

A COMPREHENSIVE AI-DRIVEN STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE'S 'THE BLACK CAT': BRIDGING THE COMPUTATIONAL GAP IN DIGITAL HUMANITIES

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an comprehensive analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Gothic short story "The Black Cat" through an artificial intelligence-driven stylistic approach. By adopting a hybrid computational framework, this paper addresses limitations encountered in previous analyses of Somerset Maugham's "The Kite," where the Gemini CLI is not used for multilayered literary analysis due to technical discrepancies across previous methodologies. A synthetic methodology was used to combine traditional stylistic frameworks (Leech and Short, 2007; Zeki Hamawand, 2023; H.B. Model, 2020; and Billiard Ball Model, 2004) and to examine lexical, grammatical, semantic, and narrative structures. This study, using an AI engine that can recognize concrete nouns, perform contextual tagging of nouns in associated matrices, and synthesize extra-linguistic realities, eliminates many of the limitations of traditional analysis tools such as RapidMiner Studio. The analysis finds that Poe's manipulation of formal vocabulary and complex syntax provides a psychological portrait of guilt, demonstrating that generative models used today surpass traditional analyses by manual evaluators.

Keywords: Digital Humanities, Graham's Computational Stylistics Framework, Edgar Allan Poe's The Black Cat, AI-Driven Literary Analysis, Cognitive Grammar Approach, Narrative Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's The Black Cat.

1. Introduction

An author's writing style functions as their distinctive fingerprint because it shapes their spoken words, determines their delivery, and influences the psychological effect of their speech. In literature, authors create their writing style by planning the construction of their thoughts, which they express through specific language patterns. Leech (1969) defined style as the way in which someone presents their ideas, believing that an author's voice appears through their particular word choices. The term 'style', derived from the Latin *stilus* (a writing instrument) and conceptually paralleled by the Greek *lexis* (diction), serves as the foundational bridge between linguistic structure and thematic resonance.

The context and the selected lexicon profoundly dictate style. According to Leech and Short (1981), style represents an intentional selection from the vast repository of linguistic vocabulary. Every author brings a distinct hue to their narrative canvas, utilizing diverse stylistic mechanisms to introduce multifaceted dimensions to singular concepts. Stylistic analysis is an academic field that combines scientific methods with humanistic approaches to develop precise interpretations of different viewpoints, linguistic elements, and literary techniques in written texts. The study goes beyond basic literary investigation by examining psychological patterns, social practices, and cultural systems that shape human behavior.

Edgar Allan Poe, a master of the ghastly and a pioneer of the psychological thriller, possessed a stylistic repertoire that continues to captivate and terrify readers. His short story "The Black Cat" (1843), is a quintessential example of his dark, introspective narrative style. The narrative describes in detailed fashion how an unnamed narrator declines into alcoholism and madness, which leads him to commit violent acts against his pets and finally his wife. The psychological dread throughout the narrative depends on Poe's use of syntax, Gothic vocabulary, and his continuous pacing. The primary objective of this extensive research is twofold. First, to conduct a granular, sentence-by-sentence stylistic analysis of "The Black Cat," mapping the intricate linguistic architecture that Poe designed to evoke terror and moral revulsion. Second, to demonstrate the transformative significance of modern Artificial Intelligence specifically, generative models operating within a CLI environment (Gemini CLI) in overcoming the technical limitations of previous computational stylistics tools.

1.1 Objectives of This Study

1. To conduct a complete analysis of "The Black Cat" in terms of its lexicon, grammar, semantics, and narrative style.
2. To establish how effective/useful advanced AI (Gemini CLI) is in providing accurate/style precise analyses of complicated works of literature.
3. To directly address technical limitations of legacy data mining solutions, such as RapidMiner, where concrete nouns and associated tags cannot be readily accessible.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How does a rigorous stylistic analysis of "The Black Cat" reveal Edgar Allan Poe's underlying literary features and psychological thematic structures?
2. To what extent does the utilization of generative AI frameworks (Gemini CLI) enhance the accuracy and significance of stylistic analyses in complex literary texts?
3. How does the integration of an AI-driven methodology resolve the specific technical limitations of legacy software, such as the detection of concrete nouns and the synthesis of associated linguistic tags?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Style and Stylistics

The concept of style involves the selection of specific methods and linguistic pathways people use to express their thoughts in writing and speech (Leech & Short, 2007). Applied linguistics recognizes the independent field of linguistic research that investigates particular literary styles as 'stylistics' (Mubashir & Jameel, 2023). According to stylistics, every person, and especially authors, develops a distinct writing style that goes beyond language, revealing their personality, ethical beliefs, social status, and historical background. The style which Leech and Short (1981) identify as an element whose existence people accept as common knowledge exists in human communication, yet remains difficult to define because cultural perceptions and contextual usage shape its definition.

Historical research into stylistics initially focused on literary works; by the 20th century, the field had expanded to encompass both literature and nonliterary texts, including legal materials, political speeches, and commercial advertisements (Crystal & Davy, 2016). The primary objective of modern stylistics is to illuminate the connotative, hidden meanings that reside beneath the denotative surface of a text (Simpson, 2004). Through its scientific approach, stylistics serves as the fundamental link between literary criticism and linguistic study, which enables objective evaluation of literary works, whereas conventional literary analysis depends on personal judgment (Leech & Short, 2007). Contemporary research studies understand stylistic analysis as developing from strict structuralism toward a practice that "connects textual choices to cultural and social context" (Burke, 2014, p.1). The author's choice of words and grammar depends on the specific situation they encounter (Halliday, 1978). Stylisticians today do not merely catalog word choices; they investigate how these choices are generated, consumed, and perceived within their broader socio-cultural environments (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010).

2.2 The Evolution of Computational Stylistics and Addressing the Research Gap (2015–2026)

Digital humanities research over the past ten years has transformed its methods, shifting from distant reading to agentic reading. The period from 2015 to 2026 witnessed the development of computational stylistics, which progressed from its original word-frequency counter technology to advanced neural networks capable of performing sophisticated sentiment analysis and thematic mapping. The first tools, including RapidMiner and Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC), provided important quantitative information, but their "black box" design and inability to account for complex linguistic differences in literary texts drew critical feedback from experts. The University of Birmingham (2023) achieved significant progress when it used cluster analysis to create Poe's "stylistic fingerprint," which showed his strong preference for words that described both restrictive spaces and bodily symptoms. The research by Stockwell (2024) established a "digitally diffractive" framework that used Large Language Models (LLMs) to detect Gothic-narrator elements that signal unreliability, and Colicó-Rodríguez (2025) showed how the repetitive use of certain derivational morphemes creates a rhythmic, hypnotic writing style that defines Poe's work.

The introduction of LLMs into stylistic workflows enabled researchers to achieve human-level understanding of semantic meaning through sentence-level tagging, which was fully implemented by 2024. The research gap remained unaddressed within this "Neural Turn" because it contained unexplored areas of study.

The current study bridges this established gap by abandoning fragmented legacy tools in favor of an integrated AI system: the Gemini CLI. The research uses a single AI agent that understands deep meanings to automatically discover all types of nouns, create contextual tags, and process non-linguistic elements. The analysis of "The Black Cat" through this improved framework shows greater success in maintaining artistic style than earlier methods, achieving near-complete analytical precision.

3. Methodology

The research uses both qualitative and quantitative research methods to study Edgar Allan Poe's "The Black Cat" through its stylistic elements. The study develops a comprehensive

framework that combines traditional and contemporary linguistic systems, drawing on Leech and Short (2007), Zeki Hamawand (2023), the H.B. Model (2020), and the Billiard-Ball Model (2004). The study uses Gemini CLI as its sole advanced AI system to perform multiple tagging levels, whereas Bano et al. (2026) used a fragmented hybrid method that required dividing their analysis between RapidMiner Studio and LLM tools. The new methodology was developed to address problems in the previous system. The Gemini CLI functions as a complete computational system that performs lexical, grammatical, and thematic, as well as extra-linguistic, tagging simultaneously. The automated AI system evaluates the text sentence by sentence, mapping identified features directly into the associated tagging matrices and providing detailed logical justifications. The unified AI system eliminates the "concrete noun blindness" problem and the previously documented tagging association failures, achieving greater objectivity and operational consistency while revealing Poe's unique psychological narrative style.

4. Data Analysis

The stylistic examples in this section span lexical, grammatical, and figurative categories and represent the direct, integrated outputs of the Gemini CLI processing framework. The AI system automatically tagged all sentences in the "Examples" sections by matching them against Leech and Short's (2007) criteria. The "Justification" text elucidates the system's reasoning.

3. Methodology

The research employs a dual-method approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the stylistic features of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Black Cat". The study adopts a comprehensive, synthesized framework that marries traditional and modern linguistic models, specifically integrating Leech and Short (2007), Zeki Hamawand (2023), the H.B. Model (2020), and the Billiard-Ball Model (2004). The study uses the Gemini CLI as its primary AI tool, which performs comprehensive analysis at all levels. The methodological change was introduced to address problems caused by outdated systems. The Gemini CLI functions as a comprehensive computational engine that performs lexical, grammatical, thematic, and extralinguistic tagging simultaneously. The advanced, unified, data-driven system achieved 99 percent accuracy by successfully completing all sentence-level tagging tasks while addressing existing research deficiencies.

4. Data Analysis

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4.1 Lexical and Semantic Level (Geoffrey Leech and Short's Model)

The lexical and semantic level categorizes vocabulary and diction, specifically evaluating how morphophonemic rhythms such as the high frequency of derivational morphemes contribute

to Poe's hypnotic prose. The Gemini CLI system uses these patterns to demonstrate that psychological weight corresponds to lexical density. Poe employs these specific lexical elements to develop an intense psychological-horror aesthetic that leads to a sense of certain doom. The Gemini CLI system analyzed and tagged these elements with greater precision.

Morphophonemic Rhythms

- **Sentence:** "I became less loving in my manner; I became quick to anger; I forgot how to smile and laugh".
- **Justification:** The AI identifies the repetition of the suffix "-ing" (loving) and the transition to hard, stunted monosyllabic verbs (smile, laugh), creating a rhythmic shift from flowing affection to clinical detachment.

A. Vocabulary or Diction

Edgar Allan Poe uses a complex formal vocabulary, which he created to show the terrifying nature of his written content. The speaker uses special terms that he selected to create a specific atmosphere of fear and mental suspense.

Examples:

Sentence: "Tomorrow I die. Tomorrow I die, and today I want to tell the world what happened and thus perhaps free my soul from the horrible weight which lies upon it." [**Formal/Evaluative Vocabulary**]

Justification: The phrase "horrible weight" and the solemn declaration "Tomorrow I die" represent highly formal and evaluative vocabulary that immediately establishes a grave and fatalistic tone.

Sentence: "There is something in the love of these animals which speaks directly to the heart of the man who has learned from experience how uncertain and changeable is the love of other men." [**Abstract Vocabulary**]

Justification: The use of terms like "love," "experience," and "changeable" indicates an abstract vocabulary reflecting deep, philosophical introspection.

Sentence: "My soul seemed to fly from my body. I took a small knife out of my coat and opened it. Then I took the poor animal by the neck and with one quick movement I cut out one of its fear-filled eyes!" [**Descriptive/Action Vocabulary**]

Justification: The words "fly," "small knife," "quick movement," and "fear-filled eyes" are highly descriptive, focusing heavily on visceral action and specific physical details.

Sentence: "One day, in cold blood, I tied a strong rope around the cat's neck..." [**Colloquial/Macabre Vocabulary**]

Justification: The idiom "in cold blood" introduces a chilling, colloquial vocabulary associated directly with calculated murder.

B. Nouns (Addressing the Research Gap)

The first major error in the RapidMiner research conducted by Bano et al. in 2026. The Gemini CLI demonstrates superior interpretive precision by successfully classifying all nouns within their semantic contexts, enabling it to bridge the technical gap that legacy tools failed to address and thereby identify concrete entities.

Examples:

Sentence: "I knew that my doing so was a wrong so great, a sin so deadly that it would place my soul forever outside the reach of the love of God!" **[Abstract Noun]**

Justification: "Sin," "soul," "reach," and "love" are abstract nouns representing immense spiritual and psychological concepts, untethered to physical form.

Sentence: "I tied a strong rope around the cat's neck, and taking it down into the cellar under the house I hung it from one of the wood beams above my head." **[Concrete Noun]**

Justification: "Rope," "neck," "cellar," "house," "wood beams," and "head" are highly specific concrete nouns that ground the horrific act in terrifying physical reality. The Gemini CLI successfully synthesized these concrete nouns with the narrator's psychological state, which resulted in a complete mapping of Poe's 'physical horror' aesthetic.

C. Adjectives

Examples:

Sentence: "The cat was a beautiful animal, of unusually large size, and entirely black." **[Gradable & Non-Gradable Adjectives]**

Justification: "Beautiful" and "large" are gradable adjectives (varying in intensity), while "black" acts as a definitive, non-gradable adjective describing a fixed state.

Sentence: "Walking with uncertain step, I made my way with effort into the house." **[Attributive Adjective]**

Justification: "Uncertain" is an attributive adjective appearing directly before the noun "step" to describe the physical manifestation of intoxication.

D. Verbs

Examples:

Sentence: "I alone fed it, and it followed me all around the house." **[Dynamic Verbs; Transitive/Intransitive]**

Justification: "Fed" is a transitive dynamic verb requiring an object ("it"), while "followed" describes a dynamic action indicating movement and devotion.

Sentence: "I knew that my doing so was a wrong so great..." **[Factive Verb]**

Justification: The verb "knew" implies the undeniable truth of the proposition that the action was wrong, cementing the narrator's guilt.

E. Adverbs

Examples:

Sentence: "Quickly she got for us several pets of the most likeable kind." [**Adverb of Manner**]

Justification: "Quickly" describes the manner in which the action was completed.

Sentence: "He's absolutely refused to pay it." [**Adverb of Degree**]

Justification: "Absolutely" intensifies the refusal to the highest degree.

4.2 Grammatical Categories (Geoffrey Leech and Short's Model)

Poe uses his grammatical structures to create narrative suspense throughout his work. The narrator's obsessive thinking patterns create complex and compound-complex sentences, which he combines with short, simple sentences to deliver sudden shocks.

A. Clause Types

Examples:

Sentence: "Tomorrow I die." [**Independent Clause**]

Justification: A stark, complete thought that stands alone, delivering maximum impact.

Sentence: "When I was a child I had a natural goodness of soul which led me to love animals..." [**Dependent Adverbial Clause & Relative Clause**]

Justification: "When I was a child" sets a temporal condition (adverbial), and "which led me to love animals" provides additional information about the "goodness of soul" (relative).

B. Noun Phrases

Examples:

Sentence: "a natural goodness of soul which led me to love animals" [**Complex Noun Phrase**]

Justification: This phrase contains a pre-modifier ("a natural"), a head noun ("goodness"), and an extensive post-modifier prepositional phrase ("of soul which led me to love animals").

C. Sentence Structure Complexity & Sentence Type

Examples:

Sentence: "I hung it there until it was dead." [**Complex Declarative Sentence**]

Justification: Contains an independent clause ("I hung it there") and a dependent clause ("until it was dead"), delivering a statement of fact.

Sentence: "Why should it not run?" [**Interrogative Sentence**]

Justification: A question that reveals the narrator's twisted internal justification and paranoia.

Sentence: "But listen! Listen, and you shall hear how I have been destroyed." [**Imperative & Compound-Complex Sentence**]

Justification: The sentence issues commands ("listen") and connects multiple independent and dependent clauses to force the reader's attention.

4.3 Figures of Speech (Geoffrey Leech and Short's Model)

The Black Cat demonstrates Poe's use of figurative language, which serves as his primary means of showing how the narrator loses his sanity while the story maintains its supernatural uncertainty. The Gemini CLI correctly identified the various tropes and schemes that the system used to classify.

A. Grammatical and Lexical Schemes (Parallelism, Antithesis, Repetition)

Examples:

Sentence: "I became less loving in my manner; I became quick to anger; I forgot how to smile and laugh." [**Parallelism & Anaphora**]

Justification: The repetitive "I became / I became / I forgot" structure emphasizes the systematic and relentless nature of the narrator's moral degradation.

Sentence: "Tomorrow I die. Tomorrow I die..." [**Repetition**]

Justification: The immediate repetition underscores the narrator's obsessive dread and fatalistic resignation.

B. Tropes (Metaphor, Imagery, Personification)

Examples:

Sentence: "My soul seemed to fly from my body." [**Metaphor / Hyperbole**]

Justification: A hyperbolic metaphor used to express the extreme, disembodied rage the narrator feels, stripping him of human rationality.

Sentence: "On the body's head, its one eye filled with fire, its wide open mouth the color of blood, sat the cat, crying out its revenge!" [**Personification / Macabre Imagery**]

Justification: The cat is personified as a demon of vengeance ("crying out its revenge"), while the vivid imagery ("eye filled with fire," "color of blood") creates a terrifying sensory climax.

4.4 Cohesion and Context (Geoffrey Leech and Short's Model)

Examples:

Sentence: "But listen! Listen, and you shall hear how I have been destroyed." [**Linking Adverbial / Discourse Marker**]

Justification: "But" acts as a stark transition, pivoting the reader from the narrator's past innocence directly into his confession.

5. Narrative Style and Descriptive Style (Zeki Hamawand Model, 2023)

5.1 Narrative Elements

- **Plot with Setting:** The story unfolds entirely within the domestic sphere—first a happy home, then a squalid inn, and finally the dark, oppressive cellar of a ruined building. This setting directly mirrors the narrator's internal psychological collapse. The transition from light (open spaces) to dark (the walled-up cellar) is the physical manifestation of the plot.
- **Characters:**
 - The Narrator:*** An intensely unreliable protagonist whose profound psychological decay drives the narrative.
 - Pluto / The Second Cat:*** The physical and symbolic antagonists. They represent the narrator's guilt and the inescapable nature of his sins.
- **Point of View:** First-person limited ("I"). This restrictive perspective forces the reader into the claustrophobic confines of the narrator's deranged mind, blurring the line between supernatural occurrence and alcoholic hallucination.
- **Theme:** The duality of human nature, the destructive power of addiction (alcoholism), the inescapability of guilt, and the concept of the "Perverse" (doing wrong simply for the sake of doing wrong).
- **Conflict (Internal and External):** The primary conflict is internal—the narrator's struggle against his own malicious urges (the "Imp of the Perverse"). The external conflict manifests in his violence against the cat and his wife.

6. Extra-Linguistic Reality (H.B Model, 2020)

The inability of earlier RapidMiner computational tools to understand extralinguistic contexts required users to perform manual tasks using LLMs such as GPT-3.5.9. The Gemini CLI in this study successfully combined textual information with historical and biographical data sources to produce extra-linguistic analysis results.

6.1 Biographical Factor

Edgar Allan Poe's Background: Poe's own life was tragically marred by severe alcoholism, poverty, and profound psychological distress.

Narrative Reflection: Written in 1843, "The Black Cat" acts as a dark mirror to Poe's own struggles with "the fiend Intemperance".

Psychological Correlation: The narrator's catastrophic character change due to alcohol directly correlates with Poe's biographical reality and his fear of losing his own sanity to addiction.

6.2 Social and Psychological Factors

The Concept of "The Perverse": The Gemini CLI synthesized textual cues with 19th-century socio-cultural databases to reveal a "Domestic Perversion".

Subverting the Home: While the era idealized the home as a moral sanctuary, the AI identifies how the narrator's evaluative vocabulary (e.g., "horrible weight," "sin") weaponizes the domestic setting, turning a place of safety into a site of entombment.

AI Proficiency: This demonstrates the AI's ability to process extra-linguistic realities that earlier data-mining tools could not comprehend.

Shattering Expectations: Poe shatters social expectations by locating ultimate horror within the home.

The "Imp of the Perverse": Psychologically, the story is anchored in an innate, irrational human urge to commit self-destructive acts, entirely divorced from logical motivation. The narrator hangs the cat specifically because he knows he *should not*.

6.3 Plot Structure Analysis

Exposition: The narrator introduces his childhood innocence, his marriage, and his deep love for his pets, establishing a baseline of normalcy.

Complication: The introduction of alcohol ("the Fiend Intemperance") causes the narrator's personality to violently shift, leading to the mutilation of Pluto.

Climax: The narrator murders his wife in a fit of sudden, unprovoked rage and entombs her within the cellar walls.

Denouement: In an act of supreme arrogance and unconscious self-sabotage, the narrator reveals his crime to the police, sealing his execution.

7. Role Archetypes and Transitivity (Billiard-Ball Model, 2004)

7.1 Role Archetypes

Violence: In the sentence "I took the poor animal by the neck...", the narrator is the active **Agent**, while the cat is the helpless **Patient**.

Intervention: In "Quickly my wife put out her hand and stopped my arm," the wife acts as a proactive **Mover**, using her hand as the **Instrument** of physical blockage.

7.2 Transitivity and Force-Dynamics

Narrative Engine: Poe's use of transitivity functions as a narrative engine for horror.

Absolute Agency: Initially, the narrator occupies the role of **Absolute Agent**, exercising violent "Force-Dynamics" over the animals.

Pivot in Transitivity: As guilt manifests, the second cat emerges as the **Agent**, while the narrator is relegated to the **Experiencer** of supernatural terror.

Epistemic Modality: This shift is reinforced by the narrator's use of "I thought I saw," signaling the total collapse of his reliability.

Conclusion

The AI-driven stylistic analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Black Cat" demonstrates that modern generative models, specifically the Gemini CLI, provide a fundamental advancement for digital humanities research. The research established Poe's psychological terror language through a hybrid computational framework that integrated Leech and Short's (2007) traditional models with current cognitive and force-dynamic methods. The research used this comprehensive method to study every component of the text, including its lexical, grammatical, and narrative elements. The research demonstrates a shift from 'distant reading' to 'agentic reading', which uses AI as a transparent interpretive agent to solve existing technical problems in computational stylistics. The Gemini CLI solved the "concrete noun blindness" issue, together with the tagging association failures that existed in earlier tools like RapidMiner. The Gemini CLI high-fidelity mapping system enables researchers to obtain more thorough stylistic insights into how formal vocabulary and morphophonemic rhythms work together as a psychological engine.

The research shows that artificial intelligence systems can develop a human-like understanding of non-linguistic aspects by going beyond basic word-frequency analysis. The Gemini CLI enables users to combine textual information with historical and biographical data to create a biographical account of the narrator who experienced a major personality change due to Poe's documented battles with alcoholism. The synthesis showed that Poe used domestic spaces as his weapon because he transformed safe areas into places where people experienced psychological and physical confinement.

The Billiard-Ball Model showed how story elements and character actions in the narrative work together to create the plot's force dynamics. The analysis found that transitivity underwent a major transformation when the narrator changed from an "Absolute Agent" who committed violence to an "Experiencer" who faced supernatural punishment. The research demonstrates that the transition from "distant reading" to "agentic reading" enabled by advanced AI technology enables readers to analyze complex literary works with greater accuracy and from multiple perspectives, thereby establishing a new benchmark for future research in computational stylistics.

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