Spring 2024

The Monster Mash: A Monster Studies Approach to Literature in the University Classroom

Megan L. Bowen

THE MONSTER MASH: A MONSTER STUDIES APPROACH TO LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM

by

MEGAN BOWEN

(Under the Direction of Kendra R. Parker)

ABSTRACT

The Monster Mash is a course proposal for an upper-division undergraduate literature course focused on exploring monsters in literature and building connections between classic and more contemporary texts using high-impact practices (HIPs) with student success in mind. I build on previous work in the field of Monster Studies and introduce my own original monster pattern that prompts students to interpret monsters as they trek through Origin, Separation, Power, Threat, and Diminishment. This pattern highlights commonalities when it comes to the representation of monsters and their stories, allowing students to identify them across texts. I also divide monsters into three categories and use these to structure the course: Creations, Transformations, and Disconnections. Using these frameworks and an intertextual approach, students will craft original arguments that engage with scholarly conversations about monsters. In this course, I incorporate a range of media from novels and novellas to graphic novels and films, so students will perform both textual and visual literary analysis. I position three classic nineteenth-century texts as foundational monster myths and use these to track connections with the rest of the monsters in the course. The three central texts are *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. The more contemporary texts include *Dawn* by Octavia E. Butler, *Squad*

by Maggie Tokuda-Hall and Lisa Sterle, and *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V. E. Schwab as well as three films—*Edward Scissorhands*, *Nimona*, and *Interview with the Vampire*. Using a combination of Monster Studies, historical contexts, and critical theory, students analyze each monster with the intersections between race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability in mind. Students also develop their writing and presentation skills while building their intellectual confidence through regular discussions and scaffolded assignments.

INDEX WORDS: Monsters, Literature, Pedagogy, High impact practices (HIPs), Thesis, English, Frankenstein, Jekyll, Hyde, Dorian Gray, Dawn, Xenogenesis, Edward Scissorhands, Squad, Nimona, Interview with the Vampire, The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue, Disability Studies, Adaptation Studies, Pop Culture Studies, Education, Queer theory, Race, Gender, Sexuality, Film, Graphic Novel, Oscar Wilde, Mary Shelley, Robert Louis Stevenson, Maggie Tokuda-Hall, Lisa Sterle, V. E. Schwab, Octavia E. Butler, Syllabus

THE MONSTER MASH: A MONSTER STUDIES APPROACH TO LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM

by

MEGAN BOWEN

B.A., Georgia Southern University, 2010

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

THE MONSTER MASH: A MONSTER STUDIES APPROACH TO LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM

by

MEGAN BOWEN

Major Professor:	Kendra R. Parker
Committee:	Lindsey Chappell
	Joe Pellegrino
	Amanda Konkle

Electronic Version Approved:

May 2024

DEDICATION

You know that scene in *Beauty and the Beast* when Belle sees the library for the first time? This is dedicated to that feeling and to the monsters who continue to captivate me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to all of the many wonderful people in my life who have listened to me ramble about monsters for the last 4 years.

To Dr. Parker for teaching the vampire course that inspired this project, reminding me to drop my shoulders and breathe, and for introducing me to Octavia E. Butler's incredible body of work. I'm traumatized, but in a good way.

To Dr. Pellegrino for convincing me I could do this program, making me cry over Seamus Heaney, and challenging me at every step to just get to the point and say what I mean. It's a work in progress.

To Dr. Chappell for indulging me with the Jane Austen class so that I could finish this degree on a high note and also for making me question every single word I write. It has been painful, but worth it.

To Dr. Konkle for the lesson plan assignment that made me excited to start my thesis and for introducing me to *The Haunting of Hill House*. The spooky house genre is my new favorite rabbit hole.

To Charlie, the love of my life, for being so supportive and invested in my work. Reading all of the books in my thesis and discussing them at length with me is the most romantic thing I can imagine.

To my sister, Scarlet, for having endless faith and confidence in my abilities, especially when I felt like giving up. You're right—it's time to show off.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Monsters in Literature

What exactly is a monster? What is the difference between a monster and a villain? Why do monsters exist and why are they so fascinating? Monsters live at the border between what is human and what is Other and they are defined according to the culture and time and perspective that they represent. This makes them notoriously difficult to identify because these definitions shift and evolve. These complications open the door to a variety of critical approaches and they provide an opportunity for many layers of interpretation and analysis, which makes monsters a compelling and dynamic topic for a literature course. I propose an upper-division course in monster literature, called The Monster Mash, that explores the nature of monsters and the connections between them over time. This course starts with the nineteenth century due to the significant impact the monsters from this period continue to have on contemporary literature and media. Although monsters in literature date back to some of our earliest texts, like the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, they were initially used primarily as smaller side characters and obstacles for a hero to overcome. Early stories that featured monsters, like *The Odyssey* and *Beowulf,* were not typically about the monsters themselves. In the nineteenth century, many authors began exploring the nature of monstrosity in works that focused directly on the monster's story. This marked a turning point in the monster literature tradition that authors have built on ever since, and many of the monsters from the nineteenth century have become modern myths that haunt monster stories to this day. My course will have three units and my central texts include Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein,* Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,* and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. I chose these three works because they represent

three different types of monsters that will be pedagogically useful as an organizational structure and classification system. Using this system, students will interrogate the literature, explore connections with contemporary stories, and complicate our understanding of what it means to be a monster.

Identifying the Monster: Literature Review

When it comes to looking at monsters in literature, critics agree that the monster is never just a monster—it represents something else. According to Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)," the monster embodies a specific "cultural moment...a time, a feeling, and a place" (4). More specifically, I argue that the monster in any text represents a very particular perspective on that cultural moment, which is informed by the power dynamics that establish cultural norms and expectations. Whether or not the monster is created from a position of power and privilege changes their relationship to their cultural moment. Cohen adds that the monster is made up of "fear, desire, anxiety, and fantasy" (4) and that it is "difference made flesh," so it represents a perpetual Other (7). Robin Wood argues that the Other represents "what is repressed within the self in order that it can be discredited, disowned, and if possible annihilated" or rendered safe through assimilation (77). So, the monster is something we construct to tell a story about the things that scare us or entice us, but that are beyond the realm of what society understands as normal and acceptable. Kendra R. Parker says that the "relationship between vampires and constructions of the 'Other'…is as old as the vampire itself" (xxviii), but I believe that this is true of monsters in general.

If the monster represents the Other, then what or who exactly does the Other represent? Wood simplifies the concept to "other people" but goes on to specify examples like "women," "the proletariat," "other cultures," "ethnic groups," "alternative ideologies or political systems,"

"deviations from ideological sexual norms," and "children" (78-9). Cohen says that this "monstrous difference tends to be cultural, political, racial, economic, sexual" (7) and Parker adds gender to that list (xxviii). I appreciate the simplicity of Wood's "other people" but, if specificity is the goal, then consideration must also be paid to the concept of disability. However, Melissa Bloom Bissonette cautions against casting the monster as a "pure 'other'" because that can be reductive (108) and Chris Koenig-Woodyard says that the monster lives "between the subject (Self) and the object (Other)" (6). I argue that monsters are intimately connected to fear and desire and that these concepts are informed by societal norms, so while the monster is a representation of the Other, that representation can reflect repressed and rejected aspects of the self. Understanding the monster as the Other does not limit our ability to interrogate it as long as we acknowledge how the Other is constructed and how complicated that relationship between normal and different is. Monsters are different and disconnected from what society identifies as normal, but it would be a mistake to equate normal to good or right, just like it would be a mistake to equate monsters to villains and identify them as entirely bad or wrong. Although monsters and villains are often conflated, they are not necessarily the same and that is precisely what I want students in my course to explore.

Monsters can mean multiple things, even within one text, and those meanings multiply across texts as monsters are reinterpreted. Successful and interesting monsters that resonate over time are complex and difficult to pin down. You can hunt them through a text and then not be sure whether what you were hunting was even the monster after all. Monsters are manifestations of fear and desire and they are created to represent some kind of difference or Other that is socially charged, but who is the monster exactly? Is the monster evil? Bissonette argues against the tendency to pick one answer when it comes to the monster in *Frankenstein* (108). She says

that students often want to wrap him up simply as either the "victimized child, mistreated and misunderstood" or as pure "evil" but that to reduce the monster to an easy answer is to remove the possibility of learning (Bissonnette 108). Despite Bissonette's intentions, convincing students to reserve judgment may not be possible, but her sense of caution is valid. Students who decide whether the monster is good or bad may think that is the end of the conversation, but it is not. Teaching students to see their reaction to a text or a monster as a starting, rather than ending, point is a useful first step toward analysis. Koenig-Woodyard confronts the challenge of categorizing the monster, stating that "monsters defy the canonical and conventional, preferring their re-inventions and innovation" (3). Monsters are practically ripe for retellings and those re-inventions become part of the monster's story. When most people think of Frankenstein, they picture green skin and short hair and bolts in the neck, which is straight out of the 1931 film, but has nothing to do with the original 1818 text. Koenig-Woodyard goes on to say that extreme intertextuality is required to even begin to approach the monster (4). Rather than ignore the pop culture picture in everyone's mind, we should interact with the multiple layers of texts that created it. Cohen says that because the monster can never be easily classified and resolved, it will always escape and it will always return (4-6). The complications and layers that are inherent to Monster Studies provide infinite possibilities for discussion.

The monster can be multiple things in one text, but it gets even more interesting than that. Once a monster has been created, it tends to pop up again in new ways in other texts, and those new interpretations can interact with the idea of who the monster is in ways that complicate the question even more. In "Literature, Film, and Their Hideous Progeny," Julie Grossman argues that these "cross-textual" conversations "among creative works across time and medium" push boundaries and allows for connections to be drawn across works that may seem really dissimilar

(1). Although we are not dealing with adaptations in the traditional sense in this course, we are working within adaptation studies as we consider how monsters are adapted across mediums and texts over time. In "Adapting the Victorians," Kristen Layne Figgins argues that the nineteenth century represents "a nexus…where the ethereal realm of the 'canon' (supervised largely by critics and academics) meets the material realm (overseen by executives, fandoms, and bottom lines)" (2). According to adaptation scholars, "the nineteenth century is one of the most highly-adapted periods of literature" (4) and I argue that this has allowed texts from this period to permeate popular culture in really significant ways, creating myths out of the monsters of this era. Grossman uses the word "*elastextity*" to talk about the ways that texts have "extended beyond themselves, merging their identities with other works of art that follow and precede them" (2). My intertextual approach to this course invites students to think about how examining the connections between multiple texts changes or "slants," (3) according to Grossman, our perspective on and interpretation of each individual text.

Interpreting the Monster: Context & Pedagogical Approaches

Monsters are the embodiment of cultural fears, anxieties, and desires. From a curricular perspective, their symbolic nature creates a perfect starting point for literature students to explore and analyze the meaning within a text. Monsters are also popular. They fascinate audiences and continue to demonstrate their appeal. From the 1931 *Frankenstein* film to the incredible success of the *Twilight* franchise in the early 2000s, pop culture is full of monsters, and I have always loved them. According to Helen Vendler, we owe it to our students to teach what we love and then they will love it too (40). Gerald Graff suggests that engaging with secondary criticism is what draws a student into the study of literature and allows them to participate in the discussion in a way that deepens their appreciation of the work itself (48). According to bell hooks's

pedagogy of liberation, power dynamics in the classroom must be transformed so that students are empowered to bring their own experiences, identities, and perspectives to the conversation as they challenge the texts we teach ("Toward" 79-80). Teaching monster literature allows me to embrace each of these perspectives. I will teach the literature that I love with a focus on how secondary criticism provides a framework for us to interrogate the meaning of the monsters in the texts and the perspectives that they represent. My goal is not to teach students what the monster means, but rather to provide them with the critical framework necessary to prompt their own investigations.

If the monster cannot be easily identified or categorized or explained, then teaching the monster is going to require a lot of context and space to explore its meaning. This context will be historical, cultural, intertextual, and theoretical. Cohen acknowledges that history is just one of many texts that we should look at to determine meaning, and that it is not necessarily the "final determinant of meaning" (3). History is written by the people with the power, so we have to question how the historical context adds to our understanding of the monster as it relates to those power dynamics (Cohen 7-12). If monsters are metaphoric representations of social issues, then we have to investigate the context and power dynamics of those issues. Part of that investigation involves questioning the individual and cultural perspectives from which the monster was written and part of it includes acknowledging the ways that contemporary pop culture influences our understanding of monsters in general. In "Invisible Monsters," Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock uses a Popular Culture Studies approach to track how popular films and television shows reveal the shifting nature of monstrosity over time (359). He argues that the trend we see in pop culture today of "sympathy for the devil" in monster stories like *Twilight, Interview with the Vampire*, and *Edward Scissorhands* started in the nineteenth century (359-60). Since the nineteenth

century, we have moved from merely sympathizing with monsters to empathizing with them and ultimately to wanting to become them (360). To unravel the monster, I believe that we have to look at it from multiple perspectives, and those perspectives are part of the cultural and historical context of both the text under consideration and the students attempting to come to terms with the monster.

When it comes to moving from my reading of each text to considering how to teach them to a class, context is not enough. I must also consider how my pedagogical approach influences my students and their ability to engage with the material. I care about the answers to questions like "what is a monster?" and "who is the monster?" and "what does the monster represent?" but I am much more interested in having my students learn to interrogate the texts themselves than just teaching them those answers. I care that my students leave the class with the ability and, hopefully, the desire to read things more critically. Bissonette uses Bertold Brecht's "Alienation effect" as a pedagogical approach designed to keep the focus on the monster by pushing students to operate with "two minds simultaneously, the one taking pleasure in story...the other taking note of...what its author is saying" (107). By introducing critical theory before reading the text, students are encouraged to keep the fact that it is a novel or work of art in mind even as they invest in the story. She applies this method of alienation to prevent students from choosing a side where the monster is either "exonerat[ed] completely" or "wholly evil" because "sympathy and analysis...often counteract or resist each other" (109). Bissonette also argues that by "keeping the monster in 'sight' at all times, we can draw attention to the paradox rather than choosing sides" (110-111). It is easy to pick a side for a character or text and even to switch between the two sides, but it is much harder to live in between the ideas of good and evil. I am interested in centering class discussion within that gray area. If we choose a side too early, then we may

ignore the complicated evidence that could point in the other direction. In the gray area, each choice and circumstance has to be analyzed because the conversation is not over. Students who can successfully navigate this gray area will develop more nuanced and insightful arguments and analyses.

Methodology

When I set out to design this course, I knew several of the texts I wanted to use and that I wanted to focus on the monsters, but I had no idea where to start because I had never taken a class like this. I had taken classes where we talked about Historical Studies or Film Studies or Cultural Studies and, although I had never heard it phrased this way, it got me thinking about what Monster Studies might look like. In the introduction to *The Monster Theory Reader,* Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock traces the origins of the term "monster theory" to Cohen's 1996 collection *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (1) and Koenig-Woodyard's "Introduction: Monster Studies" cites Cohen's work as an origin point as well (2). Everything I have read about monsters has pointed me back to Cohen, so I knew I needed to start there. Cohen's "Seven Theses" form the foundation of what is now known as Monster Studies. He provided a toolkit for analyzing monsters that has been hugely influential on the field in general and on my course design specifically. Cohen says that monsters destroy the boundaries between past and present (ix-x) and Weinstock says that Monster Studies "transgresses categorical boundaries, spreading out into different disciplines" (1). Koenig-Woodyard says that this field "explores monsters and monstrosity from an array of methodological and theoretical perspectives" (2). Monster Studies is inherently interdisciplinary.

From the very first day of graduate school, my professors told me to look for connections between my classes. They promised that every class would help me get closer to my thesis. At

the time, I thought this was a nice sentiment, but probably not very practical. I was wrong. It turns out that Monster Studies sort of is a little bit of everything. To do Monster Studies justice, we will need to look at the historical and cultural contexts that informed the monster's creation as well as the pop culture history that influences how we read and interpret the monster today. Adaptation Studies asks how the monster is reinvented or transformed across various iterations while Film Studies and Graphic Novel Studies provide some of the language and concepts necessary to work with the different mediums we will encounter throughout the semester. Pop Culture Studies tracks changing trends in the common conception of monsters and monstrosity, as evidenced by movies, television, books, and other media. Queer Studies and Disability Studies offer lenses through which we can examine the monster and all of this is really just a taste of what Monster Studies can do. After all, we only have 15 weeks.

Monster Studies provides a basic framework to start with, but I needed to know what was already being done in the classroom. In order to develop an understanding of how monsters are being handled in college courses, I collected 50 syllabuses that focus on monsters in literature from across institutions in the United States and analyzed the 14 that are most relevant to my course proposal. The syllabuses were readily available online, and those I selected represent upper-division English literature courses with a significant focus on monsters. Other subjects reflected the interdisciplinary nature of Monster Studies and included classes in American Studies, Humanities, Spanish, Women's Studies, and various interdisciplinary introductory courses, in addition to the numerous courses focused on English Literature or Writing specifically. The 14 syllabuses I selected to analyze come from 11 different states[1] and 14

[1] States include: Arkansas, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

different institutions.[2] There are a number of different types of courses within English represented, including classes on film, critical theory, and specific literary time periods ranging from medieval literature to the postmodern era. Of the 14 courses selected, 5 are designed to teach specific historical or literary periods with a focus on monsters. These courses are largely concerned with defining the idea of monsters or monstrosity within those particular historical contexts. The most common recurring texts are *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (appearing 10 times), *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson, and *Dracula* by Bram Stoker (both appearing 4 times). *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde appears only twice. Although I am not using *Dracula* in my course, I will teach a similar kind of monster with Dorian Gray, and we will draw connections to *Dracula* in that unit. Only 2 of the courses claim to purposefully draw a connection between the older monsters they are studying and more contemporary representations with any attention given to the legacy of those original monsters. This connection is what I will explore in my course using a theoretical approach to the material, with particular emphasis on queer theory and disability studies.

Although I believe that monsters are worthy of study and that the texts I have chosen are interesting, that does not mean that students will agree. Like Vendler suggests, I am teaching what I love. In response to Graff's ideas, I am drawing students into a conversation with theory and criticism. Most importantly, I am following hooks's advice and inviting my students to show up as themselves and bring their own conversations to the table. It is not possible for me to know in advance which monsters will appeal to my students. They may have never heard of some of

[2] Institutions include: City University of New York, Dickinson College, Eastern Illinois University, Guilford College, New York University, Ohio State University, Saint Louis University, Southern Illinois University, University of Arkansas, University of Massachusetts, University of Montana, University of New Hampshire, University of Pennsylvania, and Washington State University.

the texts I choose, and they may not particularly like all of them. I hope they love everything I have selected, and I hope they think that it's all super interesting, but that is not the point. The point of my course design is to get students engaged with the process of learning. My class, like Cohen's work, is meant to be a toolkit. It can strengthen their work in other classes and allow them to see connections between what they read or watch for fun and what they only interact with because it's assigned. Like Robert Gagne's "Nine Events of Instruction" suggests, my first goal is to get their attention. Throughout the semester, I will be asking students to bring the monsters they care about into conversation with the ones we are studying. The course material is not meant to be isolated because monsters cross boundaries. Maybe they want to talk about monsters from mythology like Medusa, or maybe they prefer horror films and they want to talk about *Scream*, or maybe it's something I have never considered. I want students to draw connections to their interests, and I want them to see that their contributions are valuable. According to hooks's "Engaged Pedagogy," through holistic learning students are empowered but so are teachers because everyone is taking risks and everyone is learning (21), and that is my goal.

Course Overview

Although monsters are hybrids by nature and cannot be easily categorized, I selected my three central texts because they represent three different basic types of humanoid monsters: Creations, Transformations, and Disconnections.[3] We can think about these types in relation to humanity: Creations were never human, Transformations are sometimes human, and

[3] My monster types were inspired by Jerry Rafiki Jenkins's work on vampires and the ways that each of them addresses the issue of immortality. He built on Stephen Cave's work with the Mortality Paradox and classified vampires as one of two types – either "Staying Alive" or "Resurrection." For more on this concept, see Jenkins's *The Paradox of Blackness in African American Vampire Fiction.*

Disconnections used to be human. Creations are made as monsters, either by birth or through scientific experimentation. Transformations change into monsters but may also transform back, so they embody a sense of duality. Disconnections represent those whose monstrous identities separate them from the human experience in a way that cannot be reversed. Frankenstein's creature is a Creation. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde represent a Transformation. Dorian Gray is a Disconnection.

In order to help students identify and interpret the monsters in each text, I have outlined an overall monster pattern of commonalities. I believe that monsters can be identified based on their ability, function, and perception by the public. What can the monster do that makes it different from other people? What role or function do they play in the story? How are they perceived? Based on my analysis of the central texts I have chosen, my monster pattern includes: Origin, Separation, Power, Threat, and Diminishment. Like the hero's journey by Joseph Campbell or the Raglan scale, this pattern reveals the connective tissue between monsters of all kinds. Campbell's work in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* identified a series of events within a hero's life while Raglan created a list of common traits among heroes in his book *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama.* Like any good monster, my pattern is a hybrid. It functions as a checklist, like Raglan's work, in that a character who checks the boxes is likely a monster. Although monsters may not always go on a journey, like in Campbell's monomyth for heroes, there is an element of a common trajectory for a monster from the moment they come into existence to the point where society wants to reduce the threat that they pose, whether through violence or cure.

Table 1: The Monster Pattern

The Monster Pattern	
Origin	Creation, Transformation, or Disconnection
Separation	Identified as Other
Power	Has some extra ability
Threat	Inspires fear
Diminishment	Threat reduction

The origin marks the moment that a monster comes into existence, whether through creation, transformation, or disconnection. Each of these options connects to a different web of monsters and may influence how that monster is received. Separation marks a monster as the Other. They may be rejected by an individual or their family or society at large or they may be marked as different in some way, like their appearance, that removes them from what is considered normal. They may be considered deformed or they may live in isolation, for example. Power refers to any ability or attribute outside of the human norm that grants the being in question an advantage. This is often physical, but not always. They may be larger or stronger or faster or they may live longer or wield magic. Whatever it is, they have something that other humans do not. Like Separation, Threat is about how the monster is perceived by others. Whether intentional or not, a monster poses a potential threat. They may be violent or they may simply inspire fear, but Threat is a key component of something being classified as a monster. Diminishment has to do with society's reaction to the monster. It represents the urge to cure, tame, control, capture, or kill the monster in order to diminish its power and threat. Threat and Diminishment also refer to the monster's function within the world of the story. Do they pose a perceived threat, and is someone trying to stop them? These pieces of the pattern can exist in

various orders, but it is the combination of these that makes a monster. Based on this pattern, monsters are abnormal beings who exhibit some special power or ability and who pose a potential threat.

Exploring these types and patterns will prompt different questions about each of the texts and increase our understanding of each monster's story. Studying the texts in conversation with each other will also prompt new lines of inquiry. My course is comprised of three units that will focus on exploring the myths of each of these monsters and the impact they have on contemporary literature. Critics like Chris Baldick position stories like Frankenstein and Jekyll as modern myths due, in part, to their "lasting significance in Western culture" (2-3). Adaptation Studies scholars call texts like these "culture-texts" because they have been replicated and adapted and proliferated so widely that even people who have never read the original texts know the stories (Figgins 4). Baldick distinguishes myths from literary texts because literary texts are fixed in their form while the essential stories of myths are more malleable because the value is in the story itself rather than in the strict original presentation. The text is the original work, with all of its specificity. The myth is what emerges from the text, and it is subject to change over time as it is influenced by retellings, adaptations, and popular culture. Despite these changes, the myth can still be recognized for its connections to the text. Given these distinctions, I have inserted *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as an additional example of a monster myth. The longing for eternal youth is mythic in its own right, and the central story is recognizable even when the specifics are changed. Each unit will have a central nineteenth-century text, and each central text will function like a myth that haunts the other texts we connect to it.

Like Monster Studies, my approach to this course will be interdisciplinary, blending historical research, sociological theory (primarily gender, race, sexuality, and disability), literary

analysis, visual rhetoric, and media analysis. Because monsters are often described as ugly or deformed in some way, evaluating the visual representations of the monsters we study is critical to unpacking the links between physiognomy, disability coding, and monstrosity. I use a wide variety of "texts" throughout the course—including novels, films, short stories, graphic novels, and even a music video. My texts will range from *Frankenstein* to Lil Nas X's music video for "Montero (Call Me By Your Name)." I will purposefully reduce the boundaries between high literature and popular culture by linking texts like these in an attempt to encourage students to engage with all types of media more critically and to prompt them to see how the legacy of classic literature is woven into our understanding of contemporary media. Through our examination of the monstrous in these texts, we will confront issues surrounding race, gender, sexuality, disability, class, representation, and personal biases.

Interrogating the Monster: 7 [Hypo]theses

As a pedagogical tool, monsters open a practically endless number of doors for discussion, interpretation, and analysis. Cohen's Seven Theses will provide some structure to the discussion and will give students a framework for Monster Studies. According to Cohen, cultures can be understood through the monsters they create (3). His Seven Theses are designed to unpack how monsters embody particular cultural moments, so that we might more clearly understand the culture they represent. Instead of asking strictly what the monster can tell us about the culture that created it, I plan to ask what the cultural, historical, and literary context can tell us about the monster itself. Students will interrogate whether or not Cohen's ideas actually apply to each monster, and they will work to determine why that matters. We will draw connections between various texts, and students will apply Cohen's work as well as other critical

lenses for their analyses. By treating Cohen's Seven Theses as hypotheses, each one becomes a question that needs to be answered about the text.

Question #1: What is the cultural context for this monster?

Cohen's first thesis states that a monster is "an embodiment of a certain cultural moment—of a time, a feeling, and a place" (4). To explore this idea in a classroom, I incorporate historical context, authorial biography, and the major cultural attitudes of the time and place that produced the particular work(s) we are studying. The literary context that a monster participates in may be nearly as important as the historical context because genre conventions can also impact the choices an author makes. Is it a gothic novel? Is it science fiction? What allusions does it make to previous works?

Question #2: How does the monster escape, and when, where, or how does it return?

His second thesis claims that "the monster always escapes" and shifts, only to reappear somewhere else (4). This thesis is the reason that we will track connections between a central text like *Frankenstein* and other monster texts that share similar themes, in order to build a web of connected monsters that will enable us to better understand each one. Direct adaptations can be part of the conversation, but I connect texts primarily by theme and monster type instead to broaden our scope of study without being beholden to whether or not a text was intended as an adaptation. The point I am making is that monster types reappear in new ways because of their mythic status, not necessarily because someone set out to write a retelling of *Frankenstein*.

Question #3: What is this monster a hybrid of, and what category does it challenge?

Part of tracking this web of connected monsters will relate to Cohen's third thesis, which asserts that monsters "are disturbing hybrids" that challenge binary thinking and defy easy categorization (6). We will examine what kind of hybrid each monster is as part of our analysis.

What aspects were combined to create each monster? What references or allusions to earlier texts exist that may have informed the monster's creation?

Question #4: What "Other" does this monster represent?

Cohen's fourth thesis will guide a significant portion of our discussion of each text. This thesis proposes that "the monster is difference made flesh, come to dwell among us" and that it functions as the perpetual Other (7). Cohen argues that the "monstrous difference tends to be cultural, political, racial, economic, [and] sexual" (7). We will interrogate each text to determine what Other is being represented by each monster and for what purpose because the power dynamics and social privileges that determine the difference between normal and other shift and evolve over time. A monster who originally reflected fears about racial differences or class struggles may be reinvented or reinterpreted in light of growing conversations about gender and sexual differences.

Question #5: What boundary does this monster define or challenge?

The fifth thesis argues that the "monster polices the border of the possible" and often serves to warn against intellectual, geographic, or sexual mobility (12). He cites the dinosaurs of *Jurassic Park* as a warning that "curiosity is more often punished than rewarded" (12); however, this thesis merits further consideration because it may not account for the modern shift in the depiction of many monsters as sympathetic beings. If the monster is also the villain, then their presence as a warning is fairly straightforward. They are like a big sign that says "Danger: Do Not Enter." However, what happens when the monster is not the villain? What kind of warning does a monster who invites our sympathy provide? In this course, we will examine the boundaries that each monster helps define.

Question #6: What fantasy or desire does this monster embody, and why is it scary?

Cohen's sixth thesis contends that "fear of the monster is really a kind of desire," because the monster is "linked to forbidden practices," so it inspires fear but it is also attractive (16). With each monster we encounter, we will attempt to dissect the elements of fear and desire at work.

Question #7: Why was this monster created, and what does it say about humanity?

Cohen's final thesis charts the real purpose of the course. He says that "monsters are our children," and they stand "at the threshold of becoming" (20). Monsters exist to be interpreted, and they challenge our cultural assumptions and the way we perceive the world. Cohen says that monsters "ask us to reevaluate our cultural assumptions about race, gender, sexuality, our perception of difference, [and] our tolerance toward its expression" (20). For each monster, the question we need to attempt to answer is why we created them in the first place.

Isolating the Myths: Connecting the Texts

Once the monster in the central text has been identified, interpreted, and interrogated, students will isolate the myth of the monster in its simplest form in order to draw connections to the rest of the texts in the course. Relying on Baldick's distinction between a literary text and a myth, we can interrogate the basic stability of meaning in each of the three central texts I am proposing. Each of these texts can be distilled down into a skeleton story that is recognizable when it reappears in a new context, even when a lot of the details change. Baldick turns the story of *Frankenstein* into two basic plot points: "(a) Frankenstein makes a living creature out of bits of corpses" and "(b) The creature turns against him and runs amok" (3). For an even more simplified variation, we can say that a man makes a creature and the creature turns against him. This simplification does not address the how or why of the story, but it captures the big idea. In *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, a man transforms into a monster and back again. In

The Picture of Dorian Gray, a man becomes a monster and loses touch with his humanity. These skeleton stories can be endlessly adapted and alluded to, because, as Baldick reminds us, "the vitality of myths lies precisely in their capacity for change, their adaptability and openness to new combinations of meaning" (4). These stories can shift and mutate, but the basic myths still connect to these three monster types: Creation, Transformation, and Disconnection.

I am not arguing that the connected texts are all adaptations of these central stories, but rather that the myth of each one haunts these new stories and variations. Whether the text is an adaptation or not, I argue that something about the myth of the central text can create new understandings of the connected stories. *Frankenstein* is thought of by many today as the first Science Fiction novel, but it may be understood as a Gothic Romance instead. These ideas are more connected than they initially seem. Patrick Brantlinger argues that Science Fiction has its origins in Gothic literature because they are both concerned with the "imagination of disaster" (34) and he points out that Gothic tropes, like demonic possession or Gothic doubles, find new life in Science Fiction stories about alien invasions or clones (37). Just like a monster myth may be reinterpreted in a later story, Gothic literature has a definite presence in Science Fiction. Brantlinger also states that *Frankenstein* marks a transition between the genres as a Gothic Romance that hinges on scientific advancement (32) and argues that the "Frankenstein pattern" specifically persists throughout Science Fiction as well (37). This idea of the "Frankenstein pattern" is similar to Baldick's positioning of the Frankenstein myth; both ideas will allow us to explore the influence of and allusions to the central monster in each unit of the course. How does the central monster haunt each of the connected stories and what kinds of questions do these hauntings raise?

Curiosity – Punished or Rewarded? A Chapter Breakdown

In Chapter 1, I provided an overview of monsters in literature and some of the many reasons that a course like this one is both valuable and appealing. I also outlined my approach to this material with an understanding of how monster scholarship and critical theory will inform my course apparatus. I have highlighted my central texts and my goals for my course design. Chapter 2 features the course breakdown, which is informed by pedagogical theory, literary criticism, monster scholarship, and critical theory. In it, I discuss the three major units, the texts and films I have selected, and the various contexts that are relevant to each unit in order to provide a more complete picture of the course as a whole. Chapter 3 includes the syllabus and various supplementary course materials, like assignment sheets, handouts, and a schedule for the semester. Chapter 4 features a two-week lesson plan on Octavia E. Butler's *Dawn* that could be adapted to any literature class, whether a course on monsters or an intro to literary studies course. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate my approach to teaching a more contemporary monster text in conversation with a more historically classic one and to apply my questions about monsters as a method of literary analysis. Chapter 5, the conclusion, reflects on how the three units come together to create a cohesive and exciting upper-division course on monster literature that would fit into any undergraduate English program. Students who take this course would identify and analyze connections between texts, apply theory and criticism to their understanding of those texts, and articulate their own original questions and ideas about literary monsters with a particular focus on interrogating the many layers of meaning at work in each piece.

CHAPTER 2

MEETING THE MONSTERS: A COURSE OVERVIEW

Introduction

There is a monster for everyone. Monsters can be scary or silly or seductive, and they pop up everywhere, from classic mythology to contemporary television. As popular and fascinating as they are, a literature class about monsters will appeal to a wide variety of students because there is such an incredible range of possibilities.[4] *Frankenstein* has already been transformed through multiple adaptations, but there is always something new to say with it. In 2024, the *Frankenstein*-inspired film *Poor Things* is nominated for 11 Academy Awards (Coates), *Lisa Frankenstein* is a new teen horror-comedy-romance, and Guillermo del Toro is working on his own horror retelling of this classic story (Kirkham). It is not just *Frankenstein* though—a new season of *Interview with the Vampire* is being released this year (Bucksbaum) and monsters have continued to dominate the box office with popular film franchises like Marvel*, Star Wars, Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Lord of the Rings,* and *Jurassic Park* ("Top Lifetime Grosses"). Monsters endure and we are drawn to their stories over and over again. A course like this can recruit new students who might not have otherwise considered studying literature and it can work to retain students who are already in the major because it uses something popular as a hook, invites students to bring their interests into the classroom, and teaches them how to see the connections to their other classes. As an academic advisor for the Department of English at Georgia Southern University, I love getting to talk to students who are excited about their degrees. However, I also have conversations every year with students who tell me that they are

[4] For more on the widespread appeal of a class on vampires and the vast success of a course that capitalizes on pop culture interests, see Sue Weaver Schopf's "'Legitimizing' Vampire Fiction."

no longer sure about their English major because it is not what they expected. Students who choose to major in English typically do so because they love the subject. They already love to read. Our job, in an English class, is to fan the flames of their interest while helping them develop their skills and igniting their curiosity to dig deeper and branch out further in order to prepare them for their post-graduation goals. Instead, students often report that their classes make them feel like the books they like to read are not worth reading. Rather than igniting a love for a wider variety of literature, their classes sometimes make them question their entire major and leave them feeling burnt out on reading at all. These students often do not understand the connection and relevance of their courses to their actual interests and goals. Building on high-impact practices (HIPs) like collaboration and diversity ("High-Impact Practices"), I aim to prepare students to engage more deeply with their degree by focusing on the relevance of their courses to their goals, interests, and the world around them.

This course design is founded on the idea of intertextuality between texts that are considered important canonical pieces of literature and more contemporary books and media. By teaching students to explore these connections, they will develop a skill set that will translate to the rest of their classes. The best classes, and the ones I hear the most praise for from students, are the ones where they see a connection between their interests and their assignments. Students in these classes are excited about their work, motivated about their reading, and interested in learning more. Through student-centered pedagogy, my course aims to bridge the gap between classic and contemporary texts in order to highlight the value of studying a range of literature while building the skills students need to succeed both academically and professionally. By engaging their participation in low-stakes assignments and discussions that require them to propose topics, interpretations, and arguments, students can take risks and push themselves. By

fostering an environment where they can build their intellectual confidence, they will be more prepared for their post-graduation goals. I argue that students are more apt to understand the relevance and importance of works they may not have otherwise chosen to study if they are actively looking for connections to the books and movies they already enjoy. With collaborative learning in mind as a high-impact practice (HIP), students will explore these connections as a group through discussion and in-class assignments and they will work together to refine their projects over the course of the semester.

This course, entitled "The Monster Mash," is comprised of three units featuring three different types of monsters: *Frankenstein* as a Creation, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde* as a Transformation, and *The Picture of Dorian Grey* as a Disconnection. Each unit focuses on its central nineteenth-century text as a monster myth due to the significant impact the humanoid monsters from this period continue to have on contemporary stories. In this course, students will examine monsters through intertextual connections across multiple literary texts using historical context, a Monster Studies approach, and various critical lenses. We will use the central myth of each primary text as a starting point for investigating these connections in each unit. After unpacking the central myth and interpreting the monster in that story, students will identify the points of connection with each of the monsters we encounter. The texts I have chosen all explore the moment that the monster comes into being. This focus on the moment of creation complicates how we as readers interact with the idea of the monster. Witnessing Frankenstein's creature coming to life or the moment that Jekyll transforms into Hyde and back again or Dorian's disconnection from human to immortal forces us to grapple more closely with the question of what it means to be human and what it means to be a monster. Using the ideas of creation, transformation, and disconnection to draw a line from these classic monsters to later

works like Octavia E. Butler's *Dawn* or *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V.E. Schwab will push students to explore connections between texts that span various genres and mediums over two hundred years. This approach will emphasize the relevance of classic texts to more contemporary interests and help students bridge the gap as they consider the legacy of monsters and how they have been reinterpreted over time.

Over the course of the semester, students will engage in discussion, complete intertextual assignments, and present their own scholarship to the class. After an introductory week designed to accommodate the brief period of the semester during which students can add or drop classes, the rest of the course will break down into three major units, addressing four novels, one novella, one graphic novel, and three films. Since this is a discussion-based course, each day of class will start with a warm-up that is designed to help students focus their minds on the most recent reading and prepare themselves to actively participate in class that day. Warm-ups include five-minute writing prompts and small-group assignments.[5] Throughout the course, students will submit discussion proposals[6] that will guide some of our time in the classroom. I will prompt students to bring the monsters from the books, movies, and shows they already enjoy into the conversation and build on their interests to draw connections to the works we are studying in class as we attempt to identify the various types of monsters in each one. Our in-class discussions will vary between large and small groups, depending on the best fit for the topic that day. In the event of small-group discussions, students will have discussion guide worksheets to complete in order to demonstrate their work during that class period.[7] In addition to their small assignments, students will complete a project at the end of each unit in this course. All projects

[5] For an example of a warm-up activity, see "Warm-Up: The Monster Pattern" in Chapter 3.
[6] For details on the discussion proposal assignment, see Chapter 3.
[7] For examples of discussion guide worksheets, see Chapter 3.

will include a visual aspect, a presentation, and a written component, and they are scaffolded to build skills and confidence while they prepare students for each next step. The first project is just about brainstorming and drawing connections. The second project will be primarily reflective writing to help students identify their interests before they start their final projects, which will incorporate research and a scholarly argument. Final projects will also go through a proposal, workshop, and revision process, reinforcing important English major skills.

I am endlessly fascinated with stories that present a monster but then challenge the idea of what monsters and monstrosity even mean. I want to use our readings in this course to examine times when monsters have been used to represent both good and evil and the endless gray area between the two. By questioning whether the monster itself is necessarily evil, we will have an entrance into each text where we can begin to determine what the monster really means. Gothic literature often dealt with man's potential for evil and depicted monsters among us. According to Jack Halberstam, Gothic monsters are "pieced together out of the fabric of race, class, gender, and sexuality" (150). These monsters were transgressive and that was part of the appeal. However, they were also punished. Nineteenth-century Gothic novels like *Frankenstein*, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Dorian Gray* feature monsters who are informed by cultural concerns about who is normal and who is Other. They define boundaries. Halberstam argues that "monsters have to be everything the human is not and, in producing the negative of human, these [nineteenth-century Gothic] novels make way for the invention of human as white, male, middle class, and heterosexual" (166). This is the idea that opens the door to the rest of our semester. Monsters are coded with layers of meaning. When we imagine monsters as depraved or perverse but also as representations of people of color, queer identities, and disability, we connect everything they are coded to represent with a sense of wrongness. By looking more

closely at who each monster really is, we can begin to break down some of those connections in our minds. In this course, I will ask my students to engage critically with the literature we read, challenge our preconceived notions, and move forward with the ability to examine the monstrous ideas they encounter more carefully.

During the first week of the semester, I will introduce students to some of the key themes and concepts of the course while keeping in mind that enrollment may change before the second week. After a brief review of the syllabus, we move on to a discussion about the differences between monsters and villains. One of the most important skills for an English major is to make sure they understand the words they are reading and using, so we will start with the definitions from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Definitions have shifted over time, so while *monster* originally referred to a "mythical creature which is part animal and part human, or combines elements of two or more animal forms, and is frequently of great size and ferocious appearance," it has evolved to refer to "any imaginary creature that is large, ugly, and frightening" ("Monster, n."). While the primary definition of a monster refers to what it is rather than how it behaves, the term has also been linked to a person's character, as in "a person of repulsively unnatural character, or exhibiting such extreme cruelty or wickedness as to appear inhuman" ("Monster, n."). Both of these definitions will be important to our discussion as we try and work out, over the course of the semester, who exactly the monster is in each text.

Because monsters and villains often overlap, it is important to also review the definition of a villain. *Villain* refers to "an unprincipled or depraved scoundrel" and "a man naturally disposed to base or criminal actions, or deeply involved in the commission of disgraceful crimes" ("Villain, n."). Unlike *monster*, the term *villain* is primarily concerned with a person's behavior or intentions. Another definition says that the villain is "the character in a play, novel,

etc., whose evil motives or actions form an important element in the plot" ("Villain, n."). A villain is bad or evil. A monster is inhuman, ugly, and scary. On the first day of class, I will use these definitions to review a variety of monsters and villains from pop culture in order to prompt students to apply their newfound knowledge and examine these characters more critically. In Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, we can consider characters like Mrs. Potts, Gaston, and the Beast himself. In the world of *Twilight,* we can discuss the Cullens, the werewolves, and the Volturi. These are just a few examples, but the goal of this exercise is to separate the two terms so that students can understand how a character might be a monster, but not a villain, or vice versa. We will focus on identifying connections between monsters, evaluating their physical appearances, and discussing the ways that monsters represent societal fears and anxieties – like fatness, aging, disability, queer identities, and racial differences. By the end of the first week, we will have analyzed Lil Nas X's music video for "Montero (Call Me By Your Name)" in class and students will have annotated Neil Gaiman's short story "Click-Clack the Rattlebag."[8]

Unit 1: Creations – Focusing on Frankenstein

For the first unit, we focus on *Frankenstein* as a central text. In chapter one, I identified the skeleton story within Mary Shelley's work as: a man makes a creature and the creature turns against him. Science makes a monster, the monster is rejected, and violence and chaos ensue. Returning to the idea of types of monsters, Frankenstein's creature is a Creation. What does that mean exactly? It means that he has never been anything other than a monster. He was brought into being as a monster. Victor created him with his own goals in mind. I see several important themes, including issues of creation, responsibility, alienation, abandonment, rejection, scientific advancement, the manipulation or creation of life, and the search for a community. Victor

[8]For details on their annotation assignment, see "Annotating the Text" in Chapter 3.

Frankenstein is part mad scientist and part father figure while the creature is both an experiment and a child. By putting Frankenstein's creature into conversation with other monsters, I hope to prompt students to ask questions about the connections that exist between them in order to develop a deeper understanding that separates monsters from villains and considers the role and function of the monster in each text. This unit will also include Octavia E. Butler's *Dawn* and Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands* because of their thematic similarities to the Frankenstein myth and their incorporation of Creation monsters. By the end of Unit 1, students will:

- Develop skills for annotation, discussion, and analysis
- Understand the context of the Frankenstein myth, character coding, and the social construction of disability
- Apply the monster pattern and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's Seven Theses to locate monsters in a text[9]
- Identify intertextual connections using textual evidence
- Analyze texts through close reading, with an emphasis on word choice and naming

This unit opens with two weeks on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to establish a central Creation monster myth. Throughout these class periods, we explore three major ideas, including modern myth-making, the importance of naming, and the problem of creation. In 1816, or "the year without a summer," the dreary weather following the eruption of Mount Tambora kept a group of writers, including Mary Shelley, indoors without many options for entertainment (Gordon 162). As one of the writers, Lord Byron turned to a collection of ghost stories but decided they needed something even more terrible, so he challenged the group of restless writers to create the scariest story possible for a little competition among friends (Gordon 187). Mary

[9] For more information on these, see the handouts in Chapter 3.

Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* and created a myth that defines the science fiction genre by blending Romantic and Gothic elements with a scientific twist.[10] She carried the storytelling and myth-making theme into the novel itself with Robert Walton's letters at the beginning of the text (7-21). He tells his sister the story that, supposedly, Victor told him, which includes the story that the creation told Victor. Although the epistolary form can have a substantiating effect on a story, these layers of storytelling within the novel can also create the feeling of a myth, passed from person to person until we hold the story in our hands. Even though Shelley is vague about the monster's creation in the text, the 1931 film version provides a very clear answer when lightning is harnessed to deliver an electric shock that animates the body of the monster (00:23:00-00:25:00). Despite the fact that it is not part of the original text, this scene is an integral part of the myth and it draws on the scientific experimentation that was happening around the time the novel was written. In 1803, George Foster was executed for the murder of his wife and child and his body was donated to science as part of his punishment (Montillo 77, 86). In addition to hanging, dissection was added to the possible sentence for murder with the 1752 Murder Act, because of the additional terror and infamy it would inflict on the convicted criminal (32). Giovanni Aldini, an anatomist obsessed with restoring life, attached electrodes to Foster's body and powered up his battery to demonstrate the effects of galvanism on a corpse (86). He failed to bring Foster back to life, but the body quivered, clenched, and opened his eyes before finally raising his right hand (88). In the film, the lightning works and the monster raises his own right hand to the doctor's chorus of "it's alive, it's alive" (*Frankenstein* 00:24:45-00:25:05). The myth

[10] For more about the importance of *Frankenstein* to the science fiction genre and the link between Gothic Romance and Science Fiction, read Patrick Brantlinger's "The Gothic Origins of Science Fiction."

and the monster may have been born in 1818, but they have both shifted and evolved through popular culture ever since.

The myth of Frankenstein is so pervasive it has become part of our cultural consciousness. In "The Monster Lives On," Susan Tyler Hitchcock indicates that the word *Frankenstein* has been used to signify good intentions gone wrong, the horrors of war, and man's oversized ambitions (106-112). However, it is a complicated myth because Frankenstein could refer to either Victor or his creation or the novel overall, so Frankenstein could also represent the underdog of society by connecting to those who have been rejected or alienated (111-2). Readers have likely been trying to clarify this problem since the novel was first published. Hitchcock references a letter to the *New York Times* from 1902 which points out that "Frankenstein was the man who made the monster and not the monster who was made" (115). The movie posters for *Frankenstein* and *Bride of Frankenstein* in the 1930s reflect this confusion as well and likely impacted popular culture perceptions of the monster.

Figure 1: Movie Posters[11]

In the poster for the original *Frankenstein* film, it says "Frankenstein: The Man Who Made a Monster," meaning that the name Frankenstein refers to the doctor. However, in the poster for *The Bride of Frankenstein*, the doctor is not pictured and the bride is described as "more fearful than the monster himself," which could imply that the name Frankenstein also refers to the monster. This is up for debate.

What should we call him? What's in a name? If Victor Frankenstein is the creator and *Frankenstein* is the novel, how do we refer to the creation and how much does it matter? We will go back to the text first, as a class, to discuss our options. Students will bring examples from the text for our discussion. In *Frankenstein*, Victor refers to his creation as a "daemon" (17), a

[11] Movie posters are from the International Movie Database (IMDb) pages for each film.

"creature" (45), a "wretch" (46), a "monster" (46), and a "fiend" (47). Dating back to Greek mythology, "daemon" was a fairly neutral term that referred to supernatural beings caught somewhere between gods and humans ("Demon, n."), which could definitely be useful here. However, "daemon" is also a variant of "demon," which conjures images of evil spirits as well as Christian ideas about Hell and the devil ("Demon, n."). Daemon or demon, wretch, and fiend are all associated with ideas of evil and villainy, so they bring that connotation to the character and his intentions if we choose any of these. Creature is perhaps the most neutral in terms of intentions and it does link to the idea of a creation, but in contemporary use, it could imply that he is an animal and deny him a sense of humanity. Monster could obviously work in this class. It would make sense to choose that one, but it has some baggage too as we are still trying to pick apart the differences between monsters and villains throughout the course. Notably, if we call him "the monster," there will be significant confusion moving forward in a class all about monsters.

We have discussed how Victor refers to his creation, but what does the creation have to say? He connects himself to the biblical Adam numerous times (90, 121, 123) and an argument could be made that it represents his attempt to name himself. If "creature" implies an animalistic nature, then Adam certainly grants him humanity. It also emphasizes the relationship between him and Victor as his god-like creator. In pop culture, he's known simply as Frankenstein. Although as readers we know that this is not exactly true to the text, we should not be too quick to dismiss it as being completely inaccurate. It is important to consider the familial relationship that it highlights between Victor and his creation. Just as the name Adam denotes one type of relationship between them, calling the creation himself Frankenstein brings constant attention to the father-son dynamic that exists in the novel. In the *Hotel Transylvania* movies, they take it

one step further and call him Frank as an attempt to recognize the Frankenstein connection while granting him his own identity. As with so much literary analysis, there is not one clear and correct answer because the book does not tell us. The point of this discussion is to recognize the power of names and their implications. Students will have to make a judgment call when they write about this work as they decide what to name him for themselves. For the purpose of discussion, we need a name that is specific when we put this work in conversation with later texts. Since we are focusing on the creation dynamic in this work and because we will need something specific to use when we talk about this character later in the semester, we will likely take a note from pop culture and go with Frankenstein for simplicity, but it is important to talk about why and what that choice does to our understanding of the monster. Frankenstein, as a name, is specific to this text and commands a connection to Victor, which serves the Creation aspect of the myth. In this chapter, I will personally use Frankenstein to refer to Victor's creation.

Rejection and alienation are key themes that will connect Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to both Octavia E. Butler's *Dawn* and Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands.* Victor creates Frankenstein from human body parts and refers to him during this process, before he comes to life, as a human being (41-2). He also likens himself to a father and relates his creation to a child (42). Before he comes to life, Victor describes his creation as beautiful with lustrous, flowing hair and pearly white teeth (45). When Frankenstein opens his eyes, Victor's perception shifts and he sees his creation as a monstrous wretch instead (45). This initial parental rejection of a child who has done nothing wrong is the theme that winds itself through so many adaptations from the 1931 *Frankenstein* film and its sequel, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, to Mel Brooks's *Young Frankenstein* in 1974. *Frankenweenie* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* transform this

in their versions of the story as the creators embrace their creations excitedly. Either way, as this is the point on which many adaptations turn the story, it is a key moment to confronting the myth and students in this class will discuss why it matters. Is Frankenstein a child or an adult? Is he fully responsible for his actions or does his creator bear the brunt of responsibility? Does the answer change through the course of the novel? Is there a point at which he is innocent and another point at which he is guilty? If Frankenstein is responsible for some or all of his own actions, is any of it justifiable because of the way he has been treated? All of these questions are part of the way the overall myth has been handled in adaptations, sequels, and spin-offs.

Just like monsters are coded with layers of meaning, so are the texts. In this class, students will discuss how ideas like disability, queer identities, and racial backgrounds are communicated through character coding. Character coding happens when often stereotypical ideas about minority groups of people are used to create a character that reads as representative of that group, even though it is never explicitly stated.[12] As an example of how this happens, in "The Lost Races of Science Fiction," Octavia E. Butler recounts a time when a science fiction writer suggested substituting extraterrestrials for black characters "so as not to dwell on matters of race" (137). David M. Lugowski ties queer coding to early cinematic representations of gender stereotypes that were often played for jokes (8). Julie Clarke examines the pervasive use of prosthetic hands for monstrous characters, like Edward Scissorhands and Darth Vader, to indicate their difference from the rest of humanity and also to connect them to ideas of disability (93-4). This kind of character coding over time creates links between monsters and villains and the identities that have been collaged into these various representations. If monsters are often

[12] For more insight into the way that character coding is discussed online, see Natasja Rose's "Character Coding in Fiction" and Shafira Jordan's "How White Fandom is Colonizing 'Character-Coding.'"

visually coded as disabled, for example, and monsters are not human…then a cultural link is created between the idea of disability and a lack of humanity, which influences perceptions of disabled people. If monsters are also coded as queer or Black or all of the above, then a narrative emerges that connects very real people with stock ideas about monsters and villains. These kinds of connections have real societal impacts in our world, as we can see with recent events like Florida's attempt to ban drag queen performances (Totenberg) or the wider anti-Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) movement sweeping America right now (Watson). When marginalized identities are conflated with monsters and villains, it provides fuel for the fire of discrimination. Students will reflect on what kinds of coding they can identify within *Frankenstein* as we attempt to come to terms with these connections. Possible examples include Frankenstein's appearance, which is described as notably not European (Shelley 16), or the queer subtext behind Victor fantasizing about how the beautiful features he selected for his creation would come to life (45). They might identify disability coding within the idea that Frankenstein cannot read or speak initially. Each of these layers is important to Frankenstein's characterization because they each reveal different aspects of what makes him a monster.

Building on discussions about disability coding as we move on to *Edward Scissorhands*, I will challenge students' understanding of disability by introducing them to the theory of social constructionism. Susan Wendell examines the social factors that construct disability with an emphasis on the idea that things like physical spaces and social expectations are disabling (61). She argues that "disability is relative to a person's physical, social, and cultural environment" (58). Thinking of an individual as being disabled or less able to navigate the world draws a problematic comparison between what is normal and what is different. This comparison is essential to the typical understanding of a monster as the perpetual Other because both disability

and monstrosity are defined in relation to social norms. With this in mind, a disabled person is othered and marginalized and it creates a perception that it is the individual who is the problem, rather than society itself. Students will identify examples of this social construction within *Edward Scissorhands* as part of our discussion about disability coding in the movie. We will also identify connections to the Frankenstein myth with Edward as a version of Frankenstein and his creator as a version of Victor.

Edward Scissorhands raises questions about what it means to be human, the pressure of conformity, the exploitation and objectification of the other, and the innocence of the creature. This film follows the story of a mad scientist's unfinished creation moving from a Gothic castle to middle-class suburbia. Tim Burton, the writer and director of the film, highlights the connection with stories like *Frankenstein* and *Phantom of the Opera* or even *King Kong,* stating that this film "is not a new story" (Easton). *Edward Scissorhands* builds on the monster myths that preceded it. Edward becomes a source of fascination for the members of the neighborhood where his scissor-hands, lack of social skills, and overall appearance inspire a variety of reactions from religious condemnation to intrusive curiosity to sexual interest before they ultimately reject him. He returns to his isolation where he becomes a story that is told to future generations. Julie Clarke identifies issues of disability, xenophobia, and conformity and highlights a connection between this film and nineteenth-century Gothic tropes in her article "All Too Human: Edward Scissorhands." Russell A. Potter also identifies the *Frankenstein* elements at work in the film and argues that "Kim's shift of love and allegiance exposes the inhumanity of the 'human' and the humanity of the 'inhuman.'" Connections between *Edward Scissorhands* and *Frankenstein* are plentiful and intentional, which makes this a really effective transition when teaching students how to identify the various types of monsters presented in this course.

In this film, Edward is brought into society and welcomed by a family where he is taught how to navigate the world around him. However, the differences between him and the rest of the members of the neighborhood are visually striking and, ultimately, he is rejected by the community and he becomes something of a myth for years afterward. Some questions for discussion include:

- Consider the mise-en-scène[13] of the film. What do the sets of Edward's Gothic mansion and Peg's pastel suburbia reveal about the characters and the story? What about their costumes?
- What does it mean for individuals like Edward and Frankenstein to be created as monsters? Who is responsible for their actions?
- How were they created? How does our understanding of their creation affect our perception of them?
- What is the effect of the last name "Scissorhands?"
- What do Edward and Frankenstein look like? How does their physical appearance affect society's perception of them?
- Consider the role of the community—what is the effect of alienation versus inclusion on an individual?
- Which of Cohen's Theses most readily applies to *Edward Scissorhands*? What about *Frankenstein?*

[13] For a brief guide to writing about film and using terms like mise-en-scène, see *A Short Guide to Writing about Film* by Timothy Corrigan.

These questions address the importance of visual analysis when it comes to film and they are designed to help students practice using a Monster Studies approach while identifying connections to *Frankenstein.*

While *Edward Scissorhands* represents a fairly direct correlation to *Frankenstein*, students may struggle to see the connection initially to *Dawn* because the protagonist, Lilith, is human at the start of the novel. However, as a science fiction novel that plays with the idea of a scientist who experiments with a creation who is rejected by society, there are definite similarities to explore. When she awakens on the first page, it feels almost like we have slipped into the monster's perspective from *Frankenstein.* In *Dawn*, the Oankali are a race of extraterrestrials who collected human survivors as the Earth was dying. Their goal is gene trading, so they hope to interbreed with humanity. Lilith Iyapo is a human who undergoes genetic modification that grants her access to their ship as well as increased strength and cognitive ability. This modification is also meant to create the perfect teacher to guide other humans through breeding relationships with the Oankali, and it means that she faces rejection by the humans for her differences. The baby Lilith is carrying at the end of the novel reflects the fruition of the Frankenstein creation because that baby is not human—it will be born as a monster. In addition to focusing on the act of creation, the role of community, and the importance of naming, this novel also builds on our discussions about disability.

In this section on *Dawn*,[14] we will discuss the importance of naming again as students confront the effects of referring to the Oankali as aliens or extraterrestrials. Both of these terms place the Oankali in relation to humans and to the planet Earth. There are also implications of the name Lilith from Jewish legends as both a monster and the mother of demons (Osherow 70).

[14] For the full lesson plan on this section, see Chapter 4.

How does this context influence our understanding of Lilith Iyapo? Other questions for discussion include:

- Isolation and xenophobia are recurring themes throughout this unit. Why? What other common themes exist?
- Who is the monster in *Dawn*? How do we know? Apply Cohen's Seven Theses.
- What examples of the social construction of disability exist in *Dawn*?
- What is the difference between a human, a monster, a person, and a villain?
- Why are Lilith, Frankenstein, and Edward rejected?
- What other examples of Creation monsters, like *Frankenstein*, can we think of? How would you approach putting them in conversation with *Frankenstein*, *Edward Scissorhands,* or *Dawn*?

These questions represent just a small sample of the overall lesson plan for *Dawn*, but they will deepen our discussions about Creation monsters and connect all three works from the first unit.

Unit 1: Assessment

At the end of this unit, students will complete a major unit assessment called the Monster Map. This assignment includes three components: visual, presentation, and writing. For the first component, students will each create a visual representation of connections between *Frankenstein* and either *Dawn* or *Edward Scissorhands*. They can (and should) get creative with this portion of the project. Visuals could include art projects, charts, mind maps, or more. The only requirement is that their image has to show at least five connections between the two works and must be put on a Google slide that we will view together in class. For the sake of time, I will combine all of the slides into one presentation. For the second component, students will each prepare a brief elevator pitch explaining their slide. These should be written down and take no

more than two minutes to present to the class while we view their visual component. Finally, their third component is an in-class reflective essay on this process. Students will consider the following questions:

- Given the choice between *Edward Scissorhands* and *Dawn*, why did you pick this one?
- What kind of a visual did you create? Why?
- What kinds of connections did you identify and was your visual effective at demonstrating them?
- After viewing all of the slides, which other approaches would you consider next time? Why?
- How did this process affect your understanding of the material?
- Based on this work, identify one possible topic for an academic essay.

Rather than relying on a standard academic paper at this point in the semester, the novelty of this assignment is meant to get each student's attention and prompt them to approach their work creatively in order to identify their interests in the material. Students often move so quickly from reading the text to making their big point that they fail to consider all of their options and they wind up working on a topic, not because they care about it, but because it feels easy to prove. With this assignment, I will ask students to notice connections, spend some time thinking about the texts, practice their presentation skills, and learn from each other as they consider how to turn their interests into possibilities for their papers. They do not have to prove anything yet. I am taking the pressure to make a big point about the text off for now, so that students can spend some time just exploring the possibilities. Following Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction, I aim to get their attention, explain the objectives, and stimulate recall through connections across the unit materials. By having students present multiple different approaches to the same idea, they

will be participating in both teaching and learning activities simultaneously. This brainstorming method is meant to help guide their learning as they develop new ways to think about the texts they encounter and the papers they have to write. The reflective essay allows students an opportunity to practice writing, think about their processes, and develop their interests. Based on their Monster Maps, brief presentations, and reflective essays, I can assess their performance in Unit 1 and provide feedback about their ideas before they move on to their next assignments. I can use what I learn from their work to tailor my lessons in Units 2 and 3 to make connections to their interests and to provide support materials as needed.

Unit 2: Transformations – Juxtaposing Jekyll & Hyde

In 1885, Robert Louis Stevenson was woken from a nightmare, and angry at his wife for interrupting, he said, "'Why did you wake me? I was dreaming a fine bogey tale'" (Lutz xiii). Stevenson turned this nightmare into a novella that has had such a profound impact on our cultural consciousness that we use Jekyll and Hyde as shorthand for someone who seems to flip between two drastically different personalities. In the second unit, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* takes its place as the central text as we shift to Transformation monsters. Unlike in *Frankenstein*, this monster can transform back and forth, moving between an ordinary human form and one that is seen as the embodiment of evil (Stevenson, R. 48). The monster is a projection of Dr. Jekyll's own wicked impulses. Even though Dr. Jekyll sees Mr. Hyde as a separate entity initially, we have to contend with the idea that if Hyde is a monster, so is Jekyll, because they are both contained within the same person. This text continues our exploration of the mad scientist that started with the first unit, but it will take us further into discussions about several important themes, including identity, morality, societal expectations, sexuality, double lives, ugliness, and deviancy. With shorter texts, including *Squad*, a graphic novel by Maggie

Tokuda-Hall and Lisa Sterle, as well as *Nimona*, a 2023 Netflix film based on a graphic novel of the same name by Noelle Stevenson, Unit 2 spans a three-week time period. By the end of Unit 2, students will:

- Develop skills for intertextual interpretations
- Understand the context of the Jekyll and Hyde myth, ugliness, and Victorian ideas about sexuality and race
- Apply queer theory to interpret a text
- Identify pop culture connections to generate textual analysis
- Analyze texts with emphases including, but not limited to, visual appearance, historical context, and the influence of social power dynamics

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde may have been the stuff of Stevenson's nightmares, but it took more than a dream for this story to come together and resonate like it has. The moral panic about gay men in Victorian England also informs the story. Male hysteria and homosexuality were big legal and scientific topics and, with the Labouchère Amendment that criminalized homosexual acts going into effect right as the novella was published (Showalter 115-6), it is not anachronistic to read the queer subtext in this story. In fact, Stevenson's friend John Addington Symonds, also a writer, struggled with his own homosexual urges that were considered sinful and degrading by society at the time, and he saw them reflected in this particular text (Lutz xvi). This historical context reveals some of the fears that are so pervasive within this story.

Why does Mr. Hyde exist? Dr. Jekyll reaches an age where he is reflecting on his life and he is grappling with his identity. He feels that he has two separate versions of himself that are both real, but only one of them is socially acceptable, so he creates a formula that allows him to separate his identities. Why? What is it exactly about him that is so wrong? While there are many

possibilities, I see a queer subtext.[15] Dr. Jekyll mentions that his faults were "hard to reconcile" with his "desire to carry [his] head high" (Stevenson, R. 45). He "concealed [his] pleasures" and hid his irregularities "with an almost morbid sense of shame" (45). While he does not reveal exactly what his actions are, it is clear that he hides this part of himself from society at least in part because he fears people's judgment. Words like *desire*, *pleasure*, and *shame* indicate transgressions of a sexual nature. Once the transformation is complete, he revels in a "current of disordered sensual images" (47). While *disordered* could refer to a sense of chaos, it also connects to ideas about mental dysfunction, like male hysteria which developed into a psychoanalytic view of homosexuality as a disorder (Showalter 106). Elaine Showalter notes that, at this time, homosexuality would have represented a double life to most middle-class people (106), so it is fair to assume that the connection would have been apparent even then. Despite being two manifestations of the same person, Jekyll and Hyde looked very different physically and could not have been confused for each other. Showalter points to Jekyll's "'strange preference' for Edward Hyde" and his implied status as a kept man, due to the lavish gifts and secretive nature of their relationship (111). Hyde sneaking out of Jekyll's bedroom after a midnight transformation (Stevenson, R. 51) could have signaled a sexual encounter to Jekyll's servants who witnessed Hyde's exit. Wayne Koestenbaum argues that although Jekyll and Hyde turn out to be the same person, early readers would not have known that and might have initially thought "that it was a novel not about two men in one body, but about two bodies in one bed" (54). Queer subtext runs throughout this novella, even though Jekyll and Hyde share a body.

[15] For examples of queer readings of this story, see Elaine Showalter's "Dr. Jekyll's Closet" and Wayne Koestenbaum's "The Shadow on the Bed."

Since monsters mark the boundaries between what is normal and what is different, ideas about what constitutes "normal" sexuality are significant to a queer reading of monstrosity as we work to identify the lines that separate monsters from humans. Queer theories about compulsory heterosexuality and heteronormativity will provide students with the tools they need to have conversations about how moral standards regarding sexuality are socially constructed.[16] Compulsory heterosexuality highlights the ways that society rewards heterosexuality and punishes any deviation from it (Barker 44). Heteronormativity refers to the cultural assumption that heterosexuality is the "'normal' or 'natural' form of attraction" (Barker 84). While Hyde can be read as a condemnation of queer behavior, this makes him an example of self-loathing as a result of social expectations. Social construction theory means that his existence can also be interpreted as a denouncement of the society that relegates gay people into the shadows. This discussion demonstrates the importance and relevance of historical context and provides another opportunity for students to use a theoretical framework in their literary analysis.

These so-called deviant desires were not the only thing haunting the edges of peoples' minds. Physiognomy is the study of the connection between physical appearance and moral character and people have been obsessed with it for ages.[17] In 1876, just ten years before Stevenson published *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, an Italian physician named Cesare Lombroso published *Criminal Man* (Lutz xxi). In this book, he argued that "criminality is innate from birth and is visible in apish signs on a person's anatomy" (Lutz xxi). Using scientific

---

[16] For more about compulsory heterosexuality, see Adrienne Rich's "Compulsory Heterosexuality and the Lesbian Existence." For more on heteronormativity, see Michael Warner's "Introduction: Fear of a Queer Planet." For easily digestible explanations in graphic novel form, see *Queer: A Graphic History* by Meg-John Barker and Jules Scheele.

[17] For a brief history of physiognomy moving from Socrates to the modern day, see Jaco Berveling's "'My God, here is the skull of a murderer!' Physical appearance and violent crime" (2021).

jargon, Lombroso's work had the appearance of objectivity (Berveling 150). The central idea that you could tell that someone was bad, just by looking at them, was part of the cultural conversation at the time Jekyll and Hyde entered the scene. Hyde is also said to be "ape-like" (19), "wicked-looking" (20), and "ugly" (7). "Ape-like" has racial implications that also cannot be ignored in our discussions. Hyde's monstrosity is physical. It manifests itself in his ugliness and deformity. In comparison, Dr. Jekyll is described as "well-made, smooth-faced" and with "every mark of capacity and kindness" (17). By definition, monsters are ugly ("Monster, n."). Also by definition, monsters are wicked ("Monster, n."). What do these two things have to do with each other? Our work from unit one on disability studies also comes into play here. Throughout the book, Hyde is described as having "something wrong with his appearance" and giving "a strong feeling of deformity" (Stevenson, R. 9). He "seems hardly human" and somehow "troglodytic" (15). Mr. Utterson assumes that he hates Hyde on sight because Hyde's appearance is evidence of his evil character. Before Sami Schalk wrote *Black Disability Politics*, she wrote about the importance of a critical disability lens when dealing with Hyde's monstrosity. People in the Victorian era saw a connection between physical and mental disabilities (Schalk) that, taken in combination with an understanding of physiognomy, creates a link between disability and poor moral character that comes to life in Mr. Hyde.[18]

Students may already be familiar with the concept of privilege, particularly as it pertains to white or male privilege, but may not have encountered the idea of pretty privilege. Being

[18] There are multiple possible ways to approach disability in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.* For this course, I will focus on the physicality of Hyde as it connects to nineteenth-century ideas about physiognomy, and on the connections to homosexuality, which has previously been classified as a disorder. However, students who want to take a Disability Studies approach to this text may also consider using Rokeya Sarker Rita's "Dissociative Identity Disorder in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*" as another approach.

pretty is equated with "being thin, white, able-bodied, and cis" (Mock). If being pretty comes with privilege, what does it mean to be ugly? Da'Shaun L. Harrison argues that ideas like Pretty, Beauty, and Ugly are determined by power structures, and he capitalizes them in his work in order to draw attention away from the individual and focus on systemic power dynamics instead (12). It is all a question of "who owns or embodies more or less of the identities that grant one access, power, and resources" (12). If being pretty opens doors, then being ugly closes them. Beauty standards are defined and controlled by people with power. Harrison says:

> The World is set up in this way: to be Ugly is to be a Monster; to be a Monster is to be the Slave; to be the Slave is to be the Other; to be the Other is to be unDesirable; to be unDesirable is to be the Beast (16).

Connections between physical appearance and moral character are exacerbated by issues of racism, sexism, and ableism. These are inextricably linked. Hyde is Ugly in appearance, a Monster by character, Slave to the drug he takes to transform and the pleasures he pursues in his altered form, Othered by his separation from Jekyll, unDesirable in a way that is repulsive to society, and ultimately the Beast when he is described as "ape-like" and inhuman (56). The monsters I have selected for this course all exist right on the line of what it means to be human; however, they each have their humanity denied in various ways and their physical appearance is a huge aspect of their characterization.

Racism and physiognomy are circular ideas that inform nineteenth-century novels and contemporary monsters while also affecting the way we view real people, even today. Racist ideologies about who is considered the standard and who is seen as the Other led many people in the nineteenth century to attempt to use a scientific approach to justify this delineation. Franz Joseph Gall introduced organology in the 1790s and claimed he could tell a man was a criminal

from the bumps on his skull because the skull was shaped by the brain (Berveling 143-4). The basic idea of being able to identify character traits and criminality by examining the skull was rebranded as phrenology (146) and cranioscopy (147), all of which are connected to the basic idea of physiognomy, that physical characteristics reveal inner traits. Phrenological societies were formed as these fields gained popularity (146), but many critics wanted more objective and precise scientific tools (149-50). In the 1870s, Francis Galton tried to make a "true science out of the study of physiognomy" using composite photography to create an average portrait that showed a type of person by "'extracting the typical characteristics' from groups of faces" (Bailey 190-2). By overlaying portrait images of criminals, for example, he aimed to determine "whether there were features that could be correlated with criminality" (191). Although Galton's work was able to create a statistical average in visual form, he could not identify an actual typical criminal, and by 1900 he was looking at the margins of the images to reveal the differences instead of the similarities (191-2). Physiognomy and its related fields are now widely understood to be false, but this pseudoscientific approach gave the appearance of scientific legitimacy and objectivity to these ideas. Scientific attempts to legitimize physiognomy reinforced racist, classist, and other discriminatory ideologies, which continue to fuel the field of criminology today.

Monsters represent societal fears. Historically, people are terrified of anything different and especially of anything that threatens their power and control. Imperialism, colonialism, the declining aristocracy, and a wave of anti-semitism in the nineteenth century each had their own effects on the urge to define an English identity (Halberstam 160). Who is and who is not English enough? These concerns filter into the monsters of the time who all seem to exist right at the edge of humanity. Instead of being English enough, the question they confront is whether or not they are human enough. As much as we might all like to imagine that we have moved on

from nineteenth-century ideas about physiognomy, the research is still ongoing (Berveling 142) and the effects are ever-present. The work of physiognomists gave these racist ideologies the weight of science in a way that still exerts its influence today. Although physiognomy is now widely understood to be a pseudoscience, Cesare Lombroso is hailed as "the single-most important figure in accounts of the founding of criminology" (Knepper 5). As a founder of modern criminology, there is an undeniable link between Lombroso's ideas about physiognomy and current-day racial profiling. Neighborhood Watch Associations and the Department of Homeland Security's "If you see something, say something" campaign implicitly urge everyday people to participate by watching for suspicious activity. Although the DHS campaign says that factors like race and ethnicity are not suspicious, the campaign is built on the fear of Middle Eastern terrorists that gripped the country in the early 2000s. If you're looking for examples of racial profiling in action, consider the murder of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman or the example of Christian Cooper, a Black man who was bird-watching in Central Park when Amy Cooper, a white woman, called the cops on him. In both cases, it was their physical appearance in combination with systemic racism that made someone see them as suspicious or threatening. Monsters separate what is human from what is Other. As these examples show, modern-day racism also denies people their humanity. I am asking my students to draw connections between the historical context of physiognomy, the casual racism found in the texts, and our modern-day experiences ranging from microaggressions to acts of violence. Using strategic presentism as a pedagogical approach to bridge the gap between "contemporary relevance…[and] historical specificity" (Betenksy 738), I hope to help students avoid the urge to dismiss or ignore the inherent racism in the texts just because it's uncomfortable. These texts can be important and valuable and also contain racist ideology. By focusing on our experiences with

racism today and the complicated legacy of the past, we can set aside simplistic claims that we have moved on as a society and engage more deeply with the relationship between monsters, racism, and other forms of discrimination or Othering.

Drawing on discussions about character coding and the social construction of disability from Unit 1, in combination with the focus on historical context, physiognomy, and queer theory in Unit 2, students are building a collection of tools that they can use to interrogate the monsters in each text. The Jekyll and Hyde myth of a transformation monster can be seen throughout pop culture in things like *Fight Club* and Marvel's Incredible Hulk or Green Goblin. When we encounter a werewolf in a story, we have to consider the same duality that is so important in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. A simplistic understanding of the story might indicate that Dr. Jekyll is good and Mr. Hyde is bad or that Dr. Jekyll is human and Mr. Hyde is a monster. After all, Dr. Jekyll is the real identity and Mr. Hyde is the alternate, right? No. The doctor retains the name Jekyll while his new form takes the name Hyde and this, along with the implication from his name that he needs to hide, influences our perception of Hyde as the Other. However, Jekyll feels strongly that both forms were already contained within himself and that he was just unleashing something he had previously restrained. He says that Hyde seemed natural and human to him, just another side of himself (48). Despite the two different names and the radically different appearances, these are two versions of the same man. If that is the case, and Hyde is bad…so is Jekyll. If Hyde is a monster, so is Jekyll. Jekyll created the formula, drew Hyde out of himself, and willingly transformed into him repeatedly. Like Victor Frankenstein and his monster, there is a question of responsibility. However, this question could send us in circles because Jekyll and Hyde cannot really be separated. It will be difficult to do, but students will have to keep his duality in mind throughout our discussions. We can talk about what Jekyll

does or how Hyde behaves and examine them as two separate personalities, but we have to come back to the fact that they both exist inside of one man. Stevenson's friend Symonds wrote about his own physical and sexual craving for men as a wolf that lived inside of him (Symonds 108). What happens when the wolf is unleashed? This is useful imagery for dealing with transformation monsters so that we can keep their duality in mind. They are never just one thing—they are always both.

Before we move on to the rest of Unit 2, students will discuss a few key questions. Is the "Hyde" character Jekyll's true self? Is there such a thing? If so, how is that determined? What role does society play in shaping behavior and morality? Why is Hyde so repulsive to others but something of a relief to Jekyll? How responsible is Jekyll for Hyde's behavior? Does the answer change through the course of the novel? How much does choice matter when it comes to the ethics of transformation? What role does physical appearance play in our understanding of the monster? Choice, duality, sexuality, and physical appearance are key themes that will connect to both *Squad* and *Nimona.*

In *Squad*, Maggie Tokuda-Hall and Lisa Sterle raise questions about feminine rage, what it means to be a monster, and the need to belong. Becca is the new girl at Piedmont High School and she is quickly taken in by the popular crowd. She desperately wants to belong, but she is very aware of her differences. They poke and prod her about her ethnicity and her sexuality. Her parents are divorced and she cannot afford to keep up with the cool girls financially, but her friendships with Marley, Amanda, and Arianna grant her access to a world she has never been a part of before. People pay attention to her. She gets invited to parties. She has friends. They become her world. Eventually, she finds out that they are werewolves and they want her to join their pack. They offer her a choice between being normal and being powerful. What is the catch?

Every full moon, they have to eat a human. In order to feed their hunger, they hunt the boys who prey on girls at parties. Things start falling apart when they kill a boy who did nothing wrong and then when Becca accidentally kills a boy from their school. Ultimately, Becca has to choose between staying a monster who has to feed forever or eating the heart of her friend and alpha, Arianna. Unlike other werewolves that students may be more familiar with, the girls in *Squad* exhibit a sense of control over their transformations. However, they are still bound by their need to feed. Like Dr. Jekyll, each of these girls chooses to transform. They justify their actions in their werewolf forms by keeping the two identities separate, but they also see their wolf forms as better versions of themselves. Like Jekyll, they feel a sense of freedom in the transformation. Some questions for discussion include:

- Identify a page or panel that was particularly effective. How did the visuals enhance the story?
- How does the transformation from popular girl to monster affect our perception of right and wrong?
- When they classify the boys they hunt as predators, what effect does that have on their monstrosity?
- Does Becca really have a choice about joining the pack? Does that matter?
- Their rules for recruitment include that the girl has to be pretty, smart, and hungry. Why?
- What intersections exist within Becca's identity and how do they isolate her?
- What connections can we identify between *Squad* and *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*?
- Which of Cohen's theses apply to the monsters in this text?

These questions will prompt students to consider the monster's motivations and whether they have an effect on their monstrosity, while connecting *Squad* to *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and helping students build their skills using visual analysis and monster theory.

In *Nimona*, there is a legend of a hero named Gloreth who stopped a monster and protected the kingdom. Her victory created a tradition of knights and 1,000 years later, their descendants are still training and fighting. Ballister Boldheart is the first commoner allowed to become a knight and the Director of the Institute sees his existence as a crack in the wall of tradition. She believes his knighthood will destroy them and pave the way for monsters to attack, so she sets him up to kill the queen and frames him as a villain. Nimona shows up and asks to be his sidekick because she has a bone to pick with the institute. She was Gloreth's monster and the legend is wrong. She and Gloreth were friends, but Nimona was run out of the village when people saw what she could do. She is a shapeshifter. Nimona is not quite a girl, but she looks like one when she is first introduced. She is called a freak and a villain. People see her as evil and not human. Boldheart begs her to be normal. When he asks her what she is after witnessing her transformations, she says, "I'm Nimona…I'm a lot of things" (00:18:14). She is violent and destructive, but also loyal and funny. In the end, she saves the kingdom from the Director's attack and everyone believes she has died. After her supposed death, memorial walls are created and she is mourned as a hero.

Nimona embodies a duality between human and monster that illuminates a connection to *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Squad* as examples of Transformation monsters. This complicated dual nature refuses easy classification as these characters cannot be reduced to something as simple as an evil villain. Each of these stories features a sense of queer coding or representation that invites discussion about double lives and repressed identities through the

application of queer theory. The monstrous side of each character highlights the connection between physical appearance and our understanding of moral character as influenced by a historical fascination with physiognomy. Disability theory will enable students to engage with this theme and draw connections to the monsters we met in Unit One. Some questions for discussion include:

- Consider Nimona's character design as she takes on her various forms. How do we know that an animal is Nimona? What effect does the art style have on our interpretation of her character and why?
- Nimona's story draws attention to the differences between villains and monsters. Who are the villains and who are the monsters in the texts we have studied so far?
- How is our perception of Nimona affected by each of her forms? What about by the order in which they appear?
- Like Edward Scissorhands, Ballister Boldheart has a prosthetic. What is the role of visible disability when it comes to monsters?
- Ballister says that they cannot change how people see them, but ultimately they do because he and Nimona are both lauded as heroes. Consider the monster pattern of diminishment—would this be different if the people knew Nimona was alive?
- What role does Ballister's sexuality play in his characterization as a villain? How does this compare to Ballister's love interest, the hero Ambrosius? Why are these characters treated differently within the world of *Nimona*?
- What common themes can we identify between the texts in Unit Two? How do these connect to Unit One?

- What are some other examples of Transformation monsters? How would you put them in conversation with *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Squad,* or *Nimona?*

Using visual analysis, Disability Studies, and Queer Theory, these questions are designed to help students see the connections between all three works in Unit Two while also building on our conversations from Unit One.

Unit 2: Assessment

At the end of this unit, students will complete a midterm assessment called the Monstrous Mirror. This assignment will function as a proposal for their final project and it includes three components: writing, research, and presentation. For the written component, students will write about their experience in the course so far. They should reflect on the texts, monsters, and discussions that they are most interested in working with. Students must select at least one text from the class to work with for their final project and reference a piece of historical context or critical theory that is relevant to their interests. Rather than summarizing these topics, they should answer the following questions:

- Why is this text interesting?
- How would you recommend this text to someone else?
- What did this context or theory help you understand?
- What kinds of questions did this text, monster, context, or theory raise?
- What kinds of connections can you draw to other monsters from outside of the course material?

For the research component, students will find three sources that help them understand the material we have covered in class. These can focus on the texts, historical context, or theory we have discussed, like disability or Monster Studies or queer theory, for example. They should

select their sources based on their interests for their final project, so they should connect to the written component. Students will submit a copy of each text that shows their notes, along with a brief annotation that addresses the following questions:

- What is this source about?
- What are the main arguments or claims?
- How is it useful?

For the presentation component, students will create a slideshow with three slides.[19] Students can get creative with the layout and design, but a basic template for the necessary information will be provided. These will be shared in Folio for other students to access and I will group students for in-class presentations based on their selected topics to promote collaboration and facilitate more productive and thematic question-and-answer sessions afterward. After each group presents, they will take feedback and answer questions from the rest of the class.

Unit 3: Disconnections – Decoding Dorian Gray

On June 18, 2023, I found myself in London at the Bow Street Police Museum with my hands on the actual court dock where Oscar Wilde stood while on trial for "gross indecency" before being convicted and sentenced to prison. While my husband took pictures of me crying in the museum, all I could think was that it looked like a cage and that they had treated him like a monster. Physiognomy, the Wilde trials, and a legacy of censorship are all pieces of the myth surrounding the 1890 novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In this novel, a young man becomes immortal and loses touch with the social norms that previously shaped his sense of morality. His portrait ages and changes while he remains young and beautiful. He represents a Disconnection

[19] For details on this assignment, see the assignment sheet for "The Monstrous Mirror" in Chapter 3.

monster because his difference disconnects him from humanity, consequences, and social restrictions. Unit 3 continues discussions about historical context, monstrosity, morality, and sexuality while pursuing a different kind of monster. Like Transformation monsters, Disconnections are also concerned with repression and unleashing a version of themselves that is not bound by typical human morality. However, although Disconnection monsters may have been human once, that time is over and they cannot turn back now. Like Creation monsters, Disconnections are all monster all the time. Is it the lack of human consequences that makes these monsters behave the way they do? When immortality is added to the mix, how does that affect their behavior? To complete this unit, students will also watch the 1994 *Interview with the Vampire* film and read *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V. E. Schwab. By the end of Unit 3, students will:

- Engage with scholarly conversations about monsters
- Identify useful source material for their academic writing
- Develop an argument based on intertextual connections and Monster Studies
- Analyze a monster of their choosing, using the context and theory we have discussed in class
- Design a poster to represent their work and present their argument

Dorian Gray presents an interesting challenge to the idea of monsters because nothing changes about his physical appearance—that is the point of his story. There must be a precise moment when he disconnects from humanity and becomes a monster, but the book does not show it. Dorian's disconnection from humanity and descent into monstrosity seems slow and gradual. In chapter two, Dorian says that he would give his soul if only the portrait would age while he remains young (39), but the portrait does not show any signs of change until chapter

seven when it features “a touch of cruelty in the mouth” (111). At some point between these two events, Dorian stopped aging and became a monster whose portrait would reveal his true self, but the precise moment is not clear. This means that he was moving through the world as a monster and neither he nor the reader was aware of it at the time. At what point was he still human and when exactly did he become a monster? The uncertainty makes him tricky to analyze until his portrait reveals changes, but one of the fascinating things about this story is that external beauty is a veneer that can conceal internal monstrosity. Building on the idea of pretty privilege and the historical context about physiognomy from Unit 2, students will find that appearances can be deceiving in this novel.

The Victorian ideas about physiognomy that were depicted in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* are flipped in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The many branches of physiognomy in the nineteenth century attempted to scientifically prove that criminality, and other traits, could be identified based solely on someone’s physical appearance. The generalization of this approach is that someone who looks like a criminal is a criminal. The flip side of these attitudes reflects the belief that someone who is attractive must also be good and this is found represented in the attitudes of two main characters in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Basil and Lord Henry cannot believe that Dorian is capable of any real evil because he is just so beautiful. Dorian’s beauty protects him from suspicion, upholding the idea that ugly is evil. Basil hears rumors about Dorian’s scandals, but says that he cannot believe them whenever he sees Dorian because “Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man’s face. It cannot be concealed” (181). Not only is Dorian supposedly too beautiful to be bad, but he is also too rich. Lord Henry refuses to believe that Dorian could be capable of murder because “crime belongs exclusively to the lower orders” (257). Basil and Lord Henry’s beliefs about Dorian reveal physiognomy is also classist because

people who looked rough and dirty were likely also poor and working in manual labor jobs that affected their appearances. The racism and anti-Semitism that was so intrinsic to physiognomy is revealed in this novel as well, when Dorian refers to the Jewish manager of the theatre where Sibyl performs as “hideous” and “a monster” for his “greasy ringlets” and greed (65). Dorian’s comments reveal common sentiments about Jewish people in England at the time. Dorian’s portrait transforms from a beautiful work of art into something hideous and foul as a result of his choices in life and he says that “it is the face of [his] soul” (190). The portrait’s magic grows out of the idea that physical appearance reveals moral character. This is exaggerated in the case of Dorian’s portrait, but the idea is that his appearance in the portrait reflects his true character while he remains eternally young and beautiful. All of these elements reflect common Victorian beliefs about physiognomy.

However, this story challenges those ideals as well. This is certainly not the first time that a story contains an attractive but terrible character, but it does walk an interesting line, given the historical context of the time. Is Dorian an exception to the rule or does he reveal the failings of physiognomy? He is a walking contradiction whose very existence highlights the power of beauty, whiteness, and money and the privileges that they confer while simultaneously challenging the ridiculous notion that someone’s appearance reveals their inner character. Dorian is beautiful and rich and white and he is also the monster. In his case, physiognomy falls apart because he is both beautiful and evil. Like Narcissus, Dorian is “enamoured of his own beauty,” but he is also fascinated by the “corruption of his own soul,” as evidenced by his portrait (156). This contrast between appearances and reality when it comes to Dorian’s monstrosity is the central dilemma of the novel. His appearance retains the “unsullied splendour of eternal youth” (265) rather than aging, and he looks so innocent that Basil cannot believe the rumors he has

heard (181). Even amidst scandals and talk of shame and corruption, Basil comments on Dorian's "pure, bright, innocent face" (181). Dorian is proof that beauty can be a façade.

Even though the Wilde trials happened after *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was published, they matter to our discussion—just as they matter to the discussion of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*—because they reflect public perception of the novel, reveal the effects of moral outrage on an individual, and demonstrate the need for self-censorship at this time. In an 1894 letter, Wilde sheds some light on how the book was received:

> I am so glad you like that strange coloured book of mine: it contains much of me in it. Basil Hallward is what I think I am: Lord Henry what the world thinks me: Dorian what I would like to be—in other ages perhaps. (Gillespie ix)

The three central characters in the text are Basil Hallward (the artist), Dorian Gray (the muse), and Lord Henry (the corrupting influence). Wilde recognized that although he saw himself as an artist, many saw him as a corrupting influence and this perception informed the trials he faced in 1895 when his writing was used against him as evidence of his sexual relationships with men (Hyde 127). This was not the first time he faced moral outrage over this story though. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was originally published as a novella in a magazine entitled *Lippincott's Monthly* and received so much criticism that Wilde wrote a list of twenty-five aphorisms that function like a disclaimer in response, and these are now traditionally published at the beginning of the novel (Gillespie xv). For example, Wilde wrote that "there is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book" (9) and that "it is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors" (10). According to Wilde's disclaimers, people who saw immorality in the book did so because they saw it reflecting themselves. According to Nicholas Frankel, in 1890, two reviewers of the novel "hinted" that Wilde should be prosecuted for what he wrote, and five years later it was being

used against him in court (30). Additional evidence was presented, but *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was part of the legal strategy against Wilde that ultimately resulted in his conviction (Wan 710). Wilde was sentenced to two years in prison with "hard labor, hard board, and hard fare," which basically amounted to solitary confinement and near starvation while performing manual labor (Frankel 36-7). Censorship takes many forms, and the use of Wilde's book against him during the trial provides direct evidence of the possible dangers associated with writing something objectionable in the Victorian era.

Although the goal of censorship is to restrict content, it can result in the creation of subtext instead. Though students may think of censorship primarily in its legal context, I broaden the idea to talk about the function and effects of censorship on monsters. I treat censorship like an umbrella term that encompasses the various forces that restrict artistic content. Anything that affects the content of a book or film with the intention of making it more palatable or acceptable falls within this broader understanding of censorship. These restrictive forces may include things like legal concerns, financial considerations, and moral outrage. The Wilde trials demonstrate the legal concerns associated with publishing something deemed transgressive. There does not have to be a law against publishing something in order for the legal system to be a threat. Financial considerations are evident with the editing and publication process because, in order to have the story published and get paid, Wilde had to agree to edits to remove portions of the text that the editor at *Lippincott's Magazine* considered "too graphic for his readers' sensibilities" (Gillespie xii). Wilde's revisions before the second publication of the story included removing some of the most directly homoerotic portions of the book (Gilbert 149). The twenty-five aphorisms at the beginning of the novel reveal the effects of moral outrage on the work, since they were written in response to criticism and accusations of immorality (xii). Censorship, in its many forms, can

push creators to approach their work at an angle. In *Better Left Unsaid*, Nora Gilbert argues that the "allusive, subtextual style of storytelling" that artists create in response to censorship is perfectly suited "to telling tales of sexually and socially subversive desire" (1). Although Wilde removed some of the more overtly homoerotic sections of the story, he did not substantially change the characters or their relationships. The connection is obscured, but not removed. This kind of subtext finds a perfect home in the idea of the monster. Monsters represent societal fears and they cross boundaries. They draw a line between what is acceptable and what is not. Whether it is intentional or not, they are full of subtext, which is why they practically beg to be analyzed and interpreted. When we take a Monster Studies approach to analysis, we are looking for what informs that subtext and what it reveals about the culture that created it.

The combination of horror and sensationalism with compensatory punishment made nineteenth-century novels a great fit for adaptation into Hays Code era films. Victorian era censorship looks a lot like the Motion Picture Production Code of the 1930s, also known as the Hays Code, because they were both concerned with enforcing morality and they were both forms of social, rather than legal, censorship. While Victorian writers often censored themselves to sell their books and avoid moral outrage, filmmakers operating under the Hays Code did so in order to avoid fines, prevent possible legal battles, and ensure that their films were widely distributed (Gilbert 2). This is what Gilbert refers to as the "insidious censorship of public opinion, of middle-class morality, of the marketplace," and it is shockingly similar to what Wilde experienced with *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In addition to restricting specific content, the Hays code operated by a rule of compensation, meaning that although violence and sex were extremely regulated, immoral behavior could be exhibited under specific circumstances as long as it was punished by the end of the film (Silgar 21). Similarly, monsters in the nineteenth

century could cross all kinds of boundaries and commit unspeakable acts, but their stories ended with punishment. Dr. Jekyll and Dorian Gray both commit suicide, and *Frankenstein* ends with Victor's death and the creature's promise to join the funeral pyre as well. Under both types of censorship, the need for monsters to be punished guides the story, meaning that there simply are not many options for how their stories can end. In 1930, when the Hays Code was officially introduced, Universal Pictures had just settled on horror films as their new strategy (Edwards 24-5). With these films, they could push the boundaries of the production code while operating within the rules. *Dracula* was their first attempt and they were successful. Despite being widely considered a pre-Code era film, Universal Studio executives requested a Production Code review of *Dracula* both prior to and after filming (Edwards 26-7). Although the Code was not yet strictly enforced, it was already affecting Universal's plans. The film was approved, according to the Code, and part of the justification from the reviewer was that "Dracula is not really a human being, so he cannot conceivably cause any trouble" (Edwards 27). Monsters are not human, so they can get away with things that humans cannot. Like Dorian Gray, vampires represent another example of Disconnection monsters – their humanity is a thing of the past.

In the 1994 *Interview with the Vampire* film, which draws on the legacy of *Dracula* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* the monsters take center stage. Louis grants an interview in which he tells the story of his life since Lestat turned him into a vampire and he was "born to darkness" (00:05:33). The emphasis on storytelling here echoes *Frankenstein* with a mythic quality to the tale. Lestat's commitment to hedonism and self-gratification at the expense of humans paints him as the monster in Louis's story, but Lestat does not see himself that way. Like Lord Henry, Lestat advocates for a life of beauty and pleasure. He sees himself as above humanity and his sense of superiority grants him the right to take from humans without remorse. Louis is seduced

and, like Dorian Gray, he gives in to his urges but he comes to see himself as a monster and begins to regret his disconnection. This film raises questions about the effects of beauty and perspective on monstrosity. By telling his own story, Louis invites sympathy for his plight. Some questions for discussion include:

- Keeping in mind our earlier discussions about censorship and the systems that construct morality, what does morality look like for vampires?
- If monsters are supposed to be ugly, what changes when the monster is beautiful? Consider *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Interview with the Vampire.* What is the effect of a monster's beauty?
- Like Victor Frankenstein, Lestat creates monsters. Does this make him more monstrous than Louis or Claudia? Is he responsible for them? With this in mind, did Victor's ability to create life make him a monster?
- Louis agrees to his transformation, but Claudia does not. How much does consent matter when it comes to someone's transformation into a monster? Think back to *Squad* as well. Is it ever really a choice?
- Turning Claudia into a vampire trapped her in the body of a child forever. Without Lestat, Claudia would have died. Was Lestat a villain for turning her into a vampire or a hero for saving her from true death?
- Is Claudia a child or an adult by the time she and Louis leave for Paris? Align this with conversations about whether or not Frankenstein can be considered human.

These questions will prompt students to reconsider the monsters we have discussed previously and question what it takes to actually be considered a Creation, Transformation, or Disconnection monster. By identifying connections to previous works, students will gain practice

in applying a Monster Studies approach and forming their own interpretations of each type of monster.

In *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, Addie makes a deal with the darkness to escape her limited life and an arranged marriage. She wants to be free and live. The darkness manifests itself in the form of a man she calls Luc, short for Lucifer, and he grants her wish, but with a price. She will live forever and she will be free, but no one will remember her. Unable to speak her real name or leave any kind of direct mark on the world, she lives a lonely existence, aching for human connection. Luc will gain her soul when she tires of life, but she is determined to continue to find beauty and a sense of wonder among humanity. In the end, Addie makes a new deal and seems to give in to Luc, agreeing to be his for as long as he wants her by his side (Schwab 427). Blinded by his feelings, Luc misses the real meaning of her new vow. Addie plans to drive him mad and break his heart until he casts her off and she earns her actual freedom at last (441-2). Like Lord Henry and Lestat, Luc functions as a seductive and corrupting force. Like Dorian and Louis, Addie's story is part coming of age and part dark fairy tale.

- Addie and Luc represent two different kinds of monsters. Addie is a Disconnection, but Luc is a Creation. What do these types have in common?
- At different times throughout the story, Addie both loves and hates Luc. How does the romance lens affect how we view the monster?
- What if, like vampires need blood, Luc needs souls? Would that change anything about his monstrosity? What about his villainy?
- *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* both have a heavy emphasis on art and beauty. What is the role of art in these stories? What effect does beauty have on humanity?

- Monsters, like Addie and Luc, are often lonely. Why is isolation such a recurring theme among monsters?
- What are some other examples of Disconnection monsters? How would you approach putting them in conversation with *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Interview with the Vampire*, or *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*?

Of all the monsters we study in this course, Addie is perhaps the least obvious. These questions are intended to have students think about how widely Monster Studies can be applied when we set aside the bias of thinking about monsters as villains.

Monsters define the borders between what is human and what is Other. One of the ways that we can think about them is in relationship to humanity. Creations were never human, so Frankenstein comes into being as a monster. Transformations move back and forth between human and monster states, so Jekyll and Hyde are both human and monster simultaneously. Disconnections used to be human but they have turned into monsters and they cannot go back again, so Dorian's humanity is lost to him. This relationship to humanity is a useful shortcut to help students quickly categorize the monsters they encounter. However, nothing about monsters is actually that simple. After all, monsters defy categorization (Cohen 6). As students revisit works from previous units, they may find themselves rethinking earlier monsters. In *Dawn*, Lilith is really more of a Disconnection than a Creation, but the Oankali and the baby Lilith is carrying at the end of the story fit the Creation type more neatly. Although Nimona transforms back and forth between multiple different shapes, she may be more of a Creation than a Transformation, depending on what students see as her true form. Perhaps she could even be a Disconnection if you buy her story about being a young girl at a wishing well who is changed into a monster. Although the categories are helpful for prompting students to identify connections between texts

and understand the different kinds of monsters, rules like these are made to be broken. As part of my intention to cede power in the classroom and embody hooks's pedagogy of liberation, I am inviting students to challenge the ways I have chosen to categorize these monsters if they want to approach them from a different direction. By integrating this possibility into our class discussion, I hope to build each student's intellectual confidence and invite them to teach me about their perspectives.

As students work toward their final projects, they are not limited to comparing monsters who neatly fit the same types. *Dawn* may straddle the line between Disconnections and Creations, but I included it in the *Frankenstein* unit because it shares so many thematic connections with that story through her search for community, her relationship with Nikanj as a creator, and the alienation she experiences after being violently rejected by humanity. The idea that her identity as a Black woman would have made her a monster in the eyes of some humans before she was ever modified by the Oankali is also horrifying. An analysis of Lilith as a Disconnection monster may reveal a very different interpretation of the text, with more of a focus on her losing her humanity, redefining her sense of self, and coming to terms with an alien sense of morality. Considering *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* with the historical context of queer panic and male hysteria may blind students to the possibility of Dr. Jekyll's struggle with addiction. Analyzing his reliance on the potion in this light may reveal connections to vampires like Louis who struggle with the lure of human blood even though animal blood will suffice. As students grapple with these kinds of conversations, they will identify connections between texts that they may have initially overlooked. After all, it is not just about who is actually a monster – the question is who do we treat like monsters?

Unit 3: Assessment

At the end of the semester, students will complete a final project called The Monster Mash. For this project, students will choose at least one monster from the course material and at least one from outside of class. In their papers, students will explore how these monsters are connected and they will craft an argument that engages with scholarly conversations about monsters. Using secondary sources and building on our conversations in class, students will identify elements of monstrosity as well as connections between the monsters. Is their monster a Creation, a Transformation, or a Disconnection? What does a monster's type reveal about the text? This project will build on the proposal they developed at the end of Unit 2 and will include written, visual, and presentation components.

- Written component: Academic paper that engages with scholarly conversations and addresses the prompt. Approximately 2,000 to 3,000 words in length.
- Visual Component: 24x36 inch poster[20] that visually represents their argument. Images and charts are required and text should be simplified for easy engagement—think bullet points, not paragraphs.
- Presentation Component: Students will prepare a 1-2 minute version of their overall argument. It should explain the topic, their approach, and at least one interesting conclusion. The class will split into groups and take turns viewing the posters. As people approach each poster, students will present their summaries and answer questions.

[20] A sample poster with information about this course can be found in Appendix B. While this is not exactly what a student might create to reflect their work in a paper, it does provide an example that we can review in class before they make their own.

Conclusion

The Monster Mash is an undergraduate literature course designed around high-impact practices (HIPs), like collaborative assignments and diversity. At the surface level, the goal is student engagement because engaged students are more likely to rise to the occasion, do the work, and persist through challenges. They are also more likely to be receptive to learning and retaining the skills they learn in class. At a deeper level, I want my students to leave the classroom as better-informed citizens who are invested in thinking critically about the world around them, the media they consume, and what the connections that exist between the past and present can teach them. By centering the course around discussion and inviting students to bring their own monsters to the table, I aim to pique their interests and get them invested. Small-group discussions and major assignments like The Monstrous Mirror and The Monster Map are aimed at creating a community of scholars and making the research and writing process more collaborative. The Monster Mash serves as a culmination of their work, providing an opportunity for students to use their new critical frameworks and present original monster scholarship that is, hopefully, relevant to their individual interests. Monster Studies is inherently interdisciplinary and the use of historical context, queer theory, and disability studies to have difficult conversations about discrimination and marginalization is part of an intentional choice to embrace diversity in the classroom. By drawing connections between contemporary monsters and the myths that arise from classic texts, I hope to help students learn how to see the real-world relevance of their other courses and the works they are studying elsewhere. If *The Picture of Dorian Gray* can teach them something about *Twilight* and *Frankenstein* can teach them something about *Terminator* and *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* can teach them something about the Marvel Cinematic Universe, and monsters in general can teach them

something about humanity, then what could they learn in their other classes? Teaching students to identify these connections and use them to deepen their understanding of each new text they encounter will build skills that will allow them to succeed throughout the rest of their college career. Showing students that their interests are relevant to the discussion and that their insights are valuable will increase their intellectual confidence. Using low-stakes assignments to guide discussion will encourage students to take risks and push their ideas further. Monsters provide an in that will prepare students to look below the surface and read the subtext and subtleties, apply critical theory, and consider historical context. They are as useful as they are entertaining.

CHAPTER 3

COURSE MATERIALS: SYLLABUS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Syllabus

The Monster Mash: Course Description

From vampires and werewolves to aliens and shapeshifters, monsters are everywhere. In this course, learn about some of the monster myths—like *Frankenstein*, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*—that helped create the monsters we know today. Through novels, short stories, films, and graphic novels, we will explore monsters while we talk about issues like gender, sexuality, race, class, and disability.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Develop skills for annotation, discussion, and analysis of literary works.
- Engage with scholarly conversations about monsters.
- Craft and present an original argument using written, oral, and visual mediums.

Required Materials

Texts can be purchased in either print or digital editions, but you must take notes that reference specific passages and page numbers and bring both the texts and your notes to class. All three films are available on streaming services currently, but access may vary through the course of the semester, so I will keep you updated. As with the texts, it is your responsibility to have access to the films by the required date, whether through a streaming platform, digital download, or DVD.

- Texts:
    - *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
    - *Dawn* by Octavia E. Butler

    - *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson
    - *Squad* by Maggie Tokuda-Hall and Lisa Sterle
    - *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde
    - *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V. E. Schwab
- Films:
    - *Edward Scissorhands* (1990)
    - *Nimona* (2023)
    - *Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles* (1994)

Unit 1: Creation

Week 1: Monsters & Villains

- Topics: Welcome, Monsters, & Assignments
- Read & Discuss: "Click-Clack the Rattlebag" by Neil Gaiman
- Assignment: Annotating the Text
- Read: *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley

Week 2: Born this Way

- Topics: Seven (Hypo)theses & Creation Monsters
- In-Class: Tips for Writing & Cultivating Self-Awareness
- Read & Discuss: *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley

Week 3: A Life of its Own

- Topics: Myths & Character Coding
- Read & Discuss: *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
- Watch: *Edward Scissorhands* (film)
- Assignment: Discussion Proposal – *Edward Scissorhands*

Week 4: A Whole New World

- Topics: Disability Studies & Xenophobia
- Discuss: *Edward Scissorhands* (film)
- Read & Discuss: *Dawn* by Octavia E. Butler

Week 5: Come with Me if You Want to Live

- Topics: Sexuality & Survival
- Read & Discuss: *Dawn* by Octavia E. Butler
- Assignment: Discussion Proposal - *Dawn*

Week 6: Is Everyone a Monster?

- Topics: Intertextuality & Identifying Monsters
- Read & Discuss: *Dawn* by Octavia E. Butler
- Assignment: The Monster Map

Unit 2: Transformation

Week 7: Masquerade!

- Topics: Transformation Monsters & Victorian Ideals
- Presentations
- Read & Discuss: *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson

Week 8: Super Freak

- Topics: Queer Theory & Visual Analysis
- Read & Discuss: *Squad* by Maggie Tokuda-Hall and Lisa Sterle
- Watch & Discuss: *Nimona* (film)
- Assignment: Discussion Proposal - *Squad* or *Nimona*
- Assignment: The Monstrous Mirror

Unit 3: Disconnection

Week 9: Oh, the Humanity!

- Topics: Disconnection Monsters & Brainstorming
- Presentations
- Read & Discuss: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde

Week 10: Beautiful Monsters

- Topics: Racism, Classism, & Physiognomy
- Read & Discuss: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde

Week 11: This is the Skin of a Killer

- Topics: Censorship & Subtext
- *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde
- Watch: *Interview with the Vampire* (film)
- Assignment: Discussion Proposal - *Interview with the Vampire*

Week 12: A Deal with the Devil

- Topics: Isolation & Choice
- Read & Discuss: *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V. E. Schwab
- Assignment: Discussion Proposal - *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*

Week 13: A Work of Art

- Topics: Romance, Beauty, & Final Projects
- Read & Discuss: *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* by V. E. Schwab

Week 14: It's Alive!

- Topics: Revisiting the Monsters & Workshopping Final Projects
- Optional Assignment: Draft of The Monster Mash – can be submitted for feedback!

Week 15:

- Thanksgiving Break – no class!

Week 16: You Get a Monster! You Get a Monster! Everybody Gets a Monster!

- Topics: Polished Presentations & Drawing Connections
- Assignment: The Monster Mash

Week 17: The Ultimate Monster Mash

- Final Exam: Poster Session

Table 2: Grading Breakdown

Grading Breakdown	
Participation – 50 points total	
Attendance	5 points
Warm-ups	15 points
Discussion Proposals	15 points
Small Group Discussion Guides	15 points
Papers & Projects – 50 points total	
Annotating the Text	5 points
The Monster Map	10 points
The Monstrous Mirror	15 points
The Monster Mash	20 points
Up to 10 extra points can be earned through extra credit assignments.	

Warm-Up: The Monster Pattern

1. Origin: How did the monster come into existence? It is a Creation, Transformation, or Disconnection?
2. Separation: What marks the monster as an Other? How is it separated from society?
3. Power: What can the monster do that is outside of the ordinary?
4. Threat: Who perceives the monster as a threat?
5. Diminishment: Who is trying to reduce the monster's power and/or threat? How?

Table 3: Warm-Up: The Monster Pattern

Text or Film Character	
Origin	
Separation	
Power	
Threat	
Diminishment	

Monster Theory Handout: 7 (Hypo)Theses & 7 Questions

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)" lays out 7 Theses about monsters in literature. I'm calling these (hypo)theses instead because we will use them to investigate our texts throughout this course, so I have turned them into 7 Questions to guide our discussions this semester. You'll also use these for some of your assignments, so it's important to go ahead and get familiar with them!

7 Theses:

1. The Monster's Body is a Cultural Body
2. The Monster Always Escapes
3. The Monster is the Harbinger of Category Crisis
4. The Monster Dwells at the Gates of Difference
5. The Monster Polices the Borders of the Possible
6. Fear of the Monster is Really a Kind of Desire
7. The Monster Stands at the Threshold…of Becoming

7 Questions:

1. What is the cultural context for this monster?
2. How does the monster escape, and when, where, or how does it return?
3. What is this monster a hybrid of, and what category does it challenge?
4. What "Other" does this monster represent?
5. What boundary does this monster define or challenge?
6. What fantasy or desire does this monster embody, and why is it scary?
7. Why was this monster created, and what does it say about humanity?

Annotating The Text

What does it mean to annotate?

This is the process of taking notes on a text. It can include marking specific passages, taking notes, and summarizing.

Why does it matter?

It helps you engage with the work more deeply, better prepares you to discuss it, and makes it easier to find what you're looking for when you come back to it later. I recommend annotating each of the texts we read this semester because you will be returning to them all semester long.

How do you do it?

This looks a little different for everyone, so there's no one right answer. For the purpose of this assignment, I'm going to give you some guidelines—but feel free to make it your own as you continue developing this skill.

- You can mark your passages by highlighting, underlining, or using sticky tabs – but they should be marked in the text so that you can find them as you flip through in class.
- Your notes might be in the text itself, on post-it notes that you stick on the page, or in a separate document entirely.
- If something is confusing or you find a word you don't know, look it up!
- Write down the important themes, the things you think are interesting, and the questions you have.
- Make note of how it makes you feel and if you notice connections within the text itself or to other things you have read or watched.
- As you apply this to longer texts, I recommend writing a brief summary of each chapter.

Table 4: Annotating the Text

Annotating the Text
Summary – 1 point
Who are the characters? What is the setting like? What happens? Keep it brief, this is just to help you remember what you read.
Quotes – 2 points
Pick 2 important quotes and explain why you chose them.
Questions – 2 points
Answer at least 2 of the following questions: • What theme(s) did you notice? • What did you think was interesting about the story? • What did the story remind you of? • How did the story make you feel? • How would you convince someone else to read this story?
Feel free to select additional quotes or answer extra questions, if you are not sure about your work. I am looking for proof that you read and engaged with the story.

Writing Tips

Cultivating Self-Awareness

Writing is a skill and it has to be developed. There are likely elements of writing that you're comfortable with and others that you find challenging. As we talk through these tips, give yourself a star by the ones you feel good about and circle the ones you know you need to work on. I'll look over everyone's answers and we'll adjust accordingly!

Ten Tips for Improving Your Writing

1. Read the instructions.

   Assignment sheets are provided and we will go over the requirements in class. Read these carefully and ask questions! You cannot succeed if you do not understand the assignment.

2. Brainstorm.

   Spend some time thinking about your interests and all of the possibilities. Write them down! Try to find connections between some of the different topics you're considering and think about what kinds of sources you'll need for your top choices. The best ideas usually come from your unique intersection of interests.

3. Figure out your point.

   Decide on a topic and then think about what you might want to say about it. What question(s) are you trying to answer? What is so interesting about your idea? What do you want your classmates to get out of your work? Write it down several different ways until you can communicate your big point in 1-2 sentences. This may take until your paper is done, so it's okay to start with a question rather than an argument.

4. Do your research.

Read the text and annotate it. Come up with a list of key words for research. Take advantage of the library and databases like the MLA International Bibliography, Project Muse, or JSTOR. When you find a good article, check out their sources!

5. Get organized.

   Make a list or an outline or a very rough draft. It doesn't have to be super formal—it just needs to be helpful! What do we need to know to understand your point? Think about how you will walk us through it and write it down.

6. Provide evidence and cite your sources.

   Use the text(s) and any other sources that will help us understand your point. Use quotations if you need the exact wording from the source or paraphrase and restate it if you don't. Use MLA 9 formatting for your citations.

7. Explain your evidence.

   Don't assume we know what the evidence means. If you're quoting a source, explain it! What does it mean? Why is it relevant?

8. Make it clear.

   Each paragraph should serve a purpose and a good topic sentence tells us what the paragraph's purpose is. At the end of the paragraph, tell us how it connects to the big point.

9. Revise your work.

   It's not going to be perfect the first time—or the second. Get feedback from a peer or the Writing Center on campus. You can also use Grammarly to check for grammatical errors and typos. Now that you have finished your paper, make sure you made the point you set

out to make. If you discovered something better by the conclusion, go back and make some more edits!

10. Take a break and revise it again.

    Editing your own work is hard. Try to finish your paper in advance, so you have time to set it down for a day or two. When you go back to it with (hopefully) fresh eyes, try reading it out loud or printing it out. Interacting with your work in a new format is a great way to find issues you might have missed the first time.

Discussion Proposals

What is a Discussion Proposal?

This is your opportunity to tell me what you're interested in from the reading so that we can talk about it in class! You'll use this assignment to get some practice identifying important quotes from each text and coming up with the kinds of questions that may inform your paper.

Why does it Matter?

Throughout the semester, you'll submit five discussion proposals. I will review these as I'm pulling together our topics for class. This will help you feel more prepared for class discussion. I will also provide feedback on these to help you plan for your final project.

Table 5: Discussion Proposals

Discussion Proposals
Context Summary – 1 point
What's going on in the scene? Who is speaking? Who are they talking to? What are they talking about? Why does it matter? Answer in 100-150 words.
Questioning the Text – 1 point
What question do you have about this quote or the theme that it highlights in the text? This question should be something that prompts discussion and should not have a yes or no answer.
Making Connections – 1 point
Connect the quote you have chosen or your question about it to something we have discussed previously in class.
Want a bonus point? Include a monster from outside of our course material and describe how that monster connects to this text or the overall unit.

Small Group Discussion Guide – Part I of Dawn

Instructions:

- Read all of the discussion question options.
- As a group, decide which one you want to focus on!
- You should spend about 20 minutes talking as a group. As you discuss, take notes and pull any relevant quotes from the text so you can report back at the end!
- Synthesize your discussion in the box provided using full sentences. Summarize your main points and give credit to scholars in your group for their individual ideas!
- Be prepared to share your synthesis with the class and turn this in before you leave.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is this part of the book called Womb? What do you think this tells us about where the story is going to go from here?
2. What do the Oankali look like? For this option, you'll need to provide visuals.
    a. Using the internet and your own creative abilities, put together a Google slide that shows the class what they look like, based on textual evidence.
3. What do we know about Lilith? Think about her appearance, her background, her personality, her motivations, etc. Be specific! You can create a mood board as well, if you think it's helpful, but it's not required since this is about more than her appearance.
4. Jdahya says that humans have a mismatched pair of genetic characteristics – in that they are intelligent and hierarchical (40). What does this mean? Do you agree that this combination of traits is a problem? Why or why not?
5. What is the trade that the Oankali are seeking? What do they want and what are they offering? Is it worth it? Why or why not?

Table 6: Small Group Discussion Guide - Part I of Dawn

Small Group Discussion Guide – Part I of Dawn
Group Members:
Question:
Notes:
Synthesis:

Small Group Discussion Guide – Part IV of Dawn: Is Everyone a Monster?

Recap:

- Prior to starting *Dawn*, you were split into groups and asked to pay particular attention to specific characters as you read and annotated.
    - Group 1: Lilith Iyapo
    - Group 2: Nikanj
    - Group 3: Jdahya and Kahguyaht
    - Group 4: Paul Titus and Conrad (Curt) Loehr
    - Group 5: Tate Marah and Joseph Li-Chin Shing
- I gave you one specific question to consider. **Is everyone a monster?** It's time to see what you thought!

Instructions:

- With your group, discuss the character(s) you were assigned. Using the handout on Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)," decide whether or not they qualify as a monster. Use evidence from the text and make sure you address each thesis.
- After 20-30 minutes with your group, we'll come back together as a class and share!

Table 7: Small Group Discussion Guide - Part IV of Dawn: Is Everyone a Monster?

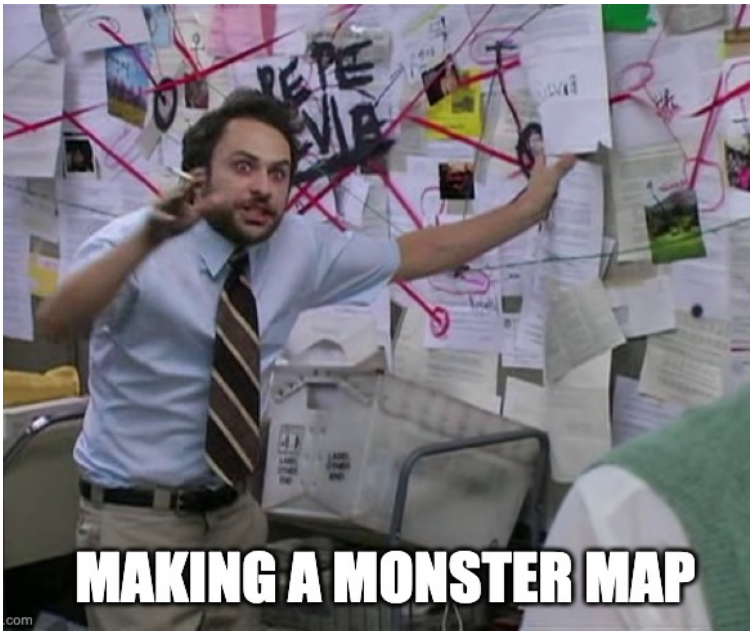
Small Group Discussion Guide – Part IV of Dawn: Is Everyone a Monster?		
Group:		
Character:		
Thesis:	***Does it fit?***	***Explain!***
1: Culture		
2: Return		
3: Hybrid		
4: Other		
5: Warning		
6: Fantasy		
7: Creation		
Is this character a monster? Why or why not?		

The Monster Map

What is a Monster Map?

This is a visual representation of the connections between the monsters we have been studying. However you approach your design, you will submit it on a single slide to share in class.

Figure 2: Making a Monster Map



Why are you making one?

This is to show that you understand the work we are doing in class and that you can apply it by drawing these kinds of connections. Whether you normally write it down, draw it out, or just spend time thinking about it—this should mimic the brainstorming process too and it will help you with your midterm and final project.

How do you do it?

Think about the connections you can make between the texts in this unit: *Frankenstein*, *Edward Scissorhands*, and *Dawn.* These connections can be drawn between characters, types of monsters, themes, historical context, physical descriptions, or anything else you can imagine.

Table 8: The Monster Map

The Monster Map
Visual Requirements – 5 points
• Your monster map should fit on one presentation slide, to be included in a group presentation that we will view together in class. • Your map should show at least 5 points of connection between *Frankenstein* and either *Dawn* or *Edward Scissorhands*. • Use text, images, graphs, charts, or connecting lines—feel free to get creative! *Grading:* • 5 points: One point will be awarded for each clearly identified point of connection between the texts.
Writing Requirements – 3 points
Write a brief summary of your work and an explanation of one interesting connection you identified through this process. This can be informal writing and should be 200-300 words long. Be prepared to read this in class! *Grading:* • 1 point: Briefly summarize the five or more connections you found. • 1 point: Select one specific connection to highlight. • 1 point: Explain why that particular connection is interesting to you.
Presentation Requirements – 2 points
You'll present your slide in class and read your written summary. At the end of the presentations, you'll be asked to reflect on the visualizations that you thought were most effective and how you might use this process in the future with an in-class writing prompt.

Grading:

- 1 point: In-class oral presentation of written summary.
- 1 point: In-class reflective writing prompt is completed after the presentations.

The Monstrous Mirror

What's the Assignment?

It's time to start thinking about your final project, so this is an informal proposal. You do not have to know your exact idea yet, but this will help me understand your interests and help you get started on the research.

Figure 3: Mirror Mirror, on the Wall

Reflective Writing

Reflect on your experience in the course so far and tell me what you are interested in working with. This can be informal writing! Just write about your interests so far and the ideas you have for The Monster Mash.

Research

Dig a little deeper for the text(s), context, and theory you're interested in. Find some sources that you can use in your final paper and take some notes to show me how they are useful.

Presentation

Share your ideas and sources with the class! You are all working together to create a resource guide that everyone in class can use when it's time for your final projects. Hearing each other's ideas will help you refine your own and will give you a better understanding of the scholarly conversation that is happening in our class.

Table 9: The Monstrous Mirror

The Monstrous Mirror
Reflective Writing Requirements – 5 points
Select a text from the course material and some historical context or critical theory that we have discussed. Answer these five questions in essay form: • Why is this text interesting? • How would you recommend it to someone else? • What did this context or theory help you understand? • What kinds of questions did this text, monster, context, or theory raise? • What kinds of connections can you draw to other monsters? *Grading:* • 5 points: One point will be awarded for each answer of substance. These are not yes or no questions, so you should expect to write at least 2-3 sentences for each response in order to adequately address each question.
Research Requirements – 6 points
Select 3 sources and submit a copy of each that includes your notes along with a brief annotation in MLA 9 style for each that addresses the following questions: • What is this source about? • What are the main arguments or claims? • How is it useful? *Grading:* • 3 points: Each source is relevant and properly cited. (1 point each) • 3 points: Each annotation addresses the three questions listed above. (1 point each)

Presentation Requirements – 4 points
Create a slideshow with 3 slides. These will be shared in Folio for other students to access and you'll present them in class. Be prepared for questions afterwards! • Slide #1: Include your name, a title for your project, and a description of your topic and interests. • Slide #2: List the text(s), and any relevant historical context(s) or theoretical approaches you plan to use. • Slide #3: Use MLA 9 formatting to list the three sources you have selected. *Grading:* • 3 points: Each slide is completed accurately and is free of grammatical mistakes. • 1 point: In-class oral presentation of slide #1 is clear and concise.

The Monster Mash

Figure 4: The Monster Mash

What's the Assignment?

Your final project includes a paper, poster, and presentation. You'll build on the work you have been doing all semester with a project that brings your own favorite monster(s) to the conversation!

The Monster Mash
Writing Requirements – 10 points
Choose 2 or more monsters to connect. At least one must come from the course material. Explore how these monsters are connected and craft an argument that engages with scholarly conversations about monsters. • 2,000 to 3,000 words using MLA 9 style formatting • Use at least 5 sources in your paper. At least 3 sources should be secondary material. *Grading:* • 2 points: Paper contains a clear argument within the first two pages that connects the two (or more) monsters. • 3 points: At least 3 relevant secondary sources are used appropriately and cited accurately. • 5 points: The writing tips provided in Folio have been successfully implemented. The paper is clear, well-organized, and relatively free of grammatical mistakes. The

evidence necessary to make the argument has been provided, well-incorporated, and explained.

- A bonus point will be awarded for a draft with notes showing that feedback from a peer or the Writing Center was used.

Poster Requirements – 7 points

Translate your paper to a 24x36 inch poster. Use graphics, images, and/or charts. Text should be simplified for easy engagement – think bullet points, not paragraphs! We will talk more about this part of the assignment in class. Posters will be displayed in class and the poster session will be open for the English department to attend.

Tip:

Canva.com has a free account option and is a great tool for poster design. There are templates to help you get started and it's easy to customize. However, make sure to check your work carefully, since Canva does not spell-check. You can use the Grammarly extension in Google Chrome to help!

Grading:

- 2 points: Poster is physically produced in the correct size and all images and text are clear and easily legible, without grammatical mistakes.
- 1 point: Main argument is stated and labeled clearly. This can be in the form of a thesis statement pulled directly from the paper or it can be accomplished with bullet points.
- 2 points: Relevant graphics, images, and/or charts are used effectively. Be as creative as you'd like, but make sure each image serves a purpose.
- 2 points: Poster is representative of the paper, meaning that the monsters are clearly identified, the major points are highlighted, evidence is provided, and sources are cited.

Presentation Requirements – 3 points
Prepare a 2 minute version of your overall argument. This should explain your topic, your approach, and at least one interesting conclusion. As people approach, walk them through your poster by presenting your summary and answering their questions! *Grading:* • 2 points: Initial explanation of the poster is clear, relevant, and takes two minutes or less to present. • 1 point: Questions are fielded successfully.

Extra Credit Opportunities

You can earn up to 10 points of extra credit throughout the semester. Choose from the options below! These are each worth one point and can be completed multiple times.

Extra Discussion Proposals

There are five discussion proposals built into the course already – additional ones are worth one point each.

Mini Monster Mashes

Suggest a monster that you think belongs in one of our three units. Explain who the monster is, what they come from, and why they should be included.

Monster Monologues

Select a monster from one of our texts and write a brief monologue from their perspective. You can choose any scene from the text or film where the monster does not speak for inspiration. Identify and summarize the scene you choose.

Annotations

You should be taking notes on each text as you read! Revisit the annotation assignment for ideas, but this is a practice you should develop for yourself. Credit will not be awarded if all you have done is highlight or underline passages. Annotations should include your reactions to the reading and the thoughts that the reading inspires.

CHAPTER 4

A LESSON PLAN ON OCTAVIA E. BUTLER'S *DAWN*

Introduction - Why do Monsters Matter?

Monsters are complicated. They are scary, but seductive. They make us question what it means to be human. They represent a particular time and place and perspective, but they are constantly being reinterpreted and reimagined as ideas about monstrosity shift and evolve. This two-week lesson plan centers on Octavia E. Butler's *Dawn* and situates it within a unit on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as part of a 3000-level undergraduate literature course.

Unit one examines *Frankenstein* as an example of a Creation monster, and this lesson plan caps off the end of that unit by tying together *Frankenstein*, *Edward Scissorhands*, and *Dawn*. By engaging with monster theory, historical context, and the overlap between science fiction and the gothic genre as well as intersectional questions about race, gender, sexuality, and disability, students will identify monsters within *Dawn* as well as connections to the other texts within the unit. Units two and three focus on *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde as Transformation and Disconnection monsters, respectively. Although I have chosen to situate *Dawn* within the *Frankenstein* unit, this novel provides an excellent transition into the rest of the course because students will be able to identify connections between *Dawn* and the monsters in units two and three.

Literature Review - What does Dawn have to do with Frankenstein?

Monsters have always been an important part of literature, from early mythology like *The Odyssey* to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to Octavia E. Butler's *Dawn* and beyond. Monsters are forever and they are immensely popular. From the Universal Monsters films of the 1930s to

classic Disney villains to the vampires in *Twilight*, pop culture's obsession with monsters is timeless. However, just like everything else, monsters evolve over time. As monsters adapt and definitions of monstrosity shift and change, there is still a common thread that links them together as the fear-inspiring perpetual other. This common thread is worth exploring because it can help us understand the push and pull between historical context, critical theory, and contemporary perspectives when it comes to analyzing literature. I am particularly interested in the connections between monsters and ideas about race, gender, sexuality, and disability, and I believe that these conversations will resonate with students and provoke interesting and valuable literary analysis.

Octavia E. Butler's *Dawn* is an example of science fiction that can be tied to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* through the genre itself, common themes between the two works, and within the realm of Monster Studies. In "The Gothic Origins of Science Fiction," Patrick Brantlinger draws a direct connection between Gothic romance and what we think of today as science fiction. He argues that both genres are concerned with the power of the irrational, that they break from reality, and that they are both "forms of apocalyptic nightmare fantasy characterized by demonic possession and monstrous distortion" (31). Brantlinger notes that *Frankenstein* is, if not the first science fiction novel, at least a "clear, early example of cross-fertilization between the Gothic romance and science fiction" and that it establishes patterns that appear in contemporary sci-fi stories (32). Using these connections between the genres, my lesson plan explores how *Dawn* interacts with the myth or pattern of *Frankenstein* and how common elements like the mad scientist and the monstrous invention appear in both.

I am not alone in noting the similarities between *Dawn* and *Frankenstein*. Theodora Goss and John Paul Riquelme identify many common elements and themes between these two works

in their article "From Superhuman to Posthuman: The Gothic Technological Imaginary in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis*." They argue that the overlap between the Gothic imaginary and the technological imaginary is what guides both novels (435). Both works imagine a dark turn for humanity, and both examine how new technological advances may shape the future. Goss and Riquelme connect these works further with numerous shared themes, including: posthumans, superhumans, experimentation, monstrosity, new forms of life, and the idea of crossing boundaries and dismantling binaries (437-9). Their work provides a starting point for several connections and shared themes; however, my lesson focuses specifically on the elements and types of monstrosity within each novel.

Cohen's "Monster Culture" offers a definitive look at monsters that guides my overall course, including this particular lesson on *Dawn*. Cohen offers theses that he says are true about monsters and that can help readers understand more about the cultures that created them (4). Since this lesson is part of a literature course, students will use these seven theses to identify and interpret the monsters in each of the texts we analyze. Cohen argues that monsters always represent something else, embody particular cultural moments, and that they shift and change as they escape and reappear (4-5). This means that students will have to examine the historical context around each monster but also connections to previous monsters to really understand what each one represents within the text. Cohen states that monsters function as the Other and are "difference made flesh," but that they are difficult to categorize (6-7). Students in this course will have to resist the urge to simplify the monsters into representing just one thing because they are more complicated than that. Monsters stand at the border of what is socially acceptable (12-3), and they are linked to both fear and desire (16), so they repel and attract us simultaneously. Throughout this lesson plan, students will use Cohen's seven theses in their analysis of each text.

In *Dawn*, Lilith Iyapo's story holds definite traces of the Frankenstein myth and can be grounded in Monster Studies, but it also has a direct link to the myth of the biblical Lilith. In "The Dawn of a New Lilith: Revisionary Mythmaking in Women's Science Fiction," Michele Osherow examines the impact of the legend of Lilith on women in science fiction and identifies connections between this myth and the central character of *Dawn.* Lilith was Adam's first wife and, after refusing to submit to him, she went on to become the mother of demons, but she is not seen as a particularly maternal figure (70). Osherow explains that the myth of Lilith tells us that she is immortal, powerful, strong, feared, sexual, and that she can even fly, so she embodies man's fear of a powerful woman (71). This is an example of Cohen's point about monsters embodying both fear and desire. Osherow goes on to identify how Butler's Lilith is connected to her "mythic ancestor," but she also explains how Butler reimagines her as a more maternal figure similar to Eve and draws on the African American woman's experience to further complicate this character (75-6). This idea of revisionist mythmaking is useful for understanding how a more contemporary work can draw on an older myth without replicating it. *Dawn* stands as its own story, but it also builds on the legacy of *Frankenstein* and the legend of Lilith.

It is not enough to just connect *Dawn* to previous myths or to identify the monsters. The goal of this lesson plan is to explore how those connections can illuminate new things about each text. Sami Schalk's article "Teaching the Social Construction of Disability through the Parable series, *Lilith's Brood*, and *Seed to Harvest*" explores how different ideas about disability appear in Butler's works and how that can translate to the classroom. In *Dawn*, Schalk argues that Lilith's genetic predisposition to cancer, which would be dangerous and disabling in our world, becomes a talent among the Oankali (99-100). She also notes that the Oankali use "patronizing and ableist language" in reference to human beings (100). I argue that beyond using ableist

language, the Oankali have constructed a world where humans are disabled because they cannot operate the technology, even just to open their own doors. How does the idea of the social construction of disability affect our understanding of who the monster is in the text? What is the connection between disability coding and monstrosity?

Since monsters are always meant to represent something else, they provide an opportunity for students to use everything they know about literary analysis to decode their meaning. This lesson plan will explore intersectional ideas about disability, race, gender, power, and sexuality and examine the ways that these concepts are used to code monstrous characters. Background context about the Gothic genre and science fiction as well as monster theory will be useful as I teach my students how to draw connections between various texts and then how to use those connections in their analysis. Students will identify monsters and articulate intertextual connections with *Frankenstein*, but they will need to take it further and examine why any of these matter. Monsters are socially constructed. We made them. It's time to ask why.

Is There a Method to This Madness?

Literary critics disagree about what we should teach, how we should teach it, and even why it matters. Gerald Graff says that it's all about secondary criticism and discussion (48). He suggests that students will like literature if they learn how to pick it apart through interpretation. Helen Vendler says to teach what you love and then students will love it too (40). She suggests that our enthusiasm for the texts will translate directly to students. These two ideologies are often positioned in contrast with each other, but I believe that any good literature class does both. Whether we love the text itself or the discussion around the text, literature classes are more enjoyable and productive when they are designed to engage everyone—from the professor to the students. I hope to achieve this engagement by using bell hooks's pedagogy of liberation and

flipping the power dynamics in my classroom in order to invite students to bring their own perspectives to the table ("Toward" 79-80).

I believe that the study of literature is inherently rewarding. Reading a book is my favorite hobby. Talking about the text with other people who also read it is fun for me. However, that is not enough for a class because everyone who enters the classroom does not necessarily feel that way. My goal as a teacher is for my students to develop the skills that come from studying literature while working with texts that are fun, exciting, and relevant. These skills include: critical thinking, written and oral communication, literary analysis, academic research, integrating feedback and the revision process, informed discussion, and intellectual confidence. Since upper-division literature courses often lack prerequisites, I cannot assume that students know how to do all of this already. In order to develop these skills, we have to teach them in each class. I have worked them into my course through intentional assignment design where each assignment asks them to develop and practice a skill that they are going to use later in the course.

I implement Graff's ideas by introducing larger scholarly conversations about monsters and by asking students to use both theory and criticism to dissect our texts. I embrace Vendler's ideas by teaching monster texts that I love, but also by asking students to bring their own favorite monsters from literature or pop culture into the discussion and to bridge the gaps between those and the ones I have selected for the semester. I hope that by engaging their interests as an intentional part of the course, my love of monsters and the texts I have chosen will translate and the students will learn to love them too—or at least to think they are interesting. My course design and assignments reflect hooks's approach because I will be stepping down from the podium and centering student voices in our discussion. I hope to create an environment where

students are free to present their perspectives, identify their own ideas, and cultivate their confidence in the classroom.

Building the Monster

Dawn is full of monsters and it stands on its own as a text worth studying, so I devote time to *Dawn* individually as well as in connection with *Frankenstein* in order to conclude Unit 1 of my course. Lilith stands as a central figure meant to bridge the gap between humanity and the Oankali. Is this dynamic about altruism or selfishness? Are the Oankali meant to represent colonialism or are the humans means to represent racism and species purity? Humanity's inability to navigate Oankali technology opens up questions about the social construction of disability, and Lilith's genetic modifications invite analysis about the differences between human, superhuman, posthuman, and monster. The Ooloi and the Oankali reproductive process invite discussion about gender binaries and sexuality, and any one of these themes can be connected back to *Frankenstein*. The Oankali and Frankenstein's monster represent what I refer to throughout this course as Creations, meaning that they are made as monsters. In these examples, they are each the result of scientific experimentation and they are rejected by humanity for their obvious differences. Like *Frankenstein, Dawn* keeps readers in a grey area throughout the novel. The texts do not pick a side, so there is no right answer to find—but that middle area is fascinating and that is exactly what we will be exploring in this course.

The objective of this lesson plan is for students to examine *Dawn* within the context of Monster Studies and in conversation with *Frankenstein.* The foundational knowledge they will build in the beginning of the semester includes tools for critical reading and annotating as well as an understanding of monster theory. They will develop and apply their critical reading and annotation skills throughout the semester because we will continue working with them with each

new text that we encounter throughout the entire course. The semester starts with *Frankenstein* and we will still be discussing *Frankenstein* at the end of the term. This means that they will need to have excellent notes on each text in order to continue to integrate them into conversation with the new texts throughout the semester.

Our classroom is meant to function as a scholarly conversation where each student brings their own perspectives and interpretations to the work, so students will have time to explore the human dimension of literary studies. No piece of critical analysis exists in a vacuum. We build on the work that came before us, so it is essential that we learn how to interact productively with other people's ideas. I hope that students will care about the course material because of the ways we are connecting Monster Studies and literature to social issues like disability, race, gender, sexuality, class, and power. The skills that students develop in my course will not only improve their understanding of this material but will also better prepare them to learn in their other classes. Aside from the standard skills like critical thinking, literary analysis, writing, and editing, my biggest goal for this course is to help students develop their intellectual confidence in the classroom.

This lesson plan is split into five class meetings over the course of three weeks and it is situated at the end of Unit 1, starting in week 4 of the semester. Since *Dawn* is divided into 4 parts – Womb, Family, Nursery, and Training Floor, we will tackle one part of the text in each of the first four meetings, with the reading load divided accordingly. The fifth class meeting is devoted to wrapping up the first unit and drawing connections between *Dawn*, *Frankenstein,* and *Edward Scissorhands.* Assignments for this lesson plan include a discussion proposal, in-class group work, and a monster map. These assignments will facilitate their active participation in

each class meeting and will require them to bring their own perspectives on the novel to our discussion while building connections to the larger context of the course.

Course Assignments

Students will each submit one discussion proposal as a part of our focus on *Dawn*. I will select from the proposals and use some of that material to guide our in-class discussion. These proposals are designed to demonstrate that students are using their critical reading skills and actively engaging with the text, so I will use them to assess whether or not students are actually reading the novel. They will also help prepare students for the paper proposal they will submit later in the semester and give them practice working with direct quotations to support their analysis. I hope to generate student buy-in for each class by having them propose these topics for discussion and to build their confidence in their literary analysis abilities by showing how the things they notice are relevant, important, and worthy of discussion. Students will repeat this assignment throughout the semester, so my goal is to use at least one proposal from each student throughout the course as part of our discussion.

Over the course of this lesson plan, students will be split into small groups for discussion in class. Their discussion topics will vary depending on the reading that day, but in each case, they will be expected to talk through their prompt with their small group and then bring their main points and conclusions back to the overall class. By breaking into smaller groups, each student will have an opportunity to speak and this will reduce the pressure of my presence in order to allow them to develop their ideas together before they have to share them with the entire class. This is meant to mimic the idea of a literature review or scholarly conversation synthesis by prompting them to engage with ideas from their peers as the other scholars in order to support, challenge, or complicate their own interpretations. Although they will not be working

with criticism during these sessions, they will be engaging with ideas from their peers as other scholars. At the end of these small group discussions, they will summarize their overall points for the rest of the class into something informal that resembles the literature review portion of a paper by weaving their ideas together into one paragraph and giving credit to each scholar who contributed. Sharing their group's ideas and conclusions will also help prepare them for the presentations they will give later in the semester.

At the end of this unit, students will submit a monster map that draws connections between the texts we discussed. In the map, students will visually represent at least five connections between *Frankenstein* and either *Dawn* or *Edward Scissorhands*. These connections can be drawn between characters, types of monsters, themes, historical context, physical descriptions, or anything else they can imagine. It is okay for these monster maps to be messy. They are meant to help facilitate the brainstorming process and the task of prewriting, which is often chaotic. Students may use their maps from this first unit to help develop their midterm assignment and final project.

Thursday: It's a Whole New World

Objective: Understanding the world of *Dawn*, including historical context, major themes, and characterization.

Dawn hit the shelves in 1987 – aside from roller skates and big hair, what else was happening in the 1980s? Zombies crawled out of the screen from Michael Jackson's iconic music video for "Thriller." Genetic engineering was picking up in the scientific world and the AIDS epidemic was sweeping the planet. Cold War tensions between the United States and Russia were still growing and the Doomsday Clock was ticking closer and closer to midnight with the threat of nuclear war. The United States was barely even one generation removed from school

segregation. Films like *E.T., Alien,* and the original Star Wars trilogy were taking over theatres. Clearly, the obsession with what we might find out there in the universe did not end with the space race of the 50s and 60s. What does all of this have to do with *Dawn*?

Prior to class:

- Reading Assignment: Is Everyone a Monster?
    - Each student is assigned a character to pay particular attention to as they read *Dawn*.[21]
- Students read Part I: Womb, pages 1-47
- Folio module with information about Octavia E. Butler & her short essay "The Lost Races of Science Fiction"
- 1st of 3 opportunities to submit a discussion proposal on *Dawn*

Day of class:

- Class discussion:
    - Historical Context: What do we know about the 1980s?
    - Themes from Part I: isolation, imprisonment, & xenophobia
    - Additional topics pulled from discussion proposals
- Small-group discussion:
    - Students split into small groups of 3-5 students each. Using a small group discussion guide,[22] they choose one of the questions and attempt to answer it using the text.

[21] See "Small Group Discussion Guide – Part 4 of *Dawn*: Is Everyone a Monster" in Chapter 3 for more on how this will be used.
[22] For full details on this discussion guide, see "Small Group Discussion Guide – Part I of *Dawn*" in Chapter 3.

- Bringing it all together:
    - For the last 15-30 minutes of class, depending on the time needed for earlier discussion, each group shares the question they chose to discuss and the conclusions they reached.

Tuesday: It's All About Family[23]

Objective: Exploring the relationship dynamics between Lilith and the Oankali by questioning the function of disability and the reasons why Lilith was chosen.

In this part of *Dawn*, Lilith says she feels like a pet (63) and an experimental animal (67). Meanwhile, she realizes that she thinks of the Oankali as people now (64). What does it mean to be a person and why does Lilith feel like an animal? She has entered the world of the Oankali, but it is not designed for her. In many ways, Lilith is disabled by their society intentionally. She cannot open their doors or operate their technology. She is denied paper and pen while trying to learn their language. Her memories have been modified and she has been rendered sterile. Using ideas about the social construction of disability, we examine the effect of these barriers on Lilith's relationship with Nikanj and the other Oankali. Paul Titus says that Lilith is exactly what the Oankali want in ways he has not even thought of yet (101). What is it about Lilith's character that makes her the perfect fit for the Oankali?

Prior to Class:

- Students read Part II: Family, pages 48-125
- Discussions about disability and queer coding of monsters and villains from earlier in the semester are relevant to this discussion
- 2nd of 3 opportunities to submit a discussion proposal on *Dawn*

[23] Imagine this in Vin Diesel's voice.

Day of Class:

- In-Class Assignment:
    - Students take 10 minutes to free write about the social construction of disability. What is it? What questions do they have about it? Identify an example from *Dawn*. Are there connections to *Edward Scissorhands* or *Frankenstein* as well? Can they think of other examples of disability and monsters?
- Group Discussion:
    - What are some examples of the social construction of disability in *Dawn*? What about *Edward Scissorhands* and *Frankenstein*?
    - What is the difference between a human, a person, a monster, and a villain?
    - Why did the Oankali choose Lilith?
    - What does the Oankali family structure look like?
    - What do we know about gender and sexuality among the Oankali?
    - Are the Oankali benevolent or are they master manipulators? Can it be both?
    - What is a Judas goat? And why does Lilith refer to herself that way?
    - What effect does her encounter with Paul Titus have on her relationship with Nikanj and the Oankali?
    - Additional topics pulled from discussion proposals

Thursday: Come with Me if You Want to Live

Objective: Facilitating student-centered discussion about *Dawn*, with a particular focus on relationships between Lilith, the humans she Awakens, and the Oankali.

Lilith is caught in the middle between the Oankali and the rest of humanity. She lacks the true authority of the Oankali, but she is not human enough to be trusted. She refers to herself as a

Judas goat throughout the novel, because she is worried that she is leading humanity to its slaughter (74). With Lilith standing in the middle between these two groups, whose side is she on? As the readers, whose side are we on? This is where the idea of the Oankali trade really starts to become a reality. Is it worth it? Are the Oankali saviors or captors? Are they colonizers? Why are humans so concerned about preserving their species intact? Is this idea of species purity about anti-colonialism or is it related to racism? Different is scary. Why? How does this connect to Monster Studies? Class discussion will be student-centered, but these are some of the questions I hope to address in this part of the book. We will continue discussions from previous class periods and use student discussion proposals to kick things off.

Prior to Class:

- Students read Part III: Nursery, pages 126-223
- Final opportunity to submit a discussion proposal on *Dawn*

Day of Class:

- Discussion Proposals:
    - This is the final opportunity for students to submit discussion proposals on *Dawn.* We have covered enough context that they should be able to participate effectively and confidently in a more student-guided large-group discussion about the text. Using the discussion proposals they submit, we devote this class period to talking about their interests in the book while I take notes on the board and ask them questions.
- Selected Quotes to Prompt Discussion, if needed:
    - "What could she tell the humans but 'Learn and Run!' What other possibility for escape was there?" (132)

- "Some avoided Lilith because they were afraid of her – afraid she was not human, or not human enough." (205)
- "'Different is threatening to most species,' Nikanj answered. 'Different is dangerous. It might kill you.'" (211)

Tuesday: Is Everyone a Monster?

Objective: Apply Cohen's Seven Theses to the characters in *Dawn.* Students attempt to answer the question that has guided our reading—"Is Everyone a Monster?"

Since Lilith exists in a middle ground between the Oankali and the rest of humanity, she opens the door for readers to see both sides as monsters. She is not Oankali, but the humans do not see her as one of them either. Is she the monster? Unit 1 of this course is focused on the Frankenstein myth. Students have already had some practice identifying connections between *Edward Scissorhands* and *Frankenstein* and with applying monster theory to those texts. *Dawn* will ask them to dig a little deeper, but the connections are still there. I have presented this novel through the lens of Monster Studies, so it is time for students to apply what they know.

During this class, students will split into small groups for discussion about specific characters from *Dawn*. They will use Cohen's Seven Theses to analyze their assigned characters and determine which ones are monsters. As students work in small groups throughout the semester, I move around the classroom to get an idea about how their discussions are going. I am listening to see if each group is having a productive discussion and if different group members are speaking up. If groups are struggling, I step in with a question or idea to get them back on track. As I listen, I also take notes about the interesting things they have to say so that I can help guide the recap at the end of the class, if necessary.

For the second part of class, students return to the larger group to bring their discussions together. As they share their findings, I make connections between their ideas on the board. I ask clarifying questions and help guide the discussion as needed, but this is mostly about each group interacting with the others and bouncing their ideas off of each other. These ideas about monsters in *Dawn* and the connections we draw to *Frankenstein* and *Edward Scissorhands* will help them finish up their monster maps before the next class period. This lesson is the culmination of Unit 1 and *Dawn* is a perfect fit because chances are, everyone is a monster.

Prior to Class:

- Students read Part IV: The Training Floor, pages 224-283
- Preparing for Discussion:
    - Previous lessons about annotating, science fiction, monster theory, disability coding, and the work we have already done on *Dawn* prepared students for their assignment today.
    - I introduced students to Cohen's Seven Theses at the beginning of the semester.[24] At this point, we have already practiced using these to analyze both *Frankenstein* and *Edward Scissorhands* together as a class.
    - Prior to reading *Dawn*, students were broken into groups and asked to pay particular attention to specific characters as they annotated.

Day of Class:

- Small Group Discussion – Applying Monster Theory to *Dawn*:

[24] See "Monster Theory Handout" in Chapter 3 for more details.

    - Using the handout on Cohen's Seven Theses, students have 30 minutes to work in small groups to see which of the theses they can apply to each of their assigned characters.
        - Group 1: Lilith Iyapo
        - Group 2: Nikanj
        - Group 3: Jdahya and Kahguyaht
        - Group 4: Paul Titus and Conrad (Curt) Loehr
        - Group 5: Tate Marah and Joseph Li-Chin Shing
    - Each of the groups completes the small group discussion guide,[25] determining whether each thesis applies and explaining their answers. Groups with two characters to consider complete a chart for each character.
    - With the last 5 minutes of their small-group time, students need to make sure their handouts are completed and decide whether they believe their character is a monster so that they can share their results with the class.
    - Groups who finish early should think about how the theses apply to other characters that they were not assigned or start identifying connections between *Dawn* and *Frankenstein*.
- Sharing their Findings – Is Everyone a Monster?
    - Before we open up the discussion, I ask each group to tell me yes or no – is their character a monster?
    - Each group shares how they addressed the theses with their characters and I take notes on the board.

[25] See "Small Group Discussion Guide – Part 4 of *Dawn*: Is Everyone a Monster" in chapter 3.

    - We discuss their conclusions as a group, asking questions and seeing if the rest of the class agrees.

- Connecting *Dawn* to *Frankenstein*:
    - For the last 15 minutes of class, I ask students to share any connections they see between *Dawn, Frankenstein,* and *Edward Scissorhands* and answer final questions about their monster maps, which are due at the next class period.

Thursday: The Monster Map

Objective: Exploring connections between *Frankenstein, Edward Scissorhands,* and *Dawn* in order to complete Unit 1 of the course.

It's alive! The monster map is an interactive visual tool for students to show the class how they interpreted the connections between these texts. These maps will help each student by showing them different ways to approach brainstorming and intertextuality while having them practice their synthesis skills. This is an opportunity for each of them to practice presenting in a low-stakes environment, since the presentation is only a small portion of the grade and they are just reading their summaries to the class. By reviewing everyone else's monster maps, students will develop their own ideas that may turn into their final projects.

Prior to Class:

- Students will complete their monster maps and writing assignments.[26]

Day of Class:

- Monster maps will be collected into a slideshow and students will read their summaries as their slide is displayed.

[26] See "The Monster Map" in Chapter 3 for full details on this assignment.

- During the final 15-20 minutes of class, students will write a reflection on this process, including their overall observations, differences they noticed between the various approaches, and thoughts about how this process may help them brainstorm for their final projects.

Conclusion

Monsters are fascinating and the options are endless. I have chosen to situate my central texts for each unit in the nineteenth century because of the particular perspectives on monstrosity at that time and the significant impact that these works have continued to have on contemporary media. Frankenstein's creature is so prevalent in pop culture that most people know him with bolts in his neck, even though that is not part of the book, and his story has influenced so much of science fiction. *Dawn* is just one example of a text that can be connected back to *Frankenstein*. However, with a focus on monsters, you could pick any number of different starting points and connect to an endless variety of newer texts. There is no shortage of monsters to choose from. Since monsters have always represented the fear-inspiring Other, the connections between monster theory and intersectionality are clear. Between disability, race, gender, sexuality, and power, monster theory opens the door to interesting and relevant literary analysis and classroom discussions. This lesson plan includes the closing activities for unit one of the course, so the next class period would transition into unit two with an exploration of the legacy of *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson. *Dawn* will continue to be relevant to that discussion as we examine monsters who look human but hide something else inside.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

What exactly is a monster? What is the difference between a monster and a villain? Why do monsters exist and why are they so fascinating? These are the questions I started with, and they guide my course. It seems easy to answer at least the first two with definitions, but dictionaries fall short of capturing the complexity and nuance of Monster Studies. As students attempt to answer the third question, this complexity will be revealed. It is not just about who is inherently a monster, but rather who gets treated like a monster or functions like a monster or becomes a monster. Just like ogres and onions, monsters have layers. As I have demonstrated with my course, monsters are complicated and their analysis requires a multifaceted approach. For the foundation of this course, I introduce Monster Studies, remix Cohen's "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)," and establish a unique monster pattern (Origin, Separation, Power, Threat, and Diminishment). I also categorize monsters as Creations, Transformations, or Disconnections based on their relationships to humanity as a way to identify the monsters, draw connections between them, and structure the course. For current and future instructors, I provide an overview of the entire course with important topics, possible discussion questions, and key assignments as well as a full semester schedule. I also outline a detailed lesson plan on Octavia E. Butler's *Dawn*, linking it to *Frankenstein* as a literary precursor, to show that the classics are not dead but can be reanimated through connections to more contemporary work in order to cross generational divides and excite new readers. As an academic advisor for the Department of English, I hope that this course empowers students to explore the fascinating interplay between literature, culture, and the concept of monsters while building their intellectual confidence and fanning the flames of their interest in literary studies.

As I developed this course, I considered numerous options that did not make the cut this time. However, these units are flexible and texts could be swapped out or rearranged as needed. In Unit 1, I could have selected something like *Terminator, Young Frankenstein,* or *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* instead of *Edward Scissorhands.* Instead of *Dawn*, we could have studied *Bunny* by Mona Awad or *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro. In Unit 2, movies like *Fight Club* or *Spider-Man* could have replaced *Nimona* and we could have read *Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter* by Theodora Goss or Incredible Hulk comics instead of *Squad*. In Unit 3, I debated using *Jennifer's Body* or *Dracula* instead of *Interview with the Vampire* and I considered *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer instead of *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*. Ultimately, I selected the texts and films that I did because they will allow me to have the conversations I want to have with my students. Many of these will present challenges to the categories of monsters that I have provided and will allow students to see how they could approach the same text from a different direction and identify something new.

With this thesis, I highlight and amplify the exciting relevance of monsters to the broader field of literary studies, but it is about so much more than that. I offer a comprehensive structure for a literature course that equips students with the tools necessary to identify and analyze monsters while also providing them with a skillset that will translate to the rest of their classes. With an emphasis on high-impact practices through collaborative learning and diversity, students will define and interrogate monsters in several different ways and employ a variety of tools to analyze and interpret them. They develop fundamental skills like research, annotation, discussion, analysis, writing, and presentation. I introduce students to the intersections between race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability as a framework for literary analysis. Through historical context and critical theory, students craft arguments that engage with larger scholarly

conversations. Students participate in the absolutely critical thoughtwork that goes into academic writing as they develop their ideas from the very first day of class all the way to the end. A series of intertextual assignments and presentations allows students to flex their skills and demonstrate their new knowledge. The monsters that students contribute to our discussion in week one are revisited at the end with a deeper understanding and a more complex perspective. Through this process, students witness their ideas take shape, see the benefit of revision, and reach the end of the semester more confident about their abilities. Monsters are incredibly meaningful and so is good course design.

REFERENCES

Awad, Mona. *Bunny.* Penguin Books, 2019.

Bailey, Suzanne. "Francis Galton's Face Project: Morphing the Victorian Human." *Photography and Culture*, vol. 5, no. 2, July 2012, pp. 189-214.

Baldick, Chris. "Introduction." *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-century Writing*, Clarendon Press, 1990, pp. 1-9.

Barker, Meg-John and Jules Scheele. *Queer: A Graphic History*. Icon Books Ltd, 2016.

Beauty and the Beast. Directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise. *Disney,* 1991.

Berveling, Jaco. "'My God, here is the skull of a murderer!' Physical appearance and violent crime." *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2021, pp. 141-54.

Betensky, Carolyn. "Casual Racism in Victorian Literature." *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2019, pp. 723-51.

Bissonette, Melissa Bloom. "Teaching the Monster: Frankenstein and Critical Thinking." *College Literature*, vol. 37, no. 3, Summer 2010, pp. 106-120.

Brantlinger, Patrick. "The Gothic Origins of Science Fiction." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction,* vol. 14, no. 1, Autumn 1980, pp. 30-43.

The Bride of Frankenstein. Directed by James Whale. 1935.

Bucksbaum, Sydney. "AMC announces *Interview with the Vampire* season 2 premiere date, expands Anne Rice TV Universe." *Entertainment Weekly*, https://ew.com/interview-with-the-vampire-season-2-premiere-date-new-cast-third-anne-rice-tv-show-announced-8559740. Accessed 18 February 2024.

Butler, Octavia E. *Dawn*. 1987. Grand Central Publishing, 2021.

—. “The Lost Races of Science Fiction.” 1980. *Octavia E. Butler*, by Gerry Canavan. University of Illinois Press, 2016, pp. 137-41.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces.* 1949. New World Library, 2008.

Clarke, Julie. “All Too Human: Edward Scissorhands.” *Screen Education*, no. 50, Winter 2008, pp. 93-98.

Coates, Tyler. “‘Oppenheimer,’ ‘Poor Things’ Lead Oscar Nominations.” *The Hollywood Reporter*, https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/2024-oscars-nominations-oppenheimer-poor-things-lead-1235804202/. Accessed 18 February 2024.

Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. “Monster Culture (Seven Theses).” *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen. University of Minnesota Press, 1996, pp. 3-25.

—. “Preface: In a Time of Monsters.” *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen. University of Minnesota Press, 1996, pp. vii-xiii.

Corrigan, Timothy. *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*, Longman, 2015.

“Demon, n.” *Oxford English Dictionary,* Oxford University Press, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/demon_n?tab=meaning_and_use#7096596. Accessed 3 February 2024.

Dracula. Directed by Tod Browning and Karl Freund. Universal Pictures, 1931.

Easton, Nina J. “For Time Burton, This One’s Personal: The director of ‘Beetlejuice’ and ‘Batman’ is filming another bizarre movie – but this tale draws on his own childhood images.” *Los Angeles Times*, 12 August 1990.

Edward Scissorhands. Directed by Tim Burton. 1990.

Edwards, Kyle. “Morals, Markets, and ‘Horror Pictures’: The Rise of Universal Pictures and the Hollywood Production Code.” *Film & History*, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 23-37.

Figgins, Kristen Layne. “Adapting the Victorians: Introduction.” *South Atlantic Review,* vol. 88, no. 4, Winter 2023, pp. 1-7.

Fight Club. Directed by David Fincher. 1999.

Frankel, Nicholas. *Oscar Wilde: The Unrepentant Years*. Harvard University Press, 2017.

Frankenstein. Directed by James Whale. Universal Pictures, 1931.

Frankenweenie. Directed by Tim Burton. 2012.

“Gagné’s Nine Events of Instruction.” *Northern Illinois University: Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning*, 2020, https://www.niu.edu/citl/resources/guides/instructional-guide/gagnes-nine-events-of-instruction.shtml. Accessed 28 January 2024.

Gilbert, Nora. *Better Left Unsaid: Victorian Novels, Hays Code Films, and the Benefits of Censorship*. Stanford Law Books, 2013.

Gillespie, Michael Patrick, editor. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Norton Critical Edition, 3rd ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2020.

Gordon, Charlotte. *Romantic Outlaws*. Random House, 2015.

Goss, Theodora and John Paul Riquelme. “From Superhuman to Posthuman: The Gothic Technological Imaginary in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Octavia Butler’s *Xenogenesis*.” *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 53, no. 3, Fall 2007, pp. 434-459. *JStor*, http://www.jstor.com/stable/26287111.

Goss, Theodora. *The Strange Case of the Alchemist’s Daughter*. Saga Press, 2017.

Graff, Gerald. “Disliking Books at an Early Age.” *Falling Into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature,* edited by David H. Richter, Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000, pp. 41-8.

Grossman, Julie. *Literature, Film, and Their Hideous Progeny*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Halberstam, Jack. “Parasites and Perverts: An Introduction to Gothic Monstrosity.” *The Monster Theory Reader*, University of Minnesota Press, 2020, pp. 148-69.

Harrison, Da’Shaun L. “Pretty Ugly: The Politics of Desire.” *Belly of the Beast: The Politics of Anti-Fatness as Anti-Blackness*, North Atlantic Books, 2021, pp. 11-32.

“High-Impact Practices.” *AAC&U,* https://www.aacu.org/trending-topics/high-impact, Accessed 22 October 2023.

Hitchcock, Susan Tyler. “The Monster Lives On.” *Frankenstein: A Cultural History*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007, pp. 100-16.

hooks, bell. “Engaged Pedagogy.” *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, Routledge, 1994, pp. 13-22.

—. “Toward a Revolutionary Feminist Pedagogy.” *Falling Into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature,* edited by David H. Richter, Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000, pp. 79-84.

Hyde, H. Montgomery, editor. *The Trials of Oscar Wilde*. 1948. The Notable Trials Library, 1989.

“If you see something, say something.” *U.S. Department of Homeland Security,* https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2023-05/S4_Campaign%20Information%20Packet_5.5.2023_508.pdf. Accessed 2 March 2024.

Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles. Directed by Neil Jordan. 1994.

Jenkins, Jerry Rafiki. *The Paradox of Blackness in African American Vampire Fiction*. The Ohio State University Press, 2019.

Jennifer’s Body. Directed by Karyn Kusama. 2009.

Jordan, Shafira. “How White Fandom is Colonizing ‘Character-Coding.’” *Medium*, https://shafirajordan.medium.com/how-white-fandom-is-colonizing-character-coding-9476cd6870ac. Accessed 17 September 2023.

Kirkham, Ellie. “Guillermo del Toro’s ‘Frankenstein’: Cast. Plot, and Everything We Know So Far.” *Collider*, https://collider.com/frankenstein-guillermo-del-toro-cast-plot-creative-team/. Accessed 18 February 2024.

Knepper, Paul and Per Jørgen Ystehede. “Introduction.” *The Cesare Lombroso Handbook*, Routledge, 2013, pp. 1-7.

Koenig-Woodyard, Chris, et al. “Introduction: Monster Studies.” *University of Toronto Quarterly*, University of Toronto Press, vol. 87, no. 1, Winter 2018, pp. 1-24.

Koestenbaum, Wayne. “The Shadow on the Bed: Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde, and the Labouchère Amendment.” *Critical Matrix*, no. 1, 1988, pp. 31-55.

Lancaster, Ashley Craig. “From Frankenstein’s Monster to Lester Ballard: The Evolving Gothic Monster.” *The Midwest Quarterly*, vol. 49, no. 2, Winter 2008, pp. 132-48.

Lisa Frankenstein. Directed by Zelda Williams. 2024.

Lugowski, David M. “Queering the (New) Deal: Lesbian and Gay Representation and the Depression-Era Cultural Politics of Hollywood’s Production Code.” *Cinema Journal*, vol. 38, no. 2, Winter 1999, pp. 3-35.

Lutz, Deborah. “Introduction.” *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Norton Critical Edition, 2nd ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2020, pp. xiii-xxix.

McGill, C. E. *Our Hideous Progeny*. HarperCollins, 2023.

Meyer, Stephenie. *Twilight*. Hachette Book Group, 2005.

Mock, Janet. “Being Pretty Is a Privilege, But We Refuse to Acknowledge It.” *Allure,* 28 June 2017, https://www.allure.com/story/pretty-privilege. Accessed 24 September 2023.

“Monster, n.” *Oxford English Dictionary,* Oxford University Press, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/monster_n?tab=meaning_and_use#35945948. Accessed 17 September 2023.

Montillo, Roseanne. *The Lady and her Monsters: A Tale of Dissections, Real-Life Dr. Frankensteins, and the Creation of Mary Shelley’s Masterpiece.* Harper Collins, 2013.

Nimona. Directed by Nick Bruno and Troy Quane. *Netflix*, 2023.

Osherow, Michele. “The Dawn of a New Lilith: Revisionary Mythmaking in Women’s Science Fiction.” *NWSA Journal*, vol 12, no. 1, Spring 2000, pp. 68-83.

Parker, Kendra R. “Introduction: The First Bite.” *Black Female Vampires in African American Women’s Novels, 1977-2011: She Bites Back*, Lexington Books, 2019, pp. xiii-xli.

Poor Things. Directed by Yorgos Lanthimos. 2023.

Potter, Russell A. “Edward Schizohands: The Postmodern Gothic Body.” *Postmodern Culture*, vol. 2, no. 3, May 1992.

Raglan, Baron. *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama*. 1936. Dover Publications, 2011.

Rich, Adrienne. “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence.” *Signs*, vol. 5, no. 4, Summer 1980, pp. 631-660.

Rita, Rokeya Sarker. “Dissociative Identity Disorder in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.” *ASA University Review,* vol. 11, no. 1, January-June 2017, pp. 75-80.

Rose, Natasja. “Character Coding in Fiction.” *Geeks*, https://vocal.media/geeks/character-coding-in-fiction. Accessed 17 September 2023.

Schalk, Sami. “Teaching the Social Construction of Disability through the Parable series, *Lilith’s Brood*, and *Seed to Harvest*.” *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Octavia E. Butler*, edited by Tarshia L. Stanley. MLA, 2019, pp. 97-102.

—. “What Makes Mr. Hyde So Scary?: Disability as a Result of Evil and Cause of Fear.” *Disability Studies Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 4, Fall 2008, https://doi.org/10.18061/dsq.v28i4.145.

Schopf, Sue Weaver. “‘Legitimizing’ Vampire Fiction as an Area of Literary Study.” *The Vampire Goes to College: Essays on Teaching With the Undead*, 2014, pp. 9-20.

Schwab, V. E. *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*. Tor Publishing Group, 2020.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. 1818. Penguin Random House, 2018.

Showalter, Elaine. “Dr. Jekyll’s Closet.” *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle,* Viking Penguin, 1990, pp. 105-26.

Silgar, Sara. “Reserving the Kill: The Suicide Ban and Criminal Punishment in Code-Era Hollywood Film.” *Film History*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2019, pp. 1-29.

Spider-Man. Directed by Sam Raimi. 2002.

Stevenson, Noelle. *Nimona*. Harper Teen, 2015.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. 1886. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Norton Critical Edition, 2nd ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2020, pp. 1-59.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Directed by Jim Sharman. 1975.

The Terminator. Directed by James Cameron. 1984.

Tokuda-Hall, Maggie and Lisa Sterle. *Squad*. Green Willow Books, 2021.

"Top Lifetime Grosses." *Box Office Mojo* by IMDBPro. https://www.boxofficemojo.com/chart/top_lifetime_gross/?area=XWW. Accessed 18 February 2024.

Totenberg, Nina. "Florida drag shows win temporary victory in Supreme Court." *NPR*, 16 November 2023, https://www.npr.org/2023/11/16/1208570685/supreme-court-florida-anti-drag-law. Accessed 6 March 2024.

Twilight. Directed by Catherine Hardwicke. 2008.

Universal Pictures Corporation. "Bride of Frankenstein (1935)." *IMDb,* https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0026138/mediaviewer/rm3542239745/?ref_=ext_shr_lnk. Accessed 6 March 2024.

—. "Frankenstein (1931)." *IMDb,* https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0021884/mediaviewer/rm2546189056/?ref_=ext_shr_lnk. Accessed 6 March 2024.

Vendler, Helen. "What We Have Loved, Others Will Love." *Falling Into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature,* edited by David H. Richter, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000, pp. 31-40.

"Villain, n." *Oxford English Dictionary,* Oxford University Press, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/villain_n?tab=meaning_and_use#15584997. Accessed 17 September 2023.

Wan, Marco. "A Matter of Style: On Reading the Oscar Wilde Trials as Literature." *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2011.

Warner, Michael. “Introduction: Fear of a Queer Planet.” *Social Text*, no. 29, 1991, pp. 3-17. *JStor*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/466295.

Watson, Leah. “Anti-DEI Efforts Are the Latest Attack on Racial Equity and Free Speech.” *ACLU*, 14 February 2024, https://www.aclu.org/news/free-speech/anti-dei-efforts-are-the-latest-attack-on-racial-equity-and-free-speech. Accessed 6 March 2024.

Weinstock, Jeffrey Andrew. “Introduction: A Genealogy of Monster Theory.” *The Monster Theory Reader*, edited by Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. University of Minnesota Press, 2020, pp. 1-36.

—. “Invisible Monsters: Vision, Horror, and Contemporary Culture.” *The Monster Theory Reader*, edited by Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. University of Minnesota Press, 2020, pp. 358-73.

Wendell, Susan. “The Social Construction of Disability.” *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability*. Routledge, 1996, pp. 57-71.

Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. 1890. ROADS Classics, 2013.

Wood, Robin. “An Introduction to the American Horror Film.” *Robin Wood on the Horror Film: Collected Essays and Reviews*, edited by Barry Keith Grant, Wayne State University Press, 2018, pp. 73-110.

Young Frankenstein. Directed by Mel Brooks. 1974.

APPENDIX A

SYLLABUS DATA

Bloom, Clive. “Gothic Literature.” https://www.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyu/globalPrgms/documents/london/academics/Syllabi/SampleSyllabi/Syl_London_ENGL-UA9056L01_Bloom.pdf. Accessed 29 October 2023.

Booker, Keith. “The Monster as Metaphor in Film.” https://bookerhorror.com/syllabus-the-monster-as-metaphor-in-film-engl-3283-and-engl-4933/. Accessed 29 October 2023.

“British Literature III: Monsters and Madness.” https://courses.unh.edu/class/201770/70937. Accessed 29 October 2023.

Curseen, Allison S. “Monsters and Outsiders: A Hood Project.” https://blogs.baruch.cuny.edu/monstersoutside/. Accessed 29 October 2023.

Delahoyde, Michael. “Monsters.” https://public.wsu.edu/~delahoyd/monsters09.html. Accessed 29 October 2023.

Hayton, Heather. “Monsters & Monstrous Desire.” https://guilfordcollege.instructure.com/courses/4391. Accessed 29 October 2023.

Hoberman, Ruth. “ENG 4300-4390-002-098: The Monstrous in Literature.” *The Keep*, Fall 2009. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/154514933.pdf. Accessed 29 October 2023.

Joy, Eileen. “The Post/human Middle Ages.” https://www.siue.edu/~ejoy/eng505syllabusSP07.htm. Accessed 29 October 2023.

Kane, Kathleen. “ENLT 301.03: Applied Literary Criticism – Anatomizing the Composite Body of Literary Theory.” *University of Montana Course Syllabi*, 2001.

https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7070&context=syllabi. Accessed 29 October 2023.

Marshall, Bridget. “The Gothic Tradition in Literature.” https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.uml.edu/dist/8/7/files/2018/05/gothic-trad-syllabus-Spring-2016-1nbe6ye.pdf. Accessed 29 October 2023.

“Monsters of Europe.” https://www.slu.edu/madrid/academics/courses/syllabus-proper-name/engl-3591.pdf. Accessed 11 September 2022.

Nichols, Ashton. “Frankenstein and Other Romantic Monsters.” https://blogs.dickinson.edu/syllabus/2013/07/31/english-403-frankenstein-and-other-romantic-monsters-fall-2018/. Accessed 29 October 2023.

Ryan, Michael and Daniel Traister. “Science & Literature.” https://www.sas.upenn.edu/~traister/syl-scilit.html. Accessed 29 October 2023.

Winstead, Karen. “Monsters Within, Monsters Without.” https://ascnet.osu.edu/storage/request_documents/4726/Proposal%20Monsters%20Without%20and%20Within%20(1).docx. Accessed 29 October 2023.

APPENDIX B

POSTER

Figure 5: Poster

THE MONSTER MASH | A MONSTER STUDIES APPROACH TO LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM

What is Monster Studies?

An interdisciplinary approach to studying monsters throughout history and across various forms of media.

Can you be more specific?

Sure! I'm interested in the connections between monster myths from the 19th century and more current monsters.

How does that work exactly?

We'll take inspiration from pop culture and adaptation studies. Using monster theory, historical context, queer theory, & disability studies, we'll analyze monsters as cultural products.

7 QUESTIONS FOR MONSTERS

1. What is the cultural context for this monster?
2. How does the monster escape and when, where, or how does it return?
3. What is this monster a hybrid of and what category does it challenge?
4. What "Other" does this monster represent?
5. What boundary does this monster define or challenge?
6. What fantasy or desire does this monster embody and why is it scary?
7. Why was this monster created and what does it say about humanity?

I adapted these questions from Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)"

How do you know who the monster is?

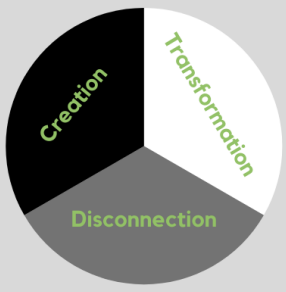
It's not always who you expect! Try to remember that monsters and villains are two different ideas. Sometimes they overlap and sometimes they don't!

THE MONSTER PATTERN

- ✓**Origin:** How did the monster come into existence? Is it a creation, transformation, or disconnection?
- ✓**Separation:** What marks the monster as an Other? How is it different?
- ✓**Power:** What can the monster do that is outside of the ordinary?
- ✓**Threat:** Who perceives the monster as a threat? Why?
- ✓**Diminishment:** Who is trying to reduce the monster's power and/or threat? How?

COURSE DESCRIPTION

From vampires and werewolves to aliens and shapeshifters, monsters are everywhere. In this course, learn about some of the monster myths—like *Frankenstein*, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*—that helped create the monsters we know today. Through novels, short stories, films, and graphic novels, we will explore monsters while we talk about issues like gender, sexuality, race, class, and disability.



3 TYPES OF MONSTERS

- **Creations** were never human. They were either born or created as monsters.
- **Transformations** can switch back and forth between human and monster forms.
- **Disconnections** used to be human, but have turned into monsters.

CLASS STRUCTURE

Unit 1: Creation	Unit 2: Transformation	Unit 3: Disconnection
Frankenstein	***The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde***	***The Picture of Dorian Gray***
Edward Scissorhands (film)	***Squad*** (graphic novel)	***Interview with the Vampire*** (film)
Dawn	***Nimona*** (film)	***The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue***

GRADING

- 50 points: Participation
- 50 points: Papers & Projects

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

- Attendance
- Warm-ups
- Discussion Proposals
- Small Group Discussion Guides

- **Unit 1: The Monster Map**
  - Brainstorming & Making Connections
- **Unit 2: The Monstrous Mirror**
  - Research & Reflection
- **Unit 3: The Monster Mash**
  - Paper & Poster Presentation

All major assignments include written, oral, and visual components.

Megan Bowen
Georgia Southern University
M.A. English, 2024