

Personification in *Call Us What We Carry* Poems by Amanda Gorman 2021

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Abstract. This study aims to find out the types of personification in a poem and to know which personification types are dominant in *Call Us What We Carry* poems by Amanda Gorman. The previous studies emphasized on types, meanings, and functions of personification contained in literary work. Qualitative research method was applied and the data used were lines and stanzas within the poem. The concept of personification by Breed (2021) becomes the main theory of this current study. The result shows that there are 3 types of personification which contained 51 data of personification types in total. The Platonic personification type which applied an action, picture, and the role of human knowledge into an inanimate object including a total of 46 data was the most dominant of the three forms of personification since its characteristics most frequently occur in the lines and stanzas of *Call Us What We Carry* poems. Then, it is followed by the Prudentian personification type that has religious and deification aspects in their characters with a total of 3 data; it is uncommon to discover lines and stanzas in the *Call Us What We Carry* poems by Amanda Gorman that fulfill the features of Prudentian personification. The last position was occupied by the Aristotelian personification type which has a mundane and ironic characteristic. This personification type contained the least quantity of 2 data due to the rarity of lines and stanzas.

Keywords: *Personification, Types of personification, poem*

INTRODUCTION

Figurative language is a way of expressing or symbolizing something beyond its actual meaning. According to Wren and Martin (as cited in Sharma, 2022), figurative language is another form of expression or an ordinary idea to achieve a greater effect. Figurative language has an important role in using language to make the language more diverse. This current study focused on figurative language as personification. Walter and Bart (2016) stated that personification is a form of figurative language that uses something other than human to easily be assigned an identity or a face with its form and function. Another definition of personification as stated by Breen (2021), is a way of representing something that is not human, such as an animal, an idea, or an abstract thing as if it were human. Breen also added that personification can impart sex and gender into inanimate objects and often adds important social characteristics such as race, age, ability or disability, and level of interest. There are three personality types developed by Breen, such as the Prudentian personification that is created through a process of devotion or deification. This type also has religious and realist characteristics. Then, the Platonic personification which not only gives human images or actions on inanimate objects or ideas, but also adds to it the role of human knowledge. Finally, the Aristotelian personification which explained in everyday language, and this personification is more trivial than religious, and also ironic rather than serious. The use of personification can be found in many different forms of literary works such as lyrics, poetry, novels, and other literary works.

This current research gives more emphasize on discussing the form of personification in the poem. Poetry and poem are linked together. Hughes (as cited in Ellen, 2021) said poetry is a combination of thoughts and feelings concentrated in a single unit that can describe the whole, while a poem is an arrangement of poetry. This current study used the poem *Call Us What We Carry* by Amanda Gorman as a data source to find the types of personifications present in the poems. The *Call Us What We Carry* poems are used as the source of the data because these poems have represented the data needed and have a lot of data sources that this current research could dig up.

There have been many researchers explored personification and figurative language. Some of them are (1) Utama (2015), in an article entitled *Analysis of Personification Expressions Used in The Blink 182 Songs*, Utama made identification on the types of personification expressions that appeared in The Blink 182 song lyrics. It was found that there are two types of personification using the Theory of James J. Paxson and K.L. Knickerbocker & H. Willar Reninger. (2) Another study by Manueke (2021), aims at exploring to find out the types of personification in the poem and find out the connotation of meaning in the *Kata Yang Tak Sempat Terucap* poem. The results of the current research indicate that there are 63 sentences containing the phenomenon of verb personification and name personification, of which 61 sentences refer to the personification of the verb and 2 sentences refer to the personification of the name. (3) Citra, Putranti, and Wahyuni (2020) in their article entitled *An Analysis of The Subtitle of Simile and Personification in Anna Karenina Movie* explored types of subtitle strategies applied to personality translation comparative personification and personification found in the film *Anna Karenina*. The research used Perrine's Theory of Comparative and Personification to

analyze the personifications and comparisons they found in the *Anna Karenina* movie, and they also used Gottlieb's Theory of Subtitle Strategy to analyze the strategy of subtitles in the movie. The study uses qualitative methods and document analysis to interpret and describe the data obtained from the *Anna Karenina* Movie. The search results show that 2 data are classified as personification and 5 data are classified as a comparison. There are 3 out of 10 strategies applied to data translation, namely transfer, decay, and deletion. (4) Trisna (2016) analyzed figurative languages and determine semantic meanings in Coelho's novel entitled *The Alchemist*. It was qualitative research and used Leech figurative language theory, in which the results show that there are 70 figurative sentences including 30 comparatives, 27 personifications, 12 metaphors, and 1 hyperbole.

The previous researchers have analyzed the types of subtitle strategies to translate personification and simile, and types of personification with meaning. While this current research explored and analyzed the types of personification and classified the dominant personification kinds in the *Call Us What We Carry* poems by Amanda Gorman used types of personification theory by Breen. This current study used the personification type theory by Breen because it could categorize and interpret personification forms differently than any other theories out there, and this theory is also appropriate for analyzing poems that utilize personification forms that depict the characteristic of personification type theory by Breen, such as an action that belong to Platonic personification element, deification which contained in Prudentian personification feature, and ironic elements which is a part of Aristotelian characteristic. Therefore, this current research aims to find the types of personification and to know the dominant type in *Call Us What We Carry* poems by Amanda Gorman.

RESEARCH METHOD

This current study belongs to qualitative research method. Lincoln (2017) stated that it is a method of studying things in their natural environment and trying to explain phenomena in terms of the meaning that humans give them. This study design was chosen because the data was extracted from the source in its natural and pure form without any internal changes. Data analysis is descriptively interpreted into an appropriate type of personification.

The data sources for this current study were poems containing a collection of poetry owned by Amanda Gorman titled *Call Us What We Carry* published in 2021. The data used are; the form of personification contained in the line or stanza of the poem, then the researchers determined the form of personification types based on Breen's theory.

There are several steps in the technique of collecting data. The first step was reading the *Call Us What We Carry* poems to search for the stanzas or lines that contain personification form in them. In this step, we scanned every line in the stanza to find the form of personification. The second step was collecting the form of personification found in *Call Us What We Carry* poems. After finishing reading the whole *Call Us What We Carry* poem, we collected all the forms of personification data that had been found, then it was continued to count the total number of personifications obtained from the *Call Us What We Carry* poem by adding the

description of the name of its poetry with their lines and stanzas. This was done because the *Call Us What We Carry* poems did not have page numbers.

In the technique of analyzing data, we took several steps. The first one was categorizing the personification form found in *Call Us What We Carry* poems, whether they were included in the types of personification theory by Breen (2021). The data categorization must follow the order of types of personification theory by Breen (2021), which started with Prudentian personification, Platonic personification, and Aristotelian personification. After the data were categorized, we gave the proper reasons why those forms of personification are included in each different three types of personification. The second step was done by determining which type of personification has the most dominant form of personification data contained and providing information on the types that has the least or no personification form data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The three types of personification that are part of Breen’s (2021) theory found in the poem *Call Us What We Carry* are Prudentian personification, Platonic personification, and Aristotelian personification. With 46 data and a percentage of 90%, Platonic personification is the most dominant type of personification. Prudentian personification comes next with 3 data and a percentage of 6%, while Aristotelian personification is last with 2 data and a percentage of 4%. The Platonic personification, with a total of 46 facts, is the most prevalent of the three varieties of personification in the poem *Call Us What We Carry* because it has the most lines and stanzas that exhibit its traits, such as action, role, and human understanding. Because it is uncommon to discover lines and stanzas in the poem that fulfill the features of Prudentian personification, such as religious and deification aspects, it is then followed by Prudentian personification with a total of 3 data. Due to the rarity of lines and stanzas that exhibit Aristotelian traits, such as being ordinary and sardonic, Aristotelian personification data contain the least quantity of 2 data.

Table 1. Types of Personification in Call Us What We Carry Poem

No	Personification Types	Amount	%
1	Prudentian personification	3	6
2	Platonic personification	46	90
3	Aristotelian personification	2	4

Prudentian Personification

A type of personification called prudential personification combined realistic and religious elements. Through the process of deviation or deification, this kind of personification is created by Breen (2021). This finding is contradictory with

Walter's (2016) Personification Prosopopoeia, which has the ability to describe something that is not human as human and has cognitive functions and forms that are entirely distinct from deification elements. Three instances of Prudentian personification in *Call Us What We Carry* poems were discovered by this current study, and these three instances are examined in the section below.

*Anxiety is a living body.
'Fugue' (Line 46, stanza 7)*

This line could be categorized into Prudentian Personification because the word "living" conveys the idea that "anxiety" is something alive and has a "body," the phrase "living body" that belongs to "anxiety" in the poem entitled *Fugue* could be categorized as Prudentian personification. Because it doesn't use action words or depict humans in general, "anxiety" in that sentence is compared to a living human being with a higher level than humans. As a result, the phrase "living body" refers to the deification of something. This line embodies the traits of Breen's Prudentian personification, which deifies an object as if it were alive. However, this line contradicts with Dancygier (2014) personification metaphor *corporations are people* which describes a corporation as a living being but with equal degrees as people.

*Trees heaving huge sighs into the heaven.
'Earth Eyes' (Line 10, Stanza 1)*

The word "sighs" used in the line of the poem entitled *Earth Eyes* to describe the "trees" as deities as if they were alive and the word "heaven," which is a religious element of Prudentian personification; both could be classified as Prudentian personification according to Breen. Because the word "sighs" does not have a cognitive function and because the word "heaven" appears in this line, the "trees" are not described as humans. This result contradicts Grill (Ellen, 2021) who states that personification is a way to express inanimate objects, abstract ideas, or aspects of nature as a human being without any increase in the degree of it.

Platonic Personification

Platonic personification is a type of personification that does not only depict an action by humans against non-human entities but also incorporates human knowledge into it, as stated by Breen (2021). Platonic personification refers to all types of personification data that have been discovered and contain an action, role, and human knowledge in non-human objects. This finding is consistent with verb personification, a type of personification that serves to describe an action according to Abrams (as cited in Ellen, 2021). This study discovered 46 pieces of Platonic personification in *Call Us What We Carry* poems, but only 2 of those pieces were examined in this section below;

*March shuddered into a year.
'At First' (Line 16, stanza 2)*

In the poetry entitled *At First*, “march shuddered” could be categorized as Platonic personification because ‘shuddered’ is belong to a human role stated by Breen, and it describes that ‘march’ seems to have a trembling feeling towards the year. The word “march” is used to describe a human character that is trembling. It can also mean that “march” transforms its fear into “year.” This statement is consistent with Keraf (as cited in Baan, 2020) stating that personification is the depiction of an inanimate object that has human characteristics in it.

*By the slash of a screen.
'What We Did In The Time Being' (Line 2, stanza 1)*

In that line in the poetry entitled *What We Did In The Time Being*, the word “slash” could be regarded as a Platonic personification because, according to Breen, it refers to an action that is carried out by a “screen.” This statement implies that the “screen” actually “slashed” us, and it also implies that staring at a computer screen excessively can be harmful to our eyes. This line is consistent with Turner’s general mechanism of personification which gives awareness of the central nervous system to inanimate objects as if they could move and perform an action (Dominicy, 2019).

Aristotelian Personification

This kind of personification is an explanation form that uses everyday language, ironic rather than serious, and more commonplace than religious. The Aristotelian personification can be seen as having a common character and using everyday language. Aristotle’s conception of the reality that exists in the world as a component of entities serves as the foundation for this kind of personification as well as stated by Breen (2021). This finding contradicts Bart (2016) personification allegory, which is a type of personification that represents something opposed to its literal meaning. It is also possible to say that this personification represents a figurative and non-literal interpretation of mythological material rather than mundane and ordinary elements. We discovered two forms of Aristotelian personification in *Call Us What We Carry* poems, and this section analyzes those instances;

*As trees forget their leaves in fall.
'At First' (Line 22, stanza 3)*

That line belongs to Aristotelian personification because “trees forget” refers to an ordinary reality that belongs to “trees”; it was an ironic event that happened because “trees” “forgot their leaves”. In other words, it is impossible for trees to lose their leaves when they do it naturally. Thus, “trees forget” in the poetry entitled *At First* could be categorized as Aristotelian personification. This statement contradicts Potebnya stating that personification in art can give a characterization, expression, and gender to inanimate objects (Nurullina, 2017).

*Feet falling over themselves.
'Fugue' (Line 40, stanza 7)*

Since “falling” describes an ordinary reality experienced by “feet”, and it was part of the irony that feet would fall naturally because it is their own function to walk; this line is in accordance with the Aristotelian personification characteristic by Breen. This seems to demonstrate how the “feet” are similar to a person who unintentionally falls on “themselves”. The Melion (2016) personification allegory is in conflict with this line because there is no statement of the opposite literal meaning by the feet that describe the object as though it were a human.

CONCLUSION

Using Breen’s theory, this current study discovered three different forms of personification, including Prudentian personification, Platonic personification, and Aristotelian personification in the poem *Call Us What We Carry* by Amanda Gorman. Prudentian personification had 3 data, Platonic personification had 46 data and Aristotelian personification had 2. All the data were analyzed and categorized by following the criteria of the three forms of personification.

Platonic personification is the most dominant of the three types of personification in the poem *Call Us What We Carry* which has a total of 46 data; thus, there are many lines and stanzas in poems that contain the characteristics possessed by Platonic personification, such as human role, human action, and human knowledge. Then, it is followed by Prudentian personification with a total of 3 data because it is rare to find lines and stanzas that match the characteristics of Prudentian personification, such as deification and religious elements. Because it is very rare to find stanzas and lines that match Aristotelian characteristics, such as mundane and ironic, Aristotelian personification data has the least amount of 2 data.

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