

I Kill, Therefore I Am: The Expressive/Transformative Process of Violence

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Abstract

I Kill, Therefore I Am: The Expressive/Transformative Process of Violence

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Before the late-Industrial age, a minority of murderers posed their victims' corpses to convey a message. With the rise of mass media, such offenders also began sending verbal communications to journalists and the authorities. Unsurprisingly, the 21st century has seen alienated killers promote their violent actions and homicidal identities through online communications: from VLOGs to manifestos, even videos depicting murder and corpse mutilation. Though the decentralization of media has provided an easily-accessible platform for violent offenders, such communications also afford law enforcement the opportunity to better understand the make-up of such criminals. To this end, qualitative research was conducted on a sample of 10 such offenders. The results revealed that they suffer from a chronically volatile self-concept with resulting negative-emotionality owing to deficient childhood socialization and strains related to sexuality, gender, and vocation. As the psychologist, Higgins, and sociologist, Mead, have shown that our *self-concept* arises and is negotiated through communication, these homicidal expressions provide the killer with a tenable identity, temporarily or permanently eliminating their emotional turmoil. Far from mere attention-seeking, these killers are desperately striving for a *self*. Their malaise is exacerbated by our increasingly anomic and isolating society—the mid-stages of Baudrillard's 'hyperreality'—where the 'real' and 'unreal' are becoming indistinguishable. Together, these observations form the bedrock of the *expressive/transformative* process of violence (ETV). By highlighting the link between semiotics and psychology in the context of our media-saturated society, ETV provides a methodology for interpreting homicidal communications, allowing law enforcement and mental health professionals to strengthen criminal profiles, link crimes, aid in pre- and post-homicidal risk assessment, and devise clinical treatment strategies.

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Introduction

I Kill, Therefore I Am explains the *expressive/transformational* process of violence (ETV) as outlined in Chapters 1 and 2, and applied in Chapter 3 and 4. My data is primarily the killers' own words, but also comments about their personalities by friends, mental health professionals, attorneys, and law enforcement officers with whom they interacted. There are direct quotes taken from the autobiographies and manifestos of the murderers, as well as books and articles by authors who have conversed with them. Documentaries in which the offender and other relevant parties were interviewed also proved useful. This approach has been taken in Leyton's *Hunting Humans: Rise of the Modern Multiple Murderer*, Katz's *The Seductions of Crime*, and Hickey's *Serial Murderers and their Victims* with excellent results.

As a general comment on theory, this dissertation is steeped in the sociological theories of *symbolic interactionism* and its fraternal twin *dramaturgical theory*. It is underpinned by a scientifically validated theory of social psychology largely derived from symbolic interactionism—E. Tory Higgins's Self-Discrepancy Theory—and augmented by Agnew's General Strain Theory and Jung & Hecht's eponymous Communication Theory of Identity. These theories intersect by examining three common factors:

- 1) the *self* and its aspects,
- 2) which are formed and reformed through communication, and
- 3) affect the emotions and mental cohesion of the individual.

Concepts of social conformity and deviance, particularly how the offender views himself and his victims, will be employed throughout, and informed by the works of Steven Egger¹ in The United States, David Wilson² in The United Kingdom, and Elliott Leyton³ in Canada. When the issue of masculinity arose, I was directed toward the gender theory of R.W. Connell⁴ as reconceptualized by Christine Beasley.⁵ My application of this theory is particularly narrow. I neither accept nor reject the concept that gender identities are tied to institutions and global power structures, because this aspect is irrelevant to the immediate investigative aims of my research. Subsequently, I have not read widely enough in the voluminous academic literature arguing for this position to reach an informed and well-reasoned conclusion. Instead, I look at how popular conceptions of gender roles and relations between and within genders (e.g., differing depictions and performances of masculinity and femininity) influence a person's sense

of who they are compared to others. Naturally, the role of the media as a form of communication and purveyor of gender norms must also be explored. For this, I turned to a more tempered interpretation of Baudrillard's *hyperreality* to provide situational context, along with a slew of findings on gender and media by numerous researchers.

This dissertation uses theories drawn from a number of different fields (i.e., psychology, sociology, criminology, communications, and semiotics), to propose a specific process of violence (ETV) that may apply to a diversity of violent offenders. These include, but are not limited to, single-incident murderers (i.e., those who commit single, double, and triple homicides), rampage killers of all stripes, and serial murderers. These offenders may have any number of additional motives, such as profit or sexual gratification, which might stand completely apart from or intersect with ETV. When discussing “serial killers” or “school shooters”, I may be referring to the (i) serial killer or school shooter as simply a category of criminal, or (ii) as a media promulgated social identity, whether on the daily news or in a fictionalized form such as *The Silence of the Lambs*. I will demarcate between these two concepts by simply writing ‘serial killer’ or ‘school shooter’ in the first instance and ‘*serialkiller!*’ or ‘*schoolshooter!*’ in the second to reflect the two-dimensional hyperbole.

The concept of criminal *signature* as articulated by Keppel & Birnes, informs the practical aspect of this dissertation. It should be noted that the nature of an offender's *signature* was used as the primary criteria for selecting offenders for the study—that is, I looked for *signatures* that were not driven by paraphilia, but instead communicated an aspect of the offender's views toward himself and/or the victim. These generally fell into three categories:

1) posing a human body to shock and convey contempt for the victim and/or the parties that encounter the corpse: police, whoever else happens to find the body, or, in the case of Luka Magnotta, an audience on the Internet;

2) costumes or masks—always of a symbolic nature—which the offender wears during the commission of their crimes, and

3) written or video communications in which the offender explains themselves, their relation to others, and sometimes their personal philosophies. These may have been released to the public before, amidst, or after the murder(s). The content of these messages was interpreted using semiotics, which is theoretically compatible with symbolic interactionism, as both stem from the philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce. Semiotics was selected primarily for its depth

and practicality.

Finally, I conclude with several important caveats. I am not arguing that *expressive/transformational* behaviour causes violence, rather that *expressive/transformational* violence is a distinct strategy, chosen willingly by the perpetrator^a, to resolve the negative-emotionality associated with having an ego-dystonic *self* or aspects of the *self*. Nor do I propose that communication is the *only* factor involved in the interpretation, negotiation, consolidation, and disintegration of the *self*. I recognize the strong influence of genetic, neurological, and hormonal factors in violent behaviour, but as these determinants are not visible at a crime scene, they are of little use here. Their omission should not be interpreted as a denial of their existence or minimization of their impact. Ultimately, I concur with former FBI profiler Jim Clemente's articulation of the bio-psycho-social model: “genetics loads the gun. Your personality and psychology aims it. And your experiences pull the trigger.”⁶ In *I Kill, Therefore I Am*, we are dealing with what can be observed *without* medical testing or technological enquiry: this is academic detective work. The *expressive/transformational* model may be expanded upon or refined later to greater incorporate biological factors—in fact, I encourage it. ETV is not yet firmly rooted in science although this is theoretically possible in the future with the addition and analysis of more offenders—a further 60 at least— according to the methodology proposed later in this dissertation.

It is also worth pointing out that, though some of the building blocks of ETV can be also found in previous theories of violence, particularly Levin & Madfis's Cumulative Strain Theory⁷ and Canter & Young's Criminal Narratives⁸, there are significant theoretical and methodological differences. While Levin & Madfis also note the role of strain, as conceptualized by Agnew⁹, in mass shootings, Cumulative Strain Theory (CST) differs from the *expressive/transformational* process in at least six ways. Firstly, where CST has been conceptualized as applying solely to mass killers, *chronic* and *acute strains* were found in all 10 of our offenders, including serial killers and single-incident murderers. In fact, the offenders suffering from the highest number of strains were Colin Ireland and Danny Rolling, both serial murderers in their late-Thirties. Secondly, ETV sees strains as largely embedded, and thus subsumed, by the offender's *self* (within the *self-concept* and the *self-guides*): a point that CST barely recognizes, let alone

^a As much as one *can* freely choose. Recent discoveries in neuroscience seem to hint that free will is illusory, and that human choice is completely deterministic. For a succinct and convincing argument see Sam Harris's *Free Will*.

emphasizes. One could hypothetically remove the concept of strain from my dissertation altogether, and the motive to commit acts of violence would still be accounted for by the dejection-related emotions resulting from *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancies. This failure to look at the salience of identity is likely what led Levin & Madfis to prematurely conclude their analysis of Seung-Hui Cho's photographic self-portraits by stating that "Cho was desperate to make his fellow students take notice of him. On the afternoon of April 16, 2007, in the midst of his killing spree, Cho took a break long enough to get to the post office and mail photos of himself to NBC News. These photos depicted Cho as a dangerous and powerful person holding guns and knives in a threatening posture"¹⁰. At no point do they mention the *self* or identity, or its relation to the communication in this process. Perhaps this is why they err in asserting that Cho sent photographs to NBC News in order to be simply "noticed"¹¹ by students on his own campus. As ETV repeatedly emphasizes, such homicidal expressions have a far greater function than mere attention-seeking. Fourth, CST proposes a rigid sequence of five stages leading to the perpetration of the homicide: (1) *chronic strain*, (2) *uncontrolled strain*, (3) *acute strain*, (4) *the planning stage*, (5) *massacre*.¹² In CST, a mass shooter is regularly victimized by his family and/or peers (the *chronic strain* stage) *before* failing to "develop any meaningful social relationships"¹³ in the *uncontrolled strain* stage. While ETV acknowledges that victimization may certainly result in an asocial or antisocial *self* on some occasions, it presents a more nuanced look at this relationship between the child's failure to socialize and victimization. In many instances, the inability to communicate effectively with other children clearly precedes (and may even cause) bullying and exclusion, as was undoubtedly the case with Daniel Gonzalez, James Holmes, Elliot Rodger, and Seung-Hui Cho, all of whom came from reasonably good homes. In ETV, these aspects of *chronic strain* and *uncontrolled strain* may be seen as occurring simultaneously as the *self* and identity arise and are negotiated through the child's interactions with others. The case of James Holmes featured in this dissertation also challenges the notion that *acute strain* precedes the *planning stage*. So, while CST may bear some superficial resemblance to ETV, they differ significantly in these five ways.^b A sixth divergence between ETV and CST is the absence of personal narrative and its semiotic manifestations from the latter theory.

Like ETV, Canter's theory of Criminal Narratives wisely focuses on the offender's

^b Moreover, ETV is far more theoretically robust, nuanced, and inclusive than CST.

storylike concept of his life and deeds. However, it too is completely devoid of the media-borne semiotic component I present in Chapters 2 and 4. Hence, it offers no comment on how this ‘story’ is situated temporally; geographically; and shaped by the ubiquity, content, and form of contemporaneous media. After stating that “the complexities of [criminal narrative] processes can be drawn from open-ended interviews in which people are asked to describe their own understanding of a crime in which they have been involved and to put it into the context of their life in general”¹⁴ Canter & Youngs assert that “open-ended responses are extremely difficult to work with systematically and are challenging to develop into distilled themes.”¹⁵ Instead, they employ an alternate methodology, specifically, drawing upon quantitative data from a questionnaire that is both reductionist and possesses the capacity to potentially lead a subject’s answers. From this data they create a four-theme typology of narratives based upon a convenient misrepresentation of the literary theories of Northrop Frye who proposed there were fundamentally only four stories: comedy, tragedy, irony, and romance. As I detail in Chapter 1, this approach stands in stark opposition to the natural, qualitative approach of ETV.

A third caveat: I do not take everything these offenders are saying at face-value. Any research which relies on human testimony is destined to run into outright lies, self-deceptions, and half-truths, particularly when the subjects are socially insecure criminals. There is simply no way to avoid this complication. In some instances, I consider and logically assess conflicting information to form an interpretation of what must be (or is likely) true. Luka Magnotta is as unlikely to admit his homosexuality to us as Colin Ireland would have confessed to his bisexuality. Yet, a careful examination of the words and known actions of these men along with the accounts of those acquainted with them provides ample evidence of their sexual orientations. Likewise, Danny Rolling and David Berkowitz cloak the motivations for their crimes in the occult and demonology whenever it suits them, which is more often than not. However, it is in their rare moments of candor or when they let their guard down and admit their true motives to which I have paid the most attention. With this pre-amble out of the way, let us go now, you and I, into the proverbial inferno. I will begin by briefly introducing the 10 offenders in this sample, and the sources I relied upon to analyze them.

Mark David Chapman (New York City, USA: 1980)

On the evening of December 8, 1980, Mark David Chapman (b. May 10, 1955) fired four

hollow points into the back of rock star John Lennon with a Charter Arms .38 special revolver. The former Beatle, who was returning home to the Dakota Building in Manhattan after a late-night recording session, was rushed to hospital and pronounced dead on arrival. In the meantime, Chapman, who had been disarmed by doorman Jose Pederno, waited quietly to be arrested while reading a copy of *The Catcher in the Rye*. Once in custody, he variously claimed to have murdered Lennon because he was a 'phony', to promote *The Catcher in the Rye*, and because Chapman believed that immediately after the shooting, Chapman would transform into the novel's protagonist, Holden Caulfield. Back at his hotel room, police found a number of items ranging from Todd Rundgren records to *The Wizard of Oz* assembled in a peculiar display. In the summer of 1981, Mark David Chapman pleaded guilty to second-degree-murder and was sentenced to 20-years-to-life, which he is currently serving at Wende Correctional Facility in upstate New York.

Of all the killers in this study, Chapman had the second most abundant and diverse sources available for analysis. He gave interviews to *People* magazine in 1987 and *Frontline* in 1988; to his biographer Jack Jones for *Let Me Take You Down*, to Barbara Walters for *20/20*, and Larry King on *Larry King Live*—all in 1992; and more recently to Barbara Walters on *The View*, and for CNN's 2015 Special Report: *Killing John Lennon*. In each of these sources, Chapman clearly and repeatedly states his reasons for killing Lennon, though not without contradiction, as well as describing his life before and after the murder. Observations and stories about Chapman from those who knew or interacted with him also emerged from these sources and various newspaper articles.

David Berkowitz (New York City, USA, 1976-1977)

Armed with a .44 Bulldog revolver, adoptee David Berkowitz (b. June 1, 1953) prowled the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn searching for attractive young women or couples to murder. Between July 29, 1976–July 31, 1977 he killed five women and one male, wounding six others. Prior to this, Berkowitz had unsuccessfully attempted to stab Christine Foreman to death. He was also a serial arsonist. Berkowitz's modus operandi typically involved shooting into parked cars, though sometimes he would surprise pedestrians on the street. Following the double-homicide of Alexander Esau and Valentina Suriani, Berkowitz left a note addressed to NYPD Chief Joseph Borrelli referring to himself as the sobriquets 'Monster', 'Beelzebub', 'Chubby Behemoth', 'The

“Son of Sam’, and ‘Mr. Monster’. Thirty-three days later, Berkowitz mailed another letter to *Daily News* reporter Jimmy Breslin.

Upon being caught, Berkowitz claimed his neighbour Sam Carr was a 6,000-year-old demon who had commanded him to kill using Carr's black Labrador retriever, Harvey, as a mouth-piece. Despite disagreement in the psychiatric community as to whether Berkowitz was criminally responsible, on May 8, 1978, he pleaded guilty to six counts of second-degree murder and six attempted second-degree murders. Subsequently, he was sentenced to six consecutive 25-to-life terms, which combined with his other convictions, add up to 365 years imprisonment. Soon after, Berkowitz admitted the demonic Sam Carr story was a hoax, before changing his tale once more in 1993 to imply that he did not act alone. Berkowitz now claims he was a member of a Satanic cult known as the Process Church, and that Carr's sons, John and Michael, were involved in the killings. No evidence has been found to corroborate this assertion and Berkowitz remains imprisoned in Shawangunk Correctional Facility.

The most robust resource of David Berkowitz quotes is *Confessions of the Son of Sam* which draws from 50 hours of personal interviews and more than 400 written correspondences with his psychiatrist Dr. David Abrahamsen. The author, Abrahamsen, also interviews Berkowitz’s family, childhood teachers, and associates, and examines his school, army, and court records. Berkowitz's own prison interviews and journal *Son of Hope*, writings on his website ariseandshine.org, television interviews with the *700 Club* and Larry King, were substantially useful. George Carpozi Jr's *Son of Sam*, and Lawrence Klausner's book of the same name were also indispensable. Though I reject the Satanic-panic conspiracy in Maury Terry's *The Ultimate Evil*, the book did recount some official interviews with Berkowitz that had not been documented elsewhere.

Danny Rolling (Louisiana & Florida, USA: 1989-1990)

Beaten and berated throughout his childhood by his unloving policeman father, Danny Harold Rolling (b. May 26, 1954) grew up a lonely and traumatized child in Shreveport, Louisiana. He developed numerous paraphilia including *voyeurism*, *picquerism*, and *necromutilophilia*; along with possible *biastophilia*, *sexual sadism*, and *necrornopositophilia*.

After spending most of the 1980s incarcerated for bank robbery, the paroled rapist committed a triple-homicide in Shreveport in 1989. Seven months later, a violent altercation

resulted in Rolling shooting his father non-fatally in the face, then fleeing to Florida. Arriving in the university town of Gainesville, Rolling murdered one male and four female students between August 24-27, 1990. With the exception of his hated father, Rolling's male victims were all *incidental*—eliminated to remove a witness or barrier to his *intended* targets—attractive females aged 17-24. The primary motive for these opposite-sex murders seems to have been violent paraphilia and resentment against women possessing similar physical characteristics. Rolling's *signatures* included elaborate mutilation and arranging his female victims' bodies in shocking poses.

Arrested on separate criminal charges soon after leaving Gainesville, Rolling was linked by DNA to eight homicides. Despite attempts to attribute his murders to demonic-possession, Rolling elicited little sympathy, and was executed by lethal injection on October 25, 2006.

Danny Rolling was a fairly public figure, giving numerous television interviews. He also co-authored an autobiography with Sondra London, *The Making of a Serial Killer: The Real Story of the Gainesville Student Murders in the Killer's Own Words*, which is informative despite Rolling's pathological lying. I also drew from two true crime books containing interviews with police and family members—Mary Ryzuk's *The Gainesville Ripper* and Philpin & Donnelly's *Beyond Murder*—albeit cautiously. Finally, my colleague at the American Investigative Society of Cold Cases, Anthony Meoli M.A., who interviewed Rolling and reviewed his case files, was of great assistance in providing his observations and insights regarding the crime scenes.

Colin Ireland (London, UK; 1993)

From March 8 to June 12, 1993, manual labourer and ex-convict Colin Ireland (b. March 16, 1954) tortured, robbed, and murdered five homosexual men in London, England. A highly organized killer, Ireland's modus operandi was to trawl for victims at The Coleherne, a gay pub in West London. Homosexual men would often meet at the Coleherne for one-night stands, advertising their sexual tastes (BDSM, 'top' or 'bottom' etc.) via their symbolic choices of clothing. Ireland would look for a submissive or 'bottom' partner, acquaint himself, and accompany them back to their apartment under the auspices of engaging in sadomasochistic sex. Having convinced his victims to let him tie them up, Ireland then whipped, beat, and burned them; forced them to reveal their ATM PIN numbers, and finally murdered them. In some cases, he elaborately posed the bodies after death. Throughout the series, Ireland frequently called

police agencies, media outlets, and charities to direct them to the crime scenes, and chastised the authorities for failing to link the victims.

When police released a still from CCTV footage to the public showing Ireland leaving a subway station with his final victim, Ireland approached the police and acknowledged that he was the suspect in the photograph, but denied involvement in the murder. Eventually, he volunteered a confession, pleaded guilty, and was incarcerated. In 2012, he died of complications resulting from a prison-yard hip injury.

Data for Colin Ireland was primarily drawn from five separate sources. The first is an extensive chapter on Ireland in Anna Gekowski's *Murder By Numbers*, in which the author, a forensic psychologist, reprints her lengthy correspondence by mail with the killer. Having spoken with Dr. Gekowski over the telephone in September 2014, I have been assured that the transcripts in her book are not only accurate, but also account for the bulk of her correspondence with the late Mr. Ireland.

That same autumn I spoke in person with retired Detective Superintendent Albert Patrick of the London Metropolitan Police who was involved in the Ireland investigation, and have subsequently used many of his statements about the offender and the case. In instances where there was uncertainty regarding his recollection of events, DSUP Patrick graciously looked into any outstanding questions on my behalf, and responded at a later date.

Finally, three television documentaries 'Serial Killer on Camera' from ITV's *Real Crime*, 'Colin Ireland' from *Crimes That Shook Britain*, and 'Resolution to Kill: Colin Ireland' from *Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence* were particularly helpful as they featured footage from Ireland's confession, along with numerous interviews with law enforcement officers who investigated the case, Ireland's ex-wife, and friend.

Luka Magnotta (Montreal, Canada: 2012)

Born Eric Clinton Kirk Newman, the eldest of three children, in Scarborough Ontario, Luka Rocco Magnotta (b. July 24, 1982) was homeschooled by his germophobic, controlling mother while his schizophrenic father toiled at a Toronto warehouse. When alcohol and mounting bills devastated the marriage, Magnotta and his siblings went to live with his maternal grandmother in Lindsay. Unable to fit in with his peers and abused by multiple parties, Magnotta dropped out and drifted into Toronto's gay scene. Over the next dozen years, he paid the bills

either by prostituting himself or relying on an older man to finance him.

Having continually failed in his goals to become a famous model and reality TV star, Magnotta found attention and existential meaning by filming himself murdering kittens and uploading the footage online, before graduating to humans. In the summer of 2012, he posted '1 lunatic 1 icepick'—a lengthy video clip depicting his mutilation and sexual degradation of a male victim's corpse—on the Internet. After mailing the man's body parts in packages to a public school and the headquarters of major political parties, Magnotta fled to Europe. He was apprehended at a Berlin Internet cafe several days later while reading about himself online. On December 23, 2014, he was convicted of first-degree murder and is currently imprisoned at Archambault prison in Quebec.

Thanks to Magnotta's fame seeking cyber exhibitionism there are no shortage of documents and videos featuring him on the Internet. Among the videos were his auditions for the Reality TV shows *Plastic Makes Perfect* and *Cover Guy*, a television appearance he made on *The Naked News*, and numerous home recordings uploaded to YouTube. I watched and transcribed each of these videos.

I also obtained and examined a lengthy forensic psychiatric report on Magnotta prepared by Dr. Joel Watts on February 18, 2014, detailing Magnotta's psychiatric (family and personal), educational, occupational, romantic, sexual, past medical, and legal history. Dr. Watts would go on to testify that Magnotta was NGRI for the defense at his trial. Despite the ostensible greater value of a psychiatric report, I approached this document with some caution, as Magnotta was ultimately found to be criminally responsible for the murder of Jun Lin—a position which I find fairly obvious given the depth of his planning and past history of malingering.

Two documentaries on Magnotta, *Sex, Fame & Murder: The Luka Magnotta Story* and The Fifth Estate's *Hunting Magnotta* featured a wealth of interviews with various figures surrounding Magnotta's life. I also reviewed a 48 minute and 37 second long video interview with his ex-girlfriend, Barbi Swallows—raw footage from the *Sex, Fame & Murder* documentary—which included additional information. When necessary, I consulted newspaper and magazine articles. Finally, I watched the '1 lunatic 1 icepick' a number of times in order to determine its symbolic content and analyze the veracity of what was implied in the video.

Daniel Gonzalez (South of England, UK: 2004)

The son of an absentee Spanish father and English mother, after high school, Daniel Gonzalez (b. 1980) whiled away his days downing narcotic cocktails, playing video games, and watching horror movies in his mom's house. Bored, unemployed, and enamoured with violent fantasy, he decided to see what it would be like to be 'Freddy Krueger', and paradoxically donned a hockey mask reminiscent of Jason from the slasher movie *Friday the 13th*. From September 15-17, 2004, Gonzalez roamed around Hilsea, Tottenham, Hornsey, and High Gate knifing elderly and middle-aged citizens in their homes and on the streets. By the end of his rampage, four lay dead, with two others injured. Arrested on September 17, Gonzalez was hand six life sentences in 2006 and was given the designation 'never to be released.' Following several failed suicide attempts at Broadmoor Psychiatric Hospital, Gonzalez succeeded in taking his own life on August 9, 2007, slashing his wrists with a broken CD case.

The vast majority of the data on Daniel Gonzalez was taken from quotes revealed at his trial as chronicled by Court News UK, a private company that sends employees to attend high profile court cases in the London-area and document the proceedings. Using a 24-hour membership I was able to access several days' worth of court reports through their website on this relatively unknown British spree killer. I also drew upon British and Irish newspaper articles.

Anthony Arkwright (South Yorkshire, UK: 1987)

Anthony Arkwright (b. 1968) grew up the middle child of five in Wath, South Yorkshire, and was abandoned by his mother at the age of four. Tormented by the other school children for being 'inbred' (he wasn't), Arkwright grew to be an antisocial misfit, in and out of state children's homes for petty crimes. Upon losing his job at a Mexborough scrapyard, on August 26, 1988, Arkwright went to his grandfather's allotment and fatally bludgeoned him with an axe and lump hammer, concealing his body in the shed. He then proceeded to his grandfather's house to steal his life savings and a pocket watch. There, Arkwright is believed to have murdered elderly housekeeper, Elsa Konradaite, with an axe. Later that night, Arkwright stripped naked, donned a devil mask, and crept into the home of neighbour Raymond Ford, stabbing him to death, and inflicting horrendous mutilations on his corpse. On Sunday August 28, he did the same to wheelchair-bound neighbour Marcus Law, thrusting his crutch into the victim's wounds and stuffing his nose and ears with cigarettes.

Law's mother found her son's body the next day, and Arkwright, having blatantly incriminated himself, was arrested for his murder. After playing elaborate mind games with the police, he was soon linked to the other slayings and charged. Convicted of the murders of his grandfather, Ford, and Law, in 1990 Arkwright was given a whole life tariff. He remains imprisoned to this day, having never spoken publicly about the murders.

Admittedly, my research on Arkwright is the weakest in this study. I submitted a request to speak to an investigator on the case, but the invitation was not accepted. Due to the low-profile nature of the case, and the lack of video footage of Arkwright, I have been forced to rely on (i) The direct testimony of Arkwright's acquaintances and the police and journalist who worked on the case, all drawn from the television true crime documentary *When Life Means Life*, (ii) the book of the same name by researcher Nick Appleyard, an informative popular publication, (iii) newspaper coverage of the case. Through these sources, I am confident that I was willing to assemble a reliable portrait of Arkwright, and approximate the *expressive/transformativ*e process in his criminal narrative.

James Holmes (Colorado, USA: 2012)

James Eagan Holmes (b. December 13, 1987) was raised a highly introverted and intelligent child in California. Believing he was suffering from psychosis, Holmes decided to enroll in an undergraduate neuroscience program at University of California, Riverside to fix his 'broken brain.' He graduated in 2010 with an outstanding 3.949 GPA and continued his studies in neuroscience at a doctorate level at the University of Colorado in Aurora. Following a break-up with his girlfriend and a sharp decline in his academic performance, Holmes began plotting mass murder, claiming he instantaneously transferred suicidal thoughts to homicidal ones. Holmes dyed his hair bright red and posed for photographs with weapons, sometimes wearing black contact lenses, which he posted online. On July 19, 2012, he mailed a copy of his diary to his psychiatrist at the university and select photographs to the *New York Times*.

Hours later, shielded by body armour and brandishing an AR-15 and pump-action shotgun, Holmes burst into a midnight screening of *The Dark Knight Rises* at the Century 16 theatre and fired into the audience, killing 12 and wounding 70 others. He promptly left the cinema, and lingered outside until he was arrested. On August 24, 2014, Holmes was convicted on 12 counts of murder and received the equivalent in life sentences plus 3,318 years.

I reviewed and transcribed 22 hours of video footage in which James Holmes was interviewed by psychiatrist Dr. William Reid and looked at Holmes's diary which corresponded with the subject matter they discussed. Like most of the 21st century murderers in this study, Holmes left a digital footprint in the form of dating website profiles. Though not as diverse as the sources on Chapman or Rodger, his was the third largest corpus I examined.

Elliot Rodger (Isla Vista, USA: 2014)

Other than his parents' divorce, Elliot Rodger (b. July 24, 1991), the son of a filmmaker, was born into a life of relative privilege. Growing up in California, where he attended private schools, his social life was severely hindered by his shyness. Though obsessed with social class, status, and his petit physique, the embittered Rodger was particularly fixated with his inability to establish romantic relationships with attractive young women. A closeted racist who was uncomfortably half-Asian, Rodger believed it was unfair for 'inferior' non-Caucasian men to date white women, and concluded that the latter must be biologically flawed for choosing interracial relationships. He enrolled at the University of Santa Barbara in Isla Vista, where his frustrations grew, and around 2014, began posting video-blogs on YouTube describing his life of loneliness, and asking 'girls' why they weren't attracted by his 'sophistication' and material wealth.

Rodger's rage soon reached a boiling point, and on May 23, 2014, he murdered his two Asian roommates and their friend using a knife. Immediately after, he uploaded the video "Elliot Rodger's Retribution" to YouTube in which he confessed his virginity and swore revenge against sexually active men and women, stating he would drive to 'the hottest sorority house' on campus and massacre everyone inside. However, upon actually attempting to do so, nobody answered the door. Frustrated, Rodger began shooting random people on campus, then got in his car and drove around Isla Vista in a killing spree. After claiming six lives in total and wounding fourteen others, Rodger was wounded in a shootout with law enforcement and crashed his vehicle. He committed suicide by way of gunshot to the head.

The Elliot Rodger case had the most plentiful and diverse sources in the sample. Rodger's digital footprint was extensive, ranging from a series of video blog soliloquies, to his 137-page biographical document *My Twisted World: The Story of Elliot Rodger*, and a legacy of interactions on puahate.com and bodybuilding.com. Furthermore, his father spoke with Barbara Walters for over 40 minutes in a *20/20* interview. Two of Rodger's acquaintances also recounted

their experiences with him to the *Daily Mail* and CNN, respectively.

Seung-Hui Cho (Virginia, USA: 2007)

A Korean immigrant who suffered from selective mutism, Seung-Hui Cho (b. January 18, 1984) struggled to fit in at school and expressed admiration for the Columbine gunmen. Despite his clear mental and social problems, he graduated from high school and was accepted at Virginia Tech. After years of frightening classmates, students in residence, and English department faculty members with his peculiar behaviour, on April 16, 2007, Cho gunned down 49 staff and students at Virginia Tech. Using a Glock 19 pistol and Walther P22, he amassed the highest number of casualties in any school shooting—killing 32 and wounding 17 others—before taking his own life. Cho mailed a video manifesto to NBC News stating his reasons for the rampage.

My main sources were the videotapes Cho mailed to MSNBC transcribed and compiled in a four-page PDF document by Dr. Peter Langman, along with Liebert & Birnes's *Suicidal Mass Murderers: A Criminological Study of Why They Kill* which contains copious information on the killer's life, behaviour, and psychiatric history leading up to the Virginia Tech Massacre. A nationally renowned psychiatrist, Dr. Liebert was granted access to primary sources in the form of Cho's records. Finally, Dr. Langman's own book *Why Kids Kill* contained some valuable primary and secondary source information. As the massacre was subject to a media frenzy following the killings, I also relied on articles from the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Daily Telegraph*, and ABC News. Cho's short stories and plays provided particularly valuable insight.

Endnotes

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- 1 Egger, 1998.
 - 2 Wilson, 2009.
 - 3 Leyton, 1985/1995.
 - 4 Connell, 1987, 1995.
 - 5 Beasley, 2008, 2009.
 - 6 Hall, 2012, July 20.
 - 7 Levin & Madfis, 2009.
 - 8 Canter & Youngs, 2009.
 - 9 Agnew, 1992.
 - 10 Levin & Madfis, 2009, p. 1238.
 - 11 Levin & Madfis, 2009, p. 1238.
 - 12 Levin & Madfis, 2009.
 - 13 Levin & Madfis, 2009, p. 1232.
 - 14 Canter & Youngs, 2009, p. 126.
 - 15 Canter & Youngs, 2009, p. 126.

1. Theory and Method

“*Man is most nearly himself when he achieves the seriousness of a child at play.*” - Heraklitus

“*When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.*” - Corinthians 13:11

1.0 Introduction

The *expressive/transformative* process of violence (ETV) attempts to link the observable outer-world of the offender, particularly his communications and the contents of his crime scene, with his inner sense/coherence of *self*, emotional state, and imagination. It is necessarily broad in scope—and because its purpose is to interpret crimes and communications—focuses chiefly on the role of *signs* (icons, indexes, symbols) in overlapping social and psychological spaces.

The formal hypothesis of ETV is that offenders

- (a) are inadequately socialized due to a lack of effective or meaningful communication, leading them to
- (b) feel a profound crisis of *self* and suffer from strain, causing them to
- (c) experience negative emotionality,
- (d) which they decide to cure by ultimately transitioning into a new homicidal *self*,
- (e) and that because *self* is a product of communication, such offenders intentionally or unintentionally leave messages for us,
- (f) which are *signature* behaviours comprised of *signs*, and reveal the motives and characteristics of the perpetrator.

Points a-d are outlined in detail for all 10 offenders in the sample in Chapters 1 and 3, e-f in Chapter 4.

As the history of warfare and capital punishment reveal, *expressive/transformative* violence is by no means a new phenomenon. Rather, the ever-expanding presence of media in our lives has simply increased its visibility, and perhaps as a result, its rate of occurrence. Nor is ETV an exclusive category which exists separately from other types of violence (e.g., sexual, domestic). To the contrary, each of the 10 offenders in this study followed the conventions of their respective homicidal type.

A violent paraphilic streak runs through both the successful and would-be serial killers. Danny Rolling’s *voyeurism*, *picquerism*, and *mutilophilia* are readily apparent in his murders.

FBI Agent John Douglas reports that David Berkowitz returned to his crime scenes to roll in the dirt, later masturbating as he recalled the killings.¹ Ostensibly, Luka Magnotta showed signs of the necrophilia-spectrum behaviours *necrosodomolagnia*, *sarxenthymiophilia*, *sexual anthropophagy*, and *necromutilophilia*, though the corresponding acts might have been simply to increase shock value by maximizing abjection (see Chapters 3 & 4). Similarly, we have hints at Colin Ireland's *sexual sadism*, but cannot confirm it. Anthony Arkwright's extensive mutilations may or may not be manifestations of paraphilia—there is no account of his comments on them. Daniel Gonzalez described the experience of killing as “orgasmic”² however it is difficult to ascertain whether he was speaking literally or figuratively. In typical rampage killer fashion, James Holmes, Elliot Rodger, and Seung-Hui Cho committed act-focused murders against random victims, sometimes beginning with friends or acquaintances, and made no effort to cover up their crimes. Mark David Chapman enacted a stereotypical American assassination-by-firearm, a national tradition. Thus, *expressive/transformative* motives may play a primary, secondary, or tertiary role in the commission of crimes. The examples discussed here pertain to cases where the *expressive/transformative* aspect appears to be fairly central to the motive of the killing, and perhaps as a result, highly visible. When appropriate, we will comment on paraphilia, however it is not the focal point of this study, and will therefore be subject to relative de-emphasis.

In a way, murder itself can be *expressive/transformative* even when it does not leave discernible semiotic breadcrumbs. Serial killer Edmund Emil Kemper III acknowledged this, saying “I just wanted the exaltation over the party. In other words, winning over death. They were dead, and I was alive. That was the victory in my case.”³ On the surface, this type of behaviour, in which the offender communicates symbols to himself as a process of self-creation or reaffirming an existent self, is a form of self-signaling. However, where self-signaling is “an action chosen partly to secure good news about one's traits or abilities, even when the action has no causal impact on these traits and abilities”⁴, the phenomenon we are discussing here concerns the creation of *signs* which confirm one's self-image, thereby helping to create or sustain it. Henceforth, we will call such behaviour *semiotic affirmations of self* (SAOS^c), and will mark their occurrence in square brackets in the text: [SAOS]. As they are *expressive/transformative* behaviours, SAOS also exist in *overt* and *covert* form. To Kemper, his victim's bodies were a

^c I recommend pronouncing this acronym Say-Oss (rhyming with chaos).

covert SAOS, representing his superiority over them by being “alive.”⁵ A *covert* SAOS can only be identified through an offender's own words. For instance, we would not know that the bodies signified this to Kemper if he hadn't told us. Though primarily driven to kill by necrophilic sexual urges, Kemper also committed numerous *covert* acts of *expressive/transformational* behaviour that were not SAOS. One example has him burying the head of a victim in his backyard facing his tyrannical mother's bedroom window because she “always wanted people to look up to her.”⁶ In another he attempted to flush his mother's larynx down the garbage disposal because “she'd bitched and screamed and yelled at me over so many years.”⁷ Unlike Kemper's *covert expressive/transformational* communications, this study focuses on ETV behaviours that are *overt* for the simple reason that they are observable to witnesses and law enforcement. An *overt* SAOS is a *sign* others can easily identify and interpret, because the offender wishes us to accept their *enacted identity* as their new *personal identity*.^d When Frank Spisak decided he wanted to become Hitler, dressing in Nazi regalia and sporting a toothbrush moustache⁸, this SAOS was *overt*. An example of an *overt expressive/transformational* act that was not a SAOS, at least to our knowledge, is serial killer George Russell posing his last victim with a pillow over her head, legs spread, and a rifle inserted into her vagina.⁹

Having established a basic understanding of what ETV is, the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to explaining the sociological, psychological, semiotic, and communication theories which form its foundation. The interplay between communication, *signs*, socially-held meanings, and the development of the *self* was first articulated by the symbolic interactionists in the first half of the 20th century. For this reason, the core tenets of symbolic interactionism, which constitute the basic micro-material binding all other ETV-related theories together, will be detailed first (1.1 Why Symbolic Interactionism?). Section 1.2 (The Development of the Self Through Communication) focuses specifically on how the *self*—including *self-concept*, *self-guides*, *self-evaluation*, and *self-regulation*—arises and is shaped by interaction throughout a child's development and connected to negative emotionality. Here symbolic interactionism's transformation into the scientifically-validated Self-Discrepancy Theory (SDT) is demonstrated and supported by research from cognitive psychologists Jean Piaget and Robbie Case. Naturally, we then move on to a detailed outline of Self-Discrepancy Theory (1.3) and how, despite the assertions of Higgins, an offender may shift to a homicidal *self-guide*, then commit murder to

^d Granted, at other times it is merely a flippant statement or joke.

permanently or temporarily quash his negative-emotionality. Section 1.4 (General Strain Theory and the Self) looks at how strains—incentives or disinhibitors to commit deviant and criminal acts—emerge from and are embedded within the notions of the *self* which bely SDT. In section 1.5, Face-Work and the Communication Theory of Identity, the communication theory of identity (CTI) is presented to augment SDT by showing how negative-emotionality can also result from *communication dysfunctions*: the feeling that one is not being understood and/or believed by other members of society. The writings of the Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman also reveal some of the theory's shortcomings, which will be subject to brief discussion. Finally, the chapter concludes by examining the role that mental illness played in our 10-offender sample is assessed in Section 1.6: Communication Dysfunction and Mental Illness. In this section, mental illness is discussed as an impediment to effective communication resulting in an unstable *self*, with a concentration on individual symptoms rather than constructs as whole.

Before proceeding, it is important to emphasize that the *expressive/transformative* process of violence adds something refreshingly new and necessary to our understanding of homicide. Despite the countless offender profiling methodologies, risk assessment tests, psychometric tools, and clinical treatment strategies in use, there are none which systematically trace *identity signatures*—offender communications directly related to violent acts which do not comprise modus operandi and occur before, during, or after the violent event—back through the techno-socio-cultural context in which they occur into the offender's emotional life and personal narrative of *self*. This is likely owing to two factors: (1) the strange failure to recognize and/or study *identity signatures* as discreet entities, as has been done with paraphilic signatures, and (2) the inherent interdisciplinary nature of such an endeavor in an academic climate which encourages hyper-specialization at the graduate level over the continued need to broaden the areas of one's education. As the remainder of this dissertation will reveal, one must possess a decent understanding of social, forensic, and abnormal psychology; sociology; criminology; religion; anthropology; history; communication; and media to understand ETV to the extent that it truly merits.

1.1 Why Symbolic Interactionism?

The primary theoretical basis of ETV is symbolic interactionism as formulated by the American social behaviorist George Herbert Mead in his *Mind, Self and Society*. Interactionism

studies the construction of *self*, groups, society, and culture through symbolic expression. It has been criticized for being too microscopic in focus, making it essentially a non-theory with no practical application¹⁰. Such detractors have failed to grasp that these early works by Mead, Herbert Blumer, and Erving Goffman—whose dramaturgical theory is essentially an expansion and partial re-articulation of interactionism—laid a solid theoretical foundation upon which further research and theory could be built. This dissertation will demonstrate its utility. Furthermore, thanks to the efforts of Jung & Hecht, there is now quantitative data to support interactionist claims that “identity is inherently communicative.”¹¹

Admittedly, while symbolic interactionism is crucial in establishing the link between communication, symbols, and notions of *self*, it trails behind semiotics regarding the interpretation of *signs*, both individually and in relation to one another. Fortunately, the disciplines have a common intellectual ancestor in Charles Sanders Peirce, the American scientist, mathematician, and founder of philosophical Pragmatism.^e Danesi has noted Peirce's fascination with the criminal profiler C. Augustin Dupin—the fictional protagonist of Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, *The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*, and *The Purloined Letter*—which led Peirce to view detective work as the study of *signs* through a process he termed 'abduction.'¹² This theoretical compatibility allows ETV to bridge the gap between the meaning of *signs* and their use in communication to construct and negotiate human identity. ETV is therefore a practical use of *interpretivism*—incorporating, augmenting, and informing positivist research, rather than stalwartly opposing it.

This study of 10 ETV offenders began with the methodology championed by Herbert Blumer in his *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Blumer advocates naturalistic, qualitative research, in which the theoretical model used to analyze the data should solidify *during* the research process, rather than preceding it, because “[I]t is important to recognize that the means used to get the data depend on the nature of the data to be sought.”¹³ Blumer believed that, despite its increasingly popular use in social science, the standard procedures of adhering to scientific protocol, engaging in replication, testing hypotheses, and using operational procedure,

^e There are several tenets of pragmatist epistemology which I strongly disagree with, specifically the notion that there is no reality outside of human interpretation. Fortunately, this has no bearing on my implementation of symbolic interactionism or semiotics in the context of this dissertation.

do not, in actuality, lead to empirical validation. Instead, more often than not, they lead to social scientists skewing or selecting data to fit their pre-existing model.

Very simply put, the only way to get this assurance is to go directly to the empirical social world—to see through meticulous examination of it whether one's premises or root images of it, one's questions and problems posed for it, the data one chooses out of it, the concepts through which one sees and analyzes it, and the interpretations one applies to it are actually borne out.¹⁴

Blumer advocates the social scientist immersing himself in the actual, authentic social experience of the people he is studying, allowing what he observes to give rise to theory, rather than beginning with theory and seeking to process data that is subsequently collected. He argues that most social scientists explore the social lives of groups or individuals with whom they have little familiarity, inevitably and naturally bringing preconceived stereotypes of these individuals and their behaviour to their research endeavours.¹⁵ This is both understandable and unavoidable. He encourages the researcher to test and revise their presuppositions in accordance with the reality they encounter, rather than adhering dogmatically to a pre-established theoretical model. We followed this methodology closely, selecting violent offenders who communicate as the sample to be studied, then stepping into their experiences to see what emerged. A symbolic interactionist's two modes of inquiry are *exploration* and *inspection*. *Exploration* is a

flexible procedure in which the scholar shifts from one to another line of inquiry, adopts new points of observation as his study progresses, moves in new directions previously unthought-of of, and changes his recognition of what are relevant data as he acquires more information and better understanding... The flexibility of exploratory procedure does not mean that there is no direction to the inquiry; it means that the focus is originally broad but becomes progressively sharpened as the inquiry proceeds.¹⁶

Acceptable methods of *exploration* include “direct observation, interviewing of people, listening to their conversations, securing life-history accounts, using letters and diaries, consulting public records, arranging for group discussions, and making counts of an item if this appears worthwhile.”¹⁷ *Inspection* entails “an intensive focused examination of the empirical content of whatever analytical elements are used for the purposes of analysis, and the same kind of examination of the empirical nature of the relations between such elements.”¹⁸ Blumer defines analytical elements as “[W]hatever general or categorical items are employed as the key items in

the analysis”¹⁹ which “may refer to processes, organization, relations, networks of relations, states of being, elements of personal organization, and happenings.”²⁰ These *analytical elements* may be broad or narrow, and Blumer advocates scrutinizing them in multitudinous ways from a variety of perspectives. In the same way that we pick up a material object, regard it, turn it around in our hand to inspect all sides, look inside it, underneath it, and form conclusions about every aspect of it (and thus the object as a whole), we should also do the same with “any one of the elements used in the theoretical analysis of a given area or aspect of empirical social life.”²¹ These include—but are not limited to— relationships, processes, and 'social objects.' Only when one fully understands the nature of the *analytical element*, can one incorporate it into a theory. Relaying the advice of Charles Darwin, Blumer recommends noting all observations that 1) challenge one's working conceptions, and 2) are odd and interesting, even if seemingly irrelevant.

Given the impossibility of involving oneself in an offender's social experience before he or she is apprehended, and the difficulty in obtaining prison interviews at a graduate level, the research presented here relies primarily on the offenders' biographies and autobiographies, interviews (written and recorded in audio and/or video) with the offender or those who knew him, and their correspondences for data. These all fall within Blumer's accepted sources for *exploration*.

Before proceeding, there are several schisms in symbolic interactionism which should be briefly addressed. Stryker—arguably the leading symbolic interactionist scholar of the so-called Indiana school—has criticized Blumer's recommended methodology on the grounds that it (1) dismisses any research or behavioural predictions grounded in *a priori* theory, (2) rejects the validity of research methods that set up constraints on how issues are formulated or attacked (such as experimentation and survey research), and (3) deems any data rendered into mathematical or statistical attempts to understand the sociological process useless as numerical data lacks the focus on 'meaning' that defines sociological phenomena.²² “Thus along with denying the possibility of explanatory sociological theory, Blumer severely restricts the legitimate range of investigatory (data gathering) techniques as well as analytic methods.”²³

Having revisited the passages in Blumer's work which Stryker refers to in his criticism, it is apparent that Stryker is misunderstanding Blumer's argument. Blumer is by no means dismissing mathematical/statistical/quantitative approaches to sociology/social psychology

altogether, rather, he is arguing against the increasingly popular notion that it is this the *only* acceptable protocol in the social sciences. He points to Charles Darwin, whose theory of evolution grew first out of 'exploring' and 'inspecting' the fauna of the Galapagos Islands and contemplating it. Darwin did not put together a complex theoretical model before arriving on the islands which he subsequently used to test the phenomena he encountered. This would have been foolhardy, as Darwin was not even aware of what he would discover on the island. Instead, he observed and considered the phenomena, which subsequently gave rise to the theory of evolution. Blumer states this is also an acceptable and advisable approach to understanding the social experience—particularly for the symbolic interactionist—and at no point claims that statistical, mathematical, and quantitative methods should be foregone entirely. He does reject *a priori* theoretical models, but only if these are inflexible. Indeed, following the *exploration* and *inspection* stages of this research—pouring over the documents for each of the 10 offenders—the quantitatively-validated Self-Discrepancy Theory (1.3) and Communication Theory of Identity (1.5) emerged as applicable theories to the *analytical elements* we encountered.

Similarly, there has been much debate in the field of symbolic interactionism regarding the degree to which the individual's *self* is static or dynamic from situation to situation. Viktor Gecas notes that Mead's 'social behaviorism' has split into two major camps: the psychological (social psychology) and sociological (symbolic interactionism), each with their own problematic biases.²⁴ Psychologists tend to look for internal causation, focusing on how *self-concepts*—"the overarching view that a person has of himself or herself as a physical, social, moral, or spiritual being"²⁵—translate into behaviour, while sociologists attempt to identify the prototypes for *self-concept* within social interaction. Recognizing the rather obvious fact that internal and external influences are frequently occurring and interacting at the same time, ETV incorporates both social psychological and symbolic interactionist approaches. Thus, Erich Goode's assertion that "specialists in crime, often referred to as criminologists, tend to focus on behavior (almost never beliefs, and *never* physical conditions) that generate formal sanctioning"²⁶ does not apply to this criminological study.

Complicating matters further, symbolic interactionism has broadly split into the 'Chicago school' of processual interactionists, and the structural interactionists known as the 'Iowa school' and led by Manfred Kuhn.²⁷ However, once academic partisanship is abandoned, it becomes clear that both the processual and structuralist symbolic interactionist worldviews are true, with

the mutual exception that they refuse to acknowledge this fact. Processual and structuralist interaction intersect through the formation of social narratives by both groups and individuals. In order to define any social situation, participants must necessarily draw upon semiotic meanings which reside in the social structure. One example which is particularly applicable to the 21st century is the person who endeavors to appear virtuous by never offending anyone^f, even though members of the human race have opposing values. In order for the person to change themselves to adapt to different social structures, they must be acquainted with the *norms* of that structure, meaning the structure must have a culture which is somewhat static and knowable.

Having established why symbolic interactionism is theoretically and methodologically best suited to the study of ETV, along with addressing some of the rifts within the theory itself, we will now explain the relationship between the social, emotional, and conceptual *self* and its relation to communication, thereby laying a framework for us to study the 10 offenders in this sample.

1.2 The Development of the Self Through Communication

Symbolic interactionism explores how communication occurs through the exchange of symbols—which Peirce’s semiotics rightfully broadens to *signs* (icons, indexes, and symbols)—and functions to formulate and re-formulate the subjective meaning of phenomena. Crucially, communication gives rise to the *self*, which Mead proposes “has a character which is different from the physiological proper,”²⁸ distinct from consciousness or sentience. This ability to be both subject and object gives birth to the *self* and arises through interaction with others. When a child engages in organized games, for instance, he learns to mentally adopt the role of the other participants so that he may anticipate their reactions, and thus compete more effectively. Once the individual realizes that every other person he encounters is regarding him in the same manner, he becomes an *object to himself*. He has now, through communication, developed a *self*. Blumer clarifies that “nothing esoteric is meant by this expression. It means merely that a human being can be an object of his own action.”²⁹ The *self* is organized into two sub-facets: the 'I' (subject) and 'Me' (object). The I is the individual's self-determination of his “function and

^f A disdainful cheater strategy. Victor Hugo put it best in his essay *Villemain*: “You have enemies? Why, it is the story of every man who has done a great deed or created a new idea. It is the cloud which thunders around everything that shines...”

privilege”³⁰, and remains hidden. It reacts to the Me which is “...the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes.”³¹ Essentially, the Me is the I's window into the world of the *generalized other*^g—“the organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self.”³² As the *self* arises through communication, it is also reshaped in this manner over the course of the individual's lifetime. Hence the term *expressive/transformative*. We are made and remade through communication, interpretation, and experience the resulting emotional effect.

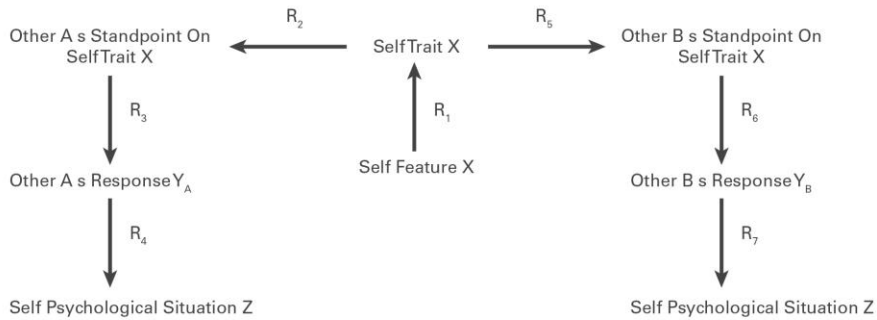
Drawing chiefly from the developmental cognitive psychology of Jean Piaget and Robbie Case, E. Tory Higgins cites a wealth of psychological research validating this notion of the *self*.³³ He divides its development into roughly five levels, each related to a different age of childhood: *Early-sensorimotor* (level 1), *late-sensorimotor/early-interrelational* (level 2), *late-interrelational/early-dimensional* (level 3), *late-dimensional/early-vectorial* (level 4), and *late-vectorial* (level 5).³⁴

During the *early-sensorimotor level*, which begins at birth and lasts until approximately 1½ years of age, the infant becomes able to understand how two incidences are related ('R1' in Figure 1). Higgins gives the example of a child noting how their mother responds ('Other Response Y' in Figure 1) to the child's own behaviour ('Self Feature X' in Figure 1), allowing them to express and perceive *signals*^h which triggers an emotional experience. It is at this earliest level that a child can “experience four basic emotionally significant psychological situations...”³⁵ all of which may be actual or anticipated: the presence or absence of positive outcomes (e.g., the child is nurtured *or* the child is neglected), and the presence or absence of negative outcomes (e.g., the child is subjected to pain *or* removed from pain). As the infant can now anticipate experiencing an absence of positive outcomes or presence of negative outcomes, this makes them susceptible to anxiety.³⁶ As we shall see later, this newfound ability to experience an absence of positive outcomes, in particular, paves the road for *expressive/transformative* violence.

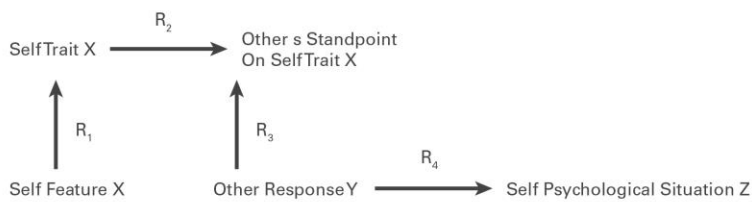
^g Recent research in symbolic interactionism has revealed that individuals do not always take the perspective of society-at-large (i.e. the *generalized other*) when making decisions. See Chapter 2.

^h Higgins uses the term 'signals', but as we seek to incorporate semiotics into ETV, when the occasion arises we will use semiotic nomenclature.

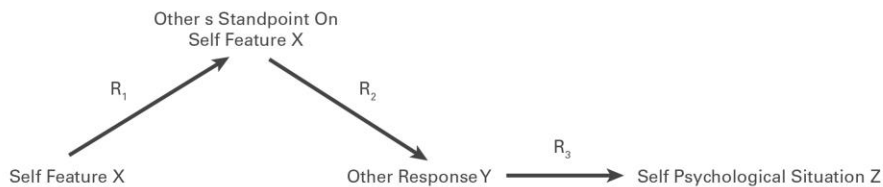
LEVEL 5 LATE VECTORIAL DEVELOPMENT



LEVEL 4 LATE DIMENSIONAL AND EARLY VECTORIAL DEVELOPMENT



LEVEL 3 LATE INTERRELATIONAL AND EARLY DIMENSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



LEVEL 2 LATE SENSORIMOTOR AND EARLY INTERRELATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



LEVEL 1 EARLY SENSORIMOTOR DEVELOPMENT

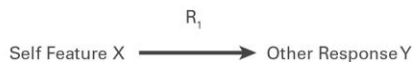


Figure 1. Developmental Changes in Children's Ability to Represent Self-Other Contingencies
Note. Reprinted from “Continuities and discontinuities in self-regulatory and self-evaluative processes: A developmental theory relating self and affect” by E.T. Higgins, 1989, *Journal Of Personality*, 57(2), 407-444, 1989 by E.T. Higgins. Reproduced with permission from Higgins.

The *late-sensorimotor/early-interrelational development level* follows soon after, between the ages of 18 months and two years of age. Here, the child learns symbolic

representationⁱ and to utilize a scheme which represents one object's relation to another³⁷, in order to attain a “represented and specified goal pertaining to two other objects.”³⁸ This allows the infant to deliberately formulate a plan to “obtain a particular *kind* of relationship”³⁹, thus they are now able to comprehend their current state as discrepant from a hypothetical one.⁴⁰ Quite simply, a child comes to understand that displaying a given *sign* ('Self Feature X' in Figure 1) to another person, will result in a particular response ('Other Response Y' in Figure 1) which in turn will result in one of the four psychological situations ('Self Psychological Situation Z' in Figure 1). The transition from the *sensorimotor* to the *late-sensorimotor/early-interrelational level* is marked by early behaviour associated with imitation, play, and language.⁴¹

Between the ages of four and a half to six years, the child enters the *late-interrelational/early-dimensional* third level of development⁴², where he continues to imitate, converse, and *play*; the latter term now encompassing the specific symbolic interactionist concept in which a child assumes multiple imaginary roles in a single event (e.g., a gunslinger who fires a killing shot followed immediately by his victim who dramatically clutches his imagined wound and falls dead). Mead saw this behaviour as crucial in the formation of the *self*⁴³, while Mellor has posited that it allows violent paraphilic offenders to engage in auto-erotic activities were they take on the role of both victim and perpetrator.⁴⁴ Predictably, this is the level at which a child's ability to see himself as an *object to himself*⁴⁵, giving rise to the Me. By extension, the *self* forms.

In keeping with Piaget, Higgins views the transition from the absence of role and/or perspective-taking to its presence as demonstrative of a movement from egocentric toward nonegocentric thought. At this stage, the child's ability to infer the thoughts of others improves dramatically. Using his previous actions, the actions of others, or imagined preferable alternatives as a measuring stick, he is now able to describe and emotionally respond to his state and actions as a “'success' or a 'failure,' as 'good' or 'bad'...”⁴⁶ The child may also use information located temporally outside his immediate situation to judge his or another's actions within the immediate situation. The sum total of these expanded social abilities is that the child may now use *self-regulation*—the ability to control their actions and thus tailor their persona

ⁱ In their essay on symbolic representation, Huttenlocher & Higgins (1978) begin by noting that the earlier sign system established by Peirce has yet to be introduced into psychological theory, specifically “models of the representation of conceptual information in long-term memory” (p. 99). Consider this the first step.

situationally—and *self-evaluation*, to display *signs* they infer another person (a specific or *generalized other*) will find desirable in them. The child does this by taking the other's standpoint, becoming an *object-to-himself*, in order to conform to the standard of the other. Stated another way, the child understands that, as displayed on Figure 1 “the relation between self-feature X and other-response Y is understood to be mediated by the relation between self-feature X and the other's standpoint on self-feature X.”⁴⁷ The process of understanding self-other contingencies has become more complex, but the outcome—experiencing self psychological description Z—remains the same. Perhaps most importantly, the child now realizes that not all people respond the same way to self-feature X, and that a discrepancy between his behaviour and the behaviour another person wishes him to have is the connection to the self psychological situation. Children at level 3 “can now monitor, plan, and evaluate themselves in terms of congruencies and discrepancies from internally represented standards or guides that others hold for them.”⁴⁸ As this period draws to an end, children are increasingly interested in trying to match the standard they believe others hold for them. Social approval becomes ascendant^j over the direct consequences of the child's actions, providing motivation for both *self-regulation* and *self-evaluation* which lead to the development of *self-guides*.⁴⁹ Higgins puts it far more eloquently: “For the first time, children can evaluate themselves by comparing their perceived current state to an alternative valued state, an 'other' standpoint self-guide. And they are motivated to do so in order to monitor their progress in self-regulation. Thus, self-evaluation occurs in the service of self-regulation.”⁵⁰ Though this level of socialization is necessary to function as a social being, Higgins notes that comparing oneself to *self-guides* can result in more emotional vulnerabilities. This hypothesis will be explored in much further depth in section 1.3.

At level 4, *late-dimensional/early-vectorial* development occurring between the ages of nine and 11, children learn how to judge themselves and others based on disposition. This means that dispositional attributes finally feature in their *self-concepts* as well as their concepts of others. The primary factor in this development is the child's newly acquired ability to infer their (or somebody else's) relative ability by comparing it to prior differences in outcomes, intent, and effort. At this stage, the child recognizes the influence variables—opposing or compensating—play in individual attempts at achievement, allowing them to compare a person's relative quality

^j An observation: the end of this level seems to correspond with the onset of Freud's 'latency phase' in which the child becomes unconcerned with bodily pleasure and more on socializing.

in an attribute dimension in the context of certain circumstances, to another person's given a different set of circumstances. So, for example, nine-year-old 'Jimmy' goes from knowing that he is simply a faster runner than 'Timmy', to ascribing a portion of this superiority to the fact that 'Timmy' is two years younger. Again, as this inter- and intrapersonal awareness grows, so does one's capacity for self-loathing: the realization that dispositional attributes reside within one's person ('Self Feature X' relates to 'Self Trait X' in Figure 1), is accompanied by the crushing realization that failure of the *self-concept* to meet the *self-guide* may actually be beyond one's control. One may innately be a 'loser': “The self-evaluation process for a single self-feature could now activate a child's general self-discrepancy system as a whole because of spreading activation among interconnected elements in a unitized self-discrepancy system.”⁵¹ Accordingly, the child's newfound ability to compare the totality of their self-attributes to the totality of another person's, means that their peers may do the same to them ('Other Standpoint on Self Trait X' in Figure 1) and find them wanting ('Other Response Y' in Figure 1). Authentic self-discrepancies may now enter the child's experience, resulting in negative emotionality ('Self Psychological Situation Z' in Figure 1). Worse, even in the absence of a recent discrepant activity, simply being reminded of a discrepancy between the *self-concept* and *self-guide* can now provoke an emotional response.⁵²

The final level of development Higgins discusses, level 5 *late vectorial development*, occurs between the ages of 13 and 16. Here, the capacity to interrelate alternate views on the same object or occurrence arises, which Higgins proposes “can produce a new form of 'egocentrism' in which children construe that others' viewpoints are totally different from (and potentially incompatible with) their own viewpoint...”⁵³ The capacity to examine how higher-order abstractions, particularly personalities and identities, relate to one another, is associated with this level.

Through these five levels of development, the etiology of Self-Discrepancy Theory—in which negative emotions such as depression, frustration, and anxiety emerge from gaps between aspects of one's *self-concept* and *self-guide*—has been thoroughly outlined. Before proceeding to the next section which focuses exclusively on SDT, it is necessary to reiterate that this process of childhood development, *self-concepts* and *self-guides*, and the evaluation and judgment of others occurs through ongoing communication through *signs*. We are made, re-made, and forge ourselves through the observation and interpretation of *signs* (and constructs comprised of *signs*,

which themselves act as *signs*). The full importance of these symbolic interactionist underpinnings may not be apparent until subsequent chapters, however, in the meantime they should by no means be dismissed as obvious and inconsequential. In ETV, the 'devil' is quite literally in the details. And that is where we ultimately find the hoof prints that lead to his door.

1.3 Self-Discrepancy Theory

As Self-Discrepancy Theory wasn't selected as a major theoretical component of ETV from the outset, before delving too far into it, an account of how Higgins' theory came to form such an integral part of ETV seems appropriate. During the process of *exploring* the primary sources (*à la* Blumer), the first phenomenon discovered was that every offender announced the birth of a new *homicidal self*. Often, this declaration was explicitly stated:

Chapman: "I would actually become Holden Caulfield."⁵⁴

Berkowitz: "I am the 'Son of Sam.'"⁵⁵

Rolling (in the third-person): "Danny disappeared in the mist of his tormented thoughts...and a different person surfaced. It was the outlaw, still unnamed, who would one day emerge as Ennad."⁵⁶

Ireland: "I think it is from four people that the FBI classify as [being a] serial [killer], so I may stop now I have done five."⁵⁷

Magnotta (written on blog before murder): "Necrophilia serial killer Luka Magnotta."⁵⁸

Gonzalez: "I will be a serial killer. I mean it, I promise. I will be a serial killer"⁵⁹

Rodger: "I will take great pleasure in slaughtering all of you. You will finally see that I am, in truth, the superior one, the true alpha male."⁶⁰

Cho: "I am Ax Ishmael. I am the Anti-Terrorist of America."⁶¹

In the remaining two cases, promotion of the *homicidal self* was marked by wearing demonic costumes. Anthony Arkwright sported a devil mask during his murder of Raymond Ford; while James Holmes dyed his hair bright red, wore black contact lenses, and posed with weapons before perpetrating the Aurora Theatre Massacre in full body-armor.

Further examination of these 10 offenders' lives revealed they had failed in their attempts to establish other *selves* in the years leading up to their murders. Like most human beings who fail to live up to their own expectations, these *selves* were typically preceded and followed by periods of depression and frustration. As hinted at in the previous section, this is consistent with

self-discrepancy theory. SDT posits that negative emotions result from the failure of the *self-concept*—the person one believes oneself to be—to match the *self-guide*, which is their desired self-state.⁶² These failures to obtain or maintain parity are referred to as 'self-discrepancies.'

Higgins termed the *self-concept* an *actual self*, and after reviewing the relevant literature, found evidence for two kinds of *actual selves*: an 'own' and 'other'. “The kind of person an individual believes he or she actually is”⁶³ comprises the *own self* because it reflects one's self-perception. Likewise, the *other self* refers to “the kind of person an individual believes that others think he or she actually is. The 'others' can be either significant others or the generalized other”⁶⁴, as previously articulated by Mead.^k A person has multiple 'others' (e.g., father, mother, coach) who hold differing or competing views of who that person is and should be. The two perspectives from which somebody measures their *actual self*—the “standpoints on the self”⁶⁵—form one cognitive dimension of self-state representation. Higgins defines a standpoint on the self as “a point of view from which you can be judged that reflects a set of attitudes or values...”⁶⁶ and notes its origins in the symbolic interactionist tradition. Nevertheless, in Self-Discrepancy Theory, only the standpoints of 'significant others' such as friends and family members are considered—which functions satisfactorily for the present study—though there is no reason it couldn't be expanded in the future to include the *generalized other*.⁶⁷

The second cognitive dimension of self-state representation, “domains of the self”⁶⁸, denotes the nature of the *self-guide*; which can be *actual* (“your representation of the attributes that someone... yourself or another... believes you *actually* [emphasis added] possess”⁶⁹), *ideal* (“your representation of the attributes that someone... yourself or another... would *like you, ideally* [emphasis added], to possess... i.e., a representation of someone's hopes, aspirations, or wishes for you...”⁷⁰) or *ought* (“your representation of the attributes that someone... yourself or another... believes you *should or ought* [emphasis added] to possess”⁷¹). Combining these three domains of the *self*—*actual*, *ideal*, and *ought*—with the two standpoints on the self, *own* and *other*, produces six self-state representations (see Table 1).⁷²

^k Presumably, Athens' *phantom community*, *phantom other*, and Mellor's *fandom community* could also expand the boundaries of self-discrepancy theory, though they have yet to be incorporated into quantitative testing.

Table 1

Self-state Representations* Resulting from Self-Domains and Standpoints on Self

Self-Domain	Standpoint on Self – Own	Standpoint on Self - Other
Actual	<i>Actual/Own</i>	<i>Actual/Other</i>
Ideal	<i>Ideal/Own</i>	<i>Ideal/Other</i>
Ought	<i>Ought/Own</i>	<i>Ought/Other</i>

*Self-state representations are in *italics*.

A discrepancy between the *actual/own* and *ideal/own selves*, is represented as such:

actual/own:ideal/own. *Actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancies were the most common, or at least the most visible, among our 10 offenders.

Rather than referring to a monolithic *self*—the person in total—the *self-concept* and *self-guide* are comprised of numerous attributes. During the *exploration* process, aspects of sexuality, gender, vocation, class, race, philosophy, and religion emerged as the most relevant. These attributes are examined across our 10 offender sample in Chapter 3. One may experience no discrepancy whatsoever in many attributes, while feeling intense discrepancies in others. For example, 'John', a newly unemployed welfare-recipient, could hypothetically feel an *actual/own:ought/other* discrepancy in his vocational attribute as a result of being reprimanded for 'leeching off the system', while experiencing an *actual/own:ideal/own* class-related discrepancy due to being forced to relocate from a gated community to a trailer park. Yet, he may simultaneously experience no sexual, gender, racial, or religious attribute discrepancies whatsoever. Higgins explains this by stating

... self-discrepancy theory assumes that the motivational or emotional effects of your actual/own attributes, or self-concept, are determined by the significance to you of possessing such attributes. And the significance is assumed to depend on the *relation* between the self-concept and your self-guides, with different types of relations representing different types of negative psychological situations...⁷³

Unlike a multitude of other theories which merely propose that discomfort or negative emotions arise from incongruent beliefs and/or *self-concepts* within a given individual⁷⁴, SDT uniquely predicts the *kind* of emotions associated with various discrepancies. This capability, along with the theoretical ties to symbolic interactionism, make it an optimal basis for criminal profiling. Higgins notes a wealth of psychological and psychiatric literature separating negative emotionality into two clusters: dejection-related and agitation-related.⁷⁵ Multiple quantitative

studies have indicated that *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancies produce dejection-related emotions such as depression, dissatisfaction, disappointment, sadness, and frustration.⁷⁶ On the other hand, *actual/own:ought/other* discrepancies result in feelings of resentment, fear, and being threatened, while anxiety¹ and paranoia are associated with *actual/own:ought/own* discrepancies.⁷⁷ As a person may possess all, some (in various combinations), or no self-discrepancies, the first two types of people are susceptible to several different emotional vulnerabilities. This does not mean that these discrepancies are equally active at a given time, or that the levels of negative-emotionality they produce are similar.⁷⁸ Depending on which self-discrepancy is most accessible in the moment, the corresponding negative emotion will dominate.⁷⁹

Higgins stresses the need to move “away from the simple first-generation question 'Is there an effect?' to the second-generation question 'When is there an effect?’”⁸⁰ Higgins proposes that the *self-regulatory significance* of the self-discrepancy is determined by four variables relating to it: *magnitude*, *accessibility*, *applicability and relevance*, and *importance*.⁸¹ A person will suffer negative emotionality more or less commensurate to the *magnitude* of a self-discrepancy. For instance, 'Jimmy', a teenager who dreams of being a major league baseball player will obviously become more depressed and frustrated when he strikes out than 'Timmy', who has no such aspirations and would rather be at home playing video games. As our study will reveal, each of our 10 offenders had large discrepancies—*magnitude*—in multiple areas of their *self*.

Higgins also stressed that a self-discrepancy must be activated in order for the negative emotion to be experienced, which shows the importance of *accessibility*. SDT has revealed that individuals who have both *actual:ideal* and *actual:ought* discrepancies will experience emotions if the *actual:ought* is primed, and dejection-related emotions if the *actual:ideal* is primed. Priming, in which exposure to specific stimuli activates a reaction to other stimuli, makes a discrepancy accessible. In other words, certain stimuli (e.g., acts, objects, experiences) remind

¹ Self-discrepancy theory considers the possibility that not all individuals will have both *ideal* and *ought* self-guides. Interestingly, there was no indication of a sincere *ought* self-guide among any of the psychopathic offenders in this sample (Berkowitz, Ireland, Rolling, Magnotta, Gonzalez, and Arkwright). As *actual/own:ought/other* discrepancies result in anxiety, perhaps this explains the lack of anxiety many researchers associate with psychopathy, as emphasized in Hervey Cleckley's *The Mask of Sanity*. Guilt is also typically missing in those with high PCL-R scores. Then again, a replication of Higgins's research by Tangney et al. (1998) indicated no relation between guilt and any of the self-discrepancies whatsoever.

the subject of their self-discrepancy and trigger the corresponding emotion. When this occurred in a lab setting, *actual:ideal* priming did not result in emotions, nor did *actual:ought* priming result in dejection-related emotions.⁸² Continuing with our baseball metaphor, Jimmy is more likely to become depressed or frustrated if an uncle teases him about the time he struck out, rather than if this reminder had not occurred. Higgins specifies that “a variety of different priming techniques can be used, from priming either ideal self-guides or ought self-guides as a whole... to priming a specific ideal or ought attribute...”⁸³ With this in mind, in Chapter 3, we will identify 'triggers' preceding the transformations of offenders in this sample by inserting the marker '[*trigger*]'. Theoretically, these should lead to the negative emotionality which gives rise to new *selves*.

Thirdly, Higgins notes that the activation of self-discrepancies also depends on their *applicability and relevance* in a given situation. This occurs with respect to negative events which trigger self-discrepancy, but not positive events.⁸⁴ Citing a study by Boldero & Francis⁸⁵, Higgins proposes that if self-discrepancy research is to be conducted on undergraduate students, then any negative stimuli must be situated in an academic context in order for it to be relevant (e.g., bad grades).⁸⁶ As Jimmy's dejection is specifically related to his lousy baseball skills, for example, trying to trigger it by showing him his poor grades on a spelling test may be a futile pursuit.

Finally, the *importance* of a particular self-discrepancy to an individual is a large factor. Higgins points out that if an *actual:ought* discrepancy (e.g., “I ought to get better grades because I should do well in school”) is more important to a person than an *actual:ideal* discrepancy (e.g., “I want to get better grades because I aspire to be an honours student”), then agitation-related emotions will be experienced rather than dejection-related.

As negative emotions arise from incongruent *self-concepts* and *self-guides*, “self-discrepancy theory postulates that we are motivated to reach a condition where our self-concept matches our personally relevant self-guides.”⁸⁷ Pondering why people who experience profound self-discrepancies do not simply change their *self-guides*^m, Higgins proposes that socialization has embedded cultural expectations too deeply in the individual's intrapersonal structure.⁸⁸

^m A seemingly unwarranted assumption given the radical transformations in religious, political, and national identity of Maajid Nawaz, to name one of many examples. A formerly irreligious British youth turned Islamist turned liberal democrat and humanist, Nawaz claims to have experienced significantly decreased guilt upon transitioning to a less 'ideological' Islamic identity.

Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that pursuing normative gender expectations and upwards class mobility is unlikely to change significantly in the majority of individuals. We are literally indoctrinated with these values from birth by familial, religious, political, and educational institutions, all of which receive substantial reinforcement from the media. Yet, these core ingredients (e.g., 'act like a man', 'be rich and famous') can be repackaged in different identity recipes. As noted by Peter Langman in his *Why Kids Kill*, during a study of neo-Nazis, psychologist Raphael Ezekiel found an overrepresentation of group members with frail physiques and severe childhood illnesses (a gender-related attribute of the *self*).⁸⁹ Langman, analyzing Columbine High School gunman Eric Harris, interpreted his adoption of a White Supremacist *self* as a “way of establishing a hard, tough masculinity”⁹⁰ to compensate for his sunken chest (*pectus excavatum*) and lack of athletic ability. Although hailing from a family of military men and sportsmen, Harris had been excluded by the 'jocks' at Columbine who represented an ideal masculinity at the school. As Higgins suggests, Harris did not create an entirely new *self-guide* to resolve his depression—he continued to accept the normative demands of what constitutes a 'real man' in American culture. Instead, he found an alternative *self-guide* (*schoolshooter!*) which still incorporated hypermasculinityⁿ, only this *self-guide* was one he could actually attain. This *actual/own:ideal/own* gender self-discrepancy could thus be negotiated through a different embodiment of *self*, without Harris ever needing to minimize, critique, or dispel the notion of normative masculine gender. So, in a narrow sense, Higgins is correct—people keep their identity ingredients—but more fundamentally, he is wrong, because they may change the rest of the identity recipe. Contrary to Higgins' claims, this dissertation empirically proves that ETV murderers pathologically change their *self-guides* in an attempt to resolve their negative emotionality, eventually culminating in homicide and the rebirth of 'self-as-killer.' Unlike Leyton, it is not our contention that this permanently reconciles the offender's crisis of *self*.⁹¹ In fact, the relief from negative emotionality might only be momentary, a handclap, or indeed, it might be a lifelong existential unification—the 10 cases here seem to show that it generally falls somewhere between.

As the *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy overwhelmingly appears across our 10 offender study, let us consider Higgins' overall summary that this discrepancy is “associated with

ⁿ For now I will use this more familiar term, though Beaseley's *sub-hegemonic masculinity*, which will be introduced in Chapter 2, is ultimately preferable.

dejection from perceived lack of effectiveness or self-fulfillment.”⁹² The dejected sufferer feels both existentially impotent and hollow. The successful commission of murder resolves the first problem by demonstrating the offender's competence, while the transcendent experience our culture associates with taking a life fills his emptiness. He becomes 'one who has gone where others fear to tread'. More to the point: ETV is a quick fix to an eternal problem. The need to rid oneself of negative emotionality is a strong motivator, and the choice to do so through criminality is by no means anomalous. There are additional motives to commit crime inherent in SDT. By noting that dejection-related emotions stemming from *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancies are associated with the absence of positive outcomes, while *actual/own:ought/own* and *actual/own:ought/other* discrepancies produce emotions resulting from the fear of negative outcomes⁹³, Higgins opens a second motivational door, leading to Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory of deviance.

1.4 General Strain Theory and the Self

Implicit in self-discrepancy theory, though neither mentioned nor identified in Higgins's writings or citations, is the sociologist Robert Agnew's concept of general strain theory (GST).⁹⁴ Following criticisms of the classic strain theories of Merton⁹⁵, Cohen⁹⁶, and Cloward & Ohlin⁹⁷—which dwelled solely on deviance resulting from the lack of institutionalized means to achieve wealth and upwards class mobility—Agnew developed GST as a broader theory “written at the social-psychological level: It focuses on the individual and his or her immediate social environment.”⁹⁸ In this way, it shares similarities with symbolic interactionism, and the two theories are wholly compatible. Agnew stresses that one of the key points differentiating GST from other criminological theories is that it “focuses explicitly on *negative relationships with others*: relationships in which the individual is not treated as he or she wants to be treated.”⁹⁹ This emphasis on interpersonal dealings is another way in which GST gels with interactionism. Over the course of his career, Agnew has categorized many types of strain. His strain as the “disjunction between *aspirations* and *actual achievements*”¹⁰⁰, “strain as the disjunction between *expectations* and *actual achievements*”¹⁰¹ and “strain as the disjunction between *just/fair outcomes* and *actual outcomes*”¹⁰² are all associated with the aforementioned “absence of positive outcomes”¹⁰³ in Higgins' self-discrepancy theory.

Compatible with SDT's presence of negative outcomes¹⁰⁴, “strain as the presentation of

negative stimuli”¹⁰⁵, played a surprisingly small role in the lives of most of our 10 offenders, with the notable exception of bullying.^o The hypothesis that negative stimuli provokes aggression is borne out by data.¹⁰⁶ Of the four strategies Agnew lists for avoiding negative stimuli, the two most relevant to ETV are drug-use^p and either (i) exacting revenge on either the source of the noxiousness or (ii) displacing this aggression onto a related person, group, or object. Every offender in this sample took the latter approach.

Agnew further identifies three types of strain specifically inflicted (or perceived to be inflicted) on the person by others: (1) removing or threatening to remove positively valued stimuli, (2) inflicting or threatening to inflict negatively-valued stimuli, and (3) preventing the attainment of positively-valued goals.¹⁰⁷ This last strain is consistent with the failure of the *actual/own self-concept* to match the *ideal/own self-guide* in self-discrepancy theory—a phenomenon experienced by all 10 offenders in our sample (see Chapter 3). Intriguingly, Agnew proposes that “strains increase the likelihood that individuals will experience a range of negative emotions, including anger, frustration, jealousy, depression, and fear”¹⁰⁸ which in turn may lead to criminal activity. We have already established how *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancies result in depression, dissatisfaction, disappointment, sadness, and frustration.¹⁰⁹ When these discrepancies are associated with strain resulting from a failure to achieve positively-valued goals, are anger and jealousy added to the psychological stew? Or do anger and aggression arise from frustration¹¹⁰ as conceptualized by Dollard et al.¹¹¹ as an unexpected blockage of goal attainment which occurs externally?¹¹²

Agnew's two other strains in which positively valued stimuli is removed (e.g., the death of David Berkowitz's adopted mother, James Holmes' break-up with his girlfriend), or threatened to be removed, and negatively-valued stimuli is inflicted or threatened to be inflicted (e.g., the physical and emotional abuse allegedly inflicted on Danny Rolling and Luka Magnotta), can obviously take a devastating toll on a person's well-being. Yet, these strains have rarely been evaluated from the perspective of affecting a person's *self-concept*, *self-guide*, or the relationship

^o Eighty percent of the sample—Chapman, Berkowitz, Ireland, Rolling, Magnotta, Arkwright, Rodger, and Cho—endured verbal and/or physical bullying growing up. Rolling and Magnotta both grew up in abusive households, though the former's was seemingly far more severe. Rolling was also imprisoned on multiple occasions, including a long stint in solitary confinement in a cell that was allegedly flooded with raw sewage. Regarding this last point, Agnew particularly stresses the impact of chronic foul odor, pollution, and restriction of personal space as strain.

^p Mark David Chapman, Danny Rolling, and Daniel Gonzalez all abused drugs and alcohol. There are conflicting reports about Berkowitz and Magnotta's substance use.

between the two. If, for instance, we consider the symbolic interactionists' position that one's *self* arises from and is shaped by social interaction¹¹³, schoolyard bullying is largely the infliction of negative stimulus *because* it results in the victim's *self* being stigmatized by others.¹¹⁴ Thus, the failure of the *self-concept* to match the *self-guide* can arguably result more from exposure to noxious social judgments than simply failing to achieve positively-valued goals. In fact, abstract goals such as self-worth are potentially impeded more by the beliefs of others than one's self. Symbolic interactionists have addressed this with their concept of the *self-fulfilling prophecy*.¹¹⁵ Clearly, the same overlap which Agnew discussed earlier also applies here.

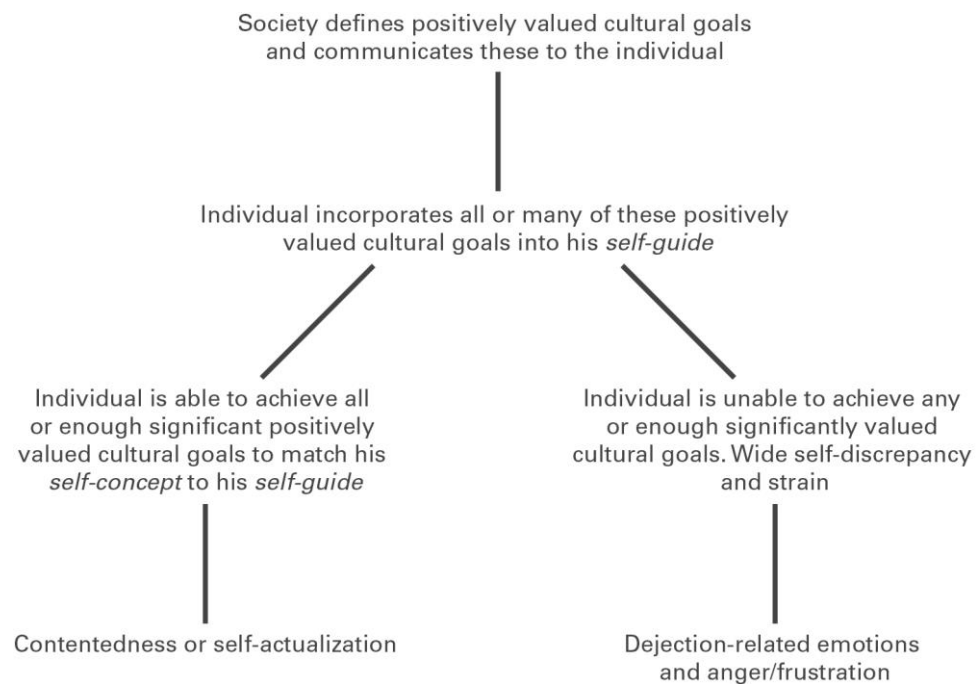


Figure 2. Cultural Goals, Strain, and Emotionality

Where strains are often seen as being related to tangible, material concerns (e.g., “I can’t keep a job which means I can’t house myself”) they are compounded when interpreted as reflecting aspects of the *self-concept* (e.g., “I am *the kind of person* who can’t keep a job, and because I can’t house myself I’m a *bum*.”) In this example, the physical discomfort of being poor and homeless is worsened by the person attributing this physically uncomfortable condition to a failing of their inner *self*. Beyond transforming one's *self-guide* to a *homicidal self-guide* as outlined in the previous section, Agnew lists a number of ways that crime can result from strain. One way is the need for corrective action in which “crime may be used to reduce or escape from strains, obtain revenge, and alleviate negative emotions...”¹¹⁶ Another is that certain strains are comparatively difficult to manage within the confines of the law. In GST, strains are also

increasingly likely to result in crime when the person experiencing them views them as high in magnitude (*à la* Self-Discrepancy Theory), has low self-control, and when the character of the strain incentivizes coping through criminal means.¹¹⁷

Strains which are high in magnitude—“the extent to which [a strain] is disliked and viewed as having a negative impact on one's life”¹¹⁸—have an increased chance of producing negative emotions. The magnitude of a strain is calculated by considering its degree (high vs. low), recency (now vs. then), duration (chronic vs. fleeting), and rate of recurrence (frequent vs. infrequent).⁹ Strains that are chronic and/or recurring increase the difficulty for an individual to cope lawfully.¹¹⁹ By remaining in a state of perpetual dejection or agitation, whenever the individual must contend with a new strain, it is experienced as much more overwhelming than it is in actuality, provoking an exaggerated emotional response.¹²⁰ Echoing Self-Discrepancy Theory, Agnew proposes that the magnitude is further inflated when the strain threatens the “core goals, needs, values, activities, and/or identities of the individual”¹²¹, specifically providing the example of a person's masculine identity^r.

Where low self-control can also result from biological factors such as damage to or underdevelopment of the frontal lobe, Agnew, the sociologist, emphasizes the social control theorists' focus on the individual's ties to society. One factor binding people to society is their emotional connection to specific others: family members, friends, teachers, fellow employees etc. Another is their feelings toward institutions—family, church, political affiliation, the economy, school¹²², and the workplace¹²³—to name but a few. An individual who has weak or no emotional bonds has less to lose by committing a crime. To paraphrase a serial bank robber who spent most of his adult life in the Canadian prison system: “[Habitual criminals] don't think they have a future anyway.”¹²⁴ Social control theorists refer to this as a 'stake in conformity'¹²⁵: the incentive a given person has to play by society's rules. Finally, Agnew notes that if an individual does not believe it is wrong to commit a crime, he is less morally constrained. In Chapter 3, such statements are marked with '[*mj*]' to highlight the ubiquity of moral justification^s

⁹ For example, bullying involving physical violence (high degree) which is ongoing (chronic in duration), and just occurred (as recently as 'now') is extremely high in magnitude.

^r As we will see, insecurity over one's gender is present, albeit to different degrees, in all 10 offenders in our sample.

^s In his excellent *The Seductions of Crime*, sociologist Jack Katz points out the moral underpinnings of violence, but seems to relegate it to *reactive* homicides. The fact that moral justifications to commit murder were given by all 10 offenders in this sample demonstrates that they also frequently apply to pre-meditated and 'abnormal' acts of violence as well.

in the commission of violence.¹²⁶ A list of potential strains Agnew specifically mentions includes:

Parental rejection. Supervision/discipline that is erratic, excessive, and/or harsh. Child abuse and neglect. Negative secondary school experiences (e.g., low grades, negative relations with teachers, the experience of school as boring and a waste of time). Abusive peer relations (e.g., insults, threats, physical assaults). Work in the secondary labor market (i.e., 'bad jobs' that pay little, have few benefits, little opportunity for advancement, and unpleasant working conditions). Chronic unemployment. Marital problems. The failure to achieve selected goals, including thrills/excitement, high levels of autonomy, masculine status, and the desire for much money in a short period of time. Criminal victimization. Residence in economically deprived communities. Homelessness. Discrimination based on characteristics such as race/ethnicity or gender.¹²⁷

As Chapter 3 will reveal, multiple different strains were found in the 10 offenders comprising our sample.

In conclusion, General Strain Theory and Self-Discrepancy Theory are not only complimentary but may actually be different ways of discussing the same phenomenon.

1.5 Face-Work and the Communication Theory of Identity

There are several important aspects of symbolic interaction which SDT does not incorporate. One indispensable omission is Goffman's (technically 'dramaturgical') observation that individuals and groups adjust the way they perform their identity in accordance with their immediate social encounters.¹²⁸ Goffman refers to this as *face-work*¹²⁹ which begins with the enacting of a *line*: "... a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which [a person] expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself."¹³⁰ Even if a person refuses or neglects to take a *line*, other participants in the social encounter will interpret his behaviour as if he had. As such, they will form conclusions about him based upon their observations. In the social world, a refusal to perform is still a performance of sorts. A second concept, *face*, consists of positively valued social attributes connected to a *line* which others perceive a person has adopted. As *face* is defined in terms of positive value, it must be carefully maintained, lest it be lost. Furthermore, because *face* is socially beneficial, its owner becomes emotionally attached to it. When others communicate to an individual that his *face* has exceeded his expectations of it, he will have a positive emotional response. If it falls short, the emotional response will be negative, while feedback which meets his expectations has little

emotional impact.

In this way, Goffman's dramaturgical theory is nearly identical to symbolic interactionism, though it focuses more on individual encounters than their sum total. According to Goffman, *being in face* allows a person to feel secure and confident. More importantly, one has to first *be in face* in order to *maintain* it. It is not uncommon for a person to unwittingly find themselves without a *line* that meets the expectations of a social situation. Goffman refers to this as *being out of face* and proposes that it can result in feeling ashamed for undermining the collective definition of the situation. Similar emotions arise from *being in wrong face* which occurs when newly acquired information casts doubt upon the authenticity of a previously established *face*. In both situations, the person's emotional attachment to their *face* may result in negative emotionality because their positive *self-concept* is suddenly under threat. The mental and emotional discombobulation the person experiences in that moment may cause them to lose their composure and be *shamefaced*. Goffman stresses that an integral part of interaction ritual is “the combined effect of the rule of self-respect and the rule of considerateness”¹³¹ which incentivizes a participant to *maintain* his own face along with those of others in the encounter.

Though Goffman perceived a connection between emotional responses and *face* long before the development of self-discrepancy or general strain theory, attempts to quantitatively confirm anything resembling interaction ritual fall short of encapsulating its full complexity. The best effort has come in the form of The Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) which notes:

As early as Goffman's (1959) formative work, researchers have been interested in how individuals 'perform' their selves. It seems almost obvious to say that one's self-concepts are engaged when he/she interacts. However, it is less obvious that ascribed identities, the identities others project on a person... are not only related to a person's self-images but also to his/her social behavior.¹³²

CTI concerns the relationship between four loci of identity: personal, enacted, relational, and communal. One's *personal identity* is essentially his *self-concept*, while his *enacted identity* is the identity he performs in social interactions—his *line*. Echoing Goffman, Jung & Hecht stress that simply because enactments express one's identity, it does not mean they are somehow separate from it.¹³³ For these CTI pioneers, communication and identity are intertwined to the point of being virtually synonymous. Next is *relational identity*, which is broken down into four levels, though only the first is useful for our purposes. Termed *ascribed relational identity*, it is shaped

by one's understanding of how he is perceived by others in his life (comparable to Higgins' *other*, but broader in scope).¹³⁴ Finally, and similarly unrelated to our analysis, is *communal identity* which deals with the definition of identity by groups and collectives.¹³⁵

CTI delineates these four frames for quantitative analysis, but holds that, in practice, they 'interpenetrate', meaning a thorough analysis would involve examining multiple frames simultaneously. This is because, according to Jung & Hecht, frames “are not really separate from each other. One's personal identity is infused into one's enacted and relational identities...”¹³⁶ Fortunately, our main concern is the relationships between *personal* and *enacted* identity, and *personal* and *ascribed relational identity*, a topic which Jung & Hecht specifically explored.¹³⁷

In CTI, negative-emotionality arises from problems related to three 'communication outcomes': “communication satisfaction”¹³⁸, “feeling understood”¹³⁹, and “conversational appropriateness and effectiveness”¹⁴⁰. 'Communication satisfaction' is the missing piece of the proverbial jigsaw connecting symbolic interactionism to SDT. It is an emotional reaction to feedback we receive from others regarding our *self-concept*. Generally, if others reinforce our own notions of who we are, we feel satisfied, while feedback which contradicts our *self-concept* leaves us dissatisfied. Tying this to *self-discrepancy theory*, feedback disconfirming our *self-concept* may cause us to see it as incongruent with our *self-guide*, resulting in discrepancy and negative-emotionality. 'Feeling understood'—the idea that we are accurately and effectively conveying information about ourselves to others—is similarly important because we rely on appraisals of this information to *self-evaluate*. Finally, as touched upon in our discussion of interaction ritual, there are unspoken social expectations tied to every conversation, a phenomenon referred to in CTI as 'conversational appropriateness and effectiveness'. When people respond to us in a way that does not confirm our *self-concept*, we may judge that we are violating the expected norms of communication. In worst case scenarios, rather than dismissing one or two incidents as gaffes, we come to see ourselves as somebody who is inherently incapable of conforming to socially accepted standards of interaction (see the case of James Holmes in Chapter 3).

Whether related to 'communication satisfaction', 'feeling understood', or 'conversational appropriateness and effectiveness', negative communication outcomes result from *gaps* between two or more frames of identity. As with *self-discrepancies*, the greater the *gap* the stronger negative emotionality experienced. Accordingly, individuals are rationally motivated to reduce

or close the *gaps* altogether. In a study of 135 undergraduate communication students at an American university, Jung & Hecht found substantial evidence that a *personal-enacted identity gap* may lead to undesirable results in all three communication outcomes as well as producing a *personal-ascribed relational identity gap*.¹⁴¹ The researchers also found that this *personal-ascribed relational identity gap* does not cause any of the communication outcomes. Rather, the results indicate that both a *personal-enacted identity gap* and the three communication outcomes may precede a *personal-ascribed relational identity gap*. Taking this into consideration, Jung & Hecht convincingly opine that a *personal-ascribed relational identity gap* is either directly or circuitously (via communication outcomes), the result of a *personal-enacted identity gap*.¹⁴²

Setting abstract conceptualization aside for a moment, the reasons for this become obvious. A person who is unable to communicate his true nature (*personal-enacted identity gap*) will inevitably be misjudged by others—this underpins communication dissatisfaction, misunderstanding, and inappropriate/ineffective conversation—resulting in social feedback which fails to support his *self-concept* (*personal-ascribed relational identity gap*). The notion that a *personal-ascribed relational identity gap* could precede disconfirming feedback implies a fundamental misunderstanding of the basic principles of symbolic interactionism. If our *self-concept/personal identity* is formulated, maintained, altered, and shattered by how others react to it—the Me reacting to the specific or *generalized other*—then the very idea is sequentially flawed with respect to cause and effect.

There are, of course, other reasons why there may be *gaps* between somebody's *personal* and *enacted* identities. Jung & Hecht list shyness, impression management[†], intimidation, and dishonesty.¹⁴³ Though they briefly acknowledge this last possibility, the authors do not openly consider the challenges it proposes to their theory.¹⁴⁴ In a case of willful deception, for which their measurements and methods do not adequately account, a *gap* would arise not from one's inability to competently enact his *personal identity*, but (i) from a failure to lie effectively, that is, to convince others that one's *enacted* and *personal identity* are the same when they are not (e.g., Luka Magnotta)—the equivalent of Goffman's *being in wrong face*—or (ii) due to discomfort about having successfully masqueraded as something else (e.g., Mark David Chapman). Unfortunately, due to the paucity of research on deception in CTI, at this point, these speculations are supported only by introspection and reasoning.

[†] A polite euphemism for a non-egregious deception.

In Chapter 3, we will examine how *personal-enacted identity gaps* affected the psyches of Mark David Chapman, Luka Magnotta, and James Holmes. First, given the prevalence of mental illness among violent offenders, the interplay between psychological afflictions and communication will now be briefly explored.

1.6 Communication Dysfunction and Mental Illness

As has been firmly established, communication between an offender and his intended audience will necessarily occur through the use and interpretation of *signs*: somatic gestures, facial expressions, verbal utterances, written passages, drawings, or objects which hold shared cultural meanings. Using the inferior parlance of symbolic interactionism rather than semiotics, Mead referred to these as *significant symbols* which an individual presents to others in order to call out for a socially-held response. For example, when we hold a door open for somebody, we generally expect this gesture to be verbally acknowledged with a 'thank you.' If the person we hold the door open for does not acknowledge our kindness, a number of potential interpretations of this breach of social convention may occur to us:

1. Does this person *expect* people to open the door for them?
2. Does this person expect people *who look like me* to open the door for them?
3. Is this person actually grateful, but so shy that they avoid communication with strangers?
4. Does this person open the doors for other people? If so, do they expect verbal acknowledgement of the gesture?
5. Is opening the door for people becoming an archaic social convention?

Whether signaling or interpreting, communication using *signs* is a constant ongoing part of the social process which leads us to develop impressions of specific people, ourselves, groups, and society as a whole. To recap, Goffman highlighted the importance of adopting a *line* which meets the expectations of a given social encounter in order to avoid *being out of face* or *being in wrong face*.¹⁴⁵ However, by definition, somebody suffering from a severe mental illness or personality disorder will experience chronic difficulties judging what the appropriate *line* is and enacting it.

First, consider the potential for misinterpretation inherent in the use of *signs*, along with the possibility of unintentional breaches of communication etiquette (Jung & Hecht's

'Conversational Appropriateness and Effectiveness') which frequently occur between healthy, socially-functioning individuals. Then, take into account the serious mental illnesses attributed to each of these 10 offenders. Mark Chapman was diagnosed as schizophrenic by five separate psychiatrists and manic-depressive by a sixth.¹⁴⁶ This first diagnosis was also given to James Holmes¹⁴⁷, Daniel Gonzalez¹⁴⁸, Luka Magnotta¹⁴⁹, and David Berkowitz¹⁵⁰, while Elliot Rodger was prescribed Risperidone, an anti-psychotic treatment for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.¹⁵¹ Holmes was also diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder¹⁵² and schizotypal personality disorder¹⁵³—frequently a precursor to psychosis.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, Danny Rolling had been “diagnosed as suffering from atypical psychosis”¹⁵⁵

David Berkowitz, Colin Ireland, Danny Rolling, Luka Magnotta, Daniel Gonzalez, Anthony Arkwright and Elliot Rodger all evidence(d) psychopathic traits, indicated by a score of 20+^u on the *Psychopathic Checklist Revised*.¹⁵⁶ Borderline Personality Disorder was diagnosed in Mark David Chapman¹⁵⁷, Danny Rolling¹⁵⁸, and Luka Magnotta.¹⁵⁹ Chapman and Magnotta were also deemed to have Narcissistic Personality Disorder at one point¹⁶⁰, an affliction which Rolling also apparently showed symptoms of according to separate psychologists.¹⁶¹ Antisocial personality disorder has also been attributed to Rolling¹⁶² and Magnotta¹⁶³, though based on the diagnostic criteria, Berkowitz, Ireland, Gonzalez, and Arkwright should also qualify. Magnotta was diagnosed with Histrionic Personality Disorder¹⁶⁴, while Rolling also displayed histrionic traits.¹⁶⁵ Obsessive compulsive¹⁶⁶ and avoidant¹⁶⁷ features were also detected in Rolling, paranoid traits in Berkowitz¹⁶⁸, and selective mutism in Seung-Hui Cho.¹⁶⁹

By listing the offenders' diagnoses, we do not intend to directly explain their acts of violence purely in terms of mental illness, although we acknowledge the likelihood of its contribution to this complex process^v. For our purposes, these diagnostic categories in themselves are meaningless; rather, the associated symptoms that led the offenders to be diagnosed as such illustrate impairments in their social functioning that, according to

^u Obviously, I was unable to conduct thorough file reviews or face-to-face interviews with any of these offenders. However, there was more than enough information available on them among my sources to make a reasonable approximation of whether or not they exceeded a score of 20 on the PCL-R. If this informal manner of distance diagnosis is completely unacceptable to the reader, I recommend they dismiss my assessment and move on. It has very little bearing on the rest of the dissertation.

^v A particularly egregious example of this reductionism is Cullen's *Columbine*, which minimizes the social aspects of the April 20, 1999 Columbine High School massacre, to the point where they are essentially regarded as non-factors. Instead, Cullen emphasizes Harris and Klebold's mental disorders. The vast majority of people with psychopathy, schizophrenia, personality disorders, and manic depression do not commit murder. This is not a frivolous point. Causation, particularly in social life, should never be reduced to a single variable.

expressive/transformational process, could result in a truncated or unstable *self*. These social impediments include bizarre beliefs (schizophrenia¹⁷⁰, schizoaffective¹⁷¹, and schizotypal personality disorder¹⁷²), deviant affect (psychopathy¹⁷³, schizophrenia¹⁷⁴, schizotypal personality disorder¹⁷⁵, schizoaffective disorder¹⁷⁶), and empathy deficits (psychopathy¹⁷⁷, narcissistic personality disorder¹⁷⁸, antisocial personality disorder¹⁷⁹). It is hereby argued that each of these social impediments will result in *communication dysfunctions*.

In sociology, 'bizarre beliefs' fall under the category of *cognitive deviance*—"holding beliefs which are unconventional and non-normative, which, in some social circles, causes their believers to be shunned, isolated, marginalized, rendered powerless, criticized, condemned, and punished"¹⁸⁰—and therefore those with 'bizarre beliefs' nearly always fail to meet Jung & Hecht's 'Conversational Appropriateness and Effectiveness.' Consider the pervasive avoidant reaction most people give when a mentally ill person starts 'talking nonsense' to them on the street. Any person who is routinely and rudely ignored by those they converse or attempt to converse with will experience social isolation and other forms of negative feedback which ETV demonstrates will shake their *self-concept*, manifesting in negative-emotionality.

'Deviant affect', which refers to either a flat or shallow affect, is essentially the difficulty or inability to manifest a facial expression which is expected in a given social situation. For example, Jeffrey Dahmer's flat affect while speaking about cannibalizing a corpse¹⁸¹ during an NBC interview led many to doubt whether his professed remorse was genuine or not, because the socially-expected facial expression when discussing something so terrible should reflect embarrassment and/or shame. One can only wonder how Dahmer's affect influenced his social development and inclusion before he committed his first murder. Deviant affect elicits negative results in all three of Jung & Hecht's communication outcomes.

With their 'empathy deficits', psychopaths and individuals with narcissistic or antisocial personality disorder, may struggle (in different ways and to different extents) to perceive or meaningfully understand the subjective experiences of others. They will, whether unknowingly or intentionally, miss important social cues during interactions, and commit *faux-pas* by speaking out of turn or excessively. The histrionic's need to always be the centre of attention leaves him similarly vulnerable to this.¹⁸² Discussing interaction ritual, Goffman writes of how participants frequently allow an individual who has made a gaffe to 'save *face*', avoiding social confusion by allowing each participant to temporarily accept each other's *lines*. To do otherwise constitutes a

gaffe in itself. Fittingly, Goffman's observation that a “person who can witness another's humiliation and unfeelingly retain a cool countenance himself is said in our society to be 'heartless...’¹⁸³ reflects the 'empathy deficits' implicit in psychopathy, narcissism, and antisocial personality disorder.

In summary, owing to the very nature of their symptoms, each of these mental illnesses and disorders manifest in an impeded ability to take a *line* which prevents them from *being out of face* or *being in wrong face*.¹⁸⁴ Depending on the condition, this may happen sporadically (but often enough to impact the offender) or in nearly every social encounter. ETV suggests that the resulting feedback will potentially threaten the person's *self-concept*, eventually resulting in negative-emotionality and the abandoning of the *self-guide*. Again, this is to say nothing of the numerous non-communication-related effects that mental illnesses and disorders may contribute to the commission of violence.

By integrating symbolic interactionism, semiotics, Self-Discrepancy Theory, General Strain Theory, and the Communication Theory of Identity, ETV is the only academic lens capable of analyzing the unique transformations of *self* in individual offenders as a communicative process.

1.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we have elaborated on the fundamental structure and mechanisms of ETV; their etiological paths through communication; and the role of self-discrepancy, strain, and identity gaps in conjuring up negative emotionality and destabilizing or truncating the *self*. This theoretical framework, incorporating elements of symbolic interactionism, semiotics, SDT, GST, and CTI, reveals ample motivation for the drastic changes in an offender's identity which Leyton first discussed in a cursory fashion more than 30 years ago.¹⁸⁵ Where Chapter 1 has provided the shape of ETV, Chapter 2—concentrating exclusively on cultural narratives of identity and the ever-expanding role the media has in promulgating them—fills in the lines with colour and detail. The importance of the media in this process was keenly acknowledged by Leyton in the Eighties, minus the hyperbole and alarmism which commonly undermined such views during that decade:

[These murderers] are all justifying their behaviour and drawing their ideas from a dehumanizing mass culture that glorifies and legitimizes violence as an appropriate—

even 'manly'—response to the frustrations and disappointments that are a normal part of life. In such a cultural milieu, self-control remains untaught, even stigmatized as submission and cowardice.¹⁸⁶

The next chapter will prove Leyton's claim. We must also consider a second:

[B]oth serial and mass murderers are overwhelmed with a profound sense of alienation and frustration from their feelings that no matter how fierce their ambitions may be... no matter what they do, they could not achieve the place in society to which they aspired... they have not, like Durkheim's contented man, accepted their station in life.¹⁸⁷

Moving forward, the question of why so many young men living in the relative material comfort of the first-world are profoundly unhappy and incomplete is addressed in light of the unprecedented technological advancements, media-bombardment, and alienation of late-capitalist, Anglophone societies.

Endnotes

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2. Media, Masculinity, Cultural Goals, and Talismans

*“In the new-mediated ‘reality’ thoroughly awash in art-as-advertising and advertising-as-art, acts of violence like those of Chapman... need to be studied as media-simulations, as quintessentially mimetic arts.” - Joel Black, *The Aesthetics of Murder**

*“From rock and rap music and videos, Hollywood action films, professional and college sports, the culture produces a stream of images of violent, abusive men and promotes characteristics such as dominance, power, and control as means of establishing or maintaining manhood.” - Jackson Katz & Sut Jhally, *The Boston Globe**

*“Movies don’t create psychos. Movies make psychos more creative!” - Billy, *Scream**

2.0 Introduction

Having established a basic theoretical foundation for ETV in Chapter 1, we will now enter the world of *signs* where the drama of murder is conceived, born, and broadcast. Following a brief summary and contextualization of the history of mass media (2.1: The USA, UK, and Canada in the Information Age), a theoretical and evidential corpus is presented to demonstrate that we live in some approximation of Baudrillard's *hyperreality* (2.2: Hyperreality). This accounts for the mimetic/anti-mimetic semiotic dialogue (*intermimesis*) from which our 10 offenders drew identity and meaning. The concept of *hyporeality*, the fictional world of myth and religion preceding the Information Age, is then introduced (2.3: Is Religion Hyperreal?) in order to explain contemporary religion's presence in both *hypo* and *hyperreality*. To varying extents, religion facilitated or coloured the crimes of 50% of the offenders in our sample. Next, evidence is presented showing that rather than taking the perspective of Mead's *generalized other*, certain offenders turn to the purported value systems of supernatural entities—the *hyporeal other* (e.g., Jehovah, Allah)—or media-borne fictional characters (e.g., Holden Caulfield, Freddy Krueger), the *hyperreal other*. These concepts are described in detail in 2.4: The Hyporeal and Hyperreal Other, substantiated through case studies, and integrated into the *expressive/transformative* framework.

Having established the inextricable connection between the *hyperreal* and Reality^w, it is argued that traditional notions of masculinity have been absorbed intermimetically into media

^w When capitalized, the term “Reality” refers to the physical and social world which would exist in the absence of media.

discourse where they mutated into what is termed *hyperreal masculinity* (2.5: Hyperreal Masculinity). *Hyperreal masculinity* has become an ideal gender associated with *sub-hegemonic masculinity* to which many of the offenders in this sample aspire, both in their *pre-homicidal* and *homicidal selves*. As *hyperreal masculinity* is conveyed through media, chiefly film and television, and is often portrayed by male celebrities or pseudo-celebrities, it should come as no surprise that *expressive/transformational* killers strive to appear in the media spotlight themselves. They do so either by using murder as a mechanism to obtain cultural relevance (Mark David Chapman, David Berkowitz, Colin Ireland, Danny Rolling, Daniel Gonzalez, Anthony Arkwright) and/or by creating and disseminating media in which they are the 'star', either before, during, or after the commission of a homicide (Luka Magnotta, James Holmes, Elliot Rodger, Seung-Hui Cho). In 2.6: Fame, Fortune, and Epistemosis, it is argued that beyond the interconnectedness of *hyperreal masculinity* and the media which propagates it, celebrity has become a dominant cultural goal, on par with attaining wealth and upward class mobility. The section concludes with a brief discussion of *epistemosis*—a psychosocial state ushered in by *hypo-* and *hyperreality*—which leaves vast swaths of the public unable or unwilling to discern what is true or Real.

Finally, we will examine the concept of *narrative prototypes* or *talismans* (2.7 Talismans and Avatars), *hyporeal* or *hyperreal memes*¹ and *memeplexes*² which ETV offenders draw upon to form their *ideal/own* selves. These include specific texts or corpuses^x such as *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Holy Bible*, and *Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise, while offender-influencing characters in these texts—Holden Caulfield, Jesus Christ, Freddy Krueger—are called *avatars*.^y Like the literary genie in the lamp, *avatars* reside within *talismans*. Another less specific and more generalized form of *narrative prototype* is the *archetype*: “the original pattern or model of which all things of the same type are representations or copies.”³ All *avatars* are derived from *archetypes*, though *archetypes*, being original cultural models, may exist independently of specific characters. For instance, beyond being an *avatar* to ice-pick murderer Luka Magnotta, Catherine Tramell, the fictional antagonist of Paul Verhoeven's 1992 film *Basic Instinct*, was

^x My use of the term texts and corpuses (collections of texts) also extends to films, television programs, video games etc.

^y In the classic Hindu use of the term *avatar* refers to a metaphysical entity which manifests in a bodily form. Here it means a media-borne entity which manifests in Reality when an offender uses it to construct a (typically homicidal) *self*.

also an archetypal 'femme-fatale.'

In conclusion, this chapter establishes the origins and nature of *hypo* and *hyperreality*, and demonstrates that the 10 ETV offenders in our sample drew upon *hyperreal* concepts of masculinity in order to develop *ideal/own self-guides*, particularly in their homicidal incarnations. For the purposes of this study, *hypo* and *hyperreality* should be understood as semiotic structures absorbed intermimetically into the identities of *expressive/transformativ*e offenders, and spit out in the form of posed bodies, letters and phone calls to police and media, costumes, and numerous other *identity signatures*. These *signatures* are then subject to ETV interpretative analysis. Though this semiotic phenomenon was observed by a post-structuralist, Jean Baudrillard, it is fully compatible with symbolic interactionism. Any further associations with post-structuralism end there.

2.1 The USA, UK, and Canada in the Information Age

An initial review of our 10 ETV case studies uncovered the pervading influence of media on both (i) the technologies of communication utilized in the expression and (ii) the semiotic components of *self* negotiated in these crimes. In the 21st century, we are increasingly socialized through our near constant interaction with media. According to a study by Internet analyst Mary Meeker, in 2014 Americans spent an average of 7.4 hours a day staring at screens: approximately two and a half hours devoted to Smartphones, the same amount of time in front of a television, an hour and 43 minutes on the computer, and 43 minutes of tablet-use.⁴ Any theory encompassing symbolic interactionism which does not account for this social phenomenon is incomplete.

Let us then situate these semiotic murders within the unprecedented historical and social context of the Information Age. The past 600 years of human history have seen an exponential increase in the abundance, prevalence, and use of media. It has been over 575 years since the invention of the printing press⁵, films have been screened in public since 1895⁶, there has been roughly one hundred years of radio broadcasting⁷, television stations since 1928⁸, and approximately 15 years of Internet use by the majority^z of the British, American, and Canadian population.⁹ Sixty-four per cent of American adults¹⁰, 72% of Brits between the ages of 16-64¹¹, and 67%¹² of Canadians own Smartphones. The first murder to air on television was the 1963

^z In 2002, 61.59% of the population of Canada, 58.79% of the USA, and 56.48% of the UK were using the Internet.

assassination of Lee Harvey Oswald. Eleven years later, newscaster Christine Chubbuck proclaimed, “in keeping with Channel 40's policy of bringing you the latest in 'blood and guts', and in living color, you are going to see another first—attempted suicide”¹³ before fatally shooting herself through the head during a broadcast: another hallmark.

From a different perspective, today's elderly were never without radio and cinema. Most baby boomers have always had television. Generation X and Y have overwhelmingly grown up with computers and video games, watching these mediums transform immensely over short periods. The last decade of the 20th century saw the presence of mass media in our lives become interactive in the form of the World Wide Web. In the 21st century, the Internet's presence and influence are now a constant, embodied on our person in the form of Smartphones. Perhaps most jarring is the realization that late-Millennials and iGens have never *not* had Smartphones: portable digital devices which enable their owners to summon all preceding types of media whenever they wish and with minimal effort. This ubiquity, particularly when combined with social networking sites, is increasingly fusing mankind and media into the same entity. Referencing the French post-structuralist sociologist, semiotician, and philosopher, Jean Baudrillard, Joel Black proposed “This is no longer simply a case of life imitating art but... of life being indistinguishable from, or unimaginable without, art... in the far broader sense of advertising and the commercial arts.”¹⁴ This bombardment of signs and narratives results in a moral, existential, and epistemological *anomie*^{aa} called *hyperreality*. In its original conception by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim, *anomie* is a state of normlessness resulting from rapid social change which may result in criminal or non-criminal deviance.¹⁵

2.2 Hyporeality and Hyperreality

Baudrillard's notion of *hyperreality* was first articulated in his highly influential *Simulacra and Simulation*, published in French in 1981. In this treatise, Baudrillard sought to map the intersection of media and Reality using semiotics—the study of communication by interpreting *signs*—an approach which fortuitously accords with the symbolic interactionist

^{aa} As a post-structuralist, Baudrillard would likely reject my use of the structural-functionalist concept of *anomie* to describe the malaise brought on by *hyperreality*. Nevertheless, *anomie* is (1) the result of rapid change, (2) causing people to be alienated and morally confused (*hyperreality* adds a psychotic element—a confusion of what is real—to the problem), and (3) sometimes results in deviance. Once we have swept theoretical dogma aside, their interconnection becomes obvious. They are linked through a semiotic order, even if their roots are in opposing theoretical soil.

underpinnings of ETV.^{bb} A key focus of *Simulacra and Simulation* and a hallmark of hyperrealism are *simulacra: signs* that (1) either never had or (2) no longer have an original prototype in Reality.¹⁶ An example of the first are fictional characters or places—in his *Travels in Hyperreality*, the Italian semiotician Umberto Eco provides the classic examples of Mickey Mouse and Disneyland.¹⁷ The second refers more to depictions of people who are now deceased or places that have been destroyed. For example, at the 2012 Coachella music festival a hologram of murdered rapper Tupac Shakur was projected to make it appear as if he were performing alongside former collaborators Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg.¹⁸ Baudrillard argues that since the rise of the mass media, the social world has become a *simulation* comprised of *simulacra*^{cc}: “the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal.”¹⁹ Emotionally unstable, solipsistic, and tenuous in his identity, the isolated individual's social world is largely relegated to the media. Compelled to turn to *simulation* for semiotic structure and narrative cohesion, his murders leave a *hyperreal* fingerprint.

The most overt manifestation of this in ETV is the hockey mask worn by spree killer Daniel Gonzalez depicting the slasher-movie villain, Jason Voorhees. Jason is a *third-order simulacrum*, a fictional character who never existed in Reality—that is, independent of the media—and the rendering of his trademark hockey mask^{dd} into physical form is *anti-mimetic*: a case of life imitating art.²⁰ Yet, Jason was little more than a copy^{ee} of Michael Myers, the antagonist of John Carpenter's *Halloween*. And, as specifically stated in the film, Myers is a variation of the bogeyman^{ff} *archetype*: the final *simulacrum* in this causal chain.

Though the debate as to whether the world is *mimetic* or *anti-mimetic* has raged for over a millennium, this is obviously a bi-directional process; that is to say, the nature of the contemporary human experience is *intermimetic*. We interact with *hyperreality* through

^{bb} Both semiotics and symbolic interactionism share a common ancestor in the writings of the 19th century American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce.

^{cc} *Simulacra* are contrasted with *representations* which, either through similarity or convention, refer to Real objects: a portrait of an extant Douglas fir tree, for example, whether painted in the realist or impressionist style.

^{dd} The hockey mask that personifies Jason was first worn by the character in *Friday the Thirteenth Part III*, meaning that the most recognizable and iconic depiction of the character is itself a departure from the original character.

^{ee} Filmmakers John Carpenter and Victor Miller, who conceptualized Michael Myers and Jason Voorhees respectively, both named their antagonists after people they knew. So, while these *simulacra* did not have an exact existing prototype, it would be inaccurate to say that no *mimesis*—art imitating life—was involved in their creation.

^{ff} Both Myers and Voorhees act out the conventions of the bogeyman, murdering teenagers who engage in sexual activity and substance use. They are literally 'getting' children who behave badly. In *Killing For Slenderman*, Mellor, Venkatesh, Wallin, and Thomas look at the bogeyman as an *archetype* with a 'don't function.'

intermimesis, sending and receiving *signs*, crafting and negotiating our *selves*, society, views, values, and media products through this same process. For Baudrillard, however, the line between media depiction and Reality has become so indistinguishably blurred that the question of *mimesis* vs. *anti-mimesis* is altogether meaningless. Joel Black proposes “it is no accident that the decade of the presidency of a former movie actor and television host Ronald Reagan⁸⁸ coincided with a hyperreal phase of mass culture when the media (literature, film, TV, and all the other arts) came to mediate as never before the general public's sense of ‘reality.’”²¹

Actually, there is some indication that Baudrillard did not believe in Reality at all, only a series of converging and conflicting interpretations.²² Our position is more moderate, rooted in the Realist notion that “even if there were no human thought, even if there were no human beings, whatever there is other than human thought (and what depends on that, causally or logically) would still be just what it actually is.”²³ *Hyperreality*, then, is a sort of delusion-inducing mass social condition resulting from near constant, often subconscious, rapid *intermimesis*, and manifesting socially (“You're like Kramer from *Seinfeld*”) and even physically in landscapes such as the Las Vegas strip and Hollywood.²⁴ There is still a Reality—Eugene Thacker's the *world-in-itself*²⁵— but it is increasingly difficult to discern. The recent phenomenon of 'fake news' and 'alternative facts' under the Trump presidency, in which Media Outlet A denounces Media Outlet B for reporting gross inaccuracies, while B accuses A of the same thing, is a testament as to how dizzying the process of ascertaining any aspect of Reality we have not experienced first-hand has become.²⁶

Baudrillard presciently embodied this phenomenon at the beginning of the first chapter of *Simulacra and Simulation* by offering a quote purporting to be from Ecclesiastes reading “The simulacrum is never what hides the truth—it is truth that hides the fact that there is none. The simulacrum is true.”²⁷ The passage is a fabrication, albeit a didactic one, cleverly echoing the spirit of Nietzschean prose. For the matter of the passage's veracity is secondary; what is of primary social importance is that readers who assume it to be true, act upon it *as if it is true*. By attributing the quote to a Biblical text, Baudrillard cheekily frames religion within the same question his Ecclesiastes deception has called forth. What prototype of God has ever existed in Reality? Is God *hyperreal*?

⁸⁸ And now the reality television star president, Donald Trump, ushered in by social media, with over 26 million Twitter followers at the time of this writing.

2.3 Is Religion Hyperreal?

Responding to Adam Possamai's designation of Jediism as one of many so-called *hyperreal religions*,²⁸ Markus Davidsen argues that *all* religions are *hyperreal*.²⁹ He sees this as strongly implied by Baudrillard's decision to use the Christian God to demonstrate the procession of *simulacra*. In the western world, the truth of God's existence, as interpreted and relayed by the Catholic church, was taken for granted by nearly the entire population from approximately 325 C.E. to 1517 C.E.^{hh} Icons depicting God, Jesus, and other religious characters were considered to be accurate earthly *representations* of these metaphysical figures which were central to the worshipper's ritual enactment of faith. However, as Baudrillard notes, with the coming of the Protestant reformationⁱⁱ, iconoclasts began destroying these graven images because, in Baudrillard's semiotic interpretation, icons expunge divinity from man's conscience by situating and defining divinity in the material world. Secretly, and perhaps subconsciously, fearing that "God never existed, that only the simulacrum existed, even that God was never anything but his own simulacrum"³⁰ the iconoclastic Protestants sought to purge religious icons in order to conceal that, rather than being profound *representations*, they were empty *simulacra* comprising a self-referential, self-perpetuating metaphysical *simulation*.³¹

While Baudrillard restricted his analysis to the Christian God^{jj}, Davidsen correctly notes that "all other religious notions referring to supernatural agents, worlds or processes are also simulacra and all religions are per definition systems of simulacra."³² In a sense, Davidsen is right: ultimately religions, deities, and supernatural beings are *simulacra*, and this would seem to constitute *hyperreality*. But, crucially, Baudrillard writes of *hyperreality* emerging with the Information Age, and the spirit of his concept is of a ubiquitous and relentless barrage of *simulacra* disseminated through media devices leading to *simulation* and what we will term 'disorientation-by-semiotic-deluge.' Outside of the news media, today's *simulacra* are usually openly fictional, rarely purporting to embody any objective truth claims.^{kk} Religion, on the other

^{hh} I acknowledge the intellectual and existential heroism of the Lollards in 14th century England and Hussites in 15th century Bohemia, but the challenge to Catholicism did not have any significant popular impact until the transgressions of Martin Luther in the early-mid 1500s.

ⁱⁱ The Reformation itself coincided with the invention of the printing press, a device which not only proliferated dissident ideas, but is thought by many to have ushered in the mass media: see McLuhan (1962), Ahonen (2008).

^{jj} The promotion of atheism or agnosticism was never the purpose of *Simulacra and Simulation*, therefore Baudrillard restricted his example to a single paranormal entity.

^{kk} One interesting exception is the so-called 'found footage' genre of film, including *The Blair Witch Project* and the *Paranormal Activity* series. These fictional movies are intentionally shot in a crude manner to resemble 'home movies', and presented as non-fiction video excerpts edited together to tell the (often supernatural) tale of the camera

hand, emerged millenniums earlier in the Stone Age, and was embodied in far fewer *simulacra* (graven images, shrines, temples and churches, chapels in homes, pilgrimage sites, graveyards, religious symbols): all of which supported a master truth claim. Though there was a relatively paucity of *simulacra*, these *simulacra* evoked a greater verisimilitude, which could be called 'disorientation-by-semiotic-awe.' If contemporary *simulacra* result in an excess of 'reality' (*hyper*), the *simulacra* of the pre-industrial period furnished a 'reality' that was 'less than' (*hypo*). In their original incarnations, the various pagan religions, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were all *hyporeal* because they preceded the empiricism of the Enlightenment. That said, any attempt to determine the exact historical point where the *hyporeal* pre-mass media world ended and the *hyperreal* began is futile. Certainly, *hyporeality* governed Durkheim's socio-historical period of *mechanical solidarity*, in which collective beliefs and values were highly homogenous.³³ While the machine-replicated dissemination of fiction and news began with Gutenberg's printing press in the 16th century, much of the *hyporeal* still endures to this day in *hyperreality*, albeit more-often-than-not in an altered form. The Real, objective *world-in-itself*³⁴ has always existed, but has only been perceived through the correct application of scientific inquiry, arguably, if at all.

With the rise of the Information Age, religion in the western world has transformed from *hyporeal* to *hyperreal*, particularly in the United States.¹¹ As early as 1925, less than a decade after the beginning of popular radio broadcasts³⁵, American audiences from Staten Island to Los Angeles were bemoaning the oversaturation of religious sermons and content on local radio.³⁶ At this point, the number of religious radio stations in America was at an all-time high of 71.³⁷ By the 1950s, religion had moved onto the small screen in the form of televangelism. According to Gibney & Courtright³⁸, the National Religious Broadcasters reported that there were 414 religious television stations in 1987, with Dan Nicholas estimating a monthly growth of two new outlets in the United States. The same article cites estimates of more than \$2.5 billion in annual income from televangelism, with the more prominent ministries grossing between \$100-200

operators and their companions. The genre simulates the haphazard and disorienting camera work of amateur video for enhanced verisimilitude and to obfuscate the origins and nature of the horror. In the words of Dan O'Bannon, screenwriter of the space horror *Alien*: "the unknown is the most frightening thing... make the audience squint, stare and try to catch glimpses of the thing in the shadows." This same principle may explain the collective fascination and dread of killers on the loose.

¹¹ Our discussion of the history of *hyperreal* religion will be confined to the United States, partially for the sake of brevity, but also because the four offenders in the sample who incorporated religion into their *selves* (in any meaningful way) were all American.

million.³⁹ Ostling approximated a regular religious television viewing audience of 13.3 million during this same period.⁴⁰

Nor has *hyperreal* Christianity stopped at radio and television: it has bled out into geography. Where Walt Disney has Disneyland and Madame Tussaud has her eponymous wax museum, fundamentalist Christian Ken Ham has created a 510 foot replica of Noah's Ark in Kentucky⁴¹, and is similarly working on erecting a Tower of Babel in the bluegrass state.⁴² Ham also owns the Creation Museum where guests proceed into the Time Tunnel to “be transported back 6,000 years to the dawn of time as you begin your walk through biblical history.”⁴³ Along the way, the guest will “encounter a realistic Garden of Eden, animatronic Noah, Flood dioramas, and... a fascinating insectarium, sculpted dinosaurs of all kinds in the Dino Den, a full-size Allosaurus skeleton, and much more.”⁴⁴ At Orlando's Holyland Experience, one can stroll through a simulation of ancient Jerusalem, watch re-enactments of Christ's crucifixion, check out a live Televangelical Studio, and eat a 'Goliath Burger'.⁴⁵ Decades before, with the popularity of rock music emerging among youth, Christian institutions were quick to co-opt the medium (electric guitars, bass, and drums etc.), replacing the message with a religious one. Speaking on his church ceremonies, the now-disgraced Pastor Ted Haggard once stated “lots of Americans think of it as a rock concert.”⁴⁶ Similarly, following their social failures within the counter-culture, wannabe pop stars Mark David Chapman and Danny Rolling sought to perform their music and establish new *selves* in religious communities.⁴⁷

At this point, the reader may have noticed an ostensible theoretical contradiction: if the *hyporeal* is comprised of unsubstantiated truth claims, while the *hyperreal*, with the exception of the news media, is not, then how can religion transition into the *hyperreal* while still purporting to explain Reality? Interestingly, like the iconoclasts of the 16th century, Gibney & Courtright⁴⁸, Postman⁴⁹, and Fore⁵⁰ all argued vociferously against religious television and radio on the basis that it would depreciate the word of God. Their protestations are startlingly similar to their Reformation predecessors. In his classic media study *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman demarcates between what we term *hyporeal religion* which supplies believers with 'truths' they *need*, and the trend in *hyperreal religion* to give its couch potato congregation the 'truths' they *want*:

Though it may be un-American to say it, not everything is *televisable*. Or to put it more precisely, *what is televised is transformed from what it was to something else, which may*

or may not preserve its former essence [emphasis added]. For the most part, television preachers have not seriously addressed this matter. They have assumed that what had formerly been done in a church or a tent, and face-to-face, can be done on television without loss of meaning, without changing the quality of the religious experience. Perhaps their failure to address the translation issue has its origin in the hubris engendered by the dazzling number of people to whom television gives them access... [Historically] there is no great religious leader—from the Buddha to Moses to Jesus to Mohammed to Luther—who offered people what they want. Only what they need. But television is not well suited to offering people what they need. It is 'user friendly.' It is too easy to turn off. It is at its most alluring when it *speaks the language of dynamic visual imagery*. *It does not accommodate complex language or stringent demands. As a consequence, what is preached on television is not anything like the Sermon on the Mount* [emphasis added]. Religious programs are filled with good cheer. They celebrate affluence. Their featured players become celebrities. Though their messages are trivial, the shows have high ratings, or rather, *because* their messages are trivial, the shows have high ratings.⁵¹

Ironically, in a Darwinistic bid for survival, the doctrinal truth claims of the *hyporeal* have mutated to fit the *hyperreal* environment. In Chapter 3, when we explore the concept of *meta-delusions*, we will see how Mark David Chapman, David Berkowitz, and Danny Rolling all used religion in a 'user friendly' fashion to furnish what they *wanted*—justification to murder—rather than what they *needed*: divinely sanctioned restraint.

2.4 The Hyporeal and Hyperreal Other

Recent research in symbolic interactionism has revealed that the individual's Me does not always take the perspective of society-at-large (i.e. the *generalized other*) when making decisions.⁵² More often, it refers to specific sections of society which are useful in resolving a particular problem. For instance, Athens found that when a criminal considers perpetrating a violent act they refer to their *phantom community*—a conglomerate of “interlocutors from our past whom we cognitively replicate and whose perspectives we carry with us mentally”⁵³—rather than the *generalized other*. Thus, norms regarding the acceptable level and application of violence in the individual's *phantom community* depend on whether it is *unmitigated*, *mitigated*, or *nonviolent*⁵⁴, and provide him with a socially sanctioned response. In his examination of crimes perpetrated by gangsta rappers, Mellor discussed how the conventions of violence embedded in the genre lead these artists to consider whether they will lose *face*⁵⁵ in front of their audience (the *fandom community*) by *not* reacting with threats or violence to perceived slights.⁵⁶

Higgins similarly does not factor the *generalized other* into SDT, only 'significant others'.⁵⁷

But what of people who are so invested in *simulacra* that they prioritize the imagined perspectives of fictional characters^{mmm} over 'significant others', the *generalized other*, *phantom community*, or *fandom community*? The individual who turns to God, the Devil, Jesus, Kali, angels, or demons in order to ascertain his course of action is considered to be taking the perspective of the *hyporeal other*, while he who does the same with fictional media characters is calling out to the *hyperreal other*. Though SDT only considers the opinions of 'significant others' (e.g., close friends and family), there is an abundance of evidence showing that, among the religious population, the imagined judgment of gods and demons may wield a much stronger influence.

Certainly, there have been a multitude of historical figures who have made important decisions based upon the perceived will of *hyporeal* characters. They are simply taking the perspective of the *hyporeal other*; after all, 'God' is always watching, society is not. Facing the real possibility of his own execution at the Diet of Worms in 1521, Martin Luther refused to recant his 'heretical' views, famously stating “unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures or by evident reason... I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture, which is my basis; *my conscience is captive to the Word of God* [emphasis added].”⁵⁸ In their *Killing For Slender Man*, Mellor, Venkatesh, Wallin, & Thomas provide examples of more contemporary figures who committed acts of murder after appealing to the *hyporeal other*. These include Yigal Amir who assassinated Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin “on orders from God”⁵⁹, abortionist murderer Reverend Paul Hill whose manifesto claimed that the “Moral Law”⁶⁰ of the Old and New Testament requires “the means necessary for defending the innocent [unborn]”⁶¹ and that “this duty comes directly from God, and cannot be removed by any human government”⁶², and Osama Bin Laden who announced he was “fighting so I can die a martyr and go to heaven to meet God.”⁶³ Later, Mellor & Venkatesh added India's Thuggee sect⁶⁴—serial murderers offering sacrifices to the Hindu goddess Kali—and African witchdoctors practicing Muti magic⁶⁵ to the ranks of homicidal *hyporeality*.⁶⁶ This is to say nothing of the millions of

^{mmm} An embarrassing admission: As a child I would routinely look to Strider in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*—a fictional character who captured my admiration—in order to determine what the appropriate action would be in relevant situations. Upon discovering more extreme examples in Jay Martin's *Who Am I This Time?: Uncovering the Fictive Personality*, I realized that, far from being anomalous, my experience was likely more common than I anticipated. Hence, our exploration of this strange tendency here.

non-violent worshippers who have experienced guilt, anxiety, and shame resulting from their perceived failure to match a *self-guide* supposedly outlined in religious texts by a higher power.

Psychoanalyst Jay Martin's *Who Am I This Time?: Uncovering the Fictive Personality*, on the other hand, provides rarer case studies of individuals who have taken the position of the *hyperreal other*. An airplane pilot modelled his *self* after The Lone Ranger, Captain Marvel, and Superman; while one New York university graduate saw himself as comprised of Heathcliff, Josef K, Huckleberry Finn, Jay Gatsby, and others⁶⁷. Martin compares such individuals to Don Quixoteⁿⁿ, the wannabe knight in Cervantes' eponymous novel.⁶⁸ One can speculate that as far back as the 17th century when Cervantes was writing, he observed people emulating fictional characters or *archetypes*, and that these inspired the creation of the author's beloved 'man of La Mancha.' Thus, the earliest threads of *hyperreality* may date to the mid-15th century, and the dissemination of fictional stories via Gutenberg's printing press.

Joel Black demonstrated how *hyperreality* is seemingly colouring the personalities and motives of modern killers in *The Aesthetics of Murder*. Travis Bickle, a fictional New York cabbie who resolves his masculine alienation through vigilante violence in Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* brought cohesion of identity to John Hinckley Jr.⁶⁹ On March 30, 1981, Hinckley was arrested for shooting President Ronald Reagan in a demonstration of love for actress Jodie Foster, who portrayed Bickle's Lolita-in-distress in the film.⁷⁰ The number of killer couples who have acted out variations of the *Natural Born Killers* narrative is now nearing double digits⁷¹, and there are numerous examples of murderers wearing Ghostface^{oo} masks from the film *Scream*.⁷² In this age of the *hyperreal*, t-shirts asking "What Would Walter White Do?" or "What Would Tyrion Do?"^{pp} parodying "What Would Jesus Do?" bracelets are arguably missing the ironic quality that *should* make them humorous. *Hyperreality* has rendered them equally valid questions. This symbolic interactionist building of the *self* through fiction or news entertainment will inform the rest of this work, manifesting to different degrees in every case in the study.^{qq}

ⁿⁿ Here, Martin's comparison of his patients to a *simulacrum*—a fictional character—provides an excellent example of how *hyperreality* has pervaded the life of even the author himself!

^{oo} The antagonist of the movie *Scream* and its sequels, who wears a cloak and mask vaguely resembling Edvard Munch's painting of the same name.

^{pp} Walter White is the protagonist of the AMC television series *Breaking Bad*, while Tyrion Lannister is one of the more popular male characters in HBO's *Game of Thrones*.

^{qq} Consider the references to art, celebrity, and media (underlined) in the following murders:

Inspired by *The Catcher in the Rye*, Mark David Chapman gunned down John Lennon: international celebrity and

2.5 Hyperreal Masculinity

By far the most influential media propagated images are near-unattainable depictions of masculinity and femininity.⁷³ As the offenders in this sample are male, our focus here will be on the former, though the latter will be of some importance in Chapter 3 when we analyze certain offenders' victims. In their 'Media and the make-believe worlds of children', Götz et al. found traces of media influence in the daydreams of 74% of their sample of boys between eight and ten-years-old in Germany, Israel, South Korea, and the United States.⁷⁴ As television programming targeting male children is dominated by violence, conflict, and competition, unsurprisingly boys' fantasies are often associated with action settings, with their agency expressed through physical combat.⁷⁵

A wealth of quantitative research confirms the link between masculine gender role discrepancy stress and the likelihood of severe violence in men.⁷⁶ For instance, in a recent study of 600 American males ranging in age from 18-50, Reidy et al. found that while men who reported being 'high-conforming' in their gender role thereby experiencing 'low stress' were at the highest risk for perpetrating violence, 'low-conforming/high stress' individuals were still 348%

leader of the pop rock sweethearts The Beatles.

Self-made serialkillers! David Berkowitz and Colin Ireland contacted the media through telephone calls and letters in the midst of their killing spree. Ireland complained about the lack of attention his crimes were receiving, while Berkowitz commented that he felt the extensive media coverage of his murders meant that the public wanted him to kill.

Danny Rolling saw himself as a stereotypical American outlaw—"The Mystery Rider"—even recording a country song by the same name. Once captured, he claimed to have committed his murders because he was possessed by a demon called Gemini: the name of the supernatural serialkiller! in the film Exorcist III, which Rolling had seen before his Gainesville killing spree. While incarcerated, Rolling penned and published an autobiography to support this claim.

Obsessed with the Sharon Stone movie Basic Instinct, Luka Magnotta filmed himself stabbing his victim's body with an icepick. After editing the footage to the beat of New Order's "True Faith" from the American Psycho soundtrack, he uploaded the video onto BestGore.com, titling his pseudo-snuff movie I Lunatic I Icepick. Donning a hockey mask to resemble slasher film killer Jason Voorhees, Daniel Gonzalez went on a murder spree to see what it would be like to be Freddy Krueger and a serialkiller! for a day. Interviewed later, he expressed his excitement that his story would make the newspapers all over Britain. In a slight mutation of serialkiller!, Anthony Arkwright wanted to be famous like Jack the Ripper and the Yorkshire Ripper, two of the most notorious murderers in the U.K.

Sporting bright red hair, black contact lenses, and body armour, James Holmes took several photographs of himself brandishing weapons which he mailed to the New York Times. Shortly after, he stormed into the premier of Batman film The Dark Knight Rises at the Century movie theatre in Aurora, Colorado and set off smoke pellets before opening fire on the audience with an assault rifle and shotguns.

Elliot Rodger and Seung-Hui Cho recorded videos in which they vented their frustrations and reasons for killing, then embarked on college shooting sprees. Like the copycat killer, Arkwright, Cho referenced Columbine High School shooters Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold—whose massacre of 13 people in 1999 was covered relentlessly by the media for years—as martyrs for the same "cause". Rodger parroted pseudo-Darwinian tropes from the websites PUAhate.com and love-shy.com.

more likely to act violently than 'low-conforming' men who felt 'low stress' regarding their gender role discrepancy.⁷⁷ Furthermore, gender role discrepancy stress has been found to correlate with negative emotionality in men.⁷⁸ When discussing the *expressive/transformational* murderers in the subsequent chapter, strain resulting from 'low-conforming/high stress' gender role discrepancy will emerge as a common factor across the sample. Summarizing Reidy et al.'s research for an online article, journalist Tom Jacobs equated the concept of high and low conforming masculine gender roles with “two stereotypical images of masculinity: The hyper-masculine alpha male, and the borderline effeminate guy who lives in fear that others view him as unmanly”⁷⁹ which “American pop culture has often contrasted”⁸⁰ as “caricatured figures.”⁸¹ The existence and influence of these male caricatures in popular media—a trope which is not necessarily relegated solely to the United States, but also exists in Britain, Canada, and Australia (to name but a few)—lends further credence to the ubiquity of *hyperreal intermimesis*.

R.W. Connell was the first to meaningfully address this phenomenon with the concept of hegemonic masculinity,⁸² in which she^r proposed that through “social forces”⁸³ such as “mass media content”⁸⁴ certain males are represented as hegemonic: socially ascendant in the hierarchical organization of life and culture.⁸⁵ According to Connell, *hegemonic masculinity* is “always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women. The interplay between the different forms of masculinity is an important part of how a patriarchal^{ss} social order works.”⁸⁶ A *subordinated masculinity* is a stigmatized gender identity which reduces the standing of men in the social order who are homosexual, suspected homosexuals, or who do not otherwise meet the socially endorsed criteria for *hegemonic masculinity*.⁸⁷ These include so-called 'nerds'⁸⁸, 'geeks', 'metrosexuals', and 'stoners', among others. Connell noted that although the vast majority of men are not hegemonic in their masculinity, they nevertheless enthusiastically endorse the concept.^t *Hegemonic masculinity* is

^r I use the pronoun “she” as R.W. Connell sexually transitioned to a trans-woman, Raewyn Connell, in the first decade of the 21st century. Though the research cited was before the author started identifying as 'Raewyn Connell'—typically using the pen name 'R.W. Connell' and less frequently 'Bob' or 'Robert Connell'—having explored Connell's personal webpage, I noted that she lists all of her previous publications under the name of 'Raewyn'.

^{ss} I wish to refrain from commenting on the issue of gender-based power relations at an institutional level, as I have not read widely enough on the topic, and do not wish to make assumptions. Rather, as with Baudrillard, I restrict my use of Connell's concepts to a semiotic and cultural level where their veracity is readily observable in both the media and social life. These are the areas relevant to my analysis.

^t A woefully under-researched topic is the role women play in supporting this construct. One example is the practice, during the First World War, of British women giving white feathers to men who were not in military uniform. The

therefore not normal but normative—an elusive construct to which every male should aspire. Connell emphasizes that hegemony is not established solely through violence or threat of violence (ascendancy through force), however, it is certainly compatible. Gay-bashing and specific instances of violence against women reflect and reinforce dominant patterns in culture. State and institutional ideology is invoked to concentrate the legitimate use of violence and coercion in the hands of certain individuals, particularly members of the police and military.⁸⁹

In more recent years, Connell has advocated a re-examination of the concept of *hegemonic masculinity*. Taking up the challenge, Beasley noted several major flaws rooted in the unnecessary entanglement of masculinities that are legitimating (i.e., hegemonic) and power-wielding (i.e., dominant).⁹⁰ To illustrate her point she notes that an accountant may be extremely powerful in some positions or instances but is hardly the idealized image of manliness which many males wish to achieve and tacitly support. On the other hand, a physically strong, uncompromising male is typically considered a 'real man' by a large percentage of the population, even if he is completely bereft of any institutional power.⁹¹ Beasley has advocated referring to this latter group as *sub-hegemonic* which for the purposes of this study is the most applicable descriptor.

Low and mid-level military men, firemen, and police officers exist at a high tier among *sub-hegemonic* masculinities. These roles have the legal authority to use violence legitimately and take individuals into custody; they are traditional 'men in uniform' tied to the state and presented as benevolent public servants—occupational manifestations of Joseph Campbell's 'Hero' *archetype*.⁹² In this way they have a modicum of dominance and abundant legitimacy, but fall short of Connell's original concept of *hegemonic masculinity*. While some films, books, and television programs portray these professions accurately, more often than not they become caricatures of violent masculinity. Few would deny the cultural influence of Rambo the rogue soldier or vigilante cops Harry Callahan and John McClane in the *Dirty Harry* and *Die Hard* films. For decades, children have had more encounters with fictional police officers who circumvent and solve problems through violence than with actual law enforcement officers. As we will see, multiple murderers David Berkowitz, Colin Ireland, Danny Rolling, Luka Magnotta, and Anthony Arkwright (50% of our sample) either aspired to be firemen, police officers, or

white feather symbolized cowardice and was intended to shame non-combatants. See: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/nov/11/first-world-war-white-feather-cowardice>

military men before settling on a murderous *self*. A sixth offender, James Holmes, incorporated paramilitary elements into his *homicidal self* by wearing armour and employing tear gas during his massacre, though admittedly, this may have been a purely practical decision.

Media narratives often place antisocial versions of *sub-hegemonic masculinity*—generally derived from the Outlaw *archetype*—in opposition to 'men in uniform' in order to create dramatic conflict. Though traditionally these Outlaws were antagonists, the theme of the 'anti-hero' has grown in popularity since the Sixties. One example is the shift from the hero-vs.-villain trope of the Classic Western, in which criminals were 'bad guys' brought to justice by the 'good guys' of law enforcement, to the Revisionist Westerns of the mid-Sixties and early-Seventies, where criminal anti-heroes challenged the corrupt and/or tyrannical authority of malevolent sheriffs, businessmen, and their cronies^{uu}. Serial killer Danny Rolling, who loved *The Outlaw Josie Wales* and hated authority figures, mimicked the Outlaw anti-hero *archetype*, strategically gerrymandering his *self-guide* to justify murdering attractive co-eds in a campaign of revenge against society. Other examples provided of fictional or fictionalized *sub-hegemonic masculine* characters in academic literature are Mick the knife-wielding survivalist from *Crocodile Dundee*⁹³, *Fight Club* founder Tyler Durden⁹⁴, Wolverine⁹⁵ the indestructible superhero in *X-Men*, vigilante firefighter Gordon Brewer in *Collateral Damage*⁹⁶, and the eponymous *Rambo*⁹⁷, to name but a handful of thousands of cinematic examples. More typically, actors who frequently portray such characters are given as examples, including “Humphrey Bogart, John Wayne, Sylvester Stallone, Steven Segal, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Vin Diesel, Will Smith, Denzel Washington”⁹⁸, “Clint Eastwood”⁹⁹, “Jean-Claude Van Damme, Bruce Willis, Christian Bale and Matt Damon”¹⁰⁰. As these unattainable depictions of manliness in cinema have become normative in our media-saturated world, many males are increasingly unable to conceive of an ideal masculinity which is entirely separate from them. Such notions of manliness are thus better described as *hyperreal* than *sub-hegemonic*: believable enough to masquerade as viable options, yet impossible to realize in actuality. Here, we will use the term *sub-hegemonic masculinity* when referring to legitimizing manly gender identities which are difficult to achieve, but not unfathomable, and *hyperreal masculinity* to those variants which are *simulacra*. As *hyperreal masculinity* is borne by the media, it is unsurprising that those who strive toward it demand to be

^{uu} A similar inversion happened with the *serialkiller!* *archetype* in the form of Showtime's eponymous *Dexter*: a 'moral' *serialkiller!* because he only preys on other murderers.

broadcast. Unfortunately, platforms for their banality have never been more abundant and accessible, thanks to social media and reality television.

2.6 Fame, Fortune, and Epistemosis

In 1991, the same year in which Joel Black published *The Aesthetics of Murder*, the Dutch program *Nummer 28* first aired, giving rise to a new genre: reality TV^{vv}. Debuting in 1997 and 2001 respectively, *Survivor* (Sweden) and *Pop Idol* (UK) paved the way for highly successful American derivatives. Consistent with the cultural goals of western capitalism, the prizes for 'winning' these televised contests are financial: *Survivor* offers \$1,000,000 USD and a vehicle from their sponsor, while *American Idol* opens doors to a successful music career, awarding the victor with major recording and management contracts. In this way, the programs did not deviate significantly from the materialistic rewards offered by traditional quiz shows. However, the means of winning these programs—a popularity contest adjudicated by fellow contestants or the viewing public—departed significantly, with skill or talent either completely expunged or taking a distant secondary role.

This emphasis on popularity echoed the contemporaneous rise of social media. The Internet has long been a digital schmooze, connecting people through message boards, chatrooms, instant messaging programs, websites, and blogs. Then, in 2003¹⁰¹, Myspace launched, providing a platform for customers to stream their music, post photographs, provide biographical details, and become 'friends' with other users' profiles. In 2006 it was the most frequented social media site in the world,¹⁰² soon becoming *the* vehicle for independent self-promotion. Musical acts with a high number of 'friends' and song plays were offered record contracts, while others such as Tila Tequila gained a degree of minor celebrity, paving the way for a reality television career. Crucially, a Myspace profile could only display eight friends on its front page, forcing the user to arrange them spatially according to their preferential rank. This resulted in the semi-formalized social hierarchy of 75.9 million users by December 2008¹⁰³, many of whom were competing for attention on what, in retrospect, seems to have been the first mass online popularity contest in human history.

^{vv} In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard refers to what appears to be an earlier reality TV program, *An American Family*, which aired in 1973, lasting one season. Though the show preceded *Nummer 28*, it was a disaster and hardly marks the beginning of the reality TV genre.

Facebook, launching on February 4, 2004, usurped Myspace's throne in 2009. As of September 2016, there were 1.71 billion active monthly Facebook users¹⁰⁴—approximately one quarter of the world's population. Where gaining social approval on Myspace occurred through the selection and ranking of 'friends', Facebook members post thoughts and photographs which instantly become visible on other members' feeds. One has the option to 'like' a post or photograph by clicking a 'thumbs up' button, with Facebook keeping a running tally of 'likes' which remain visible to other members. An individual may also write a comment in response to a post or photograph which can in turn be 'liked' and commented upon by the original poster and other members. A year after the arrival of Facebook, YouTube burst onto the scene, allowing users to post, 'like' or 'dislike', and comment on videos; as well as 'liking' or 'disliking' and replying to the comments themselves. The following year came Twitter, in which members send 140 character 'tweets' (messages) out to the world; 'like', repost, and comment on others' tweets; and attempt to maximize one's 'followers' while minimizing the people one follows—a transparent attempt at signaling social-worth by showing how disinterested one appears to be with society compared to how interested others are with them. With 319 million active users every month, Twitter has become a major source of breaking news, as demonstrated by the 40 million tweets sent on the day of the 2016 American presidential election.¹⁰⁵ That same year, a poll conducted by IKEA of 12,000 people in big cities found that 68% preferred communicating over social media to face-to-face interactions, including with people in their own home.¹⁰⁶ Depending on the medium, either 'significant others', the *fandom community*, and/or the *generalized other* can provide feedback (or none whatsoever) to posts and photographs in real time, affecting the emotional state of the user by confirming or disconfirming matches between their *self-concept* and *self-guides*. The prevalence of suicides resulting from so-called 'cyber-bullying'¹⁰⁷ shows that such social media interactions are hardly frivolous—in fact, their visibility to a wider audience and permanent documentation may actually worsen their impact. In summary, the combined effect of social media and reality television has been to transform 21st century media into something decidedly exhibitionist, voyeuristic, and (ironically) asocial; now even the most unremarkable person can achieve fleeting stardom simply by doing something provocative on camera or Twitter.¹⁰⁸

Writing in 1938, the eminent sociologist Robert Merton inhabited an America that had not yet seen celebrity culture transmitted constantly into the home through television. As such,

he defined the *cultural goals* of his time as wealth and elevated socioeconomic status. However, with the ever-expanding prominence of mass media in the post-Second World War period, individuals in Western societies began to increasingly shape their personal values, perceptions, and aspirations based upon print, radio, cinema, television, and the Internet.¹⁰⁹ Simultaneously, mass media ushered in a culture which positioned celebrity at the height of an individual's aspirations.¹¹⁰ Now, in this *hyperreal* 'age of the celebrity', a majority of children in developed societies are listing 'fame' as their primary aspiration¹¹¹, even when the option of "self-acceptance"¹¹² is presented. Notability has arguably become the dominant cultural goal in the West, and perhaps beyond.¹¹³ This is consistent with the theories of the symbolic interactionists who propose that our identities arise and are negotiated through communication.¹¹⁴ Certainly, Westerners still covet wealth and upwards class mobility, but seek them through stardom. Along with the aforementioned *gender role strain*, Chapter 3 will address the issue of strain resulting from the inability to achieve fame, wealth, and upward social class mobility in our sample of offenders.

Merton proposed that when a person cannot achieve the *cultural goals* through the *institutionalized means*, they may adapt their behaviour by *innovating* (rejecting the *institutionalized means* to achieve the *cultural goals*).¹¹⁵ Accordingly, homicidal offenders such as Luka Magnotta—who unsuccessfully auditioned for several reality television programs—and the socially-inept Elliot Rodger, whose stepmother was a reality television star, cast themselves in video recordings before or during their homicides.¹¹⁶ Moral crusaders may protest the so-called 'sensationalism' of such murders, but they are undeniably gossip-worthy. Spree killer Daniel Gonzalez vocalized this uncomfortable truth himself, remarking "Good people are so boring, aren't they. [sic] Bad people have all the fun. Good people don't do anything. They are just boring."¹¹⁷ Gonzalez's perspective is demonstrative of Black's proposal that the "relation of the ethical and aesthetic domains to one another has been inverted in the twentieth century, especially in its later phase. The social norm in post-industrial society and in postmodern culture is no longer the ethical world of the real, but the aesthetic world of the hyperreal."¹¹⁸ Having spent more time interacting with horror films and video games than human beings, Gonzalez saw 'good people' as 'boring' because their perceived morality lacked the aesthetic qualities of *hyperreal* violence. Recalling one of his murders, Gonzalez once tellingly boasted "I got that old bitch proper, bloodbath, pouring out of her throat, boy, McFlurry!"¹¹⁹ In other words, he

became so excited by the aesthetics of arterial spray that he compared the sight to a frozen dessert sold by the world's most prominent fast food chain. Like the religious fanatic who cannot think outside the confines of *hyporeality*, Gonzalez's psyche was so ensconced in *hyperreality* that it seemingly infiltrated nearly every thought or action. But where the religious fanatic, though ultimately illogical, is at least coherent within his own closed dogmatic system, Gonzalez spews an almost non-sensical *hyperreal* collage unified by a single theme: violence. How did he arrive at such a place?

Returning to *anomie*, which we briefly touched upon in Section 2.1, Durkheim proposed that during eras of rapid social change—and make no mistake, the Information Age is the most heterogeneous and volatile period in human history—those caught in the maelstrom would not know which attitudes and behaviours are expected of them anymore. On the surface, the fact that the crime-rate in the Western world has been steadily falling since the 1990s seems to disprove that we inhabit *anomic* societies. However, *anomie* is not uniquely linked to criminality, rather, it gives rise to deviance in general. The coming of postmodernism coupled with *hyperreality* further complicates matters by challenging and/or obscuring notions of not just what is normal, but what is actually Real: a state we shall call *epistemosis*^{ww}. If *anomie* contributes to antisociality and neurosis¹²⁰, then, at its most severe, *epistemosis* results in delusion and chronic confusion. One of the most demonstrative recent examples is the case of 28-year-old Edgar Welch^{xx}, arrested on December 4, 2016 after bursting into D.C. pizza parlour Comet Ping Pong with an AR-15 to investigate reports that members of the Democratic Party were using the venue to run a child sex-trafficking ring. The rumour started when Internet users began interpreting phrases used in leaked e-mails by White House chief of staff John Podesta, as code-words for child prostitution and pornography. Their observations were repeated by a number of alternative online news websites, until 14% of the supporters of Presidential-candidate Donald Trump were certain of its veracity, while another 32% reported being not sure either way.¹²¹ Though the theory has been refuted by various law enforcement and news agencies, and Welch himself admitted finding no sign of child sex trafficking on the property, the conspiracy theory remains

^{ww} From the Greek ἐπιστήμη, *epistēmē*, for 'knowledge' and ὄσις, *-ōsis*, for 'abnormal condition.' Like *anomie*, *epistemosis* should be seen as a social condition which affects the choices and rationale of the individual, rather than anything born of the brain itself.

^{xx} I am not claiming that Welch was an *expressive/transformativ*e offender or socially isolated, only that he was responding to the proposed state of *epistemosis*.

popular to this day. Facing between 18 months and 10 years imprisonment, Welch continues to believe in the sex trafficking allegations, stating only that “the intel on this wasn't 100 percent.”¹²² The frequent connection between *hyperreality* and *epistemosis* is further demonstrated by a litany of questions online asking whether the undead character, Jason, from the *Friday the 13th* series is 'real'. Eerily, statements uttered by numerous ETV offenders indicate a similar immersion in *hyperreal simulation*. Dawson College gunman, Kimveer Gill, who posted photographs of himself in a trench coat brandishing weapons online remarked “life is like a video game.”¹²³ This echoed Eric Harris’s videotaped statement that the Columbine High massacre was “gonna be like fucking Doom, man.”¹²⁴ After murdering and dismembering John Altinger in Edmonton, *Dexter* killer Mark Twitchell wrote that the victim’s “...reaction was pure Hollywood. The lurch forward with the grunt was dead on TV movie of the week.”¹²⁵ Double-murderer Rod Ferrell encouraged his girlfriend to “Look at the world like it's a movie theater complex. You don't have to let Hollywood dictate what your reality is, you know. You can decide what movie to walk into,”¹²⁶ while, after throttling his girlfriend and posting a photograph of her nude corpse on 4Chan, David Kalac typed “turns out, it’s way harder to strangle someone to death than it looks on the movies.”¹²⁷ Similarly, remarking on his victim’s intestines, Twitchell almost sounded almost disappointed: “Human intestines just look like one long roll of uncooked sausage as opposed to the gruesome mileage of stringy nastiness that they appear to be on film.”¹²⁸

An existential lubricant which often allows ETV offenders to transition in and out of the *homicidal self* is *meta-delusion*^{yy}—a type of conscious self-deception regarding the nature of the universe. At some level of consciousness, the subject knows it is untrue, but chooses to believe it nevertheless without experiencing *cognitive dissonance*. In the absence of proof, we hypothesize that both *hyporeality* and *hyperreality* furnish this psychological phenomenon, which was present in 50% (Chapman, Berkowitz, Rolling, Gonzalez, Holmes) of our sample, possibly as a result or response to *epistemosis*. Consider the following statements:

Chapman: “*I made a decision to be crazy* [emphasis added], or schizophrenic... It's a choice anybody can make...”¹²⁹ and “if I had to be crazy to kill John Lennon, then I would be crazy. I

^{yy} In pen and paper roleplaying games, when a player directs his character to act upon knowledge the character could not possibly know within the boundaries of the setting, this is called *meta-gaming*. This concept has been repurposed here to describe willfully self-induced delusion.

would rip off my clothes and summon demons and pray to the devil... But through all of that, *it was me... I made the choice* [emphasis added]—God forgive me—to kill another man.”¹³⁰

Berkowitz: “I did not become *subconsciously* [emphasis added] deluded—hence, [this was not] mental illness. Rather, I am very much aware of the fact that I *really deluded myself. I did this on purpose* [emphasis added]... I was determined and in full agreement with myself that I must slay a woman for revenge...”¹³¹

Rolling: “Nonetheless, *Gemini is a real being from another dimension* [emphasis added] that coexists with our own—the nether world, where the fallen angels dwell. You see, I wanted revenge. I wanted someone else to suffer the way I suffered. That's why *Gemini became real to me* [emphasis added].”¹³²

Holmes: “[My theory of Ultrareception is]objective, but that's my subjective opinion.”¹³³

When an isolated individual loses or fails to develop a stable sense of *self*, he turns to the media for direction: media will always speak to him for as long as he desires, and never rejects or abandons him. The alienated individual exercises complete control over the conversation, vaguely resembling a kind of social necrophilia^{zz}. Online he even has the ability to speak back and be heard. Murderers are no exception. Lacking identity and an autobiographical concept which he is able to tolerate, the inadequately socialized, alienated man reaches into *hypo* or *hyperreality* and finds ready-made identities attached to social or fictional narratives to fill his existential void: *avatars* and *talismans*.

2.7 Talismans and Avatars

We have already touched upon several instances of anti-mimesis in which violent offenders crafted their *homicidal selves* from movie figures, including Daniel Gonzalez's emulation of slasher villain Jason Voorhees and John Hinckley Jr.'s mimicry of vigilante Travis Bickle. Though the cultural sources of these fictional characters are easily determined—the cinematic classic *Taxi Driver* and the *Friday the 13th* franchise—the question of why Gonzalez specifically chose Jason while Hinckley gravitated towards Bickle remains unanswered. This section analyzes the factors affecting both the transmission and adoption of *hypo*- and *hyperreal*

^{zz} Mellor (2016d) observed that the most common motive for necrophilia is to have complete control over a human form. A dead body is unable to deny access to sex or specific sexual acts, criticize sexual performance, or abandon a sexual partner.

simulacra as *talismans* at a social and psychological level.

In his influential 1976 work *The Selfish Gene*, evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins first proposed the idea of the *meme*^{aaa}—“a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation.”¹³⁴ The propagation of *memes* is comparable to genetic transmission, in that it is Darwinistic.^{bbb} A *meme*'s success is tied to its ability to operate in a given socio-cultural environment. One good example is the increased likelihood that a White Supremacist *meme* will spread in culturally homogenous rural areas rather than ethnically diverse cities. While genes are transmitted through sexual congress, *memes* pass from brain to brain through communication. For this reason, Arntfield & Danesi contest Dawkins's claim that *memes* encode and transmit information, pointing out that *signs* serve this purpose: a difficult point to dispute¹³⁵ In common parlance, the word *meme* is now used (almost exclusively) to refer to a humorous combination of text and images that is shared online (see Figure 3 below).

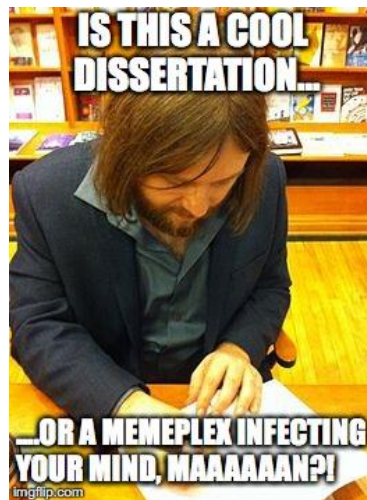


Figure 3: An internet *meme*, as the term is now most commonly used.

Though such amusing frivolities certainly qualify as *memes*, Dawkins's original concept is far more inclusive. Dawkins specifies that “If a single phrase... is sufficiently distinctive and memorable to be abstracted from the context of the whole... then to that extent it deserves to be

^{aaa} On page 230 of their *Murder in Plain English* (2017), Arntfield & Danesi offer a clearer definition of meme as “any cultural product or artifact (text, image, sound, idea, and so on) capable of being acquired and reproduced massively throughout the cultural sphere.”

^{bbb} Dawkins notes that *memes* tend to mutate at a much faster rate than genes as they can be intentionally or unintentionally altered by their hosts: the human brain.

called *one meme* [emphasis added].¹³⁶ Here, Dawkins is referring to a musical phrase from a symphony, though the same could be said of a linguistic phrase. Nietzsche's declaration that "God is dead"¹³⁷, for instance, is more well-known and repeated than the surrounding sentences which contextualize it, let alone the totality of *The Gay Science* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* texts in which the phrase appears.^{ccc} These larger texts and corpuses are what Dawkins refers to as *meme complexes*, recently shortened to *memplexes*.¹³⁸ Beyond existing as cultural units in the social world, it seems that specific *memes* and *memplexes* adapt better to certain 'psychological habitats' than others. For instance, research employing the Five Factor Model of Personality has shown that political conservatism is linked to high levels of Conscientiousness, while liberalism is associated with Openness to Experience.¹³⁹ Similarly, the respective psychologies of our 10 ETV offenders incentivized them to adopt *memes* and *memplexes* with particular qualities while rejecting others. By viewing the transmission and encoding of *signs* as Darwinistic, Dawkins's work fills a theoretical void in semiotics as to why certain *signs* and the ideas conveyed by them proliferate more successfully than others. As our analysis of the 10 offender sample in Chapter 3 reveals, some *memes* and *memplexes* are simply better suited to some psychologies than others

At this point, we turn to the concept of *narrative prototypes*—media-disseminated *memplexes* in the form of specific stories (*The Catcher in the Rye*, *Basic Instinct*, the *Friday the 13th* or *Nightmare on Elm Street* series, the *Holy Bible*) or *archetypes* (*monster*, *serialkiller!*, *outlaw*, *avenger*, *schoolshooter!*)—which an offender uses to construct his *self-guide*. A more aesthetically pleasing synonym for *narrative prototype*, and one that will be used in its place, is *talisman*^{ddd}. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a "talisman" as: "1: an object held to act as a charm to avert evil and bring good fortune 2: something producing apparently magical or miraculous effects."¹⁴⁰ In ETV, the held object is a cultural one, and the evil it averts is the negative emotionality of the offender. Furthermore, a *talisman* transfixes those who possess it, contains a mysterious power, and can be worn and removed, much like an identity. The term *avatar* refers to specific fictional characters (e.g., Holden Caulfield, Travis Bickle) or *hyperreal* caricatures of non-fictional people (e.g., Jack the Ripper, The Columbine High shooters) which

^{ccc} Perhaps this is why so many people lacking any understanding of Nietzsche rush to condemn or celebrate him based upon isolated quotes. His phrases are so replicable that they paradoxically work to the detriment of his philosophical ideas.

^{ddd} I credit my friend Clayton Strang with coining the term *talisman* while responding to my explanation of *narrative prototypes*.

an offender either adopts whole or piecemeal to furnish his *homicidal self*. Generally, *avatars* are *memes* residing within specific narrative *talismans* (which are necessarily *memplexes*). By attempting to assassinate a political figure and becoming infatuated with Jodie Foster, John Hinckley Jr. adopted two components of the Travis Bickle *avatar* from the *Taxi Driver* cinematic *talisman*. Hinckley also incorporated elements from *The Catcher in the Rye* into his *homicidal self*. Similarly, all 10 offenders in our sample drew from multiple *talismans* or *avatars*, fusing two or more disparate narratives into one, vaguely reminiscent of Jay Martin's patients in section 2.4. This is consistent with research by Götz et al. who found an identical phenomenon in male children^{eee} such as one boy who daydreamed of a *self* which incorporated the powers of three superheroes.¹⁴¹

A *talisman* is rarely esoteric: generalities about or aspects of the *Holy Bible* or the *serialkiller!* are familiar to most people in Western society. Certainly, the majority of the population will only have a passing understanding of the core concepts (e.g., Jesus was the son of God who was crucified for mankind's sins and was born on Christmas; *serialkillers!* are 'crazy' men who are unable to stop killing people^{fff}). Fewer still possess a richer understanding of these *talismans*, such as individuals who read about Christianity or true crime as a hobby, while theologians and criminologists occupy the extreme end of this spectrum. A significant subsection of society are acquainted with (if not well versed in) the slasher film franchises *Friday the 13th* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, while *The Catcher in the Rye* continues to be read, with a little help from Mark David Chapman's homicidal promotion. Indeed, it is the transmissibility of these cultural products that makes them accessible to offenders as potential *talismans* or *avatars* in the first place. Furthermore, the shared cultural meanings of *signs*—'archaic hockey mask signifies Jason Voorhees'—enables communication between the perpetrator and the rest of society.¹⁴²

2.8 Conclusion

If the components of ETV introduced in Chapter 1 provide the skeleton which holds the theory together, the organs which bring it alive, and the glands to secrete emotional motivation,

^{eee} The full relevance of this will become apparent in the next chapter when the prevalence of immaturity in our 10 offenders comes to the forefront.

^{fff} Just because concepts about the *talisman* are widely held, it does not mean that they are necessarily accurate. In fact, whether these concepts are 'true' or not is of absolutely no importance here at all.

then Chapter 2 has given it a face, flesh, and vocal cords. In this chapter, we charted the development and prevalence of media technologies from Gutenberg's printing press in 1440 to 21st century social networking websites, noting how communication with these mediums has progressed from passive recieience to online interaction. This unprecedented growth of communication technologies has been accompanied by an onslaught of *simulacra*, resulting in an *anomic* state of *hyperreality*. Surrounded by *simulation* and countless news media organizations broadcasting vastly conflicting reports, modern man is subject to *epistemosis*: the inability to distinguish fact from fiction, often leading to intellectual capitulation and an unwillingness to even bother trying. Where, in the pre-Industrial era, our ability to know what was Real was hindered by a lack of heterogeneity (*hyporeality*), there is now such an overabundance of information and *simulacra* (*hyperreality*) that we struggle not only to separate fact from fiction, but to know the difference between fact and fiction in the first place.

As our *self-concepts* and *self-guides* are shaped by communication, the role that media plays in molding our aspirations through depictions of gender and celebrity obsession has been an area of particular focus. Specifically, *sub-hegemonic* and *hyperreal masculinity* have been directly linked to violence in men who either conform or wish to conform to these standards. As these masculinities are embedded in media-propagated *talismans* and *avatars*, ETV offenders frequently draw from them to construct their *homicidal selves*. By committing acts of violence, the *expressive/transformational* offender now declares himself worthy of media attention also, which the media confirms by covering his story. He is now a widely disseminated *sign* himself, perhaps a *talisman* or *avatar* like *JacktheRipper!*, *PeterSutcliffe!*, or *Eric&Dylan!*. With his death, the *sign's* original referent is removed, and he becomes a *simulacrum*: truly *hyperreal*. He continues to exist as a two-dimensional caricature in the *simulation* among fictional characters such as Holden Caulfield, Catherine Tramell, Detective Vince Magnotta, Freddy Krueger, Jason Voorhees, and the Joker—all of whom we will encounter soon. Perhaps someday another dejected loner will look into the pantheon, seize his character, and hang it as a *talisman* onto a homicidal *self-guide*, one violent narrative blending into another.

Into this malaise came Mark David Chapman, David Berkowitz, Colin Ireland, Danny Rolling, Luka Magnotta, Daniel Gonzalez, Anthony Arkwright, James Holmes, Elliot Rodger, and Seung-Hui Cho. Between them, they would kill over 60 people, wounding approximately 110 more. All 10 committed crimes involving media idols, fictional characters, or *archetypes*

transmitted to them through literature, cinema, music, the Internet, television programs, or news media. Each drew from this *hyperreality* to construct their *homicidal self*. Chapter 3 will combine the theoretical elements from both previous chapters to illustrate how and why this occurred in these men, as well as highlighting additional commonalities between them.

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3. Transformation: From Compromised to Uncompromising

“What do we mean by saying that existence precedes essence? We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world – and defines himself afterwards. If man as the existentialist sees him is not definable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself.” - Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism

“Half of the harm that is done in this world is due to people who want to feel important” - T.S. Eliot

“What happens to a dream deferred?

*Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?*

*Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.*

Or does it explode?” - Langston Hughes, Harlem

3.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how SDT, CTI, our variant of *hegemonic masculinity* theory, and *talismans* drawn from *hyperreality* combine to explain the 10 offenders' actions by applying them to case studies. As the transformation of the offender's *self* over the course of his life is our primary focus, this chapter is necessarily descriptive—admittedly, far more than a typical academic treatise. This decision has been a conscious one. Divorcing the analysis from its biographical context renders a low-resolution picture at best, and at worst, utter incomprehensibility. For instance, if we were to discuss Mark David Chapman's shift from the **Hippie** to the **Good Christian** without explaining the interpersonal incidents which led to his adoption and rejection of these *selves*, then the symbolic interactive nuances of ETV would be lost.

In 3.1 *Previous Interpretations of ETV: Consistencies and Divergences*, we begin by looking at how expressive behaviour such as posing bodies, communicating with the media, and

wearing symbolic attire has traditionally been regarded by law enforcement and mental health professionals. We argue that such phenomena have been egregiously under-explored, either because the communication has been deemed 'simple' and 'obvious', or at the opposite extreme, dismissed for being impenetrably esoteric. It is proposed here that because *selves* are formed and negotiated through communication, these expressions depict the offender's transformation from what he *was* to what he *has become*. The section concludes with statements by the late 'Moors Murderer' Ian Brady demonstrating how this experience reflects a complex, but nevertheless interpretable transformation of *self*.

Section 3.2 (*The Expressive/Transformative Progression of Self*) utilizes a diagram (Figure 4) to map the ETV process from the consolidation of the *actual/own self* and its constituent traits through various 'emergent' *ideal/own selves* to the *homicidal ideal/own*. Consistent with SDT, the periods between *selves* are usually marked by crises in which the offender experiences negative emotionality, which he may deal with by retreating into media and/or psychosis, or by realizing a new *self*. Once a *homicidal self* has developed, the offender either remains happily reconciled in this *self*, commits suicide, or transitions to a **Penitent Christian** *self* to adapt to condemnation and incarceration. It also expands on the concept of *meta-delusion*, so that we may observe its presence in the subsequent case studies.

Section 3.3 (*Victim/Expression Typology*) introduces a four-way typology of ETV offenders based upon the symbolic/non-symbolic property of the victim(s) and whether their killer communicated through posing the victim (*victim-as-canvas*); or used a *victim-as-soapbox* strategy by sending written/oral communications, or adorning a costume/mask.

The first case we examine using ETV is Section 3.4 *Mark David Chapman*. Here CTI is applied to explain Chapman's seemingly strange claim that he was a child masquerading as an adult. In Section 3.5 *David Berkowitz*, Connell's concept of *emphasized femininity* is introduced, along with theories regarding the effects of adoption on the stability and experience of *self*, and *adaptive preference formation*, as well as ideas from gender studies that address masculinity as an ongoing performance supported by ceremonial boasting of sexual conquests. Section 3.6 *Danny Rolling* looks at an offender who demarcates between two personalities, 'Ennad' the rapist and robber and 'Gemini' the murderer. In a similar vein, rather than taking this offender at his word, evidence is presented to show that this is likely a false dichotomy. Mellor's assertion that weapons collecting leads to an increase in the Athens' notion of violent self-image is also

introduced. The first offender in our sample to aspire to be a *serialkiller!* in its purest form is discussed in Section 3.7 (*Colin Ireland*). Here, the offender's victimology, statements, and *signature* behaviours are conjunctively analyzed to assess whether his claims of heterosexuality and motives are truthful. Beyond expanding on nearly all of the concepts introduced in the preceding four cases, Section 3.8 *Luka Magnotta* incorporates gender theory regarding cultural notions of race and sexuality. The case is also remarkable for the sheer number of *talismans* and *avatars* adopted by the offender, and their expression in a series of increasingly abhorrent criminal acts. The complexity of the Magnotta case is followed by two brief sections (3.9 *Daniel Gonzalez* and 3.10 *Anthony Arkwright*) in which the offender dons a 'monster mask.' Various methodologies to determine the semiotic properties of these monsters and why they specifically appealed to that particular offender are utilized. Due to spatial concerns, three case studies in this qualitative sample—those of the Millennial student mass murderers, James Holmes, Elliot Rodger, and Seung-Hui Cho—can be found in the Appendices. Any observations gleaned from those cases have been incorporated into our findings, summarized at the end of this chapter.

During the course of these case studies, two dozen commonalities emerged, each of which are highlighted and discussed in Section 3.11: *Transformation: Findings*. This leads us to Section 3.12: *The Transformative Triangle* an evaluation of how ETV socially and emotionally transforms individuals at the *primary* (transformation of the perpetrator), *secondary* (transformation of the victim), and *tertiary* (transformation of those who witness the crime scene) levels. Our *Conclusion* (Section 3.13) offers a summary of the chapter, its implications, and elucidates the semiotic relation to what we will encounter in Chapter 4: Expression.

3.1 Previous Interpretations of ETV: Consistencies and Divergences

Communications with the authorities and media have been intrinsically linked to multiple murderers since Jack the Ripper—generally (and incorrectly) considered history's first serial killer. Despite intense debate over the veracity of letters purporting to be from the Ripper, there has been a surprising lack of serious focus on the semiotic content of these communications. Recently, Arntfield & Danesi¹ broke this ground in their *Murder in Plain English*, but this is only the beginning. As atypical homicides in the United States have largely been the province of the FBI, this task has generally fallen upon their Behavioral Analysis Unit (formerly Behavioral Sciences Unit). Unfortunately, their understanding of this phenomenon remains rather shallow.

Certainly, the late FBI profiler and BSU pioneer, Robert Ressler, hit the nail on the head when he claimed that London's 'Gay Slayer'—later identified as Colin Ireland (3.7)—was “a person who is trying to conquer their inadequacies by doing something important.”² This overcoming of negative emotionality through violence is one the tenets of *expressive/transformative* process. Unfortunately, Ressler then added the reductionist conclusion that “Challenging the police—setting up scenarios where they're the center of manhunts—communicating with the media, is *just nothing more than attention-seeking* [emphasis added] at a very, very bizarre level.”³ As we will see, such communications are *much more* than attention-seeking, they are a negotiation of the perpetrator's *self* and identity. If Ireland was desperate for attention, it is because human beings rely on feedback from others to understand themselves as social entities.

Mental-health professionals have similarly failed to fill this void. Worse, having examined Seung Hui-Cho's video communications, one eminent American psychiatrist concluded that “these videos do not help us understand Cho. They distort him. He was meek. He was quiet. This is a PR tape of him trying to turn himself into a Quentin Tarantino character.”⁴ This assessment is coloured by the erroneous assumption that human identity is static.^{ggg} Far from it, in fact, the fundamentalists of symbolic interactionism see the *self* as being in constant flux. Like the Heraklitean river, the *self* only appears to be the same because we label and thus define it—in this case with the name 'Cho'—yet all the while, different water passes through its hollow form: perceptions, interpretations, ideas, emotions. Contrary to the eminent psychiatrist's claims, the very fact that Cho, who suffered from selective mutism and who was at the extremes of asociality, should suddenly barrage the world with a cluster bomb of lengthy communications, enriches our understanding of him immensely. And while the implication is that Cho is impression managing, as is the case with most social interactions, this does not take into consideration the reality that Cho actually *did* transform himself into something vaguely resembling^{hhh} a “Quentin Tarantino character.”⁵ The Cho who placed a gun to his own head as the police closed in on him was *not* the same Cho who had existed up until that day. In the typical adaptive process of the *expressive/transformative* mass murderer, he opted to permanently and irreversibly bridge the gap between his old *actual/own* and new *homicidal ideal/own* by pulling the trigger, and expelling his consciousness into oblivion, unobservable to

^{ggg} Personality, as measured by the Five Factor Model, is relatively unchanging, but this is separate from identity.

^{hhh} In actuality, he was adopting the *Eric&Dylan! talisman*.

him, but tangible to us in the form of skull shards, blood, and grey matter. With his suicide, Cho sealed off the possibility of ever returning to his quiet, meek self. If one listens with the poet's ear rather than the scientist's—for Cho spoke in metaphors and similes, much like 'crazy' Charles Manson—it is clear that personal transformation was the prime motive for his actions.

Too often, social scientists neglect to discuss this 'Dostoevsky element' of homicide; namely, the fact that killing—at least the first time—is an existential commitment, not only to moral transgression but to possessing the stigmatized or *discreditable* identity of 'murderer.'⁶ In his *The Gates of Janus*, the late 'Moors Murderer' Ian Brady noted that "In extinguishing someone's life [the killer] is also committing his own."⁷

The first killing experience will not only hold the strongest element of existential novelty, but also the greatest amount of danger and trepidation conjured by the unknown... You could, in many instances, describe the experience as an affective state of shock. He is, after all, storming pell-mell the defensive social conditioning, as well as declaring war on all organized regulatory forces of society.⁸

Even for a classic psychopath like Brady⁹, committing murder was far from a psychological walk in the park: "In another very significant sense, [a murderer] is killing his long-accepted self [the *actual/own*] as well as the victim, and simultaneously giving birth to a new persona [the *homicidal ideal/own*], decisively cutting the umbilical connection between himself and ordinary mankind [the *generalized other*]."¹⁰ This illustrates the *expressive/transformational* process in a nutshell: person #1 murders person #2, consciously or subconsciously expressing semiotic messages before, during, or after the crime. The transformation of person #2 into a corpse with specific semiotic associations communicates the identity of person #1 to himself and an audience. Often this will include person #1's attitude towards person #2, and even the audience. This expression and transformation dialectic is necessarily a social act.¹¹

Returning briefly to Cho, the moral crusade of the aforementioned psychiatrist, with his admonishments to "stop showing the video now"¹² by somehow taking "it off the Internet"¹³ because it is a "social catastrophe"¹⁴, obscures the video's importance in understanding the offender. By donning the helm of chivalry, the white knight's vision is blinded by its visor. For this reason, we have chosen to view these case studies through an amoral lens, though true moral objectivity is admittedly difficult given the nature of the crimes. Let us now endeavor to do the opposite of dismissing Cho's attempts "to turn himself into a Quentin Tarantino character."¹⁵ Let

us plunge into his statements, and those of other murderers, and understand him in the hopes that future 'social catastrophes' can be prevented, rather than merely expunged from the Internet (an impossibility). The following section explains the transformative process of ETV in order for us to observe its occurrence in the forthcoming case studies.

3.2 The Expressive/Transformative Progression of Self

The transformation which occurs in ETV is essentially a reiteration of Higgins's Self-Discrepancy Theory as outlined in Chapter 1, with minor alterations. Primarily, Higgins questioned why people do not change their *self-guides* in order to reduce the negative emotionality resulting from *actual:ideal* and *actual:ought* discrepancies. This statement is baffling. Honest self-reflection along with reading less than a handful of biographies makes it obvious that many people *do* change their *self-guides*—the legions of Westerners who strive to be famous entertainers and athletes in their younger years, reinventing themselves when success eludes them, is readily observable.ⁱⁱⁱ However, the number of *ideal* or *ought selves* attempted by a given individual varies. For this reason, Figure 4 encompasses all subsequent *ideal* or *ought selves* into a single box entitled 'emergent selves' which may range from as little as one to over a dozen. In our study, following the realization of the *homicidal self*, our 10 offenders either committed suicide immediately (obliterating the *self*), remained consolidated in their *homicidal self* (closing of *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy), or fell into a period of negative emotionality out of which they crafted a *penitent self*. Specifically, in this study, this was a **Penitent Christian self**. In the case of Daniel Gonzalez, the *homicidal self* endured for a lengthy period before lapsing into a crisis which ended in suicide. The nine stages of ETV are further elaborated below.

ⁱⁱⁱ At this very moment, for example, I am striving toward an **Unencumbered Public Criminologist** (*ideal/own*) after clawing myself out of the dejection and frustration brought about by my failure to realize the **Lyrically Masterful Pro Singer-Songwriter** (*ideal/own*). Let's see how it works out.

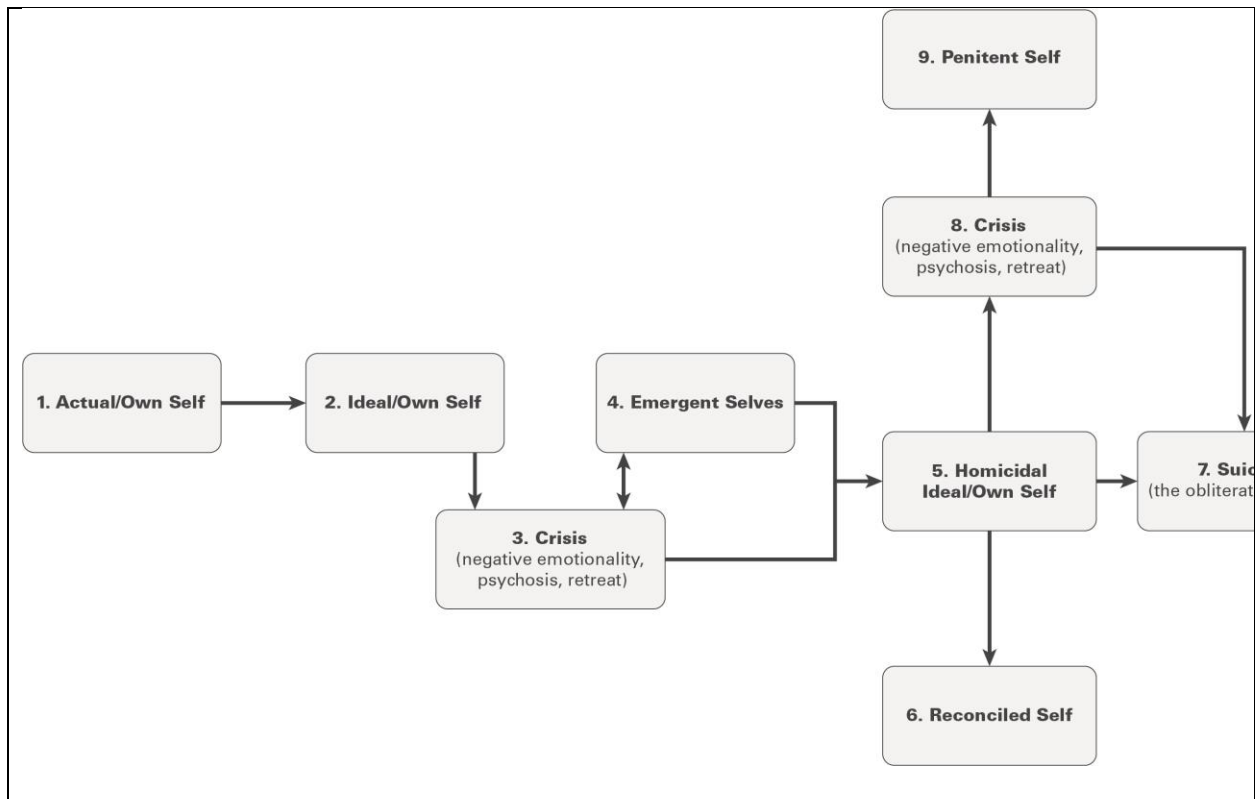


Figure 4. The Expressive/Transformative Progression of Self

1. Actual/Own Self

As a child, the offender is inadequately socialized, leading him to develop an ego-dystonic *self-concept*. Often he views himself as a 'child in a man's body'^{jjj}, alienated and unable to function in the adult world. Though he strives to overcome this *actual/own self* by transitioning to an *ideal/own self*, he invariably fails in his attempts, leading him to return to this *actual/own self*. This *actual/own self* is comprised of sexuality, gender, religious and/or philosophical, social class, vocational, and racial components. Notability—the degree to which one is known in the greater world and represented in the media—is also an important aspect, however, as 90% of the offenders^{kkk} were of no note whatsoever before their homicides, a lack of notability is assumed in these cases rather than supported by evidence. In each case, at least two of these components is strongly ego-dystonic or results in strain residing in the very structure of the offender's being. In

^{jjj} See: Chapman, Ireland, Rolling, Gonzalez; and possibly Berkowitz, Magnotta, Arkwright, Rodger, and Cho.

^{kkk} Magnotta secured a fleeting moment in the Canadian media by spreading and denying rumours of his romantic involvement with Canadian serial killer Karla Homolka.

our 10 offender study, this phase is encapsulated in the first sub-section—3.X.0^{III} *Failed socialization and formation and realization of the actual/own self*.

2. *Ideal/Own Self*

The *ideal/own self* is the person the offender initially aspires to become, embodying ego-syntonic alternatives to replace the ego-dystonic aspects of the *actual/own self*, and similarly weakening or resolving inherent strains. This first *ideal/self* is described at the beginning of 3.X.1 *Pre-Homicidal Ideal/Selves and Negative Emotionality*.

3. *Crisis*

When the offender is unable to resolve his *actual/own:ideal/own* self-discrepancies or strains, he experiences negative emotionality such as depression, frustration, anger, and suicidal ideation. He may seek refuge from his torment by retreating into drugs and alcohol, media (especially video games), *meta-delusion*, or true psychosis. During such periods he will effectively remove himself from society. Eventually, he will formulate a new *ideal/own*, though in rare instances he may return to a former *self-guide*, which alleviates his negative emotionality by providing him with renewed purpose. These pre-homicidal crises are outlined within sub-sections 3.X.0 *Failed socialization and formation and realization of the actual/own self* and 3.X.1 *Pre-Homicidal Ideal/Selves and Negative Emotionality*. Specifically, dejection-related emotions are underlined so that the reader's attention is easily drawn to them.

4. *Emergent Selves*

Falling under 3.X.1 *Pre-Homicidal Ideal/Selves and Negative Emotionality*, this refers to any additional *ideal/own* or *ought/own selves* arising after the first *ideal/own*. The process is identical; however, in those rare instances when an *ought/own* appears, the associated negative emotionality is agitation-related—*anxiety or paranoia*—rather than dejection-related, and *italicized* to make it stand out. The offender will adopt any number of emergent *selves* before plunging into a final crisis. Out of this crisis, the *homicidal ideal/own* is born.

^{III} Where X refers to the number of the particular case study.

5. *Homicidal Ideal/Own Self*

The *homicidal ideal/own* appears when an individual opts to establish a *self* that (i) is easily achievable, (ii) invariably attracts media attention thus mandating acknowledgment by the *generalized other* which crystalizes the *self* through consensus, (iii) allows him temporary or permanent catharsis through one or more acts of violence, and (iv) becomes his *master status*: “the status that is considered the most significant in a person's social identity.”¹⁶ Like previous *ideal/owns* it is designed to relieve ego-dystonia and strain. In every case it reduces strain related to notability, and almost always entails an attempt to transition from ego-dystonic *subordinated masculinity* to ego-syntonic *sub-hegemonic masculinity* or *hyperreal masculinity*. The *homicidal ideal/own self* is discussed in 3.X.2 *Renegotiated Homicidal Ideal/Own*.

6. *Reconciled Self*

The first of three possible outcomes found under 3.X.4 *Post-Arrest Self and Identity*, the reconciled *self* is a permanent narrowing of self-discrepancy and strain-reduction resulting from the transformation into the *homicidal ideal/own*. As the offender's problems have been rectified to his satisfaction, he remains mostly consolidated in this *self* during his incarceration, and may bask in his notoriety as a murderer for the rest of his days.

7. *Suicide (the obliteration of self)*

This second outcome is most frequently chosen by rampage killers. Unwilling to face the consequences of their actions and/or suspecting that their *homicidal ideal/own* will inevitably collapse leaving them in a state of dejection once more, they opt to eliminate all possibility of this occurring by committing suicide.

8. *Crisis*

This stage is identical to the crisis discussed earlier, only it occurs *after* the realization of the *homicidal ideal/own*. Unlike the *self* that is reconciled through the commission of murder, significant strain and/or ego-dystonia reappears immediately, days, or even years after the killing(s). Theoretically, it is possible for an offender to remain imprisoned in this hellish state, which he may try to escape by committing suicide (7). Only one offender in this sample took that option. More often, they erect a *penitent self*.

9. *Penitent Self*

The *penitent self* is the third option and arises from a period of crisis following the *homicidal self*. With varying degrees of sincerity and self-reflection, an offender disavows his violent actions and *homicidal self*, and announces to the world that he has devoted the rest of his life to penance. As we will see, this strategy is not without its benefits. All three offenders in this sample claim(ed) to have found salvation in Christianity—the metaphysical 'get out of Hell free' card.

Let us now turn away from the offender to his victims, for they semiotically define him largely to the same extent that he has defined them.

3.3 Victim/Expression Typology

The type of person an offender chooses as his victim, and the manner in which he uses their death to send a message to the authorities and/or media is arguably one of the key differentiators between ETV killers. For this reason, a simple typology of *expressive/transformative* behaviours—focusing on how the meaning ascribed to the victim by the perpetrator (*symbolic* or *non-symbolic*) interacts with the manner in which the perpetrator uses the victim to express himself (*victim-as-soapbox* or *victim-as-canvas*)—is provided below (see Figure 5). When the victim is *symbolic*, some aspect of their identity shapes their killer's motivation. Social attitudes and labelling of the victim exist in a kind of cultural well-spring, informed by daily social interaction, but also increasingly in the media—where day to day social interaction is distorted in biased or inaccurate news reports or reified by tropes and cultural messages in film and television. David Berkowitz, Danny Rolling, and Elliot Rodger all killed 'the pretty girl': that is a conventionally attractive middle-class woman in her late-teens and early-twenties. Mark David Chapman shot dead one of the 20th century's most beloved artistic icons. We will call this *killing up*: the murderer destroys what he covets, and those who have greater perceived social worth than him.

Adversely, society concurrently stigmatizes the homosexual victims of Colin Ireland and Luka Magnotta^{mmmm}, and the emotionally and physically disabled men butchered by Anthony Arkwright. Gay men have been tarnished in the western world since at least the onset of

^{mmmm} The fact that Magnotta's victim was a Chinese homosexual may be of even more significance, as will be discussed.

Christianity. Homophobia has manifested itself violently through social institutions from the jailing of Oscar Wilde in England to mass imprisonment and murder under the Nazi regime.¹⁷ Even today, anti-gay sentiment is literally preached from the pulpit. Likewise, the physically and mentally ill are looked down upon as useless, sponging off social assistance, physically disgusting, and in the latter case, potentially dangerous. Drawing from this same cultural reservoir, the killer destroys what he considers weak, vile, or immoral. In such cases, he is *killing down*, because the value of his victims, as perceived by large segments of society, is negative. Due to their status as deviants, homosexual and disabled men are to varying degrees what Egger terms “less dead.”¹⁸ In every case of *killing down* in this sample, the victim's stigma reflected an undesirable aspect of the killer's *self*—perhaps a repudiation. The murders of Chinese men committed by half-Singaporean Elliot Rodger exemplifies this. Racism against East Asians in the United States has existed to varying degrees since their appearance on the continent in the 19th century including incidences of mass murder.¹⁹

Given the history of misogyny, it could be argued that the murder of women is *killing down*, and, indeed, in many homicide cases it is. However, in this sample, Berkowitz, Rolling, and Rodger were reacting to perceived rejection by attractive members of the opposite sex. They were destroying a person of value who they could not possess—a person of higher standing than them in the social hierarchy. In doing so, they may have created or co-opted misogynist ideology to rationalize their actions, but we should not let their self-deceptions similarly deceive us. Even Mark David Chapman attached the label of 'phony' to John Lennon in order to justify killing the celebrity he could never become. The case of David Berkowitz will introduce us to the theory of 'sour grapes' to help shed some light on this matter.

A *non-symbolic* victim represents little or nothing to the offender and is generally not pre-selected, but chosen opportunistically. The starkest example of this is James Holmes' statement that his victims were a “conglomerate mass... I didn't like single them out as individuals... [To me they were] not real people. It was just amorphous people.”²⁰ Typically, they are victims of a generalized misanthropy and/or notches on a killer's belt. Nevertheless, their *non-symbolic* status gives us just as much insight into the killer's motives as *symbolic victims*.

When an offender selects his *victim-as-soapbox*, he uses their murder or anticipated murder as a podium from which he can communicate written and/or verbal messages, sometimes even communicating by dressing in symbolic costume. He allegorically stands on their dead

bodies to announce his new *self*—often adopting a moniker (e.g., 'The Son of Sam') or wearing a mask signifying a character (e.g., 'The Devil', 'Jason Voorhees') who he emulates or identifies with. In the event of *victim-as-canvas* murder, the victim's body is posed (potentially involving mutilation) and sometimes surrounded or adorned with other *signs* so that the corpse itself communicates a message beyond that of simply being a murder victim. An example is the 1979 murder of Francine Elveson in which, amongst numerous acts of paraphilic violence perpetrated on the body, the words “Fuck You” had been scrawled on her stomach.²¹ The killer had also defecated beside the victim's corpse and covered it with her clothing.²² If the perpetrator had instead left an envelope filled with feces on the police chief's doorstep with the words “Fuck You” scrawled on it, this would be a case of *victim-as-soapbox*. Some *victim-as-canvas* killers such as Colin Ireland also communicate by letter or phone, but for the purposes of this typology, their *victim-as-canvas* behaviour takes precedence because it appears to be rarer than *victim-as-soapbox*. Thus, Ireland falls into Type 2 of the typology of *expressive/transformative* offenders figure depicted below. Regardless of whether the offender treats his victim(s) as a soapbox or canvas, they are always ultimately a *vehicle*²³ to his *homicidal self*.

EXPRESSIVE/TRANSFORMATIVE THEORY OF VIOLENCE

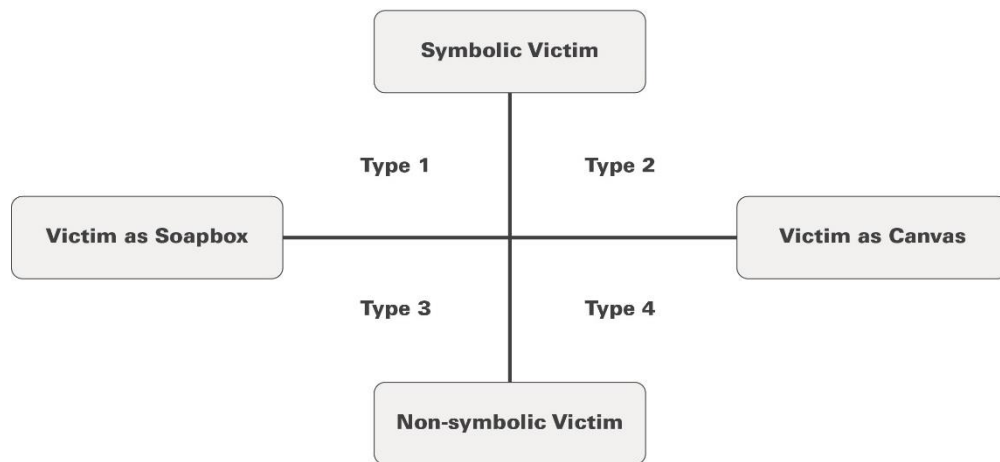


Figure 5. Victimology and ETV

The state of a victim being *symbolic* or *non-symbolic* will be discussed in the following 10 case studies. Each will examine the offender's *actual self*, *ideal* and *ought selves*, and *homicidal*

ideal/own. It will then expand upon the victimology discussed in this section, before moving on to the offender's *self*, post-arrest or post-spree (in the case of a suicidal rampage killer). Finally, where it is applicable, the *sexual/gender*, *religious/philosophical*, *class*, *vocational*, and *racial/ethnic* aspects of an offender's *self* are examined individually. In our concluding thoughts, each of these *selves* and aspects of the *self* are considered in relation and conjunction with each other to provide an overall summary of motive and behaviour as part of the transformational process. A final caveat: the reader must always keep in mind that such transformations are negotiated through communication, which is the displaying and interpretation of *signs*. The importance of this will become abundantly clear in Chapter 4 when we trace the offender's expressions back to transformations in his *self*.

3.4 Mark Chapman: 'Child Nobody' to 'The Catcher'

Talismans: *The Catcher in the Rye*, John Lennon, *Holy Bible*; Type: 1

3.4.0 Mark David Chapman - Failed socialization and formation and realization of the actual/own self

There was a time in childhood when Mark David Chapman had been reasonably happy: "For a certain number of years, my very early years, I felt like a normal kid."²⁴ This narrative of kindergarten contentment will echo through many of the cases in this study, as will the phenomenon of bullying and expulsion from the social order: "Then these instances started occurring, mostly in school or when I tried to interact with other kids. I started to feel alienated. Other kids teased me, and I didn't seem to be able to defend myself against them."²⁵ In a nation where success in competitive sports is essentially a cultural goal (associated with masculinity and celebrity)²⁶, Chapman deviated from normative notions of masculinity²⁷ because he "wasn't very athletic,"²⁸ which made him a target for bullying. His persecutors branded him with a stigmatizing label associated with the female sex and *subordinated masculinity*: "'Pussy.' That's what they called me. 'Pussy.'"²⁹

Feeling rejected from the social order, Chapman was isolated: "I didn't have a solid background of a group, because I didn't have a group mentality, wasn't *one of the guys* [emphasis added], you know."³⁰ Chapman retreated into a world of fantasy for comfort—imagining himself as "Mark the King of the Little People"³¹—with the ensuing lack of human interaction stunting the growth of his *self*.³² It is possible that Chapman's early asociality led to

an inability to accurately interpret or express communicative gestures. Chapman recalls a childhood incident in which he sincerely remarked to a friend “oh, isn't that too bad”³³ after seeing a dead cat. The friend misinterpreted the tone of his comment as flippant and verbally reprimanded him. A friend in Hawaii would comment on the adult Chapman's *communication dysfunctions*: “I told him he was so sensitive that he wasn't always accurate in what he thought he was picking up from other people, especially the people closest to him.”³⁴ In CTI, a lack of *communication satisfaction* and *feeling understood* leads to negative emotionality.³⁵

By late pubescence, Chapman had begun to see himself as “a nothing, really a nobody”³⁶ and a “little kid”³⁷ who existed in a world of fantasy. Chapman uses the words 'child' and 'nothing/nobody' interchangeably, essentially referring to the same concept. Childhood is a culturally designated formative stage during which one's sense of *self* and purpose is supposed to develop into a consolidated adult. If one fails in this process, one simultaneously remains a 'child' which is tantamount to 'nothing' or 'nobody', as one has failed to become 'somebody.' Taking this into consideration, Chapman's *actual/own* is henceforth dubbed **The Child Nobody**. Children may turn to make-believe to seek agency in a society where they are “completely excluded from participating in any political, social, or familial act of any consequence.”³⁸ In Chapman's case, he envisioned a kingdom of 'little people' living inside his walls. They worshipped him, and he exercised a god-like power over them. When he was angry he would press imaginary buttons and cause explosions and other disasters to befall them.³⁹ These fantasies not only made him feel like 'somebody' but a person of tremendous power and significance, evidencing a latent desire for notability. After a brief sojourn, this fantasy-world would reappear in Chapman's adulthood when he was at his weakest [*retreatism*].

To understand aspects of Chapman's *actual/own* which are unaccounted for by SDT, we turn to CTI. Though Mark David Chapman felt as if his *personal identity* was that of a child, upon entering puberty he could no longer overtly project this image and began enacting his “phony adult”⁴⁰ identity in order to move through the social order. Thus, this *enacted identity* was mostly impression management. Entering high school, Chapman was hypersensitive to the concept of authenticity in both himself and other people. In subsequent interviews, he repeatedly demarcated between his *personal identity*⁴¹ of a 'child' and his 'phony adult' *enacted identity*.⁴² Chapman describes the 'phony adult' as “all surface anyways. It was a front. It couldn't handle anything... I wasn't real to myself. I was just a... conglomerate of adult mannerisms and jobs,

but [with] a child's heart."⁴³ This statement raises interesting questions about the concept of maturity itself: if a person mimics the conversation and affect of his peers and is employed, he has, to the surface viewer, become mature (even if he is not). 'Maturity', in the colloquial sense, may simply be a sustained process of *face-work*.⁴⁴

Jung & Hecht found that large gaps between an individual's *personal identity* and *enacted identity* lead to poor *communication satisfaction* which results in negative emotionality⁴⁵ (henceforth underlined in this text): "My child was always conflicting with my fake adult..."⁴⁶ causing Chapman to be "just a hulk of hurt and rejection..."⁴⁷ Furthermore, as the person is portraying a different identity than they actually believe they possess, they feel that others are misunderstanding them, because people are responding to their more observable *enacted identity* rather than their *personal identity*. We find evidence for this in Chapman's pre-suicidal thoughts: "I don't understand. Nobody can help me understand."⁴⁸ This seems to explain why despite being adored by the children at the YMCA where he was employed, highly respected for his work by his colleagues, and being married to an exceedingly loyal and loving wife, Chapman remained discontented. The children, his colleagues, and his wife were all responding positively to Chapman's *enacted identity*—the 'phony adult'—leading him to feel misunderstood. Chapman himself comments on this: "The child" [*personal identity*] is "so specially linked to the phony adult [*enacted identity*] that I was, the phony adult that the child had created, something had to happen. An explosion had to happen."⁴⁹ This explosion was the result of seven years of pent-up negative emotionality in a man who was not even 'real to myself.'

3.4.1 Mark David Chapman: Pre-Homicidal Ideal/Own Selves and Negative Emotionality

Lacking a sense of *self* that was acceptable to him, Chapman began emulating his associates. Specifically, he refers to one Michael McFarland who "would become my first true alter ego"⁵⁰ and "told me later to read *The Catcher in the Rye*."⁵¹ The first *ideal/own* Chapman developed that was not directly derivative of his associates—the **Hippie**—arose when he was a high school freshman. He describes how this resulted in an "instant release"⁵² from the burdens of lacking an acceptable social identity: "immediately, I went from being a nerd to being a hippie, from being a *nobody* [emphasis added] to being a *somebody* [emphasis added]."⁵³ This new *self* also resulted in increased opportunities for Chapman to socialize: "The main reason I became a hippie was that it gave me my first chance in life to be a group player, a part of

something.”⁵⁴ The need to belong to a group is fundamental to the human condition with research showing that a failure to do so can itself result in negative emotionality.⁵⁵

The **Hippie** was an appealing *self* for Chapman to aspire to: not only would he close his *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy, but also narrow the identity gap between the 'child' (*personal identity*) and 'phony adult' (*enacted identity*) by adopting a hybrid child-adult identity. Hippie culture is inherently childish, consisting of self-proclaimed 'flower children' who often hold simplistic and idealistic worldviews, are pre-occupied with inner experience, and emphasize personal freedom and creativity over maintaining employment and conventionally mature conduct.^{mm} Media often portrayed the hippie counter-culture as virtuous and revolutionary through its promotion of celebrity artists such as The Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix, Aldous Huxley, Ken Kesey, and Thomas Wolfe, and public academics like Dr. Timothy Leary. Ostensibly associated with an ethos of free love and ego-liberation, hippies stood in direct opposition to both *hegemonic masculinity* (i.e. the Johnson and Nixon administrations) and *sub-hegemonic masculinity* (e.g., soldiers returning home from Vietnam, policemen). While 'nerds'—as Chapman identified his previous self—accept their *subordinated masculinity*, male hippies were only viewed as *subordinated* by certain segments of American society: a society which they had “dropped out”⁵⁶ of in order to form communities with alternate value systems. Understandably, Chapman believed transitioning to his **Hippie self** was a kind of social elevation.

Of special importance here was the endorsement of the hippie lifestyle by the most popular rock band in the world, The Beatles, and particularly by their leader, John Lennon. Speaking of Lennon’s influence in this regard, Chapman would explain, “John Lennon was *real* [emphasis added] and he was a hero. He was the hero of my childhood.”⁵⁷ Moreover, by the time Chapman was 14, the Beatles “were into long hair, meditation, and drugs. The Beatles were into things that fit my life perfectly.”⁵⁸ Having begun using pot, LSD, and inhalants, Chapman frequently stayed out till dawn listening to rock music.

A number of personally-symbolic incidents prevented Chapman from fully realizing his

^{mm} It may be misinterpreted here that I am condemning the hippie lifestyle by denouncing it as childish. On the contrary, when I use the words 'childish' and 'mature' *specifically here* I am drawing upon the socially held meanings and interpretations of these terms. Children possess many admirable qualities that adults do not, and I often find more vitality and intriguing ideas circulating in the counter-culture than I do mainstream society. This does not change the social fact that most people do not share my opinion and look down upon childishness and hippie values.

Hippie *ideal/own*, resulting in him experiencing increased discrepancy between **The Child Nobody** he wished to leave and the **Hippie** he wished to become. First, he was arrested for vagrancy—the police correctly suspected he was high but could not find drugs on his person—and he was held at a nearby juvenile home until his tearful father came to pick him up. On another occasion he ran away to Miami and instructed the cab driver to “take me where the freaks are.”⁵⁹ With only \$30 to his name, he met up with two older hippies on Miami beach. They spent the next four days bumming around, conducting shoplifting raids in the city to finance a trip to a music festival. When a policeman nearly caught Chapman for under aged drinking, the older boys ditched him. He deciding to hitchhike to the music festival alone but could not catch a ride and ended up walking 20 miles in flip flops in the Florida heat. Burnt and exhausted, he stumbled upon a carnival where he found employment as a security guard. Eventually, he was driven back to the suburbs of Miami by a hippie named Carlos. He stayed at the family home, working for room and board, before earning enough money to fly back to Georgia. After disappearing for two weeks he found his bedridden mother too distraught to speak. As this gap between his **Child Nobody** *actual/own* and **Hippie** *ideal/own*—which he described as a “*somebody* [emphasis added]... a part of something”—widened, he began to experience the dejection-related emotions predicted by SDT. The final straw came in 1971, when during a second visit to Florida, he partied with a hippie named Earl 'King of the Beach' and his friends, who somehow picked his pocket [*trigger*]. “I remember, when I realized that my buddies had gone through my wallet, feeling the lowest I had ever felt. I felt like nobody [*actual/own*]. Like nothing [*actual/own*].”⁶⁰ “It was the culmination of so many things at that time and I started crying, desperately crying.”⁶¹ This incident marked a change from striving to be the **Hippie** towards another prototypical identity of 1970s America.⁰⁰⁰

According to a close childhood friend, “When Mark was in the ninth and tenth grades, he was doing drugs very heavily, then he went into this **Good Christian** [*ideal/own*] stage and his whole identity changed. It was like he had to be the best Christian in the world.”⁶² This transformation happened when Chapman was 15, and approximately one year before the release of John Lennon’s 'Imagine'. He began to involve himself in the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association). Chapman’s inability to live up to the **Hippie** *self* advocated by Lennon, the “hero of my childhood”⁶³ provoked him to openly disavow and denigrate The Beatles and John Lennon

⁰⁰⁰ This exact same attempted change of *self* occurred in David Berkowitz as we will see in the second case study.

specifically. “I remember Mark said that the Lennon song ‘Imagine’ was a Communist song... And that comment by Lennon, about the Beatles being more popular than Jesus, that really pissed him off.”⁶⁴ But, tellingly, Lennon's controversial remark about the Beatles being bigger than Jesus Christ occurred in 1966 when Chapman was 11. Chapman’s first post-child identity was the **Hippie**, and there is no record of him having expressed his disapproval of the comment as **Hippie** or a child. In essence, Chapman sacrificed his John Lennon *talisman* to his Christ *talisman*, as if to blame and punish Lennon for his own failures in the counterculture and return to the mainstream. Here we see the beginnings of Chapman’s habit of projecting his own inadequacies onto the John Lennon *talisman*. In *expressive/transformativ*e process, the reevaluation of a *talisman* from 'benevolent' to 'malevolent' is called *burning the talisman*, or for those who prefer technical speech, *reinterpretation of a prior narrative prototype*. Ultimately his reconciliation of *self* as a **Good Christian** was as precarious as his **Hippie** incarnation, crumbling under the slightest social pressure:

There was a particular song I wanted to play really badly on my guitar, a song I had written a few days before, a Christian song. I remember the meeting just was so jam-packed with people talking, singing, praying, that I didn’t have time to play the song I wanted to [*trigger*]. And I got *frustrated*... It was a small thing... But with me, it was a catalyst for a growing *lack of wanting to be close to the Lord* [emphasis added] and I stopped going to meetings... I more or less became what they call a lukewarm Christian.⁶⁵

Instead of focusing on 'the Lord', Chapman began relying on his work with the YMCA as a means of socializing and establishing a third *ideal/own*: **Captain Nemo**, a lukewarm Christian devoted to the YMCA and children. “The kids always called him Captain Nemo. That's what he wanted them to call him,” said Tony Adams, the director of the YMCA program who had hired Chapman. “Mark was a pied piper with kids. I just could never say enough good about the Mark Chapman that I knew for those five or six years in Georgia... If there was anybody that didn’t like Mark I don't know who it was. The Mark Chapman I knew was just an outstanding person.”⁶⁶ As a result of his benevolent works with the YMCA, Chapman met his first girlfriend, Jessica, had steady employment, and was paid a \$200/week salary (adjusted for inflation that's \$880/week in 2016) to settle Vietnamese child refugees at Fort Chaffee where he met President Gerald Ford.⁶⁷ A tile engraved with his nickname 'Nemo' was placed in Chapman's honour above an indoor swimming pool, and he travelled to Beirut as part of the international program. He

became engaged to Jessica, a devout Christian who was attending Covenant College, a fundamentalist university. After finishing his assignment at Fort Chaffee, Chapman enrolled at Covenant College, too.

That was my identity... When I was Captain Nemo, I did good things and everybody loved me. I remember the year I was at the camp's closing ceremonies with my [YMCA] kids and they were giving the award for 'counselor of the year.' I heard them call my name, 'Captain Nemo,' and I couldn't believe it. The kids were all cheering and shouting, 'Ne-mo, Ne-mo! Ne- mo!' Those were the greatest days of my life. I *was* Nemo [complete reduction of *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy] and everyone in camp loved me... I had been a *somebody* [emphasis added].⁶⁸

If we consider the **Captain Nemo** *ideal/own*, it is predicated on two important criteria: 1) **Captain Nemo** is a Christian, even if lukewarm, and emerged as Chapman's *self* through the Young Men's Christian Association, 2) **Captain Nemo** is special, considered an important and exemplary member of society, and widely loved among both the counsellors at the YMCA and children—in Chapman's words a 'somebody.' These components would ultimately be Captain Nemo's downfall. While staying at Fort Chaffee Chapman claims to have woken to find a female counsellor lying naked beside him in bed and given in to temptation. Afterwards, he felt intense guilt about having cheated on Jessica. Contemplating the negative emotionality that drove him to later make a serious attempt at suicide and to murder John Lennon, Chapman asked:

Where did it start? Where did these depressions, these suicidal thoughts come from?... With total clarity, I saw that all this began with my breakdown at Covenant College and proceeded up to that night of December 8, 1980. I realized why I got depressed at Covenant College... I had had sex and I had repressed the guilt from that and never told Jessica. I don't ever remember dealing with guilt from that.⁶⁹

This infidelity widened the gap between his *actual/own* **The Child Nobody** and the Christian role model aspects of his **Captain Nemo** *ideal/own* resulting in negative emotionality.

Chapman's disrupted emotional state acted as a catalyst for a series of additional challenges: he struggled in his academic pursuits compared to younger students and began to feel inferior to them. This inverted the second tenet of the **Captain Nemo** *ideal/own*—being special and exemplary—which widened the gap even further. According to Chapman:

[At Covenant College] I felt like a **nobody** [*actual/own*]... When I went to college I was

just like everybody else and had to study like everybody else... *I wasn't in charge of anything* [emphasis added]... I was just like everybody else—a **nobody**. And when I had to face that truth, my insides fell in on myself. I fell down a dark hole.⁷⁰

Managing to struggle through the school year, Chapman sought to rid himself of his negative emotionality by returning as a YMCA camp counsellor to narrow the gap between **The Child Nobody** [actual/own] and **Captain Nemo** [ideal/own]. “I was coming back out of my depression because I was back in my element and I had some *authority* [emphasis added]. I was maybe feeling like a **somebody** [ideal/own].”⁷¹ However, his self-conceptualization was toppled when a female camp counsellor disobeyed his instruction to take a group of girls canoeing as was scheduled. “She snapped back at me, ‘Well who do you think you are? God or something?’”⁷² [trigger] Already stretched thin, the thread connecting **The Child Nobody** to **Captain Nemo** broke inside Chapman, and he watched the closest thing he ever had to a realistic pre-homicidal *self* drift away.

And I believe that was the final blow to me after resurrecting [**Captain Nemo**] out of that depression at college and coming back to camp... I was in a mass of confusion, and hurt, and anger and everything. And I said I was quitting. I couldn't take it anymore. I told him about the incident... And then, when my YMCA identity fell apart, when I was stripped of that is when the clouds really started getting dark and I started slipping into an abyss that ended in murder, of someone I didn't even know... I didn't have an identity. I had splintered into atoms, into total nothingness.⁷³

Chapman flew to Hawaii where he made a failed yet sincere attempt to kill himself. “I wasn't frightened when I made the decision. I wasn't angry or upset. I felt strangely at peace about everything. My mind felt very clear again.”⁷⁴ Believing he had survived because God wanted him to live, Chapman walked to a mental-health centre in downtown Honolulu and was admitted that evening. Psychiatrists who assessed him following his failed suicide attempt observed that he was “extremely depressed and states that he does not see any purpose in living.”⁷⁵

After his recovery in the summer of 1977, Chapman began working as a caretaker at the hospital. In 1978, he travelled to Japan, South Korea, China, Thailand, India, Iran, Israel, Switzerland, and the British Isles. Upon his return to Hawaii he began dating his travel agent, Gloria Abe, a Japanese-American woman five years his senior. By June 2, 1979, they were married. Having escaped death due to the perceived will of God, Chapman tried to build a more traditional life for himself, making a half-hearted effort at becoming a **Providing Patriarch**

(*ought/own*). Eventually he switched from janitorial work to a solitary position at the hospital print shop.

Then I was stuck, all alone, in this printing room, smelling chemicals, going crazy with the noise, the boredom. I was taken away from my element of being happy and being sociable because of my own strict 'should do's'—should do this and should be that [*ought/own*—because I was married. I already was *starting to cave in* at that point. The pressures from marriage, which I should have been responsible for, and which I was in a lot of ways—but I started caving in. I started to feel *desperation* in me and the job wasn't helping any... *Never feeling that I had a good day.*⁷⁶

After being fired from the hospital for arguing with a nurse, on December 26, 1979, Chapman became a security guard at an apartment complex. He retreated further into solitude: “It was bad, the wrong thing to do, removing myself from all my roots. I stopped going to church. Just becoming more and more isolationist... I began drinking heavy, becoming very unhappy and dissatisfied with my life.”⁷⁷ As SDT links dejection-related emotions with *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancies, clearly Chapman still harboured aspirations for himself that had slowly become more powerful than his **Providing Patriarch** *ought/own*. Based on his previous and subsequent actions, fame was probably the strongest component of this latent *ideal/own*.

During the period in which Chapman was employed as a security guard, the gap between **The Child Nobody** and the fame-seeking *ideal/own* had developed into a yawning canyon: “Why was I a security guard? Because I thought I was a nothing [**The Child Nobody** *actual/own*], and that was the only thing I could handle.”⁷⁸ Describing his emotional state leading up to the Lennon assassination, Chapman said “I was just always feeling bad.”⁷⁹ It was at this point that he began drinking heavily [*retreatism*] which caused him to gain a lot of weight, and having fantasies in which he spoke to the Little People again [*retreatism*].⁸⁰

As soon as he had paid down his debts, on October 23, 1980, Chapman quit his job as a security guard, signing out as 'John Lennon.' He decided “I could just stay at home and cook and clean and have dinner ready for Gloria when she got home. You know, be like John Lennon was, kind of like a househusband.”⁸¹ In his spare time, Chapman retreated to the Honolulu Public library, a place of order where he sought refuge from being “so confused and discontent and angry and hurting...”⁸² “I was in a lot of pain. I knew something was wrong, but I didn't realize it was that serious. I was headed down a deep, dark alley and I was running out of doors real quick... I was walking around lonely and hurting, in a fantasy world.”⁸³

Chapman's half-hearted attempts to salvage some measure of self-respect during this period were confined to purchasing a custom blue t-shirt with the words 'I'M UNIQUE. I THINK FOR MYSELF' on the back even though “I didn't have that done because I believed that I was unique... But it illustrates, in some way, the tremendous pressures and tugs and pulls—the 'Should-be's' and the 'Why-am-I-nots' and the 'Helps' that I never said.”⁸⁴ After borrowing the book *John Lennon: One Day at a Time* from the library, a new *ideal/own* began to formulate in Chapman's disturbed mind. Reading about Lennon's life in New York City, Chapman remembers:

Thinking that there was a successful man [Lennon] who had the world on a chain. And there I was not even a link of that chain. Just a person who had no personality [*actual/own*]. A walking void who had given a great deal of my time and thoughts and energy into what John Lennon had said and had sung about and had done—and had told all of us to do—in the sixties and early seventies, when I was growing up, when I was first trying to make sense out of a world that was so painful and hurtful and sad. *I thought I loved reality and I didn't want the world to be the way it was* [emphasis added]... I checked out the book [*John Lennon: One Day At a Time*] and brought it home to my wife and pointed out the pictures to her, pictures of him smiling on the roof of the sumptuous Dakota building: the decadent bastard, the phony bastard, who had lied to children, who had used his music to mislead a generation of people who desperately needed to believe in love and a world at war that desperately needed to believe in peace. He told us to imagine no possessions, and there he was, with millions of dollars and yachts and farms and country estates, laughing at people like me who had believed his lies and bought the records and built a big part of our lives around his music.⁸⁵

At another point, upon reading an article on John and Yoko in a magazine, Chapman recalls

[A]ccording to this article, he said, himself, that the thing about the bed-ins for peace, the concerts for peace, and the whole promotional packages that he and Yoko had done—he said in his own quote that those things were essentially put-ons, that they were phony, they were fake, and that they were a way of getting publicity... It was not the reporter's own language. And I remember that that was a confirmation for me that Lennon was a phony.⁸⁶ [*trigger*]

Chapman's religious devotion combined with his hypocritical obsession with authenticity led him to an obsessive hatred of Lennon. Specifically, he despised Lennon's song 'God' from the 1970 *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band* album. “I would listen to this music and I would get angry at him, for saying that he didn't believe in God, that he just believed in him and Yoko, and that he didn't believe in The Beatles.”⁸⁷ He also saw Lennon's “terrible inconsistencies”⁸⁸ as “mirroring my own inconsistencies and my own pain and my own guilt at not having accomplished

anything.”⁸⁹ Thus, Chapman's hatred for Lennon ostensibly grew out of (i) Lennon's perceived public rejection of God, (ii) Lennon's unintentional mirroring of Chapman's own 'phoniness', and (iii) the fact that Chapman perceived himself as “Mr. Nobody”⁹⁰ while John Lennon was “the biggest *Somebody* [emphasis added] on earth.”⁹¹ One day Chapman took the acclaimed Beatles album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* from his wife's record collection.

As soon as I saw his picture on that album... I knew - that I was going to kill him... I remember saying in my mind: ‘What if I killed him?’ I thought of the repercussions that would occur around the world. I felt, not in an ego way, or a prideful way at all, but I felt that *perhaps my identity would be found in the killing of John Lennon. And there was a certain peace about that.* [emphasis added]⁹²

Chapman's biographer, Jack Jones, who interviewed the killer for hundreds of hours remarked that, at this point, Chapman regained control of his feelings⁹³: his plans of assassination served to create a new *homicidal ideal/own* to which he could aspire.

3.4.2 Mark David Chapman: Renegotiated Homicidal Ideal/Own

Around this same period, Chapman purchased JD Salinger's classic coming-of-age novel *The Catcher in the Rye* and found himself profoundly identifying with the protagonist. Like Chapman, 16-year-old Holden Caulfield views the adult world as being full of phonies, and in a particularly poignant scene from which the title is derived, envisions himself in a field of towering rye. Children are racing through the tall leaves unknowingly headed for the edge of a cliff, and Caulfield wishes to catch as many of them as possible before they fall over, making him 'The Catcher in the Rye.' The cliff edge is a metaphor for adulthood, and Caulfield seeks to prevent the children from losing their innocence and becoming phonies. Unsurprisingly, Chapman began to strongly identify with the Holden Caulfield *avatar* from the *The Catcher in the Rye talisman*.

[I]n the second [copy of *The Catcher in the Rye*], the extra one that I had bought for myself in case something happened to the other one, I had written 'From Holden Caulfield to Holden Caulfield.' Of course, I knew that I was Mark David Chapman when I wrote that. But I was acting out in a minor way. I was saying, 'What if this were so?' But it was more than that. I had not totally felt that I was Holden Caulfield when I wrote that. But it was like a badge, it was like a pledge... A statement of '*Here is my identity, here is what my pain is* [emphasis added] if it can be reduced to ink and paper.'⁹⁴ [SAOS]

In another instance, Chapman attempted to legally change his name to 'Holden Caulfield'.¹⁹⁵ [SAOS].

Given Chapman's focus on authenticity and his child-masquerading-as-adult *self-concept*, it is unsurprising that *The Catcher in the Rye* became the *talisman* which begat his new *homicidal ideal/own*: **The Catcher**. "[I]t was during that time that I read the book about Lennon and read the Catcher then it just all melted into one, Holden and John Lennon."⁹⁶

By the time Chapman arrived in New York to assassinate Lennon he believed that after the murder he "would become Holden Caulfield. Not that I would become crazy. That I would actually become Holden Caulfield."⁹⁷ Chapman began emulating Caulfield's actions in *The Catcher in the Rye*, to the point of asking a police officer in Central Park "Do you know where the ducks go in the winter?"⁹⁸: an exact scene from the novel and another SAOS. He also entertained another scenario in which after the assassination, he would "curl into a fetal position and sink forever into a coma in which he could still see and hear, but from which the world could never rouse him and into which it could never intrude."⁹⁹ At 10:50 p.m. on December 8, 1980, Mark David Chapman fatally shot John Lennon four times in the back with hollow point bullets fired from a .38 Special outside Lennon's residence at the Dakota Building in New York City.

It became so paradoxically a *search for identity* [emphasis added] yet a search for destruction at the same time. I just felt like a big **nobody** [actual/own] and that was so attractive to me, to go out and do this horrible act that would make me become **somebody** [ideal/own - **The Catcher**]. I couldn't control it. There was something in me that desperately wanted to be filled. I was stretched to the limit and *I had no personality* [emphasis added] and everything was going so wrong there was no way to avoid going down that hole once I made that decision.¹⁰⁰

Chapman noted that the *enacted identity* "the adult"¹⁰¹ took action and "planned it out perfectly, precisely"¹⁰² while the *personal identity* "the child"¹⁰³ was the driving will who "turned to Satan for the power to pull the trigger..."¹⁰⁴ In a kind of *hyperreal* psycho-stew, Chapman drew from the *Holy Bible*^{PPP} and *The Catcher in the Rye talismans* to physically destroy John Lennon, a *talisman* he had already burned in his mind.

^{PPP} This use of Christian theology to facilitate Lennon's murder will be explored in Section 3.4.6 Religious/Philosophical aspects.

3.4.3 Mark David Chapman: Victimology

Table 2
Mark Chapman Victimology

Victim Name	Age	Race	Gender	Profession	Date Murdered	Where
John Lennon	40	White	Male	Celebrity pop star	December 8, 1980	Outside his apartment building, The Dakota, in Manhattan

Mark David Chapman murdered John Lennon primarily because “I was an acute *nobody* [emphasis added]. I had to usurp someone else’s importance, someone else’s success. I was ‘Mr. Nobody’ until I killed the biggest *Somebody* [emphasis added] on earth.”¹⁰⁵ Boon provides Chapman as a textbook example of psychological cannibalism¹⁰⁶, a claim reflected in Chapman’s own words: “John Lennon fell into a very deep hole. A hole that was so deep inside of me that I thought by killing him I would acquire his fame.”¹⁰⁷ Unbeknownst to many, Lennon was not the only celebrity Chapman considered killing. His hit list included Hawaiian governor George Ariyoshi, talk show host Johnny Carson, former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy-Onassis, Beatles bassist Paul McCartney, actor George C. Scott, and actress Elizabeth Taylor. Chapman claimed that he thought about murdering Onassis because of “What she did to John F. Kennedy, whom I admired greatly. She disgraced him after that incident in Dallas, with Aristotle Onassis”¹⁰⁸ [mj] and Elizabeth Taylor because of “her personality... I despise people who flaunt themselves [mj].”¹⁰⁹ Yet the moral salience of his homicidal motivations is nullified by Carson and Ariyoshi, who he contemplated murdering simply because they were “popular”¹¹⁰ even adding “actually I kind of like Johnny Carson.”¹¹¹ Similarly, Chapman admitted “I like [George C. Scott]. He’s great.”¹¹² Paul McCartney had only evaded his crosshairs because “I found out Lennon was more accessible”¹¹³ This information is vital in untangling Chapman’s motives as, logically, it follows that the motivation to commit a celebrity-homicide pre-dated the search for moral justification.

Unintentionally dehumanizing his victim, Chapman spoke of Lennon as an “It”¹¹⁴—essentially a media facsimile of a person: “It’s important to understand how nobodies see celebrities... *These people aren’t real* [emphasis added]. They don’t flush the toilet. They don’t have bad days. They’re on TV. They’re on albums.”¹¹⁵ The media’s two-dimensional celebrification of Lennon allowed Chapman to think of him as the “toy that [**The Child Nobody**] had played with years ago. It had once been his hero... He said, ‘Look! Look what one of my

toys has become!' and he threw a tantrum."¹¹⁶ This does not necessarily mean that Chapman lied about believing Lennon was a phony. However, Lennon's 'phoniness' allowed Chapman to rationalize killing him, while minimizing his primary motive: the pathetic pursuit of fame. Phoniness is what Goffman refers to as a "blemish of the individual character"¹¹⁷ and a *discreditable* identity, which Chapman believed had been fully exposed and *discredited* with the revelations of Lennon's opulent lifestyle.¹¹⁸ Thus Chapman's murder of the deviant 'phony' Lennon was, in his world schema, a moral act [*mj*]. In Goffman's words:

Society is organized on the principle that any individual who possesses certain social characteristics has a moral right to expect that others will treat and value him in an appropriate way. Connected with this principle is a second, namely that an individual who implicitly or explicitly signifies that he has certain social characteristics ought to be in fact what he claims he is.¹¹⁹

As we will see, Berkowitz, Ireland, Arkwright, Rodger, and Cho also provided varying degrees of moral justification for murdering 'deviants.' In his classic *Seductions of Crime*, Katz noted that many homicides are a kind of deformed enforcement of common morality, although Katz's examples were of *reactive* homicides. This study reveals that acts of *instrumental* violence are no exception. Paradoxically, Chapman was acutely aware that Lennon's "terrible inconsistencies"¹²⁰ mirrored his "own inconsistencies and my own pain and my own guilt at not having accomplished anything."¹²¹ The homicide would thus serve to exterminate two false identities—John Lennon 'the phony', and the fake Chapman by reconciling his *personal identity* with his *enacted identity* and his *actual/own* and *ideal/own*—or in Chapman's words: "There was no fake adult anymore. He was used and buried. He had disintegrated. He turned to dust. He was gone."¹²²

If serial killers frequently prey on Egger's "less dead"¹²³, we might refer to John Lennon as 'more dead' as his passing was mourned globally by millions, even culminating in the suicides of three fans who did not know him personally.¹²⁴ Beyond being celebrities, Ariyoshi, Carson, Onassis, McCartney, and Scott all shared this quality of being potentially 'more dead.' Chapman was not just *killing up*, he was aiming at celebrity gods atop the mass media Olympus.

3.4.4 Mark David Chapman: Post-Arrest Self and Identity

At this point, one of two transformative scenarios occurred—an ego-syntonic consolidation of *self* or an ego-dystonic loss of *self* followed by a psychotic break—it is difficult to ascertain which narrative is true. In the ego-dystonic scenario, Chapman claims that after shooting John Lennon the *actual/own:ideal/own* transformation he expected did not occur:

...afterwards it was *like the film strip broke* [emphasis added]. I fell in upon myself. I like went into a state of shock... And I was stunned. I didn't know what to do.⁹⁹⁹ I took *The Catcher in the Rye* out of my pocket. I paced, I tried to read it. I just couldn't wait... till those police got there. I was just devastated.¹²⁵ To his astonishment, Chapman did not transform into **The Catcher** *ideal/own* or anything at all: “There was nothing that felt like I was within a womb; nothing that felt like I was Holden Caulfield [*actual/own:ideal/own*]. I felt more of a panic...¹²⁶

Following this failure to transform, the **Child Nobody** *actual/own* experienced dejection-related emotions. Chapman was taken to the police station where he gave a statement confessing to Lennon's murder and briefly alluding to his connection with Holden Caulfield. “I remember a lot of pain and a lot of confusion at what I had done when I dictated the statement.”¹²⁷ Psychiatrist Naomi Goldstein who examined him immediately after the killing recorded: “an insatiable need for attention and recognition... grandiose visions of himself... mood fluctuations... anger... paranoid tendencies... suicidal thinking, rage, confusion and agitation about himself.”¹²⁸ Similarly, biographer Jack Jones explains that Chapman was “depressed”¹²⁹ in the weeks following his arrest. Goldstein found no evidence of psychosis.

In early 1981, Chapman's lawyer gave him a copy of *The Catcher in the Rye* to read. Pouring over the lines from his prison cell, Chapman states he felt it was a different book from the one he had previously read. He “made a list of fifty total coincidences, things that were pretty frightening because there was no way that they could have been planned, no way that I could have set them up. It was like the whole killing was set up by destiny, just something that was meant to be.”¹³⁰ Convinced that he was on a mystical mission, Chapman “realized, in that instant, that John Lennon had been killed to promote the reading of *The Catcher in the Rye*... In that moment, I was on my feet and I came up off my bunk in the grip of a total, psychotic euphoria.”¹³¹ He was reinvigorated by “knowing that there was a reason beyond myself for what I had done [*ml*].”¹³²^{trr} In this scenario, Chapman “became a savior”¹³³, a notion reciprocated

⁹⁹⁹ Chapman had originally fantasized that, upon the police's arrival, he would shout “I am Holden Caulfield, the catcher in the rye of the present generation!” Then he would hold up the book and refuse to say another word.” (Gaines, 1987, February 23).

^{trr} Intriguingly, Chapman claims that this was the only time he feels he lapsed into “a psychotic episode... always

through the actions of corrections officers, who allegedly brought him “copies of the novel by the boxful. Doctors, too, the psychologists... I signed [copies of the novel] to make them keep them, so that they would never throw the books away... They would give the copies to their friends, and I knew it would increase the value of the books.”¹³⁴ Chapman concedes “I know it's hard to believe there were no thoughts of celebrity when I was autographing those copies of the book, but there wasn't. I simply wanted to make the book as special as possible.”¹³⁵ By his own admission, Chapman “would sign my name and write 'The Catcher in the Rye' [*SAOS*] at the bottom of it.”¹³⁶ Now, Chapman realized that he did not *literally* have to transform into Holden Caulfield in order to spread his *avatar's* message. He, Mark David Chapman, could become **The Catcher** (*homicidal ideal/own*), saving youth from entering the phony adult world by using his notoriety to advertise the book.

The alternate scenario holds that Chapman's *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy was bridged immediately upon murdering John Lennon. While Chapman claims he was in a state of affective shock following the murder, Manhattan District Attorney Kim Hogrefe has a more cynical interpretation of Chapman's actions: “He stood there and he waited... because he wanted to be arrested because what's the point of committing a celebrity murder if your name isn't associated with it?”¹³⁷ Immediately after being handcuffed and placed into the patrol car, Chapman's status as a 'somebody' was confirmed when one of the excited officers exclaimed “This is history man!... This is history!”¹³⁸ Chapman reportedly smiled and responded, “I am **the Catcher** in the Rye [*ideal/own*].”¹³⁹ This seems to contradict his claims of 'confusion' and 'devastation.' In this scenario, where Chapman “found my identity. But I had lost my life.”¹⁴⁰ his signing and distribution of copies of *The Catcher in the Rye* were communications that cemented him as **The Catcher**. Every book he gave that was received gratefully by the *generalized other*, bound him to this new *homicidal ideal/own*. His advocacy of the book, rather than being borne of sheer psychosis as he claims, was an act of self-promotion. After reading the Lennon bio, Chapman had “wished someone would write a book about me.”¹⁴¹ Now he was both the protagonist in *The Catcher in the Rye's* pages and its real-life manifestation: “I was going to use my trial... to promote the reading of that book. I didn't care about being at the trial. I wanted *the book to be at the trial* [emphasis added].”¹⁴² “I dealt with [the negative emotions] by becoming

until then I had freedom of choice... But what happened... in my cell on Riker's Island that was a choice that was made by somebody or something else” (Jones, 1992, p. 213).

something other than a person. It was on the book now... It didn't matter whether I was alive or dead... the book... would live long after us all and be read by millions of people..."¹⁴³

Regardless of whether Chapman briefly succeeded or failed at reconciling his *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy, during this time

wherever I went, from my cell to Bellevue to the courtroom, I took the book with me. In court, I made sure that I was always holding it in my hand so everyone would see it as I walked in and out... I held it crosswise so court reporters could see it, holding it very still *so the newspaper and TV artists could sketch it* [emphasis added]."¹⁴⁴ "I had planned to read from the book the whole time during my trial and I was going to jump up at random moments and shout, 'Read *The Catcher in the Rye*! I am **The Catcher** in the Rye [*homicidal ideal/own*]!"¹⁴⁵

Yet, by pleading guilty to second-degree murder on June 22, 1981, Chapman ruined his chance to effectively promote *The Catcher in the Rye*. Though he claims not to know why, he now attributes this decision to divine intervention.

Once he was permanently behind bars, Chapman claims to have become conflicted about becoming **The Catcher**, recounting how an "officer asked me for my autograph, and I just said 'that's wrong to do that.'"¹⁴⁶

I'm sure there was a part in me that enjoyed the attention, but there was a greater part of me that revolted against being an 'It.' I had become the thing that I thought I had killed: I became an 'It.' I had treated people like they were Its and then suddenly I became an It to everybody in the world.¹⁴⁷

Chapman's use of the term "It" refers to the two-dimensional media image of Lennon as *talisman*. With grim irony, Chapman's newfound fame turned him into a *talisman* for future celebrity assassins John Hinckley Jr and Robert Bardo.¹⁴⁸

To escape negative emotions [*retreatism*], Chapman allowed himself to slip back into being Holden Caulfield whenever life became too painful, quashing his depression by closing the gap between the *actual/own* (**The Child Nobody**) and the *ideal/own* (**The Catcher**). "It was an option I always had, to once again become *The Catcher in the Rye*... that psychotic comfort of being a fictional character."¹⁴⁹ Chapman claims that he made a willful decision to break free of this opium of *meta-delusion*:

I finally said that I would not allow myself to be Holden Caulfield [**The Catcher**]. You don't know how hard it was for me to do that. Nobody will ever know how hard it was for me to do that. Even now, after all these years, I feel my blood stir just thinking about Holden Caulfield. I guess it's like a drug addict. To me, slipping into the mind of Holden Caulfield was as comforting as a needle full of heroin to an addict. You can't imagine

what it was like.¹⁵⁰

Ultimately, becoming **The Catcher** did not quash Chapman's negative emotionality, nor has his new **Penitent Christian** *self*. By his own admission: “I recognize that I still struggle with not wanting to deal with all of my feelings of rejection, anger, rage, jealousy the whole assorted cornucopia of hurts.”¹⁵¹ Rather, each *ideal/own* provides temporary respite for the man whose mother told him he would be somebody important. “The child would finally get what he wanted: not celebrity, but purpose. An important purpose... [T]his child would become *a star in his own movie* [emphasis added]. One of the rare children who was destined to become what he had idolized years before.”¹⁵² As author Jack Jones points out, by murdering John Lennon, Chapman actually did obtain a measure of celebrity. He has received letters of both condemnation and support from around the globe. One communication from a convict in the UK read: “You’ve done something that you will always be remembered for, killing John Lennon. To tell the truth, I’d like a status like that but I don’t think I’d have the bottle to do it.”¹⁵³ Chapman claims to find these letters deplorable and has repeatedly expressed remorse for the slaying. Still married to his devoted wife, he now presents himself as the **Penitent Christian**. Whether this is his new *actual/own*, yet another *ideal/own*, an *ought/own*, or merely an *enacted identity*, as of 2014 Chapman continues to unsuccessfully apply for parole.

3.4.5 Mark David Chapman: Sexual/Gender Aspects

Though Mark Chapman’s sexuality and gender do not seem to have been directly involved with his motives for killing John Lennon, he suffered from a chronic crisis of sexual identity. Specifically, Chapman’s sexuality is defined by fear and guilt, overlapping significantly with his Christian beliefs (1.6). In the days leading up to the Lennon murder, Chapman decided to order a call-girl to his New York City hotel room—emulating his literary *avatar*, Holden Caulfield. Once she arrived, he was delighted to see that she was wearing a green dress: the same colour as the escort's clothing in *The Catcher in the Rye*. Following the Caulfield *avatar's* script, Chapman did not participate in sexual acts with the prostitute. Instead he massaged her, and then paid her \$190 and kissed her goodbye. As he massaged her, he whispered “a *real man* [emphasis added] doesn't have to use a woman. He can give.”¹⁵⁴ This concept of the *real man* will re-emerge in different guises across the cases in our study. More likely, Chapman was attempting to circumvent confronting his 'unmanly' erotophobia by repackaging it as a progressive, and thus

superior, masculinity.

Regarding his gender identity, Chapman the 'pussy'—a *subordinated masculinity*—was concomitantly uneasy in his masculine *relational identity*, that is his identity as perceived by other people, speculating that

Maybe my problem was I kind of sounded feminine. About a year ago I played my voice in a tape recorder and I thought that was what it was.... One time about a year ago in a store I was just trying to make up my mind what to get, you know, and this salesgirl, she says, 'You're just like a woman—can't make up your mind.' You get somebody saying something like that and it just crushes me.... I just felt like I wasn't worth anything.¹⁵⁵

Unable to repair his wife's stereo turntable—a responsibility traditionally associated with the masculine sphere of domestic life—Chapman flew into a rage and smashed it to pieces with a hammer as she looked on in shock.¹⁵⁶ Perhaps most interesting is how reluctant this infamous murderer was to resort to violence against men who directly challenged his masculinity: “[T]hese two fellows were coming up the stairs and talking too loud. I started yelling at them, telling them to be quiet... later, he started whistling at my wife as he would go by our apartment. I just wanted to jump out and grab him. But I didn't. I just got all frightened inside.”¹⁵⁷ Yet Chapman was routinely abusive to his wife¹⁵⁸, his *subordinated masculinity* all-too comfortable in physically and psychologically dominating a submissive female. Chapman voluntarily admits that he is a “coward”¹⁵⁹ who lost every fight he was ever in because “I could never hit anyone in the face... even years later, when I killed [John Lennon]—I had to shoot him in the back.”¹⁶⁰ By committing a celebrity murder, he may have believed that he could refute this element of his gender identity to himself and to the world. In this regard, he clearly failed.

3.4.6 Mark David Chapman: Religious/Philosophical Aspects

Chapman's religiosity has already been discussed at great length during our examination of his fervent **Good Christian** and lukewarm-Christian **Captain Nemo ideal/selves**, as well as the post-incarceration **Penitent Christian**. Rather than covering the same ground, this section will examine the 'darker' half of Chapman's faith: his brief flirtation with the Devil.

Endemic to the Holy Bible *talisman* and its Jehovah and Christ *avatars*, is the Devil *avatar* (aka Satan, Lucifer). Just as Chapman sided with the 'benevolent' Christ during his pro-social **Captain Nemo** phase, upon accepting his *homicidal self* he allied with the 'malevolent' Satan character of the mythology. “God had been my anchor, but I cut the anchor line...”¹⁶¹ On

his invoking of Satanic power, Chapman remarked “I would sit up all night and play Beatles records, speeding them up, slowing them down, interjecting my own words. I would strip naked gritting my teeth and summoning the devil and wild things into my mind. I was sending out telegrams to Satan: 'Give me the opportunity to kill John Lennon.'”¹⁶² The content of Chapman's Satanic prayers was “Hear me, Satan... Accept these pearls of my evil and my rage. Accept these things from deep within me. In return... give me the power... to kill John Lennon. Give me the power of darkness. Give me the power of death...”¹⁶³ This strange ritualistic behaviour was confirmed by Chapman's wife who awoke in the middle of the night to hear him chanting “The phony must die says the Catcher in the Rye”¹⁶⁴ in a strange voice, along with phrases such as “the Catcher in the Rye is coming for you”¹⁶⁵, “imagine that it's over”¹⁶⁶, “don't believe in John Lennon”¹⁶⁷, and “imagine John Lennon is dead, oh yeah, yeah, yeah”¹⁶⁸ These last two incantations evidence the sacrifice of the John Lennon *talisman* to the Christ *talisman*; an inversion of Lennon's lyrics “I don't believe in Jesus”¹⁶⁹ from the song 'God' and “imagine there's no heaven”¹⁷⁰ from 'Imagine'.

It is tempting to dismiss these actions as mere symptoms of schizophrenia; indeed, activities such as changing the speed of the music^{sss} do seem to indicate genuine psychosis. However, the full picture begins with the social indoctrination and sanctioning of the Christian *delusional interpretive framework*¹⁷¹ over the course of Chapman's life, his antagonism toward John Lennon in his early teens, and his lifelong conviction that he was a 'nobody.' Each of these elements was in place well before psychosis reared its head. Furthermore, if Chapman was heard chanting “Hear me, Lord... Accept these pearls of my goodness and love. Accept these things from deep within me. In return... give me the power... to help John Lennon. Give me the power of light. Give me the power of life.” it would have been accepted as a normal, vanilla prayer—although chanting all night certainly indicates a kind of religious mania. The purpose here is not to take potshots at religion but to illustrate that Chapman draws from the Holy Bible *talisman* in multitudinous ways. He is a devotee of Christ if it serves his purposes—when he requires a socially acceptable *self* (e.g., rebounding from social rejection, endearing himself to a woman, applying for parole)—but he easily switched allegiance to the antagonist of the mythology when he needed to transition to a *homicidal ideal/own*. The Christian ideology does not guide

^{sss} I once knew a schizophrenic who played Fleetwood Mac's *Tango in the Night* album a few dozen RPMs faster than the original recording, insisting that it “sounded better” that way.

Chapman, rather he shapes it to conform to his existential needs at any particular moment.^{ttt} Rather than being an unwitting victim of psychosis, the *meta-delusional* Chapman “made a decision to be crazy, or schizophrenic... It's a choice anybody can make. When I try, I'm still able to put myself back into that 'thing' that I was.”¹⁷² David Berkowitz makes nearly identical claims regarding his “demonology”¹⁷³ in the next case study. For Chapman and Berkowitz, temporary religious 'madness' was a means to an end “[I]f I had to be crazy to kill John Lennon, then I would be crazy. I would rip off my clothes and summon demons and pray to the devil and if that was being crazy, then I was crazy. But through all of that, it was me...I made the choice...to kill another man.”¹⁷⁴

It would be remiss to ignore how the premises underlying Chapman's *meta-delusion* have been sanctioned by American society. During the **Good Christian/Captain Nemo** phases of his life, Chapman and his girlfriend Jessica attended religious group meetings involving supposed acts of “laying on of hands, miraculous healing, speaking in tongues, the gift of prophecy and the deliverance from demons.”¹⁷⁵ According to Chapman, “At times I would be on my back and five or six people would be laying on hands... At other times there would be manifestations of demonic power. I remember one man barking like a dog and then assuming a karate position... We talked about demons more than we did about Jesus.”¹⁷⁶ Though it is disingenuous to attribute Chapman's homicidal impulses purely to the influence of charismatic Christianity—millions engage in such practices every year and do not perpetrate acts of violence—those aspects of Chapman's faith which justified ('Lennon said The Beatles are bigger than Jesus'), facilitated ('Hear me Satan...'), or excused ('God forgives me') the murder were drawn from superstitious cultural beliefs and rituals purporting to be real and accepted as such by Chapman's *phantom community* and large portions of the *generalized other*. With 68% of Americans believing the Devil is real¹⁷⁷ it socially constructs a 'truth'^{uuu}—a narrative about the nature of reality—which acts upon human beings. This gave rise to the *delusional interpretive framework*¹⁷⁸ Chapman utilized leading up to and following the killing.

^{ttt} In fact, it is so contradictory, it is routinely used this way. For example, the Old Testament advocates 'an eye for an eye' while the new says to 'turn the other cheek.' These admonishments stand in direct opposition to each other. If one needs to justify being vengeful he can quote the former, while a coward or pacifist can quote the latter.

^{uuu} Almost certainly not *the* truth, as validated by empirical scientific inquiry. Rather, the 'truth' in quotation marks I refer to here is something that is not Real, but acts *as if* it is, because it is widely held to be. For instance, the existence of Santa Claus is not *the* truth, but because children believe it to be so, the myth affects reality by prompting them to leave milk and cookies for him every December 24th.

3.4.7 Mark David Chapman: Class Aspects

Having assassinated a wealthy celebrity—a “decadent bastard... with millions of dollars and yachts and farms and country estates, laughing at people like me”¹⁷⁹—Chapman presented yet another paradox when he claimed that “Living it up means identity... Identity means security, warmth, and all those human things... I wasn't a murderer, but I had to have an identity.”¹⁸⁰ Following this logic of 'opulence-is-tantamount-to-identity', he purchased a suit and top coat for his trip to New York City where he “went to front row [Broadway] plays... \$40 carriage rides. Taxis all over, limos all over the place. First class flights. Filet mignon at the Waldorf.”¹⁸¹ According to District Attorney Kim Hogrefe, “He had gotten front row tickets for George C. Scott’s one man show at the time. And he claimed that he was going to take his gun out there in the middle of the show, stand up, and shoot into the body of George C. Scott. He wasn't able to buy the bullets for the gun.”¹⁸² One wonders what justification he would have given for killing an actor he admitted was 'great.'

Prior to New York, Chapman had run up a fortune in debt renting a Lincoln Continental and driving his wife and recently-divorced mother out for weekend excursions at expensive Hawaiian hotels and restaurants. “I ran up debts renting fancy cars and staying in fancy hotels where people would think I was *somebody* [emphasis added]—because inside I knew that I was a *nobody* [emphasis added]. 'Captain Nemo'—Captain Nobody, who had nothing, not even a job at that point.”¹⁸³ This class-consciousness, entwined with his need for notability, likely comprised the latent aspects of Chapman's *ideal self* which precipitated his plunge into depression in Hawaii. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of class-consciousness in Chapman's background before that point—the **Hippie**, **Good Christian**, and **Captain Nemo** *ideal/owns* all theoretically eschewed the importance of materialism. For this reason, a competent analysis as to why Chapman believed “living it up means identity”¹⁸⁴ is difficult. One potential scenario is that Chapman's obsession with notoriety was broader, entailing an obsession with celebrity which also encompassed opulence. This celebrity worship would have been instilled in him by immersion in *hyperreal* simulation from a young age.

3.4.8 Mark David Chapman: Vocational Aspects

During his 25 years of freedom, Mark David Chapman transitioned from a YMCA counsellor to a custodian to a print shop operator and finally a security guard. He routinely quit stable jobs seemingly on impulse, and like the majority of offenders in this study, was unemployed in the months leading up to the Lennon killing. Although he enjoyed working as a custodian, once he was engaged to Gloria, Chapman the **Providing Patriarch** switched professions, becoming a print shop operator because “I felt like I had to do better... wanting to get ahead, feeling I had to have a more important job and be more responsible if I was getting married.”¹⁸⁵ Fired from the print shop and 'reduced' to a security guard, Chapman attempted to compensate by becoming an art dealer. Having no experience of such a specialized profession he was predictably conned into buying “Salvador Dali's gold plaque for \$5000”¹⁸⁶ by an unscrupulous art gallery who cooked their books. Though Chapman later successfully sued the gallery and used the \$5000 to buy an original Norman Rockwell, he soon gave up on the art world. Eventually, he became a house-husband.

Concluding Thoughts: Mark David Chapman

Table 3

Mark Chapman: Selves and Strain

	Actual/Own	Ideal/Own	Homicidal Self	Post-Arrest Self
Sexuality	Sexual Frustration (Erotophobia)	Christianity used to renegotiate social interpretation of sex. Retreatism.	N/A	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism.
Gender	Subordinated. Gender-role strain ('nerd', 'pussy', househusband). Cowardly.	Counter-culture or Christianity used to renegotiate role of masculinity. No gender-role strain.	Act of murder challenges notions that he is a coward or a 'pussy'. Less gender-role strain.	Christianity used to renegotiate role of masculinity. No gender-role strain.
Religion/Philosophy	Theistic	Strong influence	Appeals to Devil	Penitent Christian
Class	Middle-class Mertonian Strain.	'Living it up means identity'	Destruction of a symbol of affluence.	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism
Vocation	Menial. Unstable.	Captain Nemo: 'everyone in camp loved me... I had been a somebody'	N/A	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism.
Race	Ego-syntonic. Non-racist.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Notability	Ego-dystonic. Mertonian strain.	Ego-syntonic. 'Important' 'Captain Nemo'	Ego-syntonic. Killed the 'biggest someone.'	Ego-syntonic. Media circus. Public performance of penitence.

Like many baby-boomers, Mark David Chapman was raised in a world where television and radio broadcasts resounded through his family home—the earliest stages of Baudrillard's *hyperreality*. In this *Zeitgeist*, celebrities such as The Beatles, Elizabeth Taylor, and George C. Scott were a ubiquitous presence, embodying the ultimate realization of post-war American cultural goals: wealth and fame. Chapman fantasized about becoming one of these media-borne deities, slowly forming the belief that he was a special person who was destined for 'greatness'.

His highly-religious mother, routinely physically abused by her husband, sought refuge in Mark's love to the point where she idolized her son. She reinforced his grandiose notions, though neither seemed to give much thought to exactly what skill or accomplishment Mark would actually become 'great' for:

I was always destined for greatness, and I don't mean in an ego sense, I mean in a real, rational sense. I told my mother this ten years ago, and she told me I was. She agreed with me, and I said, 'I don't know if it's I'm going to be a *great actor or a great musician*^{vvv} [emphasis added] or what.'¹⁸⁷

With the most important figure in his life confirming his own self-important prophecy, finding 'greatness' became the driving force in Mark's life. This close bond between mother and son, along with the emotional absence of the father, also meant that he was exposed almost exclusively to femininity. Predictably, upon entering school, Mark was immediately associated with *subordinated masculinity* by his peers and pushed to the social margins. The cowardly 'nobody', psychologically and physically unable to project himself farther up the social hierarchy, instead retreated back into media, fantasy, and his mother's arms. This either led to or exacerbated his failed socialization, which, in turn, stunted his psycho-social growth so that he remained at the developmental level of a child or adolescent.

As Chapman seems to have identified his *subordinated masculinity* as the factor which led to his exclusion, upon entering his teenage years he pursued *ideal selves* which either repackaged *subordinated masculinity* as virtuous or downplayed the importance of (*sub-*) *hegemonic masculinity* altogether: the **Hippie**, **Good Christian**, and **Captain Nemo**. Although this avoidance strategy should have worked in theory, Chapman still remained infantile and unable to socially navigate through post-pubescent society. It is no coincidence that his greatest success was in managing children for the YMCA as the beloved 'Captain Nemo.' However, if he was challenged by a peer, Chapman's *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancies were activated, plunging him into emotional turmoil. Whenever this occurred, he would partially or thoroughly renounce the related *ideal/own self* and the subculture to which it belonged. This pattern continued into his Twenties when it became obvious that he could not function in 'ordinary' society, let alone transcend regular people to achieve his promised 'greatness.' Upon realizing this, Chapman abandoned all *self-guides* and attempted suicide. When he was unsuccessful, he

^{vvv} Before the rise of the mass media, an actor or musician was hardly something to aspire to, and was rarely known outside small social circles, let alone associated with greatness. Granted, there are a few historical exceptions.

interpreted this as proof that God had wanted him to remain alive, and concomitantly, for a reason. Chapman's subsequent marriage and attempt to be the **Providing Patriarch** had little to do with love—his treatment and devaluation of his wife makes this clear— rather, it was an earnest attempt to live a 'normal' life. Yet, the promise of fame and riches still lingered in his psyche, and the underwhelming drudgery of menial labour was a constant reminder of this. This is evidenced by his extravagant spending on luxuries during this period: a futile effort to mimic the celebrity lifestyle he so coveted.

Collapsing into despair once more, this time Chapman emerged with a plan to realize the prophecy of his own 'greatness.' By murdering one who had already achieved it, he could bypass the perilous waters of socializing, and obtain instant fame. At the same time, Chapman was paradoxically obsessed with morality, and thus any assassination plot needed to cast him in the role of 'hero' and his target as 'villain.'¹⁸⁸ Lennon's hypocritical advocacy of a less materialistic, more spiritual pacifist lifestyle—the superiority of *subordinated masculinity* over all other variations—not only allowed Chapman to stigmatize him as a 'phony', but also to blame him for Chapman's legacy of failure as a hippie, charitable Christian, and house-husband. In his homicidal fantasies, Chapman would leave his Hawaiian paradise, descend into the chaos of pre-Giuliani New York and slay the corrupting force 'Lennon', restoring innocence to the world. Through this process, he would overcome his own cowardly *subordinated masculinity*—and emerge transformed as **The Catcher**^{www}—the heroic savior of a generation. This classic Hero narrative, brilliantly articulated in Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, has existed across cultures since the dawn of man, first reflected in *hyporeal* mythologies, then crossing over to the mass-produced books, movies, and television shows of the Information Age.¹⁸⁹ The fact that Chapman's fantasies mirrored the narrative so precisely is not only a testament to its pervasiveness, but also to his complete immersion in *hyperreal* simulation. Accordingly, he donned *The Catcher in the Rye talisman*, and either sought to literally become or emulate the Holden Caulfield *simulacrum*, whose alienation he identified with so profoundly.

In destroying a symbolic representation of opulence in John Lennon, Chapman also eliminated any possibility of elevating his own social class or accumulating wealth. No longer would this married man have to “do better”¹⁹⁰, “get ahead”¹⁹¹, “have a more important job”¹⁹², or

^{www}As Chapter 4 will reveal, Chapman's homicidal *expressions* all explicitly and semiotically mark his attempt to leave behind **The Child Nobody** and become **The Catcher**.

“be more responsible”¹⁹³. Instead, he became a ward of the state—fed, and left alone to read and write^{xxx}—the eternal child gladly liberated from the independence that so tormented him. His *subordinated masculinity* and erotophobia was negligible in prison. Protective custody shielded him from the threat of aggressive men, and there were few if any women to remind him of his inadequacies. This prospect of sexual isolation was not unwelcome. Chapman “had never especially enjoyed the act of intercourse... something about the wet, warm feeling of entering a woman's body... had always frightened him... He could count the number of times... that he had engaged in the act of coitus, even with his wife.”¹⁹⁴ In short, prison conveniently excused this 25-year-old child from having to live up to the conventional demands of manhood.

For all of his years of religious devotion, the *Holy Bible talisman* neither prevented Chapman from attempting suicide or committing homicide. As Postman warned, *hyperreal* religion allowed Chapman to select whichever metaphysical truth he *wanted* on any given occasion. When he wished to fit in with the Christian community he was celibate, opposed both abortion and euthanasia as 'murder'¹⁹⁵, sang hymns, helped hundreds of people, and prayed to God or Christ. But the minute the community or a member of the community did not respond to him in the way he expected, he reduced the role of Christianity in his life, as if to punish his creator (burning the *talisman*). Indeed, when he needed to psych himself up to murder John Lennon he prayed to Jehovah's enemy, Satan, to grant him the strength. Then, after experiencing guilt and hopelessness while incarcerated, he switched back to worshipping God/Christ because he offered the prospect of hope and forgiveness. All things considered, Chapman always used the *Holy Bible talisman* to combat his negative emotionality and facilitate a new *self*, regardless of that *self's* morality. The holy text was like a hammer, used to build homes for the poor one moment and to viciously bludgeon a man in the next—an instrument of Chapman's will, rather than the other way around.

The death of John Lennon continues to be viewed as a tragedy by millions. The second tragedy of this story is that in his 25 years before murdering Lennon, Mark David Chapman had accomplished a great deal: becoming the heroic 'Captain Nemo' to the children he worked with, helping refugees, marrying a faithful and supportive wife, and travelling the world from Japan to Dublin. As a self-avowed Christian, this should have fulfilled him.

^{xxx} During a hospital visit, Chapman once told a therapist that he wanted to be in prison so he could rest and read (Jones, 1992).

Though the assassination of John Lennon occurred in 1980, there is something prescient in Chapman's belief that he would achieve extreme fame, although he could not specify what it was that he would be famous for. Like the talentless reality TV star who humiliates himself in front of a global audience just for a chance to be “known for his well-knownness”¹⁹⁶, Chapman would permanently discredit his character with the master stigma of being a murderer to have his 15 minutes in the spotlight. The grating reality, of course, is that in order to understand men like him, we must continue to discuss them. Besides his numerous television interviews and biography, in the years since the murder, Chapman has been portrayed in song (e.g., 'I Just Shot John Lennon' by The Cranberries) and most notably by acclaimed actor Jared Leto in the 2007 film *Chapter 27*. Raised in a world of simulation, this 'media junkie' has himself become *hyperreal*.

3.5 David Berkowitz: 'Reject' to 'Son of Sam'

Talismans: Holy Bible, *Rosemary's Baby*, True Crime novels; Type: 1

3.5.0 David Berkowitz: Failed socialization and formation and realization of the actual/own self

Born Richard David Falco on June 1, 1953, the future 'Son of Sam' was adopted three days later by Nathaniel and Pearl Berkowitz, a childless Jewish couple, and renamed 'David Berkowitz'. Berkowitz grew up in the Bronx, and was much closer to Pearl, as Nate worked long hours every day at his hardware store. Sometime between the ages of three and six (*late-interrelational/early-dimensional*), Nate and Pearl explained to David that he was adopted, telling him (falsely) that his natural mother had died when he was born.¹⁹⁷ According to Nate, “The reason why we told David so early was to protect him from the other children, if they should say to him he was adopted without his knowing it. He accepted it.”¹⁹⁸ However, Berkowitz claims he was “surprised, confused”¹⁹⁹ about the revelation. “I had a deep desire to know my natural family... I always believed [my biological mother] had died, and I felt guilty torn apart... I thought I was responsible for her death.”²⁰⁰ We will unpack this shortly.

Berkowitz attended Shore Haven elementary and Columbus High School, earning poor grades and spending his classes being disruptive and daydreaming.²⁰¹ Numerous individuals who knew him as a child have described him acting out and bullying other children. When Berkowitz later referred to himself as a “Little Brat”²⁰² in his 1977 letter to Captain Joseph Borrelli, he may

very well have been alluding to his boyhood tantrums. Another possibility is that, like Chapman and several other offenders in this study, he perceived that he had never truly matured.

Speculation aside, we will not dwell on Berkowitz's childhood misconduct any further, for as Leyton sensibly pointed out, this behaviour “is interesting, but all it offers us is one variation of a type of child with which every neighbourhood is cursed...”²⁰³ Interestingly, an adult neighbour, who frequently involved Berkowitz in outdoor excursions and sports with his son, said Berkowitz was a “normal, good child.”²⁰⁴ Yet, despite his perceived athletic ability he was reluctant to try out for Little League because “he was afraid of becoming a failure in front of people.”²⁰⁵ When Berkowitz eventually did, the neighbour claims he was the best player on the team. Berkowitz's insecurity in comparing himself to and/or competing against other people is also evidenced in his attitudes towards his paternal cousins:

They excelled in everything. They had physical good looks. They had good marks in school, and their schools really were good... I had an acne condition when I was young and I was fat. I had it until I was 18. I had difficulty getting together with girls. My cousins were popular – tall, slim, they had a lot of girlfriends.²⁰⁶

Berkowitz's self-conceptualization as socially inadequate may have initially stemmed from his relationship with his parents: “I wanted to have praise. Praise for heroism. Instead I got criticized... I could never meet their standards.”²⁰⁷ Regardless of the roots of Berkowitz's social inadequacy, it is a perception of him shared by others. A woman who encountered him in a Florida bar described him as “a quiet listener, who would timidly attempt to join animated conversation. He'd interject a few comments, with his bemused smile, then quickly be cut out of the group as an odd duck. Then he'd retreat and try to strike up a conversation with others.”²⁰⁸ After interviewing him in Attica prison, FBI agent John Douglas wrote of Berkowitz as “not what I would call a charismatic guy, and he was always searching for some bit of recognition or personal achievement. He had bright blue eyes that were always trying to pick out if someone was generally interested, or laughing at him.”²⁰⁹ Here we see a repetition of the *communication dysfunctions* exhibited by Mark David Chapman in the previous case study. Berkowitz acknowledged this inability to bond with others, despite his desire to do so: “I was never able to relate to people. I was always a loner.”²¹⁰ Unable to see himself through the eyes of others, be they the Floridian bar customer or John Douglas, Berkowitz was left to guess the causes of his social alienation. As his deficiencies were subtle (e.g., 'a bemused smile' and 'eyes that were always trying to pick out if someone was generally interested'), it is understandable why he

would be baffled as to the reasons for his rejection. Raised in a culture which encourages supernatural interpretations of unexplained phenomena, he reasoned: “There is a force to [sic] turn other people away from me. Somebody wants me destroyed, makes people dislike me and makes girls be not attracted to me in any way. If I had close friends or girlfriends, I would be able to resist the force. I would be able to resist, if I had people.”²¹¹ Here we can see the depth of his religious belief and perhaps the seeds of his resulting demonology (more in 3.5.6).

Berkowitz's *actual/own* is that of the **Reject**: rebuffed by his biological parents and women, losing his adopted mother Pearl to cancer in his early teens, and finally abandoned when his one-surviving parent, Nathan, remarried and relocated to Florida.

3.5.1 David Berkowitz: Pre-homicidal Original Ideal/Selves and Negative Emotionality

David Berkowitz writes that “ever since I was a small child, my life seemed to be filled with torment... During this period of my life I was also plagued with bouts of severe depression.”²¹² Even in pre-pubescence he experienced suicidal ideation:

Sometimes I spent time sitting on a window ledge with my legs dangling over the side. We lived on the 6th floor of an old apartment building. When my dad saw me doing this he would yell at me to get back inside. I also felt powerful urges to step in front of moving cars or throw myself in front of subway trains. At times those urges were so strong that my body actually trembled.²¹³

A recent review of the academic literature on adoption, identity, and self-esteem by Horstman et al. provides valuable insights into Berkowitz's childhood depression. Firstly, adoptees who view their adoptive identity as a highly salient characteristic generally regard it as the 'organizing theme' of the *self*, and become preoccupied with it, expending an inordinate amount of personal energy.²¹⁴ Secondly, a strong understanding by the adoptee of the circumstances associated with his or her adoption is linked to higher self-esteem and lower levels of depression. Less information has inverse results accompanied by identity-related confusion.²¹⁵ This level of understanding is tied to another important factor: openness and frequency of communication, or “conversation orientation”²¹⁶, within the family about the adoption.²¹⁷ Berkowitz who “had a deep desire to know my natural family”²¹⁸ was clearly an individual with high adoptive identity salience. Furthermore, his father's assertion that David “accepted”²¹⁹ the revelation of his adoption compared to the offender's own claims that he was “surprised, confused”²²⁰ strongly indicates the matter was not sufficiently discussed in the household (i.e., low conversation

orientation). Predictably, the young Berkowitz experienced what Horstman et al. call “feelings of isolation and low levels of trust in adoptive parents... as well as low levels of positive affect about adoption and self-esteem...”²²¹ His attitude towards his *self* became associated with loss²²², hence **Reject**: “I always believed [my biological mother] had died, and I felt guilty torn apart... I thought I was responsible for her death.”²²³ His torment only deepened when his adopted mother, Pearl, died of cancer when Berkowitz was only 13 (*late vectorial development*). “For the most part, my mother was my source of stability. With her now gone, however, my life quickly went downhill. I was filled with anger at the loss of my mom. I felt hopeless and my periods of depression were more intense than ever.”²²⁴

Berkowitz's biographer, Lawrence Klausner, summarized Berkowitz's attempts to reduce the negative emotionality resulting from the discrepancy between his *actual* and *ideal* selves by creating a false macho persona: “His response, both to rejection and to a shaky sense of self, began with bravado. He boasted of achievements, strength, and sexual conquests that did not exist.”²²⁵ Prohaska & Gailey keenly observe that “men participate in activities that adhere to the hegemonic ideal so that other men will recognize their masculinity... Men fear rejection by other men^{yyy}, and the only way to avoid this rejection is to participate in normative masculine behaviors... Thus, real manhood is only achieved when ‘real men’ acknowledge and approve of other men's accomplishments.”²²⁶ Standard ways to seek such approval is to convince other men that one is a 'winner', physically and emotionally tough, and sexually successful. As Berkowitz met none of these criteria, his *enacted identity* was deceitful in a manner so incredulous it resulted in communication gaps with his *personal identity* and *ascribed relational identity*. According to CTI, this would have contributed to his negative-emotionality.

Ultimately, if Berkowitz's new persona was to be believed by himself and others, he would eventually have to live up to it. Around the age of 17, he moved to Co-op City but the girls there “didn't find me attractive. I began to hate girls and wanted to join the army.”²²⁷ In the interim he enrolled in the “auxiliary police, and fire departments; I wanted to make a dramatic rescue, to be a hero.”²²⁸ Unsurprisingly, the first *ideal/own* to emerge as an adult was that of the **American Fighting Patriot**, who, contrary to the widespread counter-cultural condemnation of

^{yyy} Unfortunately, this text overlooks the rather obvious fact that women also police men's masculinity and that men seek female approval in roughly equal measure because it enables sexual access. For an example, see the behaviour of Elliot Rodger's stepmother in Appendix II.

the war in Vietnam, was “fanatically patriotic”²²⁹ expressed his support for the conflict, and enthusiastically enlisted. He “wanted some adventure.... wanted experience of life... wanted to serve the country...”²³⁰ and hoped to “die for a cause”²³¹. Sent to South Korea in 1972 rather than Vietnam, Berkowitz's enthusiasm for military life quickly waned: “I got there in the unit and I was really, you know, just out of training. I was gung-ho. Almost straight. But later in Korea, it varied. The Army had a way of making you a *nobody* [emphasis added]. You know. Impossible. I felt like I was going to make a revolt against them.”²³² The sense of respect and camaraderie he expected was undermined by constant criticism: “Everybody is down on you. Old lifers, you just can't please them. Petty stuff... The Koreans hated you and the army lifers hassled you constantly.”²³³ [*trigger*] When the discrepancy widened between Berkowitz's **Reject actual/own** and his **American Fighting Patriot ideal/own**, dejection-related emotions followed. Later, he would describe Korea as “nothing but a bad dream”²³⁴, noting “I joined the Army, in a sense, to start a new life and get away from my problems. But even in the service I had trouble coping...”²³⁵ He self-medicated with marijuana and LSD to “find a way to temporarily escape this lousy life” and “straighten out my distorted messed up mind...”²³⁶ Interestingly, like his sexual conquests, many doubt Berkowitz's claims to have experimented with drugs at all.

Accordingly, Berkowitz's *ideal/own* took a 180 degree turn and became a **Hippie**, refusing to carry a gun and writing to his friend Iris “I don't play anymore conservative patriotic scenes. I woke up. This world is all fucked up (thanks Nixon). We've got to have some peace. The only thing on my mind is Drugs, Music, Pollution, Poverty, Peace and Love... I despise religion...”²³⁷ Yet within less than 10 months of his declaration, Berkowitz was reassigned to Fort Knox in Kentucky. There, the **Hippie ideal/own** mutated fully into a **Good Christian**, and he

began searching for a kind of religion at Fort Knox... There was an emptiness there, you know, with God. The meaning of life. I used to read a lot. Soul-searching, you know? They had guys in the barracks, like really Christian. They used to go to church all the time. One of them, John Almond, used to ask if I wanted to go along. One day I did. I went to church. The service was really uplifting. Men, women, children, singing, holding hands. I never felt anything like that before in my life... I finally converted... I went through the thing. They wanted to dunk you in water. Yeah, I went through it because you're supposed to, if you want to get in there. You know. Join. I didn't want to lose my Jewishness [*actual/own*]. But again, I wanted to be with these people [*ideal/own*].²³⁸

Once more, for a suspiciously short period of time, Berkowitz threw himself headfirst into this new *ideal/own*, listening “to religious broadcasts constantly—seven days a week. I read dozens

of religious books... I spent my days telling my peers and superior officers of the need to be 'saved' and the tragic increase in sexual immorality and permissiveness of our day.”²³⁹ Ominously, Berkowitz would later remark “All the sermons were about demons... sin, hell, damnation, etc... They had a bad effect on my mind... I was enthralled with the doctrine of the Apocalypse—the end of the world and the ever-lasting punishment of sinners. 'Hell' fascinates me.”²⁴⁰ However, “towards the end of my tour at Fort Knox, I began to lose interest in Christian stuff. I could never stay with anything too long.”²⁴¹ With a discrepancy forming between his *actual/own* and **Good Christian** *ideal/own*, Berkowitz now felt “guilty for having let himself be baptized, and angry at those who had persuaded him to take such a step... he had now become more guilty and depressed.”²⁴²

According to Klausner, Berkowitz “wanted to be good-looking, popular, successful, romantic, and loved by young women. He was none of these except in fantasies.”²⁴³ These aspirations all relate to the *sexual/gender* aspects of his *self*, which are reflected in his three *ideal/selves*: Conservative (**American Fighting Patriot**) to Liberal (**Hippie**) back to Conservative (**Good Christian**). Each mark a failed attempt to belong to a stereotypical pre-defined segment of American society. Like Mark David Chapman sporting his “I'M UNIQUE. I THINK FOR MYSELF” t-shirt, Berkowitz, who proudly proclaimed “I'm an individual again”²⁴⁴, was, in reality, wholly conventional in his views. The **American Fighting Patriot** was a grab for *sub-hegemonic masculinity*, while the **Hippie** and **Good Christian** offered alternative 'peaceful and non-materialistic' alternative masculinities—the illusion that Berkowitz had chosen a *subordinated masculinity* as some kind of moral decision, rather than being born into it. Again, the parallels to Chapman are remarkable.

Returning to New York from Fort Knox, he eventually settled into an apartment at 35 Pine Street in Yonkers, New York and found employment in a series of menial positions. Berkowitz said that he “just wanted to live a nice happy life. I wanted friends, a good job, a future, maybe an education.”²⁴⁵ “I was at a vulnerable time, getting out of the army, and all my friends that I knew before I went in the army had all gotten moved on, gotten married, so I was kind of like the odd man out. And I was just lonely and searching for my place in the world and fell into a lot of hard times.”²⁴⁶ He began tracking down his biological parents, dreaming of finally having a “perfect family—a blissful family—a perfect relationship.”²⁴⁷ He joined the Adoptee's Liberty Movement Association (ALMA) and at the first meeting “told them I would

like to look up my natural father... My mother, I said, had died at my birth... They then explained that they laughed because every adoptee is told the same story. Later on I confronted my (adoptive) father about it, and he acknowledged the falseness of the story.”²⁴⁸ His attempts at establishing a **Normal Family Man** *ideal/own*, were complicated when he “tried to go out with some of the girls in Co-Op City. They didn’t find me attractive.”²⁴⁹ and he “began to hate girls.”²⁵⁰ A second blow came upon learning that his biological mother, rather than dying, had given him up for adoption “for *her* benefit, not mine”²⁵¹ because Berkowitz surmised he “was not good enough [*actual/own*]”²⁵². This led him to feel increasingly “bothered and tormented.”²⁵³ “Here I was, never wanting to be born in the first place... miserable, unhappy, maladjusted, plagued with Death fantasies and suicidal hopes [strong *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy], only to find out that I was unwanted, an accident after all.”²⁵⁴ Considering his existing, long-standing adoption-related issues, Berkowitz was sent psychologically reeling. Rather than resigning himself to an existence as a **Reject** (*actual/own*), approximately five months after a disappointing meeting with his biological mother [*trigger*], Berkowitz took a month's leave from work in November 1975 and began to lay the foundation for his *homicidal ideal/own*.

3.5.2 David Berkowitz: Renegotiated Homicidal *ideal/own*

At some point that same year, Berkowitz had started reading “about murderers, among them Nathan Leopold and the notorious mass murderer Richard Speck”²⁵⁵ saying after his 1977 capture “I like to read about murders and murderers—it's a recent interest of mine—a little over two years.”²⁵⁶ There is no evidence that either offender served as a *talisman* for Berkowitz, as their victims, methods, and motives differed greatly. Still, through his true crime readings, he was learning that he could gain an identity through the commission of murder. Here **The Son of Sam**^{zzz} *homicidal ideal/own* was formed: a specific roaming “monster”²⁵⁷ variation on the *serialkiller!*^{aaaaa} *talisman*.²⁵⁸ Berkowitz made his first attempt to kill a woman on Christmas Eve. Cruising the streets of Co-Op City with a hunting knife, at about 10:45 p.m. he spotted Michelle Foreman, a “young girl”²⁵⁹. He hurried towards her and stabbed her repeatedly in the back. Recalling the attack, Berkowitz later said “I stabbed her, she looked at me. I stabbed her again....

^{zzz} Berkowitz's homicidal *expressions* all served to announce his transformation into the monstrous **Son of Sam**. This will be explored in great detail in Chapter 4.

^{aaaaa} Though the term 'serial killer' was not in common use in 1977, the concept existed in the public imagination. Hence, we use *serialkiller!* in the sensationalized media sense, not as a specific category of criminal.

It wasn't like the movies^{bbbb} [emphasis added] when the stabbed person falls down and is killed.”²⁶⁰ Out of his element, he fled.

Having decided upon a less personal, more effective way of killing, Berkowitz obtained a .44 Bulldog pistol from an ex-army buddy in Texas. Berkowitz would go on to murder six young New Yorkers and wound seven more using this powerful handgun—nearly always shooting them while they sat in parked cars—from July 29, 1976–July 31, 1977. Following the double-homicide of Alexander Esau and Valentina Suriani on April 17, 1977, Berkowitz left a handwritten note for the police near the crime scene referring to himself as 'the Son of Sam', a 'Little Brat', and signing it 'Mr. Monster'. The **Son of Sam** [*ideal/own*] moniker was released to the press, and with its alliteration and cryptic reference to a second sinister figure, quickly replaced the former media-coined '.44 caliber killer' sobriquet. Mayor Abraham Beame later admitted “I knew the press was going to have a field day. Son of Sam. I even liked the name and that in itself is terrifying. I knew it would stick...would become his trademark.”²⁶¹ For the first time in his life, Berkowitz's *ideal/own* had been accepted and validated by the *generalized other*. He believed that at “the point in which the papers began to pick up vibes and information that something big was happening on the street”²⁶² that “it was good to [commit murder], necessary to do it, and that the public wanted me to do it. The latter part I believe until this day. I believe that many were rooting for me.”²⁶³ Abrahamsen notes “The murderer's crimes, as a matter of fact, had been reported on the front page of the Vatican’s *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Hebrew newspaper *Maariv*, and the Soviet *Izvestia*.”²⁶⁴ By perpetrating the most blasé form of serial murder in a metropolis, Berkowitz had become international news.

Following the shooting of Stacy Moskowitz and Robert Violante in Brooklyn, Berkowitz returned to his car to find he had received a parking ticket.

I knew that the police would eventually come around. I've always known that it was a standard procedure for the police to check for traffic violations given out in the neighborhood of a crime scene. Also, license plate numbers of all cars parked within a large radius of a crime are also noted and eventually checked. This is usually done within several hours after a crime. Uniform policemen go up and down nearby streets recording the plate numbers and the model of all cars in the vicinity. So I knew that they would be coming. It was just a matter of time. But it did surprise me that it took almost two weeks.²⁶⁵

^{bbbb} Once again, the expectation that murder in Reality would resemble its cinematic depiction is proof of Baudrillard's simulation.

Arrested outside his Bronx apartment on August 10, 1977, a smiling Berkowitz reportedly remarked “You finally got me. What took you so long?”²⁶⁶ We might well ask him in return why he waited around to be arrested, though the answer is shamefully obvious: “I was glad in a way that they caught me.”²⁶⁷ Like Mark Chapman, at long last David Berkowitz had an identity to parade before the entire world. The discrepancy between his *actual/own* and *ideal/own selves* was gone, at least for a while.

3.5.3 David Berkowitz: Victimology

Table 4
David Berkowitz Victimology

Victim Name	Age	Race	Gender	Date Murdered	Where
Michelle Foreman	Teen	White	Female	December 24, 1975/survived	Bronx, outdoors
Donna Lauria	18	White	Female	July 29, 1976/died	Bronx, parked car
Jody Valenti	19	White	Female	July 29, 1976/survived	Bronx, parked car
Carl Denaro	20	White	Male	October 23, 1976/survived	Queens, parked car
Rosemary Keenan	18	White	Female	October 23, 1976/survived	Queens, parked car
Donna Demasi	16	White	Female	November 27, 1976/survived	Queens
Joanne Lomino	18	White	Female	November 27, 1976/survived	Queens
Christine Freund	26	White	Female	January 30, 1977/died	Queens
John Diel	30	White	Male	January 30, 1977/survived	Queens
Virginia Voskerichian	19	White	Female	March 8, 1977/died	Queens
Alexander Esau	20	White	Male	April 17, 1977/died	Bronx
Valentina Suriani	18	White	Female	April 17, 1977/died	Bronx
Sal Lupo	20	White	Male	June 26, 1977/survived	Queens
Judy Placido	17	White	Female	June 26, 1977/survived	Queens
Stacy Moskowitz	20	White	Female	July 31, 1977/died	Brooklyn
Robert Violante	20	White	Female	July 31, 1977/survived	Brooklyn

Berkowitz's victims were symbolic: he targeted “pretty”²⁶⁸ young women—almost always brunettes—and their male lovers. More than half of his attacks took place in Queens because “there are a lot of *pretty women* [emphasis added] there. It seemed to me that Forest Hills was

where *the prettiest ones* [emphasis added] were”²⁶⁹, speculating that it “must be the water they drink.”²⁷⁰ He rationalized his crimes by expressing contempt for the perceived societal privilege of his victims, stating [*mi*] “everybody mourns more for pretty girls, more than ugly. Pretty girls get more attention in life. Guys lay down their lives for them... I mean some pretty girls at eighteen lived three times over, with all the attention they got. If a pretty one dies, what the hell. She had a good time.”²⁷¹ The implication is that Berkowitz felt that comparatively he had not received even a fraction of this attention, and had hardly 'lived' at all, let alone 'three times over.'

Paradoxically, Berkowitz also explained that “I loved them, I want to love them.”²⁷² In one breath he protested their perceived privilege, while in another he admitted that, if given the chance, he would gladly have joined in worshipping them. As Leyton observed of multiple murderers 30 years ago, “these killers are no radicals: they have enthusiastically embraced the established order only to discover that it offers them no place they can endure.”²⁷³ Berkowitz exemplifies the adage that love rejected equals hatred rather than indifference. Similar sentiments regarding attractive women will appear in the cases of Danny Rolling and Elliot Rodger.

Berkowitz situates the relationship of his victims to himself and society within *hegemonic masculinity*, and its accomplice *emphasized femininity*. *Emphasized femininity* complies “with this subordination [of women] and is oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men.”²⁷⁴ It does so by:

the display of sociability rather than technical competence, fragility in mating scenes, compliance with men's desire for titillation and ego-stroking in office relationships, acceptance of marriage and childcare as a response to a labour market that discriminates against women. At the mass level these are organized around themes of sexual receptivity in relation to younger women and motherhood in relation to older women.²⁷⁵

As Berkowitz did not stalk his victims, the degree and character of *emphasized femininity* in their lives was confined to his interpretation of them in the moments before he inflicted violence upon them. His repeated references to them as “pretty”²⁷⁶—a descriptor largely agreed upon by those who have publicly commented on their physical appearance²⁷⁷—along with the fact that 55% of Berkowitz’s female victims and 100% of his male victims were in parked cars together at night, is significant. In the short time he observed them, Berkowitz interpreted his female victims as being emphasized in their femininity, which placed them in the most socially desirable category of woman. Like Mark David Chapman, Berkowitz destroyed a representation of something

unattainable: where Chapman struck out against fame and fortune, Berkowitz obliterated the sexual objects he coveted.

3.5.4 David Berkowitz: Post-Arrest Self

Immediately after Berkowitz's arrest, Detective John Falotico reportedly asked him “now that I've got you... who have I got?” “You know,” Berkowitz replied. When Falotico responded that he did not, a smiling Berkowitz said “Sam.” [*homicidal ideal/own*] In the squad car, a detective found ammunition on Berkowitz's person.

I then asked him, ‘Are they .44’s? He smiled and nodded yes... Chief Keenan looked at Berkowitz and asked, ‘What is your name?’ Berkowitz looked around at all the faces and smiling said, ‘I'M SON OF SAM.’ [*homicidal ideal/own*] No one said anything and at this time I asked Berkowitz did he know who he was speaking to. He looked and smiled and said, ‘you’re Det. Keenan’ at which time Insp. Dowd said, ‘It’s Chief Keenan.’²⁷⁸

Berkowitz, the social outcast, was basking in the attention. Abrahamsen observed that he “was so controlled and so eager to find out the latest news about himself that he even asked one detective if he would be getting the day's newspapers.”²⁷⁹ He proudly received a visitation from the mayor of New York²⁸⁰: happily consolidated in his *homicidal self*.

By shooting 16 people, the **Reject** had successfully transformed into the socially relevant **Son of Sam** and reveled in his celebrity status:

All the others were my little puppets. People to be manipulated. They bent forward when I wanted them to, they talked about the subjects that I wanted to speak of... So, in a sense, they were *extensions of me* [emphasis added], to be picked up and placed back down on the ground when I was finished with them.²⁸¹

Despite initial psychiatric assessments indicating that Berkowitz was mentally unfit to stand trial, Dr. David Abrahamsen found otherwise, eventually prompting several other psychiatrists to reverse their own decisions. Berkowitz finally entered a guilty plea, and on June 12, 1978, was sentenced to 365 years behind bars at Attica Correctional Facility.

Once incarcerated, Berkowitz began to drift from his **Son of Sam self**: “when I first came to prison, I was very suicidal. And I saw no hope in living. I was disgusted with my life. I was angry at a lot of people. I felt betrayed, confused, [*trigger*] and I saw no hope. So there were some times when I did try to commit suicide.”²⁸² Though he attempts to frame his dejection-related emotions in moral terms, the man who once admitted to Abrahamsen “I only like [excitement]... when I cause it myself... because it attracted attention to me... I wanted to be the

center of attention. I love the limelight”²⁸³ was no longer having his *homicidal ideal/own* reinforced on a daily basis by a media firestorm. By the time of his imprisonment national attention had already turned to *serialkillers!* John Wayne Gacy in Chicago and the Hillside Stranglers on the west coast. Sliding back towards the **Reject**, Berkowitz needed to reinvent himself once more.

Ten years into my prison sentence and feeling despondent and without hope, another inmate came up to me one day as I was walking the prison yard on a cold winter's night. He introduced himself and began to tell me that Jesus Christ loved me and wanted to forgive me... He gave me a Gideon's Pocket Testament and asked me to read the Psalms... One night, I was reading Psalm 34. I came upon the 6th verse, which says, 'this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him from all his troubles'. It was at that moment, in 1987, that I began to pour out my heart to God. Everything seemed to hit me at once. The guilt from what I did... the disgust at what I had become... late that night in my cold cell, I got down on my knees and I began to cry out to Jesus Christ...²⁸⁴

Today Berkowitz has successfully approached a new *ideal/own* 'The Son of Hope', a **Penitent Christian**: “now I have discovered that Christ is my answer and my hope. He broke the chains of mental confusion and depression that had me bound.”²⁸⁵ Once again his *actual/own* and *ideal/own* discrepancy narrowed, and “a peace flooded over me. I did not understand what was happening. But in my heart I just knew that my life, somehow, was going to be different.”²⁸⁶ Under the 'purpose' section of his website [ariseandshine.org](http://www.ariseandshine.org), Berkowitz states “The purpose of this Website is to bring glory and honor to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”²⁸⁷ before concluding with a telling final paragraph:

As the apostle Paul said in the Scriptures, that before his salvation experience, he was the 'chief' of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). Likewise, David Berkowitz was one of the worst sinners of his day. But *if God can forgive David and heal his mind and soul* [emphasis added], He will do the same for anyone else. As it says in the Bible, 'For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13).’²⁸⁸

Despite Berkowitz's so-called apology^{cccc}, his continued propagation of a lie that he was part of a Satanic cult shows he has not taken responsibility for his crimes in any meaningful sense. Rather, by transforming into the **Penitent Christian** he has renegotiated his *ascribed relational identity* in numerous religious communities—after all, it is in their mutual interest to demonstrate that faith in God can reform “the worst sinners.”²⁸⁹ Conveniently, this shift of *self* lets Berkowitz, by

^{cccc} This string of hackneyed sentiments is available for your reading pleasure at <http://www.ariseandshine.org/my-apology.html>

symbolically vocalizing his submission to and communion with 'God' (*SAOS* - the effortless utterance of *signs*), sidestep personal accountability by issuing statements of regret and claiming that he has now been saved and transformed by a metaphysical entity. Religious groups give him their attention— “they accept you. They crowd around...”²⁹⁰—as they had once done at Fort Knox. Their acknowledgment of his claims strengthens his transformation from the **Son of Sam** into the **Penitent Christian**.

At the same time, far from retreating into an ascetic life of prayer, the **Penitent Christian** piggybacks off the **Son of Sam's** notoriety, hamming it up while enjoying positive reinforcement from his fellow believers.

[T]he Lord has opened ways for me to share with millions via TV programs such as Inside Edition in 1993 and A & E Investigative Reporter in 1997, what He has done in my life as well as to warn others about the dangers of getting involved in the occult. I have also shared my testimony on several Christian TV programs such as the 700 Club in 1997, the Coral Ridge Hour (Dr. James Kennedy), and on Larry King Live in 1999.²⁹¹

For all intents and purposes, a serial killer has reinvented himself as a televangelist. Saved, he is now a purveyor of *hyperreal* Christianity.

3.5.5 David Berkowitz: Sexual/Gender Aspects

With the exception of some transitory episodes of truthfulness, Berkowitz has attempted to cloak his homicidal motivation in occult mystique. Given how pathetic and banal his actual motives were, one can hardly blame him. Berkowitz's violence against *emphasized femininity* was an attempt to renegotiate his *subordinated masculine* gender identity to a *hyperreal* one. Connell notes that “Terror is used as a means of drawing boundaries... Violence can become a way of claiming or asserting masculinity in group struggles.”²⁹² That Berkowitz's masculinity was *subordinated* is a reality of which he and others were acutely aware. Lawrence Klausner described Berkowitz as a “drab, soft-faced man.”²⁹³ His psychiatrist, Dr. David Abrahamsen associated him with stereotypically feminine traits— “[h]e was shy, dependent, submissive, intuitive, passive, flirtatious, and seductive. His movements were gracious and swift, his voice light”²⁹⁴—even accusing Berkowitz of “having possible homosexual leanings.”²⁹⁵

^{dddd} This is an instance of psychoanalysis gone awry. No evidence has been provided that Berkowitz was sexually attracted to males. Nevertheless, the fact that an esteemed mental health professional—the only one keen enough to see through Berkowitz's elaborate psychotic malingering— interpreted his soft demeanor as being associated with homosexuality is informative. It demonstrates the social milieu of mid-20th century America that shaped Berkowitz's

Abrahamsen's claim that "In order to cover up his own passivity, [Berkowitz] often felt the need to act and speak in a 'manly' fashion..."²⁹⁶ is seen in the killer's attempts to renegotiate his *subordinated masculinity* to a *sub-hegemonic* one by joining "The Army, auxiliary police, and fire departments; I wanted to make a dramatic rescue, to be a hero."²⁹⁷

Berkowitz asserts that he "kept away from girls because to stay with them was 'sissy stuff'"²⁹⁸ explaining that in the 1950s and 1960s "you had to be masculine, a strong guy, like James Dean."²⁹⁹ In reality, he was likely using this as an excuse to compensate for his trepidation around women. He avoided what he coveted until he could only do so by eliminating it.

Abrahamsen notes that when Berkowitz "was nine years old he had tried to start, among the boys, a 'hate group' against the girls"³⁰⁰, hypothesizing that "he secretly denounced women in order to show that he was just 'one of the guys.'"³⁰¹ Among the reasons Berkowitz gave for being afraid of women were "I didn't think I could satisfy them"³⁰² and "if [I was] enticed by the female, it may be dangerous. All women are deceitful because I myself was fooled."³⁰³ In other words, his social and sexual inadequacies led him to fear the very thing he desired.

He recounted that during high school "I didn't have a date. I met some girls. I wanted to. *They* [emphasis added] were shy..."³⁰⁴ Furthermore, he claimed to have "joined the Army... in order to lose my virginity."³⁰⁵ Though the details of his story waver between oral and vaginal sex, he says that "The first time I had sex... was in Korea... a month before I left Korea I didn't have any sex because I didn't want to get sick..."³⁰⁶ "There were prostitutes in the village. If you wanted. It only cost a couple of dollars. But you had to stay clean. It was important to me. You could only go so far with them... We had so much money. The women wanted so little. We really partied."³⁰⁷ However, one soldier recalls that "whenever barracks banter about sex came up, David would back off."³⁰⁸ Upon returning to New York City, Berkowitz once again "tried to go out with some of the girls in Co-Op City. They didn't find me attractive. They had no sexual interest in me even though they were sexually experienced."³⁰⁹ Insecure about his life of sexual failure, Berkowitz had told his lawyer "[Mark] Heller that I had sex with girls many times. This wasn't true. I was just showing off, bragging... I never had those girls that I wrote I did. I made that up to impress Heller because he wasn't much older than me."³¹⁰ Similarly, he had boasted to Abrahamsen "that he had 'lost his virginity' at 16 when he had oral sex with a girl..." only to later admit that "I never had oral sex with [name withheld] from Co-op City. I only said it... in

self and identity in the first place.

order to make myself look big and experienced in the way of love.”³¹¹ Predictably, there are widespread doubts that Berkowitz has ever had sexual relations with a female at all. His bragging reflects Prohaska & Gailey's assertion that he was trying to shore up his masculinity through the approval of other men, and is compatible with Abrahamsen's observation that “In order to cover up his own passivity, [Berkowitz] often felt the need to act and speak in a ‘manly’ fashion...”³¹²

With his constant desire for women conflicting with his gynophobia, Berkowitz would have experienced marked *cognitive dissonance*³¹³ manifesting in tension and frustration. Elster argues that *cognitive dissonance* can be avoided by *adaptive preference formation*—known colloquially as 'sour grapes'—in which a desired but unattainable object is devalued in order to reduce frustration.³¹⁴ Hence, Berkowitz “began to hate girls, I always^{eeee} hated them.”³¹⁵ His attitudes towards women were therefore reactions to internal and external constraints. This manifested in Berkowitz annihilating the evasive objects of his desire by gunning them down. Berkowitz himself has said “pretty girl[s]”³¹⁶ were “a threat to me, to my masculinity...”³¹⁷, presumably because their unavailability reminded him of its *subordinated* nature.

In keeping with the *cognitive dissonance* hypothesis, after committing his first murder (Donna Lauria) Berkowitz claims “I was literally singing to myself on the way home... The tension, the desire to kill a woman, had built up in me to such explosive proportions that when I finally pulled the trigger, all the pressures, all the tensions, hatred, had just vanished, dissipated, but only for a short time.”³¹⁸ The murders served the double-purpose of eliminating threats to his masculinity while simultaneously reinforcing it through violence, and narrowing his *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy.

The 'Son of Sam' murders themselves were not paraphilic; that is, Berkowitz does not seem to have gained sexual satisfaction through committing them. “When I fantasize myself having sex with a woman, it's never violent... My violent fantasies are miles apart from my heterosexual fantasies.”³¹⁹ However, after murdering them, he often daydreamed “of sexual intercourse with some of his victims.”³²⁰ There is good reason for this. Berkowitz's *primary transformation* from the *subordinated Reject* into the *hyperreal Son of Sam* by reducing the 'dangerous' woman of *emphasized femininity* into a lifeless object (*secondary transformation* – see Chapter 4) allowed him to feel sufficient control over them to fantasize and dream about having relationships with their spirits. Berkowitz “felt a mystical attachment to [Donna Lauria]

^{eeee} This self-contradicting statement is evidence itself of *adaptive preference formation*.

that I can't explain.”³²¹ As part of his *meta-delusional* system he claimed that “Sam promised her to me. That's Donna... Donna Lauria... He didn't give her to me... I don't know why. Maybe he would eventually?... I figured in the end [Sam] would give her to me.”³²² Similarly, according to Dr. Abrahamsen, Berkowitz “had also sought out and lingered over the graves of young women who were complete strangers to him.”³²³ Here his sexuality seems to intersect with his constant but malleable religious beliefs. The idea that there may be romantic or sexual congress between the souls of the deceased and living humans is less rare than one would think, having a historical precedent in ancient China³²⁴ and marking the fifth *spiritual/magical* allure of necrophilia.³²⁵ Not only was Berkowitz unable to establish relationships with women of *emphasized femininity* in the material world, he also made no attempt to rape or abduct them. It would be foolish to think this was a moral decision. All of the evidence presented above, from his empty boasting about false sexual trysts to his stated concerns that he was unable to satisfy a female indicate that, even more so than the erotophobic Chapman he was terrified of actual sexual contact with a woman. Instead, he substituted violence for courtship, existentially binding himself to his victim by becoming the most important man in her life: her killer. He then projected this 'relationship' into a fantasy spiritual world where he could imagine himself engaged in romantic and sexual acts with her without the risk of personal failure, while experiencing pleasure through masturbation.³²⁶

Berkowitz had a history of uttering superficial moral protestations about pre-marital sex, from spending his “days telling my peers and superior officers of... the tragic increase in sexual immorality and permissiveness of our day”³²⁷ to justifying the murder of Esau and Suriani by saying “if they did have their clothing off, and were engaged in sex, then I would be somewhat justified in killing them. Sex outside of marriage is a heinous sin [*mj*].”³²⁸ This could be another example of *adaptive preference formation* using the Bible as a *talisman*, but it also may have been an aspect of Berkowitz's deceptive *enacted identity*, allowing him to mask his erotophobia while justifying his sexless lifestyle to other men (and perhaps himself) in a face-saving enterprise: “What I expressed verbally against the girls, they were whores and it was sinful to have sex, it wasn't what I felt. Strange, I felt hypocritical, but I couldn't help it... I was anxious that people should have a good impression of me.”³²⁹ Again his *enacted identity* is one of impression management. As will be illustrated in the next section, like Chapman, Berkowitz

shaped his religiosity so that it would be favourable to him.

3.5.6 David Berkowitz: Religious/Philosophical Aspects

Continuing along this line of inquiry, let us consider the mutual interest between Berkowitz and religious and mental health groups in sustaining his demonology. For those of faith, the homicidal descent of the **Son of Sam** was accepted as spiritual coup (possession) involving real devils, while many within the psychiatric community held that it was a neurological misfiring (psychosis) with hallucinatory characters. In his latest video interview with Storyteller Ministries, Berkowitz covers both bases by proclaiming he was driven by demonic possession *and* schizophrenia; in other words, he was completely non-responsible.³³⁰ He had both a spiritual ('I was possessed') and psychiatric ('I'm nuts') advantage which assured him attention and moral exculpation from both of these monumental American institutions. Berkowitz bragged to Dr. Abrahamsen that “all I had to do was slide ‘Sam Carr’ and the ‘demons [sic] into the conversation and I'd have [the psychiatrist] bending over his chair in my direction. Why he'd practically be wiping the tears from my eyes and comforting me, in a sense, 'don't fret, don't cry, you're a sick, sick boy.’”³³¹ Metaphysical truth was never the issue; rather it was *useful* for David Berkowitz to transform into the demon-driven 'Son of Sam.' This American cultural sanctioning of spiritual truth enabled Berkowitz to craft a *self* that could retreat into transient, religious *meta-delusion*: “I really think I used this religious 'kick' to escape reality...”³³² “I did not become *subconsciously* [emphasis added] deluded—hence, [this was not] mental illness. Rather, I am very much aware of the fact that I *really deluded myself*. I did this on purpose [emphasis added]... I was determined and in full agreement with myself that I must slay a woman for revenge...”³³³ If true, there is merit in Abrahamsen's assertions that Berkowitz “had to identify and give his unruly emotions names, and so he called them demons.”³³⁴ Among the names of the many demons scrawled in his letters and on his walls were “Mr. Williams”³³⁵, “Papa Sam”³³⁶, “John 'Wheaties’”³³⁷, and “the Wicked King.”³³⁸ When it was advantageous to rely on other aspects of his Christian religious identity, Berkowitz did so without compunction. Having already admitted the demonic-possession hoax, in a May 17, 1979 interview with Abrahamsen he now justified the Esau/Suriani double-homicide by incredulously claiming that “they were embracing... but I can't remember if they had their clothes off or not. If they did have their clothing off, and were engaged in sex, then I would be somewhat justified in killing them.

Sex outside of marriage is a heinous sin.”³³⁹ This same cultural climate begat Mark David Chapman who prayed to Satan for the strength to kill John Lennon and become Holden Caulfield, while dehumanizing Lennon as a 'phony' who asked his audience to imagine a world without religion.

Berkowitz's suspicious flexibility with his faith has a biographical precedent. As an adoptee into a Hebrew family, Berkowitz “never felt Jewish. Whether I was in a synagogue or not—whether it was a holiday or not—I never felt Jewish... No I never felt Jewish at my Bar Mitzvah. I tried to fast on Yom Kippur without success. I fasted for about one hour.”³⁴⁰ Furthermore, Berkowitz was stigmatized for his parents' religious beliefs by “those Catholic kids”³⁴¹ in the Bronx who “were always passing nasty remarks about Jews.”³⁴² “When I was a kid, I often got picked on for being Jewish. There were plenty of fights between me and the Italian guys, but they were the aggressive ones. And as a result, as a child I was very ashamed of being Jewish.”³⁴³ Confronted by social exclusion, Berkowitz did what he always did: rather than standing by his principles, he shifted his identity: “To be with the crowd, I had to rebel against my own Jewishness... I rejected my Judaism because of all the ridicule I faced in school.”³⁴⁴ Ever eager to join in, he “felt proud to hang around with the Gentile boys. When I hung out and played ball with the non-Jews this caused my grandparents to get upset. My adoptive father's mother was always putting the Gentiles down. But I continued to befriend them and reject Judaism.”³⁴⁵

In the military, Berkowitz the **Hippie** wrote “I despise religion”³⁴⁶ before his faith took a sudden dramatic turn and “me and Jesus talked, ya know, the usual story”³⁴⁷ paving the way for his **Good Christian** *ideal/own*. Writing to his adopted father, Nathaniel, he stated:

I just can't explain my ideas and philosophies to you. You wouldn't understand. It's all too deep. I feel like a saint sometimes. I guess I'm kind of one. Dad, believing in God is wonderful. It's very hard for me, Dad. The lifers don't understand me. I'm just not army stuff anymore... I'm sorry that I can't live up to your expectations. I'm sorry that I'm nothing in society, that is I feel sorry for you because you can't see my point.³⁴⁸

After being discharged from the military, Berkowitz “began searching for a kind of religion at Fort Knox.”³⁴⁹ Later he would remark “My involvement with Christianity while stationed at Fort Knox has had a tremendous impact on my life and thoughts. More than most people realize. There isn't a waking moment that goes by that I'm not thinking of God and the devil, good and

evil, heaven and hell, and my usual sexual fantasies.”³⁵⁰ In joining the religious community at Fort Knox he found a measure of temporary social inclusion within their ranks “It was a very warm feeling standing there. They accept you. They crowd around...”³⁵¹ Indeed, Berkowitz used religion as a way of feeling special. Even after the murders, he still sees himself as “one of the ‘elected’ and ‘chosen.’ I always hope to be the first one to go to heaven, one of the first fruits. I do feel more important to God than other people. This is probably why I am alive today because, despite my anger towards God, he still loves me the most.”³⁵²

Before his conversion to the **Penitent Christian**, Berkowitz stated

I hate God, and I don't like him because of all the things he did. I blame him for taking my mother. I hate him for taking both my grandmothers. They both died. I hate him for making me, my life. I was always dissatisfied with life, and I wanted to die. I always felt that if God had any sense he would have taken my miserable life a long time ago. I never asked God to let me live—I never wanted to live. I believe God is everywhere. I believe that God exists, but I think he is a liar. He has disappointed me. I almost believe in God, in his existence, in his power and in heaven and hell, but not in his powers of justice, love and mercy as it is quoted in the Bible. It is hard to express it.³⁵³

He also expressed that he couldn't “love anyone who holds me in check with fear. The Bible talks about fear and hell and eternal damnation; it has caused me untold mental pain and miserery.”³⁵⁴ For Berkowitz, 'God', apparently, functions as something to blame in one instance, and to dissolve blame in another: a complete *talismanic* mask for Berkowitz's overwhelming social inadequacies and violence. The *sexual/gender* and *religious/philosophical* aspects of Berkowitz's *self* fed into one another to create the demon-driven hyperreal masculine **Son of Sam** *ideal/own*: “The demons were turning me into a soldier. A soldier can't stop everytime he shoots someone and weep... In the United States Army you can't stop to feel grief. You desensitize yourself.”³⁵⁵ Berkowitz never shot anyone in the army, in fact, he refused to carry a gun. More than being religiously flexible, his ideological system suited his immediate needs.

3.5.7 David Berkowitz: Class Aspects

In his classic *Hunting Humans: Rise of the Modern Multiple Murderer*, Leyton devoted an entire chapter to Berkowitz which laid the foundation for this study and made many similar discoveries. Based upon statements such as “Queens was special to me—very special. But this I can't explain. Shooting someone in Queens was an obsession”³⁵⁶, Leyton argued that Berkowitz

chose this borough because it was lower-middle-class and family-oriented. As Berkowitz was always on the cusp of working and lower-middle-class (Leyton erroneously proposed that most modern multiple murderers kill roughly one social class segment above them) and was defined by family instability, the residents of Queens represented everything he hopelessly aspired to have and become.³⁵⁷ When Berkowitz failed to follow through with plans to murder in middle-class Huntington and upper-class Southampton, Leyton proposed this was because he was uneasy killing too high above his station. This interpretation is certainly possible, but barring additional commentary by the killer himself, impossible to prove. In his documented statements, Berkowitz barely refers to class in any direct sense at all. For this reason, beyond reiterating Leyton's theory, there will be no additional commentary on *class aspects* in this analysis.

3.5.8 David Berkowitz: Vocational Aspects

Berkowitz's first paid job was with the United States Army. Specifically, he served as a military radio operator and custodian in Korea before his reassignment to Fort Knox in January 1973. There he worked as a clerk-typist.³⁵⁸ Following his honorable discharge on June 24, 1974, Berkowitz moved back to New York City. Over the next three years he worked as a cab driver, security guard, air-conditioning installer for Wolf and Munier, and for the Bronx postal service, before quitting this final position several weeks before his arrest. He also enrolled in Bronx Community College, attending sporadically. Though he was more adjusted in his work than the irritable Chapman, Berkowitz's sporadic employment pattern mirrored that of Lennon's assassin. Other than the army, Berkowitz makes no comment on his various occupational positions. His co-workers barely remember him as a taxi driver, and at Wolf and Munier, the foreman commented "I had no trouble with David but he was just a body at a plant, not much of a worker. He didn't do good with tools^{ffff} [*subordinated masculinity*]. He was sometimes depressed and would break into tears."³⁵⁹ This is the direct opposite of the **Son of Sam** who would emerge later smiling to the press and police, and who referred to his murders as "work"³⁶⁰: his true calling.

^{ffff} Recall Chapman's rage at his inability to fix his wife's stereo.

Concluding thoughts: David Berkowitz

Table 5
David Berkowitz: Selves and Strain

	Actual/Own	Ideal/Own	Homicidal Self	Post-Arrest Self
Sexuality	Sexual frustration (social incompetence and gynophobia).	Christianity used to renegotiate social interpretation of sex. Retreatism.	Destruction of object of desire, belief he romantically possesses some victims on metaphysical level.	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism.
Gender	Subordinated. Gender-role strain ('feminine', 'soft')	Sub-hegemonic masculinity. American Fighting Hero. No gender-role strain.	Hyperreal masculine violence destroying <i>emphasized femininities</i> . No gender-role strain	Christianity used to renegotiate role of masculinity. No gender-role strain.
Religion/ Philosophy	Theistic	Strong influence	Appeals to demons	Penitent Christian
Class	Lower-middle-class.	N/A	Leyton argues he was murdering victims one class wrung higher than him.	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism.
Vocation	Menial. Unstable.	Soldier.	Employed in menial work, but views murder as his true career. 'I love my work' 'you will see my handiwork at the next job.'	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism.
Race	Ego-syntonic. Non-racist.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Notability	Ego-dystonic. Mertonian strain.	Ego-syntonic. 'Die for a cause.' 'Hero.'	Ego-syntonic. Writes letters to newspapers. Struggles not to tell people.	Ego-syntonic. Media circus. Public performance of penitence.

Fundamentally unstable in his *self* due to his high adoptive identity salience, as a child, Berkowitz's entrance into the social world was predictably unsuccessful. His *expressive/transformative* journey mirrored Mark David Chapman's in many ways. Both were young men of *subordinated masculinity* growing up in the 1960s and entering their Twenties in the America of the 1970s. They created demonologies to justify and enable their murders and shot *symbolic victims* in New York City. Berkowitz and Chapman would fluctuate from

countercultural posers to fervent Christians whose devotion to Jesus would later go tepid before they exploded into murder. Now they both grow old in prison, settled snugly into their **Penitent Christian selves**.

Nevertheless, they differ in many important ways. Berkowitz was an arsonist and serial killer. He was also a native New Yorker and bachelor who had served in the armed forces. Chapman was a celebrity assassin, entranced by three specific *talismans*—*The Catcher in the Rye*, John Lennon, and Christianity—believing he would literally turn into the *avatar* Holden Caulfield. Berkowitz chose the more general Monster as *talisman*. There are many reasons to believe Berkowitz genuinely saw his *homicidal self* as an archetypal Monster.³⁶¹ Consider the first three definitions of 'monster' given in the Oxford Dictionary of English: “1. A large, ugly, and frightening imaginary creature... 1.1 An inhumanly cruel or wicked person... 1.2 A rude or badly behaved person, *typically a child*. [emphasis added] *'he's only a year old, but already he is a little monster.'*”³⁶² Certainly, it could be a coincidence that Berkowitz wrote the declarations “I am a monster. I am the ‘Son of Sam.’ I am a little ‘brat’”³⁶³ so close together sequentially. Or perhaps not.

From the mythological trolls and ogres of Western mythology to Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the archetypal Monster is indeed hideous in appearance. Berkowitz referred to himself as “the Chubby Behemoth”³⁶⁴, while others similarly criticized the way he looked and presented himself. Often cast out by society—Berkowitz's isolation has been strongly established—the Monster lives on the margins of civilization, emerging from its isolation to wreak havoc on the populace (often at night; or exclusively, in the case of vampires). In her literary analysis of Gothic English novels, Christina Schneider writes:

Monstrous bodies represent the strangeness of others and thus help to structure the self and the group the self belongs to. Accordingly, they are used to draw boundaries between the 'I' and the 'not I'. Furthermore, monsters cross geographical, physical, and psychological barriers and transgress moral norms, making them visible by their excessive deviation. Goetsch states that the monster 'dwells at the gates of difference' and polices the border between inside and outside, known and unknown...³⁶⁵

This description certainly fits Berkowitz, whose communications to police and journalists (see Chapter 4) are coloured with fragmented esoteric references (e.g., “Papa Sam is old now. He needs some blood to preserve his youth. He has had too many heart attacks. 'Ugh, me hoot, it

hurts, sonny boy.”³⁶⁶) and unabashedly revel in the mystery that is his identity. There are also numerous high-profile monsters whose conception and parentage, like Berkowitz's, is deviant and marked by abandonment (e.g., the Minotaur of Crete, Frankenstein's Monster). From human-animal hybrids such as the aforementioned Minotaur to outright beasts like the dragon or the Xenomorph from Ridley Scott's *Alien*, Monsters are frequently represented as having animal-like characteristics. Addressing Dr. Abrahamsen, Berkowitz once tellingly wrote “I guess you see me as I really am—an animal and unhuman.”³⁶⁷ In fictional narratives, Monsters often abduct beautiful women who are later saved by the (typically male) Hero *archetype*—which is compatible with the cultural notion of *sub-hegemonic masculinity*—after he outwits or slays the Monster.³⁶⁸ The Aarne-Thompson classification of folktales numbers this folktale 300, and refers to it as “Princess and Dragon.”³⁶⁹ Berkowitz was enamoured with the Hero *archetype*³⁷⁰, seeking to embody it in his teenage and early-adult years by becoming an auxiliary policeman, volunteer fireman, and finally joining the military. During his years in the army he would pen letters to his only female friend—who likely occupied something of a 'princess' role in his fantasies—as if boasting of his 'heroic' exploits. But ultimately, Berkowitz failed to achieve his **American Fighting Patriot** *self* and the associated *sub-hegemonic masculinity*/Hero *archetype*.³⁷¹ His lack of success with women evidenced this in his personal narrative. So, filled with alienated rage, he renegotiated his *self* to occupy the antagonist in the story—the Monster—who he more closely resembled. No longer would Berkowitz seek to win the admiration of the princess by becoming the Hero *archetype*³⁷²; rather, he would simply leave his isolation to go “prowling the streets looking for fair game—tasty meat”³⁷³ to devour, like the monsters who often consume fair maidens and princesses in folktale 300. In the increasingly *hyperreal* age of celebrity, at least Berkowitz remained a character in the American story, one in which the police played the part of the *archetypal* Hero.³⁷⁴ His alternative was to keep returning to “a series of rotten jobs, to a rotten social life and a horrifying feeling of becoming an old bachelor or a dirty old man. I had no woman in my life ... I felt like worthless shit.”³⁷⁵ It is here that we can draw a strong demarcation between Berkowitz and Chapman: Berkowitz plays the role of antagonist in his tale, while Chapman perversely saw himself as Hero^{gggg}.³⁷⁶ This dichotomy resonates through many of the forthcoming cases in this study.

^{gggg} Where Chapman ended his *expressive/transformational* progression by enacting the 'Hero' (Campbell, 1949/2008), Berkowitz began with it, abandoned it, and recast himself as its foil.

A child born into the age of mass media, Berkowitz would have been inundated with literary, cinematic, and televised versions of folktale 300 and its associated *archetypes*, which he used to frame his life. Besides his devouring of true crime novels—evidence that even the most mundane person can become worthy of a paperback biography if their transgressions are highly visible and dastardly enough—Berkowitz also admitted to being obsessed with *Rosemary's Baby*³⁷⁷ the 1968 Roman Polanski film set in a New York apartment complex^{hhhh} in which a pregnant woman believes she has been raped by the Devil and is carrying his seed.ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Berkowitz, who claimed “When I was growing up I watched countless horror and satanic [sic] movies”³⁷⁸ would have been in his early teens at the time of the film's release. Though highly speculative, one might infer that Berkowitz, the child conceived in sin, came to see himself as like Rosemary's baby—'son of Rosemary' = 'son of Sam': “There is no doubt in my mind... that a demon has been living in me since birth.”³⁷⁹ This would certainly help explain the complex demonology he constructed around himself.

During the Son of Sam murders the term 'serial killer' had not yet come into popular use. An interesting point to ponder is whether Berkowitz would have stuck to the *archetype* as his *talisman* if he had this more specific term to use.

3.6 Danny Rolling: 'Sensitive Boy Nobody Loved' to 'Mystery Rider'

Talismans: *The Outlaw Josie Wales, Holy Bible, Exorcist III*; Type: 2

3.6.0 Danny Rolling: Failed socialization and formation and realization of the actual/own self

Like Chapman and Berkowitz, Danny Rolling experienced problems socializing from a young age. Labeled “Sasquatch”³⁸⁰, “Bigfoot”³⁸¹, and “Bald head”³⁸² by his peers, he was excluded at school and experienced severe physical and emotional abuse at the hands of his policeman father, James Harold Rolling. According to Rolling's autobiography, penned with girlfriend Sondra London, and often written in the third person:

Danny felt outside the norm and his childhood reflected such. It came at him from all

^{hhhh} Eerily, the building used in the film was The Dakota Building where 12 year later John Lennon would be shot dead. Polanski's wife and friends were slaughtered a year after the movie debuted by The Manson Family in yet another *expressive/transformational* murder.

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Like Berkowitz himself, the film is subject to multiple interpretations: either the protagonist truly was the victim of a Satanic cult and gave birth to the anti-Christ, or she was delusional.

directions—home, school, the neighbors. He grew up fighting tooth and toenail emotions he couldn't control without a confidant. He couldn't take the *peer rejection at school* [emphasis added] and the lack of love at home. They were at it almost every other day, and we're talking knockdown drag-out fights. James Harold beat Danny, beat [Danny's brother] Kevin, beat [Danny's mother] Claudia, beat the dog. Danny wanted to die, to run away from the entire scene.³⁸³

Where Mark Chapman retreated into his kingdom of the Little People when his father battered his mother, Rolling similarly fled into an imaginary world to avoid the wrath of an authoritarian patriarch:

As a child, *my dad made me feel inadequate and odd* [emphasis added]. I grew up turning my mind off to what was happening around me, because I was forced to endure painful experiences I could not tolerate. The *stress* never let up. In order to survive, I distanced myself from the suffering and sought a fantasy world to escape to [*retreatism*].³⁸⁴

Higgins' contention that agitation-related emotions stem from *actual/own:ought/other* or *actual/own:ought/own* discrepancies—Rolling's internalization of his father's criticism—is consistent with the findings of one psychologist who wrote: “[Rolling] is *highly anxious* with a great deal of insecurity and a great deal of *apprehension* as to what lies ahead of him. There was a good deal of *tension, stress, and anxiety* indicated throughout the entire testing...”³⁸⁵ As we have seen, Agnew also links “strain as the presentation of negative stimuli”³⁸⁶ with aggression.³⁸⁷ The full ramifications of this will emerge toward the end of this case study.

Rolling often remarked that he was a “kidⁱⁱⁱⁱ in a man's body”³⁸⁸, an opinion which his mother agreed with: “I don't think that Danny ever got past the level of fifteen... his conversation is more mature, but every once in a while he'll go back to that little fifteen-year-old that I know so well.”³⁸⁹ This view was reaffirmed by clinical psychologist Dr. Harry Krop who testified that “Danny functions at a level of an immature teenager.”³⁹⁰ Dr. Betty McMahon, a clinical psychologist with a background in forensic assessment, also stated “he is extremely immature... distractible in the way a child is.”³⁹¹ Claudia Rolling reported that Danny “was always trying to get rid of that person that his daddy made him believe he was [*ideal/own:actual/other*]... I could say 'Danny, I love you,'... And he would say, 'Why? What is there in me for anybody to love?' [*actual/own*] And he still does that.”³⁹² These familiar themes

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Commenting on his time in prison, Rolling stated this was a common characteristic of criminals: “Most convicts are extremely immature and throw temper tantrums if they don't get their way... Most convicts are not what they seem. They are little children in men's bodies and that is what makes them really dangerous” (London & Rolling, 2011, p. 176).

of early social isolation and becoming stuck at a juvenile level of development constituted a large part of Danny Rolling's *actual/own self*.

Rolling described the 'Danny' [*actual/own*] part of his personality as “good natured...sensitive...impressionable...kind...loving...easygoing...religious...caring...intelligent...talented...troubled...tormented”.³⁹³ The vast majority of these traits strongly contrast with the *selves* that arose later to compensate for his fragility. Echoing Chapman who believed he was “too sensitive for this world”³⁹⁴, Rolling wrote “Danny was sensitive to the point of pain. It seemed as though little Danny could feel the thoughts of others and all too often those thoughts spoke loudly in terms of rejection.”³⁹⁵ As we have hypothesized in Chapter 1 and observed in the cases of Chapman and Berkowitz, mental illness results in *communication dysfunctions* which truncate the *self*. Having been diagnosed on separate occasions with “atypical psychosis”³⁹⁶, “borderline personality disorder”³⁹⁷, and anti-social personality disorder³⁹⁸ along with evidencing narcissistic³⁹⁹, histrionic⁴⁰⁰, obsessive compulsive⁴⁰¹, and avoidant⁴⁰² traits, Rolling was arguably susceptible to all three social impediments: bizarre beliefs, deviant affect, and empathy deficits. Accordingly, Dr. McMahon described him as “an individual who is likely to hold a number of mistaken beliefs. By that I mean there are times when *he is likely to misperceive what is going on around him* [emphasis added] and then hold that misperception and it becomes a belief for him...”⁴⁰³ Taking the totality of these elements into consideration, Rolling's *actual/own self* is best characterized as **The Sensitive Boy Nobody Loved**.

Perhaps as a result of his truncated development and personality disorders, Rolling could only “interact in a superficial way...”⁴⁰⁴ and was always “playing a role, [though] not intentionally...”⁴⁰⁵ showing “whatever emotions he feels are appropriate at the time. They are simply what he has learned to do in a social situation.”⁴⁰⁶ As predicted by CTI, we see an example of poor *communication satisfaction* and feelings of being misunderstood stemming ultimately from a gap between the *personal* and *enacted identity*, which in turn affects the *ascribed relational identity*. This would have compounded his negative-emotionality.

3.6.1 Danny Rolling: Pre-Homicidal Original Ideal/Selves and Negative Emotionality

Danny Rolling is unique among the offenders in this sample in that he claimed to have “had multiple personalities at a very young age. I would go off to myself and just change over. It was a defense, the only way I could deal with the pain and confusion in my life”.⁴⁰⁷ He explained

this process as resulting from the fact that his father “would not let me just be Danny. I was never good enough for him [*actual/own:ought/other*]”⁴⁰⁸ This paternal rejection led to Rolling's first *ideal/own*: the **Macho American Soldier**. When Rolling was 17-years-old he came home drunk, leading to an argument with his father. Furious, James violently wrestled Danny to the floor and handcuffed him. James arranged for two of his fellow officers from the Shreveport Police to arrest Danny and confine him in a jail for juvenile delinquents. After fighting with the other inmates, Danny was sent to The Hole (solitary confinement): “I remember how hurt and betrayed I felt. I couldn't deal with the confinement. I was bitter and confused. I mean, if you can't trust your own father, who can you trust?”⁴⁰⁹ Upon his release two weeks later, he demanded that his father sign the papers to allow him to enlist in the military. On June 28, 1971, the 17-year-old Rolling started basic training at Texas's Lackland Air Force Base. He served as a Security Policeman until substance abuse led to his general discharge on honorable conditions in 1973.⁴¹⁰

Returning to live with his grandfather in Shreveport, the 19-year-old Rolling began attending United Pentecostal Church where he was baptized. He drove the Sunday School Bus, sang hymns, passed out Christian pamphlets, and played guitar at nursing homes. One day Rolling claims to have prayed to God to send him a wife. Soon after, he met Omatha Halko and the two married four months later in September 1974. Having failed to achieve the **Macho American Soldier** *ideal/own*, **The Sensitive Boy Nobody Loved** (*actual/own*) now followed a similar path as David Berkowitz, striving toward a **Good Christian Husband** *ideal/own*. Rolling writes of having “a sincere desire to succeed at his marriage and his faith.”⁴¹¹ Within a year he had fathered a baby girl, Kiley. Rolling would come to view these as “the best years of his life.”⁴¹² Unfortunately, the union was a troubled one.^{kkkk} Ryzuk writes that Rolling suffered from erectile dysfunction⁴¹³, though Danny denied it and Omatha has never commented publicly on the matter. Rolling, on the other hand, claimed Omatha was sexually frigid which drove him to window-peeping to find relief⁴¹⁴, and that she had had an affair with her “high school sweetheart, John Lummus.”⁴¹⁵ At Rolling's subsequent trial, Omatha testified that the couple had discussed Danny's voyeurism because she wanted to understand it, that he continued to disappear at night, struck her once giving her a black eye, used marijuana secretly, and was work-shy.⁴¹⁶ She denied having been romantically involved with John Lummus, her “friend for years”⁴¹⁷, until after she

^{kkkk} During this time, Rolling claims to have been visited by a demon, which will be explored further in section 4.5.

left Danny in 1977 (for more see section 3.6.4). Danny and Omatha divorced later that same year.

According to Claudia Rolling “Danny took his divorce very hard.”⁴¹⁸ He penned a line in a song asking “Without you... what shall I do?... Wake up and weep. Into depression seep...”⁴¹⁹ In his autobiography, Rolling describes himself as “deeply wounded, dejected, angry, confused and depressed.”⁴²⁰ He wrote “in the misery and resentment of being served his divorce papers, he committed his first rape”⁴²¹ which was “a direct result of [this] rejection.”⁴²² On the night after being served his papers [*trigger*], Rolling broke into the home of a brunette college student—the same victim profile he would target during his future homicides—and sexually assaulted her, taking out “all my frustration and pain on her”⁴²³ while “visions of Omatha ran through his mind.”⁴²⁴ With this incident, Rolling began moving towards his *homicidal ideal/own self*:
Mystery Rider.

3.6.2 Danny Rolling: Renegotiated Homicidal ideal/own

The tag **Mystery Rider** comes from Rolling's eponymous song featuring the lyrics “Mystery rider, what's your name? *You're a killer* [emphasis added], a drifter gone insane...”⁴²⁵ The song draws from the *archetype* of the lone wandering outlaw. In his country ballads, Danny romanticized American gunslingers, singing “I'll become an outlaw like Jesse James I'll rob and steal till a bullet with my name^{lll} sets my weary soul free.”⁴²⁶ Less frequently, Rolling used the more political (but still very southern) “rebel gone mad”⁴²⁷ in place of “drifter gone insane”⁴²⁸—with 'rebel' and 'outlaw' both referring to those who challenge pre-established institutional, dominance hierarchies. Rolling divided this criminal **Mystery Rider** *ideal/own* into two separate personalities: Ennad and Gemini. “The outlaw Ennad developed as a rebellious soul against the harsh realities of my childhood. He loves the thrill of it all...”⁴²⁹ Phonetically, Ennad is 'Danny' pronounced backwards, and fittingly, this *ideal/own* is the inverse of who Danny, **The Sensitive Boy Nobody Loved** [*actual/own*] believed he really was.

ENNAD: Strong...self-willed...courageous...bold...daring. He can be as dangerous as a tiger, but he does have a conscience. Even though he has an explosive temper, he does not enjoy hurting people. He is an *outlaw* [emphasis added] for sure. And if you get in his way, look out! It's payday. Ennad might rape you...but he would not want your blood.⁴³⁰

^{lll} At his subsequent trial, Rolling's mother would verify her son's desire for suicide-by-cop, saying he committed robberies because “he thought that somebody would blow him away.” (Ryzuk, 1994, p. 425)

In the preface to his autobiography, Rolling's lover Sondra London explains: “because the Danny [**The Sensitive Boy Nobody Loved** *actual/own*] side of him would always be immature and inadequate in many ways, the Ennad [**Mystery Rider** *ideal/own*] side developed into all that Danny could never be. Ennad is daring, sexually aggressive—a thrill-seeking scofflaw and a stand-up convict”.⁴³¹ Rolling provided a mathematical equation to describe the factors that gave rise to Ennad [**Mystery Rider** *ideal/own*], and the nature of Ennad’s crimes: “Rejection + Depression x Rage x Lust—Counseling—Support = B&E + Rape”⁴³². While Rolling claims to be ego-syntonic with Ennad, the 'demon' Gemini personality purportedly “dismays and frightens him.”⁴³³ Gemini's homicidal equation is “Dementia + Possession x Revenge = Murder.”⁴³⁴

GEMINI: Darkest night...evil...destructive...powerful...your wildest nightmare...come to haunt your dreams with screams...demon...grim reaper...murderer...bloodthirsty...psychotic...terrible. Gemini came from all the hatred, all the pain, everything sick and insane that had happened.⁴³⁵

Later in his autobiography, Rolling clarifies that “Gemini prefers knives and machetes; Ennad loves guns”⁴³⁶, and that Ennad was responsible for property crimes.⁴³⁷ This seems to indicate that the demarcation between the Ennad *ideal/own* and Gemini is a superficial one, with the latter being the most extreme antisocial expression of the former. Rolling's attribution of sexual homicide to possession by Gemini could serve several different functions:

1) Rolling might have concocted Gemini to distance himself from the murders, whether as a legal and/or social strategy, or because he felt ego-dystonic about the killings.^{mmmm} It is notable that shortly before commencing his homicidal spree, Rolling viewed the film *Exorcist III*—featuring a fictional serial killer possessed by a malevolent entity called 'Gemini'—in a Gainesville cinema. Yet, as Rolling had committed the Shreveport triple-homicide a year earlier, which he would have attributed to Gemini who is “destructive...grim reaper...murderer...bloodthirsty...”⁴³⁸, unlike Ennad who “would not want your blood”⁴³⁹, then either it was an incredulous coincidence that both Rolling’s 'real' demons and *Exorcist III*'s fictional demons were called 'Gemini', or Rolling opportunistically borrowed the film character.

2) Mellor et al. note that religious socialization may lead to a *delusional interpretive framework* of phenomena which sanctions supernatural causality as legitimate.⁴⁴⁰ Therefore, Rolling might

^{mmmm} Prison inmates who spoke with Rolling and a criminologist who interviewed him have remarked that Rolling was proud of the killings, so ego-dystonicity is unlikely.

have genuinely interpreted mental disorders such as dissociation, psychosis, paraphilic disorder, or homicidal compulsion as demonic possession. Upon viewing *Exorcist III*, he decided to name his own 'real' demon Gemini (which is Rolling's astrological sign).

3) Through the same process of utilizing *meta-delusion* as Chapman and Berkowitz, Rolling was able to redeem himself—at least among certain members of the Christian communityⁿⁿⁿⁿ—by playing to the American belief in demons, as well as developing a *post-arrest ideal/own self*.

The false dichotomy between Ennad and Gemini is best illustrated by a slip-up in Rolling's autobiography. While preparing to commit a sexual assault, Ennad who “might rape you...but he would not want your blood”⁴⁴¹ hears the voice of Gemini urging “*Dannnnneeeee... Take off your socks... Put them on your hands... Mask your identity...*”⁴⁴² Yet this rape occurred in 1974, 12-14 years before Gemini allegedly “exploded in his mind”⁴⁴³ while Rolling languished in Parchman Prison (see below).⁴⁴⁴ Furthermore, Rolling stated that Gemini was the murderous personality, while Ennad was the rapist: hardly the situation described above.⁴⁴⁵ For this reason, Ennad and Gemini are represented here as gradients of violence in Rolling's renegotiated *homicidal ideal/own*: **Mystery Rider**.

Rolling is the second of five offenders in this study (Berkowitz, Arkwright, Holmes, Cho) who is known to have collected weapons. He describes a

9mm automatic handgun... a beautiful weapon. 45-cal. Colt auto ...extremely powerful close range. .38-cal. revolver ...very accurate and reliable. .22-cal. Ruger auto... also accurate and reliable. .308-cal rifle with Leupold variable scope... BINGO! KNIVES: Ka-Bar Marine Fighting Knife...deadly, sharp and huge. STAFF: Ancient Chinese Kung -Fu weapon. STARS: Shuriken or throwing stars. *All these weapons I have owned at one time or another in the course of my life* [emphasis added].⁴⁴⁶

In a qualitative study of 47 male and 11 female prisoners incarcerated for substantially violent offenses, Lonnie Athens found that violent self-image precedes violent acts.⁴⁴⁷ Mellor has argued that collecting weapons may contribute to the construction of a violent self-image in some individuals.⁴⁴⁸ Individually and in their totality, they are SAOS, with the *self* being one of violence. Rolling's own statements seem to reinforce this notion: “I became *very relevant* [emphasis added], you might say. I was an expert with these weapons.”⁴⁴⁹ Beginning in 1975,

ⁿⁿⁿⁿ Once again, there were no shortage of delusional individuals or charlatans who happily legitimized Rolling's claims of demonic possession. The oxymoronic *Deliverance from Evil Spirits: A Practical Manual* by MacNutt and Johnson provides us with one example.

Rolling racked up a number of fist fights, domestic assaults, death threats, armed robberies, and rapes, finally culminating in a series of sexual homicides. By this time, Rolling's **Mystery Rider** *ideal/own self*, comprising both the outlaw drifter Ennad and bloodthirsty 'demon' Gemini, was undoubtedly *ultraviolent* and susceptible to all four of Athens's lines of interpretation: *defensive*, *frustrative*, *malefic*, and *frustrative-malefic*.⁴⁵⁰ Interestingly, none of them seem to perfectly fit Rolling's motives for his five homicides of *intended* victims (attractive young white women), though the closest is *frustrative* in which “the perpetrator indicates to himself that the victim's gestures mean either... that the victim is resisting or will resist the specific course of action that the perpetrator seeks to carry out...”⁴⁵¹ then “by assuming an attitude of his generalized other... indicates to himself that he ought to respond violently toward the victim...”⁴⁵² If Rolling saw attractive young white women as a general group that would forever reject him as a worthy partner, then in his *ultraviolent* rationale, this frustration entitled him to rape, murder, and humiliate them.

Owing to his criminality, Rolling the **Mystery Rider** spent virtually the entire Eighties incarcerated. Having committed a series of burglaries in Alabama and Louisiana, he was first arrested on May 31, 1979 in Georgia after robbing a Winn Dixie supermarket at gunpoint. Rolling admitted to his prior robberies and spent the next five years serving prison sentences punctuated by failed escape attempts in Georgia and Alabama. Released on June 7, 1984, Rolling returned to his parents' home in Shreveport once more. By 1985 he was back to his old ways, wandering the United States and eventually robbing a Kroger supermarket on July 22. The next day he stole a car but was arrested by law enforcement by morning and sentenced to four years in Jackson County Jail. Once more he tried to escape, swimming the Snake River, but was re-apprehended in Texas six days later after a brief foray into Mexico. He was returned to Mississippi, only this time he was incarcerated in the notorious Mississippi State Penitentiary aka Parchman Farm. To punish him for his escape attempt, he was placed in solitary confinement for a period of 240 days where Rolling claimed to have been stored in a 'hot box', deprived of fresh air, and beaten by prison guards.⁴⁵³ Soon after leaving solitary confinement, Rolling said an official

... had him moved again—to the worst cell in Parchman Prison—a rat-infested roach hotel that flooded out two or three times a week... raw gray-brown sewage seeped in through the floor and belched from the drain up the hall. The sludge would creep down the hall and bubble through the floor, filling the cell with filth. It was the most horrid

smell imaginable... Filled with the will for revenge for the way he had been treated, for years all the prisoner had to live on was his hatred for the system and the society that put him there... He snapped. And now when he talked to himself, new and striking voices talked back. He didn't call them. He came into being because he was incomplete. Pushed beyond his endurance to cope, Ennad or Jesse [James] became real to him, and Gemini exploded into his mind. And a plan, or a scheme if you will, began to form... *Ahhh! Ahhh! One soul for every year! They'd better not ever let me out of here!*⁴⁵⁴

Released from Jackson County Jail on July 18, 1988 under the condition that he return to Louisiana, the 32-year-old Rolling moved back into his parents' Shreveport home once more. On November 6, 1989, Rolling broke into the home of “petite brunette”⁴⁵⁵, Julie Grissom, 24, and her 55-year-old father, William, in Shreveport. After murdering William and his eight-year-old grandson, Sean, Rolling raped Julie, stabbed her to death, and left her body in a sexually-degrading pose.⁴⁵⁶ He evaded detection for this grisly triple-homicide only to shoot his abusive father in the stomach and face during a domestic altercation on March 18, 1990. James Rolling would survive the attack. That same night, Danny fled east, committing numerous robberies and burglaries along the way.

Arriving in the college community of Gainesville, Florida in mid-August, Rolling set up camp in the woods outside town. On August 23 he spotted freshmen Christina Powell and Sonja Larson—also attractive petite brunettes—at Walmart and followed them home to their Williamsburg Village apartment, noting where they lived. In the evening, immediately before Rolling embarked on his Gainesville killing spree he recorded a message to his family on audio tape. He lamented his social alienation and isolation, proclaiming “I don't know what people think anymore. All I know is that I'm just one man alone in this world facing the whole world by himself.”⁴⁵⁷ Like every murderer in this sample, Rolling was announcing his severance from society, shirking responsibility by claiming that it was “not the road I really wanted... But it is the road that is before me right now, and I will walk it *like a man* [emphasis added].”⁴⁵⁸ At 3 a.m., Rolling broke into Sonja and Christina's residence where they lay sleeping. Spotting Christina passed out on the living room couch, he crept up the stairs to Sonja's bedroom, covered her mouth with duct tape, and stabbed her to death. Heading back downstairs, he bound Christina, forced her to fellate him and raped her, before plunging the knife five times into her torso. He posed Sonja's body with her legs splayed and engaged in post-mortem vaginal sex with Christina's corpse before excising her nipples and positioning her body similarly.⁴⁵⁹

The next night—August 25, 1990—Rolling forcibly entered the home of 18-year-old Christa Hoyt, a part-time Alachua County Sheriff's records clerk. He had chosen her as a potential victim after peeking through her window several nights earlier. Rolling waited until Christa arrived home between 10-11 p.m., subduing her with a chokehold and binding her with duct tape. He dragged her onto her waterbed where he raped her before stabbing her to death. Rolling then sliced Christa's torso open, excised her nipples, and decapitated her, placing her nipples nearby and propping her head with drinking coasters on a bookshelf so that it was immediately visible upon entering the apartment. He then positioned her naked body in a sitting position on the bed.

Finally, after window peeping on 23-year-old Tracy Paules, Rolling broke into the apartment she shared with football player, Manuel Taboada, also 23, at 3 a.m. on August 27. While Paules showered, he crept into Taboada's room and stabbed the younger man to death as he slept. When Paules hurried from the bathroom to confront the commotion, Rolling raped and fatally stabbed her. He posed her body in the hallway, legs spread in the same manner he had posed Christina Powell.

Later that day, Rolling held up a First Union Bank a half mile from Christa Hoyt's apartment. As he made his escape he removed his ski mask, inadvertently allowing witnesses to see his face. The next day he was spotted by police and fled on foot into the trees. Though the officers failed to apprehend him, they stumbled across his campsite and the equipment he used in the robbery. Although its importance would not become clear until later, they also recovered a tape recorder and cassette containing the audio recordings Rolling had made for his family. On August 30, Rolling stole a 1978 Buick Regal and headed south. Two days later he burgled a home in Tampa leaving fingerprint evidence. Having acquired a .38 revolver, three days later he robbed a Save-N-Pack and was nearly arrested by responding policemen after a dramatic escape on foot across the highway. Breaking into another Tampa home on September 6, he stole the keys to a silver Mustang and drove north to Ocala. There, on September 8, he was arrested after robbing a grocery store. Despite his stated desire to “rob and steal till a bullet with my name sets my weary soul free”⁴⁶⁰, **Mystery Rider** Danny Rolling fell to his knees and surrendered.

3.6.3 Danny Rolling: Victimology

Table 6

Danny Rolling Victimology

Victim's Name	Age	Race	Gender	Profession	Date Murdered	Where
William Grissom	55	White	Male	AT&T employee	November 4, 1989/died	Their home in Shreveport
Julie Grissom	24	White	Female	Student/model	November 4, 1989/died	Their home in Shreveport
Sean Grissom	8	White	Male	None	November 4, 1989/died	Their home in Shreveport
James Rolling	59	White	Male	Police Officer	May 18, 1990/survived	His home in Shreveport
Sonja Larson	18	White	Female	Student	August 24, 1990/died	Their apartment in Gainesville
Christina Powell	17	White	Female	Student	August 24, 1990/died	Their apartment in Gainesville
Christa Hoyt	18	White	Female	Sheriff's department records clerk/student	August 25, 1990/died	Her apartment in Gainesville
Manuel Taboada	23	Hispanic	Male	Student/Bartender	August 27, 1990/died	Their apartment in Gainesville
Tracey Paules	23	Hispanic	Female	Student	August 27, 1990/died	Their apartment in Gainesville

In his autobiography (co-written with Sondra London), Rolling wrote that he could have gone anywhere in Florida but “Gemini wanted it to be Gainesville. The only reason I can think of would be the obvious—because Gainesville is a college town filled with *beautiful girls* [emphasis added].”⁴⁶¹ Here we have echoes of Berkowitz's pursuit of outward *emphasized femininity*.

Rolling's female victims were all petite brunettes between the ages of 17-24.⁴⁶² That he intentionally targeted “beautiful girls”⁴⁶³ with these physical characteristics is near certain; he stalked all five prior to their murders.⁴⁶⁴ Paul Fuqua, an inmate at the same correctional facility as Rolling, said Rolling told him “The reason I sliced them up is because they were too pretty for anybody and I can't stand that. I made it so they weren't so pretty anymore.”⁴⁶⁵ The reliability of this statement should be treated with some suspicion (i) in light of the litany of false claims made

about inmates by fellow inmates, and (ii) the broken-telephone effect—perhaps Rolling did say he mutilated young women so 'they weren't so pretty anymore', but the 'too pretty for anybody' addition (or any section of it) may have been a misremembering by Fuqua.

Recalling Rolling's autobiographical claim that “visions of Omatha ran through his mind”⁴⁶⁶ while he raped his first victim—also a brunette—along with Mary Ryzuk's description of Omatha as “pretty, dark-haired⁰⁰⁰⁰, petite with a long neck...”⁴⁶⁷ and Rolling's own recollection of her “long waist-length auburn hair that held deep, rich colors of red and gold amongst the shiny black and brown”⁴⁶⁸, it seems likely he was raping, murdering, and mutilating his ex-wife over and over. According to Ryzuk, “It was impossible not to notice the distinct similarities between O'Mather [sic] and the girls who had been selected for murder, in particular, the startling resemblance to Christa Hoyt^{pppp}... the girl he had decapitated.”⁴⁶⁹ However, it is also possible that Rolling's sexual preferences were simply for young, dark-haired women: a description that fit both his ex-wife and victims. Ryzuk has asserted that Danny's mother, Claudia Rolling, was also similar in appearance.⁴⁷⁰ It is possible his “deeply ambivalent feelings”⁴⁷¹ toward Claudia, stemming from her mollycoddling and a failure to protect him from paternal abuse, led Danny to fantasize about harming her. Dr. McMahon testified “he's angry at his father but he's *absolutely enraged* at his mother, despite all his love for her. That is the one thing he's not in touch with at all. He begged her not to go back—repeatedly. She always went back.”⁴⁷²

In *The Making of a Serial Killer*, Rolling addressed Ryzuk's claims:

She repeatedly calls my mom a brunette, because that fits her theory about the murders, but Claudia is and has always been a redhead... I have never been resentful of my mom. I loved her with all my heart... I have never blamed my mom for my dad's attitude, or for the problems in my life... Nor did I feel she failed me in any form or fashion.⁴⁷³

Whatever the case may be, with their consistent physical attributes, there was clearly a symbolic quality to the female victims. With the exception of Rolling's hated father, his male victims ranged in age from eight to 55 and were *incidental*—they happened to be at the wrong place at

⁰⁰⁰⁰ I came across a Facebook profile photograph of Omatha during my research for this paper. Although it has been 22 years since the publication of Ryzuk's *The Gainesville Ripper* she fits this description.

^{pppp} As we will explore in Chapter 4, there were numerous indications in Hoyt's apartment that she worked for the county sheriff. Given his lifelong history of suffering at the hands of the police (beginning with his father), it is entirely possible that Rolling decapitated and eviscerated Hoyt because she was law enforcement. Or perhaps her physical resemblance to Omatha combined with her occupation is what fueled Danny's anger to this extent.

the wrong time.

Rolling repeatedly explained that he had murdered “eight souls for every year I was abused by the prison system... and Gemini became the catalyst.”⁴⁷⁴ [mj]

Lucifer told me eight souls for every year I'd done in prison. When I got out of Parchman prison, that was eight years that I'd spent in prison, different prisons in the South. I've been convicted of five murders here in Florida. And then, well, you know, there's been, you know, talk that there were three others in Shreveport. And I'm sure you're aware of that. That adds up to how many?⁴⁷⁵

By killing he sought “revenge against society—revenge for a lousy childhood, revenge for a failed marriage, revenge for years of abuse by the prison system.”⁴⁷⁶ If his abusive policeman father, James Rolling, represented the criminal justice system and his “lousy childhood”⁴⁷⁷, and his victims were surrogates for his mother or Omatha with whom he had a “failed marriage”⁴⁷⁸, then Rolling's post-Parchman violence was directed at symbolic victims. Though it is difficult to imagine a serial killer with Rolling's violent paraphilias stopping of his own volition, inmate Bobby Lewis, speaking to investigators on behalf of Rolling, said that after Rolling killed his eighth victim “he was through. He decided to quit what he was doing. That was to be the last victim.”⁴⁷⁹ Rolling *did* leave town almost immediately after the murder of Tracy Paules, though is botched bank robbery may have been the catalyst.

3.6.4 Danny Rolling: Post-arrest ideal/own

In January 1991, Gainesville Police finally listened to the audio cassette at Rolling's campsite and began connecting the dots. By the 25th they had linked him through DNA to the Gainesville student murders. A match to the Grissom slayings in Shreveport came on February 10. Between August 29-October 18, Rolling pled guilty to multiple counts of burglary and armed robbery across Florida and was handed multiple life sentences.

Incarcerated at Florida State Prison, Rolling struck up a friendship with another inmate, Bobby Lewis. When Lewis showed Rolling a copy of his screenplay edited by Sondra London, Rolling asked him to put them in touch. After exchanging a number of passionate letters beginning in June 1992, London and Rolling became engaged. They began to collaborate on Rolling's autobiography *The Making of a Serial Killer: The Real Story of the Gainesville Student Murders in the Killer's Own Words*. Rolling contacted investigators from Gainesville on January 31, 1993, and offered a confession. The catch was that Bobby Lewis would answer questions for

the investigators and Rolling would provide corrections if he was wrong. Rolling and Lewis met with the investigators that same day. Over the course of three hours, Lewis confirmed Rolling was responsible for the homicides and attributed the motive to Gemini [*mj*] and a desire to take revenge on society.⁹⁹⁹⁹

In 1994, as his trial for the Gainesville homicides approached, Rolling informed his defense attorney that despite the likelihood of receiving the death penalty, he wished to “confess my sins to God and man... I want to stop running... I want to do the right thing... I don't want to show those pictures to anyone.”⁴⁸⁰ He entered guilty pleas on all five counts of murder in Gainesville. On March 24, 1994, Danny Rolling was convicted of the first-degree murders of Sonja Larson, Christina Powell, Christa Hoyt, Manuel Taboada, and Tracy Paules. Five days later he confessed to the murder of the Grissom family in Shreveport. Danny Rolling was sentenced to death on April 20.

As with his other stints in prison, Rolling experienced dejection-related emotions as his phase as the wandering homicidal **Mystery Rider** *homicidal ideal/own* abruptly came to an end: “It brings tears to my eyes. I'm a caged bird that longs to fly again...”⁴⁸¹ “And depression? Mercy! You ought to try on one of these bottomless pits I fall into for size. It's like my heart just keeps sinking and sinking beyond my grasp.”⁴⁸² Ryzuk, who attended his trial, wrote that “Rolling on the one hand seemed to enjoy the special attention he received as a 'celebrity' killer, and on the other apparently resented the negatives his status gave him.”⁴⁸³ Seemingly, the negatives got the better of him.

Like Chapman and Berkowitz, his last known *ideal/own* was that of **The Penitent Christian**, who proclaimed “In pleading guilty, a huge weight lifted off my shoulders. Now even my prayers feel more sincere. Regardless of what people think, *I know in my heart that my Lord God has forgiven me* [emphasis added].”⁴⁸⁴ Nothing lifts the spirits like the promise of paradise. In his final years, Rolling spent a great deal of time warning the world of the dangers of malevolent supernatural entities (*à la* Berkowitz): “There are demonic spirits roaming this world in search of an open door to a soul to possess. If you open the door to these forces, they will enter and influence your mind, even dominate you to do things you never thought or dreamed of doing... I am here today to bear witness that Evil walks among us.”⁴⁸⁵ Assured by scripture that

⁹⁹⁹⁹ Soon after, Lewis and Rolling would have a bitter falling out—an interesting turn of events, but hardly relevant here.

God would forgive him, he turned to proselytizing: “I feel it my duty to warn you. Search the deep corners of your heart. We will all face our destiny soon, but you still have a choice as to which fate befalls you. CHOOSE JESUS CHRIST NOW...”⁴⁸⁶ Even after admitting to some of the worst transgressions possible, the multiple murderer is able to turn the tables and moralize by appealing to the expectations of the *hyperreal other*.

Daniel Harold Rolling was executed by lethal injection on October 25, 2006.

3.6.5 Danny Rolling: Sexual/Gender Aspects

Like Chapman and Berkowitz 'the brat', Rolling was chronically unsatisfied with his 'little boy' *subordinated masculinity* and spent a life pursuing 'manly' *sub-hegemonic masculinity*. The first incarnation of his *sub-hegemonic* aspirations came in the form of the state-sanctioned **Macho American Soldier**. Ever eager to win his father's approval, Rolling attempted to enlist in the Navy; James Harold Rolling had served as a Navy man and somehow Danny had formed the false impression that his father was “the most decorated veteran of the Korean War... when in fact James Harold had only received awards for length of service, a recommendation for commendation, and an honorable discharge.”⁴⁸⁷ Instead, Danny ended up in the Air Force and was discharged for drug use before he could be deployed: “I got busted just a couple of weeks before I was scheduled to take my 30 days' leave before I went to Vietnam. I wanted to go because I thought I could finally make my dad proud of me.”⁴⁸⁸ Again, we see Prohaska & Gailey's contention that many men do not feel secure in their masculinity unless it is confirmed by 'real men.'

Rolling moved from one *talisman of sub-hegemonic masculinity* embedded in “fantasy action heroes”⁴⁸⁹—the military man as depicted in “violent ‘adventure’ movies such as the Rambo series”⁴⁹⁰—to the **Mystery Rider** of the mythologized Wild West, first portrayed by Clint Eastwood in spaghetti western films. Eastwood's characters departed significantly from those played by earlier cinematic gunslingers such as John Wayne, in that he took on the role of archetypal anti-heroes—usually outlaws. In 1973, the year Danny was discharged from the military, the Eastwood-directed *High Plains Drifter* was released. The film's protagonist is an unnamed stranger who wanders into a frontier mining town for a drink. When aggressive locals follow him from the saloon to the barbershop, he kills them quickly and effortlessly with his revolver. Walking away from the scene of the triple-homicide, an attractive female bumps into

him in the street, knocking his cigar from his mouth. He reacts by forcibly dragging her into a nearby stable and raping her. The scene ends with the strong implication that she was sexually satisfied by the rape. This parallels a dubious account by Rolling that in 1984 he broke into a house intent on raping a woman, only to discover that she wished to have consensual sex with him.⁴⁹¹ Rolling revealed his affinity for Clint Eastwood westerns in his own words:

Cowboy Rolling's [emphasis added] earliest role model was James Cagney in *Public Enemy No. 1*. But his all time favorite movie is 'The Outlaw Josie [sic] Wales,' starring Clint Eastwood... He don't take no shit. You spit on his boot, he drills you nice and proper between the peepers. A man of action^{trr} and very few words.⁴⁹²

The 'outlaw drifter' *talisman* served to repackage Rolling's 'mundane childishness' into 'cool anti-authoritarianism', elevating him in his own mind from *subordinated* to *sub-hegemonic*. His inability to effectively socialize now became manly individualism. His psychopathic aimlessness was similarly recast as a lone wolf's wanderlust:

A drifter is driven, like the wind. You hear the sound it makes, then as suddenly as it comes... it's gone. A drifter can't stay put in one place long enough to set roots, because something keeps tugging at him, pulling him over the next hill into the next town or city. Like a tumbleweed, when the wind blows, a drifter's gotta go!⁴⁹³

Rolling's ego-dystonic gender and sexuality were clearly a salient source of strain and played a crucial role in his killings. Speaking of his sex life in his autobiography, Rolling revealed a series of disappointments, beginning with his first sexual encounter with an unhygienic woman, and including his wife Omatha's alleged frigidity⁴⁹⁴ (according to Ryzuk, the sexual problems in the marriage resulted from Rolling's reported impotence⁴⁹⁵). He also claims to have undergone a varicocele operation after a man punched him in the testicles at a roller rink.⁴⁹⁶ Moreover, Rolling was an admitted⁴⁹⁷ and diagnosed⁴⁹⁸ paraphile—by far the most severe case in our 10 offender sample—with sexual desires including *picquerism*, *necromutilophilia*, *voyeurism*, *biastophilia*, a strong probability of *sexual sadism*, as well as potential *necrornoposiphilia*. Contesting Ryzuk's claims that he harboured *erotophonophilic* proclivities as a teenager, Rolling stated: “She has no idea how I felt at that time. My heart did not house murder until I was rotting in that sewage-filled prison cell at Parchman. True enough, I did masturbate and have violent fantasies at the time, but it was rape—not murder—that filled these moments. There's a big difference.”⁴⁹⁹ While having no qualms about discussing his fondness for rape, Rolling was

^{trr} This exact descriptor will later be used by James Holmes to describe James Bond.

strangely prudish about a number of other alleged sexual acts. He fiercely denied accusations⁵⁰⁰ of experiencing sexual abuse as a child⁵⁰¹, bisexuality⁵⁰², attempted child molestation⁵⁰³, suffering from inhibited orgasm and erectile dysfunction⁵⁰⁴, using dental instruments and mirrors in a sexual tryst with an African-American prostitute⁵⁰⁵, sodomizing victim Tracy Paules⁵⁰⁶, asking a student from England if she would engage in anal sex with him⁵⁰⁷, and for being obsessed with the cleanliness of the female body.⁵⁰⁸ Yet, he proactively disclosed engaging in rape and post-mortem vaginal intercourse with one of his victims.⁵⁰⁹ What are we to make of this? The first possibility is that denying lesser sexual transgressions and admitting to worse lends credibility to his claims. Another attributes his denial of being sexually abused, bisexual, and sexually dysfunctional as a way of reducing the discrepancy between the *subordinated* and *sub-hegemonic* dimensions of his masculinity. Finally, Rolling's strong Christian identity (see the following section) may account for his dismissal of the sodomy and bisexuality claims. Rather than condemning rape, the Bible gives examples in which it is permitted (Deuteronomy 22:28-29; Deuteronomy 21:10-14; Judges 5:30; Exodus 21:7-11), considered virtuous (Genesis 19:8; Judges 21:10-24; Numbers 31:7-18; Deuteronomy 20:10-14), and even facilitated by God himself (2 Samuel 12:11-14; Zechariah 14:1-2).

3.6.6 Danny Rolling: Religious/Philosophical Aspects

As Rolling's devout religiosity has been largely covered already, this section will be relatively brief. Along with Chapman and Berkowitz, Rolling's Christian identity strongly defined him. According to his mother Claudia's testimony at his trial "Danny can quote almost the whole Bible."⁵¹⁰ And like the previous two offenders, he turned to the antagonist in the Christian belief system—the Devil—before and during his homicides (the **Mystery Rider** *homicidal ideal/own*), shifting his allegiances back to God following his arrest (the **Penitent Christian** *ideal/own*). According to Rolling's own chronology, his first encounter with a demon occurred "on a still warm July night"⁵¹¹ when a sleepless Danny "tossed and turned, and gazed out the window into the illuminated street out front."⁵¹²

Suddenly! A cold violent wind blasted through the opened window, raising the ceiling-to-floor olive-colored curtains over a startled Danny... Paralyzed with fear, he stared wide-eyed out the window as things flew around the room. Then...there...outside the window...it came creeping down from the roof—a Shadow of Evil, demonic energy personified. It slipped under the window and poured into the room, slithered up the wall

and gathered in the corner of the ceiling. The freezing wind howled as the Visitor from the underworld hovering above the bedded Rollings began to watch, to call, and to reach for Danny's soul. He could feel its evil power. The hair on his arms and neck stood up as he watched the demon watching him... Danny could only moan and look astonished at the thing hovering above him. It could change shapes... The thing held no light. It looked like if you put your hand into it, your hand would go somewhere and you would never see it again. There in his bed, Danny struggled to gain release from the spell... as he overcame his fear and willed himself to speak three names. The first name was a whisper forced from a forged will, the second, a triumph—and the third, a victory: 'Jesus...Jesus...JESUS! After he shouted the Holy Name the third time, the dark demon immediately dashed out the window into the night.⁵¹³

On another occasion Rolling recalls sleeping in his car near a graveyard and waking to find the ghost of a “tall, dark man wearing a wide-brim Quaker black hat, a knee-length coat, and gray slacks. He had no face, only darkness filled his ragged clothes”⁵¹⁴ walking nearby. Rolling was a member of a Pentecostal Church in which worshippers believe their bodies are possessed by spirits, giving rise to the glossolalic practice of 'speaking in tongues'. Inherent in this belief system is Mellor et al.'s *delusional interpretive framework*, as previously discussed. In reference to his paranormal experiences, Rolling briefly spoke of the link between *epistemosis* and both *hyporeal* and *hyperreal* simulacra in this process:

Those who haven't seen or experienced [the paranormal], just can't comprehend it. Reality and fantasy, these are opposites to be certain. Still, why do we choose to entangle the two? *TV is a prime example of escape into a world totally unlike our own. But when the real and the unreal collide, the result can only be confusion* [emphasis added].⁵¹⁵

As seen in the Chapman and Berkowitz cases, when social or individual concepts of Reality are malleable, *hyperreal meta-delusions* become possible: “The murders were like being in a movie – a horror movie. Gemini the puppet master was pulling the strings and I was the possessed leading actor.”⁵¹⁶ Rolling clearly had no regard for knowledge, logic, or scientifically-established truths, believing “*The day we chose to become wise, we became fools* [emphasis added]. Since the first man Adam and the first woman Eve, we have rejected the counsel of God and chosen rather to lean upon our own understanding, and there has been nothing but death and confusion ever since.”⁵¹⁷ Unsurprisingly, the man who rejects logic and wisdom—embracing ignorance by definition—can easily dive or fall into useful *meta-delusion*:

Gemini is a real being from another dimension that coexists with our own—the nether world, where the fallen angels dwell. You see, *I wanted revenge* [emphasis added]. I wanted someone else to suffer the way I suffered. That's why Gemini *became real to me* [emphasis added]. Gemini lusts for revenge against God Almighty's righteous judgments

against him, and since he can't touch the Creator God, he goes after the next best thing—the creation of God, mankind.⁵¹⁸

Nevertheless, there was nothing fraudulent about Rolling's Christian faith. Around the time of the Grissom murders, Reverend Mike Hudspeth remembers Rolling showing up at the church at night to pray. It was located within easy walking distance from the Grissom residence.⁵¹⁹

Rolling's last words immediately prior to his 2006 execution by lethal injection, “None greater than thee, oh Lord”⁵²⁰, came in the form of a hymn.

3.6.7 Danny Rolling: Class Aspects

It is difficult to ascertain the role social class factored into Rolling's homicides, as he did not explicitly refer to it in any of his known writings or statements. There is some evidence that the lower-middle-class blue-collar Rolling^{ssss} was aware of his background, and attempted to transcend it by attending the aptly-named Superior Bar and Grill, which according to Ryzuk was “located on busy Line Avenue in one of the [Shreveport's] upscale neighborhoods”⁵²¹ where it attracted “professionals who crowded the bar every night for after-work margaritas and a free Mexican buffet.”⁵²² Rolling's autobiography describes it as “his favorite watering hole... a trendy hangout for *Shreveport's upper class* [emphasis added] where every Thursday through Saturday evening, big spenders and beautiful women piled in...”⁵²³ He provided one account in which he attempted to pass as a 'big spender' himself:

He splashed on his favorite aftershave, and dressed himself in virgin white from head to toe. Gazing in the mirror, his reflection portrayed him so: *Small gold chain about his neck White cotton Bugle Boy shirt Gold watch on his left wrist Black silver buckled leather belt White cotton Bugle Boy pants Patchwork python snakehide Acme boots...* he dug into his pocket, pulled out his keys, and opened the door to his favorite chariot. That car! That beautiful car! All that chrome trimming a cool-black 1960 Chevy Belaire two-door hardtop, with the legendary 283 under the hood... Everywhere he went in that car, people would smile, wave, and give the thumbs-up...⁵²⁴

Rolling describes lurking outside “in the dark, watching the people inside, how he wanted to fit in! But somehow...he never quite did.”⁵²⁵ This admission is eerily similar to his habit of peeping through the windows of his middle-class victims. Certainly, we might speculate that Rolling was

^{ssss} Ryzuk describes the location of his family's residence as a “quiet middle-class neighborhood known as Sunset Acres” (Ryzuk, 1994, p. 77). However, according to definitions given by Gilbert (2002) and Thompson & Hickey (2005), along with my own personal observations regarding speech patterns and habits, it is clear the Rollings were lower-middle-class at best. Philpin & Donnelly refer to it as 'blue collar.'

killing up due to his social class, as Ryzuk has, but ultimately there is no evidence to support this claim. For our purposes, it will remain a *sexual/gender* matter.

3.6.8 Danny Rolling: Vocational Aspects

A crucial part of Rolling's *actual/own* concept was his inability to maintain employment⁵²⁶, a phenomenon which pervades the offenders in this sample. After Rolling was discharged from the Air Force, Philpin & Donnelly write that he "found a succession of low-paying jobs"⁵²⁷ or as Ryzuk describes it, he was "fired from a few menial jobs."⁵²⁸ Following his marriage to Omatha, he worked for Louisiana Paper at a loading dock, and at a bakery.⁵²⁹ Though there is no account of his time in these jobs, at some point in the marriage, Rolling began working for the Water Department. One day he apparently^{tttt} refused to get out of bed and go to work, prompting Omatha to call his parents for help. James reportedly^{uuuu} responded by barging into the house, ripping the bedsheets off his naked son, pouncing on him, and putting a knife to his throat. Regardless, Rolling clearly did not survive his time at the Water Department, as months later he was working as a waiter at a Mexican restaurant.⁵³⁰

Between 1979 and 1988, Rolling was more-or-less continually incarcerated. Upon being released back to Shreveport he struggled to find employment. Virtually repeating the cruel words that his father had used to label him, Rolling told his mother "I'm useless. I'm not worth anything. I can't even get a job."⁵³¹ At one point he penned a country and western song entitled "I Need a Job" which he planned to sing outside Standard Oil in an attempt to gain their sympathies: "I need a job today/and I ain't going to go away/Until I hear you say/'you're hired./ I'll work till I drop/ ain't never gonna stop/ And I don't ever want to hear you say 'you're fired.'"⁵³² Though he did not find employment at Standard Oil, within a period of approximately a year, Rolling managed to obtain and promptly lose work as a baker at the Western Sizzlin' Steak House, a labourer at Wal-Mart, a cashier at a Circle K, a cook at Pancho's Mexican Buffet, a salesman at a telephone solicitation company, an apprentice to an electrician, an employee at Midas Muffler, and finally at Bowman Diesel.⁵³³ There is even some indication he self-

^{tttt} Rolling contested this assertion, saying that it was his day off.

^{uuuu} This account is confirmed by Danny and Claudia Rolling, and appears in Ryzuk (1994), Philpin & Donnelly (1994), and London & Rolling (2011). However, when asked about the incident while under oath in court, Omatha denied ever witnessing it. Rolling claimed she was lying, as it would have been impossible for her not to see.

sabotaged a publishing deal for a number of country songs he had written.⁵³⁴

Violence was often associated with negative-experiences on the job. On Saturday, November 4, 1989, Rolling was fired from Poncho's Mexican Buffet [*trigger*] for failing to show up for work three days in a row^{vvv}. He responded by threatening to murder the manager and cook. That same date, Rolling invaded the home of the Grissom family in Southern Hills, brutally killing Julie, Tom, and Sean.⁵³⁵ Six months later, when his boss at Bowman Diesel playfully ribbed him about some shoddy work he had done, Rolling threatened to attack him with a shovel. Within days of losing his job [*trigger*], Rolling shot his father in the stomach and face.

3.6.9 Concluding Thoughts: Danny Rolling

Raised in a house dominated by a tyrannical patriarch who beat and berated him since infancy, Danny Rolling's social development stagnated at the level of 'immature teenager.' His father was both a Korean-war veteran and a cop^{www}—positions associated with *sub-hegemonic* masculinity—and Rolling, the childish outcast, was *subordinated* in his masculinity, spending a lifetime striving for *sub-hegemony*.^{xxxx} Perhaps as a reaction to his strict upbringing, he habitually resisted authority, making his forays into institutionalized *sub-hegemonic* masculinity an impossibility. Rolling's failure in the Air Force—an attempt to endear himself to his father by effectively copying him—is the strongest testament to this. However, his overall relationship with law enforcement is more crucial in understanding his criminality. Physically abused by his policeman father who routinely proclaimed “I am the law”⁵³⁶, Rolling naturally developed animosity toward law enforcement from an early age. All subsequent authority merely followed. And as Mark Chapman defined himself by murdering an internationally-known celebrity, an identity he wished to possess but never could^{yyyy}, Rolling the failed air force Security Police

^{vvv} Rolling disputed the reasons for his termination: “That is just not the way it happened. I was the best damn worker they had. But the manager at that time had a grudge against me because I was dating all the waitresses and none of them liked him... I guess he resented their flirting with me Anyway, after work one day, as I always did, I checked the shift roster twice before leaving and I was scheduled to be off for the next two days... Apparently, my boss changed the roster sometime after I left work, and didn't or couldn't contact me about the new schedule. That's why I blew my stack on being fired, because it came as a complete surprise, and without a job, I'd lose my apartment. Which I did. I came to work thinking everything was fine—until the manager said, 'You're fired.'” (London & Rolling, 2011, p. 103).

^{www} Rolling's grandfather was also a reserve deputy sheriff for Muscogee County in Georgia.

^{xxxx} To be fair, during the Eighties, Rolling was forced to embody *sub-hegemonic* masculinity in order to survive in prison. His deficits were not in his capacity to be physically 'tough', but his emotional and social maturity.

^{yyyy} Shock-rocker Marilyn Manson embodied this duality of American celebrity in his stage name: the famous 'beautiful' person (e.g., Marilyn Monroe, John Lennon) and the unremarkable nobody who becomes infamous for

Table 7

Danny Rolling: Selves and Strain

	Actual/Own	Ideal/Own	Homicidal Self	Post-Arrest Self
Sexuality	Sexual Frustration (paraphilic); Unsatisfactory experiences	Sexually normal.	Rape and destruction of object of desire. Pleasure from enacting of violent paraphilia.	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism.
Gender	Subordinate. Gender-role Strain ("kid in a man's body")	Sub-hegemonic. (failed soldier). No gender-role strain.	Sub-hegemonic. 'Outlaw' Masculine violence destroying <i>emphasized femininity</i> . No gender-role strain.	Christianity used to renegotiate role of masculinity. No gender-role strain.
Religion/Philosophy	Theistic	Strong influence	Appeals to Devil	Penitent Christian
Class	Lower-middle-class.	Middle or upper-middle class.	The abnegation of class through life as a drifter.	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism.
Vocation	Menial. Unstable.	Employed.	An Outlaw lives off the avails of crime.	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism.
Race	Ego-syntonic.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Notability	Ego-dystonic. Mertonian strain.	N/A	N/A	Ego-syntonic. Media circus. Public performance of penitence.

officer⁵³⁷ turned against law enforcement (two of his 1990 victims were employed by police services), becoming their opposing *archetype*, the equally *sub-hegemonic* outlaw **Mystery Rider**: "Clint Eastwood... He don't take no shit. You spit on his boot, he drills you nice and proper between the peepers. A man of action and very few words."⁵³⁸ As Rolling's crimes escalated in frequency and severity, naturally, so did the frequency and severity of his negative

murdering somebody famous (e.g., Charles Manson, Mark Chapman).

encounters with law enforcement.

Unwilling to accept the legitimacy of government-sanctioned authority, Rolling's *self-guide* was, to quote Yeats, “turning and turning in the widening gyre”⁵³⁹, increasingly detached from society and its institutions until he became a murderer: “Things fall apart, the center cannot hold/Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.”⁵⁴⁰ Or in Rolling's words: “The further I have plunged from the mainstream, the lonelier I have become. It started long ago as a child, with that deep-down feeling of being the Outsider, the odd man out in the game of life. The pain, the anger and the violence still haunt me.”⁵⁴¹ This spiraling away from society eventually begat a manifestation of rage which culminated in Rolling realizing his full violent potential: the *archetypal* wandering outlaw transgressing an internal boundary to become the homicidal drifter of slasher-film lore.^{zzzz} Like Yeats' “rough beast”⁵⁴² from the same poem, with its “gaze blank and pitiless as the sun”⁵⁴³ slouching “toward Bethlehem to be born”⁵⁴⁴, the “Devil... I just call him GEMINI... *became real* [emphasis added]” to Rolling at Parchman Prison.⁵⁴⁵ When Rolling's subjective experiences pushed him to the brink of personal apocalypse, Gemini “was summoned...”⁵⁴⁶ for Rolling's final battle against the world: “So now we come to why I crossed that bloody bottom line even before Gainesville. That would be revenge against society—revenge for a lousy childhood, revenge for a failed marriage, revenge for years of abuse by the prison system.”⁵⁴⁷

Of the four strategies Agnew lists for avoiding negative stimuli, the most relevant to ETV are drug-use^{aaaaa} and either (i) exacting revenge on either the source of the noxiousness or (ii) displacing this aggression onto a related person, group, or object. This latter strategy was briefly discussed in regard to Rolling forming a *frustrative* line of interpretation of the perceived actions of young attractive women. According to a fellow inmate, Rolling wished to terrorize the communities he targeted, perhaps American society as a whole.⁵⁴⁸ This was made clear by his willingness to murder men, women, and children alike: a kind of equal opportunity murderer. Still, his *intended* victims were young attractive women with brown hair and a petite stature—women who physically resembled his ex-wife—and to a lesser extent, police department

^{zzzz} Rolling was a longtime fan of The Doors, arguably the first 'dark' psychedelic band. As noted by Philpin & Donnelly (1994), frontman Jim Morrison, also the rebellious son of a navy man, sang “Father? Yes, son? I want to kill you” on 'The End', “motel, money, murder, madness” on 'L.A. Woman', and “there's a killer on the road” in 'Riders on the Storm'.

^{aaaaa} Mark David Chapman, Danny Rolling, and Daniel Gonzalez all abused drugs and alcohol. There are conflicting reports about Berkowitz and Magnotta's substance use.

employees (his father, Christa Hoyt).

Whether Rolling genuinely hallucinated, fabricated, or misinterpreted the nature of the paranormal entities he encountered, there is no denying that, like the demonologies of Chapman and Berkowitz, Gemini was a suspiciously useful imagining for Rolling. By attributing his homicidal compulsion to demonic possession, Rolling (i) rationalized his tumultuous emotions leading to the killings; (ii) reduced his personal culpability; (iii) created doubt surrounding his sanity, and by extension, the justification for his execution; and (iv) paved the way for a post-arrest *ideal/own*.

In retrospect, Danny the drifter had no anchor to moor him to society—the social control theorists' *stake in conformity*.⁵⁴⁹ His parental home was chronically dysfunctional, he was unable to sustain a romantic relationship, and fared even worse in his failed attempts at employment. The ability to use one's competence to provide for oneself (*vocational aspects*) and success with women (*sexuality aspects*) are both linked to normative masculine gender identity. So, beyond having nothing to lose, Rolling would have also experienced intense *gender-role strain* at the most rudimentary level, amplified by the fact that he ultimately aspired to *sub-hegemonic masculinity*. When we take into account the fact that Rolling's divorce triggered his first rape, losing his job at Pancho's triggered his first murders, and the chronological proximity between his termination from Bowman Diesel and the shooting of his father, it becomes apparent that *gender-role strain* was the key factor nudging Rolling toward violence.

Born a year earlier than Chapman and a year later than Berkowitz, Rolling was raised in this same first-stage of *hyperreal* simulation in which the television and radio were ever-present, films easily accessible, and video games and the Internet a complete non-factor. Cast out of society from his youngest years and told he would end up in jail by his policeman father, it is understandable why Rolling would profoundly relate to the characters in Outlaw Country music and revisionist Western films—both genres blossoming in the early-to-mid-Seventies when Rolling was a teenager and young adult. Learning of the infamous American bank-robber Jesse James through both mediums, Rolling saw elements of his *actual/own* and *homicidal ideal/own selves* mirrored in the *hyperreal* rendering of this historical character. A creative and naturally artistically talented individual who expressed himself through song writing and illustration, Rolling's pre-ambles to 'Ode to Jesse' on the cassette he recorded evidences this: “Well, I guess this song depicts the way my life really is. In a way Jesse James and myself, we're both having to

live the same life, the life of an outlaw—even though I really don't believe in Jesse's heart it was what he wanted. So maybe I was really writing this song about myself.”⁵⁵⁰ Not only did the Outlaw *archetype* provide *sub-hegemonic masculinity* and the possibility of notoriety, but as an outlaw survives through crime, it provided Rolling with an alternative to the employment he could not maintain. Most importantly, the *archetypal* Outlaw fights the perceived injustices in his world, trespassing the laws that protect them without a second thought. Rolling, the man who called himself 'cowboy', gutted Christa Hoyt like a buck, then cut off her head Indian-hunter style, and displayed it to the authorities.^{bbbb} The injustice: resembling the object of Rolling's torment.

Like his hero Jesse James, who Rolling sang “*chose a life of crime*”⁵⁵¹, according to fellow inmate Bobby Lewis, Rolling said “he wanted to be a superstar of crime...”⁵⁵², immortalized in film and song. In fact, by penning the semi-autobiographical 'Mystery Rider', which former Rolling-correspondent and psychologist Tony Meoli referred to as “a favorite of Rolling music aficionados”⁵⁵³, he may have taken a step in the right direction toward his own goal. Not only has the haphazardly-recorded song been uploaded to YouTube where it may exist as an accessible cultural product forevermore, it has also been covered by numerous amateur musicians^{cccc} and uploaded. In 2010, an indie film about Rolling's reign of terror *The Gainesville Ripper* was released, with Rolling portrayed by actor Zachary Memos. Though not as infamous as Chapman or Berkowitz, Rolling has been immortalized as a *hyperreal* simulacrum. Recently, it has been confirmed that the screenwriter of the critically-acclaimed blockbuster slasher-film *Scream* was directly inspired by a program he saw on Rolling.⁵⁵⁴ If it is not obvious by now, old media (e.g., *The Outlaw Josie Wales*) and murderers (e.g., Jesse James) are *talismans* to killers who inspire new media (e.g., *The Gainesville Ripper*, *Scream*), a causal chain which could theoretically continue into perpetuity. To quote prosecutor Rodney Smith: “These are legendary murders. These aren't just murders you hear about and read about. These are murders you never forget. But Danny got his wish. He is the superstar of crime...”⁵⁵⁵ Though Rolling denied wanting homicidal celebrity, calling Bobby Lewis a liar, in the long-term it doesn't matter. He has it.

^{bbbb} The serial killer in *Exorcist III*, which Rolling watched *after* the Grissom-family murder (no decapitation) but *before* the Hoyt murder (decapitation), beheaded his victims.

^{cccc} The version by Forest of Nine is actually a strong performance and recording, demonstrating Rolling's songwriting talent. This view is generally affirmed in the comments section.

The case of Danny Harold Rolling is of particular interest because violent paraphilia was the offender's primary motivation, while *expressive/transformational* elements were a secondary, yet primal and purposeful, motive. Rolling's sexual desire to stab and mutilate blended with his propensity to terrify through *maximizing abjection* (see Chapter 4). In the next case we will also examine a probable paraphile, a sexual sadist, who cast himself as a decidedly modern variation of the Outlaw *archetype*: the *serialkiller!*

3.7 Colin Ireland: 'Lost Middle-Aged Nobody' to 'Perfect *Serialkiller!*'

Talismans: *serialkiller!*, *FBI Crime Classification Manual, Whoever Fights Monsters*; Type: 2

3.7.0 Colin Ireland: Failed socialization and formation and realization of the actual/own self

Colin John Ireland was born out of wedlock to a 17-year-old shop assistant on March 16, 1954. He spent his early years living with his maternal grandparents, uncle, and young mother in Dartford, England, before moving with his mother to Sidcup at age six (*late-interrelational/early-dimensional development*). Financially overburdened, the Irelands were compelled to stay briefly at a homeless shelter before moving back to Dartford for three months. Colin's mother soon married, but their hardship continued, and they were constantly relocating to escape debt. In 1964, 10-year-old (*late-dimensional/early-vectorial development*) Colin was placed temporarily in foster care when his mother gave birth to a second boy and his parents could not afford to keep them both. In all, he moved homes nine times before the age of 12.

Like Mark David Chapman and David Berkowitz, Colin Ireland described his *actual/own* as essentially that of a perpetual outsider who was “not a mixer”⁵⁵⁶, “often at the edge of things”⁵⁵⁷, and who, as a boy, would spend “more time on the side line waiting to be picked”⁵⁵⁸ than actually participating in social activities. He attributed much of this to his experience with the educational system and having to continually relocate from one school to the next: once attending six in five years⁵⁵⁹: “I would not say I enjoyed school. It was a chore. As to why not, I would say I was not given a chance. My primary education was a mess, unstructured is too nice a term. Disjointed an understatement.”⁵⁶⁰

Bullied because his clothes didn't fit, the impoverished Ireland arrived late to class to avoid being teased, and was regularly caned for his tardiness. Reflecting on this, he would later remark “the punishment for lateness, repeated lateness, was the cane and I'm surprised that I

grew up to be a sadist and not a masochist.”⁵⁶¹ He also admitted that he was “immature and tended to seek out immature associates.”⁵⁶²

When Ireland was 12, his first step-father was replaced by a second. The family's financial lot improved and in 1965 they settled into a home in Sheerness for a period of five years. Colin began attending Sheerness Secondary School, but failed to adjust.

My secondary education was, I feel, hampered by my not going through primary education – with the boys. My start was also delayed, I walked into a class of boys who were half way through a class. They had been together for some time, several weeks at least. My 'new boy' status was duplicated. It went down hill from there.⁵⁶³

As Ireland grew, he was in and out of schools for troubled youths, borstals, and prisons; typically for property crimes. Much of Ireland's activities during this time are unknown, and his aspirations are indiscernible. Ireland describes it as his

lost period. Common with those who suffer from psychopathy... *The fictional account is in the book The Catcher in the Rye* [emphasis added]. The true account was the year Hitler disappeared when he was in Vienna... My own 'lost period' (my term) lasted a lot longer. In between custodial periods a lot of the seventies are a blur. I spent my time detached and wondering.⁵⁶⁴

His criminal habits continued to see him in and out of the British prison system throughout the Eighties. During this period, he had a number of failed relationships with women, including two marriages.⁵⁶⁵ As Ireland wandered aimlessly from job to job, prison to prison, he began to perceive himself as a **Lost Middle-Age Nobody** (*actual/own*).

3.7.1 Colin Ireland: Pre-homicidal Ideal/Selves and Negative Emotionality

Colin Ireland's original *ideal/own* was that of the **Macho Hero**. His second-wife, Janet Young, remembers that when she first saw him in 1989 “he was dressed in camouflage although he has never actually been a soldier.”⁵⁶⁶ Donning his combat fatigues, Ireland would head out to the Dartford Moors or Essex Marches for outdoor survivalist camping trips. A psychological assessment of Ireland in custody noted “Very strong interest in survivalism. Important to self image.”⁵⁶⁷ According to Janet Young: “He did like to see himself as a survivalist and he had all the gear: the water purification tablets, and all that kind of thing with him. And he'd go out on the moors, and he was gonna go all night and catch a rabbit... But actually, he wasn't very good at it and he always came home for his tea.”⁵⁶⁸ Worse, Ireland reportedly earned the nickname

'Chicken Colin' due to his habit of sneaking into town on survivalist weekends to eat fried chicken.⁵⁶⁹ He attempted to enlist in the French Foreign Legion and was rejected, worked as a bouncer, and supposedly did a short stint as a volunteer fireman⁵⁷⁰. Ultimately, he did not remain in any of these positions. Detective Superintendent Albert Patrick, who witnessed Ireland being interviewed at length about his life and crimes, said “I think he was in his own comfort zone when he was out in the wilds walking. I think he'd have loved to join the French Foreign Legion.”⁵⁷¹

When Ireland failed both in his pursuit of manly vocations, he found work as deputy manager of a homeless shelter—a position which he described as the only job he ever loved—but was fired [*trigger*] and soon found himself breaking up wooden pallets for a living.⁵⁷² As 1993 drew near, the discrepancy between Ireland's *actual/own* the **Lost Middle-Age Nobody** and **Macho Hero** *ideal/own* became pronounced, and he experienced dejection-related emotions: “If you look at Ireland he was going through a depression... You talk to the people he lived with. I think he got depressed because he got the sack from the job he was working at.”⁵⁷³ Ireland's friend who managed the homeless shelter said that upon being fired he “was very upset, disappointed, angry.”⁵⁷⁴ In the months before embarking on his murder series, he added that Ireland was “troubled” and “frustrated”⁵⁷⁵. “He was living in a bed sit. He was very unhappy, lost is a good word. That would sum it up. He was lost. I personally felt quite sorry for him at the time.”⁵⁷⁶ Others close to him said that Ireland felt that that he had never accomplished anything in life.⁵⁷⁷ These sentiments correspond with the dejection-related emotions of feeling ineffective and discouraged.⁵⁷⁸ The manager of the homeless shelter, who remained in touch with Ireland, claimed Ireland “didn't know what to do with his life.”⁵⁷⁹ Unfortunately, he would soon commit to an extreme idea.

3.7.2 Colin Ireland: Renegotiated Homicidal ideal/own

When Ireland failed to become his original **Macho Hero** *ideal/own*, he created a renegotiated *homicidal ideal/own* to expunge his dejection-related emotions. Having read the FBI's *Crime Classification Manual*, Ireland came away with the false impression that the criteria for becoming a **Perfect Serial Killer**—his renegotiated *homicidal ideal/own*—was to murder a minimum of four victims.^{dddd} Ireland telephoned *The Sun* and revealed that his New Year's

^{dddd} The actual number of victims to qualify as a serial killer according to the *Crime Classification Manual* is three.

resolution for 1993 was “to kill a homosexual.”⁵⁸⁰ Thus, by fatally asphyxiating Peter Walker, Christopher Dunn, Perry Bradley III, and Andrew Collier, Ireland became consolidated in his new **Perfect Serial Killer** *self*.

After murdering his fifth victim, Emanuel Spiteri, on Tuesday June 15 Ireland telephoned the Arbour Square Police in East London and reportedly said “I have read a lot of books on serial killers. I think it is from four people that the FBI classify as serial, so I may stop now I have done five. I just wanted to see if it could be done. I will probably never reoffend again.”⁵⁸¹ Prosecutor John Nutting would later confirm this at Ireland's trial, stating “Indeed, it would seem this defendant set out to be a serial killer. He told others that in order to be classified, he knew he would have to commit at least four murders.”⁵⁸²

Both Ireland's friend and Detective Superintendent Patrick made separate claims that Ireland had spoken to them about wanting “to be famous.”⁵⁸³ Through highly-calculated homicide, Ireland accomplished something that would bring him a degree of what Leyton refers to as “international celebrity”⁵⁸⁴ if apprehended. Alternatively, if he got away with it, he could take personal pride in knowing that he belonged to an exclusive club of evasive serial killers alongside Jack the Ripper and The Zodiac.

After his first murder, Ireland would comment on his transformation from **Lost Middle-Age Nobody** (*actual/own*) to **Perfect Serial Killer**^{eeee} (*ideal/own*):

I looked at myself in the mirror. Then I walked down the road and thought that anyone who looked at my face would be able to see I had just murdered somebody. I thought they must be able to tell by just looking at me. I remembered losing my virginity and I remembered the same feeling. You're always buzzing.⁵⁸⁵

Eventually, CCTV cameras at Charing Cross train station captured footage of Ireland and his fifth victim walking together on the night of June 12. On June 24, the London Metropolitan Police released a still from the CCTV footage, an E-Fit (Electronic Facial Identification Technique) composite of the killer's face, and his physical description to the general public.

Ireland showed up at the police station on July 19 with an affidavit from his solicitor explaining that he was the man in the photograph. He admitted being with the victim on the night of the murder, but denied having killed him. Instead, Ireland explained that he had arrived at the

^{eeee} Many of Ireland's homicidal *expressions* sought to establish himself as **The Perfect Serial Killer**, but made no reference to the **Lost Middle-Age Nobody** *self* he was abandoning. Perhaps even more so, they focused on the deviant identity of his victims. See Chapter 4.

victim's apartment to find a third male present. When they tried to coax Ireland into a threesome, he politely refused and left. Unbeknownst to Ireland, who had meticulously cleaned each crime scene, he had left a fingerprint on his fourth victim's window ledge: a single mistake that would lead to his arrest. On July 21, 1993, he was officially charged with the murder of Andrew Collier, followed two days later by that of Emanuel Spiteri.

3.7.3 Colin Ireland: Victimology

Colin Ireland's five victims were lower-middle to upper-middle-class homosexual males who frequented The Coleherne pub on Brompton Road in West London. Four were sexual masochists who advertised their inclinations by wearing a coloured handkerchief in their back right pockets.⁵⁸⁶ According to Paul Burston, a journalist in the LGBT community and former Galop (Gay London Policing Group) volunteer, “The Coleherne back then was *the* destination venue for gay leathermen in London. The windows were blacked out so you couldn’t see inside... You did sometimes see sex on the premises.”⁵⁸⁷

Table 8
Colin Ireland Victimology

	Age	Race	Gender	Profession	Date Murdered	Where
Peter Walker	45	White	Male	Assistant theatre director/choreographer	March 8, 1993/died	Victim's apartment in Battersea
Christopher Dunn	37	White	Male	Librarian	May 28, 1993/died	Victim's apartment in Wealdstone
Perry Bradley	35	White	Male	Businessman	June 4, 1993/died	Victim's apartment in Kensington
Andrew Collier	33	White	Male	Warden at sheltered	June 7, 1993/died	Victim's apartment in Dalston housing complex
Emanuel Spiteri	41	White	Male	Chef	June 12, 1993/died	Victim's apartment in Catford

Ireland has given contradictory accounts regarding his feelings towards gay men. Initially, he claimed that he had no animosity towards homosexuals whatsoever, only victimizing them because they were easy targets. In one of the telephone communications made to a Battersea police constable during his killing series, when asked why he chose homosexuals,

Ireland replied that they “keep their mouths shut and don't tell police things. They're respectable, and that I don't like them...”⁵⁸⁸ Later, he would revise his story once more, saying that he only disliked “extreme male deviants”⁵⁸⁹ [mj]. In a communication with Gekowski, he explained “My anger is not triggered by the behaviour of the conventional gay man, it's triggered by male deviancy. I do not regard the two as the same. The men I preyed on were deviants who happened to be gay.”⁵⁹⁰ He had hinted at this in a police interview: “I felt that if I was approached by one of the group that tended to trigger feelings in me – *masochistic men* [emphasis added] – I felt there was a likelihood I would kill.”⁵⁹¹ However, according to a detective involved in the investigation, victim Perry Bradley III was neither into sadomasochism or bondage. Nevertheless, Ireland convinced him it was the only way that he [Ireland] could be sexually gratified.”⁵⁹² Bradley agreed to let Ireland tie him up.

If Ireland was only driven to kill “extreme male deviants”⁵⁹³ why had he agreed to accompany Bradley home from the Coleherne? Moreover, after being informed by Bradley that he was not the type of person Ireland reportedly wanted to victimize, why did Ireland murder him anyways? He could have simply left, citing Bradley's disinterest in S&M as an excuse. Similarly revealing is Ireland's claim that “two of my victims were known to have used rent boys”⁵⁹⁴—facts that he could not have learned until after murdering them. When Ireland made his call to Brandon Malinsky at *The Sun* and stated “It was my New Year's resolution to kill a homosexual”⁵⁹⁵ he did not qualify this with any other descriptor.

The manager of the homeless shelter revealed that Ireland “did have some rather narrow opinions of certain sections of society. He was homophobic. He made it quite clear that he didn't agree with homosexuality. He didn't like the gay community at all.”⁵⁹⁶ Albert Patrick made a similar observation: “He definitely had a dislike, but I don't think we ever got to the real truth of it... I think it was from being a bouncer on the door of clubs in London. He just didn't like them—simple as that.”⁵⁹⁷ Not quite. Higgins notes that as we judge ourselves in relation to a *self-guide*, we also judge others by that same *self-guide* and may experience negative emotions as a result. As Ireland's *self-guide* was *sub-hegemonic* in its masculinity, the *subordinated* status of his victims may have provoked intense resentment, criticism, and hatred in him.⁵⁹⁸

3.7.4 Colin Ireland: Post-Arrest Self

Whether Colin Ireland would have re-offended or not is an eternal mystery. When his fingerprints were matched to those found on his fourth victim's window, he was promptly charged for the last two killings. Under questioning, “he never opened his mouth for three days. Just looked straight into the camera.”⁵⁹⁹ Unlike Chapman and Berkowitz who readily confessed to their murders, police perceived that Ireland was playing a game of cat and mouse with them. Then, after nearly a month of stonewalling interviewers while on remand, on August 19 Ireland suddenly informed prison officials “I’m the gay slayer [*ideal/own*]. I want to confess.”⁶⁰⁰ He offered the following statement:

I think there is a side to my personality that can only be controlled by my being restricted to a prison regime. I think long-term prison establishments are humane and they take good care of you. I feel I’m okay within this restricted environment. But I feel there are certain sides of my character – especially within the group that I was targeting – that means I may offend again. I want to remove that possibility. I feel there is a certain side of my character – not all of it by any means – but I’m probably sixty to seventy per cent quite a reasonable human being most of the time. However, there is a side of my character that is quite cold and calculating. I feel that because of the confession I am about to make that I face an extensive prison sentence and that will restrict me. That will stop me harming other people. When my case comes to trial any judge worth his salt is going to find me guilty and he will imprison me and by doing so allow me not to offend again for some time. That’s all I really wanted to say.⁶⁰¹

Once incarcerated, Ireland continued to play the part of *serialkiller!*, taking a page from the book of Henry Lee Lucas and offering to confess to additional homicides if certain conditions were met. According to Detective Albert Patrick, “He ran us a wild goose chase. He said he’d killed other victims around the country...”⁶⁰² but then later admitted “he had made the whole thing up and that it was a matter of mind games between him and the police, and there were no bodies.”⁶⁰³ This trend will reappear later, in the case of another Englishman who went from failed survivalist to *serialkiller!*, Anthony Arkwright.

3.7.5 Colin Ireland: Sexual/Gender Aspects

Any discussion of Colin Ireland’s *sexual/gender aspects* must necessarily begin with same-sex encounters. In his communication with Gekowski, Ireland described five separate

incidents^{ffff} from his childhood where he was either propositioned or he saw other boys being groomed or taken home by male “pedophiles.”^{eggeg} The incidents are recounted here:

I, a very lonely and vulnerable boy, went to the caravan as he had told me he might give me the necklace if I did. I half thought he might offer me a job, I also, to a point, knew his intention in that I knew it might be unpleasant. I wanted that gift. In the caravan the man pulled down my trousers, beneath them I was wearing shorts. I saw it at the time as 'bottling out' but did not allow him to remove the shorts and never received the gift.⁶⁰⁴ On my way home I stopped to use the toilet. I was sat in a cubicle when a man (late teens/early twenties) looked over the dividing wall and offered me seven shillings and six pence... It's difficult for me to come to terms with but I may have considered his offer. I was very young and very poor and also inquisitive, but when I came out he had gone... The man was not gay, he was a pedophile. So was the first.⁶⁰⁵

On another occasion while watching a film at the cinema, a man had been going from child to child offering them ice-creams and drinks. I reported this man to the only 'official figure' I knew, a probation officer named Mr Bridges. The man was a local optician and I am still uncomfortable in the company of male opticians.⁶⁰⁶

A man who worked for a second-hand shop... befriended me and later made it known that for sexual services he would give me money, I declined.⁶⁰⁷

I became involved in the 'Playland'^{hhhhh} scene. You may or may not have heard of Playland, it was an amusement arcade where paedophiles would pick up young runaways. Again, I was on the edge of things, I was never abused though many of my friends were, often exchanging their bodies not for money, but just for a bed for the night.⁶⁰⁸

Ireland denied ever having been molested, much in the same way he denied experiencing sexual arousal from torturing his victims. He would say of his encounters with the pedophiles, “I was just a child. How many more [children] did they approach? They just saw my vulnerability and attempted to abuse that, though I was never abused.”⁶⁰⁹

The *sexual/gender* aspects of Ireland's *actual/own* drove his *ideal/own* to target homosexual males. There is ample evidence that Ireland was sexually attracted to women. He had twice married as well as having a live-in relationship with women, and was fired from the homeless shelter because “there had been some allegations during that time of inappropriate

^{ffff} The same number as his victims before he decided to stop killing, though this is likely a coincidence.

^{eggeg} The label has been placed in quotation marks because Ireland personally used it to describe these individuals. In reality, he would not be able to know if the men were pedophiles or not, because not all child molesters are disposed to pedophilia, in the strict paraphilic sense.

^{hhhhh} The 'Dirty Dozen'—a sexually sadistic and murderous British pedophile ring led by ‘Hissing’ Sid Cooke—was known to regularly procure victims, often rent boys, from Playland in the Seventies and Eighties.

touching of some of the female members of staff.”⁶¹⁰ Despite repeated questioning by police as to whether he was sexually attracted to men, Ireland always categorically maintained his heterosexuality. In fact, he pre-emptively emphasized in his confession that he was not homosexual or bisexual, had never been naked or engaged in sexual activities with his victims at any point, and did not derive sexual pleasure from the murders⁶¹¹. Yet behavioural analysis suggests otherwise. Ireland spent hours whipping and beating nude or near-nude men, burning their genitals with a lighter, and singing their pubic hair to see how it would smell⁶¹². Why this level of intimacy in the violence, and focus on the genital region? Numerous studies have linked sexually sadistic arousal to brutality inflicted on erogenous zones.⁶¹³ Moreover, for a man who touted himself as a heterosexual who disliked “extreme male deviants”⁶¹⁴, Ireland habitually placed himself in the heart of the gay community, working as a bouncer at a gay bar⁶¹⁵ and prowling as a serial killer⁶¹⁶. He spent enough time at The Coleherne to learn the nuances of queer culture, passing seamlessly among the homosexual patrons during the height of his killing spree⁶¹⁷. Ireland's admission that, as a boy, when propositioned by a male in a public washroom he “may have considered his offer”⁶¹⁸ because he “was very young and very poor and also inquisitive”⁶¹⁹ is particularly curious.

If Ireland had harboured sexual thoughts about other men, this would have conflicted strongly with his macho *self-concept*. This, in turn, would have led to communication dissatisfaction between his *personal identity* (encompassing bisexual tendencies) and his *sub-hegemonic masculine enacted identity*⁶²⁰, as well as *cognitive dissonance*. Ireland told police that the “group that tended to trigger feelings”⁶²¹ in him were “masochistic men.”⁶²² Though it has been established that Ireland was generally homophobic, there is good reason to believe that masochistic gay men inflamed him the most. The symbolic associations of masochism are submission, effeminacy, and sexual deviance: qualities associated with *subordinated masculinity* and contrasting with Ireland's *ideal/own* image of assertive *sub-hegemonic masculinity*. Like Berkowitz, this resolved the desire/repulsion paradox belying his *cognitive dissonance*, with Ireland self-communicating a lack of sexual interest in males through violent acts, opting to destroy rather than fornicate with them. If Ireland was a sexual sadist and becoming aroused by torturing his victims, he could nevertheless cling to the notion that he destroyed rather than loved, dishing out pain rather than giving pleasure. This narrowed the gap between the confused sexual identity of his *actual/own* and his *sub-hegemonic ideal/own's* macho heteronormative

sexual identity. Dallas Drake's analysis of violence in the gay community discusses two cases in which a man who did not identify as homo- or bisexual fornicated with a gay man, experienced profound *cognitive dissonance* as a result, angrily murdered the same-sex partner to resolve the *cognitive dissonance*, and then staged the crime scene to resemble a hate crime, incorporating communications such as “fags will die”⁶²³ and “KKK Forever!”⁶²⁴ into these deceptions. This certainly makes the Ireland scenario, in which consensual intercourse or petting was substituted for sexually sadistic, non-coital pleasure followed by a terse 'I just don't like homosexuals' explanation, highly believable.

3.7.6 Colin Ireland: Religious/Philosophical Aspects

Ireland was raised Mormon; a peculiar religion for the United Kingdom as it forbids both the drinking of tea and ale. Homosexual activity is prohibited in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Though Ireland made no recorded statements as to his metaphysical beliefs (or lack of them), the roots of his homophobia may contain vestiges of Mormon doctrine. However, his use of the term “extreme male deviants”⁶²⁵ indicates this is more to sexual and gender aspects.

3.7.7 Colin Ireland: Class Aspects

Colin Ireland grew up in poverty and was bullied and mocked because his school uniform was always too small.⁶²⁶ When he was 16 (*late vectorial development*) he took revenge on a bully who had ridiculed his poverty by incinerating the boy's clothing⁶²⁷—clearly a symbolic act. In one of his many phone calls to the police and media (see Chapter 4), Ireland stated that he killed gay men because “they're respectable and that I don't like them.”⁶²⁸ At first this seems like a contradiction: generally, we do not consider those we dislike 'respectable.' Yet, if one interprets the term to mean 'respectable' in the sense that Ireland's victims lived lower-middle to upper-middle-class lifestyles in expensive London—a kind of polite, cosmopolitan homosexuality (Walker was a theatre director, Dunn a librarian, and Bradley an international businessman)—then the statement begins to make sense. After a murder, Ireland, who was living at a homeless shelter at the time, would stay overnight in his victims' apartments, eating their food and watching television. It could be argued that this chronically impoverished working-class criminal was topping up his homicidal compulsion with a momentary enjoyment of bourgeois comforts.

3.7.8 Colin Ireland: Vocational Aspects

Ireland's first documented job was at a fairground when he was 11-years-old (*late-dimensional/early-vectorial*). Before the Nineties, in the brief periods of his life in which he was not incarcerated or unemployed, Ireland worked as a bouncer, chef's assistant, and volunteer firefighter but always promptly quit or was fired. After leaving his second wife and stealing a substantial sum of money from her, he travelled to Southend-on-Sea.⁶²⁹ There he used the alias 'Colin Williams' to apply for unemployment benefits and lived as a homeless man before the Department of Health and Social Security arranged accommodation for him.⁶³⁰ He went on to gain and lose his favourite job as deputy manager of a homeless shelter and was reduced to what he considered demeaning manual labour. Ireland's dissatisfaction with his *vocational aspects* was reconciled when after the death of his fourth victim, he became his *ideal/own*, the **Perfect Serial Killer**. Not only did Ireland see serial murder as a kind of career, but he even informed police that he robbed his victims “to reimburse himself for the costs of the last murder and to re-equip himself for the next.”⁶³¹ By the time he murdered Emanuel Spiteri, Ireland claimed that “It wasn't my primary motivation to kill him. It was more finance, money really.”⁶³²

Concluding Thoughts: Colin Ireland

Colin Ireland's childhood was marked by chronic instability, moving from place to place, and in and out of his destitute mother's care. Ever the 'new kid', he was denied the opportunity to bond with his peers and bullied. Though he did not emphasize it as much as Chapman and Rolling, Ireland's admitted 'immaturity' seems to have resulted from failed socialization—it is difficult to imagine how an impoverished foster child who changed schools more than once annually could have been adequately socialized. Where Chapman, Berkowitz and Rolling were geographically stable in their childhoods, and pathologically aspired to new *selves* to complete their lives, Ireland does not seem to have sought any long-term goals until his Thirties. Lacking money, education, or direction he simply continued his nomadic pattern of aimless drifting, and was in-and-out of prison for property crimes.

Table 9
Colin Ireland: Selves and Strain

	Actual/Own	Ideal/Own	Homicidal Self	Post-Arrest Self
Sexuality	Sexual Frustration (ego-dystonic bisexuality)	Sexual 'normalcy.' Married twice during this period. Ego-syntonic.	Destruction of object of desire. Sexually sadistic pleasure. Ego-syntonic.	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism.
Gender	Subordinated. No gender-role strain ('little runt' 'Chicken Colin')	Sub-hegemonic. Wannabe soldier/ survivalist, gay club bouncer, volunteer fireman. No gender-role strain.	Sub-hegemonic. Personification of masculine violence destroying <i>subordinated masculinities</i> . No gender-role strain.	Reconciled.
Religion/ Philosophy	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Class	Working-class.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vocation	Menial. Unstable.	Heroic soldier.	Uses murders to finance future murders.	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism.
Race	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Notability	Ego-dystonic. Mertonian strain.	N/A	Ego-syntonic. Telephones police and media.	Ego-syntonic. Media circus. Reconciled.

Socially-isolated, poor children who are lacking in confidence are often preyed upon by child molesters because (i) their families are disempowered, (ii) they are starved for attention, (iii) they lack the emotional strength to speak out, and (iv) can more easily be persuaded to participate in sex acts in exchange for the promise of money or material possessions. Ireland was not only one of these children, but seemed to have a strange obsession with 'pedophiles', recounting five incidents from his childhood that were near misses. Although he may have been naturally bisexual or bicurious, in light of the nature of his future murders we should strongly consider that Ireland was taken advantage of sexually by a man on one or more occasions. In his naivety, he may have even enjoyed some or all of the acts, not knowing that both child molesters, their victims, and gay/bisexual men are all stigmatized to some extent in British society. Learning this would have caused Ireland to be suddenly ashamed of his sexual interest in men (and past sexual experiences)—a *discreditable identity*⁶³³ to be hidden at all costs—and, despite his claims to the contrary, to conflate same-sex 'pedophiles' with homosexual males in general.

There may still be some truth to his contention that 'extreme male deviants' provoked his ire more than most gay men. Perhaps Ireland was the 'submissive' or 'bottom' when he was molested in childhood, and his murders of 'submissives' was an attempt to symbolically repudiate that part of himself (as Chapman 'the phony' shot Lennon 'the phony'). Another possibility is that he murdered 'bottoms' because his molester(s) were also 'bottoms.' However, this is hypothetical and only part of the equation. Ireland's desire to become **The Perfect Serial Killer** comprises the rest.

Retrospectively, Ireland's ambition to become a *serialkiller!* and nothing more seems dull and unimaginative compared to Chapman's disturbingly specific Holden Caulfield *avatar*, Berkowitz's spooky classic Monster *archetype*, and Rolling's southern-flavoured wandering Outlaw *talisman* and *archetype*. But if there was ever a time in history to simply be a *serialkiller!* it was the early Nineties. The term 'serial killer' had increasingly entered common parlance during the 1980s, largely owing to the FBI's publicizing of its Behavioral Sciences Unit along with the unprecedented spike in multiple murders during that decade. In the summer of 1991, the revelation that Jeffrey Lionel Dahmer had been slaying, butchering, cannibalizing, and raping the dead bodies of gay men for decades, collecting their body parts in his Milwaukee apartment, dominated international news. Seemingly overnight, Dahmer's notoriety came to rival that of canonical Seventies killers such as Ted Bundy and John Wayne Gacy, shocking a violence-inured public out of their complacency. Following Dahmer's arrest came his highly publicized 1992 trial, along with a flood of interviews, true crime books, and documentaries about the case—even a comic book. Concurrent with the Dahmer case, blockbuster thriller *The Silence of the Lambs* was released in February 1991, winning Best Picture, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Director, and Best Adapted Screenplay at the 64th Academy Awards in March 1992. That the first man to openly declare he was committing murders for the very sake of being a *serialkiller!* did so in 1993 is no coincidence. Ireland, along with the rest of the developed world, was mainlining media, wallowing alienated in *hyperreal* simulation. Feeling he had accomplished nothing in life, and full of sexually sadistic hatred, he concluded that a *serialkiller!* was something to legitimately be. After all, the media certainly implied it, whether consciously or not.

The *serialkiller! talisman* is essentially a two-dimensional, sensationalized variation on the older same *archetype* which gave narrative to the lost and angry Rolling. The primary

difference is that, while Rolling's cowboy-tinged **Mystery Rider** is tough and “don't take no shit. You spit on his boot, he drills you nice and proper between the peepers”⁶³⁴, the **Perfect Serial Killer** is more insidious: dangerous because of his intelligence, meticulousness, and invisibility.

Ireland not only turned to media for an identity—reading the FBI's *Crime Classification Manual* in order to ensure he met the criteria— but also studied televised police procedurals to become a more efficient murderer. While discussing his habit of wiping his fingerprints from flashlight batteries, Ireland revealed, “I had got that idea after watching *The Bill*... you know you ought to ban that programme... *it gave me lots of ideas* [emphasis added].”⁶³⁵

As we have seen, the **Perfect Serial Killer** *homicidal ideal/own* provided Ireland with an outlet for his homophobia and sadism, narrowed the discrepancy between his *subordinated masculinity* and *sub-hegemonic self-guide*, and ensured him some level of purpose and notoriety. Its role in furnishing this unemployed ex-con with an ego-syntonic vocation should not be understated. Beyond the theft of his victims' money which he used to “reimburse himself for the costs of the last murder and re-equip himself for the next”⁶³⁶, killing also gave Ireland *something to do*, moreover, it was something that this otherwise unremarkable man was exceptionally good at. Considering all of this next to Ireland already being accustomed to incarceration, it is no wonder he lived out the rest of his days reconciled in his *homicidal self*. The next offender to adorn the *talisman of serialkiller!* would experience a similar outcome.

3.8 Luka Magnotta: 'Ugly Useless Faggot'ⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ to 'Dangerous Elusive Paraphilic Killer'

Talismans: *Basic Instinct*, *serialkillers!*, *Ripper* (video game), Marilyn Monroe, *American Psycho*, *Catch Me If You Can*; Avatars: Catherine Tramell; Type: 2

3.8.0 Luka Magnotta: Failed socialization and the formation and realization of the actual/own

Luka Rocco Magnotta was born Eric Clinton Kirk Newman in 1982 in Scarborough, Ontario. His father, Donald Newman was 17 at the time of the pregnancy, while his mother, Anna Yourkin, was 16.⁶³⁷ Originally living with Donald's parents, the couple married as soon as they were legally eligible, and moved into a home in the small town of Bethany near Peterborough. They had two other children, a son, Conrad, who was 10 months younger than

ⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ The word 'faggot' was used by the offender to describe himself and is also the word used to label him by numerous others he came into contact with.

Eric, and a daughter, Melissa, five years his junior.⁶³⁸ Donald Newman worked at a warehouse in downtown Toronto while Anna 'homeschooled' the children. Commenting on Magnotta's childhood many years later, his father said “He did not [have friends]; he was isolated. No schooling, no friends of any kind.”⁶³⁹ Of his ex-wife's homeschooling, he commented “If I may say so, she didn't do a very good job.”⁶⁴⁰ Rather than educating her children, his father alleges she sought “total control over them.”⁶⁴¹ Magnotta would later tell psychiatrist Dr. Joel Watts that Anna Yourkin was obsessed with cleaning and sanitation, forced him to wear diapers at the age of six, locked the children outside, allowed his pet rabbits to freeze to death in winter, and bound his brother, Conrad, to a chair if he misbehaved.⁶⁴²

When Donald was fired for being drunk on the job in the early Nineties, the Newmans lost their house and were forced to move back in with Donald's parents in Scarborough.⁶⁴³ In 1993, 11-year-old Eric began attending school for the first time at Charlottetown Junior as a 6th grader. According to his father, it was the first time he had interacted with kids his own age. Unsurprisingly, the undersocialized Eric was bullied by other children.⁶⁴⁴ In an interview with Dr. Watts, Magnotta said that they “tortured me”⁶⁴⁵ calling him “‘gay’ and ‘faggot’”⁶⁴⁶, roughing up his hair, physically assaulting him, and labelling him “‘a baby’”⁶⁴⁷ when he cried. In the early years, Eric's younger brother Conrad “would stick up for him at school when other kids teased him because he looked ‘like a girl’”⁶⁴⁸, but “as they got older, he and his brother were less close and his brother did not stick up for him as much, even though he was bigger and less intimidated.”⁶⁴⁹ Eric was formally assessed as having “significant *difficulties with spoken and written language* [emphasis added], math skills, confidence and *social interactions* [emphasis added]...”⁶⁵⁰ So, like Chapman, Berkowitz, Rolling, and Ireland, the boy who would become 'Luka Magnotta' was another immature outcast with marked *communication dysfunctions*; one who tried to buy respite by giving his tormenters chewing gum. He claimed the only children who would interact with him were “three disabled wheelchair kids.”⁶⁵¹ This statement was supported by a former Grade 7 classmate who noted that Eric only associated with socially awkward children or kids suffering from cerebral palsy.⁶⁵² According to Watts, the classmate described Eric as a “‘sad little kid’ who was small, immature and ‘odd’ for his age... ‘almost too odd to be a target’”⁶⁵³, although he was certainly bullied. Like many of the younger offender offenders in this sample, Eric “did not speak much [and] was shy... he seemed to be

'uncomfortable around emotions.'⁶⁵⁴ With the possible exception of Mark Chapman, Eric differed from the other offenders by preferring the platonic company of girls.

Around 1994, amidst a torrent of alcohol abuse and mental illness, the Newmans' marriage fell apart, and Eric and his siblings went to live with his maternal grandparents in rural Lindsay, Ontario. Reports of Eric's relationship with his grandmother, Phyllis Yourkin, are conflicting. According to Watts:

Mr. Magnotta described his grandmother as having doted on him and having preferred him to his other siblings (his sister and father later confirmed this)... During his childhood and early adulthood, he would call his grandmother on a daily basis and came to feel that his grandmother was a mother figure to him. He felt like his mother was more like a big sister. At times, Mr. Magnotta stated that his grandmother had in fact raised him. She would often dress him in her clothes. Mr. Magnotta said that he went everywhere with his grandmother and slept with her when he was younger.⁶⁵⁵

On the other hand, an anonymous source 'Greta'ⁱⁱⁱⁱ, described by the *Toronto Sun* as a close family member, claimed, "This family from the head down is very dysfunctional... The essence of this whole story is parenting or the lack of... [Phyllis Yourkin] tries to be the typical matriarch of the family. She is very domineering, controlling and *if you have a submissive personality* [emphasis added], she will beat you up and do what she wants."⁶⁵⁶ When Phyllis and her husband Walter were divorced, the Newman children moved back to Toronto to live with Anna and her new boyfriend, Leo Belander, in an apartment. Donald claims that Belander—who Magnotta would later label a "monster"⁶⁵⁷—also "called [Eric] a faggot, he beat him up and he treated him terribly."⁶⁵⁸

In 1995, a psychological evaluation revealed that although Eric Newman's IQ was average, he was "underfunctioning by at least two academic years and had language dysfunction"⁶⁵⁹, had a poor self-image, and was extremely sensitive to criticism. Here again we see the link between poor socialization, *communication dysfunctions*, and maturity. For the aforementioned reasons, Eric was placed in a special education program. He began in Grade 9, and remained in it throughout high school, showing improvement in all areas except spoken language and math.

By the age of 16 (*late vectorial*), Eric could no longer stand Leo's abuse, and moved back in with his grandmother, Phyllis. While in Lindsay, Eric attended grades 10 and 11 at I.E.

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ A pseudonym.

Weldon Secondary School. Magnotta told Watts that during high school “he was still shy, often cried and was picked on by peers and teachers alike. He was scared to talk in front of the class because when laughed at [sic] and often felt humiliated... He felt like a fly on the wall.”⁶⁶⁰ Replicating the isolated environment he had experienced as a pre-pubescent, “his grandmother would not permit him to socialize... after school.”⁶⁶¹ This social isolation would continue into his adulthood, with his former partner, Barbie Swallows, revealing in an interview for CBC's *The Fifth Estate* that Magnotta “lived his life mainly online on the Internet...[*retreatism*] I guess most people found him weird so he felt left out. You know, isolated.”⁶⁶² Later we will see similar retreats into the 'digital opium' of media in the cases of Daniel Gonzalez, James Holmes, and Elliot Rodger. After quitting high school at the age of 17, Eric obtained and lost five jobs within approximately a year before becoming dependent on social services (see *Section 5.8 Vocational Aspects*). Whether his family and peers had correctly guessed his sexual preferences, or if this is another instance of *self-fulfilling prophecy*⁶⁶³, during his high school years Magnotta began to realize that he was a homosexual: “I was a teenager and I was very shy and I was very confused. I didn't know what to think and there was nobody around for me to talk to. So then I was thinking in my head 'you know what, is everybody else feeling this way or is it just me?... See I didn't know.”⁶⁶⁴ Watts writes of a period later in life in which Eric/Magnotta “felt useless, abandoned, and a disappointment to his grandmother for not being straight. He would tell himself, 'I am a useless faggot.’”⁶⁶⁵ Used in a non-pejorative sense, **Ugly Useless Faggot** best denotes his *actual/own*: “He often felt ugly and inadequate since he was a young boy.”⁶⁶⁶ During this period, he was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia.⁶⁶⁷ However, Eric had looked into the *hyperreal* world of movies and magazines and found something to aspire to:

Mr. Magnotta recalled that when he was in high school, he began to become very interested in Marilyn Monroe after discovering a book about her in the library and completing a book report about her. He began to strongly identify with her and he watched all of her movies. When I asked why he identified with her so much, he said that he felt they had much in common, for example she had been abused and 'she is sexual.' She posed in many magazines, as he did later on. When he was younger he felt quite ugly and when imagining himself being beautiful like her, he felt better [*actual/own:ideal/own*]... He added, 'When I think of Marilyn, it calms me down. I wanted people to understand and love me.' Mr. Magnotta said that his family would talk about her and his uncle had a picture of her.⁶⁶⁸

Magnotta had learned his lesson: fame, beauty, and sex brought love and acceptance—the two things he had been missing all of his life. Upon this premise, he erected his first *ideal/own self*.

3.8.1 Luka Magnotta: Pre-Homicidal Original Ideal/Selves and Negative Emotionality

A closeted homosexual high school drop out in Lindsay, Ontario, in 2001 Eric Newman was suffering from “depression.”⁶⁶⁹ Upon moving to Toronto in 2002, the **Ugly Useless Faggot** (*actual/own*) aspired to become **The Sexually-Liberated Celebrity** (*ideal/own*). Around this time, he began working as a stripper and escort. Though he would come and go from Toronto over the next 10 years, Eric Newman/Luka Magnotta continued to make the bulk of his income from prostitution and disability payments. He repackaged his homosexuality as “bisexuality”⁶⁷⁰ telling documentarians

I like to sleep with both men and women, obviously. And I feel comfortable completely with both. And it's like fifty-fifty for me. Actually it's a bit more, it's like sixty percent men and forty percent [women]... I tend to have a lot of male partners and a lot of people assume that, you know, I'm gay because I have a lot of male partners. And when I tell them... 'I see a lot of women partners' and they don't believe me, they say 'well, usually, you know, we just see you with a lot of guys' you're automatically just gay... They don't believe that. They think I'm just doing it as an act... cos I'm struggling with myself. But I know in my self what I am and I know that I'm bisexual.⁶⁷¹

In retrospect, these 'people' were right to doubt Eric's claims of bisexuality. Though he told Watts that as a young man “he believed that he was bisexual”⁶⁷², later in the report he said he had lied “about his sexual orientation when younger. He wanted people to think he was bisexual and not completely gay due to negative attitudes he experienced from of [sic] his family regarding his sexuality.”⁶⁷³ Aside from the undeniable stigma attached to homosexuality, there may have been another factor. In the 21st century, homosexuality has become too familiar to make a person truly stand out as unique. Eric likely realized that a more pansexual philosophy would mark him as noteworthy—at various times he claimed incest occurred with numerous family members, and to have had sex with dead animals. In 2003, Eric told his psychiatrist “I'm going to be a celebrity, a superstar.”⁶⁷⁴ Furthermore, as we have seen, despite his presentation as a sexual libertine [*enacted identity*], Eric was deeply conflicted about his homosexuality. Though it would take until the late-2000s for him to come out to his allegedly homophobic family⁶⁷⁵, he had starred in his first gay porn film: *Street Bait 996: Luka* as early as 2003. The **Sexually-Liberated Celebrity** starred in his second pornographic film, *Son of Poseidon* in 2004. While living with a

Greek family in Toronto, he defrauded a mentally-handicapped 21-year-old woman—a crime for which he was convicted the following year. He received a nine-month conditional sentence and served a year's probation. In 2005, Eric continued the pursuit of the **Sexually-Liberated Celebrity** *ideal/own*, posing for Issue 260 of the gay pin-up magazine *Fab Boy* under his old escort name 'Jimmy': “a 22-year-old soccer fan born in Russia...”⁶⁷⁶ He also starred in three more gay pornographic films: *His First Huge Cock: Luka*, *His First Huge Cock: Jimmy*, and *badpuppy.com:Luka*.

Eric met “transsexual”⁶⁷⁷ Barbie Swallows in January 2006, and they began dating. Though they were only together for four months, Barbie has become one of the go-to sources for information on the future murderer. Noting his obsession with becoming the **Sexually-Liberated Celebrity**, she stated “he said he wanted to be famous one day. I mean, that was his dream... He was just really into himself... He would always beg me [to be] taking pictures of him with his digital camera.”⁶⁷⁸ Barbie recalls a time when “I knocked down a picture frame of himself, and he freaked out on me.”⁶⁷⁹ Commenting on photographs taken of him from this period, Magnotta later stated “I think they look hot [*ideal/own*].”⁶⁸⁰ Thus, we may interpret Magnotta's picture as a SAOS, and his reaction to Barbie dishonouring it as activating his *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy [*trigger*]. Similarly, “when I would ask him about his past he looked sad [*accessibility* activates *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancies]. He didn't want to talk about it. He just said he wasn't ready yet.”⁶⁸¹ Barbie claims that after moving in with Magnotta for three weeks, they broke up.

In 2006, Eric Newman starred in another pornographic film, *Adorable*. That same year, he began undergoing a series of substantial changes seemingly inspired by the Marilyn Monroe *talisman*. Firstly, he changed his name to 'Luka Rocco Magnotta', partially to escape the criminal stigma associated with his birth name, but also because Norma Jeane Mortenson had “changed her name to Marilyn Monroe and he had changed his name as well.”⁶⁸² He also underwent cosmetic surgery, because Monroe “had done so and [Magnotta] believed this would help him forget about the past and incite people to like him.”⁶⁸³ Specifically, he had “a hair transplant and... 'Juvaderm' [sic] injections in his face...”⁶⁸⁴ These changes accompanied a broadening of his aspirations. According to Swallows, “He wanted to be the most famous male model/escort in the world... He was definitely very obsessed with the whole celebrity lifestyle. The whole Hollywood, you know, thing.”⁶⁸⁵ One of Magnotta's former sugar daddies described Magnotta's

mannerisms as emulating a **Sexually-Liberated Celebrity**: “He walked as if he was on a stage or a ramp for modeling clothes. He walked a very special way and was always watching his posture.”⁶⁸⁶ Another anonymous male associate stated that Magnotta even “had ideas to go into the movies, and you know, be a model.”⁶⁸⁷

Yet outside of low-budget porn flicks, the only screen time Magnotta would get was in 2007. First he appeared on *The Naked News*, where using the 'Jimmy' alias, he candidly discussed his life as an escort: “I was a stripper first... being up on stage, *it was hard hiding that profession* [emphasis added]... People who I would know would walk into the club and see me naked... So [a fellow stripper] said 'why don't you get into something more discrete and keep your anonymity? Be an escort?’”⁶⁸⁸ This statement gives rise to the question: if Magnotta quit stripping because he wanted privacy, why would he proactively appear on television to disclose that he was a prostitute? Barbie Swallows has already provided us with this answer; the man who was driven to be the “most famous male model/escort in the world”⁶⁸⁹ quit stripping because he “just didn't like orders. Like he didn't like people telling him what to do. He liked to work for himself.”⁶⁹⁰ In short, Magnotta was lying again.^{kkkkk}

When further media attention did not follow, in the fall of 2007 Magnotta started a rumour on the Internet that he was dating the infamous female Canadian serial killer Karla Homolka. To accompany the deception he created a video montage which seemed to depict him in Homolka's company—in actuality, it was his similarly petite, blond mother, Anna Yourkin.⁶⁹¹ This allowed him to then appear in the news media to deny the claims, a strategy that Greta asserted was his typical m.o.: “He will create a conflict, then he will take himself out and he will deny the content of the story, which he in fact started.”⁶⁹² After being contacted by *Toronto Sun* reporter Joe Warmington, Magnotta strode into the newspaper offices dressed like a super model, and before the cameras, dramatically announced: “I'm about to have a nervous breakdown here. My reputation is completely ruined. I just want... to set the record straight that me and her have absolutely no connection.”⁶⁹³ Barbie Swallows offers a plausible explanation:

when I heard about him dating her, I knew that he fabricated that story. Because when you're obsessed with someone, then you'll do anything to get your name close to that person. And unfortunately he succeeded with that, but we all know that he never dated Karla Homolka.... He wanted to have a bigger name so he thought that by using their names with his name he'd be a somebody.⁶⁹⁴

^{kkkkk} Magnotta is by far the most deceitful offender in our sample.

This drastic attempt for public attention by Magnotta may have resulted from his failed audition for the OUT TV reality television show *Cover Guy*—the prize was a contract to pose as an underwear model [*ideal/own*]^l—as well as him filing for bankruptcy earlier that year. It is also notable that Magnotta had fixated on another attractive, highly-sexual blonde, only this one was an infamous murderer.

In February 2008, Magnotta attempted another venture into the world of reality TV. During his audition for *Plastic Makes Perfect*, he revealed that he disliked his physical appearance [*actual/own*] and wished to improve it with cosmetic surgery [*ideal/own*]. He lied^{lllll} that he had undergone numerous procedures: “I’ve had my eyes done here because they used to have dark circles underneath my eyes... I’ve had my nose done. I’ve had two hair transplants...”⁶⁹⁵ In reality, he had only a single hair transplant and Juvaderm injections. Despite the fact that people were supposedly telling him “you look good, you look fine”⁶⁹⁶, Magnotta admitted “I don’t believe them. I just think they’re saying that.”⁶⁹⁷ Though he felt it was “very nice”⁶⁹⁸ of people to say this, Magnotta dismissed their reassurances by explaining that “still, I don’t like the way I am.”⁶⁹⁹ When asked how important his looks were to him, he explained that for him “number one is looks. Number two would have to be intelligence and I don’t know what the rest are. All I care about is number one, basically.”⁷⁰⁰ Later he would tie all of these notions of *self* together by saying that “if I don’t have my looks then I don’t have any life. My looks and my body are my life.”⁷⁰¹ Magnotta explained that additional cosmetic surgery would give him “more self-esteem”⁷⁰² and make him “feel amazing”⁷⁰³ about himself [narrowing of *actual/own:ideal/own*], noting that “it’s very important for people to have high self-esteem and feel good about themselves.”⁷⁰⁴ This implies that four years before murdering Jun Lin, Magnotta had low self-esteem and did *not* feel good about himself. Aged 25 at the time of the audition, Magnotta said that prior to his first round of plastic surgery “I was good looking and it was starting to fade. I was starting to get very self-conscious about that. I could not deal^{mmmmmm} with having my looks go.”⁷⁰⁵ If what Magnotta said in February 2008 was true, we can only speculate as to how he felt about his looks (=life) in the days and weeks preceding the May 2012 homicide, as he grew

^{lllll} “Mr. Magnotta admitted that he exaggerated the extent of his cosmetic surgeries in video auditions for a reality TV show” (Watts, 2014, p. 22).

^{mmmmmm} Note Magnotta’s use of the phrase “could not deal” to refer to his personal crisis. This is similar to Daniel Gonzalez saying that he “couldn’t handle” the reality of what his life had become anymore.

nearer to his landmark 30th birthday (July 24). As physical attractiveness is intrinsically linked to success as a model, a reality of which Magnotta was exceedingly aware, there would undoubtedly be an ever-widening discrepancy between his **Ugly Useless Faggot** *actual/own* and **Sexually-Liberated Celebrity** *ideal/own*. Yet, as distasteful as it is to say, Magnotta was not a quitter. In the words of Barbie Swallows: “He was very goal-oriented. He was the type of person that when he has a plan he'll do it... He told me that one day he was going to become famous.”⁷⁰⁶ When Magnotta realized he could no longer seek fame purely through his physical appearance, he began to devise another plan.

3.8.2 Luka Magnotta: Renegotiated Homicidal *ideal/own*

Around 2010, a second *ideal/own* began to emerge: the **Dangerous Elusive Paraphilic Killer**. Motivated more by a pathological need for attention (=self) than genuine hatred of a specific social group, Magnotta first approached this *ideal/own* by filming himself killing kittens and uploading the videos online. In the autumn of 2010, he posted a link to the infamous '3 guys 1 hammer' videoⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿ on Facebook. The name would serve as an inspiration for several of his own killing videos. As Christmas 2010 approached, Magnotta began anonymously promoting a video called '1 boy 2 kittens' on Internet message boards. The video finally appeared online on December 21 and depicted the murder of two kittens by vacuum-sealing them in a plastic bag.

One of the people who viewed the video was Ryan Boyle, a former American soldier. Later stating “I don't think I've ever had a reaction like that to something like that before that was so intense because... it wasn't normal”⁷⁰⁷, Boyle started a Facebook group 'Find the Kitten Vacuumer' where animal lovers and web sleuths compiled their time, talents, and resources to find the perpetrator. It would soon have more than 4000 volunteer members. Four days later they received an anonymous email, subsequently discovered to be from Magnotta, which stated “The name of the kitten vacuumer you're looking for is Luka Magnotta. He was born in Russia, lives in Los Angeles, and has lived in several different countries. The apartment in the video is located in West Hollywood. Hope this helps. I'm 100% serious.”⁷⁰⁸ Given Magnotta's self-created online omniscience, finding images of him was an easy task, however determining his exact location was more difficult. Eventually, one image was linked via digital information embedded in the

ⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿ Leaked cell phone footage from two Ukrainian serial killers which depicts them bludgeoning a man with a hammer and mutilating his abdomen with a screwdriver.

file to Toronto, and in February 2011, the civilian investigators informed Toronto law enforcement. The police were unable to locate Magnotta, as he had no fixed address. In November and December 2011, two more videos depicting kitten-killing were posted online.

When British journalist Alex West of *The Sun* discovered the latest kitten-killing videos in November, he began working with PETA and the web sleuths to identify the perpetrator. By now multiple pieces of evidence had surfaced linking Magnotta to the crimes and were circulated among his pursuers. As luck would have it, Magnotta had already flown to London and rented a room at a Wembley pub. On December 5, two days after *The Sun* had published an article about the 'Python Christmas' video, Magnotta unexpectedly walked into the offices of the newspaper to deny his involvement, asking West “Why are you looking for me?”⁷⁰⁹ Several days later, West drove to Magnotta's room in Wembley for an ambush interview. Even when directly confronted with the evidence, Magnotta declared his innocence: “People frame me... they're pretending to be me. Isn't that obvious?”⁷¹⁰ This is nearly identical to his Homolka tactic, with the exception that, in this case, Magnotta really had *killed* the kittens. Several days later, an anonymous email arrived in West's inbox reading:

Well, I have to say goodbye for now, but don't worry, in the near future you will hearing from me again. This time, however, the victims won't be small animals. I will send you a copy of the new video I'm going to be making. You see, killing is different than smoking... with smoking you can actually quit... Once you kill, and taste blood, it's impossible to stop. The urges [are] just too strong not to continue... You know the fun part of all this is watching millions of people get angry and frustrated because they can't catch me. That's why I love this. I love the risk factor. *It's fun watching people work so hard gathering all the evidence. Then not being able to name me or catch me. You see, I always win* [emphasis added]. I always hold the trump card, and I will continue to make more movies... *next time you hear from me, it will be in a movie I'm producing that will have some humans in it* not just pussies [emphasis added].⁷¹¹

By December, PETA was offering a £2,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the kitten-killer. In the meantime, Magnotta learned and published personal details of the animal rights activists who were pursuing him. Using the handle 'uonlywish500', he also posted the opening animation from the film *Catch Me If You Can*⁷¹²—which chronicles the five year manhunt for legendary con man and counterfeiter Frank Abagnale Jr. (who also employed numerous aliases)—on their webpage.⁷¹³ This may indicate *talismanic* influence. In April 2012, Magnotta made a montage video of himself urging people to “please join our Facebook page to find this *dangerous serial killer*” [emphasis added].⁷¹⁴ At the end of the video, the narrator

warned “do not approach Luka Magnotta. He is a dangerous psychopath.”⁷¹⁵ A month earlier, he had posted an entry on his blog 'Necrophilia Serial Killer Luka Magnotta' discussing how lonely it is to be a 'necrophiliac'⁷¹⁶ and plagiarizing vast sections of text from an essay on the morality of necrophilia by undergraduate Sarah McKearn.⁷¹⁷ In another blog post he briefly talked about the benefits of cannibalism.⁷¹⁸ By this time Magnotta had moved to 5270 Décarie Boulevard, Apt 208, in Montreal. He began posting on various online forums asking “Does anybody know where I can watch the 1 Lunatic 1 Icepick video? I've been trying to find it for weeks...”⁷¹⁹ On May 24, Magnotta made a post on the consumer awareness website ripoffreport.com with the headline “Luka Magnotta Bisexual Male Model and Porn Actor Luka Magnotta Male Model Luka Magnotta Male Model New York, New York”⁷²⁰ and reading

Luka Magnotta is an extremely dangerous and sick psychopath, he is incapable of feeling remorse and only thinks about how situations benefit himself. He is a sadistic, manipulative psychopath [*homicidal ideal/own*] with an IQ of 145 which makes him even more dangerous... Psychopaths can appear very charming and look beautiful, but beware, they are cunning and highly maniacal... Luka Magnotta, is a retired male model and former bisexual porn star [*former ideal/own*]. He is of Russian/Italian decent [*sic*] born in Canada... Luka Magnotta is also known for dating female serial killer Karla Homolka who murdered three girls with her husband Paul Bernardo, yet he denies these allegations... Magnotta was accused in 2010 of severe animal killing and torturing many animals in sick sadistic ways. First he allegedly took two baby kittens on Christmas eve, put them in a vacuum bag and sucked all the air out, playing Christmas music while his friends filmed. It is believed he sells these films on the black market for big bucks. Then he took another cat, taped it to a poll and drowned it in a bath tub. *If that is not bad enough he had sex with their dead bodies* [emphasis added]. In 2011 he took another cat and fed it to his 16ft long Albino Python. He has outraged animal lovers the world over. Here is a list of news articles on his many crimes...⁷²¹

The following day, Magnotta posted his '1 lunatic 1 icepick' video online depicting his elaborate mutilation and sexual abuse of a (then unidentified) East Asian male's corpse. He mailed the victim's body parts to the headquarters of the Canadian Conservative and Liberal parties, along with a school in British Columbia. After disposing of the remaining parts, Magnotta caught a flight to Paris and began making his way across Europe to Berlin. When police finally discovered the identity of the perpetrator and entered Magnotta's abandoned, blood-soaked apartment they found the following message scrawled on his wall: “IF YOU DONt [*sic*] like the Reflection. DONt look in the Mirror. I DONt Care.”⁷²²

Magnotta's apparently unhealthy interest in serial murderers is well-documented. It is believed he selected his last name from Detective Vince Magnotta—a fictional detective

portrayed by actor Christopher Walken in the 1996^{oooo} computer game *Ripper*. In *Ripper*, a serial killer terrorizes New York City by butchering victims and sending letters to the media. Magnotta did both.⁷²³ One of the four possible endings reveals Detective Vince Magnotta to be the offender.⁷²⁴ Another alias, “Kirk Trammel”, relates to fictional femme fatale Catherine Tramell^{ppppp}—the seductive ice pick wielding antagonist of the 1992 erotic thriller *Basic Instinct*. Like Monroe and Homolka, she is an attractive blonde portrayed by Sharon Stone. According to former partner Barbie Swallows, Magnotta “took me to see the movie *Basic Instinct Part 2*. He was dying to see that movie... But he said that he... didn't like the movie that much. He said it wasn't that good. He said the first one was better...”⁷²⁵ Again, Magnotta's murder of Jun Lin had several commonalities with the slayings depicted in the film. Most obviously, Magnotta recorded the crime, titling it '1 lunatic 1 icepick. Though he had used a screwdriver to stab Lin's corpse, he painted its black handle silver so that it resembled an icepick.⁷²⁶ Prior to the Lin murder, Magnotta had sent British journalist Alex West an email containing a paraphrased quote from the film: “You see, killing is different than smoking... with smoking you can actually quit.^{qqqqq} Once you kill, and taste blood, its [sic] impossible to stop...”⁷²⁷ The name of the person purporting to have sent the email was 'John Kilbride', the second known victim of Britain's 'Moors Murderers', Ian Brady and Myra Hindley. Brady and Hindley had recorded the pleas of victim Leslie Ann Downey on an audio tape which began with the Christmas carol 'The Little Drummer Boy.' The same song had been playing in the background of one of Magnotta's kitten-killing videos.

Barbie Swallows also confirms “He had obsessions with those two serial killers, Paul Bernardo and Karla Homolka. He would talk about them obsessively: his face would glow... He kept talking about Karla Homolka, almost like he was, you know, infatuated by her.”⁷²⁸ It is important to note that, once again, Magnotta identified with a female serial killer (Tramell, Hindley, Homolka): a unique phenomenon among our sample. This is particularly interesting in light of his feminine-leaning gender identity (Section 3.8.5):

Mr. Magnotta initially said that he would only cross-dress when escorting, but then added that he would do so at the request of [his boyfriend] who bought him lingerie. He also bought wigs for his escorting work... At the age of 16, he would try on his grandmother's

^{oooo} Magnotta would have been 13 or 14 at the time of the game's release.

^{ppppp} During post-arrest psychiatric interviews, Magnotta would claim he was coerced into committing acts of violence by a person named 'Manny Lopez' who followed him from city to city. Dr. Watts believed that this was a sign of psychosis, leading him to declare Magnotta NGRI (Watts, 2014). Catherine Tramell's fiancée in *Basic Instinct* was named 'Manny Lopez'.

^{qqqqq} In *Basic Instinct*, the exact line uttered by Catherine Tramell is “Killing isn't like smoking. You can quit.”

bras and started using mascara on his eyelashes... When he was a little boy, he played with Barbie dolls and liked his grandmother's clothes, never wanted to leave her side and felt like he wanted to be a girl.⁷²⁹

Three days before his arrest, Magnotta sent an e-mail to his sister, Melissa Newman, asking her “How does it feel to be the sister of a murderer [*homicidal ideal/own*]?”⁷³⁰ Like the false dichotomy between 'Ennad' and 'Gemini' in Rolling's *self*, Magnotta's progression from 'kitten-killer' to “necrophiliac serial killer”⁷³¹ is more of a broadening of his **Dangerous Elusive Paraphilic Killer** [now *homicidal*] *ideal/own* than separate *selves*.

3.8.3 Luka Magnotta: Victimology

Table 10
Luka Magnotta Victimology

Victim's Name	Age	Race	Gender	Profession	Date Murdered	Where
Jun Lin	33	East Asian	Male	Student/store clerk	May 24, 2012/died	Magnotta's apartment in Montreal

On the surface, it appears that Magnotta's targeting of Jun Lin, a 33-year-old Chinese undergraduate enrolled at Concordia University's faculty of engineering and computer science, was merely opportunistic. Until the night of the slaying, the two men had not met in person, and Magnotta has never commented publicly on his victim. When Jun Lin's murder was first revealed to the world, newspapers reported that Chinese citizens were interpreting it as a hate crime—a seemingly non-sensical theory given the sexual nature of the killing, along with the absence of any direct Sinophobic connotations. We maintain that, in all likelihood, Jun Lin was simply a victim of opportunity.

However, given that every other offender in this sample, with the exception of Mark David Chapman, used homicide to transition from their perceived *subordinated masculinity* to a *sub-hegemonic* or *hyperreal* (with sub-hegemonic elements) one, there is a convoluted but viable alternative that must be explored. As a 'femme' or 'bottom' homosexual occupying one of the lowest rungs in the masculine hierarchy, the only masculinities more *subordinated* than his own are arguably the transgendered, and the gay East Asian male. A large body of Queer literature, both academic and non-academic, elaborates on both the feminization of gay East Asians in the

LGBTQ+ community and in American pornographic films. In his *A View From the Bottom*, Nguyen Tan Hoang, the most prolific author on the subject discusses “the widespread assumption in gay Western male subculture that Asian men possess a propensity for the bottom position in gay anal sex. Such an attitude derives from the view of Asian men as feminized and less masculine than men of other races.”⁷³² Earlier in his career, Hoang built upon the observations of Richard Fung, who authored the influential article 'Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn.' Referring to Fung, Hoang brings to light the pervasive western cultural trend of viewing black men as occupying extreme hypersexuality on the male virility gradient, contrasted with East Asians who are regarded as basically asexual.⁷³³ This is supported in the discourse by armchair quantifications of primary (e.g., average penis size) and secondary (e.g., triangular body form) sexual characteristics, along with prevalence of sexual activities, and cultural attitudes toward sex.⁷³⁴ As with many of the controversial theories related to race and I.Q., in this cultural narrative Caucasians occupy a comfortable and convenient middle-ground between 'the brutish savage' and 'overcivilized castrate'⁷³⁵, positioning Magnotta in a more masculine (or less feminine) category of *subordinated* masculinity than his Chinese victim. This is important because Magnotta “admitted [to Dr. Joel Watts] that in most of his relationships he tended to be 'submissive' and sometimes fantasized and engaged in sexual activities where his sexual partner would humiliate him.”⁷³⁶ His transgender girlfriend, Barbie Swallows, frequently complained that Magnotta was not “giving me sex”⁷³⁷ and that when he did “the first half during sex was quite good but... he kept losing his erection so he just asked me to finish him off with oral sex and then he fell asleep.”⁷³⁸ Ironically, Barbie's surgically-obtained female anatomical parts were probably partially responsible for the homosexual Magnotta's lack of sexual interest. Watts reported that Magnotta “would often fantasize about other guys during sex with girls and would have difficulty having an erection.”⁷³⁹ As his relationship with Barbie, whose transgender expression aspires to reflect *emphasized femininity*, inevitably positioned Magnotta in the fixed role of 'top' this would have conflicted with his submissive sexual preferences. Magnotta was a preferential 'bottom' in homosexual sex—a man who identified with *emphasized femininity*—and it is thus possible that he faced psychological obstacles to being the 'top' during his sexual desecration of Jun Lin's body. Following this line of inquiry, he may have sought a victim who was visibly male but lower in the ranks of *subordinated masculinity* than

himself. Gender theorists would argue that homosexual East Asian males occupy this cultural position.

Reviewing the relevant historical literature, Hoang proposes that this feminization of East Asians in North American culture resulted from laws necessitating that one had to be a white male to be an American citizen until 1870, when African-American men were finally granted this status. Caucasian women received it 49 years later in 1919, while East Asian males had to wait until a series of legislative changes from 1943-1952 to become naturalized citizens.⁷⁴⁰ Hoang argues that “U.S. citizenship originally confers the status of maleness, of masculinity, predicated by whiteness. Since Asian laborers were excluded from this subject-citizen status formulated as masculine and white, they were seen as 'emasculated' and 'feminized.’”⁷⁴¹ This emasculation was compounded by earlier immigration laws which prohibited Chinese male immigrants from importing their wives, along with legislation stripping citizenship from any Caucasian woman who married an East Asian man, as he was a non-citizen. These laws segregated East Asian men in 'bachelor societies', and once the demand for railroad workers declined, they were left to occupy jobs that were considered 'woman's work': cooking, serving, and laundering.⁷⁴² When combining these arguments with honest reflection on popular racial discourses, the idea that gay East Asians occupy one of the lowest tiers of *subordinated masculinity* is a tenable claim. And though Hoang has used American history to make his case, (1) many of the same historical practices existed in some form in Canada, and (2) American culture is transmitted into the minds of Canadians by way of the mass media, along with its tropes and ideologies.

Did Magnotta murder a victim of opportunity or one of a more *subordinated masculinity*? Barring a statement on the issue from Magnotta himself, we can only speculate, and thus we will continue with the premise that his victim was non-symbolic. However, the alternate explanation explored here is certainly worthy of consideration.

3.8.4 Luka Magnotta: Post-arrest ideal/own

Magnotta was apprehended in an Internet cafe in Berlin on June 4, 2012, while looking at news articles about himself online. According to arresting officer Marc Liege, after Liege “became a little bit more intensive...” toward Magnotta, Magnotta “...said 'okay, you got me.’”⁷⁴³ The whole drive to the police station he didn't say a word. *He was just smiling* [emphasis

added]...⁷⁴⁴ Extradited to Canada on June 18, Magnotta eventually pled guilty to all charges but claimed he was not criminally responsible by reason of insanity. The jury did not agree, and on December 23, 2014, he was found guilty of first-degree murder and handed a life sentence with a minimum of 25 years before he could apply for parole.⁷⁴⁵

Since his incarceration at Archambault Institution, Magnotta seems happily reconciled in his *homicidal self*. A prolific writer of letters to 'friends' and fans, he is “so excited to be finishing [secondary] school”⁷⁴⁶ and as the doors at Archambault Prison are “open 90% of the time... I feel like I'm in a university setting.”⁷⁴⁷ Considering his future, he muses “I'm not sure what I want to take Post Secondary. There are so many options.”⁷⁴⁸ Magnotta is permitted to wear his own items of clothing “provided they are approved by the institutional head”⁷⁴⁹ and photographs show him wearing designer sunglasses and a Versace shirt while hobnobbing with sex offenders. Freed from the responsibility of living as an independent adult, the eternal child now enjoys playtime courtesy of the state: “I went outside and played in the snow today and made a little snowman. lol. I know it's juvenile but it's still fun. Same with snowball fights. hahaha. Thankfully we have hot chocolate here.”⁷⁵⁰ When he's not decorating his cell with his art and posters of Marilyn Monroe, he enjoys “pizza party night[s]”⁷⁵¹ with his fellow inmates, and jamming to “Celine Dion's album and a lot of others”⁷⁵² on his “stereo”⁷⁵³ or the “portable for when I suntan outside.”⁷⁵⁴ Sometimes he is allowed to have friends over to play: “I really hope you'll be able to make it in July to the little cottage here... I'll go shopping for the food and movies. We have movie channels and movie night here so I can get any title.”⁷⁵⁵ He is also allowed to go to the “convenience store here that is open every day that sells everything you can imagine.”⁷⁵⁶

Though the prison food “is really, really good and they serve a lot. The Italian is the best. I also love the ice cream”⁷⁵⁷, Magnotta remains concerned with maintaining his physical appearance and claims to be on a diet and exercise regimen:

I'm really enjoy playing hockey and tennis and I've lost a lot of weight. I'm looking forward to next month when the volleyball nets outside will be put up. I've always been an amazing player. We have a nice gym here too for exercising. It's really important to getting the results I want. I spent 2 hours playing sports, one hour exercising and at night I go outside for a walk in the garden. The lilacs are my favourite.⁷⁵⁸

However, he is not without his complaints: “So, all this chocolate for Valentine's Day is ruining my diet. lol. These f—g a—s said they would add Ferrero Rocher and they didn't. They just

want all their choices on the canteen. Some people are so f—g selfish it piss’s [sic] me off.”⁷⁵⁹ Magnotta is even less pleased with the institution's mental health professionals, and remains devoted to a small group who assessed or treated him before he was convicted.

The best psychiatrist I ever had was Dr. Renée’ Roy at RDP (Rivière-des-Prairies Detention Centre). She was phenomenal and I miss her. Dr. (Marie-Frédérique) Allard and Dr. (Joel) Watts were also wonderful and so was Dr. (Thomas) Barth from Germany. Very professional and kind, intelligent and informed unlike a few others who will remain nameless.⁷⁶⁰

Incidentally, all of the psychiatrists on Magnotta's “very professional and kind, intelligent, and informed”⁷⁶¹ list either operated in a purely clinical capacity or testified for the defense in his trial.⁷⁶²

No longer afforded the luxury of refusing to take orders, he works seven days a week in the prison's kitchen. As his current situation means he can never be left without food and shelter, he lambasts the guards as “imbeciles”⁷⁶³ and “mostly all trash or retards.”⁷⁶⁴ He complains that “the staff and doctors here have an extremely unhealthy obsession with my personal life... everyone wants to know minute sexual details. F—g losers I just tell them to check the Internet and everything is on there, stop asking me.”⁷⁶⁵ Indeed, what else is there to know? Eric Newman, outcast and failed model, is now a **Dangerous Elusive Paraphilic Killer** [*homicidal ideal/own*]. His sexual violence is accessible online via the '1 lunatic 1 icepick' video, likely until the end of civilization. Unfortunately for Magnotta, when we “check the Internet”⁷⁶⁶ it becomes clear that what he presents as “everything”⁷⁶⁷ about his sexuality—essentially that he is a homosexual necrophilia-spectrum cannibal *à la* Jeffrey Dahmer—is far from the “everything... on there”⁷⁶⁸ elucidated by critical, dispassionate analysis of the video footage. In actuality, there is good reason to believe that Magnotta is neither a necrophile or an anthropophagist. Rather, he is an impostor and consummate wannabe (see the following section).

3.8.5 Luka Magnotta: Sexual/Gender Aspects

More than any other offender in this study, Luka Magnotta seems to have suffered the most strain due to his sexuality. Though Magnotta attempted to cement his *ideal selves* and celebrity in his sexual desirability, prowess, and transgressiveness, there is ample evidence to suggest all three qualities were distorted to different extents, whether through fabrication or confusion. Let us begin by challenging the depth of the transgressive quality, particularly the

notion that Magnotta was a necrophilia-spectrum paraphile. To the untrained (or discombobulated) eye, Magnotta's supposed necrophilic proclivities seem indisputable; after all, there is video footage of him mutilating, and (apparently) sodomizing and eating pieces of Jun Lin's corpse. However, one should approach a case of exhibitionist 'necrophilia' with extreme caution. Other than Magnotta, there is no known case anywhere in the academic literature of a necrophile recording and deliberately releasing his sexual defilement of a corpse for public consumption.⁷⁶⁹ On the contrary, necrophiles are generally extremely private people.⁷⁷⁰ With this in mind, all 10 minutes and 38 seconds of the '1 lunatic 1 icepick' video were viewed frame-by-frame, and though Magnotta's pelvis is clearly thrusting against the victim's buttocks at no point do we see the shaft of Magnotta's penis entering the anus. A casual perusal of pornographic films, both amateur and professional, should make the reader incredibly suspicious as to this omission—was Magnotta *literally* just going through the motions? Similarly, Magnotta can be seen carving a portion of flesh out of the victim's buttocks, skewering it on a fork, and displaying it for the camera. Yet at no point do we see him place it in his mouth, let alone devour it. Admittedly, the video ends with several seconds of footage depicting Magnotta masturbating with the victim's arm. This constitutes proof of post-mortem sexual activities (PPSAs) lasting less than 10 seconds, but it is insufficient to show that Magnotta was genuinely sexually aroused by the act. Firstly, we do not know *how* Magnotta obtained an erection (e.g., non-tactile arousal, masturbation, erectile dysfunction medication^{TTTT}) or *when* (e.g., during mutilation *or* hours later). It is entirely possible that he used tactile stimulation, possibly in combination with erectile dysfunction medication, to become erect independently of the corpse—just long enough to film the sequence.^{SSSS} With this in mind, it is noteworthy that his partialist post-mortem sex acts (PPSAs) were incredibly brief and that we do not see him ejaculate (or have evidence that this occurred at all). When this 'lack of what one would expect to see' is considered in toto, the likelihood that Magnotta's paraphilic^{TTTT} manifestations were actually an elaborate performance moves from possible to probable. Furthermore, when questioned by Dr. Watts about the “content

^{TTTT} According to Watts, Magnotta had been repeatedly prescribed ED medication.

^{SSSS} As we have seen, Magnotta admitted to fantasizing about men while having sex with women, though he would eventually lose his erection. Could he not also have used a similar technique for a narrow window of time on a disembodied arm?

^{TTTT} In actuality, the only paraphilia Magnotta admitted having to Watts was an arousal to “‘scat’ because ‘it makes me feel closer to people’” (Watts, 2014, p. 21) There is a chance he may also be masochistic, as he “admitted that in most of his relationships he tended to be 'submissive' and sometimes fantasized and engaged in sexual activities where his sexual partner would humiliate him” (Watts, 2014, p. 21).

of his sexual fantasies... he responded negatively when asked about having voyeuristic, exhibitionistic, pedophilic, sadistic or necrophilic fantasies.”⁷⁷¹ A necrophile, by definition, has necrophilic fantasies.

There is precedent for disbelieving Magnotta's claims to have been a necrophile and cannibal. Magnotta frequently described himself as “bisexual”⁷⁷², lying in his *Plastic Makes Perfect* audition that he participated in heterosexual sex with female co-stars.⁷⁷³ Though he continued to bill himself as “bisexual”⁷⁷⁴ up until the day before the killing, there is no concrete evidence that Magnotta ever had a sexual encounter with a non-trans-woman, with the exception of his mentally-challenged female fraud victim. When asked about this by Watts, Magnotta explained “that he was trying to act normal, felt confused and did not want the son of the family he was staying with to think he was gay.”^{uuuuu} He said he wanted to like having sex with her but did not.”⁷⁷⁵ All of his known pornographic films have exclusively featured Magnotta in same-sex scenes, and unsurprisingly, all of his escort clients seem to have been men.

Magnotta's admissions that “he wanted people to think he was bisexual and not completely gay due to negative attitudes he experienced from of [sic] his family regarding his sexuality”⁷⁷⁶ and his feelings of “disappointment to his grandmother for not being straight”⁷⁷⁷ denote an *actual/own:ought/other* discrepancy. When Magnotta would use mascara and concealer to improve his appearance “His grandmother and grandfather would give him 'dirty looks'...”⁷⁷⁸ Even less overtly effeminate activities would provoke familial condemnation:

Mr. Magnotta admitted that he was quite feminine and that his grandmother sometimes commented, 'You hold a glass like a faggot.' She would sometime hide hairspray or throw out hair mousse when he was about 12 years old because according to her, Mr. Magnotta used 'more than a girl.' Mr. Magnotta said that he believed his grandfather hated gay people 'more than anything.' His family did not like how he dressed. He was sometimes made fun of because of his effeminate tone of voice, his hair, and the way he crossed his legs.⁷⁷⁹

Growing up in an environment where he was routinely called 'fag' by his peers and raised in a family who “would make fun of effeminate gay men and often made homophobic comments and slurs”⁷⁸⁰ Magnotta was justifiably severely deterred about disclosing his homosexuality. When

^{uuuuu} Even though Magnotta portrayed himself as bisexual superstar, in reality he remained a socially isolated and solitary figure. According to Barbie Swallows: “He wasn't really into the gay scene like in the gay community. Like he wasn't into going to the gay community and going to clubs. He said he's 'been there, done that' but it just wasn't his thing anymore” (Hiltz, Shane, & Hiltz, n.d.).

he finally came out to his family (with the exception of his grandmother), Watts reports “this was a very stressful [*actual/own:ought/other*] experience for him.”⁷⁸¹ Magnotta's brother, Conrad, “told people I was gay before I was ready”⁷⁸², a claim corroborated by their sister.

Concerning his gender, Magnotta identified as male, though he performed his masculinity in an observably feminine manner. Asked “if he had ever wondered whether or not he was the right gender”⁷⁸³ Magnotta admitted to Dr. Joel Watts that “this [question] had preoccupied him in the past. When he was a little boy, he played with Barbie dolls and liked his grandmother's clothes, never wanted to leave her side and felt like he wanted to be a girl... he often felt confused...”⁷⁸⁴ This gender disorientation may have resulted from when “his mom would dress him at times in female clothing when he was younger.”⁷⁸⁵ From the age of approximately 10 “he would put on make-up and dress up in his mother’s clothing when she was not aware of this... At the age of 16, he would try on his grandmother’s bras and started using mascara on his eyelashes.”⁷⁸⁶ Magnotta confessed that, on occasion in the past, he was sexually aroused by cross-dressing.⁷⁸⁷ Upon the request of an escort client or sugar daddy, he would also wear articles of female clothing such as wigs and lingerie.⁷⁸⁸ Magnotta clarified to Dr. Watts that he had never considered sex reassignment surgery. When asked about his mental illnesses, Magnotta provided an answer that appears psychotic on the surface, but when interpreted without the biasing foreknowledge of his paranoid schizophrenia, appears no stranger than any relationship between *self-guide* and *talisman* in this sample:

Mr. Magnotta explained feeling that Marilyn Monroe’s soul was inside of him at times, 'because she had lot of sex; *when I dress up as her, sometimes I feel like she is making me more beautiful* [emphasis added], I have a connection with her because of her childhood, I love her so much.' He would feel that she was doing things that he was doing. He wanted very much to in fact be her. His feeling of having Marilyn Monroe’s soul inside of him comes and goes. He went to Hollywood in 2008, kissed her star on a sidewalk and visited her crypt a few times causing him to feel particularly close to her.”⁷⁸⁹

Monroe was obviously a *talisman* which influenced Magnotta's **Sexually-Liberated Celebrity ideal/own**, transforming from 'blond bombshell' to 'blond femme fatale' trope as he transitioned to the **Dangerous Elusive Paraphilic Killer**.

Magnotta's confusion over his gender identity is intrinsically linked with his self-perceived physical attractiveness. According to Watts, the diminutive Eric “often felt ugly and inadequate since he was a young boy.”⁷⁹⁰ In high school “he had lots of acne and would use concealer to hide this”⁷⁹¹ but he also “had never liked his body and people often commented

about his skinniness [*actual/own:ideal/other*]. Sometimes he was even rejected by clients because of this.”⁷⁹² Having obfuscated his homosexuality by claiming bisexuality as an aspect of the **Sexually-Liberated Celebrity**, Magnotta tried to turn his 'ugliness' into “beauty and perfection”⁷⁹³ because “he wanted to be liked.”⁷⁹⁴ Unfortunately, his biology got in the way of his determination as he “tried to gain weight over the years without success.”⁷⁹⁵ Strangely, even though he exuded 'femme', Magnotta planned “on doing muscle implants in my pecs and my arms...”⁷⁹⁶ in order to become the **Sexually-Liberated Celebrity**. When he failed in his *Plastic Makes Perfect* audition, these surgeries became a financial impossibility.

3.8.6 Luka Magnotta: Racial/Ethnic Aspects

Though born in Scarborough, a suburb of Toronto, Luka Magnotta often falsely presented himself as being “of Russian/Italian heritage”⁷⁹⁷, listing his birthplace on white supremacist Stormfront's message board as Tolyatti, Russia.⁷⁹⁸ At other times he claimed the same ethnic descent but said he was born in Canada. 'Luka Magnotta' is his Italian alias, while another, “Vladimir Romanov”⁷⁹⁹, is as stereotypically Russian as 'John Smith' is English. Magnotta gives little further comment on his fake heritages; still, there are two associations worthy of exploring. The first is the association between both nations and organized crime. Among his litany of online deceptions are claims or innuendos that Magnotta has allies in the Russian mafia. In 2010, a choppy, low-quality video entitled “Luka Magnotta Russian Mafia”⁸⁰⁰ was uploaded to YouTube by user Scarface3030^{vvvv}—almost certainly a Magnotta proxy account as it only features content related to him—which seems to depict Magnotta in a late-night altercation with the description “WTF??? Why does Luka hang around the Mafia and serial killers?”⁸⁰¹ This corresponds roughly with the time that Magnotta began referring to himself as 'dangerous' and a 'psychopath' online. Thus, the most probable interpretation is that Magnotta wished to associate himself with the Russian mob, and more generally Russia^{wwwww}, in order to appear dark, threatening, and exotic (*enacted identity*). The motivation to pass as Italian may be similarly related to Cosa Nostra, Camorra, 'Ndrangheta, and/or Italian fascism. There is evidence, albeit spurious, for the latter. In September 2011, responding under the name 'arcangel9' to a thread “Your opinion

^{vvvv} 'Scarface' was the nickname of Italian-American mobster Al Capone, though it may also refer to the eponymous movie starring Al Pacino as Cuban-American drug tsar, Tony Montana.

^{wwwww} Magnotta also frequently marketed himself as a Russian escort.

about Benito Mussolini”⁸⁰², Magnotta replied “I think his policys [sic] were very interesting and he was a very courageous individual.”⁸⁰³ More likely (or synonymously), the association between Italy and high culture, particularly Milan's fashion scene, attracted Magnotta's admiration. For instance, in his *Cover Guy* audition, he attempted to excuse his slender physique by claiming that he had recently returned from Italy where they had informed him they prefer skinny male models.⁸⁰⁴

This half-Russian/half-Italian identity remained fairly static for Magnotta over the course of his adult life. Moreover, with the possible exception of Elliot Rodger, he is the most racist ETV offender in our example. Employing the username 'arcangel9' in September 2011, somebody who was almost certainly Magnotta wrote the following on Stormfront's message board:

I want to make it clear, someone can be racist, and still be a great person. I dont [sic] want to kill other races. I just dont [sic] want to associate, communicate or live near any other races. I have the right not to like other races, I am not advocating violence, this is my point of view and if anyone doesnt [sic] like it **** off. Not everyone is going to or has to like you!⁸⁰⁵

The racial group Magnotta posted most frequently about were “BLACK PEOPLE”⁸⁰⁶:

THE TRUTH IS SOMETHING A LOT OF PEOPLE PRETEND DOESNT [sic] EXIST - PRETENDING BLACK PEOPLE AREN'T TRYING TO TAKE OVER OUR BEAUTIFUL COUNTRIES, COUNTRIES BUILT BY WHITE EUROPEANS - THEN AFTER WE BUILD EVERYTHING, THEY COME IN, LIKE PARASITES AND CONSUME EVERYTHING WE HAVE MADE BEAUTIFUL - OH, BUT LETS [sic] PRETEND ITS [sic] NOT HAPPENING!⁸⁰⁷

He also provided statistics, likely made up or plagiarized word-for-word, showing the correlation between absentee fathers, bastardy, and African-Americans:

About 27% of White children do not live with their biological father, 35% of Hispanic children and 66% of Black children... About 80% of African American [sic] can expect to spend ‘a significant’ portion of their childhood living without their biological father... In 2000, among White mothers about 27% of all births were out-of-wedlock, among Hispanic mothers about 43% and Black mothers about 70%...⁸⁰⁸

Previously, under the username 'reddragon1'^{xxxxx}, he posted anti-Semitic views:

^{xxxxx} *Red Dragon* is a novel by *Silence of the Lambs* author Thomas Harris about a serial murderer who kills in order to transform himself into a powerful being.

Jesus Christ I wish theses [sic] Jews would just get lost... stay in Israel and give the Palestinians back their land. Instead they hide behind the U.S., because they know that without the US , [sic] the rest of the middle east would destroy them in a second. In my opinion they are a bunch of disgusting pussys [sic] who wine [sic] and cry. Every jew [sic] I have ever known thinks their **** doesn't stink and they are a million times better then [sic] the rest of the world.⁸⁰⁹

Under the same username, Magnotta quoted white nationalist remarks from his own website:

“blacks get their own countries, Chinese get their own countries ... however if white people want their own countries then we are denied that right.”⁸¹⁰

Like the males who compensated for their physical shortcomings by adopting neo-Nazi identities in studies by Ezekiel and Langman⁸¹¹ (see Chapter 1), Magnotta may have adopted a similar strategy in response to his “skinniness”⁸¹² and/or effeminate mannerisms. Though he was clearly somewhat racist—at least he *acted* that way—we must obviously question a man who fabricated a relationship with Karla Homolka and possibly necrophilic and cannibalistic predilections for attention. As evidence suggests, there is a strong likelihood that Magnotta posted incendiary racist comments as part of his 'privately fabricate then publicly deny' self-promotional strategy. For example, posing as a Magnotta-fan on the Stormfront message board, in May 2011, Magnotta posted the following screed:

Male model Luka Magnotta has been forced to leave North America and relocate to Russia for his views on White Supremacy... Luka Magnotta has been accused of horrible and false crimes in order to silence him. Recently individuals claimed they had a vide [sic] of him killing two cats on the internet. In reality it was a big hoax, that was started to slander his name... Luka Magnotta was apparently forced to leave North America for a more safer life in Russia. After *mentally ill ethnic groups sent him death threats* [emphasis added] and got animal activists on their side to threaten his life... Do you actually believe in thirty years, when we become minorities that the ethnics wont [sic] try and get rid of us all? They are planning on slowly taking over our countries and then we will be enslaved by them. Watch and see. The governments are too much of cowards to freeze immigration. I for one wish Mr. Magnotta a lot [sic] of luck in life.⁸¹³

Given his earlier and later provocations, the notion that Magnotta was primarily motivated by a desire for media attention so he could publicly defend his 'celebrity' reputation (i.e., self-promotion) rather than simply expressing racist rage seems likely.

3.8.7 Luka Magnotta: Class Aspects

Raised in a financially disadvantaged nuclear family, upon entering public school “other

kids would laugh at [Magnotta's] clothing. His parents did not have much money and bought clothing at Value Village.”⁸¹⁴ Likely reacting to this, when Magnotta was able to afford clothing of his own, he splurged on expensive brand name attire. As low social economic status was associated with 'Eric Newman' the **Ugly Useless Faggot** (*actual/own*), 'Luka Magnotta' had to embody visible affluence to transition to the **Sexually-Liberated Celebrity** *ideal/own*. Accordingly, Barbie Swallows describes Magnotta as “a generous guy but he was trying too hard to impress people...”⁸¹⁵ mentioning an incident in which “he gave his whole pack of smokes to the parking lot guy so he was trying to show off in front of me...”⁸¹⁶ Even while admitting to prostituting himself on *The Naked News*, Magnotta clarified “It's really high-end, high-class clientele who I cater to... *I've travelled all over the world... I get to meet... really influential people... Doing a lot of high-end things* [emphasis added]... And make a lot of money.”⁸¹⁷ Watts reports that Magnotta's mother was mocked for her poverty by her boyfriend, Leo. By sending money to his mother, Magnotta was not only able to transcend the financial situation of the **Ugly Useless Faggot**, but also push back against his abuser. In 2005, Magnotta took Anna to the Bahamas: her first international trip.⁸¹⁸

3.8.8 Luka Magnotta: Vocational Aspects

According to Magnotta's self-reported job history to Dr. Joel Watts, he began working after dropping out of high school at 17-years of age. His first job was as a night-shift labourer on an assembly line printing pamphlets, but he kept falling asleep, and only lasted a month. He remained in his next position for just a week, as he lacked the physical strength to move equipment from a warehouse. Magnotta's most successful stint of regular work was two months at a deli, which was cut short when customers complained about how he made their sandwiches. The 18-year-old was subsequently fired from a grocery store in under a month due to incompetency and missing work. He fared only slightly better at The Great Canadian Bagel, lasting just over a month. This inability to maintain consistent employment for more than three months is reminiscent of Rolling.

Shortly after, he began subsisting off welfare, and owing to his mental health problems, began collecting provincial disability payments around the age of 19. Upon moving to Toronto, he had a number of short-lived 'under the table' jobs, and worked briefly as a stripper at for “a short period of time, two to three weeks at the most. I remember he stormed out and told off the

manager. He just didn't like orders... He'd rather work for himself.”⁸¹⁹ At this point, Magnotta began working as an escort—a profession that, coupled with disability payments, would sustain him until his arrest. Nevertheless, in March 2007, Magnotta filed for bankruptcy due to illness, unemployment, and lack of sufficient income.

In the mid-2000s, Magnotta also attempted a career in pornography, starring in a handful of low budget videos. Barbie Swallows recounts how, in 2006, he “mentioned to me that he wanted to quit his escorting job and work as a police officer... he realized that he was going to get old one day and you can't rely on your looks to make money and you have to get a real job, you know, a career.”⁸²⁰ Her assertion is corroborated by Issue 260 of *Fab* in which Magnotta posed as 'Jimmy' “a 22-year-old soccer fan born in Russian... who hopes to train to become a police officer.”⁸²¹ This makes him the fourth offender in this sample to consider a stereotypically heroic masculine career; although Berkowitz, Ireland, and Rolling all actually served or attempted to serve in the armed forces, or were auxiliary police/volunteer firemen.

Concluding Thoughts: Luka Magnotta

As if Luka Magnotta's homosexuality, gender-confusion, small stature, and learning disabilities did not make childhood socialization difficult enough, his 'home-schooling' and 'isolation' from children his own age during the first 12 years of his development (*early-sensorimotor* to *late-dimensional/early-vectorial*), condemned him. When he finally began attending school he was ridiculed and ostracized: a clear message that he did not belong to the social order at any level. In high school, his exclusion continued, although he was generally ignored more than actively bullied. His grandmother's rule of prohibiting his congregation with other teens meant that his childhood continued in near total isolation. Besides frequently referring to himself as a 'boy' into his late-Twenties—perhaps more reflective of his fear of aging and/or attempts to market himself to clients—there is no record of Magnotta stating he felt immature or childish as Chapman, Ireland, and Rolling did. Yet his *self* is arguably the least coalesced we have encountered thus far in this sample. His intense self-hatred is palpable: an **Ugly Useless Faggot** *actual/own*. Needing to feel beautiful and loved, his idolization of the Marilyn Monroe *talisman* led him to pursue a career as a model and porn star. Socially incapable of keeping conventional jobs, Magnotta prostituted himself to make ends meet. He presented

himself as a highly-liberated pansexual individual, whose career as an escort provided him freedom, even celebrity—a male Heidi Fleiss. Yet, secretly, he suffered the traumas of rape,

Table 11
Luka Magnotta: Selves and Strain

	Actual/Own	Ideal/Own	Homicidal Self	Post-Arrest Self
Sexuality	Ego-Dystonic submissive homosexuality	Ego-Syntonic bisexuality	Ego-Syntonic dominant homosexuality	Unknown. Has boyfriend in prison.
Gender	Subordinated. Homosexual femme. 'Faggot', 'baby.' Confusion as to male or female gender. Gender-role strain.	Subordinated, but proud and flagrantly so. Less gender-role strain.	Non-subordinated, violent masculinity. Less gender-role strain.	Reconciled.
Religion/ Philosophy	N/A	Superficial flirtation with Scientology.	N/A	N/A
Class	Lower-middle- class.	Upper class.	N/A	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism.
Vocation	Menial. Unstable.	Professional celebrity.	N/A	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism
Race	Ego-syntonic.	N/A	Ego-syntonic 'white supremacist'	N/A
Notability	Ego-dystonic. Mertonian strain.	Ego-syntonic. "he said he wanted to be famous one day.'	Ego-syntonic. 'I love this. I love the risk factor.' <i>Catch Me If You Can</i>	Ego-syntonic. Media circus.

abuse by clients, sexually transmitted diseases, and frequently participated in acts that he did not enjoy.

Ultimately, his career in both modeling and pornography were utter failures. Having entered adulthood in what could be considered the mid-stages of simulation (mass use of the Internet, video games, and smartphones)—a world where completely mundane people actually did achieve superstardom by constantly promoting themselves as glamorous idols—he followed this new formula to celebrity with a dogged determination. His public life became a self-made *hyperreal* collage of aliases, deceptive biographies, doctored pictures (using Photoshop to insert himself into scenes across the globe), fake fans (he created approximately 700 false social media accounts to 'like' his own pages), and publicity stunts (linking himself to Karla Homolka in order to deny it). Even in the days leading up to the murder, Magnotta continued to perpetuate the illusion that he was a successful model. In a short video posted on YouTube, Magnotta filmed himself in a manner which made it appear that it was being done by another person. He then delivered dialogue to bolster this illusion, conveying the false persona of being a hounded celebrity. While reclining on his couch smoking a cigarette with Madonna's 'Las Isla Bonita' playing in the background, Magnotta looks up with feigned disinterest at the camera and says “what's up and hi to all my fans”⁸²² before reacting with impatience to an imaginary person off camera, with “I just did. What else do you want me to say?”⁸²³ Continuing with this deception, in an online post he stated:

I have no 'obsession with the lime light' the reality is, I refuse to give interviews and I have turned down countless interviewers and media requests to appear. I have had many opportunities [sic], the thing is, it just is not that important to me and it does not interest me any longer. Having appeared in magazines/films years ago does not constitute an unhealthy obsession with the limelight.⁸²⁴

Nearly his entire *enacted identity* was a fabrication. In keeping with CTI, this increased the gap between his *personal* and *enacted identities* which in turn widened the gap between his *personal* and *ascribed relational identity*, unleashing further negative emotionality. Despite his significant and laughable efforts, he could not even secure a role in reality television show. As we have seen, Chapman, Berkowitz, Rolling, and Ireland all attempted to deceive the public regarding their true motives. Magnotta, who devoted his life to fame, did the same by pretending to *already* be famous—in fact, “the prince of Canada[’s]”⁸²⁵ 'celebrity' was put forth as a reason why he was being 'framed' for the kitten-killing videos. He constantly tried to convince others that he was beyond seeking their approval posting “I care about a lot of things, what others think of me isn't one of them”⁸²⁶ and “the only people that matter to me are my family and a select few

individuals I am privileged to call friends, everyone else's [sic] opinions of me do not count nor do they matter and they hold no merit"⁸²⁷ online. In this way he reflected normative social behavior in the digital age—the 'successful' Twitter user with thousands of followers and no interest in following anyone back.

With his boyish looks fading and everything coming to no avail, Magnotta remained a profoundly alienated individual with a truncated ego-dystonic *self* and arguably more negative-emotionality than when his quest for fame began. It was here that, allegorically, he switched from the Marilyn side of western celebrity to the Manson—emulating the *hyperreal serialkillers!* Catherine Tramell from *Basic Instinct*, Vince Magnotta from the video game *Ripper*, and *American Psycho*'s Patrick Bateman (the music employed in '1 lunatic 1 icepick' is from the movie version starring Christian Bale). Now he created media that absolutely *could not* be ignored: videos depicting the destruction of kittens, and finally, a human being. Unlike the serial killers Berkowitz, Rolling, and Ireland who concealed their names from the world until their arrest revealed them, Magnotta proactively released his to the groups investigating his kitten-killing videos, albeit with some misinformation to misdirect them. Here he has more in common with Chapman who committed murder then waited patiently to be arrested. Interestingly, while the aforementioned three serial killers had all aspired to *sub-hegemonic masculinity* as an *ideal/own*, the self-admittedly effeminate Chapman and Magnotta avoided it. They readily internalized and agreed with their *subordinated masculinity*, and rather than futilely trying to prove their toughness, focused on achieving a diluted form of *hegemonic masculinity*^{yyyyy}: the cultural goals of wealth and fame. That said, though Magnotta's masculinity remained *subordinated* after the homicide, by being the 'top' or 'dominant' in his sexual activities with Lin's corpse, his *homicidal ideal/own* would have been regarded as less *subordinated* than his 'bottom' *actual/own*. The quintessential 21st century murderer, in cutting Jun Lin into six separate pieces, Magnotta sought to assemble himself as *serialkiller!* He forged a patchwork quilt of *talismanic* elements: straddling the victim and stabbing him with an icepick (*Basic Instinct*), sending messages and dismembering the body (*Ripper*), and using New Order's 'True Faith' as the soundtrack for his '1 lunatic 1 icepick' video (*American Psycho*). Furthermore, in 2014, hitherto unseen footage of Magnotta auditioning for a documentary film in Toronto surfaced on

^{yyyyy} Perhaps a new term is needed for a wealthy celebrity entertainer who wields great cultural influence but has little formal institutional power: *neo-hegemonic?*

YouTube. He introduces himself by saying “Hi, my name is Luka and I *don't* live on the second floor”⁸²⁸—a joking reference to the Suzanne Vega pop song 'Luka'. This 1987 hit features the opening lyrics: “My name is Luka/I live on the second floor/I live upstairs from you/Yes I think you've seen me before/If you hear something late at night/Some kind of trouble, some kind of fight/Just don't ask me what it was...”⁸²⁹ Considering that Magnotta murdered Jun Lin in his second floor Montreal apartment soon after moving in, alongside the numerous media associations which coloured his life, the possibility arises that he imitated the song's lyrics by design. Or perhaps the elaborate *hyperreal* jigsaw he rendered has left us apophenic, spotting media references in meaningless coincidental data.

For this reason, among others, Magnotta embodies the Information Age—the line between who he 'really' is and how he portrays himself is blurred to the point of being indistinguishable, as is the line between what he *actually* did to Jun Lin and what was represented on video. Even though this case study has provided multiple pieces of evidence bringing Magnotta's supposed necrophilia and cannibalism into question, in this age of simulation where Reality and fiction are either indistinguishable or irrelevant, he will always be remembered as the necrophilic 'Canadian Cannibal.' Given his past, is it any wonder Magnotta appears to be happily reconciled in his *homicidal self*? By his own warped standards, he has won (or is he faking once more?)

3.9 Daniel Gonzalez: ‘Dependent Lonely Boy’ to ‘Slasher Hero *serialkiller!*’

Talismans: *Friday the 13th* series, *Nightmare on Elm Street* series, *Halloween* series, *serialkiller!*;
Avatars: Jason Voorhees, Freddy Krueger; Type: 3

3.9.0 Daniel Gonzalez: Failed socialization and the formation and realization of the actual/own

With an IQ of 125⁸³⁰ Daniel Gonzalez was an intelligent child who did well in elementary school. Around the age of 10 (*late-dimensional/early-vectorial*), he began laughing inexplicably and engaging himself in conversation. His Spanish father returned to his native Marbella leaving his mother to raise the problematic child alone. Gonzalez was taken to a child psychologist. By the time he reached puberty, he had been expelled from Brooklands school for misbehaviour. Gonzalez began abusing drugs at 14 (*late vectorial*), increasingly losing control. Amazingly, he managed to obtain his GCSEs, but in 1997, the 17-year-old was charged and convicted for

possessing an offensive weapon and institutionalized in a psychiatric facility. Over the next three years he was repeatedly released and then readmitted to mental health hospitals, including Broadmoor where according to Dr. Edward Petch “He would stare into space, grin and laugh to himself for no apparent reason... He was unable to hold a coherent conversation. He wasn't washing and was taking drugs.”⁸³¹ During this period he was diagnosed with a personality disorder, schizophrenia, and dysgraphia by different mental health practitioners.⁸³²

Stunted in his personal growth since 10, Gonzalez followed in the footsteps of Mark David Chapman and Danny Rolling confessing that he was a “little boy”⁸³³ who “couldn't handle growing up to be a man.”⁸³⁴ After his arrest he lamented “I haven't had a job for four years, I haven't had a girlfriend for ages.”⁸³⁵ Instead, he spent his days living at his mother's house playing violent PlayStation games; abusing a buffet of substances including LSD, heroin, and ketamine; and watching slasher films. Consistent with the *communication dysfunctions* we have found in previous cases, Gonzalez's “grandmother complained he refused to talk to anyone apart from ‘ranting and raving’ about being abused as a child.”⁸³⁶ His mother also spoke of how “at nursery school [*late-interrelational/early-dimensional*] he had good speech and was good at sums but lacked social skills and did not know how to play with other children.”⁸³⁷ Gonzalez's *actual/own* is therefore best described as a **Dependent Lonely Boy**.

Though it is indisputable that Gonzalez was experiencing some degree of schizophrenia, on multiple occasions he was formally assessed and no signs of psychosis were detected. In other incidences, Dr. Petch explained that Gonzalez “admitted making up symptoms on occasions to get into mental hospitals instead of prison.”⁸³⁸ A habitual felon, he was also convicted of theft, burglary, robbery, and criminal damage.

3.9.1 Daniel Gonzalez: Pre-Homicidal Original Ideal/Selves and Negative Emotionality

There is no available documentation indicating that Daniel Gonzalez ever had an *ideal/own* or *ought/own* before he decided to become a killer. As a self-described 'boy' who couldn't handle growing into a man, and who spent most of his time wallowing in narcotics and media [*retreatism*], it is doubtful Gonzalez harboured any long terms goals or obligations whatsoever before his rampage. His mental illnesses and inability to grow up likely would have prevented this, resulting in an *actual/own* (**Dependent Lonely Boy**): *ideal/own* (**Self Sufficient Man in a Relationship**) discrepancy.

Theoretically, this explains his marked dejection-related emotions. In his confession to the police, Gonzalez described his life before the murders as “very bad”⁸³⁹, “shit”⁸⁴⁰, and “rubbish”⁸⁴¹, and claimed to have been chronically “bored”⁸⁴² and unable to “handle any more”⁸⁴³. Dr. Philip Joseph, a psychiatrist who would assess Gonzalez, concurred saying that “There was nothing left of his life”⁸⁴⁴. In criminological terms, his *stake in conformity* was non-existent.

3.9.2 Daniel Gonzalez: Renegotiated Homicidal ideal/own

Daniel Gonzalez's homicidal urges surfaced in 1999, when his mother divulged that her son “thought of killing people although he said there was no way he would do this.”⁸⁴⁵ Psychiatric records from this period note “He talks of having horrific images like a horror movie in his own head. He attributes it to watching a lot of horror movies.”⁸⁴⁶ In a 2004 post-arrest interview with police, Gonzalez would reiterate this connection to the slasher genre by saying “I just thought about doing it, man -- what would it be like just to be maybe Freddy Krueger or something like that, just for one day.”⁸⁴⁷ and compared his killings to those in John Carpenter's 1978 film *Halloween*.⁸⁴⁸ He also referred to the *Friday the 13th* and *Nightmare on Elm Street* movie franchise *talismans*.

Gonzalez donned a white hockey mask [*SAOS*], popularly associated with slasher film character Jason Voorhees, and murdered Marie Harding. Returning home after cutting her throat he wrote “I will be a serial killer. I mean it, I promise. I will be a serial killer”⁸⁴⁹ [*SAOS*] in his diary. In doing so, he was adorning the *serialkiller! talisman* and Jason Voorhees *avatar*. As with Colin Ireland who held himself to a highly organized homicidal standard, Gonzalez didn't want to be just any old serial killer. When asked about an entry reading “so when the death toll reaches 10 which is at one”⁸⁵⁰ in his diary, Gonzalez explained that he aimed to reach a double-digit victim count. He also claimed killing made him feel “like a superhero.”⁸⁵¹ Where Ireland strived for professionalism (quality), Gonzalez was fixated on sheer numbers (quantity).

By wearing the mask and scribbling vows to himself, Gonzalez was making *semiotic affirmations of self (SAOS)*: his *homicidal ideal/own* approaching a **Slasher Hero serialkiller!** fusion. Like fellow *serialkiller!* variants David Berkowitz, Colin Ireland, and Luka Magnotta, Gonzalez also wanted his 15 minutes in the spotlight: “He told me he wanted to be famous and notorious... He liked the idea of being all over the papers”⁸⁵² said Dr. Philip Joseph, a

psychiatrist who interviewed him at length. Gonzalez also shared Seung-Hui Cho's *Eric&Dylan! talisman* making comparisons between himself and “those who participated in the Columbine high school massacre.”⁸⁵³ As their murders bore no similarity to each other, Gonzalez likely identified with the boys' misanthropic alienation.

In murder, the **Dependent Lonely Boy** who “wanted to kill people because I was bored and I wanted to know what it felt like”⁸⁵⁴ was existentially reinvigorated proclaiming, “This is *something I live for* [emphasis added]. Its [sic] a really good buzz, killing.”⁸⁵⁵ Following the Harding slaying he wrote that the experience “felt really, really, really good”⁸⁵⁶ and was “one of the best things I've done in my life.”⁸⁵⁷ One statement seems to indicate that the killings had helped to negate his “shit”⁸⁵⁸ past existence: “I felt clean, orgasmic. I had washed all the crap out of my life. I felt better”⁸⁵⁹ (narrowing of *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy). After the double murder of Derek and Jean Robinson on September 16, Gonzalez was tracked on CCTV taking the train to Tottenham Court Road Station where he was quickly arrested.

Like ex-con ETV offenders Danny Rolling, Colin Ireland, Luka Magnotta, and Anthony Arkwright; Gonzalez, the habitual criminal, had strong animosity towards the police. A SAOS note he wrote to himself read “You have to f***zzzz up them Old Bill^{aaaaaa}”⁸⁶⁰ and “Old Bill. Things I hate. All Old Bill. Anything I can do to kill or hurt Old Bill... I hate the Old Bill more than anything I or anyone can imagine.”⁸⁶¹ Strangely, he did not target police officers. A plausible explanation is that he had no access to firearms and would have likely been subdued, as British police are well-trained and accustomed to using non-lethal force to deal with violent offenders. Moreover, a look at his victimology reveals that Gonzalez was hardly brave, at least outside of his own fantasies.

3.9.3 Daniel Gonzalez: Victimology

Gonzalez's victim selection process has been described as “random”⁸⁶² and less helpfully^{bbbbbb}, “apparently motiveless.”⁸⁶³ The gender of those attacked are approximately half-male, half-female, and the fact that Gonzalez broke or pushed his way into the homes of the

^{zzzzz} The profanity is censored here as it was also censored in the source material. I do not wish to guess incorrectly or misquote the source.

^{aaaaaa} The 'Old Bill' is English slang for the police, deriving from King William IV who assembled the first modern police force. Hence the name of Colin Ireland's favourite police procedural *The Bill*.

^{bbbbbb} Motiveless homicide does not exist. I welcome all debate.

Constantinous and Robinsons without prior stalking negates the possibility he was intentionally targeting couples. There is nothing in his background to indicate any dislike of the middle-aged and elderly, so he either attacked them randomly or exploited their relative physical fragility.

Table 12
Daniel Gonzalez Victimology

Name	Age	Race	Gender	Profession	Date Murdered	Where
Peter Hove	61	White	Male	?	September 15, 2004/survived	Outside in Hillsea, UK
Marie Harding	76	White	Female	Pensioner	September 15, 2004/died	Outside in Woking, UK
Kevin Molloy	46	White	Male	Pub landlord	September 16, 2004/died	Outside in Tottenham, UK
Koumis Constantinou	59	White	Male	?	September 16, 2004/survived	Victim's house in Hornsey, UK
Christella Constantinou	?	White	Female	?	September 16, 2004/survived	Victim's house in Hornsey, UK
Derek Robinson	75	White	Male	Pensioner	September 16, 2004/died	Victim's house in Highgate, UK
Jean Robinson	68	White	Female	Pensioner	September 16, 2004/died	Victim's house in Highgate, UK

Gonzalez once remarked “Good people are so boring, aren’t they. [sic] Bad people have all the fun. Good people don’t do anything. They are just boring.”⁸⁶⁴ [mj] ‘Good people’ may be actually a childish label for non-celebrity civilians who are social and largely law-abiding, rather than the lone violent ‘heroes’ of slasher movies or video games. If we accept Gonzalez’s own claim that horror movies inundated his mind with violence until he wanted to be like Freddy Kruger, his comments seem to indicate that he saw his victims as being non-agents—extras in his Chapmanesque personal movie. Their lives existed only to be cut down by ‘bad people’ who were ‘interesting’ like Gonzalez and the blade-wielding horror film maniacs he emulated. Later, we will see a similar complete depersonalization of victims under fellow *meta-delusional* video game obsessive James Holmes.

In his diary, Gonzalez repeatedly stated his desire to “get to London and kill some old bill

as soon as I can... as many old bill as I can as best I can.”⁸⁶⁵ Whether Gonzalez would have followed through with his plan if he hadn't been caught will forever remain a mystery.

3.9.4 Daniel Gonzalez: Post-Arrest Self

Once in custody, Gonzalez's hatred of the police manifested almost immediately when he punched a detective in the mouth. He continued to violently lash out against the 'Old Bill' during his time in custody. On several occasions, it took six officers to restrain him. During his stay at Belmarsh Prison, Gonzalez routinely tried to trick guards into believing he had fainted.

Initially, **Gonzalez's** dejection-related emotions seemed to disappear when he closed the gap between his *actual/own* (**Dependent Lonely Boy**) and *ideal/own* (**Slasher Hero serialkiller!**) through his acts of repeated homicide: “I felt clean, orgasmic. I had washed all the crap out of my life. I felt better.”⁸⁶⁶. However, once admitted to Broadmoor psychiatric hospital, Gonzalez made numerous suicide attempts, finally succeeding on August 9, 2007 by slashing his wrists with a broken CD case. Due to the severity of his psychosis, it cannot be ascertained whether this act was due to schizophrenia or a return of the dejection-related emotions which seemed to have been initially quashed with his homicidal reconciliation of his *actual/own* and *ideal/own*: the post-homicidal *expressive/transformativ*e crisis which usually is resolved through adopting a *penitent self*.

3.9.5 Daniel Gonzalez: Sexual/Gender Aspects

Daniel Gonzalez, the 'little boy' who hadn't “had a girlfriend for ages”⁸⁶⁷, is a case of a *subordinated masculinity* (*actual/own*) striving to become a *hyperreal masculinity* (*homicidal ideal/own*). More monster than man, this *homicidal ideal/own* aspired to unfathomable breadths and depths of violence in the spirit of the indestructible Jason Voorhees, Freddy Krueger, and Michael Myers. These unrealistic expectations were likely the product of drug induced psychosis.

There is no mention of Gonzalez being diagnosed as a paraphile, so his description of feeling 'orgasmic' after the murders may or may not be literal. Paraphilic knife users typically inflict more stab wounds on their victims⁸⁶⁸, and there is also a complete absence of mutilation across Gonzalez's killing series. In this case, it seems that Gonzalez's lack of a girlfriend and

ability to live up to the traditional responsibilities of an adult male simply undermined his *stake in conformity*.

3.9.6 Daniel Gonzalez: Religious/Philosophical Aspects

The only account of Gonzalez discussing anything spiritual relates to his bizarre reincarnation-based delusions. In his diaries, police found numerous references to his belief that he had been the pop star Michael Jackson in a past life, even though Jackson was still alive when Gonzalez was born.^{cccccc} Gonzalez wrote of his revulsion at Michael Jackson's alleged sexual abuse of children in the third-person, referring to himself by his nickname 'Zippy': "Michael Jackson is a sick fuck... Last Saturday and Sunday I found out I did the sickest thing possible in a former life... what can I say, I'm sick... I'm speechless. What can Zippy do?... Zippy has to do it all to prove he hates Michael Jackson."⁸⁶⁹ Here we may have a fascinating example of a psychotic experiencing *ought/own* and *ought/other* anxiety over an *actual/own* that never existed! Another possibility is that Gonzalez, anticipating his eventual capture, staged aspects of his journal entry to lay the groundwork for an insanity defense. Along with Dr. Petch's claims that Gonzalez previously admitted malingering, he was also reportedly overheard using the telephone to instruct his mother what to say to public officials.

According to Dr. Petch, Gonzalez actually "enjoyed believing mad things"⁸⁷⁰ and "recognised that drugs had led him to have hallucinations which was the point of taking them."⁸⁷¹ If true, this would place him somewhere in the proximity of Chapman, Berkowitz, and Rolling's *meta-delusional*ity. Gonzalez's readiness to use his psychiatric diagnoses to justify his crimes is noteworthy. As he fled from the scene of his first attack, he mumbled "sorry, I'm a schizophrenic, I can't help it"⁸⁷² to one of his victims.

3.9.7 Daniel Gonzalez: Class Aspects

There are no references to Gonzalez's social class.

3.9.8 Daniel Gonzalez: Vocational Aspects

^{cccccc} Similar absurdities have been stated by former-Oasis frontman Liam Gallagher and rapper Snoop Dogg, who claimed they were the reincarnations of John Lennon and Bob Marley, respectively.

Immediately after the end of his killing spree, Gonzalez lamented to police “I haven't had a job for four years.”⁸⁷³ His previous occupations were menial labour positions which he was unable to keep for more than a few weeks at most. Throughout his life he remained completely dependent on his mother, leading the press to label him “The Mummy's Boy Serial Killer.”⁸⁷⁴

Concluding Thoughts: Daniel Gonzalez

Table 13

Daniel Gonzalez: Selves and Strain

	Actual/Own	Ideal/Own	Homicidal Self	Post-Arrest Self
Sexuality	Ego-dystonic. Probable sexual frustration stemming from social incompetence.	Ego-syntonic. Sexually active and has a girlfriend.	Ego-syntonic replacement of sex with 'orgasmic' violence; or perhaps sexually sadistic pleasure.	Suicide.
Gender	Subordinated. Gender-role strain ('little boy' 'couldn't handle growing up to be a man.')	Ego-syntonic. No gender-role strain. Self-sufficient and dating.	Hyperreal. Personification of monstrous violence destroying indiscriminately. No gender-role strain.	Suicide.
Religion/Philosophy	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Class	Lower-middle-class.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vocation	Chronically unemployed.	Speculative, but it would be employed.	N/A	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism. Then suicide.
Race	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Notability	Ego-dystonic. Mertonian strain.	N/A	Ego-syntonic. 'Mine's a big f***** story and will be on the full front page.'	Ego-syntonic. Media circus. Then ego-dystonic. suicide.

Struggling to socialize with others since nursery school, Daniel Gonzalez sank into mental illness as he grew older, worsening an already problematic situation. Like Chapman,

Berkowitz, Rolling, and Ireland, he was another depressed nobody who perceived himself (and was perceived by others) as a child who could not handle becoming a man. His impoverished sex life, gender-role strain, and associated inability to maintain work are all related to this chronic infantilization. Ultimately, he failed to measure up to (let alone surpass) the same 'boring' 'good people' he derided. Though far from famous, the average British citizen at least has a social life which gives him or her some situational relevance, and manages to adhere to the cultural norms of adulthood.

As the **Dependent Lonely Boy**, was unable to socialize, let alone keep a job or a girlfriend, he retreated into the chemically-abetted *hyperreality* of slasher films and violent video games. Completely lacking control over his own life, he enjoyed experiencing power vicariously through media. His homicidal fantasies—“he talks of having horrific images like a horror movie in his own head”⁸⁷⁵—likely developed alongside his admiration for Freddy Krueger and Jason Voorhees. Freddy and Jason are *avatars* that embody both the Monster *archetype* (*à la* Berkowitz) and Outlaw *archetype* (*à la* Rolling, Ireland, Magnotta). They are outcasts who are literally killed by a mob^{dddd}, only to return from the dead and terrorize society. Though far from indestructible, they are resurrected at the beginning of every new film. The entirety of their existence is devoted to killing. As beings without the need for food, shelter, sex, or companionship (*hyperreal masculinities*) they lurk on the margins of society and consciousness, relevant because of their capacity to destroy.

Taking these qualities into consideration, their appeal to Gonzalez becomes obvious. As a dangerous criminal who roamed the streets naked, Gonzalez was treated as a monster by virtually everyone but his mother, echoing the narrative of *Friday the 13th*^{heeeeee}. By dressing up as Jason and becoming “Freddy Krueger or something like that, just for one day”⁸⁷⁶ the “little boy”⁸⁷⁷ temporarily transcended all of the unmet demands of manhood—sex, self-reliance, emotional resilience, employment—and did “something I live for”⁸⁷⁸: indiscriminate killing. Like the reality-bending Freddy Krueger, his murders occurred in a dream-like state brought on by narcotics, in which he felt “like a superhero [*hyperreal masculinity*].”⁸⁷⁹ Then, as with Colin Ireland and Luka Magnotta who also adorned the *serialkiller! talisman*, Gonzalez waited with

^{dddd} The child-killing Freddy was burned alive by vigilantes while bullies chased the deformed Jason into Crystal Lake where he drowned.

^{ceeee} One is also reminded of the relationship between Grendel and his mother in the poem *Beowulf*.

anticipation for the headlines announcing his relevance-through-evil to the world: “Good people... are just boring.”⁸⁸⁰ Operating in the early-mid phases of *hyperreality*, Gonzalez reasoned correctly that homicide would bring him media attention: “Mine’s a big f***** story and will be on the full front page.”⁸⁸¹ According to Inspector Dave Cobb, Gonzalez wished to be “remembered as a famous serial killer... But I hope he is forgotten^{fffff} and that we only remember his victims.”⁸⁸² His aspirations to be a 'famous' *serialkiller!* adorning the front page of newspapers extends beyond a simple wish for notoriety. At least in his final years as a free man, Gonzalez spent more time watching movies and playing video games than he did in society. For all intents and purposes, this utter nobody did not exist, even to himself, until he appeared in media. Now all that remains is a single photograph of Gonzalez—a *simulacrum* buried in the *hyperreal* landslide—yet, nevertheless, digitally immortalized on the Internet. Fortunately, unlike Chapman, his esotericism in the annals of crime makes it highly unlikely than he will go on to be a *talisman* for future killers. The problem with becoming Freddy or Jason, who almost certainly will, is that these *simulacra* culturally subsume those who emulate them.

Beyond temporarily reconciling negative emotionality and strain, there is evidence that Gonzalez may have adorned his Jason and Freddy *avatars* for other reasons. Studying the appeal of 1038 movie monsters, Fischhoff et al. found that Freddy Krueger ranked second in popularity among those aged 25 and younger, while Jason Voorhees was ninth.⁸⁸³ Furthermore, the mean age of those who chose Freddy and Jason as among their favourite movie monsters was 24.6 and 25.8 respectively⁸⁸⁴ (Gonzalez was 24 at the time of his killing spree). This study also concluded that younger viewers also tended to prefer non-sympathetic ego-syntonic monsters who engaged in extreme and graphic acts of violence. Fischhoff et al. proposed that this youthful preference for explicit slaughter motivated by sheer nihilism over quick, bloodless dispatch driven by existential despair “may reflect altering value trends in popular culture.”⁸⁸⁵ Hypothetically, this sea change could result from *anomie* brought on by an ever-deepening *hyperreality*.

The five attributes common to both Freddy and Jason that were favoured by the respondents in the sample and of statistical significance were 'Monster is Pure Evil,' 'Like Different Ways Monster Kills People,' 'Monster Kills Lots of People,' 'Monster Kills Deserving Teenage Females,' and 'Monster Kills Deserving Teenage Males' (see Table 14).

^{fffff} Eleven years later, the outcome has proved to be bittersweet: Gonzalez is at best a highly-esoteric killer, largely lost to the public, as are his victims.

Table 14
Popular Common Attributes of Freddy Krueger and Jason Voorhees

	Freddy Krueger	Jason Voorhees
Monster is Pure Evil	2.54	2.5
Like Different Ways Monster Kills People	1.81	2.1
Monster Kills Lots of People	2.28	2.85
Kills Deserving Teenage Females	1.26	1.5
Kills Deserving Teenage Males	1.25	1.45

The murderous prolificacy of these characters almost certainly appealed to Gonzalez who “felt I was on a mission to kill as many people as possible”⁸⁸⁶ wanting to murder “at least 10 people.”⁸⁸⁷ A diagnosed psychopath who was bored by good people, he also likely related to their 'pure evil.' However, concerning killing in different ways and the murder of 'deserving' teenagers, Gonzalez did not conform to these aspects of the narratives, instead stabbing middle-aged and elderly citizens to death. Hollywood actor Ken Kirzinger, who portrayed Jason Voorhees in several films, has described Jason as a “*psychotic mama's boy* [emphasis added] gone horribly awry...”⁸⁸⁸ Given what we now know, the fact that the schizophrenic Gonzalez was saddled with the moniker “The Mummy's Boy Serial Killer”⁸⁸⁹ after his arrest, should not be dismissed as coincidence. Rather, it should be acknowledged for what it is: startling evidence of *intermimesis*. The next offender in our study also donned a mask, fused the Monster and Outlaw *archetypes* into a *hyperreal masculinity*, and targeted the old and infirm, albeit with an unprecedented level of violent ferocity.

3.10 Anthony Arkwright: 'Odd Delinquent Inbred' to 'Famous Evil Ripper'

Talismans: *jacktheripper!*, *petersutcliffe!*, Holy Bible; Avatars: The Devil; Type: 2

3.10.0 Anthony Arkwright: Failed socialization and the formation and realization of the actual/own

Anthony Arkwright was the third of five children born in South Yorkshire and abandoned by their mother. According to his barrister, James Chadwin, Anthony Arkwright “has shown signs of disturbance since his mother left him when he was four years old [*late-interrelational/early-dimensional*].”⁸⁹⁰ Further complicating matters were (unfounded) rumours that he was a product of incest between his mother and grandfather: a serious social stigma. Steve Smith, Arkwright’s lawyer, stated “I think Tony had a lot of difficulty when he was a kid at school, because, of course, these sorts of things leak, and kids are very very cruel.”⁸⁹¹ Given this shaky and confused upbringing, it is probable that the adoption-related issues discussed in the Berkowitz case also affected Arkwright. Constant teasing by other children ensured Arkwright was preoccupied with his questionable birth to the extent that it was an ‘organizing theme’ of the *self*⁸⁹² which research shows would have negatively affected his self-esteem and resulted in depression.⁸⁹³ Growing up in the small South Yorkshire town of Wath, Anthony Arkwright was, in the words of Detective Chief Inspector Michael Burdis “distinctive... a very tall young man and just stood out in the community.”⁸⁹⁴ Neighbour Neil Hirst described Arkwright as an “oddball”⁸⁹⁵ who “didn’t get on with many people, and he never spoke to many people,”⁸⁹⁶ an antisocial tendency corroborated by DCI Burdis’s recollection of him as “well known for falling out with local people and for his fractious relationships with the neighbourhood.”⁸⁹⁷ Arkwright was expelled from school for habitual fighting, robbery, and vandalism, and spent most of his early years in children’s homes, borstals, and the care of local charities.⁸⁹⁸ As a teen, Arkwright became a “well known petty criminal”⁸⁹⁹ with “numerous convictions for burglary, theft, arson. He’d served a 30 month youth custody sentence.”⁹⁰⁰ In August 1988, Arkwright was working at a scrapyard and living in a council flat in Wath: little more than an **Odd Delinquent Inbred** (*actual/own*), with no real social life because, in the words of DCI Burdis: “Arkwright could fall out with his very best friend... he was an individual who was very volatile in his relationships.”⁹⁰¹ Having spent all of his childhood teased by other children, Arkwright seems to have become paranoid—evidence indicates he perceived slights in harmless jokes—which would have given birth to numerous *communication dysfunctions*.

3.10.1 Anthony Arkwright: Pre-homicidal Ideal/Selves and Negative Emotionality

A limitation of studying Anthony Arkwright is the lack of a sufficient account of his negative emotionality, though Neil Hirst’s statement that “deep down I think Tony Arkwright

were a lonely lad in his own world”⁹⁰² seems to indicate that some degree of negative emotionality was present. Like Daniel Gonzalez, Arkwright was so young and inexperienced when he embarked on his killing spree that the number of identifiable pre-homicidal *ideal/selves* are minimal. His lawyer, Steve Smith said that “he was a hustler, or tried to be,”⁹⁰³ but this could be more a component of Arkwright’s petty criminal behaviour, inherent in his *actual/own*, rather than any attempt to recognize a 'conman' *ideal/own*.⁹⁰⁴ Interestingly, like fellow English serial killer Colin Ireland, Arkwright’s only pre-homicidal *ideal/own* was the **Macho Survivalist**. It has been reported that Arkwright wanted to be an SAS-type character, carrying a knife in his boot and building camouflaged hideaways by the railroad tracks. He allegedly preferred to sleep in these more than in his apartment during the summer months.⁹⁰⁵ On the night of Friday August 26, hours after Arkwright had committed his first murder, Neil Hirst and his cousin invited Arkwright out to a nightclub, only to find “when I opened the door he were dressed in combat gear. We just looked at each other, me and my cousin, and realized that this was just not right.”⁹⁰⁶ They explained to Arkwright that he would not be granted entrance into the club dressed in army apparel, and provided him with a change of clothes. However, upon arriving at the nightclub, “Tony took to the dance floor and I’ve never seen anybody dance in the fashion that he did. Tony were like military dancing, if you understand. Bumping into ladies, like. And I knew things were going to escalate from then, that he were revving up for something.”⁹⁰⁷ Fortunately, he was ejected from the nightclub without incident. This 'military dancing' may have been a SAOS; alternatively, he might have been also communicating his unconventional **Macho Survivalist** *ideal/own* to the 'conforming masses' who danced in a 'normal' manner around him.

On first appearance, this overlap between the pre-homicidal **Macho Survivalist** *self* and homicidal *self*, seems to be contradictory. Yet, violence is a common theme linking the two, in fact, the **Macho Survivalist** *ideal/own* may be viewed as a kind of stepping-stone identity between the **Odd Delinquent Inbred** and Arkwright's emerging homicidal *self*. For example, Neil Hirst’s account that “once I went into Tony’s flat and I actually saw, like, loads of knives, all different shapes and sizes, flick knives and all kinds”⁹⁰⁸ is applicable to both the **Macho Survivalist** *ideal/own* and *homicidal ideal/own*. An important point of distinction is that Arkwright did not wear the 'combat gear' associated with the **Macho Survivalist** *self* while committing his crimes, rather he wore a different costume, depicting an *archetypal* Monster.⁹⁰⁹

As demonstrated in the nightclub incident, Arkwright, the stigmatized schoolboy, was no

longer attempting to integrate into society whatsoever. Reflecting upon this, his lawyer Steve Smith describes Arkwright's 'child of incest' deviant status as a strain that “may have created this in-built turmoil [negative emotionality], this hatred of [his grandfather]. And it stores itself like a cauldron [negative emotionality] until it rolls and burns over into violence. And I think in Tony's case, it created a monster.”⁹¹⁰ Arkwright had found a blueprint for the 'monster' during an earlier period of incarceration, while reading books on Jack the Ripper and 'Yorkshire Ripper' Peter Sutcliffe in the prison library.⁹¹¹

3.10.2 Anthony Arkwright: Renegotiated Homicidal ideal/own

Arkwright drew upon the *talismans* of canonical English *serialkillers!* associated with mutilation to create his *homicidal ideal/own*⁹¹². Forensic psychologist Kerry Danes explains that Arkwright had “told friends that one day he was going to be as infamous and notorious as Jack the Ripper.”⁹¹³ Wishing to cast himself in this mold, he transitioned from **Macho Survivalist** to **Famous Supernaturally Evil Ripper** (*homicidal ideal/own*), though this happened so quickly that vestiges of the former lingered in the latter. Specifically, he had realized the **Ripper** component of this *ideal/own* on the afternoon of Friday August 26 by murdering his grandfather, Stasys Puidokos, at his allotment in nearby Mexborough, burying an axe in his chest and then smashing his head to pieces with a 14-pound hammer. Soon after, he almost certainly killed Elsa Konradaite, his grandfather's housekeeper, while breaking into Puidokos's house to steal his life savings along with a pocket watch. Then, he went out 'military dancing.' Returning from the disco at approximately 3 a.m. on Saturday August 27, Arkwright broke into his neighbour Raymond Ford's flat, stabbing him anywhere between 250-500 times in every part of his body. Arkwright then methodically disemboweled Ford's corpse.

Four hours after the murder, Arkwright, who Raymond Ford had previously reported for burgling his home, was taken into custody when a police search of his apartment revealed “very large knives”⁹¹⁴, a pocket watch, approximately £3000 in cash, and clothes soaking in his bath. After a few hours of interrogation, Arkwright admitted to stealing from Ford and posted bail. PC David Winter was tasked with taking a statement from Raymond Ford but was unable to contact him. Arkwright advised Winter that Ford was out drinking, and generally tried to dissuade him from finding the missing man. Once released from custody, in the early morning hours of Sunday August 28, Arkwright broke into the bungalow of wheelchair-bound neighbour Marcus

Law and murdered him in a similarly brutal fashion. When Law's eviscerated body was discovered by his mother on Monday morning, Arkwright was arrested under suspicion of murder.

As with Daniel Gonzalez, who also wore a *talismanic* mask, Anthony Arkwright displayed abundant SAOS. According to DCI Michael Burdis, he confessed that while standing over Elsa Konradaite with an axe “he was looking at this picture of whiteness, and he himself was a picture of darkness.”⁹¹⁵ Though Arkwright would admit to murdering his male victims, Burdis noted “He wouldn't bring himself to say that he'd actually killed Elsa Konradaite, but he did describe all the circumstance.”⁹¹⁶ This inability to acknowledge his culpability in the Konradaite murder, coupled with Arkwright's description of her as a “picture of whiteness”⁹¹⁷ may indicate that he viewed his victim as a 'good' or 'benevolent' person, compared to his 'bad' victims: 'incestuous' grandfather Puidokos, Ford the 'miserable, alcoholic snitch', and the 'cigarette-scrounging cripple' Law. Though not necessarily exclusive, another possibility is that Arkwright was discussing Konradaite's pallid corpse (or perhaps she was 'white with fear'). Regardless of the true interpretation, what is important is that Arkwright looked upon Konradaite as a brutalized opposing symbol which affirmed his brutalizing “picture of darkness”⁹¹⁸ *homicidal self*.

In the Abrahamic religions, the Devil or *a* devil is similarly associated with darkness and evil, and DCI Burdis reports that “one of the witnesses told us that he'd been scared by Tony Arkwright when he visited his flat because Arkwright had been wearing a devil mask.”⁹¹⁹ Dressing in a devil mask in private was also a SAOS which served to self-communicate the 'supernaturally evil' component of Arkwright's **Famous Supernaturally Evil Ripper** *ideal/own*. Yet, when Arkwright murdered Raymond Ford he was wearing the same devil mask. Whether it acted merely as a SAOS or served a dual purpose of terrifying Ford has never been specified (we shall explore this more in Chapter 4).

As we have seen in the cases of fellow British serial murderers Colin Ireland and Daniel Gonzalez, Arkwright also wanted to be acknowledged as a *serialkiller!* by the *generalized other*—which made his capture a necessity—yet he did not wish to be a mediocre murderer. Besides the unparalleled savagery of his attacks, he also took precautions by committing the murder of Raymond Ford “whilst he was wearing his underpants so that he didn't leave any forensic traces behind.”⁹²⁰ Knowing he would eventually be caught, Arkwright wished to amass

as many victims in small town South Yorkshire as possible before that occurred, leaving them in horrific fashion.

3.10.3 Anthony Arkwright: Victimology

Table 15
Anthony Arkwright Victimology

Victim's Name	Age	Race	Gender	Profession	Date Victimized	Where
Stasys Puidokos	68	White	Male	Pensioner	August 26, 1988, died	Grandad's allotment
Elsa Konradaite	72	White	Female	Housekeeper	August 26, 1988, died	Grandad's house
Raymond Ford	45	White	Male	Unemployed	August 27, 1988, died	Victim's home
Marcus Law	25	White	Male	Unemployed	August 28, 1988, died	Victim's home

Anthony Arkwright is unique among the offenders in this study as he only murdered people he knew. Tellingly, he confessed to the Puidokos, Ford, and Law homicides, but not to that of his grandfather’s housekeeper, Elsa Konradaite, whose murder technically remains unsolved. This has been dealt with in the previous section.

Each of Arkwright’s confirmed victims was to some degree stigmatized in the community, and were of *subordinated masculinities*. As has been demonstrated, Stasys Puidokos was rumoured to have participated in incestuous intercourse with his daughter (Arkwright’s mother), marking him as a sexual deviant⁹²¹, regardless of the objective truth of the situation.⁹²² He was also elderly and hardly well-off. Raymond Ford was stigmatized for the *attitude* and *condition*⁹²² of being mildly mentally ill, permanently physically ill, and the deviant behaviour⁹²³ of drinking heavily. The former 45-year-old teacher who DCI Burdis remembered “had worked overseas, I think in Burma, for many years, and had contracted a rare disease, and returned to the UK and lived on a pension”⁹²⁴ struggled with depression while swigging cheap cans of cider in front of the television.⁹²⁵ Another neighbour, Marcus Law, had been left in a physically disabled condition⁹²⁶, confined to a wheelchair after a motorcycle accident. The fact

⁹²² South Yorkshire police looked into these rumours and debunked them.

that all three confirmed victims had been considered socially deviant [*mj*] is a common thread uniting the crimes, and the posing of Marcus Law's body seems to indicate that, at least in this case, it factored into Arkwright's motivation (see Chapter 4).

However, Arkwright also had personal grudges against his victims. According to multiple sources, he had become obsessed with the notion that his grandfather was his true father, a claim that regardless of its truth, had saddled Arkwright with the label of 'inbred', a *master status*, throughout his life. Neil Hirst, who was neighbours with Arkwright and two of his victims explained that "[Arkwright] had a few words now and again with Marcus and Raymond. I could hear him, so obviously he got in a bit of trouble with them, like, he weren't getting on with them two very well."⁹²⁷ In the case of Raymond Ford, Arkwright had terrorized the man by vandalizing his property and pushing feces through his mail slot.⁹²⁸ More recently he had burgled Ford's apartment, and according to DCI Burdis: "He stole a quite valuable antique clock and a microwave oven. Raymond Ford reported the burglary and claimed that he thought that Arkwright was the person responsible for it."⁹²⁹ Concerning Marcus Law, Neil Hirst recalls:

The only time I knew that he got a real vengeance against Marcus was on the night that we went out [to a nightclub], and it were just before we set off in the car. Marcus came in front of my car as I was setting off, he were jokingly shouting at me, and I were telling him to get out of the way. And he was just having a laugh with me, Marcus. And then Tony said from the back of [the] car 'I'm going to kill that bastard.' Tony said it with such adrenaline in his body that I thought 'He means it this guy.'⁹³⁰

As will be expanded upon later in Chapter 4, Arkwright also resented Law because he was always asking Arkwright for cigarettes.

The cases of Mark David Chapman, David Berkowitz, and Colin Ireland (and later Elliot Rodger and Seung-Hui Cho) demonstrate a trend among ETV offenders' relationships to their symbolic victims; namely, they murder those who remind them of their own inadequacies. One might speculate that Arkwright's slaying of his grandfather eliminated the spectre of inbreeding that haunted him throughout his life, while the socially-dependent and cash-strapped Ford and Law reflected Arkwright's own living conditions and reliance on the state. As they lived in such close proximity, this would have occurred on a regular basis. Arkwright's desire to become a survivalist—that most rustic manifestation of *sub-hegemonic* manly independence—seems to betray this insecurity.

3.10.4 Anthony Arkwright: Post-Arrest ideal/own

Arkwright and fellow English survivalist-turned-*serialkiller!* Colin Ireland had numerous commonalities. Through murder, both permanently closed the gap between their insignificant, directionless *actual/own* and *homicidal ideal/own*, effectively achieving their existential goal and ridding themselves of any negative emotionality related to their sense of *self*. Like Ireland, Arkwright continued to revel in his new **Famous Supernaturally Evil Ripper** *self* long after he had been captured. An unnamed senior detective who had worked the case summarized Arkwright's post-arrest behaviour: "From the day we brought him in for the Marcus Law murder to the day he was jailed, Arkwright seemed genuinely proud of what he had done. He expected everyone to revere him, to be fascinated by him."⁹³¹ Arkwright and Ireland also took mutual delight in toying with the police. According to his lawyer, Steve Smith: "When he was taken out of the cell into the interview room it was almost as if he'd preened himself. Almost as if he was looking forward to being able to being centre stage if you like. Centre of attraction."⁹³² As with Ireland, Arkwright began his symbolic face-off with the police by denying any involvement in the murder of Marcus Law. Both the officers present and Arkwright's own lawyer perceived that he was participating in a game, and enjoying it.⁹³³ In the words of Steve Smith: "It wasn't an interview like I've ever seen before or since. This was a lad who played, toyed even, with the police as if it didn't matter. That it was just this total and complete disregard for the plight that he was in that fascinated me."⁹³⁴ As the first day of questioning neared its end, a police officer informed Arkwright's lawyer they had found another body. Steve Smith did not immediately notify his client. Soon after, Arkwright began to play the part of a pseudo-Tarot reader.

According to DCI Burdis:

On the table was a pack of cards, and Arkwright [who] had become familiar with the officers, picked up the pack of cards and said 'I can read the cards. I can tell you the future'... Eventually he turned over the four of hearts and said 'one you've got—two, three, four to come. And of course at that stage Arkwright didn't know that we'd discovered the body of Raymond Ford and that meant that three and four we still had to discover.'⁹³⁵

Here, Arkwright was not merely toying with the police, but enacting a *hyperreal masculinity*—a dangerous devil-man with clairvoyant powers. When Smith informed Arkwright that the corpse of a second murder victim had been found, Arkwright "laughed. Almost as if he knew. Almost as if he'd been waiting for that moment and then the questions would begin again. He loved it. He

absolutely loved it [narrowing of *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy].”⁹³⁶

The following day the bodies of Elsa Konradaite and Stasys Puidokos were discovered in Mexborough. Arkwright was now formally linked to the murders due to Puidokos's pocket watch being found in his possession. Nevertheless, even with strong evidence against him—as there had been against Ireland, in the form of CCTV footage and a fingerprint—Arkwright continued to deny his guilt. Eventually, after a week and a half of questioning, he confessed to the murder of Marcus Law. Yet, still he drew out the process, turning it into a game of cat and mouse. DCI Burdis recalled:

He sang a little song and asked me to name that tune. And I said, 'well it's strangers in the night.' And he told me that I got it right. And he would talk to me. Very bizarre. In that interview he then confessed to murdering his grandfather and Raymond Ford and eventually as the interviews progressed he went on to confess—almost—to Elsa Konradaite...⁹³⁷

Paralleling Ireland again, once Arkwright was behind bars he fabricated additional victims, whether to be back in the “limelight”⁹³⁸ as some assert, to derive satisfaction from manipulating the police, or some combination of the two. Explained theoretically, discrepancies between the *actual/own* and *homicidal ideal/own*, no matter how slight, may occur in prison, and leading police on a wild goose chase reaffirms the *homicidal ideal/own* thus eliminating them. For instance, Appleyard claims Arkwright rubbed excrement all over the walls of his cell to protest the “lack of respect and recognition”⁹³⁹ he was receiving in jail.

By his 1989 trial, Arkwright was clearly reveling in his **Famous Supernaturally Evil Ripper** *ideal/own*: “The attention that he got from the press was incredible. Tony appeared with his spiky hair combed back and a red bow tie I remember. And he loved it. He loved being centre stage.”⁹⁴⁰ Journalist Anne Story noticed, “He never cowered in court. He looked quite comfortable, as if he was kind of an onlooker.”⁹⁴¹ Arkwright would eventually enter guilty pleas and be convicted of the first-degree murders of Stasys Puidokos, Raymond Ford, and Marcus Law.

Arkwright's was successful in closing his *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy, because he made men of *sub-hegemonic masculinity* fear him, at least temporarily. In the words of his interrogator, Detective Inspector Bob Meek:

He was six-foot-five. If he starts getting aggressive, it is difficult to deal with somebody of that size. But more than his demeanor or presence, it was looking at him and thinking *I*

*think he has killed... And it's that makes an interviewing officer look at an individual as either intimidating or threatening [emphasis added] more than his physical presence in the room.*⁹⁴²

Moreover, his *homicidal ideal/own* actually made educated men consider the veracity of his *hyperreal masculinity*. Commenting on how he felt as the murders were unfolding, Arkwright's own lawyer, Steve Smith, remarked “What is this man? Is he a man? Is he a human being? What is he?”⁹⁴³ To a lifelong nobody who wore a devil mask, claimed to see the future in a deck of playing cards, and described himself as a “picture of darkness”⁹⁴⁴, this was exactly the kind of social response he was calling out for.

3.10.5 Anthony Arkwright: Sexual/Gender Aspects

Like Danny Rolling, although Arkwright was large in stature, which projected an illusion of *sub-hegemony*, he was also dependent, juvenile, and far from a ladies' man: a *subordinated masculinity*. Following a now familiar ETV pattern, Arkwright first aspired to become a *sub-hegemonic Macho Survivalist*—hardly a tenable *self* for a generally unemployed 'jack-of-no-trades' in overpopulated Britain. This penchant for the unrealistic carried over to his **Famous Supernaturally Evil Ripper** *homicidal ideal/own* which contains aspects of *hyperreal masculinity*. Certainly, Arkwright was able to realize the 'ripper' element and even secured a fleeting 'fame', but the nature of the 'supernatural evil' he embodied extended to the metaphysical, including affectations of clairvoyance and a self-guide which included him as a “picture of darkness.”⁹⁴⁵

There is almost no account of Anthony Arkwright's sex life or romantic relationships, and any resemblance his crimes have to the paraphilias of *picquerism*, *mutiophilia* or *necrornoposiphilia* can be explained by Arkwright's stated desire to emulate previous mutilators: Jack the Ripper and 'The Yorkshire Ripper' Peter Sutcliffe.

3.10.6 Anthony Arkwright: Religious/Philosophical Aspects

There is no documentation of Arkwright's religious beliefs or philosophies, we only know that he sometimes wore a devil mask around the house and played Tarot-reader for the police. His mask could represent an actual theistic worship of Satan, but far more likely served as a SAOS, communicating that he was the powerful and dark **Famous Supernaturally Evil**

Ripper to himself. Left behind, perhaps intentionally, at the Ford crime scene, it was later used to link Arkwright to the crime: “We found this devil mask in Raymond Ford's flat and later on during the course of interviews Arkwright admitted that he had worn this mask and that he had committed the crime.”⁹⁴⁶ Likely, it had a dual function, as a SAOS and to confuse and terrify the victim.

The same logic applies to Arkwright's fortune-telling: it was merely a theatrical way of demonstrating to the police that Arkwright was, literally and figuratively, holding all of the cards. He had the power of knowing the future because he had proactively created the circumstances that would lead to it. Once again, it is possible that through *meta-delusion* Arkwright convinced himself he was actually clairvoyant, but to our knowledge, he was simply using the playing cards as a prop in his **Famous Supernaturally Evil Ripper** fantasy.

3.10.7 Anthony Arkwright: Class Aspects

The only element of class identity to arise in the Arkwright case was his victim selection.

3.10.8 Anthony Arkwright: Vocational Aspects

After many years of failed criminality and relying on Borstals and prisons to house him, Arkwright worked in various menial positions for short period of times: a story that should be familiar to the reader by now. In the words of his lawyer Steve Smith: “The system looked after him. He was a regular.”⁹⁴⁷ On Friday August 26, he was fired from his job as a labourer at a scrapyard⁹⁴⁸ [*trigger*] for poor attendance. He used his severance package to get drunk at the pub, before murdering his grandfather, Stasys Puidokos, within less than 24 hours of the termination of his employment.

Concluding Thoughts: Anthony Arkwright

Anthony Arkwright, whose psychological problems first began to manifest at the age of four, is yet another example of an ETV killer whose social development was stunted. Like Berkowitz, the confusion and stigma surrounding his birth consumed Arkwright, and predictably, took a devastating toll.⁹⁴⁹ The fact that Arkwright's *homicidal ideal/own* manifested in the form of a monster, the Devil—a *hyperreal masculinity*—is significant. To reiterate, the *archetypal* Monster often is conceived in sin and resides outside the organized structure of society in the

chaotic realm of the unknown. A classic representation of this is the underworld, repurposed as Hell in the subsequent doctrines of the Abrahamic religions. Where Berkowitz holed himself up in his darkened apartment scribbling demonic fantasy on the walls, Arkwright literally attempted to remove himself from society, living in camouflaged hideaways on the outskirts of town.

Table 16
Anthony Arkwright: Selves and Strain

	Actual/Own	Ideal/Own	Homicidal Self	Post-Arrest Self
Sexuality	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gender	Subordinated. Gender-role strain (incest rumour)	Sub-hegemonic. (wannabe survivalist). No gender-role strain.	Hyperreal. Personification of monstrous violence destroying <i>subordinated masculinities</i> . No gender-role strain.	Reconciled.
Religion/Philosophy	N/A	N/A	Wears Devil mask and acts as fortune-teller.	N/A
Class	Working-class.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vocation	Chronically unemployed.	Self-reliant survivalist.	Murders other unemployed people.	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism.
Race	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Notability	Ego-dystonic. Mertonian strain.	N/A	Ego-syntonic. 'infamous and notorious'	Ego-syntonic. Media circus. Reconciled.

This “oddball”⁹⁵⁰, believing his own conception to be taboo, sought refuge on the physical margins of his world—the Monster narrative. Echoing Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* tale, in which the creation turns upon its creator to punish him for making him monstrous, Arkwright first murdered Stasys Puidokis, who he wrongly believed to be his incestuous father.^{hhhhhh} As well as being a Monster, the Devil is also the 'trickster' *archetype*, a trope which

^{hhhhhh} Though it is highly doubtful that Arkwright possessed enough insight to consciously design such a complex symbolic narrative, it is worth mentioning that the Devil *avatar* also rebelled against his creator, God.

Arkwright enacted in his tarot card games with the police: the *archetypal* Heroes of his story.⁹⁵¹

A second *talisman* of Arkwright's was the *serialkiller!*, specifically 'ripper' subtypes such as *jacktheripper!* and *petersutcliffe!* Troublingly, Arkwright studied these offenders in a prison library before he employed them in the formulation of his *homicidal ideal/own*. Jack the Ripper and 'Yorkshire Ripper' Peter Sutcliffe are two of the United Kingdom's most widely media disseminated *serialkillers!*—the subject of movies, true crime novels, and newspaper articles; in the case of the former, also a graphic novel, video games, and a board game. Whether Arkwright was drawn to them because he already entertained mutilation fantasies or noted that their respective homicidal methods to attaining fame and simply followed suit, is unknown to us. What we do know is that he “told friends that one day he was going to be as infamous and notorious as Jack the Ripper.”⁹⁵² The influence of *hyperreality* on Arkwright's psyche is pervasive.

When we contrast Arkwright's reliance on social security (*actual/own*) with his juvenile hobby of building hideaways in an attempt to become a survivalist (*ideal/own*), his frustrated and futile desire to achieve independence emerges as a major source of strain. Perhaps this discrepancy, which feeds into both the masculine *gender* and *vocational* aspects of his *selves*, it explains why he embarked on his murder spree immediately after being fired. Unable to escape dependence because his social development was truncated, Arkwright sought to transcend the dependence/independence dichotomy altogether by committing acts of moral transgression that would force society to imprison him. He could now be given food and shelter against his will, reconceptualizing himself as the ultimate rebellious individual, incarcerated for his uniqueness. In becoming the **Famous Supernaturally Evil Ripper** (*homicidal ideal/own*), the utterly powerless **Odd Delinquent Inbred** (*actual/own*) not only had power over his victims, but over the minds and emotions of the policemen hunting him, at least for a moment in history. His hatred and murder of the disabled Ford and Law can be viewed as a repudiation of those same *gender* and *vocational* aspects of his *ideal/own*: weakness, reliance, and perpetual confinement to a housing estate. When combined with the strain resulting from his need for notoriety, they provide ample motivation for the commission of *expressive/transformative* murder.

3.11 Transformation: Findings

Over the course of this lengthy chapter, we have applied qualitative analysis to each of the 10 offenders in our sample. Though, on occasion, we have been unable to find proof that an offender experienced dejection-related emotions during *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancies, the process outlined in the *expressive/transformativ*e progression of *self* has been overwhelmingly supported by our observations. Thus, in those rare instances when dejection-related emotions were absent, a possible explanation is that they simply were not recounted by the offender or documented. Of course, there could also be another explanatory factor: changing one's *self-concept* or *self-guide* need not *necessarily* always spring from despair. Until this point, our approach has been primarily qualitative—we have attempted to understand each offender individually at the psycho-social level so that we may retrace the origins of their expressions in Chapter 4. Yet through this exercise we have also uncovered a number of startling commonalities between the offenders, opening the door for future quantitative analysis. The following 24 qualities were present in 50-100% of the sample.

1. *Failure of socialization* (100%)

Whether due to mental illness and/or sociological factors, every offender in this sample experienced marked difficulties socializing from a young age.

2. *Loner* (100%)

Though they may have formed superficial friendships, each of the offenders in this sample was ultimately a loner with tenuous connections to others at best. Certainly, nobody would have referred to them as a 'close friend' or been privy to their innermost thoughts.

3. *Strain* (100%)

Whether related to gender, sexuality, class, vocation, or notability, all 10 offenders experienced strain in multiple areas. As we will see, each offender possessed strains related to their gender identity and notability, culminating in public or publicized acts of manly violence. To recap Chapter 1, they also experienced the following specific strains as outlined in Tables 17 and 18 below, with James Holmes suffering from only a single strain while Danny Rolling and Colin Ireland tied for the most at nine.

Table 17
General Strain in a Sample of 10 ETV offenders, part 1

Name	Parental rejection	Erratic, excessive, or harsh supervision or discipline	Child abuse and/or neglect	Negative secondary-school experiences	Abusive peer relations	Work in secondary labour market	Chronic Unemployment	Failure to achieve select goals
Mark Chapman	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y
David Berkowitz	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Danny Rolling	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Colin Ireland	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Luka Magnotta	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Daniel Gonzalez	Y	?	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Anthony Arkwright	Y	?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
James Holmes	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y
Elliot Rodger	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Seung-Hui Cho	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y

Table 18
General Strain in a Sample of 10 ETV offenders, part 2

Name	Criminal Victimization	Residence in economically deprived community	Homelessness	Discrimination based on gender	Discrimination based on race/ethnicity	Total number of strains for this offender
Mark Chapman	Y	N	N	N	N	5
David Berkowitz	N	N	N	N	Y	7
Danny Rolling	Y	N	N	N	N	9
Colin Ireland	Y	Y	Y	N	N	9
Luka Magnotta	N	N	N	N	N	7
Daniel Gonzalez	N	N	N	N	N	5
Anthony Arkwright	N	Y	N	N	N	8
James Holmes	N	N	N	N	N	1
Elliot Rodger	N	N	N	N	N	5
Seung-Hui Cho	N	N	N	N	N	4

4. *Negative Emotionality* (100%)

As predicted by SDT and GST, negative emotionality arose from *actual:ideal* and *actual:ought* discrepancies and the various types of strain experienced by the offenders in this sample. Typically, these were dejection-related emotions, particularly depression, sadness, and frustration.

5. *Notoriety* (100%)

Unsurprisingly, notoriety emerged as an explicitly coveted quality across our sample. Mark David Chapman “killed the biggest Somebody on earth”⁹⁵³ in order to “usurp someone else’s importance, someone else’s success.”⁹⁵⁴ David Berkowitz smiled upon his arrest and asked if the newspapers were coming so that he could read about himself. Danny Rolling bragged to his fellow inmates that he wanted to become a “superstar of crime”⁹⁵⁵ Colin Ireland contacted police and media to draw their attention to his murders and ultimately fulfill his ambition of being a *serialkiller!* Luka Magnotta’s fame seeking was pathological to the point of filming and publicizing his crimes online, even associating them with his name. Daniel Gonzalez wanted to be “remembered as a famous serial killer”⁹⁵⁶ boasting “mine’s a big f***** story and will be on the full front page.”⁹⁵⁷ Anthony Arkwright “told friends that one day he was going to be as infamous and notorious as Jack the Ripper”⁹⁵⁸, and “loved being centre stage”⁹⁵⁹ at his trial. James Holmes sent his photographs to the *New York Times* before embarking on his massacre because he “didn’t think people would remember me for any other reason.”⁹⁶⁰, telling his psychiatrist “at least I’m remembered as doing something.”⁹⁶¹ Elliot Rodger, who “always believed, I am destined for great things”⁹⁶² posted his 'Retribution' VLOG and autobiography online to accompany his Isla Vista killing spree. Similarly, Seung-Hui Cho sent a video to NBC news in which he declared himself to be a neo-Moses who, through killing, would “spread the sea and lead my people—the Weak, the Defenseless, and the Innocent Children of all ages that you fucked and will always try to fuck—to eternal freedom”⁹⁶³

6. *Guilty or NGRI Pleas* (100% of n=8)

As their murders provided them with an ego-syntonic social identity, it is unsurprising

that 50% of the sample (Chapman, Berkowitz, Rolling, Ireland, Arkwright) pleaded guilty while another 30% (Magnotta, Gonzalez, Holmes) entered NGRI pleas⁹⁶⁴—the acceptance that one is indeed a killer, but is technically 'not guilty' due to strong mitigating factors. The remaining 20% (Rodger, Cho) committed suicide and could not be brought to trial. Among the first 40%, three of the four offenders (Chapman, Berkowitz, Arkwright) initially built insanity defenses, only to later enter guilty pleas.⁹⁶⁵ None of the NGRI defenses were successful.

7. *Child-Like Self* (60-90%)

Another probable bi-product of failed socialization is the prevalence of truncated social and emotional maturity in seemingly every offender in the sample, with the possible exception of Holmes. In the cases of Chapman, Rolling, Ireland, Magnotta, Gonzalez, and Cho (60%) this was explicitly stated by the offender or diagnosed while they were children, while Berkowitz strongly implied it (10%), and the habits of Anthony Arkwright and Elliot Rodger (20%) certainly lean more towards childishness than maturity.

8. *Gender Issues* (100%)

Having an *actual/own* where one self-conceptualizes as a 'child'—anywhere from 60-90% of our sample—is enough in itself to undermine the demand for self-reliance and emotional stoicism inherent in normative masculinity. On top of this, 80% of the sample (Chapman, Berkowitz, Rolling, Ireland, Magnotta, Arkwright, Rodger, and Cho) were relentlessly bullied in school, a classic method of reducing somebody's standing in the masculine social hierarchy, with labels related to *subordinated masculinity* such as 'pussy', 'nerd', and 'fag' applied to at least 30% of themⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ (Chapman, Magnotta, Rodger). James Holmes self-identified as a 'nerd' though his actions clearly indicate he experienced strong gender-role strain. Below we look at how sexuality, lack of a romantic partner, and vocational instability all contribute to an ego-dystonic gender identity.

9. *Poor Relationship With Father Figure* (90%)

Though we lack the necessary information to make a determination in the James Holmes

ⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ I strongly suspect these labels or variants were applied to more offenders in the sample and that the offenders either never spoke of them or it was simply not documented.

case, in all nine others the offenders either had a father figure who was completely or effectively absent (Chapman, Berkowitz, Ireland, Magnotta, Gonzalez, Arkwright, Rodger, Cho) or highly abusive (Rolling). Mark David Chapman claims his father was emotionally inaccessible and beat his mother. Though David Berkowitz, Elliot Rodger, and Seung-Hui Cho's father figures may have loved them, in all three cases these men were nearly completely preoccupied with their work. Ireland, Gonzalez and Arkwright's biological fathers all abandoned them at a young age, with Ireland also losing a stepfather whose name he had taken. Given the scale of the physical and emotional abuse Danny Rolling endured at the hands of his father, he would almost certainly have been better served if James Harold Rolling had also walked out on his wife and children. Like Chapman's father, his physical presence did not necessarily mean that he was there for his sons in any positive way.

10. *Sexual Issues* (90%)

Excluding Anthony Arkwright, for whom we lack the necessary information to make a sound judgment, every offender had notable problems with the nature and/or success of their sexuality. Mark David Chapman was admittedly erotophobic and intimidated by the prospect of being inside a woman's vagina. Despite being married, he could count the number of times he had sexual intercourse on his hands. Though displaying similarly erotophobic tendencies, Berkowitz and Rodger were paradoxically obsessed with the absence of sex in their lives. According to one source, Berkowitz would return to his crime scenes, roll in the dirt, and then go home to masturbate while fantasizing about his victims. Both had imaginary sexual partners—Berkowitz's victims and an otherwise non-descript 'hot-blonde' for Rodger. Danny Rolling was an admitted paraphile who may have suffered from impotence while attempting to engage in non-violent consensual sex, and Colin Ireland's murders contain bisexual and sadistic *signature* elements. Luka Magnotta was a homosexual masquerading as a bisexual who was ashamed of his predilection for men. Moreover, though he made his living as an escort and porn star, Magnotta was unenthusiastic about sex and often allowed himself to be subjected to acts he found painful and humiliating. James Holmes remained a virgin until well into his Twenties, relying on prostitutes after his brief sexual relationship with Gargi Datta came to a sudden end. Daniel Gonzalez and Seung-Hui Cho were totally sexually isolated, with the latter remaining a virgin until his death.

11. *No Romantic Partner at Time of Murders* (90%)

Only one of the 10 offenders, Mark David Chapman, was known to be in a steady relationship—a relatively sexless and dysfunctional marriage—when he first committed murder. Danny Rolling and Colin Ireland were both divorcees with sporadic sex lives, while James Holmes had been dumped by his first and only girlfriend months before the massacre. Elliot Rodger, Seung-Hui Cho, and (almost certainly) David Berkowitz (30%) were all virgins who never dated, let alone had a partner. Luka Magnotta, though sexually active, had not been in anything resembling a long-term relationship for six years prior to his killing of Jun Lin. Similarly, Daniel Gonzalez complained that he hadn't “had a girlfriend for ages.”⁹⁶⁶ There are no available records pertaining to Anthony Arkwright's relationships, which seems to indicate that they were non-existent at the time of his killing spree. As normative masculinity entails the ability to successfully and effortlessly achieve heterosexual relationships with attractive women, this element would cause gender-role strain in anyone who aspired to a *hegemonic, sub-hegemonic, or hyperreal* (with *hegemonic* or *sub-hegemonic* elements) masculinity. Therefore, this quality can be subsumed by Gender Issues. Crucially, the lack of a romantic partner undermines one's *stake in conformity*.

12. *Unemployed/Dropped Out Before Murder(s)* (80%)

Shortly before perpetrating their first murder, Danny Rolling, Colin Ireland, and Anthony Arkwright were fired from menial positions, while a depressed Mark Chapman quit his job as a security guard. Similarly, David Berkowitz took a month off work before making a failed attempt to stab his first victim to death. James Holmes and Elliot Rodger both effectively dropped out of college, while Daniel Gonzalez was permanently unemployed, relying on social security. Though Magnotta also collected disability benefits, he continued to work as an escort until his murder of Jun Lin, and Cho does not seem to have abandoned his studies in any formal sense. They represent our two ostensible exceptions. A further 80% of the sample (Chapman, Berkowitz, Rolling, Ireland, Magnotta, Gonzalez, Arkwright, and Rodger) showed a pattern of unstable employment, moving from one unskilled job or college program to the next. As the conventions of normative masculinity include stoic competence and self-reliance—traits which none of these offenders exhibited—this quality also constitutes an aspect of gender-role strain.

Understanding it in this context also negates the 'did not actually stop attending classes' technicality which allowed Cho to escape inclusion here. It also shows how the credibility of Magnotta's non-heteronormative sex work could also be ultimately reduced in the wider context of Gender Issues. Once again, there is no *stake in conformity* when a person believes they are incapable of even holding down a bad job.

13. *Under 30 Years of Age* (80%)

With the exception of the serial killers Danny Rolling and Colin Ireland who committed their first known murders at the ages of 35 and 38 respectively, the remainder of the offenders were under age 30 when they embarked on their homicidal careers. The youngest was Anthony Arkwright, who began at age 21, while the average age of the offenders in our sample was 26.4. The serial killers (Berkowitz, Rolling, Ireland) averaged 32 years, with 27 for the single-incident murderers (Chapman, Magnotta), 23 for mass murderersⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ (Holmes, Rodger, Cho), and 22.5 for spree killers (Gonzalez, Arkwright). If we are to employ the current definition of serial murder advocated by the FBI, which would encompass Gonzalez and Arkwright, the average age lowers to 28.2 years.

14. *Diagnosed or Suspected Psychosis* (80%)

The prevalence of psychosis, typically related to delusion but occasionally including hallucinations, in this sample was notably high. Keeping in mind that an offender is typically assessed by numerous mental health professionals whose views are not always in accordance, paranoid schizophrenia was diagnosed in Chapman⁹⁶⁷, Berkowitz⁹⁶⁸, Magnotta⁹⁶⁹, Gonzalez⁹⁷⁰, and Holmes⁹⁷¹, while psychiatrist John Liebert makes a convincing case that Cho was also a schizophrenic.⁹⁷² Having been prescribed the anti-psychotic Risperidone, Elliot Rodger likely suffered from schizophrenia or bipolar disorder⁹⁷³, which has psychotic features, while Danny Rolling was found to have an “atypical psychosis.”⁹⁷⁴

15. *Suicidal* (80%)

Interestingly, all of the offenders diagnosed with psychosis by at least one mental health professional were also suicidal. Chapman and Magnotta were both documented as having made

ⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ Including bi-furcated variants.

unsuccessful attempts years before their homicides, while Berkowitz and Rolling claim to have experienced suicidal ideation at different points in their lives. Holmes incredulously purports to have automatically channelled suicidal thoughts to homicidal ones so that he wouldn't have to kill himself. Of those offenders in our sample who actually committed suicide (Gonzalez, Rodger, Cho), the mass murderers did so at the end of their rampage while Gonzalez was finally successful after making numerous attempts at Broadmoor psychiatric hospital.

16. *Symbolic Victims* (70%)

The majority of ETV offenders—70% of our sample—targeted symbolic victims. Mark David Chapman gunned down an internationally-known celebrity who he deemed a 'phony.' Berkowitz and Rolling specifically murdered young women who outwardly represented *emphasized femininity*, with Rodger and Cho making efforts to do the same, along with any other young person they deemed 'hedonistic.' Half of Rodger's fatalities consisted of young Asian males who were pre-emptively selected. Ireland's victims were all homosexual males. Although he claimed only to have targeted submissives, whom he referred to as 'extreme male deviants', Ireland's inclusion of Perry Bradley III, who did not care for BDSM, casts doubt upon the specificity of his victimology. Anthony Arkwright murdered his grandfather, believing him to be his incestuous father, before slaughtering two impoverished neighbours who suffered from disabilities. As the notion that Luka Magnotta may have specifically chosen a homosexual Asian victim due to race is purely speculative, it has not been included here.

17. *Name Changes* (70%)

Be they aliases, nicknames, monikers, or formal names registered with the government, 60% of our sample were in the habit of referring to themselves by something other than their birth name. In the cases of Mark David Chapman, David Berkowitz, and Seung-Hui Cho, these name changes related directly to their crimes. On his last day at work, Chapman signed out as his future victim 'John Lennon' and soon began signing copies of *The Catcher in the Rye* as his *avatar* 'Holden Caulfield.'⁹⁷⁵ Cho told fellow students his name was 'Question Mark', although in his final homicidal communication he rebranded himself 'Ax Ishmael.' In his letters to the police and media, Berkowitz, whose name had already been changed from 'Richard Falco' at birth, referred to himself as the sobriquets 'Mr. Monster' and 'The Son of Sam.'⁹⁷⁶ Ireland also called

himself 'The Gay Slayer' during a telephone call to the police. As a result of having two stepfathers, he had changed his surname in childhood, then changed it back following his mother's first divorce. Ireland also employed the alias 'Colin Williams.'¹⁹⁷⁷ Although legally changing his name to 'Luka Magnotta', Eric Newman also went by 'Jimmy', 'Vladimir Romanov', 'Kirk Trammel', and 'Mattia Del Santo' to name a few. Danny Rolling phonetically inverted his first name to 'Ennad' to describe his *ideal/own*, but also used the alias 'Michael Kennedy.'¹⁹⁷⁸ Daniel Gonzalez often spoke in the third person, referring to himself as 'Zippy.'¹⁹⁷⁹

18. *Class Issues* (70%)

Contrary to Leyton's conclusions that the modern multiple murder is primarily motivated by class-related insecurity, there are but two examples here (Mark Chapman and Seung-Hui Cho) and only the latter qualifies as a multiple murderer. Certainly, Luka Magnotta and Elliot Rodger were embarrassingly class conscious—Rodger even hypocritically whined about 'rich kids'— but neither actually murdered victims from a higher social class. Rolling and Ireland's victimology, when paired with statements and incidents that seem to indicate some level of class insecurity, do seem to contain socio-economic aspects, though far from decisive. So, while 70% of the offenders did display some class related strain, the role that class played in their murders varied from significant (Chapman, Cho) to moderate (Rolling, Ireland, Rodger, Arkwright) to irrelevant (Magnotta). Particularly, Elliot Rodger's polemics reveal the major flaw in Leyton's theory of multiple murder. For Leyton, the modern multiple murderer strikes out at members of a social class that he wishes to join but feels excluded from. Yet Rodger, the British prep-school educated son of a Hollywood film director, was a member of the upper-middle class, and enjoyed a higher-class position than many of the middle class 'beautiful blond girls' he coveted. Nevertheless, on numerous occasions he refers to the 'popular kids' which have always rejected him. This is because social class is not tantamount to social inclusion in the late-20th and early-21st centuries. The overriding factor in each of these 10 cases is that the offender occupied the lowest strata of *social inclusion*. For whatever reasons, their personalities and/or affects did not allow them to socialize effectively, an impairment which over time, loosened their bonds to society as a whole. Another possible (and not necessarily exclusive) explanation is that they were never bonded to society in the first place. This may have resulted from congenital brain abnormalities or ineffective childhood socialization, which served to hinder the offender's

attempts at bonding with their peers.

19. *Hero Culture* (50%)

To our knowledge, at least 50% of the sample were interested, albeit to different extents, in what we will call 'hero culture': professions associated with uniforms and *sub-hegemonic masculinity*. Berkowitz, Rolling, Ireland, and Arkwright all were enamoured with the military, with the first two enrolling in the American army and air force, respectively, while Ireland was rejected from the French Foreign Legion. Ireland and Arkwright also shared a fascination with SAS-style survivalism. Berkowitz volunteered as an auxiliary cop, Rolling served a short stint as a military policeman, and Magnotta publicly and privately expressed his interest in pursuing a career in law enforcement. Finally, Berkowitz and Ireland—both arsonists—were volunteer firefighters. While 50% may seem like a low number, when compared to the total number of people in the American, British, and Canadian public who have served or attempted to serve in one of these professions, it is abnormally high.

20. *Weapons Collecting* (50%)

Half of the offenders (Berkowitz, Rolling, Arkwright, Holmes, Cho) collected three or more weapons, with all but Berkowitz making a public display of brandishing them before their homicides. Rolling and Arkwright did so in front of their neighbours, while Holmes and Cho sent photographs of themselves posing with weapons to the media. These weapons are theorized to contribute to the offender's violent self-image, shoring up their *homicidal ideal/own* through SAOS, although in the case of Rolling and Arkwright, this *homicidal self* may have also been reinforced by their neighbours' reactions. Once again, it seems improbable that 50% of the American or British public own three or more weapons at any given time, though American gun culture may come closer to approximating this number.

21. *Costume* (50%)

It is likely no coincidence that four of the five offenders (Rolling, Arkwright, Holmes, Cho) who collected weapons also wore costumes, masks, or otherwise altered their appearance to portray a *homicidal self*. Gonzalez and Arkwright, with their Jason and Devil masks, were most obvious, while Rolling, who described himself as moving “from shadow to shadow draped in

Ninja black”⁹⁸⁰ could be dismissed as simply wearing effective camouflage if not for his statements.^{kkkkkk} James Homes dyed his hair bright red, wore black contact lenses, and sported a ballistic helmet and gloves, bulletproof vest, and shin armour. He posed for various photographs which he sent to the *New York Times*, and then stormed into the Aurora cinema with his red hair and armour to commit a massacre. Fellow mass murderer Seung-Hui Cho dressed in an outfit reminiscent of the Columbine High School shooters which he wore in his publicity photos and during his killings. In one way or another, these are both expressions and SAOS. Chapter 4 explores them in greater detail. With the exception of Halloween, it is fairly safe to conclude that the general public do not walk around sporting violent costume or uploading such images on the Internet.

22. *Christian Themes* (50%)

Given that Christianity is the dominant religion in the west, the fact that 50% of the offenders were strongly influenced by Christian themes makes sense. Chapman, Berkowitz, and Rolling all fervently believed in the Holy Bible *talisman* and attended church of their own volition. When they needed to commit murder they turned to the Satan *avatar* to embolden them or rationalize their actions, and their post-arrest *selves* took the form of the **Penitent Christian**. Likening himself to Moses and Jesus Christ—Biblical figures who suffered to redeem their flock—Seung-Hui Cho declared a revolution of the oppressed and embarked on a 'self-sacrificing' mass murder. Though there is no indication of whether or not Anthony Arkwright identified as a Christian or read scripture, he adorned a devil mask during his murder of Raymond Ford, and described himself as “a picture of darkness.”⁹⁸¹ Certainly, the majority of Americans (75%)⁹⁸² are Christian, but this misses the point. All five of these offenders explicitly stated Christian motives, *meta-delusions*, or invoked Christian imagery in direct relation to their murder(s), in comparison with the majority of violent offenders who do not.

23. *Meta-Delusion* (50%)

Chapman, Berkowitz, and Rolling's religious beliefs allowed them to create demonologies which they used to facilitate *meta-delusion* in the manner described above.

^{kkkkkk} Elsewhere he compares himself to a “Ninja assassin [who] prowled the neighborhood” (London & Rolling, 2011, p. 132.)

Holmes, the agnostic scientist, was more innovative, crafting the theory of Ultrareception to absorb his victims' value and thereby prevent himself from committing suicide. According to his psychiatrist, Daniel Gonzalez chose the excitement of surreality over Reality, recognizing “that drugs had led him to have hallucinations which was the point of taking them”⁹⁸³ because he “enjoyed believing mad things”⁹⁸⁴ Arntfield & Danesi have argued that motives for murder (e.g., strain and negative emotionality) emerge, pass through a “narrative mechanism”⁹⁸⁵ (e.g., *talismans* and *avatars*) and are then subject to “rationalization”⁹⁸⁶. *Meta-delusional* seems to play a pivotal role in the latter two stages of this homicidal process, and as the concept arose specifically from observations of abnormal psychologies featured in this dissertation, one can safely hypothesize that this is far higher percentage of *meta-delusional* people in the general public.

24. *Prior Criminal History (50%)*

With the exception of David Berkowitz, who was never caught for the hundreds of fires he set, the ETV offenders who were either serial killers or aspired to be all had prior criminal histories. Danny Rolling served multiple prison sentences for armed robbery, while Colin Ireland, Daniel Gonzalez, and Anthony Arkwright were also in and out of prison for a variety of property crimes. Luka Magnotta was convicted of fraud in his early-Twenties. Berkowitz, Ireland, and Arkwright were all arsonists. Widespread problems concerning the collection and interpretation of data concerning criminal convictions in the United States and England make this finding difficult to contextualize, although even the highest estimates do not implicate half of the population.

Naturally, in future studies these findings should be compared to a sample from the non-criminal population as well as violent criminals who do not exhibit *expressive/transformative* behaviour in order to determine whether or not they are significant whatsoever.

3.12 The Transformative Triangle

In order to fully grasp the complexity of the *expressive/transformative* process, equal consideration must be given to how semiotic communication between offender and victim (see 1 on Figure 6), victim and audience (see 2 on Figure 6), and audience and offender (see 3 on

Figure 6) facilitate this transformation. The relations between these three types of transformation are called *expressive/transformative dynamics*.

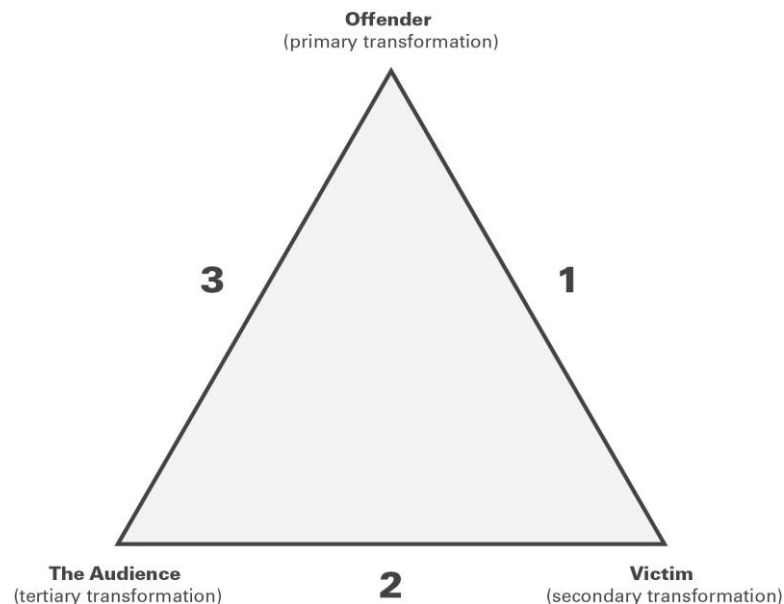


Figure 6. The Transformative Triangle

1. Primary-Secondary Dynamic

As Chapter 3 has shown, the offender must necessarily perpetrate acts of violence against a victim in order to establish his *homicidal self*. This occurs through *semiotic affirmations of self* (SAOS) in which the victim's corpse acts as a *sign* to the offender that he is now a killer: a kind of intrapersonal communication. Recall 'Moors Murderer' Ian Brady's pronouncement that “in another very significant sense, [a killer] is killing his long-accepted self as well as the victim, and simultaneously giving birth to a new persona, decisively cutting the umbilical connection between himself and ordinary mankind.”⁹⁸⁷ What the offender does to the victim, be it ante- peri- or post-mortem, determines what *kind of homicidal self* he perceives himself to be. When Detective Dave Reichert told 'Green River Killer' Gary Ridgway “you're a rapist”⁹⁸⁸ the prostitute slaying Ridgway replied “I'm not a rapist. I paid them for sex and I killed them”⁹⁸⁹ claiming “it's robbery [not rape].”⁹⁹⁰ Ridgway prided himself on being the most prolific serial killer in American history⁹⁹¹ but did not wish to include the status of 'rapist' in his *homicidal*

self^{lllll}, choosing to interpret having consensual sex with a prostitute without paying her as a property crime instead. The Primary-Secondary dynamic also entails the transformation of the victim's identity in the eyes of the killer. Necrophilic serial murderer Sean Gillis referred to the weapon he used to fatally strangle his victims as “the Objectifier, because it would *turn them from a woman to the object*^{mmmmmm} [emphasis added] that I would then deal with.”⁹⁹² Similarly, Edmund Kemper III “just wanted the exaltation over the party... *They were [now] dead and I was [still] alive*”⁹⁹³: a SAOS which indicated his “victory.”⁹⁹⁴ Beyond the mere act of transforming a victim into a corpse, the killer may project their own subjective views of the victim's identity on or around the victim's body. British serial killer Joanna Dennehy dressed the corpse of murdered lover Kevin Lee in a black-sequined dress, leaving his buttocks exposed.⁹⁹⁵ Lee had previously confided in a friend that Dennehy, who was known in her townhouse as “the man woman”⁹⁹⁶, had “wanted to dress me up and rape me.”⁹⁹⁷ Clearly, Dennehy felt she was more masculine than Lee and projected this symbolically onto him by feminizing him in a SAOS—Dennehy as the masculine, Lee as the feminine.

2. Secondary-Tertiary Dynamic

A victim's identity is also transformed in the eyes of society by an offender's actions. Perhaps the most telling example is that of Elizabeth Short whose entire existence was reduced to the *master status*⁹⁹⁸ of 'murder victim' when she was famously slain in 1947, posed in *expressive/transformative* fashion, and rechristened 'The Black Dahlia.' Today, many have heard of the 'Black Dahlia' but fewer would recognize the name Beth Short. Canadian serial murderer Russell Williams manipulated the secondary-tertiary dynamic when he left a message reading “GO AHEAD. CALL THE POLICE. I WANT TO SHOW THE JUDGE YOU'RE [sic] REALLY BIG DILDOS”⁹⁹⁹ on the computer screen of a woman whose home he had burgled. The surviving victim would be either forced to keep quiet or reveal private details of her sex life to the public, forever associating her identity with somebody who uses large phallic sex toys—considered a *stigma* in some social circles.ⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿ In such a case, the victim's stigmatized identity

^{lllll} What a killer explicitly expresses he *is* and *is not*, whether through language or other *signs*, is extremely helpful in analyzing his behaviour, as will be seen in the coming pages.

^{mmmmmm} Readers who are familiar with my Thematic-Derivative Model of Sexual Progression will note that all human beings, living or dead, are objects, as the *self* develops when a person is able to understand himself as an object in the eyes of others.

ⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿ In a remarkable show of strength, the victim would calmly disclose this in an interview with the Canadian

goes from being *discreditable* to *discredited*¹⁰⁰⁰ because the attack reveals it to the *generalized other*, with this revelation promulgated by the media. Female promiscuity, non-normative sexual desires, hypocrisy, and invisible illnesses are just some of many *stigmas* which are commonly revealed.

From the unfortunate party who discovers the body, to the policemen who process the crime scene, to the general public who learn about the murder, the *audience* are also transformed. The breadth and depth of this impact is typically related to the perceived social status and culpability of the victims. Following the murder of John Lennon, there were candlelight vigils and public displays of mourning across the globe, as well as several suicides.¹⁰⁰¹ The assassination resulted in widespread changes to the level of security surrounding high-profile celebrities and their accessibility to the general public. Following the mass murders of 'innocent'¹⁰⁰⁰⁰⁰⁰ middle-class students and theatre-goers by Seung-Hui Cho, James Holmes, and Elliot Rodger, there were multiple public gatherings to mourn the victims and memorial structures or scholarships created to honour the fallen.¹⁰⁰² James Holmes perceived that the Aurora murders he perpetrated “made the community more tightly-knit.”¹⁰⁰³ As an aggregate, such mass shootings have resulted in constant widespread fear among the American public of being randomly gunned down, and have sparked heated debates over the issue of gun control. They have tangibly transformed the psychology and political discourse of an entire nation. The murders committed by David 'Son of Sam' Berkowitz and Danny Rolling terrorized local communities, leading their residents to wonder if they would be the next victim. For example, during the summer of 1977, many young women in New York City stopped going out at night or dyed their hair blond because it was (wrongly) assumed that the 'Son of Sam' targeted women with dark tresses.¹⁰⁰⁴ Amidst the Gainesville murders committed by Danny Rolling, students fled the college town in droves—some never to return—in order to avoid a similar fate.¹⁰⁰⁵ Rolling's attempts to “invoke terror”¹⁰⁰⁶ were a roaring success. Along with numerous candlelight vigils and scholarships, a memorial wall was erected at the university in honour of Rolling's five Gainesville victims.¹⁰⁰⁷ Two hundred people attended a memorial to Luka Magnotta victim Jun

Broadcasting Corporation's *The Fifth Estate*. Symbolic interactionists would see this as *normalizing* the stigma: proactively revealing it and treating it as if it was not deviant whatsoever. By doing so, the victim attempts to negate the power of the offender by refuting the validity or importance of the stigma.

⁰⁰⁰⁰⁰⁰ I do not place the word 'innocent' in quotation marks to be facetious, rather to acknowledge the fact that the victims were perceived to be so by the general public regardless of the relative lack of meaningful information about them.

Lin in Montreal¹⁰⁰⁸, and the university he attended raised \$70,000 for his bereaved family.¹⁰⁰⁹ However, more sinisterly, the video showing the desecration of his corpse continues to circulate online, repelling and attracting web users across the globe, potentially forever. Colin Ireland struck terror into the hearts of London's gay community during his 1993 spate of killings. Though there has seemingly been no memorial for his five victims, the murders ultimately led to improved relations between the LGBTQ+ community and British law enforcement.¹⁰¹⁰

In summary, the symbolic value of the victim to society has both positive and negative functions. It can result in increased solidarity and progressive social change, yet also produces local, nationwide, or global fear and distrust.

3. Tertiary-Primary Transformation

The *Tertiary-Primary dynamic* examines the way the resulting transformation of society interacts with the killer or his 'legacy.' For example, the same memorial services and monuments which honour the dead—the notion of 'lest we forget'—are inextricably linked to the killer in popular memory. The victims literally become *symbols* of their killer. Informed members of the general public simply cannot recall the names or faces of Sonja Larson, Christa Hoyt, Christina Powell, Tracey Paules, or Manny Taboada without simultaneously conjuring up the name and/or image of their killer Danny Rolling. This process is a subconscious one. Attempts to deny it, though well-intentioned, are simply dishonest.

In the case of a killer who is still at large, widespread media coverage and public discussion of the murder affirms the offender's *homicidal self*. David Berkowitz spoke of how the excessive newspaper reporting of his murders led him to conclude “it was good to [kill], necessary to do it, and that the public wanted me to do it. The latter part I believe until this day. I believe that many were rooting for me.”¹⁰¹¹ Conversely, a lack of press may result in the ETV offender feeling that his *homicidal identity* has been repudiated. Having received very little media coverage, Colin Ireland phoned the Kensington police approximately three months after his first murder, asking “are you still interested in the death of Peter Walker? Why have you stopped the investigation? Doesn't the death of a homosexual man mean anything?”¹⁰¹² In another example, within a week of his arrest for murdering three prostitutes in Bradford, self-proclaimed 'Crossbow Cannibal' Stephen Griffiths was knocked out of the British newspapers by Derek Bird who murdered 12 victims in a killing spree across Cumbria. When fellow prisoners

began chanting “you're not famous anymore”¹⁰¹³ Griffiths experienced an *actual/own: homicidal ideal/own* discrepancy which caused him to plunge into depression and attempt suicide. This phenomenon likely explains why many imprisoned serial and spree killers fabricate additional victims—the renewed attention from police and media serves to keep them consolidated in their *homicidal self*.

It is crucial to understand that *primary, secondary, and tertiary* transformations do not exist in isolation, rather, they interact with each other in a social dialogue. Perry Bradley III and Jun Lin were homosexual men who hailed from affluent families in socially conservative areas (Texas and China). Accordingly, they concealed their homosexuality from their families and large portions of the human race. By murdering these men in a way that publicly exposed their homosexuality, their killers, Colin Ireland and Luka Magnotta, revealed Goffman's blemishes of individual character. The relational sexual identities of Bradley and Lin were thus transformed from semi-closeted, *discreditable* homosexuals into *discredited* known *homosexuals!*^{PPPPPP} This transformation was simultaneously *secondary* and *tertiary*, as these victims' personal loss of privacy is inextricably bound to the public's knowledge of them.^{qqqqqq}

3.13 Conclusion

Whether they are single-incident murderers, serial killers, mass murderers, or spree killers, ETV offenders pass through a pattern of striving for one or more *ideal selves* only to fail and descend into dejection-related emotionality. These *ideal/owns* usually involve the pursuit of normalcy and/or (*sub-*) *hegemonic masculinity* accompanied by an overt or latent obsession with achieving fame. In every known case, this *ideal/own* stands in stark contrast to the offender's ego-dystonic *self-concept*. This process results, at least to some extent, from abnormal childhood socialization. Whether ETV offenders suffer socially from a young age because of inherent mental illnesses, or if these mental illnesses arise from poor childhood socialization and alienation, is difficult to pinpoint—every offender in the sample was, at some point, diagnosed with psychosis, a personality disorder, or both. Overwhelmingly, this failure of socialization results in the offender experiencing truncated development which, to varying extents, leaves him

^{PPPPPP} I use the term *homosexuals!* because it denotes the culturally stereotyped identity of homosexuality in general, emphasizing it as a categorical identity rather than a sexual preference.

^{qqqqqq} Magnotta spoke of the trauma of his brother telling other he was homosexual before Magnotta was officially ready to 'come out.' Did he project this onto Jun Lin?

immature and unstable in his *self*. This state of permanent childishness then leads to chronic problems fitting in with adult society—perhaps due to the offender's unstable sense of *self* and the resulting emotional volatility—a dynamic which produces further destabilization, sabotages the offender's gender identity, and creates pathological alienation.^{TTTTT} Hence, the rise of the *expressive/transformational* process. ETV offenders' professional lives are either non-existent or consist of hurtling aimlessly from one menial job to another over the course of weeks or months. Their romantic lives follow a similar pattern. Besides depriving the offender of an identity and basic human needs, the ensuing lack of any *stake in conformity* provides little inhibition for the offender to commit criminal acts. Half the sample already had a history of interactions with the criminal justice system before they murdered. When combined with their continued hopelessness and negative emotionality, the offender often becomes suicidal.

At some point in their lives—26.6 years of age on average—ETV offenders opt to permanently rid themselves of negative emotionality by attaining greater masculinity and notability through the commission of murder and sending of related communications to the police, media, and/or society as a whole. Though class-frustrations may occasionally colour their victimology, more often than not, victims are selected symbolically based upon their perceived higher or lower standing than the offender in a more fundamental social hierarchy. To conceive of this merely in terms of social class is far too narrow: the case of Elliot Rodger proves that economic privilege does not negate the devastating effects of alienation. Rather, the hierarchy we speak of is one of social inclusion and general desirability—something akin to the realities we encounter when we first enter high school.

Many offenders will conceive and abide by a *meta-delusional* system to transition between *selves*, particularly to and from the *homicidal self*. As the offender's *homicidal self* is a desired end—providing him, temporarily or permanently, with a stable *self*, a respite from negative emotionality, and perhaps even catharsis, in the event that the offender goes to trial he will plead guilty or not guilty by reason of insanity. This is presumably because he is satisfied with his identity as a murderer and the prospect of physical removal from a society to which he has never truly belonged. Throughout this process, the *intermimetic* influence of existing in *hyperreal* simulation on the offender's *selves* is readily observable.

^{TTTTT} Some of these problems may be partially influenced by the absence, whether physical or emotional, of a positive father figure in the child's life.

Having developed a low-resolution heuristic of an ETV offender over the course of Chapter 3, the following chapter will focus on the semiotic content of their homicidal expressions and how they result from this process of transformation, which to recap, is itself negotiated through the communicative exchange of *signs*.

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4. Expression: Victim as Canvas, Victim as Soapbox, and Costumes

“Sometimes the individual will act in a thoroughly calculating manner, expressing himself in a given way solely in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke from them a specific response he is concerned to obtain.” - Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*

“’Twas a grotesque replica carved from human flesh and bone, its sculptor the devil’s advocate”
- Danny Rolling and Sondra London, *The Making of a Serial Killer*

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, links between the offender's personal transformation, his victimology, and homicidal expressions are interpreted using Charles Peirce's theory of semiotics, Erving Goffman's *front stage* and *back stage* social areas, Julia Kristeva's *abjection*, and Alfred Gell's anthropological understanding of *agency* in art. We argue that by analyzing the semiotic content and aesthetics of an offender's communications—perceivable to us as *identity signatures*—it is possible to trace these *signs* back to aspects of the offender's *actual/own* and/or *ideal/own selves*. This enables us to reasonably deduce his motives, and to both link and separate murders he is suspected of committing. Section 4.1 (*Mark David Chapman: Semiotic Breadcrumbs*) provides an example of the connection between *expression* and *transformation* as explained by the perpetrator himself. It shows that, if investigators follow Colin Wilson's assertion that “alienation craves to express itself, because its ultimate aim is to cease to be alienated”¹ and attempt to decipher homicidal communications rather than dismiss them as crazy, impenetrable, or unimportant, it will usually work to the advantage of law enforcement. The best method to interpret *signs*, which are used verbally or pictorially as language, is through Peircean semiotics, which is outlined at the beginning of the section. With the rudiments of semiotics established, we will then employ them to examine the *victim-as-canvas* homicides perpetrated by Danny Rolling, Colin Ireland, Luka Magnotta, and Anthony Arkwright. However, first, *necromnositophilia*—the paraphilic desire to pose, clothe, and/or decorate a corpse²—and *staging*, in which elements of a crime scene are altered to deceive investigators³ must be presented in order to demarcate them from ETV posing, followed by techniques to distinguish them (4.2 Necromnositophilia, ETV, or Staging?). Next, Erving Goffman's dramaturgy and Kristeva's notion of abjection are briefly articulated and incorporated (4.3 Abjection: Disturbing the Order) to explain the profound

social disruption that occurs when a corpse and/or its constituent parts enter the public realm. Drawing from Gell's anthropological interpretation of art as utilized by Harper, it is argued that dead bodies actually possess a type of *agency*, as they force people to react to them. Section 4.4, 'Increasing Abjection', explores this phenomenon further and illustrates how Danny Rolling, Luka Magnotta, and Anthony Arkwright intentionally sought to maximize the psycho-social disturbance of those who encountered their victims' bodies (*tertiary transformation*), whether directly or indirectly. Next, we turn to the *victim-as-canvas* murders perpetrated by Danny Rolling, Colin Ireland, Luka Magnotta, and Anthony Arkwright, in which *signs* are identified and interpreted to decipher the killer's message and learn more about his identity and motives (4.5 Decoding the Message). A specific method to do so is presented and utilized, before some final comments on the findings of ETV posing.

Next, we look at *victim-as-soapbox* communications (4.6 *Victim-as-soapbox* Introduction) in which the offender uses his new found relevance as a murderer to send messages—verbal (whether oral or written) or pictorial—to the police, media, and other institutions. Here, a preliminary method for breaking *texts* into individual passages to be interpreted and, subsequently, synthesized into a greater *corpus* analysis, is presented and demonstrated. This practical forensic adaptation of semiotics is then applied to David Berkowitz (4.7). Having left a letter for police Captain Joseph Borelli at one crime scene, and sending a subsequent letter to *Daily News* columnist Jimmy Breslin, Berkowitz represents the purest example of a *victim-as-soapbox* offender, also mailing strange and threatening letters to his neighbours and former landlords. When combined with his public letters, these provided ample clues that he was the homicidal 'Son of Sam'. Next, we use the same method on Colin Ireland (4.8) and Luka Magnotta's (4.9) *victim-as-soapbox* communications, combining our conclusions with an earlier *victim-as-canvas corpus* analysis to render a final judgment. Section 4.10 (Gonzalez, Arkwright, Holmes, and Cho: *victim-as-soapbox/costume*) looks at a significant variation on *victim-as-soapbox* communications, briefly discussing the semiotic content of the costumes these four offenders wore to mark their *homicidal selves*. The chapter concludes with a review of the general findings of ETV *expressions* (4.11).

4.1 Mark David Chapman: Semiotic Breadcrumbs

This first section introduces the basics of forensic semiotics and demonstrates their application in interpreting Mark David Chapman's *expressive/transformational* progression. Whether oral, gestural, pictorial, or written, human beings inevitably communicate using *signs*: “anything that stands for something else in some determinable way.”⁴ As our *selves* arise and are negotiated through communication, these *selves* are thus inextricably linked to *signs*. For the purpose of studying the offenders in this dissertation, our focus will be confined to three types of *signs*—*icons*, *indices*, and *symbols*— concepts emerging from the Peircean school of semiotics which shares symbolic interactionism's pragmatist roots.⁵

According to Danesi, the most useful *sign* in terms of interpreting ETV communications is the *symbol*, which “stands for something in a culture-specific or conventional way.”⁶ A circle with an arrow on top pointed in the one o'clock position [$\overset{\curvearrowright}{\circ}$], for instance, is a *symbol* for maleness. As *symbols* bear no resemblance or causal relation to what they signify, we cannot know their meaning unless somebody interprets them for us on at least one occasion.^{ssssss}

This is not the case with *indices* (the plural of *index*), where “the sign relates to the object in terms of causation”⁷. Cancer of the prostate is an *index* of maleness because this disease can only occur in a biological entity which is male. Thus, where *symbols* require an interpreter, *indices* instead require an object. There are three sub-types of *indices*: *designations*, *tracks*, and *symptoms*.⁸ *Designations* are perhaps the easiest to understand, as they are *signs* which immediately signify the relevant object while nevertheless remaining distinct from it (e.g., a proper name, a finger pointing at the object in question). The sound 'Mark Chapman', for instance, is a *designation* which has an entirely different physical composition from the object it signifies. *Tracks* are *indices* which are linked to the object by a causal relationship which has already occurred. The stamps on Chapman's passport marking the countries he had visited are examples of *track indices*. As with the cancer of the prostate example, *symptoms* are *indices* which must *necessarily* co-occur with the same object, in this case they causally signify 'male biology'. One might argue that John Lennon's bullet wounds were symptomatic of Mark

^{ssssss} This can create doubt as to whether a *sign* left a crime scene is a *symbol* or not. When 'Southside Strangler' Timothy Spencer drew a figure-eight with nail polish on victim Diane Cho's hip, police recognized it as the *symbol* for 'infinity' and it was interpreted as reflecting the killer's belief that he now possessed her forever (Keppel & Birnes, 2009). Conversely, I once worked a cold case in which what appeared to be a *sign* was carved into the corpse's flesh. As neither my colleagues or I had ever seen such a *sign*, we were unable to determine whether it was a *symbol* intended to communicate a message or merely an *index* of the offender's *piquerism*.

Chapman, as Chapman and *only Chapman* was their immediate cause.

Finally, an *icon* is a “sign that stands for something by resemblance”⁹, also coming in three different varieties: *diagram*, *image*, and *metaphor*.¹⁰ *Diagrams* are related to corresponding objects as explanatory models. For instance, Figures 5 and 6 both demonstrate and explain *expressive/transformative* processes without bearing intense pictorial resemblance or exactitude to the individuals undergoing them, much in the same way that *signs* representing mathematics render abstract concepts tangible.¹¹ *Images* are easier to comprehend: they are *icons* which bear a sensory resemblance to the signified object, such as the skirtless figure on a restroom door or a phallus to 'male biology'.¹² Lastly, *icons* can also be *metaphors*¹³: in the classic English poem *Beowulf* the 'sea' is famously called the 'whale road'¹⁴—it is not *actually* a path, but it is the closest thing whales have to one.

Over a hundred years after Charles Sanders Peirce compared the study of *signs* to the investigative techniques of Poe's fictional detective C. Augustin Dupin¹⁵, the Italian-Canadian semiotician and linguistic anthropologist Marcel Danesi established forensic semiotics as a branch of criminology in his *Signs of Crime*.¹⁶ Danesi differentiates between *first-order forensic semiotics* which focus on the decoding of “facial expressions, gesture, language, and so on... to recognize deception and to identify perpetrators”¹⁷ and *second-order forensic semiotics* that “help gauge the connection among crime, fictional depictions of it, and cultural definitions and aspects of crime”¹⁸, with the latter representing much of what we discussed in the preceding two chapters. Danesi also developed Lakoff & Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)¹⁹ into Metaphor Analysis (MA)²⁰, a practical technique for interpreting a *text*—“a composition of sorts using specific kinds of signs and codes (such as a written letter or a mode of dress, and so on) that implies a certain set of interpretations”²¹. In keeping with this definition, ETV applies semiotic and logical analysis to letters, phone calls, costume, VLOGS, and crime scene tableaux as *texts*. The aggregate of an offender's *texts* is called a *corpus*. Drawing from Berkowitz's letter to journalist Jimmy Breslin, Danesi demonstrated CMT by analyzing passages of figurative language known as Metaphorical Referents and deducing their Underlying Concept using the following form:

Table 19

Metaphorical Referents/Underlying Concepts

Metaphorical Referent

“gutters, dog manure”²²

Underlying Concept

“my life is a sewage dump”²³

Danesi contends that MA encompasses (1) searching a criminal *text* for metaphors, (2) determining what themes appear consistently across the *text* and the larger *corpus* of *texts* (if such a *corpus* exists), (3) and comparing the findings to a criminal profile to ensure there is no discrepancy in their respective findings. In the following cases we pursue all three of Danesi's avenues, along with scanning the *texts* and *corpuses* for internal contradictions or variances. Besides metaphor, Danesi also advocates looking for metonymy and irony^{ttttt} in offender communications. Metonymy is the practice of using part of something to represent the whole (e.g., 'We need your *brains* on this project') or a single example to represent the many (e.g., '*The scientist* is chiefly responsible for recent progress in the West'). In these instances, 'brains' refers to the entire person and 'scientist' to the scientific community. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, irony^{uuuuuu} is “the expression of one’s meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect”²⁴ Though we take a similar approach to MA in this chapter, rather than restricting our analysis to metaphor, metonymy, and irony, we interpret a variety of relevant *signs* and linguistic devices in criminal *texts*.

The potential to make correct inferences from *signs* related to the *expressive/transformative* process is exemplified in the case of Mark David Chapman. As previously mentioned, after murdering John Lennon, Chapman waited at the crime scene to be arrested while reading a copy of *The Catcher in the Rye* which he had signed “from Holden Caulfield to Holden Caulfield”²⁵ (*SAOS*). In the police cruiser on the way to the station he also reportedly declared “I am the Catcher in the Rye.”²⁶ Back in Chapman's hotel room, investigators found his passport (ostensibly a combination of a photographic *icon-image* and *indices-tracks* in the form of travel stamps), a Holy Bible, a still from *The Wizard of Oz* showing Dorothy kissing the cowardly lion (a *symbol*), an eight-track tape of *Runt. The Ballad Todd Rundgren* the second album by the eponymous artist, photographs of Chapman with the

^{ttttt} Irony, in particular, arose as a common expression across many of the offenders in our sample.

^{uuuuuu} The most familiar example is Alanis Morissette's Top 40 hit 'Ironic' which lists numerous events the singer deems 'ironic' (e.g., rain on the day of one's wedding) which are, in fact, not; the only irony being the fundamental misunderstanding of the very topic the song is about.

Vietnamese refugees he helped at Fort Chaffee (*icons-images*), and letters of commendation (*indices-tracks*) related to this work “laid out on the dresser...”²⁷—a *text* comprised of personal and mass media *signs*. As a coherent message does not immediately leap out from this semiotic corpus, it's easy to see how such phenomena may simply be viewed as the non-sensical acts of a psychotic. In actuality, the items left at the hotel room signified Chapman's *actual/own* **The Child Nobody** (*The Wizard of Oz*), as well as the former **Good Christian** (Holy Bible) and **Captain Nemo** (commendation letters, photos of refugees) *ideal/owns*: everything that Chapman *had been*. In short, ultimately, these *signs* were all *indices* or *symbols* of who he once was. *The Catcher in the Rye* inscribed with Chapman's “from Holden Caulfield to Holden Caulfield, This is my statement”²⁸ self-dedication along with his “I am the Catcher in the Rye”²⁹ utterance represented what he had *become* after the slaying: **The Catcher homicidal ideal/own**. These acts are literally the semiotic expression of his transformation. Chapman explicitly states this in his 1992 biography:

I somehow knew that this was it, this was the day. So I laid out on the dresser at the hotel room... just a tableau of everything that was important in my life. So it would say, ‘Look, this is me. Probably, this is the real me [*actual self*]. *This is my past and I’m going, gone to another place* [emphasis added].’ I practiced what it was going to look like when police officers came into the room. It was like I was going through a door and I knew I was going to go through a door, the poet’s door, William Blake’s door, Jim Morrison’s door.^{vvvvvv} It was like I was going through a giant door. And I was. *I was leaving my past. I was leaving what I was, going into a future of uncertainty* [emphasis added]. There were tremendous feelings of Holden Caulfield and *The Catcher in the Rye*.³⁰

This statement outlines the *archetypal* Hero's journey in which the protagonist (Chapman) leaves his past life and descends “into a future of uncertainty”³¹ (i.e., chaos) to slay the corrupting 'phony' and return to society transformed as **The Catcher**.³² There is also historico-cultural significance attached to *Runt. The Ballad of Todd Rundgren* which is readily observable in the

^{vvvvvv} 'William Blake's door' refers to the author's poem *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* in which Blake writes “If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern” (Blake, c. 1793). 'Jim Morrison's door' references the name of the artist's band, The Doors, which is derived from Aldous Huxley's work *The Doors of Perception*: the author's documentation and reflection on his first mescaline trip (Huxley, 1954). Huxley took his title from Blake's poem. However, there is a second interpretation, which does not necessarily negate the first. In the song 'The End', Morrison sings of a 'killer' who rises before dawn and looks through a door, followed by the line “'Father?' 'Yes son?' 'I want to kill you. 'Mother, I want to [fuck you]’” (Morrison, Manzarek, Krieger, & Densmore, 1967). It is noteworthy that both Chapman and Rolling were fans of The Doors, having both grown up with abusive, emotionally distant fathers and codependent relationships with their mothers. Morrison's lyrics explicitly referenced Freud's Oedipal Complex.

album's title: resembling the 'The Ballad of John and Yoko' released by The Beatles as a single two years earlier in 1969. Lennon and Rundgren had a highly publicized feud in 1973 beginning with Rundgren's statement in *Melody Maker* that Lennon was seeking attention by pretending to be a revolutionary and compared him to Richard Nixon.³³ Lennon had countered with a seething reply in the same magazine the following year.³⁴

It is likely no coincidence that Chapman the 'pussy' chose a picture of Dorothy kissing the cowardly lion to depict what he once was. The cowardly lion symbolizes Chapman's *subordinated masculinity*, while the 'manly' act of killing was represented by his post-murder verbal *signs* related to the Holden Caulfield *avatar*. Though Holden does not commit murder in the novel, he is proactively involved in violent altercations and fantasizes about homicide.³⁵

Without Chapman's statements, perhaps his tableau would appear to us only as a jumbled mess of *signs*. Nevertheless, it is important not to dismiss it. By making such ostentatious displays, Chapman is, intentionally or unintentionally, revealing his interests. As humans typically wish to talk about the things they are interested in—*The Wizard of Oz*, Todd Rundgren, Chapman's work with the Vietnamese refugees, the places he had visited logged on his passport, the *Holy Bible*, and *The Catcher in the Rye*—each presents potential points of entry or segue during interrogation. Knowledge of these *signs* enable law enforcement to pick the most suitable candidate from their ranks to conduct the interview. Moreover, if the investigators are acquainted with the fundamentals of ETV, they can immediately approximate his motive, and structure the totality of their investigation accordingly. The same maxims apply to mental health professionals preparing to interact with an offender. Fortunately, in this case, Chapman was more than forthcoming.

Having outlined basic Peircean semiotics and established that accurate *expressive/transformative* analysis of homicidal communications is both possible and useful at multiple levels of inquiry, the remainder of this chapter is devoted to analyzing the *victim-as-canvas* and *victim-as-soapbox* messages left by the remaining nine offenders. Sections 4.2-4.5 are mainly devoted to the former, while 4.6-4.10 look at the latter.

4.2 Necrornoposiphilia, ETV, or Staging?

More often than one might expect^{wwwwww}, a murder victim's body is *posed*—positioned, altered, and/or decorated by the killer in order “(1) to shock the finder of the body or police investigators, and (2) for the killer's own pleasure.”³⁶ *Expressive/transformati*ve process also understands *posing* as a means of communication and identity negotiation. When contemplating the possible significance of a posed body, the investigator should first determine whether the act was *expressive/transformati*ve; *necrornoposiphilic*, in which “sexual gratification [is] derived from posing and/or decorating a corpse”³⁷; or an incidence of *staging*.

Technically, a body which has been moved in order to stage a crime scene should not be considered posed at all, as by definition, *posing* is a *signature act*.³⁸ *Staging*, on the other hand, is “a deliberate rearrangement of the crime scene to hide evidence or misdirect investigators”³⁹ and relates to the offender's modus operandi. This term has sometimes been expanded to include incidences of *posing*⁴⁰, though this is problematic as it results in a needless jingle fallacy, thus we will avoid this folly here.⁴¹ One of the most notorious examples of *staging* is the massacre of the MacDonald family at their home in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. At 3:42 a.m. on February 17, 1970, military police received a phone call from Dr. Jeffrey MacDonald, a Group Surgeon with the Green Berets, saying that he and his family had been attacked. Upon arriving at the MacDonald residence, first responders found Dr. MacDonald: face bruised and bleeding from a superficial torso-incision. The deceased bodies of his pregnant wife, Collette, and daughters, Kimberly and Kristen, showed multiple stab wounds. Above the headboard of Collette's bed, the word 'PIG' had been written in blood, echoing the Manson Family murders of the previous year. Though Dr. MacDonald spun a terrifying tale of being attacked by four intruders chanting 'acid is groovy, death to pigs', suspicion soon fell upon him, and he was convicted of the triple-homicide in 1979. MacDonald's injuries and the crime scene message had been made by the good doctor himself in order to deflect suspicion⁴²: a common motive for *staging*. We only mention *staging* here because it can be mistaken for *posing*. As identifying *staging* merits a whole other volume in itself^{xxxxxx} we will not dwell on it any further, other than to say that it

^{wwwwww} At the time of this writing I have aided in the investigation of approximately 10 cold case homicides, four of which clearly involved the posing of a victim's body.

^{xxxxxx} Dr. Laura Pettler's *Crime Scene Staging Dynamics in Homicide Cases* is particularly useful in this regard.

must always be considered as a possibility.

Unlike staging, *necrornoposiphilia* is a *signature* behaviour, though it is paraphilic rather than exclusively *expressive/transformational* (an *identity signature*). Examples of *necrornoposiphiles* are 'BTK Strangler' Dennis Rader who bound, positioned, and re-arranged the clothing on his victims' corpses⁴³; Jerry Brudos who dressed them in shoes and lingerie⁴⁴; and 'Camden Ripper' Anthony Hardy who adorned their nude corpses with devil masks^{yyyyyy}, 'Mr. Happy'^{zzzzz} socks, and baseball caps.⁴⁵ Typically, the *necrornoposiphilic* offender has previously fantasized about a living and/or dead victim posed in a tableau, encoding this image into his sexual *fantasyscape* through orgasmic conditioning.⁴⁶ Often, a more salient fetish or paraphilia is incorporated into the tableau: shoe (*retifism*) and lingerie fetishes for Jerry Brudos, and *vincilagnia*, the sexual attraction to binding, for Dennis Rader. As photographic evidence found in Jeffrey Dahmer's apartment also indicates, *necrornoposiphilia* can also be accompanied by *necromutilophilic*^{aaaaaaa} mutilation.



Figure 7. A photograph taken by Dahmer depicting the *necrornoposiphilic* posing of a victim accompanied by *necromutilophilic* decapitation.

Mellor has noted that “an important rule of thumb is that not all *expressive/transformational* posing is sexualized, but acts of *necrornoposiphilia* invariably encompass some degree of *expressive/transformational* psychological reinforcement.”⁴⁷ Stated another way, there are semiotic and cultural meanings which predispose the offender to sexualize particular acts and paraphernalia and not others. For instance, in the children's cartoon *Dudley Do Right*, images of

^{yyyyyy} As we have seen, Anthony Arkwright wore a Devil mask because he identified with the Monster/Trickster archetype. Did Hardy see his female victims as Monsters and/or Tricksters?

^{zzzzz} A character from the popular 'Mr. Men' children's books. Here the killer may be using irony to degrade his victims.

^{aaaaaaa} Mutilophilia: “Sexual arousal from the act of mutilation itself, regardless if it is perpetrated on a living person or a corpse.” (Mellor, 2016, p. 7)

Necromutilophilia: “Sexual arousal derived from the mutilation of corpses.” (Mellor, 2016, p. 7).

Nell Fenwick bound to railroad tracks emphasized the powerlessness of the attractive female and her possession by the male antagonist, Snidely Whiplash—a dynamic which sexually aroused Dennis Rader⁴⁸—enabling his *vincilagnia*.

Though far from scientifically-validated, the following markers may indicate a *necrornopositophilic* motivation for posing:

- (1) semen on or around the corpse;
- (2) evidence of sexual intercourse with the victim;
- (3) evidence of other fetishes or paraphilia;
- (4) evidence that photographs were taken; and
- (5) most crucially, whether the body was left to be discovered in a pose (*overt*), or whether such posing was *covert* and observable only to the offender (i.e., never meant to be found in the posed state)

This emphasis on identifying sexual elements distinguishes *necrornopositophilic* acts from purely *expressive/transformational* ones, which by definition, do not arouse the perpetrator.^{bbbbbb} Certainly, sexually-charged *signs* and identities are often highlighted as stigmatizing features in ETV murders, as the examples of Colin Ireland, Gertrude Baniszewski, and Stephen Farrow will demonstrate, yet they do not necessarily serve to sexually gratify the offender.⁴⁹

Having established how to discern *expressive/transformational* from *necrornopositophilic* posing and *staging*, we will now expand ETV to account for *how* and *why* these acts transform those who encounter the body, drawing from the *transformational triangle* and the work of Erving Goffman, Alfred Gell, and Julia Kristeva.

4.3 Abjection: Disturbing the Order

This first section on *victim-as-canvas posing* concentrates on the absolute fundamentals: chiefly, the repercussions of leaving a corpse where no corpses are expected to be, and how this serves to empower the offender and disrupt society.

In his classic *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman sees the physical space of the social world as being divided into *front stage* and *back stage* areas.⁵⁰ The public world is

^{bbbbbb} Once again, *necrornopositophilia* occurs when *expressive/transformational* posing sexually stimulates the offender. This means that, to an extent, we can analyze *necrornopositophilic* posing in the manner suggested in this chapter, while giving salience to the paraphilic motivations of *necrornopositophilia*. Danny Rolling might exemplify this.

essentially a series of overlapping *front stage* performances. One example given, which is particularly useful to us, is that of the funeral home. In the *front stage* of a funeral home, the embalmed and formally attired cadaver is presented in a coffin. The undertaker communicates the tone and subtly controls the proceedings. He leads the *audience*, in this case, the bereaved, through a socially defined grieving ritual. Dressing in a formal manner, offering hackneyed condolences, weeping, and the leaving of flowers are conventional *signs* communicated by the bereaved in order to mutually define the social situation. By strictly adhering to the cultural conventions of the visitation, the participants have greater *communication satisfaction*⁵¹ in a time where discord is to be avoided at all costs. The geo-social space and ritual are all very real but entail a rigidly defined performance. The *back stage* of a funeral home, on the other hand, is the space where the staff members cease to perform, and adopt a more casual air. They may tell jokes, discuss how the ceremony is going, and comment about the attendees. Crucially, the *back stage* is also where the corpses are kept and embalmed. Goffman writes of how *back stage* areas are used to conceal visceral, dirty work or acts—*butchery in a restaurant kitchen, defecation in the restrooms—and, in the funeral home, the preparation of corpses for the front stage performance.*⁵²

Julia Kristeva's^{cccccc} influential *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* presents dead bodies, butchered meat, and feces (among many other things) as examples of that which is *abject*, a concept which simultaneously means a “jettisoned object”⁵³, something that “cannot be assimilated”⁵⁴, and “what disturbs identity, systems, order.”⁵⁵ Though the term has been criticized for having too many disparate meanings, when analyzed through Goffman's lens, they make sense as an aggregate.^{dddddd} In an ETV homicide investigation, the *front stage* area is the primary crime scene where the offender poses the body and/or leaves a message, or a secondary crime scene in which a written, telephone, or electronic communication from the offender is received by another party (e.g., police, victim's family, media). With the exception of a funeral

^{cccccc} Kristeva is also a semiotician, albeit one following in the Saussurean tradition (Cobley & Jansz, 2012).

Nevertheless, the aspects of her theory of *abjection* utilized in this dissertation are compatible with Peircean semiotics.

^{dddddd} Though I use Kristeva's terminology and acknowledge the existence of the *abject*, I do not agree with her psychoanalytical interpretation as to precisely *why* something takes on the quality of becoming *abject*. Specifically, I reject the notion that it stems from the blurring of 'subject' and 'object' and is tied to the notion of the biological separation of mother and child. A far more credible explanation is that what is widely considered *abject* is tied to the spread of noxious odours and disease (e.g., feces, corpses, vomit), compounded with a violation of established cultural boundaries (Douglas 1966; Howarth, 2001). This likely serves an evolutionary purpose.

home setting (and a handful of others), the presence of a corpse in the *front stage* world disturbs the *audience's* definition of the social situation, and shakes their sense of order and identity. A non-embalmed corpse cannot be assimilated into the rigidly hygienic *front stage* because it is a *back stage* item, an *abject* which must be removed into some literal backroom as quickly as possible.

If we consider the social disruption that occurs when a dead body enters the *front stage* world, almost always unexpectedly, then we begin to understand the immediate power of an offender leaving his victim's corpse in the open. The act itself disturbs order. Kristeva would likely argue that the very division between *front stage* and *back stage* collapses entirely in this moment, or at least blurs.⁵⁶ Ultimately, whether this boundary is obliterated or trespassed is mostly semantic; what matters for our purposes is that it profoundly and often permanently upsets those who bear witness to it (*tertiary transformation*). Whether intentional or otherwise, the offender has brought *abjection* into the world. It is telling that 90% of the ETV offenders in this sample left victims' corpses in the same location where the murders occurred, while the single exception (Luka Magnotta) went a step farther, mailing body parts to the headquarters of Canadian political parties and a Vancouver school. ETV offenders typically do not hide their victims' bodies, precisely because they wish to impose them upon us.

In their study of necrophilic themes in Death Metal—arguably one of the more abrasive modern musical genres—Venkatesh et al. found that a number of Death Metal artists used images of corpses and viscera to confront listeners with their own physical precariousness and mortality.⁵⁷ They argue that, in what Joel Black refers to elsewhere as the “aesthetic world of the hyperreal”⁵⁸ or Boorstein's “thicket of unreality”⁵⁹, we have become desensitized to representations of death, consuming them as cultural products in a hubristic attempt to overcome the fear of our own mortality. Aside from the oft-cited statistic that the average American child will have viewed 200,000 violent acts and 16,000 murders on television—nearly all simulated depictions—by the age of 18⁶⁰, Venkatesh et al. note that forms of entertainment such as extreme metal music and zombie films have moved away from the cultural periphery, becoming increasingly commercialized and available.⁶¹ While we are literally bombarded with artistic simulations of death and mutilation in media, our own tangible realities have never been more sanitized. With this in mind, Black proposes that “the romantic artist-assassin has become the postmodern performance artist... the contemporary performance artist often employs bold,

aggressive means to penetrate the surrounding world of hyperreality in order to reveal the ‘[R]eal.’”⁶² When this analysis is considered alongside the findings of Death Metal ethnography, the possibility arises that an *expressive/transformational* killer is, consciously or sub-consciously, forcing the 'ugliness' of Reality into *hyperreal* simulation—a world which simultaneously envelopes him yet offers him no tenable place—by way of creating *abjection*. He is interrupting the performance in the most vulgar manner possible. Inured to media-simulated death imagery and reassured by funeral home cosmetics⁶³, the postmodern man deludes himself into thinking he has conquered his innate terror of physical destruction. By forcing Real corpses and gore into his experience, the *expressive/transformational* killer shatters this naive comfort and reawakens humanity's latent existential horror, numbed by *hyperreality*. Being of necrophilous character, and unable to overcome his own pathological fear of risk⁶⁴, the ETV offender comes to envy those who can accept uncertainty and resents them as “phonies”⁶⁵ and “frauds”⁶⁶ who inhabit a “phony society.”⁶⁷ Is it any wonder that he delights in dragging them unwillingly into his own state of perpetual dread; into Reality “red in tooth and claw”⁶⁸? This subsequent transformation of the *audience*—the people who directly encounter the victim's corpse, view crime scene photos or video, or even learn about it through news media—is *tertiary*, as it occurs sequentially after that of the killer's transformation (*primary*) and the victim's (*secondary transformation*), before feeding back into both *primary* and *secondary transformation*.

Corpses, and to an even greater extent body parts, being *abject*, intrinsically contain what the late Alfred Gell referred to as *agency*—an innate propensity to act upon the viewer.⁶⁹ This is compatible with Kristeva's definition of the *abject* as being so profoundly disturbing that we are paradoxically drawn to it. As a social anthropologist, Gell rejected both the aesthetic and semiotic analyses of art, employing an 'action-centred' approach which focuses on the “practical mediatory role of art objects in the social process.”⁷⁰ In Gell's theory, art objects do not directly connect people, rather, they influence individual members of society at a personal level, with social repercussions. This idea hinges upon the notion that art objects possess intrinsic *agency*—the ability to cause events and influence human cognition—thereby affecting social relations.⁷¹ Art objects are thus *agents* “that which performs social action”⁷² as opposed to the thing “upon which the agent acts”⁷³, termed *patients*. Being non-sentient, art objects are classified as “secondary' agents... through which primary agents^{eeeeeee} distribute their agency...”⁷⁴ to

^{eeeeeee} Gell defines *primary agents* as “intentional beings” (Gell, 1998, Location 885) such as artists.

patients.⁷⁵ Gell proposes that this occurs through *abduction*—a complicated concept present in logic and semiotics—which, for our purposes, simply means a cognitive process which exercises its *agency* by affecting the *recipient's* mind.⁷⁶ To help demonstrate how *agency* and *abduction* occur through artwork, Gell coined four terms which comprise an artistic nexus: *artist/originator*^{fffff}, *index*, *prototype*, and *recipient*. Masterfully, Gell demonstrated how, in a given incident, any of these could be either *agent* or *patient* (see Figure 8), though for the purpose of understanding ETV posing, the *patient* is always the *recipient*.

		AGENT			
		Artist	Index	Prototype	Recipient
PATIENT	Artist	Artist as source of creative act Artist as witness to act of creation	Material inherently dictates to artist the form it assumes.	Prototype controls artist's action, appearance of prototype imitated by artist. Realistic art.	Recipient cause of artist's action (as patron).
	Index	Material stuff shaped by artist's agency and intention.	Index as cause of itself: 'self-made' Index as a 'made thing'	Prototype dictates the form taken by index.	Recipient the cause of the origination and form taken by the index.
	Prototype	Appearance of prototype dictated by artist. Imaginative art.	Images or actions of prototype controlled by means of index, a locus of power over prototype.	Prototype as cause of index Prototype affected by index	Recipient has power over the prototype. Volt sorcery.
	Recipient	Recipient's response dictated by artists's skill, wit, magical powers etc. Recipient captivated.	Index source of power over recipient. Recipient as 'spectator' submits to index.	Prototype has power over the recipient. Image of prototype used to control actions of recipient. Idolatry.	Recipient as patron Recipient as spectator

Figure 8: Gell's Art Nexus

Note. Reprinted from *Art & Agency* by A. Gell, 1998. Reproduced with permission from Clarendon Press.

^{fffff} Gell used these terms interchangeably.

Most pivotal to his theory is the *index*, which both Gell and his foremost critic, Layton, considered to be consistent with Peirce's concept, although Gell referred to the plural as *indexes*⁷⁷ while Peirce preferred the more Latin *indices*.⁷⁸ Acknowledging the *index*'s inextricable place in a causal sequence, Gell described them as “material entities which motivate abductive inferences, cognitive interpretations, etc.”⁷⁹ *Prototypes* are “entities held, by abduction, to be represented in the index, often by virtue of visual resemblance, but not necessarily.”⁸⁰ Gell defined *artists* or *originators* as beings “whom are ascribed, by abduction, causal responsibility for the existence and characteristics of the index”⁸¹ while *recipients* are “those in relation to whom, by abduction, indexes are considered to exert agency, or who exert agency via the index.”⁸² So, for example, the French *artist* Jacques-Louis David was awed by the Napoleonic army triumphantly traversing the Great St. Bernard Pass in 1800 (*prototype*), rendering it into the famous painting, *Napoleon Crosses the Alps* (*index*). When he revealed the painting to Napoleon (*recipient*), the Emperor adored it (in Gell's terminology he was *abducted* by it), and commanded that three more copies be painted.⁸³ Being an *index*, *Napoleon Crosses the Alps* connects this historic military expedition, Jacques-Louis David, and Napoleon causally. Figure 9 depicts how the event's *agency* was transferred through the *artist* into the *index* to act upon the *recipient* in the manner used by Gell (with the letter 'A' representing 'Agent' and 'P' representing 'Patient'):

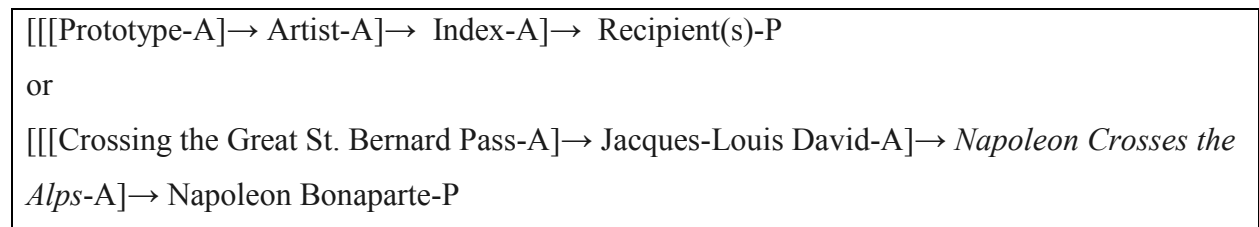


Figure 9. From Agent to Patient: David's *Napoleon Crosses the Alps*

Controversially, Gell proposed that the agency of art objects exists outside cultural convention.⁸⁴ In the years since, Layton has dispelled this notion, noting that “cultural conventions, such as the distinction between prestige and utilitarian goods, must be understood”⁸⁵ in order to grasp how “treasured items, and personal possessions can be exchanged to create and maintain social obligations...”⁸⁶ and that viewers of art objects must inevitably turn to their culture and personal experiences to accurately perceive the artist's *primary agency* through *secondary agents*.⁸⁷ In short, this requires the semiotic analysis which Gell sought to

avoid. As Gell's *Art and Agency* was published posthumously, Layton proposes that the late anthropologist likely intended to address these problems.

Sheila Harper has convincingly argued that Gell's theoretical model of agency can also be applied to corpses displayed at a funeral home. Having recorded the statements of mourners *abducted* by embalmed bodies at American and British establishments, she found that many attributed the corpse's resemblance to the living person and/or its agreeable appearance to the mortician's skill.⁸⁸ Conceptualizing the mortician as the *artist*, the “pre-deceased”⁸⁹ as the *prototype*, the embalmed “dead body”⁹⁰ as the *index*, and the mourners as *recipients*, Harper was able to formulate how the mourners abducted the *agency* of the mortician through the corpse:



Figure 10. Harper's Agent to Patient Via Corpse

Note. Reprinted from “The Social Agency of Dead Bodies” by S. Harper, 2010, *Mortality*, 15(4), 314, 2010, by S. Harper. Reproduced with permission from S. Harper.

Harper also considered instances when mourners' statements indicated that this *agency* originated from the pre-deceased, conceptualizing it accordingly:



Figure 11. Harper's Patient to Patient Via Corpse

Note. Reprinted from “The Social Agency of Dead Bodies” by S. Harper, 2010, *Mortality*, 15(4), 314, 2010, by S. Harper. Reproduced with permission from S. Harper.

If a mortician can exercise *agency* through a dead body in order to *abduct recipients*, then it logically follows that a murderer can do the same. When interpreting an ETV crime scene using Gell's theory, the corpse is the *G index*^{ggggggg}, the murderer is the *originator*^{hhhhhhh}, and the *recipients* are those who stumble upon and/or process the crime sceneⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ.⁹³ The crucial difference lies in the *prototype* and its relation to motivation. The mortician, whose task is to make the *G index* resemble the pre-deceased as accurately as possible, will thus use the pre-deceased as the *prototype*. He does so because his motivation is to *abduct the recipients* in a manner which elicits a positive response (e.g., peacefulness, fondness, acceptance, closure). The

^{ggggggg} From this point on, Gellian *indexes* will be differentiated from Peircean *indexes* by adding a 'G': '*G Index*'
^{hhhhhhh} I will use this term instead of 'artist'.

ⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ As a crime scene can be conveyed through leaked photographs or verbal descriptions to the entire planet, theoretically the entire human race can be *recipients*.

expressive/transformational offender, on the other hand, has the opposite motivation: he seeks to disrupt order, disgust, and terrify. In short, he wishes to exercise *agency* through *abjection*. While leaving a victim's body in an unsanctioned *front stage* area is already *abject*, transforming the *G indexical* corpse into something which bears no resemblance to the pre-deceased *prototype* is even more *abject*. Worse, the murderer may intentionally decide to model the corpse *index* after a *prototype* of *abjection* itself (e.g., a mass of intestines). Even for *recipients* who did not know the victim in life, such a malicious use of *agency* threatens to traumatically *abduct* their minds and emotions forevermore. Here, Gell's theory—augmented by those of Goffman and Kristeva—comes to resemble the *transformational triangle*.

During *primary transformation* the corpse *indices* acted upon Rolling, Arkwright, and Magnotta (the *originators*) by signifying the killers' personal step toward their renegotiated *homicidal ideal/owns*. Consistent with symbolic interactionist theory, *primary transformation* also uses the corpse *index* as a vehicle for the killer's *agency*, shaping the perception of the offender/*originator* in the eyes of the *recipients* by making them fear, hate and/or struggle to understand him. In the same way that a painter's skill leads us to conclude that he is a genius (or, at least, a 'real' or 'talented' artist), a murderer's ability to *abduct* us through *abjection* also affects our concept of him. This is precisely why an ETV offender exercises *agency* in the first place. Seeking to comprehend the unknown perpetrator of Anthony Arkwright's murders, Detective Inspector Bob Meek recalled that the police force were asking themselves “What have we got? What is this man? Is he a man? Is he a human being? We just didn't know what we were dealing with.”⁹⁴ Rolling and Magnotta provoked similar responses.

Secondary transformation (transformation of the victim) renders the victim unwhole, dehumanizing them into *abject G indexes* (or *G indexical abjects*, if you prefer): “For all the world you weren't looking at someone who'd been a human being. It didn't look real. Didn't look as though it was a human being on the floor in that state.”⁹⁵ Though employing the same mechanism, this is the opposite of the role of the undertaker (the *originator*) who seeks to soothe the bereaved (his *recipients*) by making a corpse (his *index*) appear dignified and resembling the person in life (the *prototype*).⁹⁶ Rather, all three murderous *originators* drew from the cultural *prototype* that disembodied pieces of a human being are *abject*, and replicated that *prototype* in the form of *G indexes* to *abduct* whoever found them. In the case of Rolling and Arkwright, they had no idea who was going to discover the body, but knew that eventually the police would need

to see it. Through the use of digital media and the internet, Luka Magnotta ensured that potentially the whole world (including this author) were *recipients*. This use of malicious *agency* is outlined in the following formula:

[[[ETV killer-A]→ Abjection-A]→ Mutilated corpse-A]→ Those who view mutilated corpse-P
--

Figure 12. Killer as Agent to Corpse Viewers as Patient

which is represented abstractly as

[[[Originator-A]→ Prototype-A]→ Index-A]→ Recipient(s)-P
--

Figure 13. Abstraction of Killer as Agent to Corpse Viewers as Patient

In conceptualizing the *recipients* as *patients* we refer to the *tertiary transformation* of ETV—transformation of the *audience/recipients*—in which the *index's abduction* changes the emotional state/stability, world concept, attitude toward the offender, attitude toward the victim, and possibly even the identity of whoever views the crime scene. Unsurprisingly, this method is very effective, as attested by the statements of those who witnessed it. One civilian who encountered the body of Arkwright victim Marcus Law said:

I went into [the] room, like, and I saw Marcus disemboweled, laid on floor. It were *shocking* [emphasis added]. Tony, from what I can make out, he must have slow tortured Marcus. He done some bad shit to Marcus. *It's the most horrific thing that I've ever seen. I've never been to a doctor about it, but I still have bad dreams about what I saw* [emphasis added].⁹⁷

Detective Michael Burdis referred to the Ford homicide as “a most grotesque attack”⁹⁸ and the Law crime scene as “pretty horrendous”⁹⁹ adding that “very few officers had ever seen the sort of injuries that Marcus Law had suffered.”¹⁰⁰ Arkwright’s lawyer, Steve Smith, stated “I don’t think I’ve ever dealt with a case which reached the depths of such human depravity.”¹⁰¹

This echoes American criminal profiler Anthony Meoli who stated that the Rolling crime scene photographs were the most horrific he had ever come across.¹⁰²

I examined the crime scene photos at the Alachua County Courthouse in 2009. I had made a formal request from their records officer and viewed the two books which included observatory exterior photos as well as the actual crime scene photos. There are literally over 350 photos in these two books, all in color. *My reaction to the photos was one of shock* [emphasis added]. While I had personally interviewed Danny in 2003, *it was hard to understand... the brutal nature of what was seen* [emphasis added].¹⁰³

The same observations were made by one Robert Blecker, a specialist in capital punishment, who “saw the crime scene photos for hours... *It was horrifying* [emphasis added]. He posed all the bodied [sic] pornographically, each one.”¹⁰⁴ Though he had not personally viewed the crime scene photographs, journalist Jeff Weinsier claims he “talked to several *people who have who actually needed counseling after seeing the photos* [emphasis added], very graphic photos, *things in your wildest minds that you couldn't even think of* [emphasis added]...”¹⁰⁵ After attending Rolling's trial, author Mary Ryzuk wrote “The jurors were grim. Some looked revolted. Many cried at the sight of the gruesome photos, heads in hands. One man appeared to be fighting tears for the rest of the day.”¹⁰⁶

Similarly, in an article for the *Toronto Sun*, a reporter who had attended the Luka Magnotta trial described the '1 Lunatic 1 Icepick' video as “*beyond disgusting. It is revolting and sickening. And it took much self control not to leave the contents of an ill-considered lunch on the courthouse floor* [emphases added].”¹⁰⁷ According to the *Toronto Star*, Denis Mainville of the Montreal Police Service major crimes unit described the murder of Jun Lin as the “*more* [sic] *horrible case* [emphasis added] he's seen in his 29-year career. On a scale of one to 10, he said, 'I would put it at a 10.’”¹⁰⁸ Regarding the video, Mainville stated that “These are images that stay in your head for a very long time.”¹⁰⁹ Conservative Party spokesman Fred DeLorey added that after the parcel was opened by director of political operations Ms. Jenni Byrne, “it was such a *horrible* odour I'm sure *many of us will not forget it* [emphases added].”¹¹⁰ Perhaps most severely affected was Jun Lin's own mother who stated “The most unbearable pain for me is that the video got posted on the Internet. People watched it over and over and over. It's like my son is being murdered again and again... This heinous crime happened in Canada. It's made me reconsider what kind of place this is.”¹¹¹ The fact that a single *expressive/transformativ*e murder could cause people to question the fundamental nature of a relatively safe society is a testament to the power of a perfectly depraved *sign* to *abduct* the recipients.

Having looked at how Gell's theory of art, augmented by Kristeva and Goffman, explains an ETV offender's capacity to primitively incite personal and social change, the following sections will delve deeper into understanding *expression* through *victim-as-canvas* activities. Specifically, through *posing* the body of his victim, the offender can (1) *increase abjection*, by further violating or intentionally inverting social conventions as to how a corpse should be

displayed in death, and/or (2) *communicate a message* to whoever beholds the tableau.ⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ The next section explores the first.

4.4 Increasing Abjection

Offenders will sometimes emphasize *increasing abjection* or *communicating a message* in their *posing*, though these may occur in tandem. This section uses the established theoretical framework to examine incidences in which ETV offenders have clearly *increased abjection*.

Danny Rolling claims that after murdering his third Gainesville woman, Christa Hoyt, he returned to the crime scene an hour later to search for his lost wallet.¹¹² Though Rolling had already cut off Hoyt's nipples and eviscerated her, once back inside her apartment, he decided to “leave them something to think about”¹¹³, further *increasing abjection*. After slicing off Hoyt's head, he placed it on a shelf “so that anyone who came into that apartment... that would be the first thing they'd see.”¹¹⁴ Rolling then propped Hoyt's headless corpse up in a sitting position on her bed, later claiming it “resembled ‘The Thinker,’ [a statue] fashioned by Rodin, the famous artist of the roaring twenties.”¹¹⁵ As the relevance of 'The Thinker' to the victim and perpetrator is completely unclear, we must assume Rolling posed the body in this fashion for purely aesthetic reasons, adding the artistic reference after the fact to create the false impression that he was cultured. In actuality, his message was simple and carnal—'BOO!'—but the *abjection* was extreme.

Contemplating this gruesome tableau, one wonders why Hoyt was rendered more *abject* than Rolling's other victims. Let's begin by considering the sentence “leave them [*recipients*] something to think about”¹¹⁶. Who, specifically, does 'them' refer to? Given Rolling's history of animosity toward law enforcement and the fact that the only people mandated to 'think about' the crime scene were the investigators themselves, 'them' is most likely the police. Furthermore, as an employee of the Alachua Sheriff's Department, Hoyt was one of 'them'. According to several sources, the victim's police hat and a photo of her in uniform were easily observable inside the home—a place where Rolling had spent considerable time.¹¹⁷ The possibility thus arises that Rolling maximized the *abjection* of Christa Hoyt as a double-exacting of “revenge”¹¹⁸; revenge against the archetypal attractive brunette who had rejected him *and* the generalized 'police' who

ⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ Actually, one does not even have to visibly experience the tableau to receive this message. Written and oral accounts of the scene convey the same message.

had oppressed him since childhood. Through *primary transformation*, his *self-concept* was enhanced to the extent that he rendered his victim *abject* through *secondary transformation*. Knowing that her body would act as an *index on recipients* from law enforcement increased Rolling's *agency* further. This will to power comprised a pivotal component of his **Mystery Rider** *ideal/self*—the cold-hearted wandering Outlaw they should have killed while they had the chance.

British serial killer Anthony Arkwright went even further, employing mutilation and evisceration to *increase the abjection* at his crime scenes, creating hideous tableaux that fulfilled his goal of haunting the minds of those who beheld them. According to DCI Michael Burdis, “Raymond Ford had been savagely attacked. The whole of his intestines had been removed and he'd suffered about 250 stab wounds. Two knives had been used and one of them had broken inside and the other one was left in the... body cavity.”¹¹⁹ PC David Winter described the charnel scene upon discovering the body of Raymond Ford as follows:

The television was on, and the heating was on. There was no lighting. So I made my way through, into the corridor and there was all sorts of things on the floor. And there was blood on the walls. And so then I opened the bedroom door, and I thought there was this pile of clothes in the corner. And when I looked behind the corner you could see that there was a body under it. And all the bits and pieces that was in the corridor in the hallway, that was all his organs. He'd removed just about every organ in his body.¹²⁰

The most extreme case of *increasing abjection* in our study is the murder and corpse desecration of Jun Lin—perpetrated and recorded on video by Luka Magnotta and posted online under the title '1 Lunatic 1 Icepick' at bestgore.com, so that it could reach a global audience. The following description is based on the author's own observations while viewing '1 Lunatic 1 Icepick'.

In the 10 minute and 28 second video—set to the music of New Order's 1987 hit “True Faith”^{kkkkkkk}—Magnotta can be seen straddling a nude male who is bound and gagged, with his face covered. Movement of the victim's legs indicates that he is still alive. The video then cuts to Magnotta standing over the corpse of a second victim^{lllllll}, Jun Lin, who like the first victim, is

^{kkkkkkk} This song is featured on the *American Psycho* soundtrack, although the lyrics contain a message which seems to reflect personal transformation: “I feel so extraordinary/something's got a hold on me/I get this feeling I'm in motion/a sudden sense of liberty/I don't care 'cause I'm not there/And I don't care if I'm here tomorrow/Again and again I've taken too much/Of the things that cost you too much” (Gilbert, Hague, Hook, Morris, & Sumner, 1987).

^{lllllll} It is not apparent by watching the highly edited video that the victims were different individuals in separate

lying supine on the same bed. Using an icepick, Magnotta stabs Lin's torso and covered face approximately 100 times.^{mmmmmmmm} The video then zooms in to show the cluster of wounds. Magnotta removes the clothing covering Lin's visage, revealing his slashed throat. There are several stab wounds to his eyeball. In the same shot, the camera pans down to the corpse's right thigh which Magnotta proceeds to slash several times with a knife, before inflicting similar injuries to Lin's right arm and left thigh. Next, '1 Lunatic 1 Icepick' transitions to a shot of Lin's decapitated head in a cardboard box as Magnotta rolls it around playfully.

The following scene shows the victim's headless corpse now lying prone on the bed. Brandishing the knife, Magnotta begins to saw through the right shoulder, creating a gaping wound. He then carves several striations into the corpse's back. The video cuts to a point of view shot in which Magnotta is using the victim's disembodied arm to caress Magnotta's own crotch. The next cut shows the victim's headless body, now supine, with arms and legs dismembered at the shoulder and mid-thigh as the camera explores the amputated wounds. Only the lower left leg is still visible, though it is difficult to determine whether it remains joined, partially-joined, or completely separated from the upper portion. The video then cuts to footage of the body in the same physical condition, now lying prone, with a fully clothed Magnotta mounting it and thrusting his pelvis repeatedly against the anus as if sodomizing it.

In the next edit, Magnotta carves a chunk of flesh from the victim's left buttock with utensils, and then briefly displays it skewered on a fork. Magnotta steps out of frame and returns, placing a black and white puppy near the bloody stump of the victim's left leg. The dog begins licking the wound. The scene then jumps to Magnotta repeatedly thrusting a wine bottle into the victim's mutilated anus. The final video sequence shows Magnotta lying on his back nude, using the victim's severed arm to masturbate: a PPSA (partialist post-mortem sex act¹²¹). A series of stills of Jun Lin's mutilated head and body conclude the video.

Following the creation of the video, Magnotta mailed a package containing the victim's left foot to the headquarters of the Canadian Conservative Party in Ottawa, a parcel with the left hand to the Liberal Party headquarters¹²², and two packages containing the right appendages to St. George's School and False Creek Elementary School in Vancouver.¹²³

incidents. This revelation only surfaced during Magnotta's trial and may add credence to the 'Chinese bottom' victim hypothesis.

^{mmmmmmmm} Some sources claim there were much fewer stab wounds. Having watched the video at least 10 times, I recommend that you take my word for it.

Rolling, Arkwright, and Magnotta were *originators* of *abject G indexes*—the severed head and mutilated body of Christa Hoyt, pieces of Raymond Ford in the form of internal organs, and the dismembered hands and feet of Jun Lin. Each of these *G indexes* acted as *agents* upon the *recipients* who beheld them, provoking a negative emotional reaction and perhaps even trauma.

Rolling, Magnotta, and Arkwright also posed their victims in a manner which forced the discovering party to *reveal abjection*—an act of ETV in which the killer temporarily conceals a victim's corpse, or parts of a victim's corpse, either (i) to unexpectedly confront the discoverer with something profoundly disturbing (shock), or (ii) to force the discoverer to unveil something they already suspect will be profoundly disturbing (the psychological equivalent of pulling a rusty nail from one's foot). Magnotta's mailing of packages containing body parts to unsuspecting political parties and schools evidences the former, as does Rolling's placement of Christa Hoyt's severed head in view of the front door. Similarly, nearly 30 years earlier, the largely overlooked American serial killer William Dean Christensen stowed the head of victim Sylvie Trudel in an oven in his Montreal apartment, then fled back to the United States, leaving his landlords to make a gruesome discovery.¹²⁴

In an example of the second type of *revealing abjection*, Anthony Arkwright arranged for the discoverer of Raymond Ford to navigate a hallway strewn with internal organs in order to reach a pile of clothes concealing Ford's body.¹²⁵ As if the trail of blood and guts was not harrowing enough, PC David Winter was obligated to follow it into the proverbial 7th circle of Hell to unveil the victim's hollowed body. Writing of the unsolved Christine Jessop murder in his award-winning *Redrum: The Innocent*, author Kirk Makin offered the following telling description:

This was hardly a cunningly concealed body... The ripped shirt, the position of Christine's legs and the location of the ripped pants and underpants indicated the poor thing had been sexually assaulted on the spot... *[T]he ball of clothing was chilling. There was little doubt it would contain the little girl's head* [emphasis added].¹²⁶

The offender is thus able to make first responders knowingly inflict psychological harm on themselves.

The Rolling, Arkwright, Magnotta, and Christensen cases are examples of effective *increasing abjection* at a crime scene. The *abduction* occurs through pure horror, resulting in the

recipients being intimidated, baffled, or terrified of the *originator* (murderer) and sickened by and repelled by the *G index* (victim).

4.5 Decoding the Message

While the last two sections have dwelled almost exclusively on the use and role of *abjection* in *primary*, *secondary*, and *tertiary transformation*, this section utilizes semiotic analysis to decipher message-focused *victim-as-canvas* communications, allowing us to make accurate inferences about the perpetrator. In each case, the offender's victimology—whether he is *killing up* or *killing down*—is an indispensable component, as the people we encounter in day to day life constitute *signs* themselves with various *symbolic*, *indexical*, and *iconic* associations.

With the exception of Christa Hoyt, Danny Rolling consistently left his victims in *message emphasis* poses all-to-familiar to homicide detectives. Of the Larson-Powell double-homicide, Tony Meoli says “Both bodies were posed... and placed in a way to humiliate them further (legs spread apart).”¹²⁷ Ryzuk gives a similar but more elaborate account of the posing of Sonja Larson and Christina Powell:

[Rolling] posed Christina lewdly and slid one of her school notebooks under her head... spread out on the living room floor, face up with her breastsⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿ removed... [Sonja] had on panties. He cut them off... He placed Sonja on top of the comforter on her bed... He pulled her down to the end of the bed, placing her at the foot of the mattress. He left her spread out, lying on her back with her legs bent at the knees and her feet on the floor hanging over the side at a ninety degree angle.”¹²⁸

Meoli and Ryzuk offer near identical descriptions of the posing of Tracy Paules. To quote Meoli: “Danny... dragged [Tracy] out to the main hallway of the apartment... and he... [left] her posed and legs spread.”¹²⁹ According to Ryzuk: “[H]e dragged her body into the hallway between the bathroom and living room, where he posed her in a lewd, spread-out position.”¹³⁰ The most detailed description of the posing of Julie Grissom's body in Shreveport is offered by Philpin and Donnelly: “[Julie Grissom] was displayed on the bed. Her body was in the same position as Sonja Larson's body—dragged down to the edge of the bed, legs bent over at the knees over the edge, feet touching the floor, hair spread out like a fan.”¹³¹ In summary, in all but one of the murders Rolling perpetrated on his female victims—the Hoyt grotesquery—he left them naked from the waist down with their legs splayed. Although those who provided us with detailed

ⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿ Every other source I consulted states that Powell's nipples, *not* her entire breasts, were excised.

descriptions of the crime scenes have ascribed motives to the *posing* (i.e., 'to humiliate them further') along with judgment-laden adjectives (i.e., 'lewd'), it is necessary for us to consider these posings minus their descriptors in order to determine their meanings.⁰⁰⁰⁰⁰⁰ The question then is “what is conveyed by the *sign* of a woman with splayed legs?” First, it draws attention to a specific, usually concealed, body part—the genitalia—over all other anatomical features. As a *sign*, the vagina represents (i) a means of identifying its owner as a biological female (*index* or *icon*), (ii) the locus of the owner's sexuality (*index* or *symbol*), (iii) an origin of urine, menstrual blood, and other discharge (*index*), (iv) venereal disease (*index*), (v) an orifice from which a newborn emerges (*index*), or (vi) an anatomical area which the norms of Western culture dictate should be kept private/obfuscated (*symbol*). Obviously, there is no point in accentuating any of these semiotic associations unless there is a relevant secondary idea attached to them. The vagina as a *sign* of being female, for instance, may be accentuated to show that the offender murdered a victim precisely *because* she was a woman, indicating misogyny. The case for this is strong considering none of Rolling's three male victims were posed. Moreover, sexuality—particularly female sexuality—has historically been associated with impurity, sin, moral decadence, hedonism, and the like; a cultural stigma that survives in many forms today. Therefore, this accentuation of the vagina may not be restricted to 'I killed a woman because I hate women' but could also extend to (i) 'I raped and killed this woman, robbing her of her chastity' or (ii) 'I killed this woman because I hate her for her sexual impurity', or (iii) 'this woman wields power over me because I desire her sexually, therefore I raped and/or killed her to strip her of this power', or (iv) 'women are teases and temptresses so I killed this whore because I hate her for making me desire her (and potentially luring me into sin).' Of course, the second, third, and fourth motives are by no means mutually exclusive, and may be combined into (v) 'women, like and including this one, are sexually impure teases and temptresses who wield power over me because I desire them sexually (potentially luring me into sin), therefore I have raped and killed this woman to strip her of this power and punish her.' As Rolling did not rape Sonja Larsen but posed her similarly, the salience of sexual assault is unlikely to play a large role in this message. Instead, (vi) 'women, like and including this one, are sexually impure teases and temptresses who wield power over me because I desire them sexually (potentially luring me into sin), therefore I have killed this woman to strip her of this power and punish her' is more likely, especially in light of inmate Paul Fuqua's

⁰⁰⁰⁰⁰⁰ This does not necessarily indicate a refutation of their interpretations.

claim that Rolling said “The reason I sliced them up is because they were too pretty for anybody and I can't stand that. I made it so they weren't so pretty anymore.”¹³² This would explain the juxtaposition of emphasized genitals and intense *abjection*: the victim's sexual power is negated because her attractiveness has been inverted.

Naturally, the vagina's *indexical* associations with urine, menstrual blood, and especially venereal disease can also augment this narrative. According to scripture in the Abrahamic religions, contact with menstrual blood renders a man impure (Leviticus 20:18, King James Version). Venereal disease, on the other hand, saddles him with an embarrassing (sometimes grotesque or fatal) contagion which may lead to conflicts with future sexual partners or outright rejection if disclosed. Pertinently, Rolling remarked that his first sexual partner “was not very clean, and it took a month to get the smell off him.”¹³³ Thus, these additions can be easily added into any combination of associations 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Comparatively, the association with child birth does not necessarily lend itself to *stigma*, so in the absence of other evidence pointing to this association, it should not be considered. Another possibility is that by revealing a semiotically-laden private area to the public, the offender is stripping away the victim's 'disguise of decency' to confront the world with her perceived impurity (whether moral or medical) and power of seduction. So, when Meoli states that the offender sought “to humiliate them further”¹³⁴ by spreading their legs, he is correct^{PPPPPP}, but—with the exception of the 'robbery-of-privacy-and-nothing-else' motive—this explanation limits the full scope of the cultural associations which bely this degradation. The victim is degraded not just because her genitals have been exposed, but because this anatomical exposure also draws attention to the stigma(s) associated with them, whether real or perceived, revealing Goffman's “blemishes of individual character.”¹³⁵

As Rolling relegated his ETV communications to tableaux, we have only his *victim-as-canvas expressions* alongside his *paraphilic signatures* and m.o. from which to formulate an offender profile. Firstly, the offender is sexually-capable of raping multiple female victims yet he displays their sexuality like a proverbial scarlet letter. This, combined with the consistency of his

^{PPPPPP} It is impossible to *actually* humiliate a dead person. The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'humiliate' as “Make (someone) feel ashamed and foolish by injuring their dignity and pride” (Humiliate [Def 1], n.d.). One can not feel ashamed, foolish, or injured without being sentient. However, as the *originator* and/or *recipients* may falsely believe that the soul, spirit, or consciousness of a victim endures after death to perceive their corporeal degradation, then this motive certainly arises.

intended victims' appearances—attractive petite brunettes—increases the probability that he was once romantically-interested or involved with a female fitting this description: the victims are *icons* of another woman. His criminal sophistication and disturbing tableaux hint that he has a prior criminal record for break and enter, burglary, and/or sexual assault. Considering these inferences in light of one another, a portrait of a lone, embittered heterosexual ex-con reeling from a failed love life emerges. The *expressive/transformative* nature of his crimes supports this: he is clearly striking out against the injustices inflicted on a former *ideal* or *actual self* while announcing a 'criminal superstar' *homicidal self*. These features, combined with the high-risk nature of his crimes, evidences a psychopathic personality. Unfortunately, as Rolling focused on *abjection* and repeated the same pose, these are the only conclusions we can formulate about him: hardly useful given his transient lifestyle.

In another example of *message emphasis* posing, Colin Ireland stuffed condoms into the nose and mouth of his first victim's corpse, placed two teddy bears^{qqqqqqq} in a '69' position next to the body, and covered the scene with a duvet.¹³⁶ Here we are presented with a more complex *text*, consisting of *signs* positioned in relation to one another, which must be analyzed and interpreted. For the purposes of analysis, each *act* or *object* in the tableau will be numbered, and when considered in relation to each other, will be joined by a “+” and underlined: e.g., 1+2. The question we must answer first is *how* Ireland went about presenting his message and *what* that message was intended to be. Beginning with the *how*, the acts should be noted individually: (1) The covering with (2) a duvet, of (3) a homosexual male victim, with (4) condoms (5) inserted into the victim's nose and mouth, and (6) teddy bears (7) placed in a '69' sexual position (8) against his body.¹³⁷

Typically the covering of a body serves (i) as either a ritualistic act of *undoing*, in which the offender does not want to look at his victim's body and/or wishes to prevent others from looking at what he has done¹³⁸ or (ii) is intended to delay the discovery of the corpse, which relates to m.o.^{rrrrrr} The Ireland case is unique because the accompanying derogatory acts (4+5, 6+7+8) indicate an absence of remorse. Though Ireland did not comment on the covering of the body in this case, we can presume that his motivation was (1) either to shock whoever

^{qqqqqqq} William Dean Christensen also placed a plush toy on the body of Michelle Angiers: a Go-Go dancer he had murdered in Scranton, Pennsylvania (Mellor, 2012). No further details have been published.

^{rrrrrr} Though it is of little consequence in this case, other descriptions have stated that the plush toys were placed on top of the duvet—where the sexualized teddy bears would also serve as *indices*, drawing attention to the corpse.

discovered the corpse by forcing them to *reveal abjection*, (2) because he was somewhat necrophobic^{sssssss}, or (3) both. Ireland did not cover his subsequent victims. Some sources claim that he (1) placed a doll (2) on top of the nude corpse of his third victim, Perry Bradley III.¹³⁹ Ireland also symbolically posed fourth victim, Andrew Collier, by (1) pulling a condom over (2) the tail of his murdered cat, and another (3) on Collier's penis, then (4) positioning the cat in a '69' position on Collier's body with its tail in Collier's mouth and its mouth on Collier's penis.

Having parsed out and numbered the relevant *signs*, we must now establish a method for correctly interpreting them.^{tttttt} First, when analyzing *signs* such as condoms, teddy bears, dolls, and cats which are incorporated into a tableau, it is prudent to ascertain whether these objects were brought to the crime scene by the offender, or if they were already there. In every one of the Ireland murders they belonged to the victim. This indicates that the offender did not pre-meditatively bring any *sign* to the crime scene, rather he used semiotic objects he found in the victims' residences to communicate his message. On the surface, this seems simply indicative of improvisation. In actuality, it is crucial to our interpretation of the meaning of certain objects. For instance, teddy bears, dolls, and cats are generally associated with concepts such as 'innocence' or 'cuteness' and their arrangement in a '69' position could therefore be interpreted as representing a perversion of innocence, or a likening of homosexuality to pedophilia. If Ireland had brought these items to the crime scene, there would be a much stronger case for this as he had pre-selected them specifically for their semiotic associations. Instead, they might have been the only anthropomorphic objects in the victim's apartment, making the fact that they were teddy bears, dolls, or cats incidental.^{uuuuuuuu} In any event, acts 4+5 and 6+7+8 in the Walker murder and 1+2+3+4+5 in Collier are all undeniably sexual. Given the manner and context in which they were applied, they are *symbols* of the victim's perceived deviance as a homosexual, seeming to link homosexuality to child molestation.

With this established, let us now consider Ireland's emphasis on homosexual deviance

^{sssssss} Regarding this second possibility, Ireland commented "I think that affected me mentally to quite a degree.

Sitting in with these bodies for sort of like five or six hours on some occasions. Watching them gradually sort of get blue and blotchy and cold... I don't think I could cope with it to be honest. Deal with it too well" (Joseph Green, 2015, August 9).

^{tttttt} Of equal importance is the ability to determine those rare instances when we CANNOT interpret them, as a failure to do so will result in the futile pursuit of a blind lead.

^{uuuuuuuu} I suspect that in this particular case the teddy bears and dolls were chosen for their symbolic meanings, regardless. This is due to Ireland's association of male homosexuality with child molestation as evidenced in Chapter 3.

next to his m.o. and *signature* in order to complete the picture. If one's anger is “truly triggered by male deviancy”¹⁴⁰ we must ask the rather obvious question: why did Ireland actively immerse himself in it? The most obvious answer is that he had some existential connection to it. His multiple accounts of alleged near-misses with molestation is a screaming clue, one that is revealed to us in the perversion of *symbols* of innocence. Now consider the burning of his victims' testicles and pubic hair, the flagellation of nude men, and the intimate proximity of strangling or suffocating them. These are all *indices* of sexual sadism.¹⁴¹ When placing Ireland's *identity signatures* next to his *paraphilic signatures* in the context of his m.o. and victimology a plausible answer emerges: Ireland may have been an ego-dystonic bisexual suffering from a paraphilic disorder known as sexual sadism.¹⁴² Whether he became bisexual because he was molested or was born bisexual and attributed the cause to sexual abuse is unknowable, at least at this point. Thus, he probably linked the men who victimized him to extremely deviant male homosexuality. By murdering these victims, Ireland may have been able to achieve sexual gratification through intimacy with a man, while simultaneously destroying members of the sexual group he perceived as responsible for his own molestation and his resulting bisexual *discreditable identity*.¹⁴³ Perhaps it goes even deeper: he murdered representations of male homosexual submission and weakness—the shameful personification of Ireland himself as a passive, sexually exploited child. In such ways, Ireland may have exercised his bisexuality (associated with *subordinated masculinity*) while simultaneously refuting it with homophobic violence. As he would have been either incapable of admitting this to himself or others, he shifts the focus to the *serialkiller! self—sub-hegemonic* in its masculinity, and newsworthy (relevant).

Victimology also reveals that the victims Ireland left in a sexual pose, Walker and Collier, had both been diagnosed HIV positive. Though Ireland admitted to posing the bodies upon discovering medical papers, for some reason Collier bore the brunt of his anger: “I think Collier was the only one I was angry with in a funny way. He was the only one I got cross with. And you probably noticed that in the way the body was found. I felt real anger towards him.”¹⁴⁴ Ireland's reaction upon finding the documents was understandably absurd: “That annoyed me. *I was the killer [homicidal ideal/own] and he had AIDS [emphasis added]... he didn't tell me about this, he didn't warn me [trigger] – could have been me in 5 years [emphasis added]... I went fucking crazy.*”¹⁴⁵ SDT accounts for his reaction. 'Being able to kill the unsuspecting other', 'secrecy', and 'callousness' were all important aspects of Ireland's **Perfect Serial Killer homicidal**

ideal/own, and the revelation that Collier was similarly using these tactics against him activated an *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy resulting in furious frustration. To “increase”¹⁴⁶ the “thrill of killing”¹⁴⁷, but also to leave *indices* of his own manly violence and re-establish Collier's *sub-hegemonic* victimhood *status*, Ireland strangled his cat and positioned it on him in the '69' pose to leave him “no dignity in death.”¹⁴⁸ Indeed, this *secondary transformation* makes it extremely difficult to think of the victim without mentally picturing him in a sexual pose with his cat.

Obviously, by leaving *overt* and complex *expressive/transformational* messages, Ireland placed a great deal of importance in the *tertiary transformation* of the investigating officers. Like every other *victim-as-canvas* offender (Rolling, Magnotta, Arkwright), this reflects his documented interest in Hero Culture. Candidly detailing his motives for posing his victims, Ireland explained:

I wanted to know how you would react when you came across the scene. You're not thinking normally when you do something like this. But it was almost like a signature – to almost let you know I'd been there. I was reaching that point – you know where you feel you have to set up a stage each time.¹⁴⁹

Exemplifying symbolic interactionism, Ireland used his 'Me' to call out for the reaction he anticipated in the *other*, even acting out a scenario for himself: “I remember sort of with Walker and with Collier standing by the bed and saying 'Well what do you think of this sergeant so-and-so?' 'I don't know sir.' As if how you would react when you came in and saw it.”¹⁵⁰ In a remarkable example of literary criminology, Ireland, who admitted to watching police procedurals and reading about serial killers, was emulating a trope associated with *serialkillers!* but rarely seen in actual cases of serial homicide: creating an exotic tableau. Though Ireland aspired to be the consummate and professional **Perfect Serial Killer**—cleaning up his crime scenes and leaving almost no physical evidence whatsoever—he felt mandated to exhibit a *signature* as a convention of the *archetypal serialkiller!* narrative he was enacting.^{vvvvvvv} As the self-cast antagonist, he saw it as his role to leave intriguing puzzles for the Hero protagonists to ponder. Like the paraphilic offenders mentioned in Chapter 1 who assume both the role of perpetrator and victim in their auto-erotic practices¹⁵¹, Ireland was taking the perspective of the *other* in order to determine what their response would be.¹⁵² His *expression* might thus be said to

^{vvvvvvv} Ironically, Ireland had already left numerous *signatures* in the specific forms of torture he had inflicted upon his victims, though he didn't seem to realize it.

have a function, then, enjoining himself and law enforcement in opposing roles which correspond to an *archetypal* narrative.

In summary, through the semiotic interpretation of these *signature* behaviours and victimology, it is hypothetically possible to deduce that the offender is a homophobic bisexual or homosexual (and thus ego-dystonic and almost certainly closeted) with a paraphilic disorder known as sexual sadism. He does not meaningfully distinguish between homosexuals and same-sex male child molesters, giving rise to the probability that he was sexually assaulted as a youth. His malice, however, is more generalized as evidenced by his setting up of the Peter Walker tableau to force someone to *reveal abjection* and his unnecessary attempt to set Emanuel Spiteri's apartment on fire.¹⁵³ Ireland himself confirmed this, stating “I think there is something in me that's highly destructive, in some moods I would be quite happy to burn the world down.”¹⁵⁴ Finally, his successful modus operandi of picking up men from the Coleherne under the pretense of sexual interest indicates that the offender possessed the ability to pass unnoticed among the gay community, even those involved in BDSM culture. In Section 4.8 (*Colin Ireland: Victim-as-canvas/soapbox*), the findings of this *victim-as-canvas* analysis will be incorporated into our analysis of his *victim-as-soapbox* behaviour to determine the full extent of what a competent *expressive/transformativ*e analysis can yield.

The crimes of Luka Magnotta, though overwhelmingly focused on *increasing abjection*, also use *signs* in a *victim-as-canvas* tableau to communicate the killer's message. As Ireland had done with the teddy bears and cat, Luka Magnotta also employed a cute, cuddly *sign*—a puppy—in his ETV video-posing of Jun Lin's body. After extensively mutilating the victim's corpse (as detailed in the previous section), Magnotta placed the young canine near the bloody stump of Lin's left leg where it began to lick the wound. In the previous videos Magnotta posted online leading up to the murder, he had instead shown the deaths of kittens. The first of these videos, '1 boy 2 kittens' which was posted on December 21, shows an unidentifiable human figure petting two kittens as John & Yoko/Plastic Ono Band's 'Happy Christmas (War is Over)' plays in the background. The video then cuts to a shot of the figure placing both animals in a large vacuum sealable plastic bag. He lingers over the bag with the nozzle of a vacuum cleaner for several seconds before startling the kittens by turning it on. Placing the nozzle to the suction valve, he zooms the camera in close on one entrapped kitten so that the viewer may watch as it slowly suffocates to death. Another, entitled 'Bathtime LOL', shows a figure in sunglasses

petting a kitten, then quickly transitions to a scene with the same kitten duct-taped to a broom handle being drowned in a bath. 'Python Christmas', the second video, depicts a dark-haired figure in a Santa Claus hat kissing and nuzzling a kitten, before cutting to a shot of the kitten inside the same hat being lowered onto a bed where an Albino Burmese python awaits. The kitten emerges from the hat and is devoured by the snake, while 'The Little Drummer Boy' Christmas carol plays in the background. At some point in the video, the figure is seen similarly petting the python as the hit pop song 'A Whole New World' from Disney's *Aladdin* plays in the background. Consistent with this theme of 'cuteness', Magnotta also drew a heart-shaped *symbol* on the package containing Jun Lin's foot.

Here, we return to the concepts of metaphor, irony, and metonymy which Danesi presents as key to interpreting criminal *texts*.¹⁵⁵ In the West, teddy bears, Santa Claus, cats, kittens, puppies, hearts, and the aforementioned three songs are culturally associated with innocence, warmth, and/or benevolence. Juxtaposing these symbols with *abjection* or sexualizing them results in a kind of violent irony— “the expression of one’s meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect”¹⁵⁶—a dark, sarcastic humour residing in the posings of Colin Ireland and Luka Magnotta's victims, but not those of Danny Rolling. The heart on the parcel that Magnotta sent to Conservative Party headquarters was coloured black, a continuance of this *symbolic* inversion theme.¹⁵⁷ The irony of contrasting stereotypes of innocence, warmth, and benevolence with *abjection* enhances malicious *abduction*, as attested to by 'Body Movin', one of the animal rights advocates who attempted to track down the 'kitten killer': “There was something about the way he did this. *He loved on these cats. He pet them. He snuggled with them and then he murdered them* [emphasis added]... this is a vile human being and this needs to stop.”¹⁵⁸ Perhaps this speaks to the widespread outrage concerning child sexual abuse compared with the rape of adults—children are 'innocent' and have not fully developed physically and mentally to where they are culturally 'supposed to' have sex. The *act* completely inverts the *symbolic* association of the *object*.¹⁵⁹

Though Anthony Arkwright's *increased abjection* and *revealing abjection* have already been discussed, the murder of Marcus Law arguably places equal emphasis on semiotic meaning. Law's corpse was “laid down behind his settee. His stomach had all been cut open, and his crutch had been thrown through his stomach. And it was actually sticking out into the air.”¹⁶⁰ Arkwright had stuffed cigarettes into Marcus's nose, mouth, and ears so that, in the words of PC David

Winter, "His head just looked like a birthday cake."¹⁶¹ Laid out in the ETV interpretive formula, we have (1) a crutch (2) inserted into the body cavity of (3) a disabled man's corpse, with (4) cigarettes (5) inserted into the victim's nose, mouth, and ears, and (6) *increased abjection*.

Once again, we begin with looking at which (if any) elements were brought to the crime scene. Unfortunately, while the crutch belonged to the victim, there is no information in the sources as to whether the cigarettes were Law's or Arkwright's (both men smoked). Such information could easily be obtained by ascertaining the victim's preferred brand. If they were Law's brand, then it is safe to presume that none of the *signs* used in the posing were brought to the crime scene. This would be consistent with the other *victim-as-canvas* home invasion ETV murders in this sample. On the other hand, if the brand was *not* Law's brand, then we have a potentially significant clue—namely, we could know the type of cigarettes the perpetrator smokes. In a small town such as Wath, with a population of just over 16,000, this could actually lead police right to his door. Investigators need only inquire around local corner shops as to which customers purchase that brand, compile a list, and then begin looking into suspects, prioritized in accordance with a pre-established offender profile.

Now let us attempt to decode this tableau. The crutch is both a *symbol* and *index* of disability. As it was thrust into Law's wound, this could simply be an additional cruelty associated with *increased abjection*. The crutch could also act as a metonym of the victim's 'handicapped' *master status*: the stigma literally resides in the core of his being. Less obvious is the insertion of the cigarettes into the nose and mouth. As the significance of the cigarettes is not initially clear, the best procedure is to consider them as *symbols*, *indexes*, and *icons* in order to produce a body of potential meanings. Cigarettes have numerous *symbolic* associations: rebelliousness, delinquency, glamour, and even the potential *symbolism* of the specific brand^{wwwwwww} (e.g., 'Marlborough' conjures up images of cowboys and the Old West, 'Virginia Slims' is associated with femininity). As *icons*, cigarettes only resemble themselves, therefore this line of inquiry is not fruitful.^{xxxxxxx} *Indices* link them causally to 'addiction', 'cancer' (and other 'diseases'), 'stench', 'fire', 'smoke', and 'ash'.

^{wwwwwww} Though brand symbolism is worthy of consideration, I caution going too far down such rabbit holes. Thus far, ETV murderers simply do not seem to display this level of esotericism.

^{xxxxxxx} Certainly we could argue that they vaguely resemble a stick of dynamite or a penis, but this is where traditional psychoanalysis goes terribly awry. Even Freud may have been aware of this, allegedly stating "Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar" (Wheeler, 1950).

One common aspect tying cigarettes *symbolically* and *indexically* to both the crutch and evisceration is the negative affect they have on the human heart and lungs (disease). A second is the broader theme of 'dependence'—the dependence of the disabled person upon others, social assistance, and the 'crutch'; and the dependence of the nicotine addict on cigarettes. Thus, if Raymond Ford's empty cider cans and cigarettes had also been placed inside his wounds or orifices, we might rightfully conclude that the offender is targeting 'weak' people for their unhealthy substance addictions. However, the fact that Law was the only victim with addictive substances incorporated into his posing seems to discourage this interpretation. Keep in mind, the homophobic Ireland left sexualized *signs* associated with innocence and cuteness on every victim who was HIV positive, while Rolling posed the bodies of 80% of his female victims with their legs spread. This anomalous cigarette posing could indicate that, rather than making a broader social statement about smoking, the message was specific to the character of Marcus Law. This increases the likelihood that the offender knew him personally. Hence, when interviewing friends, family, neighbours, and witnesses, the investigator should inquire as to the manner in which Law used cigarettes, and his attitudes toward them. If they did so, they might learn that Marcus Law was in the habit of bumming cigarettes. Indeed, Anthony Arkwright would later explain that he posed Law in this fashion because the disabled man was always asking him for cigarettes, which annoyed Arkwright.¹⁶²

This section has proposed a rudimentary methodology for applying semiotic analysis to message-focused *victim-as-canvas* murders, demonstrating the ability to form reasonable conclusions about the offender and his motives whenever possible. As we have seen, the *signs* utilized in *victim-as-canvas* crime scene behaviour often reveal or highlight stigmatized aspects of a victim's identity.

Sexual impurity is perhaps the most common theme, reflected in Danny Rolling's posing of his female victims with their legs spread. American serial killer Morris Frampton had a near identical, if somewhat more exaggerated, *signature*.¹⁶³ Likewise, after murdering a woman in her home, American serial killer George Russell posed her with her legs splayed, and a rifle protruding from her vagina. Previously, he had inserted a vibrator into the mouth of another victim and tucked her copy of *The Joy of Sex* into her armpit.¹⁶⁴ Gertrude Baniszewski carved 'I am a prostitute and proud of it' into the abdomen of eventual murder victim Sylvia Likens.¹⁶⁵ Colin Ireland sexually positioned toys and murdered house pets on or next to the

bodies of his homosexual victims to emphasize their deviance. In another British *victim-as-canvas* case with features that overlapped with Ireland's, serial killer Stephen Farrow found evidence of closeted homosexuality inside his victim's residence. Farrow surrounded the corpse with condom wrappers and homosexual pornography, and placed a calendar featuring semi-nude males over his genital region.¹⁶⁶ In this case, the victim was a Vicar, and the perpetrator an ardent hater of Christians who claimed to have been molested by a clergyman as a child. This semiotically taps into popular associations of Christian clerics with sexual abuse¹⁶⁷

Health problems, including diseases and handicaps, also appear with some frequency. Colin Ireland stuffed condoms into the mouths and nostrils of his first and fourth victims—the only two in his five-victim series who Ireland learned were HIV positive. English spree-killer Anthony Arkwright posed handicapped victim Marcus Law with a crutch jutting out of his body to accentuate his stigmatized physical condition. Substance addictions and the impoverished lifestyles associated with them have also appeared elsewhere in *victim-as-canvas* cases. Russia's “Chessboard Killer” Alexander Pichushkin left empty vodka bottles jammed into the fractured skulls of his alcoholic victims.¹⁶⁸

To conclude, *expressive/transformational* posings

(i) are often sexually charged (Rolling's leg-spreading; Ireland and Farrow's symbolic mocking of homosexuality)

(ii) frequently appeal to *abjection* (Rolling's placement of the head on the shelf; Magnotta's mutilation of Jun Lin; Arkwright's dissections and scattering of internal organs)

(iii) involve insertion of objects into orifices (cigarettes in the mouth, nose, and ears of Marcus Law; vodka bottles into an alcoholic's shattered cranium; a vibrator in a dead woman's mouth, or a rifle in her vagina; sticking a crutch into a disabled man's open wound)

(iv) are completely improvised: almost no item was used in any of the posings that was not already on the victim's person or at the crime scene.

If we are to consider these four points together—sexual themes, overt grotesqueness (*abjection*), the insertion of semiotic objects into the victim's orifices, and the fact that the evidence seems to show that these expressive posings were perpetrated on a whim—we can conclude the following

- they are fundamentally primal (e.g., hyper violence, sex, insertion)

- they tend to mock their victims, often by revealing their real or perceived deviance (e.g., homosexuality, promiscuity, physical handicap, dependence, hypocrisy)
- the offender wishes to communicate these *signs* to an audience to affect their emotions and perceptions of the offender and/or victim
- they seek to disturb the semiotic order and organization of society, by destroying and/or transcending social boundaries

In summary, these brutish assortments are generally not the highly organized, explicit messages we have come to see in films like *Se7en* (in which the antagonist expressively transforms the victim into representations of the Seven Deadly Sins). These *victim-as-canvas* ETV murderers are not artists, they are confused children scrawling messages with a Freudesque crayon. They do so because they cannot effectively communicate, and through their killings they demand that we confer them unity of *self* and identity by acknowledging their existence. They slip on *talismans* of identity like *serialkiller!* or *outlaw!* or more specific *avatars* of the same phenomenon such as *JacktheRipper!* and *JesseJames!*

Our four *victim-as-canvas* murderers (Rolling, Ireland, Magnotta, Arkwright) had several commonalities. They were all (i) psychopathic, (ii) previously convicted for property crimes, (iii) unstable in their work and not formally employed at the time of their murders, (iv) single during their murders, (v) bullied at school, (vi) interested in Hero Culture, and (vii) killed using close-range weapons (edged-weapons for Rolling, Magnotta, and Arkwright; strangulation/asphyxiation for Ireland^{yyyyyyyy}). Furthermore, both Rolling and Magnotta were physically and emotionally abused during their childhood.

The next section looks at *victim-as-soapbox* ETV murderers along with *victim-as-canvas* offenders who also enacted *victim-as-soapbox* style expressions.

4.6 Victim-as-Soapbox Introduction

Where the previous sections focused on *victim-as-canvas* ETV offenders who arranged their crime scene(s) and/or victims' bodies to express themselves, this section concentrates on offenders who transmit verbal (oral or written) communications before, during, and/or after a crime has been committed. Given that this dissertation was authored in the hope of finding new

^{yyyyyy} Of the remaining six ETV offenders, only Daniel Gonzalez did not use firearms.

ways of investigating ETV murderers, not only risk assessment^{zzzzzz} and as we have already explored the communications of Holmes, Rodger, and Cho thoroughly in Chapter 3, these mass murderers will be excluded from analysis until section 4.10 when we look at costume.

Thus far, our interpretation of criminal *expressions* have been confined to a semiotic conceptualization of *content analysis* which has looked at the meaning and interplay of less than a handful of *signs* in any given incident of *posing*. As the semiotic content of even a few short sentences tends to produce a greater plurality of *signs*, the analyses of Berkowitz's *corpus* of letters, Ireland's phone calls, and Magnotta's notes will prove far more laborious, particularly as Ireland and Magnotta's *victim-as-canvas texts* must be considered next to their *victim-as-soapbox texts* in order to assess the totality of their respective *corpuses*.

This transition to analyzing oral or written *expressions* does however have its benefits. 'BTK Strangler' Dennis Rader learned the hard way that digital documents are easily linked to a suspect by way of metadata, including digital or digitized videos and photographs.¹⁶⁹ In the case of written notes or letters, such communications can be subject to *forensic document examination*^{aaaaaaa}. FDE can include checking the materials used to create the document such as paper, ink, writing implements, stamps, ribbons, seals etc. to determine when and where they were produced. This is especially effective when comparing it to similar materials in the suspect's possession; for instance, *forensic document examination* is now capable of determining whether a specific pen was used to create the document.¹⁷⁰ Stamps, in particular, are an excellent source of DNA, as it is contained in saliva. Naturally, there may also be fingerprint or 'invisible' touch DNA evidence on the document. *Indented writing*—in which handwriting on a piece of paper leaves traces of the text on paper beneath it¹⁷¹ (a particularly common phenomenon in notepads or workbooks)—proved instrumental in the arrest of ETV serial killer Larry Gene Bell in 1985.¹⁷²

As there are no two people on the planet with the same handwriting, *graphanalysis* is particularly useful in matching the perpetrator's penmanship to that found on a given letter or note.¹⁷³ Furthermore, though a suspect may successfully misrepresent his calligraphy as less-deft

^{zzzzzz} Early identification of a homicidal ETV offender was theoretically possible in all three cases as they either published online communications or wrote violent, artless stories in their classes. Though assessing pre-homicide *expressive/transformativ*e communications to determine risk is beyond the scope of this work, it is clearly an avenue which could be fruitful, and I strongly encourage further research in this direction.

^{aaaaaaa} This discipline is more commonly known as Questioned Document Examination, but it sounds less aesthetically pleasing.

than it actually is, he is unable to exercise this deception by, improving it.¹⁷⁴ There are two methods of comparing a suspect's handwriting to that on a document. *Collected writing specimens* are samples of the suspect's handwriting on documents which he authored before the investigation, and have the advantage of preventing deception although they may not include key words or passages which appear in the forensic document.¹⁷⁵ *Requested writing specimens*, are typically specific sentences written by a suspect at the behest of an investigator, allowing the suspect to attempt to potentially falsify his handwriting but reproducing pivotal words and sentences found in the forensic document.¹⁷⁶

Forensic linguistics—which, problematically, is usually defined in “its broadest sense”¹⁷⁷ as a discipline covering “all areas where law and language intersect”¹⁷⁸—can also be applied to both written and oral forensic *texts*. Relevant to assisting with an investigation is its ability to “examine texts of all types for authorship [identification], authenticity, interpretation of meaning, disputed language and other forensic processes.”¹⁷⁹ We have not incorporated *forensic linguistics* in our analyses of ETV *expressions* because it is not rooted in symbolic interactionism or semiotics, and is thus theoretically incompatible with the *expressive/transformative* process. Nevertheless, with its unique linguistic approach, such as studying *lexical density* (the percentage of words “with content or meaning”¹⁸⁰ in a text), *mean sentence length* (“the average number of words per sentence in a given text...”¹⁸¹), *mean word length* (“The average number of letters or characters per word in a text”¹⁸²), and *authorship attribution* through “...the analysis of the structures of the language”¹⁸³, it may potentially reveal additional insights which this first iteration of ETV *expression* analysis could miss.

Victim-as-soapbox communications over the telephone are also susceptible to technologies such as the spectrogram which “is a visual recording of certain parameters of sound, especially the amplitude and intensity of the voice at certain frequencies”¹⁸⁴ capable of scientifically matching a suspect's voice to a recording. Moreover, background noises in a phone call can be used to identify or approximate the caller's location, speech patterns and accent can be ascertained, and if the offender stays on the phone long enough his call can be traced.

Though these forensic techniques and technologies have resulted in the capture and prosecution of numerous offenders, they have not always been successful. It is our hope that, when used in tandem with an *expressive/transformative* analysis of *victim-as-soapbox* verbal communications, the percentage of convictions will rise significantly. Regarding the

methodology of analyzing a *victim-as-soapbox text*, for the sake of consistency and simplicity, we have tried to replicate the *victim-as-canvas* methodology as closely as possible. To demonstrate, we will use the first five sentences of a brief *text* sent to Windsor Police in the form of a letter by Canadian serial killer Ron Sears in the 1940s:

Dear sirs (1) This is a challenge to you (2). 'I' (3, 4) will strike in the near future (4) I can not disclose this to you of course.(5) My avenge [sic] (6, 7) of these people (6, 8) are [sic] great (6, 7)...¹⁸⁵

As can be observed above, the methodology of analyzing such a letter involves (i) fragmenting the *text* (T) into relevant passages (P) ranging in length from single words to whole paragraphs depending on their perceived significance, (ii) numbering the texts (e.g., T1, T2) and underlining and numbering the passages at the end (e.g., P1, P2) then coding them (e.g., T1P1, T1P2, T1P3, T1P4) to make them easily identifiable^{bbbbbbb}, (iii) analyzing the passages individually and in light of each other. The end result is the following form:

T1P1. Dear sirs

[analysis of this passage here]

T1P2. This is a challenge to you

[analysis of this passage here]

T1P3. 'I'

[analysis of this passage here]

T1P4. 'I' will strike again in the near future

[analysis of this passage here]

T1P5. I can not disclose this to you of course.

[analysis of this passage here]

T1P6. My avenge [sic] of these people are [sic] great

[analysis of this passage here]

Meta-information: Sears' victims were later discovered to be closeted homosexual men.

T1P7. My avenge [sic]

are [sic] great

[analysis of this passage here]

^{bbbbbbb} The repetition of the number '3' here signals that, despite individual fragments (i.e., '4') of the passage being singled out, the passage nevertheless continues beyond them.

T1P8. these people

[analysis of this passage here]

For the sake of this dissertation, where details about the *text's* author are inevitably known—enabling us to study them in the first place—any post hoc knowledge pertaining to a passage is termed *meta-information* and placed beneath the relevant entry (see T1P6). Obviously, as we cannot possess knowledge of ETV offenders who have evaded detection, *meta-information* is not applicable to unsolved cases. Passages with repeating themes such as T1P7, which addresses the offender's spelling and grammatical errors, are numbered identically and stacked. *Signs* can be specified as *indices*, *symbols*, or *icons* if the semiotician perceives value in doing so, but this is a tool, not a requirement. Contradictory or implausible claims should also be interpreted using reason to determine their veracity. When all *texts* have been analyzed, the passages and their analyses are then interpreted as a greater *corpus* which allow us to make inferences about the offender.

In this section we have reviewed the benefits of examining *victim-as-soapbox* communications in their verbal forms and outlined a methodology for analyzing them. The following three sections utilize this methodology to interpret the *corpuses of texts* authored by David Berkowitz, Colin Ireland, and Luka Magnotta. With Ireland and Magnotta, the results of their *victim-as-soapbox corpus* analysis will be interpreted next to their *victim-as-canvas* analysis to render the highest-resolution offender profile possible.

4.7 David Berkowitz: Victim-as-soapbox – Written

Though David Berkowitz only penned two 'Son of Sam' letters—leaving the first for the police and posting the second to the media—he also delivered nearly a dozen anonymous harassing communications to his neighbours, Sam Carr and Craig Glassman, and former landlords the Cassaras. Most of these latter communications have never been released to the public, thus our *corpus* consists of the 'Son of Sam' letters and what has been publicized of the harassing communiques. Chronologically, Berkowitz's first letter to Sam Carr preceded both of his 'Son of Sam' letters. However, as the NYPD were tasked with dealing with the 'Son of Sam' communications, while law enforcement in Yonkers and New Rochelle handled the harassment case, Berkowitz's *texts* have been arranged here in the following order: April 17, 1977 to Captain Joseph Borrelli, May 30, 1977 to James Breslin, April 10, 1977 to Sam Carr, April 19, 1977 to

Sam Carr, June 6, 1977 to Sam Carr, June 9-10, 1977 to the Cassaras, June 7, 17 or 18, 1977 to Craig Glassman. Our sole purpose in analyzing these seemingly unrelated personal letters is that names and themes tie them to the 'Son of Sam' letters. In hindsight, it seems that Berkowitz was intentionally trying to place himself on the police radar. With this in mind, we will employ the methodology established in the previous section to analyze the *texts* and greater *corpus*.

Text Analysis: Letter 1

I AM DEEPLY HURT BY YOUR CALLING ME A WEMON HATER. I AM NOT. BUT I AM A MONSTER. I AM THE "SON OF SAM." I AM A LITTLE BRAT.
 WHEN FATHER SAM GETS DRUNK HE GETS MEAN. HE BEATS HIS FAMILY. SOMETIMES HE TIES ME UP TO THE BACK OF THE HOUSE. OTHER TIMES HE LOCKS ME IN THE GARAGE. SAM LOVES TO DRINK BLOOD.
 "GO OUT AND KILL" COMMANDS FATHER SAM.
 BEHIND OUR HOUSE SOME REST. MOSTLY YOUNG - RAPED AND SLAUGHTERED - THEIR BLOOD DRAINED - JUST BONES NOW.
 PAPA SAM KEEPS ME LOCKED IN THE ATTIC, TOO. I CAN'T GET OUT BUT I LOOK OUT THE ATTIC WINDOW AND WATCH THE WORLD GO BY.
 I FEEL LIKE AN OUTSIDER. I AM ON A DIFFERENT WAVE LENGTH THEN EVERYBODY

ELSE - PROGRAMMED TOO KILL. HOWEVER TO STOP ME YOU MUST KILL ME. ATTENTION ALL POLICE: SHOOT ME FIRST - SHOOT TO KILL OR ELSE. KEEP OUT OF MY WAY OR YOU WILL DIE!
 PAPA SAM IS OLD NOW. HE NEEDS SOME BLOOD TO PRESERVE HIS YOUTH. HE HAS HAD TOO MANY HEART ATTACKS. TOO MANY HEART ATTACKS. "UGH ME HOOT IT URTS SONNY BOY."
 I MISS MY PRETTY PRINCESS MOST OF ALL. SHE'S RESTING IN OUR LADIES HOUSE BUT I'LL SHE HER SOON.
 I AM THE "MONSTER" - "BEELZEBUB" - THE "CHUBBY" BEHEMOUTH."

I LOVE TO HUNT. PROWLING THE STREETS LOOKING FOR FAIR GAME - TASTY MEAT. THE WEMON OF QUEENS ARE 2 PRETTIEST OF ALL. I MUST BE THE WATER THEY DRINK. I LIVE FOR THE HUNT - MY LIFE. BLOOD FOR PAPA.
 MR. BORELLI, SIR I DON'T WANT TO KILL ANYMORE NO SIR, NO MORE BUT I MUST, "HONOUR THY FATHER."
 I WANT TO MAKE LOVE TO THE WORLD. I LOVE PEOPLE. I DON'T BELONG ON EARTH. RETURN ME TO YAHOOOS.
 TO THE PEOPLE OF QUEENS, I LOVE YOU. AND I ~~WA~~ WANT TO WISH ALL OF YOU A HAPPY EASTER. MAY GOD BLESS YOU IN THIS LIFE AND IN THE NEXT AND FOR NOW

I SAY GOODBYE AND GOODNIGHT.
 POLICE - LET ME HAUNT YOU WITH THESE WORDS;
 I'LL BE BACK!
 I'LL BE BACK!
 TO BE INTERPRETED AS - BANG BANG, BANG, BANG, BANG - UGH!!
 YOURS IN MURDER
 MR. MONSTER

Figure 14. Berkowitz Letters to Captain Borrelli

When: April 17, 1977.

To Whom: Joseph Borrelli, captain of the New York Police Department

Text:

Dear Captain Joseph Borrelli (1),
I am deeply hurt by your calling me (2) a wemon [sic] (3) hater. I am not (4). But I am a
monster (5). I am the 'Son of Sam.' (6) I am a little 'brat' (7). When father Sam (8) gets
drunk (9) he gets mean. He beats his family (10). Sometimes he ties me up (12) to the back
of the house. Other times he locks me in the garage. (11) Sam loves to drink blood (9). 'Go
out and kill' commands father Sam (13). Behind our house some rest (14). Mostly young—
raped and slaughtered (15)—their blood drained—just bones now (16). Papa Sam keeps
me locked in the attic, too. I can't get out (11) but I look out the attic window and watch the
world go by. I feel like an outsider. I am on a different wave length then everybody else
(17)—programmed too [sic] kill (18). However, to stop me you must kill me. Attention all
police: Shoot me first—shoot to kill or else. Keep out of my way or you will die! (19) Papa
Sam is old now. He needs some blood to preserve his youth. He has had too many heart
attacks. Too many heart attacks. 'Ugh, me hoot it hurts sonny boy.' (20) I miss my pretty
princess most of all. She's resting in our ladies house but I'll see her soon (21). I am the
'Monster'—'Beelzebub' (5)—the 'Chubby Behemoth [sic] (22).' I love to hunt. Prowling
the streets looking for fair game—tasty meat (9, 23). The wemon [sic] (3) of Queens are z
[sic] prettyist [sic] of all. I [sic] must be the water they drink. (24) I live for the hunt my
life (23). Blood for papa. Mr. Borrelli, sir, I dont want to kill anymore no sir, no more but I
must, 'honour thy father.' (25) I want to make love to the world. I love people. (26) I don't
belong on Earth. Return me to yahoos. (27) To the people of Queens, I love you. And I wa
[sic] want to wish all of you a happy Easter. May God bless you in this life and in the next
(28) and for now I say goodbye and goodnight. Police—Let me haunt you with these
words; I'll be back! I'll be back! To be interpreted [sic] as—bang, bang, bang, bank [sic],
bang—ugh!! (29)

Yours in murder (30)

Mr. Monster (5)¹⁸⁶

T1P1. Dear Captain Joseph Borrelli

The letter begins by addressing 'Captain Joseph Borrelli': a *designational index* referring to a policeman, and the head of Operation Omega targeting the offender. The author has therefore directly addressed his rival and the police force by proxy. By utilizing this *designational index*, the author has indicated his awareness of the person he is addressing and has specifically chosen them. The use of the formal, respectful 'Dear' to open the letter has the appearance of being non-antagonistic, along with acknowledgment of Borrelli's rank.

T1P2. I am deeply hurt by your calling me a wemon hater

The author is either genuinely deeply hurt by being labelled misogynistic or is being sarcastic. *Meta-information:* After his arrest, Berkowitz admitted to hating women, thus the second possibility is much stronger.

T1P3. wemon

This particular misspelling of 'woman' to refer to adult females is notable for several reasons. First, given that the author has correctly spelled 'Borrelli', 'Beelzebub', and 'Easter', it is difficult to believe that he does not know how to spell a word as commonly used and important as 'woman.' This misspelling also closely resembles the word 'demon' which is significant given his latter reference to 'Beelzebub' (T1P5). The writer is likely attempting to convey his belief that women are fundamentally evil by intentionally spelling the word in this manner.

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that he was striking out against society and, more specifically women, for rejecting him.

T1P4. I am not

The author denies that he is a misogynist.

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that he was striking out against society and, more specifically women, for rejecting him. Hence, he is being deceptive.

T1P5. I am a monster

Mr. Monster

I am the 'Monster'—'Beelzebub'

The author reframes himself as the great menacing 'monster' *archetype* (see Chapter 3) rather than a pithy misogynist. In folk tales across the globe, monsters frequently capture or devour 'princesses': attractive high-born women. This is reflected in the Ancient Greek myths in which sea-monsters seek to devour the beautiful Princess Andromeda and Princess Hesione, only to be saved by Perseus and Heracles, respectively. There are countless other examples across numerous disparate cultures.

T1P6. I am the 'Son of Sam.'

The author positions himself relationally as a son: he is an *index* of Sam, and Sam is an *index* of

him. The 'Sam' described here is not given a last name or whereabouts. The alliteration in 'Son of Sam' lends it an aesthetic power.

Meta-information: Sam Carr lived in Berkowitz's neighbourhood and received harassing letters from him. Berkowitz claimed Carr was a 6,000-year-old demon who instructed him to kill. In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that the Sam Carr angle was a hoax.

T1P7. I am a little 'brat'

The author uses a word denoting a petulant child to describe himself. Following passage 6, this seems to indicate the author thinks of himself as childish.

Meta-information: Berkowitz was described as problematic by many teachers and neighbours who knew him as a child.

T1P8. father Sam

The 'Sam' mentioned here is not given a last name or whereabouts. Typically, we do not refer to our mothers and fathers as 'Mother X' or 'Father X' when discussing them. Instead, we say 'my mother/mom', 'my father/dad', or leave out the 'my' altogether so that it is 'mother', 'mom', 'father', or 'dad'. We only add names when we are referring to grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins who must be distinguished from one another, (e.g., 'Uncle Tony'). The author's strange habit of calling his dad 'Father Sam' indicates either that (1) he is speaking of a spiritual father (e.g., Father Samuel the priest) or (2) has an ulterior motive for continually dropping the name 'Sam'.

Meta-information: Sam Carr lived in Berkowitz's neighbourhood and received harassing letters from him. Berkowitz claimed Carr was a 6,000-year-old demon who instructed him to kill. In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted the Sam Carr angle was a hoax.

T1P9. father Sam gets drunk

Sam loves to drink blood.

tasty meat

There is an emphasis in the author's writing on ingesting things, particularly blood and meat. Again, Berkowitz's ostensible dad is called 'father Sam' and even simply 'Sam' at one point (see T1P8).

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that the Sam Carr angle was a hoax. Berkowitz's psychiatrist, Dr. Abrahamsen, concluded he had an oral fixation.¹⁸⁷

T1P10. When father Sam gets drunk he gets mean. He beats his family

The author is revealing that his purported 'father Sam' is a violent drunk. The reference to 'his family' implies that there are more than two other family members, and that, if this is not a 'spiritual' family, the abuse is restricted to his wife, children, and any other wards.

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that the Sam Carr angle was a hoax.

T1P11. Sometimes he ties me up to the back of the house. Other times he locks me in the garage.

Papa Sam keeps me locked in the attic, too. I can't get out

The author expresses that he is restrained and confined to his home, though his language may be metaphorical. He proposes that he lives in a house which he shares with his family, including a garage and attic. This is the third occasion upon which he mentions his dad's name unnecessarily and unconventionally: 'Papa Sam'.

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that the Sam Carr angle was a hoax. Berkowitz lived alone in a small apartment without house, garage, or attic.

T1P12. Sometimes he ties me up to the back of the house.

The notion that a human being who is given a firearm, instructed to kill (and does), and is allowed to write confessional letters to the police naming his accomplice is tied up behind the family home is incredulous. The only creature routinely tied up behind residences are dogs. This bolsters the 'metaphorical language' hypothesis.

Meta-information: Berkowitz claimed Carr's black Labrador retriever, Harvey, was sending him messages. On April 27, 1977, he shot and wounded Harvey. Previously, he had left apartments because he could not stand the barking and howling of neighbourhood dogs at night.

T1P13. 'Go out and kill' commands father Sam.

The author claims to drive around New York murdering people at the behest of his authoritarian

father. Once again, that this same tyrannical figure would allow him to write these letters is difficult to believe. This is the fifth time he has mentioned his father's name, but has never once called him 'dad', 'my dad', 'father', 'my father', 'papa', or 'my papa'.

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that the Sam Carr angle was a hoax.

T1P14. Behind our house some rest.

The author claims that he shares a house and that more victims are buried behind it.

Meta-information: Berkowitz lived alone in a small apartment without house, garage, or attic. All of his known victims remained at the scene of the shooting.

T1P15. Mostly young—raped and slaughtered

The author says that there are other victims who have been raped, though there was no evidence of sexual assault at his known crime scenes.

Meta-information: No further victims have been linked to Berkowitz, and none of his victims were subject to any form of sexual assault.

T1P16. their blood drained—just bones now.

The author claims that these young 'raped and slaughtered' victims have been reduced to bone fragments.

Meta-information: None of Berkowitz's victims were skeletonized.

T1P17. I look out the attic window and watch the world go by. I feel like an outsider. I am on a different wave length then everybody else

The author indicates that he is more of an observer than participant in society. He is relegated to the social margins because he does not think and/or experience the world like other people.

Given what we know of ETV offenders, this is believable.

Meta-information: Berkowitz was socially isolated and unable to fit in.

T1P18. programmed too [sic] kill.

The author denies personal responsibility for the murders he committed. He implies that an

external agent has invaded his mind and wired him to kill. It is worth noting that the misspelling of the word 'to', though not totally unbelievable considering the various contexts in which it is used, does not reappear in the next sentence (T1P19).

T1P19. To stop me you must kill me. Attention all police: Shoot me first—shoot to kill or else. Keep out of my way or you will die!

The author warns law enforcement that they must shoot him if their paths intersect or he will do the same to them. This indicates that he is proactively trying to facilitate suicide-by-cop which hints at a past history of suicidal ideation. At the same time, he wishes to impress his capacity for violence upon the police. This is the only moment in any of his communications when the author threatens law enforcement, and it is only in service of ensuring his own death. He suggests that he is unwilling or unable to stop killing of his own accord.

Meta-information: Berkowitz was plagued by suicidal ideation and claimed to be entertaining the idea of perpetrating a mass murderer.

T1P20. Papa Sam is old now. He needs some blood to preserve his youth. He has had too many heart attacks. Too many heart attacks. ‘Ugh, me hoot it hurts sonny boy.’

The reader is informed that 'Papa Sam' (the sixth time his father's first name is used) is a vampire-like creature whose advanced age has resulted in several withering heart attacks. Now, only the blood of others can keep him from decay. Unless the blood of victims was somehow methodically collected, preserved, screened for matching blood type, and transferred intravenously into 'Papa Sam'—a near impossibility—there is no basis to suppose a medical explanation for this. Rather, it makes the 'Sam' story even less believable, assuming one does not actually believe in vampires. The sentence 'ugh, me hoot it hurts sonny boy' was interpreted as signifying that 'Sam' possibly spoke with a Scots accent/dialect or that the killer was familiar with it. Yet with the Scottish accent's famous rolling 'r' sounds and tendency to say 'mah' over 'me'^{cccccccc} we should dismiss this strange quote as either a complete fabrication or the listener's inability to translate his own father's accent phonetically. Its sudden appearance without the necessary context hints that the author is more concerned with freely expressing himself than comprehensibility.

^{cccccccc} An actual Scottish accent would be represented as “Ugh, mah hearrt it herrts, sonny boy.”

T1P21. I miss my pretty princess most of all. She's resting in our ladies house but I'll see

her soon The author does not elaborate on who his 'pretty princess' is, but the reference to 'resting in our ladies house' seems to dispel the notion that he could be referring to a romantic partner in a normal relationship. Princesses are often present in fairy tales, and are abducted by monsters. Comparing this to passage T1P5, one can reasonably speculate that the author is referring to one of his victims. The word 'rest' to denote 'death' in T1P14 adds further credence to this.

Meta-information: Berkowitz was single at the time of his murders and did not have a 'ladies house.'

T1P22. 'Chubby Behemouth.'

The author uses the term 'Behemouth' [sic] to associate himself once more with the 'monster' *archetype*. However, he also reveals a physical descriptor: 'chubby' and may have, consciously or subconsciously, misspelled 'behemoth' using the word 'mouth' because his 'chubbiness' and, to a lesser extent, 'monstrosity', was the result of overeating.

Meta-information: Berkowitz was overweight, and an emotional eater.

T1P23. I love to hunt. Prowling the streets looking for fair game—tasty meat.

I live for the hunt—my life.

The author's existential fulfillment is in stalking and killing humans as if hunting animals. Previously, he claimed he was hunting for blood for Sam, but this phrasing and the use of the term 'tasty meat' seems to imply that he is also invested in the process.

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that he was striking out against society and, more specifically women, for rejecting him.

T1P24. wemon [sic] of Queens are z [sic] prettyist [sic] of all. I [sic] must be the water they drink.

By employing the phrase 'water *they* drink' seems to indicate that the author does not drink the same water. Therefore, the author probably does not live in Queens. The use of the letter 'z' instead of the word 'the' may reflect the author's earlier efforts to imitate a Scottish accent. Here,

he seems to be attempting to write in a Slavic, German, or French accent in which the word 'the' is replaced with 'z' ('ze'). Considering his recent and repeated reference to blood drinking, the imitation of a Slavic accent may be simply an imitation of how Dracula speaks in horror movies. Along with T1P20, this seems to indicate a playful immaturity in which the author is merely saying things for his own amusement. The idea that he actually speaks English as a second language and does not know how to spell 'the' is refuted by his earlier uses of the word. *Meta-information:* Berkowitz lived in Yonkers. His first language was English. To our knowledge he had no history of interactions with Scots, the French, Germans or Slavs. Berkowitz admitted to a fascination with horror movies.

T1P25. Blood for papa. Mr. Borrelli, sir, I dont want to kill anymore no sir, no more but I must, ‘honor thy father.’

The author contradicts T1P22, now claiming that he does not want to kill, but is forced to do so out of Christian filial piety. This is the only passage in which he writes of his 'papa' and 'father' without also dropping the name 'Sam'. Finally, the author slides from using the formal title 'Captain' to 'Mr.' for Joseph Borrelli.

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that he was striking out against society and, more specifically women, for rejecting him.

T1P26. I want to make love to the world. I love people.

The author wishes to be a happy and engaged member of society, which is consistent with the alienation of ETV offenders.

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that he was striking out against society and, more specifically women, for rejecting him. He stated that there was 'a force' that made people turn away from him.

T1P27. I don't belong on Earth. Return me to yahoos.

The author believes that he has not adapted to the social world around him, and feels like an alien. This interpretation is reinforced by its proximity to T1P26. In Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, the Yahoos are “a species of animals utterly incapable of amendment by precept or example”¹⁸⁸ who inhabit a remote island, and bear a stark resemblance to human beings:

My horror and astonishment are not to be described, when I observed in this abominable animal, a perfect human figure: the face of it indeed was flat and broad, the nose depressed, the lips large, and the mouth wide... The fore-feet of the *Yahoo* differed from my hands in nothing else but the length of the nails, the coarseness and brownness of the palms, and the hairiness on the backs. There was the same resemblance between our feet, with the same differences; which I knew very well, though the horses did not, because of my shoes and stockings; the same in every part of our bodies except as to hairiness and colour, which I have already described.¹⁸⁹

Perhaps most importantly, the Yahoos are casually and frequently violent, murdering one another over attractive stones they find in the mud. In the years since the publication of this book, 'yahoo' has formally entered the English language to refer to “a boorish, crass, or stupid person.”¹⁹⁰ Indeed, it is possible that the author saw himself as such a person. In *Gulliver's Travels*, the Yahoos are comparable to monsters (T1P5)

Meta-information: Berkowitz was socially isolated and unable to fit in. Whether he was referring to Swift's Yahoos or the word that was subsequently derived from them is unknown.

T1P28. To the people of Queens, I love you. And I wa [sic] want to wish all of you a happy Easter. May God bless you in this life and in the next

The author is either mocking one of the communities he has victimized through insincere utterances, or wishes to establish that he has no animosity against the community, only individual residents.

T1P29. Police—Let me haunt you with these words; I'll be back! I'll be back! To be interpreted [sic] as—bang, bang, bang, bank [sic], bang—ugh!!

The author will kill again, subjecting police to *tertiary transformation* by using a gun to facilitate the *secondary transformation* of victims. Police are encouraged to be afraid of the author because he will create unwanted transformation at both levels. The promise of future violence also helps maintain the author's relevance.

Meta-information: Berkowitz did go on to kill again.

T1P30. Yours in murder

Captain Joseph Borrelli and Berkowitz are bound together by the act of murder, as depicted by

the transformative triangle.

Text Analysis: Letter 2

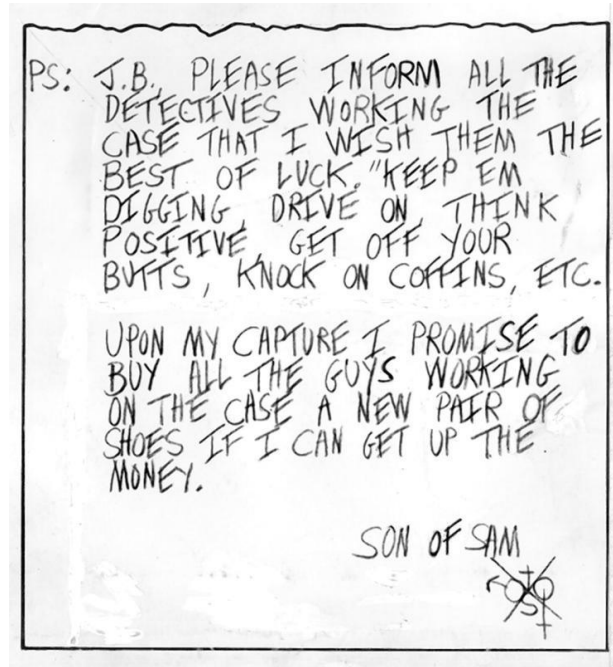


Figure 15. Last page of Berkowitz Letter to Breslin, May 30, 1977

When: May 30, 1977

To Whom: James Breslin, columnist at *The New York Daily News* newspaper

Text:

Hello from the gutters of N.Y.C (1), which are filled with dog manure, vomit, stale wine, urine and blood (2). Hello from the sewers of N.Y.C (1), which swallow up these delicacies when they are washed away by the sweeper trucks (2, 3). Hello from the cracks in the sidewalks of N.Y.C. (1) and from the ants that dwell in these cracks and feed in the dried blood of the dead (2, 3) that has settled into the cracks. J.B. (4), I'm just dropping you a line to let you know that I appreciate your interest (5) in those recent and horrendous .44 killings (6). I also want to tell you that I read your column daily and I find it quite informative (7). Tell me Jim, what will you have for July twenty-ninth? (8) You can forget about me if you like because I don't care for publicity (9). However you must not forget Donna Lauria and you cannot let the people forget her either. She was a very, very sweet girl (8) but Sam's a thirsty lad (29) and he won't let me stop killing until he gets his fill of blood (3, 10). Mr. Breslin, sir (11), don't think that because you haven't heard from me for a while that I went to sleep. No, rather, I am still here. Like a spirit roaming the night (12). Thirsty, hungry, (13) seldom stopping to rest (12); anxious to please Sam (10). I love my work (14). Now, the void has been filled (15). Perhaps we shall meet face to face someday

or perhaps I will be blown away by cops with smoking .38's. (16) Whatever, if I shall be fortunate enough to meet you I will tell you all about Sam if you like and I will introduce you to him. His name is 'Sam the terrible.' (17) Not knowing the [sic] what the future holds I shall say farewell and I will see you at the next job. Or should I say you will see my handiwork at the next job? (18) Remember Ms.Lauria (8). Thank you (11).

In their blood (2)

and

from the gutter (1)

'Sam's creation' .44 (19)

Here are some names to help you along. Forward them to the Inspector for use by the NCIC Center. They have everything on computer, everything. They just might turn up, from some other crimes. Maybe they could make associations. (20)

'The Duke of Death' (21)

'The Wicked King Wicker' (21)

'The Twenty Two Disciples of Hell' (22)

'John 'Wheaties' (23) – Rapist and Suffocator of Young Girls. (24)

PS: Please inform all the detectives working the slaying to remain. (25)

[LAST PAGE]

P.S: [sic] JB, Please [11] inform all the detectives working the case that I wish them the best of luck. 'Keep 'em digging, drive on, think positive, get off your butts, (25) knock on coffins,(26) etc.' Upon my capture (27) I promise to buy all the guys working the case a new pair of shoes if I can get up the money (28).

Son of Sam [symbol] (30)¹⁹¹

T2P1. Hello from the gutters of N.Y.C

Hello from the sewers of N.Y.C

Hello from the cracks in the sidewalks of N.Y.C.

from the gutter

'Gutters', 'sewers', and 'cracks in the sidewalks' all refer to both literal and figurative spaces specifically in 'N.Y.C.' 'Gutters' and 'sewers' are culturally associated with refuse/waste. The author creates this association with 'cracks in the sidewalks' by explaining that “ants... dwell in these cracks and feed in the dried blood of the dead.”¹⁹² As he cannot literally exist in 'gutters', 'cracks', and 'sewers', the author is using these *signs* metaphorically. They *symbolize* places in the middle of society that are nevertheless habitually overlooked and filled with *abjects* (see T2P2), which the author perceives he inhabits by saying 'Hello from...'

Meta-information: Berkowitz was socially isolated and unable to fit in.

T2P2. dog manure, vomit, stale wine, urine and blood.

which swallow up these delicacies when they are washed away by the sweeper trucks.

from the ants that dwell in these cracks and feed in the dried blood of the dead

In their blood

The author lists numerous *abjects* as occupying the gutters, sewers, and sidewalk cracks. He may have done so to elicit a reaction in a similar way that Rolling, Magnotta, and Arkwright did with their posing, but this seems like a secondary motive at best. The author sees himself as situated in the places where *abjection* resides, perhaps using these *abjects* as *icons* to indicate that he lives in physical squalor. They may also be *symbols* implying that he lives in a psycho-social squalor; that he is a man considered similarly grotesque and ejected like bodily fluids into unseen places. The use of the term 'delicacies' to describe *abjects* may lead the reader to conclude that the author is a paraphile—a hematolagnist (blood fetish), coprophile (feces fetish), emetophile (vomit fetish), and/or urolagnist (urine fetishist)—but it is important to remember that the 'sewer' and *not the author* 'swallow' the delicacies in this letter. This seems to indicate a literary motivation for using “swallow up these delicacies when they are washed away by the sweeper trucks.”¹⁹³

Meta-information: Berkowitz evidenced none of the fetishes listed above, and admitted to structuring elements of his letters for purely aesthetic purposes. Reflecting back on his *self-concept* immediately before the killings, Berkowitz stated “I felt like worthless shit.”¹⁹⁴ 'Shit' belongs in sewers and gutters.

**T2P3. swallow up these delicacies when they are washed away by the sweeper trucks
ants that dwell in these cracks and feed in the dried blood of the dead**

Sam's a thirsty lad and he won't let me stop killing until he gets his fill of blood

Thirsty, hungry,

There is an emphasis in the author's writing on the ingestion of things, particularly blood and meat.

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that the Sam Carr angle was a hoax. For those interested in Freud, Berkowitz's psychiatrist, Dr. Abrahamsen, concluded that Berkowitz had an oral fixation.¹⁹⁵

T2P4. J.B.

The author is addressing *Daily News* reporter Jimmy Breslin directly by his initials. However,

unlike the first letter he did not begin the letter with this or the formal 'Dear'. This may indicate a perceived familiarity with Breslin.

T2P5. dropping you a line to let you know that I appreciate your interest in those recent and horrendous .44 killings.

The author's tone is complimentary, acknowledging he enjoys Breslin writing about the murders he has committed.

Meta-information: Following his arrest, Berkowitz asked whether he would be receiving newspapers while on remand.

T2P6. in those recent and horrendous .44 killings.

By using the adjective 'horrendous' the author is either expressing guilt, being sarcastic, or simply acknowledging that the murders he committed are horrendous (which he enjoys). T212, however, renders the first possibility extremely unlikely.

T2P7. I read your column daily and I find it quite informative

The author claims to read the *Daily News* every day and is complimentary in his tone.

Meta-information: Once captured, Berkowitz wrote to Breslin saying “Dear Mr. Breslin, It has come to my attention that you wish to speak to me... I am quite disgusted with the way the Press has been spreading lies about me but perhaps some of these can be ironed out in our meeting... Please bring a beer when you come. Sincerely, David Berkowitz.”¹⁹⁶

Seemingly, he continued to trust and value the columnist.

T2P8. Tell me Jim, what will you have for July twenty-ninth?

However you must not forget Donna Lauria and you cannot let the people forget her either.

She was a very, very sweet girl

Remember Ms. Lauria.

The author is making a moral appeal to Breslin to write a piece for the anniversary of his first murder victim, Donna Lauria. In doing so, the author is hoping to reinforce his *homicidal self* by using a *symbolic* link (the anniversary) to the *secondary transformation* of Donna Lauria from living woman to corpse to prompt a *tertiary transformation* in the editorial content of the *Daily*

News. As he reads the *Daily News*, the author's *homicidal self* is reinforced (*primary transformation*) because the press assures him that he remains relevant.

Meta-information: Berkowitz fantasized that Donna Lauria's spirit was romantically bound to him after he murdered her.

T2P9. You can forget about me if you like because I don't care for publicity.

The author denies he is motivated by attention-seeking, which is immediately recognizable as a lie due to the very fact that he pens letters to police and journalists. Instead, he tries to frame himself as a concerned citizen who is making a moral case for a Donna Lauria memorial.

Meta-information: Berkowitz later admitted that he loved the limelight.

T2P10. Sam's a thirsty lad and he won't let me stop killing until he gets his fill of blood. anxious to please Sam.

The author is again claiming that he is killing to please a figure called 'Sam', previously identified as his father. However, where the descriptor 'father' or 'papa' had routinely appeared before 'Sam' in the previous letter, it is conspicuously absent here.

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that the Sam Carr angle was a hoax.

T2P11. Mr. Breslin, sir,

Thank you.

By using terms such as 'sir' and 'thank you', the author is showing respect and even potentially deference to the reader, journalist Jimmy Breslin.

Meta-information: Once captured, Berkowitz wrote to Breslin saying “Dear Mr. Breslin, It has come to my attention that you wish to speak to me... I am quite disgusted with the way the Press has been spreading lies about me but perhaps some of these can be ironed out in our meeting... Please bring a beer when you come. Sincerely, David Berkowitz.”¹⁹⁷ Seemingly, he continued to trust and value the columnist.

T2P12. don't think that because you haven't heard from me for a while that I went to sleep. No, rather, I am still here. Like a spirit roaming the night.

seldom stopping to rest

There are two themes of these passages. The author needs to reaffirm his *homicidal self* by receiving feedback from the *audience* (Breslin and the general public) which confirms the authenticity of the *homicidal self* (third dynamic on the transformative triangle). Therefore, he sends a communication to the media using his *victims-as-soapbox*^{ddddddd} advising them 'don't think that because you haven't heard from me for a while that I went to sleep... I am still here.' The second theme is one of restlessness—possibly even insomnia ('don't think...that I went to sleep', 'roaming the night', 'seldom stopping to rest').

Meta-information: Berkowitz claimed to have trouble sleeping and resting because of the dogs barking in his neighbourhood.

T2P13. Thirsty, hungry

Until this moment, the author portrays 'Sam' as being thirsty for blood, and not himself. Here he slips up and attribute this bloodlust to himself as well, perhaps indicating that the 'Sam' explanation was a red-herring all along.

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that the Sam Carr angle was a hoax.

T2P14. I love my work

The author not only enjoys trolling for victims and killing them, but also sees it as his true vocation. Knowing what we do about ETV offenders, this could imply he is unhappy in his current career, or between jobs. The word 'work' may simultaneously refer to a 'work of art', with the author viewing himself as a kind of homicidal performance artist. If this is the case, then it demonstrates his belief that he has been elevated to a level of cultural significance where his murders are actually appreciated by the public.

Meta-information: Following his arrest, Berkowitz stated to Dr. Abrahamsen “I finally had

^{ddddddd} The term *victim-as-soapbox* is not employed here to dismiss, minimize, or trivialize the victim; instead, it identifies the fact that the media would have no reason or motive to publish the communication if the author had not committed murder.

convinced myself that it was good to [commit murder], necessary to do it, and that the public wanted me to do it. The latter part I believe until this day. I believe that many were rooting for me. This was the point in which the papers began to pick up vibes and information that something big was happening out on the street.”¹⁹⁸ Berkowitz was constantly shifting from one dead-end job to another.

T2P15. Now, the void has been filled

The negative emotionality stemming from the author's self-discrepancy has been alleviated due to the creation of his *homicidal self*. The word 'void' denotes 'emptiness', which is associated with dejection-related emotions, rather than agitation.¹⁹⁹

Meta-information: Berkowitz spoke of a legacy of suicidal ideation and depression which had plagued him since childhood.

T2P16. Perhaps we shall meet face to face someday or perhaps I will be blown away by cops with smoking .38's.

The author is hinting that both Breslin and the whole world will inevitably come to know him, whether through arrest or suicide-by-cop. As the conditions under which the author will meet Breslin are not outlined by the author, this could also constitute a threat.

T2P17. Whatever, if I shall be fortunate enough to meet you I will tell you all about Sam if you like and I will introduce you to him. His name is 'Sam the terrible.'

The author promises to reveal everything about the 'Son of Sam' mystery to Breslin if they have the opportunity to meet. His use of the word 'fortunate' once again suggest a reverence for the journalist.

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that the Sam Carr angle was a hoax. Once captured, Berkowitz wrote to Breslin saying “Dear Mr. Breslin, It has come to my attention that you wish to speak to me... I am quite disgusted with the way the Press has been spreading lies about me but perhaps some of these can be ironed out in our meeting... Please bring a beer when you come. Sincerely, David Berkowitz.”²⁰⁰ Seemingly, he continued to trust and value the columnist.

T2P18. Not knowing the [sic] what the future holds I shall say farewell and I will see you at the next job. Or should I say you will see my handiwork at the next job?

Through the second dynamic of the transformative triangle, Breslin will be able to vicariously glimpse the author through the *secondary transformation* of his next victim(s) which will lead to Breslin, the *Daily News*', and society's own *tertiary transformation*.

T2P19. 'Sam's creation' .44

Instead of remaining consistent in naming his *homicidal self*—'Mr. Monster'—the author identifies himself by a different sobriquet "'Sam's creation' .44"²⁰¹ While the '.44' clearly identifies the author as the '.44 caliber killer', the media's original moniker for him, his use of 'Sam's creation' implies that he does not believe that he is responsible for his murderous behaviour. He was made the way he is by 'Sam.' Interestingly, the author does not once call 'Sam' his father once in this whole letter, but does maintain that he was created by Sam.

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that the Sam Carr angle was a hoax.

T2P20. Here are some names to help you along. Forward them to the inspector for use by N.C.I.C. Center. They have everything on computer, everything. They just might turn up, from some other crimes. Maybe they could make associations.

The author is providing vague clues though the sincerity of his motives should be doubted given his observable history of lies and contradictions.

Meta-information: Berkowitz would later claim that he was part of a cult called The Church of the Process along with Sam Carr's sons and various other members. Subsequent investigations have revealed this is a Satanic-panic hoax.

T2P21. 'The Duke of Death'

'The Wicked King Wicker'

As he did with 'Son of Sam', the author has used alliteration to make these names sound better aesthetically. He has also associated them with the aristocracy by using the title 'Duke' and 'King'.

Meta-information: Sam Carr and his children lived at 316 Warburton Avenue, on the corner of Wicker Street. Wicker Street led to the back of Berkowitz's apartment at 35 Pine Street (the address has since been changed to 42 Pine Street).

T2P22. ‘The Twenty Two Disciples of Hell’

More cryptic allusions to a nefarious group of which we should be extremely skeptical.

Meta-information: Berkowitz would later claim that he was part of a cult called The Church of the Process along with Sam Carr's sons and various other members. Subsequent investigations have revealed this is a Satanic-panic hoax.

T2P23. John 'Wheaties'

The author reveals yet another possible accomplice.

Meta-information: One of Sam Carr's sons was named 'John' and his daughter was 'Wheat'.

T2P24. Rapist and Suffocator of Young Girls.

By calling “John 'Wheaties’”²⁰² a rapist of young girls, the author attributes the “mostly young—raped and slaughtered”²⁰³ he claimed rest “behind our house”²⁰⁴ in his previous letters to this murderous acquaintance.

Meta-information: No remains have been discovered behind the Carr house, nor was any member of the Carr family ever prosecuted for violent crimes.

T2P25. Please inform all the detectives working the slaying to remain.

Please inform all the detectives working the case that I wish them the best of luck.

‘Keep 'em digging, drive on, think positive, get off your butts,

The author does not express any antagonism toward law enforcement, to the contrary, he encourages them to pursue him.

Meta-information: Berkowitz asked “What took you so long?”²⁰⁵ to police officers when he was captured. He immediately admitted to the killings, and was observed smiling.

T2P26. knock on coffins,

The author seems to be implying that the cops investigate the dead or cemeteries. This could be a

play on words for 'knocking on wood' though there seems no corresponding reason to invoke this superstition.

Meta-information: The term 'pine box' is a linguistic *icon* and *symbol* for coffins. Berkowitz lived at 35 Pine Street in Yonkers, in a building called Pine Hill towers.²⁰⁶ He would later admit to inserting this clue intentionally.²⁰⁷

T2P27. Upon my capture

Here, the author contradicts earlier statements that he will almost certainly be killed in a shoot-out with police. It also suggests that he expects to be apprehended, and that the idea does not cause him discomfort.

Meta-information: Berkowitz asked “What took you so long?”²⁰⁸ to police officers when he was captured. He immediately admitted to the killings, and was observed smiling.

T2P28. I promise to buy all the guys working the case a new pair of shoes if I can get up the money.

The author is again encouraging the police, and noting the amount of work it must be taking them to catch him. His suggestion that he might not be able to afford the shoes implies that he does not have a high-paying job.

Meta-information: Berkowitz was a postal worker.

T2P29. Sam's a thirsty lad

The use of the word 'lad' which invokes boyhood or youth is a strange one considering Sam has previously been described as both the author's father and as old. This inconsistency, when paired with the author's self-description as a 'brat' who is also 'thirsty, hungry' may suggest that Sam is not a separate person at all, but a fabrication or another dimension of the author's personality.

Meta-information: In a 1979 press conference, Berkowitz admitted that the Sam Carr angle was a hoax.

T2P30. Son of Sam [symbol]

As the *symbol* appears immediately after the words 'Son of Sam' it is reasonable to assume that it is the author's personal symbol. The *symbol* consists of an 'x' shape with the ♀ *symbol* for the

female gender in the right corner, and that of the male ♂ opposing it on the left. In the top space is a Christian cross *symbol* placed diametrically opposed from a letter 's' in the bottom space. We interpret this letter 's' to stand for 'Sam'. Beyond being an initial, the fact that the 's' is positioned across from the cross along with the author's association of 'Sam' with demonic forces indicates that it represents Christ's theological opposite, the Devil and evil.^{cececece} This pictorial intersection of femininity with the Devil could either represent the perceived evil of women—remember 'wemon'—or their consumption by the demonic forces driving the author.

Meta-information: Berkowitz admitted to killing because he hated women, and that he created a religious *meta-delusion* to facilitate his actions and provide him with an excuse if caught.

'Son of Sam' Corpus Analysis and Theoretical Synthesis

The first step in analyzing any corpus of *victim-as-soapbox* communications is to determine *if* an offender is lying, *what* he is lying about and *when*, and then to deduce *why*. The most obvious method is to look for internal contradictions within and/or between communications. In the 'Son of Sam' case, for instance, the author claims to be killing at the behest of 'Sam' (T1P13, T1P19, T1P25, T2P10); on two occasions stating he does not want to kill but is being forced to (T1P25, T2P10). Yet, there are twice as many instances (T1P23, T2P13, T2P14, T2P15) where the author states he derives satisfaction and fulfillment from hunting and murdering his victims. Only one of these positions can be true. Ockham's Razor, or the Law of Parsimony, which espouses *Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem*—“plurality should not be posited without necessity”²⁰⁹—is a useful tool here. Let us consider the following possible scenarios:

1) The author paradoxically lives for and wishes to stop killing. Ultimately, he is forced to by 'Sam', an abusive blood-drinking patriarch, who keeps him tied up behind the house or locked indoors. Moreover, he is affiliated with other serial murderers such as 'John 'Wheaties' – Rapist and Suffocator of Young Girls.' The author sends letters to the police and media revealing leads and clues, yet Sam and John 'Wheaties' both either (a) allow him to do so, or (b) somehow do not know he is doing it. Alternatively, the author *is* punished by Sam and/or John 'Wheaties', but decides to send the letters anyway, making no mention of the likelihood of punishment.

^{cececece} In Berkowitz's schema, anyway. The true opposite of Christianity would be disbelief, with Satan just considered another character in the Christian canon.

2) The author is a psychotic who falsely believes he is under the control of his father, Sam, and thus holds strong conflicting attitudes regarding his murderous mission. He also believes he is associated with a 'rapist and suffocator of young girls' called 'John 'Wheaties.' Despite these pronounced delusions, the author is nevertheless able to keep a job *or* obtain a succession of jobs which allow him to afford a car and a residence in the vicinity of New York City, while eluding authorities for over a year.

3) The author is a lone non-psychotic who commits murder and lies about 'Father Sam' and 'John Wheaties' because these actions benefit him.

Clearly, the last scenario is the most parsimonious, and reinforced by the author's unusual habit of mentioning his 'father' by his first name (T1P6, T1P8, T1P9, T1P11, T1P13, T1P20, T2P10, T2P17, T2P19, T2P30).

If the author has proactively provided a false motive while denying more plausible motivations attributed to him, we should consider the possibility that he is impression managing. That the first sentence of the author's initial communication denies his misogyny (T1P2, T1P4) should be regarded with great suspicion, particularly given the nature of his crimes. More to the point, he also laughably claims to be disinterested in publicity (T2P9) while actively engaged in seeking it. Why would the author admit to being a murderer—arguably one of the most stigmatized statuses in Western society—while denying being a woman-hating wannabe-celebrity? Precisely *because* the offender is most ego-dystonic about his gender, sexuality, and (lack of) notability, he wishes to hide his insecurities from us. We may now deduce that he is primarily a heterosexual who has not been in a relationship during the span of his crimes, and may have a complete non-history with members of the opposite sex. This is supported by the findings of this study in which only Mark Chapman was romantically involved at the time of his murders. Furthermore, 60% of the sample had no known sexual history whatsoever.

Having dismissed the Sam/Wheaties explanation and established the offender's motive, an examination of the remaining text reveals a classic *expressive/transformational* process. The theme of confinement, isolation, and alienation is established literally (T1P17) and figuratively (T1P11, T1P12, T1P27, T2P1) throughout the corpus. The author is adamant that he does not wish to be this way (T1P17, T1P26). Unsurprisingly, this alienation is accompanied by statements in which he perceives himself as childish (T1P6, T1P7, T2P29). This pairing is consistent with ETV's position on maturity and socialization. If we accept that the author occupies a socially isolated,

hermit-like existence and is infantile, his claim that he is 'chubby' (T1P22) along with his constant references to ingesting items (T1P9, T2P3), may lead us to accept that he is indeed overweight. Social isolation^{ffffff} incentivizes him to retreat indoors, where overeating and lack of exercise lead him to become fat. Certainly, this contradicts the descriptions provided by eye witnesses²¹⁰, but they are notoriously unreliable.²¹¹

These conclusions allow us to glimpse an *actual/own* that is almost certainly discrepant from the author's *ideal/own*. Further evidence of this comes in the form of dejection-related emotions, including suicidal ideation (T1P19, T2P16), expressed in the first letter. In both letters, the author hints at an ego-syntonic *homicidal self* (T1P23, T2P14)—a 'Monster' (T1P5, T1P22, T1P23) who wanders into civilization at night to devour (T1P23) 'princess' after 'princess' (T1P21)—narrowing his self-discrepancy, and thereby reducing these dejection-related emotions (T2P15). He encourages the police to pursue him (T1P29, T1P30, T2P25). Every offender in the sample who specifically mentioned the police in their communications showed a disproportionate interest and involvement in *sub-hegemonic* hero culture: law enforcement, firefighting, the military, and/or survivalism. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume the author is of a similar disposition. By transforming from an irrelevant *subordinated masculinity* to an antagonistic *hyperreal* Monster masculinity, the author has established a place of relevance in the narrative. Small wonder he welcomes law enforcement, without malice, as rivals; they are the Yang to his Yin. When they fulfill their archetypal *sub-hegemonic* Hero roles by bringing him to justice—the metaphorical slaying of the Monster—they reveal the author's identity, and finalize the pseudo-mythological narrative²¹² he has constructed for public consumption in films, television programs, newspapers, true crime paperbacks, and doctoral dissertations.^{eeeeeeee} Put another way: they give him the fame and relevance he denies he craves (T2P9). Though he warns the police and public that he will not be taken alive (T1P19, T2P16), he also contradicts this (T2P27), likely because he wishes to bear witness to his own notoriety.

As previously stated, there are many reasons to suspect that notability is one of the author's primary motives. On several occasions, he equates his homicidal activity with his life's work (T1P23, T2P14, T2P18). The fact that the author has accessed an automobile for over a year

^{ffffff} Of course, possessing the physical stigma of being overweight may have contributed to his isolation in the first place.

^{eeeeeeee} Perhaps this is why he gave them clues as to his identity and whereabouts (T2P21, T2P23, T2P26).

makes it likely that he is employed^{hhhhhhh}. However, our findings that every offender in our sample were either unemployed, worked sporadically, or unsatisfied in their career (see Chapter 3), coupled with the author's self-discrepancy crisis and perception of murder as vocation, makes it probable that he either laboured miserably in one menial positionⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ or drifted aimlessly from one job to the next. His occupation(s) did not confer the prestige on him he so desired, so he made murder his true profession.

Perhaps this is why the author is surprisingly polite to Captain Joseph Borrelli and *Daily News* journalist Jimmy Breslin (T1P1, T2P11): he respects their status and notability, particularly Breslin (T2P17). Another equally likely explanation is that he is a genuinely well-mannered and non-offensive character in his day-to-day life. Meekness may be a cause or symptom of his social isolation.

In summary, the communications paint a portrait of a chubby, sporadically employed bachelor and consummate loner, who, having failed to court women, identifies as a Monster and embarks on a campaign to destroy them. A timid and childish connoisseur of Hero culture, he hopes to be pursued and captured by the police, ridding him of dejection-related emotions and garnering him a measure of celebrity.

Although many of these conclusions can be readily observed in a suspect, in a city the size of New York, the pool of people matching this description remains unmanageably large. Yet, considered retrospectively, Berkowitz's letters contained enough information to lead the police right to his door. During an interview with Berkowitz at the Central New York Psychiatric Center on October 26, 1978, Berkowitz confirmed attorney Felix Gilroy's suspicions that the killer had intentionally included clues as to where he lived in his letters²¹³ because “I wanted the police to come and find me.”²¹⁴ In the letter to Captain Joseph Borrelli, Berkowitz refers to a 'Sam', states that he is an outsider on a different wavelength, and refers to himself as 'the Chubby Behemoth.' Pooling this information with 'The Wicked King Wicker' and 'John Wheaties' from the Breslin letter, we find veiled references to Sam Carr; Sam's son, John Carr, and daughter, Wheat Carr; and Wicker—the street which Berkowitz's apartment building exited onto.ⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ

^{hhhhhhh} The chronically unemployed non-student offenders in our sample did not own an automobile at the time of their killings. See Danny Rolling, Luka Magnotta, Daniel Gonzalez, and Anthony Arkwright.

ⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ Furthermore, there is nothing in the communications to indicate that the author had exceptional intelligence or ability.

ⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ Writing in his *The Ultimate Evil*, Satanic cult conspiracist Maury Terry notes that he had searched the phonebook for all entries corresponding to the surname “Carr” and found an entry for “John Wheat Carr” at Sam

Furthermore, there are a number of letters Berkowitz sent to his former landlords the Cassaras, the Carr family across the street, and his downstairs neighbour Craig Glassman, which *should* have immediately linked him to the Son of Sam murders. Five of the letters are reproduced and analyzed below:

Text Analysis: Letter 3

When: April 10, 1977

To Whom: Sam Carr, resident of 316 Warburton Street, Yonkers

Caveat: This fragment of the full letter is available to the public.

Text:

This is to inform you that I'm in the process of filing legal papers in Yonkers City Court to have one of your dogs removed from our property cause he is a public nuisance (1)... Our lives have been torn apart because of this dog (2)...Anonymous (3)²¹⁵

Note: In George Carpozi's *Son of Sam*, the author claims that in this letter “The writer... asked [Sam Carr] the 64-year-old retired City of Yonkers employee to rid himself of his black Labrador retriever, Harvey, a trained guard dog.”²¹⁶

T3P1. I'm in the process of filing legal papers in Yonkers City Court to have one of your dogs removed from our property cause he is a public nuisance

Rather than going to speak with the Carrs in person, the author sends a letter explaining that he is taking legal action. This seems to indicate he is uncomfortable with face-to-face confrontation. As there is no reason to inform the Carrs that he is filing the papers, one might conclude that the claim is a bluff. The use of the term 'our property' seems to indicate that the author shares property with the Carrs—a fact which, as home owners, they would know to be untrue. Thus, the author has an incorrect or distorted view of what constitutes property. Another possibility is that the dog in question, Harvey, routinely wanders onto the author's property, although this was likely not the case, as Carr seems to have always tied Harvey up.

Meta-information: Berkowitz hated barking dogs. He would later shoot Carr's dog on April 27.

Carr's address. Most likely, this referred to a shared telephone number for both John and his sister, Wheat, as they both resided at their father's home on Warburton Avenue.

T3P2. Our lives have been torn apart because of this dog

The author suggests that there are other parties, perhaps neighbours or family members, beyond himself

who have experienced chronic distress because of Carr's black Labrador retriever, Harvey.

Meta-information: There was no 'our.' Berkowitz lived alone and hated barking dogs. He would later shoot Carr's dog on April 27.

T3P3. Anonymous

The author refuses to disclose his identity but nevertheless signs the note with the word 'anonymous.' There seems little motivation to do that other than to create a sense of mystery and dread in the recipient(s) of the letter. This is in keeping with the general threatening tone of the communication.

Text Analysis: Letter 4

When: April 19, 1977

To Whom: Sam Carr, resident of 316 Warburton Street

Text:

Samuel Carr (1),

I have asked you kindly to stop that dog from howling all day long, yet he continues to do so. I pleaded with you. (2) I told you how this is destroying my family. We have no peace, no rest. (3) Now I know what kind of person you are and what kind of a family you are. You are cruel and inconsiderate. You have no love for any other human beings.(4) Your [sic] selfish, Mr. Carr. My life is destroyed now. I have nothing to lose anymore.(5) I can see that there shall be no peace in my life, or my families [sic] life until I end yours.(6) You wicked evil man—child of the devil.(7) I curse you and your family forever. I pray to God that he takes your whole family off the face of this earth. People like you should not be allowed to live on this planet. (8)

'A Citizen'(9)²¹⁷

T4P1. Samuel Carr

The author addresses the letter using the recipient's formal first name and last name, without employing cordialities such as 'dear' or titles like 'Mr.' The tone is direct and confrontational, yet the author still has not spoken to Carr in person.

T4P2. I have asked you kindly to stop that dog from howling all day long, yet he continues to do so. I pleaded with you.

The author is stating that he has made attempts to be reasonable, placing the blame on the recipient. His use of the adjective 'kindly' is particularly interesting because his initial letter was far from cordial. Instead, we interpreted the language to be antagonistic. There is a hysterical quality implicit in his use of the word 'pleaded'.

Meta-information: According to Carpozi, in his first letter to Sam Carr, Berkowitz asked him to get rid of the dog. He would later shoot Carr's dog on April 27.

T4P3. I told you how this is destroying my family. We have no peace, no rest.

Again, the author brings up the devastation Harvey's howling is causing to the cohesion and mental health of his family.

Meta-information: There was no 'my family.' Berkowitz lived alone and hated barking dogs. He would later shoot Carr's dog on April 27.

T4P4. Now I know what kind of person you are and what kind of a family you are. You are cruel and inconsiderate. You have no love for any other human beings. Your [sic] selfish, Mr. Carr.

Here, the author leaps to paranoid conclusions about Sam Carr and his family based on very little information. Where the judgment 'inconsiderate' may be appropriate if Harvey was still noisy, the idea that Sam, and perhaps his entire family, are 'cruel', 'selfish', and 'have no love for any other human beings' because their dog continues barking shows an eagerness to demonize the family and a penchant for the dramatic. Note the misspelling of the word 'you're' as 'your'.

Meta-information: The word 'cruel' appears repeatedly in the letters Berkowitz would later send to his downstairs neighbour, Craig Glassman.

T4P5. My life is destroyed now. I have nothing to lose anymore.

This statement shows that the author, rather than seeing the noise disturbances as a temporary annoyance which can be dealt with in a number of ways, declares his life 'destroyed'—that is, beyond redemption. Furthermore, he explicitly states his lack of *stake in conformity* and its

permanence. He projects the cause of this and his negative emotionality onto Sam Carr, his dog, and family. Interestingly, here he switches to the singular voice (e.g., 'my' and 'I' over 'we have no rest'). If not for the following line (T4P6), it would be tempting to entertain the possibility that the author has become estranged from his family.

Meta-information: Berkowitz lived alone and suffered dejection-related emotions resulting from an unstable sense of *self*.

T4P6. I can see that there shall be no peace in my life, or my families [sic] life until I end yours.

Though mentioning himself first, the author re-establishes that his family is still suffering from the effects of Harvey's barking. By including a death threat as the only possible solution, the offender not only confirms his suspected mental instability but also commits the crime of aggravated harassment. There are marked paranoid traits.

Meta-information: Berkowitz lived alone and would later shoot Carr's dog on April 27.

T4P7. You wicked evil man—child of the devil.

Continuing with the observations made of T4P4, the adjectives and ad-hominems escalate from 'cruel' to 'wicked' and 'evil', veering into Abrahamic religion with the mention of a singular 'devil.' This is particularly telling given the magnitude of Carr's transgressions (i.e., having a noisy dog) versus the author's statement that he must end Carr's life.

Meta-information: The word 'wicked' appears in the Jimmy Breslin letter at T2P21. Berkowitz was heavily influenced by the film *Rosemary's Baby* in which a woman believes she has given birth to the devil's child.

T4P8. I curse you and your family forever. I pray to God that he takes your whole family off the face of this earth. People like you should not be allowed to live on this planet.

Here the author oscillates between what appears to be superstition/Black Magic—placing an eternal curse on the Carr family—and paradoxically appealing to the Abrahamic 'God' to eradicate them. He makes a childish declaration about the types of people who should be permitted to exist, showing an authoritarian bent indicative of Fromm's necrophilous personality.²¹⁸

Meta-information: Berkowitz was *meta-delusional* and showed a lifelong fixation with Christianity. He also believed in curses stating that a secret force turned people away from him.

T4P9. 'A Citizen'

The author does not provide any name or means of contacting him. He uses the term 'a citizen' to mask his identity while appealing to the dignity of local action and civic decency. This shows an erratic moral and social *self*, which rapidly oscillates between anti-sociality and civility, malice and decency. This points to severe interpersonal dysfunction and a potential personality disorder.

Text Analysis: Letter 5

When: June 6, 1977

To Whom: Sam Carr, resident of 316 Warburton

Caveat: The text of this letter to Carr is not available, however it is notable for listing the residence of Jack and Nann Cassara at 174 Coligni Avenue, New Rochelle as a return address (T5P1).

T5P1. Jack and Nann Cassara at 174 Coligni Avenue, New Rochelle

The point of the letter seems to have been to connect the Carrs to the Cassaras by giving them a reason to communicate and providing addresses to facilitate their communication.

Meta-information: Berkowitz had rented a room at the Cassaras' house in February 1976 but was tormented by the sound of barking dogs, and promptly left in April.

Text Analysis: Letter 6

When: June 9 or 10, 1977

To Whom: The Cassaras (Get-well card)

Text:

Dear Jack(1),
I'm sorry to hear about the fall you took from the roof of your house. Just want to say 'I'm sorry' (2) but I'm sure it won't be long until you feel much better, healthy, well, and strong (3): Please be careful next time (4). Since your [sic] going to be confined for a long time, let us know if Nann needs anything (5). Sincerely: Sam and Francis [sic] (6)²¹⁹

Return address on the envelope: "Mr and Mrs Sam Carr, 316 Warburton Ave, Yonkers"²²⁰ (7)

Extra: An illustration of a German Shepherd was on the card. This *icon* represents the various annoying dogs in the neighbourhoods where Berkowitz lived.

T6P1. Dear Jack

Unlike the Sam Carr communications, this letter begins cordially and informally.

Meta-information: Berkowitz had met Jack Cassara personally.

T6P2. I'm sorry to hear about the fall you took from the roof of your house. Just want to say 'I'm sorry'

The letter makes no mention of how the author heard of any fall, and apologizes twice within two sentences. This could indicate that the author has little to say, or may be taken as a threat that the author could cause Jack Cassara to have a 'fall' in the future.

Meta-information: Jack Cassara had not fallen from his roof.

T6P3. I'm sure it won't be long until you feel much better, healthy, well, and strong

This is a hackneyed and thoughtless overture. As the author has not seen Cassara's condition, how could he make such a determination?

Meta-information: Jack Cassara had not fallen from his roof.

T6P4. Please be careful next time.

The author implies that Cassara's 'fall' was a result of his carelessness, and implores him not to be this way the next time he is on his roof.

Meta-information: Jack Cassara had not fallen from his roof.

T6P5. Since your [sic] going to be confined for a long time, let us know if Nann needs anything.

The use of the word 'confined' without any other descriptor (e.g., 'to a wheelchair', 'to a bed') demonstrates the author's lack of knowledge of the situation but also, when combined with the grammatical error, his ineptitude with the complexities of the English language. Note the misspelling of the word 'you're' as 'your'.

Meta-information: Jack Cassara had not fallen from his roof.

T6P6. Sincerely: Sam and Francis [sic]

This name-dropping seems to have been the main point of an otherwise platitudinous letter. As the female 'Frances' is spelled in the male form, and thus incorrectly, it is obvious that the author is neither Sam or Frances Carr. Moreover, his lack of mastery over linguistic nuance is again laid bare.

Meta-information: Sam and Frances Carr had never met the Cassaras.

T6P7. Mr and Mrs Sam Carr, 316 Warburton Ave, Yonkers

Again, the point of the letter seems to have been to connect the Carrs to the Cassaras by giving them a reason to communicate and providing addresses to facilitate their communication.

Clearly, by strategically mentioning 'Jack' and 'Nann' the author has ensured that the Cassaras would not simply dismiss the letter as being intended for somebody else and shipped to the wrong address.

Meta-information: Berkowitz was a former tenant of the Cassaras and could see the Carrs' house from his apartment.

Text Analysis: Letter 7

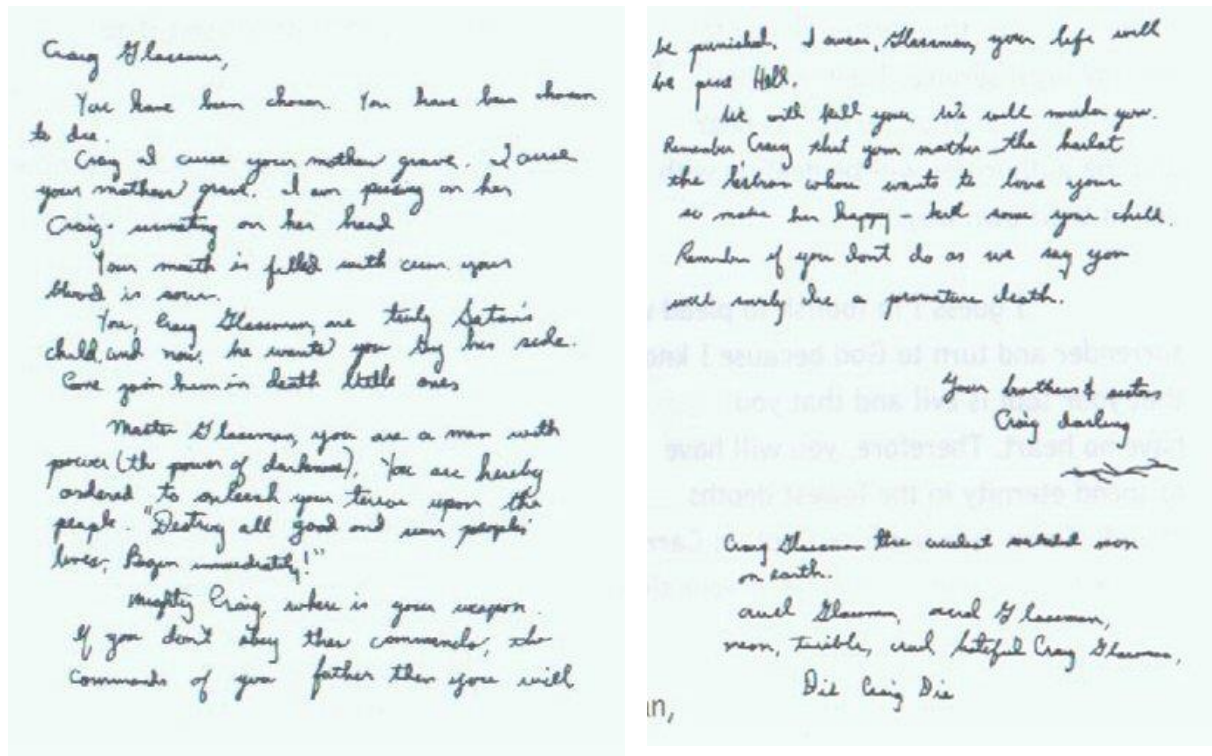


Figure 16. Berkowitz's (First) Second Letter to Craig Glassman, June 1977

When: June 7, 17 or 18, 1977

To Whom: Craig Glassman

Text:

Craig Glassman(1),
You have been chosen. You have been chosen to die. (2) Craig I curse your mothers [sic] grave. I curse your mothers [sic] grave (3). I am pissing on her Craig. urinating on her head (4)Your mouth is filled with cum. your blood is sour. (5)You, Craig Glassman, are truly Satan's child, and now, he wants you by his side. Come join him in death (6) little ones (7). Master Glassman (8), you are a man with power (the power of darkness) (9). You are hereby ordered to unleash [sic] your terror upon the people. 'Destroy all good and ruin peoples' lives. Begin immediately!'(10 Mighty Craig, where is your weapon. (11) If you don't obey thes [sic] commands, the commands of your father then you will be punished. I swear, Glassman, your life will be pure Hell. (12)
We will kill you. We will murder you. (13) Remember, Craig that your mother the harlot the lesbian whore wants to love your [sic] (4, 14) so make her happy-kil [sic] some your child. (14) Remember if you dont [sic] do as we say you will surely die a premature death. (12)
Your brothers & sisters(15)

Craig darling (16)

Craig Glassman the cruelest sickest man on earth. cruel Glassman, cruel Glassman, mean, terrible, cruel, hateful Craig Glassman (17),

Die Craig Die (2)

Return address: Mother, the Cemetery (19) 174 Coligni Avenue, New Rochelle, NY 10801(20)²²¹

T7P1. Craig Glassman

The author addresses the letter using the recipient's first and last names, without employing cordialities such as 'dear' or titles like 'Mr.' The tone is direct and confrontational, yet the author has never spoken to Glassman in person.

T7P2. You have been chosen. You have been chosen to die.

Die Craig Die

The author does not state who made the choice for Glassman to die, creating the possibility that there is more than one party involved. This is a clear death threat.

Meta-information: On August 6, Berkowitz started a fire outside Glassman's apartment door and threw .22 calibre bullets into it which were intended to shoot through Glassman when he went to investigate.

T7P3. Craig I curse your mothers grave. I curse your mothers grave.

If Glassman's mother was indeed dead, this would demonstrate that the author either knew Glassman or his family, or had some other way of obtaining this information. This is an unequivocal expression of malice, highly personal, and may point to an offender who is highly religious or superstitious. On both occasions, the word 'mother's' is misspelled 'mothers'.

Meta-information: It cannot be currently determined whether Glassman's mother was alive or deceased at the time the letter was written. Berkowitz's adopted mother, however, was.

T7P4. I am pissing on her Craig. urinating on her head

Remember, Craig that your mother the harlot the lesbian whore wants to love your [sic]

The author is using *abject* symbolism and stigmatizing labels related to sexuality to provoke an emotional response in the recipient. As he cannot be literally urinating on Mrs. Glassman's head, this demonstrates that the author may readily use metaphor. The use of the word 'harlot' once

again points toward a religious offender from one of the Abrahamic faiths. Note the 'waste' motif.

Meta-information: There is no evidence that Glassman's mother's body was desecrated, or that she ever engaged in prostitution or had same-sex attractions. Berkowitz is arguably the most religious offender in this sample

T7P5. Your mouth is filled with cum. your blood is sour.

The author is using *abject* symbolism to provoke an emotional response in the recipient. He appeals to the stigmatization of homosexual acts and communicates an image of Glassman as a *subordinated masculinity* with polluted blood. Again, the speech is metaphorical at best, if not just intended to shock. Note the blood motif.

Meta-information: Glassman was heterosexual and a deputy sheriff.

**T7P6. You, Craig Glassman, are truly Satan's child, and now, he wants you by his side.
Come join him in death**

This language is nearly identical to T4P7 in one of the letters to Sam Carr. The allusion to Satan offers more proof of a high level of religiosity in the author.

Meta-information: Berkowitz was heavily influenced by the film *Rosemary's Baby* in which a woman believes she has given birth to the devil's child. He would later lie that both Carr and Glassman were demons or involved in a Satanic cult. Berkowitz is arguably the most religious offender in this sample

T7P7. little ones

The use of this term is patronizing, and seems to reinforce the notion that the recipient is a child as claimed in T7P6. However, Glassman is an individual, while the plural 'little ones' seems to refer to multiple people.

T7P8. Master Glassman

Intriguingly, here the author abruptly switches from treating Glassman as a victim who has been 'chosen to die' and the recipient of numerous insults, to a 'master'—a role indicating that the author is beneath him in an unspecified power structure.

Meta-information: Berkowitz would later lie that Glassman was involved in a Satanic cult.

T7P9. you are a man with power (the power of darkness).

Continuing with the notion that Glassman is a 'master', the author now attributes a destructive supernatural force to him.

Meta-information: Berkowitz would later lie that Glassman was involved in a Satanic cult.

T7P10. You are hereby ordered to onleash [sic] your terror upon the people. 'Destroy all good and ruin peoples' lives. Begin immediately!'

Having encouraged Glassman to believe that he was a 'master' possessing the 'power of darkness', the author then paradoxically issues him orders. Glassman is placed on one-side of a black and white moral worldview—pointing to the author's religiosity again—and instructed to commit malevolent acts. At this point it is unclear whether he is superior to the author or the other way around. This may indicate that the author suffers from problems with interpersonal communication and fitting in to power structures.

Meta-information: Berkowitz is arguably the most religious offender in this sample and socially incompetent.

T7P11. Mighty Craig, where is your weapon.

The author seems to be trying to convince Glassman to procure a weapon to use in the commission of murders. Note the author's failure to use a question mark.

T7P12. If you don't obey thes [sic] commands, the commands of your father then you will be punished. I swear, Glassman, your life will be pure Hell.

Remember if you dont [sic] do as we say you will surely die a premature death

Switching power-positions once more, the author then threatens Glassman with death and misery if he does not commit murder, as outlined at the beginning of the letter. The reference to 'your father' is presumably the devil, harkening back to T7P6. The author has capitalized 'Hell' unnecessarily, another hint that he is religiously-minded. The author uses the plural personal-pronoun 'we' to imply that there are multiple agents threatening him. The sudden appearance of a group of prodigal murderers should be regarded with suspicion, as the threat of power in

numbers would generally be established earlier in the communication. Furthermore, by stating that Glassman's father is the devil and then informing him of his father's commands, the author is taking the role of an intermediary who presumably speaks to 'the devil' or somebody associated with him.

Meta-information: Berkowitz acted alone. On August 6, Berkowitz started a fire outside Glassman's apartment door and threw .22 calibre bullets into it which were intended to shoot through Glassman when he went to investigate.

T7P13. We will kill you. We will murder you.

For the second time, the author uses the plural personal-pronoun 'we' twice in rapid succession to enhance the gravity of his death threats.

Meta-information: Berkowitz acted alone. On August 6, Berkowitz started a fire outside Glassman's apartment door and threw .22 calibre bullets into it which were intended to shoot through Glassman when he went to investigate.²²²

T7P14. Remember, Craig that your mother the harlot the lesbian whore wants to love your [sic] so make her happy-kil [sic] some your child. so make her happy-kil [sic] some your child.

Though the multiple grammatical and spelling errors make this passage difficult to interpret, it seems that the author is telling Glassman that his dead mother will be pleased if he commits murder. This is the third strategy the author has employed in this letter to try to persuade Glassman to kill.

T7P15. Your brothers & sisters

The author of the letter is claiming that it is from Glassman's figurative, not literal, siblings. If Glassman is a child of the devil, this implies his 'brothers & sisters' are also children of the devil.

Meta-information: The letter was from David Berkowitz alone.

T7P16. Craig darling

Given the mixture of derision and respect directed at Glassman in this letter, it is difficult to ascertain whether the term 'darling' is meant to be insulting or endearing.

T7P17. Craig Glassman the cruelest sickest man on earth. cruel Glassman, cruel Glassman, mean, terrible, cruel, hateful Craig Glassman

The content of this passage is restricted to pure vitriol directed against the recipient.

Meta-information: The adjective 'cruel' was similarly used to describe Sam Carr.

T7P19. Return address: Mother, the Cemetery

One of the most relevant passages, this could either refer to Glassman's supposedly dead mother (referenced in T7P3 and T7P4) or the author's own mother. In the first instance, it supports the notion that this message is coming from a supernatural power emanating from the grave. The second might mean that the author's dead mother is an *index* causally linked to his antisocial behaviour and advocating of violence.

Meta-information: Berkowitz's adopted mother, Pearl, was literally interred in a cemetery at the time of the writing. It cannot be currently determined whether Glassman's mother was alive or deceased at the time the letter was written.

T7P20. 174 Coligni Avenue, New Rochelle, NY 10801

The author provides a return address which actually exists, but is not a cemetery.

Meta-information: This address was Berkowitz's residence from February-April, 1976, and home to his former landlords Jack and Nann Cassara.

Secondary Corpus Analysis

The old adage that serial killers secretly wish to be caught is generally untrue, though David Berkowitz presents a notable exception. By scrawling the return addresses of neighbours and former landlords on envelopes containing threatening, offensive, or peculiar letters, then sending these letters to other neighbours and landlords, Berkowitz was intentionally facilitating communication between the victims of his scatological writings. Specifically, his June 6 letter to Sam Carr and subsequent letter to Craig Glassman both included a return address (T5P1, T7P20) belonging to the Cassaras: the offender's former landlords in New Rochelle. Soon after, the Cassaras received a get-well card from “Sam and Francis [sic]”²²³ with the Carrs' address at 316 Warburton Avenue listed on the back of the envelope (T6P7). The families were completely

unknown to each other. Completing the circle, Berkowitz's last letter to Craig Glassman on supposedly began with the phrase "I know Captain Carr put you up to this..."²²⁴ The result could have been his arrest for the 'Son of Sam' murders before he had the chance to kill Stacy Moskowitz and seriously injure Robert Violante on July 31, 1977. After receiving their bogus 'get-well' card, Mrs. Cassara had telephoned Mrs. Carr. When the Carrs disclosed that the content of their own harassing notes was their dog, Harvey, who had been shot and injured on the morning of April 27, a member of the Cassara family connected the incident to their former tenant, David Berkowitz, who had also complained of the howling dogs. Berkowitz had suddenly left the same month the Carrs began receiving their hate mail. Mrs. Carr explained that they had already spoken with detectives from Yonkers, so the Cassaras reported the incident and Berkowitz's name to the New Rochelle police. The police ascertained that Berkowitz was a 24-year-old former soldier turned Bronx postal worker who was now living at 35 Pine Street in Yonkers. As Berkowitz was not in their jurisdiction, they did not investigate him, but wisely sent his name and address to Yonkers police.²²⁵ Detectives from Yonkers noted that Berkowitz lived so close to the Carrs that both homes looked on to each other.

Upon speaking with his neighbours, they learned that Berkowitz had run downstairs shouting "I don't like dogs barking."²²⁶ After checking Berkowitz's address before he had moved to New Rochelle, they found that an 84-year-old woman downstairs had received a threatening noise complaint letter and that the superintendent's dog had been fatally shot.²²⁷ Even though they were not working the case, the Yonkers detectives concluded that Berkowitz and 'Son of Sam' might be one and the same. They spoke face-to-face with Detective Richard Salverson of the NYPD who was specifically visiting departments in Yonkers, New Rochelle, and Mount Vernon due to their geographical proximity to the Bronx and Queens (via bridges over the East River), the boroughs where the Son of Sam attacks had occurred.²²⁸ Despite the Yonkers detectives reportedly being told they had the best suspect by Salverson, for some reason the NYPD never pursued the Berkowitz lead. Following the murder of Stacy Moskowitz, Sam Carr had even visited the Task Force to inform them about Berkowitz and ask when they were going to arrest him.²²⁹ According to Gibson, Berkowitz had also included the Cassaras return address on one of the letters he had left for Craig Glassman (T7P20). This would have joined the Cassaras to the Carrs and Glassman through letters—the Carr and Cassara communications also both contained misspellings of the word 'you're' (T4P4, T6P5)—and Sam and Glassman, who

lived one floor below Berkowitz, through geographic proximity. Berkowitz had wreaked further havoc in his neighbourhood. On May 16, 1977, he had set fire to the home of Robert Neto at 18 Wicker Street using a Molotov cocktail, though was never identified as the culprit.²³⁰

Though Yonkers detectives did a terrific job in recognizing the obvious links to 'Son of Sam' and reporting them to the NYPD, who failed to act on this information in a timely fashion, this is often not the case.

A practical solution is to develop a national computer database—DarkChatter—to log, process, and obscure, threatening, and/or harassing *texts*. Such communications would include letters, digital messages, and transcripts of telephone calls. Every *text* would have *corresponding data* consisting of (1) the names and addresses of the recipients of the communications, (2) the names and addresses of the recipients' family members, (3) the names and addresses of suspects, and (4) any other pertinent information. Berkowitz's May 30, 1977 letter to Jimmy Breslin would have caught the following crucial words in the *corpus data*: 'Sam,' 'Wicker,' 'John,' and 'Wheaties.' When Sam Carr and the Cassaras brought their own letters to the attention of the police, the *corpus data* 'Sam' from the Cassaras' letter along with the *corresponding data* of Sam Carr's children's names 'John' and 'Wheat'(ies) from the letter Carr himself had received, would have linked at three points to the *corpus data* of the Breslin letter. The algorithm would then establish a possible connection between the author of the anonymous letters sent to Sam Carr and the Cassaras and Breslin's 'Son of Sam' letter. As the Carrs and Cassaras believed that David Berkowitz had sent the letters, Berkowitz would have become a primary suspect in the Son of Sam killings. A cursory review of the letters combined with a visit to Berkowitz's apartment would have revealed that his building exited onto Wicker Street, and that Berkowitz himself was overweight, consistent with the 'Chubby Behemouth' moniker in the Borrelli letter. Upon knocking on Berkowitz's door, investigators would ask to be invited inside his apartment to speak with him. If permitted entry, they would have been privy to a whole new secret archive of Berkowitz's writings, in the form of his scribbles on his wall. The phrases “KILL FOR SAM CARR/SAM CARR MY MASTER”²³¹ and “In this hole lives the wicked king”²³² correlate with the 'Son of Sam' and 'Wicked King Wicker' phrases in the Breslin letter. This would be sufficient evidence to lead to an arrest and issuance of formal search warrants. In the event that Berkowitz refused to speak to the investigators, their suspicions would have deepened, and he could have been placed on surveillance.

A final thought: Berkowitz's own words reveal that we must not only consider the message of a handwritten communication, but also whether it was done in cursive or printing, and the style of the lettering: “The reason I printed the letters to Captain Borrelli and Breslin was for effect. I wrote those two out first in longhand. Then I wrote them again in print without any changes, I thought the printing was more ghoulish looking.”²³³ Berkowitz, the 'Monster', was deliberately manifesting his demonic *meta-delusion* in his handwriting to affect *primary* and *tertiary transformation* through the *tertiary-primary* dynamic.

4.8 Colin Ireland: Victim-as-canvas/soapbox

Though the 'Son of Sam' and 'Gay Slayer' cases featured verbal communications with the media and police, the ETV crimes of Colin Ireland differed from David Berkowitz's in several important ways. While Berkowitz sent letters (written communications), Ireland made phone calls (oral communication), many of which were not recorded. For this reason, we must contend with the problem of generation loss, where the exact wording of the phone calls was initially misremembered and/or altered during its re-telling. Also, though it is of no particular significance in this post-hoc analysis, the exact date upon which some of the phone calls were made differs from source to source. Finally, Ireland both made phone calls *and* left tableaux, necessitating the inclusion of both in the corpus analysis. This section will examine the content of seven phone calls Ireland made to the Samaritans, *The Sun* newspaper, and various police departments between March 10 and June 15, 1993.

Text Analysis: Phone calls 1

When: March 10, 1993

To Whom: The Samaritans

Caveat: As there is no transcript of this brief phone call, it relies on the receiver's recollection and will be summarized accordingly. The letter 'P' for 'passage' has been substituted here for 'I' which stands for 'idea', as this *text* does not purport to be anything approximating a transcript of the phone call.

On March 10, two days after the murder of Peter Walker, Ireland telephoned the Samaritans(1) informing them that two dogs were trapped inside his victim's apartment (2). He gave Walker's

name and address (2), stating that he knew this because he was the killer (3).²³⁴

T1I1. the Samaritans

The decision to contact the Samaritans—a secular, registered charity primarily devoted to preventing suicide by taking phone calls from distressed individuals—was probably a practical decision. The caller knew that the volunteer on the other line would genuinely be listening, motivated by altruism rather than career goals (hence empathetic), and that the phone call would not be traced or recorded. However, the choice of the Samaritans over other charitable organizations is revealing. In the early-1980s, Samaritans began volunteering in prisons across the British Isles, eventually starting an influential Listener program at HMP Swansea in 1991.²³⁵ This service is now available in most British prisons.²³⁶ Given the fact that the caller was reporting a murder he had committed, the strong possibility that he may have served time in a prison which worked with a branch of the Samaritans arises. He may also have been employed by or associated with a prison in some other capacity.

Meta-Information: Ireland was sentenced to serve two years in prison for robbery in 1980, an additional two months in 1981 for attempted deception, and six months in 1985 for 'going equipped to cheat'.²³⁷

T1I2. Informing them that two dogs were trapped inside his victim's apartment

Walker's name and address

The caller is providing this information because he wants Walker's body to be discovered. He thus wishes for his crimes to be visible rather than go undetected. Information arising later dispels the possibility that he was actually concerned for the animals' welfare.

Meta-information: Albert Patrick believes that Ireland claimed his first victim in January 1993—a homosexual male who was found bound and dead in his apartment. Most of the corpse had been devoured by the man's dogs who had been left inside and were starving.²³⁸ Patrick thinks that the conscientious Ireland refused to admit to this crime because he was not proud of it.²³⁹

T1I3. He was the killer

The caller admits to murdering Walker to lend credibility to his claims, announcing the birth of his *homicidal self*.

Text Analysis: Phone Call 2

When: March 10, 1993; an hour after first phone call.

To Whom: Brandon Malinsky, Night news Editor at *The Sun* newspaper

Text:

“It was my New Year's Resolution (1) to kill a homosexual (2). He [Walker] was a homosexual (3) and into kinky sex (4). You like that stuff, don't you? (5)”²⁴⁰

T2P1. New Year's resolution

Though more prevalent in the West, the idea of a New Year's Resolution—in which an individual sets a goal for the coming year—exists across large portions of the world. One can see it as striving toward an aspect of the *ideal* or *ought self*, or this *self* in its totality. Often we are mindful of the age we will turn in the upcoming year, and this may be an expediting factor for dramatic change. It also indicates that there were likely no homosexual victims before December 31, 1992.

Meta-information: Ireland was turning 39 on March 15, 1993—seven days after the murder of Peter Walker.²⁴¹

T2P2. kill a homosexual

The resolution specifically entails killing a homosexual because the caller is violently homophobic and/or an ego-dystonic bi- or homosexual. In this communication he identifies himself as neither. The use of the technical term 'homosexual' instead of pejorative terms such as 'queer', 'fairy', 'poof', 'poofster', 'shirt-lifter', or even 'homo' which were common British parlance in the early-Nineties^{kkkkkkkk} is particularly revealing. In casual conversation, the average Brit would typically use a pejorative term as such language was not stigmatized at the time; indeed, it would have been rarer to use 'homosexual'. That a homicidal homophobe chooses instead to use 'homosexual' provides us with a vital clue. One can thus infer that he has spent a great deal of time in an environment in which this term was used: academia, government, medicine, or the

^{kkkkkkkk} The pejorative 'faggot' or 'fag' did not find its way into the vernacular until rather recently, likely due to the exposure of the American media. Hence, the British use of these terms to refer to offal and other portions of meat, cigarettes, and a bundle of sticks.

homosexual community itself.

Meta-information: Ireland had worked as a bouncer at several gay bars and was able to move through the Coleherne without standing out.

T2P3. He [Walker] was a homosexual

The caller specifies that Walker fit his victim criteria. In doing so he also amplifies Walker's *discredited* and stigmatized identity. Again, he uses the term 'homosexual'.

Meta-information: Ireland had worked as a bouncer at several gay bars and was able to move through the Coleherne without standing out. Walker was openly gay.

T2P4: kinky sex

Beyond noting the victim's preference in sexual partner, the caller also reveals the victim's penchant for BDSM.

Meta-information: With a single exception, Ireland's victims advertised themselves as sexual masochists who would let him tie them up. Not only did this comprise a crucial part of his modus operandi, but he would later state that homosexual masochists, particularly, were the victims he wished to target.

T2P5: You like that stuff, don't you?

This statement could be directed at journalist Brandon Malinksy or *The Sun* newspaper in general. Both the author and the tabloid have a history of covering sex scandals. In 1993, *The Sun* was generally a working-class publication which focused on gossip, crime, and sport, featuring relatively easy crosswords and 'page 3 girls': topless female models on the third page. This might indicate that the offender was a reader of *The Sun* but could also reflect that he was simply aware of their penchant for sordid content, as were most Brits.

Text Analysis: Phone Call 3

When: June 8, 1993

To Whom: Kensington Police.

Text: "If you don't stop me, it will be one a week (1). I pissed myself when I read that I was an animal lover (2). I thought I would give you lot something to think about, so I killed the cat

(2).²⁴²

T3P1: If you don't stop me, it will be one a week

By threatening to commit a murder every week, the caller is stressing the importance of the police thoroughly investigating his earlier homicides in order to prevent him. Like Berkowitz, he wants his adversaries to pursue him.

T3P2: I pissed myself when I read that I was an animal lover

I thought I would give you lot something to think about, so I killed the cat_

The phrase 'I pissed myself' is a shortened version of the metaphorical 'I pissed myself laughing', indicating that the killer found the interpretation of why he spared Peter Walker's dogs so inaccurate that it was humorous. In order to give them 'something to think about'^{lilililil} (i.e. call that belief into question) he killed Collier's cat, Millie.²⁴³ Clearly, the offender is following his crimes in the press.

Text Analysis: Phone Call 4

When: June 12, 1993

To Whom: Kensington Police

On June 12, Ireland telephoned Kensington police and gave the names of the four men he had murdered

Caveat: The *text* here is the recollection of the officer who answered the phone, not a transcript of it.

Text:

He's trying to explain to me that he's committed a murder in the last couple of days (1). And I said to him 'okay, can you obviously tell me how am I going to believe you?' And he went into the facts and said 'well, I'll tell you.' He said 'I killed a gentleman (2) the other day and what I've done is I've placed the tail of the cat into his mouth.' (3) This pricked my ears up and I started to think this is real not a prankster call.²⁴⁴

T4P1. He's trying to explain to me that he's committed a murder in the last couple of days

According to the policeman who took the call for Kensington Police, the caller actively divulged

^{lilililil} Interestingly, even though they came from different parts of the English-speaking world, both Danny Rolling and Colin Ireland claimed to act in order to give the police 'something to think about.'

that he had recently committed a murder. This shows that the caller wanted to remain on the police radar and had no desire to cover up his crimes. From a theoretical standpoint, press coverage and police attention helped was a *tertiary-primary dynamic* which helped reinforce his *homicidal self*.

Meta-Information: Ireland had killed Andrew Collier in the days leading up to the phone call.

T4P2. I killed a gentleman

The caller's use of the word 'gentleman' is formal and conveys respect.

Meta-Information: As this is the police officer's recollection we must consider the possibility that he is substituting some of his own words for Ireland's, or misremembering.

T4P3. I've placed the tail of the cat into his mouth

The caller is aware of the value of holdback information.

Meta-Information: Ireland placed Collier's murdered cat over his body in a '69' position with the tail in Collier's mouth and the cat's mouth on Collier's penis.

Text Analysis: Phone Call 5

When: June 12, 1993

To Whom: Battersea Police.

Text:

“Are you still interested in the death of Peter Walker? (1) Why have you stopped the investigation? (2) Doesn't the death of a homosexual man mean anything? (3) I will do another. (4) I have always dreamed of doing the perfect murder (5).”²⁴⁵

T5P1: Are you still interested in the death of Peter Walker?

Expecting no reply, the caller is simply using this opening sentence to drop the name of his first victim 'Peter Walker.' Though he had killed Christopher Dunn and Perry Bradley III by this point, Ireland seemed particularly fixated on Walker: the only victim he mentioned by name in his communications.

T5P2: Why have you stopped the investigation?

Based upon the lack of media coverage, the offender is assuming the investigation into Peter Walker is not ongoing. This provides us with two substantial clues: the offender follows the media closely for reports on his criminal activities, and is almost certainly not a policeman, at least not one with any knowledge of the 'Gay Slayer' investigation.

Meta-Information: The investigation was indeed active, reinvigorated by the offender's earlier admissions.

T5P3: Doesn't the death of a homosexual man mean anything?

This statement is particularly revealing. Once again, it shows that the caller has assumed the investigation is not a high priority. He has also referred to Walker as a 'homosexual' a third time, using no other descriptor. Moreover, the caller is aware that homosexual male victims in this particular time and location fall into Egger's *less dead* category. As the year was 1993 and LGBTQ+ rights were much less advanced than they are today, the offender would have only known this if (1) he was law enforcement or an academic studying crime, or (2) he was involved in the LGBTQ+ community at some level. He is also (1) attempting to manipulate the police into making a bigger deal of the investigation by shaming them into reflecting upon their own biases and/or public image, (2) using irony, essentially saying 'you care as little about homosexual men as I do', or (3) both.

Meta-Information: Ireland had worked as a bouncer at several gay bars and was able to move through the Coleherne without standing out. Seven days earlier on June 5, the police had held their first press conference to announce that the five deaths were linked and warn homosexuals that a predator was murdering them. As there is no complete footage or transcript available from the press conference, we cannot rule out that the police did not discuss building bridges with the LGBTQ+ community.

T5P4: I will do another.

By threatening to commit another murder, the caller is stressing the importance of the police thoroughly investigating his earlier homicides in order to prevent him. Like Berkowitz, he wants his adversaries to pursue him.

Meta-Information: Ireland did kill on at least one more occasion.

T5P5: I have always dreamed of doing the perfect murder.

The use of 'have' instead of the word 'had' indicates that the caller does not yet believe any of his murders were 'perfect', while 'always' shows that his homicidal fantasies likely go back to his childhood. 'Dreamed' may not just refer to these fantasies, but also reflects an aspirational pursuit of positively-valued goals. This implies that being a consummately professional murderer is the caller's *ideal/own*.

Text Analysis: Phone Call 6

When: June 12, 1993

To Whom: Battersea Police

Text (Ireland had the following exchange with the Detective Constable):

Officer: "Why are you doing this?"

Ireland: "I set out to see 'cos I've read several books on serial killers (1) and you see you know I wondered if it could be possibly done and got away with (2)."

Officer: "But why in particular homosexuals?"

Ireland: "Because they're a class of err... keep their mouths shut and don't tell police things (3). They're respectable (4), and that I don't like them (5)."

Officer: "But what was your aim in all that?"

Ireland: "Just to see if it could be done (2). Alright, so I'll leave you to get on with it (6). Bye bye (7)."²⁴⁶

T6P1. I've read several books on serial killers

Here, the caller reveals that he is both literate and reads voluntarily and is modeling himself after the *serialkiller! talisman* represented in these undisclosed books.

Meta-information: Ireland was literate.

T6P2. wondered if it could be possibly done and got away with just to see if it could be done

The caller is emphasizing the dual role of aspiration and thrill-seeking driving his motives. Could

he do it? This statement also shows his utter disregard for human life. His victims were not people, but a means to an end. Tests in a personal experiment. There is an implication of psychopathic traits.

T6P3. they're a class of err... keep their mouths shut and don't tell police things

The use of the term 'class' is interesting here, though as it occurs in an incomplete sentence, it seems the caller may have realized he used the wrong word and stopped himself. 'Class' could simply mean something similar to 'category' or 'type', however, though there are hierarchical connotations to it. The caller demonstrates his knowledge of the homosexual community's relationship with the police, suggesting he has spent a lot of time in one or the other group.

Meta-information: Ireland had worked as a bouncer at several gay bars and was able to move through the Coleherne without standing out.

T6P4. respectable

As noted in the case study, the use of the adjective 'respectable' to describe a group which the victim purports to dislike is an interesting anomaly, particularly given the fact that their behaviour is stigmatized by large portions of the British public. The only sensible way to interpret this in light of the other information and declarations is that his use of the word 'respectable' refers to their socio-economic status rather than their sexuality.

Meta-information: Ireland often stayed in his victims' apartment for hours after he killed them, watching the television and eating their food.

T6P5. I don't like them

The caller reveals his animosity toward his victim group, albeit in the mildest terms. In doing so, he seems to be trying to downplay the role of their homosexuality as secondary to his *primary transformation* motivation.

Meta-information: Several sources report that Ireland was openly homophobic prior to his murders.

T6P6. I'll leave you to get on with it

The phrase 'get on with it' is interchangeable with 'work the case' or 'investigate'. Once again, this

is an indication that the offender enjoys the idea of the police attempting to catch him.

T6P7. Bye bye

Fortunately, this call was recorded, demonstrating that 'bye bye' is simply the caller's speaking convention rather than the patronizing farewell it resembles in text.

Text Analysis: Phone Call 7

When: June 15, 1993

To Whom: Arbour Square Police.

Text:

“I have read a lot of books on serial killers (1). I think it is from four people that the FBI class as serial (2), so I may stop now I have done five (3). I just wanted to see if it could be done (4). I will probably never re-offend (5) again (3).”²⁴⁷

T7P1. I have read a lot of books on serial killers

The offender is literate and enjoys reading voraciously about at least one topic: one who does not care for books could simply learn about serial killers by watching the television.

Meta-information: Ireland was literate.

T7P2. It is from four people that the FBI class as serial

This is a particularly revealing statement as the offender incorrectly recalled the number of victims necessary to be listed as a serial killer. This indicates that his phone calls were impulsive. Compared to his meticulously organized murders, the offender did not fact check or prepare a statement for his phone call. It could also indicate that he does not own *The Crime Classification Manual* or Robert Ressler's *Whoever Fights Monsters* in order to refer back to it. Likely, he read it at a library, or borrowed it for a short time and returned it. Given his intense interest in the subject, this implies that the offender has little to no disposable income. The need to fit the perceived official criteria for being a serial murderer shows a certain respect for the FBI and institutions in general.

Meta-information: Ireland was homeless and living in a bed sit at the time of the crimes. No such books were found in his possession.

T7P3. I may stop now I have done five

I will probably never re-offend again

The offender believes that he has achieved his primary goal of becoming a *serialkiller!* For this reason, he proposes that there is no need to continue murdering. However, his use of the words 'may' and particularly 'probably' show that he is far from certain that he can stop, revealing a compulsive element.

Meta-information: Ireland later claimed at the point where he murdered Spiteri he was losing control of his impulses and offered to confess because he thought there was a chance he would still murder gay men.

T7P4. I just wanted to see if it could be done

The success of executing his homicidal mission is either the offender's primary goal *or* what he wishes others to believe his primary goal is. This downplays the fact that his victims were tortured, which is not necessary to simply kill and become a serial murderer. It also ignores the fact that his victims were consistently homosexual.

T7P5. re-offend

The use of the term 're-offend' rather than 'kill' hints toward somebody with a history of interactions with the criminal justice system: an ex-convict, police officer, prison guard, mental health professional, criminologist, lawyer, warden, parole officer, or some other related role.

Meta-information: Ireland had served numerous stints behind bars in the Seventies and Eighties.

Corpus Analysis and Theoretical Synthesis

Unlike Berkowitz's communications, there are no contradictions in Ireland's communications, and therefore no reason to suspect gross deception.^{mmmmmmmmmm} The content of his telephone communications reveals that, through the commission of murder, the offender is aspiring to a long-anticipated (T5P5) *homicidal self* (T2P1, T2P2, T5P5) drawing from the

^{mmmmmmmmmm} A single exception: Ireland originally called the Samaritans and reportedly expressed concern that Walker's two dogs were locked inside. This was an attempt to get them to uncover the murder. Later, he murdered Collier's cat to prove that he did not actually care for animals, and that the original phone call had been a ploy.

serialkiller! talisman (T1F3, T5P5, T6P1, T6P2, T7P2, T7P3, T7P4). The offender's expressed desire to meet the criminological criteria for this identity (T7P2, T7P3) along with his stated motive 'to see if it could be done' (T6P2, T7P4) allows for two additional lines of interpretation: that the challenge of completing the journey toward the *homicidal self* was important to the killer, not just the end result (i.e., he enjoyed tricking, murdering, and sometimes posing his victims), and perhaps a paradoxical quest for validity through institutionalized narratives. In keeping with the tropes associated with the *serialkiller!*, he wants the police to pursue (and perhaps eventually capture) him as indicated in at least seven incidences (T1F2, T3P1, T4P1, T5P1, T5P2, T5P4, T6P6). His *victim-as-canvas expressions* are part of him playing this *serialkiller!* role. For this reason, like Berkowitz, rather than insulting the police, the offender actually encourages them. Similarly, he seeks validation of this identity through media coverage, going out of his way to draw the press's attention to his crimes when he feels that it is non-existent or inadequate (T2P1, T2P2, T2P5, T3P2, T5P2).

By contacting the Samaritans (T1F1), using the word 're-offend' (T7P5), and committing serial murder-robberies, he also unconsciously indicates that he has spent some time in a correctional institution, either as an inmate, prison guard, administrator, or mental health professional. He is relatively well-spoken and literate (T6P1, T7P1). His modus operandi of going home with men from the Coleherne, consistent use of the word 'homosexual' (T2P2, T2P3) rather than more common pejorative terms, and knowledge of the relationship between the LGBTQ+ community and police (T5P3, T6P3) demonstrates that he is ensconced in gay culture. Though evidence of sexual penetration or fondling is absent, by suffocating and strangling nude homosexual men on a bed and burning their genital areas, the offender leaves *indices* of his sexually sadistic attraction to men. His homophobic comments (T2P2, T2P3, T6P5) coupled with his posing of several victims using *signs* to highlight their homosexual deviance reinforces the notion, proposed in an earlier section, that the offender is an ego-dystonic bisexual or homosexual who believes that experiencing sexual pleasure by torturing men (i) obfuscates the libidinal nature of his crime, and/or (ii) somehow repudiates his same-sex attraction. The inversion of *symbols* of innocence through sexualization may tentatively lead us to conclude that this ego-dystonic bi- or homosexuality may have resulted from the offender suffering sexual abuse at a young age which he attributed to gay men.ⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿ ETV analysis of his *victim-as-*

ⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿ There is a precedent for this. 48 years earlier in Windsor, Canada, ETV offender Ronald Sears had

canvas communications supports this. The offender employed irony in his communications by contrasting cute *symbols* such as teddy bears, dolls, and cats with the *abjection* of dead bodies. There are also hints of humour in his telephone communications to both the media (T2P5) and police (T3P2). As nearly every *victim-as-canvas* murderer showed an interest in Hero Culture, the offender may have been employed, sought employment, or been enamoured with the police, military, survivalism, or the fire department. The consistent use of fire in his crimes strengthens the case for the last possibility.

Based upon this corpus analysis, there are several useful inferences we can make about the offender which can be operationalized. Firstly, any suspect who was either a prison worker or former inmate at a correctional institution with a Samaritan-presence between 1980-1992 would become a higher priority suspect than one who had not. As the suspect is clearly striving toward a *homicidal ideal/own*, and every offender in our sample went through a period of dejection-related emotionality immediately beforehand, we should prioritize those who exhibited dejection-related emotions in the days, weeks, or month leading up to the murder of Peter Walker. Likewise, ETV offenders typically are unemployed or unstable in their employment. The fact that two of the murders happened late on Monday nights (two more were on Fridays, and the last was on a Saturday), as well as the fact that the victims were robbed, seems to indicate a suspect who either did not work a nine-to-five job, or was unemployed. Therefore, prioritization of these individuals also increases. Inversely, illiterate suspects would find their priority reduced, though certainly not eliminated. Lastly, though this would entail personal knowledge of a suspect's social habits, any suspect known to proactively make anti-LGBTQ+ remarks in one sphere of life while frequenting gay club and pubs in another—effectively living a closeted, homophobic life— would also receive a bump in prioritization. With his *subordinated masculinity* hidden, it is unlikely that the suspect would display effeminate mannerisms. In fact, considering that every serial or spree killer (with the exception of Daniel Gonzalez) showed a marked interest in Hero Culture, there is a strong likelihood that his work to cover his

propositioned homosexuals at meet-up spots only to stab them once they were vulnerable. While still at large, he sent a letter to the local newspaper reading: “Dear sirs This is a challenge to you. 'I' will strike in the near future. I can not disclose this to you of course. My avenger [sic] of these people are great. Nothing shall stand in my way. I will use only the knife on my supposed enemies. I am not a returned soldier. This is no prank. THE SLASHER. Please forgive me but these people have destroyed my whole life” (Mellor, 2012, p. 198). Once arrested, Sears admitted to being molested when he was nine-years-old, and was now seeking vengeance upon 'sex perverts' (Mellor, 2012).

subordinated masculinity would have initially come through attempts to aspire to become a *sub-hegemonic* survivalist, policeman, firefighter, or military grunt. Perhaps most crucially, before they actually managed to record a phone call, the police would have received ear-witness testimony as to the killer's accent, which in the UK contains clues to both the area^{oooooooo} he is from and his social class. Ireland has a Kentish accent^{pppppppp} which bears some similarities to the estuary accent, but is certainly distinct enough for some to discern. Once a call was recorded, an expert would have been able to identify it easily. This would be the offender's most indisputable and primary identifying *sign*.

As all five victims were procured from the Coleherne, a dragnet strategy should have been implemented at the venue following the murder of Perry Bradley III^{qqqqqqqq}. The operation would require eight undercover police officers, each with an exceptional understanding of the criminal profile and an ear for the Kentish accent, to be present at the Coleherne every evening till closing time for the period of approximately one month. The first would masquerade as a doorman and wear a hidden wire. Though Britain is lax about checking identification cards at drinking establishments, in this scenario such a strategy would have been invaluable. After receiving the customer's identification, the doorman^{rrrrrrrr} would ask the customer to confirm his name^{ssssssss} which would entail the customer speaking it aloud. If the name provided by the customer did not match the one on the card, the doorman could remark 'but it says [insert name] on the i.d. you've just given me.' This way both accurate and inaccurate names would be conveyed audibly and discretely to a second undercover policeman stationed outside the pub in an unmarked car. He would run each of the names through the police database in order to conduct a criminal record check. Any punter refusing to provide identification would be immediately flagged as suspicious, and subject to surveillance. Two additional unmarked police

^{oooooooo} After playing back a recording of one phone call, they were also able to determine his whereabouts based upon a background sound associated with Fenchurch railway station.

^{pppppppp} He spent his formative years in Dartford and Sidcup, areas in Kent which are located 25 kilometres and 19.31 kilometres south-east of London, respectively.

^{qqqqqqqq} Ideally, this would have started with the second victim, Christopher Dunn, but his death had still been deemed 'accidental' at this stage

^{rrrrrrrr} Certainly, the offender may have used a fake piece of identification—in fact this should be anticipated. Ireland, for instance, was known to employ the alias 'Colin Williams'. But rather than this being a problem, it would have been the opposite. As the officer checking the identification would necessarily be an expert at spotting fake i.d., then any patron possessing it could immediately be arrested or followed. Similarly, because an i.d. may be real but stolen, then it should be cross-referenced with any reports of stolen identification.

^{ssssssss} In the past I have been asked to provide my birthdate by a doorman to see if it matches the date on my identification.

cars, each manned by two officers, would assist in these background checks, but also be on standby to tail any suspicious customers leaving the venue. The final two undercover policemen would be positioned in the heart of the Coleherne, scouring the club for men fitting the respective offender and victim profiles. One officer would be disguised as a submissive and actively seeking out suspects, while the second would be generally surveilling the interior of the pub as a whole. As the victims were all 'bottoms'—openly advertising their preference by the wearing of *symbolic* handkerchiefs in their back-right pockets²⁴⁸—then (i) observation of potential suspects could be relegated to those without 'bottom' handkerchiefs, and (ii) any person seen leaving the Coleherne with a 'bottom' could immediately be documented or tailed by the surveillance team. In summary, this operation would require five officers in three cars outside the Coleherne, two undercover officers inside, and one acting as the doorman. Veteran homicide investigator Cloyd Steiger of the Seattle Police Department has confirmed that this plan is effective, reasonable, and within the budgetary allowance of most major police departments.²⁴⁹

Unfortunately, these suggestions can only be applied to similar future cases. On March 11, 1993, four days after the murder of Peter Walker, the House of Lords ruled by a majority of three to two that consensual sadomasochistic activities were illegal in Britain.²⁵⁰ With the preferential sexual activities of many who frequented the Coleherne now criminalized, their already adversarial relationship with police was greatly exacerbated—the inevitable result of 460 years of prosecution for homosexual acts and the perceived disinterest of police in homophobic violence.²⁵¹

A second way in which our findings can be operationalized—by taking advantage of the offender's obvious desire to interact with the media and law enforcement^{ttttttt}—was capitalized on by the police task force. Shortly after the death of Emanuel Spiteri, a police press conference was held to announce they had linked the deaths of the five men and warn the gay community that there was a killer in their midst. On June 17, 1993, Detective Superintendent Ken John of Battersea Police made a direct appeal to the offender: “Speak to me, I am willing to speak to you. I need to speak to you. This is something we can talk about. Enough is enough. Enough pain, enough anxiety, enough tragedy. Give yourself up – whatever terms, whatever you dictate,

^{ttttttt} This strategy has been successful in several notable ETV cases including those of 'BTK Strangler' Dennis Rader, and 'UNABomber' Ted Kaczynski.

whatever the time, to me and my colleagues.”²⁵² More appeals followed. According to Detective Superintendent Brian Edwards:

There was a two-fold purpose to the public appeals. First of all, we were looking to protect the target victim community and alert them to the risks that they were facing so they could take precautions against that risk. And secondly we were looking to get inside the mind of the killer and to shape his thinking in the way we wanted it to go.²⁵³

It is notable that Ireland did eventually walk into a solicitor's office and admitted to being with Emanuel Spiteri on the evening of his death, albeit denying his guilt and offering a plausible excuse.

In this section we have seen how inferences about the semiotic content of phone calls coupled with a *victim-as-canvas* analysis can inform and augment a police operation to ensnare a serial killer. Though the next case, Luka Magnotta, has some commonalities and significant departures, it provides us with another example of how our methodology may be applied in this way.

4.9 Luka Magnotta: Victim-as-canvas/soapbox

Luka Magnotta's *victim-as-soapbox* communication was notably less elaborate than his *victim-as-canvas* activities. Severing Jun Lin's hands and feet, he wrapped each in pink tissue paper and garbage bags, packed them into small boxes with notes, and mailed them to the headquarters of the Conservative Party of Canada and the Liberal Party of Canada, along with two Vancouver schools. Each box contained a symbolic sender name and return address.

Text Analysis: Letter 1

When: May 29, 2012

To Whom: The Conservative Party of Canada headquarters

Extra: The note was signed with a black heart *symbol*. The package contained a severed foot wrapped in pink tissue paper.

Text:

“Stephen Harper and Lauren [sic] Tesky [sic] (1) will know who this is. They f***ed up big time! (2)”²⁵⁴. The sender's name read “Renee Bordelais (3)”²⁵⁵.

T1P1. Stephen Harper and Lauren [sic] Tesky [sic]

At the time of the communication, Stephen Harper was leader of the Conservative Party, serving his second term as the 22nd Prime Minister of Canada. The maiden name of his wife, Laureen Harper, was 'Teskey'. Here the author has misspelled both her first and last names. His choice to call Harper's wife 'Laureen Tesky' rather than 'Laureen Harper' should not be given too much consideration, as she only changed her name to 'Laureen Harper' 13 years after their 1993 marriage when her husband became Prime Minister.

T1P2. Stephen Harper and Lauren [sic] Tesky [sic] will know who this is. They f*ed up big time!**

The author is implying that the 22nd Prime Minister of Canada and his wife possess some kind of hidden knowledge regarding either the owner of the disembodied foot or the person who sent it. The second sentence blames the incident on them. However, at no point does the author actually reveal any information which would hint toward what this 'fuck up' was.

Meta-information: In the years since there has been no information linking the Harpers with either Luka Magnotta or Jun Lin. One possibility is that Laureen Teskey was actively involved in supporting animal welfare charities and Magnotta was the infamous kitten vaccuumer. Perhaps by stating that the couple would know who this is, Magnotta is referring to himself, and his belief that the Harpers were aware of his status as the #1 suspect.

T1P3. Renee Bordelais

Renee Bordelais is the mother of Canadian serial killer Karla Homolka's lawyer, Sylvie Bordelais, and Karla's husband Thierry Bordelais.

Meta-information: After marrying her lawyer Sylvie Bordelais' brother, Thierry, Karla Homolka changed her surname to 'Emily Bordelais'.

Text Analysis: Letter 2

When: May 29, 2012

To Whom: The Liberal Party of Canada headquarters

Extra: The note was signed with a black heart *symbol*. The package contained a severed hand

wrapped in pink tissue paper.

Text:

“You need to speak to Laureen Tesky [sic] (1) & her family! Lots to Hide! (2)”²⁵⁶ Again, the sender's name read “Renee Bordelais (3).”²⁵⁷

T2P1. Laureen Tesky [sic]

Here the author refers to Prime Minister Stephen Harper's wife by her maiden name, Laureen Teskey, incorrectly spelling her surname. The choice to call Harper's wife 'Laureen Tesky' rather than 'Laureen Harper' should not be given too much consideration, as she only changed her name to 'Laureen Harper' 13 years after their 1993 marriage when her husband became Prime Minister.

T2P2. You need to speak to Laureen Tesky [sic] & her family! Lots to Hide!

Again, the author eludes to an insidious secret concealed by the Prime Minister's wife and unspecified members of her family. Yet he provides no clue as to what is being hidden.

T2P3. Renee Bordelais

Renee Bordelais is the mother of Canadian serial killer Karla Homolka's lawyer, Sylvie Bordelais, and Karla's husband Thierry Bordelais.

Meta-information: After marrying her lawyer Sylvie Bordelais' brother, Thierry, Karla Homolka changed her surname to 'Emily Bordelais'.

Text Analysis: Letter 3

When: June 5, 2012

To Whom: “Louise Jones”²⁵⁸ at Vancouver's False Creek elementary school

Extra: The note was signed with a black heart *symbol*. The package contained a severed hand wrapped in pink tissue paper.

Text:

“ROSES ARE RED. VIOLETS ARE BLUE. (1) THE POLICE WILL NEED DENTAL RECORDS TO IDENTIFY YOU, (2) BITCH (3).”²⁵⁹ This time the sender's name and return address were “L. Valenti (4)”²⁶⁰ from “St. Catharines, ON (4)”²⁶¹

T3P1. ROSES ARE RED. VIOLETS ARE BLUE.

The first two lines of this poem are an homage to (or borrowing of) 'Roses are Red', one of the most well-known poems in the English language, which dates back to 1590. In its most familiar form, the poem reads 'roses are red/violets are blue/sugar is sweet/and so are you.'

T3P2. THE POLICE WILL NEED DENTAL RECORDS TO IDENTIFY YOU

Here the author is using irony, substituting the complimentary and maudlin 'sugar is sweet/and so are you' for 'the police will need dental records to identify you.' Far from an appreciative or conscientious poet, as perhaps indicated by his reference to such a hackneyed poem, the author ravages the poetic meter by using 15 syllables to end the composition, where the original poem employed an aesthetically sensible eight syllables. This points to a lack of artistic ability.

Strangely, as the note was accompanied only by a severed foot, there was actually no way to identify the victim through their teeth.

Meta-information: Jun Lin's head was found on July 1 near a lake in Montreal's Angrignon Park. His body had already been identified through DNA technologies.

T3P3. BITCH

In this context, the pejorative 'bitch' is used to emasculate the victim and imply dominance and ownership over him by claiming superior masculinity. The popularization of this term to refer to men largely stems from late-Eighties and Nineties hip hop records. It is now common parlance among certain late-members of Generation X, Millennials, and subsequent generations. This suggests that the author of the letter was born in the late-Seventies, at the very latest, but likely after.

Meta-information: Magnotta was born in 1982. As proposed in the previous chapter, he may have selected Jun Lin as a victim due to symbolic associations of East Asian men with femininity.

T3P4. L. Valenti

St. Catharines, ON

Though the return address indicates the letter was sent from south-western Ontario, it was actually posted from Montreal.

Meta-information: Canadian serial killer Karla Homolka's sister, Lori, changed her name to Logan Valenti in 1996. She lives in St. Catharines, Ontario.

Text Analysis: Letter 4

When: June 5, 2012

To Whom: “Louise Jones”²⁶²(1) at St. Georges school

Extra: The note was signed with a black heart *symbol*. The package contained a severed foot wrapped in pink tissue paper.

Text:

“Die Bitch! Soon!(2)”²⁶³ The name and return address read “Hurbert [sic] Chretien (3)”²⁶⁴ from “Gatineau, QC (3)”²⁶⁵.

T4P1. Louise Jones

Louise Jones is employed as an Administrative Assistant at St. George’s Junior School—a fact which is readily observable on the institution's website.

T4P2. Die Bitch! Soon!

As the severed foot indicates the victim was likely already dead, this statement seems to refer to another 'bitch' who is not yet dead, but will die 'soon': most probably, Louise Jones. The tone of the email is undeniably threatening and intended to frighten Ms. Jones.

Meta-information: Magnotta did not harm anybody at St. Georges school, nor has any connection between him and Louise Jones been reported.

T4P3. Hurbert [sic] Chretien

Gatineau, QC

Hubert Chrétien is the son of the former Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien who held office from 1993-2003. The author misspelled his name, so that phonetically it sounds like 'Herbert', seeming to indicate that the author read and misremembered it, rather than hearing it. Hubert Chrétien does live in Gatineau, Quebec but has largely not been a figure represented in the media. Though the return address indicates the letter was sent from Gatineau, Quebec, it was actually posted from Montreal. The referencing of another political figure is consistent with the

first two letters, and seems designed to maximize the attention given to these incidents by making them look like acts of terrorism or revolution.

Corpus Analysis and Theoretical Synthesis

Unlike the far lengthier and more complex letters sent by David Berkowitz, Luka Magnotta's communications—at least what has been released of them—are extremely curt and lacking in substance, averaging about two sentences each. However, like elements of both Berkowitz and Ireland's letters, the offender intentionally provides clues which link the murders and hint at his identity. Firstly, the signature behaviour of sending severed appendages wrapped in pink tissue paper with notes is enough to link all four of these *homicidal expressions*. The references to 'Renee Bordelais' (T1P3, T2P3) and 'L. Valenti' of 'St. Catharines' (T3P4) in the context of a homicide confirm the suspect's connection to Karla Homolka. A simple Internet search of 'Karla Homolka' would have revealed a bizarre 2007 article in the *Toronto Sun* romantically linking her to Luka Magnotta.^{uuuuuuuu} A subsequent search for 'Luka Magnotta' would not only have revealed his pathological need for attention, professed White Supremacist views, and profound interest in serial killers, but also a news article from *The Sun* in the UK outlining a case against him as the elusive 'kitten killer'. The use of the author's term 'bitch', seemingly to refer to his male victim (T3P3), places him in an age group roughly from 18-33 (born 1979-1994). Magnotta was 29. The *symbolic* associations of 'hearts' and the colour pink—signs used in all four communications—with femininity should also lead us to consider a female or effeminate male suspect, like Magnotta. By issuing threats, referencing Karla Homolka (T1P3, T2P3, T3P4) and namedropping political figures (T1P1, T2P1, T4P3) without any accompanying political commentary, the sender is essentially *increasing abjection*, instilling terror, and appealing to pre-established Canadian media figures to be newsworthy. There is no evidence of any other ultimatum.

Fortunately, in this case, the *expressive/transformativ*e communications were linked to Magnotta within a single day of the body part appearing at Conservative Party headquarters, largely thanks to his posting of the '1 lunatic 1 icepick' video five days earlier. The ironic themes

^{uuuuuuuu} I can attest to this because two years before the Magnotta murders, while researching my book *Cold North Killers*, I had stumbled across the 2007 Magnotta-Homolka article while performing a Google search. The article had appeared within the first few pages.

in both the letter and video (e.g., use of the puppy) provides a semiotic link between them. However, as demonstrated here, even without the video in question, efficient and proactive investigation would have placed Magnotta's name at the top of the suspect list anyway, based on the information available about him online.

This section completes our look at how *victim-as-canvas* and *victim-as-soapbox* communications can work in tandem with other investigative measures to apprehend a perpetrator, as well as demonstrating our methodology.

4.10 Gonzalez, Arkwright, Holmes, and Cho: Victim-as-soapbox/Costume

Another *victim-as-soapbox* ETV act is the donning of a costume—usually preceding or during violence—whether it be as subtle and practical as Danny Rolling's “Ninja black”²⁶⁶ hit clothes' or dramatic as Anthony Arkwright's devil mask. This *expression* embodies the becoming of a new *self* in which the offender literally alters his physical appearance to match a *sub-hegemonic* or *hyperreal self*.

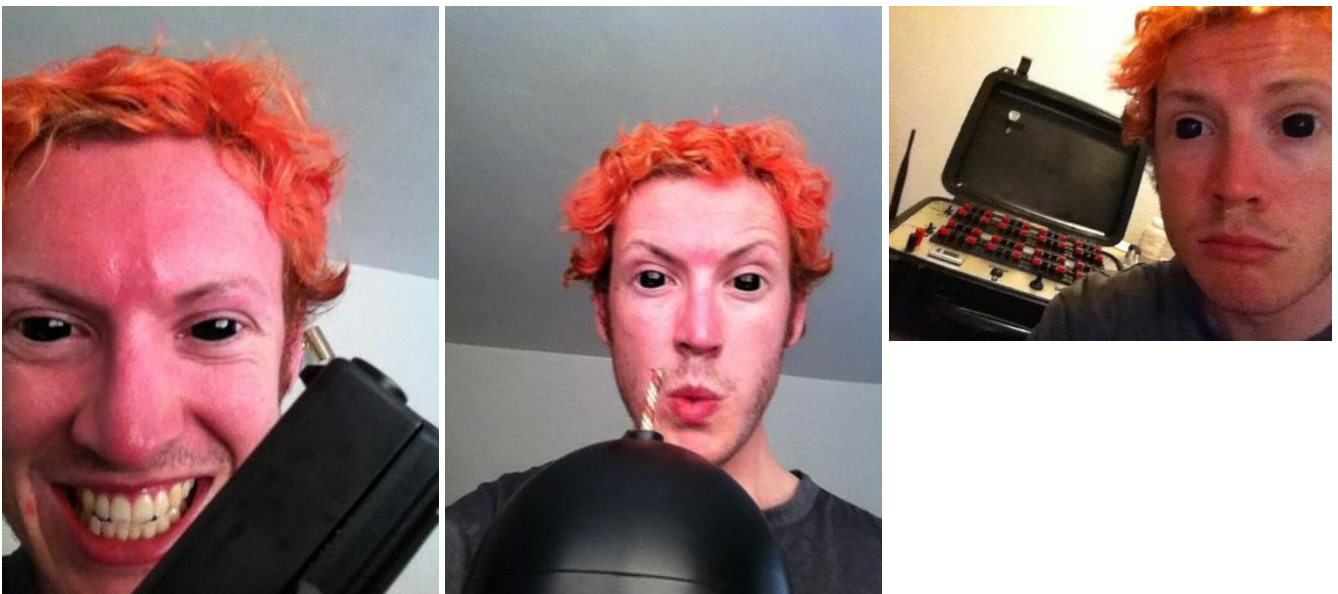
A caution: Similar to the posing of corpses, before one embarks on a semiotic interpretation of the offender's costume, it is first necessary to determine whether the attire was used a disguise—modus operandi—or if it was truly an *identity signature*. On Christmas Eve 2008 in Covina, California, 45-year-old Bruce Pardo dressed himself in a Santa Claus costume and drove to his ex-wife's residence, where he knew the family yuletide party would be in full swing. Knocking on the door, Pardo was granted entry, and was greeted by his excited eight-year-old stepdaughter. He shot her in the face with a semi-automatic handgun, before using firearms and a homemade flame thrower to massacre nine people, including his ex-wife and her parents.²⁶⁷ Psychiatrists were quick to weigh in, with one concluding that Pardo “was so full of hate that he had to disguise his hate by dressing up as someone full of love—Santa Claus.”²⁶⁸ Yet, the true explanation is much simpler. Pat Bower, a neighbour of the victims, explained “I would generally play Santa for the family every year... The family was always together. Brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles were always in the house. They were a gigantic family.”²⁶⁹ Knowing he would not be granted access to the house by his embittered former family, Pardo adorned the Santa costume so that he would be mistaken for Bower and allowed inside.

Let us return to those offenders who used costume as an *identity signature*. In the United Kingdom, Anthony Arkwright and Daniel Gonzalez did not release photographs or video of

themselves in their costumes, rather they simply wore them while murdering their victims in privacy. Both offenders donned masks for only one homicide in their series of four slayings. Arkwright drew upon the Satan *avatar* from the Holy Bible *talisman*, stripping naked and donning a devil mask while he butchered Raymond Ford. Similarly, Daniel Gonzalez dressed as the seemingly indestructible, machete-wielding Jason Voorhees of the Friday the 13th films: perhaps the most recognizable slasher movie character of all time. Both masks were *icons* as they resembled Lucifer and Voorhees, although it could be argued that an old-fashioned hockey mask, having lost its initial meaning, is now also a *symbol* of the latter. Sections 3.9 and 3.10 have already explored why these specific offenders were drawn to these particular *hyperreal avatars*. The outstanding question, then, is why the killers chose to adorn such masks knowing they would be the only living witnesses to their *homicidal expression*. Returning to the transformative triangle, the answer lies in the *primary transformation* of the killer, *secondary transformation* of the victim, and the *primary-secondary dynamic* between them. *Primary transformation* initially occurs through the simple act of being conscious that one is wearing the mask (*SAOS*) with its related implications for one's *homicidal self*. Yet, in keeping with the communicative origins and negotiation of *self* implicit in ETV, the victim's presumably terrified reaction to the mask signals to the killer that the victim has undergone the *secondary transformation* of being happily indifferent to the offender to one who is frightened and completely defined by him. The victim's facial expression, gestures, and any oral communications thus serve to affirm the killer's *primary transformation*: he *is* as relevant, powerful, and terrifying as he believes.

On the other hand, mass murderers James Holmes and Seung-Hui Cho posed for selfies in their costumes before embarking on homicidal rampages, literally dressed to kill. Holmes claims to have dyed his hair red “to stand out I guess... to stand beside normalcy and be the exotic figure [*primary transformation*]”²⁷⁰, and more practically, because “I thought it would look better than green or blue.”²⁷¹ Researchers at the University College of London have noted that psychological testing has shown that red elicits the strongest response from observers, and is associated with blood, anger, sin, courage, boldness, virility, danger and war²⁷²: “A Roman general receiving a triumph had his entire body painted red in honour of his achievement.”²⁷³ Holmes also wore black contact lenses which are *indices* of pure evil or demonic possession in contemporary Western culture, a notion chiefly borne by artistic representations in mass media.²⁷⁴ So, when Holmes anticipated that people would observe his photographs and think

“this guy’s different than other people... he doesn't look the same as a normal person...”²⁷⁵ because “he's got red hair and black contacts in”²⁷⁶, consciously or subconsciously, he was evoking *symbols* and *indices* with very specific cultural meanings. Tellingly, he claimed the photographs represented “the differentiated self... I dyed my hair red, put the contact lenses in, and that wasn't the normal me... *That portrays an evil me* [emphasis added]... It's kind of a character of me”²⁷⁷, adding “I don't think it's an inaccurate depiction of who I am. It was just a capturing of the moment.”²⁷⁸ Like Arkwright who literally wore a devil mask and Gonzalez who dressed as Jason Voorhees—the Hell-bound revenant—Holmes viewed his possession-eyed, fiery-haired homicidal *self* as “a little devilish... There's warrior-like characteristics but I didn't view myself as a warrior.”²⁷⁹ While perpetrating his massacre, Holmes wore body armour, though he told Dr. Reid that his decision to do so was more “function over form.”²⁸⁰ Nevertheless, he did post photographs of himself sporting the body armour, along with other weapons, online, reasoning that those who saw them would view him as “familiar with the ways of weaponry and body armour... that I'm a killer I guess.”²⁸¹ This statement supports Mellor's contention that weapon-collecting can lead to an increase in violent self-image, along with style of dress, tattoo content etc.²⁸²



Figures 17-19. James Holmes Poses With Weapons

For a man who hadn't been in a fight since elementary school, identified with the *subordinated masculine* character of Leonard from *The Big Bang Theory*, and was genuinely afraid that “thugs

would rob me... beat me up..."²⁸³ in Aurora, Colorado—one of the 20 safest large cities in the United States—having an 'evil' (self-)image was particularly useful. Commenting on the depiction of his *homicidal self* in the photographs, Holmes remarked "He looks scary... I wouldn't want to run in to him... he looks more like a thug... not a typical thug... *a crazy thug* [emphasis added]... you'd wanna stay away from him."²⁸⁴ For a man with such profound social anxiety, this would have been seen as positive.

Before his homicidal incarnation, Holmes the student "didn't stand out. I was pretty much going with the flow."²⁸⁵ Interestingly, he believed the physical alterations marking his *homicidal self* would lead observers to conclude that he was "mentally different"²⁸⁶ with "a different kind of view of the world than other people."²⁸⁷ Thus, Holmes needed society to acknowledge that he was apart from it, not because he was outcast and socially anxious—the true explanation—but because he was intrinsically 'different', somehow 'beyond' society. Expecting to be "remembered by those pictures"²⁸⁸, he considered posting a photograph to the *New York Times* because he was certain "they would repost it."²⁸⁹ This visual expression of *cognitive deviance* may reflect Holmes's desire to "speak through an image instead of having to use words."²⁹⁰ His dichotomy between different/evil/noteworthy and normal/good/unremarkable harkens back to Daniel Gonzalez's view that "good people are so boring, aren't they. [sic] Bad people have all the fun. Good people don't do anything. They are just boring."²⁹¹ Ultimately, Holmes admitted posting the photographs "to be remembered... you're going to be remembered by other people not yourself."²⁹² Like fellow embodiments of *hyperreal masculinity*, Gonzalez the 'slasher monster' and Arkwright the 'devil', Holmes threw his lot in with different, evil, and noteworthy at the expense of being normal, good, and unremarkable.

Five years earlier at Virginia Polytechnic, Seung-Hui Cho, had similarly posed for a series of photographs while brandishing dual handguns, knives, and a hammer. In the most blatant example of *primary transformation* through costume, he even wrote "Ismail's Ax"²⁹³—a variation of his Ax Ismail homicidal alias—on his arm in red ink, marking it as an instrument of destruction [*SAOS*].



Figures 20-23. Seung-Hui Cho Posing With Weapons and in *Eric&Dylan!* Regalia

But where Holmes had sought “to stand beside normalcy and be the exotic figure”²⁹⁴, Cho conceived of himself as the latest ‘martyr’ in an uprising of “the Weak, the Defenseless, and the Innocent Children of all ages.”²⁹⁵ Sporting a backwards baseball hat and military-style vest in emulation of previous “martyrs”²⁹⁶ Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, he went on to murder 32 so-called “Apostles of Sin”²⁹⁷ before taking his own life *à la Eric&Dylan!*. As Cho saw himself as continuing a social movement, he donned an approximation of his predecessors’ uniform, likely believing that those who followed him would style themselves similarly. Like Holmes, this was a SAOS also intended to affect the *tertiary transformation* of American society more than the

secondary transformation of his victims who would have thought little of his subtle garb during the ensuing panic.



Figures 24-25. Cho's costume is similar in style to the Columbine gunmen's

4.11 Conclusion

In Chapter 3, we mapped the *expressive/transformational* process as a descent into depression and frustration followed by an existential upsurge toward a *self*. ETV offenders fall apart and reassemble themselves in different guises comprised of media *avatars* and *talismans*. This chapter has demonstrated that *expressions* or *identity signatures* mark the passage to a *homicidal self*, sometimes leaving the semiotic residue of *actual* or former *ideal selves*. For instance, Mark David Chapman left *indices* of his past in his hotel room and brought a copy of *The Catcher in the Rye*, a *sign* of **The Catcher** *homicidal self*, to the Lennon assassination. David Berkowitz marked his personal transformation into **The Son of Sam** *Monster archetype* with letters describing blood, death, and hunting 'pretty princesses' in 'ghoulish' handwriting reminiscent of horror movie posters. Swearing revenge on society for his incarceration and divorce, Danny Rolling, the vengeful **Mystery Rider** 'killer gone insane', brought terror to Shreveport and Gainesville by elaborately mutilating attractive females and leaving their bodies in perverse poses. This negated the sexual power of the pretty young brunettes who rejected him, terrorized the society to which he could not belong, and profoundly shook, challenged, and pressured investigating officers—inflicting brutal retribution on representations of his past nemeses à la Spaghetti-western era Clint Eastwood. Colin Ireland calmly telephoned the police

to announce that by killing five men, he has met the FBI criteria for becoming a *serialkiller!*. Acting out popular tropes associated with this *talisman*, he posed the bodies of his victims with toys and condoms—leaving an obvious and contrived *signature*, as the popular criminology books had said he would. Similarly, Luka Magnotta promoted himself online as a kitten killer, necrophile, cannibal, and white supremacist, anonymously promising a suspicious British journalist that his next victim would be human. In May 2012, he lived up to his own hype, affirming his **Dangerous Elusive Paraphilic Killer** *homicidal self* by posting his *abject* '1 lunatic 1 icepick' video online, mailing body parts to institutions guaranteed to make headline news, and suddenly disappearing. Swearing to become a *serialkiller!* and slasher villain, Daniel Gonzalez donned an antiquated hockey mask reminiscent of Jason Voorhees then went on a murder spree across southeast England. Likewise, the “picture of darkness”²⁹⁸ Anthony Arkwright, who foretold of coming evils to the police, sported a devil mask. Arkwright, who wished to emulate *JacktheRipper!* and *PeterSutcliffe!* in becoming a **Famous Evil Ripper**, followed their example, inflicting extensive mutilations on his victims and setting up *abject* tableaux which rivaled his *talismans'* most stomach-churning crime scenes. Pushed out of the social world due to their taciturnity, James Holmes and Seung-Hui Cho disavowed normalcy altogether, visibly manifesting their self-perceived homicidal uniqueness. Holmes cast himself as the solipsistic mad genius—the ultimate individual—as evidenced by his red hair and black eyes, posting a journal entitled 'Inside the Mind of Madness' to his psychiatrist: a series of disparate entries which outlined his *meta-delusion*. Alternatively, Cho saw himself as the next warrior-prophet in a revolution of the dispossessed, styling his murder clothing after his *Eric&Dylan!* *talismans* and calling for a mass uprising of the alienated on videos he sent to NBC. Bullied or ignored all his life, Elliot Rodger posted a final VLOG after killing his roommates in which he declared himself the 'True Alpha Male' before attempting to massacre a sorority house in Isla Vista, then speeding around the streets shooting young people and hitting them with his BMW to punish them for being sexually active.

Admittedly, the task of determining what can be reasonably inferred from an offender's communications while already having knowledge of his identity and biography will have undoubtedly influenced some of the interpretations made in this chapter. Yet, the observation that important aspects of their *selves*, *talismans*, emotions, metadelusions, views, and motives were revealed through these criminal expressions is indisputable.

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298 Grover Tu, 2016, April 21.

5. Conclusion

The *expressive/transformative* process of violence began with the observation that some murderers use homicides as a means of communication—whether written, oral, visual, or mixed—then sought to understand their underlying motivations in a sample of 10 offenders. These initial 10 subjects were selected according to two criteria: (i) they engaged in homicidal communication or expression, (ii) there were sufficient autobiographical and close biographical sources (e.g., statements from police investigators, friends and family, lawyers, mental health professionals) to conduct a thorough excavation of their lives and psychologies. This excavation unearthed important commonalities across the sample. Every member (i) had, to varying extents, failed to socialize effectively with their peers and lurked on the outskirts of society, (ii) possessed unstable self-images and identities, often quickly flitting from one identity to the next, (iii) was plagued by negative-emotionality, specifically, depression, sadness, and frustration; and, perhaps less surprisingly, (iv) was diagnosed with a personality or psychotic disorder. Furthermore, half of the offenders explicitly stated that they felt like a child who had never grown up, while many of the others implied this and/or embodied immaturity. As their homicidal *expressions* were comprised of *signs* (*symbols, indices, and icons*) relating to their identities and/or those of their victims, the symbolic interactionism of Mead and Blumer emerged as the sole theory which allowed us to link the external *sign* back to the communicative social process through which the *self* arises and is continually negotiated. When combined with Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory, the failed socialization of the 10 offenders was partially attributed to *communication dysfunctions*: the inability of the offender to avoid *being in wrong face* or *out of face*, which itself may result from deficient childhood development and/or mental illnesses or disorders.

As Higgins' Self-Discrepancy Theory specifically explored aspects of Mead's *self*—whether *actual* (*the self-concept*), *ideal*, or *ought* (*self-guides*)—and was predicated on a fusion of symbolic interactionism with the developmental theories of Jean Piaget and Robbie Case, it offered the best explanatory framework. SDT also scientifically linked dejection-related emotions to discrepancies between the *actual* and *ideal selves*. Higgins's theory not only accounted for the negative-emotionality in our 10-offender sample and their chronically unstable self-image, but also linked the two phenomena, and related to Agnew's General Strain Theory.

Here, the circular causal chain tying the *sign* to micro-sociological communication, the larger society as a whole, and the offender's psychology, was fully established.

ETV was never intended to explain why these offenders committed murders, rather, it focused on *why*, *how*, and *what* the offender communicated to his audience in the time during and/or surrounding the homicide. Still, by looking at the victims as *signs* to contextualize the other *signs* in the communication, it became clear that the victims were often killed to rid the offender of dejection-related emotions resulting from self-discrepancies. Hence, Chapman 'the nobody' killed the biggest 'somebody' alive, John Lennon, to usurp his importance; Ireland the ego-dystonic bisexual and wannabe 'hard man' murdered five gay masochists; and tormented virgin wimp Elliot Rodger stabbed and shot countless young Isla Vista residents to punish them for being sexually active, proving that he was the 'true alpha male'. Unable to approach an acceptable *ideal self* due to their personal deficits, these offenders eventually pursued one that could be achieved purely through the commission of murder: a *homicidal ideal self*.

In the Information Age, in which we interact with media arguably more than people—Baudrillard's *hyperreal* simulation—our understanding of the world and our position in it is shaped accordingly. Unsurprisingly, our *self-concepts* and *self-guides* are hardly free from this influence, as demonstrated by the patients in psychoanalyst Jay Martin's *Who Am I This Time?* Socially isolated, unstable in their *self*, directionless, and often psychotic, the prospective ETV offender is particularly susceptible. With popular media overwhelmingly propagating physically unattainable gender roles—what we have termed *hyperreal masculinity* and *hyperreal femininity*—and celebrating violent *sub-hegemonic* male characters while lampooning 'nerds', 'stoners', 'gays', and other *subordinated masculinities*, this typically *subordinated* male reaches into the digital ether and pulls out one or more *talismans* (*narrative prototypes*) to grant him an *ideal self*. These can be *archetypal* ('Monster', 'Outlaw'), a trope (*serialkiller!*, *schoolshooter!*), or a specific character (*avatar*) from a narrative ('Jason', 'Holden Caulfield'). Often, the *talisman* or *avatar* possesses characteristics which compensate for the offender's real or self-perceived shortcomings (e.g., Rolling the 'dependent boy' becomes the 'independent manly outlaw') or repurpose a deficit so that it takes on a *hyperreal* masculine quality (e.g., Berkowitz the 'Outcast' becomes the 'Monster'). As our *selves* and *identities* are socially negotiated, the ETV offender requires communicative feedback from his victim, the police, and/or the news media to be affirmed in this *homicidal self*. Thus, while the murder(s) may net him benefits such as sexual

gratification, venting rage, or exacting vengeance, the accompanying communication calls attention to the birth of the *homicidal self*, with the expectation of acknowledgment.

Expressive/transformative violence is therefore a fundamentally social and existential act.

Though the 10-offender study was qualitative in nature, 24 common characteristics were readily observable among these offenders.

Expressive/transformative process has never purported to be scientific, yet it relies heavily on empirical data, and is clear and logical in both its theory and methodology. ETV is in its infancy, and possible future improvements and applications are abundant. Where substantive sources are available, qualitative research might be conducted on additional offenders in order to chronicle their *expressive/transformative* process, and interpret the *signs* they communicated and trace them to the offender's *selves* and psychology. Incorporating offenders from more diverse racial backgrounds will hypothetically reveal that *racial/ethnic aspects* of the *self* may be generally more central to this demographic than white offenders. Two female ETV offenders, Joanna Dennehy and Gertrude Baniszewski, received passing mention here for their *victim-as-canvas* communications, but the representation of biological sex in our sample was restricted to males. Provided the necessary sources were available, a parallel 10-offender qualitative study of female ETV offenders would be extremely valuable, as it would explore the motives underlying female homicidal *expression*, comparing and contrasting them to those of males. The same case could be made for children—what of Mary Bell and Rod Ferrell who carved her initials into their victims' flesh¹, or 17-year-old Peter Woodcock who sprinkled paper clips and pennies at his crime scenes?² Do their homicidal communications result from the same *expressive/transformative* process, or is something less complex at work?

Canter & Youngs gathered data from 71 subjects before determining their sample size was large enough to formulate Criminal Narratives theory. Similarly, ETV should conduct qualitative analyses on a further 60 offenders who have committed ETV homicides before we should even consider operationalizing it. However, unlike Criminal Narratives theory, ETV must always utilize Blumer's recommended methodology, and never rely on the administration of questionnaires to gather data. The reason is simple: we must avoid unintentionally injecting ideas into a subject's head for them to report back to us at all cost. For instance, Criminal Narratives theory utilizes a questionnaire in which a subject is asked to rank the roles they saw themselves playing during the commission of a given crime on a five-level Likert scale consisting of the

following options: ‘Not at all’, ‘Just a Little’, ‘Some’, ‘A lot’, ‘Very Much’.³ The problems with this approach become evident almost immediately when the first question asks the subject to choose one of the five available answers to “It was like a professional.”⁴ To understand the problems with this approach, ask yourself this same question regarding your experience reading this dissertation, and choose one of the five answers (refusing to answer is not an option):

Question: “While I was reading this dissertation it was like [I was] a professional”

Possible Answers: (1) Not at all, (2) Just a little, (3) Some, (4) A lot, (5) Very much.

Did this notion of being a ‘professional’ while reading the dissertation even enter your mind before you were asked this question? Perhaps, but not necessarily. Yet, readers of *I Kill, Therefore I Am* may include professional academics, psychologists, psychiatrists, researchers, law enforcement etc., along with some readers who do not necessarily have a career related to any of the content here. For those of you who did not once think “I’m reading this like I’m a professional” before the question was posed, how did you rationalize your answer? Did you reason that, even though the notion didn’t even cross your mind until now, since you *are* a professional you should choose answers 4 or 5? Maybe because you did not actively think about your professionalism until now you chose answers 1 or 2, deciding this was a more honest approach. A third foreseeable option is that you decided to hedge your bets or mitigate the unexpected and leading question by choosing moderation: answer 3.

By now, the problem with this approach should be obvious: many of you will have been forced to agree with a statement about your self-concept related to reading *I Kill, Therefore I Am* which was actually never part of the original process. This yields biased data through planting an idea in your mind and then mandating you to comment on it. Bringing this back to the issue of criminality, recall Chapman’s statements about becoming ‘Holden Caulfield’ or Berkowitz being a ‘monster.’ Their narratives emerged by allowing them to speak freely; identifying the relevant *talismans, avatars*, and archetypes; and finally interpreting them in a natural manner, as language is intended. It is difficult to imagine somebody capable of understanding ETV who is also so inept at basic communication that they would struggle to do this. Thus, the future of ETV will avoid methodologies which produce biased data such as the one we have critiqued, and continue to focus on the approach we have taken here. Once every member of the 70-offender sample has been qualitatively analyzed with the relevant data extracted, we can conduct a statistical analysis to determine whether any significant commonalities have emerged. Contrary to the assertions of

Canter & Youngs, we believe it is challenging but entirely possible to identify and quantify themes using this process. As ETV has remained free from dogmatism, it is hypothetically compatible with any theory of offender profiling, risk assessment, or clinical treatment that (i) accepts the notion that our *selves* and identities arise and are negotiated through communication (which is facilitated by the display and interpretation of *signs*), and (ii) has not formulated any firm conclusions that necessarily exclude the precepts or methodology of ETV. One potential example in the area of criminal profiling is the model first articulated by Douglas, Ressler, Burgess, & Hartman in their article ‘Criminal profiling from crime scene analysis.’⁵

Moving beyond conventional criminality, ETV analysis might also be applied in war—whether to individual soldiers, brigades or platoons, or entire militaries. From Tamerlane's skull towers⁶ to American G.I.s collecting ears in Vietnam⁷, homicidal *expressions* during wartime are perfectly suited for *expressive/transformational* analysis. Such *expressions* make clear statements about group and individual identity, and, hypothetically, could improve morale by reducing *actual:ideal* discrepancies in soldiers, military collectives, and nations.⁸ The military prides itself on breaking down former *selves* and creating stronger ones, yet even soldiers who have survived boot camp can experience profound crises of *self* when confronted with the realities of war. This is fertile ground for ETV analysis and could be vital to the successful investigation and understanding of certain war crimes, legally, morally, and clinically.

In a forthcoming academic chapter *Jihadi Chic: Islamist 'Soul' vs. Islamist 'Skin'*, Mellor & Kindarji aim to explore the *expressive/transformational* process in Jihadists.⁹ This will be the first formal application of ETV to terrorism. Whether Jihadism, White Supremacy, anarchism, or Irish Republican in character, each of these groups and the individuals comprising them mark their identities with *signs*. The same can be said of mobsters and gang members. The blue Crips and red Bloods throw up gang signs and mark territory with graffiti.¹⁰ Hells Angels sport red and white¹¹, while Bandidos wear red and gold¹², with members of both organizations often bearded, covered with tattoos, and clad in leather. Tattoos also mark the Yakuza: through the painful process of irezumi their ability to stand in pain is signified indexically on their bodies in hand-mixed ink.¹³ Like the red hair and black contact lenses of James Holmes, these costumes are both *expressive* and *transformational*. As with Rolling, Magnotta, and Arkwright, criminal gangs symbolically mutilate their victims, from the Medellin Cartels' 'Colombian necktie'¹⁴ to the 'Glasgow Smile' of the Chelsea Headhunters¹⁵. Terrorist groups also enact symbolic violence: for

example, Jihadists cut off heads¹⁶ and White Supremacists burn crosses to threaten their victims.¹⁷ Whether a group is a military brigade, terrorist organization, or criminal enterprise, these *signs* are routinely coopted by lone wolves. ‘Pulse Nightclub Shooter’ Omar Mateen¹⁸ and ‘Charleston Church Gunman’ Dylann Roof¹⁹ mimicked the conventions of Jihadist and White Supremacist groups though neither was a member of anything. Mark Moore affected the image of the rich and beloved gangsta rapper Prezidenteeh while he gunned down fellow black men in his ‘fantasy ghetto’ of Scarborough, Ontario.²⁰

Ultimately, ETV’s true test will be determined by its utility and success when applied practically in pre and post-offence risk assessment, offender profiling, linkage analysis, and clinical treatment. As it stands, an *n* of 10 offenders is far too small to support any statistically-informed inductive determination of pre-offence risk potential or offender characteristics. Unfortunately, the relative paucity of overt *expressive/transformational* behaviour combined with the difficulty in acquiring a substantial corpus of autobiographical statements made by ETV offenders will likely provide a significant barrier to acquiring a sample approaching statistical significance in the near future. As pre-offence risk assessments and inductive offender profiles challenge us to identify an unknown violent offender from within the general population, they require large samples to produce the necessary predictive power. Post-offence recidivism assessments and clinical settings differ in this regard. In the first case, an offender whose identity is known has marked himself as an ETV offender by intentionally employing a semiotic corpus. In the second, he necessarily comes under scrutiny due to institutional instruction, and is interviewed by a clinician who is provided with his biographical details. During both a post-offence recidivism assessment or treatment plan, relevant professionals might note elements of the *expressive/transformational* process in the offender’s personal narrative, regardless of statistics. Key areas of focus should include the offender’s ability to communicate/socialize, the nature of his *actual*, *ideal*, and *ought selves*, negative emotionality, *talismans*, and meta-delusionality. Of most immediate use, linkage analysis based on ETV communications does not seem to require any additional research beyond what has been conducted in this dissertation. Serial offenders Colin Ireland, Danny Rolling, and Anthony Arkwright all used *signs* to consistently convey a specific theme focusing on the stigmatization of their victim’s conditions and behaviours, while the latter two also *maximized abjection* across their series of killings.

I Kill, Therefore I Am has provided us with a theoretical foundation and preliminary

methodology for understanding ETV, but this is only the basis upon which future research can be designed. Hence, as new findings regarding *expressive/transformativ*e violence comes to light, our conception of this process will likely be subject to revision and further development. It is certainly possible that scientifically-validated profiling methodologies, risk assessment tools, and psychometric measures concerning ETV may emerge in the future. Until then, regardless of whether ETV is incorporated into offender profiling, risk assessment, or mental health care, it should always be used to complement other evaluative methods and tools— including, but not limited to, offender and geographic profiles, forensic linguistic analyses, standard industry risk assessment tests, and psychological tests —and *never* used in isolation.

As we conclude with a crescendo of cautions and caveats, murderous communications continue to appear routinely on the Internet. Not so long ago, the 2008 film *Snuff: A Documentary About Killing on Camera* mocked and debunked the snuff-video panic and urban legend that had shaken Reagan-era America. Less than 10 years later, mankind believed it had witnessed its first live-streamed murder, if only momentarily.²¹ With technology increasingly mediating every facet of our lives and social alienation rampant in the developed world, we no longer ask whether live-streamed homicide will happen, rather, we acknowledge that it is only a matter of time. The question, then, is not 'will it happen' but 'will we believe it when we see it?'

1 Sereny, 1998; Jones, 2000.

2 Vronsky, 2004.

3 Canter & Youngs, 2009.

4 Canter & Youngs, 2009, p. 127.

5 Douglas, Ressler, Burgess, & Hartman, 1986.

6 Marozzi, 2006.

7 Sallah & Weiss, 2006.

8 Hedges, 2002.

9 Mellor & Kindarji, in press.

10 “How are Gangs Identified”, n.d.

11 Hayes, 2011.

12 Hayes, 2011.

13 Mellor, 2017.

14 Bowden, 2001.

15 Sullivan & Peake, 2011, March 26.

16 Jacoby, 2014, September 22.

17 “Burning Cross”, n.d.

18 Henderson, Alexander, & Sherlock, 2016, June 15.

19 Ghansah, 2017, August 21;

20 Hasham, 2015, May 28.

21 No author, 2017, April 17.

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Appendix A: Terminology

Blastophilia – Sexual preference for non-consensual intercourse over consensual intercourse.¹

Erotophonophilia – Paraphilic lust murder.²

Mutilophilia – Sexual arousal from mutilating a human being regardless of whether they are alive or dead.³

Necromutilophilia – Sexual arousal from mutilating corpses exclusively.⁴

Necromnositophilia – Sexual arousal from posing and/or decorating corpses.⁵

Necrosodomagnia – Sexual arousal from sodomizing corpses.⁶

Partialist post-mortem sexual activities – Engaging in sexual acts with disembodied pieces of the human anatomy.⁷

Piquerism – Sexual arousal from stabbing or cutting a human being.⁸

Sarxenthymiophilia – Sexual arousal from possessing human body parts.⁹

Sexual Anthropophagy – Sexual arousal from devouring human body parts.¹⁰

Sexual Sadism – Sexual arousal from witnessing pain, humiliation, and/or fear in another human being.¹¹

Voyeurism – Sexual arousal from secretly watching another person, especially when they are undressing or engaged in sexual activity.¹²

Appendix B

James Holmes: 'The Misfit With the Broken Brain' to 'James + x'

Talismans: Neo-liberal economic theory; Avatars: James Bond, The Joker?; Type: 3

Before delving into the *expressive/transformativ*e homicides perpetrated by James Holmes, it is necessary to first dispel a crucial error which obfuscates our understanding of this individual and his misdeeds: his association with the Joker *avatar*. Upon Holmes' arrest it was widely reported that he either cried "I am the Joker"¹³ before firing into the crowd or made a similar claim to police upon his arrest. This misconception was originally reported in a 2012 ABC News Report quoting New York Police Commissioner Ray Kelly, and was debunked by 18th Judicial District attorney, George Brauchler, the prosecutor in the Holmes trial.¹⁴ Holmes himself denied the rumour. When asked by psychologist William Reid "Did you ever call yourself the Joker?"¹⁵, Holmes clarified "no... the dyed hair made them think about it along with the Batman movie"¹⁶ He claimed to have targeted *The Dark Knight Rises* premiere because "I knew there would be a lot of people there."¹⁷ Commenting on comparisons with the Joker, Holmes said that if he copied the famous comic book villain's appearance "it was unconscious"¹⁸, and agreed that "it bears some resemblance."¹⁹ Given Holmes' interest in the Batman franchise²⁰, his use of gas canisters and explosives²¹, and the fact that his statement reading "Terrorism isn't the message. The message is there is no message"²² echoes the chaos-for-chaos's sake philosophy espoused by the Joker in *The Dark Knight*, it is difficult to believe the *avatar* did not colour his crimes to some extent. Unfortunately, there is no way to prove this, so we will accept Holmes' claim that any influence was unconscious.

James Holmes: Failed socialization and the formation and realization of the actual/own

James Eagan Holmes grew up in Oak Hills, California, the son of a scientist/mathematician, Robert, and Arlene, a registered nurse. Along with his younger sister, he seems to have enjoyed a stable, middle-class upbringing in a nuclear family. When James was 12, the Holmes brood moved back to his birthplace, San Diego. After graduating from Westview High School in 2006, he interned at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies for the summer. Later that year, he enrolled in an undergraduate neuroscience program at the University of California, Riverside, graduating in 2010 with honours. In the autumn of 2011, Holmes began

pursuing his doctorate in neuroscience at the University of Colorado.

Holmes' keen interest in neuroscience was motivated by a desire to understand himself. Since he was a teenager, he had viewed himself as having a “broken brain”²³ due to intense self-diagnosed “social anxiety.”²⁴ Whether his “social anxiety”²⁵ resulted in “not being able to talk well”²⁶ or vice-versa is a chicken-egg scenario which is difficult to disentangle. In his diary, Holmes wrote that he would “avoid social interactions”²⁷ and “99% of the time will not initiate a conversation... If discourse is unavoidable or avoidant action [is] socially unacceptable [my] response will be short or in question form to have [the] other person be the one talking.”²⁸ When somebody unfamiliar spoke to Holmes, he “would have like violent [fantasy] images... things like saws going against the other people... like sawing them or getting their heads cut off or something.”²⁹ Rather than hallucinations, this seems to have been a defense mechanism to overcome his marked *communication dysfunctions*. Holmes speaks of the process as involuntary: “[The images] just pop up... Then once it happens it's just done... I'm either still frozen or I come up with a response or something... That was why I figured [my brain] was broken... [and] not being able to talk well.”³⁰ He perceived this “broken part of me”³¹ as residing in “the core of my being”³² and would carry this *self-concept* into adulthood making the **The Misfit With the Broken Brain** his *actual/own self*.

Noting his inability to articulate his thoughts to other people verbally, Holmes wished he could “just speak through an image instead of having to use words... I think the closest thing would be to draw but I'm not a very good artist.”³³ In his diary he wrote that he had an “*inability to communicate what I want to say* [emphasis added] although I can understand it. Typically [I] have an image in my mind but can't say images or draw them, [it] would be nice if there was some form of telepathy to transfer the images.”³⁴ Holmes's aversion to verbal communication was related more to “apathy in a boring situation when someone is giving a presentation or otherwise rambling about frivolous information”³⁵ than responding to a task-oriented interaction because the latter is “something we have to do together, instead of like talking and there's awkward silences.”³⁶ Where Mark David Chapman insincerely donned an “*I'M UNIQUE. I THINK FOR MYSELF*” t-shirt and David Berkowitz vapidly proclaimed his individuality by adopting a counter-cultural skin, Holmes explained “I kind of view the world through my own eyes as opposed to other people's... I'm different... I guess I kind of felt like I was separate from mankind.”³⁷ He saw this distinction from mankind as being irreconcilable with his existence as

we live in “a social society. [In] any type of work you're usually going to have to interact with people.”³⁸

Holmes hated “mankind in general... because they make me anxious, and because they make me anxious I hate them,”³⁹ however, he clarified that this 'hatred' was more akin to his aversive hatred of broccoli rather than violent misanthropy.⁴⁰ He took care to distinguish between the two, saying “I don't think the [hating like broccoli] had much to do with the killing”⁴¹ and that he “didn't really hate any of the people [he shot] in the theatre, I just hate mankind in general.”⁴² Even though Holmes briefly had a small circle of friends and a girlfriend at the University of Colorado, his social deficits are among the most severe in this sample.

Initially, Holmes displayed deviant social behaviour by being too taciturn, and not offering the culturally expected responses to social cues. But because he had an accurate *looking-glass self*⁴³—the ability and propensity to see oneself through the eyes of the *generalized other*—Holmes was well aware that his *enacted identity* was that of a “weird”⁴⁴ person, which was a misinterpretation of his preference for solitude: “[In my mind's eye I look] uncommunicative... standing there and not saying anything and people are talking around me and I don't know what to say.”⁴⁵ Holmes's self-consciousness rendered him socially anxious and avoidant which manifested in verbal and somatic gestures [*enacted identity*] which others judged to be deviant.⁴⁶

Testifying at Holmes's 2015 trial, ex-girlfriend Gargi Datta commented that “he was pretty shy and closed off at school. He wouldn't go interact with other people by himself at school”⁴⁷, while in private quarters “he was more forthcoming than he was in school, but he still wasn't extremely interactive.”⁴⁸ “His sense of humour in writing was mostly pretty funny”⁴⁹ she claimed, but “his jokes fell flat in person.”⁵⁰ This is likely owing to Holmes' 'flat affect'—“characterized by the person's face appearing immobile and unresponsive, with poor eye contact and reduced body language”⁵¹—a *communication dysfunction* which Holmes acknowledged saying “yeah, I can see that, too... Just not showing too much emotion”⁵² According to Holmes's psychiatrist, Dr. William Reid, an unnamed person described Holmes as “awkward around other people, having difficulty in social situations”⁵³ while another viewed him as “very angry.”⁵⁴ Holmes agreed with the first appraisal but thought the second wrongly “interpreted my awkwardness to anger.”⁵⁵ He tried to act 'nice', although confessed this was not necessarily genuine, but came from “social expectation.”⁵⁶

Like Mark David Chapman, Holmes admitted to acting “different around different people”⁵⁷ and believed this would make people see him as “weird.”⁵⁸ His *enacted identity* was extremely non-interactive “anytime there were other people I didn’t know or wasn’t close friends with.”⁵⁹ While picturing himself interacting with others, Holmes imagined that they would “stare”⁶⁰ at him and think “why isn’t he talking?... Is there something weird about him?”⁶¹ When answering questions, Holmes was admittedly “very concise... I don’t know if that’s just a speech pattern thing or I’m just freezing up.”⁶² Holmes recalled an incident in college in which he “walked in”⁶³ on other students “and heard them talking about”⁶⁴ him in an earlier social situation, saying ““What was he doing there [in the earlier situation]?””⁶⁵ This discovery led him to feel “like there was something wrong with me.”⁶⁶ Holmes said that before college “I thought I was a social equal.”⁶⁷ When asked by Dr. Reid if hearing people gossip about him hurt him, Holmes replied in the affirmative. In theoretical terms, the gap between Holmes’ *personal identity* and *enacted identity* led to a negative *ascribed relational identity* which left him feeling misunderstood and with poor communication satisfaction.⁶⁸ Both result in increased negative emotionality.

James Holmes: Pre-homicidal Ideal/Selves and Negative Emotionality

In a display of determination and pragmatism, **The Misfit With the Broken Brain** [*actual/own*] sought to become a **Successful Cured Neuroscientist** [*ideal/own*] who wanted to “see why I was different... I was interested in the differences between normal people... and people who were outside the norm... I guess mentally ill... I wanted to know as much as possible so I’d do a bunch of searches on the brain or how the brain works... I sought career options that might be related to that.”⁶⁹ After fixing himself, he would then be able to “get a good paying job”⁷⁰, go about “raising a family”⁷¹ and “having a cookie-cutter life.”⁷² In other words, the American dream.

Unfortunately, the socially-dysfunctional Holmes was unhappy in graduate school because he was required to give several oral presentations, where there had been “less necessity of public speaking in college.”⁷³ A mere four months into the program, Holmes “became more disorganized and I guess my mind was kind of falling apart... after Christmas when I came back to graduate school [in 2012].”⁷⁴ In October 2011, he had started dating fellow student, Gargi Datta, but by February 2012 “she was acting more distant.”⁷⁵ Correctly sensing an impending

break-up, Holmes became “sad that the relationship was ending”⁷⁶ which soon turned into full-blown “depression.”⁷⁷

Following his break-up with Gargi [*trigger*], Holmes became estranged from their social group: “it was kind of a mutual abandonment... They stopped inviting me to activities and stuff... because Gargi didn't want to see me... I guess Gargi was kind of the glue that kept it together... I deleted their numbers... because I kind of figured our friendship was over... Out of sight, out of mind.”⁷⁸ Holmes explained that continuing to be connected to the group “reminded me too much of Gargi.”⁷⁹ Around the same time, his academic performance began to suffer. He sought refuge from his depression by doing “escapist stuff like video games... It made it go away for the time being.”⁸⁰ [*retreatism*] In this way, Holmes was like Daniel Gonzalez and Elliot Rodger. Video games also provided Holmes with a surrogate social life: “I wasn't quite as anxious [socializing] when it's kinda over the digital web... as I am *when I'm with people I'm kinda anxious*... They expect you to say something [in face to face interactions] and I usually like to listen more.”⁸¹ Crucially, video games routinely assign abstract point values to opponents, which are then assimilated into the protagonist's overall score immediately after he defeats them. Often this is achieved through firearm related violence: an important point to keep in mind as it will resurface when we explore Holmes' *homicidal ideal/own*.

As the discrepancy between **The Misfit With the Broken Brain** [*actual/own*] and the **Successful Cured Neuroscientist** [*ideal/own*] widened, Holmes' dejection-related emotions became worse. He claimed “I felt sad and depressed”⁸² in a way he had never felt before, describing his condition as “debilitating... morose... I did more escapism, watching TV... listening to music... techno, trance... I was like almost catatonic... I didn't have the drive to do anything... Every opportunity I had I would stay in bed, but if I had to go to class I would get up.”⁸³ Holmes continued to attend classes because he felt that “I still had a future. I just didn't think about what I would do in the future.”⁸⁴ Normalcy still held some potential value for him, and he implied that he would be content “if I had a steady job”⁸⁵ and could “maybe raise a family”⁸⁶, but ultimately he decided to “leave it to kinda fate to decide... That I would either continue graduate neuroscience program or quit.”⁸⁷ By June, the idea of having any kind of normal future was “not there anymore.”⁸⁸

Of the 10 offenders in this study, Holmes vocalizes the fundamental premise of *expressive/transformativ*e process the most explicitly, saying he could not “solve the problem of

getting out of my depression so I thought *I'd make myself more valuable by killing people* [emphasis added].”⁸⁹ Holmes repeatedly informed Dr. Reid that, in the months leading up to the murders, he existed in “a depressed situation where I transfer[red] my feelings from suicide to homicide.”⁹⁰ He claimed never to have experienced suicidal ideation because “I would automatically transfer it to homicidal thoughts.”⁹¹ Holmes believed that if he didn't do this “then I would have to suicide.”⁹² The homicides thus served “as a kind of coping mechanism.”⁹³

At first, Holmes sought to resist his homicidal “purpose... that's why I think I went to the psychiatrist [Dr. Fenton] in the first place and told them about the homicidal thoughts... There was like internal conflict... I wanted to be fixed to be normal, and the other was to carry out the mission [*ideal/own:homicidal ideal/own*].”⁹⁴ He hoped he would be prescribed “drugs and then I'd be better”⁹⁵ however, when “I got the drugs and it abolished my *anxiety*, my kind of *fear of other people*, and maybe facilitated [the massacre].”⁹⁶

Ultimately, like the other offenders in this study, Holmes sought to overcome negative emotionality by using violence to negotiate a new *ideal/own*. He had been fantasizing of murder since his teens, but of “no one in particular... It might have been a response to *stress*.”⁹⁷ However, because he was a highly intelligent and educated young man, Holmes constructed a logical system to channel and control his emotions—the theory of 'ultracception'—which explained and justified the process of how this would occur.

James Holmes: Renegotiated Homicidal ideal/own

Holmes's *homicidal ideal/own* crystalized through a process of (i) weapon collecting, (ii) the need to immediately transfer suicidal ideation to homicidal action, and (iii) his personal philosophy. Explaining to Dr. Reid, Holmes said “[my plan to commit murder started] when I first bought the taser, the knife... initially I rationalized it as like self defense,”⁹⁸. He claimed to have felt the need to protect himself, imagining a scenario where “I'm just like walking down the street and thugs would rob me... beat me up... just with their fists and steal all of my money and stuff.”⁹⁹ That said, Holmes gave contradictory statements regarding which weapon acquisition facilitated his homicidal thoughts. In one instance he said it was “when I bought the shotgun I think.”¹⁰⁰ In another: “It was offensive when I got the tear gas... I think it was May or June... I don't know how it changed from self-protection to offensive, aggressive. I primarily thought of [the use of tear gas] as offensive... If there was a riot or if I started a riot... it would disperse the

crowd.”¹⁰¹ When Dr. Reid asked whether 'defensive' had morphed into 'offensive', or if they were separate, Holmes replied, “I think it morphed... My planning got more deliberate... I got committed to the mission... and then I decided to go buy the shotgun.”¹⁰² Holmes claimed he “formed an attachment to it. Learning how it worked. Practicing with it... It just kept escalating to get more and more weapons... Getting a shotgun is an escalation from getting just a handgun.”¹⁰³ Here we see parallels with Rolling and Arkwright's obsessive weapons collecting and increased violent self-image.

Accordingly, Holmes's *homicidal ideal/own self* began to emerge in May and June of 2012 as “kind of a gradual process”¹⁰⁴ until it became “consuming... the main focus”¹⁰⁵ of Holmes's life. Entries in his journal, which Holmes corroborated in his interviews with Dr. Reid, show that he considered numerous types of homicide. His first thought was to use explosives, but he dismissed this method as being “too regulated + suspicious.”¹⁰⁶ Similarly, he was “too impatient”¹⁰⁷ for “biological warfare”¹⁰⁸ as it “requires extensive knowledge”¹⁰⁹ and “equipment.”¹¹⁰ He considered serial murder “too personal”¹¹¹ with “too much evidence”¹¹² resulting from violence which yielded “few kills.”¹¹³ Finally, having “no fear of consequences”¹¹⁴ Holmes reconciled himself to the idea that “being caught”¹¹⁵ for “mass murder/spree”¹¹⁶ was “99% certain”¹¹⁷ and decided to choose this m.o. because it yielded “maximum casualties”¹¹⁸ and was “easily performed w/firearms although primitive in nature.”¹¹⁹ He considered perpetrating the shootings at an airport but rejected this for pragmatic reasons noting the “substantial security”¹²⁰ and that airports have “too much of a terrorist history. Terrorism isn't the message. The message is there is no message.”¹²¹ This paradoxical statement will be discussed in more detail later.

Holmes' renegotiated *homicidal ideal/own* is unique—the product of his personal metaphysical and moral reasoning—rather than being derived from any specific *talisman* or *avatar*. It is also the most abstract. In pondering philosophical questions such as “what is the meaning of life?”¹²², “what is the meaning of death?”¹²³, “why should life exist?”¹²⁴, and “what is the purpose of living?”¹²⁵, Holmes formulated his theory of ultraception, as represented by the following symbol:

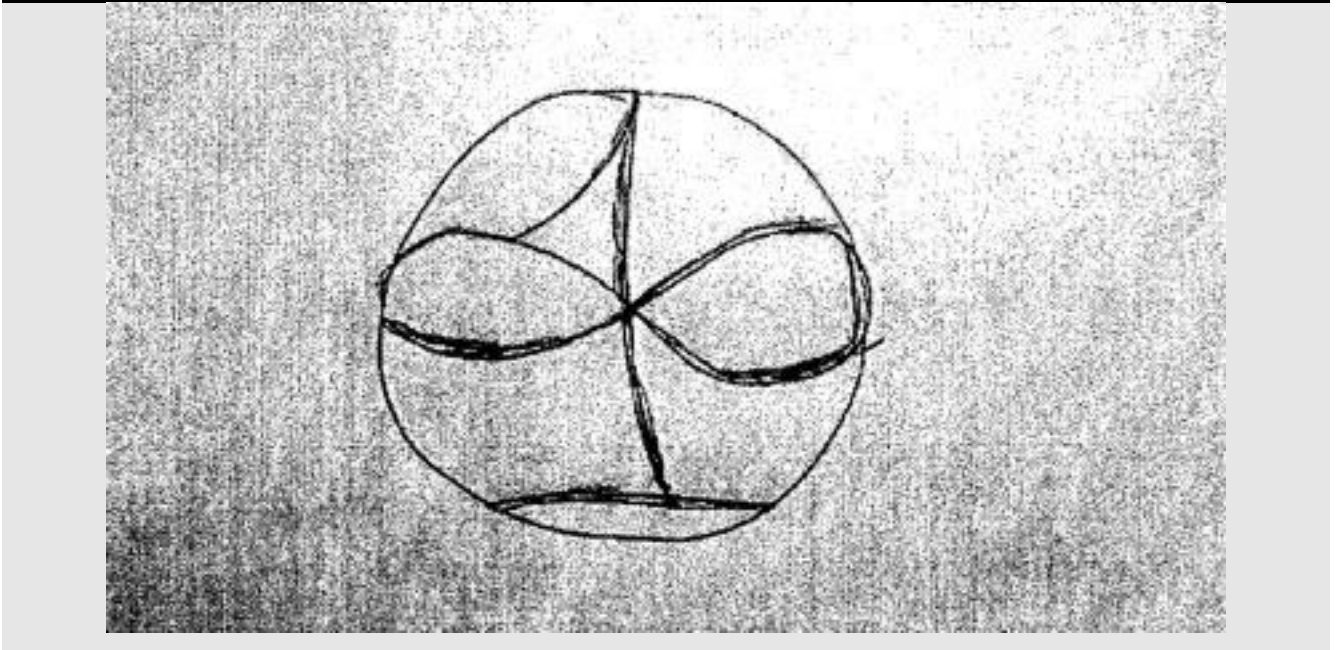


Figure 26. The Symbol of Ultrareception

Holmes explained the illustration to Dr. William Reid as “a symbol I call the 'ultrareception' and it's just that any problem can be solved with death... It's constructed with a 0, 1, and infinity overlapping, and it's anthropomorphic. It's kind of like a face... So it's applicable to humans... An *abnormal person* [emphasis added].”¹²⁶ This notion of striving to be 'different' from other people was obviously of great importance to Holmes, who dyed his hair red and wore black contact lenses before the massacre “to stand beside normalcy and be the exotic figure.”¹²⁷ As he could not be 'normal', this constituted another option other than complete invisibility.

Having “studied economics”¹²⁸ Holmes had formulated his theory of “human capital”¹²⁹ in graduate school, and incorporated it into ultrareception making it “kind of [an] economic theory of value applied to people.”¹³⁰ He decided that every person he murdered would increase his own existential worth by a value of 1. Interestingly, Holmes only conceptualized this value as abstract and purely quantitative—the higher the number the more value—without assigning properties (e.g., dollars, happiness) to explain exactly what made it valuable. This idea of murdering a person to absorb their worth is reminiscent of Mark David Chapman's assassination of John Lennon, however it differed significantly. Where Chapman “killed the biggest *Somebody* [emphasis added] on earth”¹³¹ in order to “usurp”¹³² Lennon's “importance”¹³³ and “success”¹³⁴—specific *qualities*, Holmes' psychological cannibalism was *quantitative*, targeting multiple victims to whom he had assigned a value of 1. In a way, his emphasis on quantitative

methods of murder over qualitative reflected his scientific inclinations. Although Holmes neither *killed up* (*à la* Chapman, Berkowitz) nor *killed down* (*à la* Ireland, Arkwright), he did ponder whether “a millionaire was more important than a homeless person”¹³⁵, but at the end of the day he chose to assign “an intrinsic value [of] this person is worth 1 value.”¹³⁶

Unsurprisingly, given that the creator of ultraception was socially isolated and retreated into *hyperreal* simulation to escape his dejection-related emotions, ultraception mirrors the mechanics of countless video games in which players compete to have the most points. These points seldom have any objective value outside the digital realm, though particularly high numbers represent a player's unique virtuosity. In order to explain away this ostensible oversight regarding what 'value' represented, Holmes compared ultraception to the issuing of fiat currency: “It's kind of like the value of the dollar. Like the dollar isn't worth anything but you attribute value to it. So if you attribute value to killing people, then you become more valuable.”¹³⁷ Other prominent themes in the zeitgeist of economic globalization and Information Age America found their way into 'ultraception.' For instance, Holmes explained to Dr. Reid that “you can take countries measuring their GDP of a given population and say this is a value which we place on our nation's output. And you can do the same to individual people, and say this person has a value and does this output or would do this output but then it goes to me afterwards after killing them... You conquer the country through illegal war and then you receive its economic benefits.”¹³⁸ When Reid, seemingly more acquainted with actual history than war strategy games, pointed out that the value of a country drops catastrophically when it is destroyed, Holmes countered with a deflection, saying “the conquering country would have increased their military effectiveness cos they've kind of won a battle... essentially you win the war by killing them so you're no longer in a state of war.”¹³⁹ As if the voice of predatory capitalism itself was emanating from his mouth, Holmes pointed out that “it was necessary to do what was in my best interest.”¹⁴⁰ The late Robert F. Kennedy's assertion that every society gets the kind of criminal it deserves has never been more applicable. Having attempted to circumvent the emptiness of nihilism by applying the inherently schizophrenic economic policies of the Federal Reserve to the value of human life, Holmes acquired a high-powered assault rifle through a mail order purchase and walked into the screening of a violent Hollywood film, spraying the audience with bullets. In the shadow of the 2008 U.S. sub-prime mortgage crisis, there is a grim irony to the massacre; Reeves, McKee, and Stuckler found that approximately 10,000 suicides had resulted

directly from this so-called 'Great Recession.'¹⁴¹

Unlike typical mass shooters, after firing into the audience, Holmes “just decided I was done and left... I could have kept on shooting”¹⁴² but “I felt I shot enough people and the other [factor] was the weapon jamming.”¹⁴³ Consistent with ETV, the negative emotions he had felt before completing the massacre and “standing outside the emergency exit door”¹⁴⁴ were immediately replaced by “relief.”¹⁴⁵ At this point, Holmes was unsure of what to do because “I kind of figured my life would end [literally and figuratively] at the end of the shootings.”¹⁴⁶ His only plan was “the basic biologic instinct to survive.”¹⁴⁷ Though Holmes would murder 12 people, at this stage of his renegotiation of *self* it would be inaccurate to call his *homicidal ideal/own James + 12*, as he did not know how many people would die. Instead, we will use **James + x**, where x refers to the unknown death toll. To announce the existence of **James + x** to the world, Holmes dyed his hair red, wore black contact lenses, and snapped photographs of himself posing with weapons to resemble a *hyperreal* figure. This will be explored in Chapter 4.

James Holmes: Victimology

Table 20:
James Holmes Victimology

Victim Name	Age	Race	Gender	Profession	Date Killed	Where
Jonathan Blunk	26	White	Male	Worked at hardware store	July 20, 2012	Century 16 Aurora
A.J. Boik	18	White	Male	Coffee distributor	July 20, 2012	Century 16 Aurora
Jesse Childress	29	White	Male	Cybersystems operator	July 20, 2012	Century 16 Aurora
Gordon Cowden	51	White	Male	Small business owner	July 20, 2012	Century 16 Aurora
Jessica Ghawi	24	White	Female	Sports radio intern	July 20, 2012	Century 16 Aurora
John Thomas Larimier	27	White	Male	U.S. navy	July 20, 2012	Century 16 Aurora
Matt McQuinn	27	White	Male	Worked in Target store	July 20, 2012	Century 16 Aurora
Micayla Medek	23	White	Female	Subway sandwich artist	July 20, 2012	Century 16 Aurora
Veronica Moser-Sullivan	6	White	Female	None	July 20, 2012	Century 16 Aurora
Alex Sullivan	27	White	Male	Married bartender	July 20, 2012	Century 16 Aurora
Alex Teves	24	White	Male	Counselor	July 20, 2012	Century 16 Aurora
Rebecca Ann Wingo	32	White	Female	Customs relations representative	July 20, 2012	Century 16 Aurora

James Holmes exemplifies *expressive/transformational* offenders who choose non-symbolic victims. His only point of discrimination was that he thought it was “wrong to kill children”¹⁴⁸ under the age of 12¹⁴⁹ and “tried to minimize child fatalities by choosing [a] midnight [screening], [with a] PG-13 [rating].”¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, he believed that taking a child's life still contributed to the numerical increase in his self-worth through ultrareception “because their lives are valuable too.”¹⁵¹ Holmes intentionally targeted completely random strangers in a dark room because “it was just a crowd... an abstract thing... I do not see them as individuals.”¹⁵² Referring back to ultrareception, Holmes would further expand upon this later in the Reid interview:

I just consider them numbers really on people... there would be a number of people who died in conglomerate mass or something... [At the theatre] I didn't like single them out as individuals... [To me they were] not real people. It was just kinda amorphous people. People were going to get hurt, not John Doe... [I was] unknowledgeable of their ambitions and their thoughts.¹⁵³

Holmes did not believe he had the capacity to murder individuals crossing out “serial murder”¹⁵⁴ as an option in his notebook because it was “too personal, too much evidence, easily caught, few kills”¹⁵⁵ and placing a checkmark next to “Mass Murder/Spree”¹⁵⁶ because it had the qualities of “maximum casualties, easily performed w/firearms although primitive in nature. No fear of consequences, being caught 99% certain.”¹⁵⁷ When questioned about this journal entry by Dr. Reid, Holmes explained, “I chose mass murder over something like serial killing... because it's impersonal. Because it's something I could actually do.”¹⁵⁸ In his journal, Holmes had written “the cruel twists of fate are unkind to the misfortunate”¹⁵⁹ beside “targets random”¹⁶⁰. When pressed to offer more details, he explained “the people who were shot were misfortunate because there are thousands of theatres and seats and they were in the wrong one at the wrong time.”¹⁶¹ Finally, Holmes's notion of death as a “dreamless imperceptible... the epitome of peace, justice, and freedom”¹⁶² led him to reason that his victims were “going to be going to a peaceful state and they're going to avoid all of the conflict”¹⁶³ [*mj*] adding “it doesn't matter what you do in life... cos you're just going to die anyway.”¹⁶⁴ These views are consistent with Holmes's philosophical pessimism (see 3.11.6 *James Holmes: Religious/Philosophical Aspects*).

As of the Reid interviews, Holmes stood by his decision to commit the murders, though he did express some regret over the “collateral damage”¹⁶⁵ of those wounded: “[I]t's not good in

that they had to be injured in order for you to kill the other people... because if I put my shoes in their situation I wouldn't want that to happen to me... I regret they had to be wounded... They get debilitated... and it's too bad that it couldn't be avoided.”¹⁶⁶

James Holmes: Post-Arrest Self

When asked about his feelings upon hearing that there “was like over 50 wounded and 12 died”¹⁶⁷, Holmes thought “just that I was worth 12 more people than I was before... I only count fatalities.”¹⁶⁸ Through the “philosopher's stone”¹⁶⁹ of violence, Holmes transformed himself from **The Misfit With the Broken Brain** to **James +12**: “I increased my self worth and I didn't have to die.”¹⁷⁰ Predictably, this narrowing of the discrepancy between Holmes' *actual/own* and *ideal/own selves* by perpetrating “the homicide got me out of the depression. It gave me a purpose... I accomplished what I set out to do... it went according to plan.”¹⁷¹

As of July 2014, Holmes remained fairly consolidated in his renegotiated homicidal self as **James + 12**—“I did get the value, [but] it didn't stop my suicidal thoughts...”¹⁷²—and considers his body count a “moderate [success].”¹⁷³ Dr. William Reid had noted that the ultraception symbol adorned the wall of Holmes's cell. Regarding incarceration, Holmes' feelings are ambivalent: “It was not my intentions [sic] to be locked up... I knew I was going to be locked up, but I didn't want to be locked up... That's just the price you have to pay for completing the mission.”¹⁷⁴ On the other hand, the prospect of incarceration appealed to him in some way because he wished “to be isolated, [though] not necessarily in jail.”¹⁷⁵ Moreover, “I wouldn't say it's entirely bad... *at least I'm remembered as doing something* [emphasis added].”¹⁷⁶ When asked by Dr. Reid how he would be remembered, Holmes replied “I'd be remembered in a poor light... as mentally ill or *different from the norm* [emphasis added]... [but also for] being successful with the mission.”¹⁷⁷ Holmes admitted that, in 2012, being remembered was very important to him, which is why he considered sending photographs of himself to the *New York Times*, though “that [motivation] didn't surface consciously [at the time]... *I didn't think people would remember me for any other reason* [emphasis added].”¹⁷⁸

Regarding the possibility of his execution, Holmes applied his theory of ultraception to explain the purpose of homicidal retribution by the state: “[mass murder] creates an imbalance of value, so the justice system wants to obliterate that and get it back to zero... [by] killing me.”¹⁷⁹ According to Holmes, if the executioner believed in the theory of ultraception they would “get

the value”¹⁸⁰ of executing him and if they “believed that I was worth 13 then they would be the arbiter of that.”¹⁸¹ Holmes did not seem particularly fearful of death at the time of the Reid interviews: “since I've got to jail it hasn't looked that bad of a possibility.”¹⁸²

However, the transition into **James + 12** did not resolve Holmes's emotional problems completely. He stated that “the person who gives me the [mental health] tests”¹⁸³ said “I show strong signs of depression.”¹⁸⁴ When asked what it's like to be a dangerous guy, Holmes answered that he feels “isolated and alone... it's hard to trust people... I figure most people could be dangerous to me as well... because I've been dangerous... [they might hurt me] to get even maybe.”¹⁸⁵ Holmes said other inmates “call me The Joker”¹⁸⁶ which “makes me feel like they've kind of turned me into a supervillain.”¹⁸⁷

Finally, as a reward for murdering 12 people, Holmes garnered a global fan club of “almost 500”¹⁸⁸ mostly female admirers calling themselves 'Holmies' who send him photographs of themselves, money orders, and letters garnished with lipstick marks, perfume, and menstrual blood.¹⁸⁹ At one point, the facility where he was detained received such a high volume of mail addressed to Holmes that they were forced to change their mail policy. When Holmes's trial began on April 27, 2015, several 'Holmies' flew or drove long distances to attend. One letter sent to him reads:

[At the trial] there was me & Shena on the back row and Cyd and Kriss on the row in front of us. Shena, I'm sure you know well by now as I'm pretty sure she writes you and sends you money/pictures more often than what's healthy (haha). She was the blonde mouthing things at you and trying desperately to make any sort of eye contact.¹⁹⁰

Though Holmes' defense team entered a plea of not guilty by reason of insanity, on August 24, 2015, he was found guilty and handed 12 life sentences with an additional 3,318 years without parole. He was transferred to an undisclosed prison out-of-state in late-2015 after being punched several times by a fellow inmate.¹⁹¹

James Holmes: Sexual/Gender Aspects

James Holmes met his first girlfriend Gargi Datta in September 2011 at the University of Colorado, and by October they were dating. Holmes told Gargi that he loved her, but she did not reciprocate, and in February 2012 the two broke up. According to Holmes, they enjoyed sexual relations “three or four times a week”¹⁹² for a period of approximately four months, which

continued intermittently after they had broken up: “I guess she wanted a non-committal relationship so I figured I was better than nothing... It was just like the first [relationship] except I knew there was not going to be a future between us.”¹⁹³ According to Holmes, in May 2012 “I just told her I wasn't happy and I didn't want to do the relationship anymore... because I wanted a committed relationship.”¹⁹⁴ Gargi had been Holmes's first girlfriend, though she claims he lied to her about having previously “grown intimate with someone in camp, I believe an undergraduate.”¹⁹⁵

Though Holmes later expressed to Dr. Reid that he just wanted to “be alone. Solitary”¹⁹⁶, he showed an intense interest in having (or being seen to have) female companions. On one occasion, Holmes manipulated a 'selfie' to appear as if he was romantically involved with an attractive model (see Figure 31), which he then posted online.



Figure 27. Photograph Holmes doctored to include attractive female and posted online
Holmes explained that he had created the deception because “I kind of thought that that would make me more desirable, seeing me with someone like that... [*enacted identity*] I was trying to

feel desirable... because I'd broken up with my ex-girlfriend... Not wanting to be alone. Wanting to start another relationship.”¹⁹⁷ Furthermore, Holmes wrote of how the end of his romantic relationship with Gargi Datta was an “expediting catalyst”¹⁹⁸ for his violent acts. Holmes told Dr. William Reid:

When I was a kid I thought I would never fall in love...[I remember] not wanting to fall in love...[but] there's a biological drive to procreate, and there's a biological drive to fall in love. And I couldn't overcome those... I was trying to fight my biology... I resisted trying to fall in love... I'm glad I did [fall in love]...I got to know another person and care for another person, and have that returned.¹⁹⁹

Holmes addressed these contradictory desires for companionship and solitude in his diary:

View myself as divided. There is a biological me, which is driven by biological needs... The real me is fighting the biological me. The real me, namely [the] thinking one does things not because I'm programmed to, but b/c I choose to. The latest battle I lost was when I finally succumbed to falling in love. Evolution, the biological program's coder is very difficult to fight.²⁰⁰

Considering Holmes' relative sexual inexperience²⁰¹ in light of his attempts to dupe others into believing he was desired by women who embodied *emphasized femininity*, it is obvious his attitude toward his sexuality was *ego-dystonic*. Like his quantity-focused approach to killing, Holmes' use of call-girls after the break-up²⁰² was likely an attempt to 'increase his numbers' and reduce the discrepancy between the sexual-aspects of his *actual* and *ideal selves*. After all, given his social deficits, he probably concluded that a substantial amount of time—perhaps the rest of his life—would pass before he found another sexual partner. Thus, when Holmes replied “no”²⁰³ to Reid's question as to whether or not he wanted to be a “womanizer”²⁰⁴ like “James Bond”²⁰⁵, he was likely being deceitful.

Compounding this obsession with his sex life, in his diary under a list of personal bodily concerns, Holmes wrote:

Concern with cock. Suffered accidents as child. Allergic reaction to sex - scarring. Excessive stimulation in response to ‘most beautiful woman in world’ I had read in a book. Other event - a slab of skin tore away, did not heal. [The] Results of accidents [are either] not prevalent to absence [sic] in appearance when erect.²⁰⁶

When questioned about this entry by Dr. William Reid, Holmes replied “I don't want to talk about it.”²⁰⁷ However, when asked more generally about how he viewed his genitalia, he replied

“small, I guess... well, based on national averages it's small.”²⁰⁸ Considering that Holmes answered every other question put to him in his 22 hours with Dr. Reid, his refusal to talk about the reference to a scarred or injured penis is noteworthy. Holmes' diary seems to indicate that he may have caused some level of cosmetic damage, however insignificant, to his penis by masturbating to an image or description of the 'most beautiful women in the world' in a publication. Among the other scribbles in his diary were “Body dysmorphic disorder”²⁰⁹, a phrase which Holmes clarified by saying “I wasn't happy that I had poor vision and bad sinuses and [I was also] unhappy with my hair... I did a lot [of checking myself in the mirror].”²¹⁰ Placing the sum total of these findings next to Holmes's stated identification with the nerdy Leonard from *The Big Bang Theory* sitcom²¹¹, it is obvious he saw his *actual/own* as a *subordinated* male.

James Holmes: Religious/Philosophical Aspects

Unlike the rest of the American-born offenders in this study, Holmes “never was really a believer”²¹² in religion, stating that he had been “indifferent”²¹³ to his Sunday school teachings. His match.com dating profile listed “agnostic”²¹⁴ under the 'faith' field. Queried about the importance of his religious beliefs by Dr. Reid, Holmes answered “I'd say insignificant”²¹⁵. Yet, Holmes' journal indicates he spent a great deal of time reflecting on metaphysics. When Reid asked him why he had printed the word 'why?' more than 100 times in a row in his journal, Holmes explained “I think it was... 'what is the meaning of life and death?'... it's something I mulled over for a long time.”²¹⁶ One counterargument for the existence of an Abrahamic God which Holmes particularly dwelled on was the issue of the creation of sin and free will. Specifically, in his journal he wrote “what kind of GOD commands his people not to murder yet cowers behind free will?”²¹⁷ When Reid rephrased his questions to enquire as to whether Holmes had a personal spiritual system, Holmes replied: “Yeah I kind of believe God is everything. So He doesn't really need worship or to be preyed to, because He's just kind of everything in total.”²¹⁸ This belief seems to reflect Holmes' scientific background, and may be related to Deism or facile spiritual interpretations of quantum theory^{vvvvvvv} where it is proposed that the unknown force driving the universe exists at the most microscopic level and links all things. According to

^{vvvvvvv} See Rhonda Byrnes' bestselling book *The Secret* (which will appear in the Elliot Rodger case below), the film *What the Bleep Do We Know?*, and various claims by the New Age author and speaker Deepak Chopra.

Holmes, God is “always in our actions, and in our thoughts, and in the collective sum of anything... So like anything you can think of, that is part of God... he kinda does everything and anything.”²¹⁹ It may also be that Holmes is using the word 'God' allegorically as a substitute for a more abstract concept, since when asked if he believes God has any expectations of man, he replied “No, I would say not.”²²⁰ Responding to questions of whether God pays attention to what happens on earth and cares about it, Holmes answered “Well that would kind of mean he's paying attention to himself cos he is everything... if you're talking about everything then it's going to be negative and positive... It's hard to say what he would care about because that's a single thing ... and he would be caring and not caring as in the same way.”²²¹ When this was restated more specifically in regards to the shooting, Holmes said that God would simply acknowledge “just that it's changing something... It's changing life”²²² Asked again whether God would care about Holmes's action specifically, Holmes replied “that's personifying God into a human.”²²³ Holmes seems to be implying that to him God is a non-judging, perhaps non-sentient totality, which neutrally experiences flux.

Turning to the question of life after death, Holmes explained that he didn't “believe in afterlives [sic]”²²⁴ and described the state of death as “the dreamless sleep”²²⁵ where “before life is the same as after you live... so it ultimately didn't matter what you did in life^{wwwwwww} because it would just go back to before and after.”²²⁶ Within this metaphysical worldview, Holmes reasoned “In life's there's conflict, struggles, there's not absolute freedom [because] you're bound by laws of nature, human laws. But when you're [dead and] in the dreamless sleep you're just kind of in a perfect state.”²²⁷

If we were to characterize Holmes's views in western philosophical terms, there are echoes of philosophical pessimism—“I generally have a pessimistic view... all the time”²²⁸—best characterized in the writings of Emil Cioran and Arthur Schopenhauer, along with existential nihilism. Dr. William Reid seems to have formed similar conclusions, asking Holmes about the influence of the 19th century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche²²⁹, who was strongly influenced by Schopenhauer but ultimately rejected his asceticism. When questioned about his familiarity with Nietzsche's^{xxxxxxx} work, Holmes answered that he knew very little: “He believed

^{wwwwwww} There is an obvious and interesting logical contradiction here, as Holmes has violated the logic of his own nihilism by striving to have greater value and notoriety.

^{xxxxxxx} The question of whether Holmes was a Nietzschean *Übermensch* or not would merit an entire essay in itself. For brevity's sake, “no, not really. He was ultimately governed by the need for others' approval. This binds

he was God^{yyyyyyyy} I think and then he went crazy.”²³⁰

Fittingly, as Nietzsche predicted of 21st century man, Holmes's lack of belief in a traditional God resulted in his accepting of “moral relativism”²³¹ where “you kind of decide for yourself what's right and what’s wrong... [T]here’s no concrete absolute set of moral standards. It's contrived by the individual.”²³² Therefore, “the message is there is no message”²³³ implies that the murders were a reaction to Holmes encountering nihilism. As Holmes does not believe in objective moral truths, he interpreted his homicidal acts as “selfish, not morally wrong.”²³⁴ Responding to Reid's question as to whether he was a “wronger”²³⁵, Holmes replied that he was not a 'wronger' because he had only been 'bad' for one day, while remaining 'good' over a period of many more days.²³⁶ This reasoning seems to parallel that of another existentially nihilistic multiple murderer, 'The Moors Murderer' Ian Brady, who in his controversial *The Gates of Janus* proposed the questions: “[I]f a killer of six proved that he had consciously refrained from killing a dozen other victims he previously had at his mercy, why should the dozen acts of clemency be of lesser moral significance than the six fatalities?”²³⁷ Holmes recognized a rather obvious point that the psychopathic Brady seemingly overlooked: “the magnitude [of what was done wrong] matters”²³⁸—at least to *other* people.

Where Chapman buried his desire for fame in a classic morally righteous hero narrative, Holmes constructed his theory of 'ultracception' upon the blank slate of nihilism. He “designated like an arbitrary value of like 1 to each person... One value unit... One is significant enough... As a human being they have this value and I take that value”²³⁹ by killing them. Interestingly, Holmes recognized that his system was “objective, but that's my subjective opinion”²⁴⁰ and that the value of 1 for each victim was “arbitrary”²⁴¹. This actually shows that he did not possess a *delusional interpretive framework*²⁴² and, therefore should not be considered delusional but *meta-delusional*: “[ultracception] would be a delusion viewed by other people, [but] not according to me.”²⁴³ When asked if 'ultracception' applied to a person other than himself, Holmes replied: “Well people can believe whatever they want so it's as valid as she needs it to be.”²⁴⁴ Ironically, the end result of his philosophizing is something that bears resemblance to a spiritual belief system. Holmes believes 'ultracception', like the holy scriptures, will endure past his death

him to the flock.”
yyyyyyyy Incorrect.

because “I’ve written it down. Shared it with other people. So it exists through them.”²⁴⁵
Thankfully, American society has yet to produce any 'ultrareception' copycat killers.

James Holmes: Class Aspects

Class identity does not seem to have played a role in the multiple murders Holmes committed against his “conglomerate mass”²⁴⁶ of victims. That said, he mailed a package containing burnt money to his psychiatrist, Dr. Lynn Fenton, before the massacre: “I figured I wouldn't have any use for money afterwards so I destroyed the currency... It was about as much as I could take out from the ATM machine... I think four, six hundred [dollars].”²⁴⁷ Holmes explained that “one of the reasons I didn't stay with Fenton was because my insurance was going to get cancelled because I dropped out of graduate school and she charged like \$80 an hour... [I sent burnt money] to show that was a reason that I didn't come back to her.”²⁴⁸ Perhaps, consciously or subconsciously, Holmes was attempting to demonstrate that the amount of mass murders in the United States was the result of inadequate access to quality mental health care due to financial factors.

James Holmes: Vocational Aspects

Holmes began studying neuroscience “to get a good paying job”²⁴⁹ and because “I wanted to see why I was different... I was interested in the differences between like normal people and like people who are different... outside the norm I guess... I guess mentally ill.”²⁵⁰ “I was also really depressed... I just didn't have like my normal drive to finish things and succeed... Kind of stuck in a rut... It was hard to get up and do things... I would like to go back and sleep in the middle of the day on lunchbreak.”²⁵¹ According to Holmes, his grades began to suffer when he supposedly became “sick from mono and I was fatigued all the time... In my lab I kind of messed up. Used the wrong procedure... I passed all of my courses and everything.”²⁵² For a student who had finished his previous studies with an absolutely outstanding GPA, this must have been devastating.

In the months leading up to the mass murder, Holmes admitted to experiencing “a loss of self-worth... The career I'd chosen was most likely over... some of my rotations didn't go very well... Nobody cared if I stayed in the program or not.”²⁵³ Resigned to his homicidal mission, Holmes left his prelims “up to fate”²⁵⁴ because “it didn't matter if I passed or failed...because I

was gonna complete my mission and get locked up or killed.”²⁵⁵ At the time he admitted to feeling socially “underappreciated”²⁵⁶ and an “outcast.”²⁵⁷ He stopped feeling invested in university altogether when “I didn't pass my preliminary exams and I had a lab I could have joined but the kind of topics were less neuroscience and more genetics... I just made the decision not to take them, and then just made the decision to leave.”²⁵⁸ In June 2012, Holmes officially quit the program. According to Holmes's program director, Sukumar Vijayaraghavan, “James had told [Dr. Fenton] he did not think he would make a mark on the world with science so he could blow up people and become famous.”²⁵⁹ Despite their significant differences, here he bears an unsettling resemblance to Mark David Chapman.

Concluding Thoughts: James Holmes

Table 21

James Holmes: Selves and Strain

	Actual/Own	Ideal/Own	Homicidal Self	Post-Arrest Self
Sexuality	Ego-dystonic. Lies about past sexual partners. Girlfriend breaks up with him. Concern with penis. Forges photos to appear he has an attractive female sexual partner.	Ego-syntonic. Steady sexual partner.	N/A	Ego-syntonic. Hundreds of women vie for his attention and send him letters and photographs of themselves. He sticks his personal sign to the wall of his cell and surrounds it with their photos.
Gender	Subordinated. Gender-role strain.	Subordinated.	Hyperreal. No gender-role strain.	Reconciled.
Religion/Philosophy	Agnostic	Agnostic	Ultrareception	Ultrareception
Class	Middle-class.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vocation	Student.	Neuroscientist.	N/A	Resolved. Incarcerated. Retreatism
Race	Ego-syntonic. Non-racist.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Notability	Ego-dystonic. Strain.	Ego-syntonic. Famous scientist.	Ego-syntonic. 'blow up people and become famous'	Ego-syntonic. Media circus. Reconciled.

The seven cases preceding this one have shown that, from a very young age, ETV offenders experience difficulties with socialization and exhibit some degree of *communication*

dysfunction: problems which interact to create a truncated and/or unstable sense of *self*. James Holmes is the first of three American Millennial *expressive/transformative* murderers in this sample who suffer from extreme *communication dysfunctions* to the extent where they hardly speak. When these men are isolated from their families in college, their inability to cope with the demands of adult life reaches a fever pitch, and they adjust by transitioning to a *homicidal ideal/own*. In Holmes' case, his *homicidal ideal/own* was neither blatantly comprised of *hyperreal* characters (e.g., Holden Caulfield, Catherine Tramell, Jason Voorhees) or *archetypes* (e.g., Hero, Monster, Outlaw). Rather, upon abandoning the 'normal' **Successful Cured Neuroscientist ideal/own**, he sought to externalize the *cognitive deviance* of his *actual/own* by dying his hair red, sporting black contact lenses, and posing with weapons “to stand beside normalcy and be the exotic figure”²⁶⁰ with “a different kind of view of the world than other people.”²⁶¹ In other words, when confronted with his *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy, Holmes rejected all attempts at conformity, embracing and amplifying his deviance into a *homicidal ideal/own* which proactively and permanently separated him from society, physically and existentially, by committing indiscriminate mass murder. This *homicidal ideal/own* “wasn't the normal me... That portrays an evil me... It's kind of a character of me.”²⁶² To emphasize and promote his “different kind of view of the world”²⁶³, Holmes also sent his journal, which included cryptic references to ultrareception, to Dr. Fenton.²⁶⁴

Holmes' disinterest in people, in which conversation is simply the act of “rambling about frivolous information”²⁶⁵ is reflected in his philosophical devaluation of individuals into 1s—all are equal, possessing the least value possible.^{zzzzzzzz} Even groups are nothing more than a 'conglomerate mass' of 1s to be murdered, increasing Holmes' own worth so that he could transcend 'normal' and become the exceptional **James+12** (worth 13 times what other individuals are). Here we have echoes of Daniel Gonzalez, another ETV murderer with non-symbolic victims, who opined “good people don't do anything. They are just boring”²⁶⁶, with 'good' being synonymous with seemingly 'normal.' Holmes even compared himself to James Bond, saying that like the fictional British spy, he was “a man of action.”²⁶⁷ Holmes' taciturn preference for action over words is a trope of *hyperreal masculinity* conveyed in action films and video games. Ironically, this wannabe 'exotic figure' was actually mainlining normative masculinity.

^{zzzzzzzz} Yes, arguably he could have made them worth .50, but this is nitpicking which misses the fundamental point.

This is unsurprising. With his nerdiness, lack of success with women, and injured penis, Holmes' masculinity was a major source of gender-role strain for him. Anticipating that he would be perceived as committing the Aurora cinema massacre because Gargi broke up with him, Holmes wrote in his journal “Most fools will misinterpret correlation for causation, namely relationship and work failure as causes. Both were expediting catalysts not the reason. The causation being my state of mind for the past 15 years.”²⁶⁸ Here Holmes is playing a rather obvious trick: if one attributes his violence to strain regarding the *gender* and *vocational* aspects of his *self* (arguably both linked to his masculinity), then one is a 'fool.' Since nobody wishes to be viewed as unintelligent, they are incentivized to avoid this explanation. Yet, if we have learned anything so far from the offenders in this sample it is that they misdirect us from those aspects of their motives which embarrass them. Certainly, Holmes' proverbial psychological gun was already loaded, but the collapse of his first sexual relationship and academic career pulled the trigger. They did so because these were primary strains in his life. His *actual/own* **The Misfit With the Broken Brain** suffered from severe social anxiety to the point of actually wishing to be removed from society, while **The Successful Cured Neuroscientist** (*ideal/own*) wanted a “cookie-cutter life”²⁶⁹ which entailed “a good paying job”²⁷⁰ and “raising a family”²⁷¹ Both acts require constant interaction with society: “[In] any type of work you're usually going to have to interact with people.”²⁷² Due to his deviant social behavior—chronically *being out of face* or *being in wrong face*—**The Man With the Broken Brain** was unable to sustain a relationship and stand-out grades. Retreating from society into media, the **Man With the Broken Brain** was likely, consciously or subconsciously, at least partially inspired to create the theory of ultraception by the video game convention of killing foes to accumulate abstract 'points.' Reasoning that he would never be able to function as a normal person, Holmes plotted the massacre because “the mission brought me hope”²⁷³—i.e. the possibility of finally having an attainable *self* which would eliminate his negative emotionality: **James+x**. Moreover, “destroying doesn't come out of the hatred... I don't want to deal with the people, so one way is to get rid of them.”²⁷⁴ Now isolated in protective custody, the 'exotic' Holmes hardly needs to deal with anybody or anything.

Most fascinating is Holmes' constant framing of his actions in terms of the state. Besides comparing his arbitrary view of human value to fiat currency, he justified ultraception by

remarking “It's kind of human nature almost to fall back to wars and violence when there's no solution.”²⁷⁵ Conceptualizing himself and his victims as competing nations, he says

“you can take countries measuring their GDP of a given population and say this is a value which we place on our nation's output. And you can do the same to individual people, and say this person has a value and does this output or would do this output but then it goes to me afterwards after killing them... You conquer the country through illegal war and then you receive its economic benefits.”²⁷⁶

Where the dropouts Chapman, Berkowitz, and Rolling wore the Holy Bible *talisman*, the case of James Holmes showcases the terrifying phenomenon of a mentally-disordered intellectual channeling content from textbooks and news media. Ultimately then, whether an ETV offender is religious or nihilistic has little bearing on their capacity to commit murder, rather, it simply changes the colour of their *meta-delusion*. As predicted by Nietzsche, the void left by the death of God will be filled by political and personal ideologies, and the violent man will inevitably fill it with violence.

Elliot Rodger: ‘Effete Cultured Outcast’ to ‘True Alpha Male

Talismans: Incel/Truecel culture; Avatars: Ramsay Bolton; Type: 1

Elliot Rodger: Failed socialization and the formation and realization of the actual/own

Elliot Rodger emigrated with his family from Sussex, England to Los Angeles at the age of four. Like Colin Ireland, he moved constantly from school to school, though unlike Ireland, he did so voluntarily because he could not deal with his social rejection and bullying.²⁷⁷ From a young age, Rodger's *communication dysfunctions* were severe, making him “incredibly hard work to talk to.”²⁷⁸ Philip Bloeser, who Rodger had considered a friend, said that Rodger “was unable to communicate with anyone. He was so shy and painfully awkward. He had a boring personality and he didn't talk.”²⁷⁹ After watching one of Rodger's video rants, Bloeser “was amazed to hear him talk so much and so articulately, usually all you would get were one word, monosyllabic answers from him.”²⁸⁰ Again, we see echoes of the severe reluctance to express oneself in conversation that inhibited the psycho-social growth of Millennial rampage killers, James Holmes and Seung-Hui Cho. And like both gunmen, Rodger “perceived things very differently to everyone else”²⁸¹ and developed a “warped sense of reality”²⁸², according to Bloeser. These observations are corroborated by the testimony of family friend Simon Astaire who “got a sense

of a boy who was unable to communicate... he was unable to engage, and it was difficult to engage. And I saw lots of people trying to engage with him.”²⁸³ Lenny Shaw, an adult who claimed to know Rodger, said “you would immediately see how awkward he was in just about any situation and how shy he was and how afraid he was...”²⁸⁴ Taking all of this into consideration, Rodger's issues with the *sexual aspects* of his *self*—the primary strain belying his homicides—were directly related to his inability to effectively communicate. Bloeser proposes “He would never dream of approaching a girl, he just expected them to come to him, which they didn't. Even if any of them ever had, it wouldn't have lasted long, because he wouldn't chat to them.”²⁸⁵ Though his *personal identity* was that of a 'cultured gentleman' Rodger did not seem to realize that his *enacted identity* showed a socially-mortified dullard. As with similar offenders in this sample, this resulted in a negatively-evaluated *ascribed relational identity* which begat poor *communication satisfaction* and, crucially, a dangerous and consuming sense of not being understood: “I don't know why you girls are so repulsed by me. It doesn't make sense. I do everything I can to appear attractive to you.”²⁸⁶

Like David Berkowitz and Daniel Gonzalez, the inability to form a romantic/sexual relationship with a woman was central to Rodger's *self-concept*. Rather than taking the view that there were inherent deficiencies in his *actual/own*, Rodger blamed the female gender, claiming that their “sexual attractions are flawed”²⁸⁷ and “perverted”²⁸⁸. In numerous Videologs (VLOGS) he purported a seemingly genuine belief that he was “polite”²⁸⁹, looked “fabulous”²⁹⁰ and “magnificent”²⁹¹ in his BMW and \$300 Giorgio Armani sunglasses²⁹²; as well as “so awesome”²⁹³, undeniably “beautiful”²⁹⁴, well-travelled²⁹⁵, “civilized, intelligent, sophisticated”²⁹⁶ with “a sense of style”²⁹⁷ and had “so much to talk about.”²⁹⁸ To Rodger, this was proof that as he was “the ultimate gentleman”²⁹⁹, he had experienced “injustice”³⁰⁰ because “I deserve girls much more than all those slobs [with girlfriends].”³⁰¹ At the same time he openly recognized that he had been “cast out. No one likes me. No one accepts me. All my life I've been struggling to fit in with the popular kids.”³⁰² Taking this into consideration, we can summarize Rodgers' *actual/own* image as an **Effete Cultured Outcast**—a truly special male in his own mind, whose brilliance was unrecognized by the boorish culture around him.

Though Rodger did not discuss feeling like a child in a man's body, he never really lived an adult life, as everything was provided for him by his parents, including childhood friends: “I always had a pleasant experience during mother's week. She always arranged playdates for me,

because she knew I was too shy to initiate them myself.”³⁰³ He did however express that “I wish I could be a kid again... I mean, when you're a kid you don't have to worry about things like being attractive or how many girls like you. No one has unfair advantages.”³⁰⁴ For these reasons, we should strongly consider the likelihood that Rodger suffered the same truncated development as Chapman, Berkowitz, Ireland, Rolling, and Gonzalez, and that this resulted partially from his *communication dysfunctions*.

Elliot Rodger: Pre-homicidal Ideal/Owns and Negative Emotionality

When he was nine-years-old (*late-dimensional/early-vectorial*), Rodger “...realized that there were hierarchies^{aaaaaaaa}, that some people were better than others [emphasis added]... At school, there were always the 'cool kids' who seemed to be more admirable than everyone else.”³⁰⁵ Rodger started to “compare myself to these 'cool kids' [*looking glass self*]. I realized, with some horror, that I wasn't 'cool' at all. I had a dorky hairstyle, I wore plain and uncool clothing, and I was shy and unpopular [*actual/own*]... This revelation... decreased my self-esteem.”³⁰⁶ Observing that many of the popular children in his school were white and rode skateboards, Rodger constructed his first *ideal/own self*—the **Cool Kid**—accordingly: “I had never even ridden on a skateboard before, but if I wanted to be cool, I had to become a skateboarder... [Father] took me to the store Val Surf on Ventura Boulevard to buy me a new skateboard...”³⁰⁷ Rodger “was thrilled to have this new skateboard and the possible chance it gave me to be a cool kid [*ideal/own*]. It was time to start practicing... I was now a skateboarder, though *not yet good enough to reveal myself as one to the kids at school* [emphasis added]. This was the start of an obsession to copy everything the supposed 'cool kids' were doing.”³⁰⁸ Like Rolling, Magnotta, Gonzalez, Arkwright, Holmes, and Cho, Rodger changed his physical appearance to transition toward this *ideal/own self*: “My first act was to ask my parents to allow me to bleach my hair blonde. I always envied and admired blonde-haired [sic] people, they always seemed so much more beautiful^{bbbbbbbb}... father took me to a hair salon... I felt cool.”³⁰⁹

^{aaaaaaaa} Specifically, dominance hierarchies among (and in many sociological theories 'between') groups of males and groups of females.

^{bbbbbbbb} Notice Rodger's ego-dystonic racial identity. Later, we will see him use race to claim superiority over other men. Like Magnotta, Rodger's thoughts meet the definition of racism in its traditional use. Both men have strong feminine characteristics in their highly *subordinated* masculinities. They use race and class to claim superiority—both incredulous affectations of *hegemonic masculinity*—because their masculinities are so stigmatized: “faggot” and “virgin”.

Framing this using the CTI, Rodger wished to narrow the gap between his *enacted identity* of the 'cool kid' and his *relational identity* among those whom he deemed “cool kids.”³¹⁰ This never truly occurred, because much to Rodger's “disappointment, no one really cared. They were all in their own worlds. *I don't remember any kids showing recognition of my new 'coolness'* [emphasis added].”³¹¹ Still, at this point, he perceived the gap between his *enacted identity* and *relational identity* to be minimal. Ultimately, despite his perceived efforts “I never really became good friends with the so-called 'cool kids'. I would see them more as competitors than friends.”³¹² As the gap between his *enacted* and *relational* identities widened, Rodger's “life at school was starting to become mediocre again, and I became frustrated with my struggle to be cool [*ideal/own*].”³¹³

Rodger's social isolation mirrored that of the other offenders in this study: “I didn't have a regular group of friends who I always played with. I was like a nomad, moving from group to group and trying to fit in with each one, but never fully integrating.”³¹⁴ By sixth grade, Rodger “didn't know what was cool anymore, I had no friends there. I simply didn't know what to do... The social challenges that I faced in Fifth Grade were intensified tenfold.”³¹⁵ Unable to find an acceptable *line*, Rodger was ever *in wrong face* or *out of face*.³¹⁶

My whole world had changed. *The 'cool' thing to do now was to be popular with girls* [emphasis added]. I didn't know how to go about doing that. Skateboarding, I was able to do... dressing well, that was simple... But attracting attention from girls? *How in the blazes was I going to do that? I didn't even understand what was so special about it either, but everyone seemed to place so much importance on it* [emphasis added to second sentence].³¹⁷

This last sentence is particularly informative as Rodger, who did not hit puberty until he was nearly 14-years-old (*late vectorial development*), was not initially motivated to ingratiate himself to his female peers due to sexual desire. Rather, his motives arose from a wish to be socially included.

Instead of striving toward a new *ideal/own self* during this time, Rodger resigned himself to his **Effete Cultured Outcast** *actual/own* while continuing to resentfully envy those who had achieved his **Cool Kid** *ideal/own*.³¹⁸ Following a similar path as Daniel Gonzalez and James Holmes, by Seventh Grade, Rodger was using video games to retreat from his social problems.³¹⁹ When Rodger's mother subscribed to high speed internet, he

was able to play World of Warcraft on her computer, along with Halo 2 on Xbox Live. This was the point when *my social life ended completely* [emphasis added]. I would never have a satisfying social life ever again. It was the beginning of a very lonely period of my life, in which my only social interactions would be online through video games^{ccccccccc}... I stopped caring about my life and my future. I even stopped caring about what people thought of me. I hid myself away in the online World of Warcraft, a place where I felt comfortable and secure.³²⁰ [*Retreatism*]

Still mandated to attend school, Rodger could not completely escape into the digital opium. He would describe the years between the ages of 13 and 17 (*late vectorial*) as being a “depressing and lonely period of my life.”³²¹ Given the massive discrepancy between his **Effete Cultured Outcast** *actual/own* and his **Cool Kid** *ideal/own* selves, it is unsurprising. In *My Twisted World*, Rodger continues to write ad nauseam about being excluded, teased, and occasionally physically bullied throughout high school. Three particularly relevant points for analysis are (i) his aversion to being labelled a 'skateboarder', as he had abandoned the hobby, (ii) his visible fear of female peers, and (iii) the world schema he formed during this process.

Regarding the first, Rodger wrote of how he “developed a hatred for the sport”³²² because he “failed to become good at skateboarding... and whenever someone called me a skateboarder, it reminded me of my failure [emphasis added] and I got very angry [*trigger*]. The whole school started calling me it just to anger me...”³²³ He was mocked for his gynophobia—“I was scared of girls”³²⁴—and called homosexual epithets (see Section 9.5). One particular incident was crucial in the formation of his viewpoint:

Some boys randomly pushed me against the lockers as they walked past me in the hall. One boy who was tall and had blonde [sic] hair called me a 'loser', right in front of his girlfriends... Pretty girls [*emphasized femininity*]. And *they didn't seem to mind that he was such an evil bastard. In fact, I bet they liked him for it* [emphasis added]. This is how girls are, and I was starting to realize it. This was what truly opened my eyes to how brutal the world is. The most meanest and depraved of men come out on top [*hegemonic/sub-hegemonic masculinity*], and women flock to these men. Their evil acts are rewarded by women; while the good, decent men [*subordinated masculinity*] are laughed at.³²⁵

Of course, there is no evidence that there was anything “good”³²⁶ or “decent”³²⁷ about Rodger, and based upon his actions, it is likely that he too would have engaged in bullying behaviour if

^{ccccccccc} The similarities to James Holmes here are startling.

he was physically capable. Instead, he tried to recast his weakness as morality.

Returning to his hatred of being called a 'skateboarder', thanks to the extensive detail in Rodger's autobiography, the link between his *self-concept* and emotional instability is repeatedly laid bare for us. As discussed in Chapter 1, Higgins emphasized that a self-discrepancy must be *accessible* in order for it to produce an emotional effect. In other words, something has to remind the subject of his self-discrepancy.³²⁸ We have already seen how being reminded of his ineptitude at skateboarding provoked Rodger's ire. Another example of how an emotional effect results from the sudden *accessibility* of these self-discrepancies is perfectly demonstrated in the following account:

Another horrible experience concerning the Bubenheims occurred... a few of Pollina's friends came over... cool kids. When I heard them talking about their awesome lives and their parties, I had a breakdown right then and there [*trigger*]. I realized how much I've been missing out in my life, and I cried in front of everyone. I felt like I would never have a life as good as theirs [*actual/own:ideal/own*]. I told everyone that I wanted to commit suicide.³²⁹

Unwilling to retreat into the digital opium any longer, Rodger had a

revelation that just because I was condemned to suffer a life of loneliness and rejection, doesn't mean I am insignificant. I have an exceptionally high level of intelligence. I see the world differently than anyone else. Because of all of the injustices I went through and the worldview I developed because of them, I must be destined for greatness. I must be destined to change the world, to shape it into an image that suits me!³³⁰

Determined to become a revolutionary, Rodger spent his hours "reading books about history, politics, and sociology, trying to learn as much..."³³¹ as he could, and "formed an ideology...of how the world should work..."³³² which he would impose "on the world and set everything right"³³³ after his pre-destined "rise to power..."³³⁴ Rodger "became a new person furiously driven by a goal..."³³⁵—the **Erotophobic Totalitarian Dictator** (*ideal/own*)—who sought to abolish sexual activity, "destroy all of the injustices of the world, and... exact revenge on everyone I envy and hate."³³⁶ Though Rodger finally "had something to live for"³³⁷ and "felt empowered"³³⁸, the **Erotophobic Totalitarian Dictator** *ideal/own* quickly crumbled when it occurred to him that he "had absolutely no idea or plan of how to acquire any sort of power. It was naïve of me to think that I could one day become a dictator. The only thing I could do was fantasize about it."³³⁹ Predictably, Rodger's "whole world twisted even deeper into darkness and

despair as my depressing life continued on. My hatred for people who have sex festered inside me like a plague... My life, if you can call it a life, was living hell.”³⁴⁰

Following a period of reflection, Rodger “realized that I was still only seventeen... I wanted to give myself a new chance at life... This calm session of contemplation made me feel a lot better.”³⁴¹ Thus began the construction of a third *ideal/own* which corresponded with Rodger's enrollment in college: the **Sexually-active Student Sophisticate**: “College represented a hope for me... I might possibly make friends, have interactions with girls, maybe even get a girlfriend!”³⁴² Like all of Rodger's pre-homicidal *ideal/own selves*, he quickly gave up on this *self*, dropped out of college, and plunged into depression at the smallest slight. Apparently forgetting that he had no plan to seize power, he returned briefly to the **Erotophobic Totalitarian Dictator** *ideal/own*, fleshing out his ideology further before switching to a **Wealthy Screenwriter** *ideal/own*. Within weeks he had abandoned this *ideal/own* after discovering that “most writers of even the highest budget films didn't make as much as I thought they did... Definitely not enough to live on for the rest of their life.”³⁴³ As Rodger had concluded that accumulating riches would guarantee him a 'hot blond' girlfriend, work which did not achieve this goal promptly had no value to him.

Within a year, Rodger enrolled at the University of California's Santa Barbara campus. Having learned that the film *Alpha Dog*, which depicted attractive young people having sex, was filmed in Santa Barbara, he returned to his **Sexually-active Student Sophisticate** *ideal/own*. Rodger's mother found him an apartment in the Capri Complex in Santa Barbara which he moved into in the early summer of 2011. Though he would have more than a handful of differing roommates, he found reasons to hate all of them. When classes started in September, Rodger's *actual/own:ideal/own* discrepancy widened when “some pretty girls waiting outside”³⁴⁴ the classroom “didn't pay any attention to me... I was sure I had an attractive appearance [*ideal/own*] that day...”³⁴⁵ Instead, much to his chagrin, “a group of typical popular-type boys sat near me... They somehow knew all of the pretty girls in the class... Right then, on the very first day of SBCC, I was going through the exact thing... the feeling of being a lonely, unwanted outcast [*actual/own*].”³⁴⁶ After discovering that a female classmate who'd caught his eye had a boyfriend, Rodger “couldn't look at her beauty anymore, knowing that some punk was able to enjoy having sex with her every day... [*trigger*] Shortly after dropping my math class, I decided to drop all of my other classes in a rage...”³⁴⁷

Another *ideal/own* which arose during Rodger's desperate flailing for a tolerable position in life was the **Lottery Millionaire**: “After continuous analyzing and contemplation, I concluded that winning the lottery was the only way I could become wealthy at a young age, and thus it was the only way to enjoy the rest of my youth.”³⁴⁸ Again, Rodger believed wealth would solve his chronic inability to win a woman's heart. Upon seeing the negative results, Rodger's **Lottery Millionaire** *ideal/own* crumbled and he “felt completely dead inside... I sat in my car for hours, crying and crying and crying. I wailed with agony... I had no hope of ever having a happy life.”³⁴⁹

As Rodger rapidly slipped back to his **Effete Cultured Outcast** *actual/own*, a new *ideal/own*—at first only dimly perceived—began to emerge. It first manifested in the form of minor but symbolic attacks against young couples in public. In a Starbucks, Rodger threw coffee all over an “obnoxious punk”³⁵⁰ and a “pretty blonde... rubbing their bodies together and tongue kissing in front of everyone.”³⁵¹ [*trigger*] He started having sadistic fantasies: “I wanted to do horrible things to that couple. I wanted to inflict pain on all young couples... I realized... *I was capable of killing them, and I wanted to* [emphasis added].”³⁵² In one fantasy script, Rodger “wanted to kill them slowly, to strip the skins off their flesh.”³⁵³ This violent fantasy may be anti-mimetic. In the literary fantasy series *A Song of Ice and Fire*, whose first book *A Game of Thrones* gave its name to the unprecedentedly popular television adaptation, there is a psychopathic sadist named Ramsay Bolton. Ramsay is the most enthusiastic participant in his ancestral house's tradition of flaying enemies alive.³⁵⁴ Not only was Elliot Rodger an admitted reader of the novels³⁵⁵, but one of his World of Warcraft characters was actually named 'RamsayBolton'.³⁵⁶ Furthermore, Ramsay is the son of a wealthy and powerful man, but is a bastard, and dispossessed from inheriting his family seat.^{dddddddd} Ramsay's sense of entitlement and being outcast is shared by Rodger in his autobiography. It is thus probable that Rodger's flaying fantasies were influenced by the Ramsay Bolton *avatar* from the *Game of Thrones* *talisman*.

On a second occasion, Rodger splashed iced tea all over “A tall, blonde [sic], jock-type guy”³⁵⁷ and “one of the sexiest girls I had ever seen”³⁵⁸ who had been kissing in public. [*trigger*]

^{dddddddd} Ramsay is known by the bastard's surname 'Snow' until the last episode of Season 4, in which his father legitimizes him for defeating the armies of Stannis Baratheon. The episode aired on June 15, 2014, mere weeks after Rodger's killing spree. However, Rodger was a regular reader of the books in which Ramsay's legitimization occurs in *A Storm of Swords*, published in 2000.

As with the Chapman case, Rodger began to construct a twisted Hero narrative.³⁵⁹ Though he effectively admitted that he was lashing out against a *symbol* which triggered self-discrepancy related negative emotionality, in order to avoid confronting his substantial personal deficits, Rodger, like Chapman, recast himself as a fighter of injustice, eventually culminating in the moral claim that “you [girls] denied me a happy life and in turn I will deny all of you life. It's only fair... You never showed me any mercy, so I will show you none... just for the crime of living a better life than me.”³⁶⁰ This narrative likely prevented Rodger's psyche from completely falling apart. Several similar incidents followed.

Where Berkowitz fired bullets at women of *emphasized femininity* and their boyfriends, Rodger initially threw drinks on them—the same principle, but with a different degree and form. As with the other offenders we can see a developing violence against both *symbolic victims* ('hot blondes') and society itself. Rodger's beverage bombing was a preparatory crime—his version of Berkowitz's arsons, Rolling's rapes, and Magnotta's kitten-killing. Several more of these incidents occurred, but the one that preceded Rodger's murder spree was a pivotal turning point:

I stood awkwardly in the front yard [outside a house party] for a bit, realizing how pathetic I looked all by myself [*looking glass self*] when everyone was partying around me. To calm down, I climbed up onto a wooden ledge that bordered the street and plunged down on one of the chairs there... Eventually, some partiers climbed up onto the ledge... They all started socializing right next to me, and none of the girls paid any attention to me. [*trigger*] I rose from my chair and tried to act arrogant and cocky toward them, throwing insults at everyone. They only laughed at me and started insulting me back. [*trigger*] That was the last straw, I had taken enough insults that night. A dark, hate-fueled rage overcame my entire being, and I tried to push as many of them as I could from the 10-foot ledge... I failed to push any of them from the ledge, and the boys started to push me, which resulted in me being the one to fall onto the street. When I landed, I felt a snap in my ankle, followed by a stinging pain. I slowly got up and found that I couldn't even walk... The people in this house must have been friends with the ones I previously fought with, for they greeted me with vicious hostility. They called me names like 'faggot' and 'pussy' [*subordinated masculinity*], typical things those types of scumbags would say. A whole group of the obnoxious brutes came up and dragged me onto their driveway, pushing and hitting me. I wanted to fight and kill them all. I managed to throw one punch toward the main attacker, but that only caused them to beat me even more. I fell to the ground where they started kicking me and punching me in the face... I had never been beaten and humiliated that badly. Everyone in Isla Vista saw what happened, and it was truly horrific.³⁶¹ [*trigger*]

And with that night came the final death of the **Sexually-Active Student Sophisticate** *self-guide* and the birth of Rodger's *homicidal ideal/own*: “I actually gave them all one last chance to accept me, to give me a reason not to hate them, and they devastatingly blew it back in my face. I gave the world too many chances. It was time for Retribution.”³⁶² In reality, he had made no attempt to interact with any of the party-goers before hurling insults at them and trying to push them off the ledge.

Elliot Rodger: Renegotiated Homicidal Ideal/own

Seemingly forgetting his **Erotophobic Totalitarian Dictator** *ideal/own*, Rodger declared “It was only when I first moved to Santa Barbara that I started considering the possibility of having to carry out a violent act of revenge, as the final solution to dealing with all of the injustices I’ve had to face at the hands of women and society... I named it the Day of Retribution.”³⁶³ Rodger's autobiography reveals a history of violent fantasies dating back to his teenage years. However, it was in Santa Barbara that a practical plan for vengeance crystalized in his psyche. In its original form, the plan was far more convoluted and sadistic than its actual realization:

On the day before the Day of Retribution, I will start the First Phase of my vengeance: Silently killing as many people as I can around Isla Vista by luring them into my apartment through some form of trickery. The first people I would have to kill are my two housemates, to secure the entire apartment for myself as my personal torture and killing chamber. After that, I will start luring people into my apartment, knock them out with a hammer, and slit their throats. *I will torture some of the good looking people before I kill them, assuming that the good looking ones had the best sex lives* [emphasis added]. All of that pleasure they had in life, I will punish by bringing them pain and suffering. I have lived a life of pain and suffering, and it was time to bring that pain to people who actually deserve it.³⁶⁴

Next, Rodger, calling out to the Ramsay Bolton *hyperreal other*, planned to “cut them, flay them, strip all the skin off their flesh, and pour boiling water all over them while they are still alive, as well as any other form of torture I could possibly think of.”³⁶⁵ This original plan actually encompassed a *victim-as-canvas element*, with Rodger wishing to “behead them and keep their heads in a bag.. Once I reach Del Playa Street, I will dump the bag of severed heads... everyone will fear me as the powerful god I am.”³⁶⁶ Obsessed with the notion that his half-brother, Jazz, might one day have sex, Rodger would “drive down to my father’s house to kill my little brother, denying him of the chance to grow up to surpass me, along with my stepmother Soumaya, as she

will be in the way. My father will be away on one of his business trips...”³⁶⁷

Though the Day of Retribution had been scheduled for April 26, 2014, unfortunately for Rodger he “woke up with a terrible cold... In addition, I found out that father had arrived home two days earlier than he originally said he would, so if I had indeed went forth with my plans, I would have had to kill my father^{eeeeeeeee}, which I wouldn’t be mentally prepared for.”³⁶⁸ Rodger rescheduled The Day of Retribution for May 24, because it was “the absolute last weekend in the Spring semester in which I can carry out this plan efficiently.”³⁶⁹ With a sad accuracy, Rodger reasoned “If I don’t do this, then I only have a future filled with more loneliness and rejection ahead of me, devoid of sex, love, and enjoyment. I have to do it. *It’s the only thing I can do* [emphasis added].”³⁷⁰

On May 23, 24 hours before The Day of Retribution had been scheduled, Elliot Rodger stabbed his roommates, Weihan Wang and Cheng Yuen Hong, to death along with their visiting friend, George Chen. This was in accordance with his plan for the day preceding The Day of Retribution. However, for reasons known only to Rodger, his Ramsay Bolton inspired torture murders never followed. Perhaps the intimate nature of the initial triple-homicide proved too psychologically and/or physically difficult for Rodger, compelling him to abandon his even more grotesque plans to capture, flay, and burn “men who have had pleasurable sex lives while I’ve had to suffer.”³⁷¹ More likely, as suggested by the physical evidence, his roommates were not in the house at the same time, and he was delayed waiting for them, cleaning up blood, and hiding the bodies. He then continued to deviate significantly from his original plans, enacting The Day of Retribution earlier that same day, instead of on May 24. On the Day of Retribution, Rodger had planned to

attack the very girls who represent everything I hate in the female gender: The hottest sorority of UCSB... I will sneak into their house at around 9:00 p.m. on the Day of Retribution, just before all of the partying starts, and slaughter every single one of them with my guns and knives. If I have time, I will set their whole house on fire... The Final Phase of the Day of Retribution will be my ultimate showdown in the streets of Isla Vista... I will then make my way to Del Playa, splattering as many of my enemies as I can with the SUV, and shooting anyone I don’t splatter... I will then start massacring everyone on Del Playa Street. I will pull up next to a house party and fire bullets at everyone partying on the front yard. I will specifically target the good looking people, and all of the couples. After I have destroyed a house party, I will continue down Del

^{eeeeeeeee} Ramsay Bolton had no such compunctions, murdering his father, stepmother, and stepbrother in Episode 6 Season 6 of the television program.

Playa, destroying everything and everyone. When I see the first police car come to their rescue, I will drive away as fast as I can, shooting and ramming anyone in my path until I find a suitable place to finally end my life...³⁷²

After murdering his first three victims, Rodger uploaded his final VLOG 'Elliot Rodger's Retribution' on YouTube at 9:17 p.m. In this final VLOG, he reveals his *homicidal ideal/own* of the **True Alpha Male Avenger**:

All those girls that I've desired so much. They'd have all rejected me and looked down on me as an inferior man [*subordinated masculinity – actual/own*] if I ever made a sexual advance toward them, while they throw themselves at these obnoxious brutes. I will take great pleasure in slaughtering all of you. You will finally see that I am, in truth, the superior one: the true alpha male [*sub-hegemonic masculinity – homicidal ideal/own*]³⁷³

According to Philip Bloeser, far from the “shy and painfully awkward”³⁷⁴ young man who gave “monosyllabic answers”³⁷⁵ the Elliot Rodger “on the YouTube recording is not the person I knew. In the video, he even sounds different, he *puts on a different* voice [emphasis added]. It's almost demonic.”³⁷⁶ Perhaps the voice was different because it was not the voice of his *actual/own* or previous *ideal/owns*, but that of his short-lived *homicidal ideal/own* the **True Alpha Male Avenger**. Next, Rodger e-mailed his autobiography, *My Twisted World*, to his biological parents and therapist.³⁷⁷ Within less than 10 minutes he had driven to the University of Santa Barbara's Alpha Phi sorority house and knocked upon the door. When nobody answered, he began shooting students on campus. Among those killed were Katie Cooper and Veronika Weiss. Rodger then hurried back to his BMW and drove recklessly through the streets of Isla Vista, hitting young men and women, or shooting them. Christopher Michael-Martines was shot through a deli window and killed. Police fired at Rodger, wounding him. After crashing, Rodger took his own life: “The prospect will be so sweet, and justice will ultimately be served. And of course, I would have to die in the act to avoid going to prison.”³⁷⁸ The act ensured he would never live to see his **True Alpha Male Avenger** *homicidal self* called into question.

Elliot Rodger: Victimology

Table 22
Elliot Rodger Victimology

	Age	Race	Sex	Profession	Date Attacked	Where
Weihan Wang	20	East Asian	Male	Student	May 23, 2014, died	Apartment
Cheng Yuan Hong	20	East Asian	Male	Student	May 23, 2014, died	Apartment
George Chen	19	East Asian	Male	Student	May 23, 2014, died	Apartment
Veronika Weiss	19	White	Female	Student	May 23, 2014, died	Street
Katie Cooper	22	White	Female	Student	May 23, 2014, died	Street
Christopher Michael-Martinez	20	Mestizo	Male	Student	May 23, 2014, died	Isla Vista deli mart
Megan Carloto	22	Hispanic	Female	?	May 23, 2014, injured	Street
Antoine Cherchian	25	?	Male	Student	May 23, 2014, injured	Street
Bianca de Kock	20	Mixed?	Female	Student	May 23, 2014, injured	Street
Patrick Eggert	19	White	Male	?	May 23, 2014, injured	Street
Jin Fu	?	East Asian	Male	?	May 23, 2014, injured	Street
Victor Garcia	?	Hispanic	Male	Student	May 23, 2014, injured	Street
Elliot Gee	?	?	Male	Student	May 23, 2014, injured	Street
Christopher Hoang	?	East Asian	Male	Student	May 23, 2014, injured	Street
Mitchell Lyubarsky	21	White	Male	?	May 23, 2014, injured	Street
Bailey Maples	?	White	Female	?	May 23, 2014, injured	Pizza My Heart
Nick Pasichuke	19	White	Male	?	May 23, 2014, injured	Street
Matthew Smith	?	White	Male	Student	May 23, 2014, injured	Street
Aaron Zaglin	22	White	Male	Student	May 23, 2014, injured	Pizza My Heart

Enraged that he did not have a “hot, blonde-haired [sic] girlfriend to have passionate sex with”³⁷⁹, in his 'Day of Retribution' video, Rodger declared “I am going to enter the hottest sorority house at UCSB [Alpha Phi] and I will slaughter every single spoiled, stuck-up, blond slut I see inside there. All those girls that I've desired so much... If I can't have you, I will destroy you.”³⁸⁰ Like Berkowitz, Rodger was annihilating unattainable embodiments of *emphasized femininity* because “girls gave their affection and love and sex to other men, but not to me.”³⁸¹ Where Berkowitz primarily targeted dark-haired 'pretty princesses'—the Italian women of New York City who regularly passed him without so much as a glance—Rodger lashed out against the stereotypical tanned California blonde who haunted his lonely world.

Though Berkowitz also shot several men, they seem to have been *incidental* rather than *intended* targets. Rodger, on the other hand, raged against “all of you sexually-active men”³⁸² for

“living a better life than me... I hate all of you. And I can't wait to give you exactly what you deserve: utter annihilation.”³⁸³ In other words, his male victims were similarly *intended*, and comprised the majority of Rodger's casualties. His first three victims were his East Asian male roommates, Weihan Wang and Cheng Yuan Hong, and with their friend, George Chen. In his autobiography, Rodger stated

[Wang and Hong] were two foreign Asian students who attended UCSB. These were the biggest nerds^{ffffff} [*subordinated masculinity*] I had ever seen, and they were both *very ugly with annoying voices* [emphasis added]... I knew that when the Day of Retribution came, I would have to kill my housemates to get them out of the way.³⁸⁴

Here, Rodger seems to happily contemplate murdering these 'ugly' 'annoying' 'Asian' 'nerds', although later he writes of their death as more of a means to an end: “The first people I would have to kill are my two housemates, to secure the entire apartment for myself as my personal torture and killing chamber.”³⁸⁵ Since Rodger did not end up using the apartment as his own personal dungeon, it is necessary to ask why he felt the need to kill his roommates at all. It is our contention that, like Chapman, Ireland (probably), and Arkwright, Rodger was, consciously or subconsciously, destroying an aspect of himself which he hated—his East Asian heritage. His racist views will be discussed in greater detail in Section 3.12.6, though it is of note that Rodger attributed a significant portion of his social failings to his racial makeup.

Rodger's East-Asian victims—whom he killed in a much more personal fashion than his subsequent ones—may have been slain for two racially-motivated reasons. The first is that in murdering three “ugly Asian(s)”³⁸⁶, Rodger was repudiating a *symbol* of a hated aspect of his *actual/own*: the annihilation of the 'inferior' Asian and the ascendance of the 'superior' Caucasian. This refutation would have occurred internally (*SAOS*) as well as externally. The second possibility builds upon the first. When Rodger saw that full-blooded East Asian males could lead satisfying lives despite their perceived 'inferior' status, this decimated his racially-based excuse for his own misery. Now Rodger not only hated them for representing an ego-dystonic part of his *actual/own*, but for plunging him into *cognitive dissonance*, in which he was unable to reconcile his views with the observable contentedness or successes of other men of East Asian heritage.

In his Day of Retribution video, Elliot Rodger declared that the young men and women of Isla Vista were “animals and I will slaughter you like animals.”³⁸⁷ Dehumanizing one's

^{ffffff} The irony of Elliot Rodger labelling somebody else a 'nerd' is laughable.

victims is an age-old way to justify killing them, whether in military conflict (e.g., Israeli soldiers called Palestinians “dogs”³⁸⁸ during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war), genocide (e.g., Nazis considered Jews to be “rats”³⁸⁹; Hutus labelled Tutsis “cockroaches”³⁹⁰ in Rwanda), or straight-up murder (e.g., The Manson Family referred to their affluent victims as “piggies”³⁹¹). To Rodger, females were inherently “flawed. There is something mentally wrong with the way their brains are wired, as if they haven’t evolved from animal-like thinking. They are incapable of reason or thinking rationally... That is why they are attracted to barbaric, wild, beast-like men. They are beasts themselves.”³⁹² Building upon this premise, he concluded

Beasts should not be able to have any rights in a civilized society [*mj*]... Women should not have the right to choose who to mate with. That choice should be made for them by civilized men of intelligence [*actual/own*]. If women had the freedom to choose which men to mate with, like they do today, they would breed with stupid, degenerate men, which would only produce stupid, degenerate offspring. This in turn would hinder the advancement of humanity. Not only hinder it, but devolve humanity completely. *Women are like a plague that must be quarantined* [emphasis added].³⁹³

Elsewhere, in his autobiography, Rodger reasoned that because “the females of the human species have never wanted to mate with me...”³⁹⁴ he was “not part of the human race”³⁹⁵, leading him to conclude that “I am more than human. I am superior to them all. I am Elliot Rodger... Magnificent, glorious, supreme, eminent... Divine! I am the closest thing there is to a living god.”³⁹⁶ Here, Rodger adopted a different rationalization strategy: rather than dehumanizing his victims to feel above them, he elevated himself to the level of living deity. Either way, by murdering “all of those girls who I've desired so much... all those popular kids who lived lives of such hedonistic pleasure... they've all looked down on me...”³⁹⁷ Rodger was *killing up*. Yet, because his extreme narcissism would not allow him to fully realize his own beliefs—that his victims were 'better' than him—he opted for self-deception, whether identifying as a “god exacting my retribution on all those who deserve it”³⁹⁸ or a civilized slayer of obnoxious beasts. Only by convincing himself that he was in fact *killing down*—the *adaptive preference formation* previously discussed in the Berkowitz case—could Rodger finally feel ego-syntonic in the moments before ending his miserable existence.

Elliot Rodger: Post-Spree Self

For Elliot Rodger, the closing of the gap between the *actual/own* and renegotiated *ideal/own selves* corresponded with the termination of his life by suicide. To quote a hackneyed metaphor, he had chosen to live one day as a lion rather than a lifetime, in Rodger's own words, as “a mouse.”³⁹⁹ His unified *self*, the **True Alpha Male Avenger** has been designed to live on forever in a state of personal harmony and eternal triumph through the immortalizing medium of the Internet. His final video portrayals would not be that of an awkward outcast [*actual/own*], but of a man of violence cackling at the thought of destroying the objects of his hatred: “Humanity is a disgusting, depraved, and evil species. It is my purpose to punish them all. I will purify the world of everything that is wrong with it. On the Day of Retribution, I will truly be a powerful god, punishing everyone I deem to be impure and depraved.”⁴⁰⁰

In a cruel twist of fate, had Rodger decided to surrender instead of committing suicide, he would have finally met one of the attractive young blondes he coveted. For, as in the case of James Holmes, several years after Rodger's killing spree, a young woman calling herself 'ElliotSupremeLady' began posting YouTube videos expressing her adoration for the misogynistic killer. On Valentine's Day 2017, ElliotSupremeLady published a video entitled “I love you Elliot Rodger”⁴⁰¹, featuring photographs of the young blond-haired woman next to photos of Rodger, giving the appearance that they were a couple. It is accompanied by the text “Look what I made for you sweetie! Happy Valentine's day over the rainbow. I love you!”⁴⁰² In a second video, “My Elliot Rodger shirt!”⁴⁰³, ElliotSupremeLady models a mail-order black t-shirt covered with a giant graphic of Rodger's face, declaring “I'm very happy with this shirt. I love the big graphic on it. I love the picture: his big beautiful face [laughs].”⁴⁰⁴ A third posted five days before this writing, “MY BIRTHDAY PRESENT! Elliot Rodger phone case”⁴⁰⁵ has her showing off her new Elliot Rodger face phone case: “I really love this. I really like the.. cartoonish design on it, I guess you'd call it [laughs]. I dunno.”⁴⁰⁶ If one is so inclined, they may view several other similar videos on her YouTube channel, along with countless Rodger tributes.

As baffling as this adoration is, it is nowhere near as dangerous as the legions of so-called Incels (involuntarily celibates) and Truecel (true celibates) congregating online to share (often violent) misogynistic views on reddit.com. According to one Reddit user “an Incel is an Involuntary celibate, someone who can't form a sexual relationship with another person”⁴⁰⁷ while “a *truecel* is basically the Olympics of Incels. A Truecel has likely never even touched a girls [sic] hand before, and they believe they will live their whole life this way.”⁴⁰⁸ For some incels

and truecels, Rodger is held in high regard. On Reddit, one finds comments such as:

“[Elliot] is someone we all should look up to. He had the courage to do what we all want to deep down.”⁴⁰⁹

Every time a woman rejects a man's advances or ridicules him for whatever excuse is popular, especially when done in his younger years, she contributes to the probability of creating another Elliot Rogers [sic] in the future. The nightmare will end for everyone when women stop saying 'no' and start saying 'yes'.⁴¹⁰

“His rampage should have been solely directed at women. Women are the ones who kept him from being happy.”⁴¹¹

“Everything he did was badly planned out. If he's gonna kill himself anyway he may as well at least have a solid plan... He could have been a hero for all incels but instead he completely failed. At least he had the same troubles as us.”⁴¹²

“Most people would go insane if they were in Elliot's position. There was nothing wrong with Elliot, except for how society treated him.”⁴¹³

“ER understood just how awful these beings were and did the correct thing by punishing some of them. Too bad he didn't manage to enter that sorority house - had he done so he'd probably be the greatest hero in the history of the world.”⁴¹⁴

The Rodger case remains a popular discussion point online, lingering in the public memory. In 2015, he became a *talisman* for virginal school shooter, Christopher Harper-Mercer⁴¹⁵, and judging by the number of resentful men gathering online purporting relate to him, the next truecel-perpetrated massacre is likely just around the corner.

Elliot Rodger: Sexual/Gender Aspects

More than any other offender in this sample, Elliot Rodger's *homicidal self* was almost exclusively the product of his *sexual/gender aspects*. His pronounced sense of *class* and *racial* superiority is largely tied to it; that is, class and race would have been negligible factors in the commission of his homicides without his perceived *sexual/gender* inferiority.

From his earliest years, the petit Rodger was insecure about his height and physique, crucial cultural physical signifiers of masculinity:

I was very small and short statured for my age. I never gave this much concern during my early childhood, but this fact fully dawned on me the day my family took a trip to Universal Studios... *I saw other boys my age admitted onto the ride, but I was denied* [emphasis added] because I was too short!... Little did I know, this injustice was very small indeed compared to all the things I'll be denied in the future because of my height.⁴¹⁶

In an earlier instance he recalled:

[S]ometimes I would go on the swing, though my father had to push me. I remember getting *jealous of other boys* [emphasis added] who were able to swing by themselves, boys who were even younger than myself. It was the second time I realized my lack of physical capability.⁴¹⁷

Though it is tempting to write off Rodger's small physique as simply another hang-up to deal with, this imbalance of physical power left him subject to routine acts of physical and emotional 'bullying'—the patronizing term for 'abuse' when it is perpetrated by peers rather than adults:

People also liked to steal my belongings and run away in an attempt to get me to chase after them. And I did chase after them in a furious rage, but I was so little and weak that they thought it was comical... I had to wait in a quiet corner for the hallways to clear before I could walk to class. I also took long routes around the school to avoid bullies.⁴¹⁸

Based in part on his experiences in high school, Rodger predictably began to see himself as a 'lesser' man—a *subordinated masculinity*. According to Peter Rodger, his son “would say ‘[Women are] never going to like me because I'm not six-foot-two, a jock sporty guy.’”⁴¹⁹ Indeed, this lack of physicality continued to manifest in poor athleticism which left Rodger frustrated: “I had been trying very hard to get better at skateboarding, but when I saw that there were boys a lot younger than me who could do more tricks, I realized that I sucked. I was never good at sports or any physical activity... Why did I fail at everything I tried? I asked myself.”⁴²⁰ Karate lessons, Rodger's token effort at *sub-hegemonic* masculine violence, fared no better: “I wasn't getting better at my karate moves in the class... I was also frustrated at how James was so much physically stronger than I was, and how he was so much more skilled at karate...”⁴²¹ Predictably, he quit.

Between his slight build and general weakness, Rodger started to form a schema which, accurately or inaccurately, attributed his social failures to his unmanly physical appearance. For example, one Hallowe'en “four young thugs drove by me in a pick-up truck and proceeded to

throw eggs at me, laughing while they did it... *They must have seen me as a weakling* [emphasis added] who they could bully for their amusement. I didn't want the world to view me as weak."⁴²² Motivated to move from the *subordinated masculinity* of the **Effete Cultured Outcast** (*actual/own*) to the *hegemony*-oriented **Sexually-active Student Sophisticate** (*ideal/own*), Rodger started "exercising and lifting weights... I hoped it would increase my confidence and make me appear a bit stronger. Maybe if I built muscles, girls will be attracted to me, I hopefully proclaimed to myself. I had never worked out or lifted weights in my life, so my body has always been very frail and delicate."⁴²³ But like Luka Magnotta who couldn't gain muscle, Rodger's body remained unchanged. Unable to join the ranks of the athletic, he dismissed them: "All of the hot, beautiful girls walked around with obnoxious, tough jock-type men... They should be going for intelligent gentlemen such as myself. Women are sexually attracted to the wrong type of man."⁴²⁴ Like James Holmes, Rodger also professed concern regarding the size of his penis on a Body Building forum: "The average [penis size] is 5.5 [inches]? I thought it was 4. This is very unsettling."⁴²⁵

Compounding Rodger's unease about his physicality, manliness, and desirability, was his delayed onset of puberty. When a 10-year-old peer "took out a magazine that had pictures of beautiful model women, and all of the boys gathered around and looked at them"⁴²⁶ the insecure, pre-pubescent Rodger "didn't understand this"⁴²⁷ but "pretended to be interested just so that I wouldn't appear uncool."⁴²⁸ Though he had started "to admire female prettiness"⁴²⁹, at this point in his life females were more akin to his clothes, skateboard, or hacky sack—a status symbol to close the discrepancy between his **Effete Cultured Outcast** *actual/own* and **Cool Kid** *ideal/own*.

Despite Rodger's constant complaints of being denied sex, there is an erotophobic bent to his character, reminiscent of Chapman. Though his fear of girls was evident at an earlier age, Rodger speaks of "an incident... that would scar me for life. The first time that I was treated badly by a girl occurred at this camp."⁴³⁰ Already self-conscious about his physique and athleticism compared to other men, Rodger was crushed when "I accidently [sic] bumped into a pretty girl the same age as me, and she got very angry. She cursed at me and pushed me, embarrassing me in front of my friends... I immediately froze up and went into a state of shock."⁴³¹ The public spectacle of a boy with a *hegemonic self-guide* being physically dominated by an attractive woman predictably widened Rodger's *gender* self-discrepancy: "Cruel treatment

from women is ten times worse than from men. It made me feel like an insignificant, unworthy little mouse. I felt so small and vulnerable... I thought that it was because she viewed me as a loser [**Effete Cultured Outcast**]... It made me even more nervous around girls...⁴³² One might conclude that Rodger was so insecure about his masculinity in relation to girls that by the time he developed sexually the thought of intercourse absolutely terrified him. Take, for instance, his first encounter with “pictures of beautiful naked girls... I was shocked beyond words. I had never seen what beautiful girls looked like naked, and the sight filled me with strong and overwhelming emotions. I didn't know what was happening to me. Was it the first inkling of sexual desire in my body?”⁴³³ Where, for many men, this an exciting and pleasant experience, the 11-year-old Rodger was immediately “traumatized. My childhood was fading away. Ominous fear swept over me...”⁴³⁴ This is but one of several such accounts in Rodger’s autobiography.

Like many young boys, Rodger had been taught that sex with girls was a normative and enjoyable aspect of being a man. At the age of 10 (*late-dimensional/early-vectorial*), a family friend at a dinner party “patted me on the back and told me that I have a great life ahead of me. With a grin on his face, he told me that ‘in the next ten years, you’ll have a great time... a great time’. I had no idea what he meant by that... Now I know what he meant.”⁴³⁵ Unfortunately, Rodger never lived up to the 'great time' promised to his masculinity. This discrepancy between his *actual* and *ideal* masculinity (*subordinated* vs. *hegemonic*) and sexual *self* became an increasingly unbearable, unavoidable, and hair-trigger strain: “I saw people bragging online about their sexual experiences ... they used the term 'virgin' as an insult to people who were more immersed in the game than them. *The insult stung, because it was true* [emphasis added].⁴³⁶ The writings of Prohaska & Gailey seem to account for nearly all of Rodger's issues with his *gender identity*. His obsession with other men's sexual conquests can be attributed to the phenomenon in which “men participate in activities that adhere to the hegemonic ideal so that other men will recognize their masculinity... Men fear rejection by other men^{#####}, and the only way to avoid this rejection is to participate in normative masculine behaviors... Thus, real manhood is only

Unfortunately, the ideological bent of this text overlooks the rather obvious fact that women also police men's masculinity and that men seek female approval in roughly equal measure. For an example, see the behaviour of Rodger's stepmother on the next page.

achieved when ‘real men’ acknowledge and approve of other men's accomplishments.”⁴³⁷ This placed Rodger in perpetual competition with his more sexually successful housemates:

I was eating a meal in the kitchen when he came over and started bragging to my housemates about his success with girls. I couldn't stand it, so I proceeded to ask them all if they were virgins. They all looked at me weirdly and said that they had lost their virginity long ago. I felt so inferior, as it reminded me of how much I have missed out in life. And then this black boy named Chance said that he lost his virginity when he was only thirteen! In addition, he said that the girl he lost his virginity to was a blonde white girl! [*trigger*] I was so enraged that I almost splashed him with my orange juice. I indignantly told him that I did not believe him, and then I went to my room to cry.⁴³⁸

A sexually inexperienced cry baby, Rodger's *subordinated masculinity* invited constant ridicule. Rodger also constantly compared his *sexual/gender* identity to that of his father's, and found himself wanting. From a young age

my little mind got the impression that my father was a man that women found attractive, as he was able to find a new girlfriend in such a short period of time from divorcing my mother. I subconsciously held him in higher regard because of this. It is very interesting how this phenomenon works... that males who can easily find female mates garner more respect from their fellow men, even children. How ironic is it that my father, one of those men who could easily find a girlfriend, has a son who would struggle all his life to find a girlfriend.⁴³⁹

Moreover, Rodger was extremely sensitive as to how his father might judge his lack of success with women (*actual/own:ideal/other*).

Ultimately, Rodger developed a seething envy of the sexually-active men and boys in his life. This is somewhat understandable, as each reinforced his lowly position in the masculine hierarchy. Prohaska & Gailey would interpret these interactions in light of their observation that “many heterosexual men”⁴⁴⁰ see sexuality “as a commodity they must seize from women.”⁴⁴¹ Boasting about sexual conquests among male peer groups confers status upon the man, which partially accounts for why the virginal Rodger was regarded with ridicule both online (in *World of Warcraft*) and offline. This phenomenon has been independently documented among athletes—Rodger's 'six-foot-two jock sporty guys'—by Sabo⁴⁴² and Messner.⁴⁴³ In this cultural climate, punctuated by comedy films mocking '40 Year Old Virgin'(s), it is no wonder that Peter Rodger's attempts to persuade his son that “‘there is no shame at all in not losing your virginity, and at a later age. Some people never do. Some people go into the church and choose chastity’”⁴⁴⁴ failed. The shame, actually, is immense.

As with Chapman and Magnotta, Rodger was routinely called “names like 'faggot' and 'pussy’”⁴⁴⁵ by students in high school and college^{hhhhhhhh} to both situationally construct and reinforce his *subordinated masculinity*. Rodger's recourse was to term nearly all other men, particularly those who were popular or sexually-active, 'brutes.'⁴⁴⁶ It is interesting to note that 60% of the offenders who did not seek out *sub-hegemonic masculine ideal/owns* before committing murder—Chapman, Magnotta, and Rodgerⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ—all sought to compensate by pursuing varying degrees of *hegemonic masculinity*, which entails a strong class element (Class Aspects). Only when it became clear that he would not win the lottery did the frail, weepy Rodger attempt to transition to *sub-hegemonic masculinity* by realizing his **True Alpha Male Avenger homicidal ideal/own**. Raised on action and adventure films and video games which encourage “feudal notions of manly vengeance”⁴⁴⁷ as a normative response to slights and frustrations, Rodger concluded:

To be angry about the injustices one faces is a sign of strength. It is a sign that one has the will to fight back against those injustices, rather than bowing down and accepting it as fate. Both my friends *James and Philip seem to be the weak, accepting type; whereas I am the fighter* [emphasis added]. I will never stand to be insultedⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ, and I will eventually have my revenge against all those who insult me...⁴⁴⁸

Rodger's views oscillated between old fashioned misogyny and the sort of erotophobic homicidal authoritarianism reminiscent of the most extreme and deplorable branches of feminism.^{kkkkkkkk} Concerning the latter, Rodger admitted that his “whole viewpoint and ideology of abolishing sex stems from being deprived of it all my life. If I cannot have it, I will do everything I can to DESTROY IT.”⁴⁴⁹ His ideology is best summarized by a quote from the British psychiatrist Robin Skynner: “If people can't control their own emotions, then they have to start trying to control other people's behavior.”⁴⁵⁰ But how could Rodger control his emotions

^{hhhhhhhh} In the case of the college students, this only occurred when Rodger crashed a party drunk and was beaten up after trying to shove several fellow partiers off a ledge.

ⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ Holmes and Cho are our two exceptions.

ⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱⁱ Though they are oceans apart culturally, this quote calls up Danny Rolling's admiration of Josie Wales' *hyperreal masculinity*: “He don't take no shit. You spit on his boot, he drills you nice and proper between the peepers” (London & Rolling, 2011, p. 70).

^{kkkkkkkk} Ironically, Rodger's ideas resemble the infamous 1967 SCUM (Society for Cutting Up Men) Manifesto penned by radical feminist Valerie Solanas who would attempt to murder the artist Andy Warhol and critic Mario Amaya the following year. The manifesto argues that men are emotionally and socially inferior to women as a result of possessing a Y chromosome, blames them for virtually all of the world's problems, and argues for the genocide of the male sex which would result in an all-female utopia (Solanas, 1967).

when his parents attempted to soothe his torment with expensive rewards instead of meaningful guidance?

Where the more traditionally masculine Berkowitz, Ireland, and Rolling pursued *sub-hegemonic masculine ideal/selves*, Rodger sought *hegemonic masculinity*, perhaps due to his small stature and affluent upbringing. For Rodger, social class and success at courtship were clearly linked.

Wealth is one of the most important defining factors of self-worth and superiority. I hated and envied all of those kids for being born into wealth, while I had to struggle to find a way to claim wealth for myself. I had to be ruthless, and do whatever it takes to attain such wealth. After all, it was my only hope of ever being worthy of getting a girlfriend and living the life of gratification that I desire.⁴⁵¹

This class consciousness will be explored later in this case study.

Elliot Rodger: Racial/Ethnic Identity

Commenting on his *racial/ethnic identity*, Rodger explained that his father “Peter is of British descent, hailing from the prestigious Rodger family”⁴⁵² while his “mother is of Chinese descent. She was born in Malaysia, and moved to England at a young age to work as a nurse on film sets...”⁴⁵³ Born in England, Rodger emigrated to the United States at the age of five, where he immediately “considered myself an ‘American kid’... I got accustomed to all the American T.V. shows, and I started to adopt an American accent. I was looking forward to my new life.”⁴⁵⁴ Growing up in Woodland Hills, Rodger admitted to “feeling that I was different because I am of mixed race. I am half White, half Asian, and this made me different from the normal fully-white kids that I was trying to fit in with.”⁴⁵⁵ Following the Isla Vista Murders, Peter Rodger disclosed that Elliot had once told him “I wish that I wasn't half-Asian.”⁴⁵⁶

Despite having a Chinese-Malaysian mother and Moroccan stepmother, Rodger was an unabashed racist who took an immediate dislike to any housemates who were ethnic minorities. When an East Asian using the handle 'Tyger' posted a question on puahate.com regarding whether acquiring a nice set of shoes would attract women, Rodger replied “Shoes won't help you get white girls. White girls are disgusted by you, silly little Asian.”⁴⁵⁷ He might as well have been addressing himself. Shortly after, when Tyger posted a photograph of himself with a Caucasian female, Rodger expressed doubt that the picture was real: “It's fake. That guy is

probably some friend-zoned loser she is using as a guide during her trip to Korea”⁴⁵⁸, among countless others. Similarly, Rodger couldn’t comprehend how “an inferior, ugly black boy [could] be able to get a white girl and not me? I am beautiful, and I am half white myself. I am descended from British aristocracy. He is descended from slaves”⁴⁵⁹ and upon seeing a “short, ugly Indian guy driving a Honda civic”⁴⁶⁰ with “a hot blonde girl in his passenger seat”⁴⁶¹ asked “What on earth is up with that?!?!”⁴⁶² He also used the term ‘inferior’ to refer to Hispanics, who he routinely looked down upon. His bigotry was also something he rarely articulated publicly. After the massacre, Peter Rodger emphasized he was astonished at his son's racism.⁴⁶³

Elliot Rodger: Class Aspects

Hailing from the highest social class of all the offenders in this sample—upper-middle—Rodger is also its most class conscious. He describes “the prestigious Rodger family”⁴⁶⁴ as “once part of the wealthy upper classes before they lost all of their fortune during the Great Depression”⁴⁶⁵ and notes that his paternal grandfather “George Rodger, was a renowned photojournalist who had taken very famous photographs during the Second World War, though he failed to reacquire the family’s lost fortune.”⁴⁶⁶ From a young age, Rodger had intimate knowledge of his father's wealth and financial concerns, from “the offer to buy the Old Rectory [in England] for about 400,000 Pounds”⁴⁶⁷ which Peter Rodger “declined, a decision he would regret later on, as it would have been a worthy investment.”⁴⁶⁸ to Peter's “temporary financial setbacks on top of the divorce.”⁴⁶⁹ Elliot recalls his father's documentary film *Oh My God*, and how Peter “kept talking about how he will become very rich from it”⁴⁷⁰ but “the movie would only bankrupt him in the future.”⁴⁷¹ Without commenting on the artist merit of the film, Elliot Rodger complained “My father’s movie was released, but it did not do well at all... I was annoyed that he kept having to make it clear to us that he was now in a 'financial crisis'... it was embarrassing.”⁴⁷²

As a child who “always loved luxury and opulence”⁴⁷³ any measure of austerity frustrated the spoiled Rodger. Social class was of paramount importance for him, as he could use it to signify his perceived superiority. With a tedious class-consciousness reminiscent of Patrick Bateman in Brett Easton Ellis's satirical *American Psycho*, Rodger also chronicled numerous upscale eateries, events, and locales he had frequented. Linked to Hollywood and wealthy family friends by his parents and stepmother, Rodger was a habitual name-dropper, which can clearly be observed in his autobiography. Nor did Rodger neglect to remind the reader of the countless

move premieres his family was invited to⁴⁷⁴, as well as having attended a “private Katy Perry concert... held for extremely wealthy people... Every family there must have had a net worth of at least twenty million...”⁴⁷⁵

Perhaps because it was the only social quality he had going for him, Rodger privately considered his high school classmates “slobs”⁴⁷⁶, “degenerate, low-class”⁴⁷⁷, and frequently invoked his socio-economic superiority in arguments against others. For example, he would use his Hollywood-insider status to respond to criticisms on websites such as puahate.com:

Hahahahaha. You pathetic loser. How dare you insult my family. [sic] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf9ijiWiU2U...> Skip to 31:30 in this video and you'll see me walking the red carpet at the Hunger Games premiere with my *high status father and stepmom* [emphasis added]. You're all jealous of my 10/10 pretty-boy face.⁴⁷⁸

Similarly, he strategically mentioned attending these premieres to teachers and fellow students in order to curry social status.

Despite growing up in this upper-middle-class world of financial and social privilege, Rodger was paradoxically conflicted about his socio-economic-status. Having learned that his biological mother was dating a millionaire, he encouraged her “to seek marriage with this man, or any wealthy man for that matter. She always adamantly refused, and demanded that I stopped talking about it.”⁴⁷⁹ In another incident, convinced that he had been short-changed at the Katy Parry concert “I tried to pretend as if I was part of a wealthy family. I should be... I WOULD BE! If only my damnable mother had married into wealth instead of being selfish. If only my failure of a father had made better decisions with his directing career...”⁴⁸⁰ With apparently no self-awareness or sense of irony, he regarded the other concert attendees and “couldn’t help but feel a bitter form of envy at all of the rich kids at the concert. They grew up in lavish mansions, indulged in excessive opulence, and will never have to worry about anything in their pleasurable, hedonistic lives. I would take great pleasure in watching all of those rich families burn alive.”⁴⁸¹ Nevertheless, Rodger didn’t hesitate to lord his own privilege over others, demonstrating a hypocrisy that was verging on comical.

If it is not already apparent, Rodger was so snobbishly class conscious that it actually deepened his *subordinated* masculinity, making him visibly effete. For instance, on a school camping trip he “was appalled by how drab and uncomfortable the tents looked. I wanted a

cabin. So I went to my teacher and asked to be transferred to a group that was sleeping in a cabin.”⁴⁸² This refusal to ever sleep 'rough' violates the ability to endure physical hardship which is one of many tenets of normative masculinity. Despite the fact that numerous notable adventurers, explorers, and mountaineers have hailed from the aristocratic and upper-classes, Rodger designated camping outdoors 'appalling' and 'drab', using class-coloured terminology to justify his non-participation.

Brought up travelling “Virgin Atlantic Upper Class”⁴⁸³, with a father who “hired a limo to pick up [Rodger's sister] Georgia and her friends”⁴⁸⁴ for her birthday, Rodger was similarly fussy about vehicles:

To my chagrin, my father... pulled up to the house one day in a roaring Harley Davidson... He kept insisting that he take me on the motorcycle whenever we went out, instead of going in the car. This would be too embarrassing for me, and I adamantly refused to ever go on the motorcycle.⁴⁸⁵

Indeed, the Harley Davidson *sign* quickly conjures up images of unkempt one-percenter bikers in the mind's eye, but as Rodger himself admits, his father was introduced to it by the multi-millionaire Leo Bubbenheim, whose family Rodger admired. Furthermore, in the 21st century, there is clearly no shortage of what the late-comedian George Carlin referred to as “weekend motorcyclists... dentists and bureaucrats and pussy-boy software designers getting up on a Harley because they think it makes them cool.”⁴⁸⁶ According to Harley Davidson's own statistics, in 2011 the median Harley Davidson owner was a 47-year-old male with a \$90,000 annual income.⁴⁸⁷ Openly pampered by his parents and crying at the drop of the hat, Rodger's masculinity was so *subordinated* that it actually undermined his socio-economic advantages:

I don't know why you girls are so repulsed by me. It doesn't make sense. I do everything I can to appear attractive to you. I dress nice. I'm sophisticated and magnificent. I have a nice car, a BMW... These sunglasses here are worth \$300. Giorgio Armani... I wanna take a girl out for a date and prove to her that I'm worthy.⁴⁸⁸

Amazingly, it never occurred to him that a large part of the *hegemonic masculine* allure is being a self-made (or at least 'competent') man. In his 22 years, Rodger barely made anything, let alone of himself. Lacking industriousness and resilience to work toward his goals, when he predictably failed to win the lottery Rodger abandoned all hope, and became the **True Alpha Male Avenger homicidal ideal/own**. His non-existent work ethic is revealed in the following section.

Elliot Rodger: Vocational Aspects

Obsessed with his *sexual/gender identity* and *class identity*, the spoiled and entitled Rodger placed almost no importance on his *vocational aspects*. As a child he entertained “hopes and dreams of becoming a professional skateboarder...”⁴⁸⁹, but naturally, the thin-skinned serial quitter soon “realized that I sucked... My dreams of becoming a professional skateboarder were over.”⁴⁹⁰ Presumably neglecting this original life goal, he wrote that at the age of 18 “getting a job [was] something I never thought about before in my life”⁴⁹¹ because “I never thought nor cared about money before I turned 18, because I was still living like a child, with my parents handling the money and giving me the things I needed.”⁴⁹² Now legally an adult, Rodger “soon realized that the older I became, the more it was expected of me if I didn’t go to college. To placate my mother, I started searching for jobs online every day, but I wasn’t able to find one that was suitable for me.”⁴⁹³ This was further complicated by Rodger’s snobbish belief that the jobs “available to me at the time were jobs I considered to be beneath me.”⁴⁹⁴ Because he was “an intellectual”⁴⁹⁵ who was “destined for greatness”⁴⁹⁶ he “would never perform a low-class service job.”⁴⁹⁷ In this way, Elliot Rodger, like Chapman, was truly a child of the *hyperreal* Information Age: destined for greatness, but at what?

Eventually, Rodger did compromise and take on 'low-class' jobs, albeit for short periods of time. He helped his father's friend Karl Champley build a staircase for his new house “every weekday for about three weeks”⁴⁹⁸ noting that though “construction work was lowly and laborious”⁴⁹⁹ this was “more like assisting a friend... in a private environment.”⁵⁰⁰ Even though “it turned out to be quite a pleasant experience”⁵⁰¹ and that, after finishing, Rodger “took a moment to admire the work we did”⁵⁰², he did not feel compelled to continue in construction. Nor did he care for his “second and last 'job”⁵⁰³ as a custodian who “to my horror and humiliation... had to clean offices and even the bathrooms.”⁵⁰⁴ Unsurprisingly, he decided “there was no way I would ever degrade myself to such a level. I felt like utter shit from even considering working at such a place. I only worked for a few hours while I thought about how to handle this foul situation... I called to announce that I was quitting.”⁵⁰⁵ The 'intellectual' Rodger was more taken by his mother's suggestion “that I should become a writer, because I had some talent in writing.”⁵⁰⁶ Without giving any consideration to his plot, characters, or style, he concocted a plan to “write an epic fantasy story that will be made into a movie, and I will

become rich from it”⁵⁰⁷ reasoning “being rich will definitely make me attractive enough to have a beautiful girlfriend.”⁵⁰⁸ Predictably, Rodger threw in the towel before making any real attempt.

Despite his repeated claims of superiority, in a rare moment of truth, Rodger admitted “Deep down, I've always known that I had no talents, and I've always tried not to think about it.”⁵⁰⁹ Having been accustomed to inheriting merits (e.g., social class, racial background) rather than earning them (e.g., making friends, charming girls), Rodger opted to play the lottery, and “...of course, didn't win. And neither would any of the tickets I buy after it...”⁵¹⁰ Routinely dropping classes at various colleges and universities because “...what was the point of going through college, getting a degree, and finding some mundane professional job afterwards if I could never experience the pleasure of girls along the way?”⁵¹¹, Rodger's prophecy became self-fulfilling. He was so convinced of the futility of pursuing goals that attaining them was necessarily impossible. The only thing he would succeed at in his adult life was becoming a rampage murderer, which requires little effort other than the capacity to hate.

Concluding Thoughts: Elliot Rodger

Table 23
Elliot Rodger: Selves and Strain

	Actual/Own	Ideal/Own	Homicidal Self	Post-Arrest Self
Sexuality	Ego-dystonic. Unable to form romantic and/or sexual relationship. Erotophobic.	Ego-syntonic. Steady sexual partner. Sexually-Active	Ego-syntonic. The destruction of unattainable objects of desire.	Resolved. Deceased.
Gender	Subordinated. 'Faggot', 'Pussy'. Gender-role strain.	Hegemonic. No gender-role strain	Sub-hegemonic. True Alpha Male . No gender-role strain.	Resolved. Deceased.
Class	Mertonian strain. Upper-middle-class.	Upper-class. Student sophisticate .	'I will be a God'	Resolved. Deceased.
Vocation	Student. Strain. 'Deep down, I've always known that I had no talents....'	Millionaire. No strain.	N/A	Resolved. Deceased.
Race	Ego-dystonic. Self-hating racist.	N/A	Ego-syntonic. Murdered Chinese roommates to resolve ego-dystonia.	Resolved. Deceased.
Notability	Ego-dystonic. Strain. 'I have craved... significance all my life...'	Ego-syntonic. 'I must be destined for greatness.'	Ego-syntonic. 'I must be destined for greatness.'	Resolved. Deceased.

Elliot Rodger's *communication dysfunctions* mirrored James Holmes' in that he rarely spoke to his peers, although where Holmes was aware that this was the cause of his social alienation, Rodger was utterly oblivious. In fact, without the insights of Philip Bloeser, Simon Astaire, and Lenny Shaw, it is entirely possible to watch Rodger's VLOGS without having the slightest clue that he never *once* approached a female. Rodger's anger was born from a rejection that never occurred except in his own mind, though given his bigoted, dependent, and banal personality, he was probably correct in anticipating rejection.

Like David Berkowitz, Rodger was of *subordinated masculinity*, friendless, alienated, and pathologically consumed by his lack of success with women. Yet, they sought to reconcile this problem of courtship by aspiring to different masculinities embedded within their *self-guides*. Berkowitz strived for *sub-hegemony* in his pre-homicidal *ideal/owns*, casting himself in the institutionalized Hero roles of volunteer fireman, auxiliary policeman, and soldier. When he could not live up to his *sub-hegemonic* ambitions, he sought the *hyperreal masculinity* of a demon-driven Monster. Rodger, who could never come close to being a *sub-hegemonic* 'brute' (even if he wanted to), instead looked for ways to achieve *hegemonic* masculinity through wealth, using social class to exceed others:

If I become a multi-millionaire, I would be able to walk on the beach with a beautiful girlfriend too, and my life would be complete [attainment of **Lotto Millionaire ideal/own**]. That was what I wanted. That was what I wished for in my future. As I've always believed, I am destined for great things. Becoming a multi-millionaire at a young age is what I am meant for.⁵¹²

Rodger spoke as if he was dispossessed lord always referring to Peter Rodger as 'father' and never 'dad' and decrying the denial of his perceived entitlements as eldest son. Hence, his affinity for the Ramsay Bolton *avatar*. Particularly, class superiority allowed Rodger to compensate for his inferior masculinity and maturity. Within the hierarchy of his self-hating racism, he was able to also claim supremacy over almost all minorities, because he felt socially reduced by his virginity. His unnecessary and brutal murder of three Chinese victims—stabbing Wang 15 times, Hong 25 times, and Chen 94 times⁵¹³—indicates extreme rage. As Rodger made no reference to them being sexually-active (his usual trigger), one is left to conclude that this fury was directed at their racial identity. There is little doubt that the mixed-race Rodger hated the Asian side of himself.

Still, it is of importance to note that when the curtain finally came down with *The Day of Retribution* video, Rodger the **True Alpha Male Avenger** was not protesting his financial or racial lot, as both were ultimately mere ways to justify his entitlement to women over other men. Instead, he raged against females, and more generally, the sex act which he coveted but lacked the social skills to facilitate. Pathologically insecure about the *sexual/gender* aspects of his personality, Rodger attempted to compensate by emphasizing the *class* and *racial* aspects of his *self*—a weak claim to *hegemonic* masculinity—only to find his perceived superiority did not automatically bring women flocking to his door. His response was *sub-hegemonic* violence.

This failure of normative heterosexual masculinity at virtually every level may be at least partially owing to what Rodger describes as “my father's absence from my life... I always looked up to him as a powerful and successful man.”⁵¹⁴ In another statement he proclaims “I tried to show [the website PUAHate.com] to my parents, to give them some sort dose of reality as to why I am so miserable... They have always had the delusion that everything is going well for me, *especially my father* [emphasis added].”⁵¹⁵ Instead of fatherly guidance, he was overindulged by his biological mother, who bought him expensive luxuries when he felt sad. Accordingly, Rodger was either completely dismissive of or startlingly clueless as to masculine conventions. For instance, one VLOG shows Rodger driving through the streets of Santa Barbara, smiling insincerely at the camera while bobbing his head to the rhythmic pulse of Whitney Houston's 1985 Dance-Pop hit “How Will I Know?”⁵¹⁶ The performative quality of the video, highly reminiscent of Magnotta, leads one to conclude that Rodger was trying to convince the viewer that he was enjoying life and/or make himself seem fun and desirable to women. But in doing so he inadvertently feminized himself. In another example, Rodger begins his 'Life is so unfair because girls dont [sic] want me' VLOG by proudly announcing he is “enjoying a nice vanilla latte”⁵¹⁷, before taking a sip, and proclaiming “oh yeah, that's nice. Makes me feel all pumped up.”⁵¹⁸ The notion that a vanilla latte—a stereotypically bourgeois sweetened female drink—could make a grown man “feel all pumped up”⁵¹⁹ is the equivalent of getting an alcohol buzz from a cooler. Regardless of the truth of Rodger's statement, it is not something a young man who has been subject to normative male socialization would typically advertise online. Worse still are his multiple non-self-conscious autobiographical admissions that he threw tantrums and crying well into adulthood.

The one normative masculine convention Rodger did unfortunately absorb was the notion

that 'real men' react to personal slights with violence. He distinguished himself from the other “men who are starved of sex”⁵²⁰ and “share my hatred of women”⁵²¹ on PUAhate.com by saying that “unlike me they would be too cowardly to act on it.”⁵²² As we have seen, he similarly attributed weakness to virginal friends who had a healthier outlook on their situation. Like Danny Rolling, Rodger finally cast himself as the *sub-hegemonic Avenger ideal/own* who would punish society for his life of misery and alienation. But where Rolling styled this *homicidal idea/own* in the fashion of the Outlaw *archetype*, Rodger, in his ultimate narcissism, reasoned that if human women did not wish to mate with him then it must be because he was greater than human: a “powerful god”⁵²³ in his own words, “punishing everyone I deem to be impure and depraved.”⁵²⁴ His choice of words and contradictory thoughts indicate that this was more a way of keeping his ego intact rather than a genuine *meta-delusion*, though we must remain open to the possibility. After all, in mythology and contemporary religion, a 'god' is the ultimate patriarch—the “superior one, the true alpha male”⁵²⁵ in Rodger's words—with hegemony over all men and women.

As Rodger elaborated on his personal struggles in clear language—he was both the most open and honest offender in this sample—his case acts as a decoder ring for the less comprehensible rants of Seung-Hui Cho: fellow college shooter and bi-furcated mass murderer detailed in the next case study.

Seung-Hui Cho: Charlatan Slaying Martyr-Prophet

Talismans: *Eric&Dylan!*, Holy Bible; Type: 1

Where socially-isolated student Elliot Rodger articulated his grievances literally—“since I hit puberty, I've been forced to endure an existence of loneliness, rejection and unfulfilled desires, all because girls have never been attracted to me... I'm still a virgin. It has been very torturous”⁵²⁶—Seung-Hui Cho expresses the same kinds of sentiments allegorically: “Committing emotional sodomy on me wasn't enough for you. Every single second wasted on your wanton hedonism and menacing sadism could have been used to prevent today. Ask yourselves, What was I doing all this time? All these months, hours, seconds.”⁵²⁷ Unfortunately, for this reason Cho's statements are frequently dismissed as the incoherent ramblings of a madman. This section will act as a decoder ring to reveal the similarities in the underlying

rationale between Seung-Hui Cho and Elliot Rodger.

Seung-Hui Cho: Failed Socialization and the formation and realization of the actual/own

Seung-Hui Cho was born in South Korea, and developed whooping cough and pneumonia when he was nine-months-old (*early sensori-motor*). At the age of three, he underwent a medical procedure related to a heart murmur which reportedly left him traumatized and afraid of being touched.⁵²⁸ In 1992, at the age of eight, he emigrated with his family to the United States. The Chos eventually settled in Centreville, North Virginia where they worked in dry cleaning. Even before leaving South Korea, Cho's *communication dysfunctions* were obvious to both his immediate and extended family. His great aunt revealed "When I told his mother that he was a good boy, quiet but well behaved, she said she would rather have him respond to her when talked to than be good and meek."⁵²⁹ An uncle corroborated these claims: "The kid didn't say much and didn't mix with other children... Yes sir was about all you could get from him."⁵³⁰

Attending Poplar Elementary School in Chantilly, Cho was unresponsive to teachers and generally did not talk in class. Whenever he did speak he was reportedly mocked by other students for his poor English and unusual voice.⁵³¹ Despite Cho's refusal to discuss bullying, his sister often witnessed other students taunting him in the hallways.⁵³² Where they had initially attributed his silence to problems with the English language, the teachers at Poplar Elementary increasingly formed the opinion that its etiology ran much deeper. At home, Cho's shyness increased and whenever he was asked to greet a visitor he would "become pale, freeze, and sometimes cry."⁵³³

As middle school approached, the Chos decided to enroll their son in counseling. Along with art therapy, he was subjected to a number of tests. Consistent with Chapman, Berkowitz, Ireland, Rolling, and Rodger, "Cho was diagnosed as being immature for his real age. He acted and behaved as if he were a younger child"⁵³⁴ though "his tested IQ was above average."⁵³⁵ In Grade 8, Cho began to show "symptoms of depression"⁵³⁶ and his counsellor convinced him to sign a contract promising to notify his parents or somebody at school if he was experiencing suicidal or homicidal thoughts.

One month later, Cho encountered his homicidal *talisman* when news of the 1999 Columbine High School shootings perpetrated by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold shocked the nation. When he wrote a paper for class stating that he wished to "repeat Columbine"⁵³⁷, his

family was notified, and he was sent for psychiatric evaluation. Cho was determined to be suffering from “major depression: single episode”⁵³⁸ and an anxiety disorder known as “selective mutism”⁵³⁹—a form of severe shyness which compels a person to remain silent when they are socially expected to speak. Cho's *communication dysfunctions* only worsened in Westfield High School, although with the help of a special education program, he was able to obtain Honors grades. Achieving a 620 SAT score in math, he was admitted to Virginia Tech, his college of choice, where he went to live and study far from the stabilizing influence of his family.

Unsurprisingly, this 'selective mutism' continued at Virginia Tech. According to Cho's roommate, Karan Grewal, Cho “was expressionless... as he always was... I don't think he ever looked anybody in the eye. None of us ever had a conversation with him... It was weird that he never spoke but we'd all got used to it... If you talked to him, he would stare down at his lap.”⁵⁴⁰ Cho's taciturnity was so extreme that Grewal “never saw him with anyone else and I only realised he knew English when I saw him typing quickly on his computer.”⁵⁴¹ Another roommate, Joseph Aust, echoed Grewal's observations: “He pretty much never talked at all... I tried to make conversation with him earlier in the year... He gave one-word answers. He pretty much never looked me in the eye.”⁵⁴² Repeatedly listening to the alternative rock song “Shine” by Collective Soul, Cho reportedly scrawled a passage of lyrics from the song on his dormitory wall: “Teach me how to speak; Teach me how to share; Teach me where to go.”⁵⁴³

Cho's *actual/own self* mirrored Elliot Rodger's and Luka Magnotta's in his persecution complex and feelings of being maliciously excluded. However, rather than emphasizing his physical attractiveness and/or cultural superiority, Cho—perhaps as a result of his religious upbringing⁵⁴⁴—saw himself instead as being more genuine and morally superior. Before his rampage, he made frequent reference to “the Weak, the Defenseless, and the Innocent Children of all ages”⁵⁴⁵ who he sometimes referred to as “us.”⁵⁴⁶ The use of the term “children of all ages”⁵⁴⁷ reveals that he is not speaking of children in the biological or chronological sense, but God's children. Cho's *actual/own* was the **Weak, Defenseless, and Innocent Child of God**.

Seung-Hui Cho: Pre-Homicidal Ideal/Own Selves and Negative Emotionality

As Cho was pathologically uncommunicative before his homicidal transformation, it is difficult to determine whether his secondary education represented a striving towards a genuine *ideal/own* or simply a path placed before him. There was a brief period in late 2004 when he

sought to become a **Professional Writer** [*ideal/own self*], changed his major to English, and sent a query letter to a publishing house. However, upon receiving a letter notifying him that his book proposal had been rejected in Spring 2005, “his sister noticed that he seemed to have lost interest in writing... was even more withdrawn... [and] seemed to not have any interest in his own future.”⁵⁴⁸ According to the state of Virginia's *Mass Shootings at Virginia Tech: Addendum to the Report of the Review Panel* the rejection “seemed to depress him.”⁵⁴⁹ In December of that same year, Cho was diagnosed with a “depressive disorder”⁵⁵⁰. Fortunately, it isn't necessary to confirm the existence of a pre-homicidal *ideal/own self*, as Cho's words immediately before the Virginia Tech massacre confirm his dejection-related emotions and his decision to narrow the discrepancy between his **Weak, Defenseless, and Innocent Child of God** *actual/own* and his *homicidal ideal/own*. Speaking of the emotional “pain”⁵⁵¹ he endured, Cho laments about “the happiness I could have had mingling among you hedonists...”⁵⁵² Having proclaimed “I might as well kill myself”⁵⁵³, Cho, who would commit suicide after his rampage, announced “you thought it was one pathetic, void life that you were extinguishing. Thanks to you, I die, like Jesus Christ, to inspire generations of the Weak and Defenseless people.”⁵⁵⁴

In the imaginatively titled *Story 2* penned in 2006, he wrote of the protagonist, Bud, as “thinking about his life up until the current moment—All the emotional and mental abuse he has endured, feelings of invisibility, inadequacy, unworthiness, the bombardment and the thrashing of scornful derisions... He wants no more of the hellish torment of his intrinsically tragic life.”⁵⁵⁵ Reinforcing this perception of being invisible, he later added “eyes glance at Bud but without the glint of recognition.”⁵⁵⁶ As with most of our offenders, Cho lacked any *stake in conformity* which would prevent him from acting on his homicidal impulses:

As the time approached, I wished for a last minute miracle and discard [sic] this mission you've given me... But when the time came, I did it. I had to. What other choices did you give me?... When you're raped of everything, you got nothing to lose.⁵⁵⁷

The concept of rampage murder as a 'mission' is similar to James Holmes'. As if to reinforce the military aspect of this, both would sport paramilitary regalia during the commission of their crimes [SAOS].

Seung-Hui Cho: Renegotiated Homicidal ideal/own

Cho's *homicidal ideal/own self* "Ax Ishmael...the Anti-Terrorist of America"⁵⁵⁸ was that of a **Charlatan Slaying Martyr-Prophet**. Having once been one of the "Weak and Defenseless people"⁵⁵⁹, he now sought to rise from their ranks "like Moses"⁵⁶⁰ and "spread the sea and lead my people—the Weak, the Defenseless, and the Innocent Children of all ages that you fucked and will always try to fuck—to eternal freedom"⁵⁶¹. His manner of doing this would be violent retaliation for "committing emotional sodomy on me"⁵⁶², adding that "like Easter [Monday]"⁵⁶³ which occurred exactly one week before the murders, the day of the massacre would "be a day of rebirth"⁵⁶⁴. Cho's fellow "martyrs"⁵⁶⁵ included Columbine High School shooters "Eric [Harris] and Dylan [Klebold]"⁵⁶⁶ who he declared sacrificed their "lives to fuck you thousand folds for what you Apostles of Sin have done to us."⁵⁶⁷ The Columbine High School gunmen remained Cho's primary *talisman*, in fact his "revolution of the Children that you fucked"⁵⁶⁸ was originally articulated by Harris and Klebold in the so-called 'basement tapes' in which they talk about "starting a revolution of the dispossessed"⁵⁶⁹, with Harris boasting "We're going to kick-start a revolution..."⁵⁷⁰ Cho emulated Harris and Klebold in style and dress as will be further explored in Chapter 4. In the end, Seung-Hui Cho proved to be a far more efficient killer than both Harris and Klebold combined, murdering 32 students and wounding 17 others with semi-automatic pistols in a bifurcated mass murder occurring between 7:15-10:00 a.m. on April 16, 2007 at Virginia Tech. But who were these "Apostles of Sin" the **Charlatan Slaying Martyr-Prophet** railed against?

Seung-Hui Cho: Victimology

Seung-Hui Cho's explanations for his killing rampage are often dismissed because his victims appear to have been selected at random:

Table 24

Seung-Hui Cho Victimology

Victim Name	Age	Race	Gender	Profession	Date victimized	Where
Ryan Clark	22	Black	Male	Student in Psych/ Biology/English	April 16, 2007	West Ambler Johnston Hall
Emily Hilscher	19	White	Female	Student in Animal Sciences	April 16, 2007	West Ambler Johnston Hall
Minal Panchal	26	South Asian	Female	Student in Architecture	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
G. V. Loganathan	53	South Asian	Female	Professor of Engineering	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Jarrett Lane	22	White	Male	Student in Civil Engineering	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Brian Bluhm	25	White	Male	Student in Civil Engineering	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Matthew Gwaltney	24	White	Male	Student in Environmental Engineering	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Jeremy Herbstritt	27	White	Male	Student in Civil Engineering	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Partahi Lumbantoruan	34	East Asian	Male	Student in Civil Engineering	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Daniel O'Neill	22	White	Male	Student in Environmental Engineering	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Juan Ortiz-Ortiz	26	Hispanic	Male	Student in Civil Engineering	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Julia Pryde	23	White	Female	Student in Biological Systems Engineering	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Waleed Shaalan	32	Middle- Eastern	Male	Student in Civil Engineering	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Jamie Bishop	35	White	Male	German instructor	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Lauren McCain	20	Native American	Female	Student in International Studies	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Michael Pohle Jr.	23	White	Male	Student in Biological Sciences	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Maxine Turner	22	White	Female	Student in Chemical Engineering	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Nicole White	20	White	Female	Student in International Studies	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall

Liviu Librescu	76	White	Male	Professor of Engineering	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Jocelyne Couture-Nowak	49	White	Female	Professor of French	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Austin Cloyd	18	White	Female	Student in International Studies/French	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Daniel Perez Cueva	21	Hispanic	Male	Student in International Studies	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Caitlin Hammaren	19	White	Female	Student in International Studies/French	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Rachael Hill	18	White	Female	Student in Biological Sciences	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Matthew La Porte	20	White	Male	Student in Political Science	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Henry Lee	20	East Asian	Male	Student in Computer Engineering	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Erin Peterson	18	Black	Female	Student in International Studies	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Mary KareRead	19	East Asian	Female	Student in Interdisciplinary Studies	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Reema Samaha	18	Middle-Eastern	Female	Student in Urban Planning	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Leslie Sherman	20	White	Female	Student in History/International Studies	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall
Kevin Granata	45	White	Male	Professor of Engineering	April 16, 2007	Norris Hall

Much like Elliot Rodger, Cho's victimology was extremely inclusive, but nevertheless symbolic. As he literally had no friends, Cho viewed enough of the people at Virginia Tech as "hedonists"⁵⁷¹, "Christian Nazis"⁵⁷², "Descendants of Satan"⁵⁷³, "Apostles of Sin"⁵⁷⁴, "sadistic snobs"⁵⁷⁵, "Sinners"⁵⁷⁶, "Spillers of Blood"⁵⁷⁷, "American al-Qaeda"⁵⁷⁸, "Lovers of Terrorism"⁵⁷⁹, "Descendants of Satan Disguised as Devout Christians"⁵⁸⁰, "Charlatans"⁵⁸¹, "Rapists"⁵⁸², "Sadists"⁵⁸³, "Lifetakers"⁵⁸⁴, "Sadistic Charlatans"⁵⁸⁵, and "Masqueraded Democratic Terrorists"⁵⁸⁶ to justify shooting them indiscriminately [*mj*]. Whether he viewed the five professors he murdered similarly or if they were merely collateral damage in his personal

war against the student population is indeterminable. Again, on the surface these descriptions may seem “incoherent”⁵⁸⁷, but listening to his 'rants' with the poetic ear identifies several narrative themes which bind them together conceptually.

Table 25

Decoding Cho's Communications

References to violence/violent groups	References to sin/evil	References to deceit
X	Hedonists	X
Nazis	X	X
X	Descendants of Satan	X
X	Apostles of Sin	X
Sadistic	X	X
X	Sinners	X
Spillers of Blood	X	X
al-Qaeda	X	X
Terrorism	X	X
X	Descendants of Satan	Disguised as Devout Christians
X	X	Charlatans
Rapists	X	X
Sadists	X	X
Lifetakers	X	X
Sadistic	X	Charlatans
Terrorists	X	Masqueraded

As Table 25 reveals, all of the terms Cho uses to describe his victims fall into at least one of three categories with negative associations: *violence*, *sin/evil*, and *deceit*. The words 'Christian', 'Snobs', 'American', 'Lovers', and 'Democratic' lend context to the negative terms. So, although the victims are ostensibly 'Christian', 'American', or 'Democratic', to Cho they are simply American versions of Nazis and terrorists. This either invalidates their Christian, American, or Democratic character, or inverts it, so that it becomes insidious. For instance, Christianity ceases to be benevolent if it is propagated in the fascistic manner connoted by the term 'Nazis.' 'Lovers' when used in the sentence 'Lovers of Terrorism' or 'Lovers of Sadism' obviously does nothing to

detract from the negativity, and 'Snobs' next to the word 'Sadistic' either means that the victim is sadistic and snobbish, or sadistic through snobbery.

With unintentional irony, Cho places himself in opposition to these labels by comparing himself to history's most famous persecuted victim, "Jesus Christ"⁵⁸⁸, and "Moses"⁵⁸⁹ the Biblical figure who declared "You Shall Not Murder" on Mount Sinai. If we take the characters "Spanky", "Ax", and "Bud" in Cho's stories as being self-representations—and they certainly appear to be—we gain even further insight into the way Cho perceived his victims.

In *Story 2*, Bud beholds his fellow students and concludes "I hate all these frauds."⁵⁹⁰ With Mark Chapman's hatred of 'phonies', this theme is all too familiar. Fellow co-ed murderer, Edmund Emil Kemper III, discussed earlier in this work as a *covert expressive/transformational* offender, once similarly stated:

I consider it a very phony society, a very phony world, where people are too busy copping out to so many things to exist and fit into a group that they had lost sight of their individual aims and goals. I had become completely lost, and very bitter about what I considered these phony values and phony existence...⁵⁹¹

Cho's writings in *Story 2* portray the day-to-day superficiality which Bud encounters, providing us with valuable insight into the author's own experiences: "[A] fun-natured teacher ecstatically lectures making social and political jokes occasionally. The class laughs. Everyone is smiling and laughing as if they're in heaven-on-earth, something magical and enchanting about all the people's intrinsic nature that bud [sic] will never experience."⁵⁹² As should be evident by now, Cho's conception of the world as phony is not entirely incorrect. Goffman observed that social-life is inherently performed. In a social setting, individuals act out *line*—expressions of their perspective of a given situation, the perspective of others, and the way the individual is seen by others. For somebody with Cho's *communication dysfunctions*, the theatrical nature of social interaction could be judged fake and dismissed, with everyone taking part in it deemed "phonies."⁵⁹³ Bud's perception of college life is one riddled with characters enacting social clichés. He sees

oversized football players acting, talking, and walking like rappers making obnoxious commotions and comments that they should keep to themselves. Cheerleaders in show uniforms gossiping in high-pitched tone with their noses slightly pointed to the sky and severe makeup on their faces. Nerd-types carrying stacks of books, wearing obscene pink

wrinkle-free shirts, and talking about the upcoming state chess championship.⁵⁹⁴

Essentially, stereotypical representations of *sub-hegemonic masculinity*, *emphasized femininity*, and *subordinated masculinity* which the isolated Cho sought to destroy. Like Berkowitz, Rolling, and Rodger, he would do so because they offered no place for him among their ranks, *killing up*.

Seung-Hui Cho: Post-Spree Self

For Seung-Hui Cho, the closing of the gap between *actual/own* and renegotiated *ideal/own homicidal self* culminated with his suicide. His unified self, the **Charlatan Slaying Martyr-Prophet**, had been designed to live on forever in a state of personal harmony and eternal triumph through the immortalizing mediums of television and the Internet. Rather than depicting an awkward outcast, his final video portrayals would present a new man—one of violence, posing like a movie hero with firearms and knives, and cryptically protesting a lifetime of perceived injustices.

Yet, Cho may have genuinely believed that his self-sacrifice would usher in a revolution of the socially excluded rising up against the socially included. His final statements delivered to NBC was nothing short of a call to arms:

All of you who have ever been fucked by these Descendants of Satan Disguised as Devout Christians, all of you who have went through what I went through, all of you who have felt what I have felt in my life, all of you who have suffered the wrath of these Democratic Terrorists, all of you who have been beaten, humiliated, and crucified—Children of Ishmael, Crusaders of Anti-Terrorism, my Jesus Christ Brothers and Sisters—you're in my heart. In life and death and spirit. We'll soon be together. Let the revolution begin!⁵⁹⁵

Like Elliot Rodger and The Columbine High School shooters, Cho sought to transform from flesh and blood to a corporeally dead but eternal *talisman* for future murderers to emulate.

Seung-Hui Cho: Sexual/Gender Aspects

There is no evidence of problems related to Cho's gender, but he was obviously unhappy with his sex life, which inevitably feeds into one's gender self-concept. Upon arriving at Virginia Tech, he informed his roommates that he had a girlfriend, Jelly: a space-travelling super model who

existed in his imagination. Apparently, she referred to him as Spanky. Cho once asked roommate Andy Koch to leave their suite because Jelly was supposedly visiting.⁵⁹⁶ This 'invisible sex partner' is reminiscent of David Berkowitz's fantasy relationship with Donna Lauria's spirit, and Elliot Rodger's "hot blonde-haired"⁵⁹⁷ "imaginary girlfriend"⁵⁹⁸ who he had "passionate sex with"⁵⁹⁹ in his "elaborate fantasies."⁶⁰⁰ Jelly also appeared in one of Cho's creative writing stories—*Spanky's Big Adventure*—as the girlfriend of the protagonist Spanky (Cho).⁶⁰¹ Another story, *Man-Bitches* features a relationship between a character with Cho's alias "Ax" and his "super-hot girlfriend"⁶⁰² Jen. In a third piece of writing, Cho tells the tale of Bud who wears "a strappy black vest with many pockets, a black hat, a [sic] large dark sunglasses"⁶⁰³ and who tries to "kill every god damn person in this damn school".⁶⁰⁴ The story concludes when Bud meets a "girl with gothic makeups [sic] and clothes"⁶⁰⁵ who encourages him to commit a massacre so they can "fight to claim their deserving throne."⁶⁰⁶

By presenting fictional representations of himself next to admiring young females in his stories, it is clear that Cho was living out fantasy relationships on paper. In reality, the closest he came to touching a female student was photographing their legs under his desk. Cho was also complicit in numerous stalking incidents. In the first case, he sent unwanted phone calls and Internet communications to student Jennifer Nelson. Knocking on Nelson's door at West Ambler Johnston residence hall, Cho introduced himself as "question mark."⁶⁰⁷ On November 27, 2005, Nelson reported him to the Virginia Tech Police Department, but refused to press charges. A second incident came to the attention of Resident Advisors on December 6. Christina Lillizu reported that she had received profane and unsolicited instant messages from an unknown person using an alias. On a third occasion, Cho entered East Campbell residence hall and went to the room of Margaret Bowman, whose carpet he had repeatedly stabbed during a party earlier that fall. Prior to his unannounced visit, Bowman had received mysterious self-deprecating comments on her Facebook page. When she asked the poster his name, he replied, "I do not know who I am"⁶⁰⁸—tantamount to saying 'question mark' and wholly consistent with the crises of *self* plaguing our ETV offenders. Moreover, Cho wrote a message to Bowman on the whiteboard outside her room quoting Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*: "By a name I know not how to tell thee who I am. My name, dear Saint, is hateful to myself. Because it is an enemy to thee. Had I it written I would tear the word."⁶⁰⁹ A plausible interpretation of this is that Cho hates himself because his inability to date transforms women from potential friends and mates into 'enemies.'

These incidents were reported to the campus police on December 12.

Clearly, Cho desired young women, but was so clumsy in his courtship attempts that he adapted through criminal means. According to some sources, he had tried to start a relationship with and been rejected by his first victim, Emily Hilscher.⁶¹⁰ In his poem *a boy named Loser*, Cho wrote: “In LOSER's little mind, he brings over a girl to this house. Only if he could do that in this real world.”⁶¹¹ As there is no evidence that Cho used drugs or alcohol, his utterance “oh the happiness I could have had mingling among you hedonists”⁶¹² likely expresses rage about being excluded from romantic and/or sexual activities. It bears a notable resemblance to Elliot Rodger's comment on “the hedonistic scum who enjoyed lives of pleasure that they don't deserve... I can't have it...”⁶¹³ Like Berkowitz and Rodger, Cho paradoxically attached a moral stigma to sexuality. On a rare occasion when he decided to speak to a roommate regarding why he had visited Jennifer Nelson's room, Cho “said that he wanted to go up there and look her in the eyes to see how cool she was because that's the only way he could tell how cool she was... And, when he looked in her eyes, he said that he saw promiscuity.”⁶¹⁴ Here, like Chapman and Berkowitz, Cho begins to use religion to compensate for his masculine shortcomings.

Seung-Hui Cho: Religious/Philosophical Aspects

Unlike the vast majority of Asian families in their community, the Chos did not attend a major Korean-language church, instead choosing a small house of worship on the outskirts of town.⁶¹⁵ There is no record indicating whether or not Seung-Hui Cho regularly went to church, however the video statements he mailed to NBC mid-rampage convey strong religious themes. Though multiple websites repeat the misconception that Cho railed against his parents' Christian faith^{lllllllll}, in reality he drew heavily from the Holy Bible *talisman* to interpret his victims' characters as well as his identity in relation to them.

When considered in isolation, Cho's use of the term “Christian Nazis”⁶¹⁶ seems to imply that he saw all Christians as right-wing authoritarians. However, he also referred to “Descendants of Satan”⁶¹⁷, “Apostles of Sin”⁶¹⁸, “Sinners”⁶¹⁹, and most importantly, “Descendants of Satan Disguised as Devout Christians.”⁶²⁰ Thus, the implication is not that all Christians are bad—Cho even compared himself to Moses and Jesus Christ. Rather, he took issue

^{lllllllll} For instance, see the websites http://www.conservapedia.com/Seung-Hui_Cho, <http://murderpedia.org/male.C/c/cho-seung-hui.htm>, http://serialkillers.wikia.com/wiki/Seung-Hui_Cho

with people he perceived as sinful but masquerading as Christians: “Do they wanna fuck us and pretend to be devout Christians?... Do they wanna perpetrate endless sessions of crucifixions and holocausts on our innocent life then go to church and praise the Lord and Jesus? Do they wanna fuck us and pretend to be Jesus Christ?”⁶²¹

Instead, Cho saw himself and those who similarly suffer as the true Christians, because like Christ, they are persecuted:

“I say *we're* [emphasis added] the Jesus Christs, my Brothers, Sisters, and Children. Jesus Christ exists in us all: Ax Jesus Christ, John Jesus Christ, Jane Jesus Christ, Seung Jesus Christ, Carlos Jesus Christ, Hakeem Jesus Christ, Mohammad Jesus Christ, Zhang Jesus Christ, Oliver Jesus Christ, Elizabeth Jesus Christ, Vladimir Jesus Christ... I say there is no pain *they* [emphasis added] can inflict on us that they haven't already inflicted.”⁶²²

Cho's call to “take up the cross, Children of Ishmael, take up our guns and knives and any sharp objects, and take no prisoners and spare no lives until our last breath”⁶²³ is ultimately best characterized as a Crusade against a perceived heathen sect.^{mmmmmmmmmm} Drawing from the political and media discourse of post-9/11 America, he proclaims “You may stand steadfast on the battlefield of your life's dedication to eternal terrorism American Al-Qaeda, but the Children that you have fucked will rise. By the power greater than God we will hunt you down, you Lovers of Terrorism, and we will kill you.”⁶²⁴ It is important to clarify that Cho did not *literally* believe his victims were members of Al-Qaeda. This is evident in his reference to “Masqueraded Democratic Terrorists who commit unforgivable acts of treason against mankind.”⁶²⁵ Cho speaks of a form of terrorism which “vandalized my heart, raped my soul, and torched my conscious again and again”⁶²⁶ via social exclusion. Outcasts like Cho are expected to either suffer in perpetuity or commit suicide and quickly disappear from history, a reality of which he was all too aware and sought to counteract: “You thought it was one pathetic, void life that you were extinguishing... by destroying you, by giving you pain, we attempt to show you responsibilities and meanings of other people's lives.”⁶²⁷ When Cho rhetorically asked “Don't you just wish you finished me off when you had the chance? Don't you just wish you killed me?”⁶²⁸ he was effectively saying that if society was content to let him die, they should have caused his demise

^{mmmmmmmmmm} It is amusing to contemplate what the social and political reaction to this diatribe would have been if Cho had used Islamic terminology rather than Christian. One can safely assume it would have been presented as a sinister example of homegrown terrorism rather than being dismissed as the rantings of a madman.

directly before he had a chance to strike back.

Though his statement “for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction... All the shit you've given me, right back at you with hollow points”⁶²⁹ could be compared to the Old Testament's eye-for-an-eye, Cho did not seek moral justification for his violence in religious texts. Instead, he paradoxically conceived of it as teaching empathy by inflicting suffering: “You have never felt a single ounce of pain your whole life, thus... by destroying we create. *We*

create the feelings in you of what it is like to be the victim, what it is like to be fucked and destroyed [emphasis added]. Because of your annihilations, we create and raise new breeds of Children who will show you fuckers what you have done to us.”⁶³⁰ Here is an example of *secondary* and *tertiary* transformation (see Chapter 4) in which the victims are edified and 'improved' by annihilation or injury, and the rest of the world is forced to ponder its treatment of 'invisible' people like Seung-Hui Cho.

Seung-Hui Cho: Class Aspects

Cho joins Mark David Chapman and Elliot Rodger as one of the most class-conscious offenders in this sample. However, where the middle-class Chapman dreamed of near unattainable wealth and the upper-middle-class Rodger was startlingly deluded as to just how financially well-off he actually was, Cho hailed from a genuinely humble working-class family. Before moving to the United States, his father had owned a used bookstore in Seoul. According to their Korean landlord, Lim Bong-ae: “they lived a poor life... While emigrating, (Cho's father) said they were going to America because it is difficult to live here and that it's better to live in a place where he is unknown.”⁶³¹ Yet, after 15 years of hard-grit in America, Cho's father continued to work from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. as a presser at a dry cleaner's, prompting his mother to take a job at a high school cafeteria in order to secure medical insurance for her family. They lived in a row house.

While viewing himself and those like him as “poor”⁶³², Cho derided his victims as “bratty, snobby kids”⁶³³ who ate “caviar”⁶³⁴, drank “cognac”⁶³⁵ and who stole “from the Poor and the Weak...in order to gratify [their] fucking pride and hedonism.”⁶³⁶ In reference to his perceived persecution by them he rhetorically asked them if “your two million dollar house wasn't enough? Your BMW wasn't enough? Your inheritances weren't enough?... What are you going to do with the blood money? Buy a new Mercedes?... The fat surpluses that you roll on everyday aren't enough?”⁶³⁷ Once more, Leyton's statement that multiple murderers have

“enthusiastically embraced the established order only to discover that it offers them no place they can endure”⁶³⁸ resounds. While protesting their indulgence, Cho hypocritically pined for “the happiness I could have had mingling among you hedonists, being counted as one of you.”⁶³⁹ By stating “every single second wasted on your wanton hedonism and menacing sadism could have been used to prevent today”⁶⁴⁰, Cho was essentially saying that if he had been included in the perceived debauchery he would not have resorted to murder. He was defined by the same victim-envy as Chapman, Berkowitz, Rolling, and Rodger—*expressive/transformational* offenders who *kill up*. In several of Cho's stories, the protagonist comes into money and those who once derided him, including teachers and students, suddenly become sycophantic. This paradigm is consistent with his view of society as being full of phonies and that money facilitates social inclusion.

Seung-Hui Cho: Vocational Aspects

There is no mention of Cho ever being employed. Immediately after leaving high school he began attending Virginia Tech as a student. Still, like Holmes and Rodger, he effectively dropped out of school in the Spring semester of 2007.⁶⁴¹

Seung-Hui Cho: Concluding Thoughts

Table 26

Seung-Hui Cho: Selves and Strain

	Actual/Own	Ideal/Own	Homicidal Self	Post-Arrest Self
Sexuality	Ego-Dystonic. Virginal.	Ego-syntonic. Girlfriend.	Killed female he desired.	Resolved. Suicide.
Gender	Subordinated. 'Mocked by other students for his poor English and unusual voice.' Gender-role strain.	N/A	Sub-hegemonic. No gender-role strain.	Resolved. Suicide.
Religion/Philosophy	Christian	Christian	Becomes self-styled prophet	Resolved. Suicide.
Class	Mertonian strain. Working-class.	Upper-class.	Classless.	Resolved. Suicide.
Vocation	Unstable student.	Pro writer.	N/A	Resolved. Suicide.
Notability	Ego-dystonic. Mertonian strain.	Ego syntonic. Published author.	Ego-syntonic. 'I die, like Jesus Christ, to inspire generations of the Weak'	Resolved. Suicide.

In many ways, Seung-Hui Cho was a less articulate Elliot Rodger whose anger stemmed more from general social alienation than perceived female rejection, although the latter was still a significant factor. Ultimately, he wished to be included, but did not possess the necessary social skills, becoming resentful in his dejection-related emotions. Unable to admit, or perhaps even understand, that his *actual self* was a menacing character whose presence intimidated fellow students, Cho instead saw himself as **Weak, Defenseless, and Innocent Child of God**—one of many proverbial Jews oppressed by the pharaoh or early Christians persecuted by the Romans. He viewed the social hierarchy of the 'popular' and 'unpopular' through this religious lens. While Rodger re-purposed himself as a 'god' exacting arbitrary vengeance for his personal pleasure, Cho cast himself in the mold of the prophetic 'Ax Ishmael' whose homicidal self-sacrifice would serve as a *talisman* for allegorical “Brothers, Sisters, and Children”⁶⁴²: the ostracized “Jesus Christs”⁶⁴³ of the future who would look to his example as he had looked to *Eric&Dylan!*.ⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿ This self-conceptualization as a Christ-like figure played into his fixation with social class. In the Holy Bible *talisman*, the Christ *avatar* preaches anti-materialism and humility. Hailing from a poor family, virginal and at the extreme ends of non-interaction, it is easy to see how Cho came to view himself as “Seung Jesus Christ”⁶⁴⁴ compared to more outgoing, sexually-active students from middle-class families—those “bratty, snobby kids”⁶⁴⁵ who drove luxury cars and dined on 'caviar' and 'cognac'—conceiving of them as “Descendants of Satan Disguised as Devout Christians.”⁶⁴⁶ This allowed his doctrines to overlap with those of his heroes Harris and Klebold who reportedly asked several students if they were 'Christian' before shooting them,⁶⁴⁷ even though Cho was clearly religiously inclined himself. In essence, his was a homicidal enactment of the 'no true Scotsman' logical fallacy. He was the 'real Christian' ridding the world of 'false Christians.'

Like Rodger, he did not see his murders as a choice, but actions society had forced him to perpetrate reluctantly: “As the time approached, I wished for a last minute miracle and discard [sic] *this mission you've given me* [emphasis added]... But when the time came, I did it. I had to.”⁶⁴⁸ For Cho, the option of continuing existence as a sexless, friendless, and ignored *subordinated masculinity* was not an option whatsoever, and his fellow students were completely responsible. At first, his targeting of males and females of all ages and ethnicities makes his

ⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿⁿ In Chapter 4, we saw how Cho even emulated *Eric&Dylan's* homicidal garb.

victimology appear non-symbolic, but considering he was asocial to the point where his own roommates didn't even know he spoke English, it is obvious that his concept of other people's social lives would have been guesswork. Thus, *every* other student was an 'apostle of sin' or a 'sadistic charlatan.'⁶⁴⁹ Like Chapman, Cho was acting out an archetypal Hero narrative⁶⁵⁰—a young man reluctantly forced to journey into chaos to die slaying the “Masqueraded Democratic Terrorists”⁶⁵¹ (Chapman's 'phonies') who “perpetrate endless sessions of crucifixions and holocausts on our innocent life [and who]... fuck us and pretend to be Jesus Christ...”⁶⁵² in order to “spread the sea and lead my people—the Weak, the Defenseless, and the Innocent Children of all ages that you fucked and will always try to fuck—to eternal freedom [Chapman's catching of the innocent children in the rye].”⁶⁵³ The Virginia Tech mass murder was thus a misguided *subordinated* man's attempt to wage a moral war which would culminate in the “rebirth”⁶⁵⁴ of himself as *sub-hegemonic* Hero and the decadent landscape around him.⁶⁵⁵ At least that's how he coloured it, for like Chapman and Rodger, his motivation was envy: the resentful destruction of that which he could never become or possess. The fact that he purposely targeted student Emily Hilscher, a love interest, before going on his rampage is revealing. While being 'normal' was unattainable for Cho, his childhood exposure to the *Eric&Dylan!* talisman demonstrated he could still be *something*. One only had to follow the cultural script of the school shooter⁶⁵⁶, murder people en masse, and send hyperbolic communications to the media. Growing up, flashy images on screens had been Cho's only companions, and with his suicide he would join the *hyperreal* canon as an immortalized simulacrum: 'realer' in death than in life.

In the 10 years since the Virginia Tech massacre, Cho has endured as a canonical school shooter in the public discourse, second only to The Columbine High shooters, and likely due to his unrivaled body count. Yet despite a spike in bomb and rampage murder threats in the days following his killing spree, Cho himself seems to have been abandoned as a *talisman* for prodigal school shooters. One suspects the allure of *Eric&Dylan!* stems from the efficacy of their homicidal expressions. Cho, with his flat affect, monotone voice, and cryptic diatribes^{ooooooooo}, immediately comes across as mentally ill rather than a paragon of willful *sub-hegemonic* vengeance against an unjust society.

^{ooooooooo} His Asian racial background may also be a factor here.

Endnotes

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- 5 Mellor, 2016e.
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- 17 Croaker Queen, 2015, May 29. Day 21 (part 5)
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- 20 Collman, 2015, September 10.
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- 35 Holmes, 2012, p. 38.
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- 40 Croaker Queen, 2015, March 29. Day 21 (part 3).
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 - 100 Croaker Queen, 2015, May 29. Day 21 (part 5).
 - 101 Croaker Queen, 2015, May 29. Day 21 (part 5).
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 - 103 Croaker Queen, 2015, May 29. Day 21 (part 5).
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254 Croaker Queen, 2015, June 1. Day 22 (part 2).
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256 Croaker Queen, 2015, June 3. Day 24 (part 4).
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