

ZOMBIES, VAMPIRES AND WITCHES: IMAGINATIONS OF 'OTHER' WORLDS

TIME: TUESDAY 14:00 – 16:00

We are as ignorant of the meaning of the dragon as we are of the meaning of the universe; but there is something in the dragon's image that fits man's imagination, and this accounts for the dragon's appearance in different places and periods.

Jorge Luis Borges, *The Book of Imaginary Beings*

A monster is always alive, let us not forget. Monsters are living beings. A monster is a species for which we do not have a name, which does not mean that the species is abnormal, namely the composition of hybridization of already known species. Simply, it shows itself [elle se montre] —that is what the word monster means—it shows itself in something that is not yet shown and that therefore looks like a hallucination, it strikes the eye, it frightens precisely because no anticipation had prepared one to identify this figure.

Jacques Derrida, *Passages*

“the monster, being unstable, crosses boundaries between human and nonhuman, mingling the appropriate and the inappropriate, showing itself in constantly novel and unexpected ways.”

COURSE OUTLINE:

Interactions with the 'other' across time and place have been conceptualized in a myriad of ways. The course aims to look at the relationship between the self and other through the figure of the 'monstrous' and 'wonderous'. What is a monster? How did the monstrous get rearticulated throughout history? What were the different categories through which the monstrous became constructed? The course aims at looking at the construction of the 'monstrous' beings within political thought and the processes of 'othering' implied within them. How does the dichotomy of life/death become articulated through categories of 'undead'? How does the unknown become articulated through the prevalent order of knowledge of the 'time'? How were new technologies such as cartography utilized to map out the 'unknown' and how were 'discoveries' incorporated into the 'European' system of knowledge? The aim is to examine the construction of monsters, witches and vampires in order to consider how cultural representations of monstrosity play a role in determining what qualifies as normal, civilized and human.

REQUIREMENTS:

Will be determined after first session

1. INTRODUCTION (5 May)

Required Readings:

- Eco, Umberto. 1998. "From Marco Polo to Leibniz. Stories of Intellectual Misunderstandings." In *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 53-76.
- Marina Warner, *Maps and Monsters*
<http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/gallery/2014/jan/03/maps-monsters/>

Recommended Readings:

Borges, Jorge Luis. *The book of imaginary beings*. Random House, 2002.

2. CONSTRUCTING THE MONSTROUS AND WONDEROUS (12 May)

Required Readings:

- Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. "Monster culture (seven theses)." *Gothic horror: A guide for students and readers* (2007): 198-217.
- Albrecht Classen (2012) *The Epistemological Function of Monsters in the Middle Ages*-*Rivista di Filosofia*.
- 'The topography of Wonder', Daston, L. and Park, K., 1998. *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (p. 120). New York: Zone books, 21-66

3. MONSTERS AND WONDERS (19 May)

- Boria Sax, *Monsters and Wonders*
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4. VAMPIRES (26 May)

- Barber, Paul. "Forensic Pathology and the European Vampire." *Journal of Folklore Research*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1987, pp. 1-32.
- Halberstam, Judith, and Jack Halberstam. *Skin shows: Gothic horror and the technology of monsters*. Duke University Press, 1995, ch.4

MOVIE: Bram Stoker's Dracula (1992)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzkIEMeXwMg>

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5. WITCHES (2 June)

- 'The Great Witch Hunt in Europe', Federici, S., 2004. *Caliban and the Witch*. Autonomedia, Chapter 4 and 5
- Witchcraft and Magic: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rHSu2oDZXE>
- Witchcraft: <https://podcasts.apple.com/de/podcast/witchcraft/id463701224?i=1000097068518&l=en>

6. ZOMBIES (9 June)

- Kevin boon, 'The Zombie as Other: Mortality and the Monstrous
- Raphael Hoerman (2017) Figures of 'terror': the 'zombie' and the Haitian Revolution
- Investigating the Haitian Zombie (6 parts): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXcjioLLvRQ>
- Voodoo Island: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWI9-avcNuE>

7. UNICORNS (16 June)

- Caillois, Roger. "The Myth of the Unicorn." R. Scott Walker, trans. *Diogenes*. 119 (Fall 1982): 1-23.
- Boria Sax, The True Unicorn
- Pluskowski, A. (2004). Narwhals or unicorns? Exotic animals as material culture in medieval Europe. *European Journal of Archaeology*, 7(3), 291-313.

8. MERMAIDS AND SEA CREATURES (23 June)

- Chet Van Duzer (2011) The sea monsters in the Madrid manuscript of Ptolemy's Geography
- Vaughn Scribner (2017) Such Monsters Do Exist In Nature' Mermaids, Tritons and the Science of Wonder in Eighteenth Century Europe
- Cristina Brito (2018) Connected margins and disconnected knowledge: Exotic marine mammals in the making of early modern European natural history

9. FRANKENSTEIN (30 June)

- Braudy, L. (2016). 'Frankenstein, Robots and Androids
- Stephen Asma, The Medicalization of Monsters
- Mary Shelly's Frankenstein (1994 movie)
- Podcast:
<https://podcasts.apple.com/de/podcast/frankenstein/id73330895?i=1000438236187&l=en>

10. WEREWOLVES (7 July)

- William de Blecort (2007) I Would Have Eaten You too: Werewolf Legends in the Flemish, Dutch and German Area, Folklore, 118(1): 23-43.
- Dale Hudson (2013) Of Course There are Werewolves and Vampires' American - Quarterly
- Phillip A. Bernhardt-House (2008) The Werewolf as Queer, the Queer as Werewolf and Queer Werewolves

11. CONCLUSION (14 July)