

Figurative Language Use in Lucas Hnath's
Hillary and Clinton

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1. Introduction

The title of this study is, “An Analysis of Figurative Languages Used in Paulo Coelho’s novel Entitled “The This study scrutinizes the types of the figurative language found in the play under study and to identify the contextual meaning of the figurative language. It also attempts at revealing how figurative language specifically "metaphor and exaggeration" plays a vital role in exposing some hidden ideologies such as idealism, power, dominance etc. Language represents the most important means of communication in our life.

Communication, interaction and getting information from others cannot be achieved without the use of language. In literature, figurative language may be the crucial tool by which writers can convey their literary message and purpose. Language can be used to express someone’s feelings or emotion and expressing their ideas, their thoughts. There is a big difference between literal and non-literal meaning. Literal meaning is the words or expressions that have only one meaning, which is the natural meaning.

When an utterance has different meaning of what is literary said or has hidden meaning it would be non-literal meaning. This study is concerned with non – literal meaning.

2. Figurative Language

Figurative language can be defined as the language that uses words or expressions embody meaning with different connotation from their literal interpretation. Figurative language is found in a wide scale of different literary genre such as in plays, articles in newspaper, advertisements, novels, poems, etc. Since the words that are used in figurative language go beyond their normal meaning, the readers need to use their imagination to infer the playwright's meaning. What makes figurative meaning is problematic to realize that we cannot get the meaning from the dictionary simply like any the other words that we usually practice in our daily exchange.

Webster defines figurative language as: A form of expression (as exaggeration and metaphor) used to express meaning or intensified effect often by paralleling or detecting one thing with another, that has a meaning or inference familiar to the reader or listener. Meriam-Webster’s Encyclopedia of literature (1995:415).

By the use of figurative language, the playwright intends to construct an image in the readers mind. According to Kerf (1991), figurative language is fallen into four main types:

1. Figure of speech of comparison such as; personification, metaphor, allegory, exaggeration, etc.
2. Figure of speech of allusion such as; irony, scorn, etc.
3. Figure of speech of assertion such as; replication, parallelism, climax, etc.
4. Figure of speech of conflict such as contrast, paradox, etc.

2.1. Metaphor

Language users, especially writers, use rhetorical devices like metaphor, metonymy or wordplay to realize what is meant out of the literal meaning for different reasons as Weaver (2010: 542) observes.

Metaphor is defined as “a rhetorical figurative expression of similarity or dissimilarity in which a direct, non-literal substitution of identity is made between one thing and another”(Myers and Simms:1989, 178).

Metaphor is of many forms:

- i. noun metaphor,
- ii. verb metaphor,
- iii. preposition metaphor,
- iv. adjectival metaphor and
- v. Adverbial metaphor.

Metaphor is specially used in literary works for ideologically potent to reflect the viewpoints of the writer towards political or social issues (ibid.)

To avoid of being ideologically motivated, language users deny any ideological implications of the usage of metaphor by claiming they are only joking (Feagin, 2006: 207). Pragmatically speaking, Grice (1989: 34) sees metaphor as an example of flouting the maxims of quality and manner.

The Webster’s New World College Dictionary (1996,p.571) explains that figurative language is a form of language that uses words or phrases that are not meant to be taken literally. It is often used to make a point or to create a vivid picture in the reader’s mind. It is a form of language that is used to convey a message in a way that is more powerful and memorable than literal language. It is a form of language that is used to convey a message in a way that is more powerful and memorable than literal language.

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2.2.Exaggeration

The concept of exaggeration is a representation of certain values or ideologies in an extreme manner to make it more prominent or larger, better, or worse than it really is (Aristotle, 1976:165), i.e., beyond the restrictions of truth.

Pragmatically speaking, certain pragmatic exaggerated devices are used to convey their intended meanings as it is a common feature used in everyday language as, Leech (1983:146) states, for the aim of describing, understanding, and evaluating self-experience or people’s. Language users and playwrights adopt and use exaggeration in their writings such as conveying certain ideologies or ideas to achieve their aims.

Pragmatists indicate that exaggeration devices have pragmatic forces such as speech act forces, implicature and or for showing the degree of politeness as Brown and Levinson (1987) recognize exaggeration as an essential part of positive politeness and going off record. Scholars detect certain devices to show exaggeration to be effective which are:

2.3. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a figure of speech of blunt exaggeration, as Fussell and Krueuz (1998:94) define. One of the functions of hyperbole is to present an extra note of something for receivers, or to praise or approve of people or action or to complain, criticize and attack someone or something (Mora, 2006:205). The interpretation of hyperbole depends on the context to reach the suitable inference.

2.4.Irony

Kreuz (1996:23), and Fussell and Krueuz (1998:91) indicate that it is common to exaggerate by embodying the opposite of what they really mean. Furthermore, Colebrook (2004:1-22) remarks that irony destroys the sincerity and immediacy of life as it shares the changeability and context dependency of all general concepts. Pragmatically speaking, interpreting irony means looking beyond the standard exchange and use to what might really mean contextually and perceptually Sharp (2009:35).

3. Data and analysis

The play takes place in an alternate universe and centers on a woman named Hillary Clinton who is running for President of the United States in 2008. A few days before the New Hampshire primary, Clinton is in her hotel room trying to turn her struggling campaign around. Her campaign manager Mark advises her to concede the primary race and accept her opponent's offer to be his

running mate. Against Mark's advice, Clinton turns to her husband Bill for assistance, but the two disagree on how much vulnerability Clinton must show to win over voters.

Extract1

Mark: *I'd actually be more worried if we were winning too fast -If right out of the gate- we were **at the top** , Because when that happens people start to look for someone to **upset the race**.As far as I'm concerned it's good for you to be the **underdog**.* (Hillary and Clinton, 14)

Mark gives this utterance in order to lessen the effect of the loss of Hillary in two states trying to give her some hope.

He purposely uses several metaphoric expressions in order to express his own thoughts to reflect the reality and to support the speaker attitude and thinking since he was fully aware of the difficulty of their position in the race. The speaker uses different expressions to show that. First, he uses the expression “**at the top**” to give a sort of power and certainty that may support the effect victory on the hearer.

The second use of figurative language, metaphor, to portrait the picture of a victim so as to make others sympathize with her by the use of a figurative expression “**underdog**” which refers to a person at disadvantage and expected to lose.

This intensive use of figurative language serves to indicate the importance of individual's role in the play.

Extract 2

Hillary: *Not if keep losing, the **rich** don't like people with the loser look and **I've got-***, (ibid: 15).

Hillary in this extract use metaphor as a kind of figurative language to reveal “skepticism” and uncertainty. The utterance is identical to show what is exist in her mind about an object. Hillary reflects what is going in her mind concerning her situation in the presidential election. She intentionally depends on metaphor because she does not want to say or couldn't say that she will lose the election.

The use of the word “rich” is metaphoric since it may refer to powerful people that do not want to lose all the way. It expresses the speaker inner feelings of loss and disappointment. Since the speaker could not say that, all the indicators are pointing to her loss and she needs the help of some influential people to support her campaign, she prefers the metaphoric use of language.

Extract 3

Hillary: *That's the **vultures** are circling.*

Mark: *No, think about it-his team wouldn't be making this offer unless they were scared of you this is desperate, this is a **Hail Mary**-I think you should feel encouraged by that.* (ibid:16)

Here a debate is taken place between Hillary and her assistant Mark. They were discussing Obama's offer through which he asks Hillary to pull out the election, in return to make her, his running mate. The use of metaphor in this utterance represents a tool, which makes the essential reality embracing the spiritual unity of the speaker.

Maxims of quality and relevance are breached so as to support the metaphoric aspect in the extract.

The ideology is achieved by the use of metaphoric devices “**vultures**” which refers to the, according to the Native American culture, bad luck or even danger. Hillary summaries her position in the election by this word.

On the other hand, Mark uses the expression “**Hail Mary**” to exaggerates Hillary position in the race and give her a thread of hope to assert that success is very near to her.

The purpose behind this figurative use of language is to construct bases for the dramatic requirements and to transform the original pragmatic strategy to a kind of exaggeration so as to persuade readers with the speaker's state.

Extract 4

Hillary: *And is that such an **outrageous** thing to ask for?*

After all the years that I stood next to you, after all the years I waited for my chance to step out of your spotlight- (Bill pick up his travel bag.)
Bill, don't you walk out of here, don't you dare- (ibid: 33)

Hillary performs this utterance as a reaction to Bill's previous speech. Hillary felt offended after the harsh respond of Bill concerning her need for money. As a result: she tries to adopt figurative language for the sake of face enhancement technique reflecting her personality in an ideal manner. Hillary's speech is an example of exaggeration reflecting her fundamental reality so as to embrace her spiritual reality. She tries strongly to defend herself as she has the right to rehabilitation.

The speaker adopts this technique because she could not be brief in another words she could not avoid unnecessary prolixity. The speaker is intentionally resort to such strategies so as to be able to express her disappointment of the sever respond from her husband. It is an attempt to depict Hillarie's grief and bitterness.

She also tries to use metaphoric expressions "*outrageous, spotlight*" to portrait a kind of milting of a person into another one. She was the shadow of her husband to the extent that she represents his spotlight. The purpose behind this use is to express her ego constructs knowledge out of her sense impressions and the universal concepts that it imposes upon her. She supports her identity in the last sentence in the utterance to prove to herself and to her husband that she is essential to his existence. The speaker might exaggerate her position so as to be away from embarrassment. She needs to be realistic rather than imaginative.

Extract 5

Hillary: The story I'm telling is that I am prepared,

That I have it together better than anyone has ever had it together, that I am experienced-

Bill: That's a shitty story. Better to let it all hang out, Be a broken mess where you're a mess and show the parts of yourself you're ashamed to show

Hillary: Like what, Bill

Bill: Like that part of you that when I walked in here earlier tonight that wanted to take care of me. (ibid: 43)

The situation involves an argumentation between Hillary and her husband Bill Clinton. Both of them are trying to show that he /she is the best person to be the president of the US.

Using the figurative language (exaggeration), Hillary always tries to show that she is an ideal person to be the president of the US. Moreover, she tends to convey a message to the audience that she is even better than her husband. This kind of thoughts that are found in Hillary's mind seems identical to her own personality. In addition to that another example of exaggeration is also obvious here. When Hillary said that "better than anyone has ever had it, I'm experienced" she reflects a high level of human self-ego that imposes upon her.

Exaggeration as a one of figurative language tools is widely used in this statement. Hillary is exaggerated her position and her ability to win the race in a strong way. The purpose behind her using all those strategies is to prove to herself first and to others that she is the only suitable person to this position.

As to Bill in responding to his wife speech, he represents an example of different kind of exaggeration. He tries to make the fundamental reality as an all –embracing his wife's spirit.

He starts with an impolite style. He intentionally starts impolitely each time when he speaks to his wife so as to achieve the writer's ideology. "That's a shitty story", with this expression he starts his speech. This use seems as a coin with two sides; first, by using the face threatening strategy, he intends to diminish the image of his wife, while the other side of the coin is used as a self-exaggeration or a supportive strategy to him.

He speaks to her with a figurative language. He uses metaphoric style addressing her. The sentence "be a broken mess where you're a mess" is used purposely to indicate Hillary's weakness and blunder.

Then as Bill used to make himself the only important thing in Hillary's mind. He said the sentence " that wanted to take care of me" which represents a reference to tell Hillary that you could not do anything or be powerful without me.

4. Conclusions

The author uses the figurative language (metaphor and exaggeration) to explain circumstances, to describe the characters, to express emotion of the characters, and to make his writing more intense and enjoyable. The present study concludes that figurative language plays vital roles in this play. That's the reason that makes the author used so many sentences that have figurative language in his play. Using figurative language makes the more exciting to read, and creates an imaginary atmosphere to the readers and audience of the play, the character centered on the image that the author has already given in the play. The playwright generally depends on figurative language to depict actions, and to refer to the inner conflict between characters.

used figurative language to describe what the character looks, the character's feeling, the character's

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