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Gothic Language Style in *Demian* Novel by Hermann Hesse: Stylistic Approach

Mega Styarini

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Abstract

In writing a literary work, the author must insert stylistic devices to attain a certain atmosphere that can affect the readers. The main objectives of this study is to find what kind of stylistic devices that are used and to describe the gothic language style to build the gothic atmosphere in *Demian* novel by Hermann Hesse. The type of this study is qualitative research and the data are the characters' utterances and the author's narration which are collected through the close reading technique. The technique of analyzing the data is done by categorizing the data into the types of stylistic devices, interpreting, and concluding. The result of this study revealed that the author uses certain diction to maintain the gothic atmosphere, inserts some of gothic elements to the story, and uses outdated yet philosophical name for the characters. This study also shows the correlation between family background and social condition or situation with how the author create their literary work.

Keywords: Gothic, Demian, Stylistic Approach

Abstrak

Dalam menulis karya sastra, seorang penulis harus memasukan piranti stilistika untuk mencapai suasana tertentu yang dapat mempengaruhi pembaca. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan piranti stilistika apa sajayang digunakan serta menjelaskan gaya bahasa gotik untuk membangun suasana gotik dalam novel Demian oleh Hermann Hesse. Jenis penelitaian ini adalah penelitian Kualitatif dan data yang digunakan berasal dari ucapan tokoh serta narasi dari penulis yang dikumpulkan melalui teknik membaca cermat. Teknik analisis data dilakukan dengan mengkategorikan data ke dalam jenis piranti stilistika, menerjemahkan, hingga menyimpulkan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penulis menggunakan diksi tertentu untuk mempertahankan suasana gotik, memasukkan beberapa elemen gotik dalam cerita, dan menggunakan nama filosofis yang kuno untuk para tokohnya. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan hubungan antara latar belakang keluarga dan kondisi sosial atau situasi dengan bagaimana penulis mengarang karya sastranya.

Kata kunci: Gotik, Demian, Pendekatan Stilistika

<https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/jscl>

Journal of Social, Culture, and Language

Vol ... No ... pp ...

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, there are many literary works written in various genres, and gothic is one of them. The origin of this genre is hard to determine, but it is started with the publication of *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole in 1764 and it is still developing until now. According to the book entitled *History of the Gothic: Gothic Literature 1764-1824*, it is written that the first work of gothic is *A Prospect of Death* by John Pomfret in 1700 (Davison, 2009). Some researchers assume that gothic genre is started in 1764 and ended in 1820, but some other researchers argue that those periods are just the end of the classic gothic (Rata, 2014).

The gothic language style is related to gloomy, suspense, and mysterious atmosphere or mood. Atmosphere or mood is determined by the author's tone. Tone is one of stylistic devices that can be determined by how the author chooses the other stylistic devices, such as diction, imagery, figurative language, and so on. According to Peter Stockwell, Tone can be the index of the mood and also can show the character or personality trait of the writer (2014). This present study uses stylistics to analyze the novel through its stylistic devices.

Since there is a lot of gothic literature published until nowadays, yet there are still a few researchers who analyze its distinct language style. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to find what kind of stylistic devices are used by Hermann Hesse as the author of *Demian* novel and to describe the gothic language style through the stylistic devices that are applied by Hermann Hesse in the novel to build the gothic atmosphere.

METHOD

The type of this study is qualitative research which needs in-depth analysis to gain an in-depth understanding (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). The source of data is a translated novel entitled *Demian: The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth* by Hermann Hesse 1999 edition which is originally published in German with *Demian: Die Geschichte Von Emil Sinclair Jugend* in 1919. Moreover, the data of this study are the character's utterances and the author's narration in the novel that are collected through close reading and related to the topic.

After the data are collected, the first step of analyzing the data is categorizing it into the kinds of stylistic devices, such as diction, symbolism, and figurative language. The second step is transcribing or interpreting the data by using the theory from Pickering, Hoepfer, and Kalashnikov. The last step is making the final report including the interpretations and conclude it.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Diction

The diction or the word choice of the author also can determine the tone, reflect the characteristic, intelligence, and attitude of the author (Pickering & Hoepfer, 1981). In creating gothic literature, the author chooses certain dictions to describe the setting of the place and raise the mystery and gloomy atmosphere of the story.

The keystone of the arch above the doorway bore no doubt a kind of coat of arms but it had worn off with time and had frequently been painted over. As far as I knew it had nothing to do with us and our family.

"I don't know anything about it," I said shyly. "it's a bird or something like that and must be quite old. The house is supposed to have been part of the monastery at one point." (Hesse, 1919)

Journal of Social, Culture, and Language

Vol ... No ... pp ...

Sinclair's house is depicted as an ancient building and it has an old-style doorway made of a stone locked at the center of the arch with a stone that resembles a heraldic bird. The author uses a phrasal verb "worn off" derived from verb *wear* and adverb *off*, which means that the stone is broken and gradually disappears and is hard to identify. The author chooses that word to describe that the house is not a new building, but it has been used by somebody in the past that is supported by the sentence *as far as I knew, it had nothing to do with us and our family*. Moreover, Demian also states that the house is supposed to be a monastery in the past.

The church was almost completely dark, only a very thin beam of light penetrated the window closest to me. (Hesse, 1919)

The famous setting of place in gothic literature is in a castle, old house, or religious places such as a church, cathedral, and monastery. In the quotation above, the narrator describes that the church, which is the place where Sinclair meets Pistorius for the first time as dark with a rare source of light. Through the word dark, the author builds the mystery and gloomy atmosphere into the place and it can affect the readers in perceiving what they read.

Symbolism

Symbolism is used to hide a certain idea or to represent an idea to be more understandable to the reader. There are three kinds of symbols: traditional symbol, original symbol, and private symbol (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981).

The Meaning of Abraxas

Abraxas was first mentioned by Basilides, a Christian gnostic teacher, as a gnostic deity. It is depicted to have the head of a rooster, the body of a human carrying a shield and a whip, and the legs in a form of serpents. The rooster head is usually related to the sun as the rooster always hailing to the rising sun. The shield is the symbol of wisdom, and the whip is the symbol of power. The serpent-like legs are a symbol of Nous (the mind) and Logos (the word) (Hall, 2010).

Sinclair, our god's name is Abraxas and he is God and Satan and he contains both the luminous and the dark world. (Hesse, 1919)

In this novel, Abraxas is defined as a God that has two sides; a God that conquers the luminous world, and a Satan with its dark world. Demian tries to convince Sinclair that it is fine not always be an innocent person and belong to the realm of light all the time.

Abraxas and Gnosticism were found in the first century. It means that Abraxas and the Gnosticism belief are outdated things and can be categorized as a traditional symbol because it can be recognized by many people.

The Meaning of Bird

Bird is one of the animals that are often used by authors as a symbol to express their idea in a literary work. Authors can use any kind of bird as a symbol, but it has to be related to what is the bird signify because each of the birds has its own meaning. In this novel, the author uses a sparrow hawk as a symbol.

"Quite right. No, one doesn't. The bird has a significance. Do you know what?"

<https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/jscl>

Journal of Social, Culture, and Language

Vol ... No ... pp ...

"No. I only feel that it signifies some shattering event, a move on the part of destiny. I believe that it concerns all of us."

He was pacing excitedly back and forth.

"A move on the part of destiny!" he shouted. (Hesse, 1919)

According to the author, the symbol of the sparrow hawk is an omen to move on to another part of destiny. It also appears in Sinclair's dream, but the sparrow hawk symbol signifies Sinclair himself. In Sinclair's dream, it is described to have its body inside a gigantic eggshell ready to fly to meet its god, Abraxas. The eggshell can be a symbol of his own world, his comfort zone, or all of the ordinary dogma and norms that have drummed into him and trapped him since he is raised by a religious parent. Then, the bird flies to the God that has duality called Abraxas, it means that he has to deal with or to normalize the duality that exists in every individual especially in himself.

The symbolism of the sparrow hawk bird can be categorized as an original symbol because the meaning depends on the context. In this novel, the symbol of the sparrow hawk has two meanings; as a representation of oneself or one's inner self, and also as an omen to move on into a new world and leaving the old world behind. However, outside the novel, the sparrow hawk is just a bird.

Figurative Language

Charactonym

Charactonym is the way the author gives a name to the character that also can describe them. it can makes the name sounds philosophical and makes the character's trait stronger. A name may contains a common stem which can be referred to as *significance* (Kalashnikov, 2006).

a. Emil Sinclair

Emil Sinclair, or mostly called Sinclair, is the main character in the novel. Although the name *Emil* has the same pronunciation as the word *amelioration*, the name Emil also has the same pronunciation as the word *emulate*, which means try to be equal or better (Soanes, 2008). In this novel, little Emil Sinclair is trying to look equal or better than his new friends in terms of the power or cleverness by stealing apples.

I was a stranger among them and felt that my manners and clothes presented a kind of challenge. As a Latin school boy, the spoiled son of a well-to-do father, it would be impossible for Franz to like me, and the other two, I felt acutely, would soon disown and desert me.

Finally, out of sheer nervousness, I began telling a story too. I invented a long tale about robbery in which I filled the role of hero. In a garden near the mill, I said, together with a friend, I had stolen a whole sackful of apples one night, and by no means ordinary apples, but apples of the very best sort. (Hesse, 1919)

The main character's last name is Sinclair. The name Sinclair has two common stems *sin* and *clair*. Lexically, *sin* as a noun means an immoral act that against religion or God's law. Meanwhile, the word *clair* is derived from French, which means clear and light in English (Rowlinson, 2001).

Unquestionably I belonged to the realm of light and righteousness; I was my parents' child ... Sometimes I was absolutely certain that my destiny was to become like

<https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/jscl>

Journal of Social, Culture, and Language

Vol ... No ... pp ...

mother and father, as clear-sighted and unspoiled, as orderly and superior as they.
(Hesse, 1919)

From the quotation above, it can be inferred that besides the narrator describes his parents belong to the realm of clarity, he also affirms that he undoubtedly belongs to that realm of clarity since his parents raise him with religious norms and good manners since he was born. Therefore, it can be inferred from the name Sinclair is that the author is trying to portray him as someone pure and innocent.

b. Max Demian

Max Demian is the first character that helps Sinclair in solving his problems, especially with Franz Kromer. Max is his first name. The name Max may be derived from a Roman emperor in the 3rd century whose name was M. Aurelius Valerius Maximianus or shortly called Maximian (W. Smith & Anthon, 1884).

The clattering of hooves could be heard approaching along the street. I leaped to the window and saw Demian dismounting below. I ran down.
He tied the bridle of his steaming horse to the garden fence and took my arm and walked down the street with me. (Hesse, 1919)

Horse riding is something that has only been done by wealthy people. Because they are the ones who have money to afford, pay rent, and maintain the horses. In the novel, Demian is the only one that is described riding a horse. Being described as a character who comes from a wealthy family and has an aristocratic vibe, it makes Demian character close to the characteristic of Byronic Hero. Byronic Hero is a variant type of Romantic Hero created by George Gordon Byron or known as Lord Byron. Byronic Hero is described to be aristocratic, moody, secretive, brilliant, cynical, and sexually intriguing.

I kept glancing toward Demian whose face held a peculiar fascination for me, and I observed the intelligent light, unusually resolute face bent attentively and diligently over his work ... I could not say that he made a favorable impression on me ... and his eyes gave him an adult expression—which children never like—faintly sad, with flashes of sarcasm. Yet I could not help looking at him ... I can only say that he was in every respect different from all the others, was entirely himself, with a personality all his own which made him noticeable even though he did his best not to be noticed; his manner and bearing was that of a prince disguised among farm boys, taking great pains to appear one of them. (Hesse, 1919)

Since their first meeting, Sinclair can not resist Demian's charms and is attracted to him. Demian is described to be intelligent. He has the eyes of an adult which makes him have a little bit of sad expression or moody and a flash of sarcasm or cynical. Sinclair also describes Demian's attitude to be aristocratic by resembling his manner as a prince from an aristocratic family.

“Is that your doing? How did you manage it? I don't understand it at all. He's staying away altogether.”

“That's good. If he should turn up again—I don't think he will, but he's quite

<https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/jscl>

Journal of Social, Culture, and Language

Vol ... No ... pp ...

ruthless—just tell him not to forget Max Demian.” (Hesse, 1919)

Demian is his last name. The name Demian might be from a Greek name *Δαμιανός* (*Damianós*) which is derived from a Greek word *δαμάζω* (*Damázo*), which means to tame (Watts, 2000). Like the meaning of his name, in the novel, Demian has the power to tame Franz Kromer who is depicted intimidating and scary.

Metaphor

My feet had become muddied, I could not even wipe them clean on the mat; everywhere I went I was followed by a darkness of which this world of home knew nothing. How many secrets I had had, how often I had been afraid—but all of it had been child's play compared with what I brought home with me today. I was haunted by misfortune, it was reaching out toward me so that not even my mother could protect me, since she was not even allowed to know. (Hesse, 1919)

The narrator explains “*I could not even wipe them clean on the mat*” which refers to the previous clause about muddy feet. A *mat* is a certain material that people usually put on the floor to wipe their feet on. In this case, the mat represents something that can clear or vanish the narrator’s sins, guilts, or unpleasant feelings. After that, the author puts semicolon, which is followed by another independent clause “*everywhere I went I was followed by a darkness of which this world of home knew nothing*” which is still related to the previous one. The next independent clause mentions the word “*darkness*”, which also refers to the sins or unpleasant feeling that keeps following him. Moreover, the phrase “*world of home*” refers to the unspoiled realm of light of his parent.

The next sentence with metaphor starts with an independent clause, “*I was haunted by misfortune.*” The verb “*haunted*” is usually related to the existence of a ghost, but here, the ghost is in a form of misfortune. It is also still related to the narrator’s unpleasant feeling for having his first sin and being different from his religious unspoiled family members. The word “*misfortune*” also can represent the the narrator’s consequence for telling a false story to Kromer.

Whether my crime was stealing or lying—(hadn’t I sworn a false oath by God and everything that was sacred?)—was immaterial. My sin was not specifically this or that but consisted of having shaken hands with the devil. Why had I gone along? Why had I obeyed Kromer—better even than I had ever obeyed my father? Why had I invented the story, building myself up with a crime as though it were a heroic act? The devil held me in his clutches, the enemy was behind me. (Hesse, 1919)

Another metaphor that is used by the author is “*My sin was not specifically this or that but consisted of having shaken hands with the devil*”. In that sentence, the word “*shaken hands*” means an act of holding hands between two people or creatures to make a deal about something. Meanwhile, the word “*devil*” might carry out some possible meaning. It could be the metaphor of Kromer since the narrator has dealt with him to keep the false story a secret and obey him. Therefore the meaning of the metaphor “*having shaken hands with the devil*” is that the narrator is describing the situation where he is dealing with something bad for the first time, whether it is Kromer or a false story that turns into a sin.

The next metaphor is “*The devil held me in his clutches, the enemy was behind me*” which

<https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/jscl>

Journal of Social, Culture, and Language

Vol ... No ... pp ...

has the word “*devil*” in it. Gothic literature is related to supernatural things such as demons, devils, and so on. Lexically the word devil means an evil spirit or satan, but in this novel, the word devil may be referred to the one bad character which is Franz Kromer. Since the subject (devil) is holding the narrator's hands, which is related to the previous metaphor, this sentence could be mean if the narrator is trapped in a dark realm with that “*devil*”. Meanwhile, in the next clause the narrator states “*the enemy was behind me*”, the *enemy* here lexically means as a person or a group of opposed people who are against someone or something. Therefore, since the narrator is trapped in the dark realm with the devil, the enemy refers to everyone who belongs to the realm of light that he left behind.

There's a smell of death in the air. Nothing can be born without first dying. But it is far more terrible than I had thought. (Hesse, 1919)

The author uses the phrase “*smell of death*” which seems like an imagery if the character is smelling something, but the phrase is carrying another meaning. Death is an act of dying or the end of life (Soanes, 2008). In this sentence, the character is not smelling the death, rather he just guessing the upcoming events that may occur and it may takes many people's lives, which is a war. The author wrote this novel during the first World War, which then influences him to write about war. It is also implied in the next sentence “*nothing can be born without first dying*”, which means that the war will make a lot of people dying along with the collapse of the old world to bear something new.

Simile

He went past me without seeing me, staring in front of himself with bewildered eyes shining, as though he followed something darkly calling out of the unknown. I followed him the length of one street; he drifted along as though pulled by an invisible string, with a fanatic gait, yet loose, like a ghost. (Hesse, 1919)

Simile is one of the stylistic devices where the author can compare unrelated things by using the words *like* and *as* (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981). From the quotation above, there are three data of simile. The first one describes someone's weird behavior by comparing his “bewildered eyes” as if he was following the unknown voice. The second example, which is almost similar to the first one is when the narrator describes the same person's weird behavior by drifting—walking—as if he is pulled by an invisible string. Both of those examples are not only using “as” for comparing something but also for explaining so that the reader can easily understand and imagine what the narrator sees. The last data of simile is “like a ghost” which refers to the previous clauses “*he drifted along as though pulled by an invisible string, with a fanatic gait, yet loose.*” The phrase “*like a ghost*” besides comparing the character's weird behavior, it also concludes all of the narrator's explanations. The word choice of *ghost* also becomes the spotlight here because it helps to raise the horror atmosphere into the story even though only for a comparison.

Personification

I had summoned all my strength to conjure up the sweetest of images and now fate looked at me suddenly with a threatening and horrible mask. (Hesse, 1919)

By using personification, the author can give an object or animal having human traits as they

<https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/jscl>

Journal of Social, Culture, and Language

Vol ... No ... pp ...

were alive (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981). In the quotation above it states that fate becomes a subject that can stare at the narrator while fate itself is a non-physical thing. Besides, it also describes that the subject—a fate—is wearing a mask. That sentence is describing the narrator's feeling when he is longing for the existence of Frau Eva and tries to call her via telepathy. When Demian (Frau Eva's son) comes, he is surprised by the news from Demian that there will be a war, and he is going to be involved soon. Therefore, the use of personification of fate looking at the narrator with a threatening and horrible mask means a gloomy future that the narrator has to face—involved in a war and not being able to see Frau Eva anymore.

Imagery

According to Pickering and Hoeper (Pickering & Hoeper, 1981), imagery mostly refers to the verbal visualization and sensory experiences through figurative languages that can also appeal to the readers' senses of sight (visual imagery), taste (gustatory imagery), touch (tactile imagery), smell (olfactory imagery), sound (auditory imagery), and internal sensation (organic imagery). This part is also divided into two kinds: imagery of inexplicable events and imagery of nightmares.

a. Imagery of inexplicable event

There I saw my friend sitting upright, his shoulders braced back as usual. Nonetheless, he looked completely different and something emanated from him... I first thought he had his eyes closed but then saw they were open ... He sat there completely motionless, not even seeming to breathe... His face was pale, uniformly pale like a stone, and his brown hair was the part of him that seemed closest to being alive. His hands lay before him on the bench, lifeless, and still as objects... (Hesse, 1919)

The quotation above describes the strange event that happens to Demian. The narrator sees Demian motionless for no reason during the learning process in the class. The author mostly uses visual imagery through the narrator's lens because it focuses on describing Demian's condition when he is discovered by the narrator. These visual imageries can affect the readers so that their minds can project some possible images to make them more understand Demian's condition and position.

Then a loose, yellow cloud swept across the sky, collided with the other, gray bank of cloud. In a few seconds the wind had fashioned a shape out of this yellow and blue-gray mass, a gigantic bird that tore itself free of the steel-blue chaos and flew off into the sky with a great beating of wings. Then the storm became audible and rain rattled down mixed with hail. A brief, incredible, terrifying roar of thunder cracked across the rain-lashed landscape and immediately afterwards a gleam of sunshine burst through. On the nearby mountains the pale snow shone living and unreal above the brown forest. (Hesse, 1919)

The author uses phrases such as yellow cloud, gray bank of cloud, a gigantic bird, steel-blue chaos, gleam of sunshine, pale snow shone, and brown forest for visual imagery. Those words can help the readers to construct their imagination about what the author has written. The kinesthetic imagery is still used in this quotation for describing the movement of the gigantic

<https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/jscl>

Journal of Social, Culture, and Language

Vol ... No ... pp ...

bird-shaped cloud that loses itself to the sky with just one beating wings. The auditory imagery is used by the author to describe the sound of storm, rain, hail, and roar of thunder that is heard by the narrator.

b. Imagery of nightmares

The worst of these dreams, from which I awoke half-mad, had to do with a murderous assault on my father. Kromer whetted a knife, put it in my hand; we stood behind some trees in an avenue and lay in wait for someone, I did not know whom. Yet when this someone approached and Kromer pinched my arm to let me know that this was the person I was to stab—it was my father. Then I would awake. (Hesse, 1919)

The quotation above describes the first nightmare that the narrator's had when he was young and threatened by Kromer. The author uses organic imagery to describe the narrator's feelings about the nightmare. The second clause in the first sentence, "*from which I awoke half-mad*" really represents the narrator's internal sensation of having a nightmare of murdering his father. The second sentence contains visual imagery to describes what Kromer did to the narrator in his dream. It is also described that they are standing behind some trees. Kinesthetic imagery is used to describes Kromer's actions such as whetting a knife, put the knife in the narrator's hand, and also pinching the narrator's arm.

That night I dreamed of Demian and the coat of arms. It kept changing continuously. Demian held it in his hand, often it was diminutive and gray, often powerful and varicolored, but he explained to me that it was always one and the same thing. In the end he obliged me to eat the coat of arms! When I had swallowed it, I felt to my horror that the heraldic bird was coming to life inside me, had begun to swell up and devour me from within. Deathly afraid I started up in bed, awoke. (Hesse, 1919)

This quotation also consists of visual imagery, kinesthetic imagery, and organic imagery. The first two sentences are visual imagery that tends to describe the coat of arms and its changing color. Meanwhile, kinesthetic imagery is used when the narrator eats and swallows the coat of arms, those lead the narrator to feel a sensation of unpleasant things inside his body which is considered organic imagery.

CONCLUSION

The findings show that the author has used some stylistic devices to raise and maintain the gothic atmosphere in the story. Through the description of places, the author uses dark as the theme or condition to build the gloomy and mysterious atmosphere. The author also uses religious and outdated architecture such as a monastery and a church which is one of the gothic elements. The symbols are also used as an omen in the story. The author also uses figurative language with gothic vocabularies that could represent the unpleasant things or feelings in the story to strengthen the chosen gothic elements. The charactonym is also used by the author to strengthen the characterization of the character, which most of them are using references from ancient names or the Bible. The visual imagery is frequently used in imagery of inexplicable events meanwhile, the organic imagery is used in the imagery of nightmares to raise the horror atmosphere.

This novel also portrays the author's religious crisis by using an ancient belief and Abraxas

<https://journal.trunojoyo.ac.id/jscl>

Journal of Social, Culture, and Language

Vol ... No ... pp ...

as a deity to be worshiped by Sinclair and Demian. The author also portrays a war at the end of the novel, which also portrays the actual World War I at the time this novel is written. Some of the charactonyms are also related to ancient names, and most of them are related to German history in the past, which portrays the author's background as German. This paper substantiated that every individual has their uniqueness in terms of background or personality trait that can be shown through their works.

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