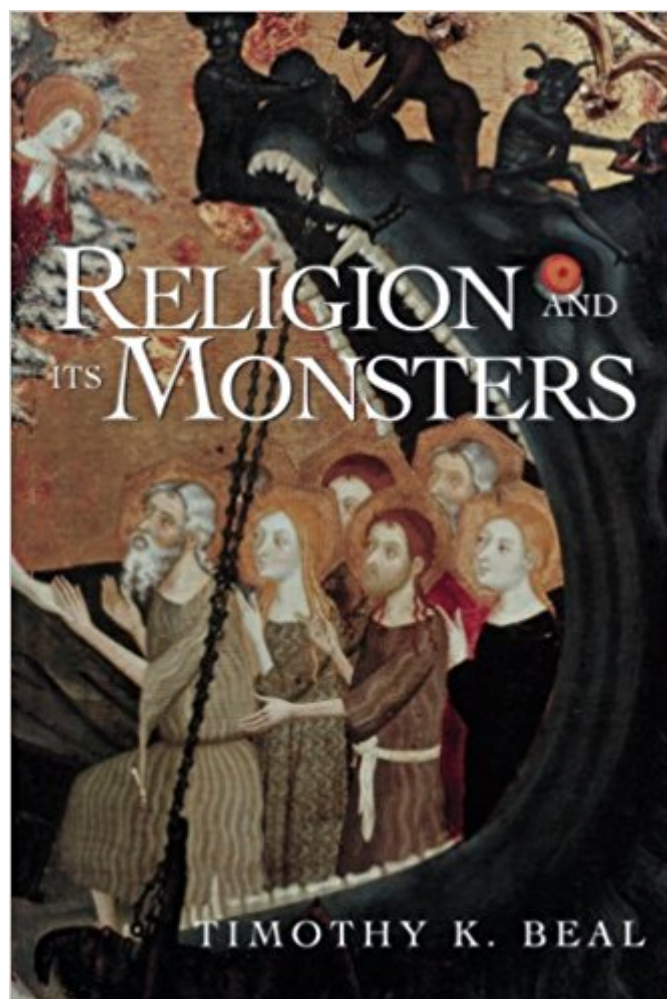


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Religion And Its Monsters



Synopsis

Religion's great and powerful mystery fascinates us, but it also terrifies. So too the monsters that haunt the stories of the Judeo-Christian mythos and earlier traditions: Leviathan, Behemoth, dragons, and other beasts. In this unusual and provocative book, Timothy K. Beal writes about the monsters that lurk in our religious texts, and about how monsters and religion are deeply entwined. Horror and faith are inextricable. As monsters are part of religious texts and traditions, so religion lurks in the modern horror genre, from its birth in Dante's *Inferno* to the contemporary spookiness of H.P. Lovecraft and the *Hellraiser* films. *Religion and Its Monsters* is essential reading for students of religion and popular culture, as well as any readers with an interest in horror.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The moment I started to read this intriguing modern religious masterpiece, I could not put it aside. *Religion and Its Monsters* is a book where one reading can easily lose track of time, because the words flow so perfectly with much thought and genius behind them. Professor Beal seems to have gone through and mastered every possible source, both modern and ancient, on the topics concerning monsters and how they are intertwined with religion. I especially enjoyed the sections concerning Leviathan, Tiamat, and vampires, and how all these creatures have their place in our very own Judeo-Christian Bible. I already know this is a book I will read through several times and I highly recommend it.

Why are we afraid of blood drinkers? What makes the drinking of blood any more horrific than the eating of flesh (steak), or the wearing of skin (leather)? It was a question that I had never asked before, but just accepted in such creatures as vampires and chupacabra. Little did I know that there is an actual Biblical prohibition to drinking blood (Deuteronomy 12:23), as the soul is said to live in the blood, and to drink it is to swallow the soul and take that which belongs to God alone. After all, "The blood is the life, Mr. Renfield." Such revelations can be found in abundance in "Religion and Its Monsters." Author Timothy K. Beal has plundered the Bible of its hidden monsters, and laid bare the secrets and contradictions of Leviathan, Behemoth and the lesser-known but more important Yam. Although most of the mythology is Christian, he has referenced the Bagavadgita and Krishna, as well as other older religions that influenced Christianity, such as the mythology of the Near East. As well as some insights into the nature of monsters and treated in these religions, he has shown the influence of these primitive monsters on modern life. He has drawn a fishhook through the mouth of the Babylonian chaos god/monster Tiamat, run a conclusive link through the Biblical Leviathan, up to Lovecraft's Cthulhu and into the enormous hides of cinematic Eco-monsters like Godzilla and his contemporaries. He has shown the changeover in the bible, where God was set against the ancient chaos gods of older religions such as Yam and Baal, until the Revelation of John brought a new player onto the field, that of the great dragon Satan. An absolute must-read for anyone interested in religion and/or modern horror. Without knowing the biblical links, such as the blood-drinking prohibition, one cannot fully appreciate monsters such as Dracula and Cthulhu. The roots of horror run deep and old.

Can a serious theological book possibly go wrong after opening with remarks concerning The Bride of Frankenstein? Not this book! This book is a serious, publically accessible study of chaos monsters and religion or, if you prefer, the edges of ordered reality and religion. From the religious perspective it takes you through the Near Eastern chaos monsters thru Job, the Psalms and Revelations. It has fascinating observations concerning the monsters of the Hebrew Scriptures as both frightening as God's playthings. Culturally, the book looks at Orientalism, monster flicks, horror fiction and Goth music - as embracing or staving off the chaos monsters. One often wishes that Beal would distribute the attention he gives to detail differently -- Job and Dracula get the most detailed attention. But one must admit that it is only because one's own interests are differently distributed. However, the topics that are less detailed have well chosen seminal ideas for the reader to think for themselves! This encouragement for independent thought around his subject is the result of the author's humility despite the breadth of knowledge he displays. If you have any interest in the dark side of society, this

book is well worth your time.

I bought this book last year for an independent study and it was one of my favorites. This book is as immensely entertaining as it is informative. Beal touches on numerous topics, ranging from ancient texts and their monsters, modern music, and even Dracula. I would suggest it to anyone studying religion with an interest in its role in society.

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