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Schematic Incongruity, Conversational Power-Play and Criminal Mind Style in Thomas Harris' *Silence of the Lambs*.

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Keywords: crime fiction; schema theory; conversation analysis; metaphor; psychological profiling; (criminal) mind style

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Abstract

This paper considers the construction of the profilers and criminals in Thomas Harris' [2013] (1988) novel *Silence of the Lambs* through the analysis of selected indicative criminal mind-related extracts. The aim is to consider such characters' construction through analysis of schematic incongruity, conversational power-play, language depicting the actual fictional criminal viewpoint and, lastly, psychological profiling language, the style of which has criminal mind style 'potential'. Schematic incongruity has a role to play in generating impressions of both the normality and abnormality of psychological profilers and the killers they pursue. Serial killers are constructed as not only physically/psychologically 'abnormal' but also as 'abnormals' amongst other 'abnormals' in terms of their conversational patterns, too. Where some criminals' apparent reluctance, or inability, to accord to conversational norms marks them as uncivilised, killer/profiler Lecter's mostly conventional conversational politeness marks him out as indirectly mocking the social norms he sometimes chooses to accord to. Where killer Gumb is concerned, profiling language, and language depicting his criminal viewpoint, draws on metaphors, and references to, killing being likened to hunting, work, and art, suggesting that killing is necessary, commendable and ceremonial, the victims mere things to be utilised in a venture that can only be described as worthy. Though Lecter is shown to be 'born' into deviant behaviour, and Gumb is suggested to have been 'made' into a criminal, the novel undoubtedly suggests connections, similarities even, between both such character types' extreme criminal behaviour and those wanting to understand 'criminal minds' through the profiling practice.

Bionote

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Language, Ideology and Identity in Serial Killer Narratives (2011); and *Deviance in Contemporary Crime Fiction* (2007).

1. Introduction

At the mention of 'fictional detective figures', most of us tend to activate a relatively well-developed schema, or knowledge-bundle (for an introduction to literary schema theory analysis, see Stockwell 2002, chapter 6). As argued in Gregoriou (2007a), fictional detective figures are often Holmes-like individuals whose intelligence is beyond average, for which reason they prefer to work alone, and are prone to obsession over criminal cases. Since they tend to sacrifice themselves wholly to the work to be done, many are seen as tragic figures, their suffering producing knowledge, insight and, ultimately, results. It is perhaps for this reason that readers/viewers tend to be far more tolerant of fictional detectives' social deviance[1]/rule-breaking than they would be of other fictional character types encountered. We come to sympathise with, or forgive our fictional detectives for, their needing to break the law in order to catch criminals, for instance. Having said that, our biased judgment of fictional detectives' abnormal behaviour indeed depends on context, an issue that the genre of crime fiction exposes extensively.

A relatively recent phenomenon in crime fiction is the emergence of a new, but not unrelated, kind of character: that of the psychological profiler. Like detectives in the form of amateur sleuths and Private Investigators (PI), such profilers most often operate outside the institution of the traditional police force. Unlike the amateur sleuth and PI though, profilers' speciality is to 'think outside the box' when dealing with violent

[1] In previous work (Gregoriou 2007), I have come to use the terms 'deviance' and 'deviation' interchangeably, whether referring to crime fiction language or social behavior (and even genre). For the purpose of clarity, I here use 'deviation', the more usual term in stylistics, for departure from linguistic norms, and 'deviance' for departure from social ones.

crime solving. They possess specialist knowledge and training into the way the criminal mind works, their skillset going beyond that of even the most gifted detective. See Gregoriou (2020: 173) for a discussion of the criminal portrayal in McDermid's (2003) [1995] *Mermaids Singing,* for instance, the novel which first introduced the author's recurring protagonists, Detective Inspector Carol Jordan and clinical psychologist and profiler Tony Hill. In the paper in question, criminal 'mind style' analysis (derived from cognitive linguistics, to be defined in the next section) is not limited to extracts focalised through this novel's psychopathic killer Angelica, who is portrayed as mentally ill, but also those of Hill's psychological profiling of Angelica, as he engages in transference with her throughout. Interestingly, the Angelica-focalised sections are in italics, the font choice graphologically foregrounding the perpetrator sections as deviant and "other" to the main narrative (Seago 2018: 923) where Hill's psychological profiling of the killer appears in a non-inflected font throughout. In adopting particular criminal mind styles, as in language alluding to the criminal consciousness, fictional psychological profilers project the kinds of ideological viewpoints the genre tends to steer clear of, such as in breaking taboos dealing with how violence and sex are discussed and represented in the genre. Such engagement is applicable to real-life psychological profilers' autobiographies too. For analysis of such mind style markers noted in the language employed in Paul Britton's 1997 *Jigsaw Man*, an autobiographical book detailing the author's career as a forensic psychologist and offender profiler working on various real-life criminal cases across the UK, see Gregoriou (2011: 164-6).

This paper considers the construction of the profilers and criminals in Thomas Harris' [2013] (1988) novel *Silence of the Lambs* through the analysis of selected

indicative criminal mind-related extracts. The aim of this paper is to consider these characters' construction through analysis of schematic incongruity, conversational power-play and psychological profiling language, as well as language depicting the actual fictional criminal viewpoint. With respect to profiling, I argue that through the use of particular linguistic choices, what psychological profilers do is adopt a criminal mind style that can be described as 'potential', i.e. as indicative of the mind of the killers that language purports to describe, the ideology of which is worth delving into. I elaborate on this notion first.

2. Criminal Mind Style and Psychological Profiling

Mind style, first coined by Fowler in 1977, and developed by Leech and Short in 1981 and 2006 (see also Gregoriou 2007a and Semino 2007 among others), is the term currently given to identifying how a fictional character's worldview is represented in a narrative, through the identification and grouping of linguistic features such as particular transitivity markers, emotive lexis and figurative language. Palmer, in his book *Fictional Minds* (2004) sees the representation of characters' minds as central to the definition and study of narrative. For Palmer (2004: 19), the notion of 'mind' encompasses 'all aspects of our inner life', our 'inner life' including our feelings, beliefs and emotions, as well as our general thinking and perceiving of various events and processes. Central to narrative then, is a reconstruction of how characters' minds function, which then enables us as readers to make sense of actions and events encountered in fictional narrative story telling. Semino (2007) also identifies Margolin's (2003) notion of 'cognitive style', or 'cognitive mental functioning', as somewhat equivalent to that of mind style.

An important aspect of mind style is the representation of deviation from the norm, deviation being one mode through which prominence, or the psychological effect of foregrounding (see Leech and Short 1981, 2006), can be achieved through, among other things, language. In an analysis of a true crime book (Gregoriou 2007b), I previously touched on both linguistic deviation and social deviance and argued that discourse used to describe serial killers contributes to mystifying them, 'othering' them and, in some cases, literally alienating them from the rest of us 'normals'. Linguistic analysis of metaphor particularly shows how killers are often schematically conceptualised as devils, monsters or vampires perhaps because, unlike killers of single victims, there is so often so little justification as to why serial murderers act as they do; since 'ordinary' killers do not behave this way, they must, according to the discourse surrounding them, be monstrous, their reason for killing being embedded in some other, and indeed outside, source, such as Satanism or even extra-terrestrial presence.

According to such discourse, the 'monstrous' behaviour of such murderers is so outside the patterns of 'normal' criminal behaviour that it has given rise to a new kind of killer-catching character in crime fiction, that of the psychological profiler:

> Psychological profiling is a technique that involves analysing details about a crime, including specific scene-of-crime details, in order to build up a 'psychological profile' of the criminal in an attempt to narrow the field of suspects. Profiling is used primarily in serial-killer investigations, and can provide indications as to the approximate age of the killer, their gender and sexual orientation, their physical characteristics, their occupation, education, marital situation, and general personality, as well as the reasons why they kill, and why they kill in the way that they do. Most usefully for the procedural, particularly for narrative reasons, profiling can also provide some idea about the killer's likely future actions, and this allows the investigative team to anticipate the killer's actions in order to intercept, and ultimately apprehend, her or (usually) him.

Scaggs (2005: 101-2)

Empowered by their knowledge of psychology, and access to relevant data, such individuals devise psychological profiles to assist investigators trying to catch such extreme killers. Once treated with suspicion and distrust by the police, judiciary and public alike, the psychological profiler has recently gained in credibility, thanks in part, in the UK and USA at least, to TV series such as *Cracker* (1993-1996)*, Criminal Minds* (2005-2020)*,* and *Wire in the Blood* (2002-2009), the latter based upon the novels of Val McDermid. Their assisting of police officers in the solving of apparently otherwise unsolvable crimes in real life have likewise altered attitudes toward such figures, with scepticism having come to (grudging perhaps) be replaced by respect. The introduction of the profiler has also coincided with a change in the nature of the kinds of crime now depicted in the genre, crime fiction having become increasingly more graphic in terms of its representations of sex, violence and other taboo subjects, including cannibalism and paedophilia. Where once motive actually formed the very bedrock of detection, the crimes more recently depicted are also very often without motive, seemingly pointless and random. A profiler, by nature of their training and work, deals with the workings of minds, specialising in fact in the most deeply disturbed ones at that. Novels often even explain the profiler's ability to deal with the workings of a dysfunctional mind whilst making reference to profilers themselves being disturbed or dysfunctional in some way. Take, for example, McDermid's previously introduced profiler Tony Hill as depicted in the 2004 novel *The Torment of Others,* where he muses on the psychological profile of serial killers generally:

> The fucked-up childhood was more or less a given too. Of course, it was possible to have all the markers without growing up to embrace the darkness. Tony knew that only too well; anyone examining his own past would have

> found a series of indicators that, in another man, would have been the first steps on the tortuous routes to psychopathy. For him, they had provided the foundation of his empathy with those who had ended up on a different path. He was never entirely sure where the crucial fork in the road had been, but he had ended up a different kind of hunter. And just as the serial killer had a sure instinct for his victims, so Tony had an apparent sixth sense for tracking his prey.
>
> McDermid (2004: 344-5)

Notice the excerpt's grammar/transitivity hinting at a lack of responsibility behind psychopaths 'ending up' in 'different paths' to his, alongside the text's epistemic and deontic modality respectively suggesting that things happened by possibility ('it was possible') and also necessity (with reference to what someone 'would have found', for instance) (see Simpson (1993) for his system of the epistemic and deontic forms of modality). More noticeably though, a range of conceptual metaphors (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980) are here employed: EVIL IS PHYSICAL DARKNESS ('to embrace the darkness'), LIFE IS A JOURNEY ('ended up on a different path') (and its encompassing FATE IS A TURN IN A CROSSROAD one realised in 'the crucial fork in the road'), and MURDERERS ARE HUNTERS/ANIMALS TO THEMSELVES BE HUNTED ('a different kind of hunter'), all serve to reinforce our schematic expectations as to the nature of good and evil, and how it is that people experiencing similar traumas can supposedly choose, or otherwise be drawn to, the serial killing route with others opting for the psychological profiling one. To use another metaphor, these resulting choices are mere differing sides of the same coin. Although such metaphorical patterns are widely shared by communities of speakers, Kovecses (2000) has suggested that metaphor use varies from person to person, due to autobiographical experiences and personal interests. Thus, patterns of metaphor use can be exploited by authors of fiction to convey a particular world view and cognitive habits of individual characters. Consequently, whilst the

metaphors used by the character of Hill are widely shared ones, their choice and grouping are here shaped by his own (if fictional) experiences (the suggestion being that his childhood was far from pleasant), these contributing to the portrayal of his particular world view, done so through his very own cognitive habits. Here, Hill claims to have opted for a tortuous path that yet was based on empathy over violence and killing.

3. Thomas Harris's *Silence of the Lambs*

Harris's [2013] (1988) novel *Silence of the Lambs* is arguably the first novel to feature a psychological profiler as a prime character. Young trainee FBI agent Clarice Starling is, unlike her traditional fellow police officers, one such profiler. This novel, and also its prequel *Red Dragon* (1981), also has the distinctive feature of including a second unusual character in the form of the serial killer Hannibal Lecter. Lecter is a psychiatrist by profession, and whilst he helps Starling to build up a profile of another serial killer from inside his cell, he is simultaneously profiling her. Starling is invited by her Section Chief Jack Crawford to interview Lecter, in order to complete a questionnaire to be used to inform a psychological profiling database that the FBI were compiling for use in unsolved cases. Thereafter, she is caught up in a race against time to find another serial killer, one nicknamed Buffalo Bill, who skins the girls he holds hostage, before he kills again. 'Armed with his privileged knowledge of the identity of Buffalo Bill, [Lecter] manipulates the law enforcement apparatus at every level for his strategic advantage' (Simpson, 2010: 142), and even manages to escape. Third person narration is used throughout, although the narrative mode and point of view change from chapter to chapter, with different characters alternating in the role of focaliser, including profilers and criminals.

3.1 Schematic Incongruence, Conversational Power Play and Criminal Mind Style

Readers are first introduced to Clarice Starling at the very beginning of the novel, while she is on her way to the FBI Behavioural Science Building. She functions as focaliser to the narrative at this stage: we get access to her musings while she proceeds to engage in dialogue with Jack Crawford. Crawford quickly establishes the purpose of his summons:

> 'Do you spook easily, Starling?'
> 'Not yet.'
> 'See, we've tried to interview and examine all the thirty-two known serial murderers we have in custody, to build up a database for psychological profiling in unsolved cases. […] But the one we want the most, we haven't been able to get. I want you to go after him tomorrow in the asylum.'
> Clarice Starling felt a glad knocking in her chest and some apprehension too.
> 'Who's the subject?'
> 'The psychiatrist – Dr Hannibal Lecter,' Crawford said.
> A brief silence follows the name, always, in any civilized gathering.
> Starling looked at Crawford steadily, but she was too still.
> 'Hannibal the Cannibal', she said.
> 'Yes.'
>
> (p. 4-5)

Rather than 'cannibal' being used only to metaphorically allude to the violence of 'Hannibal' – whose name is a near-homonym/homophone of, and rhymes with, 'cannibal' – the text here hints at an individual with literal cannibalistic tendencies, as in a taste for human flesh. Put differently, Lecter's nickname and Starling's reaction to it is sufficient to trigger hints as at the nature of his crimes, which can be seen to be drawing upon schemata activated by the word 'cannibal'. With Lecter himself later saying 'Nothing happened to me, Officer Starling. *I* happened. You can't reduce me to a set of influences' (p. 24), this character can easily be described as 'monstrous'; he is a 'born-

evil' rather than 'made-evil' (see related discussion in Gregoriou 2007a: 114). Semino (2002: 104) makes the point that once a schema is activated, 'it drives further processing by generating expectations and inferences, and by guiding the identification of the component elements of the input and establishment of relationships between them'. As the novel unfolds, this cannibal schema is reinforced through flesh-eating references found in subsequent dialogue between Starling, Crawford, Dr Frederick Chilton, the administrator at the psychiatric hospital, and Lecter himself, as well as Starling's free indirect thoughts. Portrayed as available but also bright, ambitious (notice the glad knocking in her chest), and even naïve, Starling is used by Crawford to get through to Lecter, who he describes in non-human terms: as a 'monster' who has the 'curiosity that makes a snake look in a bird's nest' (p. 7), a description particularly telling given Starling's surname itself triggering metaphors of a vulnerable bird. Crawford even takes advantage of Starling's youth and good looks; in conjunction with the 'bird' associations her name triggers, he uses her as bait, in an attempt to get Lecter to cooperate with the officers. This impression is reinforced when Starling later goes to the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane to visit Lecter. In briefing Starling on her visit, Chilton describes Lecter as an 'impenetrable' (p. 13) 'creature' (p. 12), again hinting at non-humanness, and a 'pure sociopath' (p. 13), and outlines the procedures for talking to him, which include passing nothing to him but soft paper. Chilton also tells her that following previous violent attacks of his, Lecter is never outside his cell without wearing full restraints and a mouthpiece. This has been since he was treated by a nurse;

> 'When the nurse bent over him, he did this to her'. Chilton handed Clarice Starling a dog-eared photograph. 'The doctors managed to save one of her eyes […] He

> broke her jaw to get at her tongue. His pulse never got over eighty-five, even when he swallowed it'.
>
> (p. 14)

In this way, our mental picture of Lecter is already established by schemata associated with murder, non-humanness, cannibalism and sociopathology, generating expectations and inferences associated with those terms (for a discussion of the text's monstrousness moving the novel 'beyond the borders of the detective genre [and] into territories of the Gothic and Horror', see Messent, 2008: 15). Those expectations and inferences are important in colouring readers' reaction to Lecter, who they get to meet alongside other inmates next.

One of the ways in which the mind of the criminally insane is represented in these novels, is through peculiarities in conversation. For example, during her first visit to the Baltimore prison, Starling gives Alan, one of the better-behaved inmates, her coat, after which the following passage features:

> He rolled his tongue around in his cheek as he took Starling's coat.
> 'Thank you.' she said
> 'You're more than welcome. How often do you shit?' Alan asked.
> 'What did you say?'
> 'Does it come out lo-o-o-o-nnng?'
> 'I'll hang these somewhere myself.'
> 'You don't have anything in the way – you can bend over and watch it come out and see if it changes color when the air hits it, do you do that? Does it look like you have a big brown tail?' He wouldn't let go of the coat.
>
> (p. 11)

As Semino (2007) has argued, the inability to follow conventions as outlined by Politeness theorists (e.g. Brown and Levinson 1987; see also Leech 1983) can provide evidence of 'cognitive impairment'. Though departing from such conventions is something we all do at times, Alan's particular inability to follow politeness

conventions is here certainly linked to his social deviance. While Alan first takes Starling's coat and responds positively and schema-appropriately to her thanking him (note him saying 'You're more than welcome'), he next asks not only irrelevant and inappropriate questions but also inadvertently attacks Starling's negative face (her wish to be free) and positive face (her wish to be approved of). The questioning is both negatively and positively impolite (see impoliteness model in Culpeper 1996; Culpeper et al 2003); it is negatively face threatening as it is imposing, ridiculing and associates Starling with a negative aspect, and it is positively face threatening as it uses a taboo subject and is designed to make her feel uncomfortable. In Spencer-Oatey's rapport management theory[2] (2008: 32) terms, the reader possibly encounters the strategy of rapport challenge orientation, as in a desire to challenge or impair harmonious relations between interlocutors (for more on strategies of impoliteness, see Culpeper 2011). In any case, Alan's inability, or reluctance, to accord to conversational norms and politeness-related expectations could in fact be described as a criminal mind style marker for him, in that his language reflects the ways in which his mind works, or indeed fails to work perhaps. In Semino's words (2007: 166), we here possibly encounter an 'inability to assess what normally counts as the "appropriate" level of detail in communication'. Similarly, Multiple Miggs, a patient in the cell next to Lecter's, tries to get Starling's attention by hissing 'I can smell your cunt' (p. 16), an utterance which is impolite as positively and negatively threatening to Starling, just like Alan's is, not to mention as suggestive of actual violence even. It is mostly through

[2] Developed to overcome the weaknesses of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, rapport management theory accounts for face as interpersonal needs, sociality rights and obligations as social expectancies, and interactional goals, which can be transactional and/or interactional. Whilst acknowledging the complexity of communication by considering many interaction management factors, Spencer-Oatey (2008: 28) suggests that speakers hold any of the following four types of rapport orientation: enhancement, maintenance, neglect or challenge.

such inability, or perhaps unwillingness, to accord to conversational politeness appropriateness that prison inmates such as Alan and Multiple Miggs are shown to be socially deviant, standing outside the norm in a social sense rather than through the use of metaphor or any other literary device. Indeed, a striking feature of *Silence of the Lambs* is a tendency to avoid embellishing description. As for Buffalo Bill, he is seen interacting with his latest victim, Catherine Martin, through direct directives in the form of imperatives when holding her hostage; he directs her to take off her clothes, wash and rub cream on herself and clean the floor she is on (p. 176-7) without the need for any negative politeness, given the extreme power he then holds over her.

It is through Starling's viewpoint that we, as readers, are introduced to Hannibal Lecter; his first appearance is when Clarice first visits him in his cell, and we first encounter him through her eyes:

> Dr Lecter's cell is well beyond the others, facing only a closet across the corridor, and it is unique in other ways. The front is a wall of bars, but within the bars, at a distance greater than the human reach, is a second barrier, a stout nylon net stretched from floor to ceiling and wall to wall. Behind the net, Starling could see a table bolted to the floor and piled high with softcover books and papers, and a straight chair, also fastened down.
>
> Dr Hannibal Lecter himself reclined on his bunk, perusing the Italian edition of *Vogue.* He held the loose pages in his right hand and put them beside him one by one with his left. Dr Lecter has six fingers on his left hand.
>
> (p. 17)

Here, two schemata are activated that are incongruent with one another. The description of a prison cell (or 'cage' surrounded by 'nylon web', as Starling describes it on p. 18) generates expectations of imprisonment and a lack of civility, as did the reference to his name generating awkwardness in 'civilized' gatherings in this section's first extract. Contrastingly, the here reference to uniqueness, and several books and magazine *Vogue,*

and the Italian edition of that, connotes an image of an educated man with an interest in, among other things, high fashion culture, and refinement. The incongruence lies between there being two conflicting images of Lecter emerging at once; Lecter's previously constructed evil, uncivilised and sociopathic killer image conflicts with the image of the civilised, educated and urbane Lecter Starling here encounters (see also related discussion in Taylor, 1994: 219-220). Not unrelated to this contrast is perhaps the reference to the doctor's six-fingered hand which (problematically, perhaps) hints at a physical abnormality that might go unnoticeable but might well bear links to his psychological one. Such supposed link between these abnormalities is worth dwelling on; as I elaborate elsewhere (Gregoriou 2020: 170), 'suggesting (most often causal) links between a supposedly abnormal physicality and criminal behaviour must be challenged, particularly because of assumptions regarding the extent to which certain physicalities are themselves deemed unappealing compared to others' (see also Gregoriou 2007a). This particular form of polydactyly being 'the rarest', as it was his middle finger that was 'perfectly replicated' (p. 25), goes further to characterise Lecter as especially deviant: as physically/psychologically 'abnormal' even among other 'abnormals'. In any case, characteristics of the 'normal' are contrasted with those of the 'abnormal' later on as well, and sometimes even in the same sentence. For example, at the end of her first visit to Lecter, Miggs gets Starling's attention with the positively and negatively face threatening 'I bit my wrist so I can diiiieeeeeeeee – see how it bleeds?' (p. 28) and then flicks semen at her. Lecter calls her back and says: 'I would not have that happen to you. Discourtesy is unspeakably ugly to me' (p. 28), signalling that the act was unacceptable to him, and one he would not have allowed had he had the power to prevent it. This is followed immediately by Starling's thought: 'It was as though

committing murders had purged him of lesser rudeness' (p. 28). Starling's metaphorical comment itself suggests that it might well have been Lecter's prior murderous actions that have caused his current disapproval of others' rudeness and discourtesy, as if murder and violence are acts themselves consistent with civility and courtesy somewhat. Uniquely amongst the prison's inmates then, Lecter's language, as we encounter it mostly through his conversations with Starling, tends to conform to politeness conventions; he is positively polite when greeting her 'Good morning' (p. 18) and addressing her as 'Officer Starling' (p. 24), and negatively polite when asking for her credentials with 'May I see your credentials?' (p. 18). Further to such politeness being potentially in conflict with the schema of visiting someone in prison, and more in-keeping with that of visiting someone at home, it is a politeness reinforcing the contrast between, and paradox of, Lecter the art-loving civilised (he enjoys classical music, reading and painting) and Lecter the uncivilised serial killer. Having said that, and as noted in analysis of Michael Haneke's Austrian *Funny Games* (1997) film in Gregoriou (2017: 117), this behavioural pattern is not atypical of the horror genre's villains, many of whom have sophisticated mannerisms and even flaunt their manners/capability to engage in linguistically polite behaviour, if of the 'mock' kind (sarcasm or mock politeness is the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, see Culpeper 1996; Culpeper et al 2003), but all whilst socially acting anything but so. Even more so, Lecter does, in fact, pose face threatening acts to Clarice too, some of which are positively impolite, if relatively mildly so (he calls her a 'rube with a little taste' and 'cheap shoes' on p. 25 and suggests that the relationship between her and her boss has the potential to be sexual on p. 69, for instance) and some of which are negatively impolite (he imposes on her by demanding to know all about her past, for instance),

again pointing toward rapport challenge orientation. That being said then, perhaps much like other inmates' more direct 'offensive' language (as Lecter puts it on p. 69), meaning their rudeness and inability/unwillingness to accord to conversational politeness expectations, Lecter's over-tendency/eagerness to mostly accord to politeness-related expectations, and showcase so, can be defined as a criminal mind style marker for him, too. Besides, both linguistic behavioural patterns suggest unsettling minds therein, language reflecting the psychology within. In fact, though more linguistically polite, one could argue that Starling finds herself more upset by Lecter's linguistic behaviour than she is of other inmates'. Starling's references to him as 'Dr Lecter' and Starling-focalised descriptions of his voice as 'cultured' (p. 18) and his posture as 'erect and graceful as [that of] a dancer' (p. 169) suggest respect/admiration, but they contrast with descriptions of him as a scent-driven animal (p. 28, p. 165), interfering 'alien consciousness'/'bear' (p. 30), and even him having/being 'darkness' (p. 28). Where the other inmates are portrayed as uncultured and pitiable even (see, for instance, her making reference to being sorry for Miggs on p. 20), it is perhaps this ambivalence between the two very different sides of Lecter's that Starling finds hard to compensate the most.

In a subsequent interview between Lecter and Starling, she offers him a deal: in return for information about Buffalo Bill, Lecter would be moved to a cell with a view and access to medical journals and case notes. He accepts her offer, on the condition that they tell each other things, Lecter exchanging information for Starling doing the same ('I tell you things, and you tell me', he says on p. 186). From then on, their dialogue about Buffalo Bill's crimes is interspersed with Lecter asking Starling about herself, as they trade bits of information between them: he about Buffalo Bill, and she

about herself. Through their dialogue, Lecter profiles Starling, recognising her as a damaged human being. As a result of his questioning, we discover that Starling's father was murdered when she was young. Her mother, unable to cope, sent her to live with her mother's cousin and husband on their sheep and horse ranch in Montana. Clarice was allowed to ride one of the horses, but what she did not know was that all the horses were old and destined for slaughter. Once she discovered this, she ran away with the horse and, rejected by the cousin, ended up in a children's home. Like Tony Hill in the relevant quote above, Clarice Starling has all the markers of delinquency, but also like Tony Hill, has chosen a different metaphorical path.

During their interviews and trading of information, Lecter teases out aspects of Starling's past, this being a key feature in the way the narrative develops, as the trading of information becomes a key feature in encounters between Lecter and Starling. During one visit, Starling asks Lecter to give his opinion, in other words his profile, of Buffalo Bill. During their conversation, he asks her about Montana, and when she talks about running away with her horse he asks: 'How far did you get?' to which she replies: 'I got as far as I'm going until you break down the diagnostics for me' (p. 192). He does so, but then refuses to tell her more until the next time she sees him.

It is communicative behaviour in this novel that not only accounts for characteristics specifically to do with the criminally insane, but also issues to do with gender and especially power between the sexes, then. A further dynamic at play in the novel is between female Starling and the other men she encounters (see Hawkins 1993, for a discussion of Starling representing a crossing from pre-feminist to post-feminist portrayals of ambitious women in popular art). She is the only significant female character in the novel, the others being Crawford's dying wife and Buffalo Bill's

victims, especially Catherine and her mother, a state senator[3]. Crawford is her boss who leads her to Chilton, Chilton provides access to Lecter, and Lecter gives her Buffalo Bill. In Starling's first encounter with Chilton, he says:

> 'Crawford's very clever – isn't he? – using you on Lecter'
> 'How do you mean, Dr Chilton?'
> 'A young woman to "turn him on", I believe you call it.
> […]
> *Well fuck off, Chilton.* 'I graduated from the University of Virginia with honors, Doctor. It's not a charm school.'
>
> (p. 13)

Notwithstanding the generational and status difference between the two, and also the potential danger that Chilton wants to warn Starling she is in about, in this dialogue, Chilton's words can also be read as potentially positive face threatening toward Starling, signifying his patronising attitude towards women and latent misogynism, not to mention ageism. In Spencer-Oatey's (2008: 32) rapport management framework terms, the reader encounters rapport neglect orientation, as in a lack of concern or interest in the quality of relations. Chilton's implication here is that Starling was only invited to participate in this task because of her youth and gender, this assuming that she potentially lacks other, and indeed professional, qualities to bring to the task. Whereas Starling's spoken response belies her youth and naivety, stating her academic credentials as by way of countering her supposed youth limitations, her unspoken italicised thought expresses clear annoyance at this implication, taboo words here being used to flag this up explicitly for readers. According to the Leech and Short's (1981/2006) speech and thought presentation framework, Starling's statements are classifiable as free direct thought and free direct speech respectively; the utterances are

[3] The involvement of a senator deems Catherine, the senator's daughter, to be more a more 'idealised victim' than the rest – see victim deservability scale and related discussion in Gregoriou (2011: 172) – giving her captor's capture actual urgency; 'All of a sudden they're working the hell out of it', readers learn on p. 341).

'direct' as character- rather than narrator-owned, but also 'free' as devoid of reporting clauses. In taking such a form, the thought/speech statements are character-controlled, and work together to reveal a feisty and gutsy woman, not afraid to stand up for herself. Indeed, much of the dialogue in the novel between Chilton and Starling follows a similar pattern to the one above, a bat and ball of face threatening acts and defence, which signifies the power play between the two characters, as much as the trading of information between Lecter and Starling does in fact.

In the remaining of this section, I analyse Starling and Lecter's psychological profiling of 'Buffalo Bill' – who turns out to be a man called Jame Gumb – as 'potential' criminal mind style, alongside analysis of extracts portraying this killer's actual fictional criminal viewpoint. I mostly focus on metaphors, many of which are popular, and indeed typical of novels employing a criminal mind style (see Gregoriou 2007a, 2017, 2020), and yet worth pondering over if briefly; in so doing, I unpick the ideologies lying behind this character's overall portrayal, and hence how readers of this novel are invited to understand the workings of this character's mind.

As noted, Starling is a fledgling forensic psychologist/criminologist who, assisted by more experienced profiler Dr Lecter, comes to profile serial killer Buffalo Bill/Jame Gumb. The latter is code-named so for 'skin[ing] his humps' (p. 24), which alludes to the ever so popular KILLER IS A HUNTER metaphor. Seeing as 'he lived to hunt women' (p. 334), and actually enjoyed physically hunting, as in chasing, them through his basement, this metaphor is one he actually literalises. Extracts portraying this killer's viewpoint also utilise hunting references, such as where he thinks of 'field-dress[ing]' (p. 126) his victim Catherine, and of how 'fun' it would have been/how he 'would have *thoroughly* enjoyed' 'to hunt' Starling (p. 398), or generally

conceptualising his manipulating of his victims as '[taking] his pleasure', 'meet[ing] his needs' (p. 232) or 'playing basement games' (p. 234) with them. Expressions of this sort suggest that, to him, killing these women is not only enjoyable, but – like 'hunting' is for some – necessary; it is an activity or leisure designed to keep him alive through feeding oneself in addition to an activity that is meant to offer entertaining value. Conversely, references to others 'hunting' (p. 84) him indicate the KILLER IS A HUNTED SPECIES metaphor, and hence the urgency to not only catch him, but do so fast, before he kills again; '[problem-solving/hunting] is savage pleasure and we are born to it' (p. 368), Starling thinks. This metaphor is consistent with the evident necessity in others catching him also, then, investigators having to do so in order to preserve current and future victims' lives, if not their own (where, for instance, investigators find themselves being hunted by killers they pursue, such as where Starling is herself nearly killed by Gumb at the novel's end).

Given the race, gender and various locations of his white young female victims, Buffalo Bill is presumed to be a white male travelling man; most serial killers are male and kill within their own ethnic group (p. 81). In asking Starling to 'look for severe childhood disturbances associated with violence. Possibly internment in childhood' (p. 193), the suggestion is raised of this killer having been 'made' into one, because of a violent and confined upbringing, the nominalisation ('disturbances', 'violence', 'internment') not assigning any agency to these disturbing acts performed against him (consistent with the book's final chapter making reference to academic writers explaining that his 'unhappy childhood' was why he killed women for their skin on p. 411). He is said to have kept his victims alive for a while before he killed them, which meant he kept them somewhere where he could 'work in privacy' (p. 82). Such

profiling expressions euphemise KILLING AS WORK, which portrays his acts as supposedly legitimate and well-meaning for the killer, in line with references to serial murder as something some 'practice' (p. 22), the experience being depersonalising for the victims who need to be seen as objects the killer physically manipulates (p. 137), and the killer feeling as if he is 'working on […] doll[s]' (p. 137), i.e. unfeeling beings. Extracts focalised through Gumb's viewpoint are consistent with the hunting metaphor in that they too dehumanise the victims (seeing that literal hunters hunt non-human animals), whilst again reinforcing the impression given by the working metaphor of the victims being object-like:

> To march something ahead of you – it stumbling and crying, begging, banging its dazed head – is difficult, dangerous even.
>
> (p. 232)

> The material is lying on her side, curled like a shrimp […] Experience has taught him to wait […] before harvesting the hide […] starvation takes much of his subjects' strength and makes them more manageable […] It definitely has lost weight.
>
> (p. 235-6)

> He could never hear it from the kitchen even at the top of its voice, thank goodness, but he could hear it on the stairs as he went down to the basement. He had hoped it would be quiet and asleep.
>
> (p. 324)

> Mr. Gumb wanted very much to offer this one a shampoo, because he wanted to watch it comb out the hair.
>
> (p. 347)

> Starling wondered if he thought of women as 'skins' […]
>
> (p. 363)

Here, one encounters references to victims as 'subjects', 'something's, 'one's, 'it's and 'skins' and, to his latest victim, Catherine, as 'the material', the process of preparing her

skin for flaying as 'harvesting the hide', all of which suggest the killer's utter dehumanisation of his victims, which are mere things for him to use as he pleases. He has wants ('Mr Gumb wanted […]'), hopes ('He had hoped […]') and takes precautions based on past experiences ('[it is] dangerous', 'Experience has taught him') but, where his victims are concerned, proves unsympathetic and heartless. Profilers' references to him being 'more of a trapdoor spider' (p. 82) draw on the again popular KILLER IS A SPIDER simile which is not unrelated to the hunting metaphor both in the sense of spiders being a hunting species, and also a hunted species. This meaning connection is also related to the killer having an interest in species such as bugs and insects, a cocoon of which is found in a dead victim's mouth. Readers ultimately discover that, for 'his current project' (p. 347), '*he coveted* [female] *hide*' (p. 361) and, thinking 'he wants to change', he 'mak[es] himself a girl suit' using real girls' skin (p. 187), the text establishing links between the killer's own insects' transformation into moths, and his own transformation into a woman. Starving his victims enables their skin to loosen which makes it easier for him to remove and manipulate it when making himself a so-called 'female' attire to wear. This alludes to another correlation which is also work-related, that of the KILLER IS AN ARTIST/TAILOR, such as where the killer ponders over nights when he wanted to 'work for a little while […] when he was hot with something creative' (p. 156), a correlation that is arguably literal as well as metaphorical. On listening out to a sewing sound whilst held captive in a dark well, Catherine finds herself perplexed: 'Sewing was so wrong down here. Sewing belongs to the light' (p. 302), Catherine ponders, noting the schematic incongruity between a sound she associates with her happy childhood (and the conceptual metaphors UP IS GOOD, LIGHT IS GOOD), and yet which contrasts with the awful circumstances she currently

finds herself in, being held hostage in a dark basement (all in conjunction with the metaphors DOWN IS BAD, DARKNESS IS BAD). The art metaphor is also singled out by Borchardt (1995: 130) who argues that Gumb's murder spree raises further conflicts; it turns life into art, but also humans into objects, in 'a reversal of the function of art'; '[i]nstead of delimiting the object to release life, life is destroyed for the sake of art'. Even more so, such metaphors suggest that his disturbing acts are – to him – not only a positive expression of oneself but also an expression that others are meant to value, and see as positive, worthy and admirable. Lastly, elsewhere, one encounters the profiler's KILLER IS A MACHINE metaphor (with reference to 'the way Bill's wired' on p. 137), which suggests that he is constructed to perform a certain way, despite himself even, and he has little control of his actions, seeing as these are dictated by the relevant machine creator, who designed the machine to perform a certain function, or series of functions.

4. Conclusion

This paper aimed to examine the construction of profilers and criminals in *Silence of the Lambs* through engagement with criminal mind-related excerpts. Cognitive linguistics has much to offer when it comes to explaining the linguistic basis or link for the activation of cognitive schemata between individual words and knowledge bundles triggered in readers' minds. Schematic incongruity, in particular, has a role to play in generating impressions of both normality and abnormality in this novel. In being trained to work on violent crime-solving, psychological profilers are constructed as brilliant but also troubled individuals, and hence share resemblances with the killers they pursue. Serial killers are constructed as not only physically/psychologically 'abnormal' but also

as ‘abnormals’ amongst other ‘abnormals’ in terms of their conversational patterns, too. Where some criminals’ apparent reluctance, or inability, to accord to conversational norms marks them as uncivilised, Lecter’s mostly conventional conversational cooperativeness marks him out as indirectly mocking the social norms he sometimes chooses to accord to. Lastly, where Gumb is concerned, profiling language, and language depicting his criminal viewpoint draws on metaphors, and references to, killing being likened to hunting, work, and art, suggesting that killing is – for such individuals – necessary, commendable and ceremonial, their victims mere things for them to utilise in a venture that can only be described as worthy. Though Lecter is shown to be ‘born’ into deviant behaviour, and Gumb is suggested to have been ‘made’ into a criminal, the novel undoubtedly suggests connections, similarities even, between both such character types’ extreme criminal behaviour and those wanting to understand ‘criminal minds’ through, for instance, profiling. While ‘criminally minded’ profilers and killers persist in capturing our imagination and curiosity, what stylistics comes to offer is tools with which to explain exactly *how* language is used to create their own criminal minds.

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