Mise-en-scène, Embodied Metaphors and Mood in *Hannibal*
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Embodied metaphors manifest visually through the mise-en-scène.

Analysis of Hannibal.
Embodied metaphors

- Perceptual and motor sensory systems play an important role in our thoughts.
- An example of this embodiment of mind would be the several ways we tend to project our body structures and orientations onto objects and scenes that we experience.
For instance, being “up” and “on top of” suggests, at first, physical control. Later, it extends to social, moral, or political superiority as in “She rose to the highest level of corporate power”. 

Embodied metaphors
Embodied metaphors

- The Conceptual Metaphor Theory argues that this kind of sentence contains primary metaphors.

BEING IN CONTROL IS BEING ABOVE

“She rose to the highest level of corporate power.”
Embodied metaphors

- The source domains of primary metaphors are embodied patterns.

QUANTITY IS VERTICAL ELEVATION

Crime is down for the second year in a row
The world population is rising
Several experimental studies in psycholinguistics suggest that primary metaphors are essential for thinking processes.
Primary metaphors are present in our everyday language but can also combine with one another to form complex, sophisticated or original expressions.

Moreover, we can find primary metaphors in gestures, advertisements, comics, films or videogames.
When the film-maker orders the elements in a certain frame, sometimes primary metaphors are used because they are inherent in human thought and essential in the expression of abstract concepts.
Primary metaphors manifest visually through the mise-en-scène.

BAD IS DARK

There are dark forebodings in the report

*Nosferatu, a Symphonie of Horror* (Murnau, 1922)  *The Graduate* (Nichols, 1967)

Dark shadows have been used since the early days of filmmaking as a metaphor of evil.
Primary metaphors manifest visually through the mise-en-scène.

**KNOWING/UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING**

I can’t see how to use this telephone

*The Graduate* (Nichols, 1967)

Out-of-focus images can express the lack of understanding or awareness.
Primary metaphors manifest visually through the mise-en-scène

**IMPORTANCE IS SIZE/VOLUME**

Today is the *big* day.

*The Graduate* (Nichols, 1967)

Two people appear to be different in size to express their importance.
Primary metaphors manifest visually through the mise-en-scène

AN EMOTIONAL STATE IS A LOCATION

I feel *out of place* here.

*The Graduate* (Nichols, 1967)

The location expresses the character’s situation, mental state or circumstances.
Primary metaphors manifest visually through the mise-en-scène

RELATIONSHIPS ARE ENCLOSURES

It’s difficult to get into the inner circle of advisers

*The Graduate* (Nichols, 1967)

Different frames-within-the-frame expresses the lack of unity in the relationship.
Hannibal can be labelled as both thriller and horror, and it is an example of a “preboot”, a term coined by Brinker (2015) mixing the words prequel and reboot.

The viewer enjoys the surprises and tensions of the new Hannibal through what Mittel has called “operational aesthetic”.
The empathy of Will Graham is depicted visually: “This is my design”.

Several visual metaphors from a cognitive background:

- CHANGE IS MOTION/STATES ARE LOCATIONS
- INTENSITY OF AN EMOTION IS HEAT
- UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING
- Etcetera
CHANGE IS MOTION/STATES ARE LOCATIONS

Change of color and distance between the camera and the character expressing the emotional impact caused by crime
The narrative uses Will’s gaze as a metaphor for understanding (UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING).

Every thought on the murder is metaphorized through his vision (MENTAL FUNCTION IS PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE).

Graham places himself in the same place and time of the killer, watching everything as the killer would do.
Will: from close empathy to total identification.

He begins to identify with the killer in such an immediate way that he hardly can distinguish his own self.

Confusion between reality and imagination.
BAD IS DARK

We do not see his intentions though we know they are dark.
The character of Dr. Lecter contributes to the threatening mood pervading the whole narrative.

Dread is a meta-emotion, because it is an emotion we feel before another emotion that can happen in the near future.
There is another way to emphasize the danger Hannibal entails: food porn.

Color red as a metaphorical source of anxiety.
CIRCUMSTANCES ARE SURROUNDINGS/FLUID

The characters are surrounded by blood
She disappeared on a Saturday.
She was found on a Monday.
Doctor-patient confidentiality works both ways.
The deer as another element that usually shows up with an intimidating resonance.

A wendigo is a mythological creature, a cannibalistic deer-like creature that is known to eat human flesh.
UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING

Will sees the position the genuine Hannibal occupies

*You see?*
Hannibal

- Mouth-watering horror, gore art and the beauty of evil.
- The dreamlike splendor of the murders, opposed to an unnerving score, creates the atmosphere of dread and nightmare that singles Hannibal out.
Conclusions

- The mise-en-scène helps to create the mood and keeps the unity of TV series.