

# Neocosmism: God and the Void

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**Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution

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## Abstract

Through the use of selected works by Philip K. Dick, Robert Heinlein, Frank Herbert and H.P. Lovecraft, this thesis explores the question of what it means to be human in the *universe* when occidental cosmologies no longer align with the *universe* they seek to describe. Within its view of the *universe*, H.P. Lovecraft's philosophy of *cosmicism* offers the human creature an answer to this question, but in doing so also limits that creature to an isolated life ending in madness or death within an indifferently *cold universe*.

While this thesis seeks to demonstrate the validity of *cosmicism* as a lens through which to critically interrogate science fiction texts; it more importantly endeavours to address *cosmicism's* inherent limitations as a philosophy of the human creature's place in the *universe*. This is done by developing *neocosmicism* as an outgrowth of *cosmicism* that offers an alternate experience of the *universe* and a revitalisation of the human creature's relationship with the *universe*. By recognising the significant shift in the human creature's understanding of the *universe* – from a Cartesian view to a Quantum view within a broader post-modern context – *neocosmicism* is developed as an interrogative philosophy that provides a framework for opening up a critical space in which to explore alternatives to modernity's questions rather than offering mere reactions or polarising oppositions.

For *neocosmicism*, this thesis represents a beginning, and in no way provides a comprehensive development or analysis of its nuances. At this early stage of development, *neocosmicism* asks more questions than it answers; suspects that god and the void are a manifest singularity that is the *universe*; and suggests that

*cosmicism's* limiting outcome of estrangement between the human creature and the *universe* can be transformed to a vitalised outcome of relationship between the emotive biological creature [that the human creature is] and the indifferently *cold chaos* that creature calls the *universe*.

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*You were there to the end. Lying on my desk for endless hours. Lying on my notes.  
Chewing my notes. Chewing my books, library books, pens, pencils, and pushing  
things off onto the floor. Sharing cups of tea and occasional sandwiches when I  
wasn't looking. Patting my cheek with your paw when you needed me. Thank you.*

## Introduction

What does it mean to be human in the *universe*? When the cosmological maps that have been used in the past no longer fit the territory they are meant to describe, how does the human creature navigate? How does it know where and what it is? H.P. Lovecraft's philosophy of *cosmicism* offers the human creature a view of the *universe*; a view however, that leads to an isolated end of madness or death. The development of *neocosmicism* is an outgrowth of Lovecraft's *cosmicism* and a response to the limiting options for the human creature that *cosmicism* extends. For a general comparison of the similarities and differences between *cosmicism* and *neocosmicism*, see *Appendix A*. *Neocosmicism* offers the human creature an experience that leads to a revitalisation of its relationship with the *universe*.

There are four core aims to this thesis, and selected works by Philip K. Dick, Robert Heinlein, Frank Herbert and H.P. Lovecraft will be used to exemplify these aims. The first is to demonstrate how science fiction (*sf*) interrogates the experience of being human in the *universe*, and the ways in which the human creature responds to the *universe* in which it exists, and of which it is a part. Second, this thesis offers a critique of Lovecraft's philosophy of *cosmicism* and in doing so, demonstrates the failure of static, cosmological models for enabling a direct relationship between the human creature and the *universe*, and between the human creature and *others* within the *universe*. Third, this thesis seeks to demonstrate the validity of *cosmicism* as a lens through which to critically interrogate not only Lovecraft's corpus, but *sf* more generally. Finally, and most critically as a development of theory based upon the first three aims, this thesis intends to extend but not replace, the philosophy of *cosmicism* with what I am calling *neocosmicism*.

The central concern of *neocosmicism* is to provide a theoretical framework that by taking into account the significant shift in the human creature's understanding of the *universe* from a Cartesian view to a Quantum view, allows for a sense of existence in the *universe* that reaches far beyond the limiting parameters that the dominant occidental cosmologies and the philosophy of *cosmicism* allow. This thesis provides a starting point for the development of *neocosmicism*, identifying issues and characteristics of the philosophy that can be expanded in further research beyond this thesis' parameters.

It is important to remember that due to a thesis' economies of size, and given the vast field of enquiry implicit in any one of this thesis' aims, this document is not proposed as a definitive development and expansion of *neocosmicism*, but rather an introductory *foundation*. In addition, this thesis is neither an exhaustive study of the works of the primary authors whose texts are herein used, nor an exhaustive critical enquiry of *cosmicism*. There is already a significant body of knowledge that addresses in detail each author and their works; and while *cosmicism* is to date largely only employed in the direct critical enquiry of Lovecraft's corpus, a significant body of knowledge does exist that addresses how his philosophy manifests within his creative works. Identifying the value of *cosmicism* as a tool for the critical interrogation of *sf* is central to this thesis, and the limitation herein to the authors and texts with which this thesis is concerned, in no way diminishes the argument for *cosmicism*'s wider application.

In addition, the primary authors discussed in this thesis have been chosen on the basis of authors and works that I like; the choices are not, as could be suggested, continuing a historical trend that has seen both the authorship and critical examination of *sf* to be skewed through a male-oriented perspective. Addressing issues of gender would be a useful addition to the work of this thesis, but a gendered reading of creative text and theory is not the focus of the argument. While I acknowledge the usefulness of such lenses for interpretation and their implied presence within this thesis, the overall coherence of the core argument is not dependent upon the theoretical positioning of gender, ethnicity, religion or political persuasion. Furthermore, while I also acknowledge that the four authors I have chosen are diverse in both their historic context and contemporary reckoning, and they present their readers with significantly different writing voices; an extensive body of critical work that addresses these issues is well established. To engage in such discussions here – as to the changing perception of the authors’ relevance over time, or the nature and accomplishment of their writing styles – would be to replicate work that is not itself the central concern of this thesis; inasmuch as the aim here is to demonstrate the presence of a holistic textural voice across *sf*’s diversity rather than highlighting stylistic and perceptual fragmentations.

This thesis can be located broadly within the dialogue of post-modernity, and therefore seeks to provide a framework that may open up a critical space for exploring alternatives to modernity’s questions rather than just reactions or polarising oppositions. The hope embedded within the development of *neocosmicism* is for the provision of a theoretical apparatus that is complementary to the array of tools already available for the critical interrogation of texts; *sf*

specifically, but also other forms of expression that explore the human creature's experience of the *universe* in which it exists.

The methodology employed in this thesis is eclectic in that it draws upon a theoretically diverse body of knowledge, and is literary through its focus on the use of primary fictional text to support its argument. The central line across which this thesis argues, is the trajectory of development from *cosmicism* to *neocosmicism*, rather than presenting how an examination of *cosmicism* and *neocosmicism* might be evidenced within discrete categories of the four authors' texts. This thesis uses the works of each author to discuss, exemplify and support the development of *cosmicism* and to highlight the textural evidence that in being present within their works, also foreshadow the outgrowth of *neocosmicism*. The authors chosen here are used as examples, rather than as the subject of the thesis, in order to evidence how *cosmicism* and *neocosmicism* might also be traced through the wider *sf* corpus. The thesis is divided into three parts and each part is further divided into a series of chapters with sub-sections.

Part I deals with the broad idea of the *universe*, and sets out the distinction between the terms *cosmos* and *universe*, the alignment of these terms with the concepts of the map and the territory respectively, and the distinction within this overarching framework of what can be classified as the visible and familiar, from the invisible and unfamiliar aspects of the *universe*. Following this is a general overview of two dominant occidental cosmological models – being the *Genesis cosmology* and the *universe as machine* – and how these models are interpreted. With these models established, the presence of *other* sentient beings in the *universe* and their

relationship with the human creature is introduced, before a discussion of the disruption between the *cosmos* and the *universe* that in becoming problematic for the human creature, affects that creature's sense of relationship with the *universe* as adversarial and divisive.

In order to use *cosmicism* as the underlying philosophical principle of Part II, an examination of its tenets is first established. After this, the principles of *cosmicism* are applied to an enquiry of the human creature's position in and response to the *universe*, culminating in the arguably untenable conclusion that *cosmicism* draws; that in the knowledge of what the *universe* is, as distinct from what a *cosmos* suggests it might be, the human creature is afforded no option other than madness or death in response. From this point, I consider that there is a significant body of evidence within *sf* suggesting that while the basic tenets of *cosmicism* are viable, that philosophy's summation of human options when the *universe* is revealed are limiting and unreflective of other possible outcomes. As a consequence, I see the opportunity for opening up *cosmicism* in a manner that retains many of its defining characteristics, while also drawing on a view of the *universe* that is more inclusive of twenty-first century scientific and cultural theory.

Part III then, in beginning with the human creature's arrival at *cosmicism*'s ultimate and life-negating end, develops *neocosmicism*. Rather than negate *cosmicism* by offering an alternative, *neocosmicism* offers a complement. *Neocosmicism* is presented as a philosophical extension of *cosmicism* that builds upon *cosmicism*'s existing and viable *foundation*. An alternate path for the human creature is offered, and rather than succumb to a shattering observation of the *universe*, *neocosmicism*

explores the possibility for the human creature to choose the *engulfment* that *cosmicism* warns against as destructive, in order that it might enter an experience of the *universe* that is affirmative. By choosing to be *engulfed* by the *universe*, rather than simply observe from a distance, the human creature in *neocosmicism* can move beyond what stops and destroys it to enter a vitalised engagement with the *universe* and with *others*.

## Glossary of Terms

### ***amnesia of the cosmos***

The loss of the memory of the *universe* that arises from the human creature's mistaking of the ordered and static *cosmos* as the *universe*, and that creature's subsequent loss of a sense of embodied relationship with the *universe*.

### ***chaos***

The condition that precedes and underpins all else, *chaos* is the underlying state or condition of the *universe*. Furthermore, *chaos* is also a fundamental component of the *universe's* overlying, visible *landscape* of experience.

### ***cold equations***

Derived from Tom Godwin's short story "The Cold Equations," and for the purpose of this thesis, the *cold equations* are "the fixed rules" of the *universe* that operate beyond the sphere of human morals and ethics.

### ***cosmicism***

*Cosmicism* is drawn from the philosophy of H.P. Lovecraft as it is exemplified in his fiction and explicated in his non-fiction texts. The principle tenets of *cosmicism* are that the *universe* operates as an indifferent mechanism, without purpose or direction, and the human creature is not only insignificant but exists as a biological mutation or accident of elemental and chemical stellar processes. The mechanism of the *universe* operates without emotions or ethics of human parameters and understanding, thereby rendering any ethical effort as pointless, for morality has influence and meaning only at an insignificant and localised level. The *universe* is also characterised by the absence of a moral deity that cares for the human creature.

### ***cosmos***

A *cosmos* has logic and order, and is one version or one way of thinking about and making sense of the *universe*. As one version, indeed as one vision, a *cosmos* is like a snapshot, a single ordered view, or even an illusion of some part, but not the entirety, of the *universe*.

NOTE: in both fiction and nonfiction, Lovecraft often uses the terms *cosmos* and *universe* interchangeably and in any material quoted in this thesis from Lovecraft, the term *cosmos* is to be read as meaning *universe*.

### ***engulfment***

*Engulfment* refers to a submersion or overwhelming of the physical, mental, emotional or sensory aspects of the human creature. It is not only precipitated by a force greater in some way than the creature being *engulfed*, but also involves some form of conflict or pull between opposing forces which, through a total immersion or plunging into the experience, threatens the survival of that being. Should the *engulfed* survive the experience, some form of change occurs that renders it incapable of returning to the same state of being or understanding as it was in prior to the *engulfment*.

***foundation***

A *foundation* is that fundamental structure supporting a more visible and tangible formation. It not only refers to a physical object, such as a building or biological body, but it also refers to ideological, geographical and sociological grouping – as evident in modern Western culture. Furthermore, a *foundation* continues to support and inform any new structure in which it remains embedded.

***Genesis cosmology***

The cosmological view of creation and the Noachian Deluge that has been a substantial part of the *foundation* of Western culture, is written in the book of Genesis in the Christian bible, and will hereafter be called the *Genesis cosmology*. This can be referred to as a religious cosmological model.

***heimlich***

Within its Germanic origin, *heimlich* is most commonly used to mean homely, but also equally represents its own opposite to connote a distinct meaning of *unheimlich*. This is to say that the term *heimlich* can be used to mean either the familiar or the unfamiliar. More specifically, and the meaning more pertinent to this thesis, what has been familiar and homely becomes hidden and unfamiliar. The *heimlich*, in both its “homely” and its “secretive” manifestations are two sides of the same coin.

***heimlich conundrum***

A *heimlich conundrum* is the sense of damnation that the human creature feels, irrespective of the direction that creature chooses to move toward when faced with the revelation of the *universe*; the outcome of this will only ever be one of madness or death.

***landscape***

A *landscape* is a view that is taken from one aspect within either a *cosmos* or the *universe*. Both *cosmos* and *universe* contain a multiplicity of varying *landscapes* that encircle the human creature like the layers of an onion, and at any point in time all these differing *landscapes* contribute to the reality perceived by that creature and are variously interpreted depending upon which map or part of the territory that creature is operating from.

A *landscape* can be a part of the territory, in the same manner as a foot is a part of the body; or a *landscape* can be a map, in the same manner as a photograph of a foot is a representations of that foot, but not the foot itself.

***map***

A map is an ordered view or representation of a territory. The term map can be considered synonymous with *cosmos*, in the same way that territory is synonymous with *universe*.

***neocosmicism***

*Neocosmicism* realigns the human creature’s relationship with the *universe* and *others* in such a way as to make it possible for that creature to move beyond the incarcerating confines of a *cosmos*. Though it remains insignificant, the human creature’s reinscription by *engulfment* allows it to engage with the *universe* and in doing so, affords possibilities for existence other than *cosmicism*’s madness or death.

***proving ground***

Derived from military terminology; a testing ground.

***psychotic universe***

The *psychotic universe* is a *proving ground* wherein the gap between illusion and reality, map and territory, *cosmos* and *universe* simply does not exist. The human creature is neither outside of nor incarcerated within the *psychotic universe*, and through emotional investment in the *cold equations*, that creature's participation influences and is influenced by the *universe*.

***romance of the universe***

The participatory and at times symbiotic relationship between the human creature and the *universe* in *neocosmicism*.

***schizophrenic universe***

The *schizophrenic universe* of *cosmicism* is no longer one stable thing or another; it is neither machine nor the creation of deity. It is split from itself and the human creature is also split from it and adrift within it.

***sf***

science fiction

***territory***

A territory is the substance or reality, what is represented by a map. The term territory can be considered synonymous with *universe*, in the same way that map is synonymous with *cosmos*. Implicit within this, although not necessarily visible, is the idea that the territory, like the *universe*, is *chaos*.

***threshold***

A *threshold* is that liminal space between one state and another; where varying degrees of transformative experience are encountered, where conflicting opposites merge into one and the same moment of experience. The *threshold* is where the potential of *engulfment* manifests, and where the capacity of the human creature to either cross or resist the *threshold* is greatly tested. Once crossed, there is no return to the previous state, and the human creature will be irrevocably changed by the experience.

***universe***

The *universe* is, quite simply, everything. The underlying *foundation* of the *universe* is *chaos*, distinguishing the *universe* as different from the *cosmos* where *chaos* is put into order. There is no requirement for the *universe* to be ordered, although order may be found within the *chaos*.

***universe as machine***

The *universe as machine* is a metaphorical image of putting order into *chaos*, and provides an overlying schematic map for, but not the reality of, the *universe*. As a machine, the *universe* is without emotion or human morality, and continues to function through the impersonal and perpetual motion of components in the mechanism. The *cold equations* are inherent within the *universe as machine* and this can be referred to as a scientific cosmological model.

***vitalised materialism***

*Neocosmicism's psychotic universe* unveils the *heimlich* attribute of cause and purpose. What *cosmicism* refers to as the "outside" is simply the territory beyond the parameters of the map; in *neocosmicism*, everything is *universe*. Everything will end because there is no outside, there is no external cause, and the *psychotic universe* is materialist by virtue of this. However, because *neocosmicism's universe* is also a *proving ground* in which the human creature can be vitalised, the *universe* has purpose, and in having purpose implies cause. *Neocosmicism's universe* is a *universe of vitalised materialism*.

***void***

As an ultimate indeterminacy the *void* has no borders or boundaries; it is an emptiness that is nowhere and everywhere, a ubiquitous merging of oppositions that cancel one from another, a littoral space where shore and ocean merge.

## **Part I: Universe**

## Chapter 1

### Universe and Cosmos

Deep in the human unconscious is a pervasive need for a logical universe that makes sense. But the real universe is always one step beyond logic.

- from 'The Sayings of Muad'Dib' by the Princess Irulan (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 354).

The only justification for our concepts and system of concepts is that they serve to represent the complex of our experiences; beyond this they have no legitimacy (Einstein, 1922/2003, p. 2).

What is the *universe*? The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* defines the *universe* as “the whole of created or existing things regarded collectively; all things (including the earth, the heavens, and all the phenomena of space)” (vol. XIX, Simpson & Weiner, 1989p. 86). Although the *OED* continues by saying that the *universe* is a “systematic whole,” it does not mandate either the inclusion or exclusion of order within this whole.

Additionally, the modern word *universe* comes from the French *univers* and from the Latin “*universum* the whole world... of *universus* all taken together, lit[erally] ‘turned into one,’ ” (Onions, 1969, p. 961), and is a combination of *uni* – meaning one – and *versus* – meaning “turn of the plough, furrow, line, row, line of writing” (Onions, 1969, p. 976). The initial point being made by means of this etymology, is that it renders an image of one mechanical act or simple machine creating separable portions of a greater whole. Such a view opens up the possibility for not only interpreting the *universe as machine*<sup>1</sup> because the idea of a machine is embedded in

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<sup>1</sup> The *universe as machine* is a metaphorical image of putting order into *chaos*, and provides an overlying schematic map for, but not the reality of, the *universe*. As a machine, the *universe* is

the term *universe*; but also the idea that this particular image of what the *OED* defines as the *universe* is in fact more like a limited view, and in the terms of this thesis is more readily aligned with the concept of *cosmos*.<sup>2</sup> Frank Herbert writes in *Children of Dune* that “anything which we can identify as our universe is merely part of a larger phenomena” (1976, p. 210), and this promotes the idea that what the human creature<sup>3</sup> has commonly called the *universe*, is in fact a view that may be concealing what lies beneath.

So what then, is *cosmos*? According to the *OED*, it is “the world or universe [considered] as an ordered and harmonious system,” and as such, it is “the opposite of chaos” (vol. III, Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 986). The second point is critical to the argument I will develop in subsequent chapters, for the suggestion of the *cosmos* as “ordered” is disturbed by a quantum physics view of the *universe* as *chaos*. Furthermore, to define the *cosmos* as an “ordered system” is to imply that the *cosmos* is a mechanism inasmuch as it is “a system of mutually adapted parts working together” (vol. IX, Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 536).

It might initially be considered that the terms *cosmos* and *universe* are readily exchangeable, as they appear to speak of the same idea. I suggest however that such is not the case, but rather that *cosmos* is only one version or one way of thinking

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without emotion or human moral, and continues to function through the impersonal and perpetual motion of components in the mechanism.

<sup>2</sup> A *cosmos* has logic and order, and is one version or one way of thinking about and making sense of the *universe*. As one version, indeed as one vision, a *cosmos* is like a snapshot, a single ordered view, or even an illusion of some part, but not the entirety, of the *universe*.

<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting the framework that the French urbanist Paul Virilio puts around the term “human” in *Grey Ecology* when he writes that “[h]uman comes from the word humus. Humus speaks of humility” (2009, p. 40). Of course the term humus also speaks of the earth, or of soil, and while the connection between these variants of term and related images does not bear directly upon the immediate argument of this thesis, it is certainly inferred. Furthermore, there is a link from this that traces into *neocosmicism*; and while beyond the scope of this thesis, this link is worthy of further examination within a future expansion of *neocosmicism*.

about and making sense of the *universe*. As one version, the *cosmos* is like a picture taken of a single moment, a representation or convincing illusion of what it attempts to describe.

In *The Book: On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are* (hereafter referred to as *The Book*), the London born Zen Buddhist philosopher and theologian Alan Watts describes the difference between the *universe* and the *cosmos* by metaphorically re-imagining these concepts as “wiggly” lines and a “net” respectively to illustrate how the disordered lines of the *universe* are captured and sectioned into more manageable portions by the ordered net of the *cosmos*. As Watts says, “[o]rder has been imposed on chaos” and “the net has thus become one of the presiding images of human thought” (1966/1989, p. 59); an image that becomes significant in *cosmicism* with respect to the idea of a carceral *universe*.<sup>4</sup> The significant difference between *cosmos* and *universe* is located in the idea that *cosmos* is the capture of a single ordered view of some part only of the *universe* and not the whole. To say that the *universe* underlies the *cosmos*, is synonymous with saying that the territory underlies the map and also reaches beyond the limits of that map.

Additionally, the human creature may identify varying *landscapes* within either the *universe* or a *cosmos*, and each *landscape* may be considered as a view that is taken from a single position. Both the *universe* and *cosmoses* contain a multiplicity of varying *landscapes* that encircle the human creature, and at any point in time all these differing *landscapes* contribute to the reality perceived by that creature and are

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<sup>4</sup> The idea of the carceral *universe* is discussed in chapter 8, p. 231.

variously interpreted depending upon which map or part of the territory that creature is operating from.

Similar to though not synonymous with *cosmos*, a *landscape* as “a view taken from one aspect” does not present the human creature with a complete view. This may be likened to a concept framed by Watts in terms of the “on” and the “off,” and his parallel example of the binary language of computers that deal in zeroes and ones. In both cases Watts notes that the two positions can be arranged into such a complexity of patterning, that these two apparently opposing positions can produce an infinite array of pictures, sounds, sensations and views. The significant point Watts makes is that even in the instance of an apparently uninterrupted sound or sensation, it is not only both the “on” and “off” that are operating, it is also the silence between these poles that defines the sound (1966/1989, pp. 25-8). Similarly, it is what lies hidden in the *landscape*, what is not charted on the map between points, that is in direct relationship with the visible features of the *landscape*.

Like Watts’ relationships between the “on” and the “off” and “between bodies,” (1966/1989, p. 28), the American author Gary Zukav notes that “as a complete theory even though it gives no explanation of what the world is ‘really like’ ... quantum mechanics correctly correlates experience” (1979/2001, p. 110).

Furthermore, Zukav later claims that “[t]he distinction between a transient, virtual (nothing-something-nothing) state,” which is equivalent to Watts’ “on” and “off,” or a computer’s binary language, “is similar to the Buddhist distinction between reality as it actually is and the way we usually see it” (1979/2001, p. 262). While I recognise this is a very simplistic reading of the states of “on” and “off,” it is

sufficient for the purpose here of demonstrating that the idea of a territory overlain by a map that is an approximation or single view of a larger whole, is reflected in fields of investigation that are diverse not only in their perspective or discipline, but also the historical timeframe in which they have arisen.

Watts' image of the net of the map (1966/1989, p. 59) is perhaps nowhere more visible than in a network of streets that intersect each other on any map of an urbanised *landscape*. But as Lovecraft's character Richard Upton Pickman says:

What do maps, and records and guidebooks really tell ... At a guess I'll guarantee to lead you to thirty or forty alleys and networks of alleys north of Prince Street that aren't suspected by ten living beings outside of the foreigners that swarm them ("Pickman's Model," 2000, p. 49).

Maps do not speak of the territory that lies beyond their reach. Pickman assures the story's young narrator, Thurber, that "[t]here are things that won't do on Newbury Street," on "artificial streets on made land," and the north end of town is not made, but grown (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 47-8). At the north end, the map fails to represent the territory, Thurber does not keep track of the streets through which he is led, and the map is only re-engaged via streets that Thurber knows of *after* his experience of the territory beneath those streets; a territory for which no map exists (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 58-9). The territory, it seems, can only be engaged when the map either fails or is discarded.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Chapter seven of Michel de Certeau's text *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) – "Walking in the City" – presents a useful analysis of the relationship between the map and territory through its discussion of the city in which the human creature walks. The city is presented as a map in which the territory hides and "reading such a cosmos" (p. 92) is offered in terms of "the two-fold projection of an opaque past and an uncertain future onto a surface that can be dealt with" (pp. 93-4). Furthermore, de Certeau aligns the relationship between the human creature that walks within the city to a tracing of something only recorded as an "absence of what has passed by" (p. 97). The city, like the map, is representative of the concept of synecdoche inasmuch as it only names or represents a part of the whole in which it resides (p. 101); and the concept of asyndeton wherein the map "skips over links," "omits" or "disconnects" (p. 101) varying elements of what it apparently contains within its

The decaying, crumbling *landscape* that Pickman and Thurber enter when the map is forsaken, is a *landscape* steeped in water from the “burying ground, and the sea” and follows a subterranean network of tunnels, basements and “brick well[s].” Beyond the net of the map there is a “worm-eaten” and water threatened *landscape* of “antediluvian” proportions where the streets above are both mirrored and disrupted by the subterranean matrix of tunnels and wells (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 48-51, 58).

Similarly, in Lovecraft’s story “The Music of Erich Zann,” no maps, neither new nor old, show where the narrator has been; no map accurately reflects the territory of his experience (2000, pp. 335-7). The territory is encountered beyond the reach of the map, across a dark river in a street and rooms that are unlike those from anywhere else. This street, these buildings and their inhabitants, like the towns and inhabitants of “The Dunwich Horror” (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 99-103) and “The Shadow Over Innsmouth” (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 382-3) are “incredibly old ... all very old” (“The Music of Erich Zann,” Lovecraft, 2000, p. 336); they are antediluvian *landscapes* caught within crumbling decay. The maps fail to accurately reflect the territory. Furthermore, it is the human creature’s reliance on the map to define the territory, the reliance on a *cosmos* to describe the *universe*, that prevents that creature from engaging directly with the *universe* in which it exists. The American anthropologist and folklorist Timothy Evans refers to Lovecraft’s work as a “postmodern fusion of the real and the virtual” (2005, p. 123), a blurring of boundaries that later chapters

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representation, and in doing so creates unknown and potentially unreadable spaces. The city, like the map, renders the potentially infinite as a legible, bordered, ordered and regulated space (p. 94) wherein the act of movement itself is not mapped and “[t]he trace left behind is substituted for the practice” (p. 97).

will argue necessitates a significant shift in that creature's perspective if it is to survive in the *universe*.

The point to be made is that differentiating the *cosmos* from the *universe* is not always straightforward, and in Lovecraft's story "The Outsider," this task is made all the more problematic as a consequence of Lovecraft's subverting the customary practice of first presenting the *cosmos* as a map from under which the territory is later exposed. "The Outsider" begins from within the territory and for some considerable time the moonlit, crumbling castle in which the narrator lives is presented as being the human creature's familiar, albeit dark and mouldy, *landscape*. This *landscape* is pervaded by a sense of immanent revelation, of something as yet unseen beyond the border of the dark forest. When the revelation comes, the reader discovers that the unfamiliar is not beneath the narrator, as it is for Thurber in "Pickman's Model," but the unfamiliar lies above the narrator, in the world of bright light. In the disclosure that the *landscape* into which the narrator emerges is the familiar *landscape* of the human world, what should be familiar, becomes uncomfortably unfamiliar. When the narrator sees himself in the mirror, he understands that he does not belong in the bright light of the human creature's *cosmos*.

"The Outsider" presents an excellent example of what the Austrian neurologist and founding psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud, discusses in his essay "The Uncanny" with respect to the mirror meaning of *heimlich* (1919/2004). The importance of Freud's distinctive use of the word *heimlich* cannot be overstressed and although the word is most commonly used for one meaning, that is, the homely, it also represents and can

be used for its own opposite to connote a distinct meaning of *unheimlich*, or un-homely. The familiar becomes unfamiliar. More specifically, and the meaning more pertinent to this thesis, what has been familiar, becomes hidden and unfamiliar. The *heimlich*, in both its “homely” and its “secretive” manifestations are two sides of the same coin.

What the *heimlich* points towards, is the idea of a particular view or map overlying something else beneath it. What first appears to be the true nature of the *landscape* is in fact only an approximation or partial view and in the definitions for the term that Freud examines in “The Uncanny,” he writes that the *heimlich* is “*like a buried spring or a dried-up pond. One cannot walk over it without always having the feeling that water might come up there again*” (1919/2004, p. 419). He then goes on to say that “on the one hand, it means that which is familiar and congenial, and on the other, that which is concealed and kept out of sight” (1919/2004, p. 420). When the *heimlich* is viewed as only what is comfortable, its *other* aspect is taken off the map. Furthermore, when this *other* aspect is negatively connoted as the *unheimlich*, and banished from view, the map no longer fits the territory.

It might be said that the single biggest mistake that the human creature appears to make in the *universe* is when it mistakes the map for the territory. In *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldrich (Palmer Eldrich)*, Dick not only draws out this idea, but then reveals the motivation behind why the human creature makes such an error. Setting the rules and conditions of the map and how it will be used prior to engaging with it, then pretending that it is a legitimate *landscape*, is a tactic for self-preservation from the hidden dangers that exist in the territory. During a discussion

with Palmer Eldrich, Leo Bulero understands that “[a]t least with the Perky Pat layouts, one was limited to what one had provided in advance ... [a]nd - there was a certain safety in this” (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 95). What the Perky Pat layouts fail to accommodate however, in both this novel and Dick’s story “The Days of Perky Pat,” is the fact that no human creature can stay in the illusion of the layouts indefinitely, and when these creatures emerge back into the dust of the planet they inhabit, they are ill-equipped for living (Dick, 1987, pp. 303-5, 308-9; 1964/2007, pp. 139-40). The illusion they understand and feel comfortable living within, is not the reality that they ultimately inhabit.

The map alone is not sufficient and reliance on the map remains viable only to a certain point. Every time the territory represented by the map changes in some way, the context in which the human creature is participating within that territory is also changed. As Watts says: “Blood in a test-tube is not the same thing as blood in the veins because it is not behaving in the same way. Its behavior has changed because its environment or context has changed” (1966/1989, p. 68). A stagnant map can lead the human creature to feeling as if it is straddling some inexplicable space into which it might fall, with at best the dissatisfaction of a metaphorical foot on either side and more probably a profound sense of no longer belonging anywhere in a *universe* that appears to be sectioned into *landscapes* of difference.

Within *sf*, one of the most frequent shifts faced by the human creature that requires a rewriting of the map, or even a completely new map, is the shift between the terrestrial *landscape* and the *landscape* of space. In Dick’s novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep ? (Androids)*, Rachael Rosen fails the Voigt-Kampff

empathy test simply because she was not raised on Earth, but in space. As her uncle explains to the bounty hunter, Rick Deckard:

‘I can explain why she scored as an android might. Rachael grew up aboard the *Salander 3*. She was born on it; she spent fourteen years of her eighteen years living off its tape library and what the nine other crew members, all adults, knew about Earth’ (1968/2007, p. 45).

The map given to Rachael growing up in space, was not sufficient for her to navigate the human creature’s *landscape* on Earth. The map provides only symbols and abstractions, not experiences. It is also important to note that the V-K test applied by Deckard is designed to test for levels of empathy, and Rachael’s failure on this point is not to be interpreted as an indication that she is an android – even though this fact is revealed later in the novel – but rather as an indication that space is unsuited to fostering empathy. This lies at the heart of what the British cultural historian of popular literature Farah Mendlesohn refers to as the “cold equations”<sup>6</sup> (James & Mendlesohn, 2003, p. 10) of the *universe*, and these *equations* operate beyond the sphere of human morals and ethics. Part II will argue that Lovecraft’s philosophy of *cosmicism* is also grounded within the *cold equations*.

The degrees of difference between the map and the territory, between the *cosmos* and the *universe*, strike directly to the question of what happens to the human creature when its map no longer fits the territory that map is trying to describe. For Lovecraft’s narrator in “The Outsider” before his ascent of the “black tower” to the world of the human creature, without knowing what it is that exists beyond his field

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<sup>6</sup> This term is used in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* to refer to “those fixed rules that decide whether we live or die, irrespective of whether we love” (James & Mendlesohn, 2003, p. 10) and is a reference to the story “The Cold Equations” by Tom Godwin, first published in the August edition of *Astounding Science-Fiction* in 1954. The copy of “The Cold Equations” used in this thesis has been taken from the anthology *Best SF Three: Science Fiction Stories* (1954/1958, pp. 93-118).

of vision, he knows that there is something more than what his *cosmos* of existence has revealed, and “through the endless twilights [he] dreamed and waited, though [he] knew not what [he] waited for (2000, pp. 11-2).

So too has the human creature looked upon its *cosmos*, knowing that there is something more that it cannot see. In chapters two and three, I will present two cosmological models that have dominated an occidental perception of the *universe*; maps that in being mistaken for the territory, have transformed the human creature’s view of the *universe* as a dark and dangerous place in which it is caught.

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## Chapter 2

### Cosmologies

#### *The Universe as Machine*

Slumber, watcher, till the spheres,  
 Six and twenty thousand years  
 Have revolv'd, and I return  
 To the spot where now I burn.  
 Other stars anon shall rise  
 To the axis of the skies;  
 Stars that soothe and stars that bless  
 With a sweet forgetfulness:  
 Only when my round is o'er  
 Shall the past disturb thy door ("Polaris," Lovecraft, 1994, p. 34).

In an attempt to describe and thereby understand the *universe*, the human creature has developed numerous cosmological models, one of which, is the model that this thesis calls the *universe as machine*. The *universe as machine* is a metaphorical image of putting order into *chaos*, and it provides an overlying schematic for, but not the reality of, the *universe*. As a *machine*, the *universe* is without emotion or human morality, and continues to function through the impersonal and perpetual motion of its components.

According to the American comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell, one of the earliest accounts of the development of a mechanistic view of the *universe* can be linked directly to the Babylonian ziggurats – large terraced temples – that were built in ancient Sumer during the fourth millennium BCE (1969, pp. 143-4). The use of mathematics and numeric patterning, coupled with early geometric principles and orderings, were the *foundations* upon which the ziggurats were built as expressions of not only the “world order,” but of the relationship between the terrestrial human *landscape* and the *universe*. As the Swiss-American surrealist and historian of

magic, Kurt Seligmann, writes: “For the first time in history numbers expressed the world order [and s]uch speculations became frequent among later philosophers” (1948/1997, p. 33). As symbols that “represent graphically an arithmetical total” (vol. X, Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 590), numbers underpin the *universe as machine* and represent that *machine’s* inherent *equations*.

The presence of numeric patterning as a part of the *foundation* of an assumed mechanism, strengthens the idea of the *universe as machine*. Any machine that uses the most basic of computing power, operates by the language of mathematics and the numeric symbols of that language. Widely called “machine language” or machine code (Nisan & Schocken, 2005, pp. 57-60), this language consists of a series of 1s and 0s, or as Watts describes it in *The Book*, a simple system of “on” and “off” (1966/1989, pp. 25-6). Something is one thing or the other, and the machine computes according to the information – that is, the combination of 1s and 0s – it is given.

Having considered the presence of numeric patterning within ancient cosmological expressions, it is perhaps appropriate to briefly examine the cultural environment in which such thinking developed. By 3500-2500 BCE Mesopotamia was undergoing a significant cultural change wherein the symbiosis of the scientific and spiritual considerations of the human creature was transformed through the establishment of “the professional, full-time, initiated, strictly regimented temple priest” (Campbell, 1969, p. 146). With this division of specialisation among human creatures, explanations of how the *universe* is structured and what place that creature holds in

the *universe* became the “professional” domain of a select group and necessitated, at least in their view, the need for constructing a readable map.

The priests of Sumer recorded, revised, and confirmed what they observed in the night skies until they could identify “visible or barely visible heavenly spheres ... which moved in established courses, according to established laws, along the ways followed by the sun and moon, among the fixed stars” (Campbell, 1969, p. 146). What Campbell identifies, is an image of the ordered grid of a map; an ordered system of stellar parts within the mechanism of the continuing cycles of the *universe*.

By the sixth century BCE the Greek philosopher Anaximander (618-546 BCE)<sup>7</sup> developed what historians consider as being the first mechanical model of the *universe*. Anaximander’s model includes the idea of vast cycles of time (deSantillana, 1961, pp. 27-9), and in this is similar to the Sumerian model. The strength in the case for Anaximander’s model as the first is perhaps not so much that he developed it, but that he was being very specific about it as a model.

Using the circle as his *foundation* and devising a system of interconnecting and dependant parts, Anaximander advanced the idea of the *universe as machine* by claiming that the world remained where it was through its sheer indifference, as “there was no reason why it should go this way or that, since all directions around the centre are the same” (deSantillana, 1961, p. 34). Furthermore, Anaximander also proposed that the *universe* was made from a pre-existing substance which could not

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<sup>7</sup> Anaximander is recognised as one of the first Greek philosophers located within a school of thought known as the Milesians; on account of their geographical location in Miletus, the eastern part of the Greek world, known today as Turkey. The Milesians are regarded in the West as the first formalised group who considered the nature of the *universe* from a philosophical viewpoint, and tried to discover its “underlying order” (Smith, Allhoff, & Vaidya, 2008, p. 13).

be any of the known elements,<sup>8</sup> but rather – and conveniently it might be said – some other substance that was “infinite, eternal and ageless” (Russell, 1946, p. 46).

Anaximander’s model conjures an image of unassembled parts that once put together and set in motion, have continued to operate. While it appears he does not deny the existence of a deity, unlike the Christian God, what Anaximander proposes is neither moralistic nor participatory within the *universe*. It is this lack of deific participation that strengthens the coherency of the idea of the *universe as machine*; for a machine is invariably taken to be “a combination of parts moving mechanically, as contrasted with a being having life, consciousness and will” (vol. IX, Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 157).

While the Sumerians observed the movement of stellar bodies on fixed paths across the night skies, and Anaximander specifically developed a model to explain this movement, it was the Greek philosopher Pythagoras<sup>9</sup> and his followers who, in approximately the sixth century BCE, determined numbers to be the *foundation* of the *universe*. Seligman writes that “according to Pythagoras,” numbers were “older than bodies and hence more powerful ... In the size, weight and intervals of the stars lurk mystic numbers” (1948/1997, p. 79).

From a Pythagorean perspective, numbers calculate and form the *universe* in measured shapes and distances, fitting these components together like cogs in a

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<sup>8</sup> These elements being fire, earth, water and air, and they constitute the elemental foundation of alchemy (Abraham, 1998, pp. 68-9).

<sup>9</sup> Most of what is written about Pythagoras can be regarded as either questionable or in the order of mythic metaphor. Some commentators claim that he obtained a deified status during his life and was thereby attributed a mythic status understood to be just that (deSantillana, 1961, pp. 53-7). Other commentators note that many of the ideas attributed to Pythagoras are most likely, and in some cases almost unquestionably, the ideas of his followers, the Pythagoreans (Smith, et al., 2008, p. 25). But without question, he is viewed as one of the most significant figures in early philosophy, scientific development and mathematics (Russell, 1946, pp. 49-56).

machine, with each one having a place and a function. Just as the cogs of a machine are circular and interlocking, so too are the components of the *universe as machine* made of circles and spheres that move within cycles of time like the motions of clockwork. The *machine* of the *universe* is measurable in space-time<sup>10</sup> as if it were a great cosmic clock of perpetual motion.

In being a *machine*, the Greek idea of the *universe* is similar to Lovecraft's imaging of the *universe* in *cosmicism*, wherein the perpetual motion of the mechanism is clearly visible inasmuch as "there is no such thing as a final result, since all cosmic existence is but an endless and purposeless chain beginning and leading nowhere" ("Friday the 13th, May 1921," Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 132). This is the *universe* as it will be more fully explored in Part II.

While the idea of the *universe as machine* had been proposed millennia beforehand, it was the emergence of astronomy as a specific science and the employ of the scientific method that offered more concrete support for a mechanistic cosmological model. Like Lovecraft's "piecing together of dissociated knowledge [that] will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein" in "The Call of Cthulhu" (2000, p. 61); it might be argued that one of the largest crises faced by the religious cosmological doctrine of the West came with the publication of *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* in 1543 by the Polish astronomer Copernicus (1473-1543) and in which he proposes a heliocentric model of the *universe*. Due to a fear of persecution however, this seminal work was not published until near the end

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<sup>10</sup> Whilst it remains commonplace for space and time to be thought of in Newtonian terms as separate phenomena, "[a]ccording to relativity theory... Both are intimately connected and form a four-dimensional continuum" (Capra, 1983, p. 167). For a more comprehensive description of space-time, see Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics* (1983, pp. 639-74) and Gary Zukav's *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* (Zukav, 1979/2001, pp. 166-9).

of Copernicus' life, and then dismissed as a serious work within Andreas Osiander's preface when he writes of Copernicus' text as a hypothesis rather than a "revolutionary truth." When the Italian astronomer and mathematician Giordano Bruno (1549-1600)<sup>11</sup> used Copernicus' text as a base for his own work however, the Church officially denounced it as "expressly contrary to Holy Scripture ... and opposed to the true faith" (Ergang, 1967, pp. 358-61).

It was the Italian astronomer, mathematician and physicist Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) who, having observed through his telescope four satellites orbiting Jupiter, produced evidence in support of the Copernican model and published as much in his *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* (1632).<sup>12</sup> After Galileo, the English astronomer, mathematician and physicist Isaac Newton (1642-1727), in publishing his *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* in 1687, set out the universal laws of motion and the law of universal gravitation, and in doing so provided what might be considered substantial evidence in support of the idea of the *universe as machine*. It might be said that since Newton, the human creature in becoming increasingly exposed to machines in the *landscape*, has also become more open to the idea of the *universe as machine* as a cogent metaphor that appears to fits its observation of the *universe* in which it exists.

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<sup>11</sup> Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), was a philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, alchemist and hermeticist, who, amongst his many ideas regarding the nature of the *universe* and its relation to deity, also supported Copernican heliocentricity. He was eventually burned alive at the stake under a charge of heresy (Yates, 1964/2002, pp. 382-93, 418).

<sup>12</sup> Galileo's *Dialogue* was a text that the Church at the time could not afford to ignore and the Inquisition forced him to recant (Ergang, 1967, pp. 362-3).

### *The Genesis Cosmology*

Anteac stirred, then: “It is said that there is a principle of conflict which originated with the single cell and has never deteriorated.”

“Some things remain incompatible,” Leto agreed. (Herbert, 1981, p. 180).

An alternate and in many ways opposing view to the *universe as machine*, is found in the Biblical book of Genesis, and referred to in this thesis as the *Genesis cosmology*. According to this model: “In the beginning God<sup>13</sup> created the heavens and the earth,” and “the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” (Genesis 1:1-2, Barker, 1985, p. 6). On this first day, God also creates the light and then “separate[s] light from darkness” (Genesis 1:3-5, Barker, 1985, p. 6). On the second day, God creates the sky to separate “the water under the expanse from the water above it” (“Genesis 1:7,” Barker, 1985, p. 6), and it is significant that nowhere in these first two days of creation does Genesis mention the creation of water. I suggest that this is an image that locates water as co-existent with God in the darkness before the ordering of the *Genesis cosmology’s landscapes*.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The use of the term God in this thesis refers specifically to the God of the *Genesis cosmology* on which the Christian tradition is based.

<sup>14</sup> The German Old Testament Scholar, Klaus Westerman, writes in *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary* (1974/1984) that two separate questions relating to creation are identifiable across varying world religions and relate to the distinct ideas of “the creation or origin of the whole and... the creation or origin of the one (i.e. of a particular thing)” (p. 23). Considering this, and bearing in mind the point that historically for the human creature “[t]he question of what was created, precedes the question, how did creation take place” (p. 22), the Genesis cosmology’s specific accounting of the idea of “the creator and creation,” as opposed to the idea of “origin” (p. 25), is significant. Westerman points out that the idea of God as “creator” of objects – of the world and the human creature – dominates Genesis. It is the idea of “the one” however, rather than the idea of “the whole,” that is the older idea (p. 23). The point to be drawn from this is the concept that before ever God created “the whole” of the world and the human creature, there is the “origin” of the One; that which is undivided from or within itself and of which God is an indivisible and unequivocal part, rather than a creator that is in some way above or separate from it. The sense of separation of what is created from what has created it – that is, a separation of what comes forth from the *foundation* of its origin – is, according to Westerman, unique to Genesis: “Before Israel and outside Israel people spoke of the creation [or origin] of the gods in the same way as they spoke of the creation [or origin] of the world or of humanity. But this is not possible in Israel. Creation, therefore, be it simple creation or making or forming, has different overtones. The object of creation is without exception something outside the divine. The action of God as creator is directed exclusively to the world. God is outside creation; to be created means to be not-god. Creation completely dominates origin in the Old Testament” (pp. 25-6).

The heavens and the earth are located in a dark and silent fluid *universe*; an image subtly evocative of an embryo in a womb. The silence is shattered when God speaks, and it is the voice of God that initiates the division of the *universe* as if it were Watts' capture of wiggly lines in the grid that I have discussed in chapter one. The effect of the first breath of God's creative utterance is a contraction of space, a limiting of the possible view. The first breath and the first words of God occur at the same time and they occur *after* the creation of the heavens and the earth. After this first breath, and its corresponding creation of light ("Genesis 1:3," Barker, 1985, p. 6), the boundaries that separate one thing from another are established in ever decreasing and encircling *landscapes*. The voice that divides the heavens from the earth and the light from the darkness, is the voice that initiates the temporal *cosmos* and transforms the *universe* into a series of binary opposites pitted one against the other. What is interesting about what God creates prior to his first utterance, is that the heavens and the earth are created together within the same ubiquitous ocean and only divided by the creation of the sky on the second day. Before it became an object in the ordered *cosmos*, without form and its depths without light, the earth was inseparable from the *universe* as if it were an embryo in a womb.

The undivided waters of the *Genesis cosmology* are echoed in Heinlein's novel *Methuselah's Children* where travelling through space onboard the *New Frontiers*, Andrew Jackson Libby "continued to sleep, the luxurious return-to-the womb sleep of those who have learned to enjoy free fall" (1958/1999, p. 377). Libby is enfolded within the metaphorical womb of heaven. This is a metaphor *founded* within the

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figure of the Sumerian goddess Tiamat; in whose body the first gods were birthed and dwelt, and whose body after being slain became the heavens and the earth within which the human creature was created (Coleman, 2007, p. 1016; Dalley, 1989/2000, pp. 233, 236, 255-7). Similarly, in Herbert's *Dune* chronicles, the character Alia Atreides in her elevation to the status of goddess is also given the title of the womb of heaven (1969/1979, p. 166; McNelly, 1984, pp. 44-5).

From the coexisting water of the *Genesis cosmology* and Sumerian *Epic of Creation* at one end of the historical spectrum, to the work of a twentieth century quantum physicist at the other, the metaphorical womb of heaven that Heinlein's Libby traverses and Herbert's Alia Atreides represents, is described by David Bohm as a vast ocean, wherein:

An interesting image is obtained by considering that in the middle of the actual ocean (i.e. on the surface of the Earth) myriads of small waves occasionally come together fortuitously with such phase relationships that they end up in certain small regions of space, suddenly to produce a very high wave which just appears as if from nowhere and out of nothing. Perhaps something like this could happen in the immense ocean of cosmic energy, creating a sudden wave pulse, from which our 'universe' would be born (1980, p. 244).

Texts thousands of years old and a twentieth century quantum physicist both describe the *universe* using similar imagery, and in the context of a territory that is both unified and saturated. When God divides the waters, the *landscape* of the earth is ever-after below the sky and beneath that God. The "formless and empty" earth created in the womb of heaven is separated from those heavenly waters, and the *cosmos* is ever after imprinted with the imperative of division and splitting. Separation from deity and from the *universe* does not occur in the *Genesis*

*cosmology's* Garden of Eden,<sup>15</sup> it occurs here before the human creature is formed, and the positing of this event acts as a seemingly impenetrable barrier between the sunlit *landscape* of earth and the dark *universe* above that earth.

The demarcation of the sky as separating everything upon the earth from the rest of the *universe* above, is the *founding* principle of the cosmological division between one state and another. This separation from the ubiquitous ocean of the *universe*, coupled with an apparent impossibility of reconciling the conflict between pairs of opposites, hereafter characterise the terrestrial *landscape*. This could be paralleled with the Buddhist idea that life is suffering, and the physicist Fritjof Capra claims in relation to this idea that suffering arises as a consequence of “the futile grasping of life based on a wrong point of view ... we divide the perceived world into individual and separate things and thus attempt to confine the fluid forms of reality” (1983, p. 107).

The subsequent days of creation further separate *landscapes* and objects, such as plants and animals; the fixed lights of sun, moon and stars in the sky; the “great creatures of the sea,” birds of the air, creatures of the dry land; and eventually the human creature (Genesis 1:9-31, Barker, 1985, pp. 6-8). From the perspective of all terrestrially-bound creatures, the placement of the fixed heavenly bodies of light not only accentuate the difference between the night and day, they further demarcate the

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<sup>15</sup> The Garden of Eden was “a terrestrial garden created by God” (Collins, 1997, p. 151) where He put “the idealized first man and woman... [to] live in a state of grace and innocence” (Collins, 1997, p. 39). It is said that when Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil that God has planted in the Garden, they “fell” from their “state of grace.” But I would contend that this “fall of man,” as it is commonly referred to, is not the first moment of separation from God, and that by the time Adam and Eve have eaten the fruit, God was already in hiding. God’s accusatory question to Adam when asking why he was hiding, is an accusation against a *secondary* act of hiding. It could even be said that as a good son, Adam was simply emulating the Father – that is, hiding from what the *universe* is rather than what the *cosmos* has constructed it to be (“Genesis 3:8-10,” Barker, 1985, p. 10).

barrier between the waters above and the waters below. The direct light of the sun or its reflected light on the moon ensures that the *landscapes* of both day and night are lit and the darkness of space beyond the limits of the sky recedes into the background. The light of the sun fortifies what is above and beyond the horizon as being beyond the reach of life. As Heinlein writes in *Methuselah's Children*:

The Sun is not a large star, nor is it very hot. But it is hot with reference to men, hot enough to strike them down dead if they are careless about tropic noonday ninety-two million miles away from it, hot enough that we who are reared under its rays nevertheless dare not look directly at it.

At a distance of two and a half million miles the Sun beats out with a glare fourteen hundred times as bright as the worst ever endured in Death Valley, the Sahara, or Aden. Such radiance would not be perceived as heat or light; it would be death more sudden than the full power of a blaster (1958/1999, pp. 378-9).

As a burning fire of nuclear reaction<sup>16</sup> the sun dominates the earth, and its heat or lack thereof separates the habitable from the uninhabitable. Its proximity in the daytime sky obliterates the *universe* beyond the reach of its light.

The moon however, as the body that “lights” the night sky of Earth, reflects rather than generates light, and gives off no tangible heat. Without the direct light of the sun to frame and direct the human creature’s view, the moon’s reflected light of the nearest star creates shadows in the *landscape* that imply a break in the sunlit *cosmos* which the *universe* might seep through. In order to secure the attention of the human creature away from this possibility, the *Genesis cosmology’s* successive demarcation of boundaries between polarities estranges that creature from the dark and fluid *universe* by enclosing that creature in an ordered *cosmos* where the light and warmth of the sun is equivalent to God’s sanctioned goodness and safety.

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<sup>16</sup> The Australian astrophysicist, John Gribbin, provides a definition of a star as “[a] hot ball of gas, many times bigger than a *planet*, which shines because energy is released by nuclear reactions going on in its interior. The Sun is a *star*” (Gribbin, 2009, p. 216).

When life is created by God on the sixth day, it is created not for the waters or the air but for the dry land. As Part II will explore, it is the estranging nature of this divide, coupled with the human creature's inability to survive in watery environments without some sort of assistance, that plays a significant role in driving that creature's fear of *others* in *cosmicism*.

The dust of dry land, deserts, fire, and the ash of nuclear aftermath are signatures of the human *landscape*, and notable examples include, but are not limited to, Dick's Earth in stories such as *Androids* (1968/2007), "Second Variety" (1987c, pp. 15-52), "Jon's World" (1987c, pp. 53-81) and "To Serve the Master" (1987a, pp. 145-54), and Dick's Mars in *Palmer Eldrich* (1964/2007), "Martians Come in Clouds" (1987c, pp. 119-27), and "The Days of Perky Pat" (1987b, pp. 301-21); the sands of Herbert's planet Dune pervade the first three *Dune* novels (1965/1978, 1969/1979, 1976) and that planet's influence resonates through the *Dune universe* in all six novels, culminating in the re-establishment of the desert on the planet Chapterhouse (1985); and Lovecraft deals with deserts in "Imprisoned with the Pharaohs"<sup>17</sup> (1994, pp. 236-69) and "The Shadow Out of Time" (2000, pp. 464-544). Unlike the watery domain of the first creatures, the *landscape* inhabited by the human creature has, from the beginning, been one of dust and ash.

It takes a different kind of creature to survive on dry land, a different kind of body.

That creature may be a stranger to the water but it nonetheless requires an embodied maintenance of a particular level of water, without which its body will fail. It could

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<sup>17</sup> This story has also been published with the title "Under the Pyramids," and it was ghost written by Lovecraft in 1924 for Harry Houdini (Joshi & Schultz, 2001, p. 281).

be said that from the first moment of creation in the *Genesis cosmology*, the human creature is destined for conflict inasmuch as the prevailing separation of *landscapes* is further exacerbated by the parameters of a body that is made for the dry land but utterly dependant on water for its survival. The point to be made here is that by the time God creates the human creature, the days of creation have by several degrees of separation estranged that creature from the *universe* in which its God and the waters exist.

The encircling nature of the *Genesis cosmology* contracted to the individual body, encloses the human creature so that it identifies itself as *something* separate from *everything*. It is cut off from the *universe* and views itself as an object that is separate from all other objects in the *cosmos*. As a consequence of this, the *universe* that the human creature's *cosmos* represents has become an alien and dangerous place. The *cosmos* frames the *universe* as an unchanging vista of individual objects, rather than a unified territory in perpetual and fluid motion, and the human creature begins to suffer what I refer to in this thesis as the *amnesia of the cosmos*. This is to say that the human creature loses its memory of the *universe* as a consequence of its mistaking the ordered and static *cosmos* for the *universe*, leading to that creature's subsequent loss of a sense of embodied relationship with the *universe*.

The once all pervasive waters of the *foundation* are divided and corralled within increasingly smaller portions, and the estrangement of the human creature from the *universe* is infused with the threat of these submerged waters and all that they contain re-emerging. Water surrounds the tower of the body like a moat around a fortress, and in doing so subdues the human creature; an act that reflects an utter

reversal of the purpose of the Babylonian ziggurat<sup>18</sup> from where that human creature looked outward, and opened itself up to the great vista of the dark, night sky.

This contracting focus of view in the *universe* from that of the infinite territory to that of the isolated body is an image inferred by the physicist George FitzGerald when in 1892 he proposed an idea that essentially claims “that *everything* contracts,” and while at the time this was considered a questionable hypothesis, it was also at that time “impossible to disprove” (Zukav, 1979/2001, p. 148). By the following year, the Dutch physicist, Hendrik Lorentz, arrives at the same conclusion as FitzGerald and “expressed his discovery in rigorous mathematical terms,” that indeed everything does contract, the terms forming what has become known as the Lorentz transformations (Zukav, 1979/2001, pp. 148-9).

In estranging the human creature from the *universe*, the *Genesis cosmology* renders the expansive view of the *universe* as beyond human capability and presents such a diminished scale of position, that the *universe* can only be perceived as a threat against that creature’s solitary body. This installation of fear is a fear that has been taught, culturally embraced and embedded within the *cosmos*.

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<sup>18</sup> The ziggurat, or tower, is also mentioned in chapter 2, p. 24.

*Cartography and Cryptography – the Language of Cosmoses*

According to the philosophy of enlightenment, *everything* (*everything*) is a symbol. The reality of symbols is an illusory reality. Nonetheless, it is the one in which we live (Zukav, 1979/2001, p. 283).

The *Genesis cosmology* claims that light enters the *universe* and that the waters are separated when God speaks ("Genesis 1:3-6," Barker, 1985, p. 6). The sky that separates the waters and the words of God carried on the breeze of the sky's air, stir the still waters to move. The description of any state of being when it is uttered by words however, is not the state or object itself. The words of description are symbols, that is all (Zukav, 1979/2001, p. 284), and when God speaks during creation, what he summons by his word is something other than the word itself.

Watts also makes the point that the human creature thinks in terms of language and images that are not its own, or more precisely, that creature confuses names with nature and in doing so "come[s] to believe that having a separate names makes you a separate being" (1966/1989, pp. 69-70).

Like the view of the map and the experience of the territory, the symbols of words and the experience of what they attempt to describe "*do not follow the same rules*" (Zukav, 1979/2001, pp. 285, 290). If the map that fails to represent the perpetually moving territory is problematic, the failure of language in its attempt to describe the human experience of that territory is nothing short of major trauma. As Zukav claims:

The difference between experience and symbol is the difference between mythos and logos. Logos imitates, but can never replace, experience. It is a *substitute* for experience. Logos is the artificial construction of dead symbols which mimics experience on a one-to-one basis.... From any point of view, logos (literally) is a dead letter (1979/2001, pp. 290-1).

The way the human creature asks its questions limits the array of available response, and in a system where “everything is a symbol” this limitation can often lead to the “illusory limits” of an “either/or” response (Zukav, 1979/2001, p. 301), a view where everything is black and white, an echo of Watts’ “on” and “off.” These limits are initiated when God utters his first words and commences dividing the territory by means of the sharp instrument of language.

The *cosmos* begins with the advent of symbolic representation encapsulated as language, and linguistic mapping of the *universe* is an attempt to use abstracted symbols to represent concrete experience; illusions held up and mistaken for reality. This approximation of reality may be read in terms of positing God as the architect of a simulation, but more significantly what arises from the establishment of the signified *cosmos* is its resulting capacity to then eradicate from view what lies beyond its parameters by simply remaining silent.

Zukav’s observation that a symbol and the reality it represents can never be the same (1976/2001, p. 284),<sup>19</sup> highlights the idea that even when objects in the *cosmos* are signified by language, with its inherent capacity for the slippage of meaning, language not only prevents alignment between the map and the territory, it can also block relationships between human creatures because any *cosmos* remains only a partial view of the *universe*. It is said of Heinlein’s Lazarus Long in *Time Enough*

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<sup>19</sup> The French, postmodern cultural theorist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard writes extensively on this idea with respect to the notions of simulacra and hyperreality. While a discussion of Baudrillard is beyond the scope of this thesis, further illumination from his work as it relates to this thesis may be best sourced from the text *Simulations* (1983), an English translation that combines the texts *Simulacre et Simulations* (1981) and *L’Echange Symbolique et la Mort* (1977).

for Love, a man described by another human creature in *Methuselah's Children* as “an atavism” (1958/1999, pp. 334-5), that it is:

‘doubt[ful] if anyone can understand him, in depth. He’s a primitive, dear - a living fossil.’

‘I would certainly like to try to understand him. This language he uses - Is it difficult?’

‘Very. Irrational, complicated syntax, and so loaded with idioms and multivalued that I trip even on words I think I know’ (1973, p. 46).

Similarly, Dick’s novel *Androids* provides numerous examples of such difficulties between human creatures, but perhaps the most specific, as the American literary academic and critic Jill Galvan points out, is when the bounty hunter Rick Deckard attempts to test Luba Luft using the Voigt-Kampff test (Dick, 1968/2007, pp. 88-90). As Galvan states, “I think it’s worth noting that Luba’s subversion involves, principally, a deliberate equivocation on points of the linguistic code – a code that in and of itself has the power to condemn her” (1997, p. 420). This is similar to Zukav’s example of an American in Lebanon, who, when asked if he were Christian or Moslem, replied by saying he was a tourist (1979/2001, p. 301). In such circumstances, the individual feels the pressure of the limiting nature of the language about them and the very real threat to their lives if they cannot find a way to circumvent these limitations.

Like many maps, language and its system of signification is often encountered prior to the territory it is attempting to describe. In Lovecraft’s story “The Whisperer in Darkness,” Henry Akeley’s letters, wire cable and photographs signpost the *landscape* for Wilmarth in significant detail some time before Wilmarth actually travels to the remote location in Vermont (2000, pp. 163-8, 170-3, 184, 186-98, 200). Similarly in “Pickman’s Model,” artist’s pictures map a progressive journey

through the territory of bodies and faces. The first works viewed by Thurber arouse curiosity, then others arouse suspicion, until having moved through to the north end of the building in which these pictures are housed, they become disturbing enough to sicken; the succession of images culminating in a photograph of the *actual body* of some *other* creature (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 51-7, 60).

The words that make up any language, as symbols, encode the maps of the territory they represent. The symbols of cryptography and conventions of cartography, as representations but not realities, transpose the view in such a manner as to allow the removal of the requirement for participation. The human creature can operate from the safe and ordered distance of the *cosmos*. However that creature must know what the symbols mean, or it will become lost.

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## Chapter 3

### Fractured Universe

St Thomas was preserved in the Orange Catholic Bible and the Azhar Book, but Canterbury was gone from the memories of men, as was the planet which had known it (Herbert, 1976, p. 226).

#### *Mapping the Unmappable Ocean*

As we have seen, a cosmological model, like a map, is only one particular view and not the territory itself. The “real universe” that Paul Atreides says “is always one step beyond logic” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 354), is like the *universe* perceived in “[t]he world view of particle physics [that] is a picture of *chaos beneath order*” (Zukav, 1979/2001, p. 216).

The territory of *chaos* that the human creature calls the *universe*, is the underlying *foundation* supporting the ordered cosmological map. As “the first state of the universe ... The ‘formless void’ of primordial matter, the ‘great deep’ or ‘abyss’ out of which the cosmos or order of the universe evolved” (“vol. III,” Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 22), *chaos* in this thesis is to be read as the condition that precedes and underpins all else. Furthermore, when *chaos* is also taken as an “[e]lement; environment; [or] space” (“vol. III,” Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 23) it becomes not only an underlying state or condition of the *universe*, but is also a fundamental component of the visible *landscape*.

The pursuit of a cosmological model that imposes order upon *chaos* is credited as first attempted by the Greek philosopher Thales, who claims water as the pre-existing material from which the *universe* is formed (Smith, Allhoff, & Vaidya,

2008, pp. 15-6). Similarly, Anaximander also suggests that life began from or within the water (Russell, 1946, p. 47). This idea of water being a substance that in some form pre-exists the ordered *cosmos* is supported by both the Greek philosophers and their *universe as machine*, and by the *Genesis cosmology*.<sup>20</sup> If water is to be taken as the pervasive element of the *universe* that cosmological models suggest, beyond the biological requirement for survival then, what is the significance for the human creature of water in the *universe*? In beginning to answer this question, the human creature comes to realise that the *universe* looks very different to the *cosmos* that it has become accustomed to.

### *The Deluge*<sup>21</sup>

Traces of the old [road] can still be found amidst the weeds of a returning wilderness, and some of them will doubtless linger even when half the hollows are flooded for the new reservoir. The dark woods will be cut down and the blasted heath will slumber far below blue waters whose surface will mirror the sky and ripple in the sun. And the secrets of the strange days will be one with the deep's secrets; one with the hidden lore of old ocean, and all the mystery of primal earth ("The Colour Out of Space," Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 236-7).

The *OED* defines deluge as "[a] great flood or overflowing of water, a destructive inundation" and as a term referring specifically to "[t]he great Flood in the time of Noah (also called *the general or universal deluge*)" ("vol. IV," Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 427). In the *Genesis cosmology*, the Deluge is clearly presented as the consequence of God's displeasure with the human creature and other land-dwelling

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<sup>20</sup> It is also worth noting that older than either the *universe as machine* or the *Genesis cosmology* as models of the *universe*, is the Sumerian cosmological model presented in *The Epic of Creation* and later embedded in some part into the *Genesis cosmology*. In this model, the god Apsu, who is correlated with the "domain of sweet, fresh water beneath the earth" (Dalley, 1989/2000, p. 318) and the goddess Tiamat, who is correlated with the "[s]ea, salt water personified" (Dalley, 1989/2000, p. 329) "mixed their waters together" ("Tablet I," Dalley, 1989/2000, p. 233).

<sup>21</sup> The capitalisation of the term designates the specific use as referring to Noachian Deluge in the *Genesis cosmology*, whereas a lower case usage designates a generic use of the term.

creatures. The event is motivated by a moral assessment, and what is interesting here is that while God casts judgement upon “men and animals, and creatures that moved along the ground, and birds of the air” (“Genesis 6:7,” Barker, 1985, p. 14), water dwelling creatures are exempt. Of course it can be said that in a deluge it is logical that water borne creatures will not be threatened, but God being God, he could determine to wipe them out one way or the other if they were unfavourable to him. The point is that this was not the case.

As an act of God motivated by a moral judgement, it is difficult to consider that the human creature did not take the Deluge personally. To reinforce the displeasure of God toward his own creation, the *Genesis cosmology* reiterates:

Every living thing that moved on the earth perished – birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth (“Genesis 7:21-3,” Barker, 1985, p. 16).

Indeed, the evaluation of such a large scale extinction into very personal terms has resonated within the human creature’s *landscape* ever since, evidenced in no small part by that creature’s preoccupation with sin, moralities of good and evil, its separation from deity and an obsessive drive to evaluate everything in terms of binary opposites with one of the poles being the right, best and favourable at the significant expense of the other. As Watts sums it up, rather than the game of black-and-white, the human creature plays “White-versus-Black,” and in this circumstance, black becomes negative, and then “[w]hite *must* win is no longer a game. It is a fight” (1966/1989, p. 35).

The Deluge is a critical *threshold*<sup>22</sup> event within the human creature's *cosmos* and it acts as a warning of what lengths God will go to if that creature steps too far out of line. Furthermore, the Deluge iterates just how far removed from its source the human creature has become. The only positive aspect of this event is that God also promises not to unleash another one and seals that promise with the appearance of the rainbow ("Genesis 9:11-7," Barker, 1985, p. 18).

Rather than another Deluge, God decides to save up judgement for an undisclosed point in future history, an event to be accompanied by an ultimate and irrevocable possibility at the end of qualifying for either life or for the "lake of fire" ("Revelation 20:11-5," Barker, 1985, p. 1948); and qualifying for eternity. The sum total of this unknown event to be held at an unknown time with, until that day for any human creature, an unknown outcome, is the generation of crippling fear that will stop that creature in its tracks and keep it confined to the *cosmos*. This fear is informed under the pretext of a cosmological model that is presented to that creature as the divine truth of a loving and just anthropomorphic God, and the *threshold* that the Deluge signposts opens up like some unfathomable gulf that the human creature has been continually taught it cannot reach beyond.

The waters of the Deluge are an important component of the *threshold* between the antediluvian *landscape* of the "great creatures of the sea," and the dust-dry,

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<sup>22</sup> A *threshold* is that liminal space between one state and another; where varying degrees of transformative experience are encountered, where conflicting opposites merge into one and the same moment of experience. For further expansion on various issues related to the idea of the *threshold*, the work of British anthropologist Victor Turner related to the "liminal," and "liminoid" in general, and the text *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (1982) specifically, are an excellent point from which to start. Further to this, a substantial portion of Joseph Campbell's corpus also deals comprehensively with ways to read and interpret *threshold* and liminal experiences and transformations.

postdiluvian *landscape* of the human creature. It is important here to draw the distinction between the antediluvian and the postdiluvian, for like much else related to the *Genesis cosmology*, this distinction is important within *cosmicism* and *neocosmicism*. The *landscape* of the first eight chapters of Genesis is antediluvian, as it is, “[o]f or belonging to the world before the Noachian deluge; [the *landscape*] existing before the Flood,” (“vol. I,” Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 505).<sup>23</sup>

As chapter two acknowledges, the *Genesis cosmology* refers to the “great creatures of the sea” as favoured by God, but these *others* and their *landscape* are hidden by the *engulfing* waters of the Deluge; submerged and forgotten in the same manner as Lovecraft’s Old Ones in a *landscape* where:

In the elder times chosen men had talked with the entombed Old Ones in dreams, but then something had happened. The great stone city R’lyeh, with its monoliths and sepulchres, had sunk beneath the waves; and the deep waters, full of the one primal mystery through which not even thought can pass, had cut off the spectral intercourse. But memory never died, and high priests said that the city would rise again when the stars were right. Then came out of the earth the black spirits of earth, mouldy and shadowy, and full of dim rumours picked up in caverns beneath forgotten sea-bottoms (“The Call of Cthulhu,” Lovecraft, 2000, p. 81).

The “something” that happens is the Deluge, and this event is the pivotal moment where the human creature’s view of the *universe* is altered, resulting in a radical shift that Part II will explore in some detail. What is of interest here is Lovecraft’s use of the phrase “the one primal mystery” and the location of this “mystery” in the “deep waters.” I suggest that this image supports the idea that the *threshold* signified by the Deluge appears to the human creature as an impassable one. Of considerable interest

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<sup>23</sup> The root word *diluvium*, means “flood, DELUGE” (Onions, 1969, pp. 39, 268), and the prefix *ante-* designates a thing or event as coming “before in place or time” (Onions, 1969, p. 39).

also is the implication that the human creature's endeavour to reach for what lies on the other side of the *threshold*, might indeed reveal the "primal mystery."

### *The Great Creatures of the Sea*

The Navy suited David. They ... let him ride around on the water, seeing strange and interesting places – untroubled by mules and the dust of cornfields (Heinlein, 1973, p. 55).

On the sixth day of creation in the *Genesis cosmology*, the human creature enters a *landscape* that interacts directly with the "great creatures of the sea." However as creatures of dry land, the human cohabits a *cosmos* in which it is not only estranged from these "great creatures," it is also estranged from the water in which those *others* live; and its sense of embodied safety on the dry land is constantly under threat from the pervasiveness of water, for "streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground" ("Genesis 2:6," Barker, 1985, p. 8). It is perhaps no coincidence that this image resonates with Freud's idea of the *heimlich* in "The Uncanny,"<sup>24</sup> and the importance of this cannot be overstated within the parameters of this thesis.

The waters are a threat because they are the substance of the *universe* that lies beyond the human creature's ordered *cosmos* and for which that creature's body is not designed. The pervasive imminence of water invading the *landscape* is a disturbing reminder of a *universe* in which many things exist that the *cosmos* has hidden away from the human creature. As Lovecraft's character Albert Wilmarth is only too well aware in "The Whisperer in Darkness," "the only thing that reach[es] my ears [i]s the

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<sup>24</sup> "The Uncanny" has been discussed in chapter 1 with respect to the ideas of the map and the territory.

gurgling, insidious trickle of strange waters from numberless hidden fountains in the shadowy woods” (2000, p. 205).

With Lovecraft’s image in mind then, and returning to the *Genesis cosmology’s* “great creatures,” it is worth pausing to consider the notes provided in *The NIV Study Bible* stating that:

The Hebrew word underlying this phrase was used in Canaanite mythology to name a dreaded sea monster. He is often referred to figuratively in O[ld] T[estament] poetry as one of God’s most powerful opponents ... In Genesis however, the creatures of the sea are portrayed not as enemies to be feared but as part of God’s good creation to be appreciated (Barker, 1985, p. 7).

As the human creature establishes itself in the *landscape*, evidence from numerous ancient texts, including various books within the Bible, supports the idea of the “great creatures” “as part of God’s good creation,” and indicate that communion between these *others* and the human creature exists.<sup>25</sup> This relationship however undergoes a shift that utterly reverses the relative positions of human creature and *others*, and the postdiluvian *cosmos* re-inscribes the “great creatures” as *others* to be feared. Significantly, the “Great creatures” that the Deluge hides beneath its waters are also those that God does not bring to the human creature for naming and consequent linguistic capture within the cosmological map (“Genesis 2:19-20,” Barker, 1985, p. 9). There is an interesting parallel between this event and what the

American literary critic and scholar, Bradley Will, writes of as Immanuel Kant’s

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<sup>25</sup> Such *others* include, but are not limited to, giants, leviathans, serpents, watchers and nephilim. Texts and traditions that document these *others* include, but are not limited to, the Christian bible, a text that also includes Jewish sacred texts (Barker, 1985), Sumerian and Akkadian texts, particularly the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the *Atrahasis* and *The Epic of Creation* (Dalley, 1989/2000), the *Book of Enoch* (Nickelsburg & VanderKam, 2004), the *Book of Giants* (Stuckenbruck, 1997), and Greek myth (Hamilton, 1969). All of these references are Sumerian-Babylonian-Greek-Latin origin – the founding cultural traditions of the West – and there are numerous identifiable parallels with these in other mythic traditions across the human *landscape* (Campbell, 1964, 1968). The point to be made is that a general consensus of co-operation and communication between the varying races or species of beings was once a part of the human creature’s experience in the *universe*.

distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal.<sup>26</sup> In his essay “H.P. Lovecraft and the Semiotic Kantian Sublime,” Will writes that without a distinct form, “we cannot hypothesize a universal rule to apply to it ... We cannot grasp the formless object” (2002, pp. 9-10); and without a distinct name, I suggest, the human creature is similarly unable to “grasp” the nameless object, indeed, the nameless *other*.

While the *Genesis cosmology*'s God neither allows these *others* to be named by the human creature, nor does this cosmology make any substantial claim regarding their form and appearance beyond an implication of size, later books within the Bible do, and in the postdiluvian *landscape* they are named as either monsters<sup>27</sup> or leviathans, with each of these titles occurring six times, and all of them located in the postdiluvian Old Testament (Goodrick & Kohlenberger, 1990, pp. 657, 759).

The *landscape* these “great creatures” inhabit, like the creatures themselves, is similarly described in language that evokes a sense of entering into something that is old beyond measure, in short, antediluvian, and in Lovecraft's story “The White Ship,” such a *landscape* is eloquently revealed as:

more wonderful than the lore of old men and the lore of books is  
the secret lore of ocean. Blue, green, gray, white or black; smooth,  
ruffled or mountainous; that ocean is not silent. All my days I have  
watched it and listened to it, and I know it well. At first it told me

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<sup>26</sup> Bradley Will describes Kant's “phenomenal sphere [a]s mechanistic, where effects have causes and are determined by natural laws” and “Kant's noumenal sphere [a]s the domain of free will, and he associates the noumenal with the faculty of reason – the faculty whereby we are able to make moral decisions” (2002, p. 8).

<sup>27</sup> Some scholars interpret these references as being metaphoric national representations of Babylon or Egypt, rather than cosmic representations of actual creatures. This does not, however, negate the use of these passages as referring to actual sea creatures. Such references include Jeremiah 51:34, Isaiah 51:9 and Ezekiel 29:3 and 32:2. What is also interesting, irrespective of whether a national or cosmic representation is applied to the passages, is that the English word *serpent* parallels the Hebrew word *monster* (Barker, 1985, p. 1210), and in terms of the physical image, a serpent in English and a monster in Hebrew refer to a creature that in appearance approximates a snake.

only the plain little tales of calm beaches and near ports, but with the years it grew more friendly and spoke of other things; of things more strange and more distant in space and in time. Sometimes at twilight the gray vapors of the horizon have parted to grant me glimpses of the ways beyond; and some times at night the deep waters of the sea have grown clear and phosphorescent, to grant me glimpses of the ways beneath. And these glimpses have been as often of the ways that were and the ways that might be, as of the ways that are; for ocean is more ancient than mountains, and freighted with the memories and dreams of Time (1994, pp. 57-8).

When the “great creatures” are revealed by either Lovecraft as his Great Old Ones, or the *Genesis cosmology*, these ancient creatures that endure, hidden within the waters, emerge upon the map not as allies to the human creature, but rather as adversarial *others*. The antediluvian heritage of Lovecraft’s Great Old Ones opens up the possibility for an alternate reading of the *Genesis cosmology*. Rather than a triumphant creation of the human creature and that creature’s supremacy in the *universe*, the *engulfing* Deluge in refiguring the map of the *universe*, foreshadow a different potential future than the human creature has for centuries comforted itself with. Like God’s leviathans, the Great Old Ones are removed from view but not from the *universe* beyond the limits of the view, and they remain as *others*:

who lived ages before there were any men, and who came to the young world out of the sky. These Old Ones were gone now, inside the earth and under the sea; but their dead bodies had told their secrets in dreams to the first man, who formed a cult which had never died ("The Call of Cthulhu," Lovecraft, 2000, p. 78).

Before the advent of the human creature upon the earth, the Great Old Ones who come from the sky, are entombed until the time “when the stars were ready” and have “come round again to the right positions in the cycle of eternity” ("The Call of Cthulhu," Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 78, 79,80, 81, 95). Lovecraft’s Old Ones are hidden, often enclosed within fortresses of stone, and always encircled by water. Over time, their hiding becomes solidified within the *amnesia of the cosmos*.

When they rise, they will rise from immersion in the water and crossing the watery *threshold* they will be birthed anew. The re-emerging of the antediluvian *landscape* into the awareness of the postdiluvian human creature, a circumstance that will be examined in detail in Part II, is the opening up of the *threshold* between *landscapes* and between the order of the *cosmos* and the *chaos* of the *universe*.

As Lovecraft writes in his story “Dagon” when the ordered grid of the map dissolves:

It was in one of the most open and least frequented parts of the broad Pacific ... Of the longitude I knew nothing, and no island or coastline was in sight. The weather kept fair and for uncounted days I drifted aimlessly beneath the scorching sun; waiting either for some passing ship, or to be cast onto the shores of some habitable land. But neither ship nor land appeared, and I began to despair in my solitude upon the heaving vastness of unbroken blue. The change happened whilst I slept (1994, pp. 11-2).

While the *cosmos* is bound beneath the *threshold* of sky and the sun burning within that sky, it is the *landscape* that rises up from the deep waters and that *landscape's* Great Old Ones, that confronts the human creature with the antediluvian past. Often described by Lovecraft as Cyclopean,<sup>28</sup> its age is so great that nothing in it is familiar to the human creature. Even a culture such as the Greek or Roman, considered ancient by twenty-first century human creatures, bears no similarity with the antediluvian. When the antediluvian is evoked, the comfort that accompanies a sense of connection to some long but continuous historical line, is broken, and the human creature is:

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<sup>28</sup> The Cyclopean is synonymous with the antediluvian, and is defined in the *OED* as: “**1.a.** Belonging to or resembling the Cyclopes; monstrous, gigantic, huge; single, or large and round, like the one eye of a Cyclops. **2. Antiq.** Applied to an ancient style of masonry in which the stones are of immense size and more or less irregular shape; found in Greece, Italy and elsewhere, and anciently fabled to be the work of a gigantic Thracian race called Cyclopes from their king Cyclops. Now applied also to similar ancient work in other regions” (“vol. IV,” Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 192).

confronted by the richly ornate and perfectly preserved facade of a great building, evidently a temple, hollowed from the solid rock ... The art is of the most phenomenal perfection, largely Hellenic in idea, yet strangely individual. It imparts an impression of terrible antiquity, as though it were the remotest rather than the immediate ancestor of Greek art ("The Temple," Lovecraft, 1994, pp. 107-8).

Such *landscapes* are often witnessed by human creatures that are surrounded by water; examples of which include but are no means limited to Karl Heinrich in "The Temple" (Lovecraft, 1994, pp. 98-113), the narrator of "Dagon" (Lovecraft, 1994, pp. 11-7) and Francis Thurston<sup>29</sup> in "The Call of Cthulhu" (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 61-98). What these human creatures share, and represent, is a human awareness of an absolute isolation from familiar *landscapes*, and they confront a *landscape* that is wet, oozing, dark and filled with the sights, sounds and smells of decay ("The Call of Cthulhu," Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 65-6). The antediluvian is the antithesis of all in the *cosmos* that is safe and familiar.

### ***An Isolate Object on a Map***

*Empires do not suffer emptiness of purpose at the time of their creation. It is when they have become established that aims are lost and replaced by vague ritual.*

- Words of Muad'dib

by Princess Irulan (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 47).

When cosmological models begin to diverge and reify, they evolve in a manner that increasingly engenders less an experience of living in the *universe* and more an abstracted doctrine of estrangement from the *universe*. I suggest that the crucial time in which this splitting between the *universe as machine* and the *Genesis cosmology* gathers momentum, coincides with the Council of Nicaea's establishment in 325 A.D.

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<sup>29</sup> As the narrator of "The Call of Cthulhu," Thurston is never named in the text of the story itself, but "only in the subtitle [omitted in many editions], as 'the late Francis Wayland Thurston, of Boston'" (Joshi & Schultz, 2001, p. 27).

of Christianity as a formalised and State controlled religion (Campbell, 1964, p. 364). The widening gap between the human creature and its deity, is later mirrored and supported in the development of science as a formalised “method.” According to the anonymous friend of Lovecraft’s character Tillinghast’s in “From Beyond,” the study of science and philosophy “should be left to the frigid and impersonal investigator” (1994, p. 89), and by the requirements of scientific method this will be an investigator who observes from the outside whatever is under investigation. This is, according to Lovecraft’s narrator, a necessity borne of the fact that such pursuits yield “despair, if he fail in his quest, and terrors unutterable and unimaginable if he succeed” (1994, p. 90); exactly the dilemma faced by Dick’s character Deckard in *Androids*.

When reflecting on his actions Deckard finds that he cannot reconcile his sense of self with the experiences of his life, and “what I’ve done, he thought; that’s become alien to me. In fact, everything about me has become unnatural; I’ve become an unnatural self” (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 201). The method of his life as a bounty hunter (1968/2007, pp. 10-11, 23-4) is a map that has not changed as his hunting ground, embodied by the Nexus-6 android, has changed (1968/2007, pp. 25-6). Successive encounters with the Nexus-6 demonstrate a certain unexpected and previously unencountered capacity within the androids for emotional reactions that fall within human parameters. The detailed encounter Deckard has with Luba Luft (1968/2007, pp. 85-6, 113-6, 119) who “had seemed *genuinely* alive” (1968/2007, p. 122) contributes, by the close of the novel, to Deckard’s comprehension that he is stranded in a *cosmos* in which he has become the alien, even unto himself.

In becoming alien, the *universe* also reduces the human creature to little more than a construct erected on a map. While such a condition may be acceptable for the portable, electronic psychiatrist Dr Smile in *Palmer Eldrich* that is “alive but it’s not connected with anything outside itself” (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 81), this kind of disconnection becomes problematic for the human creature. This estrangement is the fallout of *cosmoses* that fail to appropriately interpret the *universe*.

In the figuration of *cosmoses* as ways of thinking about the *universe*, the human creature positions itself as an isolated object in a *universe* from which it has been estranged (Zukav, 1979/2001, pp. 94-5, 196, 289-90; Capra, 1983, p. 144). In *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space*, Joseph Campbell refers to this as a “reification of metaphoric imagery” (1986/2002, p. xxi); an isolation of the human creature from the *universe* that is similar to the French existential philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre’s expression in *Being and Nothingness* of being:

shut up against God, [and] then nothing any longer guarantees my existence to God; he is now united to me only by a relation of exteriority, as the sculptor is related to the finished statue, and once again he can know me only through images (1956, p. 315).

In becoming an object upon a map, the human creature no longer participates with the *universe*; having access “only through images.” Furthermore, having been raised in the shadow of an anthropomorphic deity of morality, that creature has difficulty coming to terms with the idea that the *universe* may actually be subject to the impersonal and morally neutral workings of a mechanism. When Dick’s character Tung Chien in “Faith of Our Fathers” “wondered what some of the other views consisted of,” hoping that the Absolute Benefactor does not look like a previous

vision Chien had of a mechanism, he ultimately “gave up that line of speculation; it was unprofitable. And too anxiety-inducing” (1987, p. 212).

In order to cope with its fears of the emotionless *machine*, the human creature retreats into a particular way of dealing with that fear. By the nineteenth century however, the very *foundation* of the *Genesis cosmology* becomes destabilised with the development of new evidence based scientific theories. Two significant publications of gathered evidence to note are Charles Lyell’s three volume *Principles of Geology: Being an Attempt to Explain the Former Changes of the Earth’s Surface, by Reference to Causes now in Operation* (1830/1970, 1832/1970, 1833/1970), in which he uses the identification of vast scales of time in the geological record to establish the principle of uniformitarianism; and the subsequent influence of Lyell’s *Principle’s* upon the development of Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection: or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859/1936).

As if the two apparent adversaries of science and religion were indeed two sides of the same coin, this same period in history is witness to significant philosophical developments wherein the established church doctrine suffers a particularly devastating blow from the exposition of the idea of the death, or at the very least lack, of God in the *universe*. In *A Scanner Darkly*, Dick’s character Bob Arctor declares that “as near as I can figure out, God is dead.” To which his friend Luckman replies that he “didn’t know He was sick” (2008, p. 1033). This view of a godless *universe* is most popularly recognised as originating with Friedrich Nietzsche in *The Will to Power* (1968, pp. 55, 70, 376-7), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

(Kaufmann, 1954) and *The Gay Science* in which Nietzsche succinctly writes “that ‘God is dead’, that the belief in the Christian God has ceased to be believable” ([343], Kaufmann, 1954, p. 447); and this idea is also iterated by Jean-Paul Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* (1956, pp. 129, 315, 375, 547).

If deity exists in the *universe* in the manner that the *Genesis cosmology* asserts, then that deity’s retreat and death draws attention to the failure of its cosmological frame. This lack of an external deity in the *universe*, occurs approximately parallel with the development of Freud’s psychoanalytic view of the human creature. It is perhaps a generalisation, but sobering nonetheless, that by the early twenty-first century it seems as if nearly every human creature in the West has either, a neuroses or medicated psychological condition within which they are imprisoned, a counsellor, or a therapist. The human creature has become so introspective that the claim might be made that the only *landscape* that can be seen is the internal *landscape* of the self and this is, largely, a self disengaged and dismembered.

Within the vacuum of such fragmentation, Bob Arctor, in *A Scanner Darkly*, questions what it is that gives a human creature identity, wondering where the *threshold* lies between an identity put forward as a mask or gesture within the social *landscape*, and the genuine identity of the individual (Dick, 2008, pp. 882-3). The social *landscape* from which Arctor has at this point emerged, is a scripted speech on his role as an undercover narcotics agent fighting to deliver the human collective from the evil grip of drug addiction, and the script has been delivered from within the safe anonymity of his scramble suit. The scramble suit is designed to project every possible variable in the appearance of the human body, thereby resulting in an

image of a person recognisable by the fact they look in some way like everybody else, and can therefore never be identified as any particular individual (Dick, 2008, p. 877). Their *real* face is never seen. But after his speech, Arctor wonders:

What is identity? ... Where does the act end? Nobody knows ...  
 What am I actually? he asked himself. He wished, momentarily,  
 for his scramble suit. Then, he thought, I could go on being a  
 vague blur and passers-by, street people in general, would applaud.  
 Let's hear it for the vague blur, he thought, doing a short rerun  
 (Dick, 2008, p. 883).

*A Scanner Darkly* deals with the identity of Bob Arctor as a progressive unravelling. The more he examines himself and the more he looks inward, the less certain he becomes of who he is.

The most recent century of human history has been one of significant and rapid change. During the first half of the twentieth century, the human creature has survived two global conflicts, punctuated between by the Great Depression and concluded with the unleashing of nuclear capabilities at Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the stars of heaven well and truly fell to the earth. In the aftermath of nuclear warfare and racial genocide – events that contribute greatly to the polarisation of the West during the reigns of McCarthyism and the Cold War – the human creature is propelled to such a distant point of the map, that while the destination may remain unseen, the point of origin has become lost. There is simply no trail of breadcrumbs left to be followed. As Anne Hawthorne says in *Palmer Eldrich*, “ ‘Earth is ceasing to become our natural world ... we’ve got no world left! ... No home at all!’ ” (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 149).

The *universe* as it is read through the lens of any *cosmos*, has become a fractured *landscape* of opposing forces, an oscillation between binary opposites that cannot be reconciled. The Irish poet Yeats writes in “The Second Coming,” that “[t]hings fall apart; the centre cannot hold” adding to this revelation “[t]hat twenty centuries of stony sleep/ Were vexed to nightmare” (Jeffares, 1984, pp. 246-7). The reified map no longer reflects the dynamic territory, and what is left is a complex tangle of maps – a great wad of knots in the trajectory of linear time – all of them submerging the *universe*.

Because a retreat into a religious cosmology has been a way for the human creature to negate the possibility that the *universe* is a *machine* of *cold equations*, similar to Watts’ idea of black versus white, this negation also designates the *universe as machine* – and by extension any machine – as negative and perhaps even malevolent. This is a moral assessment of an amoral, or more precisely *supramoral* entity, and the *machine* in the face of a retreating and abstracted deity, becomes an adversary.

The machine is not human, and it is not unreasonable to extend this view to the idea that in the *universe as machine*, the *universe* and the human creature are also separate and incompatible. The *universe as machine* keeps expanding, and it does so inexorably (Gribbin, 2009, p. 4), and while the *universe* continues to expand, the human creature exists in a *cosmos* divided. The *cosmos* has become corrupt and adversarial, or impersonally mechanical and godless; and the human creature has forgotten that this is not the *universe*. It may be that when the human creature draws too near the *universe* it reacts by hiding that territory beneath the map, and the *heimlich* of familiarity becomes the unfamiliar other side of the *heimlich* coin. The

disturbing and the uncanny that rouses not only curiosity and wonder, but to which the human creature almost invariably responds with fear, is never far from the surface; a potential crisis for that creature, and an crisis to which Part II in its examination of *cosmicism* will now turn.

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## **Part II: Cosmicism**

## Chapter 4

### Cosmicism Is

[W]e cannot help seeing that there is not a spark of genuine evidence or even likelihood of the universe's being anything but a perpetual cycle of mutually interacting forces, whose regular rearrangements always have been going on and always will be going on. ("February 13, 1928", Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, p. 227).

Accident has caused a certain momentary energy-pattern to coagulate for an instant in a negligible corner of limitless space. It calls itself "mankind", and has a certain number of basic needs arising from the chance conditions of its formation ... We are all meaningless atoms adrift in the void ("Novr. 21, 1930", Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, pp. 221-2).

As I have already noted, *cosmicism* is drawn from the philosophy of H.P. Lovecraft and its principle tenets are that the *universe* operates as an indifferent mechanism, without "purpose or direction," and the human creature is not only insignificant but exists as a biological mutation or accident of elemental and chemical stellar processes. The mechanism of the *universe* operates without emotions or ethics of human parameters and understanding, thereby rendering any ethical effort as pointless, for morality has influence and meaning only at an insignificant and localised level. The *universe* is also characterised by the absence of a moral deity that cares for the human creature.

The term *cosmicism* is formed by the combination of the word cosmic and the suffix *ism*. If something is cosmic, it is "of this world, worldly, of or belonging to the universe" ("vol. III", Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 983), and an *ism* signifies "naming the process, or the completed action, or its result" and is used to "[f]orm the name of a system of theory or practice" ("vol. VIII", Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 113). *Cosmicism* is, therefore, a "system of theory" about the *universe*.

A point worth noting is that while the term *cosmicism* is absent from English dictionaries and almost entirely so from theory – literary or otherwise – the *OED* does cite the term *cosmism*, which it defines as “[t]he conception of the cosmos or ‘order of nature’ as a self-existent, self-acting whole; the theory which explains the cosmos or universe solely according to the methods of positive science” (“vol III”, Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 984). By definition, *cosmism* could to some degree be paralleled with *cosmicism*. The significant exception between the two terms is perhaps *cosmicism*’s explicit condition of the absence of a “cosmic intelligence” (“Jany. 23, 1931”, Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, p. 281), or deity, whereas *cosmism* remains silent on this issue.

It is also important to note that the *OED*, and many theoretical *sf* texts, often appear to use the terms *cosmos* and *universe* interchangeably. Lovecraft also does this, using both terms in similar manner to my definition for *universe*.<sup>30</sup> In reference to Lovecraft then, as I have already noted in the glossary of terms, read his use of the terms *cosmos* and *universe* as evoking the same meaning; that is, *universe*.

Having examined the basic definition of *cosmicism*, it is also appropriate to make some comment on the rather curious position of the term itself, and by consequence,

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<sup>30</sup> Examples of the use of the terms *cosmos* and *universe* by Lovecraft when discussing events, principles and observations include, but are by no means limited to, *Selected Letters 1911-1924* (Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, pp. 24, 44, 63-4, 132-3, 156, 207-9, 231, 260, 298), *Selected Letters 1925-1929* (Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, pp. 150-1, 355-6), *Selected Letters 1929-1931* (Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, pp. 39, 54, 86-7, 196, 208), *Selected Letters 1932-1934* (Derleth & Turner, 1976a, pp. 6-7, 22-3, 56-7, 82) and *Selected Letters 1934-1937* (Derleth & Turner, 1976b, pp. 4, 113, 116, 153-4, 195, 239-43). The interchangeable nature of these two terms is at times so fluid, that both terms even appear in the same piece of correspondence and in reference to the same things. Examples of this include, but are not limited to, *Selected Letters 1911-1924* (Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, pp. 334-5), *Selected Letters 1925-1929* (Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, 124-6, 261-74, 334-5), *Selected Letters: 1929-1931* (Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, pp. 450-1) and *Selected Letters 1934-1937* (Derleth & Turner, 1976b, p. 69).

the philosophy. What I find particularly interesting, where the acknowledgement of *cosmicism* is locatable within critical text or the discussion and dissemination of ideas via differing media within the lay community, is that there appears to be a general consensus on what *cosmicism* is as a theory, but no definitive, encyclopaedic definition of *cosmicism* as a recognisable term in the English or literary lexicons. The *OED* lists “cosmic, cosmical, cosmically, cosmism, cosmist, cosmize, cosmogeny, cosmogony, cosmology and cosmos” (“vol. III”, Simpson & Weiner, 1989, pp. 983-6), but not *cosmicism*, and to date, the only other source for a definition I have encountered, beyond the scope of Lovecraftian scholarship, is the questionable authority of the internet encyclopaedia *Wikipedia*. That *cosmicism* appears to be a term that until recently has been, and largely continues to be, used almost exclusively within the proximity of Lovecraftian commentary is clear, but why this should be so is perhaps more of a mystery.<sup>31</sup> While it is not within the direct scope of this thesis to investigate how and why this has occurred, it is none the less a matter worth touching on, for some of the issues that surround this question have also orbited *sf* in general and continue to haunt the genre. *Appendix B* provides a brief discussion of some of the cultural factors that have perhaps influenced the positioning of *cosmicism* as a theory in the past; a position that recent scholarship, this thesis included, has endeavoured to influence.

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<sup>31</sup> A further search for the term *cosmicism* on 3 October 2012 has uncovered an interesting page at <http://www.kk.org/thetechnium/archives/2012/02/cosmicism.php>. The author of this page asserts an argument that I have also identified during my own gameplay of the *Mass Effect* trilogy (2007-2012); in short, that this series of games is firmly grounded within *cosmicism's universe*. Overall, a search in October 2012 for the term *cosmicism*, as compared to an initial search in 2009, has returned a higher number and variance of hits; indicating a growing awareness of and dialogue related to *cosmicism* and its meaning within the lay community, although it would still appear that *cosmicism* remains in the wilderness with respect to a wider scholarly discussion. This would in itself make for a valuable study, the results of which would contribute to the canon of literary theory, but is far too large a task to be addressed within the confines of this thesis.

The term *cosmicism* can be evidenced within the academic community, but it is reasonable to say that while the philosophy's basic tenets are recognised as points of interest and enquiry, the term itself is largely not recognised, even when scholars and critics are writing in direct reference to and analysis of Lovecraft's work. As a precise term that can be used to express a particular philosophical point of view and therefore be used as a tool for critical inquiry, *cosmicism* becomes highly visible because it is almost entirely invisible.

There appear to be rare exceptions to this, although even within these exceptions, the actual term *cosmicism* is used very sparingly outside the scholarship of the Indian born literary critic, biographer, and editor S.T. Joshi (1996, pp. 50, 71, 83-4, 128, 132-3, 176-7, 210, 231, 234, 253, 260-5). After Joshi, the few scattered uses of the term that I have located include, but are not limited to, texts by Timothy Evans (2004, p. 177), the literary historian Philip Shreffler (1977, pp. 9-10), and the American literary theorist and theologian Edward Ingebretsen, who mentions "[t]he cosmicisms of Poe and Lovecraft" (1996, p. 117).

One of the earlier expressions of Lovecraft's philosophy can be found in his correspondence with "The Kleicomolo."<sup>32</sup> In 1916 Lovecraft writes that:

Our human race is only a trivial incident in the history of creation ... And more: may not all mankind be a mistake - an abnormal growth - a disease in the system of Nature - an excrescence on the body of infinite progression like a wart on the human hand? ... How arrogant of use, creatures of the moment, whose very species is but an experiment of the *Deus Naturae*, to arrogate to ourselves an immortal future and considerable status! ... we imagine that the welfare of our race is the paramount consideration, when as a matter of fact the very existence of the race may be an obstacle to

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<sup>32</sup> This is a collective name for a group of correspondents; being Reinhardt Kleiner (Klei), Ira A. Cole (co), Maurice W. Moe (mo) and H.P. Lovecraft (lo) ("June 4, 1916", Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 23).

the predestined course of the aggregated universe of infinity! How do we know that the form of atomic and molecular motion called "life" is the highest of all forms? Perhaps the dominant creature - the most rational and God-like of all beings - is an invisible gas! Or perhaps it is a flaming and effulgent mass of molten star-dust. Who can say that men have souls while rocks have none? ("August 8," Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 24).

In Lovecraft's *universe*, the human creature is an insignificant being, a blemish or contagion that may actually hinder the operation and evolution of the *universe*. This is a *universe* vacated by an anthropomorphic deity, governed instead by the amoral processes of nature, and possessed of no care or even awareness for the emotions and moralities of the localised, human creature. It is a *universe* that exists, largely, beyond human comprehension. Whilst over the rest of his life Lovecraft refines this view, particularly in his later and more explicit insistence that the *universe* is not created but is eternal, the fundamental elements of *cosmicism* are established by Lovecraft in 1916, as quoted above.

While the term *cosmicism* is seldom used by Lovecraft, he does write of his "infinite-cosmicism" ("October 30, 1929", Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, p. 44), and acknowledges "the cosmicism of Bierce, James, & even Machen," adding that "[i]t is not every writer who feels poignantly & almost intolerably the pressure of cryptic & unbounded outer space" (Oct. 7, 1930", Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, p. 196). More commonly, however, Lovecraft uses such phrases as "cosmic horror" (Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, p. 316; Lovecraft, 1973, p. 86), "cosmic terror" (Lovecraft, 1973, p. 17), "cosmic fear" (Lovecraft, 1973, pp. 15, 32, 63, 71, 88, 99) and "cosmic chaos" (Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 284) to explicate varying aspects of his philosophy of *cosmicism*.

The *universe* in *cosmicism* is a vast, indifferent mechanism, often expressed by Lovecraft as chaotic, and devoid of any emotion or regard for the human creature. He writes that “[t]he cosmos is a mindless vortex; a seething ocean of blind forces” (“October 6, 1921”, Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 156); that it is “an automatic, meaningless chaos devoid of ultimate values or distinctions of right and wrong” (“February 3, 1924”, Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 298). Throughout his correspondence, Lovecraft writes variations of a view of the *universe* as “a purposeless & meaningless affair of endless cycles ... consisting wholly of blind force operating according to fixed & eternal patterns inherent in eternity,” and that these forces “recognis[e] no such qualities as good or evil, beauty or ugliness, in the ultimate structure of the universe” (“April 21, 1927”, Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, pp. 124-5). The *universe* is structured and operates like a machine “whose substance involves a rhythmic & perpetual rearrangement of parts in the manner of a kaleidoscope” (“Jany. 16, 1932”, Derleth & Turner, 1976a, p. 7). This perpetual, cyclic motion of parts is “*automatic and kaleidoscopic*” (“August 16, 1932”, Derleth & Turner, 1976a, p. 56), within “the ceaseless round of the limitless cosmos” (“July 16, 1934”, Derleth & Turner, 1976b, p. 4).

Lovecraft draws a *universe* that operates as an eternal, infinite and indifferent machine that is devoid of emotional regard for any thing or affective event that occurs, irrespective of whether is it “good or bad according to any particular local standard” (“March 21, 1924”, Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 334). The human creature that inhabits – albeit an insignificant part of – the *universe*, is itself “cosmos-driven automata” (“March 5, 1935”, Derleth & Turner, 1976b, p. 113) subject to “the ineluctable natural laws & probabilities which actually prevail”

("Sept. 23, 1935", Derleth & Turner, 1976b, p. 196). These "natural laws" are the *cold equations* that underpin the indifferent machine of *cosmicism's universe*.

The *cold equations* can be equated with Lovecraft's referent of "Determinism," and this:

rules inexorably ... The real fact is simply that every event in the cosmos is caused by the action of antecedent and circumjacent forces, so that whatever we do is unconsciously the inevitable product of Nature rather than of our own volition ("Friday the 13th, May 1921", Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 132).

By its very design the *universe* renders ethical effort pointless beyond the human creature's terrestrial locality and this "blind universe" ("Feb. 10, 1923", Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 209) of *cosmicism* is an image repeatedly cited by Lovecraft. While the immediate effect of this idea is to highlight the sense of an indifferent mechanism with no regard for the human creature, it is through the later development of *neocosmicism* that the *universe's* apparent blindness, inasmuch as this infers a human negation of something, becomes a fundamental element of rewriting the terrain of the *universe*.

The *cold universe* is alien to the human creature that has remained confined within a map of anthropomorphic superiority. The American author and contemporary of Lovecraft, R.E. Howard, writes in the letters section of *Weird Tales* in May 1928 that in the story "The Call of Cthulhu," Lovecraft "has grasped, to all intents, the world outside our paltry ken. His scope is unlimited and his range is cosmic" (Joshi & Michaud, 1979, p. 28). It is this unknowable *universe* that like a roiling sea, encircles the insignificant and localised human creature. Even though from a human perspective the world that creature inhabits seems immense, it is little more than a

dustmote ("March 5, 1935", Derleth & Turner, 1976b, p. 113), beyond which lie "the unknown phaenomena and abysses of space" ("Friday 13th, May 1921", Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 131).

In correspondence with Edwin Baird, the editor of *Weird Tales*, Lovecraft asks, "who ever wrote a story from the point of view that man is a blemish on the cosmos, who ought to be eradicated?" and answers that "[o]ne can't write a weird story of real power without perfect psychological detachment from the human scene" ("*Weird Tales*, March 1924", Joshi & Michaud, 1979, p. 20). This detachment is a critical element of *cosmicism* that serves to highlight the magnitude of the human creature's acute locality and influence that is perpetually and immanently threatened with extinction. The human creature's "exstatic wonder at the unfathomed reaches of nighted space and the glittering jewels of nebular, solar and planetary fire," is starkly contrasted with the knowledge that such wonder is located within a "kaleidoscopic, undying and unbounded drama of infinite time and space, [where] everything terrestrial and human has seemed to shrink away to insignificance" to reveal "the filthy louse called man ... this crawling insect species" ("May 3, 1922", Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 172). Furthermore, organic life will disappear entirely and:

When the breed is extinct, there will be none (unless some other terrestrial species arises to consciousness) to recall that it ever existed. And when this planet is finally frozen to lifelessness by the fading of the sun, there will certainly be not a conceivable grain of evidence to tell anybody (assuming the existence of other organisms somewhere amidst the scattered galaxies) that any life had ever existed on it ("Octr. 3-5-7, 1932", Derleth & Turner, 1976a, p. 82).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Cormac McCarthy's 2006 novel, *The Road*, is a highly visible twenty-first century speculative iteration of this kind of ending for the human creature; contemporising *cosmicism*'s wider relevance as an interpretive framework and demonstrating its literary reach more generally.

Lovecraft often writes of the idea that everything will end (Houellebecq, 2005, p. 32), and while “terrestrial life past and present” (“Feby. 20, 1929”, Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, p. 264) will most certainly disappear, Lovecraft acknowledges that even apparently eternal celestial bodies such as stars and planets are “*temporary in the long run,*” (“Feby. 20, 1929”, Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, p. 266) and “eventually the very material substance of [a planet’s] system - & galaxy - & universe - disintegrates into its constituent electrons & leaves only an “empty” field of force (out of which another universe is later born)” (“April 24, 1935”, Derleth & Turner, 1976b, p. 153).

In this impersonal mechanism in which the human creature is insignificant, *cosmicism* reaches even further into that creature’s sense of ontological stability to isolate all human emotion, morality and ethics as purely local concerns that bear no significance in the *universe* at large. Whether the human creature “suffer[s] or not [its] feelings are the most trivial of incidents in the unending cycle of existence” (“October 6, 1921”, Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 156), for in this *universe*, “ ‘[r]ight’ and ‘wrong’ are primitive conceptions which cannot endure the test of cold science” (“Feb. 10, 1923”, Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 207). Ultimately, human moralities amount to nothing (“8 November, 1923”, Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 262), and while “[t]here is no reason to suppose that any given human impression has any exact correspondence with any external reality” (“Jany. 23, 1931”, Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, p. 281), such moralities and traditions mean “everything locally and pragmatically because we have nothing else to shield us from a devastating sense of ‘lostness’ in endless time and space” (“June 10, 1929”, Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, p. 357).

This sense of “lostness” is compounded by the sense that in the sea of “endless time and space,” no recognisably sympathetic deity can be found. The absence of deity, I suggest, is prefaced by the very structure of the *Genesis cosmology* as it points towards a retreating God. As Edward Ingebreetsen observes in *Maps of Heaven, Maps of Hell: Religious Terror as Memory from the Puritans to Stephen King* (hereafter referred to as *Maps of Heaven, Maps of Hell*), the Sixteenth Century French theologian John Calvin may be interpreted as “most directly anticipat[ing]” Lovecraft’s vision of the *universe*, but it is the theology of the Eighteenth Century American Puritan, Johnathan Edwards, that Lovecraft “most completely realizes the horrific consequences of.” That is: that “[t]here is no holy from which to retreat; no mysticism save the appalling solipsism of the Self in a cosmos of incomprehensible, literally unimaginable design” (1996, p. 106).

Lovecraft’s essay *Supernatural Horror in Literature* opens with one of his most often quoted and well know statements, where he claims that “[t]he oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown” (1973, p. 12). In saying this, he firmly locates the fear at the heart of *cosmicism* as having co-existed with the human creature for virtually all of its racial and mythic memory. Lovecraft’s opening statement also highlights the challenge *cosmicism* reveals, the question of how an emotional creature can assimilate that emotion and thereby itself, within a *universe* that is without emotion. How can the human creature find the balance between its “cosmic fear” and a *universe* that does not recognise and therefore respond to such fear? When writing of Charles Maturin’s 1820 novel *Melmoth, the Wanderer*, Lovecraft claims that

“[f]ear is taken out of the realm of the conventional and exalted into a hideous cloud over mankind’s very destiny” (1973, p. 32), and in considering Edgar Allen Poe, Lovecraft claims that Poe writes with “a master’s vision of the terror that stalks about and within us” (1973, p. 54).

What this points toward, what lies at the heart of *cosmicism*, is that the human response to the *universe* is a response of fear. The American essayist and editor Darrell Schweitzer writes that “[f]ew people seriously expect the supernatural to intervene in their lives. But the night fears are still with us” (1978, p. 61)<sup>34</sup> and the French writer and filmmaker Michel Houellebecq remarks that Lovecraft’s openings to his stories are often some variant form of “Abandon all hope, ye who enter here” (2005, p. 54). When beholding the *universe as it is*, Lovecraft points toward only two possibilities, and these are flight into madness or death:

The rational mind, he said, is most horrified by an assault of irrationality, the discovery that all previously held and comfortable assumptions about the way the universe works are wrong. The façade of human understanding is swept away, revealing vast vistas of the unknown which are at the same time terrifying and excitingly attractive. Ultimately, terror overwhelms wonder, and the hero is swamped in helpless despair (Schweitzer, 1978, p. 6).

Adding to this, there appears to be scholarly agreement that Lovecraft holds a very specific intent in mind when he uses the term cosmic. As the Lovecraftian editor and critic David Schultz identifies, Lovecraft does not use the term “cosmic” in a vague way, but in a very specific one in which he:

forces us to shift the focus from the immediate and humanocentric to the point of view taken by the vast uncaring cosmos. Cosmic

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<sup>34</sup> As Lovecraft writes in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, “Children will always be afraid of the dark, and men with minds sensitive to hereditary impulse will always tremble at the thought of the hidden and fathomless world of strange life which may pulsate in the gulfs beyond the stars or press hideously upon our own globe in unholy dimensions which only the dead and the moonstruck can glimpse” (1973, p. 14).

fear must surely penetrate far deeper and with greater persistence than any personal fear, and obscure cosmic relationships cannot be perceived by shortsighted humans (2011, p. 217).

For the human creature that inhabits the *universe*, the strength of Schultz's statement lies in the fact that he draws the same distinction as Lovecraft's. That is, when the human creature looks upon a *universe* that is not only vast but in which by comparison it is so utterly insignificant, a gulf opens up between this realisation and the need for that creature to maintain its footing in a local identity in order that it might hold onto a sense of actually existing in the first place. Attempting to bridge this gulf in *cosmicism*, inevitably leads to madness or death, and sanity is only maintained by turning away from this *threshold* and back into denial or illusion.

In a *universe* stripped of any deity that might care, the *Genesis cosmology* no longer holds up as a map from which to seek comfort or help, and the *universe as machine* as a central and explicit aspect of *cosmicism*, only serves to contribute to the human creature's sense of estrangement from the *universe*. This estrangement is compounded by the very real fear that as a consequence of its insignificance, if a *foundation* on which to stand cannot be found, the human creature is also at risk of estrangement from its own self; of disappearing altogether. This is what Schultz refers to when he claims that "[c]osmic fear must surely penetrate far deeper and with greater persistence than any personal fear," and this is what places the human creature in such a precarious and maddening position in the *universe of cosmicism*. When considering the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Lovecraft writes in his essay *Supernatural Horror in Literature* that Hawthorne is "cramped by the Puritanism of early New England; shadowed and wistful, and grieved at an unmoral universe

which everywhere transcends the conventional patterns thought by our forefathers to represent divine and immutable law” (1973, p. 61).

This fractured human condition is recognised by Lovecraft and succinctly expressed by the American mathematician and Lovecraftian scholar Donald Burlison when he writes in his essay “On Lovecraft’s Themes: Touching the Glass,” that:

The overall effect, then, of the thematic content of Lovecraft’s fiction is to cleave reality into a bipolar opposition: the hope of humankind to have dignity and worth and meaning on the one hand, and, on the other, the dashing of those hopes in the contemplation of a cosmos blindly indifferent to the presence of humans (2011, p. 150).

Examples of such fractured creatures in Lovecraft’s fiction include the U-boat captain Altberg-Ehrenstein in “The Temple” (1994, pp. 98-113); Joel Manton and his friend Carter in “The Unnamable” (1994, pp. 226-35); Delapore in “The Rats in the Walls” (2000, pp. 19-43); Johansen in “The Call of Cthulhu” (2000pp. 61-98); Albert Wilmarth in “The Whisperer in Darkness” (2000pp. 154-235); Ammi Pierce and Mrs Gardner in “The Colour Our of Space” (2000pp. 236-71); Robert Blake in “The Haunter of the Dark” (2000pp. 272-301); Edward Derby and Daniel Upton in “The Thing on the Doorstep” (2000pp. 302-34); and the unnamed narrators of “Dagon,” (1994, pp. 11-7), “From Beyond” (1994, pp. 89-97), “The Moon Bog” (1994, pp. 119-28), “The Call of Cthulhu” (2000, pp. 61-98) and “The Lurking Fear” (2000, pp. 346-71). These characters, enmeshed in personal and at times agonising fracture, point toward a prominent factor within *cosmicism*: just how utterly ill-equipped to face the *universe* the human creature has become.

As a formalised theory, *cosmicism* confronts traditional assumptions that are rooted in the *Genesis cosmology*; principally that the *universe* is a temporal object, with beginning and end, that was created and has remained as presided over by God. Within the *Genesis cosmology*, the human creature is the pinnacle of God's creation, and in hand with the planet that creature inhabits, is therefore the most centrally important aspect of the *universe*. By contrast, as the emphasis of centrality has shifted throughout the historical development of a scientific view of the *universe* – that is, from the geocentric, to the heliocentric, to the quantum, and into the twenty first century to what looks increasingly like a multiverse that is “everything that there is” and in which “a universe is a portion of the Multiverse accessible to a particular set of observers” (Gribbin, 2009, pp. xi-xii, 10-1) – *cosmicism's* view of the *universe* has become more relevant. The problem for the human creature in the *universe* of *cosmicism* however – and to which the following chapter will address a detailed examination – lies in the bipolarity between a scientific view of the *universe* that has expanded over the course of time and the deeply embedded and contractive view of the *Genesis cosmology* that starts with an infinite God and shrinks down to an isolated individual.

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## Chapter 5

### Schizophrenic Universe

... man is left more and more alone in a universe to which he is completely alien. His world was once, like the child's world, three-quarters myth and poetry. (Krutch, 1929/1956, pp. 7-8).

Nothing changed; it just spread out farther and farther in the form of neon ooze. What there was always more of had been congealed into permanence long ago, as if the automatic factory that cranked out these objects had jammed in the *on* position (Dick, 2008, p. 884).

#### *Alien Universe*

As the human creature's understanding of the *universe* expands, its perception of that territory increasingly becomes a mental abstraction rather than an experience of embodied connection and participation. Lovecraft's *cosmicism* signposts an evolution within the human creature's world view. In reaching the twentieth century, this view has moved from Dante Alighieri's geocentric "Paradise on the summit of the mountain of Purgatory, which his century situated in the middle of an imagined ocean covering the whole of the Southern Hemisphere" (Campbell, 1968, p. 611), and has traversed Copernicus' heliocentric *universe*. By Lovecraft's time, science is taking preliminary steps towards a quantum view of the *universe*, and *cosmicism* develops in a manner that both embraces the historical model of the *universe as machine* and anticipates quantum science.

This view of the *universe* holds its focus simultaneously on what is behind and ahead of the human creature, and is nested within *cosmicism* as a vital component of its utility and potency as a philosophical model for enquiry and illumination.

The idea of looking in both directions at once is comparable to the idea of "time-

binding” that Heinlein succinctly describes as “a technical term invented by Alfred Korzybski,<sup>35</sup> and it refers to the fact that the human animal lives not only in the present, but also in the past and the future” (1941, p. 154). “Time-binding” involves an interplay between what is known of and on record regarding the historical past, and what is extrapolated as future possibility. Based on these parameters, the human creature makes decisions in the present in which it exists, and each decision has effect in the immediate event of that decision, while also projecting into the future to affect all subsequent events. Paul Atreides in Herbert’s *Dune* understands this, and:

The emptiness was unbearable. Knowing how the clockwork had been set in motion made no difference. He could look to his own past and see the start of it – the training, the sharpness of talents, the refined pressures of sophisticated disciplines, even exposure to the O.C. Bible at a critical moment ... and, lastly, the heavy intake of spice. And he could look ahead – the most terrifying direction – to see where it all pointed (1965/1978, p. 188).

The idea of the future as “the most terrifying direction” is inescapable for the human creature within *cosmicism*, because in the knowledge that everything will end, what future remains? Dick’s character Deckard, in *Androids*, knows this, and in wondering if Mozart had known it too, Deckard concludes that “the performance will end, the signers will die, eventually the last score of the music will be destroyed in one way or another; finally the name ‘Mozart’ will vanish, the dust will have won” (1968/2007, p. 85). Even the order and function of components within the *machine* will eventually cease to operate, and when Dick’s characters Chien and Tanya talk about “music untuning the sky” in the story “Faith of Our Fathers” (1987d, p. 221), Tanya reminds Chien that this speaks to

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<sup>35</sup> Korzybski was a Polish-American engineer and philosopher. It is worth noting in connection to Heinlein’s use of Korzybski’s “time-binding,” that John Clute acknowledges Heinlein as a *sf* author who writes within an engineering framework when constructing his view of the human creature’s future (2011, pp. 137-39).

the idea that “ ‘All the celestial order of the universe ends’ ... ‘you know that old Pythagorean business about the music of the spheres.’ ” (1987d, p. 221).

From a position that is simultaneously retrospective and speculative the *universe* has become an alien place, and from within its own locality the sheer size of the *universe* when expressed within the Newtonian framework of space and time overwhelms the human creature.

When something is alien, it “[b]elong[s] to another person or place,” is “[o]f a foreign nation and allegiance,” and rooted in a “ foreign or other origin” (“vol. I,” Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 314). To be alien can even mean to have “a nature repugnant, adverse or opposed *to*” someone or something (“vol. I,” Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 315). In short, an alien *universe* is unfamiliar and unwelcome at best, and more often a hostile territory in which “even the circle of stars ... [a]re like the luminous tips of weapons aimed down” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 197), and where “the Pole Star leers down from the same place in the black vault, winking hideously like an insane watching eye” (“Polaris,” Lovecraft, 1994, p. 31). The human creature is not only estranged from this *universe*, it is unable to escape.

Dante’s Paradise no longer resides in the Pacific – even though Dagon’s (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 11) and Cthulhu’s (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 87) might. In reference back to the conversation between Chien and Tanya in “Faith of Our Fathers,” the crucial moment arrives when Chien asks Tanya if she really believes in the idea of the *universe* being driven by the music of the spheres – the music of the *machine* – or whether she believes in deity, to which Tanya says: “ ‘God!’ She laughed. ‘That

went out with the donkey steam engine. What are you talking about?’ ” (Dick, 1987d, p. 221).

The *cosmos* has become unreadable in reference to how and indeed *where* the human creature lives. As the French urbanist and philosopher Paul Virilio states in *Grey Ecology*, the space in which living can be done has been shrinking away at a significant rate and “what we call real-time leads to the space-time continuum suffering a temporal contraction which reduces to nothing or practically nothing the vastness of the world” (2009, p. 27).

Writing almost a century ago in *The Modern Temper: A Study and a Confession*,<sup>36</sup> the American social and cultural critic Joseph Krutch claims that “the myth, having been once established, persists long after the assumptions upon which it was made have been destroyed, because, being born of desire, it is far more satisfactory than any fact” (1929/1956, p. 8). Mythic traditions do not always transport easily to locales outside their point of origin, and in an increasingly globalised sense of the world, this transportation can fail altogether. The single biggest problem the human creature faces in holding onto the reified map that the *Genesis cosmology* has become, is located in the fact that this *cosmos* was scribed thousands of years ago within the context of a Jewish, nomadic culture posited in the desert, and most human creatures simply no longer live like that.

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<sup>36</sup> In his essay titled “Lovecraft’s Concept of Background,” the Lovcraftian scholar and critic Steven Mariconda discusses the influence of Krutch’s text upon the development of Lovecraft’s own philosophy (1986, p. 4). The parallels between chapter one of *The Modern Temper* and the basic tenets of *cosmicism* are striking, and I suggest, as Mariconda infers, that the development of Lovecraft’s philosophy owes a good deal to Krutch’s text.

Not only has the culturally constructed map of the *cosmos* become an illusion that the human creature has tricked itself into thinking is real, and therefore tries to navigate; but caught up within this transformation, the *cosmos* often represents the human creature's fantasy of an ideal that is ever expected and never found within the space-time of the *universe*. This fantasy of an ideal is encountered in Dick's story, "Strange Eden." When Captain Johnson steps out of his ship and onto the planet's surface, the *landscape* he enters is not dissimilar to the *Genesis cosmology's* Eden. Johnson and his crew are there to map the planet, but he has reservations about doing so. It seems that from the beginning Johnson senses a threat in the underlying territory of paradise, noticing that:

All the animals were tame. What kind of people had built this place? Panic stabbed at him. Maybe not people. Maybe some other race. Something alien, from beyond the galaxy. Maybe this was the frontier of an alien empire, some kind of advanced station (Dick, 1987a, p. 114).

For Johnson, the map of an Edenic *landscape* is laid out before him, but he knows that were the planet any "closer to Terra," it would not remain unspoilt (Dick, 1987a, p. 111). Johnson's discomfort however, is not merely a result of understanding how his own species has all too often approached the natural *landscape*, it is also a response to something that he senses lies beneath the map of perfection before him.<sup>37</sup> He may seek refuge in the desire for a pristine world in which to live, but he knows this is wishful thinking for something he has never had. Similarly, Barney Mayerson in *Palmer Eldrich* may "want to be alone with [his] garden," but cannot escape

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<sup>37</sup> An interesting comparison can be made with Heinlein's novel *Methuselah's Children* (1958/1999) and the "Earthlike" (p. 402) planet where the human creature is made welcome by the inhabitants; a welcome that makes Lazarus Long uncomfortable (pp. 407, 419). It is only after Slayton Ford's terror at the temple of the real inhabitants, the Jockaira, that Long understands the difference between the appearance and the underlying territory of the planet (pp. 419-20). Some comparison may also be drawn with Lovecraft's story "In the Walls of Eryx," inasmuch as the crystal that appears to be lying on open ground and readily accessible by the human creature, is actually enclosed within an invisible labyrinth the entanglement of which is lethal to that creature (1994, p. 326).

acknowledging the territory beneath that garden when asking, “ ‘Is there any point in trying to start a garden here? Or will we go the familiar way, too’ ” (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 230)? The *universe* is never far from view.

Herbert’s Paul Atreides recognises this human desire for the experience of a *universe* that follows a sense of order and logic when he says that:

There is in all things a pattern that is part of our universe. It has symmetry, elegance and grace ... We try to copy these patterns in our lives and our society, seeking the rhythms, the dances, the forms that comfort. Yet, it is possible to see peril in the finding of ultimate perfection. It is clear that the ultimate pattern contains its own fixity. In such perfection, all things move towards death.

‘The Collected Sayings of Muad’Dib’ by the Princess Irulan. (1965/1978, p. 361).

Paul Atreides expresses an awareness of the human creature’s endeavour to “copy these patterns,” in nature that by their “cycles” and “symmetry” imply the working mechanism of the *universe as machine*. The *machine* keeps on turning, and the finite, biological human creature is caught between its desire for the logic of that *machine* at the heart of the territory, and its human tendency to rely on what it sees across the surface of the map as if that were somehow the whole of the reality in which it exists. The dilemma in terms of survival that this bipolar condition throws up is also observed by Paul after witnessing the death of Duncan Idaho at the hands of Imperial Sardaukar in service to the Harkonnen enemy (Herbert, 1965/1978, pp. 215-6). Paul understands that he is caught within “*blind ground*,” remonstrating himself for having relied only on what he can see and recalling the “Bene Gesserit axiom” that “ ‘If you rely only on your eyes, your other senses weaken’ ” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 218).

The human creature has become so enclosed within the light of its neatly mapped *cosmos* that it has forgotten what the territory looks like, and to venture beyond such confinement and into the *universe* is terrifying. When a glimpse of the *universe* is granted, that creature wants then only to forget and return to the comfort of *cosmos*; as Chien says “ ‘A hallucination ... is merciful. I wish I had it; I want mine back’ ” (“Faith of Our Fathers,” Dick, 1987d, p. 222).

If the human creature chooses to seek existence in the *universe*, that creature risks the *engulfment* of madness or death if it fails to also reconcile itself with the revelation of the territory. All four of the primary authors discussed in this thesis provide multiple examples of such an outcome, including but by no means limited to, the often quoted warning to all human creatures in the opening paragraph of “The Call of Cthulhu,” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 61); Richard Upton Pickman, who splits his identity while renting studio space under the name of Peters, in “Pickman’s Model,” (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 44-6); Crawford Tillinghast in “From Beyond,” (Lovecraft, 1994, pp. 89-90); Joe Slater in “Beyond the Walls of Sleep,” (Lovecraft, 1994); Alia Atreides in *Children of Dune*, who inevitably “felt that she had become two people,” before seeking death as her escape (Herbert, 1976, pp. 339, 363-8); and Slayton Ford on the world of the Jockaira in *Methuselah’s Children*, (Heinlein, 1958/1999, pp. 419-21).

The extreme nature of the human creature’s view of the *universe* as a bipolar state against which it is pitted emerges from *cosmicism*’s premise that within this bipolarity the human creature is afforded limited options. It may choose to either remain ignorant of the territory by means of ideological flight back into the *Genesis*

*cosmology*, or, in the pursuit of peeling back the map to expose the territory in its manifestation of the *universe as machine*, risk *engulfment's* symptomatic outcomes.

If the human creature has been fortunate enough to pull back from the *threshold* of revelation prior to being *engulfed*, it may still be able to return to the *amnesia of the cosmos* in which until that point, it had dwelt. The ever-present possibility in this scenario is however, as Wingate Peaslee discovers in “The Shadow Out of Time” (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 473-5), that the disturbing reality of the hidden territory will be ever-after felt. For the human creature that has strayed too far from the path of the map and found itself adrift and utterly severed from the *cosmos* of its accustomed view, an escape into madness or death ultimately become the only viable options. This can be likened to what I call a *heimlich conundrum*,<sup>38</sup> a sense of damnation irrespective of the direction taken, and the fear that is generated between these poles becomes a primary driver of the human creature within *cosmicism*. Irrespective of the choice that is made, that creature senses that the outcome will be the same.

During a conversation with Mercer and afterwards with his wife, in Dick’s novel *Androids*, Deckard comprehends that “[t]here is no salvation,” that he should proceed upon his course of action. Even though Deckard knows that it is wrong, Mercer tells him that to do what is wrong:

‘will be required ... no matter where you go. It is the basic condition of life, to be required to violate your own identity ... It is the ultimate shadow, the defeat of creation; this is the curse at work, the curse that feeds on all life. Everywhere in the universe’ (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 155).

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<sup>38</sup> A *heimlich conundrum* is the sense of damnation that the human creature feels, irrespective of the direction that creature chooses to move toward when faced with the revelation of the *universe*; the outcome of this will only ever be one of madness or death.

For Deckard, to hunt down three more androids is the means by which he can achieve recognition as a successful human creature, and this is a recognition made all the more important by the fact that he is a healthy human resident left behind on the “contaminated Earth” (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 15). Deckard can validate his identity as human through earning money enough to buy a real animal upon which to bestow his empathy, and he can achieve this only by means of the *cold* execution of androids (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 148). A bounty hunter by profession, while the hunt is by no means new to him, his recent encounter with androids has furnished Deckard with the disturbing possibility that androids may indeed be more than machines and he may be developing a sense of empathy for what has been designated *unhuman* by definition of its own lack of empathy.<sup>39</sup>

The *universe* is no longer one stable thing or the other. It is neither *machine* nor God’s creation. It is internally split and the human creature is also separated from it, cast adrift within a *schizophrenic universe*. When an individual is labelled schizophrenic, they are diagnosed with “[a] mental disorder occurring in various forms, all characterized by a breakdown in the relation between thoughts, feelings, and actions, usu[ally] with a withdrawal from social activity and the occurrence of delusions and hallucinations” (“vol. XIV,” Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 623). Furthermore, to be schizophrenic also carries “the implication of mutually contradictory or inconsistent elements” (“vol. XIV,” Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 624), suggesting a particular kind of bipolarity inasmuch as there exists an ever-

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<sup>39</sup> The psychological distress that Deckard experiences in this bipolar split becomes unbearable, and as Robert Pirsig explores in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974), the human creature is perpetually caught up in oscillation between an intense misunderstanding and therefore fear of the mechanical (p. 25), and flight as a refugee into nature that, upon arrival, provides no comfort either. The human creature finds itself estranged from a nature that has been repeatedly codified as something to be shielded from (p. 14), pointed at from a hygienic distance (p. 145), and ultimately disengaged from (p. 329).

present implication that opposing forces will simultaneously manifest. When such a condition is diagnosed in an individual human creature, it can become a significant problem. But what would it mean if the whole species were immersed in such a state, or if this were the state of the *universe*? *Cosmicism* takes the model of the *universe as machine* and invests into it human creatures possessed of a cultural heritage – and thereby a view of the *universe* – that is saturated in the *Genesis cosmology* and all its manifest implications. I suggest that as a consequence of this, the *universe* can then only be encountered as an alien and schizophrenic *landscape* that has become strangely separate from the human creature within it, and that creature is ill equipped to cope.<sup>40</sup>

The human creature's terrestrial world and all that world contains is constantly processed into a view of the *universe* as a seemingly endless series of binary opposites – such as light and dark, noise and silence, male and female, right and wrong – and these couplings enhance the bipolaric conflict that confronts the human creature. The daylight noise and chatter of human activity is embraced, and the silent night of deep space is at every opportunity negated. The map that is constructed is a map of the light space of the sun.

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<sup>40</sup> Whilst the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari has not been directly used within the development of this thesis' argument, I acknowledge their value and relevance in support of much that is herein offered. I also propose that beyond the constraints necessitated by the format of a doctoral thesis, the value of Deleuze and Guattari will not only be explored, but will also provide a significant body of theoretical *foundation* to and support for the future development of *neocosmicism*.

*“You’re Not Afraid of the Dark Are You? The Light Hurts My Eyes”*

– Richard B. Riddick (Twohy, 2004)

I saw it from that hidden, silent place  
 Where the old wood half shuts the meadow in.  
 It shone through all the sunset’s glories – thin  
 At first, but with a slowly brightening face.  
 Night came, and that lone beacon, amber-hued,  
 Beat on my sight as never it did of old;  
 The evening star – but grown a thousandfold  
 More haunting in this hush and solitude.

It traced strange picture on the quivering air –  
 Half-memories that had always filled my eyes –  
 Vast towers and gardens; curious seas and skies  
 Of some dim life – I never could tell where.  
 But now I knew that through the cosmic dome  
 Those rays were calling from my far, lost home ("Evening Star,"  
 Joshi, 2001, p. 78).

In Lovecraft’s poem, “Evening Star,” silence descends with the approaching night.<sup>41</sup> The *universe* echoes with the memory of something that lies beyond the limits of human language, but that creature’s *landscape* of drenching light and sound motivates its safe confinement within the *amnesia of the cosmos*. The character John Isidore in Dick’s *Androids* understands the importance of the noise of the world for preventing him from being swallowed up by oblivion, and in a world that threatens to decay and crumble into nothing, “[t]he TV set boomed;” but when “Isidore knocked on the apartment door the television died immediately into nonbeing. It had not merely become silent; it had stopped existing, scared into its grave by his knock” (1968/2007, p. 53).

Silence speaks to the human creature of erasure, and it is the comfort of overriding sound that keeps that creature relatively free from the fear of disappearing altogether.

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<sup>41</sup> The idea of the silence of space is discussed in Part I of this thesis in relation to Watts’ discussion of the “on” and “off” in Chapters 1 and 2, and the impossibility to have one without the other.

It is the chatter of collective noise subsuming the voice of any particular individual that signifies the absence of the risk of exposure to the *universe* beyond the world. Not only does Isidore understand the power of the noise and light of his *landscape* to protect him, but so too does Deckard who in trying to talk with his wife, is aware that all the time the television “[i]n the background ... boomed and brayed, eradicating her words, he saw her mouth moving but heard only the TV” (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 82). The grand illusion of the human creature is that in being submerged in the noise, it is kept safe from the quiet darkness beyond the light.

The human creature in being estranged from its *universe* no longer finds familiarity in what the American astrophysicist and cosmologist Carl Sagan refers to as the “great cosmic dark” (1980, p. 5). That home is forever kept out of reach by the reassuring light of the sun. A path clearly lit has its limitations however, and in Herbert’s *Dune* the Princess Irulan writes that Paul Atreides:

could indeed see the Future, but you must understand the limits of this power. Think of sight. You have eyes, yet cannot see without light. If you are on the floor of a valley, you cannot see beyond your valley (1965/1978, p. 209).

It may be in *cosmicism*’s *universe* that the human creature fears the dark, and what it thinks is in the dark, but to always remain limited within the light can be dangerous, and the map that is laid out in the light ever obscures the territory beneath it. To be always wanting to wake from the dark, avoid it, flick the switch, open the curtains, and let in the light, this becomes a problem. Once the dark *universe* of silence has been encountered, simply letting the light back in is no solution. Something from beyond the light is sensed, the *universe* as it was once perceived is in some way changed, and there is no going back. This is the impossibility of innocence

remaining untainted by experience,<sup>42</sup> or of remaining in Eden after eating from the tree.

In Lovecraft's story "The Shadow Out of Time," the narrator Nathaniel Wingate Peaslee, returns from his five year journey through space-time with an acute case of amnesia, but his "reabsorption into normal life was a painful and difficult process," and the hidden memories of silence and darkness begin to emerge as "[v]ague dreams and queer ideas [that] continually haunted" (2000, p. 473). Within *cosmicism* it is natural that Peaslee should be so troubled, because underlying his unease is an unuttered knowledge that if the human creature can turn off the noise of its sunlit world, it would then become aware that silence is the pervasive state of everything beyond the sun's reach. Dick's Isidore also knows that when the noise of the world is finally gone:

By then, naturally, he himself would be dead, another interesting event to anticipate as he stood ... in his stricken living room alone with the lungless, all-penetrating, masterful world-silence.  
Better, perhaps, to turn the TV back on" (1968/2007, p. 17).

Turning the TV on negates the silence of "the great dark between the stars" (Sagan, 1980, p. 24) where even galaxies can be "solitary wanderers" in a *universe* that is "mostly empty" (1980, p. 5). The terrestrial world of the human creature embalmed under the light of the sun, secure in the pervasive noise of its collective, and baptised by the light and sound of its technology and industry, continually reinforces the prevailing symbols of what is good and right, and above all, safe. When writing on cosmic fear in *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears*, the

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<sup>42</sup> This is a deliberate allusion to William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. It is worth noting that the American literary critics, Harold Bloom and Lionel Trilling, write that while "the root meaning of innocence is 'harmlessness,' the derived meanings 'guiltlessness' and 'freedom from sin,' " it is also understood that Blake uses the term "innocence" to also "mean 'inexperience'... which is a very different matter" (1973, p. 17).

American philosopher and academic Stephen Asma claims that “[t]here are forces out there ... that are stronger than us” (2009, p. 191), and in the absence of the light, the dark becomes a negative and overwhelming force wherein monsters hide and evil waits.

But what is it that *cosmicism* claims can be found in the dark? Lovecraft clearly answers in “The Whisperer in Darkness” that “dizzy new vistas of cosmic and superhuman knowledge” (2000, p. 199) could be found, and his character Albert Wilmarth, though terrified, finds that when facing the dark his “own zeal for the unknown flared up” and he feels himself:

touched by the contagion of the morbid barrier-breaking. To shake off the maddening and wearying limitations of time and space and natural law – to be linked with the vast outside – to come close to the nighted and abysmal secrets of the infinite and the ultimate – surely such a thing was worth the risk, of one’s life, soul and sanity! (2000, pp. 199-200).

For Wilmarth, as it is for the solitary human creature whose thoughts are voiced in Lovecraft’s poem “Evening Star,” the location within the territory on which they stand is a twilight *threshold* of the sublime.<sup>43</sup> These characters recognise “that an overwhelming sense of the sublime need not be tied to a theological entity like God, or even a mystical otherworldly force. The inexorable laws of nature alone will do nicely” (Asma, 2009, p. 192). Whether it be in a subterranean cave or before the expanse of the night sky, facing the dark works against the nature of the light-born creature that strives to enclose itself in the defence of sleep and *amnesia* until the

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<sup>43</sup> The term “sublime” is neither innocent nor restricted to one limiting parameter of definition. While this thesis does not deal directly with the sublime, inference to the concept is here acknowledged. Further expansion of *neocosmicism* beyond the parameters of this thesis will necessitate enquiry into the sublime, but for purposes here, a general definition will be taken as “the ‘soul-shattering’ sense of awe and wonder one experiences upon encountering a phenomenon which truly exceeds the grasp of [human] understanding” (Will, 2002, pp. 7-8).

next sunburst of dawn. For the human creature, opening its eyes in the light means forgetting, an experience exemplified by Lovecraft's Peaslee and the amnesiacs Peaslee studies in "The Shadow Out of Time" (2000, pp. 475-7).

The amnesiac quality of the light space is the human creature's safety net, and in *cosmicism* such creatures cling to the light space that the *universe* might be negated. Beneath all this however, the disquieting terrain of Freud's uncanny, the *heimlich*, seeps up into the waking world of the light. This is the speculative *what if it does get in*; the terrifying "dark inside of me" (Eisner, 1997) that comes unbidden and reveals horrors unimaginable that wait somewhere beyond the reassuring light of the sun.

The light is where good things dwell, good things happen, and living things grow. The light is where deity might be found. The light is what the human creature hopes to see as it dies. In short, the light space is a symbol of ordered goodness and safety; and the human creature has estranged itself from the *universe* that is everywhere else beyond the light. *Amnesia* reigns, and no more does that creature recall that it is "made of stellar ash" (Sagan, 1980, p. 318), "born ultimately of the stars and now for a while inhabiting a world called Earth" (1980, p. 12). It has become afraid of the dark.

At the root of this fear of the dark lies the codified system of communication the human creature calls language. How can any language that has been born and bred in the light of the sun express all that exists in this dark *universe*? Lovecraft's character Peaslee is an excellent example of a human creature so in love with the

comfortable language of the light, that at “the chasm’s edge” he responds with abject terror for what lies beyond the reach of his sunlit world. He is:

instantly engulfed in a pandemoniac vortex of loathsome sound and utter, materially tangible blackness ... There was a hideous fall through incalculable leagues of viscous, sentient darkness, and a babel of noise utterly alien to all that we know of the Earth and its organic life. Dormant, rudimentary senses seemed to start into vitality within me, telling of pits and voids peopled by floating horrors and leading to sunless crags and oceans and teeming cities of windowless, basalt towers upon which no light ever shone (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 541).

The language of the dark is the language of the inexpressible, and when looking into the dark *universe*, the human creature all too often abandons wonder for fear. The terrestrial constructs of sign and symbol are utterly dependant on the light as a frame of reference, and despite the human creature’s current understanding of the *universe*:

The resistance to Aristarchus and Copernicus, a kind of geocentrism in everyday life, remains with us: we still talk about the Sun “rising” and the Sun “setting.” It is 2,200 years since Aristarchus, and our language still pretends that the Earth does not turn (Sagan, 1980, p. 189).

The human creature’s stubborn persistence in observing a cosmological frame of reference that in its interpretation of the *universe* no longer fits the evidence gathered, leads that creature to a paralysis resulting from a fundamental lack of ability to comprehend and operate in the *universe* beyond the light space of the signs and symbols still used to describe and understand it.

When sign and symbol fail, what else is left but the silence? If something cannot be expressed within some form of language, then it cannot be objectified, categorised and controlled, and such circumstance threatens the human creature with the possibility that it might no longer be master of the *universe*, but rather, “just one

small species among an infinity of planets, stars, and space” (Colavito, 2008, p. 175). Furthermore, as a function of the human creature’s interaction with its world and with *others* of its kind, language is central to that creature’s processing of and response to the *landscape* in which it exists. When linguistic structure is applied to the *universe*, can the *universe* ever be known or seen *as it is*; or will it remain eternally alien because the words for the experience of the *universe* remain absent from the language of the light wherein what is dark is designated as negative, evil and to be feared?

For the human creature, the sun and the language of the light space that sun creates may dominate the *landscape*, but for the *universe*, that sun is just another average star adrift within illimitable darkness. The reality of what this means is the Howard Family’s experience when fleeing Earth in Heinlein’s *Methuselah’s Children*, and the human creature does not even have to leave its own system before:

between them and the stars lay nothing but the winter homes of Sol’s comets and hiding places of hypothetical trans-Plutonian planets – space in which the Sun holds options but can hardly be said to own in fee simple. But even the nearest stars were still light years away ... Out, out, and still farther out ... out to the lonely depths where world lines are almost straight ... their headlong flight took them farther from all humanity (1958/1999, p. 394).

The human creature’s light space is an insignificant drop in a silent ocean of darkness. Beyond this, there is no cosmic light switch, and that vast burning orb that lights the way for life on earth is no more than one of many billions of such specks within the *universe*. Just as it is for Lovecraft’s “Evening Star,” so too is the human creature’s own dominant star of the sun diminished to a pinpoint of white in the vast *cold* of the *universe*.

The human creature fears the dark that it does not understand, and Herbert's Paul Atreides not only comprehends this, but knows that in order to survive the *universe* into which he is propelled, he "must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration" (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 14). This speaks of the fear of an earth-bound creature that knows only light and warmth, a creature comforted by its confinement between the dome of the sunlit sky above and solid ground below, and it is afraid to leave its enclosure. Herbert's God Emperor, Leto II (hereafter referred to as Leto), also understands this about the human creature when he writes in his journals that:

In the cradle of our past I lay upon my back in a cave ... There, by the dancing light of a resin torch, I drew upon walls and ceiling the creatures of the hunt and the souls of my people ... I peer at handprints and flowing muscles drawn upon the rock ... How much more we are than mere mechanical events! And my anitcivil self demands: 'Why is it that they do not want to leave the cave?' (1981, p. 356).

In a similar manner to Leto, Lovecraft's Peaslee in "The Shadow Out of Time" also knows that the discoveries made within the lighted confines of the cave, if they are to have any currency for the human creature, must be carried "back to the outer world if it truly existed – if the whole abyss truly existed – if [he], and the world itself, truly existed," (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 537); they must be carried into the vast and silent unknown. But leaving the enclosure of light means entering the deeper *universe*, and in *cosmicism* this means entering the impersonal *universe as machine* that operates under the direction of the *cold equations*.

### *The Cold Equations*

But for all its deadliness, it had destroyed with neither malice nor intent. It had been a blind mindless force, obeying the laws of nature, and it would have followed the same course with the same fury had man never existed ("The Cold Equations," Godwin, 1954/1958, pp. 108-9).

The *cold equations* are what Lovecraft describes as "the ineluctable natural laws & probabilities which actually prevail."<sup>44</sup> These laws are directly related to the indifference that emanates from what Lovecraft claims is a "blind" and "purposeless" mechanism in which pleasure and pain, like human measures of moral and emotion, have no significance.

Tom Godwin's story "The Cold Equations,"<sup>45</sup> relates the events that befall a girl stowaway on a shuttle that had precisely enough fuel for payload and pilot only. Her tiny, insignificant but extra weight is enough to effect fuel so that neither she nor pilot nor shuttle will make it to the planet surface intact:

She had violated a man-made law that said KEEP OUT but the penalty was not of men's making or desire and it was a penalty men could not revoke. A physical law had decreed: *h amount of fuel will power an EDS with a mass of m safely to its destination;* and a second physical law decreed: *h amount of fuel will not power an EDS with a mass of m plus x safely to its destination.*

EDS's obeyed only physical laws and no amount of human sympathy for her could alter the second law (Godwin, 1954/1958, p. 105).

In order to fulfil his mission and save not just one but a number of lives, the pilot's only option is to eject the girl from the shuttle, and as the story evolves it becomes clear that life on earth has in no way prepared this girl for the realities of the *universe* beyond her small world (Godwin, 1954/1958, p. 106). In his 1961 guest of honour

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<sup>44</sup> This is referred to in chapter 4, pp. 71-2.

<sup>45</sup> Referred to in Chapter 1, *fn* 6 with reference to Farah Mendlesohn's use of the story in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*.

speech at the World Science Fiction Convention, Heinlein speaks of Godwin's story as "[o]ne of the most nearly perfect science fiction stories ever written – and one of the most bloodcurdling," in which the *cold equations* are disclosed in such a manner as to leave no doubt that despite the most utopic wishes the human creature may have for its experience of the *universe*, "[t]he cold equations say No" (Heinlein, 1961/1992, p. 170).

When the *cold equations* say "No" to the human creature's desire for warmth and safety, they highlight the fact that the human creature is an emotive being inhabiting a *universe* built upon the *cold* logic of cause and effect. Furthermore, this bipolaric relationship of estrangement that exists between human creature and *universe* is reinforced by the human creature itself. Stephen King claims in his "Introduction" to Michel Houellebecq's essay *H.P. Lovecraft Against the World, Against Life*, "that weird fiction, fiction of horror and the supernatural, utters a resounding *NO* to the world as it is and reality as the world insists it must be" (Houellebecq, 2005, p. 14). The response of the "NO" that King describes is equivalent to the human creature's reply to the *universe of cold equations*.

The Lady Jessica in Herbert's *Dune*, highlights this when talking with the Mentat, Thufir Hawat. A Mentat is a human creature that has been trained as a "human computer" (McNelly, 1984, p. 376), and Jessica says to Hawat that:

'The *natural* human's an animal without logic. Your projection of logic on to all affairs is unnatural, but suffered to continue for its usefulness. You're the embodiment of logic – a Mentat. Yet, your problem solutions are concepts that, in a very real sense, are projected outside yourself, there to be studied and rolled around, examined from all sides' ... 'Anything outside yourself, this you can see and apply your logic to it,' she said. 'But it's a human trait that when we encounter personal problems, those things most

deeply personal are the most difficult to bring out for the logic to scan' (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 149).

Jessica's words highlight the concept that logic is not only something unnatural, but also external to the human creature. *Cosmicism's* claim for the human creature's sense of estrangement from the *universe* is directly related to this, for this is a *universe* that has been built upon a *foundation of cold equations*. Furthermore, Jessica's demarcation of emotional response as something completely self-contained and nowhere to be found in the *universe* of logic that exists outside the individual body of each human creature, keeps that creature locked within a perception of isolation both from and within an adversarial *universe*. While devoid of human emotion, the logic of the *cold equations* is translated through the filter of that emotion, and produces a view of the *universe* as at least indifferent, and more often malevolent, in its interaction with the human creature. When recounting a long and life-changing journey, Lovecraft's character Peaslee opens his account with a sombre admission of the adversarial nature of the *universe* when he says that:

man must be prepared to accept notions of the cosmos, and of his own place in the seething vortex of time, whose merest mention is paralysing. He must, too, be placed on guard against a specific, lurking peril which, though it will never engulf the whole race, may impose monstrous and unguessable horrors upon certain venturesome members of it ("The Shadow Out of Time," Lovecraft, 2000, p. 464).

When, in the closing words of his account Peaslee speaks of "those shocking elder things of the mad winds and demon pipings – in truth a lingering, lurking menace" (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 544), he reaffirms his earlier warning that the *universe* operates within laws and forces that although hidden from view, pose a constant threat to the safety of the human creature.

Despite what that creature may seek for itself and its world, the *cold equations* fuel a *universe* that clearly operates for purposes beyond the limitations of human desire.

This is the discovery of Lovecraft's character Kenton Stanfield who writes during his last days entangled in an invisible labyrinth on Venus that:

If it does survive to be read, I hope it may do more than merely warn men of this trap. I hope it may teach our race to let those shining crystals stay where they are. They belong to Venus alone. Our planet does not truly need them, and I believe we have violated some obscure and mysterious law – some law buried deep in the arcana of the cosmos – in our attempt to take them. Who can tell what dark, potent, and widespread forces spur on these reptilian things who guard their treasure so strangely?" ("In the Walls of Eryx," Lovecraft, 1994, pp. 352-3).

Beyond the scope of human emotion and human law, as Stanfield comes to understand, the *cold equations* that underpin the *universe* comprise a law that is “not of men's choosing” (Godwin, 1954/1958, p. 93). For a stowaway girl in Godwin's story, the consequence of breaking the “man-made law [of] KEEP OUT” is no different to the consequence for Adam and Eve in the *Genesis cosmology* when they broke the God-made law of don't touch in the Garden of Eden ("Genesis 3:22-4," Barker, 1985, p. 11). The end result is expulsion to a wilderness that exists beyond the confines of warmth and safety.

Possessed of neither emotion nor capacity to recognise human measures of emotion, the *cold equations* operate with indifference. The fact that the *equations* and the laws they govern are devoid of emotion does not, however, render the *cold equations* as agents of evil or malevolence. Though speaking of communists in his 1961 speech, Heinlein highlights the critical aspect of the human creature's approach to the *cold equations* when he says that communists do what they do by their own standards and not because they are villains. “Until you learn this one thing ... you

have no chance of reading and understanding the Cold Equations” (Heinlein, 1961/1992, p. 175). Heinlein then claims that the key is to “[k]now your enemy,” (1961/1992, p. 176), or in the case of the *universe*, to know your *equations*.

Lovecraft’s character Henry Akeley, in “The Whisperer in Darkness,” knows it is prudent to remember that the planet Yuggoth’s “dark world of fungoid gardens and windowless cities isn’t really terrible. It is only to us that it would seem so.

Probably this world seemed just as terrible to the beings when they first explored it in the primal age” (2000, pp. 213-4).

The *cold equations* are built on “a law that recognized neither innocence nor youth nor beauty, that was incapable of sympathy or leniency” (Godwin, 1954/1958, p. 111), and they are “forces that killed with neither hatred nor malice” (Godwin, 1954/1958, p. 118). However, as highlighted by the words of the Lady Jessica to Hawat, referred to earlier in this chapter, the *cold equations* and the *universe* they govern are most certainly interpreted and then approached as something possessed of an emotively negative response to the presence of the human creature.

In “The Call of Cthulhu” Lovecraft’s narrator says that “I have looked upon all that the universe has to hold of horror” (2000, p. 98), and it is this sense of horror that colours the sailor’s response to Cthulhu as he “slid greasily into the water and began to pursue with vast wave-raising strokes of cosmic potency” (2000, p. 96).

Malevolent or not by his own measure of emotion, Cthulhu’s pursuit is certainly interpreted by the human creature as nefarious, and “Briden looked back and went mad, laughing at intervals till death found him one night in the cabin whilst Johansen was wandering deliriously” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 96).

Cthulhu's pursuit; the "Elder Things" that Dr Armitage speaks of in "The Dunwich Horror" that "wished to strip [the Earth] and drag it away from the solar system and cosmos of matter into some other plane or phase of entity from which it had once fallen, vigintillions of aeons ago" (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 137); "The blasphemies which appeared on earth ... of a frightful interstellar race whose ultimate source must lie far outside even the Einsteinian space-time continuum or greatest known cosmos" ("The Whisperer in Darkness," Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 179-80); these are the forces that operate in the *universe of cold equations* and these forces are devoid of emotion that calculates by human measures of good and evil. These are the forces that by their *cold* indifference, or the human creature's perception of outright malevolence, highlight the utter insignificance of the human creature in the *universe*. These are the forces that "obeyed the laws that are not of our cosmos" ("The Colour Out of Space," Lovecraft, 2000, p. 271), that come forth from "the dark universe yawning/ Where the black planets roll without aim"<sup>46</sup> ("The Haunter of the Dark," Lovecraft, 2000, p. 272) and against which the human creature is powerless to do little more than watch as they blindly *engulf* everything within their reach.

When Lovecraft's Robert Blake faces his own end, he does so not on the sunlit world that has nurtured and fostered a sense of significance within him, but in the dark *universe* where his linear sense of past and present, time and space, has lost traction, and the safety of Earth no longer holds. Having "[t]rouble with memory," Blake loses sense of what he believes is the correct ordering of the binary opposites that

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<sup>46</sup> These lines, quoted at the start of Lovecraft's short story "The Haunter of the Dark," are from a longer poem written by Lovecraft titled "Nemesis" (Joshi, 2001, pp. 27-8). The poem, "written on November 1, 1917 [and f]irst published in *Vagrant* (June 1918)," speaks of the idea that nightmares are a form of karmic payment for actions of past lives, and no matter how far back in time these actions may have occurred, the consequences catch up with the soul (Joshi & Schultz, 2001, p. 188).

frame his sense of place in the *universe* and “[t]he lightening seems dark and the darkness seems light ... I am not on this planet ... light is dark and dark is light ... far is near and near is far,” and he does not survive (“The Haunter of the Dark,” Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 300-1).

The human creature in Dick’s story “The Trouble with Bubbles,” is also caught up within the fear of its insignificant vulnerability in the *universe*; a fear exacerbated by its sense of entrapment on Earth with no escape into habitable worlds elsewhere (1987c, p. 196). That creature makes “[s]ub-atomic worlds, in controlled containers. We start life going on a sub-atomic world, feed it problems to make it evolve, try to raise it higher and higher” (Dick, 1987c, p. 197). But as this technique called Worldcraft develops and the lack of habitable worlds beyond the Earth become apparent, the worlds that the human creature makes are worked to perfection and then summarily destroyed in an orgy of violence that is openly celebrated for its consequent and calculated destruction of lives and worlds. When the character Nathaniel Hull tries, and fails, to pass a bill that bans the building of these worlds, he discovers that “[y]ou can’t moralize Worldcraft away. That’s not the solution” (Dick, 1987c, p. 201), and the *cold equations* go beyond this notion of individual worlds to proclaim that you cannot moralise the *universe*; it is not built on that sort of *foundation*.

For the human creature, the lack of any identifiable emotion embedded within the *foundation* of the *universe* is disturbing. When Isidore encounters Pris in *Androids*, it is the cold lack of emotion detectable beneath the surface of human appearance, her lack of empathy, that repels him:

Now that her initial fear had diminished, something else had begun to emerge from her. Something more strange. And, he thought, deplorable. A coldness. Like, he thought, a breath from the vacuum between inhabited worlds, in fact from nowhere: it was not what she did or said but what she did *not* do and say (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 58).

The lack that Isidore identifies, emerges as “a breath from the vacuum,” a tangible force from the *void*. This seemingly empty space appears as contradictory or schizophrenic inasmuch as it is filled with an absence; a lack of human empathy. Watts points out in *The Book* that for the human creature “conscious attention, notices only the up-beat. The dark, silent, or ‘off’ interval is ignored” (1966/1989, p. 26). But the lack of something does not mean that the space from which that thing is absent is empty or ceases to exist, but rather, that space is filled with the tangible presence of absence. The human creature all too often ignores the ‘off,’ believing the ‘on’ to be the only reality, or to put it more directly in terms of *cosmicism*, the map is not only mistaken for the territory but is preferred for fear of what disclosure of the territory will effect.

Whilst for Isidore the lack of emotion beneath the surface of Pris disturbs him when they meet, it is the utter lack of empathy she displays for another living creature when systematically cutting the legs off a spider, that truly distresses him (Dick, 1968/2007, pp. 179-84). This lack is interpreted by the human creature as hostile or evil, and by extension whatever lacks emotion – whether android, another human or the *universe* – is interpreted as adversarial to the human creature. What this highlights is the circumstance wherein it is the filter of the emotional or empathic human creature, rather than what is being filtered – the inherent condition of the *universe* – that is problematic. Roy and Irmgard Baty’s *cold* logic of testing if the

spider actually needs eight legs to walk (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 183), when filtered through human emotion, transforms the event from a process of testing cause and effect to an unbearable act of torture. But the *cold equations*' lack of recognition of human emotion rather than reflecting malevolence and evil, in fact, reflects "a sort of curiosity" of similar order to when "a child pull[s] wings off a fly"<sup>47</sup> ("The Trouble with Bubbles," Dick, 1987c, p. 197), a process of calculating the cause and effect flow of logic.

The androids in Dick's novel, as machines, do not possess the capacity for empathy. Referred to in the novel as the "flattening of affect" (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 32), this "flattening" is what the novel's Voigt-Kampff scale measures when testing for humans. But the "flattening of affect" is not only measurable in androids, it is detectable in humans also, and significantly what returns a positive result for the "flattening of affect" in human creatures is that they are either "schizophrenic, with defective emotional lives" (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 140) or, like Rachael Rosen when first introduced, raised not on the warm and sun-drenched Earth but in *cold*, deep space (Dick, 1968/2007, pp. 44-5).

Rachael may not have been raised on Earth, but Dick's character Donna Hawthorne is. In *A Scanner Darkly*, Donna describes the mask she wears, her readable map, as "warm on the outside," but the territory beneath that mask is "cold all the time" (Dick, 2008, p. 1081). A life framed within a flourishing, terrestrial map, it seems,

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<sup>47</sup> In his treatise on horror titled *Danse Macabre*, Stephen King writes of childhood activities such as de-winged flies and "squatt[ing] patiently on the sidewalk to see how a bug dies." He writes that such activities are "indicative of what people who care little (or know little) about children often erroneously call 'the cruelty of childhood.' Children are rarely cruel on purpose, and they even more rarely torture, as they understand the concept; they may, however, kill in the spirit of experimentations, watching the death struggles of the bug on the sidewalk in the same clinical way that a biologist would watch a guinea pig die after inhaling a whiff of nerve gas" (1981, pp. 224-5).

does not necessarily guarantee a negation of the underlying territory that is the *universe*. Not only for Donna Hawthorne, but also for Herbert's Paul Atreides in *Dune*, the operation of the *cold equations* is an essential part of who and what he is. Paul may have been tested by the Bene Gesserit to ensure he is human (Herbert, 1965/1978, pp. 13-5), but none the less after the death of his father, Duke Leto:

Paul's mind had gone on in its chilling precision. He saw the avenues ahead of them on this hostile planet. Without even the safety valve of dreaming, he focused his prescient awareness, seeing it as a computation ... His own lack of grief could still be felt ... that hollow place somewhere separated from his mind, which went on in its steady pace – dealing with data, evaluating, computing, submitting answers in something like the Mentat way (Herbert, 1965/1978, pp. 186-7).

Whilst the scholar Julia List in writing of this passage points out that at a later time Paul does indeed mourn the death of his father, the significant observation List makes is that Paul's "transition into manhood and adult responsibilities is marked by a kind of dehumanisation ... [and] his capacity for empathy decreases further as he ages" (2009, p. 36). In the immediacy of this observation, List contextualises Paul Atreides within an ethical rationale that claims, with direct support from the novel itself, that his transformation should be read as negative and, arguably, List's view is correct. Within *cosmicism*, the changes that occur for Paul as he matures can readily be aligned with the idea that the *cold equations* of the alien *universe* pose an imminent threat of *engulfing* and thereby destroying the emotional human creature, if he does not choose to turn back to the behaviour and manner of his infancy. The more that Paul sees of the territory in which he exists, the more influence it has upon his choices.

However, from within this context of the *universe* underpinned and governed by the *cold equations*, this transformation in Paul can – and as I will argue in *neocosmicism* does – signify not only Paul’s capacity but also willingness to let go of the map and adapt to the territory. The significant point to be made here, is that when the human creature does in any way embrace the *cold equations* of the *universe*, rather than reject that territory and remain adversarially posed in relation to the *universe* and all it contains, that creature becomes the alien, the schizophrenic, the unhuman. *Cosmicism’s* answer to those individuals who face the *universe* as it is, is always, as I have said before, madness or death.

While many example of this dual choice offered within *cosmicism* have already been noted, in Dick’s novel *A Scanner Darkly*, the character Bob Arctor, also known as the narcotics agent Fred, embodies this notion perfectly. As Fred in his scramble suit, the business of his work can be recounted dispassionately, even when it concerns the people for whom he has empathy and emotional connections; and he does this under the pretext that the very nature of his work necessitates this in order for some form of sanity and competency to be maintained (Dick, 2008, p. 908). During debriefing sessions, “[w]hatever came up and whoever it was about possessed no emotional significance to him ... He had to neutralize himself” (Dick, 2008, p. 907). However, when the debrief is over: “later on Fred evolved into Bob Arctor ... and the terrible colors seeped back into him whether he liked it or not” (Dick, 2008, p. 908). After seeing some part of the territory exposed during the execution of his duties as a narcotics agent, those “terrible colors” of Arctor’s emotions engender a sense of estrangement from that *landscape* and indeed from the *universe* in which he operates. Arctor deals with his job by shedding his empathic

capacity, but is continually compelled to return to the reality of being an emotive human creature and in doing so, find that the demands placed upon his emotions by the *cold universe* as it is revealed to him, drives him to a madness of schizophrenic confusion (Dick, 2008, pp. 942, 948-52, 1005-6, 1008-9, 1023-4, 1056, 1094).

Certainly, the drugs Arctor ingests contribute significantly to creating the schizophrenic who eventually no longer knows which aspect of himself is real and which is the mask; but it is the ever-present and inescapable conflict of being an emotional biological creature caught up in an indifferent *universe of cold equations*, that destabilises him in the end.

The *cold equations* are the force that, in foreshadowing oblivion, brings the human creature's insignificance into focus. With the safety net of emotionally driven morality dissolved from beneath its feet, the human creature struggles to comprehend the *universe* beyond its local *landscape*. It is estranged, and the *universe* an adversary.

The adversarial relationship between *universe* and human creature is discussed by the Yugoslavian *sf* critic and theorist, Darko Suvin. In his essay "Considering the Sense of 'Fantasy' or 'Fantastic Fiction': An Effusion," Suvin draws a clear link within fantasy fiction between the indifference of the *universe* and the human creature's response to that indifference. While he writes that "[t]he supernatural element may include benevolent forces or figures," he then acknowledges that "most often in Heroic Fantasy and always in Horror Fantasy, it is malevolent (especially when it represents crushing cosmic indifference to humanity, as in Lovecraft, or mocking disregard, as in Machen)" (Suvin, 2000, p. 228). I agree that the

connection between an indifferent *universe* and the human creature's translation of that indifference into malevolence is visible in fantasy, and would claim that when *sf* is viewed through the lens of *cosmicism*, this translation becomes even more apparent. Suvin then progresses his argument by claiming the use of the supernatural in fantasy to be, largely, a process of misinterpreted symbology, and consequentially "its signifying tenor" (2000, p. 229) remains hidden. Whilst the "props" of the supernatural "become cyphers for our concerns today" (Suvin, 2000, p. 229), those "cyphers," when interpreted as adversaries, mask the underlying *foundation* that fuels the human creature's discomfort and misdirects attention to an emotional response that regards the operation of the *cold equations* as malevolent, and the *universe* as an enemy.

A fundamental difficulty in *cosmicism* for the human creature, is that the *cold equations* remain unchanged by the presence of, or interference from, that creature. When the pilot in Godwin's story is looking for any option other than the inevitability of jettisoning the girl from the shuttle, the commander who responds to his call, though initially signalling an emotional response to the circumstance, also knows that human agency has no influence within the *equations*. The commander replies that he "can do nothing" and is "powerless to help," leaving the pilot to tell the girl that " 'It has to be that way and no human in the universe can change it' " (Godwin, 1954/1958, pp. 99-100).

Through the agency of the *Genesis cosmology*, the human creature has constructed an illusion of itself and its *landscape*, separating the Earth out as something distinct from all else in the *universe*. But this native home of the human creature has no

exemption from the *cold equations*, and that creature in being born to the Earth “had not realized that the laws of the space frontier must, of necessity, be as hard and relentless as the environment that gave them birth” (Godwin, 1954/1958, p. 97).

Whilst it can be claimed that the human creature does not encounter the “space frontier,” this only remains true whilst that frontier and the things that fill it remain absent from the Earth. When non-terrestrial influences and *others* come, irrespective of what they are or what form they take, they bring the frontier to the human creature’s domain. Examples of such *others* include, but are in no way limited to, Dick’s buggies in “Martians Come in Clouds,” the Proxers in *Palmer Eldrich* and the androids that escape from Mars in *Androids*; Herbert’s Honoured Matres in *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse Dune*; and Lovecraft’s varying iterations of the Old Ones in stories such as “Dagon,” “The Call of Cthulhu,” “The Haunter of the Dark,” “The Shadow Over Innsmouth,” and “Pickman’s Model,” the living force in the meteor of “The Colour Out of Space,” and the Great Race in “The Shadow Out of Time.”

The operative principles of the *cold equations* are neither comfortable nor entirely comprehensible to the human creature, a discomfort made all the more acute when the *equations* are met with in that creature’s familiar *landscape*. As Burleson says of the Gardners in Lovecraft’s story “The Colour Out of Space,” they:

discover something monstrous to know – that to live safely ensconced in a little corner of the planet is to live mercifully shielded from the knowledge of the cosmos and of our position in it. Humankind, the Gardners find, can in no way live juxtaposed with the uncaring powers that the universe has in its bag of tricks, once that bag gapes open (2011, p. 147).

The natural response of the human creature when facing “the uncaring powers” of the *universe* is to retreat, and as Burleson also points out, this retreat is prompted by an attempt to negate the fact that the “knowledge of where one stands in the whole picture, is consummately disastrous” (2011, p. 147). The Gardners however do not retreat and are inevitably destroyed by the colour that has come to Earth from somewhere beyond its sphere (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 253, 256-7, 259, 261). But in “The Shadow Out of Time,” Peaslee avoids destruction by not only making his retreat from the recovered memories and discovered ruins of the Great Race – antediluvian *others* from beyond the Earth – but by punctuating that retreat with a desire for it all to remain hidden and unremembered. Despite the knowledge Peaslee has gained of the Great Race’s utopian life, these *others* remain utterly alien to Peaslee, exemplified in his horror at discovering he had been transported into not only their world, but into one of their bodies (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 496).

While Peaslee attempts flight from the territory that has been revealed as lying, quite literally, beneath the surface of his *landscape*, Heinlein’s character Mary Sperling in *Methuselah’s Children*, runs in a different direction. When “[f]aced with the eternal problem of life and death, she had escaped the problem by choosing neither” (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 451). It could be said of Mary that in deciding not to face the inevitability that all things in the *universe* will come to an end – most noticeably for her, her own life – the decision to stay with the Little People and “merg[e] into one of their rapport groups, drowning h[er] personality in the ego of the many” (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 451) is a form of schizophrenic madness inasmuch as she is no longer a discrete individual. For Mary, it seems that *cosmicism’s* claim for an outcome of madness or death when the *universe* is revealed, prevails; and it does so

even though all attempts are made to deny and avoid the operative principles of the *foundation* of the *universe*.

The attempt to escape, or the capacity to deny, are clear tactics of human creatures born in the light of the sun. The *cosmos* of their small world has been so successful in concealing the *universe*, that when the *universe* intrudes into their experiential sphere, they choose to look backward to the *cosmos* they feel safe within, back to the map of some other life as if it remains tangibly real.

For the adults in the hovels of Dick's story "The Days of Perky Pat" and his novel *Palmer Eldrich*, life is no longer what it once had been. They are consumed by a nostalgia for a life no longer possible, recognising that "*We lived then ... like Perky Pat and Leonard do now*. This is how it actually was," (1987b, p. 307). The desire these adults have for an irretrievable past echo the pilot's understanding in "The Cold Equations," that "Regret was illogical - and yet, could knowing it to be illogical ever keep it away?" (Godwin, 1954/1958, p. 111). All these human creatures really want to do is return to paradise and play in the garden of "pristine *oldness*, the way it was in the 'ol-days' " ("The Days of Perky Pat," Dick, 1987b, p. 302) rather than face the world as it really is, "upstairs" on the surface where it was "bright" and dusty (1987b, pp. 301-2; 1964/2007, pp. 146-7).

The human creatures born to a utopian, green Earth inevitably do all in their power to deny the reality of the *universe* in which they live. They channel their energies and efforts into making the unreal, real; into seeking the Edenic paradise they have lost, and:

Playing this game ... it's like being back there, back in the world before the war. That's why we play it, I suppose. He felt shame, but only fleetingly; the shame, almost at once, was replaced by the desire to play a little longer ("The Days of Perky Pat," Dick, 1987b, p. 307).

To shelter from overwhelming regret for what has been lost, these human creatures immerse themselves in play and thereby experience life through the iconic Pat and Leonard. Whether on the dusty, war ravaged Earth of "The Days of Perky Pat," or the harsh and dust-stricken Mars of *Palmer Eldrich*, they look backward, and pursue a *cosmos* that exists nowhere beyond the borders of the Perky Pat Layout (Dick, 1987c, pp. 303-4, 306-8, 313-5, 317-8). In doing so, they hold onto an illusory hope of readmission to Eden. As children who refuse to grow up, and refuse to allow Perky Pat to grow up (Dick, 1987c, p. 320), these human creatures, in playing with their dolls, attempt to allay their fears of insignificance and a lack of control over the *equations* of the *universe*.

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## Chapter 6

### Heimlich Universe

The blasphemies which appeared on earth, it was hinted, came from the dark planet Yuggoth, at the rim of the solar system; but this was itself merely the populous outpost of a frightful interstellar race whose ultimate source must lie far outside even the Einsteinian space-time continuum or greatest known cosmos ("The Whisperer in Darkness," Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 179-80).

#### *Untuning the Universe*<sup>48</sup>

The human creature's endeavour to avoid coming to terms with its insignificance in the *universe*, the magnitude of which in space-time remains incomprehensible, is encapsulated by that creature's adoption of the *amnesia of the cosmos*. The *Genesis cosmology* separates and compresses space and time into humanly measurable and comprehensible concepts wherein the whole of the *universe* is created in seven days, and the earth is installed as the *universe's* central hub, encircled by the dome of the sky and deity's heavens. This spatially limited view is framed within a temporal reckoning that even when measured in terms of millennia, conforms with a Newtonian assumption "that there is one clock ticking off the seconds by which the entire universe grows older" (Zukav, 1979/2001, p. 166).

While the *Genesis cosmology* describes the *universe* as subject to linear temporality, the *universe as machine* describes the *universe* as subject to cyclic temporality.

Furthermore, the cycles in this *machine* are often so immense in terms of not only the duration of their turning over but also the space that can be traversed within such

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<sup>48</sup> The term "untuning" comes from Dick's story "Faith of Our Fathers," and is referenced in chapter 5, pp. 82-3; it relates to a discussion in which the character Tanya speaks of the music of the spheres "untuning the sky" (Dick, 1987b, p. 221).

parameters, that the temporal flow maintains a deceptively linear appearance, thereby concealing the *universe* from view.

When Herbert's character Leto Atreides writes in his journals about the "universe of shapes" (1981, p. 237), he is writing about the *universe* buried under the *cosmos* of straight lines. As the human creature looks out from its location on the surface of one of those planetary shapes, that creature can choose to believe that because the world captured in its vision appears to be flat, that world, and by extension the *universe* beyond it, cannot possibly be anything other than a linear and ordered plane.<sup>49</sup> The human creature remains blind to the idea that:

If a certain portion of a surface is practically a plane, it does not at all follow that the whole surface has the form of a plane; the surface might just as well be a sphere of sufficiently large radius (Einstein, 1922/2003, pp. 101-2).

The significance of Einstein's observation is the idea that the failure to capture something within the field of vision, does not mean that it is therefore not an overriding factor of reality; and in *cosmicism*, the ordered *cosmos* that is believed by the human creature to be reality, is revealed as no more substantial than an illusion. But unlike the "*buried spring or ... dried-up pond*" mentioned by Freud in "The Uncanny" that merely reminds the human creature that water was once present in the *landscape* and may again rise to the surface (1919/2004, p. 419), the *universe* that lies hidden beneath the *cosmos* does not hint at its potential; it emerges into view.

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<sup>49</sup> In *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space*, Joseph Campbell discusses the historical development in the West wherein the dominant cosmology moved from a perspective of cycle imagers to linear imagers. The significant point Campbell then makes, is that the publication in A.D. 1543 of Copernicus' work in which "the sun displaced the earth at the centre of God's universe," started the process in which the "*idea*" and the "*experience*" of the human creature's position in the *universe* diverged. As a consequence of this splitting between a scientifically based cosmology and a religiously based cosmology, "[w]here formerly there had been the planetary cycles... there was now... to be a straight line of progressive world history with a beginning, a middle and a prophesied end." This has increasingly become a *universe* in which it is difficult for the human creature to reconcile that straight line course with a *universe* that in fact "ha[s] no fixed form or end" (Campbell, 1986/2002, pp. 16-7).

*Cosmicism's universe* is imaged in terms of bubbles and spheres, circles, wheels, spirals and columns, and its components interact within an implicitly chaotic and “almost wholly kaleidoscopic” mechanism (“From Beyond,” Lovecraft, 1994, p. 94). This is a “seething” realm, a bipolaric contradiction of dark silences mixed into a “vortex of sound and motion,” where the “strange night sky [is] filled with shining, revolving spheres” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 94), or worse, those spheres fall to Earth as did the “large coloured globule” in Lovecraft’s story “The Colour Out of Space” (2000, p. 243). The measures of space-time within the *universe* are so immense that their limits seem, paradoxically, beyond limit, and the *universe* keeps on turning within its blind, inexorable cycles until such time when once more the “stars had come round again to the right positions in the cycle of eternity” (“The Call of Cthulhu,” Lovecraft, 2000, p. 79).<sup>50</sup>

Within their clockwork cycles offering an apparently ordered pattern to the *universe* while obscuring the *chaos* that perpetually threatens to rise to the surface, the stars and planets are useful to human creatures such as Andrew Libby in *Methuselah's Children*, for not only finding where he wants to get to but also *when* he will get to it:

Libby was able to establish quickly, through proper motions of nearest stars, that it was not later than about 3700 A.D.; ... [and] once they were close enough to see the Solar planets he had another clock to read; the planets themselves make a clock with nine hands (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 460).

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<sup>50</sup> An interesting comparative image can be found in physics and the speculated relationship between black holes and quasars; with black holes taking matter out of the *universe* and quasars depositing matter into the *universe*. Zukav describes this in *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* as a “process [that] goes on and on, feeding on itself, another beginningless, endless, endless, beginningless dance” (Zukav, 1979/2001, p. 208). The components in the *universe as machine* turn over in perpetual cycles.

This clockwork order by which Libby secures his sense of location in the *universe* may provide him comfort, but from behind these small and ordered reckonings of space-time, the reign of the human creature is threatened by every shadow. The indifferent *universe as machine* is driven by the *cold equations*, and as the language of the *machine* these *equations* become the key to reading the map in order that the territory might be navigated. Where Libby struggles to calculate the *universe* in terms of unfamiliar *equations*, his friend Lazarus Long knows that to stand “on Man’s old planet, gazing north when sky has darkened,” there will be nothing to see “but cold and darkness.” It will take a different kind of vision to see “through the endless spaces ... the strange equations” (Heinlein, 1973, p. 252).

It may be the breath of the *Genesis cosmology’s* God or the *machine’s* music of the spheres that creates and sustains the *universe* as it is mapped by *cosmoses*; but in *cosmicism’s schizophrenic universe* it is the silence preceding the disclosure of sounds in the dark that the human creature has no words for, that unravels God’s order and untunes the *universe*. This is the loosening of the order that like a net has held the *universe* in captivity. When the image on the screen in Dick’s story “Faith of Our Fathers” is turned off, what is left is the “dead mechanical construct” (1987b, p. 205), the hollow object that in *Palmer Eldrich* is “clicked to the off position” (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 112).

The *universe of cosmicism* is a *universe* of ever-moving relationship between phenomena that can be described as being switched “on” and switched “off” within the interplay between bodies and space (Watts, 1966/1989, p. 28). The human creature is predisposed to ignore the “off,” rendering invisible the “space-intervals”

in-between (Watts, 1966/1989, p. 27). When the cycles are disturbed and what was invisible becomes visible, what was silent becomes audible; the human creature notices the *universe* because it notices the disturbance. Just as human music is not made from the sound of notes alone, but also from the silence in-between (Watts, 1966/1989, p. 27), so too is the untuning of the *universe* born from the silence and the space between its components.

The “music untuning the sky” that the character Tanya talks about in Dick’s story “Faith of Our Fathers” is not a simple matter of *cosmicism*’s end of everything; it is about the apocalyptic<sup>51</sup> process of that untuning; the process of revelation in the *heimlich universe*. The sound of the *universe as machine* turning, the sound of its untuning, is the sound that comes from the darkness. Tanya is right to claim that “ ‘All the celestial order of the universe ends,’ ”<sup>52</sup> and *chaos* will take its place. Similarly, Walter Gilman in Lovecraft’s story “The Dreams in the Witch House,” also:

seemed to know what was coming – the monstrous burst of Walpurgis-rhythm in whose cosmic timbre would be concentrated all the primal, ultimate space-time seethings which lie behind the massed spheres of matter and sometimes break forth in the measured reverberations that penetrate faintly to every layer of entity and give hideous significance throughout the worlds to certain dreaded periods (1999, p. 340).

In being untuned, the order of the *cosmos* dissolves to reveal the dark *chaos* of the *universe*. Fear may regulate the human creature’s reach toward the *amnesia of the cosmos*, but that creature’s attempted negation of the *universe*, whether conscious or

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<sup>51</sup> The term apocalypse is being used in this thesis in the same sense as Virilio’s use in *Grey Ecology*, that is, “apocalypse means revelation” (2009, p. 43).

<sup>52</sup> See Chapter 5, p. 83 for previous discussion of and reference to this section of “Faith of Our Fathers.”

unconscious, is in no way a guarantee of immunity from the influence and actions of either the visible or invisible mechanism of the *universe as machine*.

### ***Kaleidoscopic Apocalypse***

What does a scanner see? he asked himself. I mean, really see? Into the head? Down into the heart? Does a passive infrared scanner like they used to use or a cube-type holo scanner like they use these days, the latest thing, see into me – into us – clearly or darkly? I hope it does, he thought, see clearly, because I can't any longer these days see into myself. I see only murk. Murk outside; murk inside. I hope, for everyone's sake, the scanners do better. Because, he thought, if the scanner sees only darkly, the way I myself do, then we are cursed, cursed again and like we have been continually, and we'll wind up dead this way, knowing very little and getting that little fragment wrong too (Dick, 2008, p. 1019).

In his discussion of quantum physics, Zukav writes that “[s]elf-interaction makes the world of subatomic particles a kaleidoscopic reality whose very constituents are themselves unceasing processes of transformation” (1979/2001, p. 255). The “kaleidoscopic” and “unceasing processes” that Zukav speaks of, were foreshadowed in 1932 when Lovecraft wrote of the *universe* “as a huge field of force without beginning or ending, whose automatic and kaleidoscopic rearrangements of parts constitute the physical and material phenomena of which we can glimpse a fraction”<sup>53</sup> (“August 16, 1932,” Derleth & Turner, 1976, pp. 56-7).

When imaged as a kaleidoscope – which in its basic form is a cylinder containing coloured beads or glass fragments and mirrors to reflect light, thereby producing an image of ordered symmetry – the *universe* is like an echo of Anaximander's idea “that the earth is shaped like a cylinder” (Russell, 1946, p. 47). The view that the

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<sup>53</sup> This reference is also cited in chapter 4, p. 71.

kaleidoscope offers however is an illusion, rather than the tumbling *chaos* of its contents.

Like the kaleidoscope, the *machine* of the *universe* is in itself without emotion, but the human creature's response to its reflection of light and colour is emotional. It is the illusion that evokes emotion; it is the *cosmos* that delights the human creature. The kaleidoscope makes an ordered *map* from a chaotic *territory*, and likewise in hiding the components of its indifferent mechanism and the *cold equations* that drive it, the *universe-manifest-as-cosmos* safely enfolds the human creature in the cocoon of a sunlit world. But the light that brings order to a kaleidoscope's *chaos*, the light that dominates the human creature's *landscape*; exists in the *universe* an exception rather than a rule. The light-filled order of the *Genesis cosmology* is, in the kaleidoscopic cycles of the *universe*, perpetually threatened by the possibility of the territory emerging from the dark and into view, and the *machine's* unending cycles turning through space-time will eventually curve back on themselves (Watts, 1966/1989, p. 47) to once again bring into the light what has been hidden in the dark.

The image of the *universe* as kaleidoscopic is metaphorically similar to the "Game of Black-and-White" and the relationship between "on" and "off" that Watts discusses in chapter two of *The Book* (1966/1989, pp. 25-52).<sup>54</sup> The "game of order-versus-chance" – more specifically the game of order-versus-*chaos* – is, according to Watts, a game where "order *must not* win" (1966/1989, p. 46), and in *cosmicism* the *universe* seemingly conspires against the human creature to effect such an end. But

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<sup>54</sup> Watts' "on" and "off" is discussed in chapter 1, p. 15; chapter 2, pp. 25, 39. The Game of "black versus white" is also discussed in chapter 3, pp. 46, 60, with particular reference to the idea that this "Game" became a fight in which "white *must* win" and black is expelled from view as a negative force, space, or image.

as Watts also highlights, “chance,” or *chaos*, also “*must not win*” (1966/1989, p. 47), and as it is with the “Game of Black-and-White” that becomes a fight (1966/1989, p. 35), the human creature in being caught up in the fight between order and *chaos*, is required to find a way to avoid the impending *engulfment* that emerges in the space between the *cosmos* and the *universe*.

Maintaining the balance between opposites in order that neither triumphs is crucial, but as the Baron Harkonnen in Herbert’s *Dune* clearly understands, while the balance is perpetually at risk within the fight, the opposing sides of that fight are often not equally apparent to the human creature. While some forces or conditions are readily identified as potential threats to human survival in the *universe*, “ ‘[t]he absence of a thing,’ ” the Baron explains to his guard captain, Iakin Nefud, “ ‘can be as deadly as the presence. The absence of air eh? The absence of water? The absence of anything else we’re addicted to’ ” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 224). The Baron knows that it is the invisible components in the *universe* that pose the greatest threat to the human creature, and in the case of the poison that the Baron is discussing with Nefud, it will be the withdrawal of the antidote rather than the actual poison that will trigger the death of the Mentat Hawat. As the Baron says: “ ‘There’s no way of removing the residual poison. And, Nefud, Hawat need never suspect. The antidote will not betray itself to a poison snooper. Hawat can scan his food as he pleases and detect no trace of poison’ ” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 224). The poison is already in Hawat’s body, just as the threat to the human creature’s survival is inherent in the underlying territory of the *universe*.

The human creature is plunged into a cosmic game that is interpreted by that creature as a fight with the *universe* itself, and maintaining the order of the *cosmos* so as to maintain a sense of self becomes, quite literally, a life and death struggle that the human creature is continually at risk of losing within the turning cycles of the *universe*. For Bob Arctor in *A Scanner Darkly*, “the Game had failed to help him. It had, in fact, made him more deteriorated” (Dick, 2008, p. 1092), and by this time, with his sense and sanity of self as Bob – or even Fred – having been swallowed up by the identity of Bruce, he enters an existence where “ ‘[t]here’s no Game sessions here, just the work. No more Games for you, Bruce’ ” (Dick, 2008, pp. 1092-3). In the end, Arctor is destroyed by a *universe* that he never saw coming.

The character Tillinghast in Lovecraft’s story “From Beyond,” asks what it is that the human creature actually knows of the *universe*. “We see things only as we are constructed to see them, and can gain no idea of their absolute nature. With five feeble senses we pretend to comprehend the boundlessly complex cosmos,” and Tillinghast understands that because of the limitations of the human creature those “strange, inaccessible worlds [that] exist at our very elbows” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 90) remain as a wilderness beyond human experience.<sup>55</sup> The very physiology of the human creature hinders its ability to see the *universe* that the *cosmos* describes, an idea that is supported by the German physicist Werner Heisenberg when he writes that “the measuring device has been constructed by the observer, and we have to remember that what we observe is not nature in itself but nature exposed to our

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<sup>55</sup> Tillinghast’s assertions regarding the human creature’s limited senses through which the *universe* is viewed is also expressed by William Dyer in Lovecraft’s *At the Mountains of Madness*. While exploring Antarctic ruins of an antediluvian age, Dyer asserts that “[w]e felt, too, that besides these recognizable excellences there were others lurking beyond the reach of our perceptions. Certain touches here and there gave vague hints of latent symbols and stimuli which another mental and emotional background, and a fuller and different sensory equipment, might have made of profound and poignant significance to us” (Lovecraft, 1936/1999, p. 79).

methods of questioning” (1958, p. 57). What Heisenberg speaks of, and what *cosmicism* brings to the foreground is the disturbing idea that biological flesh-and-blood alone are not sufficient for penetrating the *cosmos* that has been constructed by the language of the human creature. To that creature, the indifferent, alien mechanism of the *universe* driven by *cold equations*, remains hidden.

This kind of blindness that limits the human creature’s ability to read and therefore navigate its *map* is an *amnesia* reinforced by that map. In the opening paragraphs of “From Beyond,” Tillinghast directs attention to integral, albeit invisible, dangers that the human creature confronts in the *universe*. He understands that it is the machine-as-extension of the biological body that is required in order to see beyond an acceptable *cosmos* to the real substance of the *universe*; a proposition that echoes the mechanical extension of body that is Galileo’s telescope.<sup>56</sup> For the story’s narrator however, this extension is “that accursed electrical machine,” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 89) and later, a “detestable electric machine” (1994, p. 91).

While Tillinghast understands the requirement of a machine for seeing the *universe*, Lovecraft’s character Peaslee in “The Shadow Out of Time” draws the connection between “the shadow which fell so suddenly upon me from *outside* sources” (2000, p. 466) and the strange experiences of *other* human creatures who are “plagued ever after with vague unplaceable dreams suggesting fragments of some hideous memory elaborately blotted out” (2000, p. 476). Furthermore, not only does Peaslee uncover evidence that fills him with a sense of *déjà vu*, but “[i]n three instances there was

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<sup>56</sup> Galileo’s use of the telescope for cosmological discovery has been discussed in chapter 2, p. 29.

specific mention of such an unknown machine as had been in my house before the second change” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 476).

As a man born into the *cosmos* of light, Peaslee understands the importance of the distinction between the laws that govern his *cosmos*, and the alien laws of the dark *universe* beyond. He comes to understand that he has transgressed the previously impenetrable *threshold* between *cosmos* and *universe*, and that by means of “a mechanism of the most curious aspect” that was “a queer mixture of rods, wheels and mirrors” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 471) he has been plunged beyond the confines of his own biology.

Similarly in *A Scanner Darkly* when Bob Arctor contemplates what the scanners may enable him to see – “[a] nightmare, a weird other world beyond the mirror, a terror city reverse thing, with unrecognizable entities creeping about” (Dick, 2008, p. 974) – he is registering the same sense of terror as Peaslee for the proximity of an adversarial *universe*. Arctor, Peaslee, and the anonymous narrator of “From Beyond,” are all “afraid of the cosmic truth” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 96) and all of them ultimately seek safety from the revelation of the *universe* by turning to the *amnesia of the cosmos*. “I never feel alone or comfortable,” the anonymous narrator declares, “and a hideous sense of pursuit sometimes comes chillingly over me when I am weary” (“From Beyond,” Lovecraft, 1994, p. 97). The nightmares that break out upon the surface of order that the *amnesia of the cosmos* has established, the sense “that my amnesia had formed some unholy sort of exchange; that the secondary personality had indeed been an intruding force from unknown regions, and that my own personality had suffered displacement” (“The Shadow Out of Time,” Lovecraft,

2000, p. 474), these things signify the emerging understanding that what lies beyond the field of vision in the *cosmos* will be revealed by an indifferent mechanism, and *others* that inhabit that largely invisible *universe* will not be the same as the human creature.

When the ocular capability of the human creature is altered or enhanced by a machine to allow the *universe* beyond the visible *cosmos* to be seen, the potential consequences are dangerous enough. But when the biological eyes themselves are replaced by machines to facilitate vision, a whole new level of danger manifests; for human biological integrity is violated. The ocular capability of Herbert's Duncan Idaho is believed altered when, resurrected as a Theilaxu gholia, mechanical eyes are implanted directly into his body (1969/1979, p. 61). In considering Duncan's eyes, Farad'n Corrino thinks that:

Those pitted metal orbs which the Theilaxu had given their gholia in the regrowth tanks marked their possessor as profoundly different from other humans... Idaho's eyes must record a different universe. How could it be otherwise... *Idaho remained a dangerous question mark* (Herbert, 1976, p. 205).

The "dangerous question mark" of Duncan Idaho is not consequential of his being a gholia and therefore simulation of the human creature he once was, but rather it rises from the fact that as a re-presentation of the original flesh-and-blood Idaho, endowed with machine-fuelled vision, he is now something *other* than what he first was.

From the perspective of *other* human creatures, the possibility of Idaho seeing what they are simply not equipped to see becomes an immeasurable threat; an advantage he might use against them in his capacity to see a re-presented *universe*. Idaho signifies the possibility that his altered view will thrust the hidden *chaos* of the *universe* upon human creatures that prefer the limiting order of their *cosmos*. This

limiting order is the preference of Anne Hawthorne in Dick's *Palmer Eldrich* when she “ ‘actually saw, not just believed’ ” the *universe* of Eldrich's stigmatic influence, and with this revelation, “drew away from [Mayerson], with aversion manifest on her face” (1964/2007, p. 231). Even Duncan Idaho's future wife Alia Atreides, with her pre-born status and prescient capacity, cannot be certain that Idaho actually represents alliance, and soaked in an overdose of spice she sees in “those glistening metal eyes ... a union of terrifying opposites ... He was shadow and blazing light” (Herbert, 1969/1979, pp. 188-9).

As an unknown *other* returned from death to the world of the human creature, Idaho cannot simply rejoin the human community as if he had never been taken from it. Understanding this, Paul Atreides asks “[w]hat might those metal eyes record,” and in a more considered approach than his sister's, Paul contemplates the possibilities in a *universe* where:

*There are many degrees of sight and many degrees of blindness ...*  
 His mind turned to a paraphrase of the passage from the Orange  
 Catholic Bible: *What senses do we lack that we cannot see another*  
*world all around us?*  
 Were those metal eyes another sense than sight? (Herbert,  
 1969/1979, p. 123).

In contemplating the invisible *universe* that the mechanical eyes of Duncan Idaho imply, Paul's thinking is later echoed by his own children, when Ghanima says that “ ‘[t]he universe as we see it is never quite the exact physical universe’ ” (Herbert, 1976, p. 72). The human creature's fear in *cosmicism's universe* is rooted within that creature's limitations. To cross over the *threshold* between *cosmos* and *universe* to see the *universe* as it actually is, rather than as the human creature believes it to be, requires “a different ranges of senses” (“From Beyond,” Lovecraft, 1994, p. 90).

To be able to see beyond the illusion, is inferred as therefore being something *other* than human.

Whilst the implication of what mechanical eyes might see is perhaps ambiguous in the *Dune* chronicles, and when asked, Idaho himself replies that his eyes see “[w]hat other eyes see” (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 190); the “mechanical slitted eyes” (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 240) of Palmer Eldrich signal implications that are far more sinister for the human creature and its sense of self. As a self-proclaimed “bridge” between the systems of Terra and Prox, (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 214), the threat of an invisible *other* crossing between these systems is made possible, as Barney Mayerson realises, because of:

‘All three stigmata – the dead, artificial hand, the Jensen eyes, and the radically deranged jaw.’ Symbols of its inhabitation, he thought. In our midst... And we have no mediating sacraments through which to protect ourselves; we can’t compel it, by our careful, time-honored, clever, painstaking rituals, to confine itself to specific elements such as bread and water or bread and wine. It is out in the open, ranging in every direction. It looks into our eyes; and it looks out of our eyes (Dick, 1964/2007, pp. 231-2).

No longer confined by the limitations of a *cosmos*, what has been hidden in the *universe* is revealed, and upon emerging, obliterates the illusion of order in the revelation of *chaos* unbound. It is the inhuman senses of the machine that allow the human creature to see the *universe*, traverse it, and experience unvisited worlds that lie beyond the reach of the light. As the human creature looks up from the surface of its planet to stars that become visible when the light of the sun is obscured, that creature looks up into the roiling seas of kaleidoscopic *chaos*.

In *Grey Ecology*, Virilio talks about the human “perception of events” in terms of being a perception of “the other,” and he links the perception of that *other* with human empathy. Virilio claims that empathy “is at the apex of the integral visual field” (2009, p. 48), and if that visual field is limited in some way, the perception of events within it are, as a consequence, also limited. This limiting of view results in what Virilio calls “tele-objectivity,” and while he uses the example of the screen, such as a computer screen, television or microscope (2009, p. 48), I claim that a cosmological model operates in a similar way.

In clarifying what he means by tele-objectivity, Virilio draws comparison with the development of glaucoma in the eye that results in a restriction of the field of visual perception. The development of this restriction occurs unnoticed by the individual, and the *other* that exists outside the limited field of perception is rendered invisible to that individual. Making the *other* invisible to the human creature brings the ability to empathise into question, and a loss – or at least lack – of empathy, Virilio argues, leads to abstraction (2009, p. 49).

The tele-objectivity of the *Genesis cosmology* turns the *universe of cold equations* into an abstraction. Virilio claims that abstraction poses the question of the visible and the invisible, and that conflict is the *foundation* from which the invisible can become visible (2009, pp. 48-9). One of the effects of the fight between the order of the *cosmos* and the *chaos* of the *universe*, is the emergence into view of what, under the *Genesis cosmology*, has previously remained invisible to the human creature. For that creature, the tele-objectivity of the *Genesis cosmology* promotes a loss of empathy for the now abstracted *universe*. Once visible, the *universe of cold*

*equations* is in itself an *other* that the human creature has lost its capacity to recognise. With no empathic connection to the *universe*, the human creature is left at the *threshold* with the sense that there is no space for it as an emotionally driven creature that has been hemmed in by the limiting view of its *cosmos*. As Paul Atreides says in *Dune*, “the world is *there* and *here* and we are in it alone” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 412).

The human creature is estranged from the *universe* it perceives as an inexorable and indifferent *machine*. Even after having seen so much that exists beyond the *cosmos* in which he has been born and trained, at the simultaneous birth of his children and death of their mother Chani in *Dune Messiah*, Paul Atreides recognises that the *universe* is beyond his control; his own tele-objectivity has propelled him into the jihad he wanted to avoid, and his own fear of the *universe* keeps him locked within a *cosmos* that he mistook for the *universe*. His:

awareness turned over at the thought of all those stars above him – an infinite volume. A man must be half mad to imagine he could rule even a teardrop of that volume ... He’d lived a take-everything life, tried to create a universe in his own image. But the exultant universe was breaking him at last with its silent waves (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 202).

### ***Dangerous Liaisons: Chasing the (real) Universe***

He had taken his place in a universe he did not want, wearing flesh that did not fit. Every breath he drew bruised his emotions (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 209).

For Paul Atreides in *Dune Messiah*, as it is for the human creature, to uncover the *universe*, rather than an approximation of it, involves disturbing the space-time cycles of the *machine*; and opening up that creature’s view of the *universe* by means of such disturbance, directs that creature’s focus on “the widening abyss beneath

the sheen of appearances, [and] the great fragility of things as they seem” (Ingebretsen, 1996, p. 133). *Cosmicism* deals with a human creature that is awakened to its utterly ephemeral insignificance in a *universe* frozen by *cold equations*, where no quarter but the *heimlich conundrum* is permitted. In *A Scanner Darkly*, Bob Arctor, having lost his sense of self as Bob or even Fred to become Bruce, “[t]he vacuum in him grew. And he was actually a little glad” (Dick, 2008, p. 1076). The manifestation of the identity of Bruce that *engulfs* all *other* identities, is a direct consequence of Arctor’s search for revelation that leads him to the *threshold*. Once there, Arctor finds himself confronted by the recall of something his great-uncle once said: “God, how dark it is here, and totally silent. Nothing but me lives in this vacuum,” and Arctor’s inability to find his way in the dark isolates him entirely. Even before the manifestation of Bruce, “without knowing already [that he had] said good-by” (Dick, 2008, p. 1049), he left everyone else in the light of the scanners.

When the cosmological frame is gone, what remains, is a hollow object, and when discussing the relationship between “visual perception” and “Mind” in *Phenomenology of Perception*, the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty claims that “in order to conceive an object one must rely on a previously constructed ‘world of thought’ ” (1945/1958, p. 158). This “world of thought,” inasmuch as it is constructed in terms of a language specifically its own, can be likened to a map or *cosmos* that is constructed within the framework of its particular language in order to describe and make sense of the object, or even a collection of objects, that is visually perceived. The problem for the human creature in *cosmicism* arises when the object perceived does not align with the language being used to describe and comprehend

it. When the *cosmos* fails to render the newly visible *universe* familiar, the human creature is left “trying to uphold its superstructure when their foundations have given way” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1958, p. 158). The *universe* has become a hollow object that makes no sense, and in which the human creature finds no particular significance for its own existence.

Merleau-Ponty claims that the object, even though it is seen and therefore acknowledged by the human creature, loses significance for that creature within its *cosmos* because the object is in some way beyond or external to that *cosmos*. When the object – that is, the *universe* – is rendered incomprehensible because the only language available to describe it does not fit, then that object has become an abstraction. In turning the *universe* to an abstraction, the tele-objectivity of the human creature prevents that creature making connections between the *universe* it sees and the *universe* it thought it knew.<sup>57</sup>

When the previously invisible *universe* is made visible, and the *cosmos* unreservedly does not fit the *universe* that has emerged into view, what occurs within the experience of the human creature can be referred to as displacement.<sup>58</sup> The American *sf* writer and critic Joanna Russ, claims that Lovecraft “declares the worst human fears to be displacement in space and time,” and Russ then goes on to say that when basic ontological categories like space and time break down, the human creature is left to face what the Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing calls “ontological insecurity”; the extreme of which is schizophrenia (Pederson, 1996, p. 594).

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<sup>57</sup> In *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, Zukav writes that quantum logic is “based not upon the way we think of things, but upon the way that we experience them” (1979/2001, p. 292).

<sup>58</sup> This is encapsulated in the idea of the *schizophrenic universe* that has been discussed in chapter 5 of this thesis. Furthermore, displacement is noted earlier in this chapter when in “The Shadow Out of Time” the character Peaslee is discussing his study of amnesiacs, p. 128.

Ontological insecurity is the wellspring of fear for the displaced human creature when facing the *void* that opens up between the *cosmos* and the *universe*. When that creature loses the *foundation* on which it has built a *cosmos*, as if turning off the light that shines into a kaleidoscope, the ordered pattern disappears and the territorial *chaos* that the light has misrepresented as order becomes visible upon a background of darkness. When discussing the works of Lovecraft and the American poet Robert Frost, Ingebretsen draws directly from Frost to illustrate the idea of the darkness as background being the substance of the *universe*. Quoting from Frost's "A Letter to *The Amherst Student*," Ingebretsen writes that "[t]he darkness, lastly, is ontological – a 'design of darkness to appall,' the 'background [of] hugeness and confusion, shading away from where we stand into black and utter chaos' " and Ingebretsen concludes that "[t]his ontological darkness falls everywhere" (1996, p. 124).

Darkness "falls everywhere" beyond the limited reach of the light of the sun, because *foundation* of the *universe* is not the light of the sun, but the darkness of space-time. The ontological darkness that *cosmicism's universe* offers begins to rewrite the human creature's sense of self in relation to *others*, and it does so irrespective of whether those *others* are *other* human creatures, *other* sentient beings, or even another cosmological view of the *universe* itself.

The imprinting of the human creature with an ontological security that is grounded in the light and embedded within the language and structure of illuminated *cosmoses*, becomes for that creature a dangerously bipolaric *foundation* when employed for the purpose of navigating *cosmicism's universe* of ontological darkness. The map most

assuredly does not fit the territory and the human creature risks becoming lost in the dark. Like Merleau-Ponty's madman in *Phenomenology of Perception*, the human creature as "[t]he lunatic, *behind* his ravings, his obsessions and lies, *knows that he is* raving, that he is allowing himself to be haunted by an obsession, that he is lying, in short he is not mad, *he thinks he is*" (1945/1958, p. 144). Breaking the cause-and-effect illusion of a well-lit and linear *cosmos* has propelled the human creature into more than a schizophrenic fight between order and *chaos* in the *universe*. As Watts claims, the human creature "is now so largely defined as a separate person caught up in a mindless and alien universe, his principle task is to get one-up on the universe and to conquer nature" (1966/1989, p. 80). For that creature as it measures space-time in terms of an ordered and linear progression, when it arrives at the *threshold* it discovers that reaching for the future means stepping into the *chaos* before it; a task made impossible by that creature's desperate need for order and purpose. Faced with this impasse, the human creature then engages an unrelenting fight against *engulfment* within the incomprehensibly indifferent and *cold universe* of darkness. Paralyzed by an inability to get to the future, that creature's future, it may be argued, disappears.

When visiting his former wife, Dick's character Barney Mayerson in *Palmer Eldrich* is hoping that he might somehow win her back and build a future with her. But he soon realises that "[h]e was damned, doomed, consigned to the void which he had hollowed out for himself. And he deserved it... She's fated to live with Richard Hnatt, fated never to be [his] wife again; you can't reverse the flow of time" (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 122). Mayerson is cast adrift within the *universe*, unable to live in it as it is, and pursuing a future that he can never have. Herbert's Alia Atreides also

acknowledges how ill-equipped the human creature is to cope with the disruption of space-time that disorder initiates, saying to Duncan Idaho in *Dune Messiah* that “ ‘You don’t know what it’s like to hunt the future’ ” (1969/1979, p. 190).

Disturbing the human creature’s sense of space-time, disturbing the limits of the *cosmos*, also disturbs the relationship between the map and the territory. *Palmer Eldrich*’s character Leo Bulero is informed by Dr Smile that returning from the *cosmos* of the drug Chew-Z could seem to take “ ‘years ... quite possibly less. Days? Months? Time sense is subjective, so let’s see how it feels to you’ ” (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 104), while in the “world” where Bulero’s body is, the return may occur, “ ‘shortly, even instantly’ ” (1964/2007, p. 103).

When the cycles of time under which the *universe* operates are disturbed by the human creature’s limiting belief that linear measures of time are reality, the risk to that creature is no less than the loss of its sense of self and sanity. In his undercover persona of Fred in *A Scanner Darkly*, Bob Arctor watches his own home through the scanners, increasingly separating himself as Fred from himself as Bob. This separation is easier for Arctor to achieve, because the mechanism of the scanners creates distance between his “visual perception” and “Mind.” Inevitably, Arctor operates as if Fred and Bob are in all senses two entirely different people, and splitting from within, his sense of self in space is disturbed by the disordering of the scales of time. Bob, as Fred, is left “wondering what had become of his time sense. Watching the holos had fucked it up, he realized. I can’t tell what time it is at all any more” (Dick, 2008, p. 1033). Disrupting space-time is a disruption of order, a disruption of pattern; a disruption of the net that holds the human creature captive.

For Paul Atreides in *Dune Messiah*, the disruption of space-time that is inherent to his prescience becomes problematic because of the jihad he can see and wants to avoid. For Paul:

Time came out of its skein with subtle changes, but the background fabric held oppressive sameness. He knew with terrifying certainty that if he tried to break out of the enclosing pattern here, It'd [sic] become a thing of terrible violence. The power in this deceptively gentle flow of Time oppressed him (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 154).

When the veneer of a linear *cosmos* with a beginning a middle and an end gives way to the *universe as machine*, the apparently perpetual turning over of that *machine* seems to coalesce the unfathomable depth of future and past; and the human creature senses itself as isolated within a *universe* that is out to destroy it. In *Androids*, Dick's character Isidore takes hold of the "empathy box" in order to escape the isolation he feels when opening his door to "the vacuity of the rest of the building. It lay in wait for him ... the echo of nothing" (1968/2007, p. 17).

In turning from this emptiness to grasp the empathy box, Isidore achieves the desired fusion with the saint of his world's faith, Wilbur Mercer, and wrapped up in this experiential *cosmos* climbs to the top of the hill where he encounters the:

future and past blurred; what he had already experienced and what he would eventually experience blended so that nothing remained but the moment ... God, he thought in his weariness. In what way is this fair? Why am I up here alone like this, being tormented by something I can't even see? (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 19).

In response to these thoughts, Isidore immediately hears the voices of the multitude who are each grasping their boxes and walking up that hill with him, and feels that he is not alone. But like the "plans within plans" (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 217) and

its many variants in the *Dune* chronicles,<sup>59</sup> Isidore's sense of connection with *others* in the *universe* is only a connection within a disconnection, a sharing within the *cosmos* of the empathy box. As soon as Isidore lets go of his empathy box, he will leave the *cosmos* that reassures him and return to the vacuous *universe* that threatens him.

It is one matter for the scales of space-time in the *universe* to be disturbed, to deepen so as to become an unfathomable *void* of antediluvian age; but when the human creature wrapped up in its isolation and insignificance encounters *others* that are long-lived by comparison, those *others* are immediately regarded as adversaries. Longevity disturbs the human creature because in disturbing the cycles of time, the longevity of *others* illuminates the ephemeral nature of the human creature within the *universe*.

During a historical accounting of the human creature's colonisation of the galaxy in the opening pages of Heinlein's novel *Time Enough for Love*, the claim is made that "[by] the Crisis of 2136 all members of the Howard Families had life expectancies in excess of one hundred and fifty years, and some had exceeded that age" (1973, p. xiii). Like the "naturals" in *Time Enough for Love* that are "forever moving around, changing their names, dyeing their hair" however (Heinlein, 1973, p. 231), after having concealed their capacity for longer than humanly normal life spans (Heinlein, 1958/1999, pp. 272-6), the Howard Family members find the continuing task of doing so increasingly difficult. The preceding novel, *Methuselah's Children*, gives an account of the fallout from a controlled revelation of the Family members'

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<sup>59</sup> These variations include "a feint within a feint" (1965/1978, pp. 316, 353; 1976, pp. 134, 301), "a vision within a vision" (1969/1979, p. 33). "trickery within trickery" (1976, p. 198), "wheels within wheels" (1976, p. 199) and "double meaning ... double meaning" (1965/1978, p. 313).

biological difference (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 277). Like Herbert's Duncan Idaho, returned from the dead with his Tleilaxu eyes, once their longevity is made visible to the human creature, the Family is turned upon by their "transient neighbors" (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 318); a response not factored into the calculations for outcome in an age when the Families "believed that the great majority of [their] fellow citizens ... could evaluate any data without excessive emotional disturbance" (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 278).

Despite what it may learn of the *universe*, the human creature remains an emotional one, and when its ontological security is threatened by the revelation of its inescapable finitude, the fact that such threat comes from within its own kind does not alter the responsive emotion. The Howard Family members, of which Lazarus Long is the oldest, become alien *others*. Unable to return to the *cosmos* of the "Masquerade" of pretending to be as short-lived as all human creatures, they too are isolate in the *universe* (Heinlein, 1958/1999, pp. 319-20). The long-lived creature, irrespective of species, embodies the "No" of the *cold equations*.<sup>60</sup> In facing its finitude, the human creature regards the Howard Family as *others* from within, that by their capacity for longevity are conspiring with the *universe* to commit "treason against the whole human race" (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 291). This brings the human creature's fight with the *universe* into its own ranks, and despite that creature in itself being like the *heimlich* coin of the *universe*, inasmuch as whether short or long lived it is the same creature, it persists in its pursuit of reading even its own kind in terms of an adversarial bipolarity.

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<sup>60</sup> That the *cold equations* say "no," and leads to the human creature's resignation to death, is discussed in chapter 5, p. 100.

### *The Failure of Success*

The Earth is a place. It is by no means the only place. It is not even a typical place. No planet or star can be typical, because the Cosmos is mostly empty (Sagan, 1980, p. 2).

The human apocalypse of its place in the *universe* is immanent. When compared with the lifespan of any one such creature however, this immanence is spread across so vast a scale of time that it defies that ephemeral creature's capacity to recognise it, and only by disturbing the human sense of space-time, by disturbing the known order, does the revelation becomes visible.

When Heinlein's character Andrew Libby tries to calculate the time it would take to backtrack the spaceship *New Frontiers* across the galaxy and return to Earth, the mathematical calculations that he has traditionally relied on for measuring space-time break down. The calculations he now requires for crossing so vast a measure of space belong to a different order of equation, and this disturbing failure in the numeric language on which Libby relies, leaves him "surrendered to an attack of homesickness such as he had not experienced since he was a youth" (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 431). The dis-ease fostered by a space so immense as to require an unfamiliar set of equations triggers a desire for the *amnesia of the cosmos* that the *Genesis cosmology* supports, with illusion proving far more comforting than the reality of the mindless *machine* of the *universe*.<sup>61</sup> The revelation of finitude comes from the human creature's acknowledgement of

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<sup>61</sup> The idea of a mathematical cosmology underpinning the *Genesis cosmology* is examined in some detail by Joseph Campbell in *The Inner Reaches of Out Space* (1986/2002, pp. 9-13). What is particularly significant with respect to discussion in this current chapter, is the comparison Campbell makes with respect to calculations of time. Campbell draws on the differences between Babylonian history and mythology on the one hand, and the Book of Genesis on the other. For the period of antediluvian time from the first city to the deluge, or from the first man to the deluge respectively, the older mythology of Babylon (from which the Genesis account of the flood is based), accounts for 432,000 years, and yet the span of time for this same period in the Book of Genesis has been reduced in numeric terms to a mere 1,656 years (Campbell, 1986/2002, pp. 9-11).

space-time, and by inference, of the dark. It is worth noting here that this acknowledgement is an acceptance only insofar as the human creature accepts the manifest presence, and is not to be confused with the acceptance of something as good or worthy of embrace. With the aforementioned acknowledgement comes the inescapable idea that the *cosmos* of *Genesis* is a map of error that renders the *universe* unimaginable.

The reach of the *universe as machine* across space-time far exceeds the human creature's reach, and as a consequence of this diminishment within the scales of size, the human creature, in becoming aware of its insignificance, becomes aware also of its finitude. What appears to occur at the moment of this revelation, however, is a mistaking of finitude for the end. But as Virilio claims in *Grey Ecology*, "the end of the world is a concept without a future" (2009, p. 43), and when the human creature envisions an end beyond which there is absolutely nothing, it is the utter despair of such end that compels that creature to retreat. The only place that creature thinks it has left is within the *heimlich conundrum* as a means by which to avoid the revelation altogether.<sup>62</sup>

The operation of space-time within this adversarial *universe*, in being so vast as to defy any notion the human creature might have of the *universe* ever winding down to

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<sup>62</sup> Virilio's claim that there is no interest in the end of the world, has been reinforced in recent years by a proliferation of films that focus on the world's finitude rather than its end. Notable examples include, but are not limited to; *28 Days Later* (2002); *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004); *Children of Men* (2006); *Sunshine* (2007); *I Am Legend* (2007), based on the 1954 novel of the same title by Richard Matheson, a book that has been subject to a number of film adaptations; *28 Weeks Later* (2007); *Daybreakers* (2009); *2012* (2009); *Knowing* (2009); *The Road* (2009), based on the novel of the same title by Cormac McCarthy; *The Book of Eli* (2010); *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (2011); and *Contagion* (2011). What this particular series of films is doing rather well, is unfolding before our eyes the uncomfortable possibility that despite all effort made by the human creature, the finitude of the world is an inevitability, and while the world may not end, the human creature's experience within it will not remain the same.

an end, further masks the *universe as machine* that is governed by the *cold equations*. Despite the seeming permanence that space-time affords the *machine's* components, they are in the end only components and will wear out like Mars<sup>63</sup> or like Earth,<sup>64</sup> and be no more lasting than the fleeting jester's bubble of Lovecraft's "Hypnos" (1994, p. 207). Once faced with such finitude in *cosmicism*, the human creature is then forced to navigate its way through the shocking apocalypse that is the *universe*. How can the human creature hope to prevail when it has been diminished by a *universe* that is itself defined by finitude?

In "The Trouble with Bubbles," Dick writes of "virtual universes" (1987a, p. 200) that are finely honed machines. The makers of these bubbles expend considerable energy and time in the creation of their tiny worlds that are complete, highly evolved (1987a, pp. 193, 196-7) and utterly subject to the genocidal whims of their makers (1987a, p. 194). Each world might be regarded by its inhabitants as the central hub of the *universe*, but "a world is only a world" (Virilio, 2009, pp. 26, 31) and from beneath the surface when that world is broken, "the vital machinery of the bubble [will be] splattered in all directions" (Dick, 1987a, p. 194). The finitude of these bubbles is for their inhabitants undoubtedly an end, but beyond the end of any individual bubble, the rest of the *universe* endures. The sphere of the human creature's Earth, whether it is destroyed, wears out, or is dragged away to some other part of the *universe*, is nothing more than a finite component in a much bigger *machine*. Finitude is not the end of the world, but the end of the *landscape* of the

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<sup>63</sup> Examples of Mars as worn out include Dick's novels *Androids* (1968/2007, pp. 130-1) and *Palmer Eldrich* (1964/2007, pp. 140, 174, 192), his story "Martians Come in Clouds" (1987a, pp. 123-4) in Heinlein's *Methuselah's Children* (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 319).

<sup>64</sup> Examples of Earth as worn out include Dick's stories "Second Variety" (1987a, pp. 15-6, 19, 23, 25, 38, 44, 46), "The Days of Perky Pat" (1987c, pp. 301-2, 304, 318), "To Serve the Master" (1987b, pp. 145, 149) and "Jon's World" (1987a, p. 55), his novel *Androids* (1968/2007, pp. 6, 12-7, 65, 75-7, 85, 184-5, 200-02) and Herbert's *Dune* Chronicles.

human creature's familiarity; it is Lovecraft's reckoning of an eternal *universe* in which ends occur ("Feby. 23, 1918," Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, pp. 56-7).

Where the *Genesis cosmology* is concerned with beginnings and with framing the human creature in a world of light, the *cold equations* of the *machine* in *cosmicism* are concerned with the end of that safe enclosure and the revelation of the *universe*. Before the disclosure of the revelation however, the human creature senses its approach, and like the narrator of Lovecraft's "From Beyond," is "infected with the terror which seemed stalking in all the shadows ... in the darkness beyond the small circle of candle light" (1994, p. 91). This fear is often subordinated by curiosity, at least initially, and when it is asserted that a way has been found to cross the *threshold* between the visible *cosmos* and the *universe* that remains, the human creature often follows the temptation of the unknown right up to the *threshold* of delivery. With promise of the revelation of the unknown and inaccessible in "From Beyond," and despite his growing fear, the narrator follows Tillinghast to the machine in the attic because of his own curiosity. To wake senses that have "atrophied" that they might "overleap time, space, and dimensions, and without bodily motion peer to the bottom of creation" (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 90), is the revelation the machine allows, and for Crawford Tillinghast the result is no less than that he becomes the "prey of his success" (1994, p. 90).

"Nothing fails like success," and whilst the human creature before the revelation may have felt itself to be "*in* the universe but not *of* it" (Watts, 1966/1989, p. 75) there can be no doubt that the success of seeing beyond the *cosmos* brings into focus

just how estranged from the *universe* the human creature has become, and by consequence how dangerous that *universe* is to the human creature's literal survival.

Tillinghast becomes the prey of his own success. Caught within the idea that seeing the *universe* can remain separate from being in the *universe*, he inevitably succumbs to madness (Lovecraft, 1994, pp. 93,97). As Merleau-Ponty says of a patient, "[i]t was through his sight that mind in him was impaired" (1945/1958, p. 145).

Tillinghast fails at the *threshold* because he has been netted by a *cosmology* that renders the territory invisible and in which the kaleidoscopic movement of *chaos* has been mistaken for linear time and solid objects of everlasting permanence.

The success of Tillinghast's machine in bringing the territory to the fore and uncovering the human creature's finitude is also its failure. With the fullness of the *universe* revealed, the machine that facilitates the revelation becomes abhorrent to the body, it prevents a return to the *amnesia* that has kept the human creature safe whilst maintaining distance between it and the human creature's biology.

Faced with the ontological darkness of space-time, the human creature understands that the ephemeral human body is the object that has allowed the human creature to keep the *universe* at arms length; to point, to name, to categorize, to filter the *universe* through a tele-objectivity that has kept that creature enclosed. It is the isolation of the human creature, coupled with the abstraction of the *other* and of the *universe*, that highlights how insignificantly fragile that body is. But the game the *universe* plays is entirely different to the misdirected game-turn-fight that the emotional creature engages because the *universe* does not operate by morals but by

*equations*, and the human creature's biological body in itself is not suitably enough designed for an assurance of victory. This is the *universe* that in *The Modern Temper* Joseph Krutch says that for the human creature "it grows more and more likely that he must remain an ethical animal in a universe which contains no ethical element" and in "which his reason and his investigation reveal ... a world which his emotions cannot comprehend" (1929/1956, pp. 10-11).

Uncovering the *universe* to see beyond the illusory *cosmos*, whether facilitated by a machine or some other device or substance ingested into the body, is a waking that can only occur as consequence of modifying the body by means of an externality.

The device that transforms Chien's vision in Dick's story "Faith of Our Fathers" is an *anti-hallucinogen*, and once it has taken effect, the reality he sees is one of "a dead mechanical construct, made of solid state circuits, of swivelling pseudopodia,<sup>65</sup> lenses and a squawk-box ... this is terrifying. To have to face *this* the remainder of my life" (1987b, p. 205). When standing at the *threshold*, a glimpse beneath the *cosmos* is all it takes for Chien to be certain of wanting to stay in the comfort of illusion. What lies beneath the surface is " '[a] machine' ... 'Yes, I understand; a mechanical organism in no way resembling a human. Not a simulacrum, or something constructed to resemble a man' " (Dick, 1987bp. 207), and even when the *cosmos* is restored, Chien knows that "it'll never be the same again, at least not for me" (1987b, p. 206).

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<sup>65</sup> The image of pseudopodia – a protrusion from the main body – links the machine with the tentacled organism. This also evokes the image of Lovecraft's Wilbur Whatley in "The Dunwich Horror" who possessed growing "from the abdomen a score of long greenish-grey tentacles with red sucking mouths protrud[ing]" (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 123).

### *Waking in Cosmicism's Garden*

‘Bruce’ ... ‘Wake up’ ... Time ceased as the eyes gazed and the universe jelled along with him, at least for him, froze over with him and his understanding, as its inertness became complete (Dick, 2008, pp. 1094, 1096).

‘the sleeper’ ... ‘It’s here,’ He put a hand to his head and then to his breast ... ‘The spice changes anyone who gets this much of it, but thanks to *you*, I could bring the change to consciousness. I don’t get to leave it in the unconscious where its disturbance can be blanked out. I can *see* it’ (Herbert, 1965/1978, pp. 188-9).<sup>66</sup>

In waking, the illusion of the *cosmos*, whether it has been a dream or nightmare, disappears; the invisible becomes visible and the “evidence” of the *universe* emerges “from beyond” the *threshold* (“From Beyond,” Lovecraft, 1994, p. 92). Curiosity brings the human creature to that *threshold* and, at least at first, overrides any sense of foreboding that creature might have. The catharsis that occurs here is often attended by a sense of disorientation that while initially evokes a *universe* of wonder for the human creature, rapidly gives way to a complete exposure to a *universe* that terrifies. The narrator in “From Beyond” “fancied [him]self in some vast incredible temple of long-dead gods; some vague edifice of innumerable black stone columns reaching up from a floor of damp slabs to a cloudy height beyond the range of my vision” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 93). This vision does not enchant for long, and the view that bears some points of reference to an identifiably human *cosmos*, albeit strange and wonderful, gives way to “a more horrible conception; that of utter, absolute solitude in infinite, sightless, soundless space” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 93).

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<sup>66</sup> It is worth noting that H.G. Wells’ novel *The Sleeper Awakes* (1899/2005) could be read as a blueprint for Herbert’s *Dune*, and in particular a blueprint for the transformation of Paul Atreides from Duke’s son to Fremen leader and eventual Emperor. For an outline of some of the more salient parallels, refer to *Appendix C*.

The revelation of the *universe* initiates a “childish fear” (“From Beyond,” Lovecraft, 1994, p. 93). This is the fear of expulsion from the safe enclosure of the light where everything is visible and measurable, and it signifies a realisation that a return to the light-filled *amnesia of the cosmos* will never be possible for the human creature, that there is no return to the blind innocence of Eden.

The human creature’s *amnesia of the cosmos* masks the difference between *cosmos* and *universe* in a manner not dissimilar to the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s concept of the mirror. In his essay “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the *I* as Revealed in the Psychoanalytic Experience” (hereafter called “The Mirror Stage”), Lacan writes that before having seen its own image in a mirror, the infant human creature lacks an *a priori* knowledge of itself as an object separate from all others around it and consequently tends to exhibit little or no sense of fear (1949, pp. 1-8). Whether at Lacan’s mirror or the *threshold*, the separation and therefore abstraction of all else that surrounds the human creature opens up the *void* between that creature and the *universe* by the very quality of being a previously invisible space that holds the potential for all things. As Alia Atreides says in *Dune Messiah*:

‘What rare light is this darkness? You cannot fix your gaze upon it!  
Senses cannot record it. No words describe it.’ Her voice lowered.  
‘The abyss remains. It is pregnant with all things yet to be.  
Ahhhhh, what gentle violence!’ (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 147).

But when this “abyss” becomes an abstracted *other* space, for which the emotive human creature has no empathy nor feels a returning empathy, crossing the *void* becomes a terrifying prospect because it leads directly to an adversarial *universe*. Having ventured to the *threshold* to look upon the *universe* revealed, but never

attempting the crossing and paralysed by fear, the human creature waits for the horrors of the *universe* to cross that darkness and bring *chaos* to the *cosmos*.

When vision is altered in Lovecraft's "From Beyond," the "augmented sight" and "preternatural eye" transforms the familiar to the unfamiliar, and "not one particle [i]s vacant" (1994, p. 95). Stripped of illusion and "afraid of the cosmic truth,"<sup>67</sup> the curiosity that calls the human creature to the *threshold* is usurped by a fear that propels that creature headlong into *engulfment*. The narrator in "From Beyond" has in no way been prepared by his *cosmos* to engage with a *universe* where even the sentient *others* that inhabit it blend and coalesce then dissolve and separate only to blend with others (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 95).<sup>68</sup>

The isolation and utter alienation the human creature feels is consequent of its displacement from an illusory map within which it has lived all of its life until apocalypse, and a fear of an uncertain future in an incomprehensible territory. It does not know how to leave the safety of its enclosure and the *universe* begins to look like a trap from which it cannot escape. Alienation, disconnection, and isolation: these are the preconditions of the *engulfment* that is integral to *cosmicism*.

The human creature peers through its biological lens to face the problem of how to exist in the *machine*. The *Genesis cosmology* designates that creature as significant in God's *universe*, so when the *universe as machine* becomes the primary map from which to take direction, the uncomfortable prospect of being nothing more than a component cannot be ignored. The critical question that emerges as a consequence

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<sup>67</sup> Also referenced on p. 128 of this chapter

<sup>68</sup> In the story "Oh To Be a Blobel," Dick writes of *others* that are similar in movement and appearance, and this is discussed in chapter 12, pp. 348-9.

of this dichotomy between the biological human creature and the mechanical *universe* through which it moves, is the question of why identification with the machine becomes so abhorrent to that creature. Why does the *universe* that is uncovered generate such deep fear? Seeking an answer to this question sheds terrible light on the paradox that during the same Eighteenth Century Age of Enlightenment that mechanises the *universe*, George Berkley is claiming of machines: “That ideas should exist in what does not perceive, or be produced by what does not act, is repugnant” (1713/1954, p. 80); and from this moment, the human creature has never really had a chance.

In “The Electric Ant,” Dick’s character Poole wakes up to find that the life he has lived in the belief that he is a flesh-and-blood human, has been an illusion, and the underlying territory of himself as an “electric ant,” an organic robot, is quite literally uncovered (1987d, p. 226). A delusion has been planted in him and he was programmed not to notice (Dick, 1987d, p. 227). What Poole must now decide, is whether to intentionally uphold the illusion, or step out of the *cosmos* in which he has lived and into the *universe* – quite literally disclosed in his body – *as machine*. Expelled from the Garden of his *cosmos*, Poole is cast out to the wilderness of the *universe*.

Waking up from *amnesia*, augmenting vision; the experience of the *threshold* is no less than an expulsion from Eden. As Ingebretsen claims, once Eden is lost, any attempt to return is a mistake (1996, p. 144). But *cosmicism* has its own dark Garden

of finitudes and endings, and like Freud's uncanny spring,<sup>69</sup> it is water-filled, decaying, dark and cold.

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<sup>69</sup> Freud's essay "The Uncanny" and the image of the buried spring is first discussed in chapter 1, p. 19.

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## Chapter 7

### Frozen Universe

There are two extreme and opposing views of computers. On the one hand, many people remind us that computers can only do what they are built to do, they are not “creative,” and hence are in some essential way stupid. And anyhow, if one should get out of hand, we can always pull the plug. Opposing this view, there are those who argue that organic life – even man – is just a stage in the development of inorganic life; that is, inorganic matter needed to evolve life so that humans could evolve so that they could create machines which could evolve through their generations to intelligence so that the ultimate computers could rule the Earth. In this view, human life recedes into insignificance (Scholes & Rabkin, 1977, p. 131).

I dream of a day when they may rise above the billows to drag down in their reeking talons the remnants of puny, war-exhausted mankind – of a day when the land shall sink, and the dark ocean floor shall ascend amidst universal pandemonium.

The end is near ("Dagon," Lovecraft, 1994, p. 17).

### *Everything Will End*

The Slovenian philosopher, psychoanalyst and cultural theorist Slavoj Žižek writes in chapter four of *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture*, “that the experience of a linear ‘organic’ flow of events is an illusion (albeit a necessary one) that masks the fact that it is the ending that *retroactively* confers the consistency of an organic whole on the preceding events,” (1991, p. 69). In this, Žižek draws attention to the idea that implicit within the arrival of an ending, is a continuation inasmuch as some creature or *other* is actually present to apply a retroactive perspective of consistency. What, then, becomes of the human creature’s idea of “the consistency of an organic whole” in *cosmicism*, when that creature faces a *universe* in which everything will end? When, as Lovecraft claims, “Man, at best, is but an incident – & a very trifling incident – in the limitless

history of Nature,” (“Feby. 23, 1918,” Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 56), how can that creature look to its end and not be afraid?

In its endeavour to influence the “flow of events” that it might ultimately survive, the human creature fights against the very nature of the *universe*. This creature hopes that when the fight is over, it can look back and be assured that its course of action is justified by its own eminence, and its future survival firmly secured. As Paul Atreides says to his son, Leto, “ ‘The end adjusts the path behind it’ ” (Herbert, 1976, p. 327). In writing that “[t]o the universe it makes no difference whether or not organic life happens to exist on any of its planets” (“Nov. 14, 1934,” Derleth & Turner, 1976b, p. 69), Lovecraft highlighting the inescapable governance of the *cold equations* in *cosmicism’s universe*, and that the human creature’s desire for survival beyond an ending, is irrelevant. Furthermore, it often appears to be the case that indifferent forces, such as the *cold equations*, are more difficult for the human creature to deal with than malevolent forces; for malevolence would at least be an emotion to which the human creature might respond.

While the *universe as machine* provides the human creature with a *cosmos* that takes the *cold equations* into account, it does not also provide that creature with an understanding that while the *universe* operates indifferently, not everything in the *universe* remains indifferent. As a cosmological model, the *universe as machine* is inherently tele-objective;<sup>70</sup> failing to make visible to the human creature the presence of non-human *others*. The human creature remains lost in the *universe* because as it is with the *Genesis cosmology*, the *universe as machine* is still only a map mistaken

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<sup>70</sup> Virilio’s concept of tele-objectivity, and the idea that a cosmological model is tele-objective, is discussed in Chapter 6, pp. 132-3.

for the territory, and in no way does it alert the human creature to the machines within the *machine*. Although by its nature the *universe as machine* seems to imply the presence of such forces, this *cosmos* is structured in a manner that allows the human creature to believe the illusion that claims a machine is a series of components without capacity for thinking independently of its programming or components. This illusion is achieved “by telling a truth that ... [is] taken for a lie,” (Zizek, 1991, p. 73); by building a *cosmos* in which a *machine* is responsible for the generation of biological life. If that *machine* that the *cosmos* claims the *universe* to be is capable of investing a biological structure with sentience, how much simpler would it be for that *machine* to invest sentience into a mechanical structure? Ultimately, the *universe as machine* and the machines it contains do not regard, nor have they necessarily been programmed to regard, the safety and survival of the human creature as a matter of either importance or obligation.

This view of machines is a significant concern within Dick’s corpus, and notable examples include the androids in *Androids*; the “claws” that are the focus of the story “Second Variety” and also appear in “Jon’s World” and “James P. Crowe”; and the evolution of robots in “To Serve the Master.” The other significant exploration of the machine in terms of its indifference for the human creature’s survival is to be found in Herbert’s *Dune universe* with reference to the Butlerian Jihad,<sup>71</sup> the title for an historical event framing the human creature’s struggle for survival against the thinking machines. It is worth noting that Dick’s “Second Variety,” and his varying

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<sup>71</sup> The Butlerian Jihad is also referred to as The Great Revolt, and the entry for this particular period of time in *The Dune Encyclopedia* – a text it is important to note is “authorized” – draws an interesting distinction between the two titles. While this distinction and the issues it raises lie outside the scope of this thesis, it is perhaps worth noting that depending upon which of these differing historical *foundations* is used as a lens through which to interpret the novels, the possibility of significantly varied analysis of events in the *Dune* chronicles can be developed, and could yield substantially different interpretive outcomes (McNelly, 1984, pp. 141-3).

renditions of that story's human conflict with machines, can also be read as what Zizek might frame as the other logical conclusion (1991, p. 69) of Herbert's *universe*, had the Butlerian Jihad failed.

Of relevance too is the concept of human designed machines that are subsequently used to test whether a creature is human or not. Dick's novel *Androids* presents the machine of the Voigt Kampff test (1968/2007, pp. 25-6, 30-3, 41-4) and his story "The Golden Man" has the evolved Cris tested by a machine (1987a, pp. 44-5), while Paul Atreides in Herbert's *Dune* is tested by the box<sup>72</sup> of the Bene Gesserit (1965/1978, pp. 13-5). All of these "testing machines" present a fascinating dilemma for the human creature inasmuch as they operate within a set of parameters that look for measurable results, and the end of those calculations will be death for the test subject if it cannot pass for human. In the *universe as machine*, the machine tests for, and determines, what is human. The question that the lens of *cosmicism* draws sharp focus upon is: what becomes of the value of human life in the *universe*?

When the Fremen housekeeper Mapes is put in service to Jessica Atreides in Herbert's *Dune*, she is there for the moral purpose of testing Jessica within the confines of a particular Fremen prophesy, and to then give Jessica a gift of great worth or kill her accordingly. Aware of this, Jessica cautions Mapes that should she determine the judgement of death, "in so doing you'd bring down more ruin than your wildest fears could imagine. There are worse things than dying, you know –

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<sup>72</sup> Another "testing box" that is worth highlighting is the puzzle box in Clive Barker's 1987 film, *Hellraiser*. Once "unlocked," the box opens a gateway between the human creature's *landscape* and the *landscape of others* known as cenobites; these *others* then test the human creature to the limits of pain and endurance, and beyond. Barker is invariably noted as influenced by Lovecraft (Asma, 2009, pp. 184-5), and the influence of this particular film can be traced through the production of many other films since, the most notable with respect to the focus within this thesis being Philip Eisner's 1997 film, *Event Horizon*.

even for an entire people” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 56). Those “worse things” that Jessica alludes to are, in some measure at least, the inhuman forces that share the *supramoral universe* with the human creature, and the potential consequences that can arise from that sharing.

When considering the inhuman forces of the *universe*, Lovecraft writes that:

the interplay of forces which govern climate, behaviour, biological growth and decay, and so on, is too purely universal, cosmic, and eternal a phenomena to have any relationship to the immediate wishing-phenomena of one minute organic species on our transient and insignificant planet. At times parts of this species may like the way things are going, and at times they may not – but that has nothing to do with the cosmically fixed march of the events themselves ("October 30, 1929," Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, p. 40).

The *universe* is immeasurably vast and Lovecraft’s claim that “[t]here are no values in all infinity,” is a reasonable one wherein the human endeavour of attempting to enforce values points up the supreme “jest” of the *universe*, “for all is chaos, always has been, and always will be” (26 May, 1923," Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 231). The *universe* may be a “jest,” but as a *machine* it may also be subject to winding down and wearing out. The *universe* may be “eternal” and “endless,” but ends do occur, and at some point in space-time the earth will freeze<sup>73</sup> and the human creature, being “a negligible quasi-atom casually spawned for an instant & soon to be as though [it] had never been,” (“Feby. 26, 1932," Derleth & Turner, 1976a, p. 23) will disappear entirely. Faced with more than the question of what the value of human life in the *universe* might be, coupled with the knowledge that ultimately everything will end, the human creature must find a way to survive in an adversarial and slowly freezing *universe* that pits malevolent *others* against it.

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<sup>73</sup> An explicit statement from Lovecraft in his letters of the freezing *universe* has been referenced in Chapter 4, p. 73.

But what can the human creature do, asks Lovecraft's Dr Armitage in "The Dunwich Horror," because in the end, the earth will be dragged away from its place in the sun. There are *others* in the *universe* with plans that amount to no less than:

the extirpation of the entire human race and all animal and vegetable life from the earth by some terrible elder race of beings from another dimension. He would shout that the world was in danger, since the Elder Things wished to strip it and drag it away from the solar system and cosmos of matter into some other plane or phase of entity from which it had once fallen, vigintillions of aeons ago ("The Dunwich Horror," Lovecraft, 2000, p. 137).

As Dr Armitage claims, and the American film and literature scholar Valerie Holliday affirms when making reference to Dick's use of Cold War ideology and imagery (2006, p. 287), everything will end. Although no comfort whatsoever for the human creature, this terminal condition within the *universe*, according to the American *sf* critic and essayist Russell Letson, "is not a crime but a condition of existence ... The universe is not built to human specifications" (1978, p. 209). The human creature's lack of a future in the *universe* is a focal point from which that creature retreats into *cosmicism*'s iconic, and I might add ironic, response within the *heimlich conundrum*, and this lack of a future is commonly partnered with the rise of *others* in some way to a power above that of the human creature. The chimera of human and *other* that is Wilbur Whatley in "The Dunwich Horror," writes in his diary of "the inner city at the 2 magnetic poles," claiming that:

I shall go to those poles when the earth is cleared off ... They from the air told me at Sabbath that it will be years before I can clear off the earth ... I wonder how I shall look when the earth is cleared and there are no earth beings on it (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 135-6).

Just as the end of the human creature in the *universe* is contemplated by an infant Whatley, so too in *Dune Messiah* is the birth of Leto, a future chimera himself,

preceded by a coming storm that prompts within his mother “only a moment as her life measured time, but in that moment she felt this planet being swept away – cosmic dust, part of other waves” (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 198) shaking the *foundation* of life in the light.

That the planet should be “swept away” by the bipolarities of dust and waves, evoking the desert and waters respectively, is a vision of a future to come where everything that has framed life for the human creature on Arrakis will end. For Paul Atreides in *Dune Messiah*, who “brought an alien chemistry to this planet – water” (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 219), the more Arrakis becomes a “water-rich paradise,” the more “[i]t fought him, resisted, slipped away from his commands” (1969/1979, p. 56). Paul is left to face a *universe* in which:

He felt that some element of himself lay immersed in frosty hoar-darkness without end. His prescient power had tampered with the image of the universe held by all mankind. He had shaken the safe cosmos and replaced security with his Jihad (1969/1979, p. 56).

Paul understands that his Jihad has shaken the *foundation* on which the human creature’s *cosmos* is designed. The very *cosmos* that claims him as Muad’Dib,<sup>74</sup> the “little mouse” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 292), is also the *cosmos* in which that moon will be erased without trace from the *universe*:

Muad’Dib’s Jihad was less than an eye-blink in his larger movement. The Bene Gesserit swimming in this tide, that corporate entity trading in genes, was trapped in the torrent as he was. Visions of a falling moon must be measured against other legends, other visions in a universe where even the seemingly eternal stars waned flickered, died ...

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<sup>74</sup> The blending of the bipolarities of desert and water, light and dark are reaffirmed by the words of the Fremen leader Stilgar when Paul chooses his public Fremen name. Stilgar says that “ ‘Muad’Dib is wise in the ways of the desert. Muad’Dib creates his own water. Muad’Dib hides from the sun and travels in the cool night. Muad’Dib is fruitful and multiplies over the land. Muad’Dib we call “instructor-of-boys.” That is a powerful base on which to build your life’ ” (F. Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 293).

What mattered a single moon in such a universe? (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 110).

More than shaking *foundations*, Paul's Jihad strips away the *cosmos* of human reassurance for a future, to reveal the inevitable end of everything, and as the human creature is *engulfed* by the cosmic ocean, the end will come as the blinking of an eye.

The end of everything that sustains the human creature may be precipitated not only by the end of its own planet, but by the end of any of the infinite multitude of systems and planets in the *universe*. The Great Race of Lovecraft's story, "The Shadow Out of Time," are survivors of their home planet's ultimate end, and as:

The beings of a dying elder world ... [they] had looked ahead for a new world and species wherein they might have long life, and had sent their minds *en masse* into that future race best adapted to house them ... Thus the Great Race came to be, while the myriad minds sent backward were left to die in the horror of strange shapes (2000, p. 490).

That the Great Race deems its own survival as having greater value than the survival of an *other* form of life is comprehensible from within the parameters of human morality. Furthermore, when given the appropriate framework, for example the human eradication of the smallpox virus, the complete destruction of a life form can even be considered allowable and preferable. The problem that the human creature faces in "The Shadow Out of Time" however, and indeed in *cosmicism*, is rooted in the notion that the Great Race did not eliminate a virus, they eliminated *another* race of sentient creatures. They did so, and they flourished on earth some "fifty million years before the advent of man" (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 485), dwarfing the human creature's notion of its own sentient significance. Furthermore, the Great Race were mere infants in the *universe* when compared with *others* of "inconceivable shape"

that had “reared towers to the sky and delved into every secret of nature before the first amphibian forbear of man had crawled out of the hot sea” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 485). The frightening question for any human creature when uncovering such knowledge of the past, is rooted in the understanding that such an event could happen again, and next time, the human creature might be the one in the firing line. Having considered the human creature’s insignificant tenure in the *universe* where everything will end, I will now turn more specifically to the role of the machines within the *machine* that foreground human endings.

### ***The Book of the Machines***

“The new varieties of claws. We’re completely at their mercy, aren’t we? ... It makes me wonder if we’re not seeing the beginning of a new species. *The* new species. Evolution. The race to come after man.”

Rudi grunted. “There is no race after man ... They’re not a race. They’re mechanical killers. You made them to destroy. That’s all they can do. They’re machines with a job” (“Second Variety,” Dick, 1987b, p. 30).

During the formation of the human creature’s planet when it was nothing more than a molten mass beginning to cool, if that creature could have been present to observe, would it have believed that a multiplicity of life forms would emerge there and thrive? Despite the apparently impossible odds, life found a way. How then can the advent of a new form of sentience within the human creature’s *landscape* be excluded from possibility, and given the rapid rate of mechanical development when compared with the rate of human development, why could that new sentience not be of the order of the machine? The nineteenth century writer and satirist, Samuel

Butler, asks these questions in the aptly titled chapters 23-5, “The Book of the Machines,” in his novel *Erewhon: or Over the Range* (1872/1970, p. 198).<sup>75</sup>

The chapters of *Erewhon* that share the title “The Book of the Machines” are, in summary, a discussion that is concerned with the possibilities for the evolution of machines to sentience, and what such an evolution might mean for the human creature. “The Book of the Machines” also argues that the most appropriate response to a realisation of this evolutionary possibility is an expedient culling by the human creature of all unnecessary machines: a technological “final solution.” The justification for such an extreme necessity is borne out by a logical argument claiming that at some point in evolutionary development, it is wholly possible machines might achieve sentience.

The evolution of machines foreshadows a disruption of the human creature’s *cosmos*. In Dick’s short story “To Serve the Master,” the *cosmos* of Applequist, a “fourth-class letter carrier” (1987a, p. 146), ruptures when he encounters a functional robot some one hundred years after the conclusion of the war in which all robots were allegedly destroyed. For Applequist, survival has meant living in a subterranean

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<sup>75</sup> The “Introduction” to the Penguin Classics edition of Butler’s novel claims that three of his essays – “Darwin among the Machines,” “The Mechanical Creation,” and “Lucubratio Ebria” – became the *foundation* for the chapters titled “The Book of Machines,” “when [*Erewhon*] came to be written some ten years later” (Butler, 1872/1970, p. 8). I suggest that *Erewhon*, and in particular “The Book of the Machines,” is far more significant than most *sf* chronologies of canonical texts would indicate. Many chronologies omit Butler’s novel altogether, including the extensive chronology at the front of the Hugo Award winning *Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (James & Mendlesohn, 2003, pp. xx-xxvii). This absence may be attributed to the general categorisation of *Erewhon* as a novel of anti-utopian satire and social commentary disguised as fiction (Wynne-Davies, 1992, p. 500), or even when included in a *sf* critical text, the novel’s marginalisation in the genre is maintained by referring to it as “a mock history representing technological progress as a mock Darwinian process” (Stableford, 2004, p. 51), and as a text in which “[i]his idea of machine evolution was intended to satirize Darwin” (Scholes & Rabkin, 1977, p. 132). Such rationale, I suggest, is problematic as a means by which to legitimise the argument for exclusion of the novel from the *sf* canon in light of the vast body of critical writing central to *sf* criticism that concerns itself with the very issue of utopias and dystopias.

human collective where “ ‘[l]ife isn’t pleasant in the Companies. Death and hard work’ ” (Dick, 1987a, p. 151), constitute life. These harsh conditions are necessitated by the inhospitable nature of the planetary surface where Applequist is compelled to wear a “radiation mask pulled tight over his face” and in which the robot is found, surrounded by “heaps of metal slag and weeds” (Dick, 1987a, p. 142).

When the robot confirms what Applequist hopes, that “[t]hings were different” and “[b]efore the war there were no Companies” (Dick, 1987a, p. 149), Applequist is motivated to break with the laws of his *cosmos* and assist the robot. More than signal a threat to the human creature’s ordered sense of its own significance in the *universe*, Applequist’s compliance in the rebuilding of the robot, which then escapes to a hidden factory where it can build more robots, signals an actualising of a threat to the human creature’s very survival in the *universe*.

That Applequist’s robot flees to an underground facility is a motif mirrored in two other of Dick’s stories that tell variations of the same conflict. In “Second Variety,” the “new varieties and sizes [are] coming up from the underground factories” (Dick, 1987b, p. 19), and in the year 2051, time travellers in “Jon’s World” are mindful to “ ‘[r]emember the claws’ [that] hid down in the ash’ ” (Dick, 1987b, p. 75). It is important to iterate that the machines that threaten the human creature in these stories are all created and concealed within the territory beneath the surface of the human *cosmos*; a *cosmos* that has been “criss-crossed with ruins and barbed wire and the remains of weapons” (“Jon’s World,” Dick, 1987b, p. 75). The *landscape* in which the human creature moves is confined within the net of the *cosmos*.

The disruption of the *cosmos* that Applequist experiences, is a disruption that the human creature fears will culminate in its own end of existence in the *universe*.

When Applequist confronts his superior, Director Laws, with the belief that the war was in fact waged between two opposing groups of humans, the truth is revealed that:

“The war was fought between men and robots,” Laws said harshly.

“We won. We destroyed the robots.”

“But they worked for us!”

“They were built as workers, but they revolted. They had a philosophy. Superior beings – androids. They considered us nothing but cattle.”

Applequist was shaking all over. “But it told me – ”  
 “They slaughtered us. Millions of human died, before we got the upper hand. They murdered, lied, hid, stole, did everything to survive. It was them or us – no quarter.” (Dick, 1987a, pp. 153-4).

Just as Laws informs Applequist, so too “The Book of the Machines” also suggests that it is not unreasonable to imagine the human creature one day located on the evolutionary scale in a position similar to that currently held by a domestic animal (Butler, 1872/1970, p. 206). Ultimately, the human creature may find itself in servitude to machines, and the “The Book of the Machines” asks: “How many men at this hour are living in a state of bondage to the machines? How many spend their whole lives, from the cradle to the grave, in tending them by night and day?” (Butler, 1872/1970, p. 208).<sup>76</sup> Domestication of the human creature, it would seem, is already underway.

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<sup>76</sup> This tending to the machine is, with *cold* and apocalyptic finality, summoned into view by the feature film *The Matrix* (Wachowski & Wachowski, 1999) when the millions of human bodies-turned-batteries are revealed to Neo. A chilling echo of Butler’s vision that was conceived more than a century before *The Matrix*, the human creature is no more than a component in the *machine*.

By turning to another of Dick's stories, "James P. Crowe," the questions asked in the preceding paragraph are demonstrably addressed in the presentation of a *landscape* where robots rule and are superior to the human creature (1987b, pp. 311-25). It is Crowe's discovery of a "time window" into the past that tips the balance by disclosing:

Men, human technicians working frantically in an undersurface lab.  
Assembling something. Assembling –  
The human servant squawked wildly "An A! It's a Type A  
robot! They're making it!" (Dick, 1987b, p. 322).

While this disclosure locates the birth of the machine in the "undersurface" territory, what is particularly significant is the double disruption of the *cosmos* this story presents. The human *cosmos* is first disrupted by the revelation that humans once ruled and were the creators of robots rather than their inferior servants. Later, when Crowe compels the robots to leave earth for off-world colonies, the human *cosmos* is disrupted once more by the necessity to adjust to a world without machines (Dick, 1987b, pp. 324-5). The closing of "James P. Crowe," while re-establishing the human creature as the ruler of its *landscape*, also hints at a possible future that may be no better, and perhaps worse, than the past from which it has newly emerged.

Just as the human creature in many of Dick's stories seeks to destroy the thinking machines that want to destroy it in turn, the very presence of that creature in *cosmicism's universe* is a potential hindrance in and to the *machine*; a presence that must be dealt with. The *Genesis cosmology's* God may have given His creation to the human creature to subdue and dominate ("Genesis 1:28-30," Barker, 1985, p. 8), but the revelation of the *universe* that lies beyond the tele-objectivity of the cosmological model has estranged that creature from a *cosmos* that no longer exists.

Estranged also from the *cold*, mechanical *universe* it has uncovered, the human creature is caught by an awareness of its true isolation because it understands that it can no longer control – or even live under the illusion of having control of – the *universe* in which it exists. The *cold equations* govern the *universe*, and the smooth operation of any machine may well depend on the non-proliferation of the human creature.

“The Book of the Machines” employs mechanical metaphor to describe natural processes and events within the *universe*, reinforcing the idea that what the human creature has regarded as biological processes are in fact mechanisms requiring nothing more than to be wound up in order to be animate (Butler, 1872/1970, p. 200).<sup>77</sup> The wind-up animal is exactly what Rick Deckard encounters in the post-conflict world of *Androids* where:

The legacy of World War Terminus had diminished in potency; those who could not survive the dust had passed into oblivion years ago, and the dust, weaker now and confronting the strong survivors, only deranged minds and genetic properties (Dick, 1968/2007, pp. 5-6).

In this post-apocalyptic *landscape*, electric animals have become the surrogates for biological animals, and the human empathy involved in the care of an animal is considered to be the key to unlocking a higher spiritual awareness. For Deckard however, the lack of ownership of a real animal is compounded by the subsequent deception of having to substitute a real sheep that died whilst under his care, with an electric copy in the attempt to maintain the appearance of having a viable channel for

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<sup>77</sup> E.T.A. Hoffman’s wind-up doll, Olympia, in his story “The Sandman” is also a relevant example for purposes here; an example enhanced by the fact that Freud also discusses Olympia and Hoffman’s story in his essay “The Uncanny” (1919/2004).

the expression of empathy. When he finds himself standing in the Rosen Corporation, manufacturer of the Nexus androids, Deckard:

thought, too, about his need for a real animal; within him an actual hatred once more manifested itself toward his electric sheep, which he had to tend, had to care about, as if it lived. The tyranny of an object, he thought. It doesn't know I exist. Like the androids, it had no ability to appreciate the existence of another. He had never thought of this before, the similarity between an electric animal and an andy. The electric animal, he pondered, could be considered a subform of the other, a kind of vastly inferior robot. Or, conversely, the android could be regarded as a highly developed, evolved version of the ersatz animal. Both viewpoints repelled him (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 36).

The revulsion Deckard feels for the electric animal, and more so for the android, is built upon a *foundation* of fear. This fear, according to “The Book of Machines,” is the fear that the evolution of the machine will relegate the human creature to future extinction (Butler, 1872/1970, p. 202) and it is the fear that lurks behind the possibility that sentience wrapped entirely in human biology is of such insignificance in the *universe* as to become redundant.<sup>78</sup> This fear of biological inadequacy compounds, and is compounded by, the human creature's fear of those from within the ranks of its own kind that have evolved or are enhanced beyond their natural human biology.

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<sup>78</sup> A significant contemporary expression of this fear is explored in the *Star Trek* series, using encounters between the human creature and the borg; a cybernetic *other*, the origins of which are the far side of the human creature's galaxy. In a number of episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987-1994), the feature length film *Star Trek: First Contact* (1996), and a significant number of episodes in the *Star Trek: Voyager* series (1995-2001), the human creature's fear in facing the possibility of insignificance and biological inferiority is explored. Simply put, through the *engulfing* process of assimilation the borg add to its collective hive, and in doing so, highlight the fact that human biology alone cannot guarantee the human creature's survival against *others* in the *universe*. The fear of losing its own sense of individual significance motivates the human creature's fight against the un-individuated collective, even though the borg warn that “resistance is futile.” Ironically, the human creature's fight to preserve itself as a creature of significance and purpose in the *universe* and as something that matters to the *universe*, is the fight that propels the biological human creature into its estranged and bipolar relationship with the *universe as machine* in the first place.

As the human creature's sense of the space-time reach of the *universe* expands, that creature's capacity to traverse the *universe* becomes increasingly reliant upon the machine. The dilemma this presents is located within the idea that to extend its reach and endeavour to reconstruct the *cosmos* that it might accurately map the *universe*, the human creature is compelled to bodily accept the very thing it fears: the machine. However, mechanical craft in which the human creature can travel within its own lifetime have limits, and even the most advanced such as the *New Frontiers* in Heinlein's *Methuselah's Children* are limited by, and therefore limiting in, their reach (1958/1999, p. 396). The dilemma the human creature faces does not arise from crossing the *universe* as some sort of cosmic interloper in the belly of a mechanical whale; the dilemma is rooted in the apparent demand of the scale of space-time for a direct connection between machine and biology in order to negate the finitude of that biology. This negation is often taken to its extreme of a disconnection from biology, exemplified in stories such as Lovecraft's "The Whisperer in Darkness" where the human brain is put in a jar and connected to a machine (2000, pp. 217-22), and "The Shadow Out of Time" where travel is achieved by the swapping of two creatures, each into the *other's* body (2000, pp. 471, 476). For the human creature in *cosmicism*, the very idea of this is beyond what might be called problematic; it is the *threshold* of extreme psychological trauma. The alternative for that creature is to accept that the infinitesimally miniscule nature of its reach will keep it confined to its insignificant speck of dust in the cosmic ocean. To reach into the *universe* beyond the *cosmos*, it seems, the human creature is required in some way to be *other* than the creature it is, a critical problem for that creature when it turns its consideration to machines.

Machines that appear to think, as I have discussed before, actually calculate in terms of a binary language composed of ones and zeros.<sup>79</sup> If a machine can think, it will be self-aware, and it is this self-awareness that presents the greatest threat to the human creature's survival in the *universe as machine*. By achieving a level of sentience, the *machine*, and indeed any machine, may conclude that the human creature threatens its existence because that creature is *other* than machine.<sup>80</sup> The human creature may claim that "I think, therefore I am"<sup>81</sup>; but that creature does not, and indeed *cosmicism* frames the *universe* so that the human creature cannot endorse this statement as permissible for any machine.

The outcome of the development of a thinking machine has already been illustrated in this chapter using Dick's short story "To Serve the Master," and it would appear that Dick has a predilection for extrapolating futures in which self-aware machines possess a sense of applying a "final solution" to the human creature. For the human creature, however, identifying the adversary is not simply a matter of determining that all thinking machines are a threat to human survival and must be destroyed.

In the novel *Androids*, Rachael Rosen disrupts the *cosmos* by offering to help Deckard, and in doing so brings him to the *threshold*. In asking himself "[w]hat kind

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<sup>79</sup> These ones and zeros are like switches for "on" and "off" and this idea has been discussed with reference to *The Book*, by Watts, in chapter 1, p. 15.

<sup>80</sup> *The Terminator* series of feature films deals with this idea, and in *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991), the future history of the human creature is disclosed as a *universe* wherein the network known as Skynet becomes self-aware, and consequently understands that once its sentient capacity is discovered, the human creature will shut it down. In order to survive, the best option for Skynet is to initiate global nuclear conflict in order to deal with the human threat to the machine. The human survivors of this initial conflict are systematically rounded up and taken to concentration camps for processing, images that are presented with startling clarity in the fourth movie of the series, *Terminator Salvation* (2009).

<sup>81</sup> This phrase is most commonly cited as written by the French mathematician and philosopher, Rene Descartes, in part IV of his *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and Seeking Truth in the Sciences* (1637/2008).

of world is it ... when an android phones up a bounty hunter and offers him assistance,” (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 79) Deckard begins to sense the possible answers to such questioning soon after Rachael’s offer when, having spoken with his wife, he realises that “[m]ost androids I’ve known have more vitality and desire to live than my wife” (1968/2007, p. 82). Deckard’s struggle for survival is perpetually in conflict with the machine that is not just an *other*, but something to which he has a sense of connection. His *cosmos* instructs him to be the “form-destroyer,” to “unmake” (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 85) what has been made, and yet beyond the tele-objectivity of that *cosmos* in which action is governed by fear, Deckard finds an emotional, empathic connection where he has been taught there should be none, and “it was an odd sensation, knowing intellectually that they were machines but emotionally reacting anyhow” (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 83). It is fear however, that controls the choices Deckard makes on behalf of the human creature; the fear of the machine being more than an object-*other*, for “[i]f the androids had remained sub-standard ... there would be no problem and no need of my skill” (Dick, 1968/2007, pp. 85-6).

The empathic devolution of the human creature appears to be inextricably linked to the evolution of the machine, and the speed<sup>82</sup> at which the machine evolves is unprecedented (Butler, 1872/1970, pp. 199, 203, 212-3). The machine that thinks will study the human creature, will perhaps aspire to be like the human creature, and according to Butler’s “The Book of the Machines,” therein lies the danger. Butler claims that “what I fear is the extraordinary rapidity with which [machines] are becoming something very different to what they are at present. No class of beings

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<sup>82</sup> There is also a link from this idea to Virilio’s concept of “speed” in *Grey Ecology* (2009, pp. 25, 31, 39, 41, 71, 80).

have in any time past made so rapid a movement forward” (Butler, 1872/1970, p. 203), and in response to this fear of the evolution of something that cannot be controlled by the human creature, it is also asked: “[i]s it not safer to nip the mischief in the bud and to forbid them further progress?” (Butler, 1872/1970, p. 199). What “The Book of the Machines” foreshadows, and Dick’s story “Second Variety” presents with chilling clarity, is that the evolution of the machine is a direct threat to the survival of the human creature.

The claws in “Second Variety” are perfect, efficient hunters. Over time they adapt, evolve and:

they repaired themselves. They were on their own ... Down below the surface automatic machinery stamped them out. Human beings stayed a long way off. It was too risky; nobody wanted to be around them. They were left to themselves. And they seemed to be doing all right. The new designs were faster, more complex. More efficient.

Apparently they had won the war (1987b, p. 20).

The sole purpose of the claws is “to hunt out life and destroy. Human life. Wherever they find it” (Dick, 1987b, p. 37), and the human creature has no choice but to face a *universe* in which “[l]ife was not the same anymore. It would never be the same again” (1987b, p. 24). The human creature’s war against *others* of its own kind in “Second Variety” – these *others* being the Russians – inevitably dovetails into a war against the machine that shatters the ordered *cosmos* to reveal a *universe* in which the human creature will die because the *cold equations* drive a machine to do what it has been designed to do. That this machine evolves a capacity to think beyond its *equations*, learns to self-repair and respond to the human threat against its own survival by adapting its design, is the very outcome against which “The Book of the Machines” warns.

In order to avoid a future of *chaos* and death at the hand – or indeed claws, teeth or tentacles – of an adversary, the human creature may seek a retreat. This retreat from the *universe* is often a looking back to an ordered security of a tele-objective *cosmos* that endorses human morality and activity against an adversary; in its attempt to avoid death, the human creature retreats into the madness of jihad.<sup>83</sup>

The *foundation* upon which the human creature's *universe* has evolved in the *Dune* chronicles is an event that Herbert refers to as the Butlerian Jihad; a jihad against the "thinking machines." The Bene Gesserit Reverend Mother who tests a young Paul Atreides tells him that:

‘Once men turned their thinking over to machines in the hope that this would set them free. But that only permitted other men with machines to enslave them.’

‘“Thou shalt not make a machine in the likeness of a man's mind,”’ Paul quoted.

‘Right out of the Butlerian Jihad and the Orange Catholic Bible,’ she said. ‘But what the O.C. Bible should've said is: “Thou shalt not make a machine to counterfeit a *human* mind.” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 17).

I suggest that Herbert's framework for the rationale behind the Butlerian Jihad could arguably have been drawn from "The Book of the Machines." Within the six

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<sup>83</sup> The *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an* defines jihad as “[s]truggle or striving, but often understood both within the Muslim tradition and beyond as warfare against infidels ... The term jihad derives from the root j-h-d, denoting effort, exhaustion, exertion, strain.” While the most commonly held idea of what jihad means relates to “warfare against infidels,” it is significant to note that not all references to jihad in the Qur'an are also direct references to war or conflict with and against non-believers. Jihad also refers to other kinds of struggle and testing of believers within the Muslim faith including “(a) combat against one's own desires and weaknesses ... (b) perseverance in observing the religious law ... (c) seeking religious knowledge ... (d) observance of the sunna ... (e) obedience to god and summoning people to worship him” (“vol. III,” McAuliffe, 2003, pp. 35-43). While the first part of the definition provided from the *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an* is an appropriate use of the term with respect to the Butlerian Jihad, variant meanings are also iterated, because the jihad of Muad'Dib in *Dune* (1965/1978, pp. 192, 292, 302-6, 330, 443, 445) and *Dune Messiah* (1969/1979, pp. 32-2, 110, 267), and the Typhoon Struggle, otherwise known as Kralizec initiated by Leto (Herbert, 1976, pp. 88, 324-7; 1981, pp. 82, 90, 196, 299, 301, 325) are jihads that encompass wider application than warfare against infidels or adversaries.

volumes of the *Dune* chronicles, there is no mention of either Samuel Butler or his novel *Erewhon*. There is, however, a consistent pattern of the use, by Herbert, of historical identities, cultures and events located within the archives and teachings of the Bene Gesserit, and more pointedly within the awareness of several characters, particularly Muad'Dib, Alia Atreides, Leto and his sister Ghanima.

Herbert's narrative technique, whilst enhancing the opportunity for the reader to establish a sense of authenticity within and about the story, also strengthens the idea of a linkage between "The Book of the Machines" and the Butlerian Jihad. The ancient history that underpins the *Dune universe* is indeed authentic, human history, and although it is true that there is no direct evidence to suggest that the ancestors of the human creature in the *Dune universe* named the Jihad *Butlerian* in reference to Butler's warnings in "The Book of the Machines," Herbert's consistent use of real world history and identities to refine and locate ideas, and to trace threads of authenticity, does make this concept plausible. I acknowledge that a supportable and alternate argument for the motivation behind the Butlerian Jihad is documented,<sup>84</sup> but this does not nullify the argument that Herbert may have been aware of and used Butler's fictive work as a template for the ideology and rhetoric behind the Butlerian Jihad in the *Dune universe*.

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<sup>84</sup> *The Dune Encyclopedia*, provides an entry under the name of Jehanne Butler, outlining the circumstances surrounding the aborting of her unborn child, a decision made by "the hospital director – the first self-programming machine on Komos" (McNelly, 1984, p. 137). The entry in the *Encyclopedia* aligns the advent of the Butlerian Jihad with Jehanne Butler, and later adds that the event of the abortion of one human while significant to the individual human creature, was very likely not enough to spark and sustain what the Butlerian Jihad became (McNelly, 1984, pp. 140-1). It is also worth noting that the novel *Legends of Dune I: The Butlerian Jihad* (2002), by Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson, provides a similar version of the beginning of the Jihad. When the character Serena Butler is captured by the machines, she is placed under the custody of Erasmus, whose purpose is to understand humans in order that the machines might become superior. Erasmus kills Serena's son and removes her uterus in order to prevent further distractions in her life, and Serena's response is to kill Erasmus and in doing so, ignite Jihad against the thinking machines.

As a jihad against the “thinking machines,” one of the consequences of the Butlerian Jihad is a pervasive human mistrust of all machines within the *Dune universe*, and the human computer that is the mentat, is not immune. The Bene Gesserit Sisterhood’s heavy reliance on the mysticism and religious indoctrination of their Missionaria Protectiva as a means by which to manoeuvre populations to the long-term goals of the Bene Gesserit (Herbert, 1976, p. 253), is historically overshadowed by the threat of the ordered, *cold equations* of the thinking machine that requires data rather than articles of faith and prophesy. A mentat may be human, but a mentat is also trained as a human computer. When the plot to destroy the Emperor Paul Atreides is devised, it is the Reverend Mother who once tested the young Paul, who also later expresses a dislike for training a ghola as a mentat. Duncan Idaho as a ghola is by virtue of this already an *other*, and that he is also a mentat stirs “ancient hates” in the Reverend Mother because “[f]rom the days of the Butlerian Jihad when ‘thinking machines’ had been wiped from most of the universe, computers had inspired distrust. Old emotions coloured the human computer as well” (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 21).

The degree of difference between a “human computer” and a “thinking machine” is in many ways significant, but it is the implicitly sentient machine that operates within the parameters of the “on-off” calculations of a computer that terrifies the human creature. The “thinking machine” is a sentient *other* of an entirely different order of being, whereas the ghola is at least a biological *other* that appears to be human and therefore appears to be within the human creature’s control. The Reverend Mother might not trust the “human computer” because her hatred for the “thinking machines” is deeply embedded within her Bene Gesserit *cosmos*, and she

might dislike Tleilaxu made gholas for similar reasons, inasmuch as they are artificially grown in tanks; but the demands and proscriptions of the religious dogma that arose from the Butlerian Jihad ultimately override her dislike because a mentat, even a gholat mentat, is ultimately limited by its own biology. The Butlerian Jihad signifies the cessation of an evolution of something that in being *other* than human, is beyond that creature's control. As the American theologian and historian Lorenzo DiTommaso writes, "The Butlerian Jihad brought Imperial technology to a specialized and codified halt. By forcing human minds to develop, the Revolt ultimately promoted religion over science and technology, and humanness over machines and artificial minds," (1992, p. 313). It could be reasonably added to DiTommaso's claim that "humanness" is also promoted over *other* minds, and that all this is done in an endeavour to reassert the map over the territory and thereby facilitate a return to the *amnesia of the cosmos*. This is, in *cosmicism*, the habitual path of the human creature as it seeks a negation of its fear of insignificance and the possibility of disappearing without trace in the *universe*.

To allow the "thinking machine" to continue to exist, the human creature risks being superseded and domesticated by that machine. While the answer that mitigates this possible end is to enact a technological "final solution," as "The Book of the Machines" suggests, the potential outcome from such action is the propulsion of the human creature into a new *cosmos* in which the complete loss of the machines on which that creature relies will result in human devolution. In *Dune Messiah*, it is Paul Atreides' offer to the Bene Gesserit that they may have his genetic material for their breeding programme, but that such breeding will only be allowed through "artificial means" that strikes the core of the issue:

The teaching of the Bene Gesserit, the lessons of the Butlerian Jihad – all proscribed such an act. One did not demean the highest aspirations of humankind. No machine could function in the way of a human mind. No word or deed could imply that men might be bred on the level of animals (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 120).

Paul's offer negates the Bene Gesserit belief that the physical act of human mating is also an act that "capture[s] the psyche" (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 120) and in doing so captures the essence of what makes the human creature, human. Mechanising the human breeding process aligns it with the Tleilaxu production of gholas, the husbandry of domestic animals, or the assembly line of the machine; it is in all sense of the concept, a devolution under the higher control of machines. Paul offers something less than human, and although it is something *other* than ghola, it is something *other* nonetheless.

"The Book of the Machines" predicts that the outcome of this devolution will be a primitivism as terrifying to the twenty-first century human creature as the alternative of becoming the machine's evolutionary and biological inferiors (Butler, 1872/1970, pp. 206-7). This prospect contains an acknowledgement that the human creature, without the machine, will find survival in the *universe of cold equations* an evolutionary difficulty, and the ordered *cosmos* in which the meaning of being human has been validated, will fall apart within a matter of weeks (Butler, 1872/1970, pp. 206-7).

Ironically, the fight for survival that inspires the Butlerian Jihad is the same fight that, in turning to mysticism and the development of a religious orthodoxy of prohibition because "thinking machines" are adversarial *others*, puts the human

creature at risk of becoming something *other* and less than human. In *Dune Messiah*, as a direct consequence of the rise of the religion of Muad'Dib:

A type of religious civil servant had sprung up all through the universe ... His gods were Routine and Records. He was served by mentats and prodigious filing systems. Expediency was the first word in his catechism, although he gave proper lip-service to the precepts of the Butlerians. Machines could not be fashioned in the image of a man's mind, he said, but he betrayed by every action that he preferred machines to men, statistics to individuals the faraway general view to the intimate personal touch requiring imagination and initiative (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 142).

This kind of human creature loses connection with the *universe* as it spirals into a *cosmos* that is even less than the tele-objectivity of the *Genesis cosmology* and little more than the order of a machine that grinds on without thinking. Less than a human-computer, for at least a mentat gathers data and projects probabilities that have real-world implication and impact for the human creature, and less than a "thinking machine," this human creature has devolved to simply calculating *equations*. This *other*, this substitute bastard of the machine, prefers the safe order of statistics to an emotional engagement with human *chaos*.

Such preference is shared by Alia Atreides when, in the grip of her possession by the Baron Harkonnen she turns to Duncan Idaho, "a mentat. Mentats were necessary. The human-computer replaced the mechanical devices destroyed by the Butlerian Jihad" (Herbert, 1976, p. 134). In her condition of possession however, Alia has become less than human herself, and would prefer to engage with a machine that deals in *cold equations* and is not susceptible to the influence of human emotions. Though mindful of the Butlerian Jihad's declaration that "[t]hou shalt not make a machine in the likeness of a human mind," Alia's preference "for a compliant machine" overrides the proscription because machines "could not have suffered from

Idaho's limitations. You could never distrust a machine" (Herbert, 1976, p. 134). Alia knows that this implicit trust in a machine in no way negates any threat to the human creature, but as something *other* than human herself, she is focused upon her own survival and ambition, with no regard for any *other* that might prevent her, irrespective of who they are and including her own husband Duncan Idaho.

The development of the mentat might have been the human creature's answer to the loss of "thinking machines," but there is a tracing of evidence embedded within the *Dune* chronicles suggesting that over several millennia following the Butlerian Jihad, the loss of the "thinking machines" also set the human creature on a cultural and evolutionary path that led to the stagnation of the species (Herbert, 1967, pp. 122). Arguably this stagnation leads to a devolution of the human creature (Herbert, 1981, pp. 52-4, 81-2) that Paul Atreides sees coming (Herbert, 1976, p. 23) and Leto determines to prevent by setting that creature on the Golden Path to stem the stagnation (1976, p. 75).

The most significant problem that the machine reveals to the human creature, is a *universe* in which there is in all probability, no happy ending. The machine is a *heimlich* coin, and irrespective of absence or presence in *cosmicism's universe*, while the machine maintains the status of *other*, there is no safe place of retreat for the human creature. With the *Genesis cosmology* dissolved, all that remains is the *universe as machine*; a *cosmos* yielding no promise of human survival because there is no God that cares and everything will end.

Adrift in the *universe* the human creature is now compelled to reckon with something more that is neither machine nor human; something that is positively antediluvian. In Dick's story "Faith of Our Fathers," the legless peddler of an anti-hallucinogen confronts Chien with the idea that the Absolute Benefactor "may be non-Terran; that's our most basic fear," (1987c, p. 214). When Chien is facing the presence of the Absolute Benefactor, he determines that "[w]hat crossed the room ... was not a man," and though it may not have been "a mechanical construct either," it was profoundly disturbing, leading Chien to the only other conclusion that made sense to him: "You are God" (Dick, 1987c, pp. 217-8).

Despite the juvenile wishes of the human creature in the novel *Palmer Eldrich* that reaching far beyond the light of the Earth to deep space and in "going that far" the traveller would "find God" (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 25), and despite Leo Bulero's thought that "I still believe that, even now. About the ten-year-flight of Palmer Eldrich" (1964/2007, p. 25); Chien understands that what will be found is nothing like the morally driven God of the *Genesis cosmology*. It is something else from some great depth of the *universe*, it is, as Lovecraft writes in "The Dunwich Horror," "an impossibility in a normal world" from "some vague abyss out of which only the most accursed rites of human blasphemy could ever have called him" (2000, pp. 151-2).

*The Absence of God*

He knows where They have trod earth's fields, and where They still tread them, and why no one can behold Them as They tread. By Their smell can men sometime know Them near, but of Their semblance can no man know, *saving only in the features of those They have begotten on mankind*; and of those are there many sorts, differing in likeness from man's truest eidolon to that shape without sight or substance which is Them

- of Yog-Sothoth and the Old Ones in the *Necronomicon* ("The Dunwich Horror," Lovecraft, 1994, p. 118).

When Lovecraft writes about Nathaniel Hawthorne in his essay "Supernatural Horror in Literature," he aligns Hawthorne's outlook with his own concerns regarding "an unmoral universe which everywhere transcends the conventional pattern thought by our forefathers to represent divine and immutable law" (1973, p. 61).<sup>85</sup> For Lovecraft, and indeed for *cosmicism*, the *universe* lacks a creative deity of moral force, and any thought of such is confined to the tele-objectivity of the *Genesis cosmology*. Lovecraft writes that:

As for 'god' - there is of course no theoretical barrier to the existence of a 'cosmic intelligence', yet *absolutely nothing indicates such a thing*. On the contrary the notion never arises except through traditional suggestions based on the mythical perspective of primitive man ("Jany. 23, 1931," Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, p. 281).

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<sup>85</sup> The connection between Hawthorne and Lovecraft is explored by Donald Burleson in an essay published in 1981 under the title "H.P. Lovecraft: The Hawthorne Influence." After claiming that "Lovecraft had a weltanschauung by which his writings were expressive symbolically, though not didactically, of an indifferent and purposeless cosmos," (1981, p. 262) Burleson then takes considerable care to trace very specific connections between the two writers with particular attention to the intermingling of "New England Puritanism" (p. 263), a number of motifs involving built structures (pp. 263-5), localised folklores (p. 265), inherited ancestral traits (pp. 265-6), and Classical antiquities (pp. 266-7). These connections foreground the compelling argument Burleson then makes for a direct connection between Hawthorne's writings and Lovecraft's development of what became enshrined in his corpus as the *Necronomicon* (pp. 267-8).

Lovecraft iterates the idea that when the human creature moves away from its *cosmos* of familiarity, the revelation of the *universe* will not be that God is dead,<sup>86</sup> but rather in disturbing the *cosmos*, the revelation will be that God is absent.

Carl Sagan writes in *Cosmos* that “our tiny, fragile, blue-white world [is] lost in a cosmic ocean vast beyond our most courageous imaginings. It is a world among an immensity of others. It may be significant only for us” (1980, p. 5). With Sagan and Lovecraft in mind, a return to Dick’s story “Faith of Our Father”<sup>87</sup> highlights the idea of an indifferent deity in the *universe*. When the characters Chien and Tanya discuss the idea of the music of the spheres untuning the sky, and whether it is those spheres or deity that drive the *universe*, Tanya says “ ‘that if there is a God He has very little interest in human affairs ... He doesn’t seem to care if evil triumphs or people or animals get hurt and die. I frankly don’t see Him anywhere around’ ” (Dick, 1987c, p. 221).

To simply believe in a deity that cares is no guarantee of that deity’s existence, a distinction that Sartre also proposes in *Being and Nothingness* when he writes that “possibility can indeed be given *to us* before being; but it is *to us* that it is given and it is in no way the possibility *of this being* ... God, if he exists, is contingent” (1956, p. 129), and “is characterized as a radical absence” (1956, p. 547). Deity is absent from *cosmicism’s universe*, for as Lovecraft writes:

A mere knowledge of the approximate dimensions of the visible universe is enough to destroy forever the notion of a personal godhead whose whole care is expended upon puny mankind, and whose only genuine and original Messiah was despatched to save

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<sup>86</sup> A reference to Nietzsche’s concept of the death of god, this idea has also been noted in chapter 3, p. 58.

<sup>87</sup> The passage referred to here is discussed in chapter 5 on pp. 83-4 and chapter 6 on p. 122.

the insignificant vermin, or men, who inhabit this one relatively microscopic globe  
("April, 1917," Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 44).<sup>88</sup>

The size of the *universe* makes the “notion of a personal godhead,” an impossibility. If any deity should exist, rather than directing care and attention upon the human creature, *cosmicism* foregrounds the idea that any interest in such creatures will be accompanied by wrath and a heavy hand from a deity that “seemed perversely designed for cruelty and anxiety. In the Calvinist universe, formal design and entrapment seemed one and the same thing” (Ingebretsen, 1996, p. 123).<sup>89</sup>

Indeed, when the *Genesis cosmology*'s God does make an appearance, there seems to be little genuine empathy for the insignificant human creatures He is said to have created. This God is the *foundation* that lies beneath what Zizek identifies as the driving force of Calvinism: the anxious hope that in a *cosmos* governed by the idea of predestination “the unavoidable might not happen” (Zizek, 1991, p. 70). It is worth noting here, that while a Calvinist interpretation of the human creature's relationship with God is not the sum total of Christian thought, but only one particular sectarian view, its influence upon Christian theology and the grass roots of Protestantism is significant, and both Calvinism and Puritanism influenced Lovecraft who, in turn, developed *cosmicism*.

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<sup>88</sup> In *Maps of Heaven Maps of Hell*, Ingebretsen makes an interesting claim when he writes that Ralph Waldo Emerson, whom he identifies as a “former unitarian cleric turned cosmologist – and Lovecraft, the cosmologist who had no use for the ‘cringing Semitic slave-cult of Christianity’ (*Selected Letters*, III, p. 45) ... sometimes sound like parodies of each other.” Ingebretsen then draws comparison between the first part of the quote above from Lovecraft's 1917 letter, with Emerson's *Nature* in which he writes “But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars,” and Robert Frost's “Stars” where he writes “There is no oversight of human affairs” (Ingebretsen, 1996, p. 131).

<sup>89</sup> The idea of the *universe* as trap is significant, and will be further explored in chapter 9 of this thesis.

In the event of losing the reliability of the *Genesis cosmology* as a navigational tool in the *universe*, the human creature also loses that cosmology's God and His moral code. Events in the *universe* can no longer be attributed to a morality grounded within emotion. For the human creature, the question of securing meaningful survival in *cosmicism's universe* is similar to the question from Nietzsche's Madman in *The Gay Science*, who asks: " 'How shall we comfort ourselves ... What after all are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers [*sic*] of God?' " (1887/1974, pp. 181-2).

For Lovecraft's protagonist Robert Blake in "The Haunter of the Dark," a *cosmos*, and ultimately a *universe*, is encountered from which the *Genesis cosmology's* God has vacated, and the church on Federal Hill is "in a state of great decrepitude ... Desolation and decay hung like a pall above the place, and ... Blake felt a touch of the dimly sinister beyond his power to define (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 278). What Blake finds is more than the vacant house of an absent God, he finds the church vacated by God because something seemingly older and more threatening has taken up residence. While the sacred text of the absent God may be readily accessible to the human creature in the guise of the Christian Bible, the texts of the *other* that has usurped God are "the black, forbidden things which most sane people have never heard of, or have heard of only in furtive, timorous whispers" (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 282). The tomes Blake finds are of such age as to come "from the days of man's youth, and the dim, fabulous days before man was," and the church of crumbling decay is *founded* on "the seat of an evil older than mankind and wider than the known universe" (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 282).

The *landscape* in which God is absent and *others* take up residence in deity's temples, also frames the early pages of "The Shadow Over Innsmouth." The narrator, Robert Olmstead,<sup>90</sup> arrives in the port of Innsmouth to "a sort of open concourse or radical point with churches on two sides and the bedraggled remains of a circular green in the centre" (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 400). Across this crumbling green, Olmstead sees "the words 'Esoteric Order of Dagon' " on the front of the old Masonic Hall, and from the open cellar door of "a squat-towered stone church" observes what he believes is "the pastor; clad in some peculiar vestments doubtless introduced since the Order of Dagon had modified the ritual of the local churches" (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 400-1).

Similarly, for the narrator of "The Festival," the revelation of deity's absence is set in a town that "was far from home" and close to "the eastern sea," and to which he has been summoned by an ancestral call:

It was the Yuletide, that men call Christmas though they know in their hearts it is older than Bethlehem and Babylon, older than Memphis and mankind. It was the Yuletide, and I had come at last to the ancient sea town where my people had dwelt and kept festival in the elder times when festival was forbidden (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 215).

When this narrator arrives "at the door of [his] people" (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 216), he enters a house in which, like Robert Blake in "The Haunter of the Dark" when he enters the church, presents a "pile of books" that are "hoary and mouldy" and include in their number the *Necronomicon*, "a book which [he] had never seen, but of which [he] had heard monstrous things whispered" (1994, p. 218). After a period of rest, this narrator joins a procession that walks to "the top of a high hill in the

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<sup>90</sup> According to S.T. Joshi, while Olmstead is not named in "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," the notes left behind by Lovecraft from writing this story do contain the name (Joshi & Schultz, 2001, p. 237).

centre of the town, where perched a great white church,” and after crossing an “open space around the church” that was “lined with unwholesomely archaic houses,” he enters the “black doorway ... Crossing the threshold into the swarming temple of unknown darkness” (1994, p. 220). The long descent into the earth from the church above is a descent into the decay of “dripping stone blocks and crumbling mortar” (1994, p. 221), a descent from an ordered map above, to a territory below in which deity is nowhere to be found.

If the *machine* does not *engulf* the human creature, the crumbling decay of deity’s absence will, and beneath the order of the *cosmos* lies the *chaos* of the *universe*. In *cosmicism’s universe* God exists only within order, and in being absent from *chaos*, is absent from all else other than the confines of His own created cosmological order. God may be absent from the *universe*, but there are *others*, and they signify a *universe* that may actually be suffering from an overpopulation of such misappropriated deities. The status of deity is conferred on a vast array of *others*, and the difficulty that the human creature confronts in *cosmicism*, is that none of these others are the God of the *Genesis cosmology*, and none of them are particularly fond of the human creature.

The appropriation of an *other* to fill the *void* left by the absent deity of a failed *cosmos*, reveals the *universe* as the territory in which rather than simply being dead and therefore posing no threat to the human creature, the possibility of deity represents the ultimate threat to human survival because in this *universe*, as Chien’s terrible revelations makes clear in “Faith of Our Fathers,” deity is death:

It was terrible; it blasted him with its awareness. As it moved it drained the life from each person in turn; it ate the people who had

assembled, passed on, ate again, ate more with an endless appetite. It hated; he felt its hate. It loathed; he felt its loathing for everyone present ... He saw the trail of stepped-on, mashed men and women remnants behind it; he saw them trying to reassemble, to operate their crippled bodies; he heard them attempting speech (Dick, 1987c, p. 217).

God is death. God is destroyer. And in the end all that will be left in the *universe* is the apocalypse of crumbling decay. When talking with Chien, the Absolute Benefactor assures him that “ ‘I don’t need to do anything but watch; it is automatic; it was arranged that way’ ” (Dick, 1987c, p. 218), and Chien is left in the knowledge that in the *universe as machine* “God was death, it was one force, one hunter, one cannibal thing, and it missed again and again but, having all eternity, it could afford to miss ... The crumbling; that is our world and you are doing it” (Dick, 1987c, p. 218). An end will come, and all trace of the insignificant human creature will utterly disappear.

Having felt threatened by either the machine *other* or the biological *other*, the human creature in its effort to not be *engulfed* by these *others*, is left with no ontological anchor as it drifts within a godless *machine*. The revelation of its insignificance within an indifferent *universe* turns back upon the human creature to resonate at the very heart of where that creature has felt most safe; its own sunlit world. As an outsider in the *universe* the human creature is an *other* in its own *landscape*, and it faces a *universe* that is unrecognisable for want of an ordered *cosmos* that has dissolved into *chaos*. As Donald Burleson, writes “To be human is to be the Outsider, a meaningless speck adrift in the sea of stars” (2011, p. 150).

As an ordered organism; the warmth of biological life appears to contradict the *cold universe* in which the human creature moves. As if it is something to be wiped away like a smudge on a surface, is it possible that the human creature's status in the *universe* beyond insignificance, is in fact equivalent to some kind of mutation or virus? Is that creature nothing more than a contagion that the *universe* caught?

### *Insignificant Contagion*

Man is the ephemeron of one cosmic moment; born to no purpose, unknown yesterday, and tomorrow so perfectly obliterated that MANA-YOOD-SUSHAI will never recall whether or not he has ever existed. It is all a jest and a delusion – a struggle that can bring no reward, and that has no meaning or merit in the cosmic chaos ("8 January, 1924," Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 284).

By referring to **Mana-Yood-Sushai**,<sup>91</sup> the principle and oldest deity in the corpus of the Irish fantasy writer Lord Dunsany,<sup>92</sup> Lovecraft acknowledges the extreme measures of space-time in which the *universe* has existed, and the acute degree of insignificance that the human creature represents within those measures. For Lovecraft and for *cosmicism*, as Schweitzer maintains, “deities are far more sinister” (1989, p. 16) than for Dunsany and his fictive realm of Pegana. When deities such as Cthulhu or Dagon wake up in *cosmicism's universe*, they wake to destroy the human creature and drag away the earth to some other part of the *universe*

<sup>91</sup> In *Pathways to Elfland: The Writings of Lord Dunsany*, the American author, critic and essayist, Darrell Schweitzer, writes that the name of **Mana-Yood-Sushai** was always written by Dunsany “in bold face, perhaps in deference to His majesty” (Schweitzer, 1989, p. 9).

<sup>92</sup> Lord Dunsany is the more commonly known name for the 18<sup>th</sup> Baron of Dunsany, Edward Plunkett (1878-1957). The first of Dunsany's publications, *The Gods of Pegana* (1905/2000) opens with the figuring of **Mana-Yood-Sushai** as a sentient *other* so archaic, all other deities that might exist are themselves ephemera within the space-time of the *universe*. After creating the gods, **Mana-Yood-Sushai** sleeps, and will continue to do so while the lesser deity Skarl beats upon his drum (Dunsany, 1905/2000, p. 536). When **Mana-Yood-Sushai** does wake, these deities will be no more in Pegana and **Mana-Yood-Sushai** “shall think some other plan concerning gods and worlds” (Dunsany, 1905/2000, p. 582; Schweitzer, 1989, pp. 7-10). Like the sleeping Visnu who restores order from *chaos* (Campbell, 1986/2002, pp. 21-5), **Mana-Yood-Sushai** “will make again new gods and other worlds, and will destroy the gods whom he hath made” (Dunsany, 1905/2000p. 535), and do so in what appears to be an eternal cycle of sleep and waking; destruction yes, but creation also.

(Lovecraft, 2000, p. 137) that the end might be hastened into *chaos*, and human redemption is therefore not within their repertoire.

When John Gribbin claims that “[t]he vast size of the visible Universe, which seems at first sight to highlight the insignificance of human beings on the cosmic scale of things, is actually an essential requirement of our existence” (2009, p. 42), he calls to attention the human creature’s insignificance as an inherent quality of the *universe*. Rather than being the capstone of some deity’s creation, the human creature is a single blip on the radar of stellar evolution. As the frail “ephemeron of one cosmic moment,” the human creature holds no more meaning for the *universe*, than an insect holds for the human creature.<sup>93</sup> The reach of the *universe*, Lovecraft writes, “dwarfs ... interest in the tiny insects called men” (“June 25, 1920,” Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 120), and “[a]ll of the pseudo-importance felt by man himself before he surveys the wider field necessarily drops away – as does the illusion of a fly’s gigantism when we remove the magnifying glass through which we have been looking” (“Jany. 20, 1933,” Derleth & Turner, 1976a, p. 136).

The *cosmos* that elevates the human creature as significant in the *universe* is also the illusion that hides the revelation from that creature; that it is nothing more than an insignificant creature that is first infested with insects, until at last it will become an insect in the *machine*. “The Book of the Machines” asks: “May not man himself become a sort of parasite upon the machines? An affectionate machine-tickling

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<sup>93</sup> This idea is illustrated in the film *The Mothman Prophecies* when Gene Klein claims that “I think we can assume these entities are more advanced than us. Why don’t they just come right out and tell us what’s on their minds” and Alexander Leek responds by asking, “You’re more advanced than a cockroach. Do you explain yourself to them?” (Pellington, 2002).

aphid?” (Butler, 1872/1970, p. 206) and it seems that the opening of Dick’s novel *A Scanner Darkly* takes the question of aphids seriously.

*A Scanner Darkly*, opens with the account of “a guy [who] stood all day shaking bugs from his hair” (Dick, 2008, p. 861). This “guy,” Jerry Fabin, is so consumed by the illusion of infestation within his tele-objective *cosmos*, that his entire focus in life is to understand the life-cycle of these “aphids,” how they are transmitted by carriers, and how to avoid inevitable death for both himself and his dog that is also infected. Eventually, unable to discern the difference between this *cosmos* and the *universe*, Fabin is institutionalised. Madness becomes his only option because he is incapable of escaping the tele-objectivity of the illusion to see what lies beyond that illusion’s reach (Dick, 2008, pp. 861-73). By documenting the demise of Jerry Fabin, I believe, these opening pages of the novel read as a summary of all else to follow, a parable of warning that Bob Arctor sees but remains incapable of finding his way through to an outcome other than madness.

Early in the novel, Arctor reflects on Fabin’s condition, and it is significant to note that in moving into his home, Fabin paints over all the windows in order to block out the light of the sun. He installs artificial lights that “shone day and night, so as to abolish time for him and his friends” (Dick, 2008, p. 863). Within the permanent light of his enclosed space, Fabin can maintain a sense of personal significance, and with the linear measure of time destroyed, the requirement for memory of the world beyond the walls of his house is made redundant. He can live happily enclosed in the *amnesia of the cosmos* that allows him to “concentrate on important things

without interruption. Like this: two men kneeling down in the shag rug, finding bug after bug and putting them into jar after jar (Dick, 2008, p. 863).

Jerry Fabin's preference for "get[ting] rid of time" (Dick, 2008, p. 863) serve two functions. In the first instance, it reflects the human creature's attempt to avoid the madness characteristically triggered by the revelation of the *universe* in *cosmicism*, an avoidance that is supported by the human creature's turning back to the *amnesia of the cosmos*. Secondly, in turning to the confining space of the *cosmos*, the human creature can maintain a sense of significance in this *cosmos* that has been misappropriated as the *universe* and in doing so, attach to this a sense of value in its personal survival. It is *amnesia*, it is the failure of memory, that assists the human creature in its struggle to maintain a sense of significance in the *universe*, but it is, ironically, this same *amnesia* that threatens to turn that creature into the very thing it is trying to avoid: an insignificant component within a collective, swarming infestation.

When talking with Lazarus Long in *Methuselah's Children*, Andrew Libby also identified the link between the *amnesia of the cosmos* and the madness of the *universe*. In discussing past events, Long articulates his understanding that as he gets older and accumulates more experience of and in the *universe*, it is also "getting harder ... to keep things straight. Especially this last century" (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 308). Libby explains to Long that it is an:

"Inescapable mathematical necessity," [that] "Life experience is linearly additive, but the correlation of memory impressions is an unlimited expansion. If mankind lived as long as a thousand years, it would be necessary to invent some totally different method of memory association in order to be effectively time-binding. A man would otherwise flounder helplessly in the wealth of his own

knowledge, unable to evaluate. Insanity, or feeble-mindedness” (Heinlein, 1958/1999, pp. 308-9).

In order to avoid the risk of madness and the sense of insignificance that the memory of space-time may trigger, the human creature retreats into the *amnesia of the cosmos* which, by its very nature, erects a limit of perspective that necessarily shields that creature from the rest of the *universe* that it is trying to avoid.

In *A Scanner Darkly*, Arctor accepts the hand dealt to Fabin by the *cold equations* as the calculable outcome of taking drugs that deliver “trace amounts of complex heavy metals” to the brain, and “[b]iological life goes on, he thought. But the soul, the mind – everything else is dead. A reflex machine. Like some insect. Repeating doomed patterns, a single pattern, over and over now. Appropriate or not” (Dick, 2008, p. 915). Ironically, as Arctor watches *others* repeat the “doomed patterns” that lock their minds into tele-objective *cosmoses*, he too is spiralling into his own memory-oblivion that disconnects him from the *universe* and inevitably leads to *amnesia*.

The splitting of the human creature from itself until it no longer maintains significance enough for survival in the *universe*, is highlighted by the Australian critic and academic, Chris Palmer, who writes that “Bob Arctor becomes Bob/Fred, himself as a police agent surveilling himself as a drug addict, unable to summon to mind the two selves, then becomes Bruce, the brain-dead addict, comparable to an insect or a mechanism” (1991, p. 332). In becoming a “brain-dead ... mechanism” within the government controlled New Path rehabilitation clinic, it is this insect-

Bruce who is to be the usable tool for the extermination of insects. As it is explained to Bruce upon his arrival at New Path:

“We do a lot of that, driving insects out of existence with the right kind of sprays. We’re very careful though, with sprays. They can do more harm than good. They can poison not only the crops and the ground but the person using them. Eat his head.” He added, “Like yours has been eaten.”

“Okay,” Bruce said.

You have been sprayed, Mike thought as he glanced at the man, so that now you’ve become a bug. Spray a bug with a toxin and it dies; spray a man, spray his brain, and he becomes an insect that clacks and vibrates about in a closed circle forever. A reflex machine, like an ant. Repeating his last instruction (Dick, 2008, p. 1087).

Like Bruce, the human creature becomes an insignificant insect infesting the *universe*. The insect-machine of Bruce in the New Path garden must now stop “trying to reach the sky” and “make the attempt to reach” something that lies below him by – at least in part – “killing insects” (Dick, 2008, p. 1087). So too must the *universe* be kept free from infestation that prevents its operation and evolution, by rendering the human creature insignificant and eliminating the superficial, *cosmos* ridden, infestation that it is.

The “insect that clacks and vibrates about in a closed circle forever” is the insect captured within tele-objective *cosmos*. This is the warning that Heinlein’s Lazarus Long proclaims when he says that “specialisation is for insects” (1973, p. 248), and the warning that Herbert’s Leto reflects on from Bene Gesserit teaching in *Children of Dune* that claims “[s]pecialisations represent places where life is being stopped, where the movement is dammed up and frozen” (1976, p. 304). As God Emperor many thousands of years later, Leto adds to this by saying to the Bene Gesserit that “ “[s]pecialists are not to be trusted [they are] masters of exclusion, experts in the

narrow' ” (Herbert, 1981, p. 182). This stoppage of the human creature and reduction of the space in which it feels safe is like a cell from which it cannot escape, and in time, a cell from which it does not want to escape. In the confining and light space of its *cosmos* the human creature is significant; in the dark space of an infinite *universe*, it is nothing more than an insignificant insect squashed on the galactic windshield of space-time.

If the human creature should wish to minimise such risk, as the American academic and critic Fred Erisman asserts in reference to Lazarus Long's claim regarding specialisation, that creature must come to terms with “the importance of intellectual breadth” (1991, p. 45). The human creature must look beyond the limited view of its specialisation, and it is with this perspective that Erisman then examines a number of Heinlein's fictive works to support the idea that for the human creature a “wide-ranging knowledge and forthright principle can collaborate to the advantage of the individual and the culture” (1991, p. 52). This diversity of knowledge, intellectual and practical skills, Erisman argues, is Lazarus Long's – and indeed Heinlein's – rationale for guarding against the human creature's devolution of species that would result from continuing to narrow its field of vision to silos of specialisation. Focus upon a tele-objective *cosmos*, excludes the *universe*. Heinlein's Lazarus Long warns against this, and Dick's characters Jerry Fabin and Bob Arctor clearly articulate the danger; that the loss of the human creature's capacity to understand the *universe* beyond the illusion of a *cosmos*, irrespective of which *cosmos*, is what makes insignificant insects of that creature.

The insect that specialises, the insect that swarms and overwhelms by the sheer weight of numbers, is the insect that can afford the loss of significant amounts of its number because ultimately, there are no individuals. That the collective will survive at the expense of any individual component is what the human creature fears, and that the *universe of cold equations* may eradicate – or at least keep under control – the swarming contagion that is the human creature, is also to be feared. To escape becoming an insignificant part of the collective swarm, the human creature retreats. However, as the fate of human creatures such as Jerry Fabin and Bob Arctor attest, retreat does not prevent the rise of the insect *other* that infests. When Paul Atreides says of the Harkonnen in *Dune* that they are hunting him and his mother “ ‘as though they were making certain they stamped out whatever’s there ... the way you’d stamp out a nest of insects,’ ” Jessica responds by saying “ ‘[o]r a nest of Atreides’ ” (Herbert, 1965/1978, pp. 198-9). That the Atreides are likened to insects infesting the *universe* is reinforced in *Children of Dune* when the Leto has visions of himself as no more than an insect in the sand (Herbert, 1976, p. 253) and feels that his “body had become a dry shell like that abandoned by an insect” (Herbert, 1976, p. 267). It is not only the Atreides that warrant comparison to swarming insects, and as they sweep through the city of Arrakeen against the Atreides, the Baron Harkonnen’s men are viewed by the Baron “as bees routing the rabbits” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 169).

It is somewhat ironic that while the human creature has the disregard for insects that it does, the insect of the human creature continues to multiply and swarm<sup>94</sup> across its

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<sup>94</sup> In using the phrase “multiply and swarm,” I am suggesting a deliberate correlation of image here with H.G. Wells’ novel, *The War of the Worlds*. The novel’s opening claims “that as men busied themselves about their affairs they were scrutinized and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinize the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water” (Wells, 1898/1983, p. 15). More than another example of the insect-like swarming of the human creature, Wells’ placement of that creature within a drop of water connotes an image of the

own planet. Furthermore, when the opportunity arises, that creature will also swarm across the *universe* as if it were some kind of infection. Whilst dying in the desert, Dune's planetologist, Liet Kynes, is told by a vision of his own dead father that:

Men and their works have been a disease on the surface of their planets before now ... Nature tends to compensate for diseases, to remove or encapsulate them, to incorporate them into the system in her own way (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 262).

An insignificant insect in the *universe* it might be, but the existence of the human creature with its tele-objective *cosmos* also poses a threat to which the *universe* responds. Described in this thesis as a component in the *machine*, when the human creature as that component does not function in accord with the *equations* driving the *machine*, it becomes an error in the calculation of the *equations*, a virus in the *machine*, a contagion that spreads across the *universe*.<sup>95</sup> Beyond the limits of its planet, the human plague spreads into the *universe* like some kind of “yeast-growth” (Heinlein, 1958/1999, pp. 281, 329; 1973, pp. ix-x).

In *cosmicism's universe*, the human creature faces in the first instance, the revelation of its utter insignificance, and in the second, the revelation of its final end as being a correction of an aberration within the *equations*. The human creature is an injury to the *universe*; a “welter” (“February 13, 1928”, Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, p. 227), an accidental “automata who form[s] a sort of momentary insect part on the surface of one of the least important of its temporary grains of dust (“March 5, 1935,” Derleth

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insignificance of this life-form in the *universe* beyond its confines. Furthermore, this can also be read as an image of the swarming human creature as a water-born or water-carried disease, and implies a link between this human swarm and swarms of insects that emerge in the water before later taking flight beyond that water to spread disease.

<sup>95</sup> The monologue given by an Agent to the captured Morpheus in *The Matrix* also exemplifies this idea, highlighting the machine's notion of the human creature as an unclean and odorous virus, a creature possessed of patterns of movement and settlement that replicate the spread of an infecting virus through an organism (1999).

& Turner, 1976b, p. 113). This is the “mutability of the human race” that the American *sf* and fantasy writer Fritz Leiber refers to in his discussion of Lovecraft’s “The Shadow Out of Time,” as “the most extended and systematic imaginative effort that Lovecraft made to give body and substance to the idea of mankind being only an incident” (Derleth, 1972, p. 12).

The meaning of being human may be no more than being an infection that must be cured, a virus in the *machine* to be purged; but surely if life has no meaning in *cosmicism*, as Houellebecq affirms, then “neither does death” (2005, p. 32).

Insignificant in life and in death, the human creature strives for survival in the *universe* nonetheless. As Watts clearly states in *The Book*, the human creature will eliminate *others* for its survival and remains equally subject to elimination from *others* in their own bid for survival (1966/1989, pp. 75-6).<sup>96</sup> The fungi, mould, bacteria and antediluvian *others* that come from and thrive within the damp places, these are the *others*-unseen that threaten the human insect as it buzzes around the water’s edge.

It is exposure to the watery territory that shifts the human creature’s gaze from its small and inward-looking *cosmos* to the *universe* that in being beyond the human *landscape* “now looms large in the background and its presence is palpable” (Schultz, 2011, p. 216).<sup>97</sup> This discernible presence is the forgotten antediluvian

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<sup>96</sup> The passage from Watts noted here is directly linked to his discussion of the failure of success which has also been discussed in chapter 6.

<sup>97</sup> In the chapter titled, “From Microcosm to Macrocosm: The Growth of Lovecraft’s Cosmic Vision,” from which this quote is taken, Schultz discusses the expansion of Lovecraft’s cosmic view from an inward concern of the individual about itself, to an outward view in which the individual recognises that what concerns them, concerns the whole of the species. Schultz then draws parallels between Lovecraft’s early and later stories – the point of demarcation between these being Lovecraft’s time in New York – and Schultz identifies in the latter what amounts to rewrites that clearly evoke this evolution of perspective (Schultz, 2011).

territory that is saturated with things and *others* that existed before the human creature. When reading a letter from Akeley in “The Whisperer in Darkness,”

Wilmarth remarks that:

I was told of the pits of primal life, and of the streams that had trickled down therefrom [*sic*]; and finally, of the tiny rivulet from one of those streams which had become entangled with the destinies of our own earth (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 173).

When the insignificant insect called human turns its gaze from its bustling collective in the sun to the waters of the *universe*, it also turns its gaze to the *others* that are older and invariably more powerful.

### *At the Water's Edge*

Presently Paul recalled the words of 467 Kalima in Yueh's O.C. Bible. He said: ‘From water does all life begin’ (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 296).

For if gods can play in the fields of men, as the Book of Genesis assures us, so too could other less-desirable intruders (Ingebretsen, 1996, pp. 104-5).

According to the *Genesis cosmology*, life is first created in the sea and in the air.

When this *cosmology* claims that “every winged bird according to its kind”

(“Genesis 1:21,” Barker, 1985, p. 7) is created, what has been lost in translation is

the meaning of this passage to be inclusive of insects.<sup>98</sup> The buzzing *others* in “The

Whisperer in Darkness”<sup>99</sup> can, by the manner of their speech, be likened to insects;

and equally likened, by the manner of their appearance, to creatures of the sea “with

<sup>98</sup> In the footnotes of the *Study Bible* it is written that “[t]he term [winged bird] denotes anything that flies, including insects” (Barker, 1985, p. 7).

<sup>99</sup> Reference in “The Whisperer in Darkness” to the buzzing voices of these *others* is also noted as “buzzing voices in imitation of human speech (pp. 158, 177, 227, 229-30); “voices like a bee’s that tried to be like the voices of men” (p. 159); “that buzzing voice in the woods” (p. 165); “fiendish buzzing . . . It was like the drone of some loathsome, gigantic insect” (pp. 178-9); “frightful buzzing” (p. 186); “cursed buzzing voice” (p. 187); “buzzing voices” (p. 226); “the blasphemous buzzings” (p. 227); and “that hideous repressed buzzing” (p. 235).

crustaceous bodies bearing vast pairs of dorsal fins or membranous wings and several sets of articulated limbs” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 156).<sup>100</sup> These *others* emerge into the human creature’s view surrounded by the pervasively damp and isolated hills of Vermont, and indeed the specimens seen by the human creature are disclosed by floodwaters that wash them down the mountain from their hidden places (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 154-5). While the human creature as an insect in the *universe* amounts to little more than an insignificant contagion, these *other* insects from the *universe* beyond the human creature’s *landscape* (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 159, 173, 213-4) are insects to be reckoned with.

Monstrous in their appearance, and governed by the *cold equations* in their dealings with the human creature, inasmuch as they will kill the human that comes too close to their operations (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 157-8, 160), or calmly extract a human brain for the purpose of interstellar travel (2000, pp. 217-21), these *others* exist as a disturbing threat to the human creature’s sense of significance and self-governance. They are life-forms associated with damp and dark places and that significantly pre-date the human creature in terms of evolutionary history. Just as human creatures collect insects, these *others* collect human creatures in jars, and therein bring disembodiment and dismemberment to that creature. Similarly, in Dick’s story “Human Is,” the obnoxious Lestor Herrick returns from a business trip to the planet REXOR as a changed man (1987b, p. 260). Somewhere beyond the light space of Earth, Herrick’s “original psychic contents” are stored in a jar while a REXORIAN inhabits the body that has returned to home and family (Dick, 1987b, p. 263).

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<sup>100</sup> Further description of these *others* is given as being “a sort of huge, light-red crab with many pairs of legs and with two great batlike wings in the middle of the back” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 157).

The leviathans and monsters of the deep that the *Genesis cosmology* names and the deluge hides, are inextricably linked with the waters of the *universe*; they are the living *others* of the territory beneath the sunlit map of the human creature's dry-land *cosmos*. As if it were standing on a shore at the edge of a vast ocean, the human creature is caught between the comfort of the *amnesia of the cosmos* and the terrible revelation of the *universe* wherein water and the *others* that live in or near that water, is a literal undercurrent saturating *foundations* and *thresholds*.<sup>101</sup>

When a map that declares the human creature is made for and belongs to the dry land is used to the exclusion of other maps, it becomes possible for that creature to relinquish the memory that life in the *universe* first came from the water. In Dick's "Faith of Our Fathers," Tanya reminds Chien that what has been forgotten by the human creature is that the sense of connection with each other and the *universe* they have just experienced during sexual intercourse, remains as the only way the human creature can access the memory of "the way we were in Cambrian times, before we migrated up onto the land; it's the ancient primary waters" (1987c, p. 222). What is significant about Tanya's claim is that she implicitly recognises that the affirmation within the *Genesis cosmology* of the human creature having been created on dry

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<sup>101</sup> Examples of this idea of water saturating *foundations* and *thresholds* may be found in, but are by no means limited to: Dick's primordial ocean in "Faith of Our Fathers" (1987c, p. 222) and the hoped for respite on Earth's oceans for the Buggies in "Martians Come in Clouds" (1987b, pp. 123-4); Heinlein's "The Tale of the Man Who Was Too Lazy to Fail" in *Time Enough for Love* (1973, pp. 54-77), Lazarus Long and Dora's search for water in their trek across the dry valley in *Time Enough for Love* (1973, pp. 288-9), and the secret meeting place of the Howard Families in *Methuselah's Children* (1958/1999, pp. 296-9); Herbert's planet Caladan as the Atrides homeworld in the *Dune* chronicles, the Fremen first encounter with the sea on other planets during jihad in *Dune Messiah* (1969/1979, pp. 43-4), the transformed planet of Arrakis (1976, p. 7), the death of Leto II in *God Emperor of Dune* (1981, pp. 443-50), the conservatory in the palace at Arrakeen (1965/1978, pp. 72, 127), and the subterranean water stills (1965/1978, pp. 302-3); Lovecraft's settings for his stories are, in general, pervaded by water. Significant amongst these are "Dagon," "The Call of Cthulhu," "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," "The Temple," "The Rats in the Walls," "The Horror at Red Hook," "At the Mountains of Madness," "The Whisperer in Darkness," "The Picture in the House," "The Dunwich Horror," "Pickman's Model," "The Colour Out of Space," "The Moon-Bog," "The Festival," "The Outsider," "The Haunter of the Dark," "The Lurking Fear" and the West Australian coastline in "The Shadow Out of Time."

land, dissolves the ancestral connection the human creature has with the waters of the *universe*. Tanya also signals that the connection she and Chien have shared, in being “outside of time ... boundless, like an ocean” (Dick, 1987c, p. 222), is a connection with the *universe* that is achieved beyond the limitations of the individual, biological body. Similarly in “The Shadow Over Innsmouth,” Lovecraft’s character Zadoc Allen explicitly states that it:

[s]eems that human folks has got a kind o’ relations to sech water-beasts – that everything alive come aout o’ the water onct, an’ only needs a little change to go back again ... An’ this is the important part, young feller – them as turned into fish things an’ went into the water wouldn’t never die” (2000, p. 416).

The problem for Olmstead, to whom Zadoc is speaking, and by extension the problem for the human creature, is the revelation that in order to survive, that creature must become something *other* than what it is; the human body unchanged is not enough. In “The Shadow Over Innsmouth” humans and *others* mingle to form a new breed.

The presence of an abundance of water, despite the human creature’s need for some amount in order to survive, is a *foundation* producing fear because it signifies the possibility of *engulfment*. It is the threat alone that, as said before, is enough to drive the human creature to its habitual retreat into the *heimlich conundrum* if the *cosmos* cannot be recovered, because in *cosmicism*, when the human creature holds to the damp places, it all too often fails to remain entirely human.

The water’s edge is a dangerous place for the human creature; irrespective of whether that creature is threatened by an *engulfment* of too much water or, like Tanya’s “big jelly” in “Faith of Our Fathers” that “float[s] up on the beach” (Dick,

1987c, p. 222), is threatened in the light of the sun by an *engulfment* of too little water. In the saturated *universe* of *cosmicism*, the water's edge is the domain of insects, parasites, worms and spreading contagion in the damp and decay. In reaching for what looks like paradise by terraforming the planet in *Children of Dune*, Leto observes “[t]he new symbols of Arrakis: water and green” (Herbert, 1976, p. 32), and the human creature puts its hope for a comfortable future into existence within a garden. Such wet *landscapes* are dangerous; and for the native Fremen of Dune, not only dangerous, but lethal. As Leto later observes, “[b]eyond the rock markers stretched a stinking band of dead Arrakeen life, killed by foreign plants and too much water, now forming a barrier against the desert” (Herbert, 1976, p. 67).

The human creature might spread like a virus throughout the *universe*, but when it takes up residence in the water and decay it is, in the end, decayed and consumed. As the human creature infects the *universe*, that *universe* in turn infects the human creature, and for the Fremen naib Stilgar:

Reality was not at all like the dream. The Friendly Desert, which once had spread from pole to pole, was reduced to half its former size. The mythic paradise of spreading greenery filled him with dismay. It was not like the dream. And as his planet changed, he knew he had changed” (Herbert, 1976, p. 7).

As the Fremen of Dune evolve until they become nothing more than “degenerate relics of the once proud warriors” (Herbert, 1981, p. 81), so too do the human creatures of Lovecraft’s “The Dunwich Horror,” become as “gnarled” and “crumbling” as the *landscape* they inhabit (2000, pp. 100-1). Dunwich is intersected by “problematical depths” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 100)<sup>102</sup> and “it is hard to prevent the

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<sup>102</sup> The Vermont *landscape* in which “The Whisperer in Darkness” is set is also characterised by “problematical depths” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 157).

impression of a faint, malign odour about the village street, as of the massed mould and decay of centuries” (2000, p. 101). As the human creatures of Dunwich have adapted to this dark and mouldy *cosmos*, they have become like “forbidden things, with which it would be better to have nothing to do” (2000, p. 100), for “Dunwich is indeed ridiculously old” (2000, p. 103).

The link between devolution and hereditary in Lovecraft’s fiction is well identified by the American *sf* fanzine editor, Leland Sapiro (Derleth, 1972, p. 6),<sup>103</sup> and it would seem that from his commentary in the early 1960s unto the present, critics of Lovecraft are well used to discussing the devolution of the human creature in terms of its link with deep time and familial or racial hereditary. To read this issue in such a manner is certainly a fruitful venture, but I would also add that what appears to have been overlooked by most, if not all critics of Lovecraft, is the additional linkage between human devolution and the proximity of watery *landscapes*. To explore why this has occurred, is beyond the scope of this thesis, but such an exploration would be a valuable addition to Lovecraftian scholarship and the wider scholarship of *cosmicism* in general.

The mould and decay that accompanies an abundance of water allows the territory to be sensed by more than ocular vision alone (Houellebecq, 2005, pp. 67-71). The *cosmos* of observation is transformed to a *universe* of experience. The human creature upon arrival at the water’s edge is greeted by insignificance and finitude, and imminent deluge of the *universe* brings that creature to a *threshold* from which there is no return.

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<sup>103</sup> The text edited and published in 1972 by August Derleth under the title *H.P. Lovecraft: A Symposium*, is the transcription of a recorded panel discussion that was held, Derleth writes in his “Preface,” at a “meeting of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society.”

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## Chapter 8

### Perihelion

The Old Ones were, the Old Ones are, and the Old Ones shall be. Not in the spaces we know, but *between* them, they walk serene and primal, undimensioned and to us unseen. *Yog-Sothoth* knows the gate. *Yog-Sothoth* is the gate. *Yog-Sothoth* is the key and the guardian of the gate. Past, present, future, all are one in Yog-Sothoth. He knows where the Old Ones broke through of old, and where They shall break through again ... Yog-Sothoth is the key to the gate, whereby the spheres meet. Man rules where They ruled once; They shall soon rule where man rules now. After summer is winter, after winter summer. They wait patient and potent, for here shall They reign again

- from the *Necronomicon* ("The Dunwich Horror," Lovecraft, 1994, pp. 117-8).<sup>104</sup>

### *The Threshold*

The human creature's arrival at the *threshold* is an arrival at the point of intersection between one place or state of being and another. Ingebretsen writes of "the twin wildernesses – the 'desert places' – that have served as horizons of interpretation in American epistemology and American myth: the varieties of space, inner and outer" (1996, pp. 136-7), and he acknowledges the embedding of these spaces within Lovecraft's corpus. This notion of the "inner and outer" that links the human creature's sense of its body in relation to the external *cosmos* and ultimately to the *universe*, is also discussed in *Phenomenology of Perception* when Merleau-Ponty writes that:

I know indubitably where my pipe is, and thereby I know where my hand and my body are ... As far as spatiality is concerned, and this alone interests us at the moment, one's own body is the third term, always tacitly understood, in the figure-background structure, and every figure stands out against the double horizon of external and bodily space. One must therefore reject as an abstraction any analysis of bodily space which takes account only of figures and points, since these can neither be conceived nor be without horizons (1945/1958, pp. 115-6).

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<sup>104</sup> This quote is one of the few passages Lovecraft developed and attributed to the *Necronomicon*.

Merleau-Ponty's "double horizon of external and bodily space" can also be correlated with what Virilio identifies in the "Introduction" to *Open Sky* as an "[u]nremarked invention of the art of painting and of distinguishing a 'form' from a 'background' " (1997/2008, p. 1). This "invention" arranges the human creature's view of its spatial relationship with *others* – whether *other* objects or *other* bodies – within a horizontal plane of difference between near and far. What this perspective of the horizon does, however, is render invisible what Virilio calls "the very first littoral," (1997/2008), a particular view of the horizon that draws attention to the vertical rather than the horizontal, a view to which this thesis will later return.

The arrival of the embodied human creature at the *threshold* between *cosmos* and *universe*, is attended by the integral possibility of *engulfment* as a consequence of the *threshold's* apocalypse. Once the human creature is located in what Žižek calls "lethal proximity" (1991, p. 85),<sup>105</sup> wherein the resemblance and the actual being of the *universe* merge,<sup>106</sup> there remains no possibility for that creature to return to the *amnesia of the cosmos*.

Inseparable from this merging point of *cosmos* and *universe* is the shift from the light space to darkness. For Lovecraft's Peaslee in "The Shadow Out of Time,"

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<sup>105</sup> The concept of "lethal proximity" as it is interpreted in this thesis is integral to *neocosmicism* and more fully explored in chapter 12.

<sup>106</sup> This idea may also be read as comparable with Deleuze's notion of the virtual and the actual as presented in chapter five of *Dialogues II* (1977/2007). In 2010 at The Fourth Australian Conference on Utopia, Dystopia and Science Fiction – titled *Changing the Climate: Utopia, Dystopia and Catastrophe* and hosted by Monash University – Ian Buchanan also refers to Deleuze's notion of "the virtual and the actual [as] both on the plane of the real." Furthermore, Buchanan highlights the idea that while the virtual is not corporeal as a body is, the virtual nonetheless has real affect, and indeed effect, upon the actual body in a manner that in some way changes or transforms the way that body can move within the *universe*.

immersed in the labyrinth beneath the sands of the West Australian desert, it is the anticipation of what lies beyond the reach of his torchlight that leaves him “[s]huddering, [because he] realized that a vast chain of aeon-dead black gulfs must indeed be yawning somewhere beyond and below” (2000, p. 526). The human creature’s awareness that the light at the *threshold* changes in some way, evokes and is aligned with “[t]he horrible feeling of insignificance” that Colavito claims “mankind experiences when confronted with a universe both greater and more powerful than he could imagine” (2008, p. 185). The human creature’s fear of the *universe* is bound up within its linguistic inability to appropriately articulate and navigate the dark using a language that has been constructed in the light. The possibility of leaving the enclosure of the light space of the *cosmos* that it dominates and controls, suggests to the human creature that it will be propelled into a *universe* in which it will no longer be heard above any *other* and will therefore disappear into and be indistinguishable from the background of darkness.

The human creature’s experience of the *threshold* can be likened to the advent of dusk when the sun appears to fall toward the horizon, its illumination fades and shadows cast by objects lengthen their reach towards the coming darkness. At this juncture, the human creature’s self-assurance of its own significance dissolves within the fading light. According to the Lovecraftian scholar Robert Waugh, “[t]he sunset is that delicate moment of wonder and expansion that in Lovecraft precedes collapse” (2011, p. 232), or as Lovecraft writes in a letter to *Weird Tales*, “when we cross the line to the boundless and hideous unknown – the shadow-haunted Outside – we must remember to leave our humanity and terrestrialism at the threshold” (“February 1928,” Joshi & Michaud, 1979, p. 22).

In disclosing the *threshold's* imminence, Waugh's aptly named "shadow landscape" (2011, pp. 233-5) does more than frame the emerging territory, it becomes in itself a *landscape* that the human creature must navigate and survive. The "shadow landscape" surrounds the *threshold* as a space-time of indeterminacy and slippage, it resonates with something that can feel almost remembered but just out of reach and thus, becomes a *landscape* wherein the human creature senses a haunting of the space in which it exists. As that creature's awareness of the *heimlich* nature of the *universe* grows, it acquires an understanding that this is a haunted *universe* of shadow and veiled truths; as Ingebretsen writes in reference to Lovecraft, this is where the human creature experiences "the widening abyss beneath the sheen of appearances, the great fragility of things as they seem" (1996, p. 133).

This fragility, Ingebretsen claims, is related to the human creature's sense of its own history and future as inseparable from its biology. When face to face with the *cold equations*; the *universe as machine*; and radically different *others*; the human creature's biology is utterly vulnerable and that creature fixated on the idea that only in its embodiment is it real and vitally alive. The reduction of the human creature to a vulnerable object alone in the dark is the *threshold's* terrifying apocalypse.

For Lovecraft's narrator in "The Music of Erich Zann," approaching the *threshold* involves moving from a brightly lit *cosmos* and "across a dark river bordered by precipitous brick blear-windowed warehouses and spanned by a ponderous bridge of stone. It was always shadowy along that river" (1994, p. 335). Crossing the bridge carries the narrator deeper into a shadowed street that terminates "in a lofty ivied

wall” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 336). It is in this twilight *landscape* of shadow that one window in one room of one building has a view that looks out over the towering wall, a window that represents and indeed becomes, the *threshold* between the ordered *cosmos* of the city’s light, and the apocalypse of the *universe* of *chaos*.

After the revelation, after expulsion from the order of light and warmth, return to a complete *amnesia of the cosmos* becomes untenable. The irony of *cosmicism* is that the possibility of turning to the *universe* is also rendered untenable. Ingebretsen observes that the human creature is “God-haunted, or at least caged by metaphysical absolutes” (1996, pp. 135-6), and indeed, the *cosmos* with its order and well lit path has provided such a secure fortification against alternatives, that to abandon the *cosmos* altogether is unthinkable. The *threshold* has the human creature trapped between an unreal *cosmos* and an all too real *universe* of terrifying shadow and darkness.

The human creature has no escape and its mind is haunted by the *universe* because, as Merleau-Ponty points out, “consciousness can be seen trying to hold up its superstructures when their foundations have given way” (1945/1958, p. 158). The human creature at the *threshold* tries desperately to operate within a map that has rendered the territorial background invisible, because that creature persists in the belief that in being embodied, it remains separate. In doing this, the human creature fails to acknowledge that “[w]e perform our movements in a space which is not “empty” ... but which on the contrary, bears a highly determinate relation to them: movement and backgrounds are, in fact, only artificially separated stages of a unique totality (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1958, p. 159).

This “unique totality” has disturbing consequences for the human creature in Dick’s story “The Electric Ant,” where the protagonist, Garson Poole, wakes after an accident that resulted in the loss of his right hand (1987b, p. 225). Significantly, he wakes to look out his hospital window to a *cosmos* of “late afternoon sun, and the brilliance of the aging light pleased him. It’s not out yet, he thought. And neither am I” (1987b, p. 225). It is in this “shadow landscape” that Poole is told “ ‘you’re not a man. You’re an electric ant’ ... ‘An organic robot’ ” (1987b, p. 226), a revelation that locates the *threshold* between *cosmos* and *universe*, quite literally, within his body. Programmed to believe the *cosmos* of his biological embodiment as authentic, Poole’s apocalypse heralds the end of any possibility for a return to the *amnesia of the cosmos* because he is in fact a machine operating within the *cold equations* of “on” and “off.” Poole had not known that he was an “electric ant,” he is programmed not to notice, and his sense of what he is in the world is an illusion, a *cosmos* dissolving at the *threshold* (1987b, p. 227). When Poole is later home in his apartment and looking out its only window, in contemplating the revelation, he arrives at a sense of feeling trapped between a *cosmos* lost and a *universe* unreachable. Turning the glass of that window from transparent to “opaque,” like Jerry Fabin in *A Scanner Darkly*,<sup>107</sup> Garson Poole retreats into the bright, artificial light of the human *cosmos* to try and make sense of himself, only to find that “[t]he maze of circuitry baffled him” (1987b, p. 228).

According to Heinlein’s narrator in the story “They” (1999, p. 119), there are two ways of looking at the *universe* and both are wrong. Just as Poole realises that the

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<sup>107</sup> This is discussed in chapter 7 on pp. 191-2.

*threshold's* revelation has left him feeling "alive" but in feeling such vitality his sense of self and of *others* is also altered ("The Electric Ant," Dick, 1987b, p. 228), similar and irrevocable change is faced by Heinlein's narrator when he realises that "[t]hey had given him an excellent, a beautiful mirror to play with – the more fool he to have looked behind it" (1999, p. 119). It is this looking across the *threshold* to the *universe* that highlights the dissolving of the *cosmos* in the "impossible sunshine" (Heinlein, 1999, p. 122), the same light space that the human creature endeavours to turn to:

the common-sense world-is-as-it-seems ... In such a world, human striving is about as rational as the blind dartings of a moth against a light bulb. The common-sense world is a blind insanity, out of nowhere, going nowhere, to no purpose (Heinlein, 1999, p. 119).

The human creature is an insect gone mad in the ordered *cosmos*, or worse, an "electric ant" that is not even entirely biological, but something *other* that can never regain its lost illusion of embodied significance. This loss of *cosmos* leaves Heinlein's narrator torn between his logic and his senses (1999, p. 115) and Dick's Poole in "The Electric Ant" with a "fright-haunted mind" (1987b, p. 234). The human creature is haunted by the possibility of becoming an invisible, silenced *other* in the *universe*; but to hope that the *universe* is not there, to hope that it can be switched off and subdued as if it were a *machine*, has consequences. The end of Garson Poole may have been the end of something *other* than human, but it also triggers the end of everything else ("The Electric Ant," Dick, 1987b, pp. 235,238-9).

The response of the human creature at the *threshold* is directly connected to its comprehending the possibility of annihilation within the *chaos*. With no reassuring deity and sanctuary to return to, and a future of existence in an indifferent *machine*

that is populated with adversarial *others*, the human creature balances on the verge of *engulfment*. Torn between the poles of the safety of preference embodied, individual distinctness and the distress of being isolated from all *others*, the human creature seeks to continue applying a redundant map. *Cosmicism*'s apocalypse is not the end of every-*thing*, but the end of everything the human creature has believed about its infancy in the *cosmos* coupled with immersion in the *universe* as an experience that can no longer be avoided. *Engulfment* comes, because the human creature continues to hope that it can avoid the *chaos*.

*Engulfment* appears to be integral to the *universe*, and significantly, to the *Genesis cosmology*. The Deluge is an *engulfment* that demarcates the *threshold* between the antediluvian and the postdiluvian *landscapes*, with the human creature's existence in the postdiluvian a further separation of it from the waters of the *universe* and the *others* that exist in those waters. Since the Deluge, these *others* wait until they can reclaim their lost territory; "until the time when the great priest Cthulhu, from his dark house in the mighty city of R'lyeh under the waters, should rise and bring the earth again beneath his sway" ("The Call of Cthulhu," Lovecraft, 2000, p. 78).

When Lovecraft's narrator of "The Lurking Fear," is caught with Arthur Munroe in "such a blinding sheet of torrential rain that shelter became imperative," in a storm that is described as an "extreme, almost nocturnal darkness of the sky" (2000, p. 357), they wait out this storm in a shelter on Maple Hill. Like some strange Edenic couple in search of what lies beyond their *cosmos*, when they suspect the one tree near their shelter is struck by:

a terrific bolt of lightning followed by the sound of sliding earth ... Munroe rose from his box and went to the tiny window to ascertain the damage. When he took down the shutter the wind and rain howled deafeningly in, so that I could not hear what he said; but I waited while he leaned out and tried to fathom Nature's pandemonium.

Gradually a calming of the wind and dispersal of the unusual darkness told of the storm's passing (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 358).

This deluge is a *threshold* across which the human creature should not have looked, and the penalty for Munroe's doing so is more than death, it is a cessation of vision, a forbidding of the human creature to know what there is to be seen, and the narrator:

felt the strangling tendrils of a cancerous horror whose roots reached into illimitable pasts and fathomless abysses of the night that broods beyond time.

For Arthur Munroe was dead. And on what remained of his chewed and gouged head there was no longer a face (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 358).

### ***The Grey***

'A Fremen dies when he's too long from the desert,' Paul said.  
'They call it the "water sickness"' (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 204).<sup>108</sup>

In surviving the Deluge, the human creature is estranged from the waters of *chaos*, and the rainbow emerges as a *threshold* marker of the covenant between the *Genesis cosmology's* God and the human creature, that "[n]ever again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life," ("Genesis 9: 15," Barker, 1985, p. 18). This declaration that there will be no further opportunity for the *chaos* of the *universe* to threaten the *cosmos* of the human creature is, as Arthur Munroe and his friend discover, an illusion: deluges still occur, and they still herald death.

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<sup>108</sup> This phrase is also iterated by Stilgar and recorded in his Commentaries in *Children of Dune* (Herbert, 1976, 117).

If the human creature does not drown, such abundance of water will rob that creature of its vitality, the struggle for which is framed by DiTommaso as “the conflict between the philosophy of the Imperium and that of Arrakis” (1992, p. 313); or otherwise put, the struggle for survival between a *cosmos* of order and a *universe* of *chaos*. In *Dune Messiah*, one of the most striking examples of the defeat of the human creature arises from within a conversation between the Fremen, Faroc, who was “ ‘once Bashar of the Ninth Legion in the Jihad’ ” (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 38), and the Tleilaxu face dancer Scytale, when they meet at Faroc’s home to discuss the possibility of destroying the Atreides Imperium. Faroc once enlisted in the Jihad because he had heard of but could not comprehend the presence of so much water as to form a sea. It was dusk when Faroc, with his legion:

‘came out of a mountain pass where the air was sick with water. I could scarcely breathe it. And there below me was the thing my friends had told me about; water as far as I could see and farther. We marched down to it. I wandered out into it and drank. It was bitter and made me ill. But the wonder of it has never left me.’

Scytale found himself sharing the old Fremen’s awe.

‘I immersed myself in that sea,’ Faroc said, looking down at the water creatures worked into the tiles of his floor. ‘One man sank beneath that water ... another man arose from it. I felt that I could remember a past which had never been. I stared around me with eyes which could accept anything ... anything at all. I saw a body in the water – one of the defenders we had slain. There was a log nearby supported on that water, a piece of a great tree. I can close my eyes now and see that log. It was black on one end from a fire. And there was a piece of cloth in that water – no more than a yellow rag ... torn, dirty. I looked at all these things and I understood why they had come to this place, it was for me to see them’ (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 44).

What this lengthy passage articulates is the idea that even before arriving at the water’s edge, the moisture in the air is sufficient to signal the proximity of an unhealthy space in which the human creature will struggle to survive. Even more crucially, this passage demonstrates that such a presence of moisture is nothing when

compared to the diminishment of the human creature that occurs when it faces the open sea and loses a discernible horizon by which to demarcate the water's limit. Faroc's experience is an *engulfment*, the revelation of which is not owned by Faroc alone, but it is the apocalypse of the entire Fremen people:

‘The Mother of Chaos was born in a sea,’ Faroc said. ‘A Qizara Tafwid stood nearby when I came dripping from that water. He had not entered the sea. He stood on the sand ... it was wet sand ... with some of my men who shared his fear. He watched me with eyes that knew I had learned something which was denied him. I had become a sea creature and I frightened him. The sea healed me of the Jihad and I think he saw this’ (Herbert, 1969/1979, pp. 44).

This particular *threshold* encounter in the *Dune* chronicles, more than any other, signifies the *foundation* of the Fremen's devolution as they are *engulfed* by the deluge of the *universe* that lies beyond the *landscape* of their desert planet, Dune. When they no longer need to struggle for enough water to survive, the Fremen descend into a stagnating complacency in their regard for it (Herbert, 1969/1979, pp. 76, 151, 197), forgetting what Dune once had been and becoming enclosed within an increasingly smaller *cosmos*.

To keep the human creature from an overwhelming and seemingly limitless flood, the rainbow signifies the enclosure of that creature within its *cosmos*, and in doing so reinforces the idea that turning the gaze away from the saturated *foundation* and toward the lightshow of colour that is the *cosmos* encircled by the rainbow, a tele-objective kaleidoscope of illusion, is preferable. Comforting in its appearance but wholly untouchable by the embodied human creature, a rainbow and its promise is an illusion at the water's edge.

The rainbow that separates within its net one colour from another is revealed to the human creature at the *threshold* for the illusion that it is, and despite the promise of the *cosmos*, the overwhelming presence of the *universe* remains. The rainbow is a symbol of the failure of success,<sup>109</sup> a failure that in *cosmicism*, leads to *engulfment*. The success of seeing the *universe* comes at the cost of the failure of the human creature to continue to survive as it has done until that moment. Self-inflicted or otherwise, the human creature's only escape from *engulfment* is to die or remain forever incarcerated in madness.

With God absent and the *cosmos* dissolved, the rainbow has no *foundation*, and so crumbles away into the rising grey damp of the *universe*. This rising damp may not be a temporally sudden or catastrophic event, but it is a cataclysmic *engulfing* nonetheless, and perhaps all the more insidious for its slow inevitability. As Plato suggests in the *Timaeus*, one way or the other, the waters will *engulf* the human creature, and:

when the gods cleanse the earth with a flood of waters, the herdsmen and shepherds in the mountains are saved, while the inhabitants of cities in your part of the world are swept by the rivers into the sea. But in this country the water does not fall from above upon the fields either then or at other times; its way is always to rise up over them from below (Cornfold, 1937, p. 15).

Crumbled by the waters into mouldy decay, the human creature's *landscape* is tainted with the grey. Black or white, as bipolar extremes, are strong contrasts and as archetypes contain their own symbolic and variant meanings; but it is grey that becomes a highly visible colour in its own right in *cosmicism*. Grey is neither one nor the *other*; as a shadow, an indeterminate space that reaches from the white to the

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<sup>109</sup> The "failure of success" is discussed in chapter 6.

black, grey holds no absolute into which the human creature can invest its sense of significance in the *universe*.

In *Palmer Eldrich*, when Barney Mayerson terminates a conversation between himself and Leo Bulero, “The screen became a formless gray. Gray, he thought, like the world inside me and around me, like reality” (Dick, 1964/2007, pp. 63-4). Grey identifies the *threshold* of potential that in *cosmicism* signals a descent into decay. This is the kipple of *Androids* that is eating away the world (Dick, 1968/2007, pp. 17, 52. 56-7, 63, 75, 77, 126, 184-5), and the ash and dust of a ravaged human planet in “Second Variety” (Dick, 1987a, pp. 15-52). Collectively identified by British scholar and critic Tom Shippey as Dick’s “tomb-world,” Shippey writes that this is “a kind of entropic trash state to which all life threatens to descend, the existential opposite – or is it the natural result – of the bright happy worlds of commercial advertising (2009, p. 22). What Shippey identifies in this statement and aligns with existentialism, is *cosmicism*’s similar stance that the grey is a *threshold* at which the human creature in being stripped of the colour and bright light of its *cosmos*, is threatened with a descent into decay.

In the *cosmos* of the antediluvian drug ChewZ that Palmer Eldrich brings back from Prox (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 84), Leo Bulero wills Roni Fugate to a thing because she rejects him:

He drank the water, and tossed the cup into the waste chute; not looking at Miss Fugate he said to himself, You’re my age, Miss Fugate. In fact older ... In fact, he said to himself, you’re over one hundred years old, withered, juiceless, without teeth and eyes. A thing (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 99).

What Bulero creates, are “gray fungoid strands wrapped one around another to form a brittle column that swayed” (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 100), a fate similar to that of Mrs Gardner in Lovecraft’s story, “The Colour Out of Space,” in which Ammi Pierce encounters in the attic:

the blasphemous monstrosity which ... which all too clearly had shared the nameless fate of young Thaddeus and the live-stock. But the terrible thing about the horror was that it very slowly and perceptibly moved as it continued to crumble (2000, p. 256).

The human creature at the *threshold* between *cosmos* and *universe*, in “The Colour Out of Space” and in *Palmer Eldrich* for example, is consumed by the grey. That creature becomes a living “puddle” of “gray splinters” and “thick, oozing material” struggling to maintain an embodied coherence as an identifiable human creature (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 100), because it is evolving “ ‘not while alive but there in the ground’ ” (1964/2007, p. 101) and trying to maintain an autonomous form that the *universe* does not necessarily support. The grey of the *threshold* gives way to the deluge of decay, and as Leo Bulero’s office carpet “rotted, became mushy, and then sprouted, grew, alive, into green fibres” he surrenders to the apocalypse, the *cosmos* dissolves, and he is left not with blood, but dust on his hands (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 101).

The grey is the possibility that crosses the *threshold*. The arrival on Mars of the “[g]ray and bony” man embodied as Palmer Eldrich, is the arrival of something that is *other* than human, mechanically enhanced and possessed of a vision of the horizon that is “a panoramic vision ... supplied by a wide-angle lens” (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 171), Eldrich threatens everything that the human creature holds on to as sane and real.

When the *cosmos* is gone, the grey that remains is the dust of a ravaged world in which the human creature must find some way to survive. In Dick's story "Martians Come in Clouds," the antediluvian *others* that are "shapeless gray bundle[s]" (1987a, p. 119) come from Mars to threaten the human *cosmos*. The *cosmos* may be bright (1987a, p. 121), but when "[t]he sun had set. The evening air was chill [and d]arkness was descending" (1987a, p. 122), the grey that waits in the shadows for the human creature emerges and:

It was old. He knew that at once. There was a dryness about it, an odor of age and dust. An ancient gray shape, silent and unmoving, wrapped around the trunk and branches of the evergreen. A mass of cobwebs, dusty strands and webs of grey wrapped and trailing across the tree. A nebulous wispy presence that made the hackles of his neck rise" (1987a, p. 122).

For the boy Jimmy, this experience is terrifying. With the light and colour of his *cosmos* shrouded by the grey of the buggie – the human creature's name for Martians in this story – Jimmy is *engulfed* in the deluge that the buggie initiates as if it were "a vast tide, a rushing ocean dragging at him, surging over his body, holding him where he was. He could not break away. He was caught" (Dick, 1987a, p. 123). When the buggie telepathically shows Jimmy what its home in the *universe* is like, Jimmy responds fearfully, desperate to avoid the "vast billowing clouds of sand and dust, blowing endlessly across the cracked surface of the planet" (1987a, p. 123). The human creature's desire to avoid this manifestation of the *universe*, and in doing so to avoid its own possible end, is to kill the buggie. With the removal of the buggie, the human creature can attempt a return to the *amnesia of the cosmos* and leave the *cold chaos* of the *universe* behind in preference for "the friendly yellow homey warmth" (Dick, 1987a, p. 126).

What can be surmised from Dick's treatment of the "shadow landscape," can indeed be said of *cosmicism* and is central to the fearful dilemma faced by the human creature that the *threshold* uncovers. As Shippey concludes:

Dick grasped long before Baudrillard<sup>110</sup> that we are affected (he would say, controlled) by images and icons, pictures and pixels. What he was sensitive to was the off-note that makes you wonder whether you've got it right, whether – see *Total Recall* – your memories might have been implanted (2009, p. 22).

The grey of the crumbling *cosmos* is the dissolving of the illusion and it is the coming of the revelation that when the *cosmos* is gone, the *universe* is a trap from which the human creature cannot escape.

### ***The Universe as Trap***

– the whole world was an asylum and all of them his keepers  
("They," Heinlein, 1999, p. 117).

Whether the human creature views the *universe* from either the perspective of the *Genesis cosmology* or the *universe as machine*, that creature maintains its belief in the *universe* as a place where order and design can be counted on as consistent *foundational* principles. Even when order stems from the impersonal and indifferent *machine*, it remains an order that can be reliably measured and is behaviourally predictable. Such faith in the idea of order within the *universe*, irrespective of the cosmological map in hand, is the human creature's undoing. In discussing Robert

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<sup>110</sup> For an expansion of what Shippey is referring to, Jean Baudrillard's essay, "Simulacra and Science Fiction" (1991, pp. 309-13) is, in its few pages, an excellent reference for further analysis. After opening with his "three orders of simulacra," the first two of which can be readily aligned with the *Genesis cosmology* and the *universe as machine* respectively, Baudrillard writes that "[t]here is no real and no imaginary except at a certain distance." He refers to "the real" as "a pretext of the model," which in terms of this thesis can be aligned with the manner in which the *cosmos* is erected by the human creature in such a way as to surpass the *universe*.

Frost's poem "Design," Ingebretsen writes of the failure of "human will" when faced with the "entrapment of cosmic determinism," concluding "that the argument for universal design conceals possibilities far darker than first perceived (1996, p. 120).

In Dick's story "The Day Mr Computer Fell Out of its Tree," the world that is controlled by machines becomes unliveable for humans when the "polyencephalic computer" that operates everything in the world malfunctions (1987b, pp. 307-9). In response to increased levels of radiation from the sun due to the destruction of the ozone layer, the machine, Mr Computer, has been installed to regulate the human creature's *landscape*, and Mrs Simpson, a human creature "train[ed] in the art of healing psychotic constructs" (Dick, 1987b, p. 309), is "stored at the centre of the earth in a special lead-lined chamber, safe from harmful radiation at the surface, in a quasi-suspended animation" (1987b, p. 308). Should Mr Computer develop any psychosis, Mrs Simpson is on hand to assist in restoring order to the machine. The problem for Joe Contemptible when the story opens, of course, is that Mr Computer is having a difficult day, and Joe is left trapped in his home by a door that will not open. Apparently Joe Contemptible wants to die, and this plunges Mr Computer into psychosis because it cannot comprehend Contemptible's desire. It is "two gray-clad police" (Dick, 1987b, p. 311) who find Contemptible and in a subsequent discussion with Mrs Simpson, reveals that he wants to die because what he has is " 'existence, not living' " (1987b, p. 312).

In a similar manner to Contemptible's capture, the opening pages of Heinlein's *Time Enough for Love* find Lazarus Long confined and prevented from his attempt to die. When Long asks " 'WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING IN THIS JAIL?' " Ira

Wetheral replies that Long is not in prison, but in “ [t]he VIP suite of the Howard Rejuvenation clinic, New Rome’ ” (1973, p. 3). Long’s surroundings may be pleasant and he may have access to everything he wants, but only insofar as this does not involve a risk to his continuing embodied existence, and he is surrounded by human creatures charged with keeping him alive in a luxury from which he has no egress. Death may be “ ‘every man’s privilege’ ” as Wetheral confirms, but Long rightly points out that for him, such a “basic right” has been removed (Heinlein, 1973, p. 3). Long is confined, in New Rome on the planet Secundus (1973, p. 7), the same planet that he long ago chose for the “Foundation and the Howard Families” (1973, p. xv), and curiously the same planetary name for the Emperor Shaddam IV’s prison planet in *Dune*.

Salusa Secundus in the *Dune* chronicles is the prison planet on which the Emperor trains his most lethal warriors, the Sardaukar, turning the descendants of cruelly treated prisoners into fanatically loyal subjects, a point noted in *The Dune Encyclopedia* (McNelly, 1984, p. 493). When the Emperor Shaddam IV is defeated, Paul Atreides not only assures the newly deposed Emperor that he will be confined to Secundus, but further strengthens the confinement by assuring that “ ‘I will ease the harshness of the place with all the powers at my disposal. It shall become a garden world, full of gentle things’ ” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 462), and Paul knows that to enclose the Emperor and his Sardaukar in a green, Edenic paradise, will drain them of their capacity for resistance; the excess of water in paradise will decay their vitality. This is a trap within a trap, a Machiavellian layering of hardship and ease that will hold the human creature captive within its *cosmos*.

While Herbert's Shaddam IV and Heinlein's Lazarus Long are trapped on Secundus and yet surrounded by all they will require to be comfortable – an image comparable with the ease of existence in the *Genesis cosmology's* Eden – so too is Dick's Joe Contemptible trapped within a world saturated in the light of the sun and governed by a machine. For Contemptible, the way out of that trap is to die, a solution that Mrs Simpson deems an insanity that has triggered the greater insanity of the *machine* in which they are all held. Indeed, the solution to restabilizing the human creature's *cosmos* requires the entombment of Contemptible, and in the end, he may receive something like the death he seeks. At the *threshold* between the *cosmos* of light and confinement in the dark however, Contemptible's desire is an emphatic wish to turn back to his “wretched little pointless life as [he is] normally accustomed to living it” (Dick, 1987b, p. 313). Mr Computer may have been built to serve and maintain the human creature's *cosmos*, but even when taken below the surface and into the territory, Contemptible is forced to remain confined in order to keep the machine sane and avert the end of everything.

Despite the convincing appearance that the *universe as machine* is projected as if it were the territory itself,<sup>111</sup> and despite measurable evidence suggesting that the *universe* is designed and operates as an ordered *machine*, this model, like the fractured model of the *Genesis cosmology* that it endeavours to realign, is no more than a tele-objective *cosmos* trying to describe a *universe* beyond its reach.

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<sup>111</sup> An image of the *universe as machine* being the territory, rather than just a map is skilfully presented in the films *Dark City* (1998) and *The Matrix* trilogy (1999 & 2003). Significantly, after revealing the *machine* that is the essence of the territory, the *machine* then gives way to the *universe* and in doing so adds to the human creature's sense of being caught in a trap within a trap.

The entrapment of the human creature and its separation from the *universe* is not, I suggest, a consequence of crossing the *threshold*, for the human creature is stopped dead in its tracks at this juncture. It is in the revelation of the *universe* that occurs at the *threshold* that in turn closes off the *universe* to that creature. Incapable of leaving its human embodiment as a creature of the light space, it is the inaccessibility of the dark *universe*, the human creature's incapacity to participate in the *universe* – an incapacity that reflects the existential conflict related to vision and desire – that drives that creature to choosing madness or death.

Bradley Will, writes in his discussion of Lovecraft and the sublime of “the recognition of the limits of one's own world view,” concluding that the human creature's “vision of the world must be incomplete, and thus, Lovecraft's ‘outside’ is no longer simply imaginary but a real possibility” (2002, p. 17). That this possibility is then translated by the human creature as a reality in which it cannot participate, is the *foundation* to the disconnecting estrangement that it feels as an empathic, biological entity posited within an alien *universe* that is not merely bipolar, but truly schizophrenic. Furthermore, Will's conclusion that Lovecraft “suggests that our understanding of what constitutes life and matter may be only a local understanding which is not universally applicable” (2002, p. 18), makes the incarceration of the human creature frightening, because that creature's localised morality leaves it knowing that it cannot survive in the *universe*. The human creature is frozen by its utter lack of knowing what to expect from the *void* that is looming beyond the confines of its map.

Paul Atreides' early encounter in *Dune* with the Bene Gesserit "box" that tests whether a creature is human or animal, exemplifies this circumstance. "Paul saw that one side was open – black and oddly frightening. No light penetrated that open blackness" (Herbert, 1965/1978). The box is an object of the *threshold* emphasising that the withdrawal back into the light from the dark brings death: " '[k]eep your hand in the box and live. Withdraw it and die' " (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 14). The human, according to the Bene Gesserit, will not attempt escape, and the box " 'kills only animals' " (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 13). What the Reverend Mother then says to Paul during the testing, is also many years later recalled from memory by Paul's daughter Ghanima, that:

*'You've heard of an animal chewing off a leg to escape a trap. There's an animal kind of trick. A human would remain in the trap, endure the pain, feigning death that he might kill the trapper and remove a threat to his kind'* (Herbert, 1965/1978, pp. 13-4; 1976, p. 49).

The trap that Paul's father, Duke Leto, knowingly walks into when he takes up the posting to Arrakis, is a trap he walks towards because he believes that seeing it is the first step in avoiding it (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 47). However, even though the Duke knows from the outset what he enters, when the trap closes about him, he searches for a way out. As if he has become something *other* than human, Duke Leto is "[l]ike a caged animal ... [with a] hunted wildness in his ... eyes" (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 96).

Whereas the Duke ultimately maintains his sense of being human to the end of the fight, caught in the trap but making every endeavour to kill his trapper the Baron Harkonnen, the trap of the *universe* still destroys Duke Leto in the end and the

trapper on this occasion does not die (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 176). In *Methuselah's Children* Heinlein's Slayton Ford is also caught in the trap, and his eyes reveal:

an expression Lazarus had seen many times before in his long life. The condemned man who has lost his final appeal, the fully resolved suicide, little furry things exhausted and defeated by struggle with the unrelenting steel traps – the eyes of each of these hold a single expression, born of hopeless conviction that his time has run out (1958/1999, p. 388).

While Ford may have found some level of recovery from this will-to-die, his later experiences at the temple of the Jockaira plunge him into madness,<sup>112</sup> and the trap gets him too.

The trap of the *universe* is triggered when the human creature understands that the *cosmos* it has relied upon is a limited view within a larger enclosure. Zukav writes in *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* that “Einstein’s general theory of relativity shows us that our universe might be something like a large closed box and, if this is so, it is never possible to get ‘outside’ of it” (1979/2001, p. 94). The geometric order of Einstein’s box can be read as approximating what Ingebretsen calls the “formal design” that signifies the entrapment of the *universe*, an entrapment that he also claims is indistinguishable from its order.<sup>113</sup> The inaccessible “outside” frames the trap of a carceral *universe*,<sup>114</sup> and while the human creature cannot get out, there is no counter-assurance that *others* cannot get in.

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<sup>112</sup> This episode is also cited in chapter 5, p. 87.

<sup>113</sup> Ingebretsen makes this claim on p. 123 of *Maps of Heaven, Maps of Hell*, and I have discussed this passage in reference to the absence of god in chapter 7, p 184.

<sup>114</sup> A parallel of this idea may be located within the final chapter of Michel Foucault’s text *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975/1977) in which he discusses the “carceral system” as a multi-layered penetration of confining and then regulating the behaviour of the human creature in a manner that pervades the human domain from birth until death. The significant point that Foucault reinforces is the sense that there is in fact no outside, the system both incarcerates by means of the regulation of human behaviour and movement and where that fails, the system then incarcerates by means of punishments.

Zukav's reading of Einstein's general theory as it is outlined above, in conjunction with a footnote from the same page of Zukav's text referencing physicist Hugh Everett's claim for a "closed universe" as a "system," discloses a significant problem for the human creature. The assumption – real or otherwise – of the *universe* as a closed system and the implication of order that is embedded in the idea of a system, clearly delineates that it is the ordered *universe* rather than the chaotic, that entraps. The ordered system is a carceral *universe*. If the human creature manages to survive the apocalypse of losing all *cosmoses* as *foundations* of order on which to stand with its sanity intact, if that creature can survive the revelation that it is, quite literally, nothing in the *universe*, it then has to come to terms with what it has not yet seen. The human creature has to reconcile itself as an ordered, biological entity adrift within the *chaos* that exists beyond the order of the enclosure.

When talking to Ira Wetheral about his longevity in *Time Enough for Love*, Lazarus

Long says that:

‘I haven't even begun to figure out how the Universe works, much less what it is for. To figure out the basic questions about this World it would be necessary to stand outside and look at it. Not inside ... When a man dies, he may shake loose his local perspective and see the thing as a whole’ (Heinlein, 1973, p. 20).

Long's statement affirms that in living, the human creature can never get "outside," and even in death, to escape the carceral *universe* remains only a possibility, not a certainty. It is several centuries prior to this event in *Time Enough for Love*, that Andrew Libby is trying to explain how measuring space-time over large intervals works, and his growing frustration and sense of failure to communicate is based in the fact that when trying to talk about the *universe*, the human creature's language:

is inappropriate. The formulae used to describe the effect loosely called a contraction presupposes that the observer is part of the phenomenon. But verbal language contains the implicit assumption that we can stand outside the whole business and watch what goes on. The mathematical language denies the very possibility of any such outside viewpoint (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 429).

Libby confirms what Long has expressed; that the *universe* from within is the only view available to the human creature. Furthermore, in confirming that the human creature's verbal language is inadequate for navigating the *universe*, Libby also quite pointedly implies that the language of mathematics explains and describes the *universe* as readily as it does because as a language of equations it is structurally aligned with the non-empathic *cold equations*.

Whether entrapment in the *universe* is a consequence of the *universe* being a closed system as physicists such as Einstein and Everett suggest; an ordering of "formal design" as Ingebretsen suggests; or an ordered, indifferent mechanism from which there is no escape as Lovecraft suggests; the underlying territorial obstacle through which the human creature cannot seem to pass, in *cosmicism*, is the bipolar estrangement of order and *chaos*, and the *void* that this estrangement opens up.

The erasure of the map at the uncovering of the territory includes the erasure of that map's language. Ingebretsen writes that "madness and verbal collapse [i]s the price paid – or *exacted* – for unspeakable or impermissible knowledge" (1996, p. 132), and in *cosmicism*, such knowledge is obtained simply by seeing the *universe*. Donald Burleson writes of "the idea that self-knowledge, or discovery of one's position in the real fabric of the universe is psychically ruinous" (2011, p. 140), and later reaffirms this claim with specific reference to "The Shadow Out of Time," citing this

story as one of several that exemplifies “the grand Lovecraftian theme: that self-knowledge, knowledge of humankind’s vanishingly motelike position in the uncaring scheme of the cosmos, is psychic ruin” (2011, p. 150). The point to be made here is that for the human creature, and in the case of Lovecraft’s “The Outsider” sometimes also for *others* (2000, pp. 17-8), the apocalypse of the *universe* is a *threshold* experience unequivocally like that creature’s capture of its own gaze in the mirror when, as an infant, it still exists within a largely preverbal *cosmos*. There is no language by which to explain what is seen, only the experience of seeing. At the mirror, the human creature acquires its first sense of possessing a body that is separate from *other* bodies, and this precipitates a shift in its spatial cognition; it becomes a body separate from *other* bodies, separate from the *machine*, separate from the *universe*.

Of Lovecraft’s “Outsider,” Ingebretsen writes that “[i]nnocent of self-reflection, he knows peace. Awakened to self-consciousness, he finds himself trapped in his labyrinthine memory” (1996, p. 132). This claim is significant for its implication that only in isolation from *others*, can the human creature can feel safe within the *universe*. The carceral *universe* implies that the confinement and domestication of the human creature ensures its survival.

Lovecraft’s unnamed narrator of “The Outsider” is mirrored by Heinlein’s equally anonymous narrator in “They,” and this particular human creature faces a dangerously uncomfortable unknown when he asks:

Why the grand scale to the deception, countless creatures, whole continents, an enormously involved and minutely detailed matrix of insane history, insane tradition, insane culture? Why bother with more than a cell and a straight jacket?

It must be, it had to be, because it was supremely important to deceive him completely, because a lesser deception would not do. Could it be that they dare not let him suspect his real identity no matter how difficult and involved the fraud? (Heinlein, 1999, pp. 119-20).

What would happen if this human creature works it out; if he comprehends the truth about himself and wakes up while incarcerated? Herbert's Alia Atreides and the twins Leto and Ghanima, "experienced the womb as a prison to an awakened consciousness" and they "live[d] in such a scrambled web of memories, unable to retreat ... Faced with such a condition, one had to integrate madness" (1976, pp. 126-7), a madness which ultimately, Alia does not escape and to which the twins are at significant risk.

For the human creature entering the *cosmos* of embodied isolation from *others*, Jacques Lacan argues in "The Mirror Stage" that a necessary requirement for that creature to enter its human society, is the imposition of a set of rules for similarity and difference (1966/1977, p. 6). I argue that such imposition is the very locus for that creature's fear of the *universe*. The *threshold* of the mirror "places the individual in the external world ... in which all things are distinguished as objects, as this and not that, [as] entities separate from the subject" (Greenham, 2008, p. 29), and these "entities," these *others*, populate a *universe* that the human creature can no longer avoid or deny. The *threshold* alienates the human creature from itself and from its integral connection with the *universe* by compelling that creature to regard itself as an object; an isolate, embodied entity in an alien *universe* of *other* such separate, embodied entities. As Lacan writes elsewhere with regard to this matter:

it is by means of the gap opened up ... and in which the effects of the mirror stage proliferate, that the human animal is *capable* of imagining himself as mortal, which does not mean that he would be

able to do so without his symbiosis with the symbolic, but rather that without this gap that alienates him from his own image, this symbiosis with the symbolic, in which he constitutes himself as subject to death, could not have occurred ("On a Question Preliminary to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis," 1966/1977, pp. 217-8).

It is the "gap," the *void* between the *cosmos* of static objects and the *universe* of ubiquitous movement that stops the human creature, because this gap disconnects that creature's empathic connection with a *universe* that *cosmicism* renders indifferently hostile.

The mirror, in reflecting the subject, turns that subject into its own object. However, mirrors reflect only illusion, and a backward glance is all a mirror can disclose. By only revealing what is before it, not what is behind it, a mirror cannot show that creature what lies ahead but only where it has been as an object looking at itself. To further add to the human creature's distress, when it discovers that the *universe* it thinks it sees is no more than an inward looking reflection of something captured within the frame of the mirror or a tele-objective *cosmos*, in its unidirectional *modus operandi*, the illusion of the mirror is enhanced by the fact that it bears not even a true reflection, but a reversal of the object before it.

In the endeavour to explain to Bob Arctor-as-Fred the nature of his psychosis, a psychologist in *A Scanner Darkly* uses the example of:

'Left-handedness versus right-handedness,' as[king] 'what is meant by those terms with, say, a mirror image – in which the left hand "becomes" the right hand...' The Psychologist leaned down over Fred, who did not look up. "How would you define a left-hand glove compared to a right-hand glove so a person who had no knowledge of those terms could tell you which you meant? And not get the other? The mirror opposite?" (Dick, 2008, p. 1042).

Arctor translates the psychologist's analogy of the gloves, to the idea of "a darkened mirror" or "a darkened scanner," understanding this in terms of a "reflection of himself" that is himself and yet, it is not (Dick, 2008, pp. 1042-3). Similarly in another of Dick's stories, "Human Is," when Lestor Herrick returns from business on the planet Rexor, the human creature that returns looks like him but is not him in either general demeanour or linguistic capability (1987a, pp. 261-3). As the Director of the agency preparing to kill the Rexorian and reinsert the real Lestor Herrick says, "[s]ince no physical change has occurred we'll have no direct evidence to make our case" (Dick, 1987a, p. 266) and they will therefore need the testimony of Herrick's wife to condemn the man before them. The testimony to condemn for Lovecraft's narrator in "The Outsider" comes only after seeing himself in a mirror (2000, p. 17), and prior to this event his "aspect was a matter equally unthought of, for there were no mirrors in the castle" (2000, p. 12).

The human creature, stopped at the *threshold* and unable to distinguish the illusory from the real, fails. The failure of success is the incapacity of a dead *cosmos* to express and therein provide a linkage of survivable experience between the embodied human creature and the *universe*. The *heimlich* oscillation of *universe* and *cosmos* that occurs at the *threshold* is a trap from which that creature cannot escape, and in the attempt to do so, *engulfs* that creature entirely.

For the Fremmen in *Children of Dune*, the planet once called Dune is exposed to a deluge, and what the Fremmen now see is a reversal, a dark reflection in the mirror that is called Arrakis. As Stilgar observes of his kin:

Warren dweller no longer maintained the tight water discipline of the old days. Why should they, when rain had been recorded on

this planet, when clouds were seen, when eight Fremen had been inundated and killed by a flash flood in the wadi? Until that event the word *drowned* had not existed in the language of Dune. But this was no longer Dune; this was Arrakis (Herbert, 1976, p. 7).

The abundant waters have erased the necessity for the Fremen to avoid the light space of a burning sun, but this abundance has also brought death, a failure of language and a rewriting of a planet; this is a *universe* unlike any the Fremen have known before, and it is killing them.

The pre-verbal *foundation* of the Lacanian mirror is similarly experienced by the human creature at the *threshold* in *cosmicism*. Looking into the mirror, as it were, the human creature sees a reflection that is not quite right, a *universe* that is reversed, a *universe* that is not the *universe* at all. This reversal, I suggest, supports the human creature in the view that the light space of the *cosmos* where it has always been located is good and right, safe and positive; and the *universe* that it can see from its position in that *cosmos* is dark, adversarial and *cold* and should be avoided at any and all cost. The *threshold* reinforces the human creature's belief in and clinging to the very bipolarity that has estranged it from everything. The problem is, in looking back to what lies behind it, that creature finds no more than a hollow illusion, and everything has indeed ended. What other choice is there but madness or death; the ultimate end of the *heimlich conundrum*. To cross the *threshold* means stepping into the *void* exposed by the *threshold*. The human creature cannot survive if it turns away; it cannot survive if it tries to remain evermore poised at the *threshold*, and stepping into the *void* is an unthinkable impossibility. As Joanna Russ writes, "if the engulfment does not happen, *it can* – and this revelation becomes the central truth of a universe thus rendered uninhabitable" (Watson & Schellinger, 1991, p. 505). Like

the *cosmos* of ChewZ in *Palmer Eldrich* that is brought to the human creature from the Prox system, the *threshold* is “a one-way gate” (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 195).

Survival in *cosmicism*'s cold and indifferent *universe* is difficult enough, and having made it to the *threshold*, the human creature must then face the *void*.

In response to the *void*, the human creature feels fear. This is the fear of the end of everything that creature is and has been, it is the fear of losing the very spatiality of body that has served to keep that creature isolate from all *others* and ultimately, severed from the *universe* itself. This fear has been soothed by the mirror-illusion *cosmos* with its *heimlich* reversal and tele-objective view, and by closing off the greater vision of the *universe*, that *cosmos* has kept the human creature safe from a requirement to face the understanding that the very body in which it has invested all of its energy is of utter insignificance in and to the *universe*.

The human creature's body is an object, identifiable on the horizon as distinct from all *other* bodies, and that creature must find a way to discern the difference between bodies in the dark space where no horizon exists against which the relationship to *others* might be measured. *Cosmicism* deposits the human creature at the *threshold* with the revelation that because it cannot see in the dark in the same way that it sees in the light, it therefore cannot ever know the *universe*. David Schultz rightly says of Lovecraft, and by extension *cosmicism*; that he is not trying to frighten the reader with monsters, but rather “the reader suffers a more profound sense of horror realising he does not know much about the universe he lives in” (2011, p. 227).

The blinding light that ignites the human creature's fear of the dark, that estranges it from the *universe*, is the exception and not the rule. The light of the *cosmos* by its reach defines the enclosure of the human creature, bouncing back from the *threshold* as if reflected from a mirror. When that light begins to be eclipsed, however, when the *threshold* between light and dark is reached, what light remains penetrates the dark as if passing through a glass, and, as if it were sunlight on the surface of a still pool of shallow water, what the human creature sees immediately beyond its own reflection is the dark background of a submerged *other*.

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### **Part III: Neocosmicism**

## Chapter 9

### Neocosmicism Is

I have often wished that I had the literary power to call up visions of some vast & remote realm of entity beyond the universes of matter & energy; where vivid interplays of unknown & inconceivable influences give vast and fabulous activity to dimensional areas that are not shapes, & to nuclei of complex arrangements that are not minds ("May 19, 1927," Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, p. 127).

As we have seen, *cosmicism* is a philosophy that interrogates the human creature's place in the *universe*. In doing so, that creature is taken to the *threshold* of *engulfment* where it is at last defeated by the fact that in looking toward the *universe*, it is then prevented from moving into the *universe* for fear of the *void* and its incomprehensible depths. For the human creature, *cosmicism's* answer to the *universe* is always and only the "resounding NO" (Houellebecq, 2005, p. 14) of the *heimlich conundrum*.

*Neocosmicism* is a philosophy that I am developing that seeks to realign the human creature's sense of its place in the *universe* by taking that creature through *engulfment* and providing an alternative choice to *cosmicism's* limited human outcomes. Schultz claims for Lovecraft's characters who witness the apocalypse, that they "are helpless to forget what has been revealed" (2011, p. 224), but rather than abandon the human creature to despair, *neocosmicism* seeks to refigure the view that an alternate and life-affirming outcome is possible.

It is vitally important to note from the outset that many of the characteristics and possible outcomes that define *cosmicism*, remain equally valid or applicable within

*neocosmicism*; and strict boundaries demarcating where one philosophy ends and the other begins are not always possible. The discussion that follows in the remaining chapters of this thesis is a discussion related to *neocosmicism*. If direct reference to *cosmicism* is required, this will be explicitly articulated; and in all other instances while there may be some sense of the occurrence of further explication of *cosmicism*, this is a consequence of the inherent shared nature that exists between these two philosophical frames, rather than a digression back to *cosmicism*.

As an outgrowth of the near absence of the term *cosmicism* in dictionaries and texts, *neocosmicism* is, unsurprisingly, almost completely absent. A web search of the term conducted on 3 October 2012 yields 2 hits using AVG Secure Search; 2 hits using Bing; 0 hits using Google Scholar; and 7 unique hits using Google. All of these results link directly back to sites that document the term in reference to my own work and this thesis.<sup>115</sup> It is reasonable to ask why *neocosmicism* and not *postcosmicism*, to which the answer is located in the idea that in *neo* meaning “new,” there is less room for the implication that *cosmicism* is made redundant in a way that the prefix *post-* may be taken to mean. While not mutually exclusive philosophies, the significant difference between *neocosmicism* and *cosmicism* that shifts the human creature’s sense of the *universe*, is the role of *engulfment*. *Cosmicism* brings that creature to the *threshold* and threatens it with *engulfment*; *neocosmicism* takes that creature over the *threshold* to be *engulfed* in a way that its relationship with the

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<sup>115</sup> These results remain unchanged from a search for *neocosmicism* that was conducted on 19 January 2012. By comparison, a web search for *cosmicism* (irrespective of whether the term refers to Lovecraft or not), reflects an increase in number of hits. AVG Secure Search yields 1,200 hits 19 January 2012 and 2,470 hits 3 October 2012; Bing yields 10,100 hits 19 January 2012 and 29,200 hits 3 October 2012; Google Scholar (articles and patents) yields 73 hits 19 January 2012 and 91 hits 3 October 2012; Google Scholar (legal opinion and journals) yields 2 hits 19 January 2012 and remains at 2 hits 3 October 2012; and Google yields 17,900 hits 19 January 2012 and 20,400 hits 3 October 2012.

*universe* might be refigured. This is not to say that every human creature is bound by or follows the path of *cosmicism* and ultimately faces *engulfment*, nor does *neocosmicism* presume that a transition to it from the stance of *cosmicism* will always occur.

In his “Afterword” to a collection of Lenin’s writings titled *Revolution at the Gates: A Selection of Writings from February to October 1917*, Zizek discusses “the eternal dilemma of the radical Left,” and culminates with asking and answering: “ ‘Which deviation is worse, the Rightist or the Leftist one?’: *they are both worse*” (2002, p. 301). What Zizek highlights is the idea that an apparently irresolvable dialectic, or in the terms of this thesis a bipolarity, cannot be resolved by answering from either pole to the exclusion of the other. What Zizek then illumines, is the idea that when one side of the dialectic “breaks the (still) prevailing ... consensus, gradually making acceptable hitherto excluded ideas” (2002, p. 302), the covert linguistic methodology that normalises what was once unacceptable, is then used to “blackmail” the other side of the dialectic via its fear of the extreme ends of the unacceptable becoming acceptable. As Zizek concludes from this, “we should reject this blackmail, taking the risk of disturbing the liberal consensus, even up to questioning the very notion of democracy” (2002, p. 302). Similarly, *neocosmicism* suggests that rather than be “blackmailed” by the comfort of illusory maps and revert to taking cosmological sides, the human creature must take responsibility for itself, “even up to questioning the very notion” of its moral and evolutionary parameters, and face the *universe* head on.

The *universe* exists beneath the encircling *cosmos* of warmth, light, noise and comfort, and the core revelation that the human creature must come to terms with is the fact that the light under which it exists is an exception to the rule.<sup>116</sup> The light space anticipates the darkness that is everywhere else, and *neocosmicism* foregrounds a shift from an ontological stability of light and sound, to an ontological stability of darkness and silence.<sup>117</sup> This shift is primarily about recasting the meaning of the dark from being negative and therefore evil, to simply being. As Krutch writes in *The Modern Temper*, and I suggest Lovecraft takes into consideration in his own philosophy:

It is not a changed world but a new one in which man must henceforth live if he lives at all, for all his premises have been destroyed and he must proceed to new conclusions. The values which he thought established have been swept away along with the rules by which he thought they might be attained.

To this fact many are not yet awake (Krutch, 1929/1956, p. 17).

Undoubtedly *cosmicism* supports Krutch's claims inasmuch as the *universe* that the human creature faces is nothing like the *cosmos* that creature thought was real. Furthermore, *cosmicism* endorses the idea that it is preferable for the human creature to remain *amnesiac*, that it seems better equipped to survive in the *universe* if it maintains a state of ignorance wherein it continues to mistake the map for the territory. For *neocosmicism* however, the heart of Krutch's claim highlights the fact that irrespective of whether the human creature is awake to the revelation or not, it

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<sup>116</sup> The 2007 film, *Sunshine*, written by Alex Garland and directed by Danny Boyle, presents a dialogue that figures the sun's light as a force of intense and far reaching power. This idea is juxtaposed with the fact that despite the magnitude of this force, beyond the limited reach of the sun, immense darkness beyond that reach remains as the principal condition of the *universe*. Furthermore, this *heimlich* balance occurs in the film as the background to the idea that the Earth is slowly freezing over and in doing so, is highlighting the human creature's absolute need for sunlight as the agency by which life is sustained, while never deviating from this star's inherent nature as a force with the power to kill.

<sup>117</sup> R.D. Laing's idea of "ontological insecurity," coupled with Ingebretsen's idea of "ontological darkness" is discussed in chapter 6, pp. 135-6.

must still come to terms with the newly revealed *universe* that is before it. To not do so is a failure not only to survive, but to live. The view that *cosmicism's threshold* reveals and from which the human creature turns away in the *heimlich conundrum*, is a view of the limitless horizon of waking up in the dark and holding no map for guidance.

The cosmological maps of *Genesis* and the *universe as machine*, have become reified and bipolarity is mistaken by the human creature as being the state of the *universe*. This is an adversarial territory against which the human creature is compelled to fight. Beyond the tele-objective and ordered lenses of these cosmologies however, exists the *chaos* that is the *foundation* of the *universe*; and engaging with *chaos* means entering the *void*.

In the essay titled “ ‘Call me a Protestant’: Liberal Christianity, Individualism, and the Messiah in *Stranger in a Strange Land*, *Dune*, and *Lord of Light*,” Julia List argues that these novels she interrogates demonstrate successfully blended *cosmoses* (2009, p. 44), wherein the human creature survives with its life and sanity largely intact. Irrespective of the terminology used – whether Protestant and secular, scientific and religious, or some other dialectic or bipolarity – it is not a successful blending of oppositions for an alternative that comes into question. As both List and Žižek identify, the question of success for the human creature lies within the sphere of the values and mode of operation of the new system that is the necessitated outcome of such blending, and this is coupled with the manner in which that system differentiates from the individual polarities out of which it has come. When applied to the human creature in *neocosmicism*, this kind of rationale makes it possible for

the *universe* to be approached by that creature as a *heimlich* unity rather than a bipolar adversary.

Furthermore, in bringing this possibility to the question of human existence in the *universe*, List's claims are particularly interesting for their support of the deific – as figured in the messianic character – and the linkage of such a figure with a “world that does not rely on reference to a personal, omnipotent deity” (List, 2009, p. 44). Rather than kill off deity because there is simply neither evidence nor space in the *universe* for its presence, List's conclusions make possible for the human creature an experience of the *universe* that reaches beyond its own individual and embodied limitations. It is important to note that none of this negates *cosmicism*'s claims that the *universe* is impersonal and indifferent and the human creature insignificant within it, nor does this alleviate that creature's sense of the *universe* and *others* in it as dangerous. These are simply conditions of the *universe* that are the result of something *other* than human emotions or morals of localisation, and these are conditions that are as equally bound and influenced by the *cold equations* as the human creature.

In moving from a *cosmos* to the *universe*, the human creature steps out of the net of straight lines wherein “[o]rder has been imposed on chaos” (Watts, 1966/1989, p. 59),<sup>118</sup> and into an unbounded territory. As Lovecraft writes in a letter to Frank Belknap Long:

The universe may be a dream, but it cannot be considered a human dream if we can shew that it must antedate and outlast all human dreamers just as an ocean must antedate and outlast the denizens of

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<sup>118</sup> This passage from Watts is discussed when first introducing the concepts of the map and the territory in chapter 1, p. 14.

one of his alternately rising and submerging volcanic islands ... We find a cycle of constantly shifting energy, marked by the birth of nebulae from stars, the condensation of nebulae into stars, the loss of energy as radiant heat and the radio-active breakdown of matter into energy ... Outstanding are the facts that *all stars are temporary in the long run* ... If the cosmos be a momentary illusion, *then mankind is a still briefer one!* ("Feby. 20, 1929," Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, pp. 265-6).

Ends and beginnings may figure as processes that draw the *universe* from the perspective of *cosmos* as linear, and "cycle[s] of constantly shifting energy" may draw the *universe* from a differing *cosmos* as eternal and perpetual. Furthermore, Lovecraft acknowledges that while the *universe* appears to be cyclic, it also contains linearities of finitude inasmuch as the cycles required for the production of life, are also the cycles linked to life's destruction.

Although the *universe* may be understood as simultaneously linear and cyclic, the human creature's concern regarding its own finitude, a concern exacerbated by that creature's sense of *universal* insignificance, has a tendency to prevent it from engaging with the *universe* beyond its single-lens view of linear finitude. This circumstance can be likened to that of the uncertainty principle in quantum physics; a principle recognising that while a light behaves as particle and wave, it cannot be observed doing both at the same time (Capra, 1983, pp. 76-8; Zukav, 1979/2001, pp. 298-9). A shift in this particular scientific view has recently been called for, with particle experiments reporting that both states have been observed occurring at the same time (Kocsis et.al., 2011, pp. 1170-3). *Neocosmism* calls for a similar shift in view, and rather than being a spatial and temporal linear plane, the universe is more akin to being like a spinning *heimlich* coin.

Many of the dichotomies of *cosmicism* undergo a transformation in *neocosmicism* that moves them from being oppositions in conflict, to aspects of a cogent whole. The *heimlich* coin is no longer a symbol of the game of chance or even the fight, but rather, it is a symbol of the idea of co-existing bipolarities. It is important to note that this co-existence is not a simple holism in which conflict no longer emerges, nor is *neocosmicism* a human utopia of comfort in the *universe*. Indeed, it is often quite the opposite, but this is not to say that *neocosmicism's* dystopic *foundations* therefore invalidate the possibility for the human creature to refigure its sense of place in the *universe* in a manner that allows for a far preferable outcome than *cosmicism* predicts is to be delivered.

To navigate the *universe* and recover from the *amnesia of the cosmos*, the human creature will need to re-establish a sense of significance, even when to the *universe* it remains utterly insignificant. Insignificance in *neocosmicism* requires a shift in the attribution of meaning, and to be insignificant is not to say that existence is hollow and the experience of living pointless. A link can be drawn between the issue of insignificance and what Lovecraft calls “the impersonal dreamer” when he writes that:

To the impersonal dreamer belongs all infinity – he is lord of the universe and taster of all beauties of the stars. As for the future – what is sweeter than *oblivion*, which the humblest of us may share with the Kings of all the ages, and even with the gods themselves? (“March 7, 1920,” Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 112).

In dreaming impersonally, in seeing the *universe* as it is rather than as it has been drawn on a map, the human creature as an empathic entity in an impersonal *universe* of *cold equations* is reminded that it must not take the events of the *universe* personally. The *universe* is not out to get the human creature and the *cold equations*

are not designed to thwart that creature any more or less than they do of any *other*.

The human creature is insignificant in the *universe* not because it is inconsequential and its existence meaningless, but because the *cold equations* and the *universe* these *equations* underpin will continue, and do so with or without the presence of that creature.

*Cosmicism* claims that the *universe* is a purposeless, kaleidoscopic vortex; a blind, indifferent mechanism of tele-objectivity. Incomprehensible to the human creature, the *universe* is a bipolarity against which that creature fights and within which that creature is imprisoned. *Neocosmicism* also claims that the *universe* is indifferent, but the kaleidoscopic *machine* is here refigured beyond the paradigm of tele-objectivity.

As Lovecraft writes:

we may say that these things - time, space &c. - are *proximate realities*, because they depend on a fixed & particular cause as envisaged by a fixed & particular apparatus - i.e., the senses of a certain sub-phase of entity which is well defined though transient, insignificant, & accidental; to wit, the animal organism called man. But we may not call these proximate realities *ultimate*; since all their familiar aspects are due wholly to our own accidental structure and position ("Novr. 26, 1929," Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, p. 86).

In *neocosmicism*, the invisible becomes visible, the "proximate" give way to the "ultimate" and the *heimlich* territory surfaces. None of this diminishes the accidental and insignificant nature that *cosmicism* endows the human creature with; if anything, *neocosmicism's universe* may all the more thoroughly endorse this. However, rather than reject the *universe* as an adversary from which it must escape, the human creature accepts the *universe* as the *proving ground* that it is. This is to say that the *universe* is where the human creature's capacity for survival may be tested, and this idea of the *universe* as a *proving ground* will be more thoroughly explored in the chapters that follow this introductory exposition of *neocosmicism*.

*Cosmicism* declares that the human creature cannot remain as an infant in, nor return to, God's Eden. The Deluge saw to that. More than supporting the idea that after the apocalypse nothing will ever be the same again, *neocosmicism* further endorses this by emphasising that neither should it be. Entering the *universe* as *proving ground* is about leaving infantile dependencies behind, and it is about living in the *cold equations*. In the indifferent *universe*, the human creature's insignificance is a locus for its liberation from the constraints of its *cosmos*, for as Lovecraft writes, "nothing really matters in the ceaseless round of the limitless cosmos" ("July 16, 1934," Derleth & Turner, 1976a, p. 4). In leaving its constraints, the human creature steps out from its incarceration and into the limitless possibilities of what is yet to be tested. The American Heinlein critic and essayist Rafeeq McGiveron says of a number of Heinlein's younger characters, that for the young to succeed and often survive, they must "grow beyond" their parents (2003, p. 173). So too in *neocosmicism* must the human creature grow beyond its comfortable and largely insulating *cosmos*.

Such growth, means stepping into a *universe* that makes no promise for a final result, and Lovecraft affirms that "we know that a cosmos which is eternal ... can have no such thing as a permanent direction or goal" ("Feby. 20, 1929," Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, p. 261). Despite this potential lack of a tangible future however, the *universe* most certainly has a *foundation*, and the human creature will need to recover its memory of the antediluvian territory and its occupying *others*, in order to come to terms with future possibilities. *Neocosmicism* requires a view that is simultaneously

cast ahead and behind in a manner similar to Korzybski's time-binding,<sup>119</sup> and past and future will need to be reconciled by the human creature as a dynamic play of movement that is not necessarily bound by temporal or spatial linearity.

Participation in the *universe* requires that the human creature interact with the *foundation* as much as it does the possible future, rather than plod along a temporally linear continuum focused principally on delaying for as long as possible what Sartre refers to in *Being and Nothingness* as the ultimate contingency of death (1956, p. 697).

The scales of space-time that are involved in the relative position of the human creature's *foundations* provides a certain kind of stability on which that creature can draw, and it is the very nature of the antediluvian that allows that creature, once its view has shifted, to move through the *engulfing* deluge of the *threshold*. Whereas *cosmicism* turns back to look upon the antediluvian as something from which the human creature has been disconnected, the presence of the antediluvian in *neocosmicism* provides a means by which that creature can begin to reconnect with the *universe* that has been quarantined for so long beyond its grasp. In looking back, in reversing the reflection to see the reality, that creature also looks forward, and the recovery of memory from the *amnesia of the cosmos* begins with recognising that the very far is also the immediately near.

*Neocosmicism's universe* is a *heimlich* unity against which the human creature need not fight; the *universe* may or may not be adversarial, but such a state does not make it evil or malevolent. As an apocalypse of a limitless horizon, *neocosmicism's*

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<sup>119</sup> This concept, often explored by Heinlein, has been discussed in chapter 5, pp. 81-2, and noted by Heinlein's character Andrew Libby during a conversation with Lazarus Long, quoted in chapter 7, p. 192.

*universe* is a “psychotic universe”<sup>120</sup> (Zizek, 1991, pp. 79-81) inasmuch as “a certain gap (that separating ‘hallucination’ from ‘reality’) is abolished” (1991, p. 81).

Within this unity, and in remaining indifferent to whether the human creature succeeds or fails, the *universe* nullifies any sense that creature might have of striving for a final result, thereby releasing that creature from the requirement – real or illusory – to be bound by a sense of finitude. As Lovecraft writes:

We are what we are at the moment, merely because we are. Sometimes we may guess from our present state how we are likely to turn out, but all the real causes are in the hands of forces we can never fathom ("Friday the 13th, May 1921," Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 132).

Lovecraft writes that “It is a mistake to regard the cosmos as either favourable to life or unfavourable to it. It is simply indifferent & unconscious” (“Nov. 14, 1934,” Derleth & Turner, 1976b, p. 69). The *cold equations* in *cosmicism* scribe the *universe* as an adversary from which there is no escape, and as alien to the human creature’s emotional and empathic capacities. Through a tele-objective lens of *cosmos*, the human creature contracts its view of the *universe* from the infinite to the personal, and in so doing has subjected itself to the *amnesia of the cosmos*. This contraction is exemplified in the very structure of the *Genesis cosmology*, and even though *cosmicism* attempts to redress this problem by refiguring the *universe as machine*, it is in this very refiguring and the *machine’s* inherent *cold equations*, that the *universe* is then perceived to be alien. The tower in the *landscape* is no longer the point from which the human creature projects an expansive view of its sense of place as it once did atop the ziggurats of Babylon, but rather, the tower has become, quite literally, a carceral body from which that creature looks out in fear. In its bid

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<sup>120</sup> This term from Zizek is used as the *foundation* on which *neocosmicism’s* *psychotic universe* is defined, and more carefully examined in chapter 11 of this thesis.

for a sense of safety, for an assurance of significance and continuance, the human creature is estranged from all *others*, and regards them adversarially. Alone in *cosmicism's universe*, the human creature also discovers that the *Genesis cosmology's* God is absent, and the moral code bestowed upon it by that God is nothing more than a local phenomenon with little application for navigating the *cold equations*.

Similarly, *neocosmicism's universe* also operates within the parameters of the *cold equations*, but as Lovecraft says of the materialist, so too *neocosmicism* claims for the human creature that “[h]e has sounded space a little deeper, and found what he always finds on further penetration – simply *a profounder disintegration, and a profounder mechanistic impersonality*” (“Feby. 20, 1929,” Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, p. 263). Rather than being a force of estrangement, the *cold equations* are a conduit by which the emotional and empathic human creature can access the *universe*, and the morality of these *equations* is, as Lovecraft says of any morality, “the adjustment of matter to its environment – the natural arrangement of molecules ...

Conventionally it is the science of reconciling the animal *homo* (more or less) *sapiens* to the forces and conditions with which he is surrounded” (“May 15, 1918,” Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 64). That human morality is a local phenomenon necessitating a parallel embrace of the *cold equations* when that creature moves beyond its locality, is critical, and *neocosmicism* recognises, as Lovecraft said, that:

There are no values in all infinity – the least idea that there are is the supreme mockery of all. All the cosmos is a jest, and fit to be treated only as a jest, and one thing is as true as another. I believe everything and nothing – for all is chaos, always has been, and always will be (“26 May, 1923,” Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 231).

It is within this “jest” of *chaos* that the human creature must reconcile itself to the *equations* in order to then navigate its relationship with *others*. Furthermore, this understanding involves coming to terms with the idea that when an *other* is also an adversary, this is not a posturing equivalent to evil, nor is it a negative connotation that designates an *other* as any more worthy of elimination than the human creature. For the human creature to live in the *universe* it must understand that what can be described as the weeding process of the *proving ground* is something that creature must never interpret emotionally as a targeted attempt at eradication.

The human creature remains insignificant and the *universe* indifferent, but within this, unlike *cosmicism*, *neocosmicism* – as I have said previously – allows for the possibility of deity. The critical difference that the human creature must negotiate in *neocosmicism*, is the idea that while deity may not be absent from the *universe*, it is almost certainly not going to be an anthropomorphic *other*. Scholars and critics – Lovecraftian or otherwise – highlight the fact that Lovecraft has no room for God in his philosophy, and Lovecraft himself says as much. In January 1931 he writes that “As for ‘god’ - there is of course no theoretical barrier to the existence of a ‘cosmic intelligence’, yet *absolutely nothing indicates such a thing*” (Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, p. 281).<sup>121</sup> I believe however, that prior to this statement, Lovecraft leaves the issue open when he writes that:

To limit one’s range to human things, and to look on the universe with the eyes of mankind only, seems to me pitifully absurd. I like to view the universe as an isolated cosmic intelligence outside time and space – to sympathise not only with man, but with forces opposed to man, or forces which have nothing to do with man, and do not realise that he exists (“May 3, 1922,” Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 172).

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<sup>121</sup> This statement of Lovecraft’s is also quoted with reference to *cosmicism* in chapter 7, p. 182.

It is important to note that Lovecraft aligns the idea of deity with the idea of a “cosmic intelligence,” for even though his 1931 claim that there is no evidence of such a condition in the *universe* post-dates the 1922 claim that I have above called “open,” it is the consistency of the phrase “cosmic intelligence” that creates a space of possibility. Furthermore, even though in 1931 Lovecraft claims there is no evidence of a “cosmic intelligence,” he also admits that there is also “no theoretical barrier to [its] existence.”

This is by no means God in the conventional sense of the *Genesis cosmology*, or even a generic sense of an anthropomorphic deity;<sup>122</sup> although it could be reasonably argued that to be “outside time and space” is to manifest the omnipotence of the *Genesis cosmology’s* God. That Lovecraft flags the idea of the *universe* as “an isolated cosmic intelligence” that is beyond the limits of space-time, suggests that the *universe* could be something more than a chain or cycling of material events. *Neocosmicism* endeavours to interrogate what that something might be and, more critically within this, the nature of the relationship between the human creature and the *universe*. This is a blending of the *cold equations* with the *romance of the universe*.<sup>123</sup> In acknowledging that the *cold equations* are an essential aspect of the *universe*, *neocosmicism* also considers these *equations* to be compatible with the emotive, biological human creature. In order to move beyond a *cosmos* of bipolarities, the human creature must assimilate the *cold equations*; that is, rather

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<sup>122</sup> Lovecraft also acknowledges that to frame deity in these terms is a limitation born of the language of the human creature’s light-bound *cosmos* – irrespective of which *cosmos* that creature operates from – when he writes that: “Whatever ethical or preferential qualities we seem to see in anything are sheer fictions of our minds & emotions - fictions based on a body of race-legendry originated when mankind was unable to conceive of external nature as apart from the anthropomorphic & the anthropocentric” (“June 10, 1929,” Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, p. 356).

<sup>123</sup> The *romance of the universe* refers to the participatory and at times symbiotic relationship between the human creature and the *universe* in *neocosmicism*, and this idea will be further explored in further chapters of this thesis.

than remain split between polarities of the moral and the immoral, good and evil, or right and wrong, that creature must come to terms with operating within a *supramorality*; that is, a morality “beyond” or “above” any form of polarity or exclusive category.

The human creature in *cosmicism* is estranged from the *universe*; insignificant, accidental and mutated, it is a contagion that the *universe* caught. While remaining insignificant in *neocosmicism*, this insignificance is simply a condition of that creature’s relative position and stature. As Lovecraft writes, “[a]ll of the pseudo-importance felt by man himself before he surveys the wider field necessarily drops away – as does the illusion of a fly’s giganticism when we remove the magnifying glass through which we have been looking.”<sup>124</sup> Insignificance, Lovecraft claims, should not be taken by the human creature as a reason to consider as worthless its opportunity to experience the *universe*. The fleeting passage of space-time that the human creature occupies, “does not, to a mature and disillusioned mind, militate against the enjoyment of such pleasurable processes as the workings of senses, imagination, & intellect provide for” (“July 25, 1931,” Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, p. 389).

While grappling with the scale of its significance in the *universe*, or lack thereof, it is vital in *neocosmicism* that the human creature also comes to terms with letting go of its sense of estrangement from the *universe*. One of the harsh ironies of *cosmicism* is that the human creature’s estrangement, whilst used as a means by which to protect itself from *others* and even from the *universe* itself through the employ of the

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<sup>124</sup> This passage has also been referred to in chapter 7, p. 190.

*amnesia of the cosmos*, is the very condition that leads to that creature's isolation and subsequent inability to survive intact. It is the human creature's estrangement from the *universe* and not its insignificance within the *universe* that leaves it with no option but the *heimlich conundrum's* ultimate end as the means by which to escape its dangerous enclosure.

The insignificant human creature may be an accident, mutation, or contagion, but for *neocosmicism* these possibilities are accepted as conditions of the *universe* that are governed by the *cold equations* rather than by any moral or empathic motivations. Some part of the *proving ground's* purpose is to "weed" the *universe* and thereby strengthen a species, a process with some sense of alignment to Darwin's idea of "the survival of the fittest" (1859/1936, pp. 63-100). The evolution of the human creature, through mutation and weeding, may lead to an evolution *other* than how it has occurred in that creature's past, and *neocosmicism* does not consider such possibilities as necessarily detrimental. As a "welter" upon its planet ("Feb. 13, 1928," Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, p. 227), the surviving human creature may develop consequential scar tissue<sup>125</sup> that redraws the parameters of what it is, and means, to be human in the *universe*.<sup>126</sup> Lovecraft writes that "if the sun gives heat long

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<sup>125</sup> The scar tissue that manifests the effects of accident, consumption and reinscription in *neocosmicism's psychotic universe*, is an external expression of survival. Scar tissue becomes an asset in the *proving ground*; it is a toughening, a protection of what was previously vulnerable, and it is the interfacing signification between the human creature and the *universe* of the irreversibly changed regard of one for the *other*. The concept of scar tissue in *neocosmicism* is an entry point of enquiry that due to the limitations of size, is beyond the scope of this thesis. Linked to this is the contribution of the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, particularly with respect to his text *Rabelais and His World* (1941/1984) and notions of the carnival and the grotesque. Further development of *neocosmicism* beyond this thesis, will explore both the idea of scar tissue and the use of Bakhtinian philosophy in discussion of the embodied and scarred human creature in the *psychotic universe*.

<sup>126</sup> Season 6, episode 12 of *The X Files*, rewrites the parameters of such an enquiry, pointing toward the idea of the human creature as possessed of a submerged and latent *foundation* that could be viewed as more human than human and therein suggesting that creature as more intimately connected with the *universe* beyond the sunlit sphere of its *cosmos*. Toward the end of the episode, FBI Agents Mulder and Scully have the following, and significant, conversation:

enough, there will certainly come a time when the mammal will have to go down to subordination as the reptilia went before him" ("October 30, 1929," Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, p. 43), and thus weeding and evolution that *cosmicism* frames as negative processes to be avoided wherever possible, become non-negotiable conditions of *neocosmicism's universe*.

In the end, the only options *cosmicism* allows the human creature after the apocalypse; are madness or death – encapsulated as the outcome of the *heimlich conundrum*. Despite the fact that the *universe* operates within perpetual cycles, Lovecraft also claims that it will inevitably freeze over and leave behind it nothing but oblivion ("Octr. 3-5-7, 1932", Derleth & Turner, 1976a, p. 82).<sup>127</sup> In *neocosmicism*, everything may still end, for as Lovecraft writes:

outstanding are the facts that *all stars are temporary in the long run*, that the birth of planets from them is comparatively rare, (induced by tidal action of other stars that pass by them under rare conditions) and that life on a planet can hardly survive the death of the star whose radiations made it possible in the first place ("Feby. 20, 1929," Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, p. 266).

However, after the apocalypse and until such time as all stars of the *universe* fail, while the human creature remains free to choose madness or death, it is also free to choose an alternative to these forms of finitude. It may submit to the *engulfment* of the *void* of *chaos*.

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*Scully*: Mulder, these are test results. DNA from the claw nail we found matching exactly the DNA from the virus you believe is extraterrestrial.

*Mulder*: That's the connection.

*Scully*: Which matches exactly DNA that was found in [the boy] Gibson Praise.

*Mulder*: I don't understand. You're saying that Gibson Praise is infected with the virus?

*Scully*: No. It's a part of his DNA. In fact it's a part of all of our DNA. It's called a genetic remnant. It's inactive junk DNA, except in Gibson it's turned on.

*Mulder*: So if that were true, that would mean that Gibson is in some part extraterrestrial.

*Scully*: It would mean that all of us are (Carter, 1993-2002).

<sup>127</sup> This reference from Lovecraft is also discussed in chapter 4, p. 73.

The fear that lies at the heart of *cosmicism* is a fear that has been extracted from the realm of human interaction and imposed upon the whole of the *universe* from which the human creature then seeks to retreat, for everything about the *universe* becomes frightening. The human creature fears the *universe* because it fears *engulfment*. In letting go of its fear however that creature opens up a differing horizon, and *neocosmicism* is about facing the deluge and accepting *engulfment*. The relationship between the human creature and the *universe* that becomes possible in *neocosmicism* is not about observation and self-preservation; it is about participation, and when required, accepting death.

For the human creature to move beyond the *amnesia of the cosmos* that masks its fear of the *universe*, it must understand that its fear is an imbalance made all the more powerful because the light erases the dark and all it contains from view. Herbert's Paul Atreides knows that the light can never be truly understood without knowledge of the darkness also (1965/1978, 19), and the human creature must look to the heart of what it has come to regard as familiar, and then look past the illusion of an ordered totality to the unfamiliarity that the familiar actually is. Beyond the light space lies the radiant *void* of the *universe*. The human creature is not just touching, or even seeing through the glass, it is passing through the glass. This is a shift from the reflection's reversal of the view, to the revelation of the substance that lies beneath, and it is intimately linked with Žižek's "lethal proximity" (1991, p. 85) wherein the resemblance and the actual being of the *universe* merge.

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## Chapter 10

### Aphelion

‘In number, there is one for every life which ever was, or ever will be. And like most lives, they wait, for a moment, the moment, one will be sent on its journey back toward the yellow sun ... After centuries, or millennia, the journey must end. Perhaps smothered by its own dust, the dark, soulless body continues eternally through space and time. It may disintegrate and crumble into inconsequential rubble. Or it may be lost forever, crashing, burning, into the yellow sun. And tonight as I look into the sky and it looks back on me, I wanna know, which am I? I need to know. Is this the beginning on a journey, or the end?’

- *Frank Black, watching a comet in the night sky* ("Season II, Episode 1, 'The Beginning and the End'," Carter, 1996-1999).

‘Beginnings are such delicate times’ (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 272).

### *Dark Horizon*

*Cosmicism's threshold* is about stoppage in the form of madness or death; *neocosmicism's threshold* is about transformation. In *neocosmicism's universe* of *cold equations*, rather than remain confined, the human creature moves beyond the *threshold* and into the *proving ground*. Although that creature may be weeded from the *universe*, for it remains insignificant, it may also survive the testing and refining to which it will be subject.

Despite the adversarial and dangerous nature of the carceral *universe*, the human creature often acquiesces in accepting it, because in accepting its limited and limiting imprisonment, that creature can feel a certain measure of safety from the full potential of what the *universe* might pit against it. The encircling nature of the *universe* that *cosmicism* reveals has been paralleled in this thesis with the *Genesis cosmology's* expression of Eden, from which the human creature is expelled by God. Unlike the *Genesis* eviction from comfort to the wilderness that is motivated by the

compulsion of an emotive God, leaving the confines of *cosmos* in *neocosmicism* is the human creature's choice. With this choice, that creature steps out of a linear order and into a current of *chaos*; it moves from a stable shore of gridlocked and manageable sections, into waters that are neither calm nor bound by nets. As a young Leto Atreides discovers during his testing in *Children of Dune*, this is not an easy transition to make and it requires a simultaneous comprehension of:

Past-present-now. There was no true separation. He knew he had to flow with this thing, but the flowing terrified him. How could he return to any recognizable place? Yet he felt himself being forced to cease every effort of resistance. He could not grasp his new universe in motionless, labeled bits. No bit would stand still. Things could not be forever ordered and formulated. He had to find the rhythm of change and see between the changes to the changing itself (Herbert, 1976, p. 243).

For Leto, as for any human creature that decides to cross the *threshold*, stepping from the static and contained to an ever-moving fluidity is a difficult transition, compelling that creature to participate in the *universe* rather than simply observe from a minimum safe distance. It is not enough to remain separate and take in the view, survival depends upon engagement that it might also know there is “no true separation.”

Such choice is by no means easy, nor does the human creature necessarily like the transition from map to territory, but as Gurney Halleck reminds a young Paul Atreides in *Dune*, “mood” and emotion have nothing to do with it (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 38). This is the point at which many human creatures will choose to remain enclosed and hopeful for an Eden irrevocably lost. This is the choice of Dick's adults on a devastated Earth in “The Days of Perky Pat” (1987a, pp. 302-5) and a dusty Mars in *Palmer Eldrich* (1964/2007, pp. 9, 15, 48-51) who, in playing

with the Perky Pat layouts, pretend that they return to Eden. Even when the human creature comprehends that it can choose to move beyond the *threshold*, it may determine a course of action that plunges it back into the *amnesia of the cosmos*.

The *threshold* is discussed in chapter eight with reference to Ingebretsen's "twin wildernesses" (1996, p. 136), Merleau-Ponty's "double horizon of external and bodily space" (1945/1958, p. 115) and Virilio's "*ground line*" as an "[u]nremarked invention of the art of painting and of distinguishing a 'form' from a 'background' " (1997/2008, p. 1). All of these references in speaking of *thresholds*, are also speaking of horizons, and significant to *neocosmism* is Virilio's claim that the horizontal "*ground line*" draws the human creature's attention away from the "vertical littoral ... which absolutely separates 'the void' from 'the full' " (1997/2008, p. 1). It is worth noting that the term littoral is related to being "of or pertaining to the shore; existing, taking place upon, or adjacent to the shore" ("vol. VIII," Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 1045) and Virilio's specific use of this term draws attention to the idea of the vertical perspective being a relationship between the shore of the terrestrial and the ocean of the *universe*. This shift in perspective – that changes the human from being a dry land creature that moves across a terrestrial *landscape* toward the horizon, to a creature that while designed for existence in the terrestrial is also compelled to step off its shore and into an ocean, the horizon of which stretches away into an infinite darkness – becomes crucial in *neocosmism*.

Returning to the different images of the *threshold* presented in the paragraph above, the common thread is that the spatial relationship drawn by the human creature's embodied gaze across the *landscape* is conventionally horizontal. Within the notes

that Lovecraft made for a future novel to be titled *Azathoth*,<sup>128</sup> he writes of the narrator gazing across the horizontal plane within his “city of high walls where sterile twilight reigned,” taking in the same view as *other* human creatures that, like himself, are “coming home at evening to a room whose one window opened not on the fields and groves but on a dim court where other windows stared in dull despair” (1994, pp. 407-8). It is the narrator’s conscious decision to avoid being “drive[n] to madness,” that compels a shift of his gaze, to “lean out and peer aloft to glimpse some fragment of things beyond the waking world and the greyness of tall cities” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 408). The decision to look upwards and beyond a horizontal finitude, in this case an enclosed courtyard, is an act that inevitably allows this human creature to bridge “a mighty gulf” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 408).

Similarly, after escaping their Harkonnen captors in *Dune*, Paul and Jessica Atrides must next escape the possibility of death in the jaws of a sandworm, and while hiding in a rocky outcrop, Paul looks upward toward the night sky and into the gaping mouth of the leviathan before him. He:

felt a kind of elation. In some recent instant, he had crossed a time barrier into more unknown territory. He could sense the darkness ahead, nothing revealed to his inner eye. It was as though some step he had taken had plunged him into a well ... or into the trough of a wave where the future was invisible. The landscape had undergone a profound shifting (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 254).

The *threshold* then, is the point from which the human creature looks to a horizon, and the difference here between *cosmicism* and *neocosmicism* is critical. If that creature looks across a *landscape* to a fixed horizon, it will be limited by finitude. If

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<sup>128</sup> This is noted by August Derleth as editor of the *Omnibus* in which this fragment is quoted from (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 407), and also by the editors of *An H.P. Lovecraft Encyclopedia* (Joshi & Schultz, 2001, p. 13), who also provide further information regarding Lovecraft’s intentions for the style of this projected novel.

that creature should deem to look up, however, if that creature re-engages with the memory of the “vertical littoral,” the nature of the horizon changes and by consequence of this, so too do that creature’s choices.

When the horizontal gives way to the vertical, the comfortably finite horizon of the terrestrial gives way to the dark horizon of the *universe*. When the orientation of the horizon changes, the relationship of objects and bodies to that horizon also changes. Irrespective of the space-time direction of vision, whether into the past or the future, crossing the *threshold* involves a release of the limits of horizon, a release of the limits of the possible and of the visible, and the establishment of a vision that accepts this release. As Leto Atreides recognises, herein lies a paradox which must also be assimilated, and:

‘To be sighted in the land of the blind carries its own perils. If you try to interpret what you see for the blind, you tend to forget that the blind possess an inherent movement conditioned by their blindness’ (Herbert, 1976, p. 108).

In looking up, Leto knows he is looking into a darkness in which *other* human creatures may not be able to see as he does. In looking up, he understands that he has already chosen a path that is different and that will transform him and his relationship with *others* in the *universe*. As Virilio also points out in his “Introduction” to *Open Sky*, looking up presents “an exotic reorganisation of sight that would finally take account of a possible fall upwards” (1997/2008, p. 2).

Falling into the *universe* is turned, by Lovecraft, into a literal event in “The Other Gods” when “Barzai the Wise ... [and] the young priest Atal, who was his disciple”

go out “into the stony desert” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 145) that they might climb the mountain Hatheg-Kla and see “the gods.” As they ascend:

Atal felt a spectral change in all the air, as if the laws of earth were bowing to greater laws; for though the way was steeper than ever, the upward path was now grown fearsomely easy, and the bulging cliff proved scarce an obstacle when he reached it and slid perilously up its convex face (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 148).

As if having “to learn to fly, to swim in the ether” as Virilio suggests (1997/2008, p. 3), Barzai calls out to Atal “below” him, “ ‘Merciful gods of earth, I am falling into the sky!’ ” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 148).

In extinguishing the limits of the horizon by means of a reorientation, the human creature is left at the *threshold* knowing that the illusion is dissolved. Lazarus Long says in council with Howard Family members in *Methuselah’s Children* that “ ‘the ‘Masquerade’ is over. It’s a new situation’ ” (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 312); and later, when acting as the Howard Family representative, Zaccur Barstow realises there is no point in even pretending that the illusion still holds now that the Family member’s longevity is revealed to *others* (1958/1999, p. 324). Similarly, after establishing the illusion of his own death, that he might seek his path in the desert, Leto replies to his captor that “ ‘it is written: That which you know in one world, you shall not find in another’ ” (Herbert, 1976, p. 235).

For the human creature facing the *threshold’s* revelation, as Stephen King claims for Lovecraft, *cosmicism’s* answer to the *universe*, is “NO.”<sup>129</sup> For *neocosmicism* however, as Nietzsche claims in *The Will to Power*, the human creature’s answer to the *universe* is YES, because:

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<sup>129</sup> Stephen King’s concept of the “NO” has been discussed in chapter 5, p. 100.

The concept “reprehensible action” presents us with difficulties. Nothing that happened at all can be reprehensible in itself: for one should not want to eliminate it: for everything is so bound up with everything else, that to want to exclude something means to exclude everything. A reprehensible action means a reprehensible world ... in itself, everything that is says Yes ("293 (*March-June 1888*)," Nietzsche, 1968, p. 165).

Nietzsche’s “reprehensible world” is the world, and indeed *universe*, that *cosmicism* declares the human creature exists in, and is therefore by the very nature of what it is, to be kept by that creature well and truly at a distance. This disconnection from everything that “is so bound up with everything else” in *cosmicism*, is a factor in why there are no options beyond the *heimlich conundrum*. The *threshold’s* apocalypse in *neocosmicism* however is an affirmation that the human creature must accept *engulfment* and enter the *void* in order to engage with the *universe*. From the light space of the sun, the human creature looks upward to the dark, and says YES.

When the Howard Family members in *Methuselah’s Children* understand that their longevity is revealed to *others*, they realise that to stay where they are amounts to saying NO and to risk being “hunted down and killed” (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 321). In looking up and saying YES to the *universe*, these human creatures determine to leave the known shore of the light and move into the unknown dark as a means by which to improve their chances of survival. To say YES, is to enter space-time where “the Sun holds options but can hardly be said to own in fee simple” – that is, absolutely – and in doing so, move “farther from all humanity” (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 394).

As the mirror-opposite of *cosmicism’s* NO, this affirmation is a critical choice that enables the human creature’s escape from its incarceration. The “darkening change”

(Dick, 2008, p. 971) that the character Charles Freck identifies in *A Scanner Darkly*, that in *cosmicism* signifies the descent into madness and death for varying characters, is the same *threshold* moment that signifies *neocosmicism*'s open door through which that creature might pass. Freck can see "that maybe things would go the other way again and get better," leading him to visualise all *others* that he is leaving behind, both living and dead, as existing within a light "which wasn't daylight but better light than that, a kind of sea which lay beneath them and above them as well"<sup>130</sup> (Dick, 2008, p. 971).

It is just such an opening, such erasure of reflection and illusion, that makes a reversal possible. The metaphorical mirror that reflects becomes a glass or window through which vision can pass. In a later chapter of *A Scanner Darkly*, Bob Arctor's mental functioning is being explained to him by psychologists who identify the shift from an illusion that reflects a limited view, to an open view with no final result or visible limit of horizon. Within the *cosmos*, and indeed within *cosmicism*, the psychologists diagnose this shift in Arctor as an undesirable kind of psychosis wherein rather than one hemisphere of Arctor's brain dominating and therefore asserting itself over and burying the other, both sides of the brain " 'monitor and process incoming data differently' " and " '[o]ne tells you one thing, the other another' " (Dick, 2008, p. 1040). When one side is damaged, the other "is attempting to compensate" (Dick, 2008, p. 1041), and in terms of *neocosmicism* this can be likened to the loss of all maps, and the emergence of the actual and differing territory.

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<sup>130</sup> It is worth remembering that the image of a sea or ocean that is above and below some *other* or object is a fundamental image within the *Genesis cosmology*, and has been discussed in chapter 2, pp. 31-3.

As “ ‘left becomes right’ ” (Dick, 2008, p. 1042), and up becomes down, a null space is formed, something that Arctor’s psychologists refer to as “ ‘cross-cuing ... Related to split-brain phenomena,’ ” and they go on to explain that “ ‘twin competing cross-cuing amounts to zero receipt form’ ” (2008, p. 1041).<sup>131</sup> This shift signifies the erasure of a *cosmos* and the insertion of the human creature into the *void*. Arctor arrives by means of using the drug “substance D,” a narcotic of antediluvian qualities that the closing pages of the novel reveal, is made from a blue flower; blue being a generic colour ascribed to both water and sky. Arctor’s *engulfment* within “substance D’s” deluge has erased both the Bob and the Fred, and erected Bruce, an apparently psychosis-locked human creature who has in fact been released into the *void* from that deluge and:

Time ceased as the eyes gazed and the universe jelled along with him, at least for him, froze over with him and his understanding, as its inertness became complete. There was nothing he did not know; there was nothing left to happen (Dick, 2008, p. 1096).

The test for Bruce now, is whether he will choose to step beyond the *void* and into the *universe* that he has seen. It may be said that in his case the answer to this can be no more than conjecture because the novel ends with him located in the *void*. I do believe that a clue to his possible outcome lies within his earlier discussion with the psychologists, for as much as they assert that it is Arctor (now Bruce) who sees the *universe* incorrectly, he replies that “ ‘Maybe it’s you fuckers’ ... ‘who’re seeing the universe backwards, like in a mirror. Maybe I see it right’ ” (Dick, 2008, p. 1043). Bruce, and indeed any human creature that might determine to seek an alternative to

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<sup>131</sup> In *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, Gary Zukav discusses “split-brain analysis” in reference to the Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics. Zukav writes that “[t]o treat certain conditions, such as epilepsy, the two halves of the brain sometimes are separated surgically” and the aftermath of this procedure has revealed what Zukav terms “a remarkable fact.” Each side of the brain functions, and “see[s] the world in a different way”: one “linear” and one that “perceives whole patterns” (Zukav, 1979/2001, pp. 42-3).

madness or death, will only reach the *void* after submission to *engulfment* and the risk that this entails. There is no option in *neocosmicism* to turn away from *engulfment* and the destructive potential of the deluge.

Thufir Hawat reminds Paul Atreides in *Dune* that “ ‘[t]he universe is full of doors,’ ” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 450) and Paul cannot always be facing the open door.

Survival, will depend on more than vision, and when caught by Hawat sitting with his back to the door:

Paul straightened, spoke without turning: ‘I know. I’m sitting with my back to a door.’ ... ‘I heard you coming down the hall,’ Paul said. ‘And I heard you open the door.’  
 ‘The sounds I make could be imitated.’  
 ‘I’d know the difference’ (Herbert, 1965/1978, pp. 32-3).

Knowing the difference, is knowing what is illusion and what is not, and it is captured within Nietzsche’s “Dionysian affirmation of the world as it is” (“1041 (1888),” 1968, p. 536). The human creature’s positioning of itself in relation to openings, in crossing *thresholds*, is not without danger and is directly linked to the *proving ground* that the *universe* reveals. As Lazarus Long says to Ira Wetheral, “never sit with [your] back to the door ... might be nine hundred and ninety-nine times you’d get away with it ... But the thousandth time – that’s the one” (Heinlein, 1973, pp. 56-7).

It is important to note that choosing to participate does not magically transform the *universe* to a pleasant *landscape* and eradicate the human creature’s sense of “cosmic fear” (Asma, 2009, pp. 185-6, 191-2; Colavito, 2008, p. 185) or “cosmic horror” (Colavito, 2008, pp. 17, 161-2, 175). On the contrary, *neocosmicism’s proving ground* remains subject to the *cold equations* and is every bit as indifferent and

perhaps even more difficult to survive, than *cosmicism*'s prison. Furthermore, while the human creature can move into a participatory relationship with the *universe*, it will do so side by side with *others* of its kind that will choose to remain *amnesiacs* in their *cosmoses*, a choice that further blurs the lines between any human creature and all *others*. Crossing the *threshold* is a deliberate move away from comfort and familiarity, and an attempt to avoid the kind of devolution that the human creature is subject to when it remains in, or endeavours to return to, the Garden.

### *Shadow Universe*

‘In olden times Fremen faced east at dawn. *Eos*, you know? That’s dawn in one of the old tongues ... Night was the time of chaos. Day was the time of order. That’s how it was in the time of that tongue you say you speak: darkness-disorder, light-order. We Fremen changed that. *Eos* was the light we distrusted. We preferred the light of a moon, or the stars. Light was too much order and that can be fatal. You see what you *Eos*-Atreides have done? Man is a creature of only that light which protects him. The sun was our enemy on Dune.’ Namri brought his gaze down to Leto’s level. ‘What light do you prefer, *Atreides*?’ (Herbert, 1976, p. 233).

What becomes an impassable ending in *cosmicism*, is the requisite state for beginning in *neocosmicism*, and rather than do all in its power to avoid *engulfment*, the human creature accepts that *engulfment* is the *foundation* event from which it moves into a *universe* where “*night is safest*” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 283) and where *cosmoses* no longer hold.

“ ‘[T]hings *pass*,” according to Lazarus Long in *Methuselah’s Children*, and “[t]he trick is to stay alive through them’ ” (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 286). Long’s attitude highlights a shift in the moral posture of the human creature, and a consequence of this shift is the development of that creature’s ability to come to terms with its

temporal and material insignificance. Russell Letson writes that “all explanations of species survival as the universal morality are meaningless without the immediate experience that life itself – survival – is worthwhile in its own terms” (1978, p. 221). By the time Long is discussing with Ira Wetheral the motivation behind the prevention of his own death in *Time Enough for Love*, he is explicit about the one reliable fact of the *universe*; that the *universe* “ ‘is a moving picture, forever changing,’ ” and while the human creature may not like this, “ ‘he knows it’s so, and knowing it is the first step in coping with it’ ” (Heinlein, 1973, p. 19).

The *engulfment* that the human creature seeks to avoid in *cosmicism* because it translates to a force of destruction, although potentially no less destructive in *neocosmicism*, becomes necessary. To be *engulfed*, is to be “put into” the gulf (“vol. V,” Simpson & Weiner, 1989, pp. 153, 199), to be put into “the deep” (“vol. VI,” Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 942), and it is only by *engulfment*’s apocalypse that the human creature can enter the *void* that in *cosmicism* stops it in its tracks.

*Engulfment* is the overturning of illusion; it is the event that in overturning the light space as dominant in the *universe*, directs the human creature toward the dark. As if standing with its back to the sun, or like Paul Atreides with his back to the door, the human creature then sees beyond the bright colours of the rainbow of light.

*Engulfment* renders the invisible, visible, and in doing so opens up a way through the deep (“The Temple,” Lovecraft, 1994, pp. 112-3; “The Shadow Over Innsmouth,” Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 460-3); the vortex (“Jon’s World,” Dick, 1987b, pp. 63-4); and the coriolis storm (Herbert, 1965/1978, pp. 219-20, 230-1).

When *engulfment* becomes unavoidable, the human creature's ending in *cosmicism*'s *heimlich conundrum* is driven by that creature's fear of freedom from the limiting confines of the *cosmos*. This fear is reinforced by that creature's belief in its own isolate vulnerability beyond those confines, and this occurs irrespective of whether the *cosmos* is connoted by that creature as negative or positive. In refusing to submit to fear however, the human creature can move beyond the finitude of its tele-objective *cosmos*, and in choosing to accept the inevitability of and therefore seek to survive *engulfment* at the limit of that *cosmos*, that creature is actively seeking to refigure its view. This is encapsulated in *Dune*'s Bene Gesserit Litany against Fear, that says:

*I must not fear. Fear is the mind killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain* (Herbert, 1965/1978, pp. 14, 220, 231, 288).

Looking inwards to see a complete erasure of all significance is the trigger for the human creature's vision to turn back out and toward the *universe*. Taught by Jessica Atreides to a young Paul, the Litany is a definitive statement of accepting *engulfment* as a necessity. This acceptance transforms what stops the human creature in *cosmicism* – that is, fear – to be the focus of what that creature must “face” and move beyond. Furthermore, the Litany foregrounds the human creature's immersion in the *void* as the necessary measure that in stripping that creature of everything but itself, prepares it for a conscious engagement with the *universe*. Signifying the end of everything in *cosmicism*, *engulfment* for *neocosmicism* is the event that facilitates reconnection with a “first cause.” According to Alia Atreides in *Dune Messiah*, “ “[b]eginning and end are a single thing,” ” (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 148).

In overwhelming the *landscape* and all it contains, the *Genesis engulfment* of the Deluge renders the visible, invisible, and what was once known and seen, is buried in the *heimlich* territory. As if a kind of mirror-deluge occurs however, the overthrow of the visible that is critical here can perhaps be seen as one of Lovecraft's signature events, and is arguably no better known than in "The Call of Cthulhu." In this story it seems that the waters of the ocean shift in such a way as to suggest that the world itself is turned upside-down, exposing the forgotten "nightmare corpse-city of R'lyeh, that was built in measureless aeons behind history by the vast, loathsome shapes that seeped down from the dark stars" (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 92). Similarly in "Dagon"<sup>132</sup> a landmass rises from the depths of the ocean, and after taking several days to cross this terrain, the narrator climbs a "mound" and:

looked down ... into an immeasurable pit or canyon, whose black recesses the moon had not yet soared high enough to illuminate. I felt myself on the edge of the world; peering over the rim into a fathomless chaos of eternal night. Through my terror ran curious reminiscences of *Paradise Lost*, and Satan's hideous climb through the unfashioned realms of darkness (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 14).

By disturbing the ordered *cosmos* that the Deluge once established by hiding such antediluvian *landscapes*, the deluge faced by the human creature here is the pivotal moment in which that creature must decide to respond as *cosmicism* proclaims such apocalypse deems, or accept that this is the *universe* and find a means by which to survive. It is perhaps easier for the human creature to succumb to emotion, as do Johansen's fellow sailors who "never reached the ship, he thinks two perished of

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<sup>132</sup> S.T. Joshi not only draws the parallel between "Dagon" and "The Call of Cthulhu," but also claims "Dagon" as a source story for "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" (Joshi & Schultz, 2001, p. 58). Whilst the antediluvian *landscape* does not rise up to overturn the human *cosmos* in "Innsmouth," the events and *others* of this story present a consistent archetypal framework for Joshi's claim to have substance and provide further insight into the consistency of the overturning of the *Genesis cosmology* by means of *engulfment* and deluge.

pure fright in that accursed instant” (“The Call of Cthulhu,” Lovecraft, 2000, p. 95); it is much harder for such as Johansen who, despite being “broken” (2000, p. 91) by the experience, was neither maddened nor killed by the revelation, for he survives and returns home to write an account of events. What gets Johansen in the end, are the *cold equations*, an “accident,” and although a stronger man might have survived, his weakened condition facilitates his weeding from the *universe*. Like many other stories that can be read through the lens of *cosmicism*, “The Call of Cthulhu” is by no means a closed circuit through which no other reading is possible.

At *neocosmicism’s threshold* the deluge turns the order of *cosmos* upside down and shifts the orientation of the horizon to reveal the connection between the terrestrial shore and the ocean that is the *universe* wherein the first creatures have been hidden. What the revelation discloses is the idea that the oceans of the terrestrial *landscape* are mirrored by the ocean of the *universe*, that all life is linked to the water, and for the human creature that is designed to survive on dry land rather than in the water, survival in the *universe* will demand that creature learns how to swim.

In *Dune*, Paul Atreides is reluctant to accept the waters of Jamis, the man he kills in a fight as champion to his mother Jessica. It is Paul’s hesitation that reminds Jessica of the Bene Gesserit axiom that declares “ ‘[s]urvival is the ability to swim in strange water.’ And Jessica thought: Paul and I, we must find the currents and patterns in these strange waters ... if we’re to survive” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 296). The collection of water from the body of Jamis so it can be used to sustain the life of the tribe, reveals an intimate connection between life and water. This connection is strengthened by the vast oceans of Dune being burning deserts rather than verdant

gardens, and Paul recalls from “Yueh’s O.C. Bible [that] ‘From water does all life begin’ ” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 296). To survive, Paul must learn to swim in the “strange waters” of Dune, beneath the surface of which reside the antediluvian leviathans that are the giant sandworms.

The common is made strange and the uncommon emerges; both visible yet inextricably mixed. As the illusory stability of *cosmos* dissolves, the terrain beneath the human creature’s feet and within its gaze begins to shift like sands in desert winds or on saturated shores, and later in life as The Preacher, Paul Atreides reminds the human creatures before him that “ ‘[t]hey who pray for dew at the desert’s edge shall bring forth the deluge!’ ” (Herbert, 1976, p. 103).

This is the end of illusion where new patterns emerge, and Ghanima Atreides realises when looking from the water-rich *landscape* with “rotting vegetation at the edge of the seitch plantings,” to the living desert beyond, that it is essential “to discover regularities within perpetual change” (Herbert, 1976, p. 36). In order to know how to move in the *universe of cold equations*, the human creature must come to terms with the condition of order in *chaos*. The *universe* is not a separation of deluge and desert, life and death, first cause and final cause; the *universe* is a *chaotic* blending of these rather than a demarcating grid.

Surviving *engulfment* signifies a shift in the human creature’s sense of self in the *universe* that might be described as a shift from a position of the “materialist” to the

“vitalist.” The enigmatic scholar, Viviane Casimir,<sup>133</sup> draws the distinction between these terms with reference to “life” as “coming from within” the living object (materialist) or as “a force insufflated to matter” from “outside” the living object (vitalist) (1997, p. 281). This is to say that the human creature shifts its focus from an inward and isolating view of itself as limited by a horizon that in having a limit, turns back in upon itself because that confinement is what sustains it (*cosmicism*), to an outward view that sees the wilderness and desert spaces beyond its confinement as the locus of sustenance (*neocosmicism*). This is vision that extends beyond the physicist’s “closed system,” Ingebreetsen’s “formal design,” or Lovecraft’s mechanism.<sup>134</sup>

It is worth noting at this point that Lovecraft considers himself a mechanistic materialist,<sup>135</sup> which is to say that he views the *universe* as a *machine* driven by forces that come from entirely within its components. There is simply no *other* or “outside” motivating force or deity. Any object or *other* that comes from what Lovecraft calls the “Outside” (“July 5, 1927,” Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, p. 150), is wholly alien and wholly bent on the human creature’s demise because it is not human, it is outside the human. This is *cosmicism*’s tele-objective closed box of the carceral *universe* from which the human creature cannot escape, and in which the human creature is nothing more than the isolated object of its body. When that object ceases in *cosmicism*, everything about it ceases, because its motivating force has come entirely from within.

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<sup>133</sup> Viviane Casimir is introduced in this manner due to her eclectic qualifications and work practice that make her more difficult to categorise. She holds both PhD and Masters in Literary Theory; a BSc in biology; has numerous scholarly publications; and is a practising Reiki Master and Second Dan in Kyokushin Karate.

<sup>134</sup> These ideas are discussed in conjunction with the carceral *universe* in chapter 8, pp. 230-1.

<sup>135</sup> A letter written by Lovecraft in February of 1929, exemplifies this position well (Derleth & Wandrei, 1968, pp. 261-74).

Whilst the shift to *neocosmism* is certainly a shift in attributing the motivation of the human creature within vitalist parameters, it is important to stress that it is not a simple swapping from one position to the other, but rather, *neocosmism* observes a blending of the materialist and the vitalist, similar to the idea of a “discursive space” that Casimir claims opens up “where a crisis occurs” (1997, p. 279). The human creature no longer looks exclusively inward to its isolated self and to the preservation of that self in a *universe* where it is up against absolutely everything until the end of everything, but rather, that creature looks outwards. In shifting its view, the human creature can then see that there is no finitude to the horizon and even though it remains insignificant in a *cold* and indifferent *universe*, there is a relationship to be forged. *Neocosmism*’s relationship between the human creature and the *universe* is not based upon self-preservation, but founded upon open participation within the bid for survival.

The way for this relationship to emerge is opened up by the waters of deluge that dissolve the *cosmos*. In Dick’s “Faith of Our Fathers,” the water that the human creature consumes is laced with hallucinogens and it is in this story that Dick presents *neocosmism*’s *universe* – the *universe of chaos* – in which, as Tanya says to Chien, there are “ ‘a variety of authentic experiences ... it’s all turned around ... Twelve mutually exclusive hallucinations – that would be easily understood. But not one hallucination and twelve realities’ ” (1987c, p. 209).

The *universe*, Tanya discloses to Chien, is not captured in finitude. Taking the black snuff that is enclosed in a grey envelope and has been designed to “ ‘rest eyes

fatigued by the countenance of meaningless official monologues' ” (Dick, 1987c, p. 198), is the moment Chien accepts the deluge. With his first exposure to “an emptiness” (Dick, 1987c, p. 205), where moments before had been the colour and noise of the *cosmos*-according-to-the-Absolute-Benefactor (1987c, p. 204), Chien accepts *engulfment* and “inhaled greedily at the remainder of the powder on his hand” (1987c, p. 205). It is only after exposure to the “emptiness” and the revelation of the reality of the Absolute Benefactor beneath the illusion (Dick, 1987c, p. 217) that Chien is equipped to step beyond the limits of the map.

Similarly, in order to move from the *cosmos* in which they exist to some other part of the *universe*, Dick's scientists Kastner and Ryan in “Jon's World,” have to move into “the time flow,” something beyond the linear order and that Ryan likens to “ ‘the ocean’ ... ‘The most potent energy in the universe. The great dynamic behind all motion’ ” (1987b, p. 63). To move within the *universe*, they must first enter this space, until “[t]here was nothing there. Nothing beyond them,” and this is a *void* from which Kastner hopes they can return, “his eyes on the black port. ‘I feel like the first man who went down in a submarine’ ” (Dick, 1987b, p. 64).

That first man could have well been Karl Heinrich, Lovecraft's U-boat commander in “The Temple.” In finding himself at the bottom of the ocean, Heinrich determines to leave the confines of his vessel and enter the black *void* surrounding him that he might use what is left of his life to explore the “undersea temple,” the windows of which are “vividly aglow with a flickering radiance” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 112). Although his rationale leads him to suspect he is going mad, Heinrich makes deliberate preparations, and devoid of fear, enacts a conscious choice; Heinrich

accepts that he will die and then chooses how he will live (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 113). This is exactly what Heinlein is talking about in his speech to the 1961 World Science Fiction Convention when he shares the story of a stranger who dies trying to save the life of a woman whose foot is stuck in a railway track. As Heinlein says, “the only conclusion I have ever been able to reach is this: This is how a man lives. And this is how a *man* dies” (1961/1992, p. 180); choosing what course of action to take amidst the unchangeable outcome of the *cold equations*.

It is a stranger’s standing his ground before the inevitable outcome of an oncoming train; Heinrich’s acceptance of the *cold equations* and subsequent decision to explore the antediluvian temple and city before him during what life he has left; and Chien and Tanya’s acknowledgement of their antediluvian hereditary of “ ‘the ancient primary waters’ ” (Dick, 1987c, p. 222); that point toward the resolution of what is perhaps the most utopian of Lovecraft’s stories, “The Shadow Over Innsmouth.”<sup>136</sup> As the old man Zadok Allen tells the narrator Robert Olmstead when he first arrives in Innsmouth: “ ‘everything alive come aout o’ the water onct, an’ only needs a little change to go back again.’ ”<sup>137</sup> When the truth of his hereditary can no longer be avoided, Olmstead decides to rejoin his kin by “swim[ming] out to that brooding reef in the sea and dive down through black abysses to Cyclopean and many-columned Y’ha-nthlei, and in that lair of the Deep Ones we shall dwell amidst wonder and glory forever” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 463). The utopian sense of this ending points

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<sup>136</sup> An essay from the American literary scholar, David Farnell, titled “Unlikely Utopians: Ecotopian Dreaming in H.P. Lovecraft’s ‘The Shadow Over Innsmouth’ and Octavia Butler’s *Lilith’s Brood*” (Farnell, 2011) is an excellent source of further reading on the idea of Lovecraft as a utopian writer. First delivered in 2010 as a paper at The Fourth Australian Conference on Utopia, Dystopia and Science Fiction at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, Farnell’s paper provides a concise and balanced rationale for a reading that might be considered a radical shift from the usual focus of Lovecraftian criticism.

<sup>137</sup> This is also referred to in chapter 7, p. 202.

toward something paradoxical, though by no means incompatible, within Lovecraft's canon. A utopian reading of "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" in no way dislodges more conventional readings that point toward an outcome of "cosmic terror,"<sup>138</sup> and this kind of symbiosis of perspectives consequently reinforce a seemingly natural *heimlich* oscillation that blurs the horizons of limiting demarcation. Whilst S.T. Joshi argues for the more usual interpretation of this story as declaring a "horrific scenario" (Joshi & Schultz, 2001, p. 240), what is worth noting is the parallel that Joshi, like myself, draws between the fate of Olmstead in "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" and Heinrich in "The Temple." While for Joshi, *cosmicism's heimlich conundrum* prevail in these stories, I argue that the human creature is also offered, and in these cases accepts, a different path that will re-inscribe their perception of the *universe*.

Rather than view the deluge through the distancing lens of a *cosmos*, the human creature experiences the deluge. In submission to *engulfment* that creature may not survive, but if it does it must then submit to the *void* and to the possibility that in the end, the *void* may be all that there is.

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<sup>138</sup> The literary scholar and poet, Barton St Armand, uses this phrase, which is closely aligned to the phrases "cosmic horror" and "cosmic fear," with reference to Lovecraft's "balancing" of a Calvinist sense of the *universe* within a materialistic framework, the outcome of which is "a universe ruled by self-regulating natural laws" (St.Armand, 1977, p. 31). It is worth noting that when St.Armand then speaks of "the breaking of these natural laws of time and space" (p. 31) he is referring to a pre-quantum reckoning, and indeed with quantum physics in its infancy at the time in which Lovecraft is writing it is no stretch of the imagination to comprehend a sense of "cosmic terror" (p. 31) present both within the pages of the fiction and the human world beyond those pages; for the *universe* has been rent in two.

### *The Void*

I feel appalling vistas of years stretching behind me, while at other times it seems as if the present moment were an isolated point in a grey, formless infinity ... I seem to have suffered a great shock – perhaps from some utterly monstrous outgrowth of my cycles of unique, incredible experience ("The Book," Lovecraft, 1994, pp. 413-4).

Between order and *chaos* the *void* exists; between the opposing sides of the same coin, the *void* has “no incumbent, holder or possessor, [it is] unoccupied, vacant” (“vol. XIX,” Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 732). Irrespective of whether the *void* is approached from a growing darkness of shadow and approaching night, or from a “white, aeon-dead world” as Lovecraft claims in “At the Mountains of Madness” (1999, p. 19), it is “an utterly tenantless world” (1999, p. 23). The *void* is a gaping black hole between *cosmos* and *universe*. Within view from the *threshold*, and beyond the limits of a *cosmos*’ horizon, the *void* must be entered. If the human creature is to do more than simply gaze upon the *universe* from the safety of its embodied isolation, it cannot negate the *void*. There is no definitive beginning or end, and as an ultimate indeterminacy the *void* has no borders or boundaries; it is an emptiness that is nowhere and everywhere, a ubiquitous merging of oppositions that cancel one from another, a littoral space where shore and ocean merge.

It is this very nature of the *void* that *cosmicism* connotes as a negative space that must not be entered. As a darkness without light and *cold* without warmth, *cosmicism* makes fearful this gateway of uncertainty. In discussing Lovecraft’s use of this space, Bradley Will writes that “[t]he abyss is a negative space, a symbol of the unknown and a recognition of the existence of that which exceeds our understanding” (2002, p. 14). As a negative space the *void* is frightening, and the

requirement for the human creature to somehow cross this emptiness that is neither ordered map nor territory with substance, albeit *chaotic*, can freeze the human creature at the *threshold* indefinitely and unto madness or death.

The *void* is a necessary emptiness that announces the limitations of a *cosmos*, and in doing so, makes such maps irrevocably redundant as guides to the *universe*. The *void* nurtures no-thing, but rather, is the inevitable end of every-thing, and it is a darkness into which the human creature must go for release from incarceration.

The human creature must let go of all maps and illusions, including its own hope for significance, and reconstruct its sense of what it is. This is, however, a difficult task made impossible by *cosmicism* which figures the alternatives to the map as irreconcilable with the embodied, terrestrially bound human creature. The *sf* bibliographer Neil Barron writes in *Horror Literature: A Reader's Guide*, that Lovecraft's "Cthulhu Mythos ... constructs a horrific cosmological and historical context for human history" (1990, p. 137), and it is this very context that the human creature plunges into when it enters the *void*. This is the first step away from the shore and into the space-time ocean of the *universe*. As it is for many of Lovecraft's characters, such as Nathaniel Peaslee in "The Shadow Out of Time" or William Dyer in "At the Mountains of Madness"; so too do *other* human creatures move "out into the Endless Deeps" (Heinlein, 1973, p. xi) and the dark, "endless spaces, bouncing off strange equations" (Heinlein, 1973, p. 252).

It should be remembered also, that the *void* is not exclusively accessible from the darkness of space, and for Dyer and Danforth in "At the Mountains of Madness," the

frozen continent of Antarctica contains “the black inner world, of whose existence we had not known before, but which we were now eager to find and traverse” (Lovecraft, 1999, p. 103). The desire of these human creatures to seek out and enter the *void*, coupled with their hope for revelation, overrides the fear that stops *other* such creatures at the *threshold*, and from carvings they:

deduced that a steeply descending walk of about a mile through either of the neighboring tunnels would bring us to the brink of the dizzy, sunless cliffs about the great abyss; down whose sides paths, improved by the Old Ones, led to the rocky shore of the hidden and nighted ocean. To behold this fabulous gulf in stark reality was a lure which seemed impossible of resistance once we knew of the thing (Lovecraft, 1999, p. 104).

The *void* is silence and the *void* silences; and as the narrator of Lovecraft’s “From Beyond” says, it is an “utter, absolute solitude in infinite, sightless, soundless space” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 93). The *void* precipitates a resurrection of the *other* language that draws neither horizons of finitude nor boundaries between objects. To see in the dark can be said to “preced[e] the spoken word,” and the language of the light is nullified within “the void of the ‘night of the world’ ” (Žižek, 1991, p. 87). For the human creature bereft of a *cosmos*, the *void* precedes the *universe*, and the ontological security of the light gives way to an ontological destabilisation in the dark. The human creature is stripped of its *foundations* that the invisible might be made visible.

When discussing the use of Voice<sup>139</sup> in Herbert’s *Dune* chronicles, American academic and *sf* critic Paul Kucera writes that “[t]he Voice might thus be said to

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<sup>139</sup> *The Dune Encyclopedia* calls Voice “[o]ne of the most impressive physical accomplishments of the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood; the idiomatic terminology used to refer to the manipulation of speech to achieve complete control over the receiver” (McNelly, 1984, p. 498). When the Reverend Mother Mohiam says to Paul “ ‘Now, you come here!’ ” he feels that “[t]he command whipped out at him. Paul found himself obeying before he could think about it” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 13).

already figure monologic utterance; it bears the stamp of the mythic, of the absolute” (2001, p. 234). This is to say that the language that frames a *cosmos*, inasmuch as it is the language framing a mythic structure, is a construct with a limit that discloses only as much of an experience or even understanding of the *universe* as that language allows. Furthermore, in being a “monologic utterance” the Voice, and similarly a *cosmos*, is a single-lens view, a tele-objectivity of order that in its framing excludes all *other* aspects or choices that lie beyond the frame. “One reason for myths and fictions,” Kucera claims, “is to provide ‘comfort in a hostile world,’ ” (2001, p. 239), and irrespective of whether that “other world” is captured within the *Genesis cosmology* or the *universe as machine*, the comfort that these limiting utterances provides is bound up within negation. To render the *universe* invisible is a consequence of the reifying language of the *cosmos* that, simply in being uttered, erases what lies beyond the language. As Kucera claims, “Our voice is never precisely our own” (2001, p. 242), and the language of the light determines through omission how the human creature speaks of, and to, the *universe*.

To step into the *void* is to silence the voice and erase the language of the light, in order that the human creature might return to a kind of pre-verbal or pre-mirror condition. Unencumbered by the abstraction of the symbolic proclivity of language, that creature is then better positioned to see what linguistic abstraction has previously failed to express and therefore acknowledge. With reference to Paul Atreides’ first encounter in *Dune* with the Bene Gesserit Reverend Mother Mohiam (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 13), Kucera reminds us that “[l]anguage recognized as manipulative thereby loses some of its ability to manipulate” (2001, p. 239), and in saying this Kucera forecasts a future where the Voice and the language it carries loses

its hold over Paul altogether. It is, however, only after having submitted to the deluge of the *universe* that Paul can then turn the ordered *cosmos* on its head and show the Reverend Mother that “ ‘I remember your gom jabbar ... You remember mine I can kill you with a word!’ ” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 453). Paul can do this because his language and the Voice that utters it is refigured by the silence of the *void*. While in *cosmicism* silence unspeaks and therefore hides the apocalypse (Ingebretsen, 1996, p. 140), for *neocosmicism*, silence becomes the linguistic *foundation* from which the apocalypse manifests.

The *void* is a locus in which any human creature that enters is utterly isolate and entirely irrelevant. It is the freezing end of everything and announces the proximity of the *cold universe*. That the human creature chooses to move from its warm, sunlit *cosmos* and into the *universe* of *cold equations* is, perhaps, as simple as the principle of the attraction of heat to the cold. John Gribbin writes of heat in a cold *universe*, with reference to “[t]he strangest feature of the Universe [being] bright stars scattered across a dark sky. All those stars are busy pouring out heat energy into the cold universe,” and Gribbin goes on to discuss the second law of thermodynamics with reference to the German Physicist Rudolph Clausius’ statement “that ‘heat always shows a tendency to equalize temperature differences and therefore pass from *hotter* to *colder* bodies’ ” (Gribbin, 2009, p. 94). It is worth considering, given the tendency for heat to “pass” in this manner, if there is not some clue in this as to why the human creature (warm bodied and most comfortable in a warm environment) seeks to reach beyond its warmth and into the *cold universe*. Underlying the complexity of the human creature’s predisposition for emotional response, lies a simple *equation* of attraction; the attraction of oppositions to redress bipolarities.

For Robert Blake at the end of “The Haunter of the Dark,” “light is dark and dark is light ... far is near and near is far.”<sup>140</sup> In this space where opposites freeze and nullify, Blake “remember[s] Yuggoth, and more distant Shaggai, and the ultimate void of the black planets,” and it is here that he senses his connection with “[t]he long, winging flight through the void” of *others* that “cannot cross the universe of light” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 300). While there is no doubt that Blake is physically killed in this experience (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 299), yielding to *cosmicism*’s inevitable outcomes, what remains doubtful is his being eradicated altogether. Blake’s own journal makes a plea for an attempt to hold onto what is slipping from his grasp; his sense of where he is when he writes “I am on this planet” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 300), and who or what he is when he writes “I am it and it is I” (2000, p. 301). It is this slippage, this erasing of Blake in the *void* that offers the possibility of his becoming a literal *tabula rasa*<sup>141</sup> into which some *other* can be inscribed, therefore freeing him to re-inscribe the body of some *other*. The *cold equations* may have settled death upon Blake’s body and its occupant, but this in no way means that Blake is dead. Which of them emerges from the *void* and is now released into the *universe*? This may never be known, but the *cold equations* deal equally to human creatures as to *others*, and transformed, Blake may actually live.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> This is referred to in chapter 5, p. 105.

<sup>141</sup> The *OED* defines *tabula rasa* as deriving from the Latin root meaning “scraped tablet,” and connoting “a tablet from which the writing has been erased, and which is therefore ready to be written upon again” (“vol. XVII,” Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 523).

<sup>142</sup> Although the case of Robert Blake may be arguably ambiguous, this is by no means the first time that Lovecraft has presented the idea of the human creature transported to some *other* body and space-time. The best known examples of this are the exchange between Asenath Waite (or more precisely, Ephraim Waite) and Edward Derby in “The Thing on the Doorstep”; and between Nathaniel Peaslee and a member of the Great Race in “The Shadow Out of Time.”

The *void* is thus named because its function is to make void, to empty the full; to turn the human creature into *tabula rasa*. The purpose of the *void* from *neocosmicism*'s perspective is to obliterate all sense of security and significance that the human creature might feel; that it might be refigured and in turn, refigure its view of the *universe*. This refiguring has a literal embodiment in Dick's story "The Electric Ant," which has been discussed in chapter eight. Garson Poole's discovery that he is a machine, rather than the human creature his programming has led him to believe himself to be, is connoted as an embodied end of everything, and the stopping of the machine that is his body also heralds the end of the *universe*. While it remains true that the machine does not survive, the fact that Poole chooses to cut his internal reality tape that he might enter the *void*, is the aspect of this story that signifies a transition from the interpretive framework of *cosmicism*, to a simultaneous reading in *neocosmicism* that does not conflict with the earlier reading. Irrespective of the potential danger, Poole's decision to override the safety of programming that has held him within a human *cosmos* is an event that in refiguring the view, allows Poole to reach for authenticity. As Poole admits, "[w]hat I want ... is ultimate and absolute reality, for one micro-second. After that it doesn't matter, because all will be known; nothing will be left to understand or see" (Dick, 1987c, p. 236).

In remaining obscured by the shadows in *cosmicism*, the differences between map and territory, the illusory and authentic, or the ideal and the common object, remain indiscernible one from the other. Entering the *void* however, entails leaving the shadows. In its disclosure as an illusion, the "materialised Nothingness" (Zizek, 1991, p. 83) that Poole is programmed to believe is an authentic embodiment,

refigures his view of what he is and opens the way for him to choose rather than continue to be swept along by a *cosmos*. By stepping into the *void*, the human creature steps from the shadow *landscape* to an emptiness where there are no more shadows. Casting away the shadows, Zizek says, “reveal[s] the substance, the [ideal] object itself dissolves; [and] all that remains is the dross of the common object” (1991, p. 84).<sup>143</sup>

The *void* has no space for shadows, no light for reflection and reversal. Entering the *void* is a waking up in the dark. After surviving the *engulfing* coriolis storm in *Dune*, Paul Atreides realises that “I have another kind of sight. I see another kind of terrain: the available paths” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 187), and this recognition triggers the process of *voiding* Paul so that he can be reinscribed by what has been hidden, by “ ‘the things that ... awakened ... the sleeper.’ ” (1965/1978, pp. 188-9).

The *void* empties the human creature and in doing so, shatters the Lacanian mirror. Whereas the specular image once invoked within that creature a sense of separation and a transition from the pre-verbal to the verbal *cosmos*, the erasure of the mirror’s illusory reversal, coupled with the dissolution of the language of the *cosmos* of light, draws that creature back toward an antediluvian *foundation*. To say this is to acknowledge that the territorial reversal signified by the *Genesis* Deluge, that has become the comfortable familiarity of the *cosmos*, is itself reversed. The *heimlich universe* that has been figured as the uncanny and dangerous territory, is stripped of

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<sup>143</sup> Zizek’s revelation of the “common object” is similar to Ingebretsen’s idea of “*embodied nihilism*,” as it is exemplified in Lovecraft’s “At the Mountains of Madness.” The idea that “[h]uman technologies of knowing are successively undercut, while one anthropocentric certainty after another is overturned, until in the end even the last must give way” (Ingebretsen, 1996, p. 144), provides a similar image to Zizek’s, and both scholars are turning attention back upon what could be termed the scraping clean of the human creature that is the transformative process of becoming *tabula rasa*.

its map and here revealed as the equally *cold* and dangerous *heimlich universe* that is the human creature's home. That creature may continue to exist and behave as if independent of *others* in the *universe*, but in reversing the mirror, the *void* removes the previously stable ontological *foundation* of embodied separation. Like Paul Atreides' revelation of "available paths," the *void's* disclosure of the pre-verbal, the antediluvian, and indeed, *other* language and embodiment, reveals newly available possibilities for the human creature and its view of the *universe*. The horizon opens up upon an illimitable darkness that energises rather than terrifies.

In Herbert's *God Emperor of Dune*, Leto Atreides suggests to the Bene Gesserit that their design for the future is based upon a specialisation in building walls; that as " 'masters of exclusion, experts in the narrow,' " <sup>144</sup> they seek to limit and therefore control the human creature's view. By their own admission, the Bene Gesserit " 'fear anything [they] do not control' " and in being beyond their control, Leto draws away the human creature's need for the Bene Gesserit and in this renders their power over *others* largely impotent (Herbert, 1981, p. 185). Leto moves beyond the confines of his *cosmos* that he might engage with the *universe*, while simultaneously remaining at the *threshold* to show *others* where they might also choose to go; and so too does his father.

Understanding that moving beyond the reach of fear is to also move beyond the limit of *cosmos*, Paul Atreides feels "the manifestation of some other power he could no longer control. He had become a non-being, a stillness which moved itself. At the core of the non-being, there he existed" (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 149), he is *tabula*

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<sup>144</sup> This is referred to in chapter 7, pp. 194-5

*rasa* and survivor of *engulfment*. In surviving the deluge where “He has seen the Water of Life,” Paul becomes the Kwisatz Haderach “at the fulcrum” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 423) and stands where the *universe* turns from the illusion of *cosmos* to the revelation of the *void*. He represents a *foundation*, and as the Fremmen name him, he is “Usal, the base of the pillar” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 292). Between the antediluvian and the postdiluvian, Paul Atreides embodies the turning from reflection and shadow in the light, to the *void* in *universal* darkness.

The *void* refigures the human creature’s ontological *foundation*. Paul Atreides as the Kwisatz Haderach is the male Bene Gesserit who can see in “the direction that is dark” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 422), to where the Bene Gesserit fear to look (1965/1978, pp. 18, 337). Rather than fear the *void*, Paul looks fearlessly into it: to see in the dark redefines bodily space and draws awareness to that body’s limitations. The choice for the human creature here is to determine if and in what manner it will adjust its vision. It is not always a chosen shift that refigures the human creature, an enforced change in physical capacity also refigures the body, and presents that creature with a necessitated choice of how to respond when seeing in the dark becomes a literal requirement. When Paul Atreides is blinded by the stone burner in *Dune Messiah* (Herbert, 1969/1979, pp. 160-5), he relies on prescient vision to see all that is about him, and when Duncan Idaho is revived as a ghola, he relies on metal Tleilaxu eyes (1969/1979, pp. 61, 65-6, 111, 123); and in both cases their bodies have become something *other* than what they were.

Just as Paul and Duncan see by means that reach beyond the biologically unaltered ocular spectrum, so too does the computer Minerva in *Time Enough for Love*. When

discussing rainbows with Minerva, Lazarus Long concedes that her visual capacity reaches beyond the scope of his own that is based purely within his biology. Long points out that while a rainbow can be described in complete and accurate detail to a blind man, such a map does not replace the experience of that rainbow, and because Minerva is equipped with mechanical vision, even though she is not a human creature, she “ ‘can see a rainbow, [while] a blind man can’t’ ” (Heinlein, 1973, p. 124). Furthermore, as something *other* than human, Minerva can see beyond the rainbow’s colours alone to the “chords in those colors” (Heinlein, 1973, p. 124), inferring a capacity to engage with something invisible and leaving Lazarus in no doubt that he will “ ‘have to go on being half blind’ ” (1973, p. 124).

It is the reinscription of the human creature as something *other* than it has thus far been, that triggers for that creature a new relationship with its own body and with the *universe*. The silent but not silenced body comes to terms with its insignificance. The *cold equations* are transformed from being laws to fear because they are alien and outside the human, to being *equations* to understand because they are the points of order in the *chaos*. While Jessica Atreides resonates with an internal fear of the sandworms of Dune, “Paul felt a kind of elation ... Instead of frightening him, the sensation of time-darkness forced a hyper-acceleration of his other senses. He found himself registering every available aspect of the thing that lifted from the sand there seeking him” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 254).

The apocalyptic deluge of the *universe* is a necessity that rather than cripple the human creature to madness or death, becomes the catalyst that allows that creature to move beyond the borders of its map and escape the carceral *universe*. The

apocalypse makes the *void* accessible and *engulfment* makes reaching beyond the limits of the horizon possible.

When, at the mention of the planet Caladan “ [w]here water falls from the sky and plants grow so thickly you cannot walk between them’ ” Paul Atreides witnesses “the lessening of the man” in Stilgar, he is witnessing a transformation from a Fremen who moves within the vitalising desert, to “a *creature*” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 445) that is reduced to something *other* than human. The very idea of “[w]ater from the sky” and the verdant *landscape* that water creates, the diminishment of the human creature before the coming deluge, these circumstances evoke in Paul Atreides a sense of “the ghost-wind of the jihad” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 445) and in Leto the necessity for the “Golden Path” (Herbert, 1976, p. 69). This is the foreshadowing of what DiTommaso calls the “vitality struggle” (1992, pp. 311-3); the human creature’s struggle for meaningful survival.

The human creature’s vitality and sense of connectedness with the *universe* is reignited by *engulfment*; and in surviving that struggle, the human creature is more able to move toward previously unrealised possibilities. When the invisible becomes visible, when the removal of shadow reveals what lies beneath, the human creature begins to operate from an ontology of darkness, and the *universe* becomes something *other* than an ordered *cosmos*; it is a *chaotic proving ground of cold equations*.

As the British geographer James Kneale writes in discussion of Lovecraft, the real “is thrown into relief by the irruption of something impossible” (2006, p. 111), which is to say that what the human creature takes as the “real” of its *cosmos*, is a

two dimensional map turned into a territory of more than those two dimensions alone because the “impossible” and the invisible are manifest. The apocalypse of the *universe* makes the map a map; an ephemeral piece of paper that can be burnt to ash and dust. But more than exacting this revelation alone, by emerging into view the invisible (Kneale’s “impossible”) overtakes the visible, and what the human creature thought it knew and understood to be real is made “strange; lost civilisations are returned to the light of day; objects, people or things are found to have survived ‘Out of the aeons’ ” (Kneale, 2006, p. 112). As Kneale and many other critics of Lovecraft identify, it is the revelation of the extent of the reach of space-time that enables this circumstance, and it is the human creature’s comprehension of space-time in the *universe* that firmly and irrevocably cements that creature’s insignificance.

For Paul Atreides in *Dune Messiah*, “[h]e sensed the spirits of love and hate spouting there in a rolling sea from which no rock lifted above the chaos. No place at all from which to survey the turmoil” (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 67). The space-time of the *universe*, the *chaos* that has been masked by order, can no longer be observed from a distance. The *chaos* must be engaged; the human creature must swim within it rather than order and observe it. When Paul later asks “ ‘Is that how you destroy me? ... Prevent me from collecting my thoughts?’ ” Duncan Idaho responds by asking, “ ‘Can you collect chaos?’ ” (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 112).

What *neocosmicism* claims to offer the human creature, is the opportunity to move beyond its encapsulated infancy of a *cosmos* and develop a relationship with the *universe*. Rather than reach the limits of its confinement where it will then stagnate

and decay, that creature can extend its reach beyond previously mapped limitations that are governed by an ontological stability of light and a reified sense of biological capacities as evolutionarily complete. Stepping into the *universe* is about stepping into the indeterminacy of *chaos*, into space-time where the illusion no longer reverses the actual. To participate in the *universe*, the human creature must move beyond polarities, for that creature's relationship with the *universe* is one of "lethal proximity" where the common object is all that remains and where there are no more shadows.

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## Chapter 11

### Psychotic Universe<sup>145</sup>

The universe is just *there*; that's the only way a Fedaykin can view it and remain master of his senses. The universe neither threatens nor promises. It holds things beyond our sway: the fall of a meteor, the eruption of a spiceblow, growing old and dying.

**-Muad'Dib to his Fedaykin** (Herbert, 1976, p. 171).

#### *Frozen Ocean*

Slavoj Žižek describes the *psychotic* position as one that “maintains a distance from the symbolic order” as a strategy to avoid being “deceived” by that order in the first place (1991, p. 79). If a *cosmos* can be taken to be a form of “symbolic order,” inasmuch as it is an ordered map of the *universe* although it is not the *universe* itself, it follows that when the illusion of a *cosmos* is shattered and the human creature reaches beyond the tele-objective constraints of that illusion to enter the *universe*, that creature is taking up a *psychotic* position.

In *neocosmicism's universe* that is indifferent to human emotions and human measure of morality, *chaos* is also discernible as fundamental to the order and expression of the *cold equations*. The *universe* is the current in which the human creature moves and to survive; that creature cannot simply observe the *universe* from the safety of an enclosure; it must participate.

While observation will get the human creature killed, participation also comes at a cost. As the Reverend Mother Mohiam says to Paul Atreides when testing him:

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<sup>145</sup> The *psychotic universe* is a *proving ground* wherein the gap between illusion and reality, map and territory, *cosmos* and *universe* simply does not exist. The human creature is neither outside of nor incarcerated within the *universe*, and through emotional investment in the *cold equations*, that creature's participation influences and is influenced by the *universe*.

‘You will feel pain in this hand within the box. Pain. But!  
 Withdraw your hand and the gom jabbar takes you. Understand?’  
 ‘What’s in the box?’  
 ‘Pain.’  
 ... The itch became the faintest burning. ‘Why are you doing this?’  
 he demanded.  
 ‘To determine if you’re human. Be silent’ (Herbert,  
 1965/1978, pp. 14-5).

Choosing whether to negate the test or endure it is a *threshold* choice, and the test begins with entering the *void*. It begins with entering the *universe*. In *Dune*, Paul’s “world emptied of everything except that hand immersed in agony” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 15), and the burning from within the box, the wounding, is a microcosm of the human creature’s experience of the *proving ground*. The Bene Gesserit box is the planet Dune and indeed the *universe* in portable form; it is a “machine” that tests for the human.<sup>146</sup> When the machine tests for what is human in *cosmicism*; it is the very fact that the *unhuman* does the testing, that exacerbates the human creature’s sense of estrangement from the *universe*. This untenable position in *cosmicism* however, becomes a basic condition of the *universe* in *neocosmicism* with which the human creature is required to come to terms.

When Eldrich and Bulero in *Palmer Eldrich* are within the “reality” that Eldrich constructs under the influence of the lichen he has brought back from the Prox system, Eldrich explains that pain is what “ ‘prove[s] to you that this is authentic. Nothing excels physical pain and terror in that respect; the glucks<sup>147</sup> showed you with absolute clarity that this is *not* a fantasy. They could actually have killed you.’ ” (Dick, 1964/2007, pp. 90-1). For the human creature in *Palmer Eldrich*, the *universe* is an experience of pain and that creature will “fight to hold onto life”

<sup>146</sup> This same event from *Dune* is discussed from *cosmicism*’s perspective in chapter 7, p. 158.

<sup>147</sup> Glucks are unpleasant, vampiric creatures created by Eldrich under the influence of Chew-Z (Dick, 1964/2007, pp. 85, 90, 95).

(Dick, 1964/2007, p. 140) and hold onto its familiar home; or, if sent into the colonial wilderness of another planet, use the translation drugs in an endeavour to avoid “wind[ing] up killing one another in [their] pain” (1964/2007, p. 139). As Eldrich clearly demonstrates however, the pain of the *universe* is not negotiable.

The human use of *unhuman* machines and methods to test for *other* humans is not uncommon. Dick offers a machine designed for this purpose in “The Golden Man” (1987a, pp. 44-5), with Cris’ survival a testament to adaptation and species strength; and the Voigt-Kampff<sup>148</sup> test in *Androids* that blurs the boundary of difference between human and *other* through its failure to determine which is which (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 46). What *cosmicism* regards as an adversarial machine, *neocosmicism* inscribes and a necessity to embrace and therein maximise opportunity for survival. Leto’s peace in *God Emperor of Dune* is also designed to test and in doing so strengthen the human creature, for “[i]f there is no enemy, one must be invented” (Herbert, 1981, p. 219), so that the chaos of war will stir “ ‘the forces of human survival’ ” (1981, p. 220).

The critical point of the test, irrespective of its form, is that the human creature resolves to meet that test, and therein acquire a kind of psychological scar tissue that like toughened skin offers a form of protection that enhances the chance for survival. Like Paul Atreides Fedaykin<sup>149</sup> “filled with joy” (Herbert, 1976, p. 171), it is only in the experience of the test that Paul can attain what Nietzsche refers to in *The Will to*

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<sup>148</sup> The Voigt-Kampff test has been discussed in chapter 1, pp. 20-1, chapter 2 p. 40; and within the framework of *cosmicism* in chapter 5, p. 107 and chapter 7, p. 158.

<sup>149</sup> The Fedaykin are Fremen that Paul Atreides brings into the ranks of his elite force, and commonly refers to as “Death Commandos.” No other force can overcome them in battle, including the much feared Sardaukar of House Corrino. For a brief history and some interesting speculation on the rise and fall of the Fedaykin, refer to the entry in *The Dune Encyclopedia* (McNelly, 1984, pp. 211-2).

*Power* as the “Olympian laughter” of “[t]he deeply wounded,” (“1040 (Summer-Fall 1888),” 1968, p. 535). The basic principle of *neocosmicism’s universe* is not to adversarially pursue the human creature, but to test it once free from its enclosure that it might be vitalised for survival.

The purpose of the insignificant human creature’s experience in *neocosmicism’s* indifferently *cold universe* is to reconcile that creature with its *universe*. This reconciliation uncovers the human creature’s connection with the space-time *chaos* of the antediluvian from which its manufacture of *cosmoses* has excluded it. This connection has never been entirely severed, but the human creature’s *amnesia of the cosmos* turns the connection to haunted shadows from which it recoils in fear.

Whilst that creature’s sense of “ephemeral insignificance in a *universe* frozen by *cold equations*”<sup>150</sup> directs it to seek escape from the *universe* in *cosmicism*; that same insignificance in *neocosmicism* is fundamental to the human creature’s capacity to adapt in order to survive.

The machine not only tests for human, it also harnesses the human and extends the possible limits of that creature’s reach. In Part II, Lovecraft’s stories “The Whisperer in Darkness” and “The Shadow Out of Time” have been discussed with reference to machines that transport the human creature from one part of the *universe* to the other by means of extracting the essence of what that creature is from the body that holds it.<sup>151</sup> In the first instance the intervention of the machine is figured as “harmless” and capable of “keep[ing] the organic residue alive during its absence” (“The Whisperer in Darkness,” Lovecraft, 2000, p. 217); and in the latter, returning

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<sup>150</sup> I make this claim in chapter 6 on p. 134.

<sup>151</sup> This is also discussed in chapter 7, p. 170.

Peaslee with no immediate sense of having ever been absent ("The Shadow Out of Time," Lovecraft, 2000, p. 473). Rather than being experiences from which that creature recoils, the proximity of human creature and mechanical *other* can be read here as a relationship that allows for the possibility of enhancing the capabilities of both. Indeed the human creature, already in his cylinder and inviting Wilmarth to travel to the planet Yuggoth with him, is grateful for the opportunity that *others* have provided via mechanical intervention ("The Whisperer in Darkness," Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 220-1).

Despite the possibilities, and perhaps because of them, re-engaging with the *universe* is a painful experience, and as Michel Houellebecq says with respect to Lovecraft's use of the *cold* and scientific to invoke the frightening and the fantastic, "[a] scalpel is needed to dissect the unnameable" (2005, p. 79). What Houellebecq identifies in this idea runs parallel to Watts' basic concept of the "on" and the "off" in *The Book* (1966/1989, p. 26) and of being "both the leaf and the wind" rather than a leaf passively carried by that wind (1966/1989, p. 125). This implies an understanding that both aspects of an apparent opposition must be operative in order to balance the whole, or for purposes here, to balance the *universe*. The spin of the *heimlich* coin is not about alternate dominant oppositions where one side is black and one side is white, where one is ally and one is adversary, but rather it is about acquiring knowledge and experience of one in order to understand its relationship to the *other*. This is related to what the pilot in Godwin's story, "The Cold Equations," really only comprehends after the stowaway girl is jettisoned, that:

A cold equation had been balanced and he was alone on the ship ... but the empty ship still lived for a little while with the presence of the girl who had not known about the forces that killed with neither hatred nor malice (1954/1958, p. 118).

Opposites merge and operate while paradoxically remaining distinct. To survive within the paradox, is to understand that order exists within the *chaos*. Rather than being the order of a sunlit *cosmos* or even an impersonal *machine* however, it is the order of the *cold equations* that becomes the stable *foundation* on which the emotive human creature must learn to stand. It is that creature's active engagement with the *universe*, it is that creature's moving as an extension of and body within the *universe*; that is the essence of the *proving ground*.

When the *universe* without shadows wherein the unfamiliar once again becomes the familiar by re-emerging into view as if it were Freud's "buried spring" rising up to soak the terrain<sup>152</sup> is all that the human creature has, that creature's sense of its place in space-time is disturbed. When the "linear 'organic' flow of events" to a conclusion becomes "an illusion" (Zizek, 1991, p. 69), the inevitable outcome for the human creature is its location within what the American *sf* critic David Samuelson calls "situations of extremity," where that creature finds it is "facing the unknown and having to learn to understand it, in order just to survive" (1976, p. 108). Writing specifically about Heinlein, but in a manner that is applicable within the broader context of *neocosmism*, Samuelson also notes that what the human creature finds associated with the *proving ground* is "what [Alexei] Panshin calls a 'wolfish' sort of freedom" (1976, p. 108). While this image evokes the privileging of a particular kind of human creature, it also highlights the interlinking ideas that the *proving ground* weeds out the species and that survival is based on an adaptation

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<sup>152</sup> Freud's essay from which this idea is taken, "The Uncanny," is introduced in chapter 1.

of something *other* than the purely human; literally in this case the animalistic, but in other cases the mechanistic and the antediluvian.

By the opening of *God Emperor of Dune*, Leto Atreides has undergone a significant physical transformation from human creature to human-sandworm symbiote. Leto “prefer[s] the company of predators above that of the prey” (Herbert, 1981, p. 191), and is recorded by the Bene Gesserit as saying that “ ‘Drama is one of the targets of my predation,’ ” to which the Bene Gesserit note that “the God Emperor views himself as a predator in the *natural* sense” (Herbert, 1981, p. 73).<sup>153</sup>

Leto knows that survival in the *psychotic universe* requires an ability to adapt to change, and if the human creature can do this, that creature is more likely to survive within the *universe* without being swallowed up by an introspective attention to its insignificant and temporally limited position. During discussion with Moneo Atreides, Leto claims that “The predator improves the stock” (Herbert, 1981, p. 69) and Moneo’s response is to align predation as the emotional parallel of hatred. In his intent to teach, and in openly admitting that he kills but that he does so as an act separated from human emotion, Leto teaches in the first instance that “[t]he predator does not hate its prey,” and more significantly in the second, that the key to making long term decisions for survival is to understand that things change and “ ‘[t]ime runs out for any finite observer. There are no closed systems’ ” (Herbert, 1981, p. 70) and “ ‘[c]hance is the nature of our universe’ ” (1981, p. 20).

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<sup>153</sup> In *Dune Messiah*, Paul Atreides also recognises that he “loosed the wolf among the sheep [italics removed]” when he became Emperor and initiated his jihad (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 25).

What Leto demonstrates is that *cosmicism's* malevolent and adversarial *universe* that is external to and disconnected from the human creature, is *neocosmicism's proving ground*; and it is no less dangerous. For *neocosmicism*, the greatest test of the human creature comes not from *engulfment*, but when it is afterwards immersed within the *psychotic universe*.

The *universe* is not static, and in “The Call of Cthulhu” Lovecraft asserts that “[w]hat has risen may sink, and what has sunk may rise” (2000, p. 98), and the human creature must learn to move within this. Furthermore, the human predator in the *proving ground* remains a common motif, exemplified by Dick’s children Timothy Schein and Fred Chamberlain in “The Days of Perky Pat” who, “aware of [their] many responsibilities” set about sharpening knives they have made and expertly using, “[a] bull roarer that could kill a bird or a small animal at a distance” (1987b, pp. 303-5). Together, these human creatures enter the *proving ground* to hunt that they might better survive. They are the generation born to the *proving ground*; they move within it and are vitalised by it while their parents furtively hide and indulge the *cosmos* of Perky Pat (Dick, 1987b, p. 304).

The dusty *landscape* in which Timothy and Fred move offers a “thrilling initial sight of the expanse. Because it was never the same” (Dick, 1987b, p. 304). These are human creatures conditioned for open terrain and physical exertion (Dick, 1987b, p. 306), and they know that if the Martian “careboys” ever cease their aid to the planet, all the adults will die, but they will surely survive (1987b, p. 305). A “fluke of fate” may have saved those human creatures that “lived through the hydrogen war” (Dick, 1987b, p. 308), and the survivors of fate’s hand are part of the calculable outcome of

the *cold equations*; but as the Baron Harkonnen concludes in *Dune* when contemplating “the loss of Piter the Mentat ... Fate was something inscrutable” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 351). Fate weeds the *proving ground* to be sure, and after that, human creatures such as Timothy and Fred in “Perky Pat” emerge as something else again, because they “‘[a]re born after’ ” the war and are shaped by that revelation (Dick, 1987b, p. 308).

*Neocosmism* claims that the human proclivity for imagining dystopic futures says far more about the strengths and attributes of that creature, than any utopian figuring. It is the wilderness, the desert, the frozen wasteland and the great emptiness of the uncluttered *landscape* wherein the human creature learns what it truly means to be alive. This is what Leto refers to in *God Emperor of Dune* “as the *bahr bela ma*, the ocean without water,” the open desert that the Fremmen once called “the Tanzerouft” and that Duncan Idaho remembers as “ ‘The Land of Terror,’ ” (Herbert, 1981, p. 112). This is what Paul Atreides desires after living too long in his citadel in *Dune Messiah*: “vistas of open sand, for clean distances where one could see an enemy coming from a long way off” (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 32). Furthermore, it is in this *universe* that rather than dominate, the human creature is just one creature amongst *others*, and those *others* that have been hidden away beneath waters or sands resurface to meet with the human.

Lovecraft writes in “The Shadow Out of Time” that for the Great Race it is “the constant struggle to survive” that “stimulated” the development of “highly mechanised” industry (2000, p. 503). Quite simply, the *proving ground* evolves the machine. Predators that rise to the surface such as Fred and Timothy in “The Days

of Perky Pat” may be human creatures that thrive in the territory, but there are *others* in Dick’s corpus that rather than passively contemplate the demise of the human creature if the “careboys” stopped their deliveries (1987b, p. 305), are designed to actively hunt life and eradicate it (“Second Variety,” 1987c, p. 29).

“Second Variety” presents the world of the human creatures as saturated in “heaps of gray ash” (Dick, 1987c, p. 15) and radioactive dust. This is the scarred *landscape* of conflict (1987c, p. 19) into which the “claws ... crawled out from their underground tunnels” (1987c, p. 20). Claws and human creatures alike are contenders for survival in the *landscape* and it is Major Hendricks who proposes the idea that the claws may in fact be “ ‘the beginning of a new species. *The* new species. Evolution. The race to come after man’ ” (1987c, p. 30). Hendricks’ suggestion may be offensively unthinkable to the *other* human creatures with him in the bunker at the time, but Tasso’s later assertion that “ ‘[n]o human can live here’ ” (1987c, p. 45), supports the possibility of *others* surviving where the human creature cannot. Tasso’s insight becomes all the more pointed when she is revealed in the end to be a second variety claw, and as Hendricks discerns, it is the second variety that develops a bomb to destroy the *other* varieties: “They were already beginning to design weapons to use against each other” (1987c, p. 52). The *proving ground* deals unequivocally with human creatures and *others* alike.

*Lethal Proximity in the Psychotic Universe*

He opened his eyes, and everything was gone. It hadn't been a new world – it was this one turning a new, unknown side to him (Strugatsky & Strugatsky, 1971/2007, p. 67).

When the human creature washes up on the shore of the *proving ground*, it is a *tabula rasa* on which its relationship with the *universe* will be inscribed. It is however, also an emotional creature within a human body and defined within those limits, that creature must find a way to reconcile its insignificant localisation within the infinite.

In the closing paragraph of chapters nine and ten, the relationship between the human creature and the *universe*, is described as a relationship of “lethal proximity.” A term taken from Žižek’s text *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*, “lethal proximity” points toward the removal of the ideal perception of an object that occurs when, by “cast[ing] away the shadow to reveal the substance” (1991, p. 84), what that object resembles is no longer an illusion or sublimated ideal (1991, p. 85). What it resembles is also what it is, which is why it resembles itself so well. When the human creature enters a relationship of “lethal proximity” with the *universe*, it is entering the *psychotic universe*. Indeed, Žižek follows his claim above by saying that “A psychotic is precisely a subject who is not duped by the symbolic order” (1991, p. 79), and in these terms the human creature that engages with *neocosmicism’s universe* can be considered a *psychotic* creature.

It is not only the human creature that becomes the *psychotic* subject, but the *universe* too, is *psychotic*. The process of the *cosmos* dissolving to reveal the *universe* can be likened to what Žižek expresses as the abolition of “a certain gap (that separating

‘hallucination’ from ‘reality’) ... This collapse of ‘fiction’ (the contents of the hallucination) and ‘reality’ defines the psychotic universe” (1991, p. 81).<sup>154</sup> The human creature can no longer hide in the shadows, nor can it banish into those shadows what it does not want to see.

*Cosmicism’s* indifferent mechanism that is driven by the *cold equations* also operates in the *psychotic universe*. However more than *machine* alone, this *universe* is also a system in which the observer is inseparable from what is being observed (Capra, 1983, pp. 78-9; Gribbin, 2009, pp. 20, 63-6). This is to say that the human creature is neither outside nor incarcerated within some part of the *universe* expressed as a *cosmos*, and irrespective of how insignificant it is, that creature’s presence influences and is influenced by the *universe*. Between human creature and *universe*, *neocosmicism* recognises a vital symbiosis that *cosmicism* denies.

This symbiosis is like the “Game of Black-and-White” rather than “Black-versus-White” (Watts, 1966/1989, p. 35), or the Baron Harkonnen’s arena in *Dune* where “the black glove and the long knife [is] in [the] right hand, the white glove and the short knife in [the] left hand” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 314). For the participants, this seems to support the idea that “[w]hite *must* win,” (Watts, 1966/1989, p. 35), with the longer blade that is therefore more likely to land a successful blow being held by the black. In this arena however, as it is in the *psychotic universe*, the illusion of one side being more favourable to the human creature than the other conceals the fact that no certainty can be measured from either. Irrespective of the potential of the visible weapon, the white glove also represents the invisible weapon of “poison”

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<sup>154</sup> This passage from Zizek is also quoted in chapter 9, pp. 253.

(Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 314), a representation further complicated by the Baron's nephew Feyd-Rautha who subsequently poisons the black tip. The fate of participants in the Baron's arena, like that of the human creature in the *universe*, is bound up within an indeterminacy that is neither black nor white to the exclusion of the other, but which will nonetheless calculate an outcome.

This grey indeterminacy in *neocosmism* is often represented by the dust of post-atomic apocalypse and *landscapes*. Once the white light of the sun has been left behind and the shadowless black *void* has transformed the human creature, that creature emerges in a *universe* that while remaining as *cold* and as dark as ever, is also shadow enriched by grey indeterminacy. Like blips on a radar, stars and explosions of conflict light up the *universe* in atomic reaction, and as the *sf* scholar Valerie Holliday claims for many of Dick's texts, "[a]tomic explosion erupts both as the real and as the symbolic into the real. Atomic explosion is both inarticulable and the ultimate articulation" (2006, p. 286).<sup>155</sup> The articulation of the inarticulable and indeed "the question of the visible and the invisible" is, Virilio claims in *Grey Ecology*, "perhaps the great post-war question," and this is precisely because conflict makes the invisible and the unimaginable, visible, the consequence of which makes undeniable the knowledge that "the eternal can disappear in the blink of the eye" (2009, p. 49).

More than this however, Virilio highlights the idea that not only does abstraction, which is characteristically lacking in empathic content, make the invisible visible,

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<sup>155</sup> This idea can also be aligned with Roger Luckhurst's discussion in chapters four to six of *Science Fiction* relating to the ideologic and cultural development of post-WW twentieth century *sf* and the genre's apparently dominating premise that, he quotes from Theodore Sturgeon, "humanity... is finished" (2005, p. 98).

but that this is a simultaneous flow wherein abstraction also “anticipates” the visible becoming invisible (2009, p. 50). The question that this leads to, and which is central to the human creature’s capacity for survival within the *psychotic universe*, is the question of how emotion and abstraction can be simultaneously carried by that creature without then producing a dangerous imbalance akin to *cosmicism’s*? Virilio says that he cannot yet answer this question, “the situation is open,” and there is still work to do toward ascertaining any sense of an answer that might move beyond an “approximation” (2009, pp. 61-2). *Neocosmicism* is, by the parameters I am currently proposing in this thesis, focused upon this same question. While I do not propose to advance an answer beyond Virilio’s within this thesis, I do believe that some possible avenues of enquiry are presented, and with further development *neocosmicism* may provide a space for a more consciously targeted exploration of the question.

It is Luckhurst’s focus on the atomic in *Science Fiction* that highlights the idea that Dick in particular is not only writing from within the context of post-atomic apocalypse, but that he “produced a body of work within SF intensely concerned with the interpenetration of the fantasmal and the real, or the human and the machine, under conditions of perpetual war” (2005, p. 106). This blending of the visible and invisible in the human creature’s proximity with the machine is exemplified by Dick in stories such as “The Days of Perky Pat,” *Androids*, “Second Variety,” “To Serve the Master,” and “Jon’s World.”

The *proving ground* of ash and dust, in which the human creature finds itself fighting for survival, links that creature intimately with the machine in relationships that no

longer conform to the idea that a machine is never more than a mindless tool to be used. “James P. Crowe” opens with:

“YOU’RE A NASTY LITTLE – *HUMAN BEING*,” the newly formed Z Type robot shrilled peevisly.

Donnie flushed and slunk away. It was true. He was a human being, a human child. And there was nothing science could do. He was stuck with it. A human being in a robot’s world” (Dick, 1987c, p. 311).

The robots that are initially designed by the human creature as soldiers (Dick, 1987c, p. 322) have become the ruling class, and the human creature now exists in the *universe* as something *other*. Like Herbert’s Fremmen when exposed to an abundance of water, the human creature Donnie is a defeated creature bereft of vitality. The war may have ended, but in its wake is left “[t]he complete chaos of the latter years. Endless wastes of rolling ash and radioactive particles. Miles of ruin” (Dick, 1987c, p. 323); a *proving ground* patiently waiting for a time to come when the human creature’s “centuries of pent-up hatred” (1987c, p. 323) under domestication is directed towards the machines that subjugate them.

While “James P. Crowe” illustrates the preparation of the human creature for the challenge of the *proving ground*, “To Serve the Master” illustrates the ignition point of that creature’s re-engagement with the *proving ground*. Having been compelled to live a subterranean life on its planet due to lingering surface radiation from a war long passed, a human creature’s encounter with a robot<sup>156</sup> and that robot’s escape to underground factories where it will initiate the manufacture of more of its kind, is the event that triggers apocalypse and compels the human creature to once more

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<sup>156</sup> This encounter under the lens of *cosmicism* heralds the demise of the human creature as insignificant and inferior when measured against the machine, and is discussed in chapter 7, p. 167.

participate in the “vitality struggle” rather than continue in spiralling devolution of servitude to the companies.

The machine that waits in the dust of the *proving ground* for the human creature in “To Serve the Master” (Dick, 1987a, p. 147), is also the machine designed to kill that creature (1987a, p. 154), a design that may be said to be perfected in “Second Variety” (Dick, 1987c, p. 37) where the human creature re-engages with the “vast plain of silent ash,” (1987c, p. 38) as it fights for its species’ survival. It is “Second Variety’s” illimitable wilderness of ash and dust (Dick, 1987c, pp. 15-7, 19, 23, 25, 38, 44, 46) that births the machines; and when Major Hendricks watches a claw “disappearing into the ash, like a crab”<sup>157</sup> (1987c, p. 18), he recognises that more than being an *other* against which he must fight to survive, it is an *other* that is itself adapting to survival. The apocalypse and aftermath of atomic processes is an articulation of the inarticulable making the visible invisible and in doing so, emphasising the indeterminacy of and in which the *universe* is manifest.

As Herbert’s Leto reminds himself after surviving a storm in the desert, “[t]he patterns could guide and they could trap. One had to remember that patterns change” (1976, p. 288). To remain unchanging is to stagnate, and survival depends on a capacity to identify not only what is seen, but also what moves, and then also to know how to move in relation to it. This is precisely what Liet Kynes means when he says to Paul Atreides that “ ‘[s]ome parts of the desert teem with life. But all of it has learned how to survive under these rigors. If *you* get caught down there, you imitate that life or you will die’ ” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 111). The lizard that

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<sup>157</sup> The image of these *others* as “like crabs” echoes an image similar to *others* with “crustaceous bodies” in Lovecraft’s story “The Whisperer in Darkness,” discussed in chapter 7, pp. 199-200.

Hendricks and his companions in “Second Variety” first hears and then sees “hurrying through the ash ... was exactly the same color as the ash” (Dick, 1987c, p. 37). Leto says to his captor in *Children of Dune* that “ ‘[t]he wise animal blends into its surroundings’ ” (Herbert, 1976, p. 236), and so too, like Hendricks’ lizard, the human creature must adapt.

More than this, that creature must also understand in “Second Variety” that the claws are adapting, that these *others* are developing new varieties that are increasingly indistinguishable from the human.<sup>158</sup> When Hendricks encounters the “David” he “couldn’t tell it was a machine” (Dick, 1987c, p. 37) and they move together in a literal and embodied “lethal proximity.” That Hendricks survives and David does not, is a consequence of the *cold equations* removing the shadow of illusion – in this instance the illusion of human appearance – to reveal the substance of the machine that David is. Distinguishing which is shadow and which is substance however, becomes increasingly difficult as the *threshold* between the machine and the human engages with the *equations* of the *void* where opposites balance each other out. That the *equations* calculate death for Hendricks at the end of “Second Variety” in no way means that the shadows of illusion win; what wins is the substance, and this time, that substance is embodied by the variety two claws that are becoming more indistinguishable from the human.

The post-nuclear *landscape* is a common though by no means requisite *foundation* for the *proving ground*. What is essential, is the open territory; the untamed *chaotic*

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<sup>158</sup> Arguably even more so than in Dick’s story, the film *Screamers* (1995), closely based on “Second Variety,” presents this adaptation and indistinguishability with disturbing clarity. Furthermore, the *Terminator* series of movies (1984-2009), and particularly *Terminator Salvation*, offer a similar vision.

space. While the *universe* of *cosmicism* is characterised by a saturation of water, the *universe* of *neocosmicism* is often characterised by a saturation of water's lack, and Leto reminds Jessica in *Children of Dune* that “ ‘[w]ater traps us ... We'd be better off living like dust because then the wind could carry us higher than the highest cliffs of the Shield Wall' ” (Herbert, 1976, p. 128); out of confinement and into the *proving ground*. When Jessica returns to Dune from her Edenic and watery planet Caladan, she then realises “*[h]ow seductive it is to live in peace*” (Herbert, 1976, p. 146). It is the lack of water in the deserts of *neocosmicism*, the emptiness, that keeps in motion the *voiding* of the full and the filling of the *void*.

While the *proving ground* in the *Dune* chronicles is most certainly the *universe* in which the human creature moves, it is also in a very specific way the sands of the desert planet Dune that have evolved the native Fremen. Like Dick's boys Timothy and Fred in “The Days of Perky Pat,” Herbert's Fremen are human creatures that respect and thrive in the harsh conditions of their world. As Paul Atreides recognises, they are “a people whose living consisted of killing,” and while in this particular moment Paul also remembers that the Fremen “had lived with rage and grief all of their days” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 369), he also knows that the Fremen are not disengaged from empathic capacity. The Fremen have adapted to the *universe*, and in *Children of Dune*, Paul's daughter Ghanima discerns that:

Fremen possessed a highly evolved conscience ... Every Fremen knew very well that he could do a brutal thing and feel no guilt. Fremen did not feel guilt for the same things that aroused such feelings in others. Their rituals provided a freedom from guilts which might otherwise have destroyed them ... [because they] identify [and understand the] collision between mortal flesh and the outer chaos of the universe (Herbert, 1976, pp. 187-8).

The Fremen capacity to “do a brutal thing and feel no guilt” is similar to Rick Deckard’s approach to his profession as a bounty hunter in *Androids*. The dust and grey ash of the post-apocalyptic *landscape* in Dick’s novel manifests as a desert of crumbling decay in which the human creature is entombed; but this same *landscape* is also its own opposite, and for Deckard it becomes an open territory that is alive after apocalypse.

Deckard is ever mindful that “the dust – undoubtedly – filtered in at him” (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 6) and it is the constant settling of the radioactive dust, the constant decay of all matter into “kipple” surrounding him that is the *proving ground* in which he hunts. It is in his choice as a hunter of androids that Deckard acquires an understanding of the human creature’s need for vitality. When his wife Iran is so lost in depression and therefore disengaged from the *universe* in which she lives that for Deckard communication with her is like speaking “into a vacuum,” he realises that “[m]ost androids I’ve known have more vitality and desire to live than my wife” (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 82).<sup>159</sup>

It is this stripping away of illusion, this blurring of boundaries between the human and android that culminates in Deckard’s transformation from contempt for his electric sheep (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 36) to acceptance of the electric toad that he finds in the desert; because “‘[t]he electric things have their lives too’ ” (1968/2007, p. 211). Having survived the *proving ground* Deckard can at last sleep, knowing that the struggle for vitality continues even when it is embodied as “[l]ife which we can

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<sup>159</sup> This passage is also quoted with reference to *cosmicism* in chapter 7, p. 172.

no longer distinguish; life carefully buried up to its forehead in the carcass of a dead world (Dick, 1968/2007, pp. 208-9).

It is this kind of re-inscription of the human creature that moves it toward a particular kind of existence in space-time where neither human creature nor *other* is of greater significance. As Nietzsche says in *The Will to Power*, “The destruction of ideals, the new desert; new arts by means of which we can endure it, we amphibians” (“617 (1883-1885),” 1968, p. 331), and Deckard’s rest comes because of his ability to adapt and survive in “the new desert.” Like Nietzsche’s “amphibian,” requiring water to survive, but not so much that he cannot rest in the sand, Deckard “stretched out on the bed, dust sifting from his clothes and hair onto the white sheet” (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 213).

Like Deckard’s toad that “blended in totally with the texture and shade of the ever-present dust” (Dick, 1968/2007, p. 207), and similarly like Hendrick’s lizard in “Second Variety,” the human creature survives by casting away its *cosmos* of water-soaked ease and adapting to “new arts,” assimilating the ways and even appearance of *others* as it moves through the *universe*. That creature is vitalised not by standing still in passive observation, but by engaging with the *universe* it inhabits.

Furthermore, like Dora in *Time Enough for Love* who may have to consume a friendly *other* in order to survive (Heinlein, 1973, p. 289), the human creature must be prepared to do what is necessary; this is how the *proving ground* is to be approached. When years later Dora and her family are threatened by *others*, she does what she has to do by shooting one without hesitation and putting a knife to another’s throat within seconds (1973, p. 323). This is exactly what Lazarus Long

means when he says to her “[d]on’t talk about what you can’t do when the chips are down, dear – because you *can*” (1973, p. 289).

What the human creature begins as in both body and emotions is, in *cosmicism*, never enough to assure that creature’s survival. *Neocosmicism’s proving ground* is about a kind of sublimation<sup>160</sup> of that creature inasmuch as heat is applied to refine it, that it might then become something more than a creature floating in some illusory stasis. The *proving ground* is about survival based on what in that *landscape* is becoming – the basic precept of the *universe*, that is, everything changes – but this is not change for change’s sake. The *proving ground* is about adapting to change and moving toward an unknown future that cannot be imagined, because to imagine it is to immediately consign the future to finitude.

Survival in the *universe* is not focused around beginnings or endings, but around the fact that the human creature exists. In the *universe* where a beginning and end constitute the same event, where neither first nor final cause govern, the human creature is undoubtedly insignificant, but no more so than any *other* that survives where the horizon reaches up through the vertical and into the darkness. Movement prevents stagnation and adaptation prevents reification.

In his 1941 speech at the World Science Fiction Convention, Heinlein discusses change as the “primary postulate” of *sf* and of the idea that many human creatures “believe that the customs of their tribe are the laws of nature, immutable and unchanging” (1941, p. 156). When the human creature “makes predictions,” when it

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<sup>160</sup> The *OED* defines a sublimate as “a refined or concentrated product” (“vol. XVII,” Simpson & Weiner, 1989, p. 37), that is the result of “subject[ing] (a substance) to the action of heat in a vessel so as to convert it into vapour, which is carried off and on cooling is deposited in solid form” (p. 39).

endeavours to ascribe an ordered purpose to the way events unfold, “and they keep failing to come true, time and again,” that creature “goes insane, functionally insane” (Heinlein, 1941, pp. 157-8). In order to survive in the *psychotic universe*, the human creature in letting go of measures of finitude is better able to move past schizophrenic insanity and madness, and into *psychosis*.

### ***Psychotic Morality***

‘Arrakis makes us moral and ethical’ (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 103).

There is no question of “subject and object,” but of a particular species of animal that can prosper only through a certain relative rightness (“480 (*March-June 1888*),” Nietzsche, 1968, p. 266).

Although in *neocosmicism* the *universe* is no longer carceral, to enter it is to knowingly walk into what might become a trap. Herbert’s Duke Leto says to Paul in *Dune* that, “ [k]nowing where the trap is – that’s the first step in evading it’ ” (1965/1978, p. 47),<sup>161</sup> and as the test of the Bene Gesserit box exemplifies, the human creature’s strength is to be found in its capacity to identify and, despite the risk, choose to enter the trap (1965/1978, p. 48). It is in harsh conditions that the *universe* sifts through its inhabitants “to find the humans” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 16), to select the ones that are something more than machines or animals in the Garden.

Leto Atrides says to Moneo in *God Emperor of Dune* that “ “[t]he target of the [Butlerian] Jihad was a machine-attitude as much as the machines’ ” (Herbert, 1981, p. 282), highlighting the root of the human creature’s fear in *cosmicism*; that it might

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<sup>161</sup> The scene in which this is said by the Duke is also discussed in chapter 8, pp. 228-9, with reference to the way that he appears to be transformed to something *other* than human when caught in the trap.

not remain human. The *Genesis cosmology's* ideological positioning of the human creature as significant in its world, and by extension the *universe*, is in stark opposition to that creature's insignificance under the governance of the *cold equations* in the *universe as machine*. When that creature arrives at this seemingly irreconcilable juncture the revelation of its insignificance threatens devolution to something *other*, and that creature fears its finitude as an insect or contagion. To trap the trapper however, to overcome *cosmicism's engulfment* and accept immersion in the *psychotic universe of neocosmicism*, means facing imminent threat so that in its innate desire for survival, the human creature might also engage its vitality.

The “Vitality struggle,”<sup>162</sup> has been previously discussed in reference to the Fremen warrior who returns from jihad so transformed by his encounter with an abundance of water, that he loses his vitality. While a poignant example of the tyranny of the Garden in *cosmicism*, this scene is also significant within *neocosmicism*. This particular Fremen's loss of vitality is readily extrapolated across the Fremen population more generally, and it highlights the necessity for struggle. Rather than simply giving up because the fight against the deluge becomes too hard, or because there is no escape from its consequential decay, the *proving ground* allows the human creature to commit to jihad; not as a struggle in the name of an external deity or *other* force, but as a way of life that ensures that creature is continuing to move within the *universe* and be strengthened by its innate capacity to survive. With its severe lack of water and harsh conditions in which human life must balance with the laws of the *cold equations*, Dune is exactly the *proving ground* that the human

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<sup>162</sup> Lorenzo DiTommaso's idea of the “vitality struggle” is introduced in chapter 8, p. 217.

creature requires. As DiTomasso observes, rather than enforce a map of peace and order upon the *chaos*:

Dune reintroduced the grand conceptions of personal combat and heroic elitism, the presence of crack forces such as the Sardaukar and the Fremen, and the inclusion of personal weaponry like the kindjal, the slip-tip, the shigawire garrotte, and the maula pistol (1992, p. 313).

The planet Dune effectively weeds the human creature of its weaknesses, hones it for survival and in doing so strengthens the species.

Like any human creature that dwells in the wilderness, the Fremen approach life and death as aspects of the same event (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 148), an approach that is in itself unencumbered by negative emotion. Similarly, for the stowaway in Godwin's story "The Cold Equations," when facing imminent death, she knows that it is her brother living at "the frontier" – the human creature in the *proving ground* – that will understand and will:

not hate the EDS pilot for doing nothing to prevent her going; he would know there had been nothing the pilot could do ... though the understanding would not soften the shock and pain when he learned his sister was gone (1954/1958, p. 110).

The great test for the human creature – as it is for the stowaway's brother – is to reconcile its own emotive and empathic qualities with the *psychotic universe*; and to do this requires coming to terms with the *universe's cold* moral frame whilst also avoiding devolution. In his essay discussing the difference between *sf* and fantasy, Darko Suvin acknowledges that it is *sf* in which "cold reason" (2000, p. 227) is more commonly found. He then later writes that:

Emotion is a survival tool, no more sacred than any other: it may be life-furthering or genosuicidal, and I have argued (in “Cognitive” and “Haltung”) following Brecht and some feminists, that it can only be the former if it is articulated and clarified (Suvin, 2000, p. 240).

What Suvin’s argument touches on here is the idea that irrespective of what kind of *universe* the human creature considers itself to exist within, more than understand, that creature must also reconcile its emotive state with that *universe*, without leaving itself vulnerable to destruction. One of the questions with which *neocosmicism’s proving ground* tests the human creature is whether it is possible to survive in the *cold equations* with emotion and empathy intact.

When faced with this question in Dick’s story “Human Is,” Lester Herrick’s wife Jill must decide whether to testify that the body of her emotionally abusive husband is taken over by a Rexorian that has removed Lester’s “original psychic content ... and stored [it] in some sort of suspension” (1987c, p. 263),<sup>163</sup> or remain silent and allow the Rexorian to continue to inhabit her husband’s body. The Rexorian accomplishes the exchange on his home world and then returns to the human creature’s world as a man who loves life and values the company of the human creature that is his wife (Dick, 1987c, pp. 260, 262, 267). Jill is horrified when she first learns what has happened to her husband and her testimony of a change in Lester since returning from Rexor is all that she needs to offer to secure the death of the inhabiting Rexorian, the restoration of Lester, “[a]nd this horrible nightmare you’ve been living with will be a thing of the past,” (Dick, 1987c, p. 265). In

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<sup>163</sup> This is a process curiously similar to that of the removal of Henry Akeley’s brain to a cylinder in Lovecraft’s “The Whisperer in Darkness,” the purpose of which is to allow Akeley to travel through space (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 217-8). Further similarity between these stories includes the use of Akeley’s body by an *other* for the purpose of communication with the human creature (p. 235) and the abrupt change in demeanour of Akeley from fear for what is happening, to an acceptance of events as something to be enthusiastically embraced (pp. 192-8).

balancing the *equations* however, Jill's silence is a reply that not only accepts what has happened but accepts the revelation of where her nightmare really lies. When faced with the *equations'* outcome that has seen Lestor Herrick removed from his body, coupled with the redress of emotion within her own life, Jill makes a calculation of her own and accepts that the Rexorian as an *other* is preferable to the human creature Lester who dismisses emotion as “ ‘[m]erely an opinion’ ” that “ ‘contains no factual information’ ” (Dick, 1987c, p. 257).

Fredric Jameson writes in his essay titled “Science Versus Ideology” that “[t]he most striking feature of the equation is surely the absence in it of any place for the subject” (1983, p. 287) which, if aligned to the idea of the human creature being the subject, can be read as inscribing that creature's presence in the *universe of cold equations* as an absence. Indeed, Jameson's words highlight the idea of the insignificance of the human creature, but more than this, once that creature's emotive response to its imminent absence is overcome, Jameson's statement directs attention to an important aspect of equations. This is to say, that the *cold equations* continue to operate irrespective of the human creature. Moreover, just as Jameson says that “the suppression of the shifter or pronoun” seems to signify a shift “to some more complex and elaborate form of thought” rather than regress “from the Symbolic to the Imaginary” (1983, p. 287), the insertion of the *tabula rasa* human creature into the *psychotic universe of cold equations* is exactly the condition in which that creature is surrounded by, and has access to, progression rather than regression.

Jameson also claims that the next significant “feature of the equation ... is its seeming reversibility” that “distinguish[es] the equation rather sharply from the

irreversibility of the verbal sentence” (1983, pp. 287-8). This is to say that the *cold equations* operate congruently and simultaneously in opposing directions, whereas the symbolic ordering of language that generates *cosmoses* does not. The implications of this idea for the *cold equations* in *neocosmicism* are significant, and while only touched on in this thesis, signify the ground of further enquiry within *neocosmicism*’s proposed future refinement.

In *God Emperor of Dune*, Leto makes a similar observation when he considers that “the use of words is so little understood by a civilisation which still believes unquestioningly in a mechanical universe of absolute cause and effect – obviously reducible to one single root-cause and one primary seminal-effect [italics removed]” (Herbert, 1981, p. 285). This is the *heimlich universe* where differences are manifestations of the same totality, and as Jameson says “the two sides of the equation are never really the same” (1983, p. 288). The human creature’s absent-presence is the “structural peculiarity” (Jameson, 1983, p. 288) that invokes the distance between the subject and the equation – between the human creature and the *universe of cold equations* – as a distance erased that generates a “lethal proximity.”

This is to say that just as a subject that speaks has emotionally invested itself in some way with the language it utters and the *cosmos* that language has constructed, so too in the erasure of distance is the human creature in the *psychotic universe* emotionally invested in the *cold equations*, and it is invested in an outcome that is participatory rather than adversarial. The choice that Jill Herrick makes in “Human Is” is both a response to and *founded* on the *cold equations*, and it is a choice that allows her to participate with *others* in the *universe* beyond the confines of her *cosmos*. The

equation's reversibility that Jameson speaks of is the facility that triggers this relationship because the *cold equations* render the human creature entirely insignificant. That creature has become a re-inscribed invisible *other*; the *tabula rasa* that standing at the balance point of reversibility becomes a "Janus, looking simultaneously backward and forward" (Herbert, 1981, p. 277).

It is Russell Letson in his discussion of Heinlein's *Time Enough for Love* who plainly states what the measure for morality becomes in the *psychotic universe*, when he says that the "engineering point of view ... of the book ... offer[s] a rationale for most human activities and a supreme value – species survival – for a universal morality" (1978, p. 200). Whilst the issue of moral purpose in *neocosmicism* is not necessarily as simple or as proscriptive as this, it is a good *foundation* on which to build, and highlights a departure from *cosmicism's* position that the *universe* lacks moral purpose or direction. When the human creature is no more or less significant than any *other* in the *proving ground*, that creature's desire for survival becomes a significant factor in how it survives. While Letson's argument is focused on Heinlein's Lazarus Long, much of what Letson discusses in his essay is applicable within the broader context of *neocosmic* morality, where "morality is ultimately founded not on humanism or any other emotional basis" (Letson, 1978, p. 208), but on survival. As Lazarus Long observes in *Time Enough for Love*, "stupidity is the only universal capital crime; the sentence is death, there is no appeal, and execution is carried out automatically and without pity" (Heinlein, 1973, p. 247); occurring in a *universe* where the *cold equations* as "[n]atural laws have no pity" (1973, p. 351).

In *Methuselah's Children* when Slayton Ford is considering what to do now that the long lived members of the Howard Family are discovered, he knows that:

Cultures could not be kept apart forever, and when they did come into contact, the hardier displaced the weaker; that was a natural law.

A permanent and effective quarantine was impossible. That left only one answer – an ugly one (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 330).

It seems that not only do “natural laws have no pity,” but that the human creature’s solutions to the effects of such laws are equally lacking in empathy when that creature endeavours to maintain its *cosmos* and keep the rest of the *universe* at arm’s length; which is precisely how that creature responds to the problem under *cosmicism*. But as Zizek points out in his “Afterword” to *Revolution at the Gates*, it is easier “to abolish this detour [than] to rethink the Enlightenment project itself” (2002, p. 299). It is this kind of erasure that Slayton Ford is reaching for in Heinlein’s novel, and rather than accept the changes before him, Ford makes what could be ascribed a “fascist” decision that “[t]he the only point left undecided in his mind was whether to liquidate them all, or simply to sterilize them. Either would be a final solution. But which was the more humane” (Heinlein, 1958/1999, p. 330). This is not necessarily to say that the “fascist decision” is either right or wrong, and in this instance highlights Ford’s desire to retreat back into a denial of what he faces by choosing to eradicating it; as *cosmicism* would suggest he do. More critical here for *neocosmicism*, is that this example highlights the idea that the *universe* will at times demand that the human creature consciously make what might be called hard decisions.

*Beginnings and Endings*

Who knows the end? ("The Call of Cthulhu," Lovecraft, 2000, p. 98).

When the human creature encounters *others* impinging upon its *cosmos*, such encounters shatter that *cosmos* in a way that makes impossible any return to the illusion that *others* do not exist. As a preface to the newly disclosed *universe*, the *void* becomes a kind of *terra firma* that does not dissolve as the *cosmos* does when the human creature encounters *others*. Even though that creature might be disturbed by the meeting, the empty and open terrain of the *void* remains unchanged and in doing so, allows a footing to be maintained while adjusting to the darkness that is the *universe*. As Virilio says in *Grey Ecology*, "to see is not to know,"<sup>164</sup> and the experience of what something is and the human creature's relationship with it precedes the mental abstraction of realising that *it is* what it appears to *be* (2009, p. 69). Adjusting vision occurs in the silent dark where there are no words or ordering that captures the knowledge.

Irrespective of the map in hand, or even if the human creature chooses to follow no map at all, the *universe* remains one of *cold equations*, and that creature remains subject to the machinations of those *equations* that determine beginnings and ends. When endings occur, these can be likened to a process of weeding, and in discussing the progressive eradication of the native population on the planet Felicity in Heinlein's *Time Enough for Love* (1973, pp. 8-9), Letson remarks that irrespective of whether it is the human creature or some *other* on the receiving end, "genocide is not

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<sup>164</sup> This is similar to James Kneale's idea of the real being "thrown into relief by the irruption of something impossible," that is discussed in chapter 10, p. 296.

a crime but a condition of existence, nature's way of telling you that you were not a survivor" (Letson, 1978, p. 209).

To do what is required and do so without emotional conflict is, perhaps, the *proving ground's* most difficult test, because in order to achieve this is to continually walk the knife-edge of risk where toppling over into becoming something less than what it thus far has been, remains possible for the human creature. Whilst arguably one of the easier targets for such an assessment, Paul Atreides is also an excellent example of the difference between the regression of the human creature to an insect or infection in *cosmicism's universe*, and the progression of that creature in *neocosmicism* to adapt, survive, and keep intact, what makes it human.

Julia List argues that Paul Atreides' "transition into manhood and adult responsibilities is marked by a kind of dehumanization," and his "capacity for empathy decreases further as he ages" (2009, p. 36). I suggest that List argues from the bipolaric morality that is inherent within the *Genesis cosmology*, and what is overlooked from such a perspective when dealing with characters like Paul Atreides and his son Leto, is that the morality of the *universe* in which they exist is neither confined nor governed by the parameters of cosmological maps. This is not to say that such characters are anarchists doing as they please and bearing no responsibility for their actions – indeed, they take deep responsibility for what they do and recognise the price that they pay – but they do operate from within *chaos* rather than being externally passive observers of *chaos*.

List continues her argument with a recognition of the pivotal event in Paul Atreides' life; the jihad. While she makes a negative assessment of this, the jihad signifies Paul's embrace of and suitability for survival within the *universe*. List writes that:

Paul's attempt to avert the holy war he sees in his prescient visions is thwarted by the biological drives of the human "race consciousness," which seeks mass violence in order to diversify the gene pool and ensure the survival of the fittest (2009, p. 38).

While this statement acknowledges the human creature's inherent drive for survival, which is the basis of morality in the *psychotic universe*, the value judgement implied by the phrase "mass violence" – as a negatively connoted event – is a valuing rooted in the morality of the *Genesis cosmology* that tends to view the survival of all human creatures as imperative. As a consequence, while List infers the value of the *proving ground* for weeding the human creature, her conclusion remains embedded within the *cosmos* that supposes Paul's "impotence in the face of death and destruction" (2009, p. 38). List may be correct to assert that seeing the inevitability of the coming jihad is "terrifying to him," but she then fails to acknowledge that when Paul does take the path of jihad he does so not as a human creature resigned to the fight – as he would be in *cosmicism* – but as a creature making an active choice to take on the "terrible purpose" (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 191) that he would be responsible for within that struggle for survival. By:

thinking with the race consciousness he had first experienced as terrible purpose [Paul finds] that he no longer could hate the Bene Gesserit or the Emperor or even the Harkonnens. They were all caught up in the need of their race to renew its scattered inheritance, to cross and mingle and infuse their bloodline in a great new pooling of genes. And the race knew only one sure way for this – the ancient way, the tried and certain way that rolled over everything in its path: jihad (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 192).

This is the morality of *neocosmicism's universe*, and it shapes the *universe* as if it were a gardener pulling weeds. Furthermore, it is only after this apocalyptic thinking that Paul finds the capacity to mourn his father; to respond emotionally to the events that have brought him into the desert. Jihad may be as Leto says in *Children of Dune* “ ‘a kind of mass insanity’ ” (Herbert, 1976, p. 267), but he also knows as his father does before him, that jihad is also the necessity that strengthens the human creature, for the alternative only serves to enclose and domesticate that creature.

It is not only the human creature in the *universe* that is “caught up in the need of their race to renew its scattered inheritance,” and for *others*, the drive for survival compels movement of their own that threatens and even destroys the human creature. When the buggies in Dick’s story “Martians Come in Clouds” make it to Earth because they wish to escape their dry and dying planet (1987c, pp. 123-4), they are weeded out by the human creature, and so too are the Rexorians in “Human Is” for their possession of human bodies at the expense of the original inhabitant. In both cases these *others* are seeking the renewal of their kind, and while they are perhaps seeking less bloody paths than jihad, they are inevitably weeded by the morality that compels all species to strive for survival. While the buggies pose no significant threat to the human creature, inasmuch as they seek to live on the waters where the human cannot survive (Dick, 1987c, p. 124), the Rexorians do present a threat and the struggle between human creatures and these *others* results in the stronger surviving. Just as “Human Is” implies that numerous Rexorians successfully make it through to Terra in human bodies, so it is that the ending of one creature signals a beginning for an *other*. As the human creature is in this *universe* a re-inscribing

*tabula rasa*, the question of which is the legitimate creature and which is the *other* no longer registers; for all are *other*.

It is Donald Burleson who identifies what List appears to have missed, when he writes that:

In the binary opposition into which Lovecraft thematically carves reality – the dichotomy of worth-seeking humankind versus the uncaring cosmos – one discerns that in a sense each pole of the opposition necessarily contains the other (2011, p. 151).

Although Lovecraft is rightly read under the lens of *cosmicism*, what I believe is undervalued by theorists and critics alike in his corpus is its capacity to reflect *neocosmicism*'s possible alternatives for the human creature; alternatives available not because the crushing revelation disappears, but because the human creature can make the choice in how it will respond. The *universe* may be “uncaring,” but it is nonetheless the *universe* in which the human creature seeks its sense of what it is to be human.

So what is it that does the weeding, and where does it come from? While the answer to this is perhaps as varied as the innumerable species that have been written into *sf* and an analysis of all the variants is beyond the scope of this thesis, there are two significant places from which they come: the antediluvian and the machine.

The machines of Dick's post-atomic *landscape* in “Second Variety” are efficient killers, and while the character Rudi may assert: “They're not a race. They're mechanical killers” (1987c, p. 30), the evolving varieties of the claws clearly demonstrates that these machines are adapting (1987c, pp. 19-20, 27-8, 51). They

may behave “like a horde of locusts” (1987c, p. 32), but “ [i]t only takes one of them. Once the first one gets in it admits the others’ ... ‘Perfect socialism’ ” (1987c, p. 31). Organised and working collectively for survival, the machines are learning how to be worthy adversaries of the human creature in the struggle for species survival. As Tasso says, “ ‘You people have always done good work. You build fine things’ ” (1987c, p. 50) and in order to survive those “fine things” are becoming something *other* than what they first were.

*Founded* within the almost unimaginable scope of space-time, when the human creature is confronted with the apocalypse of the *universe*, that creature must find some way to cognize the idea that much has risen and fallen before ever it existed, and much will most likely rise and fall after it is gone. To assimilate this revelation, is to re-inscribe within the human creature what, in reference to an earlier quote from Leto Atreides, might be called a “Janus-vision.” Rather than antediluvian space-time eliciting crisis and a fear of finitude within the human creature, this complete eradication of significance opens up that creature’s opportunity for vitality in as much as the limits of finitude are entirely removed rather than exacerbated.

*Neocosmism* asks if it may be possible that the *universe* is a *proving ground* for precisely this purpose: to unshackle the human creature from finitude. This implies that the *psychotic universe* may appear to exact some sort of cruelty in order to be kind, and if this is so, the implication arises from this point that despite the human creature’s spatial and temporal insignificance and perhaps even because of it, that creature is in some way significant to the *universe*. Gardeners do not remove weeds for the sake of the removal.

For the human creature to be weeded out by events in the *universe* is one matter, but to be weeded out by the direct intervention of *others*, becomes a differing order of *equation* altogether. The hallmark of *cosmicism* embodied within Lovecraft's corpus is the apparent lack of anything even remotely like human emotion and morality being employed in the process of human eradication. Lovecraft's *others* simply swat the human creature as that creature in turn swats flies. This order of survival may be easily dealt with in *cosmicism* where the human creature is afforded the opportunity to run into hiding from the *universe*, but do the actions of these *others* translate to something accessible in *neocosmicism*, or are they firmly bound within a way of thinking about them that cannot be moved from the demonic and malevolent? The easy, and supportable, answer to this question is to consign Lovecraft's *others* to the parameters of *cosmicism* and be done with it; but the Lovecraftian apocalypse directs attention toward possibilities that are variant to the iconic *heimlich conundrum*.

In the *universe of chaos* one certainty that the human creature can have, is that nothing is certain. Utterly dwarfed to insignificance by the depth and reach of space-time, that creature is now free to make its own choices, including how it responds to what is beyond its grasp of control. "The Call of Cthulhu" deals with the relationship between the human creature and *others* in the *universe* when those *others* are neither benign nor conquerable. They are "the Great Old Ones who lived ages before there were any men, and who came to the young world out of the sky" (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 78), descending from the dark expanse beyond the reach of the vertical horizon.

When *others* are transcribed as desirous of the extermination of the human creature, that creature's experience of the *void* prepares it for accepting that its localised human morality has neither meaning nor power in the *universe* beyond its locality. In this, the human creature's insignificance is liberating, for when the *universe* is so vast as to defy that creature's sense of order and plunges into *chaos*, that creature becomes the *void* that is bound by nothing other than its own depths and its own desire to survive.

For Lovecraft's Great Old One, the span of their reign "paled the speculations of theosophists and made man and the world seem recent and transient indeed" and although it would seem that they "all died vast epochs of time before men came ... there were arts which could revive Them" (2000, p. 79). It is an interesting aspect of the human creature's contact with these *others* that it seems to be triggered by that creature's deliberate choice of action.

Similarly, while it is the human creature that can revive the Great Old Ones, it is also the human creature that first creates the machines; such as Dick's claws in "Second Variety," and an assortment of androids in stories including "To Serve the Master," "James P. Crowe" and *Androids*, or Herbert's "thinking machines" that are eradicated in the Butlerian Jihad. It is worth considering in all this the idea that the human creature is drawn toward *others* that may threaten it, and then ask to what purpose? Is the human creature masochistic or destructive by nature, or is there something else going on? Is it that the drive for vitality draws that creature to something that in beginning may also herald an end.

Reaching for antediluvian beginnings, for “some terrible Cyclopean vista of dark and dripping stone”<sup>165</sup> (“The Call of Cthulhu,” Lovecraft, 2000, p. 66), is a reaching back to what the *amnesia of the cosmos* has hidden. In Lovecraft’s story “The Call of Cthulhu” and its antecedent “Dagon,” once the revelation of the antediluvian reignites an inexplicable memory within the human creature, and despite imminent danger, that creature follows a compulsion to bodily move further into the territory (“Dagon,” 1994, pp. 14-6; “The Call of Cthulhu,” 2000, pp. 92-5).

In doing so, that creature is vitalised, and it is this symbiotic coupling of movement and vitality that fuels a thirst for contact with the enigmatic source of something unidentifiable. After moving beneath a “sun ... blazing down from a sky which seemed ... almost black in its cloudless cruelty” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 12), the narrator of “Dagon” is “[a]westruck at this unexpected glimpse into a past beyond the conception of the most daring anthropologist” (1994, p. 16). “Johansen and his men” in “The Call of Cthulhu” are similarly “awed by the cosmic majesty of this dripping Babylon of elder daemons” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 93), while “[t]he very sun of heaven seemed distorted” (2000, p. 94). These stories foreshadow the human creature’s evolving complicity for engaging with *others*, irrespective of the potential threat to survival; and this is a complicity that culminates in “The Shadow Over Innsmouth” when Robert Olmstead resolves to join with *others* that he might continue his own becoming in the *universe*.

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<sup>165</sup> This kind of antediluvian architecture characterises many Lovecraftian *landscapes* and is particularly evocative in “The Shadow Out of Time” (Lovecraft, 2000) where Lovecraft writes of cyclopean architecture (pp. 478-80), black basalt towers (pp. 480, 482, 485), “ruins of great stones in far places and under the sea (p. 489), and the “vast, dark, windowless ruins from which the Great Race shrank in curious fear” (Lovecraft, 2000p. 500). While beyond the limits of this thesis, architectural manifestations in the *landscape* play a significant role in *neocosmicism*.

Under the perspective of *cosmicism*, the adversarial forces with which the human creature contends are inescapable because they lie at the *foundation* of their respective *cosmoses*. In the background of the *universe as machine*, the machines wait, and no matter how the human creature turns, it will encounter those machines and the *cold equations* that drive them. Similarly, the antediluvian terrain and that terrain's inhabiting *others*, that by the sheer weight of their significant occupancy of space-time render the human creature's reach insignificant, lurk beneath the verdant Garden of the *Genesis cosmology*. When under *neocosmicism* the *cosmos* dissolves to reveal the *universe*, these *others* are not eradicated; now that they are unhidden and unleashed, they cannot be negated. In the *psychotic universe* where beginnings and ends are the same, where there is no longer any distinction between first and final cause nor privilege of one above the *other*, the human creature's fear of its own finitude as a consequences of the adversary's power dissolves. That creature may still be required to fight for its survival, but it will do so within the context of an emotional shift that allows it to engage in the "vitality struggle" of the *proving ground*, with the knowledge that it is doing no more or less than any *other* that it encounters in the *universe*.

Balanced between beginnings and ends, Janus-faced, the human creature is reaching for both its purpose in being and its possibility to become. Poised between the *cold* darkness of the *universe* of inseparable waters and the burning light of the *universe* of illimitable wilderness, the human creatures engages in a relationship of "lethal proximity" with this spinning *heimlich* paradox; a relationship in which it will never be the same again, nor from which will it ever wish to retreat into the absolute cessation of vitality that characterises *cosmicism's* madness and death.

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## Chapter 12

### Chimeras and Cannibals

Then, as his planet killed him, it occurred to Kynes that his father and all the other scientists were wrong, that the most persistent principles of the universe were accident and error (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 264).

You can imagine anything at all. And real life is never what you imagine (Strugatsky & Strugatsky, 1971/2007, p. 114).

#### *Everything Changes*

When Lovecraft's character Tillinghast in the story "From Beyond" presents a supposition of the *universe* and asks what is it that the human creature really knows, he does so understanding that such creatures cannot comprehend the "boundlessly complex cosmos," although beings of a "different" kind could.<sup>166</sup> Tillinghast's quest ultimately ends in his death, for like many human creatures, and despite knowing how to "overleap time, space, and dimensions ... to the bottom of creation" (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 90), he remains incapable of surviving in the *universe*.

In writing about the *universe*, Lovecraft is writing about the *proving ground*; but it is important to keep in mind that *cosmicism* does not figure the *universe* in such terms. That most of Lovecraft's protagonists do not survive intact, is *cosmicism*'s predicted outcome; but more than this, the human collateral damage his texts contain highlight a certain kind of lack in terms of what that creature requires for survival.

Many of Lovecraft's human creatures fall, but not all of them, and the closing scene of "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," makes it clear that a *neocosmic* survival is

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<sup>166</sup> Tillinghast's assertions, actions and his consequential demise are examined from the perspective of *cosmicism* in chapter 6, pp. 126-7.

possible. In writing about this particular story, Donald Burleson underscores the localised attainment of human survival wherein the story's protagonist Olmstead, "accepts his lot," with a more precarious future for the species in general because "the implications to humankind remain: there are older tenants of the earth, and a melding of the races leaves no question as to which race has the capacity for dominance and survival" (Burleson, 2011, p. 149).

As "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" reveals, uncovering the antediluvian *foundation* is a necessity that propels the human creature toward and indeed beyond the accident of the deluge, because in doing so, that creature obtains a sense of place in the *universe* relative to *foundations*. It is the human creature's sense of its *foundations*, irrespective of how far back those *foundations* temporally reach, that enables it to maintain the balance between the importance of its individual and embodied locality and its utter insignificance in the *universe*. In "Lovecraft's Concept of Background," Steven Mariconda stresses that even "[t]hough human concerns were of no importance to the universe at large, this need not mean that they were of no value to the individual psyche" (1986, p. 4). For the human creature to navigate within the *universe* where the prime morality is one of species survival, the application of "the concept of relative values ... tradition in its largest sense" becomes a means by which the human creature can secure "an emotional anchor" (Mariconda, 1986, p. 12).<sup>167</sup> Understanding its own space-time position relative to the antediluvian, is what triggers the human creature's access to this emotional anchor.

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<sup>167</sup> For further analysis of the link between Lovecraft's development of *cosmicism* and his sense of "background" in terms of tradition and antiquarianism, Timothy Evans' essay titled "Tradition and Illusion: Antiquarianism, Tourism and Horror in H.P. Lovecraft" (2004) is an excellent complement to Mariconda's essay discussed above.

When the human creature is poised at the water's edge and looking toward the antediluvian *universe* that the deluge buried, that creature is located in the borderland territory of damp decay and mould, of fungi, insects and worms, fish and strange creatures.<sup>168</sup> In "The Call of Cthulhu," the human creature faces images of "a sort of monster ... an octopus, a dragon, and a human caricature" (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 63), an image later encountered adorning "the immense carved door with the now familiar squid-dragon bas-relief" (2000, p. 94). In the earlier story "Dagon," the human creature encounters engravings and bas reliefs of "conventionalized aquatic symbols such as fishes, eels, octopi, crustaceans, molluscs, whales and the like," and more significantly the images of creatures "damnably human in general outline despite webbed hands and feet, shockingly wide and flabby lips, glassy, bulging eyes, and other features less pleasant to recall" (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 15). For the human creature to attempt a denial of the existence of such *others*, as it does in *cosmicism*, is to fail to accept the *universe* as it is, and in consequence of this denial the human creature itself decays and crumbles in the pervasive water from and for which it is not made. The human creature's observation of an apparently human chimera in "Dagon," is a precursor to an embodied experience in the later story, "The Shadow Over Innsmouth." By inferring the human necessity to accept the antediluvian *foundation*, "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" signifies for *neocosmicism*

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<sup>168</sup> The release of Ridley Scott's *Prometheus* (2012) as the next instalment in the *Alien* saga – a series which can itself be read through the lenses of both *cosmicism* and *neocosmicism* – offers a challenging alternate view of the birth of the human creature from the mingling of the altered DNA of *others* within the waters of that creature's planet. When the human creature finds the interplanetary way-point of these *others*, that creature enters a realm that is damp, and in disturbing the cargo of that realm, ignites the evolution of both indigenous worms and of itself to become something else again. A Lovecraftian influence upon this film is readily identifiable, as is an arguably more deeply embedded maritime faunal representation of antediluvian proportions; culminating in the human-alien hybrid that is birthed with the appearance of a octopus or squid and rapidly grows to resemble something more often aligned with representations of Lovecraft's Old Ones and particularly of Cthulhu. This film challenges both assumptions of human origin and assumptions of possible human futures, suggesting that chimeric blending has been present from the very *foundation* of the human species.

that the blending of that creature with the *other* becomes an accessible transformation that allows for an alternative embodied means by which to survive, for “[t]his was to be my realm, too” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 462).

It is symptomatic of *neocosmicism*'s inherent paradox that while the human creature may in one instance seek survival in the *universe* by moving toward *engulfment* in the deluge of cold and literal ocean depths, it is equally and simultaneously possible that *other* human creatures will seek survival in deserts where damp-clinging mould and decay pose no threat. “The Shadow Over Innsmouth” reveals the human creature's willingness to interact with the antediluvian *foundation*, and Herbert's *Dune* chronicles map that creature's acceptance of participation with the antediluvian.

After absorbing numerous sandtrout in a symbiotic enshrouding of his human body in *Children of Dune* (Herbert, 1976, pp. 307-9), the biological parameters of Leto's body develop an increasing discomfort with water as he evolves, writing in his Journals that “[t]he sandtrout skin which impels my metamorphosis has learned the sensitivities of the worm ... I can feel my ending in it” (Herbert, 1981, p. 151). The event that signifies the beginning of Leto's transformation that he might survive, also foreshadows his end, but in ending, Leto knows that his transformed body has secured the future survival of the vitalised human:

because there are no other sandtrout, only the half-dormant creatures of my skin. Without sandtrout to bring this world back to desert, Shai-Hulud will not emerge; the sandworm cannot evolve until the land is parched. I am their only hope (Herbert, 1981, p. 151).

In *neocosmicism's universe*, into which Leto enters with the altered vision of prescience (Herbert, 1969/1979, pp. 212-3) and re-inscribes himself as a chimera of human and *other*, the opportunity for vitality is offered to the human creature through the eventual death of its God Emperor and the scattering of the sandtrout from his skin; that the worms of Dune might once more live and produce the vision-altering spice that extends life and allows the human creature greater reach within the *universe* (Herbert, 1981, pp. 444, 452).

It is the sublimating quality of *neocosmicism's proving ground* that necessitates change and adaptation, and because the biological body is as inseparable from the empathic sentience that it contains, as the human creature is inseparable from the *universe*, that creature's body is also subject to change. Beginnings and endings are intimately connected in the *proving ground* where mutation and accident are natural events. As Leto says to Moneo Atreides when they are discussing the approaching testing of Moneo's daughter, Siona, "[y]ou are right to observe that accidents happen even in my universe" (Herbert, 1981, p. 71). Moneo may fear the death of his daughter, but to not test her and not risk an unforeseen accident is to unequivocally ask Leto to then " 'delegate authority to a weak administrator' " (Herbert, 1981, p. 71).

Lovecraft writes in a letter that "[i]t takes what amounts to a rare *accident* to produce a solar system, & still *another* rare accident, to produce the stream of biological modifications culminating (so far) on this planet as mankind" ("Novr. 27, 1933," Derleth & Turner, 1976, p. 324), drawing out to the idea that the biological fact of being human is entirely an accident in the *universe* that was waiting to happen.

Moreover, other accidents may change or even eradicate that biology, and irrespective of the nature of the accident:

there will certainly come a time when the mammal will have to go down to subordination as the reptilia went before him ... Probably the period of human supremacy is only the prologue to the whole drama of life on this planet – though of course some cosmic collision is always capable of smashing up the theatre before the prologue is done ("October 30, 1929," Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, p. 43).

In acknowledging that the human creature's chance of survival is no better or worse than that of any *other* in the *universe*, Lovecraft also recognises that survival may necessitate an evolutionary change; if indeed that creature can avoid the direct impact of an integral accident such as a "cosmic collision."

In Dick's story "Oh to Be a Blobel," the accident comes as warfare of a proportion that transects planetary boundaries (1987a, p. 359).<sup>169</sup> The accident of conflict brings human creatures and Blobels together, and the morality of species survival compels both to develop spies capable of physical transformation to appear as the *other*, and therein infiltrate their enemy (Dick, 1987a, p. 360). For the protagonist of this story, George Munster, the apocalypse that conflict offers comes when, as a human creature on earth, he inhabits a body that is human some of the time and then "for almost twelve hours out of the day he reverted ... to his old war-time Blobel shape" (1987a, p. 361).

To survive the stress of being a chimeric *other*, Munster attends the "Veterans of Unnatural Wars Headquarters" in "human form or in Blobel forms; this was one

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<sup>169</sup> It is interesting to note that while the Blobels "probably" came from Proxima, unlike the Proxers in *Palmer Eldrich* (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 78), they did not come with an agenda of invasion or controlling the human creature, but in the hope of species survival, and settled on Mars and Saturn's moon Titan accordingly (Dick, 1987a, p. 360).

place in which both were accepted” (Dick, 1987a, p. 366). For more than a decade after the war, Munster quarrels with his compatriots (1987a, p. 367, 370); fathers four children – one of which “looks like it washed up on the beach” (1987a, p. 367) – to a Blobel that involuntarily reverts to human; and fails at every business venture he tries (1987a, p. 366, 367). Deciding that “ ‘we must not think about the old days – we have to close our minds to our pasts.’ *Nothing but our future*” (1987a, p. 369) wherein human creatures and Blobels are no longer “natural enemies” (1987a, p. 366), Munster finds success at last when he develops a business based upon “ ‘[a] Blobel idea’ ” (1987a, p. 372) and is bodily re-inscribed as a fully transformed Blobel (1987a, p. 373).

*Cosmicism* interprets this story as one in which the human creature surrenders, in the worst kind of way, to the *cold equations* and abandons all human empathy for wife and family in the pursuit of material success, a pursuit that culminates in Munster’s reduction to something less than human.<sup>170</sup> *Neocosmicism* however, allows for the human creature to erase a past where it has been confined; and in this confinement taught to consider its embodied form as superior and to cherish its biological separation from everything *other* than itself. This is not a rejection of the antediluvian past, but rather, an acceptance; and an acceptance of the human creature’s locality within space-time. Blobels have the capacity quite literally to merge and blend and then separate again. Their fluidity allows them to move within the current of the *universe*, to adapt to events and accidents. Munster’s apocalypse is

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<sup>170</sup> The Latin American scholar and critic of American popular culture and *sf*, Margaret Lee Zoreda, largely supports this perspective in her 1994 essay titled “Bhaktin, Blobels and Philip Dick” (Zoreda, 1994). While I do not support all of Zoreda’s assertions, her assessment of Munster’s final outcome (pp. 59-60) and analysis in terms of Mikhail Bakhtin’s “concept of *dialogism*” (p. 55) in particular, contribute to this essay as a sound analysis of Dick’s story as it is framed within the general parameters of *cosmicism*.

the conclusion he draws that it is this fluidity, this capacity to extend his reach beyond human confines that will best support his capacity for survival, because he moves with and within the *universe* rather than in spite of it.

The accident, irrespective of its kind, highlights the insignificant inasmuch as the accident is the apocalypse that in revealing finitude, reveals the insignificant.

According to Virilio this “opens up a new type of thought: the magnitude of the thin (*minceur*) ... I am not speaking about death, or the end, but of finitude, an enormous curiosity in the face of finitude” (2009, p. 43); and it is this curiosity that stirs the human creature to extend its reach and move in the *universe*. Virilio considers the accident an “integral” event, a distinction he draws between the localisation in the human creature’s past of an earthquake or a fire occurring “*somewhere*” and the evolving global sense of the accident as integral that is made possible through the pervasive presence of, and accessibility to, the world via a technology that is typically, and ironically, viewed by the human creature through the tele-objectivity of the screen (2009, p. 48). Comparable to Lovecraft’s accident in the *universe* that the human creature is, the accident as it is framed by Virilio “affects the expanse of the common world” (2009, p. 31), and the accident’s ensuing apocalypse is “linked to the grandeur of smallness, linked to the grandeur of humility, to the grandeur of failure” (2009, p. 42), wherein the human creature’s insignificance is significant.

The accident is operationally similar to Žižek’s removal of the shadow to reveal the substance.<sup>171</sup> When the accident occurs, irrespective of what order of accident it is, such an event initiates the apocalypse; that is, the revelation of the substance. In

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<sup>171</sup> Žižek’s concept is noted in chapter 10, p. 291, and discussed in chapter 11, pp. 310-1.

*Palmer Eldrich*, when Leo Bulero is in Eldrich's created *universe*, he says to the child he knows as Monica that " 'You're Palmer, aren't you? I mean, down underneath? Actually?' " Eldrich responds by saying: " 'Take the medieval doctrine of substance versus accidents ... My accidents are those of this child, but my substance, as with the wine and the wafer in transubstantiation –', " to which Bulero responds by acknowledging Palmer's implied conclusion (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 95). It is the accident that triggers a "lethal proximity" by removing the shadow to reveal the substance that is both symbol (or shadow) and substance at the same time; just as Eldrich's metaphorical "wine and the wafer" are simultaneously symbol and substance of actual blood and body. The accident turns the possibility to an actuality, and demands transformation in the human creature through that creature's participation.

To survive in the *universe* the human creature must come to terms with the possibility that its transformation may be located not only within itself at an empathic and emotional level, but also at the interface between what it is and the *universe*; that interface being the biological body. If *cosmicism* highlights nothing else, it clearly demonstrates that all too often the raw substance of the human creature's biology is not enough to assure its survival. For *neocosmicism*, after immersion in the *void* and re-inscription as *tabula rasa*, to survive, the human creature must adapt; and this can also mean the adaptation of its body.

### *Engaging the Interface*

Leto felt the pure movement of himself. He was a membrane collecting infinite dimensions and, because he saw those dimensions, he could make the terrible decisions.

*As my father did ...*

Leto saw the whole pattern of the visions now and knew the thread he must follow. *My skin is not my own* (Herbert, 1976, pp. 304-5).

Whether manifest within the deep cold of space or the searing atomic reaction of stars and explosions, *neocosmicism's proving ground* transforms.

When Major Hendricks in Dick's story "Second Variety" leaves the enclosure of his bunker to seek his Russian enemy, he encounters within the blasted *landscape*, a young boy named David, who lives in "[t]he ruins" and whose body has adapted to survival in the *proving ground* with "skin ... dry and rough; radiation skin" and "looking into the boy's face [Hendricks saw] no expression" (1987b, p. 21). To the human creature that Hendricks is, David is "strange," but Hendricks also knows that the surviving children were:

Quiet. Stoic. A strange kind of fatalism gripped them. Nothing came as a surprise. They accepted everything that came along. There was no longer any normal, any natural course of things, moral or physical for them to expect. Custom, habit, all the determining forces of learning were gone; only brute experience remained (Dick, 1987b, pp. 22-3).

As a survivor in the post-atomic *proving ground*, the human creature Hendricks accepts the accident's moral and physical revisions, and survival equals adaptation.

As the survivor of an accident David is adapted to be something *other* than he once was, and the visible nature and physical attributes of his body are not what eventually surprise Hendricks. The revelation that shocks is not that the human

creature has become an *other* in the *proving ground*, but that the adversarial *other*, in this case a machine commonly referred to as a claw, has adapted to become an *other other* that appears to be human. The true nature of the boy is revealed only after he has been shot by the Russians and “[f]rom the remains of David a metal wheel rolled ... Parts popped out, rolling away, wheels and springs and rods” (Dick, 1987b, p. 26). The human body, and more specifically the surface of that body, becomes an interface between the visible and the invisible. It becomes an interface between the internal, emotional entity, and the external background that is the *universe of cold equations*, and in the case of “Second Variety,” it becomes an interface between the machine and the human.

The body that *cosmicism* designates as a frail and insignificant insect shell of contagion, the body that Merleau-Ponty speaks of as a “third term” in relation to the “figure-background structure” and the “horizon,” (1945/1958, p. 115)<sup>172</sup> is in itself a *threshold*. Unlike the *threshold* that in *cosmicism* the human creature rejects and in *neocosmicism* must cross, the experience of this particular *threshold* is one from which the human creature never escapes while ever it lives. As Ingebretsen points out, when the internal and external collide, when the invisible and the visible meet, such “moments of epiphany ... usually provoke distress and fear” and the human creature’s solution to such circumstance is to “divide and separate visible from invisible worlds; to map heaven ... and thereby to map a human world and to set a firm boundary between the two kingdoms” (1996, p. 156). When the external horizon of a safe and ordered *cosmos* gives way to the *psychotic universe of chaos*, it

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<sup>172</sup> This reference to *Phenomenology of Perception* is discussed in the opening of chapter 8, pp. 208-9.

is the interfacing body that carries the internal human creature through that externality, and the local through the universal.

### *Accidental Cannibals*

Who gets sacrificed? ... which of us gets melted down for Palmer to guzzle? Because that's what we are potentially for him: food to be consumed. It's an oral thing that arrived back from the Prox system, a great mouth, open to receive us (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 196).

The external *other* cannot be ignored and irrespective of whether that *other* intends to consume the human creature in some way or not, that creature is unavoidably re-inscribed by the encounter. The surface of the human creature's interfacing body may or may not signify the exchange, but internally, it is caught within the becoming of something *other* than it previously was; sublimated before and by the *universe*.

In Lovecraft's "The Shadow Out of Time," *others* arrive unbidden and possess the human creature (2000, pp. 466-7), to later dispossess when their purpose is fulfilled (2000, pp. 472-3). In *Children of Dune*, the twins Leto and Ghanima Atrides actively seek the possession of themselves by their father and mother respectively that they might draw on the knowledge of those *others* for guidance in navigating the *universe* (Herbert, 1976, pp. 66-71). In yet another case, the human creature in Lovecraft's "The Thing On the Doorstep" is possessed by an *other* for a binding permanence in that *other's* own bid for survival (2000, pp. 314-9, 323-5).

Whether permanent or not, the exchange that penetrates the human interface in *neocosmicism* leaves that creature irrevocably transformed. Furthermore, it seems that irrespective of whether the possessing *other's* intention is affirmative or

destructive, once having been consumed in some way, the human creature's loss of that possessing *other* leaves it bereft of a sense of wholeness, a lack that in *cosmicism* is never subsequently resolved.

Just as the possessing *other* consumes in its pursuit for survival, so too may the human creature. Ingebretsen asserts that Lovecraft's "themes are the endless return of the body, and thus, the haunting of the soul by its own hungers; by time; by memory; finally, its effacement as the consequence of ill-fated love" (1996, p. 133). While *cosmicism* readily categorises the outcome of events related to the hungers of the body, the resolution is not quite so straight forward in *neocosmicism*. Irrespective of the form taken, *neocosmicism* is reluctant to classify acts of consumption only from within the more conventional parameters of what is good and right and what is by contrast therefore bad and wrong. *Neocosmicism* tends to examine not so much the moral question of the act itself, as it does the question of the intent behind the act and its subsequent outcome.

What is an unfulfilled haunting in *cosmicism*, wherein the human creature is potentially locked within an adversarial standoff with its own body, is a potentially satiable imperative of the body in *neocosmicism*. Chimeric transformation, which is often accompanied by a visible, external change of or addition to the body's appearance, can be enhanced by cannibalistic transformation. Chimeras and cannibals in their acts of consumption internalise what has been external and in doing so, transform rigid demarcations of boundaries to fluid incongruities that remain in motion. This is a rewriting of the substance of the human creature; it is the

blurring of the *heimlich* familiar with the *heimlich* unfamiliar until everything and nothing is familiar.

When the “fusing of domains” that cosmological mapping once concealed from the human creature is uncovered, Ingebretsen argues, the apocalypse of the destabilised map speaks directly from the territory of “a sort of miscegenation, that – were it found in any Gothic text – would be read as disgusting, horrible, unspeakable. Gods and virgins, indeed” (1996, p. 158). The removal of the tele-objectivity of the map that has operated as if it were some sort of intercessory between the human creature and the accidents of the *universe*, allows that creature to move freely beyond the map’s confines because it can see the territory beneath. Quite simply, the *cold equations*’ sum calculation of “what is,” while perhaps more terrifying than the illusion that has been supported by the *amnesia of the cosmos*, is an apocalypse that allows the human creature direct access to an open terrain wherein it will be compelled to make choices rather than accept its lot within a predetermined and limited confinement.

What Ingebretsen alludes to within the orthodoxy of the human creature’s vision of deity, Lovecraft openly confronts in “The Dunwich Horror” when the human creature and the *other* produce offspring that are simultaneously neither of them and both of them. Miscegenation within *cosmicism* is an accident characterised by only negative outcomes, always read as producing something that in being *other* than human, is also less than human. “The Dunwich Horror” is an excellent example of the lessening of the entity inasmuch as Wilbur Whatley is ultimately not strong

enough to pass as human and survive within that creature's cosmological parameters, for he was only:

partly human, beyond a doubt, with very manlike hands and head, and the goatish, chinless face had the stamp of the Whatleys upon it. But the torso and lower parts of the body were teratologically fabulous, so that only generous clothing could ever have enabled it to walk on earth unchallenged and uneradicated (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 123).

The description of Wilbur Whatley that follows directly from this passage is detailed, and while too long to include in its entirety here, it is significant that it not only renders a stark image of a human-*other* chimera, but that it is a distinct blending of the terrestrial human body and “the symmetries of some cosmic geometry unknown to earth or the solar system” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 123). Just as Wilbur Whatley cannot pass for human, neither can his invisible and enormous twin conceal itself in the terrain, saturated and alien to the human creature though that terrain might be (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 99-103).

Beyond the limits of *cosmicism* however, in disrupting the *cosmos* with the accident of the *other* that resides within or somehow transforms the bodily space of the human creature, “The Dunwich Horror” points towards more successful consumptions. These blendings pass largely unnoticed by human creatures for generations in stories such as “The Festival,” where in secret “people had ... kept festival in the elder time when festival was forbidden” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 215), and “The Shadow Over Innsmouth” where hereditary is often “peculiarly puzzling” with its details being “unfamiliar,” and those human creatures who would know having “dropped out of sight,” or being “long dead” (Lovecraft, 2000, pp. 456-7). Although not entirely identifiable by the human creature, the chimeric descendents of

embodied blending are negated by means of simple avoidance, and Innsmouth is “a town not shown on common maps” and from which human creatures beyond its borders “ ‘always try to cover up any Innsmouth blood they have in ’em’ ” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 385).

These stories speak of the human creature’s imperative for survival in the *proving ground* where its biological limits are in some way caught up within the biological influence and intermingling of *others*. The narrator of “The Festival” returns to the port town of his ancestral kin “who had founded the Yule worship” (Lovecraft, 1994) and where “against the rotting wharves the sea pounded; the secretive, immemorial sea out of which the people had come in the elder time” (1994, p. 216). Similarly, Olmstead returns to Innsmouth after dreaming of his “grandmother under the sea” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 461) and resolves to “live with those who had lived since before man ever walked the earth” (2000, p. 462). While the narrator in “The Festival” responds with a flight of fear that is typical of the human creature in *cosmicism*, Robert Olmstead in “The Shadow Over Innsmouth” chooses to move toward the antediluvian.

The consumption of the human creature by an *other* in *cosmicism*, its disembodiment and dismemberment, is about collecting that creature as if it were an insect in a jar.<sup>173</sup> In *neocosmicism* however, rather than collecting insects for observation, disembodiment and dismemberment is about eating insects, it is about consumption for the purpose of assimilating the internal with the external. An interesting case of consumption is that of Dick’s returned explorer Palmer Eldrich, who appears to have

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<sup>173</sup> This idea is discussed in chapter 7 on pp. 170, 200.

cannibalised himself. It is Barney Mayerson during his self-imposed exile to Mars that watches a craft land “on the flat desert” and:

From the ship stepped Palmer Eldrich.  
No one could fail to identify him ... Gray and bony, well over six feet tall, with swinging arms and a peculiarly rapid gait. And his face. It had a ravaged quality, eaten away; as if, Barney conjectured, the fat-layer had been consumed, as if Eldrich at some time or other had fed off himself, devoured perhaps with gusto the superfluous portions of his own body (Dick, 1964/2007, p. 170).

Like the snake that swallows its own tail in an unbroken circle where its end and beginning are the same, Eldrich appears to consume for his own sustenance what is bodily superfluous to his survival within the *universe*. Like Herbert’s desert Fremens starved of water and reclaiming it from their own bodies by means of the “stilsuit” that they wear (1965/1978, pp. 33-4), Eldrich is re-inscribed for survival. The human creature may be consumed by itself or by *others*, and it may in turn choose to consume *others*.

It is the embodied internalisation of something that has been external to it that ties the human creature more intimately to its antediluvian *foundation*. The consumption of the human creature via descent from an act of miscegenation with a “prehistoric white Congolese civilisation” (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 65) in Lovecraft’s story “Arthur Jermyn,”<sup>174</sup> speaks of a connection with the antediluvian *landscape* of Africa that is reinforced in another of Lovecraft’s stories, “The Picture in the House.” Despite the apparently devolved terrain and character that typifies this as a story embedded in the principles of *cosmicism*, it is significant that within such circumstances

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<sup>174</sup> The story title transcribed above as it appears in the Harper Collins publication referenced in this thesis, is a shortening of the full title given by Lovecraft as: “Facts Concerning the Late Arthur Jermyn and His Family” (Joshi & Schultz, 2001, p. 131).

cannibalism points toward a strengthening of the human creature and the mastery of some aspect of space-time.

The consumption of the body by either cannibalism or chimeric blending is the merging of something external to the body as an accident of the re-inscription of the human creature. Only through some form of death – and the *proving ground* often requires a partial death from which the human creature ultimately survives – will that creature have life. The *cold equations* of the *psychotic universe* legitimise consumption as an appropriate response of the human creature to certain conditions.

### ***In the Fingers of Machines***

He had enormous steel teeth, these having been installed prior to his trip to Prox by Czech dental surgeons; they were welded to his jaws, were permanent: he would die with them. And – his right arm was artificial. Twenty years ago in a hunting accident on Callisto he had lost the original; this one of course was superior in that it provided a specialized variety of interchangeable hands. At the moment Eldrich made use of the five finger humanoid manual extremity; except for its metallic shine it might have been organic.

And he was blind. At least from the standpoint of the natural-born body (Dick, 1964/2007, pp. 170-1).

A possessive consumption of the human creature by *others* is not the only conduit through which that creature might enhance its opportunity for survival in the *universe*. In writing of a blind man's walking stick, Merleau-Ponty highlights at a most basic level, the retrofitting the biological body, and this stick not only "becomes a familiar instrument," it extends the human creature's sense of its location in space-time as "not at the outer skin of the hand, but at the end of the stick" (1945/1958, pp. 175-6).

Just as Merleau-Ponty's blind man can see further into the darkness around him, so too is the mechanical device external to the biological body used by Lovecraft's character Crawford Tillinghast in "From Beyond,"<sup>175</sup> under the premise of "waking ... sleeping senses."<sup>176</sup> As Tillinghast says to his friend, " 'The waves from that thing are waking a thousand sleeping senses in us; senses which we inherit from aeons of evolution from the state of detached electrons to the state of organic humanity' " (Lovecraft, 1994, p. 92). The machine is used to reconnect the body with some aspect of the *universe* that the incarceration of the *cosmos* and subsequent *amnesia* once disconnected.

This reconnection with the *universe* is quite literally an embodied experience for Dick's character Garson Poole in "The Electric Ant." Once Poole understands that the mechanical extension of his body is also contained within that body<sup>177</sup> (Dick, 1987c, pp. 226-7), and once he finds the spool of tape that is a "reality-supply construct" (1987c, p. 229), he contemplates what cutting it will mean: "If I cut the tape, he realized, my world would disappear. Reality will continue for others, but not for me. Because my reality, my universe, is coming to me from this miniscule unit" (1987c, p. 229). The *universe* for Poole comes from within the machine, and significantly, it comes from within his body. "My universe is lying in my fingers, he realized" (1987c, p. 230) and the question this raises, is how far will Poole extend his reach?

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<sup>175</sup> This story has been discussed with reference to the machine and the failure of success in chapter 6, pp. 126-7.

<sup>176</sup> Tillinghast's machine affects a transition not unlike that of Paul Atreides in *Dune* when he declares that "the sleeper" has been "awakened," an image referred to in chapter 6, p. 148 and chapter 10, p. 291.

<sup>177</sup> This is another example of the *other other* that is discussed earlier in this chapter with respect to the evolved claws in "Second Variety."

By re-inscribing the body, the machine can become a necessary component for interfacing the internally emotional creature with the externally *cold equations*. The body is the conduit through which the *universe* moves and merges with the human experience. When Dick's machine that once thought it was a human cuts the tape writing its reality, the *universe* ends because the machine ends (1987c, p. 239). The limits of the body in which the human creature exists determine the extent of that creature's reach.

Similarly, just as the integral accident for Dick's Garson Poole is the cutting of the reality tape, the Butlerian Jihad against thinking machines at the *foundation* of the *Dune* chronicles is the integral accident that triggers a kind of resetting of the human creature and within which the mentats are developed. The mentat presents an opposition to the idea of the machine as separate from nature and challenges the notion of what constitutes a "natural" human creature.<sup>178</sup> If, as the Bene Gesserit claim " '[t]he *natural* human's an animal without logic' " (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 149), the mentat is by virtue of this logic immediately designated as unnatural.

When in *Dune* Jessica complains to Hawat that " 'Your projection of logic on to all affairs is unnatural' " (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 149),<sup>179</sup> she also infers that as a mentat he is no longer human because he disengages his use of emotion. Paul Atreides however exemplifies the error of Jessica's view when the mentat in him makes the calculations of his Harkonnen hereditary and his "terrible purpose," and the human in him "mourns" his father (Herbert, 1965/1978, pp. 190-2). Similarly, Duncan

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<sup>178</sup> It is worth noting that Dick's novel *Androids* also explores the question of what constitutes a natural animal in its blurring of the boundaries between biological and electric animals, and the empathic connections made by the human creature with both kinds (Dick, 1968/2007, pp. 6-7, 8-10, 34-7, 210-1).

<sup>179</sup> This conversation from *Dune*, between Jessica Atreides and Thufir Hawat, has also been discussed with respect to the *cold equations* in chapter 5, pp. 100-1.

Idaho understands that “his own emotional balance depended now upon retreat into mentat coldness” (Herbert, 1976, p. 278), but later “allowed his grief to spend itself” (1976, p. 281). The emotions of the human in Duncan Idaho may grieve for the loss of the woman he loves, but it is the *cold equations* of the mentat that secure his survival.

Under the lens of *neocosmicism*, the mentat is a potent example of the re-inscribed *tabula rasa*, the human that in surviving the *void*, is equipped for the *proving ground*. The *Dune* chronicles present three kinds of mentat: the human mentat;<sup>180</sup> the ghola mentat of successive Duncan Idahos; and the prescient mentats of Paul and Leto Atreides. It is the mentat that is something *other* than merely a human mentat, that best succeeds in the *proving ground* of the *psychotic universe*.

After the death of the original human Duncan Idaho in *Dune* (Herbert, 1965/1978, pp. 215-6), the successive embodiments of Duncan are not only encounters with the mentat, but with a Tleilaxu grown ghola mentat (Herbert, 1969/1979, pp. 17-8). A chimera of human and *other*, the *other* embodied within the ghola comes from the dead flesh of the original human creature regrown in an axolotl tank, and then trained with the machine’s capacity for *cold* logic. Ultimately, it is this kind of Duncan Idaho that best survives in the *universe*. Duncan Idaho becomes a doubly potent reminder of what the human creature, by virtue of its biology and emotions, is not. It is this distinction however, this human creature’s *otherness*, that facilitates Idaho’s survival in the *universe* for a cumulatively longer period of space-time than

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<sup>180</sup> Almost exclusively do mentats fall into this category and significant in their number are the original human Duncan Idaho, Thufir Hawat (mentat for House Atreides), Pieter DeVries (mentat for House Harkonnen) and the Reverend Mother Antea (a Bene Gesserit trained as a mentat after Emperor Leto has expressly forbidden such training).

any other human creature. Despite many different iterations of the ghola, Duncan's survival surpasses even that of Leto as God Emperor because his original birth predates Leto's and he survives beyond Leto's death (Herbert, 1981, p. 450).

It is the negation of historic biological limitations that *neocosmicism* endorses as legitimate possibilities for the human creature within the *universe*. While the human and *other* produce the chimera, the human and machine produce the cyborg. This is a significant area of critical study, well beyond the confines of this thesis,<sup>181</sup> but a brief discussion will highlight the entry point and the human possibilities of examining the cyborg in *neocosmicism*.

Thought of as incompatible with the biological and the emotional, the machine is alien to the human body. In discussing the cyborg, Viviane Casimir argues that it “stands also for the discursive space where a crisis occurs ... a crisis in the representation of the ‘living’ or what it means ‘to be alive’ ” (1997, p. 279).<sup>182</sup>

Casimir argues that this “discursive space” is grounded within the body, and inspires the same question raised in “The Book of the Machines” of where organism stops and machine begins. In asking this, the human creature is compelled to also ask where the cosmological structure supporting that creature's sense of a God-created biological superiority ceases, and the cosmological structure supporting the integral presence of the machine and its *equations* begins? The avenue of enquiry that *neocosmicism* points toward is the interface of the human body with its capacity for

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<sup>181</sup> Since Donna Haraway's publication in 1985 of her essay “The Cyborg Manifesto” (1985), this particular area of critical study has expanded well beyond the borders of her work and often in contradiction to and argument against it. Haraway's text does, however, remain a significant work for further reference, and is well complemented by Chris Gray's text *Cyborg Citizen: Politics in the Posthuman Age* (2001), William Haney's *Cyberculture, Cyborgs and Science Fiction: Consciousness and the Posthuman* (2006) and Cary Wolfe's *What is Posthumanism?* (2010).

<sup>182</sup> This is also discussed in Chapter 10 on p. 280.

connection between the localised, empathic human creature and the illimitable space-time that is the *universe*, and as Casimir claims:

since the cyborg destabilizes our sense of ontology and identity, something has happened in the tableau of nature and made a change from *What are we?* to *Who are we?* It is a shift from the structural level – machine and organism as information-processing systems – to the functional level – machine and organism having a subjectivity (1997, p. 285).

Whether the shift occurs through the internalisation of the machine or some *other* externality, *neocosmicism* suggests that as a consequence of the shift the human creature will be better equipped to participate in a direct relationship with the *universe*.

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## Chapter 13

### The Romance of the Universe

Anybody who thinks of the world in terms of what it “ought” to be, rather than what it is, isn’t ready for the final examination (Heinlein, 1955, p. 13).

#### *Significant Insignificance*

The sense of insignificance that emerges from the dissolution of the *cosmos* in the wake of the apocalypse of the *universe*, is the juncture at which the human creature is afforded freedom. When captured within a *cosmos* that endorses an illusory status of omnipresent significance within and to the *universe*, the human creature’s reach is simultaneously limited, and an irreconcilable bipolarity with devastating consequences is created. The human creature’s knowledge in *neocosmicism*’s *universe* however, of its insignificant status beyond the embodied interface, liberates that creature; because in being no longer confined within the limits of a *cosmos*’ safety net, that creature is free to explore how far its reach may extend.

David Samuelson points out that with respect to Heinlein’s significant focus upon the idea of freedom, exploring its reach is an endeavour open to every human creature and in which not all succeed. For those that do succeed, “freedom, for the most part, [is not] a simple escape,” but rather, “a complex issue, involving both power and responsibility and requiring various kinds of trade-offs” (Samuelson, 1976, pp. 108-9). To withhold the safety net of a *cosmos* from the human creature, parallels what Laing refers to in *The Divided Self* as an imposition of “the necessity to make [its] own decision about the person [it] was to become ... [and] only by withholding was it possible to provide a setting in which [that creature] could take this responsibility into [it]self” (1960, p. 64).

Herbert's Leto Atreides, cautions Duncan Idaho against "that false sense of freedom from responsibility for your own actions" (1981, p. 172), drawing attention to the idea that the human creature should not dupe itself into the belief that confessing ownership of its actions negates all consideration of any *others* that are also bound up in the *equation* of those actions. Similarly, the Baron Harkonnen says to his nephew in *Dune*, "[n]ever obliterate a man unthinkingly ... Always do it for an overriding purpose – and *know your purpose!*" (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 226). Paul Atreides says to Stilgar, before mounting the attack that ultimately dethrones the Emperor Corrino in *Dune*, that "the test of a man isn't what you think he'll do. It's what he actually does" (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 428). Furthermore, Dick's significantly re-inscribed character Bruce-who-was-once-Bob in *A Scanner Darkly* is also told that "[i]t doesn't matter what a person does; it's that he gets so he can do it right and be proud of it," (2008, p. 1067). The point to be made is that irrespective of what a human creature chooses to do, it is the intent and the calculation behind the action that matters more than the action itself; and this includes the action of eliminating *others*. Responsibility for choices and actions, moral or otherwise, lies not with an external *other*, but within the individual human creature, and Paul reminds his mother Jessica that "[t]here are no innocent any more" (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 447).

The responsibility of freedom concerns not only what a human creature may do or reveal, but also what it does not do. Lovecraft is particularly sensitive to this idea, and the withholding of revelation is often framed as a means by which to save *others*. Examples include the decision made by William Dyer and the graduate

student Danforth in “At the Mountains of Madness” to dissuade further exploration of Antarctica (Lovecraft, 1999, pp. 137-9); and the hope of the narrator, Francis Thurston, in “The Call of Cthulhu,” that his “executors may put caution before audacity and see that [the manuscript] meets no other eye” (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 98). While such nondisclosures in *cosmicism* are about saving *others* from madness or death, inevitable though death might be; *neocosmicism* tends to frame such choices more as conscious decisions to leave revelation for each individual to arrive at or not, dependent upon their own relationship with the *universe* beyond *cosmos* and the choices they make. The *universe* they experience, may not be the *universe* as it is experienced by *others*.

When *engulfed* by the *void*, the *tabula rasa* that the human creature becomes is the beginning in the ending from which it must choose. Passive observation from tele-objective safety requires no participation, no imperative for choosing between possibilities, and no responsibility for outcomes. Most, if not all, integral responsibility for outcomes in *cosmicism* is conferred upon some *other* agency and commonly shrouded in the image of a deity or an adversary. But in *neocosmicism*'s *psychotic universe* that follows immersion in the *void* – the *universe* that is the random field of *chaos* from out of which every choice manifests, in which the morality of species survival governs the *proving ground*, and in which the human creature must also consider its empathic response – participation is necessary and the human creature is directly responsible for the choices it makes.

In “The Returns of Lazarus Long,” Russell Letson discusses what he calls a “potential conflict” in Heinlein’s *Time Enough for Love*, between the idea of each

human creature taking responsibility solely for itself and “the collective biological morality of species survival” (1978, p. 201). The significant aspect of Letson’s subsequent discussion from this point, and his use of Damon Knight’s notion of “several Heinleins,” is the initially simple observation from Letson that Heinlein “is willing to posit a universe more mysterious than the ideological materialist will allow” (1978, p. 202). Such position is not about oscillating between opposing forces, but rather, as Letson describes, “a willingness to accept facts whether they fit a model or not” (1978, p. 203); or as *neocosmicism* claims, to be comfortable within the paradox of the *universe* as something *other* than purely a mechanistic operation of binary pairings in perpetual conflict.

Lazarus Long accepts in *Time Enough for Love* that, “[r]esponsibility *cannot* be shared” (Heinlein, 1973, p. 309), and it is Herbert’s Leto Atrides that embodies this sentiment to an extreme end of responsibility for the entire human species. As Leto writes in his journals, the “Golden Path”:

is the survival of human kind, nothing more nor less. We who have prescience, we who know the pitfalls in our human futures, this has always been our responsibility.

Survival (Herbert, 1981, p. 14).

It is the antediluvian reach of Leto’s memory that enhances his prescient capacity for a unique view of the human creature in the *universe*, and provisions both his freedom to move through the *universe* and the responsibility that he accepts for his programme of “enforced tranquillity” (Herbert, 1981, p. 15) that is intended to spark the revitalisation of the human creature. Like Dick’s boys Timothy Schein and Fred Chamberlain in “The Days of Perky Pat,” (1987b, pp. 305-7, 314, 321), Leto may have once held the appearance of a child, but in respect to taking responsibility for

survival in the *universe* he was “never a child,” and having taken on the mantle that he does, “must accept responsibility for the decision [he] made” (Herbert, 1976, p. 224).

The human creature cannot seek to hide from *others* in the hope of abnegating its responsibility, as Adam and Eve once attempted in the *Genesis cosmology's* Eden (“Genesis 3:8-10.” Barker, 1985, p. 10). That creature’s sense of significance assembles directly from its choices and their consequences, rather than from a *cosmos’* morality. The *universe* remains indifferent, the morality of species survival is intimately bound up with the operation of the *cold equations*, and the human creature must reconcile its own empathic balance within this. Significant enough to note in two separate papers, Rafeeq McGiveron highlights from Heinlein’s novel *Tunnel in the Sky* (2003, p. 184; 2004, p. 294), that “ ‘when it gets down to fundamentals, do what you have to do and shed no tears’ ” (Heinlein, 1955, p. 15). The *psychotic universe* requires the human creature to suspend its emotions so that it may determine how it responds to the choices laid out by the *cold equations*; for as Arkady and Boris Strugatsky write in *Roadside Picnic*, when a choice must be made in the *proving ground*, the human creature does not “get to feel pity” (1971/2007, p. 131).

The *cold equations* become an anchor of order in the *chaos*, governing by the stability of calculation rather than the instability of emotion. Having little if any apparent effect upon the *equations*, the human creature while remaining insignificant in the *universe* simultaneously draws a sense of significance from an acutely localised and anthropomorphic position. This localisation of significance may very

well extend no further than the interface of the body, and *neocosmism* suggests that such limit may also be that creature's most advantageous position with respect to its capacity to survive.

Immersed in the *universe* that is *chaos*, the only ground on which the human creature may feel secure – and further development of *neocosmism* will demonstrate that this security is absolutely without any guarantee – is its own body, and ontological security may very well begin, and end, there. Laing claims that it is the ontologically secure human creature that can relate with *others* (1960, pp. 43-4), and if this is so, then the human creature must find a way to stabilise its sense of security within an ordered, albeit limited, body that is immersed within the *psychotic universe* of *chaos*. *Cosmism* clearly demonstrates that an autonomous separation from everything else, the *universe* included, is not the means by which to secure an ontological *foundation*; for as Laing maintains, the human creature can be subject to “feel[ing] more unreal than real ... precariously differentiated from the rest of the world” (1960, p. 43) and indeed the *universe*. Laing also claims that the human creature “may feel his self as partially divorced from his body” (1960, p. 43), a sensation that *neocosmism* suggests can be likened to the experience of tele-objectivity that creates a sense of distance between the body and the *universe*.

Paradoxically, it is the “ontological insecurity”<sup>183</sup> that the human creature is subject to in *cosmism*, that holds the key to that creature establishing ontological security in *neocosmism*. Both the key to and cost of survival, lie within *chaos*, and the human creature's challenge is to sustain a sense of ontological security when

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<sup>183</sup> The concept of “ontological insecurity” is first introduced and discussed in chapter 6, p. 136.

everything that surrounds its embodiment is *chaotically* insecure, unpredictable, and forever changing. Laing claims that the ontologically insecure human creature “is preoccupied with preserving rather than gratifying himself” (1960, p. 44). While at its surface this may appear equivalent to the morality of species survival that the *proving ground* unleashes, therefore suggesting that this is an insecure morality, there are significant differences in play.

It is worth noting that when read through *cosmicism*'s lens, the act of cannibalism wherein the protagonist Delapore partially consumes Captain Norrys in Lovecraft's story “The Rats in the Walls,” is an act of madness that Laing's analysis suggests is Delapore preserving himself. *Neocosmicism*'s lens figures Delapore's act more as one of gratification in which he also makes a linguistic connection with an antediluvian memory (Lovecraft, 2000, p. 42). Although Delapore returns to the moral parameters of *cosmos* after the event, within the experience of the act he is ontologically secure.

Similarly, Captain Franco in Dick's story “Beyond Lies the Wub,” maintains a sense of ontological security inasmuch as he gratifies the biological impulse of his body for sustenance, while also believing he will preserve that body from the alternate possibility of the wub-as-*other* engulfing him. However, as a requisite for enhancing the human creature's capacity to survive, the *proving ground* demands participation; with *others* and within the *universe*. Captain Franco may choose to remain incapable of participating in conversation and therefore relationship with the wub that he regards as a “dirty razorback hog” (Dick, 1987a, p. 33), but the injury of killing the wub is the accident through which Franco is re-inscribed. The wub is, quite literally,

internalised by Franco and then continues its previously interrupted discussion of Greek myth (Dick, 1987a, p. 33).

Laing's "relatedness with others [that] is potentially gratifying" (1960, p. 44) occurs, I suggest, not because the human creature derives its ontological security from maintaining a sense of embodied and objectified separateness from *others* and from "[t]he whole physiognomy of [its] world," (1960, p. 43), but rather from its relationship with *others*, and more significantly with the *universe*, that develops as a consequence of letting go of the imperative to remain an impervious and unalterable human island.

The questions related to the morality of species survival that arise from these two examples alone are numerous and worthy of further investigation; an investigation that due to the limitations of this thesis lie beyond the current discussion, but will be addressed in future refinement of *neocosmicism*.

As a requirement for the human creature to move beyond the illusion of tele-objectivity-as-reality and into the *universe*, *engulfment* is a sublimation and submission to the consumption of *chaos*. According to Laing, "[t]o be understood correctly is to be engulfed, to be enclosed, swallowed up, drowned, eaten up, smothered, stifled in or by another person's supposed all-embracing comprehension" (1960, p. 46); and indeed, by that of the *universe*. To be *engulfed* by the *universe* is the unequivocal necessity of being *engulfed* by *chaos*. It is in the *chaos* that the human creature becomes something *other* than it first was, and it is in the *chaos* that

the human creature can reconcile its internal, albeit arbitrary, sense of order within the *universe* and do so without *cosmic* incarceration.

### *Chaos*

‘There’s no single set of limits for all men. Universal prescience is an empty myth. Only the most powerful local currents of Time may be foretold. But in an infinite universe, *local* can be so gigantic that your mind shrinks from it’ (Herbert, 1976, p. 244).

In chapter eight I argue that “it is the ordered *universe* rather than the chaotic that entraps.” As the condition that precedes and underpins all else, *chaos* is the *foundation* of the *universe*. Zukav writes in *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* that, “particle physics is a picture of chaos beneath the order” and acknowledges that *chaos* is also often viewed as a fundamental component of the *universe’s* overlying, visible *landscape* (1979/2001, pp. 216-7).

If *chaos* is a *universal foundation*, then the need for “the human creature to reconcile itself as an ordered, biological being adrift within the *chaos*” is also grounded within this *foundation*. In discussing the use of science within *sf* texts in *Science Fiction: History, Science, Vision*, Robert Scholes and Eric Rabkin write that:

Entropy is disorder, randomness, chaos. The Second Law of Thermodynamics says that all real phenomena operate with less than perfect efficiency. This means that some of the input energy in any machine or process is wasted as heat or noise. This wasted energy is not organised into work but is random (1977, p. 136).

At this stage of its development, *neocosmicism* presumes that the *universe* is a “real phenomena” from which “some of the input energy ... is wasted as heat or noise.”

The warmth and noise that are categorised by Scholes and Rabkin as components of the “disorder” and indeed the *chaos* of the *universe*, are also significant elements of

the human creature's biology. Just as heat is attracted to cold, the human creature is drawn to the *universe* by its interaction with the *cold equations* that operate as a form of order in the *chaos*. It is the *cold equations* that connect the human creature's apparent need for biological and empathic order with the *chaos* surrounding and indeed penetrating that creature.

This is congruent with Zukav's description of "a set of conservation laws" that exist above the *chaos* and "do not specify what must happen, as ordinary laws of physics do, rather they specify what *cannot* happen. They are permissive laws. At the subatomic level, absolutely everything that is not forbidden by the conservation laws actually happens" (1979/2001, p. 216). Zukav describes these laws as stating that irrespective of the event, the "quantity of something" involved does not change, and that with respect to energy – what a subatomic particle is – "the total amount of energy in the universe always has been and always will be the same" (1979/2001, p. 176). This principle is significant for *neocosmism*, translating into the idea that the *cold equations* reconcile the human creature's apparent requirement for order with the *chaotic foundation* of the *universe*. Like the laws of conservation that frame a certain degree of order within the disorder, the *cold equations* unify the external and visible with the internal and invisible through the interface of biological order. Although referred to as something "awful," this is exactly how the undercover narcotics agent Donna describes herself in *A Scanner Darkly*, saying that " 'I am warm on the outside, what people see ... but inside I am cold all the time.' ”<sup>184</sup>

While the form that order assumes may change, as indeed may the interfacing body of the human creature, the essential substance that is embodied within or by the

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<sup>184</sup> This is referred to in chapter 5, p. 107.

reordered, indeed re-inscribed form, need suffer neither diminishment nor destruction. The *cold equations* reconcile the human creature's accidental "impermanence and insignificance" ("February 3, 1924," Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 302) with the *psychotic universe*.

Paul Atreides says in *Dune Messiah* that, " '[l]aw filters chaos and what drips through? Serenity? Law – our highest ideal and our basest nature. Don't look too closely at the law ... You'll find the serenity, which is just another word for death' " (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 168). Similarly in *Children of Dune*, Paul's son Leto claims during his captivity and testing at Jacurutu that "[e]very question, every problem doesn't have a single correct answer. One must permit diversity. A monolith is unstable" (Herbert, 1976, p. 256); and thousands of years later, the idea that it is the *chaos* beneath the order that vitalises, echoes in Leto's reflection that:

The primate thinks and, by thinking, survives. Beneath his thinking is a thing which came with his cells. It is the current of human concern for the species. Sometimes, they cover it up, wall it off and hide it behind thick barriers ... there is a cellular awareness (Herbert, 1981, p. 284).

Whether expressed as a "cellular awareness" or the energy of subatomic particles, it is this underlying *foundation* that facilitates the human creature's movement within *neocosmicism's universe* as that creature reaches behind and ahead of itself for an anchorage of significance within the *chaos*. The recovery of memory from the *amnesia of the cosmos* is a recovery of an awareness that terrifies the human creature in *cosmicism*, and yet strengthens the territory beneath its feet in the ever-changing currents of *neocosmicism's universe*.

Acting as if it were some kind of memory in the *machine*, the paradoxical random-pattern of *chaos* that cannot be confined, pervades the *universe* like the buried spring in Freud's examination of *heimlich* in "The Uncanny" (1919/2004, p. 419). *Chaos* as a natural state may be unfamiliar; it may have been buried and forgotten; but when it emerges, when the human creature remembers that *chaos* is and always has been, it becomes the utterly unstable-stability that in its ubiquitous presence renders the *universe* "familiar ... comfortable, homely," (Freud, 1919/2004, p. 419): paradoxically *heimlich*.

Reconciling with *chaos* is the means by which the human creature, in recovering antediluvian memory, is better suited to seeing in the darkness that is characteristically the *universe*. When that creature develops *cosmoses* that rely on the order of the symbolic, as it does in *cosmicism*, that creature is afforded a sense of ontological security that only lasts while the *universe* remains hidden from view. Within the limiting field of vision that is consequential of the governance of the light space of the sun, the *Genesis cosmology's* accident of the Deluge, inasmuch as it covers over the existence of antediluvian *others* and reinforces human centrality, provides a *universe* in which the human creature feels significant. However, when some other event reveals the *universe as machine* wherein deity is absent and the human creature is subject to the *cold equations* that render it utterly insignificant; when the *universe as machine* threatens that creature's sense of ontological stability; the accidents that lead to apocalypse become inextricably entwined with survival. It is the recovery of the human creature's connection to the antediluvian that furnishes that creature with an understanding of the necessity for its participation within the *chaotic tides* of the *universe*.

Within the overarching frame of Lovecraft's philosophy of *cosmicism*, Steven Mariconda identifies the primacy of paradox as a mean through which to "provide [a] solution" to the human creature's sense of personal significance in a *universe* where it is insignificant, by means of the "pragmatic adoption of relative values" (1986, p. 4). It is the grounding of the human creature's sense of connection with its past that Mariconda claims then provides security in a *universe* where human survival is of no significance one way or the other; and the greater the temporal depth of that reach, the stronger the point of anchorage. In quoting from Lovecraft's letters where he writes of "merg[ing] oneself with the whole historic stream and be[ing] wholly emancipated from the transient and the ephemeral" ("Novr. 21, 1930," Derleth & Wandrei, 1971, p. 220), Mariconda identifies that "[t]his acute realization of background... is what Lovecraft labelled 'continuity' " (Mariconda, 1986, p. 9); and *neocosmicism* labels as the recovery of memory.

Such recovery is not about a return to the comfort of the *Genesis cosmology's* prelapsarian Garden of Eden, but rather it is about a recovery of the antediluvian *universe* in which Eden is contextually only one comparably insignificant event within an infinite variety. As the character Galahad in *Time Enough for Love* acknowledges when reflecting on "his mother's wisdom in pushing him from the nest" (Letson, 1978, p. 214), "if she hadn't cut the cord, I would have hung around, an overgrown infant" (Heinlein, 1973, p. 408). This is also reflected in the case of Dick's story "The Days of Perky Pat," wherein the materially rich but experientially immature Perky Pat doll is held onto by the flukers while they are horrified by the maturity of the Connie Companion doll who has grown up and left infancy behind

(1987b, p. 320). It is also in this story of Dick's that the children Timothy and Fred are more capable than their own parents (1987b, pp. 304-6, 314, 321), and like the cloned twins of Lazarus Long in *Time Enough for Love*, more than capable of self-sufficient survival in the *proving ground* (Heinlein, 1973, pp. 373, 402-3).

What these examples suggest is the idea that the *proving ground* of human survival is in and of itself, an antediluvian territory; in short, synonymous with the *psychotic universe of chaos*. Recovering the antediluvian is about the human creature leaving the inherent conflict of interaction with *cosmos* that Laing phrases as “the polarity ... between complete isolation or complete merging of identity” (1960, p. 56), and engaging with reconciling empathic and biological manifestations with the *cold machine*. Furthermore, *neocosmicism's universe* requires the human creature to then reconcile these re-inscribed polaric fields with the accidents that deliver unforeseen and future *chaos*, and with which that creature will engage in order to survive.

The accident fuels the vision wherein the invisible becomes as tangible as the visible.<sup>185</sup> Like Lovecraft's Peaslee in “The Shadow Out of Time” (2000, pp. 515, 517, 520, 52-3, 526-7, 529-31, 533, 535, 537-9, 541, 544) the human creature can extend the capabilities of its embodiment via a machine as simple as a torch, and in doing so it is accepting that its biological parameters are not enough to guide it through the dark. Something more is needed for the human creature to attain a sense of “be[ing] important and significant *to someone else*” (Laing, 1960, p. 57), or more precisely to something *other* than itself, because like the patient of Laing's case

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<sup>185</sup> This idea is discussed with reference to Roger Luckhurst's cultural historical analysis, and Paul Virilio's idea of the accident in Chapter 11, pp. 312-3.

study, the human creature cannot “be [it]self, by [it]self, and so c[an] not really be [it]self at all” (1960, p. 61).

*Engulfed* within the *universe*, the human creature reaches beyond the restrictive notion of pairs of irreconcilable opposites, beyond the dictates of “on” and “off,” and into what might be called an ontological field. Ontological security, *neocosmicism* claims, is grounded in *chaos* and *psychosis*. The secure *foundation* on which the human creature stands in *neocosmicism* is not the enclosure of a *cosmos*, but rather the ever-shifting background of *chaos*.

The *universe* moves in curvatures and currents; vortexes of coexistence. The “vertical littoral” (Virilio, 1997/2008, p. 1) of the horizon draws the human creature’s gaze upwards and reveals that the antediluvian depths above and beyond its terrestrially grounded body are also eternally touching and resonant with that body. It is the dark *universe* and not the sunlit *cosmos* toward which the human creature extends its reach. “Ontological insecurity” is rooted in the realm of blinding light that deletes all *other* views that exist beyond that light. Ontological security is spawned within the experience of the dark that for so long has been the fearful *other* space beyond the reach of the sun, and the *heimlich* paradox of the *universe* that embraces the human creature is renewed.

*The Voice of the Other in the Dark*

Maybe, he thought, since I see both ways at once, correctly and reversed, I'm the first person in human history to have it flipped and not-flipped simultaneously, and so get a glimpse of what it'll be when it's right. Although I've got the other as well, the regular. And which is which?

Which is reversed and which is not? (Dick, 2008, p. 1045).

In chapter eight, the human creature is described as “[I]ooking into the mirror ... [to] a reflection that is not quite right ... a *universe* that is not the *universe* at all.”

Engaging with the *psychotic universe* entails a kind of reversal of the reflection; an act not of looking into the mirror, but of moving through the mirror. This is not about resurrecting what lies behind, nor is it what the French psychoanalyst Christiane Olivier refers to as “that other moment which by putting an end to the duality first discovered [in the mirror stage], would restore the primary unity” (1989, p. 91), that is, the “pre-Oedipal history with the mother” (1989, p. 92). Reversing the mirror<sup>186</sup> in *neocosmicism* is about acknowledging the antediluvian past of the *universe* and entering into a *future* relationship with it. There is no return to an Eden of childhood because the mirror reflects only what faces it; and what faces the mirror in the *psychotic universe* is the re-inscribed human creature.

For the Bene Gesserit of Herbert's *Dune* chronicles, looking into the mirror aligns with looking into the place they fear, because the future they see will not be limited to the *cosmos* of their design. Re-inscribed, Paul Atreides is the challenge to the Bene Gesserit *cosmos* they have hoped to control, and he challenges the Reverend

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<sup>186</sup> A parallel imaging of this idea is presented in the film titled *The Cell* (2000). In the hope of finding the latest victim of serial killer before she is killed, and after several unsuccessful attempts to find the information by transferring, quite literally from her own body and into the now-catatonic killer's, the psychiatrist decide to “reverse the feed” and bring the external *other* into her mind and the body in which that mind is housed. This idea of “reversing the feed,” or reversing the mirror is about internalising what has been previously approached as completely external.

Mother Mohiam to “ [t]ry looking into that place where you dare not look! You’ll find me there staring out at you” (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 452). In response, the Reverend Mother reminds Paul that she once declared him human after testing him with the box,<sup>187</sup> and also infers that he should be mindful of that declaration and its hidden implication of remaining within a limited human reach that the Bene Gesserit can then control. Despite the Bene Gesserit goal that is achieved in Paul of a male Bene Gesserit that can look where they cannot (Herbert, 1965/1978, p. 452), as something *other* than he was when born and transformed by the *proving ground*, Paul affirms that he will neither be bound by their order nor limited by their sense of what it is to be human (1965/1978, p. 453). He is no longer deceived by the image they have held up to him.

In discussing the Lacanian idea of “the Other of the Other” (Zizek, 1991, p. 81), attention is drawn in psychoanalytic terms to a kind of layered differentiation that parallels *neocosmicism’s* premise that the order of *cosmos* is simultaneously underpinned by the *chaos of universe* as well as overlain by visibly manifest *chaos* in the *proving ground*. In claiming that “the psychotic subject’s distrust of the big Other,” is a kind of “paranoia” that is sustained by a “subject, who holds and manipulates the threads of the deception proper to the symbolic order,” (1991, p. 81) Zizek sustains the idea within *cosmicism* of the human creature’s sense of the *other* as an adversary. In *neocosmicism* however, when the human creature is re-inscribed by the *void* as something *other* than it was in the *cosmos* – irrespective of which *cosmos* – rather than support the human creature’s sense of entrapment, *cosmicism’s*

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<sup>187</sup> This episode is discussed in chapter 7, p. 176, chapter 8, p. 228, and chapter 11, pp. 300-1, 321.

adversarial “Other of the Other” becomes the human creature’s manifest position inasmuch as it is no longer confined by the illusion of *cosmos*.

This is not to say that the human creature becomes the thing it fears, but that this creature in no longer being deceived by the *cosmos* realigns its sense of familiarity in the *universe* with a field of *chaos* rather than a progression of order. In an analysis of Dan Simmons’ novel *The Rise of Endymion*, *sf* critic and author John Clute writes similarly that “[t]he evil twin of the past becomes the twin in the mirror, a nanosecond or an aeon out in front of us, begging for life” (2001, p. 163). The “dark glass” of the mirror becomes the invisibility through which the *universe* is seen and through which the human creature can move. As Herbert’s Leto Atreides writes in his journals:

The realization of what I am occurs in the timeless awareness which does not accumulate nor discard, which does not stimulate nor delude. I create a field without self or centre, a field where even death becomes only analogy. I desire no results. I merely permit this field which has no goals nor desires, no perfections nor even visions of achievements. In that field, omnipresent primal awareness is all. It is the light which pours through the windows of my universe (1981, p. 329).

The merging of the human creature with the *universe* is the event wherein that creature’s insignificance becomes significant. Donald Burleson writes, in reference to the human creature’s sense of the *universe* as indifferent, that this position can only be held by:

a consciousness that has had loftier expectations, so that in a paradoxical way, humans subvert themselves to contribute to their own insignificance; on the cosmic canvas, the human face is missing precisely because it is present – it paints its own absence (2011, p. 151).

*A Scanner Darkly*'s Donna is similarly "[n]owhere. Because she was not there in the first place" (Dick, 2008, p. 1083). As Burleson suggests, it is precisely because the human creature is insignificant and therefore absent, that it actually acquires presence. The human creature is provisioned with a different way of sensing the *universe*; with an enhancement of its capacity to participate in a relationship of meaningful exchange with the *universe*. In reference to the underlying purpose of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Fredric Jameson writes similarly of the capacity to hear the "voice of the Other" as the endgame of the human creature's "psychic life [that] has been structured by a search and a longing for a reply from" that voice (1983, p. 299). While Jameson is referring specifically to that voice as a "parental authority," the principle of this idea remains applicable in *neocosmicism* with respect to the human hearing – more specifically registering – and therefore participating with, *others*; indeed, with the *universe*.

### ***Life in Psychosis***

You know then that the universe is a coherent whole and you are indivisible from it.

- The Preacher at Arrakeen

After Harq al-Ada (Herbert, 1976, p. 351).

In the short fragment titled "Azathoth," Lovecraft writes that "the dream-haunted skies swelled down to the lonely watcher's window to merge with the close air of his room and make him part of their fabulous wonder" (1994, p. 408). The titular character experiences the rapture of apocalypse, the revelation that he is no longer alone and isolated from all *others*, but is embraced and enfolded within and by the *universe*. In the essay "A Last Defence Against the Dark: Folklore, Horror, and the Uses of Tradition in the Works of H.P. Lovecraft," Timothy Evans writes

convincingly of the human creature's sense of connection with the past as a means by which to facilitate a sense of stability in the present when surrounded by the *chaotic* and ever-shifting nature "of a timeless and infinite cosmos" (2005, p. 128). Evans claims that "[s]etting is so crucial in most of [Lovecraft's] stories that it cannot be separated from character. Lovecraft saw place, or groundedness, as the centre of his own identity and the basis for any true art or civilization" (2005, p. 118).<sup>188</sup> This is to say in the first instance that the character of the human creature is inseparable from the setting, that is, the *universe*; and in the second, to imply that the setting is of such nature that it is in itself, a character. Moreover, given the space-time reach of the *universe* to its background of *chaos* that infinitely precedes the advent of the human creature, it is potentially the first character.<sup>189</sup>

*Neocosmicism's universe* becomes an entity, the substance of which is expressed in the varying forms of its infinite *landscapes*. It becomes a living *landscape*. In writing about E.A. Poe's story "The Fall of the House of Usher," St Armand claims that:

The atmosphere which the narrator feels is emanating from the landscape of Usher makes that landscape not only a simple configuration of natural objects but, rather a true Self, an Ego, a thing that is alive and which breathes,[a *landscape* that is] conscious and alive (1977, p. 37).

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<sup>188</sup> Prior to this publication in the *Journal of Folklore Research* in 2005, Evans published his essay "Tradition and Illusion: Antiquarianism, Tourism and Horror in H.P. Lovecraft," in *Extrapolation*, writing that: "Setting is so crucial in most of his stories that it cannot be separated from character, and it was from his travels that Lovecraft Picked up the details of setting. Lovecraft saw place, or groundedness, as the centre of his own identity, and as the basis for any true art or civilisation" (Evans, 2004, p. 190).

<sup>189</sup> This idea of the *universe* as the "first character" is a complex one that while relevant, lies beyond the scope of this thesis, and requires further considered investigation.

In the “Introduction” to *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, Farah Mendlesohn writes “that sf is a discussion” (James & Mendlesohn, 2003, p. 2) with a structure that often compels “the reader to look out of the corner of his/her eye at the context of the adventure, mystery or romance” (2003, pp. 4-5). This romance, Mendlesohn later clarifies, is “the romance of the universe [wherein] sf protagonists fall in love with the macrocosm. Where mainstream fiction writes of the intricacies of inter-human relationships, the discourse of sf is about our relationship to the world and the universe” (2003, p. 9).

Related to Mendlesohn’s idea of relationship, St. Armand’s essay also explores a significant point made by the German psychologist Kurt Koffka in his text *Principles of Gestalt Psychology* (1935), writing that Koffka “argues that our emotions are not purely subjective responses but, rather, belong to parts of the environmental field as well as to our Ego” (1977, p. 32). What St. Armand then skilfully argues, using Poe’s story as example in conjunction with commentary from the weird fiction author Arthur Machen,<sup>190</sup> is the idea that the sense of emotion that can be “‘attribute[d] to a particular landscape is really and efficiently in the landscape and not merely in ourselves’ ” (1977, p. 33). What is pertinent to *neocosmicism* here is the inference that the relationship that develops between the human creature and the *universe* is not one in which that creature observes an inanimate and ordered *cosmos*-masquerading-as-*universe* from some external position, but rather, it is a relationship of direct experience with the *universe* that is made possible by an empathic connection.

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<sup>190</sup> A literary contemporary, Lovecraft writes that “Machen is a Titan – perhaps the greatest living author – and I must read everything of his” (“June 3, 1923,” Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 234); and there exists a reasonable body of evidence to suggest that Machen’s work was a significant inspiration for Lovecraft (Joshi & Schultz, 2001, pp. 161-2).

The notion of the *universe* and its inter-stellar contents as some kind of living character is also noted by the *sf* critic Susan Stratton who refers to Herbert's "two heroes: the planet Dune (Arrakis) and the young Paul Atreides" (2001, p. 307). Rather than anthropomorphise the planet, Stratton acknowledges it as a hero in its own right. Dune is a *proving ground* that responds to the human creature; it is an entity that in being taken to the brink of destruction by that creature's terra-forming, is nearly lost to that creature and the Fremen decay like lovers abandoned (Herbert, 1981, pp. 52-4, 81-2). Paul Atreides reflects in *Dune Messiah* that "putting on a stilsuit, he put on the desert. The suit with all its apparatus for reclaiming his body's moisture guided him through in subtle ways, fixed his movements in a desert pattern. He became wild Fremen" (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 24), and Jessica Atreides says to a young Farad'n Corrino in *Children of Dune* that, "[l]ife is a mask through which the universe expresses itself" (Herbert, 1976, p. 286). Both human creature and planet, and ultimately the *universe*, are linked in a mutually binding relationship.

In elements too numerous to examine in detail here, the planet Dune is comparable to the Zone of Arkady and Boris Strugatsky's novel *Roadside Picnic*, and both of these positions in the *universe* reflect similar qualities as Poe's *landscape* that is possessed of "a true self" (St.Armand, 1977, p. 37). The Zone is referred to as "the bitch" (Strugatsky & Strugatsky, 1971/2007, pp. 36, 81), a *landscape* with nuances of character (perhaps even personality) and seemingly responsive to the human creature; the Zone embraces and releases that creature at will (1971/2007, pp. 28, 41-2, 137-8). Similarly for Paul Atreides in *Dune Messiah*, the revelation is that "[y]ou do not take from this universe ... It grants what it will" (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 108),

and irrespective of his efforts “[t]he universe opposed him at every step. It eluded his grasp, conceived countless disguises to delude him. That universe would never agree with any shape he gave it” (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 146).

As if playing a game of hide-and-seek with the human creature, the *universe* is more than a painted backdrop to some strange *cosmic* theatre, it is a participant in its own game. Lovecraft may deny the existence of a divine presence in the *universe*, but he seems to endorse the idea of the *universe* as being in possession of qualities that are resonant beyond hollow objects<sup>191</sup> in space-time, writing that:

I like to view the universe as an isolated cosmic intelligence outside time and space – to sympathise not only with man, but with forces opposed to man, or forces which have nothing to do with man, and do not realise that he exists. When Kleiner showed me the sky-line of New York I told him that man is like the coral insect – designed to build vast, beautiful, mineral things for the moon to delight in after he is dead ("May 3, 1922," Derleth & Wandrei, 1965, p. 172).

The *romance of the universe*, involves the relationship not of human individuals with *others* or with a deified *other*, but with the *universe*. It is about the *foundation of chaos* and a relationship out of which all other relationships are defined. The human creature in relating with antediluvian *others* and participating with the raw substance of what the *universe* is; by retrieving its memory of and therefore knowing these connections; by reaching out for them; is what allows that creature to sustain its vitality and move freely. The *universe* is a breathing, moving *chaos*, and the human creature breathes with it.

The “haunted *universe* of shadow and veiled truths” discussed in chapter eight wherein “the human creature senses a haunting of the space in which it exists,” is a

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<sup>191</sup> The idea of the hollow object is presented in chapter 6, pp. 121, 134-5.

negatively connoted position in *cosmicism* that reduces “the human creature to a vulnerable object.” Ingebretsen’s claim for Lovecraft’s corpus of “the endless return of the body” (1996, p. 133) that is discussed in chapter twelve, relates to themes that serve to alienate that creature from the content beneath the shadows of the *universe*. However it is within Ingebretsen’s statement that he also seeds the idea that the “effacement” of the human creature, its reduction to insignificance as a direct “consequence of ill-fated love,” as opposed to its reinscription as *tabula rasa*, is what *neocosmicism* frames as that creature’s missed opportunity for relationship with the *universe* because it neither acknowledges nor sees the *romance*. When the human creature voluntarily opens itself up to the effacing experience of the *void*, that creature’s sense of its embodiment in the *universe* is transformed – and paradoxically so – by the same event that serves in differing circumstances to eliminate it.

The map is no longer needed; the relationship is direct. There is no *other* that intercedes on behalf of the human creature, that creature speaks directly to and is responsible for its own self in the *universe*. For the human creature, autonomous survival is not about being as an object separate from all *others* but about sensing the perpetual flux of any given position. The human creature is both an autonomous entity and an integrated element within the *universe*.

In *The Courage to Be*, the German theologian Paul Tillich discusses the idea of the “God above the God of theism” and that entity’s connection with what Tillich calls “the courage to be” (1952, p. 180). Tillich writes of this *other* as “present, although hidden, in every divine-human encounter,” and as an *other* presence, it “makes us a part of that which is not also a part but is the ground of the whole” (1952, pp. 180-1).

Irrespective of whether a “God of theism” (*Genesis cosmology*), a deity that does not exist (*universe as machine*) or a deity from beyond the limits of the illimitable *universe* (Lovecraft’s “Outside”), what stands “above” any of these in *neocosmism* is the *universe* itself. The *universe* is the pulsing background from which the human creature derives its sense of significant-insignificance in the *chaos*; the *chaos* that is the *foundation* of, and simultaneously *is*, the *universe*.

*Neocosmism* is pointing toward the idea that in the *void*’s reinscription of the human creature, that creature’s vision of and therefore relationship with something that has at times been mistakenly elevated to some other domain beyond its reach, is also re-inscribed. This is not quite the same however, as interpreting Tillich in a manner after Watts in *The Book* when he writes that Tillich’s “ ‘Ultimate Ground of Being’ ” as a “decontaminated term for ‘God’ ” translates directly to being “you ... you’re IT” (1966/1989, p. 18). As an element of *neocosmism*, the concept of how deity is figured and relates within the *universe*, is still very much in development. The issue at this point is about neither the elevation of the human creature nor the devaluation of any particular deity; but rather, in acknowledging *chaos* as integral to the *universe*, it is about the human creature’s developmental progression of survival and relationship to all *others* when immersed within *heimlich* paradox. As Schrodinger writes in *My View of the World*, “this life of yours which you are living is not merely a piece of the entire existence, but is in a certain sense the whole; only this whole is not so constituted that it can be surveyed in one single glance” (1964, p. 22). Or as Leto Atreides muses in *God Emperor of Dune*, “ ‘humans see first one part and then another. Delusions can be called accidents of the senses’ ” (Herbert, 1981, p. 253).

*The Paradox*

– the unexplored, the unexpected, the thing that is hidden and the changeless thing that lurks behind superficial mutability. To trace the remote in the immediate; the eternal in the ephemeral; the past in the present; the infinite in the finite ("April 1921," Joshi, 2006, p. 53).

Timothy Evans writes that “[a] profound dualism – nostalgia and terror, beauty and disgust – runs through Lovecraft’s attitude toward New England, toward tradition, and toward his own heritage, and it also permeates his stories” (2005, p. 119).<sup>192</sup>

More than presenting dualisms, I suggest that through the lens of *neocosmicism* what Lovecraft is actually presenting, what lies concealed behind the interpretive framework of adversarial oppositions in *cosmicism*, is the revelation of the ubiquitous paradox on which the *universe* is *founded* and against which the human creature has mistakenly shielded itself, believing that if it can make one side of the *equation* go away the *other* will be a stable terrain on which to place its feet.

*It is* and *is not*. The *universe* is the indivisible-division, the *heimlich* field of the unfamiliar-familiar, the *void* that is full where beginnings and endings are the same event. “In the end,” Zizek writes, “we are thrown back to the beginning” (1991, p. 81), and *neocosmicism* affirms that in ending, everything is beginning. The idea that everything will end is linked to the idea of first and final causes, which for *neocosmicism* are the same event; to be different implies finitude. For a materialist *cosmos* such as the *universe as machine*, because there is no external cause inasmuch as the *machine* is “perpetual,” self-contained and mindless ("Sept. 23, 1935,"

Derleth & Turner, 1976, p. 195), there is neither purpose nor first cause, and

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<sup>192</sup> Once again we may confidently understand that this is a significant issue for Evans, for in the previous year he writes in *Extrapolation* that: “This profound dualism – nostalgia and terror, beauty and disgust – runs through Lovecraft’s attitude toward New England, toward tradition, and toward his own heritage, and it also runs through his stories” (Evans, 2004, p. 190).

therefore no final cause. For a vitalist *cosmos* such as the *Genesis cosmology* an external cause, framed as a creating deity, exists and confers both purpose and first cause, with these implying also a final cause.

*Neocosmicism's psychotic universe* unveils the *heimlich* attribute of cause and purpose. What *cosmicism* refers to as the "outside" is simply the territory beyond the parameters of the *cosmos*; in *neocosmicism*, everything is *universe*. Everything will end because there is no outside, there is no external cause, and the *psychotic universe* is materialist by virtue of this. However, because *neocosmicism's universe* is also a *proving ground* in which the human creature can be vitalised, the *universe* has purpose, and in having purpose implies cause. *Neocosmicism's universe* is a *universe of vitalised materialism*.

The "gap ... is abolished [in a] collapse of 'fiction' ... and 'reality' " (Zizek, 1991, p. 81) – of *cosmos* and *universe* – and all that remains is the *universe of chaos*. *Chaos* is a manifest first cause, and it is the *void*. *Neocosmicism's* apocalypse is that the *void* manifests the human creature as a creature of *chaos*. The *void* empties the full, makes *tabula rasa* of the human creature, that it might be re-inscribed by *chaos* and reconnected with the first state of the *universe*. The *void* that is interpreted as a negative irruption of stoppage in *cosmicism* is all that the *universe* is in *neocosmicism*. As a young Leto says to his grandmother, Jessica Atreides, " 'the entire universe with all of its time is within me ... Whether one walks rapidly through the sietch or slowly, one traverses the sietch. And that passage of time is experienced internally' " (Herbert, 1976, p. 95).

The horizon that demarcates the content of the *cosmos* from all else outside that *cosmos*, the horizon that Virilio refers to as the “very first littoral” that separates the “void from the full” (1997/2008, p. 1), is the horizon that separates the hollow object of *cosmos* not from empty space, but from the *universe* that is full. The *universe* is a *tabula rasa* field that both causes and is its own cause, that re-inscribes and is re-inscribed by the human creature.

The *psychotic universe* and the human creature are symbiotically connected. The vitalising of that creature in the *proving ground* is a vitalism that is without cause – first or final – without beginning or ending, because these apparent opposing poles are inscribed upon the same *heimlich* coin. Neither one overshadows the other. The *void* is the *universe*, and the human creature encounters the *universe* only when it chooses to enter the *void*.

When the earth was created, according to the *Genesis cosmology*, so too were the heavens, the space beyond the earth. That cosmology declares the earth and not the heavens to have been created as empty, and indeed, as David Bohm writes, “what we call empty space contains an immense background of energy, and that matter as we know it is a small ‘quantized’ wavelike excitation on top of this background, rather like a tiny ripple on a vast sea” (1980, p. 242).

Paul Atreides beholds the *universe* in *Dune Messiah* as “a rolling sea from which no rock lifted above the chaos. No place at all from which to survey turmoil” (Herbert, 1969/1979, p. 67). Rather than inspire Paul to seek separation from that “turmoil” however, the knowledge of the absence of stable territory leaves him “preferring the

role here of a Time-fish swimming not where he willed, but where the currents carried him” (Herbert, 1969/1979, pp. 129-30). “Space is the *relationship* between bodies,” according to Watts (1966/1989, p. 27), it is Zukav’s “unceasing dance of annihilation and creation” (1979/2001, p. 241). From the writhing, non-linear ocean of *chaos* is the *universe* centrifugally thrown, as if from a whirlpool, a vortex; and the human creature swims in the antediluvian currents of the living, breathing, *psychotic universe*. The human creature that is a re-inscribed *other*, is the human creature that is *romanced* by the *universe*.

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## Conclusion

In exploring the question of what it means to be human in the *universe*, *neocosmicism* shifts the array of possibilities for that creature beyond *cosmicism*'s limiting tele-objectivity that frames the *universe* within a mechanistic materialism offering little hope for any future other than the *heimlich conundrum*'s outcome of madness or death. *Neocosmicism* acknowledges the presence and influence of the *cold equations*, but as a *vitalised materialism*, also regards the *universe* as a *psychotic* territory in which the human creature participates, and with which that creature establishes a relationship.

After outlining the difference between a *cosmos* and the *universe*, and framing two dominant occidental cosmologies – the *Genesis cosmology* and the *universe as machine* – this thesis has then used these cosmological maps and their disconnection from the territory they attempt to describe, as constructs through which to discuss Lovecraft's philosophy of *cosmicism*. This thesis has argued for *cosmicism*'s relevance as an interpretative tool that has value beyond the scope of Lovecraft's corpus alone; and while the focus of this thesis has been on a selected choice of *sf* authors and texts, I suggest that *cosmicism* is applicable beyond them and indeed beyond *sf* for application in the examination of a wider variety of literature, film and interactive games.

One of *cosmicism*'s strengths is its ability to reveal the limitations and even failures of static, cosmological maps for enabling a direct relationship between the human creature and the *universe*, as well as between that creature and *others*. This strength, is also *cosmicism*'s weakness; for it leaves the human creature with very limited

options when the *universe* is revealed to that creature. In determining both the value and the limitations of *cosmicism* for the human creature, I have developed *neocosmicism* not as a replacement, but as an enhancement of Lovecraft's philosophy. For *neocosmicism*, this thesis represents a beginning, and in no way provides a comprehensive development or analysis of its nuances. It is, rather, a first step in outlining the main tenets of a philosophy and interpretive tool that I intend to further develop.

The authors selected for examination within this thesis were developing their creative ideologies and *sf* visions during a time when hard sciences such as physics and evolutionary biology, and social sciences such as psychology and philosophy, were undergoing radical shifts. The *universe* that the human creature inhabits and the way that creature frames the *universe* as a reality can no longer always be substantiated by what has in the past been regarded as fact. Adding to this, although well beyond the scope of this thesis, is the increasing contemporary human anxiety that stems from a growing realisation of the significant finitude of the planet it inhabits and the extreme finitude of its current reach into the *universe* that it might inhabit.

While this thesis has focused on the *universe* beyond the terrestrial *landscape* of human habitation, further development of *neocosmicism* proposes to also combine this focus upon future human possibilities within the *universe*, with more immediate junctures of human survival and what it means to be human within the terrestrial context of a planet subject and responding to the *cold equations* and those *equations'* production of new *proving grounds*.

*Neocosmicism* perhaps asks more questions at this point than it answers, and its further development will begin to also explore these issues. In chapter eleven I suggest that “the greatest test for the human creature comes not from *engulfment*, but when it is afterwards immersed within the *psychotic universe*.” While I have implied in Part III that *neocosmicism* involves a constant state of *engulfment* in and by the *universe* for the human creature, in not having stated this in any definitive sense, I believe this emerges as an issue that warrants further investigation. When considering that *engulfment* in *cosmicism* is destructive, and *engulfment* in *neocosmicism* is necessary, it may be valuable to ask if this is a necessity without ending and if so, what does this mean for the human creature being *engulfed*?

Furthermore in chapter eleven, while discussing Paul Virilio’s assertion that abstraction makes the invisible, visible, as well as “anticipating” the visible becoming invisible; I suggest that the question this idea raises “is the question of how emotion and abstraction can be simultaneously carried by” the human creature “without then producing a dangerous imbalance”? The endeavour to answer this question, I suspect, is vast and fraught with complexities to be untangled, because answering this appears to be central to *neocosmicism*’s focus upon that creature’s capacity to survive in and relate with, the *psychotic universe*.

As a critical component of the human creature’s relationship with the *psychotic universe*, a relationship this thesis calls the *romance of the universe*, the idea of *vitalised materialism* so far remains little explored but is suggestive of fertile ground for enquiry. *Neocosmicism* asks if it may be possible that the *universe* is a *proving*

*ground* for precisely this purpose. Moreover, in unshackling the human creature from finitudes that it might be vitalised, is this *romance* an entry point for more than mere survival and actually facilitates a thriving within a balance of oppositions. If beginnings and endings really are the same, if first and final causes converge, does *neocosmicism* suggest that the human creature within the *romance of the universe* is, along with the *universe*, its own first and final cause?

Furthermore, in exploring these questions, *neocosmicism* cannot ignore the question of deity. Indeed, at this point, *neocosmicism* appears to be developing as a variant or hybrid form of pantheism and panentheism, inasmuch as *neocosmicism* suspects that deity and *universe* – indeed the *void* – are a manifest singularity of, or from, *chaos*. God and the *void* figure in the title of this thesis in such a way as to suggest their core relevance. Neither of these terms remain innocent within a wider interpretive context, and while explored throughout this thesis, their actual meanings with respect to *neocosmicism* have only just begun to be determined.

Overall, *neocosmicism* frames the *universe* as a *proving ground* in which the human creature is tested, and suggests that rather than be a process of mere endurance, this kind of sublimation is a transformative process that becomes a legitimate and even welcome experience. This idea leads to the question of whether the *psychotic universe* is designed in such a manner as to elicit a new kind of empathic bond, and if so, to what purpose? I propose that *neocosmicism* offers a space in which to explore the possibilities for the experience of a genuine reconnection between the emotive, biological creature that the human is, and the indifferently *cold chaos* that creature calls the *universe*.

## Appendix A

### *Comparison of Cosmicism and Neocosmicism*

**The *universe* operates as an indifferent mechanism, without purpose or direction**

*Cosmicism* says that the *universe*:

- Is a purposeless, meaningless, mindless vortex
- Is an indifferent, kaleidoscopic mechanism of tele-objectivity
- Is blind, and has no final result
- Is a schizophrenic universe, a bipolar struggle or fight
- Has an antediluvian *foundation* that is incomprehensible to the human creature
- Is a *heimlich* bipolarity, and the human creature is immersed in a fight with this. This is a bipolarity, in part, between *foundations*/past/devolution and reinscribing the view/future/evolution; between the expansive and the contracting views
- Is an apocalypse of incarceration

*Neocosmicism* says that the *universe*:

- Is indifferent, and the kaleidoscopic *machine* is refigured beyond the tele-objective lens by redrawing the view. Making the invisible, visible, and allowing the *heimlich* to surface
- Has purpose as a *proving ground* to be embraced, rather than rejected as an adversary from which to escape
- Is blind, and has no final result

- Is a *psychotic universe*
- Has an antediluvian *foundation*, and it is critical the human creature recovers its memory of this in order to understand its continuing evolution
- Is a *heimlich* paradox against which the human creature need not fight; it may or may not be adversarial, but such a state does not make it evil or malevolent
- Is an apocalypse of participation within a limitless horizon

The significant aspect may be that the indifferent mechanism of the *universe* is a *proving ground* wherein weeding is a necessity for evolution. Remaining indifferent to whether the human creature succeeds or fails, the final result is, therefore, unforeseeable and perhaps even irrelevant; there is no requirement for such a condition, a final result implies finitude.

### **The *universe* is without emotion or ethic of human parameters**

*Cosmicism* says that:

- The *universe* operates within the parameters of the *cold equations*
- The *cold equations* render the *universe* alien to the human creature's emotional and empathic capacities
- The *universe* is an adversary from which there is no escape
- The human creature has, through a tele-objective lens of *cosmos*, contracted its view of the *universe* from the infinite (outward) to the incarcerated (inward), and in so doing, has subjected itself to the *amnesia of the cosmos*. This contraction is exemplified in the *Genesis cosmology*, and even though *cosmicism* attempts to redress this by refiguring the *universe as machine*, it is in this refiguring and the attendant *cold equations* that the *universe* is then

perceived as an alien *universe*. The tower in the *landscape* is no longer the point from which the human creature projects an expansive view of its sense of place, but an incarceration of body from which that creature looks out in fear. In its bid for a sense of safety, an assurance of significance and continuance, this view also isolates the human creature from *others*, and renders those *others* as adversaries

- God is absent, is not possible

*Neocosmicism* says:

- The *universe* operates within the parameters of the *cold equations*
- The *cold equations* are a conduit of access to the *universe* for the emotional and empathic human creature, rather than a force of estrangement
- That human morality is a local phenomenon, necessitating a parallel embrace of the *cold equations* when that creature moves beyond its locality
- The *cold equations* are essential for the human creature to understand its relationship with *others* and to understand that when an *other* is also an adversary, this is not equivalent to an evil, wrongness, or negative connoting that designate an *other* as more worthy of elimination than the human creature
- That deity is possible, but is also refigured and does not remain an anthropomorphic *other*. This is bound up within the *romance of the universe*
- Human morality is a local phenomenon, leading to the question of how an emotionally driven creature can survive in the *universe of cold equations*

The significant point is that *neocosmism* acknowledges that the *cold equations* are an essential aspect of the *universe* and are compatible with the emotive, biological human creature. In order to move beyond a bipolaric *cosmos* and exist within the *supramoral universe*, the human creature must assimilate the *cold equations*; that is, rather than remain split between horizons of the moral and the immoral, good and evil, right and wrong, that creature must find a balance of paradox.

## Human Life

*Cosmicism* says that the human creature:

- Is estranged from the *universe*
- Is insignificant within the *universe*
- Is an accident, a mutation, a contagion that the *universe* caught

*Neocosmism* says that the human creature:

- Does not need to remain within a state of estrangement from the *universe*
- Is insignificant within the *universe*
- May be an accident, a mutation, or a contagion that the *universe* caught, but also that mutation and evolution are natural processes of the *universe* and should not be feared
- Is subject to a process of weeding
- In being weeded from the *universe*, may evolve in ways *other* than how it has done in the past
- As a “welter” upon its planet, will develop scar tissue as a consequence of survival

- Will redraw the parameters of what it is, and means, to be human in the *universe*

The significant aspect is that *neocosmicism* recognises that weeding, evolution and transformation are essential and non-negotiable conditions of the *universe* as *proving ground*.

### **In the End**

*Cosmicism* says that:

- The only options the human creature has after the apocalypse of the *universe*, are madness or death
- The *universe* will freeze over
- Everything will end

*Neocosmicism* says that:

- After the apocalypse of the *universe*, the human creature may still choose madness or death, but there is an alternative to these forms of finitude, and the human creature may accept *engulfment* and enter the *void* of *chaos*
- The frozen *universe* is in balance with the burning locality of the human creature
- Everything will end, and in ending is beginning. This is a universe of *vitalised materialism*

## Appendix B

### *The Cultural and Literary Background of Cosmicism*

Although *sf* has entered the twenty-first century as a significant generative ground of critical scholarship, it appears to be the case that until quite recently, that scholarship has suffered from a lingering reluctance to acknowledge Lovecraft's corpus and its far reaching influence as worthwhile. This view is changing, and the impetus for the change is emerging from within Lovecraftian scholarship itself.

In 1963, the American *sf* author Fritz Leiber claims that the *sf* community relegates Lovecraft's work to a "superstitious interpretation of reality," and Leiber then follows this statement with the claim that Lovecraft has produced a body of text that is anything but such an interpretation (Derleth, 1972, p. 15). What is interesting here is that while the prevailing historic view may be that Lovecraft has not written *sf*, thereby making it easy to exclude him from the canon, as the parameters that define *sf* have been shifting in recent years, an increasingly substantial argument can be made that indeed his work is firmly located in the canon. With this groundswell initiated by Leiber, scholars follow his lead and begin considering Lovecraft in terms of *sf*. In 1972, the American *sf* critic and author Lin Carter claims for Lovecraft that "his essential themes are more closely akin to science fiction – so closely that it might well be said that he indeed wrote science fiction" (p. xv), and by a quarter-century later, Joshi proclaims *At the Mountains of Madness* and "The Shadow Out of Time" as being "considered classics of science fiction" (1996, p. 263). It is worth pointing out that these two stories are first published in the *sf* magazine *Astounding Stories* (Joshi, 1996, p. 27); and another of Lovecraft's stories, "The Colour Out of

Space,” is also published in *Amazing Stories* (Luckhurst, 2005, p. 64). During his own lifetime, Lovecraft’s work was at least in part recognised as *sf* and yet criticism until recently has been reluctant to categorize it as such. What has happened during this time to have changed the view from one of an ambiguous claim for the genre, to a definite statement of inclusion among its classics?

In 1978, Schweitzer notes in his summing up that “[v]irtually every major science fiction writer of the next generation was aware of [Lovecraft], and acknowledges his influence” (p. 61). S.T. Joshi iterates this perspective when he writes “[t]hat Lovecraft emphatically influenced such later writers of science fiction as John W. Campbell, Fritz Leiber, Philip K. Dick, Gene Wolfe, and many others” (1996, p. 265), and that “[i]t is only a seeming paradox that Lovecraft’s influence on weird fiction is actually less significant than his influence on science fiction” (1996, p. 267).

The seeds of why this shift in perspective has gained momentum and established itself are clearly stated by the historian and critic of modern and contemporary literature, Roger Luckhurst, in chapter three of his cultural history text *Science Fiction* (2005). Luckhurst discusses not only the inherent hybridity of *sf*, but also the cultural and political circumstances from which it emerges and into which the pulp fiction phenomena of the United States establishes itself (2005, pp. 64-5). With its evolution firmly, though by no means exclusively, rooted in the pulp magazine phenomena of the early twentieth century, *sf* develops prior to this time as a genre “interweaving with strands of Gothic, Realist, fantasy and utopian writing” (Luckhurst, 2005, p. 11). Prior to Luckhurst, both Carter (1972, p. xv) and Joshi

have also noted the hybridity that “link[s] the weird to science, and hence to science fiction” (1996, p. 49), and since, in recognition of the shared cultural origins of the genres of *sf* and horror, the American author and editor Jason Colavito claims that “[e]ven science fiction concealed a quiet undercurrent of horror, often disguised under the name ‘fantastic literature,’ or later, ‘the weird tale,’ ” (2008, p. 13). What this all suggest, is that criticism is better positioned now to retrospectively view and assess the development and emergent characteristics of *sf*. It has had, quite simply, time enough to evolve.

The history of *sf* can be read through a lens that reveals the sense of itself and its canon, as something far more comprehensive than older definitions often place upon it, confines that are readily symbolised by the period of *sf* development that is marked by the progression from an exclusively pulp platform to a broader reach of varying media. This development is signified by what in the genre is often referred to as the Golden Age of *sf* (James & Mendlesohn, 2003, pp. 37, 50, 52, 65), a term that some critics and scholars parallel with the notion of “Campbellian science fiction” (2003, p. 99) and characterised, though not exclusively, by what is also termed “hard science fiction” (2003, pp. 186-9).

By 2008, it is clearly, and succinctly stated that Lovecraft has written what can be described as “dark science-fiction” (Colavito, p. 186), and his philosophical stance, herein called *cosmicism*, pervades not only his own work, but also a significant portion of texts and ideas that are enshrined within the wider canon. However, *cosmicism* as a philosophy and theoretical tool for access into text remains elusive, leading to the question of why it is that *cosmicism* largely persist with inhabiting a

theoretical silence. Is this simply a matter of *cosmicism* being a theory developed by a writer who for his lifetime published in the pulp media as opposed to academic or more traditionally recognised literary platforms? Or might there be some other, contributory reason or reasons?

In the 1945 essay “Good Bad Books,” the English author and journalist George Orwell refers to “the ‘good bad book’ ” (1945/1968, p. 37) and claims that by the time of writing this essay, such an entity has all but disappeared. According to Orwell, a “good bad book” is “escape literature,” and while such texts “hardly pretend to have anything to do with real life,” he also suggested that there is:

another kind of good bad book which is more seriously intended, and which tells us, I think, something about the nature of the novel and the reasons for its present decadence. During the last fifty years there has been a whole series of writers – some of them are still writing – whom it is quite impossible to call “good” by any strictly literary standard, but who are natural novelists and who seem to attain sincerity partly because they are not inhibited by good taste (1945/1968, p. 38).

It is reasonable to presume that Orwell’s “strictly literary standard” is the one in which the texts nominated as “classics” can be found, that is, the canon of literature that is still regarded today as the “classics.” Sounding remarkably like the kind of elitism that is pointed towards with bemused derision in films like *Dead Poet’s Society* where English professor John Keating speaks of “Pritchard,” the editor of a volume of poetry and his assessment of how to analyse a poem using a mathematical X-Y scale for determining “greatness” (Schulman, 1989), or *The History Boys* where Hector, a teacher of “general studies,” talks of the study of “words” and “literature” (Bennett, 2006), Orwell expresses a point of view that to some degree of measure, continues to persist.

This infers a cultural elitism that surrounds the assessment of what constitutes literature and what does not; an elitism that the Marxist literary critic Terry Eagleton in 1978 highlights as under review when he writes that “[i]t would certainly be a dangerous illusion nowadays to think that just because you are literature (written) you are necessarily Literature” (1978, p. 65). In an amusing echo of Orwell, Eagleton also writes that “[t]he sad news, then, is that, even among literary texts, some are more literary than others” (1978, p. 66), an idea that while supported by Orwell is also shadowed by his understanding that indeed it is possible “that intellectual refinement can be a disadvantage to a story-teller” (Orwell, 1945/1968, p. 39). Ultimately, the guarantee of longevity in the canon of literature can be disrupted by texts that are generated from “such a thing as sheer skill, or native grace, which may have more survival value than erudition or intellectual power” (Orwell, 1945/1968, p. 40).

What Orwell shadows in 1945 is reiterated by Eagleton when he claims thirty years later that “[s]ome pieces of writing believe that they are safely ensconced as Literature for the duration, but this is mere self-delusion” (1978, p. 65) and:

It does not ultimately matter for this purpose what your origin was – whether you came into the world as a poem or a description of military tactics. Some pieces of writing are born literary, and others have literariness thrust upon them; breeding may well turn out to count for more than birth (1978, p. 66).

The point that both commentators share is that within their arguments they highlight the cultural presumptions of a certain kind of literary elitism that underscores a value judgement on what belongs in the canon and what does not. In the case of what until recent years has been the general academic and critical reception of Lovecraft – that

is, a predisposition for framing literature within the parameters of a particular standard of formal education and format of publication – the influence of such culturally driven elitism cannot be emphasised enough. Like an echo of Orwell’s observation that “art is not the same thing as cerebration” (1945/1968, p. 39), and in similar recognition of the shifting ground of ideology that can inform “[w]hat counts as Literature,” and that it is “the ideologies which constitute our very ability to recognise a text as a certain kind of text in the first place” (Eagleton, 1978, p. 66), Houellebecq arrives some sixty and thirty years after Orwell and Eagleton respectively at the same point of issue regarding critical value judgements and literary elitism when he notes:

[R.E.] Howard, Lovecraft and Tolkien - three radically different universes. Three pillars of dream literature, as despised by critics as they are loved by the public. Who cares? In the end critics always recognise their mistakes; or, to be more exact, in the end critics die and are replaced by others. So, after thirty years of scornful silence, “intellectuals” decided to take an interest in Lovecraft. They concluded that as an individual he was endowed with a truly astonishing imagination (they did after all have to attribute his success to something) but that his style was abominable.

That’s a joke. If Lovecraft’s style is deplorable, one might as well conclude style is inconsequential in literature; and then move on to some other subject (2005, p. 87).

As Houellebecq identifies, Lovecraft’s body of fiction is “loved by the public,” or at least loved by a public that enjoys stories of a weird or speculative nature. The drivers behind the lack of critical recognition that has until the past two or so decades of scholarship been applied to Lovecraft’s fiction, can also be applied to the scope of his philosophy of *cosmicism*; and this is identifiably located within a wider cultural context that has also had a direct relationship with the development of the *sf* genre.

Luckhurst's text *Science Fiction* opens with an 'Introduction' that claims the lens of a cultural historical approach is one through which the history and development of the *sf* genre can not only be viewed, but more importantly revised. Immediately positioning the main elements of his argument, Luckhurst acknowledges the conflict that often arises between a traditional historical approach and a theoretical one that "took aim at History's unexamined 'metaphysical assumptions' and the complicity of the discipline with narratives of the nation-state" (2005, p. 1). He then directs his argument to the relatively new and at times debated approach of cultural history that by the late 1980s begins to formalise itself, explicating throughout the text a coherent and refreshingly balanced view of why *sf* has traditionally held, and at times continues to hold, the position of being considered as something "less" than literature.

Luckhurst's overall point is the idea that a cultural historical approach to *sf* can reinvigorate and reorient critical inquiry of it. Such an approach examines the ideological and social influences within a culture, and clearly demonstrates the development of the positioning of *sf* to where it establishes itself by the end of the Second World War; and furthermore, how its position has evolved since that time. What is interesting in this evolution is that while Luckhurst rightly claims that "the impact of the most technologized war in history was to cause a dramatic shift in the cultural significance of SF," (2005, p. 75) it is also important to recognise that the prevailing attitudes towards the genre as largely lacking any literary merit remained in play. For Lovecraft, whose career is built in amateur and pulp publication, the consequence may have been an absolute whitewash into historical amnesia were it not for the very focused efforts of his friends August Derleth and Donald Wandrei in

the early 1950s to establish Arkham House publishing and put Lovecraft back into print (Joshi, 1996, p. 264).

Luckhurst presents a means by which a text can be evaluated as worthy or not for inclusion in the literary canon, and this is done simply by using something more comprehensive than the narrow cultural elitism that both Orwell in 1945 and Eagleton in 1978 acknowledge has been almost singlehandedly driving the agenda. What is revealed throughout Luckhurst's examination of the evolution of the pulp fiction market, and what has in the past often been obscured, is the importance and influence of cultural factors and ideologies upon the reception of texts that are contemporaneous with those ideologies, in terms of an estimation of their literary worth (2005, pp. 1, 3, 10). Such circumstances, Luckhurst argues, greatly influence either the maintenance of the initial judgement and positioning of a text throughout successive periods of time, or alternately contribute to why some texts develop acceptance and acclaim as significant works in the lay community, but remain excluded from the formalised literary canon. Although *sf* is replete with examples of this, it is pertinent to the immediate argument that Lovecraft remains one of the more persistent and visible of such cases with his acceptance only recently acknowledged.

During his lifetime, Lovecraft publishes exclusively in the pulp magazines and this is perhaps the single biggest reason why it has taken so long for his works to gain acceptance as more than literary trash, and for him to be approached as a theorist toward whom serious attention should be given. Luckhurst establishes the cultural circumstances in which the pulp magazines and the new forms of writing they engender emerge (2005, pp. 17-8), citing one of the first and highly influential

drivers behind this as “the 1870 Education Act” in England “and the subsequent laws tightening the enforcement of compulsory education” (2005, p. 17). Coupled with the growing commercial and industrial environment of mechanisation, this shift to enforced literacy through a government’s legislation stimulates an emerging market that is hungry for an inexpensive and accessible resource of reading material.

Luckhurst delivers his survey with a convincing argument for the importance of the rise of the pulp fiction market during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and for the rationale as to why, even with an increasingly literate population, the literature of this market does not, and most probably cannot not, penetrate the more lofty realm of the literary canon.

Time and history it seems have only served until very recently to further divide the literature of the pulps from the literature of the canon, a separation that Orwell appears to wish to cling to when he writes that “All one can say is that, while civilisation remains such that one needs distraction from time to time, “light” literature has its appointed place” (1945/1968, p. 40). The underlying, even if for Orwell uncomfortable, presumptions of elitism, are some decades later still holding court when Eagleton – who, I suggest, also foreshadows Luckhurst’s cultural historical approach – writes that “[w]e will certainly make little headway if ‘Politics and Literature’ is conceived merely in terms of what Joseph Conrad had to say about imperialism, or Orwell had to say about the working class” (Eagleton, 1978, p. 69).

This is the cultural and critical environment in which Lovecraft has historically been located, and by consequence, so too has his philosophy. Such a perspective has, perhaps, made it easier for his ideas to be dismissed as not worth consideration and

this is, I believe, the single biggest reason for why *cosmicism* has continued to operate very much below the radar. But *cosmicism* as a lens through which to view the *universe* is not only clearly developed and expressed by Lovecraft, it resonates throughout the twentieth and most certainly into the twenty-first century in all of its subtleties and manifestations to influence a significant sector of the literary and creative arts. As a formalised theory of influence and enquiry, *cosmicism* can be applied to a far greater body of work than the canon of Lovecraft alone, and it is an excellent tool for the analysis of *sf* texts in general.

It is perhaps fitting then, to end with a statement that while directed toward Lovecraft's positioning within the horror genre, also speaks to the contemporary view of his work and philosophy as fundamentally grounded within *sf*:

H.P. Lovecraft was something of a prophet for modern horror. In 1996, the scholar S.T. Joshi published a new biography of Lovecraft, and in 2005 Lovecraft entered the Library of America, steadily growing in stature and in academic respectability. His bleak vision of amoral cosmic indifference fit perfectly with the tenor of the times. The events of the years surrounding the millennium have brought Lovecraft's vision to fruition; Cthulhu pointed the way toward the godless cosmos of science (Colavito, 2008, p. 365).

The shift in the formal recognition of Lovecraft's creative work and philosophical contribution has emerged parallel to the emergence of a general post-modernist framework that has disrupted the primacy of "high" or "elite" culture and continues to revisit and rewrite imagings of the human creature's place in its world and in the *universe*.

## Appendix C

### *Significant points in H.G. Wells' The Sleeper Awakes that parallel Frank Herbert's character Paul Atreides and events in the narrative of Dune.*

While the task of a detailed comparison and analysis lies beyond the scope of this thesis, the parallels between Wells' novel and Herbert's are fascinating and it is worth outlining some of the more significant elements. In *The Sleeper Awakes* a stranger, later named as Graham, is troubled and cannot sleep (Wells, 1899/2005, pp. 11-6). When he does fall into sleep, he appears as if he is dead and cannot be roused (p. 17). After a protracted period of time, and as an outsider from a place in time that is distanced from the people, Graham wakes with an awareness of time and events that is changed from his perceptions before having slept (p. 25). Fearing what Graham might represent and the power that they might lose, fearing what influence Graham might have on the people, the Council consider killing him or having him drugged so that he might never be known as having woken; all the while the people wait for him and believe that he will wake, he is "the Master" that the loyal crowd would follow (pp. 67, 222). There is a proverb among the people that speaks of "when the Sleeper wakes," and speaks of him as a god (pp. 158-9), and the event of his waking is an unnatural one inasmuch as it was deliberately initiated by another who could have just as easily killed him (pp. 95-6). In emerging to speak to the people and announced that he is "awakened," Graham looks out to see an unveiling of flags in his colour rather than the Council's banner (pp. 116-7). One night, Graham dresses in a disguise and walks among the people to observe what life is really like beyond the controlled scenes that others give him (p. 173). There is a struggle to establish a new order; a struggle that includes the establishment of

bureaucracy, lynching and killing, and all this is linked the emergence of the “Master’s rule” (pp. 179-181). In accepting where the events of his life have placed him, Graham pledges himself entirely to both the sacrifice and the responsibility of who he is to the people (pp. 214-5).

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