

A POST STRUCTURAL STUDY OF W. H. AUDEN'S *THE MORE LOVING ONE*: STYLISTICS AND THE THEORY OF LITERATURE

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Abstract

The study aims at investigating W. H. Auden's The More Loving One in the perspective of A Post Structuralism especially exploring the key traits (Trace, Difference, Binary Opposition, etc.) of poststructuralist and writer's ideology with the help of writer's style. Auden is considered as a prominent poet in modern era of English literature. A Post Structural Studies theorists have alternated their attention on either the reader or the text in an effort to clarify and justify opinions on epistemological difficulties of hermeneutics, also known as interpretation, as the logical end of the reading act. This is done in an effort to explain the connection that exists between the reader and the text. Therefore, in order to more clearly define an approach to the investigation of writer's style in relation to the dismantling (deconstructing) the ideology of the writer (through ideo-stylistics. This is done in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the field.

Keywords; post-structuralism, Trace, Difference, Binary Opposition, Stylistics

Introduction

The 1960s and 1970s saw the birth of a new intellectual (Mills et al., 2022; Brassett, 2023) movement known as post-structuralism, which originated in the fields of philosophy and the humanities. The ideas of structuralism, which had previously been the dominant school of thought in the fields of the humanities and the social sciences, regarding the interpretation of language and texts, as well as the study of economies and cultures, were called into question by this. In addition to developing new ways of thinking about difference and identity that are anti-essentialist rather than grounded or fixed a priori, post-structuralists criticised the reliance of structuralism on centres and binary oppositions (Mills et al., 2022; Larsson, 2015; Brassett, 2023; Thomassen, 2017).

They also questioned the validity of ontology and demonstrated the emergence of Truth regimes for the first time. On the other hand, post-structuralism has been accused of being idealistic and apolitical, as well as lacking evaluative norms. These are accusations that the majority of post-structuralists either refute or reinterpret. When it comes to geography, the movement has had the most significant influence on the field of cultural geography. This is because it has resulted in new views on geographical landscapes, (Mills et al., 2022; Larsson, 2015; Brassett, 2023; Thomassen, 2017) representations, and identities. The field of political geography, economic geography, and social geography are also among those that subscribe to this way of thinking. Antagonisms between it and other geographic perspectives, particularly spatial science, critical realism and Marxism, and humanistic geography, have been the source of a significant portion of its destabilising impact within the field of geography. In this article, we will begin by elaborating on the fundamental principles of structuralism and post-structuralism.

We will then divide post-structuralism into theorists whose work emphasises epistemology and ontology in a different way. Following that, we will proceed to talk about some of the most significant components of post-structuralist methodology in geography. In doing so, we suggest that a geographical sensibility, which may be defined as an awareness of space, space–time contexts, historicogeographical specificities, and other such things, need to be seen as an integral component of postdisciplinary and poststructural theorising, research, and politics (Mills et al., 2022; Larsson, 2015; Brassett, 2023; Thomassen, 2017).

Research Objectives

The study aims:

- ❖ To explore the themes of selfhood in W. H. Auden's *The More Loving One*.
- ❖ To conduct a post structural analysis of W. H. Auden's *The More Loving One*.
- ❖ To highlights the key elements of Deconstruction i.e., differabce, trace, revolt and rebellious of W. H. Auden's *The More Loving One*.

Research Questions

- ❖ How did W. H. Auden explore the themes of selfhood in *The More Loving One*.
- ❖ How did W. H. Auden conduct a post structural elements in *The More Loving One*.

Literature Review/ Conceptual Framework

The 1960s and 1970s saw the birth of a new intellectual movement known as post-structuralism, which originated in the fields of philosophy and the humanities (Mills et al., 2022; Larsson, 2015; Brassett, 2023; Thomassen, 2017). The ideas of structuralism, which had previously been the dominant school of thought in the fields of the humanities and the social sciences, regarding the interpretation of language and texts, as well as the study of economies and cultures, were called into question by this. In addition to developing novel approaches of considering difference and identity which are anti-essentialist rather than grounded or fixed a priori, post-structuralists criticised the reliance of structuralism on centres and binary oppositions.

They also questioned the validity of ontology and demonstrated the emergence of Truth regimes for the first time (Efimenko, 2023). On the other hand, post-structuralism has been accused of being idealistic and apolitical, as well as lacking evaluative norms. These are accusations that the majority of post-structuralists either refute or reinterpret (Mills et al., 2022; Larsson, 2015; Brassett, 2023; Thomassen, 2017). When it comes to geography, the movement has had the most significant influence on the field of cultural geography. This is because it has resulted in new views on geographical landscapes, representations, and identities. The field of political geography, economic geography, and social geography are also among those that subscribe to this way of thinking. Antagonisms between it and other geographic perspectives, particularly spatial science, critical realism and Marxism, and humanistic geography, have been the source of a significant portion of its destabilising impact within the field of geography (Mills et al., 2022; Larsson, 2015; Brassett, 2023; Thomassen, 2017). In this article, we will begin by elaborating on the fundamental principles of structuralism and post-structuralism. We will then divide post-structuralism into theorists whose work emphasises epistemology and ontology in a different way (Leone, 2022). Following that, we will proceed to talk about some of the most significant components of post-structuralist methodology in geography. In doing so, we suggest that a geographical sensibility, which may be defined as an awareness of space, space–time contexts, historicogeographical specificities, and other such things, need to be seen as an integral component of postdisciplinary and poststructural theorising, research, and politics (Ruitenber, 2018).

On the one hand, and depending on the perspective that was adopted, these transitions were seen as "fertilisations." That is to say, structural semiotics was finally giving up the ivory tower of its pure abstraction and was delving into the life of meaning. In this life, texts do not mean in isolation, like animals in a zoo or like plants in a greenhouse. Instead, they mean in the meshes of their complex connections with their contexts (Mills et al., 2022; Larsson, 2015; Brassett, 2023; Thomassen, 2017). These meshes can sometimes be so thick that it is difficult to differentiate between texts and contexts, discourse and co-discourse, semantic features, and pragmatic conditions. On the other hand, and from a different point of view, these transitions were considered to be "contaminations." This is because the process of substantiating structures through the various poststructuralist approaches meant that the purity of the structuralist view was tainted. The rationale behind the structuralist view was precisely to overcome the presumptuous subjectivity or the illusory objectivity of previous approaches. When it comes down to it, striking a balance between these two extreme poles—on the one hand, abstract structuralism that is devoid of any connection to (Mills et al., 2022; Larsson, 2015; Brassett, 2023; Thomassen, 2017) phenomena, and on the other hand, concrete poststructuralism that disintegrates the heuristic potential of structuralism—has been shown to be a matter of personal moderation and style. This author believes that the best poststructuralist voices were those that did not diminish the heuristic power of thinking reality and language through structural articulations (Mills et al., 2022; Larsson, 2015; Brassett, 2023; Thomassen, 2017). However, these voices were also able to extend this articulatory approach to non-immediately linguistic and semiotic areas, such as social patterns, anthropological settings, material conditions, economic dynamics, political frames, biological characteristics, mind functions, (Mills et al., 2022; Larsson, 2015; Brassett, 2023; Thomassen, 2017) and even brain features. This author is certain that these voices were the best. Because of this, a number of writers may become poststructuralist without also being anti-structuralist if they were to work inside the framework of structural semiotics (Baca, 2023).

The majority of Francophone structural semiotics and the majority of Anglophone Peircean semiotics developed separately for the most part, particularly in the first and most crucial phases of their respective elaborations. The frontier between a conception of meaning that is ultimately based on discontinuity (Saussure, linguistic and semiotic structuralism) and a conception of meaning that is ultimately based on continuity (Peirce) is one of the most important epistemological and even ontological frontiers between the two semiotic schools. However, it is worth noting (Mills et al., 2022; Larsson, 2015; Brassett, 2023; Thomassen, 2017) that as structuralist semiotics, or at least some of its authors, evolved towards some kind of poststructuralist semiotics, they also implicitly and increasingly blurred one of the most important epistemological and even ontological frontiers between the two semiotic schools. In point of fact, when structuralist semioticians began to include a greater degree of continuity into their philosophical analysis and interpretations of meaning, a significant number of them inevitably gravitated towards Peirce and his semiotics. It is not evident that a symmetrical movement of 'continuity semioticians' towards structuralist semiotics has also taken place, but, as it shall be seen in the subsequent sections, that must be explained not as a result of a supposed superiority of 'continuity semiotics' over its discontinuous counterpart, but as a consequence of the disequilibria in the linguistics and geography of academic semiotics: Structuralism arrived in Anglophone North America at a time when it had already been questioned and, in many instances, academically supplanted, not by poststructuralism but by anti-structuralism (Widyokusumo, 2023).

The field of research, scholarship, and publications that were covered by structuralism, beginning with Ferdinand de Saussure and continuing onward, has been so vast and diverse that poststructuralism has also inherited it. In a sense, all aspects of reality that had been considered from a structural point of view could now be seen from a poststructural point of view. An examination of the totality of this cultural output would go beyond the scope of a single chapter of a book and would not be entirely relevant in a handbook that is dedicated to semiotics. Despite the fact that there is a significant amount of semiotics in structuralism, there is also a significant amount of structuralism in semiotics; nonetheless, these two conceptual paths do not totally overlap with one another. Although a subfield of semiotics, primarily the Francophone one, originated from linguistic structuralism and, later on, from anthropological structuralism, and despite the fact that the School of Moscow and Tartu was also fundamentally a derivation of such a trend, semiotics as it was conceived primarily in the Anglophone world, originating from the ideas and works of Charles S. Peirce, was not only not historically structuralist, but it was also anti-structuralist, from a particular point of view that will be specified later on, anti-structuralist. As a result, it was unable to give rise to a proper poststructuralist version of it either. However, this did not rule out the possibility that some poststructuralist tendencies also had a role in the evolution of semiotics in subfields of the field that were not initially inspired by structuralism (Mills et al., 2022). The current chapter will confine itself to discussing poststructuralism in the semiotic field; however, it is necessary to begin with the realisation that, in semiotics, as in other fields of study, the paradoxical situation frequently occurred in which poststructuralism developed chronologically after structuralism, but it could not logically supersede it because the latter theory had not actually been fully developed before the present chapter. It was not only in those semiotic fields that were not largely based on structuralism that this occurred, but it also occurred in those advancements of semiotics that claimed to have solved all of the faults of the old-style structuralism (Mills et al., 2022; Larsson, 2015; Brassett, 2023; Thomassen, 2017).

Data Analysis

Tone and style

Berry (2002) opines that In post structuralist writing, tone is euphoric and urgent, and the style is self-consciously showy and flamboyant. the poem 'The More Loving One' is written in blunt language and tone is optimistic with full of hope. In W. H. Auden's poem "*The More Loving One*," the poet used an extended metaphor as star for his true love, god and a natural thing.

Differance

Berry (2002) explores that the term "differance" was coined by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida. It is a play on the French words "differer" (to differ) and "durer" (to defer or to last). Differance encapsulates the idea that meaning is always in a state of deferral and difference, never fully present or fixed. Derrida introduced this concept to challenge traditional notions of stable meaning and the binary oppositions that often structure our understanding of language and reality.

How should we like it were stars to burn
With a passion for us we could not return?
If equal affection cannot be,
Let the more loving one be me.

(Auden, 1957, p.93)

In the context of this poem, the concept of *differance* challenges the stability of the opposition between "stars" and "us." Derrida would argue, the meaning of the poem is deferred and relies on the differences between the words and concepts. The poem suggests a one-sided love between the speaker and the stars. The passion of the stars is presented as something that cannot be reciprocated. Here, *differance* would point to the deferral of the meaning of "passion" and the relational differences between the speaker's affection and the supposed passion of the stars.

The poem introduces the idea of "equal affection," raising questions about the nature of affection and its equality. *Différance* would highlight the constant deferral of a fixed meaning of "affection" and how its meaning is dependent on its differences from other terms in the poem.

In the above lines,, The phrase "Let the more loving one be me" introduces a hierarchy of love. *Differance* would emphasize how the meaning of "more loving one" is contingent on its difference from its opposite, and that this opposition is not a fixed, stable structure but one that is in a constant state of deferral and play.

In essence, *differance* disrupts the stability of meaning and emphasizes the interplay of differences, encouraging a more fluid and context-dependent understanding of language and concepts.

Illusion of Presence

Berry (2002) opines that the concept of the "illusion of presence" is closely tied to Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist philosophy. It suggests that the traditional philosophical assumption of a fixed, present meaning is an illusion. And this Meaning is always deferred, and there is no ultimate, stable foundation for language or concepts.

How should we like it were stars to burn
With a passion for us we could not return?
If equal affection cannot be,
Let the more loving one be me.

(Auden, 1957, p.93)

In the context of this poem, the illusion of presence challenges the assumption that the meaning of the poem or its key concepts (e.g., love, passion, affection) can be fully present or fixed. Instead, meaning is deferred and constantly shifting. In the above lines, the notion that stars burn "with a passion for us we could not return" challenges the assumption that passion has a fixed and universally understood meaning. The illusion of presence suggests that the meaning of "passion" is not fully present but deferred and dependent on the context and the reader's interpretation.

The poem raises questions about the nature of affection and whether it can be equal. The illusion of presence disrupts the idea that there is a stable, universally agreed-upon definition of "affection." Instead, the meaning of affection is deferred, influenced by the context and the differences between the speaker's affection and the supposed passion of the stars.

In the above lines, the phrase "Let the more loving one be me" introduces a hierarchy of love. The illusion of presence challenges the assumption that "more loving one" has a fixed and universally understood meaning. Instead, it suggests that the meaning is always in a state of deferral, influenced by the differences and context in which it is used.

Logo-centrism

Berry (2002) opines that, logocentrism is a term associated with Derridean deconstruction and refers to the philosophical tendency to privilege speech and writing as central to the communication of meaning. It assumes a belief in a stable, transcendental signified essentially, an unchanging and fixed point of reference for meaning. Derrida critiques logocentrism by arguing, there is no ultimate, fixed center to language and meaning.

How should we like it were stars to burn
With a passion for us we could not return?
If equal affection cannot be,
Let the more loving one be me.
(Auden, 1957, p.93)

The above mentioned lines, reflects logocentrism by relying on language to convey the speaker's emotions and thoughts about love. In this poem, the poet represents and captures the complex nature of affection and love. Logocentrism assumes that words like "affection" and "passion" have stable, universally agreed-upon meanings. The speaker seems to appeal to these words with the expectation that readers share a common understanding of their significance. The phrase "Let the more loving one be me" implies a fixed hierarchy of love. Logocentrism assumes that the meaning of "more loving one" is stable and universally understood. The speaker appeals to this concept as if it has a clear, uncontested meaning.

Phono-centrism

Berry (2002) argues that phonocentrism, a concept associated with Jacques Derrida's deconstruction, refers to the privileging of speech over writing. It suggests a bias toward spoken language as more immediate, authentic, and reliable compared to written language. Derrida critiques phonocentrism by challenging the assumption that speech is transparent and that written language is merely a representation of spoken language.

In W. H. Auden's poem "The More Loving One," the influence of phonocentrism is explored, particularly in how language is used to express the speaker's emotions about love and affection:

How should we like it were stars to burn
With a passion for us we could not return?
If equal affection cannot be,
Let the more loving one be me.
(Auden, 1957, p.93)

In the above lines, phonocentrism often assumes that spoken words are more transparent, directly conveying the speaker's intentions and emotions. In the poem, the speaker may assume that the

words used (such as "affection" and "passion") transparently express the depth of their feelings, aligning with the phonocentric bias toward spoken immediacy. While the poem is a written text, the speaker may expect the reader to mentally "hear" the words as if they were spoken. The emphasis is on the sound and pronunciation of the words, reflecting a phonocentric bias toward the oral qualities of language.

Multiplicity of Meaning

Derrida also questioned signifier and signified finality. He believes that the language one keeps moving from one signifier to another and the ultimate meaning or supposed signified remains elusive. Berry (2002) opines that The idea of "multiplicity of meaning" suggests that a word or phrase can have multiple interpretations or connotations depending on context, perspective, or individual experiences. In the poem, "The More Loving One", the poet uses extended metaphor of star which has three interpretation like; his true love, god and a natural thing.

It refers to someone who consistently expresses love and affection more openly or generously than others in a particular situation or relationship. It also implies a person's ability or capacity to love more deeply or extensively than others. It also refers to a specific action or gesture that is perceived as more loving than others in a given context. It also relates to how individuals express their love, with one person being more expressive or demonstrative than others.

Trace

It is the mark of absence in presence. Every sign has a trace of the absence in presence. And meaning is in the absence. E.g. Black is black because it is not white (binary opposition by Saussure) according to Derrida, Black is black because it is not blue, not yellow, not red, not green, not white, not golden etc. The term "trace" refers to the inherent instability and indeterminacy in language and meaning. Derrida argues that meanings are not fixed or stable; they are always in a state of flux and are interconnected with other meanings through a network of differences. The idea of "trace" challenges the traditional understanding of language as a stable and transparent vehicle for conveying meaning.

"If equal affection cannot be,
Let the more loving one be me."
(Auden, 1957, p.93)

In Derridean terms, the words "equal affection" and "more loving one" carry multiple layers of meaning. The concept of "trace" comes into play as these terms cannot be pinned down to a single, stable interpretation. The meanings of "affection" and "loving" are fluid, influenced by the cultural, social, and personal contexts of the reader. The poem itself leaves a trace of ambiguity and openness, inviting readers to interpret and engage with the text in personal and subjective way.

Derrida's idea of trace emphasizes the interconnectedness of signs, the instability of meaning, and the impossibility of arriving at a fixed and singular interpretation. In the context of Auden's poem, the trace might be found in the shifting emotions and perspectives of the speaker, the elusive nature of love, and the ever changing dynamics of affection in human relationships.

Conclusion

The study has investigated W. H. Auden's *The More Loving One* in the perspective of A Post Structuralism. Auden is considered as a prominent poet in modern era of English literature. Theorists have alternated their attention on either the reader or the text in an effort to clarify and justify opinions on epistemological difficulties of hermeneutics, also known as interpretation, as the logical end of the reading act. This is done in an effort to explain the connection that exists between the reader and the text. The determination of cross-cultural dimensions of communication and language competency is the core of teaching reading in language education. This is where the heart of hermeneutics resides. Reading instruction is intended to facilitate understanding, but it also serves another purpose. Therefore, in order to more clearly define an approach to the investigation of hermeneutics in relation to the reading act and literature (or written text), this paper surveys a diverse field of cross-disciplinary research that incorporates both philosophical and empirical methodology in literary theory, semiotics, reading theory, philosophy, cognitive psychology, and linguistics. This is done in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the field.

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