

FEAR FACTOR: VAMPIRES

By Jimmy Hisong
THE BATTALION

things as vampire bats. But about the worst thing they've ever done is bite some cattle," Berthold said.

Rice also frequently incorporates a sense of reality into her works of fiction. Her novel "Interview with a Vampire," later turned into a film, centers around a seemingly non-fictional interview with a man who claims to be a vampire.

"If we get scared by things that are really weird, we aren't really scared because we know it can't happen," Berthold said. "It's not as scary as a more realistic kind of literature. You could be scared for a moment, then get over it and dismiss it as a fairy tale."

While vampire tales might make it difficult for a chosen few to walk unescorted at night, there is a general limit to their acceptance by the masses as a source of real terror.

"They are probably one of the scariest monsters, but then again they kind of remind me of mosquitoes," said Keri Bell, a sophomore English major.

Regardless of some believability issues, vampire tales have survived, while stories, such as space alien clowns tend to entertain minimal success.

Vampire legends tend to deal with two basic human infatuations: Death and sex.

"It speaks to some kind of human need to be able to deal with mortality and the possibility that the body will decay or change in some sort of way, and it becomes a way of confronting your own death. You aren't just the same as your body," Berthold said.

Tones of sensuality are just as evident.

"The stories are always about a female in distress," Berthold said. "It's late at night. Somebody's chasing her and wants to get her alone.

They may not really want to suck her blood; it's just a metaphor. Sex is definitely

right on the surface in many stories."

Although vampire stories and vampire superstitions tend to be commonly known, the acceptance of the existence of vampires is still confronted by skepticism.

"If vampires were real and they were really immortal, we'd have them running around everywhere," Berthold said.

Based on that idea, Texas A&M has a lot of work to do to meet its diversity vision for the year 2020 (which by the way is exactly 558 years since the supposed emergence of the vampire, Dracula.)

The vampire presence in and around A&M is still extremely minimal.

Ryan McCabe, a senior finance major, believes students who sleep a lot during the day and are on the prowl at night are likely candidates for modern-day vampires.

"I don't know about vampires. I know I am not a vampire, but I am more active at night. I guess that's because cell phone minutes are free after nine. Plus I sleep all day," McCabe said.

Vampires or not, the American Red Cross Brazos Valley Blood Bank said it is more than ready to serve the area's needs. Non-vampires are likely to receive preferential treatment, however.



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