



The Use of Figurative Expression: Novel the Doomsday Conspiracy

by Sidney Sheldon



Kadek Ayu Ekasani ^a

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Abstract

This writing is entitled “The Use of Figurative Expression in Novel ‘The Doomsday Conspiracy’ by Sidney Sheldon”. The discussion is focussed on the analysis of figurative expression in the novel. This study is aimed to identify the types of figurative expression found in the novel and to determine the meaning represented by the use of figurative expression in the novel. The novel entitled “The Doomsday Conspiracy” by Sidney Sheldon is chosen as the data source for this writing. The main theory is adopted from the book “Interpreting Literature” by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) about the theory of figurative language, namely about simile, metaphor, personification, synecdoche, hyperbole, metonymy, paradox, irony, dead metaphor, and allusion as a frame or reference. There are also some supporting theories, such as Halliday’s theory (1985) about the metaphorical modes of expressions and Leech’s theory (1974) about seven types of meanings. The finding of the analysis shows that the figurative expression used in the novel can be divided into three groups: (a) comparison included simile, metaphor and personification; (b) contradiction included hyperbole; and (c) connection included metonymy and allusion. But among these types of figurative expression, the groups of comparison, simile, metaphor and personification are those commonly applied in the novel, because they are used to describe the persona’s having a deep feeling which is brought by the main character in the novel.

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Author correspondence:

Kadek Ayu Ekasani,

The Bali International Tourism Institute Bali-Indonesia,

Email address : ayuekasani@gmail.com

1. Introduction

“Figurative language is sometimes called ‘metaphorical language’, or ‘simply metaphor’ because its Greek ancestor ‘Metapherein’ means to carry meaning beyond its literal meaning” (Knickerbocker and Reninger

^a Doctorate Program, Linguistics Program Studies, Udayana University Denpasar, Bali-Indonesia

(1963:367). The metaphorical language always brings a connotative meaning. For instance *the ferry was full of tourists from a variety of countries, happily chattering away in different tongues* (Sheldon, 1992:237). Here, the word *tongue* does not refer to the meaning of the soft organ in the mouth, used in tasting, swallowing, etc, and, by people, in speaking, but it brings a connotative meaning for this word is to suddenly become *a language*. In this case, the sentence shows that there are many tourists in the ferry who were coming from a variety of countries and have their own languages.

The strong impact of figurative language makes the language widely applied in various types of communication. However, figurative language can be mentioned as figurative expression since basically they convey the same meaning: a word or expression is not meant to be taken literally. Since figurative expression affects the mental aspect of the recipient of a communication, it is widely used in written communication in which the recipient, in this cases the readers, receives the messages from the authors that want to convey through written texts. There are many kinds of written text, but the one that intensively use figurative expression is novel.

Novel is a strong long enough to fill a complete book, in which the characters and events are usually imaginary. Since it involves imagination, which closely connected to people's mental aspects, the use of figurative expression would make the novel more interesting to read. The readers can interactively employ their imagination to feel the atmosphere created when they read a novel, as if they took part in the story and experienced the events.

Most authors employ figurative expression in the novel they compose. They want the readers to perceive the characters and events in the novel are real. This aids the readers to appreciate the content of a novel optimally. While for the authors, they can measure whether or not they apply appropriate figurative expression. The use of figurative language is considered appropriate and successful when the readers can feel the authors' feelings expressed in the novels. This signifies the importance of studying figurative expression. Based on the background above, the problems that are focussed in this study related to the figurative expression in the novel can be formulated as follows:

1. Which types of figurative expression are applied in the novel *The Doomsday Conspiracy* by Sidney Sheldon?
2. What the meanings are represented by the application of figurative expression in the novel *The Doomsday Conspiracy* by Sidney Sheldon?

2. Research Method

The main theory used in this writing is the theory of figurative language adopted from the book *Interpreting Literature* proposed by Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963). There are also some supporting theories namely theory of figure of speech by Halliday (1985), Larson (1998) and Dyer (1982), and Semantic by Leech (1974).

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963:367), figurative language is sometimes called metaphorical language or simply metaphor, which works to carry meaning beyond its literal meaning. Regarding the kinds of figurative language, these experts propose some kinds of figures, namely simile, metaphor, personification, synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, irony, paradox, dead metaphor, and allusion. For example, as Knickerbocker and Reninger state, in order to describe one thing in different way but which is still closely related to it, they use the term metonymy, like that with the word the crown, they actually know that the word refers to the king because they already have a picture in their mind that normally a person who is wearing a crown must be a king.

Halliday supports the theory of figurative language above. Halliday in his book entitled *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985:319) introduces figures of speech by saying that among the figures of speech recognized in rhetorical theory, the general term for figures of speech is metaphor. Treating the three as distinct, he describes figures of speech as metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche. Both theories were combined with the theory of meaning proposed by Leech (1974:10) in order to discover the meaning represented by figurative language that exists in the novel.

Larson in her book entitled *Meaning Based Translation* (1998:109) states that figurative senses are based on associative relation with the primary sense. Metonymy, synecdoche, idioms, euphemism, hyperbole, metaphor, simile, and irony are the types of figures of speech she proposed.

Dyer (1982:151) also says that the figurative language involves stretching or breaking the rules or conventions of 'normal' language. It tries to create particular effect and enlarge it as a means of expression by breaking or exploring language rules.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 Comparison

a) Simile

A simile is a state of comparison of two dissimilar things introduced by 'like' or 'as'. It also can be considered as a statement of similarity.

Analysis of Data Example (1)

This time Pier walked into the hotel with more confidence. Just act like a lady, she thought.
 (Sheldon, 1992:289)

The simile concept can be identified from the word 'like'. Denotatively, a lady means a woman with dignity and good manners. The word *lady* is used for the woman who has high position in society and also has a lot of money. The word *lady* here is used to compare the real condition of Pier's life. She never knows how to act like a rich woman that can reserve a suite room in the famous hotel. In this case, there is a comparison between the poor and the rich people. From the context, it can be inferred that Pier does the action like a lady.

Analysis of Data Example (2)

"I'll go," the man said, "but I want to tell you that in all my years, 'I've never met anyone as coldhearted as you are."
 (Sheldon, 1992:196)

This sentence is using simile because there is the word 'as', which arises a connotative meaning. The similarity is explicit. The phrase *as coldhearted as* is used to express someone who did not have sympathy or kindness. The phrase *as coldhearted as* appears in the novel when the character has a certain attitude or feeling like a heart of person that is already dead and then put on the cold water with no one gives attention. In this case, the used of the phrase *as coldhearted as* was focused on William Mann who succeeded in his life as a banker.

Someday there was a man who went to a banker pleading for a loan so that his young son could have an immediate operation to save his life. When the applicant said he had no security, the banker told him to get out of his office. The applicant was very angry and he said by saying the phrase *as coldhearted as* to show that the banker did not have sympathy to someone else.

b) Metaphor

Metaphor is an implied comparison, or an expression that is used in a new sense, on the basis of similarity between its literal sense and the new thing or situation to which it is applied, with 'like' or 'as' omitted.

Analysis of Data Example (3)

"I wish you sounded better."
"If you were here, I would."
"I want you to find someone wonderful and be happy."
"I did find someone wonderful, Susan." The damned lump in his throat made it difficult for him to speak. "And do you know what happened" I lost her."
 (Sheldon, 1992:9)

The metaphor concept is shown in the example above. The topic is *the damned lump*, which made it difficult to speak (the image). The similarity is implicit (between the damned lump and difficult to speak). The word *lump* literally means a hard or solid mass, usually without a regular shape.

From the context, the use of the word *lump* means to feel pressure in the throat as a result of strong emotion caused by love. The situation of the sentence above illustrated Robert's feeling when he got the telephoned from his ex-wife, Susan, and the clause *the damned lump in his throat* showed the pressure in Robert's throat when he felt the strong emotion of love.

Analysis of Data Example (4)

Robert Bellamy's thoughts snapped back to the present, to his assignment. In his fifteen years with Naval Intelligent, he had been involved in dozens of challenging cases, but this one promised to be the most bizarre of them all. He was on his way to Switzerland to find a busload of anonymous witnesses who had disappeared into their air. Talk about looking for a needle in a haystack. I don't even know where the haystack is. Where is Sherlock Holmes when I need him? (Sheldon, 1992:48)

The sentence *a needle in a haystack* cannot be construed literally since the sentence is a saying. A saying is a short well-known phrase, expression, or proverb (Hornby's Dictionary, 1995:777). This saying can be classified as a metaphor because it also shows an implied comparison.

From the examination of the context, it can be inferred that the topic of the metaphor is the witnesses, people who showed the mysterious weather balloon crash to earth in the Swiss Alps. They dissapeared and this was the duty of Robert to find all of the witnesses. He was dipicted by the saying *a needle in a haystack* which means that a thing that is almost impossible to find because it is hidden among many other things. The word *a haystack* in the context means the inhabitants of the Switzerland.

The point of similarity is to be constructed in this context between *the witnesses*, and the image *a needle in a haystack* is clear; people had never found somebody/something that they did not know where the place the last saw it. The sentence *He was on his way to Switzerland to find a busload of anonymous witnesses who had disappeared into their air* can be classified as metaphor. The word *air* denotatively means the mixture of gases surrounding the earth. In this context, the word *air* is used to illustrate the Switzerland surroundings.

c) Personification

Personification means giving human characteristics to lifeless object, an animal, or an abstract idea which is made to act like a person and thereby gives animation, vividness and nearness to those things which are normally thought of as impersonal and aloof from human affairs. It is used a great deal in our everyday language in various expressions.

Analysis of Data Example (5)

The pale morning sun was disappearing behind rain clouds.
(Sheldon, 1992:21)

The personification is shown in the sentence above. The key word of this personification is from the word *pale*. The word *pale* usually used to express the condition of human due to illness or fright and it can be seen on their faces. The figurative expression is used to describe the situation of the sun in the morning, in which the color and the light when the sun arise was not powerful enough, if it is compared with the sun in daytime.

Analysis of Data Example (6)

The Limousine was waiting at the river-entrance parking lot.
(Sheldon, 1992:34)

The expression above can be classified as personification because of the verb *waiting*, which is compared with *limousine* (an abstract thing). The word *waiting* is the activity of human being to stay when one is or delay acting, etc. for a specified time or until someone/something comes or until something happens. Here the limousine is personified, doing something what human does.

3.2 Contradiction

a) Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a figure of speech which employs an exaggeration that is used fo special effect.

Analysis of Data Example (7)

*"I'm going through a cough period right now too. Don't you understand? I'm having your baby".
And you're damn well going to marry me. Water coming from her eyes.*
(Sheldon, 1992:152)

The word *water* is used to show the exaggeration of Tina's feeling. Here, the sentence showed the deep sorrow of Tina's feeling when her boyfriend, Paul did not want to marry and be responsible for the child unborn, because he had a status of husband in his wife. The deep sorrow is described from the word *water*, which is coming from Tina's eyes. The word *water* is used to produce the strong pictures in the mind. Here the word *water* means *tears*.

Analysis of Data Example (8)

Robert struggled to sit up. He was weak from the loss of blood. His shoulder was an ocean of pain.
(Sheldon, 1992:372)

It is definitely a hyperbole. *Ocean* is used to exaggerate the condition of pain suffered by Robert for being shot with a gun. *Ocean* is the mass of salt water that covers most of the earth's surface. By employing the word *ocean* it gets the impression of extreme pain that Mr. Robert Bellamy has to bear. *Ocean* is also chosen since the pain involves extensive bleedings in the wound. There was a lot of blood that shed.

3.3 Connection

a) Metonymy

Metonymy is figure of speech describing one thing by using the term for another thing closely associated with it.

Analysis of Data Example (9)

Television sets on the walls were playing the MTV station.

(Sheldon, 1992:234)

Here, metonymy takes prominent role. Playing here means that the TV broadcast a particular TV station, i.e. MTV station. MTV station stands for *Music Television Station*, a famous TV station that broadcast everything related to music.

Analysis of Data Example (10)

Across the street was a blue and white police car with a uniformed policeman behind the wheel.

(Sheldon, 1992:379)

The meaning of wheel can be tracked roughly by considering the shape of the object it represents. *Wheel* is a circular object that turns around a rod at its center, as on cars, bicycles, etc. Thus, behind the wheel constitutes the meaning of drives a car.

The phrase a blue and white police car also supports the meaning. Hence, behind the wheel refers to the one who drives the car and he is the uniformed policeman.

b) Allusion

Allusion is a reference to some well-known place, person or event, but not a comparison in the exact sense, but a figure in the sense that it implies more than its narrow meaning.

Analysis of Data Example (11)

One for all and all for one.

(Sheldon, 1992:332)

It is a popular motto found in the novel *The Three Musketeers* written by Alexander Dumas, a French author. It is uttered by the members of land of French fencers. They crossed their own fences in the air and vowed that they would preserve their unity. This motto implies that they would be together during happy and sad situation.

In this case, the motto was also used to imply every member of the Diavoli Rossi that they had to swear a blood oath of loyalty, an oath that they would die before they would betray a fellow member. That was what made the Diavoli Rossi such a great club. They stuck together.

Analysis of Data Example (12)

'Able was I, ere I saw Elba.'

(Sheldon, 1992:355)

The sentence above is one of the most famous palindromes was supposedly said by Napoleon. A palindrome is a word or sentence that is spelled the same forward or backward. For example, Madam I'm Adam.

4. Conclusion

This study has discussed the analysis of figurative expression in novel *The Doomsday Conspiracy* by Sidney Sheldon. It is focused on the discussion of figurative expression that exists in the novel. Besides, this study is also focused on the study of the types of figurative expression, and meanings in the novel. Based on the analysis and the discussion, the conclusion can be made as follow:

- 1) From the 39 examples of figurative expression in data analysis, only six types from ten types of figurative expression that was proposed by [Knickerbocker and Reninger \(1963\)](#) occur in this novel. Among those figurative expression applied in the novel, simile, metaphor, and personification seem to be dominant in the novel discussed because those types of figurative expression can make the novel quite vivid and rich in building up their message.
- 2) Novel may have conceptual (denotative) and/or connotative meaning which is closely related. Related to the connotative meaning, the types of figurative expressions used in the novel can be classified into three groups:
 - a. Comparison, which is compared two propositions (the topic and the image) and there is some point of similarity, included simile, metaphor, and personification.
 - b. Contradiction that is a statement that contained two things which is contradicted each other's meaning, included hyperbole.
 - c. Connection, where two things are connected, included metonymy and allusion.

In the analysis of the novel we found that the combination of figurative expression and its literal meaning appears in the same way. Even though the use of figurative expression in the novel is not more than the use of literal meaning, the function of figurative expression is to make the description more forceful and beautiful in order to make the reader more interested to read a novel. The comparison that used in this novel is human's feeling or the characteristic of human compared to things or object that always found in our lives, such as mannequin, computer, etc.

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Appendix

I. Simile

1. *This time Pier walked into the hotel with more confidence. Just act like a lady, she thought.* (p.289)
2. *"I'll go," the man said, "but I want to tell you that in all my years, I've never met anyone as coldhearted as you are."* (p.196)
3. *Pregnant was how these being gestated, procreating clumsily with their genitals, like their animals in the fields.* (p.151)
4. *"Ciao, Fransesco. What the hell is going on?"*
"You tell me, amico. I've been getting all kinds of urgent communiqués about you. What have you done?"
"It's a long story," Robert said. "And I haven't time. What have you heard?"
"That you've gone private. That you've been turned and singing like a canary." (p.268)
5. *She had stopped in front of a shop window and posed like a mannequin.* (p.365)
6. *A large shard of glass protruded from his chest like a transparent dagger.* (p.372)

II. Metaphor

1. *"I wish you sounded better."*
"If you were here, I would."
"I want you to find someone wonderful and be happy."
"I did find someone wonderful, Susan." The damned lump in his throat made it difficult for him to speak.
"And do you know what happened" I lost her. (p.9)
2. *Robert Bellamy's thoughts snapped back to the present, to his assignment. In his fifteen years with Naval Intelligent, he had been involved in dozens of challenging cases, but this one promised to be the most bizarre of them all. He was on his way to Switzerland to find a busload of anonymous witnesses who had disappeared into their air. Talk about looking for a needle in a haystack. I don't even know where the haystack is. Where is Sherlock Holmes when I need him?* (p.48)
3. *An impossible mission had suddenly become a piece of cake.* (p.63)
4. *I'm Colonel Frank Johnson. I want to welcome you here. During your stay you will use only your first names. From this moment on, your lives will be a closed book.* (p.105)
5. *'He works under cover.'* (p.106)
6. *I'm certainly pleased to meet you, Commander. Susan has been telling me all about you."*
"She's very proud of you."
Susan was looking at Robert, willing him to be polite.
He made an effort.
"I understood you'll be getting out of here soon."
"Yes, thanks mostly to your wife. She's a miracle worker." (p.124)
7. *"Susan____"*
"You know I love you. I'll always love you. You're the dearest, most wonderful man I've ever known."
"Please____"
"No, let me finish. This is very hard for me. In the last year, we've only spent minutes together. We don't have a mirrage anymore. We've drifted apart."
Every word was a knife stabbing into him. (p.125)
8. *He wanted to reedit his life, to give it a happy ending. Too late. Life did not give second chances. He was alone.* (p.132)
9. *"The pink lady's-slipper has a hinged upper lip that closes when a bee lands, and traps it. The only escape is through a narrow passageway out the rear, and as the bee fights its way to freedom, it picks up a cap of pollen. There are five thousand flowering plants that grow in the Northeast, and each species has its own characteristics. There is no doubt about it. It's been proven over and over that living plants have an intelligence.* (p.74)
10. *"What I would like you to do," Jenus said, "is to recruit those whom you feel would be most helpful to our organization. We're interested only in the best."*
"That's easy," Colonel Johnson said. "No problem."
He hesitated a moment. "I wonder _____"
"Yes?"

"I can do that with my left hand. I'd really like to do something more, something bigger." He leaned forward. (p.187)

11. "I heard you've made a deal with the Chinese and ____"
"Jesus Christ. That's ridiculous!"
"Is it? Why?
"Because an hour later they'd be hungry for more information." (p.268)

12. Pier leaned forward. "Because you've been generous to me. And I hate the police. You don't know what it's like to be out on this street, hounded by them, treated like a dirt. They arrest me for prostitution, but they take me to their back rooms and pass me around. They are animals. I would do anything to get even with them. Anything I can help you." (p.295)

13. *The ferry was full of tourists from a variety of countries, happily chattering away in different tongues.* (p.337)

14. "I'll go," the man said, "but I want to tell you that in all my years, 'I've never met anyone as coldhearted as you are.' (p.196)

15. *It was after midnight when the nun walked past the desk of the night-duty nurses at the little hospital in Orvieto.*
"I guess she's going to see Signora Fillipi." Said nurse Tamasino.
"Either her or old man Rigano. They're both on their last legs." (p.183)

III. Personification

1. *The pale morning sun was disappearing behind rain clouds.* (p.21)
2. *The Limousine was waiting at the river-entrance parking lot.* (p.34)
3. "You wish to know how many priests have flown to Switzerland in the past two weeks?"
"Yes. Zurich or Geneva."
"Just a moment, I will talk to our computers." (p.174)
4. *It was after midnight when the nun walked past the desk of the night-duty nurses at the little hospital in Orvieto.*
"I guess she's going to see Signora Fillipi." Said nurse Tamasino.
"Either her or old man Rigano. They're both on their last legs."
The man glided silently round the corner and walked directly into the priest's room. He was sleeping peacefully, his hands gathered almost as if in prayer, on his chest. A wedge of moonlight sliced through the blinds, casting a golden band across the priest's face. (p.183)
5. *Dan Wayne was not having a good day. As a matter of fact, he was having a dreadful day. He had just returned from the Waco county courthouse, where he was facing bankruptcy proceedings. His wife, who had been having an affair with her young doctor, was divorcing him, intent on getting half of everything he had (which could be half of nothing, he had assured her lawyer). And one of his prize bulls had to be destroyed. Dan Wayne felt that fate was kicking him in the balls.* (p.188)
6. *Robert was awakened by the sun hitting his face.* (p.279)
7. *Robert drove slowly, concentrating, putting himself into the minds of his pursuers. They would have all avenues of escape out of Italy blocked. Every ship leaving the country would be searched. A plan suddenly came to him.* They would have no reason to search ships not leaving Italy. It's a chance, Robert thought. He headed for the harbor again. (p.331)
8. *They were skimming over Lake Como and he dropped the balloon down until it touched the water. "We're going to crash", Susan screamed. He smiled, "No, we're not". The bottom of the balloon was dancing on the waves.* He threw out a sandbag, and the balloon began to lift again. (p.348)
9. "My friend, you're getting more attention than the president of France. The cables are burning up about you. What have you done? No don't tell me. Whatever it is, you're in serious trouble. They've tapped the phone at the Chinese Embassy, my phone at home is tapped, and they're watching my flat. They've been asking me a lot of questions about you." (p.367)
10. *It was the lightning streak that saved Robert's life. At the instant that Li Po started to squeeze the trigger, the sudden flash of light outside the window distracted him for a moment. Robert moved, and the bullet hit him in his right shoulder instead of his chest.* (p.371)

IV. Hyperbole

1. "I'm going through a cough period right now too. Don't you understand? I'm having your baby". And you're damn well going to marry me. Water coming from her eyes. (p.152)
2. Robert struggled to sit up. He was weak from the loss of blood. His shoulder was an ocean of pain. (p.372)

V. Metonymy

1. Television sets on the walls were playing the MTV station. (p.234)
2. Across the street was a blue and white police car with a uniformed policeman behind the wheel. (p.379)
3. "Ask for a Fiat or an Alfa Romeo." (p.283)
4. In the communications room at SIFAR, the two colonels were reading the message that had just come in from the Halcyon. It read simply: "Now".
"What's the Halcyon's position?" barked colonel Cesar.
"They're two hours out of Marseilles, heading for port."
"Order the Stromboli to overtake and board her immediately." (p.361)

VI. Allusion

1. One for all and all for one. (p.332)
2. Able was I, ere I saw Elba. (p.355)