

Framing the Serial Killer in Thomas Harris' *Hannibal Lecter* Trilogy: A Corpus-Assisted Critical Stylistic Approach

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Abstract

This paper uses a combination of corpus-based and qualitative approaches to investigate the 'framing' of criminals in fiction on serial killers, particularly in the works of the top-selling novelist Thomas Harris. These works feature detectives/psychologists and villains who tend to be psychopathic men involved in criminal actions that range from kidnapping to murder. Framing can be used to understand and explore how an entity is constructed, communicated and shaped. It can be defined as 'schemata' or repertoires of organized patterns of thinking which can be triggered by the framing devices presented in the text (Kitzinger, 2007). Using WordSmith5, the frequency of words related to 'killers' and 'murder' and the concordance lines of the names of each serial killer used as node words, are all extracted and examined. Concordance lines, which present 'the analyst with instances of a word or cluster in its immediate co-text' (Baker et al., 2008, p. 279), are examined qualitatively to identify linguistic patterns using the critical stylistic tools proposed by Jeffries (2010a) – including, for example, naming and describing, equating and contrasting, assuming and implying, prioritizing, representing actions/ events/ states, modality choices and metaphor. This paper, to a large extent, shows that the suggested corpus-assisted critical stylistic approach provides a comprehensive model for the study of the serial killers in the selected novels, and possibly, and more generally, for the study of characters in fiction. Indeed, the main achievement of this approach which involves a synergy of quantitative and

qualitative methods is the provision of a more comprehensive and systematic analysis of large amounts of data.

Keywords: Framing, Critical Stylistics, Corpus Linguistics, Crime Fiction, Serial Killers, Thomas Harris

1. Introduction

The term ‘serial killer’¹ was coined in the 1970s by Robert Ressler, a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agent. The official FBI definition of the term ‘serial killer’ is a murderer who perpetrates ‘three or more separate [homicides] with an emotional cooling-off period between homicides, each murder taking place at a different location’ (Schechter & Everitt, 1996, p. 69). In other words, the ‘serial killer’ is a particular type of killer, encompassing any murderer who kills for personal satisfaction sequentially and whose motivation and behaviour are validated by their personal history, particularly child abuse. This type of killer tends to murder within his own ethnic group, to target a particular type of victim, and to employ the same *modus operandi* in all his murders as a kind of repetitive and highly ritualised homicidal behaviour. Statistically, serial killers are overwhelmingly male and their victims are women, sex workers, children, and gay males (Caputi, 1993; Simpson, 2001; Young, 1991). Hence, the serial killer ‘represents an extreme of patriarchal *masculinity* and masculinity’s valued traits of independence (loner mentality), sexual aggression, emotional detachment, affinity for violence and objectification and hatred of the feminine’ (Caputi, 1993, p. 103).

The serial killers’ pleasure is most often the sole source of motivation for their crimes (Ressler & Schachtman, 1997, p. 155).

They [serial killers] don’t kill as a means to an end, such as an armed robber would; they kill or rape or torture because they enjoy it, because it

¹ Psychology of Psychopaths. <https://sites.google.com/site/psychologyofpsychopaths4a/what-is-the-profile-of-a-serial-killer-1/what-are-the-different-types-of-serial-killers>.

Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/conditions/dissociative-identity-disorder-multiple-personality-disorder>.

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gives them satisfaction and a feeling of domination and control so lacking from every other aspect of their shabby, inadequate, and cowardly lives. (Douglas & Olshaker, 1997, p. 29)

Ressler & Schachtman (1992, p. 45) acknowledge that serial killers, and more particularly rapists and child molesters, possess their own rationale for committing crime, namely, their pleasure and satisfaction, their indulgence of pressing impulses, and their need for self-expression.

The serial killer has become a cultural icon around which a considerable media industry has evolved. Serial killers, who tend to be better known than their victims, are stereotypically featured in books, sensational films and TV shows as psychologically troubled single white males who are typically ordinary and barely distinguishable from others. Indeed, 'countless films and novels, both overtly and covertly, present the serial killer as sacred monster/hero' (Caputi, 1999, p. 150). More frequently, however, fiction about serial killers focuses not only on the serial killer but also on the detectives or psychological profilers who investigate the serial murder cases. Indeed, the 'mystification of the serial killer is accompanied by mystification of his 'rivals', elite members of the FBI whose job is to track him down, relying mainly on their 'special vision'' (Tithecott, 1997, p. 29-30). The rivalry between the detective or psychological profiler and the serial killer is popularised in fiction in order to make the story more interesting. The profiler is typically a police officer or expert in the field, who is called upon to formulate hypotheses and predictions regarding the identity and future behaviour of the unknown murderer. The profiler examines the evidence and clues left behind by the killer, detects the killer's pattern of behaviour, and eventually constructs a character sketch of the murderer. This sketch also includes an outline of childhood abuse suffered and/or a fractured personality which would provide a set of motives for the killer (Douglas & Olshaker, 1997; Ressler & Schachtman, 1992, 1997). Interestingly, however, the boundary between the killer and profiler is sometimes dangerously porous. This idea is encapsulated by what Schmid (2005, p. 280) calls the 'Lecter syndrome', which represents the tradition within the genre in which serial killers are consulted about other serial killers. This situation is depicted in protagonist-killer fiction, such as Harris's novels, whereby detained killers act as profilers and eventually lead to capturing other perpetrators.

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According to the FBI profilers, serial killers are classified into two main categories: organised and disorganised killers. Organised killers tend to plan and hunt very carefully. They often have a repetitive pattern which is manifested in always using the same weapons, treating the bodies in a particular way, taking care of incriminating evidence, staging the crime scene and keeping trophies. They are intelligent and socially competent enough to charm their victims into accompanying them. They also tend to lead a double life which enables them to conceal their crimes for long periods of time. Disorganised killers, by contrast, tend to kill impulsively and opportunistically with no attempt to dispose of evidence or keep trophies. They tend to have a long history of institutionalisation, and to be unemployed, socially incompetent, and aggressive. FBI profilers² propose further classifications of serial killers, as shown in Table 1 below.

No.	Type of Killer	Definition	
1	Hedonists	They kill for fun or profit	Subtypes
			Lust Killers kill for sexual gratification
			Thrill Killers kill for the thrill of killing
			Gain Killers Subtypes:
			1 Contract Killers (Hired to kill)
			2 Black Widows (Females who kill their spouses)
			3 Blue Beard Killers (Males who kill their spouses)
4 Lethal Caretakers (Kill patients for profit)			
5 Cost Cutters (Kill to save money)			
2	Visionaries	They are psychotic, having hallucinations that they are ordered by God or the Devil to kill.	

² <https://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/serial-murder>

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3	Missionaries	They kill to “Clean-up” the world.
4	Power Seekers	They kill to exert power over strangers.
5	Revenge Killers	They kill for revenge.

Table 1 FBI classifications of serial killers

This study follows the path blazed by Gregoriou who has examined serial killers in a number of linguistic studies (see Gregoriou, 2007, 2011, 2017). In her works, Gregorio has studied the portrayal of the criminal in crime fiction and has used stylistic models of analysis to explore the poetic structure of the criminal’s mind style (Gregoriou, 2007). She has also explored criminal ideology and the construction of criminal identity in serial killer narratives (Gregoriou, 2011). She has not only examined crime fiction but shed light on other types of crime and crime-preventing discourses (Gregoriou, 2017). This study, however, uses a corpus-assisted critical stylistic approach to explore the framing of serial killers in three novels by Thomas Harris, namely *Red Dragon* (1981), *The Silence of the Lambs* (1988), and *Hannibal* (1999). Thomas Harris is an American writer who is best known for a series of suspense novels about his most famous serial killer character, Dr Hannibal Lecter. The selected novels are all international bestsellers. They have been translated into many languages and have been adapted into films: *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), *Hannibal* (2001), and *Red Dragon* (2002). These novels tend to provide stereotypical depictions of the serial killer. In Harris’s novels, Dr Hannibal Lecter, a cannibal serial killer, is also a ‘charismatic, intelligent, fascinating’ and famous psychologist (Gates, 2006, p. 259). He is white, heterosexual, socially high-functioning, and leading a double life. In two of Harris’ novels, however, there is a deviation from the normative and stereotypical presumptions about serial killers. For example, the serial killer Jame Gumb, a.k.a. ‘Buffalo Bill’ in *The Silence of the Lambs*, has attracted much critical attention, for his unique sexuality, as someone who is ‘biologically’ male but seeking to be female via crafting a ‘woman suit’ made from real female skin. This character reportedly set off a homophobic moral panic and generated protests by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transsexual activists who argued that the representation of this character was offensive and had the potential to incite violence and hatred against people of non-standard genders and sexual orientations (Fuss, 1993). Another example is the serial killer Francis Dolarhyde in *Red Dragon* who is

depicted as being physically deformed, having a harelip and ugly teeth. *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Red Dragon* feature pairs of serial killers, with one less competent than the other. Respectively, the more competent and professional killer is Hannibal Lecter; whereas the less competent killers include Buffalo Bill and Francis Dolarhyde.

In serial killer novels, the identity of the murderer is usually a mystery and the detective and/or psychological profiler attempt/s to solve it through analysing the evidence the killer leaves behind and that is revealed through autopsies of the victims. Sometimes, the identity of the killer is concealed until the very end of the story giving a shock revelation and a surprise since the killer turns out to be someone beyond suspicion.

2. Theoretical Approaches

2.1 Framing

This study uses ‘framing’ to explore the way serial killers are represented in the selected novels. Framing is widely used in the social sciences in disciplines such as sociology, culture studies, social psychology, political science, discourse analysis, linguistics, communication, media studies, journalism and so on (Benford & Snow, 2000; Hallahan, 1999; Mendes, 2011). It has been employed in a number of linguistic and literary studies (Hofling, 1987; Hufford, 1995; Tannen, 1986, 1993).

Framing is particularly useful for understanding and exploring how an entity is constructed, communicated and shaped. The notion of framing was first introduced by the social anthropologist Gregory Bateson who defined it as a means by which the human mind classifies and understands the world (Hallahan, 1999). A frame can be defined as ‘a spatial and temporal bounding of a set of interactive messages’ which serves to regulate people’s understanding of the appropriate roles and rules guiding their behaviour in a particular context (Bateson, 1972, p. 191); as ‘schemata of interpretation’ (Goffman, 1974, p. 10)

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which provide people with a context that enables them to 'locate, perceive, identify and label' (Goffman, 1974, p. 21) the information necessary for understanding a certain situation or event; as 'schemata' or repertoires of organized patterns of thinking which can be triggered by the framing devices presented in the text (Kitzinger, 2007); or as a central part of culture being institutionalized in a range of different ways which are 'used to organise codes, stereotypes, values, norms' (van Gorp, 2007, p. 62).

Robert Entman suggests that 'framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text' (Entman, 1993, p. 53). Entman proposes that, within the communication process, there are four elements involved in the framing of any entity: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture.

Communicators make conscious or unconscious framing judgments in deciding what to say, guided by frames (often called schemata) that organize their belief systems. The text contains frames, which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments. [...] The culture is the stock of commonly invoked frames; in fact, culture might be defined as the empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of most people in a social grouping (Entman, 1993, p. 52-53).

This study is concerned with how characters, and more particularly, serial killers, are framed in a novel. The communicator in this context would be the author who is responsible for providing and organising the information that is conveyed to readers (receivers) through the text. The author intentionally frames his characters in a certain way through deciding what details about the characters to tell; which features and qualities to grant them; which features and qualities to emphasise or de-emphasise; which actions they should make, and so on. The author also deliberately makes the text more salient through the use of linguistic and rhetorical devices. The author's main aim is likely to attract readers' attention, influence their perceptions and make them more involved with the characters.

2.2 Critical Stylistics

The term *Critical Stylistics* was coined by Leslie Jeffries (2007) who considers it a development of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Jeffries adopts Fairclough's argument that CDA has three dimensions or stages which are 'description', 'interpretation' and 'explanation' (2007, 2010a). She argues that many CDA scholars focus on the third stage, i.e. explanation, by 'explaining how texts fit into the socio-political landscape in which they are produced or read' (2010a, p. 11). She adds that Critical Stylistics, which would take a strongly language-oriented stance, is interested in the first two stages, namely, description and interpretation. Critical Stylistics aims to 'assemble the main general functions that a text has in representing 'reality' and organising 'the world we experience', which can be 'demonstrable in the words and structures of the texts themselves' (Jeffries, 2010a, p. 14). In order to fulfil this aim, critical stylistics uses 'models of language, analytical techniques and methodologies from linguistics to facilitate the study of style in its widest sense' (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010, p. 1).

Although CDA utilises elements of functional grammar inspired by Halliday (1985), and, more particularly, versions of modality and transitivity (Fairclough, 1989; Fowler, 1991), it is less concerned with detailed, linguistic analysis. Such disinterest in detailed linguistic analysis, according to Jeffries, results in a 'patchy' coverage of linguistic structures, and a lack of a clear, comprehensive toolkit for the analysis of texts (2010a, p. 6). Critical Stylistics, on the other hand, introduces a systematic model of analysis (Jeffries, 2007, 2010a).

The Toolkit of Critical Stylistics

I will briefly outline the tools of Critical Stylistics as presented by Jeffries (2007, 2010a). This combines linguistic features from critical linguistics (Fowler, 1991, 1996) and CDA (Fairclough, 1989, 1992). The toolkit addresses the functional aspect of text analysis in order to 'answer the question of what any text is 'doing'' (Jeffries, 2010a, p. 15).

Naming and Describing

This category, which is similar to the concept of ‘referential strategies’ and ‘nominalization’ in CDA (see for example, Fowler, 1991; Reisigl & van Leeuwen, 1996; Wodak, 2001), examines how entities and events are labelled and modified in noun phrases. It deals with the construction of noun phrases: a head noun, sometimes accompanied by premodifiers or postmodifiers, which construct the referent (Jeffries, 2010a, p. 17). Adjectives can be particularly useful in framing, whether attributive, occurring immediately to the left of the node, or predicative, occurring to the right following a copula verb. In my analysis, I have focused on the authors’ choice of nouns used to refer to serial killers, and of modifying adjectives, either attributive or predicative, to describe them. These choices contribute to the construction and framing of the serial killers. The effect of selecting certain nouns to refer to the entities in question would be to ‘package up’ ideological content ‘*in the head noun itself*’ (Jeffries, 2010a, p. 25). The head noun, however, can be post-modified or pre-modified, which further enhances the packaging up of ideas or information (Jeffries, 2010a, p. 19) and presents the propositional content of the noun phrase as an existential presupposition. Readers are unlikely to question such presuppositions and, rather, take them for granted. This allows authors to manipulate readers into adopting a certain perspective towards the entity in question.

Representing Actions/Events/States – Transitivity Analysis

This tool involves the analysis of transitivity choices, based on Simpson’s (1993) approach to Halliday’s functional grammar. Halliday proposes three ‘metafunctions’ of language: the interpersonal metafunction which is concerned with the social and power relations among language users, the ideational metafunction which is concerned with our experience of the outer world, and the textual metafunction which is language-oriented and is concerned with the production of cohesive and coherent text (Halliday, 1981, p. 328).

Transitivity is a system which construes experiences through a set of process types and relates them to the participants and circumstances involved in the production of the clause. The concept of transitivity developed by Halliday (1985) and further developed by Simpson (1993) ‘assigns lexical verbs to a

number of different categories, according to the kind of process or state they appear to be describing' (Jeffries, 2010a, p. 40). The categories are classified 'according to whether they represent actions, speech, states of mind or simply states of being,' as material, verbalisation, mental and relational processes (Simpson, 1993, p. 88). Transitivity is particularly useful for observing 'who is doing what to whom' which is quite useful in the analysis of the types of actions performed by serial killers on their victims.

Equating and Contrasting

This category is concerned with how texts construct oppositional and equivalent meanings. Oppositional and equivalent meanings can be signalled via syntactic triggers, including co-ordinating and subordinating conjunctions (such as *and*, *but*, *or*, *yet* etc), semantic relationships or parallel clause structures. A recurrent example of equating is detected in the data, as shown in the analysis below: Thomas Harris tends to use appositional equivalence, which involves the juxtaposition of two NPs, in referring to serial killers. Opposition and contrasting, on the other hand, can be triggered by antonymy (which puts two events, states or existences into contrast with each other) and negation (which opposes non-events against events, non-states against states or non-existence against existence and thereby constructs 'unrealized worlds') (Nahajec, 2009, p. 109). The construction of opposites is at the core of constructing serial killers vs profilers and serial killers vs victims.

Implying and Assuming

This category, which is concerned with implied meanings in texts, relates to pragmatics (Jeffries, 2010a, p. 93). It can be realised by the processes of presupposition (Levinson, 1983) and implicature (Grice, 1975). Presuppositions assume the existence of an entity or event, or the occurrence of an action. For example, the use of the possessive pronoun 'his' in the NP 'his cold yellow eyes' (concordance 9) presupposes the existence of a male participant. In 'We'd have a goddamned stampede if people thought Lecter was out' (concordance 61), the adverb 'out' presupposes that Lecter is detained. Presuppositions are also 'preserved in negative sentences or statements' (Levinson, 1983, p. 177).

Implicatures, on the other hand, can be conversational or conventional. Conversational implicatures involve inferring implied meanings from the text when there is a flouting or violation of one or more of Grice's maxims (Jeffries, 2010a, p. 99). Grice (1975, 1978) introduced the Cooperative Principle, arguing that in communication people follow four co-operative maxims: quality, quantity, relation and manner. These maxims demand that one's contribution to the communicative situation be truthful (quality), informative (quantity), relevant (relation) and specific (manner) (1975, p. 47). Metaphors, for example, can be seen as a flouting of the quality maxim. Conventional implicatures, however, can be 'intuitively grasped' (Grice, 1975, p. 50) and 'are not derived from superordinate pragmatic principles like the maxims, but are simply attached by convention to particular lexical items or expressions' (Levinson, 1983, p. 127). A conventional implicature can be seen as a pragmatic presupposition. Jeffries tends to use both terms interchangeably (Jeffries, 2010b, p. 3). Indeed, both implicatures and presuppositions have a potential 'for impacting on the reader/hearer because [of] the relatively 'hidden' nature of these types of meaning' (Jeffries, 2010a, p. 102).

Hypothesising - Modality

Simpson (1993, p. 46) proposes that modality involves the expression of degrees of certainty or uncertainty in relation to propositions. He distinguishes three modal systems, namely: epistemic, deontic and boulomaic which refer to degrees of confidence in the truth of a statement, obligation and desirability respectively. Modality can be triggered in the text through using modal auxiliaries, lexical verbs, modal adverbs or adjectives and conditional structures (Jeffries, 2010a, p. 118). If a sentence does not contain any modality, it is described as categorical. Categorical sentences construct entities and events as given facts.

Prioritising

This tool relates to the ways in which attention can be drawn to certain information by making some pieces of information more or less salient. There are three main ways of prioritising in the English language: exploiting the conventions of information structure since new and important information tends

to be placed at the end of a sentence; the transformation of active into passive voice which is relevant to the salience of final clause elements; and the possibilities offered by subordination which allow us to place some pieces of information at a low level of sentence structure, where it will be less prominent.

2.3 Corpus Methods

In this paper, I use a corpus-assisted critical stylistic approach. Corpus-linguistic tools allow a researcher to deal with large amounts of data and facilitate detecting linguistic patterns. It is necessary to start with a brief introduction to some key terms. A corpus may be defined as ‘collections of texts (or parts of text) that are stored and accessed electronically’ (Hunston, 2002, p. 2). Specialised corpora represent ‘a given type of text’ (Hunston, 2002, p. 14), such as the selected novels of crime fiction which are the focus of this study. CL provides a *methodology* for systematically investigating such corpora using computer software tools (McEnery & Wilson, 2001, p. 2). CL incorporates both quantitative aspects, such as frequency measures and statistics, and qualitative investigation, especially in concordance analysis. This study uses a number of CL procedures including frequency lists and concordances.

Frequency

The corpus-linguistic software tool, WordSmith5, affords the creation of wordlists. Wordlists constitute the ‘essential starting point for a systematic textual analysis’ (Stubbs, 2005, p. 11). A wordlist displays all the words and the number of their occurrences in a given corpus, ordered either alphabetically or according to their frequency, starting with the most frequent words which are usually grammatical words (Baker, 2006, p. 47). I have used the Wordlist function in WordSmith5 initially to calculate the frequencies of the names of the serial killers and the words related to their crimes.

Concordances

WordSmith5 also affords the extraction of concordances, thus producing ‘all of the examples of a search term in the context that it appears in’ (Baker & McEnery, 2005, p. 202). A concordance, which is also referred to as ‘key word in context’ (KWIC), yields a particular node word within its immediate co-text,

which is usually whatever number of words is specified to the left and right of the node word (Baker, 2006, p. 71). Concordance lists constitute the starting point for qualitative analysis. In this paper, concordances of the names of the serial killers in the selected novels are used to qualitatively explore the framing of each serial killer through employing these critical stylistic tools.

Aim of the Study and Research Questions

This study aims to explore how serial killers are framed in the selected novels using a corpus-assisted critical stylistic approach. It attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How can tools from corpus linguistics and critical stylistics be combined in the analysis of the construction of serial killers?
2. How are serial killers linguistically framed in the selected crime novels?

3. Methodology

This study combines tools from Critical Stylistics and Corpus Linguistics to explore the framing of serial killers in the selected novels. The corpus-linguistic tools are used to obtain the frequency and the concordance lists of the names of the serial killers, used as node words. This facilitates the application of the toolkit of Critical Stylistics, and hence, the detection of the linguistic patterns used in framing or linguistically constructing each serial killer. The methodology used in this paper involves the following procedures:

- The selected novels are prepared and saved as text files.
- The CL tool, WordSmith5, is used to extract wordlists and concordances.
- In each novel, the top 200 most frequent words are examined; and words related to murder, crime, and killers are identified.
- Concordances (the immediate context) of the name of each killer are examined to explore the critical stylistic tools employed to linguistically 'frame' these criminals.
- Special attention is dedicated to the following critical stylistic tools:
 - Naming and describing
 - Direct descriptions of physical appearance and manner
 - Specific forms of reference to killers
 - Attributes used to qualify killers

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- Predicates (predicative nouns/adjectives) used to qualify killers
- Representing Actions/Events/States
 - Transitivity analysis
- Equating and contrasting
 - Apposition equivalence
 - Contrast and antithesis
- Implying and Assuming
 - Implicature
 - Metaphors

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Frequency

Repetition of certain words referring to characters and major events in the text helps to focus readers' attention on them. This is the reason behind the high frequency of names of the major characters in each book. The top 200 most frequent words are examined; and words related to murder, investigation and killers are identified, see Table 2 below.

<i>Red Dragon</i>	Freq.	<i>The Silence of the Lambs</i>	Freq.	<i>Hannibal</i>	Freq.
DOLARHYDE	289	STARLING	656	STARLING	657
LECTER	151	LECTER	308	LECTER	521
DRAGON	108	CATHERINE	144	MASON	311
FRANCIS	82	CLARICE	127	HANNIBAL	195
VOICE	80	BUFFALO_BILL	94	CLARICE	111
POLICE	79	GUMB	89	VERGER	97
TOOTH_FAIRY	74	FREDRICA	66	FBI	83
		BODY	65	BLOOD	49
		FBI	57	DEATH	48

Table 2 Frequency of words related to serial killers and crime (in top 200): Thomas Harris

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The three novels have, among the most frequent words, the names of the major participants in the plot: the serial killers ('Dolarhyde', 'Lecter', 'Dragon', 'Francis' and 'Tooth fairy' in *Red Dragon*; 'Lecter', 'Buffalo Bill' and 'Gumb' in *The Silence of the Lambs*; 'Hannibal' and 'Lecter' in *Hannibal*), the FBI agents/profilers ('Lecter' in *Red Dragon*; 'Starling', 'Lecter' and 'Clarice' in *The Silence of the Lambs*; 'Starling' and 'Clarice' in *Hannibal*), victims ('Catherine' in *Silence of the Lambs*) and police forces ('Police' in *Red Dragon*; 'FBI' in *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Hannibal*).

Other frequent words include the word 'voice' in *Red Dragon* since Dolarhyde has auditory hallucinations in which he hears the voice of a dragon ordering him to kill and cleanse the world. 'Fredrica' is the name of the first victim in *The Silence of the Lambs* who provides the main clue that leads to the capture of Buffalo Bill³. The words 'Mason', 'Verger', and 'death' are frequent in *Hannibal* since Mason Verger, the arch-enemy of Dr Lecter in that novel who has been maimed and disfigured by Lecter, plans to have Lecter tortured to death.

4.2 Concordance Analysis

Concordances, using the name of the serial killer in each story as a node word, were extracted and examined qualitatively to detect linguistic features using the Critical Stylistics tools. The extracted concordances are listed and numbered to simplify cross-referencing in the analysis, see Tables 3-5 below.

Francis Dolarhyde, in *Red Dragon*, suffers from what can be referred to as 'Dissociative Identity Disorder'⁴, formerly 'Multiple Personality Disorder', which is a condition wherein a person's identity is fragmented into two or more distinct personality states often because of severe child abuse. He experiences a psychological conflict having hallucinations that he is controlled by a great Red Dragon that orders him to kill (18-30). Dolarhyde, then, as a serial killer is organized and can be also classified as both a visionary, since he hears voices, and a missionary, since he believes that he kills in order to cleanse the world. The FBI resorts to Dr Hannibal Lecter, a detained convicted serial killer and

³ She was the only victim he took time to weigh her body down in the river. Although she was the first victim, she was the third to be discovered. This motivated the detective to search for a clue at Fredrica's hometown suspecting that she might be an acquaintance of the murderer.

⁴ <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/dissociative-identity-disorder-multiple-personality-disorder#1>

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previously a renowned psychologist, to help them profile the killer (31, 32, 35, 36, 40).

Through the tool of naming and describing, the physical description of Francis Dolarhyde is provided using a series of nouns and adjectives. Dolarhyde is described as 'shy' (3), 'deformed' (10), 'ugly', and 'impotent' (32). There are also references to his cold 'yellow eyes' (9, 13), being 'deformed' (10), and to his having 'a harelip' (16) and ugly 'teeth' (12). To further frame Dolarhyde in the readers' minds, apposition equivalence is employed in a series of references to Dolarhyde as a 'damned murderer' (5), 'forty-two years old' (11), 'a psychopathic slayer' (38), and 'the bastard' (63).

The character Dolarhyde is framed by his suffering throughout the novel and, more particularly, when he falls in love with Reba. He experiences an internal conflict between the Dragon's desire to get Reba killed and his own love for her and desire to protect her from the Dragon (18, 19, 26, 27, 28). Dolarhyde's suffering is sometimes depicted metaphorically, and hence, it is framed through the tool of implying. Readers are able to grasp the implicatures created by metaphors, which are considered flouts of Grice's quality maxim. Dolarhyde has a difficulty in pronunciation since 'The plosive G defeated him' (14) and this is likely to reduce his self-confidence. When he is jealous to see his beloved Reba with another man, Mandy, 'pain shot through Dolarhyde' (1), and it even increases when Reba kisses Mandy which 'stabbed Dolarhyde deep' (6).

Features of Dolarhyde's character are depicted through the use of material, mental and relational processes. The fact that he is physically deformed and psychologically unstable appears in the processes 'covered the mirrors' and 'wore no mask' (2), 'Dolarhyde is trembling' (4), and 'Dolarhyde felt like a child' (7). In his childhood, he spent a few years in an orphanage (15) and was abused by his Grandmother (17). The processes also frame his interest in the media's coverage of his crimes: he keeps buying the newspaper, the 'Tattler', and keeps paper clips of the news items covering his crimes, 'Tattler were scattered where Dolarhyde had clipped it' (8); he abducts the journalist who branded him as *the Tooth Fairy* and bad-mouthed him in the Tattler (33) and tortures him to death 'I am the Dragon and you call me insane' (29). In his *modus operandi*, he bites his victims and leaves marks of his crooked teeth on their bodies (34).

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No.	Concordance
Dolarhyde	
1	Sharp pain shot through Dolarhyde, pain and terrible
2	snake. It covered the mirror. Dolarhyde wore no mask.
3	it with her fingers. Shy Mr. Dolarhyde. She was perfectly
4	yes Do you feel me now? yes Dolarhyde is trembling. His
5	the way back. As she slept, Dolarhyde, damned murderer of
6	Reba kiss Mandy had stabbed Dolarhyde deep. Then the pain
7	he looked like Grandmother. Dolarhyde felt like a child
8	Tattler were scattered where Dolarhyde had clipped it for
9	with his cold yellow eyes, Dolarhyde understood her anger
10	mother. He told Mrs. Dolarhyde about the deformed
11	of the house where Francis Dolarhyde, forty-two years old
12	the glass containing his teeth. Dolarhyde always puts in his
Francis	
13	looked into the yellow eyes of Francis Dolarhyde and fear
14	The plosive G defeated him. Francis strangled easily on
15	And mother Dolarhyde called for Francis at the orphanage and
16	together and told them that Francis was a harelip but the
17	child of the Devil after all, Francis. You are my good boy.
Dragon	
18	How could he be sure the Dragon then would leave her a
19	he keep from giving her to the Dragon? One way kept nudging
20	his death would affect the Dragon, now that he and the Dragon were Two?
21	He was Becoming and the Dragon was his higher self.
22	WHO IS ACCEPTABLE? the Dragon asked.
23	LOOK AT ME. The Dragon glowed from the wall.
24	From the beginning, he and the Dragon had been one. He was
25	WILL BE CLEANSED OF YOU, the Dragon said effortlessly.
26	to give Reba McClane to the Dragon. He thought about what
27	if he were not as strong as the Dragon, Reba would die. He kn

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28	against the headboard. The Dragon wants you, Reba. He al
29	warmed in him now. I am the Dragon and you call me insane
30	He knew it was the voice of the Dragon. This new twoness with the Dragon disoriented him.
Fairy (the Tooth Fairy)	
31	you help us stir up the Tooth Fairy, Doctor? A lot of people
32	He speculated that the Tooth Fairy was ugly, impotent with
33	I really bad-mouth the Tooth Fairy in the Tattler and then
34	was unconscious when the Tooth Fairy bit him?
35	to some chairs. The Tooth Fairy had to have a van or a
36	in the picture. The Tooth Fairy kills the pet first, is
37	An FBI trap to catch the Tooth Fairy backfires and a veteran
38	their search for the Tooth Fairy, a psychopathic slayer
39	head the hunt for the Tooth Fairy. What went on in this
40	Lecter would draw the Tooth Fairy, Jack. I say the

Table 3 Francis Dolarhyde, the serial killer in *Red Dragon*

In *The Silence of the Lambs*, Dr Lecter, still a detained convict, helps the FBI agent Clarice Starling to capture the serial killer, Buffalo Bill, who abducts women and skins them, by providing a psychological profile for him. To construct the profile, Lecter speculates about the motives behind Buffalo Bill's crimes, selection of victims, *modus operandi* and pattern, and even anticipates the killer's future acts (41, 42, 43, 44, 73, 79, 84). Through profiling, readers know that the killer is 'not a sadist' (43), 'can sew' (44, 56), 'has a two-story house' (48), kills women and skins them to make a vest of their real skin to fulfil his fantasy of becoming a woman (49, 57, 104), 'would start scalping' his victims (52), is 'obsessed with moths' (54), and was a friend of Fredrica, the first victim (55).

The tool of naming is used in referring to the killer as 'Buffalo Bill' (41-53), and 'MOTHER FUCKER' (45). The tool of describing, on the other hand, is employed to provide the physical description and personality features of the killer as a 'white male, thirty-four' years old (58), and as being 'meticulous' (59). The material processes ascribed to the killer further frame his character. The *modus operandi* in his crimes is revealed, readers know that he 'skins his

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humps' (50, 51), and uses 'women' (49). In addition, his transgender inclinations are manifest through the material process 'Gumb toweled himself pink' (57). Buffalo Bill, an organized serial killer, can be regarded as a particular type of gain killer, since his goal is to obtain women's skins rather than money from his crimes.

No.	Concordance
Buffalo Bill	
41	Take the knowledge of Buffalo Bill you got from Lecter
42	ford, he's promised he'll name Buffalo Bill in exchange for
43	!" "Dr. Lecter, why do you say Buffalo Bill's not a sadist?"
44	" "Good, Jerry, listen I think Buffalo Bill can sew. He cut
45	WAIST. MOTHER FUCKER CAN SEW. BUFFALO BILL'S TRAINED TO
46	the laundry room. She took the Buffalo Bill file, a four-inch
47	d to leave the Academy to hunt Buffalo Bill, a lot of
48	saved lives. Clarice?" "Yes?" "Buffalo Bill has a two-story house
49	job is--" "How many women has Buffalo Bill used?" "The police
50	e. Do you know why he's called Buffalo Bill?" "Yes." "Tell me
51	"They call him Buffalo Bill because he skins his humps
52	impressed that he could predict Buffalo Bill would start scalping
53	that you do all the time-- hunt Buffalo Bill?" "I do it all I
Gumb	
54	Raspail told Dr. Lecter that Gumb was obsessed with moths,
55	her alive? Worst, Fredrica and Gumb truly were friends to
56	ational Rehabilitation taught Gumb to be a tailor during
57	but he decided they would do. Gumb toweled himself pink and
58	m door. In the shower was Jame Gumb, white male, thirty-

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	four
59	vering the ceiling lights. Mr. Gumb was meticulous in the

Table 4 Buffalo Bill, aka Jame Gumb, the serial killer in *Silence of the Lambs*

Dr Hannibal Lecter helps the FBI to capture other serial killers, by providing a psychological profile for the killer and speculating on the motives behind his crimes, selection of victims, his pattern and his next moves. The character of Dr Lecter gives rise to a tendency in both reality and fiction to seek the help of detained serial killers in capturing other serial killers, a tendency deservedly branded as ‘the Lecter Syndrome’. Indeed, profiling is intensively employed in the processes of catching serial killers. The police investigation of serial murders involves accumulating a file on the killer for the purposes of profiling that killer, as evidenced in Harris’ novels (46, 133, 158).

In *Red Dragon*, the FBI agent, Will Graham, shockingly realises that Lecter is the serial killer they have been chasing and that, unlike other serial killers who keep trophies i.e. parts of their victims’ bodies, Lecter has preferred to eat his trophies (71, 114). After a violent confrontation between both Lecter and Graham, Lecter is arrested and declared insane by the court (85). While being detained in an asylum, Lecter continues to help the FBI in profiling other killers. He has helped in profiling both the Red Dragon and Buffalo Bill which consequently led to the disclosure of their identities (41, 42, 43, 54, 96). Indeed, Dolarhyde, the Red Dragon, metaphorically perceives Lecter as selling him to the FBI (60). However, Lecter has never forgotten his grudge against Graham, which is clear in the material processes ascribed to Lecter who has given Graham’s address to the Dragon (63, 65). Later, Lecter is approached by Agent Clarice Starling and he helps her to capture Buffalo Bill (129). He grows fond of Clarice and monitors her progress in the FBI even after his escape to Florence. Lecter’s emotional attachment to Clarice can be accounted for by facts from his past. He was born in Lithuania and was orphaned when very young, just like Clarice (130, 131). Clarice, in turn, is fascinated by Dr Lecter. She could not tolerate the idea of Mason Verger torturing Dr Lecter to death. Mason Verger, a wealthy sadistic paedophile who was mutilated by Lecter before his detainment, plans to avenge himself by assigning a large bounty to any person who helps in capturing Lecter (116, 122, 127, 141, 145, 146, 148, 149, 152). He devises a

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sadistic plan to have Lecter 'eaten alive' (111) and 'consumed in two sittings' (136) by wild pigs starting from his feet upwards (124). Clarice Starling attempts to save Lecter after his capture by Verger (140). However, she gets injured and Lecter saves her by carrying her outside the barn away from the wild pigs (132, 139).

Employing the tool of describing, Lecter's physical description is framed as having 'small white teeth' (72, 144), 'a sleek dark head' (75), 'tearing teeth' (87), a very powerful sense of 'smell' (88, 159), 'red lips' (101), not much 'sweat' (103), and as being strong (137). Lecter's intelligence, brainpower and eloquence are foregrounded. He is described as 'intelligent' (64), 'so lucid, so perceptive' (67), 'not crazy' (68), 'smart' (118), and not having 'emotions' (128). Actually, he is charismatic and powerful enough to penetrate people's minds and influence them. His charismatic nature is evidenced in an incident with his fellow inmate, Miggs. After Miggs insulted Clarice Starling by throwing semen at her (99), Lecter talked to him all night and led him to kill himself (90, 91, 154). Lecter is quite enigmatic and hard to understand. The 'psychiatric community questions whether Dr Lecter should be termed a man' (142). He is also described as 'malicious' (81), 'polite to the last' (98), 'erect and graceful' (105), 'erect as a dancer' (138), 'armed and dangerous' (147), and having 'perfect manners' (153). Indeed, he is attractive even for the media. Lecter is 'known in the tabloids' and all the newspapers covering his case dub him 'Hannibal the Cannibal' (69, 70). Actually, the media continue to adore Lecter and prefer to publish news about him even more than celebrities (92, 97, 157).

The tool of equating, via the use of appositional equivalence, is also employed to frame Dr Lecter in readers' minds. He is referred to as 'Dr. Fuck Face' (76), 'the new Memphian' (77), 'Prisoner' (86), 'murderer of nine' (100), 'the psychiatrist' (106), 'the fugitive' (110), 'American serial murderer' (114), Hannibal the Cannibal (114, 119), 'the lethal madman' (117), 'veteran of prison' (120), 'goddamned Lecter' (126), and 'known murderer of ten' (150).

Dr Lecter's violence and physical power is framed via the material processes used to describe his actions: 'Dr. Lecter killed nine people' (78), 'Lecter killed Raspail' (82), 'Dr. Lecter killed two policemen' (89), 'He tore a nurse up' (94), 'Dr. Lecter savaged the nurse' (102), 'Dr Lecter removed a slice of Krendler's prefrontal lobe' (134), 'Dr Lecter made Miggs swallow his tongue'

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(154), ‘the nurse whose tongue Dr Lecter had eaten’ (155), and ‘the bow hunter Dr Lecter had killed’ (156).

Lecter’s long confinement and imprisonment as well as people’s immense fear of him are emphasised (61, 62, 66, 74, 80, 112, 113). However, he manages to escape in *The Silence of the Lambs* after killing two police officers. After his escape (86), he is put by the FBI on the list of ‘the Most Wanted’ (83). For many years, the FBI cannot get any information about Lecter’s whereabouts (125) since he has ‘fled to Florence. Plop. Hannibal Lecter was Dr Fell’ (115). Lecter successfully assumes the identity of Dr Fell, curator of the Capponi Library in Florence, due to his wide readings and vast knowledge of Art.

Lecter is not depicted as an ordinary killer but as a phenomenon whose history needs to be written and studied (93, 108) for being a ‘gifted psychologist’ (95), an exceptional criminal profiler (96), a gentleman ‘polite to the last’ (98, 105, 153), a musician (123), a ferocious killer (78, 82, 89, 94, 100, 102), and a cannibal (69, 155). Dr Lecter is an organized serial killer, however, it is rather difficult to classify him into one type of serial killer. It is likely that he can be regarded as a hedonist, and more particularly a thrill killer, since he finds pleasure in killing people. He can also be seen as a power seeker, since he exerts power on his victims and, arguably, believes he absorbs their power through eating them. Indeed, Dr Lecter can also be classified as a revenge killer since he killed some of his victims for revenge including Paul Krendler and Rinaldo Pazzi, among others. However, Dr Lecter’s classification as a revenge killer is more in evidence in Harris’s novel *Hannibal Rising*, where he kills the men who had killed and eaten his sister, Mischa, in his childhood.

No.	Concordance
Red Dragon – Lecter	
60	look at a mail drop to see if Lecter had sold him. If he co
61	We’d have a goddamned stampede if people thought Lecter was out.
62	Crawford told Graham where Lecter was held, how the note
63	your home address. Lecter gave the bastard your home address
64	not as intelligent as Hannibal Lecter. He promised to provide
65	think you might lose Will after Lecter published his home address

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66	and shiny. You know, when Lecter was first captured we
67	so rare to get one alive. Lecter is so lucid, so perceptive
68	he liked it. Still does. Dr. Lecter is not crazy, in any c
69	nearly killed him. Dr. Lecter, known in the tabloids as 'Hannibal the Cannibal'
70	"Freddy Lounds? I covered the Lecter case for the Tattler.
71	you were the one who nailed Lecter three years ago.
72	morbid. He laughed. Dr. Lecter has small white teeth.
Silence of the Lambs – Lecter	
73	peace. "Tell me his name, Dr. Lecter, " Starling said. "Dr.
74	to Pembry after they had Dr. Lecter secure in his cell. "H
75	bars ribbed the walls. Dr. Lecter had a sleek dark head.
76	've killed her, Dr. Fuck Face. Lecter knew some more and I c
77	words, Starling shuddered. Dr. Lecter, the new Memphian. Sta
78	air from his nose. "Dr. Lecter killed nine people we
79	you can see that all the Lecter information, yours and
80	suite seemed enormous to Dr. Lecter after his long confinement
81	knew what the malicious Dr. Lecter would say, and it was
82	include the final session, when Lecter killed Raspail. More i
83	on it. The Director's putting Lecter on the Most Wanted. Ja
84	profile she'd gotten from Dr. Lecter, it had to help her wi
85	Lecter. Years ago, when Dr. Lecter was declared insane, t
86	down. Prisoner is missing. Lecter is missing. Outside po
87	between the tearing teeth. Lecter shook his head like a
88	checked the cuffs again. Dr. Lecter could smell Petnbry's
89	io just had the bulletin-- Dr. Lecter killed two policemen a
90	The overnight orderly heard Lecter talking softly to Miggs. Lecter knew a lot about Miggs
91	overnight couldn't hear what Lecter said. Miggs was crying
92	news conferences. Dr. Hannibal Lecter was catnip to the media
93	did you? We tried to study Lecter. We thought, 'Here's a
94	Picasso drew him, thanks to Lecter. He tore a nurse up in
95	useful from Dr. Hannibal Lecter. Lecter's a gifted psychologist
96	Remember the Red Dragon? Lecter turned Francis Dolarhyde

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97	supermarket press. They love Lecter even better than Prince
98	little Starling." Hannibal Lecter, polite to the last, d
99	it was semen, not blood, and Lecter was calling to her,
100	up from her briefcase. Dr. Lecter, murderer of nine, had
101	even know what it is. Dr. Lecter pursed his red lips be
102	been in effect ever since Dr. Lecter savaged the nurse, and
103	him didn't work last time. Dr. Lecter doesn't sweat much." "
104	What does he want her for, Dr. Lecter?" "He wants a vest with
	tits on it," Dr. Lecter said.
105	from her lap. "Please," Dr. Lecter said, erect and graceful
106	"The psychiatrist-- Dr. Hannibal Lecter," Crawford said
Hannibal – Hannibal	
107	Starling, are doing to catch Hannibal Lecter, what could I
108	cites him. When the history of Hannibal Lecter is written, a
109	Mason Verger about how to catch Hannibal Lecter. General
110	warning the fugitive Hannibal Lecter that he was in danger
111	began his arrangements for Dr Hannibal Lecter to be eaten
	alive
112	middle of the cell where Dr Hannibal Lecter had spent eight
	years
113	of this view on the wall of Hannibal Lecter's cell. Did
114	American serial murderer, Dr Hannibal Lecter. Hannibal the
	Cannibal. Lecter
115	it lands in a thickening pool. Hannibal Lecter had fled to
	Florence. Plop. Hannibal Lecter was Dr Fell.
116	Pazzi also had a chance to sell Hannibal Lecter to Mason
	Verger
117	interview the lethal madman Dr Hannibal Lecter, dubbed by
	the newspaper
118	believing he was as smart as Hannibal Lecter, had made the
119	she was trying to interrogate Hannibal the Cannibal in the
120	sleep beneath the painting. Dr Hannibal Lecter, veteran of
	prison
121	as the policeman who caught Dr Hannibal Lecter? For a police

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122	Once he had decided to sell Hannibal Lecter to Mason Verger
Lecter	
123	'Yquem on his candle stand, Dr Lecter plays Bach. In his
124	The first day, Mason wanted Dr Lecter to watch them eat his feet.
125	here's no reference RFLP on Dr Lecter, he escaped too long a
126	About that goddamned Lecter, no, I'd have notified
127	Verger is trying to capture Dr Lecter himself for purposes
128	Hannibal Lecter does not have emotions
129	They exchanged information. Dr Lecter gave her insight on
130	We knooowww Hannibal Lecter was born in Lithuania.
131	to the sister. The point is, Lecter was an orphan, like Clarice
132	night watchman. Now he became Lecter the Protector of her
133	security of the FBI files on Lecter. Margot had to keep he
134	resembling a tonsil spoon, Dr Lecter removed a slice of Krendler prefrontal lobe, then another, until he had four.
135	the prime dates for catching Dr Lecter. Despite their failure
136	sympathy. Carlo, I want Dr Lecter consumed in two sittings
137	always surprising to watch Dr Lecter lift a body; size for
138	the rifle in the hay. Dr Lecter, erect as a dancer and
139	the barn and into the night. Dr Lecter, holding Starling, was
140	could not abide the thought of Dr Lecter tortured to death; she
141	Mason wanting to kill Hannibal Lecter. If he had done it him
142	psychiatric community that Dr Lecter should be termed a man
143	of the FBI in the pursuit of Lecter. He only shared inform
144	of propriety, but just. Dr Lecter smiled, with his small white teeth
145	Mason would pay extra to see Dr Lecter butchered alive, even
146	Carlo knew he could butcher Dr Lecter and have his head and
147	the standard warning about Dr Lecter being armed and dangerous
148	posted the reward after Dr Lecter escaped from custody
149	they say. I don't remember. Dr Lecter broke my neck with the
150	seven years since Dr Hannibal Lecter, known murderer of ten

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151	she had always wanted to chase Lecter. The truth was more co
152	The prospect of death for Dr Lecter pleased him mightily.
153	and thought a moment. Dr Lecter had perfect manners,
154	Do you know why Dr Lecter made Miggs swallow his tongue
155	of the nurse whose tongue Dr Lecter had eaten during an at
156	photograph of the bow hunter Dr Lecter had killed years ago.
157	ground, and he thought of Dr Lecter as a sort of media bog
158	where they maintained a Hannibal Lecter Room. The college had
159	chairs cranked back until Dr Lecter can smell their hair

Table 5 Hannibal Lecter, the serial killer/profiler in *Red Dragon*, *Silence of the Lambs* and *Hannibal*

Serial killers tend to be metaphorically depicted as monsters since monsters are the stereotypical icons of horror. In Harris' novels, Hannibal Lecter, can be implicitly seen as a monster due to his cannibalism. The metaphor of 'hunting' with the FBI agent or even others, such as Mason Verger and his men, as a 'hunter' and the serial killer as 'being hunted' is quite prevalent in *Red Dragon*, *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Hannibal* (37, 39, 47, 53, 107, 109, 121, 135, 143, 151).

4. Conclusion

Framing encourages readers to construct these fictional serial killers and perceive them in a certain way. Hence, it assists authors to capture readers' attention and make them more engaged with their novels and more emotionally attached to or disturbed by the killers. Thomas Harris frames his serial killers using multiple linguistic devices. The concordance analysis conducted in this paper provides sufficient evidence that such linguistic devices are captured, to a great extent, by the Critical Stylistics toolkit including: naming, describing, equating, implying and representing actions, events and states. Information about the killers are provided through a series of predicative nouns, attributive and predicative adjectives, epithets and appositions. It should be noted, however, that this information tends to create a negative stance towards the killers. An exception to this tendency would be Hannibal Lecter whose construction

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constitutes a mix of qualities that evoke both disgust and fascination at the same time. The analysis of the transitivity processes has revealed some significant similarities between the killers. Material processes expressing violence are ascribed to all of them. In addition, their patterns and *modus operandi* are always revealed by these processes. Metaphors are also used to frame not only the serial killers but the whole process of committing crime, crime investigation, profiling and arrest.

This paper has used a corpus-assisted critical stylistic approach to study the framing of serial killers. This synergy between corpus linguistic procedures (which have facilitated dealing with the three novels in question and focusing on the framing of the serial killers), the notion of framing (which explains the construction of the serial killers) and the Critical Stylistics tools (which have provided the toolkit to detect the linguistic devices used for framing the killers), to a large extent, provides a comprehensive model for the study of the serial killers in the selected novels, and possibly, and more generally, for the study of characters in fiction.

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