

Stylistics Analysis of Heart of Darkness: A Study of Irony, Stream of Consciousness, and Metaphor

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Abstract

Introduction: Reading literary works offers a unique opportunity for individuals to enhance their understanding of the world and self-awareness through stylistic analysis. This study focuses on exploring the use of various lexical and grammatical choices in Joseph Conrad's masterwork "Heart of Darkness" to demonstrate the value of the English language's intrinsic aspects.

Methodology: The methodology involved a detailed examination of Conrad's writing style in "Heart of Darkness." Stylistic analysis was conducted to identify the linguistic components used by Conrad to captivate the audience and evoke a sense of uncertainty. Special attention was given to the widespread usage of hypothetical phrases and the intricacy of Conrad's writing style.

Findings: Conrad's adept use of language components in "Heart of Darkness" effectively captured the audience's attention and left them with a profound sense of uncertainty. The widespread usage of hypothetical phrases added a distinctive

flavor to his work, compelling readers to carefully absorb the material to uncover its meanings beneath the surface. The analysis revealed clarity amidst the unpredictability of the language, shedding light on the deeper layers of Conrad's narrative.

Implication/Future Direction: *The findings of this study underscore the importance of stylistic analysis in understanding literary works and enhancing cognitive development. Further research could explore the impact of Conrad's writing style on readers' interpretation and appreciation of "Heart of Darkness," as well as its broader implications for literary analysis and education. Additionally, future studies could investigate the application of similar stylistic analysis techniques to other literary works across different genres and authors*

Keywords: *Stylistics Analysis, Irony, Metaphor, Stream of Consciousness, Novel*

Introduction

The sense of style was bolstered by the concept of approaching a literary piece from a linguistic perspective. In 1966, M.A.K. Halliday made the suggestion that there is a basic relationship between linguistics and literary writing. In his *Studies on Style and Language*, he suggested having the collection published. His book proposal analyzes the fundamental connections that might be made between linguistics and literary studies. His ground-breaking theory calls for a fundamental rethinking of how literary material is used and how it is manipulated in the service of fashioning new styles (Oad, Khan, & Khoso, 2020). When it comes to maintaining objectivity, it is more important to manipulate language in order to present a certain and consistent style. The idea behind Halliday's theory of "style and language" is that language is the primary source that may motivate and bring a literary work to life as an art form. This is the central tenet of the theory. The study of literature may be grounded in language via an examination of the literary work's linguistic characteristics. Studying the literary text in order to investigate the hidden meanings contained within the text is at the heart of the process of doing stylistic analysis. During this examination, the researchers make an effort to investigate the author's intended meanings in connection to the works of literature. The researchers regard the operation or analysis of language to be a "pre- critical" action for the purpose of gathering data pertaining to the authors' abilities. This "pre- critical" activity in a book provides a wealth of information about the writer or author in terms of his literary ability and his capacity to construct certain themes via the use of words (Oad & Niazi, 2021). A novel is a piece of literary fiction that is also an artistic work. Novels are known for their lengthy narrations and explanations, in which the author presents characters in an in-depth way. The author takes advantage of the open space available to him in order to provide interpretations of the characters with regard to their ideas, thoughts, and emotions

(Suhag et al., 2018). The elements that make up fiction establish a connection between the reader and the author as well as the text. To put it another way, the author of the novel or the short story exposes the reader to his or her inner self by exposing his or her works to the reader. This may be said of either the novel or the short story. Also, it presents or reflects his or her impression in relation to a certain topic matter or theme (Ahmed et al., 2020). In addition, the work of fiction not only demonstrates the author's literary talent but also exemplifies the author's particular approach to the writing process. It isn't always required for novelists or short story writers to jot down their inner feelings merely for the purpose of enjoyment and fun. Sometimes, they do it because they want to. The authors of novels and short stories sometimes make it their mission to attract attention to a particular or particular kind of mess or issue, to bring about a change in certain mindset, or to protest something. In point of fact, the people and society of a certain moment or age are reflected in literary texts. The evolution of literature is directly proportional to the changes that take place within a society. Literature written in the 20th century provides evidence for this tendency, which may be attributed to the changing of society during that period (Nazir, et al., 2024).

Modernist literature is characterized by its unconventional writing style and distinctive use of language. It was a specific piece of fictional writing in its own right. In the context of communication, style refers to a mode of delivering and transmitting certain results or consequences. Each individual writer has a distinct voice and approach, which sets them apart from other current authors. When it comes to writing and communicating, every writer makes an effort to maintain his or her own unique identity. In addition, authors who took a modernist approach to writing made use of a variety of stylistic elements such as symbolism, irony, simile, metaphor, parenthesis, and other similar devices in order to maintain and control originality for the purpose of reaching or acquiring a certain value. Their works of fiction are an accurate depiction of their thoughts and feelings towards contemporary society. They made use of the instrument of language in order to shed light on the possibility of humans having consciousness or producing awareness among themselves (Ahmad, Bibi, & Imran, 2023).

Joseph Conrad was the writer of the modernist age who achieved the greatest prominence and success as a novelist. He achieved the pinnacle of literary accomplishment and acclaim as a writer, which is the greatest honor one can get in the field. He was partially Polish and somewhat British. He became well-known as a writer because to his original and recognizable approach to the literary craft. Thirteen novels, two volumes of memoirs, and twenty-eight short tales were among the works he produced throughout his career as a writer. His singular approach to the craft of writing helped him garner a stellar reputation in the world of English literature. He

traveled extensively over the most of his life. He has a wealth of information about the ocean. In 1887, he became a citizen of the United Kingdom (Shah, & Rahat, 2024). His singular approach to writing served as an inspiration to authors from the English language. His unique approach to writing served as a source of creativity for authors not just from his own continent but also from others. Because of his upbringing in several cultures, he was able to accurately depict English society both internally and outside. His exposure to both the outside and the inside world helped him to reveal the hollowness of western society. The modernist literary movement saw him as an outstanding writer who was instrumental in the production of political fiction and psychological fiction. Because of the role he had in the creation of the book as a duplicate of reality, he is regarded as a prominent and prominent character among modernist literary luminaries (Rehmat, Ahmed, & Maqbool, 2024).

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will help readers better understand the stylistic decisions that Conrad, who was not a native English speaker, made in his writing. By using examples taken from the book, readers will have a better understanding of the concept of stylistic devices as well as the relevance of the devices themselves. In addition, it is possible that this study will act as a stepping stone for further research in the future.

Research Objectives

- i. To investigate the role of irony and metaphor in the novel Heart of Darkness.
- ii. To explore the use and explanation of the stream of consciousness used in the novel heart of darkness.

Research Questions

- i. What is the role of irony and metaphor in the novel Heart of Darkness?
- ii. What is the use of stream of consciousness and what does it explain?

Research Methodology

The main theme of the novel Heart of Darkness is rebellion against modern society. This study will explore the perspective of society in the modern age. In this study, stylistics analysis will be done to explore the true essence and spirit of the novel. The present study will focus on Halliday's model of language systematic functional linguistics (SFL). This study will be explanatory, narrative, and qualitative in nature.

Stylistics analysis of the novel will focus on the following patterns.

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1. Irony
2. Metaphor
3. Stream of consciousness

20th century British Literature

Every zenith is followed by a nadir. The only constant is change itself. In a same vein, the era of transition began in the 20th century, at the same time as European imperialism and British imperialism began to collapse. The process of transformation was the primary focus of the day. It was a period when everything was changing drastically as a result of the onslaught of new scientific inventions and the progress that was being made towards industrialization and urbanization. Literature ushered in a new age of expressing ideas and concepts in relation to the visual arts, musical composition, and architectural design. As a direct consequence of this, the populace became interested in the new era of modernism. It was a movement that had no connection to the past, and it favored and fostered symbolism that was contemporary in terms of both its spirit and its presentation (Butler, xv). Throughout the 20th century, English literature took on a new shape and style, allowing authors to more accurately depict and reflect the aspirations of people who lived contemporary lifestyles (Sarwat et al., 2024).

The Beginning of Modernism

The modernist movement began as a pushback against the profound changes that were taking place in the 19th century. During that time, significant shifts were occurring in all facets of society, from the political to the economic. The 19th century was also marked by developments in scientific technology, which brought about profound alterations to the socioeconomic landscape of European nations (Gay, 4). Because of these dramatic shifts, the artists were compelled to look for new ways to convey their ideas and views. Ezra Pound believed that it was in order to create anything novel (Gay, 4). The most essential aspect of modernism was that it was inclusive toward all different kinds of cultures and made no distinctions among them. A well-known author by the name of Malcolm Bradbury provided the following explanation of modernism: "Modernism found its natural home in cities—cities which, in turn, became cosmopolitan hubs" (95). The urban character of the modernist movement was the primary factor that contributed to the movement's rise to prominence. It included every significant city in Europe, each of which had a direct role in the propagation of empire. Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Moscow, St. Petersburg, London, Zurich, New York City, and Chicago were among these prominent cities. Later on, these cities were the center of knowledge in relation to scientific breakthroughs and intellectual campaigns and activities. Also, they opened the path for new art that was exciting and attractive for contemporary standards of living (Bradbury, 96-98).

It is unavoidable to bring up the role that France played in the expansion of the modernist movement. French art and culture were significant sources of influence for the British modernist movement, owing to the fact that France served as the artistic epicenter throughout that period (Kolachi & Ahmed, 2024). The concepts that were the foundation of Anglo-American and European modernism had their roots in French art. Cyril Connolly published his book "The Modern Movement:" in 1965, and it was about modernism. In that book titled "The Modern Movement: One Hundred Key Books from England, France, and America, 1880-1950," written by Cyril Connolly, detailed information about the beginning and progression of the modernist movement was presented, including the following statement: "The French fathered the Modern Movement, which slowly moved beyond the Channel and then across the Irish Sea until the Americans finally took it over, bringing to it their own demonic energy, extremism, and taste for the colossal." This (cited in Bradbury and McFarlane, 31). Connolly claims that English authors and artists portrayed the city of Paris as a fantastical place in their work. They lived in the fictitious city of France for the most of their youth. French painters and artists introduced unique tendencies to their English counterparts that pertained to art and paintings (Abbasi, Chang, & Hafeez, 2024). The city of Fauvism, Symbolism, Aestheticism, Naturalism, Decadence, Cubism, and Post-Impressionism were among of the artistic tendencies that were imported to England by French painters. Fantasy capital of France also influenced Impressionism (Bradbury, 174- 175).

The knowledge of the French dream city, where symbolism and impressionism were often used by artists in their writings and paintings, was a significant contributor to the development of modernism in Britain. Paul Valéry (1842-1898) and Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898) are considered to be the forefathers of the modern movement (1871-1945). They considered themselves to be artists in all aspects of life. They were instrumental in breaking art free from the conventions of the past. By using free verse, Valery pioneered the usage of animated poems in which both the sound and the meaning were distinct. It made rhyme and rhythm attractive, which contributed to the poet's mental picture of what the poem should look like. The graphic quality related with language system and it provided symbol as the basic characteristic and component (Broome & Chesters, 79). (Broome & Chesters, 79). The following is how they (Paul Valéry) expressed their opinions to one another: Throughout an extremely extended period of time, the human voice served as both the basis and the condition of all writing... A day arrived when the reader could read with his eyes alone, without needing to spell things out or hear them, and this caused a complete transformation in the way literature was written as a result (cited in Clive Scott, 207).

The word "modernism" refers to a more general movement that included and was applied

to other forms of art, including literature. The artists made the transition to the new wave of information, which assisted in freeing them from the constraints of the old, in which everything was mechanical in nature. Modernism was an intellectual change from conventional activities and conventions (Barry, 81). (Barry, 81). The reliance on visual reflection came to an end, and painters started turning more often to new approaches that proved to be helpful and advantageous for their works. The modernist movement of the 20th century turned out to be a boon for the artists working during that era. They sighed breath of relief after employing methods of contemporary art. It accurately portrayed the desires of contemporary men living at that time period (Hafeez, Iqbal, & Imran, 2021). The modernist authors of the 20th century had a distinct worldview that differentiated them from the writers of earlier eras. The romantics and the realists were both repudiated by the modernists. Both Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane believe that the modernist movement served as a catalyst for a break with the past. They stated that: The communal universe of reality and culture that the art of the nineteenth century had depended on was no longer in existence; and the explosively lyrical, or else the ironic and fictive modes, modes which included large elements not only of creation but also of de-creation, were inevitable. (27) The expression "fin de siècle," which originates from the French language, acquired popularity since it symbolized the end of the practices of the prior centuries. It marked the beginning of a new age and period, one that did not accept romantics or realists as valid viewpoints. The birth of innovative, avant-garde art may be traced back to the modernist movement.

Definition of Modernist Literature

The age of English modernism coincided with a new period of economic growth and industrialization in the United Kingdom. Other significant contributors to the development of modern literature are advances in scientific knowledge and the urbanization of populations. In light of those shifting circumstances, the famous author Virginia Woolf offered her thoughts. According to what she indicated, a shift in human nature occurred about December 1910. All of the relationships between people changed, including those between bosses and slaves, parents and children, and spouses and wives. And if there is a shift in human interactions, there will also be a corresponding shift in religion, behavior, politics, and literature (Cited in Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, 33).

Virginia Woolf held the opinion that there was an undeniable connection between literature and the contemporary forces of transformation. According to Virginia Woolf, human nature will never be satisfied with the status quo and will constantly seek for novel experiences. Literature was influenced by the inherent yearnings of contemporary society. The wants of contemporary men are largely responsible for the emergence of modern literature in the annals of English literary history (Ghaffar, Khoso & Sahito, 2024).

The movement known as modernism in literature was a reaction against the literary traditions of the past. It did not maintain any kind of relationship with the past. The "tendency of

experimental literature of the early 20th century to break away from traditional verse forms, narrative techniques, and generic conventions in order to seek new methods of representation appropriate to life in an urban, industrial, mass-oriented age" (Lewis, xvii) is one way to explain "modern literature" of the early 20th century.

The amalgamation of the late 19th century and the early 20th century may be seen in the literary work produced by modernists. That was very necessary at that very moment. As a result of changes brought about by industrialization and urbanization, people of that era were tired of romantics. The modern literary canon is preoccupied with matters of social superiority and obscurity. The modernists wanted the autonomous nature of art, which had been lacking in its real meaning up to that point. The modernist literary movement saw formalization as the most essential component of works of literature (Gasiorek, 554). In the latter half of the 19th century, the modernist movement began to gain popularity in the literary circles of the United Kingdom (Ahmed et al., 2020). The literary movement known as modernism achieved new levels of success because to the contributions of authors such as James Joyce, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf, T.S. Eliot, and E.M. Forster. These modernists, in the most literal sense, encapsulated the sentiments of the contemporary populace. It was a revolt against traditional methods of storytelling and formulaic approaches to delivering information. Some of the distinguishing qualities of modernist writing are the blending of images and themes, the use of absurdist, nonlinear storylines, and stream of consciousness. In modernist literature paid greater significance to common person. The modernist movement eradicated obsolete practices and modes of expression.

There were two primary stages of modernism. The first phase of modernism was the early modernist movement. The fact that it began before the First World War places it squarely in the first part of the 20th century. At the end of the Second World War, the modernist movement entered its second phase and came into full swing. A significant number of authors who were active during that time period had contrasting points of view. As a result of this, it gained a reputation within the literary community as either neo-modernism or postmodernism. (Tupan, 27). When early modernists distanced themselves from the Victorian image of society and its ideals, the most prominent characteristics of their writing were stream of consciousness, experimentation, and fragmentation. In addition, between the late 19th century and the Second World War, a number of early modernist authors and poets wrote significant works that are considered to be excellent examples of the prevailing mindset of the time. These works include the following: In addition, early modernists were responsible for the presentation and publication of significant literary

works of the period.

Their literature followed the modernist trend that was prevalent during that time period. The novels *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) by Virginia Woolf, *The Waste Land* (1922) by T.S. Eliot, *Ulysses* (1922) by James Joyce, and *Heart of Darkness* (1899) by Joseph Conrad are some examples of works written by these literary authors (Bradbury &McFarlane, 35). The modernist movement put an emphasis on the significance of the individual, which becameless prevalent after the two world wars.

Characteristics of Modernist Literature

Alterations in the social structure took place all at once and were profound. The outbreak of war resulted in the complete dismantling of the social order existing at the time. Everything went through a significant transformation. It had a devaluing effect on both individuals and society as a whole. The development of industry and urbanization led to a fall in the worth of the typical person. The modernists developed a response to the trend that was prevalent at the time, broke away from the conventional methods of the past, and pioneered a contemporary style of writing that was appealing to the populace of that day. Since modernist literature represented the contemporary way of life in the society, it gained a great deal of appeal in the eyes of the general public. "what strikes me as beautiful, what I should want to achieve is a book about nothing, a book without external attachments, which would holditself together all by itself by the intrinsic power of its style," was how Virginia Woolf characterized and explained the modern literary movement (cited in *Modernism: a guide to European literature 1890-1930*, 25). The modern play, poetry, and prose all signified arejection of established approaches, as well as experimentation, non-representation of individual experience, and an absence of objectivity (Gasiorek, 559-560).

It is the inclination to focus on or concentrate on the negative aspects of events or circumstances. It was an extraordinary component of the modernists' literary works. Later authors saw a slow collapse in the British economy and society at the same time, in contrastto earlier writers who experienced prosperity throughout this time period. During both world wars, people were seen to have increased levels of pessimism and feelings of isolation, which was noted by modernist authors (Sarwat, et al., 2024). They made mention of the trend in the works that they produced. As a result of the decline in affluence, British society struggled with issues of hunger, loneliness, and estrangement. These ideas of bribery and estrangement were prevalent throughout the works of Joseph Conrad, particularly in his novels. The novels "*Heart of Darkness*" and "*Nostromo*" written by Joseph Conrad are the greatest examples of the new style of writing used by modernists. It was clear from the works of British authors that they were unhappy with various aspects of their lives.

Symbolism

The modernists' works were attractive to the people of their period because of the symbolism that was used in a way that was both effective and meaningful. The modernists relied heavily on figurative language and symbolism to communicate their ideas to their audiences. They brought a fresh perspective to their literary works. A well-known author by the name of Rajeev Patke provided the following definition of the usage of symbolism in the works of modernists: "Symbolism was incorporated into a much longer, more portentous idea of a modernist literary heritage." In their works, modernists often made use of various persons, things, and locations as symbols. The communication of special meanings was one of the primary reasons for making use of certain symbols. It was the most effective method for enhancing one's writing style and gaining insight into the thoughts of one's audience (Sarwat et al., 2024). The modernists relied on literary strategies and visual representations to convey and communicate the message they intended (Beasley, 25-26). Arp and Johnson defined and provided examples of the following in their work on symbolism: "The use of acts and things in a symbolic manner. Anything that has deeper connotations than it first seems to have is known as a "literary symbol." It may be an item, a person, a circumstance, an action, or any other element that has a literal meaning in the tale but that also indicates or reflects other meaning as well. For example, the story may be referring to a situation in which a certain person is acting in a certain way " (274-275). In the works of modernists, the use of literary elements such as symbolism achieved widespread recognition and widespread appreciation. The most notable instances of the modernists' worldview may be seen in T. S. Eliot's poetry, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, and James Joyce's *Ulysses*, among other works (Miller, 3).

Stream of Consciousness

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Complex language

Language is a powerful instrument that may effectively transmit a message or meaning to the audience. Because of this, modernist writers made more use of language that was both practical and experimental. Language throughout the earlier parts of the early Victorian period was more descriptive in character. In late Victorian time, modernism made it experimental. They held the belief that language, as a tool, was required in order to present the harsh facts of contemporary existence. Their vocabulary portrayed a pervasive evil that lingered in the human brain and tended to take hold (Heise, 50). In contrast to romantics, modern authors took a distinct approach to language use. The modernists saw the use of language as an art form. They did it in a creative manner using language to communicate the sensory manifestation of the character and the events. They used language as both a tool and a craft in order to describe the interior processes of the characters in a way that retained their unique qualities. Their fundamental and revolutionary desire was to write writing that was based on truth and uniqueness. The modernists considered and embraced the intricacy of the language as a beneficial tool that might convey a subjective viewpoint and vision of the character.

Stylistic Aspects in Heart of Darkness

Throughout the annals of modern English literature, Joseph Conrad has cemented his place as one of the most eminent authors of the 20th century. He contributes something really original to the modernist movement with the very sophisticated literary style that he has developed. His time spent in the Congo inspired him to create an outstanding work of art. It is generally agreed that *Heart of Darkness* is one of the most important works in the canon of English literature (Billy, Billy, & Orr, 1999). The novella is presented by him as a symbolic fiction that symbolizes his opinions about Western imperialism in Africa, and these beliefs are

represented through the novella. In addition, Conrad intends to unveil the concealed realities of the human interior by presenting a fresh approach. By using a wide array of narrative techniques and linguistic options, he is able to build a link between the written work and the individual who is reading it. The Polish-British author is working on developing a method to duplicate the ambiguity of the human heart via the use of the English language in order to achieve his goal of symbolically depicting the real darkness. Joseph Conrad had the following response when he was questioned about the manner in which he writes: "My goal, which I am seeking to perform, is, via the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel, and it is, above all, to make you see" (1). Conrad has a hard time making the leap from hearing to feeling to seeing what's going on. In point of fact, Conrad uses his literary and linguistic skills to establish a new art form in the novel *Heart of Darkness*, which is based on his point of view. In his novel *Heart of Darkness*, the modernist author Joseph Conrad used an innovative style of narration to demonstrate the distinctive knowledge and psychological intricacies of his characters. His art captures the anxiety, complication, and sadness that come with searching for something unknown. In this brief story, Conrad makes use of a variety of literary devices, the most famous of which are direct speech and stream of consciousness narrative, impressionism, symbolism, imagery, uncertainty, and so on. Conrad makes use of the aesthetic completeness of his writing style to provide an air of unique modernity to the surface structure of the material he has written.

The writing style of Joseph Conrad continues to capture the interest of a great deal of historians and literary critics due to the uniqueness and depth of it. He uses a number of different grammatical and stylistic methods to make it more difficult for the reader to decode a text and come up with their own interpretation of what it means. It is possible that the uniqueness of Conrad's writing style might be ascribed to the fact that he often used the primary language to communicate in the secondary language he was writing in. In addition to this, the author's use of the English language in *Heart of Darkness* reflects the conflict that rages inside him, particularly in light of the experiences he had in the Congo. While English is a language of action, Conrad rewrites it in a way that portrays ambiguity via his use of his style. Throughout his lifetime, Joseph Conrad was able to amass a significant amount of notoriety on a global scale, mostly as a result of his writing style, as well as his unique and out-of-the-ordinary command of the English language.

Conclusion

The modernist movement emerged as a pushback against the early Victorian era's adherence to established norms and customs. The modernists had a desire to portray harsh reality via the

medium of their art. The development of industry, scientific knowledge, and urbanization all contributed to a shift in perspective among English authors. Art has to be pushed to become more challenging and innovative by modernists. Literary devices such as individualism, experimentation, absurdity, symbolism, formalism, and stream of consciousness were adopted by the modernists in order to reflect the human psyche as well as the modernists' subjective perspectives on the characters.

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