



doi:10.5281/zenodo.10639032

Vol. 07 Issue 01 Jan - 2024

Manuscript ID: #01186

THE ROLE OF FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS IN DEPICTING THE STYLE OF A LITERARY WRITER: AN APPRAISAL OF CHUKWUEMEKA IKE'S NOVEL "THE POTTER'S WHEEL"

By

Aderinto Suebu Iyanda Abiodun

Department of English and Literary Studies, Veritas University, Abuja. (The Catholic University of Nigeria)

Corresponding: aderintoiyanda@gmail.com +2348034214020

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this Article is to show how figurative expressions can help in showcasing the style of a literary writer. This research aims at exploring some of the figurative devices used in Chukwuemeka Ike's Novel "The Potter's Wheel". The Article also aims at examining how Ike has used the figurative expressions in the novel to enhance the aesthetic beauty of the novel and depicting his own writing style, painting an exceptional posture of his personality before the readers.

KEYWORDS

Literary Devices, Style, Stylistics, texts, Interpretation, Meaning.



This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License.

INTRODUCTION

Style in literature is the literary element that describes the ways that the author uses words, inclusive of the author's word choice, sentence structure, figurative language, which work together to establish mood, images and meaning in the text.

Stylistics no doubt is the study of style in texts. Style is concerned with the artful expression of idea and stylistics is the bridge that links the idea of style to the analysis of literary text.

Undoubtedly Chukwuemeka Ike, conscious of the importance of the need for a writer to single himself or herself out used various figurative expressions in his novel, "The Potter's wheel" to showcase the style with which he writes.

SOME OF THE CORE FIGURATIVE DEVICES USED IN DEPICTING CHUKWUEMEKA IKE'S STYLE

Alliteration – Alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds and letters in words. An example could be seen below:

Exemption from fetching firewood for teachers all
through the first term of the ensuring school year
pg 1

In the above example letter f alliterates. Letter f is a consonant sound, Chukwuemeka Ike Stylistically uses alliteration in the above statement to guarantee the rhythmic flow of the words used.

Simile – Simile is the comparison between two things with the use of "AS or Like". An example of simile used by Chukwuemeka Ike for comparison between two things in his novel, "The Potter's wheel" could be seen below:

He was as cunning as the tortoise and as slippery as the eel.
Pg 108.

In the above extract, the persona's level of playing on other people's intelligence is indeed gargantuan. The more reason his level of being cunning is compared to that of a tortoise. Chukwuemeka Ike used simile here to depict his command of the English language in terms of comparing one thing with another, stylistically he uses simile as a literary device here.

Simile – Another example of simile as a literary device to depict the writer's style of writing could be seen below:

Shut up! Teacher bellowed like a lion
Pg 112.

The writer also Stylistically used simile in the extract above. The way in which "Teacher" shouted is compared to the way a lion will roar, much more fearfully. The comparison of the way "Teacher" shouted to the way a lion will roar showed how annoyed "Teacher" was in the episode in which this extract was taken. The way he shouted here also depicted the kind of personality "Teacher" is – a formidable personality.

Repetition – Repetition is the act of repeating a word or an idea, in order to place emphasis on it. Stylistically Chukwuemeka Ike used repetition in "the Potter's wheel to showcase his personal style

of writing, ie depicting his personality and to buttress the fact that style is indeed "The Man" as Georges Louis de Buffon as postulated. An example of Repetition could be seen in the extract below:

You and Mary must Scrub
the whole house thoroughly
Madam ordered. Thoroughly
I said. You must apply
the pebble thoroughly

Pg 136

The extract above showcases repetition. The word thoroughly was repeated for emphasis. The persona or the speaker in the extract wanted to show how well she wanted the task given out should to be carried out.

Stylistically Chukwuemeka Ike has used repetition here for emphasis, ie to depict how the persona wanted the task done, as stated above. The writer tries to justify the idea behind the philosophy of "style as choice". Chukwuemeka Ike tried to depict the fact that it is his choice to use repetition to showcase emphasis..

Onomatopoeia – This is the act of using words that imitate the sound they denote. Stylistically the writer used this literary device to create an effect on the readers. An example could be seen below:

The bell for the day had sounded gbo-gom, gbo-gom, gbo-gom
From the headmaster's office.

Pg146

From the extract above the writer has used gbo-gomgbo-gom to reflect the sound of bell, which is often used to alert students about what they are to do in the school or what they should stop doing like telling them about the fact that break is over and that they should go back to their classes. Gbo-gom gbo-gom is onomatopoeia oriented in terms of literary device, and Chukwuemeka Ike has used this device in "The Potter's wheel" to showcase his style of writing as a literarily informed writer, as a way of making his idea quite vivid to the readers.

Irony – An Irony is the act of saying the opposite of what one has in mind. Chukwuemeka Ike stylistically used irony in the Potter's wheel" to depict his flair for literary devices, as a way of showcasing his style and also beautifying what he writes. An example of Irony is shown below:

If you want to live in this house, you must
learn many things immediately and one of them
is not to play with a tiger's tail
Pg 112.

In the extract above, Irony as a literary device featured adequately. "Not to play with a tiger's tail", ironically means the person spoken to should not take the path of trouble. The persona is not really talking about a physical tiger's tail being touched. The writer, only stylistically used "not to play with a tiger's tail" to indirectly tell the one spoken to, to avoid danger in the course of his activities in the house. The use of Irony here is a reflection of the style of Chukwuemeka Ike's penchant for the use of literary devices to add aesthetics to what he writes and makes his message vivid before the readers.

Irony – Another instance of Irony featured at another episode of "The Potter's Wheel" and this could be seen below:

All right. If any of you brings shame to
C.M.S central school, he will see pepper
with his eyes.
Pg 176

In the above extract, the writer stylistically makes use of Irony in the persona addressing a group of students. The statement “He will see pepper with his eyes” is ironical in that the speaker is not referring to normal physical “Pepper”, rather the personal tries to refer to dire consequences which may ensue for any of the students who portrays C.M.S central school in bad light. The personal says the students will see “pepper” to let them know the punishment that awaits them, should they go contrary to what the school wants.

Assonance – This is the repetition of similar vowels in the stressed syllables of successive words. Through the writer’s style, an example of Assonance is realized in the extract below:

The crow – crow on your hands is
enough pollution already

Pg 157

In the extract above, Assonance featured accordingly in crow – crow which Chukwuemeka Ike stylistically put in place to a create sound effect in the reader with the use of similar vowels..

Paradox – This is a statement that looks unreasonable at first, but after careful look, the statement is seen to be pregnant and poignant with meaning. Based on his own personal style, Chukwuemeka Ike used extract below to signpost paradoxical idea.

It is because you have not trained
him very well that I ‘m thinking about
sending him away before he dissolves
completely... pg 70

The extract above is indeed an example of paradox. The speaker in the extract is indicating that he was thinking of sending his son Obu out of his parents’ house, so as to avoid him being overpampered and so becoming useless to himself and the society at large. “before he dissolves completely” means before Obu becomes totally unresourceful.

The statement in the extract at first looks unreasonable at first, but after careful look, the statement becomes fundamentally reasonable and sensible.

Conclusion

In conclusion therefore, it is indeed right to state categorically that Chukwuemeka Ike wrote “The Potter’s Wheel” in a way as to showcasing his style in his use of figurative devices to sell his ideas well to the readers. The writer’s use of these literary devices in the novel is to depict his creativity and also to prove that literary devices can help in expressing an individual person’s thoughts in a seamless manner. Again Chukwuemeka Ike has proven that literary devices are indispensable to writing a literary work, as they help in beautifying the messages that writers aim at passing across to the readers.

Moreover, from the exploration of the literary devices in the “Potter’s Wheel”, above, it is clear that the use of literary devices by a writer will make the readers be attracted to the messages a writer

desires to pass across to his readers, as such messages will sink well in the heart of the readers. Chukwuemeka has used literary devices in his novel "The Potter's Wheel" to pass his messages well, and it is evident that his readers will find those messages intelligent and indeed purposeful.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, M. A (1981) *Glossary of Literary Terms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Birch, D. (1997) *Context and Language: A Functional Linguistic Theory of Register*. London and New York: Pinter.
- Bradford, R. (1997) *Stylistics* London and New York: Routledge.
- Chase, M. & Collier, P. (1985) *An Introduction to Literature*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich.
- Cook, G. (1974) *Discourse and Literature: The Interplay of Form and Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Crystal, D. & Davy, D. (1969) *Investigating English Style*. London: Longman.
- Dalsylva, A. (2004) *Studies in Drama*. Lagos: Stirling-Horden.
- Lucas, F. (1995) *Style*, London: Cassel and Coy.
- Millet, F. (1950) *Reading Fiction*. Illinois: Harper and Brothers.
- Palmer, E. (1986) *Studies on the English Novel*. Ibadan: African University Press.
- Sebock, T. A. (1960) *Style in Language*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Toolan, M. (1998) *Language in Literature: An Introduction to Stylistics*. London: Hodder Arnold.
- Wales, K. A. (2001) *Dictionary of Stylistics* (2nd ed.). Harlow: Longman.
- Widowson, H.G. (1992) *Practical Stylistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Williams, J. (2007) *Style: Lesson in Clarity and Grace* (9th ed.). New York: Longman.