

# Journal 14

Linguistics, English



Lecturer Use of Imagery in the Ingrate Imagery refers to the use of figurative language or evocative language in a work of art to help in representing an idea, action or object. It does this by creating a mental picture which can appeal to the sense of sight, hearing, taste, smell or touch. In Ingrate, Paul Laurence Dunbar makes an extensive use of a figurative language. These can be interpreted to provide a literal and superficial meaning of the messages he was intending to deliver to his audience. However, such imageries might be interpreted to mean different things to the readers depending on their cultural and linguistic diversities.

At the beginning of the story, Dunbar describes Mr. Leckler as a ‘large-souled creature with hunger for unlimited counsel.’ This is a figurative language which creates an image in the mind of the readers and appeals to the senses of sight and sound. Apart from being so sweet-sounding, the imagery can be used to mean that this character is so determined and is always ready to seek for and acquire advice from others. He is a principled man who is ready to listen to the opinions of others who surround him.

The author also uses imagery when he mentions the terms surcharged clouds, flash of lightning and thunder. By saying, ‘...from the surcharged clouds a flash of lightning broke; and there was the thunder of cannon and the rain of lead over the land,’ Dunbar was trying to create an image of a rainfall. Indeed, this imagery appeals to the sense of sight. Even if this is what it meant in that context, it can be interpreted in different ways by different cultures. According to my own culture, rainy day characterized by harsh thunder and lightning. Rainfall is a sign of satisfaction to many people since they rely on it as a chief source of water which people heavily rely on

for agriculture and domestic use.

Moreover, the author uses the image of trouble when Mrs. Leckler says that her husband ‘ was troubled in the mind.’ This is an imagery which can be universally interpreted to mean that Mr. Leckler was worried. As a slave, he was not contented with the kind of working conditions to which he was subjected. His mind was not at peace regardless of his principled position. Lastly, Dunbar used imagery when he uses the word Yankee and says that Mr. Leckler was a calculating and scheming Yankee who could ‘ let principle stand between him and his interests.’ Literally, Yankee was an inhabitant of the Northern states of USA in which slavery had been outlawed. Therefore, he could not allow himself to be enslaved any more however unhappy he was. To him, it was such principled views that would enable him to overcome the challenges he and other people were facing in the hands of plantation owners who could not give them a chance to prosper.

In conclusion, Ingrate is rich in imageries. By using them in the article, Dunbar was intending to make it more interesting and appealing to the readers. It was the best way through which he could use his literary skills to appeal to their senses and deeply engage them.