

RESEARCH TITLE

A STYLISTIC STUDY OF PALINDROME IN WEIRD AL YANKOVICS' BOB LYRIC

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Abstract

Palindromes is a fascinating form of language-play. They are words, sentences or verse that can be read both backwards and forward. Therefore, this study tries to focus on the importance of palindrome as a phonetic device that is used in poetry. Accordingly, the study tries to answer the following questions: 1.What is meant by palindrome? 2.How does palindrome have an operational role as a stylistic device in poetry? 3.What are the uses of palindrome in Weird Al Yankovics lyric "Bob"? Therefore, the present study aims at: 1- Showing the meaning of palindrome. 2. Exploring the operational role of palindrome as a stylistic device in Weird Al Yankovics lyric "Bob". 3.Illustrating the use of palindrome in Weird Al Yankovics lyric "Bob". The researchers in the current study hypothesize that: 1- Palindrome is a device used to create light entertainment and fun in Weird Al Yankovics lyric "Bob". 2- The use of palindrome in Weird Al Yankovics lyric "Bob" are used in each line.

1.Introduction

Palindrome is a fascinating form of language-play. They are words, sentences or verse that can be read both backwards and forwards (Dupriez, 1991: 313–314). Palindromes are neither as rare as could be imagined, nor are they a recent invention. The Ancient Greek poet Sotades, accredited with the invention of palindrome, already understood the power of ‘talking backwards’ which enabled him to ridicule his contemporary politicians and get away with it (Ljungberg, 2007: 264–265). The research problem is an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is meant by palindrome?
2. How does palindrome have an operational role as a stylistic device in poetry?
3. What are the uses of palindrome in Weird Al Yankovics lyric "Bob"? Therefore, the present study aims at: 1-Showing the meaning of palindrome. 2. Exploring the operational role of palindrome as a stylistic device in Weird Al Yankovics lyric "Bob". 3.Illustrating the use of palindrome in Weird Al Yankovics lyric "Bob". The researchers in the current study hypothesize that: 1-Palindrome is a device used to create light entertainment and fun in Weird Al Yankovics lyric "Bob". 2- The use of palindrome in Weird Al Yankovics lyric "Bob" are used in each line.

2.Theoretical Background

2.1 Palindrome: Definition and History

A palindrome is basically a word or phrase, which can be read in the same way even in backward. For example, kayak is read as kayak when the letters are read from the right to left too (Kulkarni, 2014:29).

It is a word, phrase, number or other sequence of characters which reads the same backward or forward with general allowances for adjustments to punctuation, capital letters, and word dividers. Composing literature that is categorized as a palindrome is known as 'constrained writing' (Goodies, 2015: 98). Famous examples include:

1. Civic.
2. A man, a plan, a canal-Panama.
3. Life is good. Good is life . (Bergerson,1973:20)

2.2 Functions of Palindrome

Bergerson (1973:97) states that the purpose of using palindromes in writing, words, numbers and sentences is to create light entertainment and fun. However, some supporters have taken great initiatives in finding long palindromes that cover many sentences and poems.

The longest palindromic word in the Oxford English Dictionary is the nomatopoeic tattarrattat, coined by James Joyce in *Ulysses* (1922) for a knock on the door. The Guinness Book of Records gives title to detartrated, the preterit and past participle of detartrate, a chemical term meaning to remove tartrates. Rotavator, a trademarked name for an agricultural machine, is often listed in dictionaries (Stephen, 1992:52). Generally, the longer the palindrome, the less sense it makes. However, these longer examples are clever and some surprisingly one word:

1. Harass sensuousness, Sarah.

2. Straw? No, too stupid a fad. I put soot on warts. (Fisher, 2015:1)

Palindromes can be used in prose, poetry and criticism. This type of poetry is also called as mirrored poetry where palindrome sentences are used which read backward as well forward, as in:

3. Lewd did I live and evil I did dwell.

This is the first sentence using a palindrome that appeared in the English language, back in 1614. In this sentence, the words read the same forward and backward (Literary Devices, 2015: 1).

Further illustrations are the following poems written by Gorelick and Bagnall respectively:

9. Day brighter Load lighter Smile

Lighter load Brighter day

10. Spring in pretty blooms

Blooms, pretty in spring

Rose smells sweet, my sweet smells rose. (Short Palindrome poems, 2015:1-2)

Palindromes can be traced in classical music poetry for rhythmical effects in acoustics when a phrase once recorded and played backwards sound the same. In ancient times, the palindromes appeared in magic spells and many have taken this reversibility as a convention. Even several religious texts are full of palindromes and biologically the genes are also palindromes that their order is the same; forward as well as backward (Literary Devices, 2015:2):

11. So the last will be first, and the first will be last. (Matthew, 2016)

12. And DNA and DNA and DNA. (Bergerson, 1973:63)

Palindrome may also be used in proverbs and it is called proverbial palindromes:

13. Sex at noon taxes Dennis and Edna sinned

Live not on evil. (Fisher, 2015:1)

3.Data Analysis

3.1" Bob" of Weird AlYankovics lyric

This section is going to trace palindrome in Weird Al Yankovics lyric "Bob". The empirical data of this study is collected from one main source: Internet which is available on youtube.com. This lyric is written by Weird Al Yankovie who is an American musician, satirist, parodist and songwriter. In particular, he is known for humorous songs which make fun of popular culture or parody specific songs by contemporary musical acts or both (Brownielocks, 1999:3).

Weird Al Vankovic is famous for his parody of well- known artists. "Bob" is, a lyric song, a style parody of Bob Dylan (hence the title) as an American writer and has been influential in popular music and culture for more than five decades (Ibid.:5).

The researchers use Leech and Short model to analyze phonetic palindrome in "Bob" since it is as a whole a palindromic poem including the title itself. Each line, in addition to the title, is a palindrome. It is the top and most popular song lyric that composed entirely of palindrome. Like the palindromic phrase which can be read both forward and backward, the palindromic poem can also be read in both directions. The palindromic poem presents a challenge to writers in terms of both form and content. Not only must the poet use the same words in the second half of the poem as in the first. but the reverse reading must also make sense and relate to some kind of reversal of events or ideas to make the poems form meaningful. A palindromic poem that narrates entering a mirror world or an undoing of events manipulates the form to create greater meaning (Smith, 2015: 2).

Text 1

I, man, am regal-a German am I

Never odd or even

If I had a hi-fi

Madam, I'm Adam

Too hot or to hoot

No lemons, no melon

Too bad I hid about

Phonetic palindromes can be found in these phrases when they are pronounced the same when read in either direction. They can be analyzed according to Thorpes model (2011) even the palindromic name in the title itself "Bob". When the first and the third phonetic symbols represent the same letter may include short vowel central symbol.

Each line of this text represents palindrome whether it is read forward or

backward and its meaning may be the same when interpreted in reverse direction. Syntactically speaking, these lines show word and line-unit palindromes when they read letter by letter in both directions to make sense of the poem itself in its form and meaning. So it can be read the same from the reverse line: L man, am regal-a German am I where the I at the end of regal ' is the center of the palindrome. The same is true for the other lines: Never odd or even:

Never odd

If I had a hi-fi: If I had

Madam, I'm Adam: Madam

Too hot or to hoot: Too hot

No lemons, no melon: No lemon

Too bad I hid a boot: Too bad I

Text 2

Lisa Bonnet ate no basil

Warsaw was raw

Was it a car or a cat I saw?

From a phonetic perspective, these phrase-unit palindromes can be pronounced the same when read in reverse direction to create meaningful form. Name palindrome may be used in the first two phrases as parts of a larger palindrome when they read from right to left and left to right as in: Lisa Bonnet ate no basil: Lisa Bonnet and Warsaw was raw: Warsaw.

The third line-unit palindrome is expressed syntactically by the use of question: Was it a car or a cat I saw?

Text 3

Rise to vote, sir

Do geese see God?

Do nine men interpret? "Nine men", I nod

Rats live on no evil star

Won't lovers revolt now?

Race fast, safe car

From a syntactic perspective, a series of palindromes is shown here. Two phrases or line-unit palindromes are found in these sentences respectively:

Rise to vote, sir and Rats live on no evil star where- as: Race fast safe car

represents another type of palindrome, i.e.. letter palindrome. Each letter of the word matches and can be spelled the same forwards or back-wards to give the same effects and meanings.

The form of phrase palindrome can also be expressed by two questions in:

Do geese see God? and Do nine men interpret? In the last question, the word nine' represents phonetic palindrome that may be analyzed according to Thorpes model (2011) consists of three phonetic symbols of which the first and the third are identical and may include diphthong central symbol.

Text (4)

Pa's a sap

Ma is as selfless as I am

May a moody baby doom a yam?

The abovementioned lines give the example of word and line-unit palindromic types. They read in the same manner from the first letter to the last letter as they are going from the last letter to the first letter without effecting their meaning to make powerful form. Syntactically speaking, palindrome is carried out by means of comparison: as selfless as, to mean that both Ma and the writer are unselfish. Palindrome is also formed by a question, as in: May a moody baby doom a yam? From a phonetic viewpoint, according to Thorpes model (2011), diphthong central symbol is used in the word baby'in the same first and the third letters.

Text (5)

Oh, no! Don Ho!

Nurse, I spy gypsies-run!

Senile felines

Now I see bees I won

UFO tofu

We panic in a pew

Oozy rat in a sanitary zoo

God! A red nugget! A fat egg under a dog!

Go hang a salami, I'm a lasagna hog

From a syntactic perspective, palindromic name appears in the first sentence to name somebody on which can also be carried out by interjection and exclamatory sentences: Oh, noi Don HoL Nurse, I spy gypsies-runi. and Godi A red nuggeti A fat egg under a dogi to give the meanings of strong feeling and exclamation. Word-units

as another type of palindrome are used in: Senile felines and UFO tofu where the units of reversal are the words themselves where the latter can be accomplished by acronym. In addition, line-unit palindromes are also exemplified in the below phrases that read the same letter by letter forward and backward to influence the form and to create fun and entertainment.

4. Conclusions

The researcher has arrived at the following conclusions:

1. A palindrome is a word, a sentence, a symbol or even signs that can be read forward as well as backward, that is to say from right to left and left to right with the same effects and meanings.
2. It can be used in various functions in words, numbers, and sentences. Palindromes may be traced in classical and modern music poetry for rhythmical effects, in acoustics and in dates as well.
3. Palindromes may have different types. There are palindromes where the unit of reversal is the letter, word, or line. These are referred to as letter-unit, word-unit and line-unit palindromes.
4. There exist words which sound like palindromes. These are phonetic palindromes and most of them considered here consist of three phonetic symbols of which the first and the third are identical.
5. Most of palindromic cases mentioned above can be analyzed in Weird Al Yankovics lyric "Bob"

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