



# A Manifestation Of Monsters: Examining The (Un)Usual Suspects

*Karl P.N. Shuker*

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The spectacular front-cover painting by American artist Michael J. Smith, depicting 17 astonishing mystery beasts and other controversial entities, was the inspiration for this latest book by leading cryptozoologist Dr. Karl Shuker.

Ever since first seeing it in 2012, Shuker has wanted to prepare a book incorporating this painting's eclectic company of creatures, but the fundamental problem that he faced was how to categorize them collectively.

What single term could be used that would encompass this exceedingly diverse array of forms, plus the many additional creatures also to be included in the book? "Cryptid" was not sufficiently comprehensive, nor was "mystery creature" or "unknown animal," because some of the depicted beasts seemingly exist beyond the perimeters-and parameters-of cryptozoology's traditional confines. Eventually, Shuker concluded that only one such term could satisfy all those requirements. Indeed, it was tailor-made for this purpose. The term? What else could it be? "Monster"!

Derived from the Latin noun "monstrum" and the Old French "monstre," "monster" has many different definitions-a very strange, frightening, possibly evil/ugly mythical creature; something huge and/or threatening; a mutant, or abnormal animal; even something extraordinary, astonishing, incredible, unnatural, inexplicable. These definitions collectively cover all of this book's subjects-and so too, therefore, does the single word "monster" from which the definitions derive.

Consequently, this book is a manifestation of monsters-a unique exhibition, a singular gathering, an exceptional congregation of some of the strangest, most mystifying, and sometimes truly terrifying creatures ever reported.

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