

A stylistic analysis of *Montage*

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Abstract

This study presents a stylistic analysis of Ophelia Alcantara-Dimalanta's *Montage* by providing a syntactic and lexical investigation of the poem. It attempts to investigate the style and the language of the poem by focusing on the overall structure of the poem and the grammatical structure of the sentences thereby leading to a deeper understanding of the text. The analysis focuses on the syntax, specifically the structure of sentences, and the vocabulary of the poem. Some pedagogical implications are then drawn towards the concluding remarks of the study.

Keywords: Stylistics; lexis; literary text; syntax; vocabulary.

Introduction

As has been well established, a language - centered approach is necessary for the study of literature since all literature exists only *in* and *through* language. The central purpose of a linguistic analysis of a literary text is, as Sopher (1976) stresses, to demonstrate both what has been communicated and how it has been communicated. Hence, a linguistic

analysis that claims to explore meaning must take into account every factor contributing to meaning: organization, vocabulary, syntax, morphology, phonology, among others.

The purpose of this paper is to present one way of discovering meaning of a literary piece, that is, a syntactic and lexical analysis of one of Ophelia Alcantara-Dimalanta's poems: *Montage* (see Appendix).

Style, as Traugott and Pratt (1980) point out, is the writer's choice of employing certain structures over others which are available in the language. It means choosing to say an idea in a particular form when it could be said in another, more readily understandable way. This choice, therefore, is the form of expression adapted by the author. Furthermore, they explain that style constitutes both what is chosen and what is not. This includes "selecting or not selecting deviant structures" (p. 33).

One aspect of the language of literature is deviance. Traugott and Pratt (1980) define deviance as a means of departure from linguistic norms. It is characterized as a peculiar fashion of phrasing sentences to achieve ambiguous referent or meaning. For this reason, poetry is distinct from the trite language of everyday conversations. For instance, Keats, in *Ode to a Nightingale*, opted to say, 'tender is the night', when he could have said, *The night is tender*. Similarly, Cummings, in his poem *love is more thicker than forget*, opted to say "it shall unbecome" when he could have said, "it will cease to exist." These two demonstrate some forms of deviance: the former, of syntax, and the latter of semantics. Deviance, as a style, is thus linked to the analysis of the grammar of the text.

Grammar-of-a-text refers to the linguistic options, which are syntactic, semantic, phonological, and pragmatic systems, available for the poet. A writer can therefore

utilize a standard or deviant structure in the first three systems. As Blake (1990) suggests, “the best place to start is with syntax since this leads straight to the heart of a text by exposing its structure” (p.11). In addition, Traugott and Pratt (1980) explain that, “meaning is expressed by means of syntax” (p. 169). How the words are sequenced together to create meaning is the writer’s style. Likewise, Suzuki (2001) contends that grammatical analyses are quite useful to see the author’s style and main theme, as his style is composed of various aspects of language. This view is further corroborated by Link (2004) in his stylistic analysis of “Hills Like White Elephants”, where he argues linguistic analysis enables us to see how, at the textual level, a literary piece can manufacture such a rich interpretative web from seemingly gossamer texts.

Syntax, as Traugott and Platt (1980) describe, has something to do with the surface as well as deep sentence structures of a poem. Whether a writer employs short, simple sentences or lengthy, highly complicated ones are still a part of his style. They add that “syntax does a great deal to support meanings, and sometimes even helps to create them” (p. 177).

Shakespeare, for example, elaborates one sentence into eight lines in his *Sonnet 129*. The sonnet all in all consists of just two sentences. Conversely, Sandburg’s *The Harbor* uses recursive patterns of relative clauses in reduced and unreduced forms.

Semantics deals with the meaning of words. The vocabulary choice of the writer also denotes his style. Whether the language of the poem is archaic, ordinary, or highly-complicated all constitute the effect that he wants to put forward. After dealing with the syntax and the structure of the sentence, the next most logical step is to explore

the words used in the poem. Blake (1990) explains that in dealing with language, words are the foundation of the interpretation of meaning.

Among the styles of utilizing vocabulary in a text are compounding and functional shift. Compounding is the process which produces exotic and unusual words. Compounds usually consist of two independent words while complex words consist of one independent word and one affix (Blake, 1990). Functional shift, on the other hand, refers to the change in function of a particular word, say, from noun to adjective, or from adverb to noun. This deliberate shift from the conventional functions of words contributes to the complexity and ambiguity that the author wants to effect in the poem.

Blake (1980) conjectures that there is an advantage of using compounds as the meaning becomes more transparent since the compounds promote echoes of the word. Hence, compounds give more direct meaning than complex words do. For instance, the word ‘incarnadine’ in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, ‘*The multitudinous seas incarnadine*’ – an invented compound of the word which is either *red-making* or *all-reddening* would be more readily understandable than the complex word *incarnadine*.

To fully understand the possible deeper meaning of the poem brought about by its syntax and vocabulary, I seek answers to the following questions:

1. What is the physical structure of the poem?
2. What are the sentence structures of the poem?
3. What syntactic deviances are exhibited by the poem and what meanings are revealed by these deviances?
4. What does the vocabulary of the poem reveal?

Methodology

Focus of Analysis

The present study provides an integrative, bottom-up stylistic analysis of the poem. It attempts to investigate the style and the language of the poem by focusing on the over-all structure of the poem and the grammatical structure of the sentences thereby leading to a deeper understanding of the text. The analysis focuses on the syntax, specifically the structure of sentences, and the vocabulary of the poem.

As for the sentence structure, I adapted Blake's (1990) conventions of clause elements which are: i) subject, it refers to the one that performs the verb; ii) predicator, the verb performed by the subject; iii) object, the receiver of the action of the verb which could be a person or a thing in the sentence besides the subject; iv) complement, it refers back to the subject; v) adjunct, refers to anything that does not belong to the first four categories.

There are two aspects of the poem's vocabulary that are investigated: the use of compounding, and thereby complicating; and the use of functional shift. The different meanings of the major, as well as minor, lexical items, and the instances of ambiguity are also explored. The deviances of the poem vis-à-vis the underlying meanings of these deviances are subsumed in the discussion of the grammatical structure. In rare cases of vocabulary ambiguity, the discussion also goes with the explanation of the grammatical structure of the poem.

The Poem

Ophelia Alcantara-Dimalanta's 'Montage' (1974) is a poem about a career woman who describes her transition, and subsequently her preparation, from a fun-filled weekend to a pressure-laden Monday. Among Dimalanta's poems, "Montage" is the most critically acclaimed and seems to have received the most attention, probably because of its non-conventionality in terms of form, syntax, and semantics, among others.

Results and Discussion

The Physical Structure

The poem consists of 33 lines and is divided into two parts: the first part has 26 lines and the second part seven. The first part is clearly longer and heavier than the second part. This division of the poem is a clear departure from the stanzaic norms of English poetry. In addition, the poem does not follow any rhyming pattern neither does it exhibit a particular pattern in meter. The lines predominantly consist of ten syllables; of the 33 lines, 12 consist of ten syllables. The shortest lines (2, 4, 17, and 29) each consist of 7 syllables and the longest line (20) consists of 13 syllables. The 33-line poem all-in-all consists of 219 words.

Table 1. The physical structure of *Montage*

Sentence	Number of lines	Number of words
1	1.75	12
2	3.25	21
3	2.5	18

4	9.75	68
5	8.75	50
6	7	40
Total	33	209

All in all, the poem consists of only six sentences: the first three are comparatively shorter than the next three sentences. The first sentence is stretched in one and half lines, the second in three in half lines, and the third in two and a half lines. The fourth sentence, the longest of all, is expanded in more than ten lines. The fifth sentence is extended to eight and a half lines while the final sentence to seven lines. The arrangement of the sentences therefore seems to suggest that short sentences are paired off with long ones.

The Sentence Structure

The opening sentence, although a compound, has a relatively simple structure of Subject-Predicator (SP).

- 1 *Monday jolts and she bogs down, a ragbag*
- 2 *Splayed off at tangents.*

The subjects of the two clauses, *Monday* and *she*, contain the theme or the topic of the poem, that is, the coming of Monday to the woman. The two independent clauses are adjoined by the coordinate conjunction *and*. Separated by a comma, a metaphor *a ragbag splayed off at tangents* follows immediately. This is an absolute participial construction in which the noun phrase *a ragbag* acts as the subject of the participle

splayed off. Participles are not finite parts of verb so they cannot act as predicators. Hence, this unit cannot be interpreted as independent clause but rather a qualifier of the subject of the second independent clause which is in the form of a participle, here the nominative pronoun *she*. This unit can be interpreted as *she, just like a ragbag splayed off at tangents, bogs down*. The unit can be best interpreted as a participial adjective which is separated from its head, *she*, hence it encourages ambiguity as the referent is not easily recognizable. The author's choice of *ragbag* for a direct comparison with *she* seems to suggest what type of woman is *she* in the poem. Since ragbags are often perceived as carriers of hodgepodge of stuff, they project the image of flexibility and strength. Just like the woman in the poem, ragbags are maximally utilized and are often thrown away at the end of the day. The metaphor thus describes how the woman looks at herself on weekends: literally thrown off on the bed.

2 *Windows*
3 *To the outside and flecks of faces*
4 *Spring the morning clear at her*
5 *To set her into her old dimensions.*

The second sentence consists of just a single clause but with an inverted order of subject and object. Occupying the subject position is the compound *Windows to the outside and flecks of faces*; *windows* and *flecks* as the head nouns and *to the outside* and *of faces* as adjuncts of the head nouns. The verb *spring* is used here as a transitive; hence, the noun phrase *the morning* functions as the object. Seemingly, there is a direct object inversion in the structure of the sentence. The dynamic verb *spring* usually functions as intransitive but it is used otherwise here. Consequently, the verb *spring*

gives a more decisive meaning as though *the windows* and *the faces* have deliberate intentions of perking up the morning. Instead of saying therefore that *Morning springs clearly to her by the windows to the outside and to the flecks of faces*, which is the standard fashion, it is those *faces* and *windows* that woke her up to start a new day. The pattern accordingly follows Subject-Predicator-Object (SPO) rather than SP. The adjunct *to set her into her old dimensions* refers to verb *spring* which means that the emergence of the morning reminds her of her routine, of her Monday obligations, and probably of her work.

- 6 *Piece by piece she puts on eight o'clock;*
- 7 *Pillows and bedcovers in a tumble pat*
- 8 *Her in place.*

The third sentence is composed of two independent clauses conjoined by a semicolon instead of a conjunction. The first clause, *Piece by piece she puts on eight o'clock*, appears to follow an SP pattern on the surface structure. However, the fronting of *piece by piece* evokes a deeper structure. The syntax of the line suggests that the pronoun *she* is the subject; the idiomatic verb *puts on* is the predicator; and *eight o'clock* is the direct object. *Eight o'clock* is an adverb but functions otherwise here, apparently as a noun since it is the object of the verb. The phrase, used as a noun here, symbolizes the official start of work hour and thus ultimately represents the day – Monday. *Piece by piece*, on the other hand, functions as the adverbial adjunct of the verb. The fronting of *piece by piece* gives the impression that there are several ‘pieces’ or aspects she has to put on or prepare for the day. More than just vanity – outfit, jewelry, and make-up, she

puts on her complete psychological condition to the coming of Monday. And this is on top of other pressures like deadlines or work that need immediate attention.

The second clause is parallel with the second sentence as it also exhibits direct object inversion. The compound *bed and pillows* and the adjunct of manner *in a tumble* occupy the subject position. On the other hand, the dynamic verb *pat* functions as a transitive verb, the pronoun *her* functions as the object and is therefore in the genitive case and not in the nominative, and the prepositional phrase *in place* functions as adjunct to the verb *pat*. The structure of the sentence is again deviant in the sense that the normal arrangement of words would have been *She pats the pillows and bedcovers, which are in a tumble, in place*, as what we usually do upon rising from bed. The inversion of object seems to suggest that it is those *bedcovers and pillows* that *pat* her *in place*. It is the bed, as represented by the *bedcovers and pillows*, which lulls her to extend her sleep – probably due to the previous night’s gaiety. The adjunct *in a tumble* therefore does not refer to the *bedcovers and pillows* but to *her*. Seemingly, she had been in complete topsy-turvy from exhaustion prior to Monday morning.

- 8 *The clearest cutglass*
- 9 *Of grapefruit juice teetering on a silver*
- 10 *Tray for breakfast-in-bed exigencies*
- 11 *(Both for effect and effectivity)*
- 12 *Is for a fact but fictive in the mind*
- 13 *Which holds the fleeing moment longer,*
- 14 *Stalls the stupor of the previous spree,*
- 15 *Images of her beautiful in blank spaces*
- 16 *Wandering truantlike in private regions*
- 17 *Of the night, wisps of clouds jammed*
- 18 *In one wicked corner of sleep.*

The fourth sentence, which is the longest in the poem, consists of three clauses but of several adjuncts. The first clause is pretty simple in structure as it follows an SPC pattern but it appears to be complicated since the subject alone is stretched out in four lines.

*The clearest cutglass
Of grapefruit juice teetering on a silver
Tray for breakfast-in-bed exigencies
(Both for effect and effectivity)*

Occupying the subject position is a heavy noun group made up of different groups. The head noun is *cutglass*; preceding it are the determiner *the* and the superlative adjective modifier *clearest*; the prepositional phrase *of grapefruit juice* functions as adjunct qualifier to the head noun; *teetering* is a participial adjunct; the prepositional phrase *on a silver tray* is an adjunct of place; *for breakfast-in-bed exigencies* is an adjunct of causality; and finally, the expression enclosed in parentheses *both for effect and effectivity* is a qualifier of the adjunct that precedes it. The verb used here is a stative verb *is* and the complement *for a fact but fictive in the mind* takes a prepositional phrase structure rather than a noun phrase. It is further compounded in the object of the preposition (*fact but fictive*). The expression *in the mind* is an adjunct dependent on *fictive*. The whole clause, as by itself complex and ambiguous, suggests the same effect: of complexity and ambiguity. It seems to suggest that she cannot afford a decent breakfast that morning due to time constraint and hence, a breakfast in bed is emergent. The breakfast of the woman, therefore, is composed plainly of fruit juice which is placed on a tray. The complement *for a fact but fictive in the mind* seems to refer to the idea of having breakfast in bed.

There are two possible interpretations for this string of words. First, it was a *fact* because it is what is apparent to her at the moment. Second, it is what she has been wishing for quite some time. However, it remains to be *fictive in the mind* since the idea has never materialized, more so during Monday mornings. The adjunct *both for effect and effectivity*, herein enclosed in parenthesis, all the more confirms her wish to have breakfast-in-bed. Since having a breakfast in bed usually insinuates romantic ambience (as it is supposed to be served by a loved one), this is the *effect* she is hoping to have. And always, the idea of having breakfast in bed is very effective in providing the desired inspiration or motivation.

The *cutglass* in the subject position plays an important role in the whole poem. The choice of the poetess to use the compounded *cutglass* instead of just an ordinary glass is deliberate. Apparently, the concept of *montage* is subsumed in *cutglass*; it being a glass ornamented with patterns cut into its surfaces. It is through the cut surfaces of the *cutglass* that the *montage* appears. Hence, the next series of clauses describe the *cutglass* as it exhibits the *montage* of the woman's weekend.

The clause *which holds the fleeing moment longer* is introduced by a subordinate conjunction *which*, the verb *holds* takes the form of transitive, the object *the fleeing moment* comes with a determiner and a participial modifier, and the adverb *longer* functions as an adjunct to the verb. Separated by a comma comes the second predicator of the preceding clause introduced by the dynamic verb *stalls* which is transitive here. The object *stupor* is preceded by a determiner and the prepositional phrase *of the previous spree* is a modifier adjunct of the object. This whole clause appears to be a descriptive

qualifier of the head noun *cutglass*. It is the idea of having breakfast in bed (where the *cutglass* contains the grapefruit juice for breakfast) which halted her state of reduced sensibility about Sunday night's diversion. She wants to cleave longer to the glee and laughter of the previous night, which she describes as rather *fleeing* or passing swiftly. Yet, these scenes just appear in *montage* as the reality of the coming of Monday is there.

And since this clause is embedded in the matrix clause *The cutglass is fictive*, the succeeding clauses are still linked to the *cutglass*. As the clauses are intertwined, so is the juxtaposition of images, i.e. the *montage*, seen through the *cutglass*. The string of words *Images of her beautiful in blank spaces* has four classes of noun groups occupying the subject position: *images* is the head noun of the subject, *of her* is its prepositional modifier adjunct, and *beautiful* is an adjectival modifier of the head noun images which should precede it but is rather positioned after the adjunct in this structure, and *in blank spaces* is an adjunct of place dependent to the head noun. This series is a subject to the participle *wandering*, *truantlike* is an adverb adjunct, and the two prepositional phrases *in private regions* and *of the night* are adverb adjuncts of *wandering*. This clause is one image or scene that she sees in the *montage*. Since the participle refers to the *images*, it seems to suggest that the woman certainly had a night full of enjoyment.

The writer's choice of the compound *truantlike* is an assertion of the word being an adjective. *Truant*, which means *absent*, is by itself an adjective, attaching an adjective-forming suffix *-like* makes the word 'more' adjective in effect. Hence, the woman must have spent the night absentmindedly of the next day's obligations. The next expression exhibits parallel construction as the former. The noun phrase *wisps of clouds* functions as

subject to the participle *jammed*, while the two prepositional phrases *in one wicked corner* and *of sleep* are adverbial adjuncts to the participle. This is another picture that she sees in the *montage*. These two clauses both conjure fondness of the previous night's leisure, as though the woman refuses to retire to bed for the night is too good to miss.

18 *She hoards*
19 *Them like a child at play, triumphantly*
20 *Pieces them into a single total perspective:*
21 *Splayed off tatters of Sunday, a dark*
22 *Undiscipline of clouds settled right*
23 *Into this alarming set-up environing*
24 *Her Monday-world, jolted suddenly*
25 *Into the teeth of everyday people*
26 *And clattering sounds of slapdash.*

The fifth sentence contains two independent clauses. The first clause exhibits an SPO pattern where the subject is the nominative pronoun *she*; the predicator is compound: *hoards* and *pieces* but adjoined by a comma instead of a coordinate conjunction *and*, and the object for both predicators takes the form of a pronoun in the genitive case *them*. The first verb takes an adverbial adjunct *like a child at play* for the verb *hoards* while the second verb takes two adverbial adjuncts: *triumphantly* which comes before the verb and *into a single total perspective* after it. A colon separates these adjuncts to the next unit of expression: the participial modifier *splayed off tatters of Sunday*. The separate structure of the compound predicator seems to suggest that the participial modifier that appears after the adjunct *into a single total perspective* and not to the adjunct of the first verb. Hence, this participial construction is a qualifier of the object of the preposition *perspective*. It could be interpreted that the qualifier takes the form of

an apposition since the noun *tatters* functions as the head of the subject *tatters of Sunday*. The participle *splayed off* functions as modifier of the head noun *tatters*.

The object *them* is anaphoric in nature as the referent has been previously mentioned - the *images* in line 15. As such, the woman clutches to the *images* or the remnants of the night's frivolity as though not wanting to head off to the scheduled itinerary for the day. The act of *hoarding* the images is likened to a *child* who would not release from grips a toy that he enjoys at a particular time. For somebody who is very sluggish in going back to a dull, monotonous, not to mention tedious, work – she would surely seize the momentary delight of the past. This she now considers *tatters of Sunday*. These *tatters*, however, are *splayed off* in every corner of her room. Probably, it is the *montage* that she sees in the *cutglass* which reminds her of the miscellany of the previous night.

The next series of clauses is another set of *montage*: not of the past - the merriment of Sunday, but of the present - the displeasure of Monday. The subject takes a rather heavy noun phrase *a dark undiscipline of clouds settled right into this alarming set-up*. As the syntax suggests, the head noun is *undiscipline* since a determiner *a* and a modifier *dark* appear before it as opposed to the more popular form of this word in *ed* participle acting as modifier of a noun. The functional shift or the deliberate omission of what would have been the noun phrase 'arrangement' or 'assembly' all the more highlights the 'disorderliness' of the clouds that particular day. The qualifiers take different forms. First, *of clouds* is a prepositional phrase; second, *settled right into this alarming set-up* is a participial phrase composed of the participle *settled*, the adverbial

adjunct *right*, the prepositional phrase *into this alarming set-up* composed of a preposition *into*, demonstrative *this*, participial modifier *alarming*, and the compound noun *set-up*. This whole clause presents a picture of an unwelcome Monday as the following words evoke: *dark, undiscipline, clouds, alarming* and *set-up*. A perception of Monday as a *set-up* gives therefore a smack of stagnancy. The next clause provides another picture of the *montage*: a description of a Monday.

The clause is introduced by the particle *jolted*; two adjuncts follow: the first is just one word, the adverbial *suddenly* and the second is a prepositional phrase *into the teeth*. However, the object of the preposition *teeth* takes a compound prepositional phrase qualifier: *of everyday people* and *cluttering sounds of slapdash*. The latter is still complicated by itself since the head noun *sounds* comes with a participial modifier *cluttering* which precedes it and a prepositional qualifier *of slapdash*. This whole clause again describes how unwelcome Monday is, as suggested by the words: *jolted, suddenly, teeth, cluttering* and *slapdash*. The compound *slapdash* functions here as a noun but originally functions as either adjective or adverb. This is another instance of functional shift.

The five sentences embodied in the first part of the poem all describe the *jolting*, not just coming, of Monday to her. The *montage* presented here speaks of the two extreme worlds of the woman: Sunday night and Monday morning.

27 *She exudes it now becomingly*
28 *As she glides and putters about*
29 *By turns, spreads it as a scent*
30 *Ambiguously enwombing her, her form*
31 *Dissolved in semi-tones, nameless jewel*

- 32 *Durably ensphered in mist, constantly reborn,*
33 *Solid, whole in ever renewing shades.*

The final sentence, spread in seven lines, appears to be complex in structure – that is, a combination of one independent and one dependent clause. Chunking the clauses further, the independent clause *She exudes it now becomingly* is composed of the nominative pronoun *she* as its subject, the dynamic verb *exudes* as the transitive predicator, the nominative pronoun *it* as the object, and the two one-word adverbial adjuncts: *now* and *becomingly*. Hence, this sentence follows an SPO pattern. The referent of the pronoun *it* is rather ambiguous as the referent is not easily recoverable in the text. The embedded clause is introduced by a subordinate conjunction *as* and the subject is parallel with the subject of the first clause – *she*. The predicator takes a compound structure: *glides* and *putters about* and the adverbial prepositional adjunct *by turns* refers to the compound verb.

The final sentence describes another set of *montage*: this time, a picture of herself who is ready to face the Monday world. The readiness is exemplified by the words *exudes*, *now*, and *becomingly*. Although she still *putters* once in a while (which normally happens to anyone, not only during Mondays, but almost every day), the tone of the whole clause radiates optimism and strength. This positive outlook of the coming of Monday is further affirmed in the next strings of words. Following closely is another dynamic verb which appears after a comma – *spreads*. This can be interpreted as the second predicator of the independent clause. Hence, the independent clause is *She exudes it now becomingly and spreads it as a scent ambiguously enwombing her*. Now it

can be said that the parallelism of the two clauses does not end in the use of nominative pronoun for the subject but also in the use of compound verbs for the predicators. Apparently, the embedded clause *as she glides and putters about by turns* can be interpreted as an adverbial time adjunct of the verb *exudes* and must therefore appear close to it. The simile *as a scent ambiguously enwombing her* refers to the *it* in line 29. Here, *a scent* is the noun phrase functioning as the subject to the participle *enwombing* with an adverbial adjunct *ambiguously*. Just like the first *it*, the second *it* also has an ambiguous referent. The next series of units are qualifiers of the object *her* which still contain embedded clauses. The noun phrase qualifier *her form* functions as apposition to the object *her*. The next series of embedded clauses are modifiers of the noun phrase *her form* which ultimately refers to *her*. First, the participial phrase *dissolved in semi-tones* is consequently the qualifier of the head noun *form*. The compound *semi-tones* appears to be the outfit of the woman. But instead of saying *clothes in half tones*, the writer opted *semi-tones* which is used as a noun, not an adjective. The adjunct of the participle *dissolved* is rather compound which are separated by comma instead of conjunction: *in semi-tones* and *nameless jewel*. Matching the outfit of the woman must be a set of baubles as suggested by *nameless*. The whole participle *dissolved in semi-tones and nameless jewel* therefore refers to the woman who is now dressed for work. Second, the string *durably ensphered in mist* is also a participial qualifier of the noun phrase *her form*, where *durably* is the adverbial adjunct of the participle *ensphered*; while *in mist* is its prepositional adjunct. The whole clause refers to the *form* in line 30 and is in consonance with the previous description of *her* – *ambiguously enwombing her*.

The lexical choices such as *enwombing* and *ensphered*, among others, create ambiguity and vagueness. But as Channell (2000) notes, such vagueness is in fact an advantage. Similarly, Song (2009) opines that when a literary piece is saturated with vague words and phrases, this triggers imagination and the piece is then open to diverse interpretations.

As the line suggests, the woman is enclosed with *mist*, of the *scent*, of the *image* of being *solid* and *whole*. Third, *constantly reborn, solid, whole in ever renewing shades* is an adjective qualifier where *constantly* is the adverbial adjunct of the series of one-word adjectives *reborn, solid* and *whole*. Finally, the prepositional phrase *in ever renewing shades* functions as an adverbial adjunct to the series of adjectives.

The second part, as can be seen in the structure of the whole poem, is the culmination of the poem. If the first part speaks of the transition from Sunday evening to Monday dawn, the final part speaks of the ‘now’ of Monday. Hence, the two object pronouns *it* in lines 27 and 29 refer to the *image* being described in lines 32 and 33, *constantly reborn, solid, whole in ever renewing shades*.

As can be seen, the recursion of embedded clauses highlights the complexity and detail of the scene, giving a more profound perspective of the description. If the complicated structure is paraphrased, just like the way I did in some items, it would undoubtedly destroy the effects that Dimalanta would like to underscore.

Concluding remarks

The 33-line poem is composed of six sentences which are either compound-complex or complex-complex. The first line describes how the woman looks at herself at the onset of Monday. The second line tells how she is awakened in that Monday morning. The third line expresses her difficulty of getting up to her feet to start the day. The fourth line speaks of the *montage* of her Sunday evening while the fifth line of her transition from Sunday evening to Monday evening. Finally, the sixth and the last line illustrate a real 'she' as she faces Monday morning.

The nature of the deviance of Dimalanta's poem can be linked to the extensive subordination and clause chaining in the sentence structure. The complexity, both of the structure of sentences and the words, is therefore the stylistic option of the poetess. In the introduction of *Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*, Leech (1969) firstly distinguishes poetic language with 'ordinary' language. He writes "poetic language may violate or deviate from the generally observed rules of the language in many different ways, some obvious, some subtle" (p.5). Dimalanta's deliberate use of deviant expressions is part of the effect that she wants to express in her poem. Hence, a detailed analysis of the syntax of the poem helped unlocked the ambiguous referents and deeper meaning of the complex clauses. Furthermore, an explanation of the words used elucidates the effect and meaning that the writer wants to put forward.

This stylistic analysis of *Montage*, specifically syntactic and lexical, provides a more objective and more profound comprehension of the underlying multiple meanings of the poem. Since the grammatical structure of the poem is ambiguous, perhaps on the

initial discussion of the poem, it is but logical and appropriate to chunk the poem into its physical, and eventually, into its sentential structure. The discussion of the meaning of some strange words also helped in the understanding of the poem.

As for the pedagogical implications, Clark (1987) opines that a stylistic analysis of a literary piece indicates that ESL-EFL learners can have even greater access to understanding discourse in general, and literature in particular, by observing closely how meaning arises according to use. Additionally, Akyel (1995) asserts that stylistic analyses help EFL learners develop an awareness of how language is used to produce a particular meaning, as well as gain confidence in reaching and accounting for their own interpretations of a literary piece.

Endnote:

The explanations of the lexical items in the poem are almost all based on www.yourdictionary.com

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Appendix

MONTAGE

1 Monday jolts and she bogs down, a ragbag
 2 Splayed off at tangents. Windows
 3 To the outside and flecks of faces
 4 Spring the morning clear at her
 5 To set her into her old dimensions.
 6 Piece by piece she puts on eight o'clock;
 7 Pillows and bedcovers in a tumble pat
 8 Her in place. The clearest cutglass
 9 Of grapefruit juice teetering on a silver
 10 Tray for breakfast-in-bed exigencies
 11 (Both for effect and effectivity)
 12 Is for a fact but fictive in the mind
 13 Which holds the fleeing moment longer,
 14 Stalls the stupor of the previous spree,
 15 Images of her beautiful in blank spaces
 16 Wandering truantlike in private regions
 17 Of the night, wisps of clouds jammed
 18 In one wicked corner of sleep. She hoards
 19 Them like a child at play, triumphantly
 20 Pieces them into a single total perspective:
 21 Splayed off tatters of Sunday, a dark
 22 Undiscipline of clouds settled right
 23 Into this alarming set-up environing
 24 Her Monday-world, jolted suddenly
 25 Into the teeth of everyday people
 26 And cluttering sounds of slapdash.

27 She exudes it now becomingly
 28 As she glides and putters about

29 By turns, spreads it as a scent
30 Ambiguously enwombing her, her form
31 Dissolved in semi-tones, nameless jewel
32 Durably ensphered in mist, constantly reborn,
33 Solid, whole in ever renewing shades.

(Ophelia Alcantara-Dimalanta, 1974, line numbers added)