

# Zaha Hadid: Spatializing Identity through the Architectural Monster

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Zaha Hadid was one of the world's most influential and memorable architects; she was the first woman to win the highly acclaimed Pritzker Architecture Prize and was also awarded the Royal Gold Medal in 2016. Throughout her career she scattered the globalized landscape with her signature curves and spiraled forms, situating them within both domestic and public infrastructure; unapologetically presenting her vision for our architectural future. She championed ways of creating new spatial experiences and appeared to believe in destabilizing the walls that divide us in order to further our collective architectural journey<sup>1</sup>.

As an Arab woman in a world where architecture is largely constructed and maintained by white men, Hadid was unavoidably positioned as an outsider. Rem Koolhaas, the hugely influential Dutch architect, once described Hadid as 'a planet in her own inimitable orbit' (Seabrook par.29). Hadid has said herself that she was never accepted into the club, never permitted to squeeze unnoticed into the industry; and because of this, she circled above, a planet unto herself, critically looking for opportunities to implant her ingenuity. According to *Zaha Hadid Architects*, these opportunities have been plentiful throughout her long career. She has projects spanning across 44 countries - ranging from cultural centres, governmental structures, towering corporate power symbols and upscale private residences.

Hadid is a symbol of how an outsider can conquer and champion success. She was formidable in her practice, carving out space for her greatness through

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<sup>1</sup> This idea of community and collective experience is discussed in 'Dame Zaha Hadid in Conversation', filmed for Goldsmiths University of London, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t82U23b71ck> (accessed November 2017).

resisting the oppressive power of normativity that pervades not only in mainstream architectural thinking but also in our wider popular imagination. Hadid was not nice, accommodating nor quiet, and her work mirrors that. Her structures unsettle and confront our ingrained understandings of the built environment; they generate a feeling within their users and viewers that they are extra-terrestrial forms, forms carefully placed among humanity to disrupt the historical and contemporary trajectory of architecture.

The first part of this paper theorizes and visualizes this disruption through the image of the *hybrid monstrosity*. I frame the *hybrid monstrosity* as the ability to locate a feeling of the anti-normal; a feeling created by the uncomfortable relationship between Hadid's built design and its spatial setting. The *hybrid monstrosity* is a flexible identity; the object *becomes a hybrid monstrosity* through its ability to disrupt our human landscape which in turn gives it an alien status. The feeling of the anti-normal strips the object of any neutrality and instead posits it as an outsider, a monster. This feeling of the monstrous is exacerbated within the human viewer or user because of the conscious awareness that the object goes against conventional thinking and aesthetics.

The *hybrid monstrosity* shows parallels with popular understandings of the imagined monster:

A large, ugly, and frightening imaginary creature.

A thing of extraordinary or daunting size.

A congenitally malformed or mutant animal or plant<sup>2</sup>

By combining my definition of the *hybrid monstrosity* with these three somewhat interrelated dictionary definitions, we arrive at the act of Othering; an ideology that is continuously discussed in relation to emerging conceptualizations of the

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<sup>2</sup> Definitions taken from: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/monster> (assessed November 2017).

monstrous<sup>3</sup>. The capitalized verb *to Other*, is commonly defined as the ability to ‘view or treat (a person or group of people) as intrinsically different from and alien to oneself’<sup>4</sup>. Due to its size, ugliness and ability to create fear, the monster has long been a victim of literary, cinematic and political Othering<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, the architectural monster, the *hybrid monstrosity*, is often Othered due its size, aesthetic and inability to fit within the organic or urban landscape<sup>6</sup>. To become monstrous there is an indication that one must depart from what is considered normal; from what is societally, culturally, aesthetically, politically and spatially acceptable. As Levina and Bui argue in their introduction to *Monster Culture in the 21st Century: A Reader*, monsters ‘represent collective social anxieties over resisting and embracing change’ (1) - they are figures for humanity to Other in opposition to itself, an act which allows us to avoid collectively looking inward and facing the fears we have of the future ahead.

While on the one hand there is something fundamentally unifying between the imagined and the architectural monster, the *hybrid monstrosity* simultaneously offers a departure away from mainstream thought. There is significant scholarship<sup>7</sup> that aspires to draw together the human with the monstrous as a way of producing new intertwining subjectivities. However, with the *hybrid monstrosity*, I focus on establishing a spatial connection between the human and the architectural monster. By doing this, our understanding of the monster becomes less about the realm of the imagined and more about our physical realities. In other words, as the human can be physically contained *within* the architectural monster, there is no gain to be had by Othering the *hybrid*

<sup>3</sup> An example would be the work of Robin Wood. See *American Nightmare: Essays on the Horror Film*, Festivals of Festivals, 1979.

<sup>4</sup> Definition taken from: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/other> (assessed November 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Examples include *Frankenstein’s Monster*, *Cyclops*, *The Kraken*, *Godzilla*, *Hitler*, *Thatcher*, *Putin*.

<sup>6</sup> Examples could include *The Ryugyong Hotel* in North Korea, *The Antilia* in India, *Aoyama Technical College* in Japan and *The National Library of Pristina* in the Republic of Kosovo.

<sup>7</sup> The work of Michel Foucault and Judith Halberstam are two examples.

*monstrosity*, largely because we exist alongside it and it therefore serves to give value to our urban and rural experiences.

Through looking at two of Hadid's works: *The Bergisel Ski Jump* (2002) and *The Nordpark Railway Stations* (2007), my aim is to expand our understanding of the monstrous and our image of the monster. Through locating the *hybrid monstrosity* within these two projects, I aim to make clear that this tangible architectural identity destabilizes the dominant image of the terrible monster that lurks in our psyche. Its existence encourages us to deconstruct our understandings of monstrous imagery and instead work towards building new representations of monstrous beings and becomings.

The bridge that connects the two halves of this paper is built out of controversy.

Even for those who do not engage with architecture as either a practice or an academic discipline, Hadid's work is often recognizable; numerous projects have gained both popularity and notoriety within mainstream culture and media, fueled by a strong foundation of controversy. Firstly, by examining *The Bergisel Ski Jump* and *The Nordpark Railway Stations*, the paper demonstrates how the *hybrid monstrosity* is an example of the way Hadid mobilized architecture to produce physical and visual controversy among two different topographical sites. Building from this, controversy is then framed as a foundation for the popularized narrative surrounding Hadid's professional identity. Referring back to the image of Hadid as 'a planet in her own inimitable orbit' (Seabrook par.29), it will consider how the media painted Hadid as the industry's unethical monster, a woman prepared to sacrifice lives in favor of her creative vision. Through analyzing this particular media narrative, we can see the extent to which this framing was related to Hadid's personal identity, that of the intersectional outsider. To expand, my use of the intersectional outsider builds off Kimberlé Crenshaw's original notion of intersectionality, whereby social categorizations such as gender, class and race, intertwine to create a mutually dependent system of disadvantage<sup>8</sup>. Relating this to Hadid, I will argue that her intersectional identity, specifically in reference to her gender and ethnicity, contributes towards her position as an outsider in the

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<sup>8</sup> See Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color'. *Stanford Law Review*, vol.43, no. 6, 1991, pp. 1241-1299.

field of architecture. This section concludes by exploring how Hadid's identity can therefore be posited as a significant stimulus for the hybrid monstrous constructions which were uncovered within the first half of the paper.

By theorizing and visualizing the *hybrid monstrosity* and developing subsequent commentary on identity building, the arguments presented here contribute to the deconstruction of the popular academic narrative which posits architecture as an inaccessible discipline. The aim is to show that architecture and architectural practice can engage with, and contribute to, emerging interdisciplinary cultural conversations.



**Image 1: The Bergisel Ski Jump (2002)**

**Image copyrighted & courtesy of Tirol Werbung / Verena Kathrein.**

*'in the face of such rapid change, the once stable boundaries between time and space, human and machine, self and other have become increasingly uncertain, raising interesting and challenging questions about accepted definitions of space, place and identity'* (Wolmark 1).

Elizabeth Grosz argued in *Space, Time and Perversion* that in order for bodies to be reconciled 'not only must their matter and form be rethought, but so too must their environment and spatio-temporal location' (129). The Bergisel Ski Jump is an architectural example of this bodily re-thinking; it represents a collapse of organic and mechanical environments, the effect of which creates a concrete feeling of the sublime within the user/viewer. This makes it a perfect example of the *hybrid monstrosity*. It is part bridge, part ski-jump, a sort of architectural

revisoning of the historically monstrous conjoined twin. It stands at a vertical height of 50m and transports people from the valley to the mountain through an elevator system. The ski jump's monstrous identity can be discussed in a number of ways, but my focus is on Hadid's use of scale and how it generates a sense of the monstrous sublime.

The structure's interaction with the mountainous landscape shows it literally bursting through the dense foliage, appearing as a concrete symbol of towering strength. Its sheer size invades the alpine sense of calm. It demands attention - particularly in the way in which its curved glass paneling refracts the sun, blinding all those who dare to gaze upon it. The way the slope extends out of the main architectural body, alludes to a monstrous deformity, painting the structure as a deviant experimental subject (Comaroff and Ker-Shing 27). This deviance is exacerbated by the ski jump's size; its alien-ness and removal from our human proportionalized perspective paints the structure as uncontainable and unapproachable.

In *Horror in Architecture* Joshua Comaroff and Ong Ker-Shing discuss the effect of scale, in particular that of the giant, positing it as 'one of the central forms in the historical imaginary of horror and monstrosity' (169). They argue that when architecture adopts a gigantic scale, it taps into a collective anxiety surrounding 'topological instability'(169). In other words, when we come across an object or being of inexplicable size, our individual surroundings suddenly feel unstable - the presence of the Other (a being outside of oneself) collapses what we had previously deemed secure. When we gaze upon the ski jump, its size makes both the forest and the peaks appear dwarfed. This is overwhelming for the human sense of self because we are rendered insignificant by both the man-made form and the natural environment.

The topological setting is further made unstable by the ski jump's structural solidity. Comaroff and Ker-Shing are defiant in their view: 'Solidity is truly horrid thing; an irreconcilable, existential terror. The solid object provides no space, either physically or philosophically, for inhabitation' (176). There is, however, a distinction between exterior and interior solidity which can be explored through the ski jump. When we view the structure externally, the contrast between the landscape and Hadid's use of concrete as a primary material creates a feeling of the impenetrable. It establishes the feeling that we 'cannot properly inhabit the edifice; we can merely beetle about its edges' (173). This forces us to view it as an autonomous solid monster that has power over us - it

blocks our access to the expansive forest, acting as a barrier to the mountains, forcing us to confront our own physical journeys and spatial interactions. Simultaneously, the interior is vastly different. Primarily, it serves to aid, as oppose to hinder human life. It houses a café on the top tower which includes a viewing platform that allows users to engage comfortably and at ease with the surrounding landscape. It is no longer a looming and fearful solid object, instead, by opening itself up to flexible interactions, it becomes a safe haven for us to rest in and recuperate. What I want to emphasize, is that the ski jump as a *hybrid monstrosity* problematizes the often too rigid historical understandings of the monstrous as a solid mass of terror. In reality, monsters are complex beings with both interior and exterior selves which may at times seem at odds with one another. Simon-Mittmann argues that ‘a monster is not really known through observation’, but rather ‘through its effect, its impact’ (6). In the case of the ski-jump, our visual observations and the impact of our spatial experience may give us very different feelings. While I do not agree that we cannot experience the monster through observation, as from an architectural perspective I believe that we can; what Simon-Mittman’s argument does do, is encourage new discussions surrounding the multiplicity of ways of performing and experiencing the monstrous.

Bringing together these ideas of scale and solidity, we can turn to the emotive experience of the sublime. In an attempt to define it, Trachtenberg and Hyman refer to ‘the principal effect of the sublime’ which they specify as the realization or reaction to stimuli which evokes great emotion, adrenaline and astonishment (qtd in MacLean 48). This ‘great emotion’ is often the result of being confronted by a sudden change, which goes back to the previous notion of ‘topological instability’ (Comaroff and Ker-Shing 169). Historically, particularly within the arts, the effect of the change has been to physically surrender the victim of the sublime, rendering them fixed in time and space. Due to this stupefying effect, the feeling of the sublime is often mis-defined as terror.

In *On the Sublime and the Beautiful* Edward Burke raises the point that unlike horror and terror, which connote a sense of danger, the sublime is more closely related to pleasure, largely because the object fails to present an active threat (qtd. in Simon-Mittmann 12). The only emotive sense of threat the ski jump poses is through perspective - it threatens our human scale and dwarfs our existential sense of importance. From an architectural angle, it may threaten our own understandings, meanings and values that we associate with architectural form,

spatial encounters and rural topography. Specifically, its vast concrete and immovable body encourages us to rethink what we deem to be aesthetically valuable.

This binary relationship between the beautiful and the ugly is something that has continuously surfaced within both scholarship and popular cultural manifestations of the monster. Upon closer inspection, it seems they function less as a binary and more as a close partnership; what we may initially perceive as an ugly monster may upon observation and interaction become beautiful (MacLean 49). Upon first gazing at the ski jump, one may see its concrete silhouette as a harsh mutation of the landscape, a deviant alien having migrated from elsewhere. However, upon further inspection perhaps the structure's inherent sense of beauty - its carefully crafted curves and angles, its majestic, monumental stature - starts to unravel. What the *hybrid monstrosity* really does is encourage us to reimagine our interpretations of beauty - the deviant merging of machine and mountain offers us new possibilities of composition and space-making (Comaroff and Ker-Shing 46). This merging can be further explored through *The Nordpark Railway Stations*.



**Image 2: The Nordpark Railways Stations (2007) - Hungerburg Station**  
Image copyrighted & courtesy of Víctor Patiño George.





**Image 3: The Nordpark Railways Stations (2007) - Hungerburg Station  
Image copyrighted & courtesy of Martin Schubert.**

The Nordpark Railway Stations in Innsbruck, Austria are a collection of works made up of Alpenzoo Station, Hungerburg Station, Congress Station and Lowenhaus Station - all four make up a funicular railway system that is situated along Innsbruck's northern chain of mountains<sup>9</sup>. Each one has a unique architectural design, influenced by the topography, altitude and the neighboring ice formations of the site. While all four perform the *hybrid monstrosity* identity, I am concentrating solely on Hungerburg Station.

The station is a symbol of advanced architectural technology; the roof shell structure is organically placed on top of plinths, creating a feeling of lightness, achieved by Hadid's pioneering use of double-curvature glass. Hadid designed the original shape on computer software, which was then precisely translated into the final built form through processes of CNC milling and thermoforming

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<sup>9</sup> Description taken from Zaha Hadid Architects: <http://www.zaha-hadid.com/architecture/nordpark-railway-stations/> (accessed November 2017).

(mechanical processes of shaping material). Further, complex design and manufacturing processes commonly used in the automotive industry were adopted in order to achieve a streamlined aesthetic<sup>10</sup>. In the following section, I discuss Hungerburg Station and how it becomes a *hybrid monstrosity* through its relationship to technology and its embodiment of the cyborg.

The cyborg is the 21st century's technological monster. Its hybrid half human, half machine body has emerged as a site of fear - raising anxieties over the value of our human ontology while simultaneously igniting nervous fantasies over our future environments and bodies. Within popular culture, the cyborg has flourished and has been explored in a variety of mediums. As Simon-Mittman notes: 'monsters do a great deal of cultural work' through the way they 'are able to portray ideas, concepts and notions of culture' (1) and therefore the figure of the cyborg – due to its ability to share human traits and operate within human space and place – offers us the potential to modify and expand our sense of self within a new emerging bio-techno culture.

Alongside culture, the cyborg has also been discussed in academia. Feminist historian, technologist and scientist Donna Haraway has been at the forefront of cyborg theory. Her *Cyborg Manifesto* was first published in 1984 and to this day it remains one of the most intricate and informed academic works on the cyborg. Haraway argues that the cyborg 'is the figure born of the interface of automaton and autonomy' (*Primitive Visions* 139) - by this she means it is representative of the combined existence of technology (as an automated repeated process) and the natural (as having the ability to produce independent and unique organisms).

Hungerburg Station is an architectural cyborg through the way it represents a combination of technology and organic. The structure has a white shelled technological body and what is more, the technological is enhanced by its function and purpose as a station, the passing trains physically enter its interior core on a mechanized track system creating waves of kinetic energy. Simultaneously, it represents the natural through being both a human serving space and a space that mirrors its living environment. Humans occupy the station, shifting the interior spatial dynamics and creating transitory narratives. At the

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<sup>10</sup> Technical information taken from Zaha Hadid Architects: <http://www.zaha-hadid.com/architecture/nordpark-railway-stations/> (accessed November 2017)

same time, it appears to grow out of the mountain side like a snow-covered stalagmite, harmoniously at one with its surroundings. Like a biological organism, the station has both an interior and exterior life.

Cyborg scholar Jennifer González argues that the cyborg body is ‘imbedded within the real’ (264) which builds off Haraway’s original ideology that the cyborg is ‘a creature of social reality’ (*Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* 149). This harks back to Medieval theorizing of the monster when the common belief was that a monster was merely a creature, it was not required to be imaginary or mythical in any sense (Simon-Mittmann 5). To expand on this idea of reality, I present the railway station as an image of monstrous reality. It is a humble mundane figure consistently and quietly aiding the ordinary act of moving from one place to another. It is not a monster in a deliberate and frightening way - there so sense of drama or impending doom. Instead, its hybrid monstrous identity is formed through its autonomy; it feels like an object that has come from elsewhere, an architectural migrant who has assimilated to its environment. It has an ethereal, unstable, fleeting presence - aided by the movement of the trains and the way it represents the constantly evolving field of technology. Hungerburg station, as a cyborg figure, has found a home within the Austrian mountains, it peacefully pushes the boundaries we have drawn between technological and natural worlds and offers us a new hybrid paradigm in which to exist.

## Identity, Representation and the Making of the Monster

"My work is not within the accepted box. Maybe because I am a woman. Also an Arab" ~ Zaha Hadid, (Elkann q.3).

The second part of this paper continues this notion of boundary pushing as a mechanism for new paradigms of existence but considers it from the perspective of identity. We can begin by returning back to Rem Koolhaas’s metaphor of Hadid as ‘a planet in her own inimitable orbit’ (Seabrook par.29).

Hadid’s inimitability was frequently used as a way of constructing her as the feared *female* genius in the industry. I italicize *female* because it is critical in the making of her own planet in a significant way. By adding *female* to genius, her gender is used as a marker of difference which firmly separates her from her male genius peers. Media taglines make this division explicit, deeming ‘the queen of the curve’ (Moore title) a ‘ball-breaking harridan’ (Jefferies par.2) who trashed

architectural tradition with her ‘vertiginous heels’ (Jefferies par.2). The combined visual effect of the harridan in heels creates a shrew-like sharpness which is clearly emulated in architectural cartoonist Louis Hellman’s caricature of Hadid which was first published in his book *Archi-Tetes: The Id in the Grid*. The image is a close up encounter of her face which is created by layering angular black lines in such a way that it replicates Hadid’s own style of drawing. It constructs her eyes as small slits framed in heavy blue eyeshadow while her painted red lips are positioned into a monstrous snarl. Makeup is transformed from a normative feminine symbol into a visually frightful image, an artistic act which supports this wider media discourse of monstrosity that surrounds her gender. In a similar way, artist Michael Craig-Martin’s portrait of Hadid, which hangs in London’s National Portrait Gallery, reiterates this image of her gendered monstrosity. The portrait is digitally created on a screen and shows the same image of Hadid on a loop, each image showing her skin and facial features in different combinations of garish neon colors. In an interview, Hadid commented on the artwork, saying ‘he made my face green and my eyes purple. I’m not so sure it’s how I want to look’ (Seabrook par.38).

Akram Shalghin makes an interesting argument in relation to gendered representation, stating that Arab women are frequently subjected to misrepresentation and distortion (14). From an intersectional perspective, Shalghin’s argument reminds us that we cannot detach Hadid’s Arabness from her gender. There have been consistent media references to her Arab identity, from micro references to her ‘barking abuse in Arabic’ (Jefferies par.2) to Hadid herself more explicitly discussing her racist treatment during her first project in Cardiff (Seabrook par. 52). The combination of her female-ness and her Arabness intensifies the distortion, whether it be through an artwork or a newspaper article, as through these cultural mechanisms she is marked as different to both her male and white female architectural peers. Hadid herself referred to her intersectional struggle as a ‘double-edged sword’ (Qureshi par.3), a term Nira Yuval-Davis also uses to describe the politics of recognition (2017). As Hadid says, ‘the moment my woman-ness is accepted, the Arab-ness seems to become a

problem' (Qureshi par.3). Many feminist scholars<sup>11</sup> have written extensively on the ways in which women of color have been misrepresented through imagery which seek to serve systems of power. bell hooks would perhaps encourage us to see the symbol of the sword as an object which 'offers one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds' (150), in other words, the foundation for one's own planet. Hadid was a figure who represented a collision of difference and because of that, she personally existed and professionally created outside of the powerful framework which has historically defined western architectural ideologies and practice.

We can consider this intersectional outsider identity in relation to the *hybrid monstrosity* through revisiting Hungerburg station and its connection to the cyborg. As previously discussed, González deems the cyborg body as 'imbedded within the real' (264) and I expand this idea by revealing the station an example of an imbedded autonomous cyborg body. To extend further, Donna Haraway saw the woman of color as a manifestation of a cyborg identity due to the 'fusions of outsider identities' (*Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* 174) present within the multiple realities of non-white women. In other words, she recognized that the intersectional body, by existing on the margins, was representative of the way the cyborg can cut across and transgress dominant social structures (Wolmark 4). She posits cyborg politics as being inclusive and sympathetic to difference and a driving force behind the cyborg mission: to 'both build [ing] and destroy [ing] machines, identities, categories, relationships, space stories' (*Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* 181). Hadid was a builder of architecture and a destroyer of aging spatial ideologies, she took on civic responsibility through investing in public infrastructure and wanted to bring people together through the promotion of inclusion - a desire recognized by UNESCO when she was named the 'artist for peace' in 2010. It therefore does not seem coincidental that the creator of the autonomous cyborg structure may have had her own links to a cybernetic way of being. Both the intersectional outsider and the *hybrid monstrosity*, as identities, share the experience of difference which allows them to mutually support each other in the building of their own territories in which to exist. One cannot help but

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<sup>11</sup> Scholars include Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, Sara Ahmed, Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, Cherrie Moraga, Trinh Minh Ha, Bernadette Calafell.

think that by designing hybrid monstrosities, Hadid located a place of safety for her own intersectional outsider to thrive.

Hadid's intersectional outsidership was a springboard to launch another media crafted identity: Hadid as the unethical monster. Professionally, 2015 was a particularly controversial year for Zaha Hadid Architects and subsequently this was when we see the unethical monster rear its ugly head within popular media. Tabloid news outlets were quick to paint her work within the Middle East, notably Libya, Iraq and Qatar (Bayley par.8), as proof of her professional support of oppressive regimes and personal dealings with 'the backyards of dictators and tyrants'(Bayley par.8). Her stadium project in Qatar, due for completion in 2022, was alleged to have caused the deaths of 1,200 construction workers - a fact which was later dismissed as false as the stadium had not even entered its building phase when the article went to print (Wainwright *Why is Zaha Hadid* par.2). Similarly Hadid's work in Asia in 2015 heralded controversy; her design for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic stadium was accused of destroying Tokyo's sense of cultural community, with Japanese architects deeming it a monstrosity that was a 'disgrace to future generations' (Wainwright *Tokyo Olympic Stadium* par.2,4). This follows claims from the Human Rights Watch about the conditions of Bosnian and Serbian migrant workers in regard to her Heydar Aliyev Center in Azerbaijan (Wainwright *Baku Prize Winner* par.8) and outcries from the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Centre, an NGO who claimed that Hadid showed a complete disregard of the legal rights of Chinese citizens when constructing her Galaxy Soho shopping center in Beijing (Wainwright *Zaha Hadid's Mega Mall* par.5).

Not surprisingly, her white male peers who have also had dealings with controversial governmental regimes including Norman Foster in Kazakhstan and Rem Koolhaas in Qatar and China - do not come under the same ethical scrutiny and often harsh and carelessly executed accusations despite evidence existing which would warrant ethical interrogation. There is a strong stench of Hadid's intersectional outsider identity having been mobilized against her in order to produce a targeted narrative of a monstrous figure. This media narrative makes clear that there is a cultural expectation not only of her femaleness, but also of her Arabness, to deliver us an industry image of the good ethical immigrant; a quiet agreeable woman who creates nice normative buildings which do not challenge or illuminate the systemic problems that plague the industry. It is the ethical responsibility of all architects to critically consider the territories, people and

cultures they work in. Yet, as in most industries, the fall out of failure is targeted at those who operate on the margins; those who come to embody difference, difficulty and unapologetic willfulness.

Sara Ahmed makes a compelling argument with regard to willfulness. She theorizes that to be willful is to live a paradoxical life. In other words, 'you might have to become what you are judged as being to survive what you are judged as being' (82). Thinking of Hadid and the many reports of her rudeness and dismissive comments over the years, there may be an element of this playing out - perhaps she nurtured the monstrous narrative in an attempt to take control. This idea of owning your distortion shows parallels with Bernadette Calafell's paper on monstrous femininity which details her numerous experiences of having been Othered in the academy due to her identity as queer woman of color. By being vulnerable through her writing she demonstrates the power that can come from directing the monstrous, using it as a creative tool to disrupt, disempower and deconstruct it (128). In similar way, Ahmed does not construct willfulness as a fixed negative experience. She argues that 'willfulness can be a spark. We can be lit up by it' (82). In the case of Hadid, I think this is true. Through her taking ownership of both the intersectional outsider and the unethical monster, a creative power was sparked which led her to willfully push boundaries, regardless of the disruption it caused. After all, 'monsters do a great deal of cultural work, but they do not do it nicely. They not only challenge and question; they trouble, they worry, they haunt' (Simon Mittman 1).

Simon Mittman suggests that above all, the monstrous calls into question our epistemological worldview, highlighting its fragmentary nature and asking us to acknowledge the failures of our systems of being and becoming (8). It is this ideology which draws together Hadid and her work. Hadid was constructed as a monstrous figure because of her how she performed and embodied the intersectional outsider. This encourages us to interrogate the way popular culture uses the mechanism of Othering to create monstrous figures, and importantly, the extent to which monstrous beings are culturally constructed through racialized, gendered and religious lenses. The way Hadid was positioned as an unethical monster was a failing of the architectural industry and the cultural systems that supported it.

Hadid's willful spark produced the *hybrid monstrosity*, an architectural monstrous identity which can be seen to represent a move away from both the historically feared cultural monster and the marginalized monster of the Other. It

offers us a way of positively encountering the monster through space. These architectural identities are situated among us, intertwined with our everyday lived realities, aiding our human experiences. They too are willful in their commandment and ownership of space, unphased by the controversy they amass. Perhaps, we can unite them with their creator through this image of the planet. Rather than being isolated, hybrid monstrosities function as planetary forms that welcome the diversity of human existence and offer residency to the multiplicity of identities they encounter.

## Conclusion

Zaha Hadid had the ability to hint at the potential for a new monstrous future. Through *The Bergisel Ski Jump* and *The Nordpark Railways* I have located the *hybrid monstrosity* as a way of producing and viewing architecture in relation to the popular cultural image of the monster - an image that continues to shift, expand and develop within both our imaginaries and realities. By looking at architecture through a monstrous lens, I expand our popular cultural understandings and ideas of the monster by stepping beyond the confines of our historical imaginations and entering into our spatial human existences.

By identifying monstrous space as living within the realm of the real; in a railway or a ski jump, I actively deconstruct the common binaries of human versus monster, us versus Other. This deconstruction is important, as only by doing so can we open space for re-imagination and reconstruction. Here, I have demonstrated that we need to consider the role of identity when we go about this process of reconstruction. If we are going to try and collapse the space between human and monstrous existence, we need to consider the tools we have used to create monstrous beings and question their roots and the motives they serve. Architectural monsters represent diverse ways of looking and experiencing; they are inclusive forms with varied aesthetics and territorial situatedness. In essence, their presence symbolizes a path towards 'the utopian dream of a monstrous world' (Haraway *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* 181), a world in which monsters are welcomed and no longer feared.



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