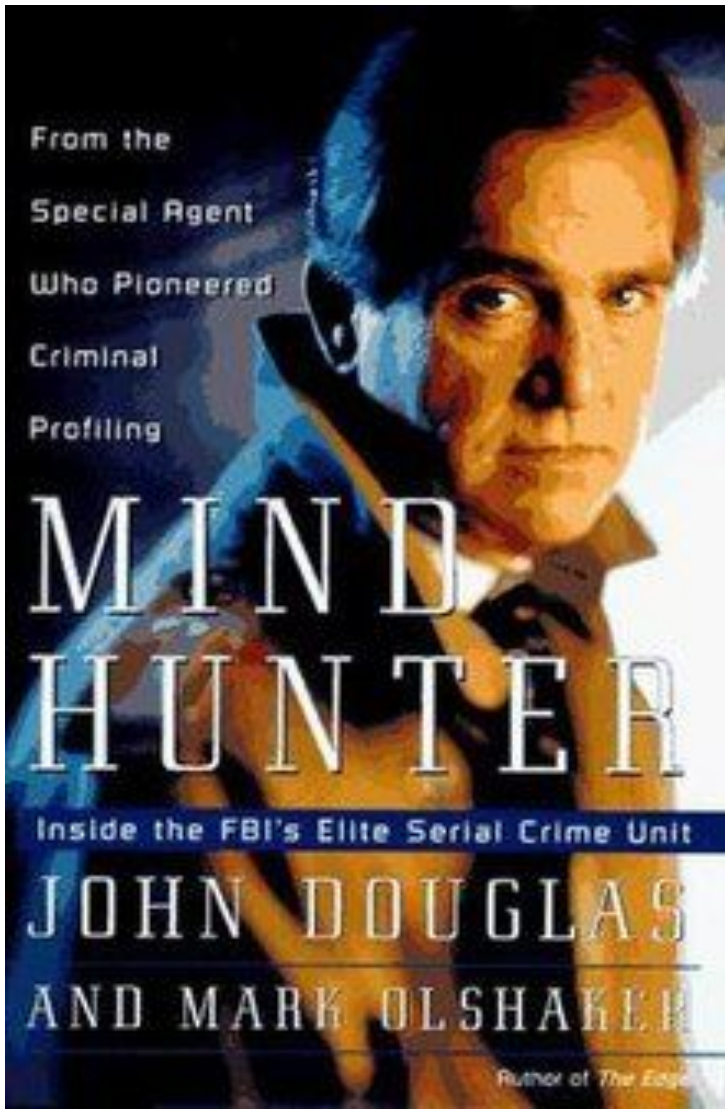


# Resemiotization in “Mindhunter”



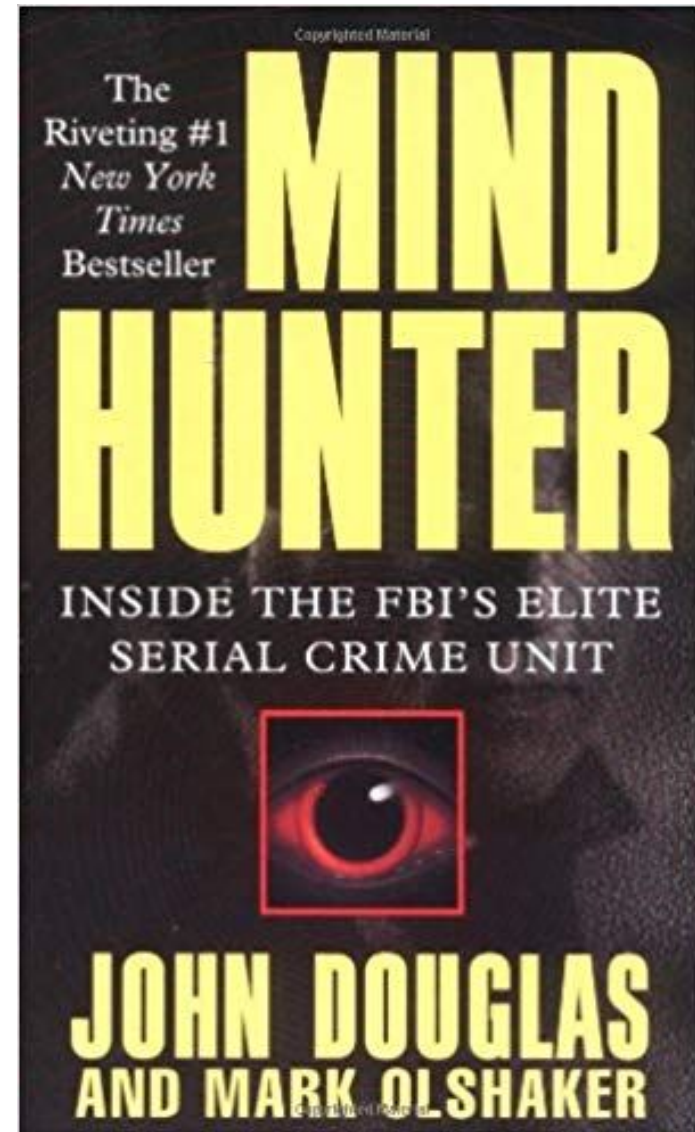
# About "Mindhunter"

Mindhunter is an American crime thriller television series created by Joe Penhall, based on the true-crime book *Mindhunter: Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit* written by John E. Douglas and Mark Olshaker.



**Book parts taken/ altered:**

- Based on real-life characters from the book
- The idea of interviewing serial killers
- No tape recorder, no notes
- Lots of research first



# Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for my analysis is mostly based of **Rick Iedema's and O'Halloran's** view on resemiotization and how resemiotization can be analyzed in audiovisual semiotic resources. Both works are based on Halliday's social semiotics theory (**systemic function theory**). It explores how changes and shifts in metafunctions affects the message and meaning, also perception of the meaning.

In closing, **resemiotization** is crucially interested in how materiality ('expression') serves to realize the **social, cultural and historical structures**, investments and circumstances of our time.

In the way that multimodality re-emphasizes the multi-semiotic nature of representation, **resemiotization seeks to underscore the material and historicized dimensions of representation.**

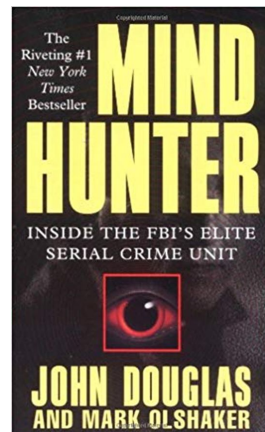
**-resemiotisation as remediation & intersemiotic translation**



# Remediation in “Mindhunter”

Bolter and Grusin argue that certain design logics – particularly the tension between a desire for **transparent immersion and the value of very foregrounded and conscious hypermediation** –operate across such diverse media as paintings, film, video games, and furniture.

On a general level this TV series is a **product of remediation** (but it has a combinative nature)- initial adaptation of the book and real-life interviews with serial killers. It’s a form of **absorption of the old medium in the new one**, as the TV series itself has to maintain the aspect of reality in itself, it doesn’t acknowledge the mediums it is based on.



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# Resemiotization from documentary interview to TV series interview (comparison across mediums)



Ed Kemper.  
Documentary  
Interview (1984)

Ed Kemper interview in TV series

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDYBmNYc8IA&t=13s>

In SF-MDA, the focus on the **metafunctional organization** (ideational, interpersonal, textual meanings) of semiotic resources is critical, but the **actual choices in multimodal** texts and processes are interpreted in relation to the context using the **concepts of register and genre**.

These dimensions are described using **register theory (Halliday)**, which is concerned with three key dimensions:

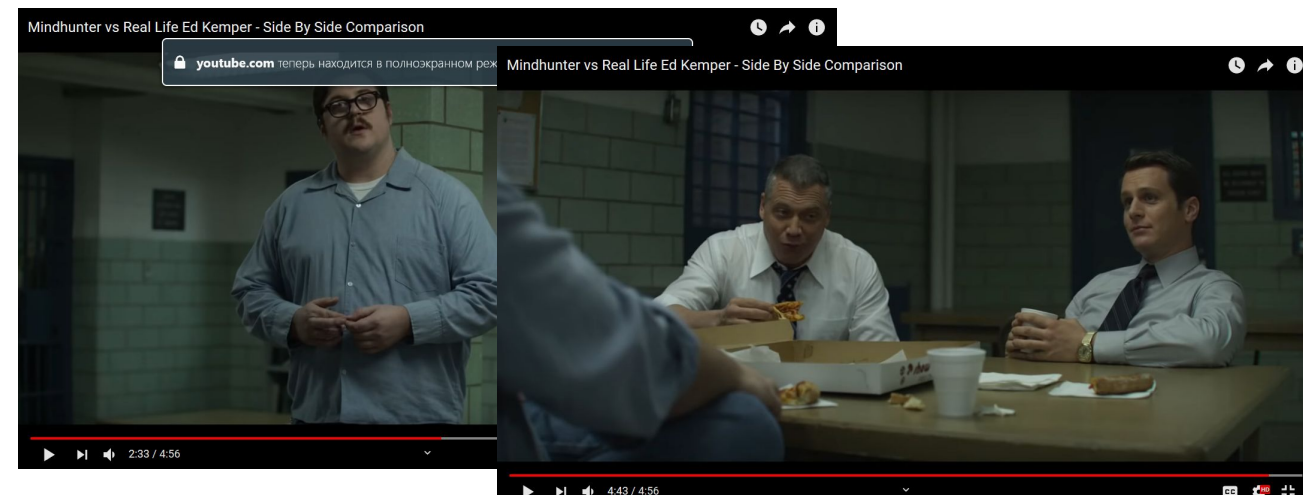
**field**—the nature of the social activity (realised through experiential and logical choices);

**tenor**—the social relations which are enacted (realised through interpersonal choices); and

**the mode**—spoken, written and visual forms of representation (realised through textual choices).

# Field

	Documentary interview	TV series interview
Field ( what is it all about, what is happening, processes, participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Real-life interview</li><li>-Acknowledged presence of the camera</li><li>- Quiet private room</li><li>-Nothing is specified or emphasized</li><li>-1984 shot and released</li><li>- Very restricted in movement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Presented as real-life interview</li><li>-No acknowledgment of camera, it's not present</li><li>-Interview is conducted in prison</li><li>-Interview is not official</li><li>-1977-1980 time in TV series, created in 2017</li><li>-A lot of sematic gestures and movement</li><li>-Casual atmosphere</li><li>-Different locations and situations</li></ul>

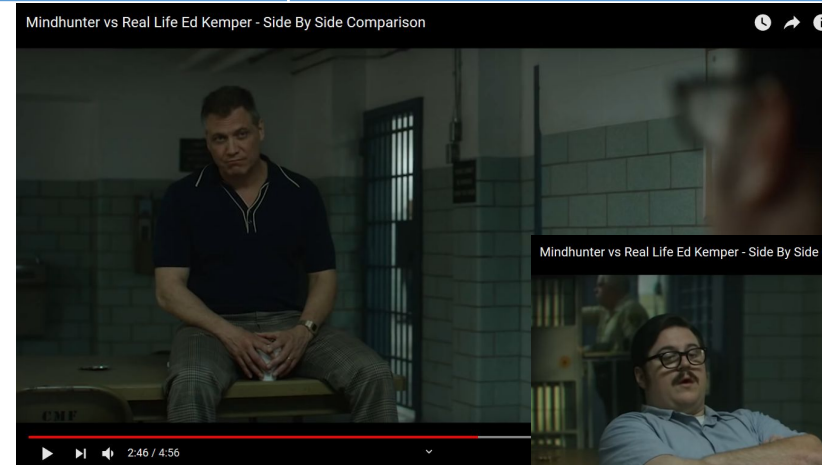


# Tenor

Tenor (participant roles, relationships, involvement)

- Involves real people (actual serial killer and psychiatrist, camera crew)
- No handcuffs, no sense of domination
- Focus primarily on the killer
- No establishment of personal relationship between participants

- Involves characters that are based on real people (serial killer and FBI agent/agents (opposite sides of the law))
- Other people around are present
- No handcuffs, domination is taken by the killer
- Focus is on both characters
- Emphasis on establishing relationship
- Reactions captured



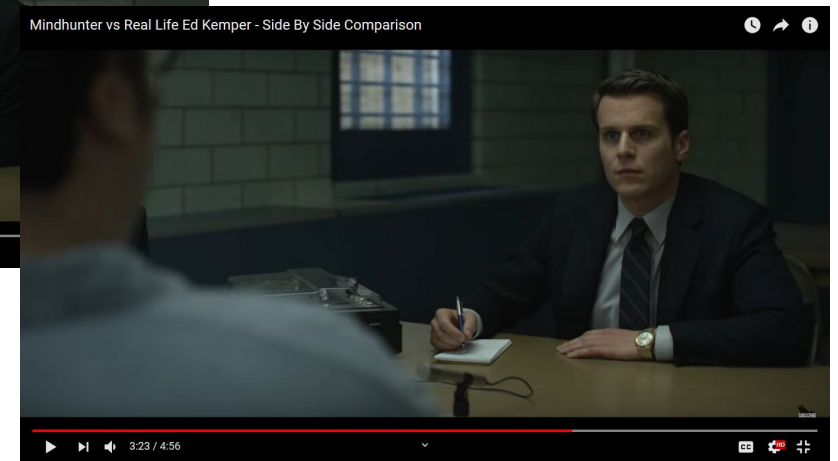
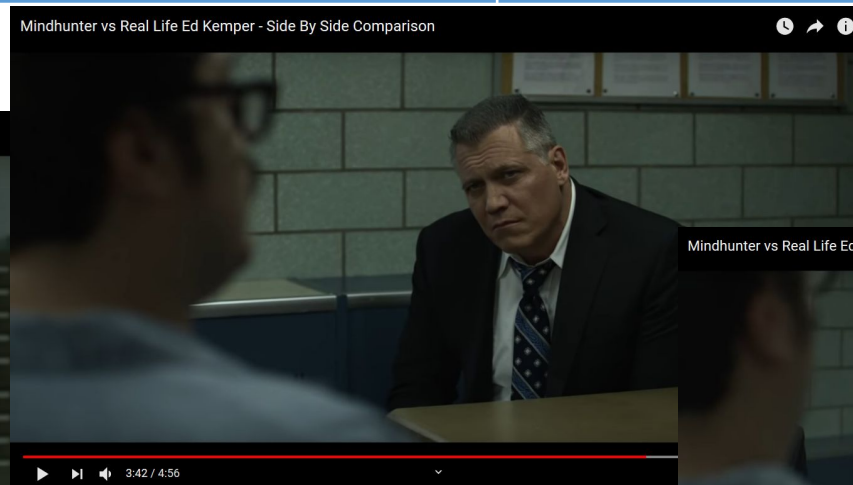
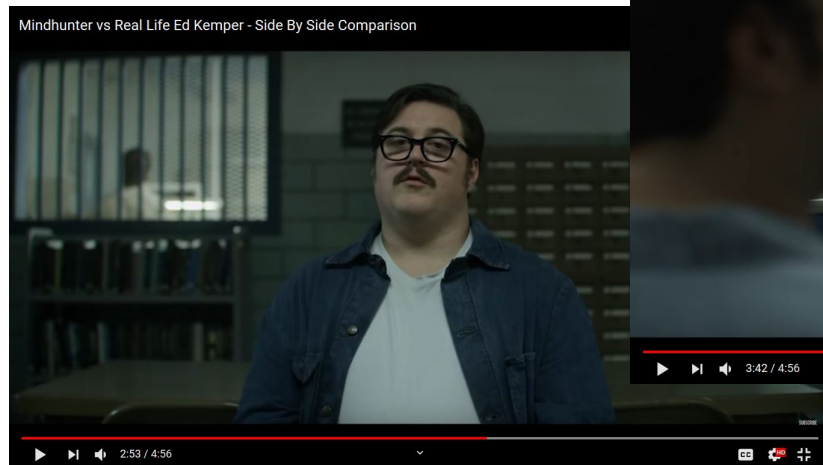


# Mode

Mode ( visual tools of representation)

-Audiovisual tools are used, but in a restricted level  
-No sounds involved, quiet atmosphere

-Audiovisual tools are used in full capacity ( soundtrack, noises, camera movement, angles, editing etc.)  
-Emphasis on the mode as a way of connecting with the audience



# Changes in meaning across genres: (processual view)

shifts in semiotic resources – **resemiotization**;

- **choice of semiotic resources** - (resources are in the way the same (audiovisual) but execution is different)
- **what meanings get expressed, fixed, carried over to the next stage** – interview with a serial killer, actual facts and information about murders, sense of understanding.
- **addition, elimination of information** – addition in terms of people that are in focus (we're interested not only in the serial killer, but also in agents, their perception, their actions; dramatization of serial killers (through cinematic choices); mystery element; conversation, posing of questions to the audience, combination of things that make you question morality)
- opening up <-> **closing down the space of interpretation/negotiation of meanings**

**Documentary interview:** observation; doesn't really explain the behavior, but rather gives us a description of actions. Abstract level. Point of view of the killer himself mostly.

**TV series interview:** aims to explain the behavior, to convey the darkness and nature of a killer. More fixed and precise level. Focus on dramatization and on the audience. Point of view from director.

**Comments:**

**David Cendana**

1 month ago

The real Ed is so.... **human**. Mindhunter ed has **this eery stillness in his emotion**. The real ed talks the way your best friend would. I understand why the cops did not believe ed at first.

**Veau Studio**

7 months ago

The real interview: **what Kemper wants us to see**

The show: **what he really is**

**Paul Bordelon**

1 day ago (edited)

Fascinating in that the real Ed is **actually likable** on a certain level. The Ed **portrayed in MindHunter not so much**.

# Closer look:

Following Halliday's SFT, the systems are organized according to the functions (called "**metafunctions**") which the resources serve in society (e.g. Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Martin and Rose 2007):

- **Ideational meaning** which consists of **experiential meaning**: to structure experience of the world and **logical meaning**: to make logical connections in the world; (what is it about)
- **Interpersonal meaning**: to enact social relations and create a stance towards the world; (how does it enact the social)
- **Textual meaning**: to organize experiential, logical and interpersonal meanings into messages (how is it put together as semiotic construct)

Metafunctional orientation	Semiotic resource	System	Description of shifts in meaning
Experiential Meaning	Language	Processes	Shift from one-on-one interview with simple <b>recitation of events</b> to an interview inside prison with a goal of <b>discovering smth new about behavior together with characters</b> . Aim is for us to have certain understandings, certain feelings.
Interpersonal Meaning	Language, semantics, visual: cinematographic resources	Speech function, establishing relationships, camera (distance, movement, viewing perspective etc)	Shift from a <b>distant relationship</b> between serial killer and interviewer and especially audience to establishing a <b>close relationship</b> (process- from first meeting when Kemper was dominant (high-angle shots, close shots) to next meetings)) with murder and FBI agents and with audience (channeling viewer's gaze on important things).
Textual Meaning	Language, written language, visual: cinematographic resources	Participants, on-screen captions, composition of shots, organization of information, editing	Shift from <b>focusing only on the killer and what he's done</b> (shots are mostly of him, only close-ups) to <b>focusing on the other characters, their reactions, realizations</b> (editing tools) and <b>creating certain atmosphere of uneasiness</b> (music, noises,

Thank you!