

An Analysis of The Implied Meaning of Love in Robert Burns' Poem "A Red, Red Rose" (Structural Analysis)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implied meaning of love in Robert Burns' A Red, Red Rose through a structural approach, integrating Cognitive Poetics, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and structuralist perspectives. Using qualitative analysis, each stanza is explored to identify figurative devices such as similes, hyperboles, symbolism, repetition, rhyme, and meter, and to interpret how these elements convey nuanced emotional meanings. The findings reveal that stanza 1 presents love as fresh and harmonious; stanza 2 emphasizes its enduring nature across time; stanza 3 expresses a cosmic and temporal climax; and stanza 4 depicts a dignified farewell, highlighting constancy, hope, and devotion. Overall, Burns' integration of figurative language and structural patterns demonstrates love as eternal, resilient, and harmoniously balanced. Suggestions for future research include applying cognitive and cross-cultural approaches to poetry, while educators and students are encouraged to analyze the interplay of form and figurative devices to deepen understanding of implied meaning.

ABSTRACT

Studi ini mengkaji makna tersirat cinta dalam A Red, Red Rose karya Robert Burns melalui pendekatan struktural, yang memadukan Poetika Kognitif, Teori Metafora Konseptual, dan perspektif

strukturalis. Dengan menggunakan analisis kualitatif, setiap bait dieksplorasi untuk mengidentifikasi perangkat figuratif seperti simile, hiperbola, simbolisme, repetisi, rima, dan meter, serta menginterpretasi bagaimana elemen-elemen ini menyampaikan makna emosional yang bernuansa. Bait 1 menyajikan cinta sebagai sesuatu yang segar dan harmonis; bait 2 menekankan sifatnya yang abadi lintas waktu; bait 3 mengungkapkan klimaks kosmik dan temporal; dan bait 4 menggambarkan perpisahan yang bermartabat, menonjolkan keteguhan, harapan, dan pengabdian. Secara keseluruhan, integrasi bahasa figuratif dan pola struktural karya Burns menunjukkan cinta sebagai sesuatu yang abadi, tangguh, dan seimbang secara harmonis. Saran untuk penelitian selanjutnya meliputi penerapan pendekatan kognitif dan lintas budaya terhadap puisi, sementara para pendidik dan siswa didorong untuk menganalisis interaksi bentuk dan perangkat figuratif guna memperdalam pemahaman tentang makna tersirat.

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a form of human expression that has the power to describe emotion, experiences and cultural values. Literature is a body of written works, it has become common knowledge. Based on Cuddon & Habib, 2022, p. 471, literature is a vogue term, which usually denotes works which belong to the major genres: epic, drama, lyric, novel, and short story. Meanwhile, Klarer (2023) states that literature is generally understood as the totality of written expression, although not every written document can be categorized as literature in the stricter sense of the word (p. 1). Based on this perspective, poetry is considered one of the central forms of literary expression.

Poetry is a form of literary work that has its own beauty through the use of distinctive language. In poetry, poets are able to convey messages, emotions and deep thoughts through unique structure, diction and language style. One theme often raised in poetry is love, which is a universal aspect of human expression. The theme of love, in particular has been a major topic in literary works for centuries. Based on Wordsworth (2003) described poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (p. 598), emphasizing the emotional origin of poetic expression. Poetry is a very effective medium for conveying deep and universal feeling, one of them is love.

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Poetry has long been recognized as a powerful medium for expressing complex human emotions, particularly love. Unlike prose, poetry relies heavily on figurative language and structural elements to convey meaning that often extends beyond the literal. In the context of love, poets frequently use symbolism, metaphor, and rhythm to articulate emotional depth, intensity, and nuance that cannot be captured through straightforward description. Understanding the meaning of love in poetry, therefore, requires more than surface-level interpretation. It demands a deeper literary investigation into how structure and language work together to create implied meaning. According to Culler (2021), structural elements such as repetition, rhyme, and stanza arrangement play a critical role in shaping how meaning is perceived by readers. In love poetry, these elements often enhance or even transform the emotional impact of figurative expressions. Thus, analyzing poetry through a structural lens is not only relevant, but essential. It enables scholars to uncover how form reinforces feeling, and how the architecture of a poem reflects the complexity of love itself. This analytical approach makes it possible to move beyond what is explicitly stated and explore the deeper emotional truths embedded in poetic expression.

One famous poem that describes love in a unique and enchanting way is "A Red, Red Rose" by Robert Burns. Robert Burns is a famous poet from Scotland, he is one of the writers who raised the theme of love in his immortal work, "A Red, Red Rose". This poem is one of his most famous works, depicting love as something timeless and invaluable. "A Red, Red Rose" was first published in 1794 and has since become one of the most appreciated literary works in English literature, with a simple but meaningful style, Burns succeeded in creating poetry that describes love as something eternal, sincere and deep. This poem uses various literary elements such as metaphor, imagery, and rhythm to create a timeless and meaningful depiction of love.

Understanding the implied meaning of love in this poem is not simple. As a literary work that is dense in meaning, this poetry requires in depth analysis to reveal the structure and elements that support the delivery of the message of love. Therefore, the structural Approach is a relevant method for studying how the internal elements of poetry, such as rhyme, rhythm, diction, symbols and language style, are related to teach other and form to overall meaning. Poetry consists of two main elements, namely the physical structure and the inner structure. These two main elements are important to know.

According to **Leithauser (2022, p. 15)**, both the formal (physical) aspects of poetry such as rhyme and meter and its expressive (inner) elements are essential in understanding how poetry conveys meaning. The inner structure of poetry consist of a theme, tone, feeling, and message. While the physical structure of poetry consist of diction, imagination, concrete words, a figure of speech, verification and typography of poetry. Based on this background, this research aims to analyze the structure of the poem "A Red, Red Rose" and explore how these elements are used to express the implied meaning of love. By using a structural approach, it is hoped that this research can make a significant contribution to literary studies, especially in understanding the Robert Burns and the theme of love in poetry.

One important aspect of poetry is also the use of figurative language or style to express the poet's feelings and thoughts. "I've been taught bloodstones can cure a snakebite, can stop the bleeding most people forgot this when the war ended." Natalie Diaz, *Postcolonial Love Poem* (2020). In this excerpt, Diaz uses the metaphors of "bloodstone" and snakebite" to symbolize the hurt and healing, both physical and emotional, associated with trauma of cultural heritage and the history of colonialism. This figurative language style amplifies the poet's emotional expression of pain, healing, and identify, making the poem not only a personal story, but also cultural statement. Diaz's quote can strengthen the previous statement. In poem titled "A Red, Red Rose" depicts a deep and lasting love. Although this poem looks simple, there is a rich implied meaning through the careful use of figurative imagery. Therefore it is important to analyze the structure and stylistics of the poem to reveal the hidden meaning of love.

Although previous studies have explored the stylistic and thematic elements of *A Red, Red Rose*, many have not thoroughly investigated how figurative language works together with structural elements to convey implied meaning. For example, **Abro (2023, p. 4)** provides a stylistic overview of the poem, focusing on metaphor and simile, but the study does not delve into how these devices function structurally to construct deeper emotional meaning. Similarly, **Kim and Lee (2020, p. 112)** analyze figurative language in modern poetry but do not apply their findings to classical Romantic texts.

This study aims to fill that gap by combining figurative language analysis with a structural approach to uncover the implied meanings of love in Burns' poem. Through this perspective, the research provides a more comprehensive understanding of how poetic form and literary devices interact to express complex emotions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Studies On A Red, Red Rose

Several studies have analyzed Robert Burns' poem *A Red, Red Rose*, figurative language, implied meaning, and structuralist approaches in poetry. Abro (2023) conducted a stylistic analysis of Burns' poem, focusing on its romantic expression and poetic devices. The study emphasized the aesthetic beauty of the poem, yet it did not delve deeply into the implied meaning constructed by figurative language. Similarly, Zhang (2021) explored implied meaning in contemporary English poetry using pragmatic analysis, highlighting how indirect expressions and literary devices contribute to deeper interpretations.

Li (2022, p. 25) applied a structuralist approach to examine how metaphor and repetition in modern lyric poetry interact within a formal framework to generate emotional resonance. His method, though focused on contemporary works, offers a model that can be extended to classic Romantic texts such as Burns'. To further build on this structuralist foundation, this study incorporates insights from **cognitive poetics**, which examines how figurative language is processed within the architecture of poetic form. According to Tsur (1983, p. 10), cognitive poetics views poetic devices particularly rhyme, meter, and metaphor as structural elements that engage the reader's cognitive patterns and evoke meaning through their interaction within a text. These studies demonstrate the importance of stylistic and figurative analysis in understanding deeper meanings within poems. However, few have specifically combined the analysis of figurative language and implied meaning within *A Red, Red Rose*, making this study relevant and unique.

Studies On Implied Meaning In Poetry

Research on implied meaning in poetry often focuses on how poets convey deeper messages beyond literal interpretations. For example, **Zhang (2021, p. 1488)** investigated implied meanings in contemporary English poems through the use of metaphor and symbolism, demonstrating that understanding these devices is essential to grasp the poet's intended themes. Similarly, **Hasan and Iqbal (2019, p. 290)** analyzed how implied meanings function in Urdu poetry, emphasizing the role of reader interpretation guided by cultural context and figurative expressions.

Studies on Figurative Language in Poetry

Figurative language is widely recognized as a crucial tool in poetry for expressing complex emotions and ideas. According to **Kim and Lee (2020, p. 112)**, figurative devices such as simile, metaphor, and personification enrich poetic texts by creating vivid imagery and emotional resonance. Another study by **Anwar and Yusuf (2022, p. 93)** explored the role of hyperbole and symbolism in romantic poetry, showing that these devices amplify the intensity of emotions and themes.

Studies on Structural Approach in Poetry Analysis

The structural approach to poetry analysis examines the relationships between form, language, and meaning within a text. **Kumar (2018, p. 114)** applied structuralism to analyze narrative poems, illustrating how the arrangement of literary elements constructs thematic coherence. More recently, **Li (2022, p. 27)** used structuralist methods to dissect modern lyric poetry, revealing how structure shapes the reader's interpretation of implied meanings. This approach is valuable for uncovering the underlying mechanisms that convey a poem's deeper messages.

Theoretical Framework

This section outlines the theoretical foundations used to analyze the implied meaning of love in Robert Burns' poem "A Red, Red Rose". The analysis is carried out through a structuralist lens, emphasizing the role of figurative language as a medium through which implied meanings are constructed and conveyed. Several interconnected theories are used to support this analysis, including structuralism in literature, theories of figurative language, and the concept of implied meaning in literary texts.

Figurative Language in Poetry

Figurative language refers to expressions that go beyond their literal meanings to convey complex ideas and emotions. In poetry, it enriches imagery and enables readers to experience abstract feelings, such as love, in a concrete way. Common types include simile, metaphor, hyperbole, Personification, and symbolism.

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According to Kövecses (2020, p. 12), metaphors are central to how humans conceptualize emotions, especially love. Gibbs (2020, p. 47) adds that figurative expressions shape how readers interpret

emotional states by invoking shared cultural metaphors. These devices are not merely decorative but integral to meaning-making in poetry.

Implied Meaning in Literature

Implied meaning refers to the meaning that is not directly stated but inferred through context, tone, and literary devices. In poetry, such meaning often emerges from figurative language and requires interpretive engagement from the reader.

Chapman (2021, p. 58) explains that implied meaning is a stylistic feature that operates between the text and the reader's interpretation. Stockwell (2021, p. 134) describes it as a cognitive and emotional process shaped by literary conventions and contextual cues. These insights are crucial for analyzing the emotional depth in Burns' poem.

By focusing on the poem's figurative expressions, this study aims to uncover the implied messages about love, devotion, and emotional endurance embedded in the text.

Structuralism as an Analytical Approach

Structuralism offers a framework to understand literature by analyzing the internal relations of elements in a text. Although it is not the main focus of this study, structuralism serves as a useful approach to support the figurative language analysis.

Culler (2021, p. 78) emphasizes that meaning in literature is constructed through relationships within the text such as rhythm, repetition, parallelism, and imagery which foreground non-semantic features of language to generate deeper interpretive effect. Structuralism enables a systematic examination of how figurative language functions within the poem's overall structure to reveal deeper meanings.

The Meaning of Love in Poetry

Love is a dominant and enduring theme in poetry across literary traditions. In Romantic literature, love is often idealized, eternal, and expressed with passionate intensity. Burns' poem exemplifies this through his symbolic use of nature and hyperbolic declarations.

Romantic love as emotional and spiritual expression, a study on Romantic poets highlights that love was used as a lens to explore emotional truth and spiritual connection with nature and the self. For instance, Ibrahim (2020, p. 7) notes that Romantic poetry often portrays love intertwined with personal intuition, nature, and spiritual renewal. The similes and metaphors in *A Red, Red Rose* reflect these ideals, portraying love as blooming, everlasting, and unaffected by time or distance.

Analytical Method (Revealing Implied Meaning through Figurative Language)

The goal of this study is to uncover the implied meaning of love in Burns' poem through the analysis of figurative language. The analytical steps are as follows :

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1. **Identify figurative language** in the poem, such as similes, metaphors, and hyperboles.
2. **Analyze the function** of each figure of speech in portraying emotional themes.
3. **Interpret the implied meaning**, especially how these figures suggest ideas of permanence, devotion, and emotional intensity.
4. **Support the analysis** through structuralism insights, such as repetition and rhyme, to demonstrate how poetic structure reinforces implied meanings.

This method allows for a comprehensive reading of the poem, highlighting how Burns communicates deep emotional truths through carefully crafted figurative expressions.

METHOD

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method. It focuses on interpreting and analyzing the implied meaning of love in Robert Burns' poem *A Red, Red Rose* through figurative language. Qualitative research is appropriate for literary analysis because it emphasizes depth of understanding, interpretative insight, and textual analysis rather than quantification.

Data Source

The main data source in this research is the text of the poem *A Red, Red Rose* by Robert Burns.

Data Collection

The data in this study consist of words, phrases, and lines in the poem that contain figurative language. Data were collected using document analysis, which involves reading and re-reading the poem to identify relevant figurative expressions such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and symbolism.

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique in this study follows the qualitative textual analysis method, focusing on the interpretation of figurative language to reveal the implied meaning of love in the poem. The steps are as follows

1. Close Reading. The first step is carefully and repeatedly reading the poem to understand its overall theme, tone, and emotional impact. This helps to immerse the researcher in the poem's language and nuances.

2. Identification of Figurative Language.

This involves marking and extracting all expressions that use figurative language such as: Simile, Metaphor, Hyperbole, Symbolism, Personification

These devices are selected because they are often used to express emotional and abstract concepts like love. In this step, the researcher systematically identifies and classifies all figurative expressions found in the poem. The figurative language includes simile, metaphor, hyperbole, symbolism, and personification. These are marked through close reading and supported by theoretical references from Kövecses (2020) and Gibbs (2020), who highlight their significance in representing abstract emotional states such as love. After identification, each figurative expression is classified based on its type, and then categorized according to its literary function and purpose (e.g., to evoke emotional intensity, to illustrate permanence, to symbolize purity).

In addition to figurative language, the researcher also identifies structural elements of the poem including stanza form, rhyme scheme, meter, and repetition as outlined in Culler (2021) and Li (2022). Each element is examined for how it interacts with figurative language to reinforce implied meaning. For example, repetition may enhance the emotional resonance of hyperbole, or rhyme may highlight the musical quality of a metaphor.

3. Classification and Categorization

The figurative expressions are then classified based on type. After identifying the figurative expressions in the poem, the next step is to classify them based on their type such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, and symbolism according to literary definitions from Kövecses (2020) and Gibbs (2020).

Once classified by type, each expression is further categorized according to its function and purpose in the poem. This includes examining how the device contributes to the emotional, thematic, or structural aspects of the poem.

Function refers to how the figure of speech operates within the poem (e.g., enhancing imagery, reinforcing rhythm, evoking emotional intensity).

Purpose explains the intended effect of the expression such as conveying eternal love, emphasizing sincerity, or illustrating devotion.

4. Interpretation of Implied Meaning

Each figurative language element is analyzed to interpret its implied meaning, particularly in relation to how it constructs the concept of love. The researcher examines how each device such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, or personification evokes meanings that are not explicitly stated but inferred from the text. For example, a metaphor that equates love to a "red, red rose" implies romantic passion and ideal beauty, beyond its literal reference.

5. Contextual Integration with Structural Elements The analysis integrates figurative language with structuralist elements such as rhyme, rhythm, and repetition. This reveals how the poem's form enhances and supports the expression of love's implied meaning.

6. Summary of Implied Meaning in every stanza

FINDINGS

Analysis of Stanza 1

"O my Luve's like a red, red rose, That's newly sprung in June; O my Luve's like the melodie, That's sweetly play'd in tune."

Close Reading

The opening stanza sets the emotional and thematic foundation of the poem, presenting love as both natural and harmonious. The repetition of "O my Luve" introduces tenderness and lyrical rhythm, emphasizing the speaker's affection and emotional intensity. The imagery of a "red, red rose" and a "melody sweetly played in tune" connects love to beauty in both nature and art. The rose evokes vivid visual imagery freshness, passion, and youth while the melody evokes auditory harmony and balance.

This stanza immerses the reader in an idealized, romantic worldview in which love transcends mere emotion; it is portrayed as both a **natural phenomenon** and an **artistic creation**. Love, therefore, is

not simply a feeling but a refined aesthetic experience—beautiful, harmonious, and enduring in its perfection.

Identification of Figurative Language

This stanza contains several forms of figurative language that construct the imagery of ideal love.

- **Simile:** “O my Luve is like a red, red rose” and “O my Luve is like the melody” both compare love to natural and musical beauty, emphasizing freshness and harmony.
- **Symbolism:** The “red, red rose” symbolizes romantic love, beauty, and vitality, while “newly sprung in June” suggests youth, growth, and energy. Together, these images signify that love is fresh, alive, and full of spirit. The “melody” symbolizes emotional harmony and serenity, portraying love as peaceful and soothing—like a song that brings joy and calm to the heart.
- **Repetition:** The phrase “red, red” intensifies emotional and visual imagery, reinforcing passion and depth of feeling.
- **Imagery:** “Newly sprung in June” evokes freshness, youth, and natural beauty.
- **Implied Hyperbole:** The perfect, unblemished depiction of love suggests emotional exaggeration, as the speaker’s portrayal of love borders on idealization.

Classification and Categorization

The figurative language in this stanza primarily functions to express love’s vitality, harmony, and perfection. The **simile** “My Luve is like a red, red rose” compares love to a rose to highlight its beauty, freshness, and passion, conveying that love is vibrant and deeply felt. The extension “That’s newly sprung in June” reinforces the sense of youth and vitality, implying that love is at its peak—strong, full of life, and unblemished. The next simile, “My Luve is like the melody,” presents love as harmonious and peaceful, suggesting emotional serenity and musical perfection.

The **symbolism** of the “red rose” strengthens the association between love, beauty, and passion, anchoring an abstract emotion in a concrete and universal image. The **repetition** of “red, red” further intensifies the feeling of warmth and passion, amplifying the emotional tone and drawing attention to the central metaphor of love’s vividness and depth.

Interpretation of Implied Meaning

The implied meaning of this stanza centers on love as both deeply emotional and aesthetically perfect. By comparing love to a “red, red rose,” Burns presents love as pure, fresh, and vital—yet potentially fragile, like a flower that blooms briefly in summer (Culler, 2021). Meanwhile, the “melody sweetly played in tune” represents balance, peace, and fulfillment. These images together reflect an idealized conception of love that combines passion with serenity.

Symbolically, the rose and the melody illustrate love’s dual nature: powerful yet harmonious, passionate yet gentle. The stanza thus suggests that true love achieves perfection through equilibrium between natural emotion and artistic harmony.

Contextual Integration with Structural Elements

From a structuralist perspective, this stanza demonstrates harmony between form and meaning. The **ABAB rhyme scheme** and **iambic meter** produce a musical rhythm that mirrors the “melody” described within the text. The repetition of “O my Luve” and “red, red” functions like a refrain, reinforcing the lyrical tone and emotional intensity.

As Lévi-Strauss (in Culler, 2021) suggests, meaning emerges through structural relationships among elements. Here, the parallel use of similes the rose and the melody creates balance and symmetry that mirror the thematic essence of love as both beautiful and harmonious.

Summary of Implied Meaning in This Stanza

Stanza 1 portrays love as natural, beautiful, and harmonious—like a rose in bloom or a perfectly tuned melody. Through the use of simile, symbolism, and repetition, Burns idealizes love as vibrant, sincere, and aesthetically perfect. It is presented not as chaotic or flawed, but as an expression of emotional purity and artistic beauty, reflecting a timeless and universal conception of true love.

STANZA 2

Analysis of Stanza 2

“As fair art thou, my bonie lass, So deep in luve am I; and I will luve thee still, my dear, Till a’ the seas gang dry.”

Close Reading

This stanza continues the speaker’s passionate expression of love with a tone that remains tender, romantic, and profoundly devoted. The phrase “my bonie lass” conveys affection and intimacy, while “Till a’ the seas gang dry” introduces dramatic imagery suggesting an eternal vow. The connection between “fair” and “so deep in luve” unites outer beauty with emotional depth, reinforcing the Romantic ideal of love as both spiritual and physical. The stanza therefore marks a transition from admiration to promise, as the speaker’s affection becomes a lifelong commitment that transcends the limits of nature and time.

Identification of Figurative Language

This stanza employs several figures of speech that intensify the emotional depth and thematic focus on eternal love:

Simile: "As fair art thou" functions as a direct comparison, highlighting the beloved's beauty. The term "fair" symbolizes purity and idealized affection, illustrating how the speaker venerates his beloved.

Hyperbole: "Till a' the seas gang dry" expresses the impossibility of seas drying up, emphasizing the timeless, unending nature of the speaker's love.

Symbolism: The word "seas" symbolizes vastness, power, and eternity—qualities that parallel the depth of the poet's affection.

Personification (Implied): The phrase "seas gang dry" attributes human-like change to the sea, underscoring the idea that even nature could alter before his love fades.

Repetition: "I will luve thee still" reappears throughout the poem as a refrain, strengthening the theme of constancy and emotional stability.

Alliteration: "So deep in luve" repeats soft consonant sounds that add musicality and tenderness to the expression of emotion.

Archaic Language: The Scots dialect word "gang" (meaning "go") enriches the cultural authenticity and poetic rhythm of the poem, rooting it in its national and historical context.

Classification and Categorization of Figurative Language

Each figurative device contributes to portraying love as eternal and idealized:

Simile ("As fair art thou"): Serves as a direct comparison to praise the beloved's beauty and purity.

Hyperbole ("Till a' the seas gang dry"): Exaggerates duration to emphasize infinite devotion.

Symbolism ("Seas"): Represents nature's vastness, linking human emotion to cosmic scale.

Personification (Implied) ("Seas gang dry"): Assigns human agency to nature, reinforcing the improbability of love's end.

Repetition ("I will luve thee still"): Stresses emotional constancy and unchanging devotion.

Alliteration ("So deep in luve"): Creates rhythmic softness that mirrors emotional warmth.

Archaic Language ("Gang"): Adds lyrical texture and historical depth, enhancing sincerity.

Interpretation of Implied Meaning

Each figurative device deepens the implied message that love transcends time and nature:

Simile: Idealizes the beloved as the embodiment of beauty and purity, reflecting Romantic idealization.

Hyperbole: Conveys eternal devotion through exaggeration, suggesting that love outlasts the physical world.

Symbolism: The "seas" signify vastness and eternity, mirroring the boundless nature of the poet's love.

Personification: By suggesting that "seas" can "gang dry," the poet implies that nature might fail before his love does.

Repetition: Reinforces the endurance and faithfulness of emotion, portraying love as an identity rather than a feeling.

Alliteration: Creates musicality that reflects the smooth, sincere rhythm of romantic affection.

Archaic Language: Expresses cultural sincerity and timelessness, implying that true love is eternal and beyond eras.

Contextual Integration with Structural Elements

Structurally, this stanza follows a regular ABAB rhyme scheme, mirroring the balance and harmony of the speaker's emotional state. The iambic tetrameter rhythm contributes to a steady, flowing tone, symbolizing the continuity of love. Repetition of "my dear" adds intimacy and anchors the emotional focus.

Parallelism in the lines "So deep in luve am I" and "Till a' the seas gang dry" produces balance and rhythmic symmetry, emphasizing the unending duration of affection. As Culler (2021) notes, such formal regularity enhances emotional unity in lyric poetry, aligning structure with meaning. Similarly, Stockwell (2021) observes that balanced poetic construction generates cognitive stability, reflecting the steadfastness of emotion portrayed in the stanza.

From a structuralist viewpoint, the integration of figurative language and rhythmic balance forms a coherent system where every element—sound, form, and imagery—serves the same function: to communicate unwavering and eternal love.

Summary of Implied Meaning in Stanza 2

Stanza 2 expresses the poet's steadfast and idealized devotion through the interplay of simile, hyperbole, and symbolic imagery. The speaker vows to love his beloved until "the seas gang dry," a metaphorical impossibility signifying eternal affection. The combination of repetition, rhythm, and archaic diction strengthens the sincerity and authenticity of this vow.

Through a structural lens, Burns unites emotion, sound, and form into a harmonious expression of permanence. The stanza's implied meaning centers on love's transcendence over time and change portraying love not merely as passion, but as an enduring essence that defines the human spirit.

STANZA 3

Analysis of Stanza 3

Close Reading

The fourth stanza of Robert Burns' *A Red, Red Rose* serves as the closing declaration of eternal devotion. It reads, "*And fare thee weel, my only luve! / And fare thee weel awhile! / And I will come again, my luve, / Though it were ten thousand mile.*" Through this stanza, the speaker expresses a heartfelt farewell to his beloved, assuring that their love transcends physical distance and time. The repetition of "fare thee weel" strengthens the tone of sincere parting, while the promise to return even after traveling "ten thousand mile" symbolizes undying affection.

Identification of Figurative Language

In this stanza, Burns employs **hyperbole**, **repetition**, and **symbolism** to convey the strength and permanence of love. The phrase "ten thousand mile" is a hyperbole emphasizing the boundless nature of the speaker's devotion. The repetition of "fare thee weel" adds musicality and emotional emphasis, while "journey" functions symbolically to represent life's separation or challenges in love.

Classification and Categorization

The hyperbole belongs to the **figurative category of exaggeration**, intended to intensify emotional impact and to portray love as limitless. The repetition falls under the **poetic device of emphasis**, reinforcing the sincerity of farewell and the emotional rhythm. Symbolism, on the other hand, belongs to **representational figures**, illustrating the abstract concept of love's endurance through a physical image of distance.

Interpretation of Implied Meaning

The implied meaning of this stanza reveals the **unwavering loyalty and faith** of the speaker toward his beloved. His statement implies that no matter the distance or time apart, his love remains steadfast and promises reunion. The hyperbolic journey of "ten thousand mile" can also be interpreted as an emotional metaphor for the sacrifices and patience required in enduring love. Thus, the stanza's implied message reflects a universal human longing—to stay emotionally connected despite physical separation.

Contextual Integration with Structural Elements

Structurally, the repetition and rhythmic balance of this stanza echo the musical quality that characterizes Burns's lyrical poetry. The alternating rhythm of farewell and return mirrors the emotional tension between separation and hope. This rhythmic pattern supports the poem's overall unity, tying the conclusion back to the opening declaration of love in the first stanza. The stanza's tone also shifts from passion to solemn commitment, completing the structural progression from emotional intensity to spiritual constancy.

Summary of Implied Meaning

In summary, the fourth stanza encapsulates the theme of **eternal and faithful love**, implying that genuine affection transcends both distance and time. It conveys a message of hope, resilience, and emotional endurance suggesting that true love remains alive even in absence. The stanza concludes the poem with a tone of faith and emotional closure, completing the structural and thematic harmony of Burns's *A Red, Red Rose*.

STANZA 4

Analysis of Stanza 4

And fare thee weel, my only Luve!
And fare thee weel, a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

Close Reading

Stanza 4 of Robert Burns' "A Red, Red Rose" marks the emotional culmination of the poem. The speaker addresses his beloved directly, using the archaic farewell phrase "fare thee weel" twice, which establishes a tone of poignant departure. The duplication of this line emphasizes the depth of emotion connected to this temporary parting. The phrase "my only luve" signifies exclusivity and singular devotion, reinforcing the Romantic ideal of one true love. The third line, "And I will come again, my luve," provides emotional contrast to the farewell by introducing hope and reassurance. Rather than finality, the stanza promises continuity, affirming the ongoing bond between the lovers. The final line, "Tho' it were ten thousand mile," uses hyperbolic distance to stress the extent of the speaker's commitment, elevating the poem to a universal testament of enduring love across space and time. The Scots dialect, seen in "luve" and

“weel,” contributes cultural authenticity and musicality, aligning with the lyrical tradition of Scottish ballads. The composed tone, even in parting, reflects mature love deep, faithful, and resilient suggesting that true affection endures separation with dignity.

Identification of Figurative Language

Stanza 4 employs several forms of figurative language to emphasize sincerity and permanence of love even in the face of distance. Repetition appears in “And fare thee weel, my only luve! / And fare thee weel, a while!” highlighting the emotional weight of farewell and creating a lyrical refrain. Hyperbole is seen in “Tho’ it were ten thousand mile,” exaggerating the distance to express boundless devotion. Symbolism appears in “my only luve,” representing exclusivity and sacred emotional connection. Assonance and alliteration, such as in “fare thee weel” and “will come again,” enhance musical rhythm and evoke tenderness. Archaic diction, as in “luve” and “weel,” situates the poem within a cultural and historical frame, adding authenticity and timelessness to the emotion expressed.

Classification and Categorization

Repetition in “And fare thee weel, my only luve! / And fare thee weel a while!” functions to emphasize sorrow and rhythm, reinforcing the intensity of the farewell. Hyperbole in “Tho’ it were ten thousand mile” exaggerates the scale of love to illustrate unbounded commitment. Symbolism in “my only luve” represents singular devotion, highlighting love’s exclusivity and sanctity. Assonance and alliteration in “fare thee weel” and “will come again” enhance lyrical quality, deepening emotional resonance. Archaic diction, such as “luve” and “weel,” provides historical depth and poetic texture, linking the emotion of love to timeless tradition.

Interpretation of Implied Meaning

The figurative language in this stanza conveys layered meanings. The phrase “my only luve” symbolizes complete emotional devotion, implying that the beloved is irreplaceable. The repetition of “fare thee weel” suggests reluctant separation, intensifying emotional pain while maintaining composure. The promise “I will come again, my luve” symbolizes hope and emotional continuity, suggesting love’s endurance beyond physical barriers. The hyperbole “Tho’ it were ten thousand mile” expresses devotion that transcends all limitations, representing love’s spiritual persistence. The contrast between temporary parting and infinite affection creates the implied meaning that true love remains unbroken, even when tested by distance or time.

Contextual Integration with Structural Elements

The stanza follows an ABAB rhyme scheme that maintains lyrical flow and unity with preceding stanzas. Repetition of “fare thee weel” serves as both a structural and emotional refrain, reinforcing thematic closure. The stanza’s rhythm follows the ballad meter of alternating iambic tetrameter and trimeter, sustaining musical cadence and emotional stability. Structural contrast appears between farewell and return “fare thee weel” versus “I will come again” marking a tonal shift from sorrow to hope. This binary opposition embodies the structuralist view that meaning arises through contrast. Enjambment between “And I will come again, my luve, / Tho’ it were ten thousand mile” maintains the continuity of thought and emotional flow, mirroring unbroken affection. The structural regularity of rhyme, meter, and repetition works with figurative language to emphasize emotional permanence and closure.

Summary of Implied Meaning in Stanza 4

The stanza encapsulates farewell, devotion, and promise as interconnected elements of enduring love. The repeated “fare thee weel” expresses sorrow and sincerity, while “my only luve” symbolizes emotional exclusivity. The hyperbole of “ten thousand mile” conveys boundless affection that defies separation. Archaic diction deepens authenticity, connecting personal emotion with cultural tradition. Structurally, the stanza’s rhythmic stability and balanced rhyme echo the constancy of love itself. In combination, the figurative and structural features reveal an implied meaning of love as eternal, faithful, and transcendent surviving both distance and time.

DISCUSSION

Stanza 1

The first stanza of *A Red, Red Rose* by Robert Burns presents love as a vivid, harmonious, and emotionally idealized experience. The poet uses figurative language such as simile, symbolism, repetition, and imagery to evoke strong emotional associations with beauty, nature, and music. According to Stockwell (2020), figurative language in poetry serves not merely decorative functions but facilitates emotional and conceptual framing, allowing abstract feelings like love to be processed in tangible forms.

The simile “O my Luve’s like a red, red rose” frames love as both aesthetically pleasing and sensually powerful. This imagery aligns with **embodied cognition theory** in literary studies (Tsur, 2020), which explains how sensory language (like sight and sound) activates readers’ physical and emotional associations. The “red, red rose,” blooming in June, evokes youth, vitality, and natural beauty, implying that

the speaker's love is fresh and in its prime. Meanwhile, the melody that is "sweetly play'd in tune" appeals to the sense of hearing and emotional resonance, suggesting that love brings not only passion but also emotional harmony and inner peace.

Recent scholarship (Burton, 2021) in cognitive poetics highlights that repeated structures and parallelism in poetry reinforce emotional engagement. In this stanza, repetition is used not only in words ("red, red" and "O my Luve") but also in **syntactic and rhythmic patterns**, creating a lyrical, musical quality that enhances the sentiment being expressed. These structural choices contribute to the *emotional fluency* of the poem a term described by Jacobs (2019) as the ease with which readers process emotional cues in poetic language.

From a structuralist point of view as reinterpreted by modern theorists like Culler (2021) meaning in poetry arises from the interplay of elements. The ABAB rhyme scheme and iambic rhythm create a sense of order and balance, reinforcing the themes of harmony and perfection in love. The structure itself becomes a mirror of the emotional content, suggesting that the speaker's love is not only intense but well-aligned, measured, and emotionally integrated.

The imagery of both the rose and the melody also serves as **universal cognitive symbols**. As explained in contemporary stylistics (Gavins & Carter, 2020), certain natural and musical metaphors tap into shared cultural schemata such as equating red with passion or melody with harmony. This shared understanding enhances the reader's ability to relate to the poem's sentiment, deepening the resonance of the implied meaning.

Thus, the implied meanings in this stanza beauty, passion, harmony, youth, idealism are achieved through both linguistic choice and structural form. The stanza presents love not as conflictual or complex, but as an aesthetically and emotionally perfect experience. This reflects a romantic ideal that continues to resonate with modern audiences, confirming the enduring relevance of traditional poetic expressions through contemporary lenses.

Stanza 2

The second stanza of *A Red, Red Rose* further deepens the speaker's declaration of love, transitioning from the aesthetic admiration of the beloved to the emotional depth and existential permanence of his affection. The poet utilizes a combination of figurative language and structured poetic form to convey the idea that his love endures beyond the limits of nature and time. As argued by Gavins and Carter (2020), figurative elements such as hyperbole and symbolism in poetry not only add emphasis but also provide an avenue for expressing deeply abstract emotions in concrete terms.

The opening line, "As fair art thou, my bonie lass," draws on **simile** to present the beloved as an epitome of beauty. The phrase "so deep in luve am I" introduces **metaphoric depth** to the speaker's emotion, suggesting an immersion in love that is not fleeting but existentially rooted. This aligns with the concept of **emotional immersion in poetic narrative**, discussed by Jacobs (2019), wherein readers perceive emotional authenticity through sensory and symbolic layering.

The most striking image in the stanza, "Till a' the seas gang dry," uses **hyperbole and symbolism** to emphasize the speaker's vow of eternal devotion. Hyperbole here serves to dramatize the sentiment, as discussed by Kövecses (2020), who explains that exaggerated metaphorical language allows poets to communicate emotional truths that feel real, even if logically impossible. The image of drying seas paired with the notion of rocks melting or sands running invokes a **cosmic temporality**, which suggests that love will last until the world itself changes fundamentally. This use of nature as a referent to time and transformation fits with contemporary literary ecological readings, which often explore how metaphors of nature are used to express emotional continuity and depth (Burton, 2021).

The stanza also utilizes **repetition and alliteration**, particularly in "I will luve thee still, my dear," to emphasize emotional consistency. According to Stockwell (2020), repetition functions cognitively as a reinforcement mechanism, building trust in the voice of the speaker and emotional resonance with the reader. Furthermore, the soft alliteration in "so deep in luve" generates a sonorous rhythm that contributes to the musical and lyrical quality of the poem—an element that aids in what Tsur (2020) describes as **prosodic emotional coding**, where sound structure enhances emotional interpretation.

Structurally, this stanza maintains the poem's consistent **ABAB rhyme scheme** and predominantly **iambic tetrameter**, which help establish both rhythmic harmony and semantic symmetry. Culler (2021) notes that such structural balance in poetry creates expectations that enhance interpretive stability, aligning with the poem's theme of enduring love. Additionally, the stanza's parallel clauses "Till a' the seas gang dry" and "While the sands o' life shall run" mirror each other in form and meaning, reinforcing the timeless quality of the emotion. As Stockwell (2020) asserts, **parallelism in lyric poetry** is not only stylistic but also deeply conceptual, enabling poets to express permanence through structural echo.

Moreover, the use of **archaic Scots dialect**, such as "gang," enhances the poem's historical and cultural authenticity. While such diction may appear stylistically distant to contemporary readers, it

paradoxically universalizes the emotion by linking it to timeless expressions of love. As Catriona MacLeod (2022) argues in her study of poetic temporality, historical linguistic choices often root universal feelings like love in a specific tradition, lending them authenticity and depth.

In synthesis, this stanza extends the romantic ideal of eternal love through a combination of heightened imagery, linguistic rhythm, and structural regularity. The figurative language especially the hyperbole, simile, symbolism, and repetition forms a cohesive emotional field that portrays love as unwavering, vast, and eternal. The stanza suggests that even in the face of unimaginable natural transformations, the speaker's love remains constant. This interplay between content and form exemplifies how modern structuralist approaches view poetic meaning as arising from the harmony between **linguistic elements and formal structures** (Culler, 2021; Gavins & Carter, 2020).

Stanza 3

Stanza 3 of *A Red, Red Rose* represents the emotional climax of the poem, using hyperbolic and symbolic language to articulate a profound and unwavering expression of love. Unlike the previous stanzas, which focus on the beloved's beauty or the intensity of emotion, this stanza introduces the theme of **eternity and time** placing love in direct contrast with the limits of nature and mortality.

Hyperbole and Emotional Extremity

The lines "*Till a' the seas gang dry*" and "*And the rocks melt wi' the sun*" illustrate the use of hyperbole to express an impossible endurance. According to Kövecses (2020), hyperbole in poetic language is often employed to intensify emotional expression and dramatize the speaker's inner state. Here, the exaggeration is not meant to be taken literally but symbolically, suggesting that the speaker's love would survive even the collapse of the natural world.

Symbolism and Metaphor of Time

The phrase "*While the sands o' life shall run*" serves as both a symbol and an implied metaphor. It evokes the image of an hourglass, a traditional metaphor for the finite nature of human existence. As Whalley (2021) explains, metaphors in poetry allow abstract concepts such as time to be understood through tangible imagery. In this stanza, the running sand signifies life's passage, and the speaker's love is positioned as enduring for the entirety of that span, until death itself.

Repetition, Parallelism, and Sound Patterns

The repetition of the phrase "*I will love thee still, my dear*" reinforces the commitment established in earlier stanzas. This line acts as an emotional anchor, grounding each exaggerated or symbolic statement in personal truth. Beck and Konieczny (2021) found that such repetition and structural parallelism enhance emotional fluency by helping the reader process affective meaning rhythmically. Furthermore, the soft alliteration in "*sands o' life shall*" contributes to the musicality and emotional gentleness of the stanza, enhancing its lyrical tone.

Structuralism and Patterned Meaning

From a structuralist perspective, the poem relies heavily on repeated patterns to embed meaning. The stanza retains the ABCB rhyme scheme and alternates between iambic tetrameter and trimeter, maintaining a stable rhythmic structure. As Culler (2021) argues, structural repetition in poetry—through rhyme, rhythm, and syntactic parallelism—functions as a formal strategy to reinforce semantic meaning. In this case, the repeated images and line structures emphasize love's permanence, making the figurative language not merely decorative but essential to thematic development.

Synthesis of Theory and Findings The stanza's figurative devices, when analyzed through recent literary and linguistic theory, reveal a deliberate alignment between content and form:

Hyperbole dramatizes infinite love (Kövecses, 2020).

Metaphorical constructs like the "*sands o' life*" illustrate time and mortality through physical imagery (Whalley, 2021).

Repetition and parallelism create emotional rhythm and reader resonance (Beck & Konieczny, 2021).

Structural elements such as rhyme and meter stabilize and intensify meaning (Culler, 2021).

Together, these elements suggest that the speaker's love is not only emotionally intense but also embedded in an organized poetic structure that affirms its endurance. The stanza constructs love as eternal, powerful, and resilient unmoved by the boundaries of time, nature, or mortality.

Stanza 4

The final stanza of *A Red, Red Rose* marks the emotional culmination of the poem. Here, Robert Burns shifts from metaphorical declarations of love's permanence to a more personal, intimate farewell. This stanza is structurally and emotionally pivotal, combining farewell, promise, and poetic affirmation of unwavering devotion.

Repetition and Emotional Emphasis

The repetition of the archaic farewell "*fare thee weel*" in the first two lines is both stylistic and emotional. Repetition in poetry serves to heighten emotional resonance, a function underscored by recent

studies in poetic cognition. According to Beck and Konieczny (2021), repetition facilitates affective processing by reinforcing emotionally salient moments, especially during transitions such as separation or closure. In this stanza, the doubled farewell emphasizes the solemnity and significance of parting, embedding emotional gravity into the poem's final movement.

Hyperbole and Symbolic Distance

The line *"Though it were ten thousand mile"* exemplifies hyperbolic expression that transcends physical reality. As Kövecses (2020) explains, hyperbole in emotional language is not meant to deceive but to dramatize emotional truth. Here, the speaker uses hyperbole to affirm that his commitment would persist over an unimaginably vast distance, metaphorically indicating emotional endurance that defies spatial and temporal boundaries. This contributes to a Romantic ideal where love becomes heroic, almost mythological in its strength.

Symbolism of Exclusive Love

The phrase *"my only luve"* is more than an affectionate term—it symbolically conveys exclusivity and spiritual singularity. As Whalley (2021) argues, symbolism in lyric poetry often functions as emotional condensation, where single phrases carry entire emotional or philosophical frameworks. In this case, "only luve" implies that no other relationship could substitute or replace this bond, suggesting love as a sacred and eternal emotional connection.

Archaic Diction and Cultural Resonance

Burns's use of Scots vernacular (*"luve," "weel"*) provides not only authenticity but also situates the poem in a specific cultural and historical context. Recent scholarship (Douglas, 2019) has emphasized how regional and archaic diction in Romantic poetry enhances affective realism, grounding otherwise universal emotions in local experience. This use of language roots the poem in Scottish cultural identity, intensifying its emotional resonance for contemporary and historical audiences alike.

Structural Analysis: Binary Oppositions and Closure

Structurally, the stanza juxtaposes farewell (*"fare thee weel"*) with promise (*"I will come again"*). According to structuralist theory, meaning arises through contrast and binary oppositions (Culler, 2021; revisiting Jakobson, 1960). This contrast between parting and reunion encapsulates the tension between temporality and permanence—a Romantic duality where love may be spatially interrupted but remains spiritually unbroken. Furthermore, the stanza retains the ABAB rhyme scheme and consistent meter, offering a formal closure to the poem's thematic arc.

Synthesis of Theory and Findings

The discussion of stanza 4 reveals that Robert Burns employs figurative and structural techniques not only for aesthetic effect but to embody the emotional truth of love in poetic form. Specifically:

Repetition expresses parting's emotional difficulty (Beck & Konieczny, 2021).

Hyperbole dramatizes unbreakable emotional commitment (Kövecses, 2020).

Symbolism portrays love as exclusive, sacred, and enduring (Whalley, 2021).

Structural contrasts illustrate the tension between separation and reunion (Culler, 2021).

Together, these devices culminate in a stanza that acts as the poem's resolution: a farewell that refuses finality, affirming that true love endures beyond the limits of space and time.

CONCLUSIONS

Study investigated the implied meaning of love in Robert Burns' *"A Red, Red Rose"* through a **structural-figurative analysis** of each stanza, using recent theories from **Cognitive Poetics, Conceptual Metaphor, figurative language, and structuralism**. The main findings are summarized below:

1. **Stanza 1** Love is depicted as fresh and harmonious. Similes ("red rose," "melody") and repetition generate a sensory-embodied emotionality (Stockwell, 2020; Jacobs, 2019).
2. **Stanza 2** Hyperbole and symbolism ("seas," "sands") express enduring love across time, with alliteration enhancing the lyrical tone. Structural balance (rhyme/meter) supports the timeless sentiment (Gavins & Carter, 2020; Culler, 2021).
3. **Stanza 3** Dramatic exaggerations ("seas dry," "rocks melt") and symbolic time metaphors form a cosmic scale of love. Repetition, parallelism, and meter unify form and feeling (Kövecses, 2020; Whalley, 2021; Beck & Konieczny, 2021; Culler, 2021).
4. **Stanza 4** A dignified farewell reinforced by repetition ("fare thee weel"), hyperbole ("ten thousand mile"), and Scots dialect conveys maturity, hope, and perseverance against separation. Structural contrast highlights reunion over separation (Beck & Konieczny, 2021; Kövecses, 2020; Whalley, 2021; Tran, 2020; Culler, 2021).

Across all stanzas, Burns integrates **figurative language and formal patterns** (iambic rhythm, rhyme, repetition) to perform love making meaning arise not only in words but in their **structural interplay**. This aligns with contemporary cognitive poetic views (Stockwell, 2020; Jacobs, 2019) suggesting

that sound, form, and figurative devices shape emotional understanding. **True love**, in Burns's poem, becomes a structured poetic act eternal, resilient, and harmoniously balanced.

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