

Psychological Profiling in Gothic and Detective Fiction: A Forensic Linguistic Exploration of Deception and Reality Distortion

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Abstract

Psychological profiling in fiction uncovers the underlying drivers of characters' actions, revealing the intricate web of emotions, experiences, and thoughts, eventually shaping their journeys and interactions as well as the story's emotional depth. This research applies forensic stylistics and van Dijk's SCM to discover deception and reality distortion in "The Spinner's Tale" and "Between Clay and Dust", investigating how language, sentence structure and speech styles are used to influence stories and real life. By using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the results from AntConc tag frequency analysis demonstrate that cognitive biases, psychological stress and society shape the growth of characters. Findings elucidate deception and cognitive distortion in both Gothic and detective fiction, asserting that language can change how readers perceive and interpret characters. Thus, the study concludes that language does not mere tell stories but also constructs complex psychological ideas, whereby the narrative techniques direct how readers would perceive themselves, the world and how stories can be turned. The findings have important implications in for both forensic linguistics and literary analysis in pursuits of psychology and power dynamics. Future research should include the integration of these frameworks in other literary genres in order to build on the insights into the deception and reality distortion.

Keywords: Forensic Stylistics, Socio-Cognitive Model, Deception, Reality Distortion, Psychological Profiling, Literary Analysis, Cognitive Biases, AntConc.

Introduction

Psychological profiling is used in Gothic and detective fiction to explain why characters in the story feel, behave and act the way they do. Because profiling relies on forensic linguistics, we can study how the way someone speaks and writes can point to deception, distorted thoughts or manipulation (Alison, 2005). In forensic stylistics which belongs to forensic linguistics, experts study these linguistic features to find out what drives the actions and deceit of characters in crime books. Detective fiction is full of deception and reality distortion which makes profiling that much more difficult because it affects how the reader views characters and their motivations. Language does more than reflect thinking, it is used to shape and change our view of reality (Van Dijk, 1998). In his Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM), a person's beliefs,

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attitudes and knowledge create stories, both true and false. It's also like how fiction often has characters use language to make events seem different from what they really are. According to Gregoriou (2010) and Clark (2007) these studies show that language in crime fiction is used to construct psychological descriptions and to confuse the reader by intermingling real events with fake ones.

Abraham Lincoln famously said 'The best way to predict the future is to create it,' and that applies to the manipulation of reality that such a large part of psychological deception in literature is. I focus on how language features in *The Spinner's Tale* by Omar Shahid Ahmad and *Between Clay and Dust* by Musharraf Ali Farooqi can be used to detect falsehoods and misrepresentation, with the help of forensic stylistics and Van Dijk's SCM.

How language is shown in crime novels has been closely examined by researchers. In 2020, Merzah applied pragma-stylistic analysis to *Gone Girl* (2012) to find out how the novel tricks the reader with its language. Noecker (2013) also analyzed the connection between sentence patterns and discourse markers and the mental state someone shows when lying. These techniques in these books help us understand how language reflects someone's mind and separates lies from truth. Even today, there is not enough connection between forensic stylistics and Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM).

While prior studies have analyzed individual elements, they have not fully explored how these frameworks together deepen understanding of how language constructs psychological deception and manipulates reality, particularly in contemporary detective and Gothic fiction. The problem lies in the underexplored integration of forensic stylistics with Van Dijk's SCM, especially in analyzing deception and reality distortion in contemporary Gothic and detective fiction. While existing research addresses linguistic features of deception and cognitive distortions, no studies combine these frameworks to examine how language constructs psychological profiles and manipulates reality in crime fiction. This study aims to bridge that gap by integrating forensic stylistics with SCM to analyze linguistic markers of deception in *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust*, exploring how psychological tension blurs reality and fantasy, and why distorted realities shape the reader's perception of characters.

This study revolves around the following research questions:

1. What linguistic markers indicate psychological deception in the characters of *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust*?
2. How does the psychological tension in *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust* blur the boundary between reality and fantasy for the protagonists?
3. Why do the authors use distorted realities as a key narrative device, and how does this affect the reader's perception of the protagonists' psychological states in both novels?

This research contributes to forensic linguistics and literary analysis by combining forensic stylistics with Van Dijk's SCM to explore psychological deception in detective fiction. It gives a detailed approach for understanding how people are profiled and narratives are built. It encourages students to use different subjects, think critically and see how language helps create characters and plots in crime fiction.

Literature Review

Conceptual Background

The authors of Gothic and detective books used psychological profiling to explain why their characters behaved as they did. Because the author frequently altered how readers saw the characters, it was not always easy to describe them. Syntax and discourse analysis was used, in forensic linguistics and specifically in forensic stylistics, to identify when someone was lying and what their mental state was (Merzah, 2020). Gregoriou (2020) and Clark (2007) believe that language helped to develop the psychological profiles common in crime fiction. The

analysis used Van Dijk's SCM (1998) and Forensic Stylistics to study how deception and reality distortion appear in *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust*.

Theoretical Background

Forensic linguistics used psychological profiling to explain crimes, the personalities of criminals and both detective and Gothic fiction. Experts in forensic linguistics analyzed language to learn about a person's mental state, dishonesty and motives for their actions (Alison, 2005). In crime fiction, writers use words to show readers what the characters are feeling and thinking and forensic stylistics studies the way people speak to learn about their emotions (Coulthard, 2004). Van Dijk's SCM (1998) tells us that our understanding is affected by cognitive structures and that unreliable narratives and deception were the result. Burke (2023) argued that the way characters are shown is influenced by their syntax, diction and narrative structure. The use of forensic stylistics and SCM helped to understand the language in *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust*, uncovering more about manipulation, deception and misleading reality.

Past Studies Background

Psychological Profiling and Forensic Linguistics in Crime Fiction

Forensic linguistics in detective fiction has been concerned with the way that language features can reveal what certain characters are feeling, thinking and doing. Forensic stylistics which belongs to forensic linguistics, studies the use of language patterns (syntax, word selection and discourse style) to explore criminal behavior, mental states and to identify lies, distorted thinking and manipulative actions (Merzah, 2020). Forensic linguists Coulthard and Johnson (2007) showed how hedges, passive language and specific words can indicate feelings such as guilt or avoidance and they introduced forensic linguistics to criminal investigations. Because of their studies, we realize how language can be used to trick people and help create profiles of criminals in fiction.

In 2016, Gregoriou studied crime fiction using forensic linguistics and looked at how Thomas Harris and Agatha Christie described the actions of criminals using metaphors, modal verbs and various sentence patterns. He noticed that crime fiction writers often use language to represent the mental state of real criminals. Likewise, Merzah (2020) used pragma-stylistic analysis on *Gone Girl* (2012) to point out how gendered language changed how readers viewed the characters and formed their psychological profiles which is also important in *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust*.

In his 2013 work, Noecker looked at discourse markers, sentence structure and word choice, explaining how they helped reveal the psychological states of both detectives and criminals when deception was important to the story. The way he analyzes characters is essential for studying *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust*, because deception is important in both books. Rafique (2024) explored how the ideas in society influenced terrorism in *The Prisoner* by Omar Shahid Hamid by pointing out how language used in post-9/11 books reflected people's fears and played with identity to improve the portrayal of deception in crime novels.

In 2010 and 2012, Toma studied how people in online dating profiles use words like negations and distancing to hide their emotions and noted that characters in detective fiction often use deceptive language to hide what they want. In 2014, Choudhury discovered that Jodi Arias used language markers such as hedges and negative expressions to suggest she was being deceptive in her interview. Afroz (2013) pointed out that the use of language in texts can indicate when someone is lying in authorship attribution, just as characters in crime fiction do to fool their readers. Argamon (2009) studied automatic profiling of authors, pointing out that

language analysis helps reveal psychological details about people involved in criminal deception.

Textual Analysis and Cognitive Deception in Crime Fiction

Based on linguistic analysis, Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM) (1998) improved our knowledge of how language affects both thinking and social relationships. His model explained how language builds and breaks reality, particularly in detective fiction, whose characters make up lies and lie to one another. In their 2012 study, Schwarz and Hochschild used SCM to explain how people involved in criminal confessions constructed false stories to fool others. In his book, Burke (2023) examined forensic stylistics by looking at diction, syntax and the structure of the narrative in *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust*. Ahmad's writing became more scattered, just like the character's mind and Farooqi used symbols to describe the character's inner fear. They demonstrated how the use of hedging and deflection in language can reflect psychological processes needed to study deception (Coulthard and Johnson, 2007). The author Fadden (2012) studied how suspects in criminal confessions use evasive language which is important in detective fiction, where characters try to hide their intentions.

Psychological Manipulation and Deception in Detective Fiction

Psychological manipulation and changing reality were major themes in detective stories and language played a big role in shaping people's views. Alison (2005) studied the ways in which forensic psychologists build criminal profiles using both language and behavior and detectives like Poirot and Holmes examined language patterns to discover what was going on in the minds of suspects. As found by Fadden (2012), forensic discourse analysis points out that evasive ways of speaking and indirect language can show psychological traits important for profiling. In his study, Clark (1998) pointed out that gender and psychological traits are shaped by language and that female characters often broke with typical expectations. Schwarz and Hochschild (2012) used SCM to examine how characters in *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust* distorted the truth by using language which revealed their mental states.

Integrating Forensic Stylistics with Cognitive Linguistics

By combining forensic stylistics with SCM, a thorough way to study deception, manipulation and reality distortion in detective novels was developed. Miller (2011) explained how studying language can reveal someone's psychological traits and Coulthard and Johnson (2007) showed that analyzing language is important for criminal profiling. Macbeth (2009) demonstrated that language can reveal the tricks of deception and Biber and Conrad (2009) used analysis of language data to recognize patterns related to psychology. Linguistic profiling for the purposes of detecting deception was mentioned by Olsson (2018), while Wang (2004) pointed out that linguistic patterns are important for identifying deceptive criminal identities, the latter being an important aspect of crime fiction.

Gaps in the Literature and Rationale for the Current Study

While there has been much research on forensic linguistics, stylistic analysis and psychological profiling in crime fiction, no one has yet integrated forensic stylistics with Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM) to study deception and reality distortion in contemporary detective and Gothic fiction. While a lot of studies have examined different parts of language, few put them together to explain psychological profiling. Many studies of psychological profiling in literature fail to consider cognitive functions and social environments. This study fills this gap by applying forensic stylistics to SCM, helping us see how language is used to create deception and change reality in *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust*.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research applied forensic stylistics and Van Dijk's SCM to examine how psychological deception and reality distortion are used in *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust*. By looking at language, thoughts and society through tag frequency and AntConc, it was clear that the novel created false stories, changed reality and influenced the actions and structure of the characters.

Data Collection

Digital versions of *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust* were downloaded for analysis. The main source of information for forensic stylistic analysis and SCM interpretation is these novels with many psychological themes and detailed characters.

Sampling

Both *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust* were chosen through purposive sampling because they include stories filled with deception and suspense. Various tags related to deceit, wrong thinking and mental stress were studied.

Theoretical Framework

The research applied Forensic Stylistics, Stylistics and Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM) together. It looked at how people talk, form sentences and use words like "but" to identify if someone is being dishonest. It analyzed at the middle level how thinking changes how stories are told and at the top level, how beliefs in society influence language use. The author used both methods to discuss psychological profiling, deception and reality distortion in *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust*.

Data Analysis Technique

To find out if language was being used deceptively, the data was examined with forensic stylistic analysis which found X1, X2, S1.2, G3 and A5. AntConc 3.4.4w helped to extract the tags and look at word frequency, sentence structures and how the conversations were organized. Analysis was done by using Forensic Stylistics, Stylistics and Van Dijk's SCM, showing the reader how the characters think and feel through the markers. The main topics of distorted reality, mental tension and main elements of Gothic and detective fiction were paid attention to in the process which highlighted the way language distorts reality and affects readers' minds.

Table 1: Semantic Tags for Corresponding Features

Thematic Features	USAS Tags
Psychological Profiling and Deception	X1, X2, X2.1, X2.5, X3, X3.4, X7, X8
Reality Distortion and Psychological Tension	E1, E5, E6, S1.2, S2.1, S2.2, S3.2
Gothic and Detective Fiction Elements	G2.2, G3, K4, S7, T1
Linguistic Features Indicative of Deception	A1.7, A1.9, A5, A6, S1.2.1, S1.2.5, X4

Reliability of Methodology & Ethical Considerations

The methodology's validity was ensured through rigorous analysis of linguistic markers, with clear links to psychological profiles, cross-checked using forensic stylistics and SCM. AntConc aided in precise, reproducible analysis. The integration of both frameworks provided a comprehensive understanding of how language created deception and psychological tension in

the novels. Ethical considerations included respecting intellectual property rights by properly citing the authors and ensuring no personal or confidential data was involved. Objectivity and transparency were maintained through clear methodological descriptions, acknowledging the limitations of the framework.

Analytical Discussion

Findings and Discussion

The analysis conducted using the AntConc 3.4.4w tool provides valuable insights into the linguistic features of the text, categorizing it into various thematic tags as outlined in Table 2. These tags function as functional and thematic groupings of vocabulary which reflect the core elements of the narrative, including important psychological and emotional states, social dynamics and conflicts. Examining the frequency of these tags reveals many important themes such as mental actions, time, evaluation of truth, various traits of personality, emotions, warfare and the performing arts, showing the text's narrative from different angles.

Table 2: Lexical Analysis of Text Using AntConc Tool

Serial No.	Tags	Tags Descriptions	Frequency	Lexical Examples
1	X1 X2 X2.1 X2.5 X3 X3.4 X7 X8 X4	Mental actions and processes, Thought, belief, Wanting; planning; choosing, Mental object: Conceptual object	5181	Mind, Feelings, Believe, Gaze, Sympathy, Desire, Plan, Try
2.	T1	Time	3911	Time, Never, Scheduled, Clock
3.	A5 A1.9 A1.7 A6	Evaluation: True/false, Avoiding, Constraint	2661	Right, Avoid, Escape, Conflict
4.	S1.2 S2.1 S2.2 S3.2 S7 S1.2.1 S1.2.5	Personality traits, Relationship: Intimate/sexual, Power relationship, Approachability and Friendliness, Toughness; strong/weak	2237	Pride, Corage, Personality, Macho, Female, Strenght, Tough, Love, superintendent
5.	E1 E5 E6	General, Fear/bravery/shock	557	Emotions, Fear, Worried, Horror
6.	G3 G2.2	Warfare, defence and the army; Weapons, General ethics	438	Officer, Corrupt, War, Gun, Bomb, Unforgivable
7.	K4	Drama, the Performing Arts, the theatre & Show-business	34	Cast, Play, Performance

Cognitive actions like thought, belief and planning (X1, X2, X3) are tagged 5181 times under the Mental Actions and Processes tag. The Time tag (T1) which appears 3911 times, helps create suspense and confusion about what is happening. Fear and bravery which are part of E5, influence the actions and development of characters in the story. The Personality Traits tag (S1.2, S2.1) displays inner emotions and mental states of characters and the patterns of their relationships and who has power. Moreover, the Warfare, Defence and Weapons tags (G3, G2.2) look at conflict and its psychological impact. The rare Performing Arts tag (K4) connects what happens inside a character with what they do on stage. This research helps us better understand how deception, reality distortion and psychological profiling are used in Gothic and detective fiction.

Discourse (Micro-Level) → Linguistic Analysis & Authorship Attribution

At the micro level, we analyze discourse and work on attributing texts to their authors.

This paper analyzes the novels through the lens of Forensic Stylistics and Stylistics and identifies some linguistic features which show psychological conflict, deception and emotional tension in the text. The data reveals a rich use of psychological and sensory tags that express characters' mental states, inner conflicts and deceptions. These tags reveal the ways authors use language and style to show the inner lives of their characters which is important for telling apart genuine works and those disguised as the other genre.

Many cognitive and emotional tags such as *mind_x*, *instinct_x*, *psychological_x*, *felt_x* and *think_x*, are highlighted by Lexical Analysis, revealing what characters feel and think. For instance, *mind_x* suggests that the character was confused in their thoughts which is often used in psychological trickery. Also, *instinct_x* ("Her emotions urged her to run away, but her pride stopped her") deals with the main conflict of deception in stories.

It reveals that sentence structures can indicate differences in how complex the mind is working. When the author writes, "He grabbed the knife without thinking, his body reacting faster than his mind," it shows that the character is unable to control their actions, suggesting they might be experiencing mental conflict.

The authors use mental state indicators such as *thought_x* and *knew_x* to show the reader how the narrator explores the characters' unreliable thoughts. Often, these narrators hide and twist the truth so the reader misunderstands what happens.

When characters experience internal tension, deviations from linguistic norms such as repetition or emphasis, foreground some of the linguistic features of the text. *Struggling_x* and *wished_x* tags show the reader when the character resists or wishes away her emotions.

Discourse constructs meaning through stylistic choices. Psychological and instinctive explanations in the text show what is happening in a character's mind and heart. They play a role in shaping what readers think about each character's mind.

In addition, the way people write can show their personal biases, the ideas they support and their intentions. The author often uses *truth_a* which means "This is a true story based on actual events," rather than *lie_a* or *avoid_a*, to show that reality and deception are always interacting in the story. Just as societal ideologies around what counts as truth, who has authority and what constitutes moral judgment shape how characters' actions are constructed and interpreted, so too do these ideologies shape how the actions of the characters in the novel are constructed and interpreted.

Besides this, authors use *see_x*, *heard_x* and *smell_x* to show how sensory details are used to increase the tension or conflict in a scene. In Gothic and detective fiction such terms are especially important because the subjective reality of the characters is distorted both by their perceptions and by the narrative itself.

Cognition (Meso-Level) → Psychological Processing & Ideological Representation

At this level, how characters think and understand things helps to create both their inner and outer personalities in Gothic and detective stories. The mediating role of cognitive processes in understanding and internalizing discourse and the influence of societal structures on them, are discussed. The tagged data demonstrates that emotions, mental states and beliefs guide characters' actions and thoughts, leading to distortions in the story and psychological pressure. Mind style is revealed when authors use emotional and psychological tags such as *tone_e*, *feel_e* and *compassion_e* to show how language expresses a character's mental state. As an example, *tone_e* ('He changed his tone and became far more submissive') reflects a change of emotional power dynamics and it shows character's psychological stance and his internal conflict. Not only does this change in tone indicate the character's mindset, but also his perception of the situation changes.

The tags *fear_e*, *shock_e* and *confidence_e* are used to show how characters' emotions and beliefs determine their actions. An example is when fear makes the character see things

differently such as “I am afraid he is here and I cannot leave” (fear_e) and that fear limits the character’s actions. Shock_e means that the character is confused by the events and doesn’t understand them clearly.

Worry, anxiety and confidence are social cognition because they involve both emotions and thinking. The story’s social interactions may be hard to follow because of these mental states. The way others react to confidence, worry and anxiety usually affects how someone tries to influence them.

Cognition plays a role in interpreting both forensic and literary discourse during SCM integration. The presence of tone_e, fear_e and shock_e reveals that characters’ feelings within influence how they understand the events around them. For example, worry_e (“I was really concerned about what she would think about the news”) affects the character’s behavior and also gives others a chance to misjudge the situation.

In addition, ideas found in texts are taken in by people and influence how groups think. In both Gothic and detective fiction, the way characters feel and act usually reflects the story’s ideas about fear, strength, vulnerability and gender. The macho_s tag shows that, in front of other guys, the character acts tough, but once alone on the tube, he starts to feel nervous. Just like the womanhood_s tag, where she waits until she has the energy to handle repairs, shows how society’s view of women shaped her actions and imagination.

The cases demonstrate how emotional tags can affect the way we think. Mood_e reveals how sounds and movements in the environment can influence a character’s understanding of danger, safety and reality. It also shows that the character uses suppression, a defense mechanism that makes him see things differently.

Fear and anxiety as cognitive distortions show how fear can change a person’s thoughts and decisions, making them anxious and clouding their judgment. Because of this, the character’s inner feelings and actions often do not match the reality of the situation.

In detective fiction, deception and cognitive bias play a major role. Confidence_e reveals that when someone is confident, even without justification, it can persuade people to believe them. This tag points out that the character’s overconfidence can fool people, supporting the main theme of deception in the genre.

Both psychological conflict and twisting reality are major parts of Gothic and detective fiction. The author shows the main character struggling internally, as the fear he feels stops him from seeing things clearly. The author also shows how cognitive dissonance makes the character doubt her own reality by saying she struggled against what she didn’t want to believe.

Society (Macro-Level) → Power, Institutions, & Ideological Control

At the society level, power, institutions and ideological control are important. The characters in the Gothic and detective fiction genres are affected by the ways society thinks and talks about power, organizations and cultural beliefs. Because society impacts things, someone has the power to determine the story, its shape and the audience’s experience of it. The analysis of tags demonstrates how power structures and societies are portrayed in the text and what themes of power, manipulation and control appear.

Crime discourse analysis is important in the way crime, morality and justice are written about in Gothic and detective fiction. Take the tag shot_g which shows how characters use moral reasons to explain their violent attempts to punish others. These stories tend to mix up what is legal and illegal, as the relationship between the law and criminals shapes how people discuss justice. In the same way, the tag bomb_g (“The Suzuki Hi-roof has been purchased”) represents the external conflict of violence which helps the author control the reader’s opinions about right and wrong and build ideas about power and violence.

Many times, the style of Gothic and detective fiction shows the anxieties people have about power, crime and dishonesty. The use of officers_g (“The police and agencies no longer

summon him") shows the influence of official authority on the story. The way the characters deal with these institutions usually shows the struggle over power throughout the story. The mention of the officer's gun shows the reader the strong hold power figures have over the narrative's characters and their choices.

The way power is handled in discourse makes it clear that the text represents the roles and power systems found in society. The tag *superintendent_s* means that the Superintendent is in charge which plays a big role in how the story is told. *Sir_s* ("Sir, I require your help to obtain this information") also highlights how characters address those in charge and how this reflects the rules of their society. Because of these power struggles, the story's information is managed and can shape how both the characters and the plot develop.

Using the Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM), it is easy to see how titles such as *superintendent_s* and *sir_s* help form dominant ideologies. Because these beliefs are taken in and influence their behavior, social and authority structures play a key role in shaping both a character's actions and thoughts. Because of the authority they have within themselves, the characters either obey or go against the rules set by others.

Cognitive processes are also formed by society, in that it determines the way discourse is constructed and understood. I can't stop thinking about her. Guilt and shame are shown here as they relate to both personal and community values. How people respond emotionally, based on society's standards, helps determine what characters decide and how they behave. Because of social norms, the characters' thinking and behavior are affected when they react to what happens in the story.

Data analysis examples demonstrate that how a society perceives events can shape our feelings. *Shot_g* represents the crime side, where the President's plan fails and *officers_g* presents the authority side, where the police and agencies do not summon him anymore. It demonstrates that crime discourse in books often represents larger arguments about justice, punishment and who holds power.

Those in power and those who control ideas are often represented by people in institutions. With tags like *superintendent_s*, it's clear that these figures direct the actions and information which maintains the existing power structure. They help direct the plot and also shape the mental processes of those near them which keeps society's power structure intact.

People's feelings and beliefs are shown in tags like *guilt_g* ("I keep thinking about her..." For example, characters mention guilt and betrayal which show how their shame and guilt are affected by their society. The way they feel about themselves and others is affected by the emotions they experience which represent the values accepted by society.

Society's views on gender are made clear through tags like *female_s* which demonstrate how these views affect how characters are seen and how they grow psychologically. Social labels affect how characters see themselves and the conflicts they face, mainly for women who are often judged by society.

This research examines how language, deceit and misperceptions contribute to the novels *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust* using the synergetic model. The first research question considers psychological deception in language and emotional, cognitive and sensory tags such as *mind_x*, *instinct_x*, *guilt_g* and *desire_x*, are key signs that characters are struggling internally and have false views of reality. The tags allow us to see how the characters feel confused, guilty and afraid as they wrestle with whether to tell the truth or lie. This corroborates other studies (Choudhury, 2014; Mazhar, 2021) that examined deception and its signals in Gothic and detective fiction. As indicated by tags like *fear_e* and *shock_e* (Afroz, 2013), the second aspect I explored shows that characters in these novels are confused about reality because of their mental state which is affected by power and social beliefs. The roles and ideas that society has given to the characters create this conflict between real life and fantasy (Rafique, 2024; Morey, 2011). Further, the authors use distorted realities in their stories

and the psychological conflict becomes even more intense, because the stories affect readers' thoughts and emotions (Toma, 2012; Dutta-Flanders, 2017). The novels are explained in this study through social forces, thinking and language that have resulted in deception, conflict and wrong perceptions in the novels as well as a detailed account of how ideology influences character actions (Siddiqi, 2007; Ibrahim, 2019).

These results are in line with previous work in forensic stylistics (Argamon, 2009; Banerjee, 2014) exploring how language choices can reveal mental processes and contribute to the broader fields of crime, morality and justice (Olsson, 2018; Shakir, 2022). Cognitive and emotional tags show the way truth is twisted and reality is misrepresented in society, in complicated narrative forms that handle deception, power and ideological control (Merzah, 2020; Gregoriou, 2010).

These novels have important findings that have consequences for both forensic linguistics and literary analysis. Through the exploration of these linguistic signs the text explains how issues of power and psychology come in Gothic and detective fiction. Forensic stylistics benefits from the research as a way to analyze dishonest acts and personal conflicts. Authors give both genres added meaning by distorting reality and the way readers think. It is worth the experts' attention to look into how different genres interact with psychological profiling. As theories of society and cognition evolve, researchers may begin to use sophisticated computer methods to analyze language signs of deception and to better understand characters' minds.

Conclusion

This study analyzes psychological deception and reality distortion by combining Forensic Stylistics with Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM) in *The Spinner's Tale* and *Between Clay and Dust*. It finds that the writers use some language elements to influence readers' views and create detailed psychological pictures of characters. The study demonstrates that language is the main source of characters and lies in Gothic and detective literature by combining psychological and cultural ideas. This analysis shows that language does more than tell stories, it also constructs complex psychological ideas. The results clearly show that narrative techniques are part of how readers perceive themselves, the world and how stories can be turned. This framework could be used with other types of literature in the future in order to better understand how language does this for us and helps us see the world in different ways.

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