

# Critics, Monsters, Fanatics, and Other Literary Essays

Cynthia Ozick



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If every outlet for book criticism suddenly disappeared — if all we had were reviews that treated books like any other commodity — could the novel survive? In a gauntlet-throwing essay at the start of this brilliant assemblage, Cynthia Ozick stakes the claim that, just as surely as critics require a steady supply of new fiction, novelists need great critics to build a vibrant community on the foundation of literary history. For decades, Ozick herself has been one of our great critics, as these essays so clearly display. She offers models of critical analysis of writers from the mid-twentieth century to today, from Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Kafka, to William Gass and Martin Amis, all assembled in provocatively named groups: Fanatics, Monsters, Figures, and others. Uncompromising and brimming with insight, these essays are essential reading for anyone facing the future of literature in the digital age.

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