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Mary Shelley, from *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus* 20

On the basis of a challenge, a young woman created a story that has thrilled and horrified people for two centuries. In this excerpt, Victor Frankenstein wakes up to find, to his horror, that his efforts to control the laws of nature have been successful: out of dead matter, he has reanimated life—and created a monster.

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A professional writer of biographical and literary histories tells the story of the summer of 1816, when the famous poets Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley; Shelley's young lover, Mary Godwin; and Byron's doctor, John Polidori, challenged themselves to write horror stories, leading to two of the most enduring monsters in literature: Dr. Frankenstein's creature and the vampire.

Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan, *Why Vampires*

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A popular filmmaker joins with a writer of vampire novels to describe why the myths of vampires are so prevalent across time and culture: because vampires, for good or bad, connect us to the idea of eternity.

Chuck Klosterman, *My Zombie, Myself: Why Modern Life Feels Rather Undead* 40

A pop culture critic argues that the appeal of zombies today is a metaphor for how we must fight unending battles in our everyday lives just as zombie killers fight relentlessly against zombies. The zombies are our daily struggles—and they will always be there.

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An urban theorist describes how the Latino community embraces the myth of the chupacabra, a vampire-like animal that feeds on other animals such as goats and chickens. The chupacabra has turned into the community's metaphor to help members cope with political and social issues of immigration and drought.

Peter H. Brothers, *Japan's Nuclear Nightmare: How the Bomb Became a Beast Called Godzilla* 51

An actor and film critic details the motivation for and symbolism behind the original *Godzilla* (1954), made less than a decade after Japan experienced the horror of atomic war. Director Ishirō Honda shows *Godzilla* destroying Tokyo in actions reminiscent of World War II and creates a universal tale of what can happen when science outruns humanity.

Stephen T. Asma, *Monsters and the Moral Imagination* 61

A professor of philosophy argues that modern society has an insatiable need for monsters to symbolize our moral shortcomings, such as our failure to be more tolerant and inclusive of diversity. Monsters are also a response to crises within our society—including September 11—and can provoke our imaginations to examine our personal and social challenges.

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Ovid, *The Battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs* 83

The ancient Roman poet Ovid, author of *Metamorphoses*, recounts the conflict that results when the centaurs—half-human and half-horse creatures—become drunk at a wedding reception and lose their self-control. The result is a pitched battle described in gory detail.

Kenneth H. Simonsen, *The Monstrous and the Bestial: Animals in Greek Myths* 89

A professor of ethics examines the relationship between humans and animals in Greek myths, analyzing why some mythical creatures are considered monsters while others are seen in a more positive light. The centaurs are a particular example of a type of creature that can at times act monstrously but can also act civilly.

Bruce F. Kawin, *Composite Monsters: Island of Lost Souls and The Fly* 99

A professor of English and film analyzes how monsters can be created by combining animal and human characteristics. Turning from classical creatures such as the Minotaur and the centaurs, Kawin instead focuses on more contemporary monsters, such as the part-human, part-insect creature in *The Fly* and the “things” created by Dr. Moreau in *Island of Lost Souls* that are neither human nor beast.

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A practicing occultist and neo-pagan connects the werewolf transformation of human to beast not to the full moon, as is so often shown in popular culture, but to the Christian holiday of Christmas.

Elizabeth A. Lawrence, *Werewolves in Psyche and Cinema: Man-Beast Transformation and Paradox* 108

A former veterinarian and cultural anthropologist analyzes the relationship of attraction and repulsion that humans have had with wolves and discusses how that uncomfortable bond is portrayed in popular movies and legends about werewolves.

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An American nonfiction author who specializes in writing about ghosts, UFOs, and the occult turns his attention to monsters. He

describes how monsters such as centaurs, griffins, and rocs entered the human imagination based on real-life sources.

David D. Gilmore, *An Ancient Crypto-Bestiary* 140

A professor of anthropology looks at the fascinating origins of ancient Greek and Roman monsters, focusing on composite creatures such as the Chimera, manticore, and harpy. As unlikely as these creatures seem to us today, the Greeks took them seriously, seeing them as evil forces in the world that humankind needed to defeat.

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One of the oldest and most important poems written in Old English, *Beowulf* recounts the story of a tribe of Danes who are afflicted by the monster Grendel—the perverse offspring of Cain, the Old Testament son of Adam who killed his brother, Abel, and then was exiled by God. This excerpt recounts Grendel's attack on Heorot, the Danes' great mead hall.

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A science journalist investigates how popular monster stories—about vampires rising from the dead and sucking the blood of the living, zombies walking the earth, and humans turning into wolves—may have some origins in truth.

W. Scott Poole, *Monstrous Beginnings* 176

A professor of American history writes about stories of monsters in America dating back to Christopher Columbus, who reported on unfamiliar creatures in the New World, and in particular about how European settlers' biases influenced their determination of what was normal and what was monstrous—and therefore deserved to be feared and killed.

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An English professor argues that "fantasies of aggression, domination, and inversion" are given a space for expression through monsters that is not allowed among civilized, good people. The monster becomes our psychological escape.

Bram Stoker, from *Dracula* 196

In the novel *Dracula*, a mathematician and theater manager distills the legends of vampires into a single character. In this selection, young Jonathan Harker finds himself the object of the desire of three young but dangerous women during his stay at the home of the mysterious Count Dracula.

J. Gordon Melton, *Sexuality and the Vampire* 202

A religious scholar examines the history of sexuality and vampires—from Bram Stoker's tale to more contemporary presentations in literature, theater, and film—tracing the evolution of the vampire from horrific monster to desirable romantic lead.

Karen Backstein, *(Un)safe Sex: Romancing the Vampire* 211

Drawing on pop culture representations of the vampire, particularly as shown in the *Twilight* series, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and *True Blood*, a film studies critic and professor explores the change from the evil sexuality of the male vampire to today's vampire as hero. A critical part of this shift has been the movement toward greater female empowerment, in which the woman is no longer a passive victim needing to be saved, but an active participant in the story.

Declan McGrath, *Life among the Undead: An Interview with Neil Jordan* 221

A major Hollywood film director discusses the trend in movies away from the archetype of a male vampire with a female victim to one of a female vampire with a male victim—and the sexual empowerment of women it represents.

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A fiction and nonfiction author and devoted astrologist details how different tales have presented mermaids as either harbingers of doom or purveyors of good fortune.

Homer, from *The Odyssey* 239

In this excerpt from an ancient Greek epic poem, the hero Odysseus has his men tie him to the mast of their ship so he can hear the beautiful song of the Sirens but avoid being lured to his death by their beckoning call.

Karen Hollinger, *The Monster as Woman: Two Generations of Cat People* 243

A feminist film studies critic shows how depictions of female monsters treat women's sexuality as a threat and thus in need of being controlled. Using psychoanalysis, she examines two versions of the movie *Cat People*, in which beautiful young women turn into killer panthers when engaged in a sexual act.

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In this excerpt from his book *Mein Kampf*, one of history's cruelest villains uses an analogy between different species of animals and different races of humans to justify treating Jews and other enemies as monsters—thus establishing the groundwork for the Holocaust.

Patrick McCormick, *Why Modern Monsters Have Become Alien to Us* 266

A professor of Christian ethics argues that the evil monsters of the past—such as Dracula, Jekyll and Hyde, and the monster in *Frankenstein*—have an element of humanity lacking in current monsters, such as aliens from outer space. He argues that when fictional monsters become too far removed from humanity, we lose our sympathy for people in the real world who are evil or misshapen.

Jason Huddleston, *Unmasking the Monster: Hiding and Revealing Male Sexuality in John Carpenter's Halloween* 275

An English professor analyzes a popular horror film to uncover subliminal messages about male sexuality and the need to control female sexuality. The cinematic monster hides behind a mask—a blank, expressionless face that not only conceals the killer's humanity but is also essential to the killer's ability to control both himself and his victims.

Anne E. Schwartz, *Inside a Murdering Mind* 289

A reporter for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* who covered the trial of Jeffrey Dahmer relates both the dramatic discovery of Dahmer's crimes and the psychology of this monster—a serial killer and cannibal living in Middle America.

Richard Tithecott, *The Horror in the Mirror: Average Joe and the Mechanical Monster* 300

In a critical examination of the Average Joe, the author looks at what serial killers like Jeffrey Dahmer mean in the culture and how their monstrous qualities pose a challenge to our own sense of self.

William Andrew Myers, *Ethical Aliens: The Challenge of Extreme Perpetrators to Humanism* 308

A professor of philosophy examines how extreme perpetrators—dictators like Adolf Hitler and serial killers like Jeffrey Dahmer—challenge our sense of self and of the Other. When we look at the worst of the worst as being outside our realm—that is, when we see them as monsters—we deny them humanity and avoid addressing the complicated question “How could anyone *do* that?”

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