SUMMARY

Tradition and Modernity in *Godzilla*:
The Implications of Changing Perceptions of Monsters

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This paper presents an overview of records concerning “monsters” from ancient times through the medieval era to the modern age, and considers whether and how the various features seen in each era have been passed on to contemporary monsters. The study shows that being a biological absurdity is a feature that has remained consistent from relatively early times to the Godzilla of today. It should be noted, however, that the supernatural qualities seen in premodern times become rare in the Meiji period (1868-1911).

Size is a feature newly acquired in the modern era, largely through the influence of the movie *The Lost World* (1925). In this film, a dinosaur, shown as colossal in proportion to humans, appears on the streets of London. A further influence of *The Lost World* was the growing popularity of the idea of monsters being discovered in unexplored regions. As a succession of monster movies, such as *King Kong* (1933), followed, monsters gradually took on qualities regarded as entertaining.