ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

BECOMING ANIMAL/HUMAN: TRAUMA AND POSTHUMANISM IN SERIAL KILLER FICTION

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Acknowledgements

At times, writing this thesis has felt like the journey of a Greek epic:

We have a story, my story, that starts *en media res*, in the middle of things. I was at a turning point when I decided to undertake this journey, unaware of the time it would take or the extent of the twists and turns I would encounter. At times, I went from thinking this was my heroic drama to a satire or even tragedy. I would like to thank my supervisors, Mareike and Eugene, for their feedback, resources, and for sticking with me until the end. You were my wise guides, the seer that sometimes gave cryptic but insightful clues about my journey. In your words, I have written the length of three dissertations in attempting to finish one, so I believe this ticks the box of an epic.

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most hopeless or confused, you sat and let me talk, challenging my ideas and building my strength until something nonsensical made sense. The wordings of an epic are often lofty, grand, eloquent, ostentatious - thank you for grounding me and reminding me that ordinary words work just fine. Sometimes my obstacles felt immense, even unsurmountable. You've taught me that when I don't know what to say, I should at least say it in a funny voice. I took on a PhD wanting to open my possibilities, but you have opened up the world to more laughs, adventures, and possibilities than I ever could imagine. This particular journey is ending (finally…thank goodness), but our epic continues.

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ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
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This thesis investigates the literary characterisation of the serial killer as an antihero through a framework of posthumanity. This thesis undertakes a textual discourse analysis by exploring how three serial texts (*Hannibal*, *Dexter*, and *Huntress*) indicate that posthumanity is initiated and developed through dialogue and gesture. This thesis examines the spaces of 'becoming' Animal/Human and how this shift encompasses various cultural perceptions of 'Otherness'. By using a hybrid and non-linear approach to identity construction, this thesis provides cultural context for understanding complex terms such as trauma, hunting or predation, and change or 'becoming'.

Drawing on the work of Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari, characterisation can be understood through structures of non-linearity and rhizomic conceptualisation. As such, the character is in a transitionary state of hybridity, changed as a result of trauma, but continuing to 'become' Animal/Human through embracing gestures of their new duality. Considering how fiction creates a literary understanding for thinking more deeply about trauma, identity, and ethics, this thesis creates a new perspective on conceptualising deviance. Ultimately through this representation, this thesis analyses how complex language and symbols are used to expose opposition and cohesion and close readings reveal that these serial killers exist in a state of hybridity which can be analysed through Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the grotesque and through a cultural perspective of post- theories. The serial killer in fiction is non-linearly positioned between life and death, between good and evil, between animal and human, and between fantasy and reality. Ultimately, the ambiguous complexity of the serial killer as an Animal/Human hybrid allows for a reading of the figure as grotesque and culturally fascinating.

Key Words: serial killer fiction, trauma, posthumanism, characterisation, non-linear binary, predator, grotesque

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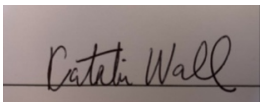
Signed:  Date: 13 May 2022

Introduction

This thesis centres around the genre of serial killer fiction and how the killer creates the construct of an Animal/Human hybrid to ambiguate their violence. In this thesis, I evidence how characters self-fashion a hybrid identity and how this gives a new perspective for understanding the relationship between trauma and deviance in fiction.[1] This is evidenced through my analysis of three main serialised texts, *Hannibal* by Thomas Harris, *Dexter* by Jeff Lindsay, and *Huntress Moon* by Alexandra Sokoloff where the authors use language, symbols, and references to the main character's backstory and past trauma to depict an identity transition to the audience. The terms 'text' or 'narrative' reference the transmedia storyline of these franchises where literature and media (television or film) adaptations are understood as a coherent portrayal of these characters and where either presentation of the serial killer (dialogue or visual) relevantly demonstrates my claims of posthuman positioning.[2]

The serial killer has become a figure of cultural fascination, evidenced by the plethora of representations that have gained cult followings across literature and media-based platforms. My interest in this field came out of reading texts and viewing media where cultural discourse has often sought to rationalise criminality through the character's self-narrative by defending it as a result of psychological damage from childhood trauma. For law enforcement or private-eye detectives, these portrayals seemed to be used to justify their motivation for their career or to evidence a military background where continued participation with violence 'triggers' their PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder).[3] I found that serial killer fiction used trauma equally as a

[1] I broadly explore how posthuman theories of identity can be applied to these characters in Chapter 1, but my exploration of posthuman positioning focuses particularly on how animal 'enhancement' and 'Otherness' is used by the characters to glorify their deviance.
[2] For example, *Hannibal* until further differentiated is a reference to the films, television, or novel series portraying the main character, Hannibal Lecter. The transmedia representations all represent one coherent figure and therefore can be referenced through cultural recognition as an amalgamation of what we perceive as the figure 'Hannibal Lecter'.
[3] As evidenced in the character of Philip Marlowe written by Raymond Chandler or Cormoran Strike written by Robert Galbraith (a pseudonym of JK Rowling).

motivation, but to different results in characterisation. Where law enforcement could be seen as a legitimised outlet for violence, the serial killer shows deviance through a narrative of detachment where they are unable (or unwilling) to harness these drives in socially acceptable forms. The texts often link this to the character's lack of emotional affect or ability to attach, showing high levels of interpersonal violence without 'conscience' as a complex antihero.

My method for studying the serial killer is a process of critical discourse analysis (CDA), meaning a critical reading approach to understanding language as a response to social practice, guided by Norman Fairclough's approach of textually-oriented discourse analysis (TODA).[4] Fairclough explains textual analysis as a revelation between text and reality:

> Discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning. […] The identity function relates to the ways in which social identities are set up in discourse, the relational function to how social relationships between discourse participants are enacted and negotiated, the ideational function to ways in which texts signify the world and its processes, entities and relations. (1992, p.64)

Reflecting on Fairclough's process of 'representing' and 'signifying', I utilise critical textual analysis through: description (how the character is portrayed), interpretation (providing a new perspective on how the killer portrays hybridity and deviance), and explanation (examining how posthuman positioning is important to the reader's response of the serial killer). These characters argue that they undergo a process of change after trauma (a fictional representation of PTSD) that I refer to as 'becoming'. The characters relate this change as becoming 'not fully human', or a hybrid of animal and human identity. Following on from this, I construct a specific understanding of hybridity through analysing text as a reflection of the character's 'world in meaning'. This approach gives credibility to the character's assertions that they are Animal/Human and that their killing is neutralised. This approach defines how posthumanity is 'positioned'; this phrase is my

[4] This concept can be visualised in Figure 1 as Fairclough's interaction of text and culture (Appendix, p.226).

own way to categorise some of the more nebulous interconnections in posthuman theory that ambiguate the position of the human with respect to the animal.

I consider how the term ‘deviance’ is used to highlight cultural irregularities from social norms, which is the starting point for defining what is meant by ‘Otherness’. Through fascination with these figures, the serial killer becomes an in-between space for dismissing and legitimising violence. The characters that I discuss are not necessarily ‘representative’ (meaning copied or accurate) but ‘signified’ (meaning similar) to real serial killers. This approach understands fictional texts and the power they evidence as common-knowledge assumptions or social truths, without necessarily aligning with portrayals of quantifiable ‘truth’ (Fairclough, 1992, p.38). For this reason, a critical discourse analysis is particularly helpful as it explores the role of language in expressing these social concepts of power:

> CDA is a broad framework that brings critical social theories into dialogue with theories of language to answer particular research questions. As such, critical discourse analysts are generally concerned with a critical theory of the social world, the relationship of discourse in the construction and representation of this social world, and a methodology that allows them to describe, interpret, and explain such relationships. (Rogers, 2011, p.3)

While traditional trauma theories have been centred around psychoanalytical approaches, I am much more focussed on how cultural trends have become influential in filling the gap in current knowledge of the serial killer as a portrayal of neutralised deviance. To explore how ideological power is evidenced in these texts, I engage the Animal/Human as a form of fractured identity and how the serial killer is evidenced as almost-belonging.

This thesis introduces several levels of analysis in framing the serial killer as a non-linear representation that maintains opposition (Animal opposite to Human) while challenging a structured approach to binary classification (total opposition). I first consider how the image of the serial killer is created through a process of ‘becoming’. To do this, I build on Mikhail Bakhtin’s theories of carnival ‘Otherness’ and the grotesque which is a concept of the body which glorifies

disgust or the subversive.[5] I then shift my attention to how the Animal/Human argues for identity as the source of criminality and deviance, neutralising serial killing through the portrayal of an antihero. I examine how fictional narratives of serial killing embrace deviant 'Otherness' through analogies of consumption and predation as a performative display of the grotesque body. Finally, I substantiate Rebecca Rogers' claims above on the purpose of CDA that fascination with grotesque figures allows us to reflect and explain more deeply the interaction between literature and the consumer's fascination with complex figures.

My claims about the killer's representation in texts reveal several potentially problematic discussions. For example, the line between fiction and reality can become convoluted because these representations often reflect real figures. Throughout, I highlight how text draws from reality in creating fictional representations. Interdisciplinary research has often received criticism for its divisions rather than coherence, an idea that Henry Jenkins challenges through his conception of 'convergence culture':

> Each of us constructs our own personal mythology from bits and fragments of information extracted from the media flow and transformed into resources through which we make sense of our everyday lives. […] Consumption has become a collective process […] None of us can know everything; each of us knows something; and we can put the pieces together if we pool our resources and combine our skills. (2006, p.3-4)

I affirm Jenkins' process to be reflective of the texts I analyse, being conceptualised across literature and media and being a 'collective' understanding of the serial killer. My challenge is to accept the character's self-evaluation (that they are unique) as true while also stepping outside of these texts to 'make sense' of contradictions (or perceived ones) within the texts. Hannibal Lecter for instance claims his inability to be 'quantified' and *Dexter* asserts to the audience that he is 'something new entirely' (*Silence of the Lambs*, 1989, p.27; Showtime, 1.2). These characters are *not* singular however and texts like Philip Simpson's *Psycho paths* have attempted

[5] I overview Bakhtin's theories of the grotesque body and carnival inversion in Chapter 1 while subsequent chapters builds on this to evidence how the Animal/Human uses this position to argue for non-linear 'becoming' and inversion of the Animal/Human as a justified antihero.

to show how serial killers are a mass-market reflection on real-world serial killing, acting as 'a broad metaphor for a plethora of concerns facing contemporary American society (2000, p.ix)'. While Simpson does not denote his bounds to the term 'contemporary', I analyse texts ranging from the 1980s through the present day and use the term to reference this particular period. Like Simpson, I explore the 'metaphors' or analogies of how literature can be representative of culture though he takes a broader approach to genre rather than focussing on direct links between gesture and characterisation as I do in this thesis. I would also generalise his assertions of 'American society' to be reflective of 'Western society' because of shared culture and research concerning trauma studies, serial killer research, and literary analysis which I explore further in Chapter 1. A transitioning identity becomes a way to theorise how these characters can be perceived as 'new' or 'different' but also 'understandable', allowing me to 'quantify' the characters. In his own attempt to quantify the character of Lecter, J.C. Oleson questions if the popularity is dependent on the in-between space these characters occupy 'encompassing contradictions, defying convenient categorization [sic] (2005, p.186)'. Through contradictions like the one I present above, these texts become resistant to a reading through a singular theory. Bakhtin's carnivalesque however most closely helps to describe the role that contradiction plays in non-linear representations such as this. I contend that bringing together various interdisciplinary perspectives most clearly reflects the role of culture in creating these narratives.

While there are various researchers who have previously explored deviance in serial killer texts, they focus more on the production of crime fiction rather than what these texts reveal about characterisation through gesture. The other predominant approach is to emphasise real killers in relation to cultural fascination generally. In her text *Deviance in Contemporary Crime Fiction*, Christiana Gregoriou takes up a dominant approach of analysing genre but does note that applying CDA to the crime fiction genre was under-researched and could still provide a depth of future studies on linguistic, generic, and social aspects of deviance (2007, p.2; p.159). Particularly, I have expanded on discourses that she disregarded such as the impact of identity

on gesture (2012, p.277). I fill this gap in Chapter 4 through directly exploring the connection of a transitioning identity and these texts' use of eating. Despite many key similarities to her investigation, such as the cultural impact of anxiety on our perceptions of deviance and a brief overview of Bakhtin's carnival in relation to the crime genre broadly, Gregoriou predominantly analyses these aspects in relation to detectives (2007). In her later text, *Language, Ideology and Identity in Serial Killer Narratives* she turns her attention to the serial killer construct but focusses on developing a schematic system to 'ranking' our social perceptions of victims and thereby, as a result, their killers (2011, p.97). While she does show how language develops this perception, critically using *Dexter*, Gregoriou focuses more on analysing the series' system of ethics where I take this as a given assumption developed by these published texts. Her research also leads her to make claims on what language evidences about the 'human condition' whereas I use these to discuss how this reveals something 'not fully human' (2011, p.109). In a linguistic study of audience online engagement, she notes how one online poster uses the term 'herds' to reference general society and the depersonalisation this implies (2012, p.276). Her assertions remain passing and do not further explore the connections to animal positioning and what this says about our anthropocentric mindset of the majority which I explore. I also disagree with some of Gregoriou's assertions around figures like Lecter being 'born' into deviance whereas my understanding through Bakhtin's grotesque and Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome analyses this 'birth' as a middle plateau or transition between two states that is ongoing but triggered by trauma rather than an inevitability from natural 'birth' (2020, p.388). Similarly, Mark Seltzer has used serial killer characterisation to also discuss identity as unstable and culturally influenced. His forays piqued some of my interests such as his anthropocentric claims of the serial killer as a 'species of a person' but his claims do not elaborate as deeply as this thesis around the in-between or transitionary 'species' of Animal/Humanism that I recognise (1998, p.2). While Seltzer lays the foundations for my claims around how fascination plays out in public and private spaces, Seltzer does not discuss the additional complexity triggered by the character's own internal battle of

identity states and being trapped between an Animal/Human that is both divided and coherent at differing times (2007).

Subject Matter: The Narratives

This thesis references three serialised texts that consider ways serial killer fiction can be evaluated through posthumanism. *Dexter* is a series of eight novels (2004-2015) and eight television seasons (Showtime, 2006-2013) based on the title character Dexter Morgan, a serial killer 'vigilante' and blood splatter analyst for the Miami-Dade police department.[6] *Hannibal* is a franchise composed of four novels (1981-2006), a series of films adaptations of these texts (1991-2007), and a television series prequel (2013-2015) known throughout popular culture for the title character of Hannibal Lecter, a renowned psychiatrist and cannibal.[7] I discuss both *Dexter* and *Hannibal* as interdisciplinary franchises. While the media and literature adaptations are separate, both have commonalities in the language and images that signal Animal/Humanity and therefore dialogue from both are relevant to my claims. To build the framework for how I read posthumanism, I generally preference the literature texts, as these preceded the media portrayals. I use images from the visual mediums most heavily in Chapter 4 to evidence how a posthuman framework is further reinforced to the audience through physical gesture. While these two series are well-known for their literary and media franchises, the third series, *Huntress* by Alexandra Sokoloff, is just beginning to make inroads into media adaptations.[8] Despite its interdisciplinary

[6] The eight novels are: *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* (2004), *Dearly Devoted Dexter* (2005), *Dexter in the Dark* (2007), *Dexter by Design* (2009), *Dexter is Delicious* (2010), *Double Dexter* (2011), *Dexter's Final Cut* (2013), and *Dexter is Dead* (2015). In this thesis, the books are denoted in-text respectively as: *Dreaming, Devoted, Dark, Design, Delicious, Double, Final Cut,* and *Dead.* For this thesis, I do not make any claims about the TV mini-series *Dexter: New Blood* (Showtime, 2021-22).

[7] The four core novels are: *Red Dragon* (1981), *Silence of the Lambs* (1988) which are denoted in-text as *Silence*, *Hannibal* (1999), and *Hannibal Rising* (2006). The media franchise surrounding the character of Hannibal Lecter has been portrayed most notably through the film adaptations starring Sir Anthony Hopkins (1991-2002) and Gaspard Ulliel (2007) but also includes the more recent television series, *Hannibal* (NBC, 2013-2015), starring Mads Mikkelsen as the title character. The film, *Manhunter* (1986), will not be referenced but, instead, I use *Red Dragon* (2002) because of the consistency of Anthony Hopkins' portrayal as Lecter throughout his other film appearances in the series.

[8] As of January 2020, it was announced on the author's official website that the series are developed into a television adaptation, though dates or network are yet to be confirmed (Alexandra Sokoloff, 2020).

limitation, I have included the *Huntress* series as a purposeful counterpoint to the previous series' acclaim. I also chose this series to provide important insight into this reading of posthumanity through discourses such as the role of gender.[9] *Huntress* is a series of six books (2014-2019) portraying the character of Cara Lindstrom as a transient serial killer.[10] The narratives chosen for this thesis are all serialised which allows me to analyse how posthuman language and character arcs are developed throughout a series and reflect on the process of 'becoming' posthuman.

Dexter

Dexter's serial killing is explained as a result of his mother's slaughter in front of him as a child. The series was first picked up by the US television network Showtime (2006-2013) starring Michael C. Hall as Dexter. The first season of the television adaptation was based loosely around the first novel, *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* (2004), but the other seasons' plotlines were developed independently of the novels while retaining Animal/Human characterisation. The novels and television adaptation of *Dexter* gained acclaim, being listed (for multiple novels) on *the New York Times* Best Seller list and nominated (and winner) for multiple Golden Globes, Primetime Emmy, and Screen Actors Guild Awards (Penguin Random House, 2020; IMDb, n.d.). The novel series is written from a first-person perspective and places Dexter, as an antihero who only kills according to the Code of Harry, a system of killing developed by Dexter's foster father (Harry Morgan) which 'allows' Dexter to kill when he has proof of his victim's culpability as a criminal, traditionally murderers and paedophiles. Dexter's proof comes in the form of surveillance and through using police databases or DNA testing available to him through his position with the police. Dexter often gives insights to his colleagues on official cases, similar to psychological profiling, which allows the police to focus their investigation. There are other times when Dexter

[9] This series is noted as 'popular' due to its style of writing and dissemination. The first novel was originally published as an ebook in 2012 for which it was nominated for a Thriller Award by the International Thriller Writers network and would be published in 2014 as a paperback text.
[10] The novels in this series are: *Huntress Moon* (2014), *Blood Moon* (2015), *Cold Moon* (2015), *Bitter Moon* (2016), *Hunger Moon* (2017), and *Shadow Moon* (2019). In this thesis, the books are denoted in-text respectively as: *Huntress*, *Blood, Cold, Bitter, Hunger*, and *Shadow.*

impedes investigations or withholds evidence to use for his benefit as a serial killer.[11] Dexter uses both his vigilantism and his posthumanity to justify serial killing and indicates that these are motivationally linked. The character of Dexter helps me to explain the Animal/Human as a grotesque non-linear identity portrayal. Dexter claims to be a hybrid of his ego which presents as human and retains characteristic 'humanity' and an 'Other' that he refers to as the 'Dark Passenger' which embraces animalistic traits.

Hannibal

Hannibal Lecter is a sophisticate and connoisseur of 'taste', a pun that points towards his intellectual sensibilities as well as his cannibalism. The novel series is written in third-person perspective, generally focussed on applying the information Lecter provides in consultation to an open FBI case (in *Red Dragon* alongside Agent Will Graham and *Silence of the Lambs* alongside Agent Clarice Starling). The *Hannibal* franchise helps me address the complexity of serial representations and the influence of culture in reading these characters because Lecter's sensationalised image develops in relation to the popularity of the series over 25 years. In the novel, *Red Dragon* (1981), Lecter begins as a psychiatrist and consultant to law enforcement whose cannibalistic past is only briefly mentioned. *Red Dragon* functions more like a detective novel, focussed on FBI agent Will Graham, than as a serial killer text (as the rest of the *Hannibal* series is positioned). In *Silence of the Lambs* (1988) and *Hannibal* (1999), Lecter is upgraded from side character to the compelling protagonist, equally emphasised alongside Clarice Starling (the new law enforcement figure). Throughout these narratives, Lecter's past crimes and killer compulsions are suggested, though his past trauma remains largely veiled in allusions. I use these texts to also explore how animality is 'contained' through the character's incarceration and through the serial killer's need to remain socially inconspicuous. The last-published prequel,

[11] For example, but not exclusively, in 'There's Something About Harry' (Showtime, 2.10) when Dexter provides falsified information to misdirect police attention from his own crimes while framing Sargent Doakes. In 'If I Had a Hammer' (Showtime, 4.6), he uses information obtained through his day job to seek out the Trinity Killer and stay ahead of the official investigation.

Hannibal Rising (2006), culminates in graphic narratives of cannibalism with Lecter as the sole protagonist, no longer sharing the narrative with a law-enforcement counterpart. In former novels, the characters of Graham and Starling legitimise the character's authority but *Hannibal Rising* embraces the serial killer as the primary focus. *Rising* also addresses details of the character's childhood trauma which has been alluded to throughout previous texts and catalogues how the character begins his killing and cannibalism as a young teenager. Lecter's deviance is explained to be the result of his parents' deaths from an airstrike during WWII. This is closely followed by his sister, Mischa, being killed and eaten by a group of looters, despite his attempts to protect her. Lecter also unknowingly participates in this cannibalism which leads to a gruesome spiral in the character's actions. Only minor attention is given to his parents' deaths, reinforcing Mischa's loss as the key trauma. Both the novel and film adaptations follow the same canon of narratives and both evidence the progression of portrayals which builds the image of this representation through increasingly violent text and images. Chronologically situated between the fictional timelines of *Hannibal Rising* and *Red Dragon* (before the character's initial crimes were discovered and prosecuted), Lecter worked with FBI agent Will Graham as a forensic psychologist. The NBC television adaptation addresses this time period where the character development of Graham and Lecter are generally based on Harris's novels but with a series of storylines elaborating on the canon of the original novel series. The media franchise has contributed to more graphic portrayals of Lecter, though represented images and character motivations remain generally true to the source novels in representing the Animal/Human.

Huntress

The *Huntress* series is written in third-person perspective, switching between the focus on Cara Lindstrom and the antagonist law enforcement character, Matthew Roarke. Because of the connections often made between Dexter and Hannibal as recognisable and influential portrayals of the serial killer antihero, the figure of Cara Lindstrom provides several useful areas for

comparison, as well as contrast, in how the Animal/Human can be read.[12] For example, while Dexter Morgan and Hannibal Lecter note that they have one formative, life-changing trauma, Cara is a character who experiences repeated, intense traumas, beginning with the murder of her immediate family.[13] This experience when she was five years old leaves her 'marked' with a slashed throat, a distinctive visual identifier of the character. This gestural scar is often used to trigger Animal/Human language in connection to violence. After the death of her family, Cara's maternal aunt decides she is too 'damaged' and places the character into the foster care system where she experiences a sexual attack from one of the counsellors. Repeated trauma is important to the discourse on socialised deviance as complex. I explore this complexity through the seeming opposition between posthumanity as a completed state (that the killer is completely posthuman as a result of trauma) and a transitionary identity (the characters become increasingly more nuanced in how they manifest and harness their animality). Discourses of sexual trauma and abuse are highlighted as the impetus for a social movement of vigilante killing by a collective called 'Bitch' (this vigilantism can be contrasted to *Dexter* as he is more personally driven by ethics than as a political statement) which I also use to reflect on the symbiotic relationship between culture and fiction.

The *Huntress* explores topics such as sexual assault and rape, sex work, and trafficking to provide insight into the serial killer considering a feminist-driven trauma narrative. While Animal/Humanity is portrayed as non-linear, the discourse around gender provides interesting insight into the cultural positioning of posthumanity, which often still reads gender in a structured

[12] One such text that compares the 'myth' status of Dexter and Hannibal is an article by Jason Bainbridge, *Seduction of the Serial Killer* (2015).

[13] There can be a perceived contradiction between Hannibal's assertion of whether he has experienced multiple stressors or one single trauma. The character notes that the death of Mischa is perceived by the character as the most important, single, trauma which he recreates through his cannibalism and through retribution of his sister's killers as his first victims. From the perspective of an outsider, however, the death of his parents, separated by a small span of time (presumably days or weeks by the texts indicating that the children lived alone on the remaining food rations in their secluded cabin until the looters came and subsequently ate Mischa for sustenance) would point more clearly to repeated stressors, if not separate 'traumas'. For this reason, I will continue to refer to Lecter's trauma as multi-faceted throughout this thesis.

way. This is important for defining the limitations of reading the Animal/Human as a reflection on 'Otherness'.

Chapter Overview

Throughout this thesis, I am guided by several questions to provide a new reading of the serial killer as posthuman. Chapter 1 functions as a literature review for answering the research questions: How can the reader recognise posthumanity? When and how does a character become posthuman? To answer the question of recognition, I explore where my concept of Animal/Humanity fits into previous posthuman theorisation. I define that the term 'becoming' provides an understanding of how trauma is characterised to influence deviance. It is this chapter that will expand on my brief definition earlier of posthuman theory and how this representation uses hybrid positioning. To reference the key contexts of my research, I use Chapter 1 to situate where my claims lay within an interdisciplinary study. These characters claim to fill an in-between space which itself lends to this approach which straddles literary, media, and cultural theories. It is also important to contextually define the underlying connection between deviance and neutralisation and how this contributes to an understanding of that in-between state. Moving from the assumptions that identity and behaviour can be linked, I discuss how symbolic language and narrative structure craft an understanding of deviance. I finish this chapter by exploring the limitations of some previous research on *Dexter* and *Hannibal* which explains how my research adds to current knowledge of serial killer fiction.

Chapter 2 of this thesis discusses how the process of 'becoming' functions in the broader discourse of 'Othering'. This chapter focuses on the research questions: What does 'becoming animal' mean in these texts? How do cultural stigmas towards 'Otherness' define posthumanity? Why is it important that we read serial killers as posthuman to understand deviance? To answer the question of 'becoming animal', I explore how the concept of hybrid or non-linear identity situates the character in a position of 'almost belongingness'. I examine how characters are

‘Othered’ in ways beyond being portrayed as Animal/Human, to reinforce how serial killer fiction provides an entry point into broader cultural discourses. These texts reclaim power over characterisation by redefining victimisation as a necessary step to transformative power. The power of these texts to answer problematic discourses is explored through the way culture responds to the ideas of guilt or culpability through redirection and justifications. Culturally, there have been many concepts of what ‘becoming’ and transformation look like, the Animal/Human is serial killer fiction’s response. This in-between space of grotesque ‘becoming’ creates the unstable ground needed to help dismiss violence as justified.

Chapter 3 explores the construct of Animal/Humanism in depth by analysing how ‘human’ and ‘animal’ are combined performatively to understand a non-linear portrayal. This chapter addresses the research questions: How does the character respond to cultural anthropocentricity? How is ‘hunting’ used as a textual ‘language’ for exploring posthumanity through gestures? How does animality justify killing as a ‘natural’ extension of ‘becoming’? I evidence how the characters explore our fascination with the grotesque through language and gestures of hybridity. These characters acknowledge culturally anthropocentric discourses while reordering or redefining how a non-linear posthuman fits (or does not) into these spaces. I explore how the language of these texts use ‘hunting’ to redraw the lines between animal and human through gestures of violence. This discourse is furthered by symbols, ‘predator’ and ‘prey’, that is a stable feature of the serial killer genre by positioning us on the side of predators. These terms are also used to evidence the cyclical and ongoing nature of ‘becoming’ and how characters can reclaim their characterisation from prey *to* predator. These texts use examples of ‘senses’ (smell, vision) to explore how Animal/Humans are hyper-predators, making killing a natural response manifesting from their ‘Otherness’.

Chapter 4 of this thesis concentrates on applying my framework of the Animal/Human to gestures of eating or consumption that evidence the character’s complete ‘Otherness’. This chapter answers the research questions: How is behavioural deviance a core assumption of

Animal/Human hybridity? How is the audience performatively involved in consumption and how do we justify our fascination with violence as a cultural 'monster'? How do these texts reinforce a literary understanding of deviance and disorder through gestures of eating? To define how killing is inherent, these texts parallel violence to a basic human 'need' for physical sustenance. While I continue to conduct a textual analysis, this chapter also explores the benefits of interdisciplinary characterisation through media imagery and how this reinforces gestures of 'Otherness' in a visual format. I explore how eating is a 'public' gesture that evidences the same grotesque nature of killing in the 'private' space. This draws a line from what the audience knows about the character and their 'Otherness' but is withheld from other characters in the 'world' of fiction. Our cultural fascination, as evidenced by consumerism, becomes a cultural form of deviant consumption where the 'needs' of the serial killer are justified to us through our own violent desires. This thesis aims to offer insight into the complex terminology used to explore posthuman positioning and evidence how this influences our cultural reception of the serial killer. I use quotation marks to indicate complex terms that require further investigation to fully understand how multiple meanings tell us more about this characterisation of the serial killer. I argue that by using the non-linear space of Animal/Human, these characters create the reasonable assumption that their 'not fully human' categorisation requires them to redefine their actions as justified in a carnival atmosphere. Through the process of 'becoming', the characters 'Other' themselves with a variety of cultural discourses, specifically how animality justifies violence.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

This chapter expands on brief explanations given in the introduction to understand how trauma is accepted as a justifying experience of the serial killer. The literary representations I have chosen portray childhood trauma through the perspectives of victims of violent crime (where one or more family members are murdered in the presence of the character). Narrative explicitly, either by character or author, cites this trauma as a cause of their actions.[14] These texts become involved in a process defined as a regime of truth which is a social construction of 'truth' that is recognised, even if something is not objectively truthful or provable. I demonstrate how the three serial texts I analyse, to varying degrees, self-fashion a hybrid identity to ambiguate actions of violence. The cultural space that explains a social fascination with deviance is guided by the theories of Bakhtin. I begin my review of existing literature by discussing his theories in line with other current scholarship on the influence of serial killers as a defined 'Other'.

In this thesis, I evidence how the serial killer resists attempts at categorisation. Two key quotes are referenced throughout to justify that this figure, despite their resistance, can be characterised but must be understood differently: 'A census taker tried to quantify me once. I ate his liver with some fava beans and a big Amarone (*Silence*, p.27)'.[15]; 'I'm something new entirely, with my own set of rules; I'm Dexter (Showtime, 1.2)'. The first quote comes from Hannibal Lecter where he defines to Clarice Starling his dislike and opposition to being 'quantified'. Lecter sets a precedent that he confronts attempts at outside categorisation through violence and consumption to reclaim power from the census taker (a figure legitimised by society to categorise and quantify

[14] Other serial killer fiction, such as *American Psycho* can be excluded for this reason as trauma is not indicated to be responsible for the character's mindset Hence, the image I discuss is prevalent across the serial killer genre but is not relevant to all narratives in this grouping.
[15] In the film adaptation, the quote retains the same intent using slightly different language: 'A census taker once tried to test me. I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice Chianti. (Silence of the Lambs, 1991)'

individuals). These same actions of violence and consumption are traced as indicators for how I begin recategorising the serial killer as Animal/Human. The second quote from Dexter evidences my rationale for why these characters should be studied, I explain the 'set of rules' that dictate how we can understand this figure as 'something new'. I refer to the usefulness of Bakhtin's carnival space, however, noting that while these figures are resistant to categorisation in line with norms, the figures aren't completely unique as they all fit themselves into this new box, the Animal/Human.[16]

I then address how an interdisciplinary study is best suited to respond to the traditional characterisation of the serial killer and how my approach helps to understand the figure indicatively rather than prescriptively. I overview how narrative structure builds this characterisation through a non-binaristic approach guided by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's rhizome structure and challenging structural concepts of binary such as Jacques Derrida's question of the animal. The main source of defined identity comes from the characters identifying themselves as Animal/Human and therefore this representation throughout this thesis is analysed across a spectrum of how posthuman transitioning manifests and can be understood.

Following my construction of the figure and narrative structure, I address how current trauma theory is influential to understanding deviance. The texts I have chosen to analyse come from a shared cultural space, serial killer fiction published after 1980. This was done for a variety of reasons such as reading the Animal/Human reflective of post- constructions in society, but also to align with current understandings of trauma and coincide with the rise of the phenomenon of the serial killer as a popular contemporary figure (Friedman et.al., 2007, p.3). There is a need for definitions of the word 'trauma' as there is a range of ways this term has been used, showing disparity between contexts of psychological research and literary texts or criticism. Though the term 'trauma' remains complex, before the 1980s, use of the term was different to current

[16] By 'all', I am referencing the three characters I analyse: Dexter, Hannibal and Cara.

understandings.[17] This context has helped to guide the fictional texts I have chosen to be representative of the cultural complexity associated with this term. In the path to understanding trauma, mass cultural traumas studies have led the way historically with conflicts, such as war, remaining the most heavily prolific focus of trauma theories and analysis (Rothberg, 2013). These wider, non-personalised traumas can be classified by their group or social connections which systematically changes the way that group creates or responds to memories or identity as a result. Examples of this may be various global responses to the traumas of the Holocaust which changed sentiments towards people groups and cultural norms or cultural responses to natural disasters which fundamentally change how a society functions. My research is more concerned with individual representations of trauma (or collective representation of a narrow group, the serial killer) to evidence how interpersonal violence is connected to future identity formation in victims (survivors). I argue that the effect of psychological suffering initiates a discourse on the reclamation of power from victimisation. It is important to understanding their process of 'justification' that these characters place blame on another individual to 'initiate' their violence rather than as a response to wider systemic or natural traumas which may be a more undefined outlet. My approach situates the figure of the serial killer as a way of defining 'Otherness', justifying violence through a traumatic past. Also, looking within this timeline leads me to explore how the current discourse on animal studies and posthumanism is reflective of the serial killer as Animal/Human. I identify where my concept fits within posthuman theory to create a unique understanding (Animal/Human) in contrast to the popular structural binary that juxtaposes animal

[17] Keller (1995) details the studies into 'railway spine' and shock as an early study of trauma in the 1860s. The American Civil war used the term 'soldier's heart'. 'Shell-shock' and 'combat fatigue' terminology were indicative of traumatic definition during the World Wars and 'delayed stress' was used later after the Vietnam War (Pitman et.al, 2012). Antze and Lambeck (1996) study Holocaust trauma and memory which is a popular lens for connecting discourses of trauma and psychoanalysis. Alexander takes a sociological perspective on how the Holocaust reflects society's perception of evil (Richter, 2018). Radstone (2007) takes a political and feminist look at trauma memory. Maceachron and Gustavsson (2012) have looked at the influences of self-talk amongst veterans for their treatment of trauma. Also, medical studies have been done by Adler (1995), Casement (1982), Deutsch (1947), Dowling (1982), Engel et.al. (1979), Isakowker (1938), Leuzinger- Bohleber (2008), Myers (1915), Niederland (1965), and Segal (1972).

and human. Finally, I finish my literature review by pointing towards the previous critical texts which have analysed the *Dexter* and *Hannibal* franchises and show where my analysis fits into the current research.

1.2 Disgustingly Fascinating

Serial killer fiction addresses part of a larger cultural fascination with what is identified in this thesis as 'deviance'. Brian Jarvis identifies the prolific nature of this fascination by noting that between 1990 and 2007, the IMDb lists over 1000 released films classified as serial killer narratives, evidencing a cultural space for these texts (2007, p.326). Tina Kendall notes a long philosophical history of research into 'disgust' as an aspect of deviance with thinkers such as Sigmund Freud and Julia Kristeva theorising about inner desires and manifesting the subconscious (2011, p.1). The study of disgust considers the process of normativity between the 'visceral' (instinctual) and the learned:

> What unites much of this interdisciplinary work on disgust is a shared concern with thinking through the relations between bodily sensation, emotion, and cognition (especially as these are mediated by films and other cultural forms), and with probing the political, moral, and ethical implications that arise from those particular conditions of embodiment. In this context, disgust is a uniquely privileged concept, which allows us to telescope questions of corporeality and cognition, and affect and emotion, with those of socio- morality, ethics, and politics. (Kendall, 2011, p.2)

Serial killer fiction is a 'mediated' concept of deviance and reflects broader understandings of 'socio- morality, ethics, and politics' through the process of justifying violence reflected in the social reception of the serial killer.

Academic research on the topic of disgust must mention the influence of texts such as William Miller's *The Anatomy of Disgust* (1997) and Winfried Menninghaus's *Disgust: Theory and History of a Strong Sensation* (2003). Miller analyses disgust as a discussion on physiological processes and begins with the inherent connection between disgust and eating. This connection is also evidenced in my discussions of Bakhtin's grotesque body in this chapter and will heavily contribute to my claims in Chapter 4. Miller also notes that aversion is a behaviour that is reflective

of social and personal attitudes. In Chapter 2, I discuss how the process of 'becoming' is evidenced through deviant attachments that comment on social attitudes of normativity and deviance of the serial killer. The process of aversion and connection is explored through the figure of the serial killer as well as our cultural fondness for this fictional figure which we would otherwise be averted to. Likewise, Menninghaus argues for the 'complexity' of understanding reactions when we attempt to untangle the concept of disgust. Menninghaus takes a pessimistic view of the audience's inability to avoid impulses of fascination toward what we otherwise avoid in real life (pain or death):

> […] the defense [sic] mechanism of disgust consists in a spontaneous and especially energetic act of saying 'no' (Nietzsche). Yet disgust implies, not just an ability to say no, but even more a compulsion to say no, an inability not to say no. As this quasi-automatic ('instinctive') form of nay-saying, disgust stands on the boundary between conscious patterns of conduct and unconscious impulses. On the one hand, it comes to our attention in a particularly striking way and, accordingly, in no way escapes conscious perception. On the other hand, it attacks, it overcomes us, unannounced and uncontrollable, taking sudden possession of us. Viewed from this perspective, it does not stand under the sway of consciousness, but rather makes itself felt within consciousness as a voice arriving from somewhere else. (2003, p.2)

What Menninghaus defines as the simultaneous act of desiring to say 'no' and being unable to say 'no' can be likened to Freud's theory of Death Drive as an exploration of self-destruction. While I will not make assumptions that the audience 'cannot' say no, I can state that the popularity of serial killer fiction (and texts about the broader fascination with disgust) prove that we *do not* say no to these impulses. In Chapter 2, I discuss how, in the process of 'becoming', characters simultaneously revolt against the victimisation they experienced as children to embrace violence and a new 'power'.

While Miller's text focuses more on the cultural implications of disgust, Menninghaus includes analysis of literature and aesthetics. More recently, researchers such as Tina Kendall or Tanya Horeck explore these concepts further in media, evidencing the interdisciplinary implications of our fascination with the subversive. Horeck analyses the 'spectacle' or 'fantasy' of rape in literature and film similarly to my approach, where she explores the dichotomous in-

between space of public and private that is unveiled in the way these stories are relayed (2004).[18] Horeck and Kendall together also consider how popular narratives can be analysed as evidence of cultural values: 'Thinking about the distinctive treatments of the extreme within and across national boundaries can tell us much about the cultural contours that produce and lend value to spectatorial experiences, that make them meaningful and watchable (2011, p.9)'. My discourse analysis relies on this belief that what is produced fictionally can provide us with 'meaningful' insights. They go on to elaborate how extreme narratives are indicative of society through what is censored and what is 'shown' (whether visual or textual) as often narratives are built around an 'ordeal' or the allusion to violence more than the excessive deliberation on violent images. I utilise this perspective to evidence how the Animal/Human is characterised as 'Other' through what is repressed (attachment) and what is acted out (violence through ritual). Though I evidence these characters as 'grotesque' (representing something 'not fully human'), I also explore how serial killer fiction limits excessive deliberation of posthumanity socially (in their fictional environment) by mitigating 'Otherness' in Chapters 2 and 3. I analyse gestures as a spectrum that evidence these figures as Animal/Human while some are more extreme than others. For instance, Peter Webber's film *Hannibal Rising* (2007) includes the character of Lecter licking blood from his hand after killing a man which gestures to the moment of violence while focussing on the product (blood) over the person (victim). The television adaptation of *Dexter* often builds the storyline up to the image of a raised knife/weapon before the camera cuts away to the character disposing of wrapped bundles in the ocean and avoiding the actual act of killing (Dexter, 2006, 1.5). These gestures indicate violence while also censoring extreme visuals. In Chapter 4, I discuss how the audience 'partaking' in violence and yet retaining deniability of participation in the moment of killing is indicative of our cultural need for deniability, as much as fascination.

[18] In her text, *Public Rape: Representing Violation in Fiction and Film* (2004), Horeck explores literary texts such as *Le Lévite d'Ephraim* and cultural experiences such as the New Bedford 'Big Dan gang rape' trial to identify blurred lines between fiction and reality in how we position the experience of rape.

1.3 Bakhtin's Carnival

This thesis explores how serial killers act as figures of fascination, not *despite* their violence and 'Otherness', but *because* of this. I use the term 'carnival' to associate with a period of festivity and ritualistic pageantry, where traditional social structures and expectations are suspended in exchange for frivolity, inversion of expectations, and openness. Many structured approaches to the 'us and them' relationship propose binary as a way of giving voice to the underrepresented factions. Adel Iskander and Hakem Rustom discuss the consequence of providing this type of new voice: 'Introducing a different or additional kind of representation disrupts the polar "Us and Them" system(s) and blurs the boundaries and distinctions (2010, p.78)'. This disrupted space (what I reference as 'carnivalesque') becomes open to non-binaristic or hybrid representation where narratives redefine the terms 'human' and 'animal' as not binaristically opposed (Bakhtin, 1984b). While the notion of carnival has grounds in criticism before Bakhtin, it is his emphasis on hybridity and collapsing of opposition that is central to the arguments I make throughout this thesis as the reason society is fascinated with serial killer antiheroes. The idea of carnival operates on a series of symbols and interactions; similarly, in this thesis, I discuss images and symbolism which operate as the indicative 'language' of the serial killer narrative. First discussed by Bakhtin in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984b), carnival operates as a discourse on genre as a system of relations or a process for understanding the world:

> The carnival sense of the world, permeating these genres from top to bottom, determines their basic features and places image and word in them in a special relationship to reality. […] There is a weakening of its one-sided rhetorical seriousness, its rationality, its singular meaning, its dogmatism. The carnival sense of the world possesses a mighty life-creating and transforming power, an indestructible vitality. (Bakhtin, 1984b, p.107)

This permeation of rhetoric introduces a post-structural representation of binary where two oppositions are collapsed in a 'special relationship to reality'. Instead of dogmatic structuralism, I view representation as a spectrum that defines the basic features of the serial killer to be 'not fully

human'. This kind of recharacterisation is 'life creating', developing the serial killer through 'becoming' and allowing them to harness this justified 'transforming power' as evidence that the Animal/Human is an inevitable or indestructible concept.

Carnival is perceived as a 'space', an atmosphere and the people within it, highlighting how those within the discourse converse, redefining the power traditionally given as hierarchy and creating a new framework of interrelationship:

> The behavior [sic], gesture, and discourse of a person are freed from the authority of all hierarchical positions (social estate, rank, age, property) defining them totally in noncarnival life, and thus from the vantage point of noncarnival life become eccentric and inappropriate. *Eccentricity* is a special category of the carnival sense of the world, organically connected with the category of familiar contact; it permits- in concretely sensuous form- the latent sides of human nature to reveal and express themselves. (Bakhtin, 1984b, p.123)

Serial killer fiction is oriented within this 'eccentric' carnival space where the characters are freed from traditional descriptors (culturally inappropriate) and uses non-linearity to 'reveal and express' their true self. Freedom from hierarchy also contributes to the hybrid portrayal of this figure as discussed in Chapter 3 where neither Animal nor Human is hierarchically 'better' but symbiotic. The post- constructions I use as foundational to my claims (postmodern, posthuman, poststructural) promote this carnival fluidity, particularly between the public and the private space. The audience explores this figure through fictional texts that invert public and private spheres. Outside of fiction, the character's thoughts would be 'private' or could be manipulated (individuals can choose to share, reveal, or hide thoughts). In a fictional space, readers are enlightened to what is 'private' in a way we would not otherwise access in society. The serial killer character reasons out public anxieties surrounding their deviance by making these public spaces of discourse. Discourses of serial killing, through true crime or fiction portrayals, allow the audience to have 'sussed out' the deviance, making it more 'acceptable' because it is now understandable.

This space also liberates us from cultural norms, while we read, and creates a new space for exploring violence through the suspension of reality. Pop culture representations, such as the ones I analyse, mediate a dialogue between escapism, education, and entertainment. Mikita Hoy

analyses the overlapping spaces of pop culture and Bakhtin's theories through the features of novelty and parody:

> […] much of recent popular culture appears as 'permanent' carnivalization [sic] (though 'permanent' in the sense of 'permanently' ephemeral, constantly changing). Style magazines consistently offer a wide range of interweaving discourses, languages, ontologies, and dialogues characteristic of the anticanonism Bakhtin defines as essential to the language of novelization, and the festival of heteroglossia that results is not a mere sideshow at a traveling carnival, but a 'permanently' ephemeral, playful, self-referential, self-parodying component of postmodern popular culture. Bakhtin's idea of carnival, both lived and textual, as the self-regarding parody of different language styles and levels of dialogue… (1992, p.771)

I recognise this 'permanence' as the recognition from audiences that these texts all reference a figure, recognised as Animal/Human despite differences in gesture or medium. This 'heteroglossia' (multiple viewpoints), is also evidenced by the way internal narratives are expressed from both the Animal and Human as a form of double language. For example, the *Dexter* texts are characterised by dry, quippy humour, that creates inside jokes between the character and the audience, acknowledging the inversion of norms and expectations that both parties are participating in:

> There is something strange and disarming about looking at a homicide scene in the bright day-light of the Miami sun. It makes the most grotesque killings look antiseptic, staged. Like you're in a new and daring section of Disney World. Dahmer Land. Come ride the refrigerator. Please hurl your lunch in the designated containers only. Not that the sight of mutilated bodies anywhere has ever bothered *me*, oh no, far from it. I do resent the messy ones a little when they are careless with their body fluids- nasty stuff. Other than that, it seems no worse than looking at spare ribs at the grocery store. (Dreaming, p.23)

Here, there is a language of dual understandings on part of the character and the audience. Dexter is surveying the scene of a crime as a blood-spatter expert with the police *and* as a serial killer. His detachment and quippy comments on the scene provide an understanding of the grotesque as well by utilising the physiological (vomiting and bodily fluids) as disinteresting and commonplace to him, akin to the weekly shop. It is also important to note that by referencing 'Dahmer Land', the character is acknowledging the cultural recognition of serial killers as a space of amusement (like Hoy's permanent carnivalisation) by suggesting this new grotesque 'Land' could be included in Disney World as a family-friendly entertainment destination. Likewise, the

complex language between what the character reveals and what the audience 'knows' and reveals this in-between space of parody. Other features of dual-language are evidenced when Dexter refers to himself as 'we', meaning the Animal and the Human, the ego Dexter and his 'Dark Passenger'. The *Hannibal* television adaptation (NBC, 2013-2015) also references the audience's assumed pre-knowledge of Lecter as a cannibal. Dialogue makes use of the term 'taste' ironically to reference Lecter's cannibalism before this is a feature of the television adaptation showing the permanence of language that represents his deviance. Other visual cues are used to acknowledge this dual-language (e.g., the camera panning to Lecter entering the room as Graham lectures about a killer). The internal language of *Dexter* draws on understandings the narrative itself has previously created to understand duality ('we') while *Hannibal* relies on the cultural influence of the wider franchise. This externally assumes that audiences understand the serial killer figure and can participate in a broader understanding of symbolism.

1.3.1 Grotesque Body

If carnival is the atmosphere, 'grotesque' describes the body, the figure that thrives in this space. In this thesis, the serial killer becomes an entity where animal and human are an intertwined grotesque product. This is initiated through 'becoming' which utilises the in-between space of creation (the identity-in-process is created) and destruction (their former self is destroyed and therefore they continue the cycle by destroying others). The philosophy of Bakhtinian dialogism centres on reciprocal communication shared between living (gestures) and understanding. The conflict between non-linear Animal/Humanity creates a new dialogue between power (animal instinct) and knowledge (human reason). Bakhtin focuses on the significance of the body, particularly sites of 'becoming' which evidences the grotesque (1984a).[19] These sites of transformation evidence where hybridity is initiated. Texts that glorify the

[19] Bakhtin discusses these sites of bodily transformation in his text *Rabelais and His World* (1984a) that responds to constructions in the literature of Francois Rabelais.

carnivalesque put aside traditional inhibitions and often discusses bodily fixation on orifices and organs, and the processes of eating, drinking, defecating, and procreating.[20] The grotesque body becomes a vehicle for transferring attention to the subversive and brings awareness to that which is suppressed in the 'every day'. Throughout this thesis, I explore how grotesque inversion becomes the method for recognising posthuman positioning.

The grotesque body is another manifestation of a double nature or double-faced image. This evidences Animal/Humanity as non-linear through sites of contradiction and consummation: 'One of the fundamental tendencies of the grotesque image of the body is to show two bodies in one: the one giving birth and dying, the other conceived, generated, and born (Bakhtin, 1984a, p.26)'. The acts of birth and death are transitionary, a form of 'becoming' between two states. Bodily functions are visuals gestural products of the process of 'becoming':

> The grotesque body, as we have often stressed, is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body. Moreover, the body swallows the world and is itself swallowed by the world…This is why the essential role belongs to those parts of the grotesque body in which it outgrows its own self, transgressing its own body, in which it conceives a new, second body: the bowels and the phallus. (Bakhtin, 1984a, p.317)

In arguing the continual 'building' of a new body, the body is figurative rather than literal. The concept of the Animal/Human hybrid is what is 'built'; the result of 'becoming' is the transcendence to a tentative identity state. Terms such as 'building' or 'becoming' indicate a present continuous tense. These texts assume that hybridity has been initiated but is also constantly evolving. The characters have already 'become' Animal/Human, the process of their 'conception' being completed through undergoing trauma. Dexter refers to this as the process of 'being born in blood' (1.12). Through flashbacks (*Dexter* and *Huntress*) or a prequel (*Hannibal*), 'becoming' is explored as a trigger to serial killing. In *Red Dragon*, the antagonist, Francis Dolarhyde, tries to simulate this provisional identity. The character is inspired by the painting *The Great Red Dragon and the*

[20] Chapter 3 discusses hunting as an analogy for eating and drinking (a physiological need). Chapter 4 further explores the mouth and its gestures of violence and consumption as a product of posthumanism.

Woman Clothed in Sun by William Blake and aspires to 'become' the Dragon, transforming himself through the process of killing.[21] Dolarhyde inserts mirror shards into his victims' eyes so that they can 'see' him becoming the Dragon. While the narrative does evidence some trauma in Dolarhyde's past, it also indicates he has not 'become' (posthuman) because of this but undertakes symbolic steps, trying to fabricate 'becoming'.[22] This assumes there are false imitations of hybridity that are opposed to these figures as 'real' Animal/Humans. The complexities of how and why this provisional identity process is initiated are further explored in Chapter 2. This reinforces an 'Other' state of the grotesque body as a common knowledge image, even recognised by these other characters. My original contribution to the discourse of serial killer fiction is through providing a carnivalesque reading for how the serial killer is 'created' and reflects culture's grotesque fascination with deviance.

The Hannibal series builds several other examples of an 'Othered' body as a physical marker of the grotesque. This links to broader discourses on 'Otherness', though posthuman positioning is not solely defined through physical hybridity (and in many ways is anthropomorphic, not a physical hybrid). Relying on physical 'Otherness' is indicative of the Lecter series' cultural context which evidences clearer links between body and mind rather than intangible identity states. As the earliest of publications used in this thesis, the *Hannibal* series relies on these visual cues to trigger our understanding of inner deviance, which is more culturally acknowledged and therefore less explicit in later-published narratives. To identify the two characters in *Red Dragon* that show deviance as 'Other', Dolarhyde was born with a cleft palate and Lecter has six fingers on one of his hands.[23] In addition to born bodily difference, Dolarhyde takes further steps to

[21] Dolarhyde is nicknamed 'The Tooth Fairy' because he bites his victims with a pair of false teeth. This is another symbol of oral violence which contrasts the Animal/Human predator to other characters and pre-empts my discussion in Chapter 4.

[22] After finding he peed the bed one night as a child, Dolarhyde's grandmother threatened to cut off his penis if he did it again. Years later, as a grown man, the character notes he sits on the toilet to urinate instead of standing because he was traumatised by this (*Red Dragon,* p.205).

[23] After Lecter's escape in *Silence*, Lecter is also noted to have his extra digit removed, making him less identifiable. While outward 'Otherness' draws attention, the posthuman must seek to appear average to

visually transform himself through plastic surgery (tooth implants or dentures) and body modification (his back is tattooed in replication of Blake's *Dragon* painting). The character attempts to mimic Animal/Humanism by incorrectly assuming this is a physical process. The final step in his pursuit of 'becoming' is through physical consumption as Dolarhyde seeks to become the only Dragon, eating the painting he is inspired by from the museum. Because of this, Dolarhyde is often portrayed as unstable while Hannibal is contrasted as an elitist intellectual. This reinforces the idea that Animal/Humans do not have to mimic physical animality as their hybridity is naturally varied across physical and mental planes. Dolarhyde must *try* to become what Hannibal Lecter or Dexter Morgan insinuate that they are by nature. Following on from the key quote from Lecter in the introduction of this chapter, another important quote that reinforces the idea of the character's self-determined state is his claim: '*I* happened, you can't reduce me to a set of influences (emphasis original, *Silence*, p.24)'. This supports my claim that the hybrid transformation is assumed to be completed (on some level) 'I happened' and cannot be imitated only by gestures or 'set of influences'. In the *Huntress* texts, Cara also hides her deformity, the scar across her neck left from her trauma. *Dexter* represents a figure whose deviance is manifested without obvious physical markers, which creates more ambiguity.[24] As culture acknowledges the tentative hybrid identity, texts can become increasingly figurative and representational.

1.3.2 Grotesque Hybridity

The creation of the grotesque body is a literal and figurative process that stretches the bounds of what it is to 'be human'; merging animal and human is a popular manifestation intended to evidence transitional bounds between person and nature. In the fictional killer, this hybridity is

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continue killing. The *Hannibal* media adaptations do not portray Lecter with an additional finger, this is a textual feature only in the novels (which came earlier).

[24] Chapter 4 explores the idea that Dexter's average appearance is an ironic marker of his deviance as he eats excess quantities of food without experiencing typical weight gain though this is a less obvious physical marker as it is about what is *not* present rather than what is additional.

primarily mental and subtly physical so we must rely on the textual recognition of 'becoming' to trace their grotesque 'transition'. Chapters 2 and 3 will more thoroughly investigate what particular mental and physical distinctions evidence layers of hybridity and how this contributes to a complex portrayal. Adam Morton suggests that the animal is sometimes used as a simplistic representation of 'evil' to create a straightforward or basic understanding of 'Otherness':

> All of these cases [terrorists, sociopaths], and many more, appeal to a kind of imaginative laziness in us. We prefer to understand evil in terms of archetypal horrors, fictional villains, and deep viciousness, rather than to strain our capacities for intuitive understanding towards a grasp of the difficult truth that people much like us perform acts that we find unimaginably awful. (Morton, 2004, p.102)

The serial killer is a non-linear combination of animal and human which challenges a 'lazy' or simplistic portrayal. The animal works as a vehicle to explain these complexities but is not the scapegoat and must be considered alongside various concepts of 'Otherness'. The Animal/Human provides a new way for explaining how people that look 'much like us' are understood to still be 'Other'. The archetypal figures that Morton alludes to function as 'pure evil' in these texts to contrast the Animal/Human. These would be the figures who are killed off by the serial killer antihero because of their complete depravity and are the ones referred to as 'only animal' or 'fully monstrous'. The Animal/Human is a grotesque inversion of characterisation because they are 'allowed' to be recognised for their 'bad' actions while not relegated to a figure of 'pure evil' (they retain some humanity). In the novel's initial introduction to Dexter, the text explains one way the characters classify these figures as separate:

> 'But *children*?' I said. 'I could never do this to children. I put my hard, clean boot on the back of his head and slammed his face down. 'Not like you, Father. Never kids. I have to find people like you'. (*Dreaming*, p.10)

Dexter uses this justification, his ethical boundaries to protect children, as a separation from him as an 'antihero' to the 'villain'. This insinuates that the border between Animal/Humanity and total depravity adheres to ethics around victimisation, particularly by protecting rather than victimising children or innocents. As Dexter enacts violence against this individual, we develop the need for

a new categorisation, a hybrid of evil and good, to explain who he is. By defining the Animal/Human, readers can reclassify 'acceptable' violence through a portrayal of an antihero:

> 'Evil' is part of the vocabulary of hatred, dismissal, or incomprehension. We call acts or people evil when they are so bad that we cannot fit them within our normal moral and explanatory frames. To call what Hitler or Pol Pot did 'wrong' seems to understate its nature almost to the point of error; so we pull out a special term of beyond-the-pale condemnation and call them 'evil'. We do the same for many rapists or abusers of children: our horror drives us to a special terminology. In so doing we signal to the world our horror. (Morton, 2004, p.4)

Those who are 'so abhorrent' (that they are targeted by the Animal/Human) are then so 'Othered' that there is no acceptance, even on a fictional scale of morality. Instead, the antihero takes the place of a middle ground where horror is signalled but absolved because they serve a 'greater good'. The audience roots for them, hoping they evade capture and continue the narrative in pursuit of 'real justice'. In this way, they become a hybrid of good and evil through their vigilante ethical system. This approach also helps explain how the serial killer resists categorisation. Fiona Peters has previously theorised about the portrayal of Tom Ripley noting that he can be portrayed as 'anti-human', noting a lack of empathy or attachment and comparing him to a clinical psychopath, but does not go so far as to theorise posthumanity (Peters, 2015, p.1-2). In her text *Anxiety and Evil* (2011), Peters considers Highsmith's crime fiction texts and how the discourse around writing that is 'difficult to categorise' leads to questions about these spaces of resistance. Peters concludes that this difficulty is exactly what makes these texts most worthy of our attention and study (2011, p.3). For my claims, the resistance to simple categorisation is what reinforces the serial killer as a grotesque hybrid and demands that we unpack how complexities can influence a reading of the character as sympathetic. The posthuman positioning that is represented in literature uses a spectrum of assumptions about 'Otherness' to evidence how each character is considered Animal/Human and, while commonalities will be elaborated in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, these do not provide a straightforward or simplistic characterisation. As with Peters, the complexity we face when trying to understand our cultural fascination with serial killers also gives broader insight into our cultural fascination with uncertainty.

1.3.3 Comedic Inversion

The grotesque opposes fascination (pleasure) and disgust, which is informed by textual features of opposition between comedy and tragedy. The antihero, as a figure of fascination (and sometimes humour), is fascinating to us because of their tragedy, further highlighting the irony of their inherent contradiction. These characters become the very beings (killers) that caused their hybrid state and continue to imitate their trauma. The Animal/Human is employed to evidence tragic deviance as well as 'comedically' inverting expectations. This comedy reminds the reader that the serial killer is still 'human' (relatable). This 'comedy' in serial killer fiction references situational humour which can be drawn from carnivalistic inversion. The characters themselves are not purposefully comedic in a farcical or nonsensical way, so 'humour' is used as a more subtle contrast between the public and private 'truths' the reader is made aware of. Characters like Dexter or Hannibal reinforce their 'likability' to the audience through intelligent, self-deprecating remarks to insert humour into their almost-belongingness. This laughter is often connected to a 'drama of the body' (gesture) that returns attention to their humorous and surprising existence (Lachmann et.al., 1988, p.125):

> Folk culture appears periodically as a culture of laughter by means of an ensemble of rites and symbols, a temporarily existing life-form enables the carnival to take place. By contrast, the principle of laughter that organizes [sic] the carnival is transtemporal and universal. Laughter above and transcends the objects at which it is temporarily aimed: official institutions and the sacral. (Ibid., p.123)

Carnival is a 'folk culture' that sublimates death through laughter, just as these characters do by using the process of killing as a way of holding power over death. In the space of carnival inversion, laughter suppresses fear to reassert power. The serial killer that can 'laugh' at their 'becoming' holds power without fear of being a victim (prey) again. Laughter is a form of proactive 'generation', an active form of creation rather than passively waiting for a greater force (another predator) to have control (Lachmann et.al., p.131). A key feature of the serial killer as

Animal/Human is their hyper-predation, active gestures that embrace animality and seek to kill before becoming victims themselves (again).

Without an aspect of comedy, serial killers or grotesque figures would simply be monstrous and unredeemable. Robert Story uses the image of the comedy and tragedy masks as visual expressions of paradox that are conceptualised around gestures of the mouth.[25] Laughter transforms the face, grotesquely altering features like in the open-mouthed, exaggerated gape of comedy/tragedy masks. The comedic mouth is a feature that points towards human physicality as 'smiling' or 'laughing' is generally seen as 'human'. In Chapter 4, I analyse oral imagery and masks as a gestural indicator of the serial killer's predation. When gestures of smiling, laughing or eating are used to indicate posthumanism, these comedic misrepresentations often contribute to the discussion of how the character is 'Othered' by almost-belongingness.

The Animal/Human self-parody of the serial killer as vigilante creates an in-between space that mocks both violence and justice. The figure is often portrayed as working alongside or in tacit alliance with the justice system, using violence as a response to criminality:

> Another key philosophical element of carnival is self-parody. Carnival imagery, talk, feasting, dramas, not only parodied official conceptions of the world, they also laughed at themselves. Carnival laughter, Bakhtin argues, differs here from the 'pure satire' of modern times, where the satire places itself above the object being mocked. In contrast festive laughter is also 'directed at those who laugh'. Even carnival marketplace advertising was self-ironic. Festive laughter is always philosophically ambivalent. It is aware of the relativity of all truths and conceptions, including its own. (Docker, 1994, p.180)

The serial killer acknowledges their participation in 'evil' while justifying that they are 'created' by an experience of violent trauma. Grotesque portrayals of the Animal/Human conceptualise a narrative open to self-parody by being displaced between two categories. This is reflective of Bakhtin's grotesque body that is 'never finished, never completed', just as a face is constantly

[25] The symbolism of the comedy/tragedy masks are explored further in *Comedy and The Relaxed Open Mouth Display* (1996).

redefined through expressions (Bakhtin, 1984a, p.317). The duality of fascination and disgust also explains why we consume these narratives in reaction to cultural anxieties:

> Writers on the grotesque have always tended to associate the grotesque with either the comic or the terrifying. […] There are naturally a good many positions between these two poles, but, apart from a few exceptions in earlier periods, the tendency to view the grotesque as essentially a mixture in some way or other of *both* comic and the terrifying (or the disgusting, repulsive, etc.) in a problematical way (i.e., not readily resolvable) way is a comparatively recent one. (Thomson, 2017)

As I explore posthuman positioning, I assume that opposition does not need to be 'resolved', simply explained. These characters are accepted as both terrifying and fascinating and my reading of the Animal/Human identifies how these coexist.

1.4 Interdisciplinary Approaches

In this section, I overview how I have utilised theories across literature, media, and cultural studies to construct a CDA. I begin by addressing the current structure for studying crime fiction and serial killing as a criminological approach. I then consider how the theories of Deleuze and Guattari reflect my critical approach. Following this, I explore how my claims further build upon Derrida's deconstruction of binary, particularly in reference to understanding animality. I have been guided by an interdisciplinary approach because I use two texts (*Dexter* and *Hannibal)* that exist as popular transmedia franchises with an initial novel series and the following television and/or film adaptations. Fairclough defines his process of textual analysis considering intertextuality as an ordering of discourses across various planes:

> On the level of texts, I see these processes in terms of 'intertextuality': texts are constructed through other texts being articulated in particular ways, ways which depend upon and change with social circumstances. On the level of orders of discourse, relationships among and boundaries between discourse practices in an institution or the wider society are progressively shifted in ways which accord with directions of social change. (1992, p.9)

The figure of the serial killer is 'progressed' in ways that may be 'shifted' to contextually fit the delivery of interdisciplinary mediums.[26] For instance, what literature texts may demonstrate through authorial description or inner monologue, media adaptations may do through visual imagery. The consistency between character representation across divergent mediums evidences the depth to my claims.

1.4.1 Studying Serial Killing

Investigating crime narratives reveals a wide breadth of research and methods. I am particularly interested in the shift from structuralist criminology to postmodernism. I claim that this shift is also reflected by constructions within crime fiction, such as posthuman positioning, which considers a complex approach to undertaking violence. In this section, I overview how my interdisciplinary approach best provides context for reading serial killers as Animal/Human.

While 'multiple murder' is not new, current criminological understandings of these figures are more relevant to my claims about the figure as a whole.[27] FBI Criminologist, Robert K. Ressler, identifies the rise of the term 'serial killer' in the 1970s to signal a cultural shift in the phenomenon of 'stranger killings' (Ressler and Shachtman, 1993, p.153).[28] There was a noted 'resurgence' of serial killing concurrent with a revival of trauma studies and psychoanalytic criticism (1970s and after) which has helped to drive my text selection.[29] Penny papers, even as early as the 1830s,

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[26] The ideas of 'progressive shifting' can also, more loosely, be applied to the *Huntress* series as well because of the author's note to use narrative as a form of response to political discourse and current social tensions, developing narrative in relation to these priorities over the course of the series' publication.

[27] In the 1960s a majority of killers are noted to have some relationship with his or her victim. By the 1980s, some 25 per cent of murders were 'stranger murders', in which the killer did not know the victim. The reasons for the steady rise in the statistics, sociologists believed, could be found in the sort of society we had become: 'mobile, in many ways impersonal, flooded with images of violence and heightened sexuality (Ressler, 1993, p.153)'. The 'impersonal' and 'heightened' cultural situation which has led to the rise of stranger murder is a breeding ground for the serial killer as a cultural production of grotesque extremes and also helps explore our response to anxieties of the unknown.

[28] In his seminal text *Whoever Fights Monsters: My Twenty Years Tracking Serial Killers for the FBI* (1993), Ressler overviews his own expertise and the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit's (BSU) influence in the understanding of these figures. In this text, Ressler claims he coined the term 'serial killer' while other texts have diverging roots to this term (1993, p.29).

[29] I have based the use of the term 'resurgence' on serial killing texts, such as that of Ressler that document these occurrences and focus. This, of course, is heavily determined by criminal apprehension

would have provided news coverage on murders (such as the Jack the Ripper murders) or other 'grotesque' cultural happenings but Schmid notes that a 940% increase in occurrences of serial murder from 1960 to 1990 provided a breadth of media coverage greater than ever before (2015, p.207). These increased occurrences of serial killing and media stories in the 80s and 90s were followed by fictional accounts of the serial killer as a prominent figure in detective-led crime fiction and eventually as central characters in their crime subgenre. This early research would become more publicly accessible as interest spread, providing seminal texts on the image of the serial killer: Mark Seltzer's *Serial Killers* (1998) and *True Crime* (2007) and David Schmid's *Natural Born Celebrities Serial Killers* (2005b). Each of these texts helps to support my claims about the wide-spread cultural fascination with, and production of, serial killer representations.[30] Compilations of serial killers such as Dave Wilson's *A History of British Serial Killing* (2011) or *Serial Killers and the Phenomenon of Serial Murder* (2015) also evidence how much of our current knowledge of serial killers come from real figures. Christina Lee identifies the progression from real-life to cultural production as a facet of postmodern extremity: 'While the concept of the serial killer can be considered a product of modernity, the postmodern condition has allowed the serial killer to flourish as the contemporary icon/superstar (2013, p.106)'. This figure's iconic or celebrated nature has provided a controversial interplay between fascination and acceptance. Manifesting

during this time and may not be completely accurate to serial killers 'at large' that were undetected due to limited criminal apprehension programmes in various jurisdictions before this time. Yaksic et.al. contextualise this by proposing that the perceived spike is often due to our 'systemic ignorance' and previous (or current) numbers of serial killings may be lower than in the 1980s or attributed to other sources. They accredit this to the period when new task forces such as the FBI's BSU or ViCAP system creation (to track and apprehend violent criminals across jurisdictions) provided particular focus on this kind of apprehension (2019, p.5). While resolved and unresolved cases also blur the lines of this 'spike', current tallies are markedly lower than the 1980s which is often cited as a 'golden age'. Yaksic et.al. describes current statistics of serial killing to be 'half' of the cases compared to this peak period (2019, p.9).

[30] These are not the only texts surrounding the figure of the serial killer. *Mindhunter: inside the FBI elite serial crime unit* (1997) by Douglas and Olshaker for instance give further insight into the BSU though this text is more focussed on the process of tracking serial killers than on the influence of their image or portrayals. Steven Egger's *Killers Among Us: An Examination of Serial Murder and Its Investigation* (1998) overviews and addresses 'myths' about serial killers and serial murders, setting the premise that firm social assumptions were already rooted by this time.

from this, serial killer fiction allows for complex scrutiny applying detached classification of killers into a comprehensible figure ('posthuman') while acknowledging the nuances of personal experience (how characters are uniquely Animal/Human).

In developing my assertions about the serial killer as Animal/Human, I explored a variety of previous texts that analyse crime fiction or serial killers to find the gaps in our current knowledge. While above I indicated several criminological texts, the ones most relevant to my claims tended to be those that reflected on the influence or social cognition around serial killing rather than texts that attempted to quantify modes or approaches to serial killing. One relevant criminology text that uses narrative theory to analyse behaviour was David Canter's *Criminal Shadows* (1994) where he looks at how the criminal's inner narrative reflects deviance. I utilise a similar method of thought to Canter but explore this characterisation in fiction. Turning to literary crime texts revealed a focus on providing a history of the genre rather than a particular focus on serial killers or characterisation. For example, John Scaggs' *Crime Fiction* (2005), Martin Priestman's *Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction* (2006), and Stephen Knight's *Crime Fiction since 1800* (2004) all introduce the crime genre and structures narratives by historical period (Golden Age) or subgenres (detective fiction). Knight is the only of these authors to provide any focus to the serial killer though this is only one short chapter. Other texts like Malcah Effron's *Millennial Detective* (2011) show how legitimised figures like detectives or the police have often been the primary perspective for crime fiction and therefore analysis into characterisation has often remained in these realms as well.[31]

These explorations into identity and characterisation reflect a broader shift towards postmodern thought and thinking differently about broad or fixed categorisation. Outside of crime

[31] Such as Matković's *Conventions of Detective Fiction, or Why We Like Detective Novels: Hercule Poirot's Christmas* (2018) that explores the escapism and satisfaction in detective fiction or Köseoğlu's *Gender and Detective Literature: The Role of Miss Marple in Agatha Christie's The Body in the Library* (2015) that analyses the role of gender in characterising detective fiction.

fiction, Patricia Waugh identifies a distinct line in critical literary approaches after 1970. Before this time, Waugh describes the 'traditional' approach as heavily structuralist:

> …interested in classifying literary genres and in identifying conventions, forms, and figures of literary works, and were more interested in underlying categories than in individual texts […] Seeking a theory of literature, they were more interested in identifying a *prescriptive* grammar of the literary work. (emphasis added, Waugh, 2006, p.2)

The previously listed genre texts, by Wilson or Priestman, align more with this structuralist focus, a clear indicator of traditional study, that concentrates on 'underlying categories' rather than exploring how characterisations are developed through textual analysis. For this reason, I have included certain media theories around complex narratives to provide a more postmodern understanding that helps to identify the serial killer as 'Other' not 'prescriptively' but indicatively.

Previous criminology studies on serial killers tend to deconstruct stereotypes about 'character' (meaning values or personality) rather than characterisation (how culture portrays and conceptualises the figure).[32] I had to consider this predominant approach when making claims about posthuman characterisation as an indicative but not prescriptive positioning of serial killer. Though certain expectations are assumed, categorising these same 'traits' are not specifically critical to portrayals of criminality in fiction (Dietz, 1996). These characters are predominantly classified by their 'Otherness'. If these killers were *not* written as 'Other', it would force authors and audiences to acknowledge a line between fiction and reality as increasingly thin:

> And in our attempt to understand serial killers, we inevitably create myths about them- works of fiction that may superficially portray the serial killer as the ultimate alien outsider or enemy of society but which simultaneously reflect back on society its own perversions, and murderous desires. Thus, the serial killer is 'psycho'- aberrant and depraved- while still remaining a recognisable product of American culture. (Simpson, 2000, p.1)

Portrayals of 'Otherness' create a variable in-between space where the figure is recognisable enough to be classified, accepted, and studied but distant enough from society that we can participate in the process of justification I detail below which reflects the social attitudes of

[32] By 'studying character', I mean that criminological texts focus on constructions such as the organised or disorganised modes of killing used as the basis for classifying serial killers into 'groups' or 'types'.

postmodernity. Patricia MacCormack defines posthumanism as a critical 'suspicion' towards categorisation: 'Posthuman theory asks in various ways what it means to be human in a time where philosophy has become suspicious of claims about human subjectivity (2016, p.1)'. My analysis of posthuman positioning explores how subjectivity depicts the Animal/Human and how this naturally aligns with how we are led to read the serial killer as an antihero. An alternate standard of ethics is applied whenever these characters are defined as 'Other', such as the case when using posthuman characterisation, and perpetuates the acceptance of characters who would otherwise be dismissed from social norms. Fascination with serial killer narratives allows audiences to be intrigued by, and even in some cases support, the fictional character while still providing ethical distance for the audience to denounce killing in real life. This subjectivity also extends to understanding the serial killer as Animal/Human in a non-linear, rather than anthropocentric fashion.

Two common approaches to crime fiction in the early 00s applied cultural criminology to an understanding of literature: sub-cultural criminology which focuses on qualitative over quantitative methods of analysis and criminological aesthetics which is a semiotic approach to binaries (Lam, 2011, p.23). The sub-cultural approach to criminology draws from Stuart Hall's *Policing the Crisis* (1978) which analyses the impact of media on cultural depictions of deviance and questions the process of thinking which connects the symbolic to the social. The aesthetics approach, heavily developed by criminologist Alison Young, focuses on how cultural values contribute to criminality, specifically by analysing fixed structural binaries where one opposition is subsumed in the hierarchy to the other (1996; 2008). While I use binary (or non-linear/collapsed binary) to contextualise the creation of the serial killer as Animal/Human, Hall's sub-cultural approach is more consistent with my claims that representations of the serial killer are reproductions of cultural assumptions. Qualitative portrayals of deviance are vehicles that are used to deliver these assumptions and I consider a non-hierarchical spectrum of identity over Young's structured binary. Several academic texts, including Nicole Rafter's *Shots in the Mirror:*

Crime Films and Society (2000), Thomas Leitch's *Crime Films* (2002), and *Criminology Goes to the Movies: Crime Theory and Popular Culture* (2011) by Nicole Rafter and Michelle Brown have already noted the importance of discussions of power in the crime genre and how popular culture influences perceptions of criminality. These texts help to explain how portrayals of crime can define genre. The Rafter (2000) and Leitch texts focus on defining an approach to genre through connections to culture, while only the Rafter and Brown text attempts to apply sociological theories (conflict theory or feminist theory) to specific instances of ideology portrayed in media (*Thelma and Louise* [1991] as a controversial portrayal of gender in the 90s [2011, pp.153-166]). In this thesis, culture is seen as a unifying approach in which the genre of serial killer fiction utilises portrayals of 'Otherness' and branches of posthumanism as an understanding of criminality.

1.4.2 Structure and Non-binary

Each text I analyse embodies the Animal/Human in similar, yet not prescriptive ways. A fluid (or abstract) textual analysis is indicative of a postmodern approach to what Henry Jenkins labels as 'Convergence Culture' where narratives are diversified and collapsed over various platforms, using text and culture in symbiotic interaction (Jenkins, 2006, p.2). In the introduction and previously in this chapter, I referenced Fairclough's approach to textual criticism that sees texts as created from, but also foundational to, a recognised characterisation. Combining these ideas from Jenkins and Fairclough, I create an interdisciplinary approach to understanding how the serial killer self-fashions a new understanding of identity. Fairclough's three-dimensional model (as seen in Appendix, Figure 1, p.226) illustrates the relationship between text (the Animal/Human), discourse practice (text building an understanding of the serial killer), and sociocultural practice (how text helps to understand deviance). This process allows me to explore how the 'convergence' of fictional violence and cultural fascination develops out of a process of justification or neutralisation on behalf of the characters and extends to the audience.

The texts I have chosen create a fluid figure of Animal/Humanity, defined enough to be culturally recognised. Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome structure of narrative best helps to conceptualise the non-linear nature of identity and the grotesque nature of cyclical or unending change that these characters undergo: 'From the moment when we can shift and disrupt the totalising character of an institution…instead of turning in on itself like a structure, it can acquire subjective consistency and start making all sorts of changes and challenges (Guattari, 2015: p.70)'. Deleuze and Guattari explain a rhizome as a type of intertwined (opposed to linear) and constantly evolving framework. For my purposes, I explore grotesque Animal/Humanity as a rhizomic approach to identify where the subject (the character) begins to make its own 'changes and challenges' to redefine themselves. As from the quote in the introduction of this chapter, Dexter claims that he is a law unto himself, something new entirely that only he can define. Guattari recognises these same limitations to a rhizome that are not imposed from outside the institution but self-imposed: 'The level of transversality existing in the group that has the real power unconsciously determines how the extensive possibilities of other levels of transversality are regulated' (Guattari, 2015: p.113)'. The limits of this figure are defined 'transversally' from within the texts as the intersection between animal and human. A non-binaristic portrayal functions as a form of opposition and alliance, a 'subjective consistency', which creates the internally regulated boundaries of how these two sides are opposed and cohere. The power to redefine themselves begins to unlock 'extensive possibilities' about how we perceive what defines us as 'human'.

Deleuze and Guattari's theories are foundational to several discourses that I engage with. Their rhizome structure is helpful for analysing a non-linear portrayal and challenging traditional psychoanalytical approaches to consciousness and engage with animal-human studies in their approach, 'becoming-animal', that reflects the ability to synthesise two states simultaneously. In this chapter, I refer to 'animal-human' as a reference to general posthuman theory and my conception of the serial killer as 'Animal/Human' separately. In *Anti-Oedipus* (2004), Deleuze and

Guattari discuss the concept of 'schizophrenia' that provides a literary, rather than psychoanalytical, approach to understanding deviance through social recognition or iatrogenesis (man-made/recognised illness):

> Then how do we conceive of the relationship between psychosis and neurosis? Everything changes depending on whether we call psychosis the process itself, or on the contrary, an interruption of the process (and what type of interruption?). Schizophrenia as a process is desiring-production, but it is this production as it functions at the end, as the limit of social production determined by the conditions of capitalism. It is our own 'malady', modern man's sickness (2004, p.142).

Exploring the terms 'deviance' or 'Otherness' can only be defined in opposition to what is understood as social norms. As with the rhizome structure that changes from within, this understanding of 'psychosis' allows the character to define for themselves 'what is posthuman'. Here, Deleuze and Guattari are describing schizophrenia, not as a scientific diagnosis, but the 'schizo' as an understanding of cognitive duality. This state suspends a figure between two 'conditions' of desire. Throughout my analysis, I explore how the serial killer is recognised as 'Other' because they are suspended between their animal and human drives and because they must straddle the state between social solidarity (a figure of fascination) and social exclusion (a figure of disgust). The characters claim their childhood trauma is to blame for their violence as well as providing contradictory statements which indicate their existence is 'natural' or 'inevitable' (Huggan, 2008). This approach to 'neurosis' contrasts Freudian assumptions that subconscious desires are inborn (Oedipus Complex). Instead, an 'Anti-Oedipus' Complex does not deny deviance or duality (in-between states) but proposes this process of schizophrenia (dual-desire) is created by culture. These concepts help to frame my discussions around complexity and how the Animal/Human as a posthuman portrayal can be defined.

1.4.3 Derrida: The Former Animal as Binary

While I approach the Animal/Human as a collapsed or non-binaristic identity, Derrida's position on binaries is useful in understanding the basis for opposition and how identity can be

divisive as well as cohesive. Derrida explores the concept of defining genre as an exercise of attempting to define limitations:

> As soon as the word 'genre' is sounded, as soon as it is heard, as soon as one attempts to conceive it, a limit is drawn. And when a limit is established, norms and interdictions are not far behind: 'Do', 'Do not' says 'genre', the word 'genre', the figure, the voice, or the law of genre (Derrida and Ronell,1980, p.56).

This limitation also reflects the difficulty of defining the serial killer by one single image or rule. I create limits in Chapter 3 to define how the killer is animal and human. There are 'laws' created by defining what the Animal/Human is and what it is not. Derrida goes on to acknowledge that the process of creating these lines often leads to contradictions. In my approach to hybrid identity as a carnival state, this allows me to embrace paradox and inversion as a key indicator of Animal/Humanity rather than a downfall of my reading. The characterisation is a response to opposition, supported by Derrida through the definition of how certain parts of an identity are given power and authority over an individual's overall perception of self. A focus on inversion also allows me to explore how human 'reason' and animal 'instinct' are opposed to defining limitations of the posthuman and accessing dual parts of a binary as a way of justifying violence.

Derrida importantly deconstructed simplistic oppositions of animal and human in his texts *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (2004), which begins to formulate 'the question of the animal', and *The Beast and The Sovereign* (2009), which further explores how those outside of social norms (animals and kings) are also outside of social law.[33] Derrida's claims are often identified as a response or debate of Claude Lévi-Strauss's discussions about animal-human positioning.[34]

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[33] Interestingly, this text (*The Beast and the Sovereign*), assesses viewpoints of those generally seen on the bottom and the hierarchical scale (animals) and those at the top (monarchy) to show how 'Otherness' transcends normality but can be either revered or degraded. One inquiry outside the scope of my current research but an area for future research would be the symbolism of religious icons to show power which could apply further Derrida's criticism on animal-human structuring. Throughout this thesis, I explore how the Animal/Human sees their postumanity in positive and negative ways.

[34] In his text *Totemism* (1963), Lévi-Strauss is well-known for his assertion 'animals are good to think with', though this is a simplification of his original writing:

> The animals in totemism cease to be solely or principally creatures which are feared, admired, or envied: their perceptible reality permits the embodiment of ideas and relations conceived by speculative thought on the basis of empirical observations. We can understand, too, that natural

Structuralist theories about the animal, such as those by Lévi-Strauss, Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, or Émile Durkheim, reflect a philosophy that prioritised animalism, only as it served human needs. Derrida's non-anthropocentric positioning more closely aligns with hybridity, and, like my claims, he argues that some classifications and hierarchies between animal and human are persisting attitudes and must be addressed to facilitate understanding of what it means to be 'living' or 'being':

> […] the complexity of 'animal languages', genetic coding, all forms of marking within which so-called human language, as original as it may be, does not allow us to 'cut' once and for all where we would like in general to cut. […] I am speaking here of very 'concrete' and very 'current' problems: the ethics and the politics of the living. We know less than ever where to cut- either at birth or at death. And this also means that we never know, and never have known, how to *cut up* a subject. Today less than ever. (1991, p.116)

The Animal/Human is unique because it 'speaks' human language through the perspective of a dual-identity, not subsuming the animal to a non-verbal language of gesture. Derrida justifies our inherent desire to 'cut' or to classify in our pursuit of understanding. Part of this classification comes from an anthropocentric narrative that defines perceptions of 'Otherness'. Grotesque hybridity does not require constructions to be cut 'either at birth or at death', but the figure is in a continuous cycle of 'becoming'.[35] Carnival inversion explores the irony that 'creating' the Animal/Human is achieved by the death of someone else which deals with complex oppositions by creating a new state of 'nature' (being). Textual analysis that engages collapsed binaries is a fitting approach because I argue that language evidences the power of a self-formed representation as a micro-analysis (repetition of connotative language, defining the

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> species are chosen not because they are 'good to eat' but because they are 'good to think' (1963, p.89).

In this, Lévi-Strauss challenges an anthropocentric perspective that animals are important to discourse because of their natural connection to physiological needs, being a common source of food. In the same vein, the animal is a figure that can help to speculate and embody a variety of understandings including 'fear', 'admiration', or 'envy', which supports the purpose that 'animals are good to think with'. This means that animalism becomes a construct for broader discourse.

[35] Trauma is likened to a form of 'death'; arguably as children are still in the process of developing their identity this is a death of their assumed trajectory (potential) more than their 'former self'. Trauma is then both the space of death and recreation (birth) as posthumanity continues in a cycle of grotesque 'becoming', constantly in flux between the new creation and recurring death.

Animal/Human through the language of 'predator' and 'prey') and a macro-analysis (analysis of narrative as an understanding of deviance and how this functions as a source of fascination).

Rhizomes or multifaceted structures of contrasting images are a core feature of understanding the Animal/Human. I use Hall's culture theory in my approach of analysing 'Otherness' by considering what he calls 'the *problem* of ideology (emphasis original, Hall, 1986, p.26)'. By this, Hall is referencing the idea that ideology is a convergence or complex rhizome of social factors that influence how society works and how it is perceived. I explore this convergence through the ways the serial killer as Animal/Human is a non-binaristic posthuman identity. In Lecter's claim, '*I* happened', the character refutes opposition of 'I' and 'Other' and embraces that these are dual functions of his identity that he is 'Other' (Animal/Human) and 'I' (Lecter perceived as a 'normal' individual). *Hannibal Rising* (2006) focuses on the narrative of justifying how '*I* happened', by suggesting that trauma directly 'created' Hannibal's killer instincts as well as his cannibalism because he is replicating his trauma from the perspective of the aggressor rather than the victim. Through an understanding of Hall's conceptualisation of ideology convergence, these series must be wholly considered to evidence how the serial killer becomes Animal/Human and the effect of these recurrences on our reading of the figure.

1.5 Trauma

Cultural productions may be developed, to varying extents, in ignorance of current scientific research, which is why cultural productions are not necessarily productions of 'truth'. PTSD is a commonly applied term to someone who experiences lingering effects or changes in mindset or behaviour after experiencing a traumatic situation. This is often used, however, as a colloquial designation by an author or audience without adherence to diagnostic criteria. Currently, scientific diagnostic criteria for PTSD have been present through three major editions

of *the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM).[36] The *DSM-III,* published in 1980, was the first diagnostic manual that listed PTSD, but it was then listed as an anxiety disorder which contributed to much of the early stigma around trauma and placed very narrow strictures on what type of experiences and manifestations could be diagnosed. The term 'trauma' as I reference it reflects a literary portrayal of PTSD that is identified by the texts. A more limited social knowledge of PTSD can be evidenced in the early publications of *Hannibal* which focus more on classic psychological approaches, such as Freudian references to maternal deprivation/transference.[37] Over two decades later, *Hannibal Rising*, evidences Lecter's post-traumatic state equated with more contemporary understandings of trauma and its potential impact on post-traumatic development (e.g., the character's sleep disturbances, muteness and regression, particularly as a child). The text mirrors the social development of our understandings surrounding definitions of trauma and traumatic reactions. Prominent trauma theorists, such as Judith Herman, focus on trauma's connection with 'memory' as a way of conceptualising the traumatic experience. Herman contextualises how trauma affects the memory of the individual and how society perceives traumatic accounts:

> The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma. People who have survived atrocities often tell their stories in a highly emotional, contradictory, and fragmented manner which undermines their credibility and thereby serves the twin imperatives of truth-telling and secrecy. (1992, p.1)

Serial killer fiction shows trauma as a 'fragmented' memory through the Animal/Human as an embodiment of contradiction. This fragmentation is also reflected in the narrative structure by how the character's trauma is revealed to the reader. The serial killer explores their disparate needs of denial and proclamation to tell the reader their 'truth' and hide their internal conflict from society

[36] Some of these editions have had additional minor revisions between edition publications.
[37] In a symbolic culmination of their sexual relationship in *Hannibal* (1999), Clarice Starling equates offering herself to Lecter in comparison to being breastfed by his mother (*Hannibal*, p.554).This scene reflects aspects of Freud's Oedipus Complex and relates his trauma back to his ability to attach, particularly with his mother. Chapter 2 explores (de)attachment more explicitly as an indicator of 'becoming'.

(the other characters in the text). These narratives of trauma then work to shape how society perceives traumatic accounts through the serial killer's attempts to justify deviance.

The current diagnostic tool, the *DSM*-5 (2013), reflects the most current research of PTSD as a stress-related disorder. Defining of trauma through a 'stressor experience' has also widened in the current edition (Roberts and Louie, 2014, p.178). By recognising trauma more broadly, it reflects the fluid approach explored in these fictional representations rather than as a fixed, constrictive list. Under the current understanding, an individual can develop PTSD after repeated or intense exposure to a stressor, through reflection on a prior stressor, or repetitive or intense exposure via media sources or other types of second-hand exposure (a friend or family member that has directly experienced the stressor). Each of the characters I analyse directly experiences a stressor by their involvement in the violent death of a family member.[38] I have also chosen texts that are varied between a single exposure (*Dexter* and *Hannibal*) or repeated stressors (*Huntress*) to show the different ways that 'becoming' can be triggered. Animal/Human 'becoming' is also inferred by texts as a result of indirect exposure to violence for characters like Astor and Cody Bennett/Morgan (Dexter's stepchildren).[39] To explore how trauma is proposed as a justified experience of the serial killer, I consider how the Animal/Human state is argued as a 'normal' reaction to what these characters have experienced which is explored through this broad approach to understanding trauma. I recognise that studies into other specific subcultures (aside from serial killers in Western culture) may have differing levels of social 'norms' to those identified here and therefore may have other concepts of what the term 'trauma' may include or exclude.

[38] As indicated in the overview of these texts in the introduction: Dexter was locked in a shipping container for days with his mother's dead body after watching her be chain sawed to death. Hannibal watches his parents die. After attempting to protect his sister, she is killed and eaten by looters (and fed to Hannibal). Cara is directly attacked, experiencing a life-threatening cut to the throat and is left to bleed to death while her family is murdered. Cara also experiences repeated sexual attack after she is placed into foster care.

[39] Their mother was repeatedly, physically abused by their biological father. The novels indicate that though Rita attempted to protect them from these experiences, the children were still aware of the abuse. While I do not explore their posthumanity in depth, the texts insinuate that both Astor and Cody have experienced initial 'becoming' and that they seek Dexter's tutledge to embrace becoming further posthuman and learn the process of hunting that Dexter adheres to.

As John Connolley and Declan Burke state: 'Fiction is not reflective but refractive by nature: it takes human experience and allows us to see its constituent parts broken down and examined in new and unfamiliar ways (2012, p.299)'. Mark Seltzer would identify this same disconnect as 'a return to the real' (2007, p.23). This perception of 'reality' is something I discuss to address how serial killer fiction provides a new way for us to look at deviance. The nature of trauma allows the reader to explore the process of change that occurs in a non-judgmental way. I also consider how posthuman theory utilises similar expectations from criminology, trauma, and culture theories to reinforce certain biases such as the use of gender in characterisation.[40]

In defining traumatic 'reactions' through gesture, there is a spectrum of expected responses which can be identified as 'normal'. I define Animal/Human 'becoming' as an 'atypical' reaction, though one that has a clear history that justifies this assumption. For example, anxiety triggered by a traumatic situation may be a 'typical' response but is not likened to PTSD while more extreme avoidance, such as induced agoraphobia is seen as 'atypical'. Under real-world conditions, serial killing would not be considered a 'normal' reaction, even to violent trauma, and even in those who experience diagnosed PTSD. These assumptions of 'typical' reactions are situationally applied to the fictional narratives as an understanding that the development of the Animal/Human identity is unique to the fictional characterisation and cannot be applied more generally to survivors of violence. Trauma theorist Paul Verhaeghe differentiates between clinical diagnosis and 'normativity' where actions are considered in relation to justification (using a person's past as 'mitigating circumstances'):

> The problem is that this observation inevitably relies on the concept of normality as an average. […] To maintain that everything must be situated in chronological terms implies that the present can be explained on the basis of the past, and that both of these determine the future. Put differently, it implies that what is actual can be entirely explained by the past, not just the disorders, but normality as well. The risk, then, is that the following message is implicitly sent: anything that can be traced back to a life history is explainable, comprehensible and, hence, *acceptable*. The hyperbolic but logical extension of the so-

[40] In Chapter 2 I discuss how gender stereotypes influence our understanding of posthumanity, particularly by contrasting Cara as a female to the traditional male serial killers portrayed by Dexter and Hannibal.

> called ‘mitigating circumstances’ serves as an illustration. ‘He beats his wife, but what do you expect? He had an unhappy childhood’. Nevertheless, even insanity has ethical limits. (2018, p.13)

This definition is important to my argument, as I rely on the concept of ‘normality’ over pathology, to justify the character’s actions. The ‘implicit messages’ that Verhaeghe indicates are the assumptions that lay the foundation for the serial killer as Animal/Human. Manifestation of a deviant identity is used as a literary representation for PTSD and to ‘explain’ or ‘comprehend’ the existence of serial killers. This helps to answer questions such as: If behaviour cannot be fully explained by a traumatic past, can it be explained if the character is not fully human? I am asserting that these two factors must be considered in conjunction to understand why the serial killer functions as a fascinating figure, particularly one that the audience ‘roots’ for. This helps explain how we perceive deviance as a result of this characterisation.

The type of interpersonal violence shown in these texts helps to generate empathy for the characters. Positioning these characters as victims, as well as predators, helps to justify their actions as a result of suffering. These assertions are well-supported by our social understanding of traumatic reactions. As readers, we do not need these claims to *be true*, we need them to be *reasonably* true and, therefore, believable. Violent homicides are statistically more likely to result in ‘traumatic reactions’ and are, therefore, a realistic aspect of the cultural production of serial killers. Robert Davis et.al. outlines several previous studies about PTSD development in Western adults after they experienced the death of a loved one: ‘In a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults, 23% of those who lost an immediate family member to homicide had PTSD at some time during their lives (2013, p.137)’. These rates were notably higher than in studies that dealt with other personal traumas or the sudden (accidental/natural) death of a family member by half. Serial killing is still an atypical reaction to violent interpersonal trauma but, more aligned our cultural knowledge of PTSD and these indications of environmental causation for affective deviance contribute to the character’s self-narrative. If characters had, before trauma, displayed psychopathic tendencies (indicating inborn deviance), an emotional disconnect would have

inhibited the expressive response needed to develop post-traumatic 'stress'. Though none of the individuals in a separate study by Jochem Willemsen et.al. were chosen particularly because of their childhood trauma, this source also indicates a connection between violent trauma and the development of an affective disorder:

> Inspection of the individual cases that reported this type of traumatic event revealed that 60% involved the accidental death of a family member or friend, 33% involved the suicide of a family member or friend, and only 7% of the cases involved the violent death of a family member or friend through crime (2012, p.519).

Each of the characters discussed throughout this thesis falls into that minority percentage who loses a family member to a purposeful violent crime. The unique nature of these figures allows authors to theorise and create assumptions about how deviance may be linked to trauma. Trauma research broadly suggests that people are shaped by their experiences which considers a causational approach to behaviourism as an understanding of identity, defining it as performative and based on learned systems (nurture) over a genetic approach (nature). These texts assume that trauma acts as a conception of, or creation to, an alternate identity (Animal/Human).

1.6 Posthuman Theory

Through critical analysis, the original contribution of this thesis provides a reading of how serial killers are self-defined as Animal/Human as a form of posthuman positioning.[41] Human-Animal Studies is the interdisciplinary study of relationships between humans and animals and encompasses posthuman theory. This section explores how I use posthuman and animal studies in my analysis. A surge in sociological research of the 1970s and 80s began asking the question: what does it mean to be human? Out of these discourses, came several branches of posthumanism including animal-humanism, cyborg hybridity (machine-humanism), and even post-human ahumanism (extinction of humanity). As a result of this, many traditional critiques

[41] In the Introduction to this thesis, I identified how 'posthuman positioning' is a term that identifies my approach of categorising the ambiguity of Animal/Humanity through a lens of posthuman theory and interdisciplinary theories of the grotesque and hybridity.

across the humanities were re-evaluated during this time from the perspective of previously under-researched sub-groups including: the role of feminism, racial and ethnic minorities, and animals. My reading of the Animal/Human transgresses several of these discourses on 'Otherness' as representations of being 'not fully human'. While I primarily highlight the animal-humanism branch of posthumanism, there are some minor areas where broader contexts of 'Otherness' such as superhuman self-image may also reflect additional branches of posthuman theories. This reflects how my understanding of posthumanism is guided by cultural studies. Cary Wolfe, a key voice in animal-human posthumanism, identifies that the main role of cultural studies is to study repressed groups and how this contributes to a wider understanding of the power given to cultural productions to evidence understanding:

> […] much of what we call cultural studies situates itself squarely, if only implicitly, on what looks to me more and more like a fundamental repression that underlies most ethical and political discourse: repressing the question of nonhuman subjectivity, taking it for granted that the subject is always already human. […] debates in the humanities and social sciences between well-intentioned critics of racism, (hetero)sexism, classism, and all other -isms that are the stock-in-trade of cultural studies almost always remain locked within an unexamined framework of *speciesism.* (2003, p.1)

Through an exploration of the Animal/Human as a tentative identity, posthuman theories, particularly those of animal-humanism, help to evidence 'nonhuman subjectivity' that may be repressed in general culture. Throughout this thesis, I address several biases of cultural assumptions which have been based primarily around these categories: racism, how serial killing is predominantly a narrative of 'white' individuals; (hetero)sexism, that killers, such as Jeffrey Dahmer and Aileen Wuornos are 'Othered' as gender-queer and by defining their sexuality as non-heteronormative or characters such as Dexter are asexualised in relation to their deviance; and classism, the serial killers portrayed in this thesis are all middle and upper-middle-class individuals who easily blend into society because of their cultural capital. Chapter 2 will look more closely at the bounds between the serial killer as broadly 'Other' and more specifically Animal/Human. In Chapter 3, I address the other bias of cultural productions that narratives are traditionally defined anthropocentrically with the human as primary unless 'Otherly' defined. Wolfe

helpfully considers the animal in defining posthumanism and transhumanism (biotechnical enhancement). Wolfe's texts have sought to overview, as well as critique posthuman theories, often noting that these theories 'gloss over' or provide a 'privileged' perspective without providing a framework (Wolfe, 2010, p.xi-xii):

> […] 'the human' is achieved by escaping or repressing not just its animal origins in nature, the biological, and the evolutionary, but more generally by transcending the bonds of materiality and embodiment altogether. […] posthumanism is the opposite of transhumanism, and in this light, transhumanism should be seen as an intensification of humanism. (Wolfe, 2010, p.xv)

Wolfe's understanding of posthumanism as 'transcendent' is reflective of the way Animal/Humanity is conceptualised in serial killer fiction. By defining themselves as 'something new entirely', these characters do not just embrace animalism, they embody a new concept of 'human'.

The Animal/Human does not just give an understanding to being human, it gives an understanding of the cultural conditions which define humanity. One concern with using traditional approaches to the Animal/Human as binaristic is the limited nature of this anthropocentric structural approach which assumes a one-way progression upwards from animal to human. Though Charles Darwin may or may not have intended his text, *On the Origin of Species* (1859), to be applied as an understanding of deviance, early pursuits which have had widespread significance (such as Darwin's theories) have laid a long-standing basis for representations that test the bounds between what it means to 'be animal' or 'be human'. Darwin's assertions, about the process and connection between animals and humans, are aligned with previous animal-human characterisations as a traditionally structured binary.[42] An evolutionary perspective infers

[42] Darwin's texts are also a good argument for intent of a production which can being separate from the cultural reception. Darwin sets out in his preface of *On the Origin of Species* (1859) his intent for his research to further an understanding of religion ('the book of God's word') through studying the relationship between religion and science. Despite these intents, historically his texts have been used as the basis of a theory predominantly referenced to refute science and religion as structuralist opposites. I do not theorise whether the authors intended to particularly represent posthumanism, I only argue that the wording used does reflect this.

that by 'becoming human', (or developing increasingly complex organs to survive) the animal 'levels up' or develops forwardly. These discourses also consider the lines and uncertainty between what it means to 'be human' and to 'be animal'. While the focus is often on the anthropocentric perspective of evolving 'up', these types of considerations have been heavily explored through fictional productions which consider what it would be like for the human to de-evolve, such as in portrayals of the werewolf. To then 'become animal', in a structuralist understanding, would be a regression. In a non-linear approach to animal-humanism, the ultimate 'goal' is not to become human but 'become posthuman' which differentiates a tenuous identity (Animal/Human) as a positive achievement.[43]

Current literature on the posthuman condition considers how the social relationship between human and animal is evolving. Matthew Calarco challenges modern theorists (Heidegger, Levinas, and Agamben) for not devoting more focus in their theories of philosophy to understanding the role of what Calarco references as 'the question of the animal' (2008, p.2).[44] Calarco recognises a posthuman approach (evidenced through a focus on the importance of Human-Animal Studies) as a contributive way to approach interdisciplinary studies towards an understanding of identity:

> […] many theorists have questioned whether there actually is a shared essence or set of characteristics binding all animals together. Much like the critique of essentialism in feminism, queer theory, and race studies, theorists in animal studies seek to track the ways in which the concept of 'animality' functions to demarcate humans clearly from animals and establish homogeneities among what appear to be radically different forms of animal life. In doing so, they seek to demonstrate that the notion of animality plays more of a constitutive than denotative role in discourses about animals. (2008, p.3)

My posthuman non-binaristic approach of the Animal/Human is 'constitutive' to understanding a dual identity as 'Other'. I trace the ways that gesture and identity 'demarcate' the Animal/Human

[43] While I will not take a particular stance of posthumanism as inherently or ethically 'good' or 'bad', it must be considered that the characters define their state as complex and, at times, both of these categorisations.
[44] He discusses this range of thinkers and criticisms in his text, *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* (2008).

without considering only an anthropocentric reading. Donna Haraway is a predominant theorist in the field of posthuman studies known for challenging the limits of anthropocentric perspectives through her works. Haraway defines machine-animal posthumanism as a struggle between science and culture:[45]

> This is a struggle over life and death, but the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion. Contemporary science is full of cyborgs- creatures simultaneously animal and machine, who populate worlds ambiguously natural and crafted. (1985, p.83)

Haraway goes on to indicate that 'cyborgs', her entry point into a discussion of collapsed identities, are becoming a way of destructuring the 'polarity of public and private'. These same constructions can be applied to other discussions of posthumanity as well. Haraway's theories have been questioned for their potentially contradictory claims, like in her text *When Species Meet* (2008) where she explores the relationship between animal and human while still using anthropocentric terminology such as 'companion species'. This terminology would indicate that pets are the companions for humans, not an equal or reversed relationship as her other writings to destruct anthropocentricty claim. These criticisms of posthuman theories do not impact the efficacy of my claims on social bias in connotative language and further prove that we have a baseline assumption of 'norms' which are difficult to overcome. The Animal/Human attempts to reconstruct their identity through hybridity by sometimes prioritising the animal and sometimes the human, viewing identity as a complex rhizome that must be battled with. In a review of Harraway's text, *Primate Visions* (1989), Matt Cartmill identifies that these same criticisms of early posthuman theory texts are the reason that these texts fulfil their purpose:

> This book infuriated me; but that is not a defect in it, because it is supposed to infuriate people like me, and the author would have been happier still if I had blown out an artery. In short, this book is flawless, because all its deficiencies are deliberate products of art. Given its assumptions, there is nothing here to criticize [sic]. The only course open to a reviewer who dislikes this book as much as I do is to question its author's fundamental

[45] In her early essay, *A manifesto for cyborgs: Science, technology, and socialist feminism in the 1980s* (1985), Haraway also identifies cyborg posthumanism as a discourse on 'Otherness'.

> assumptions—which are big-ticket items involving the nature and relationships of language, knowledge, and science. (1991, p.67)

Cartmill indicates that perceived deficiencies in the theoretical connections of Haraway's comparisons fulfil the purpose of a posthuman critique, to demand that the reader questions assumptions and the 'nature and relationships of language, knowledge, and science'. The *Journal of Posthuman Studies* is a peer-reviewed journal dedicated to this same criticism of human-cultural evolution:

> As the boundaries between human and 'the other', technological, biological and environmental, are eroded and perceptions of normalcy are challenged, they have generated a range of ethical, philosophical, cultural, and artistic questions that this journal seeks to address. (PSUP, n.d.)

The self-declared provisional identity of the serial killer becomes a cultural way of 'processing' or 'answering' these same questions. In one such publication in this journal, Rosi Braidotti defines how posthumanist critique is an approach of shared attachments and transcendence:

> Becoming posthuman consequently is a process of redefining one's sense of attachment and connection to a shared world, a territorial space: urban, social, psychic, ecological, planetary as it may be. It expresses multiple ecologies of belonging, while it enacts the transformation of one's sensorial and perceptual coordinates, in order to acknowledge the collective nature and outward-bound direction of what we still call 'the self'. (2017, p.25-6)

I explore the ways emotional (de)attachment is paralleled to the process of 'becoming' Animal/Human in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 evidences how Animal/Humanity expresses a grotesque hybrid identity, which is a 'multiple ecology of belonging'. Throughout this thesis, I focus on how a provisional identity process evidences transcendence as a foundational assumption to understanding deviance. In Chapter 4, I look outwards and discuss how these understandings redefine our broader participation with the world (culture).

Several salient texts on posthumanity, such as Haraway's work on cyborgs (1991) or N. Kathryn Hayles' *How We Became Posthuman* (1999), have helped to define the posthuman approach to reading identity but focus more on the relationship between humans and technology

(or machines) than an Animal/Human approach. MacCormack has also contributed to posthuman theory, particularly through her analysis of Deleuze and Guattari's 'The Other Person' to understand the philosophical 'self' and the image of deformed bodies, bridging the gap between theory (philosophy) and reflection (sociology).[46] MacCormack's later works offer other approaches to considering animality and ahumanity (post-posthumanism) but do not make clear connections to criminality or, specifically, the serial killer as animal.[47] MacCormack's works heavily reference the ethical approach of Benedict Spinoza, which have laid a foundation for evidencing 'desire' as 'power'. This correlates to my discussions on the cultural power of fascination which are a key feature in literary studies of serial killing as well. While I draw on these foundational texts for my understanding of posthuman postioning, I continue to expand my claims to evidence how the serial killer creates a self-assumed version of posthumanity.

The process of 'Othering' defines how characters are far removed from an assumed experience of the reader. While I specifically analyse how Animal/Human characterisation 'Others' the serial killer, discourse of public and private spaces and comedic inversion throughout these texts enhance generalised 'Otherness'. Diane Raymond describes the process of queering (or 'Othering') as a process of post-structural reduction or rejection of 'normal':

> The term is itself open-ended, and its advocates argue that its fluidity is to be embraced rather than 'fixed'. Though there is no consensus on the term's meaning (and who is included and who excluded), there is general agreement that the 'queer' is politically radical, rejects binary categories (like heterosexual/homosexual), embraces more fluid categories, and tends to be 'universalizing' [sic] rather than 'minoritizing'… (2003, p.98)

As Raymond herself indicates, by using the example 'like heterosexual/homosexual', queer theory has predominant links to gender or sexuality studies as this is how it is commonly applied. The

[46] In *Posthuman Ethics* (2012), MacCormack explores the assumption of posthuman theory that 'Others' do not begin from anthropocentricity and extend outwards but exist in a controversial in-between space that MacCormack challenges the reader to think creatively about.
[47] In *The Animal Catalyst* (2014) and *The Ahuman Manifesto* (2020) MacCormack considers alternative approaches to the 'question of the animal' and the 'question of the human'. *Ahuman Manifesto* considers posthuman theory of human extinction through a thematic approach while *Animal Catalyst* provides textual and visual analysis of posthuman theory to art, literature, and media.

characters I analyse do not use non-binaristic 'fluidity' to describe their sexuality, but instead, claim that they are 'unable to feel emotion' or normalised sexual drives which 'Others' them from the way humans are expected to feel or express emotion.[48] The character's Animal/Human-ness is the primary way of defining this 'Otherness', though this is sometimes achieved by exploring how 'Otherness' is additionally inferred (such as through the character's foreignness or gender as discussed in Chapter 2). For these reasons, descriptors of 'Othering' are a more helpful term than 'queering' to understanding hybrid 'becoming' because of the broader cultural contexts associated with these terms. This is especially important in the discussion of the Animal/Human as nested opposition which has further issues with anthropocentric stigmatisation as discussed in Chapter 3. What is important to note here is that the rejection of fixed terms and binary categories is a key approach of critical culture theory, which can explain how these characters come to be perceived as 'Other'.

1.7 Justifying Criminality

In this section, I define why it is important to contextualise the reader's understanding of deviance. Not surprisingly, serial killer fiction presents a unique perspective into deviance through first-person narration, but what was interesting to me was the way the reader became involved in the character's process of neutralisation. Evidenced by the popularity of serial killer texts, the audience participates in justifying why these characters exist and should evade capture which evidences how our perceptions of criminality can be socially influenced through storytelling. Volkan Topalli identifies that neutralisation is a process where we conceptualise based on reward

[48] Dexter particularly describes his inability to feel empathy or guilt. This inhibition is key to exploring how he can enact violence and justify his killing: 'When I was much younger I used to feel cheated by my lack of human feelings. I could see the huge barrier between me and humanity, a wall built of feelings I would never feel, and I resented it very much. But one of those feelings was guilt- one of the most common and powerful, in fact- and as I realized that Weiss was telling me that I had turned him loose as a killer, I also realized that I really ought to feel a little guilt, and I was very grateful that I did not (*Design*, p.217)'. In the process of embracing his posthumanity, the character recognises that while he once desired normality ('I used to feel cheated'), he has now fully 'become' further Animal/Human by embracing his detachment.

obtainment (2005). For the reader, consuming narratives becomes a process of belongingness, bringing us into the world of the serial killer. To accept belongingness (identifying with the serial killer) we must not only neutralise deviance but also neutralise the role of 'good'. If 'good' can never be ultimately reached or understood, then recognised 'deviance' does not carry the same negative connotation. The inversion of carnivalesque, as well as the rhizomic characterisation of hybridity, both reinforce the instability needed for the process of neutralisation. On some level, the reader must accept the character's framework of identity, that their deviance is inevitable, and that their violence is justified.

Criminality is a subculture, categorised solely by deviance. In rejecting social norms, the characters discussed in this thesis describe a different approach to moral decision making, particularly based on how they define 'respect'. Characters use a process of neutralisation which is referenced throughout this thesis (sometimes referred to as justification or ambiguity). Neutralisation is a process that transfers the nature of morality from an understanding of certain right or wrong to judgments of aesthetics or sensibility. Created by David Matza and Gresham Sykes (1957), neutralisation theory is used to hypothesise how juvenile delinquency is legitimised through statements of denial. Social disorganisation theory provides a framework for environmental factors changing the socialisation of communities and was particularly developed to study juvenile crime (Wright, 2011, p.27). Social disorganisation gives credibility to the idea that those who have been traumatised are more likely to become serial killers than their non-traumatised peers by highlighting how ineffective social controls increase delinquency (Brookman, 2005, p.102; Wright, 2011, p.29). Trauma indicates an inherent instability and fragmentation needed to understand deviance. The characters do not act in line with socially accepted actions as their motivation but instead redefine their actions based on their relativistic code. The breakdown of social controls on repressing juvenile crime or delinquency legitimises portrayals of vigilante 'justice' as seen in the serial killer as an antihero.

Expressions of neutralisation are sentiments that downplay an individual's culpability or responsibility because of outside factors which ignore the innate morality of an act. In an analysis of interview transcripts, Mark Pettigrew explores commonly verbalised neutralisations used by serial killers. Pettigrew's study provides an understanding of how moral justifications function as part of the public narrative surrounding serial killing:

> To offer some justification or excuse for killing is not uncommon, derivations of 'he asked for it' or 'he had it coming' not only are frequent but also have been incorporated into profiling typologies. Rationalizing [sic] and justifying to themselves, their crimes, mitigating their responsibility, speaks to how they are able to go about their daily lives without arousing the suspicion of those around them. (2020, p.70)

These frequently used statements of denial place onus on the victim over the perpetrator, a main factor in discussions of the antihero. Neutralisation is not only a strategy used by serial killers but is central to the discussion of delinquency applied here. By neutralising personal accountability, statements of denial allow serial killers to defend a dual self-identity of a public persona which contributes 'positively' to society through their private actions (killing) portrayed as 'taking out the trash'. Fascination with serial killer narratives require the audience to suspend disbelief and partake in the same statements of neutralisation: the characters 'aren't *that* bad' because they function as vigilantes. Or, because the characters (and their victims) aren't 'real' it should not matter whether they are apprehended or not. Audiences continue following the figure of the vigilante killer, despite potential negative perceptions towards the character's actions. A study on viewer perceptions of *Dexter* by Steven Granelli and Jason Zenor (2016, p.5068-5071) shows that viewer perception can be influenced by their own past experiences. 65% of the individuals who participated and labelled their perception of *Dexter* as a representation of a 'Justified Vigilante' (as opposed to 'Psychological Puzzle' or a form of 'Deviant Escapism') had also experienced some form of victimisation. This could indicate how our concept of fictional characters is influenced by our socialisation. For those in this study who did not have a past of victimisation, the positive perception of 'justice' (that the character only kills 'bad guys') also overwhelmed the negative reaction to his killing, just as curiosity may outweigh disgust in

exploring a fascination with the grotesque. These types of reasoning coincide with several neutralisation approaches defined by Matza and Sykes in *Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency* (1957). Vigilantism itself is an approach that centres around denial of the victim:

> Even if the delinquent accepts the responsibility for his deviant actions and is willing to admit that his deviant actions involve an injury or hurt, the moral indignation of self and others may be neutralized [sic] by an insistence that the injury is not wrong in light of the circumstances. The injury, it may be claimed, is not really an injury; rather, it is a form of rightful retaliation or punishment. By a subtle alchemy the delinquent moves him-self into the position of an avenger and the victim is transformed into a wrong-doer. (Matza and Sykes, 1957, p.668)

In the narratives analysed in this thesis, each character is placed into a 'rightful' position in comparison to their victims: Hannibal Lecter begins his killing by retaliating against the men who killed and ate his sister; Dexter Morgan only kills those who he can 'prove' to have breached his ethical code, generally paedophiles and murderers of 'innocents'; Cara Lindstrom (*Huntress*) kills those who have forcibly prostituted or trafficked women or abused children. By choosing these targets, even the fictional detectives in these narratives question whether these characters ethically *should* be apprehended and provide a legitimised justification that vigilante actions are not 'bad' because the victim is unsympathetic. Contextually, the serial killer is represented positively because these ethical denials appeal to our 'higher loyalties'. The narrative of the antihero universalises that retaliation (in this case through criminal means) may be necessary to achieve social order and peace is therefore equated to 'morality' (hierarchically more desirable). By redefining social cohesion and protection of the innocent as the 'ultimate good', the presence of the vigilante is a positive force in obtaining justice. The neutralisation approach does not consider how the initial injustice could be avoided (harming or killing 'innocents') nor does it rely on the legal justice system to be effective. Instead, it addresses these issues through the construction of a third party (the vigilante) that acts as a middle-ground and evidences social anxieties about the nature of justice.

The antihero is placed as the centre of contradiction that is justified by traumatic 'becoming'. However, the character is not the only one who must neutralise their participation in violence. In our fascination with the grotesque, the audience often utilises a similar neutralisation technique: denial of responsibility. The audience neutralises their role in perpetuating cultural productions of violence because they are partaking in a fictional or sterilised narrative rather than becoming themselves vigilantes or ethically supporting the real-world iteration of a serial killer.[49] The role of the consumer is directly addressed in the culmination of the Netflix series *Don't F**k with Cats: Hunting an Internet Killer* (Netflix, 2019). The limited series follows a real-world pursuit of a social-action vigilante group to find and bring justice to a man that had posted videos online of himself torturing and killing cats. The citizen 'investigator', Deanna, notes that the consumerist drive of making narratives and feeding into popularised images perpetuates fascination with violence:

> One of the things that still bothers me about this time in my life and that keeps me up sometimes at night is: were we complicit in Luka's crimes? Do you remember what Luka wrote at the murder scene on the inside of the closet? 'If you don't like the reflection, don't look in the mirror. I don't care'. I always wondered what that meant. When we look at ourselves in the mirror, are we proud of ourselves? Are we ashamed of what happened? You know maybe I did exactly what Luka wanted. […]
>
> Did we feed his narcissism to the point where he had to go forward? So much that he was pushed to do what he did? Did we feed the monster, or did we create it? And you [points to camera], you at home watching a whole fucking documentary about Luka Magnotta, are you complicit? Perhaps it's time we turned off the machine ('Closing the Net', 1.3).

In these statements, Deanna turns the 'mirror' back on the consumer. By partaking in narratives, even after the killer is caught, does the consumer then become a complicit part of inciting violence? By 'feeding the monster', this is not only referencing a particular individual who is fuelled

[49] By 'sterilised', I am referring to other forms of grotesque fascination with criminality such as true crime or media coverage of real serial killers where the audience only becomes part of the fascination when a killer is apprehended or by 'supporting' the process that seeks their apprehension. There are factions of society who go further, sending killers fan mail or seeking romantic relationships with known killers (known as Hybristophilia) though this goes beyond the understanding of 'fascination' with the cultural production as discussed in this thesis.

by attention, but questions whether a fascination with violence itself is perpetuating violent tendencies. In the process of popularising these fictional texts, I claim that the audience furthers the concept of the serial killer as posthuman by accepting their statements of neutralisation. In Chapter 2, I consider the process of 'becoming' as a socialised response to trauma that conceptualises how culture 'creates' the monster (an Animal/Human killer). I explore this throughout my thesis as a fascination with the grotesque and Chapter 4 further delves into the role of the 'consumer' in these characterisations. A British Crime Survey in 2001 noted that 75% of people in Britain acquire their understanding of crime and the criminal justice system from media sources (Mayr and Machin, 2011, p.2). Ross Bartels and Ceri Parsons, however, note that no published studies are looking at how real serial killers use cultural productions or 'shared understandings' of serial killing when participating in a dialogue about their crimes (2009, p.268). The closest study on the impact of cultural productions of crime is Greg Martin's *Crime, Media, and Culture* (2018) though he does not identify animality as influential to discourses of power or identity. Despite the importance of noting the impact of fascination in perpetuating future iterations of narrative, a study on the impacts of consumption on future productions is beyond the scope of this thesis but is something to consider in future research. In considering these approaches to neutralisation, I explain how my conclusions help to understand deviance as a cultural discourse.

1.8 Studying Pop Culture Texts

Academic studies on the fascination of the figure of the serial killer extend beyond real killers. Simpson's *Psycho paths* (2000) is focused on the media popularity of serial murderers. Though Simpson's text outlines social interest and fictional representation, it does not make claims about particular symbols or binaries. There are several constructions, I argue, that are used in forms of fiction portrayals to characterise a cultural reproduction of serial killers as posthuman. These are: the presence of childhood trauma as causational to killing, the symbolic language used to portray deviant ideology, and implementation of an Animal/Human hybrid (or

collapsed binary) as the manifestation of identity. Each of the series I analyse is focused on the adult serial killer as the source of narration but contains narrative flashbacks to various points of their childhood trauma and developmental reactions spawning from their trauma. Peters analyses how 'fragmentation' is used to manipulate the reader's response:

> Both Tom [Ripley] and Dexter are stable enough to be able to fake concern for others and related social responses – although these sometimes come dangerously close to fragmenting (one of the strategies to keep the reader/viewer in a state of nervous anticipation). […] there is something within us that, like Tom and Dexter, wants to get away with transgressive behaviour too, and they provide an outlet for that anti-cultural desire. (Peters, 2014, p.1; p.4)

This 'nervous anticipation' is heightened for the reader as they receive information about the character's history out of sequence which leads us to assume there's always something more to be revealed. Their ability to 'almost belong' also stabilises their characterisation on uneven ground, heightening the anxiety that at any time they may be discovered, and the narrative could end with their apprehension or death. This is used to create an understanding of the character's 'becoming' and to ambiguate their tendency towards violence. In addition, the narratives were chosen because they utilise similar forms of symbolic language of the grotesque throughout the series which reflects on an inner narrative of trauma and reclaiming power.

Both *Dexter* and *Hannibal* have previously received a breadth of attention from a variety of research areas. It is important that I use these popular narratives to evidence influential characterisation while developing a new approach to analyse the fascination of this figure. Concerning *Dexter*, four main texts have previously considered the theoretical applications of the series: *Dexter and Philosophy: Mind over Spatter* (2011) edited by Richard Greene, George A. Reisch, and Rachel Robison-Greene which considers the ethical complexities of Dexter as a serial killer and vigilante with a 'Code of Ethics' in the Showtime (2006-2013) television series; Bella DePaulo's *The Psychology of Dexter* (2010) which is a compiled series of essays from psychologists discussing the psychological complexities of narrative; Douglas L. Howard's *Dexter: Investigating Cutting Edge Television* (2010) which considers the critical response to

Dexter; and Mareike Jenner's *American TV Detective Dramas: Serial Investigations* (2016) which discusses the collapsed binary of Dexter as criminal and detective. While the latter two texts do address broader discourses of genre and cultural situation, all four major texts are centred generally around an analysis of the television adaptation more than the book series or franchise, as I do. None of these texts focuses on Animal/Human identity or the character's role in creating these assumptions. In relation to *Hannibal*, a number of texts have used the titular character as an example of the serial killer in fiction and real-life contexts (some treating Lecter as though he is a 'real' case study). Most of these texts incorporate the series into broader discussions of killing such as Jane Caputi's *American Psychos: The Serial Killer in Contemporary Fiction* (1993) which considers the 'truthfulness' of *Hannibal'*s representations. Other criminology-based texts consistently make passing references to the character of Hannibal Lecter in conjunction with other real killers (Seltzer, 2007, p.40; Vronsky, 2004, p.38-9). Like the Greene et.al. text on Dexter, *Hannibal Lecter and Philosophy: The Heart of the Matter* (2016) by Joseph Westfall again considers ethical complexities of the franchise, but without proposing an understanding of how these representations are produced or what strategies are used to build these representations. Kavita Finn's *Becoming: Genre, Queerness, and Transformation in NBC's Hannibal* (2019) assists in considering a complex portrayal of the figure through the television adaptation of *Hannibal* but does not consider a binary structure (or non-binaristic identity). I look to draw on the influence of these representations that this body of previous research has established while filling the gap in knowledge around the serial killer as a portrayal of Animal/Humanim. The *Huntress* series has not yet been the focus of academic texts, though this may be due to its current transmedia limitation as it is only a written series (novels) while the texts listed above are developed (whether majorly or minorly) with discussions of the film and television adaptations contributing to the novels' popularity.

An understanding of serial killing, and vigilantism, is central to the argument of image creation discussed throughout this literature review. Construction of serial killer representations are not only prevalent but recognised as influential inside and outside of academic circles:

> Recent surveys of the store of general knowledge possessed by Americans reveal that 11 percent have a firm grasp of evaporation; 23 percent know pretty much where the equator is […] Edgar Alan Poe is correctly linked to 'writer' by 19 percent […] Yet a solid 100 percent, every single adult and child, knows Jeffrey Dahmer, identifies him as a serial killer, homosexual, cannibal, ghoul- now dead, killed by a righteous man, albeit a prison inmate, who had enough. (Kincaid, 1997, p.ix)

While James Kincaid goes on to admit that his 100 per cent statistic may be 'slightly' overblown, several valid observations can be drawn from his conclusions. Firstly, he notes how widespread knowledge of serial killers spreads throughout the fabric of Western culture, even further than basic scientific facts or famous literary authors. Secondly, the grouping of adjectives used to describe Jeffrey Dahmer, 'serial killer, homosexual, cannibal, ghoul' assumes connectedness between these four 'Othered' qualities which are each individually defined in deviance to the political norms and collectively used to emphasise the connection or comorbidity of deviant qualities. Thirdly, Kincaid associates Dahmer's killer as 'righteous' despite being imprisoned, a culpable criminal, and now a killer himself but 'justified' because Dahmer's victim status is nullified due to his deviance. These same assumptions are central to understanding the serial killer as an entity of cultural production discussed in this thesis: the fascination or celebrity of these fictional figures and the role this plays in social knowledge, the 'Otherness' which defines certain ideologies as deviant and how deviance is multiplied, and the role of ethical justification when serial killers are portrayed as vigilantes and traumatised individuals.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the ways key aspects to my claims have previously been treated in research as approaches to complex discourses. The areas covered included: Bakhtin's carnival grotesque and research into the gesture of disgust, the interdisciplinary nature

of serial killer fiction, the rhizome as a concept of hybrid non-linear representation, conceptualising 'trauma', positioning of the serial killer as Animal/Human, and neutralisation as cultural positioning of deviance. By using the theories of carnivalesque atmosphere and the grotesque body, I have been able to conceptualise why the serial killer is a figure of fascination and worthy of study as well as provide a framework for approaching inversion and contradiction which are evident throughout fiction as characters seek to 'work out' their experiences. The grotesque body provides a starting point for conceptualising Animal/Humanism as a state that is continually in process, providing a literal and figurative in-between space between binaristic states. In the next chapter, I further explore how the process of 'becoming' develops characterisation of the serial killer, suspended between these states. Trauma initiates a cycle of change that attempts to explain deviance and ask the question: If the characters experienced something terrible and life-changing, why wouldn't they be damaged? This kind of reasoning helps the reader to justify the character's violence through human logic while theories of posthumanity help to justify violence by creating new categorisation outside of the traditional juxtaposition of the animal and human. Although many of the terms I have referenced are complex and need to be further evaluated throughout this thesis, this chapter has provided an overview of how I conceptualise the figure of the serial killer as an antihero and a representation of animal hybridity. I have overviewed how my positioning helps provide a new understanding of the serial killer not previously addressed in the current research into texts such as *Dexter* and *Hannibal*. In the next chapter, I continue to develop my new framework for reading the serial killer by evaluating further how the process of 'becoming' is evidenced and how this evidences deviance as a result of trauma.

Chapter 2: 'Becoming' Something New

2.1 Introduction

My primary task throughout this thesis is to explore how Animal/Humanity is self-identified by characters to ambiguate serial killing. In Chapter 1, I overviewed the prior research from which I have built this perspective. In this chapter, I explore the process of 'becoming' that manifests out of the text's acknowledgement that trauma disrupts cycles of development and attachment. I use 'identity' in this thesis to define the psycho-social experience which is altered or adjusted from a recognised 'normal' due to environmental factors (trauma) (Breakwell, 2015, p.160).[50] Glynis Breakwell outlines how identity can 'circumscribe' traditional development (create a deviant identity) when responding to 'threatening experiences' (trauma) and the difficulty of using structuralist terminology:[51]

> The term identity has been used so far as if it were unproblematic. This is not correct. The term is highly problematic. Theorizing [sic] about identity is like traversing a battle-field. […] The concept of identity is protean. […] identity joins terms such as character, the self-concept and personality which are used to connotate that unique syndrome of social, psychological and behavioural characteristics which differentiates one person from another (2015, p.10).

Through a reading of non-linearity, I address a 'highly problematic' characterisation that confronts these complexities. To theorise the Animal/Human, I consider the 'social' (a cultural perception of the serial killer in this chapter and Chapter 3), 'psychological' (tentative identity as a developmental reaction from trauma in this chapter), and 'behavioural' (through a critical discourse analysis on how killing and consumption are gestures of animal hybridity in Chapters 3 and 4). I argue that social assumptions drive characterisation which is an exception to the dominant criticism of trauma and empirical psychoanalysis that drives perception through

[50] These characters create and enact an identity of 'becoming' Animal/Human to invert their past role as victims and become a predator.
[51] Breakwell does this in her seminal text on trauma and identity, *Coping with Threatened Identities* (1986, republished 2015).

discourses of ‘truth’. In this chapter, I explore how serial killer fiction develops out of cultural contexts that connect minoritising features (‘Otherness’) to expectations of deviance. This serves my broader discussion for understanding how traumatised individuals are partially (or wholly) ‘absolved’, or their actions ‘neutralised’, because of an inversion of expectations that takes place within the carnival atmosphere of serial killer driven fiction, allowing for ‘almost-belongingness’ to social norms.

To create a perspective for reading these texts that is influenced by cultural discourses, I define how the Animal/Human is understood as a literary conception of psychosis or disturbed identity. Chapter 1 defined how trauma can be understood as a literary reflection of PTSD and in this chapter, I expand on how Animal/Humanity is a literary representation of psychosis. For serial killers, we accept their deviance is a result of their changed mental state. This means that we accept an in-between state where deviance is rationalised and yet is ‘Othered’ as a mental break or disconnect from norms. The serial killer becomes a cultural ‘monster’ for understanding deviance.

This chapter focuses on conceptualising how trauma leads to the development of the Animal/Human. Each of the antiheroes I analyse are ‘developed’ adults (already hybrid), after experiencing trauma as the source of ‘becoming’. However, throughout serialised texts, the reader is introduced to the ways that grotesque ‘becoming’ is a cyclical process that leads to a fuller portrayal of what it means to continue this evolution. I begin by positioning the experience of trauma against the complex terms of ‘posttraumatic growth’ and ‘change’. These characters undoubtedly are impacted by their experience but their conception of ‘becoming’ as positive or negative drives the reader’s empathy towards the character. By exploring this construction, I evidence how the process of ‘becoming’ is the logical starting point for the character being able to justify serial murder as an extension of ‘Otherness’.

Finally, my construction of ‘becoming’ as a process of change explores how designations of ‘Otherness’ are reinforced through various cultural assumptions. Animal/Human is the core

feature that identifies the serial killer but additional minoritising characteristics help to further signal the way that the serial killer is displaced from norms. These symbols help to formulate an identity of 'Otherness' as all-encompassing. These additional areas also provide an interesting contrast to posthuman discourses by redefining which lines the serial killer crosses and which ones it upholds. For example, hierarchies of anthropocentricity are often questioned, but gender stereotypes persist in characterisation. This indicates that while grotesque positioning inverts some expectations, it does not fully deconstruct all discourses which allow us to read the figure in some consistent ways.

2.2 Creating the Animal/Human

Non-linear development is evident in the process of characterisation that shows these killers 'working through' their past in the process of 'becoming' Animal/Human. Joanie Connors proposes that post-trauma changes are considered inevitable but can be classified as either 'positive' changes (e.g., personal empowerment) or 'negative' changes (e.g., paranoia) that determine behaviour as either an upwards or downwards spiral from a point of incidence (trauma). 'Becoming' is then best theorised as a process to track 'change' through a moment of 'change impulse' (trauma) and the trajectory that follows in result:

> Stresses from the environment rise and fall to push for changes or work to maintain stability. Change cycles produce the pain, chaos, awkwardness and risk that are inevitable and necessary for relationship health and productivity over time (Connors, 2011, p.313).

Though we all go through periods of stressors and cycles of change, these representations of trauma exist outside of an understanding of typical 'stressors' and, therefore, fractured 'becoming' is perceived as an atypical, though justifiable (or 'inevitable'), result. As a form of micro-evolution, the killer begins to redefine how these changes cannot be simplistically 'positive' or 'negative'. The chaotic process of 'becoming' that follows is then an attempt to regain stability or to reclaim power lost by being victimised.

In Chapter 1, I explored the characterisation of Dolarhyde in the *Hannibal* series as a figure who mimics Animal/Humanity without 'becoming'. In my analysis, I looked for indicators of what type of figure was recognised for their 'ability' to become hybrid. Cara Lindstrom's narrative in the *Huntress* series develops characterisation around repeat trauma, but also how certain forms of trauma are culturally recognised as 'more intense'. Finkelhor et.al. establish that children who experience repeat victimisation (poly-victims) are more likely to experience post-traumatic symptomology and higher levels of distress (2005, p.1298). This may indicate that characters like Cara Lindstrom are more easily primed to identity shifts because of the repeated nature of their traumas, like an animal that must adapt to their environment for survival. These texts also reinforce the justification that trauma leads to serial killing by highlighting intense and repeated interpersonal attacks.

Repetition alone does not lead to hybrid identity shifts. Dexter is a character that, on paper, was given every opportunity to succeed and recover from trauma, indicating that triggering 'becoming' is a complex causation. Discrepancies between Cara's affect pre- and post-trauma are indicate that the transition to hybridity may involve internal structures prior to the trauma:

> 'I have to say that psychologically she is an odd mix, Cara. Until the violent trauma at age five, she was raised in an excellently supportive and educated family, which means that in the critical development years between age three and four she was nurtured in the most stable and stimulus-rich environment imaginable. The processes that govern the development of personality traits, stress response and cognitive skills are formed during this period, and Cara had a situation that was optimum for neurodevelopment. She was also unusually precocious, with an IQ tested in the 140s. At the age of five, just before the attack on her family, she was already reading at a fourth-grade level […] Her grades at each subsequent school [after her trauma] varied wildly with each foster placement, from top of her class to failure across the board. She certainly suffered PTSD, as well as eating disorders and a stint of self-mutilation. And like most wards of the court she was over-prescribed medication: antidepressants, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder drugs, and antipsychotic agents. But she has no drug-related offenses or incidents on her record, which under the circumstances is rather astonishing'. (*Huntress Moon*, p.241)

Both the *Huntress* and *Hannibal* series note that these characters showed 'excellent' (advanced) development before their trauma.[52] This may indicate that another factor to 'becoming' is heightened pre-trauma intellect. The *Dexter* and *Hannibal* series' draw on stereotypes, such as the high-functioning psychopath. This trope mirrors real-life killers such as Ted Bundy who is often described by highlighting how his 'intelligence' or 'education' makes him fascinating:

> Jack the Ripper was always imagined as an aristocrat with a top hat- the best of our society gone worst. The serial killers who followed were portrayed as depraved monsters- freaks of nature- outcasts and drifters whose demented criminal features should have given them away. But not Bundy- he was like so many of us: an attractive college student with typical ambitions who drove a cute Volkswagen bug. He was an updated and egalitarianized [sic] version of Jack the Ripper- a killer of superior social qualities attributed to all young middle-class upwardly mobile professionals taking over America. In other words, unlike serial killers of the past, he was not one of 'them' but one of 'us'. (Vronsky, 2004, p.6)

The perception is that these qualities make for a 'better', more interesting, serial killer and the type worth creating fictional representations to mirror. Michael Aamodt et.al. note that the 'average' serial killer does not necessarily have an exceptional IQ with the average being 92 but Ted Bundy's is cited at 124, other notable killers like Albert DeSalvo (Boston Strangler) were even noted to have an IQ of 170 (Aamodt et.al. 2018; Oleson, 2016, p.15). In fictional representations, 'intelligent' serial killers often provide more opportunities for the narrative to explore motivations and complex plots. In this way, certain sensationalised killers combined with fictional killers may give a skewed view of the 'average' serial killer. Apex predators such as octopi or chimpanzees are also to be 'interesting' to study due to their heightened intelligence and unique use of social intelligence to enable their predation. However, this version of the serial killer is not 'average' and therefore heightened IQ is a reasonable precursor for achieving a mental state that surpasses 'normally'.

2.2.1 The 'Need' to Kill

[52] Dexter does not note this, though his trauma happened before the age of any formal schooling when these advancements are most likely to be recorded or quantifed. The series does, however, portray Dexter as a qualified professional in a career that points to at least average or above-average aptitude.

A narrative structure of ‘becoming’ allows readers to explore a character’s internal readjustment to their transitioning identity through attempts to meet their ‘needs’. The term ‘Need’ is utilised by the characters themselves to refer to killing or violence as a grotesque manipulation of typical physiological and psychological needs (capitalisation original, *Dreaming*, p.1-2). The gesture of analysing needs on a spectrum can be best understood by applying Abraham Maslow’s Self-Actualisation Theory (2012). This is conceptualised as a pyramid where progression upward through the process of ‘self-actualisation’ (‘becoming’ or transcendence to Animal/Humanity) highlights various levels of deviant coping mechanisms (D’Souza and Gurin, 2016). Maslow’s hierarchy chart can be considered outside of linear progression attainment (though some presume the original theory may have intended it to be) and I describe these ‘stages’ reflecting on ‘becoming’ as a complex rhizome (D’Souza and Gurin, 2017). Characters vacillate between meeting different needs in times of deficiency. The characters themselves fluctuate between prioritising actions that ensure their safety or meet physical needs and actions which are more symbolic or meet Animal/Human ‘needs’. At times, the characters chastise themselves for their existence and then soar to heights of adoration for the greater purpose they serve in society as antiheroes.

Maslow’s pyramid begins with physiological needs as the most basic instinct. Each character when experiencing their trauma was in a state of deficiency as their main source of physiological provision (parents) were killed. By the start of each novel series, Hannibal, Dexter and Cara are self-sufficient adults, meeting their own physiological needs. Dexter and Hannibal are employed in professional, trained careers and Cara lives off a trust from her parent's estate. Regarding the physiological need for food, characters satisfy their needs through forms of excess or overcompensation. In Chapter 4, I analyse how a figure’s excessive indulgence or control of food becomes an analogy for killing as a deviant physiological ‘need’. By defining sustenance and physiological needs as the most ‘basic’ instinct, this evidences how animalism evidences a

discourse on survivalism. How the serial killer eats physically and how they 'feed' the inner predator are key analogies for understanding the ingrained nature of Animal/Human drives.

The second tier in self-actualisation is the need for safety. Because each of the characters' sense of security is actively violated through their trauma, they reclaim their 'safety' or power through becoming predators themselves. The secrecy and lifestyle that each of the characters adopts to fulfil their needs (physiological and the deviant 'need' for killing) are also undertaken to preserve their security through anonymity. Participating in discourses around neutralisation also function to soothe anxieties and provide moral 'safety'. As an Animal/Human, these characters are aware of their place in the 'food chain' and that hyper-predation is needed to ensure their future safety and dominance.

The third tier of need is 'belongingness', which I analyse specifically in this chapter. As the characters lack attachment to others, it enables them to more easily commit dehumanising crimes, such as serial killing (and/or cannibalism). Even when the characters form 'relationships', it is often to ensure social safety rather than emotional belonging:

> Sex never entered into it. After years of dreadful fumbling and embarrassment trying to look normal, I had finally hooked up with the perfect date. Rita was almost as badly damaged as I am. […] I had no interest in a sexual relationship. I wanted a disguise; Rita was exactly what I was looking for. […] Other people are less important to me than lawn furniture. I do not, as the shrinks put it so eloquently, have any sense of the reality of others. And I am not burdened with this realization [sic]. (*Dreaming*, p.52-4)

Here, as well as other places throughout the series, Dexter is seen referring to Rita (his girlfriend and later wife) as a 'disguise' or façade which help to make society assume his 'normalcy'. In *Devoted*, Rita is referred to as a secondary (and lesser) partner than his 'Other' identity:

> She couldn't hold a candle to my old flame, the Dark Passenger, but I did need my secret identity. And until I escaped Doakes, Rita was my cape, red tights, and utility belt- almost the entire costume. (*Devoted*, p.48)

Rita is likened to clothing, an inanimate object, used to hide his 'true' identity and easily discarded though 'valuable' to him because her 'costume' allows him to efficiently meet his other, more important needs. Through the Animal/Human, the characters find belongingness within the two

'sides' of their personality, self-fulfilling their belongingness needs and rejecting the idea that they must become vulnerable by emotionally attaching to other people. There are few animals known for their monogamous relationships, such as penguins or swans that mate for life, but the majority of animals undertake mating rituals as a detached fulfilment of physical drives or for the purpose of procreation and continuing their tribe. Just like many predator mammals to whom the serial killer is compared (lions or tigers), any potential mating or relationship bonding is not generally undertaken for belongingness, but to meet other needs.

The fourth level of need comes in the form of 'esteem'. These characters develop their system of achievements and self-respect as they 'justify' their actions, unlike the 'bad guys' who become *their* victims. Dexter notes that what he is doing (vigilante killing) makes the world a better place:

> I am a very neat monster. Neatness takes time, of course, but it's worth it. Worth it to make the Dark Passenger happy, keep him quiet for another long while. Worth it just to do it right and tidy. Remove one more heap of mess from the world. A few more neatly wrapped bags of garbage and my one small corner of the world is a neater, happier place. A better place. (*Dreaming*, p.11)

Though at other points in the narrative, Dexter makes claims such as: 'I am not a thing to love', he does acknowledge his usefulness to society in these other ways which give him a justification for his 'Othered' existence. Both *Dexter* and *Hannibal* show additional attempts to build esteem through their professional contributions, a common method of esteem development (as well as a form of safety to protect them from discovery). Lecter creates professional esteem by curating a career as a psychiatrist. Even once institutionalised for his crimes, he continues to be published in research journals demonstrating the level of his notoriety and expertise and how he continues to seek professional acclaim even *after* his covert lifestyle is uncovered (*Silence*, p.12).[53] Dexter works as a blood splatter analyst, also in connection with the local police force. For both Dexter

[53] The television adaptation portrays Lecter as he consults with the police, particularly for the agent Will Graham as a profiler. This also develops Lecter's consultancy relationship with law enforcement which plays a key role in both the films and novels of *Red Dragon* (1981) and *Silence* (1989).

and Hannibal, the police connections help form a protective barrier and create a persona of esteem. Besides convenience and Dexter's extra-curricular expertise with blood, the character notes the comfort and security that this structured profession offers him: '[law enforcement is] full of routine, both official and unofficial… so there are fewer human responses for me to memorize [sic] and then fake' (*Devoted*, p.69). While I note that the serial killer may feel pride in atypical ways, achieving a professional or social status that deters suspicion is noted as a key aspect of the serial killer's actions.

The final tier of this development would be 'self-actualisation'. This term is often interpreted as fulfilment of one's best self, though Maslow (2012) notes this stage can also be 'transcendent' or visionary mastery on a spiritual level. The Animal/Human positioned through posthumanism exemplifies how these characters assume their new identity state as 'transcendent' or 'self-actualised'. Throughout each series, characters often refer to themselves as superheroes or religious figures, likening hybridity as an elevated state of identity.[54] The characters cannot be stated as achieving a 'best self' per se; this is should not be delineated with

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[54] Connected to the terminology above that Rita is likened to Dexter's superhero disguise, he also views himself in opposition to those who would stop his killing:

> Every superhero must have an archenemy, and he was mine. I had done absolutely nothing to him, and yet he had chosen to hound me, harry me from my good work. Me and my shadow. And the irony of it: me, a hardworking blood-spatter pattern analyst for the very same police force that employed him- we were on the same team. Was it fair for him to pursue me like this, merely because every now and then I did a little bit of moonlighting? (Devoted, p.5)

This quote shows several things such as the verbalisation that Dexter views his identity as dual 'me and my shadow' and that he views his hybrid state as part of a bigger discourse on good and evil.
In *Hannibal*, various religious symbols are used to also represent the character's self-perceived role in the fight between good and evil:

> Dr Hannibal Lecter hangs on the wall beneath the horse skull like a terrible altarpiece. His arms are outstretched straight from his shoulders on either side, well bound with rope to a singletree, a thick oak crosspiece from the pony cart harness. The singletree runs across the doctor's back like a yoke as is fastened to the wall with a shackle of Carlos' manufacture. His legs do not reach the floor. (Hannibal, p.468)

Here, Lecter is positioned as Jesus, a religious figure of good as he is punished for the sins of society.
In *Huntress*, Cara is portrayed as a 'magical' being:

> 'Tell him what she told you about the powers'.
> Jason looked at Roarke. 'She [Cara] said we all have special powers […]'
> Roarke leaned in closer. 'So she has a power?'
> 'Uh huh. […] She sees monsters'. (Huntress Moon, p.363-4)

Her ability to 'see' monsters is portrayed as transcendental. I discuss the posthuman development of senses as a key indicator of the Animal/Human as a predator in Chapter 3.

fictional characters who serve the larger purpose of fulfilling a narrative arc rather than a focus on self-transcendent improvement, certainly not ones who portray violent killing. Also, the characters themselves do not refer to Animal/Humanism as a transcendental state. While these religious or superhero parallels are mostly outside of the textual analysis of this thesis, the hierarchical nature of power associated with these symbols aligns with the claims I make.[55]

2.2.1 Post-Traumatic Growth

Trauma theory through the dominant approach often posits traumatic 'change' through an emphasis on post-traumatic growth. Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun argue that the use of the term 'change', rather than 'growth', to measure affect may be a clearer description.[56] They analyse change as a breakdown of three domains: 'changes in perception of self, changes in the experience of relationships with others, and changes in one's general philosophy of life' (2014, p.5). 'Becoming' changes the character's perception of self (Animal/Human), destroys current and inhibits future attachment relationships, and changes their way of reasoning between good and evil (neutralising serial killing). The contextual meaning of the word 'growth' often refers to positive development or change after experiencing trauma. Trauma theorists Tedeschi and Calhoun acknowledge this as:

> The focus on the possibilities for growth in coping with trauma can provide the opportunity for the erroneous conclusion that by trying to understand the positive, investigators are ignoring the negative. They are not. Negative events tend to produce, for most persons, consequences that are negative. (Calhoun and Tedeschi, 2014, p.4)

While post-traumatic 'growth' is probably an overzealous term for the deviance evidenced in these serial killers, the characters do not view this 'change' as an entirely negative experience either. The characters themselves vacillate on whether these alterations are positive growth or negative deviance ('dehumanising') and therefore are better addressed neutrally as 'changes'. Analysing

[55] Study on the repetitive metaphorical use of these terms (superhero or religious symbolism) would be an area of consideration for future research.
[56] In *Handbook of Posttraumatic Growth (2014)* this theory is applied to more psychoanalytic conceptions of trauma, where here I understand them in context of a literary reading of change.

characterisation through the lens of literary constructivism, these characters are not challenged to 'cope' in the same way expected of real human beings. The Animal/Human does not represent an idealised reaction to trauma but instead explores the potential 'what ifs' such as: What if trauma irreparably negatively scars people?; What if their actions are only because something horrible has happened to them? I utilise the term 'change' or 'growth' to reference the process of grotesque 'becoming' where the spiral of post-trauma reactions reconstructs a character's social identity in terms of an Animal/Human.

The process of 'becoming' initiates a cyclical restructuring of identity that I conceptualise through the continuous process of grotesque change. The characters recognise their trauma as a form of birth while 'becoming' encapsulates the ongoing process of learning the gestures of being Animal/Human.[57] Hans Selye's Adaptation Syndrome can be applied to 'becoming' to theorise how trauma initiates new emotional responses. This disruption helps the reader to justify how trauma causes deviance. Selye's system is comprised of five stages: Stress, the ordeal experienced causes tension in a cycle (the moment of trauma experienced by the characters); Perturbations, the 'feedback' or processing of the stress ('becoming' hybrid as the initial disruption); Chaos, the breakdown of traditional or normative reactions (disrupting future attachments); the Turning or Bifurcation Point, when a choice or action is made to embrace the new 'system' (when identity is embraced performatively which occurs with each character's first kill); and Readjustment, the recovery after the turning point where the characters embrace this bifurcation as their 'new normal' (the process of neutralising why killing is justified as an Animal/Human) (Connors, 2011, p.315). The texts I analyse are predominantly told from the position of readjustment where the characters have already 'become' Animal/Human and are actively embracing predatorial killing. Just as a butterfly which has emerged from a cocoon, the transformation forwardly changes the core 'animal' within, and gestures must readjust to allow

[57] In Chapter 1, I noted this through Dexter's recognition of being 'born in blood'.

the Animal/Human to survive in their new world. Each book series provides various levels of 'flashback' narrative which allows for the audience to 'see' the trauma or pre-trauma events to contrast hybridity as a new state. The characters recognise that they have passed the bifurcation point (have 'become') and now accept their identity as Animal/Human. This tentative identity becomes reinforced through the self-narrative of neutralisation that the characters believe their serial killing serves a greater purpose for society (vigilantism) or is an 'inevitable' reaction.

2.3 A Cultural Monster: Psychosis

Throughout my analysis, I acknowledge that serial killer fiction has often co-opted complex terms from psychoanalysis and provided a new perspective on these concepts through literary representation. This textual analysis uses 'affect' or 'gesture' to evidence the behavioural complexity of hybrid identity. While these psychoanalytical studies dominantly observe biological responses to trauma, theorists such as Eve Sedgewick and Lauren Berlant have conceptualised the term 'affect' as a representation of an internal state. Audrey Anable discusses how affect can be performative from audiences that engage in media but concludes that these vicarious forms of understanding characterisation through representation are 'deficient' (2018). Anable also recognises common frustrations or criticisms often raised to this approach because of its 'imprecision', the 'maddening incoherence' of that which is 'purely subjective' (2018). On many levels, literary criticism must embrace this same subjective incoherence as we theorise or mediate the role of 'the audience'. These same criticisms (that they can seem reductive) could be made of post- ideologies generally, though academics do recognise the contribution of knowledge towards these in-between spaces. Through my analysis, I overview literary conceptions of understanding these psychoanalytical theories as a reflection of how 'becoming' can be read and rationalised. By some perceptions, this process is necessarily reductive because the 'average' audience may bring into their viewership varying extents of knowledge or subliminal consideration

of these facets. My thesis shows how these are collectively 'reduced' into one coherent image of the Animal/Human.

In this section, I differentiate hybrid representation from an understanding of the serial killer as 'psycho'. These characters cannot just be read as 'psychopaths' or 'sociopaths' but require a new terminology (Animal/Human). Using Guattari's theory of transversality means that identity binaries can be evaluated outside of 'good and bad' opposition:

> Transversality is a dimension that tries to overcome both the impasse of pure verticality and that of mere horizontality: it tends to be achieved when there is maximum communication among different levels and, above all, in different meanings. It is this that an independent group is working towards. My hypothesis is this: it is possible to change the various coefficients of unconscious transversality at the various levels of an institution. (Guattari, 2015, p.113)

Here, transversality defines identity states that are flexible and have various levels of stratification. Throughout this thesis, I explain how hybridity is 'transversed' at 'various levels of an institution' by considering the Animal/Human's meaning from the perspective of the characters, the authors, and the audience as an understanding of general popular culture reception.

Each of the characters shows various emotional detachments, though this cannot equate them to psychopaths or sociopaths. Affective violence is defined as 'impulsive' in response to threat and a study by Willemsen et.al., found that psychopathology and affective violence were at odds stating, 'the core personality features of psychopathy are protective factors against the development of posttraumatic stress' (2012, p.517). If an individual were already unable to 'feel' (pre-trauma or pre-'becoming'), they would also not react in the same responsive ways, emotionally, to 'threat'. Because underlying 'psychopathy', or what I classified above through Verhaeghe's definition of 'actual pathology', would protect an individual's mental state from PTSD, the Animal/Human as a triggered identity state cannot be equated to psychopathy. Though the vigilante nature of serial killer predators is not always in response to an immediate threat, I argue that the state of 'becoming' itself is triggered by the reaction to trauma in response to threat therefore the state of the Animal/Human is constantly in a cycle of affective violence 'triggered'

by the existence of unjustified 'bad guys' and the 'need' to kill. They are also 'triggered' by their internal 'need' to predate or perform violent actions. In this way, deviant attachment is indicative of the Animal/Human but also indicates how their underlying state is disturbed through trauma (nurture), not indicative of inborn deviance better equated to 'psychosis' (nature).

A literary definition of the word 'psychosis' was developed around Jacques-Alain Miller's research on 'ordinary psychosis' as a post-structural understanding of a triggered state (2009). Miller's research was inspired by Freud and Jaques Lacan and defines 'psychosis' as a concept which was 'defined through recognition', similar to a regime of truth, rather than as a new clinical (diagnostic) concept (Lacan, 2006). The Animal/Human can be a recognised state of 'ordinary psychosis' (through cultural recognition of the figure) meaning that the 'atypical' mindset triggered by trauma is a recognised state but is not a clinically diagnosable category. JD Redmond explains this theoretical psychosis in opposition to clinical or diagnostic psychosis:

> … neurosis has a definite structure and that clinicians will be able to recognise it. Neurosis will be characterised by repetition, the clear evidence of castration and the differentiation between the ego, id, and super-ego; in the absence of these signs of a neurotic structure, then the analyst may assume he/she is dealing with a case of psychosis. […] Miller's response to this problem is that one should default to psychosis, given that clinicians will recognise neurosis if it is present. Thus, *doubt* over the diagnosis entails diagnosis of psychosis. (2014, p.24-5)

In this way, 'psychosis' is a framework of neuroses (symptoms) that are clinically observable and 'ordinary psychosis' is a theoretical discourse on the existence of assumed neuroses (signs which are interpreted). I am referring to the Animal/Human as a form of 'ordinary psychosis' where the concept already existed as a cultural representation but was undefined within a framework.

An understanding of ordinary psychosis must also be conceptualised in relation to Verhaeghe's 'actual pathology'. Verhaeghe's work is often used in contemporary discussions on mental illness and identity. Under the concept of 'actual pathology', PTSD (or other post-traumatic development) is not a universal reaction to trauma but acknowledges that an underlying condition of 'actual neurotic structure' is present in certain individuals (Verhaeghe and Vanheule, 2005, p.493). In Chapter 1, I explained posthuman positioning by recognising that other characters try

to replicate Animal/Humanity, though for them it is not a 'truthful' condition because they do not have a 'neurotic structure' (they lack what is necessary for hybridity to develop). According to Verhaeghe, the 'core feature of psychopathy consists of an affective deficit' (Willemsen and Verhaeghe, 2012). As I discuss in this chapter, these characters have a developed 'deficit' of what would traditionally be considered 'typical' affective relationships. In conjunction with this, they also evidence excessive attachment in other deviant ways such as deviant sexual relationships or excessive and symbolic consumption of food (Chapter 4 develops this further). Through an underlying neurotic structure, each of these characters is indicated to be primed to 'become' Animal/Human.

2.3.1 Literary Schizophrenia

In Chapter 1, I broadly defined 'Otherness' through the concept of literary schizophrenia as an in-between state of desire. Anita Tarr and Donna White define how posthuman theory expands beyond these same restrictive boundaries: 'We do not define who we are by what we are not (animal, machine, monster) (2018, p.x)'. The Animal/Human is both states and so must function from a position of non-linearity. There are times, however, that almost-belongingness in the serial killer signals 'Otherness' by defining them by what they are *not* (not fully human). Posthuman theory generally helps position figures against structuralist concepts of the 'monstrous'. Scott McCracken has defined this as 'mark[ing] difference rather than masking it (1997, p.288)' Harraway broadly defines monstrosity in a way relevant to my textual analysis of the posthuman as a broader discourse on deviance:

> Inhabiting these pages are odd boundary creatures- simians, cyborgs, and women- all of which have a destabilizing [sic] place in the great Western evolutionary, technological, and biological narratives. These boundary creatures are, literally monsters, a word that shares more than its root with the word, to *demonstrate*. Monsters signify. (1991, p.2)

As I do below on gender, Harraway identifies that social features of 'Otherness' (women) have often destabilised the narrative of the majority. The hybrid serial killer tackles discourses of good and evil by justifying violence. Harraway also acknowledges the complexity or geographical

reconstruction that must happen when unstable constructions are analysed (1991, p.157). The *Huntress* and *Dexter* series narrate their Animal/Human inner self through a linguistically defined 'Other' which participates with their 'ego' as a dual-part personality or a monstrous hybrid that together enacts violence and justice. Dexter refers to this side as his *Dark Passenger* and internalises the 'Otherness'. Cara instead refers to *It* and externalises more generally as evil figures around her although she recognises that '*It* has scratched her' and she is therefore also affected by this 'entity'. The *Dark Passenger* is narrated as a separate entity from the 'ego' Dexter. This is his 'animal' state which is primarily driven to enact violence while the 'ego' (human) must balance these urges with rationality:

> I felt the Dark Passenger become the new driver for the first time. Dexter became understated, almost invisible, the light-colored stripes on a sharp and transparent tiger. I blended in, almost impossible to see, but I was there and I was stalking, circling the wind to find my prey. […] I receded, faded back into the scenery of my own dark self, while the other me crouched and growled. I would do It at last, do what I had been created to do. And I did. (*Dreaming*, p.160)

Dexter explains his first killing experience and giving into the Animal/Human in action as well as internal self-identity. This acts as a dissociative or 'schizophrenic' state where a tentative identity takes cognizant action and yet remains detached or 'justified'. At times, it is as if the ego is another victim of this entity 'Other' during the process of 'becoming':

> I had been waiting and watching the priest for five weeks now. The Need had been prickling and teasing and prodding at me to find one, find the next, find this priest. For three weeks I had known he was it, he was next. We belonged to the Dark Passenger, he and I together. (*Dreaming*, p.1)

Here, the Dark Passenger and Dexter (ego) are separate and yet combined. The 'Other' (Animal/Human) retains ownership of killing ('The Need') while the ego enacts the lesser actions of stalking or 'making sure' (the process of vetting a victim against the Animal/Human's code of ethics). In this manner, the narrator speaks as rational and reliable, distancing themself from the violence and making himself likeable by comparison (though the Animal and Human are the same):

> I kicked the car door open and pulled him out after me, just to let him feel my strength. He flopped to the sandy roadbed and twisted like an injured snake. The Dark Passenger laughed and loved it and I played the part. I put the boot on Father Donovan's chest and held the noose tight. (*Dreaming*, p.6)

In this type of dissociation, Dexter prepares and cleans, participating in the process of serial killing but it is under the Dark Passenger's control that the actual killing occurs. This schizophrenia of hybridity acts as neutralisation against the less socially acceptable sides of the character. In this disassociated state between the two parts of an identity, even the satisfaction achieved by the Ego and Other is a separate pleasure: 'Worth it to make the Dark Passenger happy, keep him quiet for another long while' (*Dreaming*, p.11). Once this part of the Animal/Human is satiated, the ego can continue in a seemingly 'normal' life. It is the dichotomy of these two extremes which is the basis of fascination with these vigilante characters. Within the carnival atmosphere of a grotesque hybrid, the Ego and Other are free to interact and express traumatic deviance through these rituals. After the release of killing, Dexter speaks of the killer 'Other', as the true manifestation of his deeper self:

> Did he truly see me now? Did he see the double rubber gloves, the careful coveralls, the slick silk mask? Did he really see me? Or did that only happen in the other room, the Dark Passenger's room, the Clean Room? Painted white two nights past and swept, scrubbed, sprayed, cleaned as clean can be. And in the middle of the room, its windows sealed with thick white rubberized [sic] sheets, under the lights in the middle of the room, did he finally see me there in the table I had made, the boxes of white garbage bags, the bottles of chemicals, and the small row of saws and knives? Did he see me at last? (*Dreaming*, p.11)

The cohesion of these two states is also important, as a manifestation of the true self is not just the animal ('Other') but hybrid, representing 'Otherness'. At that moment, with his victim, Dexter feels fully 'seen', his true inner self being embodied as both Animal and Human. This schizophrenia is not pathologised like multiple personalities, the Dark Passenger state is simply a linguistic manifestation of transitional hybridity.

To position identity in this way, I explore the 'positive' indicators of the Animal/Human as what is deviant and additional to the human through 'becoming' (such as killing or acute senses) and the 'negative' indicators as the aspects of 'normative' development which are absent (such

as the lack of emotional attachment). The Animal part of identity is represented as a 'positive symptom' of ordinary psychosis or hybridity. Prior to trauma, the character did not have an 'animal' side, and this is 'added' to the human identity in the process of 'becoming'. In the *Huntress* series, the schizophrenic '*It*' is not only animalistic but parasitic or monstrous. Through a flashback, initiated in a counselling session, Cara describes her family's attack:

> *'Look again, Cara. I want you to look. What is 'it'?*'
> The little girl's voice, in a broken, rasping whisper.
> '*It. It. It'.*
> '*I know this is hard, Cara. You're being a very brave girl-'*
> She said something so softly the psychologist had to ask her to repeat it, and she said, *'Beast'.*
> Roarke felt a chill, gooseflesh rising all over his body.
> *'Beast?'*
> *'Monster. Beast. Monster'.* The child's rasping voice cried.
> The psychologist was silent for a long time.
> '*What does the monster look like?'*
> *'Big. Horrible'.*
> *'What is it doing?'*
> *'Eating. Eating'.*
> *'Eating what?'*
> A broken voice. *'Eating Amber'.*
> Roarke swallowed, sickly, Amber was Cara's sister.
> '*Wet Lots and lots of wet'.*
> *'And then what?'*
> An indecipherable sound.
> '*Say it again, Cara'.*
> *'It. Horrible. Grab me. Scratch me'.* (*Huntress*, p.328)

Cara defines *It* as a 'monster' or 'beast', reflecting language that is later used to reference herself.[58] The language that child-Cara uses to verbalise this experience does not mature or change throughout the series, showing the 'negative' symptoms of stunted psychological development beyond the point of her first trauma. This externalisation of evil (the 'beast') drinks or feeds off the blood of her family. As there is no mention of cannibalism or vampirism elsewhere in the texts, this can be interpreted symbolically as 'consumption' of violence or a parasite of the soul. Cara is like Dexter because she dissociates the evil of *It* from something 'fully human'. She does not directly reference 'the Reaper' (her family's killer) but instead, the evil manifested inside

[58] Another linguistic manifestation that detaches her self-identification from being fully human.

of him. This also shows recognition of the 'Other' as the 'true' manifestation of a hybrid identity where 'typical' violence is disconnected from this kind of non-linearity. Elsewhere Cara describes this 'beast', not as separate from a person, but collapsed inside one identity:

> 'I couldn't…leave him with her'. […]
> 'I know that- you saw something in them'.
> 'It', she said again.
> 'Tell me about *it*'.
> She looked around the room and her voice was very small, like a child's. 'It was here. It scratched me'.
> 'You saw a monster?' he asked, using her word from the tape. 'Not a man?'
> She sighed a terrible, weary sound. 'It was a man with a monster inside. The monster was using him. He killed…' her voice trembled. 'He killed everyone'. […] 'I was marked and now it plays with me'. […] 'It watches me. I see It in the shadows. It lets me see It when It wants'. (*Huntress*, p.332-3)

This 'man with a monster inside' is indicative of the Animal/Human. The Animal/Human is reinforced as a state of ordinary psychosis which is commonly recognised or used as a regime of truth. Like a cat, playing with its prey, Cara indicates that evil 'plays' with its future victim, weakening it before consuming the prey. The law enforcement figures, legitimised figures of good, recognise the need for depictions of good and evil as representative states:

> 'You do believe in evil then'.
> 'Of course I do', Snyder said calmly. 'How can I not?'
> 'So what is it?'
> 'What is evil?' The profiler smiled ruefully. 'You mean, is it a force beyond human?'
> 'I don't know what I mean'.
> The older man's face was reflective 'I've only ever seen human beings perpetrate it. But in some cases it does seem…cumulative. Another reason I regret not being able to speak to Cara myself. Perhaps it's a concept that is only done justice in metaphor'.
> *Metaphors again*, Roarke thought. He stepped to the window and looked out. 'She told me… She said *It* can't be killed'.
> 'But we know that. We can only kill its agents. *It* is always with us'.
> Roarke turned back to his mentor and stared at him. 'You really sound like you believe'.
> 'I understand *It*', Snyder corrected. 'As a metaphor'. (*Cold Moon*, p.154-155)

This discourse shows how the literary schizophrenic state is recognised by those outside of the character, differentiating it from a state of delusion or psychosis. The monster created through violence becomes a cultural metaphor for understanding deviance or 'Otherness'.

2.4 Narrating Identity

In this section, I explore how culture has changed the way we interpret stories, particularly those told via self-narration. Through the way these texts are written, we develop an understanding that the serial killer has a 'natural' or justifiable claim to 'becoming' and 'Otherness' because they define this as truth. Analysing pop culture representations provides a space for exploring the balance between compelling narrative and trending research that reflects upon perceptions of truth. In a study of contemporary culture, Anita Lam traces back the 'recent' focus of culture's impact in criminology and sociology studies starting in the 1970s, though stating it was not until the early 00s that humanities research began to also heavily apply culture in the same way to discussions of deviance (2011, p.9). Two peer-reviewed journals*, Law, Culture and the Humanities* and *Crime, Media, Culture*, both founded in 2005, focus on how both crime and culture are two sectors that have been traditionally described as 'all over' and therefore difficult to navigate, as with most of the postmodern and poststructural space. This thesis explains these same spheres as 'complex' and useful to study through defining boundaries of posthuman representation.

Genre studies have often framed discourse of the cultural impact of crime through social assumptions by referencing the 'CSI effect'. This term comes from the popularity of the CBS network show *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2000-2015) to which many media and crime texts attribute the contemporary resurgence of the crime genre in media. This effect addresses how audiences (broadly though not universally) make assumptions of objectivity and truth (e.g., in criminal proceedings, forensic testing) based on fictitious narratives without research evidence of their efficacy. Assumptions of 'cultural truthfulness', I describe as common knowledge assumptions and are a way of evaluating the 'all over' influences that coincide to form characterisation. While Chapter 1 outlined how certain common knowledge assumptions are not always true (such as knowledge about trauma), these conceptions still provide additional levels

of complexity in real criminal justice prosecution which may now have to overcome preconceived notions from the jury, sometimes influenced by fictional representations, as well as the defence's case. For these reasons, defining how the serial killer is understood as posthuman provides greater insight into the cultural reception of this figure generally. From a critical discourse perspective, these assumptions can also form the basis for audiences to suspend disbelief and 'rationalise' on behalf of the characters. Jenner notes in her study on methods of detection how the 'rational-scientific' form of detection, like those seen in *CSI* or other crime procedurals, emphasises how scientific or analytical distance can be used to 'Other' characters that rely on more subjective or instinctual methods (2016, p.19). In this thesis, the Animal/Human identity is 'self-diagnosed' by the characters and uses instinctual forms of 'proof' that trauma has caused them to become Animal/Human. While the CSI effect may not show objective 'truth', it does show academic recognition of the impact that crime fiction portrayals have had on culture generally, particularly in the audience's perceived knowledge of deviance and the justice system. Fictitious narratives are given a kind of social validity and used as a source of stereotypes:

> Contemporary criminological and sociolegal scholars are interested in studying representations because they are presumed to have 'real' effects on society and criminal justice. Media representations of crime and law can change ordinary people's attitudes towards law enforcement and affect the workings of the criminal justice system. The most recent focus of media effects research that has preoccupied both criminologists and sociolegal scholars alike is the CSI effect. (Lam, 2011, p.15)

However, these stereotypes are not one-directional from reality to fictional assumptions but can be cyclical. By defining textual influence through the perspective of a rhizome, I discuss how these literary representations draw from culture but also create their own niche that influences our understanding of serial killers as a group.

2.5 Rhizomic Characterisation: Deleuze and Guattari

The writings of Deleuze and Guattari provide several helpful insights for theorising the serial killer by a hybrid identity. This section defines how the Animal/Human reflects on their

concepts of the animal, plateaus of intensity, and a 'body without organs' (BwO) which is reflective of a grotesque body. In several of their texts, Deleuze and Guattari consider 'the animal' as a way of analysing identity. The figurative 'animal', representative of identity is a way of breaking structured expectations of the figurative (non-physical) so that a character can be perceived differently. In *Kafka Towards a Minor Literature*, this animal identity state is described through a process of 'becoming', likened to the concept I describe as a transition on a continuum between fully animal and fully human:

> To become animal is to participate in movement, to stake out the path of escape in all its positivity, to cross a threshold, to reach a continuum of intensities where all forms come undone, as do all the significations, signifiers, and signifieds… (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p.13)

The threshold from a fully human identity is crossed during an experience of trauma. From this, all future significations of identity and relationship are 'undone' and the continuum of the Animal/Human is developed as a cultural justification of violence. The figurative 'animal' utilises certain common knowledge assumptions to conceptualise identity and socialisation on various levels:

> We must distinguish three kinds of animals. First, individuated animals, family pets, sentimental, Oedipal animals each with its own petty history, 'my' cat, 'my' dog. These animals invite us to regress, draw us into a narcissistic contemplation, and they are the only kind of animal psychoanalysis understands, the better to discover a daddy, a mommy, a little brother behind them (when psychoanalysis talks about animals, animals learn to laugh): *anyone who likes cats or dogs is a fool.* And then there is a second kind: animals with characteristics or attributes; genus, classification, or State animals; animals as they are treated in the great divine myths, in such a way as to extract from them series or structures, archetypes or models (Jung is in any event profounder than Freud). Finally, there are more demonic animals, pack or affect animals that form a multiplicity, a becoming, a population, a tale ... Or once again, cannot any animal be treated in all three ways? There is always the possibility that a given animal, a louse, a cheetah or an elephant, will be treated as a pet, my little beast. And at the other extreme, it is also possible for any animal to be treated in the mode of the pack or swarm; that is our way, fellow sorcerers (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.240-41).

The 'animal' has been used in all these ways previously to theorise on identity and 'becoming'. In this thesis, I consider the animal as a conceptualisation of hybridity that explores what it means to become 'not fully human' as a response to trauma. Posthuman positioning evidences multiple

understandings of these animal categories to 'treat the animal in all three ways' (a rhizome). From an internal perspective of the narrative, these characters evidence an Oedipal understanding of their Animal/Human self by neutralising their killing through an ethical code, justifying why they kill. Each of these encounters is considered in relation to their 'own petty history' and violence is acceptable under specific contextualisation. To an extent, the audience is asked to suspend disbelief in understanding these Oedipal defences of the animal that it does not matter if they truly *are* Animal/Human, it only matters that these characters *believe themselves to be* Animal/Human. The Oedipal animal is unique due to an individualised relationship or history that the characters have with the 'animal part' of their identity. Dexter, for example, personifies the 'Dark Passenger' as his Oedipal animal. Specific characteristics or archetypes are drawn across each of these series to create an understanding of the Animal/Human as a distinct production or 'state animals'. Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the animal in identity construction also identifies the Jungian understanding of 'animal' as a representation of 'unconscious'. This is what I often refer to as the 'Other' state which is indicative of the animal being used as a vessel for violent intent and is an analogy which shows the animal in relation to nature (the 'natural' human state) and culture (as an understanding on 'normality' or deviance') (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.236). The Jungian animal is also a visual of transformation or metamorphosis which can be applied to an understanding of the grotesque nature of 'becoming'. The third conception of the animal is the 'demonic' animal which is described in the grotesque process of 'becoming'. This creates a 'pack affect' or a deviant identity to evidence an identity-in-process. The demonic animal considers the capacity of a spectrum in how 'animal' (or a type of animal) is understood. Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the demonic 'becoming animal' requires interrelationship of the animal and human are collapsed rather than hierarchically ordered. The process of 'becoming' can be described as a neo-evolution rather than a devolution:

> Becoming is a rhizome, not a classificatory or genealogical tree. Becoming is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something; neither is it regressing-progressing; neither is it corresponding, establishing corresponding relations; neither is it producing, producing a

> filiation or producing through filiation. Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, 'appearing', 'being', 'equaling', or 'producing'. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.239)

The rhizome model of understanding identity best evidences a collapsed identity that creates 'something new entirely', rather than the arborescent model of a 'genealogical tree' which would better define an oppositional binary structured approach.[59] Here, Deleuze and Guattari primarily define what 'becoming' is by first defining what it is not. In creating a framework for characterisation, I will discuss both what 'becoming' or Animal/Humaity is for the serial killer as well as what it is not to define the bounds of characterisation. The Animal/Human as this tripartite consideration of 'animal' is an 'assemblage' or intensities that are reliant on context as 'animal' fluidly shifts meaning (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). The rhizome frames the fluid relationship between these concepts of the serial killer as 'more animal' or 'more human' and each iteration of the character manifests the Animal/Human in ways that are not 'stable or fixed'. Just as Deleuze and Guattari show that 'animals' may be interpreted through different lenses, this thesis seeks to analyse how the Animal/Human is used in an understanding of the serial killer as a grotesque 'Other'. My approach to the psychological 'animal' as a hybrid identity intersects an understanding of the Oedipal, Jungian (state), and demonic as a holistic approach to collapsing animal and human and is a useful starting point for understanding the serial killer as non-binaristic.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari describe a 'plateau' as a level of 'intensity' within a poststructural spectrum. These intensity plateaus can be likened to the facets involved in creating the overall image of the serial killer as Animal/Human. These contexts and influences work together as a rhizome or multifaceted image:

> A plateau is always in the middle, not at the beginning or the end. A rhizome is made of plateaus. […] We call a 'plateau' any multiplicity connected to other multiplicities by superficial underground stems in such a way as to form or extend a rhizome. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.1-2)

[59] The quote from Dexter is described as the basis for defining the serial killer in new terms and described further in the introduction: 'I'm not the monster he wants me to be. So I'm neither man nor beast. I'm something new entirely. With my own set of rules. I'm Dexter. (Showtime, 1.4)'

The Animal/Human serial killer is the overarching rhizome or image that I analyse in this thesis while identity formation, trauma, and a cultural fascination with the grotesque are all plateaus of intensity used to build and understand the cultural production. The differing concepts of the animal listed above could also be understood as plateaus that develop this image. These plateaus are 'always in the middle' as a cyclical recurrence in the process of grotesque 'becoming'.

'Becoming' Animal/Human is a state that is evidential of a transformative process. The de-signification that comes from the process of 'becoming' produces a body without organs. The concept of BwO is used in this thesis as an inanimate state of being; this non-physical dimension contains markers of affect or assumptions and defines the 'limits' of a framework: 'You never reach the Body without Organs, you can't reach it, you are forever attaining it, it is a limit (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.150)'. Like a plateau, a BwO defines an in-between state that is in evolution. In this thesis, the posthuman Animal/Human is self-referenced by the characters as a completed state or 'having become' (past-tense) Animal/Human, but throughout the serialised narratives the audience explores the limits of a BwO state to define the serial killer in ways that increasingly embraces their hybridity.

The BwO is also a useful concept for defining the Animal/Human as an inanimate state where textual analysis must define how we 'see' these figures as human or animal. Deleuze and Guattari observe that 'the signifier is always facialised (1987, p.115)' meaning that the human is often signified physically through recognition of a face or a tangible image. This characterisation is an anthropomorphic conception of hybridity where the animal is either internal or figurative and the human is the physical 'face' of the serial killer.[60] Through mask imagery which grotesquely deforms a face, Chapter 4 further explores how facial imagery is used as the signifier for the Animal/Human. The hybrid state is therefore a limit where the bounds of 'human' have been

[60] The serial killer appears in human form and does not undertake physical manifestations of hybridity, though the animal can be physically signalled through other 'senses' which I elaborate further in Chapter 3.

crossed and the serial killer is no longer just identified by the human face but through a grotesque Animal/Human signifier:

> Conversely, when the face is effaced, when the faciality traits disappear, we can be sure that we have entered another regime, other zones infinitely muter and more imperceptible where subterranean becomings-animal occur, becomings-molecular, nocturnal deterritorializations [sic] over-spilling the limits of the signifying system. (Deleuze and Guattari,1987, p.115)

These new 'zones' or intensity plateaus are unable to be processed through traditional structures of solely animal or human signifiers. The BwO triggers a new way of reading signs, to help define Animal/Humanity through internal signifiers which are otherwise 'more imperceptible'.

2.6 Conditioning 'Becoming'

Current trauma theory is based on conceptualising the 'natural' reactions to trauma and the expression of those reactions. As a conceptualisation of how the Animal/Human is produced, I argue that this tentative state is a recourse of trauma impacting how these characters view their identity. The characters process their posttraumatic reactions by embracing deviance through a carnival inversion of power reclamation and redefining good and evil through a process of neutralisation. While the predominant approach to conceptualising 'becoming' has often been psychoanalytical, Peters has evidenced how this type of research can be used in literary analysis through her writings that consider Freud's influence on reading anxiety in Patricia Highsmith's *Ripley* series (2011). I use a similar approach to understanding deviance through defining how conceptions of 'Otherness' trigger certain literary responses.

Triggers, or reactions to stimuli, form important symbolism in the narratives upon which patterns of behaviour are carried out. Triggers often result in heightened awareness or responses to danger in a fight or flight reaction. Just as dogs may bark or experience piloerection triggered by their enhanced senses, the serial killer is acutely conscious of the threats they may face. Each character gives self-assigned value to different 'triggers' which they use to enact their Animal or their Human 'sides'. It is important to note the aspect of cognitive control (conscious recognition)

shows that the Animal/Human is active in developing violent reactions to stimuli. Each character's 'serial' killing is an example of how reinforcement is used to guide behaviour (the ability for the characters to react to violence triggers combined with the restraint to avoid apprehension). Through this conscious action, the characters show that they justify their actions, using intelligent methods of covering their crimes to continue killing:

> Parking tickets are dangerous, to be avoided at all cost; they leave a time-stamped trail. So after disposing of the bleach-soaked bedding in a restaurant dumpster she'd descended one of the escalators on Market Street to a BART stop and bought an eight-dollar ticket to SFO. (*Huntress*, p.15)

In the *Huntress* series, Cara shows care for concealing her crimes by taking steps to avoid areas under surveillance, sanitising and then disposing of evidence, and utilising public transport systems.[61] This reinforcement utilises negative punishment, taking away attention and deterring certain behaviours such as using 'risky' forms of transport, appearing on cameras, or drawing the attention of those around her; Animal/Humans are 'conditioned' to anticipate observation. There are also positive reinforcements such as emotional gratification, gained from the killing process and remaining anonymous while killing. Each of the three characters have someone in a position of legal power that chooses to turn a blind eye or actively aid in their liberation whilst knowing their actions (killing) may (or will) happen again. This legitimises or reinforces their behaviours and the justification that vigilante killing is positive (or at least defensible). For example, Cara Lindstrom is not arrested by Agent Roarke despite various opportunities, but instead, he protects her or uses half-hearted apprehensions (leaving her unrestrained and alone in his unlocked car when 'captured') that allow her to escape. Throughout *Huntress,* Roarke questions himself whether he *should* be looking to apprehend Cara. Legitimised figures enabling the Animal/Human's killing reinforces their behaviours and their ethical stance of 'justified' killing.[62]

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[61] The *Huntress* series is set in the United States which does not have nationalised CCTV and therefore public transport tends to be more anonymous than using car parks which may have private security surveillance or be monitored for unauthorised parking.

[62] In Dexter, Deb (Dexter's adopted sister who is a police officer) knows about his vast number of murders but doesn't turn him in, protecting him by omission. Clarice goes to rescue and release Hannibal from

While external reinforcement is not claimed to be a 'reason' for serial killing, it is an important facet in understanding behavioural development and the cognitive control that allows these characters to thrive. It also evidences how through interactions with the Animal/Human, the 'average' character learns to accept or rationalise violence under certain constraints which is, in turn, what the audience does by consuming these texts and accepting serial killers as antiheroes.

2.7 The Grotesque In-between: Perceptions of Otherness

Deviance, defined as 'Otherness', is contextualised socially by differentiating the Animal/Human from 'normal' in various ways. These serial killers are not absolved of their actions, but they do initiate discourses on neutralisation making the audience justify, 'of course trauma has caused them to act in that way, they're not 'one of us''. In this section, I explore how contexts of psychoanalytical and culture theories conceptualise 'becoming' deviant as a multi-faceted process. This relies on several cultural biases (assumed through social norms) and recognised analogies. These characters are accepted figures of fascinations as 'antiheroes' but are still stigmatised in ways that legitimised 'heroes' (traditional 'good guy' portrayals) are not.

2.7.1 Werewolves and Other Monsters

Mythical hybrids have often been a feature of fiction that considers 'Otherness' in terms of 'not fully human'. For example, Peters considers the vampire as a figure of in-between spaces on several levels (Peters, 2006, p.181). Firstly, vampires are suspended between life and death, an immortal hybrid excluded from society by common practices like when vampires avoid the sun. Vampire myths also consider animal-human hybridity through concepts such as transformation into bats. This concept participates in discourses of cyclical predation as well; as vampires suck the blood from their victims, they merge into one grotesque body where the creation of new vampires is passed along through violence like the creation of Animal/Humans. The vampire

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Verger's henchmen (the antagonist hunting Lecter in *Hannibal*) and then runs away with him, protecting him by enablement.

heavily relies on sites of physical transformation to evidence their animality or 'Otherness'. I further explore the complexity of the terms 'predator' and 'prey' in Chapter 3 to explore the symbolic language associated to them.

Another significant iteration of the hybrid of animal and human is the werewolf which has connections to these texts as a paralleled discussion on in-between spaces and posthuman discourses. Serial killers do not transition in such a physical sense to a grotesque hybrid but exploring werewolves helps to explain the concept of 'becoming'. Jaquelin Elliot discusses the portrayal of hybridity in the television adaptation, *Hannibal*, in what she calls a 'postmodern desire for a reclamation of queer monstrosity' (2018, p.249). She notes that the show creator (Bryan Fuller) has compared the series to a 'werewolf narrative' which focuses on physical grotesque hybridity and 'becoming' as a visual image of opposition (2018, p.250). Werewolves undergo a continual process of grotesque 'becoming', a physical transition between human and animal cyclically. The werewolf is a manifestation of 'identity-disrupting hybridity' where the animal and human 'sides' compete for power over the self which lays the foundation for the serial killer as a portrayal of posthumanity (Elliot, 2018, p.251). In this way, the werewolf is a binaristic hybrid because the animal and self are never able to work in tandem, but one must be subsumed to the other. A non-binaristic hybrid allows for both animal and human to participate mentally and physically, rather than functioning as separate entities (such as when Dexter's ego and Dark Passenger are both involved in the killing process).

Historically, the portrayal of werewolves has functioned as a discussion on monstrosity, particularly by situating the figure in gothic or mythic spheres, though the serial killer brings hybridity into a world much closer to the reader (Elliot, 2018, p.251). The transformation of the werewolf comes as a result of violent interaction between a human victim and the 'monster' (the victim being bitten or attacked by a transformed werewolf). The process of grotesque transformation itself is a form of continuous violence, ripping apart the human exterior to reveal the 'animal inside'. This physical process is mirrored more symbolically in the 'becoming' of the

Animal/Human. In the *Huntress* series, Cara most closely characterises her violent attack as 'scratching' which is a personification of being 'touched' by evil (*It*):

> 'It was here. It scratched me'.
> 'You saw a monster?' he asked, using her word from the tape. 'Not a man?'
> She sighed a terrible, weary sound. 'It was a man with a monster inside. The monster was using him. He killed…' her voice trembled. 'He killed everyone'. […] 'I was marked and now it plays with me'. (*Huntress*, p.323)

'A man with a monster inside' could easily be compared to the concept of the werewolf, which retains the essence of a human that is overruled by the animal, or a human who will be cyclically overcome by the animal (monster) inside. Language insinuates that becoming-animal is 'monstrous' and 'Other' and that these creatures are dangerous. In this thesis, the Animal/Human condition is also initiated through a violent attack (trauma). Though not bitten by a physical 'creature', the symbolism used for trauma in this thesis aligns with a process of grotesque transformation into an hybrid state. The key is that the serial killer is recognised to 'be animal' without being physically portrayed through animal features (e.g., fur, fangs). In the aftermath of trauma, the character remains permanently affected by this violence and furthers the narrative of transformation by becoming part of the ongoing 'myth' of Animal/Humanity as a form of hybrid monstrosity. This could also be recognised as the continuation of 'becoming' through the process experienced by werewolves or vampires, that they must 'bite', but not kill, another individual to 'pass along' their condition.

2.7.2 Foreignness

Yasir Suleiman identifies that core features of personal identity (and by extension 'Otherness') can be applied to national identity and Peters also discusses how displacement from culture (particularly about national identity) is a method used for destabilising characters (Suleiman, 2006, p.51; Peters, 2011, p.5). Though both researchers apply national identity to different contexts, discussions around outsider status contribute to the same instability seen here. Instability is a core feature of positioning the Animal/Human into a grotesque in-between space.

In the *Hannibal* series particularly, 'Otherness' is enhanced through an emphasis on foreignness. It is once his foreignness marks him as 'Other', that his cannibalism (and following, his representation as Animal/Human) can then be understood as another facet of the character's peculiarity rather than as a singular alienating quality. In historical contexts, the *Hannibal* series was published amidst the tensions towards the end of the Cold War and *Hannibal Rising* is partially set during WWII. Dalby (2012) identifies national security as the main threat to stability during the Cold War with an emphasis on the foreign as 'Other' and particularly as 'the bad guys'. In Lecter's case, he is developed as an outsider and therefore better suits positioning as an antihero rather than a traditional hero. It is this dichotomy of familiar and foreign that Schmid also notes as integral to the serial killer fiction genre, though he focuses more on this development post-9/11 and in response to contemporary culture (2005a). Post-9/11 fiction is more likely to highlight foreignness from Middle Eastern cultures reflective of the 'War on Terror'.[63] *Hannibal Rising* is the only book in that series published post-9/11 and this novel is the one that highlights Lecter's European background most prevalently. Though political studies would show a much more nuanced understanding of 'foreignness', fictional texts can be seen to fluidly refer to national identity as a marker of 'Otherness'. The historical connections of Soviet 'bad guys' highlight how the length of time between publications manifests the same social anxieties towards foreignness across generations. These characters may have come from different areas of the world if this series was written today, however, the emphasis remains the same. These cultural tensions can be seen off the back of the Cold War just as much as in a post-9/11 world and therefore a focus on Lecter's Europeanness distinctly dates the series' socio-cultural perceptions.

In *Hannibal,* the foreign nature of the character's background or plot settings are often contrasted to the 'stability' of America. The character of Lecter is Lithuanian and encounters cannibalism while his family is on the run and hiding out in the woods from Nazis during World

[63] This would be particularly true for American fiction whose culture was most closely influenced by this conflict.

War II. The European aspects of this representation are more clearly highlighted in the novel series than in the media adaptations where Anthony Hopkins portrays an 'Americanised' Lecter.[64] Schmid notes that creating emphasis on 'foreigners' allows readers to keep fiction distanced from their reality while comforting themselves with a sense of understanding (2005). This same in-between space of participation and denial is also a core feature in the fascination with serial killing or other aspects of the grotesque. This 'comfort' allows the reader to partake in discourse while allowing deniability for how close to their own lives figures like these may be. In *Hannibal*, it is the final two novels in the series (those published after the 1991 dissolution of the USSR), *Hannibal* and *Hannibal Rising,* which especially emphasise this European foreignness, exploring his previously restrained 'Otherness'. While *Red Dragon* and *Silence* place the Hannibal character within the boundaries of FBI incarceration/Baltimore, an 'at home' location of American law enforcement, *Hannibal* begins by showing the character as he has escaped to Florence, Italy, far from the reaches of the American police agencies. Florence is known for European ideals of high culture and art, which Lecter himself embodies in his appreciation of fine food, opera, and art. *Hannibal Rising* begins on the 'Eastern front' (Lithuania) but situates much of the storyline within Paris, another European city that is often connected to high culture. These 'structurings' create a world within the text which remains, almost like a Golden Age country house mystery, distant from the current world of the reader. The character, when on American soil is confined by the police, creating the assumption of law enforcement as dominant and protective. For the character to live more openly, he must escape to Europe, or later Argentina, creating a distance from the average American audience that may never experience these cultures and fulfilling an assumption of

[64] While Hopkins is Welsh, in the *Hannibal* films he portrays Lecter with an American accent and displays other features of the American political majority such as being Caucasian. Therefore, Hopkins' portrayal does not highlight the character's past from Lithuania, part of the USSR during the narrative of his childhood, or even his general 'European-ness' with roots to France and Italy in the same way as the novel series. In the television adaptation, Mads Mikkelsen, while Danish, also portrays the character dialogue in a neutral tone, without a heavy accent.

American safety, that the character can 'get away with' cannibalism in these places, but not 'here' (America).

Cultural discourse surrounding the *Dexter* series must consider influences of the early 2000s recession and the aftermath of 9/11 in America. Oppositions of contexts 'foreign' or 'native' reflect more broadly on contemporary culture or political discussions around acceptance and neutralisation. Dexter is noted as a representation of 'Americana' and Schmid notes that these 'homegrown' figures are perceived as familiar, homely, and even comforting to some extent (2005a, p.62). During the time of publication (2004-15), serial killer fiction detracts attention from other anxieties towards terrorism prevalent around the American 'War on Terror' which has often perpetuated individuals as outsiders primarily based on foreignness over ideology. Even the *Dexter* texts note this common assumption as the character tries to justify how he is different or 'better' than foreign figures:

> I could have been a vicious raving monster who killed and killed and left towers of rotting flesh in my wake. Instead, here I was on the side of truth, justice, and the American way. Still a monster, of course, but I cleaned up nicely afterward, and I was OUR monster, dressed in red, white, and blue 100 percent synthetic virtue (*Devoted*, p.4).

The character defines the 'native' serial killer as 'Other', but much more subtly. This approach does not deny that the Animal/Human is completely innocent, merely that they are 'not as bad' as other cultural 'monsters'. The location of *Dexter* also addresses this period's anxieties of threats 'at home' and not just 'abroad'. Stephanie Green defines this as 'play[ing] on its depiction of middle-class American normality as threatened by a rising tide of crime, death, and violence (2004, p.582)'. Schmid notes that following 9/11, American serial killer fiction (like *Dexter*) became more popular because it allowed people to work through social anxieties of terrorism by instead turning towards a more socially 'comfortable' serial killer (2005a, p.61). The message given is that since Dexter only kills 'bad guys', it alleviates the fear of this type of serial killer on the 'innocent' audience who should never be targeted (even within the fictional world, his victims are criminals, not unsuspecting or 'innocent' citizens).

The format of the *Dexter* television adaptation also provides a serialised structure to approach a complex narrative and reflect the in-between space of foreign and familiar, putting a twist on the classic detective procedural. As Dexter helps to hunt down a 'killer of the week' type criminal (seen in serialised crime dramas), the audience is also drawn into the justified 'need' for Dexter's vigilante presence as he tracks more elusive criminals (the ones local law cannot seem to apprehend or identify) in season arc instalments. Dexter is a postmodern take on traditional structures of detecting as a portrayal that fulfils both criminal and detective roles (Jenner, 2016, p.35). This combination also tempers social anxieties towards serial killers which would typically be seen as 'on the loose'. Dexter's neutrality comes from the fact that he is tamed and sometimes hampered by his work with the police and from his need to remain inconspicuous within a close circle of acquaintances who happen to also be law enforcement, providing the ultimate 'cat and mouse' game. This shows the serial killer antihero as a figure who works on the side of culture rather than being resistant to it. This dichotomous puzzle also ratchets up fascination on behalf of the audience as to whether Dexter will be identified, particularly in his close relationship in certain cases with the police force. Jenner's American *TV Detective Dramas: Serial Investigations* (2016) provides an in-depth analysis of *Dexter* as a unique approach to detection because of the 'detective or criminal' juxtaposition. Here, I emphasise that his 'Otherness' is highlighted by his 'almost-belonging': he works with the police but cannot be satisfied by only arresting criminals, he is 'one of us' (an 'average' middle class, white, educated Western male) while also sometimes being a serial killer, he is a 'family man' and someone (self-proclaimed) unable to form connections or care about people.

The *Huntress* series is another unique characterisation response to the socio-political atmosphere because it functions as a direct statement to the contemporary moment. As such, it carries many more direct references to politics in America than the other two narratives.[65] The

[65] Neither *Dexter* or *Hannibal* note particular social movements or political figures which mean the series are only generally dated by their look (or production value) and the general social discourses within it.

author, Alexandra Sokoloff, makes repeated note of the intent for the series to be a form of social commentary and critique on American culture by dedicating her books to various charities and organisations, generally, those that aim to bring an end to human trafficking or helping survivors of rape or abuse. In the Afterword of *Hunger Moon*, the author states:

> 'Don't write about politics' is a warning every novelist hears at writing conferences. I couldn't disagree more. In fact, I'm not interested in reading or writing books that aren't about politics. […] My series has always existed in a fictional world that is a reflection of this one (2017, p.367).

This statement provides direct intent that the *Huntress* series is not written to purposefully function as an understanding of serial killers, but a reflection of the 'dark times' the author feels the need to explore via narrative. Because of this intent, the usage of the Animal/Human can be seen as verification of how recognisable this cultural production is at representing the serial killer because it is used as an accepted 'language' where the author's intent is more focussed on creating parallels to social discourse. Cara's narrative represents and addresses social stigmatisation around sex workers, drug addicts, runaways, and children in the state foster care system. This provides evidence of how narratives can rely on cultural productions to generate broader discussions within a cultural context. These 'Othered' groups are socially vulnerable or 'easy prey' as they often go unnoticed, or their victimisation is underreported. Within this underground culture, the Animal/Human is just another 'oddity' that develops naturally in the carnival space attributed to stigmatised minorities.

Sokoloff relies on the Animal/Human to evidence discourse on power and vulnerability while attempting to tackle some of these broader discourses and social movements around perceptions of 'Otherness'. The *Huntress* series also reflects on anxieties focussed 'at home' and utilises foreignness by emphasising certain demographics of society that show unequal distribution of vulnerability towards ethnic minorities. The *Huntress* series heavily considers civil

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The *Huntress* makes specific references to Donald Trump as president which much more clearly dates the series to even the casual reader.

rights infringements of silent majorities by recreating these issues within the fictional space. Since the American election of Donald Trump in 2016, several activist groups have come to the forefront to confront anti-majority policies and opinions, which have dominated Trump's campaigns. One movement, headed up by university students in *Hunger Moon* (*Huntress*), can parallel discussions like those around the DREAM Act and potential revocations of protection granted for those who immigrated as children into the US (Zimmerman, 2012). This movement addresses social fears around deportation, detention, or refusal of refugee status for immigrants, documented and undocumented. The figure of Cara becomes the vilifier for these figures, the unknown or the underrepresented. Even as a teenager, she undertook vigilante killing on behalf of classmates or other youth in the foster care system who had experienced victimisation. In her adult narrative, she seeks out instances of victimisation in these undocumented circles to 'save' the victims (while fulfilling her Animal/Human need to 'kill evil'). Many of the discussions of trafficking in the series highlight the fear of being taken 'across the border', tying many of the trafficked and abused victims back to these other vulnerable groups (e.g., runaways, immigrants, those in the care system). The Animal/Human navigates the in-between space to address foreignness as a facet relevant to understanding 'Otherness' and justified violence. *Huntress* reclaims the discourse of the outsider by showing that 'Othered' characters (for various reasons) are worthy of protection.

2.7.3 Gender

Gender and sexuality are underlying symbols of 'Otherness' often discussed in relation to serial killers. Often terminology of post- or de-humanisation is used to show the character's deviance from average humans however gendered pronouns (e.g., she, he, her, him) are still used in binaristic ways to reinforce stereotypes. In crime narratives as well as criminological studies, for example, the serial killer is predominantly male. Beyond this, discussions of power revolving around physicality often target male-dominant imagery. The *Huntress* series often focuses on how Cara's gender (cis female) inverts expectations on serial killing and the ways this

highlights her 'Otherness'. Previous compilations about real serial killing, as noted in Chapter 1, focus on key serial killers through the lens of masculine domination excepting Aileen Wuornos who stands out as a key female figure. Texts that mention Wuornos tend to alienate her by her sexuality as a lesbian (portraying her as masculine) or her participation in sex work (Chesler, 1993). This is not unique to serial killing and Brett Martin demonstrates how media studies have often guided dominant narrative by a focus on the power of male figures.[66] Milly Buonanno would refute Martin's structured, gendered assumptions by arguing that female characters can be just as 'bad' or 'interesting' and that these two categories are not gendered. I have chosen texts for this thesis that demonstrate a variety of the 'Other' Animal/Human representation by choosing to include a series focused on a female killer. However, male serial killers are, arguably, more common in fiction, as also displayed by the popularity of the *Dexter* and *Hannibal* novels and as transmedia texts. The Animal/Human is, therefore, not a gender-based or male-dominant ideological reaction to trauma, though the scope of this thesis does not allow for further exploration of the role of gender in driving sales figures.

Designations as 'not fully human' however, sometimes indicate that the Animal/Human dominates identity, even to the point of sexlessness. Transcending gender is reflective of the additional layers or plateaus of hybridity present in a complex rhizome. This continues to be discussed in Chapter 3 where the Animal/Human is driven by 'primal' or 'animalistic' urges beyond desires for mating or sexual intimacy. That chapter also details patriarchal social assumptions which may be more likely to view males as dominant predators while females are given 'weaker' animalistic terminology like 'chicks' or 'bitches' (Adams, 1995). An emphasis on 'gender-lessness' and lacking a clear sexual identity is important to note when discussing Animal/Humanism as an identity. Transcending gender is often a marker of the personification of evil or the part of the ego

[66] In *Difficult Men* (2013), gender bias is inferred through Martin's study of television by only analysing male antiheroes as figures of fascination. Milly Buonanno would write her criticism, *Television Anti-heroines* (2017) as a direct response to Martin's gender blind-spot.

that is 'more' animalistic. For example, in the *Huntress* series, Cara identifies evil as '*It*'. She sometimes refers to this as a force but also a non-binaristic identity where evil and ego are collapsed. Dexter's Dark Passenger is also narrated as a non-corporeal character that is not designated by any gendered pronouns.

I previously noted the *Huntress* series' intent to function as a literary statement on culture. For this reason, appropriations of gender symbols, particularly in stereotypes associated with power, provide insight into how this text represents a unique serial killer. The *Huntress* texts appropriate the figurehead 'Lady Muerte', a Mexican folk saint and a protector of the victimised and a personification of death, to represent Cara's vigilante actions. Andrew Chesnut, a researcher of the Santa Muerte religious movement highlights that the figure, Santa Muerte, is heavily influential on both sides of the southwest Mexican-American border and has links to the drug trade. The *Huntress* series repeatedly explores the exploitation and victimisation of trafficked and/or drug-dependent women and reflects these wider allusions and cultural movements (Chesnut, 2019, p.4-5). Particularly because the plot is situated in the western United States, this highlights the plight of young refugees and runaways who may become trafficked or forced into sex work.[67] While trafficking can target vulnerable individuals of any gender, cultural discourse around this activity often focuses on female victims. Willy Pedersen and Kristenn Hegna point out that many studies on prostitution and sex work are still heavily gendered, ignoring exploited males and instead, opposing victimised females to dominant males (2003, p.135). This is a perception also reflected through fiction where Cara 'saves' young female victims. Discussions of sex work in these novels reflect the disproportionate amount of displaced and homeless youths who participate in 'survival sex'.[68] 'Choice' or 'inevitability' are paralleled between discussions of

[67] Underlying this is an anxiety around being trafficked across the country border and into Mexico. Trump's Border Wall campaign particularly focuses on excluding immigration from Mexico and South American countries bordering the south western part of America. The states of California and Arizona function as locations heavily throughout the novel series.

[68] Survival Sex is a form of sex work undertaken in order to meet that individual's basic needs rather than a choice made for means of income. These needs can be for immediate food or shelter, as is often seen

victimisation and 'becoming', which helps to question whether 'Otherness' is a choice or by default meaning through considering: are you a serial killer because you choose to do bad things or because you are Animal/Human? Similar stigmatised conversations are also directed towards drug use and sex work. A study by Kathryn Xian et.al. (2017) also highlights that those with other minority identifiers show higher rates of vulnerability to being trafficked (such as the LGBTQ+ youth community, ethnic minorities, or youth from low-income backgrounds) is compounded when multiple factors are present.[69] Much of the data surrounding numbers and prevalence of runaway youths is from the late 90s and early 00s; this potentially indicates a shift in funding and attention surrounding research towards these issues (McKinney, 2014, p.1).[70] The broader discussions around the LGBTQ+ fluid communities may, in future, help to expand an understanding of posthuman positioning even further and the ways discourses can transcend or embrace gender and sexuality.

In studies of vulnerability and victimology, social stereotypes are also addressed as rhizomic or comorbid (existing in multiple spaces at once). *Dexter* and *Hannibal* more traditionally focus on their victims by defining them as 'bad guys' and centring the narrative around the characters and their hybridity as a reclamation of their power. While the *Huntress* series does elaborate on killing victims because of their involvement in illegal or unethical activities, the text

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with homeless individuals or runaways. While most survival sex is not regulated by pimps, it can also be undertaken to supply drug habits. Many individuals are enticed into forced sex work by drugs and then indebted to their exploiters (pimps) who fuel their addiction. McMillan et.al. differentiate 'transactional sex' as an exchange of goods or services for sex which could include forced or coerced sex from pimps who control the exchange as a commercial 'business' transaction whereas 'survival sex' is 'an extreme-need-driven transactional sex that is informal and local (p.1522)'. Greene et.al. notes the high levels of survival or transactional sex amongst these vulnerable populations:

> Approximately 28% of street youths and 10% of shelter youths reported having participated in survival sex, which was associated with age, days away from home, victimization[sic], criminal behaviors, substance use, suicide attempts, sexually transmitted disease, and pregnancy (1999, p.1406).

[69] The LGBTQ+ population are five times more likely to be victims of sex trafficking and had a greater likelihood of substance use/abuse (20-30% compared to 9% of their heterosexual peers).

[70] Pedersen and Hegna also point towards the seminal text *Rethinking Prostitution: Purchasing Sex in the 1990s* (1996) by Scambler and Scambler as the impetus for reassessing the terms and understandings within the sex industry (2003, p.135).

also redirects the focus to the victims as the ultimate purpose for Cara is to reclaim power and protect the vulnerable. Cara often gravitates towards sex workers or those in transient and drug dependent lifestyles as their protector. The focus on this underlying subculture shifts the focus from just a fictitious text to how the serial killer becomes a broader discourse on culture and posthumanism:

> Extremely high rates of childhood physical and sexual abuse and sexual abuse in adulthood among incarcerated women suggest a causal relationship between abuse and criminality. (Davis and Lurigio, 2007, p.46)

The character's past victimology indicates her likely connection between her present (predator) and past (prey) but also serves to justify how she becomes involved in serial killing. These shared characteristics help her to easily integrate into these other minority groups (sex workers, drug addicts) that also experience higher levels of vulnerability and risk. This focus also helps to explore how 'becoming' values are passed along through hybrid transitioning or through the shared culture that justifies redemption from trauma. While in Chapter 1 I defined that Dolarhyde was opposed to Hannibal due to his imitation of 'becoming', *Huntress* explores how certain values of 'becoming' can be desirable if purposed for social advancement over personal power. Cara saves a young runaway, Jade, from her dealer/pimp by killing the man. Jade displays many minority stereotypes of runaways including her sexual fluidity, drug use, full-body tattoos, and precocious use of sexual appeal, even outside of her transactional sex work. Jade later joins in Cara's vigilante killings, seeking out other predators and contributing to building the cultural movement named 'Bitch'. The term 'Bitch', having contexts of gendered slander, also hints towards 'Otherness' being connected to socially rejected expressions of gender. Like the hacktivist collective group 'Anonymous', the fictional entity 'Bitch' is a collectivist figurehead in the *Huntress* series which makes several political statements, including identifying predators or accused predators.[71] This group takes the term 'bitch', often used as a demeaning slur, and uses

[71] 'Anonymous' began on the internet platform 4chan message boards, where the group collectively rallied around a movement of anarchy towards redefining power through social movement. Anonymous has

the term to reclaim power and target systemic issues of assault and victimisation of vulnerable groups. Carol Adams notes that the term 'bitch' (also 'sow', 'hen', or 'old biddy') is anthropocentric and indicates animals have 'no control over their reproductive choice' (2020, p.110). This highlights the dehumanising and powerless contexts of these slurs that are often directed at females. Just as the Guy Fawkes mask is used as a symbolic 'face' of Anonymous, the group Bitch embraces the figurehead of the skeletonised saint, Santa Muerte or Lady Death. Symbolically, this saint figure is death personified and brings protection for the victimised. Many unnamed characters begin undertaking vigilante action under the figure of Lady Death, creating a social movement to revolt against systemic vulnerability. By inverting the narrative from stigmatised groups to arbiters of social power or justice provides a carnival understanding of how 'Otherness' can reclaim power dynamics through justified violence. Even though Jade is not referenced by Animal/Human characteristics, she undertakes the same ambiguated violence under the ethical reasoning as a co-opted framework for violence. The presence of collective groups working towards political activism correlates with society reaching a critical mass of socio-dynamics where the threshold purporting social change begins to outweigh the political majority and advances towards cultural revolution. Vigilante action as a justified narrative for social change is addressed through the representation of Cara as a killer whose existence is developed to invert the power dynamics of victims and predators. This inversion addresses stereotypes of gendered victimisation and complex vulnerability associated with minority designations of 'Otherness'.

2.8 Attachment

With trauma's initial 'change' of identity, the characters experience the loss of their closest attachments. This, I argue, disrupts the character's natural capacity to attach or form emotional bonds in a 'normal' way in future. Where later attachment is shown, it is often deviant attachment

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targeted a number of organisations including the church of Scientology, the Australian government, and Sony (Fuchs, 2014, p.89-91; Coleman, 2013, p.5-6).

that signal the 'Otherness' of the character's patterns and thoughts. This change causes them to disconnect from typical social behaviours and ethical conscience, which helps them create their new framework for identity and justification defined by their 'own set of rules'.[72] This connection is important as it creates the common knowledge understanding used to rationalise trauma as a 'cause' of serial killing and 'becoming'. Attachment theory is a psychological concept that I reference as defined by John Bowlby in his book *Child Care and the Growth of Love* (1953) where Bowlby studied attachment through observing parent and child interactions inside the children's ward of hospitals. The actual terminology of 'attachment' would not be used in his writing until 1957, though the concept was developed theoretically in his previous publications. Broadly understanding the psychological concept of attachment is important because it is a key factor that indicates how these characters have 'become' Animal/Human. Bowlby would go on to foster this concept in his series of three volumes *Attachment and Loss*: *Attachment* (1969), *Separation* (1973), and *Loss* (1980). This theory is important to reading the Animal/Human because each character has lost their parental figures at a young age due to trauma. The loss of these early-learning influences provides a culturally reasonable in-between space for deviant behaviours to develop.

Ann Gath (1989) notes how Bowlby's Attachment Theory was revolutionary in bridging former child development theories with psychoanalytic theory. Through my conceptualisation of the Animal/Human, loss of attachment also helps to critically bridge discourses with psychoanalytic and learning concepts. As with my approach, Bowlby acknowledges that attachment is conceptualised to understand and analyse (qualitatively) rather than diagnose (quantitatively):

> Using as primary data observations of how very young children behave in defined situations, an attempt is made to describe certain early phases of personality functioning and, from them, to extrapolate forwards. In particular, the aim is to describe certain patterns of response that occur regularly in early childhood and, thence, to trace out how

[72] The full quote is explained in the Chapter 1 introduction as the way the character of Dexter rejects outside attempts at categorisation.

> similar patterns of response are to be discerned in the functioning of later personality. The change in perspective is radical. It entails taking as our starting-point, not this or that symptom or syndrome that is giving trouble, but an event or an experience deemed to be potentially pathogenic to the developing personality. (Bowlby, 1969, p.4)

Before an instance of trauma, the narratives I analyse depict these characters as 'normal'. The key to my textual analysis is highlighting the 'radical change in perspective' because of trauma and how the process of 'becoming' Animal/Human results in 'something new entirely'. This approach is distinct from many real-life approaches to trauma theory which focus on 'traumatic memory' or 'traumatic narrative'. My approach is focused on how literary criticism can reflect a cultural perception around how post-traumatic changes can influence a person's core identity.

In tracing the role of psychoanalytical theories on cultural perceptions of trauma and attachment, Freud's early theories are important to recognise as they are prominently linked with social understandings of trauma, despite academic concerns towards applying these theories too broadly. These approaches have since been reframed by theorists, such as Bowlby. The serial killer figure lacks attachment bonds across a variety of contexts but child and 'mother figure' bonding is especially important to the creation of this representation as all three of the characters I analyse lose their mother in the process of their trauma. Mother and child attachment is an important facet of Bowlby's theory as well as Freud's earlier claims. The *Hannibal* series explores how this loss is fragmented and initiates a cyclical process to reclaim what has been lost (or 'changed'). Lecter develops bonds with 'mother' figures through an intimate relationship with his aunt (Lady Murasaki) as a teenager and later with Clarice Starling. This obvious reliance on Freudian discourse is aligned with the historical context of *Hannibal* as the series in my analysis relies heavily on traditional representations of trauma and psychoanalytic theory. The 'Freudian slip' refers to unconscious motivations which are verbalised manifesting private thoughts into public space. This parapraxis is often connected directly to Freud's theory of the 'Oedipus Complex'.[73] Deleuze and Guattari's 'Anti-Oedipus Complex', as described in Chapter 1, further

[73] This concept is developed further in Freud's text *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899 republished 1996).

explores how these desires can be complex and pull the character in opposing directions. General audiences may recognise that broken mother-child bonds are influential, even if they do not know more deeply about Freud or Bowlby's applications. The Oedipus Complex is the manifestation of action rather than verbal speech from unconscious desires, specifically the idea of innate sexual desire for the opposite sex parent (mother). This is relevant to a textual discourse analysis where action (killing) is representative of intangible desire ('Need'). In the *Hannibal* series, Lecter loses his mother and sister and his attachment to these two important females is manifested in the few relationships the character is seen to develop. Freud describes this 'compelling' drive as one that starts in childhood and continues to impact attachment development:

> The perversion is no longer an isolated fact in the child's sexual life, but falls into its place among typical, not to say normal, processes of development which are familiar to us. It is brought into relation with the child's incestuous love-object, with its Oedipus complex. […] The abnormal sexual constitution, finally, has shown its strength by forcing the Oedipus complex into a particular direction, and by compelling it to leave an unusual residue behind. A perversion in childhood, as it is well known, may become the basis for the construction of a perversion having a similar sense and persisting throughout life, one which consumes the subject's whole sexual life. (Freud, 1979, p.178)

Parallels between Lecter's familial attachments and his sexual attachments continually hint at this 'persisting' and 'consuming' infatuation. In *Hannibal*, Lecter rescues Clarice from captivity to then drug her himself, making her dependent on him for basic sustenance and shelter. This time cements the previously developing attachment between Starling and Lecter and once Clarice is released from her intoxicants, she then makes the voluntary choice to remain with Lecter. The depth of this attachment is evidenced through her participation in cannibalism and the subsequent consummation of their romantic involvement. The symbol of this transition from adversary to partner is enacted through Clarice offering her breast for Lecter to suckle as a replacement for the mother he lost and as a promise that she would not abandon him:

> A sigh from the fire, the warmth of the fire through her gown, and there came to Starling a passing memory- *Dr Lecter, so long ago, asking Senator Martin if she breast-fed her daughter.* A jeweled movement turning in Starling's unnatural calm: For an instant many windows in her mind aligned and she saw far across her own experience. She said, 'Hannibal Lecter, did your mother feed you at her breast?'
> 'Yes'.

> ‘Did you ever feel that you had to relinquish the breast to Mischa? Did you ever feel you were required to give it up for her?’
> A beat. ‘I don’t recall that Clarice. If I gave it up, I did it gladly’.
> Clarice Starling reached her cupped hand into the deep neckline of her gown and freed her breast, quickly peaky in the open air. ‘You don’t have to give up this one’, she said. Looking into his eyes, with her trigger finger she took warm Château d’Yquem from her mouth and a thick sweet drop suspended from her nipple like a golden cabochon and trembled with her breathing.
> He came swiftly from his chair to her, went on a knee before her chair, and bent to her coral and cream in the firelight his dark sleek head. (*Hannibal,* p.554-5)

Lecter’s attachment to his mother was removed initially as her breast (feeding) was given to his younger sister and then reinforced through his mother’s death. Clarice alludes that Lecter’s deep connection to his sister began with the transferred attachment to his mother’s breast. Bowlby’s theory states the attachment between mother (or mother-figure) and child is directly linked to the process of feeding as attachment is developed through reliance on the mother to meet the child’s basic physical needs (1969, p.194). While none of the characters experience the loss of their mothers during infancy, there are still Freudian/Bowlbian references to the infatuation of mother and child relationships directly linked to the Animal/Human’s damaged development. This detail could also be used to evidence how general psychoanalytical theories are appropriated for entertainment narratives without full adherence to the theorist’s concepts. Each character’s parental loss removed their main source of physical and emotional safety. After the loss of his mother, Lecter becomes responsible for nurturing and feeding his younger sister. As he becomes the responsible providing figure, Mischa’s death could also be compared to a parent losing a child, creating a recurring cycle of loss for Lecter. Losing Mischa ‘consumes’ him mentally, as well as sexually, and this ‘Otherness’ (deviant attachments) becomes a symbol of his new identity.

In contrast to the more determinant (nature or inborn) features of Freudian attachment, popular culture representations of trauma also reflect Bowlby’s theory that indicates post-traumatic changes are the result of not only the trauma but other environmental influences and support that occurs after trauma. This is reflective in a literary analysis of Animal/Humanism as a complex rhizome. As a medical student just before WWII, Bowlby would undertake research that

revealed that in a study of thieves, almost half had experienced childhood separation from their parents within their first five years of life (1969, p.13). In my analysis, these characters not only experienced the loss of their families but describe insufficient surrogate attachments post-trauma that leads to their criminality. The emphasis of Freud and Bowlby's work specifically analysed maternal deprivation, separation, and anxiety. The representations here, however, involve the lack of bonding or attachment from all genetic parents. In the *Dexter* series, for instance, the character is adopted by the police officer who rescued him from the storage container where his mother was killed. While Dexter professes his gratefulness, respect, and what limited affection he can manage for Harry, he also recognises that this replacement is not equal to what was lost:

> I don't have a family. I mean, as far as I know. Somewhere out there must be people who carry similar genetic material, I'm sure. I pity them. But I've never met them. I haven't tried, and they haven't tried to find me. I was adopted, raised by Harry and Doris Morgan, Deborah's parents. And considering what I am, they did a wonderful job of raising me, don't you think? Both dead now. And so Deb is the only person in the world who gives a rusty possum fart whether I live or die. For some reason that I can't fathom, she actually prefers me to be alive. I think that's nice, and if I could have feelings at all I would have them for Deb. (*Dreaming*, p.15-6)

Though he was raised by the Morgans from the age of four, he still refers to them as 'Deborah's parents' and throughout the series uses their formal names ('Harry') rather than relational identifiers ('dad'). Dexter insinuates that despite their efforts, he was unable to form attachments and that 'family' is an entity bonded by emotion.

While Dexter was integrated immediately into an adoptive family after his trauma, both the characters of Lecter and Lindstrom show instances of 'state care' which is intended to meet their physical needs but may present lesser opportunities for emotional restoration or bonding. Hannibal was placed initially in an 'orphanage' that had been set up in his family home, 'Lecter Castle'. This would reinforce the child's loss and trauma while simultaneously removing opportunities for new, loving attachments. When he was eventually sent to live with his uncle and aunt (by marriage, Lady Murasaki), Lecter forms deeper bonds with her than with his blood relative. Transitioning from lack of attachment to what could be classed as having 'insecure' or

deviant attachments, results in Lecter developing a systematic approach to justifying his violent desires. In *Hannibal Rising,* his first kill (and cannibalisation) is in defence of Lady Murasaki's honour after a man makes racial slurs about her publicly (p.103). Hannibal's attachments are rare but both his relationships with Lady Murasaki and Clarice Starling are laced with sexual undertones and his displays of loyalty are shown through violent outbursts towards others in attempts to protect or defend them (*Silence,* p.69; *Hannibal Rising*, p.303). In this way, Lecter uses the one response he knows, violence, as his way of showing affection and attachment. *Huntress* texts show how Cara's 'damaged' nature breaks down any potential future attachments and reinforces the idea that her 'Otherness' makes her unlovable and dangerous. After her family's death, Cara was briefly placed with an aunt before being surrendered to state care. When the police ask questions about the time that Cara spent with extended family, her uncle defends their decision to turn her out of their house as:

> 'She was not right. […] You don't know what we had to deal with. Her waking up at night, screaming. Seeing things. […] Monsters, she said. Always crying about *It*. […] She needed more help than we could give her'. (*Blood Moon*, p.26-7)

In Cara's case, her trauma impacted her to the point that it inhibited her extended family from forming bonds with her. Because of her young cousin, her aunt also used these post-traumatic (and Animal/Human) symptoms to rationalise that Cara was dangerous and needed to be removed for 'her own child's safety'.[74] These stigmatisations towards traumatic reactions are a common assumption for creating 'Otherness'. In the section above, I addressed runaways as a minority group often associated with vulnerability towards violence. A young Hannibal was placed in state care until relatives could be contacted after his parents' deaths, however, Cara experiences state care because she is rejected by her extended family members. This is then compounded by her experiences of further trauma (sexual attack) from an authority figure (counsellor) within that system which reinforces her lack of attachments and trust in people. In

[74] This shows maternal instinct for the child she had bonded with and contrasts the experience she has with Cara who is unable to attach.

each case, factors of pre-trauma, a violent traumatic experience, and lack of post-traumatic restoration continually reinforce that these characters are too 'broken' (deviant) to remain 'normal'.

While I do not want to delve too deeply into Freud's theories as this would support a more psychoanalytic approach, there are many surface-level connections that can be made to his attachment theories which can help understand how violence is a 'natural' reaction to trauma and how many of these concepts have previously been applied to serial killing. The social recognition of many of these theories is also relevant to their cultural impact on how we can read these characters as 'damaged' or 'deviant'. Freud's *On Psychopathology* (1979) shows how sexual urges can be conceptually linked to violent urges as a 'nucleus of neuroses' for a source of deviance. Subconscious 'phantasies' of masturbation are connected to a desire for minor physical violence which Freud compares to children being corporally punished in school:[75]

> What remains of the complex in the unconscious represents the disposition to the later development of neuroses in the adult. In this way the beating-phantasy and other analogous perverse fixations would also only be precipitates of the Oedipus complex scars, so to say, left behind… (Freud, 1979, p.179)

While these total applications of Freud's desires for pain or beating may be overstretching the mark, this is a reasonable assumption for the Animal/Human because these violent urges are often described as 'primal', representing the 'disposition' of posthumanity. Judith Harris, who researches attachment through nurture, likens Freudian theories of 'phantasy' function as a form of repression: 'Creating a persona and using it as a vehicle for airing volatile or disturbing emotions can also remedy the kinds of repression that researchers have attributed to illness (2003, p.109)'. In this way, the Animal/Human identity or 'persona' helps to 'air' the need for violence but creates the presumption that this manifestation is not seen as an 'illness' but a reasonable psychoanalytic reaction.

[75] This facet of schooling no longer remains an appropriate connection in Western education systems but, the connection made between pleasure and violence are still relevant to my claims.

In Chapter 1, I discussed the cultural fascination with violence or the grotesque. In recognising the influential nature of Freudian theories on common knowledge, the character's desire for 'pleasurable pain' can be considered 'reasonable'. The audience themselves participates in this phantasy of using someone's pain (fictional prey) as the source of entertainment (pleasure). In her compendium on British serial killers, Anna Gekoski notes the connection between emotional detachment and deviant sexual fantasies:

> Throughout their lives these people have never felt valued, their needs never treated as important and now that they begin to treat people in the same way that they were treated: they take without regard to others, they use, they depersonalize [sic], they deny others the power which they themselves have been denied. The figures in their fantasies now become actual. Real people are used as objects in the enactment of desire, in the living out of a fantasy that has always been empowering and satisfying. And these fantasies, as we have sometimes seen (but often had to infer), involve a dangerous, and virtually inevitable, conflation of images of sex and death (2003, p.374-5).

This connection between sexual sadism and murder is often referenced in criminological texts. This is specifically referenced in serial killing which for many years, was referred to as 'sexual homicide' committed by 'hedonist killers' or 'sadistic sexual murderers' (Berry-Dee, 2003, p.308). Brian Lane for example notes that Andrei Chikatilo (the Russian Ripper) is categorised as a 'lust' killer because his killing was initiated by and fulfilled his sexual gratification needs (2004, p.437). Similarly, Issei Sagawa killed Renée Hartvelt then raped and consumed her corpse, claiming it was his 'expression of love' after she turned down his sexual advances (Lane, 2004, p.377-8). Catherine Purcell and Bruce Arrigo specifically study the connections between serial murder and sexual homicide, observing the broader implications of 'traumatic typology' (meaning serial killing which was preceded by a childhood trauma) (2006, p, 34-5). Hannibal's cannibalism evidences some consideration of hedonism. Crime analysis texts often refer to figures such as Albert Fish or Jeffrey Dahmer as 'hedonist cannibals' because both men reported sexual gratification out of the killing and eating of their victims. These figures, however, were also known for the rape or necrophilia of their victims which, based on Lecter's judgment of other characters, he would frown upon (Greig, 2005). Lecter shows deviance in both his sexual relationships and his consumption,

but Chapter 4 focuses on how Lecter uses these two outlets as forms of 'working out' his 'becoming' rather than using cannibalism for sexual gratification. Lecter does not show a sexual interest in his victims and to the contrary, Lecter kills those he sees as threats to his sexual paramours, protecting them at all costs. The character uses cannibalism to enact a campaign of retaliation on the men who chose to eat his sister in a literal 'eye for an eye' approach. Lecter takes pleasure in tracking or 'hunting' the individuals, even leaving them clues that he is stalking them as a predator before killing them (like when he takes the bracelet of Kolnas' daughter-Mischa's bracelet passed down to her) (*Hannibal Rising*, p.292). When he eats the war criminals or other personal enemies, he chooses to eat them ritualistically as a form of retaliation for their actions. After these sensibilities are developed, he cannibalises more frequently and lavishly as a way of 'feeding' his internal Animal/Human. When Kolnas reveals to Lecter that he also participated in eating Mischa, the character shows momentary pause and revulsion to the knowledge of his hand in her consumption, but this is a way of evidencing the hold that his 'becoming' nature has taken. He harnesses the anger in response to this information by killing the man in a ritualistic (carnival) fashion, using a sword to carve an 'M, for Mischa' into the man's chest (*Hannibal Rising*, p.359). By showing the depth he is winning to go in his quest for revenge, Hannibal alienates his one companion and supporter, Lady Murasaki, and chooses his deviance over any emotional bonds. Hannibal continues to use killing and cannibalism as his form of social justice, justifying his actions by his 'code'. Murder and consumption are 'natural' retribution for the Animal/Human for perceived infringement on their deviant code of ethics: 'He told me once that, whenever it was 'feasible', he preferred to eat the rude. 'Free-range rude', he called them (*Hannibal,* p.102)'. When the adult Hannibal consumes, little description is given to the actual deaths, anonymising actions and prioritising the characterisation persona over his actual killing.[76] Though he does indicate that he will continue to kill as a need, not just when 'feasible' victims

[76] 'Adult' references Lecter's full posthuman portrayal in the novels *Red Dragon, Silence of the Lambs,* or *Hannibal* opposed to his youthful 'becoming' in *Hannibal Rising*.

arise. What begins as a form of cause and effect develops into a consuming motivation (desire for violence) or a 'compulsion to repeat'.

2.8.1 Animal/Human Attachment and Trauma

Hannibal Rising focuses more on more direct symptoms of reliving trauma, such as persistent nightmares, than the other series. The fact that this series is often pointed to as a 'seminal' text in serial killer literature means this portrayal helps to lay a foundation of what trauma is assumed to 'look like' and how a character 'becomes' Animal/Human. The intensity of the symptoms portrayed in the series may be connected to the character's age at the time of the trauma but are more firmly connected to assumptions based on the historical context of the *Hannibal* series. Older understandings of trauma assumed individuals would be more likely to display extreme mental manifestations of the trauma such as flashbacks or amnesia and 'blackouts', while more current research indicates these stereotypes are rare (Ruglass and Kendall-Tackett, 2015, p.203). *Hannibal* uses flashbacks, providing the reader with insinuations throughout the series that Lecter is 'haunted' or driven by the memories of losing his sister and what happened during that encounter, while *Hannibal Rising* develops this concept in detail. *Dexter* shows an example of amnesia, but the text even identifies it as odd or unique that he cannot remember the trauma at all, while knowing that 'something' happened to him. Even the subtle shift in how these narratives are written, from assumed manifestations to these as 'unique' to the character, are evidential of the cultural shift in understanding what trauma is 'likely' to construct. The Animal/Human justifies their violence as a part of their 'becoming' but exploring the tentative identity is a fictional interpretation of dissociation or depersonalisation as a psychological reaction. While each character shows some sense of superiority because of their hybridity, the *Hannibal* series most clearly links the character's inflated sense of self to his self-

professed lack of (or inability to form) attachments.[77] This neurosis allows the character to justify himself as 'Other' but also as superior to other characters who have not 'become'. In this way, he depersonalises the narrative of his trauma, not as a pitiful past (where he is viewed as a victim), but as an enviable state that makes him 'better' (and where he can be viewed as a predator). This is also a way of detaching himself from the need to make bonds as he elevates himself above the station of 'normal humans'. For example, Hannibal inverts the dynamics by trying to claim mental superiority over Clarice to assert power over their relationship. Starling is a law enforcement officer and Lecter is imprisoned; to divert from his situation of powerlessness, he attacks the self-confidence of Starling's assertions and profiling, trying to gain the upper hand:

> 'You'd like to quantify me, Officer Starling. You're so ambitious, aren't you? Do you know what you look like to me, with your good bag and your cheap shoes? You look like a rube. You're a well-scrubbed, hustling rube with a little taste. Your eyes are like cheap birthstones- all surface shine when you stalk some little answer. And you're bright behind them, aren't you? Desperate not to be like your mother. […] Let me tell you something specific about yourself, Student Starling. Back in your room, you have a string of gold add-a-beads and you feel an ugly little thump when you look at how tacky they are now, isn't it so? All those tedious thank-yous, permitting all that sincere fumbling, getting all sticky once for every bead. Tedious. Tedious. Bo-o-o-o-r-i-n-g. Being smart spoils a lot of things, doesn't it? And taste isn't kind'. (*Silence*, p.25-6)

The exact things he teases Starling about are those things he holds dear: his sense of 'taste' or his recognition and possession of nice things, his lack of freedom which he equates to Starling's mental desire to escape the same fate as her mother, and intelligence which is throughout the series emphasised as 'a blessing and a curse'. Lecter's childhood tutor, Mr Jackov, had forewarned Lecter about this: 'To remember is not always a blessing (*Hannibal Rising*, p.33)'. The ability which allows Lecter to become an effective Animal/Human, using his intelligence to evade capture (for a while), is also the same feature that causes him to vividly re-experience his childhood trauma. The character attempts to dissociate from the constant reminders of his past by clinically assessing individuals and situations as 'the psychologist' Lecter rather than 'the

[77] Chapter 3 explores this sense of superiority through development of additional or enhanced physical senses such as the ability to 'sense' other predators.

former child who saw his sister being eaten' Lecter. Though he remains unattached and clinical with most characters throughout, he drops these defences with Clarice, allowing her to see him both considering his past and as his Animal/Human present. These mutual 'attachments' or similarities that Starling later notes are the basis for their relationship rather than traditional 'love' or 'affection':

> I don't think he'd ever bushwhack me- it's rude, and he wouldn't get to ask any questions that way. Sure he'd do it as soon as I bored him. […] I don't look for him to come after me… (*Silence*, p.409-10)

Clarice explains why she is not 'afraid' of Lecter's escape from custody, that she feels her value to him lies in his curiosity. While she does not deny his violence, that he 'could' kill her, she recognises that his violence is not 'uncontrolled' or purely 'animalistic' but is tempered by his reason and his ability to depersonalise situations. Despite his curiosity, which can be equated to a loose form of attachment, she assumes that he will prioritise his other pursuits over 'coming after' her. Dissociation here can be equated to deviance in the form of hybrid identity rather than a suspended state of non-reality.

Just as with the other features of posthuman positioning, these characters reflect traumatic symbols of their change across a spectrum of common traumatic reactions which is especially helpful for a characterisation analysis (Roberts and Louie, 2014, p.178). For example, Dexter portrays avoidance symptoms more markedly than Cara or Hannibal, such as the character's complete inability to remember his trauma into adulthood. It is only after the 'Tamiami killer' triggers symbolic memories such as the location of his mother's murder at the end of the first novel that he begins to recall:

> *And the inside of a different box jumped back out at me. […] I could see her face there, and she was somehow hiding and peeking up over the - things- just her face showing, her unwinking unblinking unmoving face. And I wanted to laugh at first, because Mommy had hidden so well. I could not see the rest of her, just her face. She must have made a hole in the floor. She must be hiding in the hole and peeking up- but why didn't she answer me now that I saw her? Why didn't she even wink? And even when I called her really loud she didn't answer, didn't move, didn't do anything but look at me. And without Mommy, I was alone.*

> *But no- not quite alone. I turned my head and the memory turned with me. I was not alone. Someone was with me. Very confusing at first, because it was me- but it was someone else- but it looked like me- but we both looked like me-* […]
> 'Blood…?' I whispered.
> 'You remembered', he said behind me. 'I'm so happy'. […] He paused, his face smiling but his eyes locked onto my face. 'Little brother'. (emphasis original, *Dreaming*, p.259-260)

Within this flashback, the character questions his memories, works out his trauma by remembering the incident, and uses language as if he were that four-year-old child in the shipping box with his mother's body again. Before this, the character has recognised that he is 'Other' but shows that experiencing trauma is more important than fixation or conscious recognition of trauma. This is a helpful tool for the audience to 'discover' his trauma alongside the character, making the reader sympathetic to his journey of discovery. Dexter's biological brother (Brian) proves to be the 'Tamiami killer' who claims he 'knew' Dexter would be a killer as well because of their shared trauma. Brian was older at the time of the trauma and claims to have always been aware of his 'becoming', while Dexter's event amnesia is assumed to be a result of his young age which helped him to block the experience (while still suffering the post-traumatic aftereffects of 'becoming'). It is because of his lack of awareness that Dexter claims 'inevitability' of the Animal/Human state as he doesn't see an alternative to his development. However, this developmental trajectory is not experienced in a vacuum and an Animal/Human developmental trajectory is further enabled by his foster father's 'Code' which has taught him to kill, but only as a vigilante. By exploring the character's knowledge of what 'causes' this, it begins setting a regime of truth for the audience about the power of trauma and the process of 'becoming'.

As discussed above, repetition alone does not guarantee Animal/Humanity but the *Huntress* text explores how repetitive trauma reinforces or defines how hybridity may develop. There are noted alterations in Cara's mood and behavioural swings starting directly after her first attack and worsening after her second, indicating that her 'becoming' may have been further reinforced or heightened after these repeated attacks. These changes are highlighted when Cara is around men or in situations that give the impression of threat indicating that her predator state

is triggered by the continuous risk of being intended prey. While the character's initial trauma is from a stranger, it is her second trauma, the sexual attack she experienced from an acquaintance, that emphasises her continuous caution. Also, because of her gender and the nature of her subsequent traumas, 'prey' is used as an indicative term referencing sexual assault and trauma:

> She can always tell, is always aware of this effect she has on some men. Not everyday, idle attraction but a violent longing that has nothing to do with her age or the way she looks or the way they imagine she can fuck. It's something else entirely, something more raw, a sense of her otherness, her darkness. An unhealthy thing even in otherwise healthy men, because it is an attraction to the edge, to danger and despair; to what has happened to her, to the places she has been and the things she has done (*Huntress,* p.74-5).

> '…And later there are a number of reports that diagnose borderline personality disorder'.
> *Right,* Roarke thought, with an inward sigh. *Borderline, of course, what problematic younger female isn't?* It had seemed to him for some time that BPD was mostly a catchall diagnosis for all the intangible ways people could be fucked up by abuse, usually sexual abuse. It was a kind of post-traumatic stress disorder.
> Which you would expect of anyone who had been through what Cara Lindstrom had been through. (emphasis original, *Huntress,* p.240)

Both the first excerpt from Cara's perspective and the second from the perspective of the male detective figure of the series, Roarke, hints that the threats Cara has faced and her 'fucked up' personality are attributed to her past sexual abuse and unwanted advances. This crude and simplistic example indicates that Roarke equates her deviant 'Otherness' as a natural analogy for a form of PTSD. He insinuates that this trauma marks her as understandably different but that these changes are still undesirable and likened to a mental illness and reinforcing that the Animal/Human is 'intangible' but genuine. Cara and Roarke both acknowledge that this 'darkness' attracts a different kind of attention, signalling her outsider status and that she has crossed the border from 'average' to 'Other'. This extreme wariness around men makes Cara even less likely to attach to anyone of the opposite sex. A side narrative around a young boy and his father in *Huntress Moon* shows that her attraction to them is because she 'senses' their damage and that the young boy needs protection rather than hetero-normative male/female or maternal attraction. This also highlights the unique relationship or mental connection she has with Roarke which is developed around their mutual respect for what she achieves as a vigilante.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an exploration of the ways that 'becoming' is developed in text and conceptualises an understanding of the serial killer. To create discourse around serial killers as antiheroes, texts reveal post-traumatic change through internal dialogue that helps audiences to develop empathy for the characters and neutralises their perception of serial killers as purely evil. This development is done in a variety of ways through rhizomic or multifaceted assumptions that support the evidence that these characters are 'Other' and therefore held to different standards. While trauma is the starting point for 'becoming', these texts show us the way that characters are conditioned to further embrace their hybrid nature. I have developed here how literary representations draw from various sources of understanding about 'Otherness', including that of real-world serial killers and mythical representations of monstrosity (werewolves and vampires).

These conceptions of 'Otherness' help to build a full understanding of how 'becoming' is used as a process to conceptualise an Animal/Human identity. This approach to literary criticism, prioritises 'nurture' in creating a new 'nature' and discourse vacillates between socialised violence (these characters kill because they have been exposed to trauma) and identity that is portrayed as 'inevitable' (because of these experiences, they have no other recourse than to give in to violence). The serial killer utilises key understandings of attachment from theorists such as Freud and Bowlby to show how their trauma has created deviant approaches to relationship building and emotion. The detachment works to dehumanise or posthumanise the figure and helps to create the detachment needed to justify violent killing. This also creates a literary representation of psychosis that can be used to read how these characters are fascinating grotesque figures. This literary concept aligns with theories such as Miller's 'ordinary psychosis', Verhaeghe's 'actual pathology', and Deleuze and Guattari's 'literary schizophrenia' to define 'becoming' as a cultural recognition rather than a psychoanalytical diagnosis.

Chapter 3: Animal/Human and the Predator

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on explaining Animal/Human violence as a symbolic gesture. The process of 'becoming', as discussed in Chapter 2, focused on the internal change initiated by trauma as a type of literary psychosis. This process is not just a mental state but is acted out performatively which is the focus of my analysis in this chapter. I read alongside the characters as they define how Animal/Humanity enables efficient violence. By reading across multiple storylines, I step outside of a character's limited perspective of 'truth' to evidence how posthumanity is a culturally recognised state with consistent gestures. 'Predation' terminology is employed by other characters, as well as broader discourses on serial killing, which I utilise to inform this representation's use of animality. Sanna Karkulehto et.al. have identified that there is still a need for us to map more clearly the 'tangled relations between humans and nonhumans' and how this relationship is 'reconfigured in contemporary culture' from an interdisciplinary perspective, such as the one in this thesis (2020, p.1). A non-linear characterisation confronts assumptions that serial killers are simply vicious, uncontrollable 'animals' (monsters). Instead of excluding serial killers completely from an understanding of humanity, this figure emphasises how serial killers are 'just as human as the rest of us', while simultaneously claiming they are 'not fully human'.

In Chapter 1, I discussed how the concept of binary helps to engage a broader discourse on living or 'being'. In this chapter, I explore the Animal/Human's non-linearity and what it means to *be* hybrid. I do this by exploring the 'laws' these characters create for their behaviour and their justification of these actions through tentative positioning. This characterisation reconstructs a new perspective on justice by defining certain actions as 'instinctively' Animal/Human. This construct is formed from the references to hybridity reflecting the character's grotesque state and their inability to be quantified in simplistic terms. The characters develop senses beyond 'normal'

humans that enhance their ability to carry out serial killing. The transcendent connotations of 'becoming' excuse this figure as a kind of 'superhuman' where the character figuratively and physically transcends average capabilities of being 'fully human'. This evidences their internal struggle with dual desires as well as their broader instability outside of social norms.

Throughout these texts, the indicative language of 'predators', 'hunters', and 'prey' is used to describe the affective relationship between the serial killer (predators and hunters) and their victims (prey). This chapter explores gestures of violence that evidence hybridity in the ways animals, humans, and Animal/Humans hunt. While the Animal/Human inverts some traditional hierarchies, these cannot be eradicated fully. The characters still draw on key associations around 'animal' and 'human' and delineate their understandings of how this makes them 'better', by harnessing certain traits from each category. They also redefine remaining hierarchies, ordering them differently as context suits (sometimes prioritising 'animal' and sometimes 'human'). This chapter explores the gestures of Animal/Human violence and what it means to 'hunt' as a predator.

3.2 Animal Monstrosity and Hybridity

In Chapter 1, I explored the key concepts for understanding Bakhtin's theories of the grotesque body and carnivalesque atmosphere as a way of explaining our cultural fascination with violence and serial killing. In a study of the video game *Aliens vs. Predator*, Jonne Arjoranta imagines how the performative experience of 'playing' campaigns as alien or predator compares these states of to the traditional 'human experience' (2020, p.108). Serial killer fiction allows us to read from a perspective of internal positioning and how the characters experience typical and atypical life (killing). In this chapter, I expand on the serial killer as grotesque to explain how this construction helps us redefine something potentially terrifying into something fascinating. This shift in attention is achieved by redefining how animality justifies violence. Bakhtin's theories give deeper insight into what it means to be human by reflecting on what it means to be 'not fully

human', evidencing meaning through opposed states. In his text, *Rabelais and his World* (1984a), Bakhtin explores the 'rituals' of the Medieval folk world to explain these concepts. In this chapter, I begin to explore the rituals and gestures of the Animal/Human by analysing how instances of violence evidence posthuman discourses.[78] Chapter 2 explored the folk concept of 'becoming' through the myth of werewolves and vampires. Bakhtin additionally acknowledges Rabelais' portrayal of giants, Gargantua and Pantagruel, as a discourse on carnival extremism (1984a, p.341-4).[79] Fictionalising Gargantua and Pantagruel takes a figure 'larger than life', otherworldly, and grotesque and makes them consumable in everyday culture by highlighting the ways they look just like 'us'. The Animal/Human similarly explores non-binaristic animality through a vessel that appears anthropomorphic. Screech argues that such characters are useful for exploring the underlying deviance of being human:

> Human beings, unlike other animals, are not at ease with their condition, which they find comic (or in the case, say, of dead bodies, eerie). Something seems to have gone wrong with us. […] So too death (which is often comic in Rabelais). Human beings veil their physical functions, so comedy tugs the veil cheekily aside. (2006, p.xvii)

These texts analyse what it means to be 'not fully human' by finding comedy in deviance. Just as giants are not 'fully human', neither are the serial killers discussed here so we can 'tug aside the veil' and become comfortable with violence and grotesque death in a way 'human beings' are not at ease with. It is important for the serial killer that portrayals balance the human (ways they look just like us) with the animal (ways we are not like killers) to accept this figure and their actions as neutralised.

3.2.1 Anthropocentricity and Conceptualising the Animal

Some posthuman theorists explore the animal as an entrance into broader discourses such as objectification, anthropocentrism, and power. While Chapter 1 explored the basis of

[78] Chapter 4 continues to explore rituals and gesture through consumption.
[79] One factor noted about Gargantua is the giant's gluttonous consumption which can be further applied in Chapter 4 through an analysis of eating as a ritual of the Animal/Human (Bakhtin, 1984a, p.342).

posthuman research for influencing characterisation, this chapter explores how the application of posthumanity is worked out in fictional texts. Margo De Mello's text, *Animals and Society: An Introduction to Human-Animal Studies* (2012), provides a comprehensive overview text for understanding and applying human-animal studies (HAS) to these discourses.[80] De Mello's approach studies the philosophical implications of the interrelation between humans and animals and anthropocentric readings of hierarchical relationships. Erica Fudge overviews how Animal and Human boundaries have been set and explored throughout history in a variety of interdisciplinary discourses (e.g., religious, linguistic):

> This collection is about animals, but among those animals it is perhaps the human itself that comes under the greatest scrutiny. In the early modern period, as now, animals were not easy beings to contemplate. They raised the specter [sic] of human limitation; they provoked unease about the distinct nature of humanity; they undid the boundaries between human and beast even as they appeared to cement them. (Fudge, 2004, p.13)

The Animal/Human is unique because, through dismantling hierarchies of anthropocentrism, we can scrutinise the animal, not simply use it as a 'specter' in comparison to humans. Discourses on human-animalism often address the history of why humans 'aren't' animals to reinforce anthropocentric dominance. My approach to non-hierarchical hybridity sees animal and human similarities as neutral or empowering, not demeaning. Derrida addresses underlying presuppositions about how naming or identification of 'animal' or 'human' into separate categories underlies our other hierarchical biases:

> … the limit between Man with a capital *M* and Animal with a capital *A*. It will not be a matter of attacking frontally or antithetically the thesis of philosophical or common sense on which has been constructed the relation to the self, the presentation of self of human life, the autobiography of the human species, the whole history of the self that man recounts to himself, that is to say, the thesis of a limit as rupture or abyss between those who say ''we men", ''I, a human", and what this man among men who say ''we", what he *calls* the animal

[80] As stated in Chapter 1, I differentiate the research area of human-animal studies from the characters I define as Animal/Human where HAS is an interdisciplinary approach to analysing relationships between humans and animals and Animal/Human is a particular iteration of posthumanity. A human-animal studies approach, which considers how binary and symbolism are communicated, is different to Darwin's evolutionary hybridity and is preferenced over the biological study of Animal/Human as a primarily physical state.

> or animals. I shan't for a single moment venture to contest that thesis, nor the rupture or abyss between this ''I-we'' and what we *call* animals. To suppose that I, or anyone else for that matter, could ignore that rupture, indeed that abyss, would mean first of all blinding oneself to so much contrary evidence […] I have thus never believed in some homogeneous continuity between what calls *itself* man and what *he* calls the animal. (emphasis original, 2008, p.29-30)

Humans 'call' or determine the language used in this categorisation which intonates how anthropocentricity prioritises one's own categorisation. Humans are defined as primary and separate by the nature of being the ones to participate in this written and verbal discourse. By fictionalising the posthuman, the reader is asked to consider both animal and human as equal in the discourse because both parts of the Animal/Human 'speak'. This identity distinguishes Animal/Human's belongingness from what *they* (traditional culture) define as human and animal.

The Animal/Human does not only 'cross' between states of animal and human but hybridity is instead a 'response' between two sides of identity. The serial killer responds and is self-aware of their tentative state of identity.[81] Awareness of identity is portrayed as the 'human' ability for self-recognition and regulation: 'The said question of the said animal in its entirety comes down to knowing not whether the animal speaks but whether one can know what *respond* means' (Derrida, 2002, p.377). The posthuman is aware that 'becoming' is a response to trauma, it is not merely instinctual or subconsciously ignored. For example, Derrida states that animals are not naked, though they exist perpetually 'naked' (or unclothed) and because their recognition of the state 'nakedness' is lacking, there is no shame of *being* naked. By reframing the gesture of producing language where the animal in an Animal/Human is self-aware, I use Derrida's questioning towards anthropocentricity. In my construction of the Animal/Human, animality is 'recognised' (an opposition to full humanity) but also allows difference on a spectrum rather than total separation. As a general understanding of the animal's deniability, the animal state allows

[81] This is in reference to the serial killer defined in this thesis as the Animal/Human. There are other instances of serial killer fiction where the killer does not recognise their deviance (*American Psycho*) or is not even aware of that they are the killer (*Secret Window, Secret Garden* by Stephen King).

these killers to act violently while denying their culpability. The animal does not feel shame in killing, it is the 'natural' state of a predator (like being naked) so the Animal/Human exists as a middling state where killing is undertaken. The character recognises the ethical implications (human 'knowing') but justifies killing by reasoning such as 'I'm a predator, it's what I do' (killing is the animal's 'response').

In this section, I also define Animal/Human liminality and the threshold of hybridity between these states. I do not analyse Animal/Humanity as transition to visible physical hybridity. Productions of physical hybridity are generally relegated into genres of 'fantasy' or 'mythology', indicating elevated fictionality further detached from the 'real world'. The Animal/Human can be delineated from what Jason Mittell would define as these narratives of the 'supernatural' (2015, p.66). The fantasy genre defines macro-hybrids (werewolves) without seeking to give the reader an explanation for why hybrids exist or have the powers/gifts often ascribed to them.[82] The Animal/Human creates a liminal space where audiences can interact with the idea of posthumanity on an ideological level and consider the physical implications of dual consciousness as a result of trauma. A young Hannibal's psychiatrist acknowledges the psychological disconnect or internal 'split' that allows Lecter's personality to act as a tandem set of calculation and impulse, manifesting in dual identity as a form of repression or coping as a direct reaction to his trauma:

> To be frank, he is perfectly opaque to me. […] I find scars on his scalp but no evidence of a depressed fracture. But I would guess the hemispheres of his brain may be acting independently, as they do in some cases of head trauma, when communication between the hemispheres is compromised. He follows several trains of thought at once, without distraction from any, and one of the trains is always for his own amusement. […] I think he knows, whether he realizes [sic] it or not, and here is the danger: The mind remembers what it can afford to remember and at its own speed. He will remember when he can stand it. (*Hannibal Rising*, p.100)

[82] For example, werewolves are 'created' through being bitten or scratched by a transformed werewolf but generally, acknowledgement is not given to how this state was initially achieved (by an original werewolf developing hybridity).

‘Becoming’ Animal/Human is a method for addressing danger and proactively defending against potential future traumas. The development of new reactions and senses allows the serial killer to act in two halves ‘independently’ carrying out violence and justifying away the impacts. Throughout this chapter, I note that there is no overall preference for animal or human and that both states are used simultaneously by the characters. There remain aspects of anthropocentricity, such as the key phrase used by Dexter ‘not fully human’, which does show humanity is the assumed norm. This means that the characters began as human but were able to become hybrid through trauma. In *Dexter,* the character defines himself equally using both animal and human gestures through inner monologue:

> My dear dark other self urges me to pounce- now- sink my moonlit fangs into the oh-so-vulnerable flesh on the far side of the hedge. But the time is not right and so I wait, watching cautiously as my unsuspecting victim creeps past, eyes wide, knowing that something is watching but not knowing that I am *here*, only three steely feet away in the hedge. I could so easily slide out like the knife blade I am, and work my wonderful magic- but I wait, suspected but unseen. (*Devoted*, p.1)

Here, Dexter illustrates himself as an animal using the terms ‘pounce’ or ‘fangs’ to show the animal’s actions in perpetuating violence while simultaneously using restraint (‘caution’, ‘waiting’) to reflect human thinking. At one point, the character even makes himself inanimate ‘like the knife blade I am’ showing that Animal//Humanity goes beyond straightforward categorisation. Other times in *Dexter*, ‘knives’ and ‘fangs’ are paralleled and therefore may be an extension of his animal identity or hybridity generally. It’s essential when characterising the figure as an antihero, that the audience can accept that both parts of the Animal/Human identity work in tandem.

3.2.2 Infrahumanisation

Discussions of ‘de-humanisation’ (often applied to theories of ‘Otherness’ as in Chapter 2) would misapply how the Animal/Human is employed as an understanding of the antihero. The serial killer antihero better aligns with an understanding of ‘infrahumanisation’ by Jacques-Phillipe Leyens et.al. (2007) which defines that in the ways these characters are less human, they are

more animal. The result of these differences is fascinating rather than stigmatising and infrahumanisation identifies the state of being trapped within non-linear binary. Infrahumanisation also explains how minoritising 'Otherness' helps to explain violence as justified, such as how genocide is ambiguated by attempting to eliminate an 'undesirable minority' from a society. To lesser degrees, these same 'in-group' and 'out-group' dynamics can be applied to understanding how the serial killer justifies their actions based on who they kill and why they kill:

> If people perceive their group as possessing more uniquely human characteristics than an outgroup, we say that the outgroup is infra-humanized [sic]. […] we resisted the frequent advice to speak of dehumanization. This latter term is much more common than the neologism 'infra-humanization', or 'subhumanization', but from an etymological point of view it means something very different. We were interested to show that people are inclined to perceive members of outgroups as somewhat less human, or more animal-like, than themselves; such a view corresponds to the word infra-humanization (although we could also have used 'subhumanization'). By contrast, dehumanization of an outgroup implies that its members are no longer humans at all. (Leyens et.al., 2007, p.142)

The serial killer is not fully dehumanised and non-linearity elevates this figure so that the predator is contrasted against their prey more than other characters in law enforcement or typical figures of 'good'. These 'typically good' characters highlight the 'fully human' characteristics that the Animal/Human lacks (e.g., sympathy, attachment). This also contrasts serial killers from 'fully animals' who are attributed only 'primary' or 'primalistic' emotions. This equates to Jeremy Bentham's well-known assertion that animals (and apparently Animal/Humans) deserve ethical consideration because of their ability to suffer, if not for other developed 'emotions' (1798) Afrodita Marcu et.al. equates these same manifestations as subconscious reactions to empathy and how animal-humanism is understood considering whether we 'associate' these individuals primarily as 'like us' or 'Other':

> Infrahumanization [sic] research relies on the distinction between primary emotions, which are assumed to be common to animals and humans (e.g. fear), and secondary emotions, which are assumed to be uniquely human (e.g. nostalgia). […] while primary emotions are equally attributed to out-group and in-group, out-group members are generally attributed fewer secondary emotions than in-group members. This differential attribution of secondary emotions […] represent[s] the perception of out-group members as less-than-human, and less human than the in-group, given their presumed inability to feel uniquely human emotions. Infrahumanization researchers further assume that by denying out-groups these essentially human emotions, dehumanizing treatment is justified. While the

> infrahumanization paradigm makes use of the animal-human binary, it does not assume that in-groups associate out-group members with animals, but rather that they perceive out-group members as being less-than-human. (Marcu et.al., 2007, p.876)

The serial killer is ethically worthy of consideration because they display deviations of both primary and secondary emotions such as fear or attachment. In this thesis, the 'in-group' is primarily the audience and characters portrayed as 'socially accepted'. The serial killer is often granted membership into this group through our fascination with them. To which, the audience humanises the serial killer, despite the denial that these characters display secondary emotions (empathy and relationship building). The characters often use their 'lack' of secondary emotions as evidence of their deviant mindset, such as Dexter making repeated reference to his sociopathic tendencies:

> I have used my considerable charm to make her like me. Easier than you might think. Anybody can be charming if they don't mind faking it, saying all the stupid, obvious, nauseating things that a conscience keeps most people from saying. Happily I don't have a conscience. I say them. (*Dreaming*, p.26)

> It was not really accurate to say that I loved Deborah, since I am incapable of love, but I was used to her, and I would rather have her around and reasonably content with me. (*Dark*, p.256)

Though the character says he does not have secondary emotions in the first quote, he shows that he *may* by the reader's definition in the second. Dexter states his desire to placate and keep connections to his sister Deborah, though he would not define this as 'love'. However, at other points in the series, Dexter chooses Deborah's needs over his Animal/Human instincts to kill. He chooses to save Deborah instead of killing her, though it means she holds power over him (especially a risk because she is a police officer). Insinuating this type of sacrificial affection for another person would generally be accepted as a sign of 'love'. By doing so, the audience can make excuses or rationalisations on behalf of the characters, affording them membership into the in-group (the group which appeals to higher forms of justice). As the audience humanises the serial killer, we bring them into 'our' group. The serial killer's victims are then the out-group, pushing the stigma of 'lesser' onto the antagonist criminal instead of the Animal/Human. By

neutralising their prey, it addresses both forms of deviance presenting the assumption: of course they (predator antiheroes) kill, they're Animal/Human; of course they kill *them* (un-justified criminals), *them* being 'monstrous' or primarily 'animal'.

Anthropocentric cultural biases are often used to dehumanise 'Others', prioritising human features over animal ones. Christoph Cox states that culture idealises portrayals that elevate animals 'up' to humanity as 'charming' but downgrades the human 'performing' like an animal as 'disgusting':

> We are surely a kind of animal. Yet we are also repulsed by the thought that we might be *merely* animals and have spent an enormous amount of time and intellectual energy convincing ourselves that we are something different. (Cox, 2005, p.19)

Cox goes on to elaborate how this image is built into the Western mindset through traditions of philosophy, such as Aristotle's *scala naturae* hierarchy, or religious tradition that prioritises human 'dominion'. Infrahumanisation sets an important precedent for thinking of animals 'differently'. This approach lays the basis for posthumanism to radically question and deny the human as a hierarchical priority.

Privilege is evidenced through the voices that contribute and are spotlighted in cultural discourse. The Animal/Human demands their place in cultural discourse by giving themselves a voice through serial killer fiction. Over various courses in history, bias towards 'Otherness' has portrayed sub-groups as inferior categories and dehumanised their existence in society. Karkulehto et.al. note how the humanities are well-equipped to renegotiate traditional hierarchies because of the history of questioning structuralist discourses, particularly in reference to 'Otherness' (2020, p.3-4). Chapter 2 acknowledged how these additional understandings of 'Otherness' seek to define the limits of the Animal/Human as an outsider. Richard Ryder, coined the term 'speciesism' to define the position of anthropocentricity that degrades animality. Discourses about underprivileged groups from the dominant group have defined the non-majority as primarily 'less human' (Ryder, 2010). Adams cites the role of the animal in female representation by identifying how cultural productions have often linked the two groups,

associating females and animals as 'lower', specifically by sexualising the two. Racial minorities also have a history of being institutionalised based on animalistic or 'primitive' arguments. This can be noted in misconceived arguments for slavery or oppression which have compared black individuals to monkeys or cattle (Adams, 1994, p.53). The work of female theorists was important in early animal studies, though later overshadowed by male theorists, who gained more lasting acclaim. Adams specifically cites several important early texts, such as Ruth Harrison's *Animal Machines* (1964, republished 2013) or Brigid Brophy's essay *The Rights of Animals* (1965), whose role is now seldom recognised after contributions to the field by Richard Ryder or Peter Singer almost a decade later (1994, p.xxvii-xxviii). In human-animal studies, the female voice was lost to historically dominant male theorists and many other sub-groups were not even identified in the discourse. The same dominance has existed across narrative writing, as Mittell notes:

> It is telling that most of the examples I have referenced are male show-runners; in large part, this is due to the persistent gender bias within television writers' rooms, where women make up less than one-third of writing staffs. (2015, p.103)

In the case of the narratives I have utilised, *Huntress* is the only series with a female lead and also written by the only female author.[83] While I note throughout that gender is a marker for 'Otherness', it is also evidence of a broader cultural influence towards minoritisation that prioritises the male (Caucasian) voice.[84] This is also evident in the language of power which will be important in understanding how 'predation' evidences power or dominance. Arjoranta notes that a large portion of media representations of the 'predator' tend to be sexist, or in some cases gender is

[83] This is also true for the media adaptations: *Dexter*'s (Showtime, 2006- 2013) writing room was fronted by James Manos Jr. with 96 episodes credited (also 96 to Jeff Lindsay because he owns the original property rights) while the most influential female writer, Lauren Gussis, is only attributed to 22 episodes (IMDba, n.d.). The *Hannibal* television show (NBC, 2013-2015) was predominantly written by Bryan Fuller and credits Thomas Harris (39 episodes each) with no female writer being credited with more than 2 episodes (Kai Wu) (IMDbb, n.d.). For the film adaptations of Harris's work, the screenwriters were also male dominant: Thomas Harris himself for *Hannibal Rising* (2007), Ted Tally for *Red Dragon* (2002) and *Silence of the Lambs* (1991), or David Mamet and Steven Zallian for *Hannibal* (2001) (IMDbd, n.d.; IMDbe, n.d.; IMDbf, n.d.; IMDbc, n.d.).

[84] Jeff Lindsay, Thomas Harris and Alexandra Sokoloff are all white/Caucasian Western individuals as are their key characters though Chapter 2 discusses how other racial minorities are used in the texts to provide various levels of diversity.

not explicit, but that few predators intentionally are portrayed as female (2020, p.123). By highlighting how the *Huntress* series inverts expectations of gender towards predation and victimology, the Animal/Human figure opens discourses of posthumanity that does not equate reclaimed power as a feature of male dominance.

3.2.3 Power Struggle: A Non-linear Binary

Binaries help to frame the social world by providing context through contrast. Hybrid post-theories, particularly those of non-humanity/humanity differ in the use of certain terms, such as 'binary' by redefining opposition. If the animal is not portrayed as 'lesser' in a collapsed binary, this does not prohibit it from being portrayed still as 'Other'. The process of 'becoming' (see Chapter 2) signals a grotesque understanding of the serial killer as emerging, transforming, transcending. Margot Norris highlights the interplay between animal and human language as indicative of a power struggle that attempts to explain various layers of a framework via understandings of non-humanity/humanity. She even references writers such as Nietzsche and Kafka as 'beasts' because their writing addresses questions of animality. In a discussion of the animalistic gesture, Norris defines the power struggle as evidential of what opposition can be assumed to mean:

> It is not a study of animal imagery, although the works I explore do present us with apes, horses, bulls, and mice who appear in the foreground of fiction, not as the tropes of allegory or fable, but as narrators and protagonists reappropriating their animality amid an anthropocentric universe. These beasts are finally the masks of the human animals who create them, and the textual strategies that bring them into being constitute another version of their struggle. The focus of this study will then be a small group of thinkers, writers, and artists who create *as* the animal- not *like* the animal, in imitation of the animal- but with their animality speaking. (1985, p.1)

Animal prioritisation is used to 'reappropriate' and reclaim the animal in contrast to other anthropocentric texts. The animal side of the serial killer is showcased and given the ability to narrate and to create which redefines the role of the animal in identity.[85] Norris is claiming,

[85] Norris uses the term 'human animals' meaning the human as a species within the animal kingdom. This is separate from the Animal/Human as a deviant identity and differentiated from how unmitigated

however, that seminal authors (like Kafka) are not only able to employ the Animal/Human as a figurative production but are able themselves to transcend to a form of Animal/Humanity (they become beasts in writing them). Identity continues to be separate ('not *like* the animal'), but instead as a manifestation of the animal which combines with the human, using the human form to evidence their 'speaking' (Animal mind/Human mouth). This also contributes to my arguments in Chapter 4 about how the audience vicariously experiences participation through fascination with fictional texts.

The Animal/Human is an exploration of power struggle through internal and external conflict (and ultimately a form of cohesion). Through 'predator' and 'hunter' language that I explore below, characters are opposed through ideals generally translated as the hero versus villain dichotomy. Externally, the antihero explores the conflict of killers versus law enforcement by creating an in-between space where violence is (somewhat) justified. Internally, animal and human sides of a character are in a constant power struggle for the primary identity between 'ego' and 'Other'. The internal struggle is referred to by Derrida as the concept of 'difference' which is meant to challenge structured images and explore the 'logical difficulty' of a system that has been 'shaken' (Newman, 2001):

> …by following its totalizing [sic] logic to its final consequences, one finds an excess which cannot be construed within the rules of logic, for the excess can only be conceived as *neither* this *nor* that, or both at the same time—a departure from all rules of logic. *Différance* often functions as an *aporia*: it is difference in neither time nor space and makes both possible. (Bass, 1978, p.xviii)

Posthuman characterisation makes it possible for both animal and human to exist at the same time in an individual, rather than being one then another. Hybridity helps to argue how violence can be traumatising (conceivably negative) but also 'justified' (repositioned as positive). It also helps to create a grotesque in-between positioning of hunting humans and a scenario that

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'animals' are typically portrayed as a separate category, due to the anthropocentric view, which distinguishes the human as unique.

conceivably allows for this to be a spectator sport through fiction. The purpose of 'difference' explains how a figure transcends structuralist categorisation:

> Beyond the edge of the so-called human, beyond it but by no means on a single opposing side, rather than 'the Animal' or 'Animal Life', there is already a heterogeneous multiplicity of the living, or more precisely (since to say 'the living' is already to say too much or not enough) a multiplicity of organizations [sic] of relations between living and dead, relations of organization or lack of organization among realms that are more and more difficult to dissociate by means of the figures of the organic and inorganic, of life and/or death. (Derrida, 2002, p.399)

This shows that an anthropocentric narrative is insufficient for understanding the complexity of 'living' or being. As the characters further 'become' Animal/Human, they 'kill off' potential pieces of themselves (emotional attachment) while creating their new life. As they embrace this non-linearity, they enact violence that leads to more death. Using binary in this way is consistent with an understanding of the nature of 'life and/or death' itself. In the words of Derrida:

> If the limit between the living and the nonliving now seems to be as unsure, at least as an oppositional limit, as that between 'man' and 'animal', and if, in the (symbolic or real) experience of the 'eat-speak-interiorize [sic]', the ethical frontier no longer rigorously passes between the 'Thou shalt not put to death the living in general', but rather between several infinitely different modes of the conception-appropriation-assimilation of the other (Derrida, 1995,p.281)

The process of 'becoming' makes the limit between the character's life and death unsure: 'are they still human if they are now Animal/Human?' In the same inevitability as life or death, the limit between man and animal is explored through how the characters 'eat, speak, and interiorize' which I explore in Chapter 4 through the process of equating eating and killing as core 'needs'. This representation, therefore, helps us redefine deviance by further exploring the complexities of 'being'. One complexity this addresses is the character's response to the 'right to life'. Animal/Human killing considers how to reframe ethics. Posthuman theory generally is opposed to hunting though this often is a response to the anthropocentric positioning of hunting as human dominance over animal victims. Theorists such as Eva Giraud point towards Wolfe and Haraway as key voices in the movement towards veganism, using posthuman theory to argue against hunting practices. Another linked complexity is Wolfe's understanding of how posthumanism

addresses the limitations of sight and visualisation to 'accurately see' or conceptualise life. Arjoranta discusses how the conception of a predator often takes on animalistic or enhanced 'sight' which makes the 'accustomed to using darkness against their prey'. By exploring how 'sight' is used as a complex term, this chapter shows how the serial killer uses their hybrid state to give them a competitive edge. The predator has become 'accustomed' to the role that 'darkness' or evil plays within themselves and within others which allows them to hunt from a position of power. For example, Wolfe acknowledges the limitations of human 'sight' through comparing visual sight and figurative sight (truth) in response to Derrida's own perceptions of human 'limitation' (Wolfe, 2008). In this way, Wolfe and Derrida both link enhanced senses to other complex discourses, such as animal studies and disability studies where they challenge a perception of majority-centrism. Positioning the serial killer as posthuman also challenges us to consider the limitations of our 'sight' towards ethics and towards life and death (and hunting to end life).

3.3 Predators, Hunters, and their Prey

If Animal/Human is a broader response to cultural discourses, the language and terminology of 'predator' becomes a way of exploring violence as a linguistic gesture. This section explores the hybridity of animal and human that relates to the interchangeable terms 'predator' and 'hunter' to show serial killers as infrahumanised. The *Hannibal* series uniquely highlights predation through a discourse of cannibalism and visuals of 'muzzling' as a symbol of the character's containment of his animalistic nature which I explore further in Chapter 4. In this chapter, I explore how Hannibal is posed as a 'dangerous animal'. The *Huntress* series also evidences how Cara uses enhanced Animal/Human senses as an attacker in response to being a victim. This also explains how Animal/Humans justify violence as a 'response' and more broadly comments on the linked nature of vulnerability and power. The character's intensified senses are used as a defence mechanism for when Cara is targeted as a victim. Her physical appearance is camouflage which disguises her true nature as a predator. The *Dexter* series explores predation

by evidencing a psychological shift between animal and human personas through a defined 'Other' state (the Dark Passenger). Though Dexter is not a cannibal, his killing is likened to 'feeding' his inner beast (the animal). Chapter 4 continues to explore how killing and feeding are linked as dual gestures of Animal/Human violence. In each of these texts, the animal is invoked as an equal rather than an ancillary state, primarily connected to the pursuit of killing. By exploring the 'inevitable' nature of these animal instincts, it helps the characters argue that serial killers are 'supposed' to exist as they evidence how Animal/Humans contribute to bringing about social justice. This antihero provides a 'natural' position in a carnival power structure for maintaining social order. Invoking Animal/Humans as predators also engages broader cultural discourses on killing as 'hunting', furthering my argument of ethical neutralisation through denial of the victim and detachment from emotion. In this section, I address how the terms 'predator', 'hunter', and 'prey' are applied to invoke posthumanism through exploring the relationship between serial killers (predators or hunters) and their criminal victims (prey). This further seeks to provide a new understanding of ow these characters reframe victimology and who is 'hunted'.

Using the term 'hunting' triggers cultural discourses on animality and anthropocentric dominance. Methods of animal population control are normalised in a human-dominant society through managed 'hunting' (hunting seasons and licensed tags), the controlled release of 'natural predators' (releasing wolves or coyotes to reduce certain animal populations), or castration. Many Western countries adhere to certain 'hunting seasons' whereby hunting is viewed as a 'sport' or a way of 'keeping animal populations in check'. While different countries may take varied approaches to how commonly hunting is accepted, each society has general permissibility for types of animal hunting (opposed to human hunting). Typical anthropocentric discourses encourage human domination or 'taming' of animals while posthuman theories challenge this structured hierarchy. For humans, population control is primarily instituted through contraception

methods, which indicates higher levels of respect for autonomy.[86] Similar arguments on behalf of animals have often been limited to animal rights activist groups or posthuman theorists (such as Haraway) that negate human primacy. By representing the Animal/Human as a posthuman and hierarchically dominant (possessing the 'strongest' qualities of animal and human), these narratives create a space where 'hunting' humans is naturalised in mainstream society.

In my analysis of crime fiction generally, I noted two diverging approaches to the use of terms 'predator' and 'hunter'. The first perspective is used more prevalently in traditional texts such as detective-centric crime fiction or criminological texts. This approach is indicative of structurally opposed categories of killer (indicatively 'predator') and police (indicatively 'hunter'). 'Hunter' terminology, through this approach, is more anthropocentric and works on a structural level to indicate that a character acts as an entity of legitimised power. This understanding of the hunter is portrayed by using language which opposes animalistic portrayals or debases figures which are 'not fully human' as monstrous. This is not a wholly consistent reading of all traditional or detective-led narratives; Jenner defines the irrational-subjective approach to detecting through 'instinct' or 'gut feeling' (2016).[87] Irrational-subjective detecting is closer to what I identify as 'animal' instinct, though I provide a more in-depth textual analysis as to *how* these terms portray animality than previous research has done. Traditionally, we see the law enforcement figure as 'human' and legitimised, and the serial killer is portrayed as an 'animal' or evil. In this triangle of terms, traditional 'prey' would generally be 'innocent' victims of 'bad' killers. This type of distinction is however blurred in the antihero, which collapses notions of 'good' and 'bad' and becomes additionally complex when the antiheroes work alongside the police. Because of this indecisive

[86] Forced sterilisation or government sanctions on human procreation are often met with backlash about human rights infringement. Warwick (1974) considered how population control methods in developing countries was raised at the World Population Conference in 1974 and Nie (1999) discusses ethical issues of the Chinese government's 'one child' policy from 1980 which would be repealed in 2015.
[87] In her text, *American TV Detective Dramas* (2016), she defines the two traditional approaches as the rational-scientific approach and irrational-subjective before going on to explore postmodern appraches to crime texts more reflective of Dexter's collapsed binary as criminal and law enforcement.

positioning, the secondary approach to these terms uses ‘predator’ and ‘hunter’ interchangeably and is more indicative of posthuman applications. In this approach, the killer uses the predator and hunter language to define themselves in relation to other characters within the plot. This perspective uses the terms ‘predator’ and ‘hunter’ fluidly as a way of triggering association to the ‘Other’ state where there is no single hierarchy of animal or human. I explain ‘predator’ indicative language to identify animal or ‘more animal’ actions, while the ‘hunter’ is evidences human or ‘more human’ behaviours. Through this reading, I show how ‘predators’ or ‘hunters’ are equal terms used to evidence how animality is recognised and performatively linked to violence.

3.3.1 Predator

I this section, I analyse how the term ‘predator’ is used to reference the serial killer through posthuman positioning by harnessing animalistic traits. Evidencing serial killers through the first-person perspectives of these texts, the ‘predator’ uses language describing themselves as active and powerful. This role highlights the character’s past as a victim by placing it in opposition to the power they now have. Guesse notes the inadequacy of speculating about posthuman contexts without including those ‘living within’ posthumanism (2020, p.28). By exploring the predator from within the discourse led by the serial killer, it allows us to focus on the ambiguities and critique the gestures of what it means to be posthuman. These characters are predators because they have ‘become’ Animal/Human and these gestures of violence are displayed when the character is ‘stalking’ or ‘hunting’ their victims.

In a process of cyclical ‘becoming’, characters may be (at differing points in a narrative) prey and predator. As children, Cara, Dexter, and Hannibal were victims and this directly influences how they reimagine themselves as predators. To justify predation, these characters target individuals that mirror the unjustified killers they once were victims of. This circular ‘food chain’ reflects the rhizome structure of Deleuze and Guattari (1988) and the grotesque hybridity of being suspended between two states (victim and killer). Even Dexter or Hannibal who are not

'still' targeted as victims define their identity by their trauma and therefore remain influenced by their past. As Marian Duggan states in her analysis on critical victimology:

> Firstly, being a victim is not a thing, an objective phenomenon. It will not be the same to all people in situations externally described as being the 'same'. *It has to do with the participants' definition of the situation*. Some will see victory (I dared to participate) where others see victims (I was cheated). Secondly, the phenomenon can be investigated both at the personality level and at the social system level. Some might have personalities that make them experience themselves as victims in most life situations while others tend to define life according to other dimensions. The tendency to see oneself as a victim might in the perspective be called a personality trait (emphasis original, 2018, pp.11-12).

Just as the serial killer defines themselves as Animal/Human, they also subjectively define their position as a 'predator'. The predator allows the serial killer to 'see victory where others see victims' and positions hybridity an identity or an underlying 'personality trait'. This type of character has then developed from being prey (victims) and by continuing the cycle of violence that initiated their 'becoming' predators create future iterations of Animal/Humanity by enacting interpersonal violence. In each series, the serial killer also instructs another individual, who has also gone through trauma like animals teaching their young to hunt.[88] Marleena Mustola and Sanna Karkulehto contrast the human desire to 'tame' their children from the posthuman which redefines belongingness, in this case 'training' future Animal/Humans in how to kill with 'justification'.

In line with the assumption that 'becoming' is somewhat complete, the characters are first introduced as predators, highlighting that 'Otherness' is firstly determined by their serial killing. For Hannibal Lecter, his threatening nature is introduced six chapters into *Red Dragon*; law enforcement has hit a dead end and consulting with Lecter is Will Graham's last attempt to catch the killer on the loose. The character's crimes are outlined before he is seen:

> 'He killed nine people, didn't he, in all?'
> 'Nine that we know of. Two others didn't die'.

[88] In *Hannibal,* Lecter encourages Margot Verger to kill her brother and blame it on him so that she can be figuratively free of her abuser. This same individual, Mason Verger, predatorially targets Lecter in circular retaliation for leaving him disfigured and disabled. In *Dexter*, both of Dexter Morgan's stepchildren are portrayed as young Animal/Human predators and both Astor and Cody ask Dexter to instruct them on how to kill and remain undercover. In *Huntress*, Cara saves a young, trafficked girl- Jade- from her pimp by killing the man. Jade later goes on to become a predator herself, participating in the 'Bitch' social movement of vigilante justice towards rapists.

> ‘What happened to them?’
> ‘One is on a respirator at a hospital in Baltimore. The other is in a private mental hospital in Denver. […] He did it because he liked it. Still does. Dr. Lecter is not crazy, in any common way we think of being crazy. He did some hideous things because he enjoyed them. But he can function perfectly well when he wants to’. […]
> ‘What would you call him? Springfield asked. […]
> ‘He’s a monster’. (*Red Dragon*, p.53-54)

This description posits that Lecter is a ‘monster’ by juxtaposing him against his victims. Later, the character ‘on a respirator’ is revealed as Mason Verger, the antagonist in *Hannibal* who ‘hunts’ Lecter. In that faceoff, the reader learns that Verger sexually abused his sister which restructures the assumption of him as an ‘innocent victim’. Based on these types of revelations throughout the series, it indicates that Lecter knows more about the deviance of those he targeted than the reader or law enforcement and poses him as an antihero. Graham also distinguishes Lecter from ‘typical killers’ by saying he isn’t crazy, reinforcing a cultural assumption about ‘monstrosity’ that a mental defect is the ‘typical’ reasoning for killing nine individuals. Lecter is ‘Othered’ (‘He’s a monster’) though character development later shows us that this simplistic characterisation is ineffectual at quantifying Animal/Humans. Though Lecter is incarcerated, the texts make clear that his predatorial nature still exists (‘He did it because he likes it. Still does’) and that if Lecter were free, he would kill again. Though we understand that he is a predator, we are intrigued by Lecter’s escape, knowing that he seeks to kill again.

Cara’s introduction in the *Huntress* series is similarly veiled, introducing the character first as an outsider through another character’s perspective. The text places her in the city centre of San Francisco, distinguishing her from those on the street as a (then unnamed) predator, killing a man (an undercover law enforcement agent) in broad daylight:

> The woman in black who walks through this flotsam is an anomaly. Too well dressed to be one of them, too clean to have business in this part of town. She gets glances, of course, some surreptitious and curious, some longer predatory stares. Lone women don’t often walk this street except for money. But something about her keeps the flies away. (*Huntress*, p.1-2)

Cara is noticeable to Roarke because his police background has trained him to look for anomalies. Her awareness and her appearance are the attributes that catch his attention and are the same

ones that keep her inconspicuous from the other untrained eyes on the street She is distinguished from other 'walkers' (sex workers) showing an understanding of female vulnerability and introducing a key discourse of the series. Though Roarke notes that other characters are 'predatory', she is not defensive or uneasy and this confidence signals her 'Otherness'. He watches Cara as the man he is travelling to meet gets thrown into the street to his death. Roarke suspects her of this crime because of her 'stillness', like how a predator freezes before striking. Movement often 'keeps the flies away' but in this instance, we note that the combination of stillness and threat manages to signal Cara as a spider or other predator to keep these insects away, despite her stillness. Flies are not only a nuisance, they can bite and create an infection. This also becomes an analogy for how Cara uses her predation to proactively protect herself from future injuries. Despite her careful efforts to remain inconspicuous, the interest she sparks in this happenstance entanglement becomes the impetus to introduce Cara as a predator, inverting our expectations of what a serial killer 'looks' like and how they kill from the start of the text.

The *Dexter* series is the only one where the character is introduced via first-person narration while he is actively hunting in his predator state. To create similar distance and suspense as the other two texts, the television adaptation of this scene shows the character backlit or from camera angles that place the audience is in the position of the predator (Figure 2, Appendix, p.226). The image of the predator is developed over the first ten pages of the novel through Dexter's internal narration where duality constantly exists as part of the character's identity, even when he is not acting actively on predatorial drives: 'three weeks I [Dexter] have spent fighting the pressure, the growing *Need* […] I can't help myself either (*Dreaming,* p.1; p.10)'. The text first justifies the mindset of killing, the 'Need', is a necessity or inevitable facet of being a predator. While *Hannibal* or *Huntress* 'Other' the characters by posing them as an outsider to be studied or 'figured out', the first-person perspective of *Dexter* neutralises the immediate violence the audience 'experiences'. The character pre-empts his described kill by creating intrigue, justifying

to the audience that predators must hunt. The 'Need' to kill is a primary obligation that builds up until he can act on it. Whether the predator *will* kill is not questioned, merely *when* it will happen.

3.3.1.1 Predatorial Senses

The language of predation is developed in these texts through imagery that draws attention to how the characters use their physical senses, enhanced by hybridity. This section focuses on the deviance these characters show concerning smell, touch, hearing, and vision while Chapter 4 evidences how taste is utilised to explain their need for violence. In relation to these senses, the characters display heightened awareness, likened to animals, and beyond traditional human capabilities. As Chapter 1 acknowledged, these symbols are representative of posthumanism broadly. While some expressions of enhancement clearly link to animal-humanism, other branches of posthuman theory, such as cyborg-humanism also address the 'superhuman' concept of being 'Other'. *Dexter* utilises inner monologue to bring the audience along while he hunts his victims. He places the onus of violence on the Dark Passenger's 'need' for violence and shows how he kills using animalistic traits and descriptors. *Hannibal* evidences how serial killers are positioned as violent animals but our culture is incapable of fully restraining their power. This series discusses different ways that Lecter displays enhanced physical senses but also visually positions the character using gestures of restraint such as glass barriers and face masks.[89] The *Huntress* series explores how predation is developed out of trauma which develops a 'sixth sense' for the serial killer to recognise other predators, justify violence as self-protection, and position the Animal/Human as a hyper-predator.

Acute sensory strengths of both animals and humans make the antihero dominant (a hyper-predator) over all other characters (their victims and law enforcement). In a study by Alexandra Horowitz and Marc Bekoff, they address why certain animal behaviours are

[89] In this chapter, I discuss the use of visual imagery in Lecter's incarceration and how this poses him as a 'dangerous animal'. Chapter 4 discusses mask imagery more explicitly and how this draws attention to the serial killer's mouth and the gesture of consumption.

anthropomorphised as it helps to conceptualise and evaluate 'usefulness'. Serial killer texts use these same perceptions of 'usefulness' in describing which animalistic traits the character develops or enhances. Studies are more likely to look at how animal behaviours can be 'useful' for understanding the human rather than the reverse.[90] Traditionally, certain behavioural and physical qualities trigger discourses on power and vulnerability and therefore the discourse of animality in predation is inherently linked to structuring which characters are positioned as predators. Horowitz and Bekoff also note that these 'preferences' are culturally biased and therefore the animals chosen for Western serial killer texts may not be transferrable to other culture's perceptions of this figure:

> Those animals who bear a superficial physical similarity to ourselves—apes and monkeys—and those who are at least in our taxonomic group—mammals—are the likeliest candidates. (This betrays a Western cultural preference: the Japanese are more favorably [sic] disposed to invertebrates, for instance.) (2007, p.29)

These texts generally link the Animal/Human to mammalian predators (lions, tigers, wolves) over mammalian prey (mice, gazelles).[91] Through textual analysis, I analyse how physical features of certain predators are used to evidence 'similarity' between animals and the serial killer. Earlier in the chapter, I discussed infrahumanisation and the ability for the audience to justify the serial killer by integrating them as a partial member of the in-group. Bonnie Berry argues that we choose association with animals whose traits or appearance can enhance our social status which means that the audience enhances their own 'power' by associating with the serial killer:

> That is, assuming that humans want to be perceived by their immediate and broader society in a particular light, they may specifically select their animal companions and animal possessions for traits that they hope speak well of themselves as wealthy, powerful, deadly, exotic, beautiful, well-bred humans. (2008, p.75)

[90] This again assumes that animals are 'good to think with' (see Chapter 1) or a vehicle for understanding humanity which displays underlying assumptions of anthropocentric dominance.
[91] In contrast to the serial killer's power, other studies on species representation indicate that animals are anthropomorphised to highlight 'cuteness' or vulnerability which increases the audience's psychological concern to protect or bond with those creatures (Horowitz and Bekoff, 2007, p.29-30; Serpell, 2003, p.84).

The audience uses the serial killer's positioning as a predator to justify our fascination with violence. The position of 'almost belonging' allows the reader to consider how these traits enhance the overall power of what it means to be human. Likening posthuman attributes to Pierre Bourdieu's cultural capital theory, Berry indicates that by choosing certain animals to anthropomorphise, individuals attribute the cultural capital or power already recognised in these figures, such as symmetry being associated with attractiveness (2008, p.76-7). To increase their power, these characters are imbued with posthuman animal qualities: the serial killer no longer only hunts with a knife, they *have* characteristic knives (claws); the killer does not just overpower their target in physical conquest, they can rip their 'prey' apart and consume them (with fangs). Thus, they align themselves with animals higher in the predatory hierarchy. The Animal/Human does not sprout claws from human hands, but the power of these physical characteristics is an indicator of 'becoming' that 'Others' the traumatically developed predator from the 'average bad guy' figures. Dexter, for example, compares his hunting to a tiger. The use of this predator as a metaphor positions Dexter as a meat-eater higher up the hunting food chain:

> That rascal moon, that loudmouthed leering Lucifer, calling down across the empty sky to the dark hearts of the night monsters below, calling them away to their joyful playgrounds. Calling, in fact, to that monster right there, behind the oleander, tiger-striped with moonlight through the leaves, his senses all on high as he waits for the right moment to leap from the shadows…My dear dark other self urges me to pounce- now- sink my moonlit fangs into the oh-so-vulnerable flesh on the far side of the hedge. (*Devoted*, p.1)

While Dexter does not morph into a tiger, he uses imagery to show himself as a 'pseudo-tiger' in appearance, indicating how shadows cast by the moon reflect his inner animal. He is a 'chameleon', able to be changed by his night-time surroundings. This also reflects how his social façade hides inner deviance that is only revealed in the 'dark' carnival space when he is killing. The imagery of a predator, blending into an exotic jungle, distances the serial killer as they hunt from the more accessible world of human-Dexter, Miami. This repositioning of the serial killer helps reinforce the myth of the Animal/Human as a figure whose violence is 'understandable' and 'real' without being an immediate or recognisable threat to the reader.

The state of predation is a gestural way of displaying how 'becoming' has changed the behaviours of the Animal/Human to enable effective violence. Like the compensatory nature of senses, where one sense can intensify to cover for another, 'becoming' intensifies the serial killer's physical awareness which helps them to avoid future attacks or detection. Predation is portrayed as 'more' animalistic, but these characters do not merely hunt as animals with a singular focus. A lion, for example, may not care if a human (hunter) or other lion (other 'predator') is a bystander while they hunt, but the serial killer must be aware that their position of power can be impeded if they are not cautious to detract attention from their killing. This distinguishes the Animal/Human from being a 'fully animal' predator. These characters are often juxtaposed against the prey they hunt who are seen to have lower ethical boundaries or personal restraint (behaving as 'fully animal'). For predators to retain their power, they must make sure to remain covert because if their prey were to escape, it would invert the power dynamics and present a threat. The predator's enhanced senses help in this task, but the Animal/Human killer also utilises external devices. Dexter, for example, organises a 'kill room' in a remote location and often overpowers his victims through surprise attacks before killing. In the novel series, this is through various means such as a knife to the throat or a garotte of fishing wire (*Dreaming*, p.136; *Dreaming*, p.4; *Devoted*, p.21). The television adaptation provides a slightly more sanitised approach as Dexter often sedates prey with a syringe of anaesthetic to the throat from behind. These up-close and personal sedation methods give the character power and control over the prey who are often imposing and able-bodied figures.

To position the predator, serial killer fiction explores ways of 'containing' posthumanity. One of the ways this is done in the *Hannibal* films is through scene blocking and camera angles. In *Silence of the Lambs* (1991), the film opens on Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) as she runs through an FBI outdoor course. Foster is filmed from behind as if she is being chased or at a distance through the trees as if she is being stalked. This likens Clarice to an animal being hunted and sets up the relationship with Lecter that follows. Hannibal is often portrayed as being 'one

step ahead' of the police, despite their traditionally powerful position and weapons. The Animal/Human's skills and 'weapons' are more powerful than even that of the police or the 'fully human', which means that society must defend against the figure differently. As Lecter is first pictured on screen, the camera pans onto a cell with riveted metal plates and thick, reinforced glass. This is contrasted to the other 'dangerous' prisoners that Clarice walks past, only contained in typical cells with bars. The imagery is like a zoo where dangerous predators, such as wildcats, are placed behind glass barriers to protect the onlookers while other animals are placed in cages. While all these 'animals' can pose risks, the method of containment separates those who need general caution from those who are seen as vicious predators. Additionally, Starling (Foster) interviews Lecter from a metal chair placed at a far distance from even these barriers. Lecter observes her in return, pacing his cell like a lion and gathering information he uses throughout the series, after his escape from custody to stalk and control Clarice, inverting the dynamics between hunted and hunter. These images develop an underlying uneasiness that society's methods of restraining predators are not sufficient, and we are only closely removed from the 'hunting' that takes place around us.

With intensified precautions, the predator's additional physical senses are also highlighted. Throughout their consultations, Lecter makes several comments to Clarice which draw attention to his advanced or 'animalistic' senses. Upon the first interaction between the two characters, Lecter indicates his skills to display his power: 'You use Evian skin cream, and sometimes you wear L'Air du Temps, but not today. Today you are determinedly unperfumed' (*Silence,* p.20). Being able to smell perfume or lotion from behind barriers (even his reinforced glass) may have been unique but not extreme enough to garner notice or mark these physical senses as 'Other'. However, his comments indicate that the character also has the ability to detect scents that Clarice has worn previously but since washed from her skin, making this sense of smell remarkable. This type of scent detection is closer to an animal, such as a dog, being able to track a scent days after someone has passed through an area. This one instance is not luck or

simply acute observation; the same sense is reinforced later in the text to remind Clarice of Lecter's powerful predatorial nature. When Clarice is injured, Lecter questions her about the bandage she wears, though it remains invisible under her clothing (*Silence*, p.165). This indicates it was his sense of smell rather than an acute visual observation that brought attention to her injury, like tracking a wounded animal. Even when he is contained and incarcerated, Lecter demands he be treated with deference to his power as a predator.

The *Huntress* series positions Cara as a hyper-predator by using her enhanced physical senses to redefine the 'typical' vulnerability often experienced by female characters in crime fiction. When Cara is introduced to the reader, the term 'predatory' is used against her, a lens of how she is seen by others. Later, links are drawn to the complexity of the term 'predatory' to evidence how Animal/Humanity can be developed from sexual attack or misuse of power:

> She gets glances, of course, some surreptitious and curious, some longer predatory stares. Lone women don't often walk this street except for money. But something about her keeps the flies away. The men she passes shift restlessly; a few of them even flinch from her.
> She is aware of every one of them as she passes. Very few of these souls are evil, but drugs and bad times have made them vulnerable. Desperation leaves their souls raw and open to attack. They are devastated creatures, furtive, pathetic…and sometimes something much worse. (*Huntress*, p.2)

In this expanded introduction (see also 3.3.1), Cara begins defining how the posthuman categorises evil, explaining how an experience can 'change' individuals, and justifying pre-emptively that these vulnerabilities oppose individuals to others that are 'fully evil'. Several pages later, Cara shows how she is always on guard against other types of 'predators' and ready to attack:

> 'Locked out?' a male voice says behind her.
> She turns too quickly, her hand moving to her coat pocket
> A man stands some distance away, dressed in a suit, roller bag at his side. Not airport security, just a traveler- with a hint of predator on the side.
> She can feel anger rising. What man would ever think a lone woman in a deserted parking lot would want help from him? She is already fingering the razor, but is too aware that there will be security cameras. (*Huntress*, p.21)

Here, Cara displays how she balances the physical instincts that have her 'turn too quickly' and poised to attack, with reasoning that forces her to contain her power (there are security cameras that would reveal her identity if she were to enact violence). Another time, when readers do see Cara kill, her senses are shown to be heightened after this potential encounter in the 'parking lot'.[92] This hunting scene spans five pages, exploring how she uses those enhanced senses to preventatively scan a scene and engage in violence when she is cornered:

> She's slept nearly twenty-four hours in the motel in the forest. […]
> Thirty hours later and she is still jumpy from the scene on the street […]
> She slows and hits the button to roll down the front passenger window, looking toward the truck as she feels the air…
> Nothing. Nothing apparent, anyway. […]
> The shadows make her feel uneasy. But there is no one human, no cars either, and she is so thirsty… (*Huntress*, p.63)

Cara is drawn into an empty rest station by her bodily needs for hydration and a toilet. By choosing her physiological needs over her predatorial caution, the character is aware of her vulnerability. The scene that follows is different from other intentional kills that are undertaken throughout the novels where she initiates a kill at a location of her choice. This scene rationalises that violence is driven by the continuous threat she experiences from other 'predators' (meaning 'fully evil/animal' criminals). The scene continues by highlighting how her enhanced senses allow her to detect the man's presence and gain the upper hand through tactical and physical advantage:

> Now she steps into the women's room, a dark entryway opening into a badly lit wash area: a row of sinks under a long hazy sheet metal mirror, and a turn to the right to enter the toilet area, two rows of empty stalls set across from each other. Though she can feel there is no one in the washroom, she tilts her head to scan the floor under each row of stalls, making absolutely sure she is alone. […]
> She stands, rearranging her clothes, but as she reaches behind her to flush, she freezes.
> *Presence*.
> Outside. Not close yet, not moving forward. The breathing is surreptitious, stealthy.
> *The trucker*.
> But so much more than the trucker.
> She feels *it* there, slithering, sucking the oxygen out of the air with its vacuum of darkness.

[92] Though Cara kills a man in the first pages of the text by pushing him in front of a vehicle, that experience is described from the perspective of Roarke and there is uncertainty around whether Cara actually killed the man or if it was an accident. The experience described here is the first kill that the audience participate in through the perspective of the character.

> No possible good motive for hovering in the doorway of a women's restroom. He'd seen her, and now she is trapped.
> She should have known. She can never relax her guard, not for a second, especially not now, this month, this week…
> She forces herself to breathe, to focus. (*Huntress*, p.64-65)

This excerpt indicates that these states of hyper-predation are exhausting and that remaining in this heightened hunting state has extreme effects on the predator. This may be particularly enhanced for Cara as she feels the need to stay alert against constant predators, unlike Dexter or Hannibal who do not usually face physical threats unless they have initiated a hunt. Cara balances her use of animal and human-dominant behaviours to show how her hybrid sides work in tandem. She begins by surveying the layout of the room, taking in precise details that help her to react when confronted. Animalistic enhanced hearing allows her to detect breathing from outside of the building and 'sense' where the threat is located, despite being enclosed in a restroom stall. Once Animal/Human instincts identify the threat, her predatory instincts prioritise the need for self-preservation and use these senses to reclaim her power:

> She feels for the razor in her pocket and holds her breath, listening with all her senses. Still no movement. He'll be waiting for the flush, expecting the sound to cover his approach. […]
> She can sense his thoughts: *A back door? Has he lost her?* And the surge of anger that the thought is. His blood up at the thought of being outwitted, denied… […]
> And the whistling, anticipatory breath, the sound she's been hearing all her life, since *the night*. […]
> … she clutches the top of both side walls and kicks her whole body weight forward, slamming her boot straight into his groin, He stumbles back with a grunt and then a howling curse of pain.
> She has already dropped to the floor and now thrusts another vicious kick, sending her whole weight through her heel into his balls, and he doubles over. And now she grabs the top of his head by the hair and jerks his head back to expose the neck and slashes with the razor, opening the left common carotid and internal jugular, feeling the warm blood gush over her hands as a strangled *gaah* gurgles wetly out of his throat.
> Blood geysers out of his neck, spraying the bathroom in dark arcs as the trucker drops hard to his knees, clutching at the side of his throat. His hand slips away and he topples over. The knife he is carrying clatters on the floor.
> She steps on his chest and slices again, the right side this time, and blood sprays again, but this time weaker, the blood loss from the first cut already catastrophic.
> He is spasaming now, blood still spouting, pumping from the aorta and splashing the walls, spreading in a crimson pool in the floor. He gurgles helplessly and the red fountain falters…and then stops.
> She feels *it* slipping away, sullenly, thwarted. […]
> …her head is spinning.

> She suddenly does not know how long she has been there. It may have been hours. The heightenedness is slipping away […] and there are no thoughts in her head, just darkness, a black rage (emphasis original, *Huntress*, pp.64- 67).

The detail of this attack allows us to observe the predator in ways that the *Dexter* and *Hannibal* texts often excise. Dexter often talks in metaphors, leading up to the process of killing by focussing on stalking and explaining his ethical code.[93] For Hannibal, many of the texts show the character incarcerated or direct the gaze away from actual violence by indicating the way he kills strategically and through intense bursts of violence rather than extended physical altercation. This scene depicts Cara killing in a state of almost suspended reality as she hunts. She references that she has 'heard' breathing her entire life, a comparison for the threat of evil ('*It*'). Though the character is described as slim and feminine, she utilises her physicality to dominate her prey. Only after being bathed in his blood does the character emerge from this state ('head spinning') and disconnected from a sense of time. What remains is a 'rage' for being targeted, driving Cara onto her next kill. This evidences how the predator's new senses enhance their ability to hunt and rationalise that these enhancements 'create' a figure meant to undertake violence and come out on top.

Beyond heightening their typical senses, predators are also portrayed as having an extra 'sense' unique to the Animal/Human. Heightened smell, hearing, or taste may sharpen the attacking senses of the predator, but 'intuition' provides an extra perception that helps them to remain covert and avoid detection. In these texts, the predator's additional 'sense' allows them to detect those with similar killer predilections. This intuition is integral to the Animal/Human because these characters do not just kill to satiate their own needs but do so to further a particular code of ethics that involves finding and killing evil characters. Though these targets are 'prey' for the character, they do not fit traditional connotations of weak or helpless victims. In Chapter 1, I explored how Dolarhyde is juxtaposed to an Animal/Human in various ways. Dolarhyde is not

[93] In the television series, deaths are often cut after the image of Dexter's raised knife and shift to him dumping the body off his boat after the kill.

referenced as a ‘predator’ despite his overt connections to animals (such as the tattoo of the dragon he has across his back) and as such is not able to ‘sense’ other predators. This is a distinct gesture extended to evidence posthumanity. In some cases, this extra sense is portrayed as an interpretation or pseudo-physical senses but is distinctly different to acute ‘vision’ or enhanced ‘smell’. In the *Huntress* series, Cara categorises the internal entity that she ‘senses’ as ‘*It’,* an aura or pseudo-physical being. In *Dexter*, Cody Morgan (Dexter’s stepson) refers to Dexter and other characters acknowledged to be predators as having ‘shadows’. The Jungian understanding of the ‘shadow’ archetype is a form of split or ‘Othered’ consciousness which is often the negative but authentic part of a personality. This shadow is often repressed by the ego: ‘On the civilized level, it is regarded as a personal ‘gaffe’, ‘slip’, ‘faux pas’, etc., which are then chalked up as defects of the conscious personality’ (Jung, 2014, p.262). In the predator, this is not a repressed personality conflict but is embraced as a facet of ‘Otherness’ which defines the Animal/Human. Cody refers to a developed entity within that he ‘sees’ or ‘senses’ as a shadow on a person. This extra sense gives the predator an edge in defence and attack. In *Design,* one of Dexter’s adversaries tries to kidnap his children. Cody’s predator ‘sense’ allows him to anticipate and retaliate before the man recognises Cody as a threat, stabbing the would-be attacker with a pencil from his school bag (p.234). Similarly, in the television episode ‘Popping cherry’ (1.3), Dexter ‘senses’ (described through an internal narration) that his father’s nurse had been purposefully over-prescribing to weaken and kill her patients. Harry notes the physical change in Dexter’s demeanour as he detects this and asks if Dexter sensed the nurse was ‘like him’. This leads to Dexter’s first kill, sanctioned by his father who helped Dexter develop his vigilante ‘Code’. In the novels*,* Dexter more elusively claims: ‘I can tell (*Dreaming,* p.155)’ and is confirmed by Harry claiming ‘She’s a killer, Dexter… A killer… (p.158)’. The difference between the predator and the nurse, in this case, is that she has not ‘become’, showing that non-Animal/Humans are not actively able to ‘sense’ suspicion or threat from predators. Without these additional senses, predators would have no advantage in their violent pursuits against typically powerful prey. At times, the

stakes are raised whenever the serial killer's target is assumed to also have these special skills (being Animal/Human). They are no longer the 'wolf in sheep's clothing' that they generally appear to be, but now the relationship becomes a more level competition. In these cases, it evidences audience bias as we still 'side' with the antihero because of our developed connection with them as the main character. The serial killer antihero does not actively take steps to end their actions or lives. The cases where they encounter other Animal/Humans in a predator/prey context provides an ethical dilemma for the audience and engages a broader discourse on why we rationalise violence. The killing of similar predator vigilantes underscores the question of whether these characters are ultimately 'good for society' as they claim or whether they should be killed by other justified means. We often find that it is our own, selfish fascination with the antihero that ambiguates violence for the reader, not the sole reference to posthumanity.

Predators act offensively while prey relies on defensive strategies. Prey are defined in these texts as unjustified 'villains' and are dominantly portrayed without the animal sense (most prey are 'animal', not other Animal/Humans). These characters may still show reservations or unease towards the predator though not to the level of the predator's extra sense. This weak defence mechanism is sometimes ignored because these characters are not as aware of the existence of Animal/Humans and their need to remain hyper-vigilant, which leads to their demise. These individuals are used to holding power over others and this positions their demise as a comedic defeat of evil:

> 'Grab onto this!', we call cheerfully. 'We'll pull you out!'
> He blinks and stares at the boat hook as it drifts closer to his face. 'Who's *we*?'
> It is *Us*, of course, the Dark We, the not-quite-visible but oh so very strong and cunning We of the shadowed inside smile, the happy wicked smile that spreads outward from the cold core and onto the mask of bright dopiness we wear to hide the razor teeth- but we do not tell him this; we do not tell him he is outnumbered by no more than this very real, very happy smile- we say no more than 'Grab the hook!' and add a cheerful, 'Oops!' as the boat hook purposely-accidentally thumps against his temple. (emphasis original, *Final Cut*, 253)

In this example, Dexter corners his prey by manufacturing a wave that makes the man's boat tip over. As he approaches the man in the water, Dexter uses a façade of 'help' but his predatorial

intent is indicated by his use of the plural 'We' (Animal/Human). The predator stands figuratively and literally in a powerful position over their prey; Dexter offers the man a boat hook to lift him from the water, using it instead to incapacitate him. The man recovers from this 'purposeful-accidental thump' to find that he has been lured and subdued because of his ineffective (non-Animal/Human) defensive reactions.

3.3.2 Hunter

In these texts, I analyse how 'hunter' is used indicatively of serial killers by highlighting their qualities perceived as 'more human'. As Deleuze and Guattari note, hunters are associated with *action* and prey is associated with *reaction* which helps to identify these characters by their relationship to power:

> …speed is associated primarily with the hunted animal […] In any event, what the warrior borrows from the animal is more the idea of the motor than the model of the prey. He does not generalize [sic] the idea of the prey by applying it to the enemy; he abstracts the idea of the motor, applying it to himself. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.396)

The difference between the Animal/Human as 'predator' instead of 'hunter' is not a matter of state (the Animal/Human is both), but one of action where one part of an identity is accessed over the other. Other characters in these texts may also be delineated as 'hunters' and, in these cases, the term defines participation in violence (Animal/Humans' prey) or pursuit of those individuals (law enforcement). These overlaps indicate the complexity of these portrayals and how the social understanding of this term has become fractured. While 'predation' is much more straightforwardly animalistic, the 'hunter' terminology is additionally complex due to anthropocentric biases. Outside of fiction, serial killer discourses are predominantly driven by the terminology 'hunters' which indicates broader social attitudes towards anthropocentric terminology and the dominant perspective of analysing crime through legitimised figures (police). In these traditional contexts, hunting is generally a behaviour of law enforcement, or its equivalent, proactively searching out a human 'beast' (a killer) for apprehension. An example of this is the crime compendium *Hunting Humans* (2003) by Elliot Leyton which contextualises approaches to multiple murder

investigations historically through the perspective of the 'hunter' as police. A text of the same name (1990) by Michael Newton describes itself as an 'encyclopaedia' of serial killers where the powerful human 'controls' the narrative of violence by simplistically 'defining' these killers. These texts also pose the underlying assumption that killers *should* be hunted, seeking to transfer 'action' to police and making serial killers act defensively through 'reaction' (being hunted). Stephen Fulcher's account of his career in law enforcement and his search for a serial killer uses the tagline: 'My *hunt* for murderer Christopher Halliwell (emphasis added, 2017)'. In this text, Fulcher explores his criminal investigation, culminating in the perceived 'success' of apprehending a killer. This perspective is opposite to serial killer fiction where the reader derives interest in the story by the character's ability to avoid apprehension. The complexity of the term being used to identify 'more human' characteristics like rationality and profiling is also heavily associated with texts such as *Mind Hunter: Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit* (1996) by John Douglas and Mark Olshaker.[94] Some early fictional adaptations have also utilised 'hunter' terminology in these contexts. The 1986 adaptation of *Red Dragon* changed the title to *Manhunter* which highlights Lecter's role as a psychologist and profiler (Grixti, 1995).[95] These uses of 'hunting' focus on the term as a process of seeking justice. Use of this connotation can even be seen as far back as the 1955 film *The Night of the Hunter* in which Robert Mitchum portrays a serial killer that must kill his two stepchildren to hide his other crimes. While 'hunter' language draws on these various contexts, in this section I consider how the term 'hunter' is used as an indicator of Animal/Humanity. As a non-linear portrayal of the serial killer, I evidence how 'hunting' positions the serial killer as non-linear because they are both hunter and hunted. These associations are also important to framing the serial killer as an antihero, drawing on positive associations that help us to connect with their attempts at neutralising serial violence.

[94] This text also helped inspire the basis for the dramatised television series *Mindhunter* (Netflix, 2017-2019).
[95] I do not reference this film throughout my analysis in relation to Hannibal Lecter as I use the more well-known trilogy featuring Anthony Hopkins for consistency.

The cultural position of anthropocentric dominance, discussed previously through infrahumanisation, means that these figures must create a new framework for 'normality' to define what being 'more human' looks like. For example, in *Devoted*, Dexter analyses the belongings of his most recent kill and notes a collection of 'trophies', a term often associated with displaying a killed animal after hunting. Trophies are generally an indication of the 'hunter' as human, achieving the higher power and triumphing over the animal. He notes the man's collection of pictures is like the blood slides he collects from his prey. Dexter justifies this by saying it is 'perfectly normal to keep some kind of souvenir' (2005, p.15). The predatory language that I described above often highlighted that the animal sense is to use 'claws' or 'fangs' to rip apart prey for destruction or consumption. In opposition, the hunter tendency to 'collect' shows that Animal/Humans can reclaim power over their prey through destruction (eating or ripping apart prey), but also by eliminating any 'evidence' of their existence or by redefining the memory and physical remnants of what is left behind. In Chapter 4, I discuss the broader implications of our human tendency to 'collect' as a form of participation and control. This aspect is important to the Animal/Human's recognition of their non-linear space. In the first novel of the series, Dexter only recognises himself and his actions as foreign or monstrous.[96] After meeting his brother, another killer, he begins seeing himself and other criminals (even those he justifies hunting) as 'normal' and at least 'partially human'. This process of thought helps to evidence how the Animal/Human redefines 'typical' patterns and behaviours concerning their new state.

The *Huntress* series most clearly considers how the terminology of 'hunter' functions with that of 'predator' to evidence how characters 'work through' or understand their hybridity and address potential contradictions. Agent Roarke uses the term 'hunter' to reference Cara Lindstrom, thinking that he is simplistically categorising her, though providing insight into several assumptions around this term: 'I think I have a female hunter' (*Huntress*, p.112). Here we see that

[96] 'I know what I am and that this is not a thing to love' (*Dreaming,* p.47).

‘hunter’ is assumed to be male-gendered, therefore Cara is identified as ‘Other’, as a ‘female hunter’ as opposed to just a hunter. Earlier in this chapter, I acknowledged this to be a core feature of posthuman discourse as predation tends to be assumed as male-dominant. It is key that Roarke also uses ‘female hunter’ rather than the feminised ‘huntress’ (as the overall series does), to show how he works through the perceived incompatibility between Cara’s gender and the violence of serial killing. Just as he is not sure whether to class a woman as a ‘real’ serial killer, he gives her the human-centric term ‘hunter’ over the animal-centric ‘predator’. Throughout, Roarke identifies with Cara in many ways, from their age similarities to their pursuit of ‘justice’. Using ‘hunter’ terminology is an example of infrahumanisation as Roarke extends Cara a place into his legitimised ‘group’, justifying her actions and allowing her to continue killing. Jarrod Bock and Melissa Burkley conducted a study of the terminology of predator and prey used in narratives of sexual assault. The predatory connotation of men ‘on the prowl’ or out looking for sexual ‘prey’ has gendered power connotations which, Bock and Burkley claim, metaphorically frame perception:

> …when both men and women are animalized [sic], different types of animal metaphors are often used. Men are likened to strong, sizeable, often predatory animals such as ‘dogs’ and ‘wolves’ whereas women are likened to small, docile animals such as ‘chicks’ and ‘birds’. These animal metaphors parallel traditional gender roles and dating scripts that portray men as dominant initiators of romantic advances and women as submissive recipients. (Bock and Burkley, 2019)

These implicit associations to certain animal descriptors are more likely to frame females as easy prey and males as natural predators. The *Huntress* series explores how gender assumptions also impact the term ‘hunter’ or ‘hunting’.

The representation of ‘hunter’ evokes superiority which is embraced by the Animal/Human as a symbol of their power. By hunting other ‘bad guys’, the antiheroes also show how ‘hunter’ terminology redefines an understanding of those that are ‘fully animal’ (evil):

> She drives.
> Out of the park on the Wyoming side, up toward Idaho, following the van and the hunter on the road.

> Her anger is back, a slow boil under the surface of her skin, like the hot pools under the ice. She is not surprised to be back on the hunter's tail. From the moment she heard the wolf-watchers talking, she suspected that the wolves would lead her to the next step. And she is fully aware of the irony. Because what she heard the watchers talking about, what they were in the park to prevent, themselves, was exactly this. Hunters like this one, who cross into the park deliberately, illegally, to hunt the storied wolves. A wolf with a tracking device, one marked for scientific study, fetches a bigger bounty, bigger bragging rights. As if hunting endangered creatures for sport is not enough.
> The predator is now the prey. (*Shadow*, p.333)

In this excerpt, Cara stalks a target, presenting herself as the 'hunter' of men, described as worthy prey by their violence towards animals and other humans (assumed innocent victims). The individuals she pursues are blinded by their perceived power over the 'animals' they hunt and are unaware that a hyper-predator stalks them. The 'wolf-watchers' typically assert their human privilege, and seeing Cara as a vulnerable female, assume their dominance translates to power over her as well. Wolves may be tracked for scientific study, but humans are even further policed and socially protected, highlighting the danger of 'hunting' them, and inverting these power dynamics. By making other 'hunters' her prey, Cara asserts how hyper-predation is unique. Her actions also ensure her personal safety and make sure these men are not able to 'hunt' her when she is unsuspecting. The Animal/Human calls themselves 'hunter', an anthropocentrically legitimised figure, which gives themselves the power to make their own categorisation.

The Animal/Human targets aggressors which provides a unique discourse on victimology. In real life, males are more likely to be victims of violent crimes because of their dual participation as aggressors and recipients of violence (Catalano, et.al., 2009, p.2). This statistic is only reversed in instances of sexual assault whereby females are more likely to be victimised by male assailants (Davis et.al., 2013, p.33). This separates those figures that are 'innocent prey' from those who are the posthuman's prey. Both the *Dexter* and *Hannibal* texts centre around male killers that are primarily portrayed targeting male victims. This aligns with our cultural assumptions of 'justified' recipients of violence: if males are more likely to be aggressors, and the antihero is targeting other criminals then, instances of male/male killing would be more prolific. The *Huntress* series provides a unique discourse about posthumanity by re-gendering the 'hunter' and exploring

how the impact of intimate violence, predominantly experienced by women, can also result in female aggressors.[97] Cara also targets male criminals and does not seek out female/female violence which indicates that Animal/Human victimology is driven by categorisation beyond demographic mirroring. This signifies that there is still a cultural understanding of males as typical aggressors (even in texts with a female lead) and informs how the serial killer defines themselves as powerful while still justifying their violence as 'self-preservation'.

While some crime narratives do revolve around the victim, these texts often display a similar carnival atmosphere as serial killer fiction, inverting the reader's expectations through pseudo-victimology. For example, *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn portrays the character of Amy Elliot Dunne initially as a victim who has gone missing, and her abusive husband is the prime suspect of her disappearance. The novel only inverts her victimology towards the end of the story when it is revealed that Amy staged her disappearance and has been an unreliable narrator. The focal point of the text ends up not showing Amy as 'prey', given unique power to tell her story, but how she was deceptively positioned as a pseudo-victim. In this way, trust is destroyed, and the reader must now decide to turn against the main figure (Amy) or remain by our loyalties despite her evil positioning. However, texts of the Animal/Human engender us into the carnival space by letting the reader 'in on the secret' early (revealing their trauma and claiming underlying justification if we continue following their story). This makes the reader a co-conspirator as we participate in the process of ambiguation rather than becoming victims ourselves of deceit, which may result in our distrust or putting up protective barriers. As we are primed to help justify the character's actions, this positions the reader against the 'prey' that are often involved in their own nefarious pursuits until the point of their demise. This redefines our cultural assumption of 'innocent' victims and portrays prey as unsympathetic and 'deserving' of the violence they receive. It also shows a

[97] These texts indicate that Cara is Animal/Hhuman because of her compounded traumas, which creates a complex discourse on cause and effect. Due to the limited nature of serial killer fiction focussed on a female killer, these assumptions are predominantly created by our understanding of real-world traumas (sexual assault), opposed to assumptions driven by fictional texts.

cultural assumption that even prey is most 'deserving' of our fascination when they are acting as developed predators instead of powerless or innocent victims.

3.3.3 Prey as Ethically Ambiguous

In Chapter 1, I defined how the serial killer positions their actions as ambiguous based on ethical arguments that blame their victims and argue for a 'greater social good'. In this section, I explain how these texts develop this positioning through the construction of 'prey' in relation to our understanding of the Animal/Human as a Predator/Hunter. In typical hunting for 'sport', hunters are hierarchically ranked by their ability to 'effectively' take out a target, as well as through the method of hunting which prioritises a 'humane' kill. This reasoning can be used to ethically justify that hunting is not 'as cruel' by killing prey quickly, but these types of kills also protect the meat of the animal, ensuring that prey can be consumed for sustenance. Hunting as a source of food is often used as an anthropocentric justification: the animal died, but to serve the 'greater good' of feeding humans. The Animal/Human additionally justifies killing however, by blaming prey for their positioning. The hyper-predator does not rely on 'accidental' or affective violence but explains to the reader how the victim is equally responsible for this violence:

> But there is always something the victim does unconsciously, some special trigger that brings a Passenger up out of the shadows and into the driver's seat. Every Monster has his own specific flash point that ignites the Need, and it is almost always different. And every monster reacts in his own distinctive way, following a program that provides unique satisfaction, a series of rituals that makes sense only to him and ends in the way it absolutely *must*, no matter how bewildering it may seem to the casual human witness. And when the press and an outraged public recoil in horror and demand a reason, and wail their baffled chorus of, 'why would someone do *that*?' those of us in the know can only smile and say, *Because*. It will never make sense to you, or to anyone else, and it doesn't need to. It only has to satisfy *Me*, fulfil *My* special fantasy. It is an E ticket to a ride with only one seat, *Mine*, and no one else will ever get to feel this *Me-Only* roller-coaster thrill, the one thing that provides just *Me* with the ultimate in satisfaction… (*Final Cut*, p.42-3)

The Animal/Human experiences a special kind of 'thrill' from being a predator, likened to riding an amusement park ride. This adrenaline-fuelled source of entertainment and satisfaction is unique, 'no one else will ever get to feel this', and inevitable after prey has 'triggered' the hunt. Despite

interest by the 'press and an outraged public', the Animal/Human acknowledges that these violent motivations are carnival or incomprehensible to the average human. While serial killers broadly may kill to protect their identity, Predator/Hunters rely on more specific ethical reasoning to justify their violence. While the characters may at times struggle to uphold these ethics, they do not just kill only as an instinctual 'need'.[98] These perspectives neutralise their actions because killing this prey brings about a more 'desirable' society that upholds certain behavioural standards. This also makes their hunting more efficient as they have a specific persona to focus on.

At certain points, both Hannibal and Cara use situational arguments to kill when they are threatened. This challenges the fortitude of our association with the serial killer and questions whether the reader now prioritises our fascination over other ethical considerations. For example, Hannibal kills a prison guard, a figure of legitimised good, solely to facilitate his escape (*Silence*, p.273-4). Dexter is more inhibited by his ethical code which is more clearly developed in these texts than in other series. Even when he fears he will be identified or his safety is threatened, the character explains that he cannot bring himself to kill just because of his 'needs'. The complexities of plotline are explored at several points whenever Dexter is identified as a killer by other characters (e.g., Deb, Brian, and Miguel Prado). In each of these instances, Dexter could have used his skills to eliminate a threat but, because they did not breach his ethical code, he attempts to neutralise the threat they pose in other ways.[99] This type of approach is representative of a duty-based or deontological ethics approach where the character is upholding a standard of actions and eliminating people who are 'unethical', universally imposing their standard as the

[98] Hannibal claims to eliminate people who are rude or 'uncivilised', prioritising the virtues of self-control and social graces (*Silence*, p 28). Cara strikes on those who exploit or harm women and children, particularly pimps or traffickers (*Huntress Moon,* p.177).

[99] Brian (Dexter's biological brother) poses no real threat to Dexter as he is also a killer but does not wish to kill Dexter so the two mutually hide their identities from authorities (*Dreaming; Delicious*). Deb (Dexter's adopted sister) is neutralised by compelling to her deeper sense of justice and her love for Dexter (*Design*). Deb also uses Dexter's knowledge for her own professional advancement, asking him for insight into other criminals (*Double)*. Miguel (Dexter's 'friend' the District Attorney) becomes infatuated by Dexter's participation in violence and Dexter attempts to teach him, like an apprentice to kill within an ethical code (Showtime, Season 3).

highest authority (White, 2017, p.79). However, Dexter does not adhere to the 'Categorical Imperative'; while the character notes that perhaps he *shouldn't* exist, he has no desire or intent to be killed like his own prey. In the episode 'Our Father' (3.1), the character accidentally kills an 'innocent' rather than purposefully choosing to act outside of his 'Code'. In the episode 'Slack Tide' (4.7), Dexter kills someone who is later discovered to be innocent, showing that his intensive 'search' for justice can still be fallible. The subsequent crisis of conscience that occurs contrasts the Animal/Human to those characters they hunt (those identified without a conscience for their actions).

In serial killer texts, many underdeveloped victims are acknowledged only for their part as the recipient of violence and how they allow killers to work out their hybridity. Mittell has tallied that the Dexter television show portrays 130 prey that Dexter 'eliminates' throughout the eight seasons (2015, p.146). The Dexter Fandom Wiki lists 135 of Dexter's victims, noting some as 'unnamed' or 'unseen' (meaning they are alluded to but not visualised on-screen). As the series covers a period under a decade, the 'thorough' process Dexter undergoes to ensure 'guilt' indicates that the serial killer may have an overinflated view of their ability to ensure 'certainty' were it not for qualities evidenced in this chapter like the predator's extra 'sense'.[100] Mittell considers whether increasing Dexter's kills for the television adaptation undermines the story quality of the 'justified vigilante' by showing the character 'stretched to his limits' for sensationalism over characterisation (2015, p.146). As a counterpoint, the novel series notes a much lower number of victims for Dexter. In the sixth novel, *Double Dexter*, the character has collected 52 blood slides (one collected for each victim) and this would span the time since the character began this ritual, not only those since the start of the novel series (p.78). This lower number helps to reaffirm the character's assurances of caution in choosing his prey and vetting them according to his ethical 'Code' while still evidencing a prolific 'need' for violence. What

[100] This is especially important as Dexter must undertake his additional 'detective work' in personal time without his absences being noted by his wife or family.

triggers our interest in the serial killer's victim is not their literary presence as a powerful figure, but how their presence inverts our typical expectations. The audience is invited to believe in the concept of an 'ethical kill' broadly because the texts, at key points, indicatively 'prove' to us their methods and evidenced how their Animal/Humanity is 'useful' to society.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter elaborated on the language and gestures of posthuman positioning that link 'becoming' to gestures of violence. The terms 'predators', 'hunters', and 'prey' are indicatively used to define the relationships between the serial killer and other characters. These terms also build on cultural assumptions around anthropocentricity and animalism that help to position Animal/Humanity as a non-linear portrayal. Because Animal/Humanity is a grotesque portrayal of hybridity, the character is not easily delineated in simplistic terms. The process of 'hunting' triggers a complex understanding of 'becoming' where characters 'hunt' evil, creating new potential Animal/Humans in their wake and where the serial killer is both 'hunter' (of their prey) and 'hunted' (by law enforcement).

In this chapter, I defined how these texts use 'predators' and 'hunters' indicatively to draw lines between animality and anthropocentricity when the figure is both. The Animal/Human justifies their existence by controlling how their violence is presented and justified to the reader. This combats social biases that would traditionally alienate these individuals by making 'hunting' a carnival space. 'Hunting' is compared to a sport, exploring how the serial killer enacts violence equally from need and desire. This space also engages the reader in the discourse of neutralisation by challenging anthropocentrism and requiring that we define who 'deserves' to be hunted. These texts also, by default, defend that Animal/Human serial killers 'deserve' or should be allowed to be in our society as they work with us in creating a 'better' society while other individuals are not worthy of the same inclusion. In defending their role to 'seek justice', a cultural commentary sheds light on a broader mistrust in current justice systems.

Chapter 4: Consumption as Predatorial Gesture: Eating and Food Symbolism

4.1 Introduction

The final chapter of this thesis concentrates on applying the gestures for 'becoming' and predation that I have developed to show how the Animal/Human is culturally assumed as posthuman. I analyse how serial killer texts use consumption language as evidence that the Animal/Human 'needs' to kill and is therefore justified. This relies on associating one of the most basic human needs, eating, to the Animal/Human's 'need' to kill. Building on gestures of predation in Chapter 3, exploring consumption also evidences the lines drawn between how the 'more human' hunter consumes in contrast to the 'more animal' predator. I continue to use Bakhtin's theories to guide my analysis as he studied how those marginalised or banished from mainstream society still evidence power within over culture. These theories also help to explore the bounds of posthumanity of where the 'classical' body must give way to the grotesque to interpret non-linearity. Bakhtin's exploration of the carnivalesque was described by Renate Lachmann et.al. as a 'reconstruct[ion of] this folk culture in its verbal, gestural, and ritual manifestations through an analysis of Rabelais's novel (1988, p.115)'. In this thesis, I am reconstructing an understanding of the serial killer, a form of folk (or subgroup) culture by analysing the verbal (dialogue), gestural, and ritual manifestations of being Animal/Human. This chapter reconstructs the 'body' of the killer through eating. The fascination with consumption and subsequent creation ('becoming' of a physical body) is a core feature of understanding the Bakhtinian grotesque:

> Eating and drinking are one of the most significant manifestations of the grotesque body. The distinctive character of its open unfinished nature, its interaction with the world. These traits are most fully and concretely revealed in the act of eating; the body transgresses here its own limits […] Man's encounter with the world in the act of eating joyful, triumphs over the world, devours it without being devoured himself. The limits between man and the world are erased, to man's advantage. (Bakhtin and Morris, 1994, p.281)

These texts are a carnivalesque portrayal of posthuman positioning that 'transgresses its own limits' and explores the limitations of self between Animal and Human. To demonstrate how the

Animal and Human 'sides' of the character's hybrid identity converge, these series employ various expressions of consumption both literally and symbolically.

In Chapter 2, I explored how 'becoming' is a rhizomic process that is complete and ongoing. In Chapter 3, I developed an understanding of how the terms 'predator' or 'hunter' are used to further explore the bounds between Animal and Humanity. In this chapter, I explore how our fascination with serial killers is a carnivalesque space that explains how the audience plays a part in creating assumptions of Animal/Humanity. Because of the uncertainty of a rhizomic structure and the non-linearity of predator/hunter, this allows the serial killer to be a continuously evolving representation of how hybridity manifests.

Arthur Berger, a cultural critic, describes how syntagmatic analysis (studying symbols in relation to their sequence) highlights importance through repetition (1995, p.94). In these texts, repetition or progression of images is a form of text manipulation that invites the reader to respond. By associating these characters as 'not fully human' in various ways, serial killer fiction offers an analysis of how various iterations of deviance ('Otherness') inform our knowledge of Animal/Humanism. In this chapter, I evidence how repeatedly using 'consumption' language and food imagery links to 'Otherness', particularly in associating predatory consumption (killing) with survival consumption (eating). Animalistic descriptive associations also reference the cyclical nature of a food chain (a grotesque process of consuming and being consumed) and reinforce compulsive repetition of violence as a survival mechanism. The predator equates killing to a deviant physiological need, a grotesque inversion of typical sustenance. I show how this is a gesture of the serial killer 'giving into' their internal conflict and explore how this delineates their 'rules' of identity. Derrida explains that consumption is an inherent consideration to many ethical debates:

> The moral question is thus not, nor has it ever been: should one eat or not eat, eat this and not that, the living or the nonliving, man or animal, but since *one must* eat in any case and since it is and tastes good to eat, and since there is no definition of the good [*du bien*], *how* for goodness' sake should one *eat well* [*bien manger*]? And what does this imply? What is eating? How is this metonymy of introjection to be regulated? And in what respect

> does the formulation of these questions in language give us still more food for thought? (emphasis original, Derrida, 1995, p.282)

These characters define that they cannot stop 'becoming', they can only guide the process of how they choose to kill ('one must eat'). In Chapter 3, I explained how the Animal/Human justifies their killing of prey to ambiguate their actions. Who these characters choose to kill or protect equates to their understanding of what it means to 'eat well' or 'be ethical'. To explore this gesture further, I apply Terence Dovey's theories of eating development which can evidence how different forms of consumption further the discourse of how the Animal/Human 'eat(s) well'.

In Chapter 2, I explained how hybridity is used to depathologise discourses of 'Otherness' through techniques of neutralisation as a literary criticism on deviance. These characters demonstrate distorted associations to food, but this chapter addresses how these discourses are depathologised or seen as a literary representation. While I use associations to 'disordered eating', these do not equate to the pathology of an 'eating disorder'. Deviant attachments to food are described as emotional coping mechanisms or replacements for interpersonal relationships and the cultural awareness of these states is likened to what we observe in these characters. Bakhtin's discourse on eating also explains the far-reaching impacts between what is consumed and what is produced:

> … it swallows, devours, rends the world apart, is enriched and grows at the world's expense. The encounter of man with the world, which takes place inside the open, biting, rending, chewing mouth, is one of the most ancient, and most important objects of human thought and imagery. Here man tastes the world, introduces it to his body, make it part of himself. (Bakhtin and Morris, 1994, p.228)

I argue that physical consumption is another grotesque manifestation of the serial killer's power to 'rend the world apart' and redefine their Animal/Humanity. Because the characters have 'become' posthuman through taking in or 'swallowing' violence, their 'nature' for killing is portrayed as instinctive. Food is clearly needed for survival and therefore, through comparison, these texts show how killing is 'needed' to feed the Animal/Human. Textual analysis evidences deviant relationships with food which, in this chapter, I argue are likened to disordered eating as a

connection between body and mind. Killing becomes a demonstration for 'feeding the power' of the Animal/Human nature and 'becoming' initiates a new, fifth 'survival' element: killing.[101] To justify this instinct as 'essential' for the reader, the characters compare it to food which is accepted as a 'truth' necessary to survival. The narratives discussed below indicate that these actions are compulsive, and the characters narrate them as essential to their being (making them inherently different from those who choose to kill).

All three series evidence some gestural language that Animal/Humans experience deviant consumption behaviours because of their 'becoming'. However, both *Dexter* and *Hannibal* show more overt connections than *Huntress* and will therefore be referenced more frequently in this chapter. This could also be viewed as a social reflection of gender stereotypes towards characterisation and internalised deviance. For example, females are more likely to be connected to cultural discourses on eating disorders that involve withholding or regimented control of what is eaten while males are perceived as more likely to manifest overindulgence or hyper-fitness behaviours. These internalised patterns are more difficult to identify unless a text is intentionally making a statement about eating disorders because withdrawal behaviours are less likely to be noticeable than excess. These texts focus on the character's meal routines as it is connected to social attachments or defining their 'Otherness' (cannibalism). Cara (*Huntress*), portrayed as a transient loner, does not frequently commune with other characters in the ways that the other two figures do and therefore deviant eating behaviours would not seek to further the connection between attachment and eating other than to evidence its lack of existence. Dexter and Hannibal show an excessive fixation on and passion for sources of literal food, as well as their dialogue on figurative sustenance (posthuman 'hunger') which make these links clearer to analyse. This ritualistic adherence to partaking in food bridges the gap between what is public and private and

[101] The traditional core elements for physical survival are fourfold taking the form of shelter, food, water, and heat (Cunningham et.al., 2013).

our ability to 'see' hybridity reflected as an overall 'change' to the killer's behavioural norms. Food symbolism becomes a common analogy to identify that these characters are not 'fully human'.

4.2 Predatory Consumers

The use of the term 'predator', outside of literature, is also indicative of creatures who hunt and generally to consume their prey, which explains how killing is a core feature of what it means to be Animal/Human. In serial killer texts, these instincts towards consumption may be literal but are generally figurative. The 'Need' these characters have (killing) is likened to 'food' that feeds the Animal/Human:

> …the full-throated call of the tropical night, the soft and wild voice of the wind roaring through the hairs on your arm, the hollow wail of starlight, the teeth-grinding bellow of the moon-light off the water.
> All calling to the Need. Oh, the symphonic shriek of the thousand hiding voices, the cry of the Need inside, *the entity*, the silent watcher, the cold quiet thing, the one that laughs, the Moondancer. The me that was not-me, the thing that mocked and laughed and came calling with its hunger. With the Need. And the Need was very strong now, very careful cold coiled creeping crackly cocked and ready, very strong, very much ready now- and still it waited and watched, and it made me want to wait and watch. (*Dreaming*, p.1)

This excerpt juxtaposes the human body ('hairs on your arm') to an animal ('coiled' and 'cocked'), like a snake, ready to strike, a predator on the attack. The 'Need' *is* to kill and also a way for the predator to 'feed'. For example, Hannibal consumes other sources of food as his main sustenance but cannibalises, using these ritualistic 'foods' (prey) to enhance his enjoyment and control over his consumption. The predator, whether through figurative or literal consumption, regains power over themself and others as an offensive expression of their Animal/Humanity. This can be seen when Dexter takes a hiatus from his 'normal' life and begins a side-job as a bodyguard, staying with a movie star in her hotel. Dexter transforms from an offensive predator to a secure alpha male because he does not truly anticipate that anyone will attack Jackie (the movie star). He is brought food at his whim as he indulges in room service and disengages from his predatorial side. He narrates his day by his meals, treating himself physically but depriving the predator and therefore his additional senses. As he has no practice 'hunting', it makes his extra sense and his

predatorial drive lazy, allowing another killer to get closer than his Animal/Human senses would generally allow. This insinuates that the drive to hunt and consume prey may be indicative of the credible threat they pose to our society as 'Other' that will always draw them into violence so they must be hyper-alert for their protection. The killer must make sure both parts of animal and human are 'fed' and ready to be a hyper-predator.

Food is used as a common literary device or gesture that is not only tied to survival but also comfort and relationship building. The crime genres can be considered 'disgusting' or 'disturbing by some but are equally referenced by others as 'comforting' because they provide the audience with an outlet for social anxieties. Throughout this chapter, I evidence how culture finds 'comfort' through exploring Animal/Human gestures. I explain how the term 'consumption' is used in complex ways by discussing the figure through consuming 'food' and the audience through consuming 'capitalism'. Feeding this drive, like Dexter's disengagement above is intended to lull the audience into security, a mindset which allows us to accept the truths of what it means to be Animal/Human from otherwise mistrusted figures. Hall's critical theory notes how discourse analysis is itself concerned with the understanding of consumption:

> What seems to me very striking is that nearly all forms of contemporary critical theory are theories of *consumption*. That is to say, they are concerned with understanding an object in such a way that it can profitably or correctly be consumed. The earliest stage of consumption theory was the theory of 'taste', where the link between the practice and the theory was direct in the metaphor. From taste there came the more elevated notion of 'sensibility', in which it was the consumption by sensibility of elevated or insightful works that was held to be the essential practice of reading, and critical activity was then a function of this sensibility. (emphasis original, Hall, 2001, p.141)

In this instance, the act of participation with cultural products (texts) is a method of consumption on behalf of the audience where 'consuming' (reading or watching) becomes 'practice' for the fascination with a particular image (the serial killer). I am not concerned with positioning the serial killer as high or low culture, as Hall noted as the earliest stage ('taste'), but instead as a discussion on 'sensibility'. Literary allusions and metaphors relating to food form a large basis of referential language to create a parallel between a 'consuming' identity and 'consumption' as a complex

term. Consumption imagery is used in both the literary and media franchises of these series to create a visual of the Animal/Human 'hunting' and 'eating' to feed their needs. This chapter analyses the way language is used to create visual images of excess and how the media texts further this image through title credits, advertising images, and repetitive visual cues such as the fixation of 'masks' and oral imagery in *Hannibal*. Additionally, these gestures help to conceptualise our cultural position and how consumption of serial killer driven narratives 'correctly' or culturally ambiguates violence.

The use of animal, nature, and food imagery is not new to crime fiction, or a semiotic reading of literature.[102] In their published self-narratives, real-life killers have often used food imagery to speak about their deviance, similarly to those I analyse in fiction. These former studies are however generally focussed on a semiotic reading of how language is used or implemented as a written device, not proposing that this language is indicative of a deeper state (a function of characterisation). My contribution to these discourses is not a semiotic reading but a textual discourse analysis of how these symbols indicate Animal/Humanity through gesture. The inclusion of anthropophagic self-narrative (a broader myth of cannibalism as a specific cultural grouping) is also beyond the scope of many previous semiotic readings, though this is something I consider briefly in this chapter to understand the characterisation of Hannibal. Both these areas would be interesting for future research, building on my definition of the Animal/Human as a specific construction of posthumanity.

4.3 Fascination as Consumption

In Chapter 1, I overviewed the research basis for assuming the serial killer as a figure of fascination by using texts from Seltzer and Schmid. Schmid even equates the idea of serial killers

[102] Instances of this can be seen in such texts as: Fitzpatrick, 2013; Appelbaum, 2008; Heffelfinger, 2016; Cassarino, 2014; Lindenfeld and Parasecoli, 2016.

(real and fictional) to the height of celebrity status as a comparison to how 'fascination' is used. In this section, I further explore how this cultural fascination with 'Otherness' allows audiences to 'consume' violence as a form of participation. Mandy-Suzanne Wong also traces how this fascination with 'abnormality' or 'Otherness' can be explored in many forms, particularly citing the language used to 'Other' Hannibal:

> The word *monster* is also a metaphor for people who conduct themselves like wild beasts. Mothers-in-law. Serial killers like the 'the monster of Florence'. Frankenstein's monster is a tricky one. Looks sort of human, acts not quite human. (emphasis original, 2016, p.7) [103]

Wong describes the interplay of 'Looks sort of human, acts not quite human' which accurately describes my characterisation of the Animal/Human. These fictional figures are portrayed for mass 'consumption' which influences the comparative appetite of readers. Seltzer coins this fascination as part of 'wound culture':

> …public fascination with torn and open bodies and torn and opened persons, a collective gathering around shock, trauma, and the wound […] [it] advertises, and trades on, the analogies, or causal relations, between these two forms of compulsive repetition, consumerism and serialized [sic] killing. (Seltzer, 1998, p.1; p.65)

This relationship between culture and consumerism is symbiotic and demonstrates the impact of characterisation on cultural discourses. Culture is qualified by how an individual consumes or participates in a culture and its products (such as literature or media). Like 'filling up' with drink or other non-substantial nourishment before partaking in the 'main course', secondary 'consumption' fills the reader's hunger for disgusting carnivalism or violence in a superficial way.[104] This participation culture, exploring 'Otherness', extends beyond fictional serial killers and evidences our deeper fascination with the real criminals that they represent. *Dexter* recognises this quality

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[103] Thomas Harris is reported to have travelled to Italy to attend the trial of Pietro Pacciardi, the 'Monster of Florence', in 1994 (O'Brien, 2007). While I cannot speculate about what facets of these encounters may be intended to apply to his narratives of Lecter, Harris himself has made statements that he draws from his understanding of life and the 'nature' of individuals. I think it is also notable that when the character of Lecter flees the country, he resides in Florence during that time and may be an allusion to this figure.

[104] Consumerist fascination is broadly associated with serial killing by looking at examples such as *American Psycho*'s brand obsession, *Hannibal*'s cult following, or the popular *Dexter* action figures sold in children's toy stores (Schmid, 2015).

and theorises on the cultural impact of figures like himself. In the episode, 'Circle of Friends', a fame-seeking, false-confessor prompts a self-referential understanding of the 'celebrity' associated with serial killing: 'Fascination with serial killers is an American pastime. I mean you've got groupie housewives, magazine profiles, maybe even a summer blockbuster movie… All waiting for you. But the feeding frenzy won't start till you throw out the chum (1.7)'. In this case, the 'chum' plays on the same food symbolism I discuss in reference to the Animal/Human, blurring the lines between fascination by choice and instinctive reaction. This indicates that society and consumers are like frenzied animals, ready to consume whatever dregs are 'thrown out' for them by way of media attention or fictional characters. Chum is also generally outcast from the other protein while preparing 'food', the heads, innards or other discarded bits meant to draw in predators. Similar to the grotesque as a carnival subculture, killing is separate from the 'fare' traditionally partaken of by mainstream culture. This analogy likens us, generalised culture as the true 'predators', drawing us in to be more easily 'caught'.

Gesture is a lens for understanding characterisation, whereby we study 'expressions' to articulate an understanding of intangible concepts (in this case Animal/Human identity). Miriam de Rosa identifies how studying gesture informs an understanding of 'Otherness': '…gesture is inscribed within a profoundly normative framework that determines what is socially and culturally acceptable, what is 'normal', and what is not (2019, p.117)'. In this chapter, I look at how eating behaviours are widely understood as Human or Animal gestural 'norms'. By analysing how the serial killer twists this 'normal' gesture into something that highlights their hybridity, it evidences the underlying mechanisms used to develop characterisation. Ana Olenina and Irina Schulzki also identify that gesture is a concept that is broad and transferrable enough to apply across interdisciplinary studies, since gesture can be observed in a multiplicity of ways (2017). In this chapter, analysing consumption gestures helps me to evidence self-defined identity through written narrative (dialogue), visual imagery (visuals of the mouth), and as a broader metaphor of culture.

Texts, in a broad sense, are entities for consumption. Academic research, as de Rosa finds, is a gesture through the collection of ideas (study and theorisation) in what she defines as 'fascination for the archive' (2019, p.113). Lisa Perks also defines the social aspects of shared experience that are associated with the consumption of fascinating productions: 'The lived and fictive worlds come into contact through the collective excitement that motivates us to consume these stories and through our communicative methods of processing the experience with others' (Perks, 2014, p.36). The process of consuming narratives is a non-linear 'becoming' of the reader, collapsing an understanding of the 'lived and fictive' and creating a new understanding of *who* (or *what*) the serial killer is. Perks notes that this understanding exists, even if on a subconscious level: 'Marathoners did not necessarily identify as fans of their series when they sat down to consume it, but many began exhibiting fan-like behavior [sic]' (Ibid, p.22). Marathoners are essentially a form of 'serial consumers', which can be equated socially to the drive for violence reflected in serial killer characters that I analyse here.[105] The serialised nature of the texts I analyse (as well as their existence in media reformulations) also evidences how assumptions are built through continued interaction with these representations.

4.3.1 A Figure Made for Fascination

Our social fascination with killers is an accepted norm as evidenced by my overview in Chapter 1. These assumptions are even relevant in memes such as: Figure 3 (Appendix, p.226) which portrays watching serial killer narratives as 'relaxing' rather than 'scary'; Figure 4 (Appendix, p.227) portrays the collective audience as a young and presumably innocent-looking female, licking a lolly and wearing an oversized jumper which makes her appear child-like in her fascination with killers. Bakhtinian fascination with these subversive spaces evidences the carnival atmosphere of true crime and serial killer fascination:

[105] Perks notes that her conclusions are directed towards media marathoning and that no similar studies into literary 'marathoning' currently exist (Perks, 2014, p.xv). As these texts are serialised novels and media adaptations that draws audiences across the franchise, the claims I make about serialised consumption are relevant to both iterations.

> …in the carnivalesque game of inverting official values he sees the anticipation of another, utopian world in which anti-hierarchism, relativity of values, questioning of authority, openness, joyous anarchy, the ridiculing of all dogmas hold sway, a world in which syncretism and a myriad of differing perspectives are permitted. (Lachmann et.al. 1988, p.118)

These narratives give an 'anti-hierarchical' power to the deviant unlike in other spheres of society that preference the majority. Many individuals, such as Dennis Rader (the BTK Strangler), have sought out this media attention and the pseudo-celebrity status associated with serial killers.[106] Bundy as well elevated his social presence by holding press conferences, or he insisted on sharing his thoughts at press conferences held by others.[107] Emanuel Tanay, a well-known forensic psychologist who consulted on the Bundy case, relayed how both sides of the criminal proceedings (prosecution and defence) were 'blind' to how Bundy used the media: 'Bundy's love of celebrity status and the enjoyment gained from manipulating and playing games with everyone involved in the trial precluded his acting in his own best interest or accepting the advice of competent legal counsel' (2010, p.111). Just as with the Animal/Human's drive to kill, something 'greater' than self-preservation was assumed to propel Bundy's actions. While Bundy chose his celebrity status over what Tanay claims were his legal interests, the fictional killer is separated from the audience's influence and driven only by their deviant identity.[108] The media portrayal and fanfare surrounding Bundy's crimes and apprehension(s) in the 1970s and 80s became an important aspect for understanding contemporary society's fascination surrounding serial killers and how media recognition fuels consumer 'appetite'. A true anti-hierarchical view of this folk culture (actual serial killing) is 'reduced to sublime', meaning that we create these productions of representation to make that space more accessible (Lachmann et.al., 1988, p.118).

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[106] Rader is famous for his quote sent to the media 'How many do I have to kill before I get my name in the paper or some national attention?' (quoted in Gibson, 2006).
[107] This is further explored in the episode 'Burn Bundy Burn'(1.4) of the series *Conversations with a Killer* which considers Bundy's trials and charismatic presence.
[108] This is not to say that the authors may not be on some level swayed by the audience's fascination, as I discuss in this chapter with *Hannibal*'s protracted publishing which may have produced a more sensationalised image of Lecter in later novels to respond to the character's popularity.

4.3.2 Murderabilia and Consumer Culture

By focussing on characterisation and cultural production of an image, I have taken a qualitative approach to analyse the Animal/Human as a conception of identity rather than the dominant quantitative (psychological) approach which I feel provides more instability in a discussion of fictional texts. Jenkins identifies a similar gap in academic studies when considering the impact of collector culture on fans (consumption of memorabilia) (2017, p.222). He blames the 'difficulty' of connecting the qualitative nature of fan hierarchies to studies on cultural production (like this one) as the reason for this gap. My study limits exploration into fan studies by acknowledging the body of work already produced around the fascination with serial killers and crime fiction largely in Chapter 1. Instead, I further develop how our cultural fascination with violence and disgust holds power over consumers, driving us to neutralise fictional violence in the justification of these interests. Just as my assertions around infrahumanisation in Chapter 3, Jenkins evaluates that the act of collection (particularly of items related to a collector's fascination) evidences 'ownership' and 'emotional connection' which connects to an individual and what they represent: 'Every object, it seems, has a story, and part of how we connect with the past is to insert ourselves into these continuing narratives about the production and circulation of stuff' (Jenkins, 2017, p.224). These 'objects' are a sanitised but tangible form of participation, linking identity (of the consumer) to objects (productions of characterisation). This can be drawn back to the above assertions by Bakhtin (see 4.1) about the nature of grotesque consumption which builds the body (our cultural knowledge) by 'swallowing' and 'enriching' our understanding of the world by 'rending apart' traditional hierarchies (Bakhtin and Morris, 1994, p.228). Consumerism begins, in this instance, through the collection of books (or DVD/electronic versions of media productions) which is a socially accepted form of collection. Those who see themselves as 'fans' internalise this cognitive participation as a form of 'becoming' and collection is a way to 'prove' fandom status and 'relate' (infrahumanise) with the serial killer. While fans of sport may manifest fandom through

emulating players or teams they support, these same forms of performative 'production' from the consumer would breach lines of social acceptance (and legality) if emulation were applied to serial killing. As we 'consume' these new characterisations, it helps to 'feed' a new understanding of the serial killer as Animal/Human.

Consumerism or 'collection' allows an audience to claim power over their fascination and determine the lengths of their participation in the discourse. As Richard Tithecott points out, monetary gains are often quantifiers of contemporary power struggles: 'Cannibalism, aggressive warfare, and conquest have been replaced, in the internal affairs of civilized [sic] society, by subtler forms of domination: slavery, racism, religious oppression, and capitalism' (1997, p.84). Tithecott's assertion that associates cannibalism with the un- 'civilised' parallels the connotative meanings associated with cannibalism as 'primal' or 'animalistic'.[109] In these hunter-gatherer cultures, food was gained through predatory or active pursuits, while contemporary culture often relies on 'buying' our survivalist needs, such as going to a grocery store rather than a forest to obtain food. Civilised commodification (consumerism), emphasising monetary gain, is a contemporary indicator of 'domination' on behalf of the reader. The impact of a characterisation is only as powerful as society's acceptance and recognition of the figure. The recognised 'language' and images that I have explored in Chapters 2 and 3 evidence the cultural power of serial killers in justifying violence. Audiences tacitly give this power through repeated consumption, evidenced by quantitative consumerism (capital gains) and qualitative consumerism (dedicated fan culture). This pursuit of economic gain also drives which narratives are produced (or reproduced) and mass-marketed. For example, the trilogy of Anthony Hopkins's *Hannibal* films alone has garnered a global profit of $833,642,450 (Box Office Mojo, 2020a;

[109] In Chapter 3, I explored how this terminology is often used to degrade representations of the 'animalistic' and I explored how the non-linear posthuman destructures these terms.

2020b; 2020c).[110] These adaptations came after Harris's already achieved written success; the novel series has garnered a long list of *New York Times* Best Seller list appearances, particularly over the late 90s and early 2000s (New York Times, 1999; 2006). The popularity of the serial killer figure is evidenced, not only by these 'box office' statistics but through community discussion boards (such as those on Reddit), series-inspired merchandise, and fan fiction or art.[111] The consumerist spread is evidenced as a fascination with serial killing or the characterisation of the serial killer, not just Hannibal Lecter. The *Dexter* franchise has also capitalised on the profit made from fan communities by producing a video game and Dexter Morgan action figure (Green, 2011, p.24). This method of consumer marketing has become an integral part of the fan community experience, as a way of gaining cultural capital through deeper involvement (participation) with the narrative. These forms of participation then evidence the extent to which we have 'bonded' or infrahumanised with the serial killer as an antihero.

Real serial killers and fictional reproductions both contribute to the celebrity and consumerism around this figure as a fascinating 'Other'. Fame attributed to characters like Dexter or Hannibal can be seen as more socially acceptable because the character's 'fiction' neutralises their violence (they aren't real so neither is the threat they pose). Real killers receiving fame (and/or wealth) from their crimes is controversial, despite the well-documented reality of this consumer phenomenon. These figures could also, to some extent, be neutralised as most gain notoriety after being arrested. Many killers have been known to revel in the spotlight of their crimes. For example, Bundy held several interviews during his trial and before his incarceration.

[110] This excludes additional films within the franchise such as Peter Webber's *Hannibal Rising* (2007) starring Gaspard Ulliel and ancillary collector's items such as masks, t-shirts, cookbooks, and other merchandise mentioned in this section.

[111] In Chapter 2, I reference Jaquelin Elliot's analysis of 'monstrosity' in the adaptation *Hannibal* (NBC, 2013-2015). A prolific subsect of fans 'ship' (or theorise about romantic intimacy not detailed in the canonical texts) the characters Hannibal Lecter and Will Graham. The 'shipping' of these characters is referenced by the names 'Hannigram' or 'Murder Husbands' (2018). Investment by fans through fan art and fan fiction is a commonly recognised participation in fandom. Other *Hannibal* merchandise such as T-shirts, replica Lecter face masks, and home décor (such as kitchen accessories and cookbooks) also evidence the capital market opportunities beyond adaptations of the narrative.

These interviews have contributed to his social notoriety and recognisability. David Berkowitz (the 'Son of Sam' killer) publicised his crimes by writing letters, first to the police and later directly to the media. Roy Whitehead and Walter Block reveal how the acclaim of Berkowitz's crimes throughout the United States highlighted the need for regulation of capital gains from serial killing:

> By the time Berkowitz was apprehended, publicity about the case had created enormous monetary value in the publication rights to his criminal story. New York's appalled legislature sought to prevent Berkowitz and other criminals from exploiting for profit the tales of their sensational crimes while their victims remained uncompensated. The statute resulting from the legislature's praiseworthy efforts to strip the criminal of his crime related profits and compensate the victim was called the 'Son of Sam Law'. Its efforts are praiseworthy because criminals should not profit from their violence against victims and surely victims deserve to be compensated for injuries caused by criminal violence. (2003, p.229)

This 'Son of Sam Law' does not inhibit the *figure* (the cultural production) of the serial killer from profiting, it only limits the individual themselves from profiting directly from marketing their crimes for commercial gain. These fame-seeking exploits are not limited to American sensationalism; Jack the Ripper was thought to have written letters to police and many generations later the image of the Ripper is still used in the form of merchandise, London tours, and speculative books (Bloom, 2007, p.94). Socially, a line is drawn that fascination with violence is accepted or even promulgated if the murders-for-show are fictional. Within the real world, audiences are still able to be onlookers, to read about and 'follow' the stories of real killers, while making a clear distinction that these individuals do not 'benefit' (e.g., make money) from their crimes. We want to eat or consume information about these figures without 'gaining weight' or receiving the consequences of these actions such as perpetuating real-world violence. Society then cannot be accused of legitimising killing in the real world by making it an economic enterprise. While some individuals may be drawn (in part) to their crimes because of the celebrity status, assumptions into these motivations are outside the scope of my inquiries.

Collecting 'objects', or 'valuable recognition' is a way of extending the power of participation to the consumer. Many serial killers are reported to collect 'souvenirs' or 'trophies' from their victims to relive the gratification obtained through their crimes. Souvenirs can be

physical items (jewellery, clothing, or body parts) or stimuli (video or audio recordings of the victim) (Miller, 2014, p.4). In Chapter 3, I noted how Dexter equated this desire as a 'normal' facet of human nature (and the nature of Animal/Humans). By capitalising on serial killer culture, collection of fetish objects, or 'murderabilia', from fictional or real crimes equates consumerism to 'belongingness'. Jarvis cautions trying to separate cultural fascination as an individual preference rather than fascination's impact on advancing a cultural agenda: 'The commodification of violence is inseparable from the violence of commodification' (2007, p.327). Business enterprises are often referred to as a 'dog-eat-dog' world or a space of culturally accepted predation. In the interest of 'commodifying' the image of the serial killer, reliance on a unifying image (Animal/Human posthuman) allows for representations to be developed in line with commercial reinforcement.

4.4 Giving 'Credits' to Food: Marketing and Repeat Imagery

Throughout this thesis, I have referred to linguistic imagery (dialogue) that evidences an understanding of Animal/Humanity. While textual analysis is my main method for building this characterisation, additional analysis of the media adaptations helps provide further visual gestures that support an understanding of how the character explores violence. In this section, I particularly address visual images provided through the *Dexter* television series' opening sequence and gestures that draw the audience's attention to a character's mouth. I also evidence how the *Hannibal* series uses mask imagery as a way of referencing his Animal/Humanity as a gesture of consumption.[112]

4.4.1 Dexter's Opening Sequence

For television, serial visual imagery is presented through an opening credits sequence that recurs each episode. In this section, I explore how these visuals work alongside the texts to enhance posthuman characterisation in the television adaptation of *Dexter*. These visuals support

[112] Due to the *Huntress* series not having a released media adaptation, this section excludes references to Cara Lindstrom.

imagery of the Animal/Human by portraying adherence to 'normal' routine with aspects of violent deviance that evidences 'Otherness'.

In these introductions, we observe the character eating and undertaking core daily routines in ways that can be linked to his internal posthuman and predatory nature. The music of the opening sequence is jaunty and upbeat with a sinister edge, in parallel to the images on-screen. This same tone is a marker for the dialogue and type of characterisation of the Animal/Human throughout the series. In the novels, Dexter is quippy and self-centred about his deviance, but his media characterisation has been re-formulated to limit some of the extreme selfishness and detachment. Jenner theorises that this is done to make Dexter a more likeable and palatable character for a wider television audience (2015, p.4). The exception to this tone is when he is in his 'Dark Passenger state' or actively killing which signals the dual nature of his identity. The audience can 'dislike' his killing (or his killer state) while still 'liking' the character. The episode 'Dexter' (1.1) begins with the character's shadow in relief as he drives at night, his first words are in the deep, emotionless tone of his Dark Passenger state and backed by ethereal music: 'Miami is a great town. I love the Cuban food. Pork Sandwiches- my favourite. But I'm hungry for something different now'. This immediately begins the verbalised connection between the character's obsession with food and the symbolic connection to his 'need' to kill. It takes a full four minutes of airtime before the character mentions his name, so introducing these 'gestures' becomes primary to knowing 'Dexter'. The opening sequence follows this introduction, playing out the character's 'morning routine' and making 'public' to viewers the character's 'private' self. We view Dexter as he would be, alone in his home without having to put on a charade, though not as an active predator (stalking or hunting). Angelina Karpovich deconstructs the opening credits, citing Hall's concept of how image highlights the broader social contexts of the show. She focuses on analysing the repeated 'predatory' images which reinforce the character's innate violent tendencies, such as the first shot where Dexter swats a mosquito from his arm: 'We are only five seconds into the series at this point, but the central theme is already established: Dexter Morgan

disposes of parasites, with a deadly efficiency' (2010, p.30). The rest of the opening sequence continues by displaying familiar routines (human) with a predatory or deviant edge (animal). A drop of blood on the title screen by the name 'Dexter' is assumed to be from the just-killed mosquito but this is then followed by another drop of blood in the sink while shaving. This shows the continuous trails of blood that the character leaves (figuratively, the texts are clear that he carefully cleans up the scene after his kills), as well as being a precursor for the drop of blood on a microscope slide which is how the character 'collects' souvenirs of his kills.

The other images in *Dexter*'s opening sequence begin to show how even the most mundane of human routines are misaligned for Dexter. Before shaving, Dexter runs his fingers against the grain of his stubble, creating a negative tactile image and this scratching can be heard over the music. In preparing his breakfast, he uses an unnecessarily large, serrated knife to cut through the packaging of his bacon. He cuts into the meat but not through it, slashing at various angles rather than logical segments. This can be linked to various times throughout the series where he uses the analogy of having 'claws' and this imprecise slashing mirrors that of an animal swiping with claws at their prey. He then eats this meat directly out of the frying pan, off the end of the knife rather than using a fork (or a plate). Instead of preparing a meal and then enjoying it in its entirety, he eats in stages as he prepares items. This is like an animal, going on a killing spree and eating prey as they are killed. His bacon is followed by an egg, then a coffee, and finally a 'blood' orange (another tacit use of irony). This also indicates how the character often indulges in extensive meals, unable to 'get enough', which I discuss below as a social outlet for the 'needs' he has as an Animal/Human. Karpovich also analyses how the close-up image of the spray from the orange as it is sliced, and the 'mangled' pulp left behind, denotes his killing as well (2010, p.34). His morning routine finishes with the character cleaning the remnants of his meal out of his teeth (mirroring the character cleaning his crimes before stepping back into the public eye). Dexter wraps the floss tightly around his fingers, cutting off blood flow and then cutting to an image of his shoelaces similarly wrapped tightly around his hands. This imagery will later be seen again

throughout the series when he confronts his 'prey' by partially garrotting them from behind to subdue them. As the credits close, the character leaves his apartment, locking the door behind him and plastering a socially acceptable smile onto his face. As he enters the public sphere, the imagery shows that social and 'normative' actions remain practised and staged gestures. This is also reminiscent of something deeper and more sinister with a clear separation into the public/private.

4.4.2 Marketing 'Hannibal the Cannibal'

While, throughout the thesis, I have discussed characterisation from the *Hannibal* series as a whole, in this section I focus on the marketing imagery of eating produced for the most recent television adaptation. Marketing of the Animal/Human is inherently linked to the mass market 'consumption' of the produced image. Marketing is used like a light, drawing moths to the flame, and catching the interest of the public in a way that acknowledges the Animal/Human predator. Marketing images from *Hannibal* use this imagery of consumption to highlight the notoriety of the character's cannibalism juxtaposed against clean lines and markers of sophistication that trigger visually inverted or opposed gestures. For example, the cover art from the DVD box set of Season one depicts the torso of a man (presumably Mads Mikkelsen) in a patterned, well-fitted suit with a rich burgundy silk pocket square and a hand that is holding a cloth napkin, extending up to wipe at his mouth (Figure 6, Appendix, p.227). Similar to Karpovich's claims about colour imagery in *Dexter*'s opening credits, the rich burgundy could symbolise blood, but it is the napkin held to his mouth that suggests the character has just consumed something (or someone) (2010, p.31). This is also contrasted as the character himself appears pale against the rich tones of the background and his suit. Below, I discuss the links between the character's killing and his cannibalism, which is undertaken ritualistically. Like portrayals of vampirism discussed in Chapter 2, 'blood drinking' and cannibalism may be visually linked through the character's indicative pallor. Lecter's suits are a marker of his professional career (psychiatrist) but also his personal 'tastes' for luxury items

(like suits or expensive wine). The compiled box for the series also shows Lecter (Mikkelsen) from the waist up in another well-tailored suit (Figure 7, Appendix, p.228). This time, however, his eating is more overt than the previous image as he is seated at a table with a glass of red wine and a full plate of meat in front of him. He raises a knife and holds a piece of meat on a fork aloft with a blank expression on his face. Again, as in *Dexter*, blood splatter against the white background is used as recurring imagery to remind the audience that the character is a killer and 'blood mixes with his everyday doings' (eating) (Francis, 2010, p.177). The connections here to Lecter's animalistic predation are also clearer as a shadow of antlers is pictured behind Mikkelsen's head. As we become more acquainted with the character as a predatory animal, the marketed visuals also become more explicit.

The imagery of antlers and deer or stags are made throughout the *Hannibal* series. In an interview, the executive producer of the show, Bryan Fuller states that the stag is a textual reference to Lecter's killing and the impact this has on the character of Graham and their relationship:

> The stag always represented the connection between Will Graham and Hannibal Lecter. He started seeing the stag after he was first exposed to Hannibal's murder of Cassie Boyle impaled on the stag head in the field. It felt like, at that moment, the relationship that they had has died. (quoted in Bryant, 2014)

The Hannibal Wiki notes 33 appearances of stag imagery throughout the series. The stag acts as a form of traumatic flashback and triggers a connection between predation and trauma. For example, a stag sculpture is in Lecter's office during therapy sessions and is later used by the character as a murder weapon (Fandom, n.d.). This connects what he learns about his patients during therapy to his process of stalking to kill. Marketing the stag imagery shows an underlying reference to hybridity and the character as Animal/Human. In the German DVD box set of the series, Figure 8 (Appendix, p.228), shows a minimalistic white plate on a white background with an anatomical heart. Draining away from the heart is a set of stag antlers in blood. This indicates that the stag, a repeated image to represent predatory killing, is part of the heart. 'Revealing

someone's heart' is generally used to reference someone's true nature, in this case, a revelation to the Animal/Human. The heart on a plate again references back to Bakhtin's concept of the grotesque and how our consumption 'builds' or creates our assumption, an analogy of how we culturally accept the serial killer's own conception of their state.

The television series uses food-related images to give audiences a broader social understanding of 'Hannibal' (the character and the franchise). The first season of the series takes place before Lecter is explicitly shown to be (or revealed to any other on-screen characters as) a serial killer. As the character consults with Will Graham for the FBI, there are allusions throughout to what the audience 'knows' but the other characters within the series do not. This makes assumptions that the general audience knows the 'celebrity' or previous iterations of the character as the driving force behind their 'consumption' of the television series. Food metaphors are also used in character dialogue to highlight the grotesque which is being paraded about (to the audience) while remaining veiled (to other characters). For example, upon introducing Graham (Hugh Dancy) and Lecter (Mikkelson), the two characters have a conversation about a crime scene which implies the double meaning of their conversation:

> Graham: Tasteless…
> Lecter: Do you have trouble with taste?
> Graham: My thoughts are often not tasty.
> Lecter: Nor mine. (*Hannibal*, 1.1)

These allusions highlight the carnival space that the audience is invited into, to know about the character's deviance. Lecter evades detection (or, to most extents, suspicion during season 1) and yet the audience 'knows' him to be a cannibal and killer. As the series continues, comments are frequently made which are intended to have double meanings and highlight the divide between what the audience can experience as 'private' and 'public' knowledge of the character:

> The killer who did this wanted us to know he wasn't the Minnesota Shrike. He was better than that […] He had intimate knowledge of Garrett Jacob Hobbs's murders, motives, patterns, enough to recreate them and, arguably, elevate them to art […] Before Garrett Jacob Hobbs murdered his wife […], he received an untraceable call. I believe that as-yet-unidentified caller was our copycat killer. (*Hannibal*, 1.3)

Graham states this profile about a 'copycat killer' as the camera pans to show Hannibal enter the lecture theatre. The television series will later reveal that it is Lecter who has committed the murders Graham is discussing. The audience is led to guess this, as early as episode 3, by knowing the 'canon' of what happens next in Lecter's narrative as well as the visual 'hints' given. An emphasis on the 'art' made by this killer in the crime scene tableau again references the ritualistic nature of Lecter's killing and cannibalism. It won't be until three episodes later (1.6) that the viewer participates in the grotesque by seeing Lecter approach from behind a character the audience knows to be dead while she discovers the drawings in his office of his previous victims. Again, the ties between art and killing are used to highlight how, as a killer, Hannibal is different by using restraint combined with grotesque killing.

4.4.3 'Masking' the Mouth

The popularised image of the face mask is important across the media portrayals of *Hannibal* (television and film) to build an image of Lecter as a predator. In a Bakhtinian understanding of the grotesque body, the image is contrasted to the classical form which Simonson defines as unchanging and rigid, unlike the constantly evolving grotesque hybrid:

> The body of classical art (both in its representations and as a category), being subject to the bloodless niceties of academic philosophy and polite society, is a completed, contained, enclosed, spiritual and presumably eternal thing; a cold, static, bloodless body - consider, for example, the Apollo Belvedere. (Simonson, 2009, p.5)

This classical face becomes an expression of societal norms, perfected and restrained by cultural 'niceties'. The novel series explains the ritualistic meaning behind the wearing of masks as a symbol of choice or power over one's identity (how we are seen or perceived). The partial mask evidenced in the *Hannibal* series alludes to Animal/Humanity that is unable to be completely controlled behind a 'mask' of society. Masks are a grotesque 'copy', a doppelganger that hides the true nature of an individual:

> The images of Romantic grotesque usually express fear of the world and seek to inspire the reader with this fear. On the contrary, the images of folk culture are absolutely fearless and communicate the fearlessness to all. […] Even more important is the theme of the

> mask, the most complex theme of folk culture. The mask is connected with the joy of change and reincarnation, with gay relativity and with the merry negation of uniformity and similarity. (Bakhtin, 1984a, p.39)

The grotesque figure harnesses power by the character but also extends this power to the reader. 'We' becomes a social or collective understanding, like two parts of the hybrid identity working in tandem, the outer face (mask) and the internal (identity).

The reader sees behind the mask of the serial killer, communicating fearlessness of the 'predator', which otherwise is a form of unknown 'Other' while understanding the underlying self (the past as prey). Deleuze and Guattari use the theory of 'faciality' to explore how masks reveal an inner self:

> …the face crystallizes [sic] all redundancies, it emits and receives, releases and recaptures signifying signs. It is a whole body unto itself: it is like the body of the center of significance to which all of the deterritorialized signs affix themselves, and it marks the limit of their deterritorialization. […] he makes himself one, or even several. The mask does not hide the face, it *is* the face (emphasis original, 1987, p.115).

Deleuze and Guattari note how the mask becomes the sign of true nature (the Animal/Human) and *reveals* a true nature rather than hides it as a 'classical' mask would. The mask symbolises the character's change of 'becoming' and is also a celebration of the reader's knowledge and participation in destroying structured boundaries. In *Hannibal Rising,* Lady Murasaki owns a samurai mask. The samurai is often used as a figure who, while a warrior and capable of violence, was also restrained by their duty to protect and maintain honour through violence. Lecter's predation is guided by a demand to impose 'respect' on those he feels have behaved dishonourably. When young Lecter is questioned by Inspector Popil if he sometimes dons the mask, the character notes that 'I haven't earned it' (p.152). This indicates that Lecter has not yet killed his first victim and the imagery throughout the series is then to highlight that by 'becoming' Animal/Human (and killing) means he has now 'earned' his mask (Figure 9, Appendix, p.229). Part of the samurai code emphasises dignity and humility, both of which Boyé De Mente describes as 'masks' to hide their inner self (2011). After his 'honourable' (measured by the vigilante ethical code) killings, the mask Hannibal wears reveals his true self (predator). Face masks generally

throughout social discourse are a symbol of restraint. In the case of this narrative, the mask indicates 'giving in' to the 'true nature' of the Animal/Human.

Throughout the other film adaptations, Lecter (Hopkins) is frequently portrayed in a grated, partial face mask. This draws attention to the character's mouth, seen as the source of his violence. This restriction from lashing out is a tool to 'dehumanise' his autonomy of movement. The partial face mask resembles a dog muzzle, restraining his mouth from biting those around him. Lecter is also caged (incarcerated), as a wild beast would be, for the protection of those around him. In *Silence of the Lambs* (1991) Figure 10 (Appendix, p.229) shows the complete incapacitation of Lecter's autonomy through a straitjacket, in addition to his mask. The mask imagery becomes important to understand the perception of how dangerous the character is portrayed to be. As well, it indicates how the other characters do not understand the vigilante nature of his killing. As Dr Chilton, the 'head of the mental hospital' tries to caution Clarice before meeting Lecter, he tells her an anecdote to warn her off building attachments to him:

> 'A pure sociopath, that's obviously what he is. But he's impenetrable, much too sophisticated for the standard tests. And my, does he hate us. […] I don't believe Lecter's seen a woman in several years- he may have gotten a glimpse of one of the cleaning people. We generally keep women out of there. They're trouble in detention. […] Lecter is never outside his cell without wearing full restraints and a mouthpiece. […] On the afternoon of July 8, 1976, he complained of chest pain and he was taken to the dispensary. His restraints were removed to make it easier to give him an electrocardiogram. When the nurse bent over him, he did this to her'. Chilton handed Clarice Starling a dog-eared photograph. 'The doctors managed to save one of her eyes. Lecter was hooked up to the monitors the entire time. He broke her jaw to get at her tongue. His pulse never got over eighty-five, even when he swallowed it'. (*Silence*, pp.13-14)

Chilton attempts to insinuate that Clarice, as a woman, would be more vulnerable or likely to be victimised by Lecter. Throughout the narrative, however, what is revealed about the character is the opposite, that he protects women and often justifies his violence in protection of those he feels affection towards. This could be linked to how predators still often care for and protect their 'pack'. Alena Kiel describes how the 'Lecter mask' is a seminal image, representative of our fascination with the character: 'The fear we feel when we look upon that iconic leather face-mask is rivalled [sic] only by the intrigue, excitement, fascination, and even attraction that comes with only the

best known of cultural signs' (2018, p.217). In Figures 10 and 11 (Appendix, p.229-230), Lecter (Hopkins) has the mask imposed upon him by captors to restrain his mouth. Whether through force or by choice, Lecter *is* Animal/Human, the mask is a symbol for his deeper identity. Throughout the series, the mask image is also used to show how the character reclaims the mask meant for his restraint as a way of showing his ability to control his characterisation.

Figure 12 (Appendix, p.230) shows another 'mask' that has become a famous grotesque image, sensationalising the character's deviance. In *Silence*, Lecter imposes a disguise upon himself to escape from custody in the form of another man's face. This mask is the ultimate form of grotesque manipulation, contorting how faciality reflects identity to redefine his bounds as a predator. This again shows the lengths to which Lecter is willing to go to follow his violent drives and gain his freedom, reclaiming power over his image through masks. Lisa Hodge and Lia Bryant identify this type of practice as 'mask[ing] their shame through actively reshaping their [his] body (2017, p.253). Each of these masks evidences the media discourse about the nature of appearance versus identity.

As with Hannibal's mask imagery, the television portrayal of Dexter draws emphasis to the character's consumption by showing repeated images of the character (Michael C. Hall) chewing (Figures 13; 14; 15, Appendix, p.231-232). Because of how the character is completely engrossed with food, he drops some of his social graces and the 'perfect' image he cultivates in trying to not be noticed in pursuit of physical sustenance. Each of these images fixates on the character's action of chewing, bringing attention to how he uses food as a gesture to evidence his 'Otherness'.

4.5 High-Value Predation

Throughout these texts, these figures justify the 'usefulness' of their killing and their predation in several ways, primarily through the social value they differentiate between

themselves and their prey.[113] Real-world statistics show that killers tend to 'prey' on those with increased vulnerability or those less 'valuable' to society.[114] Duggan identifies that the social conception of the 'ideal victim' is often characterised by their opposition to the offender (2018, p.13). The Animal/Human sees themselves as an 'evolved' criminal (valuable to society) because of their opposition, the unjustified criminal, to their prey. This reflects that these forms of prey are given higher attainment value as they are themselves are strong or intelligent enough to have previously evaded capture from the law while committing violent crimes.[115] The *Hannibal* series parallels the gesture of value attainment through Lecter's own desire for 'sophistication'. Jake Young considers the opposition between 'disgust' and 'sophistication' when it comes to cultural attitudes towards offal and he notes it 'reveals the dual nature of organ meat as both a food of necessity (a source of inexpensive protein) and a food of luxury (enjoyed as a delicacy)' (2018, p.76). Young goes on to explain how the practices of consuming offal have been led by cultural stigma as well as economic politics. The history behind eating these foods has fluctuated in cultural acceptance. While at certain points of history, offal was relegated to those in poverty who had to make use of the full animal for survival, the laborious and intricate preparations of haute cuisine elevated these cuts (organ meats or innards). One key feature to achieve this elevation could be the luxury for the consumer to separate themselves from the preparation of these foods which Young admits can be disconcerting such as the comparison between his own tongue and that of a cow which may make one question the emotional reaction towards eating certain meats that are more comparably 'human'. Lecter details this to Clarice Starling, stating his proclivity for expensive foods and wine, opera, and art, particularly those that are hard to obtain and therefore have high 'value'. One of the most iconic lines of the film adaptation equates cannibalism to

[113] As discussed in Chapter 1, the vigilante neutralises their killing through their code of ethics, justifying that their existence is 'good' for society.
[114] These individuals, such as minorities or social 'invisibles' like sex workers or run-aways, are therefore less likely to be missed or their deaths investigated.
[115] Generally, an activity that requires either physical or tactical domination.

upscale food and wine pairing.[116] This discussion came out of Lecter's frustration of being questioned and reduced by a simplistic understanding. The text uses these valuative markers to further the storyline and as broader symbols for status that creates a hierarchy between characters. In meeting Starling for the first time, the character tries to assert his social dominance by highlighting her lower socioeconomic background as a marker for her worth:

> Do you know what you look like to me, with your good bag and your cheap shoes? You look like a rube. You're a well-scrubbed, hustling rube with little taste. Your eyes are like cheap birth-stones- all surface shine when you stalk some little answer. (*Silence*, p.25)

These arguments evidence how, even as an incarcerated prisoner, Lecter defines himself and others by their consumption of quality items. The character's expensive and refined tastes even become an easy way for him to be tracked after his escape. Clarice Starling tracks his purchases of an expensive brand of wine and truffles that he is known to love, and hitmen abduct Lecter as he is trying to leave a bottle of wine for Clarice in her car (*Hannibal*, p.263; p.455). His preference for these particular items is so widely known that they act as Achilles' heel, representing excess to the point of self-aggrandisement. Even when on the run, the character should attempt to remain as invisible as possible to avoid re-capture but his affection for refined foods creates an obvious trail to follow. These also help to reinforce the predator's social 'camouflage' used to blend in and appear 'normal' or above suspicion.[117] The television adaptation also uses linguistic symbolism to subliminally reinforce the character's 'cultured' appreciation of food. In the first season of the show, each episode is named after French meal progressions (e.g., Apéritif, Amuse-Bouche) and similarly, the second season and third seasons are patterned after Japanese and Italian meal progressions (e.g., Kaiseki, Mizumono; Antipasto, Digestivo) indicating that consuming the series is similar to the consumption of a feast.

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[116] See Chapter 1: 'A census taker once tried to test me. I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice Chianti'. (Silence of the Lambs, 1991)

[117] Figure 5 (Appendix, p.227) evidences a common example of Ted Bundy as serial killer with a variable appearance. His 'average' appearance and 'chameleon-like' appearance is cited as a reason that he was able to continue killing and remain inconspicuous.

The Animal/Human ascribes value to their method of 'hunting' as well as the prey that they kill. In his study into eating behaviours, Dovey identifies that animals generally have a more instinctual approach to evaluating food than humans. To satiate their needs, animals generally eat a very small range of foods and are driven to hunt efficiently for sustenance (Dovey, 2010, p.67). The Animal/Human kills to fulfil their grotesque 'need' and are driven 'instinctively' by their enhanced senses to a specific 'range' of prey. Uniquely though, these figures seek satisfaction through ritual rather than just a 'quick kill'. Using the example of *Hannibal*, the character does not cannibalise out of a physical need for food but instead eats his prey as a form of 'appreciation' for killing and as a further show of power over his prey. Serial killers do not (usually) kill their victims straight away. Instead, the 'enjoyment' comes from the ritual of killing. Maxeen Biben has studied the predatory behaviour of cats, which are known to 'play' with their food or ritualistically enact violence before ending the life of their prey. In cats, the partial 'release' of live or wounded prey (only to be caught again and eventually killed) is often used to weaken the opponent, and defensively protect the predator (the cat) (Biben, 1979). For the serial killer, their rituals within the killing process are developed tactically to show their power (outwit) rather than to weaken the opponent (overpower). Cara (*Huntress*) for example, is often shown to use the allure of her body to get close to victims to then slit their throat in a close-up attack. These rituals satisfy the 'need' of her Animal/Human nature and parallel the character's trauma as a way to reclaim their power. Cara's trauma involved a slash to her throat that left her barely alive. In her killing, she does not use weapons that would enable her to commit violence from afar, from a position of safety or power, but instead uses a straight razor, leaving her victims with the same wounds she incurred. In these encounters, Cara inverts expectations as she is not victimised by these men but instead becomes the dominant predator.

In *Hannibal*, cannibalism highlights the 'animal' nature of the character's 'hunting' techniques. Sophie Raymond et.al. note that 'cannibalism occurs in every major animal group as a normal response to a variety of factors' (2019, p.1568). While it may occur amongst humans,

this phenomenon is certainly not considered 'normal', even under many extreme circumstances. An understanding of cannibalism helps to define the ethical boundaries of the Animal/Human. Humans generally look to protect children as the most vulnerable within our groups, making cannibalism (like in *Hannibal Rising* through the eating of his younger sister) an ultimate form of violence or 'evil'. Animals are, however, more likely to eat young (their own or of other animals) as they are not yet recognised as 'one of the family' (Raymond et.al., 2019, p.1568). The Animal/Human then creates a new in-between space where Hannibal justifies cannibalism sometimes while rejecting cannibalism of those who he considers 'innocents' (like young children). David Lester et.al. note that the limited body of research, and academic speculation on cannibalism, highlights previous childhood trauma. Particularly, this refers to mother and child (de)attachment, indicating the same types of assumptions used to justify the Animal/Human in Chapter 2 (2015, p.428). The same study identifies cannibals to be 'more psychiatrically disturbed than the non- cannibals' and defined this claim by referencing their lack of relationships and attachments (such as being married) (Lester et.al., 2015, p.430). This can be evidenced in the assumptions built when Lecter attacked his nurse without physiological reactions, evidencing sociopathic-type detachment. This also shows the priority given to socialised constructs (marriage) in understanding definitions of 'normality'. The review study on cannibalism by Raymond et.al. acknowledges the difficulty in making any claims of 'normality' about the performance of cannibalism as it is a rare phenomenon and has an intense stigma (2019). They were able to study five cases in which all instances of cannibalism coincided with a diagnosed psychological condition, such as schizophrenia or various personality disorders. Animal/Humanism is a way of 'depathologising' the discourse around disordered eating as a marker of 'Otherness'.

4.6 I Eat Because of Trauma: A Literary Understanding of Disordered Eating

In this section, I explore how deviant eating is an identifiable feature of posthumanity as a literary representation. The most recent Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (*DSM-V*) defines eating disorders as 'characterized [sic] by a persistent disturbance of eating or eating-related behavior that results in the altered consumption or absorption of food that significantly impairs physical health or psychosocial functioning (APA, 2013, Section II.X)'. Under this broad definition, the Animal/Human's consumption acts as a cultural reflection of 'disordered eating' because of their 'disturbance of eating-related behaviors [sic]' and the connections to 'psychosocial functioning'.[118] I explore these behaviours to show how commonly recognised attributes of deviance help to justify the character's 'Otherness', not to identify the pathology or to characterise the serial killer's 'predation' to a real eating disorder classification. This same approach reflects my understanding of how trauma is represented through literature as a gesture of exploring 'Otherness' in Chapter 1. In this section, I focus on exploring gestures of aberrant 'psychosocial functioning' associated with how the Animal/Human displays disordered eating. While Cara (*Huntress*) does explain that she avoids alcohol consumption to 'remain in control', her physical consumption is not highlighted as prevalently as part of her character development as it is with *Dexter* or *Hannibal* which I focus on in this section. Dexter uses food as a form of control over his emotions and as a way of attempting to retain power over his social relationships (as a provider of food). Hannibal uses his cannibalism to impose his power over his victims. There are no indications that Lecter (or Dexter) is an especially strong or physically dominant individual. These characters are not perceived as predators simply by their physicality, which Chapter 3 indicates is a key feature of the serial killer's 'camouflage'. Before Lecter's arrest, he frequently held dinner parties where he served parts of his victims to unsuspecting guests, giving him further power as a hyper-predator through

[118] While we are unable to accurately comment on the character's 'health', each of these figures is written and portrayed (in media adaptations) to be of perceptibly average weight and health with no mention of medical issues affecting the storyline. The forms of active predation and interpersonal physical killing (by hand rather than distance weapons) also indicates a level of fitness.

knowledge and evasion.[119] Throughout this section, I highlight the killer's deviance through their disregard for social 'rules' surrounding food or methods of consumption. This links the character's eating and traumatic emotional detachment to their 'becoming' and explains how these characters use food as a gestural extension of their power.

4.6.1 A Hunger for Deviance

When culturally referencing eating disorders, experts often contend that those who suffer these conditions enact deviant behaviours as a method of control.[120] For the Animal/Human, their predation and 'need' to kill is described similarly. Killing becomes an obsession, driving the complete character development around their serial killing (and how they hide or control their killing). Gesturally, the character's insatiable 'hunger' becomes a public gesture for the inner deviance. These characters, while not frequently 'impulsive' or careless of their surroundings, do note a 'shift' between their Animal and Human characteristics (like Chapter 3's exploration of the terminology 'hunter' versus 'predator') which could be likened to a form of impulse or compulsion. Sandra Sassaroli and Giovanni Ruggiero also note that control can be a complex term, meaning 'either the self-regulatory skill of internal states and [or] the capacity to influence external events' (2011, p.16). The Animal/Human equates their 'ways of being' and their nature as a killer to be equal and these characters do not act merely on impulse to retain their freedom and anonymity. This may explain how physical consumption is an outlet for exploring impulsive tendencies in a culturally acceptable way.

The serial killer's consumption patterns also evidence how gestures of their hybridity are a 'reordering' of their physical state. This characterisation works to rearrange our understanding of humanity and deviance through the lens of what it means to be Animal/Human and to be

[119] This is a recurring plotline in the television series *Hannibal*.
[120] Claes et.al. identifies features of obsession and compulsion in both anorexia and bulimia, the two most socially recognised eating disorders: 'Restrictive anorexia nervosa patients (AN-R) are thought to belong to the obsessive pole of the spectrum, and purging-anorexia (AN-P) and bulimia nervosa (BN) patients to the impulsive pole (2006, p.196)'.

justified of deviance through ‘becoming’. For Bakhtin, the grotesque body demonstrates a physical and figurative ‘need’ of culture to explore the body beyond its traditional bounds (1984a, p.26). These bodies are the ‘ideal’ superhuman predator while they are also deviant and grotesque. Robert Palmer notes the cultural justification that eating disorders are commonly assumed to be an ‘emotional response’ to a ‘position of powerlessness’ (2014, p.50). Carol Davis as well notes how food can be used as ‘control’ or ‘power’ over individuals as a manifestation of violence (2003). The process of ‘becoming’ redefines the ways in which the character regains control over their bodies, their actions, and their cultural perception through redefining themselves as Animal/Human. In both Dexter and Hannibal’s case, temporary malnourishment in connection to their trauma shapes their reactions to ‘becoming’ by creating a reactionary obsession with food. When Dexter’s mother was killed, the young character was trapped with her body for three days in a shipping container, probably with little to no sustenance during that time. Dexter claims his predatory nature is a survival instinct that overrides many other emotions and the same can be applied to his excessive focus on food. The character has lost the ability to create normal attachments to food, overindulging and over-connecting with the comfort of food and choice. Oftentimes, the narrative describes a physical reaction but, instead of attribution to nerves or guilt, the character reverts to the rationale of hunger or blame overindulgence (*Dead*, p.202). These reactions are directly linked to a deviant pathology, whereby Dexter associates food as a replacement for emotion. Hannibal’s trauma similarly occurred when he was in a state of malnourishment and intermittent starvation. His parents were killed by looters and the secluded cabin where they lived had minimal stores of food (and lacked access to more). The looters who killed his sister also justified their cannibalism for survival, which is an entry into the discourse of replacing traditional food with anthropophagy, altered emotions in response to trauma, and killing. Consumption is therefore another gesture the Animal/Human undertakes to evidence a reclamation of their power.

While there are enough actions commonly associated with eating disorders that triggers this construct to the audience, the Animal/Human's consumption patterns are unique enough that (like themselves) these behaviours are 'something new entirely'. This differentiates a literary understanding of deviance from a pathological eating disorder evidenced through analysing 'normativity' in contrast to 'Otherness'. For example, the Dexter series portrays the character eating (and providing detailed narrative monologues about) indulgent meals. One such example is when the character mentally deconstructs a meal, describing it piece by piece to the audience:

> …bite by bite, what it was like to eat a *medianoche* sandwich: the crackle of the bread crust, so crisp and toasty it scratches the inside of your mouth as you bite down. The first taste of mustard, followed by the soothing cheese and the salt of the meat. Next bite-piece of pickle. Chew it all up; let the flavors [sic] mingle. Swallow. Take a big sip of Iron Beer (pronounced Ey-roan Bay-er, and it's a soda). Sigh. Sheer bliss. I would rather eat than do anything else except play with the Passenger. (*Devoted*, p.68)

These types of excerpts are frequent and draw the reader into the physical experience of the predator. When eating is compared to the process of killing, it evidences to the reader the visceral experience of how killing is lavished to 'feed' the inner Animal/Human.

4.6.2 Comfort Food: Posthuman Deviant Attachment

In Western culture, food is often used as a gesture for self-comfort or to extend hospitality. Michael Jones and Lucy Long identify that 'comfort food' is connected to a desire for or a feeling of 'security' and that 'food fulfils multiple needs and functions beyond its most basic one for sustaining life' (2017, p.3; p.5). They note that there is a lack of research on the cultural study of comfort food and that most study has previously been developed from the perspectives of psychological research or nutrition studies.[121] The connections they make between behavioural response (eating) and psychology (memory) parallels the language and focus of current trauma theory. It is then reasonable to evidence how gestures of traumatic 'becoming' can also be evidenced through deviant eating to trace cultural representation. For the Animal/Human,

[121] In *Comfort Food: Meanings and Memories,* Jones and Long attempt to explore the 'implications of food experience' as a cultural gesture (2017, p.5).

consumption is a facet of displaying their need for killing, beyond food simply needed to 'sustain life'. Julia Buckroyd and Sharon Rother also note that health professionals, when studying disordered eating, have often ignored emotional 'issues' as a variable in their studies and therefore these associations often come from social narratives rather than medical studies (2008, p.5). Just as with the characterisation of the serial killer, our understandings of comfort and emotional reliance on food are accepted because the characters define that it is essential to understanding their 'Otherness'. Meagan Soffin and W Robert Batsell found that emotional responses that trigger our consumption of 'comfort food' could be separated into five categories: 'negative emotion (stress, break-up, and lonely), positive emotion (celebration and cultural), illness, reward, and remembrance (2019, p.152)'. For the Animal/Human, the 'comfort' taken from their rituals of eating is a replacement or an outlet for their deviant (or underdeveloped) forms of emotional regulation. They evidence how deviant behaviours have developed from negative emotions (trauma) and continue to be a form of 'remembrance' of their new identity. The characters define their 'becoming' as a positive transcendence and therefore associate the positive pleasure derived from eating to the 'positive' fulfilment they receive from enacting violence.

Jones and Long note that 'comfort foods' are often complicated by the perception that certain foods are 'good' or 'bad' and that one draw of comfort foods is to indulge a form of guilt as we choose food for emotional rather than nutritional means (2017, p.7). Equating eating and killing, these characters also justify their indulgence in killing by contemplating these same ethical or moral categories. Just as the Animal/Human justifies their killing, they are also able to 'justify' their indulgence with food. Dexter, for instance, notes of himself:

> Dexter is a healthy boy with a very high metabolism, and facing what was sure to be a difficult day on an empty stomach was not a happy thought. I know family comes first, but shouldn't that mean after breakfast? (*Devoted*, p.132)

> My stomach rumbled, too, and I remembered that I had missed my lunch in all the excitement. This would never do; I needed to keep up my strength. My naturally high metabolism needed constant attention: no diet for Dexter. (*Devoted*, p.67)

In the first quote, Deborah's (Dexter's sister) boyfriend has been kidnapped by a man that dismembers his victims violently and Dexter is meant to be finding them (and enacting revenge). In the second, he has spent a busy day at work, at a gruesome crime scene, and has lost track of time. In either of these situations, it may be quite 'normal' for people to forget a meal or to be put off eating because of emotional circumstances, but Dexter does not have these same inhibitions. Instead, it is because he remains emotionally detached from these situations that his lack of eating would be 'unthinkable'. He points toward a 'high metabolism' which justifies his 'constant attention' to food. This is not unique to these excerpts and the character often equates other human emotions, like longing or exhaustion, to his need for food. Even extremes of grieving or loss do not seem to alter his food thoughts. These experiences do not markedly increase or decrease his fixation on food but instead show the character's complete detachment between his personal desires and situation:

> I stood in the rain and watched as they did. A shudder seemed to go through the whole group of watchers as the car door swung open; this was a *cop* who had died this way, one of *us*, so terrible hammered into oblivion […] It was the dark of the moon, and a dark time for Dexter; there was dread spreading through the ranks of all Miami cops, and in spite of all this fearsome unease Dexter stood dripping and thinking only one dark thought:
> *I missed my dinner*. (emphasis original, *Double*, p.38-9)

> I really should have been grieving a little bit. But I was hungry, and Rita had left me nothing to eat; to me that seemed vastly more saddening, the death of a great and sustaining tradition, a violation of some unspoken but important principle that had nurtured me through many trials. No food for Dexter; All was Utterly Lost. (*Double*, p.238)

In these examples, Dexter is undeterred by surroundings (rain) or circumstance (murder of a colleague). While others around him are expressing fear for themselves or grief, Dexter is only worried about his missed dinner. In the second quote, Dexter identifies how he has felt 'nurture(d)' by food and lack of it is a source of loss equal to death. This evidences how the character's 'becoming' redefines attachment (towards food rather than humans) rather than eliminates this gesture.

4.6.3 Food Binge

The Animal/Human's emotional regulation response to food is characterised by consumption in excess. Food is used by the characters as an outlet and another form of regaining autonomous power over their emotional states. The characters are also under the 'power' of their nature, becoming dependent on it as a crutch, representative of their Animal/Humanness. Hannibal wields this power over others by eating his victims and Dexter does so by controlling cultural food rituals to blend into the mainstream.

Dexter's relationship to food may be described as 'excessive' but is much more socially acceptable than Hannibal's deviant drives. It is only when his eating habits are considered across the scope of the series that these markers of 'Otherness' become apparent. In the TV series, *Dexter*, the character frequently refers to his hunger, as in 'Crocodile' when he says he is 'always hungry' (1.2). In the novel series, he references this as his 'very high metabolism' which seems to stop him from gaining weight associated with his levels of consumption (*Devoted*, p.68, p.132; *Dreaming*, p.44). This indicates that these features are physical alterations connected to his 'becoming'. While Chapter 2 focuses on the internal changes of 'becoming', this aspect may be evidence of the physical impacts that hybridity has on the character. Dexter often partakes in successive meals, as if one is not enough to satisfy his 'hunger'.[122] He also sees food as a 'cure-all' for any problematic issues or emotions. Although he understands that his emotional spectrum is limited, he is unable to find other sources of connection or empathy so instead suggests food as a 'comfort' for others, because he is unable to conceptualise 'normative' hunger:

> 'Debs, if my deadly logic can't cheer you up, and one of Relampago's sandwiches can't cheer you up, then it's too late. You're already dead'. (*Dreaming*, p.175)

[122] For example, in *Design*, Dexter eats a substantial breakfast at home and then directly upon arriving at work eats again a meal of breakfast pastries (pp.50- 55) or in *Dead* he eats a takeout burger for ease and then partake in a second 'lunch' at a Cuban restaurant and finish off with a café con leche (pp.74-76). To indicate his meal size and urgency for food, the character notes: 'I stopped at Pollo Tropical and picked up half a chicken to take with me. The smell instantly filled the car, and the last couple of miles it was all I could do to keep the car on the road instead of screeching to a halt and ripping at the chicken with my teeth. (*Dark,* p.178)' These experiences with food repeatedly show the character's excessive consumption habits.

> ‘Maybe a nice sandwich. Or fruit salad- get your blood sugar back up? You’ll feel so much better’. (*Devoted*, p.68)

> Breakfast did, in fact, take some of the sourness out of me. It is very hard to maintain a really good feeling of utter depression and total personal worthlessness when you are full of food, and I gave up trying halfway through an excellent omelet. (*Dark,* p.134)

Here, Dexter shows in several places how he expects food to unequivocally relieve Deb’s emotional distress, a poor mood, even to the extent of being powerless to depression if food is available. Suggesting food as an emotional or physical crutch is one of the few signs of empathy the character can show, if food ‘comforts’ others in the way it does for him. In Dovey’s analysis of eating behaviours, he also explores the concept of ‘emotional eating’: ‘Emotional eating refers to eating because of alterations in mood. In short, it is the attempt to improve or stabilize [sic] mood through eating. Such individuals experience intense emotions in response to most food and mood-related stimuli’ (2010, p.100). For the characters, eating (like killing) is a positive stimulus that is equated to a survival ‘need’.

Research supports an understanding that victims of abuse or neglect may tend to create unhealthy coping strategies towards food (like fasting, overeating, or hoarding of food) (Rosenthal, 1988). Similar to assumptions explored in Chapter 1 that trauma can be a ‘cause’ for deviance, serial killing evidences how trauma is linked to eating behaviour alterations (though not generally to an extreme of cannibalism). Dexter displays features of ‘emotional eating’ as he uses food as an avoidance-coping mechanism. For a time in the novel *Dexter in the Dark*, the character ‘loses’ or disassociates from his Animal/Human identity. During this time, his usual excessive appetite is tempered, a feat that is not triggered by any other factor or scenario the character faces: ‘I stared down at my plate with its pile of half-eaten pancakes and congealed syrup. Scientifically speaking, I knew they were still delicious, but at the moment they seemed about as appealing as old wet newspaper’ (*Dark*, p.233). In contrast to the excerpt above where Dexter lavishly describes the textures, smells and pleasure he receives from eating, when he dissociates

from his animality, he is unable to 'feel' the same insatiable hunger, even though he can still rationalise a 'normal' need for food. This indicates that Dexter's deviance is directly linked to his Dark Passenger as if he is 'eating for two', his animal and human sides. This image is reinforced throughout the novels and the television series by becoming more prevalent as the character increasingly embraces his hybridity. The series begins with *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* (2004) and while it makes mention of Café Relampago (Dexter's favourite lunch spot) or Rita's excellent cooking, it is not at the fore while other parts of 'becoming' and the character's past trauma is being revealed. The clearer the images and gestures of the Animal/Human develop, so does fixation on Dexter's food consumption. In the final novel, *Dexter is Dead* (2015), the character has been incarcerated and while his killing is restrained (as in *Devoted* when he is being followed by Sargent Doakes) he turns to food. Dexter counts his time in prison by the substandard meals they bring of 'cheese-like substance', 'synthetic recycled iceberg lettuce', 'Probable Chicken', or the 'Strange Brown Meat Sandwich' (*Dead,* pp.5, p.16, pp.31-32). He spends additional time in prison creating a mental 'food tour' of Miami. Upon his release, his first thoughts are of 'a Cuban sandwich and an Iron Beer (Ibid. p.41)' which the character notes throughout the series as a type of comfort food (see quote above in 4.6.1). Another time, Dexter plans to meet a colleague, Masouka, for lunch but feels he can hit several other restaurants from his food tour plan on his way as a mass-binge session (*Dead*, p.117).[123] This type of display shows behaviours beyond the typical 'love' of food and into the realms of addiction or greed. In the television adaptation, these same overindulgences exist, and the character eats multiples of a meal, simply because there is an opportunity: 'Breakfast, which I already had, was fine, but you know me- I'm always hungry' (Dexter, 2006, 1.2). His claim that he is 'always hungry' signals either an over-exaggeration to justify his indulgence or evidences that his Animal/Human metabolism does require excess nourishment beyond the 'average' human:

[123] The character's name is spelt 'Masuka' in the television series.

> I was hungry. Very hungry, in fact. I am blessed with a total lack of conscience, but my keen sense of hunger takes its place quite ably and keeps my feet on the proper trail. And with a jolt of guilt that very nearly approached panic, I realized [sic] I'd had no dinner. What had I been thinking? There was no excuse for such rash and careless behavior. Shame on Dexter. (*Dead*, p.111)

Dexter uses his hunger to avoid experiencing other emotions like guilt ('total lack of conscience') towards people and redirects these back to selfish 'needs'. In the final novel, Deborah comes to plead for Dexter's help in retrieving her son and Dexter's kidnapped children; he notes the knots in his stomach but instead of admitting the emotional attachment of fear for the children, Dexter thinks it must just indicate that he missed breakfast.[124] The fact that his association for food overrides even his vigilante desire to protect children shows that these connections go just as deep as his other predatorial needs.

By the excessive fixation and consumption of food, the characters imbue food with power similar to a vice or addiction. Eating disorders are frequently seen to occur comorbidly with other conditions. Depression and impulse disorders are largely associated, and this can be represented in literature as a gesture of the body, representing a hybrid identity. Carol Bailey, in a study from US eating disorders, equates that just under 50 per cent of bulimics are also substance abusers (2001, p.326). In this case, disordered eating acts as a comorbid gesture of Animal/Humanism, alongside violence. Terminology around eating disorders is also stigmatised in similar ways to traumatic reactions which is why a literary representation helps work out the cultural impact of these concepts. Traumatic responses and disordered behaviours are both thought to be caused by a conglomeration of factors spanning nature and nurture. Those who are affected may be more genetically predisposed or have experienced influential social factors, such as trauma or modelling (Ibid.). Both Dexter and Cara explain their avoidance of traditional vices, which would

[124] Despite rejecting ideas of that he experiences 'typical' connections, Dexter makes clear his valuation of children. He feels a particular affinity for his step-children, Astor and Cody, which he 'justifies' to himself because they also show tendencies of 'becoming'. He often hunts down others who have hurt children but does not seem to show a different level of protection for his children than for children generally: 'But children?' I said. 'I could never do this to children…Not like you, Father. Never kids. I have to find people like you' (*Dreaming,* p.10).

inhibit their acute senses and make them vulnerable. Dexter notes he must 'put aside' his predator when drinking:

> I am not a drinker- really, drinking is not a recommended habit for predators. It slows the reflexes, dulls the perceptions, and knits up the ravelled sleeve of care, which always sounded to me like a very bad thing. But here I was, a demon on vacation, attempting the ultimate sacrifice by giving up my powers and becoming human- and so a beer was just the thing for Dipsophobic Dexter. (*Devoted*, p.41)

By partaking in food, Dexter harnesses the same power he equates to killing, but alcohol would signal vulnerability. Alcohol would slow his predatorial senses and would place him at risk from his carefully perfected and protected façade. Giving up power over his thoughts and senses is equated to being 'human' (or 'fully human') and denoting weakness. When Cara has been killing the previous night, she acknowledges that she 'appears' drunk or is assumed to have been drinking; the aftermath of the predator's hunting is equated to a hangover:

> She looks at him and realizes [sic] he is thinking that she has been drunk, may still be drunk. It's not that far from the truth, except for the drinking part.
> 'I don't drink', she tells him. That seems to startle him.
> 'Really'. And then after a long moment, he adds in a voice meant to be casual, but failing utterly. 'Why is that?'
> She considers, looking out over the rolling translucent blue-gray waves. 'It makes me feel like I'm drowning', she says finally.
> He looks at her as if that is not the answer he was expecting. It all seems very important to him, something he wants to understand. She doesn't tell him what she's seen drinking do to people, what it makes them vulnerable to. But she remembers the boy's words: '*Are you sick? My mommy gets sick…'* and thinks the man might already know (emphasis original, *Huntress*, p.75).

She indicates that she does not drink alcohol though as it would dull her senses ('makes me feel like I'm drowning') and make her vulnerable. However, if killing is equated to a hangover, this also indicates that predators do not need alcohol to experience an 'emotional high' or release that is often associated with copious drinking and instead seek this from violence.

Dexter is more focused on his excess indulgence which evidences common knowledge assumptions of how 'eating disorders' or emotional responses to food are manifested concerning gender. Rather than restriction and control, which he shows with killing, Dexter juxtaposes his approach to eating through excess. Elvira Bramon-Bosch et.al. found in a comparison study of

individuals with eating disorders that males were more likely to identify as homosexual and have evident psychiatric comorbidity and higher rates of attempted suicide (2000, p.321). Harm Hospers and Anita Jansen further explored why homosexual males are overrepresented in studies of eating disorders and this often was correlated to high levels of bodily dissatisfaction (2006, p.1188). Dexter evidences an internal struggle with his identity, if not his physical attractiveness:

> I can't keep pets. Animals hate me. I bought a dog once; it barked and howled- at me- in a nonstop no-mind fury for two days before I had to get rid of it. I tried a turtle. I touched it once and it wouldn't come out of its shell again, and after a few days of that it died. Rather than see me or have me touch it again, it died.
> Nothing else loves me, or ever will. Not even- especially- me. I know what I am and that this is not a thing to love. (*Dreaming*, p.47)

Dexter takes great strides to 'appear' in certain ways and to present a cultivated image of the public Dexter, despite his self-detest (or at least rational self-acknowledgement). While Dexter is not described as having an exceptionally muscular physique or 'typical' attractive features, his repeated mention of his high metabolism would indicate he presents as generally 'fit'. The fact that multiple women pursue him romantically throughout the series, despite his lack of encouragement to these behaviours would indicate he is also perceived as generally attractive or at least 'average'. Hospers and Jansen also posit that body dissatisfaction in males can present in other forms of eating control rather than food restriction as male ideals often are represented by weight and muscularity (2006, p.1189). Dexter is always aware that to remain anonymous, he must attempt to appear as 'perfectly average', seeking to look like a man, not the 'Animal/Man' he knows he is. In this way, he shows a balance between controlling and being controlled by food.

4.6.3.1 Eating as a Performative Bond

Food acts as an important symbol of survival, of social communion, and therefore a source of comfort through social attachment. While it may not be accurate to say the Animal/Human displays an 'eating disorder', their consumption does highlight forms of disordered eating. Recent research on Binge Eating Disorders (BED) often highlights the motivational response to emotion

that initiates a ‘binge’. The process of food restriction or binge-purging becomes a temporary solution to emotions and situations that cannot be ‘controlled’ by the individual (Buckroyd and Rother, 2008, p.9). There is also a noted correlation between individuals who binge eat and have ‘poor attachment history’ or an experience of ‘trauma’ which can also evidence why the Animal/Human is marked by deviant eating gestures (Buckroyd and Rother, 2008, p.11). Dexter uses the social performance of providing and sharing food as an attempt to ‘bond’ with other characters in a way he can control and understand. His physical ‘hunger’ replaces many other attachment drives. He recognises that, while an emotional connection may not come naturally to him, to blend in (and fulfil his vigilante training from Harry), he must find ways of connecting to not be ‘Othered’. Harry teaches a young Dexter that if he is perceived as an outcast, it will make others suspicious of him and more likely to uncover his true nature. Through sharing food, Dexter invites others to connect through proximity and mutually shared interest (food) even if he can’t connect with them emotionally. If the attention is centred on the meal, it lifts pressure off Dexter to have to connect in deeper ways. By combining this aversive activity (bonding) with food, he behaviourally pairs a deterrent with a reward.

Dexter equates friendship to communal eating or shared appreciation of food. He creates a familiar routine Masouka where they bring each other breakfast (generally doughnuts). By being a provider, he allows himself first choice, often consuming multiple doughnuts before offering them to co-workers while still appearing to be ‘friendly’ and ‘generous’ for providing the doughnuts at all. He also shows a superficial understanding of ‘friendship’ as it satisfies his immediate cravings:

> I found a friendly cop who was headed that way. He just wanted to talk about fishing, and since I do know something about that, we got along very nicely. He was even willing to make a quick stop along the way for some Chinese takeout, which was certainly a very chummy gesture, and in gratitude I paid for his order of shrimp lo mein. By the time I said good-bye to my new BFF and sat down at my desk with my fragrant lunch, I was beginning to feel like there might be some actual point to this patchwork quilt of humiliation and suffering we call Life. The hot-and-sour soup was very good, the dumplings were tender and juicy, and the kung pao was hot enough to make me sweat. I caught myself feeling rather contented as I finished eating, and I wondered why. Could I really be so shallow

> that the simple act of eating a good lunch made me happy? Or was something deeper and more sinister at work here? Perhaps it was the MSG in the food, attacking the pleasure center [sic] in my brain and forcing me to feel good against my will. (*Double*, p.97)

Dexter equates a momentary acquaintance to 'his new BFF' because the other policeman was willing to discuss a form of killing (fishing as a socially acceptable form of hunting) while sharing a trip to get Chinese takeout. As Dexter enjoys his food, this is the point where he equates emotions to his experiences with food, momentarily pondering the deeper 'connections' in his life. He questions the simplistic nature of his 'happiness' found in eating and even queries whether his pleasure is just a facet of hormone manipulation (MSG-induced pleasure). In this case, Dexter enjoys his meal alone and the brief period of socialisation was used to satisfy his hunger. With Deborah, he often schedules to meet her for lunch where she is more concerned with the conversation of sharing information or getting Dexter's insight and he (evidenced by internal monologues) is more focussed on the satiation and enjoyment of the food. An additional draw to this routine may be the fact that, during these meals, the two often discuss ongoing cases they are working on professionally, again fulfilling his mental craving for violence in combination with his physical satisfaction. The outings with Deborah are a social gesture of familial routine and reinforce his façade of 'family man'. Dexter mentions that Café Relampago has become a family mecca 'where the Morgans have been eating since time out of mind' (*Dark*, p.91); 'The Morgans had been going there since 1974' (*Dreaming*, p.173) and he makes sense of tradition and belonging by joining it to the Cuban sandwiches he loves.[125] These gestures of performative 'bonding' are the closest gesture of human 'belongingness' that Dexter can equate while reinforcing to the reader his Animal/Human 'hunger' as important to understanding his motivations and characterisation.

[125] Dexter also equates belongingness to being a loyal consumer: 'Wolfie's Deli on Miami Beach was a Miami tradition. And because the Morgans are a Miami family, we had been eating there all our lives on those special deli occasions' (*Dreaming*, p.63).

Throughout the series, Dexter also equates his 'romantic relationship' with Rita to the utility she provides towards meeting his food desires. In cultivating his show of attachment to Rita, his routines revolve heavily around mealtime to evidence 'togetherness'. These scenes parallel a prototypical family dinner, though to the audience Dexter's role is performative more than participatory in the culture of this shared experience. Family dinners often reflect a time for people to share about their lives or their day, enjoying the company as well as the food, but Dexter (by narration) talks about the experience by describing to the reader the food and its merits only. This shows a disconnect from the moment of 'enjoying togetherness' or the conversation. Poststructuralist theorists Judith Butler and JL Austin, discuss the idea of identity as performative in more depth (Carter, 2013). Dexter becomes performatively part of a 'family' (or a friendship) by partaking in traditions, such as family dinner, even if he does not participate in the emotional implications. Alice Julier (2013) discusses how feeding guests is an integral part of a hospitable mindset; the offering of food acts as a gateway to welcoming and comfort. Julier mentions the influence of Emily Post's etiquette rules in the transition of how communal dining bridges the gap between a situation or individuals from 'public' to 'private'. Dexter expresses a sense of nostalgia for 'home' by identifying it with Rita's elaborate cooking. When the two are searching for a new home, Dexter is unable to understand Rita's emotional response to the stress but fixates on how this impacts his ability to eat:

> …Rita seemed unaware that she had spun off alone into a deep neurotic fugue of perpetual rejection. And even more tragically, since our evenings, and all day Saturday and Sunday, were spent on the endless quest, they were *not* spent at home eating Rita's cooking. I had thought I could put up with the house search as long as her roast pork turned up now and then, but that was now no more than a distant memory, along with her Thai noodles, mango paella, grilled chicken, and all else that was good in the world. My dinner hour became a hellish maze of burgers and pizzas, gobbled down in a grease-stained frenzy in between rushing through unsuitable houses, and when I finally put my foot down and demanded real food, the only relief I got was a box of chicken from Pollo Tropical. (*Double*, p.168)

Dexter 'puts up with' meeting Rita's needs to the extent that he expects her to provide a range of home-cooked meals to his satisfaction. For Dexter, it is not just about having food, he shows here

(as well as later in the same novel) an aversion to 'fast food' as if having to endure cheap and greasy food as his main meal is meant as a personal affront. Both Dexter and Hannibal evidence how food is equated to their perceived elitism. Just as the posthuman evidences transcendence through their 'super-human' senses for hunting (see Chapter 3), equating their grotesque tastes to being a connoisseur implies these gestures also evidence their 'refined' Animal/Humanity. *Final Cut* (2013) draws further parallels between food and relationships through sexuality. The character, who has never been romantically motivated, begins a dichotomous infatuation with the movie star he is meant to be acting temporarily as a bodyguard for. The start of this love interest begins not with her body or personality, but the unending and immediate room service available to her. His performative 'attachment' to her means that he receives a continuous and immediate response to fulfil his food desires but without the same emotional demands or expectations associated with a wife (Rita) and family.

4.6.4 Cannibal: An Ultimate 'Other'

Hannibal, as the earliest production of the Animal/Human that I study, sets the basis for grotesque consumption by stretching far into the carnival space and elevating a portrayal of cannibalism. Cannibalism, or anthropophagy, could be considered the outer limit (socially) of food deviance as it goes against Western culture's basic behavioural norms. This portrayal is more evidently deviant than Dexter's 'emotional' or 'binge' eating, though all could be noted as deviant. Western societies participate in a guilt culture where actions are accepted up to a boundary point, in this case, eating other humans. Killing is socially unacceptable as it forcibly takes away another person's safety and autonomy, but cannibalism crosses additional lines into personal violation of selfhood and dignity. *Hannibal* creates a carnival in-between space where cannibalism can be explored and, to some extent, glorified (portraying Lecter as sophisticated and refined) while still making a statement about wider culture's condemnation of the practice (Lecter is incarcerated or a fugitive throughout the narrative). Foucauldian discourses of power show that those who

participate in discourse retain power within that sphere. The consumer holds a form of power over Lecter, as a fictional characterisation, we make his influence powerful or powerless by participating in the narrative (reading or watching). Once someone acts, then they are ultimately under the power of that identity and the expectations attached to it:

> But along with that, isn't there an explanatory discourse that involves a number of dangers? He steals because he is poor, certainly, but we all know that all poor people don't steal. So for this individual to steal there has to be something wrong with him, and this is his character, his psyche, his upbringing, his unconscious, his desires. (Foucault and Gordon, 1980, p.44)

For Hannibal, it becomes 'acceptable' if he is a cannibal because of the 'new' rules given by Animal/Humanity. His 'Otherness' ('there has to be something wrong with him, and this is his character, his psyche, his upbringing, his unconscious, his desires') is justified by this understanding of being hybrid.

Cannibalistic roots to fascination can be drawn back to Bakhtin's analysis of the 'slaughter feast' (or 'feast of a cattle slaughter') which was a ceremonial ritual where 'tripe' (intestines and innards) were eaten in mass quantities after killing an animal (1984a, p.220; p.162). This was traditionally done for functional purposes, as those parts would quickly go off, but Bakhtin analyses more deeply the gestural meaning of this act. To invert an understanding of the belly or bowel, the body 'creates new' out of a process of 'destruction' (being digested) by the still-living being. Just as the Animal and Human sides of identity cannot be divided, so the image of cannibalism intertwines 'life and death, birth, excrement, and food [are] all drawn together and tied in one grotesque knot' (Bakhtin, 1984a, p.163). This practice was also a ritualistic way of incorporating the animal into the human through consumption. For Hannibal, his cannibalism becomes a way of defeating the evil (revenge for those that break his ethical rules) and a way of incorporating 'human' and 'monster' (unjustified bad guys) into the Animal/Human. If the image of the grotesque body is never complete but always 'becoming', the Animal/Human must continue killing and consuming as a way of continuing to become further hybrid.

Hannibal's cannibalism works to explore the discourse of anthropocentric humanism. In an anthropocentric society, animals are not considered or held to the same ethical expectations. People do not actively debate (or generally even care) about the fact that some animals eat their young. The few research texts on animal cannibalism (Nishank and Swain, 2019) describe the conditions for animal cannibalism as a given or 'natural' response. This is dismissible by 'survival of the fittest' reasoning where an animalistic nature is often equated to expectations of violence and predatory nature. This same acceptance is not afforded to human cannibalism due to cultural constraints and anthropocentric ethics. Suzanne Higgs notes that one 'reason' we adhere to social eating norms is the role of group belongingness and empathy on self-perceptions of identity. As the Animal/Human rejects these types of empathetic attachment, it then destroys this barrier towards cannibalism (2015, p.39).

Different forms of anthropophagy can hold differing levels of cultural stigma, all negative to some extent, with voluntary cannibalism (as shown in *Hannibal*) being more socially repulsive than that of cannibalism for survival, while neither are universally accepted. Priscilla Walton provides an in-depth analysis of Western culture's fascination with and the meditation of cannibalism (2004). Western culture accepts general standards of tolerability within the distinction of food groups to certain boundaries. With adherence to this, there are accepted divergences. Some avoidances of common foods for religious, health, or moral reasons are generally culturally accepted. Some controlled food ideologies are accepted or even praised for their health or ethical reasoning (vegetarianism/veganism, gluten-free). Dovey describes ideologies that eliminate or choose certain foods for diet as, 'in essence, [it is] an expression of the individual's personality and identity bound up within a belief structure' (2010, p.72). Just as the Animal/Human expresses their forms of ethical code in relation to their killing, they also extend their consumption habits as an 'expression' of their identity. Tony Ullyatt proposes a series of three expectations concerning edible categories. Firstly, some foods are generally accepted and eaten like fruits and vegetables.

Secondly, substances that are recognised as edible but not generally eaten or only partaken of in special circumstances such as ritual or survival. An example of this could be in Western cultures which refrain from eating dogs or cats as these are 'house pets' but the same individual may participate in eating other animals like chickens or pigs. And thirdly, substances that are technically edible but tabooed by culture to the point that they are not recognised as a food alternative (2012, p.7).[126] In the case of Western culture, consumption of human meat would generally fall into Ullyatt's third category, and unthinkable to be used as a source of sustenance. In some dire cases, it may be moved into the second category in such as it is required for survival but even this is often met with scorn from the public, with some who would choose death over cannibalism.[127] Westfall also divides eating behaviours as a trifold approach, eating to avoid starvation; cultural fulfilment; and hedonistic behaviours respectively (2016, p.20). For some, the ultimate inversion of 'norms' are those who have no inhibitions or moral qualms about cannibalism. These individuals are often colloquially labelled as psychopaths or sociopaths (whether they meet diagnostic criteria). For others, the alternative is worse, and this is explored through the portrayal of *Hannibal*. This characterisation is aware of the taboo and unacceptability of cannibalism and therefore has made attempts to hide, rather than curb, his inclinations. In these cases, it is awareness and rejection of social norms that seals their culpability as 'Other' (Ullyatt, 2012). Lecter further explores a character's ability to define themselves and the 'world' of the Animal/Human by justifying his cannibalism as a 'normative' performance of 'becoming'.

Ullyatt's philosophy of consumption defines us by our participation and by restriction, or 'you are what you *don't* eat', suggesting that by rejecting cannibalism, we reveal parts of our

[126] It is this third category that could relate to disorders like Pica.
[127] Cases such as the well-known Donner Party or survivors in the Andes plane crash. The Donner party were pioneers in the 1800s who became trapped in the snowy mountains during a trek westward across the United States. In order to live, almost half of the party were eaten after their deaths in order for the others to survive. During the Andes plane crash, members were similarly trapped in harsh winter conditions. Those who survived the initial crash all conceded to be eaten by the remaining members were they to die naturally before being rescued (Walton, 2004).

identity value system (2012, p.5). Eschewing cannibalism says more about cultural attitudes than legal prohibitions.[128] Despite traditional Western aversions, the wording is often vague around the legal prohibition of human cannibalism. For example, out of the fifty states in the US, only Idaho has enacted Code 18-5003 which explicitly makes cannibalism, except in life-threatening circumstances, illegal and punishable by up to 14-years prison stay (Westfall, 2016, p.16). Other states and countries may have laws against 'desecration of a body' or 'bodily harm' which could apply to cannibalism (as well as necrophilia or other acts), but these are not always explicit and more reflect a 'spirit of the law' approach. This shows that cases are rare enough that they do not need specific laws to prohibit the actions but that any instances have been included with other forms of legally prohibitive deviance. Acts of desecration are also generally subsumed under the more punitive crimes such as manslaughter or murder which take precedence (Ibid.). Similarly in the UK, the precedential case *Regina v Dudley and Stephens* (1884) convicted two men of murder on the basis that they killed a shipmate who had fallen unconscious while stranded at sea, to cannibalise him (for survival) (Cornell Law, n.d.). In 2015, a civil case was lodged against a sailor, Jose Alvarenga, who cannibalised his dead crewmate for survival while stranded (Khaleeli, 2015). Alvarenga was pardoned legally for his actions because he did not kill his crewmate, the man had died naturally before Alvarenga ate him for survival (unlike in the Dudley and Stephens case). Despite this exoneration, Alvarenga became a social pariah and received severe backlash from the media. Socially, even in a case of survival cannibalism, Alvarenga's motives were met with scepticism from reporters and government officials, such as the Marshall Islands' Secretary of Foreign Affairs making public claims that Alvarenga was not 'emaciated' or 'sunburnt' enough to justify his 'need' to eat his dead crewmate (Bratu, 2014). These cases show that even if survival cannibalism is, on some level, seen as 'more acceptable', it still crosses the line of social norms

[128] Vigilantism, to contrast, *is* illegal, and yet it is reinforced through the cult following surrounding the figure of the Animal/Human as discussed in this analysis. Cult being defined as one step further than a 'fan' to a person who follows discourse surrounding a specific actor, franchise or type of programming (Hills, 2002, p.9).

and is often culturally 'punished' as 'Otherness'. The stigma around violating the sanctity of the body is culturally likened to the repulsion surrounding other bodily violations like rape or necrophilia.

The same stigmas I explored through animality in Chapter 3 are challenged in consideration of cannibalism as a form of 'norm' for the Animal/Human. Just as this characterisation challenges 'primitive' associations to the animalistic as 'instinctive', a discourse around cannibals as an 'ultimate Other' is challenged through the serial killer's popularity (particularly Hannibal). Jock Young describes how deviance manifests social exclusion when it becomes about individuality rather than becoming 'part' of society (1999, p.388). He goes on to contrast current Western societies where cannibalism is a threat to norms rather than 'primitive' (read as 'outdated') societies where cannibalisation of outsiders by 'the group' became a way to bring deviance under control of the society. Instead, Western societies find ways to outcast deviance rather than swallowing it (figuratively or literally). Young compares our exclusionary penitentiary systems to Bulimia where culture 'vomits out' that which is perceived as bad or a threat. Rejection of cannibalism is a logical response to a perceived social threat. Not only does the practice breach values of personal security, medical diseases, such as Kuru, evidence how the rejection of cannibalism is naturally instinctive to protect ourselves from illness (Lindenbaum, 2009).[129] The characterisation of Hannibal in social discourse always revolves around his identity as a cannibal. When understood in relation to Animal/Humanism, cannibalism can be perceived as a way of evidencing induction into a group. Rather than exclusion from greater social norms (macro-group), Animal/Humans (as a micro-group) are given the greatest priority of belongingness. The predator's performative use of food symbolises their entry into this new world. Lecter also uses cannibalism to bring others into 'his world' and hold power over them

[129] Kuru cases have been studied extensively in relation to cannibalistic tribes in Papua New Guinea back in the 1960s (Lindenbaum, 2009).

(infrahumanising them into his in-group). The television adaptation evidences how Lecter would host dinner parties, plying guests with his culinary masterpieces, the 'meat' element is inferred to be sourced by Lecter's kills, unbeknownst to his guests. Similarly, the end of *Hannibal* portrays the consummation of Hannibal and Clarice's intimate relationship first by sharing in a meal of their enemy's brain (pp.546-554). This evidences how Lecter inverts expectations of 'delicacies' through his deviant perspective. C*ervelle de veau,* calf's brains, for instance, is considered a French delicacy though, from an anthropocentric perspective, human brains may be 'repulsive'. It is considered acceptable or even desirable to eat the brain from an animal perceived as lower hierarchically. Because of the connections to the brain as the source of personality and identity, some individuals may still have issues eating animal brains, but this is perceived more in line with Ullaytt's first or second category above as a recognised and acceptable food or eaten under specific considerations (at a fancy restaurant).

How the Animal/Human interacts with sources of food and methods of consumption, evidence a hierarchy of power dynamics. When access, freedoms and discourse around food are disseminated throughout society, people create their own forms of power (Carter, 2013). In highly government-controlled areas, food of any kind comes at a premium. In a society where food is easily accessible, people implement their structures of value through dieting or food valuations (delicacies versus stigmas of 'fast food'). Alex Dennis and Peter Martin (2005) define 'power' as an inevitable entity. The serial killer explains different ways in which food is given the power to control their desires and tentative identity. The development of this characterisation slowly integrates the more culturally aversive ideas for the reader, becoming increasingly sensationalised and hybrid as the series progress. This mirrors the process of 'becoming' as Lecter embraces his ybridity. *Hannibal Rising* introduces cannibalism to the young Lecter as a form of survival during wartime though this was published last in the series after the broad audience had already developed a fascination with the idea of the character's cannibalism. *Rising* explores how Lecter is shown to develop his sensibilities in reference to Ullyatt's proposed

ideologies (above) and Dovey's stages of eating behaviour. Neophobia is the aversion to new foods, generally seen in young children, but this behaviour can be generalised to the stage in which young children have a fear or aversion to unknown things. As a social understanding towards cannibalism, the character's basic instinct is to protect Mischa from being eaten which is most sensible to our understanding of cannibalism. The slow integration of cannibalism throughout the novel series, like the shift from neophobia to 'picky eating', is important in allowing the reader to justify the character's exploration before showing him unleashed and at the height of his crimes. Lecter goes from aversion to cannibalism (as an emotional response to his sister) and moves towards slow justification as he enacts violence in retribution or defence of those he loves (hunting and eating Mischa's killers). Structurally, the series progresses similarly when introducing Lecter as a killer, starting with *Red Dragon* where the character plays a bit part and expanding to *Hannibal* where the character is free to kill and *Hannibal Rising* where his acts are explored more graphically. Slow priming of controversial topics also helps ease the reader into the discussion of cannibalism and shows the power the character's 'becoming' holds over his actions and tastes. Lecter likes to claim that he is *above* being influenced by his environment. Oleson emphasises the absurdity of this type of claim:

> Thus, unless he is blinded by a profound state of denial, Dr. Hannibal Lecter, a world-class psychiatrist with an immeasurably high IQ score, should be well aware of the parallels between his sister's death and his own crimes. And if he is aware of the parallels, Lecter was lying through his cannibalistic teeth when he gloated that he could not be reduced to a set of influences. According to the Mischa story, Lecter is a set of influences, and almost nothing else. (2006, p.20)

In this case, there is a direct association between the food that holds power over him and his trauma. In this carnival space, human consumption is an associative learning experience where anthropophagy explores survival, power, repulsion, and fascination (Dovey, 2010, p.49). Suzanna Forwood, a researcher in the psychology of food choice, conducted a study that showed that when taste and health are pitted against each other, taste is more likely to win out. When both perceptions of taste and health are combined, this influence was lessened (Forwood et.al., 2013).

When priming was introduced in a similar study, those who were hungry and of higher education were the group most susceptible to the modelled stimulus (Forwood et.al., 2015). During the time of Mischa's death, Hannibal was physically hungry, based on the lack of supplies available during the war (*Hannibal Rising,* p.45). He was also psychologically lacking, already having experienced the loss of his parents to be exposed to another violent trauma. The novels also characterise Lecter by his extremely high intellect which would, in Forwood's studies, indicate his natural 'predisposition' to a priming stimulus (*Hannibal Rising*, pp.26-33; 197; Forwood et.al., 2015). These key features, such as IQ, were explored in Chapter 2 as a way of justifying the type of individual that is able to 'become' Animal/Human. In Dovey's final developmental stage to eating, aversions are influenced by social perceptions of food and the societal acceptance and peer pressures that come with eating for relationship building (2010, p.59). This stage is enacted through greater levels of restraint in where foods are chosen based on factors of value, not simply on preference. For example, developed eating habits occur when we choose healthy foods based on their nutritional value, even if they are not 'preferred' (we eat vegetables because they are nutritionally good for us as equally as, or more so than, because we 'like' the taste). For the characters, belongingness to the 'norms' they outline is a result that 'becoming' is prioritised over wider social acceptance. Some real serial killers show a similar rejection of societal expectations. Dennis Nilsen, when recounting his crimes to his biographer, was intrigued that the other man showed more disgust for the fact that he had dismembered his victims than that he killed them. The violence and power associated with killing are (to an extent) understandable to us culturally and therefore not 'as shocking' while rituals beyond this expose the extents of deviance. Nilsen replied: 'The victim is the dirty platter after the feast and the washing-up is a clinically ordered task' (Gekoski, 2003, p.210). Here, we also see killing likened to eating and the social 'needs' associated with tasks like washing up (cleaning up crimes) are a natural continuance to the ritual of eating (killing).

Though Dexter is not a cannibal, that series does still explore the lines that Animal/Human's create for their deviance. This also evidences how the general cultural portrayal of these characters as 'Other' and posthuman distinctly ties characters like Dexter and Hannibal. The fifth novel, *Dexter is Delicious,* portrays a coven of vampiric cannibals as the 'prey' sought by Dexter (and the police). As the character's personal and professional 'hunts' overlap, Dexter develops a curiosity around this lifestyle:

> I had an epiphany. Food is love- so wanting to be eaten was just another way to share love! And that was the way Samantha had chosen because she was so filled with love she couldn't possibly hope to express it except in some ultimate form like this! (*Delicious*, p.299)

Even though Dexter does not begin to consume the people he kills, the character considers the deeper discussion of food as a concept of symbolising emotion. To him, this becomes another understandable or 'reasonable' expression of emotions as he tries to understand cannibalism.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have evidenced how the Animal/Human develops the image of their killing through symbolic parallels to consumption. I have analysed how the practice of consuming serial killer fiction evidences a cultural fascination with the grotesque. Because of the popularity of the serial killer figure, I argue that fictional narratives can allow the audience to show a 'thirst' for violence, without the need to perform killing in real life.

I have suggested that the Animal/Human argues for their agency by creating a narrative of 'inevitability' and 'need' that neutralises the perceived evil of killing. Throughout this thesis, I have created a reading of how these characters self-identify themselves as 'Other' by using animality to justify their violence. In this chapter, I highlighted how the character's 'need' for killing is explained through comparison to their 'need' for food. By equating out how the animal and human sides are both 'fed', the whole of the Animal/Human is perceived as one grotesque hybrid. Just as Chapter 2 explored how social cognition depathologises discourses around PTSD and

‘schizophrenia’ as literary manifestations of ‘Otherness’, this chapter explores how ‘eating disorders’ are understood through a cultural lens of Animal/Humanity as deviant eating behaviours. These behaviours evidence how the character’s emotional and physical disconnect from ‘normativity’ manifests through gestures of consumption.

It has been important for me to outline sources of dialogue as well as media visuals that enhance an understanding of the Animal/Human as a posthuman image. This also reinforces how interdisciplinary gestures are a consistent representation of ‘Otherness’. These sources of gesture are utilised by the characters themselves as well as by the franchises through marketing images and products. Gestures like chewing or ‘muzzling’ the mouth draw attention repetitively to a character’s mouth and bring us to a discourse of how the Animal/Human hunts and consumes. Conversely, what I explored in chapter 2 as emotional detachment, I further developed here by exploring how the serial killer uses fascination with food to create limited social attachments and to mirror forms of emotional comfort through eating. By exploring the extensive gestures that ‘Other’ the serial killer, these characters reinforce that their deviance is justified as a ‘natural’ extension of ‘becoming’ Animal/Human.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This thesis creates a framework for understanding how serial killer fiction applies Animal/Human identity to ambiguate violence and position the character as an antihero. I demonstrate the influence of this representation by conducting a textual discourse analysis on three series which evidence a particular image of hybridity, that I have called Animal/Human, as a non-linear identity. I show how culture has recognised trauma as a 'cause' of serial killing to try and mitigate discourses of irrational violence and to explore our cultural anxiety and fascination with serial killers. Throughout, I explore how the use of complex concepts such as 'becoming' and 'Otherness' show Animal/Humanity as rhizomic and continually evolving. This helps to address my arguments of 'neutralisation' or justification of serial killing because the characters rely on their past trauma and the assumed 'change' in identity to argue for why they must be considered 'differently' and, therefore, must create a new or different understanding for what is ethically acceptable. I consider these differences by analysing how complex terms are used in cultural discourse to express cohesion and opposition in a hybrid fashion. These in-between spaces are used to argue how trauma can be perceived as negative (trauma as damaging), but also positive (the Animal/Human contributes positively to society based on how they enact violence). I argue that Bakhtin's concept of the grotesque body effectively explains how this portrayal absorbs various cultural assumptions, reproducing varied yet consistent images to represent the serial killer as 'not fully human'. These characters assert the need for their unique 'Otherness' to be defined, creating new categorisation for understanding how Animal/Humanity manifests. I explore this through language that evidences how the serial killer hunts, using transcendent animal characteristics alongside sharpened human skills and creating a hyper-predator. The existence of this fearsome, super-human is mitigated by restricting who the killer hunts via an ethical code. The Animal/Human experiences deviant 'needs' to express their dominance publicly and privately through overindulgence in killing and eating.

A potential critique of this methodology is the jump to generalisation of productions in other discourses on deviance, ostracised subgroups, or understandings of post-traumatic reactions. My assertions are highly contextualised and not intended to be generalised to other instances outside of fiction. Previous scholars in cultural studies have also made note of the difficulty of such research because of the need for constant reflexivity to new productions in a flooded market I approach this limitation by instead providing a discussion on how three serial representations are productions out of a specific cultural context and not claiming that this is the only way of conceptualising this figure.

The Animal/Human is a poststructural interpretation of an antihero positioned between good and evil, between animal and human and between 'become' and 'becoming'. In the introduction, I first present and outline the term 'Animal/Human' based on animalistic and posthuman allusions that the characters make of themselves throughout these narratives. Serial killer fiction looks to explain how hybrid characterisation is created by evidencing a 'change' initiated after an experience of trauma. I discuss 'trauma' as a social construct, not just a scientific diagnosis, which is outlined in Chapter 1. Trauma completely changes the character's identity, evidencing that they are Animal/Human as a direct result of this experience. The process of change I refer to in Chapter 2 as 'becoming', a grotesque cycle that is 'complete' (they *are* Animal/Human) and continuously transforming ('becoming' increasingly hybrid and non-binaristic). This process reflects Bakhtin's theory of carnivalesque where the grotesque body is constantly in a state between creation and death, consuming itself and others around. I use the carnival 'marketplace' in Bakhtin's theory to explain how culture finds these 'negative' figures fascinating and celebrates them through fiction. I also utilise literary criticism to note how inverted expectations provide the unstable ground needed for non-binaristic frameworks. An iteration of evil, harnessed through Animal/Human identity, insinuates that the existence of killers (and trauma) will continue the cycle of Animal/Human production. Conversely, the figures continue to develop and mature their ethical code, their hunting practices and acceptance of this identity in a

continuous process of 'becoming' where the figure vacillates between their animal and human states or sides. I refer to the Animal/Human as a collapsed or non-binaristic identity reflecting on a poststructural understanding of binary. I reference the theories of Derrida to evidence how two constructs can be opposed and combined non-linearly and without prioritising anthropocentric hierarchies. I also compare this approach to the process of Bakhtinian hybridity which provides a gestural understanding of in-between identity. Carnival opposition and cohesion allows me to answer guiding questions such as: 'what *is* animal?'; 'what does it look like?'; 'how do we recognise this figure as animalistic?'.

Starting in Chapter 1, I define an interdisciplinary approach to developing characterisation, drawing on prominent theoretical approaches of literary, culture, and trauma theories to explore our 'fascination' with and the general recognition and influence of these characters. I recognise the character's assertions of their Animal/Humanity as primarily important to a textual criticism approach. While this interdisciplinary methodology provides complexity (for example, medical and humanities trauma studies may have opposing theories and conclusions about the role of nature and nurture), it is most relevant to a critical studies approach where I draw from various seminal approaches to evidence cultural influence. Popular culture studies have previously set the precedent for studying figures of fascination and the influence of these social constructs. Literary and media studies often explore the 'truthfulness' of a narrative structure by comparing how it enables the audience escapist entertainment or public exploration into private spaces of 'the real' created by the public fascination. Serial killer fiction creates an in-between space that does both. I use culture theory and the lens of critical reception to ground my interdisciplinary approach where discourses draw from various theories to create social 'truth'. These fictional characters are often patterned from real-life figures, creating a sense of forbidden exploration into the life and mind of a killer. By operating under a particular ethical code guided by Animal/Human 'becoming', these figures are also distanced from the reality of the audience. Serial killer fiction enables the audience to 'participate' in violence but only in a safe, fictional space. The Animal/Human acts as a narrative

for reclaiming power from vulnerability for the greater purpose of combatting unjustified violence. These figures are no longer waiting to be vulnerable prey; they have developed a new approach of hyper-predation where they hunt down other criminals, their most dangerous opponents.

The purpose of Chapter 2 is to explore the process of traumatic change that these characters undergo to 'become' hybrid. I briefly explore *nature versus nurture* theories to evidence how the audience can accept the 'explanation' that trauma may lead to serial killing. To address the complexities of my interdisciplinary approach, I show how psychoanalytical terms and theories have also been reframed in literary disciplines to defend other fictional approaches to characterisation. Specifically, I reference Miller's concept of 'ordinary psychosis' to explore how social constructs or figural images can exist as a cultural or literary 'understanding' without being a formally diagnosable construct. This theory is also supported by Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of 'schizophrenia' as an altered but in-between state of non-binaristic identity. In this characterisation, serial killers access both animal and human traits coherently, not as disjointed states though they can be 'more animal' or 'more human' in their behavioural responses. I explain this complex internal relationship in Chapters 1 and 2 through Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome structure. A cyclical or rhizomic framework allows me to explore the complex language of opposition and cohesion presented by a tenuous characterisation. These figures highlight how the two parts of their identity should not be hierarchically compared but should be understood as 'something new entirely' where Animal/Human-ness promotes a positive image, instead of degrading this figure. Through fiction, we accept a character's word as a form of truth which helps to ground the agency of the Animal/Human in defining their existence. Throughout my analysis, I identify how the Animal/Human was psychologically impacted by their identity (through deviant attachments and an additional 'sense' that allows them to recognise other predators) as well as the physical manifestations of hybridity (particularly highlighted in my exploration of deviant consumption behaviours in Chapter 4). The 'need' for consumption becomes evidence of 'Otherness', taking normal routines and inverting expectations in a carnival

space. This reflects the focus of serial killer fiction where traditional antagonists (villains) are brought to the fore. The Animal/Human is not a grotesque hybrid in the sense of a fantasy creature (werewolves or vampires) but portrays the hidden 'beast' of society that looks human but is justified as 'not fully human'. Violence itself becomes personified, 'eating away' at the characters and transforming their identity and becoming something that 'feeds' society as we consume these narratives.

Chapter 3 moves from building the foundation of 'Otherness' to the specific construction of Animal/Human through gestures of violence. To do this, I begin by outlining the history of animal-human constructs as a cultural binary traditionally used to assert anthropocentricity and undermine minorities and cultural out-groups. By harnessing various conceptions of 'Otherness', the serial killer identifies that their primary designation is through their Animal/Humanity. Linguistically, the Animal/Human state is referenced in the texts as a 'predator' or 'hunter' to describe their process of killing. Predator and prey language is used to parallel the animal kingdom, specifically the hierarchy between killers and victims. The construction of 'predator', 'hunter', and 'prey' allows me to explore how these characterisations are used to define the ways in which a serial killer is animal and human, providing a recognised 'language' for explaining posthuman positioning.

To prove the recognisability of the Animal/Human portrayal, I analyse the symbolism of how these characters see themselves as animalistic in Chapter 3. Some characters such as Dexter, personify this concept of duality through a named entity (the Dark Passenger) while other iterations focus on narrating an inner struggle between animal instinct and human rationality that characterises the Animal/Human's killing. While I focus more on building and proving rationalisation for this framework, a more in-depth semiotic reading of this concept could be an area for future research. Chapter 4 also implemented the characterisation of the Animal/Human as a coherent figure by analysing their consumption in ways that evidence hybridity. As a completely 'Othered' figure, killing is an extension of the character's identity state. Killing is

equated to a ‘need’, specifically to eating, which is explored through these narratives on various levels. On a micro-level, I implement an understanding of how eating gestures can be equated to the social understanding of disordered or deviant eating behaviours and how food-related symbolism is used visually in media adaptations to trigger the Animal/Human.

On a macro-level, I also outline how mass-market consumption of these texts equates the audience to cultural ‘beasts’ as we consume and participate in serial killing through proliferation of an image and non-verbal gestures. By referencing critical theory, I show how the Animal/Human addresses social anxieties around serial killers as ‘monstrous’. By using ‘Otherness’ as a cultural outlet, it can allow the audience to work out social anxieties around violence by legitimising the figure of the serial killer. If we can understand that: serial killers are caused by trauma, they kill because they are then irreparably damaged, they become ‘not fully human’, and they don’t kill people like ‘us’, then it neutralises our fascination with this figure and explains away ‘how’ these individuals exist. In this conclusion, I want to consider that the definition and presentations of ‘Otherness’ will continue to adapt as culture becomes more postmodern. Each of these representations was, at their time, a revolutionary concept of ‘Otherness’. By providing a coherent framework for the Animal/Human, my research helps explore the role of the serial killer through a new perspective on ‘Otherness’. How texts rework the serial killer figure from an antagonist to an antihero will continue to adapt to our understanding of socially accepted norms. The role of terms like ‘sociopath’ and my discussions on mental health or eating disorders may also indicate that increased social awareness (and academic research) into these areas may develop differing iterations of this figure in future.

Because of necessary limitations for this thesis, I would like to provide a few areas of potential future research. While I focus on a textual analysis of characterisation, future studies could look at how the construct of Animal/Humanity or posthumanism affects authors or

audiences (fans) in constructing their knowledge and opinions on serial killing.[130] Through the proliferation of certain representations, fictional texts may also have an unknown effect on the development of real killers who may 'believe' (or use these common representations as justification) that trauma initiates identity redevelopment. In a discursive psychological study on language, Bartels and Parsons reviewed transcripts of interviews by Dennis Rader and found that his language towards his crimes reflected similar common stereotypes (cultural understandings) of serial killers, such as justification of his violence and mitigation of responsibility because of his past experiences (traumas) (2009, p.267). I note throughout this thesis how real killers often inspire fiction, but studies such as the one by Bartels and Parsons also show that cultural assumptions, on some level, can influence killers and their narratives. I acknowledge that there is currently a gap in research on the impact of fiction narratives on real killers (except a few loose connections such as the study of Rader's interviews).[131] This would be a consideration for future research, however, as this thesis focuses on how literature functions as part of a cultural production discourse and does not extend to experimental enquiries.

Another limitation of this work is that I focus only on English/Western iterations of serial killing and all fictitious texts were written by American authors. To justify this limitation, it is important to note that much academic research into cultural studies, trauma studies, and serial killing is predominantly on English-based texts and written for English-speaking audiences. This means that current limitations on research in these areas are focused on predominantly Western experience. This limitation applies to my thesis as well as I only speak English. However, most

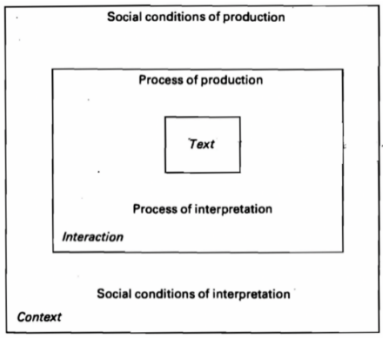
[130] In Chapter 2, I noted how several infamous killers like Bundy have helped to advance the characterisation of the high-functioning psychopath. In Chapter 4, I identified how Dennis Rader and Bundy are used as case studies for the role of the serial killer in reaction to media coverage.
[131] In Wilson et.al. (2015), the authors make two brief references to similar cases such as the case of Mark Twitchell who was incarcerated in 2011 after committing murder which he claimed was inspired by Dexter or the case of Colin Ireland who claimed that he was driven to the fame he would achieve by becoming a serial killer after reading Ressler and Shachtman's *Whoever Fights Monsters* (2015, p.192). These claims were briefly mentioned in those texts and additional research would need to be done for these connections to be substantiated further.

cultural reproductions in serial killer literature are based on contemporary, Western perception. Instances for reporting serial killing in real life also point toward Western countries (the United States and United Kingdom) as the highest documented areas of occurrence. Therefore, the limitation does not inhibit the efficacy of my claims for this representation as a critical approach to the serial killer. It would be interesting to note if the serial killer is portrayed by the Animal/Human framework in other languages/cultures or if other metaphors for posthumanity are more clearly utilised.

In conclusion, this thesis creates an understanding for how fictional serial killers' self-fashion Animal/Humanism as a hybrid identity to ambiguate violence. This thesis brings together trauma, psychoanalytical, and literary theories to analyse the cultural reception of the serial killer as an antihero. It opens a new way of thinking about the serial killers as an antihero and how trauma is used to help us think differently about justifying violence. In this, I offer a previously understudied approach to the crime genre and interdisciplinary characterisation.

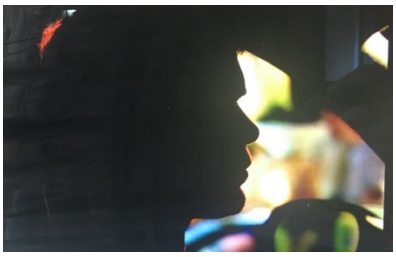
Appendix: Figures

Figure 1



Text is situated within context and interpretation as a rhizomic process of production (Fairclough, 1989, p.24).

Figure 2



Dexter (Michael C. Hall) in shadow relief in episode ‘Dexter’ (1.1) as inner narrative voiceover plays an introduction to the character while he hunts a victim ([Dexter intro], 2006).

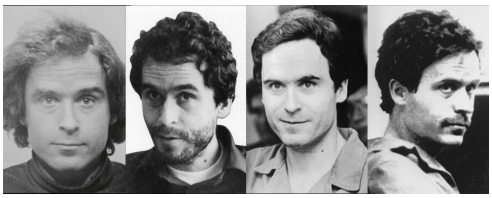
Figure 3

Homer Simpson is portrayed in a comical comparison between horror films portrayed as ‘scary’ and serial killer documentaries as ‘comforting’ ([Homer meme], n.d.).

Figure 4

Ariana Grande follows and observes her boyfriend (Pete Davidson) with text overlay evidencing that fascination with serial killer narratives is recognised to be similar to a romantic relationship. This meme insinuates that an intrigue with fictional violence is a cultural norm and considered innocent or harmless ([Documentary meme], n.d.).

Figure 5



Ted Bundy in a variety of pictures documenting his variable appearance (Getty Images, 2019).

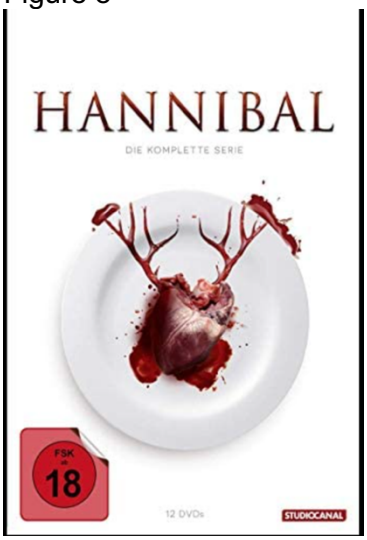
Figure 6

The front cover of the Season 1 English version DVD box set of *Hannibal* (NBC, 2013-15) showing Mads Mikkelsen as Hannibal Lecter in a suit and wiping his mouth with a cloth napkin ([Apertif], 2013).

Figure 7

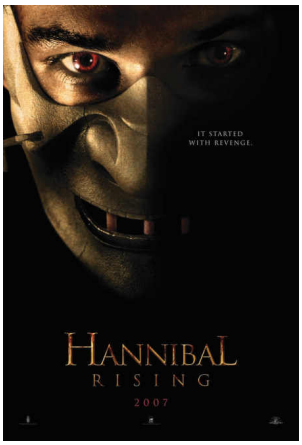
The front cover of the complete series English version DVD box set of *Hannibal* (NBC, 2013-15) showing Mads Mikkelsen as Hannibal Lecter with food imagery along with stag antlers and blood splatter which are indicative Animal/Human visuals used throughout the series ([Hannibal b], 2016).

Figure 8



The front cover of the complete series German version DVD box set of *Hannibal* (NBC, 2013-15) showing an anatomical heart contrasted against a white background as stag horn blood trails drip across the plate ([Hannibal c], 2013).

Figure 9



Young Lecter (portrayed by Gaspard Ulliel) wears a samurai face mask in movie poster for the 2007 film, *Hannibal Rising* ([Hannibal Rising], 2007). This poster portrays Lecter's eyes as an unnatural 'blood red'. This is another visual image of a predatory figure and was also used on Anthony Hopkins for the *Hannibal* (2001) film posters.

Figure 10

Anthony Hopkins constrained with straight jacket and mask on set of *Silence* (1991). ([The Silence of the Lambs a], 1991)

Figure 11

Lecter (Anthony Hopkins) carries Clarice (Julianne Moore) to safety wearing face mask after escaping from Mason Verger. ([Hannibal a], 2001)

Figure 12

Hopkins on the set of *Silence* (1991) getting makeup applied for human-skin-face-mask scenes ([The Silence of the Lambs b], 1991).

Figure 13

Dexter (Michael C. Hall) eating a Donut which he brings to work colleagues showing his full mouth as he smiles at the camera, the smile not reaching his eyes which appear uncomfortable ([Dexter Jelly Donut], 2013).

Figure 14

Dexter (Michael C. Hall) eats with his mouth open while driving his boat. The boat is used as a form of escapist hobby as well as to dispose of dismembered corpses in the water off Miami's coast ([Dexter a], 2006).

Figure 15

Image of Dexter's (Michael C. Hall's) open mouth chewing a large piece of bacon in the opening credits sequence ([Dexter b], 2006).

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