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Self study work:
"Antithesis"

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Contents

Introduction

This paper is devoted to the study of Antithesis which is one of the syntactical stylistic devices.

The subject matter of the paper is to study Antithesis and its role in literary text and to analyze its stylistic value in the English language.

The main aim of the work is to study Antithesis in the English language and show its differential peculiarities from other stylistic devices in Modern English.

The purpose directs us to arrange some tasks to carry out in revealing the chosen theme. So we have arranged the following to discuss:

- to study Stylistics as a science of linguistics;
- to study stylistic devices and their types;
- to subtype the stylistic devices;
- to define antithesis as a syntactical stylistic device.

The following methods are used to carry out this paper. They are: componential-definitial method, analytical method and comparative method.

As the main material of the paper served several theoretical books on Stylistics and fresh information from Internet. The examples have been gathered from different English and American writers' work of art.

The theoretical value of the paper is that theory and examples can serve as the main material in lectures and seminars on English Stylistics and Text Interpretation.

The practical importance of the paper is that one can compile a handbook on Stylistics and Comparative study of language on the base examples.

The course paper consists of Introduction, main part, Conclusion and Bibliography.

Introduction deals with the main purpose, methods and theoretical, practical importance of the work. Also, here was given information about the structure and brief plot of the paper.

Main part deals with general ideas on Stylistics, Stylistic devices and their characteristic features and it deals with antithesis and its usage in literary texts.

Conclusion is about the achieved result of the work under the chosen theme.

Bibliography deals with the alphabetical list literatures used in carrying out the investigated work.

Main part:

§1. STYLISTICS AND ITS SUBJECT MATTER

Stylistics, sometimes called lingo-stylistics, is a branch of general linguistics; it has been more or less definitely outlined. It deals mainly with two independent tasks:

a) the investigation of the inventory of special language media which by their ontological features secure the desirable effect of the utterance.

b) certain types of text (discourse) which due to the choice branch and arrangement of language means are distinguished by the pragmatic aspect of the communication. The two objective of stylistics are clearly discernable as separate fields of investigation.

The inventory special language media can be analyzed and their Ontological features revealed if presented in a system in which the Correlation between the media becomes evident.

The types of texts can be analyzed if their linguistic components are presented in their interaction, thus revealing the unbreakable unity and transparency of constructions of a given type. The types of the text are distinguished by the pragmatic aspect of the communication and they are called functional style of a language the special media of language which secure the desirable affect of "the utterance is called Stylistics Devices and expressive means." The first field of investigation, i.e. Stylistic-Devices and EM, necessarily touches upon such general language problems as the aesthetic function of language, synonymous ways of rendering one and the same idea, emotional colouring in language, the interrelation between language and thought, the individual manner of an author in making use of language and a number of other issues[1].

The second field, i.e. functional styles, cannot avoid discussion of such most general linguistic issues as oral and written varieties of language, the notion of the literary (standard) language, the constituents of texts larger than the sentence, the generative aspect of literary texts and some others. In dealing with the objectives of stylistics, certain pronouncements of adjacent disciplines such as theory of information, literature, psychology, logic and to some extent statistics must be touched upon. This is indispensable; for nowadays no science is entirely isolated from other domains of human knowledge: and linguistics particularly its branch stylistics cannot avoid references to the above mentioned disciplines because it is confronted with certain overlapping issues.

The branches of stylistics free language science was indirectly the result of a long-established tendency of grammarians to confine their investigations to sentences, clauses and word-combinations which are   "well-formed", to use a dubious term, neglecting anything that did not fall under the recognized and received standards. This became particularly strong in what is called descriptive linguistics. The generative   grammars, which apt as a reaction against

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[1] Stankiewicz."Stylistics". Moscow. 1984. p.78

descriptive linguistics, have confirmed that the task of any grammar is to limit the scope of investigation of language data to sentences which are considered well-formed Everything that fails to meet this requirement should be excluded from linguistics[1].

The most frequent definition of style is one expressed by Seymour Chatman: "Style is a product of individual choice and patterns of choice among linguistic possibilities[1]."

This definition indirectly deals with the idiosyncrasies peculiar to a given writer. Somehow it fails to embrace such phenomena in text structure where the "individual" is reduced to the minimum or even done away with entirely. However, this definition is acceptable when applied to the ways men-of – letters use language when they seek to make it conform to their immediate aims and purport. A somewhat broader view a style is expressed by Werner Winter who maintains that "A style may be said to be characterized by a pattern of recurrent selections from the inventory of optional features of a language. Various type of selection can be found: complete exclusion of a feature optional elsewhere, varying degrees of inclusion of a specific variant without complete elimination of competing features." This peculiarity in the manner of using language means in poetry and emotive prose has given rise to notion of "Style as Deviance." Most illustrative of this tendency is George neglect of the rules that govern the structure of clauses, sentences and paragraphs that the real secret of style consists…"

The essential property, indeed, merit of a truly genuine individual style is its conformity to the established norms of the language system in their idiosyncratic variations. This uniqueness of the individual style of an author is not easy to observe. It is due not only to the peculiar choice of words, sentence-structures and Stylistic Devices, but also to the in comparable manner these elements are combined.

It is hardly to underestimate the significance of a minute analyses of the language of a writer when approaching the general notion of his style.

The language will inevitably reveal some of the author's idiosyncrasies in the use of language means. Moreover, the author's choice of language means reflects to a very considerable extent the idea of the work as a whole.

Nowhere can the linguist observe the hidden potentialities of language means more clearly than through a scrupulous analyses of the ways writers use these means.

But for the linguist the importance of studying an author's individual style is not confined to penetration into the inner properties of language means and stylistic devices. The writers of a given period in the development of the literary language

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[1] Galperin R "Stylistics". Moscow. 1971. p. 89
[1] Seymour Chatman "Stylistics " England 1990. p.90

contribute greatly to establishing the system of norms of their period. It is worth a passing note that the investigations of language norms at a given period are to a great extent maintain on works of men-of letters.

One of the essential properties of a truly individual style is its permanence. It has great powers of endurance. It is easily recognized and never loses its aesthetic value. The form into which the ideas are wrought assumes a greater significance and therefore arrests our attention. The language of a truly individual style becomes de- automated. It may be said that the form, i.e. the language means themselves, generates meaning. This will be shown later when we come to analyzed the nature and functions of stylistic devices.

§2. STYLISTIC DEVICES AND THEIR TYPES

SD function in texts as marked units. They always carry some kind of additional information, either emotive or logical. That is why the method of free variation employed in descriptive linguistics cannot be used in stylistics because any substitution may cause damage to the semantic and aesthetic aspect of the utterance.

A. W. De Groot points out the significance of SDs in the following passage:

"Each of the aesthetically relevant features of the text serves to create a feature of the gestalt of the poem. In this sense the relevant linguistic features may be said to function or operate as gestalt factors."

The idea of the function of SDs expressed most fully by V.M. Zirmunsky in the following passage[1]:

"The justification and the sense of each device lies in the wholeness of the artistic impression which the work of art as a self-contained thing produces on us. Each *separate aesthetic fact , each poetical device* (emphasis added)finds its place in the system, the sounds and sense of the words, the syntactical structures, the scheme of the plot, the compositional purport- all in equal degree express this wholeness and find justification."

The motivated use of SDs in a genuine work of emotive literature is not easily discernible, though they are used in some in kind of relation to the facts, events, or ideas dealt with in the artistic message. Most SDs display an application of two meanings: the ordinary one, in other words, the meaning (lexical or structural) which has already been established in the language-as a-system, and a special meaning which is superimposed on the unit by the text, i.e. a meaning which appears in the language-in-action.

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[1] V.M. Zirmunsky 'Stylistics'. P.89

Sometimes, however, the twofold application of a lexical unit is accomplished not by the interplay of two meanings but by two words (generally synonyms) one of which is perceived against the background of the other. This will be shown in subsequent chapters.

The conscious transformation of a language fact into a stylistic device has been observed by certain linguists whose interests in linguistic theory have gone beyond the boundaries of grammar. Thus A. A. Potebnya writes:

"As far back as in ancient Greece and Rome and with few exceptions up the to present time, the definition of a figurative use of a word has been based on the contract between ordinary speech, used in its own, natural, primary meaning, and transferred speech."

The contrast which the author of the passage quoted points to, can not always be clearly observed. In some SDs it can be grasped immediately; in others it requires a keen eye and sufficient training to detect it. It must be emphasized that the contrast reveals itself most clearly when our mind perceives twofold meanings simultaneously. The meanings run parallel: one of them taking precedence over the other.

Thus in "The night has swallowed him up" the word 'swallow' has two meanings:

a) referential and b) contextual (to make disappear, to make vanish). The meaning (b)takes precedence over the referential (a).

The same can be observed in the sentence: "Is there not blood enough upon your penal code that more must be poured forth to ascend to Heaven and testify against you?"(Byron)

The interrogative form, i.e. the structural meaning of a question, runs parallel with the imposed affirmative thought, i.e. the   structural meaning of a statement, and it is difficult to decide which of the two structural meanings- the established or the superimposed-takes the upper hand.

In the following chapters where detailed analysis of the different SDs will be carried out, we shall try, where possible, to consider which of the two meanings realized simultaneously outweighs the other.

The birth of SDs is a natural process in the development of language media. Language units which are used with more or less definite aims of communication in various passages of writing and in various functional styles begin gradually to develop new features, a wider range of functions, thus causing polyfunctionality. Hence they can be presented as invariants with concrete variables.

The interrelation between expressive means and stylistic devices can be worded in terms of the theory of information. Expressive means have a greater degree of predictability than stylistic devices. The latter may appear in an environment which may seem alien and therefore be only slightly or not all predictable. Expressive means, on the contrary, follow the natural

course of thought, intensifying it by means commonly used in language . It follows that SDs carry a greater amount of information and therefore require a certain effort to decode their meaning and purport. SDs must be regarded as a special code which has to be well known to the reader in order to be deciphered easily.

The notion of language as a special code is now very much practiced in the analyses of the functions of language units. E.Stankievicz[1] sees a kind of code-switching of the language code when"… the neutral, basic code serves as the background against which the elements of another system acquire expressive prominence within the context of the basic system." SDs are used sparingly in emotive prose, lest they should over burden the text with implications thus hindering the process of decoding. They are abundantly used in poetry and especially so in some trends of poetical tradition, consequently retarding mental absorption of the content.

Not every stylistic use of a language fact will come under the term SD, although some usages call forth of presenting any language fact in what is vaguely called its stylistic use. For a language fact to be promoted to the lever of an SD there is one indispensable requirement, which has already been mentioned above ,*viz.* that it should so be used to call forth a twofold perception of lexical or/and structural meanings. Even a nonce use can and very often does create the necessary conditions for the appearance of an SD. But these are only the prerequisites for the appearance of an SD. Only when a newly minted language unit which materializes the twofold application of meanings occurs repeatedly in different environments, can it spring into life as an SD and subsequently be registered in the system of DSs of the given language

Lexical stylistic device

We know, that there are three types of Stylistic devices

Lexical stylistic devices

Lexico-syntactical devices

Among them we shall speak about lexical stylistic devices. Lexical stylistic devices include metaphor, metonymy and irony which are based dictionary and contextual meaning, i.e. denotational and connotational meanings.

Lexical level

The idea of previous paragraph was to illustrate potential possibilities of linguistic units more primate than the word, found at lower levels of language structure and yet capable of conveying additional information when fore grounded in a specially organized context.

The forthcoming paragraph going to be one the most important in this work for it is devoted to a linguistic unit of major significance the word, which names, qualifies and evaluates the micro and macrocosm of the surrounding world. The most essential feature of a word as it

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[1] E.Stankievicz· 'How to learn stylistic devices'. P.90

expresses the concert of a thing, process, phenomenon, naming (denoting) them. Concert is a logical category, its linguistic counterpart is meaning. Meaning, as our outstanding scholar L. Vygotslky put it, is the unity of generalization, communication and thinking. An entity of extreme complexity, the meaning of a word is liable to historical changes, of which you know from the course of lexicology and which are responsible for the formation of an expended semantic structure of a word. This structure is constituted of various types of lexical meaning, the major one being DENOTATIONAL, which informs of the subject of communication; and also including CONNOTATIONAL, which informs about the PARTICIPANTS and CONDITIONS of communication.

The list and specification of connotational meanings varies which different linguistics school and individual scholars include such entries as pragmatic (directed at the perlocutionary effect of utterance), associative (connected, through individual psychological or linguistic associations, which related and nonrelated notions), ideological, or conceptual (relealing political , social , ideological preferences of the indicated nation), emotive (revealing the emotional layer of cognition and percertion), expressive (aiming at creating the image of the object in question), stylistic (indicating "the register", or the situation of the communication).

The above –mentioned meanings are classified as connotational not only because they supply additional (and not the logical/ denotational) information, but also because, for the most part , they are observed not all once and not in all words either. Some of them are more important for the act of communication than the others. Very often they overlap. So, all words possessing an emotive meaning are also evaluative.

(e.g. "rascal", "ducky"), though this rule is not reversed , as we can find non-emotive intellectual evaluation (e.g. "good", "bad"). Also, all emotive words (or practically all, for that matter) are also expressive, while there are hundreds of expressive words which cannot be treated as emotive (take, for example the so-called expressive verbs   , which not only denote some action or process but also create their image, as in "to gulp"=to swallow in big lumps, in a hurry; or "to sprint"= to run fast).

The number of importance and the overlapping character of connotational meanings incorporated into the semantic structure of a word, and brought to forth by the context, i.e. a concrete speech act that identifies and actualizes each one. More than that: each context does not only specify the existing semantic (both denotational and connotational) possibilities of a word but also is capable of adding new once, or deviating rather considerable from what is registered in the dictionary. Because of that all contextual meanings of a word can never be exhausted or comprehensively enumerated. Compare the following cases of contextual use of the verb "to pop" in Stan Barstow's novel "Ask Me Tomorrow."

1. His face is red at first and then it goes white and his eyes stare as if they'll pop out of his head.

2."Just pop into the scullery and get me something to stand this on."

3."There is a fish and chip shop up on the main road. I thought you might show your gratitude by popping up for some."

4."I've no need to change or anything then."

"No, just pop your coat on and you're fine."

5."Actually Mrs. Swallow is out. But she won't be long. She's popped up the road to the shops."

6."Would you like me to pop downstairs and make you a cup of cocoa?".

In semantic actualization of a word the context plays a dual role: on the one hand, it outs off all meanings irrelevant for the given communicative situation. On the other, it foregrounds one of the meaningful options of a word, focusing the communicator's attention on one of the denotational or connotational components of its semantic structure.

The significance of the context is comparatively small in the field of stylistic connotations, because the word is labeled stylistically before it enters some con text, i.e. the dictionary: recollect the well-known contractions-vulgar words archaisms slang, etc… which make an indispensable pert of a dictionary entry. So there is sense to start the survey of connotational meaning with the stylistic differentiation of the vocabulary.

§3. Antithesis as a stylistic device

In order to characterize a thing or phenomenon from a specific point of view, it may be necessary not to find points of resemblance or association between it and some other thing or phenomenon, but to find points of sharp contrast, that is, to set one against the other, for example: "A saint abroad, and a devil at home" (Bunyan) "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." (Milton)

A line of demarcation must be drawn between logical opposition and stylistic opposition. Any opposition will be based on the contrasting features of two objects. These contrasting features are represented in pairs of words which we call antonyms, provided that all the properties of the two objects in question may be set one against another, as 'saint' —'devil', 'reign'— 'serve', 'hell'—'heaven'.

Many word-combinations are built up by means of contrasting pairs, as up and down, inside and out, from top to bottom and the like.

Stylistic opposition, which is given a special name, the term a n-t i t h e s i s, is of a different linguistic nature: it is based on relative opposition which arises out of the context

through the expansion of objectively contrasting pairs, as in:

"Youth is lovely, age is lonely,

Youth is fiery, age is frosty;" (Longfellow)

Here the objectively contrasted pair is 'youth' and 'age'. 'Lovely' and 'lonely' cannot be regarded as objectively opposite concepts, but being drawn into the scheme contrasting 'youth' and 'age', they display certain features which may be counted as antonymical. This is strengthened also by the next line where not only 'youth' and 'age' but also 'fiery' and 'frosty' are objective antonyms.

It is not only the semantic aspect which explains the linguistic nature of antithesis, the structural pattern also plays an important role. Antithesis is generally moulded in parallel construction. The antagonistic features of the two objects or phenomena are more easily perceived when they stand out in similar structures. This is particularly advantageous when the antagonistic features are not inherent in the objects in question but imposed on them. The structural design of antithesis is so important it would produce. After a long expectation and many wise conjectures from the bystanders—out popped, a Mouse!"

Here we have deliberate anticlimax, which is a recognized form of humour. Anticlimax is frequently used by humorists Hke Mark Twain and Jerome K- Jerome.

In "Three Men in a Boat", for example, a poetical passage is invariably followed by ludicrous scene. For example, the author expands on the beauties of the sunset on the river and concludes:

"But we didnt sail into the world of golden sunset: we went slap into that old punt where the gentlemen were fishing"

Another example is:

"This war-like speech, received with many a cheer, Had filled them with desire of fame, and beer" (Byron)

That unless it is conspicuously marked in the utterance, the effect might be lost.

It must be remembered, however, that so strong is the impact of the various stylistic devices, that they draw into their orbit stylistic elements not specified as integral parts of the device. As we have pointed out, this is often the case with the epithet. The same concerns antithesis. Sometimes it is difficult to single out the elements which distinguish it from logical opposition.

Thus in Dickens's "A Tale of Two Cities" the first paragraph is practically built on opposing pairs.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, if was the season of

Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, We had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we are all going direct the other way..." (Dickens)

The structural pattern of the utterance, the pairs of objective antonyms as well as of those on which antonymical meanings are imposed by the force of analogy makes the whole paragraph stylistically significant, and the general device which makes it so is antithesis.

This device is often signalled by the introductory connective but, as in:

"The cold in clime are cold in blood

Their love can scarce deserve the name;

But mine was like a lava flood.

That boils in Etna's breast of flame." (Byron)

When but is used as a signal of antithesis, the other structural signal, the parallel arrangement, may not be evident. It may be unnecessary, as in the example above.

Antithesis is a device bordering between stylistics and logic. The extremes are easily discernible but most of the cases are intermediate. However, it is essential to distinguish between antithesis arid what is termed contrast. Contrast is a literary (not a linguistic) device based on logical opposition between the phenomena set one against another. Here is a good example of contrast.

THE RIVER

"The river—with the sunlight flashing from its dancing wavelets, gilding gold the grey-green beech-trunks, glinting through the dark, cool wood paths, chasing shadows o'er the shallows, flinging diamonds from the mill-wheels, throwing kisses to the lilies, wantoning with the weir's white waters, silvering moss-grown walls and bridges, brightening every tiny townlet, making sweet each lane and meadow, lying tangled in the rushes, peeping, laughing, from each inlet, gleaming gay on many a far sail, making soft the air with glory—is a golden fairy stream.

But the river—chill and weary, with the ceaseless rain drops falling on its brown and sluggish waters, with the sound as of a woman, weeping low in some dark chamber, while the woods all dark and silent, shrouded in their mists of vapour, stand like ghosts upon the margin, silent ghosts with eyes reproachful like the ghosts of evil actions, like the ghosts of friends neglected— is a spirit-haunted water through the land of vain regrets." (Jerome K. Jerome)

The two paragraphs are made into one long span of thought by the signal But and the repetition of the word river after which in both cases a pause is indicated by a dash which suggests a different intonation pattern of the word river. The opposing members of the contrast are the 'sunlight flashing'—'ceaseless rain drops falling'; 'gilding gold the grey-green beech-trunks, glinting through the dark, cool wood paths'— 'the woods, all dark and silent, shrouded in

their mists of vapour, stand like ghosts...'; 'golden fairy stream'—'spirit-haunted water'.

Still there are several things lacking to show a clear case of a stylistic device, viz. the words involved in the opposition do not display any additional nuance of meaning caused by being opposed one to another; there are no true parallel constructions except, perhaps, the general pattern of the two paragraphs, with all the descriptive parts placed between the grammatical subject and predicate, the two predicates serving as a kind of summing up, thus completing the contrast.

'The river... is a golden fairy stream.'—'But the river ... is a spirit-haunted water through the land of vain regrets.' The contrast embodied in these two paragraphs is, however, akin to the stylistic device of antithesis.

Antithesis has the following basic functions: rhythm-forming (because of the parallel arrangement on which it is founded); copulative; dissevering; comparative. These functions often go together and intermingle in their own peculiar manner. But as a rule antithesis displays one of the functions more clearly than the others. This particular function will then be the leading one in the given utterance. An interesting example of antithesis where the comparative function is predominant is the madrigal ascribed to Shakespeare:

A MADRIGAL

"Crabbed age and youth Cannot live together:

Youth is full of pleasance, Age is full of care;

Youth like summer morn, Age like winter weather,

Youth like summer brave, Age like winter bare:

Youth is full of sport, Age's breath is short,

Youth is nimble, Age is lame:

Youth is hot and bold,

Age is weak and cold, Youth is wild, and Age is tame:—

Age, I do abhore thee,

Youth, I do adore thee; O my Love, my Love is young!

Age, I do defy thee—

O sweet shepherd, hie thee.

For methinks thou stay'st too long.

Antithesis is a good example of them: syntactically, antithesis is just another case of parallel constructions. But unlike parallelism, which is indifferent to the semantics of its components, the two parts of an antithesis must be semantically opposite to each other, as in the sad maxim of O.Wilde: "Some people have much to live on, and little to live for", where "much" and "little" present a pair of antonyms, supported by the ' contextual opposition of postpositions

"on" and "for". Another example: "If we don't know who gains by his death we do know who loses by it." (Ch.) Here, too, we have the leading antonymous pair "gam - lose" and the supporting one, made stronger by the emphatic form of the affirmative construction - "don't know / do know".

Antithesis as a semantic opposition emphasized by its realization in similar structures, is often observed on lower levels of language hierarchy, especially on the morphemic level where two antonymous affixes create a powerful effect of contrast: "Their pre-money wives did not go together with their post-money daughters." (H.)

The main function of antithesis is to stress the heterogeneity of the described phenomenon, to show that the latter is a dialectical unity of two (or more) opposing features.

Semantic centers and structural peculiarities of antithesis:

1. Mrs. Nork had a large home and a small husband. (S.L.)

2. In marriage the upkeep of woman is often the downfall of man. (Ev.)

3. Don't use big words. They mean so little. (O.W.)

4. I like big parties. They're so intimate. At small parties there isn't any privacy. (Sc.F.)

5. There is Mr. Guppy, who was at first as open as the sun at noon, but who suddenly shut up as close as midnight. (D.)

6. Such a scene as there was when Kit came in! Such a confusion of tongues, before the circumstances were related and the proofs disclosed! Such a dead silence when all was told! (D.)

7. Rup wished he could be swift, accurate, compassionate and stern instead of clumsy and vague and sentimental. (I.M.)

8. His coat-sleeves being a great deal too long, and his trousers a great deal too short, he appeared ill at ease in his clothes. (D.)

9. There was something every about the apartment house, an unearthly quiet that was a combination of over carpeting and under occupancy. (H.St.)

10. It is safer to be married to the man you can be happy with than to the man you cannot be happy without. (E.)

11. Then came running down stairs a gentleman with whiskers, out of breath. (D.)

12. It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair; we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way - in short the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only. (D.)

13. Cannery Row in Monterey in California is a poem, a stink, a grating noise, a quality of light, a tone, a habit, a nostalgia, a dream. Cannery Row is the gathered and scattered, tin and iron, and rust and splintered wood, chipped pavement and weedy lots and junk heaps, sardine canneries of corrugated iron, honky tonks, restaurants and whore houses and little crowded groceries and laboratories and flophouses. Its inhabitants are, as the man once said "Whores, pimps, gamblers and sons of bitches", by which he meant Everybody. Had the man looked through another peephole he might have said "Saints and angels and martyrs and holy men" and he would have meant the same thing. (J. St.)

Antithesis (Greek for "setting opposite", from ἀντί "against" + θέσις "position") is a counter-proposition and denotes a direct contrast to the original proposition. In setting the opposite, an individual brings out of a contrast in the meaning (e.g., the definition, interpretation, or semantics) by an obvious contrast in the expression. Contents [hide]

A simple enumeration of the elements of dialectics is that of thesis, antithesis, synthesis. Hell is the antithesis of Heaven; disorder is the antithesis of order. It is the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas, usually in a balanced way. In rhetoric, it is a figure of speech involving the bringing out of a contrast in the ideas by an obvious contrast in the words, clauses, or sentences, within a parallel grammatical structure, as in the following:

"When there is need of silence, you speak, and when there is need of speech, you are dumb; when you are present, you wish to be absent, and when absent, you desire to be present; in peace you are for war and in war you long for peace; in council you descant on bravery, and in the battle you tremble."

Antithesis is sometimes double or alternate, as in the appeal of Augustus:
"Listen, young men, to an old man to whom old men were glad to listen when he was young."

Some other examples of antithesis are:
A) Man proposes, God disposes.
B) Give everyman thy ear, but few thy voice.
C) Many are called, but few are chosen.

Among English writers who have made the most abundant use of antithesis are Pope, Young, Johnson, and Gibbon; and especially Lyly in his Euphues. It is, however, a much more common feature in French than in English; while in German, with some striking exceptions, it is conspicuous by its absence. The familiar phrase "Man proposes: God disposes" is an example of antithesis, as is John Dryden's description in The Hind and the Panther: "Too black for heaven, and yet too white for hell."

The force of the antithesis is increased if the words on which the beat of the contrast falls are alliterative, or otherwise similar in sound. It gives an expression greater point and vivacity... than a judicious employment of this figure.

In literature

In literary fiction, an antithesis can be used to describe a character who presents the exact opposite as to personality type or moral outlook to another character in a particular piece of literature. Some examples of an antithesis in popular literature include the characters of Dumbledore and Voldemort in Harry Potter, the doctor and Kino in The Pearl, Théoden and Denethor in The Lord of the Rings, and Aslan and the White Witch in "The Chronicles of Narnia". This does not mean however, that they are necessarily in conflict with each other.

Antithesis is also a rhetorical figure of speech, often used in both poetry and prose.

Not that I loved Cesar less, but that I loved Rome more.

(William Shakespeare, "Julius Cesar," Act 3, scene 2, 22)

My only love sprung from my only hate"

(Juliet when she finds Romeo is a member of the Montague family and therefore an enemy of her)

In the Bible

Main article: Expounding of the Law

The Antithesis of the Law is the name given by some New Testament scholars to a section of the Sermon on the Mount[Matt. 5:17–48] in which Jesus is reported as taking six well known prescriptions of the Mosaic Law, and calling on his followers to do more than the law requires. Protestant scholars since the Reformation have generally believed that Jesus was setting His teaching over against false interpretations of the law current at the time. The Jewish Encyclopedia: Brotherly Love states:

As Schechter in J. Q. R. x. 11, shows, the expression 'Ye have heard...' is an inexact translation of the rabbinical formula (ינא עמוֹשׁ), which is only a formal logical interrogation introducing the opposite view as the only correct one: 'Ye might deduce from this verse[Lev 19:18] that thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy, but I say to you the only correct interpretation is, Love all men, even thine enemies.'

Antithesis was the name given by Marcion to a document in which he contrasted the Old Testament with the New Testament.

In each of the six cases, Jesus open each statement with words to the effect: "You have heard it said...but I say to you...."

Examples:

"Love is an ideal thing, marriage a real thing." (Goethe)

"Hillary has soldiered on, damned if she does, damned if she doesn't, like most powerful women, expected to be tough as nails and warm as toast at the same time." (Anna Quindlen, "Say Goodbye to the Virago." Newsweek, June 16, 2003)

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way." (Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities)

"I would rather be ashes than dust! I would rather that my spark should burn out in a brilliant blaze than it should be stifled by dryrot. I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet. The proper function of man is to live, not to exist. I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them. I shall use my time." (Jack London)

"Everybody doesn't like something, but nobody doesn't like Sara Lee."
(advertising slogan)

"We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools."
(Martin Luther King, Jr., speech at St. Louis, 1964)

"You're easy on the eyes Hard on the heart." (Terri Clark)

"The more acute the experience, the less articulate its expression." (Harold Pinter)

To be or not to be…

You've heard it so many times that you may have forgotten to listen to the significance of these words. In these six words Shakespeare gives us two complete opposites: existing and not existing. This use of a word (or sentence) being placed against another to form a balanced contrast is known in rhetoric as ANTITHESIS.

Antithesis is a huge part of Shakespeare's language. Nearly ever character uses it. Shakespeare was well educated in the art of rhetoric and forming an argument. Naturally, this is reflected in his character's speech.

In antithesis you must "set the word itself against the word" (Richard II, V.v) for a variety of different effects. A comparison of two antithetical or opposite thoughts can show a lot to the actor and audience alike. Two opposing ideas in a line can show a the scope of thought in a characters mind. Hamlet in the above quotation is contemplating two very serious ideas. Antithesis also very clearly and precisely illustrates though words the character's meaning.

In Macbeth the witches chant "Fair is foul, and foul is fair." And later Macbeth comments on the occasion, "So foul and fair a day I have not seen." Foul and fair are two opposites and set

against each other. What kind of day is it? You'd think this doesn't make sense, but think to some of your own experiences. Have you said anything like that?

"She's so mean, but I love her anyway." "That class is great but I hate going." "I shouldn't eat it, but I can't stop!" These all have antithetical elements in them. Each of these sentences are very dramatic. Explanation can be had for all of these but it isn't necessary. When you put the two antithetical thoughts together in such a short phrase, you get drama. "I really enjoy our relationship together on occasion because we do fun things together such as swimming, shopping, watching movies and other things but you really have some habits that thoroughly annoy me at time as well and I'm conflicted with how I feel about you." Where's the drama there? How about "I love and hate you." Whoa. NOW I want to know more about this relationship. DRAMA!

Shakespeare is great at crafting these concise and dramatic sentences together to create something the audience and actor alike can really sink their teeth into.

Not all are complete opposites though. "Our father's love, is to the bastard Edmund / As to th' legitimate" (King Lear, II.i). The opposite ideas here are the legitimate versus the bastard son. But Edmund us comparing his father's love between them. One, or the other. When Marc Anthony says "I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him," (Julius Caesar, III.ii) he is setting bury and praise against one another even though they're not opposite ideas.

Some acting books could go on for chapters about antithesis and rightly so. It's pretty darn important for being able to play Shakespeare's text. It's a tool that the author has left you to use EVERYWHERE YOU CAN. Don't neglect it. Antithesis will serve you well.

Conclusion

Stylistics, sometimes called lingo-stylistics, is a branch of general linguistics; it has been more or less   definitely outlined. It deals mainly with two independent tasks:

a) the investigation of the inventory of special language media which by their ontological features secure the desirable effect of the utterance.

b) certain types of text (discourse) which due to the choice branch and arrangement of language means are distinguished by the pragmatic aspect of the communication. The two objective of stylistics are clearly discernable as separate fields of investigation.

The subject of stylistics has so far not been definitely outlined. This is due to a number of reasons.

First of all there is confusion between the terms style and stylistics. The first concept is so broad that it is hardly possible to regard it as a term. We speak of style in architecture, literature, behavior, linguistics, dress and other fields of human activity

Even in linguistics the word style is used so widely that it needs interpretation. The majority of linguists who deal with the subject of style agree that the term applies to the following fields of investigation:

1) The aesthetic function of language;

2) Expressive means in language;

3) Synonymous ways of rendering one and the same idea;

4) Emotional coloring of language;

5) A system of special devices called stylistic devices;

6) The splitting of the literary language into separate subsystems called stylistic devices;

7) The interrelation between language and thought;

8) The individual manner of an author in making use of language.

There are 3 groups of classification of Lexical Stylistic Devices:

1. The interaction of different types of lexical meaning.

   a) dictionary and contextual (metaphor, metonymy, irony);

   b) primary and derivative (zeugma and pun);

   c) logical and emotive (epithet, oxymoron);

   d) logical and nominative (autonomasia);

2. Intensification of a feature (simile, hyperbole, periphrasis).

3. Peculiar use of set expressions (cliches, proverbs, epigram, quotations).

Classification of Syntactical Stylistic Devices:

Groups.

I. Patterns of syntactical arrangement	Inversion,
	Detachment.
	Parallelism.
	Chiasmus.
	Repetition.
	Enumeration.
	Suspense.
	Climax.
	Antithesis.
II. Peculiar linkage:	Asyndeton.
	Polysyndeton.
	Gap - sentence - link.
III. Colloquial constructions:	Ellipsis.
	Aposiopesis.

Question - in - the narrative.

Represented speech.

IV. Stylistic use of structural   Rhetorical questions.

              meaning: Litotes.

Antithesis is a good example of them: syntactically, antithesis is just another case of parallel constructions. But unlike parallelism, which is indifferent to the semantics of its components, the two parts of an antithesis must be semantically opposite to each other, as in the sad maxim of O.Wilde: "Some people have much to live on, and little to live for", where "much" and "little" present a pair of antonyms, supported by the ' contextual opposition of postpositions "on" and "for". Another example: "If we don't know who gains by his death we do know who loses by it." (Ch.) Here, too, we have the leading antonymous pair "gam - lose" and the supporting one, made stronger by the emphatic form of the affirmative construction - "don't know / do know".

Antithesis as a semantic opposition emphasized by its realization in similar structures, is often observed on lower levels of language hierarchy, especially on the morphemic level where two antonymous affixes create a powerful effect of contrast: "Their pre-money wives did not go together with their post-money daughters." (H.)

The main function of antithesis is to stress the heterogeneity of the described phenomenon, to show that the latter is a dialectical unity of two (or more) opposing features.

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