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“Walk Among Us”: Moral Panics and the Deinstitutionalization of the Mentally Ill in Popular Culture

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"Walk Among Us": Moral Panics and the Deinstitutionalization of the Mentally Ill in Popular Culture

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B.A., Stony Brook University, 2009

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An abstract of
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Abstract

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By Anthony Carlton Cooke

The ubiquitous presence of the "madperson" within postwar American fiction and film at the same cultural moment that conflicts emerge over mental health care presents a strong case for the necessity of reading the social text within popular culture. My project argues that popular fascination with the "madperson" stems from a more material social referent: the contemporaneous increase of chronically mentally ill persons in public life due to the deinstitutionalization movement. Deinstitutionalization—the mental health reform movement that leads to the closure of many asylums in favor of outpatient care—begins with the introduction of psychotropic drugs into the asylum during the 1950s and subsequently leads to the release of thousands of patients by the mid 1970s. This project explores connections between deinstutionalization, representations of the "murderous, mentally ill individual" in the horror, crime, and thriller genres, and public perceptions of mental illness from the postwar era to the present. Employing methodologies drawn from psychoanalysis, cultural studies, and media studies, this study investigates the myriad ways in which popular culture actively negotiates the tensions among federal legislation, judicial authority, and the general public's misconceptions of mental illness.

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Introduction

"Popular culture provides images over and over again which move us and touch us in a very fundamental way."

Clive Barker, *The Art of Horror* (1992)

In the 1992 documentary, *The Art of Horror*, Clive Barker makes an extraordinary claim. He says that when the new millennium begins and we look back to discover the images that shaped twentieth-century Western culture, among the most prevalent we will find Mickey Mouse, King Kong, Fay Wray, and Hollywood actor Boris Karloff as Frankenstein's monster. In other words, according to Barker, popular culture—the "low" arts—shapes our sense of history as well as the direction of culture writ large. A suspect statement, to be sure, considering its source: as a popular horror author, playwright, screenwriter, and visual artist, Barker has a vested interest in touting the centrality of popular culture to our times. Yet suspect or not, his point holds up under scrutiny. The cell phone, one of the most influential technological devices of the twenty-first century, has transformed business, government, medicine, and politics; indeed, cell phones have altered every aspect of culture and society. Yet the inspiration for cell phones comes from the "communicator," a small, portable, vocal transmission device featured on the late-sixties science fiction television show, *Star Trek* ("Inventors" n.p.). Cultural critics such as Jodi Dean, David Seed, and others have written extensive studies on connections between science fiction film and fiction, cultural paranoia, and U.S. domestic and foreign policy during the Cold War.[1] Although many more examples remain worthy of mention,

these few show that Barker's pronouncements regarding popular culture deserve serious consideration.

This current study explores popular culture's influence on history and culture by looking at other developments beginning around the same time that television viewers witnessed proto-cell phones in use and science fiction texts and films reflected American cultural paranoia over communism. During the height of the Cold War—the late fifties—advances in psychotropic drugs used to treat severe mental illnesses led to improvements in living conditions within U.S. asylums (Mechanic and Rochefort 303-304). Mental health professionals also noticed positive changes in chronically mentally ill patients, which led to the formation of community-based care networks guided by the general belief that, along with regular intake of anti-psychotic medication, if chronic mentally ill persons lived in stable environments their minds would, over time, also stabilize (Madianos 2; Mechanic and Rochefort 303-304). Officially named "deinstitutionalization," this move towards community care did not begin in earnest until 1963, when President John F. Kennedy introduced the Community Mental Health Centers Act (CMHC) (Mechanic and Rochefort 302). Yet such medical advances and humanitarian policies only contributed to cultural paranoia among much of the general public regarding the possibility of mentally ill persons' presence in the public sphere.

One reason for such fears emerged from familiar tropes. The mad, or more precisely, the cultural figure of the madperson, the "mental patient," occupies a singular place in the American popular imaginary. Before I go any further, I wish to first point out another figure I believe indirectly contributes to public fear of the mentally ill: the "mad doctor." From the Faust legend to Frankenstein's monster to Doctor Jekyll to Doctor

Moreau's human/animal hybrids to comic book and cartoon villains such as Superman's nemesis, Lex Luthor, or Doctor Doom, the enemy of the Fantastic Four, and Disney's animated film, *Megamind*, the "mad doctor" or "evil genius" serves as a reservoir of cultural suspicion; not just of medicine and science per se, but rather of their imagined capabilities. In popular culture, the mad doctor releases the "uncontrollable," "unnatural" results of his or her work into the world, thus engendering terror among the populace.

Looked at in this way, madness becomes a logocentric act: like the subjective "I" whose vocal force of will allegedly moves outward to affect linear time and space, madness "begins" in the laboratory with the doctor, "inevitably" escapes its confines, and goes out into the world to cause destruction and death. And the laboratory, that secret room accessible to no one but the doctor, where chemicals mix, failed experiments remain hidden and chained in secret rooms under the floor, where science and sorcery combine, reflects cultural attitudes towards the locked and guarded "fortress" of the asylum where the mad receive treatment. In an era marred by the scientific excesses of the Great War (new weapons such as tanks, fighter planes, rocket launchers, and mustard gas), World War II (the Nuremberg Trials for Nazi genocide and human experimentation on Jews, Japanese secret experiments on Russians, the American genocide of Hiroshima and Nagasaki via the atom bomb), and the Korean War (rumors of mind control experiments by China and Korea on American P.O.W.s returning home), one can discern precedents for cultural paranoia regarding what the "mad doctor" might release into and "onto" an "unsuspecting public."

Taking Barker's pronouncements seriously within the context of the uses to which science was put in the twentieth century presents the problem not only of the "why" of

cultural paranoia, but also the more salient questions (I think) of "where" and "how" cultural paranoia becomes manifest. And it is here that, as a *product of* or *voice from* the asylum, the mental patient—the wild eyed rambler of nonsense shuffling around a darkened room wearing only a (often dirty) nightshirt—comes into play. However, and this is a recurring theme throughout the following chapters, madness (as the discursive and clinical figure of the madperson) remains always-already despised and coveted: despised because of its disruptive force and its threat to normative boundaries, and coveted because madness must exist nearby to keep normative boundaries (in this case, sanity) clearly marked and visible to a given culture. The tension brought about by this fundamental paradox means that madness must always remain "outside" yet only outside enough as to still pose the same viable threat to normative order that necessitates its removal in the first place.

Madness, then, is an opportunistic venture for a culture, where the possibilities of what normativity could become, and the desire to strengthen its boundaries so that the normative never becomes what it could be, meet. The mentally ill person embodies this cultural problem and therefore becomes remanded to the asylum, where he or she is transformed into the mental patient who represents a constant threat of returning to the public sphere. Thus, to large sections of the public, the opening of asylum doors and release of patients presents an image not of cure but of riot and escape. Even though deinstutionalization occurs slowly over a period of decades, this is not the representation that circulates in the culture, because, for the "ordinary citizen," each ex-patient encountered in the public sphere becomes representative of uncountable numbers of unseen ex-patients moving through society, all released by a "mad doctor," without

public consent. In the chapters ahead, these imagined horrific presences return again and again as discourses used to justify the expansion of police authority, the implementation of federal statutes that undermine basic rights (such as "burden of proof"), and stigmatization that leaves many ex-patients without jobs, domiciles, or even medication.

Still, all of the above remains only marginally significant without an exploration regarding how such histrionic discourses come about—a question directly relating to Barker's position on popular culture. Popular culture dominates and informs "mainstream" culture for two reasons: first, because it shares the same space as "mainstream" or "high" culture in a dynamic, simultaneous, network of exchange, domination, doubling, fusion, and submission.[2] Second, popular culture's conspicuous presence depends upon access; to accept cultural divisions as real for a moment shows an imbalance in distribution favoring pop culture. Mickey Mouse outranks Mount Rushmore because of the former's mobility and media plasticity. Mickey Mouse can appear in various media genres, can visit a school, or can undergo symbolic reduction to a set of ears, a glove, or a vocal imitation and accommodate even more formal or informal social settings. Mount Rushmore can only compete with Mickey Mouse in certain pre-approved, "appropriate" settings: postcards, t-shirts, as parody or cultural in-joke. Indeed, Mount Rushmore cannot match Mickey Mouse for amenability to mass media; while the famous presidential faces remain suited for educational programming or maybe a backdrop in a film, the talking mouse can accommodate these and other mediums—as a toy, a hat, a novelty gift, or a Halloween costume, to name only a few.

Obviously, the wider a field of distribution a cultural production occupies, the greater influence it exerts within a culture. Therefore, when speaking of public

perceptions of mental illness, one observes a small amount of discourses constantly reconfigured into a large variety of representations to populate the maximum number of cultural fields. As an example of what I mean, I turn to Otto F. Wahl, a psychologist who spent many years of his career studying mental illness stigma. In his book, *Media Madness: Public Images of Mental Illness*, he presents four advertisements using typical mental illness tropes: a person in a straightjacket with unkempt hair, wide eyes, and an exaggerated mouth (Wahl 39). One need not look too hard to find these components reconfigured and redistributed in transgressive cultural figures: the comic book villain, the Joker; Dr. Emmett Brown from the film *Back to the Future*; the folk myths of the Wildman; derogatory tropes of the African American “coon” and “Uncle Tom”; the “crazy mom,” the “hysterical woman”; the “flaming queen”; the “used car salesman”; the “sleazeball”; and of course, in the trope of the “mad scientist” or “mad doctor.” Not only do these (and other tropes too numerous to list in full) share characteristics, they also signify upon each other so that encountering one configuration means taking in unknown yet cross-signifying tropes that ease receptivity to others when they become present.

Moreover, as Wahl points out regarding the mentally ill, a trope is never just a trope; a figure always comes associated with a certain set of actions for which it is always-already responsible. For mentally ill persons, these actions are violence and perversion (which also find dispersion and redistribution among the example tropes above). Indeed, I argue that deinstitutionalization, as a process rather than a policy, goes back at least to the turn of the twentieth-century and public anxieties over “threats” to heteronormativity and expanding sexual mores. This sense of social unease, together with the ideologically expedient mobilization of a rare form of mental illness—psychopathy—

by both lay and professional social reform groups into a synecdoche for mental illness through *bricoler des discours* creates the cultural figure of "the sexual psychopath."

In the late fifties and into the sixties, the sexual psychopath remained a fixture in the cultural imaginary through infamous notables of the period such as serial murderer and necrophile, Ed Gein. Cultural paranoia resulting from fear of the sexual psychopath combined with true crime accounts in the media and the growth of deinstitutionalization becomes displaced onto ex-asylum patients who are seen by the public as sexual murderers, leading to discrimination against mentally ill persons regarding housing, employment, and other areas. As these and other problems exacerbate over decades, at times involving governmental, legal, and medical institutions, popular culture also undergoes many transformations in its representational priorities. Indeed, as Wahl notes, from the sixties through the nineties, filmic and fictional portrayals of mentally ill persons as possessing uncontrollable drives to indiscriminately commit murder reached unprecedented levels of visibility (56-86). The popular genres that most persistently make use of the "murderous, mentally ill person" as a protagonist during this period are the horror, crime, and thriller genres.

Indeed, these three genres develop a complex representational and discursive interplay between aesthetics, narrative, social stigma and public policy to the detriment of the mentally ill during the deinstitutionalization era. The following study provides a close reading of major texts, films, legal cases, homicide accounts, policy changes, government documents, and television shows that contributed to shifts in representation of and attitudes towards the mentally ill. My purpose in engaging with the subject of horror, crime, and thriller fiction and film as well as with deinstitutionalization and

representations of mentally ill persons comes out of a few core inquiries, which I seek to address by closely examining the interdisciplinary methodologies binding these topics together. First, I wish to act as an expansion on the sociological and psychological works from which I draw, to bring close reading and discourse analysis practiced in literary and cultural critique into conversation with Wahl and others, with the goal of showing not only that a problem exists and that events occurred but also to demonstrate how these problems and events work together on an intimate level, to show how debates about a topic do not just serve as commentaries but also as intersections that give additional and varied forms to a problem or event. For this reason I spend quite a bit of time examining government transcripts and using critical texts not only to "prove" my findings, but rather as primary sources deserving of scrutiny in themselves.

Second, I wish to contribute to a critical reassessment of horror, crime, and thrillers as viable subjects for study. To return to Barker for a moment, in *The Art of Horror*, he describes his work as "metaphysics for those who think they don't like metaphysics," and indeed, the more ambitious efforts in these genres reveal attempts to work through the same "highbrow" concerns found in literature, psychoanalysis, or philosophy. In fact, when at its best, horror remains one of the more subversive popular genres. At its worst, its insistence on displaying the body in extremis reads as morbid self-indulgence, its use of strict binaries seem reductive, and its focus on the worst aspects of the human psyche seem nihilistic. The mind and body under duress—at times vividly represented, at others, done with more subtlety—is one of the horror genre's most well-known qualities.

However, such negative readings gesture towards a more nuanced type of cultural

criticism. At work within the best of horror's scopophilic parade of pained bodies and damaged psyches lie attempts to disavow its own conventions, a certain ambivalence towards the images, ideologies, and judgments it presents as the ugly truths of life. Indeed, horror does not only offer up folk morality regarding the consequences of ignoring or crossing culturally-erected boundaries; the cultural work of horror also exposes the ambiguities hidden among the naturalized binaries on which culture rests. Moreover, in the interest of critical engagement, it can open up to full view discursive networks and their modes of operation.

Chapter one looks at the novel and film versions of *Psycho* and the film *Halloween* regarding postwar discourses around "public safety." Both films appear during periods of intense public agitation. For instance, Norman Bates, the sympathetic antagonist of Hitchcock's *Psycho*, whose boyish demeanor obviously means to signify the danger of taking any person at face value, also accommodates contemporaneous efforts by the anti-psychiatry movement to address abuses in asylums and to define mental illness as a flawed moral campaign against social rebellion. The anti-psychiatrists, many of whom were mental health professionals, sociologists, and former patients, contributed to a cult of heroization regarding mental illness, combining psychosis with an individualist, counterculture ethos well-received at the time and represented in novels and films, which I cover in chapter two through analysis of Cormac McCarthy's text, *Child of God*, and the later cult film, *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer.*

Chapter three focuses on law enforcement efforts to gain broader legal authority by taking up and adding to discourses of the sexual psychopath. The FBI, aided by true crime author, Ann Rule, future reality television personality, John Walsh, and others,

heavily promote the discourse of the "mindhunter" during this period. The mindhunter, or "forensic detective" allegedly possesses a special psychical connection to the sexual psychopath, allowing her or him to succeed in capturing perpetrators. The most controversial feature of mindhunter discourse, however, comes from its fictional and filmic representations in *Manhunter* (film), *Red Dragon*, and *Silence of the Lambs* (films and novels). These texts and films introduce readers and audiences to the cannibal and serial murderer, Hannibal Lecter, whose bonds with FBI agents Will Graham and Clarice Starling respectively, not only popularize the mindhunter, but also show law enforcement efforts to present itself as more capable than mental health professionals of dealing with the social "problem" of deinstitutionalized mentally ill persons.

Chapter four takes the mindhunter/psychopath discourse further through analysis of the reality television phenomenon, specifically *COPS*, and John Walsh, host of *America's Most Wanted*. I contend that this is also the time when representations of forensic science explodes in popular culture, allowing for different permutations of the sexual psychopath trope, and cite as exemplary case studies the African American intellectual Detective Somerset's relationship with John Doe in the film *Se7en*, the female forensic scientist, Dr. Kay Scarpetta's psychical bond with the 911 Killer in the novel, *Postmortem,* the stage drama, *Down the Road*, queer serial murderer Jeffrey Dahmer in Joyce Carol Oates' novel, *Zombie,* the dark comedy novel, *African Psycho* (as an Americanized novel of the African diaspora), and the film *No Good Deed*.

However, my project goes further than identifying representations and episodes of social constructivism. Here I introduce my theory of the "panic figure," a trope I argue is integral to the cultural work performed by the horror, crime, and thriller genres. The

"panic figure" functions as a barrier whenever the "abnormal" threatens to potentially transform the normative order. The "panic figure" may appear not only as a person, but also as a discourse, such as "mindhunter," for example. The panic figure may not only find representation within cultural productions, it may also be the cultural production itself. For instance, Colin, the protagonist of *No Good Deed*, meets clinical definitions of psychopathy, but he also possesses traits he should lack, since a lack of emotions and a moral sense distinguish the psychopath from others and allow for identification by the public. As I show in the following chapters, these two traits remain two of the most cited ways doctors promote as methods of detecting a psychopath. Thus, *No Good Deed* calls into question the popularized definitions of psychopathy. The representational accuracy of Colin does not matter since, as the following chapters show, the "sexual psychopath," has always existed more as a cultural function than as a clinical fact. Therefore, the film, more than any character, fulfills the role of panic figure by posing the question of accuracy and the problem of mistaken cultural boundaries.

Although "Walk Among Us" reads at times like a narrative, too many temporal gaps exist for it to claim definition as a historical text. Instead, I make connections among growing and expanding discourses to show the kinetic process of discursive activities. In doing so, I deliberately keep the fields of inquiry narrowed onto specific aspects of mental illness. Every scholar, in an effort to present a work of clarity and cohesion, must necessarily make decisions regarding which connections remain most appropriate to follow for any particular project. This is inevitable, and I followed those that aided me as well as those that made my work exceedingly difficult at times, as long as they pertained to my project of capturing discourse formations and their shifting modes of

transformation.

This study concerns the "how" and "where" of psychosis and psychopathy as these two conditions become enveloped and absorbed to become the literal definitions of "mental illness." What this means is that other forms of mental illness—neurosis, depression, phobias, and others—as damaging as they might become, in the popular imaginary, are given the status of "normalcy," simple "life changes," and many pundits have emerged over the years to write books based on just such a foundation, usually continuing the anti-psychiatry tradition without realizing it.[3] Of course, these texts fail to take into account that any shifting of discursive boundaries requires and is caused by shifts at other boundary points of intersection—a cultural Butterfly Effect. Conversely, this text makes extensive use of psychoanalytical methods—particularly those of Melanie Klein—to show the centrality of psychoanalysis to understanding representations, their function, and so understanding reader and audience function in perpetuating and creating variations of representations. Also of importance to this project is the nature of individual and collective phantasies and their roles in sustaining discursive transformations.

Some final words. Although this project foregrounds both fictional and real sexual psychopaths, I do not fetishize serial murder or sex crimes or criminality of any sort. However, I also do not take a reductionist condemnation of the subject matter, nor do I make any spurious claims to objectivity. Having rejected the most readily available and obvious three positions regarding my topic, I instead claim a fourth position: that of situational examination and assessment. In other words, this project is organized so as to allow for consideration of as many viewpoints as possible. I believe that a mobile analysis works best regarding sensitive topics.

"Sexual Healing": Deinstitutionalization, the Sexual Psychopath, and the Rise of the American Slasher

The deinstitutionalization movement emerged during the fifties in the United States, after the invention of psychotropic drugs as a method of controlling the more severe symptoms of psychotic patients housed in asylums (Mechanic and Rochefort 303-304). Successful results with extreme cases led to innovations in treatment approaches among many mental health professionals, one of which was the belief that mentally ill persons stand a better chance of recovery when treated in communal settings, a theory which led to massive influxes of patients into the public sphere during the sixties and into the present (Madianos 2; Mechanic and Rochefort 303-304). However, lack of adequate outpatient infrastructures, a conservative backlash in the seventies against the counterculture movement of the previous decade, and the public's lack of education regarding mental illness (leading to stigmatization of ex-patients), all contributed to cultural panic over communal safety. (Madianos 1-7; Wood 25-26). Indeed, anxiety over the return of the chronic mentally ill to public life, and concern over community safety contributed to another radical change during this period: the aesthetic trajectory of the postwar American horror film.

Beginning in 1960 with the release of Alfred Hitchcock's film, *Psycho*, a new type of horror film appears in American popular culture; this new sub-genre, dubbed "slasher" horror because of its lack of supernatural elements and its focus on graphic depictions of murder almost invariably features a mentally ill, predominately male

antagonist who pursues and murders random, predominately female victims.[1] Since then, the "slasher" film has assumed a high degree of cultural resonance, mainly, I argue, due to its intimacy with postwar cultural fears over mental illness and criminality that resurfaced almost simultaneously with the beginning of the deinstitutionalization movement. Therefore, a better understanding of "slasher" horror and its peculiar resonance with the public requires turning a critical lens onto the history of discourses of the "sexual psychopath" as they developed during the turn of the twentieth century and through the interwar years.

Long before mental patients exited the asylum during the postwar deinstitutionalization movement, mental illness as a discourse spread out into public culture via a new term—"mental hygiene"—that concentrated on "functional disorders of the mind and emotional maladjustment rather than on physiological conditions" (Robertson 10). Proponents of mental hygiene successfully attached themselves to popular anxieties over an increasing awareness of childhood sexuality (both heterosexual and homosexual) bolstered by media coverage of adult-child and child-child sex crimes (1-5, 10-11).[2] However, while sex crimes did occur, public outcry developed mostly around methods of regulating childhood sexuality, specifically ways of assuring that children grow up along "proper" heteronormative lines. From an insistence on the absence of pre-pubescent sexuality by parents, media sensationalism of sex crimes, and the growing influence of the mental hygienists on public policy emerged a new discourse of the "sexual psychopath" (10-12). I refer to the "sexual psychopath" as a discourse instead of an entity for two reasons: first, while I in no way intend to argue against the existence of sex crimes nor intend to diminish their horrific nature, I do wish to contest

the idea of the "sexual psychopath" as a juridico-medical entity distinguishable from the "sexual psychopath" as discourse—a socio-cultural disciplinary apparatus; second, the "sexual psychopath" as represented in the popular imagination arises from a deliberate denial of some of Freud's most controversial theories on sexuality and children.

The chapter on "Infantile Sexuality" in Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* contains some of the psychoanalyst's most challenging work, since it calls into question many assumptions regarding childhood sexuality. The book appears in the United States in English translation five times during the first half of the twentieth century; the frequency of reprints during an era acutely anxious over youthful sexual activity and sex crime suggests a public looking for explanations regarding previously underdiscussed phenomena.[3] Freud's idea that "the sexuality of psychoneurotics has remained at, or been carried back to, an infantile stage," finds a receptive audience among parents and social improvement groups of the period as a way of accounting for seemingly incomprehensible crimes (Freud *Essays* 41; Robertson 10). Yet, as Freudian psychoanalysis found its way into the culture via popular discourse, the mental hygeinicists who appropriated Freud's theories and introduced them to the lay public through writing popular non-fiction discovered that Freud's more *outré* pronouncements regarding pre-pubescent sexuality remained ignored (Robertson 10-11). Freudian theories of the presence of a multi-faceted sexuality in infancy (homosexuality, masturbation, and perversions as normal development), forcibly suppressed and sublimated (redirected into other expressive channels through the process of acculturation) until puberty, where sexuality re-emerges as heteronormativity, contradict popular belief in innate childhood purity until puberty or unless corrupted by external sources (Freud *Essays* 37, 40-59, 73;

Robertson 11). Under pressure to account for sex crimes involving children and due to a general distaste for the idea of polysexuality as part of normal childhood development, the sexual psychopath emerged within the culture as a cautionary discourse for the wayward and as an explanatory discourse for the appearance of any undeniable aberrations of heteronormativity. Indeed, the sexual psychopath became imbued with all the qualities the culture perceived as negative: "stunted psychological development…sexually chaotic behavior, including excessive masturbation and homosexuality…morally deficient behavior ranging from petty crimes to excessive violence…a lack of guilt…a failure to commit crimes for definable reasons [and] undisturbed reasoning capabilities [allowing for an absence of] any motivation for his actions" (Genter 40).

Thus, the sexual psychopath (or simply "psychopath," since, as mentioned above, "abnormal" sexuality became bound up with the very definition of this discursive figure) became a convenient "folk devil" for cultural fears regarding children, adults, and sex. The term "folk devil" derives from the work of British sociologist Stanley Cohen, who defines folk devils as particular groups singled out by the majority as "distinguishable social types…that society erects to show its members which roles should be avoided and which should be emulated" (Cohen 10). As a folk devil, the psychopath becomes a mythical figure of irredeemable malevolence whose sole purpose is to disrupt cultural cohesion; therefore drastic measures are believed needed to eradicate such a menace (Goode and Ben-Yahuda 28-29). However, the discourse of the psychopath possesses a contradictory quality: it is expressed as a threat resolvable *only* through its excision from the socius, *and* it is a *required* presence in order to recruit sufficient popular outrage and

so strengthen discourses of normativity. Such cultural binding rituals are necessary to naturalize standards of conduct, that is to say, to attribute an ahistorical quality to social constructions regarding behavior, thus making them beyond interrogation. Thus, in the early twentieth century, the psychopath emerged from a creative process of collective "moral panic": beginning with actual crimes, the number of incidents became magnified through press coverage, features in popular magazines, and opinion pieces, leading to involvement by local and national officials, culminating in the passage of new laws that in no way reduce the number of crimes (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 18-19; Thompson 8).[4] It should be pointed out here that the reason the amount of sex crimes does not diminish is due to the fact that their frequency is exaggerated in the first place.[5] This unnoticed discrepancy produces greater levels of fear and increases discourses around the legal, moral, and cultural regulation of sexual activity.

For such discourses to remain effective, however, the continual maintenance of high anxiety is required, and on various levels. Freud defines anxiety as "a particular state of expecting the danger or preparing for it, even though it may be an unknown one," and differentiates it from fear, which "requires a definite object of which to be afraid" (Freud *Beyond* 11). Thus, for the discourse of the psychopath to function, as an entity she or he must be identifiable through actions, *and* resist identification beforehand. As Robert Genter states, "what made the psychopath difficult to diagnose and therefore to recognize in general was the 'mask of sanity' he or she wore" (Genter 140). Genter cites the text by Hervey Cleckley, *The Mask of Sanity* (1941) in his discussion of general conceptions of the psychopath as "not…a complete man at all but [rather] something that suggests a subtly constructed reflex machine which can *mimic the human personality perfectly*"

(Cleckley qtd. in Genter 140 emphasis added). In other words, the psychopath, while possessing a "stunted" or infantile psyche, ostensibly is anyone. With the psychopath categorized under a highly regulated, yet constantly amended group of definitions, such as "a heterogeneous lot of criminals, many emotionally unstable, inadequate personalities, many alcoholics, drug addicts, pathological liars, swindlers, and sexual psychopaths," the academic and the corresponding popular definition could apply to anyone (Lipton qtd. in Genter 141). Thus, a wide variety of behavioral problems, lifestyle choices, addictions, and general life issues become inextricably bound up with moral failure and the potential for violent criminality.

The first use of the word "psycho" as a noun and as a popular shorthand for "A psychopath; (more generally) any person exhibiting odd or deranged behaviour, esp. when violent or hostile" or "Mental, nut, psycho, psychot, a psychopathic case" appears in 1942 and is recorded in *The American Thesaurus of Slang* by Berry and Van den Bark (1943) (OED). Thus, emergence of "psycho" as a colloquial term occurs one year after the publication of Cleckley's *The Mask of Sanity* (1941), considered the most influential text regarding identification of psychopathology and one whose methods are still currently used (Merskin 47; Westen and Weinberger ctd. in Hare and Neumann 221). As mentioned earlier, during the early fifties, the invention of psychotropic drugs allowed doctors practicing in asylums to alleviate the most severe symptoms of mentally ill persons. This paved the way for less invasive restraints on patients as well as for doctors' gradual experimentation in outpatient treatment of selected patients (Mechanic and Rochefort 304). However, as Mechanic and Rochefort point out in their article, "Deinstitutionalization: An Appraisal of Reform," the widespread belief that the

introduction of new medications into the asylum led to the release of large numbers of patients into the public sphere is inaccurate; actually, only a small number of patients left before the early sixties, during the Kennedy Administration, as shall be seen later (304-305). And yet, during the intervening years between the mid-fifties and the early sixties, popular anxiety around and fascination with sexual psychopaths, as well as cinema, fiction, and non-fiction about them, heightens dramatically (Genter 146). One of the reasons for this is the highly publicized arrest and conviction of Ed Gein.

In 1957, the police arrested Gein at his secluded farm in Plainfield, Wisconsin, initially to question him regarding a missing persons case involving Bernice Worden; upon searching his property, they discovered Gein was guilty of "the murders of at least two to seven known victims, grave robbing, mutilation of his victims, and…using the skin and body parts of several of his victims to fashion household implements" (Briggs 104-105). Picking up the story of Gein's atrocities, national periodicals and newspapers reiterated details of his crimes, "[giving] Americans everywhere a grim awareness that what had happened in an obscure Wisconsin town might have happened anywhere," making Gein into the public face of the moral panic over alleged outbreaks of deviant crime happening throughout the country ("House" and "Murder" qtd. and ctd. in Genter 147). Two years later, the horror author, Robert Bloch, publishes *Psycho*, a novel loosely based on the Gein case.

Psycho contributes to growing popular association of mental illness and criminality by using coded slang regarding mental illness, sexuality, and crime. For instance, in a series of interviews, Bloch comments on his novel and Gein, inadvertently supplying examples of cultural attitudes towards the mentally ill in the process:

> I began to speculate…and at once came up with the notion that he probably was a *schizoid personality*…I came up with the *Oedipal situation* and the *transvestite thing*…In my research, I discovered…that Gein *was* schizoid, that he *had* a *mother fixation*…and that he was a transvestite…He was a *dull and colorless little nobody except when in his manic phase*…(Bloch *Companion* 69-70 emphasis added and in the original)

In the original text, only the verbs are italicized; words and phrases of a pejorative nature regarding mental illness are italicized here to call attention to a popular tendency to use slang to "characterize people rather than to name their disorders" which "subtly dehumanizes the afflicted person, implying that the disorders *define* the individual rather than describe a fluctuating or temporary psychiatric condition" (Wahl 21 emphasis in the original). While Bloch's misapplication of psychiatric and psychoanalytical terminology are discussed below during the textual analysis of *Psycho*, for now I wish to point out Bloch's assessment of Gein as a "nobody except when in his manic phase." If Gein is a "nobody" only of interest unless he is committing horrible crimes, then by extension, his victims become "nobodies" except through their status as victims. Indeed, while the names of serial murderers and the numbers of their victims are readily available information, facts not associated with compiling a definition of them as serial murderers, the names of victims, and the facts of their lives not associated with the circumstances of their becoming victims are far less available. Thus, the parties involved become "dehumanized," that is to say, they lose their socio-cultural relevance and status as entities in their own right, and become part of discursive formations. In this case, these

discursive formations become pressed into the service of regulatory discourses of moral panic promoting anxiety around a tripartite threat—mental illness, sexuality, and crime—that "is" everywhere and "could" attack everyone.

When asked how he came up with the title for his novel, Bloch states that he drew from the terms "*psychotic*...*psychology* and *psychoanalysis*" (Bloch qtd. in Briggs 105 emphasis in the original). Only "psychotic" unequivocally refers to mental illness; "psychology" and "psychoanalysis" simply refer to sciences of studying the mind (OED). However, Bloch's misuse of the title echoes the tendency of the times to conflate any word containing "psycho" as defining mental illness then to extrapolate "psycho" as a word meaning "psychopath" or "psychopathology." Moreover, Bloch contributes to popular misappellations by giving his antagonist, Norman Bates, an interest in psychology and psychoanalysis; yet Bates refers to both interchangeably. Early on in the novel, Norman's mother, Norma Bates (an imaginary extension of Norman himself) accuses him of owning "filthy" books; Norman replies, "Psychology isn't filthy, Mother!...I was only trying to explain something. It's what they call the Oedipus situation" (Bloch *Psycho* 15). As an avid reader of psychology and psychoanalytic texts, Norman would know that psychology and psychoanalysis are two distinct sciences with two distinct methods, and that the "Oedipus situation" derives from Freud's "Oedipus Complex." Yet, the public acquires information not through primary sources, but rather through mass media, and, as Otto F. Wahl goes to great lengths to explain, such sources historically tend to be movies, newspapers, television, and novels (Wahl 2-4, 10).

Such corrupting of information through repetition is actually represented in the book's final pages, when Sam Loomis, the boyfriend of Mary Crane (who is murdered by

Norman), explains to Lila, Mary's sister, what Nicholas Steiner (head psychiatrist of the group who examines Norman) relates regarding Norman's childhood. According to Sam, Mrs. Bates infantilizes Norman until she meets Joe Considine, whom she plans to marry (Bloch *Psycho* 168). However, Norman, after accidentally viewing his mother and Considine having sex (the Freudian primal scene for the Oedipus complex), poisons the couple, then composes a suicide letter, before having a psychotic break and becoming "a multiple personality with at least three facets...*Norman*, the little boy who needed his mother...*Norma*, the mother [and] *Normal*—the adult Norman Bates...each [containing] elements of the other" (*Psycho* 170-171 emphasis in the original). Norman's relationship with his mother tends to resemble a rather reductionist version of the Oedipus complex.

Bloch asserts that the forename "Norman" signifies his protagonist's personality conflict. Yet his statement that "Norman" refers to "two words, 'nor man'...[Norman as] neither woman nor man," betrays a typical heteronormative discourse regarding identity and sexuality, namely that femininity and masculinity are distinct traits and any blurring of the two constitutes abnormality (Bloch qtd. in Briggs 105). As previously noted, Freud, in the *Three Essays*, specifically states that polysexuality, that is to say, a non-differentiation of gender identity, is an innate characteristic, and only the culturally enforced process of repression and sublimation produce the Oedipus complex and heteronormative development. Moreover, Judith Butler, in her seminal work on identity formation, *Gender Trouble* (1990), challenges assumptions regarding gender identity. Although Bloch obviously did not read *Gender Trouble* before he wrote *Psycho*, his explanatory pronouncements on Bates' sexuality do participate in "an *epistemological* account of identity," an Enlightenment-derived discourse of knowable subjectivity that

forms the very basis of thought and action during the time Bloch wrote (Butler *Gender* 144 emphasis in the original). According to Butler, "rules that govern intelligible identity…are partly structured along matrices of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality [and] operate through *repetition*" (*Gender* 145 emphasis in the original). In other words, a knowable self becomes possible to a subject and to others via repetition; therefore, Norman's being "nor man" is pathological only within the strictly regulated discourses of masculinity *contra* femininity. Norman's cross-dressing—that is to say, his failure or inability to comply—is absolutely normal. However, due to discourses of knowability, he must articulate his "forbidden" subjectivity in other ways in order to combat discourses that punish him by refusing to give him any identity at all, making him a "nor man" or "no-body" who *does not exist*.

Freud's theory of children's "compulsion to repeat" applies to Norman's situation. Freud writes, "in the case of children's play…children repeat unpleasurable experiences for the additional reason that they can master a powerful impression far more thoroughly than they could by merely experiencing it passively. Each fresh repetition seems to strengthen the mastery they are in search of" (Freud *Beyond* 42). If, as Freud states, children also insist on positive repetition, "a game [or] a nice story," and that they "remorselessly stipulate that the repetition shall be an identical one," then such childhood pleasure must contribute to strengthening of the parent-child bond and so contribute immensely to identity formation, towards a knowable subjectivity (*Beyond* 42). Therefore, play, or phantasy, is an attempt to act out desired identities that do not correspond to the limitations of reality. Norman's cross-dressing is "play acting," an attempt to assert his bisexual subjectivity, which is forcibly repressed by cultural

discourses, but becomes rechanneled through his homicidal tendencies (*Psychopathology* 242-244).[6] Thus, Norman's choice of dressing as his mother stems from a contradiction between his affection for her and her status as the representative of prohibitory discourses regarding his sexuality. By "becoming" Norma, Norman expresses his sexuality and fights against the heteronormativity she, as a representative of the regime of the Empirical Subject, demands.

Bloch also contends that the surname "Bates" comes from "[Norma's] sexual domination in childhood and youth [that Norman] could not escape except through masturbation" (Bloch qtd. in Briggs 105). Again, turning to Freud's *Three Essays* reveals inconsistencies in Bloch's representations of mental illness; nowhere in the text does Freud link genital masturbation with Oedipus. The only passage that vaguely articulates Bloch's representations reads, "It was not possible to say what amount of sexual activity can occur in childhood without being described as abnormal or detrimental to further development. The nature of these sexual manifestations was found to be predominantly masturbatory" (Freud *Essays* 100). Granted, Freud's wording may encourage confusion; indeed, reading "what amount of *sexual activity* can occur in *childhood* without being described as *abnormal* or *detrimental*" against "The nature of *these* sexual manifestations was found to be predominantly *masturbatory*" invites the interpretation that "sexual activity...in childhood" is equivalent to "abnormal" and "detrimental," and that "masturbatory" refers all the way back through the linguistic chain to the beginning. However, a careful reading shows that "these sexual manifestations" refers to "masturbatory" and "sexual activity in childhood," with "amount" referring to "abnormal" and "detrimental." In other words, in Freudian logic, Norman would attempt

to thwart Norma's domination not by masturbating, but by engaging in heteronormative genital sex, which, as discussed above, he cannot do.

However, Bloch's most intriguing contribution to stigmatization of mental illness resides not in Norman Bates, but rather in a supporting character, Lila Crane. Lila stands as what I call the "panic figure," or, more properly, the "redeemed panic figure," a pivotal character in the horror genre. The role of the panic figure in horror is to signify the as yet unknown presence of a breach in the normative order, and, aesthetically, to raise dread and suspense levels by acting as a repository of hidden knowledge.[7] The panic figure is usually (though not always) someone with a liminal position within the culture who *suggests* deviance but still remains an *accepted* member of the culture. This figure is most likely a folk devil of some type, but one whose traits reify the assumptions of normativity. For instance, the panic figure may possess a flawed character, act in a socially irritating fashion, or otherwise violate societal standards. The crucial thing is that their deviance grants them an awareness of a threat remaining inaccessible to others, and that, in the end, they are proven correct. The panic figure does not begin with *Psycho*—it has a long history in the horror genre; however, Lila as a panic figure does explicitly contribute to developing conceptions of mental illness as criminality existing under a mask of normalcy.

With Mary having disappeared for over seven days, Lila drives to Fairvale to get information from Sam, who has not heard from Mary; although Milton Arbogast, a private detective hired by Mary's employer, believes Mary's disappearance has to do with forty thousand dollars she stole from her workplace, Lila insists the story is more complicated (Bloch *Psycho* 70-80). When Arbogast also disappears (murdered by

Norman), Lila pushes Sam to involve the police, her gendered status as a woman involved in the "masculine," "rational" pursuit of crime investigation (Bloch writes that "Lila's voice teetered along a thin, hysterical edge") only meets with resistance from both Sam and Sheriff Chambers (*Psycho* 107, 118, 123-134). Lila convinces Sam to accompany her to the Bates Motel, where she discovers one of Mary's earrings, thus validating her claims that Norman murdered her sister (*Psycho* 134-142). Afterwards, the novel's denouement comes rather quickly, with Lila searching the Bates house, coming upon Norma's corpse in the fruit cellar, and with Sam subduing Norman, who is dressed in his mother's clothes and wielding a butcher knife (*Psycho* 163). However, a much larger dimension to Lila's redemption exists. Bates' arrest and the closing of the Bates Motel occasions an excess of mass media coverage, that, according to Sam, "compared it to the Gein affair up North…[attempted] to make out that Norman Bates had been murdering motel visitors for years…[and] called for a complete investigation of every missing person case in the entire area for the past two decades" (*Psycho* 165). In Fairvale, people who knew the Bates family for years suddenly "remember" that Norman was "always" different (*Psycho* 166). The final scenes in the novel demonstrate the process by which communities use incidents to retroactively manufacture a folk devil whose memory incites cultural paranoia regarding behavior, and so may be used to monitor and regulate other citizens in the future.[8]

The moral panic that ensues in Fairvale (and, presumably, around the nation due to extensive media coverage) comes solely from Lila. Questions as to whether or not Mary's disappearance would eventually arouse suspicion aside, the text of *Psycho* suggests that Lila's resistance to the complacency of Sheriff Chambers and Sam Loomis,

as well as her contestation of Arbogast's insistence that Mary's greed allows her to turn against Sam, leads directly to the exposure of Norman. Lila plays the same role in Alfred Hitchcock's film adaptation of *Psycho* (1960). David Greven reads the filmic Lila as "associat[ed] with a culture of repression and sexual hygiene…the embodiment of normativity…and the law…who ensures the reestablishment of the normative order by ridding it of its agency-seeking, non-conformist women and queer, sexually non-normative men" (Geven 86-87). Following Geven's assessment, I read Lila as the "redeemed panic figure" not only because of the cultural work she performs, but also because of her configuration vis-à-vis the normative order. Not only does Lila facilitate the restoration of normativity, she does so because of her status as an accepted folk devil— as an intelligent, independent woman surrounded by men, that is to say, as a liminal figure both accepted by and resistant to normativity. As mentioned earlier, the panic figure's uncertain position fosters awareness of a threat still unknown to others whose direct investment in normativity renders them incapable of believing in the vulnerability of the social order. Yet, Lila's deviance from gender norms only allows for reification of the socius. As in Bloch's *Psycho*, Hitchcock's *Psycho* stages a confrontation between two deviants—a "masculine" female (Lila) and a "feminine" male (Norman)—who cancel each other out when Sam rescues Lila from Norman (dressed as Norma) by stripping him of the phallic butcher knife. The ending of the two *Psychos* reinforce this: Norman, exposed as a sexual psychopath, is subdued and locked away in the asylum, and Lila is subdued in her dependence on Sam (and indirectly, Dr. Steiner) for definitions of terminology and for explanations in order to be able to make sense of her sister's death. Indeed, *Psycho*, as Genter sums up:

> centers on the rise of psychopathology in an era supposedly witnessing the collapse of traditional gender roles in the wake of declining parental authority. [The film] prioritized proper Oedipal development as the framework for healthy character growth…As a mixture of images of the sexual psychopath and the authoritarian personality, Norman Bates represents the culmination of this panic over deviant behavior in the early Cold War. (Genter 154-155)

I would add that Robert Bloch's *Psycho* serves exactly the same cultural function. Further, I would say that for Sam to murder Norman to save Lila is an unacceptable narrative possibility, precisely because of the mechanisms by which moral panics function.

As a folk devil, Norman is more valuable alive than dead. His death would only promote catharsis in audiences and readers, and a relaxing of cultural paranoia regarding the possible presence of the sexual psychopath, which is both everywhere and nowhere; alive and incarcerated, he provides a cultural tension between security and anxiety. As outlined previously, moral panics depend on discourses of anxiety to recruit adherents to their values and thus strengthen normativity. While Norman's death would perform the same work, subduing him but allowing his existence allows for the possibility of his escape, a scenario that can potentially play on a wide variety of cultural anxieties of the period. Thus, Bates verifies discourses of the pervasive presence of the sexual psychopath and creates a cultural paranoid tension of always-already undermined-safety. I use a hyphen to represent the term, "undermined-safety," because the hyphen articulates the

impossible yet real situation of the simultaneous, bound together operations of mutually exclusive states of being, their intermixture an affective confusion more unnerving than definite fear.

Kevin Walby and Dale Spencer take issue with the sort of critiques I have put forth thus far. They claim that theories of folk devils and moral panics are based on gross speculation regarding group responses, arguing that the idea of the monolithic "crowd" is not adequately supported by evidence, for example, empirical "observation or interviews thereafter" (Walby and Spencer 108). Further, they write that moral panic theory conceives of crowds as having succumbed to affective infection and call for a more interactive method that takes into consideration all parties involved (109). While I agree that moral panic theory suffers from a suspect linear cause-and-effect narrative, I disagree in one important respect. The very nature of crowd formation and the reciprocal influence members have on each other calls into question the reliability of direct interpretation as well as the possible accuracy of post-event questioning. For instance, the studies on the psychology of deference to authority figures by Stanley Migram empirically demonstrate the vulnerability of subjects to influence by cultural norms. Conducted in 1963, two years after Hitchcock's *Psycho*, Migram's experiments involved having an authority figure ask subjects of varying ages and socio-economic background to administer an increasing voltage of electric shocks to a fellow participant based on the person's correctly repeating verbal prompts (Milgram 373-374). The subject remained unaware that the person receiving the shocks was an actor, and so believed in the actor's suffering (374). Nevertheless, twenty-six persons out of forty participants shocked the actor up to the maximum voltage, even though they were free to stop at any time (375-376). Although

subjects displayed tension revealing conflicts with individual and societal morals, the authority of the greater cultural matrix encompassing them—psychologists, the university's reputation, discourses of the validity of scientific knowledge, and so on—forced them to submit (377-378). Taking into consideration the interdependent networks of authority—parental, fraternal, institutional, and ideological, to name only a few—the amount of a person's voluntary and involuntary investments in these networks, as well as their combined pressure to maintain normativity, the possibility of a monolithic crowd viewing itself as threatened by deviance seems very likely.

Where Walby and Spencer go wrong is in their equation of moral panic scholars' usage of the noun, "crowd," as indicative of an absence of individuality. Regardless of the variations of difference within the crowd, its members suppress and deny difference in favor of the security of sameness. In other words, a crowd's uniformity of thought exists only on the surface even as they incorrectly assume uniformity permeates them entirely, a collective delusion only achievable through acts of active and consistent denial. This denial is why folk devils appear, why moral panics become necessary, why panic figures always find redemption, and why any attempt at individual interviews remain unsatisfactory. As stated previously, deviance both threatens and is required by normativity, a statement which brings this discussion back around to Judith Butler, identity and repetition, and the peculiar role of the disciplinary discourses of the sexual psychopath. Butler's assertion that identity is not natural but rather learned and acted out via repetition is visible in crowd formation, where distinguishing traits, ideas, or actions are muted in the interest of an artificial yet "naturalized" sameness. Taking Butler into consideration, interviewing individuals after crowd formation most likely would result in

somewhat uniform responses, especially if the crowd's activity receives positive recognition from the larger culture. Should a crowd receive a negative response, a member under scrutiny may either try to deflect blame onto others or to more vehemently assert the validity of the group's actions by pointing to a particular folk devil. Moreover, an interviewer should take Butler's theories into account and prepare for the possibility that the urge for and belief in identity formation may be so strong that an interviewee may simply lie to protect the "integrity" of the group.

The literary and cinematic success of *Psycho* coincides with the mass exodus of middle class Americans to new suburban areas during the late fifties and early sixties. Phillips reads the film *Psycho* as a commentary on suburban America's upkeep of a harmonious façade of to obfuscate its domestic terrors (Phillips 65). Bernice M. Murphy agrees with and expands on Phillips' critique, arguing that, in *Psycho*, the outlying location of the Bates Motel is due to an increasing need for land by developers (Murphy 138-139). While Norman does tell Marion Crane (Mary Crane in the novel) that business has fallen off because of the relocation of the highway, the Bates Motel cannot be read separately from the Bates house. Together, they represent popular anxiety over the "mask of sanity." The foreboding structure of the Bates house is connected to the Bates Motel by lengthy stairs. Norma occupies the house, and the motel—the only link to the outside world—is operated by Norman, with the stairs representing an architectural "mask string" binding the two. Moreover, the gothic appearance of the Bates house suggests similarities to an old asylum. Reading the Bates house and the Bates Motel as an outlying asylum due to anxieties over public safety allows for a reading of "public safety" as Marion Crane's and Sam Loomis' dreams of a perfect life and of Norma-Norman as the psychopath-

discourse. My reading finds support in Hitchcock's choice to cast Anthony Perkins as Norman rather than retain Bloch's idea of Norman as resembling Gein. Perkins' attractive, boyish features, combined with his portrayal of Norman's social inexperience, make him a sympathetic character, in much the same way that Janet Leigh's attractive, strong facial features, combined with her portrayal of Marion Crane's self-assurance and determination, render her a sympathetic character. Indeed, the first half of the film builds tension by playing Marion and Norman off each other.

For example, in her motel room, Marion overhears Norman and Norma arguing in the Bates house; given the great distance between the house and the motel (at least as suggested by the camera), that Marion hears anything at all implies that perhaps Norman speaks in a loud voice intentionally. If so, then Marion's position as a woman, alone and in a secluded location signifies potential danger. Rather than abating, this tension rises due to the sexual undertones of the scene when Norman arrives outside Marion's room. He approaches her carrying a tray with a pitcher on it; the pitcher's curved sides and lip suggest a sensuality heightened by the fact that the lip is pointed away from Norman and towards Marion. As he walks, his reflection appears in the window next to him; his reflection, signifying his psychosis, combined with the pitcher, signifying desire, creates an aura of potential threat. During the ensuing conversation, both Marion and Norman take tentative steps back from each other, leaving the pitcher between them, until they both stand on either side of the open door to Marion's room, another signifier of desire. "It might be nicer…and warmer in the office," says Norman, rejecting her idea that they eat in her room. In the office, however, Norman suggests they eat in the parlor; thus they pass through two doors, the office door (of desire and the mask of sanity) and the parlor

door (of sublimated desire and psychosis); significantly, the parlor is architecturally bound to the office in the same way the Bates house is connected to the motel. Once they are inside and hinting at the tragedies of their respective lives, the camera continually cuts between them, with Marion, the pitcher before her (the lip turned to a neutral angle, indicating her awareness and rejection of Norman's desire), sitting on a soft chair, surrounded by curved objects: a picture, an antique lamp, a phone, and a square dresser covered by a circular rug. The dresser links Marion to Norman, who sits among pointed objects: squared pictures, a square-backed chair, and a rectangular dresser, on which a phallic candle sits. The candle rests inside a curved candleholder, linking Norman back to Marion. The parlor is also the place where Norman hides his peephole into the adjoining bathroom—a voyeuristic hole in the wall larger on the parlor side than on the motel bathroom side, again indicating connectedness and masking. Finally, the parlor is the area where psychosexual tension builds up, leading to the famous shower scene.

The shower scene is where the psychopath undoes suburban aspirations of security and normalcy. Before Norman physically arrives dressed as his mother, his voyeurism already projects him into the shower with Marion, as represented by a continued juxtaposition of curves and sharp angles. In the shower, rows of square tiles surround Marion's curved body; the bathtub she stands in has curved sides but connects to a tiled floor, and the rectangular shower curtain, supported by curved hooks on a phallic rod, simultaneously conceals her from view even as its plastic transparency makes her contour visible. The blatant phallic dimension of the showerhead above Marion also reveals the tiny holes through which water flows, calling to mind the hidden pipes behind the walls that connect to the shower. All these elements build up to Marion's murder by

"Norma," in which Marion reaches an arm out both to protect herself and to desperately reach towards the hidden forty thousand dollars that represents her future initiation into the suburban normative order. The anxieties presented in *Psycho* link directly to discourses of the psychopath as they develop through later slasher horror of the seventies. Indeed, the cultural work *Psycho* performs of popularizing discourses of the sexual psychopath makes slasher cinema possible, in particular the next great slasher film, *Halloween* (1978).

Although *Halloween* is not the next slasher film—*The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) precedes it by four years—film scholars generally refer to *Halloween* as the first "true" slasher film, that is to say, *Halloween* is the first film of its type to achieve financial and critical success; just as *Night of the Hunter* and *In a Lonely Place* precede *Psycho* but do not generate the criteria for a new genre, *Texas* fails to set the formulaic parameters for subsequent slasher horror. Future films all follow *Halloween's* basic structure and utilize its core elements. Vera Dika notes that, while *Halloween* cost only $320, 000 to make, it returned $80, 000, 000 across the world, thus earning reviews in respected periodicals such as the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker* (Dika 30-31). Film critics also generally agree that *Halloween* and its imitators (*Friday the 13th*, *Prom Night*, and others) all descend from *Psycho* (Carol 23; Dika 33-42; Worland 230-231). Carol J. Clover comments on the achievements of *Halloween*, yet also points out important differences setting the film apart from *Psycho* and *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*. In *Psycho*, Norman wears a mask of sanity and so occupies a place, however tentative, in the social order, until his exposure by Lila Crane; in *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, the violence takes place in a secluded area and is perpetrated by a psychotic family who

avoid large populations; in *Halloween*, the murderer comes from a suburban community, is locked in a mental institution, and escapes to commit more murders (Clover 23-24, 26, 30). The return of Michael Myers, the antagonist from *Halloween*, to the town of his original crime performed at age six, after his escape from the asylum at age twenty-one, plays on cultural paranoia over the return of a sexual psychopath who previously lived undetected in the social order. Unlike Norman, whose incarceration in an asylum means he might escape, the underlying anxiety in *Halloween* is that Myers does escape, and breaches the boundaries, yet he still resists identification even after his public exposure.

Halloween takes place in the fictional town of "Haddonfield, Illinois" on two nights, "Halloween 1963," the night Myers, at age six, murders his sister, Judith, and "Halloween 1978," when Myers, at age twenty-one, returns to the town of his birth and murders two teenage girls and one teenage boy. The film excludes audience members from access to any sections of the city except for the suburbs, creating the illusion of Haddonfield as comprised only of suburban areas, the ideal All-American Town; little to no crime of note, quiet, and neighborly—a phantasy residence. Indeed, such a device seems designed to arouse in the audience a level of narcotic desire for the image. Haddonfield is presented as temporally and spatially distant (on screen before an audience as well as on pre-recorded film), yet also as, at least temporarily, accessible (Metz 135-136). Indeed, during an interview, Carpenter notes, "Suburbia is supposed to be safe…Your house is supposed to be a sanctuary" (Carpenter qtd in Maddrey 133). The film's opening scene, however, contains a hidden signified within the signifier "Illinois." According to Vera Dika, "the choice of Illinois…introduces the concept of 'illness,' or 'ill,' which it incorporates within its spelling. In short, Haddonfield is a normal American

community, but illness is a part of it" (Dika 35). And this "illness" is so interlocked with "Illinois" that to separate it out undermines the sign. In *Halloween*, the asylum housing Michael Myers is located in Smith's Grove, Illinois, and thus stands at a remove from the placid area of Haddonfield. Yet, as evidenced by the All-American title, "Smith's," (and its associations with the normative family unit) and the title, "Grove," (with its implications of idyll or pastoral), the asylum, as well as Myers, remains a part of Haddonfield just as Haddonfield remains a part of Smith's Grove, just as both remain apart as well as on a continuum. Moreover, through its material distance and its social present-absence, Smith's Grove provides the illusion of safety and peacefulness Haddonfield requires to maintain its cohesion. Thus, the physical return of Myers to Haddonfield once he escapes from the asylum provides the film's tension since it disrupts the suburban communal phantasy and rewrites communal history regarding a past that has allegedly been discursively purged.

In this context, it is significant that Myers, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, does not use language; he never speaks throughout the entire film. His lack of participation in discourse, more so than his incarceration, strips him of any humanity, especially for those whom society charges with the task of rehabilitation. As Sam Loomis, Myers' doctor, and Marion, a nurse, drive a station wagon towards Smith's Grove, their conversation reveals their true feelings towards Myers and the mentally ill in general. Marion asks Loomis if he has any "special instructions" regarding how to handle Myers, to which he cryptically warns her to maintain awareness of Myers' potential for violence and not to "underestimate it;" Marion curtly reminds the doctor that "we should refer to 'it' as 'him'" (Carpenter and Hill 5). However, Marion's chiding of Loomis for

insensitivity soon reveals her own true feelings towards asylum patients: “The only thing that bothers me is their *gibberish*. When they start *raving* on and on,” she confesses; Loomis responds by assuring her that “[she does not] have anything to worry about. *He hasn’t spoken a word* in 15 years” (6 emphasis added). This exchange between Marion and Loomis occasions a number of linguistic complexities, most prominently the method by which Marion and Loomis exchange discourses of mental illness back and forth in order to reify her and his sense of normalcy, of the stability of their place in the cultural order.

The strength of shared discourses of desire for social inclusion and the demand that such discourses constantly are rejuvenated via mutual identification of the other overrides Marion’s individual desire to articulate her humanistic charity towards the mentally ill as well as her desire that Loomis, as a doctor, act accordingly to the humanistic ethics of the medical profession. Thus, although Marion appears to persuade Loomis to refer to Myers as a person, a “he,” and so attribute to him a modicum of humanity, her own statements about the mentally ill remove any trace of humanity from her speech through verb choice as opposed to pronoun use. Her description of patients’ language as “gibberish” and “raving” suggest that, while the mentally ill do speak, their language remains outside of comprehension by the sane. And so, while “they” may seem human subjects to Marion, their “inability” to use language exiles them from normal discourse. What is at stake in situations such as these is not the ability to speak, but rather the circumscriptions around which the speakable and the non-speakable are permissible (Butler *Speech* 133). In order words, when, where, and how a subject is allowed to speak, as well as if a subject’s language is accepted by others as speech acts determines the

status or non-status of a subject. “Gibberish,” “raving,” or even silence take on different valances when considered as expressions not so much beyond language as excised from it in order to determine who may or may not attain the status of subjecthood with all the considerations such a status entails on even the most basic interpersonal level.

Indeed, Loomis and Marion subtly bond in their assessment of the mentally ill when Loomis uses the subjectivity-acknowledging pronoun, “he,” thus appealing to Marion’s belief at least in the biological humanity of the mentally ill. He also assures Marion of her normalcy (and so her own corporeal safety) by calling attention to Myers’ unwillingness or incapability of participating in “humanity” via discourse, and so strengthens the assumed distance between the “sane” and the “ill.” Moreover, this “weeding out” process operates via a stigmatizing mechanism that “determines who will be a subject depending on whether the speech of such a candidate for subjecthood obeys certain norms governing what is speakable and what is not;” yet such a process is always “haunted” by “the ramblings of the asocial [or] the rantings of the ‘psychotic’ that [this process] produce[s]” (*Speech* 133). Or, perhaps more importantly, the process remains “haunted” by the utter silence of the ‘psychotic.’ Silence keeps Myers further from subjecthood than his fellow asylum patients. Not only because of his “lack” of language, however, but more so due to the fact that his silence overtakes any question of muteness or simple refusal. Silence, like bodily stillness, does not require the same level of discursive or physical policing as speech or motion, and it is for this reason that silence remains further away from discourse, further than “gibberish” or “raving,” which demand more attention from discursive circumscription practices.

Myers does not speak for fifteen years after the murder he commits at age six. He

is now twenty-one, the age of legal and biological maturity, not psychic maturity. For him, time stops at age six; from a psychoanalytic standpoint, he remains a child. And as a child both outside language and outside time, his place in the Haddonfield community as inscribed in communal history through language is not so much repressed as disavowed, remaining only as a harmless (sub)urban legend for children. As Tommy Doyle, a grade schooler, later tells his high school student babysitter, Laurie Strode, whose father, a real estate agent, plans to sell the rundown and abandoned Myers family home: "Lonnie Elam said real awful stuff happened there once," to which Laurie replies: "Lonnie Elam probably won't get out of sixth grade" (Carpenter and Hill 12). While "real awful stuff" requires memory, and thus inscription in social discourse, the phrase erases the historical event and replaces it with a generalization—"stuff"—prefaced by an adjective, "awful," which is in turn prefaced by another adjective, "real." The purpose of this descriptive chain is to agitate the imagination to such a pitch that not knowing produces terror enough for compliance, at least among children. Generalizations, whether nouns or adjectives, are linguistic silences designed to produce imaginative, yet indeterminate excesses greater than any detailed verbal descriptions.

Generalizations are also used for patrolling and protecting discursive borders; and, like silences in relation to "gibberish" or "raving," their ambiguity allows for less communal circumscription. Opposed to vivid descriptions such as, for instance, "a six year old boy stabbed his sister with a butcher knife," which maintains the event in communal history and disrupts the suburban phantasy of placid, crime-free streets, generalizations maintain social cohesion with a minimum of linguistic (or generational or parental) control. Indeed, while the audience is never told what or how much Lonnie

Smith knows or does not know, he almost certainly knows little more than that "real awful stuff happened," since Laurie, a high school student, older and liable to have access to communal histories (especially since her father is in charge of selling the Myers house, and so privy to its history), dismisses Tommy's claim without a second thought. Although the murder occurs after her birth, the time frame would be only between one to three years. Laurie must be between fifteen and eighteen, making her either just born or between one and three years old at the time of Judith Myers' murder, making her too young to remember any mention of it: clearly not long enough for a community to forget a traumatic event, unless a willful collective discursive erasure takes place.

Therefore, Myers' fifteen-year silence and his return to Haddonfield constitutes an example of "madness [as] a normal *mode of survival* in the face of actual manipulations on the part of the environment, from a prior moment that has dropped out of time" (Davoine and Gaudillière 48 emphasis added). Indeed, the intention of Laurie's father to sell the house (for possible demolition or repairs that would finally remove any physical traces of the event from an otherwise "perfect" community) provides the occasion for ultimate erasure of the Myers family. To be sure, Myers does not know this; the pending sale does not in any way predicate his escape, and neither the film nor the shooting script suggests such a possibility. However, upon returning to his home, without electricity or occupants, full of old paint, with broken windows, Myers, mentally six years-old yet physically twenty-one, is faced with the fact of his family's absence, the neglect of his home signifying neglect and ostracism in a community of well-kempt homes, representing, for Myers, death—his sister's, his family's (absence), and his own (lack of place in the community). This death-proximity inspires in Myers a repetition

compulsion, a desire to overcome his status as a "nor man," to bear witness to his sister's murder, and thus reinscribe himself back into Haddonfield's discursive field.

Dr. Loomis seeks to prevent any such reinscription. Although Loomis describes Myers as "evil," implying a thoughtless engine of murder, the scene in the film in which Myers escapes the asylum attests to a greater level of understanding and purpose on Myers' part (Carpenter and Hill 8-10). Myers attacks Loomis and Marion not to kill them, but rather to secure their station wagon and drive back to Haddonfield; moreover, he does no harm to any fellow patients who wander about the asylum lawn. Within the filmic narrative, both of these facts remain obfuscated by Loomis and Marion's dialogic insistence on the potential threat to the suburban community. To the audience, Myers thus becomes "the violent and unstoppable predator who stalks the community's teenagers…the escaped mental patient. Simultaneously, though, he is also the boy next door gone terribly wrong, the ultimate juvenile delinquent" (Murphy 143). Myers resonates in particular with the anxieties of suburban mothers and fathers, as a physical metaphor for anxieties over violence to (or even by) their children. Yet Myers' dual role as "escaped mental patient" and "juvenile delinquent" also figures into seventies-era conflations of a growing number of released mental patients with violent crime.

Halloween, released in 1978, should not be critiqued without looking at the deinstitutionalization movement, one of the major cultural and political changes taking place prior to and contemporaneous with the film. Deinstitutionalization, as mentioned above, begins in the mid-fifties due to the invention of psychotropic medication as well as a growing sense of patient sympathy on the part of doctors and the public; however, as public policy, deinstitutionalization officially begins with John F. Kennedy's Community

Mental Health Centers Act (CMHC) of 1963, which aims at combating abuse, neglect, and misdiagnoses in the asylums by releasing patients into more personalized, community-based care facilities, a move that leads to a 62% reduction in asylum residents between 1963 and 1975 (Mechanic and Rochefort 302). Concurrent with the deinstitutionalization movement for the mentally ill, deinstitutionalization of juvenile offenders, and prison inmates, prompted by similar calls for reform and community-centered rehabilitation, leads to population reductions of "98 to 69 per 100, 000 [between] 1970-1977," and a 70% rise in the prison parolee population during the 1960s and 1970s (312). Statistics only provide generalizations through raw data, however; such figures do not reveal the individual circumstances of each case. And this is precisely the point. Public knowledge of high rates of mentally ill, juvenile offenders, and prison inmates, as typically reported through the media, gives no perspective on the number of violent or "at-risk" individuals within the percentages; they could be low, median, or high. Media, then, does not so much produce public knowledge as provide "the starting point for communication…a huge, but nonetheless limited, range of possibilities from which communication can select [from] when it is temporarily deciding on particular topics" (Luhmann 66). Indeed, even the academic journal from which the above statistics are taken fails to provide such crucial information needed for properly accessing the nuances of the debate and framing an informed position.

Deinstitutionalization also participates in the conflicts among psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, pharmaceutical companies, and the federal and state governments. During the seventies, as more patients were administered antipsychotics and subsequently found their way back into community settings, the authority of psychiatry and psychoanalysis

diminished, partly due to scientific medicine's growing influence and its assault on psychiatry's more person-centered approach which stresses "the failure of the suffering individual to adapt to his or her environment" as expressed in the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) treatment guidebook, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) I and II* (Menninger qtd in Horwitz and Mayes 250). Insurance companies, bolstered by a growing scientism that stresses experiential causality, and backed by a budget-conscious federal government in search of itemized accounts of treatment, begin agitating for biological classifications for mental illness; some insurance providers even start to set restrictions on the amount of annual treatment they cover (Horwitz and Mayes 253; Wilson ctd in Horwitz and Mayes 253). By contrast, psychoanalytic-based psychiatry, according to psychiatrist Karl Menninger, "a leading dynamic psychiatrist of the time," holds that "the mentally ill person [is] not an exception," and that "almost everyone has some degree of mental illness at some point in their life" (Menninger qtd and ctd in Horwitz and Mayes 250). Such leveling of the "normal" and the "pathological" is intolerable not only to scientific medicine (and the potential profits from strict categorization procedures) but to the general culture as well, since, as mentioned above, the folk devil provides the discursive structures on which normativity rests. And so, in *Halloween*, when Loomis says to Marion, "You can calm down. The evil's gone," he only assures her that her life is no longer in danger; the threat to Haddonfield that the film builds up, both within its narrative, and for the audience, stills exists within the cinematic narrative and within the public sphere from which the audience seeks a temporary escape (Carpenter and Hill 10).

From a cinematic standpoint, Loomis' major role in *Halloween* is identical to that

of Lila Crane in *Psycho*; Loomis is the "redeemed panic figure." While at first glance, Loomis—as a doctor, a far from liminal position in the social order—does not seem to fit the requirements for a panic figure, his antagonism towards Myers categorizes him as a folk devil reminiscent of Victor Frankenstein or Henry Jekyll: the "irresponsible doctor." Loomis' competency and authority as a doctor puts him in conflict with his deviant position as a violator of the patient/doctor relationship as outlined in the Hippocratic Oath.[9] As a panic figure in search of redemption, Loomis' first stop in his pursuit of Myers leads him to Taylor, owner of a local cemetery and the only person besides Loomis who, according to the film and the script, seems to remember any details about Myers, his family, or the crime (although Laurie's father, and the other adults in the suburb, must also remember). The screenplay of *Halloween* gives no indication of the cemetery's location, only a brief description: "an old graveyard on a windy hillside" (Carpenter and Hill 29). Yet the text does carry certain revealing markers. "Old," "hillside," and even the "small road" leading to the cemetery signify a location somewhat at a remove from a centralized area (29). Loomis and Taylor make their way among the graves until they reach the place where Judith Myers, Michael's sister, is buried; Taylor, and the cemetery he attends, are physical and psychical reservoirs of memories, located on the geographic and discursive frontier. When the two men reach the gravesite, however, they find the headstone missing, a fact Taylor attributes to kids playing a Halloween prank, but that Loomis reads as proof of Myers' intent to return to Haddonfield (30).

Loomis correctly guesses that responsibility for the stolen headstone rests with Myers, yet never questions the act itself. Carrying off a physical marker of the sister he

murdered represents Myers as a more complex person than the "simply, purely evil" entity Loomis later describes to the Haddonfield sheriff (39). Although the robbery could read as a sadistic act (the ritualistic need to keep "trophies" from murders attributed to all serial killers), or as a repetition of his murder of Judith by removing her memorialized-body (the headstone) from living discourse, I believe a more satisfactory interpretation is possible by the application of object relations psychoanalysis as articulated by Melanie Klein.[10] While Myers' theft of his sister's headstone is undeniably an aggressive act, it is also an act of grieving. Judith Myers stands in for the two siblings' absent parents, especially the mother, or breast-figure. In having the breast-figure forcibly transferred from the mother to the irresponsible and absent sister, the young Myers undergoes a harmful imbalance between positive and negative interactions with those closest to him, most importantly, the sister-breast, leading to "increase[d] ambivalence, diminish[ed] trust and hope and confirm[ed] anxieties about inner annihilation and external persecution" (Klein *Love* 150). Melanie Klein writes that, when such an event occurs in children, neurosis begins to develop, overtaking positive experiences that contribute to forging a healthy relationship between a child and her or his inner and outer worlds (*Love* 150). Thus, the stunting of personal growth and the retaining of infantile neurosis and psychosis into adulthood becomes more and more likely (*Love* 150). The sister-breast becomes, through Kleinian "splitting" by Myers, both a "bad object" and a "good object."[11] Myers grieves over the loss of the "good" sister-breast, but he also remains trapped in a struggle against the "bad" sister-breast. The material presence of Judith's headstone serves as a source of reality-testing; that is to say, it serves as both a reminder of irreplaceable loss of a good object, irredeemable guilt over participation in that loss,

and his phantasy of unending persecution by the remaining, seemingly indestructible bad object. Indeed, Myers' theft of his dead sister's headstone does constitute a taking of a "sadistic souvenir," but one that acts as a tormenting force against Myers himself. This sense of persecution manifests itself as a repetition compulsion in Myers because, throughout the film, the "bad" sister-breast continually returns.

Therefore, if "the Oedipus conflict begins under the complete dominance of sadism," then Myers' attack on his sister represents a rejection of the object and an accelerated growth of desire for "onslaughts on her [the object] by all sadistic means," acted out through his repeatedly stabbing her with a butcher knife (Klein *Selected* 87; *Selected* 177). The phallic device of the butcher knife serves to provide an entranceway into the sister-object's body, whereby Myers may "enter her body in order to control her from within" (*Selected* 177). Moreover, use of a butcher knife as a chosen weapon (as opposed to all other possible phallic weapons to be found in a typical family home by a small boy, such as a baseball bat) to "enter" and "control" the sister-object reveals Myers' desire to "take over" the domestic sphere, to "become" the sister-object and stave off further neglect; the butcher knife is the instrument mothers use to prepare food, and so provide nourishment to the child.

Loomis' first order of business, when he reaches Haddonfield in pursuit of Myers, is to enlist the aid of Leigh Brackett, the local sheriff. He approaches Brackett just as the latter is conducting an investigation into a robbery at a hardware store, where the only items stolen are "some Halloween masks, rope, a set of knives," a crime the sheriff brushes off, like Taylor before him, as "probably kids" (Carpenter and Hill 33-34). The arrival of Loomis—the panic figure—at just such a moment reflects *Halloween's* filmic

narrative insistence on the extent to which Haddonfield is an ideal (idyll) community, while also serving to alert its audience to the magnitude of threat Myers poses to local order. That Sheriff Brackett finds no cause for alarm in the stolen items as a possibility of future crime or at least harmful intent involving humans or animals, considering the upcoming holiday, seems troubling at the very least. Brackett seems unconcerned that right before Halloween, children of an unknown age want a mask, rope, and knives badly enough to steal the items from a hardware store instead of from their own families. Either Brackett is incompetent or Haddonfield is such a peaceful community that nothing short of homicide can induce him to use his inductive reasoning. However, the narrative does not allow for representation of Brackett as incompetent because such a move would imply two things: first, it would suggest Haddonfield's familiarity with violent crime, and second, it would suggest the inability of law enforcement to control it. If this were the case, the magnitude of Myers' original crime would lessen (and perhaps would remain in communal discourse instead of relegated to social and discursive outskirts like graveyards) and so undermine the high level of dread the film self-consciously attempts to invoke regarding Myers impending return. Therefore, Haddonfield must be a space of, if not innocence, then tranquility, with Brackett as a figurehead holding his office simply out of adherence to convention, as a symbol of the law's potential power.

Two scenes demonstrate Brackett's relationship to Haddonfield, and vice versa. The first occurs when Loomis resorts to coercing the skeptical sheriff to investigate the old Myers house with him. The second occurs when, inside the house, they find the corpse of a mutilated animal. Loomis uses the occasion to drive home how dangerous Myers is, which also serves to play on narrative dread over communal safety, which in

turn plays on audience stereotypes of inevitable connections between the mentally ill and violent behavior. Loomis asks Brackett what he has found, to which the latter replies that the corpse is "A dog…Still warm" (Carpenter and Hill 37). The temperature of the animal signifies a strategic heightening of tension in that it suggests not only Myers' former presence, but rather the more terrifying possibility that he is present, but unseen. The likelihood of such a scenario plays out via Brackett's quick rejection of Loomis' comment that Myers "got hungry": "Come on…a skunk could have killed it" (37). When Brackett protests, "A man wouldn't do that," Loomis rejoins, in a cryptic tone similar to the one he used with Marion: "He isn't a man" (37-38).

Loomis' allusions to Myers' psychosis does not read as hyperbole in the film, nor do they read as such in the world outside the film. The reason for this is simply that a mentally ill person's "social position on the outside will never again be quite what it was prior to entrance [in the asylum]," since "the total institution bestows an unfavorable status [upon them]" (Pescosolido 3). For instance, Loomis and Brackett come upon a mutilated, partially eaten animal. Neither the doctor nor the sheriff knows for certain how it arrived there. Loomis, certain that Myers "isn't a man," hints at Myers as the culprit; examining the animal for human teeth marks do not seem necessary. Therefore, because Loomis *alludes* to the *"fact"* that *he* "*knows"* Myers is guilty, then Myers eats dogs (a household pet, "man's best friend," and so violates the sanctity of the nuclear-oedipal family and thus the normal-oedipal social order, represented by Haddonfield).[12] No definitive proof exists, yet within the narrative of *Halloween*, the proof is self-evident. However, within cultural discourse in which the film reflects and participates, the fact of a previous institutionalization for any mentally ill person translates into an "inevitable"

predilection for violence that the fact of institutionalization proves in advance of any act of violence.

The next few minutes of the film serve to justify Loomis' view of Myers, and audience perception of the mentally ill. The two men walk through the Myers house, ultimately revisiting the 1963 crime scene. The fact that Myers returns to Haddonfield (attested to by the half-eaten dog Loomis asks Brackett—and the audience—to believe Myers is responsible for) "proves" the "truth" of the perceived connection between mental illness and criminality. At this point, glass breaks, startling Loomis into revealing his hitherto-concealed gun and his past association with Myers:

LOOMIS

> I met him fifteen years ago. I was told there was nothing left, no conscience, no reason, no understanding, in even the most rudimentary sense, of life or death, or right or wrong. I met this six-year old boy with a blank, cold, emotionless face, and the blackest of eyes, the devil's eyes. I spent eight years trying to reach him and another seven trying to keep him locked away when I realized what was living behind that boy's eyes was purely, simply evil. (Carpenter and Hill 39)

Loomis encounters Myers at six years old, just after the child is tried and committed, already diagnosed as a hopeless case. But this is not Loomis' diagnosis; eight years pass before he gives up on rehabilitating Myers, after which, according to his confession to Brackett, an epiphany convinces him that nothing worth reaching exists within Myers.

And yet, Loomis' verdict reflects only one possibility. However, because of

Loomis' authority as Myers' doctor, other options, other methods of reaching Myers through the depths of his silence, remain inconceivable, within the film as well as in the cultural discourse in which the film remains embedded. Some psychoanalysts suggest that, in cases such as these, when analyst and analysand confront each other on irreconcilably opposite poles, or find themselves in a situation of mutual antagonism, doctors should attempt to find a more amenable caretaker for the patient (Robertiello ctd in Eigen 109-110). After eight years, Loomis fails to consider that perhaps a different doctor, a fresh approach, may help Myers. Indeed, Loomis' hubris is such that, instead of approaching colleagues to take over the case, he simply amends the diagnosis handed to him when he first begins to treat Myers—a diagnosis, it should be noted, that is blatantly contradictory. If Myers has "no conscience, no reasoning, no understanding, even in the rudimentary sense of life and death, or right or wrong," he cannot be "purely, simply evil," since evil depends on an object relation, that is to say, recognition of, and interrelation with, good. Loomis fails to reach six-year old Myers due to a lack of interpretive skills and sensitivity to Myers condition, which Michael Eigen calls "the ego's hate…in part, aimed against its needs and love wishes" to the point that it "develops a reproachful attitude towards an apparently ungiving and overwhelming world" while simultaneously fighting such contradictory affects by "repelling those who venture near" (Eigen 115). For a child like Myers, such repulsions push him deeper and deeper into an unreal world populated by hostile entities he must either flee from or attack (Klein *Love* 151).

In "The Psychotherapy of the Psychoses," Klein writes about children whose levels of play exhibits traits of an inability to deal with the frustrations of reality (*Love*

235). A similar recession and advancement of the ego from and towards reality occurs within Myers. It is conceivable that, during his confinement, Myers flees from Loomis via extreme affective dissociation because of the latter's power over the child's *body*. Within the strictures of the asylum, Myers' physical world (the ego and its link to reality as well as to the unconscious) is controlled by Loomis, so the child resists. A strictly delimited, categorical approach to treating patients leaves no room for overlaps or inconsistencies in its criteria; for instance, the "self evident" immutable differences between "good" and "evil." As Eigen makes clear, such absences of affect are actually signs of intense reservoirs of emotion and reasoning. Unable to make such a diagnostic leap, to strike a balance between a supportive and antagonistic position, Loomis resorts to making the mistake of hating of his charge, a move that Eigen claims causes a negative narcissistic reaction in the analysand, leading to her or his *"retreat"* (Eigen 115 emphasis added). In other words, what Loomis views as lack of conscience is the paranoid-schizoid position of a child attempting to fight reality-frustrations.

One of the ways Myers combats reality-frustration in *Halloween* is through the wearing of masks. Rick Worland, in *The Horror Film: An Introduction*, devotes almost four pages to Myers' murder of Judith during the opening scene in *Halloween* and to the significance of mask wearing. Worland expands on earlier critical interpretations by concentrating on cinematic strategies of audience identification and the fluidity between points of view ("camera/killer/audience"), correctly noting the sexual significance of the clown mask Judith's boyfriend toys with and Myers wears when he murders her (Worland 232-233). Yet, in the opening scene, an inversion of the "mask of sanity" as well as an economy of exchange occurs that is worth exploring in detail. Even before

Halloween's narrative begins, the audience is placed behind the camera and thus literally forced to wear the killer's mask. As the credits roll on the right side of the screen during the film's opening, accompanied by ominous piano music, the audience sees a sinister looking, smiling, jack-o-lantern on the left hand side of the screen, set against a black background. The camera slowly zooms in on the jack-o-lantern, where a flickering light from inside it builds on the contrast between the bright orange pumpkin and the deep darkness of the screen. When the camera closes in on the jack-o-lantern, however, it zooms to the right, focusing on one eye and the nose. At this point, the light inside the jack-o-lantern has been extinguished, and the eye and nose holes remain dark and empty. This opening not only attempts to frighten audiences, but also leads them inside Myers' psyche via the jack-o-lantern whose smile reflects both the clown mask he wears during his first murder and the dark-eyed mask he wears during his return to Haddonfield.

The narrative proper begins with a black screen and the words, "Haddonfield, 1963," accompanied by children signing, and then shows a camera view of the front of the Myers house. Here the camera, moving towards the house, functions as a mask. Yet the camera-mask also views the house as a mask, a reflection of Myers' inner turmoil, presented through the physical nature of the house. The Myers house has two stories, with two windows on the far left and right sides on both floors and a door centered on the ground floor, a design that calls to mind the features of a human face, a mask, and the spatial distribution of features on the jack-o-lantern seen during the credits. Indeed, a jack-o-lantern with a light inside sits on the right side of the Myers house porch. Moreover, as the camera zooms in close on the house, it becomes apparent that only two lights are on inside: one on the far right of the second floor and one in the foyer as seen

through a window on the front door, both of which call to mind the final image of the jack-o-lantern eye and nose during the credits, as well as reverse it, in that the dark spaces of the jack-o-lantern are now replaced by the lighted spaces within the Myers home. More than just nice cinematography, the back and forth self-consciousness of such visuals serve as commentaries on and demonstrations of Myers' psychosis.

The camera pans to the right and moves around the side of the house to observe the living room from outside as Judith's boyfriend playfully puts on the clown mask and makes kissing sounds. "Are we alone?" he asks, to which Judith replies, "Michael's around here somewhere;" the couple then moves upstairs to have sex, which, as will be seen later, "underlines the theme of childhood innocence giving way to adolescent sexuality…then twisting into murder" (Worland 233). Next, the camera does a reverse pan back around to the front of the house, where the upstairs window on the right goes dark, before performing another reverse pan back around to the rear of the house to enter through the kitchen. Although the pacing of these scenes are neither sped up nor slowed down, the erratic, back and forth movement of the camera suggests a representation of psychosis. As Myers takes a butcher knife from the kitchen, the camera's point of view shows that the (at this point unknown) stalker wears a clown costume (233). Myers approaches the stairs unseen as Judith's boyfriend comes downstairs, putting on his shirt and hurriedly leaving just as Myers goes upstairs to murder his sister. Worland writes that "the boyfriend is spared and the killer's rage vented exclusively on the helpless girl for reasons we must take, literally, at face value," a claim that does not ring quite true (233-234). The audience witnesses Judith's boyfriend wear the clown mask while he and Judith kiss; moreover, they witness the arm of the unknown wearer of the clown costume

get a butcher knife from the kitchen. These two scenes imply both incompleteness and identification—a mask without a costume and a costume without a mask.

When one wears a costume, the mask completes or authenticates the costume by hiding the most identifiable aspect of the subject—the facial features that, more so than the body proper, promote intimacy between subjects. As Myers (without a mask) witnesses the masked boyfriend having sex with Judith (the child's breast-object), the primal scene is initiated. Myers sees the authenticating mask and senses incompleteness and an impassable distance between himself and his sister-object, a distance that, to his mind, should not exist. The desire of the child, expressed as sadism against the object, becomes conflated with a sexuality Myers experiences voyeuristically when, to him, a physical component (represented through the wearing of the mask) should be present as well. The inexplicable complexity of the situation leads to Myers' splitting his sister-object. However, the good-object vanishes inside Myers, residing within him as a phantasy relation, leaving the bad-object, the one that persecutes through confusion, projected into the physical world and onto his sister. Freud notes this same basic foundation of paranoid psychosis, writing that, "the person to whom the delusion ascribes so much power and influence…is, if he is definitely named, either identical with some one who played an equally important part in the patient's emotional life before his illness, or else is easily recognizable as a substitute for him" (Freud "Paranoides" 40). Moreover, "the emotion is projected outwards in the shape of external power, while its quality is changed into its opposite," while "[t]he main purpose of the persecution asserted by the patient's delusion is to justify the change in his emotional attitude" ("Paranoides" 40). The mask, then, becomes the site of splitting, internalization, and projection; that is to

say, an object Myers competes with by appropriation, by "reclaiming the discarded mask with its red phallic nose" moments before he murders Judith (Worland 233). Not only does Myers supplant Judith's boyfriend through the wearing of the mask, but also the camera-mask presents this act through the placement of the clown mask over the lens, leaving only two eyeholes for vision. In other words, the mask wears a mask, an act that pushes Myers backwards, further away from integration with reality. More importantly, Myers, now fully inside the clown costume (body and face), his ego receding further away from connection with reality, uses the larger phallic object of the butcher knife to, as mentioned earlier, "enter" the bad-sister-object and control her from the inside, which is also an attempt to re-integrate the good sister-object and the bad sister-object. And this attempt fails precisely because of the nature of psychosis: the bad sister-object is already projected outside the boy's psyche into reality in the form of ever-changing persecuting figures.

However, the clown mask plays an even greater role after the murder. With the butcher knife still in his hand, Myers stumbles outside the house as his parents (again by chance) arrive. The camera suddenly moves outside the mask to take up the position of the parents as the boy's father calls his name and removes the phallic clown mask, revealing Myers' face, a face whose features, in the script, call for "a bright-eyed boy with a calm, quiet smile on his face" (Carpenter and Hill 4). Yet the child's unsmiling face, in the filmic narrative, is one of shock, of a dissociated subject, certainly, but one far from without conscience (as Loomis claims), and assuredly not unaware of his actions. Myers is ill without a doubt, and certainly suffers from symptoms of severe schizophrenia, such as "a marked severance from reality [and] a lack of emotional

rapport," but these, at least in the filmic narrative, come from the primal scene, not from his innate lack of humanity (Klein *Love* 234, emphasis in the original). Indeed, once the clown mask is removed, the camera zooms out, contributing to the intended sense of a child without affect. Myers uses the clown mask because of its inevitable exaggerated smile, a representation of affect he lacks. Smiles demonstrate affection, eradicate distances between subjects, draw them closer together; thus, the clown mask serves as the method young Myers uses to combat frustrations in reality and to overcome them, to achieve gratification. However, the mask proves unable to fulfill Myers' desire for his sister.

A brief return to the aforementioned discussion of Myers' relationship with his sister's headstone provides insight into the exact nature of Myers' frustrations. For instance, as previously noted, Myers both grieves for the loss of his sister and sees her as a source of persecution. He acts out these contradictions through the previously discussed theft of Judith's headstone. The headstone serves as a reminder of the physical death of the good sister-object and the ongoing presence of the bad sister-object. However, when Myers, at age twenty-one, returns to Haddonfield, his sense of persecution transforms into a need to destroy the bad-sister-object; this bad object takes the form of the three female babysitters in the film: Annie, Lynda, and Laurie. Myers' strategy for coping with his psychosis manifests as an outward articulation of lack of affect through the wearing of a "mask of (in)sanity," a white mask ironically resembling a corpse or a statue: the eyes are cavernous and dark and the mouth is tightly pursed, suggesting an inability or unwillingness to speak, an inversion of the exaggerated affect of the clown mask.

The script for *Halloween* refers to Myers as "The Shape," a designation that

corresponds with the featurelessness of his white mask and with the strange anonymity he possesses as he stalks Laurie and her two friends throughout the film. In an early scene, Laurie, Lynda, and Annie encounter Myers while they walk home after school; Myers drives by them in the station wagon he stole from Loomis and Marion, but his face remains hidden from view (Carpenter and Hill 22). Lynda asks, "Isn't that David Graham?" and Laurie replies, "I don't think so," but the most telling aspect of the scene comes from the script: "Laurie stares at the station wagon as it moves past. She looks directly at the shape inside. There is a quick glimpse of him, a strange pale face staring back" (22). This scene indicates that Myers wears the featureless mask as he moves through Haddonfield. His mask allows him to go unseen, at least at a distance; unseen here meaning that the mask's lack of distinguishing features signifies his status as the folk devil of the undetectable sexual psychopath.

Public identification of the mentally ill revolve around four markers: "labels…(people who are publically known as mentally ill), "bizarre behavior…poor social skills…and physical appearance" (Corrigan, Farina, and Penn and Martin ctd. in Schumacher et al 469). Yet only the first category actually provides enough information for definitive stigma; that is to say, one of the other three, or in combination, may signify a variety of other conclusions, depending on their context: for example, drug or alcohol abuse, grief, fatigue, or preoccupation with private concerns. The instability of categories of stigma make the mask (and subsequent revelation of what it hides) crucial to public perception of mental illness; the mask suggests that anyone might have a mental illness, and a threat to public health may lurk anywhere. Deinstutionalization problematizes the idea that the "mask" eventually, inevitably, must come off, exposing the "illness" for

eventual excision from the body politic. Fascination with hidden psychosis as represented in the media assures the public of the resilience of its zones of normalcy. Since violent psychosis is only definitively identifiable after its physical manifestation, "people fear becoming the next random victim of these violent, often grisly crimes" (FBI). Thus, the most terrifying aspect in such cases for the public is the impossibility of recognizing the mentally ill.

Cultural paranoia over the apparent initial normality of the mentally ill becomes a popular topic of debate during deinstitutionalization in the seventies. For example, a 1974 *Boston Globe* article entitled, "Psychologist Warns Public to Prepare for Mental Patients," quotes Dr. Samuel Grob as saying, "just because the state is kicking patients out of all the mental institutions doesn't mean that they are cured," before describing one of Grob's past patients as having stabbed two women (Dietz 5). Grob goes on to say that many patients released under the deinstitutionalization program are "harmless" unless denied their medication, which may occur due to the reluctance of pharmacies to fill prescriptions for people receiving government aid (5). Furthermore, a *New York Times* article from 1978, the year of *Halloween's* release, describes growing resistance to state policy by local law enforcement and neighborhood organizations. Neighborhood groups complain of "destructive elements" reducing residential areas to "slums;" a theme that echoes the narrative of anxiety over communal safety in *Halloween* (Sullivan B3). However, the article does not designate the location and previous condition of the areas that are becoming "slums," suggesting that the neighborhoods in question may be suburban locations similar to Haddonfield in *Halloween* (B3). According to the article, no violence is reported, and the only devastation to these locations comes from the presence

of the mentally ill (B3). Yet this fear of close proximity to the mentally ill and potential violence has another dimension; it is further embedded within another concern of the times: the increasingly high profile of the serial murderer.

During the late seventies, Sam Berkowitz, aka the Son of Sam, murders six people and injures seven others before his arrest ("Sam" 26). Yet when Berkowitz finally is brought before the public, he does not fit the image of a "lunatic," "maniac," "psycho," or any other popular epithets used to describe the mentally ill; described as having a "paunch [a] round and smooth face…short, curly hair and [a] calm manner," Berkowitz seems "an unexceptional figure unlikely to attract attention anywhere" (26-27). Indeed, only his psychosis connects the horrible murders he commits to the person authorities apprehend. During questioning, Berkowitz claims that he murdered at the insistence of "Sam," or his neighbor, Samuel Carr, whom Berkowitz alleges "lived 6,000 years ago" and communicated to him through Carr's dog (27). While the arbitrary nature of the murders as well as Berkowitz's mental illness terrified New Yorkers (and surely must terrify those who come across accounts of them today), the most arguably frightening aspect of the Son of Sam story, and others like it, is the normalcy of the murderer. For instance, Berkowitz's physical appearance, at least as described by *Time Magazine*, is that of an unassuming "everyperson," and the manner in which his capture takes place is full of banalities: a parking ticket for a "properly registered 1970 Ford Galaxie sedan" leads to a man exiting his inconspicuous apartment in Yonkers seemingly going about his uninteresting routine (31). With the public exposure of the mysterious psychotic Son of Sam as boring Sam Berkowitz at the same time as public debates over the effectiveness of deinstitutionalization are taking place, it is no wonder that popular opinion regarding

policies of releasing the mentally ill into community care meets with resistance.

President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalynn Carter, both advocates for mental health reform, enter the White House in 1977, one year after the start of Berkowitz's then ongoing attacks; the following February, Carter creates the President's Commission on Mental Health (PCMH) to address issues regarding the definition, origins, and solutions regarding mental illness (Grob 429-430). According to Otto F. Wahl and Rachel Roth, the PCMH findings in 1978 show that media representations shape public conceptions of the mentally ill; moreover, they site other studies, suggesting that, during the late seventies, television soap operas, dramas, and even films show a marked preference for less than favorable depictions of mental illness (PCMH, Cassata, Wahl, and Rivers ctd. in Wahl and Roth 601). And yet, while such studies provide useful information, they lack references to specific television shows, commercials, or other media accounts consulted, resulting in an incomplete representation of the actual images determining public stigma of the mentally ill during the period in question.

One such medium is the televised horror film, or "telefright" film, movies produced exclusively for home viewers during one or two night slots (Deal 3). During the seventies, these "telefright" films enjoyed immense popularity and many catered to popular fears of mentally ill persons, using female protagonists as victims. *Are You in the House Alone?* (1978) depicts a high school student, Gail Osborne, who is stalked by an assailant who, once caught, circumvents the courts; and *Someone's Watching Me* (1978), directed by John Carpenter, features a young woman menaced by a mysterious stalker (6-7; 161). In *Halloween*, Laurie and Tommy watch a televised rerun of the horror/science fiction movie, *The Thing from Another World* (1951), and it is the terror inspired in

Tommy by this movie about a breach of normal life by an alien creature that heightens his sensitivity such that, when he looks out the window, he is able to see "the boogeyman" (Myers) stalking them from across the street (Carpenter and Hill 42-43).

Earlier in the film, when she and Tommy drop off the keys to the abandoned Myers house for a prospective buyer, Myers secretly views her from behind the front door. For Myers, Laurie is more than a distorted image of Judith; she is Judith as bad-object endlessly haunting him. Children (or here, men who are psychically children), form their first idealizations of self or others during the primary stages of Oedipal relations, yet these images possess the same violent tendencies as a child during this phase of its growth, and are projected into physical reality (Klein *Love* 251). The excessive unease produced by such a situation heightens the child's sadism, pushing it to attack "hostile objects" in an effort the child views as nothing more than self-defense (*Love* 251). Thus, Myers' grief over his sister's murder stems from his super-ego (his parents who remove his clown mask after he walks outside) which torments him with internal remorse while externally, Laurie stands for the persecutory sister-object who must be destroyed. Indeed, *Halloween* represents Myers' "vicious cycle" of attempts to "destroy its object, result[ing] in an increase of [his] own anxiety"; attempts that end in the deaths of young women and attempts that perpetuate into infinity because the persecuting image is vague and ghostly (*Love* 251). In other words, for Myers, every adolescent female "is" the sinister and undying bad sister-object.

Although Myers stalks Laurie through the first half of *Halloween* once he glimpses her on the front porch of the old Myers house, it is her friend, Annie, who becomes his first victim. Annie "transforms" into the sister-object when she accidentally

spills butter on her clothes while babysitting a neighborhood child, Lindsey Wallace. Annie's half-nakedness recalls the primal scene where young Myers finds Judith half-naked. Unknowingly stalked by Myers, she walks to the garage to wash her clothes. Later, still wearing an oversized shirt over her underwear, she returns to the garage to get her car, finds the door locked, and goes for her keys. After getting her keys from her purse, she enters the garage again, and opens the car door, failing to notice it is unlocked. Once inside, Myers emerges from the back seat and strangles Annie, her face staring out of the car's front windshield where the rearview mirror hangs down, reminiscent of the mirror Judith sits in front of when young Myers enters to commit murder. Indeed, in the film's final twenty minutes, Laurie, concerned about the whereabouts of her friends, stumbles upon Annie's corpse lying in the upstairs bedroom of a neighbor's home underneath Judith Myers' headstone that Myers, earlier in the film, steals from the cemetery.

Previous scenes foreshadow this revelation of the deeper purpose behind Myers' return to Haddonfield. While Lynda, a friend of Laurie, and her boyfriend Bob kiss on the couch of a friend's house in the dark, Myers, now twenty-one and roaming in Haddonfield, watches them. Although this is not made clear in the film, the script calls for Myers to watch the two teenagers "on the stairway," a discrepancy which may account for why Worland assumes Judith's boyfriend is inexplicably "spared"; Myers' presence on the stairs in a scene repeating the primal scene from Myers' sixth year suggests that Judith's boyfriend escaped by chance and that Myers, aware of the similarities of the situations, intends to correct his mistake through reliving that night (Carpenter and Hill 64). In fact, the scene in which Myers lifts Bob inches off the ground

before impaling him to the kitchen wall with a butcher knife is arguably the most gruesome murder in the film, attesting to a certain determination on Myers' part to ensure that "Judith's boyfriend" does not escape. Myers then appears in the bedroom doorway concealed under a sheet and wearing Bob's glasses (a keepsake that, like Judith's headstone, serves as an attempt at reality-testing for the boy's death). As Lynda, imagining the figure as Bob playing a prank, engages in conversation, Myers stands in the doorway, exactly as he did at six years old with Judith. Lynda, still thinking the shape under the sheet is her boyfriend, pulls the covers down so that her breasts are visible, saying, "See anything you like?" Again, this also alludes back to the primal scene, when Myers picks up the clown mask off the floor and puts it on before Judith turns towards him, and, recognizing her brother, reproachfully calls his name as she attempts to cover up her breasts. Lynda, on the other hand, gets out of bed, turns away from Myers, and throws on her shirt, making her half-naked from the waist down. Only after she tries to call someone does Myers move in and strangle her.

Myers' murderous actions in *Halloween* not only represent popular conceptions of the sexual psychopath as a folk devil; indeed, in comparison with Norman Bates in *Psycho*, and looking back over the historico-cultural construction of psycho-sexual discourse and its subsequent attachment to the deinstitutionalization process, two things emerge: the inevitable selection of the mentally ill as folk devils because of their social status prior to induction as folk devils, and a *pattern* of cultural representation of violent criminality by the mentally ill as inevitable. As Mary deYoung points out, a general flaw in moral panic scholarship is the tendency to consider folk devils as selected from a general pool of candidates instead of viewing folk devils as produced for their eventual

cultural role, that is to say, "their social marginality…raises their profile as potential threats to the moral order and facilitates their discursive construction into folk devils" (deYoung 121). To consider that groups such as the mentally ill are desired members of the cultural order specifically to serve as threatening folk devils that must be expelled from society explains the paradoxical method of their representation.

For instance, the "mask of sanity" concept presents the sexual psychopath as both deviant (an obvious non-member) and difficult to identify (a subversive member). Norman Bates appears in the text and film *Psycho* as "normal" (to differing degrees in both mediums) and, through his mannerisms, as an "inevitable" culprit; moreover, as discussed earlier, his incarceration in the asylum represents security for the normative order at the same time his continued existence allows for escape and possible future social disruption. Thus, while he seems a member of the socius, his speech and actions already mark him as the only suspect for a guilt he is set up to bear in the future. Similarly, the narrative of Michael Myers in *Halloween* gives no information on him except that which corroborates Dr. Loomis' assertion that Myers is evil. Myers' return to the Haddonfield suburbs is explained only in terms of a simple lust for murder. As a commentary on the deinstitutionalization movement during the seventies, *Halloween* proposes only one answer to the issue of how to address mental illness, especially the chronically mentally ill, and psychotic cases: as criminality. And, as previously stated, a consistent discourse forms from these constructions, which is then repeated, undergoing select modifications over time, while retaining core attributes that, through the strength of their repetition, overtake any contradictory representations.

Psycho and *Halloween* both represent sites of heightened cultural transformation

in popular film and in popular culture, events in which networks of public anxieties and discourses, having intersected and influenced in many directions over time, sharply develop new modes of articulation. That the two most important films of the "slasher horror" sub-genre emerged contemporaneously with a resurgence of public fear over criminality, expanded media attention to sexual homicides, and advances in mental health care focusing on asylum closure, speaks to the importance of understanding postwar attitudes towards mental illness. The popularity of the sexual psychopath, slasher, or serial murderer in cultural productions directly affects the lives of those on whom public cinematic terror-pleasure depends: the mentally ill persons released into the social sphere as a part of the deinstitutionalization movement. Characters such as Norman Bates and Michael Myers and the exaggerated panics over mental illness and random violence they represent become superimposed onto everyday mentally ill persons in the popular Imaginary, to the extent that the public desires to experience its own fear as a manner of gaining a sense of security.

"I am Legion": Anonymity, Drifters, Homicides, and the Homeless Mentally Ill

In the intervening years between the release of the two most influential "slasher" films—*Psycho* (1960) and *Halloween* (1978)—a marked tendency developed among the public to associate mental illness almost exclusively with violence. This shift in popular thinking emerged from deinstitutionalization policy and the subsequent increased visibility of mentally ill persons in public life, and continued beyond the late seventies through the eighties. One reason for such a relaxing of public sympathy to mental health issues concerns the post-asylum life trajectories of former patients. Indeed, as touched on briefly in the previous chapter, the probability of an ex-patient's successful acclamation to a community depends on a network of social services, many of which remain inadequate or non-existent. During the time frame under discussion, federal government budget cuts transferred most responsibility for ex-patients to the state and local levels; many discharged mentally ill persons who received federal subsidies such as Medicare, Medicaid, SSI, or Public Assistance, ended up in nursing homes, boarding homes, "single-room occupancy" hotels (SROs) in impoverished areas, while others became dependent on homeless shelters, or lived entirely on the streets (Brown 94-95, 101, 108-109). At the same time, an increasing number of police procedural television shows began depicting mentally ill persons as violent criminals (Goldstein ctd in Diefenbach 289). Such discursive linkages of poverty, transience, need for legal restraint, crime, and mental illness contributed greatly to popular associations of mental illness with violence.

Another reason for the increase in associations of mental illness with violence is that, beginning in the mid-sixties and throughout the seventies into the present, an increase in a specific type of crime—serial murder, sexual homicide, or lust murder, resembling those depicted in films such as *Psycho* or *Halloween*—actually occurred, with many perpetrators "tend[ing] to kill larger numbers of victims" than at any time in United States history (Jenkins 40-41). However, murder makes up only a fraction of annual death tolls in the United States, and serial murders make up about one percent of this fraction (Jenkins 46-47). So why such a rigorous focus on serial murder, in fact, fiction, and film, and especially sexual homicide, rather than a focus on these crimes as part of a larger issue of homicide in America? And further, how does not only chronic and serious mental illness, such as psychosis, but mental illness *as such*, become bound up with issues of sex crime? The fact that women make up a majority of serial homicide victims speaks to these questions. A 1978 study found that popular periodicals portrayed males in relation to "psychoses, personality disorders, and childhood problems," while women were associated with "sexual dysfunction, neuroses, and so on" (Doherty and Young ctd in Klin and Lemish 438). Such groupings resemble representations of male internal conflict in *Psycho* and *Halloween*, as well as clearly delineate gendered roles of perpetrator/victim. In other words, the groupings present male mental illness as "active" and female mental illness as "passive."

Moving beyond statistics of actual murders, Jane Caputi notes that the idea of the possibility of sexual homicide flourishes to keep women fearful and desirous of male protection or face the consequences "that their lives are expendable and could easily be destroyed" (Caputi 118). Alongside deinstitutionalization and an interwoven resurgence

of patriarchal discourse, another factor warrants consideration: the simultaneous "heroization" of the schizophrenic person. First, however, to contextualize this third factor, it is necessary to revisit the site of its most visible articulation. In July 1957, a few months before the arrest of Ed Gein, *Dissent Magazine* published "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster" by author Norman Mailer. In his influential essay, Mailer draws a parallel between "the hipster" and "the psychopath" by stating: "It may be fruitful to consider the hipster a philosophical psychopath…interested not only in the dangerous imperatives of his psychopathy but in codifying, at least for himself, the suppositions on which his inner universe is constructed" (n.p.) Unlike Robert Bloch a few years later, Mailer theorizes on the difference between "the psychopath" and "the psychotic," noting that "the psychotic lives in so misty a world that what is happening at each moment of his life is not very real to him whereas the psychopath seldom knows any reality greater than the face, the voice, the being of the particular people among whom he may find himself at any moment," before bringing the hipster and the psychopath together in a disturbing image of extreme revolt:

> The strength of the psychopath is that he knows (where most of us can only guess) what is good for him and what is bad for him at exactly those instants when an old crippling habit has become so attacked by experience that the potentiality exists to change it, to replace a negative and empty fear with an outward action, even if—and here I obey the logic of the extreme psychopath—even if the fear is of himself, and the action is to murder. The psychopath murders—if he has the courage—out of the *necessity to purge his violence,* for *if he cannot empty his hatred*

> then *he cannot love*, his being is frozen with implacable self-hatred for his cowardice. (n.p. emphasis added)

Mailer, paradoxically, binds together the two extremes of Thanatos and Eros, and thus sees the psychopath as “the hero, deviant and rebel rolled into one” whose murderous acts might rescue humanity (Cameron and Frazer 160-161). However, as Deborah Cameron and Elizabeth Frazer point out, Mailer’s theory draws on the already firmly entrenched American myth of the individual (161). Indeed, Caputi’s text contains voluminous quotes from serial murderers that share a disturbing similarity with Mailer’s “hipster-psychopath,” such as Albert De Salvo aka the Boston Strangler (“Boy, it made me feel powerful…”), Edmund Kemper aka the Co-ed Killer (“I was making life and death decisions…”), and others (Caputi 111-112). These examples demonstrate that many serial murderers view their psychoses and psychopathologies as admirable and firmly entrenched in a masculine heroic tradition. Even Mailer writes, “the psychopath knows instinctively that to express a forbidden impulse actively is far more beneficial to him than merely to confess the desire in the safety of a doctor’s room,” that is to say, for Mailer, mental health professionals cannot understand this new figure emerging on the North American scene and any attempt to do so on their part is tantamount to restraining nature (Mailer n.p.).

Thus, with proponents of deinstitutionalization pushing for the release of all mentally ill persons, a lack of adequate federal, state, and community support leading many ex-patients into dire circumstances that only exacerbate their illnesses, and a rise in sexualized homicide alongside a growing mass media insistence on mentally ill persons as perpetrators of sexualized homicide, comes a space of discursive contradictions

regarding the public's approach to mental illness. These incompatible discourses become reconciled through four simultaneous processes: first, as discussed last chapter, disparate terms such as "psychosis" and "psychotic" are conflated into a single term, "mental illness" and its myriad epithets, such as "psycho"; second, an anonymous everyperson is superimposed over Mailer's "hipster-psychopath" in the popular Imaginary; third, this everyman suffers from varying degrees of "mental illness"—usually an inaccurate hodge-podge of symptoms interchangeably referred to as "psychopathy," or "schizophrenia," and so on; and fourth, the "psychopathic" everyperson is portrayed in the popular Imaginary as a drifter, a loner, and "heroic killer" through fictionalized cultural productions that resemble the crimes of actual serial killers.

Although the popular linking of deinstitutionalization and crime seems to date from the resurgence of the New Right in the seventies, it actually has an earlier precedent. In the mid-fifties, a contentious debate occurred as Congress considered the possibility of erecting mental institutions in Alaska (Torrey ctd. in Gottschalk 103). Conservative legislators, in their arguments against the proposal, accused mental health professionals of "encouraging immorality and…de-emphasizing personal responsibility" (Gottschalk 103). This conservative appeal to the American myth of individual self-making, aimed at dismantling the welfare state created during the New Deal Era, strangely later becomes central to liberal arguments for deinstitutionalization and individual freedom. Indeed, two legal rulings from the mid-sixties, both occurring in the same year, had an enormous impact on the subsequent growth of deinstitutionalization and its discursive link to criminality. In *Baxstrom v. Herold* (1966), the prisoner Baxstrom received a certification of insanity while he served a three-year sentence and

was thus removed to a facility for mentally ill offenders (Carluzzo 483). However, Baxstrom, now considered an asylum patient undergoing treatment, remained incarcerated beyond his prison term, an act the Supreme Court deemed an infringement of his civil rights:

> classification of mentally ill persons as either insane or dangerously insane of course may be a reasonable distinction for purposes of determining the type of custodial or medical care to be given, but it has no relevance whatever in the context of the opportunity to show whether a person is mentally ill *at all*. For purposes of granting judicial review before a jury of the question whether a person is mentally ill and in need of institutionalization, there is no conceivable basis for distinguishing the commitment of a person who is nearing the end of a penal term from all other civil commitments. (Warren qtd. in Carluzzo 484 emphasis in the original)

The "at all" in the judge's words had important ramifications for asylum patients and convicted criminals. As Laurence French comments, *Baxstrom v. Herold* "established a critical precedent for both prisoners' and patients' rights"; indeed, the concept of "patients' rights," of mentally ill persons as not just "the mad" but also "individuals" appears in another court case (French 502). In *Rouse v. Cameron* (1966), heard at the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, ruled that asylum residents, even convicted felons, possessed a fundamental "right…to receive adequate treatment" (Brown 42). Rouse's counsel had made the decision to enter a plea of "not guilty by reason of insanity," and Rouse himself was remanded to a mental asylum for treatment,

where he remained for a period longer than if he had gone to a penitentiary (Stone 23). The *Rouse* case is significant not only for its similarity to *Baxstrom* regarding landmark court decisions where mental illness and crime are linked, but also because it begs the question of what constitutes adequate treatment. This question becomes central to the case for deinstitutionalization, in that the main evidence for the closure of the asylums, beyond the introduction of antipsychotic medication, is the alleged unwillingness or inability of staff and physicians to provide fulfillment of patients' individual needs as guaranteed by law and as expected by society.

Nevertheless, while deinstitutionalization became widely touted as the answer to neglect and abuse in asylums, other issues came into play. For instance, in December, 1973, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) labor union petitioned the Illinois General Assembly to intervene in efforts by the state's Department of Mental Health (DMH) to release "more than 2,000" patients (McClory 3). Such a move, the union claimed, would cost "thousands of state employees" to lose their jobs in as little a period as six months; indeed, in January of the following year, the controversy between the AFSCME and the DMH director, Leroy Levitt, still continued amongst increasing layoffs (McClory 3; "See" 4). By April 1974, the labor union was calling for the governor's resignation (Strong S6). However, concerns of asylum staff members over job protection remained overshadowed by accounts of abuse in asylums. Influential studies such as Erving Goffman's *Asylums* (1961) depict asylum staff members as contributing to patients' illnesses instead of alleviating them. Moreover, Goffman charges that many staff members "believe that patients may strike out 'for no reason'…[or that] prolonged exposure to mental patients can have a contagious effect"

(Goffman 75). Such beliefs by staff certainly do much to facilitate stigmatization of patients as well as ex-patients, since, in the outside world, staff members almost certainly talk to family or friends about experiences with and opinions on the mentally ill. Negative views articulated to others by staff members perhaps get passed on by word of mouth as "authoritative" accounts coming from those with direct, "real world" experience. Subsequent surveys of asylum personnel, however, showed a more nuanced picture. One 1965 study found that asylum patients rated staff attitudes towards them as moving across a continuum—from severe to distant to favorable despite personal views held by staff members—casting doubt on links between a staff person's medical effectiveness and her or his opinions of mentally ill persons (Ellsworth 199-200). A later study, conducted in 1977, using the same standard methodology, concluded that the amount of information a staff member possesses regarding mental illness positively influences her or his treatment of patients (Pryer and Distefano Jr. 242). Nevertheless, negative assessments of asylum staff persisted during the sixties and seventies and were overshadowed by conflicting viewpoints on the nature of mental illness, as well as proper treatment, between psychiatry and the various medical professions subsumed within it such as nursing, occupational therapy, and social work, that operated through community care facilities (Prior 43; 78-103). These were the arenas where policy changes in favor of deinstitutionalization were determined.

Concurrently, the anti-psychiatrists, a heterogeneous group made up of mental health professionals, ex-patients, and lay persons, argued that mental illness *as such* was not a medical disease but rather a form of institutionalized social control against "normal" forms of cultural deviance. Their work focused on psychosis, in particular

schizophrenia. As Sander Gillman points out, the exact etiology and nature of schizophrenia has elicited, and continues to elicit, debate within the mental health field (Gillman 202-203). Indeed, the difficulty in pinning down exactly what causes and constitutes schizophrenia, in my view, made it especially attractive for anti-psychiatrists who wished to argue that the disease really amounts to a form of natural cultural rebellion. One of the most popular texts of the period, *The Politics of Experience* by psychiatrist R.D. Laing (1967), aided in the popularization of the "schizophrenic-hero." Written for a large audience, Laing's text went through thirteen printings between 1967 and 1974, attesting to its resonance not only with the counterculture movement of the time, but also mental health professionals, academics, and the general public; in it, he writes, "There is no such 'condition' as 'schizophrenia,' but the label is a social fact and the social fact is a *political event* [that] imposes definitions and consequences on the labeled person" (Scheff ctd in Laing 121; Laing 121 emphasis in the original). Here Laing mobilizes and expands upon the earlier work of sociologist Thomas J. Scheff, whose text, *Being Mentally Ill* (1960), posits mental illness not as a disease but rather as an action learned, internalized, and repeated.

Sheff takes a metaphorical approach to his topic, presenting mental illness as a form of "stereotyped imagery" learned by children in their early years at school and reified throughout life via mass media outlets and normalized cultural behaviors (Scheff 54-66). Scheff, in turn, molds his theory by expanding on the earlier work of psychiatrist Thomas S. Szasz, whose study, *The Myth of Mental Illness* (1960), defines mental illness as one of many "strateg[ies] chosen by the individual as a way of obtaining help from others" (Szasz ctd. in Scheff 49). Indeed, in his table of "Three Types of Rules:

Biological, Social, and Interpersonal," Sscaz lists "mental illness" under "Interpersonal: Sanctions for breaking the rules," and "Customs, standards of personal conduct" (Szasz 167). Among the many problems with Szasz's classification, one in particular stands out: the issue of why one would choose sanctioning. Szasz address this question later on when he discusses adopted and enforced cultural "roles" and what he argues is the error of psychiatry—approaching relational, cultural, and moral dilemmas as biological-medical entities (232-234). Therefore, for Szasz, mental illness is not a disease but rather a socio-cultural performance (275). The concept of mental illness as performance speaks to discussions of Judith Butler, Norman Bates, gender, and sexuality as performance in the first chapter, creating a contradiction between my earlier argument and my current rejection of anti-psychiatry. However, one last consideration still remains, which I wish to explore by returning to Scheff and Laing.

While my argument that the mentally ill remain both excluded and a crucial part of the cultural order as a way of enforcing performed normativity in others falls in line with Szasz and by extension, Scheff, the issue of stigma still remains. For example, Scheff claims, as do I, that mentally ill persons face near-impossible obstacles attempting to re-integrate into normative culture (Scheff 66-67). Indeed, according to Laing, the schizophrenic person, once so designated as such, "is inaugurated not only into a role, but into a career of patient," a social, medical, and legal network that deprives her or him of agency (Laing 121-122). Scheff also claims that stigma pushes its victims to internalize their status, largely because they are allowed no other options (Scheff 67-74). Laing also comments that once a person receives the "schizophrenic" label, even after they become "remitted" or "readjusted," and allowed to return to civic life, the "schizophrenic" label

supersedes all others (Laing 122). Thus, however dubious Scheff, Szasz, and Laing's assertions that schizophrenia exists in name only may seem today, they do present somewhat accurate accounts of the detrimental effects of the social naming process, and subsequent stigmatization.

And yet, if all the above claims of anti-psychiatry are so, then the schizophrenic nevertheless retains the one quality deinstitutionalization was meant to remove: anonymity. If the schizophrenic label retains its strength even when the ex-patient returns to public life, then no subjectivity is gained. In other words, at the same time that each person articulates madness according to her or his particular life trajectory, the stigmatization process shifts and expands to accommodate any distinguishing features of her or his social narrative; subsequently, an ex-patient merely disappears into a greater cloud of generalizations and stigmas. If they live in an SRO, then they become "the poor"; nursing home residents become "old people"; the learning disabled become "retards"; those living on the streets become "the homeless," and so on. For example, a poor, homeless ex-patient may be referred to as a "crazy homeless person." These variations of stigmas operate simultaneously, but at any given moment, the most homogenous stigma predominates due to its capacity to sustain itself as well as the most generalized qualities of other stigmas connected to it. Thus, the dynamic network of stigmas shifts hierarchically depending on environmental and interpersonal circumstances. For instance, ex-patients may simply be called "psycho," "maniac," or "basket case," among other epithets that house the real and folkloric symptoms of mental illness.[1] The anti-psychiatrists discussed here rely too much on discourses of an individual will that forcibly projects itself out into and onto the world and disregard not

only the power of discourses of stigmatization but also of the lived experience of those who suffer from mental illnesses.

Such processes are not as clear-cut as they appear. Even as ex-patients, especially the poor and homeless, disappear within, and are supplanted by, other discursive figures, a strange kind of subject-forming process operates. This subject is the anonymous "potentially dangerous individual"; this figure necessitates the integration and co-operation of the medical and legal apparatus in all its forms (Foucault *Abnormal* 34). Much like the "sexual psychopath" discussed last chapter, this figure is no one—that is, unidentifiable—and is everyone—that is, could be anyone. Yet, while the "dangerous individual" resembles the sexual psychopath, it differs in respect to its physical discursive manifestation; that is to say, the dangerous individual will be visually represented almost exclusively in terms of the poor, the homeless, and the mentally ill. When not represented by these figures, the dangerous individual will resemble the sexual psychopath; that is, it will be invisible, anonymous, unimaginable, will have no representation at all until a crime has been committed, and it is precisely crime that will continually force the popular Imaginary back to the poor-homeless-mental illness triad.

The anonymity of serial murderers is borne out in Philip Jenkins' discussion of an unacknowledged discrepancy between representations of the "chesslike intellectual pursuit by which a killer is gradually identified" in novels and films and the fact that law enforcement typically discover serial murderers "by luck, and through arrests made by officers who have no idea they are dealing with a serious offender" (Jenkins 109). Such powerful anonymity necessitates discursive networks to minimize public anxiety around the normalcy of serial killers. Since the serial killer, like psychosis, remains undetectable

until a physical manifestation (symptom-murder) occurs, the inescapably visible and physically close "poor-mentally ill-homeless" population becomes the identifiable (and so avoidable) folk devil in place of the unidentifiable serial killer. This process is maintained through mass media, novels, and films in the conflated figures of "the drifter/homeless," and "the dangerous individual." Intersected with these figures are the figures of "the criminally-insane," and "insane-criminality." And intersected with these figures are the figures of "the schizophrenic," "the psychotic," and "the sexual psychopath." These discursive networks of figures can be reassembled in various orders, and are incessantly recycled to produce a representational hypervisibility that overtakes and replaces the fearful invisibility of the serial murderer that occupies the real.

Again, these processes are most visible in mass media and cultural productions of the period. For instance, a book review of Cormac McCarthy's novel about a mentally ill, homeless, sexual murderer in the Tennessee backwoods, *Child of God*, in the December 3, 1973 *New York Times* carries the headline, " 'Daddy Quit,' She Said" (Broyard 45). The headline speaks a certain language; it suggests sexual assault, and functions as a provocation to readers, a method of getting him or her to read the review. Indeed, only near the end of the review does the author mention the headline is a quote from the novel where "a father catches his daughter behind the barn with a boy and chases him off…before he realizes what he is doing, he has taken the boy's place"; according to the reviewer, the daughter's protest ("Daddy quit"), "should go down in the annals of Southern history" (45). To understand this enigmatic claim, I want to move backwards to an earlier claim by the reviewer. He states that his empathy for the protagonist, Ballard, comes not from "a philosophy of permissiveness or any diabolist leanings" but rather

from "the fact that *he is so real*…that all of *his actions flow so naturally from what he is…his crimes originated in a reaching for love*" (45 emphasis added). The emphasized phrases reach back to Mailer's hipster-psychopath of sixteen years previous, and of violence as bound up with, and precondition for, Eros. Thus, the reviewer, Anatole Broyard, ends up sanctioning Ballard's atrocities, as well as the father's violent rape of his daughter, since the father's act of forcing the boy away does not concern his daughter's safety, but rather stems from anger at her sexual autonomy and a desire to hold power over her.

Broyard is not alone in his empathy with McCarthy's protagonist, however. Jonathan Yardley, writing for the *Washington Post* a month later, declares "Ballard [is] a sympathetic character. That may seem improbable…but his is a story about a man who loses everything yet carries on, hanging on to life" (Yardley BW1). Indeed, Yardley's piece plays a similar game of provocation as Broyard's review. While the title of Yardley's review—"Alone, Alone, All, All Alone"—suggests alienation, the column of text is interrupted by a selection from the review in larger print. The selection, while deploring Ballard's crimes as "horrible," goes on to list them: "burglary, arson, murder, and necromancy" (BW1). While Yardley might be forgiven for listing "necromancy" (sorcery) when the crime Ballard commits is "necrophilia" (sex with corpses), still, the list remains tantalizing, and its size, second only to the bold face headline, serves to visually guide the eye not from the top of the page to the review, but from the headline to the list of crimes—to pique interest—then to the text proper. Indeed, it is precisely this insistence on what to notice in the text as well as in the text's layout that produces the hypervisibility—or open recognition of activities and persons—that is culturally required.

Book reviewers do not generally possess any right to commentary on the layout of their work—these decisions remain the province of copy editors and publishers; nevertheless, repetition of certain words or phrases might produce hypervisibility through textual association. Such carefully constructed management of what is assumed interesting about *Child of God* operates in conjunction with the abovementioned deliberate re-sizing of selections of the review. Finally, both reviews, when not discussing McCarthy's prose, discuss only the protagonist, Ballard, and his alienation. Indeed, Ballard is the only character mentioned by name: six times in Broyard and eight times in Yardley (Broyard 45; Yardley BW1). Ballard is not the only significant character in *Child of God*, yet both reviewers approach the novel almost solely in terms of Ballard and his crimes. I argue that such an approach fits neatly into discourses of individuality: the murder-love dichotomy of Mailer's hipster-psychopath; the schizophrenic-hero of the anti-psychiatrists; and the invisibility of the "dangerous individual"/"sexual psychopath." Again, it is through these interconnected discursive networks that hypervisibility—the cultural ability to "see" potential homicides and "identify" possible perpetrators, to imagine them and thus, among the public, to "know" to shun "homeless-poor-mentally ill" persons such as Ballard—is produced as an antidote to the normalcy and hyper-invisibility of serial murderers.

Another method is to supplant the real with the generic tropes of horror genre, making the real recognizable as horror and horror relatable to the real. For example, a 1969 article on the Zodiac Killer reads more like the trailer for a horror movie than a journalistic account of serial murder. The article, "Zodiac Killer—Chilling Portrait of Madness," begins with the tropes of anonymity and invisibility: "Somewhere in the shady

hill country…lives an inconspicuous man. He has a fantastic secret, though, and if people only knew…" (Smith 1). The second paragraph of "Zodiac" suggests poverty by asserting that while this unknown person is "fairly bright…his spelling and grammar indicate a poor education, so he probably doesn't have a very good job" (1). Then the article invokes the trope of the "dangerous individual" or "sexual psychopath" by claiming that "he probably doesn't do too well with girls" and that he has "a sexual inadequacy," then asserting that this unknown person "*could be*" any seemingly harmless person in the readers' neighborhood, except that "when the signs are right, he goes out and finds young boys and girls…And he kills them" (1 emphasis added). The article goes on to mobilize another horror trope—of normalcy disrupted—through extensive descriptions of the normalcy and goodness of the victims, descriptions surpassed in vividness only by accounts of victims' murders (1, 26). In fact, the article reads much like the trailer for Hitchcock's *Psycho*.

The trailer for *Psycho* opens with Hitchcock on location at the set for the Bates Motel. Pleasant music plays in the background as he says, "Here we have a quiet little motel tucked away off the main highway. And as you see [it is] perfectly harmless looking, when in fact it has now become known as the scene of a crime." Ominous music suddenly plays when Hitchcock mentions "scene of a crime"; but even before he invokes the possibly of normalcy disrupted, certain signs evince themselves through the location. For instance, the non-descript Bates Motel looks like any other independently run establishment, suggesting anonymity and invisibility, which Hitchcock confirms through his placing it "tucked away off the main highway." The inconspicuous location of the Bates Motel also suggests poverty—a "mom and pop operation" in an unfortunate

location struggling in an era of chain hotels; indeed, this is one of the points of contention between Norman and his mother in both the film and the novel (Bloch 12-13). The ominous music that takes over at the mention of crime serves as a signifier of potential danger, as a "could be," since the viewer has no idea yet of the nature of the crime or the perpetrator or perpetrators. Moreover, Hitchcock deliberately plays on the anxiety most likely induced in the audience by this "could be," heightening it by calling attention to "an adjunct, an old house, which is…a little more sinister looking…and in this house the most dire, horrible events took place." The repetition of fear-inducing words and phrases—"scene of a crime," "old house," "sinister looking," "dire, horrible events"—tell the audience what to wait for, what to look for, while also bringing them a step closer to the ability to visualize crime and the type of persons who might commit it. Hitchcock then says, "Let's go inside…even in daylight this place looks a little bit sinister," bringing the audience into a space where they can gather more visual details while reminding them of the potential danger of their virtual presence in the house. Near the end of the trailer, Hitchcock announces that, "the victim, or should I say, victims, had…no conception of the *type of people* they would be confronted with in this house." I emphasize "type of people" because it returns the audience to the original site of anonymity and invisibility while violating the pact of representation it participates in; that is to say, the trailer refuses to name the killer or the crime, thus negating the hypervisibility—the replacement of the real by the imaginary—it promises. Of course, this is all to promote ticket sales, so I should say that this violation is more of a caesura or dramatic pause, since the promised hypervisibility is indeed delivered during the film through the dangerous individual Norman Bates and the explanation of his sexual-

homicidal psychoses at the film's end. However, I must note that I do not intend to claim that the "Zodiac" article is directly modeled on the trailer for *Psycho*; rather, I wish to use the obvious similarities between the two to demonstrate the ways in which disparate genres inadvertently participate in cultural discourse networks and that these networks also intersect with Cormac McCarthy's *Child of God.*

By 1973, when *Child of God* was published, the Zodiac Killer had already passed into folklore, due to the enigmatic ciphers he mailed to the police, his constant threats of crimes he may or may not commit (such as shooting children in school buses—which never happened), and mainly because he was never apprehended (Russo n.p.). The crimes began in the late sixties, consisted of random shootings of couples in deserted locations, and then abruptly ceased in the early seventies (n.p.). The Zodiac's combination of ciphers, high media exposure, anonymity and invisibility, and ability to elude capture all contributed to public fear of the dangerous individual who could be anyone or everywhere. Thus, it is no surprise that *Child of God*, a novel about a serial killer in the backwoods of the American South—an area in itself geographically and imaginatively invisible to most of the public—should draw on similar tropes.

The novel opens with an account of setting, as a wagon full of people clatters through the woods and stops at Ballard's "aged clapboard house"; although no specific place name is given, certain markers suggest the deep South: the wagon moving "through swales of broomstraw and across the hill…[past] flowering appletrees and…a log crib chinked with orange mud" observed by "a man at the barn door" strongly indicates rural America (McCarthy 5). This scene calls to mind the first paragraph of "Zodiac": "Somewhere in the shady hill country around Napa and Vallejo lives an inconspicuous

man" (Smith 1). Lester Ballard, the protagonist of *Child of God*, is an inconspicuous man: "small, unclean, unshaven" who walks with "a constrained truculence," a barely checked disposition for violence (McCarthy 5). Thus, Ballard already suggests himself as a perpetrator, a "potentially dangerous individual," in the same way that the anonymous man in California "could be" a neighbor with a propensity for murder, could be anyone, or, as McCarthy describes Ballard, could be "A child of God much like yourself perhaps" (6).

Ballard, like the Zodiac, is a "lover's lane killer," in that the majority of his victims are couples in parked cars in deserted locations. But, unlike the Zodiac, readers are left with no indecipherable clues as to motivation; instead, they are given full access to Ballard's mind and his acts, including the primal scene of his initiation into sexual murder. Ballard sneaks up next to a parked car, listens to the sounds of sex coming from inside, then looks inside the window, where "a pair of white legs sprawled embracing a shade, a dark incubus that humped in a dream of slaverous lust" (McCarthy 20). Ballard, masturbating, ejaculates onto the car just as the girl inside sees him; the boy turns, and "[f]or a moment they [he and Ballard] were face to face" before the boy gets out of the car to chase Ballard (21). As Ballard runs, he slips into invisibility, becoming "a misplaced and loveless simian shape scuttling…over the clay and thin gravel and the flattened beercans and papers and rotting condoms," unidentifiable and thus unpursuable (21). It is impossible to tell what "papers" litter the ground in this scene; however, "beercans and rotting condoms" signify a furtive and enforced shame concerning sex and inhibitions, as well as social and parental prohibitions gladly disdained through drunkenness, and prophylactics discarded afterwards, left as garbage untraceable to any

particular persons. This is the landscape Ballard crawls through, and, as he does so, he becomes a " misplaced and loveless simian shape," a version of the "dark incubus" full of "slavering lust."

I call this episode in *Child of God* a primal scene for a number of reasons, although, strictly speaking, it is unclear if the incident constitutes Ballard's first sexual experience. Furthermore, Freud identifies the primal scene as a child's voyeuristic encounter with adults' sexuality, and in *Child of God*, Ballard is older than the young adults in the car (Freud *Essays* 62). However, Freud also writes that children "inevitably regard the sexual act as a sort of ill-treatment or act of subjugation, that is, in a sadistic sense," an observation that coincides with the manner in which Ballard interprets the couple in the car (*Essays* 62). Indeed, it is through words such as "sprawled," "shade," "dark incubus," "humped," and "slaverous lust" that Ballard experiences the couple engaged in the missionary position, the most banal and normative of sex acts. That Ballard views the most culturally sanctioned type of sexual encounter in an extreme antithetical sense—as brutal and somewhat demonic—speaks to the high possibility that he is witnessing sex for the first time. Moreover, the novel states that Ballard's mother left the family and his father completed suicide; the narrative gives no other information about Ballard's relationship with his parents. Whatever else may or may not have happened takes place outside the novel's narrative trajectory, and so cannot be inferred from the paucity of information given (McCarthy 22). Therefore, within the scope of the novel's possibility, it must be concluded that the encounter with the couple in the car is Ballard's first sexual experience, making the scene into an eroticized chiasmus, with the adult Ballard as an uninitiated child and the younger couple as worldly adults. But one

more reason remains as to why this argument is the most plausible.

According to Freud, the childhood primal scene "contributes a great deal towards a predisposition to a subsequent sadistic displacement of the sexual aim," that is to say, children develop libidinal tendencies that are acted out through brutality (Freud *Essays* 62). Ballard's sexual gratification is contingent on his voyeurism and on the visceral manner in which he experiences the couple's sexuality. Ballard's orgasm occurs not only because he witnesses sex, but rather because he witnesses sex as sexualized violence, that is to say, for Ballard, sex as such is an encounter between victim and perpetrator. Thus, Ballard afterwards quickly goes from unsuccessfully attempting to rape a woman he finds passed out in the woods to re-enacting his primal scene through murder and necrophilia (McCarthy 40-42). Midway through the text, Ballard by accident comes across another car in December, this one parked at the same location of his previous encounter, and as before, he observed from a distance (81). Here I would simply like to mention the rather obvious foreshadowing of the setting—the coldness of late winter as backdrop for Ballard's act of necrophilia—and quickly move on to more pertinent and compelling aspects of this scene.

For instance, as Ballard approaches, he notices the car windows are steamed up to such an extent that he is unsure whether or not anyone is inside (81-82). Here the assumed absence of passengers is played against the darkness of the previous scene; earlier, at night Ballard saw into the darkness of the car while he went unseen by the couple, whereas now, standing outside a car in daylight, Ballard is highly visible but there is allegedly no one to see him. Visibility without being seen is still invisibility; no matter how the landscape changes. Further, the steamy car windows serve as a visual

double entendre: at first Ballard believes the car is empty because the steam makes seeing any passengers difficult, but steamy car windows also signify the presence of passengers, especially of sexual activity in a parked car. Ballard's ignorance of such a cultural sign and what it signifies attests to the "child-state" of his sexuality. When he finally sees inside the car, what he witnesses is a frozen replay of his own primal scene, "two people half naked sprawled together. A bare thigh. An arm upflung. A hairy pair of buttocks…The man lay sprawled between the girl's thighs" in a replica of the missionary position he witnessed before (82). Despite all this, or rather, in addition to it, the how and why of the second couple's death is left out of the narrative. It seems as if characters and situations are introduced purely as foils to accent Ballard personality or as vehicles for his desires. And while such a narrative strategy undermines *Child of God's* empathic case for Ballard, I can only say this is hindsight, since the text's structure fits neatly into the individualism of the period, but also articulates, as mentioned earlier, Mailer's "hipster-psychopath," for whom murder and Eros are identical.

Here, the primal scene is both re-enacted and altered. Ballard pulls the man's body from atop the woman's body "[w]ith a sort of dull loathing," before violating her (83). However, his act stems not from disgust at his desire, but rather from an aversion to the male corpse, who stands in for the boy who drove Ballard away during the primal scene. This is borne out in the way Ballard retroactively "conquers" his "rival." "The dead man's penis, sheathed in a yellow wet condom…point[s] at [Ballard} rigidly," and if, as Lacan states, the phallus is not so much a banal anatomical symbol of male virility, but rather "the signifier that is destined to designate meaning effects as a whole," (that is to say, the phallus is not physical but instead is power expressed through discourse), then

the dead man's erect penis points at Ballard in accusation of Ballard's powerlessness and the utter silence of his being reflected in his humiliation during his primal scene (Lacan 579.690). Further, and at the risk of simultaneously invoking and misappropriating Lacan, I suggest that here Ballard experiences both a Lacanian and Freudian castration complex, as a memory of his ejaculation onto the car then being chased away during his primal scene and as a present tense experience of the dead man's erect penis as a finger accusing him of impotence. This is why Ballard experiences "the dead man…watching him from the floor of the car," why he "kick[s] [the dead man's] feet out of the way" before violating the woman's corpse, then "stand[s] on the dead man's legs" as he dresses himself (McCarthy 84). Ballard's discharge is an enunciation, the outward projection of speech, the linear projection of phallogocentrism, and—to put it crudely—is an extension of his phallus which the dead man, erect but covered by a condom and figuratively and physically frozen in arrested coitus, cannot accomplish. And yet, such power and subjectivity struggles are committed through the desecration of the female body, the utter negation of feminine subjectivity, primarily through looking.

Ballard steals the woman's corpse and brings it back to the shack where he now lives; he removes her clothes then goes outside to stare at her through the window (87). Looking at women, more so than murder or necrophilia, constitutes Ballard's sexuality. For instance, while he keeps the woman's body for sexual purposes, he spends an inordinate amount of time "arrang[ing] her in different positions and go[ing] out and peer[ing] in the window at her" (97). Moreover, in another scene, when Ballard makes sexual advances towards the dump keeper's daughter and she rejects him, instead of overpowering her, he goes behind the house where he can observe her through a window

before he shoots her (110-112). If Ballard's sexuality consists primarily of necrophilia, he has his chance when he re-enters the house and shoots her again to make sure she is dead before burning the house down (113). Moreover, later on in the text, when Ballard murders another couple in a parked vehicle, he is holding a rifle and a flashlight when he surprises them by forcing open the door, indicating he has been watching them (141-143). I would like to suggest here that Ballard's voyeurism is not only a form of sexuality, but that the spatial and social distance of such a practice suggests Ballard's status as an outsider.

The first place to look for evidence of Ballard's ostracism from his community would be the opening scene where he watches his land auctioned off (6-8). But this is only the most visible scene, not the most relevant. The full force of the extent of Ballard's non-status comes when he levels a rifle at J.C., the auctioneer, who asks, "What do you want, Lester?" (8). The auctioneer's feigned incredulousness—he openly admits the bank hired him to sell Ballard's property and so J.C. must understand the awkwardness of the situation—prompts Lester to reply, "I *done told ye*. I want you to get your goddamn ass off my property. And take these fools with ye" (8 emphasis added). The text begins with a repetition; the trauma it sets up by having Ballard's property suddenly sold away is somewhat lessened by the realization (at least for a reader) that this confrontation has already happened at least once outside of the text. Moreover, such a realization signifies that Ballard, far from being a community member suddenly victimized by the vagaries of the economy, is in fact expendable—neither he nor his feelings matter at all. Ballard's outsider status is further emphasized by the auctioneer's half-joke, "Watch your mouth, Lester. They's ladies present," making Ballard respond with even harsher profanity (8).

Here Ballard's negligible status is solidified by the auctioneer: "You done been locked up once over this…Lester, you don't get a grip on yourself they goin to put you in a rubber room" (8-9). Although I want to say that Ballard has previously been forcibly placed in an asylum based on this textual evidence, such a conclusion, however probable, is not supported by the text. The auctioneer's statement could simply be a threat, or even a reference to Ballard's having been "locked up" before, "locked up" most likely meaning jail. Therefore, it is much more likely that Ballard has been jailed for violence.

However, his resistance, in conjunction with the auctioneer's statement about mental illness, as well as a random person's outburst—"He's crazy, J.C."—places Ballard at least within the discourse of mental illness. Here Ballard emerges as an "incorrigible" (McCarthy 9; Foucault *Abnormal* 58). His repeated insistence on defiance to the point of violence makes him, in the eyes of the community, insensible to "customary and family techniques of correction" such as hygiene ("he is small, unclean, unshaven"), manners ("Watch your mouth…They's ladies present"), and the law ("You done been locked up once over this"), so much so that he must be threatened with "supercorrection" ("you don't get a grip on yourself they goin to put you in a rubber room") (*Abnormal* 58). Finally, the epithet, "He's crazy," serves to justify the use of violence against Ballard. Once he is moved from a discourse of antagonism to a discourse of mental illness, with its connotations of violence and intractability or denial of reality, Ballard goes from outsider status to having no status at all, and thus becomes eligible for the violence used against him—he is hit over the head with an axe and then taken away (McCarthy 9). The recounting of Ballard's confrontation with the auctioneer is written in third person omnipotent; however, his forced removal is told in first person by an

unknown "I" who speaks to an unknown person or persons after the fact. How many people and how long after the fact remains unclear. What I would like to point out, though, is the use of orality in *Child of God* as a kind of mass media by which information and opinions (that is to say, representations) of mental illness, violence, and sexuality are merged together and conveyed. Moreover, I want to suggest that this "oral media," these unknown persons, constitute the text's "panic figures."

First, though, it is necessary to see the process Ballard undergoes in becoming the community's "folk devil." As previously mentioned, Ballard has already been restrained by the law and his confrontation with the auctioneer "confirms" his mental illness in the eyes of others (although, throughout the text it is made clear that irascibility is not Ballard's illness). Also, as discussed last chapter, a folk devil is, among other things, a figure held up by a community as an exemplar of what type of person not to be; Ballard, as a resistant outsider and a mentally ill person appears to others as everything they must not be. Moreover, Ballard defies not just the auctioneer, but also the bank that hired him to sell the land and the law whose job it is to enforce the will of the bank, since the bank acts "within the law." Here it is pertinent to ask, where is "the law" located then, if not within the sheriff? As Foucault details in *Discipline and Punish*, in the monarchal days of legal precedent, the law was personified in the sovereign, and a crime was thus not only a localized affair, but rather a crime against the sovereign personally (Foucault *Discipline* 47). Therefore, any crime, small or large, committed for whatever reason, becomes a heinous act, a "crime against the state," so to speak. Already an outsider given some former leniency (his first incarceration) according to the auctioneer who represents the law's desire, Ballard commits a "crime against the state" when he draws his rifle. The

reason for this is because there is no personal intermediary against Ballard; the auctioneer is selling the land to the highest bidder—potentially anyone—under orders by an entity called "the bank" that operates under the protection of legal *procedure*. There is no enemy except the law, and the law is simply the will of the sovereign, and here the "sovereign" is merely the both invisible and yet omnipresent legal code. Therefore, Ballard has challenged the entire community that acts according to legal code; the situation calls for his branding as a "folk devil" and subsequent expulsion, which is now allowed at any cost since Ballard is labeled mentally ill. In other words, and also mentioned last chapter, an outsider has a relationship to a community, even if it is through exclusion, since the community maintains its cohesion around exclusion of the Other; the mentally ill, by contrast, are discursively illegible except as danger to discourses of "community," their illegibility sanctions extreme actions against them.

According to Goode and Ben-Yehuda, folk devils are "either created out of thin air, making use of already-existing cultural materials, or, more often, relocated, dusted off, and attacked with renewed vigor" (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 117). The unknown "I" in *Child of God* uses forgotten incidents to retroactively "confirm" Ballard's mental illness by framing memories in such a way as to appear as precursors to the inevitable. "I remember one thing he done one time," the "I" begins, relating a story from Ballard's childhood where he bullied a younger boy; "Ballard *could of let it go*…He just stood there a minute and then he *punched him in the face*…I never liked Lester Ballard from that day. I *never liked him much before that.* He never done nothin to me" (McCarthy 18-19 emphasis added). Clearly Ballard is not a sympathetic character, but what is most striking here is the narrative structure. The story is framed as a situation similar to the

confrontation between Ballard and the auctioneer that opens the novel. Ballard should have let the situation drop, but, according to the "I," an innate deviance compels Ballard to attack the boy. Indeed, the storyteller concludes by hinting that even this story is not the beginning of Ballard's deviance ("I never liked him much before that"). Although orality differs from mass media such as print or television that Niklas Luhmann deals with in *The Reality of the Mass Media*, here the storyteller performs a social function identical to that of sensationalist television or the press regarding mental illness. Indeed, Luhmann's statement that "society stimulates itself into constant innovation…generates 'problems' which require 'solutions'" and so on to manufacture topics which "the mass media can pick up on and transform into information" parallels Goode and Ben-Yehuda's definition of the social processes underlining the production of folk devils and moral panics (Luhmann 78). The storyteller's refurbished memory strengthens the communal normative bond and rejuvenates the community by supplementing the incident between Ballard and the auctioneer, thus producing not only a discourse of Ballard and mental illness but also producing a story others can repeat to others while adding "new" stories of their own, and so on.

The text in fact demonstrates this process through a refusal to name or give any identifying features to the "I." This leaves open to interpretation how many storytellers contribute to the text. For instance, when a storyteller relates a memory of the suicide of Ballard's father, it is uncertain if this is the same "I" that tells the previous story (McCarthy 22-23). Moreover, this chapter introduces listeners and participants:

> "He didn't look so pretty hisself when Greer got done
> with him.

> No. But I don't mind honest blood. I'd rather see that than eyeballs hanging out and such.
>
> I'll tell ye what old Gresham done when his wife died and how crazy he was…No, I don't know the words to it…(22-23)

How many people are present here? Probably two: one person, a respondent, and the first person answering the second. However, the ambiguity leaves open the possibility of more: one person, a respondent, a third who interrupts with a tale of their own, and perhaps another who interjects with a question that the third responds to, but, as I find this somewhat doubtful, I want to leave the number at three at the most. Why is this so crucial to the overall effect of the novel? Another example from a story about Ballard nearly beheading a cow may clarify:

> Broke her neck and killed her where she stood. Ast Floyd if he didn't.
>
> I don't know what he had on Waldrop that Waldrop never would run him off…
>
> That reminds me of that Trantham boy had them old-timey oxes over at the fair here a year or two back…(34-35).

The text easily reads as one person telling a story to another person or a group, where one memory leads into another. However, another interpretation is possible; three people could be present. Another episode is even more interesting:

> No, I don't know how he got that pension. Lied to em, I reckon…
>
> I'll tell you one thing he was if he wasn't no soldier. He was a by

> god White Cap…
>
> O yes. He was that…
>
> I'll say one thing about Lester though…
>
> That's the god's truth…
>
> Talkin about Lester…
>
> You all talk about him. I got supper waitin on me at the house (77-78)

Here multiple persons are suggested, at least four or five. What this does is reinforce the sense of community, through the trading of stories, the mention of absent, yet well-known members of the community, in order to highlight Ballard's removal, except as a discourse for maintaining social and cultural networks. And yet, the final validation of Ballard's mental illness comes near the end of the text from the third person omnipotent narrator, who recounts that Ballard never went to prison but instead resided in an asylum "next door but one to a gentleman who used to open folks' skulls and eat the brains inside with a spoon" until his death (183). In other words, Ballard dies in an asylum, as a perpetrator of acts of insane-criminality (sexual homicide), next to a man who is criminally-insane (a murderer-cannibal). The presence of the omnipotent narrator at the end of the novel not only serves to dispel any possible ambiguity that might arise through a first person account, but also brings the text back into its present tense cultural milieu. That Ballard dies in an asylum as opposed to a prison speaks to contemporaneous concerns among the public regarding what was popularly known as "the insanity defense."

Since some mentally ill criminals went to asylums to serve out their sentences

instead of prisons, the public regarded with suspicion the new Model Penal Code of 1966, an update of the previous Durham and M'Naghten Rules for determining a defendant's responsibility for her or his crime due to mental illness. The Model Penal Code takes a rehabilitative approach to crime; its provisions are designed to treat and reacclimate offenders to society where possible, and it allows room for condemnation of offenders on a case-by-case basis, thus providing an opportunity for judges to address the individual offender as opposed to the generalized crime (Robinson and Dubber 327-328). During the sixties and seventies, however, primarily through the high amount of TV dramas and news articles featuring violent mentally ill criminals, the Code became increasingly viewed by the public as a "loophole" law, a way for offenders to circumvent punishment, leading to an erroneous belief whereby "the public and the press generalize[d] the cloak of mental illness to persons involved in somewhat bizarre criminal activities" (Gerbner, Pasewark, Steadman et al in Silver et al 64-65). *Child of God* reflects a lingering public fear of the law's inability to detect and control violent mentally ill persons, who, once caught (by fortunate accident most of the time, according to Jenkins), are remanded to the asylum, where deinstitutionalization allegedly increases the possibility of their being set free. These fears are then recursively channeled within the culture via disproportionate amount of negative representations of mental illness by television, journalism, literature, and films.

Another major factor in public distrust of the insanity defense during this period has to do with the insufficiency of the mental health outpatient infrastructure. As Gerald N. Grob points out, while chronically ill ex-patients could live outside the asylum through financial assistance like "Medicaid, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI),

Supplementary Security Income (SSI), food stamps, and housing supplements," the main source of symptom remission and eventual recovery—outpatient mental health care—was "a bewildering variety of institutions" organized and run by disparate groups, which led to poor care and left many chronically mentally ill persons "to survive in homeless shelters, on the streets, and even in jails and prisons" (Grob 428). Community care programs, whether privately or governmentally funded, must compete for resources, and so, even though they share the same goals, circumstances force them to bolster their efficiency at the cost of other equally deserving programs. And yet the result of such situations is that ex-patients encounter difficulties receiving proper treatment, while perhaps even receiving benefits that pay for medication, food, housing, and other necessities. However, H. Russell Searight and Paul Handal do not share Grob's pessimism. Indeed, they find that, over the years, "[t]horough reviews of community treatment have found [varieties of community care] to be associated with less hospital recidivism…less expensive…associated with increased employment and improved social functioning" (Searight and Handal 153-154). Only when community care is discontinued, they write, do ex-patients suffer relapses (154). Searight and Handal are not exactly in opposition to Grob; in fact, I suggest that they are saying almost the same thing.

Although Grob argues against community care due to lack of organization while Searight and Handal argue that community care has demonstrably positive results, in the framing of their arguments they both agree that access to services is fundamental. Grob blames lack of cooperation between community agencies for ex-patients' relapses and subsequent reduction to the margins of society; Searight and Handal assert that as long as community care remains operational, ex-patients get better, but if care is interrupted, then

relapse occurs. “Operational” and “interrupted” may mean different things depending on context. For example, one type of agency may provide therapy or even simply companionship with other ex-patients, an important tool in mitigating stigma. Yet this same agency cannot provide a stable address, which is essential for applying for jobs or even as just part of the process of reintegrating into society. And the benefits an ex-patient might receive at a stable address do not cover living expenses if she or he cannot obtain—or is fired from—a job due to stigma that leads to an inability to afford public transit to therapy. Such situations alter the definition of an “operational” agency and of an “interruption” of community care. Therefore, many ex-patients exhaust their supply of medication and their symptoms return, over time becoming even more pronounced.

In an effort to address these and other issues, then-president Jimmy Carter formed the President’s Commission on Mental Health (PCMH), deliberately altering the more widely used “mental illness” to “mental health” to openly signify a new approach based on “the role of the environment, social services, and prevention” as opposed to the isolation of chronic illness (Grob 430). Carter’s intervention in deinstitutionalization comes out of the work First Lady Rosalynn Carter began when she was First Lady of Georgia from 1971 to 1974 (Short et al 70). Her involvement in the deinstitutionalization movement led to the implementation of an asylum-to-community transition network that influenced many out-of-state policies on mental health (Smith ctd. in Short et al 70). As a member of the PCMH, she helped draft a report recommending federal and local intervention in the promotion of mental health among marginalized cultural groups, itinerant laborers, children, the elderly, and the disabled, as well as calling for reforms in insurance, funding for scientific investigation, and popular awareness (Grob 441-443).

However, concerning stigma, the PCMH simply commented that more research into public perceptions of the mentally ill was required (443). And yet, the PCMH, and the resulting legislation, the Mental Health Systems Act, achieved a great deal when viewed in its historical and cultural context. To approach mental illness as part of a social and cultural network appropriates the foundational ideologies of anti-psychiatry (that ill individuals are produced by an ill society) while discarding the myth of the psychotic individual-hero (Prior 136-138). Such a move should be looked upon as brave in the context of the seventies, when, as Douglas Mossman puts it, the cult of hyperindividualism promulgated the American popular landscape, especially in such successful films as *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1971), and *Dirty Harry* starring Clint Eastwood (1971) among others (Mossman 76). Mossman is correct when he identifies the American cultural and institutional propensity of the time to admire "independence and the capacity for conscious choice," but he goes wrong when he says that "changes in U.S. civil commitment laws and state funding have limited state powers to *detain* and *confine* America's mentally ill citizens," leading to "[m]entaly ill homeless persons [that] are now *free* to *reject* society's norms, to *make* unwise *choices* about their lifestyles, and to display overt signs of mental illness without being subject to involuntary hospitalization" (76 emphasis added).

First I want to address Mossman's assertion that the state is constrained in its ability to "detain" and "confine." While he correctly cites the tightening of legal requirements for forcible hospitalization to a criteria based on the rather ambiguous phrasing, "danger to self or others," I have argued throughout this chapter that ex-patients, especially the homeless, are more often than not, "detained" and "confined,"

although the nature of such activities involves a revolving door policy to jails and prisons. Second, I would like to speak to Mossman's claim that the homeless mentally ill are "free" to "reject" society and that they act upon this freedom by "mak[ing]" certain "choices" regarding their actions. A homeless person is not only someone without a stable domicile; they are cut off from all positive cultural, economic, legal, and political ties to society. They exist in an antithetical state to their environment—to space, place, architecture, as well as people; indeed, the homeless (and more so the homeless mentally ill) are the folk devil *par excellence*, the "ideal" example of what sort of citizen not to become. Therefore, the homeless mentally ill could be considered not so much "free" to "reject" society, but rather discursively and physically "detained" and "confined" in a situation that both condemns the subject and constricts any rehabilitative possibility for the subject, that is to say, it envelops the subject in complete, irrevocable stigmatization. This stigmatization eliminates any "choices" for homeless mentally ill persons—any, that is, except "unwise" ones, reflected in behavior patterns that signify and guarantee the deteriorization of any past progress towards recovery, thus ensuring that this particular folk devil remains to play its "proper" role in the cultural and social order.

Mossman's pronouncements participate in what Bruce Link, Howard Andrews, and Francis Cullen term the "medicalization of deviance," the expansion of psychiatry into the legal realm (Monahan, Steadman et al qtd. in Link et al 277). And yet, as we have seen, the justice system and the mental health system have been intertwined almost since the latter's inception. As Foucault points out, as far back as the early nineteenth century, psychiatry moved into the legal realm as commentators on criminal acts as indicators of madness (Foucault *Psychiatric* 249). Therefore, Mossman actually argues

for an *expansion* of the psychiatric-juridical network, to the extent that the homeless mentally ill could be remanded to institutions where, without any social ties, they would most likely remain indefinitely. Indeed, even Link cites research from the late seventies and into the eighties that argue in favor of a correlation between former asylum patients and incidents of violence (Link et al 275-276). Yet to me such studies seem more a heightening of the hyperindividualist ethos of the Reagan era and a corresponding reversal of the socio-cultural approach of the previous Carter administration. As is well known, as incoming president, Ronald Reagan reversed outgoing president Carter's Mental Health Systems Act in 1981 (Thomas 9). Reagan's move effectively undercut nearly all federally sponsored support of mental health advocacy. Moreover, as Alexandar Thomas points out, during this period there was general alarm among mental health practitioners of all types that homeless ex-patients were lacking proper care and commonly being routed into the legal system; therefore, many practitioners turned to supporting a move to relax civil commitment laws (10). The studies cited by Link and his colleagues and Mossman's policy suggestions may be reflections of a deeper anxiety among mental health professionals regarding treatment issues for homeless mentally ill persons rather than belief in discourses of asylum closure and the release of violent mentally ill perpetrators into the public.

Such reactions are not surprising, however, considering the culture of moral panic regarding mental health policy as covered in the mass media. According to Thomas, the majority of reportage on issues of mental health policy focused on an itinerant underclass and crimes by mentally ill persons released from asylums, a practice that fit well with the Reagan administration's insistence on the immediate excision of groups represented as

antagonistic to the populace (Thomas 12; Gans, LaFond and Durham ctd. in Thomas 12). For example, the discourses of poverty, mental illness, and "the dangerous individual" come together in the specific case of Joyce Brown, a dispossessed woman who was forcibly removed from a wealthy community and placed in an asylum (Reeves ctd. in Macek 172). Although Brown's name is well known, it is only because of her cultural ostracism; the fact that her existence was overtaken by these three discourses is apparent in the fact that only her plight caused her name to become known. While her poverty was evident, her mental illness and any violent proclivities were not; yet her incarceration in an asylum removes her from society while simultaneously stigmatizing her. Thus, Brown also recedes behind discourses of anonymity, which are also tied to poverty, mental illness, and potential violence—all of which are anti-social subject positions, or, put more accurately, criminalized subject positions. She becomes the anonymous, omnipresent *threat* identified and removed, thus fulfilling the promise of moral panics surrounding the deinstitutionalized mentally ill.

Concurrently, allegorical and realistic representations of violent criminality and mental illness in popular culture reached an unprecedented peak, especially within horror cinema. Between 1979 and 1981, a total of one hundred and ninety-eight horror films were released, including some of the most famous "slasher" films: *Friday the 13th* (1980), *Prom Night* (1980) and *Maniac* (1981) (Prince 243). Between 1986 and 1987 a total of one hundred and seven films were released (243). However, one of the most disturbing films of the period is the critically acclaimed *cinema vérité* horror film, *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (1986), precisely because it eschews all the excesses of the genre. And since *Henry* "begins by promising access to the mysterious and particularized madness of

a criminal [but] ends by revealing the permanent deferral of this depiction," I suggest the most appropriate and rewarding method of approaching the film is to start and the end (Pence 530).

The final frame in *Henry* depicts a bloodstained suitcase lying by the side of the road in a sparsely populated rural location. A few moments previously, Henry takes the suitcase from the trunk of his car after waiting until the road is empty of passing cars. His car is pulled off to the side of the road, and, the second time cars pass, he is staring down into his open trunk; the first time a car passes, he is looking down at the closed trunk. Taken together, the incident signifies apparent normalcy and anonymous threat. While the passing drivers see someone with car trouble (if they look at all), the viewer is privilege to the possibility a dead body is in the trunk, a possibility verified by Henry's attempts to appear as an inconspicuous driver with car trouble and by the bloodstained suitcase he leaves behind. The suitcase, abandoned among grass and weeds signifies to the viewer a hidden malignance behind the everyday.

Drivers pass objects dumped onto side roads and highways and pass stalled cars on a daily basis; yet in *Henry*, everything contains significance; the world of violence also infiltrates the prosaic world, thus no one and nowhere is safe. Even Becky, whom Henry rescues from a rape attempt by her brother, Otis, and who, in the final minutes of the film is held out as Henry's potential love interest, becomes a victim, since it is her body in the bloodstained suitcase Henry leaves by the side of the road before driving away. In the filmic narrative, the suitcase is thus both unidentifiable in terms of ownership and in terms of the body inside and identifiable as part of a crime and as a random object; yet any connections possible with the suitcase are overshadowed by the

ambiguities surrounding it. Indeed, one of the unique features of *Henry* is the film's simultaneous documenting of an individual's crimes while simultaneously presenting these crimes in such a way as to impress upon an audience the impossibility of identification of perpetrators in the real world. The contradictory yet interlinked functions of the camera in *Henry*, I argue, serve as the film's panic figure. As an "entity" possessing both the filmic narrative's "hidden" knowledge of the perpetrator, and as deliverer of the foreknowledge of danger hidden within the everyday through the film-as-cultural-product, the camera attempts to convince an unwary audience of a discursive presence personified as Henry.

For example, in an earlier scene that perhaps foreshadows the film's final moments, Henry and Otis take a nighttime drive and park on a shoulder underneath a bridge. Otis props up the front hood so they appear to have car trouble. When a man stops and asks if they need help, Otis, laughing, shoots him. Henry and Otis drive off. The film cuts to the following day, with Otis and Henry in a park. Otis is watching a video of a kill, while Henry instructs him in how to murder without getting caught. "If you shoot somebody in the head with a .45 every time you kill somebody, it becomes like your fingerprint, see," Henry says while eating a takeout cheeseburger, "But if you strangle one, one you cut up, one you don't, then the police don't know what to do. They think you're four different people." This scene is instructive not only for Otis, but for the viewer as well; it is designed to cause reflection about real crimes they may have heard or read about. The viewer is asked to wonder how many serial killers may be operating at any given time while their crimes appear to be unrelated. *Henry* and Henry also pose the possibility that the large number of unrelated and unsolved homicides could be the work

of one person. Such a proposition introduces a terrifying amount of randomness and ambiguity into a seemingly safe and stable culture, that is to say, a moral panic regarding crime and the effacy of law enforcement, both important issues to Far Right conservatives in search of issues to sway an American public fearful of allegedly violent mentally ill persons in their midst.

The usurpation of notions of stability and safety in *Henry* are also performed on a symbolic level, for example through the prop of the takeout cheeseburger. The cheeseburger anchors the scene in a tone of casualness more unnerving than the violence Otis watches through the video camera. In comparison to the brutal hyperbole of contemporaneous horror films, *Henry* insists that horror is irreducible to masks or chainsaws, props that encourage affective distance in the viewer regarding onscreen violence; rather, in *Henry*, horror is a *naturalized* component of the everyday. The film's insistence on viewer acceptance of the transient nature of notions of security begins even from the opening scene. Birdsong plays as the camera pans out from a woman's face, as if she is lying peacefully on the grass, her eyes open, gazing off-camera. As the camera continues to pull back, the viewer sees large amounts of blood, and when the camera moves out into full frame, the viewer finally sees that the woman is naked. Whereas only moments ago, the viewer was granted the option of assuming the woman might be seriously wounded, now no doubt exists that she is dead, undoubtedly murdered. As Karla Oeler notes in her study of murder scenes in cinema, *A Grammar of Murder*, "murder can reduce the victim to a mere narrative function or symbol; conversely, the murder victim can appear more real or important precisely through being killed off" (Oeler 194). As I read Oeler, this second option requires a collapsing of the affective

relation between film and viewer, some sort of affective investment in the victim, a belief that the victim is a central character in the filmic narrative. In the opening scene of *Henry*, the viewer is confronted with a victim as victim, with no previous role in the narrative; the victim's role as a depersonalized "murder scene"—as a composite of body, grass, birdsong, and camera—removes all possible affective identification, thus leaving only Oeler's first premise available. The viewer has no choice but to view the woman in the opening scene as a narrative device or symbol within the film's as yet undetermined logic.

And yet the calculated spectacle of this scene is immediately undermined as the film cuts to a close up of plates at a symbol of Americana—the small town diner. The film pushes for a sense of comfortable nostalgia as the viewer sees a hand holding a check for a just-finished meal, sees a hand place a few coins on the counter as a tip. However, as the camera pans out to show the waitress—taking the anonymous individual's money, his face remains hidden. The camera follows behind him as he walks to his parked car, holding out an expectation of seeing his face reflected in the car window. This expectation is denied; his features are unclear in the glass and his face revealed only when he enters the car. The film then cuts to another murder scene—this time a liquor store owned by an elderly couple (another symbol of Americana: the "mom and pop" store), showing them as victims of a shooting. Birdsong is replaced by a voiceover of screams and gunshots, effectively removing any nostalgia a viewer might have felt and replacing it with the realization that the man the camera is following is a serial killer and that his actions are utterly random. Indeed, the woman in the film's opening scene appears to have been stabbed, while the elderly couple were shot,

demonstrating the method of escaping detection Henry will later describe to Otis.

Another way the film demonstrates Henry's method is by having the majority of the murders occur off-camera and showing only the murder scene with an accompanying voiceover. Only the crimes Henry commits with Otis are shown as they happen. Here I want to return to Oeler once again and address another salient point she makes, that "the murder scene…starkly reflects the predicament that the genre film shares with the mass culture out of which it emerges: any claim to a precarious singularity and indispensability must be made within a system based on disposability and sameness" (133). As a horror film, *Henry* is unique; indeed, as an example of the horror sub-genre of the "slasher" film, *Henry* is exceptional. Considering the paucity of visual murders as opposed to visual murder scenes, *Henry* indeed walks the precarious line Oeler refers to. Despite its originality, *Henry*, as a film, must succumb to the imperatives of the genre on some level in order to be recognizable to an audience, and to perform its cultural work of infecting the everyday with a sense of quiet panic. This, I believe, is why the crimes Henry and Otis commit together occur onscreen while Henry's solitary crimes find representation only as voyeuristic camera pans of murders already committed. Moreover, Oeler's remarks connect back to Henry's lecture to Otis regarding criminal method. "What they [the police] really like, what makes their job so much easier, is a pattern," Henry instructs, "what they call a modus operandi…The most important thing is to keep moving." Henry's status as drifter, the arbitrariness of his lifestyle and criminal method, speaks to the fundamental disposability of the human body despite the façade of singularity a person attaches to her or his own. In *Henry*, the uniqueness of method comes from pure chance and has no relation to any identifying physical, cultural, or

social traits of a victim. Thus, only the crimes emerge as singular in relation to the pattern police will use to apprehend Henry. Such tensions between the genre of detection methods as presented in police training manuals and taught in criminal justice classes, and the criminal acts that subvert the genre from within while also being readable as crimes, participate in the suggestions that the film makes as to the transience of viewer assumptions of safety and to viewer desires to be shown how to reliably identify the "dangerous individual." This is especially relevant to instances where a victim is rendered unidentifiable through decomposition or a perpetrator is unidentifiable.

Therefore, *Henry* also participates in debates regarding statistics of serial homicide during the eighties. In 1983, a Congressional committee formed by Senator Alen Specter asserted that, in 1981, "serial murders represented about a fifth of all American homicides," a notion that at the time seemed plausible in part due to the much-publicized confessions of incarcerated serial murderer, Henry Lee Lucas (Jenkins 60, 64). Lucas' media pronouncements form a loose basis for the film, *Henry*; Henry, like Lucas, is an itinerant drifter, and Lucas supposedly, like Henry, "chose his victims randomly [using] any available weapon or means of violence" (Knox 3; Pence 525-526). At the time Lucas claimed to have murdered in excess of two hundred people, and was widely believed to have done so, until the release of the Lucas Report by Texas Attorney General Jim Mattox, an investigation of Lucas' life and actions from 1975 to his capture in 1983, which exposed many of Lucas' claims as fabrications (Knox 1; Mattox 1-5). However, as Sara L. Knox points out, some prominent law enforcement officials such as the Texas Rangers—whom Lucas led to many locations where he allegedly committed crimes—vigorously stood by Lucas' confessions because doing so removed large amounts of

unsolved homicides from their files; moreover, the "legend" of Henry Lee Lucas and the extreme fear and notoriety associated with the number of his victims, continues in spite of the lack of corroborating forensic evidence to support claims that even he later admitted were false (Knox 1). Such a scenario—where stories about incidents supplant incidents—becomes possible in confessional situations because confession brings with it identification, re-establishes discourses of a strict divide between the horrors of the world and the everyday world, re-introduces notions of stability and order, patterns that reveal the patterns inside randomness (1).

Sensationalism should be considered here as well; the cultural desire to vicariously participate in excess from the secure space of a theatre, a seat in front of a television, or behind the pages of a book requires excesses. Moreover, the authority of official institutions, in this instance the legal representatives who complete the official documents that stand in place of an event's particulars, plays a large role in the production of "truth." Lack of evidence notwithstanding, only another official document can call a closed case, a "resolved" event, into question. Even Lucas' own confession of the falsity of his confessions makes little difference compared to legal authority and cultural desire. Such confusion becomes understandable only if the notion of hyperindividualism—for so long tied to the idea of the serial murderer—is replaced by an idea of discourse. The logocentric appeal of Lucas' pronouncements are overtaken by the discursive fields in which discourses regarding confession and "truth" become possible; this is "a power relationship…[requiring] the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console,

and reconcile" (Foucault *Sexuality* 61-62). The cultural function of the confessional often holds more value for a culture than the speech act itself or even the specifics of which the confession is comprised. And *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*, is a fictionalized "true crime" narrative extensively concerned with undermining such cultural functions.

Negative repetitions of mentally ill persons as remorseless and homicidal psychotics randomly preying on innocents—as presented in *Child of God*, and *Henry*—tend to overshadow more accurate and sympathetic portrayals in popular culture and thus encourage stigmatization (Wahl 106-107). However, Stephen Harper argues that critics engaged with issues surrounding mental illness and stigma should adopt a more nuanced approach. In particular, he charges both Patrick Fleury's *Madness and Cinema* (2004) and Otto F. Wahl's *Media Madness* (1995) with applying a universalist method to a wide variety of genres and types of cultural productions (Harper 40). Moreover, he faults Wahl in particular for promoting "conservative notions about the cultural value of popular texts" as well as "assum[ing] that realism is among the aims of any media text" (40, 52). Although the debates surrounding the legitimacy of "realism" as popularly understood have here been examined in a specific context, Harper brings up a valid point. Wahl's text may potentially serve as a "conservative rhetoric of moral panic over popular culture" instead of working against moral panic over violence and mental illness (41). Yet, while Harper correctly articulates suspicion of any project aiming for a totalizing principle or critique, he misses Wahl's most salient point: the discrepancy in the *amount* of negative representations. As Harper points out, to argue for the abolishment of a single representation borders on censorship and constitutes a naïve and idealistic approach to aesthetic production; however, a lack of, or an imbalance in, the diversity of

representations does undoubtedly play a large role in popular opinion towards marginalized groups.

For example, while the psychopath-hero has an extensive legacy of representation, with the characters of Ballard and Henry representing a small fraction, a large amount of damage can be done to efforts towards successful integration of mentally ill persons back into the public sphere. As preciously mentioned, the popularity of the psychopath-hero as a cultural icon results in difficulty finding housing, employment, and social support for mentally ill persons, in turn leading to exacerbation of current symptoms or the development of new and possibly more serious conditions. The psychopath-hero and the serial murderer serve certain cultural functions which have come about as a way of understanding not only social changes emerging from deinstitutionalization, but as a way of coming to terms with broader changes as well. While I do not endorse aesthetic censorship of any kind, I fully agree with Wahl and Harper, in that a more nuanced awareness of differences between the real and claims to realism should be encouraged. In other words, rather than the cultural production, it is the *cultural function* of popular representations of mental illness that should be addressed.

"The Most Dangerous Game": Mindhunters and Psychopaths in Thriller Film and Fiction

In the wake of the success of *Halloween*, slasher horror films enjoyed an unprecedented popularity among mainstream audiences during the eighties (Prince 243). However, by the end of the decade, slasher films suffered a serious decline in popularity at the box office. In 1987, only one slasher film made the annual list of top one hundred highest grossing films, whereas six films appeared on the list the previous year (Domestic Grosses). At the same time, psychological horror films that featured minimal violence or gore in favor of more stylized cinematography became popular with audiences. Popularly termed "thrillers," these films—for instance, *Silence of the Lambs* (1988 novel; 1991 film)—not only secured commercial and critical success, but also became widely influential in American popular culture.[1] And yet, while graphic depictions of violence in cinema declined, representations of mental illness as synonymous with violent crime increased in horror fiction.

In his essay, "The Cultural Work of Serial Killers," Leonard Cassuto also notes a lack of violence in the genre, attributing this curious absence to both fiction and cinema. For instance, he states that the reason for the lack of depictions of graphic violence in the serial killer genre stems from "audience identification…[the] tangled forms of allegiance—to killers and victims" (222). Citing *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* as an example, Cassuto argues that *Henry's* openness to depicting murder for pleasure disrupts the usual function of the camera as a device which sculpts a film's visual field in an effort

to affectively link film and audience, and in doing so sacrifices any potential audience identification with Henry (222). Moreover, he asserts that the consequences of such a stylistic choice explains why Thomas Harris presents serial killer Hannibal Lecter as "motivated exclusively by self-preservation or revenge"; such representations of affect humanize the serial murderer and encourage audience identification (222). While I agree with Cassuto on these points, I argue that the general turn towards comparatively less brutality in mainstream horror is driven more by previously discussed issues pertaining to the horror genre: deinstitutionalization; law and mental health as a medico-judicial apparatus for containment of mentally ill persons; public policy as enacted by the federal government; and moral panic regarding psychopathy and psychosis.

To his credit, Cassuto touches on these same concerns, albeit briefly. For example, he makes the fundamental connection between deinstitutionalization during the Reagan era and the corresponding increase in popular representations of serial murder (226). However, a close reading shows his claim that these cultural productions discursively replace "incurable mental cases for treatable ones"—that is to say, they associate serial murderers with psychosis when in fact most serial killers are psychopathic—does not apply.[2] While "psychosis" and "psychopathy" remain frequently confused in popular culture and by the public, psychopathy remains the dominant representational mode of the period. Therefore, it is not wholly an erroneous cultural attachment of psychosis to serial murder that is at issue. Rather, the issue is the growing popular use of "the psychopath" as shorthand for mental illness as a whole and as a discourse in popular culture. The reason for this shift from psychosis to psychopathy—from Michael Myers to Hannibal Lecter, for example—is that the psychopath's most

anxiety-producing traits become especially needed to perform a specific type of cultural work during the "law and order" Reagan era. In other words, the rationality of the psychopath makes her or him a perfect folk devil for a conservative backlash against previous rehabilitative mental health efforts and the move towards mental illness as moral decline in need of legal restraint—in other words, mental illness as a synonym for criminality. Indeed, for any discourse to perform its cultural work effectively, it needs to operate in as wide a field as possible. Thus, the excesses of the slasher sub-genre must abdicate cultural dominance in favor of psychological horror (thrillers), a sub-genre whose reduced violence, as well as more complex plots and characters, can operate among a wider variety of demographics. Broadly speaking, however, it is discourses of the psychopath represented in thrillers as *incurable* by conventional mental health practices, and so *sometimes human enough to identify with but too non-human to identify,* which will dramatically contribute to the stigmatization of mental illness during the eighties and early nineties.

As the eighties developed, the Reagan Administration made known its position on mental health by repealing the reform-oriented Mental Health Systems Act signed into law by the previous Carter Administration, and curtailing funding for training and research programs by the government-sponsored National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) (Grob 449; Pardes 17-18). Moreover, federal mental health funding at the state and local level shifted to an "emphasis…on the provision of services via the private sector" which led to the potential for "substantial profits to be made in mental illness, assuming the patient had adequate health insurance" (Thomas n.p.). And yet, persons most in need of treatment—those with chronic mental illnesses—were least likely to

receive treatment precisely because the extreme and often debilitating nature of their illnesses precluded their achieving social subjecthood to the level of becoming eligible for health insurance (n.p.). Chronic mentally ill persons unable to receive treatment, as discussed last chapter, often became homeless and thus came into contact with law enforcement. Indeed, civil commitment laws for involuntary incarceration in many states were broadened considerably during this period (n.p.). However, as Alexandar Thomas also points out, such legislative revisions "were not intended to make it easier to commit the *dangerous* mentally ill. Rather, the new laws had more general application and made it easier to commit those only considered a threat," (Thomas n.p.; Lafond and Durham ctd. in Thomas n.p. emphasis in the original). The malleability of the term "threat" allowed the judicial system to capture a large portion of the mentally ill population, regardless of whether or not such persons constituted a clear and present danger to public safety.

The increasing frequency of law enforcement intervention in the lives of deinstitutionalized mentally ill persons led to what Erickson and Erickson term "transcarceration," a process dating back to the seventies (Erikson and Erickson 37). Ex-asylum patients, released from direct medical care yet without adequate community support systems, increasingly ended up in jails, leading Erickson and Erickson to conclude that the mentally ill were never released, so to speak, but rather that authority "to monitor and control" mentally ill persons simply shifted from psychiatric institutions to the penal system (39-40). A result of inclusion of mentally ill persons within the criminal justice apparatus concerns documentation of social status. Just as institutionalization produces a stigma of "mentally ill" for ex-patients, the judicial system

produces a similar stigma of "convicted felon." Such social stigmas exist not only as discourses but also as official documents and records stored in files and databases for ready access in the future by employers, landlords, social workers, and, perhaps most damaging in the current context, law enforcement agencies. These stigmas intersect neatly with contemporaneous media emphasis on a threat of "the growing homelessness problem of the early 1980s and the possibility of criminal acts committed by deinstitutionalized patients," thus enabling the New Right to use public anxiety as a means to push through its "law and order" policies (n.p.). Now I wish to look at this complex process in detail through a close reading of a prominent example: the broadening of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) jurisdiction through the creation of a nationwide network of criminal records.

In 1983, true crime author Ann Rule, John Walsh, FBI Behavioral Science Unit Chief Roger Depue, and former police officer Pierce Brooks appeared before Congress to apply for federal funding to develop the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC), a centralized, FBI-run agency designed to compile and interpret details from extreme crimes around the nation in order to facilitate arrest rates as well as to produce innovative methods for anticipating future crimes (*Serial* iii; Burgess et al 102).[3] According to the proposal, NCAVC would house the Violent Crime Apprehension Program (VICAP), a "data information center" for pattern analysis of "[s]olved or unsolved homicides or attempts, especially those that involve an abduction," crimes that "are apparently random, motiveless, or sexually oriented; or are known or suspected to be part of a series," and cases of "[m]issing persons…[u]nidentified dead bodies where the manner of death is known or suspected to be homicide" (Burgess et al 117). While the

purpose of NCAVC and VICAP appears noble on the surface, I wish to note that proposed funding for the project (an initial one million dollars per annum) comes at a time when social programs (including those benefitting mentally ill persons) are being cut back or eliminated (*Serial* 34). Further, I wish to also note that the FBI project proposal relies for its air of nobility on the very same discourses of anonymity, panic, "deviant" sexuality, and stigmatization of mental illness under discussion throughout this study.

Committee Chairperson Senator Arlen Specter's opening remarks classify "serial murders [as]…a distressing and unique phenomenon on the rise…a pattern of murders committed by one person, in large numbers with no apparent rhyme, reason, or motivation" and Senator Pauline Hopkins' opening remarks state that two years earlier, "as many as 3, 600 murders were classified as random and senseless" (*Serial* 1, 11). However, such statements regarding this "unique phenomenon" simply rework early twentieth-century and postwar discourses of the sexual psychopath. For example, Rule describes serial murderers as highly mobile, "charming…of at least normal intelligence…[sometimes] brilliant, highly manipulative and literally without conscience" (*Serial* 14-15). Here Rule's definitions remind one of descriptions of pathology in the definitive text on psychopathology, Cleckley's *The Mask of Sanity* (1941; 1982), which had in fact just been reissued the previous year. Cleckley says that the psychopath is "not…a *complete* man at all but…something that suggests a subtly constructed reflex machine that can mimic the human personality perfectly," and that while the psychopath "is in degree as maladjusted…as the psychotic patient, [Cleckley does] not believe there are similar reasons to consider him legally irresponsible or morally blameless" (Cleckley 228). Such a quasi-state places the psychopath both within the purview of the law (part-

human and therefore culpable) but also beyond the law (a "reflex machine" that stores and repeats stimuli-data). The ambiguity surrounding a being that reminds one of a machine because it reminds one of a human is quite clear here. That is to say, the psychopath is no one and, via mimicry of affect, "is" everyone. And yet, while Cleckley views the psychopath as an equally deserving clinical problem as other chronic mentally ill persons, he refuses to place the psychopath outside of legal jurisdiction. Presumably he does so because the psychopath possesses lucidity of thought, and in fact, Cleckley states this on the previous page (227). Rule, in her brief description of the serial murderer, says the same thing when she uses the words "charming…manipulative…without conscience."

Rule's statements during the *Senate Hearings on Serial Murder* allow for closer readings of her deft contributions to moral panic regarding violent crime and mental illness. After her description of the transient nature of serial murderers, Rule brings up perhaps the most infamous of all modern serial murderers, Ted Bundy. Bundy, Rule states, probably murdered a total of seventeen women during his time spent in Seattle and Colorado before his apprehension by police for a minor traffic violation; he escaped and fled to Florida where he murdered two women and severely injured three others before his arrest, but even then officers remained unaware of the enormity of Bundy's crimes (*Serial* 15-16). Thus far, Rule presents an image of a man who seems almost unstoppable by law enforcement, an individual who can elude detection even while in police custody. The implications of such persons—normal in appearance yet murderous, whose physical and affective banality confounds those specifically trained to detect criminals among ordinary persons—certainly must facilitate public desire to preemptively recognize "the

mask of sanity," especially given the extensive media coverage of Bundy and other serial offenders.

Before going further, I wish to comment on an admonition to moral panic scholars by David Garland. Garland calls for a more judicious use of the term "moral panic" when describing cultural phenomena based on what he sees as a propensity for scholars to "attribute too much efficacy to 'panics' and too little to rational reactions to underlying problems" (Garland 16). Garland is certainly correct to point out what he distinguishes as panics "based entirely on unsubstantiated claims" as opposed to perhaps more prosaic, yet verifiable events that quite rightly belong in the public eye without any accompanying discursive hyperbole (16). Indeed, a very real difference exists between the "sexual psychopath" or "serial murderer" as a discourse and as a medico-judicial reality. Of course, enough overlap between the two exist to allow for confusion, since, as also mentioned earlier, the general public obtains its knowledge of mental illness from mass media and popular culture as opposed to mental health professionals. And this propensity to confusion as well as its consequences, rather than the clinical figure, is what I seek to critique here.

With Garland's warning in mind, I cannot stress enough my position that violent offenders such as Ted Bundy should be apprehended as quickly as possible to save innocent lives; yet I also argue that Rule uses Bundy as an example *because* he represents the most familiar and *most extreme* example. Most serial murderers do not roam the nation as Bundy did, nor do most serial murderers possess the attractive features and social skills of a Bundy; in fact, most serial murderers prefer a particular area where they feel comfortable blending into the surroundings, and most possess average to below

average features and interpersonal skills.[4] Yet Bundy is the perfect choice for Rule to use because Bundy incites panic over the *articulated ambiguities and the possible ambiguities* surrounding the issue of serial murder. Indeed, Rule made her career as a true crime authority when she published her first book, *The Stranger Beside Me* (1980), an account of her personal acquaintance with Bundy before his exposure and arrest. Rule's relationship with Bundy and her status as an independent scholar place her between the layperson and the specialist, giving her a certain cultural authority on serial murder. Therefore, I argue for consideration of Rule as a "panic figure" within the "horror story" narrative of the *Senate Hearings*. Moreover, as I demonstrate later by comparing Rule with the testimonies of other *Senate Hearings* participants, panic figures always endorse moral panic and popular opinion regarding solutions to cultural "problems." In fact, the absence of any mental health specialists at the *Hearings* in favor of various forms of law enforcement representatives, combined with cuts in mental health programs and a cultural milieu hostile to deinstitutionalized patients speaks to an unspoken preclusion regarding governmental opinions on how to address serial murder. This preclusion leaves mental health professionals and rehabilitative policies almost completely out of the picture in favor of a "zero tolerance" approach.

For example, when Senator Specter asks Rule how long it took the police to realize that "eight murders were the result of one man's activity," she responds by saying that four murders occurred before police suspected a single *perpetrator* (*Serial*16). I emphasize "perpetrator" here for two reasons: first, as a reminder that the pattern of the murders escaped the police; second, that even when police knew that only one person committed the crimes, no evidence existed to link Bundy in particular. Intersecting these

implications with the discursive possibilities regarding the issue of serial murder creates a call for a culture of ever-increasing suspicion and scrutiny, or what Foucault terms "Panopticism" (Garland 16). According to Foucault, Panopticism as a cultural disciplinary practice operates through "binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal)…coercive assignment, [and] differential distribution (who he is; where he must be; how he is to be characterized; how he is to be recognized; how a constant surveillance is to be exercised over him in an individual way, etc.)" (Foucault *Discipline* 199). Such binaries and surveillance operate among law enforcement and among a general populace desirous to identify the *possible-and-so-assumed-present* sexual psychopath within the crowd. A look at the amount of popular fiction featuring serial murderers speaks to the high level of anxiety during the period. According to Jenkins, sixty-eight novels about serial murder saw publication in the United States between 1980 and early 1994; twenty during the eighties, and forty-eight between 1990 and the beginning of 1994 (99-100). Many of these works are by authors who enjoy national best-seller status: Thomas Harris; Peter Straub; Dean Koontz; and Ann Rule (99-100). Rule's first novel, *Possession* (1983), published the same year that she testifies at the *Senate Hearings on Serial Murder*, contains all the rhetorical tropes that she uses during her testimonies in favor of VICAP.

With this in mind, I turn now to analysis of the striking intertextualites between Rule's representations of psychopathy and serial murder during the *Hearings* and the structure of *Possession*. The novel opens with a prologue entitled "Mother: May 23, 1957" in which Rule outlines the history of Lureen Demich, a carnival dancer, prostitute, and mother of the serial murderer, Duane Demich, and Dorothy Demich, Lureen's

mother (Rule 11-37). Here Rule provides the reader with a sense of predestination for Duane through two generations of itinerant mothers, framed by brief outlines of his birth and youth. The first outline begins with the appropriate tropes. Rule names Duane's mother *Lure*en to emphasize her lifestyle of carnival hucksterism and prostitution, playing to readers' potential moral disdain for the character as well as moral panics over homelessness and sex workers (11). Moreover, Lureen is "not yet eighteen" when she gives birth to Duane; as eighteen is the legal age for adulthood, Lureen's status suggests legal and moral transgression, "verification" of her alleged moral turpitude. (11-12). She gives birth to Duane "with complete removal," before the elderly woman who attends her "*pushe[s]* the squalling bundle near [Lureen's] face"; Lureen is taken aback by the "ugly *thing* with a head drawn to a point, slick with her blood and covered with *stuff* that look[s] like cottage cheese," then quickly "turn[s] away, *presse[s]* her face into the mattress, and [sleeps]" (12 emphasis added). Here Rule uses forceful words to undermine general cultural associations of childbirth and motherhood with renewal and happiness in order to produce an image of the "monstrous birth."[5]

The prologue ends with the second frame: Duane's youth, in which Lureen adjusts to her role as mother, and begins to breastfeed Duane (36). If he cries, she feeds him "a teaspoon of whisky" to calm him; however, Lureen's attentions do not signify affection but rather passive acceptance and indifference: "She didn't really want him, but she didn't hate him anymore, either," Rule writes, adding that, when Lureen has to perform, and no babysitters are available, she gives her son a small amount of whiskey and leaves him "in a cardboard box behind the stage" (36). Such descriptions of neglect, linked to earlier horrific descriptions of Duane's birth, open up spaces where readers

might fill in the narrative void with their own negative moral judgments of Lureen: judgments which would connect Lureen to her mother's neglect and produce a generational timeline of abuse and thus confirm Duane as a "born monster." Of course, the detrimental effects on an infant from lack of proper paternal care remain well documented. For instance, D.W. Winnicott writes of the importance of positive affective interaction between a mother and child, stating that infants should see her or his emotions reflected in the mother's facial expressions and actions (Winnicott 112). For another interpretation of the consequences of parental neglect, however, I turn to the mid-twentieth-century infant development studies of psychoanalyst and physician, René Spitz.

One of Spitz's more compelling analytical works is not a book but a film. *Psychogenic Disease in Infancy* (1952), a documentary of his work with infants deprived of relations with a caregiver during the crucial early months of life, visually represents symptoms that Duane displays in *Possession*. I do not suggest a direct causal chain between Spitz and Rule, however; her familiarity with Spitz remains unverifiable. What I am suggesting is that Rule's description of Duane's childhood shares similarities with actual clinical phenomena, in much the same manner that the popular figure of the "sexual psychopath" shares some similarities with the clinical sexual psychopath, and that the popular figure, like Duane's childhood and youth in *Possession*, consists mostly of cultural anxieties and stereotypes grafted onto minor actualities randomly disseminated throughout the general culture.

Psychogenic disease in children, according to Spitz, appears during "disturbances of emotional relations within the DYAD (the mother-child *unit*), and he classifies them in two groups: Psychotoxic Diseases in which "the wrong kind of relation acts as a toxin"

and Emotional Deficiency Diseases consisting of "inadequate emotional supplies resulting from insufficient mother-child relations" (Spitz 1952 emphasis added). While such statements today might seem self-evident at best and at worst a long way of saying parental neglect impedes child development, psychogenic diseases are much more nuanced than their definitions make them appear, which is why I italicized "unit."

An exploration of the idea of the "dyad" in Spitz requires visiting Klein's much earlier paper, "Weaning" (1936). Here she discusses caregiver-infant relations (in Kleinian terms referred to interchangeably as "breast" or "mother") in the initial sensations in a child's life as one of "immediate gratification" centered on the mother's capacity or incapacity for providing gratification of its desires (Klein *Love* 290-291). She also says that an infant not only uses the breast's ability or inability to satisfy desire as a template for "good and evil," but also aims its anger towards the evil breast into the breast itself, thus personifying the breast (*Love* 291). At the same time, since at this stage an infant experiences the world primarily through its mouth, it believes it takes in the breast physically—through phantasy mastication—as two polar entities, one good, the other, evil (*Love* 291). This process of "projection" and "introjection," which I discussed in chapter one regarding Michael Myers' relation to his sister, applies equally well to Duane. When Lureen leaves Duane in a cardboard box and feeds him a teaspoon of alcohol to stop his crying, Duane feels deprived of the good breast externally and internally, that is to say "not only the real mother, but also the good mother within"; this leaves Duane with a sensation of fundamental lack (*Love* 295). The situation also leaves him externally and internally alone, so to speak, with the evil breast, filling his corporal world and phantasy world with attacks against him as well as "guilt at having destroyed

her (eaten her up) and…that her loss is a punishment for his dreadful deed" (*Love* 295).[6] Using Klein's work on the physical and psychical separation process of infant from caregiver to read Rule shows that the caregiver-infant relationship is more than biological and thus brings out the accuracy of Spitz's use of the word "unit." When the infant's internal development comes under consideration, a relationship that I read as symbiotic emerges, and when this stage of unification becomes arrested, disturbed, or disallowed, mental and physical illnesses result.

Psychogenic Disease in Infancy forcefully presents such possible infant disorders to the viewer. According to Spitz, EDDs are caused by "inadequate emotional supplies [in the infant] resulting from insufficient mother-child relations," or, in Kleinian terms, a perpetual loss and lack (Spitz 1952). Based on my previous reading of Klein and Spitz's concept of the dyad, I suggest that Lureen's absence and indifference to Duane is equivalent to ongoing loss and thus correlates to two cases in *Psychogenic*, Cases LAM 69 and LAM 80.

Spitz introduces LAM 69 by stating that, if a caregiver is absent for more than five months, mental and physical development becomes inhibited, and EDD expresses itself through a blank stare, strange finger gestures, and an inability to perform basic bodily motions or verbal expressions. Indeed, LAM 69, at just over nine months old, without a caregiver for six months, rocks back and forth in her crib, her left arm stretched upwards and moving at an arc above her body with fingers distended in such a way as to give the impression of brokenness or deformity, her eyes looking off into the air. She repeats these gestures with her right arm, the fingers on her right hand resembling a claw as she turns to the right before stretching both arms as if reaching for something only she

can see. LAM 80, at just over ten months old and without a caregiver for seven months, stares wide-eyed into the air and pulls her legs up towards her head; she tugs at her fingers while looking into the camera blankly. Spitz states that roughly thirty-seven and a third percent of EDD cases result in infant malnutrition, loss of mental development, then death. In some cases, EDD survivors might grow up to display behavioral traits that fall under the clinical definition of psychopathy. In fact, some of the earliest research cites "familial (e.g. parental antipathy, indifference, and neglect) and societal difficulties (e.g. negative social and school experiences)" as causes for psychopathy (Marshall and Cooke ctd. in Herpertz and Sass 575-576). This reconstruction of points of intersection between popular culture and clinical research shows the complex interplay of discursive networks in producing the "sexual psychopath" as a cultural figure.

The text of *Possession* offers a look at Duane's social interactions as an infant via another example of Lureen's maternal neglect. On the occasions when the adult Duane calls Lureen's features to mind, they appear with "vertical bars superimposed on the image"; he comes to understand that "he was seeing her through the slats of his crib" (Rule 43). Viewing the bars as literal (a crib) and metaphoric (a prison cell) allows for multiple perspectives of analysis to emerge. For instance, Duane recalls "stale urine…the sodden lumps of his own feces in his full diaper" but remains unable to visualize Lureen's lovers except as "huge figures looming over his crib, or, worse, part of two locked bodies a few feet away moving together in what had seemed to him a cruel struggle that surely hurt Lureen" (Rule 43). Because of his infancy, Duane experiences his crib as not only confinement *inside* but also as an *away from*; Lureen is not only on the other side of the bars, she is at a distance from the bars to the extent that sometimes

she becomes part of the shapeless men who seemingly harm, distort, and partly absorb her.

Klein details similar events when she describes the onset of the Oedipus complex in children. Of particular note here is the child's experience of the "combined parent figure," in which, just as the breast "is" the mother, "the penis…represents the father in person. Thus, the penis inside the mother represents a combination of father and mother in one person," and is seen by the child as a horrific and hostile entity (Klein *Children* 132). Thus, in Oedipal competition with various "fathers," the infant Duane attempts to compete by soiling himself in front and back as both a challenge to/attack on the "fathers" and as an apologetic "gift" to his mother. When feeling enraged, infants often use excrement and urine as malevolent weapons; such affective emptying of the bladder and the rectum also serve as an infant's way of rectifying any harm done from the use of waste as a mode of attack (*Love* 294). Lureen's rejection of Duane's "gift" in favor of her lovers incites homicidal anger in the child regardless of the fact that some of the men treat him kindly (Rule 43). Thus, Lureen's apathy towards her son contributes to his unhealthy development.

Indeed, Rule describes Duane in Clecklian terms, as some*thing* deceptively human-looking yet betraying a fundamental animal nature. Duane, out in the woods, is described as a predator: he has "protective coloration" in addition to the ability "to remain motionless for hours" while appearing so much a part of the forest that neither people nor animals sense his presence (Rule 41). Yet, as a predator, Duane remains so far from human as to not even possess mammalian traits. Perched on a large rock while searching for a potential victim, Duane uses his toes to latch onto the rock, "his long

spine bent improbably forward…binoculars pressed to his eyes lent him the semblance of a great brown frog alert for prey" before "[he] lay back on the rock, and the flat surface felt good under his extended spine" (41-43). His ability to perform unusual bodily contortions and to manipulate his phalanges calls to mind infants suffering from EDD in Spitz's film. Moreover, while Rule likens Duane to an amphibian, her descriptions of him clutching a rock with his toes, his elongated spine, and his stretching out to sun on the rock suggest a different type of cold-blooded creature—a reptile rather than an amphibian.

Psychologist J. Reid Meloy, in his theory of the "reptilian state of mind," also proposes understanding the serial murderer/psychopath as a non-mammalian creature (Meloy 66). Meloy asserts that a neurological feature connecting humans and mammals is the presence of a "limbic structure" in the brain that plays a "central role in emotions and affects" but that such a cognitive system does not exist in reptiles (Broca, MacLean, et al ctd in Meloy 66-67). Indeed, reptiles seem capable of only "basic and genetically transmitted behaviors such as home site selection, establishment and defense of territories, *hunting*, feeding, *mating*, competition, *dominance*, *aggression*, and *imitation*"; reptilian mimicry is "generally *repetitive*, *compulsive*, highly *ritualized*, and *automatized*" (Papez, MacLean ctd in Meloy 67-68 emphasis added). The emphasized words call to mind not only some of the generalities associated with serial murder during the *Senate Hearings*, but also correspond to previous representations of serial murderer activity as represented within the horror genre.

Meloy admits that no evidence exists to validate his theory of a reptilian brain structures in some mentally ill persons, yet in his text he persists with citing examples of

its alleged applicability, even going so far as to as to note "the absence of perceived emotion in [the psychopath's] eyes" (Meloy 70). He encourages his audience to compare the eyes of "such contemporary sexual psychopaths as Charles Manson, Theodore Bundy, and Richard Ramirez" alongside "popular film actors such as Clint Eastwood, Charles Bronson [and] Anthony Perkins" among others (71). Of course he is correct to note such representational similarities. His mistake consists of confusing examples of cultural representation of popular discourses for clinical observation. As I have shown thus far, the "sexual psychopath" and the psychopath are both quasi-adaptations of each other combined with cultural anxieties that manufacture one distinct entity; an entity that actually exists but not quite in the way he or she is described and who, paradoxically, does not exist, but rather possesses some symptoms of a legitimate medical condition. Therefore, while the eyes of the figures Meloy mentions show evidence of a "reptilian stare," certain problems arise that he does not confront. The most prevalent issue concerns an observers' inability to accurately determine where the "real" mimicry occurs—with the "real" "actors" or the "real" "psychopaths." Indeed, the "similarities" between them collapses into their "differences."

The postmodern philosopher Jean Baudrillard points out issues I find relevant to Meloy's observations. Baudrillard, discussing reality television, notes its effect as when "one sees what the real never was (but "as if you were there") [and] there is no longer a medium in the literal sense: it is now intangible, diffused, and defracted in the real" (Baudrillard 28-30). I wish to highlight "one sees what the real never was" and further contextualize it to my discussion of Meloy. Approaching the "sexual psychopath/serial murderer" as a discourse allows for a reading of Meloy's examples (and Meloy) as not so

much a glance from reality to mimesis but rather as a problem of the fundamental impossibility of locating the real. The *implication of the artificial device and mediated perspective of the camera within the fact of the photograph* calls into question assumptions regarding the photograph as "true" and the cinematic image as "imitation."

For Meloy, the cinematic still image *as a photograph* reveals the "truth" of the actors' imitation of the reptilian stare in the criminal photographs. And yet, Meloy locates clinical verification for his theory in his observation of performative discourses…as if mentally ill persons physically *involuntarily* express mental illness and actors (who may or may not suffer from mental illness) only imitate it effectively. Such conclusions contradict the verifiable knowledge of psychopathic symptoms; moreover, the "reptilian stare" negates Cleckley's "mask of sanity," since a psychopath who could otherwise appear normal except for an involuntary—and highly visible—sign of mental instability would be shunned by potential victims. In my estimation, the "reptilian stare" as evidence for a "reptilian brain" more likely fits into clinical symptoms mixed with the performance of a culturally recognizable symptom of psychopathy *once the subject has been apprehended and exposed to the public as a "psychopath."* Perhaps most significantly for my discussion regarding mental illness, stigma, and moral panic, Meloy's theory of a "reptilian stare" seems an expression of larger cultural anxieties around finding reliable methods of identifying, containing, and excising "the psychopath" who can so successfully appear profoundly normal.

All of the above suggest that Rule's representation of psychopathy in *Possession* reads as a cautionary tale, a promotional tool, in favor of VICAP. Near the end of the text Duane's identity and criminal background is finally revealed using the National Crime

Information Center (NCIC), a database much like the proposed VICAP (Rule 286-287).[7] Although Duane's identity and his transient life of petty crimes (born in California, wanted in Washington for tampering with an ATM, as well as on record in three different states for multiple swindling operations and homelessness) comes under police scrutiny, his serial murders escape detection (287). Such a lapse seems designed to impress upon readers the need for a national criminal database that stores information on murder patterns, suggesting that if the police in *Possession* had the resources to compare Duane's countrywide movements to unsolved homicides of a similar nature, the entire narrative in *Possession* could have been prevented. Moreover, Rule's author biography at the end of *Possession* identifies her as "one of five civilian advisors working in conjunction with the Department of Justice to set up a nationwide computer program (VI-CAP) to track and capture serial murderers" (351). Comparisons between the text of *Possession* and Rule's statements during the *Hearings on Serial Murder* reveal similarities in representation, such as "highly mobile" and "without conscience."

Rule mobilizes one final rhetorical strategy during the *Hearings*. When Specter asks her if any other alternatives exist besides federal funding of the FBI-proposed centralized database (VICAP), Rule responds in the negative, adding that law enforcement is "doing everything they can right now. But they are so blocked by lack of information" (*Serial* 16-17). Senator Hawkins interjects to ask Rule if she has any cases that can offer insight into how law enforcement goes about arresting serial murderers, to which she replies, "Yes. And when I went to pull out crimes, the sad thing was not to find enough crimes but that there were *so many cases that I had to choose some from among them*" (17 emphasis added). Under the circumstances, Rule's answer is quite savvy; her

implication being that the fact of so many known cases means that more unknown cases exist. After summarizing some of the more famous serial murder cases, Rule tells the committee that she "could go on for probably 8 hours" before stating that, because such criminals usually are arrested by luck, many more such perpetrators could be currently active (17-18). Rule's testimony is a masterpiece of rhetorical manipulation of presence and absence. While I do not in any way doubt the sincerity of her intentions, to my mind, the organization of her presentation speaks to a certain self-awareness. For instance, her statement that she had to "choose" from a plethora of cases suggests a large, unspecified amount of unchosen cases. The exact amount of known, unchosen cases is left up to the imagination to connect back to Hopkins' claim of "3,600" such "random and senseless" cases recorded two years prior. Rule cites only four well-known examples—Ted Bundy, Kenneth Bianchi aka the Hillside Strangler, Gary Addison Taylor, and Coril Watts—of her unspecified number of cases. Essentially, Rule claims that the clandestine nature of serial murder justifies the assumption that, for every criminal caught and prosecuted, an unspecified number of unknown serial murderers are currently active, people who could be anyone and by implication are potentially everyone and are everywhere.

The statements of John Walsh build upon those of Ann Rule. He reiterates the unexpected method by which serial murderers are apprehended, adding that children are also targets of such criminals (26). Walsh brings up the then-recent case of serial murderer Wayne Williams in Atlanta, in which he says seventeen children were killed before a citizens' group formed to force authorities to see the murders as a pattern before echoing Rule's statement that known perpetrators imply the existence of unknown perpetrators who "have no remorse…do not talk about it, they plot it…often murders for

lust and vengeance against women and children, and they prey upon the truly helpless people" (26). Interestingly, Walsh claims a figure of "6,300 unsolved murders in this country last year, random murders" (26). It will be instructive to adopt the position, for a moment, of the senators hearing and reading such figures. If, two years previous, "3,600" of these types of crimes were committed, and the next year the total rises to "6,300," for a difference of 3,300 alleged serial murders (by suspects assumed to be violent, mentally ill, and sexually deviant); these numbers suggest to the imagination another 3,300 rise the year of the *Hearings* for a total of 9,600 murders, making the numbers of *serial* murders allegedly committed by *one person* seem suspect. For example, to begin with the (unlikely) figure of 50 victims per serial murderer per year and divide the number of victims into the 3,300 rise in serial murders per year results in 66 serial murderers moving around the country at any given time. It is easy to see that, no matter how the figures are manipulated, the amount of possible serial killers operating remains untenable.

Another problem with claims made by Rule and others is that certain terms are used interchangeably to the point of confusion, such as "serial murders," "unsolved," "random," and "senseless," creating an overall effect of an impossible amount of serial murderers operating simultaneously.[8] For instance, when Senator Specter expresses concern regarding the accuracy of big data in general, Rule cites the 1981 edition of the *Uniform Crime Report* published by the FBI: "17.8 percent of all murders were deemed random and senseless. That meant that there were 6,304 murder cases not solved in 1981" (29). And, whether knowingly or not, Specter succumbs to the discourse by replying, "Well, *there are more than that which are unsolved*, are there not? What you are saying

is that there are many unsolved murder cases for which there are no apparent explanations or motives," completely sidestepping the rather obvious facts that, once a motive becomes known, the chances of producing a suspect increase, and that the absence of discernable motive does not necessarily preclude serial murder (29; Jenkins 61). And, for the purposes of this discussion, neither does lack of motive preclude psychopathy nor any other type of mental illness.

The statements of Pierce Brooks attempts to address these rhetorical disconnects. Brooks, a former detective, pioneered the VICAP idea in the late fifties by using national newspaper archives in his local library to find patterns in allegedly unrelated homicides (Burgess et al 116). However, the transcripts from the *Hearings* reveal a skepticism on Senator Specter's part even Brooks' law enforcement expertise cannot surmount. Brooks tries to clarify the confusion regarding the number of pending homicide cases by stating, "that is one of the reasons we need VI-CAP…We do not really know. There is no way to accurately count all the unsolved murders that occur"; prompting Specter to ask, "We do not know what we do not know?" (*Serial* 29). When a definite answer still fails to emerge, the senator interrupts Brooks, asking for a figure based on Brooks' experience, but Brooks fails to add anything significant to Rule's testimony; in fact, he repeats her strategy of using lack of information to suggest an unimaginable amount of crimes: "It would be an estimate because we do not know about all the people that are murdered. Some just disappear, they are buried in some unknown place…as many as 5,000, 10,000, to 12,000 people a year are murdered by persons who are *strangers*" (29 emphasis added). I have italicized "strangers" because of what Brooks says next: "Most murders are solved because there is a *known relationship* between the victim and the killer" (29

emphasis added). Brooks makes his case for VICAP specifically using the word "stranger," and, by the time he brings the word into use, it is easily assimilated into the already complex discursive networks comprised of statistics, claims to authority and expertise, criminology, medicine, and popular culture. After all, to know the perpetrator as a stranger to the victim implies, in Brooks' logic, a solved murder; but a solved murder becomes so mainly due to a knowable relationship between victim and perpetrator. Therefore, the word "stranger" slips easily into a ready-made atmosphere of panic regarding mental illness and homicide; its linguistic disconnect within such networks completely unnoticed, so much so that it sounds sensible.

However, according to Otto F. Wahl, mentally ill persons, when they do perpetrate violence, they do so "typically at those whom they know—those who have frustrated or frightened or challenged them, those with whom they have frequent contact, those to whom they are emotionally attached, just as is the case for homicides in general" (Wahl 82). Assessing Wahl and Brooks together suggests that mentally ill persons are less likely than a "sane" person, or at least equally likely as a "sane" person, to commit "random…senseless" murder. Such a comparison also suggests that mentally ill persons, if they commit a violent act, would be included in the percentage of *solved murders* by *identified* perpetrators. Moreover, Wahl states, "serial murderers" as described in the *Senate Hearings* "are extremely rare," are responsible for a only a small number of murders annually, and, most significantly, are just a small part of the entire mentally ill population in America (82). Finally, Wahl contends that oftentimes "mental illness may be irrelevant to the violent or criminal behavior," that mentally ill persons "rob, assault, or kill for profit or passion" just like everyone else, but that once a person's mental

illness becomes public knowledge, stigma supersedes competing accounts of motivation (79). All this is to say that the popular, medical, and judicial emphasis on the psychopath during this period as the primary representative figure of mental illness in America is grossly overemphasized in comparison to the actual clinical manifestations of the illness. Such hypervisibility of a rare illness only comes about through cultural and institutional equation of all mental illnesses with psychopathy and with cultural and institutional projection of "psychopathy" onto large numbers of deinstitutionalized mentally ill persons in the public sphere.

Another reason for moral panics over the sexual psychopath during the early eighties can be located in the assassination attempt on Ronald Reagan by John Hinckley Jr in 1981. Hinckley's actions brought criticism of the legal term "Insanity Defense" into public discourse and incited debate on the point at which mentally ill persons become accountable for her or his actions (Perlin ctd. in Erickson and Erickson 84-85; Erickson and Erickson 84-85). The jury acquitted Hinckley based on testimony by mental health professionals and the claim put forth by his defense lawyers that his mental illness caused him to believe the actress Jodi Foster would desire him if he could prove himself worthy (97). The verdict caused many in the legal sector and in the public sphere to doubt the usefulness of mental health professionals as trial witnesses and to criticize the Insanity Defense (97-98). In *Crime, Punishment, and Mental Illness*, Erickson and Erickson call attention to the fact that "the outrage [over Hinckley's acquittal] concerns finding a defendant not guilty by reason of insanity when evidence indicates that the person knew what he or she was doing at the time," which Hinckley did know (97-98). However, I suggest that public and legal criticism of the verdict stems from the fact that Hinckley

was not convicted *at all* (sent to prison for life or executed) and that his awareness constituted a moot issue. In fact, I contend that two sources of indignation are in operation here: first, indignation over the assassination attempt on the president as a public figure; and second, indignation over the fact that a mentally ill person committed a violent act and was not sentenced to prison or death because, in the eyes of the public, mental illness exists only in extreme forms, therefore, only the law in its most extreme forms can appropriately address mental illness.

I argue this because of revisions made to the Insanity Defense Reform Act in 1984, such as shifting the "burden of proof" from the prosecution to the defense and changing the wording of the law to read, "The *defendant* has the burden of proving the defense of insanity by clear and convincing evidence" (Insanity Defense qtd. in Erickson and Erickson 98 emphasis added). It almost seems inexcusably naïve to point to the legal principle of the Presumption of Innocence, or that "the *prosecution* must prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, each essential element of the crime charged" (Legal Institute). As Erickson and Erickson attest, the new wording sits between "'preponderance of evidence' (more likely than not) and 'beyond reasonable doubt' (a reasonable certainty)" (99). I suggest that the new wording sits beyond "beyond reasonable doubt," since a defendant may face a "preponderance of evidence" from the prosecution and still be acquitted based on the failure of the prosecution to address all possible alternative explanations—"reasonable doubt." "Clear and convincing evidence" removes any possibility of a defendant proving she or he deserves treatment and rehabilitation instead of prison. Proving insanity unequivocally to a jury is nearly impossible for a defendant due to the likelihood of conflicting expert testimony *as a matter of course in the normal*

proceedings of any trial as well as the possibility of the jury having differing opinions on what "insanity" means. Such considerations are important when reflecting that jurors are members of the general public and therefore, as discussed in previous chapters, receive information regarding mental illness from popular culture depictions that conflate all mental illness with violent crime.

Taken together with previously discussed changes in civil commitment laws, cuts in funding for mental health programs, a rising population of mentally ill persons among the homeless and among the prison population, I suggest that such legislative maneuvers regarding the Insanity Defense Reform Act reflect not only cultural intolerance of and lack of empathy for mentally ill persons, but that the changes also reflect an active hostility towards mental illness in general. The deliberate exclusion of mental health professionals from the *Senate Hearings on Serial Murder* and the subsequent focus on law enforcement speaks to the saliency of my argument. Even Rule's text, *Possession*, contains a scene indicative of cultural disdain for mentally ill persons. Nina Armitage, a lawyer, discusses her frustration over the legal definitions of mental illness with a law enforcement officer, Sam Clinton, in no uncertain terms:

> "Joseph Kekelanhni…Third felony conviction in ten years…he took all their purses after he was done with them. You know what he got…?"
> Sam nodded. "Let me guess. Sexual psychopath?"
> "You got it. They slapped his little hands and sent him down to Western State so he can get in touch with his feelings. He'll be a real good boy for six months, and then they'll give him the key and a twenty-four hour pass anywhere he wants to go—and he'll be right back at it. If anybody needs

group therapy, it's the judge." She bent her head. (Rule 58).

The above statement also reveals a certain disdain for mental health professionals by law enforcement professionals. This antipathy towards rehabilitation (as well as the aforementioned hypervisibility of the psychopath) also guides the tone of a second hearing conducted in 1986, *The Federal Role in Investigation of Serial Violent Crime*. Again, no mental health professionals are present; all participants come from branches of law enforcement: respectively, the FBI; the Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture Subcommittee; the U.S. Secret Service; the Regional Organized Crime Information Center (ROCIC); and the Hillsboro County Sheriff's Office in Florida (*Federal* iii). Moreover, the absence of civilians at the new hearings (even high profile civilians such as Ann Rule or John Walsh are absent) speaks to a growing influence of the voice of law enforcement in shaping public policy under the Reagan Administration. Further, the opening statements of Senator Glenn English closely resemble the rhetorical strategy as practiced by Senator Spector in his 1981 opening remarks.

Glenn states that, in addition to crimes such as larceny, homicide, or drug-related homicides, "a very different form of violent crime" is occurring more and more on the national scene: "In these crimes, one person commits a long series of offenses, often striking over a period of months or years. Their innocent victims…selected at random" (*Federal* 1). His wording resembles Rule's testimony as well: serial murderers "are mobile," some "appear relatively normal to their friends and families [and] are often above average in intelligence"; then he asks a rhetorical question: *"What are we facing out there?"* (*Federal* 2 emphasis added). While no italics are present in the transcript, I suggest that the sense of hyperbole italics would represent is indeed present within the

strategic placement of the question. In this context, the pronoun, "what" and the verb "are" (as a conjugation of "to be") signifies not just an inability to identify, but also an implication of non-humanity. The psychopath is categorized as unrecognizable not only in the sense of an unseen criminal suspect, but more so as some*thing* outside of normal, rational, human understanding (as in "What is it?"). To varying degrees and in different ways, such labeling of mentally ill persons as non-human occur in all the texts and films discussed so far: *Psycho* ("Normal, Norman, Norma"), *Halloween* ("He isn't a man"), *Child of God* ("a misplaced and loveless simian shape"), *Henry* ("They think you're four different people"), and *Possession* ("a great brown frog alert for prey"). Paired with "what," the pronoun "we" signifies solidarity among those who consider themselves human, rational, and normal; "facing," when added to "What are we," reinforces this syntactic coupling by calling to mind a metaphor of combat. Finally, "out there," as the last part of the linguistic chain, accents the combat metaphor by evoking battle as faced by an outnumbered closely-knit group behind a barricade threatened with being overrun. I read English as setting the tone of panic for the *Federal Hearings* to justify the absence of mental health professionals. To speak of a mental health issue in terms of invasion by "non-humans" frames the debate as irresolvable by any other societal institution except law enforcement.

FBI Executive Assistant Director of Law Enforcement, John Otto, sums up this attitude when he reads from a prepared letter by FBI Director, William H. Webster. Webster writes that the FBI

> pulled together the best expertise of local homicide detectives, psychiatric specialists from the private sector, and the latest in

> computer technology. FBI agents have interviewed convicted serial violent criminals, not to determine appropriate therapy or rehabilitation programs but to develop information and techniques to detect, locate, apprehend, and successfully prosecute offenders. (*Federal* 4)

While the attitude of the FBI towards the remedies posed by the behavioral sciences remains quite clear, the way in which law enforcement comes to claim expertise over the medical community regarding a medical issue during these hearings is worth exploring in more detail.

During the *Federal Hearings*, John Douglas, an FBI agent in charge of the Criminal Profiling and Consultation Program, states, "Psychologists and psychiatrists told us that burnout period for serial murders is in their forties. That is incorrect…they go well into their forties and still kill" (*Federal* 14-15). Further echoing Webster, he says serial murderers "will burn out once they are caught or once they are sentenced to the electric chair and get the death penalty" (*Federal* 15). Such histrionics serve to display ideological allegiance with English ("What are *we* facing out there?") regarding the supposed ineffectualness of mental health professionals. After signifying agreement with English, Douglas makes his case for VICAP, stating that his method is superior because mastering it requires special talent and "years" of education (*Federal* 15). And yet, the training Douglas recommends does not seem related to higher education; in fact, he claims that local law enforcement agencies across the country are victimized by "dabbl[ers]" with "very little training in [criminal] profiling…primarily in psychiatry/psychology and the area of rehabilitation…using terms such as paranoid

schizophrenia, manic depressive psychosis, and paranoia" before asking the rhetorical question, "What do these terms mean to law enforcement?" (*Federal* 15-16). Here Douglas produces two folk devils as detrimental to society: serial murderers and the mental health professionals who want to treat them. For Douglas, the "what" that "we" are "facing out there" is not only the alleged growing threat of sexual psychopathy, but also a large mental health system he views as seeking to protect a group that deserves only eradication. Thus, while I believe English set the tone of panic during the hearings, I argue that Douglas emerges as the panic figure, not only for his statements during the proceedings, but also because Douglas helps to create and comes to signify both the panic surrounding and the solution to cultural anxiety over serial murder (and by extension, mental illness).

Douglas' role as panic figure depends on the popular culture figure of the "mindhunter" for its legitimacy. The term emerges from Douglas' promotion of the Behavioral Science Unit of NCAVC as a unique mixture of sciences of mind and the practice of law enforcement, with the emphasis mostly on law enforcement. Termed "profiling," Douglas, in his memoir, *Mindhunter* (1995), traces its development back to 1977, when he began work at the FBI Behavioral Science Unit and encountered complaints among those invested in law enforcement issues that "academic" approaches to criminality "had only limited applicability to the field of law enforcement and crime detection" (Douglas 101). The profiling method developed from interviews with thirty-six incarcerated offenders and resulted in two classifications: "organized" (premeditated) and "disorganized" (opportunistic) (Douglas et al 290-291). In *Mindhunter*, Douglas promotes his technique by relating an interview with a repeat offender, Gary Trapnell:

"He [Trapnell] said that if I gave him a copy of the current edition of *DSM*, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, and pointed to any condition…he could convince any psychiatrist that he was genuinely suffering from the affliction," an event which in turn leads Douglas to create the *Crime Classification Manual (CCM)* (Douglas 346-347). According to Douglas, the *CCM* is a reference text on mental illness and criminal activity that competes with the *DSM* by providing "behavioral evidence [to] help investigators and the legal community focus in on which considerations may be relevant and which are not" (347). Douglas' wording regarding what symptoms and diagnoses warrant facing suggests that he considers the *DSM* irrelevant as far as apprehending and prosecuting mentally ill offenders are concerned; indeed, I have elsewhere shown that Douglas' investments extend only to containment and eradication of mentally ill persons and not in the causalities of crime or mental illness. Thus, Douglas inadvertently marks an important distinction towards approaches to the overarching deinstitutionalization issue: the *CCM* as concerned with mental *illness* (containment and excision) and the *DSM* as concerned with mental *health* (treatment and rehabilitation).

As a "mindhunter," Douglas sees violence as the only method of resolving problems of societal violence; hence his fixation on "illness." Only by fostering an atmosphere of panic as resolvable exclusively through the violent actions of the panic figure can he, like Dr. Loomis in *Halloween*, become the "redeemed panic figure." Douglas creates an environment of panic by utilizing the public's reliance on mass media for information. According to Jenkins, the discourse of the mindhunter as a specialist in homicide and mental illness emerges from the media's propensity to represent profiling in celebratory terms (Jenkins 70). Moreover, accounts of applied profiling written by

Douglas as well as others tend to repeat accounts of positive outcomes while ignoring negative outcomes, thus representing mindhunters as always successful (Snook et al 1264-1265). During the period under discussion, the popular image of mindhunting as preferable to medical intervention reached a unprecedented level of visibility and discursive effectiveness due to its high profile representations in the "Hannibal Lecter" novel series by thriller author, Thomas Harris—*Red Dragon* (1981) and *The Silence of the Lambs* (1988), as well as their film adaptations, *Manhunter* (1986) and *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991).

Both Jenkins' and Snook's critiques are observable in Harris' novels and their cinematic adaptations. Harris' first "Hannibal Lecter" novel, *Red Dragon* (1981), made the *New York Times* Bestseller List in December 1981 (Hawes n.p.). In *Red Dragon*, Will Graham, a retired FBI mindhunter, plays the role of panic figure; Graham returns at the request of Jack Crawford, head of the FBI Behavioral Science Unit, who needs Graham's unique skills to catch a serial killer (Harris *Red* 1-8). I wish to briefly emphasize my choice to use the word "needs" in describing the opening chapter of the novel, since it accurately captures not only Harris' representation, but also contains implications of the above critiques by Jenkins and Snook—especially Snook. Graham tries to convince Crawford that he does not want to return by downplaying his past achievements, but Crawford argues by pointing out Graham's successes. "I don't think I'd be all that useful to you, Jack," Graham says. "Really? You caught two. The last two we had, you caught," Crawford replies, to which Graham answers, "How? By doing the same things you and the rest of them are doing" (*Red* 2). Not only does Crawford emphasize "the last two" as a way of convincing Graham that the retired FBI academic and sometime agent possesses

unique abilities, but the text itself enacts the same rhetorical strategy. Readers only receive confirmation of two recent arrests due to Graham; however, such wording disavows rather obvious extra-textual implications. That Crawford tries so hard to call Graham out of retirement suggests a lengthy friendship between the two men, which in turn suggests that Graham had a lengthy career with the FBI and law enforcement; these two implications, taken together, suggest that, during his long career, Graham has not always been successful ("The last two we had, you caught"), since Graham worked murder cases for New Orleans police before joining the FBI (*Red* 88). In other words, the text performs the same rhetorical moves used by Rule, Douglas and others: focusing on the known crimes creates an implication of uncountable amounts of unknown crimes and thus creates a tone favorable to panic and anxiety.

The text also mimics Rule and Douglas through its framing of the situation in such a way as to positively emphasize Graham while obfuscating what should emerge as straightforward information, through its persistent repetition of Crawford's alleged need of Graham in order to solve the case. The first eight pages of *Red Dragon* are devoted to setting up Graham as the panic figure—the only person who can identify and successfully contain the folk devil, the serial murderer/sexual psychopath. For instance, Crawford insists that Graham has special mental capabilities which others do not; this is demonstrated when "Crawford heard the rhythm and syntax of his own speech in Grahams voice. He had heard Graham do that before, with other people…Later Crawford realized that Graham did it involuntarily, that sometimes he tried to stop and couldn't" (*Red* 2-3). Graham's ability to take on another person's identity comes into play later when he visits a murder scene and mentally "becomes" the killer, and thus recovers

crucial evidence overlooked by earlier investigators:

> *It was maddening to have to wear gloves when you touched her, wasn't it?*
>
> There was talcum on her leg.
>
> There was no talcum in the bathroom.
>
> Someone else seemed to speak those two facts in a flat voice.
>
> *You took off your gloves, didn't you? The powder came out of a rubber glove as you pulled it off to touch her, DIDN"T IT…*(*Red* 18-19 emphasis in the original).

In the opening chapter of *Red Dragon*, after Graham decides to take the case, he and his wife, Molly, debate the issue, before Molly confronts Crawford (*Red* 4-8). The tense discussion between Molly and Crawford romanticizes Graham's psychopathic tendencies for mimicry and affective appropriation. Crawford believes that Graham has the "bad luck to be the best," and that "[Graham] doesn't think like other people…There's nobody better with evidence. But he has the other thing too. Imagination, projection, whatever. He doesn't like that part of it," to which Molly replies, "You wouldn't like it either if you had it" (*Red* 8). Neither Molly, Crawford, nor the text of *Red Dragon* seems able nor desirous to define Graham's talents; I suggest the reason for such slippages is because Graham, as mindhunter and panic figure, is allowed only to *infer* mental illness just enough to allow him to "become" the sexual psychopaths he pursues. Graham's representational capital consists in being mentally ill *without being acknowledged as being mentally ill* because his illness *serves the cultural order*. Therefore it remains unnamed and is worked into cultural discourses. If and when Graham's illness ceases to

serve discourses of containment and excision regarding mental illness, then it becomes named, as when Graham is admitted to an asylum for “deep depression” after apprehending his first serial murderer (*Red* 87). Indeed, before his retirement, while Graham teaches classes and works two cases while at the FBI, he lacks official status as an agent, due to an unspecified “history of instability” (*Red* 88). Again, repetition contributes to the myth of the mindhunter; this time, however, repetition operates via restating ambiguous information so as to produce the suggestion of an individual who is the perfect adversary for the psychopath.

And yet, *Red Dragon* is less about Graham’s pursuit of a serial killer than it concerns Graham’s relationship with his nemesis and mentor, the psychiatrist and serial cannibal, Hannibal Lecter. Lecter, one of the two serial murderers apprehended by Graham, resides in a maximum-security asylum for the criminally insane (*Red* 87). Despite his incarceration in a mental institution, Lecter is presented as an enigma to mental health professionals. When Buddy Springfield, a local homicide investigator, asks Graham what Lecter’s official diagnosis consists of, Graham replies that the doctors “say he’s a sociopath, because they don’t know what else to call him” (*Red* 52). Graham’s implication regarding what he believes is a failure of mental health professionals is reminiscent of my earlier discussions of Douglas’ claim that psychiatry can neither adequately define nor contain psychopaths. Indeed, Graham, like Douglas, not only finds fault with psychiatry; he represents himself as superior to it by demonstrating some knowledge of the field while pointing out inconsistencies in diagnoses. Graham admits that Lecter lacks a conscience and that the doctor abused animals as a boy, but then he emphasizes that Lecter did not move frequently, had no criminal record, and actually

displayed emotion (*Red* 52). Again, the competition between law enforcement and mental health becomes apparent. Law enforcement attempts to trump mental health by claiming two areas of specialized knowledge as cultural capital. This struggle is not only over which institution deserves the right to define mental illness, but also about which institution becomes recognized by other institutions and the public as the cultural authority on the subject of how to address the issue. For example, Douglas defines profiling as "quite similar to that used by clinicians to make a diagnosis and treatment plan" and so manufactures legitimacy by associating his work with medical science (Douglas et al 405). The result is a sort of "common sense" by proxy: when one is sick, one goes to a doctor to determine the illness then cure it; therefore, when a threat to the body such as a homicide occurs, only a mindhunter can discover the nature and author of the crime then excise the perpetrator and restore the social body to health.

Douglas' rhetorical moves can also be discerned in Alexander N. Howe's study of the cultural function of the detective "[a]s trusted representative of the ruling order, or the disciplinary apparatus, the detective," much like the doctor, "reduces individuals to knowable types based on details that might be charted, or mapped, and thus grasped hold of by knowledge" (Howe 18). I would also add that the mental health institution performs similar cultural functions. Indeed, reading Douglas' testimony and Harris' text alongside Howe underscores the stakes involved in Graham's dismissal of the official diagnosis of Lecter: the battle is over the title, "*trusted* representative," or in other words, "expertise."

Howe goes on to note that "reduction of individuals to objects of knowledge," as both law enforcement and mental health strive to accomplish in this particular case, "requires the documentation of that process"; thus, both institutions compete to assemble

the best “case studies that reveal the way individuals are made useful to power” (20). Hannibal Lecter remains inaccessible to and so unusable by psychiatric power. When Graham goes to visit Lecter, he first speaks with Dr. Chilton, director of the asylum where Lecter is held, who complains that Lecter is “impenetrable. Too sophisticated…The consensus around here is that the only person who has demonstrated any practical understanding of Hannibal Lecter is you, Mr. Graham” (Harris *Red* 57-59). This exchange, in which a psychiatric specialist—the director or “trusted representative” of a major mental institution—concedes that a law enforcement investigator with a slight academic background possesses insights unavailable to experts, reiterates Graham’s earlier assertion of the ineffectuality of mental health professionals. Thus, it also reiterates an exclusively positive representation of mindhunters for public consumption. Precisely because Lecter is useless to psychiatric power, he becomes crucial to the exercise of forensic power. Documentation, as represented by Chilton’s inconclusive psychiatric case file, becomes supplanted by the documentative authority of the mindhunter’s criminal profile. Even Lecter, a psychiatrist, adopts a derisory attitude towards his own field of expertise in favor of the mindhunter’s semi-ad hoc erudition. He refers to the doctors who visit him as “banal…grasping…pencil lickers” while adopting a cordial, even friendly tone with Graham, and tells him that the reason Graham apprehended him is because “we’re *just alike*” (*Red* 61, 65 emphasis in the original). Lecter’s reference to Graham’s carefully undisclosed mental illness not only suggests, as mentioned earlier, that Graham exhibits psychopathic tendencies, but it also serves as another repetition discourses that portray mindhunters as possessing special insight into “mental illness.”

The relationship between Graham and Lecter is even more effectively emphasized in the film adaptation of *Red Dragon,* entitled *Manhunter* (1986), released the same year that the *Serial Hearings* occur. The film articulates the bond between mindhunter and serial murderer during a police briefing regarding tactics for apprehending the Tooth Fairy—the killer Crawford hopes to locate using Graham's special mental skills. After most officers and detectives exit, Detective Springfield, Graham, and Crawford discuss the Tooth Fairy, and the subject of Hannibal Lecter (written as "Lektor" in the script) arises (Mann 15-16). The officer asks Graham, "What did the psychologists say was wrong with Lektor?"; Graham replies, "Psychologists call him a sociopath. They don't know what else to call him" (16). The aforementioned exchange from the shooting script for *Manhunter* excises Graham's extended critique of psychiatry from *Red Dragon*; however, a minute, yet much more effective replacement appears in the finished film. After Springfield asks Graham what the psychologists said, Graham produces an almost inaudible snort of derision; such a quick bodily expression compresses all the relevant text from *Red Dragon* into little more than a second of audiovisual and communicates Graham's opinion of psychiatry as well as sets up what the film presents as a strange intimacy between he and Lektor.

The all white asylum housing Lektor presents an antiseptic atmosphere, somewhat claustrophobic in its spotlessness. The tile walls and floors, the single chair in which Graham sits, the door leading to Lektor's cell, even the cell bars show no evidence of dirt, dust, fingerprints, or any residue of human or animal presence, as if the building physically registers silence. Graham, dressed in a black jacket, dark blue shirt and tie, and grey pants, appears in overt contrast to the environment. Hannibal Lektor lies on a twin

bed, facing the wall. He wears a white jumpsuit and his cell is completely white.

At first, such heavy-handed color contrast might seem to suggest a clear distinction between the figures of "mindhunter" and "psychopath," with Lektor visually and aesthetically "locked" inside the asylum as if part of the building itself, and Graham representing "sanity" via the style and color of his clothing. However, color distribution also suggests a bond between the two. Lektor has deep, black hair slicked back in a tight skullcap and, when he turns to face Graham, his white jumpsuit is unbuttoned halfway, revealing a grey undershirt. The color of Lektor's hair and undershirt represent the bond between two men who, although adversaries, are engaged in an analyst (Lektor) and analysand (Graham) relationship, and also share respect for each other. Like Graham, Lektor does not like mental health professionals; he refers to them as "second raters, the lot," a repetition of the passage in *Red Dragon* (28). In Harris' *Red Dragon*, the reader remains a third person omnipotent observer; in *Manhunter*, the camera, usually a third person omnipotent observer, takes on the position of subjective "I," becoming by turns Graham *and* Lektor, as it cuts back and forth between them. Here the film again inserts a crucial change in its adaptation of the text. Although perhaps not apparent to a viewer at first, when the camera turns to Graham, a faint reflection of Lektor remains discernible in the lower right of the frame; when the camera faces Lektor, no reflection of Graham appears. Such details point to a glass partition as well as bars encasing Lektor's cell: a reasonable procedure for a criminal of his notoriety. And yet, the lack of a reflection of Graham on Lektor tells a viewer much about the balance of power between them. The absence of Graham's reflection shows that, while Lektor remains in the asylum, he maintains a considerable amount of influence over Graham; and moreover, Graham

knows this. More so than the script's call for Lektor to address Graham as "a patient" or Graham's assertion that he apprehended Lektor because the latter is "insane," is the film's insistence, via an imbalance of reflections, that Lecter remains physically confined in the asylum, yet psychically free because of similarities between he and Graham (25, 28). Indeed, that Graham allows Lektor access to a federal case file speaks to a certain level of empathy and trust despite Graham's façade of bravado. At the close of this scene, Graham "bangs on the door…He wants the locks to get unlocked faster…fights down the impulse to run through," then, "controlled—steps out" as Lecter tells him, "The reason you caught me, Will, is: we're just alike" (33). Thus, Graham denies his unique relationship with Lecter even as he desires to act on it.

Later on in the film, however, Graham seems more comfortable with the implications of his unusual friendship. In his hotel room at night, he speaks with Lecter over the phone:

LEKTOR

We don't invent our natures, [t]hey're issued to us. Along with our lungs and pancreas and everything else. Why fight it?

GRAHAM

Fight what?

LEKTOR

…Didn't you really feel so bad because killing…felt so good?...
Graham laughs. Then he starts to listen closely. There is something here for him.

GRAHAM

Why does it feel good? (106).

Here, Graham admits to his mental illness, gives to Lektor a part of himself that he denies to Crawford, and even Molly. That Graham telephones Lektor (and not, as a viewer might expect, vice versa) and initiates the former's confession is of no small importance (105). Had Lektor called Graham, the following conversation might read as Lektor manipulating Graham, but, since Graham initiates conversation, the possibility of an altogether more intriguing reading arises.

Starting from my earlier assertion of Graham's psychopathic tendencies, I suggest this scene offers an audiovisual representation of Graham's weakening ego defenses, therefore allowing for a classification of Graham as suffering from neuroses as a result of his struggle to deny his psychopathy. This process finds representation as Graham's desire for murder in general; in other words, a pleasure principle resisted by Graham's superego, represented by his family, his friendship with Crawford, his former job, and other moral strictures. Graham's ego sets in motion a reality principle that "carries into effect postponement of satisfaction…as a step in the long indirect road to pleasure," that is to say, as a mindhunter, he obtains opportunities to murder in the line of duty (S. Freud *Beyond* 7). Recalling the conversation between Molly and Crawford regarding Graham's distaste for his mindhunter skills, I suggest reading this as an unconscious articulation and recognition of his dilemma, resulting in internal conflict. Graham's dislike of his mindhunter abilities stems from his guilt over his desire to murder for pleasure that he knows is unacceptable to cultural norms; thus, he *reroutes and expresses them through his profession as a mindhunter who often must kill in the name of the cultural order.*

Manhunter's carefully constructed visual aesthetics brings out other dimensions of the Lektor/Graham relationship. Kendall R. Phillips states that *Manhunter* "is, essentially, about looking…[and should] be read as a meditation on the visual and the dangers of looking" (Phillips 11). And his thesis remains correct on a certain level. Looking plays a central role in *Manhunter*, but I read the film as not so much about the unwanted consequences of looking as about the desirous consequences of looking, that is to say, the film seeks to heighten visual awareness for the purpose of identifying hidden mental illness. During the conversation between Lektor and Graham, Lektor lies on the bed in his white cell, a grey blanket folded underneath his head, and gray socks on his unshod feet. He lies flat on his back with his outstretched legs at an angle, his feet propped against the wall, and he still wears his white jumpsuit, giving an overall appearance of a relaxed body. Indeed, one arm rests over his head, while he uses his other hand to cradle the receiver of a black telephone. Graham sits with one leg thrown over the arm of a brown sofa chair in a room nearly covered in shadow. He wears a black shirt, grey pants, and holds a white telephone. A white building with rows of dark windows is visible through the large blue windowpane to his left, or his right. Although his reflection is cast over the building, only his exposed skin and the white telephone produce any reflections. Both Graham and Lektor appear at ease, or, given the content of their conversation, I suggest "intimate" is a more accurate word. As the camera repeats its back and forth cuts between them, they give off the impression of being close friends. This scene allows Graham "to finally achieve identification" with the Tooth Fairy, to see as the killer sees, to "become" him (Phillips 12). Other meanings come to mind at the mention of "identification." Phillips uses it as a term of psychical recognition, an

understanding of another's mind as if a physical and mental transformation takes place; and yet, such recognition also provides insight into mental illness to facilitate containment. Here identification works as a visual apparatus for detecting mentally ill persons in the service of law enforcement—the special ability of the mindhunter that Douglas claims, during the *Federal Hearings*, qualifies him and his unit to contain "the psychopath."

Manhunter graphically presents the public desire for a method of making mental illness—a disease of hidden areas such as mind and brain—biologically visible; but not just visible, since mental illness attains visibility through symptom expression. Public desire for visibility demands that mental illness be visible at all times. The discourse of "the psychopath" and the "mask of sanity" is the mass expression of this desire for/fear of mental illness as physicality. Indeed, even more so than *Red Dragon* or *Manhunter*, the second Hannibal Lecter novel, *The Silence of the Lambs* (1988), and its film adaptation of the same name (1991) play upon public desire for identification regarding mentally ill persons. And, like *Red Dragon* and *Manhunter*, *Silence of the Lambs* as novel and film participates in rhetorics of repetition, and in two ways: both represent a positivity-biased discourse of the mindhunter, and both do this by repeating the basic narrative trajectory of their respective forerunners. In other words, *Silence of the Lambs* functions as a retelling of the basic plot structure of *Red Dragon* and *Manhunter*, using just enough variation to obfuscate its doubling mechanism while drawing on core devices from its predecessors to continue and expand the former's cultural work. *Red Dragon*, *Manhunter,* and *Silence of the Lambs* all concern a troubled protagonist with tentative connections to the FBI Behavioral Science Unit who, at the request of a

respected authority figure, becomes involved in a serial murder investigation, and, to solve the case, must enlist the aid of a psychopathic serial murderer currently incarcerated in an asylum. In the former, Will Graham, at the urging of Jack Crawford, attempts to apprehend the Tooth Fairy, and so consults Hannibal Lektor; in the latter, Clarice Starling, again at the urging of Jack Crawford, is enlisted to interview Hannibal Lecter, which in turn involves her in FBI efforts to capture Buffalo Bill.

Even certain passages repeat. In *Red Dragon* and *Manhunter*, Springfield asks Graham for a definition of Lektor, prompting Graham to reply that Lektor is labeled a sociopath because "they don't know what else to call him." In *Silence of the Lambs*, Starling asks Crawford for a definition of Lecter, to which Crawford replies, "I know he's a monster. Beyond that, nobody can say for sure"; the film adaptation contains the same scene, but has Crawford answer, "Oh, he's a monster. A pure psychopath…" (Harris *Lambs* 6; Tally n.p.). Chilton also appears in *Silence of the Lambs*, his words nearly identical to his conversation with Graham when he tells Starling that Lecter is "much too sophisticated for the standard tests" (*Lambs* 10; Tally n.p.). Barry Forshaw, well aware of the similarities between the films *Manhunter* and *Lambs*, notes that early viewers of *Lambs* reacted with surprise at having their ideas of what a psychopath "looks like" confounded by Lecter's "boiler suit…handsome face [and] short hair neatly slicked back" when Starling and Lecter finally meet (Forshaw 35). However, I read Lecter's physical features in *Lambs* not as an antithesis to popular conceptions of "the psychopath," but rather as the expected representation, precisely because of the normality of his features.

First, I wish to briefly note certain points of reference between *Manhunter* and *Lambs* regarding Lecter's appearance. Lektor wears a white jumpsuit, while Lecter wears

a light blue jumpsuit, but both characters wear their hair slicked back. Although I do not assume that identical hairstyles or vaguely similar attire causes audiences of *Lambs* to think of *Manhunter*, I do suggest that, having viewed one film at some point leads a viewer to the other film, whichever comes first, and that, over time, having seen both, inevitable comparisons must occur. I also suggest that such comparisons must revolve around two points of reference: the overt repetition of hairstyle in both films, and the covert repetition of attire varied by color. These juxtapositions of varying degrees of sameness and difference reify the discourse of "the psychopath" as the mentally ill person who appears normal yet who could be anyone and so is everywhere. Therefore, in context of contemporaneous antagonistic mental health policies at the federal, state, and local level, as well as popular representations of the mindhunter, a normal individual is precisely what viewers would expect; a character too physically representative of stereotypical mental illness (wild hair, slobbering, incoherent speech, unwashed clothing, and wearing a strait jacket) would seem clichéd.

And yet, at the same time Lecter *must* appear normal to adhere to culturally circulating discursive genre of psychopathy, he must also succumb to the needs of cultural desire for reliable markers of identification making him susceptible to the vigilance of the mindhunter and uninterrupted markers making him avoidable by the public. In the film, these cultural requirements find fulfillment in Lecter's "reptilian stare" as he and Starling converse. Earlier I argued for a reading of Meloy's erroneous theory of the reptilian stare as a cultural performance by those publically labeled as psychopathic because such a physical "trait" meets the criteria for what a "psychopath" allegedly looks like and that, once apprehended and named, these individuals

unconsciously *and*/or consciously internalize a cultural role and physically perform its genre conventions, in accordance with the demands of culture. Therefore, Lecter's reptilian stare (as performed by Anthony Hopkins), networked with other performances, represents an identifiable physical characteristic believed to actually exist in the world, with the fact of its cinematic performance giving the illusion of imitation of truth as opposed to imitation in a network of imitations without a true point of origin.

Harris' novel operates in much the same way. One of the first things Starling notices about Lecter concerns his physical appearance, specifically, his six-fingered left hand (Harris *Lambs* 13). In cinematic terms, a six-fingered left hand violates the aesthetic and cultural requirements for representation of psychopathy, and so does not appear in the film. In the novel, Lecter's left hand serves as an identifying marker, a physical feature he cannot hide during everyday activity, despite his otherwise mundane appearance. Of course, the symbolic value of the amount of fingers, as obvious as it seems, deserves at least brief mention. Lecter's "polydactyly," or hand with six digits, results from a genetic mutation, and thus places Lecter outside normal human evolution of humans and animals (Lawrence 523; Tabin ctd. in Kirschner et al 215). Additional descriptions of Lecter include "small, sleek," "eyes [that] are maroon…reflect the light in pinpoints of red [and hold] Starling whole," words that, like Rule's description of Duane Demich as an amphibian, suggest a constrictor snake that surprises, immobilizes, then spends inordinate amounts of time devouring its prey (Harris *Lambs* 14). Couched among these passages is a reference to mindhunting. Starling introduces herself and explains her assignment to get Lecter to fill out an assessment questionnaire (*Lambs* 14). This form refers to the Criminal Personality Research Project, the study Ann Burgess, John

Douglas, and others conducted by interviewing convicted serial murderers; such a referent lends authenticity to the novel, and thus contributes to strengthening discourses of psychopathy and the "necessity" for the violent approach to mental illness advocated by Douglas (who, as a public figure, stands in for the discourse of the "mindhunter") (Douglas et al 122-127).

Starling, as an inexperienced mindhunter, does not develop the same sort of friendship, of psychical rapport, with Lecter that Graham does, at least not in the novel; although, as the text's panic figure (the one who identifies and stops Buffalo Bill), she does gain a similar redemption: an insight into her psyche. Her transformation takes place during her last conversation with Lecter, just as Graham's does in *Red Dragon* and *Manhunter*. The novel presents a little over three pages of dialogue between Starling and Lecter, moving back and forth in rapid succession, with the fact that the speakers are an FBI agent and a serial killer obscuring the fact that their exchange, like Lektor and Graham's in *Manhunter*, takes place between analyst (Lecter) and analysand (Starling).

The final interview takes place in Tennessee, in a refurbished courthouse; inside, Lecter sits in a specially designed cell (Harris *Lambs* 203, 206). What enhances this scene in the film is the camera direction calling for almost constant movement (Tally n.p.). As Starling approaches, the camera moves around the cage while Lecter, in a swivel chair, sits with his back to Starling (and the camera); when Lecter turns around to face Starling and the camera, the camera stops. The camera cuts back and forth between the two as they speak, with each character's head centered and framed within a section of the cell bars, as if in a formal photograph. As discussion intensifies, the camera moves around the cell, still cutting between Starling and Lecter, giving the impression of

alternating focus between them. In fact, the camera really moves left to right to feign circling the cell, switching between a left pan for Starling, a right pan for Lecter, a right pan for Starling, and a left pan for Lecter. This point of view effect is deceptive; if a viewer remembers that Lecter remains seated the entire time, then it becomes apparent that the camera represents Starling only as she walks around the cell. Thus, the camera takes on Starling's position as analysand doing most of the talking and Lecter as analyst listening and asking questions.

Starling suffers from a radical, self-enforced psychical foreclosure which, during the course of her final encounter with Lecter, opens up, and allows her formerly unspoken (or perhaps "unspeakable") trauma to take its place in her personal history. I take my reading of Starling from Davoine and Gaudillière's *History Beyond Trauma*, a text based on their work with patients suffering from mental illness; they write, "every interruption in the transmission that links people to one another is, paradoxically, searching for the pathways of an inscription" (Davoine and Gaudillière 12). In Starling's case, her formative trauma of trying to save a horse from death only to end up punished for her altruism through fraternal abandonment lacks "inscription," or acknowledgment in history:

> "There was a livery stable…I tried to see about them
> keeping her…One of them, the man, agreed to everything
> I said while his wife called the sheriff."
>
> "The sheriff was a policeman, like your father."
> "That didn't keep me from being scared of him, at first…
> The papers picked it up. There was a flap. My mother's cousin

> Agreed to let me go. I wound up going to the Lutheran Home in Bozeman." (Harris *Lambs* 209-210)

Starling endures betrayal from a husband and wife, who represent not only a generalized Oedipal couple, but specifically her father and mother. Her symbolic father, to whom she appeals, pretends to validate her act (and thus her as a person) at the same time that his wife, the symbolic mother who is not present in Starling's life, becomes physically absent (unseen) and emotionally absent (surreptitiously calling the police). The father becomes doubly absent through his duplicity regarding his emotional connection to Starling; he is, so to speak, "dead" (against her) while he feigns concern (another "death," reminiscent of her dead father, who remains physically dead and so unable to intervene on her behalf, to fulfill his culturally assigned role as protector of children). The sheriff who intervenes on behalf of the family also represents Starling's dead father in that his uniform symbolizes her father but his actions distance her from him. Nowhere in this episode does Starling find herself even considered as a possible arbitrator; her history as she experiences it goes under erasure.

Her erasure emerges in the way she relates the incident. Lecter asks her, "What made you run away with the horse?" to which she answers, "They were going to kill her" (*Lambs* 210). Her admission that she resolved to leave with the horse because she awoke to the sound of distressed lambs signifies, for lack of a more accurate term, layers of memories (*Lambs* 211). Starling tells the end of the story first and relates the beginning under leading questions from Lecter. In the film, this realization finds expression once again, via the camera. Still cutting back and forth between Starling and Lecter, the camera zooms in on Lecter's face while the size of Starling's face in her frames remain

static. Even when the camera zooms in on Starling, Lecter's face remains larger. During all this frenzied motion, Lecter asks, "Do you think if you caught Buffalo Bill yourself…you could make the lambs stop screaming, do you think they'd be all right too and you wouldn't wake up again in the dark and hear the lambs screaming?" (*Lambs* 211). The breathless rush of the sentence matches the emotional pace and intensity of this psychoanalytic session. When Staring answers, "Yes. I don't know. Maybe," she attempts to inscribe her history into the world by acknowledging her motivations for her life choices, such as joining the FBI (*Lambs* 211). She also signifies a sense of trust in Lecter, which begins to heal her childhood "catastrophies in the social order [that set] in motion a loss of trust, in the safety of the laws governing men, the universe, or the body," leaving "the other [as] a surface of signs and forms to be deciphered against a background of devalued words" (Davoine and Gaudillière 64). In this case, I read "other" as a generalized network of social relations, and I use the word "healed" because "heal" implies integration. Starling "heals" in that distrust remains, to a certain extent (a necessary quality in a law enforcement agent), but she leaves Lecter having learned to integrate distrust and her trauma into an ability to identify and kill Buffalo Bill unaided (Harris *Lambs* 319-321). The film, on the other hand, changes the horse to a lamb and removes almost all of the Oedipal conflict, but makes up for this deficiency in an important way.

Just as Lecter starts to reveal the identity of Buffalo Bill, Chilton and three police officers arrive to forcibly remove Starling. In the passages from Harris' aforementioned text, no pause occurs between Starling's request for Bill's name and Chilton's arrival, suggesting an abrupt interruption. In the film, however, a moment of

silence passes between Starling and Lecter; the latter's face contorts, and his eyelids fall, suggesting he struggles to decide whether or not he should speak…before he notices Chilton. Thus, the film offers a possibility of bond formation between Starling and Lecter that the text does not. In fact, the film accents such a possibility when Starling reaches to take the case file from Lecter and he strokes her finger lightly but she does not flinch. Here, her trust in Lecter, and her new relationship with herself begins; it is a crucial moment in the film.

The text, by contrast, remains ambiguous on this point, and places the burden of instigating contact on Starling. "The tip of her forefinger touched Dr. Lecter's," according to the text; "The touch crackled in his eyes…And that is how he remained in Starling's mind. Caught in the instant when he did not mock" (Harris *Lambs* 212). While the passage strongly emphasizes bonding between Starling and Lecter, any hints of this remain overshadowed by the "crackling" in Lecter's eyes. Readers are left with two equally compelling interpretations: Starling and Lecter bond; or, Lecter, a serial murderer and cannibal, receives his first tactile human contact in a long while. Even Lecter's subsequent escape suggests two readings.

Reading both novel and film in a traditional linear manner gives off the impression that Lecter, inspired by his new connection with Starling, decides to escape. However, when he does escape, he chooses not to pursue her. Instead, he writes her a letter that comes across as both compassionate as well as threatening. First he tells her, "you'll have to earn it again and again, the blessed silence. Because it's the plight that drives you…and the plight will not end, ever," showing his psychoanalytic insight, then he distances himself: "I have no plans to call on you, Clarice, the world being more

interesting with you in it. *Be sure* you extend me the same courtesy (*Lambs* 337 emphasis added). Lecter's "admission" of emotional connection to Starling actually betrays his passive-aggressive attitude towards her. "The world" remains "interesting" as long as Starling remains alive, actually reads as an admission of desire *only* from a distance, that is to say, the nature of his feelings depend on her absence. For good measure, Lecter admonishes Starling against any attempt to capture him, his "be sure" a polite way to signify that she must not break the emotional conditions of their relationship by shortening the distance between them. Although I use many terms connotating emotional attachment here, I wish to call attention to the overall signification of Lecter's letter; namely, his priorities. Desire to resume satisfying his drives towards murder and cannibalism dictate the life choices Lecter makes, despite his demonstrative concern for Starling. All this is to say that, for all his human frailty regarding Starling, in the end, Lecter remains a representation of "the psychopath"; he remains non-human in his desire to consume human flesh and in his need to kill.

In fact, he final minutes of the film gestures towards a reading of Lecter as non-human even more openly than the text. In the film, Lecter phones Starling as she receives an award for capturing Buffalo Bill. This time, when Lecter issues his "be sure," Starling replies, "You know I can't make that promise" (Tally n.p.). While the shooting script ends with Lecter about to murder Chilton, the film only suggests this, instead showing Lecter following Chilton as he boards a plane (Tally n.p.) Such a conclusion invites reading as an example of Cassuto's idea of Lecter as motivated by "self-preservation or revenge," since taking the trouble to pursue Chilton would incur considerable risk for Lecter. Such a risk should actually deter Lecter from following Chilton, at least for a

time, but this is not what happens. And the reason for Lecter's choice resides precisely in his psychopathy: he must kill and he must eat human flesh. In other words, first and foremost, he must remain outside of the legal, moral, and cultural strictures that define "humanity" if not "the human," and Chilton, as an object of Lecter's revenge, is a convenient victim for serving Lecter's emotional and biological needs.

As I have shown, gestures such as the ending of *Lambs* favor the ambiguous regarding "the psychopath." Indeed, suggestion remains the most potent tool in the push for an exclusively law enforcement approach to mental illness as advocated by Rule, Douglas, and others during the period when thrillers reject extreme representations of violent death and privilege nuanced representations that prompt more imaginative participation from readers and viewers. As I discuss in the following chapter, such appeals to active public visualization of what might never happen, what would have happened, what has not yet happened, of pre-identification of mental illness, comes at the same cultural moment that reality television emerges and the home viewer becomes pressed into the service of law enforcement's expanding influence.

"Alternative Realities": Rhetorics of Repetition, True Crime Television, and Disability Rights

While Anthony Hopkins' portrayal of Hannibal Lecter rose to the status of popular culture icon and *cause célèbre* during the late eighties and early nineties, the forensic detective, or mindhunter, as envisioned and promoted by John Douglas, also rose to prominence as a popular culture icon—as the serial killer's natural enemy and psychical doppelgänger. Given the pivotal role the panic figure occupies both within popular and public culture as mediator and as custodian of idealized objects into and onto which phantasies find placement, such an upsurge in public interest in the "sexual psychopath" during this period suggests the presence of undercurrents of cultural desire which might potentially trouble the distinction between the "sick" and the "healthy."

Such phantasy bonding with another person forms the basis of Kleinian empathy, or the projection of one's good part objects into another person throughout our development from birth onwards; we might also call this a ritual of psychical "things in common," and in fact, Klein considers the process of "projective identification" leading to empathy as a healthy activity (Spillius and Milton 322). The growing empathetic relationship between Starling and Lecter in *Silence of the Lambs* also shows the process through which the sexual psychopath briefly replaces the mindhunter in the role of panic figure. By the end of the film, Starling moves from a heroic to quasi-heroic role and Lecter moves from a foil for Starling's character development to an anti-hero.

In fact, Caroline J.S. Picart and David A. Frank contend that a reading of *Lambs* actually shows the film performing cultural work similar to Hitchcock's *Psycho*, in that both films "resist permeability between binary dichotomies of the normal…and abnormal" through their ambiguity-laden final scenes: "Norma's" voice closing *Psycho* while "Norman" remains almost catatonic under the weight of his confinement, and Hannibal Lecter's unnoticed blending in with surrounding crowds at the end of *Lambs* (220). Here I wish to recall Leonard Cassuto's point that the minimalist violence of the thriller genre allows for interpretation of these seemingly antithetical visual and affective couplings as empathetic spaces. And by "empathetic," I mean spaces of trans-corporeal affect between two or more persons which trouble the parameters maintained by panic figures, and, in addition, undermine the very definitions of whom may emerge as a panic figure at any cultural moment.

To cite just one example, in the years between the *Hearings on Serial Murder* (1981) and the *Federal Role in the Investigation of Serial Violent Crime* hearings (1986), Norman Bates resurfaces in *Psycho II* (1983). *Psycho II* went on to become the twentieth top grossing film of the year (Domestic Grosses). That Universal Pictures should continue making use of the Bates character during the height of public fascination with, and panic over, serial murder hardly seems surprising. Nor does it come as a surprise that the film engages with contemporaneous discourses over ex-asylum patients among the public, especially those discourses concerning the proper jurisdiction of the medical profession and law enforcement. What does come as a surprise regarding *Psycho II* is the film's vacillation between its portrayals of Bates as always-already homicidal, as the *occasion* for the panic figure's emergence, and between its portrayals of blatant sympathy

towards Bates, that is to say, its *casting of him as the panic figure*.

This attitude towards Bates becomes noticeable in the first few minutes, with the camera cutting to a view of a local courthouse at midday, then abruptly cutting to the courtroom interior and making a slow zoom in behind a seated Norman Bates. However, as the camera gets closer to the back of Bates' head, the off-screen voice of a judge declares "on the basis of the staff report, Norman Bates is judged restored to sanity and released forthwith." His last few words are crowded out by Lila Crane's off-screen voice—"What about his victims?"—which causes Bates, now much older, to turn his head to the side. The camera cuts to Lila, now an elderly woman, as she shouts, "Don't they have any say? Can you restore them?" The judge, off-screen, replies—"Madam, please sit down." Bates' "inhuman" calm and self-effacement is set against Crane's "exaggerated" agitation over the possibility of his release from the asylum. The filmic narrative, via camera pace and orientation, moves back and forth between various portrayals of Bates as sympathetic or as monstrous; yet it never stops insisting upon Bates' psychosis as anything other than incurable.

All this is to say that the camera-as-third-person-omnipotent-narrator provides the viewer with not only a narrative trajectory, but with a "silent" commentary on the characters as well. In much the same way a first-person voiceover provides the viewer with "missing" aspects of a narrative, the camera's subtle use of time and space demands the viewer "see" Bates and Crane as it sees them (Henderson 9). The camera's constant shifting of position and distance, alongside the interrupted dialogue, conveys a sense of urgency regarding the stakes involved in the hearing for Bates and for Crane as well as for an audience situated in a cultural milieu in which the "new menace" of serial

murderers seem to be everywhere. In fact, as if to ensure that the stakes involved are clearly articulated, the camera shifts the narrative into a didactic mode.

With the camera still left-oriented and in wide angle, Crane approaches the bench and says, “Your Honor, my name is Ms. Lila Loomis. I have a petition here signed by seven hundred forty-three people against Norman Bates’ release,” before the camera cuts to a ground-level frontal view of Crane partially blocked by the district attorney’s shoulder as he stands in to the left of the screen in front of her. Crane continues: “including the relatives of the seven people he murdered. Doesn’t that give me the right to speak out?” Bates sits quietly, thus representing her as unstable and Bates as sane. In other words, Crane, a “law abiding citizen” in the court of law appears outside the law or “criminal” through her disruption of proceedings, while Bates, a “convicted criminal” sits quietly and obeys all the legal protocols of ceremonial deference legal culture requires of subjects in presence of the law, thus appearing “law abiding.”

The filmic narrative reinforces its negative representation of Crane by cutting to the judge, who, instead of replying to her question, addresses the male district attorney with a question of his own: “Has the DA advised Ms. Loomis on her rights regarding this matter?” The DA, still standing to the left in front of Crane and occupying a larger share of the frame, replies to the judge (without consulting Crane and referring to her in the third person) that her petition carries no weight in Bates’ hearing. Thus, the two male authority figures converse about Crane as if she were a criminal who unwisely chooses to speak in her own defense or as if she were someone’s daughter rebelling against Lacan’s “Law of the Father.” Crane, trapped within the place of the law’s power, trapped between the judge, the DA, and her petition—a symbol of the law’s power, yet in this case its

power is the power of the law to nullify its own power arbitrarily—nevertheless verifies her position to the "father-cluster" through her protest. Her protest participates in and resists the maintenance of the law-fathers as "ego-object or ideal reality," that is to say, the desired Father within a "field of eroticized aggression," which, Lacan also notes, is the precondition for psychosis (Lacan 480-481.577-578). Here, psychosis is the representational nexus where camera and sound combine into the filmic narrative's "unspoken" moral judgment of Crane acted out by Crane herself when, exasperated, she turns to a seated witness and shouts at them, "Why are we sitting here…they're going to release a homicidal maniac!" Crane is not only the "daughter" but also the "mother" whom the daughter recognizes as someone who "accommodates the father as a person…[gives priority] to his speech…his authority—[acquiesces to] the Name-of-the-Father in the promotion of the law," the law here being literally expressed through the judge and the DA, and metaphorically expressed through the network of Oedipal relations structuring the filmic narrative within which the characters are constituted (482. 578-579). Oedipal relations find further expression through the camera's triangular perspective shot of Crane turned toward the witness.

By foregrounding the petition in her hand as the wide edge, with her arm and back as the two edges and the back of her head as the highest vertex of a triangle, the camera emphasizes the power of the law-father's logos, that is to say, the literal petition as a legal document (or the father's voice returned to him as echo) and as a metaphor for the law-father's power to verbally reject his own power. Foregrounding the petition also conveys multiple sites of distance: physical distance, as Crane moves away from the judge and DA; distance from acknowledgment by the law-father as represented by the foregrounded

paper rejected by the court and the lengthening of her arm; and an increasing distance from the normative order as evinced in the witness' non-responsiveness as well as his unease and fear expressed through bodily rigidity and facial features. These distances, anchored together by the document's rhetorical and legal poverty, revoke Crane's status in the courtroom as a victim's rights advocate and re-situate her so as to be read by a viewer as an "uncontrollable psychotic," or more specifically, as a "hysteric." When the judge threatens Crane with expulsion, an action prompting her to reply, "Why bother? It's all too obvious our courts protect the criminals not their victims," and leave, the camera emphasizes her defeat by switching back to its former wide angle, left-oriented, perspective, before cutting again to ground level. At this point the viewer finally glimpses Bates' face in full frontal; as his representatives lead him to the left side of the frame and out of the courtroom, his face plays with instilling uncertainty in the viewer as to whether or not he is smiling. In the background, the judge calls the next case. That the judge calls for the next case before Bates, his representatives, or the DA leave the room speaks, albeit briefly, to a commentary on an overcrowded court system concerned more with the efficient enactment of the law than careful consideration of the act of dispensing justice.

In discussing Crane's confrontation with Bates and his doctor in the lobby, I want to return to her use of pejoratives such as "homicidal maniac," which I read as the moment she realizes her misplaced faith in the law and the Law of the Father, and resorts to insults. Her sudden awareness of what can only be called her non-status in the Oedipal relation, I contend, moves her to draw on cliché as an attempt to claim some of her lost cultural capital as a Sane Person and as a Victims' Advocate—cultural capital that the law has partially displaced onto Bates, who, as already mentioned, is given the role of

panic figure vis-à-vis Crane as hysterical. Looked at in this way, Crane appears as the "violent, mentally ill person," talked about but never talked to, in need of containment and expulsion from the cultural order. Clichés signify an assumed shared cultural ethics in the sense that they grant access to community-forming idioms and their varied meanings. Thus I argue Crane resorts to stigmatizing epithets not against Bates in particular, although she aims them at him, but rather against mentally ill persons as a whole.

Unable to attack Bates in a judicial sense—as a murderer—she attacks him through appeal to public fear of the figure of the "homicidal maniac" who becomes unidentifiable and thus unstoppable once released into the public sphere, that is to say, she mobilizes discourses of the sexual psychopath. She uses popular cliché to evoke the sexual psychopath discourse again when she says, "Are you satisfied, doctor? Turning a murderer loose on an innocent public?" Crane also relies on other discourses in her confrontation with Doctor Raymond. In accusing him of "turning a murderer loose on an innocent public," Crane simultaneously charges Raymond with violating the Hippocratic Oath (that a doctor may never knowingly do harm to a patient, in this case the patient being an unsuspecting public body) and tries to shame him by linking him to the horror genre trope of the "mad doctor," specifically Doctor Frankenstein (whose disregard for both human and natural law released a "murderous monster" on an "innocent public"). Even her choice of words, "murderer loose" and "innocent public" seem culled from television melodrama, especially when she responds to Raymond's claim that Norman "was found guilty by reason of insanity" by stating "when he murders again, you will be directly responsible," and exiting the courthouse.[1]

Crane's appropriation of the language of scripted television serves another purpose: that of solidifying her as the film's panic figure. As I mentioned earlier, the courtroom drama that opens *Psycho II* shows Crane's excision from within the Oedipal order as victims' advocate and as removal to an outside position as hysteric or madwoman. Finally, returning to her word choice, as panic figure, in order to be heard by the public, Crane relies on the popular slang used by the public to identify, contain, and thus remove mentally ill persons, that is to say, the language of popular melodrama, which, in its use of narrative, like film, provides the public with a means of talking about and dealing with its panic through the maintenance and production of stigmatizing discourses all the more "real" because they re-enact melodramas claiming to represent reality.

Crane's position as panic figure also serves to foreshadow what the viewer now knows is the inevitable trajectory of the film: Bates' relapse into madness, despite sympathetic treatment by his doctor and by the courts. This adds a tragic dimension to Crane's admonition of Dr. Raymond; indeed, it adds an almost prophetic aspect that reinforces discourses of fear and anxiety regarding mental illness because repetition, used as a rhetorical strategy, eventually overtakes and becomes the real through the sheer force of accumulation. And television, broadcast simultaneously to large numbers of people whose lived experiences are similarly structured through cultural norms, recycles narratives which overtake and replace an already replicated real of cultural norms until the two are indistinguishable from one another.

The creation of Lila Crane-Loomis as the film's panic figure is not the only way *Psycho II* engages with contemporaneous debates regarding mental illness. The film

directly engages with the issue of post-asylum trajectories of former mentally ill persons specifically as it relates to employment and stigma, thus showing an enormous amount of sympathy for Bates even as it presents his life as defined by his psychosis. For example, before Raymond leaves, he expresses his regret that if "there hadn't been all those cutbacks…there'd be a trained social worker to stop by from time to time"; Bates tells him that all is well, but of course all is far from well, since almost immediately Bates begins to have visual and auditory hallucinations. Even when the two men arrived at the Bates house earlier, Bates claimed to see a figure standing in one of the windows.

Under these circumstances, Raymond's brief remark carries considerable weight insofar as it attempts to open a space for discussion of health care policies affecting persons within the mental health community. By the time *Psycho II* appeared in theaters, the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) had been operating its Community Support Program (CSP) for six years; one of the ways the CSP encouraged post-asylum care for mentally ill persons was through the allocation of funds for mental health reform to various states, with the aim of strengthening the community care infrastructure even as it was weakening under the stress caused by the Reagan Administration's sweeping budget cuts (Grob and Goldman 121-123). As is evident from Raymond's remark, Bates is one of the chronically mentally ill persons who does not fully benefit from the socioeconomic struggles between federal and state institutions, except through his release from the asylum. He still lives in the same house where he experienced his psychoses, and he lives in a wooded, isolated area; without regular professional, post-asylum intervention of some sort he remains at risk for relapse or even a worsening of his condition.

Bates' dilemma provides a useful entry point into discussions regarding the sorts of situations mentally ill persons might face as they enter the workforce during this period. In a study of stigmatization against mentally ill persons by Wahl, *Telling is Risky Business*, the lived realities of ex-asylum patients and persons actively using community care services appear next to Wahl's theories on the subject. Wahl's study contains valuable insights not only because of its detail but also because of its balance; he always takes care to distinguish when stigma is present and when a person's account is not quite definitive. Overall, however, Wahl finds that mentally ill persons who "disclose" suddenly find that "others…view [them] as less competent…unable to handle the job…Some consumers were fired or asked to leave their jobs" (Wahl 83). Bates' situation differs from the ones described in *Telling* in that "disclosure," the term used in the mental health community for a person openly admitting to having a *chronic* mental illness (equivalent in significance to "coming out" in the LGBT community), allows Bates to secure his job rather than causes him anxiety over its possible loss. Nevertheless, *Telling* also provides a good model for gaining insight into Bates during his first day at work in *Psycho II.*

Emma Spool, an elderly woman who, in the film's final minutes, reveals herself as Bates' biological mother, greets him at the cash register and welcomes him. As she introduces Bates to the staff, he is mainly rebuffed, but finally greeted with enthusiasm by a waitress, Mary Samuels, who later on confesses that she is Lila Crane's daughter. However, Bates still endures verbal abuse from some of his co-workers for incidents of clumsiness or confusion that might be looked upon with more patience if his crimes and his illness were not public knowledge. Interviewees in Wahl's text relate similar

incidents: “When I was first diagnosed…I made the mistake of telling my supervisor at the time what was going on. She decided I couldn’t handle a job I’d been doing for ten years and demoted me” (Wahl 84). In fact, Bates’ situation at the diner intensifies *because* he begins to view himself as normal. After his first day at work, Bates returns home and fires Warren Toomey, the Bates Motel’s seedy interim manager, for drinking on the job and taking money under the table. Toomey shows up at the diner the next day intoxicated, sexually harasses Mary Samuels, and challenges Bates to a fight by shouting insults pertaining to Bates’ psychosis and his time spent in an institution. Toomey eventually leaves, but Bates, who defends Samuels from Toomey, is told to “take the day off” by the owner. Bates throws down his apron and exits.

This scene demonstrates a unique type of discrimination; Toomey assaults Samuels and threatens Bates, but all Bates wants is to act “normal,” to go back to work as if nothing happened, which his employers will not allow. The way I read the incident, Toomey has the “excuse” of intoxication, since, when he sobers up, he will still be “normal,” despite his distasteful character. By comparison, Bates is first and foremost a “psycho”; he cannot help Samuels or defend himself against Toomey without his mental illness and his criminal past causing others to view his actions as a manifestation of “inevitable” violence. Although the film does not show this, I suggest that the filmic narrative does suggest it, in that Norman does not return to his job, but instead decides to refurbish the Bates Motel and run it himself. In other words, having tried and “failed” to integrate himself into the community and claim the same privileges as his new status of “normal/sane” promises, Bates finds the stigma attached to him inescapable and immutable, and therefore retreats to a familiar and comfortable environment. Wahl finds

that a workplace incident such as Bates endures often occur, although perhaps on not so large a scale. “One requirement of disability law,” Wahl writes, “is that the workplace is not a hostile environment…[where] disabled persons are isolated, teased, or harassed…Many respondents to our study reported that their work environments involved just these negatives and that they were sometimes driven from their jobs as a result” (Wahl 85). Yet stigma and accompanying discourses of panic regarding mental illness and sexuality and violence, can only be brought to bear on subjects openly identified as mentally ill. While many chronically mentally ill persons can and do hide their illnesses, many opt to disclose, especially after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, mentioned by Wahl above.

The ADA is in many ways modeled on the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in the sense that both seek to disrupt systemic exclusion of marginalized groups from opportunities for meaningful civic engagement, gainful employment, use of public facilities, housing, and all aspects of public and private sectors (Goldberg and Killeen 464-465). The ADA also expands upon the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which provides community based care and vocational rehabilitation for disabled persons; specifically, the ADA makes discrimination against a disabled person in a workplace or in housing a crime and requires employers to provide accommodation for disabled employees: access ramps, a flexible schedule, and the like (Wahl 79-80). These Acts apply to persons with physical, or visible, disabilities, as well as persons with mental illness, especially chronic mental illness or psychiatric disabilities (Frank and Glied 4). That psychiatric disability exists as s term acknowledged by the federal government remains a huge step in public acceptance of mental illness and integration of mentally ill persons into mainstream culture,

particularly in that, as discussed elsewhere, most people do not view mental illness as a disability.

And yet, following the physician and science historian Georges Canguilhem, I must resist the lure of a blanket relativism that denies the fact of mental illness (Canguilhem 130-131). Like him, I believe "that from one individual to the next the *relativity of the normal* is the rule…that the concept of the 'pathological' is not the absence of norms but the *presence of other norms*" (130-131 emphasis added). In other words, abnormality appears only where an otherwise normal entity exists in developmental disharmony with its environment (for myself, loosely defined as a literal environment as well as other entities, values, ideas and other ways of being). In fact, Canguilhem expresses a similar view when he writes, "neither the living being nor the milieu can be called 'normal' if we consider them separately," since both mutually sustain each other in an ecological loop and as part of a greater ecological system (127). The human tendency towards a fallacy of self-sufficiency blinds us to the fact that the normative is not arbitrarily defined through binaries but rather exists *only* when a "living being" and its proper "milieu" are uniquely suited to sustain each other in a physical and metaphysical symbiotic relationship. Only when the milieu and the entity engage in the mutually beneficial relationship can we say "normal" or "natural." From a disabilities studies perspective, the guarantees of the ADA are designed to create a mutually sustaining, "normal," "natural" environment.

Yet the constant and varied normalization practices of stigma, rooted in an idea of an ahistorical, singular normalcy on the defensive against multitudinous, "hostile" abnormalities, often attempt to force pathological relations between persons with

disabilities and his or her environment. Wahl notes at least three persons who became unemployed because they chose to disclose: one applied at a fast food restaurant; another, an engineering firm; the third, a graphic design company; the last two had years of experience and excellent qualifications. (Wahl 82-83). Wahl also shows that employers who do hire persons with psychiatric disabilities do so precisely because such persons have to work for whatever wage they can get (88-89). Taken together, these and previous discussions reveal stigma as a part of public desire for objects of knowledge emerging out of cultural paranoia and moral panic around sexuality, violence, and mental illness. Yet this desire to know, to identify, remains bound up with a fundamental desire for distance, a desire that becomes intensified as deinstitutionalization grows over ensuing decades.

During the asylum era, this desire for identification and distance was satiated, in that the mentally ill, for the most part, were located within the asylum. Even if one rarely saw them, one could always "know" the mad were "in there" "behind the gates" and even further "in there" "locked up" in rooms one might be hard pressed to visualize accurately. With deinstitutionalization also came the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the ADA, the previously discussed anti-psychiatry movement, and other reform efforts, all of which sought to bring the mentally ill into long-term, close proximity with the sane, a clear "infiltration" of public culture necessitating consistent designation of the "normal" from the "pathological." Indeed, slasher film and the deinstitutionalization movement both reach peaks of cultural relevance and effectiveness during the same period, from the late seventies to the late eighties and early nineties. Moreover, the most popular slasher film series' from this period all feature physically and psychiatrically disabled protagonists: *Halloween* (Michael Myers: mute and developmentally disabled); *The Hills Have Eyes*

(disfigured cannibals); *Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (Leatherface: mute and developmentally disabled); *Friday the Thirteenth* (Jason Vorhees: mute and developmentally disabled); and *Nightmare on Elm Street* (Freddie Kruger: disfigured face and body, sexual deviancy, psychosis) (Clover 23). These films take the Cartesian duality of mind/body, reconfigure it through disability, and then re-present it through representations of psychopathy. Shawn Phillips also notes the presence of binary opposition in slasher films and presents a short list of divisions he says "are commonly violated in the slasher genre [and which] tends to be consistently present between the two groups of characters depicted in most slasher horror storylines that depict the disabled as killers" (Phillips 72). These divisions, which he views as microcosms of the process of cultural formation, are: "Victims: Normal, Urban, Clean, Attractive, Young, Sexual, Thin, Eat food" versus "Disabled Slasher: Abnormal, Rural, Dirty, Ugly, Old, Asexual, Obese, Cannibalize"; it is worth noting that Phillips cites *The Hills Have Eyes* and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* as examples of this division, as well as theorists Jane Caputi and Sander Gilman, whom I have also drawn on, as proponents of his idea (72).

It seems to me, however, that Phillips' argument, at least in regards to cultural formation, rests on a fundamental omission and misreading. He omits *Halloween*, a film that, as previously discussed, comes after *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* but provides the narrative conventions all subsequent slasher films will imitate. In other words, and I have elsewhere pointed out that the major horror critics agree on this, *Halloween* is the "first" slasher film in that it defines the boundaries of the genre. And, a cultural production (in this case a genre) defines itself through a process of elimination, that is to say, as *not that which initially contains it*. *Halloween*, while containing elements of horror and the

gothic, in its open admission of the influence of Hitchcock's *Psycho*, and even its gestures towards the supernatural (Loomis: "He isn't a man."), nevertheless takes great pains to distinguish itself from its parent genres. Thus *Halloween* seems a more appropriate example for Phillips' argument, except that *Halloween* violates many of his argumentative principles. The victims in *Halloween* live in a quiet suburban area, with the asylum housing Myers placed in a sort of hinterland even further from the rural suburbs. While the victims in *Halloween* are young and attractive, Myers is not disfigured; at one point the audience even gets to see his face and it is the face of a young, attractive man (this violates Phillips' 'Young/Old' binary). Myers is neither obese nor a cannibal. The reason for such a glaring omission of a foundational work and misreading of critical texts seems clear. Contrary to Phillips' straightforward binary oppositions, in slasher film, spaces exists where dichotomies only appear to function.

The slasher figure represents mental illness and physical disability in fusion, or, more precisely, disability doubled into a hyper-disability that surpasses the "normal" body into a supra-disability. The victims of slashers are either body-oriented (as in the genre convention of teenage sexuality) or mind-oriented (as in the genre convention of those who do not believe the panic figure), and so are at a disadvantage when encountering the slasher. In a culture where concentration on either the body or the mind is valued, the slasher, as physically and psychiatrically disabled, takes on a paradoxical form—that of almost supra-natural power when cultural logic demands the figure occupy a subordinate place in the cultural hierarchy. What necessitates this representational paradox is cultural paranoia regarding a very different sort of Cartesian divide: the hypervisible body of persons with a physical disability versus the hyperelusiveness of the

mind of the psychopath. For example, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson in her study of disability and visualization, *Staring: How We Look*, locates “The goal of observation” in a shared cultural need “to make the unknown intelligible” through “observation and display” (Garland-Thomson 48). But an impasse lies in a cultural desire “to make the unknown intelligible” by conspicuous proximity and by conspicuous absence within the same cultural moment. The chronic mentally ill are a desired *presence* in that visible proximity makes them easier to identify and avoid; they are a desired *absence* in that the presence of mentally ill persons incite fear over “inevitable” violence.

“Display,” however, is not just a state of constant presence to another; it also means constant and *conspicuous* presence to another. Indeed, as Garland-Thomson notes, “We must encounter something foreign *regularly* to make it native,” and herein lies the crucial difference between encounters with a physically disabled person and a psychiatrically disabled person (48). Repetition of presence between a “normal” person and a physically disabled person reifies normativity through a sort of benevolent condescension. Encountering a wheelchair-bound person incites an acute awareness of one’s functioning legs as well as the public and private spaces whose design legitimates them, and so produces awareness of the “normality,” “rightness,” or “correctness” of one’s body in relation to its milieu. Access for wheelchair-bound persons requires, on the other hand, special legislation; that is to say, a certain appeal to the normative power structure must take place, an appeal that, in the act of appealing, acknowledges and so strengthens normativity’s power (Brown 99, 169). By contrast, the relative invisibility of psychiatric disability until voluntary or forced disclosure, occasions anxiety over not only where mentally ill persons are, or might be, but also occasions anxiety over close

proximity to them once identified—a "not here!" as confirmation and as injunction. Such institutionalized anxieties forbid mentally ill persons from occupying any social or cultural space. Mentally ill persons cannot be "there," nor "somewhere," nor can they be "here," without inciting panic over absence *and* presence. An example of such a state of being is Norman Bates in *Psycho*, someone for whom no "presence of other norms," no cultural space to occupy, exists, leaving only abnormality and non-existence (an antagonistic relationship with one's milieu).

And yet an entirely new cultural space, one evolving out of the convergence of free market capital, public fear of violent crime, and the expanding role of law enforcement in everyday life, does emerge during the late eighties and early nineties, a new cultural space that intersects with and forcibly envelops mentally ill persons: reality television, especially the subgenre of true crime. Laurie Ouellette writes that during Reagan's presidency, fiscal regulations changed to fall in line with Reaganomics—the "trickle down" theory of economics in which the government gives free reign to corporate activity at the expense of the livelihood and security of the middle and lower classes (Ouellette 153-154). She goes on to say that such a move by the federal government not only publicly performs the New Right administration's belief in personal responsibility (by now the legal ruling granting corporations the status of personhood is well established and often successfully evoked in the courts) but also performs its "logic of private partnership and outsourcing [into] a hybrid cultural form in which commerce and civic life are inextricably intertwined" (159-160).[2] What made the reality crime show successful, then, was its non-reliance on organized labor as represented by industry organizations (the Screen Actors' Guild [SAG], the Writers' Guild [WGA], and other

artists' unions) in favor of "freelance production crews, the use of inexpensive handheld cameras," unscripted scenarios, "the labor of…suspected criminals," and "props, vehicles, sets, costumes and services provided by federal, state, and local [law enforcement] agencies" (154; Raphael ctd. in Ouellette 154). Also of importance were the WGA strikes of 1981, 1985, and 1988 (Littleton 29-32). The strike dates invite comparison with the first air dates of some of the most enduring reality crime shows: *Unsolved Mysteries* (1987-present), *America's Most Wanted* (1988-present), and *COPS* (1989-present) (Ouellette 154). However, in the context of this discussion, the most important feature of these shows was their insistence on authenticity while simultaneously suggesting an almost self-conscious non-specificity regarding temporality, thus allowing them to run in syndication without ever appearing dated (154). Representation remains minimal so that the only message conveyed remains that of "real" justice being carried out.

However, I take to heart Mark Andrejevic's injunction in *Reality TV: The Work of Being Watched,* that cultural critique should take aim at "not the false mask that covers the obfuscated reality…but the function of the promise of access to this reality," that is to say, one must attend to the representations of cultural phantasies and their discourses, and how culture and its discourses talk about (or represent) their discourses (Andrejevic 215). In the pages ahead, it is this peculiar *activity* of reality television to bend, layer, and intersperse time through manipulation of phantasy that will come to have such a huge impact on the lived realities of persons with psychiatric disabilities throughout the mid-to-late eighties and nineties.

True crime reality TV in its early years brought together the narrative structures

of horror and the documentary film (a genre which also shares similarities in narrative structure with a sub-genre of journalism: the "human interest" story). According to Gray Cavender, these two genres meet at the intersection of a "symbolic use of malaise and resolution...[as] references to crime as a threat to the social order and to the resolution of that threat" (Cavender 82). Cavender further notes that many shows openly draw on horror conventions such as a focus on eliciting dread and terror (Cavender 82; Krutnik ctd. in Cavender 42). The fundamental cultural work of true crime reality TV, like horror, is to disseminate societal morals, reify discourses, and to repair broken or weakening areas in the dichotomies that give a particular culture its form. Thus, protagonists and antagonists in crime reality TV usually remain limited to stock characters and clichés, for example, "cold blooded killers prowl[ing] the mean streets," finding prey in "a good-looking college kid," or "a pretty, young wife" (82).

However, while Cavender discusses a subsequent evolution from stock character to unique character and then to "audience identification [through] personaliz[ation]" I propose that no such tactics take place and it is the *imprecision of characterization* that allows for audience identification with the victims (82-83). True, reality TV does manipulate audience affect through conspicuous displays of intimate moments featuring victims and their relatives. Yet such specificity only allows for a shrinking of space where affective links might find expression. While viewers are invited to bear witness to traumas suffered by victims' families and loved ones by hearing and seeing personalized testimony (which one would assume, going from a general to a specific, would elicit audience identification), the very fact of the *necessity of the narrative ploy* undermines its function and purpose. The viewer does not identify with the victim except in a sense of

self-preservation ("how can *I* become vigilant enough to avoid *this*?") and only through minimalization of characters into *types* that identification occurs because viewers watch and see themselves as the victim through indulgence in phantasies of displacement. No space exists for viewers to dis-place themselves into the victim's life and social circuit; the only space available is the space of the *murdered victim*, the tenuous space of "the pretty wife," for example, first via simile ("I'm like her"), then by metaphor ("I am her"). The excessive personal details offered during the true crime narrative only provide opportunities for viewers to dis-identify with victims' families. Whether because their grief might come off as contrived (if the crime remains unsolved), ethically questionable, or for classist, racist, ethnocentric, sexist, or other reasons, it is would be difficult to say with certainty.

By contrast, critical analysis of the cultural work performed by true crime reality TV (in particular *America's Most Wanted* hosted by John Walsh, who testified at the *Senate Hearings on Serial Violent Crime* in 1984), demands interrogation of similarities between law enforcement and mental illness beyond ascribed types. Cavender notes that *Wanted* relies on "the crime genre's penchant for order and authority, and the tenets of the crime control model,"—a formulation that bears resemblance to the general narrative of horror (Silverman ctd. in Cavender 85). Also, true crime reality TV follows the slightly more specific "classic" discourses within the horror genre: "soundtrack, the visuals, and the narrative convey a pastoral or small town sense of equilibrium. Crime shatters the tranquility…Vignettes depict crime as out of control…caution is no guarantee against horrible victimization" (85). Not only do the foregoing sentences resemble the basic plot structure of *Halloween* but they also sketch out the narrative

trajectory of almost every slasher film to come after it. The previous sentences also apply to anxieties regarding safe spaces as articulated in *Henry*. Thus, repetition as rhetorical device reappears: first, the general narrative of the "slasher" becomes doubled into two narratives (horror and crime), then the two narratives double to establish their formal aesthetic qualities which are fundamentally the same but with variations appropriate to their parent genres, before forming two sub-genres (slasher horror and true crime reality TV); finally the two genres repeat again via aesthetic influence on subsequent cultural producers and cultural productions (writers, filmmakers, producers in genres and sub-genres, and so on).

And, as I have previously shown, the force of repetition attached to a discourse or narrative exerts a large influence on its receptivity in the public sphere, allowing it to pass by word-of-mouth (with slight variations dictated by situation). Indeed, word-of-mouth as social texts and social acts reveal the same mechanisms of genre formation. Perhaps the most important feature of this process I have outlined is the non-linear nature of the procedure; that is to say, these discourses, discursive practices, narratives, genres, sub-genres, and the mediums that distribute them all operate simultaneously from various physical and psychical locations. One might call such matrices phantasy fields, operating on the conscious and unconscious level, both inside and outside the body, mediating all reality.

To see phantasy through such a lens goes quite a long way towards explaining the participatory culture that evolved around *Wanted* and the rise over time of viewer phone tips during the course of the show's run—in 1988, five hundred telephone responses compared with three thousand phone tips per show in 1994, just five years later, with

"very few of these calls…[leading] anywhere"—in which viewers are shown the details of a case and asked to call in if she or he has seen the suspect (Donovan 124-125). In her essay on the symbiotic relationship between law enforcement and reality TV, "Armed with the Power of Television," Pamela Donovan elucidates the contradictory mechanism by which this relationship works. She notes that *Wanted* often implicitly accuses the same viewers it depends on for ratings as "complicit[sic]-by-way-of-passivity," that is, as culpable in crimes featured on *Wanted* because they are viewers (125). Walsh uses appeals to pathos such as "Do the right thing and call us" as simultaneously a wish or plea ("call us") and as a command "Do the right thing"); such appeals, combined with the necessarily inert position required to watch TV at the time, present viewers with a double-bind situation which, I contend, compels viewers to call the show even if they have no worthwhile information beyond what they see or experience in phantasy.

Although Gregory Bateson, who developed double-bind theory, no doubt would disagree with Melanie Klein insofar as he believes "human beings use *context* as a guide for mode discrimination," and therefore "we must not look for some specific traumatic experience in the infantile etiology but rather for characteristic sequential patterns" of behavior, I contend that the two theories are one in the same (Bateson 206 emphasis in the original). Moreover, these two developments must be thought of as intrinsic to one another or else one runs the risk of indirectly advocating for diagnoses of mental illness and methods of punishment that lead one back to Douglas and his extermination attitude towards homicidal offenders. It is not too far off the mark, after all, to say that Klein would say the "characteristic sequential patterns" of a mental illness leads one to "some specific traumatic experience in the infantile etiology." However, psychoanalysis does

not lend itself to large scale cultural analysis; it does, on the other hand, lend itself to analysis of discourses as passed between individuals, since discourse, as logos and as unconscious, both forms and reflects culture as well as attends to the individual who is shaped by those same discursive practices.

Thus, to properly understand the double-bind Walsh inflicts on his viewers, a return to a point of origin is in order. Yet, this return is not so much a return in a literal sense, but rather in a discursive sense; that is to say, to understand Walsh's cultural function requires revisiting the discursive site where Walsh *contextualizes himself into an already established discourse regarding the psychopath and then produces a narrative of his development*. The "context" of the kidnapping and murder of Walsh's son, Adam, becomes Walsh's "birth" into the shocking and threatening world of the "infant" until the breast comes to give nourishment, comfort, and self-assurance. But this breast does not come from family; it comes from the formation of VICAP and from the beginning of his own crime reality show, *America's Most Wanted.*

Recontextualizing Walsh from a Batesonian to a Kleinian position creates a lens whereby Walsh's actions become legible as "sadistic impulses and phantasies" which form the basis of both good and bad objects within, and leads to guilt over hostility towards sexualized homicide (Klein *Envy* 27-28). Before going any further, I want to explore not so much what happened to Walsh concerning the kidnapping and murder of his son, but rather, his account of the incident. However, I do not want to look at the narrative he tells so much as I want to explore how he tells it and what psychoanalytical cues give insight into him.

During the *Hearings on Serial Murder*, Walsh states, "VI-CAP is a very

necessary system, long thought to exist when in reality nothing like it does exist. *It is long overdue that we started seriously hunting the hunters of our children*" (*Serial* 26 emphasis added). Walsh parallels his two sentences—the first, a plea for funding, the second, a statement that reads like a political slogan from a bumper sticker or t-shirt—making each memorable in relation to the other. The first sentence is memorable due to the catchiness of the second; the second sentence stands out because its internal rhythm works on the mind to repeatedly remind one of the uncomfortable fact that VI-CAP does not yet exist. The italicized second sentence, when scanned, is revealed as the fulcrum on which both sentences turn:

> "IT IS long OverDUE that WE starTED seRIousLY hunTING THE hunTERS OF OUR CHILDREN."

Isolating the iambic meter highlights the rhyme at the end of each line, but leaves off a beat at the end of line two to do so, thus emphasizing the alliteration in the most memorable piece of the slogan: "hunting the hunters." This move pushes the beat down to line three, creating an awkward prepositional phrase:

> "IT IS long OverDUE that WE starTED /
> seRIousLY hunTING THE hunTERS/
> OF OUR CHILDREN."

Yet the prepositional phrase actually reveals its own internal rhetorical logic in that "OF OUR CHILDREN" is two spondees. And these two spondees, in their conspicuousness, reflect back onto line two and its missing beat, which informs "hunting the hunters." Finally, the combination of the alliteration and the missing beat reflect back to line one, where Walsh's near-demand for implementation of VI-CAP begins. Of course, I certainly

do not claim that Walsh devised the strategy as I lay it out here; rather, I wish to demonstrate the unconscious construction of his argument and how it works upon the unconscious of its hearers.

This brief demonstration of poetic license immediately leads to Walsh's outrage over the situation as expressed through syntaxical breakdown:

> I am here today to relate some of my experiences in investigating child tragedies and murders of children in this country. Most people are aware of 1970 in Houston, 27 boys. The "Freeway Killer" in California caught by random by the highway patrol, as Ann so adeptly put, most of these people are caught by accident, 44 people, boys. Atlanta, 29. (*Serial* 26)

After the initial sentence, his pacing picks up and his speech begins to break down under the force of his affect until he is speaking in excessive run-on sentences:

> No one wants to deal with it, no chamber of commerce, no city, no one wants to think that a serial murderer exists in their area and they do exist, and these are only the sensationalized ones that were caught by accident. What about the ones who commit one, two, three, five, six, eight murders, and in this mobile society go from State to State and randomly pick their victims as many police psychologists will attest to, and I am sure Ann and Pierce can attest to this, they have no remorse, they do not talk about it, they plot it, it is often murders for lust and vengeance against women and children, and they prey upon the truly helpless people. (*Serial* 26)

Before going further, these examples deserve consideration not so much as faithful

renditions of Walsh's vocal patterns, but perhaps as more closely resembling the speed of the stenographer recording them. In governmental proceedings such as these, it must be taken into account that entering every word correctly into the official record takes precedence over grammar and punctuation. However, when considering this option, a look at the stenographer's typographical idiosyncrasies also deserves consideration. For example, the stenographer never forgets the rules of capitalization. Even in the second sentence, where Walsh's affect overtakes his speech, the stenographer takes care to capitalize where appropriate as well as to capitalize where inappropriate, such as in "State to State." This particular attention to grammatical convention provides a picture of how fast the stenographer types. In other words, if the stenographer simply attempted to keep up with Walsh's ever-increasing speech patterns, then, while it makes sense to eliminate a comma here or combine two sentences there, it does not make sense to take the extra second or so needed to make sure that "state" is capitalized (especially when it doesn't need to be). Therefore, the image of the stenographer becomes one of speed but of calm speed, in that the stenographer's abilities are in no way taxed.

The following paragraph of Walsh's testimony is equally as interesting from a linguistic standpoint, but can more effectively be summarized. Walsh relates the story of his son Adam's abduction in 1981 (26). His run-ons tell of police departments in various cities without labor personnel to read the ticker tape machine that prints out police reports and of his enlistment of staff from his companies to read the tapes for clues regarding his son's whereabouts (26-27). "It took my office staff 24 hours a day, 3 days, to complete the calls, 72 percent of the sheriffs and police chiefs in the State of Florida did not even know that Adam was missing, had not read their wires, did not know he was missing," he

proclaims (27). Walsh's rage at his son's abductor and at the ineffectualness of the police leads him into unconscious guilt. His guilt conflicts with the image he has of himself as a "crusader," as someone personally battling his son's abductor and as a citizen battling ineptitude of the police department. Moreover, it is safe to say that, like any grieving parent, Walsh would direct anger at himself, his spouse, and even his child, in an effort to cope with the inevitable helplessness he would feel in contrast to his desire to protect his family from harm. At this point, splitting and damaging of Walsh's ego take place.

Klein identifies splitting as a mechanism by which an infant, as yet unable to integrate the complexity of human relations into its experiences, creates two part objects out of a whole object, one good and one bad; yet since the infant cannot experience the porousness of relationships, the two part objects are experienced as wholly good and wholly bad, that is to say, as "naturalized" binary oppositions (Klein *Selected* 182). Here, again, is the microcosm of the process of cultural formation, manifested in the infant's attempt at "hallucinary gratification": "Idealization [in which] the good aspects of the breast are exaggerated as a safeguard against the fear of the persecuting breast," and "denial of frustration and of persecution" by disavowing the "bad object" until it ceases to exist (*Selected* 182). Klein also notes that such processes come about because of infantile beliefs in its own omnipotence, that its desires make and unmake the world, and that a result of hallucinatory gratification is that "not only a situation and an object…are denied and annihilated—it is an object relation which suffers this fate…therefore a part of the ego, from which the feelings towards the object emanate, is denied and annihilated as well" (*Selected* 182). Walsh's situation, while similar, contains enough anomalies to compel me to speak to his "infantile omnipotence" and the exact identities of his objects.

Although Klein explicitly refers to relations between an infant and a caregiver, she also states that conditions such as "paranoid-schizoid" can persist into adulthood and impede development (Spillius and Milton 63-64). I propose reading "omnipotence" in Walsh's case as his phantasy of himself as an all-powerful father who protects his family against all threats. Adam's abduction throws Walsh's phantasy into disarray, causing anger and then guilt over where he directs his anger, leading him to reimagine Adam as a perfect child who was never selfish, demanding, or cruel, and to deny any bad feelings by projecting them outward onto the ready-made *discursive figure* of the sexual psychopath. Thus, Walsh, confronted with his son's abduction by an unknown person or persons who could be anyone and so "are" everywhere, has at least a phantasy-figure to act as a foil for his crusade. Adam's abductor does exist somewhere in the world, but it is instead the phantasy-figure, the discourse, of the sexual psychopath that emerges in Walsh's phantasy as a wholly bad figure, physically persecuting him through the "taunt" of Adam's unknown whereabouts. Moreover, Walsh's sexual psychopath is not only physically a conglomeration of police reports, true crime, urban legends, newspaper articles, films, books (that is to say, all and nothing), the figure is also a conglomeration of Walsh's own fears, his own imagination, his rage, his ineffectualness, so that what he psychically creates "becomes" physically "alive" out there in the world.

Thus, Walsh finds himself in a Batesian double-bind. False confidence in his omnipotence led to his son's (possible) death, articulated by Bateson as "Do not do so and so, I will punish you ["If you do not maintain omnipotence, I will take your son away and expose you"]" (Bateson 206-207). The "secondary injunction" of the double-bind always contradicts the first; for example, "Do not see me as the punishing agent," is

experienced by Walsh as "Maintain omnipotence and I will take your son away" (207). The last step in the double-bind process locks the subject into behavior that will "be sufficient to precipitate panic or rage," such as the Kleinian processes discussed earlier, resulting in Walsh's eternal struggle with the discursive figure of the psychopath he cannot defeat because the figure's non-corporeality (anonymity) gives it more *physical* power than Walsh, forcing him to struggle against the figure by proxy, that is, by a moral panic crusade against criminal offenders he and his audience can *physically* identify. Thus, Walsh's injunctions of, "If you do not watch my show you are an accessory to crimes," and "If you watch my show you can make up for the crime of watching my show by calling in to identify perpetrators on screen," result in an overabundance of viewer calls and in a spreading cultural paranoia to others regarding the actual facts and figures. After immersion in such processes, only the rhetoric of panic sounds reasonable.

The repetition process does not end here. Once again, a cultural mandate towards hypervigilance emerges, this time taken from behind the screen, off the couch, and out into the world. Yet, the sheer volume of uninformative calls placed to *Wanted* during its run speaks to an inevitability regarding what Walsh's viewers, now viewing *for* him during the course of their daily lives, accurately see and identify. It seems to me that Walsh, each week, takes up a growing number of viewers into his "fatal arresting in the moment of trauma…with nothing new to say and no future to imagine [where to] repeat the story or the image" that "become[s] not a way through trauma but an end in itself, a thin membrane of psychosis to hold back the overwhelmingness of horror and the anxiety it brings" (Lucas 208). In both a Kleinian and Batesonian sense, then, Walsh displays symptoms of psychosis. Yet, in a manner similar to Will Graham's prestige as a

mindhunter in *Red Dragon*, to consider Walsh as psychotic and in need of treatment—indeed, even the possibility of considering Walsh as psychotic—is culturally disavowed for two reasons: first, his psychosis serves the cultural order by facilitating the apprehension of criminals; second, to acknowledge his psychosis equates to admission of the ambiguities inherent in cultural divisions of "sane" and "sick," a move which would amount to undermining the binaries on which society constructs its consensus reality.

However, a different interpretation is still available. Rose Lucas, in her study of repetition in the work of thriller author Patricia Cornwell, draws on Freud and trauma theorist Cathy Caruth to argue that "repetition may also carry the seeds of a 'working through,' the possibility of an eventual reconciliation with material that is rendered abject…[by rendering it] tantalizingly close to the surface of consciousness, insistent upon some level of incorporation into the known and the accepted" (208). Yet, while repetition might serve as a means to bring trauma to consciousness where one can confront and conquer it, this is not the case with Walsh. I suggest that what remains at stake for Walsh is not so much the arrest of criminals, but rather *The Arrest*: The Arrest that will restore his son to him. Of course, my observation is quite obvious, but what is not so readily visible is Walsh's masochistic sense of guilt that he deliberately, consciously, re-enacts against himself. Recalling my earlier analysis using Klein, I propose that Walsh sees every arrest as The Arrest and at the same time sees The Arrest as The Failure; that is to say, in the logic of the mindhunter, as articulated by Douglas, Rule, and Walsh, any arrest carries with it its own failure in that every known serial murderer implies at least one more unknown offender (but usually more, as the numbers submitted during the *Serial Hearings* suggest). As a proponent of "mindhunter logic,"

Walsh surely understands that to follow the premise through to its conclusions is to admit that, since all serial murderers start out as unknowable, every serial murderer caught can only exponentially increase the number of unknowable serial murderers to numbers far larger than the numbers of arrests.

Thus, Walsh articulates his trauma via cycles of repetition that he knows (on some level) repeat but never end, and thus can never be "known and accepted"; the repetitive act of pushing the trauma away and of even adding to its irresolvability forecloses any solution of the kind Lucas proposes. Walsh's convoluted psychical maneuvers work toward irresolution because as long as his son's abductor remains unknown, his son is still alive. This seems like a paradox, considering that using mindhunter logic and exponentially multiplying the amounts of possible suspects increases the chances of police finding Walsh's son alive. A more fruitful approach might be to adopt Abby Stein's proposition of "rather than seeing these repetitive engagements as driven (in the Freudian sense), they should be seen as 'dramatic instances of self-disruption that are met with a repetitively failed attempt to lend meaning' to an event" (Stein 501; Lee qtd. in Stein 501). Indeed, such an interpretation of the repetitive acts of the sexual psychopath finds application in a surviving family member's repetitive acts as well. Walsh's repetitiveness, sustained by and collapsing under the weight of its own logic, emerges as without meaning; that is to say, without The Desired Meaning: Adam Walsh restored to him alive. And so, understanding the increasing unlikeliness of his desired outcome, Walsh psychically contrives to artificially keep his son alive, since to find the body he also knows will eventually be found introduces the randomness and meaninglessness of violence to the forefront, which in turn implies a sort of blanket helplessness, or, more

precisely, implies the absent-presence of the sexual psychopath.

If repetition serves as a validity-making machine for no other reason than that which gets reproduced most often eventually crowds out competing discourses, then the rhetorical moves of Walsh, Rule, Douglas, Harris, and others—indeed the entire mindhunter/true crime discourse—call up another mode of persuasion: appropriation. As outlined last chapter, the *Serial Hearings* were marked not only by dogged insistence on sameness and patterns—the sexual psychopath's "style," methods of detection, and the like—but were also marked by the struggle between law enforcement and the sciences as to which profession should emerge as culturally acknowledged "experts" regarding mental health issues. Law enforcement, framing the issue around a need for use of force against a "growing threat" posed by sexual psychopaths (Walsh also uses this tactic), attempted to trump the medical sciences by appropriating the substance of mental health diagnosis while couching it within law-oriented terms and then using new definitions to discredit psychiatry, psychology, and, to a lesser extent, psychoanalysis. Stein notes this when she speaks of a tendency for more judicially-minded "forensic clinicians and criminal profilers [to borrow] the paradigms of cognitive-behavioral psychology," such as "see[ing] human behavior as largely conscious and rational, and fantasy materials as goal-oriented, hedonistic variations [while] psychoanalysts have concentrated on the more symbolic modes through which needs and desires may be expressed" (Stein 498-499). Thus, not only does law enforcement take up the empirical/metaphysical divide, but in doing so appropriates one section of the scientific method—testing hypotheses by successful repetition—and uses a simplified version of it—repetition means truth—to attack mental health professionals ("Graham: They don't know what else to call him,"

"Chilton: The only one who understands him is you, Graham") and so move their position across multiple genres and subgenres.

Law enforcement appropriated cognitive science terminology just as the disciplines of psychiatry, psychology, psychoanalysis, and neurosciences began to move closer together. Method sharing between these formerly antagonistic disciplines potentially offered a broader variety of approaches towards diagnosing and treating the chronically mentally ill, whereas the "zero tolerance," "tough on crime" approaches relied upon portraying mentally ill persons as cognitively—thus biologically and so fundamentally—either non- or sub- human. Thus, forensic behavioral science relied on the Cartesian duality that privileged the brain-mind while also taking advantage of new scientific advances that took the brain-mind-body as a holistic organism. Such a strategic move allows for arguments based on empirical evidence (damage to the brain damages the mind and so damages behavior) that also imply a damaged body compelled to act out in a violent manner. At this point it is worth remembering that the *Serial* and *Federal* hearings excluded medical and scientific professionals and that the intended audience of law enforcement on mental health issues consists of law enforcement itself, branches of government not affiliated with academic disciplines, and the lay public—groups who depend on media and other groups for expert knowledge on particular subjects and so access whatever information remains most easily available presented by the groups that most forcefully present their views and repeat them in the public sphere.

And yet, struggles over acceptance by the public for the title of "expert" resist such binary divisions as I lay them out here. Even the then-new field of biological psychiatry, as put forth by professor and psychiatrist Nancy C. Andreasen in her 1984

bestselling popular science text, *The Broken Brain*, calls into question the effectiveness of psychoanalysis ("the psychodynamic approach") and psychology ("the behavioral approach") (Andreasen 20-33). Andreasen's case for the superiority of neuroscience contains much in common with "mindhunter logic" in that both stem from an assumption that, since Freud is considered the "father" of psychoanalysis, to critique Freud successfully "disproves" psychoanalysis in its entirety and invalidates its various approaches through guilt by association. Such a position nevertheless betrays its fundamental Oedipal component, in that it rests on an analytical "murder" of the Father in order to take his place. Moreover, it suggests that all power (argumentative and factual potency) rests within the Freud-father and that the psychoanalytical-siblings somehow lose all authority and credibility by default.

For example, Andreasen compares the validity of neuroscience and psychoanalysis by stating that, outside of the United States, psychoanalysis "occupies a relatively minor position and is used primarily to treat people who are mildly ill…In Europe and developing nations, psychiatry is predominantly biological and medical" (11). She further claims that innovations in psychiatry are a result of the field's rejection of psychoanalysis in favor of neuroscience (Andreasen "Woodrow" n.p.). Yet by the early nineties, neuroscience begins to yield to efforts to bring psychoanalysis and biology together. Some of the resulting innovative studies also use an Oedipally-informed rhetorical style, yet they mobilize Freud in such a way as to prove their theories instead of using him to invalidate psychoanalysis.

In the academic text, *The Adaptive Design of the Human Psyche* (1992) Malcolm Slavin and Daniel Kriegman make their case for psychoanalytical neuroscience by

rewriting the narrative of psychoanalysis' development, foregrounding Freud's early biological and neurological work. They state that, even as Freud became more deeply committed to psychoanalysis, he remained influenced by Darwinian theories; they also point out the fact that Freud devoted considerable time attempting to align psychoanalytical method and scientific protocol (Slavin and Kriegman 33-34). Slavin and Kriegman do engage with other psychoanalytic approaches, such as Klein, although not on nearly the same scale as they give to Freud. This decision strikes me as odd, considering Freud's belief in gradual ego development and Klein's belief in the presence of an ego (however rudimentary) endowed with a limited amount inborn knowledges and motivations: for instance, a biological imperative to reach for the breast and to feed from the nipple (Spillius and Milton 367-368). Klein's formulations seem more amenable to the evolutionary approach promoted by Slavin and Kriegman but Klein, a less well-known figure than Freud or even Carl Jung, is less conducive to winning public debates over the effectiveness of psychoanalysis. Indeed, whether neuroscientist or FBI agent, often arguments become structured by what evidence most successfully enhances one's argument.

The thriller genre is no exception. As mentioned earlier, assessing high-profile thrillers in relation to the progress of deinstitutionalization shows that one of the key motivations for the evolution of genre is to articulate similar anxieties as horror, but to do so while appealing to as wide a demographic as possible. To accomplish this, the thriller genre needs to also possess flexibility, a way of adapting its qualities to become simultaneously recognizable as that genre (and so all that the genre signifies) and different from that genre (an expansion that brings in new modes of signification). Thus,

in the mid to late eighties and early nineties, the thriller genre, in order to efficiently continue its work of maintaining panic regarding ex-asylum patients (and, by this point, mental illness in general), not only appropriated and reworked terminology from behavioral sciences, medicine, and hard sciences, but also expanded its repertoire of protagonists from the typical white male mindhunter to include women and people of color. To demonstrate the latter process, I present two case studies, the first, a text—*Postmortem* by Patricia Cornwell; the second, a film—*Se7en*, specifically the performance of the African American actor, Morgan Freeman as Detective Somerset. Both *Postmortem* and *Se7en* remain influential, not only for the gender and race of the protagonists, but also for the unique ways they contribute to the mindhunter mythology and to popular conceptions of mental illness.

Just as the mindhunter (Douglas) and the reality TV host (Walsh) fulfill the role of panic figures who not only warn others of collapsing binaries abut also take part in re-establishing them, Kay Scarpetta is both panic figure and agent of maintenance. Cornwell presents Dr. Kay Scarpetta, Chief Medical Examiner for Richmond, Virginia, in the tradition of pulp noir; Scarpetta narrates the novel in a voice reminiscent of Spillane, Hammett, or Chandler:

> [Marino] was pushing fifty, with a face life had chewed on, and long wisps of graying hair parted low on one side and combed over his balding pate. At least six feet tall, he was bay-windowed from decades of bourbon or beer…Marino was the stuff of tough-guy flicks—a crude, crass gumshoe who probably had a foul-mouthed parrot for a pet and a coffee table littered with *Hustler*

magazines. (Cornwell 11)

Quite a bit is happening in these few sentences. Scarpetta's hard boiled narrative voice wavers between sincerity and parody; so much so that it becomes impossible to tell if she takes herself seriously or if she uses pulp mannerisms to doubly mock Marino, whom she sees as a live incarnation of the pulp figure trope, albeit a washed-up one. For instance, she identifies Marino as an imitation of a stock character from "tough-guy flicks"; not only is the word "flicks" an odd word choice (unless used as a parody of the postwar era of the "tough-guy flick"), but she goes on to call him by another dated word, "gumshoe." Finally, she identifies him as the type to own a "foul-mouthed parrot," which stands out as a reference to the seventies-era "tough guy" cop show, *Baretta* (although Baretta had a cockatoo instead of a parrot, the uniqueness of the reference to a pet bird, combined with Cornwell's attention to genre conventions, points towards a deliberate reference) ("Baretta" n.p.). And of course, the TV show *Baretta* is almost a parody of itself in that Baretta's last name is a misspelling of "Beretta," the name of a brand of firearm—a phallic symbol so blatant as to verge on cliché ("Beretta" n.p.).

However, Scarpetta is not a police officer, nor is she a private eye; she is the coroner, an odd choice for protagonist of a police procedural thriller. But, to justify the extensive appropriation of scientific terms and methods, as happens in *Postmortem*, the narrative focus needs to remain not on the police nor on the detectives, but on someone with the academic background to narrate these types of events convincingly. So while *Postmortem* positions itself within the pulp tradition, it also derides it, especially considering that Scarpetta has more in common with another seventies-era TV show, *Quincy M.E.* than a show like *Baretta*, which is represented by Marino, an unsuspecting

parody of himself.[3]

Postmortem also stands out due to another unique innovation by Cornwell: the antagonist works as a 911 dispatcher, which corresponds to mindhunter profile claims of serial murderers possessing an above average interest in, and knowledge about, law enforcement, some even helping officers and detectives working on a case (Burgess, Douglas, et al 64-65). The antagonist, Roy McCorkle, also shares some sort of psychic bond with Scarpetta, who describes him appearing to her in a waking-sleep state as "a white face beyond the rain streaked glass…formless and inhuman…an evil intelligence looking in" (Cornwell 1). This scene, reminiscent of night terrors, not only foreshadows the location of the killer's final fight with Scarpetta (her bedroom), but also takes up the mindhunter myth, in that. Will Graham may have the ability to become like the psychopaths he pursues, but he must always focus. Scarpetta, as mindhunter, seems to involuntarily enter into psychic bonds with psychopaths; in other words, Graham has a "gift" he does not want because it reveals his psychosis, whereas Scarpetta's "gift" remains beyond her control and disrupts her life at any moment (1). Finally, the setting of a "relentless downpour…beat[ing] the lilies to naked stalks" outside Scarpetta's bedroom window evokes a tone of violence as permeating the world, creating a sense of disorientation and unrest accented by the killer's somewhat supernaturalistic face, and setting up readers for Scarpetta's taking on the role of panic figure: "People who believe in werewolves are afraid of the full moon. I'd begun to dread the hours between midnight and 3:00A.M." (2).

The werewolf analogy may be random, the first thought in the author's mind at the moment of composition. While impossible to know for certain, what can become

known is that, in the context in which she presents the analogy, Cornwell draws upon tropes familiar to the horror genre. Scarpetta occupies two subject positions here: in the first, as someone critical of those who believe in werewolves, she occupies the position of the savvy disbeliever, the type of person who dismisses the warnings of the panic figure; in the second, as the person whose body viscerally reacts to the time span when most homicides take place, who knows what others do not know, she becomes the panic figure who predicts breeches between the "natural" and the "supernatural." She hints towards just such a role as she drives to the crime scene. "Out there," she thinks, "somewhere, is a man…He *could be anybody*…He could be anybody and *he was nobody*. Mr. Nobody" (3 emphasis added). The text goes to great lengths to create an ominous mood and to approximate fears reminiscent of the era of Jack the Ripper, the village-under-siege feel of an old folk tale or silent era horror film like *Nosferatu*. And in a keeping with this vein, Cornwell insists on an indefinable unnaturalness about Mr. Nobody, when the only thing *supra*-natural about him is the excess of his anonymity, his mask of sanity. This leads Scarpetta to conclude that because "the homicides began two months ago, he may have been recently released from prison or a mental hospital" (3). Here, Scarpetta's prejudices and assumptions regarding mental illness and homicide emerge. They become more pronounced later on in the text when she claims her privileged connection to McCorkle, describes it as a mutual desire to "get inside" one another's mind, thus embarking on a private dialectic in which serial murderer and forensic pathologist communicate, comprehend one another through the medium of his victims' disfigured bodies (299). Scarpetta proclaims herself "the only real link between him and his victims…the only living witness…I alone realized the force, the savageness required to inflict the injuries,"

acknowledging an intimacy played out across victims' bodies, granting her insight into McCorkle as "arrogant…paranoid" (299). Such instances where the mask of sanity *worn by the mindhunter* falters never see acknowledgment in the text, neither within the narrative nor by the author. I find such lapses unusual, considering the attention given to pronouncements by a forensic psychiatrist, Dr. Fortosis, whom Scarpetta and her partner, Marino, consult throughout the novel.

While the temptation to view Fortosis as a literary allusion to Madame Sosotris, the charlatan fortune teller in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, looms very large, I do not see any evidence in the rest of *Postmortem* to indicate parody on the Cornwell's part. That said, I also do not see why a negligible link between names should discourage one from pursuing a more readily apparent, and therefore stronger, link between the two: the attitude of the two authors towards her and his characters. Eliot's disdain for Sosotris is well known; Cornwell's disdain for Fortosis is couched within Scarpetta and Marino's reliance on him for information regarding sexual psychopathy.[4] Early on in the text, in a move reminiscent of Douglas or Harris, it becomes clear Fortosis' role, like mental health professionals for Douglas and Chilton for Harris, is to falter while the mindhunters display their superior abilities in dealing with homicidal criminals. Marino, a grizzled caricature of hard-boiled detectives, Scarpetta, and Wesley, a criminal profiler and forensic science instructor for the FBI as well as a consultant on the then-new VICAP project, discuss Fortosis' opinion on the case files: Fortosis is "noncommittal" (88). As the three law enforcement officers engage in a sort of ad hoc profiling of their suspect, they come up with the same conclusions one would find in an article by Douglas: "fascinated by police work…one percent of the population is psychopathic…He's a

loner…has a difficult time with close relationships, though he may be considered pleasant…probably entertained violent fantasies long before…" which sound astute, compared with Fortosis' admission of limits regarding his professional acumen, except that the group's pronouncements sound correct only because they *already circulate across fiction, film, the press, non-fiction, casual conversation, television, and the like,* indeed, have done so for years (88-89). Cornwell, like Douglas or Harris, silences the mental health professional, appropriates basic points of knowledge from the profession, disavows or changes as necessary to align with her preclusions, puts it in the mouths of mindhunters, then has them proclaim their superior insights into criminal psychopathy.

Postmortem also promotes law enforcement as the proper method of dealing with crime and mental illness. Passages that bring out the novel's position on mental illness appear even before Fortosis does, and involve an intimate moment between Scarpetta and her ten year-old niece, Lucy. Lucy, hearing about the murders, asks typical small child questions regarding why people hurt other people: do they like it, or do they do it accidentally, and so on (45). Scarpetta uses this "teachable moment" to instill her ideas of essentialized evil (reminiscent of law enforcement arguments for a Cartesian brain-mind contradictorily coupled with arguments for a holistic brain-body) into Lucy. "There are some people who are evil," Scarpetta tells her, "[They are] like dogs, Lucy…There's something wrong with them. They're bad and will always be bad" (45-46). When Lucy protests, saying people hurt other people because they have been hurt by others, Scarpetta remains adamant about getting this particular life lesson to stick, and tells Lucy her belief holds true only some of the time, and "in a way, it doesn't matter. *People make choices*. Some people would rather be bad, would rather be cruel. It's just an ugly, unfortunate

part of life" (46 emphasis added). Scarpetta's statement regarding individual choice aligns with New Right ideologies of mental illness, poverty, and crime as individual moral failures ("defective" mind-brains), as bad decisions made by people "born bad" ("defective" holistic brain-bodies), with the role of dealing with such things are "inflicted" upon those who are "born good." Her statement also recalls the ignorance regarding mental illness displayed by Douglas and others during the *Serial* and *Federal* hearings.

Se7en (1995) engages in rhetorical moves similar to *Postmortem*, except, where Scarpetta mobilizes a pulp era textual voice, *Se7en* uses a visual text in the person of Detective Somerset. Somerset wears a fedora and a long trench coat, a visual cue placing him not only in the tradition of the pulp detective but also of the pulp-era G-man, the mid-century American equivalent to a mindhunter. Somerset's liminal or perhaps doubled signification plays out in his psychical relationship with serial killer, John Doe. The film represents the psychopath/mindhunter connection via aesthetic references that convey the film's philosophy of contemporary life as decadent and devoid of moral compass—a philosophy shared and articulated by the serial murderer, John Doe, and by the intellectual mindhunter, William Somerset. Thus, *Se7en* also says quite a bit about mental illness stigma, even as it valorizes the mindhunter myth by drawing on the buddy cop, the neo-noir, and thriller sub-genres.

As a buddy cop film, *Se7en* presents Somerset as a levelheaded, experienced detective compared to his partner, David Mills, a brash and outspoken young detective. "I say he's a whack job," he says to Somerset in the forensics lab regarding their then-unknown perpetrator, "So many freaks out there doin' their little evil deeds…My dog

made me do it…Jodi Foster told me to do it…" Clearly Mills does not fall into the category of those who seek to understand extreme and rare forms of mental illness, but rather subscribes to a belief, like Douglas, that the solution to the crime problem lies in the electric chair. His passing references to Son of Sam and to John Henry Brinkley work on two levels: as a postmodern in-joke, and as a legitimization of the film's argument. By including actual crimes in the filmic narrative, *Se7en* attaches its representations to the world outside the cinema, opens up spaces for the film's representations to integrate into the cultural imaginary and "become real." In other words, the references serve to tie the film to the real in a way that produces anxiety in viewers regarding what types of people might be "out there" and unseen.

On another occasion, Mills pushes for a more proactive approach to pursuing Doe. He asks Somerset why they "have to sit here waiting until the lunatic does it again?" Somerset admonishes his partner, saying, "Its dismissive to call him a lunatic. Don't make that mistake." Mills replies with more epithets: "He's insane. Right now he he's probably dancing around in his grandma's panties rubbing himself in peanut butter…He's a nutjob. Just because he has a library card doesn't make him Yoda." The image Mills produces does quite a bit of cultural work. The reference to secretly wearing women's clothes is a subtle nod to *Psycho* and Mills' insistence on insulting Doe in absentia, while expressed as a form of superiority, actually reveals Mills' powerlessness to stop his opponent. The film makes this painfully clear by showing Mills' frustration over his inability to comprehend *Cliffs Notes* student summaries of Dante and Chaucer, texts Somerset knows well and so recommends to him as a method of understanding Doe's mind and behavior. In fact, Somerset's extensive familiarity with the literary and

religious references to Milton, Chaucer, Dante, and Catholicism that John Doe leaves behind at murder scenes breaks the case early on in the film. However, the most important functions of such scenes remains to clarify Somerset's role as the "straight man" and Mills as the "buffoon," thereby using basic and recognizable comedy tropes to establish a dynamic between the two detectives that eliminates Mills as a possible panic figure, and leaves the position to Doe and Somerset.

Another, perhaps even more relevant scene that facilitates this process takes place in a bar. Somerset and Mills are discussing the older detective's imminent retirement, his reasons for leaving: "People don't want a champion; they want to eat cheeseburgers, watch TV, and play lotto. I don't think I can live in a world that embraces and nurtures apathy." Mills attempts to convince him to stay on, saying, "You're no better…We're talking about people who are mentally ill…We're talking about…crazies." Somerset responds with, "No…we're talking about everyday life." This scene goes a long way towards explaining Somerset's psychical connection to John Doe, especially when compared with the script:

MILLS

What burnt you out?

SOMERSET

There's no one thing, if that's what you mean. I just…I can't live anymore where stupidity is embraced and nurtured as if it were a virtue.

MILLS

You're so much better than everyone. No one's worthy of you… You're talking about people who are mentally ill. You're…

SOMERSET

No I'm not! I'm talking about common, everyday life here. Where ignorance isn't bliss, it's a matter of survival.

MILLS

Listen to yourself. You say, "the problem with people is they don't care, so I don't care about people." But, if you're not part of the solution…

SOMERSET (cuts him off)

People who are in arguments over their heads always use meaningless slogans. But, life doesn't conform to analogies.

MILLS

…there's a part of you that knows, even if what you say is true, none of it matters.

SOMERSET

That part of me is dead. (Walker n.p.)

The bar scene in the script is much more acrimonious than in the final cut, which weakens the connection between John Doe and Somerset and takes away from Mills' prejudice against mentally ill persons, a crucial element of the filmic narrative. Indeed, Mills' sense of unfounded superiority to John Doe, based on an uncritical acceptance of foundational cultural binaries (I am sane/normal, therefore, I am superior to a mentally ill/abnormal person), clashes with the reality of his inability to apprehend him in either a legal or intellectual capacity, and so contributes to Mills' breakdown at the end of the film. I suggest Mills' breakdown occurs not only because Doe murders the detective's

wife, but also because Mills refuses to accept, to bond with, Somerset's mental illness, his severe depression, and thus gain insight into Doe.

Nowhere in the film does the centrality of mental illness become more evident than in the concluding scenes when Somerset and Mills drive Doe out to the desert, allegedly to locate a missing body. Along the way, Doe and Mills engage in a conversation that re-enacts the previous conversation between Mills and Somerset about apathy:

MILLS

> For us to go and pick up two more dead bodies, and have that be the end of it…just seems too boring for you…Wouldn't be sensational enough.

JOHN DOE

> Wanting people to pay attention, you can't just tap them on the shoulder…Sometimes you have to hit them in the head with a sledgehammer…and then you get their strict attention. (Walker n.p.)

Somerset and John Doe, via repetition of conversations, bond through shared roles as panic figures heralding not binary collapse, but collapse of contemporary society. Mills, because of his belief in what he does, becomes treated like an outsider, not so much by Somerset, however, but rather by the *panic discourse the filmic narrative promotes*. Indeed, Mills' most important role in the filmic narrative occurs at the end when he becomes exposed as a foil for the film's discourse regarding the holding of uncritical beliefs. Mills loses two symbols of normative order: his wife and his sanity; he becomes the very thing he despises: a "nutjob," "crazy," the sort of person who "danc[es] around

in his grandma's panties rubbing himself in peanut butter." Like *Postmortem*, *Se7en* attempts to expand the reach of the discourses of the mindhunter to marginalized groups—women and people of color—as a reaction to advances in the mental health field.

The reason for such moves is not hard to find. Competition for federal funding came not only from social programs the Reagan Administration already wanted to cut, but also from projects the government actively sought to back financially, such as the Human Genome Project. Since 1990, breakthroughs in medical science (for example, the formation of a genetic archive by the National Institute of Health and the genetic mapping of Huntington's Disease) were already subsidized by the government (NHGRI, n.p.). In addition, the much-embattled *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (*DSM-III*), which has so little relevance for Douglas and other law enforcement agents, became a standard reference text not just for medical sciences, but for "insurance companies…courts, prisons, schools," academics, and other disciplines in both the private and public sectors (Angell n.p.). Alongside such institutional expansion of mental illness, the horror, crime, and thriller genres also begin to move into other areas of cultural distribution and representation.

Of note in this regard is the stage play, *Down the Road* by Lee Blessing (1989, 1991), which, through Iris and Dan Henniman's encounter with incarcerated serial killer William Reach, lays bare the unsteady affective mixture aroused by the figure of the sexual psychopath—the fear of psychical contagion and physical violation. Lee's play was no anomaly in its fascination with murder, death, and baser aspects of humanity. The period saw the musical, *Sweeney Todd*, came to Broadway, stage adaptations of *Dracula*,

Frankenstein, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* appeared, and detective, mystery, and crime plays flourished."[5] *Road* differs from many other works of the period in the overt nature of its critique of the cult of celebrity surrounding the serial murderer.

Under contract to gather material for a book on William Reach, Iris and Dan Henniman, a freelance writing couple, arrive to interview Reach in prison. The play only requires two minimalist sets—the motel room (consisting of two chairs and a bed), and the prison interview room (consisting of three chairs and a table)—and both sets occupy the stage at the same time, allowing for interplay across space/time and for representation of the characters' internal states. Thus, as the play progresses, one sees the way in which Reach infiltrates the couple's psyches and so represents a microcosm of cultural paranoia by the public over close proximity to mentally ill persons; a fear linked to the stigma of mental illness as moral failure, and moral failure as propensity to violence and sexual deviance. However, it is important to remember that, when speaking of the sexual psychopath as a clinical entity, they play their role as well, and, reaching back to the cult of celebrity and even back to Meloy and his theory of the "reptilian stare," they remain active participants in stimulating public anxiety. For example, in *Road*, Dan interviews Reach, asking about the number of his victims:

> REACH. At least nineteen.
>
> DAN. You don't know the exact number?
>
> REACH: I know it was at least nineteen.
>
> DAN: Are you saying there are others you haven't admitted to? (Reach is silent.) Are there others? (Reach is silent)…
>
> REACH. I hope you're not nervous talking to me…You're completely

safe. Your wife will be, too. (Blessing 1.2.10)

Reach plays the "serial killer role" to full effect here, mobilizing the exact discursive strategy used by Rule, Douglas, and Walsh; a strategy that goes back all the way to Cleckley and mid-twentieth century discourses of the "sexual psychopath," that is, an unknown or incomplete number implies more than the known. During the *Senate Hearings*, Rule, Douglas, and others stated that every apprehended offender implied an unknown quantity still active, and this unknown quantity always implied a larger number than the known quantity. In Cleckley's case, this formulation translates into his claim that the sexual psychopath's "mask of sanity" implied that he or she could be anyone and so therefore is everywhere. Reach uses the implications of his ambiguity to incite anxiety in Dan then subtly threatens Iris; an attempt to represent himself as an active agent even while he remains contained in prison, to play the feared predator.

Such ambiguities extend to public perceptions of mental illness in the belief that a non-violent mentally ill person is in fact only a potentially violent mentally ill person. Indeed, during the years when *Road* was performed, various studies emerged, some finding violence by mentally ill persons as largely a product of stigmatization, some reporting that mentally ill persons figure highly in arrest rate statistics, especially for "felonies, and specifically for violent crimes or crimes against people" (Rabkin ctd. and qtd. in Link et al 276). However, other studies suggest that a person's mental illness played less of a role in requiring legal intervention than did his or her socio-economic conditions (276). In other words, impoverished areas, where most post-asylum patients end up after release, receive a disproportionate amount of attention from the police, which results in higher arrest rates. Moreover, once a person enters the criminal justice

system and her or his illness becomes public knowledge, a hierarchy of identification and categorization occurs, pushing mental illness to the forefront, where it becomes "visible" and "identifiable" in a person's facial features and general mannerisms.[6]

Dan begins to turn quite early in the play, during an interview with Reach, where the power dynamics and the expected behaviors of the two switch.

> DAN. Did you have sex? At that point?
>
> REACH. At that point. At that point. That's all you guys want to hear about, isn't it?...
>
> DAN. Did you have an orgasm?
>
> REACH. What's wrong with you?
>
> DAN. Nothing—
>
> REACH. Are you getting excited?
>
> DAN. No, Bill, I'm not getting excited…(Blessing 1.11.27)

At first, Reach seems uninterested in the sexual dimension of his crimes, even going so far as to chide Dan for his interest then even feigning shock and offense when Dan asks him if he had an orgasm. Dan's reply, "Nothing—," paired with an em dash, comes off as nervous and forced. In response, Reach's "Are you getting excited?" feels less accusatory than playful, eager. Dan's denial seems a little too defensive.

Yet none of the previous analysis is verifiable. Without stage directions, the words and emotions behind them remain open to interpretation by how actors, directors might want to play them, and how critics may be inclined to read them. However, the dialogue between Dan and Reach does point to things we can know. Reach emerges as far more manipulative and Dan as naive and sexually repressed. Dan shows curiosity

about the sexual nature of Reach's murders, and so betrays a fascination with violent sex, his thoughts and feelings mediated through phantasy (in this case, not Reach, nor Reach's confessions, but the *perversions that comprise the confessions uttered by Reach*). As Susan Isaacs states, "phantasies are the primary content of all mental processes…[they] expresses the specific content of the urge…which is dominating to the child's mind at the moment," an assertion equally applicable to adults as well (Isaacs 277). Dan wants Reach to give him an invitation to imagine sexuality rooted in violence, so Dan asks leading questions. Reach feeds Dan the sexual episode then immediately rebukes him when he phantisizes Reach's pleasure and asks if he had an orgasm, because, in that moment, *in Dan's phantasy, he has taken Reach's place, that is to say, Dan is Reach and is nearing orgasm.* This is why Dan backs off, uttering a defensive "Nothing—" that prompts Reach to accuse Dan of becoming aroused by Reach's stories.

Julia Segal writes that, in relationships, one person often tries to avoid recognition of internal negative qualities by pointing out such qualities in those around them (Segal 50). This process of projecting bad objects into/onto others serves as a psychic survival tool when the ego feels attacked. Viewing the interaction between Reach and Dan in Act one, Scene 10 through the lens of phantasy elucidates an exchange between Iris and Dan in the previous scene, and brings my discussion closer to my earlier statements regarding public fears of infiltration and corruption through close proximity to mentally ill persons. At the motel, Dan plays back a recording made by Iris in her private moments; the recording consists of a fictive account based on Iris' observations of a woman and a water heater (Blessing 1.10.21). Reading the play linearly, in the manner one would see it performed, makes the scene resist interpretation, due to Dan's reaction:

DAN. (Turning it off.) What am I listening to?

IRIS. Nothing. I was just kidding around…

DAN. …Whole paragraphs of "kidding around"?

IRIS. It's an impression. We agreed to record our impressions.

DAN. Our impressions, *not our fixations*…

IRIS. If you have a problem with this, say so…

DAN. *Is this something you always do when you're interviewing?*

Does it break the tension, or—

IRIS. …It was a *lapse*.

DAN. What kind of lapse?

IRIS. *Dan*— (1.10.21-22 emphasis added and in the original)

Before Dan's interview with Reach during which Reach catches a glimpse of Dan's phantasies, the above exchange makes no sense, except to perhaps show Dan's previously hidden neuroses. However, by reading the text I have italicized *against* Dan's lapse in the following scene, certain aspects of his character become clear. Dan already seems somewhat drawn to, or should I say, affected by, Reach, and, noticing this, he attempts to save himself by projecting his bad objects onto/into Iris; her recording in and of itself reveals nothing to be upset about, but Dan uses it as a pretext to project his fixations, acquired while interviewing Reach, into/onto Iris. In fact, a close rereading of Act one, Scene 2 above shows Reach titillating Dan's curiosity and imagination by using an absent-presence discourse strategy. It is a truism that an unsatisfied imagination will fill in gaps in knowledge with things far in excess of any known event; therefore, read together, in a non-linear fashion, the scenes show Dan as slowly infiltrated and

manipulated by Reach.

Iris also becomes infiltrated by Reach, though not in the same way nor to the same extent as Dan. When the couple's argument reaches a critical point, Iris screams, *"Is this just a style-point, or what?"* before she sits down, confessing that she finds Reach inaccessible; at this point, stage lighting shows Reach sitting in the prison interview room (1.10.22 emphasis in the original). I contend that here, with Iris and Dan in the motel, and Reach in the interview room, the following exchange between Iris and Reach is not just Reach's previous reactions to her questions but rather a folding of time and space, symbolizing the beginning of Reach's unconscious influence on the couple, and that this is why having two sets onstage at the same time is important to the realization of the play:

> IRIS. …With most murderers, it's, "I hated this, I hated that, I hated everything." With Reach, it's just…a wall. "Why did you kill her?".
>
> REACH. I don't know.
>
> IRIS. "How did you kill her?".
>
> REACH. Stabbed her ten times. Strangled her with a nylon rope…
>
> IRIS. "And how did you feel?".
>
> REACH. What?
>
> IRIS. "When you did that, how did you feel?". (Reach hesitates, shrugs.) He could have been stripping a chair. (Lights fade out on the interview room.) I thought nothing could bother me…(1.10.22)

At first, this might seem just an elaborate stage effect to represent Iris' recounting of her

interview with Reach. However, while Iris' lines appear in quotes—signifying that she is repeating a conversation that happened in the past and outside of the written/visible narrative—Reach's lines do not have quotation marks, indicating their being spoken in the present tense. Yet, Reach's lines answer Iris' lines in two ways: in the past tense (as retold by Iris to Dan) and in the present tense (as spoken by Reach, yet superimposed over, and thus erasing, Iris' *voice*). The distinction between "lines" and "voice" means that Reach's lines are repeated in Iris' voice and these lines, now in Iris' voice, are spoken by Reach, the erasure of the original speaker in both cases serving as a marker of time—past and present. In the end, although Iris could not "reach" Reach, Reach most definitely has "reached" into her. Reach's psychical infiltration finds representation in Iris' frustration at his apparent absence of affect as compared with her assumed absence of affect when speaking with him ("I thought nothing could bother me"). Yet the assumptions Blessing attributes to Iris rest on beliefs in a Cartesian mind/body split, enabling one to remove affect—associated with the body—by sheer force of will, or reason—associated with the brain.

For Reach to truly lack affect, to truly fall under the category of psychopath, he would have to have evidence of some kind of severe and ongoing brain trauma. Reach would need to have sustained trauma exclusively to his brain's prefrontal cortices, the area that controls faculties for trial and error, "reason [and] decision making" leaving all other brain areas intact, since Reach's language use, motor skills, capacity for knowledge acquisition and recollection---as evinced by the text—still operated normally (Damasio 38-39). The text makes no mention of any formative brain injuries in Reach's life, therefore, he must still have emotions, since emotions are the result of specific brain

functions and resist turning on and off. Indeed, as Antonio Damasio writes, “Emotion and feeling thus rely on two basic processes: (1) the view of a certain bodily state juxtaposed to the collection of triggering and evaluative images; and (2) a particular style and level of efficiency of cognitive processes (162-163). What this means is that emotion cannot exist separate from the brain’s materiality, and the brain’s plasticity, its ability to learn, retain information, and alter its functioning accordingly—results from environmental, interpersonal, cultural “trigger[s]…acquired dispositions evaluat[ed]” by the ego during the course of daily life and instincts, “innate dispositions that will activate body-bound responses” (163). In light of these considerations, one of two conclusions comes to mind: either Reach is not a psychopath, or, psychopaths can actually have emotions. The second premise, for the general public, frightens the most, simply because if a person wearing “the mask of sanity” has legitimate emotions, then the task of locating the sexual psychopath becomes even more daunting, leaving more social space for infiltration.

And in *Road*, what happens is exactly this. Throughout the rest of the play, Reach haunts Dan and Iris in their motel room, sometimes watching them in their private moments (Blessing 28-29). Sometimes Reach “interacts” with them by watching TV. Scene 16 finds Dan (and Reach) watching a talk show on serial killers; the host sounds as if he were in a panic: “HOST. How do we indentify them? That’s what’s really important here, isn’t it?...We can theorize all we want, but how can I tell, walking down the street, who’s going to kill me and who’s not?...I’ve got to! It’s life or death! One clue—anyone” (35). The host’s panic is doubled by Dan and Iris’ fascination with and terror of him. Iris seems concerned with understanding him, his childhood, his life trajectory; while Dan begins to view him as a unique figure, in my view to feel *attracted to him*, going so far as

to demand that Iris tell Reach she is sorry for upsetting him during an interview (36-37, 41). But it is neither Dan's demand nor Iris' curiosity that most forcefully brings home the extent of Reach's influence on the couple; it is Dan's sentence, "That's if he'll even see you," a sentence parents use in reprimanding a rebellious, yet ultimately ineffectual child, that shows how deeply Reach has divided the couple and how much Dan has become enamored of him (41). The final scene in the play has Reach gain influence over Dan with Iris leaving both the writing team and the marriage as Dan stays behind. However, the reason for their breakup centers around a personal fear that also invites being read all the way back to early twentieth century discourses of the sexual psychopath, and even earlier, during the sexual hygiene movement:

> IRIS. Jeanette Perry was ten.
>
> REACH. That's right…
>
> IRIS. Why a little girl?
>
> REACH. What? Oh—I couldn't go any longer.
>
> *DAN. You mean the compulsion—?*
>
> REACH. That's right.
>
> *IRIS. So, anybody—any woman, girl—?*
>
> REACH. Hey, what are you going to call it?...You guys'll make great parents.
>
> IRIS. (To Dan.) You told him?
>
> DAN. It slipped out one day. I'm sorry…
>
> REACH. I hope it's a girl. Women like girls.
>
> IRIS. Shut up…

DAN. I said I'm sorry!

IRIS. That's not good enough!

REACH. It's just a baby—

IRIS. *Why did you kill a ten-year-old!?*

REACH. *I felt like it!*...I didn't like killing her that way. Don't like being that out of control. It's nothing I'm proud of. (1.22.47-48 emphasis added and in the original)

Dan's interruption in the interview at the precise moment Reach confesses (or rather, insinuates) and Iris comes to realize that Reach's murderous sexuality had reached a point where no victim "type" existed, reaches back to the beginning of the play, when Reach accuses him of becoming sexually aroused by stories of sex-murder. Not just any stories will do, however; for Dan, they need to be true crimes, which again bring me to suggest that Dan's unconscious sexual orientation is similar to Reach's, and this is why Dan succumbs to Reach's influence so readily. This exchange also speaks to themes in *Henry*, which was released in 1986, only three years before the first production of *Road* (1989) and re-released in 1990, one year before *Road* was restaged (1991). *Henry* presents themes of horror's presence within the everyday and the lie of the existence of "safe spaces" beyond which horror cannot cross, with the anonymity of the serial killer and the becoming-anonymous of the victim, and of lack of identifying murder patterns. Had Reach not voluntarily entered a police station and confessed, he may well have never been caught, since he had lost his victim preference; this of course would have made his crimes seem all the more random, and, in an inversion of the sexual psychopath's ability to "be anyone and so is everywhere," Reach's potential victims would literally "be

anyone and so everywhere."

Dan hides his sexuality behind neoliberal rhetoric of free speech by telling Iris that even someone like Reach "has a right to tell his story" (1.22.50). Taking this argument to its conclusion leads to a dubious moral relativism where all rights are granted, including the right to deprive others of theirs. Moreover, to "tell [one's] story" implies not just the words used to recount the story, but also the actions—the lived experiences—used to create the story. Dan seems oblivious to what he truly advocates when he endorses Reach; he seems not to realize he is sanctioning sexual homicide. Iris attempts to explain to Dan about the commercialization and cult of celebrity driving serial murder, but Dan adamantly refuses to listen, arguing that Reach and his acts are of a superior nature, "more socially significant—it deserves to be studied" (1.22.51). Iris argues that the popularity of serial killers has less to do with scientific study and more to do with consumer culture that does not value the lives of the victims; when Dan counters that Iris should not walk out on the project because he is remaining to learn the identity of the unknown individual murdered by Reach, Iris responds, "I know who it is…It's you" (1.22.51).

Road articulates a fourfold-layered cultural paranoia at work during the nineties: a doubled fear (of mental illness and of deviant sexuality) and a doubled attraction (to mental illness as a mystique and to deviant sexuality as fantasy). In the same manner that slasher horror existed alongside the more socially acceptable thriller genre, many books, movies, and documentaries about, say, Jeffrey Dahmer and necrophilia, flourished alongside more socially acceptable case studies of mental illness such as *Girl Interrupted* (1993 book; 1999 film), *Prozac Nation* (1994; 2001), *The Virgin Suicides* (1993; 2000)

and eroticized violence such as *Basic Instinct* (1992), the remake of *Cape Fear* (1957; 1991), *Crash* (1973; 1996), and *Boxing Helena* (1993). Within such contradictory yet complimentary elements at work in the cultural imaginary, the 1991 arrest of serial killer, cannibal, and necrophile, Jeffrey Dahmer, the 1991 release of *Silence of the Lambs*, and the 1995 novel *Zombie* by Joyce Carol Oates seem to fit perfectly (Wilkerson A14).

Zombie tells the first person narrative of Quentin P., a psychiatrically disabled young man loosely based on Jeffrey Dahmer—at least in his sexual orientations and how he acts on them. Quentin, the ne'er do well son of a prominent academic, murders young men, sleeps with his dead victims, eats parts of them, and experiments on them, just like Jeffrey Dahmer. However, what Oates' novel really captures, what sets it apart from the first person serial killer narrative as a subgenre of horror, lies in her representation of the real-unreal lived experience of Quentin. She achieves this through straightforward prose presented to the reader in a manner reminiscent of cartoons, in which inanimate objects and even words or thoughts can actively participate in interpersonal relations. When Quentin's father visits the student housing building where Quentin serves as part-time live-in caretaker, the father notices a strange odor coming from a padlocked trunk and begins questioning his son (Oates 36). Quentin, afraid of his father discovering the bloodstained bathroom and clothing of Quentin's latest victim, "BUNNYGLOVES," tries to distract his father: "It went on like that. DAD'S MOUTH shaped certain words emerging like balloons & my mouth shaped certain words & it was familiar to me & there was a comfort in that. For finally Dad gives up for he does not want to know & wipes his face with a handkerchief" (36-37 emphasis in the original). Important words inside cartoon speech bubbles (for example, "You can see the **result**—total clinical

psychosis. What a layman would call **schizophrenia**") or decorative words connoting sound effects (such as "SLAM!" or "WHAK!") are usually rendered in bold type or all capital letters, respectively (Conway and Simek 5, 17). In novels, italics are generally used to convey emphasis, so the capital letters in *Zombie*, combined with the image of "words emerging like balloons" like physical objects conveys what I read as Quentin's paranoid-schizoid position, aroused by the anxiety of his acts being possibly discovered by his father.

The possibility that his father might find out about his homicidal sexual orientation puts him on the defensive. For Quentin, his father's relentless questions take on the quality of a police interrogation, in that any question Quentin gives in order to end discussion only serves to prompt more questions; just as in a police interrogation, answering questions produces not relief but rather more questions, making silence, for the guilty, the only option. For example, when Quentin lies to his father, saying he was sleeping, his father wants to know why he sleeping during the day and how he can sleep in a room punctuated with such a foul odor, Quentin opts for silence: "I shook my head. I was looking at the floor but not seeing it," which only frustrates his father, pushing him to demand that Quentin provide an explanation (Oates 36). Thus, as "DAD'S MOUTH" emits "words…like balloons," Quentin views himself as under attack, making it possible to read their exchange as Quentin viewing his life instinct (the pleasure he receives from sex and murder) as directly threatened by the father's words (death instinct) which manifest themselves physically. These bad objects, "like balloons" float in the air, take up space, heightening the chances of Quentin being caught. The father's "bad object-words" inevitably enter Quentin through forced introjection; that is to say, he experiences the

words as aimed at him and demanding that he take them in and respond to them.

What Quentin does, however, is to have "[his] mouth shape[sic] certain words…familiar to [him]," to "deflect[.sic]…the death instinct outwards [because] it helps the ego to overcome anxiety by ridding it of danger and badness;" he projects the bad objects out towards his father, a process which makes his father relent (Oates 36; Klein "Schizoid" 181). Once his father backs down, Quentin's personality makes an abrupt change from defensive to somewhat confident; that is, confident enough to make an innuendo at the expense of his father. When his father asks him to the family home for dinner, hoping to win him over by adding, "Your mom has made banana-custard pie," Quentin responds, "Thanks, Dad, but I'm not hungry I guess. I've ready eaten" (Oates 36-37). The innuendo flies, unnoticed, over the father's head; for the reader, the double entendre is quite clear. On the one hand, Quentin has previously eaten, if by "eaten" he refers to his victim, BUNNYGLOVES, whose remains are in the locker and causing the smell Quentin's father finds offensive. On the other hand, not only has Quentin eaten parts of BUNNYGLOVES, but he has also had sex with him, whether alive or dead, the text does not say; however, a banana-custard pie also operates as metaphors for a phallus (banana), dried semen (custard), and the anus (pie). By ending the chapter on such a note, Oates portrays a convincing representation of psychosis and produces both revulsion at the criminal and grim fascination with the sexual.

This childlike, cartoonish manifestation of psychosis is especially conspicuous when looking at the drawings accompanying the text. Arguably, the illustrations are more sketches than drawings, given the quick manner of their execution. Like cartoons, they are one-dimensional, and aim for only the barest of representational quality. The lines are

thick, as if drawn with a felt-tip marker. Despite the lack of detail in his drawings, or rather, because of it, Quentin's sexual and criminal occupations become visible to the eye. In one illustration, Quentin's father, represented only by a pair of eyes, stares over a chain lock into Quentin's room (32). The eyes seem very searching, perhaps even reproachful, and remain disembodied, as if they represent the most important aspect of his father; in fact, although tension already exists between them, the eyes enact the verbal inquiries to come that lead to the word balloon battle mentioned above. Quentin writes that he and his father are "the same height if I stood up straight which is hard" then he "lifted my head to *confront him*," and entered into some small talk before "DAD'S EYES darting as I had known they would fixing on the one thing [the locker]" (32-33). Even before a conversation begins, Quentin feels that his father arrives in a malevolent capacity and jumps to the defensive. However, to access the full complexity of the scene, I wish to go back to the glasses Quentin's father wears. In Quentin Oates presents a fictionalized Jeffrey Dahmer, who wore glasses; Quentin also wears glasses, "plastic-rimmed…the color of skin seen through plastic," that is, the glasses are transparent, and his father wears "black plastic-professor glasses" (3, 32). Although "black plastic-professor glasses" gives the impression of fifties-era glasses with a thick, black frame, I suggest that all three pairs—Dahmer's, Quentin's, and his father's—look almost identical.

Similarities between Dahmer, Quentin, and his father become apparent when comparing three photos, one of Jeffrey Dahmer and two of Quentin as imagined for the stage play and the short film adaptations of *Zombie* ("Jeffrey Dahmer, Murderer"; Sheridan, n.p.; Razor's Edge, n.p.). In the film version, Quentin wears a pair of black-

rimmed glasses, but the frame is thin (Razor's Edge, n.p.). A comparison of Dahmer, Oates' imagined Quentins, and the glasses in the novel's illustration show all four as nearly identical. Without going too far into speculating on an author's intentions, I read the images as of a piece, that is, reading the glasses shows a representational quadrilateral between Dahmer, Quentin, and his father. Moving back to the illustration in the text, what this means is that Quentin's father resembles Quentin, who in turn resembles Dahmer; therefore the eyes staring into Quentin's room, staring at Quentin, and searching the room and finding the locker, are in fact Quentin's own eyes.

Mark Seltzer, in his study of the serial killer's place in contemporary culture, posits that what lies behind the psychical conflicts resulting in serial murder is "not the possession of an object of love or of pleasure," but rather a loss of (or lack of) what he calls "self-difference" which is actualized into a violent attack on "sexual difference" in order to actualize "self-difference…the acquisition of an *identity*" (Seltzer 144 emphasis added). While I agree with his formulation, especially as it relates to my reading of Quentin, his theory does not take into account Quentin's homosexuality. If Quentin dismembers other males to re-establish himself as a distinct subject with agency, then he commits crimes out of "same-sexual difference," in which case he would see himself, re-establish himself through rituals of sameness, not difference. Seltzer's theory suffers from an assumption of heteronormativity as a given, as "natural," as the foremost marker of difference. For Quentin, as a homosexual in a heteronormative culture, it is in fact sameness, or at least similarity, it is in fact the lack of or loss of self-difference via homosexual encounters that re-establish his identity, hence the one-dimensional, quasi-real nature of his interactions, his experience of the real. This is evinced later on in the

text through Quentin's memory of his father coming upon Quentin's hidden men's' magazines; there are many parts of the chapter (a two-page run-on sentence) that connect back to my earlier discussions:

> Dad charged upstairs to get me…yanked me by the arm and downstairs & into the garage & showed me the *Body Builder* magazines & the *naked Ken-doll*…Twisting the magazines in his hands like *wringing a chicken's neck* to spare himself the sight of the covers & the *drawings* somebody had done on them in fluorescent-red *felt-pen ink*. Nor the *insides* with more such drawings on centerfold models of male muscle-bodies & the young guy…& a shiny pink upright *banana* lifting out of his groin & *parts* of other photos *scissored out*. *This is sick Quentin* Dad's mouth worked… *I never never want to see anything like this again in my life.* (Oates 38-39 emphasis added and in the original)

Here we see Quentin's sexuality as something that must remain hidden, unacknowledged, unreciprocated except by himself and two-dimensional images (existing on paper and thus only in one dimension) embellished with a felt-tip marker. Does the ink color matter? Possibly, but I choose to bracket it for lack of enough textual evidence to suggest that the color later on becomes part of Quentin's psychosis; however, I do think the choice of the type of marker is telling, as it plays such a huge role in the text. In fact, it gestures towards Quentin's isolation and his internalization of his father's denial, his father's denigration, of his sexuality (and thus of Quentin himself), and their subsequent displacements and distortions: the doll, the father unknowingly simulating masturbation

with the magazine ("choking the chicken," so to speak), and of course, the drawings, and the body parts of some photos cut out (Urban Dictionary, n.p.).

Quentin returns to this memory during his father's impromptu visit (Oates 33-34). In the illustration, then, the father's eyes peer over a chain lock *in this particular situation* suggestive of Quentin's hidden space searched out by the father as well as Quentin's search, through that space between the door and the room, for his identity; not just to see himself or know himself, but also to see himself and know himself as he is, the "is" of course being the "sick" thing that the father "never never want[s] to see." And Quentin returns to his childhood memory again, when, as the conversational confrontation with his father begins to dwindle, he recognizes that as the questions cease, "Dad gives up for *he does not want to know*" (36 emphasis in the original). Quentin's father desires to know, yet fears the proximity of the possibility that he already knows.

American crime and horror has always, to a greater and lesser extent, undergone cross-medium interconnections exemplified by *Zombie* and *Down the Road*. The influence of Edgar Allan Poe on the French poet Baudelaire and on the Japanese crime and horror author Edogawa Rampo are well known; a more contemporary example comes from *African Psycho* by the Congolese-American author, Alain Mabanckou. *African Psycho* connects to fiction and film and various media; in fact, as I will show, *African Psycho* adopts and adapts discourses of mental illness, specifically schizophrenia, as well as mindhunter discourses regarding criminal profiling. To discuss mental illness in an African context, I turn to perhaps the most well-known and internationally influential theorist of mental illness, the Martiniquan psychiatrist, Frantz Fanon. Of course, generalizations on mental illness in the contemporary Congo using the analytical

methods of a postwar era psychoanalyst and psychiatrist might invite suspicion; however, I will draw on Fanon's metapsychology, that is, his analytical theories—in the same way one would draw on (as I and many others have drawn on) Freud and Klein—to produce critical analysis applicable across a broad range of contexts and mediums.

According to Jock McCulloch, "Fanon defines mental illness as a pathology of liberty which constricts the range and meaning of individual action" (Fanon ctd. in McCulloch 97). Regarding mental illness in a postcolonial context, Fanon's definition expands beyond psychosis due to colonialism to mental illness as complete envelopment and alteration of brain function resulting in severe limitations in judgment of appropriate conduct, so much so that an individual's illness supersedes and replaces norms. McCulloch also states that Fanon sees an etiology of mental illness in a "response to an alienating environment, that is, and environment which fails to provide for the social needs of the patient," yet fails to elucidate particulars such as the exact ways in which "a pathogenic environment [such as] family or…total social experience" results in mental illness in some individuals and not in others (98-99). However, within McCulloch's phrasing of "pathogenic environment" lies an envelopment and alteration process occurring interpersonally between "family or…total social experience" leading me to conclude that a pathological milieu produces mental illness in the individuals within it. In other words, an "ill" environment dynamically affects individuals, inducing them to produce conditions in themselves (psychosis) and their environment favorable to the total milieu.

As to why some become mentally ill and some do not, I believe the answer lies in the term "alienating environment." Since the health of the milieu is dependent upon the

relationship between individuals and environment, norms are created to (relatively) stabilize the milieu; obedience to norms over time become cultural conventions, social mores, and customs. Earlier I argued Canguilhem states that conflict between the "normal" and the "pathological" stems not from a norm opposed to various pathologies but rather from a general disavowal of the existence of multiple norms, and that one's "normality" comes from his or her relationship with the environment which maintains a mutually sustaining milieu. Returning to my earlier discussion of Canguilhem regarding normativity for a moment, I suggest that some persons come into conflict with this majority consensus milieu, resulting in impoverished interactions on a social and environmental scale. Such "shrinkage" creates alterations in brain function and social action, that is, psychosis envelops a person on an individual level to create a personalized milieu appropriate to that individual, blocking out the larger, social milieu in favor of another where "norms" become restricted to that which sustains psychosis.

In *African Psycho*, shrinkage occurs in the form of the antagonist Gregoire's obsession and ongoing dialogue with the dead serial murderer, Angoualima. Gregoire refers to him as "Great Master," patterns his life in such a way as to imitate and please Angoualima, and even visits his gave to see and speak with him (Mabanckou 2). The text does not suggest that Angoualima might exist only as an auditory and visual hallucination; however, the nature of Gregoire's psychosis emerges from his own monologue. Early on, Gregoire comments that he visits Angoualima's burial site and "there, as if by magic, I swear, the Great Master of crime appears before me, as charismatic as in his glory days," but these meetings, according to Gregoire, not only take place out of reverence and pleasure (2). Gregoire also meets with his hero "every time

one of my deeds ends in fiasco," where Angoualima will "take me to task, call me an imbecile, an idiot, or a pathetic character," which Gregoire endures and perceives as love, prompting him to continue "desperately seeking his approval" (7). In fact, Gregoire admits to dissatisfaction with his relationship with Angoualima; he knows that taking Angoualima as his standard of living constitutes an impasse to his "start[ing] to work with a free spirit," but he dismisses this option as beyond his capabilities (7). It is clear that Angoualima is a hallucination since Gregoire sees Angoualima not as he died, or even as he might appear if he were in hiding, but as he looked in his prime. Moreover, from the dependent and humiliating nature of his relationship with Angoualima, one can discern Gregoire's psychosis as an example of Fanon's view of mental illness as absence of liberty and limitation of possibility referred to previously. Finally, one can see Gregoire's resignation to this unfulfilling and self-destructive relationship as an example of shrinkage to a personalized psychotic norm-as-norm, with Angoualima as both nurturing agent (giving direction and purpose to Gregoire) and as destructive force continually damaging Gregoire's psyche to the point of being thrown back into deeper psychosis as a "healing" method which sustains the psychotic milieu.

Such conclusions remain possible mainly because Mabanckou writes *African Psycho* as a first person narrative, giving readers access to Gregoire's thought processes and emotions as well as his actions. While Gregoire's pronouncements might seem suspect (they invite interpretation as outright lies or at best, delusions), thus branding him an "unreliable narrator," the fact remains that any analysis of the text must be mediated through Gregoire's interpretations of himself and events; therefore, any analysis must proceed not on a basis of "truth" or "what really happens" but rather from

acknowledgement of his psychosis as permeating the text entirely, that is, as psychosis as the only truth. In this way, the reader does not mistake *African Psycho* for a work of magic realism or even fantasy but rather a testament to one individual's psychosis and must be examined as such. Viewed in this way, the influence of the *American Psycho* novel and film comes through, in that all three find representation in madness-as-realism. Beyond this and the clear reference of title similarity, the three resist comparison, for the same reason outlined in chapter one regarding Robert Bloch confusing use of terms beginning with "psycho": Patrick Bateman in *American Psycho* is a psychopath (he does not suffer from hallucinations) while Gregoire is psychotic.

African Psycho adopts and adapts other, more significant, cultural imports. For example, Gregoire describes Angoualima as "born with one extra finger on each hand…Not the type of additional fingers…real fingers, as necessary as the other ten…He would use them to scratch his body's hard-to-reach places, no doubt, and to satisfy his criminal impulses" (2). Angoualima's additional digits are associated with his criminal prowess as a biological marker of his outsider status. In fact, just before the above quotation, Gregoire says that "crime and highway robbery fit him [Angoualima] like a glove"; an ironic, yet telling joke, to be sure, since a person with six fingers on each hand cannot wear a glove without tearing a hole, that is, deliberately damaging the stitching (society) through forced accommodation (criminal activity) (2). Angoualima's extra fingers are also associated with vulgarity; their purpose seems only to scratch himself in a manner not acceptable in public and thus further advertize his ostracism. Therefore, Angoualima seems evolutionarily fitted for criminal activity; in other words, he represents the trope of the "born criminal," the remorseless entity John Douglas invokes

during the *Hearings* as rampant in America.

However, the linking of biology with criminality reaches back to far earlier precedents. The Italian psychiatrist Cesare Lombroso's book, *Criminal Man* (1896) became available in English in 1911, although Lombroso's theories already enjoyed wide influence in Europe. Lombroso's theory of criminality as a biological—and therefore innate and hereditary—characteristic made crime a symptom of inborn disease instead of due to socio-economic factors such as class or poverty (Ellwood 716). Gregoire makes a reference to Lombroso—or at least to the field of criminology initiated by him—when he says, "*Nothing about me* would be of interest to those who believe one is born a criminal…When criminals, real ones, start teaching the subject themselves, then I will begin to believe such things" (Mabanckou 3 emphasis added). Although this statement seems to contradict his previous statement regarding Angoualima, the key phrasing here is *"Nothing about me"*; Gregoire is not a "born criminal," and says so: "I myself do not have such additional fingers, I know. I am not going to make a big deal out of it" (2). His tone of resignation when comparing himself to Angoualima (in conjunction with his glove simile) reads to me as regret; in fact, the entire narrative of *African Psycho* consists of Gregoire's futile efforts to emulate his hero.

Angoualima's fingers also mark him as connected to another contemporary figure: Hannibal Lecter, a psychopath who, as mentioned in chapter three, possesses an extra digit on his left hand that represents a similar biosocial alienation. And of course, the elegant, intellectual cannibal, Hannibal Lecter, remains connected in popular culture to a psychotic, less confident, socially awkward counterpart: serial cannibal and necrophile, Jeffrey Dahmer. After Dahmer's arrest, people came forward to describe him

as “a quiet loner [who] rarely spoke to anybody…[and] never looked you in the eye” (Wilkerson A14). Gregoire also comes across as solitary, misanthropic, and somewhat nervous compared to the gregarious psychopath, Angoualima. Later in the text, Gregoire even suggests his desire to cannibalize his intended victim—his lover, a prostitute named Germaine: “I’m going to cut her up, then boil her in a big pot thanks to my furnace, and *go eat certain parts of her body* on the Great Master Angoualima’s grave” (Mabanckou 122 emphasis added). Again, word choice and syntax become central to understanding textual subtleties. For example, “to eat parts of her body” implies generalization (all parts or any part), something not clearly defined or thought through; “to eat *certain* parts of her body,” on the other hand, suggests surety, definitiveness (some parts as opposed to other parts), but with the exact detail hidden from the reader by syntactical ambiguity.

I wish to add two points to my reading thus far: first, this is not the first time certainty disguised as ambiguity is employed in *African Psycho* (recall that Angoualima uses his extra fingers to “scratch…hard-to-reach places”); second, the sexual dimension of Gregoire’s cannibalistic fantasy further links him to Lecter and Dahmer. Gregoire’s property consists of a small home and a shed where he repairs old automobiles (18-19; 94). He refers to his workspace and its immediate surroundings as a “graveyard for vehicular wrecks [that smells] of grease,” and adds, “I get my rocks off banging on beat-up cars” (94). Using the “graveyard” of old cars as a point of departure, I read “vehicular wrecks” and “grease” as metaphors for disfigured, dismembered bodies and for blood, respectively. Indeed, the image Gregoire presents of himself working metal (using tools to alter flesh and bone) surrounded by heaps of damaged, outdated, non-functioning cars (bodies and body parts) where he “[gets his] rocks off” (orgasms) “banging on beat-up

cars" (committing necrophilia) calls to mind the horror genre trope of the serial killer secret space. In Clover's list of horror genre tropes, such an area goes by the name of "The Terrible Place…most often a house or a tunnel" where "unwitting victims wander…[and] survey the visible evidence of the human crimes and perversions that have transpired there" (Clover 30-31). Moreover, the scene resonates with the images of body parts found in Dahmer's apartment during his arrest (Wilkerson A14). Thus, *African Psycho* serves as an extension of the sexual psychopath discourse across country and national borders, and back again to America, where it undergoes an altogether different transformation.

For example, the idea of an African American serial killer traditionally carries little weight with either the general public or with law enforcement, despite semi-prominent to prominent examples such as Wayne Williams, Coril Watts (both of whom Douglas mentions during the Hearings), and more recently, Derek Todd Lee, Kendall Francois, and the DC Snipers, among others (Branson 6-9). In fact, scholars often comment on the prolific representations of African Americans as associated with "urban" or gang-related crime across various media formats while the possibility of African Americans as perpetrators of serial homicide remains unthinkable (2, 6). Such misconceptions stem from many factors: first, the valorization of the serial murderer as "charming…brilliant [and] highly mobile" lends itself to stereotypes of intellectualism and individual freedom traditionally associated with Caucasian males in the American mythology; second, mental illness remains unaddressed by most African Americans except as a condition induced by political and socio-economic disparities; moreover, stereotypes of binary division between African Americans and Caucasians (community

and family versus individualism, for example) render African American serial murder impossible to imagine by African Americans and Caucasians alike. For example, during the Black Power era of the sixties and seventies, the usefulness of psychoanalytical methods for ameliorating socio-economical and political inequalities endured by African Americans came under scrutiny by African American authors (Ahad 111).

However, such suspicions were not without precedent. At the same cultural moment African Americans called psychoanalysis into question, a trend evolved in psychology and psychiatry that categorized socio-economic and political protest by African Americans as symptoms of schizophrenia (Metzl 100-103). According to writings at the time by psychiatrists Walter Bromberg and Franck Simon, "black liberation movements literally caused delusions, hallucinations, and violent projections in black men" (100). This period roughly corresponds with the timeframe for the publication of Robert Bloch's novel, *Psycho*, and Alfred Hitchcock's film adaptation. Recalling Bloch's confusion over and misuse of psychology, psychoanalysis, psychiatry, psychosis, and psychopathy, as well as similar misappropriations in the popular imaginary, reveals a similar misconception in African American culture. Badia Sahar Ahad notes that "Freudian analysis in U.S. popular culture was on the decline during the 1950s and 1960s [while] the broader realm of psychology was becoming increasingly accessible," an interesting cultural move in itself, if for no other reason than the appearance of multiple popular conflations of Freud with psychoanalysis *in toto* (110-111). This rhetorical strategy of denouncing an entire discipline by finding fault with its most well-known exposition is not so much designed to make sound arguments, but rather (as pointed out earlier regarding mindhunting), to win over popular opinions, since,

as also discussed previously, repetition and expansion of basic principles rather than in-depth comprehension (and the resulting contradictions) comprise most argumentative positions.

Moreover, as Metzl points out above, the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry actively pursued agendas of containment aimed at politicized African Americans. On the other hand, prominent African American authors such as Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and Adrienne Kennedy remained heavily invested in psychoanalysis as a tool for achieving equality (Ahad 83, 95, 110). These misconceptions, in turn, continue to sustain its own and related representational and discursive lapses only recently undergoing rectification. Alongside the growing number of studies dealing with psychoanalysis and African Americans, popular culture also provides representations of mentally ill African Americans; however, the importance of these contemporary cultural productions is that they expand the potential demographic for recognition of mental illness.

And yet, accurate representations of mental illness continually fail to appear. For instance, the 2014 film, *No Good Deed*, features Colin Evans (Idris Elba), an inmate convicted for one count of manslaughter and on his way to a parole hearing, although he remains suspected as a serial killer responsible for the murders of five women. The film opens with shots of a prison transport van moving along a highway from various angles while a voiceover from a television news broadcast describes him as “one of the most feared men in the annals of state history” (Lagos n.p.). Although considered a psychopath by the media and those who know him, Evans falls under the more appropriate category of “psychotic.” Of course, the camera aids in producing an effect of predatory patience

associated with popular conceptions of psychopaths as opposed to the frenzied activity usually associated with psychosis; it does this by constructing Evans' position so as to make him appear much larger than those in attendance at his parole hearing as well as by taking on the subject position of other characters and maximizing the number of shots featuring Evans staring back at into the camera.

The scene where Evans confronts the parole board is a good example of this technique. As Evans and the parole board enter into conversation, all camera shots of Evans are angled from the bottom left of the frame, even though he is alone in the frame; this creates an effect in which Evans—in close up—only occupies about one quarter of the frame, even though he directly addresses the camera/parole board. As the scene progresses, Evans' left side appears in frame, and moving from occupying a quarter of the frame to occupying one half of the frame to passing the halfway mark of the frame. However, when the board chairman speaks, representation of Evans shifts to resembling psychosis more than psychopathy. The chairman addresses his fellow board members while focusing his gaze on Evans, saying he "fits the criteria of a malignant narcisst…charming, highly intelligent…compelled to prove [his] superiority," adding that "some other, more well-known malignant narcissists were Jeffrey Dahmer, John Wayne Gacy, Manson…" (Lagos n.p.). At the mention of other "malignant narcissists," the chairman's words begin to warp and reverb, making his full speech difficult to distinguish; in fact, the three names in the quote above are the only ones I could hear with sufficient certainty. More importantly, however, is the camera's attention to Evans during the audio distortion, signifying that he undergoes some sort of psychical disturbance. Indeed, after the distortion subsides, Evans stands up suddenly and is physically

restrained and dragged from the room; he escapes during the ride back to the penitentiary.

While *No Good Deed* extends the discourse of the sexual psychopath to African Americans, the film also returns to *Psycho* in that both Idris Elba (Colin) and Anthony Perkins (Norman) play attractive males who successfully hide their psychosis. Moreover, both characters call attention to popular misconceptions of psychosis and psychopathy, even going so far as to give representations of experts who misdiagnose them. Representations of expert opinion serves to strengthen audience belief in the alleged realism of these cultural productions, in much the same way that Doctor Chilton in *Red Dragon* and *Silence of the Lambs* concedes expertise to Will Graham, who, I should note, criticizes mental health professionals for "failure" with Lector but also never offers any competing diagnoses of his own. In fact, Graham's intimate relationship with Lector implies not only trust and empathy, but tacit admission of the correctness of Chilton and others' diagnosis; Graham approaches Lector for help based on the folk belief that "it takes one to know one"—only a psychopath can truly understand another psychopath. This also implies an unconscious admission on Graham's part that his "gift" of "becoming" the psychopaths he pursues may at times turn fallible; these implications are overshadowed by repeating overt presentations of Graham's abilities and Lector's indefinable genius.

All this is to say that the discourses, texts, films, and documents under discussion throughout this study contradict as well as support each other. In fact, as I have shown, inconsistencies in argument or representation work to sustain panic regarding crime, mental illness, and sexual deviance, in combination or separately. Public policies regarding mental illness, as result and as cause of rhetorics and representations I have

discussed, have changed but still stigmatize mentally ill persons. However, unlike Wahl, I do not think that blanket censorship of representations in cultural productions constitutes an answer to this complex problem. As stated early on, I believe that careful consideration of representations during the creative process as well as a mix of positive and negative portrayals (with the balance in favor of positive representations) might initiate public gestures towards changes in attitudes about mentally ill persons in the medical, legal, governmental, and public spheres.

Conclusion

In the late nineties and twenty-first century, established cable and satellite television networks such as HBO, Showtime, Bravo, BET, and newer ventures such as Lifetime, Court TV, and A&E began to aggressively compete with broadcast networks, video retail and rental stores, and cinemas for audiences (Chalaby 461). Their selling point: as the price of one movie ticket continued to rise, a customer could, for around the price of a few video rentals, watch dozens of movies in the comfort of his or her home. At the same time, digital production methods for television and movies helped to expand demographic areas for cultural productions to include other countries. Hollywood, then-recently founded company, Netflix, and cable and satellite TV subscription services stood at the forefront of a one-sided cultural export overflow led by the United States and Britain, followed by the rest of the major countries of the "developed world" (468-469). This "soft" or "cultural" colonialism also widened the representational reservoir for American horror, crime, and thriller films, while minimizing American imports of diverse representations of mental illness, public and police relations with mentally ill persons, as well as cultural productions that might complicate received notions regarding discourses around the sexual psychopath trope.

A study conducted by Radford University in collaboration with Florida Gulf Coast University on serial murders reveals that, from 1960 to 2009, a total of 902 serial murders occurred worldwide, not including the United States (Aamodt 2). Included in the

Radford/FGCU study are twelve “Western” nations (U.S. included) and eight “Eastern” nations; however, while the study does provide numbers by country, it remains unclear what numbers belong to what country by what decade, since the universities’ timeframe begins at 1900 and extends to 2014 (9). Therefore, a comparative analysis equivalent to the timeframe of this project (1960 to the 2000s) regarding numbers of sexual psychopaths (or sexual psychotics) remains untenable. Thus, the Radford/FGCU study remains useful only in a generalized capacity.

Yet, generalizations have value. Based on Chalaby’s statements that “global TV formats have played a key role in the growth of TV production groups, such as…Endemol’s *Talent* and *Idols*, and [Shine Media’s] *Master Chef*,” certain conclusions become possible: first, Syco and Shine both produce shows for the FOX Network—*American Idol* and *Master Chef*, respectively (Chalaby 465; “Idol” n.p.; “Chef” n.p.). The fact that FOX exports these two successful reality TV shows around the world leads to the generalized conclusion that two other highly popular reality TV shows discussed previously, *America’s Most Wanted* and *COPS*, both of which predate *Idol* and *Chef*, (and, like them, still air on a regular basis), were and are also exported globally. This in turn points to possible international cultural influence as to the nature of and “proper” response to, mental illness, as well as the dissemination of sexual psychopath discourses. Another research study, this one focusing on international imports and Hollywood films, argues for just such an interpretation. While not discussing mental illness per se, the study conducted by W. Wayne Fu and Achikannoo Govindaraju does point out that how much influence a film might have in a foreign culture depends on how many cultural similarities already exist between exporter nation and importer nation (Fu and

Govindaraju 217-218). However, these same imported cultural productions undergo a process of "localization," that is, parts of "social norms, taste preferences, and aesthetic judgments" become accepted or discarded based on compatibility then adapted to various nations' cultural conventions (220). What the foregoing analysis means is that the acculturation process of film and new media platforms by various nations is in fact the same process mental illness discourses have undergone in the US in order to strengthen its cultural capital in favor of association with crime, violence, and sexual deviance. This push-pull effect becomes appropriated into the dominant social paradigm and creates opportunities for the spread of anxiety and nervousness as accepted ways of life, which, as I have argued throughout this study, results in devastating lifestyle conditions for mentally ill persons, casting them as "inhuman," "homicidal," "uncontrollable," "perverse," "sadistic," among other epithets within a media culture always searching for the greater spectacle.

Cohen points out that "the mass media…devote a great deal of space to deviance" (Cohen 8). I would add that "deviant news" might be an unspoken category in the news genre, much like sports or the weather, and, like other permanent categories, it needs content constantly. This is a different concept from the usual accusation that the media deliberately seeks out the sensational at the expense of other categories; deviance is a category itself, and for a specific reason. If, as Cohen and others claim, "the news…is a main source of information about the negative contours of a society. It informs us about right and wrong, about the boundaries beyond which one should not venture and about the shapes that the devil can assume" (Erickson qtd. and ctd. in Cohen 8). Indeed, the news—in various forms depending on the size of a particular area—provides the moral

compass for a culture after the foundational process of exclusion and cultural formation. Moreover, the news—as gossip, as work memos, as TV news, as current events programming, as dinner table talk, as macro and microcosm—circulates, always providing fresh folk devils for the cultural exclusion process according to geographical location, age, gender, race, class, nation, religion, and disability. Yet, as I stated earlier regarding Wahl's condemnation of all negative portrayals of mentally ill persons, an important factor is quantity and balance. To demand complete positive portrayals of anything in the name of realism is in fact unrealistic and undesirable; it is also censorship, just as complete negative representations censor positive representations.

Notes

Introduction

1. See Jodi Dean, *Aliens in America: Conspiracy Cultures from Outerspace to Cyberspace* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), and David Seed, *Brainwashing: The Fictions of Mind Control* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2004), and *American Science Fiction and the Cold War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

2. See Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988) for an excellent historical account of how the popular/high culture divide came about in the United States.

3. A sampling of such texts include: *The Book of Woe* by Gary Greenberg (2013), which accuses the American Psychiatric Association of diagnosing normal conditions as mental illness; *The Myth of the Chemical Cure* by Joanna Moncrief (2009), which argues that psychotropic drugs do not redress chemical imbalances in the brain; *Medication Madness* by Peter Breggin (2008), focuses on extreme side effects of psychotropic medications; and *Freud's Paranoid Quest* by John Farrell (1996), which claims that Freud actually suffered from paranoia and that he constructed the psychoanalytic method to valorize his own mental illness.

“Sexual Healing”: Deinstitutionalization, the Sexual Psychopath, and the Rise of the American Slasher

1. Hitchcock did not invent the idea of the slasher. Other equally notable films and novels preceded *Psycho*, such as the film, *In a Lonely Place* (1950) based on the novel by Dorothy L. Sayers, *Night of the Hunter* (1955) based on the novel by Davis Grubb, to name only two. What makes Psycho stand out is that the aesthetic parameters of the film stuck with audiences enough to give rise to decades worth of imitators, who faithfully mimed Psycho to the extent that a new sub-genre formed.

Carol Clover defines the “slasher” film through six major elements: “killer,” “locale” or “terrible place, most often a house or tunnel, in which victims sooner or later find themselves,” “weapons,” “victims,” the “Final Girl” a woman who lives through terrifying events by “find[ing] the strength to either stay the killer long enough to be rescued (ending A) or to kill him herself (ending B),” and “shock effects.”

Dika offers a set of binary oppositions combined with a “past/present event” schema: “1. valued/devalued, 2. in-group/out-group, 3. strong/weak, 4. life/death, 5. ego/id (controlled/uncontrolled)” and “Past Event: The young community is guilty of a wrongful action; the killer sees an injury, fault, or death; the killer experiences a loss; the killer kills the guilty members of the young community. Present Event: An event commemorates the past action; the killer’s destructive force is reactivated; the killer reidentifies the guilty parties; a member from the old community warns the young community; the young community takes no heed, the killer stalks the young community; the killer kills members of the young community; the heroine sees the extent of the

murders; the heroine sees the killer; the heroine does battle with the killer; the heroine kills or subdues the killer; the heroine survives; but the heroine is not free."

Wood uses Freudian psychoanalysis to argue for horror film in the seventies as a "return of the repressed" regarding the increasing presence of alternative definitions of race and ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual orientation.

See Carol J. Clover, *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 26-42, Vera Dika, *Games of Terror: Halloween, Friday the 13th and the Films of the Stalker Cycle* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1990), 134-136, and Robin Wood, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan…and Beyond* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 63-84.

2. Among the most notable sex crimes of the early twentieth century was the case of Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb, two late-adolescent friends and occasional lovers who abducted and murdered a random victim, fourteen year-old Bobby Franks. Called "the crime of the century," the case gained notoriety for a number of reasons: although Leopold and Loeb demanded a ransom for Franks after the boy was dead, the two friends came from wealthy families, therefore the crime lacked a motive; and Leopold and Loeb possessed above average intelligence (they subscribed to the Nietzchean philosophy of the *Übermench*, a "superman" beyond society's moral codes) which unsettled previous notions linking crime, poverty, and IQ. Stephen Robertson, "Separating the Men from the Boys: Masculinity, Psychosexual Development, and Sex Crime in the United States, 1930s-1960s." *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 56.1 (2001): 10, 21. For more detailed information on the Leopold and Loeb case and its significance,

including psychiatric records and press coverage, see *Homicide in Chicago 1870-1930:* "1924: Leopold and Loeb," homicide.northwestern.edu/crimes/leopold/.

3. 1910, 1916, 1918, 1930, 1938, and 1949 respectively. The 1910 edition appears as *Three Contributions to the Sexual Theory*, the 1916, 1918, and 1930 editions appear as *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, and the 1939 printing is included in an anthology, *Basic Writings*. James Strachey, "Editor's Note." Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Ed. and trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 2000): xxi.

4. Following the work of Stanley Cohen, Kenneth Thompson describes the "key elements or stages in a moral panic" as: 1. Something or someone is defined as a threat to values or interests, 2. This threat is depicted in an easily recognizable form by the media, 3. There is a rapid buildup of public concern, 4. There is a response from authorities or opinion-makers, 5. The panic recedes or results in social changes. Thompson's model parallels the trajectory of discourses around the psychopath. Kenneth Thompson, *Moral Panics* (London: Routledge, 1998), 8.

5. It should be stressed that, when drawing conclusions based on statistical evidence, one deals only with information that is available. In other words, more crimes may be committed than are reported, since many other influences may be involved. For instance, Robertson reports that "the relatively small number of prosecutions for carnal abuse in New York City reveal that working-class parents continued to treat only those genital acts that ruptured a girl's hymen or injured a boy's anus as sexual crimes *that warranted legal action*." The various other forms of molestation were considered a misdemeanor. Emphasis is added here because how a case is defined, where it is tried,

and if it goes to court or even gets reported at all has a decisive influence on percentages and thus any subsequent research or criticism. Stephen Robertson, "Separating the Men from the Boys: Masculinity, Psychosexual Development, and Sex Crime in the United States, 1930s-1960s." *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 56.1 (2001): 11-12.

6. In *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Freud relates the story of a man who, while playing with one of his children, accidentally almost killed him by tossing the boy up near a large chandelier. While the man loved his children, analysis revealed that he had repressed his desire to divorce his wife. Further analysis determined that when the man was a child, his younger sibling had died, and that his mother blamed his father, resulting in their divorce. The man in question reconciled with his wife and their marriage healed. Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Standard Edition. 1901. Trans. and Ed. James Strachey. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), 242-244.

7. The basis for the concept of the "redeemed panic figure" comes from the text, *Madness and Cinema*, in which Patrick Fuery discusses different examples of the "madperson" trope, and cites the example of the "wild-eyed doctor who is initially treated as mad" in the science fiction film, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956). Fuery's point is that a relation exists between cinematic representations of madness and the cultural moment that such depictions metaphorically articulate. In the particular instance of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, the doctor's insanity, according to Fuery, demonstrates the broad cultural belief by Americans of Communist infiltration. While many other examples warrant inclusion, perhaps the best literary example is Dr. Van Helsing from

Bram Stoker's novel, *Dracula* (1897). Van Helsing, a specialist in rare diseases, is called in by a former student, Dr. Seward, to investigate a mysterious illness afflicting Lucy Westerena. Already in the text, the frequency of inexplicable occurrences is steadily rising. When Van Helsing arrives, examines Lucy, and finds the two small puncture wounds in her throat, he cryptically alludes to a cause of her illness by advising Seward: "You keep watch all night…You must not sleep all the night…I shall be back soon as possible. And then we may begin." Seward asks the doctor to clarify his remarks, but Van Helsing simply replies, "We shall see!" Over the course of the novel, Van Helsing, referred to by Seward as "a seemingly arbitrary man"—an eccentric—gradually reveals his suspicions of vampirism, which ultimately prove correct. See Patrick Fuery, *Madness and Cinema* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 18, and Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2002), 129, 139-140.

8. In cultural paranoia, such processes begin with a persecutory psychosis arising in the general population which is then projected outward onto an imagined enemy; this enemy is usually regarded as existing either openly or undetected within the culture and as desiring to undermine the social structure it infiltrates. See Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (1964; New York: Vintage, 2008), 3-40 and 66-92.

9. The Hippocratic Oath is a "sacred text" of the medical profession outlining a set of ethical guidelines for healthcare providers. Of particular relevance here is the passage that states, "I will follow that system of regimen which, according to my ability and judgment, I consider for the benefit of my patients and abstain from whatever is harmful and mischievous." Loomis' single-minded insistence on Myers' death later in *Halloween* constitutes a violation of the Oath, or at least a questionable approach to its

reinterpretation. Hippocrates, "The Hippocratic Oath." Trans. Ludwig Edelstein. *The Hippocratic Oath*. California State University at Northridge. John Paul Adams. Web. csun.edu/~hcfll004/hippocr.html.

10. According to an article in an FBI training manual, "[f]requently, the murderer will take a 'souvenir,' normally an object or article of clothing belonging to the victim, but occasionally it may be a more personal reminder of the encounter…The souvenir is taken to enable the murderer to relive the scene in later fantasies. The killer here is acting out his fantasy, and *complete possession of the victim* is part of that fantasy." Emphasis is added to highlight the similarities between this study and Kleinian psychoanalysis regarding childhood object relations. See Ann W. Burgess, et al, "Sexual Homicide: A Motivational Model" in *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 1.3 (1986): 251-272, and in United States. Dept. of Justice. *Criminal Investigative Analysis: Sexual Homicide.* Federal Bureau of Investigation. Virginia: National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime. 1990. Federal Depository Library Program Archive. fdlp.gov.

11. Klein defines splitting as the process whereby the infant mentally separates the breast-figure into two distinct, opposing experiences, one "good," and the other "bad" in an effort to avoid coming to terms with the complexities attendant with the child's growing interaction with reality. While all children undergo splitting, the process can result in the development of neuroses and psychoses such as paranoia and schizophrenia. See Melanie Klein, *The Selected Melanie Klein*, ed. Juliet Mitchell (New York: The Free Press, 1986) 180-186.

12. While the scene of the mutilated dog appears insignificant within the film's greater narrative, in a historico-contextual sense, it is extremely important. In 1974, four

years before *Halloween's* release, the television show, *Lassie*, aired its final episode. Lassie, the story of a Collie and its relationships with humans, ran from 1954-1974, and articulated such American mythic themes as the bond between males and dogs, and the value of the family unit. Regarding the loyalty of dogs to their masters, it is significant that Lassie is female, thus adding a gendered dimension to the cultural work the show performs of reifying American heteronormative discourses. Another popular dog during this period is Benji, a tiny, shaggy, mixed-breed dog that starred in the successful film, *Benji* (1974). *Benji* participates in the same American mythic tradition as Lassie, while also emphasizing discourses of romanticized childhood innocence. The young audiences drawn to *Halloween* would have grown up during this period and been connected in these discursive chains. See "Lassie" (lassie.com) and "Benji" (imdb.com).

"I am Legion": Anonymity, Drifters, Homicides, and the Homeless Mentally Ill

1. The titles of many horror movies of the decades under discussion in this chapter used such denigrating terms, for example, *Schizo* (1976), *Maniac* (1980), and *Basket Case* (1982). *Internet Movie Database* (IDMB.com).

"The Most Dangerous Game": Mindhunters and Psychopaths in Thriller Film and Fiction

1. *The Silence of the Lambs* by Thomas Harris won in the Best Novel category for 1988 at the annual Stoker Awards, sponsored by the Horror Writers' Association and given for outstanding achievement in the horror genre. "Past Bram Stoker Nominees and Winners." Horror Writers' Association (HWA). Web. The novel also spent a total of eight weeks on the New York Times Best Seller List in 1988. Adult New York Times Bestseller List: October 30, 1988." Hawes Publications. Web. The film version of *Lambs*

won five Academy Awards in 1991: Best Picture, Best Actress, Best Actor, Best Screenplay, and Best Director. Barry Forshaw. *The Silence of the Lambs (Devil's Advocates)*(2013): 61-62.

2. Most serial killers in reality suffer from extreme forms of psychosis or sociopathy.

3. John Walsh's son, Adam, was abducted and murdered by a serial murderer in 1981; Walsh would eventually go on to host the reality-TV crime show, *America's Most Wanted* in 1988. In 2008, police determined that Adam's murderer was Ottis Toole, the accomplice of Henry Lee Lucas. See Yolanne Almanzar, "27 Years Later, Case is Closed in Slaying of Abducted Child." *New York Times*, 16 Dec. 2008, and Melody Chen, *John Walsh Interview*. 28 October 2008. *Archive of American Television.*

4. See previous discussions of Ed Gein, and Son of Sam for comparison.

5. The idea of the "monstrous birth" goes back much further than twentieth-century horror. Cultural beliefs regarding "non-human" or "quasi-human" infants during the early modern period in the West "were commonly seen as divine warnings against individual or communal sin and also as ordained calamities or punishments to come. David Castillo, *Baroque Horrors: Roots of the Fantastic in the Age of Curiosities*, "Introduction" (2010): 19.

6. The psychoanalyst and educator Susan Isaacs defines phantasy (or "unconscious phantasy") as "the primary content of all mental processes…the mental corollary, the psychic representative, of instinct." In other words, what is called "reality"—actions, feelings, thoughts, and so on—is all mediated through phantasy. This idea takes the traditional reality/fantasy dichotomy and places reality inside phantasy,

thus interweaving the two into one continuous experience. See Susan Isaacs, "The Nature and Function of Phantasy" *Developments in Psychoanalysis* (1952): 276-277 and Elizabeth Bott Spillius, et al, "Unconscious Phantasy" *The New Dictionary of Kleinian Thought* (2011): 5-8.

7. The NCIC is maintained by the FBI and began operation in 1967. Its stated purpose is to "help[sic] criminal justice professionals apprehend fugitives, locate missing persons, recover stolen property, and identify terrorists. It also assists law enforcement officers in performing their official duties more safely and provides them with information necessary to aid in protecting the general public." The NCIC seems to differ from VICAP in that VICAP specifically targets serial murderers. "National Crime Information Center." *Federal Bureau of Investigation.* Web.

8. For a more in-depth discussion of the role of statistical data in serial murder cases and in the Senate Hearings on Serial Murder, see Philip Jenkins, *Using Murder* (2009): 49-80.

Alternative Realities: Rhetorics of Repetition, True Crime Television, and Disability Rights

1. "Appendix B" to Wahl's *Media Madness* contains plot summaries of TV episodes from popular shows featuring mentally ill characters that are word for word from the "television guide section of the *Washington Post*" and gives an idea of descriptors circulating in popular culture at the time *Psycho II* was released. For example, "*Baretta*: Baretta learns a man he gave a second chance to has become a *psychopathic* criminal"; "*Doogie Howzer, M.D.:* On Christmas Eve, Doogie gets sidetracked by a *schizoid* patient…"; and in "*Kojak*: A *psychotic killer terrorizes* Manhattan with a series

of seemingly indiscriminate murders." Otto F. Wahl. "Appendix B." *Media Madness: Public Images of Mental Illness.* 180-188.

2. For a full discussion of the history of "corporate personhood" and a discussion of the significant rulings, see Carl J. Mayer, "Personalizing the Impersonal: Corporations and the Bill of Rights." *Hastings Law Journal* (1990): xx-xx.

3. For a detailed discussion of *Quincy*, *Postmortem*, and the former's influence on the forensic detective genre, see Jeffrey M. Jentzen. *Death Investigation in America* (2009): 183-186.

4. "Madame Sosotris, famous clairvoyante,/Had a bad cold, nevertheless/Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,/With a wicked pack of cards." These lines from Eliot's *The Waste Land* shows his disdain for clairvoyance, or fortune telling, which reflects back to Scarpetta and the other law enforcement officers for Fortosis, who expounds on the mind of serial murderers as if he can read them. T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (2001): 6.43-46.

5. Between 1980 and 1999, sixty-four major theatre productions about violent crime were staged at the major venues in New York and in London's West End, and these plays were the ones that achieved notoriety, not including revivals or run dates. Of course, to also include the uncountable number of plays possibly staged at independent and fringe theatres, while tempting, would put me in the position of adopting the same discourse of uncountable excess used by Rule, Douglas, and others during the senate hearings. Nevertheless, sixty-four plays in twenty years still speak to a public fascination with criminality. See Amnon Kabatchnik, *Blood on the Stage: 1975-2000* (2012): 552-583.

6. See chapter two for a fuller discussion of this topic.

Filmography

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Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer. Dir. John McNaughton. Wr. Richard Fire and John McNaughton. Perf. Michael Rooker, Tracy Arnold, Tom Towles. Maljack Productions, 1986. MPI Home Video, 1998. DVD.

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