

An Analysis Of Adjectives In Joyce Carol Oates “Where Are You Going Where Have You Been”

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the adjectives in Joyce Carol Oates' short story 'Where Are You Going Where Have You Been'. The analysis was focused on What kind of adjectives that are widely used found in Joyce Carol Oates' Where Are You Going Where Have You Been adjectives and the positions of adjectives. This research study was conducted by using descriptive qualitative design. The results of the study showed that there were four kinds of adjectives found in Joyce Carol Oates' Where Are You Going Where Have You Been. They were descriptive adjectives, predicative adjectives, attributive adjectives and limiting adjectives. The positions of adjectives found in Joyce Carol Oates' Where Are You Going Where Have You Been were before a noun and after a verb.

Keywords: *Adjective, Novel, Kinds Of Adjectives, Positions of Adjectives,*

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INTRODUCTION

Language plays a central role in conveying meaning, shaping readers' perceptions, and influencing how information is interpreted. In journalism, word choice is especially significant because newspapers not only inform but also frame events and issues in particular ways. Among the various parts of speech, **adjectives** hold a unique function: they describe, qualify, and provide additional nuances to nouns, enriching the text with detail, emphasis, and tone. The selection of adjectives can subtly reflect the writer's stance, highlight certain aspects of a story, or evoke specific emotions in readers.

Adjectives constitute a fundamental grammatical category in English and many other languages, playing a crucial role in enhancing written and spoken communication. By providing descriptive detail, adjectives make language more vivid and precise, allowing readers or listeners to form clearer mental images. Their correct usage not only improves comprehension but also enriches the expressive quality of texts.

Short stories, as a literary form, serve as valuable sources for linguistic analysis, particularly in the study of adjectives. Typically ranging from 1,000 to 7,500 words, short stories efficiently convey profound themes—such as morality, courage, and human emotion—while maintaining brevity. Joyce Carol Oates, a renowned American author, masterfully employs adjectives in her works to evoke tension and psychological depth, particularly in *Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?* Inspired by real-life crimes, this short story offers a compelling case for analyzing adjective usage, focusing on their types and syntactic positions.

METHOD

Kinds of Adjectives

Azar (1985) describes that adjectives are words that modify nouns or pronouns. A variety of adjectival forms must be understood in order to write accurately.

a. Descriptive Adjectives

Descriptive adjective gives information about the qualities, appearance, or characteristics of a noun. It gives a clearer and more colorful picture of what the noun is like.

Predicative and Attributive Adjectives

Adjectives are used primarily in two different ways: *predicatively* and *attributively*. A predicate adjective is one that follows a linking verb and modifies a noun or pronoun “from a distance”—that is, separated from the noun itself by the verb.

Some commonly used linking verbs are to be, to become, to get, to look, to seem, and to smell.

The Pattern: subject _ linking verb _ predicate adjective

- (1) Mr. Price is *handsome*.
- (2) My vision seems *blurred*.
- (3) That really smells *good*!
- (4) It suddenly got *cold*.

Naturally, adjectives can be modified by any variety of adverbs. For example:

- (1) Mr. Price is *very handsome*.
- (2) Today the weather became *quite terrible*.

Attributive adjectives, on the other hand, stand before a noun. It is common to use more than one adjective to modify nouns in this position.

The Pattern: subject _ verb _ attributive adjective

- (1) The *young* officer came up to me.
- (2) The *frightened young* officer came up to me.
- (3) A *tired old* man sat down to rest.

You can view attributive adjectives as replacements for relative clauses that contain the linking verb **to be**.

When a noun follows a linking verb, it is called a *predicate nominative*. The predicate nominative is a noun that further describes the subject of the sentence. Adjectives can modify the subject, the predicate nominative, or both.

For example:

- (1) The winner was a man from Holland.
- (2) The *eventual* winner was a man from Holland.
- (3) The winner was an *athletic* man from Holland.
- (4) The *eventual* winner was an *athletic* man from Holland.

A sentence with a predicate nominative can be changed by reversing the positions of the subject and the predicate nominative and *still make complete sense*. This can occur only with linking verbs. An *athletic* man from Holland was the *eventual* winner. Some adjectives can be used only as predicate adjectives.

Limiting Adjectives

There are nine types of limiting adjectives: definite and indefinite articles, possessive adjectives, demonstrative adjectives, indefinite adjectives, interrogative adjectives, cardinal adjectives, ordinal adjectives, proper adjectives, and nouns used as adjectives. The obvious function of any limiting adjective is to limit or to specify some aspect of the noun it modifies.

Definite and Indefinite Articles

The definite and indefinite articles illustrate this limitation function well. The definite article (**the**) specifies *someone or something as already known or mentioned*. Indefinite articles (**a, an**) identify *an unknown person or thing* and *persons or things in general*. For example:

- (1) *The man on the corner is my friend. A specific man is the topic here. He is known to the speaker.*
- (2) *A man on the corner was hit by a car. An unspecified man is the topic here. He is unknown to the speaker.*
- (3) *The heavy suitcase belongs to Mary. A specific suitcase is the topic here. The speaker knows that it is heavy.*

Indefinite articles are not used with plural nouns. The complete omission of an article with a plural noun indicates that the meaning is *indefinite*. Compare the following pairs of sentences:

Singular

The boy plays chess.

A good student must behave.

Plural

The boys play chess.

Good students must behave.

Possessive Adjectives

Possessive adjectives limit the nouns they modify in terms of the ownership implied: *my, your, his, her, its, our, and their*. The possessive *whose*, which inquires into ownership, is also an interrogative adjective but belongs in this group, as well.

- (1) *My new car is a Ford. Ownership of the car is limited to me.*
- (2) *Her kitten became quite ill. Ownership of the kitten is limited to her.*
- (3) *Our garden did well this year. Ownership of the garden is limited to us.*

Demonstrative Adjectives

The demonstrative adjectives—*this, that, these, and those*—limit the modified noun to the one identified by the speaker: *this one, that one*. The demonstrative adjectives show *closeness (this, these)* or *distance (that, those)* in the same way as the demonstrative pronouns.

- (1) *This book is hard to understand.*
- (2) *That remark was uncalled for.*
- (3) *These men need a job.*
- (4) *Do you know those people?*

Indefinite Adjectives

Indefinite adjectives provide general information about the nouns they modify. They often answer the questions *how much?* or *how many?* Among the most common indefinite adjectives are **all, any, each, every, few, many, and some**. Let's look at some sentences that illustrate their use:

- (1) *All work must be completed by noon. how much work?*
- (2) *Each candidate will have ten minutes how many candidates?*
- (3) *Are some companies in financial trouble? how many companies?*

Interrogative Adjectives

The interrogative adjectives are **what, which, and whose** (as noted earlier, **whose** is also a possessive adjective). They modify nouns in the same way as other limiting adjectives. **What** and **which** inquire into a choice between two persons or things and from among a group of persons or things. **Whose** asks about ownership. Here are some examples:

- (1) *What airline are you taking to Brazil?*
- (2) *What day will you arrive back in the States?*
- (3) *Which dessert did you order?*
- (4) *Whose limousine is parked in front of the house?*

Cardinal Adjectives

Cardinal adjectives are simply numbers used as adjectives. They limit the nouns they modify by specifying an amount. That amount can be as little as “zero” or as great as any number you can conceive of. For example:

- (1) *One* boy scraped his knee on the ground.
- (2) *Fifteen* girls are in the contest.
- (3) *Eighty* dollars was too much for the blouse.

Ordinal Adjectives

Numbers are used in a slightly different adjectival form with ordinal adjectives. These adjectives limit the nouns they modify by specifying numerical order. For example:

- (1) The *first* question on the test was simple.
- (2) Jake is the *twelfth* boy in line.
- (3)

The majority of ordinal adjectives are formed by adding **-th** to the end of a number: **fourth, thirtieth, hundredth**, and so on. There are only a few irregular forms, as follows:

Positions

According to Azar (1985) the structural position of an adjective can be divided into:

Before a Noun

In this case, the position of adjectives come after the determiners.

Example:

Determiner	Adjective	Noun
A	Young	Man
This	Narrow	Road
An	Old	Town
The	Early	Train

After a Verb

The position of adjectives:

- a. After the linking verbs *be, seem, appear, look* (as subjective complements in predicate position).

Examples: The boy is *tall*, The girl is *beautiful*

- b. In objectives complement position. Here are special verbs, i.e. *make, consider, keep*

Example: His attitude made me disgusted,

- c. The combinations of verb-adjectives that express a state hold tight, stand still, lie quiet, break loose, open wide, slum shut.

Example: She held the child tight, The ship broke loose from its moorings

This research is conducted qualitative method descriptively. Moleong (2018) states that qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of words written or spoken of the people and behaviors that can be observed. Analysis used in qualitative research is descriptive analytic to make more meaningful interpretation of the content created and arranged in a systematic/holistic and systematic. Literature review and relevant research have been observed to obtain the data description. In order to answer the problems of the study, the analysis of the collected data will be done by the following steps:

1. Underlining and analyzing the sentences that relate to the kinds of adjective in Joyce Carol Oates' short story, *Where Are You Where Have You Been*.
2. Underlining and analyzing the sentences that relate to the positions of adjective in Joyce Carol Oates' short story, *Where Are You Where Have You Been*.
3. Drawing the conclusions based on the the analysis of the kinds of adjective and the positions of adjective in Joyce Carol Oates' short story, *Where Are You Where Have You Been*.

4. Drawing the conclusions based on the the analysis of the kinds of adjective and the positions of adjective in Joyce Carol Oates' short story, *Where Are You Where Have You Been*.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To avoid an overlapping and misleading discussion, the writer has limited the analysis. The analysis of this study is focused on the kinds of adjective and the positions of adjective found in all the sentences in the short story written by Joyce Carol Oates.

1. There are four kinds of adjective used in Joyce Carol Oates' *Where Are You Going Where Have You Been*, they are descriptive adjective, predicative adjective, attributive adjective and limiting adjective.
2. The positions of adjective in Joyce Carol Oates' *Where Are You Going Where Have You Been* can be found before a noun and after a verb.

Discussion

Kinds of adjective found in Joyce Carol Oates' *Where Are You Going Where Have You Been*, are:

Descriptive Adjective

Descriptive adjectives describe someone or something. Some adjectives considered descriptive adjectives because they modify nouns in Joyce Carol Oates' *Where Are You Going Where Have You Been* are shown in the table below.

Adjective	Page
she had a <i>quick, nervous</i> giggling habit	1
"You think you're so <i>pretty</i> ?"	1
Connie would raise her eyebrows at these <i>familiar old</i> complaints	1
into a <i>shadowy</i> vision of herself	1
Why don't you keep your room <i>clean</i>	2
with her in the <i>same</i> building	2
There was one <i>good</i> thing	3
Connie had <i>long dark blond</i> hair	3
to the <i>brightlit, fly-infested</i> restaurant	4
He had <i>fair brown</i> hair	9
<i>New</i> paint job," he said	10
"You're <i>cute</i> ."	10
he's kinda <i>shy</i>	11
these numbers are a <i>secret</i> code	11

Table.1

she had a quick, nervous giggling habit

Quick and *nervous* in the sentence above are descriptive adjective because they modify the noun "giggling habit".

"You think you're so pretty?"

In the sentence above, the word *pretty* is a descriptive adjective that modifies subject "you".

into a shadowy vision of herself

The adjective *shadowy* in the sentence describes the noun "vision" as something unclear or unreal. makes *same* as the descriptive adjective.

She had a high, breathless, amused voice

The noun "voice" in the sentence is modified by the adjectives *high*, *breathless*, and *amused*. It means the three adjectives are descriptive adjectives.

Predicative Adjective

A predicate adjective is one that follows a linking verb and modifies a noun or pronoun “from a distance”—that is, separated from the noun itself by the verb. Some commonly used linking verbs are to be, to become, to get, to look, to seem, and to smell.

Data	Page
She was <i>fifteen</i> .	1
her own was <i>all right</i>	1
“You think you're so <i>pretty</i> ?”	1
Why don't you keep your room <i>clean</i>	2
Her sister June was <i>twenty-four</i> ...	2
if that wasn't <i>bad</i> enough	2
she was so <i>plain</i> and <i>chunky</i> and <i>steady</i>	2
her mind was all <i>filled</i> with trashy daydreams	2
girls who were just as <i>plain</i> and <i>steady</i> as she	3
They must have been <i>familiar</i> sights	3
feel good to be <i>able</i> to ignore him	4
she wouldn't be <i>alone</i>	5
with the pure pleasure of being <i>alive</i>	5
her mother was <i>simple</i> and <i>kind</i> enough	6
that it was maybe <i>cruel</i> to fool her	6
with a look that was still <i>angry</i>	7
how <i>sweet</i> it always was	7
She shook her head as if to get <i>awake</i>	8
"I ain't <i>late</i> , am I?" he said	9
I think he's <i>great</i>	10
because the glasses made it <i>impossible</i> for her	10-11
as if he were <i>afraid</i> it might fall off	11
he's kinda <i>shy</i>	11
and showed how <i>lean</i> he was	12
Even his neck looked <i>muscular</i> .	13
that everything was <i>fine</i>	15
Connie looked <i>away</i> from his smile	16

Table.2

She was fifteen.

Fifteen in the sentence above is not a number. It is an adjective because it modifies the subject “she”. It is a predicative adjective because it is used after to be “was”.

if that wasn't bad enough

Bad is a predicative adjective that is used after to be “wasn’t”. *Bad* modifies subject “that” in the sentence.

and their faces went hard with contempt

The sentence above contains *hard* as a predicative adjective because it is used after linking verb “went”. In the sentence, *hard* is used to modify “their faces”.

because the glasses made it impossible for her

Impossible, in the sentence, is a predicative adjective which is used after the verb “make”. It is used to modify the pronoun “her”.

Attributive Adjective

Attributive adjectives, on the other hand, stand before a noun. It is common to use more than one adjective to modify nouns in this position.

Data	Page
she had a <i>quick, nervous</i> giggling habit	1
Connie would raise her eyebrows at <i>these familiar old</i> complaints	1
into a <i>shadony</i> vision of herself	1
with her in the <i>same</i> building	2
her mind was all filled with <i>trashy</i> daydreams	2
She had a <i>high, breathless, amused</i> voice	2
There was one <i>good</i> thing	3
They must have been <i>familiar</i> sights	3
Connie had <i>long dark blond</i> hair	3
to the <i>brighlilit, fly-infested</i> restaurant	4
as if they were entering a <i>sacred</i> building	4
her friend pulled her face up into a <i>brave, droll</i> look	5
in a <i>convertible</i> jalopy painted gold	5
mixed up with the <i>urgent insistent</i> pounding	6
in the back seat <i>poor</i> old June	7
want you to pay real <i>close</i> attention	8
with each <i>gentle</i> rise and fall of her chest	8
He had <i>fair brown</i> hair	9
His sideburns gave him a <i>fierce, embarrassed</i> look	9
<i>New</i> paint job," he said	10
the <i>tiny metallic</i> world in his glasses	11
Connie's bright <i>green</i> blouse	11
He was standing in a <i>strange</i> way	12
and a <i>white</i> pull-over shirt	12
I took a <i>special</i> interest in you	15
with a <i>casual</i> jerk of his chin	16

Table.3

she had a quick, nervous giggling habit

Quick and *nervous* are attributive adjectives because they are put immediately before the noun they modify, that is "giggling habit".

Connie would raise her eyebrows at these familiar old complaints

The noun "complaints" in this sentence is modified by two adjectives, *familiar* and *old* which are put before it. Since the adjectives are put right before the noun, they are attributive adjectives.

into a shadony vision of herself

Shadony in the sentence is an attributive adjective because it is put immediately before the noun it modifies, "vision".

the tiny metallic world in his glasses

There are two adjectives in the sentence, *tiny* and *metallic*. The two

adjectives are put right before the noun "word". Because they are put right before the noun, it makes them attributive adjectives

that catch the light in an amiable way

Amiable in the sentence is an attributive adjective because it is put immediately before the noun it modifies, "way".

Limiting Adjective

There are some types of limiting adjectives: definite and indefinite articles, possessive adjectives, demonstrative adjectives, indefinite adjectives, interrogative adjectives, cardinal adjectives, and ordinal adjectives. The obvious function of any limiting adjective is to limit or to specify some aspect of the noun it modifies.

Data	Page
she had <i>a quick, nervous</i> giggling habit	1
<i>Her</i> mother	1
Connie would raise her eyebrows at <i>these</i> familiar old complaints	1
Why don't you keep <i>your</i> room clean	2
with her in <i>the</i> same building	2
<i>Their</i> father was	2
There was <i>one</i> good thing	3
Everything about her had <i>two</i> sides to it	3
<i>another</i> girl	5
the two of them complained about the <i>third</i> one	6
with <i>each</i> gentle rise and fall of her chest	8
It was <i>an</i> open jalopy	9
the horn sounded <i>four</i> short taps	9
This here is <i>my</i> name	11
"Do you know all <i>those</i> kids?"	16

Table.4

she had a quick, nervous giggling habit

A is an indefinite article which modifies the noun “giggling habit”. In this sentence, *a* is included into limiting adjective.

with her in the same building

In this sentence, *the* is a definite article which modifies the noun “building”. *The* in this is a limiting adjective because it is

used to specify the noun “building”.

There was one good thing

One is a cardinal number which is included in limiting adjective. *One* in this sentence is used to modify the noun “good thing”.

another girl

Another in this sentence is an indefinite adjective, one kind of limiting adjectives. In this sentence, *another* is used to modify the noun “girl”.

the two of them complained about the *third* one

This here is my name

My is a limiting adjective, a possessive adjective, which modifies the noun “name”.

The Positions of Adjectives

In relation with the previous analysis, the positions of adjectives are divided into two positions, they are before a noun and after a verb.

Before a Noun

The first position of an adjective is before the noun it modifies. After analyzing Joyce Carol Oates’ *Where Are You Going Where Have You Been*, the writer finds:

Data	Page
she had a <i>quick, nervous</i> giggling habit	1
<i>Her</i> mother	1
into a <i>shadony</i> vision of herself	1
with her in the <i>same</i> building	2
She had a <i>high, breathless, amused</i> voice	2
There was one <i>good</i> thing	3
that looked <i>one</i> way	3
Everything about her had <i>two</i> sides to it	3
ducking fast across the <i>busy</i> road,	4
where <i>older</i> kids hung out	4
her friend pulled her face up into a <i>brave, droll</i> look	5
<i>another</i> girl	5
into a <i>single</i> face	6
the <i>humid</i> night air of July	6
in the back seat <i>poor</i> old June	7

Data	Page
how <i>nice</i> he had been	7
how <i>sweet</i> it always was	7
want you to pay real <i>close</i> attention	8
It was an <i>open</i> jalopy	9
he spoke in a <i>fast</i> , bright monotone	9
<i>New</i> paint job," he said	10
Connie's bright <i>green</i> blouse	11
The <i>left</i> rear fender	11
He was standing in a <i>strange</i> way	12
and showed how <i>lean</i> he was	12
like I know <i>your</i> parents and sister	15
with a <i>casual</i> jerk of his chin	16
"Do you know all <i>those</i> kids?"	16

Table.5

They must have been familiar sights

In the sentence, the noun “sights” is modified by *familiar* that is put before it.

She always drew thick clear lines

The noun “lines” in the sentence is modified by two adjectives, *thick* and *clear*, which are put before it.

He was standing in a strange way

In the sentence, the adjective, *strange*, is used to modify the noun “way”.

like I know your parents and sister

Your in the sentence is a possessive adjective that is put before the noun it modifies “parents and sister”.

After a Verb

The second position of adjective in a sentence is after a verb. The verb can be linking verb or certain verb.

Data	Page
She was <i>fifteen</i> .	1
her own was <i>all right</i>	1
if that wasn't <i>bad</i> enough	2
whether it was <i>sincere</i> or not	2
girls who were just as <i>plain</i> and <i>steady</i> as she	3
her walk, which could be <i>childlike</i>	3
her mouth, which was <i>pale</i>	3
feel good to be <i>able</i> to ignore him	4
that it was maybe <i>cruel</i> to fool her	6
and their faces went <i>hard</i> with contempt	7
it looked <i>small</i>	8
It was too <i>hot</i>	8
shabby black hair that looked <i>crazy</i>	9
"I ain't <i>late</i> , am I?" he said	9
"You're <i>cute</i> ."	10
because the glasses made it <i>impossible</i> for her	10-11
as if he were <i>afraid</i> it might fall off	11
that everything was <i>fine</i>	15
as if he were a little <i>offended</i>	16
Connie looked <i>away</i> from his smile	16

Table.6

and their faces went hard with contempt

In the sentence, *hard* is put after the verb “went” which is the past form of “go”
it looked small

Small, the adjective in the sentence, is put after linking verb “look”.

She shook her head as if to get awake

In the sentence, *awake* is put after linking verb “get”.
 (32) because the glasses made it *impossible* for her
 The adjective *impossible* in the sentence is an adjective after certain verb “make”

CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the data, it can be concluded that the adjectives found in Joyce Carol Oates' *Where Are You Going Where Have You Been*, indicates a rich use of descriptive language, with a total of 145 adjectives appearing throughout the text. The dominance of Character/Quality adjectives reflects Oates' deliberate emphasis on shaping the protagonist's persona, emotional nuances, and social context. This careful lexical choice enables readers to visualize Connie vividly and to understand more deeply the relationships and dynamics between her and the surrounding characters.

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