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*Revising the Monstrous: Du Plessis'*  
*Short History of Prodigies and London*  
*Culture in 1730*

JAMES AUBREY

The history of monsters was described as "inexhaustible" by Rudolf Wittkower in his 1942 survey of the forms taken by the "marvelous" races and prodigies conceived by the ancient Greeks and impressed on "the European mind."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, as if the topic had become exhausted when assumptions changed in the early modern era, Wittkower hardly ventures in his study beyond the seventeenth century. Nor does he discuss the history of ideas about how monsters were generated, even though one idea is as old as any of the stories he rehearses: that an excited mother-to-be could mark her fetus with a representation of what she had imagined during pregnancy or even during conception. Belief in this idea remained current long enough to provide the means in *Joseph Andrews* by which Mr. Wilson recognizes his son: from the strawberry mark on his left breast "which his mother had given him by longing for that fruit."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, this kind of explanation for the birth of a child with unexpected skin color is still occasionally heard in the twentieth century, even though the folklore paradigms accompanying it have been largely replaced by the scientific paradigms of teratology and genetics.<sup>3</sup>

This supposed potential of the maternal imagination was an aspect of the still dominant assumption in the early eighteenth century that in human reproduction the female continued what the male had begun—not only as nursing mother or pregnant mother-to-be but also at the

moment of conception. There were two competing theories about what happened at that moment: pre-formationism and epigenesis. Preformationists believed that the male activated a pre-existing being, or homunculus, at conception; epigenesists believed that the male initiated the development of unformed matter into the germ of a being. Both paradigms were fundamentally in accord, however, with a principle asserted by Aristotle: "[T]he contribution which the female makes to the embryos when they are being 'set' and constituted is on different lines from that of the male; in other words, the male contributes the principle of movement and the female contributes the material."<sup>4</sup> Aristotle goes on to compare the male to a carpenter, or house-builder, using materials provided by the female who, implicitly, proceeds to finish the work—and sometimes to deform it.<sup>5</sup>

The possibility that the mother could mar the work would become an antifeminist commonplace of various books about monstrous births, but the validity of this view was no longer taken for granted in the early eighteenth century. Attempts to reconcile preformationist and epigenesist ideas with each other and with the discoveries of early biological research constitute what Barbara Stafford has called the "quarrel of the monsters."<sup>6</sup> In 1727 commonly received ideas about the the generation of monsters underwent a direct attack from London physician James Augustus Blondel in a treatise called *The Strength of Imagination in Pregnant Women Examined: And the Opinion the Marks and Deformities in Children Arise from Thence, Demonstrated to be a Vulgar Error*. Blondel dismissed as absurd the widely accepted belief that the mother could communicate her thoughts to the mind of a fetus which, he argued, had its own mind and organs as well as a separate circulatory system.<sup>7</sup> For more than 100 pages he critiqued the evidence traditionally cited for maternal marking, with particular, polemical focus on claims presented in *De Morbis Cutaneis: A Treatise on Diseases Incident to the Skin*, a 1712 treatise by another London doctor, Daniel Turner. Turner's reply to Blondel was published in 1728, and Blondel's counter-reply in 1729. Although Blondel's views are neither perfectly consistent nor reliable, the existence of the debate is evidence of doubts circulating about ancient medical wisdom. And as ideas about conception, pregnancy, and childbirth were being contested, conventional attitudes toward a child considered to be "monstrous" also came under pressure to change. As debates increasingly became based on medical discourse, the birth of a monster was less likely to be seen as a portent of divine wrath.

The quarrel of the late 1720s provides a revealing context for another document composed in London at the same time by an obscure Frenchman, James Du Plessis. Whether or not Du Plessis knew of the ongoing

battle of the medical books, he was subject to contemporary cultural pressures on traditional thinking and conventional evidence as he adapted traditional source material on monsters for his own treatise, finished in 1730 and titled *A Short History of Human Prodigieuses, Monstrous Births of Dwarfs, Sleepers, Giants, Strong Men, Hermaphrodites, Numerous Births, and Extreame Old Age &C.*<sup>8</sup> Du Plessis' title indicates the nature of the project: a catalogue of departures from the ordinary forms of human life, marked sometimes by physical differences (in the cases of hermaphrodites and giants), sometimes by behavioral differences (the comatose "sleepers"), and sometimes merely by someone's having done something ordinary to an extraordinary degree (for example, giving birth to numerous offspring, or living to an advanced age). *A Short History of Human Prodigies* was never published, but the manuscript in the British Library reflects aspects of London's cultural climate in the late 1720s. Most interesting is an apparent respect toward the prodigious creatures as individuals with dignity, rather than merely as monsters exemplifying otherness in some larger scheme.

Du Plessis prefaces his work with a long letter pleading with its addressee, an unnamed "Honoured Sir," to purchase the attached manuscript out of charity. He describes himself as one who has traveled and collected more than 1,000 books in his younger days but who now has been forced by circumstances to "take a garret to lodge myself and goods . . . being quite moneyless." The "Honoured Sir" was evidently Sir Hans Sloane, First Physician to George II and President of the Royal College of Physicians from 1719–35; Alexander Pope once described Sloane as owner of "the finest collection in Europe of natural curiosities." His interests must have made him seem a likely prospective purchaser of the manuscript Du Plessis was desperate to sell. Sloane did, indeed, acquire the work.<sup>9</sup>

Du Plessis' work is 163 pages long and most remarkable for its 36 painted illustrations. The first one, for example, is titled "A Monstrous Child with Two Heads" and depicts an infant displayed with a dignity that Du Plessis' narrative under the picture belies (Figure 1). In 1680 when Du Plessis was fifteen and still living in France, a gentlewoman, Madame de Souville, rented a room in his family's house for her lying in. She bore a male child with "two heads and a round excrescence of a sponge neck between the two heads[;] he was born dead." Du Plessis relates details that make this event sound more plausible than many of the others he subsequently describes. He names the mother, for example, and describes her as a gentlewoman married to the lord of the village of Souville. He explains that she moved into the Du Plessis house as she approached term so that she could be close to the neighboring midwife



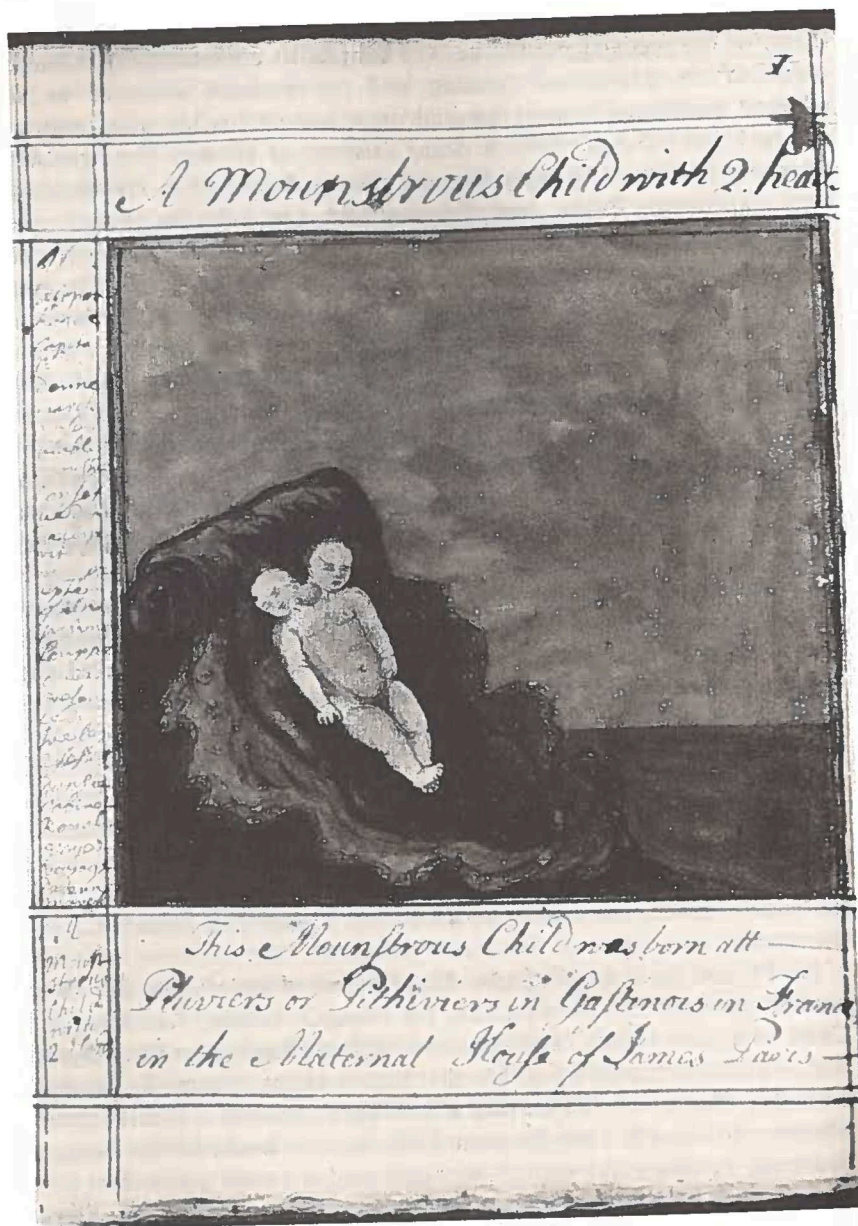


Figure 1. "A Monstrous Child with 2 Heads." From James Du Plessis' *Short History of Human Prodigies* (unpublished manuscript dated 1730), not paginated [page 2]. Reproduced with permission of the British Library.

and to a “famous Doctor of Physic and Surgeon” married to Du Plessis’ aunt and also living with them. Madame de Souville supposedly told Du Plessis’ mother—whether before or after the birth is not clear—that during her pregnancy she had looked at an almanac and became a “very fond admirer” of an illustrated “history of such a birth of a child, the very same form and figure” that her own bi-cephalic child would have. We are told that “her husband . . . taking notice . . . took the Almanack from her, and burnt it, but she procured another and so a third, which he also took from her[;] this lasted till her longing was over and the mischief was done[,] when she was very big and near the time of her delivery.” Du Plessis recalls, “This accident was kept very secret and the child being a monster and not having been christened was wrapped in a clean linen cloth and put in a little wooden box and buried very privately, in a part of our garden.” Du Plessis reports that when he asked his parents about the matter, “I received a great slap on the face; I was forced to leave of[f] my curiosity.” On what basis, then, did the adult Du Plessis make his painting of the child-monster? He says that he furtively dug up what had been buried in the garden to see for himself. He adds that one day subsequently he found his uncle’s room open and saw “the foresaid Almanack with the relation as I give it here.” It must have been the doctor’s own copy since Madame Souville’s copies had been burned. The pains he takes to establish himself as a first-hand witness are re-emphasized with his concluding phrase, “seen by James Paris Duplessis.”<sup>10</sup> There is nothing supernatural about this monster—if one accepts as “natural” the power of the maternal imagination to (mis)shape the fetus; furthermore, the confessional details make the narrative sound convincing in the manner of an autobiography. The plausibility of the manuscript might more aptly be compared to a Defoe fiction, however, for in subsequent parts of the manuscript Du Plessis will make fallacious claims to have seen first-hand other monsters that he has instead appropriated from earlier books.

Two such derivative monsters are described only a few pages further into the text. One is “A Monstrous Hairy and Moldy Woman” (Figure 2) and the other “A spotted Negro Prince” (Figure 3). Of the first, Du Plessis says the following:

This Monstrous woman was about thirty years old when I James Paris saw her in London[;] she had a very hansom Face [and] Black Hair on her Head . . . [;] all her Right Side was from the Shoulder two her Knee all hairy[,] the Leg and Hand of a fine, Smooth, white Colour, without Hair; the other Half Side of her was a pure White, Soft, Smooth and White Skin but all over Bestowed with Molds of a Reddish Collour, with a few hairs upon Each of them[,] from the Shoulder down to the



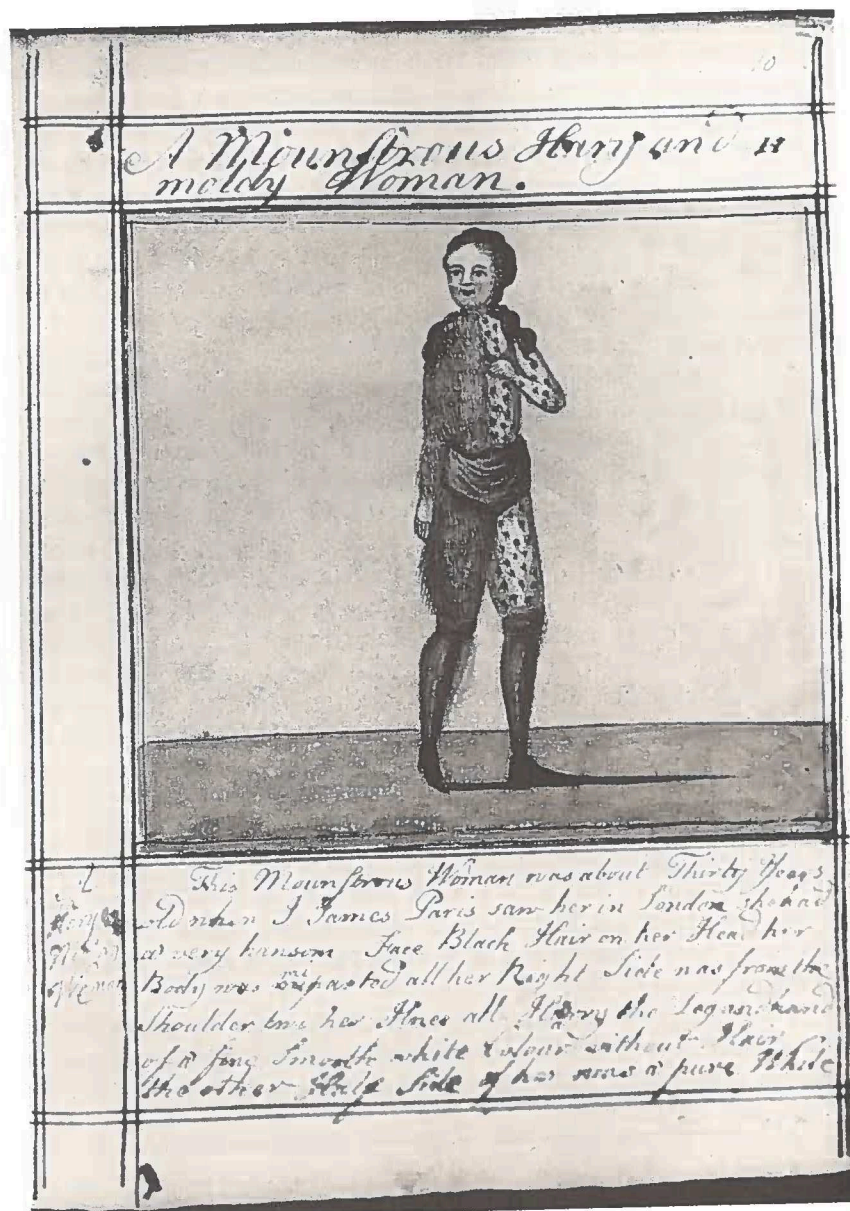


Figure 2. "A Monstrous Hairy and Moldy Woman." From Du Plessis' *A Short History of Human Prodigies*, [page 10]. Reproduced with permission of the British Library.

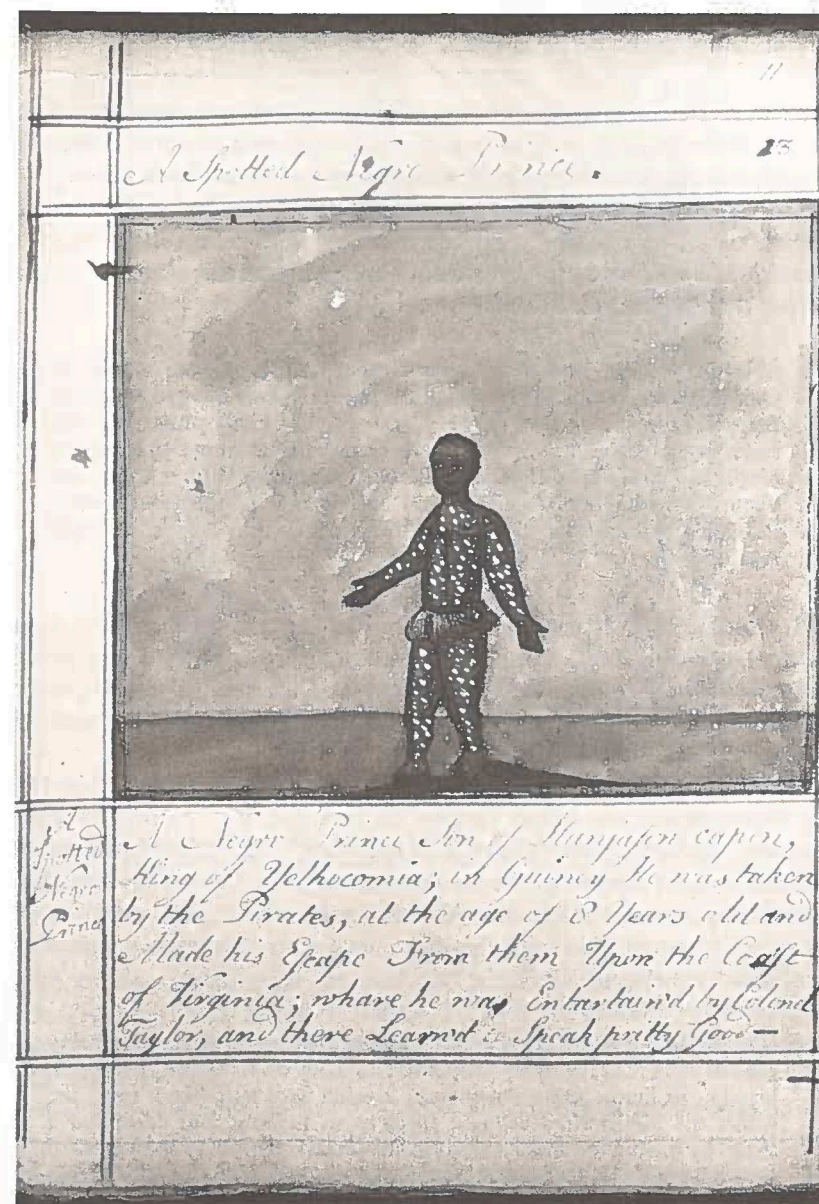


Figure 3. "A Spotted Negro Prince." From Du Plessis' *A Short History of Human Prodigies*, [page 11]. Reproduced with permission of the British Library.



Knee, her hand and foot as them on the Other Side, and so behind alike as before.[p. 10]

Du Plessis offers no account of her birth or speculation about the causes of her deformity—if *deformity* is even an appropriate word to describe the superficial characteristics of hirsuteness and skin discoloration.<sup>11</sup>

On the page following the representation of the hairy woman, Du Plessis describes another supposed monster, whom he calls a “spotted negro.” The figure’s differences from implied norms are again superficial rather than structural:

A Negro Prince, Son of Hanjason capon, King of Yelhocomia, in Guiney, was taken by the Pirates at the age of 8 years old and Made his Escape From them Upon the Coast of Virginia, whare he was Entertain'd by Colonel Taylor and there Learned to Speak pretty good English. Whose Body is of a Jet Black, Intermixed With a Clear and Beautiful White, Spotted all Over. He was Sold in London and Show'd Publickly at the age of 10 Years in 1690. Seen then by James Paris and Again in the Year 1725. [p. 11]

It is no accident that these two “monsters” appear on successive pages in the Du Plessis manuscript, for they are derived from a related pair of creatures who are depicted together in at least two sixteenth-century books about monsters, books which themselves drew on traditional lore as far back as Pliny and Herodotus.

The first book, *Certain Secret Wonders of Nature*, published in 1560 by Pierre Boiastuau, offers various explanations for “monstrous child-bearing” including “the influence of the stars,” “the superabundance or default and corruption of the seed and womb,” or “an ardent and obstinate imagination, which the Woman hath, whilst she conceives the child.” Boiastuau illustrates this last cause with two ancient anecdotes and a picture (Figure 4):

Damascenus a grave author doth assure this to be true, that being present with Charles [the] Emperor and king of *Bohemia*, there was brought to him a maid, rough and covered with hair like a bear, the which the mother had brought forth in so hideous and deformed a shape by having too much regard to the picture of S[aint] John clothed with a beast’s skin, the which was tied or made fast continually during her conception at her bed’s feet. By the like means Hippocrates saved a princess accused of adultery, for that she was delivered of a child black like an *Ethiopian*, her husband being of a fair and white complexion. [She] by the persuasion of Hippocrates, was absolved and pardoned, for that the child was like unto a [picture of a] *Moor*, accustomedly tied at her bed.<sup>12</sup>



Figure 4. Black Child, Hirsute Woman, and the King of Bohemia. From Pierre Boiastuau's *Certain Secret Wonders of Nature* (1569), 12.

Both stories attribute the “monstrous” births to the mothers’ imaginations, each of which has been affected by what the mother was looking at during the supposed moment of conception, when her husband implanted his “seed.”

Boiastuau’s contemporary Ambroise Paré explains the process in his treatise *Of the Generation of Man*: “[F]or the most part it happeneth that the children are more like unto the father than the mother, because that in the time of copulation, the mind of the woman is more fixed on her husband, than the mind of the husband on, or towards his wife: for in the time of copulation or conception, the forms, or the likenesses of those things that are conceived or kept in mind are transported and impressed in the child or issue.”<sup>13</sup>

Paré's reasoning seems opposed to the traditional belief that the mind of the female, like her so-called "rolling eye," had *less* power and capability than the mind of the male. However, the lesser fixedness here refers not to a situation requiring *intellectual* concentration but, rather, to one requiring an *unintellectual* paying of attention; in that situation, the female was evidently thought to be all too capable of focusing on any object that might attract her passing interest. This tendency could have dire consequences during sexual intercourse. Paré does not explain his comment, but he has on the previous page reiterated the Aristotelian view of female anatomy and inferiority, noting that the "testicles of woman" contrasted with those of the male are "more cold, less, weak and feeble"; they had less capacity to generate the vital heat thought necessary for conception. Evidently Paré believed that a woman's mind was likewise weak, but that during perfect sexual intercourse it would be "more fixed on her husband" than her husband's on her because her attention would be focused on him, having been arrested by his stronger male presence, in a kind of passive devotion. If her mind should wander, however, a monster could be generated. Paré indicates that this principle extends beyond conception into pregnancy, so that pregnant women's "imaginations"—an apparent reference to a mental faculty that responds with feeling to what is seen—if they should be "strongly moved, should make the like impression in the infants they bare in their wombs."<sup>14</sup>

As with Boiastuau, Paré in his 1573 book describes many other causes of monsters, ranging from God's punishment to the Devil's wickedness, from "more seed in copulation than is necessary to the generation of one body" to the "confusion of seeds of a different kind" resulting from human "copulation with beasts."<sup>15</sup> The results are as diverse as the causes, varying from two-headed babies to animal-human combinations to a three-eyed hermaphrodite with wings. It is the belief, however, that the gestating mother could produce a monster by the force of her imagination which informs the narratives that accompany Paré's picture, evidently derived from Boiastuau, of a hairy woman and black child (Figure 5). Although Paré's verbal commentary explains how these conditions resulted from an errant maternal imagination, their monstrousness is indicated pictorially only by the superficial characteristic of either excessive hairiness or black skin. In the twentieth century, neither characteristic would be considered a birth defect. Paré's narrative makes clear that in the sixteenth century hairiness or black skin *alone* did not constitute monstrousness. A black child born to black parents would not have been considered a monster, nor would a hairy child born to hirsute parents. Indeed, Paré characterizes as monstrous the birth of a white child to black parents: "We have read in *Heliodorus* that *Persiana*, Queen of



Figure 5. "The effigy of a maid all hairy and an infant that was black, by the imagination of their parents." From Ambroise Paré's *Of Monsters and Prodigies* (London, 1634), 978.

*Ethiopia*, by her husband *Hidustes*, being also an *Ethiope*, had a daughter of a white complexion, because in the embraces of her husband, by which she proved with child, she earnestly fixed her eye and mind upon the picture of the fair *Andromeda* standing opposite to her."<sup>16</sup>

It is the unexpectedness of the child's skin color which gives it the status of monster; the fact that its formation was, as Aristotle defines



monstrosities, "contrary to the general rule and to what is usual."<sup>17</sup> Why, then, do the visual texts in both Boiastuau and Paré illustrate only the story of the black child and not the story of the white one? The most obvious explanation would be that the illustrators recognized that, for their northern European reading audiences, a picture of a white child would appear perfectly ordinary; a black child, on the other hand, would have looked immediately different from figures that represented the cultural norm; indeed, a century before Du Plessis a black child might have been considered vaguely monstrous by association with "marvels," generally, which were often said to be located in Africa.<sup>18</sup> The illustrator's decisions inevitably reflected (and thereby strengthened) the cultural center in the predominantly white country of sixteenth-century France or of seventeenth-century England where the works were published in translation. Furthermore, the stories accompanying the pictures reminded the males who largely constituted this cultural center that the imaginations of females were dangerously subject to loss of control and consequently capable of hindering paternal efforts to form their offspring properly, rather than monstrously.

If we conclude that in 1730 Du Plessis was borrowing from one of these earlier publications by Boiastuau or Paré, as he must have been doing given his juxtaposition of the hairy woman and the black child in his own manuscript, the changes that Du Plessis makes to these materials have some interesting implications.

The most obvious change by Du Plessis is the rendering of the two figures in separate drawings. By separately illustrating the hairy girl and the black boy, Du Plessis depicts them as individual monsters rather than as two examples of the same phenomenon, thereby de-emphasizing the idea of the misdirected maternal gaze that formerly united the stories. Du Plessis presents the two creatures as separate curiosities, isolated objects for the scrutiny of a virtuoso—no longer a pair of monsters that jointly comprise an admonitory tale about the weakness and the power of the maternal imagination. Indeed, perhaps out of growing doubts over theories of monstrous generation, Du Plessis offers no explanation or even speculation about how the creatures were generated. What he does include is details about the circumstances in which he supposedly viewed the monsters. In addition, the negro prince is even given a childhood, acquaintances with recognizable names and a "pretty good" capacity to speak English. In short, Du Plessis makes this "monster" into a human being, an individual with a personal history.

The monstrous woman of 1730 is not just hairy, but also "moldy"; she is now twice a monster, not only abnormally hirsute but also made up of two incongruous parts, like the monsters of ancient lore that were part

animal and part human. She is given what are said to be "handsome" features and beautiful hair on her head. She modestly covers her exposed breast, and the side of her that is not hairy is said to reveal the white skin of an aristocratic woman; however, that "normal" side of her is made monstrous in its own way by the presence of the red mottling. In addition to its hirsuteness, her body has come to represent a lack of physical integration; it might also have evoked an uneasiness over the precariousness of boundaries defining what is human, for she is, in her two-fold monstrousness, like Pope's *Sporus* "between *that* and *this*," a being of uncertain definition, perhaps more disturbing than the traditional, completely hairy woman.<sup>19</sup> Without an accompanying, cautionary tale about the dangers of the maternal imagination, the monster speaks for herself rather than for her mother. Her appearance evokes by its doubleness a combination of attraction and repulsion, as if her monstrous body were a demonstration of the ambivalent characteristics Freud would assign to the female body—particularly to female genitals, whose capacity to attract and repel males is mentioned in his discussion of a Classical monster, the Medusa:

To decapitate = to castrate. The terror of Medusa is thus a terror of castration that is linked to the sight of something. Numerous analyses have made us familiar with the occasion for this: it occurs when a boy, who has hitherto been unwilling to believe the threat of castration, catches sight of the female genitals, probably those of an adult, surrounded by hair, and essentially those of his mother. . . .

If Medusa's head takes the place of a representation of the female genitals, or rather if it isolates their horrifying effects from the pleasure-giving ones, it may be recalled that displaying the genitals is familiar in other connections as an apotropaic act.<sup>20</sup>

Freud considers the Medusa's head to be a powerful symbolic representation of male fears of self-annihilation, in a form also associated with pleasure; Du Plessis' half-hairy and half-beautiful, monstrous woman may have resonated in its more literal way with such masculine ambivalence toward women. Whatever responses she evoked, this monster-woman implies a more complex male view of females than the view implied by the earlier representations of women in Boiastuau and Paré, where women serve primarily as conduits for error.

Like the hairy woman, Du Plessis' spotted negro prince is given additional outward features that mark him as a monster and obviate a verbal explanation. His skin represents, visually, what the narrative had to stipulate in Paré's sources: the un-naturalness of the conjunction of black and white. The earlier stories implied that a child's color would not be deemed "wrong" and thus monstrous if it resulted merely from sexual



intercourse between partners of different races. In such a case, the "princess accused of adultery" would have been convicted of adultery—not spared as the mother of a monster. In the sources Du Plessis was using, the mother's erring imagination had to disrupt "natural" processes before a child of unexpected color would be labeled a prodigy. In Du Plessis' manuscript both monsters are given visible features that identify them as unnatural without an accompanying explanation of some problematic conception.

The prince's spots, furthermore, suggest that by the early eighteenth century, racially-mixed offspring, however conceived, were considered a form of monstrosity. Blacks in London had become an everyday sight since the Restoration, and evidence that the black community had been growing in the early eighteenth century appears in two official responses to their presence. In 1729 the courts tried to clarify the legal status of blacks with a pronouncement that their status as chattels would not change when they arrived in England from one of the colonies, even if they had been baptized. Two years later the government tried further to restrict their economic opportunities with a proclamation forbidding the employment of Negroes as apprentices in the city.<sup>21</sup> These declarations indicate that blacks were crossing social boundaries that required reaffirmation to prevent blacks from obtaining the same status as whites. Mixing of the two races may have been disapproved foremost because it constituted mixing of classes. The issue is presented in such terms in a passage from *Gulliver's Travels*, as the Houyhnhnym master explains to Gulliver that the black Houyhnhnms are superior in mind and talents to the white Houyhnhnms, which "continued always in the condition of servants, without ever aspiring to match out of their own race, which in that country would be reckoned monstrous and unnatural."<sup>22</sup> Swift may intend some irony, of course, and his assignment of the superior rank to blacks is a satiric inversion of the English hierarchy; but the idea of keeping the races distinct, as separate classes, would have been taken seriously by most Londoners of the time.

In 1730, as in 1726 when Swift's book was published, seeing a black person would not have been the extraordinary experience that it had been a century and a half before, when the books by Paré and Boiastuau were published and translated. In part because blacks in London had come to constitute a separate class, or sub-class, Du Plessis could not do as his predecessors had and depict a purely black child with the assurance that it would seem exotic, let alone monstrous, particularly if Du Plessis was not going to account for its generation. Once blacks had come to be recognized as human rather than as marvelous, as Londoners rather than as some exotic race from Africa or "the East," black people had to

disappear from books of monsters—or the authors of such books had to make adjustments, such as the addition of spots, to signal monstrosity.<sup>23</sup>

Whether Du Plessis was adapting Boiastuau or Paré does not matter any more than whether he was borrowing from an English or a French edition. His manuscript humanizes his "monsters." From a twentieth-century perspective, Du Plessis' attitude toward blacks and women seems more complex than attitudes implied in his sources from a century and a half earlier. Furthermore, as he individualizes classic monster types by giving them personal biographies, Du Plessis' verisimilitude techniques align him in a loose way with fiction writers and journalists of the early 18th century.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps it would be surprising if his views did *not* reflect the more dynamic social trends of the Enlightenment world he inhabited. As an unpublished manuscript, Du Plessis' *Short History of Human Prodigies* was, of course, not influential. Nonetheless, it provides a gauge of what its author hoped would "sell" in 1730, and the elaborated identities of his "monsters" provide evidence of attitudinal changes underway toward women and blacks at this moment in London culture.

## NOTES

- 1 "Marvels of the East: A Study in the History of Monsters," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 5 (1942): 152–97. Other important, more recent studies of monsters include Jean Céard, *La nature et les prodiges* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1977), Leslie Fiedler, *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), and Barbara Maria Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).
- 2 Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, ed. Homer Goldberg (New York: Norton, 1987), 176.
- 3 Paul-Gabriel Boucé notes that in 1945 "some blond Norman women held that they were delivered of a black child solely because they had been 'frightened' by the first Negro soldiers they had ever seen." "Imagination, Pregnant Women, and Monsters, in Eighteenth-Century England and France," in *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment*, ed. G.S. Rousseau and Roy Porter (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 99–100n. I recall reading in a British tabloid during the mid-1980s a similar explanation by a woman in a comparable predicament. The same idea informs the opening shots of David Lynch's 1980 film *The Elephant Man*, based on the nineteenth-century case of a victim of neurofibromatosis whose pregnant mother supposedly deformed her son *in utero* when she was frightened by an elephant.
- 4 Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, trans. A. L. Peck. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 119.



- 5 The cultural implications of this paradigm and of its displacement in the eighteenth century are explored in Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).
- 6 Stafford, *Body Criticism*, 214, 359. Stafford identifies Spallanzani, Haller, and Bonnet as preformationists and Fonatana, Buffon, Needham, and Maupertuis as epigenisists. *Ibid.*, 241.
- 7 Blondel's argument is summarized by Lester S. King in *The Philosophy of Medicine: The Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 166–71.
- 8 Du Plessis' *Short History of Human Prodigies* is bound as Sloane 5246 in the manuscript collection of the British Library whose administration has graciously permitted the reproduction of illustrations.
9. Pope's comment is in his note to line 10 of "Epistle IV. To Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington," *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 588; Butt provides the other information about Sloane.
- 10 Du Plessis, *Short History*, [4–5]. The spelling of the author's name varies in the manuscript. I have adopted "James Du Plessis" as the standard, based on his signature to the letter of dedication.
- 11 Stafford describes such dark and light spots as vitiligo, forms of lupus, *Body Criticism*, 319.
- 12 Pierre Boiastuau, *Certain Secret Wonders of Nature, Containing a Description of Sundry Strange Things, Seeming Monstrous in our Eyes and Judgment, Because we are not Privy to the Reasons of Them*, trans. Edward Fenton (London, 1569), 13–14. I have modernized some spellings in the quotation and in the title.
13. Ambroise Paré, *Of the Generation of Man*, in Book 24 of *Works*, trans. Thomas Johnson (London: 1634), 888. I have modernized some spellings.
- 14 Ambroise Paré, *Of Monsters and Prodigies*, in Book 25 of *Works*, trans. by Thomas Johnson (London, 1634), 964.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 962–63, 982. I have modernized some spellings.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 978.
- 17 Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, 439.
- 18 Pliny remarks, for example, that "India and parts of Ethiopia especially teem with marvels," in *Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), 519.
- 19 Alexander Pope, "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot," *Poems*, 608, line 323. That Pope and the Scriblerians used human deformity for satirical purposes may be further evidence of a tendency to recognize the underlying, if disturbing humanity of monsters.
- 20 Sigmund Freud, "Medusa's Head," in *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York: MacMillan, 1963), 212–13. An insightful discussion of the political dimensions of Freud's 1920 essay can be found in an article by Neil Hertz, "Medusa's Head: Male Hysteria under Political Pres-

- sure," and responses to it by Catherine Gallagher and Joel Fineman, in *Representations* 4 (Fall 1983): 27–72.
- 21 James Walvin, *Black and White: The Negro and English Society 1555–1945* (London: Penguin, 1973), 10–11; 110–12; *The Black Presence: A Documentary History of the Negro in England, 1555–1860* (London: Orbach and Chambers, 1971), 62.
- 22 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. Robert A. Greenberg and William Bowman Piper (New York: Norton, 1973), 223.
- 23 The idea of white spots on the skin of a black person as a sign of monstrosity was not original with Du Plessis. In 1697 William Byrd had described a black child (of black parents) who gradually developed white spots all over, in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 19:781–82. Similar phenomena are discussed in David Dabydeen's *Hogarth's Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth Century English Art* (Mundelstrup, DK: Dangaroo Press, 1985), 48–49.
- 24 The best account of such matters is J. Paul Hunter's *Before Novels* (New York: Norton, 1990).