

CHAPTER 2

THE EPIC, STYLISTICS, AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

In this chapter, the writer discusses about some theories that are applied in his analysis in chapter three. The theories that he will discuss are: (1) The epic; (2) Stylistics; and (3) Figurative Language.

2.1. The Epic

In general, an epic may be defined as a narrative poem telling about the virtues, adventures, and heroic values of a role model (a man or supernatural being) which reflects the heroic or religious values of the ancestors in the past. (*The Epic: An introduction: 3*). In the beginning, poetry form, especially narrative poetry, was chosen to be the most effective way to express the epic. It is because poetry has more systematic rhythm that enables the hearer to remind the message easily rather than prose. Moreover, the poetry format is short enough to be remembered. Meanwhile, if the epic should be in the form of prose, it should be written down and acquires more words than poetry. Hence, it is more difficult for the readers to digest the message. The epic was usually used as a medium to stimulate the young warriors' emotional reaction to fight against their opponents. However, there are at least two great cycles of the heroic age are represented in the prose adaptations; those are *The Deeds of Cuchulain* and *The Deeds of Finn*. (*The Epic: An Introduction: 3*) Around them are grouped many other stories which have only the most tenuous connection with the fate of central hero, though they plainly belong to the epic age.

The English epic has three characteristics in common, those are: (1) It was handed down orally form; (2) It is the work of anonymous poet; and (3) It reflects a constant growth and alteration in form and subject-matter from age to age (*The Epic: An introduction: 5*). The English epic poetry history was begun between the fourth and eighth centuries. The two races that became pioneers of English epic are the Anglo-Saxon and the Celtic. However, of all these epics, all of the Anglo-Saxon examples have been lost except *Beowulf* and fragments of one or two others while the Celtic has the complete form of its epics.

In its popular epic, both the two ancestors, Anglo-Saxon and Celtic, try to express their moral ideals in their own way. According to the research, the following outline shows the major distinctions between the Anglo-Saxon and the Celtic in each point of view. According to (*The Epic: An introduction: 5*), the Anglo-Saxon characteristics are as follows:

- Constant, loyal to their own tribe, conservative, and skeptical in life except the hardest kind of battle. Life to them is more or less like a mystery and they are fearless to face it.
- Clear-vision oriented, though they often express their emotional reaction. (They can distinguish the truth and failures obviously, which can prevent them from the fatal failures in life because of their overconfidence and pride)
- They have brotherhood feelings that unite the chief of the tribe and his members and the feelings is also applied among the members itself.
- Interested in a code of ethics and in political government.
- In the sense of humor, the Anglo-Saxon prefers grim, ironic, and mature humor.

Whereas the characteristics of the Celtic tribe are as follows:

- They have positive view of life, and they wonder about the magnificent perspective of life.
- Though they are like the Anglo-Saxon in their awe of fate, they enjoy the beautifulness in nature and in life.
- In the sense of humor, the Celtic prefers simple, charming, and childlike humor.
- Though the Celtic adopts a sense of the mystery of life from the Anglo-Saxon, they don't believe in foreboding.
- They feel both an in effable and tender melancholy at the transitory and illusive nature and beauty, and an eager joy that so much beauty has been vouchsafed.
- The Celtic does not only take account on what they usually call 'tragedy' as a young warrior, but also the beauty of the young man's life while he was at the height of his power, and the inscrutability of those unknown forces which swept him away of this world into one which the bard felt, and all his people with him, must be even more beautiful than the one he left.
- The epic bards of the Celtic tribes believed in general that our world is only an imperfect fragment of a greater and more beautiful world of eternal youth, where those who have honorably performed their part in this world will find a solution for the mysteries of life, and dwell in eternal happiness. (*The Epic: An introduction:5*)

2.2. Stylistics

When discussing about the word *Style*, it cannot be released from a general perception that the word refers to a certain pattern that someone (or some people) use(s) to express the uniqueness of their identity. Moreover, the style of a person or a group

can be used as an indicator to identify in what era the style was used. The changing style indicates that the era has also been changing. Besides, the changing style also indicates the changing perspectives. The same thing with human beings, style is also applicable to the Language world. Style in language is usually used to identify the characteristics of the author on the text through linguistic pattern (grammar, style, semantic, etc.) According to David Crystal and Derek Davy, there are at least four definitions about Style in language world, those are:

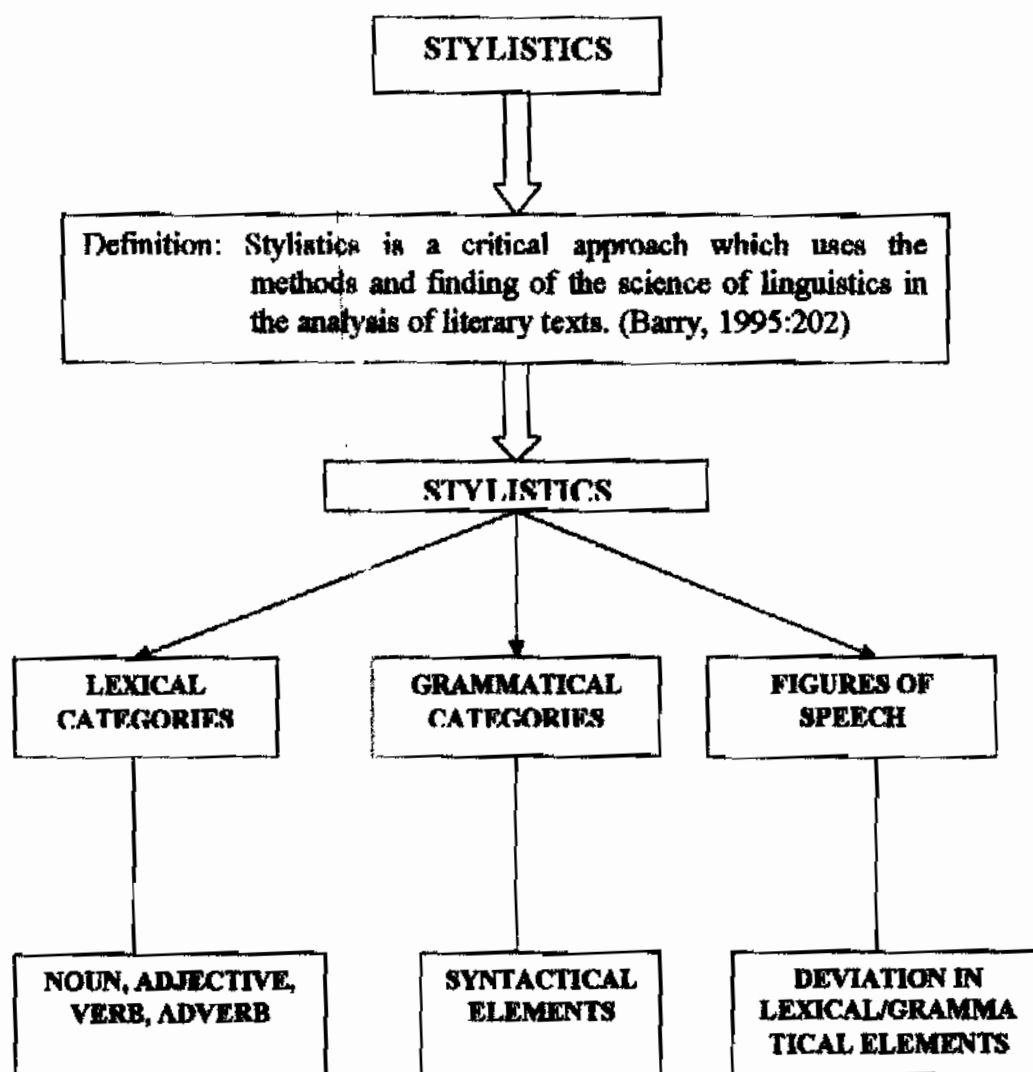
1. Style can be referred as the language habits of a person or a group of people which produces a language classification that indicates an individual's uniqueness.
2. Style also can be referred as the language habits that are used by a person or a group of people to indicate when and how the language habits are used.
3. In an evaluative sense, style has a more important meaning, that is, as an indicator to measure the effectiveness of expressions.
4. Style in literature is used as a characteristic of 'good', 'effective', or 'beautiful' writing. (Crystal & Davy, 1969: 9)

From the four definitions mentioned, the first and second definition is the closest definitions that describe what we mean by 'Style' in language. In other words, *Stylistics* can be defined as the critical approach used to analyze language habits in the aim of identifying, explaining, and classifying linguistic features in common English which are commonly used in social context. (Crystal & Davy, 1969: 10).

From the explanation above, it is obvious that there are three main purposes of *Stylistics*, those are:

- **Identifying:** Identifying the entire range of linguistic features that stylistically significant in general, and make an appropriate way to discuss about them. [metalanguage]. (Crystal & Davy, 1969:12)
- **Explaining:** Explaining why such features have been used, as opposed to other alternatives by outlining a method of analysis which will allow us to organize these features in such a way as to facilitate comparison of any one use of language with any other. (Crystal & Davy, 1969:10 &12)
- **Classifying:** Defining the function of these features by classifying them into categories based on the kind of extra-linguistic purpose they have. (Crystal & Davy, 1969: 12)

When discussing about Stylistics, it cannot be released from this key term. The key term is 'Linguistic features'. According to David Crystal and Derek Davy in their book *Investigating English Style*, defines the word 'features' in Stylistics as any bit of speech or writing which a person can single out from the general flow of language and discuss – a particular word, part of a word, sequence of words, or way of uttering a word. (Crystal & Davy, 1969: 10-11). Moreover, a feature, when it is restricted in its occurrence to a limited number of social contexts, is called *a stylistically significant or stylistically distinctive feature* (Crystal & Davy, 1969:11).



(Saptenno, 2002: 10)

The table of stylistics based on Saptenno

2.2.1. Lexical Categories

This section is discussing about the choice of words used by the author to express his or her message in his or her work(s) and the reason why he or she uses the choice of word as his or her style. According to Leech (1981), there are some considerations to analyze the author's choice of words especially on the four kinds of part of speech: (1) Noun; (2) Adjective; (3) Verb; and (4) Adverb.

2.2.1.1. Noun

According to Leech (1981), there are some points that can become considerations in determining the author's writing style as well as the author's characteristics from the author's usage of nouns, those are:

- Examine whether the nouns frequently used by the author are abstract or concrete nouns. For example, In the story *The Secret Sharer* by Joseph Conrad it is seen that there are many concrete nouns in the story (e.g. stakes, bamboo, fences, fishermen, ruins, etc.) In fact these concrete nouns are matched by nouns which are more abstract in one way or another. Significantly, these nouns tend to occur as heads of major noun phrases ('lines of, ... stakes', 'system of ..., fences'), so the concreteness is subordinated to abstraction. (Adopted from: Leech, 1981: 84)
- If the author uses abstract nouns frequently, examine what kind of abstract nouns frequently occurred (e.g. referring to events, perceptions, processes, moral qualities, or social qualities). For example the word *life, immortality, etc.*
- If the author often uses proper names in his or her literary work(s), examine the usage of the proper names used by the author. For example, in the short story *The*

Appointment in Samarra written by William S. Maugham, he always uses different proper nouns to describe his characters in the short story.

- Examine whether the author often uses single or collective noun. For example, the sentence "A dozen of students are studying English." Why the author does not use *the students* to replace *a dozen of students*? The answer is that the author emphasizes the amount of students that he or she describes in the sentence. (Leech, 1981: 76)

2.2.1.2. Adjective

Leech (1981) argues that some points can be applied as considerations in indicating the author's writing style as well as the author's characteristics in the form of adjective, those are:

- Examine whether the author uses adjectives frequently. For example, the sentence "The woman is using a yellow silk gown." Why the author adds two adjectives in the sentence? The answer is the author wants to describe the character in detail so that the readers can imagine what the author describes.
- Examine which category does the adjectives used by the author refers to (physical, psychological, visual, etc.). For example in the story *Odour of Chrysanthemums* written by D.H. Lawrence, he uses visual imagery especially color to accompany the auditory imagery of verbs such as red, scarlet, and pink, which bring the sign of life. Another group of adjective which he uses in the story is morphological defined, consists of adjectives ending with -y such as *marshy, reedy, ashy, dreary, etc.* (Adopted from: Leech, 1981: 92-93)

- Examine whether the author often uses restrictive or non-restrictive adjective because it may help us to indicate whether the author is a simple or detailed person.
- Examine whether the author uses gradable or non-gradable adjective.
- Examine whether the author uses attributive or predicative adjective because it may help us to indicate whether the adjective is important or not.
(Leech, 1981:76)

2.2.1.3. Verb

Leech (1981) also argues that there are some points that can be applied as considerations to analyze the author's writing style and characteristics in the form of verb, those are:

- Examine whether the verbs carry an important part of the meaning.
- Examine whether the verbs are stative verbs (referring to states) or dynamic verbs (referring to actions, events, etc.). For example, in the story *Odour of Chrysanthemums* written by D.H. Lawrence there are many dynamic verbs (e.g. *came, clanking, flickered, licking, etc.*). Even static elements of the landscape have implications of movements (e.g. *the pit bank 'looms up', the chimneys 'taper', the vine 'clutches'*)
(Adopted from: Leech, 1981: 92)
- Examine whether the verbs are 'referring' to movements, physical acts, speech acts, psychological states or activities, perceptions, etc. For example, in the story *Odour of Chrysanthemums* written by D.H. Lawrence many verbs indicate movements (*came, clanking, flickered, licking, etc.*) (Adopted from: Leech, 1981: 92)
- Examine whether the verbs are transitive, intransitive, or linking.

- Examine whether the verbs are factive or non factive. (Leech, 1981: 76)

2.2.1.4. Adverb

According to Geoffrey N. Leech in his book titled *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose* (1981), there are some points that can be applied as considerations to analyze the author's writing style and characteristics in the form of adverb, those are:

- Examine whether the adverbs occur frequently.
- Examine what semantic functions the adverbs perform (manner, place, time, direction, etc). For example in the story *Odour of Chrysanthemums* written by D.H. Lawrence the largest group of adverbs is the adverb of place, and especially direction such as down, back, aside, away, etc. These adverbs tend to combine with verbs to emphasize movement and activity. There are also four manner adverbs in -ly such as *indistinctly, heavily, insignificantly, and noiselessly*. Other adverbs, especially *still* and *already*, refer to time, emphasizing the premature nightfall, which, with its increase of gloom, colors the passage with despondency. (Adopted from: Leech, 1981: 93)
- Examine whether there is any significant of sentence adverbs (conjuncts such as *so, therefore, however*, disjuncts such as *certainly, obviously, frankly, etc.*). (Leech, 1981: 76)

2.3. Figurative Language

Figurative language or figures of speech is usually used in poetry to refer a certain message to something else. According to DiYanni (2001), he states that "Figurative language is something other than the actual meaning of the words." (p.439)

There are more than 250 different types of figures of speech. However, the writer will only discuss eight types of figurative languages, those are: (1) Irony, (2) Symbolism; (3) Allegory, (4) Personification, (5) Hyperbole, (6) Metaphor, (7) Simile, and (8) Sarcasm.

2.3.1. Irony

The Irony can be categorized as one of many types of figures of speech, but it can also be categorized as one of the fiction elements. It usually appears in the literary works (poetry, fiction or prose, and drama) in three ways: (1) in a work's language; (2) in its incidents; and (3) in its point of view. The author uses irony to show contrasts or contradictions between what is said (written) in the text and what is meant by the author. (DiYanni, 2001: 93)

There are two kinds of irony in fiction world, those are: (1) Verbal irony; and (2) Irony of circumstances. Verbal irony means the author or writer shows the contradictions through syntactical elements, including words and sentences. For example, when someone says, "That's a brilliant score." and he says it to the person who gets bad score, we perceive that the person uttered the irony sentence to the person gets the bad score. In more complex example, however, the designation of an action or a remark as ironic is much more complicated. At the end of O'Connor's "Good Country People", Mrs. Freeman says: "Some can't be that simple. I know I never could." The question is arising, should we take her literally? Or we detect irony? (DiYanni, 2001:93)

Meanwhile, the irony of circumstance (sometimes called irony of situation) means the contradiction that appears between what seems to be happened in the text and what is exactly happens. In Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour", the main character, Mrs. Mallard, appears to be grieving over the news of her husband's death. At least that

is how her action is perceived by other characters. In fact, her tears does not symbolize grievances towards her husband's death, instead her tears initiates her happiness in facing her new freedom. In this case, her tears is ironic because the tears indicates the opposite of what the readers expect them to.

In fact, besides the two types mentioned above, there are the other two types of irony which deserve to be mentioned, those are: (1) Dramatic irony; and (2) Ironic vision. However, dramatic irony is typically appears in the form of plays, rather than stories. A dramatic irony is the difference of point of view between what the characters know and what the readers know. In the conclusion of Flannery O'Connor's "Good Country People," the reader has quite a different view of the Bible salesman's character than either Mrs. Freeman or Mrs. Hopswell does. (DiYanni, 2001:94)

Meanwhile, an ironic vision is defined as the overall tone that suggests how the writer views his or her character(s) and the subject. (DiYanni, 2001:94)

This kind of irony can be clearly seen in a long prose such as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. For clearer information, let us examine a piece of text in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* below.

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

However, little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighborhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters. (DiYanni, 2001:94)

From the first sentence of the piece of the text, we can draw an assertion that every single man in this world must search for a wife. In addition, this statement seems to be generally acknowledged by all people in the world. In fact, can we believe that it is a common knowledge, not just a tradition in England in the nineteenth century or in

America the late of twentieth century? It is obvious that Jane Austen's sentence is ironic because it is contradictive to the reality that in fact women are the seeker of the appropriate men, not the opposite.

Besides the contradictive context and syntactical elements (words and sentences) that indicates the existence of the irony, there are three other signals that initiates irony, those are:

- *Negation*: The double negative 'unwilling... without...' suggest a contrast between the willingness that seems to be expected by the main character and the reluctance that his own circumstances force upon him.
- *Collocations*: it is an associative incongruity in the way words are in a phrase. For example, 'fat jeweled hand' and 'soiled pants de Suède'. The unappealing qualities *fat* and *soiled* influence their more agreeable neighbors *Jeweled* and *pants de Suède*, which by contamination come to seem pretentious.
- *Disparities between register and tone*: Subtle mixing of tone points to an ironic interpretations of the phrase. For example, the preciousity of *besthought* herself contrasts oddly with the colloquial bluntness of *getting rid of* in 'When Mrs. Morcen *besthought* herself of this pretext for *getting rid of* their companion' and in the final clause of the passage, the colloquial 'looking out for' foregrounds the specious gentility of 'something really superior in the way of a resident tutor' (Leech & Short, 1981: 106).

2.3.2. Symbolism

Symbols can be applied in both in poetry and fiction. Symbols in fiction are defined as objects, actions, and events that convey meaning extending beyond literal significance, beyond their more obvious actual reasons for being included in the story. (DiYanni, 2001:95). For example, in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Black Cat", the black cat that has a white spot in its neck symbolizes the figure of the author's mother because the white spot symbolizes milk.

After we have understood the explanation above, the ultimate question may arise, how do we know if a particular detail(s) is (are) symbolic? The answer of this question is that there is no way to be sure about the symbolic value of any particular details, but

according to Robert DiYanni (2001), we (the readers) can alert ourselves to the possible symbolic overtones of such details through the following considerations:

1. The quality of importance of the story elements (i.e. object, action, gesture or dialogue) to the story.
2. The tendency of the story depicts the significance meaning of the symbolic word more frequently than its literal meaning.
3. The connection between the symbolic word and the story and its literal meaning.
4. Consideration of any objection that might be created by our symbolic interpretation. (p. 95)

2.3.3. Allegory

Allegory is one of figurative languages that still have a close relationship with Symbolism. According to Robert DiYanni (2001), allegory is a form of narrative in which people, places, and happenings have hidden or symbolic meaning; allegory is especially suitable as a vehicle for teaching. (p. 444). For instance, the sentence "Life is just like a rotating wheel" teaches us that we (human beings) cannot always be happy in this life. Sometimes we have to be in bad or sad feeling. There are two levels of meaning in allegory work, literal and symbolic. In understanding allegory work, first we have to interpret the symbolic meaning. Thus, allegory is a type of symbolism. The major difference between them is the establishment of a strict system of correspondences between details of action and a pattern of meaning. Symbolic works that are not allegorical are less systematic and more open-ended in what their symbols mean. (DiYanni, 2001:445)

2.3.4. Personification

According to Thomas R. Arp (1998), *personification* is defined as one of figures of speech that gives the attributes of a human being to an animal, an object, or a concept. (Arp, 1998:623). This figure of speech is a subtype of metaphor which always uses human beings as the figurative terms to be compared. For instances, in the sentence “The fog hides the people in his arms” suggests as if the fog is a human being that can hides something by arms. In this case, the sentence personifies the subject of the sentence.

2.3.5. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a figurative language that is deliberately used to exaggerate a fact or an emotion in such a way as to attribute great importance to it (Altenbernd & Lewis, n.d.:23). For instance, if someone says, “I will die, if I don’t get any cigarette” he uses hyperbole expression to emphasize that he urgently needs the cigarette. Sometimes hyperbole is also used to show irony or cynical expression.

Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th’affrighted skies
Not louder shrieks to pitying heaven are cast,
When husbands, or when lapdogs breath their last, ... (Altenbernd & Lewis, n.d.:23).

The juxtaposing of husbands and lapdogs imparts a comic one to the whole passage and makes clear that we do not take the “living lightning” very seriously. (Altenbernd & Lewis, n.d.:23).

2.3.6. Metaphor

Metaphor is one of the figurative languages that uses comparison as its essence of thinking. Metaphor seeks for the similarities between two distinctive things. In addition, Aristotle had defined the word *Metaphor* as “an intuitive perception of the similarities in dissimilars” since more than 2,300 years ago. He also suggested that to gain the best achievement in poetry world, someone has to master the metaphor. (DiYanni, 2001: 436) For example, the sentence “It is heaven to be close to you.” The speaker feels very comfort if he or she is close to the agent so that he or she depicts his or her comfort with something which has the same sense with his or her feeling. The word *heaven* is chosen to depict his or her feeling because heaven is related with joy, comfort, and pleasure. Thus, we can conclude that the sentence contains a Metaphor.

2.3.7. Simile

Another figurative language that uses similarity as its tool to link the connection between dissimilar things is Simile. Although both Metaphor and Simile discuss the similarity between dissimilar things, the two figurative languages have some distinctive differences. Simile uses explicit verbal clues such as *like* or *as* whereas Metaphor does not. (DiYanni, 2001: 436) For example, the sentence “My life is like hell.” is a simile; “My life is hell.” is a Metaphor. Moreover, in another sentence Simile shows obviously about which part of the sentence is modified figuratively, whereas Metaphor does not. For example, the sentence “The king’s behavior is like evil” The sentence is clearly emphasizing only on the king’s behavior. (There is no suggestion that he possesses other evil qualities, only his behavior). Meanwhile, the sentence “The king is evil” is a metaphor because we do not know which part of the king is evil or it suggests a new

meaning that the king has all or most of the evil characteristics. In other words, Metaphor can create ambiguous or polysemy meaning to the reader(s). (DiYanni, 2001: 436-437)

2.3.8. Sarcasm

Sarcasm is one kind of irony; it is a praise which is really an insult; sarcasm generally involves malice, the desire to put someone down, e.g. "This is my brilliant son, who failed out of college." ("Literary," 2002. Retrieved June 29, 2007 from http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/lit_term.html)