

# Monsters and the Haunting of Civic Memory: the Americanization of a Word

(怪物ととりつかれた公共の記憶:  
言葉のアメリカーナイゼーション)

Edward J. Ingebretsen\*

**SUMMARY IN JAPANESE:** アメリカン・ゴシックと呼ばれる表現様式が存在について、特に恐怖が美学 (Grunenberg 1997)、政治的な演説 (Goddu 1997)、そして行き過ぎた大衆文化 (Edmundson 1997) をも利用するやり方に関して、活発な意見が出されてきた。ゴシック様式は、そこによく登場する吸血鬼のように完全に死んでいない異常な生物のやり方にならって、その眼前にある全てのものを食い尽くしてしまう。例えば商業目あてのゴシックでは、フレディ・クリューガーやハンニバル・レクターといった恐怖界の有名人を集中的に売りこむやり方はびこっているように見えるし、恐怖や暴力に関するレトリックは音楽から政治演説に至るまであらゆる所で問題視されることもなく用いられている。こうした営利目的のゴシックはまた、デイヴィッド・プンター(1980)がゴシックの「差し迫った政治性」と呼ぶ説を裏付けている。というのも、恐怖をあおる話し方がB級映画からアメリカの政治の場そして日々のメディアやニュース作りの中に入り込んできたからである。ティモシー・マクヴェイや、より最近ではオサマ・ビン・ラディンの例に見られるように、いったん世間が彼らに怪物の烙印を押してしまうと、あとの法的手続はみな、怪物だからやつらは生きるに値しないというすでに下された判決をただ追認するものにすぎなくなってしまう。「怪物」という言葉には注意するべきだ。それはわかりやすく認識論的な明瞭さを持った言葉であると考えられているが、実際のところどんなメッセージを伝えようとして

---

\* Director of American Studies and Associate Professor, Department of English, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., U.S.A.

いるのだろうか。その言葉はいろいろなものを指していて複雑であり、一見した所よりもずっと広い幅を持つこの「怪物」という分類は、現代の政治においてどのような意味を持っているのだろうか。

本論文は、「怪物」の社会言語学的伝統を研究するものである。怪物のレトリックは古代以来、イデオロギー的な機能を果たしてきた。それらが達成しようとする権力や報復は常に、宗教、国家、文明の三者から成る権威によって保護されている。遺伝上の偶発的変異として生まれた怪物を社会的な寓話として読めば、それは人間の都市に門を据え、その通行を規制するものである。社会が自らを統治するために組み合わせる風習や慣行のレトリックにおいて、怪物は、イデオロギーが必要とするものが目に見える負の形をとって現われたものであり、烙印を押され、共同体が自意識を持つために必要な拒絶されるべきものとして立ちあらわれる。この言葉をめぐる議論の歴史を概観することで分かってくることはマクヴェイやビン・ラディンを怪物であるとするなら、皮肉にも、その言葉がもともと意味するものとは遠くかけ離れた意味においてであるということである。

All moveables of wonder, from all parts,  
Are here—Albinos, painted Indians, Dwarfs,  
The Horse of knowledge, and the learned Pig,

...

All freaks of nature, all Promethean thoughts  
Of man...

All jumbled up together, to compose  
A Parliament of Monsters

(Wordsworth, "The Prelude," 8, ll. 706-18)

"I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created."

(Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 54)

I wondered if I would give birth to a two-headed child someday, to serve  
as a constant memory of the biggest story of my life?

(Schwartz, on Jeffrey Dahmer, 15)

## Introduction

The existence of a mode of representation called American Gothic has provoked energetic commentary, especially in regard the way horror influences aesthetics (Grunenberg), political discourse (Goddu), and, finally, the way a Gothic economy exploits the excesses of popular culture (Edmundson). In the best tradition of many of its subjects, the mode cannibalizes everything before it. In commercial Gothic, for instance, the saturation marketing of fright celebrities like Freddy Krueger or Hannibal Lecter seems omni-pervasive. It also provides evidence to support what David Punter terms "the urgent politicality" of the genre (13), as fright-speech transfers from Grade-B Gothic cinema into political venues. Two primary examples of this are the cases of Osama bin Laden—accused of masterminding the attacks on Manhattan and Washington, D.C.—and Timothy McVeigh. McVeigh received a sentence of death for the bombing of the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City, April 19, 1995. 168 persons died in the blast, including 19 children.<sup>1</sup> More than 2,500 persons died in the plane-bombing of the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan. Both men have the dubious distinction of being the two greatest domestic terrorists in American history. In media and

press they immediately underwent a profound transformation into civic monster. McVeigh's state-sponsored death in June, 2001 (fifteen months to the day before the Trade Center Bombing) provides a closure to the public narrative that enables one to gain some distance on its trajectory. The panic incited by McVeigh was evident everywhere from the yellow-ribbons aired on CNN to *Time* and *Newsweek* fulminations, to the shockumentary biography about him. *All-American Monster: The Unauthorized Biography of Timothy McVeigh* (Stickney), was available almost a full year before McVeigh's trial and conviction. Even by then it was clear that legal verdicts would only confirm a verdict already popularly passed—McVeigh was a monster—a judgment summed up in the Gothic shorthand of Stickney's title. Bin Laden is still at large, and so the forming of his cultural memory is necessarily incomplete. Nonetheless, as in the McVeigh case, popular verdict need not wait upon legal adjudication and bin Laden, too, immediately assumed the civic role of monster.<sup>2</sup> There are a number of ironies attached to this word, used in so specific an American context. It banks upon instant recognition and epistemological clarity of the term 'monster,' yet what in fact does the word tell us? The word is multifarious and complex, and the category of 'monster' is more capacious than at first it might seem. How does the category 'monster' signify in contemporary media-ized politics? Ought it to? A brief overview of the word's contested history suggests that if McVeigh and bin Laden *are* monsters, they signal a problem far different from the civic trauma for which their deaths are to be punishment.

This essay examines the intertwining of social history and linguistic use in the word, 'monster.' The rhetorical and discursive power of the term in political speech and media representation derives from the unannounced way each links McVeigh, bin Laden, or other transgressor to a history of signification far older than Grade-B Gothic cinema. Indeed, such a representation derives its energy from the monster's age-old role as the marker of social distress, and this is where the use becomes ironic. That is, rhetorics of monstrosity have served ideological functions since ancient times. Always, the prerogatives and reprisals they intend are hedged round by the tripartite authority of religion, state, civility. The monster—the genetic accident, read as social allegory—sets the gates of the human city and polices the passage there. In the interlocking modes of custom and practice by which a society governs itself, the monster is a visible—if negative—concretion of ideological need, displaying outward the signs of stigma and the necessary repudiations by which a community comes to self-awareness. Althusser

argues that “all ideology has the function . . . of ‘constituting’ concrete individuals as concrete subjects.”<sup>3</sup> The monster is the rhetorical marker of this ideological process. The monster is the repudiated non-subject by which Althusser’s subjects are situated *as* normal within the civil order. Only in the shape of the abnormal and the unlike do we find, by inversion, a sense of what the normal is presumed to be. Nonetheless, it is the enduring irony of the monster that it is a vexed and doubled sign, like the fissured body of the monster itself. Emphatically, the monster signals that what we *mean* by the normal is always, like the monster itself, severely at risk. Timothy McVeigh and Osama bin Laden bring ancient warrant to their task: all is not well with the human community. Are they signs of the illness or sign of the cure? As monster they are, suggestively, both.

### I. To Show, To Warn: A Reading from the Book of Monsters

As a cinematic tag in a recognizable, although derivative, Gothic mode, ‘monster’ first appears in Thomas Edison’s screening of a version of *Frankenstein* (1925). Early film experimented regularly with sentimental and excitation themes. However, not until the thirties did the untapped audience-potential of horror become commercially recognized. By the forties the use of horror was as an accomplished fact. Indeed, even in these first experimental years ‘monster’ had already become a cinematic formula, finding regular and rubrical use in film titles as a trigger of fear. But cinema happened upon the word by accident, riffing it without understanding from a complex history of representation, without understanding what it had borrowed. As a consequence we must put the cinema aside, if we wish, with Nietzsche, to hunt the monster and understand the complex way in which the word signifies. That is, the low-life creatures drifting in and out of the chiaroscuro light of theatres—crawling out of black lagoons, dropping in from beyond the stars, or digging up from the earth’s core—are, like the cinema, of recent origin. Notwithstanding this fact, there has always been a social ‘beyond’ and there monsters invariably lurk, securing the edges of maps, controlling the vexed crossings from exotic distance to local threat. Contemporary uses of the word have about them an element of Gothic campy excess, but the term casts a significant shadow from deep down the ages. The awfulness of the monster signals, as well, the *awefulness* of the gods, their dread. It is toward this dimension that McVeigh’s biography gestures, even if unwittingly.

The word's complicated etymology suggests a convoluted and contested social history. Of the many meanings found in the *OED*'s four pages of close text, a primary meaning (although now somewhat occluded) is "Something extraordinary or unnatural; a prodigy, a marvel." Even by this definition, however, the word 'monster' demonstrates the prodigiousness it implies. Hybrid and boundary-less, through the centuries the word could and often did mean just about anything. Very early on the trope of monstrosity escaped its explicitly biological origins and began appearing in legal and social, theological and moral discourses. The word is monstrous itself, multi-faceted, sometimes noun, adjective, sometimes verb. Accordingly, it is not often easy to sort out its efflorescence of meanings, connotations and implications, except to say that a metaphor for anomalous birth became conventional drawing room speech, sometimes about subjects and topics far removed.<sup>4</sup>

In the first and literal sense, monsters are strange or irregular bodies—deformed or disabled as a newer rhetoric titled them, exceptional and challenged in the liberal speech of more recent day. Although this meaning of the word is quite ancient, in modern dictionaries others take precedence, as we shall see. In 1481 Caxton writes, "Or it hath a membre lasse than he ought to haue, ... and may be called therfor a monstre." Or, again, some three hundred years later, "When two children are distinct they are called twins; and monsters, when they are joined together" (123). Through the tradition both usages shadow each other; Chaucer uses 'monstre' as marvel in 1374, while 'monstre' as mishapen is cited in 1300. However, even Aristotle's use of the term (Gr. *Teras*) in *De Generationes*, Book IV, carries additional nuance, since by this descriptor he intends to reference the storied creatures of antiquity. This aspect of Aristotle's *teras* dates back through classic cultures (Babylonian, Roman and Greek), where it betokens the fabulous and wonderful, the awe-inspiring non-human—the Gorgon, Sphinx, Minotaur, griffin, Cyclops, even the cockatrice and the Chimera. In this pre-Aristotelian context, the creatures—minor divinities usually—to which the word referred often consisted of hybrid, multiform bodies. The awe thus commended to such divinities resulted as much from their astonishing visuality as for any powers that might accrue to them otherwise. Throughout the narratives of amazement, monstrosity equates visual abnormality (beauty, in some instances, as well as ugliness) with the morally terrifying. The linkage of spectatorial gaze with danger still undergirds modern representations of those charged with civic transgress and atrocity. For example, in the media-driven narratives of three 'monsters' (the

term was applied to each)—McVeigh, Andrew Cunanan, and Jeffrey Dahmer, much was made of the “good looks” that disguised their criminality. In the case of Andrew Cunanan, (the assumed killer of Gianni Versace), however, his attractive appearance was seen as *confirming* a criminality that was already a deviance—homosexuality. Desire in these texts of amaze, then, is explicitly tied to the fear that it activates within the reader’s subjectivity. This, too, has classical precedent; often the encounter with monstrosity was visually organized as desire as well as threat, as in the viewing of Medusa, or the basilisk.

The constant media-fretting over Andrew Cunanan’s varying appearances and his charming appearance depends, then, upon a discourse in which however fabulous or terrifying, encounters with the monstrous are moral moments. The encounter is presumed to leave viewers physically changed—sometimes blinded, sometimes turned to stone or into beast, or in other ways humanly blasted. In this aspect the monster manifests its familial relations to the divine—at least as portrayed in Old Testament narrative—as a force from whose presence one must shield one’s eyes. John’s Gospel account of Jesus’ passion likewise depends upon this motif, when Jesus confronts, and subdues, the soldiers who come to arrest him. This notion of dangerous visibility, indeed, is perhaps central to modern etymologies of the word ‘monster.’ Most derive from the Latin *monstrare*, to show (with cognate forms *demonstrate* and *remonstrate*), as well as *monere*, to warn. Even here, though, as we see, the original biological referent is erased. It is important to understand, then, as the etymological burden of these phrases suggests, that the bodily anomaly of the monster *signified* as show and warning. Difference—whether lack or superfluity, whether too many or too few hands, toes, fingers or other bodily parts—demanded interpretation. The body was a text, or better, a palimpsest, whose contradictory writings were contested and obscure. Bodily anomaly needed positioning within an epistemological geography, as it were. Homer, for example, subjects Odysseus to serial encounters with monstrous folk (the Naiads, Cyclops, Circe, among others). Pliny literalizes Homer’s use. In *Natural History* (77 CE, *passim*) he describes the monstrous races as fabulous creatures, all living at world’s end, equidistant from Rome. Pliny accepted as a natural given that geographical and thus climactic differences would account for the gradations in skin color and temperament of different peoples. Cartographers and the genres of travel literature will exploit these conventions well into present times. The virtue of distance permitted the ‘difference’ of diverse populations to be exoticised, and thus, removed of political threat.

The rhetoric of the monstrous is narrative as well as metanarrative; its descriptions severely moralized at the same time. External monstrosity was thought to compel its internal, analogical equivalents. There are monstrous races wrote Pliny, but monstrous behaviors as well—actions whose excesses, whether for good or ill, were seen to be extra- (or perhaps in-) human. Thus, negatively, one could pinion one's enemy as a 'monster of inhumanity' or as a 'moral monster' — as Addison and Scott do, a hundred years apart.<sup>5</sup> From a positive perspective, the word could signal a beauty or perfection that was also inhuman. One could thus be complimented, at least backhandedly, as a 'monster of learning' or a 'faultless Monster.' Either way, the word's most fundamental power is its protean ability, like metaphor itself, to organize interpretive authority while disguising the provisionality of the authority it commands. That is, rhetorics of monstrosity—like the word itself—are by definition promiscuous. They link across categories of difference while suppressing, and disguising, evidence of the linkage. The power of the monstrous metaphor lies in a paradox: the complete instability of the discourse it establishes undercuts the authority the word purports to offer.

Moving forward in time, in teratological commentary from Aristotle through Cicero, Pliny, and beyond, the hermeneutic of monsters and showy deviancies established a technology for reading civil crises which would later be Christianized. In *Signs and Portents* Dudley Wilson examines how an Aristotelian biological discourse came under the influence of other authorities, notably religious (194).<sup>6</sup> Framed within Christian teleology, as "a part of his mysterious purpose in creation" (Williams 1), monsters could be considered *guarantors* of God's natural order. Augustine's *City of God* assures the reader that God's inscrutable purpose is nonetheless served by the remarkable as well as by the commonplace: "A monstrous man, is, notwithstanding, a man." Even the monstrous races—the Pygmies, the Blemmyae (men whose heads grow beneath their shoulders), the Sciapods (men with one large foot)—all exactly located by Pliny far away, elsewhere—could sing praise of the maker. Similar recuperative movements were evident in non-theological discourse as well. With Augustine's example, extending through the early Middle Ages, monster-reading provided a way of establishing the human—and, explicitly, judging its competency *as Human*. No longer was the monster merely a cryptic key for discerning, or divining, the Divine.

Medieval maps established their divisions and boundaries on the bodies of monstrous persons; whether their differences were real or imagined was immate-



rial. In this respect, then, following the example of Homer and Pliny, cartographers merely naturalize a formal aspect of the monster, like *all* bodies, the monstrous body was thought to signify in social ways—generally, as we have seen, as negative examples of incompleteness or disarray. While not blameworthy themselves, monsters nonetheless occasioned or triggered blame. Neither in Christian nor pre-Christian usage was the monstrous body understood as a ‘personal’ affair. Its appearance was invariably linked to causes and consequences, and so the monster would be called to account for the civic crisis announced by its presence.<sup>7</sup> Person would become, in a most direct meaning, *martyron* (Gr.), witness—held hostage if you will to a realm of existence that transcended it. The crisis of signification announced by the monster was deemed explicitly metaphysical; that is, it involved gods and powers beyond human ken, perhaps, but not beyond their obligation. This returns us to another sense in which the monster is duplicitous. Ideology, then, marks the monstrous body as being further doubled, both transcendent and mundane at the same time.

The *monstrum* was that wonder-making person or event, the understanding of which was crucial to civic health. Even Aristotle’s *teras* signaled something more, or other. Indeed, the biological disarray of the monster suggests an epistemological crisis, an *exemplum*: the monster was an “omen portending the will of the gods.” Sorting out this epistemological crisis was a civic occasion, in which the monster had a well-defined role as public servant and agent of propitiation. In Roman civil religion such augury—divining the will of the gods through omens—was accorded public ceremonial importance. Monsters provided a means of reading the gods, understanding the cosmos by detailing in small its every aspect. Reading the monstrous birth took its place as one of many forms of divination, “voice of birds ... [or] any other way of seer-lore” (Sophocles 53). The fabulous and exceptional interpreted the real and the mundane (Lt. *mundus*, world) in effect by demonstrating its limit—or, on occasion, by offering it implicit critique. Reading the gods, and defining the human: the monster was multiply burdened with the need to signify, always, beyond itself. This fact partly accounts for the cross-hatching of taboo and excess characteristic of the discourse. Still, however problematic and ‘unspeakable’ monsters might have been, and however apophatic and beyond speech the discourses to which they pointed, nevertheless monsters are drenched in a sheer surplus of workaday words. From political interventions and state reading to carnivalesque titillation, the monster inspired editorial plaint from high while exciting ribald commentary from low. Authoritative voices con-

tested and defined their authority, either trying to explain the provocative body or to profit from it. In sum, the monster was never self-explanatory. This fact is demonstrated, in ironic ways, in Hollywood cinema, in which monstrous persons, human or otherwise, rarely speak at all, but in which the productions they make possible are riddled with epistemological and heuristic anxiety.

While curiosity and demand for the spectacle of monsters never waned, justification for their display changed. By Renaissance times, the cataloguing of fantastic creatures in bestiaries and wonder books, and the detailing of human forms—gigantic, miniature, rare and unusual—in travel accounts, reached its apex. The cataloguing of anomaly went on, but now under the aegis of the proto-scientific rather than the theological. Monsters, once readable objects of moral scrutiny, became useful in the Plinian sense—exoticized, offered as a sign of nature's profligacy rather than as its failure. Francis Bacon, following this line of thought, and anticipating a later secularized commercial interest in 'freakery,' argued that "a collection ... must be made of all monsters and prodigious births of nature" for "he that knows [Nature's] deviations will more accurately describe her ways" (Todd 154). As Bacon's argument suggests, bodies were maps, offering sometimes competing exegetical exercises in interpreting the human.

The hermeneutic activity prompted by the monster's physical body, then, was not all that different from those same contests enacted over bodies more generally speaking, as legal, religious and civil codes exploited the human form's capacity to signify. The monster's body only confirmed the epistemology that the normal body implied, with one major exception. While the 'normal' body accrued meaning by *not* provoking signification, the monstrous body accrued civic meaning only upon the condition of its *illegibility*. That is, while the normal body escaped reading, the strange body compelled it—while at the same time its strangeness insured the body to be unreadable. The Monster signaled the category failure of the 'normal' by forming its outer limit. The Monster, as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen puts it, "is the Harbinger of Category Crisis" (6), and the most basic category, never fully articulated and so constantly being troubled, was the definition of the human. Who or what defined the monster was, thereby, also defining who or what the human was. For this reason monsters become agents of ideological contest, useful exemplars of political conflict, aesthetic fissure, or religious erasure. Through this trauma of self-recognition, the strange birth permitted many different social affects—fear, abjection, reparation and expiation, prophecy.

By virtue of the civic panic enunciated around Timothy McVeigh and Osama

bin Laden, for example, both are arguably monsters in the word's early moralizing sense. That is, the first mark of the monster is the public turmoil he (or she) provokes, the civic moralizing show—part reprisal, part desire—provoked by their appearance. Monsters were and still are public texts. Their bodies somehow miswritten, were in addition overwritten, as they were used as pawns in struggles for social meaning and authority. Monsters, organic in and of themselves, were made to bear social opprobrium. In their flesh they demonstrated, in negation, the implacability of certain social, rather than biological laws. Skin color, genital size, or texture of hair, for instance, became social metaphor which then hardened into political allegory. Thus the obsessive reference to the monster's 'surface' and its alluring, threatening visuality was driven by a more general project of tracking interior difference—a holdover from the early Roman custom of reading entrails for cosmic significance. As a discursive practice, then, rhetorics of the monstrous signify less about individuals than about social processes triggered by persons under stigma. The effects of its alienation—repudiation, reprisal, social elimination—were visible in court as well as in fair, evident whenever repudiation and public spectacle depended upon each other. By these means, that is, differing societies created, and sustained their monsters in order to contain and define their own difference. These functions remained more or less constant from the beginning of the early classic period through the Middle Ages and beyond. That is, throughout this period fabulous creatures and extraordinary bodies of all sorts still conveyed the power of exceptionality and moral scrutiny accorded them by the ancients. In current practice, as we see with McVeigh, bin Laden, and other agents of social trauma awarded the title, the term 'monster' still registers an uneasy alliance between the abnormal as spectacle and the abnormal, however socially marked, as moral failure. Both, often, are demarcated as outcast: "Societies have always tried to unburden their disasters on the strange and the stranger, oscillating blaming divine wrath, rumor, and conspiracy" (Elbaz and Murbach 2).

Monstrousness, as physical condition, then, first functioned as a way to read the divine, although as social indictment it soon found a home in other and more mundane economies. Thus, whether situated as science, politics or sideshow, monsters remained part of the lore of the grotesque, socially unmanageable body. Indeed, monstrosity had its manifold profits, sponsored by science, domesticated by the literati for similar ends, and for similar gain. This point of fine distinction was not lost upon P.T. Barnum, for example, who did both.<sup>8</sup> The

stage, the laboratory, the moralizing church: where the wild things are, as object of voyeurism and moral show, the confecting of fear for social purposes. P.T. Barnum understood the ancients. The monster, always uncanny, always unreadable yet compulsively readable; needed to be exhibited, its message was ambiguous, and so endlessly possible. Cohen observes, the “monster is difference made flesh, come to dwell among us” (7). Yet that difference fascinates as well as repels, and the reasons for either response can not always be distinguished. In *Imagining Monsters* Dennis Todd writes, “It is not the merely monstrous that draws the viewers; rather it is the *frisson* that comes with seeing how closely the monstrous verges on the normal, the human, the everyday” (157). Verges on, yet pointedly not.

## II. Bodies Politic and Politicized Bodies: Humans Well-Made and Ill-

Biologically, the term ‘monster’ referred to an abnormal birth. However, as we have seen, the term gradually came to include matters less visible, but still humanly exceptional—interior dispositions and manners, rather than external form. Suetonius, for example, writing his history of the Caesars, makes such a separation: “So much for Caligula as emperor. We must now tell of his career as a monster.”<sup>9</sup> In its varied manifestations the monster represented deviation from a presumptive natural order; its unnaturalness was often, although not always, read as perversion. Nonetheless, whether extraordinary because of mien or form, vice or perfection, the monster established a site dense with crossed and contradictory meanings. Throughout its civic history it was the monster’s hapless privilege to articulate social disarray in always poignant ways. At its most dramatic, the monster signified the collapse of human forms and structures of knowledge. On the other hand, however, the monster was itself a production, a positive attempt to suture the rupture, to bridge the gap, to offer itself as a sign or direction away from trauma. Besides underscoring the commercial value of perversity in public places, Timothy McVeigh’s biography also teaches us that as a monster, McVeigh performs a variety of civic tasks. He does, or permits to be done, social work that we ourselves might otherwise have to deny or disown.

As realism and mimesis gave way to allegory, the rhetorical power of the word “monster” increased dramatically. In *An Essay on Man* Alexander Pope uses the trope of monstrosity to argue that man is ill-made; he “hangs between,” incoher-

ently a creature of opposing impulses and worlds (cited in Todd 177). In *Pensees* Blaise Pascal writes, likewise, "What a monster, ... what a contradiction..." (89). The Monster was the "Deformed Discourse"—the *via negativa*, the ill-made who showed, by inversion, the well-made. Thus, whether caused by random act of nature, or whether interpreted as transcendental signifier of divine reprimand, the monster called into question stable definitions of the human and the social.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) is organized by this almost obligatory Enlightenment cultural fantasy of man-making; as a consequence it is not surprising that intimations of monstrosity circulate through the text. In her formulation, however, monstrosity seems at first a visual condition unrelated to internal consequence.<sup>10</sup> Shelley borrows a common political metaphor in which monstrosity catalogues interior dispositions more than surface appearance. This point is underscored by the fact that her artificial creature spends much of his narrative (when not plotting revenge against Victor) discussing the injustices that made his villainy necessary in the first place. Shelley's ironic point in *Frankenstein* is that the creature's 'monstrosity' must be framed negatively. That is, the creature can be valued as 'abnormal' only through the prism of the status hierarchies of order, class, and sentimental virtue that his creator Victor's villainy threatens. These same hierarchies are, however, the ones that confer upon Victor 'normalcy.' Central to Shelley's text—and to gothic-political texts of this period more generally—is the question, which of the two divided men, Victor or the creature, is 'ill-made'? Which is more monstrous, the representative of social and political society or the creature of fantasy and nightmare? Where does monstrosity finally locate?

Victor Frankenstein is typical in broad outline of the Gothic villain. Early Gothic novels like *The Castle of Otranto* employed a simple formula in which betrayal of the duties of class signaled moral failure. No one doubted that class privilege accrued moral debt, nor were readers allowed to doubt, despite the epistemological vagaries of the novels. Indeed, moral debt *was* what achieved monstrous visibility within the structuring hardware of the tale. Nonetheless, for all the cluttering Gothic apparatus and the moral allegory, often as painfully visible as the spirit visitant, the failure in these novels is significantly a human failure. The high caste of the villains of these texts made their actions reprehensible, even perverse (in an older, presexual sense of the word), because of the twisted use they make of knowledge, property or person. That patriarchal prerogative excuses and sanctions the villainous Manfred (in Walpole's *The Castle*

of *Otranto* [1764]) and Montoni (in Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Uldolpho* [1794]) only doubled their villainy and underscored their monstrosity. According to the literary formulas at work, monstrosity in such cases signified not the inhuman. To the contrary, the reprehensibility (i.e. monstrosity) of Manfred, Montoni, and others lay precisely *in* their humanity—or rather, in the way their actions perverted the human. Later 'commodity' horror is quite unlike authentic Gothic in this respect. That is, commodity Gothic shifts this focus from the overtly human, deflecting its terms into extravagant costume dramas where in effect the costume assumes a significance that formalizes, and conventionalizes, the unreadability of the original monster. The moral (i.e. human) referent is exchanged for a distinctly *amoral* evil. Thus, the representational strategies that fix McVeigh or bin Laden as 'monster' undo themselves. Language that seeks to heighten the depravity of these individuals does so, ironically, by lessening their responsibility.

To summarize: The term 'monster' had originally signified a human being—even if, as Augustine noted, the signification was epistemologically troubling. In the formulas of Gothic media representation, plundered from film, the word now narrowly signifies the eponymous creatures of matinee and comic book. Arguably, the great charm of the cobbled-together, chemically-confected, scientific bad-seed or land-hungry killers from space killers so characteristic of this second wave of horror Gothic in the 1950's, was their *unhumanity*—a fact visually evident for all to see. In this way, then, the inhuman and the nonhuman became burdened with questions that had previously vexed the category of the *human*; the nefarious villains of traditional Gothic gradually were displaced by creatures who were less and less able to be confused with any sort of humanity. Such creatures' alienness was visually marked by *strangeness*. By that fact their inhumaneness could be easily explained away. Making monsters became synonymous with making them easy to find. Such films were, to borrow a phrase advertising a country western radio program, "stories that you can understand." To take one example, a film like *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* requires very little semiotic sophistication; its Plinian exoticism, however, is reversed by the fact that the creature doesn't *stay* in the black lagoon.

Monsters were once high-born creatures themselves, populating the texts of Aristotle, Cicero, and the ancient auguries of the philosophers. Over time they could be seen hanging out in street fairs as well as courts, where they saw service as curiosities and freaks. Finally they drifted, lumbered, hobbled—increasingly marking their failed humanity—onto the reusable sets of studio movie sets. A

similar slippage happened, from the reverse, as popular culture infiltrated high discourse. The initially (and still) discredited genre of the Gothic, cobbled together of bits and scraps of the nostalgic and outlandish, crept steadily higher into the most socially rarefied air, consorting with presidents, presidential candidates, law courts, Supreme and other. High (brow) moralists of all kinds used its terms pervasively, and often persuasively. Monsters suddenly seemed at home in drawing room and in all the places where the civic opera of the normal would be staged. Timothy McVeigh and Osama bin Laden, both agents of civic destruction, whose actions cast themselves beyond a certain ideological pale, nonetheless find themselves laying out an essential civic boundary. At the edge of the map, ancient map-makers would aver, monsters lie.

From Plato to Aristotle, Pliny to Augustine, Chaucer to Burke, Locke to Shelley, Marx to Freud, D.H. Lawrence and Emile Zola, Stephen King to Jesse Helms and Lionel Dahmer—the term ‘monster’ became a common, if contradictory, expression meaning abnormality, deviancy and exceptionality. The word would expand, finding within its capacious metaphoricity room to describe persons, races, radio hits, even excessive language itself. Over time the word lost all boundaries, and in truly monstrous fashion collapsed all categories of biology, sociology, ethics and aesthetics. It has a distinctive heritage. Edmund Burke’s analysis of the French Revolution relies upon the trope of monstrosity; a usage which surely informs Mary Shelley’s ironic asides to the sweep of history in *Frankenstein*. Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* likewise begins with an image of a Gothic monster stalking rational and civilized Europe. The instant recognition of the image, its very banal features, made it essential to Marx’s point about production and commodity. Freud explores the political (rather than economic) life of civilizations using similar tropes.<sup>11</sup> Stephen King and his kind, crafting commodity monsters, may seem far afield from these. However, like Freud and Marx, King is equally engaged in using the Gothic to cast a cold eye slantwise upon the established forms of a society. And monsters come as monsters go. Osama bin Laden assumed the role perhaps a year and a few months following the state-orchestrated death of Timothy McVeigh. In press and media and presidential speech both men were monsters. If so, they have an illustrious past, and like all monsters, they intend a meaning we need to understand.

### III. Conclusion: The Fearful Show

The use of fear as a “weapon of mass pedagogy” is of ancient origin, as Jean Delumeau argues in *Sin and Fear* (58). Fear functions as a homiletical resource, useful for devotional as well as for avowedly secular purposes. There is pragmatic value to be gained first in scrambling social codes and then, in various ways, licensing these transgressions. The dumbed-down monster, functioning both as wound and suture, is of such a use. Traumas attract attention, but they also distract significance. Emotions can be organized, exploited, quieted, all far distant from observable threat to political systems or investment. Civic fear—especially as it is articulated, and privatized, into the individual body of the monster—is something of a bait and switch. As Franco Moretti notes, the monster “serves to displace the antagonisms and horrors evidenced *within* society *outside* society itself” (84).

One observation can be made about the various scenes of public disarray in which monsters arise. Monstrosity is a complex, lethal and multifaceted charge. The very making of the charge calls attention to itself as a social performance in which permission is given for a wide range of socially useful activities: show, warning, threat, economic profit, moral lesson, repudiation, licensed transgression and public pornographies. Most recently, Osama bin Laden became the trigger, as it were, by which all manner of social activities, including violence, were licensed. It is important then to remind ourselves that through all of the fright tableaux of this society and the apparatus of fear that buttresses the economies of public culture, the monster is not so much found once and for all as gestured at, obsessively, again and again. Indeed, one can argue that such gyroscopic instability is the monster’s necessity: “The Monster, ... [is]... a body and a language not its own, is never in the place that they would assign it ...” (Olorenshaw 54).

As a fear trigger and civic rubric, the monster makes something happen that otherwise would not. Civic trauma can be viewed as a type of genre, in which novelty and convention compete and resist each other. In its classic form as well as in commodity culture, two parallel motifs exist. From James Jones and the Guyana suicides to foreign “devils” like Hussein (identified as such by President George H. Bush) or “criminals,” from the sexual child to the child who kills, run two parallel meanings: one, the activity is “too horrible for words” and thus ‘not to be spoken.’ Second, monstrosity is usually accompanied by a vigorous effort to publicize, speak, narrate, explore, explain, demonstrate, gesticulate and drama-



tize in as much detail as possible. Thus, monstrous events are distinguished in the first place in the demand they make to be seen. On the other hand they are set apart, linguistically, by being in some manner unavailable to language, their sublimity at war with their very banality: visible, perhaps, yet 'unspeakable.'

An industry arose out of the conflicting imperatives of such narratives, which often enough equally aimed to moralize the event as well as to capitalize upon its commercial appeal.<sup>12</sup> There is no doubt that perversity in public places is well financed. This industry of selling spectacular sin continues unabated, along with the ritual double-bind that evidences Gothic discursive fissures. "Unspeakable is how some were describing the state of network news," writes *Time* reporter Richard Zoglin about the crime-boom. Likewise, *People Magazine* calls the events in Dahmer's apartment an "unimaginable horror" (12 August 1991, p. 32) and then goes on in the accustomed Gothic mode of excess to describe them. The assistant prosecutor in the Susan Smith case summed the dislocations at work when he addressed the jury in this manner: "Look at it in the eye, face to face, and see it for the unspeakable horror that it is" (Bragg). Speechlessness and visuality collude. At this juncture the unspeakable becomes endlessly exploitable, like the monster itself, an industry of showy nonutterance that gestures beyond itself in a parody of the sacred. Howard Chua-Eoan observes, "There is a moment of black epiphany at the revelation of a particularly heinous crime—a moment that is both oracular and inexpressible" (66).

Yet this collusion underscores what we have been exploring; Chris Baldick notes that the discourse of the monstrous as "strongly associated with visual display, and monsters were understood primarily as exhibitions of moral vices: they were to be seen and not heard" (45). Importantly, monsters are also linked to the failure of language, or its corruption, as Shakespeare's Caliban notes when he denounces the slim profit he gained from being taught language. The invocation of speechless public hysteria as social gesture serves a variety of economic, social, and political profits—among which simply providing an occasion for civic fear is paramount. Why? The circulation of negative public affect—fear—is a proven method, not unlike the public sporting event, of effecting social unanimity—of holding, even if by force, the public body to coherence by making, in Freud's delicious phrase, "perfect enemies." The monster is the way a culture proscribes, as well as prescribes, what it repudiates. To paraphrase P.T. Barnum, no one ever went broke underestimating the complex public uses of formulas of fear, nor the complex delights of perversity in public places.

Gothic cinema, then—where we began—did not invent either the genre of the grisly or the fright-drama of the monster. If anything, this genre of the emotional plagiarized brilliantly, aping the street culture of the broadside, the penny dreadful, the Newgate novels, fictionalized lives of the criminal and reprobate, even medieval hagiography—all of whose moral lessons were inextricable from the lurid voyeurism and self-applied terror they offered. At the same time the Gothic mirrored political culture in the way it consumed anything that might be of use, the bits and detritus, the flotsam and jetsam floating along in the effluvia of civilization's forward march into forgetfulness. When all is said and done, however, the Gothic and its monsters are engaged in a ceaseless editorializing and commentary—perhaps dream work, or nightmare—of its society. Monsters, like any text, demand to be historicized, read in the terms of creation proper to their makers.

This returns us, then, to the life stories of a handful of American monsters—McVeigh's, but additionally, Wensley Clarkson's death story of that three-month media orgy on Andrew Cunanan, available within weeks of Cunanan's police-orchestrated suicide in Miami Beach—or the life of Susan Smith, likewise available even *before* the date for her trial was set. Consider *The Milwaukee Murders*, Don Davis' chap-book revision of Jeffrey Dahmer, or Anne Schwartz's leering account of Dahmer. There is not yet one for bin Laden, who remains eerily, a ghostly effect rather than incarnate. In each we find a concatenation of effects, the hellish, with its invariable shadow of the holy and ghoulish, overlain with commodity purchasable bad taste. But moralizing and taste seem to enjoy an inverse relationship; the worse the taste the more potential for moralizing.

Nonetheless a quick read through these texts shows us two things: that the moralistic is rarely moral, and the moralistic nature of the horrific, and the minatory quality of monstrosity—or alternatively, of perversity, especially someone else's—is, indeed, an old story, perhaps one of the oldest formulas available to narrative humanity. The horrible person could be recuperated in death, as it were; it was her or his final duty to give moral uplift, a fact which has long warrant in confessional and death-bed oratory.<sup>13</sup> Each of these persons, and the narratives told about them, in the deceptively mimetic fashion of real life and bio, have the pious punch of *memorata*: they conform to the formula of remarkable providences and the comfortable assurance of good terror—all the more so, opines the editor of St. Martin's Press, because they are "true to life" (The intimate association of life and terror should give one pause). They are "edifying tales of judgments upon

sinner and mercies shown to the pious” (Thomas 93). Both share a hermeneutic of the surface, of dangerous or at least ominous visibility—a calculus by which life’s most minute details, its memorable as well as unmemorable moments, were to be *read*, charted, evaluated according to a taxonomy of awe—whether awesome or awe-ful—in the same fashion that Luther read the monstrous calf and the ancients read the entrails of birds. Fear was moralized, the scary sanctified. The monstrous person, now largely dissociated from biology, was, still, the showy one he or she was the connection, the bridge—the *monere*, the warning, the remonstrance from God to the community. The monster, made possible by the language of the godly, cannot escape its fate at their hands.

Monsters, it finally must be said, are never monstrous to themselves; their bodies are organic to them. It is only in the view of another that monstrosity registers. Monsters invariably implicate the viewer: This was their drama; their magic. Their bane, however, is that the viewer so often discounts his interest, deflects or otherwise turns away; even as looking in horror films is as compulsive as the turning from. Monsters thus drag with them a constant fear that the monster said less about itself than about the person viewing it: Ultimately, monstrous forms “fascinate and terrify because they challenge our understanding, showing the fragility and uncertainty of traditional conceptions of man” (Friedman 3). In all its various uses, the monster set the limits of human possibility by registering where definitions of the human fail. That failure could be biological, as in the hermaphrodite, or moral, as the word increasingly came to signify. Either way, to identify the monster’s perversity and deviancy, was, likewise, to secure the human. Medieval maps, of course, used the trope of the monstrous precisely in this way: This way monsters lie: the monster becomes “a frame, functioning, ... to contain and structure what is within and to orient the viewer to beginning, end, and continuity.”<sup>14</sup>

Neither McVeigh’s nor bin Laden’s social monstrosity would have been evident to Aristotle’s biological sense of the word. The way press and media talk about celebrity transgressors like these two, it is not always clear that the meaning is clear to us, either. In the end, it has been easier to make a monster of McVeigh than bin Laden, who seems, as noted earlier, to maintain some ghostly presence. McVeigh, on the other hand, was a real presence whose real body could be staked in public long before the public death he seemed willfully bent upon—and in which spectatorial America was eager to collude. In comments released a month before the date of his execution, McVeigh showed that he understood the

rite he performed; the civic light opera of Oklahoma City needed public answer and the monster is the pragmatic choice. The monster, say the ancients, was a sign from the gods, an omen, ominous: It is our hunger they feed, and our souls they keep secure. We invite them in, after all, by buying the newspapers and breathlessly sitting up for *Nightline* with Ted Koppel. For the best of social motives, and *especially* then—traffic with the terrible and the horrible is permitted, even encouraged.

### Notes

- 1 McVeigh was scheduled to die by lethal injection on May 16th, 2001, although legal maneuvers pushed the date ahead a few weeks. The almost unseemly haste governing McVeigh's movement toward death was partially his own doing, since McVeigh refused to appeal his conviction.
- 2 For bin Laden, see Jared Israel, "Bin Laden, Terrorist Monster: Take Two," 9 Oct. 2001 <<http://emperors-clothes.com/articles/jared/taketwo.htm>>; also, and from a presumptively more elevated source, see "A look inside bin Laden's web of Islamic 'warriors,'" by Warren Richey and Faye Bowers, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 19 Sept. 2001 <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2001/0919/pls3-wogi.html>>.
- 3 In "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1970), cited in Jackson 34.
- 4 Consider how horror films cluster, in any given generation, around specific phobic points—in the fifties, around invasion, women, and teenagers, for example. America threatened from within and without, takes its revenge in horror. In addition to the teen films and invasion films, gender concerns become evident: *Mesa of Lost Women* (1953); *Cat-Women of the Moon* (1953); *Queen of Outer Space* (1958); *Last Woman on Earth* (1960). In 1953, one guesses that the women returning from the war effort were, in effect, alien creatures, no longer able to breathe domestic air.
- 5 In 1713 Addison can use the expression "These monsters of inhumanity" (*Guardian*, no. 105, para. 5) and in 1821 Sir Walter Scott can use without comment the expression "moral monster" (*Kenilworth*, xxx).
- 6 Wilson 194. In *Monstres et Prodiges* (1573) Ambrose Pares sums up much of the metaphysics of monsters. His "The Causes of Monsters" gives twelve reasons for the birth of a monster; these range from the cosmic "the glory of God"; "his wrath"; to the particular, centered on the mother: the "imagination," the "narrowness or smallness of the womb," the "unbecoming sitting position of the mother"; the magical or alchemical: "by the mingling or mixture of seed"; "by the artifice of wandering beggars"; and "by demons or devils" (cited in Fiedler 233).
- 7 The commentary elicited by the monster seemed invariably that of shame and guilt. Huet observes that mothers in particular were thought blameworthy in the formation of the monstrous child: "the monster appears as the public display of all secret, and at times illegitimate, yearnings. There are no desires, shameful or innocent, that one's progeny does not publicly disclose" (17). Such attitudes inform cultural scripts of deviancy still, as Schwartz demonstrates in her biography of Jeffrey Dahmer: "So many of us wanted to believe that something had traumatized little Jeffrey Dahmer, otherwise we must believe that some people simply give birth to monsters" (39).

- 8 There is a certain staginess about the monster, a sense that even though words fail eyes do not. This, however, is not the actual case. Along with the history of monstrosity there is the history of the "fake" or imposture. Numerous "biological" anomalies turn out to have been created, rather than born, because of the lure of easy money for otherwise impecunious persons. Todd, for example, discusses the excitement caused by Mary Toft's claims to having given birth to a rabbit (44 ff.). Barnum, though hardly impecunious, was famous for literally constructing his monsters in a manner we would now call a hybrid—without remark, so accustomed are we to the piecemeal body. Barnum's viewers appeared not to mind. Writes Harris, "the national tolerance for clever imposture ... was one Barnum relied on again and again in his early museum days" (62). The fascination of the anomalous body remained, whether that body was made, born, found mummified, hatched or flew in from space (Twain, Poe), or, in these latter days, was put together from mortician's wax in a special effects lab.
- 9 Suetonius, *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*, 178.
- 10 The novel appeared anonymously in 1818; the second edition of 1823 carried Mary Shelley's name. The 1831 edition, revised by Shelley, is, as Baldick observes, the one "on which virtually all modern editions have been based" (61). This is significant because of Shelley's conservative revisions, incorporating some of the political and thus morally allegorical uses to which the story had been put since its first appearance. See Baldick 30-62.
- 11 The unconscious haunting the house of Reason or troubling its dreams, is, as numerous commentators observe, "homologous" to the Gothic: psychoanalysis is "a late Gothic story," Maggie Kilgour observes (221). Freud never thinks to address the source of the rhetoric, so common is it.
- 12 Todd writes, "The sheer volume of this literature of monsters was immense, spanning everything from popular ballads and broadsides to recondite treatises. Some of it was religious, seeking to finding each singular birth a portent or sign. Much of it was of a more profane character, trading off an uncritical fascination in the marvelous, often collected in profusely illustrated, encyclopedic volumes" (44).
- 13 Unfortunate individuals thus subjected to such textual death become cautionary tales, exploited in the name of admonishing 'Spectacle' (and reenacted) in the chapbook, broadside, deathbed confession, and other vernacular forms of the monster show. Confession seems inevitably produced not by priests and kings as by the audience, whose complex desires come to us, somewhat spuriously, as a "right to know." Such libertarian language authorizes an indulgence to information that is our right to know only in the sense that with money one can now buy privileged glimpses into others' lives. Fiedler comments, "there has always been some who suspected that the appeal of the freak show was not unlike that of pornography, and in the age of the explicit, the secret is out" (335). The person being pilloried, hung, pressed or in other inventive ways being showily terminated was expected to have a suitably sentimental speech ready. Many times these would be printed up as broadsides. In some extreme cases, such speeches were available before the person actually died—an easy achievement, considering the sturdy formulas in place that made it possible for these to be convincingly written in advance, a bit like blank checks.
- 14 Williams 17. It is not unlike what might be called the postmodern: where fissures and seems and bodies sutured together are cause celebration rather than alarm monstrosity has become a postmodern chic.

### Works Cited

- Augustine. *City of God*. Trans. Gerald G. Walsh, S.J. et al. New York: Doubleday Image Books, 1958.
- Aristotle. *Generation of Animals*. Trans. A.L. Peck. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963.
- Baldick, Chris. *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-Century Writing*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.
- Bragg, Rick. "Focus on Susan Smith's Lies and a Smile." *New York Times* 25 July 1995: A11.
- Caxton, William. *Selections from William Caxton with an Introduction, Notes and Glossary by N.F. Blake*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.
- Chua-Eoan, Howard. "The Uses of Monsters." *Time* 19 August 1991: 66.
- Clarkson, Wensley. *Death at Every Stop: The True Story of Serial Killer Andrew Cunanan—The Man who Murdered Designer Gianni Versace*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
- Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome, ed. *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- Davis, Don. *The Milwaukee Murders: Nightmare in Apt. 213*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991.
- Delumeau, Jean. *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture, 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. Trans. Eric Nicholson. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990.
- Edmundson, Mark. *Nightmare on Main Street: Angels, Sadosochism, and the Culture of the Gothic*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Elbaz, Mikhael and Ruth Murbach. "Fear in the Face of the Other, Condemned and Damned: AIDS, Epidemics, and Exclusions." *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art, and Contemporary Cultures*. Ed. Allan Klusacek and Ken Morrison. Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1993.
- Fiedler, Leslie. *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self*. New York: Anchor Books, 1978.
- Friedman, John Block. *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981.
- Goddu, Teresa A. *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
- Grunenberg, Christoph, ed. *Gothic: Transmutations of Horror in Late Twentieth Century Art*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997.
- Harris, Neil. *Humbug: The Art of P.T. Barnum*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Huet, Marie-Helene. *Monstrous Imagination*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Jackson, Jr., Earl. *Strategies of Deviance: Studies in Gay Male Representation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Kilgour, Maggie. *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. New York: Verso, 1998.
- Moretti, Franco. "Dialectic of Fear." *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*. Trans. Susan Fischer, David Fogacs, and David Miller. London: Verso, 1988.
- Olorenshaw, Robert. "Narrating the Monster: From Mary Shelley to Bram Stoker." *Frankenstein, Creation, and Monstrosity*. Ed. Stephen Bann. London: Reaktion Books, 1994.
- Pascal, Blaise. *Pensees*. Trans. H.F. Stewart. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950.

- Pliny the Elder. *Natural History*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938-63.
- Punter, David. *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*. London: Longmans, 1980.
- Schwartz, Anne E. *The Man Who Could Not Kill Enough: The Secret Murders of Milwaukee's Jeffrey Dahmer*. Secaucus, N.J.: Carol Publishing Group, 1992.
- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein; or the Modern Prometheus*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1933.
- Sophocles. "Oedipus Tyrannus." *Oedipus Tyrannus, Sophocles: The Plays and Fragments, with Critical Notes, Commendatr, and Translation in English Prose*. Ed. and Trans. Sir Richard C. Jebb. Amsterdam: Servio, 1963.
- Stickney, Brandon M. *All-American Monster: The Unauthorized Biography of Timothy McVeigh*. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus, 1996.
- Suetonius. *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*. Trans. J. Gavorse. New York, 1931.
- Thomas, Keith. *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. New York: Scribner, 1971.
- Todd, Dennis. *Imagining Monsters: Miscreations of the Self in Eighteenth-Century England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Williams, David. *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Mediaeval Thought and Literature*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.
- Wilson, Dudley. *Signs and Portents: Monstrous Births from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Wordsworth, William. *The Prelude: 1850*. New York: Woodstock Books, 1993.
- Zoglin, Richard. "Manson Family Values." *Time* 21 March 1994: 77.

