

A Stylistic Analysis of The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies

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Abstract

*The aim of this study is to make a stylistic analysis of a novel entitled *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* by Dinaw Mengestu using the analytic model developed by Leech and Short (1981) as the major approach. To facilitate this, the study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter mainly involves the background of the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions and the methodology of the study. The second chapter is mainly discusses review of related literature and theoretical framework. Chapter three is the analysis part in which selected chapters from the novel are analyzed and chapter four will be the conclusion where it summarizes the major findings.*

Most MA theses that have used stylistic analysis are based on certain poem or short stories and much work has not been done applying stylistic analysis to novels, according to the observation made. Thus, this paper tries to apply stylistic analysis on a novel and shows how one can better understand writer's use of different literary elements and how meanings are constructed from a specific novel.

To give some of the major findings of this study, the writer uses more nouns as compared to other word classes, i.e. adjectives, verbs and adverbs. When we see major figures of speech used, the writer uses repetition and parallelism as the major grammatical and lexical schemes. With regard to the phonological schemes, alliteration is widely used creating a consonant sound effect. Alliterative proper nouns are also use to help the reader not to easily forget the names of the some characters. When we see the use of tropes, almost all of the rhetorical devices that are used are similes.

Synopsis of the Novel

The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears, by Dinaw Mengestu

The story is about an Ethiopian immigrant, Sepha Stephanos, who fled to America when he was a teenager during the Red Terror and has been living in and around Washington, DC, for seventeen years much of which he has spent as a resident and store owner in Logan Circle, a neighborhood that is characterized as only poor black people live. His life is only his store and his two fellow African friends Ken from Kenya and Joe from Congo who share this bitter nostalgia and longing for his home continent. As his neighborhood begins to change, hope comes in the form of a friendship with a new neighbors Judith and her Noami, a white woman and her biracial daughter which later on feel in love with the mother and got fond of the eleven years daughter. But when a series of racial incidents disturbs the neighborhood, Sepha loses both the woman he loved and the girl that he was fond of. Thus, the story revolves around Sepha's store, his friends, Judith and Noami, his nostalgia about this past life in Ethiopia as well as his loneliness in America.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

“A great African novel, a great Washington novel, and a great American novel” is what is written on the cover page of the *The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears* which is commented by The New York Times Book Review. Also, Khaled Hosseini the famous writer and author of *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* commented as “I was profoundly moved by this tale of an Ethiopian immigrant’s search for acceptance, peace, and identity”. Dinaw Mengistu, the author of *The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears* (his first book), is an Ethiopian descendent living in the United States. He is also the author of another fiction entitled *How to Read the Air* and few other short stories.

Every writer’s works can have a great influence on fore coming literary works. Even though their purpose is the same, i.e. revelation of truth about life and human nature, the ways they express ideas differ from author to author. That means, all authors put works together uniquely to fit the specific conditions in specific words. Therefore, stylistic analysis may contribute to any one in literature: authors, critics, literature teaches, and students in identifying those uniquely put works of a certain author. The writer’s strength can be adopted and his weakness can be a lesson learned. Thus, stylistic analysis of *The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears* by Dinaw Mengestu is the main focus of study in this regard.

According to Simpson (2004: 52), the development of stylistics has begun from the classical period. From the classical period onwards there has been continued interest among scholars in the relation between patterns of language in a text and the way the text communicates. The Greek rhetoricians, for example, were particularly interested in the tropes and devices that were used by orators for effective argument and persuasion, and there is indeed a case for saying that some stylistic work is very much a latter-day embodiment of traditional rhetoric. However, here is one particular academic inquiry, from the early twentieth century, that has had a more direct and lasting impact on the method of contemporary stylistics. This field overlaps two interrelated movements in linguistics, known as Russian Formalist and Prague School of Structuralism.

According to Coyle & et.al (1993: 1085), most of the early work in stylistics was on poetry because (1) short texts were most amenable to the detailed treatment demanded, (2) the formalist and structuralist work on poetry was relatively easy to build on, and (3) the emphasis in linguistics at that time was on phonetic and grammatical structure, the results of which were relatively easy to apply to poetry. Given its emphasis on the language of the text, it is hardly surprising that early stylistics was formalist in orientations, and this label, in spite of later reader-oriented developments, is unfortunately still applied to the discipline by those outside it.

Of the former movement, key figures include Viktor Shklovsky and Boris Tomaskovsky; of the latter, Jan Mukarovsky and Wilham Mathesius. One scholar, whose work literally links both moments, is Roman Jakobson, who moved from the Moscow Circle to the Prague group in 1920. Many of the central ideas of these schools find their reflexes in

contemporary stylistics and two of the more durable theoretical contributions are the concept of foregrounding and the notion of poetic function in language. According to the Russian Formalists, the purpose of art is to make objects unfamiliar, so that a renewed perception of them creates a fresh awareness in the beholder, beyond the stale routines of automatized schemes.

Although most stylisticians would see recent developments in post-structuralism and deconstructionism as unreasonable excesses, there has been a development called critical linguistics, which aims through the linguistic analysis of literary and non-literary texts to lay bare the ideological assumptions and biases underlying texts. Another relatively recent development has been an interest in the teaching of language and literature, both to native and non-native speakers of English, and the role that stylistics can play in the pedagogical process.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Most MA theses that have used stylistic analysis are based on certain poem or short stories and much work has not been done applying stylistic analysis to novels, according to my observation. One of the reasons could be the voluminous nature of a novel to apply stylistic analysis. But if it is applied on a novel, one can better understand and enjoy the different styles used in a certain novel in addition to arousing curiosity for more studies. Not only arouse curiosity, according to some recent researches, stylistic

analysis could serve as the best way to learning English as a foreign language for a pedagogy purpose.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the novel, *The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears*, using stylistic analysis and to show how meaning is constructed through interplay of different textual features.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

To foster academic discourse concerning the stylistic analysis of a novel through the study of *The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears*.

1.4 Research Questions

This paper will try to answer the following questions:

- What is stylistic analysis?
- What are the major stylistic features used in the novel?
- How do these features enhance meaning?

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This paper limits itself to the stylistic analysis of *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* by Dinaw Mengestu. This novel contains sixteen chapters and due to time

constraints, this paper will only focus on selected chapters that are considered to be stylistically representative in the novel.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study may help students of literature who want to better understand about stylistic analysis and how writers use various stylistic devices to enhance the construction of meaning. Furthermore, the study could serve as a springboard for further studies in this area and could promote academic discourse.

1.7 Methods and Organization of the Study

This study will use literary stylistic analysis as the actual approach. The novel, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* by Dinaw Mengestu will serve as the primary source for this study. Literary stylistic analysis is selected because it gives an opportunity to intergret linguistic description with critical interpretation. To this end, the discourse and textual details of the work will be carefully analyzed following the stylistic approach. The analysis will be done on three carefully selected chapters.

As regards the organization of the study, chapter two presents a literature review wherein the theoretical framework of the study will be developed. In chapter three, the novel will be analyzed on the basis of the conceptual framework as proposed in chapter two. Chapter four provides the summary of the study and concludes on the findings of the study.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Review of Related Literature

The main aim of this chapter is to review the theoretical works and studies to the subject of this paper. In this regard, the notions like the concept of style, stylistic analysis and the methods used for analyzing prose style as mentioned by Leech and Short (1981:75-82): lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, and cohesion and context are mainly discussed.

As Dinaw Mengestu is relatively a new author and as his novel *The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears* is his first work, 2007 (his second book entitled *How to Read The Air*, 2010), no study has been done on this novel yet in our context. However, some studies have been made based on the concept of style and stylistic analysis in different texts and different contexts. Attempts have been made to look at almost every undergraduate and post graduate papers done in the university, but there are only few works.

The PhD. Dissertations by Berhanu Matthews (1994) entitled “English Poetry in Ethiopia: The Relevance of Stylistics in and EFL Context”, Akalu Getaneh (1997) entitled “An Empirical and Comparative Study of the Traditional Practical Criticism and the Innovation Stylistic Approach in Teaching Drama for Language Skills Development Purpose in an ELT Context” are basically on the language teaching aspects of stylistics which is not the major concern of this thesis. However, in Berhanu Matthews’

dissertation examines the principles and procedures of contemporary literary stylistics theories and explores ways of using a stylistic analysis approach in the teaching of literature.

The Master Thesis by Zerihun Asfaw (1983) entitled “The Literary Style of Haddis Alemayh and Baalu Girma” and Assefa Zeru (1996) entitled “Literary Style and Historical Meaning: A study of Three Amharic Historical Novels” (Yohannes, Alula Aba Nega and Aba Kostir) are basically focus on works on Amharic Novels and analyzes style differences among the stated Amharic works which is not the major aspect of this thesis. However, Zerihun Afaw attempts to identify Haddis Alemayhu and Baalu Girma’s styles using stylistic analysis to identify some features which are of prime importance in establishing the particular styles of the two novelists. He particularly focuses on four main features: figures of speech, syntactic pattern, sentence length and diction.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 The Concept of Style

The concept of style has been greatly disputable even as to literary texts and its definition in terms of different aspect. Lehman (1996:303), defined the term style can be applied to individuals, to genres, to periods or to languages. Scholars, for example, who read Shakespeare’s writings, ascribe them to him because of his style. One style is identified to for the period of renaissance, another for enlightenment. In terms of language French is said to convey clarity in style, while German is often judged to be

characterized by obscurity. So, used of individuals, of genres, of periods, of languages, the term style then still have wide array of applications.

According to Chapman (1973: 11), Style is the common adoption of a register by a number of people in a certain recurring situation. Styles are the product of social situation: of a common relationship between language-users. Stylistics is thus a part of sociolinguistics-language studied in relation to society. Sociolinguists are interested in the effect upon language of speakers' groups according to ethnic, social, class or other divisions. Stylistic features may derive from more temporary associations as well, those which concern a speakers' working or leisure time only. But every style is used for communication within a group, large or small, close-knit or scattered, with features which are accepted as communicative by members of group.

Abrams (1981) defines the term style as "a manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse." He further elaborates that the characteristic of style of a work or a writer may be analyzed in terms of its diction, or choice of its words; its sentence structure and syntax; the density and types of its figures of langue etc. so, we can understand that style in literature mainly concerns the linguistic behaviors of a literary work and the characteristics of the literary selection that concern forms of expression that are used to put thoughts into words. Style, when viewed from the perspective of linguistics, is closely related with stylistics. This is because generally stylistics is viewed or considered to be a scientific study of style. What is important is the fact that the field is basically concerned with the application of linguistic theories to the study of literary texts.

Leech and Short (1981:52) defines the term style in terms of the domain of the language use (e.g. what choices are made by a particular author, in a particular genre, or a particular text). This means style in this context is the way language is used by a particular writer in a particular literary work to communicate with the readers. When we say style is the way in which language is used, it belongs to the linguistic concept of Ferdinand de Saussure parole and langue. That means, the way individual user of a language performs the code reference of that particular language than the langue- studying about the total properties of a particular language. They also further describes that it was assumed that when we talk of 'a style' or the style of X we refer to what is pervasive or recurrent in a text. They further explain that stylistics has typically been concerned with the literary language. In other words, it is typically concerned with explaining the relation between style and literary or aesthetic function (ibid 1981:38).

Moreover, Cuddon (1991) also defines the term style as the characteristics manner of expression in prose or verse; how a particular writer says things. The analysis and assessment of style involves examination of a writer's choice of words, his figures of speech, the devices (the rhetorical and otherwise), the shape of this sentences (whether they be loose or periodic), the shape of this paragraphs- indeed of every conceivable aspect of this language and the ways in which he use it. That means stylistics is an analytical science which covers all the expressive aspects of language: phonology, prosody (the study of poetry), morphology, syntax and lexicology.

Berhanu (2009: 38) further strengthens the above ideas that "style refers to the process of selection and combination involved in writing a fictional work. That means, it denotes

the writer's choice of words (diction) and the way such choices are arranged in sentences and longer units of discourse". Coyle & et.al (1993:1084) also stated the term style (sometimes linguistic criticism)- is the linguistic study of literature; and the most important questions to be addressed in the study of literature are why and how particular meanings and effects are presented in particular literary works. It is to mean that stylistics is the examination of literary language of an author and its contribution to the construction of the meaning. In the same way, Widdowson (1975) also describes the term stylistics as an area of mediation between two disciplines i.e. linguistics and literary criticism and the ultimate purpose of literary criticism is to interpret and evaluate literary writings as work of art whereas the main concern of linguistic is with the codes themselves and particular messages are of interest in so far as they exemplify how the codes are constructed. Similarly, Short (1996:5) argues that stylistics is concerned with relating linguistic facts (linguistic descriptions) to meaning (interpretation) in as explicit a way as possible. So, stylistics is the study and interpretation of texts from a linguistic perspective.

2.2.2 The Concept of Stylistics

According to Short (1996:1), stylistics is an approach to the analysis of (literary) texts using linguistic description. ...stylistics spans the borders of the two subjects, literature and linguistics. As a result, stylistics can sometimes look like either linguistics or literary criticism, depending upon where you are standing when you are looking at it.

From the above scholars' definitions and descriptions, it can be said that stylistics is a linguistic approach to literature, explaining the relation between language and artistic

function. Every analysis of style is an attempt to find the artistic principles underlying a writer's choice of language. Writers and texts have their individual qualities. Therefore, the features which recommend themselves to the attention in one text will not necessarily be important in another text by the same or a different author. We have to make ourselves newly aware for each text, of the artistic effect of the whole, and the way linguistic details fit into this whole. Therefore, style includes a writer's way of thinking about his/her subject and his/her characteristic way of presenting it for a particular reader and purpose by his/her way of linguistic choices. That means, style is not mere ornament; rather it conveys important details of meaning and evolution, which define the nature of a writer, his/her basic attitudes, his/her presuppositions, his/her moral stance, and his/her relation to his subject and his/her reader. Furthermore, the objective of literary stylistics is to investigate thematic and aesthetic values generated by linguistic forms, values which convey the author's vision, tone and attitude, which increase the affective or emotive force of the message, which contribute to characterization and make fictional reality function more effectively in the thematic unity.

To do stylistics, according to Simpson (2004:3) is to explore language, and more specifically, to explore creativity in language use and its contribution for meaning construction. Doing stylistics thereby enriches our ways of thinking about language and; exploring language offers a considerable purchase on our understanding of literary texts. This method of inquiry has an important reflexive capacity insofar as it can shed light on the very language system it derives from; it tells us about the 'rules' of language because it often explores texts where those rules are bent expanded or stretched to breaking point. Coyle (1993:1082) further consolidate the idea that "it is self evident that

literature is written in language and so in order to discuss literary texts and our understanding them, we must concentrate on the language of those texts, at least to some extent.”

2.2.3 Framework for Analyzing Prose Style

According to Leech and Short (1981:74), every analysis of style, in our terms, is an attempt to find the artistic principles underlying a writer’s choice of language. All writers, and for that matter, all texts, have their individual qualities. Therefore, the features which recommend themselves to the attention in one text will not necessarily be important in another text by the same or a different author. There is not infallible technique for selecting what is significant. We have to make ourselves newly aware, for each text, of the artistic effect of the whole, and the linguistic details fit into the whole.

Nevertheless, it is useful to have a checklist of features which may or may not be significant in a given text. For this reason, the following list of questions has been prepared (see the checklist in the following sections). The answers to these questions will give a range of data which may be examined in relation to the literary effect of each passage. We stress that the list serves a heuristic purpose: it enables us to collect data on a fairly systematic basis. It is not exhaustive, of course, but is rather a list of ‘good bets’: categories which in our experience, are likely to yield stylistically relevant information. The stylistic values associated with the linguistic data must be largely taken on trust at present. (ibid: 75)

According to Leach and Short (1981:75-82), the categories for the checklist are placed under four general headings: **lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, and cohesion and context**. Short (1996:356) in his book entitled '*Exploring The Language of Poems, Plays and Prose*', also cites the checklist that was mentioned by Leech and Short. It says that going carefully through the checklist will mean you collect some data which will turn out not to be of real interpretative interest. Clearly it would be sensible, when you write up your analysis, only to present the findings which are significant, in the sense that they bear reasonably applied directly on your account of the text. This does not mean only presenting finding which support your interpretation. You will also need to take into account significant details or patterns which appear to work against your view. As a consequence, you may modify your interpretation, or admit finally that you can't successfully integrate interpretatively what you discover.

2.2.4 Lexical Categories

A lexical category is a syntactic category for elements that are part of the lexicon of a language. These elements are at the word level.

Leech and Short (1981:75) divides the checklist for the lexical categories into five points: **general, nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs**.

- a. **General** – is the vocabulary simple or complex? Formal or colloquial? Descriptive or evaluative? General or specific? How far does the writer make use of the emotive and other association of words, as opposed to their referential

meaning? Does the text contain idiomatic phrases, and if so, with what kind of dialect or register are these idioms associated? Is there any use of rare or specialized vocabulary? Are any particular morphological categories noteworthy (e.g. compound words, words with particular suffixes)? To what semantic fields do words belong?

- b. **Nouns** –A noun is a member of a syntactic class that includes words which refer to people, places, things, ideas, or concepts, whose members may act as any of the following: subjects of the verb, objects of the verb, indirect object of the verb, or object of a preposition (or postposition), and most of whose members have inherently determined grammatical gender (in languages which inflect for gender).

Are the nouns abstract or concrete? What kinds of abstract nouns occur (e.g. nouns referring to events, perceptions, processes, moral qualities, social qualities)? what use is made of proper names? Collective nouns?

- c. **Adjectives** – An adjective is a word that belongs to a class whose members modify nouns. An adjective specifies the properties or attributes of a noun referent.

Are the adjectives frequent? To what kinds of attribute do adjectives refer? psychological? visual? auditory? color? referential? emotive? evaluative? etc. Are adjectives restrictive or non-restrictive? gradable or non-gradable? Attributive or predictive?

- d. **Verbs** – A verb is a member of the syntactic class of words that typically signal events and actions, constitute, singly or in a phrase, a minimal predicate in a clause, govern the number and types of other constituents which may occur in the clause, and

Do the verbs carry an important part of the meaning? Are they stative (referring to states) or dynamic (referring to actions, events, etc)? Do they 'refer' to movements, physical acts, speech acts, psychological states or activities, perceptions, etc? Are they transitive, intransitive, linking (intensive), etc? Are they factive or non-factive?

- e. **Adverbs** – An adverb, narrowly defined, is a word belonging to a class of words which modify verbs for such categories as time, manner, place or direction.

Are adverbs frequent? What semantic functions do they perform (manner, place, time, degree, etc)? Is there any significant use of sentence adverbs (conjuncts such as so, therefore, however, disjuncts such as certainly, obviously, frankly)?

2.2.5 Grammatical Categories

The checklist for grammatical categories is divided into nine points: **sentence type, sentence complexity, clause types, clause structure, noun phrases, verb phrases, other phrase types, word classes and general** (ibid. 76-78)

- a. **Sentence type** – does the author use only statements (declarative sentence), or does he also use questions, commands, exclamations, or minor sentence types

(such as sentences with no verb)? If these other types are used, what is their function?

- b. **Sentence complexity** – do sentence on the whole have a simple or a complex structure? What is the average sentence length (in number of words)? What is the ratio of dependent to independent clauses? Does complexity vary strikingly from one sentence to another? Is complexity mainly due to (i) coordination, (ii) subordination, (iii) parataxis (juxtaposition of clauses or other equivalent structures)? In what parts of a sentence does complexity tend to occur? For instance, is there any notable occurrence of anticipatory structure (e.g. of complex subjects preceding the verbs, of dependent clauses preceding the subject of a main clause)?
- c. **Clause types** – what types of dependent clause are favored: relative clause, adverbial clause, different types of nominal clauses (that- clauses, wh-clauses, etc)? Are reduced or non-finite clauses commonly used, and if so, of what type are they (infinitive clauses, -ing clauses, -ed clauses, verbless clauses)?
- d. **Clause structure** – is there anything significant about clause elements (e.g. frequency of objects, complements, adverbials; of transitive or intransitive verb constructions)? Are there any unusual orderings (initial adverbials, fronting of object or complement, etc)? Do special kinds of clause construction occur (such as those with preparatory it or there)?
- e. **Noun phrases** – are they relatively simple or complex? Where does the complexity lie (in premodification by adjectives, nouns, etc, or in postmodification

by prepositional phrases, relative clauses, etc)? Note occurrence of listings (e.g. sequence of adjectives), coordination, or apposition.

- f. **Verb phrases** – are there any significant departures from the use of the simple past tense? For example, notice occurrences and functions of the present tense; of the progressive aspect (e.g. was lying); of the perfective aspect (e.g. has/had appeared); of modal auxiliaries (e.g. can, must, would, etc).
- g. **Other phrase types** – is there anything to be said about other phrase types: prepositional phrases, adverb phrases, adjective phrases?
- h. **World classes** – having already considered major or lexical word classes, we may here consider minor word classes ('functional words'): prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, determiners, auxiliaries, interjections. Are particular words of these types used for particular effect (e.g. the definite or indefinite article; first person pronouns I, we, etc; demonstrative such as this and that; negative words such as not, nothing, no)?
- i. **General** – note here whether any general types of grammatical construction are used to special effect; e.g. comparative or superlative constructions; coordinative or listing constructions; parenthetical constructions; appended or interpolated structures such as occur in casual speech. Do lists and coordinations (e.g. lists of nouns) tend to occur with two, three or more than three members?

2.2.6 Figures of Speech

Here we consider the incidence of features which are foregrounded by virtue of departing in some way from general norms of communication by means of the language

code; for example, exploitation of regularities of formal patterning, or of deviations from the linguistic code. For identifying such features, the traditional figures of speech (schemes and tropes) are often useful categories. (ibid. 78-79)

- a. **Grammatical and lexical schemes** – are there any cases of formal and structural repetition (anaphora, parallelism, etc) or of mirror-image patterns (chiasmus)? Is the rhetorical effect of these one of antithesis, reinforcement, climax, anticlimax, etc?
- b. **Phonological schemes** – are there any phonological patterns of rhyme, alliteration, assonance, etc? Are there any salient rhythmical patterns? Do vowel and consonant sounds pattern or cluster in particular ways? How do these phonological features interact with meaning?
- c. **Tropes** – are there any obvious violations of, or departures from the linguistic code? For example, are there any neologism (such as Americanly)? Deviant lexical collocations such as portentous infants)? semantic, syntactic, phonological, or graphological deviations?

Such deviations will often be the clue to special interpretations associated with traditional figures of speech such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, paradox, irony. If such tropes occur, what kind of special interpretation is involved (e.g. metaphor can be classified as personifying, animizing, concretizing, synaesthetic, etc)? Because of its close connection with metaphor, simile may also be considered here. Does the text contain any similes, or similar constructions (e.g. 'as if' constructions)? What dissimilar semantic fields are related through simile?

2.2.7 Context and Cohesion

Under cohesion (ibid. 79-80), ways in which one part of a text is linked to another are considered: for example, the ways in which sentences are connected. This is the internal organization of text. Under context, we considered the external relations of a text or a part of a text, seeing it as a discourse presupposing a social relation between its participants (author and reader; character and character, etc), and a sharing by participants of knowledge and assumptions.

- a. **Cohesion** – does the text contain logical or other links between sentences (e.g. coordination conjunctions, or linking adverbials)? Or does it tend to rely on implicit connections of meaning?

What sort of use is made of cross-reference by pronouns (she, it, they, etc)? by substitute form (do, so, etc), or ellipsis? Alternatively, is any use made of elegant variation – the avoidance of repetition by the substitution of a descriptive phrase (as, for example, ‘the old lawyer’ or ‘her uncle’ may substitute for the repetition of an earlier ‘Mr. Jones’)?

Are meaning connections reinforced by repetition of words and phrases, or by repeatedly using words from the same semantic field?

- b. **Context** – does the writer address the reader directly, or through the words or thoughts of some fictional character? What linguistic clues (e.g. first-person pronouns I, me, my, mine) are there of the addresser-addressee relationship? What attitude does the author imply towards this subject? If a character’s works

or thoughts are represented, is this done by direct quotation (direct speech), or by some other method (e.g. indirect speech, free indirect speech)? Are there significant changes of style occurring to who is supposedly speaking the works on the page?

2.2.8 Selected Categories for this Research

Among the above stated checklists, this study has used selected categories, namely Lexical Categories and Figures of Speech in order to analyze the novel. These two categories are applied in the novel in three selected chapters; chapter -1, 7 and 16.

Chapter -1 is selected because it introduces the major and minor characters and it is where the get way to the story. Chapter- 2 is selected because it is where the title of the book, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* which has some importance to the whole story is projected. Chapter -16 is the closing chapter and highlights essential thematic and stylistic aspects of the work.

Chapter Three

Stylistic Analysis of *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*

This is the analysis chapter where lexical categories and figures of speech will be discussed. As noted in the introductory chapter, the sheer bulk of a novel makes a stylistic analysis of the entire work a real challenge. The best that one can do is to select sections that are representative of the author's style for analytic purpose. This is what is done here. Hence, this chapter focuses on the study of the selected chapters 1, 7, and 16. The analysis will focus on the most prominent stylistic categories in this novel. These are lexical categories and figures of speech.

Just to give a general remark, the story is written in the first person present tense, except for flashbacks using the past tense. It is observed that the writer used long paragraphs and simple words that can be easily understood without regularly referring to a dictionary. The writer has also used dialogues and at times monologues and uses very descriptive words that could create a vivid image in the readers' mind. Though the major story takes place in Washington, DC, on Logan Circle, the story takes us back and forth to Ethiopia in several moments using the flash back technique.

Having said the above observed remarks, let us see the analysis for the lexical categories and figures of speech which is the main topic of this chapter.

3.1 Lexical Categories

As discussed in the review, lexical categories include noun, adjective, verb and adverb.

Let's see them one-by-one.

3.1.1 General

As it was put in the general remark above, the vocabularies that are used in these three sample chapters are very simple in a way one can understand them easily without further reference to the dictionary. Since most of the setting is in a grocery store, few vocabularies that are specific to grocery items and food items are mentioned, for example, on page 3, roasted beef, ham, turkey, no mayo, wheat bread, mustard, and condensed milk. Words like *injera*, *Gahshe* (Dinaw (2007,93)) and *berbere* (ibid, 2007-219) are used because Sepha, the main character, is an Ethiopian immigrant and by using these words, the writer emphasizes Sepha's heritage.

Even though most words used are all formal, few colloquial, or even better, vulgar words are used, like for example 'Fuck you' is used twice on (ibid. 2007,2) and once on page 7, "and you are a ass" (ibid. 2007,6) and "this county is like a little bastard child" (ibid. 2007,6). The reason why the writer uses these words could be, one, to show the intimacy of their friendship (Sepha, Joe the Congo and Ken the Kenyan), and two, to show that these characters are far away from their culture and uses this works as a way of assimilation to the culture that they are currently in.

Some acronyms and names that are specific to the African continent are mentioned, like for example, 'SPLA, TPLF, LRA, UNITA' (page8) and 'Bukassa, Amin, Mobutu, Haile

Selassie' (ibid. 2007, 8). The writer used these names to show that the three characters have something that they share, i.e. is the issue or topic of Africa.

From the novel, other than the above remarks, the table below presents the major word classes that are observed in these three chapters (1, 7 and 16).

Table -1 Major Word Classes

	Noun	Adjective	Verb	Adverb
Chapter - 1	674	287	427	176
Chapter - 7	758	255	561	77
Chapter - 16	925	190	773	73
Total	2357	732	1761	326
Percentage	45.5%	14.1%	34%	6.3%

3.1.2 Noun

When we see table -1, it clearly shows that major grammatical word class is taken by noun (45.5%). This indicates that the writer has used lesser actions and focused into more of describing and showing the readers using nouns. Let's see the following example from Dinaw (2007, 91), the beginning of chapter 7:

“Lying on the grass on the edge of Dupont Circle, away from the shad cast by the office buildings and trees, I listen closely to the sirens.”

From the above example, we can clearly see that the sentence is mostly noun (grass, edge, Dupont Circle, shade, office, building and tree) and as a result it is descriptive and picturesque. Among the noun classes, concrete noun is used in a greater number than abstract, proper and collective nouns. It is difficult to classify all nouns into their respective category due to time constraints, but let's see an example on ibd. (2007, 2).

Concrete Noun	Abstract Noun	Proper Noun	Collective Noun
Suit x2	Job	May	-
Coat	Heat	Kenneth x2	
Shirt	Power	Engineer	
Tie	Attention	America	
Neck	Respect	Joseph	
Men	Thought		
Boss	Humor		
Fist	Day		
Store	Air		
Door	Life		
Lips x2	Reassurance		
Woman			
Teeth			
Mouth			
Hand x2			

Thumb

Forefinger

The writer has used the proper noun mainly to refer to the major and minor characters; (Sepha, Joseph or Joe, Kenneth or Ken, Judith and Naomi) because the story is mainly revolve around the five characters that are mentioned above due to their close relationship (Sepha with Judith and Naomi and Sepha with Joe and Ken). Also proper nouns of countries, majorly Ethiopia and America and most importantly Logan Circle are mention several. Though in the above mentioned list of noun, in the example, doesn't give evidence to collective noun, it indicates that there is very minimum use of it except in some instances where it uses the collective noun 'family', page 93 &98.

3.1.3 Adjective

From the table-1, it can be seen that adjectives are the third mostly used grammatical word class from the three chapters (14.1%). Most of the adjectives describe an object or a person, thus, mostly they are visual. Let's see an example on ibd. (2007, 3) where relatively more adjectives are used.

Long	Front x2
Thin	Empty x2
Soft	Roast
Delicate	Single
Tall	Narrow x2
Protruding	Shabby

Small

Lit

3.1.4 Verb

When we see Table- 1, verb is the next frequently used grammatical word class (34%) next to nouns. The verbs carry an important part of the meaning majorly showing actions instead of states. To support this, let's see an example on ibd. (2007, 94), where there are more verbs than any other pages.

Dynamic Verbs	Stative Verbs
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Picks

Reassure

Say x3

Want x2

Reached

Hesitates

Remove

Happen

Greeting

Reminded

Left

Treated

Leave

Take care

Coming

Worry

Do x2

Feel

Close x2

Look

Hang x2

Hear x2

Call x2

Offered

Hold
Began
Work
Come x2
Eat
Take x3
Killed
Buried
Shrugged
Said
Make
Answer
Help
Ask x3
Working
Replies
Calling x2
Tell x2

3.1.5 Adverb

When we see Table -1, adverbs are the least used (6.3%) in the grammatical word classification. The writer has very little use of adverbs even though there are a number of verbs that could facilitate more use of adverbs. When we see from the little used

adverbs, manner of adverb slightly outweighs than the rest of adverbs, i.e. place, time and degree adverbs. Let's see an example on ibd. (2007, 7).

Manner of Adverb	Place of Adverb	Time Adverb	Degree of Adverb
Close	-	Before	Completely
Otherwise		Since	Quickly
Around x2		Never x2	
Sure			
Over			
Right			
Silently			
Back			

When we see it generally, the fact that the writer used lesser adverbs indicates that the dynamic verbs are used with lesser modifiers to express the actions that are being taken place.

3.2 Figures of Speech

3.2.1 Grammatical and Lexical Schemes

In this section we will see some major repetitions and parallelism that the write uses to foreground some of the ideas in the story. Let's first see some of the repetitions that are used in the three chapters that are under the study:

“Jo-Jo here yet?” Kenneth asks. Some days it’s Joe from the Congo, or Joe-Joe Congo, or Congo Joe.”...(Dinaw. 2007, 3)

“You kiss each other on the cheeks all the time. It takes you hours to say hello and good-bye because you’re constantly kissing each other. Kiss. Kiss. Kiss. Kiss.”...(ibd. 2007, 6)

“With time they will slowly dry out in the sun, and so we drink and drink and drink and we can never have our fill.”...(ibd. 2007, 9)

“And so I sit on top of a table and place my legs around a chair and lean over and I try to find where it would have been. Here. Or there. Here. Or there.”... (ibd. 2007, 10)

“Then you don’t have to say every day, ‘This is like Africa, that is like Africa.’”... (ibd. 2007, 100)

When we see the first example above, Jo-Jo is repeated and the purpose looks like the writer wants to introduce the character in a way to remember it very well and to have a long lasting image. But the rest four examples, (drink and drink and drink...Here. Or there. Here. Or there) are used just to show a repetitive action.

Other than the above examples, there is one noun that is repeated several times, Logan Circle. It is because Logan Circle has some kind of resemblance with Addis Ababa city. It says on ibd. (2007, 217) “There was a park in Addis that looked just like Logan Circle does from a distance, with a few minor adjustments.” In addition, in the story, the writer

has resembled Logan Circle with Addis because they share the same condition that was happening in both places, i.e. violence. The main character, Sepha, fled from Addis Ababa because of the Red Terror after having seen the chaos, and in the same way, Logan Circle is described as violent place because of some people start to burn house and throw bricks after some residents in the neighborhood were evicted from their house because they were unable to pay rent which created the violence. As a result, Logan Circle is mentioned in several instances.

And now, let's see some of the parallelism that the writer uses in the story:

"I spent two thousand dollars of borrowed money on it with the idea that perhaps my store could become a deli, and in becoming a deli, a restaurant, and in becoming a restaurant, a place that I could sit back and look proudly upon..." (ibid. 2007, 3)

"Business is slow, money is tight, and ever since Judith moved out of the neighborhood,..." (ibid. 2007, 4)

"Joseph would stand up then and theatrically slam his fist onto the table, or onto his palm, or against the wall..." (ibid. 2007, 6)

"Take away the whirling lights and blaring sirens of a motorcade and this is what you are left with: an old man, slightly senile, in the backseat of a beat-up car..." (ibid. 2007, 92)

“It’s the “who is this?” that gives it away. It’s the same voice that in the morning yells out from the first-floor window, “Don’t forget my milk,” and in the evening, “you got my milk?” On the weekends the voice monitors my comings and goings, scrutinizes my clothes, tells me to polish my shoes, asks me whether or not I think it’s going to rain, makes me pitchers of sweet iced tea, encourages me to come to church, and more recently, can sense my loneliness and occasional despair and tries to wash it away with a firm grip on my hand and wet kiss on my cheek.” ... (ibd. 2007, 96)

“His shirt is neatly pressed, and his tie is firmly fastened around his neck.”... (ibd. 2007, 2)

“Images of starving children with bloated bellies and fly-covered faces were ubiquitous.”... (ibd. 2007, 98)

From the above examples, we can clearly see that all the parallelism are use to show none other than showing equivalent structure.

3.2.2 Phonological Schemes

The most noticeable and frequent phonological schemes that the writer uses is alliteration (very few rhyme). These alliterations are used mostly in a middle of sentence and at times they are used for nouns to create alliterative nouns. For examples, when we see the major character’s name Sepha Stephanos, it is alliterative noun and also on ibd. (2007, 1) we see “It was there that Kenneth become Ken the Kenyan and Joseph, Joe from the Congo”. When we ask why does the writer uses this kind of alliteration

(except “Joe from Congo” is a rhyme), it is because this kind of alliteration could create a long lasting image in the readers mind and will have less confusion in identifying characters while reading.

Now, let’s see some more use of alliteration and their sounds:

“You still fighting the good fight Kenneth” ... ibd. (2007, 2)- the /f/ sound in fighting and fight

“Joseph is short and stout like a tree stump.”... ibd. (2007, 5) - the /s/ sound in short and stout

“Inevitably, predictably, our conversation find their way home”... ibd. (2007, 9) – the /e/ sound rhymes in inevitably and predictably

“...the world placed on pause...” ... ibd. (2007, 92) - the /p/ sound in placed and paused

“...with a soft, stoic face and sleepy eyes...” ... ibd. (2007, 93) - the /s/ sound in soft, stoic and sleepy

“...after which there is a tumbling, tossing noise.”... ibd. (2007, 95) - the /t/ sound in tumbling and tossing

“ For all of its stature and statues,...”... ibd. (2007, 101) - the /s/ sound in stature and statues

All the above examples have something in common, i.e. the alliteration occurs having the same first consonant sounds. The writer used these alliterations just to give interest to the sentence.

3.2.3 Tropes

what we are going to see here is language used in a figurative way that gives extra meaning using figures of speech in the novel (from those selected chapters). Looking at it generally, the writer used more of simile than any other figures of speech, let's see some of it.

*“Kenneth looks Kenyan. His nose is long and thin, and yet his features are soft, almost delicate, **like** a child’s.”* ibd. (2007, 3)

Here, the writer used simile using ‘like a child’s’ telling us that Kenneth has a very delicate skin.

*“They stop in during an afternoon stroll with their children dangling around their necks **like** amulets to ward off age, sickness, unemployment, rain, death.”* ibd. (2007, 5)

The writer is comparing the children with amulets, a jewelry usually hung about the neck and thought to be a magical protection against evil or disease. It means that the parent considers the children as a way of protection.

*“Joseph is short and stout **like** a tree stump. He has a large round face that looks **like** a moon pie.”* ibd. (2007, 6).

The writer the write could have use long sentence to describe Joseph but preferred to use two similes in two consecutive sentence; creating resemblance his body with a tree stump and his face with a moon pie.

*“This county is **like** a little bastard child. You can’t be angry when it doesn’t give you what you want.”* ibd. (2007, 6)

The writer is comparing America with a bastard child, which simply saying America is a place where you accept thing as they are.

*“The countries are all color-coded, and African’s hanging dour head looks **like** a woman’s head wrapped in a shawl.”* ibd. (2007, 7)

The writer is showing us how the countries are color coded just like the color of the garment that are used in wrap their heads, which is basically in Africa.

*“It seems **as if** time has been temporarily suspended, the world placed on pause as we wait to return to our ordinary lives.”* ibd. (2007, 92)

In this simile, the writer is trying to show the tension that was created on Dupont Circle while some officials pass through that area and continues telling this kind of incidents are also happen in Ethiopia during the Emperor’s time. The writer here uses one simile for two instances, to refer Dupont Circle and Ethiopia.

*“The lunch crowd is beginning to file back toward the offices and I stand up to join them. It’s **like** watching the end of afternoon recess on a playground.”* ibd. (2007, 92)

Here, the simile not only show how crowded both places are but also through the simile it helps to connect the two sentences.

*“Take the day off. And I will have you treated **like** the king of Ethiopia.”*

ibd. (2007, 94)

The write here tend to send the message that the king of Ethiopia lives in a luxury to the extent that every day seems a day off.

*“Joseph took the brick from my hand and turned it over and over **as if** he were checking its density and weight.”* ibd. (2007, 220)

The writer here wants to tell as how much Joseph was curious about the bricks by taking a good look at it.

From the above examples, we can say that the writer’s preferred style in using simile is applying the word ‘like’ and uses the simile to illustrate between animate object and inanimate. It is only in one instance where metaphor has been used and this proves that the writer uses simile as his major way of expressing among the other rhetorical devises.

If we see the three characters, namely Sepha, Joseph and Kenneth, we can observe some kind of allegory (extended metaphor). In the story, Sepha is an immigrant who has been 17 year since he came to America. He was working as a waiter in a big hotel where he met his two friends; Joseph and Kenneth. After working for some times, he

wanted to change his job so badly and he later on managed to own a small store. Though he owns his own shop, he still has a money issue, loneliness and nostalgia.

And when we see Joseph, even though he wants some change in his life, he still works as a waiter in a big hotel and always compares everything with Africa and couldn't let go of the past.

And when we see Kenneth, he started as being a waiter just like the rest of his friends, but he succeeded to be a professional, an engineer who lives his life in a much different from what he was before. He is different than his friend because he is somehow accomplished person.

Therefore, what we see here is, Sepha represents those immigrants who live in America for a long time and try hard to make a change but still couldn't make a big change but at least he tries. Joseph represent those people who wish to be changed but didn't take any initiative but still complains about their current life and not be in America or in African, who just float in dream. And Kenneth represents those immigrants who work hard and make their dreams come through and accept their current life as it is and never looks back to their long gone nostalgia. As a result, the three characters are allegorical.

The next section will summarize the paper.

Chapter Four

Conclusion

This study has attempted to show how stylistics can be applied in interpreting a novel using stylistic analysis of the novel *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* by Dinaw Mengestu. The study used the analytic method recommended by Leech and Short (1981) in analyzing prose style. And among the categories that are stated, the study has used two of them; Lexical Categories and Figures of Speech.

As the study showed, the writer used more nouns as compared to the word classes, i.e. adjectives, verbs and adverbs. This is because the writer uses more nouns to describe and give picturesque image to the reader.

When we see the major figures of speech used, the writer uses repetition and parallelism as the major grammatical and lexical schemes. Most of the repetitions are used to show an action that is done repetitively and in few instances it was used to repeat a pronoun as a way of introducing the character to the reader. The parallelism is used mainly to show two equivalent sentence structures.

With regards to the phonological schemes, alliteration is widely used creating a consonant sound effect. Alliterative proper nouns are also used to help the reader not to easily forget the names.

When we see the use of tropes, almost all of the rhetorical devices that are used are similes. Similes have been used very frequently and they mostly give the comparison between animate and inanimate objects.

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my work and has not been presented before to any University. Moreover, I declare that all the sources of materials used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

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