Critical and Appreciational Reading of Wendell Berry and William Davies Poetic Projects
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Abstract:
To do literary criticism is to study, interpret, analyze, and evaluate a work of art. Throughout this study the researcher read, analyzed and interpret poetic projects of two poets: William Hennery Davies and Wendell Berry. Though they wrote a lot of good and rich poems; the mentioned poets did not find enough reading and criticism in our literary context. Therefore this paper aimed at drawing the readers, researchers and critic’s attentions toward their poetry. Stylistics analysis was done that is the act of presenting and analyzing some text from those poet’s work and expounded their linguistics features on one hand literary features on the other hand in order to approve a new meaning and new critical point of view about the two poet’s literary works.

Key words: critical reading - poetic projects - Literary criticism.

مستخلص
أن تمارس نقداً أدبياً يعني أن تتدارس وتتناول وتحلل ومن ثم تقيم عملًا أدبيًا معينًا. ومن خلال هذه الدارسة نقب الباحث وحلل المشاريع الشعرية لشاعرين وهما : وليم هنري ديفس ووندل بيري. على الرغم من كتابتهم للعديد من الأشعار الجيدة والغنية لم يجد الشعراء المذكورين القراءة والنقد الكافي في سياقنا الأدبي. لذلك هدفت هذه الدراسة على لفت نظر القراء والباحثين والنقاد إلى شعرهما. قد مارس الباحث التحليل الإسلوبي والذي يعني عرض وتحليل نصوصاً شعرية من أعمال هذين الكاتبين وتتبين ملامحها ميزاتها اللغوية من جانب والأدبية من الجانب الآخر. ذلك من أجل تحقيق وكشف معاني ووجهة نظر نقدية جديدة فيما يتعلق بأعمال الشاعرين الأدبيين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القراءة النقدية - المشاريع الشعرية - النقد الأدبي.
Introduction:

This is a critical reading of William hennery Davies and Wendell Berry’s poetic projects, the paper consist of many subtitles: abstract, introduction, methods, result and discussion, conclusion, Acknowledgments and references. Word criticism is derived from Greek word meaning ‘Judgment’. Literary criticism is the exercise of judgement on works of literature. To examine the merits and demerits and finally to evaluate the artistic worth, is the function of criticism. Thus, it is the study, discussion, evaluation, and interpretation of literature. Literary criticism is the evaluation of literary works. This includes its classification by genre, structure, and judgment of value (Beckson & Ganz, 1989). Literary criticism asks what literature is, what it does, and what it is worth. (Encyclopaedia Britannica). The chief function of criticism is to enlighten and stimulate. The true critic is the one who is equipped for his/her task by a sound knowledge of his subject. The true critic can discover the qualities of power, beauty and depth of significance. S/he can give us a fresh point of view. S/he is sometimes a path finder, breaking new ground, with a friendly passion. As such the primary functions of literary criticism are interpretation and judgment. Another important factor to note is that the view of criticism is directly related to the critic’s own intellectual philosophy or outlook of life. It is determined by the likes, dislikes, and prejudices of the critic him/herself and this is equally shaped by the socio political sensibilities of the critic’s environment. As such, critical theories are shaped by the spirit of the age.

Methods:

The qualitative methodology is used in process of a achieving the objectives of this thesis. The researcher used the descriptive analytical methods furthermore interpretation and reader respond theory are also used as tools for fulfilling these goals. Particular poems works of William Hennery Davies and Wendell Berry were read, analyzed and deconstructed so as to expound anew critical point of view towards their poetry

Result and discussion:

Stylistics analysis

Analysis of Seeking Beauty

By William Henry Davies:

The poem seeking beauty by william Henrry davies and from the distance by Wendell Berry are selected to represent the poetic works of these two poets. each poem is analysed separately stating the numbers of stanzas and lines including the types of verse and so on

Stylistics analysis:

Rhyme scheme:

abXb ccXc adcd eeXe ecXc
Stanza lengths (in strings):
4,4,4,4,4,

Closest metre:
iambic pentameter

Closest rhyme:
alternate rhyme

Closest stanza type:
tercets

Guessed form:
blank verse

Amount of stanzas:
Six

Average number of symbols per stanza:
181

Average number of words per stanza:
35

Amount of lines:
20

Average number of symbols per line:
44 (strings are more long than medium ones)

Average number of words per line:
Nine

Mood of the speaker:
The punctuation marks are various. Neither mark predominates.

The author used lexical repetitions to emphasize a significant image; and, as, i, or are repeated.

The author used the same word at the beginnings of some neighboring stanzas. The figure of speech is a kind of anaphora.

From the Distance
This is one of our chosen poems:
(From the Distance) is taken from Wendell Berry collection 73 Poems, of which it is number 63. The poems in the collection have not titles but are instead referred to by number. However, for ease of reference I have used the first line of the poem as a title.

The poem '(From the Distance) is typical of Berry ' style and contains some striking irregularities of form in comparison to 'traditional' poetry. You can notice, for example, the lack of capitalization where you might normally expect it, the strange use of punctuation and the seemingly odd structure of particular phrases. Berry poems all use lots of deviation and '(From the Distance)' is no exception. One of the reasons for this is Berry ' desire to break with more conventional poetic traditions. However, his use of deviations is not simply for shock value, and the linguistic choices he makes are by no means arbitrary. Despite this, such extreme deviation can make it difficult for us to interpret his poems. In the past, some critics have even disregarded his seemingly odd use of language, claiming that it is of no interpretative significance.

We are others and the earth,
the living of the dead.
Remembering who we are,
we live in eternity;
any solitary act
is work of community.

All times are one
if heart delight in work, if hands
join the world right.

The wheel of eternity is turning
in time, its rhymes, austere,
at long intervals returning,
sing in the mind, not in the ear.

A man of faithful thought may feel
in light, among the beasts and fields,
the turning of the wheel.

Fall of the year:

at evening a frail mist
rose, glowing in the rain.

The dead and unborn drew near

the fire. A song, not mine,

stuttered in the flame.

**Lexical Features:**

My initial interpretation of '(From the Distance)' came about solely as a consequence of looking at the words in the poem. I wasn't, for example, thinking particularly about the deviant grammatical and graph logical elements. An examination of the lexical features, then, is perhaps a good place to start with a more detailed literary analysis. We will consider how other poetic effects contribute to the overall meaning of the poem later on. Let's first of all consider the open class words in the poem. Open class words are those which carry the majority of meaning in a language, as opposed to closed class (grammatical) words such as determiners (e.g. this, that, the) and prepositions (e.g. in, at, on). Closed class words act like sentence 'glue' and link together open class words in meaningful arrangements (sentences). Below there is a division shows how the open class words are distributed throughout the poem, and whether they are nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs.

**Distribution of open class words in '(From the Distance)'**

**NOUNS:**


**Main verbs:**


**Adjective:**

Earth

**Adverbs:**

Distance - frail mist- faithful –beast.

We can see from the above division that the poem consists mainly of nouns and verbs. The nouns are mostly concrete - that is, they refer to physical objects - and only two of the nouns are abstract
(We are others and the earth). It is possible to divide the nouns into two rough areas of meaning, or any solitary act is work of community. Group 2 shows how we might do this:

**Distribution of nouns within two basic semantic classes:**

-NOUNS RELATED TO NATURE

We are others and the earth, the living of the dead.

Remembering who we are, we live in eternity; any solitary act is work of community others, earth, dead, eternity, solitary, work, , community.

-NOUNS RELATED TO HUMANS:

Others, earth, dead, eternity, solitary, work, community.

The mixture in the poem of nouns belonging to these two different semantic classes could be said to account for what we perceive as an interconnection between nature and man. My initial impression of the poem was that there was some kind of conflict between these two elements and this is explained in part by the above table. The two abstract nouns, others, earth, dead, could belong to either category and might be seen to connect the two semantic classes.

If we now look at the verbs in the poem we can see that they create a sense of immediacy as we read it. They also contribute to our understanding of it as an address to another person. All the verbs which are marked for tense (finite verbs) are in the present tense. So we have present simple verbs such as 'living' [2], 'is' [19] and 'arrives' [23] and present progressive forms such as 'are The dead and unborn drew near' [6/7/8] and ('d-i-s-t-a-n-c-e'). [12/13]. In addition to helping to establish the sense of immediacy, the progressive present participles ('From the distance) indicate the ongoing ('returning') nature of the actions. This contributes to the idea of the inevitability of All times are one - if heart delight - in work, if hands - join the world right.

There are no unusual words in the poem - no neologisms, for example, and no unconventional affixation, which Berry’s often uses in his other poems. However, some of the words are arranged on the page in a seemingly strange way. Fall of the year, for example, runs across two lines and as a consequence is highly foregrounded. Dividing the word across the morphemes (Fall of the year) allows us two interpretative effects. We first read the word as the noun wonder, and then as the adjective Fall of the year. The graphological deviation here foregrounds the word and creates a density of meaning. Since deviation is such an apparent feature in '(From the Distance)', it is worth examining it in more detail. We can also consider parallelism and the foregrounding effects that this creates.

**Deviation and Parallelism:**

Perhaps the most striking aspect of deviation in '(From the Distance)' is the almost constant use of lower case letters where we would normally expect capitals. This though is typical of Wendell
Berry's poetry and so we can't attribute any great significance to it, other than his desire to break with normal convention. However, one of the effects of this graphological deviation is to foreground any instances where Berry's does use capitalisation. Because of this we can infer that the word 'earth' in line one is an important concept in the poem, since it is the first word we come across with initial capitalisation. Likewise, the final line of the poem is heavily foregrounded by each word beginning with a capital letter. This emphasises the idea being expressed here; namely that nothing (least of all poetry) and nobody is able to stop the progression of earth or the poet's love for his addressee - not even conventionally. From the Distance. Wendell Berry perhaps chooses Distance because it is a stereotypical example of the living of the dead. In addition to the graphological deviations, there are also a number of grammatical deviations in the poem. Many of these occur through Berry tendency to use punctuation where it would not normally be necessary. So, for instance, we get phrases being bracketed where there is no grammatical need, in order to express the notion of two events happening at the same time. An example would be in lines 12 and 13 - d-i-s-t-a-n-c-e/are (others, earth, dead). Here, the bracketed part of line 13 seems to mean that leaves and flowers are physically opening at the same time as the poet's others, earth, dead are opening metaphorically. Again, this contributes to our understanding of the poem as being very active and dynamic. Note the additional semantic deviation here - earth, dead cannot actually open and so this part of the line is foregrounded too, possibly to suggest that with the arrival of Spring the speaker becomes more aware of his living and aspirations, more 'open' in the sense of receptive and unguarded.

Berry tries to capture the idea of a multitude of thoughts occurring simultaneously by breaking grammatical conventions. In addition to his use of bracketed phrases, groups of nouns are often run together without punctuation (e.g. lines 3 to 6 and line 22), and we also find both definite and indefinite reference within the same clause (‘this, a)

**From the Distance**

We are others and the earth,

the living of the dead.

Remembering who we are,

we live in eternity;

any solitary act

is work of community..

Such features, remember, are what However, if we examine these closely we can see that there is actually a systematicity to the deviations, and that they do indeed contribute to meaning. We can see an example of this in lines 7 Here, Berry divides the word tumbling so that the progressive morpheme -ing appears on a separate line. This foregrounds the verb and also creates a
homological effect, or what Short (2000) refers to as a 'graphology-symbolic' effect. This is where a word or a piece of text actually looks like the concept that it represents - for example, if I were to write the word like this. In lines 7 the verb appears to 'tumble' from one line to the next and so we understand the action to be an important concept within the poem.

All times are one
if heart delight
in work, if hands
join the world right.

Similarly, in line 4 Berry uses deviant punctuation to split the progressive participle 'opening' into its component letters (‘d-i-s-t-a-n-c-e’). Again this foregrounds the verb and creates the homological effect of the word actually opening. Notice as well that the hyphens also suggest that the opening is a long, drawn-out process, reminiscent of the slowness with which flowers bloom, especially when contrasted with the following line which contains no spaces between words and punctuation marks.

The wheel of eternity is turning
in time, its rhymes, austere,
at long intervals returning,
sing in the mind, not in the ear.

If we look closely at the occurrences of graphological deviation in the poem, we can see that it often works to foreground the dynamic verbs - those verbs which imply action of some sort. Line 4 (‘-mind-’) is an example of this. The line consists of a single verb in the imperative mood, foregrounded by a hyphen either side of it.

A man of faithful thought may feel
in light, among the beasts and fields,
the turning of the wheel.

Other actions are foregrounded in different ways. In line 3 we get repetition of the verb, and in lines 3 the verbs occur in an unpunctuated list, with the list in brackets running on to a new line. And line 2 is foregrounded at a number of different levels; graphology (in light, among the beasts and fields), grammar (through an inversion of the expected subject-verb-object word order, which has the effect of placing the emphasis of the clause on the action) and semantics - by having an inanimate abstract noun (‘fields’) functioning as the subject of a dynamic verb. All these deviations focus our attention on the actions in ‘(From the Distance)’ and contribute to the sense we have of the poem being very dynamic. You can see, then, that our stylistic analysis is so far upholding our initial interpretation of the poem.
Fall of the year:

at evening a frail mist
rose, glowing in the rain.

The dead and unborn drew near the fire.

A song, not mine,

stuttered in the flame.

In addition to the graphological deviation in the poem, there is also some degree of graphological parallelism in the arrangement of the poem into stanzas. There are several possible ways of describing the graphological organisation of the poem. It may be seen as five stanzas, with a stand-alone line at the end of the poem. Alternatively, we might describe it as being made up of five 5-line stanzas, all interspersed with a single line. However you prefer to see it, what this seems to suggest is that there is some order to the poem. It is not the chaotic graphological jumble that it first appears. It is difficult, though, to know what to make of the parallel structure of the poem, and if we were to try and relate it to our initial impression of the poem it would be a pretty tenuous interpretation. However, one researcher who has studied a number of Berry's poems suggests that graphological parallelism is a significant stylistic feature in his poetry. Dixit (1977) studied a corpus of Wendell Berry poems in detail and concluded that, far from being arbitrary examples of deviation, the poems are, in fact, systematically deviant. She explains that:

When the poet chooses to talk about spring, his poem displays a regular cyclic structure like that of the seasons themselves. (Dixit 1977: 87-88)

Obviously, it is no accident that Berry's structured the poem as he did, and the above is one possible explanation as to why.

Another instance of parallelism in the poem occurs at the phonological level, where we find the repetition of particular sounds. Although 'From the Distance' does not have a rhyme scheme of any regularity (The wheel of eternity is turning in time, its rhymes, austere, at long intervals returning, sing in the mind, not in the ear), Berry's does make use of internal rhyme at particular points within the poem. There is no strict pattern to its occurrence, yet there is some degree of phonological parallelism in each stanza except the last two. Often we find a repetition of vowel sounds in words in close proximity to each other, as we can see in the examples below (vowel sounds are in bold):

From the Distance

We are others and the earth,
the living of the dead.

Remembering who we are,
we live in eternity;
any solitary act
is work of community

What we can note from this is that the absence of phonological parallelism in the last stanza again foregrounds this part of the poem. The last stanza, then, is heavy with deviation, which suggests it is important in interpretative terms.

**Congruence of Foregrounding in the Final Stanza:**

As we have seen so far, there is a strong element of foregrounding in the final stanza of '(From the Distance)'. This is what Leech (1969) describes as 'congruence' of foregrounding, which is where we get lots of different types of foregrounding occurring at once. This is obviously very important for our interpretation of the poem but before coming to any overall conclusion about meaning; let's consider again exactly what elements are foregrounded here.

First there is the internal deviation we noticed with the initial capitalization of each word in the last line. Secondly, unlike in the other stanzas, there is a lack of any sort of phonological parallelism, and (A song, not mine) the grammatical ordering of the stanza follows conventional rules of syntax. What is interesting about these foregrounded elements is that they are all the result of internal deviation, and are all foregrounded because they conform to our normal expectations of written language! In addition to the numerous deviant features of the poem in the other stanzas, what we have in the last stanza is a kind of 'reverse' deviation. The most strongly foregrounded features of '(From the Distance)' are those which we would usually define as 'normal'.

The effect of all this is to make it unusually easy for us to understand the last stanza. There is no difficult interpretative work to do (in comparison to the rest of the poem) and so the final message of the poem is made extremely clear; nothing and nobody can stop the progress of living and the poet's love - the implication being, perhaps, that we should not struggle against these forces, but simply resign ourselves to accepting and becoming participants in them. To sum-up my analysis of '(From the Distance)' shows how we can use stylistics to uphold an interpretation of a poem, and how it can also highlight elements of a poem that we might otherwise miss. It also enables us to speculate with more certainty on precisely why Wendell Berry chooses to use such seemingly odd stylistic techniques in '(From the Distance)'. For example, we saw that deviant punctuation is linked to the foregrounding of dynamic verbs, explaining why we perceive so much 'movement' in the poem.

Analysing the poem stylistically also highlights how the most internally deviant features of the poem are those which we would usually consider being 'normal', non-deviant language in both
everyday communication and within poetry, and suggests a reason as to why this might be. Stylistics, then, is helpful in explaining parts of a text which we might not otherwise understand.

There are particular features of the poem, though, which I have not been able to account for. For example, I can't explain the comma between 'selves' and 'stir' in line 11, and I'm not sure about the relevance of the colon just before 'every' in line 23. A stylistic analysis which could account for these factors would obviously supersede the one I have given.

In general though, I have shown how the linguistic features of a poem (From the Distance) are directly related to meaning and in doing so I have upheld my initial interpretation of '(From the Distance)'. Of course, mine is not the only interpretation which could be given to the poem. However, by using a systematic analytical technique like stylistics we can ensure that our interpretation is as explicit and grounded in fact as it can be. It is also highly likely that any other stylistic analysis of the poem would include at least some of my conclusions. I hope, then, that I have shown you how to explain why a text makes you feel a particular way, and that I have gone some way towards convincing you that stylistics is a useful tool for anybody interpreting literary texts.

**Discussion:**

Throughout their selected poems both the poets under the study have uses some specific literary devices to express what is miscalled their love to nature, namely these figures of speech are: personification, metaphor and paradox. However when we put the poems under the deconstructive, analytical and reader response theories to read and reread these particular poems we found that what our poets and some critics called love of nature is in fact unity with nature or pantheism.

Then when Wendell berry said in the lines one and two of the first stanza of his poem from the distance (we are others and earth, the living of dead …) he should not actually meant we the people are the other people. Deconstructing the text we can say that (we) mean all human (others) mean god and the rest livings and none livings generally, so this exactly what pantheism means it goes like this: pan = all ; theos ( theism) = god. It is the world view which understands there to an intimate connection or outright identification of god and all there is: god is all; all is god. Geisler and Watkins ( a appendix p.290).

Same arguments are to be applied to the work of our other poet William henney Davies on his pome a greeting lines two to five of the first stanza that says: ( good morning life and.. all things glad and beautiful ) he also added in the fifth line the same stanza ( ..The sun is my great friend...) life and all state that there is something bigger and further than life called (all) it includes life , livings and everything , this must be god and nothing else . The poet used personification as a tool by witch he can fell the natural gab between the man and the sun. By saying the sun is my great friend the speaker gives the sun human quality that is because a normal friend must be from the same kind let alone a great one. The word great here is used to indicate the degree of unity and sameness of all to the all and this is what called pantheism.
Again Wendell berry used metaphor as literary technique to send the meaning of pantheism in lines from six to ten of stanza two of the poem from the distance he said (all times are one if hearts delight in work, if hands join the world right...) here our poet made the three time dividers morning, day and night or past, present and future as one by using the tool of metaphor. The heart here stands for god as the highest or the most important part of a same or a one body and the hand represent human, they are the tool that enables man to exchange things with the other livings and none livings. It symbolizes human because they are the stage between other things, world and god. So since the tome is one hearts, hands and world within it must be one.

Also berry discusses the same themes in his poem traveling at home, its title says everything be itself. According to the oxford dictionary the word travelling: is the act of going from one place to another based on the above definition there must be moving from one place to another to say that someone has traveled. But berry used metaphor to embody the meaning of pantheism within the poem’s title, he demonstrates the view of pantheism that say {god is everywhere and in everything, that is all pervasive and immanent, rather than omnipresent and transcendent. God is in the university and indeed in everything, and everything is part of god.} a scientific model of pantheism. Therefore traveling at home means the work of one within his own self to explore more truth and readapt his scattered structure.

In the fourth line of the second stanza of his poem seeking beauty William Davies said: (A chaffinch laughs in his melodious voice …) he personified A chaffinch by making it laughs. Connecting the tittle of the poem seeking beauty with the laughing of the A chaffinch bird to give it human quality, is in fact trying to picture that bird as some who is looking for the truth, because beauty is truth and looking for this is looking for that, as John Keats said: beauty is truth, truth is beauty; that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know. so according to pantheism most beautiful truth ever is to know that all is one and one is all which let everything a same and alike with anything else. Wendell berry used metaphor in line 11 stanza three of the poem from the distance to describe eternity as something that has wheel, while it is the aggregate of all what is there. (The wheel of eternity is turning in time) means that beings of different times in different places are thematically related to all in any time and everywhere. Then according to encyclopedia of philosophy pantheism may be understood positively as the view that god is identical to cosmos, the view that there exist nothing which is out of god, or else negatively as the rejection of any view that considers god as distinct from the universe, so eternity starts from god and end within him and that pantheism.

In his a greeting Davies again used metaphor as a technical tool to uncover the concept of pantheism. In the first, second and fifth lines of the second stanza he send three types of greetings to three different beings:

Hail to the morning sky …
In the above lines Davies presents the pantheism as a question of relative identity or identity -in – difference, by which it is possible to maintain that god and cosmos are simultaneously both identical and different. Hail to the morning sky, indicate the first being that ever come to be and that greeting is given to it as an individual figure, single sky with specific personal identity. Hail to you birds stands for all birds as collective identity, however if we put to gather the morning sky with the birds we shall grasp a flock of birds somewhere singing in the morning while they are flying. Therefore the morning sky makes them happy, as a result they let others happier, this is what people called relative identity. The third greeting is send to the shady bowers- the shelter it symbolizes home it is the place where all have their rest and comfort. William Davies by the means of personification presents the morning sky as a person that can receive greetings and send them back he also0 dealt with the birds and shady bowers as if they were people or human beings .

A plain life poem by Davies from its tittle we can understand that the poem is calling for clear, happy and valuable life or a plain life. In the first line of the first stanza he used personification to express speaker’s relation to the sun, he said: (no idle gold ... since this fine Sun. my friend...) it means that nothing is useless even this sun is useful to me and it gives me a lot, it is my friend. He also said (no painted scenes… since clouds can change their skies …) here he personified the clouds by giving them the ability to change their skies... No painted scenes means, nothing is steady that everything is changeable including the colure of the sky. Pantheism conception is widely discussed by Wendell berry in the third line of his poem the gift of gravity. Said: ,, the river coming down  from the sky to hills from hills to sea, and craving as it moves, to rise invisible…,, in the first line of the poem berry gave the river human characteristics he pictured it as it was a person who went up to the sky and is coming down and by the time he was coming across the hills he visited the sea, throughout all that long journey he ascend unseen. All this going up and down of the river which is meant to represent water that is considered as the life blood clarifies the interconnection of the above mentioned things; sky ,hill, river and the sea to the invisible other things everywhere, then all is interconnected with everyone and everything.

In the gift of gravity line 32 berry used tactic of paradox to portray pantheism about that he said: ,, that I possess by loss..., in fact no one can possess by loss because losing is downwards while possessing is upwards. But because pantheism considers all is one and one is all (god) and as there is nothing comes from nothing it is also every missing thing goes to someone or something somewhere else. He mentioned again in lines 58-59 ,, in work of love, the body forgets its weight ,, he dealt with the body as it was a complete human that is able to remember and forget things. Forgets it weight means it make up rhymes, fresh, human ate and more spiritual. In lines 20-24 of the same poem, berry used metaphor to declare his pantheistic attitude he said: ,, and every gift is
perfect in its beginning, for it is from the father of light... the father of light here is used to stand for god but based on pantheism god is all, then every single being gives light in one corner or another. All is the father of light that is every gift is perfect or every work anywhere by every being is significant and needed the same as any other work. He also said in lines 28-29, and if our wickedness destroys the water shed, presenting the issue of good and evil in relation to pantheism reduce the chance of an evil to work as a purely satanic because even the deeds which seems bad they are in a way or another lead to good ones.

Conclusion:

In conclusion thorough the reading and interpreting the poetic works of William Hennery Davies and Wendell Berry the researcher found that the two poets discussed many themes, the main of them is the relation human to nature and that of god the whole beings. Both poets wrote in free verses using simple language of everyday life which easily understood by any person.

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