Capturing the Language of Flash Fiction:
A Stylistic Analysis of a Filipino-Authored "Short" Short Story

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Abstract

The 21st century has witnessed the gradual popularization of flash fiction as a literary genre. However, it has not been extensively explored in literary studies, and most investigations undertaken about it were on genre studies ((Ben-Porat, 2011; Guimarães, 2010; Lucht, 2014; Nelles, 2012; Taha, 2000) and a few on its use in writing pedagogy (Batchelor & King, 2014; Lucht, 2014). In order to add to the increasing number of studies on flash fiction, this paper examines along stylistic lines the flash fiction piece "Bettina" written by Gémino H. Abad, a renowned Filipino author. Using Leech and Short's (2007) schema, the present study attempts to decipher the language code of the said text in terms of the following features: lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, and context and cohesion. The implications of the present study for literature and language teaching are also discussed.

Keywords: *fiction; flash fiction; literary interpretation; Philippine literature; stylistics*

1. Introduction

In this society of 'instant' emerges people's willingness to explore and create miniatures, particularly among artists. According to Nelles (2012), "Our contemporary society has been especially prolific of miniature art forms, such as post cards, pop songs (and their accompanying videos), television commercials, and bumper stickers" (p. 87). Where does literature reside in this array of miniature and 'instant' art forms, from its creation (by a writer) and its consumption (by a reader)? Some traditional short poetic forms, such as sonnets, haikus, and epigrams, have been distinguished as literary genres. At present, too, it seems that very short prose works have gradually developed as miniature narrative genre, variously called *flash fiction* (coined by Shapard & Thomas in 2007; for consistency, this term is used generally in the paper)*, microfiction, sudden fiction*, *"short" short fiction, short-shorts, pocket-size story, smoke-long story* (just long enough to be read when smoking a cigar)*, and many others. Just like any other social media, such a miniscule narrative called flash fiction, with its compressed nature (and intensity), has the 'immediacy of a newsfeed.'

As a short form of storytelling, *flash fiction* does not have a clear definition as a genre in terms of length, for such varies from writer to writer and from editor to editor – one may say that

a story be told in less than 100 words; another, less than 300 words or 1,500 words. Whatever its length, however, it can be assumed that flash fiction has the elements of a classic story such as plot, setting, characters, point of view, conflict, and resolution. As compared with traditional short stories though, the word limit in flash fiction can mean that some of these elements are unwritten, thus, are implied in the storyline (Lucht, 2014). However, according to Galef (2016), leaving out such elements can make a fictive writing appear more expansive; thus, flash fiction depends on the art of implication or suggestion rather than statement. Likewise, a significantly brief story is assumed to have employed techniques (e.g., formal, stylistic, structural features) that are compatible with its shortness (Taha, 2000). According to Dr. Augusto Antonio A. Aguila, a professor of literature at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines, "Flash fiction, as a literary genre, is a type of fiction in which the writer shows all the necessary story details in 500-1000 words. In flash fiction, the writer exercises 'control' to convey as much as possible a single dominant impression of life" (personal communication, July 4, 2016). Masih (2009) defines flash fiction as fictional short, short stories that link to human experiences and calls it a "story miniature" (p. xi). Along with the word limit is the creative way of maintaining a powerful narrative that can surprise a reader and allow him to think about the relevant issues surrounding the text (Batchelor, 2012). In this case, while a reader can read a very short story while waiting in line to get a cup of coffee or sitting in traffic or while smoking a cigarette, flash fiction is not just a time killer, but it leaves a lasting impression that encourages the reader to use context, put more concentration on details, and extend his imagination (Barr, 2010).

Flash fiction, with its brevity (say around less than 700 words), is not just quantitatively but qualitatively different from conventional short stories. Nelles (2012) hypothesizes that "a different set of narrative principles does seem to kick in as stories shrink down to a couple of pages or less, say below about seven hundred words: beneath that point the stories begin to exhibit qualitative differences" (p. 91). Writer Richard Bausch explicates that, "When a story is compressed so much, the matter of it tends to require more size: that is, in order to make it work in so small a space its true subject must be proportionately larger" (as cited in Thomas & Shapard, 2006, p. 12).

Adding to the growing importance of flash fiction, various magazines and e-zines (or online magazines), and websites have devoted themselves invariably to publishing such a literary genre, such as *Flash: The International Short-Short Story Magazine*, *Flash Fiction Magazine*, *3 AM Magazine, Everyday Fiction, Brevity,* and *Smokelong Quarterly*. In England, the Arts Council England has been organizing for five years now the National Flash-Fiction Day. Several flash-fiction writing competitions are also held such as the Lightship One-Page Prize, the Lightship Flash-Fiction Prize, and the Fish Flash Fiction Prize. In fact, in the Philippines in 2012, Abdon M. Balde, Jr., won his fourth National Book Awards Prize for Short Fiction in Filipino with his creative opus *100 Kislap*, a collection of flash fiction in Filipino. The citation for Balde said, "Pinatingkad pa ni Balde sa *100 Kislap* ang dagli dahil sa kanyang katangi-tanging siste at parikala. At ang ehemplo ni Balde ay patunay na hindi kailangang mahaba at nakakabagot ang panitikan" (Balde highlighted flash fiction even more because of his outstanding humor and irony. And Balde's example shows that literature need not be long and dull.) (as cited in Tupaz, 2012, para. 8).

The popularity of the flash fiction genre likewise has found its niche in the academe. In the Philippines, the K to 12 Senior High School Core Curriculum for the 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World prepared by the Department of Education (2013) covers flash fiction as a literary genre in a specific item for its Content:

B. Study and appreciation of literary texts from the different regions written in different genres covering: 1. regions in Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao; 2. major genres (poetry, fiction, drama, creative nonfiction, as well as hyperpoetry, blogs, mobile phone Texttula, chick lit, speculative fiction, *flash fiction*, etc.) (p. 2, emphasis, added)

Flash fiction, furthermore, serves well in providing meaningful and purposeful reading and writing experiences. It helps enhance students' knowledge in understanding narrative elements such as characterization and foreshadowing techniques, which in turn, assist them in crafting their less than 750-word stories using their skills in narrative writing, with focus on clarity and concision (Batchelor & King, 2014). In a writing class, flash fiction seems to appeal to the interest of students who always search for avenues through which they can freely express themselves.

The 21st century has witnessed the gradual (yet slowly gaining) popularization of flash fiction in the Philippines. Anthologies either written in Filipino or in English of this genre were recently published: *Fast Food Fiction: Short Short Stories* (2003) edited by fictionist Noelle Q. de Jesus, which features 60 stories by 55 authors; *Sakit ng Kalingkingan: 100 Dagli sa Edad ng Krisis* (2006) written by Rolando Tolentino; *Wag Lang Di Makaraos 100 Dagli: Mga Kwentong Pasaway, Paaway at Pamatay* (2011) by Eros Atalia; *Ang Autobiografia ng Ibang Lady Gaga* (2015) by Jack Alvarez; and *Fast Food Fiction Delivery: Short Short Stories to Go* (2015) edited by Noelle Q. de Jesus and Mookie Katigbak-Lacuesta, which features 68 stories by 68 authors.

Flash fiction is not merely shorter than the short story; it has evolved as a different genre (or at least a different species) and has earned its niche in contemporary fiction, gradually receiving wider attention (especially in the Philippines) both in literature and in writing courses and from typical readers. In the preface of the anthology *Fast Food Fiction Delivery: Short Short Stories to Go*, de Jesus (2015) states that, "the 500-word short story is no longer the rare thing it once was... Reading may have changed a great deal... We all still love a good story. Regardless of the genre, in this quick deft form, there resides magic" (pp. ix-x).

Because of its ongoing 21st century digital-age popularization, flash fiction as a literary genre has not yet been extensively explored. Most related investigations about flash fiction were on literary genre studies (Ben-Porat, 2011; Guimarães, 2010; Lucht, 2014; Nelles, 2012; Taha, 2000) and very few on its use in writing pedagogy (Batchelor & King, 2014; Lucht, 2014).

1.1   Research Objective

This study endeavors to conduct a stylistic investigation of the "short" short story genre called *flash fiction*, which has been receiving considerable attention in the digital age. Although flash fiction is a short form of narrative that may be told in less than 700 or 1000 words, it has the essential story details and is assumed to have stylistic and structural features compatible with its brevity (Ben-Porat, 2011; Guimarães, 2010; Nelles, 2012; Taha, 2000). Also, flash fiction has found its place in various anthologies, magazines, websites, and even in academic courses. However, an informal survey the researcher conducted revealed that students and teachers alike appear to be unfamiliar with flash fiction as a literary genre; some are also 'baffled' by the language code of the said genre perhaps because of its unconventional techniques of narration. Herein lies the challenge that the flash fiction genre hurls, especially at the young reader—the writer's creativity likewise demands creativity from the reader. Thus, to add to the relatively increasing number of studies concerning flash fiction, it is interesting to examine such a genre

using the lens of stylistics. Specifically, the study intends to examine how the textual features in the flash fiction piece "Bettina" by Gémino H. Abad lend themselves well to the study of literature as discourse in terms of linguistic choices and interpretability: (a) lexical categories, (b) grammatical categories, (c) figures of speech, and (d) context and cohesion.

1.2   Theoretical Framework

Leech and Short's (2007) Schema. The present study likewise adopts Leech and Short's (2007) schema to examine the linguistic and stylistic categories of the flash fiction under consideration. The use of the checklist can provide a range of data that can be analyzed in relation to the literary effect of each passage (see Appendix B for the comprehensive checklist and notes on the categories). According to the proponents of the said model, the list "serves a heuristic purpose: it enables us to collect data on a fairly systematic basis" (p. 61). Likewise, inherent in the model is the tendency for categories to overlap, which means that the same feature can be found or noted under different headings.

Leech and Short (2007) also believe that every stylistic analysis entails selecting some features and ignoring others; thus, it is a highly selective exercise, which may focus on one feature or a number of features. The stylistic selection attempts to establish the relation between the significance of a text and the linguistic features through which the significance of the text is manifest. As a result of the process, a link is forged between linguistic discrimination and literary discrimination, which provides the critic specific features of style or 'style markers' that necessitate a more careful analysis or investigation. Leech and Short proposed the four categories of these style markers: *lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech,* and *context and cohesion*. Under these categories, the said proponents listed the following subparts:

A. Lexical Categories: (1) general, (2) nouns, (3) adjectives, (4) verbs, (5) adverbs
B. Grammatical Categories: (1) sentence types, (2) sentence complexity, (3) clause types, (4) clause structure, (5) noun phrases, (6) verb phrases, (7) other phrase types, (8) word classes, (9) general – any general types of grammatical construction used for special effect
C. Figures of Speech: (1) grammatical and lexical schemes, (2) phonological schemes, (3) tropes
D. Context and Cohesion: the former considers ways in which one part of a text is linked to another (i.e., internal organization of the text), while the latter considers 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" (Leech & Short, 2007, p. 64)

The schema, which presents a systematic manner of analyzing prose fiction along each of the categories in the list, takes into account the fact that the text is "not simply a composition of words and sentences, but couched in a language code that is itself a system of units and processes" (Fowler, 1977, p. 14, as cited in Cañares, 2002). In fact, in the context of literature as discourse, Leech and Short (2007) regard language as a multileveled code comprised of phonology (sound pattern), syntax (grammar and lexicon), and semantics (meaning); thus, stylistics focuses on the study of linguistic features of a text to arrive at its literary interpretation, and these linguistic features relate to the abovementioned levels of language. On the level of phonology, for instance, language translates meanings in the writer's mind into sounds (i.e., how sounds are signified in written texts), which in turn, are translated into meanings in the reader's mind. One can likewise consider specific words, i.e., lexical categories, and the constituent elements that form these words,

i.e., the morphemes, to determine if a text is composed of simple (e.g., *sun*) or complex words (e.g., *multitudinous*), negative prefixes (e.g., *unapologetic*), and the like, which can emphasize or co-create a specific theme in the text. Syntax mediates between the combination of these words into larger constructions and the meaning(s) that can be drawn from these constructions. For instance, a text can be composed of words from a particular semantic field such as nature objects or elements (e.g., *seashore, water, sky, stars, moon, moonlight*) or may include fragments or incomplete sentence constructions in describing an action, which could represent the fragmentary crux and flux in the mind of a character. Context and cohesion as textual features, on the other hand, go beyond the level of a text, traversing the domains of pragmatics and discourse analysis by framing references to the situation, culture, society, and the like embedded in the text. The different levels of the language code of literature as discourse are interrelated as they function simultaneously in a literary text.

2. Method

2.1   The Flash Fiction Piece – "Bettina" by Gémino H. Abad
This study analyzes along stylistic lines the flash fiction piece "Bettina" by Gémino H. Abad composed of 508 words (see Appendix A for the copy of the text), which is included in the anthology of flash fiction, *Fast Food Fiction Delivery: Short Short Stories to Go*, published in the Philippines in 2015 and a finalist in the 35th National Book Awards for the category Best Anthology in English. The said story centers on the boyhood experience of Noli and his first awakening to a girl named Bettina. The author of the flash fiction piece, a university professor emeritus of literature and creative writing at the University of the Philippines (UP), is a poet, fictionist, and literary critic and historian.

2.2   Research Design
To examine the distinct linguistic and literary features of the flash fiction under study, the present study largely depended on qualitative analysis. The critical evaluation of the "short" short story was done through documentary analysis. Documentary analysis consisted of sample passages from the text or in most instances, the entire text itself, that present salient linguistic features or 'style markers'[2] which were chosen on the basis of their "consistency" and "tendency" (Leech & Short, 2007, p. 34). Quantitative proofs, in the form of these linguistic features, can likewise help confirm the 'hunches' or insights the critic may have about a literary text.

2.3   Research Procedure
The study provides an integrative, bottom-up stylistic analysis of the flash fiction work under study. The researcher believes that "the modern linguist's scrutiny is not just a matter of looking *at* the text, but of looking *through* the text" to determine its significance (Leech & Short, 2007, p. 4). The stylistician has to peel off the linguistic features of the text layer by layer. In this case, therefore, the critic should rely on a comprehensive and systematic linguistic theory in describing the merits of the work under study. The schema devised by Leech and Short (2007) satisfies this requirement well. This schema provides a list of questions, which offers a comprehensive account of language structure at different levels, e.g., semantics, syntax, phonology, pragmatics. This list

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[2] On style markers, cf. Enkvist (1964, p. 34): "We may now define style markers as those linguistic items that only appear, or at most or least frequent, in one group of contexts."

of 'good bets' is likely to yield stylistically relevant information, leaving no stone unturned in analyzing prose fiction. Likewise, as guided by Leech and Short's schema, the researcher followed the terminology and general view of grammar presented in Greenbaum and Quirk's (1990) *A Student's Grammar of the English Language*. In the introduction to the said Greenbaum and Quirk's book, the idea of varieties of English is mentioned as a factor of the following: region, social group, field of discourse, medium, and attitude. The creative process in literature makes much of these factors, and they certainly come into play in terms of interpreting situations, intentions, and characters. Furthermore, in analyzing the figures of speech (e.g., simile, metaphor, paradox, irony), the present study referred to Leech's (1969) *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*.

The questions in the list provided in Leech and Short's schema were discriminately adapted to suit the needs of the present study; thus, questions, which were found irrelevant were dispensed with, and only the useful ones were applied. Further, the researcher went over and scoured the entirety of the text to examine the pattern of choices the author had made. Specific features that showed 'consistency' and 'tendency' served as empirical data in describing the writer's style. According to Leech and Short (2007), "'consistency' and 'tendency' are most naturally reduced to 'frequency', and so, it appears, the stylistician becomes a statistician" (p. 34). In other words, the researcher noted down the frequency of occurrence of each discernible or noticeable linguistic feature. The quantitative linguistic proofs served as concrete evidence to support the intuitions the critic has about the flash fiction piece.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1   Lexical Categories

General. Most vocabulary words used in the story are simple; in fact, a majority of them are single- and double-syllable ones. To illustrate this linguistic observation, the first two paragraphs of the story are herein presented.

> Toward <u>sundown</u>, Noli and his <u>brother</u> Ibs <u>scoured</u> the <u>seashore</u> for <u>prize</u> <u>finds</u> in the <u>sand</u> or among <u>rocks</u> <u>strangled</u> by <u>kelp</u>. In Dumanjug, their <u>house</u> was only a <u>short</u> <u>run</u> to the <u>beach</u>, and <u>soon</u> their <u>friends</u> <u>came</u> <u>running</u>, <u>shouting</u> their <u>names</u> from a coconut <u>grove</u>. <u>Ahead</u>, <u>waving</u> his <u>sando</u>, was <u>lanky</u> Vic, <u>followed</u> by <u>dark</u>, <u>brawny</u> Aning, and <u>trailing</u> <u>behind</u>, Inday, Vic's <u>sister</u>, who had <u>dimples</u> on both <u>cheeks</u>, and her <u>friend</u> Bettina, whose <u>laughter</u> Noli <u>thought</u> he could <u>sometimes</u> <u>hear</u> in his <u>sleep</u>, <u>ringing</u> <u>softly</u> like <u>wind</u> <u>chimes</u>.
>
> "Hoy, Noli, what's that?" Vic <u>asked</u>. The <u>girls</u> <u>crowded</u> <u>around</u> Noli and examined the <u>living</u> <u>conch</u> that he <u>cupped</u> in <u>both</u> <u>hands</u>. Vic <u>slyly</u> <u>shoved</u> him <u>closer</u> to Bettina. She <u>tried</u> to <u>touch</u> the <u>mollusk</u> but it <u>quickly</u> <u>slid</u> <u>inside</u> its <u>shell</u>, its <u>claws</u> <u>curling</u> a <u>tight</u> <u>shield</u> <u>over</u> its <u>chamber</u>. Noli <u>breathed</u> Bettina's <u>warm</u> <u>smell</u> like <u>salt</u> <u>long</u> in the <u>sun</u>, but <u>giggling</u>, she <u>scurried</u> <u>off</u> with Inday to the <u>little</u> <u>pools</u> <u>where</u> luminescent <u>fishes</u> might be <u>darting</u> about.

The use of short and simple words in the story may be suggestive of the intellectual limitations of the main character, Noli, and his consciousness brought about by such a boyhood experience, that is, his first awakening to a girl. Such a premature experience may imply that Noli still wanders between the realms of innocence and *experience*. Also, the story seems to resemble a Bildungsroman—one that deals with the formative years of the main character, particularly his

psychological development and youthful coming-of-age experiences. Noli's attempt to express or show his admiration for Bettina appears to be a turning point or illuminating moment in the story, for it may have proved his being innocent and sheltered as an adolescent and his inability to have an adult understanding of the world.

It seems interesting to note, too, that the story has a set of words that connote or suggest action, activity, and power. Such words may be in keeping with Noli's excitement upon being attracted to Bettina. Among the representatives of these words are the following:

> ... <u>scoured</u> the seashore for prize finds in the sand
> ... their friends came <u>running</u>, <u>shouting</u> their names
> ... <u>waving</u> his sando
> ... girls <u>crowded</u> around Noli
> ... <u>slyly</u> <u>shoved</u> him closer to Bettina
> ... <u>quickly</u> <u>slid</u> inside its shell
> ... Noli <u>breathed</u> Bettina's warm smell
> ... <u>giggling</u>, she <u>scurried off</u> with Inday to the little pools
> ... luminescent fishes might be <u>darting</u> <u>out</u>
> ... raft <u>sashayed</u> toward the <u>reddening</u> sun
> ... the girls <u>gleefully</u> <u>shrieked</u>
> ... <u>raced</u> each other toward the <u>phantom</u> raft

Noteworthy, too, are the words that evoke sensations, which can be visual, auditory, tactile, or olfactory. The words that appeal to the sense of sight are: *<u>dark</u>, <u>brawny</u> Aning*; *<u>dimples</u> on both cheeks*; *its claws <u>curling</u> a <u>tight shield</u> over its chamber*; *<u>luminescent</u> fishes*; *the <u>reddening</u> sun*; *the sun <u>slipped behind</u> a <u>purple bank</u> of cumulus*; *the sky swung upward with its <u>bright</u>, <u>multitudinous</u> stars*, *in the <u>dim</u> moonlight*; *a <u>strangely beautiful</u> world*; *a <u>gibbous</u> moon sailed sedately <u>haloed</u> with <u>pale gold</u>*; *the Milky Way spread like a <u>vast swirl</u> of incense over the <u>dark</u> face of the universe*; *and <u>shy mollusk dragging</u> its shell across his <u>open</u> palms*. Keeping the sense of hearing occupied are: *<u>shouting</u> their names from a coconut grove*, *<u>ringing</u> <u>softly</u> like <u>wind chimes</u>*, *the girls gleefully <u>shrieked</u>*, *<u>whooping</u>*, *feet first to make a great <u>splash</u>*, *lay <u>panting</u> on his back*, *their names <u>sounded remote</u>*. The words appealing to the sense of touch or feeling include: *the living conch that he <u>cupped</u> in both hands*, *tried to <u>touch</u> the mollusk*, *salt <u>stung</u> beneath his eyelids like black ants*, *how dark and <u>cold</u>*, *but his body felt <u>light</u>*, *a <u>sweet surge of feeling</u> passed through his heart*, *the raft's <u>watery</u> trap*, *his friends stood <u>shivering</u>*, *<u>sedately</u> haloed with pale gold*, and *a <u>warm, protective hollow</u> in the sand*. Only one imagery in the story evokes the sense of smell: *Noli <u>breathed</u> Bettina's <u>warm smell like salt</u> long in the sun*.

The use of such words or expressions may be assumed as the author's attempt to paint a mental picture or reference point in the mind of the reader. Although it is evident in the story that the immediate forms of imagery are dominantly visual, the use of other sensory details (e.g., touch, sound, smell) can invoke sensational, emotional, or even physical response. Through these words that evoke sensation, the reader seems to undergo the same experience of Noli, the main character, sharing the perceptual and the common or universal youthful coming-of-age experience. In Bildungsroman, the reader is involved in the same process of development or maturation as the main character; it also aims to influence the reader's personal growth.

Nouns. A majority of the nouns used in the story are concrete ones (46 or 55.42%; see Table 1). Examples of these words are *sand, rock, kelp, house, coconut, grove, chimes, conch, mollusk, shell, chamber, wind, fishes, raft, splash, ants, trap, bamboo*. The use of these common concrete nouns leaves an impression of accessibility to the Bildungsroman aspect of the story. The simplicity in vocabulary suggests that the consciousness from which these words came belongs to a young boy's; thus, such vocabulary words refer to objects familiar to such a limited mind.

Table 1

Nouns Found in "Bettina"

Abstract	Body parts	Concrete		Persons	Proper
sundown	dimples	seashore	bank	friends*	Noli*
names*	cheeks	finds	cumulus	sister	Ibs
laughter	hands*	sand*	water	girls*	Inday*
sleep	feet	rock	splash		Vic*
secret	head*	kelp	breath		Bettina*
gods	eyelids	house	underwater		Aning
night	body*	beach*	eclipse		
prowess	palm	coconut	ants		
surge	hand	grove	trap		
feeling	heart	chimes	bamboo		
air*	back	couch	edge		
name	crotches	mollusk*	sky		
triumph	palms	shell*	moonlight		
escape		claws	world		
world		shield	moon		
		chamber	gold		
		salt*	milky way		
		sun*	swirl		
		wind	incense		
		smell	pocket		
		pools	clothes		
		fishes	hollow		
		raft			

* noun appeared in the text more than once

Interestingly, one group of concrete nouns includes names of nature objects or elements: <u>*seashore*</u>*, sand, rock, kelp, beach, coconut, grove, conch, mollusk, shell, salt, sun, wind, pools, fishes, cumulus,* <u>*water*</u>*,* <u>*underwater*</u>*,* <u>*eclipse*</u>*, ants, bamboo,* <u>*sky*</u>*, stars,* <u>*moonlight*</u>*,* <u>*moon*</u>*,* <u>*Milky Way*</u>*,* <u>*universe*</u>*, hollow.* These nouns may likewise suggest the divide of vision between general topographical features and geographical areas. Moreover, the underlined words in this set of concrete nouns may imply the supposed conflict between the world and Noli (i.e., the universal versus the particular); he thought he could show off Bettina his prowess, hence, trying to hold his breath the longest and shouting her name as he plunged (i.e., "taking the plunge" into his feelings, so to speak). But he failed to do so, for he bumped his head against the bamboo. He probably realized that he is so small compared to the world, that he is still just a boy. The story tends to show the conflict between Noli and fate or nature or self in the process of maturation.

Adjectives. Perhaps, to keep up with the theme of the story, which is about Noli's boyhood experience, most adjectives used in the passage are either single- or double-syllable, e.g., *prize finds, short run, lanky Vic, dark, brawny Aning, tight shield, warm smell, phantom raft, a purple bank of cumulus*, a *great* splash, *total* eclipse, *black* ants. Likewise, several of these adjectives pertain to physical descriptions such as visual characteristics (e.g., color), auditory, olfactory, and tactile; this set of words that evoke sensations has been discussed in 1.1 General.

Adjectives that refer to color may likewise evoke emotional response and create an atmosphere in the story. The sentence "The raft sashayed toward the *reddening* sun" used red as an association for Noli's passion, determination, and love. In Gothic literature, red is assumed to be a dominant color that can have an exciting and stimulating effect. On the other hand, the use of dark hues in the sentences "He saw nothing in the total eclipse*; salt stung beneath his eyelids like black ants. How dark and cold, but his body felt light, and he saw Bettina giggling over the cowardly mollusk on his palm" seems to convey negative connotations about Noli's fear and uncertainty to express his feelings for Bettina. Such is made evident when he attempted to "come up for air and shout out her name again in the triumph of escape from the raft's watery trap. But his head bumped against bamboo, he kicked away in panic, but the raft seems to follow." In archetypal criticism, colors also serve as "archetypes" that induce a profound response from readers, thus, facilitating the decoding of the language of literary texts where they are used as symbols (Harmon & Holman, 2003).

Verbs. Out of the 66 verbs found in the story, 37 are dynamic verbs; ten (10) are stative; ten (10) pertain to psychological states or activities; and nine (9) refer to sense perceptions (see Table 2). The quite frequent use of the dynamic verbs suggests action and activity, which is an attempt to relive Noli's boyhood experience and consciousness upon being attracted to Bettina, who is assumed to be his first love interest. Examples of these verbs are *scoured, trailing, shoved, slid, curling, scurried off, darting out, swim, raced, clambered, leaped, danced, slipped, bumped, kicked, grabbed, swung upward,* and *dragging*. It can also be assumed that the use of more dynamic verbs recreates the so-called carefree days of play and youthful innocence of the characters, particularly those of Noli's. The first and second paragraphs of the story ushers in a lively atmosphere through the use of dynamic verbs:

> Toward sundown, Noli and his brother Ibs *scoured* the seashore for prize finds in the sand or among rocks strangled by kelp. In Dumanjug, their house was only a short run to the beach, and soon their friends came *running*, *shouting* their names from a coconut grove. Ahead, *waving* his sando, was lanky Vic, *followed* by dark, brawny Aning, and *trailing* behind, Inday, Vic's sister, who had dimples on both cheeks, and her friend Bettina, whose laughter Noli thought he could sometimes hear in his sleep, ringing softly like wind chimes.
>
> "Hoy, Noli, what's that?" Vic *asked*. The girls *crowded* around Noli and *examined* the living conch that he *cupped* in both hands. Vic slyly *shoved* him closer to Bettina. She tried to touch the mollusk but it quickly *slid* inside its shell, its claws *curling* a tight shield over its chamber. Noli breathed Bettina's warm smell like salt long in the sun, but *giggling*, she *scurried off* with Inday to the little pools where luminescent fishes might be *darting* about.

Table 2

Verbs Found in "Bettina"

Dynamic		Stative	Psychological State/Activity	Sense Perception
scoured	kicked	strangled	thought*	hear
followed	follow	cupped	cried	ringing
trailing	draw air	holding	knew	touch*
asked	kicking*	letting the raft float	defy	breathed
crowded	gasping	lay	thwart	look
examined	grabbed	stood	prove	saw*
shoved	panting	awoke	suspect	stung
slid	swung upward	haloed	wanted	felt
curling	hollering	spread	surge of feeling *passed* through his heart	sounded
giggling*	sailed	found	laughing	
scurried off	dragging			
darting out	slithered out			
swim	waving			
shrieked				
raced				
clambered				
leaped*				
danced				
slipped				
whooping				
swam				
come up				
shout out				
bumped				

* verb appeared in the text more than once

Although the story seems to present only a single human experience, one would notice the dynamic personality of Noli, the protagonist, as he realized his psychological immaturity in dealing with his admiration for Bettina. Adding to the mood of the story are verbs that evoke sense perceptions and refer to psychological states or activities:

> ... Bettina, whose laughter Noli thought he could sometimes *hear* in his sleep, *ringing* softly like wind chimes.
> … She tried to *touch* the mollusk
> … Noli *breathed* Bettina's warm smell like salt long in the sun
> … salt *stung* beneath his eyelids like black ants
> … How dark and cold, but his body *felt* light
> … Their names *sounded* remote

… Only Vic *knew* his secret, but now he would *defy* the gods of the night who would *thwart* him.
… He swam under the raft to *prove* his prowess
… Did she *suspect* he had *wanted* to touch her?
… A sweet surge of feeling *passed through* his heart
… hands on crotches, *laughing*, hollering

Edel (1955, p. 186, as cited in Cañares, 2002) accentuates the power of words to communicate a writer's experience:

> The "word" must paint a picture, or convey the sound of a freight train rushing through the mind of Molly Bloom; it must remind the reader of a smell or a lost sensation. And it must be so employed by the writer that it conveys to the reader at least some of the feelings he has experienced at the moment he has used it. The word is asked to carry, on shoulders not broad enough, the whole of a writer's experience.

Interestingly, the first and the last sentences in the last paragraph of the story seem to present antithetical verbs (combined with adverbs to emphasize movement or activity) placed alongside one another to emphasize their opposite meanings: "He *lay panting* on his *back* as the sky *swung upward* with its bright multitudinous stars"; "Surely, it has *slithered out* of his pocket among their clothes on the beach and *found* a warm, protective hollow in the sand". The former sentence would imply Noli's realization of him being remote and small compared to the world (i.e., world of experience) and that he is still fording the stream of his youthful innocence. The coming out of the mollusk from his pocket in the last sentence of the story would imply Noli's attempt to express his feelings for Bettina, which eventually remained unsaid or unexpressed as suggested by the mollusk's finding "a warm, protective hollow in the sand."

Adverbs. Most of the adverbs in the story are that of place, and especially direction (9): *ahead, there, toward, behind, under, beneath, upward, across,* and *over* (see Table 3). They tend to combine with verbs to underscore movement and activity (e.g., *sashayed toward*, <u>raced</u> *each other* <u>toward</u>*, slipped behind, swam under, swung upward,* <u>spread</u> *like a vast swirl of incense* <u>over</u> *the dark face of the universe,* <u>dragging</u> *its shell* <u>across</u>). These words denoting location and movement likewise are in keeping with the seven identified adverbs of manner found in the story, i.e., *softly, slyly, quickly, gleefully, cowardly, strangely,* and *sedately*, and the adverbial modifier *came running, shouting*. The said adverbs though imply opposition between mobility and passivity; the use of only one disjunct (i.e., *surely*) in the story would support this point: "Surely it has slithered out of his pocket among their clothes on the beach and found a warm, protective hollow in the sand." This can be attributed to the psychological maturation process that Noli journeys, a sort of internal struggle; half of him tries to 'take the plunge' into his feelings toward Bettina, attempting to traverse the world of *experience*; while the other half wanders in the realm of *innocence*.

Table 3

Adverbs Found in "Bettina"

Place	Manner	Adverbial Modifier	Disjunct
ahead	softly	came running, shouting	surely
there	slyly		
toward	quickly		
behind	gleefully		
under	cowardly		
beneath	strangely		
upward	sedately		
across			
over			

3.2   Grammatical Categories

Sentence Types. A majority of the sentences in the flash fiction piece are declarative; a few are exclamatory. But fewer are interrogative sentences and incomplete sentences, which are mere phrases.

The following exclamatory sentences in the story would suggest the varied forms of excitement and actions felt and experienced by the characters:

    a.   "Look over there! A raft!" cried Aning.
    b.   "Let's go swim to it!
    c.   Whooping, "Beeettiiinaaa!" Noli leaped into the water, feet first to make a great splash.
    d.   Out! gasping, he grabbed the raft's edge.
    e.   His friends stood shivering in the dim moonlight, hands on crotches, laughing, hollering, "Bettina, Inday!"

The two interrogative sentences presented below bear significance to the story.

Did she suspect he had wanted to touch her? What is a girl's body to a boy's hand the first time?

The above questions in the story are uttered by the consciousness of the character Noli. The word *suspect* makes the readers feel an immediate representation of Noli's thoughts, putting them directly "inside" the said character's consciousness. Through this, the smooth blend of inner voices and thoughts of both the narrator and the character becomes possible. The said questions likewise suggest Noli's wondering and curiosity about Bettina's first awakening and experience of being touched by a boy the first time. Such a form of inquiry implies Noli's excitement and childlike spirit of innocence.

The last part of the fourth paragraph of the story presented below shows two grammatical constructions in the story, which include word/s that are not complete sentences in themselves. They are not of high frequency in the story, but their inclusion in the story appears to be relevant, for they reveal a key plot significance, which may represent the fragmentary crux and flux in the mind of Noli, the main character. The use of these fragmentary sentences would complement Noli's losing his nerves upon bumping his head against the bamboo.

… But his head bumped against bamboo, he kicked away in panic, but the raft seemed to follow. <u>Must soon draw air! kicking away, kicking . . .</u> Out! gasping, he grabbed the raft's edge.

Sentence Complexity. Complexity varies from one sentence to another in the story. The following are simple sentences because they contain only one independent or principal clause (which is italicized) and no subordinate or dependent clause:

    a. Toward sundown, *Noli and his brother scoured* the seashore for prize finds in the sand or among rocks strangled by kelp.
    b. *Vic slyly shoved* him closer to Bettina.
    c. *The raft sashayed* toward the reddening sun.
    d. *He saw nothing* in the total eclipse; *salt stung* beneath his eyelids like black ants.
    e. *A gibbous moon sailed* sedately haloed with pale gold; *the Milky Way spread* like a vast swirl of incense over the dark face of the universe.

The compound sentences below, on the other hand, contain at least two independent or principal clauses and no subordinate one. These sentences formed out of coordination give clauses equal syntactic status and salience, which may convey in one stretch a package of suggestive details.

    a. She tried to touch the mollusk but it quickly slid inside its shell, its claws curling a tight shield over its chamber.
    b. Noli breathed Bettina's warm smell like salt long in the sun, but giggling, she scurried off with Inday to the little pools where luminescent fishes might be darting about.
    c. They stripped and, as the girls gleefully shrieked, raced each other toward the phantom raft.
    d. Only Vic knew his secret, but now he would defy the gods of the night who would thwart him.
    e. How dark and cold, but his body felt light, and he saw Bettina giggling over the cowardly mollusk on his palm.

Use of the Active Construction. In keeping with the set of words that connote action and activity identified in 1.1 General, the active constructions abound the story to suggest the importance of the doer or agent of actions. The following examples would prove this point:

    a. Toward sundown, Noli and his brother Ibs scoured the seashore for prize finds in the sand or among rocks strangled by kelp.
    b. The girls crowded around Noli and examined the living conch that he cupped in both hands.
    c. She tried to touch the mollusk ...
    d. The raft sashayed toward the reddening sun.
    e. Only Vic knew his secret …
    f. He swam under the raft to prove his prowess for holding his breath the longest underwater by letting the raft float where it will over his head.
    g. He lay panting on his back as the sky swung upward with its bright, multitudinous stars.
    h. Their names sounded remote as though he just awoke to a strangely beautiful world.
    i. He thought of the shy mollusk dragging its shell across his open palms.

Use of a Series of Same Grammatical (Word) Constructions. The use of words that connote action shows similar grammatical constructions. The sentences below manifest this structure: the first and third sentences show the use of participles, while the second one presents the use of the simple past.

    a. … and soon their friends came <u>running</u>, <u>shouting</u> their names from a coconut grove.
    b. They <u>clambered</u> aboard, <u>leaped</u>, and <u>danced</u> as the sun <u>slipped</u> behind a purple bank of cumulus.
    c. His friends stood <u>shivering</u> in the dim moonlight, hands on crotches, <u>laughing</u>, <u>hollering</u> …

Punctuations. The use of the semicolon, which separates one independent clause from the other that follows it, seems to convey a special function in these two sentences from the story:

    a. He saw nothing in the total eclipse; salt stung beneath his eyelids like black ants.
    b. A gibbous moon sailed sedately haloed with pale gold; the Milky Way spread like a vast swirl of incense over the dark face of the universe.

The semicolon in both sentences suggests a progression and/or parallelism of descriptive details (i.e., total <u>eclipse</u> and <u>black</u> ants; and <u>gibbous</u> moon and <u>vast</u> swirl of incense) that may be attributed to the mood of the story.

The use of triple dots or the ellipsis in the fragmented sentence "kicking away, kicking . . ." may signify a pause, a hesitation, or Noli's moment of realization upon having bumped his head against the bamboo. Such an epiphany made him think that he still could not "come up for air" and have the courage to be honest with his feelings for Bettina.

3.3   Figures of Speech

Repetition of certain words is evident in the story. As a figurative language, it aims to convey a logical emphasis that attempts to fix the attention of the reader on the key word(s) of an utterance. The proper noun "Bettina" and the word "mollusk" were repeatedly used in the story. The former, which is likewise the title of the flash fiction piece, suggests the impression left by Noli's first-awakening-to-a-girl experience. Such a repetition was even made significant when Noli tried his best, though struggling, to "come up for air" and shout out "Bettina" as he "escaped from the raft's watery trap" as if he was determined to "take the plunge," so to speak, into his feelings.

Three similes, which offered more emphatic and vivid descriptions, were used in the story:

… whose laughter Noli thought he could sometimes hear in his sleep, <u>ringing softly like wind chimes</u>.
… Noli breathed Bettina's <u>warm smell like salt long in the sun</u> …
… <u>salt stung</u> beneath his eyelids <u>like black ants</u> …

It is interesting to note that the use of salt as a simile in the story captures two related experiences of the protagonist, both pleasant and unpleasant. Its symbolic significance of purity, which comes from its color, can be likened to Noli's innocence in terms love. As tiny crystals, salt is too intricate to decipher, for it disappears and reappears. In the story, it caused pain to Noli's

eyes, stinging like *black* ants, which contrasts with the salt's whiteness. This contrast may suggest an epiphany about the joys and pains of love.

Further, the word "mollusk" (also referred to in the story as "conch") can be a metaphor that pertains to Noli. Similar to the mollusk described in one part of the story as "cowardly," Noli still seems to hide his true feelings for Bettina like the mollusk that "quickly slid inside its shell, its claws curling a tight shield over its chamber." The last part of the story shows the mollusk surfacing again but still finding a hiding place— it "found a warm, protective hollow in the sand." Just like the mollusk, Noli tried to show his true feelings, but it ended up still concealed; this is Noli's internal struggle, a sort of his experience of facing the complexity of the adult world and of journeying the distant mature self-awareness. In the end, the "mollusk" will surface once more, and Noli will have his time.

3.4   Context and Cohesion

Perhaps, the most salient feature of cohesion in the story is lexical repetition. The reinforcing effect of repetition is seen in these words: *mollusk*, *shell*, *raft*, *sand, sun*, and *salt*.

The mentioning of *the living conch* rather than *a living conch* is a significant feature in the passage. Since the function of the definite article *the* is to identify something concrete and contextually unique, it seems to denote emphasis or prominence on an important detail in the story on a contextual, rather than textual, level; *the living conch* is later mentioned, as a substitute form, as *the mollusk* in the text.

The image of night tends to be a recurring motif in the story: *toward sundown; bright, multitudinous stars; dim moonlight, gibbous moon, a vast swirl of incense over the dark face of the universe*. The image of night, which connotes the end of the day where things are usually hidden by shadows, and of small sources of light, as indicated by the above underlined words, would suggest the internal conflict, i.e., innocence versus experience in the maturation process, of Noli. Also, the juxtapositioning of such contrasting ideas or motifs, i.e., light versus darkness, becomes an effective way of showing such a conflict, which can be likened to the mollusk that "slithered out of his pocket" but still found itself hiding in the sand. On the other hand, these images of light and darkness may connote the optimism of Noli (i.e., the coming out of the mollusk again [Noli will have his time], so to speak) because such juxtapositioning likewise suggests positive imageries of darkness that can be found in light, sunset that is followed by sunrise, and night shadowed by day.

4. Conclusion

It is essentially *in* and *through* language that linguistics and literature find themselves at an intersecting point; thus, stylistics emerged as a subfield in applied linguistics that forged the link between the disciplines of linguistics and literary criticism (Jakobson, 1960; Widdowson, 1975). Further, in terms of literary interpretation, stylistics serves as the middle ground that links language forms and a text's function(s) (Leech, 2008; Simpson, 2004; Wales, 2001).

Moreover, linguists such as Carter and Simpson (2005), Jeffries and McIntyre (2010), Leech and Short (2007), and Widdowson (1975) posit that stylistics serves well as a method of inquiry or process of analyzing or interpreting literary texts, and in support of this assumption, Traugott and Pratt (1970) emphasizes that one's experience of literature is partly derived from its verbal structure. In fact, applying stylistics in the process of reading allows the readers to prove their intuitions by relying on a linguistic analysis in a systematic manner; thus, as readers, they

also become active producers or creators of meanings (Ruddel et al., 1994; Short et al., 1998, as cited in Jeffries and McIntyre, 2010; Traugott & Pratt, 1970).

The analyses in this article provide new insights as regards the application of stylistics in analyzing flash fiction, which has received relatively little attention in literary studies. The stylistic investigation undertaken to analyze the flash fiction piece "Bettina" by Gémino H. Abad using Leech and Short's (2007) schema proves that specific textual features could lend themselves well in interpreting the said literary text. Among the lexical categories are short and simple vocabulary words (i.e., single- or double-syllable ones), words that connote action and activity, lexical choices that evoke sensations, simple and concrete nouns, adjectives of color, and dynamic verbs and other verbs that evoke sense perceptions and pertain to psychological states. On the other hand, these grammatical categories contribute to text interpretation: declarative sentences and the special use of the only two interrogative sentences in the story, sentence complexity, active construction, parallel grammatical construction, and punctuations (i.e., semicolon and ellipsis). Repetition and simile are found to be effective figures of speech in comprehending the flash fiction piece. As for context and cohesion, lexical repetition, recurring motif, and juxtapositioning help elucidate the effects and meanings the writer intends to evoke in the story.

4.1   Implications of the Present Study for Literature and Language Teaching

Literature teaching is confronted by several seemingly insurmountable problems nowadays. Literature is challenged by many rivals with which it competes for the attention and interest of the younger generation called the 'digital natives' or 'millenials.' The television, movies, and the Internet lure them away from reading. Introducing flash fiction, which has been receiving considerable attention in the digital age, is one possible way to regain the interest of the young to journey and explore the interesting world of literature.

The description of a Filipino flash fiction's language code, which is the primary focus of the present study, can aid teachers in teaching literature, particularly fiction. It has been assumed that poor reading performance of students results from their lack of familiarity with particular story structures and with the language of fiction. Through stylistics, the teacher is expected to guide learners toward the fictive world. He or she should be concerned not only with the *teaching* of literature but with its *learning* as well. To learn is to show proficiency in something that the learner participates in, and one way by which the students can participate is through *creative reading*, that is, developing the independent ability to read literature for themselves by paying more attention to language and realizing its power.

Pedagogically, the present study lends itself well to the teaching of flash fiction and any other fictive genres. To facilitate a comfortable and enjoyable teaching of fiction, teachers can utilize stylistics to make provisions for developing in the students the necessary literary and linguistic competence to be sensitive to forms, conventions, symbolizations, and the like, which they are expected to be familiar with before they can respond accordingly to a story, particularly flash fiction. Through familiarity with the schematic structure and stylistic features of fiction, students as potential *readers* and *writers* become more linguistically and aesthetically sensitive to words, sentences, and other literary discourse patterns and elements attributed to the craft of fiction. In addition, the unique patterns of the language of flash fiction can be compared with the conventional patterns of everyday language. For instance, heavily embedded sentences can be 'cut up' for easier reading, while those that are 'queerly' or uniquely punctuated can be rewritten utilizing 'normal' or 'standard' punctuations. Other linguistic deviations from what is 'correct' or 'proper' can be pointed out and 'improved.' This situation can pave the way for the teacher to

stress the importance of propriety in grammar; however, it should be noted that this tendency for observing the norm should lead neither to the stifling of the students' creativity nor their imagination.

The study likewise contributes to the fields of literary and language studies by offering possible ways on how to examine the "baffling" language code of flash fiction brought about by its brevity as a unique quality and its unconventional techniques of narration. Unlocking such a baffling language code can be done through analyzing the schematic structure of flash fiction and looking into stylistic features that lend themselves well in describing flash fiction's linguistic choices and interpretability.

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Appendix A
The Flash Fiction Piece

Bettina
Gémino H. Abad

Toward sundown, Noli and his brother Ibs scoured the seashore for prize finds in the sand or among rocks strangled by kelp. In Dumanjug, their house was only a short run to the beach, and soon their friends came running, shouting their names from a coconut grove. Ahead, waving his sando, was lanky Vic, followed by dark, brawny Aning, and trailing behind, Inday, Vic's sister, who had dimples on both cheeks, and her friend Bettina, whose laughter Noli thought he could sometimes hear in his sleep, ringing softly like wind chimes.

"Hoy, Noli, what's that?" Vic asked. The girls crowded around Noli and examined the living conch that he cupped in both hands. Vic slyly shoved him closer to Bettina. She tried to touch the mollusk but it quickly slid inside its shell, its claws curling a tight shield over its chamber. Noli breathed Bettina's warm smell like salt long in the sun, but giggling, she scurried off with Inday to the little pools where luminescent fishes might be darting about.

"Look over there! A raft!" cried Aning. "Let's go swim to it!"

The raft sashayed toward the reddening sun. They stripped and, as the girls gleefully shrieked, raced each other toward the phantom raft. They clambered aboard, leaped, and danced as the sun slipped behind a purple bank of cumulus. Whooping, "Beeettiiinaaa!" Noli leaped into the water, feet first to make a great splash. Only Vic knew his secret, but now he would defy the gods of the night who would thwart him.

He swam under the raft to prove his prowess for holding his breath longest underwater by letting the raft float where it will over his head. He saw nothing in the total eclipse; salt stung beneath his eyelids like black ants. How dark and cold, but his body felt light, and he saw Bettina giggling over the cowardly mollusk on his palm. Did she suspect he had wanted to touch her? What is a girl's body to a boy's hand the first time? A sweet surge of feeling passed through his heart, he must come up for air and shout out her name again in the triumph of escape from the raft's watery trap. But his head bumped against bamboo, he kicked away in panic, but the raft seemed to follow. Must soon draw air! kicking away, kicking . . . Out! gasping, he grabbed the raft's edge.

He lay panting on his back as the sky swung upward with its bright, multitudinous stars. His friends stood shivering in the dim moonlight, hands on crotches, laughing, hollering, "Bettina! Inday!" Their names sounded remote as though he just awoke to a strangely beautiful world. A gibbous moon sailed sedately haloed with pale gold; the Milky Way spread like a vast swirl of incense over the dark face of the universe. He thought of the shy mollusk dragging its shell across his open palms. Surely it has slithered out of his pocket among their clothes on the beach and found a warm, protective hollow in the sand.

(508 WORDS)

Appendix B

Checklist of Linguistic and Stylistic Categories Proposed by Leech and Short (2007) and Notes on the Categories

The following is the checklist (with essential questions) of linguistic and stylistic categories proposed by Leech and Short (2007, pp. 61-66):

A: Lexical categories

1. GENERAL. Is the vocabulary simple or complex[i]? Formal or colloquial? Descriptive or evaluative? General or specific? How far does the writer make use of the emotive and other associations of words, as opposed to their referential meaning? Does the text contain idiomatic phrases or notable collocations[ii], and if so, with what kind of dialect or register[iii] are these idioms or collocations 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?
2. NOUNS. 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?
3. ADJECTIVES. Are the adjectives frequent? To what kinds of attribute do adjectives refer? Physical? Psychological? Visual? Auditory? Colour? Referential? Emotive? Evaluative? etc. Are adjectives restrictive or non-restrictive? Gradable or non-gradable? Attributive or predicative?
4. VERBS. 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[iv]?
5. ADVERBS. Are adverbs frequent? What semantic functions do they perform (manner, place, direction, time, degree, etc.)? Is there any significant use of sentence adverbs (conjuncts such as *so*, *therefore*, *however*; disjuncts such as *certainly*, *obviously*, *frankly*)[v]?

B: Grammatical Categories

1. SENTENCE TYPES. Does the author use only statements (declarative sentences), or do questions, commands, exclamations or minor sentence types (such as sentences with no verb) also occur in the text? If these other types appear, what is their function?
2. SENTENCE COMPLEXITY. Do sentences 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, or (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)[(vi)]?

3. CLAUSE TYPES. What types of dependent clause are favoured: relative clauses, adverbial clauses, 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)[(vii)]?

4. CLAUSE STRUCTURE. Is there anything significant about clause elements (e.g. frequency of objects, complements, adverbials; of transitive or intransitive verb constructions)[(viii)]? 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*)?

5. 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. sequences of adjectives), coordination or apposition.

6. 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.). Look out for phrasal verbs and how they are used.

7. OTHER PHRASE TYPES. Is there anything to be said about other phrase types: prepositional phrases, adverb phrases, adjective phrases?

8. WORD CLASSES. Having already considered major or lexical word classes, we may here consider minor word classes ('function 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.; demonstratives such as *this* and *that*; negative words such as *not, nothing, no*)[(ix)]?

9. 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? Do the coordinations, unlike the standard construction with one conjunction (*sun, moon and stars*), tend to omit conjunctions (*sun, moon, stars*) or have more than one conjunction (*sun and moon and stars*)?

C: Figures of speech, etc.

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.

1. GRAMMATICAL AND LEXICAL. 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.[(x)]?

2. 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[(xi)]?

3. TROPES. Are there any obvious violations of, or departures from, the linguistic code? For example, are there any neologisms (such as *Americanly*)? Deviant lexical collocations (such as *portentous infants*)? Semantic, syntactic, phonological, or graphological deviations? Such deviations (although they can occur in everyday speech and writing) will often be the clue to special interpretations associated with traditional poetic figures of speech such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, paradox and irony[(xii)]. If such tropes occur, what kind of special interpretation is involved (e.g. metaphors can be classified as personifying, animising, concretising, 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?

D: Context and Cohesion

Under cohesion, 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 the text. Under context, we consider 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.

1. COHESION[(xiii)]. Does the text contain logical or other links between sentences (e.g. coordinating 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 forms (*do, so*, etc.), or ellipsis? Alternatively, is [sic] 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 [sic] 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?

2. 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 his or her subject? If a character's words or thoughts are represented, is this done by direct quotation (direct speech), or by some other method (e.g. indirect speech, free indirect

speech)[(xiv)]? Are there significant changes of style according to who is supposedly speaking or thinking the words on the page?

Notes on the Categories

(i) In a formal sense, word complexity should be measured by counting morphemes. For example, *un-friend-li-ness* contains four morphemes, and *war* only one. But determining the number of morphemes in a word can be a problem, especially with words of foreign or classical origin, such as *signification.* For this reason, counting the number of syllables per word is a more convenient measure of complexity. Morphemic complexity and syllabic complexity are in gross terms reasonably equivalent; but they are not necessarily equivalent for individual words; for example, *six-th-s* contains three morphemes, but only one syllable; *establish*, on the other hand, contains only one morpheme, but three syllables.

(ii) An idiom may be roughly defined as a sequence of two or more words, the meaning of which is not predictable from the meanings of the constituent words; e.g. *get by*, *as it were*, *under the weather*. A collocation is a combination of words, which may be habitual (e.g. *blue sea*) or contrary to expectation (e.g. *mad sea*).

(iii) Register is the term commonly used for language variation of a non- dialectal type; e.g. differences between polite and familiar language; spoken and written language; scientific, religious, legal language, etc.

(iv) On the classification of verbs in terms of their relation to other elements in the clause, see Greenbaum and Quirk (1990), sections 10.1-10.18 and 16.11-16.37. This aspect of lexical choice is closely bound up with semantic relations between noun phrases in the clause. Their role in style is discussed in section 6.1. Factive verbs presuppose the truth of what is being asserted (e.g. 'Mary *liked* the show'). Counterfactives presuppose the negation of what is asserted (e.g. 'Mary *pretended* to like the show') and nonfactives leave the question of truth open (e.g. 'I *believe* that Mary liked the show').

(v) The traditional classification of adverbs and adverbials into adverbs of time, place, manner, frequency, etc. is serviceable enough; a more thorough and systematic classification of adverbs is given in Greenbaum and Quirk (1990) Chapters 7 and 8, where a major distinction is made between adjuncts, disjuncts and conjuncts.

(vi) The delaying of the main 'information point' of a sentence by anticipatory and parenthetic structure is discussed further in section 7.5 of *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose* (Leech & Short, 2007). This is the defining feature of the traditional rhetorical category of 'periodic' sentence, often contrasted with the 'loose' sentence.

(vii) We follow a common practice in treating as clauses what are traditionally called participial, gerund and infinitive constructions; for example '*Eating people* is wrong', 'a woman *destined for greatness*', 'I'm sorry *to hear it*'. These are all regarded as non-finite clauses (see Greenbaum and Quirk (1990) especially sections 14.3-14.5).

(viii) See note (iv) above, and Greenbaum and Quirk (1990) sections 10.1-10.18, on clause elements.

(ix) Of course, the same word form may occur in more than one word class. For example, *that* is a determiner (specifically, a demonstrative determiner) in '*That* day nothing happened', a pronoun in 'I know *that*', and a conjunction in 'I know *that* he's wrong'. In English, the overlap between the pronoun and determiner classes, for instance, is very striking. (See Greenbaum and Quirk (1990), sections 5.3-5.10 and Chapter 6.)

(x)   A linguistic reinterpretation of the traditional distinction between schemes and tropes is given in Leech (1969), section 5.1. Schemes are defined as 'foregrounded repetitions of expression', and tropes as 'foregrounded irregularities of content'. Various kinds of scheme, corresponding to traditional figures of speech such as 'anaphora' and 'antithesis' are discussed in Leech (1969), Chapters 4 and 5.

(xi)   The auditory aspect of prose writing should not be neglected, and forms part of the larger topic of iconicity or mimesis in language (see section 7.7 of *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose* (Leech & Short, 2007)). For an introductory classification and discussion of auditory effects in poetry, see Leech (1969), Chapter 6.

(xii)   Once again, reference may conveniently be made to the treatment of these figures of speech (paradox, metaphor, irony, etc.) in Leech (1969), Chapters 8-10.

(xiii) Some aspects of cohesion are discussed and illustrated in section 7.8 of *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose* (Leech & Short, 2007). Sentence connection is treated in Greenbaum and Quirk (1990), Chapter 19. For a more extended analysis of cohesion in English, see Halliday and Hasan (1976).

(xiv)   The topic of speech and thought presentation is developed in Chapter 10 of *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose* (Leech & Short, 2007).