

DEPTH SEMANTICS OF METAPHORS IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S *ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH*

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Abstract

No doubt, metaphors in Chinua Achebe's Anthills of the Savannah have excited much critical attention. Such attention is however not surprising given that metaphors in the text are so pervasive that they cannot escape notice, not even by naive and disinterested readers. The pervasiveness itself is thanks to the quantity and quality of those metaphors. A lot have therefore been written about them. One is nevertheless encouraged to take up their study again on the belief that something new will always be found about them. At any rate, has Northrop Frye not taught that a work of literature is 'inexhaustible' and therefore a 'source of new critical discovery?' This paper therefore seeks to study metaphors in the text via 'Depth Semantics': a poetics that is primarily Ricoeurian. The aim is to (through the practice of close-reading) treat those metaphors with the seriousness they deserve, since a true study of such metaphors as contained in the text is best done at the level of depth semantics. Such a study will show according to Cassirer that 'there is much more in metaphor than a bare 'substitution', a mere rhetorical figure of speech.' Michel Foucault's forms of similitude, particularly analogy and sympathy, will come handy in the course of the analysis.

Keywords: Metaphor, Depth Semantics, Interpretation, Explanation, Analogy, Sympathy, Power, Scapegoat

Introduction

Metaphor which Paul Ricoeur calls 'the trope of resemblance per excellence' (*The Rule of Metaphor* 205) is one of the most prominent and important, if not indeed the most prominent and important, of all the tropes in literature. On the one hand, its importance is evident in the fact that it has attracted the attention of philosophers and literary theorists more than any other trope has. Such philosophers and theorists include the famous and versatile Aristotle, I.A Richards, Monroe Beardsely, Roman Jakobson, Ernst Cassirer and Paul Ricoeur himself, to mention just a few. On the other hand, its vitality is made manifest by the argument that apprehends a number of other tropes usually defined separately as in fact variations of metaphor, that is, the argument that sees as metaphor any shift from literal to figurative sense. It is stated in this way:

It remains necessary to conserve the generic amplitude of Aristotle's definition, which also encompasses synecdoche, metonymy, irony and litotes, that is, all shift from literal meaning to figurative meaning that occur through discourse and in discourse. (*The Rule* 222)

Of all the accounts of the theorists and philosophers named above, Ricoeur's study of metaphor seems to me the most comprehensive, for a number of reasons. One is that in Ricoeur's study, particularly in his *The Rule of Metaphor*, precedent studies of metaphor are appreciated, evaluated, critiqued and synthesized. Secondly, Ricoeur distinguishes between what he calls 'trivial metaphor' (*The Rule* 223) or 'conventional metaphor' (225) or 'dead metaphor' from what he contrarily calls 'living metaphor' (225) or 'poetic metaphor' (223). He writes,

The difference between trivial metaphor and poetic metaphor is not that one can be paraphrased and the other not, but that the paraphrase of the latter is without end. It is endless precisely because it can always *spring back to life*. (*The Rule* 223)

What Ricoeur calls living/poetic metaphor, Ernst Cassirer calls 'radical metaphor' which according to him 'is a condition of the formulation of myth as well as verbal conceptions' (*Language and Myth* 87). The distinction of poetic metaphor from trivial metaphor is fundamentally significant as it is the foundation of this study; and any discussion of metaphor in any literary work ought to take cognizance of that distinction. Living/Radical/Poetic metaphor is simply the type of metaphor found in literary works as against the ones encountered in scientific and everyday discourse; as such, this category of metaphor is more than that analyzable into 'tenor', 'vehicle' and 'ground' as I. A. Richard would have it. In fact, for Ricoeur such metaphor as 'man is a wolf' (*Hermeneutics and Human Sciences* 172) which is practically analyzable into the three schema above is a typical trivial metaphor whose meaning is exhaustible. With regard to poetic metaphors, our experience in literature has shown that there is a sense in which a character or an event could be metaphorical (as shall be seen later in our text) thereby letting its significance permeate the entire text.

That poetic metaphor is not exhaustible like its trivial counterpart makes their understanding largely cumbersome. Hence, Ricoeur in his *Hermeneutics and Human Sciences* offers in the form of a theory a way to go about their understanding (this is the third reason for assigning greatest importance and significance to his work on metaphor). That theory is 'Depth Semantics' (*Hermeneutics* 161). The idea is that depth semantics alone is capable of accounting properly for poetic metaphors, unlike trivial metaphor which is taken care of by surface semantics. The theory of depth semantics is to include the twin process of 'Explanation' and 'Interpretation'. A.N. Akwanya writing about Ricoeur's depth semantics posits that '[he] proposes for works of literature a "depth semantics" which explains as well as interprets' (*Semantics and Discourse* 252). Ricoeur himself distinguishes between his concepts of Explanation and Interpretation thus:

I shall therefore say: to explain is to bring out the structure, that is, the internal relatives of dependence which constitute the statistics of the text; to interpret is to follow the path of thought opened up by the text, to place oneself *en route* towards the orient of the text. (*Hermeneutics* 161-2)

The task of explanation and interpretation is to be anchored heavily on metaphor(s); according to Akwanya,

Metaphor has an important role to play in both functions [explanation and interpretation], not merely because it is contained in a work endowing it with the quality of literariness but because in some respect the text and metaphor behave alike. (*Semantics and Discourse* 252)

According to Ricoeur, metaphor is a work in *miniature* (*Hermeneutics* 167). So, the presupposition is that 'the understanding of metaphors can serve as a guide to the understanding of longer texts, such as literary works' (*Hermeneutics* 177); especially such a work as *Anthills* suffused as it is with metaphors. Ricoeur further asks, 'if metaphor engenders thought through a long discourse is it not because it is itself a discourse?' (*The Rule* 223) Beyond the fact that metaphors and texts behave alike, when they occur in literary texts, metaphors usually have deeper significance in the entire work: what Ricoeur calls 'the power of metaphor'; he writes:

I speak now of power and no longer of structure or even process. The power of metaphor stems from its connection, internal to the poetic work, with three features: first, with the other procedures of *lexis*, second, with *fable* which is the essence of the work, its immanent sense, and third, with the intentionality of the work as a whole, that is, with its intention to represent human actions as higher than they are in reality – and therein lies the *mimesis*. [emphasis original] (*Hermeneutics* 180)

This paper is therefore poised to study metaphors in *Anthills of the Savannah* by simultaneously applying the two concepts of explanation and interpretation in a view to arriving at a coherent analysis and understanding of the entire text and thereby 'explicate the type of being-in-the-world unfolded in front of the text' (*Hermeneutics* 140). However, it is important to state that the study will focus more on interpretation rather than explanation which deals more with the structure of metaphors and texts. Metaphors in the text are to be seen as what Roland Barthes calls 'cardinal functions' ('Introduction to Structural Analysis of Narratives' 248). As cardinal function, those metaphors will be made to interact and integrate amongst themselves so as to yield coherent meaning; this is on the ground that meaningfulness in a literary work is by possession of correlate as Akwanya has taught. Of course, as cardinal functions,

integration with each other is always already the nature of the metaphors, since Barthes argues that, 'As for cardinal functions, they are bound together in a solidarity relations: a function of this type combines selectively with one of its own kind' ('Introduction...' 287). Moreover, the interpretation of metaphors in the text is likely to offer a roadmap to the study of the major characters and their roles.

It is also pertinent to mention that some metaphors in the text have been studied to an extent in A.N Akwanya's *Verbal Structures*. This essay may make reference to the analysis already done in *Verbal Structures* where they are helpful; that does not mean that this paper is a rehash of that which has been done. For, those metaphors may have been studied, but their semantic possibilities have not been exhausted. As a matter of fact, their semantic possibilities cannot be exhausted as we have learnt from Ricoeur. This paper equally differs from any other of its kind done on the text in that it takes its departure from the metaphors, pursues the analysis through them and about them. It can therefore after all pride itself on the relative newness of what it is about to do.

Power and Its Victims

One of the most pronounced of all the metaphors in *Anthills* is that of the Sun often regarded as the solar metaphor in the text. This metaphor is first encountered in the report of the first witness – Christopher Oriko. The first witness in an account of a meeting he has with His Excellency General Sam and other members of the cabinet says: 'In that instant the day changes. The fiery sun retires temporarily behind a cloud; we are reprieved and immediately celebrating' (*Anthills of the Savannah* 3). The 'fiery sun' in the quotation obviously refers to General Sam and the conceited manner with which he treats the members of his cabinet on the one hand and the macabre and sometimes absurdly ludic way with which he vents up power, distributes and manages it throughout the entire enclave designated as Kangan – what has been referred to as his use of power 'in an absolutist manner' (A. N. Akwanya, *Verbal Structures* 42). Simply put, Gen. Sam is the figure of the sun or even more directly the sun himself. His noxious management of power on the one hand links him with the power which in the account of the myth of Idemili is said to have 'rampaged our world naked' (102) in the pristine and mythic time and on the other hand, by means of Mitchel Foucault's similitude by 'analogy,' makes him analogous to the utterly fierce sun responsible for the draught in Abazon. Metaphorically therefore, General Sam is this sun punishing the people of Abazon; for which reason, the old man leading the delegation to the presidential palace in his incredible display of oratorical prowess says, 'So we came to Bassa to say our own yes and perhaps the work on our borehole will start again and we will not perish from the anger of the sun' (127). Needless to so that 'the sun' in the old man's utterance refers doubly to Gen. Sam and to the natural celestial sun.

As the figure of the sun, what General Sam cannot afford to tolerate is any form of insurrection or rebellion from any quarter or anybody. What he expects is a total submission to his 'will to power' (Nietzsche, qtd in Akwanya, 'The Superman as Master narrative in Wole Soyinka's *Season of Anomy*' 2) by all and sundry. He expects the entire people of Bassa, his cabinet members and all the provinces of the state to take his desiccating rules with total equanimity, acquiescence, joy and in fact unquestioned acceptance. He regards as a mortal enemy anyone who dares to rear his head in dissent and opposition towards his dispensation of power while on the other hand is filled with joy when his ruling is accepted with relish. This is the foundation of his constant squabble with his friends Ikem Osodi (the Editor of the *National Gazette*), Christopher Oriko (the Commissioner for Information) and the entire people of Abazon. Not only does Gen. Sam want his reign to be supreme, he also wants to enthrone it infinitely. His life-presidency referendum is telling of that desire. Therefore, his hatred for the people of Abazon stems from their refusal to give their vote in support to that referendum consequently leading to its failure. Similarly, his quarrel with Ikem and Chris is not just for their incessant reservations and sometimes point blank excoriation of his wills but particularly for tactfully withdrawing their support from the referendum; for '[finding] it possible to abandon him and allow him to be disgraced' (147) as he puts it.

The metaphor of the sun directly implicates that of 'the hole'. As said earlier, what Gen Sam wants is a total submission to his power gymnastics, his scorching influence or better still withdrawal to safety from its effect (withdrawal to safety is of course submission). What he cannot afford to condone is any act either overt or subtle implying challenge. It is a common knowledge that what earthly creatures do is crawl into their various holes any moment the heat of the sun becomes intense; that is exactly what the General wants from Kangan citizens whom he regards as nothing more than feeble earthly creatures. We learn about the existence of this 'hole of safety' firsthand from the first witness, thus: 'On a bad day such as this one had suddenly become after many propitious auguries, there is nothing for it but to lie close to *your hole, ready to scramble in*' (2). Quite a number of people have no problem or difficulty scrambling

into this hole – they readily do it unabashedly. All the cabinet members do this quite easily and joyfully except of course the commissioner for information. For instance, about the Commissioner for Education Chris tells us:

On my right sat the Honorable Commissioner for Education. He is by far the most frightened of the lot. As soon as he had sniffed peril in the air he had begun to disappear into his hole, as some animals and insect do, backwards (3)

The Attorney General in a like manner declares openly his loyalty and servile allegiance to the General; '[a]s for those like me, [] we know our place, we know those better than ourselves when we see them. We have no problem worshipping a man like you. Honestly I don't' (24). The plural pronouns 'we' and 'ourselves' are intended to include all the members of the presidential cabinet save Chris. The other members of the cabinet sometimes even stoop to maligning one another and even bootlicking so as to win the favour of the General or at least to obviate his anger. It is that hole that General Sam expects Ikem, Chris and Abazon people to crawl into. His fury with them is for their unbelievable and even obstinate refusal to do so, as Ikem declares bluntly after his suspension (which was intended to forcibly coerce him into a hole), 'I am not going to crawl into a hole' (149). The refusal of Ikem and Sam is something the General could not come to terms with. The Attorney General locates the reason for Ikem and Chris insubordination on the fact that they were his childhood friends and attended the same prestigious Lord Lugard College with him and therefore practically envy his esteemed position, since there were more or less more intelligent students than he was in their college days. For the people of Abazon, they seem naturally disinclined to subservience. They always like to hold their own, to follow what appears to them the right path and to pull their voice and strength together against whatever they perceive to be wrong no matter how puny their strength may be. Moreover, the old man maintains that their refusal to vote for the referendum is because Osodi neither came to tell them to do so nor did he write in his paper and 'So they knew that cunning has entered that talk' (126).

Another metaphor which dovetails into that of the sun is the metaphor of 'a monster'. We read from Chris narration that 'perhaps like me he meant well, neither of us having been present before at the birth and growing of a baby monster' (10) and at the other time from Ikem that, 'The emperor may be a fool but he isn't a monster. Not yet, anyhow; although he will certainly become one by the time Chris and company are done with him' (46). The monster referred to here is General Sam. His status as a monster becomes understandable given his effort to become a dictator with President-for-life Ngongo as his role model. It is from this president that General Sam purportedly picked the strange word *Kabisa*. He is also the one who earlier on tells Sam that his problem is his childhood friends. Sam so much admires the old man to the extent that he is reported to have once said 'I wish I could look like him' (52). At the point, Ikem says that he is not a monster yet but his becoming one will certainly not take much longer. Eventually, when the monster is fully born and grown, Ikem declares: 'The fellow wants to kill us! He is mad, I tell you. His acting has got into his head fully' (147). And having assumed the dual figure of both the sun and a monster, Gen Sam becomes utterly vicious, impregnable and the true image of power rampaging in stark nudity. He, as the military head of state, is in possession of both material and human resources to achieve submission, such as the formidable, enigmatic and servile director of the State Research Council – Major Johnson Ossai – who is his henchman. He is therefore ready to totally pulverize those who do not know better than to stand in his way, undoubtedly Ikem, Chris and the people of Abazon – they are the direct victims of power. The sage of Abazon seems to already have a premonition of the futility of their struggle against 'the big chief' as he call Gen Sam. Hence, he tells the tale of the encounter between the tortoise and leopard – a story purely metaphoric in itself. He ends the story by directly linking it to themselves, thus: 'My people, that is all we are doing now. Struggling perhaps to know purpose except that those who come after us will be able to say: *True, our fathers were defeated but they tried* [emphasis original]' (123).

The sun itself in the text is a typical example of Julia Kristeva's figures 'capable of "double destination"' (A.N. Akwanya, *Discourse Analysis and Dramatic Literature* 102). That is to say that the sun can be analyzed as a divine figure and as a human figure. As a divine figure, the sun is to be revered since it is not altogether harmful; but as a human figure which is personified by General Sam it is profoundly destructive. The sun as a divine presence is first glimpsed in Ikem's poetic reflection entitled Hymn to the Sun, where the sun is described thus:

Great carrier of Sacrifice to the Almighty: single eye of God
Why have you brought this to us?
What hideous abomination forbidden and forbidden again seven times have we committed or else condoned,

what error that no reparation can hope to erase? ... (30)

Here, the sun is addressed as divinity whose terror upon the world may be as a result of the world's wrongdoing. The poem is some sort of supplication, trying to appease the sun to withdraw its punishment. The divine nature of the sun is confirmed in the myth of Idemili where we read that, 'so the almighty, looking at the creation through the round undying eye of the Sun, saw and pondered and finally decided to send his daughter...' (102). As a divine being or part of the divine, the sun is capable of punishing and also showing mercy; thus, it is through it that the Almighty watches over the creation. Contrarily, the sun as the graceless and merciless General seems all harm and no good. He can only issue forth harm and scorching rays, and nothing but that rays, until 'its' career ceases. Consequently, the attempt by the people of Abazon to placate the raging sun and perhaps win his favour does not just prove futile but ends up achieving its obverse: instead of winning his favour, they end up aggravating his hatred for them and even land themselves in prison.

Scapegoatism

A scapegoat is generally known as a carrier: either one who is sacrificed for the sins of others or sacrificed for peace to reign in a community. This sacrifice is present in virtually all cultures of the world. However, the form of the ritual and the very sacrificial object or *pharmakos* (as Northrop Frye calls it) may differ. Among the Jews for instance, as we learn from the Bible, a lamb is the object of sacrifice. The ritual is also represented variously in different literary works. To cite a popular example, in Achebe's *Arrow of God*, the festival of pumpkin leave is the scapegoat ritual, with the chief priest of Ulu, Ezeulu, acting as the carrier figure. In Wole Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*, a human being is the object of sacrifice. Northrop Frye sees scapegoat figures, whether an animal or a human being, as pure victims (*Anatomy* 41). The argument here is that Chris Oriko (the Commissioner for Information) is the sacrificial lamb – a scapegoat figure. That Chris is a scapegoat is first brought about by the metaphor of a missing horse. During the search of Beatrice's house by military men looking for Chris, she is surprised by one of the soldier's rummaging of her books. In her astonishment she asks the soldier 'Are you looking for books too?' The soldier answers thus, 'Everything... My people have a saying which my father used often. A man whose horse is missing will look everywhere even in the roof' (177). After the search, the soldier still calls Beatrice and tells her, 'I know where the horse is. But I don't want to find him. Get him moved' (179). In another occasion also, he replies to Beatrice's question similarly, 'It's not me you should worry about; I can promise never to find a horse. It's the others who are more efficient than myself in the matter of finding horses' (185). Horse in those passages refers to the on-the-run commissioner for information who is also Beatrice's fiancé. It is on the basis of the commissioner for information as a horse that we here assign him the position of a *pharmakos*. This is on the ground that in some cultures, a horse is a veritable and profound object of sacrifice as can be seen from an article entitled 'The Horse Sacrifice'; we are told that,

In Vedic India, the greatest of sacrifices was the Ashvamedha (or horse Sacrifice). The sacrifice of the horse was often associated with the sacrifice of the goat... In fact the horse sacrifice was a fertility ritual, as it entails the mating of the queen with the sacrificed horse and had, moreover connections with the renovation of the cosmos this type of ritual usually represent. (np)

The horse sacrifice as seen above more than qualifies as a scapegoat ritual because for one, it is associated with the goat sacrifice which is ultimately a cleansing sacrifice and for another it is regenerative since it renovates the cosmos. If the sacrifice is arguably a scapegoat ritual, then the horse is the undoubtedly the sacrificial object.

In fact, looking at the life of Chris closely, his position as a carrier becomes overt. At the terminal point of his career, when he is due to be sacrificed, we see that he descends, though inadvertently, from his erstwhile national figure and personality of importance to a wanted and hunted person. Subsequently, in a bid to run for his dear life, he disguises himself in the cloak of a poor person (a small motor parts seller) and also goes in the company of the poor and lowly placed (Braumoh, the taxi driver and his colleague). The disguise is quite symbolic as it stands for identification, albeit unwittingly, with the poor, the entire afflicted people of Kangan; the people on whose behalf and welfare he must be offered. And then again, he flees from Bassa the capital of Kangan, to Abazon. That act of movement is also as symbolic as the previous one. This is because in most cultures, the scapegoat object is taken around the community, symbolically trapping the sins of the community and thereby rendering them whole and free before it is finally sacrificed. Chris' movement from Bassa to Abazon is to be seen as such archetypal movement. It is

particularly akin to the movement of Jesus Christ from Garden of Gethsemane to Golgotha where he is crucified. Although the actual intent of Chris is to run away from Bassa where his life is in a dire threat to Abazon where its safety is more assured, it does not in any way diminish his status as a scapegoat. He in fact becomes like Soyinka's Eman who runs away from his community that uses their own son for sacrifice and runs into another community that uses a stranger for sacrifice. Just like Eman, Chris runs away from Bassa to seek refuge in Abazon only to be shot to death there. Moreover, it can be recalled that Chris actually dies protecting, or to put it more directly, instead of the girl, Adamma. At the moment of this action, he forgets totally that in the past few days he has been doing everything possible to safeguard his life. At that very symbolic moment, he stands his ground and collects the bullet with his chest; we read that, 'Chris stood his ground looking straight into the man's face, daring him to shoot. And he did, point-blank into the chest presented to him' (215). Chris' position as a scapegoat is not therefore something he can run away from in that the more he tries to run away from it, the closer he gets to it; just like Eman's case, his situation is truly fate-ordained. Above all, it is not an accident that Chris dies in Abazon – the most afflicted and sufferer province of General Sam's regime.

If Chris is proven to be a scapegoat, Ikem is likely to be so in his own right and even the Emperor - General Sam himself. For one thing, Ikem has always been on the side of the masses, on the side of the 'bruised heart that throbs painfully at the core of the nation's being' (141) as he calls it, at least with his 'crusading editorial'. At one point, Ikem's position is ambiguous: standing for and with the people and at the same time alienated from them. That he is somewhat alienated from the people is a fact he is unaware of until the visit of two taxi drivers to his house. After the incident we read that he reflects pensively, thus:

At some point he had assumed, quite naively, that public affair so-called might provide the handle he needed. But his participation in these affairs had yielded him nothing but disenchantment and final realization of the incongruity of the very term 'public' as applied to those affairs shrouded as they are in the midst of unreality and floating above and away from the lives and concerns of ninety-nine percent of the population. Public affairs! They are nothing but the closed transactions of soldiers-turned-politicians, with their cohorts in business and the bureaucracy. Ikem could not even guarantee now that his own limited participation had not been fatally flawed. His most poignant editorials such as his condemnation of the human sport called public execution, his general dissatisfaction with government policies; his quarrels and arguments with Chris; everything now began to take on the vaporous haze of a mirage (141)

However, he does so well to re-identify with the people and even reconcile with them before his death. This he does with the public lecture he delivered at Kanjan University. Therefore, it is not illogical that the very accusation that leads to his death proceeds from that lecture.

It may seem strange, even absurd to see General Sam as a scapegoat as has been done in the above paragraph since he is actually the originator of the infamous power which threatens to consume the entire Kangan. However, he is actually one; since there is the kind of scapegoats Northrop Frye calls a 'scoundrel' (*Anatomy* 45) who needs to be driven out. Viewed from another angle, he is a scapegoat insofar as Chris and Ikem are one. The reason being that they are so much connected that what is said of one can also be said of another. Chris himself tells Beatrice that '[they] are connected. You cannot tell the story of any of us without implicating the others' (66). Similarly, in a riposte of a sort, Beatrice tells Chris, 'The story of this country is the story of the three of you' (66). Moreover, the interconnectedness of the troika is accentuated by Beatrice's prophesy. When she delivers her prophetic utterance of the impending trouble, she does include General Sam; we read, 'I see trouble building up for us. It will get to Ikem. No joking, Chris. He will be the precursor to make straight the way. But after him it will be you. We are all in it, Ikem, You, Me and even Him' (114 -5). The 'Him' in that passage refers to General Sam. In another occasion, the narrator once asked about them rhetorically, 'Were they not in fact trailed travellers whose journeys from start to finish had been carefully programmed in advance by an alienated history?' (220) One can as well answer that they were! There is therefore no way of telling the story of one without involving the others. Such strange relationship is further emphasized by the metaphor of 'three green bottles' (191). That is a name Beatrice often jokingly calls them. It is this metaphor that Christ tries to make a joke of during his death, calling himself 'the last green' (216). Therefore, despite the seeming deep antagonism between the three, they are quite closely connected by and for the same purpose. They are tied together by what Mitchel Foucault designates as similitude by 'sympathies'. About this pattern of resemblance, Foucault writes:

It excites the things of the world to movement and can draw even the most distant of them together... Moreover, by drawing things towards one another, in an exterior and visible movement, it also gives rise to hidden interior movement (*The Order of Things* 26)

By the reason of sympathy, Chris, Ikem and General Sam are one and by the same token, they are scapegoat individuals – both individually and together in the form of three-in-one. Hence, Beatrice later elaborates on the metaphor of the three green bottles, thus:

The bottles are up there on the wall hanging by a hair's breath, yet looking down pompously on the world. Chris was sending us a message to beware. This world belongs to the people of the world not to any little caucus, no matter how talented... (232)

So, because the three green bottles have dared to look upon the world pompously, imperiously and have by so doing disturbed the peace of the world, the world and her people have therefore sacrificed them to regain their peace and return the world to normalcy.

Taming Power and Continuity

Unarguably, the most pronounced myth in *Anthills of the Savannah* is Idemili myth. The myth is articulated in the passage below:

In the beginning power rampaged through our world, naked. So the Almighty looking at his creation through the undying eye of the Sun, saw and pondered and finally decided to send his daughter, Idemili, to bear witness to the moral nature of authority by wrapping around power's nude waist a loincloth of peace and modesty (102)

What we get from the passage above is that it is Idemili, the daughter of the Almighty, that was assigned the duty of taming power by 'wrapping around [its] waist a loincloth of peace and modesty', thereby saving the 'people of the world' (232) from the danger of extinction immanent in power's immoral nature and by so doing permitted their life to continue. From what is apparent in the text, Beatrice Okoh, Chris' girlfriend is the emanation of the mythical daughter of the almighty. She is therefore a typical metaphoric character. A relationship of analogy holds between Beatrice and Idemili, the daughter of almighty: the way Idemili was sent to wrap a loincloth around power's waist is the same way Beatrice is expected to arrest and tame power which is obviously 'rampaging naked' in Kangan at the expense of the life-continuity of the people. Her close association with 'the trinity who think they own Kangan', as she calls Chris, Ikem and Sam, should not be taken for granted; neither is it by accident at all. The subsistence of the life of the people of Kangan depends totally on her and her ability to maneuver things. Beatrice at the outset knows nothing about her personality. However, with time, she begins to have an inkling of the facts surrounding her life. Surprisingly therefore the revelation of whom she is and the role naturally assigned to her does not proceed externally rather internally as she tells Chris, who quite inadvertently calls her a priestess: 'You called me a priestess. No, a prophetess, I think. [] As a matter of fact I do sometimes feel like Chielo in the novel, the priestess and prophetess of the hills and caves' (114).

The fact is that Beatrice is both the daughter of the Almighty, Idemili, the priestess of the same deity and also a prophetess. As the priestess of Idemili, her prophesy is nothing short of accuracy; she once tells Chris 'I see trouble building up for us. It will get to Ikem first. He will be the precursor to make straight the way. But after him it will be you. We are all in it, Ikem, You, Me and Him' (114). Everything, of course, happens just exactly as she predicts. However, unlike the mythical daughter of the almighty who came down in a 'resplendent pillar of water' (102), Beatrice has a different *modus operandi*. From the very point when she enters the narrative, she has always been in control, although subtly, getting close to the 'three green bottles' and gradually exerting her influence and power over them and their actions, in spite of their obvious recalcitrance. Hence, she is once described as "'the latter day madam pompadour" who manipulated generals and patronised writers'. This is largely close to who she is though she denies it. Eventually therefore, she devises a most suitable means of doing her own wrapping of loincloth about power's nude waist; and that she does by initiating a scapegoat ritual. So, our contention here is that the scapegoat incidents which consecutively claim the lives of Ikem, Sam and General Sam - which is explored in the previous section - is initiated and managed by Beatrice. Therefore, including herself in the trouble which she earlier envisaged is only in so far as she is the priestess presiding over the ritual; for how else can one explain that she is totally unscathed after everything despite have included herself as one of the sufferer of the ensuing trouble?

It is in the ritual occasion that General Sam, the subject of power in Kangan loses his life, which simply means that Beatrice has successfully wrapped around power's waist a loin cloth of modesty. The hope of continuation of life in the community lies on that successful dethronement of immoral power. The

idea of continuity itself is implicated by the clause 'uwa t'uwa - world inside a world inside a world, without end' (85). The clause is therefore a metaphor for continued existence of life in Kangan, in the world, among 'the people of the world' (232). This informs Beatrice's fondness for that ostensible clause as a child, as she tells us that, 'As a child how I thrilled to the strange sound with its capacity for infinite replication...' (85).

Furthermore, immediately after the death of Ikem, Chris and General Sam, some noticeable signs of continuity and peace begin to manifest. Those signs are indicated on the one hand by the new government which at least promises orderliness and justice to the people and on the other hand by the new community of friends formed around the priestess - Beatrice. The new community of friends comprises Emmanuel, Braimoh, Captain Abdul, Admma (the girl Chris is shot saving), Elewa and, Agatha (Beatrice's house help) and newborn baby. A careful analysis of this group of friends reveals that they are simply a microcosm of Kangan. This is because almost all the classes into which Kangan citizens may be classified such as intellectuals, military men, peasants, religious people are represented in that group. Most importantly though, the newborn baby (Ikem and Elewa's baby) is the sure sign of continuity and new Kangan as is explicit in the child's name Amaechina which means 'may the path never close' (222). Both the baby and its name are another metaphor for continuity. Hence, it is neither surprising nor accidental that Beatrice is actually the one who gave the name to the baby. That demonstrates once more that the daughter of almighty is in control through and through.

Conclusion

For Ricoeur, 'To read is [] to conjoin a new discourse to the discourse of the text' (*Hermeneutics* 158). That is what this paper has tried to do by making metaphors in the text the matrix of the 'new discourse' – the interpretation. The paper can neither claim to have articulated all the metaphors in the text in its discourse nor can it claim to have given exhaustive interpretation of them – metaphors in *Anthills* are actually so many that it is just difficult for such a discourse as this to completely take care of, the ones taken care of by the paper are also interpretatively in exhaustible. Unarguably, the text largely owes its quality as a literary text, its literariness to use Ricoeur's preferred term, to those metaphors. Therefore, any study that makes them its focus of interpretation is first of all acknowledging the identity of the text. Moreover, it can be seen in the analysis how statements that are usually taken for granted or merely treated as stylistic devices are given profound significance. The analysis shows that those metaphoric statements are not to be trivialized at all since they are the pillars on which the entire text is built. As such pillars, their influence is disseminated throughout the text so that the interpretation of the whole text can be comfortably pursued through them just as Ricoeur proposes and recommends. It is in this sense that poetic metaphors are said to be capable springing back to life and engendering thought through a long discourse.

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