CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Research

Stylistic devices are linguistic tools used by writers to convey meaning, emphasize ideas, and create particular effect on readers. These devices can be found at various levels of language, such as lexical, grammatical, and semantic levels. Stylistic devices plays an essential role in revealing the author's intention, shaping characters, setting the tone, and enhancing the thematic depth of a story. Through these elements, the writers can express attitudes, irony, symbolism or moral values in subtle and powerful ways (Simpson, 2004).

One of the effective ways to analyze texts is through stylistic analysis, which focuses on how language is used rather than simply what is said. Accordding to Leech and short (2007), stylistic analysis at the micro level concentrates on the specific linguistic features in a text, such as diction, sentence structure, figurative language, and sound patterns. This level of analysis helps uncover how small choices in language contribute to the overall meaning and effect of the work.

The Micro-level of stylistic analysis focuses on small detailed linguistic features such as diction, syntax, deixis, repetition, and foregrounding, which operate in sentences, short passages, or even single words. These stylistic choices help create rhythm, highlight emphasis, and express emotional states (Verdonk, 2002). On the other hand, Macro-level stylistic analysis examines broader literary and thematic aspects, such as irony, symbolism, narrative structure, and Gothic

elements, which connect language use with cultural, philosophical, and moral issues (Simpson, 2004; Hutcheon, 1994). By combining micro and macro-level analysis, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of how language operates both at the surface and thematic levels of a text.

Flannery O'Connor is one of the most significant writers in 20th-century American literature, is particularly known for her sourthern Gothic style. Her famous short story, A Good Man Is Hard to Find (1953) presents an intriguing subject for the study of stylistic devices. The story combines linguistic features at the micro-level (short sentences, repetition, deixis and foregrounding) with thematic devices at the macro-level (irony, Gothic elements, symbolism, morality and nihilism). As Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short (2007) in *Style in Fiction* explain that stylistic analysis reveals how linguistic structure influence literary interpretation. Therefore, this study aims to examine both micro and macro-level stylistic devices to uncover how O'Connor constructs atmosphere, characterization, and moral themes through language.

In her works, O'Connor frequently employs techniques characteristic of the Southern Gothic tradition, such as irony, grotesque characterization, and the exploration of themes related to crime and redemption (Hogle, 2002). In *A Good Man is Hard to Find*, the Grandmother's superficial morality, The Misfit's nihilistic worldview, and the story's violent climax exemplify O'Connor's unique style. The micro-level stylistic features (syntax, repetition, deixis) interact with macro-level features (irony, symbolism, Gothic tone), producing a narrative that critiques morality and explores existential despair.

Therefore, this research focuses on analyzing both micro-level (lexical choice, syntax, deixis, repetition, foregrounding) and macro-level stylistic devices (irony, symbolism, Gothic elements, morality, nihilism). This combined analysis will highlight how O'Connor's style contributes not only to the atmosphere and characterization but also to the moral and philosphical depth of the story. By applying the stylistic theory of Leech and Short (2007), this study aims to explore how O'Connor uses micro and macro-level features such as sentence variation, deixis, foregrounding, and repetition to reveal deeper meanings in the story and to support its themes of morality, violence, and human imperfection.

As part of the Gothic tradition, *A Good Man is Hard to Find* incorporates several distinctive elements, including a haunting atmosphere, physchologically tormented characters, and narratives that highlight the darker aspects of human nature (Hogle, 2002). This short story demonstrates how Southern Gothic adops traditional Gothic elements, such as old houses and dark secrets, but within a more contemporary setting. O'Connor creates a sense of horror through the interaction between Grandmother and The Misfit, who not only symbolizes evil but also reflects the uncertainty of moral values. Thus, the analysis of stylistic devices at the micro and macro level can help uncover how O'Connor brings Gothic elements to life in her story through specific linguistic choices.

Through this research, I hope to reveal how O'Connor's unique literary style communicates complex moral and philosophical meanings through linguistic form. By analyzing both micro and macro-level stylistic features, this study seeks to uncover the way O'Connor's language constructs atmosphere, shapes characterization, and conveyes moral themes that reflect the tension between faith,

violence, and grace. The stylistic approach is exoected to show that O'Connor's writing is not only rich in aesthetic quality but also in moral and existential depth.

A Good Man is Hard to find is choosen specifically among O'Connor's works because it most vividly represents her Southern Gothic style and recurring themes of moral conflict, irony, and redemption. The story combines humor, violence, and religious symbolism in a way that powerfully reflects O'Connor's vision of grace within human imperfection. Moreover, the dialogue-driven narrative provides ample linguistic data for stylistic analysis, making an ideal text to explore the interesction between language, morality and spirituality in O'Connor's fiction.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background above, literary works often use language not only as a means of communication but also as a medium to express deeper psychological, moral, and philosophical meanings. In *A Good Man is Hard to Find* by Flannery O'Connor's use of stylistic devices plays a crucial role in shaping the atmosphere, characterization, and moral vision of the story. This research focuses on both micro- and macro-level stylistic devices, in order to explore how linguistic choices contribute to the thematic depth of the narrative. Therefore, there are two research questions that will be answered in this study as follows:

1. What are the subcategories of micro-level stylistics devices such as repetition, deixis, and foregrounding found in *A Good Man is Hard to find?*

2. What are the rhetorical functions of the macro-level stylistics devices such as irony and Gothic elements in constructing the atmosphere, characterization, and moral themes in *A Good Man is Hard to find?*

1.3 Objective of the Research

Based on the problems that have been explained before, short story by Flannery O'Connor's known for its distinctive Southern Gothic style, presents rich linguistic and thematic features that can be analyzed through stylistic approaches. There are two goals I want to achieve from this research, whic are:

1. To identify and classify the subcategories of micro-level stylistic devices—such as repetition, deixis, and foregrounding—and to explain how these linguistic elements operate within the text.

2. To analyze the rhetorical functions of macro-level stylistic devices—particularly irony and Gothic element—in describing the construction of atmosphere, characterization, and moral themes that reflect O'Connor's Southern Gothic style.

1.4 Focus of the Research

This research focuses on analyzing both the micro- and macro-level stylistic devices employed in Flannery O'Connor's short story *A Good Man is Hard to Find*. The micro-level analysis examines linguistic features such as diction, syntax, deixis, repetition, and foregrounding to identify their subcategories and stylistic variations. While macro-level analysis explores rhetorical functions of irony, symbolism, and Gothic elements in shaping the story's atmosphere, characterization, and moral themes.

Particular attention is given to how these stylistic features interact to reveal O'Connor's Southern Gothic tone, where elements of humor, violence, and faith coexist to express moral and existential tension. By combining both micro and macro perspectives, this study aims to demonstrate how O'Connor's language operates simultaneously at the linguistic and thematic levels, constructing a narrative that reflects both stylistic artistry and moral insight.

1.5 Methods of the Research

In this research, to answer both research questions, I used a qualitative descriptive method with a stylistic approach based on Leech and Short (2007). The analysis focuses on both micro-level stylistic features and macro-level. Supporting theories such as Hutcheon's (1994) theory of irony, Cuddon's (2013) concept of symbolism, and Hogle's (2002) definiton of Gothic literature are also used to strengthen the analysis. The data connsist of selected sentences, phrases, and dialogues from the story that highlight stylistic devices essential for atmosphere, characterization, and thematic construction.

1.5.1 Data Collection

The data for this research consist of selected sentences, phrases, and dialogues taken from by Flannery O'Connor's short story *A Good Man is Hard to Find*. These data are collected through a process of close reading of the text, which involves careful examination of lingusitic and narrative features throughout the text. The researcher focuses on linguistic expressions that contain stylistic devices identified in Leech and Short's (2007) stylistic framework, including repetition, deixis, foregrounding, irony and Gothic elements.

To ensure objectivity, the selection of data is based on the presence of these devices and their relevance to the story's atmosphere, characterization, and moral themes. The analysis includes textual segments where stylistic features clearly function to shpe tone, reveal character traits, or highlight thematic tension. These include, for example, the family's conversation at the beginning of the story, the grandmother's dialogue, and the final encounter with the Misfit, which serve as structurally and thematically pivotal moments in the narrative.

1.5.2 Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study follows a stylistic approach that examines both micro and macro-level stylistic devices in *A Good Man is Hard to Find* by Flannery O'Connor. This analysis applies the theoretical framework of Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short (2007) in *Style in Fiction*, supported by Simpson's (2004) qualitative stylistic approach. The aim is to uncover how linguistic and literary features work together to construct meaning, atmosphere, characterization, and moral themes within O'Connor's Southern Gothic narrative.

At the micro level, the analysis focuses on linguistic features that operate within sentences and dialogues, including sentence length variation, deixis, foregrounding, and repetition. According to Leech and Short (2007), variation in sentence length affects narrative rhythm and reader perception: short, abrupt sentences can convey urgency, fear, or emotional tension, while longer, complex sentences may reflect contemplation, hestation, or psychological depth. In O'Connor's story, these rhythmic shifts mirror the character's mental states—such as the Grandmother's anxiety or the Misfit's calm rationality—thereby

contributing to emotional tone. *Deixis* helps establish narrative perspective and social relationships (Yule, 1996), *Foregrounding* draws attention to key linguistic patterns through parallelism or deviation (Leech, 1969), and *repetition* reinforces significant ideas or moral tension (Simpson, 2004).

At the macro level, the analysis examines broader stylistic patterns such as irony, symbolism, and Gothic elements—contribute to the story's moral and philosophical dimensions. *Irony* (Hutcheon, 1994) is uesd to expose hypocrisy and moral blindness, while *symbolism* (Cuddon, 2013) conveys themes of faith, death, and redemption. The *Gothic elements*, as discussed by Punter (1996) and Hogle (2002), emphssize the grotesque and unsettling aspects of human nature, highlighting the spiritual decay and search for grace that characterize O'Connor's fiction.

The findings from this analysis reveal that O'Connor's stylistic techniques operate on two interconnected levels: the micro-level construct emotional atmosphere and character perspective, while the macro-level communicate moral and existential themes. Together, they demonstrate how language in this short story not only as artistic expression but also as medium for exploring moral and philosphical questions cental to the Southern Gothic tradition.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

In this study, there are some key terms related to this research:

Stylistic Devices   A detailed examination of language at the smallest linguistic units, such as word choice, sentence structure, sound patterns, and discourse features, to understand how they shape meaning in a text (Simpson, 2004).
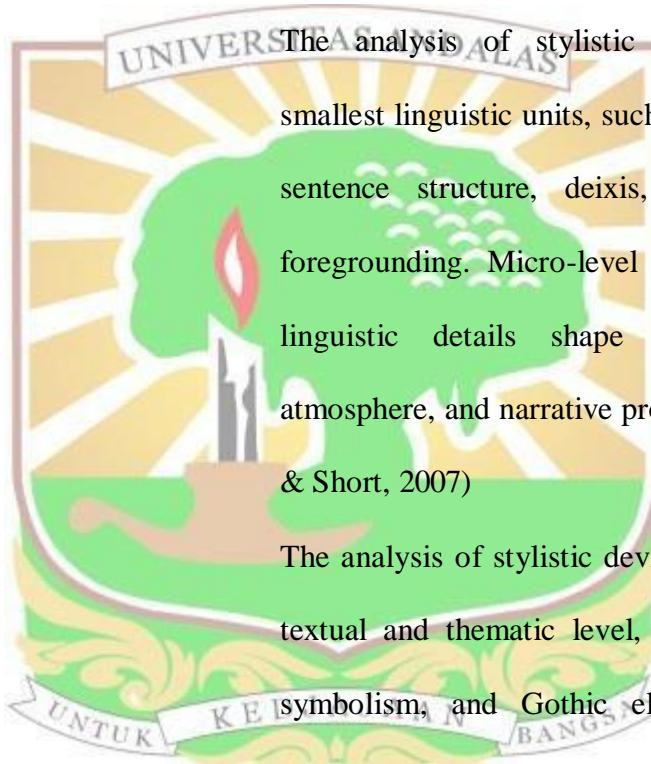
Micro-Level   The analysis of stylistic devices at the smallest linguistic units, such as word choice, sentence structure, deixis, repetiton, and foregrounding. Micro-level focuses on how linguistic details shape characterization, atmosphere, and narrative progression (Leech & Short, 2007)

Macro-Level   The analysis of stylistic devices at the larger textual and thematic level, including irony, symbolism, and Gothic elements. Macro-level analysis explores how these devices construct meaning beyond the sentence level, contributing to themes such as morality, nihilism, and redemption (Leech & Short, 2007; Simpson, 2004).

Repetition   A stylistic device that involves the recurrence of words, phrases, or structures to emphasize

particular ideas, create rhythm, or highlight key aspects of characterization and theme (Wales, 2014).

Deixis

Linguistic expressions, such as pronouns, adverbs of time and place, and demonstratives, that refer to context-dependent elements in discourse. Deixis helps situate characters and events within the narrative ans shapes the reader's perspective (Levinson, 1983).
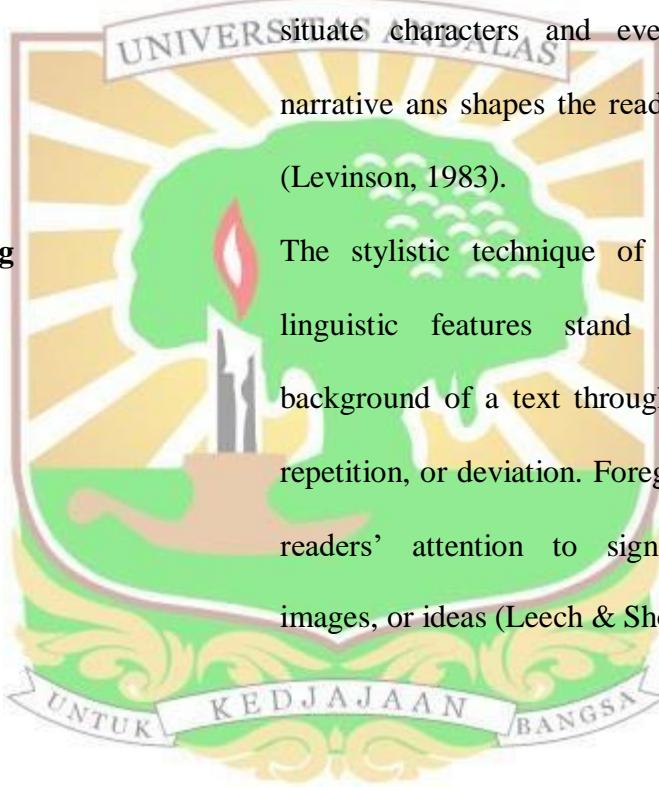
Foregrounding

The stylistic technique of making certain linguistic features stand out from the background of a text through unusual form, repetition, or deviation. Foregrounding draws readers' attention to significant themes, images, or ideas (Leech & Short, 2007).