

Humanizing Human Reflected in Metaphors Used by W. H. Auden in His Poems

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the types of metaphor found on selected poems by W. H. Auden; *Funeral Blues*, *O what is That Sound*, dan *O Tell Me the Truth About Love* by using Lakoff and Johnson theory and to find out the meaning of each metaphor. This research used qualitative research. The data were analyzed by using Matthew B. Miles et. al (2014), namely the data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The study found 17 metaphors on three selected poems by W. H. Auden; 10 structural metaphors, 3 orientational metaphors, 3 ontological container metaphors, and 1 ontological personification metaphors. Each metaphor has different meaning.

Keywords: *Poems, Metaphor, W. H. Auden.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Poetry is one of popular literary works. It also one of the oldest literary works in the world. It is a word comes from the Greek “*poesis*” which means “to make”. Edward A. Bloom et. al (1961:1)[1] argued that poetry is an art form of language, whether it is spoken or written.

In poetry, it has supporting elements that could build a poetry one of which is figurative language. Edward A. Bloom et. al (1961:17)[1] stated that figurative language is generally a way of “speaking other languages”. In other words, it satisfies our love for novelty and analogy by describing, identifying, characterizing or modifying a thing rather than its complete or literal self. Figurative language has several kinds, namely metaphor, personification and simile. This study chose metaphor for the topic. Metaphor often found in studying literature especially in poems. Metaphor is a particular form of figurative language, which compares by stating identification.

Poetry is a literary work that results from human feelings so that it contains various themes. One of them is humanism. According to Ericon (in Jeffrey Radloff et. Al (2016) [2] humanization is something that is subjective, because it comes from the diversity of races and human nature, both in groups and individually.

The objects of this research are three selected poems by W. H. Auden, namely *Funeral Blues*, *O What is That Sound*, and *O Tell Me the Truth About Love*. Most of his poems are related to tragedy that happen at that time, not only love but also tell about war or politic. All his works had long stanzas, so it eases the researchers to analyse his poems as their references.

The purposes of this study were to find out all metaphors and meaning of each metaphors found on selected poems by W. H. Auden.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher wanted to analyse the types of metaphor found in selected poems by W.H. Auden entitled “**An Analysis of Metaphors on Selected Poems by W. H. Auden**”.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. What is Poetry?

Poetry is one of the oldest literary works. Differently with other literary works, poetry is not accurately to state the earliest poetry works. Poetry has existed for thousands of years in one form or another. According to Courthope (in Raymond M. Alden, 1923:4)[3], poetry is the art of producing pleasure to express imaginative thought and feeling in your imagination. Shelley (in Raymond M. Alden, 1923:2)[3], also defines poetry as a record of the best and happiest moments in the brightest

minds. While E. C. Stedman (in Raymond M. Alden, 1923:3)[3] he stated that poetry is a language full of rhythm and imagination, expressing the invention, taste, thought, passion and insight of the human soul.

Poetry has many types that we know, but there are three main types, namely dramatic, lyric and narrative. Each poetry contains several elements, namely form, sound devices, imagery, figurative language, mood/tone, and theme.

2.2. Figurative Language in Poetry

Figurative language is one of element that contained on poetry. In this element, it divided into several types namely metaphor, personification, and simile. Figurative language became an element on poetry that quiet important, by reason of using one of type figurative language on writing poetry, it can be more artistic and beautify the content of poetry.

According to M. H. Abrams (1999:96)[4], he explained that figurative language means a language used to describe something by using other words that are different from first word to cause a certain meaning or effect. Christopher Russel Reaske (1982:33)[5] also stated figurative language is a language that applies a variety of figures of speech. From the definitions above, it can be conclude that figurative language is a language used to interpret words by using another word.

As stated by Keraf (2009:138)[6], there is several type of figurative such as: Simile, Metaphor, Allegory, Personification, Allusion, Eponym, Epithet, Synecdoche, Metonymy, Antonomasia, Hipflask or Hipalase, Irony, Satire, Innuendo, Antiphrasis, and Paronomasia.

2.3. Metaphor in Poetry

Metaphor becomes a part of figurative language. It often found in some poems because it is the famous one. Edward A. Bloom et. al (1961:21)[1] stated metaphor is a figure of speech that expresses an identity. Metaphor defines the comparison, which different from simile, which is not seen as similar i.e. the quality being compared. In addition, David N. Lord (1854:9)[7] also defined as a statement or depiction that is simply similar to an agent, thing, grade, or act using words.

There are many types of metaphor by experts, but in this study only used type by Lakoff and Johnson. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003:14)[8] metaphor has three types, namely structural, orientational and ontological.

- 2.3.1. Structural metaphor is a conception that is organized metaphorically in another term.
- 2.3.2. Orientational metaphor is a conception that is not organized metaphorically in other terms, but it combines the entire system contained in one concept with another.
- 2.3.3. Ontological metaphor is a conception that is organized metaphorically on the basis of human

experiences of physical object (including human body), that is seeing an event, emotion, idea, activity, as an entity or substance. Ontological has two categories, namely Ontological Container, is describing in-out order of an object to another object and is limited by a barrier in the form of the object's surface, and Ontological Personification, is describing an object as human.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data Collection Method

The primary data collected by doing several steps, namely: In this study, the researcher collected the data both primary data and secondary data by doing these steps: Choosing three poems that will be analyzed, reading carefully the poems, finding the metaphors on poems, highlighting the metaphors, classifying the kinds of metaphors, and finding the meaning of each metaphor.

3.2. Object of the Study

The object of the study is divided into 2 categories, such as: Formal Object and Material Object.

- 3.2.1. Formal object for this study is metaphor of selected poems that will be discussed in this research.
- 3.2.2. Material Object for this study is selected poems by W.H. Auden namely: Funeral Blues, O What is That Sound and O Tell Me the Truth About Love. The researcher analyzes the poems using figurative language approach and discusses the view of the metaphor as the issue of the poems.

3.3. Data Analysis Technique

According to Matthew B. Miles et. al (2014)[9] there are 3 steps of analyzing data namely:

- 3.3.1. Data condensation is an activity of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and/or transforming of the data. In this research, the researcher condenses the data by selecting and focusing. By doing those activities, the researcher can classify each data obtained and can make the researcher understand and easier to analyze the data.
- 3.3.2. Data display, in this study, data display conducted by describing briefly and interpreting the meaning of each metaphor obtained.
- 3.3.3. Conclusion drawing, the researcher make conclusions based on the analysis data.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Results

Metaphor often found in all literary works, for example it can be found in poetry. There are many types of metaphor by experts, this research used the types by Lakoff and Johnson. According to Lakoff and Johnson metaphor has three types, namely structural, ontological, and orientational. In ontological metaphor, it is divided into two: ontological container and ontological personification.

4.1.1. Structural Metaphor

Structural metaphor is a conception that is organized metaphorically in another term. In this study, structural metaphor found in two poems; *Funeral Blues* and *O Tell Me the Truth About Love*.

4.1.1.1. *Funeral Blues*

4.1.1.1.1. *He was my North, my South, my East and West*

The sentence above is structural metaphor, because the word "he" refers to human, while the sentence "my north, my south, my east and west," is a living guide for the speaker. This line shows structural metaphor because it connects human with something related to surrounding environment. The meaning of the line above is the man is the guide or role model of the speaker.

4.1.1.2. *Tell Me the Truth About Love*

4.1.1.2.1. *Some say love's a little boy.*

The line above is structural metaphor, because the word "love's" is something that show affection and often find in daily life, while the word "a little boy" refers to human. So, it connects human with something surrounding environment. The meaning of the line above is love can grow and develop like a child.

4.1.1.2.2. *And some say it's a bird.*

The line above is structural metaphor, because the word "it", refers to love, is something that show affection and often find in daily life, while the word "a bird" is the living thing (animal). So, it connects living things with something related to human life. Love is animal and it is categorized as

structural metaphor. The meaning of the line above is love can make someone feel free.

4.1.1.2.3. *Does it look like a pair of pyjamas.*

The line above is structural metaphor, because the speaker compares "it", refers to love, with "a pair of pyjamas". The word "it" is something often found in human life, and the word "a pair of pyjamas" is something that human wear every day. Love is warming and it is categorized as structural metaphor. The meaning of the line above is love can give warmth for someone. The meaning of the line above is love can be found everywhere.

4.1.1.2.4. *Or the ham in a temperance hotel?*

The line above is structural metaphor, because the word "the ham in a temperance hotel" refers to human's food and often found in hotel. That word compares with love. So, it shows that love is daily food and it categorized as structural metaphor. The meaning of the line above is love can be found everywhere.

4.1.1.2.5. *Does its odour remind one of llamas.*

The line above is structural metaphor, because the word "its odour", refers to love's smell, is something that can human smell every day so it is related to human life, and the word "llamas" is the living thing which means animal. So, it connects the living thing with something human feels every day. Love is animal's smell and it is categorized as structural metaphor. The meaning of the line above is love is something rarely found and hard to feel.

4.1.1.2.6. *Or has it a comforting smell?*

The line above is structural metaphor, because the word "it", refers to love, is something shows affection. While the word "comforting

smell” is an activity of something human feel. It shows that love is smell and it is categorized as structural metaphor. The meaning of the line above is love can give peace.

4.1.1.2.7. *Is it prickly to touch as a hedge is.*

The line above is structural metaphor, because the words “prickly to touch” is like human activity that show sense of touch, while the word “it” is referring to love which means abstract. The speaker compares love as prickly fence. So, it shows that love is hurting like thorn and categorized as a structural metaphor. The line above is that love can give someone pain and hurt someone.

4.1.1.2.8. *Or soft as eiderdown fluff?*

The line above is structural metaphor, because the line refers to love is soft as eiderdown fluff. It compares something abstract to sense of touch, soft. So, it shows that love is comforting and it is categorized as a structural metaphor. The line above is that love can comfort someone and give affection.

4.1.1.2.9. *Is it sharp or quite smooth at the edges?*

The line above is structural metaphor, because it compares “love” with an object which has sharp or smooth edges that can human feel or touch. So, love is confusing because it is not clear sharp or smooth, hurting or comforting. The meaning of the line above is that love can give someone happiness and/or sadness simultaneously.

4.1.2. *Oriental Metaphor*

Oriental metaphor is a conception that is not organized metaphorically in other terms, but it combines the entire system contained in one concept with another. This type of metaphor implies the dimensional relation. In this study, orientational metaphor found on all poems, namely *Funeral Blues*, *O What is That Sound* and *O Tell Me the Truth about Love*.

4.1.2.1. *Funeral Blues*

4.1.2.3.1. *The stars are not wanted now; put out every one.*

The sentence above is orientational metaphor. The word “put out” explains something going out. That line shows that the stars should disappear in that time. So, the line above is orientational metaphor. The meaning of the metaphor above is the speaker wanted to leave all things even though it is precious for himself.

4.1.2.2. *What is That Sound*

4.1.2.2.1. *Why are you kneeling?*

The sentence above is orientational metaphor. The word “kneeling” can be described that they put themselves on the land. That line shows something is down, “they is down”. So, the line above is orientational metaphor. The metaphorical expression above means that someone is afraid and chose to surrender and give up.

4.1.2.3. *Tell Me the Truth about Love*

4.1.2.3.1. *The backs of railway guides.*

The line above is an orientational metaphor because the line above refers to that love can be found everywhere, even in “back of someone”. This line shows love is back of someone. So, it can be defined as orientational metaphor. The meaning of the metaphorical expression above is that love can be found everywhere, even in public areas and every corner of our society.

4.1.3. *Ontological Metaphor*

Ontological metaphor is a conception that is organized metaphorically on the basis of human experiences of physical object (including human body), that is seeing an event, emotion, idea, activity, as an entity or substance. Ontological has two categories, namely Ontological Container, which describes in-out order of an object to another object and is limited by a barrier in the form of the object’s surface. Ontological Personification, is describing an object as human. In this study, ontological

metaphor found on *Funeral Blues* and *O What is That Sound*.

4.1.3.1. Funeral Blues

4.1.3.1.1. Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun.

The sentence above is ontological container metaphor. The word “pack up” and “dismantle” are something abstract, whereas the words “the moon” and “the sun” are something concrete. This line shows ontological container metaphor because it connects something abstract with something concrete also it described objects in and out. The line above is that the speaker wanted to ignore all beautiful things that can remind about “him”.

4.1.3.1.2. Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;

The line above is ontological container metaphor. Because the word “pour away” and “sweep up” are abstract because those words are activities. The words “the ocean” and “the wood” are something concrete because those words are object. This line shows ontological container metaphor because it connects something abstract with something concrete also it has something inside and outside. The meaning of the line above is that the speaker does not want to be concerned about anything anymore because it does not mean anything and all he feels is chaos.

4.1.3.2. O What is That Sound

4.1.3.2.1. Only the sun on their weapons, dear.

The line above is ontological container metaphor. Because it shows the word “on their weapons” is containing something else, the sun. There is something inside the weapons. So, it categorized as ontological container metaphor. The meaning of the line above is

that the soldiers gathered there during the day so that their weapons reflected a blinding light.

4.1.3.2.2. And their eyes are burning

The line above is ontological personification metaphor. It compares the word “their eyes”, a human’s part of body, and the word “burning” which means something that often happens on object. So, it is categorized as ontological personification. The meaning of the line above is the soldier’s face showing their anger.

4.2. Discussion

According to the analysis of findings above, 17 data contain three types of metaphors on three selected poems by W. H. Auden. Those types are structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors (ontological container and ontological personification). All metaphors found on three selected poems are classified in the following table:

Table 1. The Number of Types of Metaphors

No.	Types of Metaphor	Total
1.	Structural	10
2.	Oriental	3
3.	Ontological (Container)	3
4.	Ontological (Personification)	1
	Total	17

Based on the table above, it can found there 3 types of metaphor using Lakoff and Johnson’s theory. Overall, the most metaphor used on the poems is structural metaphor, it was found on two poems; *Funeral Blues* (1 line) and *O Tell Me the Truth About Love* (9 lines). While the second dominant metaphor used are orientational and ontological container. Orientational metaphor found on all poems; *Funeral Blues* (1 line), *O What is That Sound* (1 line) and *O Tell Me the Truth About Love* (1 line). While ontological metaphor found in two poems; *Funeral Blues* (2 lines) and *O What is That Sound* (1 line). The last dominant metaphor is ontological personification, it was only found on *What is That Sound* poem.

Based on the metaphor found in the poem *Funeral Blues*, the poem describes the calamity that befell the speaker, namely the loss of someone who is important to the speaker's life. The speaker explained that the person

has been instrumental in his life and has become a life role model for the speaker. So, at the end of the poem the speaker shows a very deep sense of sadness due to the incident.

The metaphor found in the poem *O What Is That Sound* describes a situation that occurs in a village where a husband and wife live there. The metaphor in this poem describes the situation of the village, as well as the condition of the residents in the village and also the troops who came to it. So, the husband's despair was seen when he saw the troops who came with full weapons and showed the anger of the troops.

Then in the poem *O Tell Me the Truth About Love*, several metaphors are found that explain the content and meaning of the poem. The metaphor in the poem explains the speaker's curiosity about the form and essence of love. The speaker questions the essence of love from all side; physical form, texture, or taste that loves has. The speaker also tries to explain the existence of love at the end of the poem. The metaphor in this poem explains that love can be found by anyone and at any time whether we realize it or not.

Based on the types of metaphors found in the poems of w. H. Auden, these types show the existence of humanizing humans.

5. CONCLUSION

The types of metaphor found on selected poems by W. H. Auden (*Funeral Blues*, *O What is That Sound*, and *O Tell Me the Truth About Love*), are 17 metaphors that contain each type; structural, orientational, and ontological (container and personification) by using Lakoff and Johnson theory. The most dominant metaphor type found is structural metaphor. It is found in 10 lines on those poems. The second dominant metaphor types found are orientational and ontological container. Each type is found in 3 lines. The last dominant metaphor types found is ontological personification. It only found in 1 line.

The meaning of each metaphor that found on poems is different based on theme of the poem. First, in the poem "*Funeral Blues*", all meanings of metaphor can be concluded that the funeral of someone who is precious to the speaker. The role of someone who has died is also explained and the speaker's feelings after being abandoned by him. Second, in the poem "*O What is That Sound*", all meanings of metaphor can be concluded that a husband and wife living in a peaceful village. But then several armed troops came to surround the village and cause fear to the villagers. Last, in the poem "*O Tell Me the Truth about Love*", all meanings of metaphor can be concluded that contains questions that arise from the speaker about the essence of love. The speaker questions everything about love from the shape, characteristics, texture, and existence of love.

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