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From Prodigy to Pathology: "Monstrosity in the British Novel from 1850 to 1930"

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Degree Type

Dissertation

Degree Name

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Major

English

Major Professor

Urmila Seshagiri

Committee Members

Stanton B. Garner Jr., Amy Elias, Bryant Creel

Abstract

In this project, I explore cultural representations of aberrant creatures and monsters, to assess the sociopolitical implications of corporeal monstrosity. Imaginative literature participates in the re/construction of m

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element of a larger social process of individuation and community defining of self and community through exclusionary practice. By situating Victorian and Modernist British novels in dialog with trajectory in cultural understandings of embodied deviance through pathology." The change occurs, I argue, because the rise of modernism ultimately constitutes the "domestication" of the monster, rendering it predictable, and containable within the boundaries of the diagnostic. The monster in Victorian fiction presents an ambivalent figure: alluring, in Modernism, the monster has been rendered largely instrumental, the product of its pathologization by scientific discourse.

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