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"A Means to an End": A Method to Analyze
Machiavellian Villains

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Abstract

Villains have always raised a huge interest among readers and spectators due to their malevolent nature. For this reason, many literary/filmic works have been composed with the figure of the villain prevailing over the protagonist in several occasions.

In the present essay, we have explored Machiavellianism as an analytic category within villainy. With this dissertation we want to make a contribution to the field of narratology, more concretely to the study and characterization of fictional characters. So we propose a method as an analytical tool to facilitate the study of the Machiavellian villain. This method is based on a humanizing conception of the characters and allows to submit them to moral judgements. For that purpose, we have used psychological literature concerned with Machiavellianism to delineate the different dimensions of Machiavellian villains into five blocks: personality, objectives, strategies, motivations and sense of enjoyment.

Key words: Literary characterization, villains and villainy, narratological analysis, Machiavellianism.

Resumen

Debido a su carácter *malvado*, los villanos han sido siempre personajes que han despertado gran interés entre la audiencia, tanto es así que se han compuesto obras, tanto literarias como fílmicas, en las que la figura del villano destaca sobre la del protagonista.

En el siguiente estudio exploramos el Maquiavelismo como posible categoría de análisis dentro del campo de la villanía. Con esta disertación deseamos contribuir al ámbito de la narratología, concretamente al estudio y comprensión de los procesos de caracterización de personajes ficticios. Para ello proponemos un método como herramienta analítica que facilite la labor de estudio del villano Maquiavélico. Este método parte de una concepción humanizante del personaje, según la cual los lectores pueden someterlos juicios morales. Por este motivo, hemos utilizado literatura psicológica relacionada con el concepto de Maquiavelismo para desglosar las diferentes dimensiones del villano Maquiavélico en cinco bloques: personalidad, objetivos, estrategias, motivaciones y sentido del disfrute.

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1. Introduction

There are not many works that focus on the study of a psychological trait of villainy in isolation, this is precisely the point where we are going to put the emphasis. We have chosen Machiavellianism because it is one of the most intriguing and captivating traits of personality in villains.

The intent of this essay is to fill the gap that exists in the studies of analysis and characterization of characters in relation to the study of a particular trait of psychology such as Machiavellianism. The objective set is to propose a method that captures as much as possible all the Machiavellian aspects that a literary or filmic villain may present. It allows to increase our sensibility and capacity of differentiating them. The method we propose does not pretend to be an absolute response to this gap, but leads the way to analyse the Machiavellian villain more thoroughly.

To do that, we have isolated Machiavellianism as an analytic category within villainy field. It was necessary to investigate and check numerous psychological articles about the Machiavellian personality, which help us to understand their attitudes, their behaviour, and to create an overall view of how their minds work. So in a way we have had to get into the role of a psychologist.

Therefore, and in order to consider these psychological theories valid in the study of characters, we will start from the premises that this method is a humanizing study of the characters. As Cámara-Arenas already pointed out "heroes and villains have been created for us to suffer and celebrate them, for us to discuss them and speculate about their motives, their traits, their vices and virtues [...] they are patterns against which we project our fears and desires" (3). So, making reference to psychology, he proposes that "a villain is a fictional entity that can be approached in this way" (6).

2. Studies of Villainy

Villainy in film and literature has recently become an area of interests for scholars. Authors like Schäfer are particularly concerned with the effect of villains on the audience. She has studied villains in search for the trait combinations that make them attractive (Shäfer, "Reading Over"), and she has also developed useful villain classifications (Schäfer, "Staring into Darkness").

Others have focused on heroes and villains in the media. Eden and her colleagues, for example, have investigated how viewers perceive and judge the heroes and the villains in the media. They use two theoretical frameworks called person-perception theory and moral foundations theory to demonstrate that the viewers make use of real life domains to value the media characters. They introduce the human trait of morality in the study and analysis of characters.

Cámara-Arenas proposes a method to analyse the figure of the villain. He presents a psychologically informed, extensive and intensive method for the analysis of villains. The author attempts both the technical description of a villain's behaviour and the understanding of her or his inner motivations. Tools like the Big Five personality inventory, Transactional Theory and Causal Attribution, among others, are convincingly integrated within his analytic protocol. Among other things, the author proposes the possibility of distinguishing between a villains' core traits—typically related to disagreeableness—and a villain's peripheral traits. These traits can combine within a virtually infinite matrix of different villainous complexions.

3. Theoretical Background

As Schneider proposed, to make sense of literary characters we need to create a mental representation of them, attribute them dispositions and motivations as well as understanding of their actions. As a consequence, readers and spectators anticipate the action of the characters and look for the reasons they do it. That is, we react emotionally to them (608).

Most of the features that define villains are those which separate them from the hero. The motivations and actions of the hero and anti-hero are very different from those of the villain. Eden and her colleagues use the concept of "appropriateness of behavior" to classify the characters according to the audience's affective disposition towards them (188). This idea is linked to the viewers' morality, which lead them to judge characters actions into positive and negative or, in other words, to classify them into heroes and villains.

According to Aguirre-Romero, literature is deeply linked to the various changes society suffers along the centuries; if we accept this, we have to redefine the idea of hero for different periods of time. He explains that the term *hero* has a number of implications that go beyond the role of the *protagonist* in a novel. Literature, from its beginnings in myths, has always relied on heroes. Regarding Aguirre-Romero, Aristotle already pointed out in his *Poetics* that human beings should be taken as a reference to indicate the qualities of the characters. Whether intentionally or not, Aristotle was already offering a role model for the audience or readers. In the figure of the hero we find embodied all the virtues to which we the men and the women have always aspired at every moment of history. In the same way, literary works have also offered examples of what should not be done, that is, models for men and women to understand the mistakes in their actions by means of their contemplation.

Aguirre-Romero states that there is a link between heroic values and social values. If society changes, their values will also change. Without values, there is no hero; without shared values, there cannot be a character who allows heroic exemplification. Aguirre-

Romero also explains that the hero is always a proposal, an embodiment of ideals. Society generates its heroes in its own image.

In literature as well as in movies, the hero is the central character of the story. Traditionally, in literature, especially in tragedies and dramas, the hero can present a number of defects that lead him to perdition. A modern subtype of hero is the commonly known as "superhero", which is the one that appears in comics, novels or films, who has superpowers to save the humanity or to conduct his heroical acts. These characteristics of the heroes can vary depending on the period and culture in which they appear. An example of that is the Medieval Hero, he needs to be brave, skilled on the battlefield and have a life story which stands out, he is long-suffering and capable of making remarkable sacrifices. However, the contemporary hero has good things and bad things, but he calls our attention for the good ones.

On the other hand, Schäfer makes a distinction between the concepts of anti-hero and villain ("Reading Over" 2). She presents the anti-hero as a character who wins the sympathy of the audience in spite of doing actions which are not socially appropriate. But this character does not offer any opposition in the narrative as occurs with the villains. According to Mullan, their functions are "against the active, positive forces of the text and actively work against them in order to defeat their purpose, creating a conflict that drives the plot forward" (qtd. in Schäfer 2).

The villain is the antithesis of the hero. The villain presents those values, features and behaviours that the society considers negative and must avoid. His qualities, behaviours and purposes are generally opposed to those of the hero . He is "the will to power and insatiable greed, the materialistic, power hungry, tyrannical side of our natures; the side that wants to possess everything it desires, without limit, and control everything it needs" (Bonnet, n.p).

The villain is a fundamental character in the story, their strong even enigmatic personalities can become the centre of the story. As Vale points out, "the villain….is the main source of conflict, tension and suspense- those necessary qualities in all of literature"

(qtd in Tapply 6). Furthermore, Cámara Arenas notes that the villain provokes to readers/spectators "a sense of dark fascination which is not always easy to understand", a kind of "poetic effect" or "characteristic mental state" which captivates the audience (11).

But why do villains arouse this strange fascination? Why do they become even more relevant than the protagonist in several occasions? The answer can be found in the idea of evil. Schäfer states that "evil occupies a central position in our cultural conception of narrative and morality in its capacity to interrogate the moral assumptions underlying a simplified notion of the good" ("Reading Over" 14). Characters can adopt unexpected positions: sometimes the good ones act worse than the bad ones, using unethical methods to achieve their goals; sometimes evil is hidden behind the most beautiful and innocent appearance. This lead us to reconsider the notion of evil as a matter of relativity (16). The character who we think is good, finally makes the choice of acting in the most horrible way. It generates a plot twist and prompts the examination of our standard values as a consequence (19).

According to Forbes, the villain is characterized by power and it generates narrative drama; there is a problem that the hero must resolve by thwarting the villain's plans. The audience enjoys perceiving that sort of power, this is another reason why the figure of the villain is so captivating. He/she represents danger, that is, the instability that threaten our society and our values (qtd. in Schäfer, "Reading Over" 17-18).

Nowadays, we increasingly find villains with a calculating nature in literature and films. They are manipulative and pursuit their goals in an obsessive way, leading to the principle of Machiavellianism. They show features like ambition, lack of morality, charisma and strategic manipulation to obtain their secret goals. Characters with these elements are intuitively perceived as Machiavellian.

These ideas are the starting point of our essay. The premises we are going to take into account to build our method are the requirements which are indispensable to consider an act as Machiavellian. If a character uses strategies of manipulation with a sense of enjoyment, then we can understand it as a Machiavellian act.

Another premise we must bear in mind is that our method is humanizing because it allows to use human traits defined by the field of the Social Psychology. Cámara-Arenas suggests that Personality Psychology and Social Psychology may help us to further understand characters and characterization. We will make use of those disciplines to characterize the Machiavellian villain too. The first one involves the study of personality and people's behaviour. The second one studies the social and psychological processes which help us understand how the individual acts when he/she is part of a group or society; that is, it studies how people behave, think, and feel within a social context (5).

In other words, following a humanizing approach we are going to conceive fictional characters as human beings who feel, suffer and who are conditioned by the circumstances that surround them and experiments an evolution along the story. So, in this essay we are going to develop a method that explores the depths of the Machiavellian characters.

3.1 Delineating Machiavellianism

The word *Machiavellianism* has its origin in the ideas that the Italian philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli exposed in his writing *The Prince* (1513). In this work, Machiavelli described the ideal characteristics that a ruler should have. He stated that a ruler should persecute the power without taking into account any ethical consideration. The end justifies the means. He should not show signs of weakness, but authority, even to the point of being feared. Cruelty must be used in an intelligent way.

The word *Machiavellianism* has been used to define a kind of personality studied within the psychology field. In fact, it constitutes one of the most important sources of information we have used to articulate our analytical method.

Paulhus and Williams developed the psychological theory called *The Dark Triad of personality*; it refers to the dimensions of three socially aversive personalities: Machiavellianism, narcissism and psychopathy. All three entail a "socially malevolent

character with behavior tendencies toward self-promotion, emotional coldness, duplicity, and aggressiveness" (557).

Rauthmann and his colleagues state that Machiavellianism "shows cold, cynical, pragmatic, and immoral thinking; strategic long-term planning; agentic motivation" (884). Machiavellian personalities are described as "cunning impression managers, self-beneficial, low in pro-social orientations, less intrinsically motivated at work, and power-oriented" (Rauthmann,et al. 884-885).

According to Jones and Paulhus, Machiavellianism is a personality trait characterized by interpersonal manipulation and specific patterns of emotional and social cognition abilities. It is associated with the use of deceit in interpersonal relationships, a cynical view of human nature and a lack of morality. It implies low levels of empathy and high levels of emotional deficits, that is, Machiavellian minds find difficulties in adopting another person's point of view and understanding other people's emotions. In this sense, Jones and Paulhus draw a distinction between cognitive empathy (ability to recognize emotions) and affective empathy (ability to share emotions) (95-99). Linked to the idea of empathy is alexithymia, which is the "absence of the words to express emotions and feelings" (qtd. in Al Aïn, et al. 3). People with this emotional deficit are more likely to present more components of Machiavellianism, especially those related with a "cynical view of human nature" (Al Aïn, et al. 3).

In their article Bereczkei and Birkas have also developed a model of Machiavellian traits. Closely related to the idea of emotional coldness previously mentioned, they describe Machiavellians as people who "exploit others and view them from a goal-oriented perspective"(65), in other words, they see people as "a means to an end" (qtd. in Bereczkei and Birkas 65). They also introduce the idea that Machiavellians have cognitive abilities that allow them to adapt their behaviour to the social circumstances; this behavioural flexibility what allows them to succeed (65).

As quoted in Bereczkei and Birkas, "previous studies suggested that Machiavellians are especially successful in short-term interactions but were less skilled at pursuing long-

term strategies" (65). A more recent study showed that they can exploit others successfully in the long run, using flexible strategies (Bereczkei and Birkas 65). So, from an overall view of the Machiavellian personality, we can sum up their traits in emotional coldness, cognitive abilities and flexible behaviour.

As we have previously stated, Machiavellianism implies both, acts of manipulation and a feeling of enjoyment. J. Austin. et al. describe Machiavellians as individuals with a dispositional tendency to emotional manipulation. They state that Machiavellians "exhibit manipulative behaviours towards others in order to promote their own interests" (180).

According to an article by Bereczky (*The Manipulative Skill*), it is demonstrated that Machiavellian´s brain is stimulated when they find a person they can deceive. He concludes that the Machiavellian brain becomes fully operational when they meet someone willing to cooperate and help them. At that moment, the Machiavellian begins to devise a plan to take advantage of the potential victim. Bereczky considers the idea that the Machiavellian uses manipulation as a way of enjoy and stimulation. In other words, they manipulate because they enjoy it.

This pleasure or satisfaction someone experiences when manipulating others and obtaining what they want by doing so, establishes a difference between what we understand as manipulation itself and a Machiavellian act. In other words, if manipulation involves enjoyment we faced with Machiavellianism. In these two movies we can see one example of each of them:

1) The film *Ransom* is a clear example of manipulation itself. The protagonist Tom Mullen [Mel Gibson] is trying to manipulate the hijackers to recover his son, but he is not enjoying it.

2) However, in the film *Rob Roy*, more specifically in the character of Tim Roth [Liam Neeson], he is manipulating the others all the time, but he is enjoying it. He demonstrates a pleasure within it in his gestures, facial expressions, etc.

A concept related to Machiavellianism is leadership. In the context of interpersonal relationships, it has to do with the effects the Machiavellian characters are capable to produce among the people surrounding them. Niccolò Machiavelli already defined the features a good leader had to have. In his work, he stated a good leader had to be cunning, clever and pragmatic. Also he had to possess personal charm and intelligence, and use them without mercy to reach their purposes. Machiavelli's thought was deeply negative, he even appealed to the use of cruelty. This can be translated in terms of a controlling leadership style, which is the one that the Machiavellian villain can exercise against the victim. This kind of villain takes advantage of the victim's insecurities so as to influence on her/his decisions and change the course of the events in the villain's own benefit.

3.2. Manipulation, strategies and motivations

For the identification, analysis and discussion of Machiavellian traits, we need to comprehend what moves them to behave that way, their motivations, and how they behave to achieve their objectives.

3.2.1. Traits of Manipulation

Here we develop the most common characteristics shared by those manipulative individuals. Ni proposes four features that all manipulators have in common:

- They know how to detect your weaknesses.

- Once found, they use your weaknesses against you.

- Through their shrewd machinations, they convince you to give up something of yourself, in order to serve their self-centred interests.

- In work, social and family situations, once a manipulator succeeds in taking advantage of you, he or she will likely repeat the violation, until you put a stop to the exploitation. (5)

But Ni is not the only one that tried to gather these characteristics. The psychology author George K. Simon explains the main issues of manipulation that define a successful psychological manipulator:

- concealing aggressive intentions and behaviours;

- knowing the psychological vulnerabilities of the victim to determine what tactics are likely to be the most effective;

- having a sufficient level of ruthlessness to have no qualms about causing harm to the victim if necessary. (qtd. in Crangle 1)

Manipulation implies a relationship of power and domination between the manipulator and the victim. Machiavellian villains know how to control their emotions and exercise control over those of others; they know how to identify their weaknesses and take advantage of them for their own profit without scruples; for them the emotions of others have no value whatsoever. As a result, they are able to place themselves in a position of superiority.

3.2.2. Motivational Aspects

Furthermore, we are interested in the motivations which move the Machiavellians to manipulate other people. As reported by Crangle:

- the need to advance their own purposes and personal gain at virtually any cost to others

- a strong need to attain feelings of power and superiority in relationships with others

- a want and need to feel in control (aka. control freak)

- a desire to gain a feeling of power over others in order to raise their perception of self-esteem boredom, or growing tired of his/her surroundings, seeing it as a game more than hurting others. (5)

Taking into account all the characteristics that we have just explained about the Machiavellian personality, we can state that Machiavellian villains are capable to control their emotions and those of others; they are driven by their desire of power and feeling of superiority above anything.

3.2.3. Strategies of Manipulation

Machiavellians can be defined by the strategies they commonly use. As quoted in Crangle, Simon[1] identifies nineteen manipulative techniques which we are going to use as a reference for our method. Moreover Braiker[2] mentioned by Crangle identifies five manipulative strategies. We have compressed and classified these techniques into four new categories, which have been named as follows: "Reinforcement, Aggressiveness, Alibis and Distraction". Each of them will be developed with further detail in the method section. These new categories share one indispensable element: lying. It is the ground that underlies any manipulative strategy used by the Machiavellian villain.

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[1] See Appendix I

[2] See Appendix II

4. A Five-Block Model of Machiavellianism

There is much psychological literature about Machiavellianism. Numerous articles show investigation about this personality trait by exposing experiments made with real people. These contents not only offer very useful information to understand the Machiavellian mind from a scientific perspective, but also to establish a correlation between the psychological Machiavellian figure and the literary/filmic Machiavellian villain.

Cámara-Arenas´s studies on villainy offer a further description of the villain from a "humanizing" perspective. He proposes the use of psychology and sociology as powerful disciplines to provide a "deeper sense of understanding" of villainy (4). In accordance with these premises, he presents a technical method based on Psychoanalysis, Transactional Analysis Theory, The Big Five Model, Theories of Causal Attribution and another concepts deriving from these disciplines.

On the basis of this methodology, we present an accessible protocol which also allows to make a deep reflection on the Machiavellian character and discuss his thoughts and behaviour as if it was a real person, that is, a living subject with real problems like us. To do so, we have employed the psychological theories of the personality and socialization of the Machiavellian individual, described previously in our theoretical background.

Our method is built on a set of questions which allow the reader/spectator to understand and construe the inner world of the character and be aware of his/her feelings so as to reach a better understanding of the Machiavellian villain´s personality and behaviour.

The questions of the method are distributed in five blocks:

4. 1. Block I: Personality - How Machiavellian is the villain?

In accordance with the ideas set in our theoretical background, the personality of the Machiavellian villain can be characterized by the following traits, to a greater or a lesser extent:

- [lack of] morality: due to the cynical view of the world they have, amoral behaviour is not something problematic for them but a question of simple pragmatism. If it serves to their purposes, then it is right.

- [lack of] guilt: following the reasoning above, if the lack of morality in their acts is not considered wrong, then they will not have a perception of any remorse or regret.

- [lack of] empathy: both lack of morality and lack of guilt are caused when the Machiavellian character is not capable of understand what the victim feels when suffering the consequences of manipulation.

- emotional coldness: it refers to the ability of self-monitoring, that is, the control of their own emotions in order to avoid any obstacle or circumstance which may threaten the achievement of their aims.

- behavioural flexibility: depending on the situation, Machiavellians are capable of adapting their strategies to the conditions likely to affect their purposes; in that way, their locus of control is high.

- mindreading: the victim has the sense that the Machiavellian villains *know* what he/she is thinking at every time; it is a cognitive ability of anticipation in the thoughts or actions of the victim.

4.2. Block II: objectives - What are the goals of the machiavellian villain?

We are going to use this section to extract the objectives pursued by the Machiavellian characters. The online APA Dictionary of Psychology defines *goal* as "a target of proficiency to be achieved in a task within a set period of time". We distinguish between extrinsic and intrinsic goals. According to McHoskey, "intrinsic goals involve behavior that is experienced as self-determined, whereas extrinsic goals involve behavior

that is experienced as externally controlled. These two types of goals tend to be associated with different experienced motivational states" (267).

As quoted in Rijavec, Intrinsic goals include "those for self-acceptance, affiliation, community feeling, and physical health. People striving for these goals are assumed to be "in touch" with their deeper nature, and to have a greater chance of finding happiness and well-being" (694-695). In contrast, "extrinsic goals are primarily concerned with obtaining some reward or social praise; because they are typically a means to some other end or compensate for problems in need satisfaction, they are less likely to be inherently satisfying" (qtd. in Rijavec 694-695). In other words, intrinsic goals have to do with the inner part of the character, that is, his/her feelings and emotions. The sense of superiority is an example of intrinsic goal. On the contrary, extrinsic goals are related to more superficial objectives, like financial success.

4.3. Block III: Strategies - What does he/she do to achieve his/her goals?

This section has to do with socialization of the Machiavellian character, that is, how he/she interacts with the rest of the characters. We have already explained that one of the most important traits of the personality of the Machiavellian villains is manipulation. As their intentions are usually amoral and unethical, they have to use manipulative tactics to keep their real objectives in secret. So, manipulation becomes a big weapon to control the victim and achieve their goals.

In this section we are going to synthesize Breiker's strategies and Simon's techniques previously developed on a certain number of categories in order to embrace and simplify the information. We propose four categories: Reinforcement, Aggressiveness, Alibis and Distraction.

Reinforcement makes reference to falsehood and hypocrisy; the action of telling someone the opposite to what you really think in order to provoke a reaction which favours the achievement of the aim; lies become a very important part of the game. Reinforcement

can be positive (excessive sympathy), negative (faking help in bad situations) and partial/intermittent (creating an atmosphere of uncertainty intentionally).

Aggressiveness is related with those acts that imply a hostile attitude against the victim. It implies tactics such as victimhood, intimidation, yelling, sulking, even emotional blackmail. They are disproportionate and sometimes explosive, thus the machiavellian character ensures the victim feels guilty and wants to avoid any confrontation with him/her.

Alibis refers to the varied range of excuses the Machiavellian villain is capable to use to justify her/his bad behaviour, even he/she rationalizes the situation up to the point of convincing the victim about the appropriateness of his/her amoral attitude.

Distraction encompasses those strategies to divert the focus of attention from the real one. Depending on their interests, we distinguish two types of distraction techniques: evasion, which occurs when the Machiavellian characters give ambiguous or unclear information so as to confuse the victim; and diversion, which takes place when they avoid talking about something which might reveal their real intentions.

4.4. Block IV: Motivations -Why does she/he want to achieve her/his goals?

Everybody pursues goals, but in what way? What drive us to achieve them? Regarding the online APA Dictionary of Psychology, *motivation* is any physiological or psychological factor that stimulates, maintains, and directs behavior. Examples are basic physiological needs, interests, and extrinsic rewards.

Motivation is not the same as goal, although there is a relationship between them. They have to do with the way in which people or characters behave.

Forgas, Joseph P. et al. state that "interactions that people have with their environments are largely influenced by their goals, desires, and wants - their motives" (3). So, our objectives are going to predetermine our behaviour in order to achieve them.

To analyse the behaviour of the Machiavellian character, we have focused our attention on Kelley's Covariance Theory of Causal Attribution (CTCA). This theory belongs to the field of social psychology and it is related to motivation. According to this theory, the behaviour someone has can be predetermined by something personal or by external circumstances. If the spectator interprets that the cause of the behaviour is the person itself, then the attribution will be internal. But if the spectator interprets that the cause of the behaviour is the circumstances or stimulus, the attribution will be external.

Kelley presents three kinds of causal information: consensus, distinctiveness and consistency. Each of these three elements can have high or low attributions.

- Distinctiveness: it makes reference to the uniqueness of the behavior. If the reaction occurs only with a specific stimulus, the attribution is high; but if the reaction is always common to other stimuli, the attribution is low.

- Consensus: it refers to the frequency the individual reacts to a certain stimulus or situation in comparison with the rest of the people. The attribution is high when everybody has the same reaction to the stimuli. However, when there are few people reacting in the same way to a situation, we say the level of consensus is low.

- Consistency: it refers to how common a reaction is in comparison with the rest of the circumstances in which the character is involved. That is, the attribution is high when a person always reacts in the same way in similar situations. Whereas it is low if the person not always reacts in that way to this situation.

As we have previously explained, Crangle proposed a number of typical motivations in people with manipulative tendencies. Manipulators, as the rest of people, want to achieve their purposes, but manipulators go beyond. For them, it is a kind of necessity. They have the need to experiment power, superiority over the rest. They need to feel they have the control over the situation.

4.5. Block V: Sense Of Enjoyment - What does he/she feel?

As we are building a humanizing method, we consider especially worthy to focus a section on feelings. They are constantly present throughout the previous blocks, and all of them lead to the most distinctive feeling of the Machiavellian villain, that is, enjoyment. There is delight in every dirty manipulative trickery they use. As they are not capable of putting themselves in the victim's position, they do not feel any remorse, what provokes a feeling of superiority more and more delightful on them.

But why do they feel this enjoyment? This feeling emerges when they are powerful and have everything under control. They have the necessity of regarding themselves as perfect and superior because they are fear of showing weakness. The longer they obtain, the more they desire. It is a kind of insatiable thirst (Rodriguez, n.p).

In conclusion, I see an emotional process experimented by the Machiavellian character, which can be divided into four stages. It begins with the use of manipulative strategies to obtain the feeling of power and perfection. Then, these feelings provoke a sense of superiority in the Machiavellian villain, leading him/her to a final sense of enjoyment. The following scheme (figure.1) shows this emotional process :
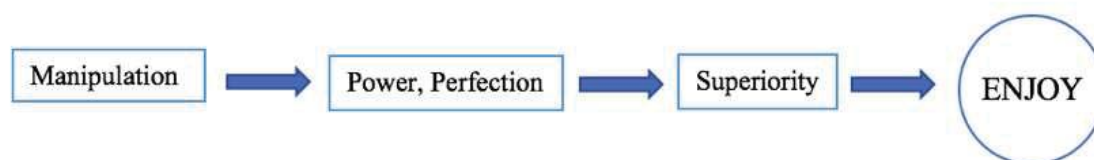

Figure.1. Emotional Process of Enjoy

In conclusion, this block is useful to make an exploration of the emotions the Machiavellian villain experiments to reach the final feeling of enjoy.

5. The Analysis of The Machiavellian Villain

The method developed above proposes a solution to the question of *how to analyse a Machiavellian villain?* There are methodologies developed about how to analyse a villain, but there is not a specific one that studies a particular trait of villainy. This is the aspect on which our study has focused.

So, within this method, on the basis of the villain´s traits, we have tried to encompass all the Machiavellian traits. We have decided to focus on five main issues: Machiavellian personality, their objectives, the strategies employed, their motivations and their feelings. We tried to cover all the necessary aspects to recognize or identify a Machiavellian villain.

We have included a scheme to indicate the users what traits they must look for in order to analyze the Machiavellian villain.

Block I: Personality

Look for …

- [lack of] morality
- [lack of] guilt
- [lack of] empathy
- Emotional coldness
- Behavioural flexibility
- Mindreading

Block II: Objectives

Look for ...

- Extrinsic goals
- Intrinsic goals

Block III: Strategies/socialization

Look for ...

- Manipulation (lying)

    - Reinforcement

    - Aggressiveness

    - Alibis

    - Distraction

Block IV: Motivations

- Covariance Theory. Analyse...

    - Consensus

    - Consistency

    - Distinctiveness

- Look for Crangle´s Motivations

    - Need to advance their purposes

    - Need to attain feelings of power and superiority

    - Need to feel control

Block V: Sense of Enjoyment

Look for ...

- Sense of power and perfection

- Complex of Superiority

- Enjoy

This method establishes a path for further analysis. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to test our method in an empiric way. Thus, we could see if our method is a helpful guideline for the analysis and interpretation of the Machiavellian character.

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Appendix

Appendix I: Strategies of Manipulation (Simon, 1996)

1. <u>Lying</u>: to determine if someone is lying, is not an easy work, so not identify a liar in the precise moment of lying is usual; however, time later, truth may be clearly seen. So, in order to reduce the possibilities of being lied, it is important to know that there are people who present personalities that are prone to lie and cheat.

2. <u>Lying by omission</u>: it means not to say all the truth by hiding or omitting an important part of the information.

3. <u>Denial</u>: it means that the liar denies all the accusations that others make about him or her when he or she has made something wrong.

4. <u>Rationalization</u>: the manipulator tries to justify his or her inappropriate behaviour by giving a rational explanation for it.

5. <u>Minimization</u>: this strategy of manipulation is similar to the previous one. This means a kind of denial of the accusations made about the irresponsible manipulator's behaviour by reducing the importance of it. For example, saying that something harmful has been a joke.

6. <u>Selective inattention or selective attention:</u> manipulator avoids those things that may distract him or her agenda, for that purpose he/she uses expressions such as "that is not interesting".

7. <u>Diversion</u>: in the case of a direct question, manipulator avoids direct answers, he/she tries to redirect the conversation into a different topic.

8. <u>Evasion</u>: it is similar to diversion, but in this case manipulator gives irrelevant or weasel words to answer the questions he/she receives.

9. <u>Covert intimidation</u>: it means threatening the victim in an indirect or subtle way.

10. <u>Guilt trip</u>: it is a kind of intimidation tactic. It consists on making the victim feel bad, putting the victim in a self-doubting position with the purpose of achieving his/her submission.

11. <u>Shaming:</u> it refers to the use of contempt in order to create a sense of self-doubt and fear in the victim and make him/her defer to them. These strategies may be subtle. Manipulators use sarcasm, fierce look, offensive tone of voice. They make the victim feel foolish if the victim faces them.

12. <u>Playing the victim role</u>: manipulator assumes the role of victim, in order to achieve his/her purpose; it is commonly used to obtain compassion and sympathy from others to get cooperation in his/her own benefit.

13. <u>Vilifying the victim:</u> it consists on provoking the victim in order to put him/her on a defensive way, while the manipulator masks his/her aggressive personality.

14. <u>Playing the servant role</u>: manipulator fakes a servant role, using an excuse to justify his or her behavior for an authority figure while he/she is masking his/her selfish goal.

15. <u>Seduction:</u> this strategy is used by the manipulator to gain the confidence of his/her victims, for that purpose he/she uses adulation and compliments.

16. <u>Projecting the blame:</u> manipulator uses other people as scapegoats.

17. <u>Feigning innocence:</u> manipulator tries to justify himself/herself saying that any harm done was not intentioned. He/she fakes surprise or indignation. This tactic will provoke a sense of doubt on the victim.

18. <u>Feigning confusion:</u> manipulator acts as if he/she was disoriented, confused or doubting, fakes that he/she never had heard about what the victim is saying.

19. <u>Brandishing anger:</u> manipulator fakes wrath when the victim denies something to him/her, but he/she is not really anger.

Appendix II: Strategies of Manipulation (Harriet Braiker 2004)

1. <u>Positive reinforcement:</u> includes praise, superficial charm, superficial sympathy (crocodile tears), excessive apologizing, money, approval, gifts, attention, facial expressions such as a forced laugh or smile, and public recognition.

2. <u>Negative reinforcement:</u> involves removing one from a negative situation as a reward, e.g. "You won't have to do your homework if you allow me to do this to you."

3. <u>Intermittent or partial reinforcement:</u> Partial or intermittent negative reinforcement can create an effective climate of fear and doubt. Partial or intermittent positive reinforcement can encourage the victim to persist - for example in most forms of gambling, the gambler is likely to win now and again but still lose money overall.

4. <u>Punishment:</u> includes nagging, yelling, the silent treatment, intimidation, threats, swearing, emotional blackmail, the guilt trip, sulking, crying, and playing the victim.

5. <u>Traumatic one-trial learning</u>: using verbal abuse, explosive anger, or other intimidating behavior to establish dominance or superiority; even one incident of such behavior can condition or train victims to avoid upsetting, confronting or contradicting the manipulator.