

HIST 349: Reading Guide – Boo!

1. Why is medieval society filled with so many monsters?
2. Is there a hierarchy of sins evident in the visions of hell and purgatory? If so, what is it? Are some sins considered worse than others? How can we tell?
3. What kind of moral code do hell and purgatory enforce? How does the afterlife and its possible punishments affect morality (go beyond “making everyone behave”)?
4. How dangerous are the undead to people with whom they come in contact? Are some more dangerous than others? Why?
5. Are there regional differences between the undead? For example, between Scandinavian and English vampires or German and English ghosts? What do these differences suggest?
6. How do the chroniclers of monster stories tell their tales? Do we see a high degree of naiveté or credulity or is it the opposite? What is the point of writing these stories down?