

The Beautiful Monstrous: Feminism in *The Book of Marvels and Travels*

What is often considered monstrous exists in the grey area between normalcy and ineffability: an ambiguous zone where all those who do not adhere to strict societal standards live and breathe. In reality, those who are deemed monstrous may appear externally “normal”, as their monstrosity festers and survives beneath the surface. In fiction or fantastical texts, however, these monstrosities seep into the external—the physical—marking those who are seen as rooted and internally “other” as spectacle. In Sir John Mandeville’s late medieval text, commonly known as *The Book of Marvels and Travels*, there is no shortage of monsters. The almost two-dozen monsters and hybrids represented and described throughout the travel narrative work toward different means, with these means almost always working to appeal to the audience’s natural inclination toward wonder and fascination of the unknown, foreign, and exotic. Among these monstrous representations, none are as political and striking as the instances of female monstrosity, particularly, the Dragon Lady and the Snake Virgins. The analysis that follows utilizes these two main instances of female monstrosity throughout Mandeville’s text to form a feminist critique of the portrayal of feminine monstrosity and the circulation of reproductive bodies in late medieval literature. Although Mandeville does not necessarily speak of these hybrid women in negative terms, their monstrosity ultimately “others” them as dangerous and abject figures. This abjection and specific monstrosity of these women importantly removes them from the cycle of circulation of their reproductive bodies, that of which they would otherwise fall victim to as a result of their societal position.

When reading this from a patriarchal lens, the monstrous nature of these women, that of which pushes them to distinct corners of their societal positions, may seem conducive to an isolating or difficult life of detachment from normal social life. However, this analysis will argue

that, when reading this from a feminist angle, this monstrosity may serve as an escape from circulation, as their hybridity caused by the monstrous alteration of their reproductive organs allows them a chance to gain a particular freedom outside of, or even beyond, patriarchy. While this may all be true, an issue arises: these women's particular hybridity, that of which allows them to either fully or occasionally externally appear as "normal" women, still allows them to be subject to the circulative male gaze. To that end, this study will offer, rhetorically, an embrace of full monstrosity as a feminist escape.

Judiciously, this paper will begin by highlighting the expectations placed upon women during the middle ages adjacent to the methods of circulation that used them in order to paint the preliminary picture of both what was being used against them in making them monsters, alongside what they can escape from by embracing full monstrosity. Next to this analysis will be a brief, yet significant, insertion of feminist attitudes toward their societal positions in the Middle Ages, that of which was spearheaded by Christine de Pizan. Following this examination, that of which subtly highlights male attitudes toward women during this time, this paper will describe representations of female monsters during the middle ages and what these monstrous representations stood for, which will begin the reading of the primary text by Mandeville. Next, this paper will discuss and think about these representations in tandem with modern feminist thought on monstrosity and hybridity. Lastly, this analysis will conclude with a full embrace of monstrosity as a means to a feminist future.

It seems productive to begin by noting and discussing the expectation placed upon women during this time, alongside the methods of circulation that used them, in order to impart on what *exactly* their monstrosity helps them to escape from. In her book *The Lady in the Tower*, Diane Bornstein paints a rather evocative picture of the expectations placed upon women during

this time, noting that “The popular image of a medieval woman is a lady in a tower wearing a pointed headdress, a flowing cloak, and a sumptuous gown of silk, velvet, or cloth of gold; she is gazing out the window at knights riding to a tournament, or at peasants laboring in the field” (9). The substance of this portrayal goes considerably beyond the details, in that the significance lies in the essence of the woman described in-between its lines. Namely, she is expected to be the pinnacle of beauty: a portrayal of each and every standard at once and naturally (Bornstein 9). What’s more, though, is the significance of her presence “gazing out the window” (Bornstein 9). Here, she is either patient and appreciative of the men around her and their prowess, or, differently yet at the same time, waiting and ready for the moment that she is needed to fulfill what was deemed her societal purpose: marriage, childbearing, and domesticity (Bornstein 12). Women were expected to wait around until their reproductive power was needed, and as such it would be used by their husbands without their say in the matter.

These were the conventional standards and expectations placed upon women. Further, women were expected to center the creation and maintenance of a family above any other aspirations, and to do so without complaint or objection. To be candid, they were expected to act as servants, as their reproductive bodies were constantly subject to societal circulation without much, or any, say. Indeed, there was very little wiggle room within this structural paradigm: if the fabric of gendered societal expectations at this time were a document, it was written with misogyny, where women were rarely ever allowed to exercise their own authority. This control and domination, needless to say, additionally existed corporeally, as consent for women was unheard of, and their bodies were seen as objects to be used whenever wanted or needed by husbands and employers (Pasternack, Farmer 216-217). Women, especially unmarried women, were seen as completely sexually available at almost any time, in that “any woman seen walking

in the street after curfew...was a potential sexual partner” (Pasternack, Farmer 216). This overall dominion was not only indicative of an assumed gender and status privilege, however was also indicative of a different, more sinister kind of complete-othering, that of which saw women as a completely different species altogether...a violent undoing, reduction, and dehumanization.

It is significant and worth noting here that the women of this time definitively expressed dispondance toward their societal positions. Charged forward by Christine de Pizan, medieval feminists praised chastity as a form of reproductive freedom for women, that of which created equality between men and women (Bornstein 12). This form of reproductive equality-making marked virginity as strength “by continually linking virginity with strength, achievement, distinction, and fame...that women can attain these hitherto masculine rewards by foregoing their traditional roles as wives and mothers” (Bornstein 28). Further, medieval feminists saw virginity as an act of autonomy that allowed them *some* amounts of freedom. Additionally, medieval feminists saw that in severing ties with the societal expectations placed upon them by the patriarchal order, women can in turn “achieve distinction in the political, intellectual, spiritual, or artistic realm” (Bornstein 30). By foregoing what was considered under patriarchy as their inherent domestic careers, women were then able to pursue their interests. Nevertheless, it is highly significant to note that this was not just some choice that any and all women could make on their own accord, and that the majority of the time women were forced into the societal positions they employed with little opportunity or way out.

Male attitudes toward women—who they are inherently and what they can and can’t stand for— is illuminating when considering representations of female monsters during the middle ages. Indeed, when thinking about these representations, it is notable to consider that “Whether she is portrayed as a saint or devil, a virgin or a whore, depends more on the man’s

feelings than on the woman's character" (Bornstein 9). Scholarship surrounding representation of female monsters in the medieval years specifically points to the fact that these female monsters are more representative of the patriarchal restrictions placed upon women of this time than they are about the nature of the women (McGreevy). To that end, it can be concluded that "It is female power, and not female weakness, which the trope of the monstrous woman is invoked to address" (Urban 5). Furthermore, this specific monstrosity of medieval women works doubly, as women were already viewed by men as figuratively monstrous, in that their status as being the direct opposite than men revered them as a monstrous other (Kurtz 1, Ussher 173). In a similar fashion, the medieval monstrous woman exists paradoxically, as they are still expected to be circulative agents of influence and power, "managing households, raising children, producing legitimate heirs and observing a set of values" (Urban 273), while this same power and influence are the exact qualities that others and makes monsters of them. In other words, women were expected to be these beings of reproductive power in the household and in society, while it is this same power that in turn was used against them and parodied into monstrosity.

This paradoxical nature of the medieval feminine monster is what brings this analysis to the hybrid Dragon Lady and Snake Virgins in Mandeville's text, as both instances exist on this plane of understanding. The Dragon Lady, or the local lady-of-the-manor, is the story of Hippocrates' daughter on the island of Lango. This lady of nobility, who remains nameless, was said to have been transformed from her beautiful and ethereal human state to a dragon by Diana (Mandeville 15). This woman, it is told, will remain a dragon until a man "brave enough to go down there to her and kiss her on the mouth", and in the case of that occurrence, she will turn back to her natural state only for a short while before dying (Mandeville 15). For the Dragon Lady, the seemingly dangerous exterior forced upon her works against the necessities of common

female circulation: she is not able to be a normal active member of society as she is mostly isolated to the confines of her castle, existing as a locked up monster whose escape would presumably endanger an entire kingdom. Nevertheless, despite her treatment and representation as a dangerous and violent being, she is still expected to fill the role of power and authority that her monstrousness was born of. Specifically, she is still expected to entertain the knights who attempt to court her regularly (despite their failure to, and ultimate death from,) and to ultimately succeed in her duties of circulation and marriage. The reader can observe this when Mandeville writes that “when a knight does come who is bold enough to kiss her, he shall not die but shall transform that damsel into her proper form, and he shall be her master and the ruler of the aforementioned islands” (16). In other words, despite the Dragon Lady’s treatment as a dangerous monster, she is still expected to fill the role of nurturer and submissive to the knight who is brave enough to successfully court her.

A similar paradoxical circumstance occurs in the story of the Snake Virgins who live in the court of Prester John. These women, different from the Dragon Lady as their monstrosity is internal and not external, are said to have poisonous snakes inside of their vaginas, so that when men have sex with them the snakes sting their penises and kill them (Mandeville 113). It is for this reason that, on their wedding night, certain “*gadlibiriens*” are appointed to sleep with these women before their husbands do in attempts to “kill” their virginity alongside the snake, so that when it is then the husband’s turn to sleep with them, they will be safe (Mandeville 113). One can only assume that the othering and deliberate monstrousness of these women is a direct attack at both their bodily autonomy and their power as child bearer and ruler of the house. By turning the part of their bodies that produces offspring into what was considered an evil and deadly serpent was to make a villain out of it. Despite this monstrousness—the same one that seems

like a direct attack on their ability to have children—the Snake Virgins are still expected to assume the role of mother and child bearer, that of which was used against her in making her a monster.

Moreover, the particular hybridity of these women is another aspect of the medieval feminine monsters that is significantly substantial in this context. Hybrids are revered as being the most abject, the most vile, of all monsters in medieval thought since they were not fully one thing or another; instead, they were an unnatural fusion, something working against the laws of nature (Mahaffy 371-372). It is notable to mention, though, that Mandeville goes against the grain of this thought in his narrative, as he describes these women hybrids in a way that doesn't make the average reader fear them but admire them as previously unknown beings wonder (Mahaffy 374). While this may be true of the relationship between the hybrid and the reader, it is not indicative of the relationship between the hybrid women and the people they interact with within their communities. Namely, the people who observed these women either face-to-face or from afar deemed these hybrid women as being even more dangerous than full monsters due to their ability to either partially or fully appear human.

In the case of the Dragon Lady, her ability to transform from normal maiden to dragon was a particularly dangerous form of monstrosity, in that it allowed men to be deceived into thinking she was a “normal” woman in circulation. This is indeed what happens, as a man who did not know of her caught her in her transformed human state, mistaking her for not only a full-human but also as a prostitute (Mandeville 16). After a mutual desire to be each others lovers, she tells this man that he must be knighted for them to be together, and, in a warning of her hybridity, “She told him not to be afraid, because she'd do him no harm; she added that even if he thought she was very hideous to look at this was just done through magic, as she said that

she was really just like he saw her then” (Mandeville 15). The story of them ends predictably, with him being completely scared off by her eventual dragon state and, thus, dying.

While the Dragon Lady’s monstrosity removes her from the social role she would otherwise employ—reproduction and inheritance—her hybridity allows the occasional appearance of a circulative reproductive body. Dana Morgan Oswald discusses this phenomenon at length in her text “Indecent Bodies: Gender and the Monstrous in Medieval English Literature”, where she analyzes how, in Mandeville’s text, there is a specific concern in demonstration and circulation of reproductive monstrous bodies, that of which is significant in that the delineation of the two is quite obscure— the monstrous women here are never fully monsters, just as they are never fully non-monsters (Oswald 138-139). The ability for these hybrid women to either partially or fully appear as “normal” women both complicated their status and solidified the cause for their monstrosity. On the Dragon-Lady specifically, Mahaffy writes that “Part of what renders the Dragon Daughter so threatening, of course, is that she is a female monster who is able, through the ability to transform in and out of her dragon-state, to disguise her monstrosity from potential suitors” (383). This mode and ability to disguise, to *be tricked*, is what was deemed so dangerous, lest these men be conned by a monster in hiding.

While signaling the same, the case of the Snake Virgins is a different story, in that their monstrous quality is fully internal. For the Snake Virgins, their monstrosity is never fully realized until they are penetrated—before this moment, they fully appear as “normal” women. The particular internal hybridity of the Snake Virgins is significant in that, despite their serpents’ efforts, they *are* able to circulate. Nevertheless, danger still looms, in that the ritual they are forced to endure before having sex with their husbands threatens a different type of danger. On this particular danger caused by their hybridity, Oswald writes that “There are two dangerous

possibilities for their bodies...Either they circulate too little or too much. If the serpent in a woman's body kills her husband...then she does not and cannot circulate...if a fool of despair successfully performs his work on her wedding night, then the woman circulates in excess" (177). The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the Snake Virgin's particular internal and sexual hybrid-monstrosity ensures that there is no societally favorable outcome for these women. That is, at least in the societal structure that they are forced into.

It is, ultimately, highly notable that the two transformative-hybrid monstrous bodies in Mandeville's text are not only women, but also women whose monstrosity hinders the circulation of their reproductive body either fully or partially (Oswald 155-156). This circumstance, fundamentally, begs the question of what the significance of hybridity as hindrance from reproductive circulation is. Specifically, what is the specific purpose of these women's hybridity as removing them from circulation? By the account of Mandeville, the creation of these monstrous hybrid women presumably served the means of both inspiring awe in the audience while also appealing to the internal misogyny of the audience. Nevertheless, this research argues that, in doing a feminist reading of these monsters, readers can appreciate these hybrid women as autonomous and powerful; not in spite of their monstrosity, but both alongside it and in the act of embracing it.

A productive way to consider this line of reasoning is to think about these hybrid monstrous women of Mandeville's world in tandem with modern feminist thought on monstrosity and hybridity. Firstly, current literature on the monstrous feminine focuses on the bodily aspects of women as contributing heavily to her monstrous representation. Particularly, the vagina, in respect to the monstrous feminine, has been considered a dreadful and terrifying entity. While this representation is demonstrative of modern feminist thought on the monstrous

feminine, its roots ultimately stem from medieval thought, as “The vagina, from which menstrual blood issues, is positioned as equally abhorrent. Representations of the *vagina dentata*, the vagina with teeth, transform dread of the vagina into myth. In medieval art, this is through allegorical images of the gaping dragon mouth speared by the knight in shining armor” (Ussher 1). Additionally, there have been references over time of “The fecund body as ‘the mouth of hell – a terrifying symbol of woman as the devil’s gateway...the monstrous feminine most thinly disguised” (Ussher 2). These representations, among others, that portray the reproductive body as inherently disgusting and abject are what has ultimately led to its monstrous representations.

Viewing the reproductive body as inherently abject, in this way, is born out of hidden societal fears of the reproductive woman as all powerful. Indeed, “the abject stands for that which we most dread, the object of primal repression...the hidden, unacknowledged, and feared parts of identity and society, that which ‘disturbs identity, system, order”” (Ussher 6). In that way, marking the reproductive body as a monstrous entity is a result of “envy of women’s reproductive power” and is an attempt to control it (Ussher 7). Evidently, these sentiments directly mirror the case of the Snake Virgins, as the fact that their vaginas encase a serpent mark it as some territory to be feared of. It can assuredly be assumed that making a monster out of these women’s vaginas, and therefore making them abject, was ultimately a tactic used to control and dominate these women who would otherwise have an influential role in this society as already “attractive, excellent people” (Mandeville 113).

Similarly, modern scholarship on the monstrous feminine in relation to the reproductive body finds that representations of the reproductive body as monstrous work as a measure of control and dominion over the women described. To deem something or someone as societally “other” is to place them in a category that must be overseen and controlled. Indeed, “the function

of this surveillance and regulation is to render the female body passive and docile, in order to manage the experience and expression of female sexuality, thus annihilating threat” (Ussher 16). Positing the reproductive body as deplorable is to other it, thus putting it into a position of inferiority and, thus, regulating it. (Monstrous) Feminism, on the other hand, attacks these notions by embracing that which is deemed monstrous: by resisting what is regarded as abject and by embracing what has been seen as naturally other, specifically, to be feminine (Hawkins 168-169). This ideology works outside of the body as well, in acknowledging that “these embodied signs are only part of who we are; we are not defined by our embodiment, yet not should we negate it” (Ussher 174). To put this in the context of our beloved hybrid women in Mandeville’s text, it should be celebrated that, Yes, the Dragon Lady may don her scaly exterior and the Snake Virgins may bear serpents within them, but they are ultimately beyond these physicalities— that of which should still be praised — and are much more.

Going even beyond the body, current scholarship on the monstrous feminine highlights how women, in occupying a category in direct opposition to men, are inherently othered and seen as monstrous. In the eyes of patriarchy, making women into monsters “is used to justify men’s dominion over women as a class of inferior human beings”, and that any woman who resists “subordination under patriarchal order” was deemed a monster (Kurtz 2). That is, women’s perceived role as the societal floor is what ultimately led to their recognition as inherently monstrous, even more so if they denied this role. Nonetheless, it seems that “even when women do what they’re supposed to do, they’re still monsters” (Kurtz 3). In this way, feminist action may take the form of inviting the monstrous in, accepting it, and embracing it. This ideology works particularly well in community, in that “by inviting other Others into the space of a shared monstrosity, it may be possible to create a place of literal or figurative

solidarity where the monstrous mien no longer becomes necessary and a different way of being becomes possible” (Kurtz 200). Embracing the monstrous in this collective way transforms it into a superior position rather than an inferior position; the monstrous becomes something exciting, liberating, and invigorating.

Further, it seems that representations of women as hybrid monsters are more of a direct attack on women themselves than fully monstrous portrayals are; certainly, it seems that creating a feminine hybrid monster works to critique monstrosity as inherently feminine (Zimmerman 2). Making these hybrid monsters appear just as humans, like the Dragon Lady and the Snake Virgins, works to convince people that the monstrosity is women’s natural condition. In other words, figuring the monstrous as inherently feminine and the feminine as inherently monstrous reconfigures the monstrosity from side-effect to entrenched-in-DNA. On this, Jess Zimmerman writes, rather masterfully, in her text *Women and Other Monsters* that “A human-looking Medusa could fly under the radar, until you tried to brush her hair... Women may look harmless on the face...but look at their snake hair and dog crotches and claws. Look at them crouched over a male victim, ready to bite. Beware their ambition, their ugliness, their insatiable hunger, their ferocious rage” (3). For the Snake Virgins, their intrinsic physical monstrosity puts them in a position where those around them revere them as *naturally* monstrous, and that this monstrosity is a quality of themselves. In other words, that their monstrosity isn’t an effect but has been a part of them since they were born. Differently, while the Dragon Lady was “cursed” with her monstrosity by Diana and was not born with it, she is still positioned with responsibility over it. Specifically, she is situated with the responsibility to be able to appeal to a knight enough to be able to change it, as those around her do not expect for her to accept her dragon state as permanent.

Ultimately, that which is deemed monstrous about a woman are the qualities that are seen as “too loud” by their male counterparts: facets that are “too gross, too angry, too devious, too grasping, too smart for their own good” (Zimmerman 3). These monstrous qualities speak to what is considered acceptable or unacceptable for women in terms of being and acting, designed to constrain and contain by forcing women to exist in dark corners and uncharted territories. When putting these into the context of the aforementioned hybrid women in Mandeville’s text, we return back to the societal expectations placed upon women during this time: to be obedient, powerless, and subservient. Specifically, by othering and transforming Hippocrates’ daughter into a dragon, the making of her into a monster speaks to the power she would have had as a noble woman and as the author of her own destiny. In contrast, Mandeville relays that “she resides in an old castle and reveals herself three times a year” (15). By confining her to the castle due to her monstrosity, the narrative restricts her ability to have autonomy and puts the power into the hands of the knights who attempt to court her. Additionally, in including the fact that potential suitors were frightened by her appearance, Mandeville’s narrative works to make her beauty monstrous, turning the very thing that would give her power into something that marks her as abject. In turning her into a dragon, the narrative, in turn, figures her into a creature so repulsive that they run away (Mandeville 15).

A similar circumstance falls upon the Snake Virgins, as their specific deformities—the serpents with them—speaks directly to the (taking of) control over their bodily autonomy and reproductive power/prowess. Placing the serpents within, or even having them replace and become the virgin’s reproductive organs, directly villainizes and abjects their reproductive abilities into something that must be contained and, thus, controlled. By attempting to control and regulate the Snake Virgins’ vaginas by way of monstrosity, the narrative is ultimately

claiming that these women need to “tone down” that of which they can do with their bodies, and the specific power granted to them by way of their reproductive prowess.

To that end, this argument concludes with a full embrace of the monstrous. When it comes to these hybrid women in Mandeville’s *The Book of Marvels and Travels*, I believe that their monstrosity works toward feminist means. In both instances, the monstrousness of these women work as attempts to save them from the circulation of their reproductive bodies. For the Dragon Lady, being exiled to her castle in reality saved her from a life of reproductive restriction and the general controlling lifestyle of women in society. For the Snake Virgins, their serpentine interior, to a certain extent, has the purpose of warding off their husbands from having sex with them and has the purpose of acting as a tactic of resistance against the insertion of their (husband’s) penises, working as a first-line of defense against insemination and thus entrance into domesticity.

The full realization of this freedom, ultimately, is semi-unsuccessful, in that these women’s particular hybridity still places the expectation of circulation onto them. In other words, the facts that these women either occasionally or fully appear as “normal” women disrupts their exit from societal circulation, placing them very much in the middle of circulation. Although the Dragon Lady is indeed a monster, her occasional appearance as a woman still places her in circulation. This is made ever more apparent by the knights who frequently visit and attempt to court or make her their lover. The Snake Virgins, on the other hand, are fully subject to full circulation despite their hybridity, as their particular monstrosity is interior.

To that end, I argue that the rhetorical feminist solution to all of this is an embrace of full monstrosity. If women are going to be described as or referred to as monsters or beings with inherent monstrous qualities, we might as well embrace the abject and use it as a source of

power. At the very beginning of the aforementioned book by Zimmerman, she poses the commanding question, asking “What happens if we charge through the gates and find that living on the other side...means living fully for the first time? Then the monster story stops being a warning sign, and starts being a guide” (9). I find great peace in this sentiment: that the solution does not fall in the further belittlement of ourselves, and that the solution isn’t to hide and to not be seen as a means of escape. Conversely, the solution here is a full embrace of our femininity, and to make the monstrous parts of ourselves louder and more readily apparent. So that, yes, while we are more than the physicality that we embody, that our physicality *can be* indicative of the strength and prowess that we contain within all aspects of ourselves.

For Mandeville’s hybrid women, an embrace of the full monstrous is perhaps the exact move that could ensure the longevity of their freedom and autonomy. For the Snake Virgins, may this be realized as the scales that exist within seep into their exterior and that they never shed. For the Dragon Lady, may she become content within the interior of her tower. Perhaps even becoming Bornstein’s “lady in a tower” gazing out of the window, but not observing knights or peasants and waiting for one of them to save her. Instead, possibly she is just looking out of the window, enjoying the landscape or scenery below for its parallel beauty.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Mandeville, John, and Anthony Bale (ed.). *The Book of Marvels and Travels*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Secondary Sources

Alban, Gillian M. “Maternal, snake-tailed foundress Melusine: A transformative, monstrously transgressive serpent woman under the gaze.” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol. 40, no. 1, Mar. 2024, pp. 5–24, <https://doi.org/10.2979/jfs.00002>.

Blamires, Alcuin. *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture*. Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1997.

Bloch, Ralph Howard. *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love*. The University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Bornstein, Diane. *The Lady in the Tower: Medieval Courtesy Literature for Women*. Archon Books, 1983.

Creed, Barbara. *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2024.

Erler, Mary Carpenter, and Maryanne Kowaleski. *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*. Cornell University Press, 2003.

Erler, Mary, and Maryanne Kowaleski. *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*. The University of Georgia Press, 1994.

Farmer, Sharon A., and Carol Braun Pasternack. *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages*. University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Halberstam, Jack. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Duke University Press, 2011.

Harris, Carissa M. "Rape narratives, courtly critique, and the pedagogy of sexual negotiation in the Middle English Pastourelle." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, vol. 46, no. 2, 1 May 2016, pp. 263–287, <https://doi.org/10.1215/10829636-3491798>.

Hawkins, Katharine Emily. "The Other Woman: The Monstrous Feminine as feminist praxis." *Macquarie University*, 2021, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.25949/19434365.v1>.

Kurtz, Katherine D. "Deviant Bodies: Toward a Feminist Aesthetics of Monstrosity." *Department of Philosophy at Villanova University*, Mar. 2021.

Mahaffy, Caitlin. "Beyond monstrosity: Natural hybridity in medieval and early modern travel narratives." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, vol. 54, no. 2, 1 May 2024, pp. 371–397, <https://doi.org/10.1215/10829636-11130403>.

McGreevy, Nora. "Why So Many Mythological Monsters Are Female." *Smithsonian Magazine*, 31 Mar. 2021, www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/meet-female-monsters-greek-mythology-medusa-sphinx-180977364/.

Oswald, Dana M. *Indecent Bodies: Gender and the Monstrous in Medieval English Literature*. 2005.

Sutor, Sarah A. "When Female Weakness Triumphs." *Georgetown University*, 20 Apr. 2012.

Urban, Misty Rae. "Monstrous Women in Middle English Romance ." *Cornell University*, Aug. 2008.

Ussher, Jane M. *Managing the Monstrous Feminine: Regulating the Reproductive Body*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006.

Williams, David A. *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Mediaeval Thought and Literature*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.

Zimmerman, Jess. *Women and Other Monsters: Building a New Mythology*. Beacon Press, 2022.