

Introduction: Teaching (And Learning) With the Monsters in Our Midst

by Camille Maria Acosta and Sheila Bock, Guest Editors

I (Camille) am a true Chicana at heart; I'm pretty sure if you ripped open my chest, you'd find a prickly pear cactus that smells like creosote and is powdered with Hot Cheeto dust. The pride of my Mexican American heritage pumps through my blood like a drum, a constant and melodic reminder of the millions before me who sacrificed everything to keep me alive. Grandma Licha's tortillas and Tía Carmen's chile con queso serve as those rhythmic reminders. So do Mexican monsters.

Monsters raised me. More specifically, I grew up listening to stories my dad (Thatha) would tell me and my brother Chris about monstrous figures like El Chupacabra, La Mano Pachona, and El Cucuy. My favorite was La Llorona. For those who may be unfamiliar...

A long, long time ago there lived a woman named Maria. She was the most beautiful woman in all of Mexico, muy hermosa, and she herself knew it too. Day after day, male suitors begged her for her hand in romance, but day after day men returned home defeated, con el corazón roto. This was Maria's life until a dashing young gentleman galloped into town and turned Maria's life upside down; ella se volvió loca. She knew in an instant that she had to have him, for he was the only man to match her in beauty and in elegance. Soon they were to be wed, and not long after had two delightful chiquititos. This delight however was short lived, for one damning day the dashing gentleman became grotesque as he rode into town with another woman at his side. He rode up to Maria and pledged his life to this new woman whom he had barely met, because to him his current wife was no longer beautiful. Maria's heart burst into tiny shards of glass, invisible to the eye but painful for those handling it. That night, in a fit of sorrow and anger Maria decided to inflict the same agony toward the man who bestowed it upon her. Maria woke her two boys up, took their hands, and guided them to the river "for a bath." Hand in hand, the three figures immersed themselves in the water...but under their mother's hand, the little niños never came up for air. After the blood red glare of fury faded from sight, Maria realized what she had done. She shrieked from the gallows of her soul, "¡Mis niños!" before letting the river water fill up her lungs. It is said now that this weeping woman, La Llorona, has returned from the hereafter, searching for new children to claim as her own for all eternity.

This is just one version, of course. Throughout Mexican, Chicano, and Nahua history, there have been many, many versions of La Llorona and many iterations of the weeping woman herself—from Chalchiuhtlicue to La Malinche. This version, however, was the one I remember Thatha reciting to me as a child. I remember sadness and anger filling this story whenever my dad would tell us this legend. La Llorona's emotions always stood out to me; they seemed monstrous. Listening to these stories was both terrifying and exhilarating. Snuggled in my parents' bed, my brother and I both clutching stuffed animals, we were safe.

It wasn't until the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, though, that my family and I started to talk *about* these stories. At that point, I was halfway through my MA in Folk Studies at Western Kentucky University. Alone in an apartment, 1,300 miles away from my family and my home in El Paso, while also battling mental health struggles because of undiagnosed OCD, I turned to the familiar stories about La Llorona for a sense of comfort. Ostensibly, I began interviewing my family members about La Llorona for my MA thesis research, but at the same time I sought out these stories because I desperately craved to relive the storytelling experience of my childhood—my brother and I holding teddy bears and Thatha holding us.

Talking about La Llorona with Thatha, my mom, and my brother Chris, I found us talking about things that we hadn't really talked about before: stigmas associated with gender, race, and sexual orientation; Thatha's difficult childhood experiences growing up; Chris's experiences of not fitting the mold of white heteronormativity as a queer Chicano man; my mom's reflections on motherhood; the dangers of machismo and idealized views of "true love"; intergenerational trauma. Our shadows. Talking about La Llorona created space for these conversations in my family. It brought them to light.

It's important to note that while my personal experiences with monstrosity, my family, and Folk Studies are unique to me, the theoretical bridge between people of color and monstrosity has been powerfully researched by a number of BIPOC scholars across disciplines. Many of the Latine scholars, writers, folklorists, and activists who have influenced my work and, arguably, entire generations of monster researchers include Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherrie L Moraga, Norma Elia Cantú, Orquidea Morales, Domino Renee Perez, Rachel González-Martin, Solimar Otero, and Rudolfo Anaya, just to name a few.

One scholar who has continuously inspired my research with La Llorona and has paved the way for Chicanas to talk about their monstrosities is the Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies scholar Bernadette Marie Calafell. In her book *Monstrosity, Performance, and Race in Contemporary Culture*, she explores how monsters have been used as a device to represent BIPOC individuals for centuries (2015).

She writes, "I share these stories because they are representative of how we are made monsters...how our difference, or Otherness, gets constructed as monstrosity in a world that has become more and more conservative. I am interested in the ways that cultural anxieties and fears around Otherness, whether they are about race, class, gender, sexuality, body size, or ability, manifest themselves in representations of both literal and symbolic monstrosity" (Calafell 2015, 4). From colonization tactics used to silence minority voices to microaggressions in academia that otherize those of us who are "different," monsters have helped us explain concepts that are too difficult to explain in our everyday lives; concepts that make people uncomfortable.

Calafell also writes about how she has integrated monsters into her educational work. Specifically, she has taught "Monsters in Popular Culture" as an undergraduate course to help students to think critically about topics such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. She writes, "In a time period that increasingly espouses post-racial and post-feminist discourses to a generation that seems willing to accept them instead of critiquing larger structures that maintain inequity and

oppression, sometimes you must find other ways to point out structural inequality” (2015, 117). For Calafell, monsters are inextricably linked to structural inequality and serve as useful tools for teaching about structural inequality in the classroom.

After graduating with my MA in 2021, I began a contract position with the WKU Folk Studies alum Lilli Tichinin and the New Mexico independent folklorist Thomas Grant Richardson at the New Mexico Arts Folk Arts Program in Santa Fe. Through this position, I was able to craft a documentary about my family’s journey with the legend of La Llorona. It featured interviews with Thatha, my mom, and my brother, each sharing different variants and interpretations of the La Llorona legend, highlighting how their personal understanding of its meaningfulness connects to their individual, family, and cultural experiences and how monsters can be communicative tools for cultural groups. The documentary is titled [*La Llorona: Picante Pero Sabroso*](#) in reference to the iconic La Llorona folksong:

*Yo soy como el chile verde, Llorona,
picante, pero sabroso.*

~

*I am like the green chili pepper, Llorona,
spicy, but tasty*

I chose this title to gesture toward the multifaceted dimensions of monsters in our lives. Much like La Llorona, the monstrosity within us all is often uncomfortable, but constant. It’s complicated, yet familiar. It’s unknown, but it’s defining. It’s whimsy and shadow.

One of my goals in making this documentary was to expand the audience for these stories and to show how stories about La Llorona work powerfully to inspire reflection on and communication about potentially difficult topics within communities. They teach us important things about ourselves, our histories, and the world we live in.

I (Sheila) found these same stories to work powerfully in the college classroom setting. In Fall 2024, I showed Camille’s documentary to my undergraduate Honors seminar on “Monsters and Monstrosity” at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV),¹ and Camille joined the class virtually on Zoom to answer questions and participate in the class discussion. Before viewing the documentary, students had read a [series of blog posts](#) published by the Library of Congress that focused on La Llorona, as well as [Permission to Wail](#), a conversation between four Latina scholars of La Llorona (including Camille) as they reflected on “what the weeping woman teaches us about monstrosity, grief, caregiving, and joy” (Eisele 2024). Scaffolded with this rich contextualization, the documentary *La Llorona: Picante Pero Sabroso* inspired a generative discussion about the anxieties La Llorona stories speak to and how they create opportunities for individuals and communities to give voice to issues that can be challenging to talk about. Figure 1, a snapshot of the whiteboard at the end of the class, provides a glimpse into the range of topics addressed in the class’s conversation that day.

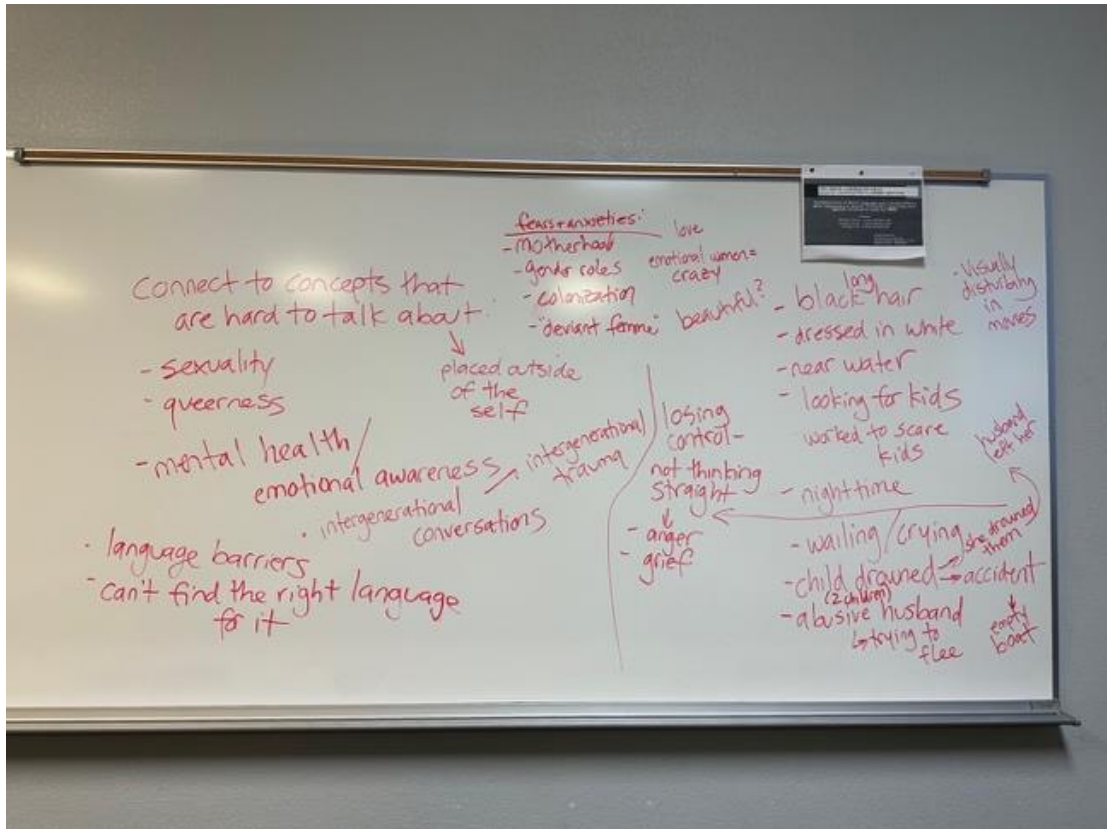


Figure 1.

After each class meeting, I asked my students to write a 400- to 500-word post in the online discussion forum on Canvas reflecting on what we covered during class time. I keep this informal writing assignment intentionally open-ended, providing a range of questions they can use to prompt their writing, including:

What did you find particularly compelling about the class discussion and/or reading assignments and why? What new questions emerged for you? What connections do you see between this week's reading assignments and previous reading assignments? How do the topics covered in class relate to your own experiences or observations? This is your opportunity to expand upon issues you talked about during class discussion or to raise issues you did not bring up in class (or both!).²

Following this particular class meeting, several students used this informal writing to reflect on their own observations and experiences about the ways emotion is and is not allowed to be expressed, as well as both the power and the dangers of "excessive" emotions that cannot be (or refuse to be) controlled. Many of the students grounded their reflections in their own experiences growing up in Latine families and communities, using the critical lens introduced in the readings and class discussion to think more deeply about family dynamics and gendered expectations. Several students, both those who identified as Latine and those who did not, also drew connections to their experiences in relation to mental health.

Notably, the majority of the students also referenced how powerful they found the words Camille used to end the documentary (although this did not come up in the discussion during class):

I like to imagine that maybe in an alternate universe after Maria's husband broke her heart she was able to run home and talk to her abuelita about it. Maybe then her grandma spoke about her previous heartbreaks, so they laughed and cried over pan dulce and café. Maybe in that moment grandma admitted to dealing with depression or anxiety and they both took a deep breath with clutched hands. Maybe that gave Maria the confidence to seek out some therapy or a couple of curandera visits to help her express her emotionality. Maybe after all of that she went home to her two sons and hugged them so tight and maybe they started their own conversations of mental health that day, too. Maybe, even for a narrative on Latinx bodies, the story ends with a happily ever after for once. Maybe. (Acosta 2022)

When we had our next class meeting, I called attention to how many found this reimagining of the tragic story to be so compelling. Revisiting some of the ideas and reimaginings introduced in “Permission to Wail,” I presented questions that would guide our collective exploration for the rest of the semester: What does reimagining monsters and the stories we tell about them accomplish? What new insights or understandings do they inspire?

At the end of the semester, I asked the students to creatively reimagine a monster or motif of monstrosity addressed in the class. Students approached this assignment through a wide variety of formats: visual art, comics, zines, music, a drag show, short stories, and poetry. I share one example here of a student's reimagining, a poem written by Sonoma Caley, that took shape in relation to the powerful ideas shared in Camille's documentary and the class discussions that followed. I am also including brief excerpts from the reflective essay that Sonoma submitted with her poem.³ This work is shared with the author's permission:

For me, there was never any other option for this assignment other than La Llorona. She was the only monster that I connected with, that I could relate to so viscerally both through my childhood memories of hearing her story and later mental health struggles. As Camille Acosta emphasized, La Llorona is a monster that grows with you, laying dormant until you need her most; until you are desperately looking for something to relate to, to hold on to. This conflict yields the intrigue around La Llorona—her strife comes from her self-inflicted grief and loneliness, and yet, she provides comfort and company to so many Latinos. La Llorona is never truly lonely, she finds companionship in the millions of Latinas that share her story and find familiarity in her rage, guilt, and sorrow. Her existence is marked by juxtaposition, eternally lonely and yet never alone. La Llorona warrants our attention because she screams about what the Latino community continuously silences. She is a staunch reminder of the existence of sexism, mental struggles, and generational trauma. This monster acts as a warning, showing us the vital need to fight to break these patterns down with each new generation in order to preserve the community. We cannot progress while holding so tightly to wrongdoings that we pass off as “tradition.”

My reimagining of La Llorona is one of acceptance. Acceptance of weakness, the innately human need to lean on others, and the necessity for change. This version of La Llorona is

a figure of healing, resilience, and female strength. By shifting to focus on the act of building an ofrenda, La Llorona retained her association with death, but her perspective on it takes a notable turn from grief and regret to one of acceptance and transfiguration. La Llorona gains a new sense of agency from her loss, finding peace and purpose via nurturing her relationships with her children and older female figures. This woman knows that love could never be confined to romance and lust. My reimagining aims to inspire discussion about La Llorona as a symbol of emotional endurance and the importance of community in overcoming hardship. In emphasizing feminine strength, I hope readers reflect on the power of intergenerational support amongst women and the potential for grace and reconciliation in the face of life's plentiful challenges.

Ofrenda for a Weeping Mother

Shrouded in darkness, the room flickers to life with the strike of a match
Marigolds glow, lighting the path to el más allá
Pictures lining the table boast faces of those long passed
And yet—tonight—they look different
Warm, ruddy. . . alive
A woman, adorned with a crown of raven hair, sweeps the floor below

Deftly moving around the children giggling and tugging on the skirt of her white dress
She pauses, staring into the center of the ofrenda
The smiling face too tight, too perfect, almost taunting her
A wrinkled hand lands on her shoulder—her mother
And somehow, the shadows tainting the edges of her vision seem to recede

The ofrenda blooms with their efforts
A mug, filled with ponche navideño, still steaming
A worn book, slightly ragged on the edges and yellowed with age
A plaid blanket, countless late-night talks interwoven in its fibers
Her tía joins, adorning the spread with a small bowl filled to the brim with dog treats
Lastly, a letter, whispers of anger and forgiveness wafting softly from still-wet ink

Tía plaits her long hair, weaving memories into each twist
Now, the photograph stares back
But it's no longer mocking
This time, grandmother's knowing smile is bursting with strength

The women's voices hum, blending together to create a harmony unlike any other
A gentle reminder that she could never truly be alone
Could never forget how to love, nor be loved
The woman in the white dress kneels
Tremors wracking her body as she places the final candle
Its flame rises, unperturbed by the weight of her sorrow
And her burden softens
Floating into the air as it mingles with the rising soot

High-pitched laughter ripples through the air
Accompanied by stories of those making the long journey tonight
Here, the woman becomes a memory
Whole, luminous, a mess that was carefully stitched together once more
Her legacy no longer one of sorrow
But of family, of femininity, and of grace

Bursting with tokens of remembrance
The ofrenda stands complete
A testament to love and loss and all of life's great strifes

Hands, old and young, clasp together
And a short oración is said
Low flames dancing perfectly in time with their words

As the wind begins to howl from behind the window panes
She feels a distinct warmth creep into the room
La Llorona no longer weeps, but smiles, her eyes unclouded
“Nuestros invitados han llegado.”

As the Guest Editors, we started with these descriptions not only to situate ourselves as teachers and learners invested in monster pedagogy but also to highlight the powerful roles that monstrous figures can play in both informal and formal educational settings—and the ways these settings can inform one another.

The idea for this special issue grew out of our ongoing conversations about what makes monsters, cryptids, and other legendary creatures so powerful to teach (and learn) with.

Our conversations around this topic were informed by the interdisciplinary field of monster studies,⁴ along with the rich body of folkloristic scholarship on monstrous creatures and motifs, or, perhaps more precisely, creatures and motifs that have taken on the label of “monstrous.”⁵

We also found great inspiration from those who engage in scholarship that extends beyond traditional academic formats and modes of publication. Emily Zarka's show [Monstrum](#) for PBS Digital Studios serves as an excellent example of public-facing scholarship that makes monster education more accessible to the public.⁶ So does the podcast [Monstras: Latinx Monsters & Folklore](#), hosted by Brenda Salguero and Orquidea Morales. Working in the domain of fiction, Rhonda Jackson Joseph creates both fantastical worlds and powerful realities in which the stories of women of color finally get to decide who calls whom monstrous. As we write this introduction, her latest book, *My Monsters Ain't Like Yours: A Collection of Short Stories*, has just been published, using Black feminist intersectional horror to explore the ways that monsters are both personal and larger than personal, linked both to individual experiences and different shared aspects of the human condition (2026).⁷

We understand this issue as being part of a broader conversation among scholars and educators working at the intersections of folklore and monster studies that are attentive to application and practice. One notable example of this work is a [2026 special issue of the journal *Contemporary Legend* on “Monsters, Creatures, and Cryptids,”](#) guest edited by the folklorist David J. Puglia, which includes contributions that, in his words, “make clear that monsters are not merely objects of scholarly inquiry; they are resources actively deployed across a range of contemporary practices” (3). One especially relevant contribution to that special issue is Andrea Kitta’s Research Note titled “Teaching with Monsters.” Another example is the [Spring 2026 issue of *Teaching About Asia*,](#) an open-access teaching resource journal, which includes a section on Japanese monsters/yōkai, with each article featuring pedagogical resources.

Reflecting on the current state and future directions of legendary monster scholarship, Puglia asserts that “Rather than disappearing, legendary monsters have become more elusive, harder to categorize, and more deeply embedded in the cultural systems that produce and sustain them” (2026, 1). Educators seeking to help guide others through explorations of these elusive figures and the cultural systems that produce and sustain them, be they in classrooms, public programming, or at the kitchen table, have approached this endeavor with different learning objectives, strategies, and activities. One of our goals with this special issue is to showcase some of the creative, profound, and thought-provoking ways educators in different parts of the world have worked with monsters in the classroom and beyond.

In giving this special issue the subtitle “From Whimsy to Shadow,” we sought to create space for the broad spectrum of ways we as humans interact with monsters. While most often associated with fears and anxieties, monsters can also serve as entry points into other dimensions of the human experience, including playfulness and creativity, for example when queer drag performers engage with monstrosity in the television show *Dragula*. Speaking about her poem “La Llorona Considers the State of Tortillas,” the folklorist Norma Cantú highlights her desire to remove La Llorona from the realm of horror: “I wanted to make it human and funny... It’s like, yeah, she’s gonna comment about how tortillas are not what they used to be. So, I hope there’s more of that. Reconfiguring the figure” (quoted in Eisele 2024).

Monsters and cryptids can also be linked to regional pride and economic opportunities within communities (Puglia 2022, 25-8). A notable example of a cryptid embodying these dimensions of the human experience is Mothman in Mt. Pleasant, West Virginia, a region often associated with problematic stereotypes by outsiders. As the folklorist Rosemary Hathaway asserts in her reflections on the increasing popularity of Mothman, which in turn has inspired increased tourism to the area, “There’s money to be made with these cryptids, and I am glad they’re doing it!” (quoted in Mallow 2021).

Puglia reminds us, “As monsters are not fixed objects, they can move, be reinterpreted, and be actively deployed...the legendary monster endures not because it can be fixed, but because it can be continually redefined” (2026, 4). Whether dealing with the whimsical or shadowy dimensions of monstrosity, all the contributions in this issue offer insights into how this understanding of monsters, cryptids, and other legendary creatures can be brought to life in learning spaces.

Of course, it is important to acknowledge explicitly that monsters are complicated. They are more than “cultural artifacts” that can be examined from a distance. The same complexities that make the monstrous so pedagogically rich also present ethical considerations that must be considered when we seek to engage with them in our educational practice. In her conversation with Rachel González-Martin in this issue, Domino Renee Perez astutely warns that “we have to really be aware of what we're inviting into the classroom” (2026:21) when we begin to teach with monsters. Indeed, several authors in this issue draw explicit attention to how educators in folklore and related fields can thoughtfully engage with these complexities in the work of teaching with monsters.

While grounded in distinct contexts (from summer family programming at a museum to an elementary school classroom to stage performances to the undergraduate college classroom), the pieces in this special issue provide models and resources that other educators can draw upon and adapt in their own pedagogical work.

In the process, this issue contributes to emerging interdisciplinary attention to monster pedagogy (cf. Browning 2023; Golub and Hayton 2017; Hughes 2009; Karn 2023) by not only engaging with folkloric content but also by featuring work shaped by approaches and sensibilities of the field of Folklore Studies. These approaches and sensibilities include being attentive to both continuity and change in the stories circulating about monsters, cryptids, and other legendary creatures across time, space, and forms of media; understanding that playfulness does not preclude seriousness; and recognizing that monstrosity can serve as a medium to help communicate about topics that can be difficult to address in other ways.⁸ It also includes an obligation to “handle with care,” to reference the title of Rachel González-Martin and Domino Renee Perez’s interview (2026).

As Matthew David Goodwin relatedly takes note of in this issue, teaching *with* monsters implies a methodological approach of collaboration. Taking monsters seriously calls for an emphasis on relationships that extends beyond treating a (legendary, literary, performance, popular culture) text as an artifact that can be extracted from its (personal, social, cultural, environmental, historical, political) contexts for the sake of analysis. Multiple contexts of meaning-making matter. The relationships embedded in the idea of teaching (and learning) with monsters matter.

Together, the contributions to this special issue showcase some of the diverse ways that teaching with monsters can help learners of different ages and in different educational settings develop skills of close reading and critical analysis; navigate ontological uncertainty; and creatively reimagine the world we live in and our place within it.

Camille Maria Acosta is a folklorist and monster enthusiast originally from the border town of El Paso, Texas. She pursued Performance Studies with a BA in Theatre from El Paso Community College and Western Kentucky University before completing her MA in Folk Studies from the same institution. Within this program, she delved into the beauty of Latinx horror through the lens of La Llorona and how monsters are mirrors guiding us toward our own brilliance, our own truth. Upon

graduating in 2021, she pursued folklore and cultural studies work with the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress as well as the New Mexico Arts Folk Arts Program, culminating in the YouTube documentary La Llorona: Picante Pero Sabroso. Her work has been featured in several publications including De Los: Los Angeles Times, HipLATINA, Borderlore, and the two-part Tubi documentary series Scariest Monsters in America and Scariest Monsters in the World. In 2023, Acosta launched her podcast [Floaties for Krakens](#), diving into the world of the other and exploring how being monstrous is synonymous with a powerful resilience. Today, she is fulfilling the position of Folklife Specialist under the Kentucky Folklife Program.

***Sheila Bock** is a folklorist and professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary, Gender, and Ethnic Studies at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). Addressing a diverse range of topics, her scholarship employs narrative and performance approaches to examine how individuals and communities position themselves, and are positioned by others, within contested domains of experience. She is the author of numerous articles and book chapters and the book *Claiming Space: Performing the Personal Through Decorated Mortarboards* (University Press of Colorado, 2023). She is an award-winning teacher, and conversations with the brilliant students in her undergraduate seminar “Monsters and Monstrosity” at UNLV helped inspire the theme of this special issue. She trained in Folklore at The Ohio State University, where she received her PhD from the Department of English.*

Endnotes

¹ Taking seriously representations of monsters and monstrosity in specific cultural contexts, while also attending to how these representations change over time, this course examined how individuals and communities use monsters to grapple with cultural fears and anxieties surrounding, among other things, gender, sexuality, race, the environment, technology, mental health, and the body.

² This informal writing assignment serves multiple purposes in my pedagogy. It offers students who are more introverted, or who may take longer to process and articulate their ideas, an opportunity to show their engagement with the ideas introduced in the course. It also functions as a valuable assessment tool, offering insights into students’ understanding of key ideas and letting me know if any concepts or ideas introduced in class need further clarification.

³ This accompanying essay asked students to address the following questions:

- What is your understanding of why monsters matter? In other words, why do they warrant our attention? In your answer, make sure to engage with ideas introduced in **at least 2** of the readings assigned during the first three weeks of the semester. Make sure to include direct quotes and cite specific page numbers from these 2 readings when answering this question.
- Why did you select this specific monster or motif of monstrosity to reimagine for this assignment? What do you find particularly compelling about this monster or this motif? In other words, why does this *specific* monster or motif of monstrosity warrant our attention?
- What connections can you draw between your reimagining and other specific examples of revisioning, reclaiming, and/or resignifying we have encountered in this class? In other

words, what specific examples of reimagining from this class inspired your approach to this assignment, and how specifically did you take inspiration from them?

- Finally, what do you hope your re-imagining will accomplish? What new insights or understandings do you hope it will inspire?

⁴ Within this expansive field, texts that the two of us have found particularly influential include Anaya 1992; Anzaldúa 1987; Calafell 2015; Cohen 1996; Halberstam 1995; Mittman and Dendle 2012; Moraga 2001; Morales 2020; Poole 2011; Rocha 2024; Trujillo 2006; and Weinstock 2020.

⁵ This body of scholarship includes Alcalá and Cantú forthcoming; Barakat 1969; Black and McNeill 2018; Brunvand 1981; De Caro 1985; Daly 2025; Dégh 2001; Dundes 1998; Ellis 2003; Evans 2005; Foster 2007, 2009, 2020; Hawes 1968; Hufford 1982; Kearney 1969; Kitta 2019; Otero 1996; Peck 2023; Perez 2008; Puglia 2022; Roth 2017; Goldstein, Grider, and Thomas 2007; Tucker 2005, and Valk 2015.

⁶ In “Talking Folklore: Getting Others to Take Folklore Seriously While Remaining a Serious Folklorist” (2021), co-authored with Andrea Kitta and Trevor J. Blank, Lynn S. McNeill recounts her experiences seeking to bridge academic and popular understandings of legendary creatures on television shows such as Animal Planet's Finding Bigfoot, offering a thoughtful consideration of how engaging in this public-facing work can help educate the public on what folklorists do and why their work is important. See also McNeill 2026.

⁷ See also the anthology Silk & Sinew: A Collection of Folk Horror from the Asian Diaspora (2025), edited by Kristy Park Kulski, Ai Jiang, and Lee Murray.

⁸ See Rachel González-Martin's article "Un/Believability: Exposing Sexual Trauma Through Latinx/e Supernatural Legends" (2026) for an examination of the relationship between encounter narratives with La Llorona in South Texas and the tellability of stories about sexual violence in Latinx/e communities.

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