

The Impacts of Othering on the Hybrids and Their Coping Mechanisms in *Tokyo Ghoul*

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the impacts of othering on human-ghoul hybrids in *Tokyo Ghoul* and the coping mechanisms they develop to deal with the impacts. The topic was chosen because the text's plot is directly driven by the impacts of othering. The applied concepts are taken from Said's "othering", Bhabha's mimicry, hybridity & ambivalence, and Glissant's rhizomatic identity. The main impacts of othering are alienation and aggression. Alienation forces hybrids into a normless state, in which they are powerless. They become more aggressive to resist threats posed by humans and ghouls. The main coping mechanism developed by the hybrids is to build identities that mimic the pure parties. In conclusion, the hybrids experience othering. Therefore, they are alienated and are forced to become aggressive to resist the othering. The aforementioned factors impact the hybrids negatively. Thus, they cope by mimicking the norms of the "self" to develop rhizomatic identities.

Keywords: aggression, alienation, hybridity, othering, rhizomatic identity

INTRODUCTION

Manga refers to Japanese comics that began developing in the late 19th century (Pagan, 2018). It tells stories through some illustrated panels and pages. Unlike western comics, which are read from left to right, manga are read from right to left. A *manga's* plot is differentiated by two main things: the audience demographic and the story's genre(s). The audience demographic is separated into four main categories. The first is *shōnen* (literally 'young boy'), like Oda Eiichiro's *One Piece* which is an action-adventure manga aimed at teenage boys between the ages of 12 to 17. The next one is *seinen* (literally 'young man'), like Kentaro Miura's *Berserk*, a fantasy adventure *manga* aimed toward young adults. The third one is *shōjo* (literally 'young girl'), aimed toward teenage girls. An example of *shōjo* manga is Natsuki Takaya's romantic comedy titled *Fruits Basket*. The last demographic is *josei* (literally 'women') which includes series like Yuki Suetsugu's romance manga, *Chihayafuru* (Rousmaniere, 2019).

Tokyo Ghoul is a psychological horror manga series written and illustrated by Ishida Sui. It was published from September 8, 2011, up to July 5, 2018, physically in the Weekly Young Jump magazine and digitally on Shueisha's MangaPlus website. Respectively, they scored 8.53 and 8.29 in a scale of 1 through 10, rated by over 280.000 and 150.000 users on MyAnimeList. This series is chosen over other *seinen manga* and other works by Ishida because of its plot which is directly driven by the impacts of othering on human-ghoul hybrids. The dynamic between humans and ghouls has already been established, Ghouls see humans as prey, while some humans hunt ghouls to ensure their own safety. The ghouls already treat humans as the "other" and vice versa, so the introduction of a third party with characteristics from both races sheds light on how the pure parties treat a being that does not fully qualify as the "self".

This study of *Tokyo Ghoul* aims to analyze the impacts of othering toward human-ghoul hybrids, and the coping mechanisms that they developed to resist those impacts. To that end, this study will apply concepts such as othering from Edward Said's *Orientalism*, alienation from Emile Durkheim's *The Division of Labor (De la Division du Travail Social)*, the frustration-aggression hypothesis from a study by John Dollard et al., mimicry, ambivalence, and hybridity from Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*, and rhizomatic identities from Edouard Glissant's *The Poetics of Relation (Poetique de la Relation)*. Othering will be used to explain the parties that are considered as the "self" and "other" alongside the discriminatory acts done against those of the "other". Alienation and the aggression

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hypothesis will be applied to analyze the main impacts of othering: social alienation and increased aggression. The stages of mimicry and rhizomatic identity will explain the coping mechanisms developed by the human-ghoul hybrids.

Orientalism is a concept in postcolonial theory that details how the West would study the Orient or the East (Said, 1977, as cited in Ranjan, 2015). Historically, it was used to separate people into two groups, the “Occident” or the self and the “Orient” or the other. The Occident refers to a familiar party that controls the cultural narrative, like how the European Orientalists represented and treated Eastern culture (notably Muslim, Arab, China, etcetera) negatively (Said, 1977, pp. 284-293). The Orient are the people who have minor control over the global narrative being written about them (Said, 1977, p. 295). Essentially, the Orient is seen as an inferior culture that should be feared and controlled despite factual evidence that suggests otherwise due to the Occident’s claim of superiority. In the context of the story, this concept is shown through the conflict between humans, ghouls, and hybrids. Ghouls could be assigned as the Occident because they cannot be hurt by conventional weaponry, are physically stronger, and more agile than humans. Humans could also be assigned as the Occident since the story implies that humans outnumber ghouls by a considerable amount. It also shows them creating weapons capable of harming ghouls. As such, pure ghouls treat beings that display human-like traits as the “other”, and vice versa. This means that the only role that could be assigned to the human-ghoul hybrids is that of the “other” due to them possessing traits from both “self” parties.

According to *The Division of Labor*, alienation is a state of personal disconnect between people in a rapidly shifting society (Durkheim, 2013, pp. 287-288). Durkheim likens people to organs in a human’s body. They need to regularly send signals to one another in proximity and high frequency so they can clearly communicate and complete their respective tasks (Durkheim, 2013, p. 288). He also states that an exceptional circumstance could dissolve the equilibrium present in a pre-established system (Durkheim, 2013, p. 288). An example of that circumstance can be seen in the technological advancements brought about by globalization, which leads to the increased specialization of jobs. The more specialized jobs are, the less commonality is shared between the people. This fact further destabilizes social cohesion, plunging it into a normless state (Durkheim, 2013, pp. 284, 288-289). When a society’s norms are unable to return to an equilibrium, the people within it start acting out monotonous routines. They lose the ability to use their power to influence the actions of others due to the hyper-specification of their tasks. Instead of acting while in contact with the neighboring “cells”, they are reduced to cogs within a machine, powerless to change the way they live (Durkheim, 2013, pp. 289-290). When applied to *Tokyo Ghoul*’s characters, the human-ghoul hybrids can be seen as alienated beings. To them, the hybridizing operation can be determined as the “exceptional circumstance” that kickstarted their rapid change. This shift can be seen in how Ken Kaneki’s surgery turns him into a hybrid, breaking down his pre-existing human-adjacent norms, and making him live without a straightforward guideline. His normless state prevents him from making meaningful connections with members of the “self” parties, making Ken powerless in influencing how they treat and perceive him, which furthers his alienation.

The frustration-aggression hypothesis was originally proposed in 1939 by Dollard’s research group. They described frustration as any obstacle that prevents individuals from achieving certain goals and aggression as a primordial reaction that humans use to demonstrate their dominance (Dollard et al., 1939 as cited in Kruglanski et al., 2023, p. 446). Initially, frustration is seen as a sufficient prerequisite in eliciting aggressive behavior. However, a recent study by Kruglanski et al. shows that the denial of certain goals is not the sole trigger for someone’s aggression. Kruglanski’s team notes that aggression can only occur if the need provided by the unachieved goal is substantial in fulfilling the person’s essential needs (Kruglanski et al., 2023, p. 448). This means that aggression is intentionally used in injuring other beings to an end (Kruglanski et al., 2023, p. 447). The team posits that a major source of frustration is the degradation of one’s significance: the perception of their social worth. As such, aggression is justified as a method to re-equalize their social standing (Kruglanski et al., 2023, pp. 448-450). An example of this concept’s application in *Tokyo Ghoul*’s story can be seen in how Ken Kaneki fights against Kōtarō Amon in the Owl Suppression Arc to ensure his social worth by the ghouls he is trying to rescue.

In *The Poetics of Relation*, Bhabha asserts that mimicry represents an ironic compromise constructed around ambivalence. It is defined as something that is “almost the same but not quite” (Bhabha, 1994. p. 127), a mere attempt at emulating a colonizer’s ideology and/or culture. The colonized mimic their colonizers, alienating their own culture to gain partial existence in a colonized society. This process creates an ambivalent identity for the imitators. They are neither part of their original culture because they adopted foreign cultural aspects deemed superior to that of their own, nor are they considered a representative member of the Occident’s culture due to their initial disposition as the “other.” Hybridity refers to the state of consciousness developed by the in-between colonized people (Bhabha, 1994 as cited in Lazuardi & Laksono, 2021). They begin to realize that in their attempt to interact with the colonizers through mimicry while simultaneously moving away from their original culture, they have become a group that adopts parts of both cultures yet cannot fully fit into either one. When applied to the setting of *Tokyo Ghoul’s* story, the human-ghoul hybrids can be seen as an ambivalent group in need of mimicry. An inverted example of this happens when Ken Kaneki (post-hybridification surgery) mimics the human culture of food consumption and rescinds the ghoul culture of devouring human flesh. Ken, who was originally human, regards his human culture as superior to that of a ghoul’s.

Glissant’s rhizomatic identity references Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the rhizome, a decentralized network-like structure that challenges the concept of a totalitarian, fixed, and hierarchical root (Glissant, 1997. p. 11). *The Poetics of Relation* revolves around this concept. In it, Glissant states that an identity is extended through someone’s relationship with others. Glissant used the descendants of the Huns as an example of this concept. The Huns are nomadic conquerors. Their goal is to exterminate the prior occupants and take their land. This arrowlike nomadism manages to create a melting pot where the Huns’ descendants started incorporating cultural parts of the people they conquered, slowly diversifying their identity (Glissant, 1997. p. 12). An example of this concept’s application is in the identities of Eto Yoshimura, a hybrid born through a human mother and ghoul father. When observed through her relationship with humans, she assumes the identity of Sen Takatsuki, Eto’s pen name as a human novelist. On the other hand, her identity in relation to ghouls is that of the One-Eyed Owl, the leader of the ghoul terrorist organization *Aogiri Tree*.

ANALYSIS

The Negative Impacts of Othering Toward Human-Ghoul Hybrids: Alienation

A result of the othering applied by the pure humans and ghouls toward the hybrids is their alienation from society and even themselves. Within the context of the story, humans and ghouls see and treat the hybrids as a lower life form. This circumstance would alienate the hybrids, forcing them to develop a sense of self-estrangement and gradually become unable to meaningfully connect in a social space. The shift in their social standing breaks down any semblance of normalcy in their lives, which leaves them unable to use their power to make meaningful changes. This manifests in their life through two forms of alienation: self-alienation and external alienation by pure humans and ghouls. The hybrids’ alienation can be seen in the normless condition they are left in. This circumstance jeopardizes their pre-existing sense of morality. In essence, the hybrids are forced to rebuild their own norm using components from both sides of their genetic and cultural makeup. This newly built norm might not be acceptable by the “self” parties, which would lead to the hybrids being othered through social alienation.

[KEN: (crying, shouting at TOUKA) I’m different from you monsters!!! Do you really think I could eat human meat?!! Don’t lump me together with you monsters!]

That exchange depicts Ken Kaneki, a human-ghoul hybrid, antagonizing Touka Kirishima, a ghoul. Ken chooses to starve himself from human flesh because of his inclination to follow human norms, specifically the taboo of cannibalism. In this state of normlessness, he chooses to take a human-adjacent moral standpoint. This decision “specializes” Ken, differentiating him from the pure ghouls. It also leads

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to the pure ghouls alienating him because they are unable to relate with nor accept a being that shows ghoulish characteristics but chooses to embrace the moral standpoint of the “other” party. This fact proves that Ken is alienated from society and himself because of his normless condition.

Other instances depict how Ken’s alienation comes from his sense of self-rejection. Because of his fractured morality, Ken is alienated from himself, both as a half-human being and a half-ghoul. The ghoulfication surgery turned Ken into a hybrid without his consent. As such, Ken feels alienated from his hybrid self because he is unable to choose which identity he has, whether as a pure human or ghoul. This aspect of his alienation manifests through the powerlessness that he experiences.

[KEN: That thing... if I hit my kidney, and my luck holds out... I might be able to have another one transplanted. (stabs his own abdomen, the knife breaks on his skin) Wh...what? (cries) I can’t hurt myself, I’m being tortured by this unearthly hunger, but I don’t know how to satisfy it. What else can I do now?]

That scene depicts Ken’s alienation from his human side because of his half-ghoul biology. He attempts to destroy his ghoul organ with the hopes of getting a human organ transplant, which he theorizes will make him wholly human again. This action that he treats his ghoul half as the “other”. Therefore, his inability to destroy the organ that transformed him into a normless being with traits that belong to the “other” proves how powerless he is. Within the context of the scene, Ken’s exercise of power to change his own biological circumstance, is rendered null and void by his half-ghoul side. That means that Ken’s half-ghoul side is preventing him from meaningfully reconnecting with his human side.

Ken’s alienation as a hybrid also manifests outward through the rejection from members of the pure parties. Not only is Ken powerless in connecting with himself meaningfully, but he is also unable to use his power to meaningfully connect with others who share his ghoul-like needs.

[KEN: You... Please help me. I beg of you!! (grovels)]

TOUKA: No. From those eyes, and what you’re saying, I see... You were originally a human, and now you’re a ghoul, ... “Everything is terrible?” Don’t make me laugh. So what about me... for me, it’s been terrible since I was born. Who could help you, idiot. Go off and die on your own.]

That dialog shows Ken’s failed attempt to get help from Touka, the pure ghoul he antagonized prior. Touka is directly offended by Ken’s mere existence as a human-ghoul hybrid. She alienates him by rejecting his request for help. This rejection is a form of alienation because she denies Ken’s attempt to create a connection with her using Ken’s human characteristics as a basis. To Touka, a ghoul-adjacent being that displays traits that belong to humans is not a ghoul, not a member of the “self” party. As such, Ken’s powerlessness in exciting his state of normless self-rejection perpetuates the acts of othering done to him by the pure ghouls. This fact proves that human-ghoul hybrids are alienated by ghouls because of the values brought forth by their human half.

Being alienated by ghouls would result in Ken’s exclusion from ghoul society. This means that Ken is othered by, and thus cut off from, a society that potentially could relate to his ghoul half. This would lead to Ken being further misunderstood by the ghouls around him, worsening his powerlessness, and his ability to use his power to influence how the ghouls, as members of the “self”, perceives and treats him.

[KEN: There’s no way I can choose. If you’re going to kill someone, then kill me...!]

YAMORI: Alright, I understand. (murders a ghoul mother and child) Look!! How is this!? Are you satisfied now!? ... Everyone in this room is mine, all mine!! I’m free to do what I want!!]

That interaction shows how powerless Ken is in influencing the decisions taken by other ghouls. Even though he offers up his life in exchange for a ghoul mother and child's safety, his ghoul torturer, Yakumo "Yamori" Oomori takes both of their lives anyway. In this instance, Ken's alienation from the ghoul society causes him to be ignored by Yamori. To Yamori, Ken's power as the "other" fails to constitute as a meaningful leverage. Thus, Ken is regarded as a lesser being, unable to exchange terms with Yamori on an equal social footing. This further explicates how Ken's alienation as a hybrid manifested through his powerlessness and the diminished value to his life as assigned by the ghouls.

However, as a half-ghoul, Ken is also alienated from human society. Most pure humans already regard and treat ghouls as a threat. They indiscriminately label beings that display ghoul-like characteristics as a dangerous member of the "other", which means that the pure humans are willing to label the hybrids as threats to the survival of their race. Thus, humans would rather see Ken as a ghoul rather than a human despite his human-adjacent characteristics.

[KUREO: You also saw the girl, didn't you? Then you'll do just as well. It'll only be for a brief time so please come along. (grabs KEN, drags him through a ghoul cell scanner)]

That altercation illustrates Ken getting apprehended by Kureo Mado, a human investigator from the Commission of Counter Ghoul (CCG) investigator. Ken's attempt to rationalize his normless state by humanizing the ghouls' backfires, getting him alienated by Kureo instead. Kureo is a member of the CCG's combat personnel, his job is to see and treat the ghouls as the "other". This value extends to other beings that display ghoul-adjacent values. This is exemplified by Kureo's alienation of Ken through the attempt of identifying him as a ghoul after overhearing Ken empathize with a ghoul, a member of the "other" party. Despite Ken's human appearance, Kureo still tries to justify his attempt to "other" Ken by looking for a reason to enact a more violent form of othering, which could have resulted in Ken's elimination, because Ken displayed partiality toward the ghouls. This proves that Kureo does not accept beings that share ghoul-like values, including human-ghoul hybrids, as a member of the "self" party. Therefore, the hybrids are proven to be alienated by humans due to their ghoul half.

As previously established, the pure humans indiscriminately label beings that display ghoul-like tendencies as the "other" which designates them as active risks to the safety of the "self." Since humans handle those threats by eliminating them, this leads human-ghoul hybrids to also become targets of these ghoul eradication operations.

[KEN: Please run away. Don't make me kill a person....]

KŌTARŌ: There's no need for me to lend an ear to some ghoul's bullshit! This world is wrong...! The ones corrupting it are you guys!!]

That conversation shows Ken's confrontation with Kōtarō Amon, a human CCG investigator. Ken refuses to kill Kōtarō and ends their fight, which leads the latter to believe that he is being tricked. By choosing to spare Kōtarō, Ken attempts to use his power to convince him that he qualifies as a part of the "self" party because he also upholds the human-adjacent value of being against murdering a fellow human. However, Kōtarō rejects Ken's attempt to connect as humans because he had already assigned Ken as a ghoul due to the ghoul-adjacent traits that he displays. Therefore, even though Ken had used his power in compliance with human norms, he is still othered by humans due to his ghoul side.

The Negative Impacts of Othering Toward Human-Ghoul Hybrids: Aggressive Behavior

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Othering also leads to aggressive acts against the hybrids. Both humans and ghouls have been shown to be constant antagonistic forces against the hybrids, dismissing their right to live. Even though ghouls and hybrids prefer to blend in human society, there are occasions when physical confrontations are unavoidable. This direct threat to the hybrids' livelihood forces them to become an aggressor to ensure their survival.

Some hybrids' initial interactions with ghouls result in a ghoul-initiated physical conflict. Because ghouls are predatory in nature, the human-ghoul hybrids also become the target of their aggressive othering. This could be caused by the characteristics of their being half-human or other reasons. Ken's initial hostile interactions with ghouls would go on to set a precedent for his increased aggression.

[NISHIKI: (pierces KEN's abdomen, kicks him, sends him flying) When some stupid junior looks down on me and says things like that, it really pisses me off.]

That fight depicts Ken getting mauled by Nishiki Nishio, a ghoul. Nishiki chooses to assert his dominance against Ken by hurting him. This show of power is not motivated by a direct provocation from Ken and therefore does not come from a threat to Nishiki's survival. Ken's existence as a hybrid is enough to trigger aggressive actions from the ghouls. This sets a precedent for the hybrids to feel a heightened sense of insecurity when dealing with pure ghouls.

The acts of aggression would make the hybrids feel threatened by the ghouls' violent othering. This would lead the hybrids to adopt a more aggressive disposition when encountering them.

[KEN: 6th ward leader... Matasaka Kamishiro. I don't know your goal. But if you stand in my way, you are the same as everyone else (stabs MATASAKA with his ghoul hunting organ)]

That scene shows Ken attacking Matasaka Kamishiro, a ghoul. Through his previous hostile encounters with ghouls, Ken became mentally conditioned to treat ghouls as dangerous beings that will attack hybrids. As such, he is now incentivized to resist the ghouls' othering by taking the initiative and assaulting them first. By doing so, he establishes himself as a considerable threat instead of prey and/or target. This behavior shows that the impact of ghouls' othering against Ken is embodied in his aggression toward ghouls.

However, ghouls are not the only active antagonistic force that other hybrids. Humans also enact aggressive othering against the hybrids through the CCG's ghoul hunts, which also targets beings with ghoul-like characteristics.

[RYOKO: Hinami... liv-

KUREO: Time's up (decapitates RYOKO)

(KEN covers HINAMI's eyes as he watches in horror)]

That conflict depicts the CCG investigator Kureo Mado killing Ryoko Fueguchi, a ghoul who allied herself with Ken. Even though Ryoko does not hunt humans to feed on them, the humans still treat her existence as a threat. Kureo executed Ryoko to eliminate threats to the survival of humans. This scene, however, also sets a precedent about how interactions with humans as hybrids will lead to physical conflict due to the humans' othering of beings that display ghoul-like traits. Witnessing this conflict leads Ken, as a hybrid, to internalize this sense of insecurity into an attempt to resist violent human othering.

As such, the hybrids also adopt an aggressive stance to resist the humans', specifically CCG investigators', violent othering. As previously stated, the investigators do not take hybrids' human-adjacent traits into account. Instead, they focus on their ghoul-adjacent side because they regard every being that exhibits ghoul-like traits as a threat to human safety.

[(KEN punches KŌTARŌ, lunges at him, and attempts to incapacitate him)]

That exchange displays Ken attacking human CCG investigator, Kōtarō Amon. Due to his prior experiences involving the CCG investigators' efforts to dehumanize and injure him due to his ghoul-like traits, he becomes more aware of the motives behind the humans' acts of aggression. The combined result of being othered from human society and his hostile human encounters amplifies his need to resist the violent othering from the humans. This proves how humans' violent othering negatively impacts the human-ghoul hybrids. It prompts them to become aggressive.

The Coping Mechanism Developed by the Human-Ghoul Hybrids to Cope Against Othering:

Mimicry-Based Rhizomatic Identities

As the human-ghoul hybrids get further alienated by both the human and ghoul societies, they encounter more acts of aggressive othering. This forces them to cope. The main adaptive response the hybrids employ as a coping mechanism is the adoption of rhizomatic identity through mimicry of the pure parties' norms and values to bond with them. This adoption of rhizomatic identities is exemplified through Eto Yoshimura. As a human-ghoul hybrid, she creates personas that mimic certain behaviors so she can better cater to the norms and values present in both pure human and ghoul societies.

Eto's ambivalence would motivate her to mimic certain behaviors that are aligned with humans. By using her knowledge of human norms which she obtained from the human half of her hybridity, Eto can ascertain specific actions that would help her be accepted by them. She would then mimic these actions to establish an identity that is acceptable by the humans, shifting her social standing from a member of the "other" into that of the "self".

[ETO (as SEN): To... Matsuyama-san.... Here you go! (hands over an autographed book)]

ETO (as SEN, to KŌTARŌ): Do you know the trading company 'Sphynx'? ... Sphinx had stocked up on some fairly rare things from ghouls.]

Those scenes display Eto's attempts at human mimicry, specifically the human mannerisms like having an occupation and an antagonistic disposition toward the ghouls. Respectively, these decisions help her establish connections with the humans and assert herself as an active assistant in the efforts related to the elimination of the "other" (ghouls). Eto's success in mimicking humans establishes a positive connection between her and other humans through her rhizomatic identity of Sen Takatsuki, a human novelist. The existence of Sen Takatsuki proves that Eto is successful in mimicking humans, and as a result, has been integrated into human society.

Eto also mimics ghoul norms to adopt a rhizomatic identity in relation to the ghouls. Doing so allows her to bypass acts of othering by the ghouls and, more importantly, become an authority figure in ghoul society. Achieving that goal would mean that she will become a member of the "self" among the ghouls.

[ETO (as OWL): Tatara-san, how many of our allies died in the 11th ward?

TATARA: Probably around 200 or so?

ETO (as OWL): Then let's try our best to kill for the sake of those 200. (proceeds to launch a counter raid against the CCG)]

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Those scenes show Eto's attempts at ghoulish mimicry. She is seen coordinating and executing planned attacks against human CCG investigators and even devouring an investigator's limb during the conflict. By doing so, Eto mimics the ghouls' violent othering and predation against humans, which aligns her morality with the ghouls. This is done to reinforce her ghoulish-related rhizomatic identity as the One-Eyed Owl, the leader of a ghoulish terrorist organization. Doing so puts Eto in a position where she can create a closer connection with the pure ghouls, the "self" party she is trying to integrate herself into.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that the impact of othering on the human-ghoul hybrids of *Tokyo Ghoul* is explicitly and exclusively negative. This is proven by the fact that due to the othering they experience, the hybrids are unable to be accepted by either of the "self" parties with reasons related to their hybridity. This is further supported by the alienation and hostility they face as a product of othering against them. The hybrids have been conditioned to see and treat members of the pure parties as threats, and as such, tend to become aggressive when dealing with them. This is due to the sense of insecurity the hybrids gained through aggressive interactions with pure parties. To cope with the negative effects, the hybrids are forced to develop coping mechanisms that revolve around mimicking certain actions and mannerisms which are deemed as normal by their oppressors to build rhizomatic identities. The hybrids develop those identities in relation to their connection with members of the pure parties to lessen the impact of othering on them by helping the hybrids to be integrated as a member of the "self". The results of this study have been very fascinating. When consumed without applying the concepts used in this study as its theoretical framework, *Tokyo Ghoul* stands as a piece of popular literature that contains an entertaining plot about Ken Kaneki's journey to find his place in the world. However, after re-reading the text through an academic lens, it turns out that *Tokyo Ghoul's* plot discusses themes that are quite deep and serious, especially discussions around the topics of humanity and the hybrids' ambivalence.

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