

STRUCTURALISM APPROACH BASED ANALYSIS: ON AMERICAN POEMS

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Abstract: The research is aimed to find how to read poems structurally. In this paper, the writer studied about Structuralism Approach Based Analysis of American Poems. During this research, the writer collected the data from American poems and chose three poets: Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, and Robert Frost, as unit analysis. The writer reads the poetry of those three poets, looks up every sentence to sentences, and analyzes the poems using the structuralism approach. The result of the research found that reading a poem as a whole unit is a must. This study was expected to help the readers of poems understand how to read the poems and analyze the poems comprehensively.

Keywords: Structuralism, American poets, Analysis.

Introduction

Poetry is a kind of literature. Since its beginning, poetry has been a heavy focus in literary studies. The poem is the language whose individual lines, either because of brilliance or because of focus so powerful as what has gone before. The poem is the language that frequently grows in condescends, giving both light and heat (Perrine & Arp, 2005).

The poem is magic, and it can heal the diseases of sick people as it can make someone do impossible things in average conditions. Poem is also a wonderful thing to read, Gunawan detailed, "puisi dimulai dengan semangat dan kerinduan, dan berakhir dengan kerendahan hati" (Gunawan, 1993).

Poetry in every country has its color. In America, the poem talked about the struggle and efforts to get equality and freedom. While the poem in the Middle East almost talked about love. It is usually because of the country's historical background, or we can say it is related to the history where the poem is made. For example, the poem "karangan bunga" is made by Taufik Ismail to describe the student demonstration against the government of the Republic of Indonesia in 1966, which killed many demonstrators.

A poem is made in stanzas, and lines correlate with other lines, and so are the stanzas. This correlation makes a poem a united unit. Mistakes always appear

because they guess the stanza as a single unit. That is why the meaning they get is also partial and incomplete. However, it will be different if the reader knows that each stanza is related as a structured unit.

The poem is structured writing. It means that every part of the poem relates to other parts. Look at the example;

....
*My little horse must think it queer
 To stop without a farmhouse near
 Between the woods and frozen lake
 The darkest evening of the year.*

....
 (Frost, 1923)

The poem above, line 3, “Between the woods and frozen lake,” is related to the stanza before, although the line is like a single idea. We cannot answer such a question; what did the event happen before? We could not answer those questions if we did not relate line 3 to line 2.

Therefore, the writer wants to analyze The American Poem using Structuralism Approach to answer the problem.

Theory And Concept

In order to prevent unimportant discussion, the research focuses on the matter of structure in the America Poem. Those are; A Noiseless Patient Spider & Cavalry Crowing a Ford By Walt Whitman, Because I could Not Stop for Death & If You’re Coming in the Fall By Emily Dickinson, and Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening & The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost.

Research Method

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive analysis explanation. The writer tries to answer all of the questions by describing the problem in the research.

Results And Discussion

A. A NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER & ONE’S SELF I SING, POEMS BY WALT WHITMAN

1. A Noiseless Patient Spider

I mark’d, where, on a little promontory, it stood, isolated;

*Mark'd how, to explore the vacant, vast surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament, out of itself;
Ever unreeling them-ever tirelessly speeding them.*

*And you, o my soul, where you stand,
Surrounded, surrounded, in measureless oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, -seeking the spheres, to
connect them;
Till the bridge you will need, be form'd-till the ductile anchor hold;
Till the gossamer thread you fling, catch somewhere, o my soul.*

- **Line to line reading**

- Line 1 : I marked (a spider), (some) where, on a little promontory, it stood and isolated (lived lonely)
- Line 2 : (I) marked (this spider) how, to explore the vacant (where it lived), vast surrounding
- Line 3 : It (spider) (then) launched forth filament, filament, out of itself (around it)
- Line 4 : (With) ever unreeling them-ever tirelessly speeding them (in launching filaments).
- Line 5 : And (for) you, o my soul, where you (ever) stand,
- Line 6 : (you have) surrounded, (still) surrounded, in measureless oceans of space (life)
- Line 7 : ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres, to connect them
- Line 8 : Till the bridge (the way) you will need, (to) be formed-till the ductile anchor (will) hold.
- Line 9 : Till the gossamer thread (that) you fling, catch somewhere (a purpose, a finish), o my soul

- **Stanza to stanza reading**

- 1) **First stanza:**

I marked (a spider), (some) where, on a little promontory, it stood and isolated (lived lonely). (I) marked (this spider) how, to explore the vacant (where it lived), vast surrounding. It (spider) (then) launched forth filament, filament, out of itself (around it). (With) ever unreeling them-ever tirelessly speeding them (in launching filaments).

2) Second stanza:

And (for) you, o my soul, where you (ever) stand, (you have) surrounded, (still) surrounded, in measureless oceans of space (life), ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres, to connect them; Till the bridge (the way) you will need, (to) be formed-till the ductile anchor (will) hold. Till the gossamer thread (that) you fling, catch somewhere (a purpose, a finish), o my soul

We can also read the poem as below:

I see the spider marked on a little isolated promontory; think how to explore the empty of cosmic surrounding. It then launched out thread filaments out of it self; although the filament didn't shape as a circle, but it is an effort to get the victim.

I see my soul surrounded in measureless oceans of space. Then I thought about risk, sink, in finding my hope. I need a bridge to achieve what I need, like thread filaments. I need an elastic way to connect what I want. My soul must be a bridge, must be a way. I will use my soul to get what I want.

- **Explanation**

The poet compares the spider to his soul. Like the spider, he feels in a vast surroundings indicating that he feels lost.

Unlike the spider, his soul has nothing to connect with. Like a spider making its web, the soul tosses pieces of itself out randomly, hoping that it will find a solid place to start building.

However, the soul has nowhere to go; the soul has no aims in life. The soul is weak as a spider, but the spider has something to do. The poet hopes his soul can do something in life, although in a limited condition of being weak.

2. One's Self I Sing

A simple separate person,

Yet utter the word democratic, the word En-Masse

Of physiology from top to toe I sing,

Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the muse, I say

The form complete is worthier far,

The female equally with the male I sing

Of life immense in passion, pulse, and power,

*Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
The modern man I sing*

- **Line to line reading**

- Line 1 : (I am) A simple separate person
- Line 2 : (seeing) yet utter the word democratic, the word En-Masse
- Line 3 : Of physiology from top to toe (is what) I sing (for)
- Line 4 : (there is) Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the muse
- Line 5 : I say (in singing)
- Line 6 : The form complete (both physiognomy and brain) is worthier far
- Line 7 : The female equally with the male (is what) I sing (for)
- Line 8 : (equality) Of life immense in passion, pulse, and power.
- Line 9 : Cheerful (singing), for freest action form'd under the laws divine
- Line 10 : (as) The modern man I sing

- **Stanza to stanza reading**

- 1) **First stanza:**

(I am) A simple separate person, (seeing) yet utter the word democratic, the word En-Masse

- 2) **Second stanza:**

Of physiology from top to toe (is what) I sing (for), (there is) Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the muse, I say (in singing), The form complete (both physiognomy and brain) is worthier far, The female equally with the male (is what) I sing (for)

- 3) **Third stanza**

(equality) Of life immense in passion, pulse, and power, Cheerful (singing), for freest action form'd under the laws divine (as) The modern man I sing

- **Explanation**

It is about a simple separate person who wants to achieve the democratic sphere. He struggles with his soul and physic, from up to the down, from the idea to the action.

Those things are hard to get, but I can sing a song of equality for a start. I will try to get what I sing for.

Life needs much passion, effort, and acts to show our ability. Show the power of struggle with a cheerful smile, the most accessible action on the law line. As modern men, we have to sing the song of ourselves.

The poem talks about the struggle to get equality. Walt Whitman symbolized his effort with the word sing. Singing means showing that we have the sound, disagreement, or reject something. The word "sing" in the poem does not mean an expression of happiness. Singing here means that we have to reject the unfair condition even only with the song. To sing means to say something; to sing may also mean to claim with polite words. Singing might be in cheerful expression, but it may have hidden meaning.

The poet also says that every citizen is not good, so with slavery. The modern era means both girls and boys are equal, and black and white are the same. The meaning of modern is the condition where everyone can be rich but not exploit others.

B. Because I Could Not Stop For Death & Of You Were Coming In The Fall, poems by Emily Dickinson

1. Because I Could Not Stop For Death

*Because I could not stop for death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And immortality.*

*We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.*

*We passed the school, where children strove
At recess, in the ring;*

*We passed the fields of gazing grain,
 We passed the setting sun.
 Or rather, be passed us;*

*The dews grew quivering and chill,
 For only gossamer my gown,
 My tippet only tulle.*

*We paused before house that seemed
 A swelling of the ground;
 The roof was scarcely visible,
 The cornice but a mound.*

*Since then 'tis centuries, and yet each
 Feels shorter than the day
 I first surmised the horses' heads
 Were toward eternity.*

- **Line to line reading**

- Line 1 : Because I could not stop for death
- Line 2 : He (the lover) kindly stopped for me
- Line 3 : The carriage (of death) held but just ourselves
- Line 4 : And (also) immortality
- Line 5 : We slowly drove, he knew (driving) no haste
- Line 6 : And I had put away (all I have)
- Line 7 : My labor, and my leisure (freedom) too
- Line 8 : For his civility (to me).
- Line 9 : (then) we passed the school, where children strove
- Line 10 : At recess, in the ring

- Line 11 : We (also) passed the fields of gazing grain
 Line 12 : (where) we passed the setting sun
 Line 13 : Or rather, (the setting sun) be passed us;
 Line 14 : The dews grew quivering and chill
 Line 15 : For only gossamer my gown
 Line 16 : My tippet (is) only tulle
 Line 17 : We paused before house that seemed
 Line 18 : (like) a swelling of the ground
 Line 19 : The roof (of house) was scarcely visible
 Line 20 : (it's) The cornice but a mound
 Line 21 : Since then 'tis centuries, and yet each (century)
 Line 22 : Feels shorter than the day
 Line 23 : I first surmised the horses' heads
 Line 24 : Were toward eternity

- **Stanza to stanza reading**

- 1) **First stanza:**

Because I could not stop for death, He (the lover) kindly stopped for me; The carriage (of death) held but just ourselves, And (also) immortality Second stanza

We slowly drove, he knew (driving) no haste, And I had put away (all I have) My labor, and my leisure (freedom) too For his civility (to me)

- 2) **Third stanza**

(then) We passed the school, where children strove At recess, in the ring; We (also) passed the fields of gazing grain, (where) We passed the setting sun. Or rather, (the setting sun) be passed us

- 3) **Fourth stanza**

The dews grew quivering and chill, For only gossamer my gown, My tippet (is) only tulle. We paused before house that seemed (like) A swelling of the ground; The roof (of house) was scarcely visible, (it's) The cornice but a mound. Since then 'tis

centuries, and yet each (century) Feels shorter than the day I first surmised the horses' heads Were toward eternity

- **Explanation**

Because I could not stop the coming of death, it stopped for me. The death sent me the carriage to bring me to the contemporary sphere somewhere with it.

We slowly drove to the end. The death knew that we do not have any haste, as I had put away labor, prosperity, and free time to pay for the death's waiting. Death waited for me for a long time. Together we passed the school, a place where children struggle to learn. We passed the sun where the sun passed us.

The dews are shaking and relaxed, and I am weak. The black will be grey; the grey becomes white. The death and I paused before the house that seemed like the growth of the ground, the matureness.

However, the roof's house was narrowly visible because it was centuries old. I feel the day is shorter than before, with death beside me. I am only like the horses' heads that could not do anything against death. I cannot hope to get an eternity.

Death is personified as a gentleman (maybe poet's lover) caller. The drive symbolizes her (poet) leaving life. She progresses from childhood, matureness (the "gazing grain" is ripe), and the setting (dying) sun refers to her grave.

The children are presented as active in their leisure (strove). The images of children and grain suggest the future. They have a future; they also depict the progress of human life.

The word "passed" is repeated four times in stanzas three and four. The death and speaker pass the children and grain, both still part of life. They are also passing out of time into eternity. The sun passes the death and speaker as the sun does to everyone who is buried. With the sun setting, death becomes dark. The death also becomes damp and cold (dew grew quivering and chill). Also, the activity of stanza three contrasts with the inactivity of the speaker in stanzas four and five. They pause at the grave.

In the final stanza, the speaker has moved into death; the language becomes abstract; the imagery was concrete and specific in the previous stanzas. The speaker only guesses (surmised) that they are heading for eternity.

2. If You Were Coming In The Fall

*If you were coming in the fall,
I'd brush the summer by
With half a smile and half a spurn,
As housewives do a fly.*

*If I could see you in a year,
I'd wind the months in balls,
And put them each in separate drawers,
Until their time befalls.*

*If only centuries delayed,
I'd count them on my hand,,
Subtracting till my finger dropped
Into van diemen's land.*

*If certain, when this life was out,
That yours and mine should be,
I'd toss it yonder like a rind,
And taste eternity.*

*But now, all ignorent of the length
Of time's uncertain wing.
It goads me, like the goblin bee,
That will not state its sting*

- **Line to line reading**

- Line 1 : If you (my love) were coming in the fall
- Line 2 : I'd brush the summer by
- Line 3 : (I'd brush) with half a smile and half a spurn
- Line 4 : As housewives do a fly (dash)
- Line 5 : If I could see you in a year
- Line 6 : I'd wind (blow) the months in balls

- Line 7 : And (I'd) put them each in separate drawers
 Line 8 : Into van diemen's land.
 Line 9 : If (there are) only centuries delayed
 Line 10 : I'd count them on my hand
 Line 11 : (and) Subtracting till my finger dropped
 Line 12 : Into van diemen's land.
 Line 13 : If certain, when this life was out
 Line 14 : That yours and mine should be (one)
 Line 15 : I'd toss it yonder like a rind
 Line 16 : And taste eternity
 Line 17 : But now, all ignorant of the length
 Line 18 : Of time's uncertain wing (that appears)
 Line 19 : It goads me, like the goblin bee
 Line 20 : That will not state its sting

- **Stanza to stanza reading**

- 1) **First stanza:**

If you (my love) were coming in the fall, I'd brush the summer by (I'd brush) with half a smile and half a spurn, as housewives do a fly (dash)

- 2) **Second stanza**

If I could see you in a year, I'd wind (blow) the months in balls, and (I'd) put them each in separate drawers, until their time befalls.

- 3) **Third stanza**

If (there are) only centuries delayed, I'd count them on my hand, (and) Subtracting till my finger dropped Into van diemen's land.

4) Fourth stanza

If certain, when this life was out, that yours and mine should be (one), I'd toss it yonder like a rind, and taste eternity.

5) Fifth stanza

But now, all ignorant of the length of time's uncertain wing (that appears). It goads me, like the goblin bee that will not state its sting

If you (someone, lover, honey) were coming in the fall, I'd brush the summer to get the time soon coming. Then I'd face you with half a smile and half a small, as housewives do a soar.

If I could see you in a year, I'd wind the months in balls, to get you soon. I'd put them each in separate drawers, until their time fall, so I get you here now. I'd count centuries delayed, and dropped into a place. A place where the death (our death) gathered in an eternity.

But the time pushes me; I can't do anything.

• Explanation

The poem above talks about love, time, and separation. It is addressed to someone who is away. The usual assumption is that the speaker is a woman because of the domestic metaphors (the housewife and the fly, the balls of yarn), because the writer was a woman, and I think it is traditionally women who wait.

The four stanzas begin with "if," which indicates uncertainty. This poem plays off certainty and uncertainty against each other. The speaker (Dickinson) is sure of her love for him (her lover); she does not know when they will be together and for how long. The time of absence gets longer in each stanza, progressing from fall in stanza one to a year to centuries to eternity in stanza four. She allows to go the importance of how long he may be absent by trailing the absence; she brushes off the absence of summer as a housewife would shoo a fly away.

Spurn connotes hate or displeasure. A year is reduced to months, a smaller unit. She minimizes a century-long waiting by modifying the word century only and calling her absence with the word delayed. Delayed implies that eventually, he will return.

The fourth stanza introduces a different time, eternity, or timelessness. She would willingly die if they were together forever. She compares her mortal life to a rind. As the rind is the outer skin that protects the food, her body (the rind) contains a spirit or essence that would continue after death.

The final stanza quickly introduces a new train of thought, indicated by the first word, "but." She deals with her reality, which is a frightening one. She calls time "uncertain"; she does not know (is "ignorant") what time or timelessness will bring her lover.

The threatening potential of time continues the wing metaphor in her comparison of time to a “goblin bee.” The bee threatens with its painful sting. However, time’s threat is even more remarkable because it leaves her in uncertainty, doubt, and suffering. The “goblin suggests the degree of threat that time presents.” A goblin is the best naughty, the worst evil.

C. STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING & THE ROAD NOT TAKEN, POEMS BY ROBERT FROST

1. Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village though;

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farmhouse near

Between the woods and frozen lake

The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake

To ask if there is some mistake.

The only other sound’s the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

- **Stanza to stanza reading**

- 1) **First stanza:**

Whose woods these are I think I know. His house is in the village though; He will not see me stopping here to watch his woods fill up with snow I think I know whose woods are in the house in the village. But I guess, he will not see me stopping here, as he wouldn't watch his woods plug up with snow

- 2) **Second stanza**

My little horse must think it queer to stop without a farmhouse near between the woods and frozen lake, the darkest evening of the year. My little horse must think it is a strange to stop without a farmhouse. Farmhouse means food. It is a strange to stop between the woods and frozen lake in the dark evening. He shakes his bells to aware me if there is some mistake

- 3) **Third stanza**

He gives his harness bells a shake to ask if there is some mistake. The only other sound's the sweep of easy wind and downy flake. Here we are, with the sweep easy wind and soft collapse. Where is the lovely dark and deep wood?

- 4) **Fourth stanza**

The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep. The condition seems to be nice to sleep, to get the rest, cold and windy. But stop here means my death. I won't. The death is not here. I have to finish my journey; I have to finish my way

- **Explanation**

The visible sign of the poet's worry is the repeated image, particularly in his earlier work, of dark woods and trees. The world of woods is a world offering perfect quiet, existing side by side with the realization that there is also another world, a world of people and people and social obligations.

We are not told, however, that the call of social responsibility proves more substantial than the attraction of the woods, which are "lovely" and "dark and "deep." The speaker and his horse have not moved on at the poem's end. The dichotomies of the poet's obligations are both to the woods and a world of promises.

The speaker is aware that the woods where he stops belong to someone in the village. However, at the same time, they are (the poet's woods) too, by what they mean to him in terms of emotion and private signification.

What appears to be "simple" is not simple. What appears to be innocent, not innocent. The poet is fascinated and lulled by the barren wastes of white and black.

The repetitions of “sleep” in the final two lines suggest that he may submit to the influences at work. There is no reason to suppose that these influences are benign. It is, after all, “the darkest evening of the year,” and the poet is alone “between the woods and frozen lake.” His one bond with the security and warmth of the “outer” world. The “little horse” who wants to be about his errand is an unsure one. The ascription of “lovely” to this scene of desolate woods, effacing snow, and black night complicates rather than alleviates the mood when considering the pervasive connotations of dangerous isolation and menacing death.

2. The Road Not Taken

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could.*

*To where it bent in the undergrowth,
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,*

*Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.*

*Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh*

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
I took the ones less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

- **Stanza to stanza reading**

- 1) **First stanza:**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could Two roads depart in yellow wood in front of me. I have to walk on road. Two choices, I can choose one. Choose a way surely, and walk as far as I could

- 2) **Second stanza**

To where it bent in the undergrowth, then took the other, as just as fair, and having perhaps the better claim, because it was grassy and wanted wear I have chosen a way, have you?

- 3) **Third stanza**

Though as for that, the passing there had worn them really about the same, and both that morning equally lay In leaves no step had trodden black. The life is a choice. You choose your way; I choose mine.

- 4) **Fourth stanza**

Oh, I kept the first for another day! Yet knowing how way leads on to way May you find something good for the life as I hope for my way chosen. I shall be telling this with a sigh

- 5) **Fifth stanza**

Somewhere ages and ages hence: Two roads diverged in a wood, and I Two roads diverge in a wood, two choices in a life. But the problem is how to lead a way. I'm afraid if I couldn't come, never come back.

- **Explanation**

The poem shows an image of a solitary traveler who has come to a fork in his journey and has to decide which way he walks. There are two ways, so there is a road not taken. Frost was too ambivalent in his descriptions of the difference between two roads and has therefore challenged the existence of a less traveled road. "The road

not taken” cannot be about choice because destiny will always guide one to the critical path.

Two distinct roads imply that all life’s choices are clear cut and that there are no greys, only black and white. The soul will go where it wants to, and this unexpected journey of the soul is what most humans perceive as individuality.

Conclusion

Poetry as a work of art has the specific characteristic of diction. Different from novels and dramas, poetry is the most efficient of literature. It is different because the word uses not a “wishy-washy” diction. The poetry is different also because the lines and stanzas save the mystery. It is efficient because it is short. The impact of poetry is direct to the spectators. The readers see an event in the lines and stanzas. In American Literature, most poetry wrote using symbols. It is the reason why the study of the symbol becomes essential.

Every part of the poem has a relation among them. The reader needs to read all the stanzas and lines to understand poetry. Each stanza is related to the other as a structured unit.

Structuralism-semiotics becomes the other approach in methodical literary poetry analysis. This approach then becomes famous as the one appropriate literary approach.

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