



An Analysis of Major Formalist Approach Terms in Short Story Everyday Use by Alice Walker

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Abstract

Literary work is a place for art to display beauty through language that is interesting, varied, and full of imagination. One of the literary works is a short story. A short story has major formalist approach terms, such as characters, plot, point of view, and setting. A short story also contains psychological aspects. This study discussed one of the literary works. It is *Everyday Use*, a short story by Alice Walker. The purpose of this study was to describe the formalist approach terms and the sociological aspects contained in the short story *Everyday Use* by Alice Walker. In describing them, the writer used the descriptive qualitative method. In collecting the data, the writer as well as read the short story, after that, the writer interpreted them by using the note-taking technique. This study used two sources, the primary and the secondary sources. The primary source was the literary text itself, and then the secondary source was some articles from the internet and books to evidence this study. The results of this study indicated that there are three main characters in the short story, they are Mama (Mrs. Johnson), Dee, and Maggie. This short story uses the first point of view. There are conflicts between the characters. From the psychological aspect, this short story had three components of the mind, the id, ego, and superego, which are symbolized by the characters' behaviors.

Keywords: formalist approach; literary work; psychological aspect; short story

Introduction

Nurhamidah et al (2019) say that literature is a creative work that depicts human existence in society in a way that may be enjoyed, understood, and utilized by society. The author will express his or her imagination through literary works. According to Keraf in Adampe (2015), literary work is a venue for art to express beauty through intriguing, varied, and imaginative language. It indicates that literary works are instruments used by authors to generate ideas for works of art since they provide information about a variety of topics that the reader may not be aware of. According to Astuti and Jumaidah (2020), literature is a mirror of society. Literary works are divided into three types, namely: prose, poetry, and drama. The prose is also divided into several types, namely: short stories, novels, and romances. As Nadira and Leila in Nurhapidah and Sobari (2019) state there are three kinds of approaches to the study of the sociology of literature, including 1). The social context of the author, this context is the background of the social process of literature in society concerning the reading community, 2). Literature as a form of social reality, namely the extent to which literature affects people's lives as a whole with all aspects 3). The social function of literature, in this case, literature, is examined to what extent literary values are social values and to what extent literature functions as a means of entertainment as well as education for the reading community.

Dinurriyah (2017) states formalists were largely interested in the linguistic component of literary works, rather than studying all aspects of them, such as how the author's life or social status influenced the literary work itself, as other theories did. Wardoyo in Sulistyorini (2007) states that formalism can be used to evaluate poetry, novel, short story, or theatre, and it suggests that the text's tension be identified.

According to Guerin et al (2005), the formalist approach in practice has some terms such as character, the figure of speech, imagery, plot, point of view, setting, and theme. The major formalist approach terms are important to know. It can give its color and taste to a literary work which can later become a deep meaning. These elements can also be used as a portrait of the reality of a society and its environment when the literary work is made. *Everyday Use* is a short story written by Alice Walker. Many events occur in the short story in sequential order, and the story is well-organized in terms of time and chronological order. It allows readers to fully comprehend and follow the story while allowing them to be carried away by their imagination.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested to analyze Alice Walker's short story, *Everyday Use*. In this study, the short story *Everyday Use*, as a work of English contemporary literature, will be examined using formalism as part of a text-oriented approach. The focus of the analysis is on the major formalist approach terms and the psychological aspect of it.

Research Methodology

The current study was part of a library research project in which the researcher relied extensively on information from the item itself (short story) to resolve or answer the research questions, as well as any information obtained from various relevant resources (Nurhamidah, 2019). The current research was based on Alice Walker's short story "Everyday Use", in which her major formalist approach was about the characterization of an imagined character.

In this study, the researcher used descriptive qualitative research. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative data analysis entails acquiring data, developing interpretations, and writing reports. This method is used to examine the condition of natural objects (as the opposite is an experiment) where the researcher is the instrument. The key to data collection techniques was triangulation (combined), data analysis was inductive/qualitative, and the results of qualitative research were more emphasized meaning rather than generalization.

The researcher was the primary instrument in this study, with Alice Walker's short tale serving as the secondary instrument. This study gathered data through reading a short narrative to comprehend the story's information on the primary formalist approach parts.

The researcher used the theory of Guerin (2005) about the elements of the major formalist approach and Tyson (2006) about the psychological aspect. The researcher described all of note-

taking before analyzing the information, presenting and interpreting the results. Finally, the researcher wrote the outcomes reports.

Findings and Discussions

Findings

The research findings were given in this section. The researcher found that *Everyday Use* was initially published in 1973 as part of Walker's anthology *In Love and Trouble*, a collection of short stories. Since then, it has been widely analyzed and anthologized. There were formalist approach terms such as character, the figure of speech, imagery, plot, point of view, setting, and theme in this short story. The findings are shown in the tables below:

Table 1. Formalist Approach Terms

No.	Formalist Approach Terms	Findings
1.	Characters	Mama (Mrs. Johnson), Dee, Maggie, and Hakim-a-barber
2.	Figure of speech	Metaphor, zoomorphic extended metaphor, simile, synecdoche, and hyperbole
3.	Imagery	Imagery can be found in descriptions of the house, the inhabitants, and their experiences
4.	Plot	Mama and Maggie, Dee's younger sister and Mama's younger daughter, are getting ready for the visit when the story begins. The ending is Mama reflects on how Dee's attitude toward them changed as she became more educated, thanks to money from Mama and the Church, and how she went from being hostile to being hurtfully condescending.
5.	Point of view	The first point of view
6.	Setting	In a rural area in Georgia
7.	Theme	One of the key topics of the short story is the concept of a person's relationship with their ancestors

This Alice Walker short story also included the psychological aspects because it incorporated the concepts of family and mind.

Table 2. Psychological Aspect

No.	Main Characters	Type of Psychological Aspect
1.	Mama (Mrs. Johnson)	Superego
2.	Dee	Id
3.	Maggie	Ego

Discussion

Furthermore, formalist approaches terms are important to know because they can give colors and help the readers imagine the narrative, Arikan (2008) said that they place a greater emphasis on linguistic and stylistic analysis, as well as the formal structure of literary works. Wulansari et al. (2012) also argue that formalism contributes to the concept that literary work, particularly the language utilized in it, has its position in literary studies.

- ***Characters***

In a tale, a character is a person, animal, being, creature, or thing. Writers employ characters to carry out activities and deliver a speech, allowing the story to progress along a plotline. In this short story, there were three main characters (Mama, Dee, and Maggie) and another character (Hakim-a-barber). The first was Mrs. Johnson (Mama). She was described as a hefty, big-boned woman with rough, man-working hands. She adores her lifestyle (particularly milking cows) and has not completed secondary school. She disagrees with Dee's way of life but keeps quiet about it to respect her and maintain civility. The second was Dee. She was Mrs. Johnson's eldest daughter, she was a well-educated African-American woman. She tried to embrace her ethnic identity by changing her name from Dee to Wangero Leewanikhi a Kemanjo (an African name), marrying a Muslim man, and collecting items from Mama's house to showcase, an approach that annoys Mama and Maggie. She is noted as having a wonderful sense of style and being physically attractive. The third was Maggie. When compared to her older sister, Mrs. Johnson described her as dull, brittle, and silent. She was Mama's youngest kid, and she was quite nervous and self-conscious about her burn scars and marks from the fire that destroyed their last home. In comparison to her sister Dee, she had weak reading skills. The fourth was Hakim-a-barber. He was Muslim, Dee's partner was addressed as "Asalamalakim." Because Mama was unable to pronounce his real name, he eventually convinced her to nickname him "Hakim-a-barber".

- ***Figure of speech***

In Walker's *Everyday Use*, there were some examples of figures of speech used. Such as, metaphor (the yard as a living room), zoomorphic extended metaphor (Mama as a hog and Maggie as a wounded dog), simile (Walker uses similes to portray the sentiments of the characters throughout the short story), synecdoche (Dee is introduced using synecdoche, with her feet, clothes, and jewelry symbolizing her personality), and hyperbole (Mama feels as if she is charged with electricity (or God) to defend Maggie from Dee).

- ***Imagery***

In the short story *Everyday Use* written by Alice Walker, imagery can be found in descriptions of the house, the inhabitants, and their experiences. The distinctions between Mama, Maggie, and Dee are further highlighted through imagery. It also depicts Mama and Maggie's way of life, which is simple, practical, and rural.

- ***Plot***

In this short story, Mama and Maggie, Dee's younger sister and Mama's younger daughter are getting ready for the visit when the narrative begins. Mama fantasizes about reconnecting with her daughter on a television show presented by Johnny Carson as Maggie changes her clothing. Mama then dismisses her fantasy as unrealistic, claiming that she is not the type to appear on such a show. Mama glances around the yard and at Maggie as she waits for Dee, bringing back memories of Dee's tumultuous youth in their home, her rage at her family and their poverty, her desire for better clothes and education, her charisma, assertiveness, and beauty. Mama reflects on how Dee's attitude toward them changed as she became more educated, thanks to money from Mama and the Church, and how she went from being hostile to being hurtfully condescending.

- ***Point of view***

The story is narrated in the first-person point of view, as it develops through Mama's eyes and thoughts. As Joe (2021) said in his blog that when "I" am telling the story, it is in first-person perspective. The character is present in the story and speaks directly about his or her experiences. This permits the narrator to provide firsthand accounts of what they saw, felt, thought, heard, said, and did with the audience. In other words, the narrator in the first-person point of view becomes an eyewitness to the story's plot.

- ***Setting***

The setting of the short story *Everyday Use* takes place in a rural area in Georgia, and it was set in Dee and Maggie's childhood home, but not their first home. Mama recalls the fire that destroyed their first home. Dee had despised the first home, she claims.

- ***Theme***

One of the key topics of the short story is the concept of a person's relationship with their ancestors. Dee's mother stayed true to family customs in the short story, but Dee chose to go further into her African heritage. Dee is of a different mind; she does not share Mama and Maggie's values, especially when it comes to cultural preservation and the best method to go about it. Maggie and her mother treasure the family treasures because they "remind them of their loved ones," whereas Dee (Wangero) just wants them to show in her home for their "artistic worth." Maggie learning to make her quilt and putting it to daily use, in Mama's opinion, is conserving the culture, which is how the quilt should be utilized. Even if the quilts "end up in rags," Maggie was taught how to make them, so additional quilts can be made. Dee, on the other hand, believes that rather than continuing to live out their tradition as Mama and Maggie do, the correct way to preserve her culture is to exhibit the quilt in her home and conserve the quilt itself. Another recurring subject in this short story is the polarizing power of education. Education is barely mentioned in the short story, and it is entirely divorced from the entire family.

- ***Psychological Aspects***

A psychological method is a way of looking at behavior that is based on specific assumptions. Each strategy has a set of common principles about how to characterize, predict, and explain behavior (Tyson, 2006). Emir (2016) say that in terms of skillfully presenting characters, expressing their moods, and immersing the reader in the psychological dimension of human reality, a literary work benefits from psychology. In their concentration on phantasies, emotions, and the human soul, psychology and literature studies collide. From this theory, it means that in literature, psychological refers to the process of analyzing a writer's work via a psychological lens. This method examines the author of the work or a character in it from a psychological standpoint. It aids readers in comprehending the writer's as well as the characters' motivations.

The human mind is divided into three components, each of which contributes to the totality of the mind. These components are required for a complete mind, just as family members are required to form a family. In writing, it is common to use parts to make up a whole (Freud in Zhang, 2020). This short story had three components of the mind, the id, ego, and superego, which are symbolized by the characters' behaviors. The first type of the mind is the id. Dee's personality is equated to the id in "Everyday Use" because she pursues her benefit and does not always consider the implications of her actions. Her role as an antagonistic foil to Maggie represents the disturbance of untamed desires. Dee's personality was akin to that of the id. The second type is ego. In this short story, Maggie represents the ego, or conscious self, and is harmed by her sister Dee's aggressive Id and constrained by the principles instilled in her. The third type is the superego. In this Alice Walker's *Everyday Use*, Mama is the embodiment of the super-ego. The reader judges and labels the character of her two daughters through her eyes as the story's narrator, and this is based on her learned ethics.

Conclusion and Suggestion

The researcher concludes research on the analysis of elements of the formalist approach in Alice Walker's short story *Everyday Use* based on the results of data analysis and discussion, so the researcher concludes that this short story contains all major formalist approach terms such as characters, the figure of speech, imagery, plot, point of view, setting, and theme. This short story also contains three types of psychological aspects, namely id, ego, and superego. Many conflicts may arise for each character.

Based on the result of this study aimed to provide insight into the features of a formalist approach as well as psychological characteristics in a literary work, particularly Alice Walker's short tale *Everyday Use*. For future researchers, the researcher hopes that the next researchers will continue to evaluate and perform in-depth research on other components of the literature using other methodologies such as culture studies, gender studies, and others to complete all of the colors of this short narrative.

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