

**Biocultural Fear of the Monster: The Ancient Sumerian *Evil Udu*g and the
Contemporary Science Fiction Horror Alien**

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Most monsters present strong visual stimuli that captivate and frighten with their general manifestation of evolutionary fears shown through individual cultural expression. Unnameable Monsters resist clear expression, giving off confusing, vague or excessive cues biologically and culturally. Since the Unnameable Monsters' body is not a reliable source of information, the space it inhabits becomes of interest.

Biocultural studies of monsters reveal that monsters carry cues of predators, aggressive conspecifics and disgust. The fear of predation, enemies and infection, affects how organisms use space, a phenomenon in ecology, called the Landscape of Peril. I argue that Unnameable Monsters can be better understood if the particular Landscapes of Peril of their creators are explored

My thesis investigates two manifestations of such Unnameable Monsters, the Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udug* from the *Udug-Hul Forerunners* and the contemporary alien, notably the Grey Alien, as shown in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023). Through drawing parallels between these texts, the underlying biocultural connections can show that this approach is not limited to cultural context, but draws on biology that has been more consistent. These texts present the reader with a tracing of both monsters biologically and culturally, revealing how understanding their particular Landscapes of Peril adds to their value in signalling fear.

The Landscape of Peril for each monster is presented in my thesis in three general areas. The wilderness, city and home as well as the body. Cultural perceptions led by underlying biological ideas of these spaces are applied to the implied coding of the chosen Unnameable Monsters and their association with that area. It is argued here that the actual and culturally perceived predators, human Others and risk of infection are strongly revealed in both the *Evil Udug* and contemporary alien used in Science Fiction Horror.

Key words/Concepts: Behavioural Immune System; Bioculture; Conspecific Fear; Evil Udug; Grey Alien; Landscape of Peril; Monster; Predator Template; Science Fiction Horror Alien; Udug-hul Forerunners; Unnameable Monster

KEY TERMS

Behavioural Immune System: A set of avoidance behaviours guided by disgust responses to possibly infectious substances, persons, objects, values or associated places.

Bioculture: A branch of study that takes as its premise human biology as a product of evolution which is expressed through culture.

Conspecific Fear: Fearing individuals of the same species.

Evil Udug: An ancient Mesopotamian entity of contagion described in the *Udug-hul Forerunners*.

Grey Alien: A particular manifestation of the contemporary alien drawn together from Ufology and popular culture. Iconic image of a small, spindly, grey, extraterrestrial with large, dark, almond-shaped eyes.

Landscape of Peril: A measurable manifestation of how perceived risk of predation, enemies and contamination impacts the actual use of space by organisms.

Monster: A fictional, hybrid, liminal, being that demonstrates and manifests certain fears.

Predator Template: An evolutionarily prepared recognition of predatory cues, and subsequent behaviours.

Science Fiction Horror Alien: The crossing of the Science Fiction and Horror genres where the extraterrestrial is used as a monster to invoke fear or dread.

Udug-hul Forerunners: Exorcism texts from the Old Babylonian Period written in Sumerian, that preceded the better-known Akkadian *Utukkū Lemnūtu*.

Unnameable Monster: A monster that is a *Thing*, exists in excess and absence, is Sublime in nature, and cannot be properly expressed verbally or visually.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Contemporary media is brimming with monsters. Cinema¹ and TV series² use Uncanny³ creatures to expand the Horror genre for entertainment, feeding into popular culture.⁴ Other streams of interest show hunts for monsters, or podcasts, of ‘real’ encounters on YouTube⁵, TikTok⁶ and Instagram⁷. Online conspiracy theory followings bloom around tales of monsters deeply entangled with the workings of the contemporary world, creating new cosmologies of fantastical creatures intertwined with the mundane.⁸ The monster is feared, fascinating and endlessly versatile, yet it is not just a creature of the contemporary.

Monstrous figures lie strewn across the accessible body of cultural products, from the earliest examples of cultural expression to the most recent. Written material from some of the most ancient civilisations, like Ancient Egypt, Ancient China, and Ancient Mesopotamia, particularly Sumer (Yeo 2021)⁹, describes fantastical monsters. These ancient entities are entangled in the functioning of the cosmos, as well as evil creatures that crawl in from the borders of the unknown to infect the unwary.¹⁰ As a contemporary monster, the alien, moulded

¹ One can refer to recent Horror movies that feature creatures, such as *Infested* (Vaniček 2023), *Arcadian* (Brewer 2024), *The Watchers* (Shyamalan 2024), *A Quiet Place: Day 1* (Sarnoski 2024) and *Alien: Romulus* (Alvarez 2024).

² Series with monsters in 2024 included *The Walking Dead: The Ones Who Live* (Ellewood, Satrazemis, Slovis & Templemore 2024), *Parasite: The Grey* (Sang-ho 2024), *Interview with the Vampire* (Akin, Powell, Taylor, Freeman, Zisk & Ostrander 2022), and *Salem’s Lot* (Dauberman 2024).

³ In this study certain terms have been capitalized to indicate particular theories. For broader terms, capitalisation is absent.

⁴ This is mostly fed by Americanised Globalisation in terms of cultural products, but more Asian content, such as Korean cultural products in 2024, do feed into popular culture also as explored in more detail by Doobo (2024).

⁵ Examples of these include channels like *Sasquatch Chronicles* (2015-ongoing), *Bob Gymlan* (2013-ongoing), *Trey The Explainer* (2013-ongoing) and *Cryptidium* (2023-ongoing).

⁶ Examples can be seen on accounts like *@cryptiduniversity* (2023-ongoing), *@oliviawistmysteries* (2021-ongoing), *@todduka* (2022-ongoing) and *@arcane Discoveries423* (2023-ongoing).

⁷ Accounts that show ‘real monster footage’, include, *@itsweirdtime* (2019-ongoing), *@cryptid_monsters* (2020-ongoing) and *@monstersamonguspodcast* (2016-ongoing).

⁸ General conspiracy theory ideas and paranormal notions are widespread, but some pages are dedicated to this topic, including *Artangle* ([sa]), *Not Top Secret Blog* ([sa]), *Alien-Ufo-Research* ([sa]), *Beam of Light* ([sa]) and *Just Energy Radio* ([sa]).

⁹ The complexity of systems that serve as ancient writings, as well as systems that preceded these is discussed in depth by Yeo (2021) in *Record-Making and Record-Keeping in Early Societies*.

¹⁰ The path the monster takes is a general theme in *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space*.

by the ‘Space Age’ (Goodman 2019:21)¹¹, orchestrate global conspiracies¹² or enter into the familiar from the darkness of Outer Space to pester their victims, as shown on screens around the world.¹³ Science Fiction Horror, being a branch on the every expanding tree of the Horror genre, shows a contemporary and relevant refection of the monster. Strangely, although these monsters are separated in the extreme by time, space, culture and many other boundaries, there is an overlap. The messages of fear these monsters communicate, albeit expressed through nuanced and particular cultural shapes, show similarities.

For example, if one takes a look at a creature from Ancient Mesopotamia¹⁴, the *Evil Udug*, described in the Sumerian *Udug-hul Forerunners* (Figure 1 & 37) from the Old Babylonian period, and some contemporary examples of the alien in Science Fiction Horror films like *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009)¹⁵, *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013)¹⁶, and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023)¹⁷, there are overlaps.¹⁸

The main overlap can be seen in how fear is connected to the two types of monsters. In contemporary iterations of the monster, it is usually found within the Horror genre. This far-ranging category of cultural creations, including film and literature, is flued and hard to define. What can be used as thread that runs throughout the genre is an underlying ability to bring about feelings of intense emotions, particularly fear and disgust (Isakov 2024:164; Hick 2022:140). The subgenre of Horror Science Fiction, where the alien depictions relevant to this study are found, can be defined as cultural products that borrow futuristic and speculative elements from Science Fiction, but applies these in such a way that it inspires fear, or creates horror (Leer 2025:114). The *Udug-hul Forerunners* (Figure 1 & 37) similarly can be seen as

¹¹ Although not exclusive to it, it is discussed in *Chapter 6: Overview of the Alien as a Monster*.

¹² Such as the strange and popular notion of Lizard-aliens explored by David Icke (Braune 2023:156), noted in footnote 249.

¹³ For examples refer to footnotes 1 to 7.

¹⁴ This study refers to Ancient Mesopotamia as a general term for the areas and time periods of Ancient Sumer, Assyria and Babylon, as they fall within the area between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in contemporary Iraq and Syria (Van de Mierop 2016:1, 4). This general term is used due to the widespread and long use of the *Udug-hul* texts in their various forms. This general term also implies that Ancient Mesopotamia falls under the larger umbrella of the Ancient Near East (Van de Mierop 2016:1).

¹⁵ When *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) is noted throughout this study, the Figures 2,45-47, 95, and 104 show examples of this film overall.

¹⁶ In this study examples depicting *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) can be seen in Figure 3, 38-44, 96 and 102.

¹⁷ *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) is shown in this study in Figure 4, 48-55, 97 and 101.

¹⁸ This study by no means reinforces the *Ancient Astronaut Theory* in its many spiralling forms, but rather seeks to address why the connection could have been made in the first place. This concept is touched on in *Chapter 6: Overview of the Alien as a Monster*, 6.3 *Ufology, Folklore and the Grey Alien*, 6.3.3 *The Grey Alien Takes Shape*.

linked to genuine fears of illness and taboo within its own context (Konstantopoulos 2015:35). The intent of the texts differ, contemporary products of Horror Science Fiction are meant as entertainment and the *Udug-hul Forerunners* (Figure 1 & 37) were exorcism texts meant to guard against what were seen as real fears at the time (Konstantopoulos 2015:20).

A clear overlap both entities¹⁹ have, is that they are ill defined.²⁰ The *Evil Udug* is so mysterious that Geller (2011:333) describes the creature as ‘faceless’. The aliens in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009)²¹ and *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013)²² are either never actually shown, or are simply encountered as shadowy figures. This aspect of the monsters would classify them as *Unnameable Monsters*²³. Beville (2014:102) explains such monsters as either having very few signifiers or an excess to the point where it overwhelms with its connection to the unknown. To add to this excess and absence, Beville (2014:76) notes that with such mysterious monsters the landscape wherein the entity functions become of great importance, the monster as *thing*’s aspects extending to the features of the space around it.

Although the *Evil Udug*, and aliens encountered in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) and *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), appear at first to have a lack of features, there are a myriad of descriptions that surround the monsters, giving them a sense of excess. The *Evil Udug* holds descriptions of various animals, lions, dogs, snakes, mongooses, and owls, as well as violent humans who attack, beat, and bind their victims (Geller 1985, 2016). Their various places within the landscape, the mountains, steppe, desert, street and home, become laden with meaning as well as the areas the *Evil Udug* transgresses to reach its victim.

¹⁹ Within this study the word ‘entity’ is used to describe the monster in its aspect as a ‘thing’. This use is meant to lend clarity to when a monster is discussed as a ‘thing’ without using the word ‘thing’ at all times, since this could lead to confusion. The word entity can here be understood as a vague enough description of something that has its own existence, and a being that exists beyond the bounds of natural laws.

²⁰ *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) is an exception, it was chosen here to show the excess of the alien compared to its nature in the other two films hinted at.

²¹ This study refers to Figure 2 and 46 when noting aliens in particular from *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009).

²² Aliens shown in *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) refer to Figure 3, 42, 43 and 44 throughout this study and include the entities themselves as well as drawings rendered by characters in the narrative.

²³ Beville (2014)’s original spelling is *Unnamable*, but due to the use of South African English in this thesis, it was changed to *Unnameable*.



Figure 1: *Uduḡ- Hul Forerunners* 16, Photo of Plate 161, [sa]. Photograph by Fincke. (Geller 1985:729).

The alien as shown in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) and *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) is surrounded by animal symbolism also, including owls, the behaviour of birds, dogs and racoons. Various violent and miscreant human traits, such as abduction and breaking into the home, forced experimentation and abuse are also present. The spaces the monster uses add to these features, the unknown of outer space, the woods, the suburb and home all become meaningful.

No One Will Save You (Duffield 2023) is different, in that it shows the alien implied in the other chose films more fully, namely the Grey Alien.²⁴ This clear representation is included since the contemporary audience is familiar with the shapes the alien takes in *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023)²⁵, because these films about aliens exist within a particular context.²⁶ The unnameable aspect of the contemporary aliens in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) and *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) makes use of the audience's knowledge of the Grey Alien beyond what is portrayed. The Grey Alien outside of these films is part of an established folklore²⁷ that feeds

²⁴ The Grey Alien is shown in various Figures in this study, when the entity is mentioned in general, the Figures 3, 4, 42-44, 48, 50, 51, 54, 63-65, 69, 70, 72, 74, 77 and 105, are to be referred to.

²⁵ Aliens shown in *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) are referred to in Figure 4, 48, 50, 51 and 54, throughout this study, excluding depictions of infected humans from this film.

²⁶ This movie was chosen since the Grey Alien is known to the contemporary audience and in the other two films these aliens are hinted at, meaning the contemporary audience has some idea of what the alien entities are supposed to be in both these films. Although the *Evil Uduḡ* is not depicted clearly in art (Konstantopoulos 2017:24), the contemporary audience might have had an insight into what the entity looked like from other sources.

²⁷ The Grey Alien's connection to folklore is explored in *Chapter 6: Overview of the Alien as a Monster, 6.3 Ufology, Folklore and the Grey Alien, 6.3.3 The Grey Alien Takes Shape*.

into products of popular culture (Difruscio 2023:4-5), describing amphibian-like entities associated with Others and their misdeeds, who attack the unwary.²⁸



Figure 2: The Watching Owl, *The Fourth Kind*, 2009. (Swift 2009:[sp]).

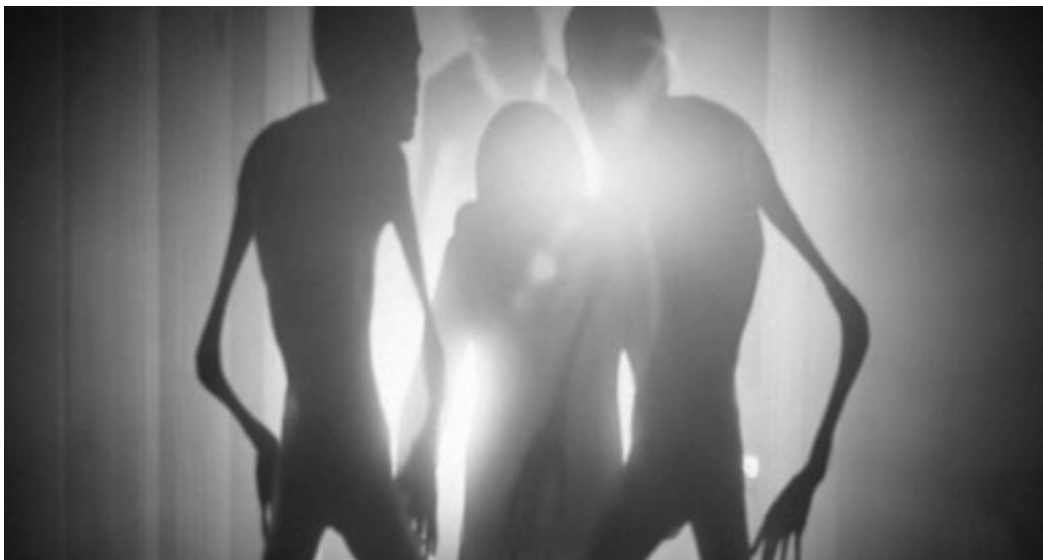


Figure 3: Greys in the Home, *Dark Skies*, 2013. (Stream 2017:[sp]).

²⁸ *Chapter 6: Overview of the Alien as a Monster* looks into the Grey Alien's formation across time, popular cultural expression as well as UFOlogy's role in influencing these expressions.



Figure 4: Grey Alien Design, No One Will Save You, 2023. (Sharma 2023:[sp]).

A way to approach the ancient *Evil Udu* and contemporary alien as seen in the chosen films is through *Monster Theory*, or *Monster Culture*. Monster Theory takes as its basis the seminal work of Jeffery Jerome Cohen's 1996, *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Figure 5), and his seven theses on what monsters can reveal about culture (Bernardi & Jacob 2019:xi). From this perspective, the monster's body is a cultural product as well as its behaviour and placement in terms of the boundaries it breaks or guards (Mittman 2016:13). Monster Theory, and more contemporary Monster Studies that take it as its basis, often reduce the monster to a sign, its intended warnings and possible fears taken as cultural (Aberdein 2020:402; Weinstock 2014:4).²⁹ The monster's value in understanding Scapegoating, Othering, deviance, liminality, Abjection, hybridity and the Uncanny is usually the aim of such culturally motivated studies³⁰(Cohen 1996).

In terms of the seminal work of Cohen (1996) concerning Monster Theory, he focuses on the monster as sign, working with the term *monstrum*, which he interprets as something that reveals or warns. For Cohen (1996) the monster is a signifier for which the signified lies elsewhere, culturally wrought, but always elusive. Beville (2014:4-5) explains that this sign of the monster is a sign of danger and that the monster implies demonstration, as per the word *monstrare*,

²⁹ Monster Theory's interdisciplinary nature is noted in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture, 2.3 Bioculture and the Monster*.

³⁰ This study uses the term Monster Theory rather loosely. Within the confines of this thesis, it indicates studies on monsters from fields traditionally associated with the humanities as it embodies the Two Cultures, which is explained in more detail in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture, 2.3 Bioculture and the Monster*.

meaning ‘to demonstrate’ or ‘to show’. Long (2012:201) and Krell (2020:53, 61) explain that the monster is a sign that demonstrates and warns of disaster and transgression. Or, as per Musharbash and Gershon’s (2023:20) interpretation, the monster is ‘warning revealing’ through its liminality, Otherness, difference, and its crossing of boundaries that are social, cultural, moral, and even geographical, as well as confusing categories.

Beville (2014:4-5) explains that the word *monster* is applied when something has gone beyond human understanding, rendering something *monstrous* which can include the characteristics of a *thing*, but also abhorrent human behaviour. Weinstock (2020:2-4) echoes this idea, explaining that the monster is that which creates confusion, threatening how one understands the self, the world and the interconnectedness of these.

Weinstock (2020:4) summarises that the monster can be considered in three broad streams, namely mythology which focuses on fictitious monsters, psychology which looks into human behaviour that might be considered monstrous³¹ and teratology where physical deformity holds deeper meaning. Although this is not a complete definition, it reveals a problem in the thinking on monsters in general, which is that the monster is both fictitious, literary, constructed of culture, yet intimately tied to the physical world, or rather, the experience of that world.

From this perspective, the *Evil Udu* and alien would be considered as hybrid monsters expressing the particular culture of the social, cultural and historical context of the peoples that created them. Comparison between monsters separated by such a large chasm of time, space and cultural practice might not be invited, or a stronger focus would fall on the differences in culture the monsters exhibit, not their similarities. Monster Theory's focus on merely the cultural value of the monster is reductionist, according to Beville (2014:8-9), as it cuts the monster down to its components, not taking it into consideration as a complete entity and what that entails.³² For Beville (2014) and Kripal (2017), the monster is better approached from a phenomenological perspective, an entity that is *experienced* by the embodied audience, particularly the fear associated with the monster.

³¹ The human monster is a complex topic that stretches across disciplines. This study does not seek to investigate this monster in detail but rather focuses on the human aspect of the monster only in relation to how humans have exerted evolutionary pressure on other humans to cause a biological ability to fear other humans.

³² This study does still participate in the same “pulling apart” of the monster. However, the aim of this study is to better understand the parts so as to appreciate the whole’s intended meaning more fully.

The phenomenological subject here is acknowledged as a subject that is defined through their ‘being-in-the-world’³³, not as a binary of body and mind, but as an intricate, interconnected subject within their ‘life-world’³⁴ wherein the subject is dependent on, and part of, their physical body (Merleau-Ponty 2004 [1948]:10).³⁵ From this perspective, the body, and its underlying biology, is crucial to experiences within the world, here relating to fear and the monster.

Some Biocultural Monster Studies provide this consideration of the body and its biology when approaching the monstrous. Monster Studies as a broad field includes Monster Theory (Mittman 2016:2) but also contains more contemporary approaches to monsters that include taking biology and evolution into account. The term that is used here indicates a specific part of Monster Studies namely; *Biocultural Monster Studies*. This term was created for the specificity it offers concerning the focus of this study. The authors of the works identified as Biocultural Monster Studies, do not seem to have applied this label themselves at this time.

Biocultural Monster Studies essentially makes use of Bioculture, the idea that culture within human groups arises from underlying evolutionary pressures that shaped the structures of the brain and body, meaning culture is an outgrowth of biological adaptations (Boyd 2006:21-22). This underlying idea of combining biological and cultural concerns is shown in Biocultural Monster Studies through the work of authors like Clasen (2012:223; 2017:[sp]) in how the human and predator cues that monsters carry, affect human biology to trigger attention and fear. Monteiro, West and Pizarro (2023:167) specifically refer to monsters that infect as linked to evolutionary structures that evolved to create disgust responses to avoid infectious substances. The combination of all of these traits can cause overstimulation, making it hard to classify the stimuli and then respond properly. This creates Category Jamming in how the brain processes stimuli, then sparking fear of the unknown (Asma 2014:7-8).

³³ ‘Being-in-the-world’ was a term used by Heidegger (2001 [1962]:26), which refers to the idea that there is an intricate and reciprocal relationship between embodied subjects and the world.

³⁴ ‘Life-world’ as a term and concept, according to Eberle (2022:110), stems from Alfred Schutz and Thoman Luckmann’s (1973) interpretation of Edmund Husserl (1936) to describe the backdrop against which, and from which, all experience and knowledge stems.

³⁵ Phenomenology is not the main focus of this study, but serves here as a means to create a tie between culture and biology.

Biocultural Monster Studies allows for an approach through which the ancient *Evil Udu* and contemporary alien from the included films can be compared across the spatial, historical, social and cultural boundaries that separate these entities. By focusing on the similarity in the human subjects that keep returning to expressing the figure of the monster as well as seeking engagement with it through various cultural texts much can be learned. Biocultural Monster Studies acknowledges the role of culture, but enhances the view of culture through a biological lens. This offers an analysis as to what fears underlie cultural expressions in terms of the chosen monster's monstrous conglomerate body's inclusion of animals, humans and infection. From this perspective the overlap between the *Evil Udu* and the alien is an overlap of what humans fear as products of their biology, orientated and expressed by cultural practices within a particular context.

However, not all aspects of the ancient *Evil Udu* and the alien as per *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) are accounted for by Biocultural Monster Studies. These Unnameable Monsters' deep connection to space, expressed differently within their contexts, but part of the fear created in evolutionary biological human subjects that experience monsters, does not seem to be addressed as a point of particular interest by current Monster Studies in general.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Monster Studies, built on Monster Theory, here referred to for clarity as Cultural Monster Studies, do not clearly explore how the monster is entangled in the landscape and what the value of predators, human elements, infection and symbolic ideas around these concepts are when space is concerned. The element of space is crucial to understanding the cultural and biological fears associated with the ancient *Evil Udu* and the contemporary alien as seen in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023). The question that is posed here can be stated as: When the monster is so ill defined that the available cultural and biocultural theories available cannot reveal enough about the monster's significance, intended meaning or fear, can the space it occupies contain further cultural and biocultural meanings about the fear the Unnameable Monster carries?

How monsters are approached by Cultural Monster Studies as a basis concerned with culture within Monster Studies is then explored, together with Biocultural Monster Studies. This

shows that the current frameworks available, biological and cultural, do not cover all the elements of the chosen monsters. Cultural Monster Studies, particularly where it uses Monster Theory, is explored in depth to build a more complete framework. This framework allows for the exploration of the Biocultural messages of fear contained in both the ancient *Evil Udu* and the contemporary alien as expressed through the chosen films. Biocultural Monster Studies' three main domains, namely a concern with predation, human enemies and infection is extended to include elements from Monster Theory. Monster Theory's focus on hybridity, problems with categorisation and liminality are linked to Category Jamming, as per the elements of predation, human enemies and infection. Othering and Scapegoating are connected to fear of conspecifics as well as a fear of infection and disgust as per the Biocultural idea of the Behavioural Immune System. A fear of disgust then also includes how the Uncanny in relation to the monster is perceived.

In order to better understand the ancient *Evil Udu* and the contemporary alien's value as monsters on a Biocultural level, an addition to the main Biocultural concerns of Monster Studies is made concerning space. Drawing from the field of ecology, I include the theory of the *Landscape of Peril* (Laundré, Hernández & Ripple 2010; Doherty & Ruhle 2020:[sp]).³⁶ This theory concerns how animals and humans measure the risk of predation, conspecifics and infection in the landscape and then use the space accordingly. The monster is an entity that is part of the idea of the physical landscape, warning of the dangers that are there to fear, facilitating an overlap of the real terrain and ideas about the terrain.

This concept is applied to the chosen monsters, using the spatial theory of the trialectics of space as per Henri Lefebvre (1991) and Edward Soja (1996) with a focus on Thirdspace³⁷ to include the cultural value that reading space can bring to exploring the monster. The space that the monster uses is also considered as per Foucault's (1986) notion of Heterotopias³⁸, taking as starting point that the monster in space brings an overlapping of spaces. The liminality of the monster and its hybridity, is connected to Thirdspace and Heterotopia in terms of the warnings it gives within space.

³⁶ This study provides a very basic illustration of the Landscape of Peril Theory in Figure 21, and throughout this study when the concept is mentioned, this figure can be referred to.

³⁷ A general and simplistic expression of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace can be found in Figure 19 which is implied whenever Thirdspace is mentioned in this study.

³⁸ A diagram providing a basic understanding of Heterotopia is provided in Figure 20 and is implied whenever Heterotopia is used throughout this study.

Through applying this modified framework of theoretical concepts from biological, ecological and cultural fields, the ancient *Evil Udug* and the contemporary alien are compared in terms of the fears they manifest, use and warn of. This is not limited to their use of human biology or cultural ideas captured in their bodies and behaviours, but also through their association with space and the landscape. This provides a more complete view of the ancient *Evil Udug* and the contemporary alien as monsters.

1.2.1 Aims

Through showing that ancient and contemporary monsters share overlaps through the fears they embody, that is not limited to the boundaries of cultural, social and historical context, this study aims to demonstrate that a Biocultural approach can be of great value when considering how human fear and monsters are intertwined. Fear is explored from a Biocultural perspective, showing where the characteristics of the monster would touch on these biological structures and perceptions.

A thorough investigation of the *Evil Udug* from the Ancient Mesopotamian *Udug-hul Forerunners* as an example of an ancient monster is included here to add to the limited knowledge of this mysterious entity (Konstantopoulos 2017:25). This also orientates the reader regarding the monster's value and possible intended meanings. An application of a Biocultural approach to ancient monsters and the significance of their meaning to their intended ancient audience are shown here as additional dimension to the understanding of the context of the monster.

Just as the *Evil Udug* is explored within its context from an enhanced Biocultural perspective, so too the contemporary alien is explored by using the examples of *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023). The research included here focuses on particular manifestations of the contemporary alien in Science Fiction Horror, meaning here where the genres of Science Fiction and Horror overlap (Littman 2018:94), films as products of a larger body of folklore and cultural products, showing that a Biocultural approach can add value to the perception of the alien as a monster. The Grey Alien, due to the relevance of this particular figure to the chosen films, is explored in more depth.

Finally, this study aims to make a contribution to the body of knowledge concerning the study of monsters from a Biocultural perspective. Existing Monster Studies' main ideas of the biological underpinnings of monsters are explored, but also a biologically considered approach to space as per the field of ecology. Concepts of how space can be valuable in determining meaning from a cultural and biological perspective is added. The research provided here serves an extra node in the network of Biocultural research on monsters by adding the concept of space into the tools for analysing monsters. The main aim of this study is to show that the concerns of Biocultural Monster Studies, predation, conspecific violence and fear of contamination (Monteiro, West & Pizarro 2023), are established within the *Landscape of Peril theory* (Laundré, Hernández & Ripple 2010; Doherty & Ruhle 2020:[sp]).

1.2.2 Objectives

The objectives of this study include a thorough literature review of information used to analyse monsters and the fear monsters instil and embody. For this purpose, traditional Monster Theory is investigated in depth, particularly the focus on the cultural understanding of the monster. Monster Studies is also investigated here, with special focus placed on the biological ideas and structures the field includes so as to create a deeper understanding of these concepts to link new ideas or apply these ideas to monsters.

Through this deeper understanding of Monster Studies as a whole, the biological components of this theory can be linked to other fields to expand the current research. Not only is the objective to show that Bioculture bridges some of the gaps between humanities and the sciences, but to actively build upon the connections that Biocultural research has already provided. This investigation seeks to show the value of the Spatial Turn not just in the humanities, but also how an emphasis on the biological perception and use of space by humans in relation to fear can be a valuable tool when approaching the monster.

By showing the value of Biocultural research, an objective of this inquiry is to provide ground for more comparisons across the boundaries of cultural, social and historical lines. This objective actively seeks to establish that acknowledging cultural, social and historical context is of the utmost importance. By focusing not just on difference, but biologically shared

experiences of humans across these boundaries, historical cultural texts can gain more immediate value, especially for a contemporary audience.

1.2.3 Domain of the study

The fields of Monster Theory and Monster Studies that take concepts such as anthropology, literary studies, psychology, phenomenology and film analysis as principles in the approach to monsters is relevant to the domain of the research included here. Biocultural Monster Studies is used pertaining to the manner in how it draws on biology, particularly the evolutionary adaptations that fear offers in relation to monsters. Although biological information is used, it is applied to concerns within the humanities. The legacy of the Spatial Turn is incorporated, referring to how focusing on space can reveal how social relations are made manifest, as well as how space and society shape each other (Macaspac & Moore 2020:4). This focus is then also applied to concepts from the study of ecology.

In terms of the chosen monsters, the *Evil Udug* from the Ancient Mesopotamian *Udug-hul Forerunners* and the context of these texts mainly originate from studies that focus on the Ancient Near East. The alien is often considered in visual culture studies and film analysis³⁹, however this investigation also draws from the folklore surrounding the alien as a contemporary monster.

1.2.4 Limitations of the study

Since this study draws on evolutionary biological, neurology, evolutionary psychology and ecological fields from outside of the humanities, the interaction and interpretation of this research is limited to its value for the humanities. The understandings and interpretations are based on the conclusions of the initial research in other fields and not on first hand data collection or conclusions from this author. The interpretation of the initial research through Biocultural Monster Studies as used by other authors is also taken into consideration to lead the Biocultural investigation undertaken here. However, the initial studies into human fear that

³⁹ Examples include books like *Aliens in Popular Culture* (Levy & Medleeson 2019), Clarke's (2015) *How UFOs Conquered the World: The History of a Modern Myth* and *Meeting the Alien: An Introduction to Exosociology* by Anton and Schetsche (2023).

are focused on fields outside the humanities that are used by Biocultural Monster Studies are touched on here so that this author could also fashion an insight into those initial studies.

Difference as well as cultural, social and historical context of the texts and peoples noted in this study are acknowledged, but they are not the main focus of this inquiry. Bioculture presents an approach that is more holistic, through bridging some of the gap between humanities and the sciences it allows for comparisons and insight that touch on the structures through which the human species experiences their being-in-the-world, which includes not just biology, but environments created by culture. The interests of this investigation do not lie in many popular topics within the humanities, particularly those fronted by postmodernism and difference. Some of the angles of approach to the monstrous are noted, such as feminism, decolonisation, or other areas where more cultural concepts originated from, but the application of such ideas only occurs within the framework of Bioculture.

A strong and definite limitation on this study is the *Udug-hul Forerunners* being an Ancient Mesopotamian text of cuneiform tablets written in Sumerian (Geller 1985, 2016). For the research presented here, the most recent translation was selected, that done by Geller in 1985 and corrections or updates provided in 2016 by the same author. The original tablets that Geller (1985, 2016) translated are not accessible to this author owing to a language barrier. Geller's (1985, 2016) translation alone is relied on, predominantly following the general narrative set out in the 1985 version.⁴⁰

In terms of the cultural and historical milieu the research is limited to English translations and studies of cuneiform texts, as well as cultural studies done in English. This author acknowledges that many studies, translations and valuable insights do exist in terms of Ancient Mesopotamian and the Ancient Near East, a large amount of which were done in German.

Limitations regarding the contemporary alien as a monster are complex. This monster is relatively speaking a new entity on the scene of cultural products, but it presents several problems when approached through film alone. The films provided are a very small sample size from which to gather insight into a monster that exists across genres of film, literature, mysticism, religion and even a body of knowledge that claims physical interaction with such

⁴⁰ A more in-depth discussion about the text within its context as well as its circulation and translations can be found in *Chapter 5: An Overview of The Evil Udug in Context*.

beings. The manifestation of the alien in the chosen films is only the coalescence of a particular node within the complex network of how the alien is perceived. Where possible this study has considered the context wherein the alien, particularly the Grey Alien, was shaped, viewing the alien more as a folkloric figure that exists across multiple cultural texts, however due to the focused scope of the research, only the most relevant information has been included. This academic exploration is then mostly concerned with ideas generated about the alien in the United States of America since the chosen films originate from there and have played a large role in how the alien figure has been shaped in globalised popular culture.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section provides an overview of theories used in this inquiry, as well as the underlying worldview this study assumes when gathering information, interpreting theories and applying concepts to cultural texts. The theoretical background expands on the information provided in the Background section of this Introduction. The research done here is deeply qualitative even when drawing on data interpreted outside the scope of the humanities. The intent of the study is to create a better model through which to compare the Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udu* and the contemporary alien as seen in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023), as such a comparative approach is taken.

1.3.1 Worldview and paradigms

Through following a Biocultural approach this study is qualitative, but draws on information obtained through quantitative studies. However, these interpretations are met from a qualitative perspective, the applications of which are qualitative also. As such some underlying points of view the study follows are included here.

Darwin's (1809-1882) theory of evolution is used in this research as a basis from which to approach the behaviours and physical traits of contemporary humans concerning fear. The initial theories of Darwin from *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) have been reinterpreted, tested and updated within the scientific community as explored in more depth in *Unity and Disunity in Evolutionary Biology Deconstructing Darwinism* (Delisle, Esposito & Ceccarelli 2024). However, the underlying notion that humans evolved certain physical structures that took shape over time due to certain pressures and then behave in line

with such evolutionary traits (du Crest, Valković, Ariew, Desmond, Huneman & Reydon 2023:2), is taken here as the basis from which human fear is approached.

The study provided here is implicitly grounded in a phenomenological approach to human experience and perception. Unlike the long-held understanding of the body and mind as separate as per Cartesian Dualism (Buongiorno 2019:315), this investigation takes as an implied underpinning the interconnectedness of the mind and body. The phenomenological understanding that the mind arises from the body, yet is not separate from it, and gives access to the experiences within the world, in turn affecting the body and mind (Zahavi 2019:66) is integral to this research. From a contemporary understanding, the body is a product of biology, as is the mind which arose from it, and that the pressures of the world shaped these systems to allow better access to phenomena within it as well as responses to it (Fuchs 2018: xix, 14, 41, 59). The body is not reduced to an object through the lens of biology as used herein, but remains an integral part of the subject.

Through this assumption of interconnectedness, a Biocultural approach is taken. Bioculture acknowledges that the body is a product of evolution, adapting to its environment (Gaya 2010:5). This implies a view that culture arises from the biological structures of the body, including the physical make-up of the brain and humans' tendency to be social (Young 2008:[sp]; Boyd 2006:21-22). A further assumption would then be that since humans evolve to adapt to their environment, that environment is social and filled with culture, meaning humans evolved to both create cultural expressions as well as receive them (Caroll, Clasen, Jonsson, Kratschmer, McKerracher, Riede, Svenning and Kjærgaard 2017:2).

1.3.2 Qualitative Research

A qualitative approach to research is used. The figure of the monster as a source of fear that manifests both culturally and biologically is at the core of this study. The focus of this project centres on how humans make meaning from phenomena within the context of social, cultural and historical systems, which are characteristics of the concerns of qualitative research (Lim 2024:199). Where biological or ecological ideas are used, they are approached and applied as information that can lend clarity to the chosen monsters within their social, cultural and historical contexts.

The chosen texts are approached with the intent to understand not just this author's subjective interpretation guided by their own context, but rather the intended meaning of the original creators and users within their contexts also. An underlying Hermeneutical understanding of the chosen texts is implied although not stated outright in the research performed here. The hermeneutic approach as per Hans-George Gadamer (2006 [1986]:46) concerns obtaining more complete insight and understanding into texts by taking their context into account. The implied approach is established by using the Hermeneutical principle of taking the situatedness of the text, author/s and intended audience within social, cultural and historical contexts (Wadhwani 2023:219) into consideration at all times.

Hermeneutics draws from various fields in order to provide a clearer image of the text at hand (Janz 2017:24). The drawing together of various disciplines to create a deeper understanding, like the disciplines Monster Theory in Cultural Monster Studies and Monster Studies' Biocultural approach uses to better understand the monster as well as this author's inclusion of ideas from the field of Ecology, is then a Hermeneutical goal. An information dialog is created between the text and the reader through combining ideas from these various fields, acknowledging that each has prejudice, authority and their own horizon (Kinsella 2006:[sp]). To better understand the texts in question the reader and the text's horizons must meet (Aktuna & Hailey 2017:66). A new understanding emerges when the interpreter confronts the authority and prejudice of his/her own horizon through interacting with the text (Shalin 2010:10).

A Hermeneutical endeavour allows for interaction with older texts by a contemporary reader, here the *Forerunners to the Udug-hul's* translations, as these texts contain relevant human experiences and intended meanings through which even the contemporary reader can gain some understanding. New meanings in the *Forerunners to the Udug-hul's* translations can be revealed through the reader's interactions and knowledge of the context surrounding the text. Novel insights into the meaning behind the aliens shown in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) can also be revealed through Hermeneutical analysis.

1.3.3 Comparative Research and Generated Model of Study

The shown research here includes contemporary uses of Monster Studies, in addition to more angles of inquiry to better facilitate a comparison between an ancient monster and a

contemporary one. The aim of this study is to show that the *Evil Udug* from the Sumerian *Undul-Hul Forerunners* and the alien as used in contemporary Science Fiction Horror movies, *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) can be compared when the underlying similarity of the audience's biological makeup is taken as a common denominator, while keeping culturally specific expressions of these traits in mind.

Comparative research has been done according to established models⁴¹, including ones centred around qualitative research.⁴² The aim of qualitative comparisons between subjects is to find similarities through establishing relationships between the points of interest, the frequency of which reveals overlaps. The observation of groups that differ, separated with intent or even if they are separate in time and space by happenstance, the variables between these are investigated (Bukhari 2011:2).⁴³

The groups that are of interest include the group/s that made up the intended audiences of the Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udug* and contemporary aliens within their niche in popular culture in the globalised world. The comparison aims to show how the monsters noted above manifest overlapping fears from a biological angle, manifested in culturally significant ways within the groups' varying social, cultural and historical contexts. The variable relationships between the points of interest are revealed through a comparison of the chosen monsters' attributes as discussed in the *Udug-hul Forerunners* translated by Geller (1985, 2016) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023).

1.3.4 Theoretical framework

⁴¹ Comparison as a means of generating a study can be debated as being alternately a field of study by itself, a methodology or content area (Lor 2011:2). Comparative research is debated along these lines as it has no method of study that is seen as an absolute even though it is also of great importance in the social sciences and other scientific fields (Lor 2011:2). However, the method of comparison across such studies does share certain elements.

⁴² Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is explained by Simister and Scholz (2017:[sp]) as a method through which complex analysis of a wide range of subjects can be done. The method includes six steps, the first step being using a theory of change, secondly, identifying cases that are of interest, thirdly, establishing a set of factors, fourthly, scoring the importance of the identified factors, fifthly, analysing the collected data and sixthly, using the original theory as a measure against which the data is interpreted.

⁴³ A method through which to create such a comparison is to compare the collected data to an established rubric (Bukhari 2011:7). For this study, the points of interest are not presented in a rubric, but rather in essay format. The initial point of interest is generated through investigating the *Evil Udug* and contemporary alien in the chosen cultural texts in order to have information to compare.

The theoretical framework used here mostly involves a Biocultural approach, as part of the ‘Cognitive Turn’, and how it is integrated with Monster Studies. Further included in the theory used in this study is a perception of space as socially constructed and culturally relevant, as per the Spatial Turn. The overview of the theory provided here is aimed at orienting the reader as more in-depth discussion and exploration of these theories can be found in the upcoming content.

David and Morris (2007:411) in their *Biocultures Manifesto* explain the tendency in the early twenty-first century to reconsider history and culture as interconnected with biology as *Biocultures*. Bioculture is part of the larger Cognitive Turn. The Cognitive Turn is explained by Engelen, Verhaegh, Collignon and Pannu (2023:325,326) as a focus on studying human beings across various fields, which can include an overlap of ‘scientific’ fields, such as cognitive neuroscience with the humanities. Michelle (2010:205-214) summarises that the Cognitive Turn appeared due to improvements in understanding human cognition. This allowed more opportunity for cognitive sciences to be used when investigating concerns usually thought of as part of the humanities (Michelle 2010:205-214). A more contemporary source, Nannini (2020:1- 7)⁴⁴, explains that although interest in the overlap of biology and the humanities is older, the new technologies of the 1980s and 90s allowed for a better understanding of neuroscience and how mental states are linked to the evolved, biological, brain.

In terms of fields of study, the Cognitive Turn, with Bioculture, interacts with the idea of the ‘Two Cultures’. The notion of the ‘Two Cultures’ is explored more in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*, 2.3 *Bioculture and the Monster*, 2.3.1 *Postmodernism and Humanities*, 2.3.2. *Bioculture as integration of Biology and Culture for Monster Studies*, but the idea can be summarised as the view that the sciences and the humanities are different fields of study, whose interests were not always accepted as overlapping (Michelle 2010:219).

⁴⁴ Nannini (2020:1-7), explains an earlier cognitive turn, the first cognitive turn, in the 1950s, 60s and 80s where theorists reconsidered philosophies of mind in light of neuroscience. However, as Nannini (2020:1-7) explains it was not until the 80s that views of the human as a biological being, product of evolution and neurobiologically dependent were naturalised and states of mind were linked directly to biology, the second cognitive turn. In relation to this study, the ‘cognitive turn’ term encompasses both of these, focusing rather on the general notion that focus fell on cognition as linked to biology. In this way, the ‘cognitive turn’, including Bioculture, is instrumental in overcoming the divide between the sciences and the humanities.

Postmodernism has a strong distrust of science, as per the work of Nietzsche (1901), Kuhn (1962), Feyerabend (1975), Lyotard (1984), Latour (1988), Derrida (1978) to name but a few. Postmodernism's distrust of Metanarratives and use of Deconstruction to destabilise authority in relation to knowledge has put it in an oppositional stance to the sciences before (Sahibzada & Zaidi 2018:105; Bergkamp 2016:[sp]). A detailed discussion as to the ideas that provide resistance to integration is explored in subsection 2.3.1.1 *Postmodernism and Humanities*.

More recently the desire to unify science and the humanities can be seen in Pinker's *Science vs the Humanities: Round III* (2013). Pinker (2013b:[sp]) notes here that ideas of change and brilliance can come from any field, and explains that in history there were many philosophers that were also scientists. He notes that the humanities are capable of more, and that science can contribute to the humanities, not simply push them into obscurity (Pinker 2013b:[sp]). The fear that the loss of difference is what science brings is addressed by Pinker (2013b), stating that science should enrich and diversify the tools of the humanist instead.

Through using cognitive sciences, the traditional boundaries between the streams of the sciences and the humanities are destabilised, new tools are used to obtain knowledge although the sciences might not offer Objective Scientific Truth (McConachie 2015:6, 7, 9). The brain's biology can be taken as a limit to the overlap of interest between the fields. However, Nannini (2020:5-6) explains that the embodied human experience as per phenomenology not only acknowledges the interconnectedness of body, mind and world, but also acknowledges that there is a gap between what is known about the physicality of the brain and the experiences of consciousness. In essence, science can be used to expand the knowledge of human consciousness, but it cannot account for all human experience, when using a Biocultural approach then, a balance is needed.

Products of culture, such as narratives containing monsters, are viewed from the Cognitive Turn, though it is Bioculture as the creation of culture that has underlying biological value. Bioculture through authors like Carroll *et al* (2017), Boyd (2009, 2006), and McConachie (2015) among others used herein, see cultural expressions as part of humans' evolution as social. Bioculture then creates an angle through which to explore human commonalities while acknowledging cultural difference as varying expressions of biological traits. Through acknowledging humans as evolved to create and infer meaning within social groups and to be

evolutionarily prepared to receive meaning through multiple cultural texts (Boyd 2006:29), such texts cannot simply be deconstructed into meaninglessness.

Boyd (2009:1) explains that within Bioculture, narrative can be viewed as an element of play, and that stories train one's brain in areas of perception and cognition, while using the biological structures in place to process the given information, allowing for learning about the real world. From this perspective, monsters as entities of warning can be engaging in terms of what they teach, but also how they signal warning in terms of cultural and biological concerns. The monster as a signalling warning makes use of biology and culture.

Biologically, fear takes varied routes through the brain depending on the stimulus. Biocultural Monster Studies acknowledges that different fear circuits exist for a stimulus that is predatory (Montardy, Kwan, Mundinano, Fox, Wang, Gross & Burne 2021:[sp]; Clasen 2012), a threat from a violent member of the same species (Gross & Canteras 2012:651; Clasen and Platts 2019), as well as elements that cause disgust (Clasen 2017:[sp]; Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]; Monteiro, West & Pizzaro 2023). When monsters are met through cultural products, they can overwhelm these categories in their excess, creating an unknown threat (Asma 2014:951). The Biocultural approach here establishes that biological structures were shaped by certain pressures and that products of culture where monsters are featured then use these structures. However, as per Boyd's (2009:81) interpretation, monster stories also serve as preparation for meeting any of the various threats the monsters embody.

Monster Studies, cultural and Biocultural, does still draw from Monster Theory, of which Cohen (1996) is a seminal thinker. In Cohen's (1996) work on monsters there are also other ideas from within the humanities that this study uses to investigate the monster. Elements of the monster as a hybrid associated with Abjection, liminality, breaking taboo and confusion of categories includes the works of Julia Kristeva (1982)⁴⁵, Mary Douglas (2013 [1966])⁴⁶, Noël Carroll (2018 [1990], 1987)⁴⁷ and Cohen (1996:44-54). The monster as an Other that is often

⁴⁵ *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980) by Kristeva is a seminal source when discussing how the Abject is a matter that is liminal, boundary breaking and category defying as well as linked with taboo. The translation used here is the 1982 version.

⁴⁶ *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (2103 [1966]) written by Douglas focuses on the Abject, liminality, boundary crossing material, taboo as well as the systems that surround practices regarding such 'dirt'.

⁴⁷ Carroll's *The Philosophy of Horror: Or Paradoxes of the Heart* (2018 [1990]) and *The Nature of Horror* (1987) discuss the appeal of Horror.

scapegoated (Cohen 1996:46-49), includes a consideration for René Girard's work on Scapegoating⁴⁸. The Uncanny nature of the monster does touch on ideas generated by Freud⁴⁹, but this examination of the monster draws more on the Uncanny as already applied to monsters as can be seen in the work of Gloyn (2020), Weinstock (2020) and (Beville 2014).

However, in Biocultural fashion, some of these theories touch on biological components that can add to the way monsters are viewed. The Abject, Othering, Scapegoating and the Uncanny can be related to the Behavioural Immune System, whose connection to monstrosity is explored by Monteiro, West and Pizzaro (2023:166-171). Fear of the Other as a manifestation of fearing Conspecifics is addressed by Clasen and Platts (2019:1-15) and linked to Homicide Adaptation Theory as per Duntley and Buss (2011), Durrant (2009:[sp]), Buss (2019:[sp]) and Duntley (2005). Where more traditional Monster Theory within Cultural Monster Studies does not always pay close attention to the predatory nature of monsters, this element is linked to the biological existence of the Predator Template by Clasen (2012).

A clear rationale as to the use of a Biocultural approach is shown throughout this study. Through a thorough discussion of Cultural Monster Studies, the lacunas in the cultural approach alone are revealed. This includes a focus on the monster as a sign and interesting parts and not the recurring creation and interaction humans have maintained with monstrous figures throughout the vast history of human cultural production. Bioculture addresses the issue of reducing the monster to a sign alone. It focuses on human evolution and biology, creating a more stable, 'holistic' framework against which to read what the value of the monster is in a human capacity. It determines what elements of human biology are engaged by monsters and what structures lead into cultural creations that show similarities in both ancient monster like the *Evil Udu* as well as contemporary entities like the alien. It allows for comparison across cultural, historical and social boundaries to better understand not just cultural expressions of fear, but how fear links to engaging with monsters in a biological way.

The Biocultural warnings embodied in the monster do not stand within a vacuum, but rather the monster is entangled with and symbolically placed within the landscape. To consider

⁴⁸ Girard discusses Scapegoating in several of his works, although the main source for this study includes *The Scapegoat* (1986).

⁴⁹ In this study Freud is acknowledged as a seminal source when discussing the Uncanny, however the study does not take on his particular psychoanalytical stances or explanations of the phenomenon, but rather acknowledges the embodied experience of the Uncanny as having a biological basis.

‘space’ as a valuable measure through which to look at products of culture, the ‘Spatial Turn’ becomes relevant. The Spatial Turn, touched on here in short, incorporates the idea that space is an intrinsic part of the unfolding of human experience. This concept acknowledges that geography is intricately connected to social relations, how spaces are perceived and actively used and created is viewed as central to the human experience (Arias 2010:30).

Space from the interest of cultural studies includes a focus on borders, distances, places, landscapes and territories (Scheller 2023:2). Authors like Lefebvre, Soja and Foucault⁵⁰ contributed to the notion that space is constructed by various elements (Storm 2019:217-218). This including streams of culture, commerce and social convention and deeply part of human experience, physical spaces overlapping with mental ideas about that space as well as social spaces (Storm 2019:217-218).

Space as a focus for this study can be justified in its linking to the monster as well as fear. The spaces the monster traverses have value from the angle of Critical Spatiality. If one considers the culturally constructed meaning of the monster and the cultural and social construction of spaces, reading the fear the monster is encoded with can be seen as also encoded around the monster and its spaces. Another layer of meaning emerges when the underlying biology that accompanies the encoding of space is considered. Ecology provides a mapping of how humans use space, which can lead to expression in cultural or social ideas about space. Seeing the monster in its social, cultural and historical context can only be more complete when the context of the spaces it occupies are taken into account. Viewing the meaning of space surrounding the monster extends the nodes of interest within a network of meaning, presenting a more interconnected view.

Within the context of the study, fear and how it relates to space, particularly from a Biocultural angle, delivered through the figure of the monster is of importance. The monster as a warning, becomes not just a warning or biologically relevant threat, but also a marker of areas where the risk of such threats is increased. The *Landscape of Peril* theory (Laundré, Hernández & Ripple 2010; Doherty & Ruhle 2020:[sp]) incorporates the risk humans and animals perceive from predators, dangerous conspecifics and infection and notes how such perceived, mental maps alter behaviour and thus also produce changes in the landscape. Through using this ecological

⁵⁰ Their particular contributions are discussed in more detail in *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster*.

theory, the monster reveals fears associated with space, offering a deeper understanding of the value it carries.

In terms of the *Evil Udug*, the Spatial Turn can be seen in the consideration of cultural products in the Ancient Near East in general. Interest in space within the study of the Ancient Near East includes work by Wyatt (2001) that includes the symbolic relationship of space to cultural expressions and experiences of everyday life. According to Wyatt (2001) the orientation within space for an Ancient Near Eastern person would happen on an axis constructed according to cultural perceptions of actual places, mythical places and religious ideas of holiness and profanity (Figure 79). The concepts of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace as well as ideas about Heterotopias as applied to cultural texts of the Ancient Near East can be seen in the work of Keel (1997), MacDonald (2013), de Villiers (2013), and Prinsloo (2013). In essence these applications make use of Lefebvre and Soja's ideas of space as socially produced.

Through adding a biological and ecological perception of space, more can be revealed of the *Evil Udug* within this context. The Ancient Near East have encodings of fear that fall on a variety of spaces, as addressed in this study. The *Evil Udug* is deeply associated with certain spaces, such as the wilderness, mountains, desert, steppe, and streets. Looking at the cultural meaning surrounding these spaces, the context wherein the *Evil Udug* can be read as generating fear gains additional meaning. Its features as fearful can be read in conjunction with the features that were seen as dangerous in terms of the landscape. The intended reader of the ancient *Udug-hul Forerunners* would also be aware of the cultural and physical dangers associated with the included spaces. A better focus on context could reveal more clearly the intended context and implied fears originally understood by the original audience.

A contemporary understanding of the social production of space as well as how Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace overlap to facilitate lived experiences can be seen in how Horror films make use of space. Horror films show spaces that are liminal, Heterotopian (Figure 20) and exemplary of overlapping of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace. They reveal the perception of physical spaces and those associated with social, economic and cultural streams that produced such spaces (Prasad 2020; Beuka 2000; Marcucci 2020). The alien as shown Science Fiction Horror, like *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) is interconnected with such stress of thought on

space, but through noting biological implications as to why some spaces are perceived as more risky, the alien's message of fear can be more clearly deciphered.

1.4 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 is an introduction that serves to orientate the reader in terms of the whole study. The introduction leads the reader through the available background from which the problem statement emerges, establishing the aims, objectives, domain as well as limitations of the study and touches on the qualitative approach to the information the study investigates. The theoretical background of the study reveals the main streams of thought that are drawn on, namely Monster Theory as it informs Cultural Monster Studies, and Biocultural Monster Studies, while taking a clear Biocultural approach.

Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture is an overview of crucial literature used to approach monsters, both in the past as well as contemporaneously. Monster Theory's cultural concerns are explained in more detail, showing how Cohen's (1996) work has shaped the usual framework applied when studying monsters. The Postmodern ideas wherein Cultural Monster Studies fall, as well as the opposition it provides to a more integrated view is clearly stated. Monster Studies is then explained, particularly the Biocultural tools already in place in Biocultural Monster Studies through which monsters are approached as subjects relevant to human biological interests and structures. The particular aim of Bioculture to bridge the gap between the Two Cultures is noted.

Chapter 3: The Unnameable Monster presents an application of the Biocultural concerns discussed in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*, to the Unnameable Monster. The Unnameable Monster is shown to have predatory, conspecific and disgusting traits. The combination of these traits in their either excessive or exceedingly vague representations are seen here as what inks the Unnameable Monster to the unknown. It is the Unnameable Monster's unclear signs that are noted here, showing that to understand this particular monster, new elements are needed.

Chapter 4: Space and the Monster investigates space and its relationship to monsters. Cultural Monster Studies' notion of the monster's association with the border is investigated in terms of geography as well as cultural understandings of liminality, Thirdspace and Heterotopias.

The ecological idea of the *Landscape of Peril* is explored in detail, drawing on the information established in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture* about predation, conspecifics and contamination. The Unnameable Monster's closer relationship to space is investigated, showing how it may use information from the landscape in lieu of a physical form.

Chapter 5: An Overview of The Evil Udu in Context creates an overview of the *Udu-hul Forerunners* within their historical, cultural and social context. The sources of the translation that are used here, are discussed as well as the texts' intention as exorcism texts and their original use. A summary is included of the translated texts, focusing only on the *Evil Udu* and not the entirety of the named entities in the *Udu-hul Forerunners*. The monstrosity of the *Evil Udu* is established with attention paid to what attributes of animals, humans and landscape are revealed.

Chapter 6: Overview of the Alien as a Monster establishes a background against which to read the aliens shown in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023). The included films are summarised according to the interests of this study. Ufology is discussed in relation to the historical formation of the Grey Alien figure. This section shows the interplay between folklore, religion, streams of popular culture like film and the social, cultural and historical context that the Grey Alien occupies as a monster for contemporary audiences.

Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space is a further application of the theory in *Chapter 3: The Unnameable Monster* and *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster* to *Evil Udu* and aliens from *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023), but it adds *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster's Landscape of Peril* theory. This chapter shows the added value an understanding of space, both culturally and biologically, can make when considering the chosen monsters in terms of where the predatory animals, aggressive humans and elements of infection are understood to occur. Three main zones of interest are identified on the path of the chosen monsters as both penetrate from the margins inward, namely the wilderness, the city and home, and the body.

Chapter 8: Conclusions serve as the conclusion for this study. Here a final summary of the research is provided and suggestions are made for further use of the provided structure that

incorporates biological and cultural information to better understand the value of monsters and the space they occupy.

CHAPTER 2: MONSTER STUDIES: CULTURE AND BIO CULTURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The monster exists intricately connected to humanity throughout history. Just as the figure itself has been a constant companion in its various forms, so varied too are the lenses through which the monster is viewed and studied. The aim of this chapter is to present an overview of the most prominent ideas within the discourse, discussing the older, culturally minded, approach as well as the more contemporary Biocultural approach. This is meant to show the overview of available literature, as well as how older cultural ideas about the monster can be accommodated in a Biocultural model. The themes established here in terms of Bioculture's main identification of fears monsters carry, predation, aggressive humans and infection, are shown as lacking when discussing the Unnameable Monster in *Chapter 3: The Unnameable Monster*. *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster* then builds onto the concepts established in this chapter to show how space can provide an angle to understand the signs of fear Unnameable monsters carry in terms of the landscape. Ultimately the information in this chapter forms the basis for investigating the possible fear values the *Evil Udug* and alien carry, showing that monsters removed in time have overlaps due to biological similarity in humans across time.

Contemporary Monster Studies, including Monster Theory, although being an ancient practice in many aspects⁵¹, achieved its recent form through the seminal work of Jeffery Jerome Cohen's (1996:44-54) Monster Theory and seven seminal theses (Moser 2020:1). These central ideas about the monster flow through much of Monster Studies, creating consistent and recurring themes in how contemporary monsters are investigated. Such themes often include looking at the monster's body as a reflection of culture and its social, historical and cultural context, its hybridity and boundary crossing, how it is Other, its connection to taboo, its relation to the Abject and Uncanny, the Scapegoating process, as well as its ability to inspire desire and fear.

The monster as a sign that exists within space is also touched on by Monster Studies, placing the monster in a liminal (Baumgarten & Davis 2008:1), Third and Heterotopia space, from where the monster reflects societal and cultural issues. Such studies are more concerned with

⁵¹ Categorising and studying monsters is a practice that was already undertaken by figures like Pliny the Elder and Aristotle (Long 2012:195).

the cultural value of the monster as a sign than the thing itself (Beville 2014:6), drawing from a myriad of fields in the humanities, which are discussed in what follows.

This approach has been criticised for being overly concerned with what the monster reveals and not paying attention to the monster as a *thing* that is Sublime in and of itself (Beville 2014:151). Another criticism comes from Kripal (2017:244-245) who explains that the actual experience of those who have claimed to encounter monsters does not have a clear enough area of expression in Monster Studies. Most relevant here is the idea that monsters are interdisciplinary, boundary-breaking figures, whose value does not stay confined to the humanities. Cultural Monster Studies using aspects of Monster Theory do not necessarily focus on why or how there is a continuous overlap in the shapes and roles monsters take on in different cultures over time. This overlap and continual interest are however explored by Biocultural studies into monsters.

Bioculture aims to bridge the gap between the humanities and sciences, called the Two Cultures (Snow 1963). To better understand bioculture's unique approach to Monster Studies, the contemporary opposition to the sciences, as posed by postmodern thinking, is first explored. The focus here falls on postmodernism's resistance to science, particularly looking shortly at Nietzsche, Foucault, Kuhn, Feyerabend, Lyotard, Derrida, and Latour. Through establishing such points of contention, how biocultural concerns legitimately aim for integration is of more value.

Biocultural interests in monsters combine fields that focus on culture as well as biology, drawing on evolutionary psychology, neuroscience and even ecology to create a more integrated investigation of the monster. The evolved circuits of fear within the human brain to identify predators and enemies are incorporated by Clasen (2012, 2017) and Asma (2009, 2014), who investigate why monsters generate fear and interest in humans across the human species at different times and cultures. Studies on the Behavioural Immune System and how humans respond to Abject stimuli with disgust are applied to monsters by Monteiro, West and Pizarro (2023:167). The Behavioural Immune System is then tied to other characteristics of monsters, such as the breaking of taboo, Othering, as well as Scapegoating. These characteristics are connected to how the Behavioural Immune System responds to false positives like deformity, its sensitivity to Moral Disgust and parasites. The hybridity of monsters is addressed by Asma (2014:7-8) as producing Category Jamming, where input that

would use different brain circuits and produce different responses is presented in the monster as combined, leading to confusion.

2.2 MONSTER THEORY: A TRADITIONAL READING OF CULTURAL MONSTER STUDIES

Merkelbach (2016:1) notes that the desire to understand monsters and monstrosity spans across various cultures and historical civilisations. The far-reaching phenomenon that is the monster, has played a role in the understanding of the world for many humans throughout various cultural, historical, political and social instances. Although the monster's involvement with the cultures that created its many incarnations is not limited to purely cultural, political and social realms, conventional, culturally concerned Monster Studies presents the monster as mainly a product of culture. Concerns like the monster's hybridity, its Otherness, how it is Scapegoated, breaks taboo, is Abject and Uncanny, an object of desire and fear, as well as how it relates to space is considered predominantly from a cultural angle. The monster as a tool for anthropology, entangled with psychology as well as what its placement can reveal about the social production of space for different cultural instances is considered here.

Monster Studies is a broad term used here to indicate research into monsters. Within this field is the notion of Monster Theory. The term Monster Theory is used by many authors, as shown in the discussion that follows, but usually here Monster Theory is used within the area called Cultural Monster Studies in this study. Monster Theory, is an academic pursuit that focuses on the role that monsters play in human societies and culture (Allen 2023:[sp]).⁵² Monster Theory is interdisciplinary and the areas include historical and contemporary investigation into the representation of monsters through drawing from the fields of anthropology (Musharbash 2014:1), psychology (Cohen 1996:52), folklore (Gilmore 2003:5) and literary studies (Sutton 2018:1). Weinstock (2014:1-2) explains that Monster Theory makes use of interdisciplinary material since, like the monster itself, the study defies boundaries and must transgress categories to obtain information on a figure that is the subject of philosophy, psychology, physicians, theologians and cultural critics. However, the diverse field of subjects included,

⁵² Recently, science as an area of interest for monster studies has also been included in how monster are studied (Koenig-Woodyard, Nanayakkara & Khatri 2018:2).

traditional Monster Studies predominantly looks at the monster as figure that can reveal its makers' social, cultural and political concerns, turning the monster into a sort of lens.⁵³

Cultural Monster Studies' toolkit is often traced back to Jeffery Jerome Cohen's 1996, *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* by authors like Weinstock (2020:2), Gloyn (2020:7), Bernardi and Jacob (2019:xi), Musharbash and Gershon (2023) as well as Picart and Browning (2012:3) to name but a few more contemporary studies.⁵⁴ Bernardi and Jacob (2019:xi) explain that Cohen's (1996:44-54) work is meant to present a method through which monsters are investigated to reveal insights into the cultures which created them. Gloyn (2020:11) notes that Cohen (1996:44-54) created seven theses, which were the cornerstones of this method, the aim being to reveal the monster's cultural underpinnings. Chemers and Santana (2022:2) explain further that these seven theses are the basis for Monster Theory, allowing for an insight across history and cultures to look at the monster within its context, not separating it from the cultural moments which gave it meaning or reducing it to merely a parable of psychology.

The seven seminal theses of Cohen (1996:44-54) are summarised briefly here. Firstly, Cohen (1996:44) notes that the body of the monster is 'pure' culture, a sign that is meant to be read. In terms of Cohen's (1996:44-45) second thesis the monster is a figure that cannot be destroyed, rather it serves a cultural, political or social function and is always reimagined to serve new problems as they arise. Thirdly, Cohen (1996:45-46) explains that the monster is liminal and conglomerate, disturbing categories and causing crisis. As his fourth thesis Cohen (1996:46-49) focuses on Difference, noting that the monster is the very manifestation of difference, truly an Other that can be Scapegoated. Fifthly, Cohen (1996:49-52) posits that monsters determine what is possible, policing the boundaries of the known world as a warning to those who transgress. Desire and fear are the sixth topic and Cohen (1996:52-54) delves into positing the monster as existing in a carnivalesque space where the Abject monster can break taboo and the audience can vicariously enjoy the fulfilment of such guilty pleasures with the added bonus of scapegoating and exorcising the monster afterwards. Finally, Cohen's (1996:54) seventh thesis

⁵³ *Monster Theory* is the term used by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (1996:44-54), who is seen as doing seminal work in the field, but the term *Monster Studies* might be interpreted as the wider field of studying monsters (Mittman 2016:2). Koenig-Woodyard, Nanayakkara and Khatri (2018: 2) explain that Monster Studies includes both cultural and scientific fields, such as anthropology, gender studies, theology, literature, geography, philosophy, history, as well as biological and zoological considerations. Other authors do refer to the field as *Monster Theory* (Weinstock 2020:2; Coeckelberg 2020:354; Merkelbach 2016:2), but for the purpose of this study Monster Studies.

⁵⁴ This text is noted as an important, and seminal source by Ellis-Etchison (2014:401), Mittman (2016:2), Merkelbach (2016:1), Musharbash (2014:1), and Beville (2014:6).

is a short one, monsters continue to change and reflect human culture and anxieties and are always able to ‘become’.⁵⁵

In essence, all the aspects within these seven theses fall under the larger banner of Cohen’s (1996:44) first thesis, that the monster is culture. The other ideas and concepts discussed by Cohen (1996:44-54), might draw from wider fields, such as anthropology and psychology, but the discourse remains firmly rooted in the humanities. As an overarching idea for Monster Theory, Cohen’s (1996:44) first thesis stands apart from the rest, as it justifies the undertaking of the other theses and their limitation to the humanities. To better understand Monster Theory, much of which was affected by Cohen (1996:44- 54), investigating the monster phenomenon in culture, and associated humanities discourses is necessary before delving further into the subject.

In the time since Cohen’s (1996:44-54) seven theses were released, the field of Monster Studies has grown around his ideas, as well as challenging and reflecting back on his method. Cohen’s (1996:44-54) explanation that the monster is ‘pure’ culture is one such point that is both argued for and against. Authors such as Mittman (2016:5) proclaim that the work which is done by monsters is cultural and that these entities consume culture only to reflect it back. The body of the monster for Mittman (2016:9) is a thing of culture, just as Cohen (1996:44-54) views the monster’s body as a solidified moment of the cultural milieu of a people. Musharbash and Gershon considered Cohen (1996) in 2023, twenty-seven years after the initial publication by Cohen, when looking at monstrous bodies to gain insight into their cultural value. Chemers and Santana (2022:3) note here that this also works into Cohen’s second thesis as the monster constantly changes to capture these moments of culture, it cannot die because its cultural work is never finished.

Loza (2013:53) explains that monsters are ‘social constructs’, entities that show the societal and cultural contexts within which they were created and in turn become part of these contexts, melting back into the framework from which individuals and groups draw. This seems to link up to the ‘cultural moment’ that coalesces into the monster’s body that Cohen (1996:44-54) refers to. To look at a monster then is to look at the social, cultural, political and historical strands from which it is woven, its particular function being to give form to these anxieties (Ng

⁵⁵ In Cohen’s (1996:54) original work this Thesis is titled *Thesis VII: The Monster Stands at The Threshold ... of Becoming*.

2004:5). As an entity of culture, the monster is not itself, but a sign that points to the cultural web around it (Comber 2012:24). The monster is then never the thing itself in Monster Theory's crosshairs.

The investigation into monsters as cultural beings is limited to several popular and recurring topics. One such a topic is that the monster is a conglomerate, hybrid being (Clasen 2018:[sp]). The hybridity of the monster is investigated, not as a fully formed being, but rather dissected by Cultural Monster Studies to gain insight through its parts rather than acknowledging that it is more than the sum of these (Beville 2014:xi, xii). The many boundaries that the monster breaks through, defying categories, is seen as revealing the categories the culture values and acknowledges, rather than focusing on the monster being a thing in itself (Beville 2014:xi, xii).

Monsters are investigated in terms of their value as signs by Monster Theory and Cultural Monster Studies, particularly the culturally agreed upon significance of their form and placement within the social, cultural and political landscape as warnings (Aberdein 2020:402). The monster is seen as demonstrating what happens to those that defy cultural ideas of taboo, or who deviate in any way, or go beyond the known and structured world of a particular culture (Weinstock 2014:4). What is absent here is a consideration for the monster not as simply a sign, but as to why it is resurrected again and again as a method to induce fear across cultural boundaries.

Using the monster as a lens of Cultural Monster Studies using Monster Theory is also a contemporary practice for studying visual media. Weinstock (2016:275-289), drawing from the idea that the monster can reveal cultural, social and political ties, looks at how contemporary monster types in film and in media are products of contemporary conspiracy theories and paranoia. Chemers and Santana (2022:3) explain that looking at monsters is no longer just a fringe subject, as monsters are popular topics in contemporary media, and they use Monster Theory to address performances that include monsters and how this can reveal historical insight into cultural moments, creating a Cultural Monster Study.

Just as Cultural Monster Studies focus on the present, so too it reaches into the past. Musharbash (2014:2) explains that anthropology is a rich field for Monster Studies, noting how Monster Theory creates overarching interdisciplinary investigation into monsters. While anthropology investigates monsters, it seldomly includes ruminations on why monsters exist at

all. Asma (2009) shows a history of monsters, tracing the idea through historical epochs, noting the value of monsters within their particular contexts at certain times. Musharbash (2014:2) describes Asma's (2009) work as "diachronic" and indicates how anthropology can add value to how monsters were considered locally, embedded within their original context. Musharbash and Presterudstuen (2014:2, 3) see Monster Studies as a way in which to use the umbrella term of 'monster' to look into how monsters reveal social change, use monsters for ethnographic analysis and the expansion of ethnography, understandings of taboo, beliefs, social structures, and identity amongst others.

Musharbash and Presterudstuen (2014:3) as well as Musharbash (2014:2) discuss how anthropology investigates monsters 'as-if' they were real, noting that for particular groups, their monsters would be treated as if they could act upon those same groups. In practice what anthropology gains from Monster Studies is another tool with which to study the groups of their interest, particularly how their world views can be investigated through their monsters. Gilmore (2003:13) similarly expresses his concerns in 2003 already that anthropology has not studied monsters, and monster stories, more.

Kearney (2005:34) explains monsters can serve as sacrifices, explaining that anthropologists often separate monsters into an 'impure', 'profane' category as opposed to deities without taking into consideration that monsters can be a hybrid of these designations. One can consider here things that might be deemed 'monstrous' are godly, like Apophis⁵⁶(Figure 5), and serve a greater role than just being a cultural prop.

⁵⁶ A monster that is more in line with the order of the cosmos from Egyptian mythology, is Apophis (Figure 5), a giant snake that is associated with primordial chaos (Gilmore 2003:29). Apophis (Figure 5) as monstrous, unlike the conglomerate shapes of the 'demons', Apophis is gigantic and god-like (Gilmore 2003:29). The entity serves as an explanatory mechanism of the Ancient Egyptian universe, based on the current understanding obtained from the observations of the world.



Figure 5: Detail of Apophis Slain. *Papyrus of Hunefer*, 1310–1275 BCE. Painted Papyrus, 5.5 x 39cm. British Museum, London. (van Oppen de Ruiter 2020:10).

Luckhurst (2020:1) reviews Kearney's (2005) take on monsters, explaining that the discourse often wavers between presenting monsters as fully Other and unavailable⁵⁷, or completely open to appropriation and interpretation.⁵⁸ According to Coeckelberg (2020:361), Kearney (2005) advocates for a balanced approach, a diacritical Hermeneutics where the interconnectedness between 'strangeness' and 'sameness' could offer deeper understandings of the monster. Coeckelberg (2020:361) notes that creating such a diacritical Hermeneutics is not his goal, nor mine, but that the takeaway is that monsters are 'Others'. This implies that they are constructed as 'Other' in terms of cultural practices, social and political ideas to the systems from which they arise, once again focusing on the monster as an anthropological tool.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Radical Hermeneutics is described here as the method used by Kearney (2005), which Luckhurst (2020:1) explains as resulting in monsters and gods being viewed as Others in the extreme who are unable to be assimilated due to a refusal on ethical terms.

⁵⁸ Romantic Hermeneutics as Luckhurst (2020:1) notes in Kearney's (2005) work, shows the monster in terms of how available it is while being fully knowable. Luckhurst (2020:1) finally explains that Kearney (2005) opted to use diacritical hermeneutics, which allows for investigating how the monster is tied up between strangeness and sameness.

⁵⁹ Monster Theory is also used to investigate Others in terms of gender, race and sexuality. Feminist Theory in particular refers to the Monstrous Feminine and how female monsters can be investigated through psychoanalysis (Creed 2007 [1993]). Monster theory and Gender studies seem to focus on how Monster Theory can be used to look at embodiment (Henriksen, Bürlow & Kvistad 2017:7). The so called *Queer Theory* investigates the deviant sexuality of monsters and how this can reveal views on the Queer community. Examples of such studies include Benshoff (2012:131-144) and Halberstam (2012:145-152). Theories that are concerned with decolonisation as well as race, often use Monster Theory as a way to investigate the hybridity and resistance within these 'Othered' identities (Rai 2013:16; Galt 2021:11). This study does not focus on these issues, but hopes to allow for new angles from which others might investigate such topics.

Together with Othering goes Scapegoating. Cohen (1996:49) in his seminal work already notes that the monster is entangled with René Girard's (1986) ideas on blaming a victim with real or imagined crimes, having marks of difference and no chance of being avenged by a greater force when great tides of violence or undifferentiating strife affect a community. The victim is made into a monster, an Other that is monstrous (Kearney 2005:33-35), either through their physical traits or even the real or imagined morally appalling actions they are said to take (Wright 2018:x). Desire also plays a role in the Scapegoating process as the monster that is constructed as a deviant and Other holds the projected inappropriate desires of the community, which are expelled onto the monster, which then becomes 'disgusting' (Wright 2018:x). This manner of blaming a victim and essentially demonising them into representing something monstrous, is still investigated as cultural, social and a deeply political concern (Cohen 1996:49). It is also important to note that Kearney (2005) who writes much on the monster as scapegoat focuses on psychology, theology and anthropology, even if it is to critique these areas of focus.

However, authors like Maria Beville (2014:6) claim that Monster Theory, Cohen's (1996) theses included, are anthropological in nature already. Beville (2014:6) explains that Monster Theory is anthropological in its search for the cultural significance of the monster as well as how it is marked as 'Other' in the systems of culture that birthed it. Similarly, Grafius (2017:39), explains how Monster Theory is commonly used as an anthropological tool across cultures to create a taxonomy that is more universal. Such anthropologically rooted studies include the work of Gilmore (2003), expansions of Mary Douglas' (2013 [1966]) ideas on purity and pollution, authors that expand on that like Noël Carroll (1987), and Asma (2014).

The fascination with monsters is expressed in Monster Studies not just through an anthropological lens, but also a psychoanalytical one. Gilmore (2003:10) explains that psychoanalysis lends insight into how and why every culture has monsters. Asma (2009:188) states that in the twentieth-century monsters became viewed as products of the unconscious, the seat of human fear, having been worked out of ideas in natural history or even religion. Weinstock (2020:22-23) notes that psychoanalysis offered a tool with which to dissect deviant behaviour, and human monsters came to be expressed through concepts of illness, trauma and the repression of such trauma.

Other tools to dissect the monster in terms of psychoanalysis includes the *Uncanny* and the *Abject*. Gloyn (2020:18) explains the meeting of psychoanalysis and mainly Cultural Monster Studies as ranging back to Freud's theory on the *Unheimlich*, the Uncanny, familiar and strange at the same time. The Uncanny is a tool, as Weinstock (2020:22- 23) puts it, which allows for a deeper look into the anxieties monsters create within humans. The monster is perceived as Uncanny because it induces a certain state in its viewer, but the monster itself is again merely a point of access to the human psyche.

Connected to the Uncanny, and ever popular in Cultural Monster Studies, is Julia Kristeva's (1982) work on the Abject. Kristeva (1982) draws from Freud's ideas on psychoanalysis, particularly the Uncanny and repression (Hook 2003). The monster is Abject in its hybridity, it resists classification like the Abject (Spenrath 2011:12), and it is entangled with the breaking of taboo just as the monster is in its form and actions (Lowe 2015:29). Gloyn (2020:20) places Kristeva's *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982) as a seminal text for Cultural Monster Studies, explaining that the Abject, the repression it implies and the horror its presence causes, is linked to the monster's Abjection causing fear or activation of repressed desires. *Abject* is then also a term through which the monster is described because it causes a certain kind of fear to arise within humans, such as the uncertainty the Abject monster brings through challenging the established order and producing a danger of the viewer being met with the 'unknown' (Ingwersen 2014:58).

Monster Studies from a psychoanalytical perspective is challenged by authors such as Judith Halberstam (2018 [1995]:19), who points out that most of psychoanalysis is focused on sex, but that the threat of the monster goes beyond just this. Gloyn (2020:20) reflects on Halberstam's (2018 [1995]) work, noting that the author includes in her analysis of Gothic monstrosity more items to be considered than just sex, for example, race, class, and gender which allow for a better use of psychoanalysis, one where there is a search for 'clarity' with fewer constraints.

What remains persistent in psychoanalytical studies of the monster is that the monster is a tool that reveals the psychology of the viewer, much in the same way that anthropological investigations use the monster to reveal culturally relevant information. In how the monster is viewed in most Cultural Monster Studies, making use of psychoanalysis and anthropological tools to do studies into historical literature, folklore, religion, or contemporary popular culture,

the monster itself, is often missed. Beville (2014:8-9) in particular takes issue with this, explaining that through focusing on the culture or discourse around the monster, that which makes the monster monstrous, the fact that it is ill-defined and often a ‘thing’, or an idea, takes away from the power of the entity.

Beville (2014:8-9) notes that the search for a cultural meaning in the monster, is reductionist, but she does point out the value in using psychoanalysis to approach the ‘thing’. The monster as ‘thing’ is discussed in depth by Beville (2014), the unnameable and unquantifiable nature of the monster as a thing is valued. Focus is placed on how the monster is more than the sum of its parts, and not just what value its parts have to the different streams that make up Monster Studies (Beville 2014). In its unnameable element as a thing, the monster defies categories, existing in excess or in a dire absence of description and identification, causing anxiety and fear through its close link with the unknown (Beville 2014:102; Long 2012:195). Through its threatening unknown nature, the monster as thing is linked to the Abject and thus also discussions surrounding this (Prince 2012:22).

Anthropological and psychoanalytical approaches that paint the monster as a fictitious being of culture or a literary figure that is the fruiting body of the unconscious also neglect how to frame the encounter with the monster in a tangible way. Mikles and Laycock (2021:10) use the example of Whitley Strieber, famous abductee and author, as well as the Fords who claimed to have encountered the Fouke Monster⁶⁰ (Figure 6). Mikles and Laycock (2021:10) explain that these individuals the experiences were real to them and what they saw was not abstract cultural constructs but beings that they perceived to have real bodies capable of causing them physical harm. Drawing from Kripal’s (2014, 2017) work Mikles and Laycock (2021:10) and Grieve-Carlson (2021:173) argue that excluding the ‘experience’ of encountering the monster outside the purely cultural framework of Monster Theory, and Cultural Monster Studies, has led to an insufficient understanding of the figure. Kripal (2017:244-245) directly addresses Cohen’s (1996) idea notes that studying the monster in a purely cultural way does not present an accurate picture of those who believe in or ‘experienced’ encounters with monsters throughout history. Kripal (2017:244-245) suggests instead that the monster is phenomenological.

⁶⁰ Figure 6 refers to a filmic portrayal of the monster.



Figure 6: Dramatized Encounter with the Fouke Monster, *The Legend of Boggy Creek*, 1972. (Lyons 2022:[sp]).

In terms of viewing the monster from a phenomenological perspective, Shildrick (2016:304) notes how phenomenology seeks to understand embodied experiences where the mind, body and world are intricately related. When Monster Theory and Cultural Monster Studies are inserted into this relationship, the body as reflected by the monster's body is brought into sharp focus, often casting the experience of the body as threatening (Shildrick 2016:304). However, this view still assumes the monster as merely met through a mediated, cultural, text.

Beville (2014:15) explains that meeting the monster from a phenomenological perspective, the monster can be viewed as existing within thought, but that this is only viewed as possible because of the biological reality of the body and how it perceives the world. In more recent years the biological realities of how humans evolved to be fascinated by as well as fear monsters have been investigated from the angle of Bioculture, particularly by authors such as Clasen (2012), Asma (2014), and Monteiro, West and Pizarro (2023).

Monsters are also connected to the study of space from a cultural, social and historical perspective. The Spatial Turn of the 70s and 80s in general gave rise to Critical Spatiality which investigates how space is socially constructed (Tally 2013:16; 2019:175). In terms of Monster Studies, where monsters can be found can reveal social, political, cultural, historical perceptions of places, particularly the liminal, marginal, and transitory spaces monsters are usually delegated to (Montin & Tsitas 2013:viii). Such liminal spaces can be viewed in relation to Heterotopias, as described by Foucault (1986:25) since these 'counter-spaces' usually house monsters that reflect certain issues onto society (Montin 2013:168).

Heterotopias, discussed in detail in *4.4 The Monster and Heterotopia in Cultural Monster Studies*, can be real spaces that have qualities and connections that are Other to the actual space, real places which bare signification value beyond themselves, simultaneously real and unreal (Costantino 2013:197-198). Wei (2015:52) states that Heterotopias allow the monster to manifest, as the deviant space and deviant behaviour and identity of the monster can be explored here because these spaces are Thirdspaces. Thirdspaces are places that are in flux and can be areas of resistance and hybridity, as used by Homi Bhabha (1994). Thirdspace can also be viewed as part of Soja's (1996) trialectic of how space is produced socially. Thirdspace is where actual space and the perception of that space overlap and lived experiences occur (Spencer 2021:252; Spencer, Coles-kemp & Hansen 2024:3; Hitchcock 2008:166). Thirdspaces like Heterotopias can be of socio-geographical interest (Maier 2013:82). One might infer here that the monster as a figure is associated with such Other and transitory Spaces.⁶¹

To summarise, monsters have mainly been viewed in recent studies on monsters as products of culture. Through the culturally concerned angle that Cohen (1996:44-45) used which was taken as a basis for most of the Monster Theory and thus Monster Studies in general, an emphasis was placed on the monster as a means to a cultural end. The monster is mainly seen as being of cultural and social concern (Loza 2013:53) and that its value as Other, taboo and boundary breaker, Abject and Uncanny hybrid, Scapegoat entangled with desire and fear are relevant in cultural terms. Anthropologists find new ways to use the monster to view their areas of interest (Musharbash 2014:1), while the pursuit of the monster as culture can be viewed as anthropological in its essence (Beville 2014:6). Psychology similarly looks at monstrosity, drawing on ideas like the Abject and Uncanny (Cohen 1996:52) while literary studies (Sutton 2018:1) look also at the monster's value as sign. The monster is however more than a sign, more than the sum of its parts (Beville 2014:8-9) and the experience of the monster can also be linked to phenomenology (Kripal 2017:244-245). The monster and how it interacts with social production of space is a way of viewing its cultural function, with the threatening monster

⁶¹ The ideas of Thirdspace and what it can reveal about cultural, social and historical contexts is used in Ancient Near Eastern Studies as well as other studies of antiquity (Klinger, Hofmann, Bernbeck, Grozdanova, Logo, Peter, Schreiber & Wiedemann 2016:349, 351). The use of such trialectics can also be seen in the work of Lukić (2022:19-48) wherein the author uses the trialectics of space to map Horror including how the monster fits into this system.

existing at the boundary of the unknown, liminal places that represent Thirdspace as well as Heterotopias.

2.3 BIO CULTURE AND THE MONSTER

2.3.1 Postmodernism and Humanities

The theoretical concerns of this study include Bioculture, which is a combination of biology and culture. To clearly situate a biocultural approach to the monster, it is prudent to first show the opposition to such an integration of ‘Science’ and the ‘Humanities’. With the monster established as primarily a concern of culture in traditional scholarship, as explained in the previous section, this section establishes the resistance that postmodern ideas on the Humanities present to the integrated view of Bioculture.

This section provides a more contemporary overview on the basic problems that the sciences and humanities face in terms of their separation and integration. The focus here falls on the resistance that a postmodern view offers in terms of the sciences and how this affects the gap between the disciplines. Sokal and Bricmont’s (1997) criticism of postmodernism as well as the ‘Science Wars’, can be seen as a barometer of the relationship between the humanities and the sciences. The scientist and thinker, Steven Pinker’s debate with Humanist Leon Wieseltier in 2013 also highlights the lingering resistance towards integration and the role postmodern thought plays here. This section then aims to provide a few major points of postmodern discourse that are seen as ‘undermining’ science and resists ‘scientism’ as an authority. The ideas of Nietzsche, Foucault, Kuhn, Feyerabend, Lyotard, Derrida, and Latour are briefly touched upon here as well in terms of postmodern thought.

Considering a topic such as monsters, once delegated to the category of the humanities as opposed to the sciences, speaks about the idea of the Two Cultures. C.P. Snow’s *The Two Cultures: and a Second Look* (1963)⁶², is often cited as one of the first works to note this gap explicitly. However, the actual separation of the disciplines is influenced by currents that are far older. It has been posited that the gap was an unlikely product of the Renaissance (Kagan

⁶² C.P. Snow’s lecture on The Two Cultures, titled *Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*, in 1959 is often taken as the starting point of the discussion about the separateness of the two cultures, meaning the humanities and the sciences, as noted by Bod and Kursell (2015:337) as well as Timmons (2007:2).

2013:28). The Enlightenment that followed, with dualistic thinkers like René Descartes, seems to suggest a that further separation (Seidler 2013 [1994]:6).

Romanticism, resisting the all-encompassing views of empirical science, would pave the way for the humanities as opposing science (Lehleiter 2016:9). However, there is also evidence of wanted integration, through a desire to reunite the human with nature (Hadzigeorgiou & Schultz 2014:1965). To put the human back into nature seems at first to become possible with the rise of Darwinism, but soon the biological aspect of nature is again played off against culture (Tarnas 2010:376).

In 1959, C.P. Snow gave a lecture expressing his observation that the humanities and the sciences had drifted apart and had ceased to communicate. What Snow puts into words is the existence of two separate cultures, being academic categories that had become rigid (McManus 2006:219). These Two Cultures, Traditional Culture (the arts and humanities) and Scientific Culture, had become so disparate that it had resulted in a loss of practical, creative and intellectual knowledge, according to Snow (1959:12).

The cultural side of the Two Culture divide is mostly concerned with postmodernism's mistrust of science. Dr G Henriques (2012:[sp]) summarizes the 'Science Wars' as a clashing between modernist and postmodernist thought that highlighted the gap between the Humanities and the Sciences in the 1990's⁶³. Some of the first events of this 'war' were a perceived attack on postmodernism, asserting that the project, and the discourses in the humanities that draw heavily from postmodern ideas, was outdated and irrational (Hedesan & Tendler 2017:[sp])⁶⁴. This sparked retaliation, and into this heated argument came the hoax of Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont in 1997 (Weber 2006:95).⁶⁵

Sokal's hoax paper was printed with the intention of demonstrating the misuse, and misunderstanding, of scientific theory by postmodern academics. Particularly he focused on

⁶³ Bergkamp (2016:[sp]) also explains that it was the accusation of realists, scientist, that postmodernism's relativist theories.

⁶⁴ This expression came in the form of *Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and its Quarrels with Science*, written by Paul Gross and Norman Levitt, originally published in 1994. According to Weber (2006:96) this text was seminal in starting the 'Science Wars' as the very term was coined by Andrew Ross in reaction to the inflammatory text.

⁶⁵ The initial article, *Transgressing the Boundaries. Toward a transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity* was the work of Sokal (Corneliussen 2017:[sp]), the collaboration of Bricmont followed in a book, *Impostures Intellectuelles* (Mullarkey 2014:43).

calling out those who claim that ‘scientific’ laws are only constructs that can be manipulated through postmodern academic thinking⁶⁶ (Weinberg 1996:[sp]). Echenique-Robba (2013:1) explains that Sokal explicitly stated after the hoax that his article was written in such a way that mathematicians and physicists would have easily seen his deception. What this brings to the fore is the deep gulf between the Two Cultures, particularly centred around science and postmodern thought.

Through the ‘Science Wars’ writers such as Gross and Levitt began to point out particular problems with postmodernism. In their book, *Higher Superstition: The Academic left and Its Quarrels with Science* (Gross & Levitt 1998 [1994]:85), they note that poststructuralism⁶⁷ reduces science to a narrative no more ‘true’ than any myth. This includes the work of theorists like Lyotard, Derrida, Michelle Foucault and Kuhn. Braber (2000:2) explains that the ‘proscience’ versus ‘antiscience’ debate is particularly pronounced in the postmodern areas of relativism⁶⁸, constructivism, and social constructivism⁶⁹. The constructivist, relativist, and social constructivist turn maintains that science is ‘constructed’, and not the only one path to accessing knowledge (Braber 2000:2).

More recent debates show the remaining tension in terms of postmodernism, particularly relativism and constructivism. Steven Pinker and Leon Wieseltier debated the integration of science and the humanities in 2013. Pinker (2013a:[sp]) proposes bolstering the humanities with new ideas from the sciences, but identifies the “calamity of Postmodernism” as dogmatically limiting. Wieseltier (2013:[sp]) in turn is concerned with Pinker’s preference of the sciences, explaining that the ideas by which progress and value are measured across the two fields would not benefit the humanities, and is part of its active decline. Dennett (2013:[sp]) notes that Wieseltier shifts the debate towards how science and the humanities work on different scales and have different end goals

⁶⁶ Scientism can be defined as the belief that seemingly uncomplicated scientific methods are objective and can lead to the resolution of complex problems (Correio 2022:92).

⁶⁷ Fuller (2006:119) explains that ‘constructivism’ and ‘relativism’ were particularly targeted as being ‘incompetent, but that in looking back at this, one might see that it is not the level of ‘competence’ that is important, but rather different modes of interpretation.

⁶⁸ Baghramian (2015:[sp]) summarizes Relativism as a philosophy that acknowledges that all social constructs and ideas of knowledge, beliefs, morals and cultures practices are relative to the context that they were constructed within, and that the framework from which these are viewed is equally depended on context and thus relative.

⁶⁹ Social Constructivism and Constructivism are not identical, but do overlap, according to Walsh (2013:15). Constructivism can be viewed as the process that allows individuals to draw subjective conclusions from their experience of phenomena and knowledge (Walsh 2013:15). Social Constructivism add the social context to this forming of meaning, taking into account that ‘artefacts’, like beliefs, practices and even ‘facts’ can be constructs of their time and social situation (Walsh 2013:15).

Pinker and Wieseltier's debate generated heated statements by individuals like John Horgan. Horgan(2013:[sp]) accuses Pinker of defending 'Scientism' and misunderstanding postmodernism and its relation to science.⁷⁰ In particular, Horgan (2013:[sp]) notes that if the humanities engage with science, they must remain thoroughly *critical* and not simply accept 'scientism', as he understands Pinker to insinuate.

Postmodernism has a history of being sceptical of science. Bergkamp (2016:[sp]) explains that postmodernism points towards the limits of science, and that it also strives to unmask hypocrisy in scientific application and practice. Christy (2023:1) notes Friedrich Nietzsche⁷¹ as a seminal influence in questioning the 'objective' truth offered by science. Nietzsche, according to Welshon (2023:40), expresses that mechanistic science can describe events and phenomena, but they cannot explain the reason behind their existence. Both science and religion for Nietzsche represent tactics that aim to present 'truth', when instead there is a continual process of ongoing struggles of strength⁷² (Sasan 2023:2). Babich (2007:206) notes that Nietzsche questioned science's authority, and that this influenced later postmodernist thinkers.

Foucault was a major contributor to the postmodern movement in terms of questioning science and power (Varghese 2023:20)⁷³. Foucault noted the misuse of scientific, psychiatric, principals to enable governments to execute ideologically motivated beliefs (Bergkamp 2016:[sp]). His particular interest included how this was done through institutions like asylums and prisons⁷⁴ (Philo 2024:497,502). Leitch (2004:211) explains that Foucault points out implicit power relations between science, technologies developed and harnessed to science, and how mechanisms supported by science have been used by those in power to uphold certain ideologies. Science and technology are seen not as neutral, but as connected to the constructed

⁷⁰ In all fairness to Horgan (2013:[sp]) he does not dismiss Pinker's ideas outright and does emphasise the points of Pinker's argument he agrees with, but it does seem that Pinker's treatment of postmodernism irks him.

⁷¹ Nietzsche discusses these ideas in depth in his books, *Will to Power* (1901).

⁷² Woodward (2014:107) explains that the idea that reality is always in flux has to do with forces continuously testing their powers against each other. It would seem that Nietzsche (2018[1901]:39) attributes the 'will to power' and its constant clashes to continuous change, meaning nothing can be absolute.

⁷³ Bazzul and Carter (2017:[sp]) notes an aversion to Foucault by those in Science Education due to his association with relativism and postmodernism. Bazzul and Carter (2017:[sp]) also emphasize the value of Foucault to the sciences and suggests a more open dialogue between the humanities and sciences.

⁷⁴ The idea of the Panopticon, a theoretical model concerned with human surveillance, is meant to show the relationship between the state and its subjects, particularly in relation to power structure between these, but also the application of technology to certain ideological ideas (Horowitz 2017:40). The Panopticon is discussed by Foucault in *Discipline and Punishment: The birth of the Prison* (1975).

beliefs of society. Science is shown here as not distinguishing between produced ‘facts’ and the value judgements of those ‘facts’ (Bergkamp 2016:[sp]).

Paul Feyerabend⁷⁵ in his 1975’s *Against Method* then questions the methods by which science produces ‘facts’. Kidd (2021:178) explains Feyerabend’s notions on scientific method as having no united theory or philosophy of science or the gaining of knowledge. It then falls short of meeting its idealized philosophical and theoretical goals (Kidd (2021:186). The experience of phenomena is deeply influenced by pre-existing biases and beliefs, needing more varied approaches (Oberheim 2006:20). This seems to suggest that science is but one of these methods, and is not more solid, true, or exceptional, implying a pluralism in interpenetration and access to gaining knowledge (Kent 2025:10).⁷⁶

This destabilization of ‘science’ links to poststructuralism⁷⁷. According to West (2010:174) poststructuralism was a reaction against structuralism⁷⁸, influenced by Nietzsche, Heidegger and Saussure. Willis (2025) explains that poststructuralism is concerned with ‘becoming’ and not static ‘being’, implying that meaning is always in flux. Science is placed as a narrative that builds itself around a centre of ‘truth/s’ that are subject to mediation by subjective individuals (Kau 2001:13). For postmodernism then the narrative of science can be deconstructed and decentred

Authors such as Lyotard challenge the Metanarrative of science. The Metanarrative, as described by Vinod and Deshpande (2013:34), is a theory that posits ultimate truths that are ‘natural’. These serve as the basis for the application of scientific and political projects (Arpa 2022:24). Deconstruction shows that the Metanarrative is in fact constructed, built from ideologies influenced by their situatedness in history and culture (Oprescu 2018:13). Lyotard

⁷⁵ Feyerabend is usually associated with relativism, anarchism, and the slogan ‘Anything goes’, referring to the idea that no one perspective should overpower the other (Oberheim2006:17).

⁷⁶ It is contended by Hunt (2015:[sp]) that through Feyerabend’s theories on the difference of method, he was also able to defend the use of voodoo and witchcraft as acceptable methods to gain access to knowledge. This is because, like science, to certain cultures these represent ‘logic’, have structures that are interrelated by ‘logic’ within that culture and do not seem to refute the experience of reality by the individual (Hunt 2015:[sp]).

⁷⁷ Poststructuralism is even explained as being synonymous with postmodernism by Kau (2001:1).

⁷⁸ Structuralism is described by Barnes (2001:[sp]) as a way ideas and concepts are explained using set structures and patterns. Structuralism assumes that there are patterns that emerge from social relations and its complexities, it does seem to take these patterns as solid Barnes (2001:[sp]). Mainly it approaches subject matter using meta-theories that view these social structural as historical and empirical truths, and that these structures are thus grant actual access to reality Barnes (2001:[sp]).

(1984:259) notes that science legitimates itself and its status by referring to Metanarratives that it generates and participates in. Cahoon (2003:259) interprets this as postmodern, noting that in postmodernism the legitimization Metanarratives offer is not needed or valid, what matters is ‘performativity’⁷⁹. This can be seen as part of Deconstruction, the intense questioning of texts, including scientific knowledge.⁸⁰

Deconstruction, founded by Jacques Derrida, aims to point out one ‘true’ interpretation is not attainable (Kau 2001:5). Salmon (2025:[sp]) explains that for Derrida, no text is a correct reflection of the ‘real world’, and the meaning in it cannot give anything fixed or ‘real’. Meaning, from this perspective, is deferred endlessly through the structures of interpretation⁸¹ which are subjective and contextual (Brown 2017:113).⁸² By applying deconstruction to science, its neutrality, motivations, methods, and validity are questioned (Kau 2001:1). Scientific research and ‘facts’ can be deconstructed in terms of the language usage that is supposed to communicate the intended meaning, derailing the intent into endless deferral.

Another relevant poststructuralist is Bruno Latour. De Vrieze (2017:[sp]) points out that Gross and Levitt in *Higher Superstition* (1998 [1994]), reference Latour’s notion that the social aspects of science are not apart from it, but rather deeply influence the construction of scientific ‘facts’. Harris (2010:69) explains that Latour and Woolgar (1979) point towards the process by which ideas are accepted as ‘scientific’ through the use of a large social system that governs the scientific community. This is often taken to mean that scientific knowledge is a social construct, and just another uncertain part of culture⁸³ (Caudill 2020:[sp]).

⁷⁹ ‘Performative’ here can be taken to mean an act of referring to an action, but not the action itself. This is related to Wittgenstein’s ‘Language Games’ (Woodward [sa]:[sp]).

⁸⁰ Deleuze and Guattari also draw attention to science and its reliance on Metanarratives. ‘Nomadic Science’, mentioned in *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. (1987), stands opposite to ‘State Science’. State Science is the unchangeable and rigid metanarrative of permanence, whereas Nomadic science has to do with the idea that subjectivity and the subject is malleable, in flux and changeable (Malatino 2014:[sp]). What is of relevance to this study is the focus on changeability. It is also important to note that Sokal and Bricmont (1997) focus on Deleuze’s interpretation of calculus, proclaiming his ignorance and errors.

⁸¹ Part of this concept of deferral is Derrida’s *Différance*. It is related to the French word which means ‘to differ’. Very shortly, it can mean that meaning differs, but also that something is being deferred to. It can also refer to the interplay between written and spoken words, the referrals and differences to each other (Reynolds [sa]:[sp]). Derrida (1978) wrote in *Writing and Difference* that is not an idea, but nor is it a word, however it is part of a form of writing that is meant to deconstruct the relationship of the sign and its signifier, called arc-writing (Reynolds [sa]:[sp]).

⁸² Cahoon (2003:225) explains that this has to do with semiotics and the connections between signs and their meanings, implying that meanings are assigned to signs through social, cultural and historical contexts, and thus there is no ‘true’ meaning of any of the ‘words’ or signs used to communicate ideas or intentions.

⁸³ Max Weber, in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1920) and ‘Objectivity’ in *Social Science and Social Policy* (1904) had already argued earlier that culture has a huge influence on the information and knowledge that is produced by science.

However, Latour, noticing that his ideas often got reduced and used to fuel ‘ant-scientific’ points of debate, sought to correct the issue (De Vrieze (2017:[sp])). Latour (2017:[sp]) explains that the original intention of his work was to be critical of science, but that in recent years, this critique has become the basis of anti-science movements. Latour (2017:[sp]) warns against the reductionism of this approach and points out the complicated, interwoven nature of science and culture, one not being reduced to the other.

In contemporary culture and science, postmodern ideas, such as deconstruction and the deep questioning of ‘facts’, science’s relation to policy and the socially constructed nature of knowledge has given rise to a definite ‘anti-scientific’ turn. Kunz (2016:944) expresses that postmodernism’s distrust of science includes a more democratic approach to how science is implemented. A problem that has however arisen is the outright denial of new scientific research by large groups and various segments of the public. An example of this is the denial of climate change.

Davis Roberts (2011:[sp]) expresses that the Right-Wing, is using Leftist postmodern discourse to validate their denial of science. Judith Warner (2011:[sp]) seems to have first linked the tendency to deny scientific ‘facts’ to the Left and the deep questioning of ‘facts’. McIntyre (2018:134) points out that Warner (2011) does not make a direct reference to postmodernism, but the intention of questioning and destabilizing is taken to be postmodern. Further responding to Warner (2011), Chris Mooney (2011:[sp]) denounces that there is a postmodern turn to how scientific evidence is being denied, explaining that the veracity and certainty with which it is denied is not postmodern at all. However, one cannot help but wonder at the trend of questioning science, perhaps misappropriated by such denial groups, still perhaps possible due to the opening up of science to critique by postmodernism. McIntyre (2018:136) points to examples of authorities that, to protect their own interests, claim, in a postmodern move, that “the Truth is uncertain.”

This uncertainty links to contemporary political stances which in essence use science where it benefits their view but also denies scientific ideas when inconvenient. Edis (2020:15) explains that various groups use postmodern rhetoric to defend pseudoscience and deflect scientific enquiry. Newman (2023:13) relates this to post-truth, where since 2016, and particularly after the 2020 COVID pandemic, deliberate misinformation, untrustworthy news sources, unsure

facts and an open deconstruction of science. Newman (2023:18) explicitly notes that the state of political alignment, ideology, and the view of science as a convenient or inconvenient bucket to draw from, can be linked to postmodern thinking.

With the above discussion of the science wars, and particularly postmodernism's stance towards science, as well as the more contemporary antagonism between the groups, there are still some authors that call for unity. During the Science Wars, Edward O Wilson (1991:13) notes that there should be a consilience between the humanities and sciences. He makes particular reference to the decline of the humanities and notes that the strain of a more complete idea of learning, coming from the Renaissance and Enlightenment needs to be reconsidered (Wilson 1991:13). Wilson (1991:13) proposes that everyday issues and even the greater troubles of the world can be better addressed if knowledge from both the social sciences and Natural sciences were applied.

Responding to the 'attack' on postmodernism by authors such as Sokal and Bricmont (1997), Newman also mentions unification as a more responsible route for the sciences and the humanities. Newman (1997:136) notes that postmodernism has shortcomings, but that he is suspicious of scientific defences posed by the pro-science schism of the science wars Newman (1997:138) warns that much of the scientific criticism is a misunderstanding of postmodernism, which fears science presenting itself as a metanarrative, and not science as a route to gaining knowledge.. In essence he claims that science and the postmodernism have much in common, for example the existence and interest in an external world, in the generation of meaning and the gaining of knowledge (Newman 1997:136).

More recently the desire to unify science and the humanities can be seen in Pinker's response to Wieseltier's critique of his invitation for collaboration, is shown in *Science vs the Humanities: Round III* (2013). Pinker (2013b:[sp]) notes that ideas of change and brilliance can come from any field, and explains that in history there were many philosophers that were also scientists. He notes that the humanities are capable of more, and that science can contribute to the humanities, not simply push them into obscurity (Pinker 2013b:[sp]). The fear that the loss of difference is what science brings is addressed by Pinker, stating that science should enrich and diversify the tools of the humanist instead.

One such a tool that is then of relevance to this study, is the biocultural discourse. As demonstrated by the continuous distrust between the sciences and humanities, this theory may not bridge all the perceived gaps but may give a fuller account of embodied human experience, human access to knowledge and understanding, that is informed by science.

2.3.2 Bioculture as integration of Biology and Culture for Monster Studies

Where Monster Studies and Monster Theory focus on mainly humanities pursuits, Biocultural Monster Studies includes pursuits from the sciences (Koenig-Woodyard, Nanayakkara & Khatri 2018:2). This subsection looks at newer themes within Monster Studies, which position the monster not as simply a literary figure, but a figure that reveals both cultural and biological information about humans. This Biocultural approach comes from a desire to bridge the Two Culture divide as originally addressed by Snow (1963).⁸⁴ Bioculture is explained and explored, establishing its roots in the sciences, before noting literature on how monsters are considered by Biocultural studies.

Bioculture, amongst other discourses, aims to bridge this gap between the Two Cultures, reconciling the humanities and sciences to create more complete understandings of concepts. Hruschka, Lende and Worthman (2005:2) link Biocultural theories to anthropological practices and desires for holism. In anthropology the desire for holism, that is the acknowledgement of the interrelation of various forces, biological and societal, on subjects, has been acknowledged (Sobo 2013:[sp]).⁸⁵ Sharma (2011:2) posits that since the origin of the anthropological field, the topics of interest that have fallen under it, are the relationships between the environment, socio-cultural constructs and evolutionary adaptation to these. In essence, it is about the idea that humans and the environment impact each other and that this is reflected in cultural practices and biological structures.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ It would seem that this focus on a world rendered poorer by the gap between humanities and science was one of Snow's major driving forces in his writing, as well as his attempt to urge the sciences and humanities to be more open to integration. Barash (2005:[sp]) explains that Snow seemed to be focusing on problems like overpopulation, the gap in wealth between the rich and the poor, as well as the constant threat of nuclear war as a result of the wilful separation of these cultures.

⁸⁵ This is due to the 'Four-field' idea instigated by Franz Boas in 1940 (Baleé 2009:[sp]). However, at the time Boas's work was met with unfavourable critique (Lewis 2001:381).

⁸⁶ One could also argue that with the advent of Darwinism, the interdisciplinary nature of looking at culture as deeply shaped by biology, was on the rise (Caroll *et al* 2017:7).

In the *Biocultures Manifesto* (2007:[sp]), Davis and Morris write that Biocultural approaches seek to not represent a reductionist view of biological, scientific and cultural practices, but that the only way to represent these as more holistic, is to acknowledge the bond between the biological and the cultural. Joseph Lopreato (1984) wrote in *Human Nature and Biocultural Evolution* that human sociology and culture have a basis in biology. Van den Berghe (1986) and Lopreato (1984) called to restructure the social sciences to have a more ‘Modern Synthesis’, the goal being a better understanding of human nature in a holistic way (Turner & Machalek 2018:[sp]). Sociologists were critical of ideas that human nature was completely determined by the ‘nurture’ aspect of society (Turner & Machalek 2018:[sp]). Instead a fundamental principle of the Biocultural approach is that human nature is deeply influenced by evolution and thus there are pre-existing tendencies within all humans that affect and guide their behaviours (Sanderson 2008:18).

From a Biocultural perspective, human nature becomes not a construct that denies or oppresses, but rather another avenue to investigate culture. Carroll *et al* (2017:2) explain that human nature can be taken to mean ‘species-typical array of behaviours’. Carroll *et al* (2017:2) further elaborate, explaining that human nature implies the biological and genetic structures and features humans are born with, and culture is then that which is learned and passed on in society. Biology and culture are not seen as separate, rather that human biology gives rise to cultural practices and the cultural environment can also affect the biological (Carroll *et al* 2017:2). This implies a more holistic approach as the notion that one arises out of the other, but deeply influence that which it arose from, shows a deep interconnected relationship between biology and culture, which implies an approach that mirrors this connection.

Bioculture takes as a premise for human biology Darwin’s theory of evolution (Gaya 2010:5). This implies that organisms adapt through natural selection to changes in their environment (Carroll 2016:xxiii). However, as Mesoudi (2011:viii) explains, it is not just biology that changes, but culture as well. The basic premise can be understood as follows: humans adapt to their environment biologically, culture arises from practical and biological structures, but such cultural practices then also change the social and cultural environment to which humans adapt.

Boyd (2006:22-23) considers that humans, through evolution, might have been natural first, and that this evolved biology provides the frame through which humans have access to all other knowledge. Culture then takes on certain forms to fit biological needs, mirroring human

behaviour as well as physical capabilities. Laland, Odling-Smee and Feldman (2000:131) explain that culture and biology are inextricably connected. An example these researchers use is the effect of tool use as cultural and how empirical data points towards biological evolution being linked to the frequencies of genotypes in certain groups (Laland, Odling-Smee & Feldman 2000:131).⁸⁷

This encompasses two basic theories, that cultural activities either create favourable opportunities for some individuals to survive and pass on their genes, or that prolonged cultural behaviour generates mutations (Laland, Odling-Smee & Feldman 2000:131). In essence what is shown is an endless cycle between the human, its environment, and how humans change through changing their environment through culture.

Humans are seen as highly social, a trait sculpted by evolution (Young 2008:[sp]). Boyd (2006:21-22) notes how this sociability led to the rise of an understandable culture between individuals. Boyd (2006:22) points out that since early humans were greatly dependent on the groups in which they lived, understanding, or being able to guess at, possible human behaviour, would have been to their benefit. It is explained that formalised and ritualised behaviour, culture, gained and built up over a long period of time, improving from previous conceptions or acts, would give members of the group a better framework within which to understand one another (Boyd 2006:22). Also, on the biological side, research, like that of Dunbar (2016:[sp]), seems to suggest that the social dynamics of human groups are related to neurobiology.⁸⁸ It stands to reason that on a biological level, sidestepping misunderstanding and violence is beneficial for group members.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ They refer in particular to the work of Bodmer and Cavalli-Sforza (1976), Durham (1991), Feldman and Laland (1996) as well as Wilson (1985).

⁸⁸ The *Social Brain Hypothesis*, as explained by Wayman (2011:[sp]) takes as its premise that primates survived in social groups because it was beneficial, but that to keep track of the conspecific relations which allowed the group to function, a big brain was needed.

⁸⁹ One might also here refer to the *Social Brain Hypothesis*. One branch, the eldest posited by Byrne and Whiten (1988), suggests that individuals are constantly in competition within the group so as to gain advantage. However, for this to happen there still needs to be a close reading of behaviour and intent to facilitate such competition. The second idea comes from Dunbar (1992), who argues that the primate brain was made/ evolved, for better bonding and better understanding in groups. The third version of the *Social Brain Hypothesis*, introduced by Reader and Laland (2002) focuses more on the aspects of groups that provide for imitation and learning through this method. Shultz and Dunbar (2012:14) also note that these three forms of *Social Brain Hypothesis* come primarily from studies on primate brains, not just humans, but aim to better explain human development, evolution and behaviour.

When the postmodern desire to deconstruct is viewed in this light, some other angles of this concept become visible. Boyd (2006:21, 25) points out that for poststructuralists, and the endless deferral of meaning, suggesting a biological certainty is problematic. However, what Bioculture shows, is indeed the construction of culture, but the simple notion that humans evolved to construct meaning, decode meaning and thus have some understanding of intent (Boyd 2006:25). It points toward the idea that within human communication there is understanding, not the ultimate understanding suggested by Modernist and Enlightenment thinking, but enough for individuals to actually communicate, pass on culture, and survive.

Merlin Donald (2018:20), a researcher on human cognition and evolution, points out that humans evolved not individually, but together. Donald (2018:37) explains that humans had ‘cognitive communities’ before proper language and writing systems were developed, the purpose of which was to better bond and coordinate the group.⁹⁰ Geertz (2010:311) interprets Donald’s writings, noting that his ‘cognitive community’ is cultural and that it has a deep influence on the development of human cognition. Geertz’s (2010:311) opinion is that humans have predispositions because of evolution, and that this predisposition towards culture and cultural activities is also what allowed humans to evolve in terms of our current cognitive state.

The cultural constructs postmodernism seeks to investigate, did not arise out of nowhere, but rather from shared biology, shaped by cultural understandings, which in turn arise from biology. Such constructs may be seen as fabrications entangled with power dynamics and vehicles for upholding the status quo. However, because of shared biology and culture, they represent *human* desires, *human* problems and are perceived through and with evolved *human* tools of cognition.

Bioculture accepts that humans have similar bodily structures formed by evolution (Easterlin 2012:[sp]). It then takes this as a biological basis or framework within and around which human beings perceive the world and make meaning (Clasen 2012:222). For example, humans create and engage in visual media because of the particular biology of our visual systems and our proclivity towards depending on vision.⁹¹ As individuals one might have a subjective experience of such visual stimuli, but the evolved human structures of sense and cognition still

⁹⁰ Donald (1999) also expresses this concept in his earlier writings, such as *The Widening Gyre: Religion, culture and evolution*.

⁹¹ One might here refer to Grodal’s (2009) use of film theory that has its basis in biology, which is reviewed in detail by Selbo (2010).

provide a particular framework wherein such experiences occur. In essence, Biocultural approaches indicate that the pluralism of postmodern interpretation exists with limits, these limits being inborn abilities shaped by culture and vice versa.

The Biocultural approach has also been applied to monsters in their various forms. Clasen (2012), and other theorists like Asma (2014) who embrace Bioculture, have given some of the most challenging critique on conventional, or Cultural, Monster Studies. Critique includes how Monster Theory limits itself to discussions within the humanities. Clasen (2012:222-224) points out that monsters exist across cultures, geographic locations and historical instances and that simply reducing these commonalities to culture is unsatisfactory. Instead, Clasen (2012:224) explains that the fascination with monsters can be tied back into the commonalities humans share in terms of biology, stating that the human mind seeks and creates monsters due to several biologically evolved factors. Asma (2014:3, 16), who writes particularly on monsters while Clasen (2012) can perhaps be seen as writing more on Horror, explains that humans evolved similar cognitive modules that are triggered to fear genuine threats, but that some of these triggers can be seen in monsters.

There are several important themes that Biocultural studies use to address monsters as literary figures and how humans respond to them. One of the core themes of Biocultural studies is that humans have biological fear circuits in their brains that evolved under the pressures of evolution and that this is shared across time, space and culture (Anderson, Schjoedt, Price, Rosas, Scriver & Clasen 2020:1498; Asma 2014:2; Clasen 2017:[sp]). These circuits includes the amygdala (Figure 7 & 8), which can make quick, lifesaving, decisions, often bypassing the ‘rational’ part of the brain (Dąbrowska 2023:74). Rabelliono, Boyd, McKinnon and Lanius (2019:198) and Gross and Canteras (2012:615) found that different stimuli use different paths through the amygdala, resulting in different actions, each being best for survival.

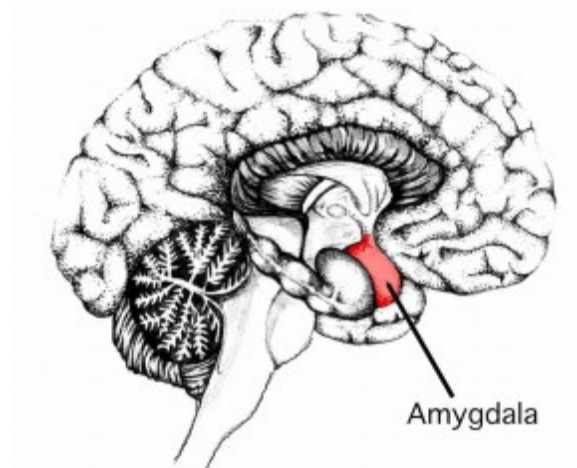


Figure 7: Amygdala Anatomy, home page The Human Memory Website, 2022. (The Human Memory 2022:[sp]).

The different fears that are addressed herein, include fear of predators, other humans (conspicuous), disgusting matter, and threats within the landscape. Monsters then, being hybrid beings, often contain cues from multiple categories, like the ones listed here. Asma (2014:7-8) names this confusion caused by the monster *Category Jamming*. The viewer is confronted an entity that does not fit completely into previously established categories, thus causing further fear. The neuroscience of the brain and how the varying stimuli follow varying paths, then gives this concept a physical grounding. Asma (2014:8) notes that the work of Carrol (1990) as well as Mary Douglas ' (2013 [1966]) ideas on purity and pollution strongly feature in Category Jamming as these categorically confusing substances, persons and monsters can cause disgust, but also fascination. What is noted here is an approach that combines both cultural and biological information for a more holistic approach.

In summary newer themes within Monster Studies make use of a Biocultural approach. Bioculture's value in bridging the gap between science and the humanities, is then also a means for filling gaps in the understanding of monsters. Bioculture's acknowledgement of the value of culture and biology creates new areas of opportunity from which to view the value of monsters. To investigate monsters from a Biocultural angle then includes focusing on the biology of the body that responds to the figure of the monster as more than a cultural creation. The feedback between biology and culture implies that the monster is both a product of biology and culture, combining different underlying biological fears into cultural expressions relevant to the monster.

2.3.3 Fear of Predators and the Monster

Mathias Clasen (2012:222) states that Horror as a broad genre, and its monsters, work in deeply on human psychology, particularly on fear. Monsters depend on biological and cultural structures to engage and scare their audience, including presenting cues that are associated with predators (Clasen 2012:222). Through investigating fear, it might be discovered how it is that the monster works in on humans to produce fear reactions. The fear of predators serves as one of the main fears investigated in the *Evil Udu* an alien. The theme is extrapolated on in terms of fear of predators within the landscape in *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster* and *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space*.

Fear evolved in humans to protect against threats. Throughout human evolution there has been a co-evolution of predators putting pressure on our species to evolve and survive (Mobbs, Hagan, Dalglish, Silston & Prévost 2015:[sp]). Fear is then a way of alerting the animal to a threat, pushing it into an action, or a combination of actions, to better their chances of survival (Kellehear 2014:4). Mobbs *et al* (2015:[sp]) explain that this continuous predator pressure left humans with a high ‘survival intelligence’, being appropriate reactions to threats which are supported on a neurobiological level.⁹²

Fear of predators takes a particular pathway through the brain and is facilitated by a neural network. It is important to note this pathway as it also links to areas of the brain associated with memory. Asma (2014:2, 3) summarises the pathway, as running from the amygdala (Figure 7 & 8), to the hypothalamus, then the periaqueductal gray, to the brain stem and finally the spinal cord.⁹³ The amygdala is of particular interest as this brain region is associated with regulating fear responses, particularly then the central nucleus (Adolphs 2013:[sp]). This means that the amygdala assesses threats based on the encountered stimuli and activates the appropriate response (Farmer 2009:76).^{94 95}

⁹² This is known as the Ecology of Fear, which investigates how pressure from predators impacts prey populations, including the idea that the influence of predation goes beyond simple killing of animals, but includes other stresses that are neurobiological, physiological and behavioural changes all of which can have effects and strains (Zanette & Clinchy 2019:R309).

⁹³ Asma (2014:2) summarises here that the fear circuit seems to be accompanied by other emotional systems that are facilitated by the brainstem’s ‘old-brain’ systems, but also the limbic emotional circuits found in the mid- brain.

⁹⁴ The amygdala also interprets very intensely emotionally charged stimuli, such as disgust and love (Farmer 2009:76).

⁹⁵ It is interesting to note that with many models of emotion, the cerebral cortex interprets stimuli and processes data associated with emotion (Nevid 2013:313). However, for fear LeDoux’s (2000, 2003, 2008)

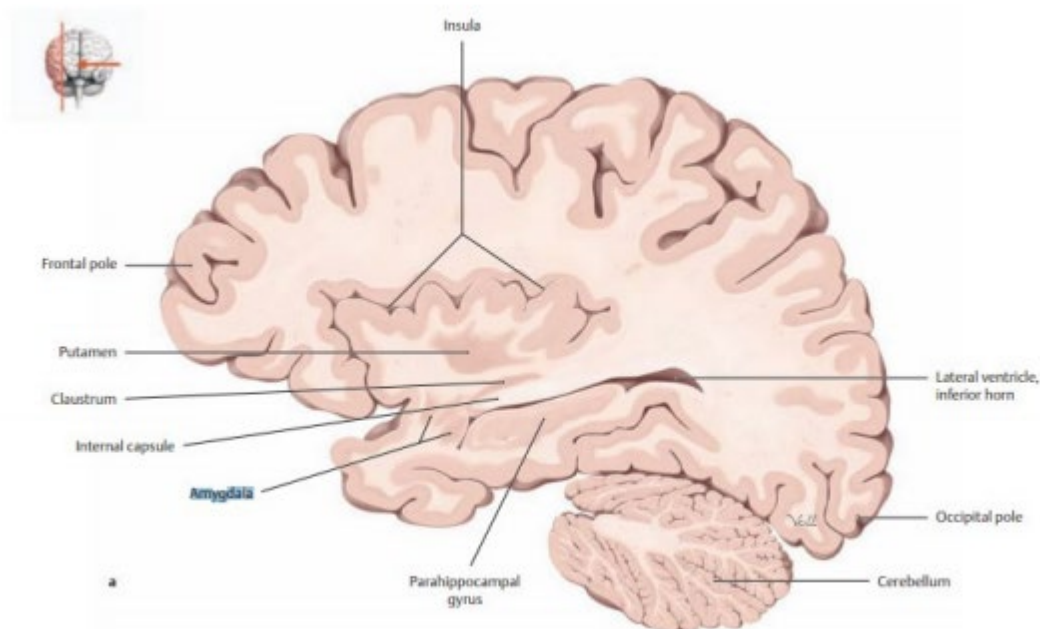


Figure 8: Amygdala Illustration. Markus Voll & Karl Wesker, Sagittal Sections: I– III (Lateral), 2010. (Schuenke, Schulte and Schumacher 2010:310).

The amygdala is involved with fear related memories as well. LeDoux (1996:730) shows that studies in Pavlovian fear conditioning in rats resulted in memory-making through the circuit that involves the amygdala and the hypothalamus. Adolphs (2013:[sp]) noted that the amygdala is part of a node in the neural network that is associated with memory and attentional investment as well as learning. Through conditioning fear can thus be learned and this learning can also occur on a level that an individual might not be fully aware of.

LeDoux (2014:2871) explains that the mechanisms involved in responding to, and detecting, threats differ from conscious fear, but that these structures can contribute to it.⁹⁶ The deep associative learning that can happen through conditioning is thus not always conscious, but can influence conscious fears. Although, the question does arise concerning the nature or nurture of fear responses, it is clear here that fear learning can happen on a very deep level, but some fears do not seem to need this learning.

model of the dual-pathway of fear, seems to imply that the amygdala interprets the fear related stimuli prior to a cerebral cortex response (Nevid 2013:315).

⁹⁶ LeDoux (2014:2871) reflects on his previous research and notes that the ‘fear’ in the named ‘fear system’, meant threat detection and response, not the higher psychological feeling of fear as a conscious experience. LeDoux (2014:2871) does explain that the mechanism he investigates does create states through their responses to stimuli that can lead to further reactions that trigger higher fear states.

Fear can have subsections of ‘innate fears’. Innate fears seem to require no previous experiences of harm to create strong defensive behaviours (Silva, Gross & Gräff 2016:[sp]). Innate fears include fear of predators and dangerous animals, social threat, which one can understand as danger coming from members of the same species, fear of physical harm, and immanent threats (Rosén 2019:14). Rosén (2019:14) notes that innate fears are prepared and handed down through evolution, sighting primate fears of snakes as requiring no real previous learning to come into effect.⁹⁷ Corcoran and Quirk (2007:[sp]) explain that innate fears, unlike learned fears, were not affected by their experiment on the prelimbic subregion in the medial pre-frontal cortex, making a distinction between learned, or conditioned, fear and innate fear.⁹⁸

The idea of Clasen’s (2012) ‘Predator Template’, seems to fall into this notion of an innate fear of certain animals passed down through evolution to contemporary humans. Clasen (2012:223) explains the Predator Template is part of an inborn system that prepares the individual in an abstract way for danger from predators. Through experience and learning, this template is then calibrated to be specific to the individual’s environment and pressing predators (Clasen 2012:223).

This is built off of Mineka and Öhman’s (2002:928) descriptions of a fear module that, amongst other things, helps humans detect and react to predators quickly, making use of parts of the brain that are subcortical. Mineka and Öhman’s (2002:297) research showed that the triggers that activate this module are formed by evolution, being relevant to constant threats to survival. They also found that there is rapid activation and response to stimuli that are not always conscious and may in fact show resistance to cognitive influences (Mineka & Öhman 2002:934). Finally, it was found that there are specific neural networks that take part in this module (Mineka & Öhman 2002:934,935). An example can be seen here in a monster that shows various predatory cues, such as the werewolf (Figure 9 & 17).

⁹⁷ Phobias can also be related to this evolutionary preparedness to more easily fear certain stimuli, an orientation that could have been advantageous and was thus passed on through the genes of more fearful individuals, as initially proposed by Seligman (1971).

⁹⁸ Innate fears can however be affected or nullified, as discussed by Charney, Bunney and Nestler (2001:468).



Figure 9: Predatory Traits in Werewolf, *Bad Moon*, 1996. (Reimann 2021:[sp]).

However, depicting such fears and templates as inborn or innate, perhaps needs more clarification. Öhman's (2009) work on fear involving snakes and faces gives a good explanation of what the 'innate' nature of such a Predator Template might be. Öhman (2009:543) explains that knowing what to fear is not an instinct⁹⁹, but rather that 'prepared learning' may take place. What this boils down to is that the capacity to connect dangerous stimuli and the appropriate response is prepared through evolutionary pressures on the human species (Öhman 2009:543). One might take this to mean that the biological structures in the brain make it easier to put together predators and fear responses, than for example, flowers and fear responses.

Regarding the Predator Template Clasen (2012:223) explains preparedness as the preparedness of biology to learn, with stronger possibilities to learn negative or positive associations as sculpted by evolution. An example of this might be the work of Gerull and Rappe (2002), who, as explained by Andreassen (2007:8), showed that toddlers (15-20 months) were very easily and quickly oriented to fear toys that represented snakes and spiders and that the association had become persistent. Andreassen (2007:9) also mentions the work of Rakison and Derriger (2008), who showed that infants as young as five months would track images that more actively resemble spiders longer than unclear images. It would seem that part of the 'prepared learning' that accompanies the introduction of possible predatory animals is a high amount of attention, which can then be orientated towards a fear-memory and appropriate response.

⁹⁹ "Instinct" here seems to imply an inborn response that needs no learning to be orientated.

It would then seem that humans are biologically prepared to learn about predators, this learning taking place through culture and cultural texts. Since human brains are constantly trying to adapt to threats, predatory threats being of particular interest here, being open to receiving and orientating information, Horror texts exploit these behaviours (University of Turku 2020:[sp]).

Putkinen, Nazari-Farsani, Seppälä, Karjalainen, Sun, Karlsson, Hudson, Heikkilä, Hirvonen, and Nummenmaa (2020:[sp]) explored this through conducting an experiment which entailed monitoring the hemodynamic activity of participant's brains through functional magnetic resonance imaging while they were watching Horror movies. The subjects rated their fear, which was then used to determine how emotional intensity affected their functional and synchronised connectivity (Putkinen *et al* 2020:[sp]). During these sessions, it was found that threat evaluation was sustained, alternating between fear that is sustained when an encounter is anticipated and fear as a response to the threat (Putkinen *et al* 2020:[sp]). It is this constant evaluation, or attempts to learn and orientate, that Horror movies, and one can argue as a genre, make use of.

In order to make use of this, monsters have to have particular triggers, both in physicality and behaviour. Bivins (2012:106) explains that cultural fears, such as monsters, are shaped by evolutionary fears including the fear of predation. Gilmore (2003:17) points out that monsters are tied up deeply with the human fear of being consumed. Khapaeva (2020:10) terms an entire category of monsters 'man-eating-monsters', a broad and far-ranging category. Of course, then the behaviour of these monsters comes packaged with the tools to do the job, fangs and claws, forward-facing eyes, and all manner of predatory trimmings.

However, monsters, unlike actual predators, consist of a conglomeration of parts (Cohen 1996:45). Clasen (2007:ii) points this out by saying that monsters confuse human ontology, making monsters worthy of more attention, one assumes to better classify and categorise them. The amalgamation of animal and human parts that make up the monster's body might lead to a confusion in processing the appropriate identification and responses. There are different neural circuits that are involved with different fears, and there are distinct fear circuits for a fear of predators, social fears as well as pain (Rabelliono *et al* 2019:198).

The work of Silva, Mattucci, Krzywkowski, Murana, Illarionova, Grinevich, Canteras, Ragozzino and Gross (2013:[sp]) shows that there are distinct pathways that deal with

predatory fear and social fear separately, as well as the appropriate responses to these different classes of threat. Within the amygdala are also different regions, nuclei, which show a difference in activity depending on the class of threat, which in turn has different paths in downstream circuits and reactions (Gross & Canteras 2012:615).¹⁰⁰ One can also here refer to Category Jamming as per Asma (2014:7-9). The idea that monsters cause confusion would be backed up by the monster containing multiple stimuli, which need to be identified so the best course of action can be taken. However, without a clear resolution, this confusion can lead to discomfort or fear (Asma 2014:8).

The appropriate reaction to the identified threat is of the greatest importance. The correct fear response can be beneficial for survival (Mobbs *et al* 2015:4, 5). These reactions are also more plastic, considering the amygdala's quick learning from experiences, and adaptive to the situation (Morozov & Ito 2020:[sp]). Making a correct identification of the threat is crucial, a predator would elicit a different response than would another aggressive human (Mobbs *et al* 2015:3), or even how one reacts to a bear versus a large snake would differ.

Reaction to predators usually entails preparing the body for 'fight or flight', such as increased blood pressure, elevated heart rate, better blood flow to muscles, faster breathing, dilated pupils, the slowing of non-vital organs and hyper-alertness in the brain (Javanbakht & Saab 2017:[sp]). When it comes to aggressive members of the same species, conspecifics, different stimuli trigger different reactions, which are discussed in the following subsection.

Monteiro, West and Pizzaro (2023:163) identify animals that are more likely to be portrayed as monsters, real animals that posed a threat at some point during our evolution, particularly those that pose a danger through being ambush predators, like Felids, or have venom, like snakes and other reptiles. Monteiro, West and Pizzaro (2023:164) suggest that animalistic monsters serve as tools to heighten awareness and watchfulness for actual predators. This language of danger can then be applied to how humans depict Others and Enemies in animalistic ways (Monteiro, West & Pizzaro 2023:164).

¹⁰⁰ One of the areas in the brain Gross and Canteras (2012:651-652) identify in rats as being specific to predator fear is the medial amygdala, receiving information from the olfactory bulb about scent which causes more activity in the posterovental medial amygdala. Live predators also activate the lateral amygdala and the posterior basomedial amygdala nuclei regions, which deal with visual and auditory inputs (Gross & Canteras 2012:651- 652). This shows an overlap between seeing predatory cues and fear, something that is of importance when watching movies in the Horror genre.

In conclusion, fear, and constant pressure of predators have caused humans to evolve in ways that assure that predators can be identified and responded to in the way best suited for survival. The Predator Template as explained by Clasen (2012:223) allows for easy and quick identification of predatory animals, evoking fear and interest, a biological tendency that is often used in Horror through the portrayal of animalistic monsters. The fear-circuit in the brain that deals with predators, and the best responses to predators are very particular and distinct from areas that other dangerous stimuli activate (Rabelliono *et al* 2019:198).

2.3.4 Conspecific Fear and the Monster

As discussed above, predation shaped early humans and continues to be a factor in how humans perceive the world. However, danger to humans was, and is, not always in the form of hungry animals, but is also evident in the threats other humans pose. Pressure on humans from other violent, or potentially violent humans, is also theorised to have left its mark on human biology. As Duntley and Buss (2011:400) explain, humans have killed and threatened other humans often throughout history, to the point where humans have evolved anti-homicide adaptations. Although, the tendency to kill, harm, and be aggressive have been beneficial to humans in the past, humans, through selection, have also evolved to be more likely to kill within their own species. This forms part of Homicide Adaptation Theory (Duntley & Buss 2011:408). The identification and fear of other humans also have its own particular fear circuit in the brain (Adolphs 2013:[sp]).

This subsection explores conspecific fear in order to better understand the human elements of the *Evil Udu* and alien as monsters, as well as how the landscape these monsters inhabit can add to the reading of the fear of conspecifics as discussed in *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster* and *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space*.

Conspecifics are organisms that fall under the same species classification (Kochhan 2017:[sp]). In the case of humans, as well as other primates particularly chimpanzees (Wrangham 2018:[sp]), there is a high rate of conspecific violence and threat (Fields 2016:[sp]). Humans show traits that are indications of particularly high conspecific violence, which is a mix of high sociability and being territorial (Fields 2016:[sp]). With this strong pressure from other humans, the monster then often carries cues of violent humans, or ‘enemies’. This subsection

explores conspecific fear in order to better understand the human elements of the conglomerate monster.

Part of this threat from other humans is the selective pressure that would have shaped human biology, which is the case for Homicide Adaptation Theory. Duntley and Buss (2011:400) provide a short overview, from Eibel-Eibesfeldt (1989), positing homicide and war as mere cultural aberrations. Daly and Wilson's (1988, 1989, 1998, 1999) work suggesting a possibility of an evolutionary adaptation, that homicide is perhaps a byproduct of an evolutionary process (Wilson, Daly & Daniele 1995; Buss, Haselton, Shackelford, Bleske & Wakefield 1998; Gould 1991) and finally their own view (Duntley & Buss 2011:408) that adaptation has occurred to facilitate homicide. Although this is not the only theory that demonstrates the implications of a constant pressure of conspecific violence on humans, it is one that does take the pressure of conspecific violence and death seriously.

Homicide Adaptation Theory assumes that humans evolved mechanisms to kill other humans because it was beneficial during earlier stages of human evolution (Durrant (2009:[sp])). Durrant (2009:[sp]) does however criticise this theory, stating that it does not take into full consideration killing's evolutionary benefits and costs, clear evidence of the actual features of this evolutionary trait and comparative analysis between other species. However, for this chapter, Homicide Adaptation Theory is taken as evidence of humans killing other humans and some examples in Evolutionary Psychological thinking on this matter.

Humans and Chimpanzees have been found as the only two mammalian species form male-bonded groups that raid and kill their own species (Buss 2019:[sp])). Conspecific killing occurs in many other species, but the social and societal impacts of humans and chimpanzees (Figure 10) seem to reveal a shared group trait that allows for killing within each species (Galbi 2014:[sp])). Homicide amongst humans can come in many forms, such as war, which slots into the male-bonded group idea, or male coalition violence (Gorelik, Shackelford & Weekes-Shackelford 2012:349).



Figure 10: Chimpanzees in the Act of ‘Murder’ in Mahale Mountains National Park, Tanzania, 2011. Photograph by Konrad Wothe. (Balter 2014:[sp]).

Human homicide might be underlain by aggression or at least connected to aggression. Buss (2019:[sp]) explains aggression as a strategy, noting how being aggressive can be beneficial.¹⁰¹ Humans stockpile or restrict access to resources, aggression on the individual level or group-level can give access to these (Buss 2019:[sp]). As an evolutionary adaptation, aggression can help the aggressor in obtaining food, mates and other resources, as well as maintain social status, which, for social species, is of great importance (Jhangiani & Tarry 2022:[sp]). However, the victim of aggression can lose access to these resources, as well as social status and thus become more likely to receive violence (Buss 2019:[sp]).

There is a correlation between testosterone levels and perceived aggression, as shown by Dabbs, Hargrove and Heusel (1996) as well as Banks and Dabbs (1996) and is noted in a recent study, 2022, by Jhangiani and Tarry. Same-sex rivalries often draw on aggression to have access to members of the opposite sex and can, mostly amongst males, lead to killing of rivals (Buss 2019:[sp]). This is beneficial for reproduction, but also for not having to incur the possible cost of fighting again in the future. Aggression can also affect one's social standing, examples of which include wars, street fighting and ritualised violence through sport (Buss

¹⁰¹ Van der Dennen (2005:322) lists several benefits of killing one's rival, such as the lineage of possible competitors not existing, reproductive resources being guarded, unrelated children not taking time and resources that could have gone to genetically related offspring, reputation to deter enemies and avoid the risks of active fighting, guarding a mate, being able to access another's mate, the resources gained from a killed rival, by killing a rival, later antagonism is avoided and the protection of oneself, offspring and mate from harm by others.

2019:[sp]). Although some groups value non-aggressors and thus aggression's success as a strategy can depend on the context, a fearsome reputation can deter rivals from inflicting harm (Buss 2019:[sp]). Violence can also deter mates from infidelity and thus lessen the chances of cuckoldry, but women have been found to murder their partners predominantly to get away from such violence and abuse (van der Dennen 2005:322, 323).

On the idea of cost and fitness, Duntley and Buss (2011:400) provide a compelling point. By eliminating a rival, there are no continued competitions, no other strategies need to be implemented, the victor gains all the victim had. Homicide Adaptation Theory does not assume that homicide was the only solution to aggressive situations, reciprocal violence and revenge would have been a threat to group stability, but that this solution was used often enough to be a pressure that humans evolved under (Anderson 2019:[sp]).

Homicide Adaptation Theory then includes the idea that humans also evolved mechanisms to avoid falling victim to homicide. Anti-homicide mechanisms involve defence by the individual, but also the retribution and violence sought by the kin of the victim, loss of status, being ostracised and thus losing resources the community can offer, often including mates (Duntley & Buss 2011:401). Humans have evolved mechanisms which are very sensitive to context, to determine how much force to use and to decide if intentional killing is needed, especially in the face of such anti-homicide measures (Duntley & Buss 2011:400).

Homicide has been so prevalent that humans have needed to prepare for facing such aggression. (Buss 2019:[sp]). Humans have 'murder fantasies'; this has been documented as not necessarily leading into the action of killing as the cost is very high (van der Dennen 2005:333). However, such fantasies reveal mechanisms that consider homicide as an option. It allow for the intake of information skewed by this bias, and allow for insight into the thinking of those who are committed to carrying out homicide, perhaps in a way to prepare or keep oneself safe (Buss 2019:[sp]). In essence, murder fantasies allow for a form of preparation and planning (Duntley & Buss 2011:406). One might guess here that learning about homicide through cultural tales can help one prepare, thus creating a desire to learn. Estimating the possibility of murdering or being murdered by others is also important. The kin of possible victims are sized-up, their bodies and faces scanned, checking for the ability to fend off retaliation (Duntley &

Buss 2011:405; Sell, Cosmides & Tooby 2014).¹⁰² According to Miller (2012:35-48) the neurochemistry and biological inheritance in people can make them more or less aggressive. Miller (2012:38) clearly notes that nurture and nature combine to form any individual, but that the biological reality of a person's inherited predispositions do still exist.

Guessing what a murderer might look like can certainly help one avoid such individuals, but knowing *where* killings could take place is also helpful. Killings of one's own clan, community or family are rare (Miller 2018:57). The murder of relatives is also relatively low (Duntley & Buss 2011:407). The reason for such killings to be rare is described by Miller (2012:227-228) as a desire to maintain stability. With regular killings there would be revenge and violence, which damages the group's ability to function (Miller 2012:227-228). Strangers, and thus places one could come into contact with strangers, are then areas of risk.

The fear of aggressive conspecifics has its own fear circuit and responses (Adolphs 2013:[sp]). Gross and Canteras (2012:652) note that aggressive conspecifics trigger fear responses that are innate.¹⁰³ At times similar behaviour might occur regarding the threat of a predator or a dangerous conspecific, but the stimulus and reactions are handled by different parts of the fear network (Motta, Goto, Gouveia, Baldo, Canteras & Swanson 2009:[sp]). The reactions to dominant or aggressive conspecifics in rats include flight, freezing, and submission as passive defence mechanisms (Gross & Canteras 2012:653). These reactions were also seen in rats when reacting to a cat, as recorded by Motta *et al* (2009:[sp]) although it was added that when facing a conspecific the rat would fight to defend itself.

Within social groups with established hierarchies, often seen in primates and humans, fear responses are complicated in that reacting in the incorrect way may damage one's social standing in the hierarchy (Öhman 2009:547). Öhman (2009:547) further explains that unlike animals, humans must rely on ritualised acts instead of actually freezing or fleeing to remain part of the group. Brosnan, Tone and Williams (2017:101) note Öhman's research in 1986, comparing the escape from an aggressive predator to an escape from an aggressive human, the

¹⁰² This is acknowledged as having a cultural component, and it is not implied here that this is a purely biological process, but rather that there is a biological component also.

¹⁰³ The network of this fear involves the ventral premammillary nucleus, medial preoptic nucleus and anterior hypothalamic nucleus, which are part of the medial hypothalamic circuit's nuclei which also deal with fear of predators (Gross & Canteras 2012:652). Separately there is also the periaqueductal grey's dorsomedial area, the dorsomedial area of the dorsal premammillary nucleus, the ventrolateral area of the ventromedial nucleus and the medial amygdala's posterodorsal area (Gross & Canteras 2012:652).

result being that running away could instead be seen as shameful. Identifying a dangerous predator versus an aggressive human is thus central to generating the correct response as an incorrect reaction might jeopardise one's standing in the group. This is particularly relevant when one takes into account the evolutionary road of social development that made the group central to human survival.

One of the cues humans are very adept at reading, is faces. Decety (2010:260) explains that infants often rely on reading faces, differentiating between familiar and unfamiliar faces, but also read for signs of displeasure and aggression. Adolphs (2008:[sp]) shows fearful faces are recognised by the amygdala without conscious input, preparing the subject for the possibly fearful situation. It was also found that angry, and therefore threatening faces, activate the amygdala, noting an identification of threat (Ewbank, Fox & Calder 2010:[sp]). Humans judge others in terms of facial width- to-height ratio, the greater the ratio the more likely one is to judge such a person as possibly aggressive (Science Daily 2009:[sp]). Interestingly it was found by Carré, McCormic and Mondloch (2009:[sp]) that high facial width-to-height ratios often coincided with more aggressive men.

What this aims to demonstrate is that by combining stimuli for different fear circuits, such as markers of predatory animals as well as perhaps aggressive human facial traits, or other threatening conspecific cues, the monster presents a problem. To have a proper reaction to the monster would mean that it must be better understood, its parts activating different circuits of fear and response, the reaction being different in different cases to optimum survival. One might here posit that the conglomerate body of the monster is confusing, yet fear inducing in many different ways. This also forms part of Asma's (2014:7-9) Category Jamming, where the mixed entity that is the monster causes confusion.

One of the reactions to fear, is risk assessment in rats (Blanchard, Blanchard & Griebel 2005:[sp]) Confronted with the possibility of a cat through odour, rats which have never encountered a cat, show repetitive scanning, information gathering and retreat in order to gather more information about the possible predator or threat (Dielenberg & McGregor 2001:[sp]). This implies high levels of attention and resources being put towards assessment and decision making. One might venture that when humans are confused by the cues of the monster, the impetus might be a higher level of attention and information gathering, that is, a deeper investment into the cultural text that contains the monster.

One must however take into consideration that the monster remains a fiction and is usually encountered in an environment that is in essence safe. Clasen (2007:60) notes how Horror-fiction, which often contains monsters, creates a space where the risk is low and danger-assessment and reaction can be polished. A monster thus presents an opportunity to prepare for real threat and danger in a safe environment, which might feed into the long-standing fascination humans seem to have with monsters and the appeal of monstrous fiction and narrative.

However, narratives with human, or more human-like, monsters, do seem to follow threats and behaviour more akin to aggressive and dangerous humans. Clasen and Platts (2019:8)¹⁰⁴ explain that the Slasher genre¹⁰⁵ in Horror is rife with violent masked men whose physical violence is shown with glee. Their morally disgusting behaviour is included to emphasise their ‘evil’ and the danger they pose to the protagonist/s (Clasen & Platts 2019:8). Clasen and Platts (2019:8) further explain how this trope is effective, and very long lived, as the male antagonist reflects the researched link between testosterone and aggression and the mask hides all cues of intent. Here it is hard to judge and make decisions based on cues humans usually use to evaluate each other (Clasen & Platts 2019:8).

In the work of Puts, Hill, Bailey, Walker, Rendall, Wheatley, Welling, Dawood, Cárđinas, Burriss, Jablonski, Shriver, Weiss, Lameira, Apicella, Owen, Barelli, Glen and Ramos-Fernandez (2016:[sp]) it was found that deeper voices, particularly those of men as perceived by men, communicated dominance. Mileva and Leongómez (2024:[sp]) note that deeper voices in males were seen by women as attractive, but ultimately a marker of untrustworthiness. Oftentimes male voices are used to measure the potential threat they might pose, this relates to their size, implied strength and aggressiveness, lower voices being perceived as more threatening (Puts, Apicella & Cárđinas 2011:[sp]). Examples of Slasher movies that make use of low male voices include, but are not limited to, *Scream* (Craven 1997), *Candyman* (Meyer, Condon, Rose & DaCosta 1992) and *Saw* (Wan 2004).

¹⁰⁴ Clasen and Platts (2019:6) note a lack in the current literature concerning the Slasher Genre from a perspective of evolution.

¹⁰⁵ Clasen and Platts (2019:3) note Slasher movies like *Halloween* (Carpenter 1978) and *Friday the 13th* (Cunningham 1980), *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (Craven 1984), amongst others, as older versions of this genre, as well as newer, postmodern examples like *Final Girls* (Strauss-Schulson 2015), *The Cabin in the Woods* (Goddard 2012) and *It Follows* (Mitchell 2014).

To conclude, the predatory monster has embedded in its category-defying body, stimuli that prompt one to fear making use of so-called ‘innate fear’ circuits. The main circuits that concern fearing the monster, are the predator fear circuit and the social fear circuit which deal with fearing members of the same species. However, it is suggested here that the monster is so complex in its form, that it might be a confusing entity, not quite relegated to one circuit or the other. This thus prompts a state that requires more attention and engages one more thoroughly in the cultural text through which the monster is encountered.

2.3.5 Disgust as Biocultural element in the Monster

Disgust, as discussed above, has been expressed as ‘culturated’ emotion (Monaghan & Just 2000:43), or a reaction guided by certain cultural structures (Menninghaus 2003:134). However, more contemporary research acknowledges that disgust is also biological, and that although it might be affected by cultural concepts, the reaction has a biological element. Curtis, de Barra & Aunger (2011:[sp]) explains that disgust arose as an evolutionary trait to further survival in humans, but later became part of a cultural system to modulate behaviour and preserve societal systems.¹⁰⁶

Disgust as a Biocultural concept could explain the continuous description and reactions to monsters as associated with disgust across cultures and time. Examples of such elements of disgust in monsters are discussed in this study in terms of the *Evil Udug* and alien. Disgust as related to the Uncanny, the Other, the physical signs associated with the chosen monsters, their disgusting moral behaviour and how the landscape can add to the reading of the *Evil Udug* and alien are included here in *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster* and *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space*.

Disgust as a felt experience has been shown as lighting up particular regions of the brain. Brain imaging studies¹⁰⁷ reveal that there is a neural network, including the basal ganglia, cortex

¹⁰⁶ McGinn (2011:[sp]) writes that disgust is tied up with culture because humans were not properly orientated by evolution to reconcile our bodily realities with our minds that are refined. This reading disgust seems to be not as Biocultural centred and is not taken into consideration here.

¹⁰⁷ Curtis, de Barra and Aunger (2011:[sp]) refer to the work of the following researchers: Philips, Senior, Fahy and David (1998), Sprengelmeyer, Rausch, Eysel and Przuntek (1998) and Wicker, Keysers, Plailly, Royet, Gallese and Rizzolatti (2003).

anterior temporal cortex, anterior insular cortex, ventrolateral prefrontal cortex, visual cortex and the medial prefrontal cortex, that is activated by visual cues including disgusted faces and objects¹⁰⁸ (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]). The inclusion of the specific regions here shows disgust can be linked to what is seen. Disgust is thus a part of an evolutionary biological and neural system in the human body.

Disgust is also related to the feeling of fear. Part of the neural network that deals with disgust includes the amygdala (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]). The part of the brain that is involved with disgust is important because it overlaps with fear, showing the connection between these states. This brain area is strongly associated with fear and other emotions (LeDoux 2014:2873). Jank and Tye (2015:[sp]) explain that humans share emotional behaviours, noting that humans respond to stimuli that are connected to emotional states, the centre of which is the amygdala. Within this region Shabel, Schairer, Donahue, Powell and Janak (2011:[sp]) explain that negative emotions, such as disgust and fear, are encoded and learning takes place.¹⁰⁹ Xu, Li, Ding, Zhang, Fan, Diao and Yang (2015:[sp]) add that fear and disgust have similar levels of arousal and valence but that these two emotions are distinct.¹¹⁰

However, fear and disgust do seem to share some aspects. Cisler, Olatunji and Lohr (2009:[sp]) explain that the research of Armfield (2006) shows that developing fear for certain objects or situations requires a disgust response. Some phobias, like a fear of spiders, seem to illicit both fear and disgust responses in varying degrees (Cisler, Olatunji & Lohr 2009:[sp]). Disgust may also enhance the effect of fear. Morales, Wu and Fitzsimons' (2012:[sp]) found that in advertising, disgust combined with appeals to fear responses were more effective. In persons with phobias as researched by Edwards and Salkovskis (2006:[sp]), it was found that fear led to feeling higher levels of disgust, but that higher levels of disgust did not result in higher levels of fear.

¹⁰⁸ Yang, Yan, Luo, Li, Zhang, Tian and Zhang (2013:[sp]) explain that disgust can also be part of how and why people make the moral judgements that they do, positing that moral disgust has a lot in common with physical/ emotional disgust, but that since humans are very social, moral disgust may be used more frequently. Yang *et al* (2013:[sp]) further note that physical disgust and moral disgust have neural activity in common as well as the physical facial expression of the feelings of disgust.

¹⁰⁹ Pavlovian fear conditioning is investigated in this study, looking into the conditioning which creates a negative association with a stimulus (Shabel *et al* (2011:[sp])).

¹¹⁰ Fear and disgust are explained as differing in biological meaning, fear being associated with threats to survival and disgust to contamination, cognitive function, fear stimulating the gathering of information through the senses to avoid danger whilst disgust cuts off information to avoid becoming infected (Xu *et al* 2015:[sp]). Finally also the demand for exploration differs in that exploring fear inducing stimuli is far more risky than exploring disgusting stimuli (Xu *et al* 2015:[sp]).

With this in mind, one might suggest that fearing a monster might result in also feeling disgusted by it, or more disgusted by it. Fearing the monster then is accompanied by disgust at times in different levels, but may add to the fascination and reaction to the monster often documented. Both fear and disgust, as emotions relating to threat, hold strong imperatives to pay attention to certain stimuli (Liu, Zang & Luo 2014:[sp]). The response is usually avoidance, or a desire to avoid the offensive entity/ substances (Davey 2011:[sp]). One can also assume that since monsters are category defying thing (Boyer 2013:241), the stimuli they carry can be both disgusting and fear-inducing. The mixing of signals and categories perhaps boost their association with the unknown and fear of the unknown. To then better understand fear of the monster, its connection to disgust, both cultural and biological, is explored here.

Disgust as biological or cultural falls into an active debate. Herz (2012:[sp]), affiliated with Boston College and Brown University in the field of psychology, explains that although the structures to feel disgusted exist, often what is disgusting needs to be taught. Young children do not always recognise disgusted faces or substances (Shah 2018:[sp]). McGinn (2011:[sp]) explains that since disgust is manifested amongst older children, it is assumed that disgust needs to be taught, but that it might simply be that the genetic operation of the innate disgust system only kicks in later. Interestingly Rottman (2014:[sp]) explains that the age at which disgust begins to be prevalent among children, is when they need this system the most to keep them safe since there are new environmental pressures on them.¹¹¹

In the field of developmental psychology, this age is also linked to developing more intense disgust. Soon after birth, children can respond to bad tastes, being in a sense disgusted (Bara 2016:[sp]). However, children are not disgusted by their own faeces until a later age, after which they strongly reject such materials (Widen 2013:276). Children do seem to be able to recognise and learn from the expressions of disgust by caregivers from an age earlier than this, which is often taken to be a universally¹¹² understandable signal of disgust (Widen 2013:273).

¹¹¹ Rottman (2014:[sp]) bases her conclusion on the Oral Origins theory of Disgust. This theory in essence revolves around the idea that disgust evolved to hamper the intake of food/ oral related pathogens (Rozin & Fallon 1987:23).

¹¹² Universal here is meant as an attribute that is not limited to race, culture, nationality or ethnicity, and implies that the communications via facial expressions are recognised across such markers of difference (Widen 2013:272, 273). It is however noted by Widen (2013:276) that the research conducted in terms of facial recognition is more complicated than pure recognition and at times requires context for the adult isolated or non-western participants to more clearly identify the intended emotion.

However, as noted by Herz (2012:[sp]) above, some teaching needs to surround this. Bloom (2004:150) suggests that children feel disgust at the age they reject Abject materials more intensively than before and that cultural orientation helps with the expression of this as part of their development.

Bloom (2004:152) notes that this period in development is when children develop stronger preferences in food also. What might be inferred here is the increase in differentiation between substances and the tendency to more fully categorise, leaving the ‘disgusting’ material more visible by its lack of place. Monteiro, West and Pizarro (2023:166) explain on this topic that as children become more independent, that is, more dependent on their own judgement on objects and substances as safe, what triggers disgust expands. One might refer back to Julia Kristeva (1982:2), writing about how her rejection and disgust at the skin on milk marks her as differentiated from her parents, showing the classification systems implied in culture, but being also motivated by biology. Rottman (2014:[sp]) argues that disgust is flexible, there may be a biological preparedness to be more easily orientated culturally towards the disgust of certain substances and not others.

Disgust, on a biological level, is deeply linked to evolutionary behaviour to try and avoid infection. As an evolutionary sculpted reaction, disgust is part of ‘disease avoidant behaviour’ (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]). This behaviour includes avoiding sick individuals, as well as the substances that can carry disease from one body to another (Bleakley 2020:[sp]). This, one would assume, would be Abject products, such as mucus, blood and vomit. Other Abject material, such as faeces, and corpses are avoided as they can trigger disgust, the underlying biological reason being that such substances carry harmful bacteria or parasites (BBC 2014:[sp]).

Curtis, de Barra and Aunger (2011:[sp]) explain that when it comes to infectious disease, good hygiene can be seen as ‘disease avoidant behaviour’. Maintaining a ‘clean’ body through avoiding contact with infectious material, as well as cleaning the body, is advantageous in evolutionary terms (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]). Lyons, Harrison, Brewer, Robinson and Sanders (2014:[sp]) deem this as a sort of ‘Behavioural Immune System’, in that through behaviour the immune system is aided, facilitating a lack of contamination. The way in which one responds to the disgust of encountering such substances, that is, going into ‘disease avoidant behaviour’ through maintaining hygiene, can come through learning and cultural

constructs (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]). In other words, avoiding pathogens through hygiene is biologically advantageous and thus wide-spread, but how this manifests in different groups is culturally orientated (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]).¹¹³

Disgust can be learned in certain instances, such as the Law of Contagion, evaluative conditioning and the Garcia effect (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]). The Garcia effect (Figure 11) is encountered when through association with a previous negative experience certain food items are avoided (Davidson & Riley 2015:[sp]). Evaluative conditioning creates labels around neutral stimuli after a negative episode with an associated substance (Ojserkis, Taboas & McKay 2017:[sp]). Finally, the Law of Contagion is a learning mechanism that allows for the tracking of contamination, making objects that have encountered something that is disgusting, also disgusting for a time (Kedzierski 2013:25).



Figure 11: Garcia Effect Example, 2025. Image by Author.

Humans can track, and keep track of, such contamination through association. If something disgusting has touched or interacted with an object or food source, it has been shown that the associated object or foodstuff is avoided (Bloom 2004:[sp]). Even if the object or sustenance no longer holds a visual cue of disgust, it is still avoided (Bloom 2004:[sp]). This association

¹¹³ It is also of interest here to note that women are more prone to disgust than men, this seems to be linked to women's immune systems, as well as the prominent role in child rearing women often carry (Lyons, Harrison, Brewer, Robinson & Sanders 2014:[sp]).

can also intersect with Moral Disgust, which is discussed more in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*, 2.3 *Bioculture and the Monster*, 2.3.5 *Disgust as Biocultural element in the Monster*, 2.3.5.1 *Monster as Other and Scapegoat through Bioculture*, 2.3.5.1.2 *Moral Disgust*.

Feeling disgust for the monster may then be seen as a way to induce ‘disease avoidant behaviour’. The risk an infectious monster with the signs of illness poses might embody the particular culture’s view of illness, but it also embodies the real danger of becoming sick and dying. However, the monster is not an actual entity and is read and met through cultural texts. As Carroll (2018 [1990]:31) explains, the human characters in these tales are repulsed by the monster, serving as a model for readers to feel the same.

One might suggest that the reader is inspired to follow the disease-avoidant behaviour of the characters, fearing the monster, but also the real substances that make it a threat to begin with. Monteiro, West and Pizarro (2023:167) note that part of what makes the monster threatening across the board is how it stands ready to infect, particularly in monsters where contact is needed to recreate the symptoms of the original monster in the victim. An example of this can be seen in the film *District 9* (Blomkamp 2009) (Figure 12), where the protagonist slowly, and abjectly, turns into one of the ‘Prawn’ aliens, an Abject Other, of the film.¹¹⁴



Figure 12: Wikus Turning into a Prawn after Exposure, *District 9*, 2009. (Armitage 2020:[sp]).

In summary, disgust as a biological element is multifaceted. Disgust as a felt emotion shows on brain imaging studies as connected to areas of the brain that fear is also associated with

¹¹⁴ The infectious monster is also embodied in the various vampire examples used within this study.

(Shabel *et al* 2011:[sp]). Disgust is part of how humans develop and might need cultural orientation, but it does have underlying biological structures (Rottman 2014:[sp]). Disgust does have a purpose as it forms part of ‘disease avoidant behaviour’ (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]). The Behavioural Immune System is then a biological system, orientated by biology and culture to incur disease avoidance in response to stimuli that might be contagious (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]). Part of this disease avoidance is to keep track of dangerous substances and to apply the label of avoidance to objects and substances by association (Bloom 2004:[sp]). Monteiro, West and Pizarro (2023:167) explain that monsters that are considered Disgusting pose a risk of infection, which is linked back to The Behavioural Immune System.

2.3.5.1 Monster as Other and Scapegoat through Bioculture

2.3.5.1.1 Deformity and Ugliness

Disgust can go beyond responding to pathogens. This subsection includes the ideas that the Behavioural Immune System may read deviations in form, scarring and ‘ugliness’ as ‘disgusting’ (Miller & Maner 2011:[sp]; Klebl, Greenway, Rhee & Bastian 2020:[sp]) and link to how a victim’s marks are perceived of in terms of Othering and Scapegoating (Girard 1986:18). Monsters then present such stimuli, or through the Law of Contagion can be associated with such stimuli, and can be seen as disgusting. In terms of the *Evil Udu* and alien, the signs of ‘Ugliness’ the monsters carry is investigated in relation to how these monsters draw on culturally established Others, particularly how they are related to the landscape. These inclusions are made in *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster* and *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space*.

One of the defences of the Behavioural Immune System is to exclude possibly contagious individuals (Shakar 2019:[sp]). Humans are socially orientated and live in groups, the group often responds to physically unfit individuals in this way, seeking to protect the rest of the group (Shakar 2019:[sp]). One might here be reminded of Girard’s (1986:18) Scapegoat, the physically suspicious pushed to the margins, the victim’s marks of disease or deformity making it visible as an Other. However, at times physical deformity that is not the direct result of any contagion is noted as a victim’s marks, or area described as monstrous. This is traced back to the Behavioural Immune System, as it seems to read deformity in a very particular way.

Another aspect of disgust comes in the guise of reacting negatively to physical deformity. Nussinson, Mentser and Rosenberg (2018:1) explain that higher disgust sensitivity often correlate with a higher rate of identifying morphological differences in faces as negative. Deformities are not always linked to pathogens or parasites, but individuals who have strong Behavioural Immune Systems tend to avoid even ‘non-threatening’ deformities (Miller & Maner 2011:[sp]). Ryan, Oaten, Stevenson and Case (2012:639) explain that deformities, in their study, in particular facial deformities, are misread as signs of disease and thus individuals with deviations are often avoided or treated as if they carry disease.

Monsters are depicted or described as deviating from the set bodily norm. Besides the markers of disease and Abject disgust that often accompany monsters, physical oddities in even the most ‘human’ monsters warn of an underlying danger (de Brui-Molé 2020:49). Engel (2014:2) includes in the very definition of the monstrous that which is ugly and a perversion of nature, physically different from the norm. Part of what makes the monster frightening and a sign for danger is its deviation, supposedly working on both cultural¹¹⁵ as well as actual biological cues.

One might here, briefly, consider the idea of ugliness. Deformity is often associated with ‘ugliness’. Umberto Eco (2007:15, 16) explains that that which is disgusting and repellent, not desirable, and morally corrupt is often portrayed as ‘ugly’. ‘Ugliness’ is dependent on social,

cultural and historical context, but in its evoking of a disgust response, it carries a strong warning of contamination, whether through signs of illness or signs of genetically less viable/desirable genes (Klebl *et al* 2020:[sp]). Klebl *et al* (2020:[sp]) found through their study on ugliness and disgust that judging something as ‘ugly’ is usually accompanied by a response from the Behavioural Immune System trying to avoid contamination. An example here might include the Ancient Egyptian god/demon, Bes (Figure 13), who was depicted as ‘ugly’, but with the intent to ward off lesser evils (Lucarelli 2012:18; Lurker 2005:33). Contemporary film also portrays monsters of great ugliness that are to be shunned, such as the violent, inbred aggressors of the *Wrong Turn* (2003-2021) franchise, or the burned and scared Freddy Krueger from *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (Wes Craven 1984).

¹¹⁵ Deformity can also be a marker for moral and spiritual impurity in some cultures (Gray, DiMaggio, Schein & Kachanoff 2023:274). This means that the deformity of the monster provokes a disgust that is culturally oriented, but is deeply connected with the Behavioural Immune System.



Figure 13: Figure of Ugly God Bes, *Statuette of Bes*, 525-30 BCE. Bronze Figure, 2.2 × 3.5 × 8 cm. Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland. (Cleveland Museum of Art 2024:[sp]).

Part of what possibly drives responses to deformity may be the ‘Law of Contagion’. In this case it would stand to reason that the disfigured, and thus ‘disgusting’ entity can infect the world and people around it. Although, as Ryan *et al* (2012:640) explain, deformity is often a ‘false alarm’, it is still treated as a threat by the Behavioural Immune System. For example, where a sick person might make another individual sick, a disgusting person, here deformed, could extend the label of disgusting to another person they come into contact with.¹¹⁶

Disgust can be triggered by deviation in form through defects at birth, scarring or a perception of ‘Ugliness’, concepts that the Behavioural Immune System misreads as situations where contamination might take place, incurring disgust and avoidance (Ryan *et al* 2012:640). Such physically different individuals are easy to visually differentiate and may become Other and victims of Scapegoating. Monsters, and those portrayed as monsters, are those that deviate, and can thus incur disgust, or are disgusting by association.

2.3.5.1.2 Moral Disgust

¹¹⁶ This trope of infection seems to be quite prevalent under monsters. The werewolf of recent cinema with its bite that leads to an excess of body hair, as in *Dog Soldiers* (Marshall 2002), *Werewolf of London* (Walker 1935) and *The Howling* (Dante 1981). Or the vampire, less a daring count or shining capitalistically successful teenager, transforms its victims into snake-like, scaly fiends (*From Dusk Till Dawn* 2014), raging, bald and sickly creatures like in *I am Legend* (Lawrence 2007) or even creating flaring, unhinged snake-like jaws in their victims as can be seen in Guillermo Del Toro’s *Blade II* (2002). Zombies that infect their victims to become rotting animated corpses like they are can be seen in *Train to Busan* (Sang-Ho 2016), *Rec* (Balagueró & Plaza 2007) and *Zombie* (Fulci 1979). Or, more complicated, hobbled and hunched fey-creatures full of fungus that roam the woods, ready to spread their form altering spores in *The Hallow* (Corin Hardy 2015).

Through the vulnerability and physical deformity, the shunned, ‘Othered’, individual might be a victim of Moral Disgust also. Liuzza, Olofsson, Cancino-Montecinos and Lindholm (2019:1) connect the Behavioural Immune System to Moral Disgust. This implies that morally the actions of individuals can also be judged as disgusting, bringing to mind the demonisation of selected Othered victims, both real and imaginary. The victim is made a monster, not just from physical markers of disgust, but also through the breaking of taboo. The *Evil Uduq* and alien show moral disgust in relation to their actions and how they are connected to Others through the landscape, as discussed in *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster* and *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space*.

Tybur, Merriman, Hooper, McDonald and Navarrete (2010:599-616) explain that disgust is not just limited to pathogen avoidance, called here ‘Core Disgust’, but also influence the fields of ‘moral’ choices and thinking.¹¹⁷ Liuzza, Olofsson, Cancino-Montecinos and Lindholm (2019:1) show in their research that individuals with a more active Behavioural Immune System had a higher Moral Disgust rate.¹¹⁸ Vicario, Rafal, Martino and Avenanti (2017:185) demonstrated that Moral Disgust and core pathogen related disgust share a neurocognitive system.¹¹⁹

Kusche and Barker (2019:1) present Moral Disgust as contested, one theory expressing that Moral Disgust is a use of metaphors to communicate a desire for avoidance, while the other is cultural anthropological and based on Mary Douglas’ (2013 [1966]) ideas. Kusche and Barker (2019:3) elaborate on this, stating that this theory of purity and pollution is an extrapolation, aided by culture, of Core Disgust. In either case, it was found that disgust is felt very strongly when the ‘ethical community’ is threatened (Kusche & Barker 2019:3).

Moral Disgust might be affected by the very social biological and evolutionary tendencies of humans to live in groups. Humans have social structures and cultures that arise from our group-based behaviour as a product of evolution (Shilton, Breski, Dor & Jablonka 2020:1). Being

¹¹⁷ Tybur *et al* (2010:599-600) also include sexuality in the areas that disgust has a hand in, but the focus of the study is not clearly shown through this inclusion.

¹¹⁸ The Behavioural Immune System’s efficiency or disgust reaction as tested in relation to body odour (Liuzza *et al* 2019:1-14).

¹¹⁹ The three main domains of disgust, core disgust, social disgust and moral disgust seem to share the insula, although they do light up other brain regions (Vicario *et al* 2017:185-200).

part of a group is much more beneficial for survival, however it requires sacrifices on the part of the individual to maintain the group (Pinker 2018:[sp]).¹²⁰ Evolutionarily speaking, one's biology is meant to keep the individual alive before all others, but if the trade-off for group survival outweighs this, it can be accepted (Weinstein 2009:67).¹²¹

However, once the sacrifices and work individuals put into the group do not pay off, a shift can occur. When individuals do not adhere to the social laws or conduct of the group, not sacrificing, but putting their individual needs first, the other members of the group desire justice (Gluckman & Hanson 2019:[sp]). Moral Disgust might be a way to keep the group functional, through exacting justice or exile onto 'polluted' (non-coherent and unpredictable) individuals (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]). This protects the group structure to ensure stability and better chances of survival.

Monsters are depicted as animalist, disgusting Others, who do not belong to the In-group, their traits justifying their exclusion and even killing (Monteiro, West & Pizarro 2023:162). Monsters very often through their actions also invoke Moral Disgust. Monsters violate societal taboos, such as eating human flesh or stealing children (Boyer 2013:242, 246, 252)¹²². They engage in behaviour that spreads the pollution of their actions, such as sexual deviance (Halberstam 2018 [1995]:77).¹²³ Monsters display great violence (Gilmore 2003:12). Victims include the most vulnerable, such as women, children or domesticated animals, or in being these individuals, presenting a challenge to the set order and expectation (Creed 2007 [1993]; Renner 2016).

Contemporary examples might include the Gothic tale of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Stevenson 1886) (Figure 14). The physical ugliness of Mr Hyde coming entirely with a new anti-social behaviour (Pitcher 2021:4, 5). Other older, yet contemporary popular tales, include new

¹²⁰ Pinker (2018:[sp]) gives this summary in explaining the popular 'Group Selection' theory, however Pinker (2018:[sp]) is deeply critical of the Group Selection theory, pointing out that the term has become a type of 'catch all' for many outdated and 'fuzzy' theories, noting a lack of blurring of boundaries between a focus on the genes of individuals and the clinging to the idea of group focus.

¹²¹ In evolutionary terms a *Trade-off* indicates the gaining of some advantageous trait which might also have some negative effects, in effect a balancing of the fitness the trait provided against a decrease in fitness in another trait (Fabian & Flatt 2012:3).

¹²² Noriko Reider's (2010) comprehensive and expansive investigation into Oni describes Oni as large, ugly creatures known for their villainous deeds such as cannibalism, hailing from a contested mix of Buddhism and indigenous Japanese lore.

¹²³ Halberstam's (2018 [1995]) focus does seem to be on Gothic monsters as well as contemporary Horror movie monsters, however the sexual deviance of monsters goes beyond these limitations.

renditions of *Beauty and the Beast*¹²⁴, where the punishment for unsociable traits is transformation into a monster.



Figure 14: Impolite Mr Hyde, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, 1931. (The Frida Cinema 2024).

The monster demonstrates obscene behaviour to generate Moral Disgust. As Asma (2009:[sp]) explains, the monster figure is a foil for the imagination, generating a ‘what if’ scenario. The monster demonstrates the breaking of taboos and the appropriate response to individuals who start to act in this way (Carroll 2018 [1990]:29). The story of the morally disgusting monster then leads the group towards seeing such actions as monstrous, and those who commit such atrocities as monsters, ready to be excluded or killed to protect the community (Lemon 2015:15-17).

In this way, the monster may become seen as a device to test moral boundaries and consequence, a figure that generates preparedness. Tales of monsters might be used not just as warnings, but as simulations for likely outcomes, a type of problem solving (Aktipis & Scrivner 2023:[sp]). In early childhood, make-believe-play between children creates opportunities to problem solve, an expansion in vocabulary takes place and this becomes an activity to develop social skills as well as self-regulation (Leong & Bodrova 2012:28, 29). The monster tale might do the same for adults, showing acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and testing the validity of choices when faced with a dangerous threat. This might include not going alone into a dark

¹²⁴ One might here consider a tale such as *Beauty and the Beast*, the oldest version believed to have been written by Gabrielle de Villeneuve in 1740 (Lawrence 2014:[sp]), the Beast is cursed because of his refusal to accept the sexual advances of a fairy, but later versions like the famous Disney Film (Trousdale & Wise 1991), shows the Beast’s transformation as result of his unkindness, that is, he put his own needs before that of his community.

basement to investigate a noise, or becoming separated from a group in the lonely woods.¹²⁵ Here one can see the monster becoming an object of simulated ‘play’¹²⁶ for the communal imagination, a tool to test ourselves against, in theory. Monteiro, West and Pizarro (2023:161-162) explain that the monster from a Biocultural perspective is a psychological tool, with which the goals of the storyteller can be reached through using underlying biological traits of the psychology of fear and disgust to teach their audience.

The monster, both evoking Core Disgust and Moral Disgust is thus a character that stands to demonstrate, as monsters do (Skal 2012:xii). The monster might be a cultural construct, intent on teaching and justifying cultural values, but it appears to be underlined by the biology of the Behavioural Immune System. This system’s aim is to keep humans safe from pathogens on a biological level, which requires certain behaviour (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]). This is then justified by culture, through concepts that have been abstracted from the Behavioural Immune System into a symbolic system and taught as appropriate through figures like the monster and is related to Moral Disgust. The monster is thus threatening to the health of the individual, makes the individual more acutely aware of what threatens him/her and draws from the disgust felt by certain substances or even acts. The monster is the threatening consequence of being ‘impure’ in action and hygiene, and its punishment sets the bar as the consequence of breaking taboos.

2.3.5.1.3 Parasites and Others

The monster as an Other can be linked to the treatment of real Others. One of the main attributes associated with the monsters as well as Othered and often Scapegoated individuals and groups, is that they are perceived as Abject and disgusting. From a Biocultural perspective, this attribution of disgust is shown as closely linked to the Behavioural Immune System as well as Disease Avoidant Behaviour. This subsection focuses on the Behavioural Immune System’s link to how sickness and parasites are perceived, as well as Others who are associated with the threat of these. The infectious value of Others in relation to the *Evil Udug* and alien is investigated in *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster* and *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space*. It is of particular importance to this study as certain places are shown

¹²⁵ Reference is made here to the idea that monsters demonstrate danger as well as what is and is not acceptable behaviour (Mittman & Hensel 2018:x).

¹²⁶ Aktipis and Scrivner (2023:[sp]) explain that Horror can also help adults to cope with anxiety and that engaging in ‘play’ events like ‘Haunted Houses’ can be beneficial to their state of mind.

as associated with Others and how infectious they are perceived in relation to the chosen monsters.

The sickening response to the monster might be attributed, not just to its pathological risk of infection, but also to its association with parasites. Although one might view viruses and microbes as parasitic (Vidyasagar 2016:[sp]), parasitic animals that are visible and known might have different triggers to disgust their potential hosts. Speaking from an evolutionary perspective, Buck, Weinstein and Young (2018:1213,1214) explain that between parasites and their hosts there is a type of arms race, with hosts often adopting defensive behaviour to avoid parasites. This avoidance of parasites is then linked back to feeling disgusted by the sight of parasites or their modes of contamination.

Within the Czech Republic, in a study done by Charles University and the National Institute of Mental Health, reviewed by Perry in 2019, it was found that parasites spark disgust in humans. The study showed that the participants feared animals that posed a danger to them, such as snakes and spiders, but were deeply disgusted by animals that could use them as hosts or were associated with carrying disease, such as tapeworms, lice and cockroaches (Perry 2019:[sp]). It is also important to note here that the responses of the participants were based on visual cues, making clear that visually there is a type of identification that is happening.

From the above study it can be assumed that humans can identify parasites and have knowledge that they pose harm in a very particular way, that is, breaching the bodily boundary and bringing disease. Visual markers of such animals would then be associated with disgust, when these markers are encountered in the form of the monster one can infer that a similar reaction of disgust to parasites is activated.¹²⁷ ¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Murray and Huemann (2016:216) note that in docuseries that centre on parasites, such as *Monsters Inside Me* (2009-2017) and *Hunting the Nightmare Bacteria* (Young 2013) do not overtly anthropomorphise parasitic creatures and go so far as to use techniques of filming often encountered in the Horror genre to better portray actual parasites as monsters. The representation of real animals becomes monstrous through this coding, but one might infer that the coding of parasitic monsters also draws from what the general audience knows about parasites, including visual markers. A deeper study into this coding could be a valuable topic for further research.

¹²⁸ Parasitic monsters, such as the Xenomorph Alien in *Alien* (Scott 1979), often resemble real parasitic creatures in behaviour as well as visually. The life cycle of the alien is similar to that of a parasitic wasp, incubating in the host and bursting free (Cruz 2012:166). Visually it is aligned with parasitic animals, having a carapace and other insect-like attributes as an adult (The Conversation 2014:[sp]), but bears resemblance to worms in its larval form both in shape and colour (Guarino 2017:[sp]). To confirm this, Hanich (2011:14) explains that the Xenomorph is a creature that inspires not just fear, but deep disgust through its shape and slimy accompanying substances. Interestingly, the ancient world seems devoid of monsters that resemble

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The monster's relation to parasites as well as the reaction to the parasitic monster can be seen as connected to how humans biologically have evolved to function in groups. Curtis, de Barra and Aunger (2011:[sp]) explain that parasites among social animals, like humans, evolved to easily transfer between these host organisms. To avoid new parasitic infections, humans thus act in ethnocentric ways, shunning infected members and exhibiting xenophobia to outsiders (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]). Culpepper's (2019:6) explanation of how parasites evolve in relation to their hosts, as well as how this can be specific to regions and location, also strengthens the idea that avoiding parasites from new sources is a 'proper' reaction of the Behavioural Immune System.

Social norms as an extension of the Behavioural Immune System, grow out of these underlying behaviours that have evolved to preserve the group. Curtis, de Barra and Aunger (2011:[sp]) explain that the knowledge of contamination leads to rituals and religious justification for marking objects or persons as pure or impure. This imposes a structure onto society that regulates behaviour within the group as well as reactions to those outside of the group (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]). One might take away that this informs the symbolic order of purity and pollution that Kristeva (1982) and Douglas (2013 [1966]) write about.

A short summary of the symbolic order of purity can be expressed as the structures humans use to classify what is pure or impure, often expressed in a cultural and social sense (Duschinsky 2013:64). What confuses or threatens systems of classification are seen as 'dirty', something that is out of place (Duschinsky 2013:64). Behaviours, belief, moral judgements,

parasites in their appearance, even though many cultures were aware of parasites. Ancient Egyptian medicine texts, such as the Ebers Papyrus (1500 BCE), describe the parasitic Guinea Worm, its symptoms and how to extract it from its human host (Khater 2017:10). Hippocrates (c.450-380 BCE), ancient Greek father of medicine, wrote about parasitic intestinal worms (King 2019:[sp]). Medieval Europe similarly had knowledge of intestinal worms, as per the writings of Gilbert the Englishman (1180-1250 CE), who writes of worms in the human gut. What one can surmise here is that endo- parasites were not an unknown phenomenon, yet there is little in the form of monsters taking the shapes of these parasites.

Something that would seem to function as a parasite, but often not described in full, would be demons. The Sumerian *Udug-hul Forerunners* explains how the *Evil Udug* stalks a man, enters his body and makes him sick (Geller 1985:4). The Ancient Greeks similarly held beliefs about evil spirits that could invade the body and make a person sick (Atsma 2017:[sp]). Roman texts note demons that bring illness, such as the case of Quintus Serenus Sammonicus, a Roman physician from the Third century, who equates what has been identified today as Malaria, with a demon (Sallares, Bouwman & Anderung 2004:315). Medieval Europe also carried forth the tradition of infectious evil spirits, albeit from a Christian perspective, all manner of behavioural and health problems being attributed to being possessed by demons (Katajala-Peltomaa 2020:5). One might here infer that although the physical appearance of these entities did not resemble parasites, their behaviour certainly did.

and taboos are linked to these ideas about categorization and the pollution that threatens the clean (Ditlevsen & Andersen 2021:181). When taking the Behavioural Immune System into consideration, one can perhaps here see the caution of the system expressed in a culture that sees the unsure as a threatening pollutant.

The monster, both in film, literature, ancient myth and most descriptive texts as well as visual texts, is depicted as coming from the ‘outside’, the unknown liminal space that is associated with contamination. The reaction to the monster, that is usually to avoid it to not become infected¹²⁹ or to kill it so as to protect from infection, as one would a foreign object or person, is a product of the Behavioural Immune System (Monteiro, West and Pizarro 2023:167, 171).

Othering based on the Behavioural Immune System includes how foreign groups are handled. Parasite Pressure/ Stress theory often works into the Behavioural Immune System, making humans wary of new groups that evolved under pressure from different diseases and parasites (Thornhill & Fincher 2020:[sp]). This has been theorised as leading to, or at least related to, xenophobia and ethnocentric behaviour, the avoidance of out-of-group members, and even new cultural ideas associated with such groups (Culpepper 2019:9). Culpepper (2019:9) further explains that the Behavioural Immune System’s favouring of ‘intra-group’ members provides cohesion. Thornhill and Fincher (2012:63) add that this also promotes support structures for individuals to recover from illness. In this way the Othering of a whole group may also be seen as related to the Behavioural Immune System.

The monster that carries cues of parasitism or animals designated as ‘disgusting’ are associated with disease avoidance and the Behavioural Immune System. Humans have a bias toward designating certain animals as ‘disgusting’ (Perry 2019:[sp]). Humans can also pick up cues of parasitic infection in others and will respond through avoidance, making such individuals vulnerable to Othering and various forms of scapegoating. This can also be applied to monsters that are explained as causing infection (Monteiro, West & Pizarro 2023:167, 171). This can also be linked to the avoidance of ‘out-group’ members as well as the tendency to Other such groups or individuals. The Strigoi from *The Strain* (2014-2017), created by Guillermo Del Toro and Chuck Hogan, are shown as pale, hairless Others who infect their victims with parasitic worms that cause their vampirism (Figure 15).

¹²⁹ Or, as in the case of many hero versus monster myths, to seek out the monster and destroy it, saving the community (Monteiro, West & Pizarro 2023:171).



Figure 15: Strigoi with Vomiting Worms, *The Strain*, 2014-2017. Screenshot by Author.

2.3.5.1.4 The Uncanny and Disgust

The Uncanny is a strong component of the monstrous. In terms of more traditional and cultural ideas of the Uncanny it is linked to psychoanalysis and concepts like repression. However, when a Biocultural approach is taken, the Uncanny gains relevance in how it facilitates a strong avoidance response to uncertain cues human-like agents. This subsection considers the Uncanny as linked to the Behavioural Immune System. The Uncanny is touched on in this thesis only lightly as the chosen monsters are not investigated in depth in terms of this attribute. The inclusion here is meant to draw attention to the close monitoring of Others, their behaviour, and how signs of illness can appear Uncanny. This is of relevance to the alien as monster in how it is represented and the value of the spaces it occupies, as discussed in *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space*.

In a study done by Steckenfinger and Ghazanfar (2009:[sp]) monkeys were shown simulated monkey faces of varying realism (Figure 16), the study finding that the monkeys' preferences fell along the same lines as the Uncanny Valley in humans. The implication of this is that the human experience of the Uncanny is more likely to be a shared biological experience across these species, than monkeys also having repressed issues about narcissism.



Figure 16: Example of Uncanny Valley Monkeys, 2009. Image by Shawn Steckenfinger.(MacPherson 2009:[sp]).

Evolutionary psychology and ideas about cognitive conflict approaches the Uncanny as a phenomenon (Zhang, Li, Zhang, Du, Qi & Liu 2020:[sp]). Threat detection is the main concern of an evolutionary approach, including how humans detect and avoid infection and parasites, as well as how humans look at potential mates and judge their health (Zhang, Li, Zhang, Du, Qi & Liu 2020:[sp]; Wang, Lilienfeld & Rochat 2015:395-396; Bischoff 2021:[sp])¹³⁰ The idea that the Uncanny causes cognitive conflicts include ideas that the Uncanny behaves in a way other than expected, especially by things that have a 'mind', and that it is difficult to categorize.¹³¹

The Behavioural Immune System links Uncanny things to disgust, possibly to err on the side of caution (Aizcorbe 2020:25; Yamada, Kawabe & Ihaya 2012:20)¹³². Human-like agents'

¹³⁰ The *Threat Avoidance hypothesis* is two-fold; it includes *The Pathogen Avoidance hypothesis* and *The Evolutionary Aesthetics hypothesis* according to Bischoff (2021:[sp]), however Zhang *et al* (2020:[sp]) also include *The Mortality Salience hypothesis* here.

¹³¹ Cognitive conflicts measure responses to the Uncanny as seen in the theories of *Mind Perception hypothesis*, *Violation of Expectation hypothesis* and the *Categorical Uncertainty hypothesis* (Zhang *et al* 2020:[sp]).

¹³² Aizcorbe (2020:25) draws from Rosenthal-von der Pütten's (2014) work which suggests three explanations to the Uncanny Valley, one being the evolutionary biological approach noted here. This includes Rosenthal-von der Pütten's (2014:25, 69) idea of the problem being related to perceived orientation, where the

imperfections become read as signs of sickness (MacDorman *et al.* 2005; MacDorman & Ishiguro 2006, Wang, Lilienfeld & Rochat 2015:394–395). Humans are more likely to pose infection risk to other humans and thus, human-like agents then incur a string disgust and avoidance response ((Rosenthal-von der Pütten 2014:36).

Attraction can also be connected to the Uncanny incurring disgust. Humans pay very close attention to possible mates in terms of their health as shaped by evolutionary pressures (Wang, Lilienfeld & Rochat 2015:395–396; Hanson 2005:[sp]). Human-like features in Uncanny agents might appear attractive at first, for example symmetry in robots or artificial agents, but then non-human elements are detected which trigger disgust (Kim *et al.* 2022:629). The combination of human-like and non-human like stimuli in Uncanny agents can trigger anxieties about death, linking Uncanny agents to corpses and the Abject connections this carries (Zhang *et al.* 2020:[sp]). The body language of Uncanny agents in particular has been flagged as confusing and off-putting, linked to ideas of reanimated corpses (MacDorman & Entezari 2015:146).

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The Uncanny creates cognitive conflict as it defies categorization, allowing human-like agents to be judged negatively (Maj & Zarzycki 2019:457; Zhang *et al.* 2020:257). Human-like agents

expectations of the viewer are shown as erroneous as well as cognition-oriented explanations which deal with fears of being replaced, reproduced or destroyed.

¹³³ MacDorman and Entezari (2015:146) work specifically with social anxiety and neurological reactions to other individuals.

seem to possess a human mind¹³⁴, with the expected behaviours and responses, but then act in unpredictable or unexpected ways (Wiese *et al.* 2018:1; Gray & Wegner 2012:[sp]). Cognitive conflict theories explain the Uncanny as emerging from categorisation failures. When stimuli resist clear classification, perceptual error increases and negative affect follows (Maj & Zarzycki 2019:457; Zhang *et al.* 2020:257). The Mind Perception hypothesis suggests that Uncanny responses arise when agents appear human-like but fail to meet expectations of possessing a human mind (Wiese *et al.* 2018:1; Gray & Wegner 2012:[sp]). Ferrey, Burleigh and Fenske (2015:[sp]) demonstrate that Uncanny effects also occur in ambiguous animal–animal and human–animal morphs, indicating that categorical uncertainty itself produces the Uncanny.

Ferrey, Burleigh and Fenske (2015:[sp]) conclude that neuroimaging of the Uncanny Valley, as seen in Kiss, Raymond, Westaby, Nobre and Eimer (2008), shows that images that cannot be clearly identified due to the confusing of categories cause inhibitory devaluation, an inability to tell, ‘solve’ or make sense of the stimuli which is met with negative emotions. The uncertainty that leads to a lack of response is linked in Kiss *et al.* (2008:[sp]) to emotional stimuli through brain imaging. It was shown that emotionally potent stimuli effected memory, attention and decision-making.

Visual stimuli, including images, can cause actual fear responses. Clasen (2017:[sp]), making use of Grodal (2009), explains that images of monsters are processed as if they were real threats. In relation to this study one may interpret this information in relation to monsters. The participants were shown morphs, essentially monsters whose parts straddled different categories. (Ferrey, Burleigh & Fenske 2015:[sp]). The participants experienced negative responses as well as created an Uncanny Valley in the reported data which suggest that monsters in their most basic, mixed states are Uncanny. It is also revealed through the work of Ferrey, Burleigh and Fenske (2015:[sp]) and Kiss *et al.* (2008:[sp]) that the response to images of monsters has a real effect on emotions, and thus the brain. This is of relevance to this study in how the Uncanny in monstrous form is often visually met, and it then stands to reason that a genuine reaction can be created.

¹³⁴ This is noted as *Mind Perception Hypothesis*. Gray and Wegner (2012:[sp]) performed experiments which tied the Uncanny feeling of viewers to human-like robots to the audience’s perception that the robot possesses a human mind and may be subject to human experiences, which is simulated by appearance, but since the viewer knows the machine can have no human-like experiences, there exists a clash.

2.4 CONCLUSION

To summarise, Monster Theory owes a lot to the contributions of the seven seminal theses of Cohen (1996:44-54). Cohen's (1996:44-54) ideas hinge on the notion that the monster's body reveals cultural, psychoanalytical and anthropological knowledge, but as discussed above, this interpretation of the monster is limited. Many authors have built onto the interpretation of monsters from Cohen's (1996:44-54) model, leaving the original contested. However, many themes that Cohen (1996:44-54) touched on are explored by later authors, which makes up a large part of the body of Monster Studies, particularly Cultural Monster Studies. These themes include a vested interest in the value of the monster as a sign that reveals the cultural, social and historical context wherein it was created, what its hybridity, boundary defying, Uncanny and Abject connections and place in the Scapegoating process, taboo-breaking and Othering can reveal about its makers. Concerns of studies such as this usually revolve around anthropology, psychology, phenomenology and literary studies.

Critical investigation from this angle reveals an absence of considering the monster as a whole, leaving out its Sublime status as 'thing' (Beville 2014:151). It does not always provide space for the expression of those who experience monsters outside of being a cultural and imaginary figure alone (Kripal 2017:244-245). Further misgivings arise when the culturally concerned angle of Monster Studies does not take information outside of the humanities into consideration when building up models and practices to analyse monsters. It is then this schism that Biocultural study aims to address by viewing the monster as a product of culture that is produced and experienced by underlying human biology sculpted through the process of evolution.

Biocultural investigation into the monster takes into consideration that fear in humans is an emotion triggered by particular stimuli, each of which has particular responses, paths and responses that have evolved over time. Humans can be triggered to fear by predators, seen in the Predator Template, and enemies, but can also have strong feelings of disgust, morally and physically, when met with Abject matter and Abject behaviour. The breaking of taboo, feelings of encountering the Uncanny, disgust at the Abject and processes of Othering that is tied up with Scapegoating are tied up in the monster with the Behavioural Immune System. The monster in its hybridity presents the viewer with an excess of stimuli, which can result in the Category Jamming explained by Asma (2014:7-8)

CHAPTER 3: THE UNNAMEABLE MONSTER

3.1 INTRODUCTION

After establishing the current Biocultural approaches to monsters in the previous chapter, this chapter aims to show an application of these concepts to the Unnameable Monster. Although the Unnameable Monster can be hard to define, its particular use of signifiers links it to predators, aggressive humans and disgust in some way. The main element that makes this type of monster relevant to this inquiry, is that its combination of these elements links it to a fear of the unknown. The *Evil Udug* and alien are argued as Unnameable Monsters, leaving them with an acute lack and excess in *Chapter 5: An Overview of The Evil Udug in Context* and *Chapter 6: Overview of the Alien as a Monster*. It is established here that space might be an element to consider when looking at what Biocultural fears the *Evil Udug* and alien carry, which is investigated in depth in *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster*. From the established parameters of what an Unnameable Monster is, and how considering space can add to the significance surrounding the *Evil Udug* and alien, *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space*, provides a detailed application of the theories established here.

The Unnameable Monster's mixing of traits could activate the viewer or reader's Intolerance of Uncertainty (Carleton 2016:5). Unlike with clear predatory or conspecific threats, the uncertainty can be met with curiosity, causing a deeper well of attention to be orientated towards the Unnameable Monster. The overwhelming nature of the thing that is the Unnameable Monster demands attention not with what it shows, but with the possibility that the stimulus could be as dangerous and relevant to survival as a hunting predator a threatening human foe or sickness.

Disgust is a part of the Unnameable Monster, not just in the signs used to express or hide its body, but also in the very nature of its mixing of categories. It is Abject in how it is neither subject nor object and has no clear place in systems of signification. It causes confusion. The Category Jamming it evokes in terms of stimuli is tied to the Behavioural Immune System in that it might flag uncertain matter as disgusting due to its foreign nature. Moral Disgust can also be found in the Unnameable Monster, as its motivations and actions remain unclear. The predominant challenge to reading the Unnameable Monster, even when applying a Biocultural approach shown here, are the unclear visual cues and descriptors this particular monster has.

3.2 UNNAMEABLE MONSTER AS PREDATOR AND ENEMY

The Unnameable Monster suffers from an excess and a lack of stimuli (Beville 2014:183). In this excess, it may carry signs of predation in its behaviour, or its physicality when it is visible. These cues can be related to a fear of predators or a fear of conspecifics, however it is argued here that what the Unnameable Monster deals with most is a fear of the unknown, which might be populated with fears of predators and dangerous humans.

Although *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*, explained the various characteristics and traits of monsters, all monsters contain an element of the Sublime, being always more than simply what is shown or described. Some monsters tend towards this more than others, particularly the Unnameable Monster. Beville (2014:51) notes that the monster as a thing is deeply linked to the Sublime and the monstrous. The Sublime is connected to the unrepresentable, the unknown, and therefore often falls into symbolic or abstract representation (Neuman 2016:[sp]).¹³⁵ Such symbols and signs stand in for a signified that is incomprehensible (Remmele 2013:7). The monster as ‘thing’ stands opposed to signs and symbols, it represents the failing of symbols to express it properly (Beville 2014:57).¹³⁶ As Asma (2014:4) explains, the brain generates fear when stimuli are novel, defies known patterns, and are unclearly.¹³⁷ Category Jamming here is then a crossing of boundaries between human and animal, challenging the primed and conceptual perceptions of both in what was taught by culture and primed by biology, presenting an unknown (Asma 2014:8).

Beville (2014) includes ideas on the Sublime by Aristotle and Longinus. Longinus’s ideas centre on the Sublime as an unknown that cannot be depicted or properly imagined (Beville (2014:52). Aristotle’s notion of the Sublime is explained by Beville (2014:52) as that which is taxonomically Other, having an unknown physicality. However, the later interest in the Sublime as per Romanticism does provide depiction of the concept to an extent. Such

¹³⁵ Architects Peter Eisenman and Daniel Libeskind, particularly her Jewish Museum, focusing on void and absence in their architecture, chose to express the sublime visually through such absences (Proimos 2009:116; Oliver 2021:[sp]).

¹³⁶ The discussion Beville (2014:57) presents is far more elaborate and insightful, but owing to the focus of this study, the most needed core concept was noted here.

¹³⁷ Asma (2014) here refers to Konner (2002) on chimpanzees, but does seem to imply that the human brain does the same.

depictions do however focus on the overwhelming and incomprehensible, meaning here that the ‘object’ depicted has dimensions that link to the incomprehensible (Krebaum 2016:78)

The Sublime, as per Burke (2014[1757]), is a feeling of overwhelming terror and awe (Clewis, Yaden & Chirico 2021:3). This confusing conglomeration is met with fear, but it also sparks interest (Gaut 1993:334).¹³⁸ Clasen (2018:48) explains that curiosity helps prepare for danger and threat, but that curiosity is kept in check by a fear of the unknown. The unknown is that which cannot be properly prepared for, yet in turn, curiosity edges humans closer to get a better look, pressured to learn and prepare (Clasen 2018:48). Clasen (2018:48) draws this back to feelings of awe and the incomprehensible. Similarly, Spuybroek (2020:[sp]) explains that the Sublime is fascinating, its incomprehensibility is captivating to the point of ‘freezing’ or getting caught between actions.

An aspect of the fascinating Sublime is the fear of the unknown (Fawver 2013:32). Carleton (2016:5) defines fear of the unknown as a fear based on a lack of information, which relates to a person’s *Intolerance of Uncertainty*. Drawing from Carleton (2016), Hudson *et al* (2020:9) explains that fear of the unknown appears to be one of the most fundamental of human fears.

It underlies other fears, it seems to be the unnerving lack of information the situation, place, predator; state of being could bring (Hudson *et al* 2020:9). Kamal (2019:[sp]) notes that even the fear of death might be viewed as a fear of losing the accumulation built up around the self, plunging one into an unknown.

Zorumski and Rubin (2011:74) explain that processing fear of the unknown includes human brains dealing with abstract information. The uncertainty of such situations puzzles the prefrontal cortex, sometimes leading to definitive responses by the emotional systems of the brain, but the responses might not be the best action for the situation (Zorumski & Rubin 2011:74). This relates back to one’s *Intolerance of Uncertainty*. Intolerance of Uncertainty differs from individual to individual (Carleton 2016:5). Persons with a high Intolerance of Uncertainty struggle with ambiguity, the uncertain results of cues from a hypervigilant state

¹³⁸ Gaut’s (1993) *The Paradox of Horror*, is a dated source, but it does present a nuanced investigation into why Horror attracts and repulses, making it an insightful and useful source.

pushing them towards responses that are not always effective (Carleton 2014:939). This prompts a desire to have a definite answer or result (Carleton 2014:939).¹³⁹

Moustafa (2020:206) explains that the Intolerance of Uncertainty leads to judging uncertain situations as negative, and worthy of avoidance. As described by Ginsburg and Jablonka (2022:[sp]), humans' assessment of situations aims to avoid risks, thus unknowns are perceived as more likely to be harmful than beneficial. Moustafa (2020:206) refers to the Prospective Intolerance of Uncertainty and the Inhibitory Intolerance of Uncertainty. The Prospective Intolerance of Uncertainty is surrounded by distress about uncertainty and the desire for stability and predictability (Hong & Lee 2015:[sp]). The Inhibitory Intolerance of Uncertainty on the other hand leads to a type of 'uncertainty paralysis' in thought and actions (Fourtounas & Thomas 2016:[sp]). Moustafa (2020:206) notes that with both these systems the desire to end the uncertainty is seen as paramount, even if a prolonged exposure to ambiguity could produce a reward.

Bethelmy and Corraliza (2019:[sp]) brings this back to the Sublime, stating that dread in relation to the Sublime is wondering about the future in the face of the unknown. It is then part of this wondering, coupled with the desire to end the state of uncertainty, such an unknown brings, that makes the Unnameable Monster effective. Science Daily (2020:[sp]) reports that based on a Finnish research team's (Hudson *et al* 2020) findings unseen 'things' in Horror films scared audiences more. Glebas (2012:124) notes that a powerful tool in Horror is to allow the audience to use their imaginations to fill in the blanks, in essence to be confronted with an unknown and to wonder. Within this imagining then, people run through shared, deeply rooted fears. Such as the fear of being hunted by a predator, social fears and fear of pain, but because the imagination is individual, the subject is allowed to project personal fears onto the 'thing' as well.

The monster that is unseen or suffers from a lack of signification is categorically confusing. It does not have enough signs to fall into any category, yet at the same time through the open-ended, multiple imagined, possibilities it leaves it has an excess of categories that it might fall into (Beville 2014:183). A monster that is seen, might be overwhelming in its excess, but may

¹³⁹ Carleton (2012:397) does focus more on Anxiety than fear, although these two emotions are related particularly in how they share physiological, behavioural, and cognitive traits, but differ in definition as fear is described as having strong physiological responses to protect oneself against an identified threat, while anxiety arises from looming, uncertain, threats, usually triggering avoidance rather than fight-or-flight.

be between forms and categories. However, something that the Unnameable Monster still carries is an intent to do harm. Its presence is often described by its influence on the surrounding area (Sipos 2014:60).

To conclude, the monster as thing, is connected to the Sublime in its tendency to be overwhelming and fascinating, being connected to a fear of the unknown. Fear of the unknown is then one of the most pervasive fears and underlies many other fears. The unknown incurs a desire to problem solve, as Burke (2014[1757]) noted of the Sublime, the possibility to wonder about the outcome. However, fear of the unknown incurs the Intolerance of Uncertainty of the brain, leading to responses that are not always beneficial to the problem at hand. In essence, the lack of the Unnameable Monster may be viewed as a confusing category as its few or excess of indicators is overwhelming.

3.3 THE DISGUST OF THE UNNAMEABLE MONSTER

This subsection aims to discuss the Unnameable Monster in relation to the disgust that usually accompanies more embodied representations of Unnamed Monsters. The notion of Moral Disgust as tied to the actions of an Unnameable Monster are also of relevance. It is posited here that the lack, or excess, the monster represents is a trigger for the Behavioural Immune System and imposes disgust as well as fear onto such entities.

The Unnameable Monster as a ‘thing’ is disgusting (Beville 2014:63). As Brown (2001:4) explains, a ‘thing’ connotes ambiguity, being concrete yet flowing freely, holding a place for something specific, yet currently failing to be defined. ‘Things’ are not quite objects¹⁴⁰, resisting such a categorisation, being ‘stuff’ that is not completely organised into being only objects (Brown 2001:11). An object may be more prominently a ‘thing’ when its relation to the subject changes in this way, the relationship between the subject and the object, seems to be the area of the ‘thing’ (Whybray 2010:21).

Like the Abject, the ‘thing’ defies clear categorisation. Being incomplete or without form, as the Unnamed Monster is, lets it fall outside of the symbolic order and into the threatening state

¹⁴⁰ Brown (200:5,13,14) refers particularly to Lacan and Heidegger, noting Heidegger’s (1950) ‘Das Ding’ and his interest in a distinction between an object and a thing which is taken further by Lacan’s work Object-thing distinction.

of possible pollutants along with the stuff of the Abject (Carroll 1987:34). The monster as thing is not wholly one thing or another thing, it falls in between things (Moser 2020:1). As Kearney (2005:91) explains, the 'unnameable thing' represents the collapse of self and other, a state of confusing fusion that is in line with the Abject. The Unnameable Monster resists and confuses the systems humans use to classify and understand the world around them. Through remaining unsure and unclassified, the Unnameable Monster maintains its power to threaten and disgust along with the Abject (Beville 2014:13).

The excess of the Unnameable Monster can be disgusting and linked to the Abject (Turner 2017:216). Its depiction, or description, differs so radically and rapidly from moment to moment, that any core or stable depiction is lost. Beville (2014:68) notes that the unnamed monster is a radical, Sublime, ultimate Other, so much so that it cannot be properly represented. I take this to mean that drawing on different categories to depict the monster in general fails here as the monster does not fit into any category enough to actually draw elements of a depiction from it. However, the monster can also show an alarming excess of categories (Long 2012:195).

The excess can be related to Category Jamming. Category Jamming makes use of fusion and fission, fusion combines and condenses, for example a Zombie, both dead and alive Fission connects separate but metaphysically connected elements, as in the case of a werewolf, where it changes shape from time to time (Figure 17) (Švelch 2023:12). In the case of the Unnameable Monster, although Beville (2014) does not refer to Category Jamming, one can infer that the lack and excess of the monster offer very little resolution to the jamming. The categories it refers to are hard to decipher, if visible at all, leaving the monster unresolved and continuously invoking the unknown. This space outside of the categorisation system, which threatens and remains unresolved, is also the home of the Abject (Švelch 2023:12).



Figure 17: Werewolf Transformation, *American Werewolf in London*, 1981. (Fowler 2023:[sp]).

An example of such an Unnameable Monster in excess and Abject threat, would be *The Thing* (Carpenter 1982). This text presents an entity that has no set form, moves between forms by feeding on other life forms. It can be anything at any time, continuously fluid and unsure. The ‘Thing’ is shown in gross transition, its in-between form is shown as fleshy, grotesque and leaking fluids. The excess is shown as Abject. It is interesting to note that this film has been coded a ‘Body Horror’ (Cruz 2012:161), directly associated with disgust. Such excess can be seen in *The Thing*’s (Carpenter 1982) unnameable alien that includes animals, humans and visceral body fluids (Figure 18).



Figure 18: Unnameable Thing, *The Thing*, 1982. (The Collinsport History Society 2014:[sp]).

The Unnameable Monster may be Abject in the bits that it is depicted or described in, but is also threatening in the lacuna and open possibilities it leaves when not fully depicted. Carleton (2016:11) writes that the fear of the unknown link to the fundamental fear of death. In this case, death through infection, is what one's Behavioural Immune System is trying to avoid (Culpepper, Havlíček, Leongómez & Roberts 2018:[sp]). Schaller (2011:[sp]) explains that the Behavioural Immune System favours false-positives over false negatives. This implies that the Behavioural Immune System 'errs on the side of caution' (Abrahamson 2020:[sp]). It is then much more advantageous to avoid and have a disgust response to unknown or 'uncertain' situations or materials of contamination.

As an example, the uncertainty of the actual form of the Thing in *The Thing* (1982 Carpenter) (Figure18), might heighten the fear and disgust it engenders. The form and final goal of the entity is unknown, but its uncertain biological mass is enough to affect the audience, as well as spur the characters on to destroy it for fear it might 'infect' and kill the general population. This certainly seems to be erring on the side of caution.

Fear can heighten a disgust response (Edwards & Salkovskis 2006:[sp]). The Unnameable Monster's strong connection with fear of the unknown (Beville 2014:102), might then also heighten the response to whatever disgusting attributes might be present. Schaller (2016:3) however writes that disgust is the overpowering emotion attached to pathogen related stimuli, and that fear is much more closely related to threats from predators. However, predatory

animals, can also carry responses of disgust and fear. Animals such as snakes, spiders and parasites evoke both fear and disgust (Polák, Rádlová, Janovcová, Flegr, Landová & Frynta 2019:297). One might assume that the ambiguity of the Unnameable Monster would leave it open to both disgust and fear.

The Unnameable Monster may trigger Moral Disgust. Like other monsters it breaks taboos and is violent (Beville 2014:117, 133). However, it is more ambiguous, more fluid, and thus more unpredictable with its violence. Often monsters serve functions, as in the case of Moral Disgust, to show the punishment for breaking taboos and incurring Moral Disgust from the community (McCallum 2016:[sp]). Beville (2014:6) writes that the monster, once reduced to its function, is in all aspects reduced. An Unnameable Monster would then remain uncertain in its function, providing ambiguity to further disgust and terrify, not simply reinforcing the structures that police behaviour and gives acceptable routes to Moral Disgust.

A significant part of the Unnameable Monster is that it is Uncanny (Beville 2014:9). It is only ever ‘like’ things and yet ‘unlike’ that thing also. One might here interpret the signs that the Unnameable Monster does present as things that would be triggering to the Behavioural Immune System in that way. It could be human-like agents that act or look as if they are affected. by illness, or trigger the avoidance of the possibly infectious in other ways. In form Beville (2014:9) describes the Unnameable Monster as ‘deformed’, that is; Uncannily different from something familiar. Although the idea of deviation from an expected body plan can then also trigger the Behavioural Immune System, as discussed in 2.2.4.1.1 *Deformity and Ugliness*.

To conclude, the Unnameable Monster is tied up with disgust and the Behavioural Immune System like other monsters, but there are also differences. In its capacity as a ‘thing’ it falls into the realm of the Abject, in-between categorisation and threatening (Prince 2012:22). In its excess, as well as in its absence, it triggers the Behavioural Immune System to assume the worst and respond with disgust and avoidance. This might be heightened by the fear of the monster. It may incur Moral Disgust through its actions, but it is not as reduced as other monsters because of the lack and excess that surrounds it. It does not fit in as easily as classified monsters and carries both disgust and fear triggers.

3.4 CONCLUSION

The Unnameable Monster as discussed in this chapter is then a thing that is tied up with Category Jamming and fear of the unknown. The predatory and conspecific traits it might have can be triggering, especially if there is a myriad of shifting cues. However, the absence of visual cues, or descriptors, can trigger vigilance and a demand on attention for gathering more information to gain clarity. One can still assume that the information the brain is engaged with finding and establishing might be cues of predation and the threat of conspecifics, since these are two threats to survival humans evolved under. The unknown element of the Unnameable Monster can also cause cues that are present to be perceived as more negative and more threatening.

The confusion that the Unnameable Monster creates is also Abject and can create a sense of disgust that is tied to the Behavioural Immune System. Because of its overwhelming nature, it appears perhaps as matter that is out of place, therefore Abject and threatening. Because of its unknown nature, it can also trigger the Behavioural Immune System. This is due to the fact that these avoidance behaviours can be triggered not just by truly infectious substances or individuals, but also by the uncertainty of something's contamination risk.

The threat and uncertainty of the Unnameable Monster certainly makes it an effective monster to fear, if one takes into consideration how potent and pervasive the fear of the unknown is (Hudson *et al* 2020:9). However, the monster in its unnameable aspect is still a sign that stands to warn people of danger. As a fictitious entity it serves a function, it can be assumed that it is encoded by its creators with intended meaning, which might be difficult to grasp due to its problematic form. It then follows that if there are more cues that can reveal what fears the monster engages and warns against then these can help aid in understanding the Unnameable Monster. It is for this reason that the next chapter takes a close look at the spaces that Unnameable Monsters haunt.

CHAPTER 4: SPACE AND THE MONSTER

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Cohen's (1996:49) seminal work on monsters sets the monster up as a guardian of borders in his Fifth Thesis. Although Cohen (1996:50) refers to cultural and moral boundaries, physical boundaries are also included. This section takes a closer look at the monster's relationship with space in a Biocultural way. Here the monster is discussed as a warning, deeply associated with the human perception of space, shaped by human fears and risk factors within the landscape. As established in *Chapter 3: The Unnameable Monster*, Unnameable monsters can be connected to Biocultural perceptions of fear within the landscape. The combination of Humanities interest in space, like Critical Spatiality, and how these are combined with the Landscape of Peril Theory from Ecology, create a structure to investigate how fear in the landscape and monster are combined. This concerns and overlaps identified in this chapter, are used in *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space*, to show that cultural and biological meaning within the *Evil Udug* and alien's respective landscapes add to the value of fear they communicate.

In order to do this, spatial theory is employed, providing a cultural view of the monster and its tendency to appear as a literary figure around borders. The seminal work of Van Genepp (1960 [1909]) and Turner (1966) is referred to, to show the perception of the monster and its space as 'in-between' and linked to the 'threshold'. The work of Henri Lefebvre (1991) and Edward Soja (1996) is used to explain the notion of Thirdspace, where monsters are said to emerge from. This space is then liminal, as is the monster itself (Beghetto 2022:3). Foucault's (1986) notion of the Heterotopia is included here as it provides a hybrid space that produces new configurations, like monsters. The aim is to show that the cultural understanding of the monster, and the fear it evokes, are linked to how spaces are perceived, conceived, and lived in.

Once this more cultural understanding is explained, a biological and ecological component is added to investigate the monster and its relation to space. The Landscape of Peril is used here, which includes the Landscape of Fear¹⁴¹ and the Landscape of Disgust¹⁴². This is an ecological

¹⁴¹ Figure 22 provides a very basic depiction of the Landscape of Fear and can be referred to throughout this study.

¹⁴² In this study a simple illustration shown in Figure 26 can be referred to when the Landscape of Disgust is mentioned.

device that shows the results of how animals mentally map risk of predation, conspecific threat, contamination and actual dangerous features of the landscape, is introduced as per the work of Laundré, Hernández and Ripple (2010) and Doherty and Ruhle (2020:[sp]). The Landscape of Peril theory reveals the effect of Secondspace fear and risk perceptions in Firstspace, fear in lived space, Thirdspace, being shaped by these overlapping elements.

To better demonstrate this Landscape of Peril as an expression of Thirdspace, its connection to Heterotopias, and its link to fear and the monstrous, places associated with monsters across cultures and historical epochs, are discussed. The monster's main dwelling place is the unknown, but it can cross into the known (Gloyn 2020:32; Gilmore 2003:113). The goal is to investigate the shapes that such monsters take on and to inspect the link this offers to actual perceived fears in the environment as per the Landscape of Peril. The Landscape of Peril mainly employ three categories, namely predation, aggressive conspecifics and disgust/contamination (Doherty & Ruehle 2020:[sp]).

The shapes of monsters are deeply influenced by the Landscape of Peril, monsters contain clear, 'local' cues of dangers, having as part of their bodies pieces or behaviours of humans, animals and also carry the possibility of infection. The Unnameable Monster however has a closer relationship to the spaces it inhabits (Beville 2014:75). Without clear distinction, it might be seen as containing a conglomeration of all the possible risks perceived in the Landscape of Peril that surrounds its abode, making its body into a conglomeration of uncertainty and risk anchored in perceptions of space.

4.2 THE MONSTER IN LIMINAL SPACE IN CULTURAL MONSTER STUDIES

The monster is a liminal being. Its conglomerate body places it between categories and its actions are at odds with the structuring of society (Merkelbach 2019:11). Another element of liminality is added to the monster and its presence in that the space occupies is liminal (Baumgartner & Davis 2008:1). This short subsection discusses liminality and how this relates to the monster in terms of space. Time is also touched on, but it is not the focus of the research included here.

Van Genepp and Turner are two seminal writers on liminality, whose work has been influential across various fields since the 1900's. Both of these individuals were orientated towards

anthropology, and thus liminality in these terms are bound up with cultural conceptions, particularly of rites of passage and change (Lipska & Zagórska 2021:7). Van Genepp (1960 [1909]:21) links liminality to the ‘threshold’, pointing towards participants’ transitional stages in rituals.¹⁴³ Thomas (2019:94) notes that this ‘threshold’ state can be interpreted as a state of being in between, of crossing from one state of being to another. Turner (1966:95), adding onto Van Genepp’s (1960 [1909]) ideas, conceives of liminality, or those that are liminal, as being ambiguous, they do not fit into the categories of structured society.¹⁴⁴

As noted above, seminal work was done on the liminality of persons in ritual, but liminality can also be applied to space, which is more in line with the goals of this investigation.¹⁴⁵ Liminal space is then connected to places that are in-between, not well-defined, ambiguous and removed from the strong classification system of everyday society (Roberts 2018:216).¹⁴⁶ When persons enter into a transitory state, they become liminal and enter a liminal space on the margin of their community (Knutson 2023:12). These spaces can also be physical places, removed geographically from the centre of the society (Roberts 2018:216). Fourny (2013:[sp]) writes that liminality often has its own space, spaces where the absence felt by those who are in a liminal state of identity, are not confronted by this lack, allowing for transition.

Liminal spaces can be viewed as thresholds, both for the individuals involved and the transition of their status or identity, but also as physical places associated with borders. Hrobat (2014:12, 13) places the liminal space as the border between the established norm and the Other place/s, a space where contact between the known and the unknown can occur. Fourny (2013:[sp]) adds that liminal spaces are on the margin or periphery, recognising that the space belongs neither to one category nor another. It serves as a means of passage from one area to another or one state of being to another.¹⁴⁷ The periphery can be embodied in many spaces, such as the Wild, roads, ruins, cemeteries, haunted houses or even the body’s interior. Although the views of

¹⁴³ He also explicitly links monsters to this threshold as per Van Genepp (1960 [1909]:21, 22).

¹⁴⁴ Turner and Van Genepp both have models of stages through which initiates pass as they perform the relevant rites of passage (Forth 2018:1-6). Turner also notes how individuals while being liminal lose their previous status and become equal, sharing ‘communitas’ (Huang, Xiao & Wang 2018:1).

¹⁴⁵ Psychoanalysis also makes use of the idea of liminal space, like the work of Lacan (1978-1998) about dreams and language, as explained by Malone (2016:196).

¹⁴⁶ Roberts (2018:216) refers here specifically to wetlands and marshes as examples of such in-between spaces where societal order is upended, a place of the supernatural and ritual as used in various literary works.

¹⁴⁷ Liminal space is also used in postcolonial theory as in the case of Homi Bhaba where liminal spaces are areas of transformation, hybridity and thus resistance (Chakraborty 2016:146).

spaces change throughout history and are dependent on social, cultural and historic context, these spaces can be viewed as peripheral or in-between.

Liminality in terms of spaces, can be related to time. Hrobat (2014:13) points toward the social construction of space and the changeability of how space is perceived, noting that this change in perception can transform a space into a liminal or dangerous space based on the time of day. This means that the status of a space can be subject to other elements of liminality, a space might change with the onset of twilight, an in-between time (Dominy & Melin 2020:258)¹⁴⁸, when new activities and conventions are expected in certain spaces. Simply put, there can be a liminal time in between the structured and expected use of spaces.

Nuzum (2004:207) states that monsters are limited to mythic time and liminal time. Humans, Nuzum (2004:207) explains, experience time in a linear fashion, historical time, time that is accessed through ritual, mythic time and also liminal time, when humans are in a state of flux and not tightly bound to their community and identity. Liminal time can be found as historical and mythic time overlap or transition, creating encounters between linear experiences of time and that which is contained in mythic time (Coombe 2018:113). When a monster is met, or its value as a signifier is constructed, time is thus also a factor in its isolation.

To summarise, the monster is not just an entity that is liminal in its physical make-up, but also in the spaces it is said to inhabit. The monster occupies the threshold between spaces and can be encountered on the periphery (Baumgartner & Davis 2008:1). Time might also be a factor in the space monsters occupy, they exist in in-between times that are mythic or liminal, times where transformation is possible (Nuzum 2004:207).

4.3 MONSTERS IN THIRDSPACE IN CULTURAL MONSTER STUDIES

Thirdspace forms part of Critical Spatiality, which takes as premise space as a determining factor in lived experiences (Saatcioglu & Corus 2018:[sp]). According to the work of Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1996), space can be investigated through conceiving of it in a trialectic manner. This includes Firstspace, physical attributes of space, Secondspace, the imagined, symbolic and abstract conception of space, as well as the Thirdspace, where First and

¹⁴⁸ Dominy and Melin (2020:258) write in particular on how primate visual systems are affected by lighting conditions, including the liminal states of twilight.

Secondspace combine to create the lived experiences of people (Kosari & Amoori 2018:166-168). It is then in this Third, liminal, hybrid, space where monsters can be found.

Thomas (2019:72) explains that liminal spaces and Thirdspace have a commonality as these exist between the real and the unreal. Thirdspace is seen as a manifestation of liminal space, a space where identity is constructed (Sterrett 2015:[sp]).¹⁴⁹ Thirdspace importantly facilitates the meeting of different ideas, races, cultures or beings through its liminality (Feldt 2012:66). In terms of mythology and religion, Thirdspace can often be situated in areas where divinity, or the otherworldly, and humanity meet (Macumber 2020:151).¹⁵⁰ One might interpret this as the meeting of culture and nature, the dialectic falling away in a Thirdspace, that is a boundary zone.

Critical Spatiality is part of the legacy of the Spatial Turn, placing emphasis on space as an important aspect of humans' embodied experiences. In essence, the Spatial Turn may be viewed as an acknowledgement of mapping place and space as an important element in discourse by cultural critics, literary scholars and social theorists (Tally 2013:16).¹⁵¹ The Spatial Turn is tied up with postmodern thinking and there is a focus on the 'human' element of geography (Campbell 2018:e26-e27). Space is conceived of in a poststructural way, meaning here that conceived space is socially constructed and part of networks of meaning, thus spatiality as a subject is often found as drawing ideas from across disciplines (Tally 2018:174, 175). Some of these include cultural studies, geography and sociology, urban studies, biblical and religious studies and Critical Spatial Theory, or Critical Spatiality (Tally 2018:174, 175).

Critical Spatiality is often used to better understand social-historical contexts, taking space as part of a trialectic that also includes sociality and historicity (Venter 2007:46). In other words, space becomes a factor when interpreting social and historical contexts, the spatial elements of human life that spread beyond just the physical (Venter 2007:46). The key thinkers behind this idea include Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja.

¹⁴⁹ Sterrett (2015:[sp]) here summarises some of Homi Bhaba's concepts of Thirdspace, the emphasis being on postcolonial thought, although the general idea of Thirdspace was found to be valuable here.

¹⁵⁰ Macumber (2020:151) writes on the dead sea scrolls and uses the wilderness as an example particular to the Ancient Near East and Biblical studies. However, the trope of the wilderness is here taken to mean an area that exists outside of the social structures of society and not a particular place in the Ancient Near East.

¹⁵¹ The Spatial Turn is usually traced back to the rise in popularity of topics relating to space in the 1970s and 1980s (Tally 2018:175).

Henri Lefebvre (1991) writes about space, and although his focus is on how space is ‘produced’¹⁵² and ‘ordered’ by capitalism and the practices of the bourgeois (Kinkaid 2019:[sp]), the notion that social space is ‘constructed’ is of relevance here.¹⁵³ Lefebvre (1991:73) notes that social space is not an object, but rather it encompasses that which is produced by society, orders their relations to each other. Space is produced from nature (materials from nature and geographic spaces). The cultural activities that shape it have connections to power and ideology, which link to the forces of production, such as knowledge and technology (Lefebvre 1991:85).¹⁵⁴ Social constructs thus shape how space is negotiated, conceived of, and shaped.

Lefebvre’s main contribution to this study is his notion of moments. For Lefebvre, space is multifaceted and can be physical (the natural world), mental (abstractions) and social, which encapsulates and ties together the other two (Ford 2015:178). Demirkam and Sevim (2017:[sp]) explain that Lefebvre’s ideas of space centre on experienced spaces, conceived and perceived spaces. Perceived space then is how societal practice relates to space. Conceived space includes how space is represented and thought of, and the experience of space includes the lived space which is a space of representation that relies on symbolism that becomes invested in as space is lived over periods of time (Jones 2015:44-45). This is then part of how space is ‘produced’¹⁵⁵ (Wolf & Mahaffey 2016:60).

Onto Lefebvre’s ideas of space, Edward Soja then builds the ideas of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace (Stojanovic 2017:129). Firstspace (perceived) is physical space environment, likened to description (Duan 2023:92). Secondspace (conceived) includes ideology and language, it is an abstract space (Wang & Gu 2023:27). Thirdspace then is lived space, where life-worlds interact and often clash (de Souse Santos 2015:218). Secondspace is subject to change and interpretation being in flux, whereas Firstspace is more stable, but both of these

¹⁵² Lefebvre (1991:68-72) explains his use of the word ‘production’ in terms of the work of Hegel, Marx and Engels.

¹⁵³ According to Löw (2016 [2000]:112), Lefebvre (1991:184) conceives of lived space (space of representation), conceived space (representations of space) and perceived space (practices relating to space). Spatial practice relates to how spaces are produced by behaviours (Löw 2016 [2000]:112). Representations of space are connected to ideology and how this influences the conceptualisation of space by scholars or urban planners (Löw 2016 [2000]:112). Spaces of representation then are spaces that are linked to the use of symbols and expression, being almost mythic (Löw 2016 [2000]:112).

¹⁵⁴ Divisions of labour and class, governance are also mentioned and here Lefebvre (1991:85) uses Marxist ideas of the base and superstructure model to explain his thinking.

¹⁵⁵ As per Lefebvre’s 1991, *The Production of Space*.

have an effect on how people connect to places (Soja 2000 [1996]:9). Thirdspace combines and builds on the perceptions of Firstspace and Secondspace (Figure 19) (Spencer 2021:252). Thirdspace has been described as ‘lived space’ or related to Lefebvre’s social space (Hitchcock 2008:166).

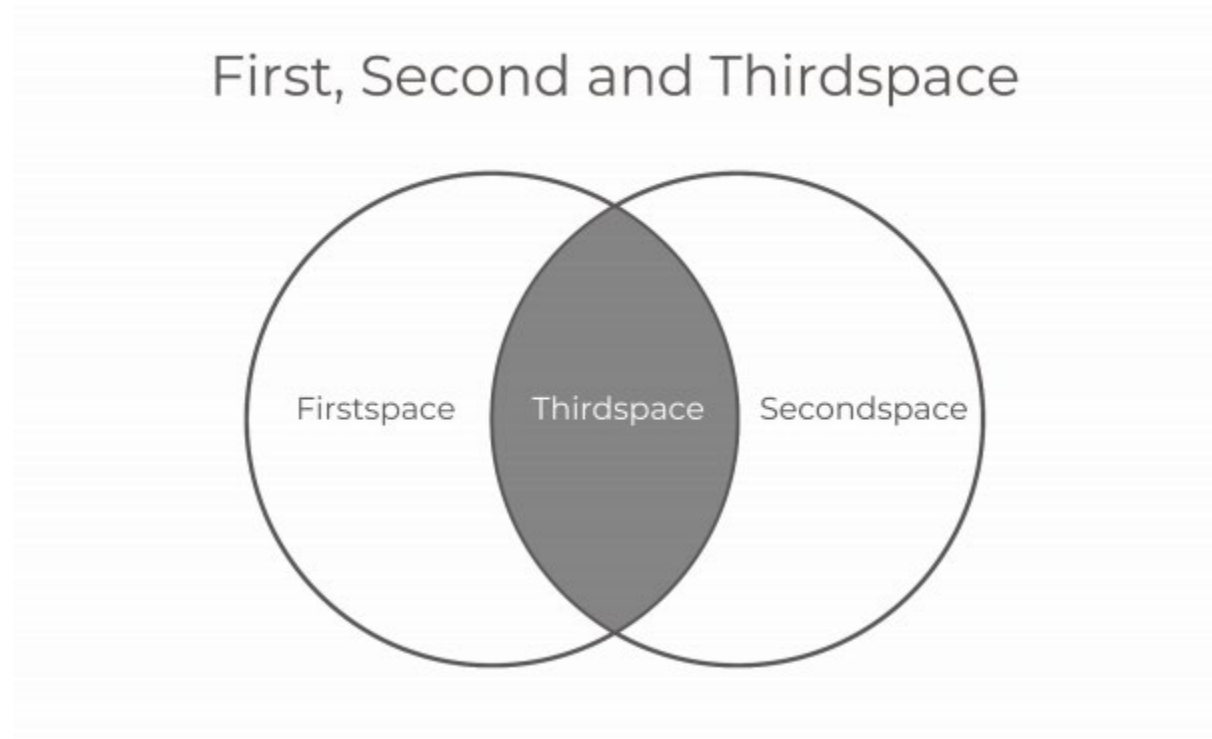


Figure 19: Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace, 2025. Image by Author.

Thirdspace is a hybrid space which emerges from the overlapping of First and Secondspace, making Thirdspace an in-between, or liminal, space (Tasler & Dale 2021:2). Bedford (1998:48, 49), reviewing Soja’s book, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los-Angeles and other real-and-imagined places* (1996), notes that this is also Soja’s way of doing away with dialectics. Soja (1996:5) explains Thirdspace as a space that is new, radically open, postmodern, and includes Thirling-as-Othering, standing opposed to the binaries of modernism.¹⁵⁶

Thirling-as-Othering, can be taken to mean creating an ‘Other way’ as opposed to the binary choices presented by modernism, as per Lefebvre’s ideas (Spencer 2012:252). However, Thirdspace has also become associated with categories of Otherness or Othering for marginalised groups (Spencer 2012:252). Soja (1996:14) notes the importance of Thirdspace

¹⁵⁶ The angle Soja presents might be postmodern, but the realm of inquiry his concepts get applied to are not limited to postmodernity itself. A popular scholar amongst biblical and Ancient Near Eastern studies focused on space, Soja’s work is widely applied to the ancient world also.

as a space of resistance on the margins in postcolonial discourse as well as feminist discourse.¹⁵⁷

For authors such as Homi Bhabha, cultural identity in relation to colonisation, being neither part of the identity of their colonisers nor their own original culture, between First and Secondspace leads to the creation of a Thirdspace, which is a hybrid (Jordan & Elsdon-Clifton 2014:222). This hybrid form emerges from ideas of liminal space, becoming a Thirdspace, where meanings and identities are in flux and can be contentiously negotiated (Harmer & Lumsden 2019:21). Although Homi Bhabha's ideas are concerned with a postcolonial angle of resistance (Abou- Agag 2021:26), the notion of a space that is in flux through negotiation of culture that brings forth new identities that are hybrid is of interest.

The Thirdspace is seen as a space of creation, where the space of separation and loss that is associated with the Abject becomes transformed into renewal and creation through hybridity (Harris 2012:v). Situating this in terms of the monster and of fear, one might suggest here that monsters signify a type of fear for the Abject space to become a space of creation and resistance. The space on the margin where societal structures and authority are thin (Shortt 2014:[sp]), could produce something new and unknown that has no place in the categories of ordering in society.

If one considers the monster as a sign, something that demonstrates dangers (Williams 2011:10), then it may be seen as falling into Secondspace. The imagining of monsters at borders or haunted locales, would make use of Firstspace, real places or at least conceptions of real places. Where Secondspace and Firstspace overlap to form a more fluid, less rigid space, Thirdspace (Spencer 2021:252), the monster appears, a mixing between the imaginary and the real. It is a Secondspace construction, but may warn about the use of space, or actual dangers in space, imagine here monsters at the edges of maps. The Firstspace is used in relation to the Secondspace notion that monsters, or the dangers they signify, can be found in certain places, allowing for a very particular usage of space in Thirdspace. This concept is explored in more depth in the upcoming section on the monster and the Landscape of Peril.

¹⁵⁷ Some examples include, but are not limited to, the work of Edward Said, Homi K. Bhaba, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Bell Hooks.

Liminal Thirdspace allows for categorical mixing (Lalrinzuala 2021:7). Thirdspace creates a space that threatens the established norm, as the monster does, being a space for the Other and the marginalised (Murić 2013:6, 7). The monster as a hybrid not just in its form (Weinstock 2020:9), but in the space it occupies, can be seen as making use of the mixing that Thirdspace facilitates (Kuortti, Nyman & Ghasemi 2023:[sp]). Thirdspace creates a space that threatens the established norm, as the monster does.

4.4 THE MONSTER AND HETEROTOPIA IN CULTURAL MONSTER STUDIES

Monsters are also connected to Heterotopias. These spaces offer areas of hybridity and amalgamation that present challenges to societal ordering of space (Foucault 1986:25). As explained by Putthoff (2020:4), Foucault (1998 [1967]) distinguishes between space and place. Place is bound to geography and topography, a place one can find. Space in this context is, however linked to infinite or finite, it can be an area or a realm, which include spaces like Utopias and Heterotopias (Putthoff 2020:5). Thirdspace can be linked to Heterotopias in their liminality and ability to combine the symbolic and the real in terms of space and also time (Davis 2010:661-663). Heterotopias can take on various forms, such as Heterotopias of Crisis and Heterotopias of Deviance (Foucault 1986:24-25).¹⁵⁸ The monster can exist in the Heterotopia as it provides a space for the mythic, fictional and the real to overlap, becoming a space of confrontation (Vincent 2020:171).

Thirdspace, is linked to Foucault's notions of Heterotopia and 'Other space'. Tucker, Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Icenogle (2020:856) note that Lefebvre points towards 'differential space'. This space synthesises difference, is defined through contrast, and is better understood when distinctions are made between Utopias, Isotopias and Heterotopias (Tucker *et al* 2020:856).¹⁵⁹ However, authors such as Pearson (2018:49) link Foucault's idea of Heterotopia more directly with Soja's Thirdspace in its capacity to combine the physical and the mental/imagined.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Heterotopias of Illusion and Compensation are also included (Allweil & Kallus 2008:191).

¹⁵⁹ Johnson (2013:[sp]) explains that for Lefebvre Utopias are non-places, imagined, whereas Isotopias are identical spaces where ordering and mapping can take place, and finally Heterotopias are other places that exist on the margins, in flux.

¹⁶⁰ Pearson (2018:49) further explains that Foucault and Lefebvre's approaches to space differ as Foucault is concerned with power and history whilst Lefebvre's aims are to investigate how space is produced socially.

Foucault (1986:25) explains Heterotopias in contrast to Utopias and Dystopias (Figure 20), as this space has roots in reality, a physical place, but contains therein representations of other sites that are inverted and challenged. Utopias and Heterotopias are sites that invert, neutralise or make suspect the relations these spaces have with all other sites they stand in relation to (Sudradjat 2012:29). However, unlike Utopias that are perfect and non-places, Heterotopias are related to real spaces and present ‘counter spaces’ where paradoxes are revealed, and related sites are represented and contested (Sudradjat 2012:29). Tucker *et al* (2020:856) describe Foucault’s Heterotopia as a space that is ambiguous, facilitating imaginary spaces’ interaction with real spaces.

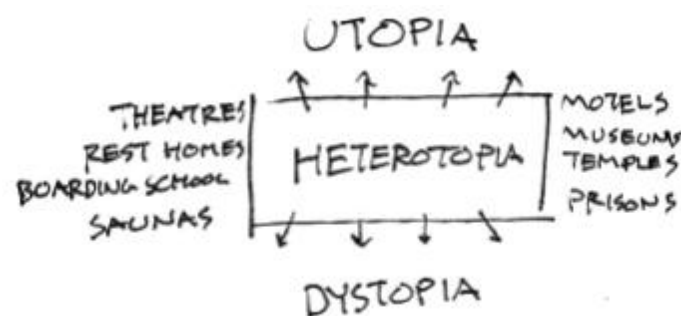


Figure 20: Heterotopia Diagram. Chad Farley, 2015. (Farley 2015:[sp]).

Foucault (1986:24-25) observes that all cultures create Heterotopias, and that these change as the community/ society does. Foucault (1986:24-25) explains two broad categories of Heterotopias, one, present in ancient societies, the crisis Heterotopia and the other more contemporary enactment, Heterotopias of Deviance. Heterotopias of Crisis seem to be strongly connected to liminality, both in terms of place as well as persons (Vuohelainen 2018:120). As Cenzatti (2008:1) notes, these spaces were for individuals that were in a state of transition, liminal in their social identities, allowing their transition in identity to emerge in a more stable form to fit within the structures of that society.

Heterotopias of Deviance, products of more contemporary societies, are places that house those that deviate from the accepted norm, such as prisons, rest homes and psychiatric hospitals (Foucault 1986:25). Sudradjat (2012:29) mentions that Heterotopias of Deviance are isolating, meant to separate the deviant and protect the norm. Heterotopias of Deviance may be seen as more permanent Heterotopias of Crisis in that although the individuals or groups who occupy these spaces might later re-join productive society, it is not expected (Cenzatti 2008:3).

Heterotopias are sites of juxtaposition between several spaces and places that are not necessarily compatible with an actual space (Foucault 1986:25).¹⁶¹ Palladino and Miller (2015:4) note that this can be applied to spaces constructed to represent a number of other spaces, serving at times as a microcosm. Joubin (2024:3) uses the example of a theatre, a real space where many spaces are represented.

Foucault (1986:26)¹⁶² further explains that Heterotopias are often connected to time in a particular way, being linked to heterochronisms. Heterochronia relates to irregularities of time (Papo 2016:2), or as described by Sudradjat (2012:29), “slices in time”. Heterotopias can be linked to the fleetingness of time, such as a space associated with transition and flux, a festival, or a space where time is accumulated, compacted, archived, the example used here being a museum (Topinka 2010:57). Sudradjat (2012:30) explains this as a break with the normal experience of time and space; the Heterotopia allows for a new intersection between time and space. Bednar (2020:95) summarises this succinctly as the linking of time/ times that are different to the actual time within that space.¹⁶³

A Heterotopia, through its spatiality and non-normative connection to time, is then connected to particular forms of opening and closing (Foucault 1986:26).¹⁶⁴ This system concerns the regulation of access to Heterotopias, certain acts allow for entrance/opening, the system being closed to others (Rymarczuk & Derkzen 2014:[sp]). Heterotopias are then isolated because of the terms of entrance, but they are also ‘penetrable’ as they can be entered if the right rituals are performed or conditions are met (Rymarczuk & Derkzen 2014:[sp]). Rituals serve as initiation into the Thirdspace of the Heterotopia, whether it is of one’s own accord or forced

¹⁶¹ Foucault (1986:25) mentions a Third Principle of Heterotopias which consists of the ability to juxtapose a multitude of spaces which are in themselves not related, but can be brought together in a space that is real, for example, the real space of the theatre can have representations of other spaces, as well as Persian gardens and the symbolism of space that real space could hold.

¹⁶² Foucault’s (1986:26) Fourth Principle includes that Heterotopias are connected to ‘slices of time’, a heterochronia, meaning the Heterotopia is dependent on a break in normal chronological events.

¹⁶³ Bednar (2020:95) then further connects the idea of heterochronia in terms of Heterotopia to Deleuze’s idea of ‘assemblages’. Bednar’s (2020:95) interpretation focuses on the assemblage as an ongoing process and ever changing object of heterogeneous parts, making it a tool to investigate the shifting elements of the Heterotopia through its connections and relations.

¹⁶⁴ Foucault’s (1986:26) Fifth Principle concerns how Heterotopias both open and close allowing for isolation while allowing for entry into this separate space. Foucault (1986:27) also notes the final trait of a Heterotopia, which is that it exists in relation to the spaces it excludes, real spaces are revealed or symbolised through illusions or revealed to be illusion originally, called Heterotopias of Illusion. Heterotopias of Compensation can also exist, this is where a real ‘messy’ space is recreated in a Heterotopian way to have an order that was lacking in the original space (Foucault 1986:27).

by the state, the separation from the public of those that enter is key in what constitutes a Heterotopia (Sajjad & Perveen 2019:[sp]).

Heterotopias function in relation to spaces that are not included in them (Sudradjat 2012:30). Between the Heterotopia's separation and its connectedness to the space outside of it, the 'real' spaces of society are confronted, revealing their constructed nature (Miller 2015:[sp]). Rymarczuk and Derkzen (2014:[sp]) note that Heterotopias are deeply connected to the differences between what is real and what is imaginary/ illusionary. A Heterotopia of Illusion heightens aspects that are outside of the norm in the form of illusion, thus reflecting back on ordinary, real, social spaces (Sajjad & Perveen 2019:[sp]). Heterotopias of Compensation are concerned with real space and creating an actual space that is seen as 'Other' (Green 2016:583). Heterotopias challenge set power dynamics by either revealing the trickery behind what is perceived as real by focusing on illusion, or by creating real spaces that are ordered to the extreme, exposing the messiness of the real.

The monster's relation to Heterotopia can be found on the basis of its resistance. Vincent (2020:171) writes how the monster as hybrid is out of place because they cannot be properly categorised. So too the Heterotopia can contain hybrids that threaten the real order of things. Heterotopias can be geographical, but also literary, mirroring and commenting through fiction (Wei 2015:52). Vincent (2020:171) argues that literature provides Heterotopias. It is accessible, but separate from ordered social space, and contains various variations of space that to be effective must refer to actual spaces and experiences of spaces (Vincent 2020:171). In this Heterotopia is a monster, but it is encountered vicariously, in a contained space (Wei 2015:52).

However, since Heterotopias in literature must make reference to real space, when one interacts with those referenced spaces in a geographic setting, the impression and conceived elements of those spaces have been informed by prior description. The imagined and mythic space that contains the monster is now overlaid onto a geographical space. It could influence one's lived experience of space and through overlaying these spaces creates a new, geographic, Heterotopia. It is important to note, that spaces monsters are depicted in, in literature are liminal and Thirdspaces to begin with (Weinstock 2020:9). A geographical space that would trigger an

experience of such a referenced, monstrous space would then have to meet these requirements also.¹⁶⁵

To summarise, Heterotopias are places that can be connected to the physical world but also provide for the overlap of conception and perception of spaces outside of it, perhaps in a symbolic or abstract way (Ng 2018:444). This mixing of space then links it to Thirdspace, where perceived physical elements of space and conceived, abstract symbolic constructions of space overlap (Hazan 2015:[sp]). Heterotopias of Crisis and Heterotopias of Deviance both seek to contain the hybrid nature of that which does not fit into ordered space and has conditions that allow entry (Foucault 1986:24-25). The hybrid nature of the Heterotopia means that it can reflect and challenge the ordering of society, linking it to the monster's hybridity. Although monsters are met through literature, literature's reference to physical spaces can superimpose on them the symbol of the monster, creating a new Heterotopia.

4.5 THE MONSTER AS BIOCULTURAL BEING IN THE LANDSCAPE OF PERIL AS LIMINAL THIRDSPEACE AND HETEROTOPIA

The Landscape of Peril (Figure 21) is a combination of the Landscape of Fear (Figure 22) and the Landscape of Disgust (Figure 26). Together these representing the risk that inhabitants calculate of predation, conspecific threats, and infection within spaces which actively affect their usage of space (Doherty & Ruhle 2020:[sp]). In this subsection, the Landscape of Fear and the Landscape of Disgust are explored as ecological and biological influences on how space is used. It is postulated here that Landscape of Peril actively reveals Thirdspace in that it combines mental ideas about the space, here the risk associated with parasites, violent conspecifics and predation, and the usage of physical space, making for very particular lived experiences in space.

The aim of this section is to show that real threats and fears within the landscape can change the usage and perception of space. If one follows Clasen's (2012:222) theory that monsters arise from real fears, like predation, violent conspecifics and infection, then how these risks are

¹⁶⁵ The haunted house might be used here as an example. The house is a physical place, but it contains a mythic and fantastic element that is connected to a break in chronological time and categorisation (Ng 2018:444). It is both a present location, overlain with symbolism from the past so dense that it contains both (Ng 2018:444).

associated with space can also reveal how the monster is related to space both culturally and biologically. Here the Landscape of Peril is discussed as an evolutionary tool for survival.

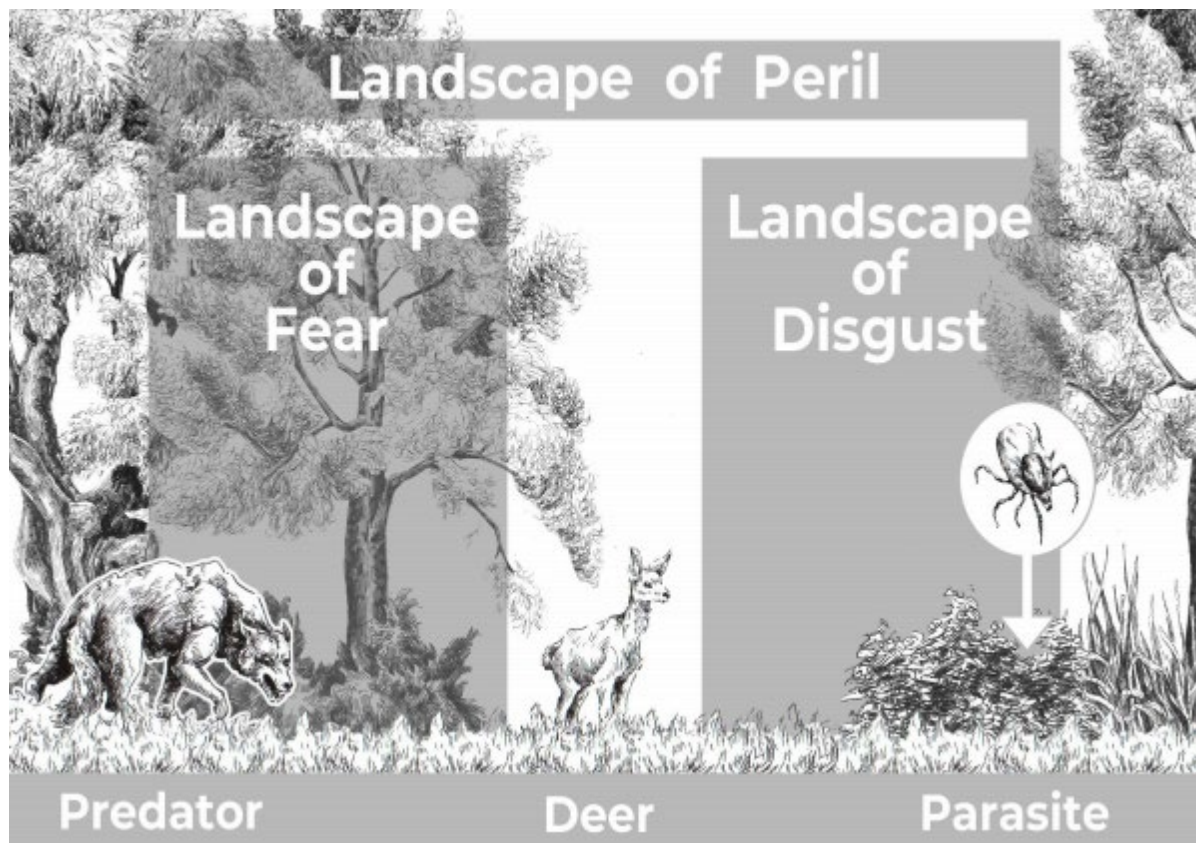


Figure 21: Landscape of Peril, 2025. Image by Author.¹⁶⁶

The Landscape of Fear is focused on predation and how the presence of predators affects the usage of space by possible prey animals (Laundré, Hernández & Ripple 2010:1). Elaborating on the focus of predatory fear in the Landscape of Fear, the human fear of conspecific violence is also investigated here, particularly in terms of how this affects the perception, conception and actual experience of the environment. To properly probe this aspect of fear in the landscape, Homicide Adaptation Theory is used (Dunty & Buss 2011), as per *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*, 2.3 *Bioculture and the Monster*, 2.3.4. *Conspecific Fear and the Monster*. One of the ways humans can avoid being killed by other humans is to avoid certain areas associated with crime, aggression, violence or previous homicide (Laundré,

¹⁶⁶ This visualisation leaves out some of the important trade-offs of the Landscape of Peril, such as food and mates, however the focus of this study falls on the perceived risk of predators and parasites and thus the illustration shows these aspects. The included grey area implies the perceived risk of predators and contamination in relation to benefits that are not listed in the drawing above since the focus is on the general perception of the area of risk.

Hernández & Ripple 2010:1). This implies that a danger in the Landscape of Fear is also then human and attached to certain areas.

Part of the Landscape of Peril is the Landscape of Disgust. Here the pressure exerted by parasites and contaminants creates a mental map of risk which prompts avoidance behaviours of places, substances, and infected individuals (Berger-Tal & Saltz 2019:[sp]). The Behavioural Immune System's strong disgust response is linked to this avoidance (Schaller 2011:[sp]), but it is also argued that Moral Disgust, which is associated with the Behavioural Immune System (Fabiani 2021:[sp]), can influence interaction with space. The Behavioural Immune System can keep track of contaminants, called the Law of Contamination (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp])¹⁶⁷. Contamination of objects can be tracked and by extension places. These can be seen as infected through association with 'morally' incorrect behaviour, or even actual substances from sickness or violence long past.

Finally, it is argued that the Landscape of Peril works on the principle of a liminal Thirdspace and Heterotopia. Firstspace's physicality influences the Secondspace perception of risk and thus the mental map of the space, which in turn influences the physical features of Firstspace through the lived experiences, in other words, Thirdspace. The monster is then placed within this space, its value as a sign for warning is focused on as it is seen as part of Secondspace which in turn affects behaviour in Thirdspace and has an effect of Firstspace. The monster then holds not just signs of predators, human perpetrators of violence and parasites in its body, but it also reveals the assessment of risk in the landscape that is associated with these fears and threats.

Heterotopias can exist in the Landscape of Peril in that a map to geographical sites that have attached to them high areas of risk, thus learned, mental perceptions and conceptions of the space, fill the experience of the user. Areas of risk become spaces that are avoided, separated, and fall outside the ordering of space. They are perceived as containing dangers that cannot be properly categorised represented by the sign of the monster. Dangerous areas in the Landscape of Peril present areas where ideas and signifiers of the space, shape the experience of the space.

¹⁶⁷ Curtis, de Barra and Aunger (2011:[sp]) note The Garcia Effect shown in Figure 11; this refers to the learning of and response to having a sickness or falling ill after ingesting certain types of food, even if the substance itself is not responsible for the sickness, it connects that substance to the feeling of illness and can be used in conditioning.

4.5.1 The Landscape of Fear: Predation

Laundré, Hernández and Ripple (2010:1) claim that fear of predation directly influences how animals and humans behave, navigate and use landscapes, revealing a 'Landscape of Fear'. Laundré, Hernández and Ripple (2010:1) explain that humans too have Landscapes of Fear, from ancient humans fearing predation, to more contemporary humans reacting pre-emptively to conspecific threats in cities. Humans have the benefit of culture, which preserves knowledge of threat, and attempts to create warnings against threats within certain spaces using narrative. This section investigates the monster as a narrative device within culture that reveals and reinforces the Landscape of Fear, particularly here shaped by predation, which arises from evolutionary adaptation and thus human biology.

To better understand the Landscape of Fear and its connection to predation, one might start on a smaller scale. Choi and Kim (2010:21773-21777) performed an experiment on rats that showed a connection between fear of a possible predator, and the distance of risk the rats perceived around the threat. Choi and Kim (2010:21774) presented rats with an apparently aggressive robotic creation, dubbed the 'Robogator', placing food at relative distances to this simulated predator. It was found that the rats would not cross a certain threshold to obtain food in relation to the threat, meaning that they had perceived an area of risk, or 'gradient of fear' around the 'predator' (Choi & Kim 2010:21773). When the amygdala was inhibited in some rats, those rats came closer to the Robogator, showing a link between the amygdala and fear of predation, as well as perceived risk in terms of distance (Choi & Kim 2010:21773). One might argue here that this experiment demonstrates the rats imposing onto space the risk of predation and adapting their foraging behaviour to the perception of this threat. This evokes the core idea of the Landscape of Fear.¹⁶⁸

The Landscape of Fear can be represented visually as a map that shows the movement of prey and how it is affected by their perception of risk to being preyed upon (Kohl, Stahler, Metz, Forester, Kauffman, Varley, White, Smith & MacNulty 2018:[sp]). The reaction and perception of a predator prompts changes in prey which affect the whole landscape, overlaying the terrain

¹⁶⁸ This term was first coined by Laundré, Hernández and Altendorf's 2001 paper on how wolves in Yellowstone affected the vigilance of elk and bison (Gaynor *et al* 2019:2). The term however, according to Gaynor *et al* (2019:2), grew out of anthropological studies and studies focused on human geography that showed how places of fear existed for humans.

with perceived areas of greater risk of predation (Kohl *et al* 2018:[sp]). It then follows that animals create and follow mental maps deeply influenced by fear of being killed by predators, as discussed by Gaynor, Brown, Middleton, Power and Brashares (2019:4).

Brown and Kotler (2004:999) explain that the risk of predation is weighed against foraging options, wherein safety and food become trade-offs. Bleicher (2017:[sp])¹⁶⁹ is of the opinion that fear here is thus strategic, the relationship between food and safety being analysed. Zanzette and Clinchy (2019:[sp]) note that there is a further cost to avoiding predators, which includes behaviour, neurobiology and psychology all of which affect the amount of animals that survive and reproduce.

The Landscape of Fear is part of the Ecology of Fear (Bleicher 2017:[sp]). Zanzette and Clinchy (2019:[sp]) define the Ecology of Fear as how prey populations are impacted by predators and note that this is beyond the previously perceived range of simply hunting and killing prey as being the limit to the ecological impact. Gallager, Creel, Wilson and Cooke (2017:[sp]) explain that trophic cascades¹⁷⁰ may occur if a predator is introduced to an area, not only will prey be affected, but vegetation growth and even changes in the natural landscape may occur. An example here, is the reintroduction of wolves to the Yellowstone National Park, which caused not just the elk population to transform through predation but changed their behaviour, grazing and birth-rates due to the stress and fear caused by possible predation, which had an actual effect on the landscape and the other animals and plants in the area (Gallager *et al* 2017:[sp]).

Professor Adrian Shrader, working in the department of Zoology and Entomology at the University of Pretoria, explained the Landscape of Fear in an interview with this author. Professor Shrader (2024) noted that the Landscape of Fear is varied and can change from individual to group depending on the assessed risk. Key to this is the idea of how benefits in terms of interaction with the landscape, such as food resources or water as examples, would outweigh the possible cost, such as predation (Shrader 2024).¹⁷¹ Animals have to change their

¹⁶⁹ Bleicher (2017:[sp]) further adds factors such as evolutionary history, the energy levels of individuals as well as pressures from other animals, both inter and intra-specific, which affect the Landscape of Fear.

¹⁷⁰ Trophic levels here are the predators, herbivores and plants (Eisenberg 2010:[sp]).

¹⁷¹ Professor Shrader (2024) noted the infamous “Four F’s” of animal needs, namely Feeding, Fleeing/Fear, Fighting and reproduction. As per his explanation Feeding is what animals need to survive, Fleeing/Fear concerns predation risk, Fighting could be linked to conspecific threats and reproduction

behaviour to continuously assess the weight of the cost and benefit of how they negotiate the landscape physically.

Part of what makes the Landscape of Fear relevant to this inquiry is the idea that animals can learn which areas are safer, or contain higher risk, and adapt their behaviour accordingly. Laundré *et al* (2010:3) come to the conclusion that since animals who are exposed to predators and escape, change their behaviour, it indicates that animals can learn which areas carry more risk than others. A very basic representation of the Landscape of Fear (Figure 22) shows the perceived risk of predation. If one considers humans, such learning could have been carried over through cultural stories with the intent to adapt behaviour to avoid places where predation might occur.

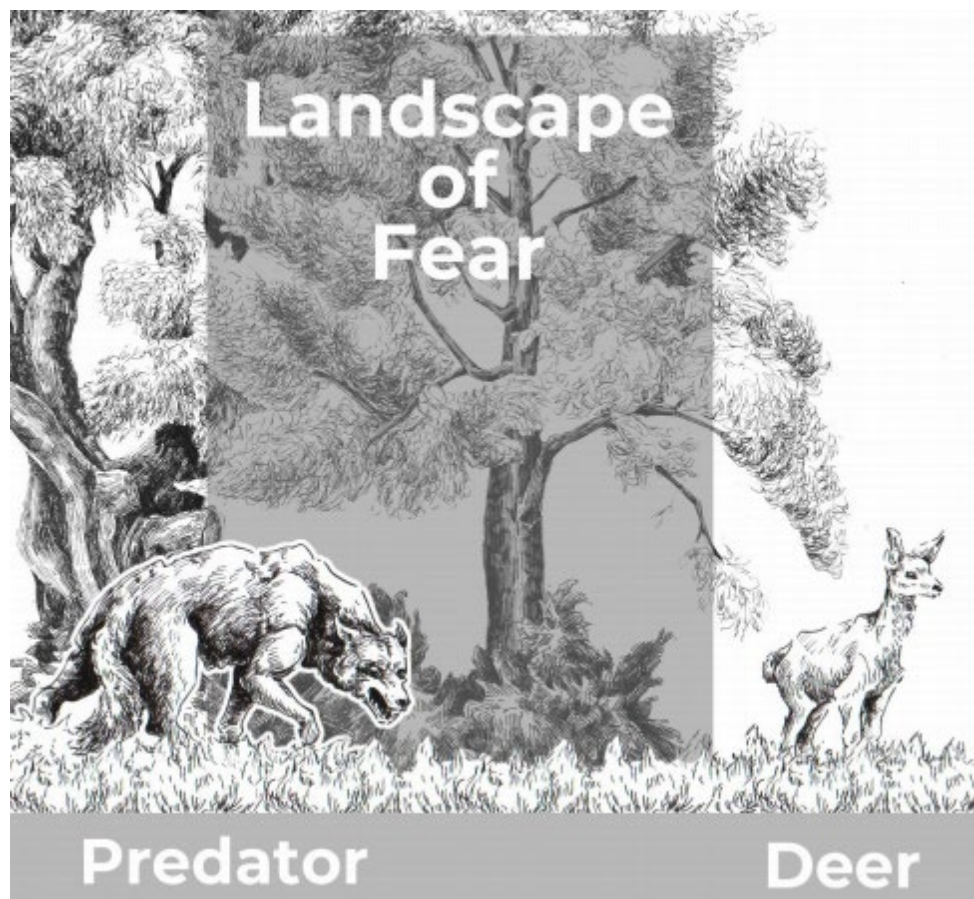


Figure 22: Landscape of Peril detail, Landscape of Fear. 2025, Image by Author.

Throughout human evolutionary history, humans and our hominid ancestors have fallen victim to predators. From early *Australopithecus Africanus* in South Africa's remains which show

concerns access to mates. The cost and risk of these concepts can then also be factored into the Landscape of Peril, where the costs and benefits are weighed.

evidence of falling prey to big cats (Hart & Sussman 2009:1), to a tiger escaping the Seaview Predator Park in Gqeberha, killing his trainer in 2021 (Big Cat Attacks 2021:[sp]). Although contemporary humans have more to fear from other humans (Fields 2016:[sp])¹⁷², humans evolved under pressure from predators.¹⁷³

Hart and Sussman (2011:20) explain that although a lot of emphasis has fallen on humans as hunters, the consequences of being hunted, and the effects it has had on human evolution, was neglected at times. By looking at the fossil record intently, extant primate models and living hunter-gatherer societies, Hart and Sussman (2011:20) found that much of human evolution was driven by being prey to large predators. Schoenherr (2005:[sp]), writing on the work of Dr Sussman (2005), summarises that early hominids faced large and ill-defined predators, shown by the fossil record, by which they were often killed. This concept is supported by evidence that shows fossil remains of hominids such as the idea that the Taung Child was the victim of a large eagle (Figure 23).¹⁷⁴ Schoenherr (2005:[sp]) noted Dr Sussman's (2005) theory that early hominids *avoided* predators, and did not hunt them as is often thought. This avoidance would then link up with a Landscape of Fear experienced by early hominids.

¹⁷² An average estimate of 1024 mammalian species provided a 0.3 % estimate of individuals killed by others from their own species; humans had an average that was seven times higher than this average (Fields 2016:[sp]).

¹⁷³ This is unlike previous theories, like the *Man the Hunter* theory put forward by Raymond Dart in 1961 (Sussman 2013:97).

¹⁷⁴ The Taung Child as a victim of an Eagle as per its remains can be found discussed at length in an article by Berger and McGraw (2007).



Figure 23: Lee Berger with Taung Child Skull Replica shows Eagle as its Killer, Johannesburg, 2006. Photograph by Telegram and Gazette. (Zavis 2006:[sp]).

One of the ways to better survive in such a Landscape of Fear is to cooperate. The pressure from predators might have prompted early group living, forcing humans to become more sociable and find protection within the group (Schoenherr 2005:[sp]).¹⁷⁵ Shrand and Devine (2014:[sp]) explain this advantage when noting that safety in numbers can outweigh solitary living, when there are agreements made between individuals to watch out for, and alert each other of, predators. Pennisi (2011:[sp]), noting the work of Shultz, Opie and Atkinson (2011:[sp]), adds to this that social living is also beneficial for animals who are/ became diurnal, as being visible to predators during the day is a risk, but in groups this risk decreases.

Part of such a social group's benefits under pressure from predators would be the obtaining and sharing of information. Among non-human animals, one of the benefits of cooperation is inspecting and watching for predators as well as alarm calling (Bowles, Smith & Gintis 2001:2). Alarm calls of contemporary vervet monkeys (Figure 24) in East Africa, as investigated by Seyfarth, Cheney and Marler (1980), differ based on the type of predator spotted (Locke 2021:[sp]). Researchers such as Rendall and Owren (2013:153), have linked

¹⁷⁵ This theory is then based on the observations of contemporary primates' social groups and how group living may be an adaptation owing to predator pressure (Schoenherr 2005:[sp]).

this to the possible evolution of human speech (Locke 2021:[sp]). Be that as it may¹⁷⁶, the sharing of information in social groups provided an advantage (Bowles, Smith & Gintis 2001:3).¹⁷⁷



Figure 24: Cropped image of Vervet Monkey, Kenya, 2024. Photograph by Gerry van derWalt. (@gerryvanderwalt 2024:[sp]).

Boyd (2018:[sp]) explains the advantage of language, arising from biological and evolutionary needs, leading to narrative and finally fiction, lies in better communicating with one's group members, keeping the group stable, as well as having access to information across generations. Through cultural practices like storytelling about the environment, humans acquire 'pools' of knowledge that allow for better adaptation to the environment (Boyd 2018:16). Part of such an adaptation, it is argued here, is to be aware of the Landscape of Fear, priming individuals to pre-emptively be more aware and ready to respond.

Within this framework, placing predatory monsters within the landscape can be viewed as beneficial to the group's survival. Musharbash (2014:3) reminds readers that the meaning of the word 'monster' is often linked to 'warning', showing where zones of safety end and danger begins. The predatory monster might be used here to show/ demonstrate what would happen to a member of the community if they entered a high-risk predation area.

However, monsters do not show up only as fully formed predators but as a conglomerate of animals, which can include predatory animals linked to ideas of humans being killed and eaten

¹⁷⁶ The work of Daniel Dor (2014), *The instruction of imagination: language and its evolution as a communication technology*, thoroughly investigates this proposition, investigating the evolution of language and storytelling.

¹⁷⁷ There is a focus here on *Man the Hunter*, but this study focuses on the benefits of communal living.

(Morin & Sobchuck 2023:4). This manifestation may occur for multiple reasons. Boyd (2018:[sp]) explains narratives that present fiction hold the attention of their consumers more readily. Fictitious, marvellous monster may hold one's attention, as does the desire to learn and be primed on how to act when encountering something of the sort; large and hungry (Clasen 2017:[sp]).

It might also be that the conglomeration of the monster is a manifestation of the accumulation of cultural knowledge over long periods of time. If one takes Boyd's (2018:16) notion of culture 'pooling' over generations, then the telling and retelling of stories as to why certain areas are dangerous might have accumulated reasons for them being seen as such. Professor Shrader (2024) explains that humans experience the Landscape of Fear and Disgust also through cultural construction. Although some areas present uncertainties about the level of risks and benefits, others are coded with preconceived ideas about the space that calls for heightened awareness. Shrader (2024) notes how this cultural element can be highly varied depending on race, age, sex, ethnicity and other factors, creating risks that are perceived as particular to those groups. Such cultural and specific understanding of place has to be taught, often across generations. The area the monster inhabits is dangerous, but it contains and has contained over many generations, various dangerous creatures, all of which can be confronted in a simulated encounter with a story monster which combines parts of these animals.

The Landscape of Fear is then the awareness of high-risk areas of predation, which comes through learning. Throughout human evolution the awareness of dangers in the landscape might have shaped basic human interactions, but also more complex cultural traits such as creative stories that demonstrate the Landscape of Fear through placing predatory monsters in certain areas.

4.5.2 The Landscape of Fear: Conspecific Threats

Another element that might form part of the Landscape of Fear in the case of humans, as well as other social animals, is the possible danger of being killed by conspecifics. The Landscape of Fear theory generally places heightened competition in conspecifics as one of the consequences of higher perceived predation risk and thus less access to resources (Taborsky, Cant & Komdeur 2021:42). However, Laundré, Hernández and Ripple (2010:1) distinctly note

that contemporary humans have Landscapes of Fear, and that some of the risk in these navigations are related to conspecific threats.

As discussed in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*, 2.3 *Bioculture and the Monster*, 2.3.4. *Conspecific Fear and the Monster*, humans killing other humans have left evolutionary strategies in place to avoid becoming a victim of murder. Humans read each other intensely for aggression and have even formed biases concerning gender, size, and certain features (Duntley & Buss 2011:405; Puts, Apicella & Cárđinas 2011:[sp]). However, estimating the risk of *where* one is likely to meet an aggressive conspecific can also be beneficial to survival.

In a contemporary study done on the fear of crime in cities, Curiel and Bishop (2018:1) show that fear of crime usually outweighs actual crimes but deeply influences the behaviour of people. How people use space is influenced by where they perceive crimes, like homicide, to occur. Certain areas perceived to be dangerous, containing aggressive conspecifics, are often avoided and become no-go areas (Curiel & Bishop 2018:2). Tandogan and Ilhan (2016:2012) note that through fear of crime, cities often experience negative effects, such as the breakdown of connections between residents or a loss of customers/ employees in particular areas, but ultimately this leads to abandoned areas. Tandogan and Ilhan (2016:2012) specifically point towards deserted areas, like parks and subways, alleyways, dark streets, and dense woodland.

Homicide can be an effective solution if there are no witnesses. Humans have been shown to be sensitive to knowing the motives of others and seem to be able to narrow down suspects in homicide cases quite well (Duntley & Buss 2011:404). Killing without witnesses is important for ancient as well as contemporary humans. To kill outside of a ritualised setting could invoke revenge taking and thus unsettle the whole community and endanger the killer and their kin (Duntley & Buss 2011:404). Places where one is isolated and away from the social group which can come to your aid are thus also considered risky.

McAndrew (2020) presents an engrossing study about the perception of haunted houses, amongst the many points included, is the danger of a place due to its isolation. Isolation due to a secluded space can have as consequence an awareness that help is far off, that the social structures one depends on for protection are not within reach, leaving one helpless (McAndrew 2020:51-52). McAndrew's (2020:51-52) insight goes beyond just human agents, but being in

an area with possible strangers of unknown motivation and allegiance is literally the basis for several Horror movies.¹⁷⁸

Castro (2019:82) addressing some aspects of the ecology of contemporary, mostly Western, cities, expresses that technological intervention based on control in public and domestic spaces create clear zones of boundaries between social classes. Castro (2019:83) further explains that cities have changed, the private sphere is visibly fortified because of a failure in the public space to maintain citizens' safety.¹⁷⁹ Spaces created by humans, inadvertently reflect human Othering. Nevins (2023:7), reviewing the geographer Mike Davis' ¹⁸⁰ work, explains how cities created privatised spaces for certain classes, which has an implied connection to race, religion and majority rule. Public spaces then degrade and those who roam there cannot afford entry into cordoned-off areas of recreation (Nevins 2023:7). Areas of safety are thus private and known areas; unknown areas pose a risk, but in this context there is also an element of attached ideas on Others in class and race and the spaces they inhabit. This perception one can assume would affect not only how space is used when trying to avoid perceived human aggressors, but also how such confrontations would be affected by the space they occur in.

Human Ecology, as a field is interdisciplinary and draws from fields like natural sciences, social sciences, humanities and technology (Lund University 2022:[sp]). It takes as its basis the study of humans and their interaction with the environment based on different cultures and the factors that influence human activity and how ecosystems are affected by these practices (Lund University 2022:[sp]). Books like Schneider's *The Ecology of Homicide: Race, Place, and Space in Postwar Philadelphia* (2020) explore perceptions of racial Othering and how this is reflected in the perception of the city as the development of physical places.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ *The Strangers* (Bertino 2008), *Wrong Turn* (Schmidt 2003), *The Hills have Eyes* (Aja 2006) and even *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Hooper 1974) to name but a few.

¹⁷⁹ Castro (2019:84-85) draws from Human Ecology theories, such as that of Ernest Burgess (2019 [1925]) with his *bullseye*, or Concentric Zone Model, as well as Mike Davis' (1998) reinterpretation of this model with the aim of investigating fear in the city of Los Angeles.

¹⁸⁰ Nevins (2023:7) cites many of Davis' writings, but the most relevant here seem to be *Beyond Blade Runner: Urban Control, the Ecology of Fear* (1992) and *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (1990).

¹⁸¹ Bourne, Hudson-Davis, Sharpe-Pryce, Francis, Solan, Lewis, Quarrie, Pabarue, Nelson, Irving and Anderson (2015:485, 499) investigated the high murder rate in Jamaica, concluding that the murder rate had a strong influence on psychiatric disorders and served as a deep social disruption, but that the murder rate was deeply tied to unemployment rises in the cost of living and rising violence. In essence, the stress of homicide is measurable in the population, through Bourne *et al's* (2015:485-499) case study tied to health care seeking, for example.

Humans also weigh risk and benefit concerning space, such as the comfort of certain routes to frequented places, uncertainty is usually avoided (Shrader 2024). Others could here be read as posing perhaps an uncertainty. The Landscape of Fear's influence on humans is linked to Othering, the perception of Other's spaces as well as more than simple avoidance, but rather the way in which complex human settlement like cities are created. The way in which Others are viewed can then also be linked to cultural and biological ideas as discussed in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*, 2.3 *Bioculture and the Monster*, 2.3.5 *Disgust as Biocultural element in the Monster*, 2.3.5.1 *Monster as Other and Scapegoat through Bioculture*.

Human perception of dangers from other humans are however not just limited to the city. Rural humans are also played off against city-dwellers. Sandberg (2013:2) explains that rural populations are often perceived as 'backwards' and as essentially 'lesser' than their metropolitan counterparts. Sandberg (2013:2) further explains that rural groups can become seen as 'deviant' and Other, the Otherness of such groups is then linked to how rural locations are shown/ constructed and perceived. A contemporary example might be *Swamp People* (2010-ongoing) (Figure 25), a reality Television series that shows the Cajun people of the United States of America in a rather dim light. Haynes (2014:250, 257), writing in-depth on this topic, notes how the series relies on camerawork associated with the Horror genre, building the view of the swamp as dangerous and those that inhabit it as similarly dangerous and Other.



Figure 25: Man with Hunted Alligator, *Swamp People*, [sa]. (Distractify 2024:[sp]).

Perhaps one can include here the idea that what underlies such dim views of Others in terms of space, is the level of territoriality that humans exhibit. Evolutionary Ecology, which overlaps with Behavioural Ecology and Social Ecology, is centred around how ecological context can affect evolutionary adaptations (Winterhalder & Smith 2017:5). Part of the evolution for humans seems to have been a favouring of territoriality.¹⁸² Kellert and Calabrese (2017:20) note that being territorial was beneficial to humans because it provided better access to resources and safety, which are built upon by cultural ideas as well as what is ecologically available. Territoriality in humans can be expressed on a grand scale in war, of which one-third of all wars seem to centre around, even if there appears to be no clear benefit to the territory, and territories associated as a ‘homeland’ can be a point of much aggression (Johnson & Toft 2014:1).

This territoriality can be seen in individual concepts like ownership. According to Curry (2016:37) something that indicates territoriality in humans are the various cultural institutions that seek to define and defend ownership, such as laws surrounding land ownership and

¹⁸² Territoriality also exists in other species and seems to be a common evolutionary solution to securing resources, human territoriality has also been investigated in terms of Evolutionary Game Theory (Johnson & Toft 2014:1- 2).

particularly private property. The very concept of ‘stealing’ implies ideas of ownership and the dim moral view of thieves reflects the importance of respecting ownership in a social setting (Curry 2016:37).

In essence, humans establish control over a certain territory, this spatial strategy defines how permeable the territory is, meaning that some are perceived as acceptable to enter and others are not (Yilmaz 2018:134). Human territories are not like animal territories, although there is some overlap. Yilmaz (2018:134) points out some differences that are often used to critique biological studies that do not take human and animal differences into consideration. Yilmaz (2018:134) mentions that humans’ motivations for space usage, needs, and protection strategies of territories are varied and unlike animals. Humans make use of variety of territories, often bound by time, and protecting these various boundaries are not always left up to showing aggression (Yilmaz 2018:134). Human can share space without conflict, but where aggression does come into play, humans often use technology rather than engaging first hand (Yilmaz 2018:134). However, humans do still put up strong boundaries around their perceived territories, often in the name of safety (Osuna 2022:[sp]).

Stazak (2020:[sp]) explains that borders create in-groups and out-groups, there is ‘our space’ and ‘their space’ demarcated by either physical obstructions or performative nuances that seem to construct the validity of the border and thus the separation of ‘us here’ and ‘they there’. Borders, in whatever form, are to Stazak (2020:[sp]) geographical testimonials of manifested Otherness as the ordering of space means in-groups and out-groups are created, their identities connected to *where* they are in relation to where the Others are. Justification for such borders can include historical conflicts, race, religion, ethnicity or language usage, and actual geographical features that separate groups, like rivers or mountains to name but a few (Stazak 2020:[sp]). However, such marks of difference are often accompanied by fear of the Other and the boundary can be drawn in pretext of safety to the in-group from out-group members.

Ji, Tybur and van Vught (2021:[sp]) note that out-group prejudice is a very enduring human trait and point towards the concerns raised by studies done¹⁸³ on United States Citizens where in-group, the majority group, had as a main reason for their prejudice against racial, religious and geographical Others fear, as opposed to Disgust. Osuna (2021:[sp]) points towards the

¹⁸³ Cook, Li, Newell, Cottrell and Neel (2018) as well as Cottrell and Neuberg (2005) were noted by Ji, Tybur and van Vught (2021:[sp]).

Swiss People's Party's use of language when Muslim immigrants are concerned and deduces that the immigrants are painted as unsafe and that their presence will make the known, in-group space not safe. If one brings this back to the Landscape of Fear Theory, then the idea that human threats exist in the landscape is possible, but that certain groups or individuals are portrayed as threats and thus the way in which the risk surrounding their space is perceived might change how one uses space.

In terms of monsters, they cross boundaries as one of their central and consistent features (Bildhauer 2020:198). Or, when a boundary is crossed they respond as its guardians (Tenoglia 2023:40). The monster as Other, might reflect real groups of people (Smith 2021:13), and in this way build on the fear that would lead to prejudice against such a group. The violent human monster might stand in for any out-group, teaching and demonstrating the dangers of that group, but also the dangers of having that group cross into in-group space or crossing into out-group space.

To conclude, human agents as dangerous entities are part of humans' Landscape of Fear and the risk of violence and murder as well as other crimes can lead to changes in how human spaces are actively used. This section has made use of rather contemporary situations, such as the city in its post-industrial phase, where a perception of perceived conspecific violence is attached to abandoned spaces (Tandogan & Ilhan 2016:2012), or the perception of Others and the spaces they inhabit (Schneider 2020:8, 50; Gillette 2020:x). Humans are however territorial (Johnson & Toft 2014:1-2) and Othering can occur on this basis with fear of the Other being cited as a cause (Ji, Tybur & van Vught 2021:[sp]). In terms of monsters, it sets up clear warnings about the boundaries between the spaces of an in-group and an out-group, perhaps feeding into prejudice surrounding risk assessment around navigating certain areas.

4.5.3 The Landscape of Disgust

The Landscape of Peril also contains the Landscape of Disgust. Disgust, generated by the Behavioural Immune System, can help keep individuals safe from infection by avoiding Abject substances and parasites (Schaller 2011:[sp]). Individuals can also keep track of suspicious substances, and objects can become infected both physically, but also symbolically, through this tracking of offensive substances (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]). This subsection posits that if Abject substances can make objects unclean, then Abject acts associated with the

breaking of taboos can make spaces unclean also. These contaminated spaces, associated with past Abject substances or behaviour can then be associated with spaces of risk where the monster might stand as a warning against transgression.

The Behavioural Immune System triggers animals and humans alike to avoid pathogens.¹⁸⁴ Doherty and Ruehle (2020:[sp]) note how possible host animals, having evolved under pressure from parasites and pathogens, are aided by ‘disgust’ in how they navigate their environment, creating a Landscape of Disgust. Weinstein, Buck and Young (2018:1213) explain how animals have evolved to avoid parasites, but unlike in the Landscape of Fear where the emphasis is on predator avoidance, the cues that shape the Landscape of Disgust are more indirect and associations can take more time to form. Still, the Landscape of Disgust, showing perceived risk of infection, actively changes the movements and interactions of animals within the landscape (Berger-Tal & Saltz 2019:[sp]).

Parasites exact a high cost on their hosts, but through implementing certain avoidance behaviours the risk of infection can be lowered. These behaviours include paying very careful attention to conspecifics for signs of infection so that questionable individuals can be avoided (Regenbogen, Axelsson, Lasselin, Porada, Sundelin, Peter, Lekander, Lundström & Olsson 2017:6400). This includes assessing the risk in carrion, as this can carry pathogens for both herbivores and predators (Moleón & Sánchez-Zapata 2021:3), avoiding the dung of predators and increasing or decreasing activity to deter parasites, amongst other behaviours (Weinstein *et al* 2018:1213). The Landscape of Disgust is pictured in simplified manner here (Figure 26).

¹⁸⁴ This concept is discussed in detail in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*, 2.3 *Bioculture and the Monster*, 2.3.5 *Disgust as Biocultural element in the Monster*, 2.3.5.1 *Monster as Other and Scapegoat through Bioculture*.

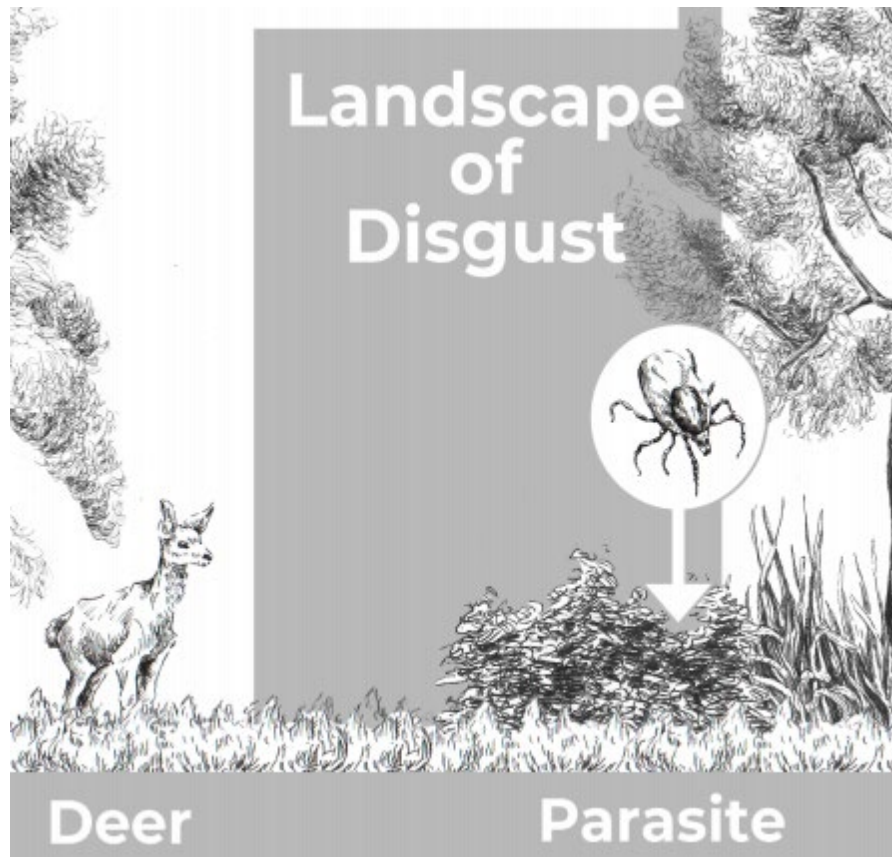


Figure 26: Landscape of Peril detail, Landscape of Disgust, 2025. Image by Author.

Animals have also been shown as adept at avoiding contaminated sources of food. Sarabian, Belais and MacIntosh (2021:[sp]) include in their research on Bonobos (Figure 27) where food contaminated with faecal matter infected with *Balantioides coli* was actively avoided by individuals and informed their foraging and food choices. This entails that the way in which the physical landscape is used to forage depends on the perception of contaminated food sources.



Figure 27: The Bonobo and the Mongoose, Democratic Republic of Congo, 2022. Christian Ziegler. (Natural History Museum [sa]:[sp]).

Albery, Newman, Ross, Macdonald, Bansal and Buesching (2020:1) note in particular the dangers faced by animals that live in dense populations, in that study's case badgers (*Meles meles*) (Figure 28), but explain that such animals change their socio-spatial dynamic to occupy areas that have the lowest parasite risk. The animal's relation to this space is thus highly dependent on the risk of infection. It can also be assumed that established interaction with space should be maintained, in a stable environment, to maintain low infection rates. One can guess here that maintaining such boundaries literally protects from infection.



Figure 28: Photo of European Badger, Brittain, 2022. Photograph by Rachel Bigsby. (@rachelbigsby 2022:[sp]).

Disgust, through the Behavioural Immune System, can also change social dynamics in groups, or between groups, as discussed in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*, 2.3 *Bioculture and the Monster*, 2.3.5 *Disgust as Biocultural element in the Monster*, 2.3.5.1 *Monster as Other and Scapegoat through Bioculture*. Primarily, infected conspecifics are avoided or interaction with them becomes less (Regenbogen *et al* 2017:6400). Similarly, the Behavioural Immune System has been implicated in forming ‘moral’ disgust, and was connected in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*, 2.3 *Bioculture and the Monster*, 2.3.5 *Disgust as Biocultural element in the Monster*, 2.3.5.1 *Monster as Other and Scapegoat through Bioculture*, 2.3.5.1.2 *Moral Disgust* to the Abject in its physicality, but also in the breaking of taboos. Moral Disgust implies a change in the treatment of conspecifics, but here it is also argued that places associated with Moral Disgust become part of the Landscape of Disgust.

Disgust can be seen as a Three-Domain system. Pathogen disgust that protects from infection and parasites, sexual disgust which protects from reproductive strategies that are not beneficial, as well as Moral Disgust which helps maintain norms and keep the community stable (Clasen 2017:15). Moral Disgust¹⁸⁵ is explained by la Rosa and Mir (2013:224) as being related to activities that affect others negatively, incurring a social cost, thus Moral Disgust seems to be a prompt in avoiding such social relationships. It could be inferred here that individuals navigate the landscape with the purpose of avoiding such ‘morally disgusting people’. However, feelings of disgust can be transferred. Pathogen disgust is often tracked from infected individuals onto objects (Russell & Giner-Sorolla 2012:27).¹⁸⁶ This is also true for Moral Disgust.

Moral judgement or condemnation is increased or influenced by pathogen disgust (Piazza, Landy, Chakroff, Young & Wasserman 2018:53). Brain regions that deal with both Moral Disgust, or moral anger and pathogen disgust overlap, although their relationship is more complicated than previously thought (Oaten, Stevenson, Williams, Rich, Buthko & Case 2018:[sp]).¹⁸⁷ To maintain the status quo, or have any effect, the majority of individuals of the

¹⁸⁵ Moral disgust seems to be part of a breakdown of disgust that places sexual disgust as part of what arises from the Behavioural Immune System (la Rosa & Mir 2013:224).

¹⁸⁶ Discussed in detail in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*, 2.3 *Bioculture and the Monster*, 2.3.5 *Disgust as Biocultural element in the Monster*, 2.3.5.1 *Monster as Other and Scapegoat through Bioculture*, 2.3.5.1.1 *Deformity and Ugliness*.

¹⁸⁷ There are overlaps in the areas of moral disgust and ‘core’ disgust, but these areas are activated by ‘core disgust elicitors’ that are dependent on conditions. What was found was that moral anger is also generated

community needs to judge an act ‘offensive’ and enact large scale avoidance, or condemnation (Russell & Giner-Sorolla 2021:142).

Moral Disgust can be aroused by objects, however these are objects that are symbolic of corrupted or corruptible ideas and moral characters, such as music, video games or even symbolic contamination from extremist symbols (Russell & Giner-Sorolla 2021:142).¹⁸⁸ Individuals might also wish to signal Moral Disgust, and although this might just be performative, it places them within certain social situations and dynamics intent on avoiding morally disgusting people or material. This is shown through acting out Moral Disgust, and imitating avoidance or condemnation regardless of the reason, to be more socially acceptable, or because of actual Moral Disgust or anger. This then influences one’s interaction with the environment and others.

If the symbolic status of something, such as labelling something/someone as dirty and actively teaching and spreading this message, can trigger Moral Disgust and condemnation (Curtis, de Barra & Aunger 2011:[sp]). The symbolic value of such items might influence how people navigate space. People may avoid, or respond negatively to, places or individuals that incur pathogen disgust. This includes individuals that show signs of infection, as well as objects and places associated with such illness, places associated with dead bodies, infected food and water as well as areas associated with habitats of parasites. The effect of moral and sexual disgust, either avoidance or even anger, might lead to less interaction with persons, objects and places associated with the breaking of taboos, or symbols that are found morally offensive.

The monster in terms of Disgust can embody physical signs of disgust, such as infection, sexual disgust through deviation or Moral Disgust through its actions. The disgusting monster in its various forms of Abjection can infect its victims (Monteiro, West & Pizarro 2023:165), and its relation to space may be associated with places linked to contamination where it stands as warning. The disgusting monster haunts places with signs of contamination, places associated

from moral. residue where core disgust activations were looked into (Brain regions that deal with both moral and pathogen disgust overlap significantly) (Oaten *et al* 2018:[sp]). Oaten *et al* (2018:[sp]) also explain that morally disgusting content, might also contain ‘core’ disgust, in that it could contain triggering substances such as blood or bodily products, which could account for the overlap.

¹⁸⁸ Anger and disgust share a particular relationship. Some objects and ideas can invoke anger, but not moral disgust (Russell & Giner-Sorolla 2021:142).

with illness and death, such as cemeteries and residences with histories of death, violence and morally corrupt acts.

Some examples show this tendency. In *Pet Sematary* (Lambert 1989) the ‘sour’ ground brings back violent, uncaring, and undead pets, children and spouses. Rotting zombies roam graveyards after reanimation in Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) ready to do violence. *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* (Coppla 1992) as a vivid adaptation of its source material (*Dracula* Stoker 1894) shows Lucy, once kind and innocent, now hunting for children to feed on in her crypt (Figure 29). As Monteiro, West and Pizarro (2023:167) explain, monsters of contagion change their victims, making them like they are, ‘Other’, infected and changed mentally and physically.



Figure 29: Lucy as a Vampire with Child as Food, *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, 1992. (Bass 2019:[sp]).

The Landscape of Disgust can affect the mental map of risk in terms of actual pathogens and parasites (Schaller 2011:[sp]), but also through incurring sexual and Moral Disgust. Just as pathogen disgust allows individuals to include contaminated objects, and by extension spaces, in the map of risk for infection, so too can sexual and Moral Disgust incur avoidance behaviour

of contaminated areas or objects, be it genuine or performative. The disgusting monster then can be associated with such places where signified transgression and infection take place, but also areas that are more likely to cause illness.

4.5.4 Landscape of Peril, Thirdspace, Liminality, Heterotopia and the Monster

When viewing the Landscape of Peril as more than a part of the study of ecology, one might apply Critical Spatiality to it. The Landscape of Peril makes use of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace. The Landscape of Peril can then be connected to the idea of Heterotopias, the Thirdspace of the lived experience of risk that combines categories into a hybrid space where the imaginary and physical meet. This short section explores this approach to the Landscape of Peril and theorises how the monster as a figure and sign of warning fits into space. It links the cultural ideas of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace as well as Heterotopia to the ecological concerns of the Landscape of Peril, which draws on the biological ideas about the Predator Template, conspecific violence and the Behavioural Immune System as discussed in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*.

The connective tissue here between ecology, biology and cultural concepts for investigating space is expressed in a biocultural way. The evolutionary psychology of biology as it overlaps with the environment can be seen as expressed in a cultural sense through Firstspace, Secondspace, Thirdspace and Heterotopia. The underlying impetus, as biology facilitates cultural expression (Caroll *et al* 2017:2), can then be seen as shown through the Landscape of Peril, the use of the Predator Template, Conspecific violence and the Behavioural Immune System. This section presents connected concepts, that have elements of holism, presenting further nodes in a network of understanding human fear of monsters within the spaces humans inhabit, and perceive monsters to co-habit.

The Landscape of Peril presents a mode of spatial practice in that it measures how the perception of space actively shapes, produces and reshapes it, showing the way space is lived in. This idea of how space is actively used and lived in encompasses Thirdspace, as per the readings of spatial theory as proposed by Meskell-Brocken (2020:243). One might break down the Landscape of Peril into three interconnected, interdependent, categories. These include actual physical landscape, the risk that exists in the minds of the animals and humans that use

landscape, and the projection of that mental calculation onto physical space which allows for a particular way in which the space is actually used.

Firstspace can be understood as perceived space. This includes the physical location of places within the environment (Duan 2023:92). Firstspace epistemologies also then look at the direct historical and social impact on the physical space that forms part of the life-world (Beyes 2007:263). Ritzer and Stepnisky (2021:[sp]) further affirm that Firstspace would be the physically observable, and mappable parts of space, but that these features are also influenced by the practices of those that occupy this space. If one looks towards the Landscape of Peril, this could line up with the physical realities of the landscape, such as the placement of trees in Yellowstone as per Laundré, Hernández and Ripple's (2010) original study. One would keep in mind that the way the inhabitants of the space use the space deeply, affects these elements. For example, in Laundré, Hernández and Ripple's (2010) study, fear of predation changed the growth of trees and thus the physical landscape's features.

Secondspace is how space is conceived, connected to the imagination and symbolic thinking about space and can be viewed as 'knowledge' of space (Beyes 2007:263). This abstract thinking on space can be brought back to the Landscape of Peril Theory (Doherty & Ruhle 2020:[sp]) in that the risk animals and humans perceive, influences their thinking on space. The mental map the Landscape of Peril shows, is a conception of a real space shaped by real factors, such as predation, infection and conspecific threat (Doherty & Ruhle 2020:[sp]). Ritzer and Stepnisky (2021:[sp]) particularly point out that Soja's interpretation of Secondspace includes mental maps, connecting the Landscape of Peril's perception of risk firmly to Secondspace. Beyes (2007:263) describes Secondspace as an imagined understanding of a place that is treated as if it is real, which is what one finds when the fear that shaped the Landscape of Peril's mental map actively shapes the landscape

Thirdspace encompasses both the physicality of the space as well as the imagined representation of the space, meaning it encompasses First and Secondspace. Thirdspace is the lived experience of space, always negotiating between First and Secondspace, part of Firstspace and Secondspace (Hitchcock 2008:166). The Landscape of Peril might be considered a demonstration of this principle as the physical landscape influences the reading of risk, creating a mental map which prompts certain behaviour which in turn physically alters the landscape again (Doherty & Ruhle 2020:[sp]; Laundré, Hernández & Ripple 2010:2). When

negotiating the Landscape of Peril, both the physical space and the mental conception of the space is real, creating the lived experience of using the space.¹⁸⁹

Thirdspace is an open, shifting space, that where Second and Firstspace is in flux (Harmer & Lumsden 2019:21). As discussed previously in *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster*, 4.2 *The Monster in Liminal Space in Cultural Monster Studies*, the liminal space of Thirdspace allows for the sign of the monster to have actual effect on Firstspace. In terms of the Landscape of Peril one might infer that risk in the Firstspace allows for the creation of monsters in Secondspace, warnings on mental maps or risk, which then become part of the lived experience in Thirdspace where these spaces overlap and choices about first space use are made.

It can also be inferred that in places where less is known about Firstspace, Secondspace might play a larger role in creating a lived experience of space. The unknown invokes the monster as symbol of danger and thus risk (Aberdein 2020:402), but the risk is not properly assessed or known because of the smaller contribution of Firstspace. The Landscape of Peril has limits for its users¹⁹⁰, and at these limits, across the border into the unknown, on the margin, are mysterious threats which might take on the form of predator, parasite or a conspecific and in the case of the monster, the possibility of all these threats combining. Such places of unknown risk could include far-off places, like ‘the wild’, places that are closer, but not properly in use, such as abandoned buildings, or perhaps the inner body, its working unseen, dependent on Secondspace, and yet intimately felt.

In terms of Heterotopias, the Landscape of Peril’s existence as a Thirdspace can also be seen as part of a Heterotopia. Since Heterotopias are more than the sum of their parts and present areas of hybridity, like the mixing of physical and imaginary, or abstract concepts, areas within the Landscape of Peril may be seen as Heterotopias. Areas of elevated risk for predation, parasites and conspecific aggression are avoided (Laundré, Hernández & Ripple 2010; Doherty

¹⁸⁹ This seems to fall into Lefebvre’s (1991) idea that space is actively produced. West-Pavlov (2009:19) explains Lefebvre’s notion that space is comprised of the social relationships and actions of individuals within an environment. One might here call to mind the interactions of animals with each other and the landscape as they avoid risk, thus physically changing the environment (Gallager *et al* 2017:[sp]). Lefebvre’s (1991:73) notion extends to interaction shaping the physical environment, but also the environment shaping physical agents who inhabit it. This can perhaps be seen here in terms of the animals and humans being prompted by the landscape to act in evasive ways, or perhaps the long journey of evolution’s constant adaptation to the environment.

¹⁹⁰ Animals and humans have certain ranges within which they move, having familiar and unfamiliar environments as well as limits to the perceptions of these environments, such as prior knowledge or what their senses can perceive.

& Ruhle 2020:[sp]). If one here considers the cultural and societal structuring of space, for example in cities, these areas of evasion can result in the abandonment and isolation of the areas, pushing them and their implied connection to deviance to the margins (Curiel & Bishop 2018:2).

The space holds the possibility to be more than itself, its presence extends beyond the physical, the past that incurred the reading of risk, and the new association with it as a dangerous place, that is, projecting into the future to determine future actions, the space now associated with past, present, and future all at once. Areas of risk that are avoided are coded as dangerous. To enter such an area, one faces the scrutiny of one's peers in their reason for entrance into the space, challenging one's social relations perhaps. To enter the Heterotopia of Risk, preparations must be made, because it is on the margins, warnings must be ignored, the structured, safe sphere of the in-group is left behind and the separated individual or group can enter a liminal space, where risk exists, real and imagined, perhaps informed by literature on monsters or 'monsterised' Others.

In essence, the Landscape of Peril might be read as a demonstration of the navigation of Thirdspace in terms of fear and risk of harm by conspecifics, predators and parasites. The ecological observation of reading risk into a landscape can help show how the monster functions in the landscape in both a biological and cultural way. From a cultural perspective the monster is a sign of warning, but it draws on a system of signification that includes how space is perceived, conceived and lived in, combining ideas of Soja's spatial trialectic. With areas of risk being hybrid spaces of the physical and the imagined, they are also Heterotopias, spaces on the margin wherein the imaginary monster can influence perception and behaviour.

The monster in its unnameable aspect has a slightly different connection to space, particularly in its relation to the Landscape of Peril. As an undefined entity, it is Sublime, much like the Sublime perception of an awe-inspiring landscape (Beville 2014:74-81), but this also links it more closely to the place, rather than its own form. The place of the unnameable in the Landscape of Peril, and its lack of signification (Beville 2014:59) is explored here.

The monster in its unnameable aspect can then also be closely linked to space. Maria Beville (2014:74-81) when discussing the Unnameable Monster in terms of Grendel's mother (Figure 30), makes several points in relating this monster to the Sublime wilderness the monster seems

to inhabit. Beville (2014:80) explains that the monster as ‘thing’ is obscured and aided by the Sublime space she inhabits, the space itself a danger in its treacherous geography, far away from social order and yet uncharitable and uncertain in the ‘natural order’. What seems of the greatest importance here, is the connection between the Sublime space and the ‘thing’ as part of its incomplete expression. Although this study does not focus on the Sublime as such, it is of interest here that the notion of the Sublime is deeply entwined with both the landscape and the monster as an unnameable thing. Prof Shrader (2024) notes that among the risks associated with navigating the landscape are also natural barriers, what he refers to as *Landscape of Accident* where the risk of accidents in the landscape is heightened. This could include spaces with geographies that humans have learned to be wary of since some physicality of place makes it difficult for the human form to traverse.



Figure 30: Charles Keeping, *Grendel's Mother Wrestling Beowulf*, 1982. (Keeping & Crossley-Holland 1982:31).

The Sublime is often connected to space, in most cases with the pristine, overpowering presence of nature in a physical and metaphysical way (Shapsay 2021:124). Kane (2019:134) places the feeling of the Sublime as a state in between, confusing pain and pleasure, control, chaos, reason and insanity. Newton ([sa]:2) upon discussing fog as liminal and Sublime, notes liminality as a

state in which the self experiences disorientation, the sense of self may shrink before the unknown and in this state one might encounter the Sublime.

Sublime as connected to space can also be viewed in terms of Thirdspace. The notion of the Sublime in nature facilitates a meeting between real and physical spaces (Roncken 2018:76, 165), their implied, imagined and symbolic value impacting upon the individual to be experienced as a Sublime space. The space of the Sublime is not limited to physical space then, but extends into the realm of ideas, into the metaphysical (Shapsay 2021:137). The Sublime landscape in fact extends so far into the realm of ideas and conceived space, that it fails to be properly expressed through symbols and ideas.

The monster of the Sublime landscape then also fails to be properly expressed by language and symbols, its lack of definition being part of its definition and its Sublime nature (Beville 2014:59). Bowers (2017:76) discusses the Arctic as a site of the Sublime in Gothic novels, and notes that the bleakness and openness of the space leaves room for the fantastical (Figure 31). Similarly, in the spaces of hidden and mysterious terrain, where uncertainty surrounds the endless possibilities of the Sublime, there too enters the undefined anxiety of the supernatural.¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ Roncken (2018:212) explains this as the idea that horror in landscapes might appear real to children at a certain time, yet real 'horror filled' landscapes can be explored by them. One could argue that this is not just true for children.

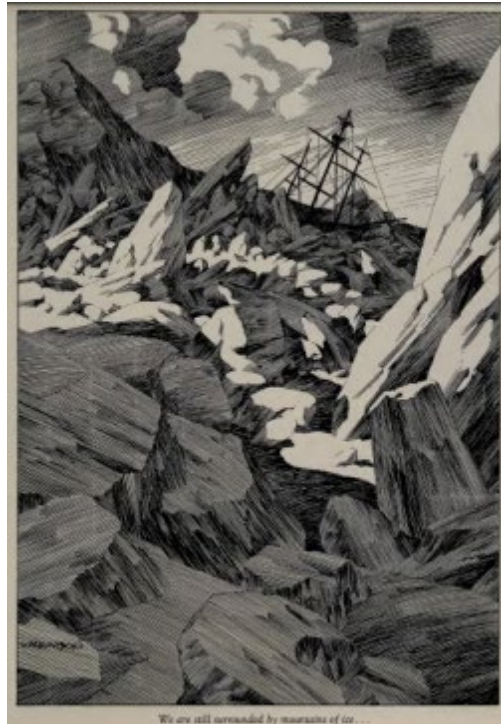


Figure 31: Bernie Wrightson, *Ship in the Arctic Ice*, 1994. (Wrightson 1994:179).

In terms of the Sublime, one can then also here better understand the Unnameable Monster by noting the Kantian notion of the ‘Thing in itself’ (Beville 2014:54-56). The ‘Thing in itself’ exists beyond what humans can perceive and beyond ‘sensible intuition’ (Kant 2004 [1781]:[sp]). Rockmore (2011:49) links the ‘Thing in itself’ to noumena, which cannot be fully known, thus not cognised and not accurately represented.¹⁹² Beville (2014:55) interprets and explains this as that which exists independently from the individual, existing in an excess that cannot be depicted.¹⁹³ It shows the lack between the noumenal and the phenomenal, beyond cognition but part of a transcendental Real (Beville (2014:56).

As undefined as the physicality of the wilderness is, and as inexplicable as the Sublime metaphysical ideas that touch on it are, so too are the unnamed monsters from this area. The Sublime ‘thing’ as an object that evokes the Sublime always falls short. Žižek (1998:203) explains that such an object fails to fully capture the Sublime, its shortcoming frustrating, yet pleasing in acknowledging the incomprehensibility of the Sublime. The Sublime thing is a paradox, constantly in tension between reason’s comprehension and imagination’s failure of representation (Kant 2001:24-26). Lacan, according to Beville (2014:61), holds the Sublime as

¹⁹²Heavily debated, interpreted and re-interpreted.

¹⁹³ Here Beville (2014:56) refers to Hegel and his writings about the gap between intellect and perception.

impossible, a lack in the phenomenal world, falling between the imagination and the symbolic.¹⁹⁴

According to Beville (2014:60), the impossibility to comprehend the Sublime, often makes the monster as ‘Thing’ into a form without form, revealed only in parts by films like *The Thing* (Carpenter 1982) (Figure 18). Beville (2014:60) relates the idea of the ‘thing’ in its endless capacity to reform, to Lacan’s Lamella.¹⁹⁵ However, the tendency to but partially reveal could coincide with the notion that the Sublime nature of it cannot be represented as a whole, and in this way coincides with the perception of the Sublime wilderness, only glimpsed in parts and not present as a whole.

In terms of the Landscape of Peril, the Unnameable Monster is the unformed monster that stands in for all the triggers, predators, human enemies and contagions but is not clearly represented as any of these. It maintains the ‘possibility’ as a ‘thing’ of any of the things mentioned above. Where it is within the landscape might make up a significant part of how it is perceived, the landscape’s features standing in for it, as in the case of Grendel’s Mother where the swamp becomes a stand-in for her body, the widespread folkloric Erl-king’s inseparability with the forest¹⁹⁶ and Frankenstein’s Monster’s intertangling with the Alps (Beville 2014:74-81, 115).

The dread of the landscape, the risk of harm, stands here unclearly represented in the Unnameable Monster. In essence, it marks a place where anything can happen, a place where one can be morally and physically contaminated, or hunted by animals and humans, its vagueness coalesces perhaps the fear of the space itself. This ominous space, where the unknown lurks can then also be a Heterotopia, as Beville (2014:136, 158-159) explains, a meeting with the Unnameable Monster can be appropriately handled in such a separate, real and unreal space, where Otherness is profound and emphasised. The Unnameable Monster is a signifier for the unknown, according to Strid (2020:17), perhaps one can extend this to space in terms of the unknown threats.

¹⁹⁴ Beville (2014:61) refers here to Lacan and psychoanalysis, particularly his three orders and the Real.

¹⁹⁵ The idea of the Lamella is expressed by Beville (2014:59-60) by drawing on work by Lacan and Žižek

¹⁹⁶ Beville (2014:110) discussed the Erl-King as a folkloric trope as per the work of Angela Carter, explaining how this being has roots in Danish, Celtic and Nordic traditions, as well as being included in poetry and is often associated with Romanticism as an unnameable entity entangled with the forest.

Cohen (1996:45) explains that the monster escapes, reforming continuously into something that remains culturally relevant. However, he (Cohen 1996:45) also notes how interpreting monsters relies on the fragments they leave behind, the footprints and traces. The body itself is never found and always beyond reach. However, Beville (2014:104) notes that the Unnameable Monster, its body unobtainable and unseen, leaves traces on the landscape, the negative remains captured by the land itself. One might here refer to the Landscape of Peril, where Risk about predators, conspecifics and contamination is hidden, and the signs of something definite, yet unclear and possibly unfriendly remain, the space itself hiding the danger, as its accomplice.

To conclude, the Unnameable Monster, is like other monsters in that it is liminal, connected to Thirdspace and Heterotopias, which are congruent with the theory of the Landscape of Peril as shown in this chapter. However, the Unnameable Monster presents an aspect of the monstrous that is beyond simple symbolic representation, and perhaps shows an overlap of all the cues of Risk in the Landscape of Peril, the fear in the landscape being Sublime and thus expressed through a Sublime ‘thing’.

4.6 CONCLUSION

To conclude, this section has investigated how the monster is tied up with space through a Biocultural lens. The monster’s relationship to borders, as culturally taught borders as well as borders enacted on the landscape was explored here to show that the monster is tied to space and how people perceive of and perhaps even use, space.

From a cultural perspective, the monster is tied up with the border as its guardian, but also crosses boundaries (Cohen 1996:49-52). Monsters punish those who transgress, demonstrating what happens to deviance when a taboo is broken, a culturally constructed line is crossed on geographical space (Weinstock 2020:25; Harris 2014:117). The monster is a liminal being (Byhars & Broedel 2018:[sp]) that lives on the border, where a Thirdspace is created that allows for hybridisation (Beghetto 2022:20), such as Heterotopias which reflect society’s fears like monsters do (Vincent 2020:160). The monster’s relationship to Thirdspace was explored in more detail as per the Spatial Turn and the work of Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1996). Heterotopias and their facilitating of the monster was investigated as per the writing of Foucault (1986).

Bioculturally, the theory of the Landscape of Peril, as per Landré, Hernández and Ripple (2010) and Doherty and Ruhle (2020:[sp]) was used to investigate how the monster interacts with biological cues of navigating the Landscape of Fear and Disgust, which includes fear of predators, human enemies and contamination. The Landscape of Fear and the monster stand as a warning against possible real predators that might have been a threat to humans, the aim being to get humans to avoid certain areas perceived to have a higher predation risk. The Landscape of Fear also includes other humans (Landré, Hernández & Ripple 2010:1), particularly territorial humans (Johnson & Toft 2014:1-2) that often create ingroups and outgroups (Stazak 2020:[sp]), Othering and 'monstering' the out-group. How humans navigate space in relation to Other humans and the perceived territory of Others is also reflected in monsters that represent Others, showing the Other as violent, worthy of fear and thus a risk to be avoided in the Landscape of Fear.

The Landscape of Disgust, as it forms part of the Landscape of Peril, shows disgust and avoidance of infectious substances as triggered by the Behavioural Immune System (Schaller 2011:[sp]). Through the Law of Contamination, objects and by extension places may be seen as 'disgusting' or unclean (Russell & Giner-Sorolla 2012:27). A place can then remain symbolically disgusting due to pathogen detection in the past, or because of a symbolic link to something morally disgusting (Russell & Giner-Sorolla 2012:27). Areas associated with disgusting Othered humans can also be perceived as dangerous and may be assessed as a risk. The monster of disgust, or Contagion as per Monteiro, West and Pizarro (2023:165) infects its victims, but the places such a monster is associated with are spaces also associated with infection, morally or physically.

Finally, the Landscape of Peril was assessed in terms of liminality, Thirdspace and Heterotopias in relation to the monster. The Landscape of Peril was shown to be a Thirdspace as it is a measurable manifestation of overlapping Firstspace with mental maps of risk as ideas about space, making that Secondspace, that affected and changed Firstspace. The monster carrying cues of harm in this system would form part of how the space is perceived and highlight areas of risk perception in Secondspace, which might lead to a different use of Firstspace and can express this overlapping, which makes it an entity of Thirdspace. Such elevated areas of risk, places haunted by monsters, may also fall under areas that can be seen as Heterotopias. To meet the monster, one must enter into a liminal space, where real and unreal merge, where the story of the monster creates a space that is accessible only through

participation, time as one receives the story. The Unnameable Monster in its absence and excess can then also find expression in relation to the space it inhabits.

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CHAPTER 5: AN OVERVIEW OF THE *EVIL UDUG* IN CONTEXT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the research done here is to show that contemporary and ancient monsters, including Unnameable Monsters, exhibit the characteristics discussed in the previous chapters, particularly the underlying biological and ecological understanding that shaped them. The aim of this chapter is to investigate one of the most ancient, documented, monsters to later compare it to a contemporary monster, the alien, as per the Science Fiction Horror genre. This is done to show that the biological impetus in humans to create and partake in monster stories transcend culture, space and time, but is deeply orientated by these elements when expressed. The cultural context of the *Evil Udug* needs to be understood so that the Biocultural elements the monster carries in terms of fear can be investigated. The cultural context is also highly relevant in relation to the cultural meaning of spaces associated with the *Evil Udug*, allowing for a more in depth reading of the fears it carries culturally and biologically in *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space*

As an example of ancient monstrosity, the Ancient Mesopotamian *Forerunners to the Udug-hul*¹⁹⁷ texts are investigated. These texts have been in circulation for up to 2000 years, showing their continuing appeal of the entities described within. One of the classes of entities is focused on more in-depth, the *Evil Udug*, but other categories of entities mentioned within are also noted where relevant. Briefly, the text concerns the exorcism of many possible entities, the *Evil Udug* being one such entity that cause sickness.

Forerunners to the Udug-hul: Sumerian Exorcism Incantations are used as a primary source, as per Geller's 1985 translation, together with his corrections to this translation made in 2016 (Geller 2016:542) from original tablets (Figure 1 & 37). The history of these texts and how they came to be in the form that Geller (1985) translated is also explored here to better show the context and limitations of this study.

The background against which these texts were written, used and distributed is of great importance as it provides social, cultural and historical context which impacts the meaning and

¹⁹⁷ The particular spelling is taken from Geller (1985).

understanding of the *Udug-hul Forerunners*. This research undertaking then provides a short overview of the culture and history from which these texts arose, particularly focusing on the Sumerian roots of the *Udug-hul Forerunners*. The use of the texts, as well as those who made use of them is included here in context of magical and exorcism practices, together with a brief discussion of the deities involved.

A brief summary of the *Udug-hul Forerunners* is provided as per Geller's (1985 & 2016) work. The aim of this summary is to orient the reader in terms of the basic intents and content of the text, but also to show the *Evil Udug*'s place in its original context. The focus of the summary is the characteristics ascribed to the *Evil Udug*, especially since it is very ill-defined. The seminal source's description is of great importance, particularly its references to the landscape, animals, humans and illness.

Lastly a discussion of the *Evil Udug* as a monstrous entity is included. The work of Geller (2011) and Konstantopoulos (2017) are used in particular. Both of these authors, amongst others that are used here, present the *Evil Udug* as a very mysterious entity, with very few descriptions of visual representations of its actual form. The aim of this final discussion is to show that the *Evil Udug* exhibits characteristics of an Unnameable Monster.

5.2 UDUG-HUL AND UDUG-HUL FORERUNNER SOURCES

The *Udug-hul* is an Ancient Mesopotamian exorcism text consisting of cuneiform tablets which were an aid to *āšipu* priests^{198 199} (Geller 2005:134). *Āšipu* priests used these rituals and incantations as they went about protecting supplicants from malevolent beings, as well as exorcising such harmful entities (Loisel 2011:323). The text includes the many possible afflictions, spiritual causes of ailments as well as the exorcism of such evil spiritual entities²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ The *āšipu*, an Akkadian term for one who 'practises the art of exorcism' (*āšipūtu*) (Geller 2016:27) was a particular priest who specialised in Incantations and Magic and stood apart from the *asû* priest who was considered to be more of a physician (Konstantopoulos 2017:22).

¹⁹⁹ The spelling for the translation of *āšipu* is taken from Geller (2005).

²⁰⁰ The *Forerunners to Udug-hul*, as per Geller's 1985 translation and 2016 update lists many such ailments of which only a few examples are included here, like breaking an oath as a cause for demonic illness (Tablet III, Line 21,22) (Geller 1985:21), demons like the *Ala Demon* that envelops (Tablet III, Line 183) (Geller 1985:31), the ghost that kills one (Tablet III, Line 184) (Geller 1985:31) and the Seven (Tablet V, Line 386-418) (Geller 1985:43-45). Furthermore, rituals that involve making noise (Tablet VIII, Line 786-788, 792-793) (Geller 1985:75), using *šemuš* flour (Tablet VII, Line 789) (Geller 1985:75) and plants (Tablet VII, Line 785) (Geller 1985:75), to name but a few items and practices, tell the exorcist how to drive off the demons.

(Geller 2016:4). Various ancient iterations, as well as contemporary translations, of these texts exist. This subsection aims to give background as to the sources that are used to look into the *Udug-hul Forerunners* to better understand the *Evil Udug* entity as an ancient monster.

The *Udug-hul* texts have existed, and have been circulated in, a multitude of forms for thousands of years. McNamara (2011:109) explains how the older *Udug-hul* texts can be dated to around 2300 BCE²⁰¹, together with newer additions from around 300 BCE, showing over 2000 years of use and interest. Geller (1985:4-5) notes that the *Udug-hul Forerunners* (UHF) existed already in the Old Babylonian Period, although here these individual incantations do not fall into a series just yet since it is unlike the later sixteen tablet collection with a clear rubric. Geller (2016:4) in his later work also notes that the *Udug-hul* had relations to even older Sumerian incantation texts dating back to Ur Period III. Later versions of the text even contained Greek translations (Geller 2016:5).

Geller (2016:5;1999:49) states that the *Udug-hul* texts come from original Sumerian unilingual spells, (*Udug-hul Forerunners*) which later became the sixteen tablet, 2000 lines bilingual incantation series, known as *Udug-hul-a-kam* (Sumerian) and *Utukkū Lemnūtu* (Akkadian), which included more Akkadian add-ons. The *Utukkū Lemnūtu*, version is better known, but the Sumerian ‘forerunners’ are older, and are the particular focus of Markham J. Geller, in his *Forerunners to the Udug-hul: Sumerian Exorcism Incantations*, published in 1985 and amended and updated in 2016 (Geller). Importantly McGrath ([sa]:1) distinctly notes a difference in content between the Old Babylonian monolingual *Udug-hul Forerunners* (UHF) and the bilingual sixteen tablet *Udug-hul* (UH) canonical texts even though there is an overlap in content. Geller (1985:4) explains that Tablets III-VIII of the *Udug-hul* (UH) overlap with the *Udug-hul Forerunners* (UHF).

Before Geller’s (1985) *Forerunners to the Udug-hul: Sumerian Exorcism Incantations*, as well as other translations of the bilingual *Utukkū Lemnūtu/Udug-hul* by Geller (2007), there was the work of R. Campbell Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia*, published in 1903. Oshima (2016:463) reviewing Geller’s 2007 *Evil Demons: Canonical Utukkū Lemnūtu*

²⁰¹ McNamara (2011:109) notes that these incantations are in Old Akkadian, however Geller (2016:5), who is a specialist in this field notes Sumerian versions coming from the third millennium BCE. Furthermore, in an earlier work Geller (1985:3) explains that the older tablets hail from the *Old Akkadian period*, thus not limited to the language of Akkadian. Mirelman (2018:6) also notes the Sumerian *Udug-hul* incantations as Old Babylonian.

Incantations, explains that Thompson's (1903) translations of the series were incomplete. Kitz (2016:449) states that Thompson's (1903) translations did use the bilingual *Utukkū Lemnūtu/Udug-hul* tablets, but as Geller (2016:5) remarks, Thompson's (1903) translations combined different copies of the text into one, not properly addressing the differences.

The main problem with Thompson's (1903) translation, in relation to the focus this research, is his naming of various entities listed in the *Utukkū Lemnūtu/Udug-hul* tablets with approximated Western terms, particularly the word 'demon'. In terms of using 'demon' in relation to the entities found in the *Udug-hul*, such as *Lama*, *Galla*, *Alad* and *Udug*, Black and Green (2004 [1992]:98) point out that this term glosses over the original class of the beings in question, as well as their neutral attributes. Konstantopoulos (2017:10) similarly notes the incorrect application of the word 'demon' to Ancient Near Eastern and Mesopotamian entities, and explains that in general it does not express the variability of the entities involved.²⁰² It is of great importance then that Geller's (1985) *Forerunners to the Udug-hul: Sumerian Exorcism Incantations* maintains the original names of the relevant beings, like the *Evil Udug*.

It then follows that Geller's (1985) *Forerunners to the Udug-hul: Sumerian Exorcism Incantations*, taking into account his 2016 amendments, are used herein as a source in terms of investigating the *Udug*, particularly the *Evil Udug*. Although earlier translations exist, Geller's (1985 & 2016) are nuanced and contain older versions of the incantations against *Evil Udugs*. Particularly the *Udug-hul Forerunners*, which overlap with tablet 3-8 of the later *Udug-hul* series, are used, due to their greater age. This means that the descriptions Geller's (1985 & 2016) version of the text offers a written account of some of the most ancient expressions of the human fear of the monster.

5.3 THE *UDUG-HUL* IN CONTEXT

The *Udug-hul Forerunners* are primarily exorcism texts which contain incantations against evil entities. As discussed above, different variations of this Ancient Mesopotamian text existed, but for this study the Sumerian forerunners are explored. More focus is placed on the Old Babylonian and Sumerian context that surrounded the creation of the texts as well as the context of their implied users and audience. The historical context is explained by including a

²⁰² Konstantopoulos (2015:10) does however provide alternatives and notes the 'demon' can be used when looking at the entities considered as shifting.

short investigation of Sumer, along with an exploration of the genre of incantation texts and important literary styles, which lends deeper meaning to the text. Within this exploration special attention is paid to the aim of the texts, exorcism, and what it meant to its contemporary audience. Furthermore, the users and enactors are also taken into consideration, being here the *āšipu* priests.

Sumer was part of Ancient Lower Mesopotamia, Mesopotamia being Greek for ‘Between the Rivers’, particularly the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, in the Fertile Crescent or Levant (de Almeida & de Fátima Rosa 2023:138-139). Today Ancient Mesopotamia’s location would stretch over Iraq, southeastern Turkey, and northeastern Syria (Ur 2014:1). The present climate seems to be similar to the climate in this region about 8000 years ago, with fertile zones around the rivers, extended by ancient and contemporary canals for irrigation (Kuiper 2011:17-19), and harsh arid regions with low rainfall surrounding this (Crawford 2013:35). The area had a flat fertile plain with marshes in the south (Crawford 2013:1), running up against the Zagros Mountains (Figure 78) in the northeast, the Arabian Plateau in the southwest, and the Anti-Taurus Mountains in the northwest (Kuiper 2011:17-18; de Almeida & de Fátima Rosa 2023:139), ending against the ocean in the Persian Gulf (Figure 32) (Crawford 2013:13). The arid natural boundary of the Syrian and Arabian Deserts contributes to this landscape (de Almeida & de Fátima Rosa 2023:139). Ur (2013:131) describes the landscape as ‘dynamic’ and notes the influence this had on early settlers, subsequent civilisations and cultures of the region.



Figure 32: Peter Kessler, *Map of Sumer and Elam*, 2008. (Kessler 2013:[sp]).

The Sumerian period is one of the oldest and most intriguing time periods of Ancient Mesopotamia. Between 10000 BCE and 4000 BCE agricultural societies formed in Southern Mesopotamia, Sumer, as hunter-gatherers took on this new way of life (Hamilton 2019:[sp]). Sumer is regarded as Mesopotamia's first civilisation, and indeed one of the oldest civilisations on earth (Kula 2023:V, 21), with their writing being the first example of a written language in human history (Kuiper 2011:42). This was also corroborated by a more recent source, Punia, Schenk, Chiarcos and Pagé-Perron in 2020.²⁰³ Head (2017:[sp]) similarly attests to the great age of the Sumerian civilisation, including their writing system, the literature they produced, architecture, administrative skills, cities, art, and music, stating that it is the oldest civilisation that humans have yet discovered on the planet.^{204 205}

²⁰³ This was discussed in their overview of Sumerian in research that aims to automatically translate Sumerian texts (Punia *et al* 2020:[sp]).

²⁰⁴ Collins (2021:15-16) notes the difficulty in contemporary scholarship when it comes to explaining and using terms such as 'civilisation', particularly as there is a focus on semantics. Collins (2021:15-16) writes in particular on the Sumerians and their impact on and imagining within the 'West' explaining that many of the ideas that are seen as part of 'civilisation' are dependent on Western ideas. However one may deconstruct the notion of 'civilisation', the literature of Sumer is the oldest within the Archaeological record (Anna & Cecilia 2023:30), showing many complex systems and cultural understandings worthy of study.

²⁰⁵ There are several Figures shown in this research document with examples of art, architecture, cities and other cultural products, however not all of these are strictly Sumerian. Where relevant the appropriate examples are mentioned and shown, often as general examples of the culture of the region.

Sumerian history can be divided into several periods. Loosely, there are two periods, before 2300 BCE which encompasses the time of Sumerian being spoken as the language of various city-states with shifting alliances, and after, when other nations ruled over the area (Head 2017:[sp]). More detailed periods are often named by scholars²⁰⁶, but there seems to be inconsistency in the dating. Birch (2013:116) explains that the dating of the fourth and third millennium BCE is vague, leading to a reluctance in most scholars on the subject to put precise dates to the time periods involved, although she does suggest the use of a chronological framework. Looking at the general chronology provided by Birch (2013:116), Black *et al* (2004:xvii), Bertman (2003:340), Mark (2019:[sp]), and Arnold (2020:[sp]) the following periods emerge: Ubaid Period²⁰⁷, Uruk Period, Early Dynastic Period, Akkadian Period, Gutian Period, and Ur Period III. The subsequent periods are no longer considered Sumerian history but include the Old Babylonian and Old Assyrian period, the Assyrian Period, Neo-Babylonian Period, the Persian era, and the Hellenistic Period (Bertman 2003:340).²⁰⁸ What is of greatest relevance here, would be Ur Period III as it marks the origin of the texts investigated in this study, the *Forerunners to the Udug-hul*.

Ur Period III is sometimes referred to as the *Sumerian Renaissance* (Kula 2023:31). This is because after years of being ruled by foreign powers, Sumerian became of interest again, but the Akkadian and Amorite parts of the population continued to absorb the few remaining Sumerians (Baizerman 2011:54). Cotterell (2017:63) explains that Ur Period III was the ‘swan song’ for Sumerian Culture. The Sumerians had been on the decline after defeats by Semites, such as Sargon of Akkad (Figure 33), and the defeat of Ur in 2004 BCE led to an invasion by

²⁰⁶ Ubaid period (5000-4000 BCE), Uruk period (4000-3000 BCE), Early Dynastic period (3000-2350 BCE), Old Akkadian or Sargonic period (2350-2230 BCE) and Third Dynasty of Ur, the Sumerian Renaissance (2112-2004 BCE) (Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zólyomi 2004:xvii). Or, Ubaid (5800-4000 BCE), Uruk Period (3750– 3150 BCE), Early Dynastic Period (2900–2334 BCE.), Akkadian Period (2334–2193 BCE) and Neo-Sumerian Period, which includes the Third Dynasty of Ur (2112–2004 BCE) (Bertman 2003:340). These time periods are generalisations, for a comprehensive overview of each, see Marc van de Mieroop’s book, *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000-323 BC, Third Edition*, published 2016. A comprehensive and detailed timeline is provided at the end of the book, which ranges from the development of Agriculture in the region to Alexander the Great’s entrance and death in Babylon. Another more contemporary timeline notes the following periods and dates: Ubaid period (5000-4100 BCE), The Uruk Period (4100-2900 BCE), Early Dynastic period (2900-2334 BCE), Akkadian Empire period (2334 – 2218 BCE), Gutian period (2218-2047 BCE), Third Dynasty of Ur, the Sumerian Renaissance (2047-1940 BCE) (Mark 2019:[sp]).

²⁰⁷ This period, as well as the others, can be subdivided further. Adamo and Al-Anasari (2020:5-16) further subdivide this period and discuss it in detail.

²⁰⁸ Bertman (2003:340) dates these periods as follows: Old Babylonian and Assyrian Period (2000-1600 BCE), Middle Assyrian Period (1600–1000 BCE), Neo-Assyrian Period (1000–605 BCE), Neo-Babylonian Period (625- 539 BCE), The Persian Period (539-331 BCE) and The Hellenistic Period (331–126 BCE).

Elamites (Cotterell 2017:63). Particularly the Gutians had been troublesome to the Sumerians also (Kriwaczek 1997:130; Chao 2022:1-2).



Figure 33: *Head of Sargon The Great*, circa 2300-2200 BCE. Bronze Sculpture, 30.7cm²⁰⁹. The Iraq Museum, Baghdad. (Annenberg Learner 2024:[sp]).

The Sumerian revival of Ur Period III is dated to 2100 BCE, the kings of which created an upliftment of Sumerian culture and language (Heinz 2013:180). King Utu-hegal of Uruk is credited with driving the Gutians from Mesopotamia and making the Sumerian city of Ur the seat of the king (Kriwaczek 1997:130; Chao 2022:1-2). Since the kingship was in Ur for the third time the period is named Ur Period III in contemporary times, this information comes from the Sumerian Kings' Lists that show Ur listed a third time here (Van de Mieroop 2016:[sp]; Kuiper 2011:60). Birsch (2013:123) notes that Ur period III was founded by Ur-Nammu of Ur, who was perhaps a brother or son of King Utu-hegal, and that he initiated many building projects and administrative reforms which were continued and refined by his son and successor Šulgi.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ The complete sizing of the original in The Iraq Museum seems lacking, however a replica, larger than the original, in the British Museum is well documented. This depiction is often assumed to be the ruler known as Sargon of Akkad, but there is some debate as to the identity of the likeness (Amineddoleh 2015:28).

²¹⁰ The translation for the name Šulgi was taken from Birsch (2013).

Moser (2015:[sp]) explains that particularly Ur-Nammu and Šulgi used Sumerian as the administrative language, but this does not necessarily reflect how the language was used in everyday interactions. Šulgi intervened in scribal education, which led to the preservation of older Sumerian texts as well as the creation of new texts which were concerned with extolling his own greatness (Mark 2022:[sp]; Cooper 2015:6, 7). At this time texts were also being written in a bilingual format, being Sumerian and Akkadian, this then mirrors the use of Akkadian whilst Sumerian began to decline as a spoken language as opposed to a written language (Taylor 2013:300).

In this period there was a strong focus on bureaucracy and administration, leading to texts being created of meticulous documentation on a great many subjects (Widell 2013:55, 56).²¹¹ There is clear documentation of political events, calculations of harvests, and many aspects of the economic milieu (Van de Mieroop 2016:[sp]). Part of the wealth of texts dating from this period is a myriad of texts called ‘incantation texts’ and ritual texts that captured the Sumerians’ fascinating magical and religious practices.

Ancient Mesopotamia, in general, had texts which, through an agent, were believed to shield people from harm or to cause harm, intervening in a way that del Omo Lette (2014:1) defines as magical practice.²¹² Said (2018:[sp]) of the Metropolitan Museum of Art explains that the magical practices of Ancient Mesopotamians were laid down through the years in the available cuneiform texts. These texts include the techniques and spells of practitioners, substances which aided the process, as well as various interpretations of natural phenomenon as divinations (Said 2018:[sp]).²¹³ Further elements of such practices involve protection from, and exorcism of, evil entities which were believed to cause illness (Annus 2019:2486). Illness, as well as many other public and private maladies, were believed to be caused by ‘witches’ as well and their connections with demons (Abusch 2020:4), protection from which could also be found through magical texts (Abusch & Schwemer 2016:xi).

²¹¹ Administrative texts that have been found from this period numbered around 120000 in 2013 (Birsch 2013:123).

²¹² Van Binsbergen and Wiggerman (1999:1-36) provide an overview of approaches as to how magic has been investigated in Ancient Near Eastern scholarship, which proposes a holistic approach amongst others. For this study, however, the texts deemed as Magical in nature or subject are not investigated to ascertain a more complete political or hegemonic understanding of their creators but rather focus on the cultural expressions that are underlined by biological structures.

²¹³ Said (2018:[sp]) focuses more on later texts, such as Neo-Assyrian and Babylonian, but as a general statement about such texts it can be seen as appropriate.

Practitioners of such magic were not automatically bad, but rather there were those who practised ‘black magic’ and ‘white magic’ (del Omo Lette 2014:183). Of these practitioners, those who practised ‘White Magic’ frequently called on the aid of various gods, while ‘witches’ made use of evil spirits (Abusch 2020:4,177). Del Omo Lette (2014:1) .explains that those who practised with the intent to harm were called witches or sorcerers (*kaššāpu/kaššāptu*) (Akkadian) whilst practitioners who helped were referred to as exorcists or magicians (*āšipu, mašmašu*), and physicians (*asû*).²¹⁴ The *asû* were skilled in medicinal practice, which included surgery as well as herbal knowledge and remedies (Teall 2014:2). The *āšipu* or *mašmašu* practised medicine in a religious way, determining the connection of ailments to the metaphysical realm (Teall 2014:2).²¹⁵ When considering the roles and functions of priests and incantation texts, Manader (2010:25) points out that Ancient Mesopotamia shared many basic concepts across the different periods of its long history. This implies that the general understanding of these practitioners can be used when looking at the *Evil Udug*.

Koch (2016:6) explains how the *āšipu* was seen as a scholar who, through magical and religious means such as prayer and incantation, fought the cause of disease in sufferers. These ‘exorcism’ priests were connected to the temple cult and treated patients through their link to divinity, trying to drive away the evil entities that were believed to cause illness through exorcism (McNamara 2011:108). Konstantopoulos (2017:21) explains that although the *mašmašu* was connected to cultic practices, often similar to the *āšipu*, the evil entities associated more strongly in literature with the *āšipu* than the *mašmašu* were the *Lama* and *Udug* (*utukkū* in Akkadian).

Very little is known about the *Udug*, particularly the *Evil Udug*, although what is known is that it causes disease (Konstantopoulos 2017:26). This entity stalks its victims (Tablet III, Line 174) (Geller 1985:31) and makes them ill (Tablet VIII, Line 778) (Geller 1985:75), being the cause of various symptoms and sicknesses (Konstantopoulos 2017:26). In order to drive away the unwanted *Uttuku/Udug* the *āšipu* priests would have to align themselves with divinity, or good *Udugs*, to command the offending entity to depart (Konstantopoulos 2020:[sp]).

²¹⁴ Included in the practice connecting the metaphysical to illness, is divination for which *baru*, diviners, looked at livers (hepatoscopy) to identify the problem (Teall 2014:2).

²¹⁵ The *āšipu* is someone who has knowledge of the “art of exorcism”, *a-šipu-tu* in Akkadian, while *mašmašu*, meaning ‘to wipe’ has closer ties to Sumerian *maš.maš*, though not identical stations, both are associated with exorcism (Geller 2010:43-44, 45).

Āšipu priests later aligned themselves in particular with Babylonian ideas about Ea and Marduk. These gods were associated with the authority to banish evil disease-causing entities (Shaul 2001:90). Annus (2019:2486) explains how exorcism texts made use of a certain spell formula, known more widely as the Marduk-Ea formula, as opposed to its older neo-Sumerian and Early-Dynastic form of Asalluḫi-Enki. These formulas align the *āšipu* priest with authoritative deities which oppose evil beings (Annus 2019:2486). By way of visual representation and reference to orientate the reader, the included seals here show Ea /Enki and Marduk. *The Adda Sea* (2300 BCE) (Figure 34) includes Ea/Enki²¹⁶, shown here with rivers flowing from his shoulders, accompanied by fish. *Neo-Assyrian Period Cylinder Seal BM 89589* (900-750 BCE) includes Marduk²¹⁷ as the largest figure with Tiamat at his feet.



Figure 34: Enki Shown with Rivers Flowing from His Shoulders, *The Adda Seal*, 2300 BCE. Carved Greenstone, 2,5 x 3,9 cm. The British Museum, London. (The British Museum [sa]a:[sp]).

²¹⁶ Whenever Ea/Enki is mentioned in this study, Figure 34 may be referred to.

²¹⁷ Throughout this research undertaking Figure 35 may be used as reference to Marduk.



Figure 35: Marduk and Tiamat, *Neo-Assyrian Period Cylinder Seal BM 89589*, 900-750 BCE. Serpentine Stone, 3.40 x 1.75cm. The British Museum, London. (The British Museum Images 2025:[sp]).

Ur period III texts differ from older and later incantation texts, however, there is a strong overlap with earlier and later Sumerian texts in the formula the text presents (van Dijk, Geller & Oelsner 2003:1). The formula creates a narrative drama through which the priest receives instructions on how to cure the ill patient (Konstantopoulos 2017:21). The roles in this narrative belonging alternatively to the priest and the deities Maduk/Asalluḫi and Ea/Enki (Konstantopoulos 2017:21). The *āšipu* takes on the role of Marduk or Asalluḫi²¹⁸ who asks advice from Ea/Enki, his father, who is associated with magic and wisdom (Konstantopoulos 2017:21).

Asalluḫi in this incarnation is explained by Geller (1985:12) as a character who was strongly associated with Maduk and Ea, but whose role had changed significantly over time, or that in the Old Babylonian period, this character was simply left out. Geller (1985:12) states that the *Forerunners to the Udug-hul* make use of this Asalluḫi- Enki formula. Although Mirelman (2018:6) notes that the Old Babylonian, monolingual Sumerian version of the *Udug-hul* makes use of this structure, the order of incantations associated with such a ritual was not yet fixed at this time.

²¹⁸ Asalluḫi is connected to the god Asar by Johandi (2019:9). Johandi (2019) presents in his Doctoral Thesis an in-depth study of this figure and his function.

Older Sumerian texts often show Enki and Asalluḫi with Enki as the father god and Asalluḫi as the divine patron of exorcism (Annus 2019:2488). Manader (2010:27) explains that the Asalluḫi- Enki dialogue is part of the *topos* within the corpus of exorcism texts and that this formula can be found in some of the earliest documents pertaining to exorcism. According to Konstantopoulos (2017:25) the bilingual version of the *Udug-hul/Utukkū Lemnūtu* uses the Maduk and Ea formula, but Asalluḫi is present in some of these texts. Manader (2010:29-31) explains that Asalluḫi, in the Sumerian pantheon is also connected to An/Enlil, the head god whose attributes include air and wind, which reaches everywhere and gives human breath to speak incantations.

Manader (2010:29-35) notes that what is important within the use of the formula is creating a mirroring between the earth and the heavens, setting up the ranking of the gods and what they represent, as well as the exorcist's mirroring of the divine role of a god in the process, seeking to stand in the role of a deity that has authority over evil entities. The priest performs the exorcism by acting as, or as the vicar of, the god, here Asalluḫi (Jiménez 2018:316).

The incantation type was named by Falkenstein (1931:44-47) and offered a rigid structure that usually has six characteristics (Annus 2019:2488). The text starts with a description of the illness, demon, or problem that the sufferer is facing, this is followed by Marduk or Asalluḫi noticing the sufferer's misfortune (Annus 2019:2488). The third part consists of the conversation between the junior deity, Marduk/Asalluḫi, or messenger giving the senior deity, Ea/ Enki, a description of the misfortune (Annus 2019:2488). Fourth, Marduk/Asalluḫi states that they are unsure of what to do, with the fifth part being Ea/Enki, reassuring Marduk/Asalluḫi that the junior deity's knowledge on the subject is as sound as that of the senior and that he knows so Marduk/Asalluḫi knows (Annus 2019:2488). Finally, in the sixth part of the formula, Ea/Enki gives advice in the form of ritual instructions that will cure the patient (Annus 2019:2488).

To conclude, the *Udug-hul Forerunners* are texts that arose from, and form part of, a particular literary tradition. The context of the text is of importance as its implied use and intended meaning to its original audience determines how the *Evil Udug* is understood as a monster. A very short overview of Sumerian history is provided as context, together with an explanation of exorcism texts, including the *āšipu* priest's role, and the *Marduk-Ea incantation* formula used.

5.4 SUMMARY OF THE *UDUG-HUL FORERUNNERS*

In what follows a short summary of the *Udug-hul Forerunners* is presented. Since the *Udug-hul Forerunners* and later *Udug-hul* overlap in Tablets III-VIII in Geller's 1985 translation (Geller 1985:3-5), these tablets are used here. Since no overview or summary of *Udug-hul Forerunners* Tablets III-VIII could be found, what follows here is my own summary. This summary draws from Geller's 1985 translation while taking Geller's 2016 updates into consideration. An example of a tablet of the *Udug-hul* to orient the reader is included here (Figure 36). The *Udug-hul Forerunner* Tablets however are not as clearly photographed or widely available but are shown (Figure 1 & 37).



Figure 36: *Udug-hul Tablet 11*, 2023. Photo by Trustees of the British Museum. (The Trustees of the British Museum 2023:[sp]).

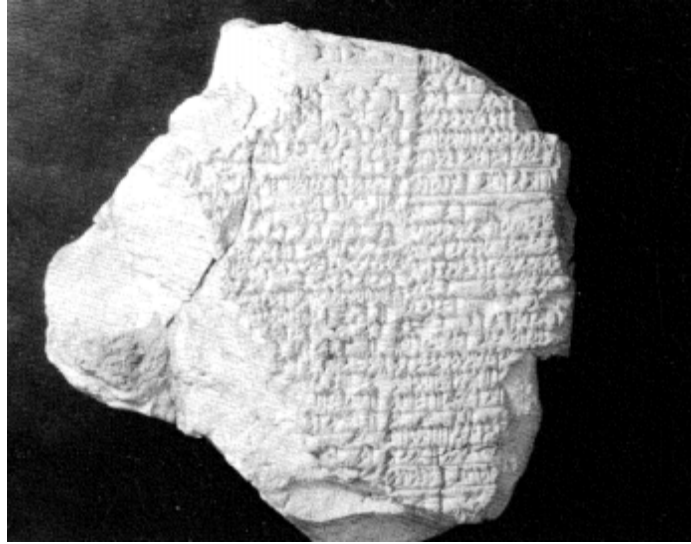


Figure 37: *Uduḫul Forerunner Tablet, Plate 12, CBS1532, F. [sa]. (Geller 1985:[sp]).*

Uduḫul Forerunner Tablet III runs from line 1-233. Although the tablet details many evil entities, such as the Namtar and Asag, more emphasis is placed on the *Evil Uduḫul*'s place within the composition. The tablet begins with what Geller (1985:21) notes as the Enuru Incantation. It starts with the places in which dangerous beings prowl, noting that the *Evil Uduḫul* runs wild in the street (Tablet III, Line 04) (Geller 1985:21). Here then follows a description of what some evil entities did or are doing to the man who is the suppliant (Tablet III, Line 1- 3) (Geller 1985:21). From this follows the manifestation of the exorcist aligning himself with Enki (Tablet III, Line 4-12) (Geller 1985:21). The sick man's plight and possible reasons for the attack are relayed in lines 21-29 (Geller 1985:21), which include breaking an oath.

The *Evil Uduḫul*'s role in line 14 and general behaviours that might include the *Evil Uduḫul* are also present here. It states that the *Evil Uduḫul* 'killed the victim' (Tablet III, Line 14) (Geller 1985:21), that the listed demons 'injected' the victims' bad blood 'separately' and that they are connected to wind roaring from the mountain and make a noise like 'wind in a porous pot' (Tablet III, Line 31) (Geller 1985:21). The exorcist again aligns himself with Enki and the entities that offer him protection, such as the Good *Uduḫul* (Tablet III, Line 46) (Geller 1985:23), (Tablet III, Line 23- 49) (Geller 1985:21-23), barring the demons from coming near his body, following behind him, going into his house, climbing his roof or slipping into his house (Tablet III, Line 50-52) (Geller 1985:23).

Casting out of the evil entities follows, again noting the exorcist's identity as Enki, carrying incantations of Asalluḫi (Tablet III, Line 104) (Geller 1985:27) as he journeys to the stricken

man's home (Tablet III, Line 53-107) (Geller 1985:23, 25, 27). The exorcist then addresses the demons, giving them clear instructions to stay away from him (Tablet III, Line 108-118) (Geller 1985:27). The text is very fragmented here. In line 153, where more coherent translation resumes, it is the conversation between Asalluḫi and Enki. Enki asks 'What do you not know?' (Tablet III, Line 153) (Geller 1985:29) and Enki instructing him to go (Tablet III, Line 155) (Geller 1985:29) 'Go my Son Asalluḫi' with instructions and statements that the demons, *Evil Udug*, *Evil Ala Demon*, *Evil Ghost*, and *Evil Bailiff* must stay away (Tablet III, Line 153-167). Line 168 states that 'it is the incantation for going down the street', while Line 169 is the Enuru Incantation (Geller 1985:29, 31).

Line 70-191 describes the demons as well as the attack on the supplicant. Particularly the *Evil Udug* of the street wants to touch the supplicant (Tablet III, Line 170) (Geller 1985:31) when he is in a dark street without heavenly bodies (Tablet III, Line 174- 177) (Geller 1985:31). Asalluḫi witnesses the attack and repeats it to Father Enki and says that he does not know what to do (Tablet III, Line 180-192) (Geller 1985:31). Enki answers Asalluḫi, saying again that his son knows as he knows, but also gives advice in the form of an incantation the one walking down the street at night must say (Tablet III, Line 193-207) (Geller 1985:31, 33). The last legible part of Tablet III (208-233) (Geller 1985:33) shows the exorcist stating his credentials as a priest of Enki (Tablet III, Line 209-218) (Geller 1985:33) and addresses the demons *en masse* to not approach him when walking in the street.

Tablet IV gives some insight into the nature of the evil entities that plague the sufferer. In Line 246-257 (Geller 1985:35), their parentage is discussed as being both of An (Sky) and children of the earth. They steal milk from the wetnurse and they travel from the underworld in the direction of the setting sun while they smash small stones and make large stones soft. They attack the victim, striking him, shaking him and shaking the land, using the ring of mountains as if it were a net and 'roaring like wind in a porous pot' at the victim (Tablet IV, Line 257) (Geller 1985:35).

A rather fragmented translation follows, but in Line 277 the evil entities' misdeeds are noted again. Described as the wandering *Evil Udug* demons who are storms, disturbing flocks of birds, striking oxen and sheep and murdering as they go (Tablet IV, Line 277-283) (Geller 1985:35,37). They are not stopped by the treasure house's brickwork and they roar 'like wind in a porous pot'. Mention is made of Nin-Geštinna and his role as the scribe of the Netherworld

and connection with the mountains and underworld, but the text fragments (Tablet IV, Line 287-290) (Geller 1985:37). When the text is readable again there are several lines (Tablet IV, Line 291-294) (Geller 1985:37) on what the demon may not do. This includes not entering the entryway with him, perhaps the suppliant, it may not follow into his home, nor compromise his footing on the canal bank or cross the ocean with him.

After a gap a description follows of Enki turning his attention to the Netherworld. It is describes as a place of death and deities who do not rinse their mouths or bathe. Hereafter all the possible malevolent ghosts are listed, as well as their means of death and their possible interactions when alive, are instructed to leave the suppliant alone (Tablet IV, Line 299-352) (Geller 1985:37, 39, 41). Tablet IV ends with instructions from Ereškigal that the victim must be purified and washed, dedicated to Utu, which will return him to the care of his personal god (Line 353-357) (Geller 1985:41).

Tablet V notes the *Evil Udu*g's connection to An again. They are connected to 'An's good seed' (Tablet V, Line 359) (Geller 1984:41) when there is frost and cold (Tablet V, Line 358b) (Geller 1985:41). Namtar, another malevolent entity and its parentage is also noted (Tablet V, Line 360-361) (Geller 1985:41). In Line 362 a long description includes evil entities that have been unleashed (Tablet V, Line 362-398) (Geller 1985:41, 43). The approximations of the entities include them screeching and twittering, being storms, the gods' poisonous gall, 'the owl that hoots in the city' (Tablet V, Line 366) (Geller 1985:41), and the offspring of both earth and heaven. They are said to 'whirl like a flood' (Tablet V, Line 368) (Geller 1985:41) over the high and broad roofs, not being stopped by doors or bolts which they slithering through like a snake.

Their deeds are mentioned next. They take wives from the laps of their husbands, the son from his father's knee, and the bridegroom from the house of his father-in-law (Tablet V, Line 371-373) (Geller 1985:41). They are described as going after a man from behind, causing in him stupor and silence (Tablet V, Line 374-375) (Geller 1985:41). The text becomes unclear again, but after a personal god is mentioned (Tablet V, Line 375) (Geller 1985:41), watchmen demons are described, followed by general incantation towards demons of highways or crossroads. Hands cannot approach them, because they are like the heavens (Tablet V, Line 379) (Geller 1985:41) and their form cannot be destroyed because it is like a mountain (Tablet V, Line 380)(Geller 1985:43).

Line 388 (Geller 1985:43) continues what appears to be a general description of evil entities. These entities cannot have children and do not have spouses and they come out of the mountain like horses (Tablet V, Line 389) (Geller 1985:43). Lines 390- 392 explain that they are tutors of Enki, chair-bearers of the gods and that they can be found standing in the street, disturbing the thoroughfare (Geller 1985:43). Line 393 (Geller 1985:43) connects them to Nergal, the god of the Netherworld, and the texts focus on invoking deities to adjourn them and keep them away from the body of supplicant to block illness (Tablet V, Line 394-398) (Geller 1985:43).

From line 401, the Seven²¹⁹ are focused on; they are Seven, they are connected to the Abzu, they are not female or male, they have no children or spouses, but flit about not aware of the destruction they cause (Tablet V, Line 401-408) (Geller 1985:43). They give no heed to supplication or prayer (Tablet V, Line 409) (Geller 1985:43). They are further described as being of equal standing and being heirs, horses from out of the mountain, the gods ' chair-bearers, and that they make storms in the street and the thoroughfare is a place where they go around making trouble (Tablet V, Line 410-414) (Geller 1985:43). Line 415-418 again adjourned them and tells the entities they will compensate the supplicant because of his discomfort (Geller 1985:43, 45). standing and being heirs, horses from out of the mountain, the gods ' chair-bearers, and that they make storms in the street and the thoroughfare is a place where they go around making trouble (Tablet V, Line 410-414) (Geller 1985:43). Line 415-418 again adjourned them and tells the entities they will compensate the supplicant because of his discomfort (Geller 1985:43, 45).

The next few lines of text are unclear (Tablet V, Line 420-427) (Geller 1985:45). When the text is clear again, descriptions of each of the Seven are given, with the first, second, and third being lost to damage. The Fourth is connected to the mountain and water, although the text is unclear (Tablet V, Line 429) (Geller 1985:45). The Fifth lays the victim on his bed, the Sixth approaches the victim, lifting his head from his stomach, with the Seventh one's approach his

²¹⁹ The Seven here refer to entities called the *Sebettu*/ the Seven. Konstantopoulos (2015) focuses on these entities in her PhD Dissertation, *They are Seven: Demons and Monsters in the Mesopotamian Textual and Artistic Tradition* with in-depth analysis and thorough historical overviews of the place of these entities in Ancient Mesopotamian history, culture and religion. This study does not focus on the Seven and thus only a few key elements of these entities are provided here. the Seven have around 2000 years of representation in cultural texts from Ancient Mesopotamia and are a group of entities with individuals who have stock iconography and known epithets (Konstantopoulos 2015:2). The beings are often dualistic, they can be divine or demonic, but they were ever fearsome (Konstantopoulos 2015:2).

mind is already set on the Netherworld (Tablet V, Line 430-432) (Geller 1985:45). Their number is mentioned again as well as their connection to the underworld, together with a list of possibly offending demons, the *Evil Udug* included, who are adjourned by heaven and earth (Tablet V, Line 433-438) (Geller 1985:45).

The evil entities are instructed on what they must not do to the suppliant (Tablet V, Line 440-449) (Geller 1985:45). The entities are told to keep away from the victim's body, to keep their hands away from his hand, not put their name together with the victim's, not sit in his chair with him, or sleep in his bed. It is not allowed to eat or drink with the victim and it is not allowed to put its hand on the table of 'the father who engendered you' (Tablet V, Line 449) (Geller 1985:45).

Line 452-466 focuses again on the *Evil Udug* and its interaction with the 'Maiden of the Steppe palace' (Tablet V, Line 452) (Geller 1985:47), referred to as Inanna (Tablet V, Line 460- 461) (Geller 1985:47). Here the *Udug* is noted as being nameless from the beginning, and never appearing with a body, following Inanna, striking her hand and taking it in its own, the same with her foot and head, the demons then enter the holy place of Gipar and Inanna shakes the heaven and the earth as she cries out. Another gap occurs in the text here. The next part suggests that Inanna takes an oath, which somehow keeps the *Evil Udug* and *Lama* away from her and makes them not enter the house, whilst calling on the Good *Udug* and Good *Lama* to be present (Tablet V, Line 463-466) (Geller 1985:47).

Hereafter follows a part about *Galla Demons*, their standing, their deeds, and how Asalluhi reports this to Enki and receives advice (Tablet V, Line 468-509) (Geller 1985:47, 49). Tablet VI however returns to the *Evil Udug* in particular. In line 512 of Tablet VI the *Evil Udug* is described as a ghost in the desert, after which Namtar is addressed, who binds a man, whereupon the incantation wills it to be smashed like a pot or ritual vessel (Tablet VI, Line 512-515) (Geller 1985:49). In Tablet VI, Line 516-521, the *Evil Udug*, and *Evil Ala* are prohibited from moving across the threshold and are told to leave, go back to the steppe, and be smashed at the crossroads (Geller 1985:51).

There is another gap and the text is fragmented, but when it resumes, the evil entities are again told to leave the man alone (Tablet VI, Line 536-548) (Geller 1985:51). Their soiled hands may not come near him, they may not lie down with the man they made feverish, their terrifying

mouth must not be used to eat with him, They make him tremble, they must not be thrown together with the man because of their furious face, they must not cover him with awe and fear, nothing must be emitted from their mouth, and their tongue must not make anything evil happen. From here the entities are adjourned and forbidden to drink and eat with the supplicant.

After a gap, the *Evil Udug* is focused on in more detail. In Tablet VI, Line 549-566 (Geller 1985:51, 53), a lot of description is given, which includes the *Evil Udug* roaming about, passing over the living, that the Namtar, seemingly an *Evil Udug*, is describe as a fierce hand. The *Evil Udu*s come as a seasonal flood. They are indifferent to supplication, they pierce the young like fish, the old are heaped up into a pile like grain, their heads split. The *Evil Udug* stalks the street, the steppe it silences, thresholds it slips over while it attacks and casts down animals, the land it strikes while striding in its full strength. It does not spare anyone, even the pure are bound, ignoring all cries. Finally, the text states that the *Evil Udug*'s roams within the mountain (Tablet VI, Line 566) (Geller 1985:53).

In Tablet VI, Line 567 (Geller 1985:53) the incantation priest again makes known his alignment with Enki. He admonishes the evil entities from shrieking behind him or shouting after him, stating that no evil man or demon may lift a hand to him and demanding that the entity be adjourned by heaven and earth (Tablet VI, Line 570-573) (Geller 1985:53). After a gap the various demons and evil magic are addressed and told to leave the supplicant, his home, roof, chair, and bed and to be adjourned (Tablet VI, Line 574-584) (Geller 1985:53, 55). More gaps and unclear text follow until Tablet VI, Line 597 (Geller 1985:55) where the demons are again warned away from the man's effects and they are described as giving the victim chills (Tablet VI, Line 600) (Geller 1985:55).

Hereafter the strange nature of the evil entities are described (Tablet VI, Line 601-609) (Geller 1985:55). These entities do not know sleep or how to lie in a bed, they do not eat good food or drink sweet water. Their deeds include taking the wife from her husband's lap, the son from the knee of his father, and a man's son from his wedding house. They seem to crawl like snakes, like a mongoose they sniff the base of the wall, and they observe all with a murderous dog. The text cuts off at line 610 (Geller 1985:55). After this the demons are adjourned and commanded to leave the body of the victim, and if they are not removed they may not dine or drink with the victim (Tablet VI, Line 611-614) (Geller 1985:55).

In Tablet VI, Line 617 (Geller 1985:55) the *Evil Udug* is described as destructive, while the *Galla Demon*, *Evil Bailiff* and *Evil Ghost* are also described (Tablet VI, Line 618-619) (Geller 1985:55). The text informs the reader that these entities are evil and that they are found in the city wandering about (Tablet VI, Line 620) (Geller 1985:57). The deeds of these entities include striking the ox in its cattle pen, in the sheepfold, slaughtering the sheep, the man lying outside of his wife's chamber they seize, while they take children from the lap of their nursemaids, both the child and father they murder, while they pierce the mother and her children like fish in the ocean (Tablet VI, Line 621-626) (Geller 1985:57). These evil entities cannot be prayed to and they do not take supplicants (Tablet VI, Line 627) (Geller 1985:57). The street they are said to fill with reeking milk while the supplicant is enveloped by sluggishness and his eyes darken (Tablet VI, Line 628-629) (Geller 1985:57). Their faces are not recognisable to humans (Tablet VI, Line 630) (Geller 1985:57). Here Asalluḫi is again mentioned, reciting the incantation, but the text breaks off and there is a gap (Tablet VI, Line 631-633) (Geller 1985:57). The last few lines of Tablet VI mention the *Evil Udug*, *Evil Ala*, *Evil Ghost*, and *Evil Bailiff Demon* being adjourned (642-645) (Geller 1985:57).

Tablet VII starts with the *Evil Udug*, and various other demons, *Galla Demon*, *Dimme* and *Dimme Demons*, and the *Ala Demon*, being described (Tablet VII, Line 647-650) (Geller 1985:57, 59). The *Evil Udug* in Line 647 overwhelms the thoroughfare and infects quiet streets as it comes forth from a place that is hidden. The other demons are described in turn, but in Tablet VII, Line 651-655 (Geller 1985:59) all their effects on the sufferer are shown to include agitating the man like a storm, sprinkling him with gall causing the victim to lose vitality, making him undulating, and keeping him from food and drink.

Hereafter, in Tablet VII, Line 655-664 Asalluḫi reports to Enki, repeating the events. Enki answers with instructions (Tablet VII, Line 665-689) (Geller 1985:61, 63). This advice contains the use of an Azam -cup, a tamarisk, and an innuṣ-plant, calming the victim and driving out the Namtar demon with a torch and sensor. There is also the beating of a copper drum, called the Hero of Heaven, the noise driving off the evil things. Lastly, the entities should be adjourned by the great gods.

Tablet VII, Line 692-694 (Geller 1985:65) describes the *Evil Udug*, *Evil Ala Demon*, *Evil Ghost* and *Evil Galla Demon* as being possible culprits for obstructing the man in the street at night, or blocking the man in the thoroughfare because they are an overpowering storm. The

description of the entities that follow from this, appears to be a possible description of all the entities that have been named (Tablet VII, Line 695-700f) (Geller 1985:65). They have an angry face and an awe-inspiring aura, it is a lion with a gaping mouth and knows no obedience. When it approaches the victim it flashes like a start and ties the victim's hands. At night a man walking home is stalked, his hands touched by the evil entity, and followed to his home. The demon then destroys his limbs and takes his sight and hearing. The hand of Namtar, or fate, makes the man suffer and he is overwhelmed by the *Ala Demon*. In Tablet VII, Line 701-715, the incantation is repeated (Geller 1985:65, 67).

Tablet VII, Line 716-745 (Geller 1985:69, 71) contains Asalluḫi again stating that he does not know what to do, with Enki telling him that he knows as Enki knows, but then instructs him on how to get rid of the evil entities. These activities include the use of a (*huš*)-*Sahar* vessel, Enki's holy water basin, and the recitation of the Eridu incantation. The man is to be sprinkled with water, and the copper drum is to be beaten with *manu*-wood to make noise to scare off the entities. A magical flour circle is to be used as a strong guard. The *Evil Udug* and *Ala* of the street are adjourned by the great gods' oath and whatever evil is present to not stand in the house, not follow the man into the house, not go through the door or door-bolt, not be beside the victim, not sit in his chair, lie in his bed, go up to the roof, or come into the sitting room. These entities are all adjourned by heaven and earth to leave.

Tablet VII, Line 746-766 (Geller 1985:73) is unclear in places, but it includes a white, black and red dog, associated with a lion, that bites, conceals meat, and gnaws flesh. The purpose or recipient of the attack is unclear. The last part that is legible before a gap is the naming of gods and the freeing of the victim.

In Line 768 more clear text returns, stating that the *Evil Udug*, *Evil Ala*, *Evil Ghost*, and *Evil Galla* emerge from the Netherworld, from the holy mound, from a distant mountain and that they are not known in heaven or earth, unrecognisable standing or sitting (Tablet VII, Line 768-771) (Geller 1985:73). They strike down shepherds, herdsmen, soldiers, young women, children, and the hero who does not have a personal god into whose body they bring evil and trouble (Tablet VII, Line 772-778) (Geller 1985:73, 75). These entities make people rise from sleeping (Tablet VII, Line 779) (Geller 1985:75).

After a gap, the conversation between Enki and Asalluḫi resumes with Asalluḫi stating that he does not know what to do and Enki advising (Tablet VII, Line 780-794) (Geller 1985:75). The advice includes taking a ritual vessel and pouring its contents into the red water of the Tigris and Euphrates and to put it in the tamarisk and *innuš*-plant. The drum should be beaten to drive out the *Evil Udug*, *Evil Ala*, *Evil Ghost*, and *Evil Galla* from the man's body. *Šemuš* flour, which is unpleasant to ghosts, should be used to create a circle around where the bed is. The *manu*-wood instrument should be placed at the bed's head so that the *Evil Udug* who is passing can stand aside. Spells and sickness are told to not approach.

Tablet VII, Line 797 (Geller 1985:75) returns the incantation to the *Evil Udug*, who is said to stand in the desert. The *Ala Demon* and *Asag* demon are also described (Tablet VII, Line 798-799) (Geller 1985:77). From Tablet VII, Line 800-831 (Geller 1985:77, 79) there is again a description of the gods, including the *Anunna* of the underworld, and Asalluḫi relates this to Enki, asking Enki for advice. The demons seem to have reached the groin, which seems dire, the incantation is/ should be cast over the sufferer so the demons can depart.

Tablet VII, Line 833 (Geller 1985:79) is again the *Enuru* incantation, where the demons, the *Evil Udug* included, are described as standing opposite the man and the *Evil Ghost* being set against him (Tablet VII, Line 833-835) (Geller 1985:79). The exorcist declares that he is the incantation priest of Enki and Asalluḫi's chief exorcist, banishing the demons by the *manu*-wood (Tablet VII, Line 836-839) (Geller 1985:79). After a gap, the text then resumes with the incantation telling the demons where to depart to. The *Evil Udug* is told to go to its steppe (Tablet VII, Line 842-843) (Geller 1985:79). From here the demons seem to be stripped of their leather bags, and their food offering is taken away (Tablet VII, Line 844-845) (Geller 1985:81). It/they are told their place is not in the west, but their food is that of ghosts, and their drinks are that of wraiths (Tablet VII, Line 847-849) (Geller 1985:81). They are instructed to leave the supplicant, to not stand in the corner, or sit by his side, they are not allowed to go through the midst of the city and must return to the darkness of the Netherworld. The incantation states that the entities have been adjourned by the great gods and they may leave (Tablet VII, Line 849-855) (Geller 1985:81).

Tablet VIII is quite short and runs from Line 857-883 (Geller 1985:81, 83). Unfortunately, there is a gap at the start of the tablet and some breaks in the text at times, with the last parts being unintelligible. The text starts with a naming of possible *Ala Demons* who might be

affecting the victim (Tablet VIII, Line 857-866) (Geller 1985:81, 83). Again there follows a declaration of the priest's credentials, particularly mentioning that he is the *mašmaš*-priest, who then casts *Ala Demon* and *Evil Udug* out, telling the *Evil Udug* to go to a distant place (Tablet VIII, Line 867-875) (Geller 1985:83). It seems that these entities are told to go to the place where they are separate, their desolate dwelling, a deserted house. That the entities, including the *Huldub Demon*, should depart before the exorcist and be adjourned by heaven and earth (Tablet VIII, Line 876-879) (Geller 1985:83). The last legible parts seem to state again that this is the *Enuru* incantation.

To summarise, the *Udug-hul Forerunners*, particularly Tablet III-VIII were discussed very briefly in the above text, drawing on Geller's 1985 translation and keeping his 2016 updates in mind. The *Udug-hul Forerunners* as exorcism texts were noted here, with extra care taken to highlight the *Evil Udug* when present or perhaps implied. This summary is meant to simply orient the reader and was created with a particular entity in mind. It then follows that this might not serve as a sufficient summary of other entities or activities in the text.

5.5 THE *EVIL UDUG* AS A MONSTROUS ENTITY

This subsection aims to give more information about the *Evil Udug* in particular. The being is very ill-defined (Konstantopoulos 2017:25), but through the contributions investigated here some characteristics of the *Evil Udug* do come to light. With Geller (2011) as a primary source, as well as Geller's (1985, 2016) translations of the Forerunners to The *Udug-hul*, the *Evil Udug* is linked to sickness, being unclean, exhibiting human traits like that of corrupt officials. The *Evil Udug* is discussed here as a *Mischwesen* and *Zwischenwesen*, making it a conglomerate and liminal monster that is Other (Sonik 2013:108).

The *Udug* is an entity that is surrounded by mystery. The *Udug* alone is not evil, but rather neutral, being evil when it gains the suffix *hul* (bad), but good when it is given the suffix *sa* (good) (Geller 2011:335). To further complicate matters, the term *Udug* can be used for not just a particular entity, but as *Udug-hul* it is an umbrella term for the multitudes of 'evils' that stalk the land (Konstantopoulos 2017:25). This is problematic because the attributes of the *Evil Udug* might overlap with other 'evils', but where the line between what the *Evil Udug*'s characteristics are another 'evil', is unclear.

The cuneiform for *Udug* is also confused for *Gedim*, or Ghost (Geller 2011:334). Verderame (2013:125-126) explains that the ideogram for *Udug* contains a term that is common for *Gedim* (ghost), being composed of *SAHARXSILA*, which combines the terms dust (*SAHAR*) and street (*SILA*) to possibly refer to a whirlwind associated with the image of a wraith. McGrath ([sa]:3, 20) further explains how this could be read as the entity being two thirds street dust and confirms that it had a strong connection to the street in the *Udug-hul Forerunners* of Tablet III-VIII.

Geller (2011:334) notes that the *Udug* is related in etymology between Akkadian and Sumerian²²⁰ which connects taboo and being ritually unclean.²²¹ This element of the *Evil Udug* links to its behaviour, the place it haunts like the street, as well as the animals it is connected with. A deeper analysis of this aspect is presented in *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space, 7.3 The City: Evil Udug in the City, Street and Home*. Here, however, it is important to note the *Evil Udug*'s connection to the Abject.

Together with ambiguous naming, the physicality of the *Evil Udug* is also notoriously nebulous and ill-defined. Geller (2011:333) notes that the texts that describe the *Evil Udug* are devoid of signifiers and that the otherwise rich Ancient Mesopotamian representation of metaphysical entities does not seem to contain any iconography, or clear depiction of the *Udug*. Konstantopoulos (2017:24) similarly notices the absence of the *Udug* in art and representation as well as how its nebulous nature in texts can make it malleable in use. Geller (2011:333) thus terms the *Udug* as 'faceless', an entity that is masked by the unknown in both art and literature. This unclear quality then puts it into the category of Unnameable Monster.

What can be gleaned from the text about the *Evil Udug*, does provide some understanding. What follows is a brief summary of the *Udug* as Evil. The *Evil Udug* is associated with the divine order, being spawned from the good seed of An (Tablet V, Line 359) (Geller 1985:41), associated with Namtar as a son of Enlil and Ereškigal (Tablet V, Line 360) (Geller 1985:41) and others.²²² It is associated with natural phenomena such as wind from the mountain, making

²²⁰ Geller (2011:334) explains how the signs that make up *Udug* in Shulgi Hymn D can be linked to the ritual uncleanness and taboo.

²²¹ Geller (2011:334) also explains that *Evil Udug*'s name is connected to a homonym for weapon in Akkadian, but that it is not enough of a description.

²²² They are associated with Enlil as his messengers (Tablet III, Line 13) (Geller 1985:21), being the 'poisonous gal of the gods' (Tablet V, Line 364) (Geller 1985:41), and the spawn of An born on earth (Tablet IV, Line 247) (Geller 1985:35). They are further associated with An but also note that these entities

a noise as if blowing through a porous pot (Tablet III, Line 31) (Geller 1985:21), (Tablet IV, Line 257, 283) (Geller 1985:35, 37), great storms (Tablet IV, Line 280) (Geller 1985:35), (Tablet V, Line 365) (Geller 1985:41), coming when there is cold and frost (Tablet V, Line 358) (Geller 1985:41), and the seasonal flood (Tablet VI, Line 552)(Geller 1985:51) which reflects their agency as supernatural entities.

The *Evil Udug* comes from the Netherworld, (Tablet VI, Line 768) (Geller 1985:73), (Tablet VI, Line 802, 803) (Geller 1985:75), steppe (Tablet III, Line 14) (Geller 1985:21), (Tablet VI, Line 518, 558) (Geller 1985:51, 53), (Tablet VII, Line 842) (Geller 1985:79), mountain (Tablet VII, Line 566, 769) (Geller 1985:53, 73) and desert (Tablet VII, Line 512, 797, 810) (Geller 1985:49,75, 77), infiltrates the street (Tablet III, Line 4, 170, 203) (Geller 1985:21, 31, 33), (Tablet V, Line 392) (Geller 1985:37), (Tablet VI, Line 574) (Geller 1985:47), (Tablet VII, Line 647, 657, 692, 733) (Geller 1985:57, 59, 65, 71), follows the man who walks alone at night (Tablet III, Line 110, 174, 182, 186) (Geller 1985:27, 31), (Tablet VI, Line 558) (Geller 1985:53), (Tablet VII, Line 699, 700) (Geller 1985:65), invades his home (Tablet III, Line 51, 52 108, 111-117, 167) (Geller 1985:23, 27, 29), (Tablet IV, Line 291, 292) (Geller 1985:37), (Tablet V, Line 464) (Geller 1985:47), (Tablet VI, Line 516, 517, 559, 583) (Geller 1985:51, 53), (Tablet VII, Line 710, 736-743) (Geller 1985:67, 71) and possesses the victim (Tablet III, Line 50) (Geller 1985:23), (Tablet IV, Line 455-458) (Geller 1985:47), (Tablet VI, Line 541) (Geller 1985:51). Through possession, the *Evil Udug* causes illness ²²³ (through contact) (Tablet III, Line 170) (Geller 1985:31), (Tablet VII, Line 700, 709) (Geller 1985:65, 67), but also kills humans indiscriminately²²⁴ (Tablet III, Line 15, 67) (Geller 1985:21, 23), (Tablet VI,

were created in the Netherworld (Tablet V, Line 378) (Geller 1985:41). Their association with Enki seems to be that they are his tutors (Tablet V, Line 390) (Geller 1985:43) and have positions of honour as chair bearers for the gods (Tablet V, Line 391) (Geller 1985:43). There is also a close association with the underworld demon Namtar, as the *Evil Udug* is called a 'Namtar' (Tablet VI, Line 551) (Geller 1985:53). The Annuna are also named as spawning the entities in the Netherworld (Tablet VIII, Line 802-806, 813-819) (Geller 1985:77).

²²³ Headache (Tablet VII, Line 660) (Geller 1985:59), internal disease and structure (Tablet VII, Line 660) (Geller 1985:59), stupor and silence (Tablet V, Line 374) (Geller 1985:41). The suppliant is feverish (Tablet VI, Line 583) (Geller 1985:53) and makes him tremble in fear (Tablet VI, Line 540) (Geller 1985:51). These beings also cause chills and sleeplessness (Tablet VI, Line 601) (Geller 1985:55), (Tablet VII, Line 779) (Geller 1985:75) and make the victim sluggish, darken his eyes distorting his face as to be unrecognisable (Tablet VI, Line 630) (Geller 1985:57). The pain the victim suffers seems to be a form of sensory deprivation also as not only blindness (Tablet VII, Line 700, 712) (Geller 1985:65, 67), and deafness (Tablet VII, Line 700, 713) (Geller 1985:65, 67), but his limbs are useless (Tablet VII, Line 700, 711) (Geller 1985:65, 67).

²²⁴ They kill the son and wife on the husband's lap and knee, the bride-groom being taken from his in-laws' residence (Tablet V, Line 371-373) (Geller 1985:41), (Tablet VI, Line 604-606) (Geller 1985:55). The text also describes the killing of the young and old, children speared like fish, elders dying in heaps like grain, their heads split (Tablet VI, Line 554-556) (Geller 1985: 53). The killing of the family is again

Line 554-556) (Geller 1985:53) as well as animals.²²⁵ It has no body²²⁶ (Tablet V, Line 379, 380, 453, 454) (Geller 1985:41, 43, 47), (Tablet VI, Line 612) (Geller 1985:55), and can go through physical boundaries (Tablet IV, Line 282) (Geller 1985:35), (Tablet V, Line 369, 370) (Geller 1985:41), (Tablet VII, Line 574) (Geller 1985:53), making it hard to identify²²⁷, describe²²⁸ or defend against. However, some animals are mentioned in relation to their behaviour, such as birds (Tablet V, Line 363) (Geller 1985:41), Wild horses (Tablet V, Line 389)(Geller 1985:43), owls (Tablet V, Line 366) (Geller 1985:41), a sniffing mongoose Tablet VI, Line 608) (Geller 1985:55), snakes that slither through door and doorbolts (Tablet V, Line 370) (Geller 1985:41), (Tablet VI, Line 607) (Geller 1985:55), a biting lion (Tablet VI, Line 592) (Geller 1985:55), a gaping-mouthed lion (Tablet VII, Line 696, 705) (Geller 1985:65, 67) and a murderous dog (Tablet VI, Line 609) (Geller 1985:55).

Geller (2011:336-337) further explores the *Udug*, noting that it is often mentioned in its *hul* form together with Akkadian *Šēdu* and *Rābisu*, which corresponds in Sumerian texts, linking the *Udug* to corrupt officials. The *Utukkū Lemnūtu* translation similarly links the *Udug*, or *Utukkū* with *Šēdu* (Geller (2011:336-337). It is seen working with a female counterpart, but is still a spiritual entity, associated with illness and with the *Rābisu* translation, a deputy (Wiggerman 2011:310). The implied human element of rank that reflects the social, cultural and historical world from which the texts arose is of importance since it can be linked to perceptions of threatening conspecifics within hierarchies.

The *Evil Udug* has a particular relationship with the terms *Mischwesen* and *Zwischenwesen*. The term *Mischwesen* refers to the mixed and hybrid state of some of the Ancient Mesopotamian in-between beings, which include ‘demons’, entities represented in iconography as having a conglomerate of animal features (Bácskay 2013:2). *Zwischenwesen* is used to

emphasised in Tablet VI, Lines 623-626 (Geller 1985:57) and the killing a variety of people is mentioned in Tablet VII, Lines 773-778 (Geller 1985:75), including herdsman, children and young women.

²²⁵ Oxen and sheep are struck in their pens (Tablet IV, Line 279), (Tablet VI, Line 621) (Geller 1985:57), sheep are slaughtered in the sheepfold (Tablet VI, Line 622) (Geller 1985:57) and flocks of birds flee (Tablet IV, Line 277) (Geller 1985:35).

²²⁶ In Tablet VII, Line 695 and 704 (Geller 1985:65), reference is made to the entity’s face, which is angry and is surrounded by an aura that is awe inspiring. Tablet VII, Line 697 (Geller 1985:65) and 706 (Geller 1985:67) explain that this being flashes towards the intended victim like a star.

²²⁷ The text notes that they are unknown on earth and heaven (Tablet VII, Line 770) (Geller 1985:73), and are not recognised sitting or standing (Tablet VII, Line 771) (Geller 1985:73).

²²⁸ Konstantopoulos (2017:25) notes that in the *Utukkū Lemnūtu* texts, the *Evil Udug* is described as being huge, having a loud voice, no light around or in its body with a pitch black shadow. This interpretation is helpful, but does not occur in the *Udug-Hul* translation provided by Geller (1985) which is used as the basis of this study.

indicate in-between entities who move in-between places like the heavens and underworld, earth being in-between itself (Bácskay 2013:2-3). This can include entities that lurk in the unknown wilds, away from humans, like several entities noted in the *Utukkū Lemnūtu*, of course, based on the *Udug-hul Forerunners* (Bácskay 2013:2-3). According to Geller (2011:333) the *Utukkū* in an “underworld vision of an Assyrian Prince”²²⁹, is a *Mischwesen*, having lion and bird features, but earlier versions of the *Utukkū*, the *Evil Udug*, have less definable qualities.

Zwischenwesens include the *Evil Udug*, according to Sonik (2013:104), who points towards the study of Mesopotamian entities such as *daimones*, among which the *Udug/Utukkū Lemnūtu* is listed. The in-between status of the *Evil Udug*, and the list of entities it accompanies, is linked to the deviance of type or mixed forms, but also the physical spaces they inhabit (Sonik 2013:107). Part of this classification, although it is not rigid (Sonik 2013:106), includes the idea that the entities of this class exist in both supernatural and physically real places, even though these might be outside the civilised boundaries of the human world (Bácskay 2013:2-3). They are ‘Other’ as they are outsiders (Sonik 2013:108). This is compounded by the idea that demons in general have no place of worship or rituals of sacrifice (Verderame 2013:119), they are not treated like other entities. This could be interpreted as them being so far in-between that it can be seen as almost a *thing*, thus Unnameable.

In essence, the *Evil Udug* within the study of the Ancient Near East, particularly Ancient Mesopotamia, is deemed a mixed being; it mixes categories, an in-between being, which one might understand as liminal in its physicality, but also geographic location, it brings the Abject state of sickness, taboos and are Other in the greater scheme of things. It is a monster that is ill-defined, yet overly saturated with fragments of meaning, thus an Unnameable Monster, and full of unknowns. The purpose of this subsection has been to note some of the key elements of the *Evil Udug* and thus orient the reader for a more in-depth application as can be seen in *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space*.

5.6 CONCLUSION

²²⁹ Geller (2011:333) explains in more detail the origins and sources of this literature.

To conclude, this section investigated the *Evil Udug* as a nebulous Ancient Mesopotamian monster. Since the *Udug-hul* has existed in many ancient forms, as well as more than one contemporary translation, it was established here that this investigation uses *Forerunners to the Udug-hul: Sumerian Exorcism Incantations* translated by Geller (1985), and amended in 2016 (Geller), from older, Sumerian, sources.

The context within which these texts were used includes Ancient Mesopotamia, particularly Sumer, and some of the other civilisations that the texts were used in. However, since Sumerian is accepted as the oldest written language (Kula 2023:V, 2), the source from this time period thus brings some of the oldest examples of monsters, the *Evil Udug* being one such being. The *Udug-hul Forerunners* are part of a tradition of exorcism texts, which were primarily used by priests such as the *āšipu*, to restore supplicants to health by driving off evil entities, including the *Evil Udug* (Konstantopoulos 2020:[sp]). The text also makes use of the Marduk-Ea formula, with an older deity named Asalluḫi included as the exorcist's source of power (Konstantopoulos 2017:25).

To better orientate the reader a short summary was provided of the *Forerunners to the Udug-hul: Sumerian Exorcism Incantations* as per Geller (1985, 2016) from tablet III to tablet VIII. The summary contains the priest's relation to divinity, descriptions of evil entities and the invoking of good ones for aid, as well as a 'panacea' of all trying to name all the evils and drive them out, together with rituals for exorcism. The summary is focused on the *Evil Udug* and thus this summary leaves out nuances about other entities and activities.

Lastly, what is actually known about the *Evil Udug* is discussed, drawing heavily on Geller's (2011) discussion of the Faceless *Udug*. The *Evil Udug* is a thing that is in-between, mixed between categories, Other, brings Abject diseases and death, and is not clearly described. The term itself is unclear, meaning a particular entity, but also an umbrella term for other beings. What the *Evil Udug* is and is not, where it is included in its characteristics or excluded to mean other particular entities, is difficult to gauge. However, what is known about it, makes it a vague, unknown, and Unnameable Monster.

CHAPTER 6: OVERVIEW OF THE ALIEN AS A MONSTER

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to provide a brief overview of the context wherein one of the most contemporary monsters make its appearance, namely, the extraterrestrial or alien. The alien as an entity that comes from the furthest borders of the known world. It predates the Space Age²³⁰, but in this study the focus falls on the popular and well known conception of the alien, influenced by Ufology, religion, Science Fiction and the popular culture of the West, The United States of America being of particular interest. The aim of this chapter is to investigate the films *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023). *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) is somewhat of an outlier, but emphasises the hidden qualities of the aliens in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) and *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013).

The alien's biological cues are orientated by culture, thus a clear understanding of this needs to be established. The cultural values of the spaces the alien inhabits are also connected to the context wherein this particular entity came to be. To investigate the Biocultural fear elements the alien carries, and how this connects to the Ecological value of the landscape in *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space*, this in-depth cultural exploration is presented here.

Mainly, the Grey Alien is discussed, but mention is made of other alien tropes that shaped it in the context of the Americanised, globalised, world. In *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) and *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) the alien forces at work are shadowy and unclear, perhaps touching on some points of Cosmic Horror. Underneath, however, the audience's familiarity with the Grey Alien is drawn on strongly. This is in opposition to *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023)

²³⁰ The history of the visitor or inhabitant of another world has been present as a figure in literature since the premodern era and runs through to contemporary Science Fiction. According to Roberts (2006:22) many Ancient Greek and Roman novels contain fantastical elements that might be viewed as using contemporary understandings of their world in a similar way that Science Fiction explores and reimagines reality by using our contemporary understandings. Within these 'proto-Science Fiction' tales mention is also made of beings from other worlds. Guynes-Vishniac (2019:5) states that the second-century AD text by Lucian of Samosata, being a parody called *True History*, describes a fantastic tale of beings from the moon and sun fighting to make Venus their property. Guynes-Vishniac (2019) in particular looks into more examples of older tales concerning arguably 'alien' identities in literature.

which is overt in the showing of its titular monsters. To better understand these monsters, an overview of the shaping of the Grey Alien is provided.

In what follows, overviews of the chosen films are provided together with a closer look at the streams of thought that led to the particular physical appearances and context of the aliens involved. Part of what produced the characteristics of the Grey Aliens within these films is linked to Ufology, the field itself being shortly explained and explored in relation to the Grey Alien..

Ufology initially manifest a grounding principle, observable presence of ‘extraterrestrial life’, namely UFOs, especially those thought to be ‘flying saucers’. The UFO phenomenon became popular in the 1940s and 50s and the imaginings of these flying saucers’ occupants provided a new slipstream for the alien into popular culture. The aliens could be hostile invaders, animalistic beasts, narrow analogies for racial and national Others, or frightening saviours intertwined with nuclear threat. Here also is found a strong trend of UFO cults, with the alien depicted as a religiously styled saviour, adding a spiritual element to a field that once claimed to work from scientific observation. However, it is not until the 60s that the Grey Alien emerges.

The Grey Alien is a product of the tales surrounding the ‘experience’ of meeting an extraterrestrial. Although the aliens seen by such ‘experiencers’ are by no means limited to the Grey Alien. It is the abduction cases of people like Betty and Barney Hill (Figure 62), Travis Walton and Whitley Strieber, to name but a few, as well as the public impact, filmic adaptations and feedback into Ufological ideas that produce the early face of the Grey Alien. As the now familiar visage becomes more mainstream, *The X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016, 2018) (Figure 68) catapults the Grey Alien and its lore into the spotlight in the 90s. With the particular manifestation of the alien firmly solidified in the popular mind, new permutations that would influence the chosen films, occur. Examples of this include the rise of the Ancient Alien idea in shows like *Ancient Aliens* (2009-ongoing) (Figure 73).

Here the Grey Aliens become ancient monsters, god-like and interwoven with mystery and mythology, echoing Lovecraft’s ancient entities entwined with evolution. It is no wonder then that the filmic representations of the Grey Alien that follow are shadowy entities, whose unfathomable motives let the human mind shrink, as in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) and *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013). Yet, in the 2020s the Grey Alien, and the many myths

surrounding it stands revealed in films like *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023), perhaps an echo of the new disclosure of projects like ATIPP and the Pentagon's acknowledgement of UAPs, once called UFOs.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF FILMS

6.2.1 *Dark Skies*

Dark Skies (Stewart 2013) runs for 1 hour and 37 minutes and purposefully blurs the boundary between an alien invasion film and a domestic haunting. The film takes as its main focus the life of the Barrett family. The father, Daniel, is unemployed and struggles with finding a new job. The mother, Lacy, works as a real estate agent in a housing market damaged by an economic recession (Meeuf 2022:39). Their sons, teenage Jesse and his younger brother, Sam, are shown as close. The family have good relationships with their neighbours initially as they are shown having a barbeque with them (Figure 38). At this event, Sam has a lizard in a box he wants to nurse back to health, but the animal is plainly scared, and Sam is warned that it will die. This serves as foreshadowing for the family's ordeal.



Figure 38: Cropped Screenshot of Suburban Barbeque, *Dark Skies*, 2013. Screenshot by Author.

The already strained circumstances of the family are stretched close to breaking point when strange nocturnal occurrences begin to disrupt their lives. Firstly, the kitchen (Figure 102) is vandalised, and a wild animal, possibly a racoon, is suspected. The next occurrence shows impossibly stacked bottles and cans with strange shadow signs on the walls (Figure 39). The

family photos vanish at this time and the youngest son, Sam, complains of a nocturnal visitor, the Sandman. As a precaution, Daniel reluctantly spends money, on surveillance equipment and the costly reactivation of the alarm in their home. However, Lacy soon sees a shadowy figure standing over Sam's bed, and three different flocks of birds fly into the family's home (Figure 40), emphasising the scale of the disturbance within.



Figure 39: Strange Occurrences in the Home, *Dark Skies*, 2013. (Ramella & Lealos 2024:[sp]).



Figure 40: Cropped Screenshot of Bird Clean-up, *Dark Skies*, 2013. Screenshot by Author.

Soon, the problem begins to transgress into the bodies of the family members, both mentally and physically. Lacy and Daniel suffer the loss of bodily control and time leading to self-harm.

Sam is seen wetting his pants, sleepwalking in a fugue state (Figure 41), and is later discovered by the neighbours to be covered in bruises and strange marks. They begin to suspect Lacy and Daniel of child abuse. Jesse frequents an abandoned house with his friend where they watch porn. When the friend bullies Jesse, he experiences a seizure in a wooded area. The family now stands to lose more than their financial status but also their children and even their social connections through the idea that they might be abusing their children.



Figure 41: Sam in Fugue State, *Dark Skies*, 2013. (Ramella & Lealos 2024:[sp]).

Lacy, realising that what is happening is unnatural, comes into contact with Edwin Pollard, who later interviews the two parents and reveals much about their visitors. Pollard, when visited in his inner-city apartment, standing much in contrast to the suburban life of the family, reveals that aliens are terrorising the family. Pollard explains that the presence of strange lights, severe headaches, ringing in the ears, allergies, unexplained illnesses, bleeding noses, abnormal behaviour, blackouts, loss of bodily control and implants behind the family's ears all point to alien intervention. Pollard calls these beings *The Greys* (Figure 42) and notes that humans are powerless against them. He offers only a vague line drawing as a reference, the key gestures of which had been echoed by some of Sam's drawings.

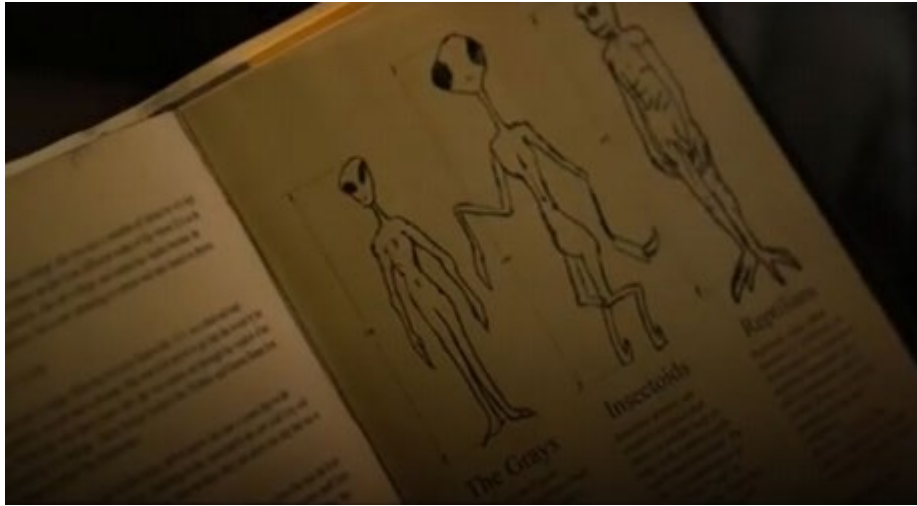


Figure 42: Cropped Screenshot of Greys shown by Pollard, *Dark Skies*, 2013. Screenshot by Author.

The family then sets out to try and discourage the aliens from taking their son, Sam, by acquiring guns and boarding up their house that evening, the date being the 4th of July. They adopt a dog, working from Pollard's observation that dogs can detect the aliens. The aliens, however, make it into the family home (Figure 3 & 43). The family's assault fails and the aliens trick their intended victim, Jesse, not Sam, into leaving the safety of his family through vivid hallucinations.



Figure 43: The Greys, *Dark Skies*, 2013. (Stiff 2021:[sp]).

At the end of the film, the family have moved to a small apartment and seem to be trying to regain some control of their lives, but the fall in class appears evident. The aliens as antagonists have not been revealed, except in shadowy outlines, one basic illustration and the drawings of

children, a collection of which Lacy finds in Jesse's old things (Figure 44). In the boy's room is also a walkie-talkie the boys used to communicate earlier. The object then begins to pick up distressed noises from Jesse and the film ends.

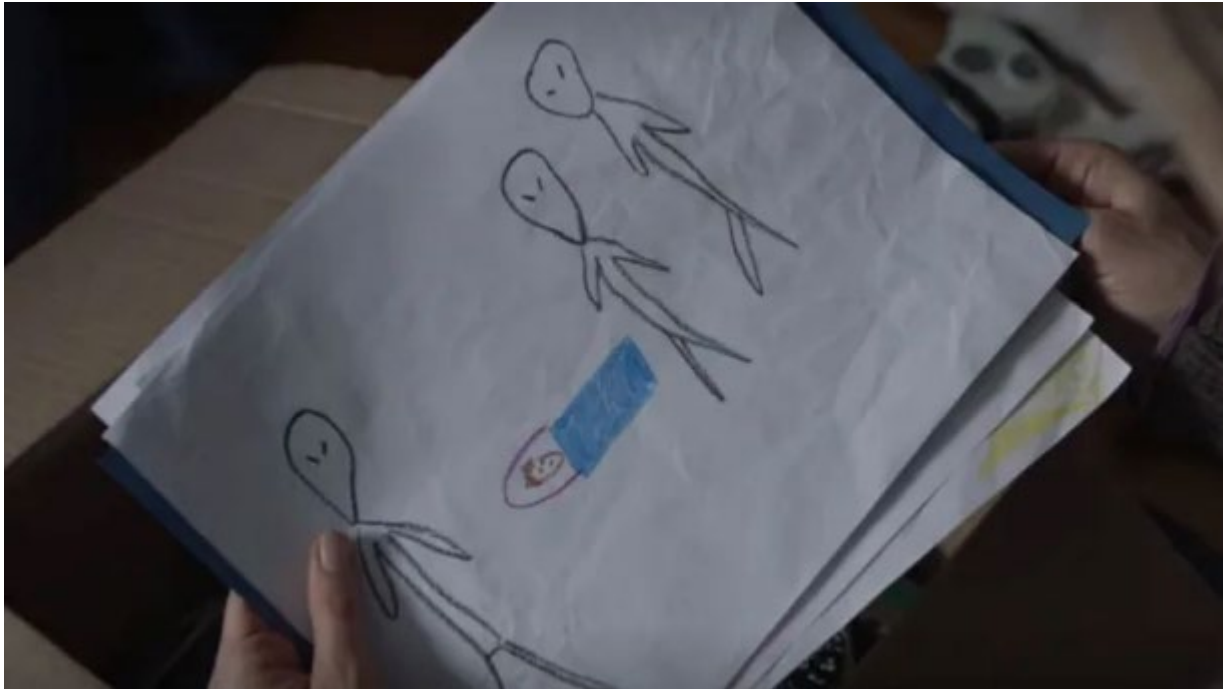


Figure 44: Jesse's Childhood Drawings, *Dark Skies*, 2013. (Sharma 2022:[sp]).

6.2.2 *The Fourth Kind*

Olatunde Osunsanmi's (2009) 1 hour and 38 minutes film has a peculiar style. It presents some of the footage in the film as 'authentic', whilst it shows, at the same time, a reconstruction of the same events as portrayed by acknowledged actors (Figure 45). The desire seems to be to imitate a documentary and lend an air of credibility and reality to the film.



Figure 45: Dr Abigail’ s actress and the ‘Real’ Dr Abigail. *The Fourth Kind*, 2009. (Stockton 2022:[sp]).

The premise of this film surrounds an inappropriate number of disappearances in the isolated town of Nome, Alaska, over the past forty years (IMDb 2009:[sp]). The film often shows the mountain ranges and forests that surround the town (Figure 95), as well as the forest that isolate the victims’ homes. Dr Abigail Tyler²³¹, a psychologist in Nome, does research on sleep disorders which a fair number of people in the town have been experiencing. To her surprise, she finds that all her patients have a memory of a similar occurrence, a large white owl watching them intently as they fall asleep (Figure 2 & 46).



Figure 46: Close-up of Owl, *The Fourth Kind*, 2009. (Malik & Howell 2018:[sp]).

²³¹ Dr Abigail is shown in this study as portrayed by both actresses in Figure 45, 47, and 104. Where reference is made to this character, these figures can be referred to in general.

Intrigued, the doctor uses hypnosis to gain information from her patients. The hypnosis sessions soon reveal that the town's people have been abducted by aliens. In their trans-like states, they scream and act as if possessed by the trauma inflicted on them (Figure 47). It is also later suggested that the alien beings communicate through the victims in this way. The aliens are never shown or described. However, it is revealed that the beings think of themselves as 'god' when they speak in Sumerian through a 'possessed' Dr Abigail (Figure 47). The idea that the aliens are ancient is established strongly in this film.



Figure 47: Example of a Victim when the Aliens Speak Through Them, *The Fourth Kind*, 2009. (Luiz 2022:[sp]).

Dr Abigail's investigation leads to several strange occurrences within the town of Nome. Her first patient to be hypnotised and gain his memory loses his mind, kills his wife and child before committing suicide. She also recalls her own abduction. This includes a painful medical procedure (Figure 104), the lingering mark of which she finds on her shoulder. The Sheriff of the town is suspicious of Dr Abigail, a suspicion which leads to him taking away her eldest child once the aliens abduct her youngest child. The film makes clear that Dr Abigail is not mentally stable and cites her misinterpreted memory of her husband's death as proof of her mental illness. The film ends with the conclusion of an interview with Dr Abigail, noting that her daughter was never returned. It is revealed that she is wheelchair bound after what seems like a last, mass, abduction.

6.2.3 *No One Will Save You*

This 2023 film takes the form of a national, home and personal invasion narrative. The protagonist of the film, Brynn, lives alone in a large home against what appears to be a wooded area (Figure 97). Throughout the film she is silent, having no dialogue. The visual narrative of the film reveals that she has lost her mother and best friend. Her mother's death is recent, as shown on a tombstone. Her friend, Maude, died over ten years ago. Her involvement with Maude's death has caused the town's people to shun her. One might note that she is alienated from her community, her lonely activities range from practising to dance to constructing a model town.

The alien aspect of the film first appears as dead rings of grass but soon escalates. One night Brynn's home's lights flicker and other devices like her record player malfunction, showing the alien interference. As she investigates, a strange creature, clicking and hissing, enters her home. It echoes a home invasion, as the creature sniffs after her, but ultimately leaves. The creature returns as Brynn tries to make a phone call. It reveals itself to be a telekinetic Grey Alien with long fingers and feet with sucker cups on each digit (Figure 48). In an attempt to defend herself, Brynn kills the creature with a stab to the head.



Figure 48: Brynn and the Alien's Feet, *No One Will Save You*, 2023. (Silva 2023:[sp]).

The next morning, she finds her car unable to drive and the phone and electricity out. On the way to town, she sees more circles left by aliens, but the town seems as of yet unaffected, except for a flipped mail van encountered outside the town. Brynn goes to the police station but rushes into Maude's parents, from whom she had hidden in the past. In this scene, however, there is no

hiding, and Maud's mother spits in her face. This leads to Brynn breaking down outside the police station, crying.

Brynn decides to try and escape, using a bus to leave town. On the bus a mailman grabs her, grunting and wheezing, showing that he is somehow infected by the aliens. It soon becomes apparent that multiple passengers have become infected, and Brynn narrowly escapes. In her search for shelter, she ends up at Maud's grave as a gigantic storm begins to build. She tries her best to run away from the building storm but is soon overtaken. The clouds are revealed as a cloak for alien space craft, looking very much like flying saucers. More infected people are seen looking towards the clouds, some parasitic alien mass moving in their throats (Figure 49). These infected seem connected to a sort of 'hive mind', who react in unison when they see Brynn. She runs home out of desperation.



Figure 49: Infected Person with Wriggling Mass in His Throat, *No One Will Save You*, 2023. (Peres 2023:[sp]).

Once home, the dead alien's stench leads her to investigate its body, only to find a slime trail indicating that perhaps a parasite has left its dead alien host. As the storm approaches her, she begins to prepare for the evening, getting ready to defend herself. However, many of her fortifications are quickly overcome by a white light from outside when the aliens return. A new creature enters her home and after another telekinetic bombardment in which it pulls a picture of her and Maud away from Brynn, she rushes upstairs to escape it only to run into another alien upstairs (Figure 50).



Figure 50: Short Grey Upstairs, *No One Will Save You*, 2023. (Film Colossus 2023:[sp]).

The alien upstairs is smaller, but with longer limbs and appears more aggressive. After a vicious chase, Brynn kills the being with a broken broom. As she leaves the house another alien appears, this time a giant creature with glowing eyes and long spindly limbs that chases her into the woods (Figure 51). Here, she is met by an infected mailman, who manages to hold her down as a large disc appears overhead. Brynn manages to escape once more as the large spider-like alien chases her, which she kills by trapping it in her car and setting the vehicle on fire. She retreats into the house, where another alien is still lurking.



Figure 51: Cropped screenshot of Long-Legged Alien Outside the Home, *No One Will Save You*, 2023. Screenshot by Author.

In the house, the alien is in her room. The alien's is distracted by her letter to Maud, as well as photographs. She tries to attack it, but is seized by a red light. The remaining alien vomits up a tentacled parasite which crawls into her mouth (Figure 52), after which she awakes in the morning with no sign of the invasion. She sees Maud, she apologises, and realises that this is a false reality and awakes by dragging the alien parasite out of her throat. The creature then climbs into a doppelganger of Brynn, provided by the alien ship. In the woods, the two fight, and the real Brynn prevails, comforting her dying double (Figure 53).



Figure 52: The Parasite, *No One Will Save You*, 2023. (Blasphemous Tones 2023:[sp]).



Figure 53: Cropped Screenshot of Brynn Comforting Her Dying Double, *No One Will Save You*, 2023. Screenshot by Author.

After being injured, Brynn is finally captured by a ship's beam and brought onboard. She is surrounded by Grey Aliens (Figure 54), who bring back memories of her and her mother building a model house, as well as Maud's death. The incident reveals Brynn and Maud as

children, fighting. Brynn kills Maud with a rock, acting in childish innocence. The guilt she feels, as well as the reason for her isolation, is revealed. When she sees the alien again, she appears relieved. The aliens seem unsure of what to do with her and appear to converse on the topic, their eyes glowing as they look upwards towards another source of light. Brynn is returned to the woods, where she laughs.



Figure 54: Cropped Screenshot of Aliens Looking Up with Eyeshine, *No One Will Save You*, 2023. Screenshot by Author.

The final section of the film reveals a vibrant and happy Brynn as she rides her bike to town, meeting infected people, who smile and wave at her with sunny dispositions. In town, she partakes in a function, where she dances with more infected humans, appearing happy and content (Figure 55). However, as the camera zooms out, the alien disks are still hovering in the sky.



Figure 55: Brynn's Happy Ending, *No One Will Save You*, 2023. (Laymonita 2023:[sp]).

6.3 UFOLOGY, FOLKLORE AND THE GREY ALIEN

There are several important threads that lead to the shaping of the aliens in the above films. The first thread is Ufology, that is the study and interest in UFOs that grew out of the 1940s and is still marked by an active interest in UFOs today (de Oliveira Neto 2023:7; Garcia 2023:[sp]).²³² Ufology's conception of aliens can be directly linked to the Grey Aliens seen in *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), including what the aliens do, who they choose as victims and where the interaction with these monsters occurs. Some of these tropes are then also displayed in full view through *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023), offering a clearer understanding of the Grey Alien as a contemporary monster.

Rutkowski (2016:[sp]) explains that *Ufology* was added to the *American Heritage Dictionary* in 1959, and that it is applied to how Unidentified Flying Objects are studied. Ufology has branches that include a reliance on science and observation, but it is also associated with paranormal, mystical and even religious streams of thinking (Gordin 2021:vii, 55; Cross 2007:249). Bullard (2010:14) notes that even within the Ufological community there are many uncertainties as to what the boundaries of the inclusion and exclusion of the field is. Ufology is thus a broad topic of huge scope, its scientific validity and phenomenological focus on experience often falling under the 'pseudoscience' label (Gordin 2021:vii).

²³² This article by Garcia (2023) is taken as evidence of active UFOlogy as it addresses the contemporary exploits of Nick Pope, a well-known and active British UFOlogist (Sheaffer 2015:24).

There are however some recurring ideas within this broad field. Dewan (2010:11) lists Diana Tumminia's (2007) eight²³³ overlapping trends. These include freelance involvement with UFO reporting, organisations such as MUFON (Mutual UFO Network) and CSICOP (Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal), an exchange with popular media, TV's *The X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016, 2018) (Figure 68), *Coast to Coast* AM Radio, *Fate* Magazine (Figure 56), *Communion* (Strieber 1987) (Figure 65) as per the influence of books, films like *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), as well as the internet's *uforia.com*, those who believe in the phenomenon, psychotherapy in the form of support groups for experiencers²³⁴, mystics and psychics like George Adamski, the involvement of religion through The Raëliens, Heaven's Gate and the Aetherius Society and finally fandoms who attach beliefs that border on the religious to aliens from respective narratives. Although Tumminia's (2007) list is dated, it does capture several streams of interest within Ufology that contributed to how the general public still perceives aliens. Contemporary Ufology has a few more components, one of which is a strong reliance on conspiracy theories as a narrative that explains lack of physical evidence (Halley 2012:63).

For this study there is no aim to disprove or endorse these beliefs, but rather to approach the view of aliens within Ufology to see how it finally influenced the chosen films. Although Ufology is packed full of bizarre and fantastical cases with branching mythologies, experiences and sightings, only the information most relevant to the Grey Alien is included here.²³⁵

Ufology is primarily understood in terms of the included research as a type of folklore. This approach assumes that contemporary alternative belief systems, such as Ufology, manifest older models of structures and beliefs seen in areas associated with folklore. This means that the structures used to view folklore in terms of social, cultural and historical concerns could be used on Ufology (Dewan 2010:133). What this implies for this investigation is an approach that views Ufology as a system of beliefs, looking at the way such tales are expressed in cultural contexts and influenced cultural texts.

²³³ Dewan (2011:11) notes there are nine definitions for UFO communities but only seems to name eight.

²³⁴ An integral part of the cycling of narratives in Ufology involves the accounts of abductees, people who were taken (Meehan 2025:63) and contactees, those contacted with messages, (Lowry 2019:68). The term *experiencer* is more contemporary and covers a larger variety of interactions with aliens (Engels 2025:18; Ashcraft 2021:26).

²³⁵ Neuwirth's (2019) Master's Thesis discusses the Grey Alien in relation to *The X-Files*, but also discusses the Grey Alien as intertwined with postmodern mythmaking and folklore. This section aims to provide not a theoretically positioned view quite along Neuwirth's (2019) ideas, but does draw on them at times. This section rather aims to present the folklore surrounding the alien, but not yet a complete reading thereof.

Ashcraft (2021:7, 26) explains that as folklore Ufology can be met as narratives that exist in a context, often involving religion and mythic structures that follow patterns associated with explaining mysterious phenomenon. Östling (2021:202) goes on to clarify, where older ideas of folklore have connections to notions of the primitive, contemporary takes on Folklore, rather view the ‘folk’ part of equation as any group who are bound by some commonality. In the case of Ufology, this becomes a loose group, or various groups, bound over multiple decades, showing varying degrees of interest in UFOs and even extraterrestrial life.

Within Ufology, repeated retellings of experiencers, at times exhibit structures found in older narratives, like legends (Dewan 2010:137). However, the passing along of information orally, as per a more traditional view of ‘Legend’, is more complicated in contemporary times (Dewan 2010:136).²³⁶ According to Östling (2021:222), experiencers spread their accounts which feed into popular media, only to create structures against which others can again measure experiences. Dewan (2010:136) explains that within Ufology the community’s many different ‘legends’ are told and retold, in an attempt to make sense of anomalous experiences using ‘cultural-belief language’.

Dewan (2010:136, 137) explains the enactment part of this arising and ever-changing folklore as threefold. It can be proto-ostension, which involves enactment to receive attention (Dewan 2010:136, 137). Alternatively, it can be pseudo-ostension, a hoax that somehow seems to prove beliefs already in place (Dewan 2010:136, 137). Lastly it can include quasi-ostension includes fantastical explanations for relatively natural occurrences. This study does not aim to judge the provided material from within Ufology, but acknowledges the streams by which beliefs are generated, told, retold and enacted to create cultural texts. In general, the understanding arises that popular films that show aliens, do not exist in a vacuum. They are part of the spreading of the beliefs in Ufology, and often draw heavily on established beliefs and ‘legends’ from this ‘group’.

This academic inquiry then aims to show a palimpsest of sorts, tracing the alien and beliefs surrounding it as it shaped the assumed or expressed beliefs about aliens in the particular films chosen for this study. The main aim of this study is not to present a folkloric interpretation of

²³⁶ Dewan (2010:136) includes a detailed discussion on what folklorists view as legends and how new ideas about what a community believes regarding the telling of such ‘legends’ have changed.

Ufology, sources like the *Handbook of UFO Religions* (Zeller 2021) give various sustained arguments to this point. Rather, the aim is to provide a general approach that allows for seeing narratives about aliens as multifaceted, deeply interconnected with popular and alternative expressions of monstrosity and dependent on the particular social, cultural and historical context of the groups that produce and circulate such ideas.

6.3.2 The Saucers Arrive

The alien as an Other and visitor from afar is a surprisingly old concept. It predates the formation of contemporary Ufology or UAP Studies²³⁷, however the contemporary visualization of the alien in its familiar Grey guise is more recent. The observation, reporting on and subsequent interest in UFO's after World War II led to a rich depiction of the alien in a startling array of forms. Threads running from scientifically minded observation, Science Fiction writing, abduction accounts, religious and transcendental experiences with aliens, all created visualizations of possible extraterrestrial visitors. This fertile ground would then later be seeded with the iconic image of the Grey Alien.

The alien as a visitor from some unknown place, is surprisingly old. Lucian of Samosata created a satirical tale in his *True History*, in the second-century AD, where beings from the sun, moon and Venus engage in battle (Guynes-Vishniac 2019:5). Much later iterations of the strange visitor from space, of course dependent on the perception of space at the time (Guynes-Vishniac 2019:5). Later iterations used as inspiration the discoveries of the 1600's and the explorative nature of the sea voyages taking place at the time (Seed 2011:6). Darwinism created a new explosion of ideas within the imaging of what would become the alien, with H.G. Wells' invading Martians and H.P. Lovecraft de-volving, ancient, entities of extraterrestrial horror (Grueso 2018:[sp]).

A deep interest in scientific discovery about the nature of the universe, including Einstein's principals, created a multitude of aliens from the mysterious reaches of the universe (Brake 2018:[sp]). Although the Second World War initially created a cloud of lingering pessimism,

²³⁷ The study of UFO's (Unidentified Flying Objects), recently renamed to UAP's (Unidentified Aerial/Aerospace/Anomalous Phenomena), is called Ufology, and more contemporaneously, UAP Studies (Peters 2025:95). For this study the older term, Ufology, is used as it is historically relevant and, it was judged by this author, as more appropriately capturing the tangle of folkloric, religious and esoteric strains that make up the body of beliefs surrounding UFO's and aliens.

the scientific imaginings that followed bore fruit in Science Fiction as Golden Age of Science Fiction of the 1940s and 1950s, filled with bizarre aliens (Krchoová 2022:8; Guynes-Vishniac 2019:7). This period also gives rise to a key feature in the rise of the Grey Alien, namely the arrival of Flying Saucers.

The UFO phenomenon's contemporary form can be linked back to the reporting done on Kenneth Arnold's experience on 24 June 1947. Lagrange (2018:247) explains that Kenneth Arnold, a private pilot, claimed to have seen nine "saucer-like-disks" at Mount Rainier in Washinton, as reported by Bill Bequette. After this initial account became popular, it opened the floodgates, with more accounts streaming into an inflating media storm (May 2017:62). In the same year, within weeks of Arnold's report, a downed disk in Roswell, New Mexico, was reported, and quickly denied, creating a much-circulated legend within Ufology (Kripal 2010:108: May 2017:65). May (2017:65) notes that the flying saucer in its disk shape was absorbed quickly into science fiction, both in literature and visual expression. Examples of this include *Amazing stories*, *Fantastic Adventures* and later *Fate* magazine which depicted flying saucers as connected to extraterrestrials (Bullard 2010:557).



Figure 56: Fate Magazine Cover No 1, 1948. (Kripal 2014:107).

Soon publications appeared that blurred the boundaries between science, fiction and mysticism. These included books like *The Flying Saucers Are Real* (Keyhoe 1950) which focused on the conspiracy around Roswell (May 2018:169). Books by Charles Fort, that speculated on the

mysteries surrounding alien encounters (May 2017:24). Books by Jacques Vallee, a noted astronomer, who collected tales of abduction or UFO's witnesses, seemed to bring some credibility to the pursuit (Boyle 2020:35). The tales were still fantastical in nature whatever the lens they were viewed through.²³⁸

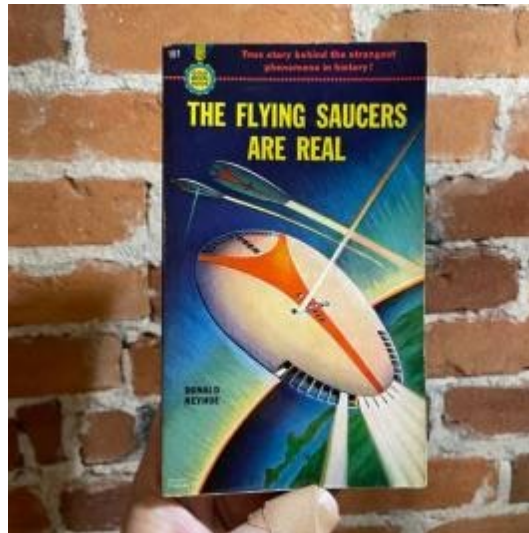


Figure 57: Photo of *The Flying Saucers Are Real* by Keyhoe printed in 1950, 2025. Photo by Postmarked for the Stars. (Postmarked for the Stars 2025:[sp]).

The alien at this point is a multifaceted monster. Experiencers and contactees provided a multitude of descriptions of tall blonde 'Nordic' looking abductors, large mantis-like creatures or even strange robots (Rutkowski 2010:[sp]; Watson 2020:109). Science Fiction described giant insects in *Starship Troopers* (Heinlein 1959), parasites in *The Puppet Masters* (Heinlein 1951), and even demon-like creatures in *Childhood's End* (Clarke 1953). Films from the 1950's similarly used the alien as an everchanging entities. The alien could be dangerous, tied up with Cold War fears of invasion, as seen in the alien pods of *Invasion of The Body Snatchers* (Siegel 1956) and the reptilian-like creatures from *Invasion of the Saucer Men* (Cahn 1957) (Lincoln 2013). At times aliens were benevolent also, as in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (Wise 1951) with a human-looking alien and robot (Lincoln 2013). Seed (2011:40) explains that such media deeply influenced the writing of Keyhoe and his collection of experiencer's narratives, showing the flow between popular culture and Ufology.²³⁹

²³⁸ Another notable researcher on UFOs is none other than Carl Gustav Jung, who added his contribution to the matter in the 1958 with his *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies*.

²³⁹ Lawson (2001:375) refers to a study that was done in 1977 on non-abductees, allowing them to imagine alien abductions and the non-abductees and actual abductees described the same classes of beings. The reason for this inclusion here is to show the variety of aliens reported in earlier abduction cases, versus later cases where the Grey Alien would become more popular and more prevalent.



Figure 58: Detail of photo of Neal Adams' *Childhood's End* Concept Art, in Starlog# 42 from 1980 on page 52, 2016. Photo by 2 Warps to Neptune. (2 Warps to Neptune 2016:[sp]).



Figure 59: Saucer Man and Victim, *Invasion of the Saucer Men*, 1957. (Wass 2023:[sp]).

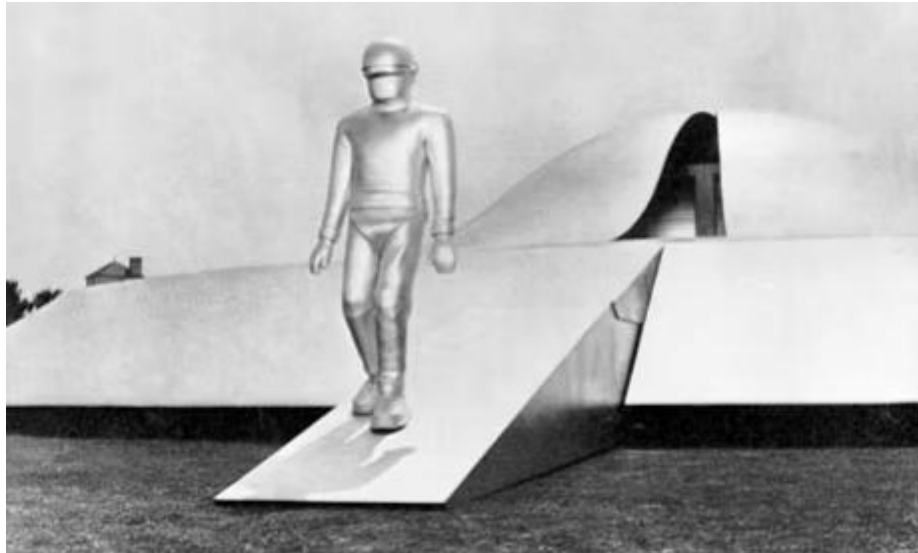


Figure 60: Exiting the Saucer, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, 1951. (O' Neill 2010:[sp]).

Another thread of Ufology includes bizarre religious movements. Wojcik (2021:17) explains that aliens became entangled in Eschatological Myths about the universe and humanity's place in it, with aliens often placed in the role of saviour from a world troubled by the Cold War and thought of nuclear fallout. This also means that many such growing religious focuses involved apocalyptic thinking (Wojcik 2021:17). Individual contactees received messages of warnings of destruction from alien powers. Examples include the 'Venusian', Ortho, contacted by George Adamski, or the 'Ashtar' messages of van Tassel and Robert Short, where Christianity was reframed within ideas of angelic extraterrestrials (Flaherty 2021).

Groups of worship also formed around UFO's and their occupants. Well known examples of these include Heaven's Gate, The Aetherius Society, the Raëlian Movement²⁴⁰ and The Unarius Foundation. These groups often conflated Christianity and belief in benevolent extraterrestrials, The Aetherius Society saw Jesus as a divine alien master, almost divine Space Brothers as beings of spiritual guidance were the focus of The Unarius Foundation, and the later Raëlian Movement, and infamous Heaven's Gate, held to a mixing of UFO-myths and biblical ideas (Rothstein 2021:454-458; Tumminia 2021:391-392; Chryssides 2021:382; Dericquebourg 2021:473).

²⁴⁰ In 2024 a mini-series was launched on Netflix that focuses specifically on the Raëlian Movement's leader, Raël (IMDb 2024:[sp]).

What is of interest here is the shape of such ‘saviours’. Most of these alien presences are described as distinctly human in shape, particularly conforming to the ‘Nordic’ style of alien (Dailey 2015; Tucker 2015; Unarius.org 2022; Prothero and Callahan 2017:131). This alien type is still a contemporary incarnation of the alien, as seen in shows like *People of Earth* (2016-2017).



Figure 61: Cropped view of Don as Nordic Alien, *People of Earth*, 2016-2017. (Li 2016:[sp]).

Although the concept of a visitor from some other place is not limited to the 1940's, the UFO phenomenon and the popularity of the movement did much to link alien visitors to such Unidentified Flying Objects. The objects became perceived as spaceships and so the visitors were re-imagined as being from space, reflecting the contemporary interest in space. Ufology soon added elements of mysticism, religion, the paranormal and fantastical, gathering bizarre tales of humans who had encountered aliens. Science fiction, both in publication and film, used these tropes and ideas to show a variety of alien entities. However, an event in the 60's would change the popular image of the alien drastically, introducing a sign so well known that it would double as a shorthand for anything extraterrestrial for the next seven decades at least; the introduction of the Grey Alien.

6.3.3 The Grey Alien Takes Shape

By the 2000s-2010s, when *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) are released, their hidden aliens are understood within the context of an audience saturated by

images and knowledge of Grey Aliens, drawing on decades of Ufology and popular culture. Within *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) the aliens have an unnameable quality in their hidden yet excessive presence. Part of what is revealed of these unnameable things feature strong cues of the Grey Alien. Intertextual knowledge of the Grey Alien links them to ideas of abduction, invaders of the planet, home and body alike, and bringing a sickness both mental or physical. Understanding in the films regarding the aliens as Grey Aliens is derived from signs, theories and ideas set up by shows like *Ancient Aliens* (2009-ongoing) (Figure 73), which is underlined in turn by Swiss author Erich von Däniken's *Chariots of the Gods? Memories of the Future-Unsolved Mysteries of the Past* (1969/1970).²⁴¹

In the notable absence of the alien, hidden entities playing with the sanity of the protagonists have Cosmic Horror elements, influenced by the New Weird Science Fiction boom, built on Lovecraftian Horror. Even alien movies that lack the concealed horror of the unknown, like *No One Will Save you* (Duffield 2023) show invading, abducting, infectious, parasitic, aliens bonding with an alienated human. The figure of the Grey Alien, in its multifaceted variety of dark eyes and grey skin, serves within its frame of reference as a monster. This section aims to better establish the layers of signs that make up the Grey Alien, and its unnameable aspect in *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) in particular.

The familiar Grey Alien, which has become shorthand for the concept of extraterrestrials, enters into the popular imagination in the 1960s through Ufology. The concepts and ideas about aliens, particularly those who would become linked to the Grey Alien, are then expressed through films like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977 Spielberg) (Figure 64), crossing the streams of popular film and Ufology. This connection, and feedback loop, is heightened when Travis Walton's abduction experience, Grey Aliens being central to his abduction, is not only expressed in a book *Fire in the Sky: The Walton Experience* (1979), but also later a film, *Fire in the Sky* (Lieberman 1993) (Figure 71 & 100). Along with Travis Walton's abduction, another experiencer's book and film adaptation, *Communion* (Whitley Strieber 1987) (Figure 65) and *Communion* (Mora 1989) seem to give a strong outline to the Grey Alien visually.

²⁴¹ Different authors give different dates as to when the book was translated and made available to the American public. Dorsch (2019:210) notes the date as 1969 whilst Kripal (2014:119) puts it at 1970, although the German version was published in 1968 (Hoopes & Whitesides 2012:71).

From here the 90s carry a distinct Grey Alien with a *modus operandi* built up through conspiracies, popular culture, Ufology and imaginative Science Fiction. Cultural key points include *The X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016, 2018) (Figure 68), entangled with conspiracy and Grey Alien hybridisation, while a hoax video, called the *Alien Autopsy* (Santilli 1995) (Figure 69) showed an ostensibly ‘real’ Grey Alien. The early 2000s’ media drew from a globalised perception of Ufology experiencers and ever more popular media in which Grey Aliens featured prominently as shown throughout this chapter. However, by the 2010s and early 2020s the Grey Alien still appears in cultural products, with much the same *modus operandi*.

The Grey Alien’s creation as a contemporary monster, folkloric figure and even modern-day messiah, draws lines of meaning and inspiration far outside of what this discussion can incorporate. While the decades that shaped the Grey Alien produced far more alien features in an exorbitant amounts, the included research only focuses on key moments in the Grey Alien’s formation, particularly in how the figures are seen, or rather not seen, in the chosen films.

The rise of the now familiar Grey Alien is traced back to the popularising of the Betty and Barney Hill abduction (Drysdale 2008:116), the couple shown in (Figure 62).²⁴² The 1961 experiencer narrative of Betty and Barney Hill, published in *The Interrupted Journey: Two Hours aboard a Flying Saucer* (Fuller 1966), set the tone for later abductee accounts in its events. This includes missing time, invasive medical procedures, hybridised offspring, memories recovered later, and the general shape of the culprits involved (Drysdale 2008:103-105). The Hills, although differing and varying in their accounts, generally described small, grey-skinned beings with large heads and ‘wrap-around’ eyes with vestigial mouths, this then became the iconic sign for the ‘alien’ (Roth 2005:65).

The interrupted journey of the Hills took seven hours, where their trip should have been around four (Flaherty 2010:91). Their missing time was soon recovered through hypnosis, revealing that they had been abducted, subjected to medical examinations, genetic and reproductive material taken with the intent of hybridisation, performed in general by short ‘grey’ aliens (Figure 63) (Flaherty 2010:91). An artistic reconstruction was created of the being, working from the Hill’s descriptions (Figure 63) (University of New Hampshire 2022:[sp]).²⁴³

²⁴² Figure 62 may serve as a visual reference for the Hills throughout this study.

²⁴³ Story (2001:66) explains the many changes the Hills made to their descriptions and also notes that similar small framed, big-headed aliens had been reported by experiencers previously as well as appeared



Figure 62: Betty and Barney Hill Photo from *Look Magazine*, 1966. (Blake 2023:[sp]).



Figure 63: David G. Baker, *Alien*, 1967. Watercolour on MDF, 43,18 x 45,72 cm. University of New Hampshire Library, Durham. (University of New Hampshire 2022:[sp]).

The popularity of the Betty and Barney Hill case allowed for other experiencers to come forward (Roth 2005:66). The idea of alien abduction became strongly associated with UFOs in the 1960s and continued to be linked to Ufology afterwards (Jacobs 2000:3). It was also during the late 60s, and early 70s that MUFON (1969), Mutual UFO Network and the Centre of UFO Studies, CUFOs (1973), were founded (McCauley 2000:36) presenting more opportunities to investigate these events.

More varied aliens were also present in popular culture. In the minds of the public, space travel became real in 1957 with the Soviet Union's launching of Sputnik, and the 1969 NASA moon landing greatly cemented these ideas, which was also reflected in the Science Fiction of the time (Roberts 2018:13-14, 61). SETI, emerging in the late 50s and early 60s, took seriously the search for alien life, their scientists very much inspired by Science Fiction to begin with (Dick 2020:323). Popular media at this time included hopeful Science Fiction titles invigorated by the shift of focus to rockets after the disillusionment brought on by the world wars but also

featured haunting tales of anticipated invasion still showing Cold War tensions (Cornea 2007:77).

Co-existing were family-friendly television features such as *Lost in Space* (1965-1968), *Star Trek* (1966-1969), *The Outer Limits* (1963-1965), together with Horror films featuring invasive aliens such as *Village of the Damned* (Wolf Rilla 1960) and *The Night Caller from Outer Space* (Gilling 1965; Cornea 2007:78). Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) presents the alien as a mysterious force which intercedes with human evolution and continues to do so (Miller 2018:76). The alien was portrayed in a cornucopia of forms, although many, due to the availability of human actors, retain strong human characteristics in these imaginings. Within Science Fiction writing however, more varied creatures took to the scene.

In literature the 1960 so-called New Wave in Science Fiction, being both products of the United States, Britain²⁴⁴, Australia and other English-speaking countries (Broderick 2003:48)²⁴⁵ came about. The New Wave was highly influential on the genre of Science Fiction, described by Higgins (2013:1) as an international avant-garde movement that included sociology and psychology, 'soft sciences' as a subversion of the Golden Age.

The mid-1960s saw a more socially conscious Science Fiction narrative (May 2018:32). Higgins (2013:1) explains that this period sparked the imagination with new technologies, but that cautious authors often wondered about the consequences, inspired by the Second World War's misapplication of science. The 60s were famously a time for social and political change. With strong countercultures springing up amongst the youth, the sexual revolution, together

²⁴⁴ Through the magazine *New Worlds* a British Science Fiction space that fostered writers such as Moorcock, Adliss and Ballard, Science Fiction's boundaries were pushed and explored (Merrick 2009:103).

²⁴⁵ Broderick (2003:48) notes that Science Fiction narratives were also being created in the USSR, but that the more available, and thus more influential work would have been coming out of the "West".

with the Civil Rights movement in America²⁴⁶ as well as the loss of Britain's colonies, the world's focus shifted (McWilliams 2021:[sp]; Encyclopaedia Britannica 2020:[sp]).^{247 248}

In the 1970s the alien in Science Fiction remained popular as the New Wave spilled over into the next decade. Since the New Wave was politically minded, there was space for female authors who became particularly popular in the 1970s (Booker 2015:5). For example, Le Guin and Joanna Russ, critiqued topics like Marxism (Booker 2015:5). Science Fiction in the cinema received a phenomenal boom in the 1970s. Although *Star Trek* (1966-ongoing) had been popular as television entertainment, it was the popularity of *Star Wars* by George Lucas (1977) that opened the way in Hollywood for later 'alien' features, such as *E.T.* (Spielberg 1982), and *Alien* (Ridley Scott 1979; Roberts 2000:84). Part of the upsurge of the alien in cinema was also the film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977 Spielberg) (Figure 64). Family-friendly fun, space operas, philosophical and moral questions together with effective horror can be seen in the texts above. However, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977 Spielberg) (Figure 64) offers something more; a direct inclusion of Ufology and its views of aliens.

²⁴⁶ Against this background Roth (2005:62) in particular notes the racial interest in the Betty and Barney Hill case, they themselves being an interracial couple, as well as their own self-declared interest and inability to identify the race of their abductors.

²⁴⁷ There is also the strong emergence of female writers within the genre, such as Ursula Le Guin and Anne McCaffrey (Norton 2010:85). Some cult novels of the time fuelled the rise of Science Fiction's popularity and dealt with the relevant issues of the time, imagining the alien as catalyst for this more social and political reflection. Human extermination is discussed in *The Genocides* (Disch 1965), featuring alien plants and giant killing machines (Anderson 2021:126). Alien plague, featuring the alien as an invasive entity in the form of illness in *The Andromeda Strain* (Criton 1969), shows an insight into human nature.

²⁴⁸ Some cult novels of the time fuelled the rise of Science Fiction's popularity and dealt with the relevant issues of the time, imagining the alien as catalyst for this more social and political reflection. Human extermination is discussed in *The Genocides* (Disch 1965), featuring alien plants and giant killing machines (Anderson 2021:126). Alien plague, featuring the alien as an invasive entity in the form of illness in *The Andromeda Strain* (Criton 1969), shows an insight into human nature and the shortcomings of science. *The Left Hand of Darkness* (Le Guin 1969) uses human aliens to explore gender. *Stranger in a Strange Land* (Heinlein 1962) although written earlier, also shows a huge focus on social issues, taking a human raised by Martians, fat furry nymphs and adults who resemble starfish.



Figure 64: Grey Alien, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, 1977. (Museum of the Moving Image Sloan Science and Film 2016:[sp]).

Josef Allen Hynek, an astronomer who was involved with studying UFOs, was a consultant on *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977 Spielberg) (Figure 64) (Hart 2020:64, 68). Hynek provided subdivisions of UFOs in a publication in 1972, as well as a classification system for the experiences of abductees and contactees (Anton 2020:133). Hynek's categories for encounters included Encounters of the First Kind, when a UFO is seen from about 200 yards (182.88 M), Encounters of the Second Kind, when the environment is affected by the UFO, and Encounters of the Third Kind, when an extraterrestrial entity is seen in relation to the UFO (Ganzevoort 2020:45). Hynek's involvement with *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977 Spielberg) (Figure 64) shows here a direct overlapping of Ufology and the lore it generates being used. The vocabulary of Ufology is being used here to express the alien in the mainstream, including abduction, grey-like beings, telepathic communication, with a friendly presence (*Close Encounters of the Third Kind* 1977 Spielberg) (Figure 64).

In terms of alien experiences, abduction remained a prevalent theme in the 1970s. Two prominent cases were that of Charles Hickson and Calvin Parker, known as the Pascagoula

Abduction (1973)²⁴⁹, and Travis Walton's abduction (1975) (Story 2001:679). Travis Walton's abduction however had a more enduring effect on the sculpting of the aliens' perception. Travis Walton claimed to have been abducted by a UFO from the Apache Sitgreaves-National Forest in Arizona within sight of his fellow loggers (Meehan 2023:18). The abduction sets up Walton in an unknown space that he can identify at best as being hospital-like, or clinical in some manner, with large-eyed beings, hairless, silent and pale, which remind him of cave salamanders (Lepselter 2016:61; Walton 1979:88). In Walton's own version of events, published in a book titled *Fire in the Sky: The Walton Experience* (1979) he goes into more detail about his experience. The aliens are described as large-eyed, large-headed, thin-lipped, small in stature, weak and with soft, noting that he felt "revulsion" (Walton 1979:87).²⁵⁰ Walton's account became popular and his experience with aliens further solidified the idea of the Grey Alien (Mosleth 2022:12).

The 1980s continue the alien's diverse mutation through history, including another deciding factor in the evolution of the Grey Alien. *Communion*, written by Whitley Strieber (1987) (Figure 65), and later directed as a film (1989) by Philip Mora, had a profound impact on how aliens were viewed. Strieber's (1987) narrative features his personal abduction story and did much to pull experiencers' ideas and the mythos of Ufology into popular culture (Robertson 2014:58). Strieber's description, and later filmic portrayal, of the aliens who abducted him, were entities that would be the visual archetype for the Grey Alien (Robertson 2014:64).

The impact of *Communion* (Strieber 1987) was to transform the UFO community from smaller groups of individuals, as in the 1950s, who were concerned with material evidence, to a larger movement in the 1980s and 1990s with a pronounced focus on abductions and abductees/experiencers who now reported profuse activity by Greys (Roth 2005:68).²⁵¹ ²⁵² This trend was further facilitated by Bud Hopkins' books *Missing Time* (1981) and *Intruders* (1987).

²⁴⁹ Charles Hickson and Calvin Parker reported an abduction by pincer-like aliens who had robotic-like qualities (Brockell 2019:[sp]). The pair gave interviews on their experience within the same year, 1973, gaining publicity (Brockell 2019:[sp]). The image of the men's description also circulated (Olmos & Noguez 2005:4).

²⁵⁰ It is interesting to note that Grey Aliens were not the only extraterrestrials Walton (1979:94) met, since he also described bumping into a tall blond man in the spaceship. Interestingly, the South African, Elizabeth Klarer claimed to have had a relationship with a blond alien in the 50s and 60s, her encounters published in 1980 in *Beyond the Light Barrier*, perhaps showing that the blond alien had not quite left the folkloric scene.

²⁵¹ Part of the alien forms that gained popularity because of Strieber is the insectoid. In 1986 he recalled seeing a giant bug-like alien in 1967, which he described as looking like a praying mantis (Watson 2020:109).

²⁵² The image of the Grey soon began to eclipse older reports of Nordic type aliens which were seen in this decade as more connected with the idea of religious interests in aliens (Roth 2005:52).

These set the patterns of abduction cases, as well as shifting the focus of such alien encounters to the participants, their subjective experiences, as well as their purpose within alien-human hybrid programs (Delasara 2000:188).



Figure 65: Ted Seth Jacobs, Grey Alien Cover Art for *Communion*, 1987. (Anderson [sa]:[sp]).

Part of such subjective experiences would include the abductee living a ‘normal’ life with the possibility of remembering their ‘lost time’ and alien encounter past a ‘screen memory’.²⁵³ According to Meehan (2023:20) such screen memories are used to hide or suppress the actual alien encounter, essentially being false memories implanted by aliens. Meehan (2023:20) refers to Budd Hopkins (1981), who in his famous book, *Missing Time*, notes an example where an abductee, Virginia Horton²⁵⁴, remembered a beautiful deer, which turned out to be a screen for hiding her alien encounter. Screen memories as part of the characteristics of alien abductions

²⁵³ This term is connected to Freudian thought, meaning a false memory created to hide a subversive expression of another, perhaps overwhelming memory (Aliaga-Lavrijsen 2015:6).

²⁵⁴ A false name given for privacy (Hopkins 1981:129).

can also be found in the Strieber's defining tale of abduction (Meehan 2023:20), involving an owl (Strieber 1987 [1989]:30-31).

Within Ufology there are a couple of stereotypical screen memories, often of animals like owls, popularised by Bud Hopkins (1981) as well as his overlap with Strieber's (1987) book and personal abduction experience (Robertson 2014:64). Usually 'screen memories' are of animals with big dark eyes, like the Grey Aliens they are meant to cover up (Fowler 2002:432). A rather recent publication by an alien experiencer Mike Clleland (2015), makes reference to owls in the use of alien screen memories. This shows that the belief is still circulating within the Ufology community in the middle 2010s.²⁵⁵ Perhaps one might draw from the writings of Strieber (1987), Bud Hopkins ' (1981), and Clleland's (2015) the following: that there is mental distress, even real symptoms of physical illness²⁵⁶ without clear cause, and from underneath an unassuming memory could flow the cause of such ailments, namely Grey Aliens.

Lingering effects of alien abduction are then not just limited to psychological distress, but part of the alien *modus operandi* in Ufology, is the presence of lingering physical symptoms. Due to Strieber's entanglement with the phenomenon, an example of his own would include physical pain, such as pain in the rectum (Strieber 1988 [1987]:34). Such pains, or scars or marks (Newton 2002:6), seen as a reflection of the abductees' conviction that their experience was physical (Scribner 2003:96). This is often accompanied by another staple of the abduction narrative, alien implants (Dumit 2005:228). Although such tales would only become more widely popular after the publication of *Awakening: How Extraterrestrial Contact Can Transform Your Life*. (2002) by Mary Rodwell. The idea of alien implants stretches back to the 1950s, with Ufologist John Robinson in 1957 already, reaching a wider audience through the Long John Nebel Radio show (Watson 2020:74, 94, 124). This idea relates to aliens having physical interactions with humans, leaving behind physical signs of their probing, and later implants.²⁵⁷

An interesting, although relevant, aside to Strieber's (1987) (Figure 65) deeply influential work, is his description of how the aliens smell. It would appear that very few abductees outside

²⁵⁵ Clleland (2015:[sp]) also refers to Strieber directly and had contact with him, in particular on the topic of owls as screen memories.

²⁵⁶ Strieber (1989 [1987]:32) describes how his mental state deteriorated, but that along with that came symptoms of a fever at first.

²⁵⁷ Watson (2020:88, 89) explains that a lot of abductees report more 'spiritual' and noumenal experiences.

of Strieber (1987) (Figure 65) focus on the smell of their tormentors, although he notes that others have reported similar experiences (Strieber 1988 [1987]:104). Strieber (1988 [1987]:104, 29) refers to the monsters as being rather musky or even smelling like sulphur, cheese, cardboard, sourness and a hint of cinnamon. A report on smell was created by Rullán (2000:11), who document odours reported by abductees from various cases, ranging from the 1950s to 1980s and provides an impressive list. It includes sulphur, burning rubber, skunk-like smells, ammonia, 'bad cabbage' and chemical smells (Rullán 2000) ²⁵⁸

The 1980s were a time in which one of the staples of the contemporary visage of the Ufology was popularised, namely the legendary crash of a UFO at Roswell. This event came into the public eye through a book titled *The Roswell Incident* (Moore & Berlitz 1980). The book told of a government cover-up over a crashed UFO and its occupant/s, it generated much interest and was followed by more eyewitness accounts (May 2017:68).²⁵⁹ The aliens in this popular narrative are described along the same lines as the growing 'Grey' alien image, being short, bald and large-headed (Roth 2005:81).

A strong element of the story includes the distrust of the United States government, an angle Reece (2007:44) explains as being connected with the American public's distrust already incurred by the Vietnam War and the Watergate Scandal.²⁶⁰ The discomfort with the government's involvement was also boosted in 1984. At this time the UFO community saw the rise of the Majestic-12 narrative. This came from 'Top Secret' documents, that exposed a supposed governmental group involved with covering up the UFO at Roswell (May 2017:68).²⁶¹ These documents further allegedly linked President Truman with the cover-up (Story 2001:53). Strieber soon wrote a book about this incident and the cover-up, titled *Majestic* (1989). In this case there is an overlap between literature and Ufology, and although

²⁵⁸ Prof Shrader (2024) explains that humans are very sensitive to sulphur. Humans generally have a meat rich diet, evolutionarily speaking, and detecting sulphur means detecting how safe it is to consume meat. Certain amounts of sulphur smell pleasing to humans, while sulphur amounts associated with decay are off-putting according to Prof Shrader (2024).

²⁵⁹ People started to visit the area, Rachel being a town near 'Area 51', and the increased tourism changed the town's economy and led to many aliens' themed forms of making business (Lepselter 2016:81).

²⁶⁰ Reece (2007:44, 45) also notes that previous stories about UFO sightings and crashes had set the stage upon which the play of the Roswell story's reception took place, with previous events including 'Aztec' and 'Aurora'.

²⁶¹ Strieber (1989) also wrote a book, *Majestic*, that was meant to reveal this group and their cover up (May 2017:68).

Majestic (1989) might not have been intended as Science Fiction, the themes of the book do make it read as such.^{262 263 264}

In terms of film, the decade had opened with Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979) (Figure 66), a Science Fiction Horror piece of innovative creature design. The sequel to this successful work was *Aliens* (Cameron 1986), which added more action and lore to the growing phenomenon of slimy, parasitic creatures seemingly a combination of lizard, crustacean and human. Still firmly within the Horror genre, *The Thing* (Carpenter 1982) (Figure 18) based on a novella, *Who Goes There*, by Campbell from 1938, shows a shape-shifting alien terrorising a research crew in the Arctic (Söderström 2016:2-3). In a more tropical sphere, *Predator* (McTiernan 1987) showed a high-tech alien, complete with scales and insect-like fangs, hunting humans. Later the skeletal aliens in *They Live* (Carpenter 1988) insidiously invade a small town, hiding amongst humans.

²⁶² Science Fiction literature at the time is identified with Cyberpunk and a heavy interest in technology that centres around computers (Martinez 2018:5), influenced by postmodernism and capitalism (Stockwell 2000:66). However, the alien was still a prominent vehicle for reflecting on contemporary culture. Alien invaders in film and in literature, such as *Footfall* (Niven & Pournelle 1985) and *The Forge of God* (Bear 1987), reflected the ideology of the Reagan administration's anxieties about the soviet union, the Other being coded as dangerous and invasive (Booker & Thomas 2009:34). The Other though was also being written about not just in terms of nationalism, but with a rise of female and feminist writers in the 1980s, a new aspect of the alien as Other comes to the fore (Tidwell 2011:11, 32).

²⁶³ Octavia Butler, a feminist African American Science Fiction writer, uses the alien in her Xenogenesis series, *Dawn* (1987) being the first (Castiello 2010:233, 234). Here the alien presents a way to reflect on gender, race, and technology as the alien Oankali, who saved humans from a nuclear holocaust and now wishes to save them through repopulating the earth with human-alien Hybrids (Castiello 2010:234). The Oankali are eyeless, grey beings who use tentacles to interact and sense (Favreau 2018:2). Similarly Slonczewski, a microbiologist and author, relates in *Wall Around Eden* (1989) a tale about a female protagonist in a post-nuclear holocaust earth where "Keeper" Aliens, hive minded creatures, maintain control of humans through technology (Pike 2022:[sp]). Yaszek (2023:[sp]) notes that the 80s also saw male authors begin to experiment with ideas beyond heteronormative patriarchal ideas.

²⁶⁴ Other alien depictions in Science Fiction also included reflections on various themes such as childhood, as seen in Card's *Ender's Game* (1985). Here there is an exploration of children to aid humanity fight in a war against aliens, Formics/ 'Buggers', who endanger the human race (Olsen 2021:8; Utero 2016:3). Recent interpretations of the novel have also highlighted the reflection on child abuse in the book (Hastuti 2019:3). The aliens of *Ender's Game* (Card 1985) are insect-like creatures, Formics had invaded earth and the aftermath of the fighting and attempted genocide by humans of these aliens are explored (Olsen 2021:8-11).



Figure 66: Xenomorph in Action, *Alien*, 1979. (Rentschler 2020:[sp]).

Benevolent aliens also mark this period, particularly *E.T.* (Spielberg 1982) which featured a lost alien becoming friends with children as it tries to make its way home. *The Abyss* (Cameron 1989) with aquatic aliens that turn out to be helpful came out during this time as well. However, the alien as a monster is firmly cemented as a being which can harm humans as per the Horror titles in films noted above.

In terms of television, Science Fiction was popular in the 1980s and saw a boost in the production of TV shows in this genre (Johnson-Smith 2005:3). Aliens were legion and had many guises, from invaders and oppressors, aliens as immigrants and even cause for comedy in sitcoms. *V* (1983) (Figure 67), shows aliens as Visitors, deceptive and invasive, entangled with policy-making (Sherman 2022:13). A *War of the Worlds* (1988-1990) reimaged its source material with a deeper focus on the enduring invasion of the aliens (Sherman 2022:32), and invading creatures in *Tripods* (1984–1985), a BBC series, showed a future where an alien invasion had succeeded (Sexton 2016:475). *Alien Nation* (1989-1990) depicts aliens as *New Comers*, alien ex-slaves now settling on earth, facing the challenges of a racial and cultural minority (Sherman 2022:106). Although aimed at a comedic setting, sitcoms like *Mork & Mindy* (1978-1982) allowed for aliens to give social commentary on society (Peltz-Steele 2016:4), as well as *ALF* (1986-1990) which could comment through satire (Sherman 2022:191).



Figure 67: Hidden Lizard Alien in Human Skin, *V*, 1983. (Kindertrauma 2008:[sp]).

As popular as Television aliens were in the 80's, the 90's would release an acculturating, global, force on the public through *The X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016, 2018) (Figure 68). The series focused on the paranormal, supernatural and the extraterrestrial, but the overarching narrative centred around a government cover-up of extraterrestrials and their alien- human hybrid project (Neuwirth 2019:68). An important trait of *The X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016, 2018) (Figure 68) was its inclusion of Ufology into the story structure. It popularized the lore surrounding UFOs and aliens, influencing the reading of the alien in the popular imagination.

Hodges and Ulserger (2005:93) note that *The X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016, 2018) (Figure 68) presented an adaptation of the paranormal thinking of its time. It allowed for issues to be read into the texts, such as the awareness of the audience of their oppression by the elite, found in a narrative of conspiracy (Hodges & Ulserger 2005:93). The inclusion of paranormal, science (fiction) and the supernatural presenting presented an alternative to religion (Hodges & Ulserger 2005:93).²⁶⁵ Randles (2000:393-395), as quoted by Hodges and Ulserger (2005:101-102) explains that *The X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016, 2018) (Figure 68) took from paranormal thinking and Ufology, using its mythology, while in turn creating new beliefs in viewers. This made some accept the show's version of events as true, feeding again back into the accepted belief about UFOs and the paranormal.

What one can see here is a feedback loop between popular culture and the mythology and lore surrounding UFOs and by extension, aliens. This process was then not limited to the United

²⁶⁵ Hodges & Ulserger (2005) is focused on feminism and how the series subverts heteronormativity at this time (Guyot 2021:9).

States of America. Molle and Bader (2016:130) are of the view that *The X-Files* (1993–2002) (Figure 68) was a ‘Magic Bullet’, or Culture bullet (*Kulturkugel*) in that it transcended the American audience to travel across cultures. It caused a great increase in the interest in UFOs and the paranormal (Molle & Bader 2016:130).



Figure 68: X-Files Compilation, *The X-Files*, 1993–2002, 2016, 2018. (Harrisson 2022:[sp]).

Some of the instances that *The X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016, 2018) (Figure 68) drew on from Ufology include the conspiracy of alien bodies and craft from Area 51, as well as the intangibility of those in charge of the lurking tendrils of the coverup (Neuwirth 2019:25). In 1995 there was also an incident in Ufology as a hoax video, called the *Alien Autopsy* (Santilli 1995)²⁶⁶ (Figure 69), surfaced of an alien body from Roswell as it was being dissected (Gordon 2019:32). This film was broadcast to a global audience on various channels, blurring fact and fiction (Gordon 2019:32). Stableford (2006:182) recounts that the footage was very popular and lent itself to be a building block for more dramatic iterations of the same theme, as was seen in *The X-files* (1993–2002, 2016, 2018) (Figure 68) and *Roswell* (1999–2000). The film reinforces the typical alien visage, with dark eyes, but then breaks this vision down by revealing more human features under contact lenses (Masters 2019:193).

²⁶⁶ Ray Santilli, a producer of the film confessed in 2006 that the film was a fake, but he then also claimed that the film he produced was based on an actual film from the Roswell crash in 1947 (Masters 2019:193; Gordon 2019:32).



Figure 69: Alien Body, *Alien Autopsy*, 1995. (Internet Archive 2023:[sp]).

UFO conventions in the 90s had moved further away from scientific and conservative methods of investigation. The main topics of discussion included conspiracy theories, alien technology and its applications or “back-engineering” as well as secret bases harbouring aliens (Donovan 2011:147). Phil Schneider, who shared his experience of helping the United States Government create Deep Underground Military Bases involving Grey Aliens of large stature (Webb [sa]:7), added to the interest in these topics.

Ufology in the 90s was dominated by abduction narratives, which had become a staple of Ufology (Ball 2010:99). Abduction cases in the 1990s focused on the taking of reproductive material (Carbone 2023:[sp]). Alien abductions had a darker side than before with a strong belief in an alien breeding programme intent on creating superior beings (Kripal 2010:301). This idea was popularised by the book *Secret Life: Firsthand Documented Accounts of UFO Abductions* (1992) by David Michael Jacobs (Kripal 2010:301).²⁶⁷ As shown in the above writings the idea of alien-human hybrids is not new, but it seems to have been more pronounced at this time.

This points towards another trait of the Grey Aliens, particularly one encountered in both *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) and *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), the abduction of children. Although there are many child-stealing monsters²⁶⁸, the Grey Alien is connected to stealing

²⁶⁷ Hopkins (1996) *Witnessed: The True Story of the Brooklyn Bridge UFO* was also in circulation during the 90s, continuing an interest in the testimony of witnesses.

²⁶⁸ Gilmore (2003), among others, note this tendency throughout the documented history of monsters.

foetuses. Watson (2020:123) refers to this as ‘Missing Foetus Syndrome’ which has been connected to aliens through the lore of hybrid babies. This is exemplified in the Budd Hopkins book, *Intruders* (1987) in Katie Davis’ case where the woman claimed she was impregnated, had the foetus stolen by aliens, and was shown this hybrid child later in its life (Bullard 2010:78, 79). This concept seems to have risen in popularity together with the hybridisation theme, in the 1970s and 1980s as beliefs about abduction, impregnation, hybridisation and vanishing foetuses grew (Watson 2020:77-76).²⁶⁹ Abductees also report lifelong experiences like Virginia Horton’s case noted in Hopkins’ writings²⁷⁰, which included childhood abductions (Bullard 2010:178).

Adult Abductees show another common theme, which is a manner of sexual assault. The taking of genetic material can come in the form of a sexualised extraction²⁷¹. Strieber (1989 [1987]:30, 85) (Figure 65) also notes the Grey Alien’s sexual curiosity and rectal probing. The infamous alien anal probe is almost synonymous with the Grey Alien, creating perhaps a further link to them as a sort of sexual predator (Levin 2019:2). Although the chosen films do not centre on this idea, the theme is still present perhaps in the many possibilities of horror the figure offers. What is of importance to the study is the set trope that the alien pierces the bodily boundary.

Another important factor in the thinking on aliens in the 90s, includes the rise of the internet. The internet became a space where the interest in UFOs and the paranormal could be shared across the planet (Eghigain 2015:1). Carbone (2023:[sp]) explains how much of the early internet interaction about UFOs was concerned with topics like *The X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016, 2018) (Figure 68), in particular its portrayal of conspiracy and cover-ups. This presence of conspiracy in the public mindset, with the internet as an available tool, created a breeding ground for hybridisation between such UFO conspiracy theories and ‘New Age’ belief systems (Robertson 2016:6). This resulted in a field called *millennial conspiracism*, often involving aliens, as can be seen in Whitley Strieber’s work (Figure 65), David Wilcock²⁷², and David Icke²⁷³ (Robertson 2016:6).

²⁶⁹ As an example, one can refer here to the book titled *Hair of the Alien, DNA and Other Forensic Evidence of Alien Abductions* by Chalker (2005).

²⁷⁰ *Missing Time* (Hopkins 1981).

²⁷¹ An example here would be Antônio Villas-Boas, who described being seduced by an alien (McCauley 2000:30).

²⁷² David Wilcock is a New Age conspiracy theorist, who combines ideas of ascension on a cosmic scale involving aliens and other New Age notions such as channelling, reincarnation, Theosophy, Ancient Aliens, but also incorporates strategies from epistemology (Robertson 2016:25, 170, 176, 177).

²⁷³ David Icke, from the United Kingdom, popularised another type of alien in the late 1990s, namely reptilian, or draconian aliens, which were intimately interrelated with conspiracy theories and the governing bodies

In terms of film, the 1990s showed off a variety of hostile aliens set on invasion and destruction (Hathaway 2019:28). Geraghty (2009:88) explains that two trends were visible, namely individual alien invaders and swarms of alien creatures. Individual attackers can be seen in films like *The Faculty* (Rodriguez 1998), with a watery parasitic monster intent on ‘possession’ (Geraghty 2009:88). More common, however, were films like *Mars Attacks* (Burton 1996), *Independence Day* (Emmerich 1996) (Figure 70), *Starship Troopers* (Verhoeven 1997) and *Men in Black* (Sonnenfeld 1997). These films show bug-like aliens, tentacled aliens, traditional greys and spoofs of all these concepts. Spoofs of the 50s’ alien monster movies are also present, taking from an era where invasion movies were popular and the political climate was rife with the fear of the Cold War (Hathaway 2019:28; Booker 2020:104). These films mainly show invading collectives, depersonalised and reflecting the United States’ political tensions with Iraq, experiences of the recent Gulf War and fears concerning depersonalisation through globalisation (Geraghty 2009:89).



Figure 70: Preserved Alien Bodies, *Independence Day*, 1996. (Colbert 2016:[sp]).

A film that stands out here is the 1993 adaptation of Travis Walton’s abduction in *Fire in the Sky* (Lieberman 1993) (Figure 71 & 100). This film focuses on Walton’s recounting of his abduction, his personal experiences as well as those of the individuals around him (Muir 2011:297), not a full-scale invasion. Walton’s written account of his encounter was less violent and terrifying than the film portrays, the screenwriter even later apologised for the horrific

of the word (Braune 2023:156). These aliens then can change their shape to better blend in with human society while they undermine it, and partake in the age-old monstrous tradition of drinking blood and snacking on babies (Dentith 2021:8). Icke’s aliens have strong spiritual, or esoteric, components, conflating the possible science of life outside of earth with spiritual ideas of sinister forces and interdimensional beings of evil, as well as receiving information via channelling as earlier contactees did in the 1950s and 60s (Gulyas 2015:35).

inclusion (Muir 2011:297). The aliens in *Fire in the Sky* (Lieberman 1993) (Figure 71 & 100) have some features that differ from of the Grey Alien, such as a different skin tone, and smaller dark eyes, but their build and lack of features echo the general outline of the Grey Alien.



Figure 71: Alien Face, *Fire in the Sky*, 1993. (Whitlock 2023:[sp]).

The 1990s' Science Fiction writing entered the 'British Boom' pushed Science Fiction writing to new heights in popularity (Seymore 2012:12). Edwards (2019:154) explains that the administration of the then British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher²⁷⁴, was involved in 'mainstreaming' to create better control through culture. This led to genres like fantasy, the gothic and Science Fiction becoming re-enlivened as they could offer subversion (Edwards 2019:154). Baker (2017:81) explains that politics had a profound influence on the 'Boom', which in turn led to the revitalisation and melding of genres in this culturally marginalised space (Baker 2017:81). Science Fiction and fantasy merged, and H.P. Lovecraft inspired writers who were in the process of creating the 'New Weird' (Baker 2017:81). This group of writers set out to break boundaries and to work around tired clichés, their work spilling from the late 90s into the 2000s (Booker & Thomas 2009:163).²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ Baker (2017:81) states that Tony Blair's governance in 1997 also impacted the 'British Boom'.

²⁷⁵ In Science Fiction writing the alien remained multi-faceted. Reactions to NASA's intended exploration of other planets and the Hubble Space telescope's completion, along with talk of life on Mars in the form of bacteria, boosted a desire for Science Fiction media (McLeod 2003:337). The theme of Outer Space became popular again, with high resolution images from Hubble and landings on Mars and this was shown in art (Triscott 2016:421). Other authors used this narrative as a vehicle for reflecting on religious elements. Such clear religious themes can also be seen in the earlier, popular and acclaimed, *Hyperion* (Simmons 1989), *The Fall of Hyperion* (Simmons 1990) and *The Rise of Endymion* (Simmons 1997), which also directly references the catholic church (Roberts 2006:319). On the other hand, authors like Ian Banks in his *Culture Series* (1987-2012) (listed here in the List of Sources as entries under Banks, IM.) showed an optimism in the future and the diverse alien life humans could encounter in a space that has transcended scarcity and is

Drawing from H.P. Lovecraft imbued the new visions of the alien with a sense of the Gothic, Sublime and thus unnameable. The early 20th century writer H.P. Lovecraft (1890- 1923) used the Gothic trope of hauntings and the return of a dark past, but inserted the unfathomable aliens that make up the Cosmic Horror he is famous for (Levy & Mendlesohn 2019:168). Lovecraft offers a re-envisioning of the past through an alien lens, that aliens existed on earth as god-like beings, engineered humans, terrorise isolated communities, combining human and alien genes with strong themes of devolution (Grueso 2018:[sp]). In most of Lovecraft's work there is an ominous presence owed to the breaking of some natural law, resulting in horror (Littman 2018:95).

The Lovecraftian aliens exist as entities made of the horrors of the unknown, cleverly combined with animals that are perceived as repulsive and 'alien' themselves. Examples include cephalopod-like features, tentacles as in the case of Cthulhu (*The Call of Cthulhu*) (Lovecraft 2014 [1926]; Reinert 2015:256), utterly bizarre body structures perhaps related to other oceanic creatures as in *At The Mountains of Madness* (Lovecraft 2014 [1931]) and Lovecraft's Frog-like Deep Ones (*The Shadow over Innsmouth* 2014 [1931]). It seems that Lovecraft applied evolution of sentient beings not to primates, but to ichthyic and amphibian sources (Steadman 2020:[sp]). It is then from such alternate imaginings that the New Weird grew.

The New Weird²⁷⁶, a term coined by M. John Harrison in 2003 concerning the writing of China Miéville, but the trend had been around since the 80s including authors like Clive Barker who created 'post-Lovecraftian' stories and blurred boundaries between high and low culture, genres, modernism and postmodernism (Noys & Murphy 2016:119). In the New Weird a Gothic and surreal atmosphere prevails, questions about the limits of knowledge are often included, horror and wonder mix into tales that focus on human experiences of the bizarre (Sederholm 2019:162). In the New Weird the alien is an infinitely changeable beast, and unlike Lovecraft's race laden reactionary entities, the monster, hybrid, alien creature, is a site of resistance, celebration, Nihilism laden and full of awe (Noys & Murphy 2016:125). This alien,

advanced (Nicholson 2019:10). Ian Banks was then also part of the 'British Boom' in Science Fiction in the 1990s (Norman 2017:31).

²⁷⁶ The Old Weird is written about by Kate Marshall (2016), where she explains the intricacies of the notes of Weird tales and their classification as New Weird or Old Weird. Inside the argument of Marshall (2016:636, 637) is however a core of the Old Weird, H.P. Lovecraft, who often overshadows other contributors, showing the New Weird's fascination with H.P. Lovecraft's mythos of an ancient cosmos where humans are newcomers haunted by great alien beings from an unfathomable place in space and time.

and the alien worlds/dimensions it inhabits are then marked by funguses, tentacles and cults (Webb 2022:86).²⁷⁷ ²⁷⁸ ²⁷⁹ The New Weird would bear fruiting bodies into how aliens are perceived particularly in the products of the 2010s and thereafter.

In the early 2000s however, *The X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016, 2018) (Figure 68) was coming to an end with its final episode, at that time, airing in 2002 (Williams 2015:166), but new aliens soon moved in to take the place of the ever elusive Grey Aliens and their sinister agenda.²⁸⁰ In the Australian/ British series *Jeopardy* (2002–2005) eight Scottish children head to Australia to look for UFOs only to be met with disaster and disease. *Roswell* (1999–2002) deals instead with young human-alien hybrids who are linked to the Roswell crash and must avoid the government. In *Taken* (Spielberg 2002) the miniseries similarly focuses on Roswell as well as hitting various notes from Ufology, such as abductions, implants, hybrids and the distinct Grey Alien. The film, *The Forgotten* (Ruben 2004) had worked with ideas from Ufology, where a

²⁷⁷ The imagining of the alien can be seen in books like Michale Swanwick's *Stations of the Tides* (1991) where the planet Miranda boasts alien animals that can adapt to the tidal nature of the world, the mysterious slippery, slimy, sentient species, called 'haunts', similarly change and can mimic humans. The focus of the book is on human evolution, artificial intelligence, and weaves together science and magic in line with this author's understanding of the New Weird.

²⁷⁸ The New Weird would then also bleed into and inform the Science Fiction of the early 2000s. According to Noys and Murphy (2016:119) the 2000s brought the most accessible and popular incarnations of the New Weird. Defining novels like China Miéville's *Perdido Street Station* (2000) with a genre bending work containing monsters and creatures of new and old design, threatened by predatory moth-like invaders from another dimension, set the tone for The New Weird in the early 2000s (Webb 2022:86). Other New Weird alien creations include Neil Asher's ocean planet of immortality with the ancient predator, The Skinner, and the war-like alien race of the Prador, carnivorous, space faring crabs (*The Skinner* 2002).

²⁷⁹ In film and TV of the 2000s the alien still presented itself in film, although, arguably, in less of a splendid fashion than in writing. The typical tropes can be seen throughout, such as alien invasion, in a remake of *War of the Worlds* (Spielberg 2005) the invaders now showing more 'grey-like' characteristics with dark eyes, large heads (although more ornate in shape), featureless faces with grey skin, a giant alien with its parasites stomping the city in *Cloverfield* (Reeves 2008), and parasitic alien slugs in *Invasion* (Hirschbiegel & McTeigueh 2007). Alien saviours are shown in *Knowing* (Proyas 2009) and in *AI: Artificial Intelligence* (Spielberg 2001) both show, benevolent, slender, light-filled aliens. Sympathetic aliens, entangled with overt social and political issues are shown in *District 9* (Blomkamp 2009) (Figure 12) as 'Prawns' with an insect-like appearance, while the blue, lithe Na'vi from *Avatar* (Cameron 2009) deal with colonisation. Such sensitive, humanoid aliens can arguably be seen as the flip side of the alien trope when the alien appears as an almost unthinking animalistic predator as can be seen in *Pitch Black* (Twohy 2000) where so called 'bioraptors', vicious winged predators, stalk a stranded crew in the long night (Geraghty 2009:90).

²⁸⁰ *Doctor Who* relaunched in 2005 after its initial run in 1963–1989 (Evans 2023:[sp]), bringing a slew of aliens in all shapes and sizes, but sprinkled with the characteristic optimism of the series (Layton 2014:64). *Star Trek* with its familiar cast of humanoid aliens similarly filled the screen, this time called *Enterprise* (2001–2005) and *Voyager* (1995–2001) (Rhodes II, Davidson & Gunderman 2017:3). *Smallville* (2001–2017) presented an adolescent Superman or Clark Kent as a young alien growing up in the rural United States (Shipley 2022:1). Other series presented take on invasion, such as *Invasion* (2005–2006) with aliens taking over humans after a hurricane, or *V* (2009–2011) where sinister Reptilian aliens invade earth. Such Science Fiction driven content was then also played off against series, and films, that held to the experiencers' phenomenon and Ufological folklore, like *Jeopardy* (2002–2005) and in particular the *Taken* (2002) miniseries (IMDb 2024:[sp]).

mother searches for her child and is ever watched by unseen aliens. *Signs* (Shyamalan 2002) (Figure 72) worked from the popular phenomenon of crop circles, known as Ufological circles (Battaglia 2005:161)²⁸¹, showing a single father's struggle with religion and a sinister invasion by large, grey-like aliens. Ufology in the 2000s, as stated above, included the speculation that the intricate crop circles of the late 1990s and 2000s were the work of extraterrestrials or other sources more paranormal than mundane (Rutkowski 2016:[sp]).



Figure 72: Alien in the Home, *Signs*, 2002. (What Culture 2023:[sp]).

From the 1980s to 2000s Ufology shows an interest in taking from wider conspiracy theories to create a narrative that would explain all of the many aspects of UFOs (Robertson 2016:72). It is important to note here, that the UFO community was now part of a globalised world of information about UFOs. There was a startling increase in online activity in the 2000s through blogging and particularly the rise of social media (Robertson 2016:6). Disclosure was a popular theme in Ufological communities in the 1990s and 2000s. Morris (2011:16-17) explains that at this time UFO communities petitioned for disclosure and focused on putting pressure on institutions like the United States Government to sponsor research into the phenomenon. The Disclosure Project was founded by Dr Steven M. Greer in 1993, he demanded that the United States Government look into the secret involvement of the government in UFOs and aliens at a press conference (Nichols 2014:78).

²⁸¹ Crop Circles seem to have been connected to UFOs since the 1960s, since hoaxers Chorley and Bower admitted that not only were they responsible for some sensationalised crop circles, but also inspired by UFO sightings and tales associated with the landing of such a saucer in Queensland Australia where it was said to have left an imprint in reeds (Gregerson 2024:[sp]). Crop circles, natural or hoaxed, were associated with a belief in extraterrestrials and that the patterns were a communication or evidence of these beings visiting earth (Gregerson 2024:[sp]).

Although, according to Showalter (2020:32) there was a sharp decline in interest in UFOs and alien abduction after 9/11 2001, since the terrorist threat was immediate. However, Boli (2018:28, 50, 51) shows that UFOs remained a topic of interest and that sightings, reported on the website of both *UFO Hunters* and the *National UFO Reporting Centre's* website, dipped in the early 2000s, but then increased again rapidly.

In terms of aliens and religion, the interconnectedness of the two continued in the 2000s.²⁸² However, at the end of the 2000s, there was a 'paranormal turn' with audiences had a preference for paranormal content, including the alien (Kalvig 2015:212). Combining religion and the paranormal, several ideas rose in popularity. Although not a new theory, aliens being seen as biblical Nephilim was a prominent topic in the 2000s (Donovan 2011:156). Conservative Christian ideas about aliens being demonic were made popular in 1997 with radio personalities like exorcist Bob Larson, and Chuck Missler who wrote *Alien Encounters: The Secret Behind the UFO Phenomenon* (Missler & Eastman 1997) and *UFOs and the Alien Agenda* (Larson 1997; Cowan 2016:143). Similarly, David Wilcock is a conspiracy theorist who was popular in the 2000s and 2010s, his theosophical take on UFOs focused on 'Awakening', like other personalities discussed in this chapter (Bader, Baker, Day & Gordon 2020:47).

The tone set in the understanding of the alien in the 2010s and after, can be traced back to the immensely popular *Ancient Aliens* (2009-ongoing) (Figure 73), series. *Ancient Aliens* (2009-ongoing) had begun to air in 2009 and by the 2010s it had a dedicated following. Applebaum (2022:[sp]) notes that Ufology in the 2010s had an actual effect on the public's opinion and that the pseudoscience being presented in *Ancient Aliens* (2009-ongoing) (Figure 73) was part of this sway. *Ancient Aliens* (2009-ongoing) (Figure 73) was part of a genre that appropriated the format of a documentary, but instead of presenting the audience with clear facts, destabilised knowledge and focused on telling viewers that the knowledge has been obscured and stigmatised, leaving the audience to reclaim this information (Card & Peterson 2022:[sp]).

²⁸² Recalling alien abductions had been popular in the 90s and continued on into the 2000s. The satanic panic of the 1980s and 1990s, brought with it the phenomenon of recalling repressed memories under hypnosis, particularly of child sexual abuse (Laycock 2012:100, 115). According to Laycock (2012:101), David Frankfurter wrote a book, *Evil Incarnate: Rumours of Demonic Conspiracy and Ritual Abuse in History* (2006), that notes an overlap between Satanic Ritual Abuse and Alien Abduction narratives. This technique was then quickly adopted by more fringe researchers who aided people in recovering memories of being abused by aliens (Pendergrast 2017:VIII). Although hypnosis was already being used to recall alien abductions, the practice was used as far back as the abduction of Betty and Barney Hill (Laycock 2012:109).

Schiele (2020:3) explains that in the 2010s this pseudoscience in the form of series like *Ancient Aliens* (2009-ongoing) (Figure 73) and *In Search of...* (1977-2019) were some of the most watched content in the United States, spreading ideas that had their origin in Ufology and the paranormal as facts to people and inspiring many copy-cat shows.

Ancient Aliens (2009-ongoing) (Figure 73) would blend popular media, some science, religion, Ufology and conspiracy into a consumable product that mostly showed aliens in the place of ancient gods, manipulating humans through evolution and the contemporary world government. This theme of powerlessness against god-like beings from elsewhere can also be seen in the Science Fiction films of the time, particularly in the Science Fiction Horror genre.



Figure 73: Giorgio A. Tsoukalos, *Ancient Aliens*, 2009-ongoing. (Cheatle 2018:[sp]).

However, underlying the core concepts of *Ancient Aliens* (2009-ongoing) (Figure 73), are far older ideas, dating back to the 70s. In Ufology, Swiss author Erich von Däniken's *Chariots of the Gods? Memories of the Future-Unsolved Mysteries of the Past* (1969/1970)²⁸³ gained popularity in the 1970s being a pseudoscientific book advocating for the idea that aliens came to earth in the distant past, also known as the *Ancient Alien* theory (Dorsch 2019:210). Kripal (2014:119) notes that von Däniken's work was not the first to bring forth the Ancient Alien or Ancient Astronaut idea and points to Carl Sagan who in 1966 already theorised that such

²⁸³ Different authors give different dates as to when the book was translated and made available to the American public. Dorsch (2019:210) notes the date as 1969 whilst Kripal (2014:119) puts it at 1970, although the German version was published in 1968 (Hoopes & Whitesides 2012:71).

ancient contact might have happened, his focus being on the Sumerians, and Egyptians (Krueger 2017:60).

The *Ancient Astronaut* that von Däniken popularised²⁸⁴ came from a brew of Western Esotericism and popular culture, showing the interrelatedness of the alien in the cultural productions of the time²⁸⁵ (Krueger 2017:70). Through von Däniken's popular theory the alien label was greatly expanded in popular thinking, opening up all of the past. Monsters, myths, angels, gods and demons alike now fit into the broadening 'alien' category of the monster.

Zecharia Sitchin, another progenitor of the Ancient Alien Theory, also gained popularity at this time. In 1976 Sitchin published his book, *The Twelfth Planet* which focuses on the Sumerians, attributing the rise of this civilization to alien intervention from extraterrestrials native to Nibiru (Winters 2020:238, 241). Sitchin's work was not just popular in the realms of popular culture, but also trickled into religion. The Church Universal and Triumphant, founded in 1975 by Elizabeth Clair Prophet was heavily influenced by Sitchin, particularly his reinterpretation of biblical events and archaeology (Whitsel 2003:75). The theosophic nature of the church here takes on another branch of possible spiritual truth, the Nephilim, hybrid beings speculated on by Sitchin (Collins & Collins 2020:[sp]).

One might also include here an interestingly new angle of the Lovecraftian kind. In terms of Lovecraft's aliens and unfathomable cosmic entities, there is a lot of focus on the ancient past. Humanity's place is often defined against ancient alien entities having ruled earth, or even having created humans. This then bears a striking similarity to some of the underlying 'plot points' of the Ancient Astronaut Theory as well as how this was communicated through *Ancient Aliens* (2009-ongoing) (Figure 73). The popular Science Fiction movement in literature, the New Weird, rooted in Lovecraftian Cosmic Horror, could be considered as another influence on the films of the time.

²⁸⁴ Although in the 70s von Däniken's popular theory led to a German film *Erinnerungen an die Zukunft* (Reinl 1970) being adapted for TV in America, now called *In search of Ancient Astronauts*, in 1973 by Alan Landsburg. Also involved was Science Fiction TV star, Rob Serling, the host of *The Twilight Zone* (1959-1964) who together with the producer of the show, Alan Landsburg, were Lovecraft fans (Krueger 2017:60). The idea and program was popular, leading to *The Outer Space Connection* and *In Search of Ancient Mysteries* being produced in 1975 (Hoopes & Whitesides 2012:55, 56).

²⁸⁵ Krueger (2017:70) calls this an *occulture*, as per the original ideas of Christopher Partridge, an example of which can be seen in the book *Contemporary Esotericism* (2013), Chapter 6 by Partridge, *Occulture is Ordinary* (113-133).

The chosen films show heavy influence from these cultural trends, particularly *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009). *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) blatantly refers to the aliens as linked to Sumer and the ‘origin’ of civilisation that is often coupled with ideas of Ancient Mesopotamia. The intent of these aliens is to continue their tinkering with human evolution, which seems to include keeping some abductees permanently (King 2022:2). The film also draws heavily from Ufology classics, such as the aliens erasing abductees’ memories leaving only the image of an owl, linked to Grey Aliens who share similar features (King 2022:11). The aliens themselves, remain hidden, a Sublime and cosmic force that drives the protagonist to madness.

Similar themes are echoed in *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), although here there are no explicit references to ancient cultures. The Alien expert, Pollard, reveals that aliens and humans are far beyond First Contact, and that the Greys ‘invaded’ a long time ago, making their presence a continuous, insidious, reality. *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) might not have a deeply ancient alien presence, but Ufology tropes established by the 2010s show up strongly. This includes the belief in alien interest in human evolution and bodies, implants, abductions, lost time and many other maladies. The aliens, although named ‘The Greys’ are only seen as shadowy figures, avatars of a large incomprehensible force set on inflicting personal harm in a strangely impersonal way.

After alien films like *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) the late 2010s offered more alien abduction-themed films with Greys. In these films the protagonists often transgress from their homes and suburbs into the woods, deserts and other areas more associated with ‘nature’. Examples of such films include *Alien Abduction* (Beckerman 2014) (Figure 74) a ‘found footage’ film based on the Brown Mountain Lights wherein a family is hunted for abduction by aliens through the woods in the mountains. *V/H/S/2: Slumber Party Alien Abduction* (Eisener 2013)²⁸⁶ on the other hand showed aliens abducting teenagers and children in a cabin by a lake. *Extraterrestrial* (Minihan 2014) similarly shows a group of young people being abducted as they strive to get away from grey-like aliens. *The Grace Field Incident* (Ratthe 2017) shows the abduction of friends from cabins in the woods from the perspective the protagonist’s modified false eye. *Aliens: Zone of Silence* (Fowler 2017) shows alien abduction and nightly terrors occurring in the Mexican desert.

²⁸⁶ The film/ franchise has many directors, each contributing a part as in a short film format (Rester 2023:[sp]).



Figure 74: Cropped Screenshot of Alien, *Alien Abduction*, 2014. Screenshot by Author.

While this more ‘traditional’ alien narrative was playing out in the various films mentioned above, several features still portrayed the alien as multifaceted and effectively weird, mysterious and some even straightforwardly Lovecraftian. Some films show mysterious forces at play without naming them as directly alien. This includes *The Endless* (Benson & Moorhead 2017) which has some cultic tones, while others show direct adaptations of Lovecraft’s Cosmic Horror such as *Colour Out of Space* (Stanley 2019) (Figure 75). Here the alien entity is represented by a glowing light cause horrible mutations and mixing of living creatures. Cosmic Horror with a clear alien presence includes *Annihilation* (Garland 2018) with mutating humans and animals, doppelgangers caused by the Shimmer alien presence . Other Cosmic Horrors like *The Void* (Kostanski & Gillespie 2017), show an alternate reality bending dimension that mutates the dead into monsters, along with tentacles originating from a pregnancy and again religious and cultic connections. More well-known alien monsters were also seen in the 2010s as *Prometheus* (Scott 2012) and *Alien Covenant* (Scott 2017) returned the Xenomorph (Figure 66) to a filmic cycle of fleshy horror, while *The Thing* (Van Heijningen 2011) reappeared in a prequel.



Figure 75: Amalgamated Horror, *Colour Out of Space*, 2019. (For The Hell of Reviews [sa]:[sp]).

The 2020s started off with the disruption of the COVID 19 pandemic (Sencer 2023:[sp]), economic uncertainty (Smietanka, Thwaites, Parker, Renault, Mihaylov, Mizen, Leather, Meyer, Chen, Davis, Bunn, Bloom, Barrero, Baker & Altig 2020:[sp]), Russia's invasion of Ukraine (Ozili 2024:1), and other international tensions such as continued mass immigration²⁸⁷, violent protests²⁸⁸ to name but a few. Amidst such chaos, the 2020s have turned out to be interesting times within Ufology also.

In 2020 the Pentagon released videos of three unidentified flying objects, termed UAPs, Unidentified Aerial²⁸⁹ Phenomenon (Dadak 2024:3, 5). These videos dated from 2004, when the USS *Nimitz* Carrier Strike Group recorded a "Tic Tac" UAP (AVV as per Navy terminology), known as FLIR1 and 2015, which included the GOFAST (Figure 76) and GIMBAL videos (Cull 2023:[sp]; Peings & von Rennenkampff 2023:[sp]; Conte 2020:[sp]; Culver & Rodriguez 2020:[sp]). The change in terminology, UFO to UAP seems to be related to an article from USA Today, where a spokesman for the Navy uses the term 'UAP' seemingly to distance the videos from negative connotations made to the term 'UFO' (Culver & Rodriguez 2020:[sp]).

²⁸⁷ Examples of some of these migration trends can be seen in The Economist (2023:[sp]), Warner's (2024:[sp]) article in *The Telegraph* and on sites such as the Migration Data Portal (2023:[sp]).

²⁸⁸ Examples include the Black Lives Matter movement's protests and how these were met (Encyclopedia Britannica 2024:[sp]), as well as the July Riots/ 'July Unrest' in South Africa in 2021 (Davis 2024:[sp]).

²⁸⁹ The 'A' seems to also alternatively stand for "anomalous" (Peings & von Rennenkampff 2023:[sp]).



Figure 76: UAP, *GOFAST*, 2015. Screenshot by Author.

Since the Pentagon's release, which is only a recent step in the viewing, leaking and posting of the three videos, even more UAP footage was released by an acknowledged UAP Task Force. However, as Shermer (2021:19-22) points out, there are multiple theories regarding what the UAPs are, the presence of extraterrestrial intelligence being merely one of many. As Little (2019:[sp])²⁹⁰ explains the intent to investigate an 'unknown' element in the phenomena is not automatically understood as an 'alien' presence that is not terrestrial. The Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AATIP), addressed as a secretive Defence Department Program in a 2017 New York Times Article (Cooper, Blumenthal & Kean), has since been acknowledged as involved with investigations of UAPs. The Department of Defence All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office (2024:10), also expresses that extraterrestrial intelligence is not the most likely reason for sighted UAPs.²⁹¹

Whatever the situation in terms of the origins of the footage or objects seen, the public's eye is once more drawn upward with promises of possibility. Films on aliens in the 2020s offer a relatively different view in some cases, such as Peele's (2022) *Nope*, with its large, alien animal.

²⁹⁰ Between the sources used above, Shermer (2021) and Little (2019) there seems to be a discrepancy in dates as to the footage's year of release, being indicated as both 2020 and 2019

²⁹¹ The Department of Defence All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office (2024:10), also explained that there are pre and post 2009 periods in the investigation of UAPs since the Advanced Aerospace Weapons System. Application Program (AAWSAP) and Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AATIP) stem from 2009, expressed here as new programs after the closing of Project Blue Book 1969.

Well-known tropes remain, like alien invasion²⁹² in *The Tomorrow War* (McKay 2021) by very animalistic ‘White Spikes’ and aliens as parasites as in the Russian film *Sputnik* (Abramenko 2020).²⁹³ However, surprisingly few films touch on the mainstays of Ufology, which this author has found interesting concerning the opening of the decade with the UAP videos discussed above. A documentary that focuses on David Huggins’ art inspired by his abduction experiences, *Love and Saucers* (Abrahams 2017) (Figure 77 & 105), exists, but not many fictional films that include more traditional Ufology notes. One film does stand out, an amalgamation of alien tropes and Ufology, namely *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023)²⁹⁴.



Figure 77: Alien Abduction Art, *Love and Saucers*. 2017. (Screen-Space 2017:[sp]).

Unlike the other main films of interest, which have shadowy, veiled alien presences, unnamed monsters that are known through their intertextuality, *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) offers an unobstructed look at the alien presence deeply influenced by Ufology and film history. The interpretation of the many alien designs can be found on places like *Screen Rant* (Sharma 2023), where they are described as ‘Greys’, ‘parasitic aliens’, and ‘alien hybrids’. The main

²⁹² *Save Yourself* (Fischer & Wilson 2020) has strong social commentary, but also an alien invasion by puff- ball-like aliens.

²⁹³ This is of course excluding the continuation of franchises like *Predator* with *Prey* (Trachtenberg 2022) and *A Quiet Place Part II* (Krasinski 2021).

²⁹⁴ Some media seems to work from the thick accumulation of tropes from UFOlogy like the comedic series *Resident Alien* (2021-ongoing), although based on Dark Horse Comics.

reason for the inclusion of this film is to show that the mythos sculpted by years of Ufology through experiencers and researchers, ideas drawn from and in turn inserted into, mainstream film, about Grey Aliens, are still present in contemporary films.

Throughout this slow coalescence of the Grey Alien, its characteristics of monster can be seen. It is an entity intimately entangled with the context that birthed it, reflecting anxieties appropriate to the various time periods it appears in. However, the use of the Grey Alien in the chosen films presents qualities that pushes the use of this alien into the realms of an Unnameable Monster. As discussed in the overviews presented in 6.2 *Overview of Films*, the particular expression of the Grey Alien within the Science Fiction Horror genre, particularly *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), uses some of the tropes of the Grey Alien, but elevates and mystifies these to the level of the Unnameable.

The Fourth Kind (Osunsanmi 2009) never shows the entities but uses known tropes about the Grey Alien to lend a framework to the horror of the unknown kidnappers. The alien is never shown; they are *things* with unclear signifiers that link strongly to the unknown. *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) explicitly names the invader *Greys*, but their full bodies and signification is not revealed, only their distorted forms and gruesome impact on the family's health and wealth. Not human, not animal, Other in the extreme to where clear depiction fails. Set against these films and their conservative depiction of unknown manifestations of possibly the Grey Alien trope *No one Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) revels in the clear depiction of various aliens. However, this excessive variety mostly share Grey Alien features and, in a way, further confuse the depiction of the Grey Alien.

No One Will Save You (Duffield 2023) provides such a plethora of Grey Aliens, that the actual signification becomes again excessive. The parasite that seems to infect all the Grey-like aliens could be seen as the true arbitrator of the alien invasion, or perhaps a weapon, although the entities are revealed, their hierarchy, intent and interests remain unclear. The film provides such numerous imaginings of the Grey Alien that it is almost a Meta investigation into the variation of the Grey Alien. In contrast *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) uses many of the same ideas and tropes, and perhaps even the same type of monster, but elevates it into realms of the Unnameable Monster.

To conclude, the Grey Alien is arguably the most well-known signifier for the contemporary concept of the extraterrestrial. It stands as both an individual entity with a particular history and lore yet can also be used as a catch-all umbrella for insinuating anything ‘alien’. The history of this particular alien, and the lore around it is dependent on the social, cultural, historical and political contexts that surround it. In this subsection the history of the Grey Alien is shown in a brief overview, touching only on the most important points of the monster to properly establish its physical form, its *modus operandi* and how this relates to the chosen films.

Key cultural moments for the Grey Alien include the abduction case of Betty and Barney Hill, popularised in 1966. The wrap-around eyes and race-less, grey nature of the beings seem to be emphasised here along with key abduction tropes, such as a loss of time, the taking of genetic material, memories being wiped and the mental disruption the Grey Aliens are associated with (Watson 2020:7-16; Roth 2005:62; Kripal 2014:905, 906). Although the alien permeated texts in multiple forms, the Grey Aliens were particularly referred to in *Fire in the Sky: The Walton Experience* (1979) as seen in the resulting film (Figure 71 & 100), as well as the later film, where they further solidify the beings as dark eyes, slim, grey, abductors associated with medical intentions, lost time, missing memories and expressive faces. A solidified image of the Grey Alien comes in the 80s with Whitley Strieber’s book and film adaptation, setting the key patterns of experiencers in years to come as well as noting screen memories and human-alien hybridisation projects (Watson 2020:91, 92; Robertson 2013:64). From these then come the mysterious Grey Aliens of the 90s *The X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016, 2018) (Figure 68), entangled in government conspiracy, human-alien hybridisation, alien viruses, human-alien hybridisation programs and much more.

This hybridisation idea would then also take centre stage in another acculturating force centred on aliens, namely *Ancient Aliens* (2009-ongoing) (Figure 73). Here the alien from the older theories of the ancient astronaut as per the work of Erich von Däniken and Sitchin from the 70s becomes a god-like being, inserted into history and human evolution, overlaid onto existing mythologies. Curiously, this focus on the ancient alien also ties in with Lovecraftian ideas of the alien, made popular again by the Science Fiction genre’s literary boom into the ‘New Weird’ also hosting hidden, ancient alien powers.

The films then inspired by this concoction of Ufological experiencers, film, television and an oppositional reading of history, include *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies*

(Stewart 2013) and even *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023). Here the aliens are mostly ancient, hidden home or planet invaders, causing lost time, mental or physical health decline, memory loss or screen memories, abductors, medical torturers leaving implants or strange marks, an interest in children, hybridisation projects, cosmic beings that the mind shrinks from. When the alien is shown fully as in *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) clear traces of Ufology remain, Grey Aliens and infectious parasites, god-like beings and monsters all flood the screen. However, their intent remains the same, abduct, implant, alter human consciousness and penetrate the bodily boundary.

6.4 CONCLUSION

This section has provided overviews of the films *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023). Within contemporary portraits of the alien, the Grey Alien stands out, either as a shadowy, hidden monster in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) and *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), identified through deduction, or shown clearly as in *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023). The aliens within these films have been shown as shaped by several years of cultural products in Science Fiction and popular culture as well as other aspects such as religion and Ufology. This section showed how the extraterrestrial became a figure within popular culture, particularly utilised in The United States of America, but not exclusively.

Extraterrestrials are discussed here as predating Ufology, with Science Fiction writing predominantly imagining monsters from other worlds. However, as science's understanding of the domain of 'Other Worlds' grew, including the principles of evolution and how life might have evolved there, the extraterrestrial changes (Brake 2018:[sp]). This particular monster then also finds a niche when UFO sightings and experiences begin to occur and enter the public domain.

The UFO phenomenon sculpts the extraterrestrial from the late 1940s and 1950s onwards, with the flying discs quickly being connected to possible alien occupants (Kripal 2010:158). Popular Science Fiction writing and films showed various possibilities in terms of the occupants of these assumed spaceships, reflecting the political, social and cultural climate of the time. The alien sways between oppressor and saviour, so much so that religions and cults adopt this figure as a point of worship.

The most lasting image of the alien arises however from the 1960s with the abduction of Betty and Barney Hill, their case forming the popularised bedrock of the Grey Alien as well as the abduction experience (Drysdale 2008:116). Other alien tropes were still popular, as noted in the shows and texts cited above. The blending of Ufology into the cultural mainstream occur in films like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (Spielberg 1977) (Figure 64) where active UFOlogists advised on the film (Hart 2020:64, 68). Of great influence was *Communion*, written by Whitley Strieber (1987) (Figure 65), and adapted to film, lending more interest to the abduction narrative common in Ufology (Robertson 2014:58).

The Grey Alien, slender, large headed, grey skinned and dark eyed, abducts its victims in the night. It subjects them to torturous medical procedures, steals foetuses, creates hybrid children, and brings about mental anguish with screen memories. The declared visitation might lead to alienation by peers and society as well as attract mysterious governmental forces. In the 90s *The X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016, 2018) (Figure 68) propels this deeply Ufological image of the Grey Alien, across cultural borders, reinforcing the mainstays of the Grey Alien (Molle & Bader 2016:130).

This alien is then again shaped by the overlaying of the Ancient Astronaut theory, particularly popularised by *Ancient Aliens* (2009-ongoing) (Figure 73), where alien beings are said to have meddled with humanity since time immemorial. The alien is then not just the Grey Alien, but a cosmic mystery, a Lovecraftian uncertainty, covered in shadows like the monsters in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) and *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013). However, when the 2020s bring recognition from NASA that UAPs exist. *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) the shows multiple Grey Alien-like beings, drawing from a large body of Ufology compiled over a surprisingly long period of time.

CHAPTER 7: THE LANDSCAPE OF PERIL: THE HYBRID MONSTER IN SPACE

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter draws together all the theories from the previous chapters. *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture* justification of the use of Bioculture as well as the main concerns of this approach, fear of predators, conspecifics and infection is used here. How the Unnameable Monster complicates investigating these cues to fear was established in *Chapter 3: The Unnameable Monster*. The issue of excessive or minimal signifiers of the Unnameable Monster can be aided by an investigating the ecological and cultural value of space, as established in *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster*. The cultural context of the chosen monsters were established in *Chapter 5: An Overview of The Evil Udu in Context* and *Chapter 6: Overview of the Alien as a Monster*. The established context, cultural understandings, biological implications and ecological values in the *Evil Udu* and the alien are drawn together here to present an in-depth investigation into the cultural, biological and ecological cues and implications to fear these monsters carry.

In this chapter the established signifiers of predation, conspecific violence, disgust, the Abject, Scapegoating, Othering, and the Uncanny are linked to an understanding of the spaces within each monster's frame of reference. The Landscape of Peril (Laundré, Hernández & Ripple 2010; Doherty & Ruhle 2020:[sp]) is used as a vehicle to explore the connections to fear that the selected monsters show when taken together with the social, cultural and historical understanding of the many spaces they are related to. In order to simplify this reading three primary zones of fear have been established, the wilderness, the city and the body. Both the alien as presented in the chosen films and the *Evil Udu* are shown as entities that traverse these spaces, made meaningful in relation to the social, cultural and historical context of each, and hold signifiers for the dangers in the spaces, as well as the final danger of crossing the bodily boundary to do harm to humans.

Each space is considered within the context of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace as well as the Heterotopian nature of those spaces. The intersection of Firstspace, Secondspace, and

Thirdspace is established here as an embodied experience of space, particularly how this trialectic overlaps with the Landscape of Peril and perceived risk.²⁹⁵

Firstspace is physical space, the landscape or chosen zone itself, the relevant geography of the areas. This implies that the chosen zones of the wilderness for the Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udug* include mountains, desert and steppe, while the contemporary aliens shown in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) are linked to outer space, areas of dark and deep water like the ocean and swamp, wooded areas, and the wilderness as a contemporary space of leisure. The city in the case of the Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udug* is most relevant in terms of the urban space's opposition to space outside the city, the temple, the street and finally the home. The aliens from the chosen films are considered in relation to 21st century city with its suburbs and homes as well as the home's location in relation to such urban spaces. In terms of the body, the Ancient

Mesopotamian *Evil Udug*'s invasion of the body and the relevant aliens' penetration of the body is also viewed as the crossing of a boundary into a particular space. Within the Landscape of Peril these areas are physical spaces where predators, enemies and infection can be found or penetrate into, in the case of the body.

Secondspace involves the cultural and historical ideas surrounding the above-mentioned spaces, particularly the symbolic value of the areas and how these are perceived. The mental map of risk as per the Landscape of Peril that drives behaviour surrounding predators, enemies and infection can be seen as part of Secondspace. It then follows that the symbolic value of places as well as animals, humans and infectious substances from the areas of the wilderness, city and body of both the Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udug* and contemporary Science Fiction Horror alien from the relevant films would have to be investigated. The animals, humans and infectious substances, relevant practices or ideas were established in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*, 2.3 *Bioculture and the Monster*, but the symbolism combined with the contextual associations made concerning risk is what is focused on here to better understand all the warnings the two chosen monster types carry.

²⁹⁵ Perceived risk is used very loosely here. Although, according to an interview with Prof Adrain Shrader (2024), that which orientates someone to perceive a landscape as negative and dangerous is often perpetuated strongly by a wide variety of particular individual or cultural circumstances.

Thirdspace is viewed as lived experience within space, where Firstspace and Secondspace overlap. Within the Landscape of Peril this can be linked to the actual use of space, guided by perception of risk of predation, enemies and infection, which in turn impact the landscape physically again. The physical and symbolic values of the spaces, particularly relating to the risks within the wilderness, city and body as expressed through predatory animals, dangerous humans and contagious ideas or substances can show which areas were marked, that which needs to be avoided or used in a particular way. The Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udug* and the contemporary Science Fiction Horror aliens from the chosen films can be argued to be perceived as a combination of warnings regarding certain spaces, which might have led to, and lead to, a different use or experience of space. Since both of these monsters are argued here as being Unnameable Monsters, part of the excess of signs includes the signs relating to the physical landscape as well as the perception of the landscape.

Finally, the spaces noted here can also be viewed in relation to Heterotopian space. Heterotopian space was discussed in *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster*, 4.2 *The Monster in Liminal Space in Cultural Monster Studies*, 4.5 *The Monster and Heterotopia in Cultural Monster Theory* and 4.6 *The Monster as Biocultural Being in The Landscape of Peril as Liminal Thirdspace and Heterotopia*, but in short it can be understood as essentially all space as Heterotopias occur where real spaces and perceptions about space overlap. This ties directly to the Landscape of Peril where the perception of space overlaps with real space to change behaviours. In terms of Heterotopia, the wilderness, city and body as space relevant to the contemporary audience of the chosen alien films as well as the ancient audience of the Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udug* can be investigated through this concept in more detail. Wilderness, city and body in relation to the chosen monsters are investigated in terms of the real and unreal space they take up, the linking and symbolic representation of other spaces they include, link to time, their permeability, including rituals surrounding entering or exiting as well as liminality and Othering.²⁹⁶

7.2 THE WILDERNESS: *EVIL UDUG* IN THE MOUNTAIN, STEPPE AND DESERT

²⁹⁶ Where the concepts of Heterotopia are applied, it is also done with the understanding that the chosen ancient culture does not exactly fall into theories made concerning the more contemporary perception of space and the industrial and post-industrial city.

This subsection provides an application of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace insights to the areas mentioned in the *Udug-hul Forerunners* and locales where the *Evil Udug* may be found. These wilderness areas include mountains, desert and steppe. The Ancient Near Eastern audience valued these places outside their physical geography, Firstspace. Cultural and symbolic understandings, Secondspace, which then impacted their lived experience, Thirdspace. The idea that Heterotopias are real and imaginary spaces found overlapping (Tucker *et al* 2020:856) is of particular importance here. Such ideas are explored where they overlap with the Landscape of Peril. The relevant animals and Other humans as aggressive, infectious and predatory, are linked to the landscape to better understand the significance of the *Evil Udug* as an Unnameable Monster.

The physical geography of the Ancient Mesopotamia includes the Firstspace of mountains, steppe and desert. Firstspace, for example, the Zagros Mountains (Figure 78) in the Southeast and East, as well as the northwest the Amanus and Taurus Mountains associated with sunset (Woods 2009:186). The physicality of the Syrian and Arabian Desert was an area on the doorstep of Ancient Mesopotamia (Van de Mieroop 2016:6). The Syrian-Steppe, as a Firstspace formed part of Ancient Mesopotamia, a place that is arid and empty, having few human settlements (Crawford 2013:[sp]).



Figure 78: Enayat Asadi, *Nomadic Woman in Zagros Mountains*, 2022. (Asadi & Hallett 2022:[sp]).

These spaces presented real and dangerous physical locations which had their own cultural values. The desert and steppe are open, arid and inhospitable. Mountains carry many physical dangers, such as falling or becoming lost. To better understand these ideas about space, a general understanding of space in the Ancient Near East is included first. Prinsloo (2013:9) explains that in the Ancient Near East there was no one worldview of space that affected all peoples. Schäder (2023:4), drawing on Prinsloo (2013), notes that although there is no one set worldview or cosmology, cultural texts from the various areas and peoples of the Ancient Near East are available and provide general insight.

The general layout of the cosmos can be seen in sources like the *Babylonian Map of the World* (sixth century BCE) (Schäder 2023:9). On this example the disk of the earth is encapsulated by the cosmic ocean (Figure 79) (Schäder 2023:9). The disk's far edges show mountains, which are mirrored below it as pillars at the edge of the world (Figure 79) (Schäder 2023:9). In contrast, the temple stands at the centre of this model (Figure 79) (Schäder 2023:9). It is on this model that the spatial orientation of the world is explored.

Wyatt's (2001) explanation of spatial orientation is noted as a guide for spatial orientation in the Ancient Near East in general, including Ancient Mesopotamia. Wyatt (2001:35) explains how orientating oneself, measurements made by the sun and other celestial bodies, as well as geographic measurements, had symbolic values. Direction could have connections to the Ancient Near Eastern understanding of the past and future (MacDonald 2013:86, 87; Schäder 2023:7). The perception of self in space could be linked to one's closeness to holiness, related to the temple and its sacred reality (MacDonald 2013:86, 87; Schäder 2023:7). Wyatt (2001:35, 36) shows these ideas as the intersection of various axes (Figure 79).

Prinsloo (2013:783) explains that the concepts of proximity deeply shaped the view people had of space in the Ancient Near East. The concept of the 'centre' was associated with the temple of important gods (Prinsloo 2013:783). Being near this 'centre' meant safety, while moving away being closer to peril (Prinsloo 2013:783). These opposites exist on a vertical and horizontal axis. Horizontally it implies being near or far from the temple/centre, moving towards edges of the earth (Prinsloo 2013:783; Schäder 2023:7, 8). Vertically it symbolises ascending and descending, the divinity lying upward and the realm of the dead, chaos and despair being downwards (Prinsloo 2013:783; Schäder 2023:7, 8). In terms of the wilderness, sites like mountains, steppe and desert, are away from the centre, self and the temple, they are unknown, areas where reality breaks down (MacDonald 2013:87).

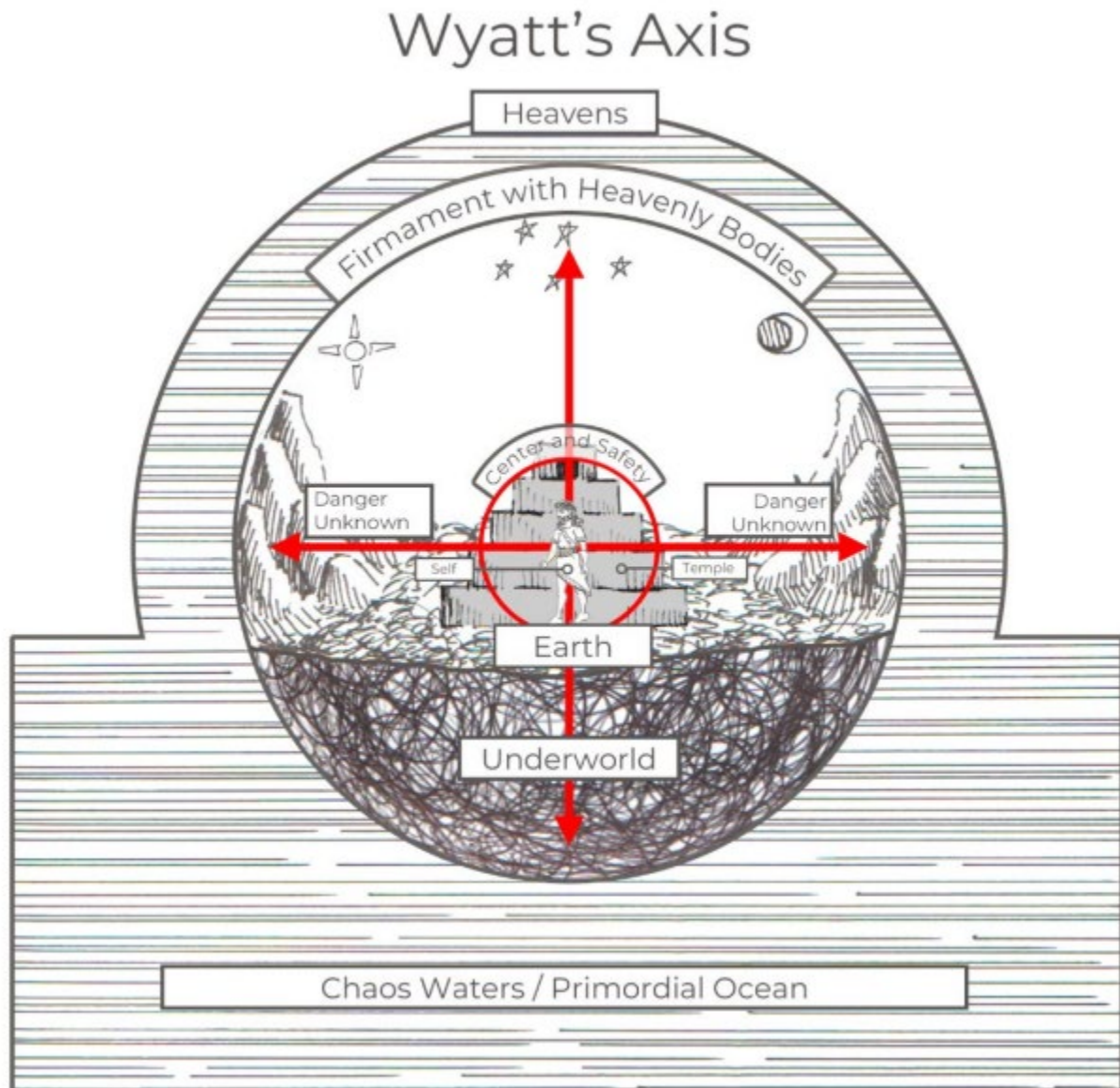


Figure 79: Wyatt's axis, 2025, Image by Author.

Cultural ideas about the mountains, steppe and desert centre on the dangers of these chaotic places. Feldt (2016:349) explains that the wilderness of the mountains are realms of chaos and places where civilisation ends. In terms of the Ancient Mesopotamian worldview, mountains are associated not just with the physical features of the landscape, but also have a mythological connotation as a space beyond the human sphere (Delnero 2018:9).²⁹⁷

²⁹⁷ This was taken here from the *Babylonian Map of the World* (sixth century BCE), as Finkel's (2014:262) interpretation of the Akkadian epic, *Atrahasis*. Finkel (2014) presents an in-depth analysis and contextualisation of this epic along with sources and translations.

Van der Toorn (1999:33) explains that the symbolism of steppe and the mountain are similar, as in the case of *hur-sag*.²⁹⁸ The Syrian-Steppe, as a Firstspace formed part of Ancient Mesopotamia, a place that is arid and empty, having few human settlements (Crawford 2013:[sp]). In Akkadian the terms *madbarou* and ‘*sēru*’ refer to land that is uncultivated and open, meaning the desert or steppe (Král 2020:15). Like the mountains, it too has a relation to the underworld (Hirvonen 2019:316) as well as the desert, seen as symbolically linked to death and danger (Vreugdenhill 2020:71). It is rich with the symbolism of danger as a Secondspace.

Thirdspace would include where these physical places would fall on Wyatt’s (2001) axis. Their symbolism and physicality relate to the lived world of the intended Ancient Mesopotamian audience.²⁹⁹ One might express this in terms of how the symbolic understanding of space shapes the physical use and experience of space. This includes the perception of travelling or interacting with mountains, steppe and desert. The mental map of risk of space usage as per Laundré, Hernández and Ripple (2010) is relevant here. This also includes *Evil Udug* and how it relates to these spaces.

Heterotopias, as defined by Prinsloo (2013:7) are on the margins of society and are ‘countersites’. Jacobs (2012:30) links Thirdspace and Heterotopian space because they provide an overlap of physical space with ideas and ideology.³⁰⁰ The wilderness then, in its included expressions, is a space that is both physical as well as overlaid with ideas of mythic places like the underworld, as will be discussed here, as well as a space beyond the margins that is unlike ordered perceptions of space and where chronology becomes mixed up (MacDonald 2013:87).

For Putthoff (2020:27, 100) the Ancient Egyptian Cosmos, as well as Hittite ideas about the Cosmos, is a Heterotopian space. This application allows for insight into other Ancient Near Eastern conceptions of the Cosmos. Putthoff (2020:27) explains how the Cosmos as a space contains all other spaces. It is physical place created by the divinity of the relevant deities, being both a physical space but also imbued with divine significance (Putthoff 2020:27). Including Ancient Egypt and Ancient Mesopotamia, Putthoff (2020:27) explains that there is a

²⁹⁸ *Hur-sag*, is explained by Van der Toorn (1999:33) which can be literally translated to *The Mountain*, however it also refers to the steppe, showing the interconnection of connections between these places and ideas of places.

²⁹⁹ Prinsloo (2013:12) explained this in terms of Nineveh, both a physical space with overlain symbolism.

³⁰⁰ An example includes the temple of Jerusalem which is both a physical place, but also bares connection to the idea of an unattainable Utopian space. This is an example from Biblical thinking, but falls under the Ancient Near East.

deep connection between the cosmos, human spaces, cultic spaces and thus connections between the divine and the mortal. This makes all these spaces physical but also metaphysical, then, Heterotopian.

In terms of the Landscape of Fear for such wild places, real predatory animals and dangerous humans posed a threat to travellers. The wilderness was home to lions, dogs, snakes and owls. Other people moved through these places outside of what was perceived as civilized. Disease, and agents of disease, roamed these wild places, connected to the Abject state of the dead and the Netherworld.

The *Evil Udug* is described as an ‘open-mouthed lion’³⁰¹, creating a strong image of a fierce, predatory, animal. In general, the lion could carry a myriad of meanings in Ancient Mesopotamia³⁰². This text focuses on monsters that intend harm and thus the negative aspects of lion symbolism within its cultural context is explored here.

Lions (*Panthera Leo*)³⁰³ (Figure 80) were present within the Ancient Near East (Gilbert 2002:27), including the now- extinct Persian Lion of Iran (*Panthera Leo Persica*) (Root 2002:172). Lions were a real threat to the people of Ancient Mesopotamia. A landowning businessman from Larsa, Balaġunamġe, had his dealings described between 1892 BCE-1792 BCE, which has revealed much to scholars of the Ancient Near East (Spada 2021:514). What is included in these dealings is the insurance that slaves who have been lent will be paid for if something happens to them, such as getting eaten by a lion (Spada 2021:516).³⁰⁴ George (2003:897) explains that meeting a lion as a traveller was an actual fear, which is reflected by Babylonian omen apodoses, *šihit nesi* and *šihit seri* that ward off the attacks of lions and snakes, ‘lions of the earth’ on the road.

Symbolically, lions also featured prominently. In terms of the royal lion hunt³⁰⁵, The king’s defeat of the lion is meant to represent the defeat of chaos. The king, like the gods, was an agent

³⁰¹ Refer to the overview presented in *Chapter 5: An Overview of The Evil Udug in Context, 5.4 Summary of The Udug-Hul Forerunners*.

³⁰² Lions were symbolically associated with divinity, royalty and the ferocity of chaos that must be overcome by the King as shown in the Lion Hunt as theme in both Assyrian and Babylonian art (Garraan 2023:[sp]).

³⁰³ Prinsloo’s (1999:340) more specified view reveals this as *Panthera Leo Leo*.

³⁰⁴ Spada (2021) includes the sources used to reach this translation, including transcriptions and names of tablets used

³⁰⁵ Several Assyrian texts and artworks show the King as associated with hunting lions (Figure 81). Some examples include Tiglat-Pileser I boasting of killing more than 900 lions (Arbuckle 2012:218), King of Ur

of order, and the lion a creature of chaos (Figure 81) (Zwickel 2012:104). Watanabe (2021:118) explains how the lion as something to be defeated could be culturally related to an evil enemy, a harmful animal that gained a mythological angle as a monster.³⁰⁶ The kingship, or the king could be a lion also, in this type of symbolism drawing on the fierceness of the lion (Watanabe 2021:114). In terms of linking to the *Udug-hul Forerunners*, the royal hymns of Šulgi³⁰⁷ (2094–2047 BCE), have strong lion metaphors and Sumerian word usage, such as specifically referring to the king as a lion with an open mouth particular (Watanabe 2021:114).³⁰⁸ This can perhaps be taken as emphasising the *Evil Udug*’s fierceness as an enemy.

III, Šulgi’s detailed description of hunting and killing wild animals on the steppe, such as lions, to safeguard the shepherds and their animals from this threat (Spada 2021:51), as well as depictions of the lion hunt in the Royal Lion Hunt of Ashurbanipal (635 BCE) on palace reliefs from the North Palace of Nineveh (Grover 2021:[sp]). Figure 81 can be referred to here, the estimated date is different, 668-631 BCE, as per Brereton (2019:[sp]). The British Museum’s estimate as noted by Brereton (2019:[sp]) does include Grover’s (2021:[sp]) date, thus the broader estimate was used for the Figure naming in Figure 81. Arbuckle (2012:218) explains that there was a strong connection to royalty before this, linking the connection between lions and royalty back to the Bronze Age and how lions symbolise the strength of the elite. The royal lion hunt as a practice that symbolises the strength of the king is drawn back by Spada (2021:516) to the fourth millennium BCE, showing the long tradition of this practice

³⁰⁶ Lamashtu as an evil entity is depicted as having a lion’s head in some cases (Wee 2021:11).

³⁰⁷ The text is called in general *The corpus of Šulgi hymns*, which consists of hymns related to King Šulgi, Ur III’s second ruler, where his great deeds are extolled (Lämmerhirt & Jáka-Sövegjártó 2020:[sp]). More detail about the sources used to reach this particular translation is noted by Lämmerhirt and Jáka-Sövegjártó (2020:[sp]).

³⁰⁸ Avila (2009:[sp]) explains that in Ur period III texts concerning the dangers of snakes and lions, depict the animals as ‘open-mouthed’ to emphasise the threat they pose, their described display implying their willingness to harm or attack



Figure 80: Joel Sartore (photographer), *A vulnerable African Lion (Panthera leo krugeri) at the Sedgwick County Zoo in Wichita, Kansas, 2025.* (Joel Sartore 2025:[sp]).



Figure 81: Detail of Lion Hunt from Nineveh in Ashurbanipal's *Palace Royal Lion Hunt of Ashurbanipal*, 668-631 BCE. Wall Relief, 165.10 x 114.30 cm. The British Museum, London. (The British Museum [sa]b:[sp]).

Salive (2017:17-18)³⁰⁹ summarises Omen texts, such as *Šumma izbu*, noting that signs associated with lions, like babies bearing resemblance to lions, as well as an encounter with the actual creature, generally brought dismay. Omen Texts' references to 'raging lions', as the *Evil*

³⁰⁹ Salive (2017) does not directly show or refer to particular tablets or translations.

Udug's lion features are described, indicated that bad times of chaos were on the horizon (Verderame 2017:391). Lions can thus be seen in at least one aspect of their symbolism as being powerful, but also destructive and a danger to humans.³¹⁰

The dream of a Neo-Assyrian Prince describes the denizens of the underworld, many of who have leonine characteristics. This includes the Uttuku, later version of the *Evil Udug*, which has a lion's head, as well as Alluhappu, Nebu and Mimma Lemmu (Generic Evil). The Urgallu, protectors, or symbols of evil events and raging storms, day demons (Wiggerman 2007:110, 111), were portrayed with lion heads also (Maiden 2020:152). Šulak is described as a lion reared up on its hind legs (Schurlock 2002:361-262). Similarly, Lamashtu (Figure 82), the dangerous, child-killing demon, also had leonine features, depicted as lion-headed regularly since the first millennium BCE (Wee 2021:12).



Figure 82: *Lamashtu Demoness*, 1000 BCE-1 CE. Stone Carving, 12,7 x 6,2 cm. (Wee 2021:[sp]).

³¹⁰ Lions were also seen as part of the forces of chaos, as in artistic products yellow was used for hybrid identities, lions and evil entities in Ancient Mesopotamia (Sinclair 2012:9).

From a Biocultural point of view, lions have very strong predatory cues and might be seen as predators worthy of attention and fear. Large cats actively preyed on humans and human-like ancestors and continue to be threats to humans in some areas, like parts of Africa³¹¹ and India³¹² (Weldon 2018:222). Hart and Sussman (2009:64-75) explain that human and primate ancestors' evolution overlapped with that of various large felid predators and that there is evidence of these predators preying on human ancestors.³¹³ It would stand to reason that paying attention to, or being easily orientated to, fear felid predators would be beneficial.

Felidae, having similar bodies, which include large forward-facing eyes, sharp teeth (Figure 80), claws, and hunt in much the same way; solitary attacks are often from behind (Camarós, Cueto, Lorenzo, Villaverde & Rivals 2015:[sp]). This is not explicitly implied by the *Udug-hul Forerunners*, but the manner in which the man going down the street is attacked is from behind, perhaps a link to the hunting strategies of such large predators as lions. Lions still attack people, for example, in 2025, Kenya, Nairobi, a fourteen year old girl was dragged from her house by a lioness (Rios & Rahimi 2025:[sp]). The girl was killed with injuries mostly being on her back (Rios & Rahimi 2025:[sp]). What can perhaps be seen here in what is described about the *Evil Udug* is an observation and response to a predator that has long been a pressure on human evolution. Reading the lion symbolism of the *Evil Udug* then reveals not just information about it, but about contemporary monsters and even perceptions of animals.

Lions were strongly associated with the mountains. This can be seen in an example of an Akkadian cylinder seal (Figure 83) showing a lion hunting on a mountain (Strawn 2005:137). Literature such as Ashurnasiripal's (1048-1031 BCE) mention of lions living in the mountains (Prinsloo 1999:340) confirms this association further with regards to the mountains as symbolically tied to the wilderness and chaos (Feldt 2015:1). The *Evil Udug* as leonine and linked to the mountains explicitly, is perhaps an effort to exemplify its dangerous nature.³¹⁴

³¹¹ Brown (2024:[sp]) reporting for CNN notes an estimated number of 250 people killed by lions per annum.

³¹² Pavithra and Deepala, (2024:[sp]) shows data of tiger attacks in India from 2014 to 2022, every year showing killings ranging from a minimum of 31 (2018) to a maximum in 2022 of 112 deaths due to tiger attacks.

³¹³ Hart and Sussman (2011:20) point to the overlap of hominids and felid predators of around eight to ten variations of species including sabertooth cats, conical-tooth cats and false-sabertooth cats in Africa about 3.5 million years ago.

³¹⁴ Eagles also share this space of actual and symbolic threat with lions within the mountains of Ancient Mesopotamia. Negro (2018:167) notes that Ancient Mesopotamia was home to various eagles, such as the steppe eagle (*Aquila Nipalensis*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) and the imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), among others. When discussing the possible identity of the raptors associated with the entity called Anzu, Black (1998:169) notes the Verreaux' Eagle, White tailed eagle, Golden Eagle, Tawney Eagle, the Imperial Eagle and the Spotted Eagle as native to the region in contemporary times. Black (1998:169) explains that



Figure 83: Drawing of Cylinder Seal: Hunting Scene in Mountains, 2334-2154 BCE.
Drawing of Intaglio Seal, 3.6 cm, Museum of Fine Art, Boston. (Keel 1997:58).

Lions were also tied to the steppe. In terms of Assyria, the steppe was still uncultivated, and lions posed a danger to people and livestock as noted in the code of Hammurabi (Král 2020:16). Jones (2011:680) explains Assyrian ‘travel’ narratives, which includes under the bounty of several kings’ exotic treasures, lions from the steppe. An example of this includes Šulgi, a king from Ur III, who boasts that he killed lions on the step to make it safe for shepherds and their flocks (Spada 2022:517).³¹⁵ Like the steppe and mountain, the lion was further associated with the desert. In a hymn to Šulgi the description includes the king being like a lion from the desert in his strength and vigour (Selz 2019:40).³¹⁶

The dog roamed both the familiar city and the wilderness. Vilela (2021:23-28) makes a point of clearly dividing the canines of the Ancient Near East into three geographical categories. These include dogs from the inside, stray dogs from the in-between and canines like wolves and foxes from the outside (Vilela 2021:23-28). Dogs were domesticated already by Ur period III (Widell, Studevent- Hickman, Tenney, Lauinger, Mahoney & Paulette 2013:96). Dogs lived in the city with people, either owned and controlled, or as strays, which were greatly feared as they ate garbage, spread rabies and fed on corpses (Vilela 2021:23-26).³¹⁷ The dog then posed a risk not just of injury, but also of infection.

in the late 90s at least some of these eagles lived in the Zagros mountains, creating the assumption that contemporaneous to the Ancient Mesopotamians, eagles might have lived there also.

³¹⁵ Spada (2022) includes detailed notes on translations and original sources for those translations.

³¹⁶ Šulgi A 16-18 is what Selz (2019) refers to in particular.

³¹⁷ The canines of the outside, like the wolf and fox were wild animals, but posed a risk more livestock and people outside the city (Vilela 2021:26).

The dog could be seen as an extension of civilisation into places like the steppe, where it was associated with guarding against wild animals (Vilela 2021:24). Dogs, however, could also be vicious. A dog as a wild animal from the steppe is shown in an Old Assyrian incantation, where a black dog, a ‘dark howler’, awaits a caravan in the steppe and looks around for a victim (Hirvonen 2019:321).³¹⁸ This black dog seems to sit on a ruin mound, the desolation and decay of the place associated and connected to the underworld (Sibbing-Plantholt 2017:169).³¹⁹ Sibbing-Plantholt (2017:169) notes that the black dog was also thought to roam the desert, dangerous and vicious.

The *Udug-hul Forerunners* position the *Evil Udug* together with a dog. The dog has many negative associations in Ancient Mesopotamia, including sickness and ill omen as noted in the *Šumma izbu*.^{320 321} The stalking of the dog, as well as its canine appearance can also be read as predatory. Many dogs evolved with Old World wolves as their common ancestors, maintaining in some breeds some physical characteristics of wolves (Hare & Tomasello 2005:441). If one considers *Lupophobia*, a fear of wolves, as having biological roots in terms of an evolutionary preference to fear predators³²² (Murphy 2023:[sp]), then fearing dogs on a biological level might be expected. *Cynophobia*, a fear of dogs (Munir & Saleem 2023:2), also exists. Such a phobia, as with many phobias surrounding animals, are linked to evolutionary pressures, although a phobia is perhaps a perversion of a once useful fear into a detrimental state (Correia & Mammola 2023:[sp]).³²³

³¹⁸ Hirvonen (2019) refers to several texts, as well as translations and original material used to create such translations.

³¹⁹ Sibbing-Plantholt (2017) has detailed references to various translations as well as the proper names of the origin sources used to construct the translations.

³²⁰ *Šumma izbu*, translated to “If a malformed foetus”, are Ancient Mesopotamian Omen Texts that are available in their ‘canonical version’ as having taken shape in the second millennium BCE (de Zorzi 2011:43). *Šumma Izbu* focuses on Omens associated with birth defects in terms of humans and animals being an example of teratomania (de Zorzi 2011:43). Examples from the *Šumma izbu* of negative Omens attached to dogs, as noted by Viktorné (2018:32), include the death and destruction of a house and political upheaval following on a dog being born of a woman. The relevant sources are noted by the authors, including the relevant tablets and translations. De Zorzi (2011) also includes various artifacts that show animals in art relevant to the literature.

³²¹ The spelling for *Šumma izbu* is taken from Verderame (2017).

³²² In France from the 16th to 19th century wolf attacks caused an estimated 9000 deaths (Boissoneault 2017:[sp]). Wolf attacks were also noted as common in Russia and Italy at this time, often being due to rabies or simple predation (Moriceau 2014:1). Between 2002 and 2020 there were 489 people attacked by wolves in North America, 13% were found to be ‘predatory’ (Frey 2021:[sp]).

³²³ Correia and Mammola (2023:[sp]) explain that in their study on what contemporary online searching fear related things might reveal, biophobias related to vertebrates, a fear of dogs was found to be the fastest growing and most ‘searched’ phobia, perhaps owing to the consistency of human-dog contact as well as online lists ranking dogs as some of the most dangerous animals to humans. Of course, such phobias are not just biological, but have a strong, orientating cultural component, as Crawley (2017:7) describes in terms of conditioning and media representation of ‘dangerous’ dogs for contemporary audiences. Here one might

Snakes were common in the Ancient Near East and were genuine threats to travellers in places like the mountains, desert and steppe. The snake as venomous is associated with the steppe or wilderness in how the word for snake is also a homophone for this space in Old Babylonian tablets (Hirvonen 2019:336). The mountain is associated with the snake in a negative way. The Gutians are associated with venomous fanged snakes, the idea of the snake here being filth and danger (Sokhadze 2021:252). In the Lugalbanda's dream from *Lugalbanda in the Mountain Cave*,³²⁴ there is also a description of snakes from the mountain sniffing (Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zólyomi 2004:19).³²⁵

Verderame (2017:394) explains that the snake within this cultural context is associated with sniffing, an action that implies stalking prey. Verderame (2017:394) makes reference to *Lugalbanda in the Mountain Cave* as well as the Akkadian *Epic of Gilgamesh* as examples of the snake's association with smelling and sniffing out its prey.^{326 327} Humans have a prepared bias to fear snakes, they are visually a trigger to fear for many people (Coelho, Suttiwan, Faiz, Ferreira-Santos & Zsido 2019:[sp]). In the case of Ancient Mesopotamia, there are further strong cultural values that orientated people towards fearing snakes.

In Ancient Mesopotamia snakes posed a very real threat and their part as monsters may have come from real species in the region. Golding (2013:50-52) explains that throughout the

look at the *Evil Udug's* connection to the dog as a cultural understanding of dogs as negative as per the *Šumma izbu* (Viktorné 2018:31), but also a biological pressure that warns of predators, while observations of 'dogs going mad' is mentioned as this links to a contemporary observation of dogs attacking people.

³²⁴ *Lugalbanda in the Mountain Cave* or *Lugalbanda in the Wilderness* is a Sumerian text dating from the Old Babylonian Period (Konstantopoulos 2023:144).

³²⁵ Black, Cunningham, Robson and Zólyomi (2004) include detailed translations as well as notes on these translations.

³²⁶ Verderame (2017) refers to the particular sources used to create this translation and interpretation, including transliterations and the needed names of the tablets used.

³²⁷ Fantastical snake monsters are present in Ancient Mesopotamia, showing that the snake was used to express certain traits of malevolent monsters, not just evil spirits. Examples of these monsters would include the

Mušmahhu, *Ušumgallu* and *Bašmu* as horned snakes created by the dangerous Tiamat, herself shown as serpentine at times (Miller 2014:14) and the familiar *Mušhuššu*, the snake-dragon (Mark 2011:15). *Mušmahhu* is shown at times with seven serpentine heads, monstrous and associated with chaos (Golding 2013:61). Ford (2010:186) notes that Ninazu, a god, or the title of a god, often thought to be a chthonic deity would be invoked to protect against *Ušumgallu*. This entity is then used poetically to depict rage, such as the anger of Marduk, or a title of Marduk, and even Ninurta, being depicted as serpentine with eagle talons and lion's paws (Oshima 2006:85, 87). These entities, although originally opposed to the organising forces of gods such as Marduk, later became protective symbols associated with gods, such as *Bašmu* and *mušhuššu* (Golding 2013:60, 61). *Ušumgallu* as a Sumerian Snake Creature could be seen as a metaphor for a god or king and was mostly neutral (Mattfield 2010:44).

Ancient Near East venomous snakes were common. Golding (2013:53) goes on to explain that Babylonians listed, Cobras and Vipers. Golding (2013:56) traces a contemporary, and probably also an ancient, inhabitant of the region, the Horned Viper (*Cerastes gasperetti*) (Figure 84), as a possible origin of the *mušhuššu*. These early people might not have had a complete understanding of how venom worked, and thus superstitious practices grew around these dangerous animals (Golding 2013:50-52).



Figure 84: *Cerastes gasperetti* (horned), 2020. (Elmoheen, Salem, Haddad, Bashir, & Thomas 2020:2).

The owl is more associated with the city, but as a bird of ill omen it is also tied to ruins and desolation (Verderame 2017:400; Miglio 2022:171). These places become part of the chaotic landscape of the wilderness outside of the city. In the tale of Inanna and the *Huluppu-Tree* when Lilith, associated with the owl, or called the screech-owl, departs from the tree, she goes to the wild desolate places, interpreted by Robertson (2022:[sp])³²⁸ as the desert.

The Ancient Near East, including Ancient Mesopotamia owls were symbolic of death, the Netherworld, and the unhappy and angry dead (Hays 2007:317). More recently Miglio

³²⁸ Robertson (2022) refers to the translations used for this information in footnotes.

(2022:170-171) notes the *Šumma ālu*^{329 330} and how these omens link the owl to destruction, noting that owls were associated with the night and danger. Similarly, Verderame (2017:412) notes the owl as symbolic of night and of the sky, danger, abandonment and death (Verderame 2017:412). What is clear here is that the owl as an animal was present within the region at the time to observe³³¹, this also implies that its predatory features were known, such as sharp claws, talons, and it has a deathly silent strike that comes out of the darkness above.

Fear of such a swooping predator may be related biologically to thigmotaxis. Thigmotaxis is ‘a wall following strategy’ (Rahman, Sharp, McVeigh & Ho 2017:1280) or a ‘wall-hugging trait’ (Sussman & Hollander 2021 [2014]:[sp]). Thigmotaxis was found to exist across human and animal models by Gromer, Kiser and Pauli (2021:[sp]). Gromer, Kiser and Pauli (2021:[sp]) identified thigmotaxis in rats as linked to avoiding predators as seen in a mouse displaying thigmotaxis, presented here as a visual aid (Figure 85). Walz, Mühlberger and Pauli (2016:391) similarly connect thigmotaxis in humans to an evolutionary adaptation to avoid predation. Thigmotaxis and Agoraphobia are linked as well (Walz, Mühlberger & Pauli 2016:390). With a focus on predation, it points back to the underlying issue; fear of being preyed on from above. The wide-open spaces of the desert and steppe would then be particularly triggering, especially where connected to the owl.

³²⁹ The *Šumma ālu*, named fully *Šumma ālu ina mēlê šakin*, which translates to *If a City is Situated on A height*, is a collection of cuneiform Omen Texts which in its Neo-assyrian form has around a hundred and twenty tablets with more than ten thousand omens listed in the text which date from the first and second millennium BCE, originated from Babylon, Asur and Nineveh (Harris 2022:4). An accessible version of this collection can be found through the *Bestiarium Mesopotamicum* project as used and described by Harris (2022:5). Although the *Šumma ālu*’s dates of completion and use are unknown, the Akkadian text is used as a source of information for the Ancient Near East in general, often employed to further cultural understanding of Ancient Mesopotamia as well as implicit information about the experiences of people at the time (Loisel 2016:291). The references to the *Šumma ālu* in this study refer only to the translation of this text as referenced in each instance. Miglio (2022) explains in more detail the tablature, translations and sources used to reach this particular translation.

³³⁰ The spelling for *Šumma ālu* is taken from Harris (2022).

³³¹ Reports on owls in the region of Iraq and Southwestern Iran, historically the area of Mesopotamia, include seven owl species in the 1920s (Ticehurst, Buxton & Cheesman 1922) and later surveys went up to nine and even eleven (Salim, Al-Sheikhly, Majeed & Porter 2012) species in Iraq (Al-Sheikhly & Aidek 2022:[sp]). Al-Sheikhly and Aidek (2022:[sp]) note the negative association owls traditionally carry in the regions of Iraq and Syria, noting that these practices and perceptions are ancient, implying that owls were present in this area in such times.



Figure 85: Mouse Exhibiting Thigmotaxis, 2025. Photo by VM Products. (VM Products 2025:[sp]).

The animals noted here are indeed predatory and dangerous, but part of what makes them threatening is that they can traverse space. The dog, snake and owl are liminal beings that can leave the wilderness and penetrate into the ordered city as agents of chaos. Keel (1997:76, 77) explains how the desert is a region where death is prevalent and the barrier between the desert and settlements often had carrion eaters. These liminal animals also then existed in an in-between, Heterotopian state, on the margins, ever threatening (Davis 2010:661-663). In essence, the symbolism of the noted animals, both predator and infectious, existed in Secondspace as ideas about danger surrounding Firstspace locations which influenced how humans perceived and interacted with such spaces, in this case fearing and possibly avoiding such unknown places as an expression of Thirdspace expressed through the dangers of the Landscape of Peril in this case.

Dangerous humans made their home in chaos filled regions of the wilderness. The mountains, steppe and desert were known for being the home of rebellious people (Van de Mieroop 2016:[sp]). These people were described as despicable nomads who were unlike, Other and counter to, civilised city-dwellers (Van de Mieroop 2016:[sp]). The Gutians and the Kassites (Figure 86) were noted as dangerous mountain dwellers. An example can be found in *Lamentation over Sumer and Ur* which place the Gutians associated with the mountains (Rainey 2018:[sp])³³². The Kassites similarly were associated with the mountains, as per Rīm-

³³² Rainey's (2018) footnotes provide information on the original sources used and translations involved.

Sîn II and his son Samsuilūna (Paulus 2011:2).³³³ The desert was also viewed as home to various antagonistic desert tribes (Thompson 2004:632, 633).



Figure 86: *First Style Kassite Seal*, 1600 BCE -1501 BCE. Worked Chalcedony Quartz and Impression, 1.5 x 3.67 cm. The British Museum, London. (The British Museum [sa]c:[sp]).

Hostile humans also roamed the steppe.³³⁴ The steppe was home to criminals who attacked and robbed caravans and travellers, often killing their victims (Fincke 2013:17). The ‘uncivilized’ Amorites (Figure 87) lived in this area (Wasserman & Bloch 2023:32). Mythically it was where Enkidu was created and roamed, meant to be the opposite of a ‘civilised’ person in an ‘uncivilized’ space (Kalla 2018:881).

³³³ Paulus (2011) provides notes on translation as well as which translations were used and the original sources involved.

³³⁴ In a *Letter to Šulgi*, (Sulgi' ETCSL, text 3.1.11) there is a complaint about brigands and bandits who are from the steppe, but these people later seem to have marks of farmers and workers (Richardson 2012:28).



Figure 87: *Amorite Pottery Juglet*, 2400-2000 BCE. Pottery, 8 x 15.20 cm. The British Museum, London. (The British Museum [sa]d:[sp]).

Apart from waves of migration and invasion, the mountain was also home to bandits and robbers. Bandits and robbers were actual threats to the people of Ancient Mesopotamia. Ancient Sumer, with its budding city-states, allowed for military protection from raiders and bandits (Bulliet, Crossley, Headrick, Hirsch & Johnson 2019:31). Mayshar, Moav and Neeman (2011:1) explain that part of the founding of villages, and later cities, might have occurred on the principle of gaining safety and the protection of farmland from banditry in exchange for a type of tax. The further away from the protection of a settled area, the more vulnerable one was to attacks by criminal elements.

The places these bandits frequented, liminal areas of wilderness, were characterised by the perception of such bands or individuals (Keel 1997:80; Richardson 2012:28; Richardson 2019:11). Similarly, many demons were described as being like bandits (Abusch 2020:[sp]). Richardson (2019:9) explains that ‘robbers’ were so entrenched in the culture that they made up archetypal characters of wrongdoing in the divine hierarchy. Robbers and brigands affected the country’s integrity and on a divine level they mirrored the breakdown of the order of creation (Richardson 2019:11). The robber became stylised as a character that lurks on the fringes, wild places like mountains and wastes, where he co-habited with dangerous creatures and monsters (Richardson 2019:11).

It is perhaps of interest to note here that the quality of several evil entities is connected to such a liminal, boundary-crossing element. The idea that several demons are ‘wanderers’ could link up to how roaming human, or even animal, threats were perceived. Egyptian ‘wandering’ demons are entities who, like the *Evil Udug*, cross boundaries, moving around to infect and do harm, such as *Sehaqeq*, associated with headaches (Arcane 2023:[sp]). The wilderness as Heterotopia is then a space that hosts Others and shows how their ways of life are Other to the city and showing ways of life counter to the known and norm (Van de Mierop 2016:[sp]; Green 2016:583).

Others are associated with contagion, as discussed in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*, 2.3 *Bioculture and the Monster*, 2.3.5 *Disgust as Biocultural element in the Monster*, 2.3.5.1 *Monster as Other and Scapegoat through Bioculture*. It might be expressed through the moral understanding of such peoples, or their way of life as disgusting, perhaps their description, but the threat of Others in the wilderness is not just aggression. These real threats are then combined into malevolent entities who come from the mountain to bring disease and death. The Firstspace of the mountain is overlaid here with the Secondspace conception of danger in these forms and as travellers navigated through this region such cultural understanding of this space would have deeply impacted their navigation of the space. One might here take Richardson’s (2019:11-12) investigation into the figure of the robber in Ancient Mesopotamia and how it was used to stand in and describe many dangers outside of the city. This connected the space outside the city with danger.

Like the criminal elements of the mountains, the *Evil Udug* and its associates fall into a space that is liminal in terms of its placement in the divine order. The *Evil Udug* is not known in heaven or on Earth, it is a roaming entity that does harm, powerful and spawned by the gods, but not divine in the sense that they are.³³⁵ Through interpreting the *Udug-hul* in its Akkadian form, Verderame (2013:122) explains that the *Evil Udug* exists in a space between heaven and the Netherworld. One of the spaces where these entities can be found then is the liminal space of the mountain, associated with death and the underworld (Verderame 2013:122).

³³⁵ Refer to *Chapter 5: An Overview of The Evil Udug in Context*, 5.4 *Summary of The Udug-Hul Forerunners*.

Heterotopias can be places of both divinity and profanity, mythical and real (Putthof 2020:6, 27), as is the case with these wilderness areas' association with the underworld.³³⁶ The mountain can be a place of death, symbolising the underworld, which had as a Sumerian concept been placed in the mountains and through later Semitic influence, shifted to an under/netherworld (Artemov 2012:2). It is then here where the *Evil Udug* dwells (Tablet VI, Line 566) (Geller 1985:53). The beings of the mountains are cut off from traditional kinship and social norms, living a chaotic existence (Sonik 2013:113). Demons are banished to this 'Mountain Region', which can also at times be understood as the Netherworld, Sumerian *Kur* (Konstantopoulos 2015:31).^{337 338}

The 'Bright Mountain' can be understood as the mountain of sunrise, but the dark mountain indicates the setting of the sun and thus a place where the sun passes into the Netherworld (Woods 2009:186-187). The *Udug-hul* noted the 'dark mountain', where the sun sets, that birthed the Seven and the Bright Mountain, where the sun rises, where they were raised, according to Woods (2009:187). This perhaps shows the divine, but liminal, status of these entities. They are definitely divine since they are associated with such 'mythical' spaces, but moving between the spaces of positive and negative significance.

Like the mountains, Edin/Sēru / the steppe was seen as connected to the mountainous regions and the ideas of the Netherworld (Hirvonen 2019:316). In Akkadian the steppe is associated with the Netherworld, linked here as a place of death to the god Dummuzi who was killed here (Katz 2005:82). The steppe was also a place of the ghosts of victims who died violently and were left unburied (Fincke 2013:17). Other evil entities, like Šaggāšu, described as a murderer's ghost who brought disease, could also be found on the steppe and desert (Fincke 2013:17). Similarly, the desert is a place of death and danger, referred to as linked to the underworld in that the referring to the desert could also refer to the underworld (Black & Green

³³⁶ There is also a strong association with the wilderness as a place of divinity, as explored by Feldt (2012:12), noting the mountain and desert in particular.

³³⁷ For the Sumerians *Kur* could also denote 'earth', as well as the mountains and Netherworld (Collins 2017:[sp]). It would seem that entrances to the Netherworld were perceived as being in the mountains (Collins 2017:[sp]).

³³⁸ An example of a monster that dwells in the mountains would be Asag, the opponent of the hero-god Ninurta (Yasenovskaya, Shelistin & Nemirovsky 2021:417). *Asag* also mentioned in the *Udug-hul*, as depicted during the reign of Assurnasirpal II, an Assyrian king from the 9th century BCE, shows Asag and a Lion-Dragon (Black & Green 2004 [1992]:36). Penglase (2005 [1994]:44) notes another depiction of what is probably Asag or Anzu, as being a combination of an eagle and a lion. If one takes these animals, the lion and eagle, these could be actual dangers present within the Zagros mountains.

2004 [1992]:180). Death comes from the desert in many forms, such as demons associated with plague and wind, like Maskim (Mostafa 2018:786).

The *Udug-hul Forerunners* specify deaths that are associated with ghosts, such as someone who died and remains unburied in the steppe³³⁹. Dying in the desert, where one would remain unburied and not recovered put one at risk of becoming a vengeful and unhappy ghost (Cooper 2009:27). Although ghosts, *Gidim* in Sumerian and *Etemmu* in Akkadian (Abusch 1999:309), were entities to fear in and of themselves, they point toward human fears of dying and contamination. Ghosts when they were wrathful, spread disease, making people sick and bringing bad luck (Mark 2022:[sp]). What is more, if a region has unburied dead, it is a sure sign of danger, but also possible contamination from the unburied corpse.

To enter a Heterotopian space, a far off, remote place like the wilderness, requires rituals (Rymarczyk & Derkzen 2014:[sp]). Rituals are needed for the traveller that will be in a liminal state between places and spaces. Travel was a source of anxiety and as such divination was often employed (Daneshmand 2019:286). Leaving the known, ordered city was accompanied by great perceived risk, as can be seen in the Babylonian oracle texts called *tamītu* (Daneshmand 2019:282). These texts involve getting the help of Adad and Šamaš to divine the future (Lambert 2007:1). Within this corpus is a topic called “A *tamītu* for the one who goes out of the city”³⁴⁰ (Daneshmand 2019:282, 283). The uncertainty and dangers to those exiting the city are noted, particularly the danger from enemy soldiers, foreign forces and those who speak a foreign tongue (Daneshmand 2019:282, 283). Lambert (2007:28, 29)³⁴¹ also shows the evoking of godly favour, noting the decree of Adad and Šamaš that such threats will not trouble the supplicants. If one considers here that leaving the city generated such anxiety that the behaviour of people showed this assessment of risk, getting a favourable divination to make a decision about entering into a physical place perceived as dangerous, then one might conclude that the perceived risk did alter the actual use of the space.

The Netherworld and its association with death can then also be associated with disgust and contagion, corpses being a primary source of Abject disgust and thus avoidance. In terms of the

³³⁹ Refer to the provided summary in 5.4 *Summary of the Udug-Hul Forerunners*, particularly lines 315-317.

³⁴⁰ Here I have also referred to *A tamītu concerning the safety of the city* (Lambert 2007:29-31 *amītu* 1 95-160).

³⁴¹ Lambert (2007) refers particularly to *tamītu* 195-160.

Landscape of Disgust, the mountain as a space is clearly culturally marked as a place that disease bearing demons make their home, the very place of the dead, the Secondspace of the Netherworld, is superimposed on real mountains. To navigate this terrain is to risk contagion and death.

The human element, such as the robbers, bandits and tribes were then also persons made unclean by their lifestyle to the Ancient Mesopotamian traveller. If violence and the breaking of the divine law made one impure, then such ‘barbarians’ were most impure in a moral sense. From a biological point of view, taking the Behavioural Immune System into account, avoiding people from another group who may be carrying diseases is a beneficial thing to do.

To conclude, the *Evil Udug*’s association with areas considered wilderness in Ancient Mesopotamia, such as the mountains, steppe and desert, are linked to ideas about predators, enemies and infection within those spaces. Although much of the *Evil Udug* is hidden the symbols that are revealed surrounding it gain more relevance in relation to space. The Unnameable aspect of the *Evil Udug* has some expression in the implied connections to the wilderness its signs of humans and animals offer. These spaces had a cultural link to the underworld and, through looking at other Ancient Mesopotamian texts, it was established that such areas were associated with brigands, robbers and threatening humans from the fringes. Animals like lions, dogs, owls and snakes, creatures of predation and sickness, could also be found in such chaos filled regions. The unhappy dead haunted some of these spaces and demons besides the *Evil Udug* roamed and infected the unwary.

The Firstspace of the regions described here has Secondspace values attached to predation, humans’ aggression and infection as per the Landscape of Peril, a perception of risk that made interacting with such spaces daunting, that is to say the lived Thirdspace awareness of these places. The Heterotopian aspects of these spaces as a combination of physical geography and imaginary reals was then also addressed here. In essence, the *Evil Udug* stands as a warning within a particular context of dangers within the landscape both real and imagined that could have affected how the space was actually navigated and perceived as a Thirdspace.

7.3 THE CITY: *EVIL UDUG* IN THE CITY, STREET, AND HOME

This subsection considers the next area specified in the *Udug-hul Forerunners*, namely, the city street that the evil entities enter into before entering the home of their victim.³⁴² The city as a larger concept is discussed here in terms of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace. The physicality of the place is noted together with cultural ideas about the spaces involved and how this created a lived experience of this space. The Heterotopian aspects of the city are also taken into consideration. The *Evil Udug* as an Unnameable Monster within the city, street, and home gains more significance through approaching its included symbolism when taking the spaces these are connected to into consideration.

The Ancient Mesopotamian city presents a space that is a physical reality as per the archaeological record of this Firstspace,. It is also deeply structured by religious, cultural and historical ideas about space as its Secondspace. The overlap of theses create a lived space in Thirdspace. The city as a space could also be read as deeply Heterotopian in many ways. The city, temple and home are linked to the cosmos (Jacobs 2015:14; Schäder 2023:8) becoming an actual space for the embodiment of metaphysical, religious notions. It is also a space that mirrors the society and activities of deities (Pongratz-Leisten 2021:1-2, 6). There is a connection to building as an act reflecting the activities of gods (George 2016:11), such as the creation of the universe (George 2016:11). This connects the city to mythic time, where homelife, temple and divinity overlap (Pongratz-Leisten 2021:2). Below are visualisations of a city as it might have appeared around the time periods relevant to this discussion in the region, (Figure 88), as well as a depiction of a temple (Figure 89).

³⁴² Refer to *Chapter 5: An Overview of The Evil Udug in Context, 5.4 Summary of The Udug-Hul Forerunners*.



Figure 88: Tomas Trescak, Anton Bogdanovych and Simeon Simoff, *3D Visualisation of the city of Uruk 3000 BC*, 2014. (Trescak, Bogdanovych & Simoff 2014:[sp]).



Figure 89: Illustration of the Etemenanki (temple of the foundation of heaven and earth in Sumerian) from *Ancient History Magazine*, 25. 2020. (World History Encyclopaedia 2020:[sp]).

A connection to the profane exists also. Strong rituals were used to protect the home and temple from evil entities (Black & Green 2004 [1992]:47). The city, temple and home are not spaces entered by all. The home had measures in place to guard the entry of evil, such as noted in what

is called by Böck (2003:11) the *Lamaštu* ritual tablet.³⁴³ Similarly, city and temple gates looked different and had associations with cosmic forces, often barring evil from entering (Dilek 2022:4, 7). This also implies a Heterotopian space linked to opening and closing as well as being accessible at certain times under certain circumstances to perform certain rituals.^{344 345}

In general, Ancient Near Eastern cities had a few similar features as per the archaeological record. Most had walls, central architectural works of great scale and importance, such as temples, administrative building and palaces which influenced the general running of such spaces with complicated administration and bureaucracy (Pedersén, Sinclair & Andersson 2010:121). Part of such building projects has left behind drafts or architectural plans³⁴⁶, which show an understanding of space and its physical attributes (Chiu 2010:139). Such physical spaces however carried deep symbolic significance and the layout, how they were produced to begin with, can be seen when examining the symbolism of and ideas about space in Secondspace.

In Ancient Mesopotamia the city was an ordered space against the backdrop of an outside, wilderness filled, world reminiscent of primordial chaos (Stančius & Grecevičius 2022:29; Feldt 2016:88). To build, which has a direct influence on the city as a space, was seen as connected to the gods. Temples were deeply connected to the divine, these spaces were connected to the ordering or creation of the universe by the gods (Pongratz-Leisten 2021:1-2,6; Schäder 2023:8). These buildings also mimicked the order of the domestic sphere, connecting the city and its populus to divinity (Pongratz-Leisten 2021:1-2,6; Schäder 2023:8). Jacobs (2015:13-14) when considering the perception of the city in the Ancient Near East through the

³⁴³ Lamashtu, here spelled as *Lamaštu* as per Böck's (2003:11) reference to the particular tablet, as a general being can be seen in Figure 82.

³⁴⁴ Through looking at literary texts like Nippur god-list (Old Babylonian), more recent Weidner god-list and *Aa I/7 c 6'*, there seems to be a possibility that city gates were closed at night (George 2015:8). In terms of the Temple in Ancient Mesopotamia, who may enter depended on the time period, as practices changed in terms of the place of priests in society, however for people to bring offerings of food in the third millennium BCE the washing of hands was required, as with a meal (Sallaberger 2019:105).

³⁴⁵ Like the temple was built with extreme care to keep the space sacred, homes for the general populus were also built with calls upon divinity and the supernatural to protect them from evil. Foundation rituals were practised throughout the Ancient Near East, as well as in Ancient Greece (Hunt 2006:iii). Hunt (2006:141) explains that foundation rituals in Ancient Mesopotamia were common from the time of the Sumerians to the Parthians and that foundations for tombs, temples, homes and palaces were laid with foundation deposits, prayers, sacrifices, incantations and other rituals. Just as the temple, the holiest of places, was constructed with the appropriate building rites, so too does the personal home have its own rites to protect the residents from illness and malevolent entities (Black & Green 2004 [1992]:47).

³⁴⁶ An example of architectural plans from Ancient Mesopotamia is the depiction of Gudea with ancient architectural plans drawn up, such as a statue of Gudea, Figure 90, found at Girsu with the temple's plan visible (Weiss 2020:44).

lens of laments³⁴⁷, notes that the city is both ‘one’ city with its interconnected homes, temples and buildings, ‘many’ which is all cities and their populations as well as the idea of the city as microcosm for the cosmos. Jacobs (2015:14) expresses this as a deep, interconnected, relationship between the house or temple, the city and the cosmology of the time. Jacobs (2015:14) notes it as ‘*House/temple-city-universe homology*’, that is to say, each of these spaces represented spaces and conceptions of space outside of themselves.

The city is where the god’s temple is, a place of protection and order. In terms of mythology and thus the understood cosmos of the time, *Enūma Eliš* has the gods building the first city, Eridu, and first of the buildings is the temple (MacDonald 2013:22). *Enūma Eliš* also shows the importance of the city as it shows that it is also created by the gods, Babylon in this case being a city that is at the centre of the world, housing the most important god, Marduk (George 2016:11).³⁴⁸ The city’s building and planning itself also had to mirror this divine connection. Van de Mieroop (2003:273) takes the archaeological evidence of the city of Babylon as an example. This shows the city with clearly structured and demarcated buildings with walls that could be defended and gates that could procure trade and connections to other cities (Van de Mieroop 2003:273).

The centre of the city, and its closest tie to divinity, is however the temple. The temple could be a gift to a god, as with Gudea (Figure 90), planning and constructing the temple for Ningirsu, meant to be the god’s home (Keel 1997:17). Ancient Mesopotamian temples were planned with much symbolism. Laying the foundation one had to dig down to find virgin soil to mirror the laying foundations linked to the gods and creation (Palmer 2012:143). Within the foundation were boxes, *temenu*, to clearly mark the boundaries of the sacred space and keep it pure (Palmer 2012:144-145). The alignment of the temple and its measurements were divine, or of divine origin (Palmer 2012:144-145). The space of divinity is then ordered to the extreme, which is opposed to the chaos and lack of order of the wilderness.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ Jacobs (2015:15) includes as examples *The Lament of Ur*, as well as *The Lament for Eridu*, *Lament for Sumer and Ur*, *The Lament for Uruk* and *The Lament for Nippur* and part of the five canonical Sumerian city laments, though with few particular references to translations.

³⁴⁸ George (2016) provides some information about translations, but this is not the focus of their study.

³⁴⁹ Lions could also be symbols of the divine sphere. An example here would be the goddess Inanna who is said to ‘drive seven lions’, as well as having the animals’ presence be part of her iconography (Strawn 2005:194). Lions were used in an apotropaic way. Lions can be found in the Neo-Sumerian period as depicted near or on doors, as in an inscription by Gudea on stone lions, who are noted as connected to the Temple’s doors, as well as the Old Babylonian period’s temples, as well as private houses and were also featured on city gates in early Assyria (Braun-Holzinger 1999:155-157). A skeleton of a lion, and a panther,



Figure 90: *Statue of Gudea*, circa 2090 BCE. Worked Stone, 44 × 21.5 × 29.5 cm. The Louvre, Paris. (The Met [sa]:[sp]).

The temple served many functions, including being a place of healing, such as the temple of Gula, a place of education, justice, administration and economic significance (Pongratz-Leisten 2021:1). MacDonald (2013:6) explains that in the Ancient Near East known space is divine because it is ordered by divine activity. Prinsloo (1999:9) similarly expresses that in the Ancient Near East the ‘centre’ is interpreted as being close to sacred spaces such as the temple, which are perceived as places where ‘reality’ exists. This ‘centre’ on the axis of vertical and horizontal lines of understanding space³⁵⁰ also included the centre as the self. This self is connected, like the temple, to holiness, and the ‘self’ dwells in a home, the very shape of which is lent to the temple as the dwelling of the god, which further binds the spaces to ‘reality’ (MacDonald 2013:6).

were also found in the foundation of the White temple of the Anzu Ziggurat, perhaps being a foundation offering meant to incur protection (Strawn 2005:157).

³⁵⁰ MacDonald (2013:6) explains the concepts of time and space in the Ancient Near East as interconnected with culture and the perceptions created by religion. The cardinal directions are more than neutral, they have value, in terms of representing the past and future, such as the East and West, and the physicality of space beyond the known fall into an unreal mythic place.

The temple in the Sumerian and Akkadian languages³⁵¹ are deeply connected to the idea of a house or home. Structurally early temples and homes would have shared similarities, but there is a mirroring between the house, palace and temple in that they are all active socio-economic entities (Pongratz-Leisten 2021:2). The temple is the household of the gods, the gods are housed in the *cella* and they have to be dressed, given food and care, paralleling in this with the king and the palace and domestic households (Oppenheim 2013:96).

The Firstspace existence of home in Ancient Mesopotamia can be seen in archaeological evidence found³⁵², giving a dedication of the home's general layout (Figure 91). As a Secondspace though, the home is deeply tied to various layers of symbolism, not just in its final form, but even the processes that create it, meaning the Thirdspace lived experience of the home overlapped with physical space and ideas about the space. This then also includes the perceived risks within the home in terms of animals, humans and infection.

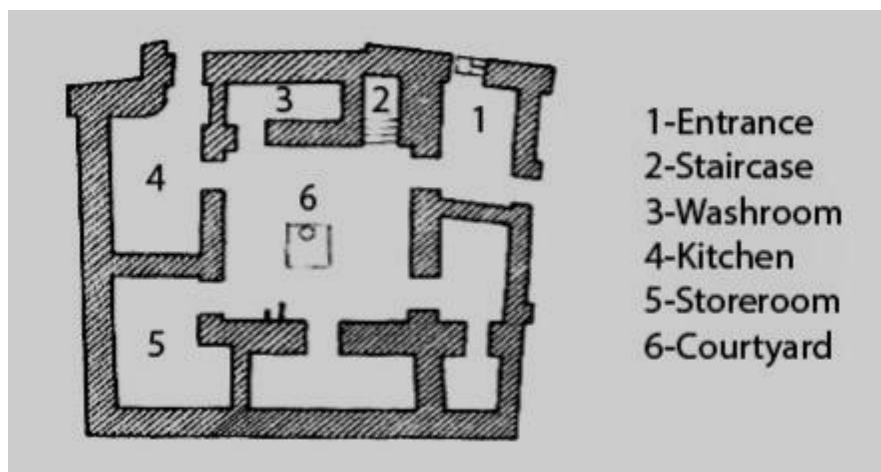


Figure 91: Abdel-Salam Al-Dawoud, Plan of House at Ur, Mesopotamia. 2006. (Abass, Ismail & Solla 2016:2558).

In terms of house-building rituals, many precautions were taken to keep the home safe from invasions of all sorts. This included a purification upon completion of the home, to make it safe for the intended occupants (Ambos 2010:222). Foundation laying rituals and deposits included libations, offerings and grain, precious metals and stones, wood, seeds and linen cloths of different colours to ward off, or drive off, evil from the house (Ambos 2010:230).³⁵³ Homes

³⁵¹ An example noted by Pongratz-Leisten (2021:4) is the Early Dynastic *Temple Hymn*, where Inanna's Temple in Ulmash is noted.

³⁵² Examples of Ancient Mesopotamian homes can be seen in Salvin's (2018) book, which gives a detailed insight into the homes of the third millennium BCE, including archaeological sites.

³⁵³ Ambos (2010:136-137) refers particularly to K 3664+:5-7 and 17-21. Ambos (2010) mostly uses precise references to translations and original sources

did not usually have foundation inscriptions, but a contrary example is cited by Ellis (1968:163-165) and explained by Van Leeuwen (2010:414) as a prayer to Marduk, a creator and builder of the world, noting how well the builder built and asking for the house to last for many generations.

The home is a place of rest and safety³⁵⁴, it has its own ‘god’ and protection rituals.³⁵⁵ Building was a dangerous business, evil omens were a constant threat and building rituals had to be carried out to keep the builders and subsequent inhabitants safe (Ambos 2010:222). Private homes had chapels and spaces of worship, wherein the collapsed house of a court official would be taken as the work of an angry god, leading to the man filling up the location of his house with new earth and taking the bricks outside the city (Ambos 2010:226).³⁵⁶

Konstantopoulos (2020:4, 10)³⁵⁷ explains that apotropaic figures, like that of Pazuzu, could be used to scare off evil, as well as rituals which included “*To Block the Entry of the Enemy into Someone’s House*”³⁵⁸ making use of various figurines to ward off evil, such as the Sebettu and other monsters. Mirelman (2018:5) also notes a tablet for blocking the entry of evil, or the foot of evil, into someone’s house³⁵⁹ which made use of figurines to ward off such evil.

One such evil is the *Evil Udug* and the main place of infection identified by the *Udug-hul Forerunners*, is the street. The reality of the physical street exists in archaeological evidence³⁶⁰ as a Firstspace. As a Secondspace various cultural ideas are tied to the street, such as its connection to infection through rubbish (Steinert 2014:142), witchcraft (Robertson 2020:209), dangerous animals (De Zorzi 2019:232, 233; Yuhong 2001:37), evil entities (Steinert 2014:138) and human violence, including foreign invasion (Earley-Spadoni 2022:53).

³⁵⁴ The home was also a place of business, as shown by Old Babylonian homes that seemed to be grouped together by the occupations of their owners, and served as both places of work and residence (Steinert 2014:19).

³⁵⁵ As noted, temple layouts were connected to the original layouts of homes. The tripartite house plan that was used in the fourth and fifth millennium BCE became the model for many temples, creating a link visually and ideologically to the rich, later chief and king, and the gods (Laneri 2022:372, 374).

³⁵⁶ Ambos (2010) notes particular examples together with details about which sources, translations and original material was used.

³⁵⁷ Konstantopoulos (2020) includes general references to the source of translations.

³⁵⁸ Konstantopoulos (2020:10) explains that this ritual also included figurines of the Sebettu and monstrous entities who created apotropaic protection on liminal points like corners, doorways and windows.

³⁵⁹ 334 Noted in Mirelman (2018:5) as *to block the entry of evil into a person’s house*.

³⁶⁰ Examples of Ancient Mesopotamian Urban Planning including roads can be found in McMahon (2020).

Overlapping of the street as a physical space and a conceived space then creates a Thirdspace of experience (de Souse Santos 2015:218), which seems to have been associated with danger.

The street *also* shows the qualities of a Heterotopia, it is a liminal and transitory space (Steinert 2014:137), tied to time in terms of changing activities and increased risk at night.³⁶¹ It is a space that represents spaces outside of itself (Gopinath 2019:102-103). It is a public space and does seem to be accessible, which also meant that divisions between classes and strong ideas of separation could not be maintained there (Steinert 2014:125). The street is a Landscape of Peril, where ideas about the dangers of the physical space concerning dangerous and infectious animals and humans needed to be assessed when using the physical space.

Steinert (2014:123) notes that for the most part, perhaps excluding Syro-Hittite and Northern Mesopotamian cities, city streets and gates were used as spaces for public activities as there were few other spaces dedicated to the particular exchanges and interactions of this nature. The road and thoroughfare are then spaces awash with human activity, a public space unlike the private space of the home (Steinert 2014:123). The road is an area where public activity occurs, where Others, especially those who were ‘social outsiders’ or of a different class, could be in close proximity (Steinert 2014:125).

Loisel (2016:298)³⁶² when investigating the divinations in the *Šumma ālu* notes that there are omens that are tied to the home as a private space and to the city and street as public spaces. Loisel (2016:299) explains how streets were spaces where transitional events occurred, such as festivals, but also the activity of the street is about traversing space, change, not consistency. The street is liminal, it holds elements of chaos and is unpredictable, perhaps here it can be linked to some of the negative elements of the wilderness (Steinert 2014:137).

In terms of the Sumerian and Akkadian world view, each city had a patron deity who was part of a larger family of divinities (Sinclair & Hein 2010:131). If the city fell or met with catastrophe; it was seen as a sign of the deity’s abandonment of the city (Sinclair & Hein 2010:131). Jacobs (2015:14) explains that since the city is a physical manifestation of the gods’ order, if it falls into disorder, it shows that the gods are absent. This ruin is then associated

³⁶¹ One might here consider the Sumerian hymn to Hendursaga, the deity being concerned with among other tasks patrolling the city streets at night (Verderame 2016:111), implying that if divine protection is needed then there is a perceived increase in risk within the space at night.

³⁶² Loisel (2016) provides details concerning translations and original sources used in general.

with certain animals, such as the owl, which is connected to the *Evil Udug*, as noted in *Chapter 5: An Overview of The Evil Udug in Context, 5.4 Summary of The Udug-hul Forerunners*.

The *Evil Udugs* are described as the owl who screeches in the city (Verderame 2017:401). The owl especially is culturally associated with illness. In terms of the *Udug-hul Forerunners*, the texts from this era are not that many, but one can perhaps look at other texts from the same region and hope to have more insight into the owl's symbolism and connection with danger within the city.

Literature from Ancient Mesopotamia paints the owl as a negative animal. In the tale of the *Huluppu-Tree*, the tree that is planted by the goddess Inanna, cannot be used by her because, among other factors, Lilith had built her nest in the trunk (Riddle 2010:14).³⁶³ Lilith here may be associated with the owl and its negative connotations, Lilith also then being a demon (Warren 2017:9). Lilith, and the many names associated with her through Jewish, Assyrian, Babylonian and Sumerian texts³⁶⁴ (Handaric 2021:327), is a night demon associated with owls, either as companion, or as a shape for this evil entity.³⁶⁵ Further negative connotations can also be found in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, where during the fight with Humbaba, owls are used as imagery that foreshadow violence (Miglio 2022:170-171).

Omen texts from the first millennium, the *Šumma ālu*, show the owl as an animal that is associated with bad outcomes, its cry in particular is noted as a sign that evil things will happen (Miglio 2022:170-171).³⁶⁶ Schmitz (2009:58)³⁶⁷ mentions the negative connotations to birds he believes are owls in Sumerian literature, such as *Cursing of Agade* and *Lament of Eridug* wherein the owl is called the 'bird of depression'. It is associated with the destruction of a city, connecting the folkloric value of the owl with desolation (Sinclair & Hein 2010:131). Schmitz (2009:57) further explains that throughout the Ancient Near East the owl's cry was a lament, it

³⁶³ Riddle (2010) does not refer directly to the translation and tablets used in the text, but does include footnotes on the translations used in each part of their interpretations.

³⁶⁴ Lilith's origin is Sumerian, her Babylonian version, *Lilitu* being of Sumerian origin, *lil*, which means spirit or wind, but in all forms these are considered to be bad spirits who come at night and cause harm (Mondriaan 2005:754).

³⁶⁵ The Owl was also associated with Inanna, a goddess of love and war, the owl there may also be associated with divinity, although the owl-like attributes can be connected to the goddess' association with prostitution and the time of night these activities occurred (Riddle 2010:30).

³⁶⁶ Miglio (2022) includes details about translations and tablets used.

³⁶⁷ Schmitz (2009) provides details on translations and tablets used to reach the provided insights.

is associated with sleep and the interruption thereof, as well as death, misfortune, ruins and illness.

The owl is then both a predator, associated with danger, but also with infection through its link to illness. Sax (2001:189) mentions that owls might have been associated with places of death as they could have been attracted to the smells of rotting flesh. The owl's association with illness is made in the *Udug-hul Forerunners* as the *Evil Udug*, who are as owls screeching in the city, bring sickness (Tablet V, Line 366) (Geller 1985:41). Similarly the Lilitu, the origin of later Lilith, were seen as unclean evil spirits, or as Inanna's handmaiden, an unclean prostitute, while the Babylonian incarnation had one Lilith, a spirit who 'screeches', perhaps linked to the owl (Smith 2008:10, 11).³⁶⁸

Another unclean animal in the city, was the dog. The dog is liminal in terms of its connection to the animals and human realm, but also its ability to cross boundaries (Coulson & Dosoo 2022:[sp]). Dogs are noted in the street, and the rabid dog in particular is a bad omen, as noted in the *Šumma ālu*, where an omen of people becoming dispersed is signified by rabid dogs running through the street (Yuhong 2001:37).³⁶⁹ Another important connection between the dog and street can be found in the *Šumma ālu* as per De Zorzi's (2022:275) inclusion of dogs howling constantly in the street being an omen that the city's god will abandon the city, leading to ruin.

Rabid dogs in particular present a cue of infection and predation. Rabies is still a threatening reality in the contemporary world³⁷⁰, and was even more of a danger in the past. Signs to look out for include anorexia, excessive salivation, aggression, changes in behaviour and self-

³⁶⁸ Prostitution and illness is also associated with the owl here. The owl associated with the goddess Inanna, may be seen as a bird who, like the prostitute, works at night and 'calls' from the balcony in terms of sacred prostitution, Inanna as *nin-ninna*, "Divine Lady Owl" in Sumerian (Riddle 2010:30). However, when the term Akkadian *Kilili* is used it forms a connection to prostitutes, the Sumerian being *Abashushu* is often translated as 'harlot' (Riddle 2010:30).

³⁶⁹ Yuhong (2001) provides precise references to the texts used as well as notes on translation.

³⁷⁰ In our contemporary world, Rabies is a well-known, dangerous, viral disease that the World Health Organisation (2023:[sp]) explains as 100% fatal once symptoms manifest, and is spread in 99% of cases from dogs to humans. This lyssavirus spreads between mammals and infects the central nervous system and brain, leading to death if no vaccination occurs (Amoako, Duah, Sylverken, Owusu, Yeboah, Gorman, Adade, Bonney, Tasiame, Nyarko-Jectey, Binger, Corman, Drosten & Phillips 2021:[sp]). The World Health Organisation (2023:[sp]) notes that there are two main ways rabies manifests, namely Furious rabies, which includes the victim becoming afraid of water (hydrophobia) and fresh air (aerophobia), becoming hyperactive and 'excitable', while Paralytic rabies slowly immobilises the victim leading to coma and death. Early symptoms may mimic a cold or flu, with weakness, fever and headache being common symptoms (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention 2021:[sp]).

mutilation (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention 2011:[sp]). Excessive salivation is linked to the long-observed symptoms of foam which rabid animals build up around their mouth, together with the fear of water and heightened aggression, which is the ‘Furious’ phase of Rabies (Sharma, Dobhal, Sharma, Kumar & Gupta 2015:325). The pupils also dilate, leading to the eyes looking darker (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention 2011:[sp]).³⁷¹ The markers of disease are still present in the manifestation of this illness contemporaneously, some visual cues can be used to spot the disease (Figure 92) and shown on Mobivet ([sa]:[sp]).



Figure 92: Signs of Rabies in Dogs, [sa]. (Mobivet [sa]:[sp]).

Altogether, Rabies presents a very clear picture to the Behavioural Immune System of danger and disgust. Abject bodily fluids such as saliva and blood from self-mutilation should trigger a response to avoid the animal. The Behavioural Immune System is then also sensitive to other markers of illness (Bleakley 2020:[sp]), such as the change in the animal’s body if they have anorexia for example, signalling that the animal is under the effect of something that one should not interact with. Lastly, as discussed in more detail with the Uncanny Valley in *Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture*, 2.3 *Bioculture and the Monster*, 2.3.5 *Disgust as Biocultural element in the Monster*, 2.3.5.1 *Monster as Other and Scapegoat through Bioculture*, 2.3.5.1.4 *The Uncanny and Disgust*, the Behavioural Immune System carefully monitors changes in behaviour (Wang, Lilienfield & Rochat 2015:395). Although this is not of a conspecific, the aggression, or erratic behaviour should also be a warning sign. A rabid dog

³⁷¹ The disease can go through stages, including a relatively long incubation period which can vary from one week to a whole year, although the average is closer to two or three weeks (World Health Organisation 2024:[sp]).

is thus an incredible sight, dangerously predatory with bared teeth and dripping with markers of disease that signal very highly for avoidance.

Rabies, although a virus, has not had a change in basic symptoms for a long time and the effects of rabies in communities can also be seen in Ancient Mesopotamia. Before Hammurabi's famous laws, the *Laws of Eshnunna* note proceedings and fines for an owner who does not control a dog that has been infected with rabies (Wasik & Murphey 2012:[sp]). Incantations against 'venomous' animals such as snakes and scorpions also include incantations against the bite of a dog, its spittle described as poison and closely connected to death (Yuhong 2001:32). Sumerian texts ³⁷² include the danger and fatality of such a bite linked to the lethal effects of venom in the other animal (Yuhong 2001:32).

Rabid dogs are described in *Incantation to survive a [Dog]'s bite*, incantation of Ea³⁷³ as carrying their children, or semen, on their teeth, the author expresses the hope that the bite will not 'have puppies' (Yuhong 2001:33; Wee 2021:330). Old Babylonian Akkadian incantations describe human rabies³⁷⁴ noting that the bite of an infected dog might leave its puppies, with the victim, making them sick (Yuhong 2001:33). Dogs were so closely associated with illness that they could be used as apotropaic figures as well. Sennacherib inscribed a building with rabid dogs at the side of the gate, perhaps to ward off evil (Yuhong 2001:38). For good or ill, the connection between the dog and illness does appear to be strong.

Omen texts such as ŠA 46, 12, note the danger of many dogs in the city and their 'going wild' (Vilela 2021:25). This has been interpreted as Rabies breaking out, which would indeed be unfortunate. The significance of the dog goes further than preserved *Šumma ālu* tablets that deal with omens in cities, homes and reading ill fortunes from sleeping patterns, incidents on the way to prayer and the behaviours of animals, including dogs (Freedman 1998:2, 8). Although there are many animals noted in this text, Freedman's (2017:57) translation of Tablet 46 shows omens connected to dogs barking, making noise, going mad, defecating, digging up dirt to name but a few. These behaviours mean a great multitude of things, including the fall of

³⁷² Examples noted by Yuhong (2001) include An Ur III Incantation against the Bite of a Snake, a Scorpion, or a Dog (VS 10, 193) as well as "incantation to survive the (poison of) a snake/dog" (6 VS 17, 4). The references to tablets are shown here as per Yuhong (2001)'s inclusion.

³⁷³ Translation can be found in Foster (2005:190).

³⁷⁴ To support this Yuhong (2001:33) notes the following texts as relevant, namely *On the Bite of a Dog*, in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East* (Marks & Good 1987:85-88) as well as *An Old Babylonian Incantation from Tell Asmar* in ZA 75 (1985:179-187).

the city, army or a man's personal life and marriage, amongst others (Freedman's 2017:57). Dogs can bring good 'demons' or evil demons, for example in lines 94-101 illness and protective demons are noted, but an Evil Demon will also attach itself to the witness of certain omens (Freedman 2017:56).

In terms of Bioculture, the fear of rabies is a particularly pervasive theme. Contemporary examples in horror still parallel the fears and cues noted above. Several themes linking to rabies can be seen in monsters that spread disease through biting, such as zombies (Henkel & Wijdicks 2022:[sp]). The decline into a violent Other brought on by disease certainly links to Rabie's effect on the brain, as it changes the behaviour of the infected. Strong visceral cues of Abject material like blood and mucus also links to what Rabies might do to the body (Henkel & Wijdicks 2022:[sp]). In essence, the fear of rabies and how it is expressed both in ancient and contemporary texts shows a link in what humans fear on a biological level.

Avoiding infectious conspecifics is important for keeping healthy as well (Curtis, de Barra & Auger 2011:391). The actual effect of the *Evil Udug*, though its body in itself does not have these clear cues, creates clear signs of sickness in the bodies of the humans it infects. The *Forerunners of the Udug-hul* describe the symptoms the victim presents, all of which seem to imply states, behaviour and substances that would spark disgust and avoidance. The body is invaded and the cultural implications thereof are discussed in more detail in *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space*, 7.4 *The Body: Evil Udug as Bodily Invader*, however here note is taken of the 'symptoms' as part of what makes the *Evil Udug* disgusting.

The literal filth of dogs posed a threat, such as being urinated on by a dog, was considered a bad omen (Scurlock 2002:382). De Zorzi (2022:276) similarly notes the omen of a dog drooling in the street indicating divorce because of improper female sexuality, linking to the idea of sexual pollution, drool relating to semen and slander.³⁷⁵ Here this can be linked back to what it is that the dog represent and how keeping it and its infection out of places like the home was desired.

In terms of conspecific violence and fear, the city, and street in particular, offers an abundance of encounters with aggressive humans, the *Evil Udug* embodying this fear in many ways. The

³⁷⁵ The dog is also not just a symbol of ill omen, but can also be interpreted positively as guard dogs (De Zorzi 2022:275), or in association with healing with the Goddess Gula (Geller 2016:2, 161).

text notes that a man was walking at night towards his house, the street is blocked and obstructed by the *Evil Udug* who follows him and ties his hands; he is captured, and he suffers terribly from the illness it brings (Tablet VII, Line 692-700e) (Geller 1985:65). Enki also gives a prayer for the man in the street who walks alone at night (Tablet III, Line 198) (Geller 1985:31) and one of the deities called on is Hendursag, the night watchman³⁷⁶ (Tablet III, Line 228) (Geller 1985:33).

The seizing and blocking of the victim in later *Udug-hul* iterations, such as those investigated by Verderame (2017:71), implies an aggravated assault, with captivity and binding connecting to a rather human activity. Verderame (2017:74) also notes Lamashtu (Figure 82), and that she is often described as blocking the path of her victims. Similarly, the witch walks around in the street and goes into homes, but she also blocks the street, cutting off the traffic (Steinert 2014:138). Steinert (2014:138) explains that evil beings are linked in this way to social outsiders who have no permanent place to reside and who dwell in the street, ready to do harm to people. One might interpret here the blocking of the way as a sort of trapping, read together with the idea of the binding of the hands, it looks like the *Evil Udug* captures his victim using a human tool and method.³⁷⁷

The street is then a place where one might encounter violent conspecifics as well and with the rush and press of people in close proximity, contamination can spread. Although, as stated, the Ancient Mesopotamians did not understand germ theory, Abject and contagious material would still trigger avoidance and disgust. Steinert (2014:137) explains that in many cuneiform texts the street is described as a place where impure animals³⁷⁸ are, rubbish and dirt accumulates³⁷⁹, one can be victimised by demons and witchcraft, and see the suffering of homeless people lived in poverty in the street.³⁸⁰ This lines up with the *Evil Udug* being described as making the street

³⁷⁶ According to Black and Green (2004 [1992]:112) Hendursag/ Hendursağa was probably associated with the later Išum, a night watchman and protector.

³⁷⁷ This can also extend to other demons from the Ancient Near East, as in the case of some Egyptian demons who use knives, noted by Omran (2015:30-53) as *Knife-holders*.

³⁷⁸ Animals such as the pig are described as disgusting and filthy. Luḫummû, in Neo-Assyrian anecdotes, offers a description of the pig as an unholy animal that stinks and makes the street stink, polluting houses and the road with its filth (De Zorzi 2019:232, 233).

³⁷⁹ Steinert (2014:142) explains how there is a connection between the street and the Netherworld, rubbish being dumped in the street and how this was the food of ghosts and animals, but it also accentuates the filth of the street.

³⁸⁰ Steinert (2014:141, 142) explains that although older cities and time periods such as the fourth millennium BCE Uruk period had drainage and plumbing, these were not maintained and later city streets might have been plagued by sewage as well as serving as dumping grounds for other garbage, the threshold of the house holding back the dirt of the street.

reek like spoiled milk (Tablet VI, Line 628) (Geller 1985:57), it seems to be a space of rubbish and disgust, holding the risk of infection.

Witchcraft was also linked to spittle and dirt, the practitioners using these substances as vehicles to harm and curse victims (Robertson 2020:209). In a prayer for an urban Ancient Mesopotamian³⁸¹, the street is depicted as a place where a cursed man might touch the supplicant, or he might come into contact with shaved off armpit hair or nail clippings (Robertson 2020:209). All this shows that there was a connection between the space of the street, its apparent actual pollution, and the perception of such pollutants as negative and even linked to the monstrosity of demons who carry illness.

To add to the perception of the street or road, one must also take the ideas surrounding crossroads in the Ancient Near East into account. The crossroads is a place associated with both witchcraft and medicine (Steinert 2014:140). The busy space was used to bury figurines where people will constantly step on the representations of the cursed people, but potsherds and dust from a crossroads or a street could also be used to heal (Steinert 2014:140).

Moving from the street to the home, one had to cross the threshold, Steinert (2014:141) explaining that the threshold of the house was the thing that kept the dirt of the street outside the house. The home then is unlike the street, which is littered with impurities (Steinert 2014:141). The home is a space connected to the symbolism of the temple and cosmos, linked with other spaces and mythic conceptions of time (Van Leeuwen 2010:399, 402). It is private space, pure and controlled space. As is discussed in what follows here, all of which links to the characteristics of a Heterotopia as explained by Gopinath (2019:102-103).

Just as the image of the home could be associated with the gods, so too could it be connected to the Netherworld. Katz (2005:68) notes that in Akkadian the Netherworld was the 'Dark House', a house from which there is no escape and no light. Those who lived there ate clay and mud, and wore feathers (Zwitser 2017:24). As Zwitser (2017:43) notes, bodies were commonly buried underneath the home, particularly in the Old Babylonian period. These burials meant that families could perform rites for the deceased and that new owners needed to keep up the

³⁸¹ Robertson (2020:209) is unclear as to which prayer this is, but notes it as contained within a publication by Foster (1996:653). The version accessible to this author was Foster (2019 [1996]).

practice. The new owners' dead intermingled with the previous dead to become a sort of collective entity, *eøem kimti*, part of the *kimtu rapaātu*, the community of long dead (Scurlock 2016:79). The dead could then also cause harm through haunting the home, and causing illness, or becoming *Lilû Demons* and *Kabu Ghosts*.³⁸²

A vulnerable point in the home is the roof, a place the *Udug-hul Forerunners* specifically permeable (Tablet VII, Line 737, 738) (Geller 1985:71). In the Ancient Near East, roofs were border zones, like the door and threshold, where religious rites were held at temples and private homes (Oggiano 2012:465-466). The roof offers an unseen and mostly unguarded point of entry and is in need of protection. In *Hymn to Hendursaĝa*³⁸³ the Night Watchman deity, where patrolling the roofs is part of his duties and that of the Seven (Konstantopoulos 2015:104).³⁸⁴

The home also falls into the idea of the microcosm and macrocosm, it is a stand-in for the cosmos, the city and the temple. The house is like the temple, physically linked through its architectural similarities as well as the idea that the home is a mirror of the cosmos (Van Leeuwen 2010:399, 402). Like the temple, city and creation, the home is a clearly defined and bounded space. Like the city, however, it has gates, weaknesses, and areas where the boundary is permeable. Evil entities entered the house through the door pivot, the threshold, the door bolt and windows, but also the roof of the house and drain were vulnerable (Verderame 2017:68, 69).

The mongoose had a strong connection to sickness. The sniffing mongoose is not just a predator, but how and where it enters the home shows its close association with disease. What the mongoose is sniffing at here is of particular importance. The *Udug-hul Forerunners* note that the mongoose sniffs "The base of the wall" (Tablet VI, Line 608) (Geller 1985:55). However, in the bilingual version, the line rather states that the demons sniff the latrine like a mongoose (Geller 2016:246). George (2015:94, 96) explains this as being actually the *assurû*, a drain or sewer which the author regards as being at the base of the wall and thus the early *Udug-hul Forerunners* refer to this drain also. These drains were known for their foul smells

³⁸² Schurlock (2016:79) links the *Uttuku* also to these 'degraded' ghosts, as dust and long forgotten ghosts becoming something more

³⁸³ Konstantopoulos (2015:xiii) notes this as a Sumerian hymn from the Old Babylonian period.

³⁸⁴ Konstantopoulos (2015) provides notes on the original sources of translations as well as which translations were used.

as well as their tendency to be chosen as hiding places for snakes, mongooses and scorpions (George 2015:94, 96).

The mongoose imagery in the *Udug-hul Forerunners* describes the *Evil Udug* as sniffing like a mongoose, an act through which it hungrily seeks its victim (Verderame 2017:401). George (2015:94) further explains that the act of sniffing of the mongoose is to locate the smelly hole in the building, the demon, like the mongoose, chooses to enter the dwelling silently. One can also perhaps note the connection between the bad smell, contamination and the animals that live in the drain being apt as describing the infectious demon.

The latrine was also associated with other demons, adding to its association with the monstrous and demonic. The Babylonians associated the latrine with a lurking demon named *rābits musāti*, the Hand of Šulak which caused epilepsy (Yamauchi & Wilson 2016:[sp]). Šulak is also the *rābisu* of the toilet and his name is a play on the parts of the Sumerian or Pseudo-Sumerian words that mean ‘unclean hands’ (Scurlock 2014:337-338).³⁸⁵ One might here make the association of the *Evil Udug* as unclean since other infectious demons were associated with wastewater that smells foul, like the latrine.

The threshold and door of the home is also a point of entry for evil entities and demons. A dangerous dog, intent on infection, crouches at the threshold, according to Akkadian magical literature³⁸⁶, ready to strike, emphasising the danger of the door and change from street into home (Ragavan 2012:209). Similarly, evil entities slip into the house like a snake slips into the house via the door, or slithering past the bolt³⁸⁷, bringing danger into the home. Snakes entering or exiting the home are mentioned in the *Šumma ālu* which can be good or bad (Rinderer 2021:59-98) (Tablet 22-24).

Snakes and their venom were also thought to bring illness. The snake in Ancient Mesopotamia is an animal that is associated with evil entities that go beyond just the *Udug-hul Forerunners*. From Ur period III and onward there are ‘Snake Incantations’ (Van Dijk, Geller & Oelsner 2003:35). There are incantations against the bite of a snake, scorpion and ‘furious dog’, often

³⁸⁵ Scurlock (2014) refers particularly to SpTU 1.47 as a source for this interpretation.

³⁸⁶ *Incantation: they shall not enter through the opening* as cited and explained by Ragavan (2012:210).

³⁸⁷ Refer to *Chapter 5: An Overview of The Evil Udug in Context, 5.4 Summary of The Udug-Hul Forerunners*.

seen as rabid, from Ur Period III and the Old Babylonian period (Yuhong 2001:32), being thus contemporaneous with some of the *Udug-hul Forerunners*. Within these incantations, the snake is decidedly negative, although in other contexts it may be more diverse in meaning, here the snake is seen together with other dangerous animals and lets its spittle enter the victim, making them sick (Veldhuis 1993:161). McMahon (2021:xx) notes in particular the Ancient Mesopotamian idea of the snake as hard to catch, sneaky, slippery, able to move between worlds and places unseen, as well as able to strike without warning, envenomating its victim.

Other better known evil spirits, such as Lamashtu (Figure 82), are also associated with snakes. In the first millennium BCE she was often depicted holding snakes, surrounded by dangerous and unclean animals (Farber 2014:4).³⁸⁸ Lamashtu's (Figure 82) behaviour is also likened to a snake, as she enters the home in the same way the *Evil Udug* does when related to the snake. (Golding 2013:78).³⁸⁹ Pazuzu, an evil spirit with an apotropaic function, is also associated with the snake. This figure has an erect penis that ends in a snake's head and can be seen as having exorcistic and apotropaic functions as it was used to chase away, or exorcise Lamashtu (Figure 82) (Frahm 2018:273).

The snake as associated with illness can be seen in its connection to bile. In Old Babylonian therapeutic series *Suālu*, and longer versions of this spell, bile is connected to a venomous snake spitting bile on burnt ground (Steinert & Vacín 2018:710).³⁹⁰ Similarly, gall is associated with both the *Evil Udug* and the snake. Scurlock (2014:522) notes a text that concerns the gallbladder³⁹¹, where the gall is compared to a water snake or snake from the desert, spitting poison.

The snake in Ancient Mesopotamia was not only a symbol of evil, but of many aspects of life. Snakes could be associated with fertility and virility through Tammuz/ Dummuza and a god connected to him, Ningizzida, to whom the snake was sacred, or medicine and healing (Skinner

³⁸⁸ Lamashtu's depictions and incantations that protect one from her evil was not yet fully formed in the third millennium BCE, the oldest texts on her dating from the Old Babylonian and Old Assyrian periods with both Sumerian and Akkadian texts (Farber 2014:7). The reason Lamashtu is used here, even if her addition to the canon of harmful spirits is later than the *Evil Udug*, the region's cultural connection to snakes as evil seems to still be intact.

³⁸⁹ Scurlock (2014:350) discusses a text that urges a baby to 'slither out like a little snake', meaning the birth should be easy, in an incantation to ease a difficult delivery. (Text 4 (Difficult Childbirth): Civil 1974, no. 2).

³⁹⁰ Steinert & Vacín (2018:710) particularly named the source as BAM 578: ii 29–38.

³⁹¹ Scurlock (2014:522) refers particularly to the third tablet in the subseries of seven about the UGU recession of Nineveh, BAM 578.

2001:46). However, in the Sumerian list of professions, the ‘Snake Charmer’, *muš-la-la-ah-hu*/, is listed together with the exorcist (*āšipu*, or *mašmaššu*) and connected to Ningizzida as per Golding (2013:36). Clancier and Agut (2021:4), taking Geller’s (2010) research on exorcism into account, notes that the *mušlahhu* is perhaps a role that the *āšipu*, or *mašmaššu* exorcist could step into.³⁹² Hurowitz (2004:286) notes the exorcist’s attention to snakes when treating a patient for snake bite and the falling of a snake on to the patient. The Namburbi-rituals³⁹³, for *mašmaššu*, counter bad omens, such as a snake in the house (Geller 2018:294). Although the snake’s symbolism is manifold, it appears clear in the *Udug-Hul Forerunners* that what is intended is the snake as a dangerous vector.

Snakes and dogs also have particular omens connected to them when they are found within the home. *Šumma ālu*, omens include negative and positive interpretations of snakes in homes, but some of the negative connotations link to ideas of the home being dispersed if a snake is found eating its young there (De Zorzi 2022:272). Further incantations also mention snakes falling from roofs onto beds, or into beds between couples, signalling divorce (De Zorzi 2022:274). The meaning of the snake might not always be negative, but if a snake turning up in a home was an occurrence that was common enough to write an omen for, then the barrier between home and outside was indeed perpetrated often by these entities. The snake itself is of course dangerous, outside of the symbolic meaning, and finding a dangerous animal in the home unexpectedly is cause for concern.

The home then is also a place shared by people, but much like contemporary fears, being killed, burgled or raped in the home was a pressing issue. Hammurabi’s laws express that breaking into a home was liable to earn a death penalty (Somervill 2010:41). This shows an awareness of dangerous conspecifics that could penetrate into the home with ill intent.

To conclude, the city in the Ancient Mesopotamian sense had Firstspace presence, being experienced as a physical place as is shown through archaeological evidence of the structures of the city, temple, street and home. The Secondspace cultural and symbolic value of the city is richly recorded and shows an interplay between the cosmos, city, home, street and temple, as well as containing perceived cultural risks of contamination by humans and animals as well

³⁹² Snakes also had medicinal properties. Snakeskin was used to help cure eyes in Mesopotamia, as well as ward off Lamastu through being an ingredient for fumigation to get rid of the Evil entity (Attia 2018:54, 58; Mirelman 2018:371).

³⁹³ Geller (2018) explains these rituals in more detail.

as aggressive dangers from enemies and animals as well as evil entities. The city is also a Heterotopian space, particularly the spaces within it, like the home and street that signify areas and time outside of themselves, are perceived as pure or impure, surrounded by rituals, contain liminal areas and facilitate an overlapping of the physical and the symbolic. The Thirdspace of the city was then navigated according to the perceived risks of contamination and aggression, meaning the Landscape of Peril existed here also. The *Evil Udug*, as described in the *Udug-hul Forerunners* then carries the implied dangers within these spaces with it, a collection of warnings for navigating these spaces connected to the hidden elements that make it an Unnameable Monster.

7.4 THE BODY: *EVIL UDUG* AS BODILY INVADER

The self and the body can also be viewed as a type of space. The self is a Heterotopian space, Puffhot (2020:6) explains, meaning it is the meeting of oppositional elements, such as divine and un-divine concepts within the boundaries of the Ancient Near Eastern body and self. The cosmos too is Heterotopian, as it contains many spaces, associated with many diverse and opposing concepts. The self and body mirror this complicated relation through the human's relation to the gods, purity, pollution and the world as humans were both of the earth, subject to decay and death, but linked to divinity in what animated them (Puffhot 2020:74). The body in the Ancient Near East is a Thirdspace, a space where social norms and views overlap onto the physicality of the body (Adendorf: 2015:58). The *Evil Udug* as a monster that penetrates the body also then carries warnings and manifestations of risks regarding the perception and physicality of the body which deepens the meaning of the available symbols attached to this Unnameable Monster.

In terms of the Ancient Near East, including Ancient Mesopotamia, purity in the form of ritual rites and general behaviour was pervasive, although these rites were not codified like the prescriptions of Leviticus (Guichard & Marti 2013:47). The body could be made pure by rites and contact with the divine, or holy objects, but could also be defiled through breaking taboo knowingly or unknowingly (Guichard & Marti 2013:47-48, 49).

The *Evil Udug* infects the victim's body, entering it in the same way that it would the home, slipping in through the openings. Like the home, the body has weak points, orifices that allow for the crossing of Abject and liminal material, as Mary Douglas (2013 [1966]) describes. In

the case of possession, however, impurities like evil spirits can slip back into the body using these points of evacuation. Evil could enter the female body through the navel or vagina, while men could fall victim to danger through the penis being in contact with evil entities such as the *lilû* (Assante 2009:6). Assante (2009:6) notes that in Sumerian and Akkadian the words for ‘orifice’, *KÁ* and *bābu*, can also be connected to meaning a gate or door. These were seen as liminal zones where the body was vulnerable to entry by evil ghosts, evil demons, black magic, and the disfavour of the gods (Assante 2009:6). What enters and exits the body had to then be highly controlled.

Ancient Mesopotamia presents an understanding of the human body based on the religion, culture, social context and knowledge of the time. In Ancient Mesopotamia dissection of humans was not common for various religious reasons, but there was an understanding of internal organs because of divination practices on animals (Pouyan 2016:205). Ancient Mesopotamian medicine similarly used diagnostic handbooks. Those from the first and second millennium BCE were used to interpret symptoms of illness, like divination, in order to reach a diagnosis (Wee 2021:1). The inner body and its workings were a place of darkness.

Simkins (2014:1) explains that the body in terms of Ancient Near East, including Ancient Mesopotamia, was viewed as a microcosm of society, mirroring its boundaries, dangers and intricacies. Dickson (2005:511) notes that the microcosm of the body stands for, and in relation to, the macrocosm of the Ancient Mesopotamian world view. Examples include the myth of Enki and Ninhursag where there is a correlation between bones and stones, eyes and the sun, blood and water, remedies for these body parts also correlating (Dickson 2005:511). This also connects the body to an event set in mythic time.

Simkins (2014:3-6)³⁹⁴ similarly explains the creation of the world in *Enūma Eliš* as coming from the bodies of deities. The creation of humans from various myths, such as *Enki and Ninmah*, note humans birthed by Ninmah using clay and Enki’s semen (Simkins 2014:3-6). *The Creation of the Pickaxe* have humans sprouting out of mud like plants (Simkins 2014:3-6). It then follows that the body and the physical world share a deep connection. Pallavidini and Portuese (2020:6) explain that the world was understood through the body, as seen in the metaphors above.

³⁹⁴ Simkins (2014) does not include a lot of detail about the original material that was put together to create the translations the author uses.

This relationship between the body and the world can be seen in other relationships too. An example might be the linking of sickness to events outside of the body in nature to sickness. The *asûtu* in Babylonian medicine there is a perceived pattern between the macro level of heaven, the world, and the micro level of the sick person (Johnson 2017:82). One might also here consider the *āšipu*, who although concerned with the supernatural agent of illness (Johnson 2017:82), still mediates between the body of the sick person and the outside world. In case of the *Udug-hul Forerunners*, as discussed in *Chapter 5: An Overview of The Evil Udug in Context*, 5.3 *Udug-Hul in Context*, the *āšipu* insert themselves into the dialogue between Marduk/ Asalluḫi and Enki, mirroring the activity of the gods to imbue the individual with power to vanquish the evil that causes illness (Annus 2019:2488).

Not only did the body stand in relation to the cosmos, but it also stood in relation to the temple. In *Song of the Hoe*, the creation of humankind shows an intersection of the divine and the non-divine to create a place where flesh grows, associated with the pillar that connects heaven and earth, Dur-an-ki (Putthoff 2020:68).³⁹⁵ The temple is a meeting place between the heavens and earth, the same way in which the human is the product of earth and heaven intermingled (Putthoff 2020:70).³⁹⁶

The body and the world also share a symbolic relationship through the taboos and restrictions placed on it. In terms of general belief about purity, as taken from the Old Testament with acknowledgement of Mesopotamian purity practices (Töyräänvuori 2020:256), the boundaries placed on the body to keep it pure, reflect the boundaries of society. For example, Wee (2021:330) notes that a man who has lost control of his emissions of semen³⁹⁷ would be considered unclean, along with demons like Šulak favouring victims who did not clean their hands. It then follows that what entered and exited the body was scrutinised.

The *Evil Udug* manifests traits of an unclean person that could infect the body. Particularly here an example would be the *Evil Udug*'s unclean hands and emitting mouth, as per the summary provided in *Chapter 5: An Overview of The Evil Udug in Context*, 5.4 *Summary of*

³⁹⁵ Putthoff (2020) provides details on which translations were used for their interpretation.

³⁹⁶ The human's flesh as a composite of divine and non-divine as per *Enūma Eliš* (Putthoff 2020:69).

³⁹⁷ Simkins (2014:1) explains how restrictions, including dietary and sexual acts, reveal how the body is connected to social concerns about family, property and community in the Ancient Near East.

The Udug-Hul Forerunners. Medical texts from Mari dated to the 2nd Millenium BCE caution that unclean hands can lead to eyes becoming painful as well as warning against drinking from the same cup as a sick woman³⁹⁸ (McMahon 2015:21).³⁹⁹

In conclusion, the body in Ancient Near Eastern terms, particularly Ancient Mesopotamian here, is a bounded, policed space, what enters and exists being monitored, being a space overlaid with meaning beyond itself, tied to the cosmos and conceptions of divinity and purity and having a set place in society, which links it to Heterotopian space. The *Evil Udug* is a monstrous impurity and danger that threatens this bounded system, it has the infectious danger of animals associated with impurities as well as human practices that cause impurity, such as dirty hands and mouths that can also physically hurt the supplicant. It disrupts the physicality of the body with cultural ideas about illness, creating a subjective experience to the body as ill and impure.

7.5 THE WILDERNESS: THE SCIENCE FICTION HORROR ALIEN FROM SPACE

The contemporary alien in Horror is intimately connected to the Landscape of Peril. Like other monsters it sneaks in from the liminal wilds of recent perception. Like a predator or a dangerous foreign agent of disease, it makes its way into the city and the suburbs, infiltrating the sanctity of the home and finally the body. The contemporary wilderness is considered here in relation to the alien as depicted in the chosen films, in relation to Firstspace, Secondspace, Thirdspace and Heterotopian ideas about space. The Science Fiction Horror alien as the Grey Alien as well as the Unnameable qualities it is presented with in the relevant films gain more meaning when the space surrounding it is investigated.

In terms of *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) the origin of the alien beings is mysterious. They are not from earth, which leaves their origins as vaguely situated in the vastness of space. This idea of an unknown origin, but close relationship to outer space, is also present in other films about aliens.⁴⁰⁰ It

³⁹⁸ Scurlock and Anderson (2005:16) cites examples from such a text also, with more detail provided in their work.

³⁹⁹ More detail provided on these medical texts by McMahon (2015).

⁴⁰⁰ Examples include *The Thing* (Carpenter 1982), which shows a crashing spaceship, but no origin planet, *Annihilation* (Garland 2018) where an alien horror is shown as impacting earth like a meteorite, *Colour Out of Space* (Stanley 2019) that similarly shows the descent of an alien presence and even films like *Independence Day*.

would seem that whatever their implied home world, that which makes the strongest connection is the hostile and mysterious void, dead and eternally in-between.

As a Heterotopian space, outer space is reached through extensive and expensive programs put into place by various nations (Brukardt, Klempner, Stokes & Vaughn 2022:[sp]). Voyages may contain and represent the interests of several nations (Checinska, Probst, Vaishampayan, White, Kumar, Stepanov, Fox, Nilsson, Pierson, Perry & Venkateswaran 2015:[sp]).⁴⁰¹ Time is an important aspect of space travel, both fantastically and physically. The flow of time often becomes a theme in Science Fiction⁴⁰² and is of real concern in planning for actual space travel (Oakes 2019:[sp]). To enter into this space, one has to go through extensive training and various rituals of preparation (NASA 2006:[sp]; 2024:[sp]). Very few people can actually visit this space and are therefore reliant on representations of it. For many the representation of space is highly curated, what gets released to the public, especially through the United States of America, is done with certain ideological goals in mind, historical and contemporary (Burwell 2019:[sp]).

For the contemporary mind, outer space stands at the breakdown of our knowledge of our world and place within it. Much like the frontier between order and chaos for the ancients was the separation between the wilderness and city, outer space is where the primordial building blocks of the earth still float unshaped, chaotic, uninhabitable and dangerous. Majsova (2014:108) explains that the perception of outer space has impacted contemporary humans who stand within the streams of popular culture, mainly produced by the United States of America. The perception and exploration of space showed that humans were not the centre of all things and that everything outside of earth is 'Other' (Majsova 2014:108).

Majsova (2014:109) further notes that humankind's interaction with outer space has been in terms of exploration, labelling and mapping new and unknown terrain, which ties in with space as a place to explore. An example of this interest to map outer space can be seen in Pablo Carlos Budassi's *Map of the Known Universe* (2013) (Figure 93). Siebrits (2020:91) explains that contemporary popular culture perceptions of space are shaped by the narrative of space exploration, which feeds into Science Fiction.

⁴⁰¹ This paper addresses the International Space Station's microbes, its connection to this study includes the work of how this space is a space where different cultures and nations meet.

⁴⁰² Some filmic examples that include time as a key element within the Science Fiction narrative would be *Pandorum* (Alvart 2009) and *Interstellar* (Nolan 2014).



Figure 93: Pablo Carlos Budassi, *Map of the Known Universe*, 2013. Digital Reconstruction based on Logarithmic Maps. (Crew 2018:[sp]).

Outer space is a space that remains in many ways intangible. One can consider here that the Firstspace existence of this space is, for a great majority of humans, ever only a space represented and mediated by narratives of science or Science Fiction. Outer space can be viewed from afar, but not visited by the average person, its place within the everyday life and understanding of most people is that of a Secondspace, constructed around ideas and concepts. The construction of the Secondspace in the lane of exploration is usually couched within the sciences, fascinating, but not accessible to most people. Science Fiction on the other hand takes concepts from science and weaves them into clear narratives, constructing a fantastical, accessible, view of outer space. In terms of space as Thirdspace, one can assume that attributes of the physical place are given constructed meanings through storytelling. Outer space exists as the lacuna of the actual place or experiences. Firstspace, ideas generated about this space in Secondspace and in Thirdspace as in the overlap of these elements, are often shown in their liminal state to better tell stories. Outer space is an unknown, one cannot go see for oneself, but instead humans rely on the narratives of science and Science Fiction writers, as if they were travellers returning from the wilderness or distant lands.

The unknown is dangerous, unsure and threatening, the very place wherein one might imagine predatory, infectious or conspecific monsters. Outer space as hostile is an enduring characteristic of imagined outer space. Outer space is where the meteor that caused the K-Pg mass extinction came from, it offers cataclysmic dangers in this regard (Carlson 2024:20; Senel, Kaskes, Temel, Vellekoop, Goderis, DePalma, Prins, Claeys & Karatekin 2023:[sp]). It has no proper orientation without known gravity, leaving one confused as to direction and even bodily functions (Sammler 2024:180), something which on a terrestrial level would equate to becoming dangerously lost.

Outer space is presented as dark (Crane 2024:[sp]), a state that is challenging for humans who are diurnal (Ketchesin, Zong, Hildebrand, Seney, Cahill, Scott, Shankar, Glausier, Lewis, Tseng & McClung 2021:1), and cold (Lea 2022:[sp]), a challenge to humans who have limited range of temperature they can stay alive in (Bohn 2022:[sp]). Most of all, it has no breathable air (Croswell 2015:[sp]), one breath could mean death. It is a '*bad place*' and it has many of the connections to other spaces and places that challenge human survival in similar ways. Even those who survive the journey to space and back often face challenges when returning to earth, their bodies having deteriorated (Figure 94).



Figure 94: Cropped view of Walking Again, *Astronaut Drew Feustel struggles to walk on Earth again after spending 197 days on the International Space Station*, 2018. Screenshot by Author.

A terrestrial space that overlaps with some of the dangers outer space is perceived to offer, includes the deep ocean and bodies of water. Fryers (2020:128) notes how the dark waters of the briny deep are mostly unknown. This makes it ripe for the possibilities of horror as the unknown gains monsters as possible manifestations of real anxieties about the dangers of the ocean (Fryers 2020:128). Fryers (2020:128) notes that the ocean presents humans with a space that is unreachable and not attainable, an exotic unknown. In Horror films, this coding also applies to outer space that is similarly mysterious and veiled to the limited everyday observer (Fryers 2020:128).

The deep ocean does present several terrifying creatures that have predatory cues aplenty⁴⁰³, together with creatures that trigger strong disgust responses⁴⁰⁴, but conspecific threats are limited. The Grey Alien itself does not necessarily show the predatory nature of oceanic creatures, but it does link to the disgust. Perhaps, most of all what this connection suggests is not just fear of the creatures of the ocean void which become linked to the imagined entities of space, but the environment's hostility.

Fryers (2020:133) links the ocean as a space of nautical Horror closely to the Abject. The ocean as a hostile environment, and the creatures that inhabit it, are bringers of death, that which turns humans into corpses (Fryers 2020:133). Fryers (2020:134) further explains the ocean has an 'anti-baptismal' characteristic. What it swallows, it changes, and what it returns are things that should be cast away, marked by the soft slimy state of ocean creatures and decaying corpses (Fryers 2020:134). The Grey Alien has these qualities, described as cold, soft and slimy in the folklore that surrounds it⁴⁰⁵, and depicted at times in colour reminiscent of a decaying corpse.

Although not explicitly shown in the chosen films, there is perhaps a link to the shape of the Grey Alien and its Unnameable aspects, and the swamp. Shortly, swamps are physically places of danger. Swamps are places similar to the ocean and outer space, the ground is treacherous, what appears as solid may not be (Giblett 2007 [1996]:18). Visibility might also be limited due to fog and mist and becoming lost is possible (Allewaert 2020:343). The swamp's deep dark

⁴⁰³ One might here refer to several species of fish often shown with an excessive amount of sharp teeth, such as Anglerfish.

⁴⁰⁴ Jamieson, Singleman, Linley and Casey (2020) show in their study that human perception of underwater creatures, particularly those from the deep ocean are viewed as 'ugly', humans do not always perceive deep sea creatures as aesthetically pleasing and may value such creatures and biomes less.

⁴⁰⁵ Refer to *Chapter 8: Overview of the Alien as a Monster*, 8.3.3 *The Grey Alien Takes Shape*.

water sparks a fear in humans of concealed dangers (Misimi, Kajtna, Misimi & Kapus 2020:[sp]). Giblett (2013:73, 2007 [1996]:118, 179) explains swamps as places with predators, crocodiles, alligators⁴⁰⁶ and snakes.

The amphibian is also a creature that reflects the chaotic liminality of the swamp, not as a predator, but rather as an agent of disgust. Amphibians are liminal, they move between the land and water, they break and confuse this boundary, just as the swamp too poses uncertain boundaries between what is wet and soggy and what is dry and stable (Kraft 2021:131). On top of that, creatures like frogs are covered in mucus, a material humans find disgusting (Janovcová, Rádlová, Polák, Sedláčková, Peléšková, Žampachová, Frynta & Landová 2019:41).

Wetlands are tied to disgust as they have a reputation for smelling bad. Swamp gas and decay in the still waters mark the place as an area that is better avoided than traversed (Meredith 2002:329-330). Wetlands bear a link to mosquitoes, malaria's earlier miasmatic theory, and fever inducing illness, thus being a place strongly associated with disease (Giblett 2016:40, 44, 198, 219 & 222). Horwitz and Finlayson (2011:678) explain that in general wetlands are viewed as places of sickness. It is a place where waste cannot be disposed of, but rather accumulates, so much so that there is resistance to wetland conservation (Horwitz & Finlayson 2011:678).

It is of interest here that the human inhabitants of swamps are painted in our contemporary globalised, Americanised, culture as 'disgusting'. The swamp is a place removed from acceptable customs and societal practices. It is filthy and chaotic, so too are swamp dwellers perceived as 'uncivilised', 'inbred', therefore morally filthy, and physically filthy. In the American mind, those who live in the swamp are marginal. They could be people of colour, having a long history with the swamp (Wilson 2018:[sp]; Allewaert 2008:34), or Cajuns, often depicted in a poor light, as in *Swamp People* (2010-present) (Figure 25). The Behavioural

⁴⁰⁶ Fear of reptiles, such as crocodiles, is known as Herpetophobia, found in about a third of adult humans, and has an evolutionary basis. While our mammalian ancestors were evolving, reptiles exerted a pressure on these animals as prey sources (Kubota 2017:[sp]). One of the supposed effects of such a long history of being preyed upon is a contribution to the human eye's sophistication (King 2019:[sp]). However, ambush predators often circumvent identification by their prey animals through camouflage or using areas where vision is not clear (Smith & Ruxton 2020:1331, 1332) like moving water or dark water. Janovcová, Rádlová, Polák, Sedláčková, Peléšková, Žampachová, Frynta and Landová (2019) list crocodiles and snakes as particularly dangerous to humans within the class of reptile, citing the crocodile's size and particular predatory style as contributing factors. Janovcová *et al* (2019:[sp]) also showed that humans responded to crocodiles mostly with fear and are not viewed largely as beautiful or disgusting, but dangerous.

Immune System might be activated by the moral elements of such depictions as well as the ‘deformity’ or deviation from what is understood as the socially acceptable ‘American’ body. These connections of predation, disgust and the view of Others is relevant here because of the complex formation of the Grey Alien, even if the spaces are not depicted in the chosen films.

Although some spaces are connected to outer space in their symbolic value in contemporary popular, Americanised, culture, another prominent space in the chosen films, and others⁴⁰⁷, link the alien to the forest, or other wooded areas. In *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) the isolated residents of Nome are shown as living in a deeply forested area. An aerial shot establishes the forested landscape (Figure 95), and the protagonist’s home is shown as surrounded by the forest. Similarly, *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) shows how an attack from the alien presence occurs in a wooded area (Figure 96). *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) shows Brynn’s home isolated by woods (Figure 97). In the woods she is later chased by a clone of herself (Figure 53). This is also the site of the murder that has caused her isolation (Figure 101).



Figure 95: Reaching Nome by Small Plane with Sprawling Forests, *The Fourth Kind*, 2009. Screenshot by Author.

⁴⁰⁷ Meeting aliens in the forest or woods is a trope seen in several films, such as *Predator* (McTiernan 1987), *Alien Abduction* (Beckerman 2014), *Extraterrestrial* (Minihan 2014) and even *Communion* (Mora 1989) shows alien abduction from a cabin surrounded by woods.



Figure 96: Jesse and Friend in the Woods, *Dark Skies*, 2013. Screenshot by Author.



Figure 97: Brynn' s Home in the Woods, *No One Will Save You*, 2023. Screenshot by Author.

Humans have a long and complicated history with forests, both biological and cultural. In the *Landscape of Peril*, forests are marked as areas that are to be avoided through many cultural tales of monsters. Blumstein (2020:78), writing on human behaviour and evolution, notes that humans have feared forests for a very long time. One of the reasons for this fear is that dense forest interferes with human sight, one of the main ways humans detect threats (Blumstein 2020:78). Parker (2020:54) explains that in cultural folklore and myths about the forest, it is a site where humans get hunted and eaten, reflecting real dangers as well as mythic monstrous creatures that do the same. Parker (2020:13) explains that monsters haunt forests because humans have labelled forests as spaces of fear, and the tales of monsters reinforces this in a sort of cycle. One might here infer that through culture, fear of forested areas is orientated and expressed, but that the area itself reaches a preparedness in humans to fear it.

Physically the forest is dangerous as one can become lost. McAndrew (2020:48) explains how contemporary Horror makes use of humans' psychologically evolved responses to spaces. McAndrew (2020:48) notes that safe or favoured spaces provide shelter and a clear view of one's surroundings. Unfavoured spaces lack 'legibility', which are areas that make recognising patterns and navigation difficult (McAndrew 2020:48). In dense vegetation one can lose one's sense of constructed space, slipping into the unknown. The forest is a space where dualities exist, it is in a contemporary sense a place outside of the city, of healing and relaxation, but also a site of danger, an antithesis to civilisation and connected through culture and religion to evil (Parker 2020:48).

The forest is a space of the 'wilderness', where 'nature' is represented and 'culture' is at a disadvantage. Steiff (2019:250) explains that traditional Western representations of the forest, which underlie contemporary Horror depictions code the forest as a space opposed to human spaces. Human spaces are highly structured and perceived as 'logical', whereas the forest is seen as dangerous, chaotic, and irrational (Steiff 2019:250).. Parker (2020:49) notes that the woods are a place on the other side of the boundary of 'civilisation', it is the 'outside'. Parker (2020:50) explains that in the forest, the past can return. the Abject deeds of the guilty can slink back, and the individual can 'devolve', becoming more animal (Parker 2020:50).⁴⁰⁸ One can also here consider the idea of 'cultural pooling' (Boyd 2018:16). The past dangers of the forest captured in several overlapping narratives collide in this unsure space, melding into a monstrous warning of all perceived dangers.⁴⁰⁹

The physical features of the landscape can be unfavourable for spotting predators and dangerous humans in a timely manner, making one prone to caution and fear (McAndrew 2020:51). McAndrew (2020:48) explains how safe or favoured spaces provide shelter and a

⁴⁰⁸ Parker's (2020:47) *The Forest and the Eco Gothic The Deep Dark Woods in the Popular Imagination* provides an in depth look into the perception of the forest and in summary includes seven theses as to why the forest is a space to fear, such as the forest as a space opposed to civilisation, that it is a landscape wherein trial occurs, a space that causes humans to become lost, it consumes humans, is a place of consciousness, and is coded in the West as a decidedly anti-Christian space.

⁴⁰⁹ The forest, in its confusing and chaotic aspect, is also connected to time and human perception of time. Within the forest it is dark, despite being daytime, navigating in a space where time is unsure can be disorientating. The human perception of time is challenged, the fragile boundaries of chronology disputed, and the age of the forest, exceeding the immediate human life, can intrude, the past and the present collide in a horror filled cocoon of trees as per Parker's (2020) ideas.

clear view of one's surroundings, whereas unfavoured spaces lack 'legibility', which are areas that make recognising patterns and navigation difficult.

Since the films chosen are layered in ideas concerning the United States of America, one might here refer to that milieu. The many forested locations of the country, as is noted by the National Forest Foundation (2024:[sp]), have several actual dangers contained within them. Bears pose a threat to people (LeCain 2019), as do mountain lions (Riley, Sikich & Benson 2021:1539; National Parks Service 2024:[sp]). An animal that is of particular significance to this study, is the owl.

The owl's inclusion in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) (Figure 2 & 46) and its overlap with the *Evil Udu* is not coincidental. The inclusion of Sumerian texts and gods was intentional, and the narrative strongly asserts the ancient astronaut theory (King 2022:4). However, the Grey Alien was tied up with owls before *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) (Figure 2 & 46) made its appearance, as explained in the *Chapter 6: Overview of the Alien as a Monster, 6.3.3 The Grey Alien Takes Shape*, with the phenomenon of screen memories which often refer to owls.⁴¹⁰

The owl is a clearly predatory bird that swoops from above, this hunting strategy of large birds of prey being connected to thigmotaxis in humans, as discussed in *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space, 7.2 The Wilderness: Evil Udu in the Mountain, Steppe and Desert*. One can also take into consideration the 'hunting' method of the Grey Alien as shown in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023). In these films, the aliens are home invaders, capturing their vulnerable victims and dragging them off to what one assumes is a spacecraft. Throughout these films many high-angle shots are used, creating the insinuation that the characters are being watched from above. As the audience, viewers understand that the abduction includes a being has grabbing a human and carrying them off into the sky, creating a link between the alien's behaviour and that of an owl.

⁴¹⁰ As early as 1995 it is mentioned by Carlsberg (1995:20) in his experiences as an abductee, that Grey Aliens present themselves in screen memories as cats, deer or owls. Clelland's (2020) book *The Messengers: Owls, Synchronicity and the UFO Abductee*, also draws a line between the Grey Alien and owls in the contemporary community interested in Ufology.

The owl's eyes reflect light having a *tapetum lucidum* as a nocturnal creature (Figure 98) (Rudiyant 2023:36). Although the eyeshine aspect of the owl is not depicted in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) and *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), clear eyeshine is shown in the very visible aliens in *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) (Figure 54). This is probably not meant as a direct reference to owls, there is a strong link to animals that are active at night, including predators. Eyeshine in animals can be an indication of being looked at by that animal, that is, the direction of the gaze at the human by a predatory animal.

A human might see, due to our limited vision at night (Lents 2018:[sp]), the eyeshine first within a dark background, leaving the dimensions of the actual threat unknown. Throughout history animal eye-shine has affected many. Armstrong (2011:178) notes Pliny's writing on the eyes of animals, particularly wolves, whose eyes are described as emitting a radiance that is full of malice and might paralyse a person. Bestiaries from the thirteenth century and even Renaissance noted the shining eyes of cats as dangerous (Armstrong 2011:178).



Figure 98: Charles Brau, *Barred Owl Eyeshine*, 2017. (Shutterbug 2017:[sp]).

It is also important to note that in the films the majority of alien activity takes place at night. In *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) people are plagued by nighttime disruptions and fears of an owl looking at them when in their beds (Figure 2 & 46). The major abduction events in the film are also nocturnal. *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) similarly revolves around unwanted nighttime visitors whose persistence increases until a nighttime abduction occurs. Even in *No*

One Will Save You (Duffield 2023) where the film ends in sunlight with an alien presence (Figure 55), the build-up placed the disruptive activity as occurring at night.

Within humans there is also a strong association with predation and darkness or nighttime. Geist (2016:3) explains that evolutionary psychology holds the pressure of predation as central to fearing darkness where the visual system that evolved to spot predation is not as beneficial. A fear of the dark also develops early in children. Prokop (2016:2) explains that it is beneficial for children to fear the dark and not wander off at night when predators are active. Through acting at night, the aliens in the chosen films show behaviour that has a prepared evolutionary perception in the viewer, marking them as possible predators.

In terms of conspecific threat, people associated with forested and rural areas are often depicted as Others. They can be labelled as criminal, Abject in some moral or physical way, and best avoided, as is the case of ‘Hillbillies’ in Appalachia (Anton 2023:11; Campbell 2024:9, 11; White 2020:15).⁴¹¹ As a place of infection, beyond just the threat of ‘morally corrupt’ humans, there are real threats such as the prion disease, Chronic Wasting Disease, often found in deer (CDC 2024:[sp]). The Horror genre depicts the woods as a place of illness at times, as is the case with *Cabin Fever* (Roth 2002) and *It Comes at Night* (Shults 2017) (Figure 99). It then seems like the taught risk of predators, enemies and infection permeates the conception of the woods or forest.



Figure 99: The Woods as Infectious, *It Comes at Night*, 2017. Screenshot by Author.

⁴¹¹ Several unsavoury Horror films also make direct reference to such people as dangerous, examples include *Wrong Turn* (Schmidt 2003) and *Deliverance* (Boorman 1972).

Interestingly, the Grey Alien is also associated with the forest in several films. The included films here make few references to this connection, but other films create a stronger link. *Alien Abduction* (Beckerman 2014) (Figure 74) shows a family lost in the wooded mountains running from spindly Grey Aliens. *Extraterrestrial* (Minihan 2014) has a group of friends terrorised by tall Grey Aliens in their cabin in the woods. *Fire in the Sky* (Lieberman 2003) shows the infamous abduction of Travis Walton taking place in the woods (Figure 100). The Grey Alien, as discussed previously, does not hold strong characteristics of predation, but its sickly appearance and connection to Otherness could line up with the culturally influenced warnings of what the woods might hold.



Figure 100: Abduction in the Woods, *Fire in the Sky*, 2003. (Scucci 2024:[sp]).

As a Firstspace the woods and wooded areas are spaces that exist physically and can physically confuse the casual visitor. As a Secondspace it is laced with negative cultural ideas of danger, including ideas of predators, enemies and contamination risk. The reality of visiting a wooded area would then be influenced by such constructed ideas and could influence how the space is used, being a Thirdspace in this way. Through the viewing of the included films where wooded areas are associated with dangerous alien presences, one might reconsider how deep to go into the woods.

As a Heterotopian space the representation of woods in the films provided could stand for more than themselves, such as being a symbol of ‘nature’ in general (Steiff 2019:250). It could be a

space Other to human, cultured, spaces, but also Abject (Parker 2020:50).⁴¹² Wooded areas are areas where entering needs proper preparation (Park Country Search & Rescue 2024:[sp]). Time is also a problem in the representation of woods in Horror (Parker 2020:50). Parker (2020:50) explains how the contemporary theme about the woods is placing humans back into nature with negative results. In the chosen films this aspect is not explored in much depth, but *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) presents the viewer with people living in the woods who lose time. *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) shows Brynn's past appear to her as a murder scene in the woods (Figure 101), to parallel the murder of her clone in the woods (Figure 53). *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) makes use of this theme heavily but does not place the locus for lost time in the woods alone.



Figure 101: Brynn and Maud, *No One Will Save You*, 2023. Screenshot by Author.

In terms of space as a valuable part of reading and understanding the contemporary Science Fiction Horror alien, more spatial insights are needed. In the contemporary American setting, the way in which these depictions show spaces such as forests, and other wildness areas are constructed within a particular context. These constructions are assumed as having an underlying biological component and in other cases can be seen as sharing some link with how our ancestors interpreted space. That being said, there is an instance of spatial experience and perception that is very much dependent on the structuring of our post-industrial, globalised world, which is the use of 'wilderness' spaces as vacation spaces.

⁴¹² The woods as a counterpoint in *The Blair Witch Project* (Sánchez & Myrick 1999), as discussed by Genish (2015:23).

In the narratives that have been considered herein, one of the main contributing features has been the idea of the monster penetrating inward, like the creatures of the *Udug-Hul Forerunners*. However, many films about aliens show the encounter with these monsters as happening in spaces like forests, mountains, deserts or other ‘wild’ places. The perception of these spaces, although underlined by biological mechanisms, would help one interpret these spaces as dangerous or negative. There are also many readings of such places as areas of relaxation, escape and even healing. These serve as extensions of human spaces, which are then invaded by aliens. Although this study does not focus on the human agent as travelling towards the unknown, a short consideration is given here for the disruption of the vacation space.

Lefebvre (1991:58) refers in particular to the production of space in terms of vacation and tourist areas, noting how the Mediterranean is coded and constructed as a space for leisure within an industrialised and capitalist society. The commodification and urbanisation of spaces which are ironically set up to offer a break from urbanisation and consumption, lead to a shattering of the illusion of escape (Rojek 2013 [1998]:36). The difference between such spaced decline and the discomfort of the population may cause social unrest (Rojek 2013 [1998]:36). The idea of a ‘nature’ destination can then shape and influence the same natural space to be less ‘natural’, which results in the loss of ‘escape’ (Saarinen 2008:446). The construction and interaction with such spaces in terms of tourism can generate new ideas about who is considered an ‘Other’ (Saarinen 2008:446). The natural, ‘wilderness’ area as a vacation spot is then highly constructed and controlled, making it an essentially safe place. When the balance between a controlled space for leisure is actively infiltrated by real threats, real wilderness, the vacation space becomes threatening.

To conclude, the contemporary alien shown in *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) are associated with outer space, the ocean, swamps, woods, a space of vacation. This is seen in terms of the symbolic risks associated with the physicality of these spaces, the predators, humans and contamination thought to be found there. These spaces are Heterotopian and offer insight into the alien as monster when combined with the significance of the perception of risk surrounding such spaces. Not just the shown aspect of the alien as per the chosen films, but the implied and connected meaning of the alien as Unnameable Monster. The signs available gain new significance when the context of the wilderness the alien is shown in, is investigated.

7.6 THE CITY: THE SCIENCE FICTION HORROR ALIEN IN HUMAN SPACE AND IN THE HOME

Like the *Evil Udu*, and other monstrous creatures, the Grey Alien, and aliens shown in the relevant films, enters into human space like the suburbs, and homes of their victims. This subsection provides an overview of the Landscape of Peril in terms of the alien as shown in *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) as it stalks from the wilderness into human spaces and human bodies. The spaces of the city are discussed here as Heterotopian as well as how they fit into the trialectic of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace. The perception of the spaces, predatory animals, enemies and contaminants are investigated to better understand the alien's portrayal within the home and the suburb as an Unnameable Monster.

In the chosen films, *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023), and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) the alien menace invades the homes of its victims. The houses shown are coded in particular ways concerning their placement in space. In *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) the principal family lives in the suburbs, generally associated with safety and 'normativity' (Prasad 2020:5). Their home is in danger of being reclaimed, a crisis persistent around 2010 in suburban living (Prasad 2020:5). The family is losing its middle-class status and have become isolated from their community. *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) in contrast shows a home that is surrounded by the deep dark forest of Nome, Alaska. The narrative makes a point of noting the isolation of the whole community, something that is arguably reflected by the placement of the seemingly solitary home in the forest. *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) shows the home as a place of safety and isolation, surrounded by woods (Figure 97), before the aliens arrive.

The isolated home in the forest of Nome, is a space that is set up by the film as a space of danger in various ways. A key element in portraying homes as spaces of fear, is in showing them as isolated, far away from the help of support networks and the communities humans as a social species rely on (McAndrew 2020:52). Although McAndrew (2020:50) refers particularly to the 'haunted' house, spaces that are isolated are filled with ambiguity, equated with 'creepiness'. The lonely home in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) carries this ambiguity, danger, and isolation.

In other Horror films, such as the iconic *The Blair Witch Project* (Sánchez & Myrick 1999), the woods are dangerous, chaotic and unknown, but the home, particularly a family home, is the space of the ‘American Dream’, comfort and order (Tryon 2009:42). However, in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) it is not the victims that go out into the woods, but rather the attributes of the woods that come inside to them. The home in the woods is a space where borders are not solid and where spaces can overlap. Danger lies in the intrusion of the outside predator, enemy and contagion overlapping with the domestic inside, private ‘clean’, ordered space. The woods are dangerous, the house is safe, and when the house is like the woods, it is unsafe. This crossing of boundaries is signified by the mysterious owl in the film (Figure 2 & 46), a predatory creature of the wild woods, who watches the home of the victim, and finally enters into the home, revealing itself as a mysterious, alien, force.

In *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) the first intrusion into the family home is pinned on a wild animal, here a raccoon (Figure 102). Raccoons are not large predators, but they are perceived as associated with filth and rubbish. They can be seen as dirty animals carrying disease, making a mess inside the family home. The raccoon brings the disordered chaos of the outside, as well as the trash and refuse it is associated with, into the home. By making a mess it ‘disorders’ the house. Considering the notion of the law of contamination, whatever it touches is dirtied too, not just in a physical way, but also in a moral and symbolic way. The disorder the animal had brought soon spreads throughout the house and the family, their lives spiralling into chaos.



Figure 102: Cropped View of Mess in the House, *Dark Skies*, 2013. Screenshot by Author.

Another animal encounter within *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) is with the three different flocks of birds that crash into the home of the family, killing themselves. In the film the corpses are collected by people in hazmat suits, and the mother warns of avian flu (Figure 40). The Behavioural Immune System is keyed into behaviour, and here the suicidal birds represent a most unhealthy behaviour. The association of the family with a place animals behaved strangely and died, further serves to incur avoidance from neighbours and the community.

No One Will Save You (Duffield 2023) follows a similar trend, but unlike the other chosen films, its clear antagonists cross into the isolated home with the fanfare of a home invasion. The home becomes a battleground as Brynn sets traps and tries to avoid the alien menace. Interestingly, it is only when Brynn crosses from the safety of her home, into the woods and later, into an alien ship, that her homelife improves.

Horror films code the American home in several ways. Although the homes shown in the film are not haunted houses per se, they do show the disruption of a safe space by an intangible enemy that makes one's home unfamiliar and dangerous. Writing on the haunted house, Curtis (2008:33) explains that it is the perceived safety of the home that offers a particularly visceral horror when it is penetrated by forces from outside.

The films chosen for this study were products of the 2000s and the 2010s, where the concept of the home had suddenly changed. In 2008 the United States of America faced an economic collapse which was followed by the *Great Recession* (Brayton 2013:150). Duignan (2023:[sp]) explains that the *Great Recession*, 2007 to 2009, the United States' housing market's bubble popped. This led to an economic downturn so large that it was comparable to the Great Depression, both within and outside of the United States (Duignan 2023:[sp]). This incredible pressure on homeowners is manifested in the Horror films of the time.

The anxieties addressed in 'haunted house' films at this time, such as *The Conjuring* (Wan 2013) and *Insidious* (Wan 2011) (Figure 103) show anxieties of vague shape. What lies underneath, Wessels (2015:512-513) notes, is the impact of recession, in a post-collapse capitalism world. The victims fear financial instability, mounting debt, job security being in doubt and a looming fear of sliding into abject poverty (Wessels 2015:512-513). Similarly, the families in *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) find themselves fighting not just alien interlopers, but earthly threats to their family.



Figure 103: Demon in the Home, *Insidious*, 2011. (Keetley 2017:[sp]).

In *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) these fears are explicit. The pressure on the family mounts daily to pay their mortgage, unemployment causes fights between the parents and the dread that outside forces will seize their home in the name of the bank, might be parallel to the seizing of their children by aliens. The suspicion of abuse raises the fear that unclear government forces will take their children, much like the aliens might. Another aspect then of being financially unstable is the inability to maintain the family unit financially, leading to a sort of ‘repossession’ of property and children. In *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) the home is not a safe and stable environment, it is haunted by the instability that can befall the family at any moment.

The Fourth Kind (Osunsanmi 2009) does not clearly refer to financial hardship, but as with *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) the threat of losing one’s children to government forces is made clear. Dr Abigail is shown as dealing with immeasurable grief and a warped perception of reality. Her ability to take care of her children is questioned, and her son is taken away from her, not by aliens, but by law enforcement. Perhaps in keeping with the themes of the post-recession world, the hungry powers that be, watch and prey on the mentally unhealthy and the financially unstable. They are ready to take away, repossess and discard not just objects, but people too.

Brayton (2013:152) notes in particular how Horror uses ‘occult’ themes to express capitalism’s inner workings and shortcomings. The anxieties and realities of the capitalistic model is then expressed through monsters (Wessels 2015:512-513). The haunted house in particular is tied to

economic factors. Liu (2015:61, 63) identifies the cycle of ‘haunted house’ films of the 2010s, and notes that the last cycle of such films was present in the 1970s and 80s when the United States also experienced social unrest and economic decline. Part of looking at the American home in context, includes taking a look at the suburb..

The suburb as a space in the United States of America came into being in a time of post-war abundance. The ‘American Dream’ was tied to home and family, the city’s populations draining away into these growing, racially homogenous, settlements in the 1950s and 60s (Michelson 2018:7).⁴¹³ The suburbs expanded rapidly, drawing people with idealistic and optimistic promises of better lives connected to progress (Prasad 2018:30). The representation of the suburbs in visual media has presented it as a space of safety, middle-class affluence and as a predominantly Euro-American space even though these areas include more diverse populations today (Patton 2019:3).

The suburbs as they appear in Horror also exploit the liminal quality of these living areas. Prasad (2018:30) explains that the suburbs, leave a lacuna between the real experiences of those who inhabit the suburbs and the constructed idea of this space, making it liminal in a sense. The physical location of the suburbs also makes it liminal as it exists between the city and more rural areas, creating a border between these spaces⁴¹⁴ (Beuka 2000:24).⁴¹⁵ The liminality of the suburbs then also lends itself to the infiltration by the monstrous.

Out of keeping with the coding of the home as Horror space above, is *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023). The home is set outside of the town, that is liminal and running up against the woods (Figure 97). The main character, however, does not appear to be in danger of losing her house or facing financial strife. Instead, Brynn’s home is a safe place, until Others invade. Similarly, the invasion of the home, though more subtle, in *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) speaks of a particular expression of fear and space.

⁴¹³ Michelson (2018:7) includes here the occurrence of building fallout shelters on suburban properties, emphasising the tension and fear of the time.

⁴¹⁴ Stilgoe (1988:4) names these spaces ‘Borderlands’ in his historical inspection of the suburbs.

⁴¹⁵ Doroszewska (2017:1) explores how suburbs even during antiquity were liminal spaces that bordered the city in both Ancient Greek and Roman instances, and due to this in-between status being the domain of preternatural entities and demons in particular.

Horror films that deal with home invasion are intimately connected to space. The monster is a creature of the far-off ill-defined areas ‘elsewhere’, but in the home the space of monstrosity is Uncanny, familiar yet skewed into unfamiliar danger (Marcucci 2020:253). The physicality of the home can stand in relation to the family symbolically. If the home is invaded and compromised, so are the people inside, ‘spatial rape’ as per Marcucci (2020:256). The invasion of a home is linked to a deep fear of the Other, of a *xenos*, as Turner and Murray (2020:152) explain. This is linked with the increase of fear of the Other through the pandemic as well as rising tensions regarding immigration (Turner & Murray 2020:152). It is a fear of conspecifics, Others, morally and physically, who can enter and do harm.

Firstspace presents the home as a physical place, perhaps mired in history as per the Secondspace context of historical, political and social issues that wove into the production of this physical place. As a Secondspace, the films express ideas about the home’s symbolism and the contemporary pressure of a change in viewing the home, the invasion of which by animals, but especially people are portrayed as worthy of fear. The Thirdspace experience of the home is then also informed by such ideas surrounding the risks associated with what penetrates the home. The Landscape of Peril surrounding the perceived risk to the house as a space is then strongly coded with fear of Others, conspecifics and even animals in the chosen films, manifested in the invading alien, sickly and a conglomeration of human and animal.

The house is also a Heterotopian space in this case. It is connected to the larger social, political and historical context, the home symbolising the family and its place in society (Marcucci 2020:256). The home is a private space (Marcucci 2020:253), with several rituals concerning entry as to who may or may not enter. One can consider here knocking, asking permission, yet it is permeable enough that the penetration, an act which is guarded against. The home as a space in Horror can serve as an illusion for all spaces of the house, revealing instead the reality of experiences within homes elsewhere.

In conclusion the home and suburb serve as part of the Landscape of Peril emphasised by the alien as per the films *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009). The isolation of homes, physically as well as symbolically, are of importance as well as the contemporary perception of the home, family and suburban space. The animals, humans and contamination risks from these spaces are connected to the depictions of the aliens in the chosen films, carrying extra cues of risk about these spaces. The

suburb and home are also Heterotopian spaces, deeply affected by contemporary perceptions of the boundaries between spaces as well as what are and are not considered safe spaces. This is particularly relevant in relating to Others, perceptions of animals, and infection in a contemporary context. The alien as Unnameable 's context with the city is then shaped by contemporary understandings of the space it traverses.

7.7 THE BODY: SCIENCE FICTION HORROR ALIEN AS INVADER OF BODIES

This subsection investigates the invasion of the alien into the bodies of their victims. The contemporary body, and particularly the bodies of those shown in the chosen films, are understood through discourses in contemporary medicine, political, cultural, and economic lenses with heavy focuses on race, gender, sexuality and age. Understanding the context within which the human body is viewed and read in contemporary visual culture in totality is a task which falls outside of the scope of this project. Instead, the focus here falls on the theme of the body as generally understood through basic notions of anatomy and germ theory as well as its representation in the Horror genre as appropriate to the chosen films. The body is explored here as Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace and Heterotopian in nature. The body has a Landscape of Peril of which the monster forms a conglomerate warning concerning risks regarding the body. The Science Fiction Horror alien as an Unnameable Monster is a thing that invades the body, the very action of which has significance in a cultural and biological way.

The alien in Science Fiction and Horror overlap as an invader, of planets, countries and very often the body. The alien is often depicted as piercing the bodily boundary, either through grotesque and violent means⁴¹⁶, at times sexual⁴¹⁷, insidiously in parasitic ways⁴¹⁸, and through the use of medical instruments.⁴¹⁹ Of these invasions, the films chosen show a particular leaning towards the idea of the body being invaded or damaged through medical-like procedures and parasitism.

⁴¹⁶ Such as the infamous chest burster of the *Alien* (Ridley Scott 1979) and *Dreamcatcher* (Kasdan 2003).

⁴¹⁷ Mostly alien lore in UFOlogy as noted in *Chapter 6: Overview of the Alien as a Monster*, but also films like *Species* (Donaldson 1995).

⁴¹⁸ Examples could include *Sputnik* (Abramenko 2020), *Alien* (Ridley Scott 1979), *Slither* (Gunn 2006), *The Invasion* (Hirschbiegel & McTeigue 2007), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Kaufman 1978) and *The Faculty* (Rodriguez 1998).

⁴¹⁹ UFOlogy noted in *Chapter 6: Overview of the Alien as a Monster* also *Fire in the Sky* (Lieberman 1993) and *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009).

In *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) Dr Abigail recalls a visceral abducting scene where a sharp, needle-like object is inserted into her back (Figure 104). This explains the peculiar marks on people's bodies in the film. Parasitism is not overly depicted, but mental illness due to alien interference is shown, as well as possessions like symptoms of 'channelling' the alien through the body. *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) similarly employs the narrative of abduction and experimentation but without clear scenes of violence. Instead, the narrative deals with marks and implants left by the abductors. The bodily boundary is also permeated through germs or an allergic reaction as the tell-tale sign of alien visitation is physical illness in the film. *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) has no clear medical procedure, but shows an invasion of the mind through telepathy and a very clearly disgust coded parasite that is vomited from an alien into Brynn's mouth (Figure 52).



Figure 104: Dr Abigail's Abduction, *The Fourth Kind*, 2009. (Quan 2022:[sp]).

Weinstock (2016:288) explains that in Horror, often there is a penetrating, transforming virus that changes the humans involved into monsters. Such 'Infection' Films⁴²⁰ insinuate that physical bodies, and the implied body politic and body of understanding shaped by culture, have been overcome and invaded (Weinstock 2016:288). Grey Aliens and the lore that surrounds them have a relationship to medical experimentation and settings that might resemble hospital-like spaces (Lackner 2019:135).

These creatures do not change the victims into physical aliens, but they do change their behaviour through affecting their bodies and minds, which in turn alienates the chosen families

⁴²⁰ As per Murray Pomerance's (2010) *What Ever is Happening to M. Night Shyamalan Meditation on an "Infection" Film*.

from their communities. *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) shows Dr Abigail being seen as an outcast by her community, perceived as an unfit guardian and mentally unstable. *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) shows how the induced strange behaviour costs the mother her job. Marks left on the youngest son throw suspicion onto the family as potential child abusers, their friends turning cold and distant. Trauma of the body, inflicted by the aliens, causes mental trauma, which leads to changes in behaviour, which in turn leads to the community changing how they view the protagonist, often avoiding them, or down right suspecting them of wrongdoing.

No One Will Save You (Duffield 2023), in contrast, subverts this trope somewhat. Brynn is seen as an outsider and is treated badly by the town's people. She is seen as a murderer, having committed a careless act of violence as a child (Figure 101). The aliens, although first intent on physical harm or implanting her with a parasite, instead examine her psyche in a setting where she is immobilised and trapped in a bright light. The result is not a dooming illness but rather healing and forgiveness.

Furthermore, as a humanoid, The Grey Alien is often associated with particular instruments, something Scrivner *et al* (2019:[sp]) notes as drawing attention in human social interactions. It makes sense to pay attention to what humans are holding as recognising the danger of objects that can be used as a weapon would be beneficial (Scrivner *et al* 2019:[sp]). There is a particular attention bias where weapons are concerned. Biggs, Brockmole and Witt (2013:[sp]) explain how holding a weapon caused a measurable change in focus when stimuli were viewed. A heightened scanning of faces and a higher perception of others holding weapons was encountered (Biggs, Brockmole & Witt 2013:[sp]). There is also the 'weapon focus effect' which is explained by Harvey and Sekulla (2020:1264) as an event where the victim of an armed crime's full focus falls on the Weapon. This happens to the point where participants can remember very few details about the environment or even the perpetrator (Harvey & Sekulla 2020:1264). In essence, weapons draw attention in terms of conspecific violence situations.

The type of instrument, or weapon, and human-related violence associated with the Grey Alien, includes tools for medical examination in abduction experiences (Rutkowski 2016:[sp]), and filmic portrayals⁴²¹ The connections include violence to humans that relate to these tools and might include torture instruments. These tools can perhaps be related in a few instances, such

⁴²¹ An example would be *Fire in the Sky* (Lieberman 1993).

as medical situations where due to anaesthesia or restraints, the victim is helpless, or even socially obliged to take the pain. The participant is unable to defend themselves against a medical worker who is doing something ‘good’ even though the pain indicates harm is being done. A typical abduction experience’s invasive procedure is depicted, in the art of David Huggins (Figure 105). This captures the Ufological narrative, and links to ideas the chosen films draw from when depicting, or implying, abduction scenes and instruments.⁴²²



Figure 105: Implant Painting by David Huggins, *Love and Saucers*. 2017. (Cain 2018:[sp]).

This includes a fear of conspecifics. As noted, the aliens shown leave some hints that they refer to Grey Aliens, creatures with strong conspecific cues. One of the ways humans read conspecifics and judge intent, is to pay attention to faces. Humans judge facial expressions such as fear and disgust in others very quickly, often inducing the state in themselves, a process wherein the amygdala is involved (Adolphs 2008:1). Judgement about stimuli in order to better cooperate can also include judging aim and intention by looking at the eyes of others, greatly

⁴²² Another connection could be the known practice of the cutting up of animals, and dissection in terms of science and discovery and experimentation. These culturally learned cues and associations with medical instruments could make one wary of such objects. As discussed in *Chapter 6: Overview of the Alien as a Monster*, 6.3 *Ufology, Folklore and the Grey Alien*, 6.3.3 *The Grey Alien Takes Shape*, the trauma and atrocities generated by the Second World War would still have been in the popular imagination.

helped by the difference in colour between the sclera and iris (Tague 2016:55). However, in the case of possible aggressive interactions these cues are used in a different way.

Scrivner, Choe, Henry, Lyu, Maestripieri and Berman (2019:[sp]) explain that there is a bias in children towards potentially dangerous stimuli, such as angry faces. People also have a bias when it comes to representations and stories of violence leading Scrivner *et al* (2019:[sp]) to suspect that there are visual cues that humans use to gather information about possibly violent or aggressive social interactions. Scrivner *et al* (2019:[sp]) found through their gathered data that humans, when viewing violent interactions, look at faces and eyes, but look more at points of contact and the objects that are being held. What is important about Scrivner *et al*'s (2019:[sp]) research is that it showed images of violence that were already occurring; the participants did not need to determine if another human was about to assault them. It does, however, add to how researchers understand what humans pay attention to in threatening situations with other humans.

The Grey Alien presents a particular challenge to reading faces. The traditional representation of the monster, as taken from the classic template is shown in media like Strieber's (1987) *Communion* cover (Figure 65), *Alien Autopsy* (Santilli 1995) (Figure 69), *The X-Files* (1993–2002, 2016, 2018) (Figure 68) and most recently *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023). From these representations one can note that the Grey Alien has very few markers by which to read intent. It has no eyebrows, a strong indicator of aggressive and angry emotions and its mouth has no real lips, the shape and pull of which is also taken as a strong cue for negative emotions (Landwehr & McGill 2011:133). Importantly, the creature's eyes have no visible sclera, making it hard to read its gaze's direction or its intent (Kano, Kawaguchi & Hanling 2022:1). In fact, the Grey Aliens are described as being so devoid of emotion that in Ufology there is a theory that the creatures could be robots (Kerner 2010). In essence what is depicted is a humanoid creature that is hard to read, its intentions being hidden, causing perhaps fear of the unknown.

Coyne (2023:[sp]) writes that from a phenomenological perspective, the contemporary perception of the body through medicine and bioethics often places the body as an object, not acknowledging the subjectivity of the patient. The objectification of the body in this way also alienates patients from their body, making their body unfamiliar (Coyne 2023:[sp]). Foucault's (2003 [1974-1975]:4) 'Medical Gaze' explanation, which places a patient as objectified by the gaze of those practising medicine as this construction of the body through the values and signs

of medicinal practice expresses the experience of disease is projected onto the patient's body.⁴²³ Kuhn (2021:3) explains that this objectifying and constructional gaze of the body places focus on the disease and leaves the actual experience of the patient, namely their pain and discomfort, as subjective factors which might be ignored. In phenomenological terms, the lived experience is often overlooked because of how medical practice has constructed the living body (Coyne 2023:[sp]).

The crux of this is that the fear that human pain and suffering bring is ignored by a powerful individual/s who strive/s to not be subjective, but objective, as they negotiate the language used to describe the pain, or even negotiate the bodily boundary itself. The fear of being relinquished to a person who has no sympathy, empathy or interest in one's subjective experience, but sees one as simply 'meat', might be seen in the unreadable, undifferentiated Gray Aliens. Abduction narratives gathered by Kelly-Romano (2008:45-53) focus on several aspects of abductions, but one that is of relevance here, is the medical associations of the experiences.

Kelly-Romano (2008:49-50) notes how in hybridisation narratives, abductees are victims of medical tests and investigations, often described as powerless. The alien is constructed as an all-powerful being in a very contemporary way. It holds more knowledge about human bodies than humans do, it has superior technology which reflects the realms of technology humans depend on, but do not necessarily all understand, and there are rarely consequences to their mistreatment of persons (Kelly-Romano 2008:49-50).

Contemporary Alien Abduction Narratives portray alien abduction and experimentation in a way one might say differs from ancient possession notions. What might be a point of contact, is the loss of control of the body to a higher power. The *Evil Udug* and the entities described in *Udug-hul Forerunners* are all connected to the metaphysical realm, weapons used to punish humans, divine in power, but not worshipped, and not kindly inclined to humans. The Grey Aliens that abduct and hurt are beyond human resistance; neither the individual, family nor country can stop them and, like the *Evil Udug*, they want to penetrate the human body.

⁴²³ Ian Hacking (1999 & 1995) refers to the *Looping Effect of human kinds*, which is a description of the phenomenon when a patient behaves more like the described diagnoses after being classified by that diagnosis given by a physician, creating an interplay between the diagnosis, patient and medical worker, as explained by HSI Kuhn (2021:4, 15).

Unlike the *Evil Udu* though, the Grey Alien invades the body, essentially stealing a part of the person, DNA, blood, semen or whatever ‘essence’, and returns the person. Its interest in the body is not to destroy it with illness, although it does infect it, but to use and discard it. What it leaves with the body is trauma and perceived mental illness by the other members of the community.

The body can be seen as part of the Landscape of Peril. As a Firstspace, the body is a physical reality, yet its inner workings are not immediately visible or felt at all times. It has strong Secondspace connections, linking to the idea of a proper body as per the cultural and societal norms, but also the conception of its inner workings and layout which are not visible to the embodied subject. As a Thirdspace the phenomenological experience of the body could be argued as physical awareness and experience coded with cultural ideas about the perception of the body. In terms of the Landscape of Peril, used here more as a framework or concept than directly linked to ecology, the physical body is measured against risks that include the perception of the inner body that might be disrupted, fail or be infected. This dark, unknown space’s collapse leads to the perception of the self, not removed but entangled, becoming like the bruised, infected body, where these outward signs are visible. In the chosen films this link can be seen between the mysterious and physical changes in the characters brought about by the monstrous forces of Grey Aliens, and their sense of self, perception of reality, time and control of their bodies, disintegrating.

The body can also be conceived of as a Heterotopian space. According to Loos, Kaszit and van der Waarden (2021:18) the body is a space of tension, both a physical reality and a space constructed by ideas and expectations created by social and cultural conventions. The phenomenological experience of the body as a ‘place’ that is inhabited while it also represents other places contributes to this idea as per the work of Roux and Belk (2019:[sp]).⁴²⁴ The viewing of the physical body is then both real and unreal, viewed through constructed values it mirrors the individual and can show a link to the collective (Loos *et al* 2021:22). The boundaries of the body are also subject to opening and closing, permeable, the self being able to extend (Roux & Belk 2019:[sp]). This also feeds into the idea of who and what may enter into a body, how the permeability is policed by social and individual ideas. One might consider

⁴²⁴ Roux and Belk (2019:[sp]) particularly consider the addition of tattoos to bodies which works in with the idea of Heterotopia, but the underlying concept of the body as a space that can be changed or coded through symbolic inclusions is what is of importance here.

here the representation of bodies in the chosen films. Each body is that of the actor or actress, but can stand in for general female, male or child bodies that are being violated by an Other.

The element of time associated with Heterotopias is then also applied to the body. Roux and Belk (2019:[sp]) explain that the body can be a space where time is accumulated, in their case through tattooing, but one can perhaps read this in terms of marks left on the body also. Loos *et al* (2021:28) explain that this association with time can be associated with performativity also. In the case of the chosen films, one might refer to the layers of damage done to the bodies of the characters. They accumulate marks over time, in a time that is not traceable by them, marks being the only evidence of their 'lost time'. *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) shows this through marks left on the bodies of the victims of abduction, while *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) shows implantations and bruises on the characters.

The marks and bodily changes made by the aliens can perhaps be read as the body being in a state of disarray, which John (2001:51) explains as part of viewing the body as a Heterotopian space. This is in keeping with the chosen films' portrayal of damage being done to the bodies of the characters by strange forces, adding marks, implants or parasitic throat-dwellers. The additions of scars and marks shows their bodies as being Other to a normally functioning body. This lapse in order is mirrored in the portrayal of the mental wellness of the human characters involved. When their bodies are disrupted, their behaviour changes and the control over their bodies slips.

The implied Grey Alien is disgusting and it poses the risk of making the victim as disgusting as it is. In terms of human indicators of illness, grey skin or a pallid complexion is often associated with symptoms of illness. Axelsson, Sundelin, Olsson, Sorjonen, Axelsson, Lasselin and Lekander (2018:[sp]) show in their study *Identification of acutely sick people and facial cues of sickness* that pale lips and a paler complexion as well as duller skin were markers used by people to identify possibly sick and contagious individuals. In this sense the pale skin and less visible lips due to loss of colouration might line up with the Grey Alien's pallid parlour and lack of lips. Grey and pale skin can also be associated with the colour of corpses (Drysdale 2008:116). This implies that the Grey Alien also presents markers not just of illness, but of the Abject thing that is a dead body. In this way the Grey Alien's visual markers that connect it to humans, are related to cues of sickness.

Similarly, the traits of thin, emaciated bodies and boldness might link to cues of illness. The Grey Alien in its general shape as discussed in *Chapter 6: Overview of the Alien as a Monster, 6.3 Ufology, Folklore and the Grey Alien, 6.3.3 The Grey Alien Takes Shape*, is usually small and extremely thin with a large head. These characteristics can also be found in individuals suffering from malnutrition, undernutrition, where wasting can lead to stunted growth (World Health Organisation 2024:[sp]). Having an emaciated frame can make the head appear too big for the body. According to Duncan (2009:119, 129), emaciated individuals are more strongly associated with disease and seen as ‘unpleasant’. Similarly, the loss of hair can be linked to ideas of ill health.⁴²⁵ Hair loss in humans have various causes, including fungal⁴²⁶ and parasitic infections⁴²⁷, bacterial skin infections, more common in those with diabetes type 1 and 2 (Novak & Meyer 2009:[sp]). Both weight loss and hair loss can be put together with another state that triggers a disease avoidance response, which is ageing. This includes a loss of the face’s fatty tissue and results in thinned lips and sagging skin, cues people may respond to negatively (Duncan 2009:41).

John (2001:51) notes that Heterotopias are places linked to the unknown, have elements of danger and through the many interpretations of such spaces there is also an element of transgression and deviation. Piccolo (2015:382) explains that the inner spaces of the body, are dark, hidden and a place that is Heterotopian. It is in these covered spaces that madness is generated (Piccolo 2015:382).⁴²⁸ One can again link this to the unsettling discoveries shown in the chosen films of how the body’s violation is strongly linked to behaviour that would read as concerning for the characters’ mental health.

This subsection has discussed the body as space that is physical, has symbolic value and is deeply part of the lived and embodied experience while also being Heterotopian in nature. The body is often subject to the penetration of Others and creatures that cause harm, can be made sick physically or perceived of as in need of isolation from others due to change in behaviour

⁴²⁵ The visual connection of baldness to illness might also be a cultural social and contextual issue, for example, the depiction of cancer sufferers as bald due to chemotherapy in popular media, which is seen as a ‘cultural’ image of cancer sufferers (Williams & Solbrække 2018:[sp]).

⁴²⁶ Possibly *Trichophyton tonsurans* or *Microsporum canis* (Novak & Meyer 2009:[sp]).

⁴²⁷ Novak and Meyer (2009:[sp]) note mites in nonhuman primates that can cause hair loss, such as the sarcoptic mange mite. Although Novak and Meyer (2009:[sp]) explain that mites mostly have preferred hosts, Sarcoptic mange can be found in humans, especially those with impaired immune systems (Bandi & Saikumar 2013:[sp]).

⁴²⁸ Piccolo’s (2015) work focuses on the ‘Madhouse’ as presented in the play *Walpurgis Night, or the Steps of the Commander* (Erofeev 1985), however the investigation into the mental hospital as Heterotopian space and its link to the inner body proved to be of interest.

or mental states. The risks to the body can be seen as part of a Landscape of Peril, some of which are expressed through the alien invading the body as shown and implied in the chosen films. The alien as Unnameable Monster presented in the chosen films then represent a thing, an unknown combination of fears, which can be better understood when the bodily space it invades is investigated.

7. 8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an application of the Landscape of Peril as discussed in *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster*, after the relevant animals, dangerous conspecifics and infectious elements were discussed. The element of space as it pertains to the monster, discussed in more depth in *Chapter 4: Space and the Monster*, is applied herein to the spaces associated with the Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udug* and the contemporary Science Fiction Horror alien. It was particularly linked to the various perceptions of the Grey Alien, and the portrayals shown in the chosen films *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023).

The physical spaces discussed here relation to the Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udug* and the aliens shown in the chosen films, included the wilderness, city and body. Each being subdivided into areas of these general regions that are particular to the monsters involved. Parts of geography relevant to the vastly separated contemporary audiences of the texts that contain information about the Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udug* and the Horror films from which the study's aliens originate are included.

Understanding the perception of spaces adds to a better understanding of the Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udug* and the aliens found in the included films. The cultural and historical elements that create symbolic and perceived values about the spaces of the wilderness, city and body were shown here as layered with risk regarding predators, dangerous and infectious humans as well as containing cues of contamination. The monsters chosen for this study stand as warnings within the Landscape of Peril, being signifiers of perceived risk regarding the dangers of the landscapes involved.

The embodied experience of space, the lived reality of places, where the Landscape of Peril is perceived and behavioural changes to avoid or navigate perceived risks are enacted within

space, is particular to the context of each monster's intended audience. The warning of the monstrous Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udug* and contemporary alien shown in the included films might not only reveal perceived fears about spaces that are inhabited by particular animals, humans and risks of various contaminants, but the avoidance and changed navigation of physical places, the lived experience of these spaces, can perhaps also follow.

As Heterotopian spaces, the various areas of the Ancient Mesopotamian and contemporary wilderness, city and body can be summed up in their relation to the overlap of actual space and the ideas and perceptions about those spaces. Each space investigated here showed links to spaces other than themselves, such as through the symbolic value of spaces that exist outside of the investigated texts, such as religious or folkloric values. The spaces are linked to time in a way that has changing elements of risk, when the link clearly exists. The permeability of the spaces covered includes preparation in some form, being spaces that may appear accessible to all, but not being as inclusive as they first appear. Those within the discussed spaces are then often shown as Other and deviant from the perceived norm. Often the spaces contain elements of liminality, where the uncertainty of the space allows for transition, but also the existence of the liminal monstrous beings that threaten stability.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

Within this chapter the conclusions to this study are set out. This research investigated how the Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udug* as described in the *Udug-hul Forerunners*, particularly Geller's translation of 1985 and updates of 2016, and the contemporary alien as portrayed in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) can be compared as monsters in terms of Bioculture. This chapter concerns conclusions about the monster as a recurring figure and how that figure has been approached in the past through Monster Theory. Building on the conclusions offered about Monster Theory and thus Cultural Monster Studies, the more contemporary approach of Monster Studies that use Biocultural elements are concluded here. The main points discovered through the investigation of Monster Theory, Monster Studies and Biocultural Monster Studies, as well as their overlap are offered as conclusions, including how space as an aspect of investigating the monster can aid the understanding of the monster.

Conclusions are made here concerning how the main points of Biocultural Monster Studies, the fear of predation, conspecifics and infection within the Landscape of Peril, added in this study, reveal how the Ancient Mesopotamian *Evil Udug* and alien from *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) function biologically and culturally within their representative Landscapes of Peril. The conclusions reached here refer to previous chapters and concepts discussed. The relevant Figures, as per the referred to topics, are implied as relevant here.

Chapter 2: Monster Studies: Culture and Bioculture functions as a broad overview of the literature, establishing important ideas that were discussed in more depth in other chapters. Some of the main points are summarised here. The ways in which monsters have been approached in the past are shown here as mainly concerned with culture, particularly in how Monster Theory uses the monster as a symbol to be decoded for cultural value. Jeffery Jerome Cohen's (1996:44-54) seven seminal theses are shown as an important underpinning for contemporary Monster Studies focused on cultural aspects of the creature. This can be seen in the work of Gilmore (2003), Asma (2009, 2014), Musharbash (2014), Musharbash and Gershon (2023), Mittman (2016:2), Merkelbach (2016), Gloyn (2020), Weinstock (2020:1) and Chemers and Santana (2022) to name but a few. This view posits the monster as creature created of culture that reforms as needed, disrupting boundaries in its Abject, liminal, hybrid

state, a creature of difference, an Other, easily scapegoated (Cohen 1996:44-49). The monster guards boundaries of a moral, cultural, and geographical nature. It is desired and feared, existing in a space of carnival demonstrating deviance (Cohen 1996:52-54), a space that is also associated with Heterotopia (Costantino 2013:197-:198) and spaces of deviance (Wei 2015:52). The monster is always ready to become something new and functional according to its contest (Cohen 1996:54).

More contemporary Monster Studies make use of aspects of biology, essentially being biocultural studies. Most important to this branch of Biocultural Monster Studies is the fear that the monster generates and how the biological aspects of this fear function to maintain the monster as a figure of interest across the products of human culture. Postmodernism is discussed briefly as the main opposition to Bioculture in how it influences the humanities. In context of this, Bioculture as theoretical framework is briefly discussed as a more holistic approach. This is because it aims to bridge the gap between the Two Cultures, the sciences and the humanities. Bioculture is explained in short as the acknowledgement of human culture as a product of underlying biological structures formed by the pressures of evolution. This implies that humans have similarities in how things like fear are felt, perceived and stimulated.

This idea of fear as related to the monster is explored by Clasen (2012, 2017), Asma (2014) and Monteiro, West and Pizarro (2023) in particular. The biological fear circuits that evolved in human brains are considered by these authors. The main stimuli, having different paths through the brain and usually different responses. This include animals with predatory cues as per Clasen's (2012) Predator Template and Monteiro, West and Pizarro's (2023) Predatory Monster as biologically providing points of fear. Fear of conspecifics is also identified, including how humans pay attention to the faces of others for cues (Clasen 2017:[sp]; Asma 2014:13). A fear of infection is part of fearing the monster, particularly tied to the Behavioural Immune System that causes a disgust response and triggers avoidance as per the work of Curtis, de Barra & Aunger (2011). Under this system many concepts of Monster Theory focused on Culture can be found, such as the Uncanny, Othering, Scapegoating and the morally abhorrent behaviour of monsters. Monteiro, West and Pizarro (2023) explicitly address the "Monster of Contagion" as making use of this biological system.

These identified elements of the monster are explained in relation to two important concepts, namely Category Jamming and the Landscape of Peril. The hybrid element of the monster also

then manifests a fear of the unknown through Asma's (2014) Category Jamming, where the different stimuli overwhelm the categorisation system and amygdala's delegation. These three main triggers to fear are then also noted as being part of the theory of the Landscape of Peril, which combines the ecological ideas of the Landscape of Fear and the landscape of Disgust. In essence, the Landscape of Peril allows for the understanding that fear is rooted in space and place.

The Unnameable Monster is addressed in *Chapter 3: The Unnameable Monster*, especially in how it combines cues of animals, humans and infection. The fear responses usually most evolutionarily beneficial to the survival of the organism might be confused by the strange, mixed stimulus. Carleton (2016) explains that humans have an Intolerance of Uncertainty, and if there is confusion, hypervigilance to gather information is usually at the order of the day. Humans and their desire to learn about or assess a risk, are engaged by cultural texts about monsters, the more unnameable, the more engaging (Clasen 2018).

All of the monsters' main biological trigger points are then investigated in terms of the Landscape of Peril which include the concepts of the Landscape of Fear and the Landscape of Disgust. In terms of traditional cultural interpretations of the monster, it is a liminal entity that guards and crosses borders, social, cultural but also geographical. It exists in spaces of resistance, like Heterotopias that are Thirdspace. However, this inquiry views Thirdspace more in terms of Critical Spatiality built on ideas of Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1996). This views Thirdspace as being where physical space (Firstspace), and ideas about that space (Secondspace), overlap to facilitate a lived experience of space.

The ideas of Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace line up remarkably well with the concepts that underlie the Landscape of Peril. In essence, the Landscape of Peril contains the idea that animals and humans navigate the physical landscape based on perceived risks posed by predators, enemies and possible sites of infection. This perceived map of risk physically changes the landscape, as per the research of Laundré, Hernández and Ripple (2010) and Berger-Tal and Saltz (2019).

If applied to the monster one might conclude that the cultural, social and historical context of the text that contains the monster was created, used by or adapted by people physically living within a particular landscape. The monster is a creature that stands as a warning of areas of

risk, combining all the risks of humans, animals and infection into one sign associated with a certain area. The perception of that real physical Firstspace is influenced by the monster in Secondspace and results in how humans navigate, or avoid the space, creating a lived experience in Thirdspace, which can also be a Heterotopia. Unnameable Monsters, due to their lack or excess of signification, then use more signs from the landscape, tying them more closely to the spaces they occupy and thus the fear of such a monster is also tied to space.

Owing to the Unnameable Monster's link to space, the *Evil Udug* and aliens from *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) are investigated in terms of the Landscape of Peril. However, to reach this application, the predatory, conspecific and infectious qualities of both the chosen monsters have to be established. *Chapter 5: An Overview of The Evil Udug in Context* and *Chapter 6: Overview of the Alien as a Monster*, provide overviews of both monsters, providing information that is relevant to the cultural and historical context of each monster. *Chapter 7: The Landscape of Peril: The Hybrid Monster in Space* takes this information and compares it in relation to the established points of interest.

These traits of both monsters also exist in relation to the relevant physical geography of their intended audience, the perception of that space as well as the actual lived experience of it. As such, the way the chosen monsters use the landscape, that is, to penetrate from without to within human space, including the body, is of interest. How the mental map of risk, physical space and the experience of that space come together is then also considered in relation to Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace. Three general zones are identified by this investigation, namely the wilderness, the city and home as well as the body as is relevant to both the *Evil Udug* and alien's respective context. Each of these spaces is considered in its physicality as Firstspace, the cultural and social ideas and perception regarding the space and how the particular feature of the *Evil Udug* or Alien might link to the significance of that to impact the lived experience of Thirdspace.

The wilderness as an area where the known breaks down into the unknown, is vastly different in our contemporary understanding and the understanding of Ancient Mesopotamians. Spaces of wilderness overlap with mythic ideas and realms, such as the mountain, steppe and desert that are simultaneously a physical place, but also deeply loaded with symbolism of the underworld and spheres of death. Contemporary concepts of the unknown are pushed much

further back, to areas like outer space and the deep ocean, but also more attainable areas that are regarded as wilderness, like swamps and the woods. These Heterotopian areas, where human space and 'nature' meet then facilitate a liminal space where encounters with the impossible are facilitated.

Animals and humans associated with the *Evil Udug* are associated with the dangers of the mountain, steppe and desert, from roaming lions, owls, snakes to dogs. The areas of nomadic tribes, bandits and robbers, are seen as places where civilisation breaks down and undesirable people, dangerous and unclean roam. What is wilderness is far off from what was perceived as safe, good and holy, usually the city's centre and temple of the relevant god. These areas were strongly associated with death, and ghosts, the Abjection of the unburied as well as other evil entities that carried illness. Wyatt's axis is used to explain this in more detail (Figure 79).

Predominantly though, the portrayal of aliens within the chosen films takes place in wooded areas. *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) takes place in an area surrounded by dense woods (Figure 95). *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) sees a significant alien event take place in a wooded area (Figure 96). *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) shows the victim of alien visitors, living at the edge of town (Figure 97), the killing of her friend (Figure 101) and her alien *Doppelganger* taking place in the woods (Figure 53). The forest is physically confusing to humans, it hides many threats and is not 'Legible' as McAndrew (2020:48) puts it. Unwanted people roam the woods, such as 'Hillbillies' and other undesirable, morally or physically 'disgusting' Others. It is an area estimated to have high risk, even as a vacation space. Other spaces, though less directly relevant, such as outer space, the deep ocean and swamp are considered here also.

The city and home as spaces are vastly different within the context of the chosen monsters. For the Ancient Mesopotamians, the city was a space of relative safety and civilisation, linked to the divinity of the temple through layout and practice. However, certain areas were more dangerous than others. Robbery and murder, infection from impure ritual objects, accidentally breaking taboo by coming into contact with objects of witchcraft, all posed a threat. The street predominantly seemed threatening in this way, liminal and public, layered with undesirable Others from many places. The home was also not always safe. The rabid dog watches the home from the street, the mongoose uses the latrine to enter the home, and the snake slithers inside, these animals were deeply associated with infection, bringing out contaminants into the home.

The city and home as space for the intended audience of *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) includes the suburb as a place of safety, where Others are unwelcome. The home is a space associated with safety and privacy, where home invasion is an actual threat. The chosen films show the home as a space that is fragile and penetrable. The owl, an aerial predator, in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) watches the home and when the aliens enter victims seem to think the owl has entered their space (Figure 2 & 46). *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013) shows birds killing themselves trying to enter the family home, their bodies being associated with disease (Figure 40). The initial alien activity in the home (Figure 102) is blamed on racoons, animals associated with rubbish. The aliens enter the homes of the victims as animals might, or humans intent on harm, making the victims ill or physically harming them.

Entering the home, both monsters also enter the body of their victims in some way. The body may be viewed as Heterotopian space, concepts of space outside of itself are represented, and its openings are closely policed. A Thirdspace subjected to the views of the physical body is constructed by culture. The Ancient Mesopotamian body stands in as a signifier for the systems and boundaries for society, as well as a connection to mythic conceptions concerning its relationship to the gods, sickness and the cures for it reflect these connections. One could also be unclean according to purity practices of the time. The body if impure in some way had to be protected from infecting others. The *Evil Udu*'s infection of the body is a violation on many levels. It includes the perceptions of infection at that time, but it is also described as an assault with human violence being used to describe some of the symptoms. The known risks to the body are being used to describe the risk the *Evil Udu* poses.

In terms of the contemporary audience, the body is also a Heterotopian space, its insides mostly invisible but somewhat understood, even if the embodied experience of that body still has factors of the unknown. The aliens from *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) all penetrate the bodily boundary. This is shown through painful experimentation as in *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009) (Figure 104) and implants in *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), or parasitic infestation as shown in *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023) (Figure 52). The aliens cause problems with the function of the body and brain, interfering in the connection between the person's experience of the

world through their now changed perception and body. The aliens are portrayed as risks to the body.

In total, this study showed that the often-used ideas underpinning Cohen's (1996) seven theses about Monster Culture which are still used in contemporary studies can link to biocultural ideas about monsters. Throughout the research presented here a new structure emerges that combines cultural ideas and biological concepts. In particular this includes monsters as hybrid, liminal, and category defying, which can be linked to the evolutionary and biological ideas concerning the Predator Template, conspecific violence, and the Behavioural Immune System.

Culturally, the value of animalistic monsters, and animal parts of monsters, can be established. However, through an added layer of biological meaning, such as the evolutionary pressure that allows humans to respond to predatory features, can reveal the repeated use of such features. Conspecific violence as an evolutionary pressure can reveal how the fear of human-like elements of monsters often reoccur. This can slot into cultural ideas about the human that are used. The combination of these, point towards the sustained fear of other humans, both culturally and on a biological level.

The Behavioural Immune System seems closely linked with Othering through ideas of Moral Disgust, Scapegoating and aversion to Abject matter. Experiences of the Uncanny can be connected to the Behavioural Immune System as well as fear of the unknown which is also generated by Category Jamming. The biological underpinning of the Behavioural Immune System lends understanding to the practices of Othering, Scapegoating and its entanglement with the Abject and Moral Disgust. From this underpinning the cultural expression of these practices can be seen in the cultural construction of the monster.

Finally, the space wherein the monster exists reveals further clues as to its meaning, especially when biological and cultural understandings are used to approach space. The cultural, biological and ecological meanings of the spaces monsters haunt reveal the fear of a context surrounding the monster. The fear of predators, enemies and infection lives within not just the monster, but also the landscape. It is part of the intricate web of meaning that the monster is entangled in.

Although this study focused on only two monsters, this structure can be used in further research concerning monsters from any age, culture or location. The structure used here acknowledges the cultural context of the creature, but is based on the shared biological underpinnings most humans share as species wide adaptations. Research into ancient monsters could reveal new aspects of not just the monstrosity of monsters, but cultural perceptions about the parts that make up the creature, as well as how the perception of space might have shaped this. It is particularly suggested that this structure can be used for contemporary monsters in terms of film. It is also applicable to the constantly evolving online environment where monsters are often recycled and used to express very particular human perception of people, events and spaces.

The monsters chosen for this investigation are found to be mainly monsters of contagion, as per Monteiro, West and Pizarro (2023). These monsters have human and predatory traits and are Unnameable Monsters. The main aim of both the *Evil Udu* and the alien, as a product of Ufology, folklore and popular culture that feeds into films like *The Fourth Kind* (Osunsanmi 2009), *Dark Skies* (Stewart 2013), and *No One Will Save You* (Duffield 2023), are to upset the bodily, social and cultural equilibrium of their victims. They kill slowly, foreign entities leaving traces of their passing within or without the body.

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