## STYLISTIC FUNCTIONS OF EPITHET

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**Abstract**; Epithets in English emotive prose can fulfil different stylistic functions: a descriptive function (to describe characters, views, situations, different things and feelings); an expressive function (to make the texts more expressive and emotional).

**Key words**; epithets,emotive,prose,literature,character,poem,play, novel, literature,point

Epithets in English emotive prose can fulfil different stylistic functions: a descriptive function (to describe characters, views, situations, different things and feelings); an expressive function (to make the texts more expressive and emotional). The third function of epithets in the emotive prose is the evaluative function (to express the evaluation of the described characters, feelings and things) also epithets can fulfill the individualizing function as they are used to describe some individual characteristics of people and things. There are examples and they will give us an idea on how epithets are used:

**In Literature**

"I've come,

As you surmise, with comrades on a ship,

Sailing across the *wine-dark sea* to men

Whose style of speech is very different..." - The Odyssey by Homer

"God! he said quietly. Isn't the sea what Algy calls it: *a great sweet* mother? The *snot-green* sea. The sea. Epi oinopa ponton. Ah, Dedalus, the Greeks! I must teach you. You must read them in the original. Thalatta! Thalatta! She is our great sweet mother. Come and look." - In 'Ulysses' by James Joyce

"The earth is *crying-sweet*,

And *scattering-bright* the air,

Eddying, dizzying, closing round,

With soft and *drunken* laughter..." - In 'Beauty and Beauty' by Rupert Brooke

"My *restless* blood now lies a-quiver,

Knowing that always, exquisitely,

This April twilight on the river

Stirs anguish in the heart of me." - In Blue Evening by Rupert Brooke

"*Blind* mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold

A sheep-hook, or have learn'd aught else the least

That to the *faithful* herdman's art belongs!" - In Lycidas by John Milton

"Here of a Sunday morning

My love and I would lie,

And see the *coloured* counties,

And hear the larks so high

About us in the sky." - In 'Bredon Hill' by A.E. Housman

**In Sentences**

Sitting by his side, I watched the *peaceful dawn*.My *careful* steps reached the attic.

Her *stifled* laughter made everybody nervous.

In the face of such *a tragedy*, his laughing happiness seemed queer.

I had reached *a delicate* corner.

The *idle* road stretched for miles.

All I can say is that he had an *honest* end.

It was a *sweet* beginning to *a tragic* end.

Her *depressing* ways ruined her mother's health.

**Epithets For Men And Women In Homer**

*Swift-footed*, *godlike*, shepherd of the people, son of Peleus, and leader of men for Achilles.

*Wide-ruling*, lord of men, godlike, and glorious son of Atreus for Agamemnon.

*Proud, royal* son of Telamon, *huge, glorious*, and loved of Zeus for Aias.

Leader of the Trojans, lord of men, *great-hearted*, son of Anchises, and counselor of the Trojans for Aineias.

Daughter of *great-hearted* Eetion white-armed for Andromache.

Nestor's *splendid* son for Antilochus.

*Lovely-haired* for Ariadne.

*Godlike great hearted,* Tydeus' son, great spearman, strong, the *horse-tamer*, master of the war cry for Diomedes.

*Boxer* for Polydeukes.

*Leader* of the Lycians, lord, and *godlike* for Sarpedon.

*Loose-tongued* for Thersites.

**Epithets For Gods And Goddesses**

Lord of the dead, and mighty for Aidoneus.

Smiling goddess, Kypris, golden, and daughter of Zeus for Aphrodite.

Son of Zeus, loved of Zeus, god of the silver bow, the unshorn, rouser of armies, and the lord who shoots from afar for Apollo.

The archer-goddess and of the golden distaff for Artemis.

The bright-eyed, Atrytone, daughter of Zeus who holds the aegis, and Tritogeneia for Athene.

*Epic poems* most notably that of Homer, depended a lot on epithets to bring out certain characteristics in people, places and things. Even now, it is more suitable to use epithets in poems to convey vivid imagery in fewer words.

*Epithets are characteristic of the style of ancient epic poetry, notably in the northern European sagas as well as epithets in Homer.* When James Joyce uses the phrase "the snot-green sea" he is playing on Homer's familiar epithet "the wine-dark sea". The phrase "Discreet Telemachus" is also considered an epithet.There are also specific types of epithets, such as the *kenning* which appears in works such as Beowulf. An example of a kenning would be using the term *whale-road* instead of the word "*sea*".

In William Shakespeare's famous play Romeo and Juliet, epithets are used in the prologue, used in "star-cross'd lovers" and "death-mark'd love."

Epithets were in its layman's terms a glorified nickname that could be used to represent ones style, artistic nature, or even geographical reference. Originated to simply serve the purpose of dealing with names that were hard to pronounce or just unpleasant. It from there went to something that could be very significant assigned to you by elders or counterparts to represent your position in the community or it could be just a useless representation of whomever you wanted to be or thought you were. *The elegance of this movement was used throughout history and even modern day with many examples ranging from "Aphrodite The heavenly & Zeus The Protector of Guests" all the way to "Johnny Football & King James."*

The modern approach to teaching English suggests that communication tasks involve learners in the process of conversation in English. It removes the teacher domination, and learners get chances to open and close conversations, to interact naturally in English.

There are some problems arising when teaching conversational English. Taking these problems into consideration, the present-day teacher should implement some quite new methodological principles of teaching apart from some innovations in single methods and teaching techniques.

We can suggest teaching students to find, analyze and use epithets when teaching them to read and speak English. The system of the tasks suggested can be used when teaching vocabulary, and training students to read and speak. Students should know the notion of epithet to be able to recognize them in the texts and use in their own oral and written speech. It will undoubtedly broaden their vocabulary and make their speech more expressive and beautiful.

As you work on a poem, play, novel, or other written work, one device you might want to consider using is the transferred epithet. The odds are pretty good that you're already familiar with this type of language, because writers use it very frequently. A working definition for the technique, as well as a simple explanation of how they

usually are applied, can make it easier for you to insert them into your own writing. In the long run, this can make your work more concise and colorful.

You'll see transferred epithets most often in poetic writing. In fact, some experts assert that transferred epithets are what distinguish poetry from regular prose. Writers such as W.B. Yeats, John Keats, and Homer frequently used this device. Even so, you also can find them in "regular" writing, such as plays and novels. Shakespeare, for example, used them often.

Transferred epithets maintain all the qualities of standard epithets. When you use one, however, you put your descriptor on the "wrong" element in the sentence. For instance, you might say, "My weary car quit running." Here, "weary" is a transferred epithet. It makes sense grammatically, but a car can't be weary, because it's inanimate. You have transferred the quality of a living thing--tiredness--onto something that isn't alive to get your idea across in a more interesting way. The transferred epithet has become synonymous with hypallage, which is taking elements in a sentence and rearranging them into less logical positions.

In the second example, we have personification without a transferred epithet. The house is described as 'run-down', which it can be without having any human characteristics. It is described not as depressed - which is a human characteristic - but as seeming depressed to the human. If the house was described as a 'depressed house' or even as 'a cheerful house' this would be a transferred epithet, because it describes a mood the house does not have. (Houses don't have moods.)However a house can be run-down, and even look as if it has a human mood, but still be just a house without any human qualities.

***Epithet*** (Greek - *"addition")* is a stylistic device emphasizing some quality of a person, thing, idea or phenomenon. Its function is to reveal the evaluating subjective attitude of the writer towards the thing described.

*Let us have a look at the following sentences describing the participants of the episode from the John Fowles novel. Focus on the words in bold type.*

• *Charles put his best foot forward, and thoughts of the **mysterious woman** behind him, through the woods of Ware Commons.*

• *It was opened by **a small barrel of a woman**, her fat arms shiny with suds.*

• *He was **a bald, vast-bearded man** with **a distinctly saturnine cast** to his face; a Jeremiah.*

• *He plainly did not allow delicacy' to stand in the way **of prophetic judgment**.*

• *He seemed to Charles to incarnate **all the hypocritical gossip — and gossips** — of Lyme.*

• *Charles could hare believed many things of that **sleeping face**; but never that its owner was a whore.*

• *What do all the structures have in common?*

Cases like these are called *epithets.*

Epithets should not be confused with logical attributes, the latter having no expressive force but indicating those qualities of the objects that may be regarded as generally recognized (for instance, *round table, green meadows, lofty mountains and the like).* Though, it is sometimes difficult to draw a clear line of demarcation between epithet and logical attribute. In some passages the logical attribute becomes so strongly enveloped in the emotional aspect of the utterance that it begins to radiate emotiveness. though by nature it is logically descriptive.

Epithets are deemed to be two-fold in nature as their striking effect is owed both to semantics and structure. Thus. Galperin and Kukharenko classify epithets from at least two standpoints - *semantic* and *structural.* The tables below illustrate the two possible ways of division.

**Semantically epithets** are looked at from different angles, which is reflected in the following:

• Galperin

Associated epithets are those that point to a feature which is essential to the object they describe: the idea expressed is to a certain extent inherent in the concept of the object, as in: *'darkforest \ fantastic terrors \ 'dreary midnight'.*

Unassociated epithets are attributes used to characterize the object by adding a feature not inherent in it. i.e. a feature which may be so unexpected as to strike the reader by its novelty. The adjectives do not indicate any property inherent in the objects but fitting in the given circumstances only, as in *'heart-burning smile',*

*'voiceless sands', 'bootless cries'._*

*Note:* As far as novelty is concerned epithets can be trite and genuine. Through their long run some of the latter have become fixed without losing their poetic flavour. Such epithets are mostly used in folk songs and ballads.

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