

Semantic deviations in Jose Garcia Villa's "Poem 130": A stylistic analysis

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Abstract

This study stylistically analyzes the semantic deviations in "Poem 130" by Jose Garcia Villa, a Philippine national artist for literature. Aside from the eccentric commas, his comma poem contains semantic deviations. Qualitative data were gathered to determine the functions of the semantic deviations found in the said poem. Findings revealed that the poem's semantic deviations focus on images which, at the outset, seem nonsense or absurd, but would lead to the realization of the aptness of these semantic deviations for finding meanings in the poem. Using Leech's (2008) stylistic analysis of semantic deviations, it was found that these deviations manifest an excellent metaphorical sense, which is another feature of the poem aside from its eccentric use of commas.

Keywords: Comma poems, Jose Garcia Villa, semantic deviations, stylistic analysis, tropes

1. Introduction

Previous studies on Villa's poetry discussed the functions of comma as his style. San Juan (2010) attests to how Villa appeals to his readers: "it is ironic for a poet obsessed with uniqueness, singularity, essence, angels, gods, and genius to be swallowed up in the homogenizing universe of absurdity" (p. 21). This nihilism displayed by Villa in his works exhibits language that means and signifies nothing. T. Yu (2004) stresses that Villa's poetry (compared to his novels) "emerges in the shuttling between two poles" (p. 50), implying that Villa is simply exposing the contradiction he inhabits. As this raised an issue whether Villa is trying to be different, Park (2013) posits that Villa hinted that these commas, for him, are much more than mere punctuation marks as seen in the development of his comma poems. Park (2013) also notes that allegedly, Villa artificially recreated words and restyled the English language through the articulation of commas as they produce, in Villa's (2008) own words, "a lineal pace of quiet dignity and movement" (p. 6). This quotation supports T. Yu's claim (2004) that Villa can only speak through a highly constrained set of discourses but never claims that this is his own making. This raises an issue as to how Villa reaches his readers.

The present study draws upon Leech's (2007) semantic deviation theories. According to his framework, stylistic analysis refers to the application of concepts from linguistics and

allied disciplines in the interpretation of samples of communication through language. Villa's poem "Poem 130" served as the text for stylistic analysis in the present study. While several studies on Villa's poetry dealt with themes such as his Orientalist style (T. Yu, 2004), subaltern poetics (San Juan, 2010), Hispanic resonance (Park, 2013), and biographical analysis (Abing, 2018), the stylistic analysis of the semantic category is explored in this study, which is the gap this paper attempts to fill.

1.1 Literature Review

In analyzing literary works, linguistic analysis cannot be neglected; it is the basic requirement in understanding literature, and the first step is to know how language is used as the medium of a literary work. In interpreting literature, one should consider how language is used (Simpson, 2004); that is, "literature cannot be analyzed in any depth apart from language" (p. 22), which is the core concept of stylistics—the combination of linguistic and literary analyses in exploring language use in literary works. Stylistics comes from the assumption that those two analyses are strongly linked and complement one another. Jeffries (2010) identifies "stylistics as the branch of general linguistics that focuses on style, particularly in the works of literature" (p. 40). It studies how a writer installs the phenomenon of language to communicate to its readers. As an application in relating how language works in literary texts, stylistics has two main objectives: to explain the relationship between language and artistry, and to determine the author's works of doubtful attribution (Eagleton, 2003).

Regarded as the innovator of experimental poetry, e.e. Cummings stretched an unparalleled pinnacle in poetry when he used an unconventional poetic language in his works. This has fascinated and mystified various readers, researchers, and literary scholars. According to the study of Li and Shi (2015), the unconventional use of language should be attributed to the persona's identity as most of Cummings's poems were written with a perfect blend of art technique and poesy. These poems highlight deviation as a means of realizing the foregrounding effect in achieving the aesthetic value of perception. According to Shklovsky (1920, as cited in Chua, 2002), "the technique of art is the process of making objects different and difficult; and there is a connection: the more different and the more difficult the object is, the more time you will spend perceiving it" (p. 57).

Zane (2011) analyzed Sylvia Plath's poem, "Stillborn." Plath used estrangement, a technique in defamiliarization, to intensify the experiences for readers. In "Stillborn," the speaker is a poet, who describes her poems as though they were fetuses in jars of pickling fluid—sitting on a shelf looking at her, their mother:

O I cannot understand what happened to them!
They are proper in shape and number and every part.
They sit so nicely in the pickling fluid!
They smile and smile and smile and smile at me.
And still the lungs won't fill and the heart won't start

The persona in "Stillborn" is presumably the mother of the fetuses smiling at her from jars on a shelf. Plath personified the poems, comparing them directly to fetuses. In this

metaphor, although they were unborn, they were once alive in the womb—growing inside, but have died a tragic and early death like an unborn child. Plath's technique strengthens the reader's imagination because the experience of seeing dead poems in jars is something so impossible to imagine that it shatters existing conventions and norms. This new image of dead fetuses in a jar may suppress the reader's traditional connotations of motherhood such as warmth, nurture, and love—which are defamiliarized (Zane, 2011).

This kind of creative use of language is technically called linguistic deviation, by which a writer creates an original language deviated from the norms of the literary convention or everyday speech. Deviation therefore is a term used to describe the spelling and pronunciation of a word (phonology) or a sentence structure (grammatical), which do not conform to a norm (Douthwaite, 2000). It is a linguistic phenomenon, which has an important psychological effect on the readers or hearers. Therefore, if a portion of a poem is unusual, it becomes especially noticeable or perceptually prominent. This is called 'foregrounding.' Leech (2008), in *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*, also explains linguistic deviation through the concept of foregrounding. Literary workers should concentrate on the element of interest and surprise rather than on the automatic pattern.

Li and Shi's (2015) study analyzed Dylan Thomas's poem "From Love's First Fever to Plague" and identified the distinctiveness of figurative language that can be examined in two dimensions in which the poet makes "the original use of the established possibilities of the language" and 'creates new communicative possibilities which are already in the language' (p. 28):

And from the first **declension of the flesh**
I learnt man's tongue, to twist the shapes of thoughts
Into the **stony idiom of the brain**
To shade and knit anew the patch of words
Left by the dead who, in their **moonless acre**,
Need no word's warmth.

Moonless acre from the poem denotes the cruel and dark side of human nature, whereas the series of figurative expressions, which transfer the functions and processes of language to those of human organs such the *declension of flesh* and *the stony idiom of the brain*, explores new communicative possibilities of the existing linguistic expressions. In effect, in the poem, Thomas rejects mechanical collocations and vividly evokes in the readers the plight, predicament, and torture suffered by men themselves, and the plagues they posed upon others resulting in agitated love (Li & Shi, 2015).

A piece of art swerves from the norms of language. An abstract painting, for example, disengages from the established rules of art. Such a painting functions against the background of norms so that it attracts in an odd, strange, and unanticipated manner the attention of viewers, who observe the artistic deviation as prominent from its background. This deviation comes into the foreground of their visual field. In the area of literature, the linguistic deviation from the accepted norms of language is the foregrounded element against the background of ordinary language.

Deviation is employed in a number of ways. For instance, semantico-syntactic

deviations explain the relationship between the two domains, namely source and target, and this relationship may be based on similarities or differences. These are different kinds of deviations proposed by Leech (2008, p. 128):

1. Phonological
2. Graphological
3. Morphological
4. Lexical
5. Grammatical
6. Semantic
7. Discourse
8. Internal and external

All the above deviations foreground a text. This foregrounding consequently helps convey meanings, and the ultimate result is the realization of the text in a perlocutionary level.

Artists do not serve their purpose if they are not creative. In literature, one could not possibly be artistic without using language creatively. Black (2006) states that “a writer may be said to use language creatively if he makes original use of established possibilities of the language and if he actually goes beyond those possibilities, that is, if he creates new communicative possibilities which are not already in the language” (p. 9). Therefore, it means that writers may transcend the limitations of language to explore and communicate new horizons of reality and experience. When creative writers purposively want to be inventive with their language, they deviate from the conventional and everyday language of their generation. With the use of unconventional language, they can make a strong impression on the minds of their readers (Louw, 2006).

Villa (2008) is never short of showing impressions in his poems as Park (2013, p. 130) posits that Villa’s use of commas fittingly helps set a pace (phonologically). The commas do not only work as a tool for adjusting a poem’s verbal density and ordinary movement, but they also give each word a fuller tonal value, allowing a more precise line movement. The commas are presented in a manner in which the reader is exposed to an unusual way of reading poetry, as shown in this excerpt:

Moonlight’s, watermelon, mellows, light.
Mellowly. Water, mellows, moon, lightly.
 Water, mellows, melons, brightly.
Moonlight’s, mellow, to, water’s, sight.
 Yes, and, water, mellows, soon,
Quick, as mellows, the mellow, moon.
 Water, mellows, as mellows, melody.
 Moon, has, its, mellow, secrecy.

Park (2013) states that the commas result in a resembling material such as a tongue twister. The words *moonlight*, *melody*, and *watermelons* are purely phonetic. Although

the poem follows syntactical logic, the similar-sounding words are absurd as meaning for Villa becomes secondary believing that commas generate a rhythm and new meanings. The unconventional use of commas helps engage the readers in unraveling the poem's theme, allowing them to reform the run-ons simultaneously. On the other hand, the commas naturalize the derivation of words from one grammatical category to another (T. Yu, 2004). Villa's comma poems could be compared to the graphological and typographical explorations of e.e. Cummings and Emily Dickinson's use of the dash. However, Villa's personal notebooks disclose yet another expression of his fixation with commas that resonate personifications through simple illustrations (King, 2008):

And,lay,he,down,the,golden,father,
 (Genesis',fist,all,gentle,now).
 between,the,Wall,of,China,and,
 The,tiger,tree(his,centuries,his,
 Aerials,of,light)...
 Anchored,entire,angel!
 He,in,his,estate,miracle,and,living,dew,
 His,fuses,gold,his,cobalts,love,
 And,in,his,eyepits,
 O,under,the,liontelling,sun—
 The,zeta,truth—the,swift,red,Christ.

In hindsight, the portion of this poem highlights the graphologically deviant form by which punctuations, capitalizations, and enjambments are evident. It is apparent that Villa used an ingenious vocabulary such as *golden father*, *Genesis' fist*, *Wall of China*, *tiger*, *tree*, *Aerials of light*, *living dew*, *liontelling sun*, *zeta truth*, and *swift red Christ*. The obtrusive syntax of the poem with all the mentioned deviations contributes to absurd meanings of the poem, which ironically can help readers understand it through a stylistic analysis.

Looking at the review of studies on Jose Garcia Villa's literary pieces, most focused on the thematic analysis of his works, particularly biographical, reader-response, and formalistic (new American Criticism). As what this present study attempts to establish, the gap which these previous research missed is the analysis of Villa's comma poems. Although previous literature (Abing, 2018; King, 2008; Park, 2013; San Juan, 2010; T. Yu, 2004) made a solid case for Villa's development of language philosophy and style, they do not hold water enough for Villa to be placed as a figure in research. Similarly, these studies defended Villa's case of trying to be apart from his generation.

Villa aims to target the readers' comprehension. He wants the poem's theme to be unmistakably understood through clarity (Abing, 2018). This assumption supports T. Yu's (2004) claim that Villa can only speak through a highly constrained set of discourses, but he never claims that this is his own making.

1.2 Research Questions

To address the issue raised in the studies of T. Yu (2004), San Juan (2010), and Park (2013) as to whether Villa is trying to be different from his peers, the present study analyzed the semantic deviations in “Poem 130” as figurative language is the very heart of poetry. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What deviations in Villa’s poem can be categorized as semantic?
2. How do these deviations function in this poem?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

1.3.1 Stylistic Analysis and Foregrounding

Brumfit and Carter (1997, as cited in Mahlberg, 2007) identified stylistics as the application of concepts from linguistics and allied disciplines in analyzing and interpreting deviations created in literature as well as in other types of text.

Deviation is the focal point of the present study because this may be obviously seen in Jose Garcia Villa’s comma poems. King (2008) posits that Villa’s style highlights irregularity among his generation of writers. Leech (2008) lists down eight different types of linguistic deviation (which were previously enumerated) that fall under three main language levels: realization, form, and semantic. Phonological and graphological categories belong to realization; lexical and grammatical deviations are under form; and denotative and cognitive meaning is in the semantic category (Leech, 2008). These three main levels of language are illustrated in Figure 1.

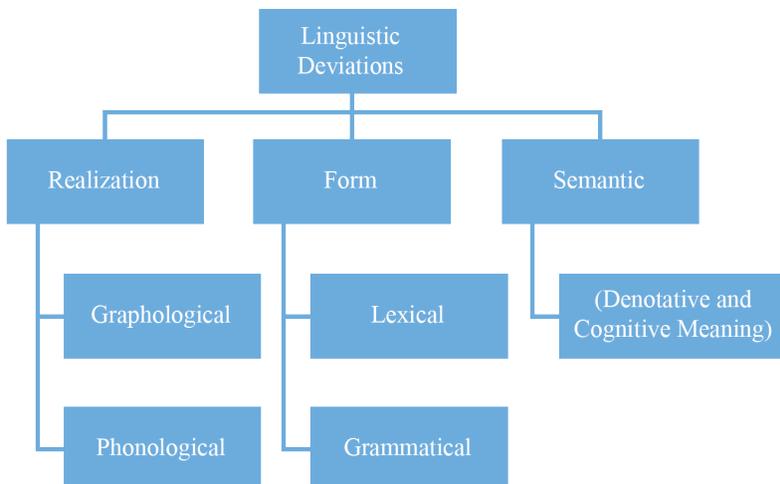


Figure 1. The Three Levels of Linguistic Deviation (Leech, 2008, p. 58)

Leech's classification of linguistic deviation into three main levels explains how a literary work should be approached. The first level is realization, which contains the verbal elements of a literary work. After accessing realization, the reader then examines the form, which includes grammar and lexicon. The semantics, or the denotative and cognitive meaning, is last to be determined (Ouameur, 2013).

In the context of foregrounding, literature and art share several similarities; thus, it is justifiable to study linguistic deviations against the artistic and aesthetic backdrop of foregrounding (van Peer, 2007). As a stylistic feature, foregrounding has the effect of defamiliarizing the reader by breaking the familiar patterns. It also suspends the act of communication by breaking the norm through stylistic variations that can be at the phonetic level (e.g., rhyme, alliteration), the grammatical level (e.g., ellipsis, inversion), or the semantic level (e.g., metaphor, irony) (Miall & Kuiken, 1932, as cited in Ul, 2014). This concept sees that a text's artistic and aesthetic uniqueness lies not in the exact reproduction of a certain piece but in its deviations from the regulations or norms. For instance, the creativity of a composer of a certain piece of music lies not in the repetition of regular rhythm and melody but in its divergence from the musical norm, which is accepted and anticipated by the public. Similarly, the eyes, hearts, and minds of the reader will be captured by the foregrounding part of the poem against the common background of language accepted by conventions.

1.3.2 Semantic Deviation

It is logical to contextualize semantic deviation based on a poetic situation for people to realize its sense. For example, when someone says, "This story is beautiful," he or she decidedly does not directly imply that "The story is true" as well. This statement introduces an arbitrary accord of concepts, which are customarily treated as diverse. In this case, semantic deviation deals with what Miall and Kuiken (1994) call as tropes, a type of figure of speech in which the foregrounded irregularities of content are stressed. They further state that tropes are classified into three major sections: (a) semantic oddity, (b) transference of meaning, and (c) honest deception. Semantic oddity refers to how the expression in writing is weird, odd, or strange. There are five types of semantic oddity: pleonasm, periphrasis, tautology, oxymoron, and paradox. Secondly, transference of meaning deals with the five tropes of figurative language: synecdoche, metonymy, metaphor, simile, and personification. Lastly, honest deception, which is concerned with misrepresenting the truth, is classified into three tropes: hyperbole, litotes, and irony.

Pleonasm is used in such a way that varies slightly from ordinary conventional language, which bears meanings in a more colorful and impressive way. It revamps the speech in rhetoric as an effective way of speaking and writing with emphasis (Li & Shi, 2015). It is a redundant pair where both words carry the characteristics and meaning of the other word. Examples are the expressions *tuna fish*, *cash money*, and *free gift*.

X. Yu (2007) elucidates that tautology is a literary device with unnecessary elaboration with limited use. For example, in the *Inland Revenue's* white-collar workers, pointless repetitions such as *new developments*, unnecessary descriptions such as *Europe's huge butter mountain*, needless appendages such as *weather conditions*, and self-cancelling propositions such as *He is either guilty or not guilty*, are employed.

According to Bressler (1999), periphrasis is an indirect and circumlocutory phrase. It is frequently used in poetry in comparison with tautology and pleonasm. In his book *The Study and Practice of Style in Composition*, he states “that periphrasis emerges when a word is substituted by numerous words to form a lengthier phrase that refers to the same thing” (p. 93). Examples of periphrasis include *vertically challenged* for “short” or *informal settlers* for “squatters.”

Brown (2006) explains that oxymoron is one type of ridiculousness, which requires irreconcilable fundamentals of reference or meaning. In layman’s understanding, it is a figure of speech which consists of a pair of related contradictory words within a single sentence. In most of his plays, Shakespeare makes use of oxymora to develop a paradox, specifically in Hamlet’s line, “I must be cruel, only to be kind” where he has drawn two incongruous ideas: “to be cruel” and “to be kind.” This contradiction is drawn in the setting of the play where Hamlet shows his willingness to kill King Claudius, the culprit behind the murder of his father, who happens to have married his mother as well. Obviously in the play, Hamlet will purge his mother—the beloved of his father’s murderer.

A paradox is an idea or a statement that expresses absurd contradicting ideas. It is “a statement that contradicts itself” (Jeffries, 2010, p. 72). In common conversations, a paradox seems absurd or contradictory, yet it creates authentic reality. In information technology, a *windows environment* is a paradox that when a user intends to ‘shut down’ his computer, it is necessary to click first the ‘start’ button.

The second section is transference of meaning, which consists of five tropes: metaphor, metonymy, personification, synecdoche, and simile. According to Hunston (2006), synecdoche is identified with a rule that represents “a part to whole and vice versa” (p. 241), for example: *The Philippines has won the international basketball competition. The Philippines*, in this case, means the team from the Philippines who has competed.

Metonymy, as quoted by Leech (2008) from *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*, is “a figure of speech that uses the name of one thing for that of something else with which it is referenced.” It is often overlooked because of the influential effect of metaphor but is as tremendously important. A practical example is the idiom, *The pen is mightier than the sword.*, in which the pen refers to written words and the sword to military force.

Metaphor, according to Jeffries (2010), is “so central to the notion of poetic creation that it is often treated as a phenomenon in its own right without reference to other kinds of transferred meaning” (p. 72). In general, the researcher believes that all figures of speech root its origin from metaphor. Metaphor’s concept of indirect comparison of two unlike things resemble that of other tropes, specifically the semantic deviations identified in the present study. As Wheelwright (1962, as cited in Ophardt, 1983) explains, metaphor is “the essence of all poetic language ... that metaphor may be the most authentic semantic formulation of an intuition which we have to analyze” (p. 50).

According to Vinogradova, Shevchenko, Mashkova, Kislitsyna, and Kuptsova (2018) (2018), “Metaphor reflects the universal human ability to link different spheres on basis of diverse associations” (p. 744). This means that the use of metaphoric language enables connection between two unlike things. Banaruee, Khoshshima, Zare-Behtash, and Yarahmadzahi (2019) add that the metaphor’s social factors have also been involved in this

phenomenon. When a poet uses a metaphor in his or her poem, he or she describes a subject or domain (target or topic) in terms of another subject or domain (base or vehicle). It is typical of a person to comprehend one sphere in the light of another, that is, to actualize a transfer from a 'source domain' to a 'target domain' and to reflect it in language. In *A lawyer is a lighthouse.*, the *lawyer* is described by the *lighthouse*. This implies that there are certain characteristics of the lighthouse (base) that is attributed to its target (lawyer).

Glucksberg, Newsome, and Goldvarg (2001) state that in the process of creating as well as understanding metaphors, irrelevant features of the target are filtered out from the base. The metaphorically irrelevant semantic aspects of the base are withdrawn and not taken into account. In *My lawyer is a shark.*, characteristics such as living at the sea, having the ability to swim, and breathing under water are metaphorically irrelevant; therefore, they are subuded throughout the process of metaphor comprehension.

According to Wheelwright (1962, as cited in Ophardt, 1983), the similarities in a metaphor are taken from the context of the discourse, specifically out of the imagined transposition of the source and the target domain. Usually, the target is delimited enough by the context of the discourse in which the metaphor occurs so that the choice of a base is enough to imply its similarities to the target. This may imply the similarities expressed in the image of the metaphor. Oftentimes, the verb, which is used to indicate the transposition of the subject and the modifier, is employed in a way that only relevant similarities will hold the transposition together. The transposition of a metaphor emphasizes the dissimilar things, which compose the metaphoric image.

A poet uses metaphors to describe and give attributes to what is being explained. In addition, a metaphor projects a visual image for readers, which can be used to support the delineation of the theme as well as the subject of the poem (Romala, 2015).

Personification, on the other hand, gives human qualities to nonhuman things such as talking, thinking, feeling, or making decisions, for example: *Your computer hates me, and the birds sing as they express their joy.*

As stated by Saleem (2012), "simile, unlike metaphor, is an explicit figurative comparison of similar things in a statement that one thing is like another" (p. 372). The words *like, as, similar, or same* are used in this trope.

Lastly, honest deception, which to Semino and Short (2004) deals with misrepresenting the truth, is classified into three tropes: hyperbole, litotes, and irony. Hyperbole refers to exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally, whereas litotes pertains to ironic understatements where an affirmative is expressed by the negative of its contrary. Irony, on the other hand, expresses one's meaning by using the opposite. The aforementioned tropes are further explained in the results-and-discussion section.

2. Method

2.1 Focus of Analysis

This study provides an integrative, bottom-up stylistic analysis of the poem. It collected and stylistically analyzed the semantic deviations found in "Poem 130" by Jose Garcia Villa.

Stylistic analysis deals with the complex and ‘valued’ language within literature (Leech, 2008). In such examination, the scope is sometimes narrowed to concentrate on the more striking features of literary language such as semantic features. These semantic deviations were classified according to types and were stylistically analyzed to determine their functions in the poem.

2.2 The Poem

The study analyzed “Poem 130: Much,beauty,is,less,than,the,face,of,” written by Jose Garcia Villa in *Doveglion: Collected Poems* (2008) published by Penguin Books. The poem contains commas placed to separate all the words in it. The persona in the poem describes God as a despot different from the God people know who is too sly and too meek. He emphasizes God’s light that shines through anyone that one cannot be received in the heavenly kingdom unless he receives presumably the Good News of salvation, which is God’s gift to man. The poem is as follows:

Poem 130

Jose Garcia Villa

- (1) Much,beauty,is,less,than,the,face,of,
- (2) My,dark,hero. His,under,is,pure,
- (3) Lightning. His,under,is,the,socket,

- (4) Of,the,sun.Not,Christ,the,Fox,not,
- (5) Christ,the,Lord,His,beauty,is,too,
- (6) Sly,too,meek. But,Christ,Oppositor,

- (7) Christ,Foeman: The,true,dark,Hero.
- (8) He,with,the,three-eyèd,thunders,he,
- (9) With,the,rigorous,terrors: this,

- (10) Man’s,under,is,pure,lightning. This,
- (11) Man’s,under,is,the,socket,of,the,Sun.
- (12) After,pure,eyes,have,peeled,

- (13) Off,skin,who,can,gaze,unburned? Who,
- (14) Can,stand,unbowed? Well,be,perceived,
- (15) And,well,perceive. Receive,be,received.

The poem has 15 lines divided into five stanzas of three lines, each in free verse. For the structure to be uniform (three lines per stanza), the third line in each of the stanzas has a missing word that runs on to the first line, an enjambment. Thus, the sense and rhythmic movement continues to the next three-lined stanza. This is an enjambment that speeds up the movement of the next line, and thus rushes the reader ahead to complete the phrase and the idea it expresses.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Semantic Oddity

Semantic oddity refers to an expression that is weird, odd, or strange. There are two types of semantic oddity found in the poem: oxymoron and pleonasm.

3.1.1 Oxymoron

According to Brown (2006), oxymoron is one type of ridiculousness that requires irreconcilable fundamentals of reference or meaning. In layman's understanding, it is a figure of speech usually composed of a pair of neighboring contradictory words often within a sentence.

who,can,gaze,unburned?

As alluded, Moses is blinded by the bright light on the face of God; he went down the mountain with his face covered. He was unable to describe the God before him because of such gaze.

The oxymoron, i.e., *gaze,unburned*, found in the poem emphasizes an allusion, specifically the impeccability of God's light penetrating through the eyes of a person.

3.1.2 Pleonasm

Pleonasm, as a figurative language, is used in such a way that differs somewhat from ordinary everyday speech and conveys meanings in a more vivid and impressive manner (Leech, 2008).

Receive,be,received.

The line above is a pleonasm stressing *receive* in the poem as in *(You) Receive,be,received.*, which means God as perceived is truth perceived. *Receive,be,received* could mean that one cannot be received in the heavenly kingdom unless he receives the Good News of salvation, which is God's gift to man. As Li and Shi (2005) posit, pleonasm makes speech more effective as it beautifies and emphasizes the speech in rhetoric, which is the art of speaking and writing effectively.

3.2 Transference of Meaning

Metaphor is the only transference of meaning in the poem. The succeeding discussion focuses on the two metaphorical figures in the poem: the *true,dark,Hero* and *Christ*. To Romala (2015), transferred conceptual characteristics are given to those that do not actually possess them. Metaphors create new meanings. In this process, the reader has to control the chains of literal meanings and create imaginative meanings.

3.2.1 Metaphor

Metaphor, according to Jeffries (2010), is so central to the notion of poetic creation; it is often treated as a phenomenon in its own right without reference to other kinds of transferred meaning.

3.2.1.1 Metaphors Pertaining to the *true,dark,Hero*

His,under,is,pure,lightning.

The above line connects two entities: *His,under* and *pure,lightning*. *Lightning* may be alluded to the Greek god Zeus, which is a symbol of power. This draws the comparison between the *true dark hero* and Zeus. However, the latter may be metaphorically irrelevant because the adjective *pure* is associated to *lightning*. The word *pure*, in this case, does not describe Zeus in Greek mythology. Zeus as a reference is withdrawn and not taken into account. The word *lightning* therefore becomes a symbol of power. In effect, the persona argues that no one can be more beautiful than his dark hero, the antecedent of the *His*, whose under is pure lighting.

His,under,is,the,socket,of,the,Sun,

Subsequently, the *under* mentioned is also paired to *the,socket,of,the,Sun* to form another metaphor that supports the previous metaphor, *His,under,is,pure,lightning*. Both *lightning* and *socket of the sun* show similar qualities as both produce bright light. Socket, a part of the body where the eye is located, describes the dark hero.

3.2.1.2 Metaphors Pertaining to *Christ*

Christ,the,Fox,

His *true,dark,Hero* metaphorically is the Oppositor, Foeman. The God that people know is too sly and too meek. God being too sly is a common misconception among believers as God is known to be all-powerful and all-knowing. The first attribute, *Christ*, is directly antithetical to the second, *fox*, ditto with the image of the sly fox and the meek lamb as mentioned in the poem. This brings up questions such as: could this dark hero be Christ, the Oppositor who did not approve of the hypocrisy of the scribes and the Pharisees of His day?; and could He be the Foeman of the law that was observed to the letter sans its spirituality?

Christ,Oppositor,Christ,Foeman,

In the second metaphor, *Christ,Oppositor* may allude to Jesus Christ who drives out of the temple the hawkers selling their wares in the House of His Father. It could mean that He is the Oppositor who defies the tradition of keeping the Sabbath sacred when He cures the paralytic on the day forbidden for people to work.

The comma between *But, Christ, Oppositor* and *Christ, Foeman* plus the absence of the coordinating conjunction 'and' may mean that the two entities are one and the same person. This holds water because the succeeding pronoun *He* remains singular.

The metaphors make reference to both the *true, dark, Hero* and *Christ* in which both entities were described with different gravity. The two metaphors pertaining to the *true, dark, Hero* were contradicting with less-to-no effect because the hero, being *dark*, is naturally associated to evil but is metaphorically linked to *under, with, pure, lightning* and *under, with, the, socket, of, the, Sun* that show slyness and meekness. However, the two metaphors pertaining to *Christ* are similar—only that Christ is associated with positive connotations metaphorically linked to negative pairs fox, oppositor, and foeman. Unlike the true dark hero, these references commit blasphemy against Christ.

Villa would show a desire to enjoy extraordinary works as the sense from the source to the target domain is well contrived to serve some poetic, aesthetic, or artistic purposes. Only on the imaginative and pragmatic level that words convey image schematization. This image schematization facilitates understanding and interpretation in a higher level; and this appears in the poem in a coherent manner, making the processes of expression and understanding systemic. However, it does not employ the most typical words to the target domain, which could block the process of comprehension. While Villa used uncharacteristic source domains to describe his target, he has employed concrete attributes to an abstract concept. However, it would still be challenging to grasp the intended idea of the persona in the poem because of Villa's use of divergent images and unusual juxtaposes.

3.2.1.3 Honest Deception

Honest deception deals with misrepresenting the truth. This misrepresentation is paradoxical, but not for deception. The truth is manipulated at will for emphasis (Leech, 2008). Hyperbole is the only honest deception found in the poem.

3.2.1.4 Hyperbole

Hyperbole refers to exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally (Black, 2006).

three-eyed, thunders

The hyperbole *three-eyed thunders* is exaggerated for two features: (a) thunder cannot have three eyes, and (b) thunder cannot be pluralized using an –s inflection. This hyperbole is associated to Christ, which alludes to the Triune God who will reign with *rigorous, terrors* on the Day of Judgment.

After, pure, eyes, have, peeled, Off, skin,

This hyperbole means one can be blinded by a very bright light. This trope serves as an allusion to the aforementioned Moses story. Also, this could be a reference to Christ's

transfiguration where He met Abraham, Moses, and Elijah on the mountain. He went down from the mountain and met His disciples. The light from His face shone brightly, which almost blinded His disciples.

The semantic oddities, specifically the hyperboles, were employed in the poem to produce peculiarity or strangeness and to put an emphasis on *Christ*, the subject of the poem. Although these hyperboles do not mean anything particular, they can create relevant effects to the poem.

4. Conclusion

The semantic deviations in “Poem 130” allude to the Bible, which adhere to the characteristics of Christ and the persona’s knowledge about Him. These deviations were expressed as oxymoron, pleonasm, metaphor, and hyperbole.

The semantic oddities found in the poem have semantic absurdity, which would somehow entail irreconcilable meaning or reference. On the one hand, the oxymoron in the poem represents an allusion to prove a point. On the other, pleonasm emphasizes more the poem’s beautiful rhetoric. These semantic deviations foreground the impeccability of God.

Further, the metaphors in the poem reflect the universal human ability to link different spheres on the basis of diverse associations. They are formed through abstract mechanism. This means that the processing characteristics and their inner structure correlate with the perceived objects and phenomena.

The hyperboles used in the poem express too much to be taken for real. Although they are biblical, to some extent, they seem almost possible to happen. The interpretations of these hyperboles do not contribute in the surface level, but in the deep level. The accuracy of the truth or the falsity of the expressions do not seem important; rather, what these tropes imply, which correspond to the Biblical theme of the poem, bear significance to literary interpretation.

Villa employed semantic deviations in an unprecedented, unconventional manner to maintain the freshness of language and to prevent his works from being too close to ordinary language. Such poetry as Villa’s does not make for easy reading. The semantic deviations may be nonsensical in their semantic meanings, specifically because they come from Biblical allusions; but when the reader moves to the poet’s imaginative lexicon, these deviations manifest an excellent metaphorical sense, which is another feature of the poem aside from the eccentric use of commas.

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