

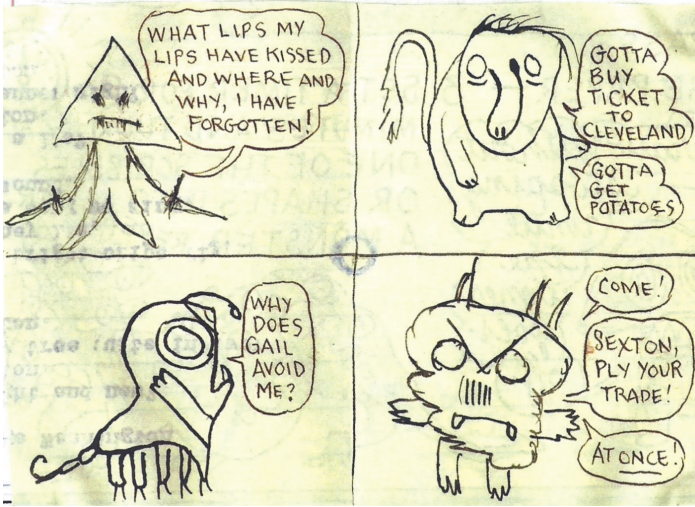
Marina Rauchenbacher

## The Case for Drawing Monsters!

Our volume revolves around how comics can represent and subvert socially determinative identity-defining (visual) concepts – whether they pertain to gender, class, dis\_ability, race, or other structural categories. Imke Schmidt and Ka Schmitz, for example, explore this question humorously and thoroughly (see chapter 2). What role does the fact that bodies are recognizable as human bodies actually play? Comics have always worked with different concepts of the body, including transgressions of the human form and the anthropomorphization of nonhuman beings. They have a specific posthumanist potential, precisely because they can portray bodies in various ways and with different attributes, but also due to the ruptures that occur between the panels, in places of indeterminacy and repetition. In critical posthumanist thought, examinations of monsters/the monstrous body have been particularly productive when it comes to subverting concepts and ideals pertaining to the human body. The monstrous, as Julia Kristeva explains with the term *abject*, disrupts concepts of *identity*, *system*, and *order*. Located in the in-between, “the ambiguous, the composite” (1982, 4), it generates abhorrence. Abhorrence through uncertainty.



Fig. 1: *Why Do Planes Always Inquire With me?* and *Help! My Eyes Are Stuck!* drawn by the author's son.



**Fig. 2:** Scribble Monster. Barry, *Making Comics*, 62.

**We need to draw monsters!** I take my inspiration here from Lynda Barry's *Scribble Monster Jam* (2019, 61–62). Take a piece of paper and divide it into four equally sized panels. Now, scribble something in each panel. Examine the scribbles thoroughly. What characters, monsters, or monstrous bodies form in your mind's eye? Draw them. And now: What do they say? Let them speak. Barry points out that drawing monsters (I would add: even if they are not abhorrent) brings back our intuitiveness and spontaneity, which we often forget “when we believe we must know what we are drawing before we can begin” (66).

**“Monsters will surprise you, and this is a reason to draw them” (66).**

## Bibliography

Barry, Lynda. *Making Comics*. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2019.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP, 1982.

## List of Figures

**Fig. 1:** *Why Do Planes Always Inquire With Me?* and *Help! My Eyes Are Stuck!*, drawn by the author's son.

**Fig. 2:** Barry, Lynda. *Making Comics*. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2019. 62.

