



Staring into Darkness

An Analytical Framework for Villains
in Literary and Adaptation Studies

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Research Objectives

- Why can evil and its agents captivate readers' and viewers' interest?



Four Villain Categories

- Emerging Villain
- Core Villain
- Philosophical Villain
- Repellent Villain



Emerging Villain

- Focus on **character development:**
 - good/neutral towards villainous
- Change of **function & presentation**
- Comparable to real life



Core Villain

- Inaccessibility as medium for interaction
- **Accomplished** villain without actual development
- **Direct, conscious** embodiment of evil
- Challenge of audience's views



Evil Conscience

“Nothing happened to me, Officer Starling.
/ happened. You can't reduce me to a set
of influences. You've given up good and
evil for behaviorism. (...) Can you stand to
say I'm evil? Am I evil, Officer Starling?”
(Hannibal Lecter)

“Evil is a point of view.” (Lestat)



Philosophical Villain

- Focus on **function**: exploration of the framework of society and human nature
- Characterised through intellectual interaction with audience
- Most obvious overlap with other villain types



Repellent Villain

- Meaning and derailed narrative
- Narrative framework dealing with **current, troubling** social issues
- Cultural and geographical proximity
- Cultural dependence



Why are villains so fascinating?

- Alternative viewpoint
- Exploration of identity and 'dark side'
- Categories as **guidelines**
- Villains in different media



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