

## Alien as friction-less agent: Jonathan Glazer's *Under the Skin* (2013)

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A recent news report on the increasingly mainstream investigation of UFO's, speculated on how such alien vessels could move in the non-human way apparently recorded by pilots. One suggestion was that these alien craft could be made of a frictionless material that would explain the lack of heat signature and other signs of extremely high velocity through an atmosphere. Starting with this defining of the alien as frictionless being, this paper will consider how Jonathan Glazer's film, *Under the Skin*, portrays key aspects of the alien's interactions with the world in a similarly frictionless way. Friction, in both literal and metaphorical senses, is fundamental to human life. Therefore, the alien is often associated with a certain kind of friction-less existence which generates a sense of disturbance. Mark Fisher describes how in much horror and science fiction imagery there an 'eerie' quality relating to the opposition of absence/presence. An aspect of this is the idea of the alien among us, moving without friction through the world, silently and undetectably. The term alien, here, is connected in the film and wider society to alienation. As more and more of our human interactions, from shopping to dating, become friction-less they are being seen as more alienating and less human. The paper, therefore examines the film as an exemplar of the cinematic imagining of the human/alien through the friction/frictionless motif.