

# Introduction to the Special Issue

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White Walkers. Hosts gone awry. Undead wrestlers. We are surrounded by monsters. Whether it is in horror films, children's movies, video games, or even in the form of our politicians, monsters inundate our everyday life. They teach us lessons, convey ideologies about what is socially acceptable, and they tell us who or what to fear. Whether through folklore, myth, or film, monsters have always been present. Monsters come to represent collective anxieties around difference (Calafell; Cohen; Levina and Bui; Loza; Phillips; Poole). They also have the potential to resist oppressive ideologies or stereotypes (Abdi and Calafell).

In this current political climate monsters provide us with a site to work through collective fears and address issues that we have yet to have forthright public discussions about. Thus, in this moment, monsters have become increasingly important. They demand our attention. They ask us to hear their screams. Each of the essays in this special issue provide us with an opportunity to consider the role of monstrosity in not only popular culture, but as meaning makers, and as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen argues, pure culture. Monsters tell us who we are. The essays included in this issue critically unpack representations of monstrosity intersectionally through the lenses of race, class, gender, ability, and sexuality. They also demonstrate how monsters are symbolically made or constructed in the practice of every life. Scholars from Political Science, Communication Studies, Performance Studies, Rhetoric, and Literary Studies bring their unique lenses and methodologies to bear on monsters to offer interdisciplinary perspectives that mirror the wide ranging approaches of the fields of horror and monster studies. This special issue brings together established scholars, as well as new voices, to reflect on the cultural significance of monsters and monstrosity.

This issue also includes the voices of practitioners as we pull back the curtains to hear from the up and coming Vancouver based Latin themed horror production company, Luchagore Productions, as Caleb Green interviews them about their history, motivations, and their most recent projects. We round out the issue with

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interviews with leading scholars in the fields of monster and horror studies; Marina Levina and Kendall Phillips.

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