

Horror, Not Just Horrible:

A Reconsideration of the Thematic Unity of Monsters in the *Beowulf*-Manuscript

through the Lens of Horror

By

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This thesis is dedicated to Bradley,  
for being so kind when translating made me grumpy.

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## ABSTRACT

In 1953, Kenneth Sisam argued that monsters provide a thematic unity to the various works in the *Beowulf*-manuscript, (*The Passion of St. Christopher*, *Wonders of the East*, *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, *Beowulf*, and *Judith*), and many scholars have agreed. Sisam, however, excludes *Judith* from this unity and does not define “monster” in his argument, leaving these interpretations too vague to be helpful. There must be a fuller understanding of “monsters” in order to understand a potential thematic unity, and the theories behind the genre of Horror provide a structure and language with which to explore monstrosity more fully. Using certain theories behind the modern Horror genre, I construct a list of criteria necessary in order to define “monster” more specifically and then apply these characteristics to the humanoid beings in the five texts of the *Beowulf*-manuscript. A dichotomy arises between monstrous appearance and monstrous behavior, and this project explores how these avenues have, in the past, been merged inappropriately and inaccurately. Through this approach, one may read these Old English works as Horror and evaluate the monstrosity of characters spanning from Grendel (a commonly accepted monster) to Holofernes (the one character Sisam argues is absolutely not monstrous). I use the biological factors and behavioral characteristics that define the monstrous to give scholars the theoretical structures and vocabulary needed to distinguish between humans, monsters, and marvels.

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## LIST OF TERMS

*Beowulf*-manuscript: The Nowell Codex (London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A. xv), containing *The Passion of St. Christopher*, *Beowulf*, *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, *The Wonders of the East*, and *Judith*)

Horror: referring to modern-day Horror as a genre for literature and film

Splatterpunk: a sub-genre of Horror (sometimes known as Extreme Horror) that depicts overtly gruesome and horrific situations not only to severely disgust but to use the gore as a means of furthering the intent behind the story

*Letter*: abbreviation of *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*

*Passion*: abbreviation of *The Passion of St. Christopher*

*Wonders*: abbreviation of *The Wonders of the East*

## INTRODUCTION

### The Beowulf-Manuscript and Horror: Defining Monsters

People have long been fascinated with monsters, the supernatural, and the unexplained, especially if that fascination can be indulged from a safe and comfortable distance.<sup>1</sup> This long-lasting and continual captivation with monsters speaks to the human experience that entities living outside of our understanding spark curiosity and create within humanity a desire to tell tales of unnatural experiences that include such emotion-inducing beings, as is evidence by the thriving Horror literature community, including both authors of Horror and those who consume Horror.<sup>2</sup> *Beowulf's* long-standing canonical status in the realm of literature has many avenues of exploration of the story and its surrounding texts under various lenses, such as Horror theory.

The *Beowulf*-manuscript (also known as the Nowell Codex, BL Cotton Vitellius A. xv) is one of four major codices of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Bound in the same manuscript volume with *Beowulf* (fols. 132r-201v) are *The Passion of Saint Christopher* (incomplete at the beginning, fols. 94r-98r), *The Wonders of the East* (with colored illustrations, fols. 107r-131v), and *The Letter from Aristotle to Alexander* (fols. 98v-106v). *Beowulf* is followed by *Judith* (incomplete at the beginning and end, fols. 202r-209v) which can be found in the second part of the manuscript (Treharne 171, Orchard 2). There are few clues about the transmission of the texts in the Vitellius manuscript, and

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to offer the reader a content warning as this project contains discussions of gore, violent bodily harm, and the crimes of serial killers.

<sup>2</sup> There exist uncountable groups who join together to enjoy literature through social media, such as Instagram, Discord, and TikTok. Often, these groups share book reviews and opinions of the literature while also conducting monthly “buddy reads,” which allows the group to read the same book on a schedule in order to enjoy and discuss it together.



since scholars are researching a text that relies heavily on oral tradition, manuscript authority is difficult to confirm (Foley 36). While respecting the complicated nature of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, scholars have still observed some evidence about the production of Cotton Vitellius A. xv. Certain details within spelling conventions of the time lead some scholars to consider the scribes to have been either Irish or, as expected, Anglo-Saxon (Orchard 86). More specifically, two scribes known to have “distinctive styles of insular miniscule script” are said to be responsible for the recording of all five texts in the Vitellius manuscript: Scribe A having written the three texts preceding *Beowulf* as well as three-fifths of *Beowulf* itself (stopping mid-line in the middle of a page at line 1939, fol. 172v3, *scyran*) and Scribe B having written the remainder of the poem, completing it and also the extant portion of *Judith*. Scribe A is noted as having characteristic descenders and ascenders with more emphasized extensions while Scribe B writes in a cruder manner with “late square minuscule script” (Orchard 2). Orchard quotes David Dumville, British medievalist and Celtic scholar, as affirming that “no other specimen of either scribe’s work has ever been discovered; nor have any closely related scribal performances been identified” (2).

Scribal history is of great interest to Anglo-Saxon scholars as it opens avenues to explore the historical situation of the text such as date, region, and potential ownership; equally fascinating is the speculation on the compilation of the manuscript. Kenneth Sisam in his book, *Studies in the History of Old English Literature*, asserts that “Professor Tolkien has defended the monsters as subjects of poetry; and it seems that the preservation of *Beowulf* itself is due to somebody who took a special interest in them” (66-67) and concludes his chapter, “The Compilation of the *Beowulf* Manuscript,” by

noting that “if the cataloguer of those days had to describe [the *Beowulf*-manuscript] briefly, he might as well have called it ‘Liber de diversis monstris, anglice’” or *The Book of Diverse Monsters, in English* (96). Andy Orchard argues that Robert Cotton was the person to have originally bound Cotton Vitellius A. xv into a collection, leading many to wonder about his rationale for doing so (1). In the face of Sisam’s decision to call “monsters” the thematic unifiers for the manuscript, Orchard suggests a different form of thematic unity: (1) the outlandish and (2) “activities of overweening pagan warriors from a distant and heroic past” (Orchard 27). Kathryn Powell takes the idea of thematic unity differently from both Sisam and Orchard by asking:

First, what made monsters so interesting to an English audience as to justify the dedication of time and resources to compiling a manuscript of monster stories and most likely copying it at least a small number of times? Second—and the question I wish to focus on here—how does one account for the addition of *Christopher* and *Judith* to this monster collection when Christopher’s status as saint makes him a rather unconventional monster and when *Judith* contains no references to monsters whatsoever? (2)

Through her reconsideration of Sisam’s argument based on these questions, Powell argues that thematic unity could more clearly be reconsidered through three aspects: ruler and foreigners (3), political relevance and geographic remoteness (7), and Christian rulership and sight (12). When considering these various arguments about monsters and thematic unity, it is evident that there is no clearly compelling approach to a possible thematic unity in the manuscript, particularly regarding monstrosity.

Though there are many voices discussing this unity, Sisam’s idea about monsters tends to be considered above the others; however, there are shortcomings in the

argument. Sisam spends the majority of the chapter addressing scribal methodologies in each work to show the proposed timeline of the compilation of the manuscript rather than addressing why exactly this manuscript is thematically unified by monsters. He argues that three of the text's mentioning *Cynocephali* is large proof for this unity, saying that the Cynocephali were "the most interesting of the Oriental monsters" and that "it cannot be an accident that the three Anglo-Saxon pieces which mention the *Healfhundingas* are all together in one manuscript" (66). He then turns around to argue of *Judith* that "somebody decided that it should be joined to the collection, whether because there was no more convenient place for it, or because Judith was felt to be, like Beowulf, a savior of her country, at a time when England needed such inspiration in the struggle with the Danish invaders" (67). And despite his dismissal of *Judith*'s part in the unity, Sisam asserts that the three texts' mentioning *Cynocephali* (or *Healfhundingas*) is enough to call for its being "planned with some regard to subject-matter" (66).

Despite the varied arguments regarding the thematic unity and the unclear definition of what each scholar defines as a monster in the case of the *Beowulf*-manuscript, people's fascination with these entities endures to this day. Consider the monsters in the text, *Wonders of the East*, which are observed conceptually, not just textually, as it has the largest collection of unusual creatures and is the only illustrated work in the manuscript. Consider too the *Hereford Mappa Mundi*; monsters such as *Blemmeyes* and *Cynocephali* are found there though on the outer boundaries of the map. People lack an understanding of these creatures and thus push them to the periphery ("Explore Hereford's"). People at the time *Beowulf* and the other texts were written were limited to their knowledge of the world. They know that these unusual entities do not

exist in their known world, so anything outside of their own experience, monstrous or not, must exist on the periphery. Telling horror stories, by way of literature, visual art, and film, allows for an exploration of human emotions that otherwise might be inaccessible or too dangerous as being near these entities could mean incurring fatal bodily harm, an argument especially true of body horror which asks the audience to look past the initial “shock value” and see that Horror is capable of offering “harrowing insights into our own sick and shining” society (Sammon xv). Supplemental to emotional exploration, Horror allows for creativity, a means to express typically unattainable emotions and experiences through art.

Horror holds the key to understanding how characters who are as varied as Grendel and Holofernes can fit into the same genre, both as monsters. Xavier Aldana Reyes defines horror as anything that “aims to scare, create suspense and dread, gross out, and scandalize” and that it is “preoccupied with the general mechanics of ‘fear,’ which becomes localized through the identification of specific sources of threat that may lead to injury or death” (107). Other genres of literature or film usually rely on the stereotypes of landscapes or persons. Westerns as a genre rely on a specific set of previously understood arrangements, and without those arrangements, criteria for the genre would be lost. For example, Westerns typically include guns and gun fights, men in authority on horseback, trains, robberies, outlaws, sheriffs, and “Indians,” as well as the general violence and daily struggle of living life on the new frontier; ultimately, there is law and order that needs maintenance in these characters’ environments (Dirks). However, horror differs in this regard. It is not marked by specific characters or settings; it is upheld by “the emotion it seeks to generate and by the fragility of the human body”

(Reyes 107). A Western needs the West just as Science Fiction needs advanced technology, but Horror can happen anywhere. Horror is a virus that knows no genre-specific boundaries and can be found wherever it desires to lurk.

As shown in Reyes's definition, Horror is based on emotion rather than a particular setting or set of characters, and many scholars agree that understanding Horror as a development from the Gothic is a valuable starting point as there are numerous connections and similarities between the two genres, showing the Gothic to be a sort of parent to the genre of Horror. Fred Botting explains that the Gothic "depict[s] disturbances of sanity and security, from superstitious belief in ghosts and demons, displays of uncontrolled passion, violent emotion or flights of fancy to portrayals of perversion and obsession" (2). These demonstrations and representations feature in Horror as well, but Horror does not end there. Mark Storey and Stephen Shapiro take Botting's definition a step further noting that Gothic is a good place to start in order to define Horror but then boosts the definition arguing, "If Gothic emphasizes the 'terror' of anticipation, then horror highlights the moment of pain and shock. If Gothic treats the disturbed and the tense, then horror treats the slashed and the torn. If Gothic is the mind, then horror is the body." They conclude their definition with the summary that "if history is what hurts, then horror is what bleeds" (3, 4). Storey and Shapiro's connecting statements between the Gothic and Horror genres show precisely how the two genres relate to each other, explaining that the Gothic ultimately paves the way and opens the door to the discomfiting elements of Horror. The history of Gothic literature composes a smooth gateway into the artistry of Horror literature and encourages new avenues of analysis.

It is often a staple of the Horror genre to have a physical monster present; however, that is not always the case in the film and literature. Monster theory attempts to find the patterns among the similarities and differences viewed by “various human groups regarding this categorial ‘Other’” (Cavell 157), and the key difficulty with defining what makes a monster is that the term is expansive and widely encompasses many creatures, people, and concepts that do not always fall into the category of Horror. W. Scott Poole condenses this concern clearly in saying:

The term [monster] has been elastic enough to include all sorts of phenomena beyond the normal range of expectations and experiences. The friendly sea serpent would seem to have little to do with Ed Gein<sup>3</sup> happily sewing his skin suit by firelight on a wintry Wisconsin night. (151-152)

In *The Philosophy of Horror*, Noel Carroll itemizes the characteristics necessary to define a monster, and it is from this list that I have constructed criteria for these readings of Horror monsters in this thesis. First, the monster must be dangerous, and this danger can be satisfied by the lethal nature of the monster alone. Secondly, the monster must pose a threat to the psyche, to morals, or to society, specifically seeking destruction of “moral order.” Third, monsters “trigger certain enduring infantile fears” and other bodily horrors such as being eaten, dismembered, raped, or becoming the victim of incest. Fourth, monstrous creatures are impure, “involv[ing] a conflict between two or

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<sup>3</sup> Ed Gein was a serial killer, committing his crimes between 1947-1957. His violent activities occurred during a time when the term “serial killer” had not yet been coined as a phrase. He was discovered to have a refrigerator stocked with human organs, bowls and bedpost decorations made of human skulls, lamps and a chair made of human skin, a box packed with vulvas, and had even sewn an outfit out of skin. Police discovered one of his victims hanging on a hook with her body hollowed. Gein’s crimes and specific mode of violence were the inspiration for films like *Psycho*, *The Silence of the Lambs*, and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Gein “ushered in the aegis of the maniac murderer in American popular culture,” and the serial killer became a point of discussion for both criminality and celebrity (Poole 147).

more standing cultural categories” (43). The fewer traits a monster embodies, the more its monstrous nature can be debated; as such, monstrosity is a spectrum, and while a monster may not necessarily have all four traits simultaneously, accumulating these traits can engender an immediate escalation in the emotional reaction the monster is able to draw out of its victims. That a monstrous figure can inspire an impassioned terror or grief is often a key factor in establishing Horror, though, as the analysis will show, there is maneuverability.

Carroll further describes what traits are inherent within these monsters in order to fulfill the list of characteristics above:

Fantastic biologies, linking different and opposed cultural categories, can be constructed by means of fission and fusion, while the horrific potential of already disgusting and phobic entities can be accentuated by means of magnification and massification. These are primary structures for the construction of horrific creatures (50-51).

Fusion is the linking of two or more ideas or concepts, such as human and insect, that would not naturally be found existing together, while fission then is the division of two or more “categorically distinct identities” (Carroll 46). Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, too, argues that monsters “are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. And so, the monster is dangerous, a form suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions” (6). Cohen’s and Carroll’s elements of monstrous characteristics agree. For example, Mothman, a figure of cryptid<sup>4</sup> folklore originating in Point Pleasant, West Virginia,

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<sup>4</sup> “Cryptids are either unknown species of animals or animals which, though thought to be extinct, may have survived into modern times, and await rediscovery by scientists. ‘Cryptid’ is derived from ‘crypt,’

represents fusion, existing as one being, both moth and man; whereas, a werewolf represents fission, existing as one being while presenting as man and wolf separately.<sup>5</sup> Magnification is the enlarging of a monstrous entity, creating a being that takes up more space than an average human is comfortable with or accustomed to. Cthulhu,<sup>6</sup> an entity so large that people are driven to insanity merely by its existence, illustrates magnification; similarly, massification is the (usually unexpected) multiplying of monstrous entities. While one entity is horrifying, multiples can be overwhelming to a devastating degree; this is the case with zombies. Carroll explains that the concepts of fusion and fission are for “constructing horrific biologies,” while magnification and massification are ways to “augment the powers of already disgusting and phobic creatures” and concludes his argument by adding that “the horrific creature is essentially a compound of danger and disgust and each of these structures provides a means of developing these attributes in tandem” (52). Carroll’s attributes identify the means by which the monster evokes fear in its victims.

Why does it matter whether the varied characters of the *Beowulf*-manuscript fit into Horror today? The *Beowulf*-manuscript has been studied extensively and has been viewed through many literary lenses—religious, historical, mythical, folkloric, etc.;

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from the Greek *kryptos* (hidden); ‘id,’ from the Latin *ides*, a patronymic suffix; and the Greek ‘*ides*,’ which means ‘in sense’ ... More broadly, then, we do not know whether a cryptid is an unknown species of animal, or a supposedly extinct animal, or a misidentification, or anything more than myth until evidence is gathered and accepted one way or another. Until that proof is found, the supposed animal carries the label ‘cryptid’” (Coleman 75, 76). Other examples include Bigfoot and the Loch Ness Monster.

<sup>5</sup> For brief explanations on both Mothman and werewolves, see Breverton, Terry. *Breverton’s Phantasmagoria: A Compendium of Monsters, Myths and Legends*. Lyons Press, 2011. Breverton explores the connection between Pliny’s description of wolves and men (372-373).

<sup>6</sup> For further lore on Cthulhu, see Lovecraft, H. P. *The New Annotated H.P. Lovecraft*. Edited by Leslie S. Klinger and Alan Moore, Liveright Publishing Corporation, a Division of W.W. Norton & Company, 2014.



however, for a manuscript as brimming with unbridled terror, monstrous beings, surprising attacks, brutal deaths, and scenes dripping with gore as this one, there has been no attempt to view this story through the lens of Horror. Taking the time to assess the place of these works within Horror also opens avenues to understanding the text in a broader sense as this manuscript continually provides opportunities for scholars in the exploration of new methods of thinking and analysis.

As part of the reconsideration of Sisam's idea about monsters as the unifying theme in the *Beowulf*-manuscript, I follow Augustine's argument made in *City of God*; Augustine situates the idea of monsters within "God's creation" and argues that, even with deformities and unusual appearances, any being descended from Adam, if rational, is human, including any kin of Cain (16.8) which, through this lens, could reshape all manners of possibilities. This assertion would have shaped the views of people in the Middle Ages, giving them an authoritative reason to consider any rational being "human," regardless of appearance. This makes these entities eligible to receive Christian salvation, as seen with St. Christopher, and also subject to moral evaluation and judgment. On the basis of Augustine's thought, I focus on analyzing the humanoid (or arguably humanoid) entities in the texts, leaving the animal-like creatures, such as the combustible red chickens in *Wonders of the East*, for the scope of a separate project. Through research of Horror literature, film, scholarship, and monster theory, I have narrowed down a list of criteria necessary to determine the monstrous nature of the entities in all five works of the *Beowulf*-manuscript. The criteria are broken down into two categories (1) monstrous appearance and (2) monstrous behavior. Monstrous appearance outlines characteristics such as fusion, fission, massification, and

magnification; monstrous behavior considers the actions of these beings under the Horror subgenres of body horror, criminality, and the disruption of normalcy. Bringing the manuscript's humanoid characters under scrutiny for these characteristics will allow me to explore whether Sisam's labeling of this collection as "a book of diverse monsters" might fit within the categories of monsters of Horror or if the thematic unity of the manuscript should be analyzed differently.

In the first chapter of this project, I will explore the monstrous creatures of *Beowulf*. This chapter will examine whether both Grendel and Grendel's Mother align with the Horror characteristics for appearance and behavior, exploring Grendel's continual attacks and the unexpected attack from Grendel's Mother on Heorot while considering the motivations behind their actions. Grendel and his mother serve as interesting characters for this project in that they are both labeled with words asserting their monstrosity while frequently also called by names that assert their humanity. The dragon in *Beowulf* will not be considered in the scope of this project as the argument for its humanity would take this project down a different path. The second chapter will then evaluate the *Passion of St. Christopher* and *Wonders of the East*. Christopher is both *Cynocephalus* and saint, and thus deemed monstrous while also being near to God, which allows for rich discussion regarding the dichotomy of appearance and behavior. *Wonders of the East* offers a myriad of creatures to investigate in the same vein of appearance and behavior, outlining specific traits such as measurements of height, color, hair length, and in some instances, specific diets and responses to observation and behavior toward strangers. The third chapter focuses on *Judith*, *The Letter from Aristotle to Alexander* (as well as Alexander's conquests mentioned in *Wonders of the East*), and again, the *Passion*

*of St. Christopher*. In this chapter, the sole focus will be on the potential for monstrous nature from those who are inarguably human in appearance, specifically Holofernes, Alexander, and Dagnus. As these men have the usual appearances of humans, they are not initially deemed monsters; however, their behavior requires inspection to determine how monstrous it may be.

## CHAPTER I

### Exploring Monstrosity in *Beowulf*: Grendel and Grendel's Mother

The other-than-natural entities of *Beowulf*, especially Grendel and Grendel's Mother, have been studied extensively regarding their monstrous natures. These studies range from their other-worldly dwellings and potential allegiances to the devil to Grendel's evolution within popular culture and his depictions in twenty-first century film<sup>7</sup>; however, little has been done to explore the nature of Grendel's monstrosity, specifically regarding what place he might hold in the genre of modern-day horror (henceforth Horror). In this chapter, I will apply the concepts of the horror of criminality, body horror, and the destruction of normalcy to Grendel and his mother in order to demonstrate how Grendel may fit into current categories as a Horror monster, not just a monstrous being of Anglo-Saxon lore, and how Grendel's Mother, alternatively, may not completely fit into the same characteristics as her son.

Grendel's status as a monster itself has been a long-lasting concept as can be seen in the 2023 novel from Stephen Graham Jones, *Don't Fear the Reaper*. Character Galatea Pangborne expresses an analysis of Grendel in the context of her situation of threat by an escaped killer in her town:

Grendel is less a rampager, more a ravager of Heorot specifically. Grendel can only be stopped with force by someone pure of heart and intention. Dark Mill South being identified with Grendel is an indictment of law

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<sup>7</sup> For Grendel's association with the Devil, see Malmberg, Lars. "Grendel and the Devil." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, vol. 78, no. 3, 1977, pp. 241–243.; for Grendel's evolution in popular culture, see Farrell, Jennifer Kelso. "The Evil Behind the Mask: Grendel's Pop Culture Evolution." *The Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 41, no. 6, 2008, pp. 934–949.; for Grendel's depiction in film, see Valdés-Miyares, J. Ruben. "Beowulf's Monster Discourse Now: Grendel in Twenty-First-Century Film." *English Studies*, vol. 102, no. 6, 2021, pp. 847–867.

enforcement. If they were pure of heart and intention, then Dark Mill South would have been stopped years ago. (Jones)

Whether Galatea Pangborne's analysis of purity and intention regarding Grendel's slayer and this relationship to Proofrock law enforcement is accurate is not important to the analysis at hand. The staying power of Grendel's monstrosity and his application to the Horror genre is what is important.

When considering how Grendel may fit into Horror, the most compelling trait of Carroll's elements of monstrosity is the fusion of an entity—the “construction of creatures that transgress categorical distinctions such as inside/outside, living/dead, insect/human, flesh/machine, and so on” (43). This fusion is evident regarding Grendel's monsterhood as he straddles the line between human and unnatural fiend at the same time, in the same body. There is no separation of his humanity and his horror as there is with Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (an example of fission). While frequently being called names like *ellengæst*, *feond on helle*, and *wiht unhælo*<sup>8</sup>, Grendel is also referred to as *wer*, *rinc*, and *guma*,<sup>9</sup> confirming that he is a fusion of both man and inhuman creature (Malmberg 241). To further fuse the dichotomy of these concepts, Megan Cavell argues that “the line between human and monstrous bodies is blurred” when considering the diction used, particularly in describing how men use their bodies as weapons, as Beowulf does, and how a creature like Grendel uses his claws as weapons against the Danes and the Geats (161). Laborde expands Cavell's argument of Grendel's weaponous body by noting that Grendel's “toughness of skin” and “steel-like claws” also in turn help protect

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<sup>8</sup> Line 86, bold demon; line 101, fiend from hell; line 120, unholy creature.

<sup>9</sup> Grendel is said to be a “man” in lines 105, 1352 (*wer*), line 720 (*rinc*), and line 1682 (*guma*).

him from the weapons the Geats use against him and that “such a characteristic would be highly appropriate for a monster” (203).

This characteristic is less “fusion-laden” regarding the words used to describe Grendel’s Mother and do tend more towards a humanistic connotation, for example *aglæcwif*, *brimwylf*, *grundwyrge*, and *merewife*<sup>10</sup>. *Aglæcwif* is one of the closest terms used for Grendel’s Mother that would bond the concepts of human and monster; however, *aglæc* is a complicated term and does not simply indicate monster, though the word is frequently translated to mean monster (monster is a term that easily encompasses some of the specific definitions by rolling their concepts into one word). Klaeber, for instance, defines *aglæc* as “formidable one,” “one inspiring awe or misery,” “afflicter,” “assailant,” “adversary,” or “combatant,” and Klaeber specifically translates *aglæcwif* as “trouble-maker” or “female adversary” (347, 348),<sup>11</sup> showing that language towards Grendel’s Mother is significantly less split between human and monsters and leans more heavily on the human side; whereas Grendel straddles those concepts more evenly. Considering that Grendel’s Mother resides in the bottom of a mere, has command over a myriad of unusual aquatic creatures, and proves to be highly dangerous, these factors themselves do not paint her as a monster. Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea, lives deep under the ocean’s surface and has command over the creatures in the water, yet he is not considered a monster but acknowledged as a god.

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<sup>10</sup> Line 1259, formidable-woman; line 1506, sea-shewolf; line 1518, ground-sinner (or a phrase along the lines of evil-doer from the depths); line 1519, lake-woman.

<sup>11</sup> Something to keep in mind here is the variety of cultural and societal representations of women, both for Anglo-Saxons and modern societies, and how those ideals bleed into Klaeber’s manner of translation.

One of the modes of creating a monster for a Horror experience, according to Carroll and Cohen, is both magnification and massification. Carroll defines magnification as “augment[ation] of [entities] scaled [to] increase their physical dangerousness” and explains that massification can “exploit the repelling aspect of existing creatures” (49, 50). Again, Grendel fits snugly into this list as he is mentioned to be much larger than a normal man as described in lines 1637b through 1639: “feower scoldon / on þæm wælstenge weorcum geferian / to þæm goldsele Grendles heafod.”<sup>12</sup> Another indication of Grendel’s massive size is the inclusion of his *glof* or *glove* (a bag) as mentioned in line 2085; Beowulf explains that the “glof hangode / sid ond syllic” and that “[h]e mec þær on innan unsynnigne, / dior dæd-fruma gedon wolde / manigra <sup>13</sup>.” E. D. Laborde makes an astute argument for Grendel’s magnification remarking that, when gloves are introduced in a story involving trolls, this detail is to “emphasize the gigantic stature and terrible nature” of the entity carrying said glove (202). Grendel can only successfully carry a glove if he has the sufficient size to do so, and he does. While Grendel’s Mother is, like Grendel, larger than the average human, size is not an ingredient for her “monster factor” the way it is for Grendel. The extreme size of the Grendelkin, since first learning of Grendel, has become expected and understood. The existence Grendel's Mother, however, is a necessary means to defining Grendel’s possession of the trait of massification. The thanes, both Beowulf’s and Hrothgar’s, are confident that their

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<sup>12</sup> Lines 1637b-1639, Four men had to carry with difficulty the head of Grendel on a war-shaft (spear) towards the gold-hall.

<sup>13</sup> Lines 2085b-2086a, the glove hanged spacious and strange; Lines 2089-2091a, He, the bold doer of deeds, wanted to put me, undeserving, there within [the glove], one of many.

sorrows are over when Beowulf slays Grendel and remain unaware of the threat of Grendel's Mother.

druncon win weras.      Pær wæs symbla cyst,  
geosceaft grimme,      Wyrð ne cuþon,  
eorla manegum,      swa hit agangen wearð  
   syþðan æfen cwom<sup>14</sup>

The lack of knowledge that Grendel's Mother would come to destroy their celebration and relaxation fits the idea of massification as no one considered the possibility of multiple creatures of the same nature.

Because he is a monster, the mode of Grendel's thane-killing can shine light on how he fits into various sub-genres of Horror. Another of these categories is the horror of criminality. "Serial killers in popular culture appear as both evil monsters and insane maniacs," and society as a whole retains full understanding that these people are still just that—people, though a monster's activities do push the bounds of what a normally functioning person would experience in their average life; Poole goes on to argue that, despite their humanity, "monsters cannot be treated or rehabilitated, only destroyed" (151). Poole's argument of destruction as necessity applies to Grendel who has no interest in changing behavior and has no desire to foster a peaceful relationship with Hrothgar and his people. The poet explains that Grendel wants no peace, no *wergeld* or other means of peace and settlement and has no desire to stop his killings.

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<sup>14</sup> Lines 1232b-1235, There was the best of feasts; the men drank wine and knew not wyrð, grim fate, as it would come pass for many noblemen after evening came.



	sibbe ne wolde
wið manna hwone	mægenes Deniga,
feorhbealo feorran,	fea þingian,
ne þær nænig witena	wenan þorfte
beorhtre bote	to banan folmum <sup>15</sup>

The only path to end Grendel's destruction is to kill him. His behavior the night of the first attack situates him in this monstrous scenario, and he immediately strikes again the next night and continues his spree for the following twelve years.<sup>16</sup>

When Grendel attacks Heorot, we are made keenly aware that Grendel is intentionally hurting people, that he is seething with rage and seeks out the warriors<sup>17</sup> with the full intention of ending their time on Earth as seen in lines 711 and 712 (“mynte se manscaða manna cynnes / sumne besyrwan in sele þam hean”)<sup>18</sup> and again in lines 731 through 733a (“mynte þæt he gedælde, ær þon dæg cwome, / atol aglæca, anra gehwylces / lif wið lice”).<sup>19</sup> In the midst of Grendel's first attack, the fiend takes *þritig þegna* and rejoices in his fill of the gore.<sup>20</sup> As noted above, Grendel wants no part in quelling this feud.

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<sup>15</sup> Lines 154b-158, He wanted not kinship with any of the men of the Dane's power, nor to banish his deadly evil, nor to settle for riches; there not one of the wisemen needed to expect bright compensation from the hands of the killer.

<sup>16</sup> Lines 134b-136a, “Næs hit lengra fyrst, / ac ymb ane niht eft gefremede / morðbeala mare” (It was not a long time, but about one night again that a greater murder-bale was brought about); lines 146b-147, “Wæs seo hwil micel / twelf wintra tid torn geþolode” (That was a great while; the time of twelve winters suffered torment).

<sup>17</sup> Lines 115-116a, “Gewat ða neosian, syþðan niht becom, / hean huses” (After night came, he (Grendel) departed to seek out the high house).

<sup>18</sup> Lines 711-712, The evil-doer intended to ensnare one of the race of men in that high hall.

<sup>19</sup> Lines 731-733a, The horrible opponent intended that he separated, before the day came, each one from the life within their body.

<sup>20</sup> Line 123a, thirty thanes; lines 123b-125, “þanon eft gewat / huðe hremig to ham faran, / mid þære wælfylle wica neosan” (Thence once more the joyous one departed to go forth to his home with his spoil, that fill of slaughter to seek dwelling-places).

With Grendel’s motive of inflicting continual terror, the lack of ability to reason with him leaves Beowulf and his thanes with the understanding that only a counterattack on Grendel, resulting in Grendel’s death, can spare the community and restore a normally functioning society in Heorot. Grendel’s Mother, however, acts in a way more aligned with accepted Anglo-Saxon feuding patterns.

sorhfulne sið,	sunu deoð wrecan . . .
hraðe heo æþelunga	anne hæfde
fæste befangen,	þa heo to fenne gang.
Se wæs Hroþgare	hæleþa leofost <sup>21</sup>

While Grendel cannot be persuaded by formal Anglo-Saxon means of ending a feud, Grendel’s Mother swiftly steps in to take a “most beloved nobleman” from Heorot in place of her own son, applying a supposedly feuding tactic of taking the life of one hall-member in response to the death of her own kin. Again, the behavior of Grendel’s Mother is not monstrous, confirmed when “heo under heolfre genam / cuþe folme,”<sup>22</sup> making sure to bring the severed appendage of her child home. However, the poet states “ne wæs þæt gewrixle til,”<sup>23</sup> foreshadowing that the feud would have to continue and Beowulf would fight again.

Not only are horrifying beings capable of eliciting terror as an emotion in their victims, but, too, they instill the fear of what can be done to the victim; fear of the entity and fear of what the entity can do to a victim’s body occur separately. The fear of bodily

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<sup>21</sup> Lines 1278, 1294-1296, On a sorrowful journey to avenge the death of her son... quickly, she had firmly seized one of the noblemen, as she went towards the fen. That (nobleman) was the most beloved of the men of Hrothgar.

<sup>22</sup> Lines 1302b-1303a, She (Grendel’s Mother), under the gore, took away the infamous hand (Grendel’s arm).

<sup>23</sup> Line 1304b, That was no good exchange.

degradation is powerful. Xavier Aldana Reyes, chief editor for the *Horror Studies* book series researches Horror with a focus on corporeality and embodiment in Horror literature and film<sup>24</sup> and defines body horror as “a particular type of horror subgenre concerned with the total or partial destruction, mutilation, deformation, transformation, or (evolutionary) degeneration of the human body” and indicates that “the victims in body horror are not merely maimed, killed, or metamorphosed but brutally and usually irrevocably so” (107). Body horror is the opposite of the safety one feels when something horrible is distant on the periphery. This fear is close and specific. There is no longer a safe distance, and the horror is not just near you but acting within your physical space. Reyes goes on to add that “body horror can foreground the depiction of grievous bodily harm, spectacularizing brutal attacks on characters and presenting the effects of violence aesthetically or in minute detail.” Novels that often depict body horror, “emphasize innovative and elaborate accounts of pain and destruction” (114, 115). Ultimately, body horror, like so much about Grendel, makes us question humanity—both the humanity of the being inflicting the attack and of the being suffering the pain. One is never more aware of their humanity than when faced with an entity that could forcefully remove limbs, eyes, skin, and bowels in the most gruesome ways.<sup>25</sup> This concept is so prevalent in the realm of Horror literature that Splatterpunk is a subgenre ever-growing in popularity—stories representing the most extreme depravity in regard to the horrific

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<sup>24</sup> Reyes will be releasing a book in 2024 entitled *Contemporary Body Horror on Page and Screen*.

<sup>25</sup> See Beauregard, Aron. *Playground*. Barnes & Noble Press, 2022.; Brite, Poppy Z. *Exquisite Corpse*. Simon & Schuster, 1997.; Thomas, Ryan C. *The Summer I Died*. Grand Mall Press, 2017.

treatment of the human body, stories that have the intention of the leaving the reader gagging.

While Splatterpunk explores the most extreme realms of body horror, Reyes, in *The Cambridge Companion to American Horror*, details five types of body horror that are most commonly seen across traditional Horror: (1) hybrid corporeality, (2) parasitism, including alien invasion, (3) abjection and disgust which covers the supernatural, (4) the grotesque body which addresses the non-supernatural, and finally, (5) gore and violence (108, 109). For the purposes of this study, I focus on the fifth element, gore and violence, and how this subtype of body horror also defines Grendel as a Horror monster.

Beowulf is already aware that Grendel is violent and capable of inflicting tremendous bodily damage when he addresses, with Hrothgar, the potential of his own death at Grendel's hand.

	Na ðu minne þearft
hafalan hydan,	ac he me habban wile
dreore fahne,	gif mec deað nimeð;
byreð blodig wæl,	byrgean þenceð,
eteð angenga	unmurnlice,
mearcað morhopu;	no ðu ymb mines ne þearft
lices feorme	sorgian <sup>26</sup>

In response, Hrothgar explains his sorrows regarding Grendel's violence noting that the mead hall was *dreorfah* and *eal bencpelu blode bestymed* leaving their dwelling-place *heorudreore*<sup>27</sup>. When Grendel attacks Heorot with Beowulf and his thanes inside, the

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<sup>26</sup> Lines 445b-451, You will not at all need to hide my head, for he will have me fiercely blood-stained if death carries me off, bears my bloody corpse, intends to taste me; the solitary walker eats ruthlessly, stains his moor-swamps. You will not at all need to care about the possession of my body.

<sup>27</sup> Line 485 (*dreorfah*), stained with gore; line 486 (*eal bencpelu blode bestymed*), all benches soaked with blood; line 487 (*heorudreore*), gore coming from bodily wounds.

poet gives the full spectrum of the body horror that Grendel grievously creates, a scene rivaling that of Splatterpunk material.

ac he gefeng hraðe	forman siðe
slæpendne rinc,	slat unwearnum
bat banlocan,	blod edrum dranc,
synsnædum swealh;	sona hæfde
unlyfigendes	eal gefeormod,
fet ond folma <sup>28</sup>	

By filling a hall full of thanes with the fear of being consumed while he utterly and irrevocably mutilates a thane's body, Grendel here demonstrates his place among Carroll's and Reyes's characteristics for Horror monsters and body horror. Body horror also happens *to* Grendel much in the same way that he creates it, as occurs when victims must inevitably fight back against their formidable attackers during a *wælræse*.<sup>29</sup> The poet offers no softening of body horror when describing the wounds inflicted upon Grendel during Beowulf's return attack:

	Licsar gebad
atol æglæca;	him on eaxle wearð
syndolh sweotol,	seonowe onsprungon,
burston banlocan <sup>30</sup>	

Even Michael Myers (*Halloween*),<sup>31</sup> while creating an environment of terror and pain on unsuspecting victims, experiences body horror as he is shot multiple times, blown up in a room full of gaseous vapors, and even swiftly decapitated. Similarly, Jason Voorhees

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<sup>28</sup> Lines 740-745a, But he quickly seized, at his first chance, a sleeping man, tore him apart greedily, bit into his bone-locker (body), and drank the streams of his blood, swallowed huge chunks; he soon had consumed all of the unliving, hands and feet.

<sup>29</sup> Line 824, onslaught of carnage.

<sup>30</sup> Lines 815b-818a, The terrible combatant experienced bodily pain; a very great wound became apparent on his shoulder, sinews burst asunder, his bone-locker (joints, limbs) shattered.

<sup>31</sup> See Carpenter, John. *Halloween*. Compass International Pictures, 1978.

(*Friday the 13th*)<sup>32</sup> experiences being blown up and receiving multiple traumatic wounds to the face, neck, and shoulder, and has his body drowned on numerous occasions, revealing a bloated and horrendous “corpse.” After twelve years of horrifying Hrothgar’s kingdom, tides have turned on Grendel, known for corruption of thanes’ bodies as his claw, complete with arm and shoulder, are hung as a trophy in Heorot<sup>33</sup>. This particular scene, the removal of Grendel’s arm, becomes a common trope in the realm of modern-day body horror.<sup>34</sup>

Just as seeing a dismembered arm hanging from the ceiling of one’s home would be disconcerting to say the least, humans experience a natural discomfort when familiar surroundings become disrupted by unfamiliar events. A crucial factor of dealing with a Horror monster is the disruption of normalcy that these entities invoke on their surrounding community. According to Megan Cavell, “the monster is aligned with the natural world and placed in opposition to humanity and the constructed world of civilization” (157). The monstrous in any capacity, upsets “scientific laws we follow in order to make sense of earthly life, its history, and the position of our own bodies within nature” (Reyes 109). Before attacking the Danes, Grendel and even his mother, as far as the poet has told us, do nothing to constitute monstrous behavior or evil before the initial attack (Farrell, 937). The poet says that Grendel waits and suffers in his home but, up to that point, has not done anything against the Danes.

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<sup>32</sup> See Cunningham, Sean S., director. *Friday the 13th*. Paramount Pictures, 1980.

<sup>33</sup> Lines 835-836, “earm ond eaxle --- þær wæs eal geador / Grendles grape--- under geapne hrof” (arm and shoulder—there all together was Grendel’s claw—under the vaulted roof).

<sup>34</sup> See *Evil Dead* (2013), a re-imagining of the original 1981 film, as a primary example of a body-horror movie that relies heavily on the removal of arms as a specific point of horror, and *The Talisman* (Stephen King and Peter Straub), a Grendel-esque arm-removal scene occurs in chapter 26.



When the “outside” is removed from that placement on the periphery and attempts to enter back into the “inside,” that normalcy is uprooted, and “normal” people begin to suffer from the monster. This concept is seen consistently in Horror film and literature; In the *Halloween* movie franchise, Laurie Strode’s life is upended when Michael Myers escapes from his position as an outsider in an institution,<sup>37</sup> and in Brite’s novel, *Exquisite Corpse*, young, gay men in London and New Orleans are unsafe once Andrew Compton escapes prison, especially once he teams up with Jay Byrne, a man who has hidden his “otherness” in such a way that he is accepted into the “inside.”<sup>38</sup>

Once Grendel begins his horrific assaults on the community, he ushers himself directly into the role of monster when he disturbs the normalcy found in Heorot. Hrothgar’s people lived happily in their community (“Swa þa drihtguman dreamum lifdon, / eadiglice”<sup>39</sup>), and the poet explains that the people did not live in fear or sorrow (“sorge ne cuðon, / wonscaft wera”<sup>40</sup>). Once Grendel begins his nightly attacks, everything changes for that society.

þa wæs æfter wiste	wop up ahafen,
micel morgensweg.	Mære þeoden,
æþeling ærgod,	unbliðe sæt,
þolode ðryðswyð	þegnsorge dreah <sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See the *Halloween* movie series, with twelve installments spanning from 1978 to 2022.

<sup>38</sup> See Poppy Z. Brite’s *Exquisite Corpse* (1996), a novel with characters based on serial killers, Dennis Nilsen and Jeffrey Dahmer, in which Andrew, who is HIV+, and Jay carry out uncountable murders against young, gay men by committing bodily mutilation, heinous sexual acts both pre- and post-death, necrophilia, and cannibalism.

<sup>39</sup> Lines 99-100a, So the warriors lived in bliss, happily.

<sup>40</sup> Lines 119b-120a, Not knowing of sorrow of the misery of men.

<sup>41</sup> Lines 128-131, Then after feasting was weeping upwards lifted, a great morning-cry. The great king, ere-good prince, unhappy sat; the mighty one suffered and endured thane-sorrow.



This upheaval of the community in Heorot causes a deep sadness for Hrothgar (“*Þæt wæs wræc micel wine Scyldinga, / modes brecða*”<sup>42</sup>). Lines 138-140a and 145b-146a<sup>43</sup> explore one of the ways normalcy is upended in Heorot. Hrothgar’s thanes are unable to sleep in the hall as they normally would have due to the unending fear that has gripped them for the past twelve years because of Grendel’s nightly attacks. Poole claims that the issue of normalcy-disruption becomes the largest version of itself, according to Horror, when the “family becomes a battleground.” Monsters on the streets of downtown carry a new weight when they become monsters in your own home (165), and Grendel breaks down the familial nature of Heorot. The hall is the venue of community-building for the thanes, and removing Heorot as a safe place for that community-building ends normal activities for the thanes.

In considering a study of the criminality of horror, body horror, and the destruction of normalcy, Grendel fits in unquestionably as a Horror monster. While he has always been applauded as one of the most famous monsters of Old English literature, there is a place for him in modern-day Horror as well. While Grendel fits easily into Horror, Grendel’s Mother functions differently and requires a separate avenue of analysis. First, she remains quiet throughout her time in the mere and while Grendel is carrying out his nightly attacks on Heorot. Though thanes of Hrothgar claim to have seen

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<sup>42</sup> Lines 170-171a, That was a great hardship to the friendly lord of the Scyldings, a broken condition of the mind.

<sup>43</sup> *Þa ceaðfynde þe him elles hwær / gerumlicor ræste sohte / bed æfter burum, ... oð þæt idel stod / husa selest.* (Then was easily found he [a thane] who elsewhere, farther away, sought rest, a bed past the chambers ... until the best of houses stood empty).

her, she is unmemorable and does not even come to mind even as Grendel displays his horrific behavior to the hall. Hrothgar only recalls her existence after her avenging attack:

Ic þæt londbuend,	leode mine,
selerædende	secgan hyrde,
þæt hie gesawon	swylce twegen
micle mearcstapan	moras healdan,
ellorgæstas.	Ðæra oðer wæs,
þæs þe hie gewislicost	gewitan meahton,
idese onlicnes <sup>44</sup>	

This further solidifies the idea that the monstrosities staying on the perimeter of society were less of a threat while showing that Grendel's Mother specifically has been remembered as an afterthought. Grendel has already been defeated, and it is not until after Grendel's Mother attacks Heorot that Hrothgar explains that those in the community have actually seen two monsters, not just Grendel but one in the form of a woman.

While the catalysts of Grendel's depravity are somewhat debatable, Grendel's Mother clearly seeks revenge for Beowulf's murder of her son.

	Grendles modor,
ides aglæcwif	yrmþe gemunde, . . .
	Ond his modor þa gyt
gifre ond galgmod	gegan wolde
sorhfulne sið,	sunu deoð wrecan <sup>45</sup>

This concept of vengeance is not lost in Horror. The *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>* franchise is a prime example. While Jason Voorhees is revealed at Camp Crystal Lake in *Part II* of the series,

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<sup>44</sup> Lines 1345-1351a, I heard the land-dwellers, my people, hall-counselors speak, that they beheld two such great mark-steppers guard the moors, those alien-spirits. The other one of those [meaning Grendel's Mother] was such that they certainly could know, the likeness of a woman.

<sup>45</sup> Lines 1258b-1259, 1276b-1278, The lady, Grendel's Mother, formidable woman considered her misery . . . and his mother then yet greedy and gloomy-minded desired to go on a sorrowful journey to avenge the death of her son.

still missing his famed mask, it is his mother, Mrs. Pamela Voorhees, who is responsible for the killings in the first film as the avenger of her son upon the “lazy” and “irresponsible” camp counselors who allowed him to drown. In *Part II*, “Final Girl” Ginny, while discussing the “myth” of Jason Voorhees with fellow counselors, Paul and Ted, expresses a level of sympathy for Mrs. Voorhees regarding her murderous rampage, saying, “And all just because she loved him. Isn't that what her revenge was all about? Her sense of loss, her rage at what she thought happened, her love for him?”<sup>46</sup> Motherhood in Horror has taken note from Grendel’s Mother, taking a passionate maternal instinct and redirecting that instinct toward acts of terror.

Grendel’s Mother even keeps her son’s corpse in the mere with her as the poet explains that “[Beowulf] on ræste geseah / guðwerigne Grendel licgan,”<sup>47</sup> showing the maternal instinct to keep her son nearby despite his being deceased, a concept not unheard of in works of an uncomfortable nature.<sup>48</sup> While Grendel’s Mother fits some, but not all, of these Horror monster characteristics, the ones she does fit are softened by a layer of sympathy for a bereaved mother.

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<sup>46</sup> While the trope of a mother’s revenge is heavily discussed in *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> Parts I and II*, this is a long-term theme occurring, too, throughout *Parts III and IV* making this concept pertinent in popular horror.

<sup>47</sup> Lines 1585b-1586, He (Beowulf) witnessed, on the bed, Grendel lie dead, battle-weary.

<sup>48</sup> See Faulker, William. “A Rose for Emily.” *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, edited by Nina Baym, 7th ed., vol. 2, Norton & Company, New York, 2008, pp. 1042–1048.

## CHAPTER II

### Unusual Beings: *The Wonders of the East* and *The Passion of St. Christopher*

Grendel and Grendel's Mother are characters that offer considerations for their levels of monstrosity as compared to other characters in the *Beowulf*-manuscript who are not as easily defined and provoke more debate due to their well-known traditions. When identifying monsters in the works of *The Passion of St. Christopher* and *Wonders of the East*, I argue that appearance and behavior are deeply important distinctions to be made. Frightful-looking entities, as in the case of St. Christopher and some "man-like" beings in *Wonders of the East*, may not continue to evoke horror once one looks past their unnatural appearance, and their behavior can be considered entirely appropriate for humans in some cases, while in others they make act animalistically, meaning that they act no differently than a wild animal living naturally. The behaviors of wild animals are not intended to horrify humans around them but may be aggressive as means of self-protection. Kenneth Sisam "recognized that understanding this codex as compiled around an interest in monsters posed certain problems, and he did not attempt to fit all of the works in the manuscript into this design" (Powell 1), so if Sisam is willing to ignore *Judith* in this thematic connection based on monsters, can it not be said that other characters, such as Christopher, could potentially be an ill fit, too?

Grendel and his mother are found only in *Beowulf*, which gives scholars a finite amount of source material from which to explore Beowulf's foe; however, characters in the *Beowulf*-manuscript such as Christopher and Alexander are much more widely recognized and thus have an extraordinary amount of material discussing their histories,

myths, Christian iconography, and representation in various art forms. Christopher is an exceedingly popular figure in regard to religious history and religious texts, which deeply complicates how one may view the saint while assessing the potential for his monstrosity, especially within the confines of the *Beowulf*-manuscript.

While Christopher is seen as an outsider to his own race of dog-headed men, there is a myriad of other creatures, along with the *cynocephali*, to be explored through the lens of Horror within the *Wonders of the East* (henceforth *Wonders*) which offers even wider material for creatures located far outside of Grendel's mere. *Wonders* describes and illustrates entities which are connected through "vague geographic references," and the individual sections indicate an approximate location, general appearance, and characteristic traits of the monstrosities in that environment. Typical characteristics are human or animal likenesses, color, even eating habits, and sometimes a creature's response to being observed (Mittman 338). Elaine Treharne explains that *Wonders* contains "three-dozen wondrous creatures that can be seen in 'the East,' a 'semi-mythical land' full of fantastical scenarios juxtaposed with a style that seeks to emulate scientific narrative" (173). Meanwhile Andy Orchard argues that the *Wonders* demonstrates the distrust existing between the "monsters" and "men." I will argue that that dichotomy is much too simple and that, through the categories of Horror, these labels quickly become problematic (27).

What readers today would consider to be scientific observations, such as physical characteristics, eating habits, and geographic location, about these so-called "monstrous" creatures makes categorizing this work difficult and labeling the work as scientific

catalogue becomes dubious, particularly when the writer, living in a pre-science time, is not aware of that genre as a possibility. Even the idea of a travel narrative becomes unstable when considering some of the visited lands may have not actually existed as presented. The text “demonstrates the hybridity and lack of orientation of the monstrous and strange depictions,” showing that the entities observed in *Wonders* are not clear (Treharne 174); the entities are vague and at times contain such a multitude of recognizable organisms that they become difficult to define. These confusing creatures, however, do open interesting avenues for exploring of the Anglo-Saxons perceptions of exotic and lesser known (to them) lands. Treharne’s use of “hybridity” encourages scholars to explore the concept of Horror’s “fusion” in respect to the human-like entities seen in *Wonders*.

While *Wonders* offers a variety of animal-like creatures such as *henna mid reades heowes*, *Corsiae næddran*, and *æmetan swa micle saw hundas*, I will focus strictly on the entities listed as men or people<sup>49</sup> as this project explores the confusion of monstrosity regarding human-like creatures, not those lacking all human aspects.<sup>50</sup> These human-like creatures alone pose very complicated questions regarding Horror, or any lens for that matter, because the section of information for each individual creature is brief. With such minimal information, readers are forced to fill in their own blanks regarding the

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<sup>49</sup> Hens with red color, Corsias snakes, and ants as big as dogs; Old English language denoting the humanity of these specific beings are *men* (people), *man-cyn* (mankind/people), *wif* (women), and *moncyn* (mankind/people).

<sup>50</sup> This also accounts for the exclusion of *Beowulf*'s dragon as it is not represented as having a confusing level of humanity.

monstrous nature (or not) of these beings. Anglo-Saxon views on foreign and unknown races add a layer of complexity to the *Wonders*' creatures as well.

The complicated depiction of the being in *Wonders* gives scholars a more complex view of the humanity of the creatures. While this project looks at these wonders through a Horror lens, some scholars, particularly those working with post-colonial theory, have chosen to shy away from the *Wonders* due to a perception of this text as essentially racist. Post-colonial theory examines the situation of people who have experienced colonization before, during, and after that colonization. The term, however, has been expanded to describe the relationships between groups of people that did not previously involve colonization, though their situations may seem similar. As Busbee explains, however, such “reductive readings” can pass over more complex ideas of how Anglo-Saxons in particular viewed foreign and exotic realms (51, 54).

Mark Bradshaw Busbee in his article, “A Paradise Full of Monsters,” explores common ideas associated with monsters at this time such as their existence on the periphery of the known world. Anglo-Saxons, for example, seem to have used *India* as a term for referencing the East in general. Busbee writes:

The Anglo-Saxons doubtless believed with other early medieval Europeans that India lay on the eastern borders of the world ... India is both a place that can be located on a map and in the imagination, where fantasies and fears can be played out. (58)

Mary Campbell agrees, saying that “the East is a concept separable from any purely geographical area. It is essentially ‘Elsewhere’” (Campbell 48). This early medieval idea of the geographical “Elsewhere” is not unlike modern-day wonders of deep space and the

potential beings that could lie beyond the world we know. When such a large area is outside of a people's known scope, it then becomes easy to imagine these possible unknown entities as both monstrous and wondrous. Anglo-Saxons regarded "India" as an "imaginative space where fears, hopes, and desires might be entertained freely" (Busbee 51). Instead of relying on the notion of inherent racism, Busbee argues that these texts, "in their expressions of fear and fascination, reveal a willingness to engage and understand a mysterious Other" (51), suggesting that the idea that creatures in the *Wonders* may not universally be monstrous when viewed through Horror.

Busbee then argues that, even though some scholars explain these creatures as being "monstrous or grotesque hybrid beings," *Wonders* "ultimately depict[s] India with a sort of romantic curiosity, one characterized by awe and wonder" (54). We are met, again, with the idea of fusion when faced with the term "hybrid" in regard to the *Beowulf*-manuscript's creatures. This project consistently explores fusion as a concept of Horror, and we are brought back to the reality that monstrous appearance equates to neither monstrous behavior nor full monstrosity. The human-like creatures in *Wonders* are numerous, and the information can be unwieldy if not laid out clearly. In order to provide a clearer basis of analysis, I have compiled two charts which summarize the characteristics of the creatures in *Wonders* in a more organized fashion. In Figure 1, "Human-like Groups in *Wonders of the East*," each race is listed individually, especially in instances where the group discussed has not been given a proper name by which to identify it. In Figure 2, "Horror Appearance Characteristics for Groups in *Wonders of the East*," the corresponding groups from Figure 1 are listed in such a way that the reader can visualize the Horror characteristics of fusion, fission, massification, and magnification for



the various groups. In Figure 3, “Horror Behavior Characteristics for Groups in *Wonders of the East*,” corresponding groups from the first two figures are divided into a visual list for a better understanding of how their behaviors may be categorized into the main Horror behavioral factors. Both figures 2 and 3 may then be examined to determine whether there are monstrous characteristics in the nineteen humanoid groups.

While there are no examples of fission among the nineteen different human-like beings in the Vitellius version of the *Wonders*, fusion and magnification are the most frequent characteristics for five of the nineteen entities that represent fused beings and six of the nineteen entities having magnified size. Massification is a complicated characteristic as each group is identified as a race or a group of people. A group containing numerous entities is not in itself a cause for fear as it is understood that these are races of beings and not individuals; thus none of the groups are listed as having the characteristic of massification.<sup>51</sup> Fusion, in four of the five cases, is representative of a combination of both human and animal traits, such as the *horses mana*, *eoferes tuxas*, and *huna heafdu* of the *Cynocephali*, the *leona heafdu* of group 5, the *oseles gelicnesse* and *longe sconcan swa fugelas* in the second mention of the *Homodubii*, and the *eoferes tuxas*, *oxan tægl*, *olfendan fet*, and *eoseles teð* of the *wif* in group 16.<sup>52</sup> None of these fusions can relate too closely to Horror as these are all definable and knowable

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<sup>51</sup> I am using London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius, A. xv as it is the version found in the *Beowulf*-manuscript. The version of *Wonders* found in London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. v contains more creatures than Vitellius, but the additional creatures are animal-like (such as *Grifus*/gryphons and *Fenix*/phoenix) and are thus outside of the scope of this project, with the exception of the “swearte menn, ond nænig oðer man to ðam mannun geferan mag for ðam þe seo dun byð eall byrnende” (dark men, and no other man to those men may travel for they live on the mountain that is all burned).

<sup>52</sup> Horse’s mane, boar’s tusks, and hound’s head (*Cynocephali*), the lion’s head (group 5), the donkey’s likeness and long legs as birds (*Homodubii*), and the boar’s tusks, ox’s tail, camel’s feet, and donkey’s teeth (women in group 16).

characteristics. People can identify common animals as easily as they can another human. However, in the fifth case, the *Donestre*, these people are said to be “frihteras fram þam heafde oð ðone nafolan, ond se oðer dæl bið mennisce onlic,”<sup>53</sup> which is not a fusion of animals but one of differing human varieties. Their appearance alone may not be monstrous, but their behavior may present a different story, as will be discussed below.

Regarding massification, there are people who are *fiftyne fota lange* in group 4, people who are *.xx. fota lange* in group 5, and *men acende lange ond micle* with *fet ond sconcan .xii. fota lange* and *sidan mid breostum seofan fota lange* in the case of the *Hostes* (whose behavior will be discussed alongside the *Donestre*). The *Blemmeye* are *eahta fota lange* and *eahta fota brade*, and people who are *fiftyne fota lange* and *.x. on brade* in group 11, and women who are *þrytterne fota lange* in group 16.<sup>54</sup> The *Wonders* unevenly attempts to examine these groups in an objective, observational manner, and the writer explains their sizes in terms of precise measurements and not descriptive language meant to be a means for enhancing fear. As with fission, while this massification may cause these beings to appear unusual, it is not reflexively associating a horror with them. Behavior must be explored alongside appearance to fully determine the monstrous nature (or lack thereof) of these creatures.

Along with these physical characteristics, the horror of criminality, disruption of normalcy, and body horror have been continual factors in determining what makes a monster. Establishing criminality and disruption of normalcy can be complicated

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<sup>53</sup> Soothsayers from the head to the navel, and the other portion is similar to human.

<sup>54</sup> Fifteen feet tall (group 4), twenty feet tall (group 5), people born tall and large with fet and legs twelve feet long and side flanks with chests seven feet long (*Hostes*), eight feet tall and eight feet broad (*Blemmeye*), fifteen feet tall and ten feet in breadth (group 11), thirteen feet tall (group 16).

considering the brief entries for each “race”; however, a few groups give just enough information to determine some of the behavioral characteristics that may truly be of monstrous nature. Perhaps, with so little descriptions of these groups’ behaviors, the writer suggests that there is no real monstrous behavior to report. As seen in Table 3, twelve of the nineteen groups have no description of criminality, societal disruption, or instances of inflicting of body horror, and three of the nineteen races actually react fearfully in the presence of others.<sup>55</sup> These fifteen groups do not meet the combined criteria to be considered monsters of Horror as defined in this project. The behavior of the *Cynocephali*, the barbarous people, the *Hostes*, and the *Donestre*, however, invite further investigation.<sup>56</sup>

The *Cynocephali*, known as the *Conopenae* in the *Wonders*, are complicated as is shown when analyzing Christopher. While Christopher escaped the term monster through his honest behavior and “undefiled faith,” *Cynocephali* as a whole were traditionally known to be cannibals, even during Anglo-Saxon times. *An Old English Martyrology* notes that Christopher comes from “þære eorðan on þære æton men hi selfe” (66).<sup>57</sup> The term cannibals, though, is not a clear one in this situation. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines cannibals as being either “a person who eats human flesh” (*OED* 1a) or “an animal that feeds on the flesh of its own species” (*OED* 2). Considering that the *Cynocephali* are fusion creatures, one might wonder whether the *Cynocephali* are considered human enough that cannibalism means eating regular humans or if they are

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<sup>55</sup> Groups 1, 3, 4, 7, and 12 through 19 have no description regarding negative behavior towards others; groups 5, 8, and 11 flee in fear when observed; see tables 1 and 3.

<sup>56</sup> Groups 2, 6, 9, and 10; see table 3.

<sup>57</sup> The land in which people ate each other.

cannibalistic towards other *Cynocephali*, staying strictly within their “species.” In the *Wonders*, though, there is no mention of their eating habits. This omission of traditionally historical information is interesting considering the reporter’s description of the eating habits of other groups, whether it be the human-devouring habits of the *Hostes* and *Donestre*, the oyster-eating of the *stillestan bisceopes* (group 13), or the people who live on *hreawum flæsce* and *hunie* (group 17). Focusing only on the text from the *Wonders*, it is difficult to determine exactly how the *Cynocephali* should be viewed. As with Christopher, the vast history of these beings in art, mythology, and iconography makes their characteristics highly convoluted; however, much of these histories occur hundreds of years after these Anglo-Saxon texts.

The *Cynocephali* is not the only group that opens wider avenues for debate. Regarding the *el-reordge* people (group 9), the reporter explains, “Ðonne is oþer stow el-reordge men beoð on, ond þa habbað cyningas under him þara is geteald .c. Þæt syndon ða wyrstan men ond þa el-reordegestan.”<sup>58</sup> While the writer does not offer the readers any specific descriptors of this group’s behavior, what little description is offered (being described as the worst, the most outlandish, and having one hundred kings beneath them) does not instill any confidence that their behavior is appropriate. To end up lording over such numerous kingdoms suggests that their modes of behavior would include acts outside the realm of morality in order to achieve their tyrannical goals.

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<sup>58</sup> Then there is another place on which there are all-speaking (or all-consuming) men, and they have kings under them who number 100. They are the worst men and the most foreign-speaking.

The key word with this explanation, however, is the term of *el-reordge*. Many scholars translate this word to mean “barbarous” or “barbaric.” “Savage in infliction of cruelty, cruelly harsh” is definition of *barbaric* that would most resonate with readers today (*OED* 4). However, this particular definition of *barbaric* or *barbarous* is cited as being much later in time than when the writer used *el-reordge* to describe this group of beings suggesting a different meaning. The second definition of *barbaric* indicates the word was also used to describe a person of varied languages or backgrounds: “Of people: Speaking a foreign language, foreign, outlandish; *sometimes*, not Christian, heathen” (*OED* 2). When breaking down the Old English word into its separate lexemes, more information is brought to light. *El-reordge* is created as a compound from *ealle* and *reordian*. *Ealle* is simply translated “all”, but *reordian* is more complex. According to *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, *Bosworth-Toller*, *Introduction to Old English*, and *Klaeber’s Beowulf* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.), *reordian* is translated as “to speak” or “to tell,” which would make the definition of *el-reordge* to mean “all-speaking.” However, this line of thinking gets increasingly complicated. *Bosworth-Toller* also translates *reordian* as “to eat” or “to feed” which could translate *el-reordge* as “all-feeding” or “all-consuming.” *Bosworth-Toller* similarly translates *reordan* as “to eat” or “to feed”; however, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* treats *reordan* and *reordian* as the same words, “to speak.” Another complication to translation is that the term is sometimes written as one, rather than two separate words compounded together. *Bosworth-Toller* defines *elreord* as both “foreign-speaking” and “barbarous” while it also defines *elriord* as strictly “barbarous,” and *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* defines *elreord* as “of strange speech” and “barbarous.” Interestingly, same dictionary offers *elðeodig* to mean “foreign, strange, barbarous,

hostile” and *elðeod* to mean “strange people, foreign nation, foreigners, enemies” or “all people, all nations.” Similarly, *Bosworth-Toller* offers *el-þeodig* as “strange, foreign, barbarous” and *el-þeod* as “foreign nation, strange people.” When investigating Cotton Vitellius A. xv (6r) to consider the actual script, *elreord* is the word seen in the manuscript; though, many scholars emend this to *elreordge*. Of the scholars I consulted,<sup>59</sup> Orchard is the only one to include *elreorde* in the Old English text (while still making a footnote of *elreordge*). These same scholars all translate *elreordge* to either “barbaric” or “barbarous,” with the exception of Fulk who translates it as “speakers of barbaric tongue,” which is a logical combination of the two translational paths. This topic is in need of further exploration, but for the purposes of this project, with either translation, this group of people behaves, if not horribly, at least in a behavior foreign to those who view them. The addition of *wyrstan* or saying that these people are the “worst” implies that they behave in monstrous ways. With such unique translational questions surrounding the *Cynocephali* and the all-speaking, all-feeding, barbaric people, ascribing them to the label of Horror monster is complicated, though the evidence still points in that direction.

The final two humanoid groups who enact monstrous behavior are *Hostes* (group 6) and *Donestre* (group 10). The *Hostes* fit the category of massification as they are “men acende lange ond micle, þa habbað fet and sconcan .xii. fota lange, sidan mid breostum seofan fota lange,” and the group participates in body horror: “Cuplice swa hwylcne man

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<sup>59</sup> See Elaine Treharne (178-179), A. S. Mittman and Susan Kim (49, 65), Andy Orchard 194-195), and R. D. Fulk 22-23).

swa hy gelæccað, þonne fretað hi hyne.”<sup>60</sup> The idea of seizing in and of itself has violent connotations, and paired with a word that does not simply mean to eat but means to devour provokes images that are much more gruesome than of a wild animal consuming a meal. There is a violence and a rage to the specific words used that can cause a feeling of horror if faced with these creatures, much more horror than facing the people of *ðrysgheowes* who are so fearful that they flee far distances and sweat blood in their panic (group 5).<sup>61</sup> R. D. Fulk’s translation of *Hostes* to *Enemies* is not insignificant. The fear of being seen by a person is markedly different than having the nature necessary to violently seize and devour a person.

Similarly, the *Donestre* are examples of fusion, though an odd one. They are a “man-cyn ... geweaxene swa frihteras fram þam heafde oð ðone nafolan, ond se oðer dæl bið mennisce onlic.”<sup>62</sup> This description depicts both halves of the entity looking human, as a soothsayer is human, but are still described as being different kinds functioning in one body. Today, readers know a soothsayer to be “one who claims or pretends to the power of foretelling future events” or “a predictor, prognosticator” (*OED* 2). The word, *frihteras*, is complicated. While the most frequent translation of *frihteras* into Modern English is “soothsayer,” soothsayer does not appear, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, until the 1300s, a few hundred years after the *Wonders*. While most scholars transcribe the manuscript’s passage as *frihteras*, Asa Mittman and Susan Kim transcribe

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<sup>60</sup> Big and tall people, that have feet and legs twelve feet long, side flanks with chests seven feet long; Certainly, whichever man they violently seize, then they devour him.

<sup>61</sup> Three colors; Gyf hi hwylcne monnan on þæm landum ongitað oððe geseoþ, oððe him hwile folgiende bið, þonne feor þæt hi fleoð, ond blode hy swætað (If whichever man they perceive or see on the land or who is following them, then they flee far distances, and they sweat blood).

<sup>62</sup> People ... that grow as soothsayers from the head to the navel, and the other portion is similar to human.

the phrase on the 6th verso as *frif teras*; however, in their Modern English translation, they still use the word “soothsayer” (50). A consideration to better understand *frihteras* is the root *friht*, which both *Bosworth-Toller* and *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* define as “inquiry about the future,” and “divination.” Another way to analyze *frihteras* is by looking at the Latin text of the *Wonders* which uses *diuini* to describe the *Donestre*. *Diuini* is a noun form of “divine” which explains the movement from *diuini* to *frihteras* (or “diviner” to “soothsayer”). What remains unsolved for the purposes of this project is the idea that a beings involved in divination are often human, though with the *Donestre* being human-like from the navel downwards, the question remains if the writer of this passage was trying to describe a creature that was less human-like on the upper half of its body.

This unusual fusion works well for the *Donestre*’s devious intentions. Upon encountering another person, “nemnað [*Donestre*] hyne ond his magas cupra manna naman, ond mid leaslicum wordum hy hine beswicað ond hine gefoð.”<sup>63</sup> If the *Donestre*’s aim is to falsify words and deceive people, appearing as a soothsayer (one typically trusted to have accurate words) makes their deception much less complicated. To further their devious encounters, they are able to utilize all human language allowing the population of victims to be wide. The added layer of communicating in the language of anybody they encounter makes their words enticing. Ultimately, the *Donestre* do not present a monstrous appearance in order to be successful in their criminality.

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<sup>63</sup> *Donestre* name him and his relatives with known human names, and with false words they deceive him and capture him.



*Donestre*'s criminality continues further into body horror. After capturing the person they have lured by deception, "hy hine fretað ealne buton þon heafde ond þonne sittað ond wepað ofer þam heafde."<sup>64</sup> The victim is then entirely devoured with the exception of the head. As seen with so many examples of Horror, including with Grendel and the thane his mother captures, the removal or decapitation of the head is often the apex of body horror.<sup>65</sup> Oddly, the *Donestre* complete this cycle of horror by weeping over the decapitated head of their victim; it is unclear whether this action is to show remorse over their actions or devastation that the meal is over. Naturally, the latter has much more sinister implications. Despite their reason for weeping, what is truly horrific about the monstrous behavior of the *Donestre* is the intentionality behind their deception. The *Donestre*, more than any other creatures in the *Wonders*, stand firm as a monster of Horror.

While the *Donestre* and *Hostes* clearly classify as monsters of Horror (and *Cynocephali* and the barbarous people classify with some minor linguistic complexities), these groups only represent 21% of the nineteen humanoid groups mentioned in the *Wonders*, meaning 79% of the human-like groups cannot be categorized as Horror monsters. With these statistics, one would be hard-pressed to label the *Wonders of the East* a work of monsters, despite Sisam's decision to do so. The groups examined in the

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<sup>64</sup>They devour him whole without the head and then sit and weep over the head.

<sup>65</sup> See Six, Tom, director. *The Human Centipede (First Sequence)*. Bounty Films, 2009. The scene depicting the gruesome removal of the "head" from the "centipede" is a marker for one of the most intense scenes in the film, as this decapitation amplifies the horror felt in the movie significantly. The film is horrifying throughout the surgical and post-surgical scenes, but the decapitation is meant not to fill the viewer with disgust but with a deeper understanding of the immense horror the other characters are in.

work are unfamiliar and unusual, but more than monstrous, these beings represent a wondrous world that lies beyond what was known to the Anglo-Saxons.

While *Wonders* offers a variety of creatures, *Cynocephali* as a race are observed in three texts of the manuscript, specifically *The Passion of St. Christopher*. Scholars have access to various other Anglo-Saxon manuscripts discussing Christopher, such as the “complete but much shorter” *Life of St. Christopher* which is found in two of the four existing manuscripts containing the *Old English Martyrology* (from the ninth century), and “the *incipit* and *explicit* of a vernacular homily concerning Christopher” included in Wanley’s catalogue from British Library MS Cotton Otho B.x. This homily unfortunately suffered tremendous losses in the Cotton Library fire of 1731. Christopher’s story is also found, in Latin, in the *Vita Sancti Christophori* which survives in an Anglo-Saxon manuscript, and finally, there is an Old Irish analogue included in the *Leabhar Breacc* (Lionarons 167-168). Joyce Tally Lionarons notes that “none of these texts are outstanding in sheer literary value, but they are interesting in that all of them are in agreement concerning the saint’s most distinctive attribute,” that Christopher is portrayed in all of these texts as *healf-hundisces manncynnes*,<sup>66</sup> a *cynocephalus*, which possesses the body of a human and the head of a dog. Christopher’s “race”<sup>67</sup> is noted clearly in each version with the exception of the *Passion* as found in the *Beowulf*-manuscript. With the work missing its beginning section, it is probable that this missing part contained the information that Christopher is a *cynocephalus* (168).

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<sup>66</sup> The *incipit* of the eleventh-century Wanley text from the MS Cotton Otho B.x says: *se wæs healfhundisces manncynnes* (Sisam 66), translated as “he was of the people (or nation) of the half-canines.”

<sup>67</sup> Much Anglo-Saxon scholarship calls groups of similar monstrosities “races”; see John Block Friedman’s *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*.

*Cynocephali* are “among the most popular” of the “Plinian” (referring to Pliny) or Medieval monstrous races, which has initiated many different arguments on the “level” of monstrosity with which these creatures should be regarded (Friedman 15), such as David Gordon White’s labeling them as “Christianity’s favorite fairyland monsters” (30). The *cynocephali*’s history is complex. The Anglo-Saxon’s view of foreign and exotic cultures could come with a general misunderstanding, and one can argue that this misunderstanding is the exact situation observed in the case of Christopher.<sup>68</sup> Note that “dog” was a common Christian name for Muslims and Jews, groups of people seen on the periphery of Christian values along with the dissenters (Friedman 67). *Cynocephali* in iconography are not limited to the Anglo-Saxon representation of Christopher, as the entities frequently appear later in history such as in images of the Pentecost. Sometimes, dogs are seen as impure animals and as seen as living on the periphery in several scenes in the Bible. For example, dogs are depicted licking the lesions on Lazarus’s skin and are also portrayed eating the body of Jezebel after she is cast off of the city walls.<sup>69</sup> Pageau mentions the frequent argument, that comes later in translational work, which is the potential for a mistranslation when moving linguistically from the peoples of Canaan to gigantic men who appear as partial dogs: *Cainite* (sons of Cain), *Canaanite/cananeus* (giants of Canaan), and *Caninite/canineus* (dog-men), and while there is controversy surrounding this argument for mistranslation, mulling over this possibility is interesting when considering that people on the “inside” did not always understand the foreign

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<sup>68</sup> See Busbee, Mark Bradshaw. “A Paradise Full of Monsters: India in the Old English Imagination.” *LATCH: A Journal for the Study of the Literary Artifact in Theory, Culture, or History*, vol. 1, 2008, pp. 51–72.

<sup>69</sup> See Luke 16:20-24; II Kings 9:10-12.

peoples of that time. This, later, brought some scholars to suggesting the Anglo-Saxons to potentially be of an overtly racist mindset, while others use the same materials to argue not for racism, but for curiosity and wonder (Busbee).

While much can be said regarding the *cynocephali* as a whole in Christian iconography, narrowing the scope of focus solely to Christopher in no way eliminates the many avenues which one can explore. Interestingly, Christopher is often depicted as a human being, completely lacking a dog's head, while still being disproportionately tall.<sup>70</sup> At times, this representation of Christopher coincides with the myth of his carrying the Christ-Child across a raging river; this story is not a part of the Old English *Passion*. The Getty Conservation Research Foundation Museum explains the story:

Saint Christopher was a man of great size and strength who devoted himself to Jesus by helping travelers cross a dangerous river. One day a child asked to ride on Christopher's shoulders across the river, but the infant seemed to grow heavier and heavier with every step. When they arrived on the opposite shore, the child identified himself as Christ, telling the holy man that he had just carried the weight of the world. Saint Christopher became one of the most popular patron saints for travelers in the Middle Ages.

Numerous art forms depict this narrative, and many too still do illustrate Christopher as a *cynocephalus*; however, there are works that interpret this scene as a means to characterize the Saint without his canine head. Often, "literary portrayals of the *cynocephali* tend to stress either the bestiality or the humanity within the hybrid,"

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<sup>70</sup> See Saint Christopher Carrying the Christ Child (c. 1420), manuscript illumination by unnamed illuminator known as the Spitz Master; Saint Christopher Carrying Christ (c. 1510), limewood sculpture by unknown artist; Saint Christopher Carrying the Infant Christ (c. 1521), engraving by Lucas van Leyden; Saint Christopher carrying the Infant Christ (c. 1540), oil painting on oak by unnamed artist known as the Master of the Female Half-Lengths.

meaning that no writer or artist conclusively establishes how a *cynocephalus* should truly be represented (Lionarons 173). However, this tale and these works of art are separated from the *Passion* by centuries and only serve as a means to add to our modern-day depiction of Christopher; these depictions were not necessarily known to the Anglo-Saxons. As this chapter focuses on the representation of Christopher within the *Passion* in the *Beowulf*-manuscript, the other works discussing *cynocephali* as a cohesive race will not be called into question for the purposes of my argument. Similarly, being a highly popular religious icon across time makes Christopher's history complicated and has the potential to be explored significantly more deeply than what is allowed in the scope of this project.

In the *Passion*, Christopher comes to Dagnus in an attempt to convert him, and consequently his kingdom, to Christianity. Dagnus, severely angered by Christopher's attempts, tortures Christopher. This torture results in Christopher's death but also in Dagnus's conversion. Sisam uses Christian iconography as the view through which to assess Christopher as a monster and fails to mention that the Saint is not said to be a *cynocephalus* in the fragmentary *Passion* that details Christopher's death; however, there is no consistency to what measure Sisam uses to define a monster. He does not define what he considers to be a monster when arguing about the manuscript's thematic unity. When Sisam asks, "How could the *Passion of St. Christopher* be given the first place in a collection of this content" he responds that, "[Christopher] was, of course, a giant, 'twelve fathoms high'" (Sisam 65).

Sisam addresses one of the key characteristics of Christopher's appearance, his height, but appearance and behavior are not the same thing and lead to questions when considering what makes a monster. The Latin *Liber Monstrorum* (late seventh century, early eighth century) includes a reference to Hygelac, from *Beowulf's* tale, given in Latin: "Et fiunt monstra mirae magnitudinis, ut rex Higlacus, qui imperauit Getis" (Book 1.2); and Sisam explains this translation to be "who was a 'monster' in stature" referring to Hygelac (75). Andy Orchard translates more closely, stating, "And there are monsters of amazing size, like King Hygelac, who rules the Geats" (259). However, Sisam does not address the possibility of Hygelac's being a monster for the purposes of the thematic unity in the *Beowulf*-manuscript; he only compares Hygelac's height to that of Christopher's: "Se cynigc þa het bringan isenne scamol, se wæs emn-heah þæs mannes up-wæstmne, þæt wæs twelfe fæðma lang."<sup>71</sup> This directly contradicts his labeling of Christopher as a monster based on height if Hygelac is not given the same treatment. While Hygelac is not a *cynocephalus*, he behaves "appropriately," in a way that everyday people find comfortable, and as in the *Passion*, Christopher's status as a *cynocephalus*, Hygelac's height is never mentioned in *Beowulf*.

However, Christopher behaves nobly while he is tormented by King Dagnus on account of his Christian beliefs, not as might be expected from his monstrous appearance. During Dagnus's torture of Christopher, the writer of the *Passion* explains "þa geseah Dagnus se cyningc þone halgan Christoforus on middum þam fyre standende, ond he

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<sup>71</sup> The king then commanded them to bring an iron bench that was equally as tall as that man [Christopher] in upward stature, that was twelve fathoms tall.

geseah þæt his ansyn wæs swylce rosan blostma.”<sup>72</sup> Even if Dagnus once saw Christopher as a monster, his courageous faith and behavior brought on a change of judgement for Dagnus who now saw him as something different, something beautiful.

The *Old English Martyrology* explains that “he hæfde hundes heafod, ond his loccas wæron ofer gemet side, ond his eagan scinon swa leohte swa morgensteorra, ond his teð wæron swa scearpe swa efores tuxas,”<sup>73</sup> showing that the Anglo-Saxons would have understood Christopher’s race (66), and King Dagnus calls Christopher *þu wyrresta wilddeor*,<sup>74</sup> demonstrating his hatred towards those who appear as Christopher does and showing the disdain he has for anyone attempting to call his own way of life incorrect. Despite being a supposed member of a race of dog-headed giants, Christopher “is not particularly inhuman in his behavior” (Powell 2). Another factor pointing towards the nonmonstrous behavior of Christopher is his “acquisition of language [which] allows the readers [to] resolve the category crisis [of Christopher’s monstrosity] and to regard him henceforth as fully human” (Lionarons 178). This idea hinges on the legend of Christopher’s conversion. According to the ancient tale, he was unable to speak and could only bark before his conversion, but after accepting Christianity, he spoke well and thus shed the veil of “monster” in the eyes of his observers and comes to be seen as a complete human. If those gazing upon his appearance deem Christopher to be non-

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<sup>72</sup> The king Dagnus saw the Saint Christopher standing in the middle of the fire, and he saw that his [Christopher’s] appearance was as if it were like the blossom of a rose.

<sup>73</sup> He had a hound’s head, and his locks were above the measurement of his side flank, and his eyes shined as brightly as the morningstar, and his teeth were as sharp as the tusks of a boar.

<sup>74</sup> You worst wild beast.

monstrous due to his ability to speak and behave in a reasonable, rational way, the argument that it is not solely appearance but behavior that makes a monster will stand.

Kathryn Powell further examines the idea that appearance may not hold the same level of monstrous potential that behavior does when she explains:

[Saint] Christopher's connection to other *cynocephali* mentioned in the manuscript ... becomes much more significant by undermining an impression built up in these works of the violent aggressiveness of this race. Christopher's lack of aggression and his Christian belief communicate a lesson about assuming that all members of a foreign people are hostile based on the actions of some of them. (12)

Assuming Christopher is a monster because other *cynocephali* have behaved monstrously is no different than assuming that because Ed Gein<sup>75</sup> behaves monstrously, all white American men are monsters. In the Horror novel, *Churn the Soil*, character Nancy's mother has been turned into a Forest Guard, a horrifying, stealthy, winged beast with the unwavering desire to eviscerate (intentionally and maliciously) any humans that appear on their land; however, unlike all other Forest Guards who behave in a truly horrendous and murderous manner, Nancy's mother does not behave in this way. She maintains her humanity and is not considered a monster by community members because, much like Christopher, she chooses to align herself with the greater good in an attempt to salvage the community's safety, despite being a creature of fusion (Stred). Monstrous behavior is not always linked to monstrous appearance, and monstrous appearance is not always linked to monstrous behavior.

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<sup>75</sup> See footnote 4 for explanation on Ed Gein.



Not only does Christopher's behavior lack monstrosity, but also merely mentioning his name evokes nothing monstrous. Christopher's name protects against "the common evils that touch everybody—poverty, fire (in an age of thatch), all kinds of sickness" (Sisam 70), and the *Passion* ends with Christopher's final prayer: "Drihten, min God, syle gode mede þam þe mine þrowunga awrite, ond þa ecean edlean þam hie mid tearum ræde."<sup>76</sup> According to Sisam, this portion was written as a means of "secur[ing] the widest popularity for the cult of Christopher" (70), but whether a means of propaganda or a true prayer, the *Passion* represents Christopher as anything but a monster.

Christopher can also be analyzed according to the categories of the monstrous outlined in Carroll's *The Philosophy of Horror*, which reminds us of the complicated relationship between monstrous appearance and monstrous behavior. A monster must be dangerous and have a lethal nature, be threatening to the psyche, and may seek to destroy moral order. Also, monsters trigger fear of bodily horrors and general phobia while being impure creatures (43). Christopher appears to Dagnus in order to convert Dagnus and the surrounding community to Christianity and does not attempt to inflict bodily harm or psychological damage on Dagnus; he does nothing dangerous but withstands immense torture from Dagnus. *Cynocephali* are often seen as descendants of Cain, like Grendel, who are indeed separated from God; however, as a means to protect Christopher, "Godes mægen wæs on ðam winde hangigende æt þæs halgan mannes swyðran healfe."<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Lord, my God, give good reward to those who write about my suffering and the eternal reward to those of them who read it with tears.

<sup>77</sup> The might of God was hanging on the wind at the right side of the saintly man.

Christopher and God are not separated from each other, and God seeks to protect Christopher, showing that God respects Christopher's life and work and does not view Christopher as a monster from which to be separated.

Christopher's fusion is important to note as many entities that do classify as monsters are bound in fused bodies. As explored with Grendel's combination as man and devilish foe, Christopher is seen as both dog and human, two species existing as one. One is not without the other. However, for Christopher, in the *Passion*, this fusion lends itself only to his discomfiting appearance and does not speak to his behavior. The same can be said of his magnification. As discussed regarding the disparity between how Hygelac's and Christopher's heights are treated, Christopher is a magnified version of what a average human will encounter on any given day.<sup>78</sup> However, much like his fusion, Christopher's magnification is not for the purpose of Horror but simply an appearance that, due to his behavior, is not seen to be monstrous. Unlike the other elements, Christopher's standing within massification is difficult. Is there an entire race of *cynocephali* in existence, mythologically speaking? Yes, but Christopher operates outside of that potential kinship. In fact, he functions on the peripheries of both "normal" humanity and his own race. In the *Passion*, Christopher is acting singularly with King Dagnus and not using other dog-headed men as a means of scaring Dagnus. These factors separate Christopher from an involvement with massification as a tactic of Horror.

Body horror is indeed present in the *Passion*; however, Christopher is not the one to inflict that bodily torture. Similarly, Christopher neither relies on criminality to inflict

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<sup>78</sup> See footnote 55.

horror nor does he attempt to destroy the normalcy of Dagnus's community. Christopher announces to Dagnus, "Symle þine goda ic laðette ond him teonan do, forþon þe minne geleafan ic unwemne geheold, þone þe ic on fulwihte onfeng."<sup>79</sup> Christopher explains that his behaving in accordance with God's desires is of the utmost importance to him, and while despising the gods that Dagnus worships, he has no plans of causing direct harm to anyone in an attempt to sway them; their decision to continue in idolatry will result in God's wrath, something that Christopher will not be held responsible for executing.

With his complicated aspects of magnification and massification and his lack of inflicting horror through means of bodily harm, criminality, and upsetting normalcy, Christopher, despite what Sisam and others may argue, does not meet the characteristics of a monster, particularly a monster of Horror. His faithful behavior, especially in the face of experiencing bodily horrors directed toward him, makes clear that monstrous appearance is not equivalent to monstrous behavior with Christopher, though the same may not always be true with the behavior of *cynocephali* as a larger group.

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<sup>79</sup> Continually, I loathe your gods and blaspheme them, because I kept my faith undefiled, that which I received in baptism.

## CHAPTER III

### The Medieval Men of Horror: Dagnus, Holofernes, and Alexander

While much of my project has been focused on understanding how certain beings may be classified as monsters and why others should not be called monsters, there are three distinct characters who are not usually called “monsters” that should be analyzed as monsters utilizing the characteristics of Horror employed for the other entities. Grendel, his mother, St. Christopher, and the nineteen humanoid groups found in *Wonders of the East* are more easily targeted as monsters due to their unusual appearances, though I have argued that unusual appearance does not always lend itself to monstrous behavior (the more accurate criterion for evaluating a monstrous nature). Holofernes in *Judith*, Dagnus in *The Passion of St. Christopher*, and Alexander in *The Letter of Alexander the Great to Aristotle* (henceforth *Letter*), all rulers in their respective communities, are viewed differently regarding monstrosity and, in some cases, are not considered monsters at all. Particularly in the cases of Dagnus and of Holofernes, the analysis “rapidly becomes an exercise in discerning the underlying reality beneath surface appearances,” leaning into my argument that monstrous appearance does not equate to monstrous behavior (Lionarons 179).

Scholars have suggested that these particular humans, despite never presenting the appearance of a monster, are of questionable moral standing, and some scholars even consider these characters to be highly negative. Ælfric’s two texts, *The Twelve Abuses* (*De duodecim abusiuis*) and *The Vices and Virtues* (*De octo uitiiis*), outline the behavioral expectations that audiences of the time would have for these rulers. Editor Mary Clayton

explains that “Ælfric’s account of the vices and virtues is an important representative of the tradition of vices and virtues material ... because [Ælfric] certainly knew a variety of earlier treatments” (71-72). Clayton’s book, *Two Ælfric Texts*, explore the eight principle vices (later the Seven Deadly Sins) of gluttony, fornication, avarice, anger, sadness/dejection, sluggishness/sloth, vainglory/boasting, and pride (84-94) and also explores what were known as the twelve abuses. The sixth and ninth abuses are pertinent to the three men as these two abuses are directed towards rulership. The sixth abuse regards a lord who cannot correct his men or does not have power to do so, while the ninth abuse addresses a king who is unjust. Using the scope of vices and abuses for Dagnus, Holofernes, and Alexander can help to clarify why their behavior may not only be monstrous in the lens of Horror but would also have been horrifying to the Anglo-Saxon readers and audiences surrounding communities during their time.

When arguing for the manuscript’s thematic unity of monsters, Sisam claims that *Judith* should not be brought into that “same design” because “Holofernes was no monster,” and he also says that *Judith*’s lack of a “monster” in the text is also not “necessary” for his argument for thematic unity and the general compilation history of the *Beowulf*-manuscript (67). Orchard, however, argues against Sisam that “Holofernes’ behavior is absolutely monstrous” (4). While Sisam’s argument is more widely accepted, Orchard’s rebuttal shows that not everyone agrees completely with Sisam’s theory. Similar to Orchard’s view of a monstrous Holofernes, Lionarons points towards a monstrous Dagnus in saying, “From the beginning, the reader knows that Christopher, however monstrous in appearance, is the saint and that Dagnus, however human he might seem, is the monster” (181), venturing into the differences between monstrous

appearance and monstrous behaviors. Alexander, too, is not free from this level of scrutiny. Orchard explains common viewpoints of Alexander in two ways. Some see Alexander in an “overwhelmingly positive light” linked with explorations, inventions, and discoveries, while others see him as “overwhelmingly hostile” and a “megalomaniac, a tyrannical mass-murderer, a figure of extreme Pride” (117). Orchard cites the opinion of George Cary, author of *The Medieval Alexander*, who said that “Alexander was a ruthless, blood-thirsty conqueror fired by his insane love of glory in battle” (118). The behaviors of these three men have already laid the foundations for their monstrosity even before I apply the lens of Horror characteristics to them, which suggests that Horror does not lie alone in perceiving the monstrous, something Anglo-Saxon audiences would have understood well through the lens of the vices, virtues, and abuses.

Carroll’s physical characteristics of monsters are complicated considering the full humanity of these three men. Since they are fully human, fission and fusion do not apply here. Massification is somewhat flexible for these men as each one is human among a world of many, though one could consider the many followers of each man to be a form of massification. These men may most easily be analyzed through magnification. Grendel and the *Hostes*, among others, naturally take on literal magnification because these creatures are literally larger than an average human. Holofernes, Dagnus, and Alexander, while of average physical human stature, take on a metaphorical magnification. They wield authority and political power as a means to increase themselves and to be viewed as larger-than-life. In the case of Holofernes, alongside his political and authoritarian powers, he uses his loud voice to display a sense of his immensity (Scoggins 50).

	Da wearð Holofernus,
goldwine gumena	on gytesalum,
hloh ond hlydde,	hlynede ond dynede,
þæt mihten fira bearn	feorran gehyran
hu se stiðmoda	styrnde ond gylede <sup>80</sup>

Holofernes’s intention is to draw attention to himself as provider of the feast as a way to show men, near and far, his power and ability to command large populations, even though his celebration is designed to facilitate his nefarious desires; Holofernes “perverts the social meaning of the feast” as a means of putting himself on a higher plane, making himself larger than his surrounding community (Scoggins 54).<sup>81</sup> This feast-perversion also allows him to set the stage for the deception required to satiate his own vulgar desires, using his version of magnification to upset social norms. The feast, too, showcases Holofernes’s vices of gluttony (including drunkenness), boasting, and bribery.

Similar to Holofernes’s approach, Dagnus uses his voice in order to flex his power as a means to appear magnified. For Dagnus, this results in his making commands of those around him, particularly his soldiers, and when those soldiers do not act in a way that is pleasing to Dagnus, he has them immediately killed, again flexing his power over those around him: “se cyningc þa yrre geworden wæs, ond he het þære ylcan tide þa [cempan] weras acwellen.”<sup>82</sup> When examining speech as a means of magnification,

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<sup>80</sup> Lines 21-25, Then Holofernes, gold-friend of men, was in a pouring-bond; he laughed and clamored, shouted and made noise so that men far away may happen to hear how the unwavering mind stormed and yelled.

<sup>81</sup> See lines 28 through 32a of *Judith* (Fulk translation).

<sup>82</sup> The king was becoming angry, and he commanded at the same that those soldier men to be killed.

compare Dagnus's words may be compared to those of Christopher, particularly in their uses of the Old English *hatan* and *cweþan*. While both words denote verbalizing something to another person or persons, they have different connotations. *Hatan* is used to show an order or command, a direction given from an authority figure, but *cweþan* is used simply to say or speak words, a much more conversational situation. Christopher *cwæð* (spoke, said) twelve times to Dagnus's two times, showing that Christopher is, using a conversational tone to communicate significantly more often than Dagnus. In contrast, Christopher only *het* (commanded, ordered) once while Dagnus *het* eleven times. Dagnus continually uses his role to enlarge himself by demonstrating that he is a power of authority, capable of controlling those around him at will.

Holofernes and Dagnus both have their own style of magnifying themselves to onlookers, particularly through vocalizations, and Alexander is like them. Along with his colossal reputation, Alexander travels with *micel mænigeo elpenda (ðusend), twa þusenda horsa, .xx. þusenda feþena, þridde healf þusend mula, .xxx. þusenda ealfarena ond oxna, twa þusenda olfenda, and fif hund hryðra*.<sup>83</sup> Wherever Alexander goes, the image he projects is simply huge. He ensures that he is magnified in the eyes of all who perceive him. The only way to understand the hordes of living beings accompanying Alexander in this situation is to encompass to the great size of the company from a distance, a direct commentary on Alexander himself. Not only does Alexander desire to be magnified at first sight, but he also intends for this magnification of himself as a character to be longstanding and to endure in history: "Ond eac swelce ecelice min

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<sup>83</sup> Many, many elephants (one thousand), two thousand horses, twenty thousand soldiers, two and a half thousand mules, thirty thousand pack-horses and oxen, two thousand camels, and five hundred cattle.



gemynd stonde ond hleouige oðrum eorð-cyningum to bysne, ðæt hie witen þy gearwor þæt min þrym ond min weorð-myn maran wæron þonne ealra oþra kyninga þe in middan-gearde æfre wæron.”<sup>84</sup> Alexander believes he has done things deserving of magnification and intends for that magnification to continue long after he has left this world.

Holofernes, Dagnus, and Alexander use tactics for their magnification outside of physical height and breadth. While such humanoid groups as those in *Wonders* are simply born into physical magnification, these three men intentionally behave in such ways as to appear magnified. They all agree that wielding power while being perceived as immense allows for them to be seen (or heard) across a larger spectrum which can in turn grant them the power that their pride so craves. Magnification, as in the case of Christopher, does not always lend itself to monstrosity; however, when paired with monstrous behavior, intentional magnification can amplify monstrous deeds. While in this case, the characteristic of magnification can only be understood metaphorically, what differentiates Holofernes, Dagnus, and Alexander from groups such as the *Donestre* or *Hostes* is that they are entirely human and that the average viewer would not perceive their appearance as nonhuman. This perception is exactly why their actions and their behaviors should be weighed in order to determine these men’s monstrosity. Like the *Donestre*, their actions are intentional and manipulative, which in turn leads to inflicting body horror, acting in criminal manners, and disrupting the normalcy of their communities as a means to further their own proud and selfish agendas.

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<sup>84</sup> And likewise may my eternal memory stand and tower over other kings of the earth as an example, that they know then very well that my glory and my honor were more proclaimed than all other kings that were before in the world.

The *Judith*-poet calls the company Holofernes keeps his *wea-gesiðas*,<sup>85</sup> showing that he surrounds himself with those who are more than comfortable acting in the realm of evil. Not only does Holofernes surround himself with unsavory characters, but he also spends much of his time in a closed-off tent, separating himself from his community. This tent puts Holofernes in a more powerful position, given the one-way view that he possesses. The poet does not mince words describing Holofernes; he is said to be *egesful*, *niða geblonden*, *nergende lað*, *wærloga*, *laðne leodhatan*, *unsyfra*, *womfull*, *hæðenan hund*, and *afor*.<sup>86</sup> These words make clear that Holofernes's behavior is detestable and criminal, and in terms of magnification, his wickedness is also magnified through his companions, allowing for a larger scale of wickedness to occur.

Though Holofernes is said to surround himself with wicked companions, there is no similar description of specific criminality regarding Dagnus. One line, however, brings to light the lengths Dagnus is willing to go in order to keep his desired status quo: “ond ic gedo þæt ðu byst forloren ond þin nama of þys gemynde ond of þyssum life adilgod, ond þu scealt wesan ealra bysen þara þe ðurh þe on ðinne god gelfydað.”<sup>87</sup> When Dagnus says this to Christopher, he does it by *bysmerigende*, by mocking him. Both *Bosworth-Toller* and *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* define *bismerian* (the root word from which *bysmerigende* is conjugated) to mean to mock, revile, illtreat, and blaspheme, showing an intentionality fueling his cruelty. If Dagnus is comfortable participating in

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<sup>85</sup> Line 16, wickedness-companions. Other translations for *wea* could be evilness, sinful, harmful, and Fulk translates *wea* as criminal (298).

<sup>86</sup> Lines 21, 257, *egesful*/dreadful; line 34, *niða geblonden*/corrupted by evils; line 45, *nergende lað*/hated by God; line 71, *wærloga*/traitor; line 72, *laðne leodhatan*/hateful tyrant; line 76, *unsyfra*/unclean; line 77, *womfull*/criminal; line 110, *hæðenan hund*/heathen hound; line 257, *afor*/bitter.

<sup>87</sup> And I will make it so that you shall be destroyed, and your name utterly annihilated out of this memory and out of this life, and you shall be an example to all of those who through you believe in your God.

atrocities against Christopher in sight of his numerous retainers, we might be justified in thinking that there is considerable criminality that occurs out of the public eye.

Dagnus's and Holofernes's criminal behaviors are portrayed differently than those of Alexander. With Alexander being such an overwhelming figure across the land, labeling any of his actions "criminal" can be difficult. What stands in place of criminality though is his pride and lust for power. For instance, he commands schemes to be carried out even though they go against the wellbeing of those around him. He finds his decisions excusable as he justifies them through his pride and continual pursuit of power.

Ða het ic þær in bescufan forworhte men, þæt ic wolde gewitan hweþer sio  
segen soð wære þe me mon ær be þon sægde, þæt þær nænig mon in gan  
mehte ond eft gesund æfter þon beon nymþe he mid asegendnisseum in  
eode in þæt scræf. Ond þæt wæs eac æfter þon gecyðed in þara monna  
deaðe, forþon ðy þridan dæge hie swulton ðæs þe hie in þæt scræf  
eodon.<sup>88</sup>

Alexander continually demonstrates that killing people, whether necessary or otherwise, is no obstacle when it comes to his continued pursuits in conquering. In this case, he deems these men unworthy of living and thus uses them experimentally. The problem is that Alexander concluded that these people were *forworhte* or "evil-doers" and in turn sees this as a matter of justice. He did not deem his own behavior to be monstrous. Whether Alexander's treatment of these *forworhte* is justified, much of this behavior is steeped in pride, a vice, making this form of "punishment" inappropriate. Alexander's

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<sup>88</sup> Then I commanded the sinful people be hurled in there [the cave of the god Liber] so that I wished to understand whether the sign was true that was told to me before by those people, that not any person may go in there and again be healthy after that unless he goes into that cave with an offering. And that was then after determined by the death of those people because on the third day they died after they went into that cave.

behavior here could be considered either just or violent, opposing characteristics within the cardinal virtues and vices.

Alexander's potentially criminal behavior reveals itself not only in the *Letter* but also in *Wonders*. Regarding the *wif* with *eoferes tuxas* or “tusked women” (group 16 in Table 1), Alexander does not deem their culture as dangerous. He judges them to be vile and filthy, and as a consequence, he massacres them: “of hyra unclennesse hie gefylde wæron from þæm miclan macedoniscan Alexandre. Þa cwealde he hy þa he hy lifiende oferfon ne mehte, forþon hy syndon æwisce on lic-homan ond unweorþe.”<sup>89</sup> Since he finds these women to be horrifyingly filthy and uncooperative as prisoners, he slaughters their entire group, showing that Alexander operates in extremes, the opposite of the cardinal virtue of moderation. This instance also shows Alexander's penchant for violence, opposing the cardinal virtue of justice, as the readers are given no information to believe that these women have behaved in a manner deserving of punishment. Consider the alternative, the group of *gæst-lipende men* or “hospitable people” (group 18 in Table 1): “se Macedonisca Alexandre, þa he him to com, þa wæs he wundriende hyra menniscnesse, ne wolde he hi cwellan ne him nan lað don.”<sup>90</sup> When Alexander is faced with a group of people who are quickly accepting of him, a community he deems humanly behaving, he treats them well, even vowing to keep them alive. This same treatment is echoed the *Letter* with King Porrus.

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<sup>89</sup> Due to their filthiness, they were destroyed by Alexander the Great Macedonian, then he slayed them when he could not take them as living prisoners because they are shameful and vile in their skin.

<sup>90</sup> The Macedonian Alexander, when he came to them, he then was astonished by their human nature, he would not kill them nor do any harm to them.

Ða sona on morgne þæs ða eode Porrus se kyning me on hond mid ealle his ferde ond dugoþe þa he hæfde ongieten þæt he wið me gewinnan ne meahte. Ond of þæm feondscipe þe us ær betweenum wæs, þæt gesælde þæt he seoðþan wæs me freond ond eallum greca herige ond min gefera ond gefylcea. Ond ic him ða eft his rice ageaf.<sup>91</sup>

Alexander initially feels that destruction is the only path for Porrus, and even goes as far as to disguise himself to deceive Porrus, but once Alexander sees that Porrus is willing to submit and behave in a way pleasing to Alexander, Porrus's kingdom is returned to him. This example shows that those who submit to Alexander will remain safe from harm. Again, Alexander's behavior is complex; Ælfric explains, in the ninth abuse, that a king who remains just must "fæstlice winnan wið onsigendne here and healdan his eðel,"<sup>92</sup> showing Alexander's responsibility to protect his people; however, this scene could also be read as a situation of bribery (opposing the cardinal virtue of justice).

These examples demonstrate that, fueled by their pride (the eighth vice according to Ælfric), Dagnus and Holofernes do not allow themselves to be governed by moral law (while Alexander remains complicated). All three, in their magnitude, deem themselves separate and above any moral code. The prideful desires of these men urge them to behave in ways that can be perceived as monstrous, often showing no concern for those who do not adhere to their customs, and when the behavior of others does not match with what these men deem appropriate, they have no qualms about making that displeasure known through force and violence, a trait to which all three adhere.

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<sup>91</sup> Then immediately in the morning Porrus the King came to me with all his armies and troops in hand when he had recognized that he could not win against me. And with the hostility that before was between us that happened that he since was friend to me and all the Greek army and my company and my troops. And I then gave back to him his kingdom.

<sup>92</sup> Constantly contend against attacking armies and keep watch over his country.



of defilement is fundamental to definitions of fornication” (84). This places Holofernes’s behavior toward Judith squarely within this vice. One may consider Ælfric’s eleventh abuse (people who are without discipline) to apply here to Holofernes as well. Further, while the *Judith*-poet does not go into specifics regarding the bodily horrors inflicted upon Judith’s community, the people clearly rejoice that Holofernes will no longer be able to hurt them as he had been doing.

þe us monna mæst	morðra gefremede
sarra sorga,	ond þæt swyðor gyt
ycan wolde;	ac him ne uðe God
lengran lifes,	þæt he mid læððum us
eglan moste. <sup>95</sup>	

The people address the pains and injuries that Holofernes has been capable of, and they state that they are now free of these troubles, showing that Holofernes indeed resorts to body horror as a means of intentionally hurting and controlling Judith’s community.<sup>96</sup>

Though the intentions are made clear, Holofernes’s methods of inflicting body horror are not described in the fragment of the poem that we have, but readers are given a full understanding of Dagnus’s attempts to torture Christopher. Dagnus starts the torture of Christopher off mildly, in comparison to his later torture tactics, by ordering that the soldiers “gebindan his handa ond hys fet tosomne, ond ... swingan mid isernum gyrðum, ond ... settan on his heafde þry weras.”<sup>97</sup> Dagnus’s actions intensify as his anger with Christopher increases.

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<sup>95</sup> Lines 181-185a, The man carried out on us the most murders, painful sorrows, and that yet should increase more; but God had not granted to him a longer life, that he would trouble us most with injuries.

<sup>96</sup> Considering these criteria are for Horror, it should be said that *Judith*, as a whole, embodies many aspects of Splatterpunk and could be studied as a text of that sub-genre.

<sup>97</sup> Bind his hands and his feet together, and ... scourge him with iron rods, and ... place 3 men on his head.

Se cyningc þa het bringan isenne scamol, se wæs emn-heah þæs mannes up-wæstmne, þæt wæs twelf fæðma lang, ond he hyne het asettan on middan þa ceastre, ond þone halgan Christoforus he het þær to gebindan, ond he het beneðan him þæt unmætoste fyr onælan, ond myt ty þe þæs fyres lig on þære mæstan hæto wæs, he þær ofer þæt het geotan tyn orcas fulle eles.<sup>98</sup>

Dagnus is so furious with Christopher that his goal is not simply to burn Christopher but to create a fire as hot as possible before then adding cups of oil to the flames, increasing the damage that could be done to Christopher. Dagnus, in this behavior, shows that he is operating with the fourth vice, anger—something he is shown to do continually.

Dagnus does experience his own bodily horrors with arrows thrust into his eyes; however, Christopher is not at fault for this affliction.

Ond he hyne het þær on gefæstnian ond bebead þæt ðry cempan hyne scotedon mid hyra strælum oð þæt hewære acweald ... odes mægen wæs on ðam winde hangigende æt þæs halgan mannes swyðran healfe ... þa se cyncinge wæs ut gangende to þam halgan Cristoforus ond him to cwæþ: “Hwær ys þin god? For hwon ne com he ond þe gefreolsode of minum handum ond of þyssum egeslican strælum?” ... Hraðe þa myt ty þe he þas word gecwæð, two flana of þam strælum scuton on þas cyninges eagan, ond he þurh þæt wæs ablend.<sup>99</sup>

It is God’s might that controls the hovering arrows, protecting Christopher from their harm and keeping Dagnus at bay when he antagonizes Christopher. God, in this moment, separates himself from Dagnus with this act (though he does give Dagnus an avenue to

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<sup>98</sup> The king then commanded them to bring an iron bench that was equally as tall as that man in upward stature, that was twelve fathoms tall, and he commanded them to place it in the middle of the city, and he commanded that the saintly Christopher there be bound, and he commanded that beneath him a superior fire be ignited, and as soon as the fire’s flame was the most in there, he commanded that completely full cups of oil be poured over.

<sup>99</sup> And he commanded him to be fastened on there and announced that three soldiers shot him with their arrows so that he was killed ... then the king went out walking to the saintly Christopher and to him called: “Where is your God? Why did he not come and deliver you from my hands and from these fearsome arrows?” ... Quickly, when he to him spoke this word, two barbs from those arrows shot into the king’s eyes, and he through that was blinded.



change his ways and be healed). Dagnus’s treatment of Christopher is terrifying because of the intentionality behind his actions. He is not simply aiming to sway Christopher but is, in his deep anger (another representation of his vice), fully intending to torture Christopher: “þæt he wolde þæt þæs fyres hæto þe reðre wære ond þe ablæstre on þone halgan man.”<sup>100</sup> Dagnus’s furious desire to immediately kill those who defy him and his intentional torture of Christopher show a monstrous nature that cannot be denied as well as a deep connection to the acts of violence, as he does not act in a just manner. When considering the cardinal virtues of moderation, prudence, fortitude, and justice, we see Christopher behave in these ways, not Dagnus.

Much like Dagnus, Alexander uses the same swift punishments against those who do not immediately obey him. When Alexander deems himself slighted, even by those who have not necessarily done any wrong to him, he ensures a painful and immediate death.

Pa het ic .cc. minra þegna of greca herige leohtum wæpnum hie gegyrwan,  
 ond hie on sunde to þære byrig foron ond swumman ofer æfter þære ea to  
 þæm eg-lande ... þæt was þonne nicra menegeo on onsione maran ond  
 unhyrlicran þonne ða elpendas, in ðone grund þære ea ond betweoh ða yða  
 þæs wæteres þa men besencte, ond mid heora muðe hie sliton ond  
 blodgodon ond hie ealle swa fornamon, þæt ure nænig wiste hwær hiora  
 æni cwom.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> He desired that the fire’s heat would be savage and then fiercely blowing on the saintly man.

<sup>101</sup> Then I ordered two hundred of my thanes from the Greek army to equip themselves with light weapons, and they went to the town by swimming and swam over across the water to the island ... that was when many water beasts [hippos] were made visible and were more savage than the elephants, between the ground and the water, the waves of the water plunged the men, and with their mouths they [hippos] tore and bloodied [the men] and they were all destroyed, that none of us knew where any [of the men] went.

Alexander sends two hundred of his men into the water to reach a nearby town, upon their horrific deaths, Alexander grows angry and punishes the guides for putting them in that situation.

Ða wæs ic swiðe yrre þæm minum lad-þeowum, þa us on swylce  
frecennissa gelæddon. Het hiera ða bescufan in þa ea .l. ond .c., ond sona  
þæs ðe hie inne wæron, swa wæron þa nicoras ready, to-brudon hie swa  
hie þa oðre ær dydon, ond swa þicce hie in þære ea aweollon swa æmettan  
ða nicras, ond swilc unrim heora wæs.<sup>102</sup>

As before, Alexander considers his punishment to be a matter of justice. The guides were paid to direct Alexander to his destination, and they too were employed to warn Alexander of dangers that could possibly be encountered. Alexander orders his men to swim over, but he does so without knowledge of the dangers from his guides and sees this lack of guidance as betrayal, so he in turn sends these guides to their deaths, mirroring the deaths of his soldiers. Alexander inadvertently enacts bodily harm on his own men for the sake of his pride and then inflicts intentional bodily harm on the guides as a means to execute punishment. Again, Alexander's behavior is complex and can be viewed through different perspectives. One may consider Alexander's punishment of the guides to be just (a cardinal virtue) while one may instead consider the punishment to be violent, prideful, and angry (vices).

This is not the only time Alexander's actions result in precarious situations which in turn anger him, leading him to horrifically slaughter his guides. After ordering his men

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<sup>102</sup> Then, I was very angry at my guides, that they lead us into such peril. I ordered 150 of them be hurled in the water, and as soon as they were inside, so were the water beasts [hippos] ready. They ripped them apart as they did the others before, and there in the water the water beasts [hippos] welled up so thick as ants, and there was such a countless number of them.

to obliterate the jungle surrounding their water source, Alexander and his troops experience an onslaught of animals harassing them throughout the night for hours on end.

Ʒa hit ða on morgen dæg wæs, ða het ic ealle mine lad- þeowas þe mec on swelc earfeðo gelæddon, het hie þa gebindan ond him þa ban ond sconcan forbrecan, ðæt hie on niht wæron from þæm wrymum asogone þe þæt wæter sohton. Ond ic him het eac þa honda of aheawan, þæt hie be gewyrhtum þes wites drugon, þe hie ær hiora þonces us on gelæddon ond gebrohton.<sup>103</sup>

Again, the idea still applies that these guides could have known about the animals and did not address this potential inundation with Alexander; however, consider though that once Alexander decides to *Indeum innanwearde to geseonne* or once he decides to see the interior of India, Ʒa sægdon us ða bigengean þæs londes þæt we us warnigan scoldon wið þa missenlican cynd nædrena ond hrifra wildeora þy læs we on ða becwomon. Ʒæra mænego in ðissum dunum ond denum ond on wudum ond on feldum eardigeað.<sup>104</sup>

Though Alexander blames the guides for not having told him about these dangers, this possibility was absolutely mentioned to Alexander at the start of the journey, and he even remembers that clearly enough to tell Aristotle. Whether Alexander or his guides are to blame, it is the disproportionate acts of bodily torment Alexander uses in his punishment that is monstrous. While Alexander expects his guides to alert him to possible dangers, until now, he has enacted punishments that mirror the soldiers' deaths. This particular punishment, though, lacks moderation and is a decision reflecting an extreme.

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<sup>103</sup> When it was day then in the morning, then I ordered all my guides who led me in such hardship, I ordered that they bind them and then their bones and legs be broken, that in the night they would be consumed by the snakes when they [the snakes] sought water. And I ordered that their hands be chopped off that they, by merit of this punishment, know to suffer, that they had thought to lead and bring us in.

<sup>104</sup> The inhabitants of these lands told us that we should be warned against the various kinds of snakes and fierce wild animals lest we come by them. There many inhabit these mountains and valleys and in the woods and in the fields.

All three men execute swift and severe punishments when the limits of their power are tested, and due to their vice of anger (and often of violence), the punishments can be immediate, swelling with the flow of their emotions. They appear to long for those people to experience the fullest spectrum of anguish—a physical torture to ensure a mental torment—if they deem that necessary. The punishment is not meant to teach or punish, meaning the punishment is not always for the “wrong-doer.” There is an intentionality behind the torments that classifies their infliction of body horror as monstrous. They see themselves as righteous and powerful when they create this pain for others.

A substantial indicator of monstrous behavior is disrupting a community’s normalcy. Without such behavior, the surrounding population should be able to live in an uninterrupted manner; however, when any entity (particularly a human wielding immense power) interferes, those norms are disrupted, often causing the community to live in a state of pain, discomfort, and fear. Human-monsters are formed when rulers behave outside of the normalcy that is expected of someone in their positions, and when this normalcy is interrupted, their actions are seen as monstrous (Scoggins 128). The *Judith*-poet does not give the reader specifics regarding Holofernes’s behavior; however, as with the explanation of body horror, the people’s reaction demonstrates the immense devastation they experience via Holofernes.

þæt ge ne þyrfen leng  
murnan on mode ...  
geond woruld wide

þæt gecyðed wearð  
þæt eow ys wuldorblæd

torhtlic toward  
þara læðða

ond tir gifeðe  
þe ge lange drugon.<sup>105</sup>

The Jews of Bethulia realize immediately following Holofernes's decapitation that they are now able to live more freely, no longer in a state of fearfulness due to Holofernes's treatment of them.

Dagnus's disruption of his community takes a different approach to that of Holofernes's. After torturing Christopher, Dagnus is blinded and only after Christopher's demise does Dagnus regain his sight. Upon receiving his sight anew, Dagnus proclaims, "Gif þonne ænig man þurh deofles searwa to þon beswicen sy þæt hyt gedyrstlæce, on þære ylcan tide sy he mid swyrde witnod."<sup>106</sup> While Dagnus has been converted to Christianity, his behavior and penchant for controlling others remain unchanged. When Christopher brings information against to Dagnus's liking, Dagnus tortures Christopher, and now that Dagnus's views have pivoted, he still intends to inflict pain on any person in his community who does not share his views. Dagnus's tactics of punishment, in his time, were considered a legitimate means of obtaining information and deterring problematic behavior; however, the problem remains that Dagnus is not keeping consistent rules for his people to follow. Dagnus's behavior has now brought him into Ælfric's definition of the seventh abuse: a Christian man who is contentious.

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<sup>105</sup> Lines 153b-154a, 155b-158, That you no longer have need to be anxious in your mind ... that it was made known through the world widely that to you radiant, glorious success is impending and glory is granted, redemption for your injuries that you long endured.

<sup>106</sup> "Then if anyone through the tricks of the devil may be seduced to that so that he dares it, at that same time he will be punished with the sword." This explains the punishment to be inflicted on those who choose not to worship Christopher's God.

Of these three men, Alexander is most adept at disrupting normalcy for those he encounters, particularly if he deems these populations unworthy. He goes so far as to annihilate whole societies of people if he judges their cultures filthy or immoral. The most basic example of Alexander's prideful disruption is his clearing of the forest near a water source: "sioðþan hie þa gewicod hæfdon, þa het ic ceorfan ða bearwas ond þone wudu fyllan þæt monnum wære þy eþre to þæm wæterscipe to ganganne, ond to þæm mere þe we bi gewicod hæfdon ... ond þa ðær onældon þusend fyra ond eac fif hund."<sup>107</sup> Though people of Alexander's time may not have considered this monstrous and selfish behavior, modern eco-justice theory would argue that Alexander gives no thought to the disruption of a normally functioning habitat, and in turn, he is baffled when animals, seeking to slake their thirsts, interact negatively with the troop that has obliterated their environment and set it ablaze. An interesting note to consider from Ælfric occurs in his discussion of the ninth abuse (an unjust king) which says, "Gif he þonne forsyhð þas gesetnyssa and lare, þonne byð his eard geyrmed foroft ... ge on wildeorum."<sup>108</sup> As being prone to anger and acting proud are characteristics of an unjust king, modern eco-justice theory may not be needed to address Alexander as the cause of the all-night onslaught of wild animals.

Before Alexander decimates swaths of land for his own comfort, he terrorizes a small island town. He tells Aristotle:

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<sup>107</sup> Since they then had made camp, I then commanded [them] to cut the grove and then fell the wood, that people were to go to the body of water more easily and to the lake that we had made camp beside ... and then there they kindled one thousand five hundred campfires.

<sup>108</sup> If he [the king] then overlooks these decrees and teachings [of being a just king], then his land shall be made miserable often ... by wild animals.

Ða gesawon we in þære byrig ond ongeaton Indisce men fea healf nacode eardigende. Ða hie þa us gesawon, hie selfe sona in heora husum deagollice hie miþan ... mid þy weða longe bidon ond us nænig mon to wolde, þa het ic fea stræla sendan in þa burh innan, to þon gif hie hiera willum us to noldon, þæt hie for þæm ege þæs gefeohtes nede scoldon. Ða wæron hie þy swyðor afyrhte ond hie fæstor hyddan.<sup>109</sup>

The people of the island are terrified to see Alexander's troops arriving, and when he does not quickly get what he wants from them, he deems shooting arrows into their space as the best course of action. Though this act could be only warning shots, the people hide because they are fearful of this immense army, not because their goal is to withhold information from him. One reading of this scenario could show the virtue of patience, as Alexander waits for the people to come out of hiding before sending warning shots near their homes; however, an alternative reading could be that Alexander is angry with the people's hiding and fires the arrows to alert the inhabitants that a battle could be the next step.

Alexander finalizes his letter to Aristotle by explaining that, "Þa ðohte ic on minum mode hwæþer ic meahte ealne middan-geard me on onweald geslean."<sup>110</sup> Alexander is unbothered if his goals require upturning the lives of vast populations as long as they are in servitude to him. The mere existence of these rulers in their communities indicates that those around them are unable to live at peace. Whether that existence is long-standing in those communities as with Dagnus and Holofernes or newly established, even if briefly, as with Alexander, the people are forced to live in fear and

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<sup>109</sup> Then we looked in the town and saw a few Indian people, half naked, dwelling together. When they saw us, they immediately concealed themselves secretly in their houses. With that then we waited long, and not any person would come to us. Then I ordered a few arrows to be sent into the town. Then if they would not willingly come to us for fear of this, they should need to fight. Then they were more strongly frightened and they hid faster.

<sup>110</sup> Then I thought in my mind whether I might force all the world into servitude to me.

apprehension for their safety. Again, it is the intentionality with which the three men enact disruption that causes this disruption to be monstrous as their surrounding communities are only able to endure turbulent and clamorous lives.

Holofernes, Dagnus, and Alexander, through their personalized magnification, reproachful behaviors, and many vices, ensure that their surrounding communities understand that they are in charge and that anyone behaving alternative to their desires will suffer tremendous consequences. They are initially not deemed monsters because of their human appearance, but based on their “hostility,” these men are more aligned with “the metaphorical ‘dogs’ ... barking against truths that are strange to them” (Lionarons 179). Unfortunately for those populations involved, adhering to the wills of these men is not always easy. Holofernes uses deceit, even against his followers to achieve his desires, and Dagnus alters the target behavior for his constituents based on his own personal experiences; meanwhile, Alexander sweeps through towns and peoples, overturning their normalcy and casting judgment on their worthiness to live. All three men operate severely under the vices of anger and pride, while Holofernes exceeds the group by including gluttony and fornication as well. Those who ruled by moderation, prudence, fortitude, and justice were considered to be possess wisdom as these virtues were seen as the clearest indicators of a good ruler. Dagnus and Holofernes fall short as good and wise rulers; alternatively, when analyzed by the cardinal virtues, despite his negative qualities, Alexander is a significantly complicated and nuanced character that, based on the information given to us from the *Letter*, cannot be analyzed as exactly as the others. However, through employing morally corrupt behaviors, inflicting bodily horror, and



disrupting any established normalcy of the surrounding populations, Holofernes and Dagnus, despite their full humanity, behave as monsters.

## CONCLUSION

### The Monsters of the *Beowulf*-Manuscript

May the entities in the *Beowulf*-manuscript be analyzed through the lens of Horror? Absolutely. Many of them in fact. These entities can be grouped together as meeting the criteria of (1) monstrous appearance and behavior, (2) monstrous appearance but not monstrous behavior, or (3) monstrous behavior but not monstrous appearance. Grendel, as expected, easily falls into the category of Horror monster not only by his ghastly appearance and horrific behavior but also by the immense onslaught of terror he works on Heorot each night for twelve years. He is the type of monster that immediately comes to mind when considering Horror and is reminiscent of many types of popular Horror monsters. Those monsters may actually be reminiscent of Grendel himself, an avenue of study that could yield fascinating results. Grendel's Mother, unlike Grendel, does not fit as neatly into Horror. While she is indeed horrible in her appearance just as Grendel is, her behavior is not merely to traumatize the thanes in Hrothgar's hall but to seek revenge on those who murdered her son, an acceptable form of violence for Anglo-Saxon feuding practices. While Grendel easily falls into the category of both monstrous appearance and monstrous behavior, Grendel's Mother is simply a monster in appearance alone, her attacks intended for the sake of her son.

St. Christopher has a complicated history considering his familial ties to the *Cynocephali*, but through his behavior he separates himself fully from their cannibalistic ways and joins together with God who accepts him as a saint to be protected from Dagnus's tortures. Despite the appearance of his dog-head and his height, Christopher is

in no way a monster. While his appearance may be deemed monstrous, his behavior is not. He harms none and only seeks to show Dagnus the ways of God. Dagnus's disdain for Christopher's God is what leads Dagnus to torture the saint, and while Dagnus continually calls Christopher a vile monster and beast, it is Dagnus in this story who is truly the monster by inflicting all manners of bodily horrors on Christopher, whose only "crime" was to reason with Dagnus and seek to convert him to Christianity. Dagnus resorts to utilizing numerous vices, and that poor behavior affirms his inability to be a good king (the ninth abuse). God goes so far as to blind Dagnus as a means of protecting His saint, showing that it is Dagnus's behavior that is monstrous, even though his appearance is not at all monstrous.

Though *Wonders* is rife with fantastical creatures, both humanoid and animalistic, very few of the entities represented in the text are truly monstrous. The vast majority of these beings, while strange-looking, have no descriptions of monstrous behavior, and many of them even flee at the sight of a human out of pure fear. There are four exceptions within the nineteen humanoid groups that may fall into the category of Horror monster: *Cynocephali*, *el-reordge* people, *Donestre*, and *Hostes*. The *Cynocephali* have a history of cannibalistic behavior and behaving in ways that others throughout various traditions have seen as terrible, including the Anglo-Saxons. The *el-reordge* people, despite the linguistic complications of some of their descriptors, are still considered "the worst." The *Donestre* and *Hostes* are intentional in their manipulation and violence, making their monstrous natures evident. They intend to deceive and hurt. The four truly monstrous groups in *Wonders* are monstrous in both appearance and behavior.

Holofernes is unique in that Sisam so heartily asserts that “Holofernes was no monster” (67); however, when analyzing Holofernes with both the lens of Horror and Ælfric’s vices and abuses, his monstrosity cannot be denied. Sisam, by not considering Holofernes’s behavior through the eyes of the Anglo-Saxons, fails to see how truly monstrous Holofernes is. Like the *Donestre* and *Hostes*, Holofernes intentionally deceives and manipulates those around him to fulfill his own selfish desires. Orchestrating the attempted rape of Judith and severely inebriating his men without their knowledge are just two examples showing that Holofernes knows no moral compass. Though his appearance is human, his behavior is monstrous. Alexander remains a polarizing character. Why Sisam would have included *Letter* as a monster text in his argument of thematic unity? During Alexander’s travels in this text, he encounters “fish-fauns,” a ten-foot-tall bishop, and other various people with no monstrous behaviors (though they are indeed marvelous) as well as *Cynocephali* which have been explained as monsters even in the scope of this project. Other than the half-dogs, the attackers Alexander experiences are simply animals. One animal, with a wild description, does attack them from the fen, but again, Alexander several times refers to this creature as an animal. Many entities Alexander encounters are marvelous and fascinating, but they are not monstrous. With Sisam’s undefined concept of monsters and the brief mention of *Cynocephali*, it makes sense that this would be enough for Sisam to define this text as a “monster” text, though that argument does not stand up well here.

Through the examples provided in the third chapter, each scenario can be viewed through either a virtue or its opposing vice, for example justice and violence, moderation and extremes, anger and patience. I lean toward reading Alexander as a monster when

considering both Horror theory, vices, virtues, and abuses; though, I must allow for understanding that Alexander is a highly nuanced character that is not always seen in this monstrous light.

My goal in this project was to analyze whether Kenneth Sisam's argument (that monsters in the texts of the *Beowulf*-manuscript form a thematic unity) is appropriate when considered through the lens of Horror theory, and through Horror theory, four of the texts boast clear humanoid monsters, and the fifth text, the *Letter*, possibly could too; however, that is fully dependent on the reader's view of Alexander, who throughout scholarship and even within this project can be viewed in too many ways for him to be specifically labeled.

Whether those monsters come together to suggest a larger allegorical or symbolic theme might form an excellent avenue for further research. What is evident is that Sisam's argument lacks a critical feature: a definition for what makes a monster. In the realm of Horror alone, the concept of a monster can take on abundant forms; a "monster" can be perceived differently based on cultural, geographical, historical, religious, and even linguistic factors. At no point does Sisam define, for the sake of his argument, what a monster actually is. His idea of a "monster" labels anything that seems outside the norm of a fully human body with no regard to actual behavior while refusing to label any monstrously behaving humans as such. This unrefined view of monsters muddies the waters of his argument as there is no way in which to frame these characters he calls monsters. This vagueness allows for many perspectives of research regarding the unique nature of the entities in the *Beowulf*-manuscript. In his review of the *Exeter Book*

(facsimile edition), nineteen years prior to calling the *Beowulf*-manuscript “Liber de diversis monstribus, anglice,”<sup>111</sup> Sisam notes that “the *Beowulf* codex, even allowing for *Judith*, is a collection in verse and prose of marvelous stories, with a strong secular bent” (342). This comment has led some scholars such as Omar Khalaf to claim that Sisam’s argument for thematic unity was about the marvelous, leaving out the specific term “monster” (660). Sisam is not wrong with the sense of the marvelous. The stories in the *Beowulf*-manuscript are rife with creatures and experiences that are outlandish, marvelous, and overall unique.

Considering the breadth of “monster” as a concept and the peculiar entities found in the manuscript, there are many avenues left to explore. Applying such lenses as Horror theory as a means of analyzing other Anglo-Saxon texts could provide fascinating insights into the works which remain fertile ground for the study of literature.

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<sup>111</sup> Book of diverse monsters, in English

## APPENDIX

Table 1: Human-like Groups in *Wonders of the East*

Group	§ <sup>†</sup>	Entity Name (translation)	OE Description of Entity	Description Translation	OE Response to Observation	Response Translation
1	1v 16 (F)	<i>Cepe-monnum</i> ( <i>merchants</i> )	(no description)	--	(none given)	--
2	3r 18 (F)	<i>Cynocephali</i> / <i>Conopenae</i> ( <i>dog-headed</i> )	Horses mana, eoferes tuxas, huna heafdu, heora oroð bið swylce fyres leg	Horse's mane, boar's tusk, hound's head, their breath is also flaming fire	(none given)	--
3	3v 20 (F)	<i>Homodubii</i> ( <i>first mention,</i> <i>doubtful</i> <i>person</i> )	Men, lenge syx fot-mæla. Beardas oþ cneow side, feax oð helan, hreawum fixum hy lifiað ond þa etaþ	People, 6 feet tall, beards down their sides to knees, hair to heels, live on and eat raw fish	(none given)	--
4	4v 20 (F)	(no proper name)	Men, fiftyne fota lange, hwit loc, two neb on anum heafde, fet ond cneowu swyðe reade, lange nose, swearþ feax, hy cennan willað, þonne farað hi on scipum to Indeum	People, 15 feet tall, white body, two faces on one head, very red feet and knees, long nose, black hair, when they need to reproduce, then they go on ships to India	(none given)	--
5	4v 22 (F)	(no proper name)	Men, ðrys heowes, þara heafdu beoð genomu swa leona heafdu, .xx. fota lange, muð swæ fon, men gewende	People, 3 colors, the head is taken as a lion's head, 20 feet tall, mouth like fan, supposed to be humans	Feor þæt hi fleoð, bode hy swæteð	Far they flee, they sweat blood
6	5r 22 (F)	<i>Hostes</i> ( <i>Fulk translates</i> <i>name to</i> <i>Enemies</i> )	Men acende lange ond micle, fet and sconcan .xii. fota lange, sidan mid breostum seofan fota lange, swearþes hiwes	Big and tall people, feet and legs 12 feet long, side flanks with chests 7 feet long, dark color	Hy gelæccað, þonne fretað hi hyne	They grab violently, then they devour him
7	5v 22 (F)	(no proper name given in this text; <i>Blemmeye</i> )	Men, buton heafdum, habbað on hyra breostum heora eagan ond muð, eahta fota lange, eahta fota brade	People, without heads, on their chest they have eyes and mouth, 8 feet tall, 8 feet broad	(none given)	--



8	6r 22 (F)	Homodubii (second mention, doubtful person)	Two-men, nafolan on menniscum gesceape ond syþþan on eoseles gelicnesse, longe sconcan swa fugelas ond lipelice stefne	Two-people, man-shaped from the navel and a donkey's likeness from there, legs as birds and a gentle voice	þonne fleoð hy feor	Then they flee in fear
9	6r 22 (F)	(no proper name; barbarous people)	El-reorðge men, þa habbað cynigas under him, wyrstan men, þa el- reorðgestan	Barbarous/all speaking <sup>††</sup> men, there are kings under them, the worst men, the most barbarous/all- speaking	(none given)	--
10	6v 24 (F)	<i>Donestre</i> (no proper translation)	Man-cyn, geweaxene swa frihteras fram þam heafde oð ðone nafolan, ond se oðer dæl bið mennisce onlic, cunnon eall mennisce gereord	People, produced as soothsayers from the head to the navel, and the other portion is similar to human, know all human language	Nemnað hy hyne ond his magas cupra manna naman, ond mid leaslicum wordum hy hine beswicað ond hine gefoð, hy hine fretað ealne buton þon heafde ond þonne sitað ond wepað ofer þam heafde	They name him and his relatives with known human names, and with false words they deceive him and capture him, they devour him whole without the head and then sit and weep over the head
11	7r 24 (F)	(no proper name)	Men, fiftyne fota lange, .x. on brade, micel heafod, earan swæ fon. Oþer eare hy him on niht underbredað ond mid oþran hy wreoð him, earan swiðe leohte, lic- homan swa hwite swa meolc	People, 15 feet tall, 10 in breadth, big head, ears like a fan, the other ear they spread under themselves at night and with the other they cover themselves, ears are very light, bodies as white as milk	Nymað hy hyra earan him on hand ond fleoð swiðe, swa hrædlece swa is wen þæt hy fleogen	They take their ears in their hands and quickly flee, so hastily as to be that they are flying
12	7r 26 (F)	(no proper name)	Men, eagan scinaþ swa leohte	People, eyes that shine as bright lights	(none given)	--
13	7v 26 (F)	<i>Stillestan</i> <i>bisceopes</i> (still-as-stone bishop)	Se nænine oþerne mete ne þige buton sæ-ostrum ond be þam he lifede	He takes no other meat without sea- oysters and he lives on them	(none given)	--
14	8r 26 (F)	<i>Gedefelice</i> <i>menn</i>	habbað him to cynedome þone	Have the Red Sea to their kingdom	(none given)	--

		(proper/honest people)	Readan Sæ ond to anwalde	and their sole power		
15	8r-8v 26 (F)	<i>Hunticgean</i> (huntresses)	Wif, beardas swa side oð hyra breost, horses hyda hy habbað him to hrægle gedon, fore hundum tigras ond leon ond loxas þæt hy fedað, ealra þara wildeora cyn þe on þære dune acende beoð, mid heora scinlace þæt hy gehuntiaþ	Women, beards as far to their breasts, they heave horse's hides to make clothes for themselves, for hunting they feed tigers and lions and lynxes, with their sorcery they hunt all the kinds of wild beasts in the mountain that are born	(none given)	--
16	8v-9r 28 (F)	(no proper name; tusked women)*	Wif, eoferes tuxas, feax oð helan side, oxan tægl on lendunum, þryttine fota lange, lic bið on marmor-stanes hiwnesse, olfendan fet, eoseles teð	Women, boar's tusks, hair to the heels sides, oxen tail on the loins, 13 feet tall, bodies are the likeness of marble-stone, camel's feet, donkey's teeth	(none given)	--
17	9r 28 (F)	(no proper name)	Men þe be hreawum flæsce ond be hunie hy lifiað	People who live on raw flesh and honey	(none given)	--
18	9r 28 (F)	<i>Gæst-liþende men</i> (hospitable people)**	Men, cyningas þa habbað under him monigfealde leodhatan, ðis man-cyn lyfið fela geara, ond hy syndon fremfulle men	People, kings who have under them numerous tyrants, these people live many years, and they are profitable people	Gif hwile mon him to cymð, þonne gifað hy him wif ær hy hine onweg læten	If any person comes to them, then they give to him a woman before they allow him on his way
19	9v 28 (F)	<i>Sigelwara</i> (Ethiopians, "sun inhabitants")	Moncyn, seondan sweartes hyiwes on onsyne	People, they are dark in color in appearance	(none given)	--

† For section numbers, see Mittman, Asa Simon, and Kim Susan. "The Wonders of the East." *Inconceivable Beasts: The Wonders of the East in the Beowulf Manuscript*, Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Tempe, AZ, 2013, pp. 25–72. For page numbers and Old English text, see Fulk, R. D. *The Beowulf Manuscript: Complete Texts and The Fight at Finnsburg*. Harvard University Press, 2010.

†† This word is also translated as “foreign-speaking” or “all-speaking” which holds a very different connotation from “barbarous” (*Bosworth-Toller*). However, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* does indeed offer “barbarous” and “barbarism” along with “of strange speech.” See chapter 2 for further explanation.

\* Of hyra unclennesse hie gefylde wæron from þæm miclan macedoniscan Alexandre. þa cwealde he hy þa he hy lifiende oferfon ne mehte, forþon hy syndon æwisce on lic-homan ond unweorþe. (Due to their filthiness, they were destroyed by Alexander the Great Macedonian, then he slayed them when he could not take them as living prisoners because they are shameful and vile in their skin.)

\*\* Se Macedonisca Alexandre, þa he him to com, þa wæs he wundriende hyra menniscnesse, ne wolde he hi cwellan ne him nan lað don. (The Macedonian Alexander, when he came to them, he then was astonished by their human nature, he would not kill them nor do any harm to them.)

Table 2: Horror Appearance Characteristics for Groups in *Wonders of the East*

Group	Fusion	Fission	Massification	Magnification	None
1	-	-	-	-	◆
2	◆	-	†	-	-
3	-	-	-	-	◆
4	-	-	◆	-	-
5	◆	-	◆	-	-
6	-	-	◆	-	-
7	-	-	◆	-	-
8	◆	-	-	-	-
9	-	-	-	-	◆
10	◆	-	-	-	-
11	-	-	◆	-	-
12	-	-	-	-	◆
13	-	-	-	-	◆
14	-	-	-	-	◆
15	-	-	-	-	◆
16	◆	-	◆	-	-
17	-	-	-	-	◆
18	-	-	-	-	◆
19	-	-	-	-	◆

† St. Christopher, a potential *Cynocephali*, is said to be twelve fathoms tall in the *Passion*; however, the *Conopenae/Cynocephali* in the *Wonders* are not given a height description.

Table 3: Horror Behavior Characteristics for Groups in *Wonders of the East*

Group	Body Horror	Criminality Horror	Disruption of Normalcy	Fearful Nature	None
1	-	-	-	-	◆
2	-	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-	◆
4	-	-	-	-	◆
5	-	-	-	◆	-
6	◆	-	-	-	-
7	-	-	-	-	◆
8	-	-	-	◆	-
9	-	◆	◆	-	-
10	◆	◆	-	-	-
11	-	-	-	◆	-
12	-	-	-	-	◆
13	-	-	-	-	◆
14	-	-	-	-	◆
15	-	-	-	-	◆
16	-	-	-	-	◆
17	-	-	-	-	◆
18	-	-	-	-	◆
19	-	-	-	-	◆

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