A Critical Metaphor Analysis of Heroic Myth in the Discourse of Kwame Nkrumah

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Abstract

This paper examines how Kwame Nkrumah, a pioneering Pan-African leader, utilizes metaphor to simultaneously construct heroes and villains, protagonists and antagonists, forming part of an ideological mechanism that portrays him as a valiant leader and a noble revolutionary. Using critical metaphor analysis as an analytic framework and a number of Nkrumah speeches as the dataset, the paper finds that Nkrumah's use of WAR/CONFLICT and JOURNEY metaphors as well as PERSONIFICATION reflects archetypal traits of mythological heroism, giving an indication of how metaphorical structures enable political leaders to formulate a socially important representation. Specifically, Nkrumah constructs himself as a champion prizefighter on a solemn mission, facing challenges and triumphs along the way, to rescue Africa from tyranny and barbarism and safeguard the continent's welfare in the post-independence period. The implications of the study in terms of the importance of critical interest in metaphor investigation are discussed.

Key words: *critical discourse analysis, critical metaphor analysis, discourse-mythological analysis, hero mythology, Kwame Nkrumah, mythic discourse*

1. Introduction

The notion of myth-making in media and political discourses continues to engender research in the field of critical discourse analysis (CDA). In addition to explicating the persuasive force and effect of discourse mythologies, these studies (e.g. Charteris-Black 2005; Kelsey 2013; Budd et al. 2018; Nartey 2019a) have shed light on the types of myth, and demonstrated the ideological role of myths in motivating a certain course of action. This scholarship has also highlighted the role of language in shaping society and (re)constructing the past, the importance of national narratives and how social actors deploy language not only to express a certain worldview, but also to negotiate social relations and construct various identities. A political myth is 'an ideologically marked narrative which purports to give a true account of a set of past, present or predicted political events and which is accepted as valid in its essentials by a social group' (Flood 2002: 144). It realizes an ideological function in that it invites listeners to concur with a specific reality and to reject other meanings and interpretations. Thus, 'Myth upholds some beliefs but degrades others. It celebrates but also excoriates. It affirms but it also denies'

(Lule 2001: 119). It is noteworthy that the common and derogatory use of myth as mere fiction or fantasy is differentiated from its scholarly usage that suggests that myths have undisputed legitimacy within the value system of the people that uphold them. Hence, although they are not verifiable, (political) myths have explanatory power and offer a practical perspective (Tudor 1972).

The CDA literature has discussed various political myths, including Unite or Perish, United We Stand, the Blitz Spirit, the American Dream, the Conspiratorial Enemy, the Noble Revolutionary and America the Peaceful, amongst others (cf. Gastil 1992; Kelsey 2014; Nartey 2019b). With respect to how particular social actors formulated and promoted these myths, most studies point to Western (especially British and American) politicians. For example, Geis (1987) identifies the Conspiratorial Enemy myth with John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Ronald Reagan while Lewis (1987) argues that Ronald Reagan's myth, which provided a sense of importance, direction and communal focus, was centered on the origins of America and its rise to freedom. Flowerdew (1997) also examines the discourse of Chris Patten, the last British governor to Hong Kong, and submits that he constructed the Britain as a Benevolent Dictator myth. Analyzing the discourse of various UK and US politicians, Charteris-Black (2005) contends that Martin Luther King invoked a Messianic myth, Enoch Powell constructed the myth of the Oracle, Barack Obama projected the myth of the American Dream and Ronald Reagan created a Romantic myth. A typical characteristic of the aforementioned myths is the idea of building consensus for sociopolitical objectives often deriving from 'manipulation'.

As far as hero mythology or the construction of hero figures is concerned, few studies can be found. In his work on Nigel Farage in the *Mail Online*, Kelsey (2016: 971) explores how reportage on Farage realizes archetypal traits of mythological heroism and concludes that Farage 'is constructed as a man on a mission, fighting against the odds, overcoming trials and tribulations in his efforts to win the United Kingdom's democratic power back from the European Union'. Detailing a story of bravery, courage and defiance, Charteris-Black (2005) discusses Winston Churchill's heroic myth, arguing that he depicts Britain as an embodiment of the forces of good with the ability to neutralize all forms of external attack and save humankind from evil. He also associates Margaret Thatcher with the legendary Boudicca (a British folk hero), casting her (Thatcher) in a 'rebellious' role. It is evident from the literature briefly described above that there is little research on African political myth creation, although such research can offer additional insights into the form and function of myth by, for instance, identifying new ways of utilizing myth. Additionally, such studies can provide a basis for illustrating any differences and/or similarities in the devices used for myth creation in African and Western contexts. To fill the afore-stated lacuna in the literature, the present study explores how Kwame Nkrumah, a pioneering Pan-Africanist and Ghana's independence leader, employed metaphor as a discursive strategy by which he simultaneously constructed heroes and villains, protagonists and antagonists, forming part of a discursive mechanism that portrays him as Africa's hero. In addition to throwing light on the nexus between discourse, mythology and ideology in a context underexplored in the literature, the present study highlights the important role of language/discourse and (post-independence) leaders in political

decolonization processes given the kind of data it analyzes. In the next section, I explain the notion of hero mythology as it is the focus of this paper.

2. Hero Mythology

The hero myth details a story of great courage, bravery and defiance. Various forms of heroism can be found in different contexts and dimensions of moral storytelling, suggesting that hero figures do not have a fixed set of traits and values (Campbell 2008). On the contrary, they 'are dramatized and personified to reflect the core values and ideals of the societies in which their stories feature' (Lule 2001: 82). The multiple forms heroes may take include warriors or pacifists, leaders or rebels, saints or sinners, rocket scientists, rock musicians or sports stars. These forms are largely dependent on the context of situation and/or the world in which the hero is born into (Carlyle 1908). It is evident from the Nkrumah speeches analyzed in this study that he takes on a leader's (specifically, a warrior) and a 'rebellious' role in the values he upholds, enabling him to promote a certain conception of the world. Consequently, he is depicted as the one who has Africa's supreme interest at heart, knows what the people of Africa want, knows what is best for the homeland and is, thus, the voice of the African people.

The role of legendary figures in contemporary storytelling, according to Boorstin (1962), has been affected by our self-awareness about our admiration for human greatness. He contends that this may result in the creation of pseudo-heroic characters via celebrities to reflect certain values and serve a temporary interest in a given period. Lule (2001) and Campbell (2008) echo this view when they assert that modern heroes are ephemeral since they often function as transitory characters that serve a particular purpose at a moment in time. This means that people may not necessarily believe the individual per se, but they believe the ideas and worldview that the individual projects in a given circumstance. It is noteworthy that mythological heroes are not flawless characters (Lule 2001). It is, thus, important for us to look beyond the classical hero myth in discussing archetypal traits of mythological heroism in Nkrumah's discourse. The view that mythological heroes are not faultless characters is significant because in contemporary storytelling, 'we often need the faults and follies of heroes to make them believable or more realistic' (Kelsey 2016: 975-976).

Similar to other conventions of the classical archetype, hero mythology involves the pursuit of a moral mission on behalf of society to achieve a greater common good. This pursuit of a noble cause is important in this paper because Nkrumah's portrayal of himself as Africa's hero and savior derives from the positioning of himself against a system, government or political establishment that he believes to be evil (i.e. colonialism/neocolonialism). Outlining the classical archetype of the hero myth, Lule (2001: 82) states that 'The hero is born into humble circumstance, initiates a quest or a journey, faces battles or trials and wins a decisive victory and returns triumphant'. The notion of mythological heroism can, thus, be said to evoke a certain cognitive script. In this paper, I argue that through his use of metaphor, Nkrumah ascribes nearly all of the heroic traits Lule describes above to himself, qualifying himself as a national/continental hero of a sort. To achieve the

objective of the study, critical metaphor analysis (Charteris-Black 2004) was found fitting, and is subsequently explained.

3. Critical Metaphor Analysis

In this study, metaphor is operationalized in its basic sense of conceiving one thing in terms of another (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) and as a resource that enables a re-contextualization and re-conceptualization of experiences (Cameron and Stelma 2004). The study additionally draws on Charteris-Black's (2004: 11) definition of metaphor: 'a linguistic representation that results from the shift in the use of a word or phrase from the context or domain in which it is expected to occur to another context […] thereby causing semantic shift'.

Critical metaphor analysis (CMA) combines cognitive semantic and pragmatic approaches and is 'an approach to metaphor analysis that aims to reveal the covert intentions of language users' (Charteris-Black 2004: 34). That is, it analyzes metaphorical expressions, descriptions and categories with the aim of identifying ideologies underlying language (Charteris-Black 2005). CMA postulates that metaphor shapes thought; hence, its use in political discourse (especially speeches) is strategic and systematic as it is intended to serve particular ideological purposes such as illusion, myth creation and resistance. It is situated within a blended understanding of linguistic, pragmatic and cognitive approaches, and provides an account of why particular metaphors are chosen in specific discourse contexts. Linguistically, metaphor is a product of semantic tension that results from personification, de-personification and reification. Pragmatically, metaphor performs a persuasive function by influencing people's judgment and opinions. Cognitively, metaphor triggers a shift in the conceptual system. In its integration of cognitive semantic and pragmatic approaches as well as CDA and corpus linguistics, CMA underscores speaker/writer intention in the creation and diffusion of metaphor. It has three main stages of analysis, namely metaphor identification, metaphor interpretation and metaphor explanation. Metaphor identification, in this paper, is informed by the notion of semantic tension resulting from linguistic processes such as personification, de-personification and reification. That is, the words considered to be metaphorical occur in unexpected contexts/domains as in referring to something that is inanimate using a word that in other contexts is considered animate (and vice-versa), or referring to something that is abstract using an expression that in other contexts is considered concrete. This paper also demonstrates how the metaphors identified are combined with various figures of speech to strengthen the heroic traits Nkrumah's discourse manifests. Metaphor interpretation follows metaphor identification, and it 'involves establishing a relationship between metaphors and the cognitive and pragmatic factors that determine them' (Charteris-Black 2004: 37). Here, Nkrumah's heroic myth is considered to be shaped by sociocultural and sociopolitical objectives, and is, thus, the result of sociocultural and sociopolitical framing. The final stage of CMA, metaphor explanation, requires the identification of the social agency and social role of metaphor as it pertains to persuasion.

Like other forms of political performance, Nkrumah's discourse is agenda-driven. Hence CMA provides an appropriate framework with which the types of metaphors Nkrumah chooses to represent himself, his (perceived) enemies and the people of Africa – all of which contribute to his heroic status – can be analyzed. That is, CMA can help to explain 'fundamental differences in ideological outlook' of sociopolitical actors and 'identify which metaphors are chosen and to explain why these metaphors are chosen by illustrating how they create political myths' (Charteris-Black 2005: 28). Charteris-Black (2004) contends that metaphor, given its affective value, is one of the key resources that can be deployed to achieve the discourse goals of political speeches because it is capable of constructing several possibilities (or mythologies). Bhatia (2008: 201) also asserts that metaphor is an effective tool for the construction of new and alternate realities since 'they allow a subjective conceptualization of reality to appear more convincing through the invocation of emotions and ideologies'. Hence, a framework like CMA that explicates how metaphor choice reflects a politician's world conceptualization and aids him to present himself in heroic terms is useful for this study. The next section presents the data analyzed in this study and the procedure of analysis.

4. Data and Analytical Procedure

The data for this study comprises fifty speeches delivered by Nkrumah that focus on Ghana's independence and African freedom in general. These speeches were given in the late 1950s and early 1960s at the height of the struggle for independence in Africa, and they discussed the key role of Ghana (as the first Sub-Saharan African country to gain independence) in championing the liberation of other African countries. In his independence declaration speech, Nkrumah opined that '[t]he independence of Ghana is meaningless until it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent' (Nkrumah 06/03/57). It is evident from this assertion that Nkrumah discursively positions himself as the one to spearhead an independence revolution across Africa in order to deliver the continent from tyranny and oppression. The larger textual situatedness of the speeches can, thus, be viewed in terms of language use to resist colonialism and all forms of foreign domination. Generally, the speeches were addressed to the people of Ghana and Africa; however, few were specifically directed at African heads of state and the international media. The main issues discussed in the speeches included African liberation, African nationalism, African unity, African identity and Pan-Africanism.

Regarding the method of analysis, I did a close reading of all the speeches and analyzed them to identify the metaphors used by Nkrumah. Next, I categorized the metaphors into various source domains as this is necessary to establish the prototypical social values connected with the source domain and to show how metaphor enables the framing of a certain social reality (Charteris-Black 2005: 39). To determine whether a word had been used metaphorically, I used the extant literature, the dictionary denotation of the word and its contextual meaning (cf. Ahrens 2009). Thus, I derived the metaphor categories directly from their usage in the speeches. Two metaphor

analysts independently verified the metaphors identified and the source domains assigned to them, and we discussed and resolved any discrepancies. This paper maintains that Nkrumah's use of metaphorical expressions is not random; instead, they are strategically utilized to describe his challenges in the strongest possible way and to represent his opponents in the worst possible terms. In so doing, he casts himself in the mold of the continent's hero and savior waging war against Africa's detractors. In what follows, I present a detailed analysis of how Nkrumah's use of metaphor contributes to archetypal traits of mythological heroism.

5. Analysis and Discussion

The analysis revealed that Nkrumah's construction of himself as Africa's hero was realized by his use of three main types of metaphor: metaphors of WAR or CONFLICT, JOURNEY metaphors and PERSONIFICATION. Each of these is discussed in the ensuing sub-sections with demonstrative examples from his speeches, showing how Nkrumah remains unfazed in the face of adversity in order to uphold the values and ideals he believes in. Before beginning with the analysis proper, it is important to state that this study is qualitative or a discourse-oriented analysis of small corpus undertaken in applied metaphor research. Therefore, there is no quantification of the identified metaphors since the emphasis is more on how these metaphors contribute to a socially important representation rather than their frequency distribution (cf. Bhatia 2008).

5.1 Nkrumah's Use of WAR or CONFLICT Metaphors

Nkrumah systematically employed metaphors of WAR and CONFLICT based on a conceptual metaphor AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE IS WAR, which follows from the general conceptual key POLITICS IS CONFLICT (cf. Charteris-Black 2005). Metaphors from this source domain included expressions such as *battle*, *forces*, *war*, *onslaught*, *decimate*, *attack* and *struggle*. Typically, discourses of war connote the repetition of attack, the presence of a dangerous threat and the need for a ruthless approach (Howe 1988; Charteris-Black 2005). Hence, the various WAR and CONFLICT metaphors enable Nkrumah to conceptualize Africa as a battleground or war zone, the people of Africa and the colonialists as opposing armies or warring factions and colonialism/neocolonialism as Africa's sworn enemy. In so doing, he positions himself as an embodiment of altruism that would deliver Africa from oppression, injustice and barbarism.

> (1)   ... to examine our position in the *great struggle* to rid Africa completely and forever of imperialism and its handmaidens. It gives us the opportunity also to *review our strength as well as that of the enemy and to reorganize our forces and our strategy ... Who is the enemy? The enemy is imperialism, who uses as its weapons colonialism and neo-colonialism.* Let us be very clear about this. Let us also not lose sight of the real object which is the liquidation of colonialism and imperialism in all its forms. (Nationalists' Conference of African Freedom Fighters, 1962)

(2)   … you will agree with me that our task is only just beginning. *We have a duty to gird our loins strongly, to order our lives austerely and to clench our teeth grimly in order to enter the battlements of the enemy and smash them to pieces. This, we must do at all cost with African nationalism as the liberating sword.* (The Convention People's Party 12th Anniversary, 1961)

The WAR metaphors in extracts (1) and (2) evaluate imperialism as detrimental to Africa, and present Nkrumah as a man on an important assignment to nullify this threat. Through these metaphorical expressions, the actions of the African people are represented as forces of good (i.e. heroic), those of the imperialists are depicted as forces of evil (i.e. villainous) and Nkrumah is portrayed as determined to defy the odds, fight against any adversaries and overcome trials and tribulations in order to secure freedom for Africa. In the extracts, Nkrumah unequivocally identifies imperialism as Africa's conspiratorial enemy and submits that imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism constitute an axis of evil, as their sole objective is to cause mayhem and inflict pain on Africa. Conversely, he is projected as an epitome of goodness and one with 'righteous' intentions who will help the African people to withstand the evil forces conspiring against them. This paper argues that Nkrumah's ability to identify Africa's archenemy qualifies him as a hero of a sort in that it ascribes certain heroic qualities (e.g. being knowledgeable, skillful, and selfless and having the ability to defeat the enemy) to him.

The use of the label *enemy* is instructive because it is 'pivotal to defining, establishing and maintain a moral order, for the enemy is one who violates "our" values' (Lazar and Lazar 2004: 227). Hence, Nkrumah formulates a strict in-group vs. out-group distinction that pits two camps against each other through his identification of Africa's number one enemy that must be resisted 'at all cost with African nationalism as the liberating sword' (2). This 'us' vs. 'them' polarity is reinforced by his use of war-time vocabulary evidenced by lexical items such as *weapons, struggle, strategy, forces* and *battlements*, implying that the individual instantiating in this manner is brave, courageous and fearless. Bhatia (2008) also asserts that the use of *enemy* serves the purpose of determining a missile target. Hence, its usage together with expressions such as *liquidation, smash* and *liberating sword* gives an indication of the diabolic nature of colonialism, thereby legitimizing any ruthless approach to be adopted in combating it. This combative posture and resistance attitude against the conspiratorial enemy of Africa is strengthened by the adjective *great* in *great struggle* and the adverbs *completely* and *forever* in the clause 'to rid Africa completely and forever of imperialism and its handmaidens' (1).

In addition to portraying Nkrumah as a war hero, a warrior and a gallant leader, the use of CONFLICT metaphors and WAR imagery enables Nkrumah to transform his speech into a military briefing given to soldiers in a barracks as they prepare and strategize for war. Thus, Nkrumah constructs himself as an Army General and the Commander-in-Chief of the Africa Armed Forces mandated to work out battle tactics, issue instructions to his troops and marshal resources and other logistics for battle. Apart from explicitly identifying imperialism as Africa's conspiratorial enemy, Nkrumah says 'Let us not lose sight of the real object' (1). This injunction when combined with

the definite article *the* and the question-answer strategy realized by the rhetorical question *Who is the enemy?* zeroes in on the enemy with laser-like focus and a devouring intent. This also provides further evidence of Nkrumah's heroic traits as a skillful and capable leader. An important characterization of mythological heroes during the course of their assignment is their ability to garner mass support and inspire action (Lule 2001). Consequently, Nkrumah's use of phrases such as *at all cost* and *African nationalism* as well as the presupposition remark 'you will agree with me that our task is only just beginning' (2) and the pronouns *we/us* can be analyzed as syntactic devices that help to increase morale, inspire a sense of devotion and evoke a patriotic feeling. These linguistic resources can also be interpreted as a strategy of manufacturing consent (Richardson 2007) and imposing an obligation on the people on Africa to rise up (in arms) against the enemy forces. That is, they must 'gird their loins strongly, order their lives austerely and clench their teeth grimly in order to enter the battlements of the enemy and smash them to pieces' (2).

Furthermore, the WAR and CONFLICT metaphors Nkrumah utilized made it possible for him to construct a warrior hero image by emphatically asserting his courage and determination. As extracts (3) and (4) illustrate, the overall military tone of Nkrumah's discourse and the calculated military strategy he advances enable him to underscore his bravado and identity as a mighty man of valor.

> (3)   ... For my part, I must say that as long as I live, and as long as any little vestige of colonialism and imperialism remains in Africa, *I shall prosecute a ruthless war on these monsters, a war in which there shall be no truce.* Colonialism and imperialism have no honor, no shame, no morals, and conscience. (Casablanca Conference, 1961)

> (4)   Now, I come to the task of *the fighters who are in the front rank of the struggle.* Unity, *fellow freedom fighters, must be the watchword of those who are leading the masses into the battle for independence* in the many parts of Africa. *You must close your ranks and stand firmly together.* You must ... *come together in a solid phalanx to meet the enemy on a common front.* (Nationalists' Conference of African Freedom Fighters, 1962)

The 'militarization' of Nkrumah's utterance in these extracts, this paper contends, highlights archetypal traits of mythological heroism in Nkrumah's discourse. As already mentioned, the discursive construction of the hero plays a binary role of depicting Nkrumah as an embodiment of all that is good and the colonialists as a repository of all that is evil and an irrational threat. This view is strongly expressed in these extracts as Nkrumah underlines his personal involvement in the war against Africa's nemesis. In (3), he suggests that he is not a coward and is, therefore, determined to launch a lethal attack on colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism. The personal pronouns *I/my* give verve and credibility to his valiant posture and this is amplified by the deontic modal *shall* and the prepositional phrase *for my part*. Further echoing Nkrumah's bravery and tenacity as well as achieving a hyperbolic and an intensification function, the conditional clauses *as long as I live* and *as long as any little vestige of colonialism and imperialism remains in Africa*

give the impression that Nkrumah will personally ensure that African freedom is achieved at all cost. Thus, in his mythological role as a hero, Nkrumah takes a solemn oath to pledge his unwavering support to the cause of Africa, thereby providing motivation for other African leaders and indeed the whole of Africa to emulate his exemplary action. This buttresses Rodgers' (2003) argument that myths can offer exemplary models for social life.

The daring leader that Nkrumah is, he would 'prosecute a ruthless war on the twin-monster' (3) of colonialism and neocolonialism since they 'have no honor, no shame, no morals and conscience' (3). This referential strategy not only exaggerates the wickedness of the colonialists, but also evokes fear and panic and legitimizes the war declared on colonialism and neocolonialism. Although the metaphorical expression *war* is powerful in itself, its combination with *ruthless* and *prosecute* realizes an intensification and a hyperbolic function that foregrounds Nkrumah's bravado. Also, the use of the verb *prosecute* is particularly important given its legal undertone that expresses the notion to continue with a course of action until it is completed. Thus, Nkrumah can be conceptualized as a no-nonsense Special Prosecutor or Attorney General who will see to it that the colonialists are penalized for their crimes against Africa and humanity in general. In archetypal storytelling, heroes represent strength, bravery or compassion (Lule 2001). Hence, through his use of military discourses, including *come together in a solid phalanx* and *close your ranks*, Nkrumah is able to project an identity of a selfless, compassionate and gallant leader leading the African frontline troops, thereby conveying the idea of a conquering hero charged with a mission to overcome the odds and win victory for Africa.

5.2 Nkrumah's Use of PERSONIFICATION

The analysis revealed that Nkrumah's use of PERSONIFICATION, contributing to his heroic myth, achieved a twofold purpose of encouraging opposition against a group of people (the colonialists) or a concept (colonialism/neocolonialism) that he believed to be cruel, and eliciting empathy and support for his ideas. Thus, he identified colonialism with pejorative human characteristics (e.g. theft, exploitation and deception) and associated African nationalism and African unity with positively evaluated attributes (e.g. bravado, heroism and resilience). The analysis, therefore, provides evidence for the conceptual metaphor COLONIALISM AND AFRICA ARE PERSONS.

By personifying colonialism, imperialism and neocolonialism in negative terms, Nkrumah depicts them as villainous, and is able to enlist mass support and harness the efforts of the people of Africa to unite against these systems. The value judgments that persuasion typically conveys make it a persuasive tool for (political) myth creation (Koteyko 2014). Hence, Nkrumah's representation of the colonialists as villains carries the subtle connotation that his resistance to their activities constitute an act of heroism.

> (5)   As a continent, we have emerged into independence in a different age, *with imperialism grown stronger, more ruthless and experienced and more dangerous in international associations. Our economic advancements demand the end of colonialist and*

neo-colonialist domination in Africa. (Inauguration of the Organization of African Unity, 1963)

(6) I have frequently emphasized that imperialism in the present stage of African nationalism will employ many feints. *With one hand it may concede independence, while with the other it will stir up the muddy waters of tribalism, feudalism, separatism and chicanery* in order to find its way back in another guise.

The ignoble character and reprehensible nature of imperialism is evident in the extracts above. It is given a negative personification as it has 'grown stronger' and is 'more ruthless and experienced and more dangerous in international associations' (5). This communicates the message that the adherents of colonialism can be likened to maniacs on a senseless mission to perpetrate more atrocities and commit worse crimes. Typically, the adjective *experienced* is used in a positive sense when describing humans (e.g. 'an experienced judge or doctor'); however, it is re-conceptualized in the current context to strengthen the derogatory attribution given to imperialism. The use of the derivational morphemes of comparison *er* and *more* (which is repeated) and the verb *demand* is also noteworthy as this realizes an intensification strategy that magnifies the misdeeds of the system of imperialism. Further, PERSONIFICATION is strategically combined with a LIQUID metaphor 'stir up the muddy waters' (6) to communicate the view that both the current and future challenges of Africa can be attributed to imperialism, and specific charges (i.e. tribalism, feudalism, separatism and chicanery) are brought against it. Interestingly, these accusations can be contrasted with concepts like African unity/solidarity and African identity/personality which are strongly promoted by Nkrumah. Hence, the inference that can be made here is that Nkrumah indirectly presents his ideas as an effective remedy to the undesirable situation caused by imperialism, thereby sculpting the image of a protagonist.

Personifying imperialism as having two hands, Nkrumah underlines the treachery of imperialism as well as its deceitful nature, and re-echoes this notion via lexical choices such as *chicanery*, *another guise* and *many feints*. His vocabulary selection in the process of categorizing imperialism (and by extension the imperialists), thus, represents a discourse strategy to attract empathy for the people of Africa and condemnation for the imperialists. That said, in a strategy of positive self-presentation, he employs intertextuality through the assertion 'I have frequently emphasized that …' (6) to give credence to his heroic myth. The intertextual reference he makes to his previous utterances and the subsequent connection he establishes between his speeches portray him as a visionary leader who continues to warn the continent to be vigilant against the schemes of imperialism in post-independence Africa. Hence, in his mythological role as hero, we see his construction as a leader with purity of intentions and the foresight to forewarn danger or plan for the future with imagination and wisdom.

Kitis and Milapides (1997: 567) propose that personification is 'closely connected with traditional forms of myth, as it exploits the common tendency to ascribe (mythological) personality or agentive power to animate or inanimate entities'. In the extracts discussed above, imperialism is characterized as a malefactor with purely malicious motives. Consequently,

even though imperialism has been personified, this paper contends that the metaphorical key is not only COLONIALISM IS A PERSON; it is much more specific, viz. COLONIALISM IS AN ADVERSARY. This latter conceptualization is more persuasive and effective, and contributes to Nkrumah's heroic myth since it puts forward not only a specific way of viewing and thinking about colonialism, but also a way of acting towards it. That is, it activates a conceptualization of colonialism that suggests colonialism (in all its forms and its supporters) is an enemy that can harm 'us', destroy 'us', injure 'us', etc. Subsequently, Nkrumah is able to position himself as the valiant leader who will mobilize the African masses to rise up in strong resistance against the adversary. The COLONIALISM IS AN ADVERSARY conceptualization, therefore, allows Nkrumah to re-contextualize an ideological dissention as an actual conflict between two groups of people (Musolff 2012), and to launch an attack on a tangible opponent that hitherto was intangible or invisible.

In the metaphorical structures analyzed, the personification of Africa is positive as Africa is described as a conquering hero who overcomes various adversities (i.e. colonialism). There is, thus, evidence for the conceptual metaphor AFRICA IS A HERO, implying that Africa has the courage and determination to achieve the objective of African independence because Africa has the can-do attitude and the Blitz spirit.

(7)   Today there is a new Africa and a new African; *an African who refuses to succumb to the blandishments of the imperialists, colonialists and neo-colonialists and rejects any policies inimical to the interest of the peoples of Africa. This new Africa is ready to fulfil its destiny and play its part in the establishment of the grand and peaceful new world order to which mankind is dedicated.* (The 6th Independence Anniversary of Ghana, 1963)

(8)   In all those years Belgium applied a system of calculated political castration in the hope that it would be completely impossible for African nationalists to fight for emancipation. But to the dismay of Belgium, and to the surprise of everyone outside the African continent, *this dreaded nationalism appeared and within a lightning space of time, secured the independence of the Congo.* (The United Nations Assembly, 1960)

Metaphor, in these extracts, interacts with contrast to accentuate the exemplary heroism of Africa/Africans in the face of adversity. First, an extremely unpleasant situation that is said to have been caused by colonialism and imperialism is presented – e.g. 'slavery, colonial exploitation and oppressive rule' (7) and 'a system of political castration in the Congo' (8). The vexatious situation is, however, quickly nullified by the might and warrior-like actions of Africans and, thus, 'holding their own in the face of colonialist, imperialist and neocolonialist schemes' (7) and 'securing the independence of the Congo' (8). Employing an intensification strategy and hyperbole to rhetorical effect, Nkrumah exaggerates the feats of strength and heroic acts accomplished by Africans through the choice of lexico-syntactic forms such as *dreaded nationalism, within a lightening space of time* and *to the surprise of everyone outside the African continent*. Further, he uses positively evaluated verb processes such as *refuse to succumb, rejects any policies inimical to*

Africa, ready to fulfill its destiny and *secured the independence of the Congo* to reinforce the exceptional qualities and desirable attributes he associates with Africans. Additionally, he elevates the activities of the African people towards African freedom to a global level, and logically associates them with 'the establishment of the grand and peaceful new world order to which mankind is dedicated' (7). The net effect of this elevated discourse is that it imbues Nkrumah's ideas with a power of inevitability, suggesting that absolutely nothing can stand in the way of African nationalism. Even though Nkrumah assigns the outstanding feats and heroic traits in extracts (7) and (8) to abstract entities like *a new Africa* and *African nationalism*, a more nuanced analysis, based on the notion of implication, is that these accomplishments and qualities can be attributed to Nkrumah (and, possibly, all the people of Africa). This is especially so because he is the one championing the cause of the 'new Africa', and he is one of the key proponents of African nationalism. By describing the whole of Africa as a conquering hero and associating all Africans with acts of bravery, courage and fearlessness, Nkrumah can be said to be boosting the confidence of the people, increasing their morale and activating a can-do spirit in them in a way that depicts him as a heroic leader.

5.3 Nkrumah's Use of JOURNEY Metaphors

JOURNEY metaphors make it possible for social actors to re-conceptualize their objectives as the destination of travelers (cf. Lakoff 1993; Charteris-Black 2004), expressing the view that there is a predetermined goal to be achieved. They imply a necessary social effort, personal sacrifice and temporary suffering in order to attain worthwhile goals. Hence, using JOURNEY metaphors, Nkrumah not only constructs a goal-focused journey that makes an explicit reference to a desirable destination (thereby qualifying him as a guide), but also creates solidarity, arouses positive sentiments and galvanizes support for his actions and ideas. Employing expressions such as *step*, *step-by-step*, *march*, *forward*, *journey* and *path*, Nkrumah positively evaluates the idea of African independence and unity, and presents himself to the people as the noble leader to take them to the 'Promised Land'. There is, therefore, evidence for the conceptual metaphor AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE/AFRICAN UNITY IS A JOURNEY TOWARDS PROSPERITY.

(9) *As a first step*, Your Excellencies, a declaration of principle uniting and binding us together and to which we must all faithfully and loyally adhere ... should be set down. *As a second and urgent step* for the realization of the unification of Africa, an All-Africa Committee of Foreign Ministers be set up now ...Your Excellencies, *with these steps, I submit, we shall be irrevocably committed to the road* which will bring us to a Union Government for Africa. Only a United Africa with central political direction can successfully give effective material and moral support to [Africa]. (Inauguration of the Organization of African Unity, 1963)

(10) *The Charter of African Unity must be regarded as the last but one step on the road to a Continental Union.* The exploiters of Africa have grasped its implications. They realize that we are out to make ourselves masters in our own house and to drive out relentlessly

> from the length and breadth of our Continent those forces which
> batten upon us and keep us in political and economic subjection.
> (Ratification of the Organization of African Unity Charter: Speech
> to Ghanaian Parliamentarians, 1963)

The target of the JOURNEY metaphors above is a steady progress towards
Nkrumah's objective of a Union Government of Africa in the post-
independence period, possibly, based on the mapping MAKING PROGRESS IS
FORWARD MOVEMENT (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 188). He, therefore,
presents the idea of an African confederacy as a valuable goal that must be
successfully attained in order to guarantee Africa's welfare. That is, it will
'make ourselves masters in our own house and to drive out relentlessly from
the length and breadth of our continent those forces which batten upon us and
keep us in political and economic subjection' (10). According to Hunston and
Thompson (2004: 14), '[s]omething that is good helps us to achieve a goal,
while something that is bad prevents or hinders the achievement of a goal'.
Hence, Nkrumah's favorable appraisal of African unity is not surprising since
it corresponds with his discursive positioning as an upright leader with noble
intentions. The import of the JOURNEY schema is that it allows a sociopolitical
actor to 'represent himself as a guide, his policies as maps and to bring himself
nearer to his audience by constructing them as fellow travelling companions'
(Charteris-Black 2005: 46). This view is evidenced by expressions like *as a
first step, as a second and urgent step, as a last but one step* and *these steps*
in the extracts above.

In particular, Nkrumah arrogates to himself the power to determine what will
be good for Africa in the post-independence era, and proceeds to establish
how this object can be practically realized. In determining the blueprint for a
Union Government of Africa via the JOURNEY metaphors, Nkrumah gives the
impression that he possesses the inalienable rights to divine Africa's true
interests or divine the continent's destiny, thereby making himself the
continent's messiah. This heroic posture is heightened by his use of the
deontic modals *must*, *shall* and *should*, the boosters *relentlessly*, *irrevocably*,
loyally and *faithfully* as well as the hyperbolic expression *from the length and
breadth of our country*. Altogether, these devices constitute an 'authoritarian
language' indicative of moral toughness (Fairclough 2000), and lend credence
to Nkrumah's resilient character and tenacious attitude. Further, the adverb
only in 'only a united Africa can ...' (9) exaggeratedly suggests that Nkrumah's
idea of African unity is the only means of ensuring Africa's peace, progress
and prosperity in post-independence Africa. The persuasive effect of all the
above is that the terminus of the journey to Africa's 'Promised Land' is
presented as something to be greatly desired in view of which arrival at the
end point is a must regardless of how long or short the road to victory is or
how rough or smooth it is. Thus, Nkrumah's use of JOURNEY metaphors and
its conceptualization of a desirable destination arouses a feeling of optimism
in the people, gives them a reason to be excited and confident about the future
and, most importantly, makes them put their trust in and depend on a strong
and skilled leader.

When we examine the archetypal structure of hero mythology, we often follow
the journey that heroes embark upon from humble circumstances, facing
challenges and achieving triumphs along the way (Lule 2001). Consequently,

the JOURNEY metaphors enable Nkrumah to highlight the social effort, personal sacrifice and temporary suffering that are required during the course of moving towards the desirable destination. He is, thus, presented as the man who defies the odds and overcomes difficulties in order to win the people of Africa their freedom and give power back to them.

(11) Fellow Freedom Fighters and Friends: *the colonial struggle has to press forward wherever it was strongest to create a break in the international imperialist chain.* Thus, this breaking of the imperialist chain at certain weak links has undermined the whole of the colonial system in Africa [as] the independent states that have emerged first have acted as a beacon light for the others. (Nationalists' Conference of African Freedom Fighters, 1962)

(12) [This meeting] gives us the opportunity to reorganize our forces and our strategy in order to *carry the struggle forward to victory* ... We have achieved some measure of success in this struggle for human freedom and dignity, but we still have *a great task ahead.* (Nationalists' Conference of African Freedom Fighters, 1962)

(13) *Yet we are not prepared to retreat from the struggle one inch. On the contrary, we are firmer than ever in our determination to carry it forward to a triumphant conclusion, whatever the cost.* For we are resolved that this continent shall not continue half-free, half-slave ... (Nationalist' Conference of African Freedom Fighters, 1962)

Going by our general knowledge of the world, journeys are invariably correlated with the use of human effort, implying that movement in the direction of a worthy social goal is challenging and demands some amount of sacrifice. In addition to giving a sense of focus and purpose to the pain and suffering to be encountered while pursuing the valuable goal of African independence, such a conceptualization highlights the personal struggles Nkrumah has to contend with, which makes his courage, conquest and exceptional qualities more admirable. In the extracts, the notion of facing difficulties and overcoming trials en route to African independence is expressed via lexical choices such as *press forward*, *carry the struggle forward*, *a great task ahead*, *not prepared to retreat* and *our strength*. The use of *press* (which activates meanings such as 'pressing on to victory' or 'pressing into something') is particularly instructive because it signifies the exertion of continuous physical force. Such toughness and doggedness are required, at least in the interim, 'to create a break in the international imperialist chain' (11) which will then 'undermine the whole of the colonial system in Africa' (11).

The difficulties on the road to African freedom and the enormous task that still lies ahead notwithstanding, Nkrumah provides a sense of hope and (re)assurance for the journey using the clauses 'the independent states that have emerged first have acted as beacon light for the others' (11) and 'We have achieved some measure of success in this struggle' (12). The articulation of the progress that has been made is, thus, intended to provide enthusiasm and motivation to carry the struggle forward to victory' (12). The reference to the journey's end using the expressions *victory* and *triumphant conclusion* in

conjunction with the predicate *has to press forward* suggests that the movement towards the goal of African independence is strategic and systematic, and will inevitably lead to arrival at the destination. These expressions also convey a message of seriousness, purposeful activity and methodical action that are generally associated with journeys based on general world assumptions. Yet again, Nkrumah adopts a strategy of logical association to equate Africa's struggle for independence to a universal 'struggle for human freedom and dignity' (12), making any accompanying hardship in the attainment of African independence tolerable and his quest for the achievement of this goal honorable.

It is also important to note how Nkrumah underscores the irreversibility of the African effort by suggesting that a journey once started must be completed at all cost, especially given the desirability of the destination. In extract (13), Nkrumah combines metaphor with contrast and metonymy to debunk the view that Africa may give up on the object of African independence. To forcefully make this point, he juxtaposes two JOURNEY metaphors (*retreat* vs. *carry forward*) with each other and adds a boastful remark *whatever the cost*, which can be taken to mean whatever the cost in human suffering. This attitude marker can be analyzed as an intensification strategy intended to underscore Nkrumah's mettle in the face of difficulties during the course of his mission. That is, the heroic leader that he is, he is even prepared to die for the noble cause that he has embarked upon. To him then, the idea of African independence must be pursued to its logical conclusion because there is no going back. That is, Africa could only go one way since Africa has 'no reverse gear'. To reinforce this view, Nkrumah rejects the idea of rest/respite argued by Charteris-Black (2005) to be an optional element of the JOURNEY schema given the commonsense assumption that rest may be taken during a journey. Instead, he (a) vows that '[w]e shall continue to wage a *relentless war* against colonialism and neocolonialism and *we shall not rest* until every inch of African territory is free and Africa is united' (Nkrumah 24/12/61). With this disposition, he positions himself as Africa's 'main man', the continent's lynchpin and the 'go-to guy' as far as tackling the issue of foreign domination (in all its manifestations) in Africa is concerned.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to elucidate how metaphor contributes to the construction of heroic myth in the discourse of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's independence leader. It analyzed Nkrumah's use of WAR and JOURNEY metaphors as well as PERSONIFICATION to illustrate how discourses on colonialism, especially from the perspective of the colonized, can be used to simultaneously construct heroes and villains, protagonists and antagonists, thereby giving indication of how metaphorical structures enable political leaders to formulate a socially important representation. The analysis revealed that an interaction between metaphor and other rhetorical tropes such as hyperbole, contrast and metonymy enabled Nkrumah to portray himself as a noble warrior leader on a special assignment, fighting against the odds and overcoming adversities in his efforts to win independence for Africa and safeguard the continent's welfare in the post-independence period. In general,

there is little research on African political myth creation, and studies on hero mythology in particular have largely focused on Western politicians and journalistic storytelling, but not the discourses on colonialism, imperialism and repression which can be considered as potential sites for mythological heroes to be created. Hence, by focusing on an African independence leader and a sociolinguistic context underexplored in the literature, this study contributes to the burgeoning scholarship on the interplay of discourse, ideology and mythology. It also provides insight into the notion of myth as a discursive practice of political discourse, and highlights the role of language and (post-)independence leaders in political decolonization processes. Finally, this paper throws light on the importance of critical interest in metaphor investigation. Musolff (2012), for instance, argues that figurative language, especially metaphor, contributes to CDA's account of how meaning is (co-)constructed within society and organizational structures. This study, therefore, shows how metaphor as an essential resource for (re-)conceptualization can contribute to CDA as a discourse-pragmatic and functional approach that examines how meaning/interpretation is realized through indirect language. As this paper demonstrates, metaphor offers Nkrumah argumentative advantage that emboldens him to (dis)qualify political developments and to condemn concepts, entities, groups and systems that he believes to be a threat to Africa's interests. This paper, therefore, underlines the discursive significance of metaphor to CDA research.

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