

A Stylistic Analysis of Forms of Metaphors in Sunnie Ododo's *The Broken Pitchers*

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of metaphors in Sunnie Ododo's *The Broken Pitchers*, focusing on their types, functions, and contributions to the themes of the poems. All thirty (30) poems in the anthology were examined, with fifteen (15) analyzed in detail for thematic content and metaphorical expressions. The analysis was guided by the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which enabled the identification, categorization, and frequency analysis of metaphors. The findings reveal that Ododo's major metaphorical inclinations include physical and natural features, health, beauty and aesthetics, and biological phenomena. Economic metaphors are also present, while temporal, power, and sports metaphors occur less frequently. These patterns suggest that the poet is deeply connected to nature, history, and his environment. Ododo's versatile and skillful use of language, akin to Niyi Osundare's creative and forceful poetic expression, demonstrates how metaphors function not only as literary devices but also as tools for conveying complex ideas and enriching the reader's engagement. The study confirms that metaphors in *The Broken Pitchers* enhance the literariness of the poems while making abstract concepts tangible, allowing readers to experience the themes vividly and meaningfully.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Metaphor Analysis, Thematic Representation, Environmental Metaphors, Health and Biological Imagery, Economic Metaphors

Introduction

This paper is situated in the field of stylistics, with particular interest in the use of metaphors as a central figure of speech in literary texts. The focus of this research is Sunnie Enesi Ododo's poetry collection *The Broken Pitchers*, authored by Sunnie Ododo, a Professor of Theatre Arts at the University of Maiduguri and former Director General of the National Theatre, Lagos. Published in June 2012 by Kraft Books, Ibadan, the anthology spans sixty-six pages. *The Broken Pitchers* is an anthology that evokes images of despondency, failed leadership, lost labour, and ennui in the face of love and abundance. As its synopsis suggests, the collection metaphorically represents the ebbing aspirations of the people and the nation, posing the central question of who will "enfire and remould these broken pitchers," making the anthology itself a metaphorical object that invites detailed exploration of its figurative expressions.

One distinguishing feature of literature, as opposed to other forms of writing, is its language. The language of literature draws attention to itself, becoming a subject of scholarly scrutiny rather than serving merely as a conduit for content. As Osundare (2004) notes, literary language can describe concrete entities like trees and grasses while referring metaphorically to human beings. Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, for instance, employs expressions such as "Life is a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage," demonstrating how

literary language vividly conveys abstract concepts through figurative imagery. Such expressions illustrate that the literariness of a text, its formal and stylistic properties is critical to its classification as literature (cf. Osundare, 2004; Riyadh Almedi, n.d.). Jakobson (1987) posits that literary science should focus on literariness, identifying the formal features, including meter, rhyme, repetition, and deviation from ordinary language, that foreground language in a text. Similarly, Olujide (2002) highlights that a poem is distinguished by the presence of poetic elements, and in their absence, a text ceases to function as poetry.

Figurative language, especially metaphor, is central to this defamiliarization or “making strange” in poetry (Yulianda & La Sunra, 2009). By deviating from literal meanings, figurative expressions compel readers to attend to connotations rather than denotations, enhancing both aesthetic effect and emotional resonance. Figures of speech, according to Osundare (2004), deliberately depart from ordinary language to produce rhetorical effects, while Babatunde (2007) categorizes figures into types, including simile and metaphor (figures of comparison), hyperbole and euphemism (figures of imagination), alliteration and consonance (figures of sound), and irony and sarcasm (figures of indirectness). Within this spectrum, metaphors serve the dual purpose of making abstract ideas accessible and enriching the literariness of a text. Clasee (2000) defines metaphor as the transfer of an image, meaning, or quality from one expression to another, establishing a comparison, analogy, or relationship between two concepts. Peter (2001) similarly notes that metaphors explain one thing in terms of another, requiring readers to understand both entities being compared to fully grasp the poetic message.

In the context of African literary studies, critical attention has historically focused on thematic concerns rather than on formal properties, leaving the role of figurative language relatively underexplored. Poetry, however, is distinguished not solely by its thematic content but by its aesthetic and formal features, which include the use of imagery and figurative language to create emotional depth and literariness (Mukařovský, 1970; Culler, 2015; Jakobson, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). This study positions metaphors as a central analytical focus within *The Broken Pitchers*, examining how metaphorical expressions illuminate and reinforce the thematic concerns of the poems. By analyzing metaphor as a figure of comparison, the study explores how Ododo’s poetic language constructs meaning, conveys complex emotions, and renders abstract concepts tangible.

The paper identifies the types of metaphors employed in the anthology, examine their functions in articulating themes, and highlight the role of metaphor in enhancing the aesthetic and cognitive dimensions of the poetry. In doing so, it contributes to stylistic scholarship by shifting focus from general textual features to the operation of metaphor as a key literary device (cf. Mukařovský, 1970; Okolo & Emelone, 2023; Ayeomoni, 2012). This paper addresses a gap in African literary criticism, foregrounding the formal and aesthetic properties of poetry and emphasizing the interplay between thematic content and figurative language. Ultimately, the study offers a framework for appreciating how metaphors in *The Broken Pitchers* function not only as vehicles of meaning but also as instruments for aesthetic engagement, providing valuable insights for critics, teachers, students, and future researchers in African literary studies.

Sunday Enessi Ododo is a professor of Performance Aesthetics and Theatre Technology at the University of Maiduguri, Nigeria, widely recognized for his scholarly contributions, particularly the Facekuerade theory derived from Ebira maskless masquerade traditions. A

distinguished playwright and theatre practitioner, Ododo gained national prominence when his play *Hard Choice* won the ANA Drama Prize in 2012, and he has held key leadership roles in both the Association of Nigerian Authors and the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists, including serving as SONTA's eighth President.

Literature Review

Frank, et al (1973:608) quoted the Romantic poet, William Wordsworth, as defining poetry as “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings and locates its origin in emotions recollected in tranquility”. Poetry, according to Adimora-Ezeigbo (2008:6), is “a composition written in verse. It uses language in a special way and relies heavily on imagery, metaphor, precise choice of words”. Poetry can also be described as a rhythmical form of words expressing an imaginative, emotional or intellectual experience. It is a patterned form of verbal or written expression of ideas in concrete, imaginative and rhythmic terms. Poetry is the earliest form of literature as it has been produced by every civilization in history. This is perhaps why it is considered as the most prestigious among the three genres of literature. It does not command however the readership and popularity enjoyed by the prose fiction, the novel.

Drama – another name for a play – is the only form of literature that is associated with stage performance. It is a composition in prose or verse that presents a story in dialogue and action primarily meant to be acted on stage. The writers of this genre are known as dramatists or playwrights. The playwright's task is the representation of human action. One major feature of drama that distinguishes it from other genres of literature is that a play imitates an action. Prose fiction is the presentation of human experiences in narrative form.

Of all the three genres of literature (prose, poetry and drama), prose is the commonest and probably the most popular. “Prose often employs the language of everyday usage, imitating the speech mannerisms that obtain in the society or community being mirrored in the work of art” (Ezeigbo, 2008:7). The novel is an extended piece of fiction. It is a fictitious account of life told in a narrative prose of some appreciable length. The length distinguishes it from short story or the novella. A novel (fiction) involves invented characters with invented sayings and doings. The characters in the novel move, speak and think in a world which often seems very real. Of all the three genres of literature discussed above, poetry, by far, is the most remarkable for its fondness for imagery, symbols and other forms of figurative language. It has been observed that “Unlike prose narrative and drama, poetry makes less use of plot and characterization. However, what poetry lacks in those elements of literature, it gains in linguistic creativity” (Osoba, 1998:5).

The works of the first generation of Nigerian poets such as Wole Soyinka and Christopher Okigbo are considered highly sophisticated as they are characterised by complex syntactic structures, foreign phrases, allusion to obscure persons and places and exploration of private themes. However, new generation poets such as Niyi Osundare, Tanure Ojaide, Harry Garuba, Femi Fatoba and Kofi Anyidoho avoid the obscurity, difficult and unfamiliar language of the pre-civil war generation of Nigerian poets.

Figurative Language

Figurative language is a figure of speech that gives words additional dimensions and allows poets to convey ideas more effectively than literal language (Perrine, 2014). It adds depth, mood, and

aesthetic appeal to poetry, making abstract ideas more concrete through imagery and creative expression (Perrine, 2019). Beyond poetry, figurative language offers imaginative pleasure to readers and enhances the clarity and enjoyment of texts. In literary criticism, 'figurative' serves as an umbrella term for non-literal uses of language, while 'metaphorical' refers specifically to one type of figurative expression. The study of figurative language has deep historical roots in classical rhetoric, though modern literary analysis typically emphasizes key devices such as metaphor, simile, metonymy, synecdoche, irony, and allegory.

Metaphor

The word metaphor originates from the Greek term *metaphora*, meaning "to transfer" or "carry over" (Moser, 2000). It occurs when a word or phrase from one semantic field is applied to another, allowing one thing to be described as if it were something else. For example, in the sentence "to live a quiet life was the summit of his ambition," the word "summit" is transferred from the domain of mountains to describe the highest point of a man's ambitions (Cameron, 2003). This transfer relies on perceived similarity between the concepts, such as the equivalence of "highest point" in ambition to the "summit" of a mountain. Metaphors thus allow abstract ideas to be expressed concretely by linking two otherwise distinct domains.

Metaphors also shape how we perceive emotional and conceptual experiences (Allan, 2007). In the song lyric "I am a rock," listeners interpret qualities of hardness, isolation, and impenetrability from the rock and apply them to the singer's emotional state. Similarly, in statements like "industries are at an embryonic stage," the term "embryonic" transfers associations of early biological development to emerging industries, suggesting natural growth and potential. These transfers highlight relevant similarities while acknowledging differences, shaping our understanding and emotional response. Through such processes, metaphors not only convey meaning but also influence the way readers or listeners conceptualize and relate to the subject matter (Cameron, 2003).

Simile

Simile is a subdivision of metaphor in that, as its name suggests, it draws attention to a similarity between two terms through words such as 'like' and 'as'. 'Simile' does not, strictly speaking, always entail figurative language, since both terms of a simile can often be understood literally. The simile, 'the sky is like a polished mirror', for example, invites the listener or reader to imagine how the sky might actually appear like a polished mirror. The difference between simile and metaphor in this respect can be demonstrated by turning the simile into a metaphor. If we say 'the sky is a polished mirror', this formulation can no longer be understood literally: we know that the sky is not really a polished mirror, though it might look like one, and therefore 'polished mirror' has to be read metaphorically. But simile is included in figurative language because there are many similes that cannot be taken literally. In his 'To a Skylark' (1820), for example, Shelley describes the skylark through an extraordinary catalogue of similes, including the claim that the bird is 'Like a cloud of fire' (ibid:8) – a simile that cannot be understood literally.

Metonymy

Metonymy (Greek for ‘a change of name’) is distinguished from metaphor in that, whereas metaphor works through similarity, metonymy works through other kinds of association (cause–effect, attribute, containment, etc.). The sentence ‘Moscow made a short statement’ makes sense only if we understand it figuratively, taking ‘Moscow’ to stand for the Russian government. This figure is possible not because of any obvious similarity between the government and the city, but because they are associated with each other (the government is based in the city). Metonymies can be formed through many different kinds of associative link (see Shifman, 2014). Typical dress, for example, can be used metonymically to stand for those who wear it: if someone says ‘a lot of big wigs came to the party’, we understand ‘big wigs’ to refer to ‘important people’ (a metonymy that probably derives from the fashion among the upper classes in earlier centuries in Europe of wearing elaborate wigs in public – a practice still followed by judges and barristers in court).

Synecdoche

Synecdoche (Greek word for ‘taking together’) is a sub-branch of metonymy. It occurs when the association between the figurative and literal senses is that of a part to the whole to which it belongs. ‘Farm hands’ is a common synecdoche for workers on a farm; ‘a new motor’ comes to mean ‘a new car’ by using one part of the car, its engine, to stand for the whole. (Note that the ‘big wig’ is not a part of the person to which it belongs, and so would not be called synecdoche (see Shifman, 2014).

Allegory

The term allegory comes from the Greek word for ‘speaking otherwise’. An allegory ‘is a narrative fiction in which the agents and actions, and sometimes the setting as well, are contrived to make coherent sense on the “literal,” or primary, level of signification, and at the same time to signify a second, correlated order of agents, concepts, and events’ (Abrams, 1993). Allegory, then, differs from the other kinds of figurative language we are looking at, since an allegorical story makes sense at the literal level as well as indicating that it needs to be understood at a second allegorical level.

Apostrophe

Apostrophe has been described (by Abrams, 1993) as a rhetorical figure rather than as a figure of speech. Whereas figures of speech involve describing things in terms of other things, a rhetorical figure is a modification of normal usage in order to achieve a rhetorical effect. Apostrophe is one of the most important rhetorical figures in poetry. One of the first things to do in understanding a poem is to work out its speech situation – i.e. who is speaking to whom. An apostrophe is a special variant on the poetic speech situation in that it involves the speaker addressing either someone who is not there, or even dead, or something that is normally thought of as unable to understand language or reply (e.g. an animal or an object). Thus, in ‘To a Skylark’, Shelley apostrophizes the skylark: ‘Hail to thee, blithe spirit’; in ‘Ode on a Grecian Urn’ (1820) Keats apostrophizes a Greek urn and the figures in its design. One of the consequences of apostrophe is that it personifies the thing that is addressed and thus works, in a way, like personifying metaphor. Apostrophe also typically (but not always) involves the use of an archaic second person pronoun and its associated verb form.

Metaphor Types

Richards (1974), cited by Jolayemi (2003:233), describes metaphor as illustrative, bringing abstract ideas to concrete form; as a device that unites disparate elements to generate new attitudes; and as a subtle means of integrating experiences. Similarly, Moody (1979:20) defines metaphor as transferring qualities from one entity to another, while Fatiregun (1981) sees it as a compressed simile, exemplified in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, where life is "a walking shadow" and man "a poor player." Ogungbemi (2016:159) adds that metaphors function as linguistic tools bridging imagination and reality, allowing multiple interpretations.

Metaphors are categorized in many ways, with Ullmann (1977), cited by Jolayemi (2003:201), highlighting six key types: anthropomorphic, animal, synaesthetic, abstract-to-concrete, organic, and telescoped. Anthropomorphic metaphors attribute human qualities to non-human entities, as in Ojaide's "the sun dresses with a huge mask," while animal metaphors, like Clark's "river bird," use animals symbolically. Abstract-to-concrete metaphors render intangible ideas tangible, as in Raji's "I will be thunder in the kidneys of liars," and synaesthetic metaphors transfer across sensory domains, e.g., Clark's "drumming" evokes tactile sensation. Organic metaphors rely on implicit tenors, such as Ojaide's "mountain of idolatry," and telescoped metaphors layer figurative structures, like Raji's *Black Laughter*. These forms, including extended, mixed, explicit, and dead metaphors, show that metaphor is a central poetic tool for meaning-making, not merely ornamentation.

Previous Empirical Studies

Akbar and Waode (2016) analyzed metaphors in *Caged Bird* and *Still I Rise* by Maya Angelou using a descriptive qualitative method. Guided by Crystal and Lakoff and Johnson's theories, they identified conceptual, mixed, and poetic metaphors, concluding that the poems articulate the author's response to racial inequality in America. While their study successfully demonstrates the functions of metaphor in selected poems, the present research differs by examining metaphors in *Broken Pitchers* by Sunnie Odo.

Similarly, Erasmus (2016) conducted a comparative analysis of metaphor across prose, poetry, and drama, classifying instances according to Newmark's (1988) typology and finding poetry especially *Song of Lawino* to exhibit the highest density and diversity of metaphors. Zhang (2009) examined metaphor in language learning, arguing that metaphor functions as a cognitive tool for understanding the world, while Oloko (2017) analyzed metaphors in Niyi Osundare's poetry using Halliday's (2004) grammatical metaphor framework, highlighting its role in meaning construction.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), introduced by Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), posits that metaphors are not merely decorative language but fundamental cognitive tools that structure thought and reality. Conceptual metaphors allow us to understand one domain, usually abstract, in terms of another, typically more concrete, domain. Over the decades, research has expanded, refined, and contextualized CMT (Gibbs, 2008; Kövecses, 2010a), showing that metaphor arises from universal bodily experiences, cultural frameworks, and situational contexts (Taylor & MacLaury, 1995; Yu, 1998; Kövecses, 2010b). Context-induced metaphors reveal

creativity beyond primary, universal metaphors, forming a continuum from bodily-based to culture-specific and context-driven metaphors.

Metaphors often form hierarchical systems, as illustrated by “ANGER IS FIRE” and “LOVE IS FIRE,” where a single source domain (FIRE) maps onto multiple abstract targets, capturing shared aspects like intensity (Kövecses, 2000a). Hierarchies may be straightforward, event-structured, or complex, where abstract concepts like friendship draw on multiple metaphor systems including state, communication, interaction, and emotion (Kövecses, 1995, 2017).

CMT emphasizes that metaphors operate primarily in thought, guiding understanding and action. Abstract domains are typically conceptualized via more concrete source domains, as in “LIFE IS A JOURNEY” or “ANGER IS FIRE,” influencing behavior, reasoning, and perception. Metaphors create “metaphorical realities,” shaping social and cognitive responses, such as perceiving body odor as an enemy in advertising. Conceptual metaphors also extend beyond language into gestures, visual arts, and other media (Forceville, 2008; Cienki & Müller, 2008).

Thus, CMT demonstrates that metaphors pervade cognition, language, and culture, systematically mapping concrete experiences onto abstract concepts, and thus fundamentally shaping human understanding and interaction.

Theoretical Framework - Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The theory adopted in this study, Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), was introduced by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in 1980, with further elaboration by Friedrich Ungerer and Hans-Jörg Schmid (2006), providing a framework for identifying source and target domains in metaphors. Conceptual metaphors are grounded in perceived similarities between two domains, which may be based on objective similarity, perceived similarity, or shared generic-level structures, as seen in metaphors like human life cycle is the life cycle of a plant or life is a gambling game. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) emphasize that these metaphors are rooted in everyday experiences and interactions, and they occur pervasively in both thought and language, linking source and target domains through systematic mappings such as anger is fire. Conceptual metaphors generally map concrete, tangible domains onto more abstract, less accessible ones, making complex ideas more understandable and guiding reasoning and behavior. Beyond language, these metaphors also manifest in gestures, visual arts, and media, showing that metaphorical thinking is a fundamental aspect of cognition and cultural interpretation.

Methodology

The research design combines qualitative and quantitative approaches, with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) providing the qualitative framework and statistical analysis serving as a quantitative complement. Data were collected from Enesi Ododo’s anthology *The Broken Pitchers*, which comprises thirty poems organized under three themes: Tension, Titillation, and Tutti-frutti. A systematic sampling technique was employed, as each poem was examined for metaphorical expressions, which were then conceptualized and assigned descriptive names. The data analytical procedure involved applying CMT to identify and conceptualize metaphors, while numerical analysis was used to determine the frequency and patterns of metaphor usage, providing insight into the author’s stylistic tendencies.

Data Analysis

This section analyses the use of metaphors in Ododo's *The Broken Pitchers*. The chapter brings out the instances of metaphors in the poems and how they function to enhance the understanding of the poems' thematic preoccupations. Particularly, the theory adopted in this study was introduced by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in 1980. They are pioneers within the field of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). They developed a theoretical framework which identified how the source and target domains are related to the metaphors. Their theory is used for the discussion of the types of metaphor in this analysis.

Metaphors in "Quarter of a Cent"

The poem "Quarter of a Cent" explores the theme of birth and coming of age. It talks about how a child is born and the process of growing into an adult. In couching the above theme, the poet uses several metaphors. The first instance of metaphor in the poem is the title of the poem, "Quarter of a Cent". This simply refers to 25 years. The poet metaphorically refers to 25 years as quarter of a cent; not only as a stage in life but as a stage full of crises and problems. In the first stanza of the poem, the poet states:

Clothed and simmered in reddish pool
Umbilical cord hold tight to mentor
With gradual tribulation, that frees itself.

In the first line above, the poet uses the metaphors "clothed and simmered" to refer to the way a new born baby is covered with blood. "Reddish pool" as used here is a metaphor for so much blood. In the second line, the mother of the child is referred to as "mentor". Another instance of metaphor is seen in line three above. The poet compares the pains which a child passes through at birth to a tribulation. Using the above metaphors, the poet creates the image of pain and suffering which characterize human existence.

In the second stanza of the poem, the poet states:

A teething child groping to find its bearing
Tottering feet here and there; falls and wails
Manages to survive adolescent incubation

In the third line of the above stanza, the poet metaphorically compares the growth from childhood to adolescent to "incubation" which happens to chickens. This metaphor makes it possible for the reader to understand the pains involved in the growth transitions.

In the first line of the third stanza, the poet refers to "A promising youth foretelling foetal future". The poet metaphorically compares the future of the youth, a foetus that is still growing in the womb. This means the future is still unknown even though it promises to be bright. In the third line, the poet says "plying and moulding your designed destiny". The poet metaphorically compares the journey into adulthood to a traveler and a sculptor. The traveler "plies" while the sculptor "moulds". All these create the impression that the young adult is very much responsible for his or her destiny.

In the first line of stanza four, the poet states that "at 25, crises cry loud in your kingdom". The poet here compares the humongous crises which characterize the life of a youth at 25 to a loud cry. The life of the youth is also metaphorically compared to a " kingdom " in which the youth is the king therein. The poet also says "jubilant music heralds silky silver cent/ of pigmented hair of wisdom". The jubilant music in the above line is a metaphor for the sweet lives of the youth. This sweet life, "heralds" the coming of grey hair at 50 (silver cent). The poet metaphorically refers to grey hair as "pigmented hair ".

In all, we can see how the poet uses metaphors to vivify the intricacies of growth and coming of age. This means that metaphors are vital instruments in couching the thematic preoccupation of a poem.

Metaphors in " Purgatory of a Race"

The poem, "Purgatory of a Race" explores innocence and experience; good days and reversal of fortune. The poet metaphorically compares this experience of falling from grace to grace to a purgatory experience where one suffers and learns from it. The poet talks about a tree which was blossoming before but eventually dries up. Obviously, it is not a tree that the poet wants to address but human beings. In the last of the first stanza, the poet uses a metaphor to summarize the reason for the fresh nature of the blossoming tree. He says, "as God sheds tears of mercy". The tears of mercy here refer to rainfall. It is the rainfall sent by God that makes the tree to blossom.

The poet further states that "a viable wisdom germinates". In the above line the poet compares the wisdom which comes at the flourishing stage of the "tree" to a planted seed which germinates. When this wisdom is discarded or disregarded, the poet says "barrels of juice exchanged, for foreign currencies. This compares the corruption of the individual to the corruption of oil theft in Nigeria. The poet also uses metaphor to capture the consequence of this kind of corruption thus "the juicy fruits becoming stones". The change in the state of the juicy fruit is compared to a stone. In all, the tree in the poem is a metaphor for human beings. The growth of the tree is a metaphor for the growth of human beings. When corruption sets in, the human person becomes a ghost or his or her former self.

Metaphors in "Broken Pitchers"

"Broken Pitchers" is the poem title for the poetry collection under study. Literarily, "a pitchers" is a container. From the title of the poem, one would think the poet wants to write about a container but as one reads the content of the poem, one discovers that "a broken pitchers" is just a metaphor for a broken relationship amongst people of a nation. It is a metaphor for a divided nation which was once united, but now, things have fallen apart. When the pitchers gets broken, its contents are spilt. The poet metaphorically compares the way the container (pitchers), the nation was built to the way the foundation of a strong house is laid. He says "we pitch its delicate formation, In a cushioned hole". Despite the efforts made to secure the container, the poet, mournfully declares:

...Alas! Clouds of miseries descended
Created a thick wall of inhibition...

In the first line above, the poet uses a metaphor (clouds of miseries) to compare the division among the people to a cloud. He further compares this division to "a thick wall" which prevents people from coming together as one. This "thick wall of inhibition" in the case of Nigeria can be tribalism and nepotism. In all, the poet has deployed pungent metaphors to create a vivid image a broken nation; a nation which was once united but now broken like a pitchers.

Metaphors in "My Land".

The poem, "My Land" explores a land filled with hopelessness and anguish. The poetic persona uses melancholic tone to portray the mood of hopelessness and decay in the land. In the capturing of the theme of the poem, the poet uses many metaphors. In the first of the poem, the poet states thus:

My land ripens in wreathen mud
Like ripened mangoes dripping in decay
Everywhere strong rancid stench
Rends the air --a contaminated purity

In the first line above, an instance of metaphor can be seen. "My land" is compared to a ripened fruit which has fallen to the mud. When a ripened fruit falls to the mud, it is just nothing but a waste and will constitute stench. The poet captures the corruption and decay in the land with the image of a ripened mango in the mud. This type of metaphor is called, "abstract to concrete metaphor". If one wants to really understand the kind of decay and corruption in the poet's land, one is to visualize a ripened mango in the mud.

There is the use of synaesthetic metaphor in lines 3 and 4 of the above stanza. It is stated that "everywhere strong rancid stench/rends the air" as a contaminated purity...The metaphor in the above lines transposes from one sense organ to another. "Rancid stench " appeals to the sense of smell while "rends the air" appeals to the sense of hearing. These metaphors are used to amplify the volume of decay and corruption going on in the poet's land.

In the second stanza of the poem, metaphors are used in lines 1 and 3. In line one, the poet states "everybody is swarmed by the swamp". In this instance, the poet uses animal metaphor and telescoped metaphor. The effect of the decay in the land to everybody is compared to the sting of a swarm of bees. Also, the vehicle of the metaphor "swarm" becomes the tenor of " swamp", thereby giving us an instance of telescoped metaphor.

In the third stanza of the poem, the following instances of metaphors can be spotted: "my land bubbles". In this instance, the poet compares the troubles in the land to a boiling liquid. This is an instance of |abstract to concrete metaphor". The reader can visualize the turmoil in the land by imagining a boiling liquid. In the third line of the stanza, the poet states that "the sun inserts its phalanges". This is an instance of anthropomorphic metaphor in that it compares objects to the quality of a human. It compares the sun to a human being with phalanges. The metaphor is used to emphasize the harshness of the sun on the human skin. Another instance of anthropomorphic metaphor can be seen in the fourth stanza of the poem which has only one line. The poet compares the anguish in the land to a disgruntled human being who hisses to express his or her frustrations.

The poet states that "my land hisses out". This implies that the land itself is tired of evils and atrocities being committed on it.

Metaphors in "Souls without Bodies", and "Twig of Fury "

The poem, "Souls without Bodies" centres on the menace of criminality in the society. Those criminals are metaphorically referred to as souls without bodies. This implies that they are not complete human beings. In many lines of the poem, the poet uses metaphor to drive home his point. In the first line of the first stanza, the poet states that "everywhere souls perch nightly". In this instance, the poet uses "animal metaphor" to compare the night criminals to night birds.

In the poem, "Twig of Fury", the poet uses metaphors to portray the message of disappointment by the masses. The poet metaphorically compares the lifted hands of protesters in Benin to a twig (shooting branches of a tree). These branches are shooting out in anger because of dissatisfaction. In the fourth line of the fifth stanza, the poet summarizes the protest metaphorically by stating that, "all in a dance of disaffection". In this manner, the poet calls the protest "a dance of disaffection". Normally, people dance to express their joy and happiness but in this case, the people are dancing in disaffection.

Metaphors in "WAI's Armoury and " Leave me Alone"

In this poem, Ododo uses certain metaphors to portray the theme of the poem. The poem centres around the one-time government policy called War Against Indiscipline (WAI). In the first line of the poem, the poet writes "pestering around in the armoured land". In this instance, the poet metaphorically compares the WAI policy to a pest that disturbs crops. In this manner, the poet makes the point that the policy is an annoying one. Similarly, the poet compares high-handedness of the leaders to a military siege. An armoured land is a land where people are coerced to do things which are against their wills.

There is an extensive use of metaphors in the poem " Leave me Alone". From the title of the poem, the poet creates the image of a man who is held hostage but longs to be free from his captors. Metaphorically, this man who longs for freedom in the poem turns to be Nigeria. Nigeria is portrayed as being held captive by colonial imperialism and the shenanigans of indigenous leaders. In the first three lines of the poem, the poet writes:

I had first breath in 1960
After an ageless incubation
In the womb of forced caption

The "ageless incubation" referred to in the above line is colonial administration. The poet metaphorically compares the colonial administration to the process of incubation which happens in chickens. This implies a period of rigorous upbringing for maturity. "The womb of forced caption" refers to the tag given to Nigeria as a British empire.

Metaphors in "Leave Me alone", "Who Picks the Baton" and "Okene".

In the poem "leave me alone", the voice is symbolic of a nation in bondage of colonial domination. The poem is replete with metaphors. Almost all the expressions are hidden in images and imageries

such as “my first breath in 1960”. This year reminds one of the year Nigeria got her independence. The second expression, “after an ageless incubation” indicates a long time of maturity before the independence. The “womb” of forced caption is also a metaphor stating that the white colonialists are a “womb” for the incubation of a nation undergoing nurturing to maturity. The civil war that erupted in 1966 is referred to as the “sharp pebble” that pierced the heart of the nation. The nine holes and the “another nine days wonder in 1975” are the created states in the new Nigerian federation. The military coup of 1976 is the cause of the bleeding into total blackout until democracy was restored in 1979. The poet seeks freedom from the colonial masters in his manipulative use of language in this poem.

In the poem, “Who Picks the Baton”, the poet metaphorically compares political tussle in Nigeria to an athletic competition in which all the athletes run to win. In the last line of the first stanza, the poet states “strides may soon intertwine”. In this regard, the poet metaphorically compares the occasional clashes that happen amongst political opponents in Nigeria to strides intertwining when people walk en-masse. In the first line of the second stanza, the poet compares the tussle for political leadership to “a rat race”. A rat race is a kind of race which is run without strict adherence to rules. Each rat runs in the direction that it chooses. Similarly, luxury of politics in Nigeria is also metaphorically compared to a “wine” which amplifies the fact that politicians are in the race just for self-aggrandizement. In the poem, “Okene”, the poet metaphorically refers to the house at the entrance of the town as “a mud face-clothed with modern architectural designs”. This implies that the town is an admixture of the old and the new. The riches in the town is also compared to “pebbles”. This implies that there is an uneven distribution of riches in the town. Only few are rich while the majority are poor.

Metaphors in “Sedimentary Riches”, “Visitation”, and “Flaming Tongues”.

In the poem, “sedimentary riches”, a land rich in great mineral and human resources is showcased by the poet. In the poem, “Visitation”, Ododo uses metaphors to drive home the theme of miseries that have become part of the Nigerian system. In the first line of the second stanza, the poet writes “mist of mysteries makes us miserable”. The poet here compares the miseries in the land to a mist. This attention foregrounds the complexity of the miseries. Furthermore, the poet compares the dimming to a “dimwit” and a “nitwit”. In the poem, “Flaming Tongues”, the poet captures what fire does to a water in a pot. He states:

when flaming tongues
leak a water pot out.
It gathers tropical plague
That hisses out to sprout
A warm-warming whistles.

In the above lines, the poet contrasts flames of fire with a troublesome human being who can stir up the anger of another. It is said that the waterpot “hisses”. This simply means that it is boiling. In this manner, the poet uses flaming fires and waterpot to illustrate how a man provokes his fellow man to wrath.

Metaphors in "Tick Tock", " Mirror", "My Death Day", A Thorn in my Heart", " Mind in Scum" and " Ajagu Lives On"

In the poem, "Tick Tock", the poet uses metaphors to capture the power of time. He compares time to a cleaner, thus "all are busy cleaning sweats of sorrow and busy clearing props of poverty". Also, in the poem "Mirror", the poet metaphorically compares mirror to "a powerless prophet". In this manner, he foregrounds the point that the mirror has no vision of its own. The mirror only reflects the things around its environment.

The use of metaphors can also be seen in the poem, "My Death Day". In the poem, Ododo compares death to planting of seeds to beget new seeds. In other words, he makes the point that death brings about reincarnation. He states:

A planting that begets another birth
A gate opener to commonwealth

In other words, death is also likened to a gate opener who ushers one to a prepared treasure after death. The use of metaphors in this poem presents death as something positive or helpful rather than a negative occurrence. In the poem, "A Thorn in my Heart", the poet metaphorically compares the pains he feels about the happenings in his society to a thorn which chokes crops. The way thorns choke crops and prevents them from growing is the same way that the pain in the poet's heart chokes him and prevents him from speaking out. The poet writes:

A thorn in my heart
Choking me to silence
My eyes see
My body feels
But the thorns in my heart
Stops the mouth from voicing
The embittered and emotive truth.

We know that thorns do not grow in the heart but the poet uses this metaphor to vivify the kind of pain which the persona feels. In the poem, "Mind in Scum", the confusion in the mind of the poetic persona is captured through the use of metaphors. The poet likens the loneliness in the mind of the persona to a man in a lone grove. He says:

In the grove of the unknown
Scoffed away from heavenly smiles.

The poet also compares the indecision and confusion of the speaker the swinging of a pendulum. He says "On the fence I sway like a pendulum, Swinging here and there demented. In the poem, "Ajagu Lives On", the poet makes use of a wide range of metaphors to eulogize the qualities of the man, "Ajagu". Ajagu was a custodian of Ebira culture and oral tradition. The poem is written in honour of him. In the first stanza of the poem, the poet begins by exploring the virtues of poetry and those of a poet. He writes:

Poetic lines are the valves
Of sweet sounding poetry;
The words of a poet never die
They cascade on the wave
Of timelessness scaling the ridges
Of wisdom , norms and riddles of life

In line one above, poetic lines are metaphorically compared to valves in tyres. What is the function of valves in tyres? Valves are the openings through which the tyres are inflated or pumped. In this regard, what valves are to tyres is what poetic lines are to poetry. The words of a poet are also compared to waters that "cascade on the wave" and even overflow the ridges. In this manner, the poet uses metaphor to foreground the potency of the poet's words. He intends to use this praise, the virtues in Ajagu as a bard who did his best in preserving the tradition of oral poetry.

In all, Sunnie Ododo in his poetry collection, *Broken Pitches*, leverages on the literary device of metaphor to pass across the not only sensitive messages in the poems but demonstrating the richness of language use in the spontaneity of expressions used in describing the history, the present and the future of the nation, Nigeria in most of the poems in *The Broken Pitches*. Thus, metaphor, as we have seen, enhances the literariness of a work of literature since it involves some measure of indirectness . Metaphors have made it possible for Ododo to paint pungent pictures in words which makes the readers visualize the issues being raised in the poems. The typologies of the poems are presented in the next section.

Metaphors in Contextual Nomenclatures

The poems in Enesi Ododo's *The Broken Pitches* have been explored for the thematic and the metaphoric conceptualizations. In this scheme, the metaphorical expressions and their contextual identities are brought to the fore, for pedagogical and for scholarly appraisals. The theory to be used in this section originated from George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in 1980. They are pioneers within the field of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). They developed a theoretical framework which identified how the source and target domains are related to the metaphors.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study reveal a rich and varied use of conceptual metaphors in Enesi Ododo's *The Broken Pitches*, analyzed according to Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). Across the thirty poems, multiple types of metaphors were identified, each grounded in specific source and target domains. Colour metaphors appear in expressions like "clothed and simmered" for the "reddish pool" of blood, while emotional metaphors are found in lines such as "as God shed tears of mercy." Concrete and organic metaphors dominate, exemplified by treasures in "the remains of our treasure are broken," ripening land in "my land," and nocturnal imagery in "souls perch nightly." Other notable types include melodic metaphors, as in "twigs of fury"; economic metaphors in "Babangidaquin" and "tick tock"; military metaphors in "WAI's armoury"; atmospheric metaphors in "what a journey"; maternal metaphors in "leave me alone"; cultural and landmark metaphors in references to Okene; health metaphors in "Visitation"; animal metaphors in "my object of desire" and "unstoppable eaglets"; aesthetic and physical metaphors

in “scarlet face” and “my object of fancy”; weather metaphors in “flaming tongues”; biological and physiological metaphors in “a thorn in my heart,” “let loose,” and “what?”; temporal metaphors in “mirror”; power metaphors in “my death day”; and metaphysical metaphors in “storehouse” for philosophy.

The analysis shows that Ododo’s major metaphorical focus is on the physical and natural environment, followed by health, beauty, aesthetics, and biological phenomena. Economic, temporal, power, and sports-related metaphors occur less frequently but contribute to the diversity of the poet’s imagery. Overall, the study demonstrates Ododo’s versatility and dexterity in language, showing a deep engagement with his environment, history, and cultural context, reminiscent of Niyi Osundare’s creative and forceful use of metaphor to animate complex ideas and emotions. This comprehensive mapping of metaphor types underscores both the cognitive richness and the aesthetic sophistication of Ododo’s poetry.

Conclusion

Sunnie Ododo’s *The Broken Pitchers* showcases a masterful use of metaphors that illuminate complex emotions, ideas, and human experiences. Through the mapping of source and target domains, the metaphors transform abstract concepts into concrete images, making the poems more accessible and vivid. The analysis employed the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, emphasizing the role of tenor, vehicle, and ground in understanding metaphorical meaning. Ododo’s collection demonstrates that metaphors are not just literary devices but essential tools for conveying depth, enhancing the aesthetic quality, and engaging readers on multiple levels. Overall, the study confirms that the poet’s extensive use of metaphor enriches the poetry, creating powerful, relatable, and enduring expressions of human experience.

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