

Kierkegaard; from Christianity to atheism and Marxism and then back to Christianity. Without judging the man or his art, Carpenter provides a broad enough sampling of the latter to show how it served as the final laboratory for Auden's manifold experiments with life.

**THE MONSTROUS RACES
IN MEDIEVAL ART AND
THOUGHT**

by John Block Friedman
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If monsters didn't exist, it would have been necessary to invent them, implies Friedman—and throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages, Europeans invented them with a creative flair. Friedman, professor of English at the University of Illinois, looks for reasons behind the lasting fascination with monstrous races. In his *Natural History*, the Roman Pliny (A.D. 23–79) compiled perhaps the most influential catalogue of “monsters.” Some, such as the Ethiopians and Pygmies, were simply natives of distant lands; others, like the Panotii (“all-ears”) and Apple-Smellers, were totally fanciful creations. The Plinian races served, in a negative way, to define *humanity*: Those who practiced alien customs or lived outside cities could not possibly be human. In Christian times, tales of monsters continued to reinforce ethnocentric norms but were further embellished by conflicting theological interpretations. One school of thought identified monsters as the descendants of Cain, and early maps of the world placed troglodytes and Sciopods (who used their huge feet as umbrellas) at the edge, “as far as possible from Jerusalem.” The *Letter of Prester John* (ca. 1163), reporting the conversion of heathens in the Far East, supported the more charitable Augustinian view that monsters possessed souls and therefore could be saved. And as early as the 12th century, a strain of “romantic primitivism” began to endow savages with noble characteristics. In most forms of medieval allegory, however, monsters served as vivid warnings to the faithful “against pride and disobedience.” New World explorations forced Europeans to give up their monsters, but the tendency to see the “outsider” as less than human persists.