

Metaphor and Education: Exploring the Social Semiotic of Nigerian Children's Literature

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Abstract: *This study examines Nigerian children's literature as a metaphorical construction and process for a better understanding of our world. Among the several reasons why authors write children's literature are to entertain and to teach the children about their cultural, traditional, political and social history. Most authors, therefore, have moral reasons for embarking on the arduous task of writing for children. The entertainment and education of the child have been at the heart of children's literature right from the eighteenth century. Thus, the education and inculcation of moral values are central to the writing and production of children's literature. Besides, children's literature appears to be an attempt to protect the innocence of the child from the vagaries of socio-moral decadence that pervade the adult mind and world. That, of course, was the eighteenth century romantic ideology that has found its way into contemporary literary production and expression.*

*Working within the framework of Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) and Cognitive Semantics (CS), this study investigates the ideology behind the cognitive use of language and pictures (illustrations) in Olabisi Are's *Home of the Brave* (HOB henceforth) and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Fire from the Holy Mountain* (FHM henceforth). Charteris-Black (2004, 2005) describes CMA as an approach to metaphors that aims to identify the intentions and ideologies underlying language use. The texts were purposively selected because they embody certain commonality in their ideological and aesthetic orientation. This study will focus on how the rhetoric of metaphorization enabled the writers to frame and express certain ideological positions about the Nigerian situation.*

Key Words: *Metaphor, Education, Ideology, Olabisi Are, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, Nigerian Children's Literature.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Children's literature has become a medium through which the reader can perceive some of the social and political crises that plague the human society. Even though the writers may have children in mind while writing, most of the problems that are addressed in the texts are mainly those caused by adults. The text may feature children as characters but the plot usually reveals that it is adults that are behind most of the travails of the children. Children's literature, therefore, aims at protecting the innocence of the child from the decadence and perversion of the adult world. Thacker and Webb (2002: 14) argue that "literature produced for children has always been influenced by debates originating in the eighteenth century. The desire to protect innocence or to control wayward thoughts; to balance education and enjoyment; and to preserve childlike qualities into adult life is familiar in the most contemporary of contexts". Writers construct a world that privileges reason, progress and strict codes of morality and behaviour over rascality and irresponsibility. Irresponsible behaviours are frowned at as deviation from societal norms and escape from rationality. However, the dominant ideology behind the production of children's literature seems to

aim at controlling or manipulating the mind of the child and orienting it towards a particular direction that is favourable to the writer's interest and ideology.

May (1995:66) contends that literature as a force within society is used to manipulate attitudes. May argues that "children's literature can use rhetoric to create a purposefully developed image of history that favors a particular view about the past". This shows that writers of children's literature may implicitly inject their biases and prejudices into their work. This can be a way of manipulating the mind of the child-reader into accepting certain assumptions (attitudes that define inter-group relationship) about themselves and other groups. For instance, texts written from the perspective of hegemonic masculinity are more likely to present women as weak, childish, irrational and emotional; and men as strong, mature, brave and rational. Similarly, texts written from the perspective of ethnic and racial supremacy will depict *Self* as brave, civilized, cultured, and rational and the *Other* as primitive, uncultured, irrational and emotional. Thus, the writers of such texts subtly aim at inculcating the underlying ideologies in the readers of the texts. Again, texts can also be constructed to challenge and debunk such assumptions. This underlies the argument that no text is ideologically neutral. Writers use the medium of metaphor to conceal or reveal their biases and ideologies.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON OLABISI ARE AND AKACHI ADIMORA- EZEIGBO

Olabisi Are holds a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) degree in Home Economics from Michigan State University, USA, and a postgraduate certificate in Food Science and Applied Nutrition from the University of Ibadan (under a UNICEF fellowship). She has taught Home Economics at International School, University of Ibadan, Nigeria; Njala College, University of Sierra Leone; Ministry of Education, Monrovia, Liberia. She was the founding Principal of Apata Community Grammar school, Ibadan; and the presenter of the popular TV programme on WNTV (now NTA) Network Channel 3, Ibadan: "It's a Woman's World". She made her first appearance in the literary scene in 2004 with *The Unexpected Visitors* and *Friends for Ever*. A septuagenarian and grandmother, Olabisi Are is an incarnation of the traditional story-teller of the "once upon a time" kind of narrative. But unlike the typical traditional story-teller who is mainly concerned with the past and journeys into the spirit world, she bestrides the interspaces between the ancient and the modern by imbuing her narratives with elements of both traditions. In some cases we see her tell events of the modern with a voice so traditional that it becomes difficult to separate the modern from the ancient. She cuts a perfect picture of that fading link between our glorious past and our endangered modernity. She is the concerned mother lamenting the decadence of the present while teaching her children the values and virtues of the past. Her *Home of the Brave* won the 2006 ANA/Atiku Abubakar Children's Literature award. Her later works include *Down but not Out*; *A Journey into the Whispering Forest*; and *Dancing to Fame*. Olabisi Are writes specifically for children and other "childlike" adults.

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo is the author of several award-winning titles. She is a professor of English at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. She has written scores of novels and collections of short stories, and over ten books for children. Two of her children's stories have been translated into Swahili and Xhosa. She has also won so many major literary awards including ANA/Spectrum Prose Prize, Flora Nwapa Prize, Zulu Sofola Prize and WORDOC Prize for short story. She was the National Treasurer of Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA); Vice President of Women Writers Association (WRITA); and the Vice President of PEN Nigeria. Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo is popularly known in literary circles for her gender perspectives. She is a great critic of forces of domination against women, children and other under-privileged groups. As a gender activist she uses her artistic enterprise to challenge obnoxious cultures and practices that privilege one group over the other. Her literary ideology revolves around the liberation of

3. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Metaphor is one of the ways language can be used to construe experience and meaning in a social system. It provides the frames through which experiences and ideologies can be envisioned. Over the past two thousand years metaphor has been studied by philosophers, rhetoricians, literary critics, psychologists, and linguists, such as Aristotle, Locke, Vico, Herder, Cassirer, Bühler, I.A. Richards, Whorf, Goodman, and Max Black. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) explored metaphor from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics. The development of traditional or "comparative theory" of metaphor has been attributed to Aristotle. Gumpel (1984:xi) contends that "Aristotle may not have been the first proponent of metaphor, but from the contemporary vantage point he is acknowledged as the major influence of this tradition and has thus become its undisputable progenitor". Similarly, Ortony (1993:3) opines that inquires into the classical or traditional concept of metaphor is "obliged to start with the works of Aristotle." Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* have remained the most influential body of knowledge in the study of rhetorical tropes. Much of what is known today in the traditional conception of metaphor is indebted to the Aristotelian taxonomy of rhetorical tropes.

The Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) and Cognitive Semantics (CS) approach which this study adopts essentially aims at showing how metaphor helps us grasp the important role it plays in shaping our understanding and interpretation of the messages it encodes. Charteris-Black (2004) describes CMA as an approach to the study of metaphors that aims at identifying the intentions and ideologies underlying language use. There are three stages to the approach: first metaphors are identified, then they are interpreted, and then they are explained (Charteris-Black, 2005:26). Charteris-Black identifies "semantic tension" as a criterion for the identification of metaphors in discourse contexts. He defines metaphor as "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 or domain where it is not expected to occur, thereby, causing semantic tension." Thus, the occurrence of metaphors is expected to generate semantic tension because metaphors occur in unexpected contexts or domains. Charteris-Black contends that metaphor potentially has linguistic, pragmatic and cognitive characteristics. As a linguistic phenomenon it does possess pragmatic and cognitive characteristics. Hence any word form can be a metaphor if the context makes it such. According to Charteris-Black (2005:15) "Metaphor's linguistic characteristic is that it causes semantic tension either by reification or personification." While reification is referring to something that is abstract using a word or phrase that in other contexts refers to something that is concrete, personification is referring to something that is inanimate using a word or phrase that in other contexts refers to something that is animate. The pragmatic characteristic is that metaphor is motivated by the underlying purpose of persuading while the cognitive characteristic is that a metaphor is caused by, and may cause a shift in the conceptual system (Charteris-Black, 2005: 15). Following the tenets of CMA, this study will **identify**, **interpret** and **explain** the metaphors deployed in Olabisi Are's *Home of the Brave* and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Fire from the Holy Mountain* as social semiotic.

The theory of conceptual metaphor or the cognitive linguistic view of metaphor is credited to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980). Kovecses (2002: viii) argues that Lakoff and Johnson were the first to develop a "new view of metaphor that challenged all aspects of powerful traditional theory in a coherent and systematic way". Lakoff and Johnson (1980:10) were however influenced by Michael Reddy's now classic essay: "The Conduit Metaphor" (1979, 1993). Lakoff (1993: 203) admits that Reddy was the first to come up with a contemporary theory of metaphor that shows that metaphor is "primarily conceptual, and part of the ordinary system of thought and language."

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) contend that everyday English language is largely metaphorical, thereby dispelling the traditional view that “metaphor is primarily in the realm of poetic or figurative language” (Lakoff 1993: 204). Lakoff and Johnson (1980:3) argue that “metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.” They based their argument about the conceptual view of metaphor on five grounds: (i) metaphor is a property of concepts, and not of words; (ii) the function of metaphor is to better understand certain concepts, and not just some artistic or aesthetic purpose; (iii) metaphor is often not based on similarity; (iv) metaphor is used effortlessly in everyday life by ordinary people, not just by special talented people; (v) metaphor, far from being a superfluous though pleasing linguistic ornament, is an inevitable process of human thought and reasoning. The conceptual view of metaphor holds that most of our everyday thoughts and actions are metaphorically construed and do not require special skills or talents to express. Kovecses (2002: ix) posits that metaphor, in this sense, “ceases to be the sole device of creative literary imagination; it becomes a valuable cognitive tool without which neither poets nor you and I as ordinary people could live”. He further contends that metaphor “plays a role in human thought, understanding, and reasoning and, beyond that, in the creation of our social, cultural, and psychological reality” (xi).

Metaphor is defined as “understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain” (Kovecses 2002: 4). Lakoff and Johnson (1980:5) say that “the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another”. It involves the mapping from a source domain to a target domain. Source domain is the conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions to understand another domain, while the conceptual domain that is understood this way is the target domain. Fauconnier (1997:1) is of the opinion that “mappings between domains are at the heart of unique cognitive faculty of producing, transferring and processing meaning.”

Kovecses (2002) provides a comprehensive list of non-linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphor. He contends that metaphor can be realized in movies and acting; cartoons, drawings, sculptures, and buildings; advertisements; symbols; myths; dream interpretation; interpretation of history; politics and foreign policy; morality; social institution; social practice; and literature. Similarly, the role of metaphor in education has been extensively studied (Cameron 2003; Jensen 2006; Botha 2009).

It is discovered that metaphors mediate the formulation of educational policies; book publication, selection and adoption; teaching policies; approaches to teaching; teaching actions; learner or learning process; subject content; communication; and nature of the schools. Botha (2009:434) opines that “metaphors are found in all these diverse areas of education.” This demonstrates the pervasive nature of metaphor. And because of the rising interest in metaphor in political, social, religious, and educational studies and discourses Botha (2009: 431) argues that “metaphors play a significant aesthetic, ornamental and pedagogical role not only in literature but also in education.”

One of our objectives is to see how the rhetoric of metaphorization enhances the understanding of our social and cultural environment. Metaphors pattern our thoughts and actions and give us insights into our cultural realities. Applying the theory of metaphor to epistemologies of academic inquiry, Jensen (2006:13) argues that metaphors open up educational world before us in new ways and become means through which we see “the good, the bad, the positive, the negative, the myths that limit growth, and the ideas that expand possibilities.” Children’s literature is highly metaphorical and from the foregoing, a sensitive reader would be anxious to know the underlying ideology behind the writing, publishing, marketing, adoption, reading, etc of children’s literature in Nigeria. Is it aimed at educating the young on the social and cultural realities of their society? Is it to serve some political and ideological interests? Is it

to service the mercantilist and capitalist ideology of the publisher or writer? Is it to advance the frontiers of knowledge and education in Nigeria?

This paper would like to argue that most of the children's literature and texts that are being "churned out" by some Nigerian publishers are fundamentally barren and visionless in orientation. Both the writers and their publishers are driven by greed and ignorance. It can also be said that most of these texts lack the socio-moral bite to effectively articulate a positive vision for the country and inculcate same in the children. How can we, as a nation, teach our children positive values like honesty, patriotism, equity, selflessness, justice and fairness, etc in a postmodernist world that is driven by greed and globalization? How can we talk so glibly about anti-corruption in a society where unbridled capitalistic greed, couched in fundamentalist Islamism and Pentecostalism, honour, euphemize and legitimize ill-gotten wealth as "prosperity" and "financial breakthrough"? How can we talk so rhetorically about vision 20 20 20 in a society where ethno-religious identity is superior to merit?

The Nigerian nation has to invest more in the moral upbringing of the child. The publication of consciously articulated children's literature will help in teaching the young the positive sides of our culture and social well-being. The positive social, moral, and cultural values that are encoded in the semiotic of children's texts may go a long way in reshaping our battered conscience and producing a better generation of leaders. Jensen (2006: 13) avers that "metaphors have a central role to play in qualitative educational research because, by their mere nature, they can stimulate imagination, arouse feeling, and prompt action and change." This study therefore focuses on Olabisi Are and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's use of the rhetoric of metaphorization to stimulate our imagination towards taking the desired steps for social change.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Children's literature contains stories and narratives about human or abstract experiences or worlds. These narratives are used to create traditions. Stories, as May (1995: 38-39) observes, constitute a vital part of a group's daily world. And as individuals tell each other stories about day-to-day happenings, they suggest what they believe should happen and their stories become allegorical narratives. Stories reflect heroic journeys and acceptable cultural practices that society upholds. The structures of the stories help individuals and groups to understand their interpretation of the world and their place in it. The metaphors that frame human experiences in children's literature are mainly culturally mediated. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors depend on the nature of our bodies, our interactions in the physical environment, and our social and cultural practices. Lakoff and Johnson also observe that different cultures deploy the type of conceptual frames that best express their cultural experiences

4.1 Life is a Journey of Discovery Metaphor

May (1995) notes that most traditional children's stories involve heroic journeys which help the young heroes to have a better understanding of their natural world. In such stories the protagonists encounter dangerous situations; people are rescued from outrageous disasters; villains defeated and heroes rewarded. Home of the Brave and Fire from the Holy Mountain involve a similar pattern. Their protagonists undertake dangerous adventures to solve social problems that threaten the social cohesion of their societies. In Home of the Brave two teenage girls, Amanda and Temabo, journey into the den of kidnapers to cause the release of the King's daughter and twenty-four other kidnapped children. In Fire from the Holy Mountain Nwakannaya travels to the land of the supernatural to bring freedom to the people of Goshe. In both stories the protagonists encounter serious challenges that threaten their lives but their endurance and heroic actions bring them honour and social recognition. In the end their societies are freed from evil and everyone is happy once again.

May (1995: 91) notes that stories are like parables, they teach as they entertain. The stories of Home of the Brave and Fire from the Holy Mountain were created by their authors to teach and to entertain their readers. At the level of entertainment, readers identify with scenes of celebration, the heroic deeds of the protagonists, the triumph of good over evil, and the reward for excellence and virtue.

At the metaphorical level, the authors teach readers the importance of virtue; the obstacles one may encounter on the path to fame and greatness; the value of valour and courage; the triumph of good over evil, etc. The aim of the authors is to implicitly present their readers with the mutually exclusive polarities that constitute our reality: good vs evil; darkness vs light; freedom vs bondage; justice vs injustice; male vs female; majority vs minority, etc and allow them to make their choices. The underlying metaphor reveals that the positive will eventually triumph over the negative; and good over evil. The stories teach readers to be just in their decisions, honest in their dealings, brave and courageous in their actions, and patient in difficult circumstances. Home of the Brave uses two strong females capable of surviving on their own to construct an alternative discourse that challenges the traditional hegemonic masculinities that our society espouses. The author uses the two brave girls to solve a problem that men in the male dominated society could not. The ideology of the discourse therefore interrogates the assignment of roles in our society along gender boundaries; it questions the use of dichotomous categories and metaphors of discrimination such as: men are strong – women are weak; men are head – women are tail; men are brave – women are cowardly; men are intelligent/rational – women are emotional, etc in determining social relations. In Fire from the Holy Mountain it is the brave but hated wife of the king, Oseka, that eventually rescues the kingdom of Goshen from social strife and extinction through her son, Nwakannaya. Both texts appear to be resisting our traditional perception of women as cheap article, weaker vessel, and emotional beings.

May (1995:91) quotes U.C. Knoepfelmacher as having argued that all journeys in children's literature contain a lesson in metaphor for the reader to ponder at the end. At a more complex level of signification, the journeys remind readers of the traditional conceptualization of life as journey. The life as journey metaphor is a sad reminder that all mortals are on journeys in the world and must someday return home. The metaphor has a moral tinge that reminds humans to live virtuous and righteous life before the end of their lives on earth. The life is a journey metaphor shows that life has a beginning and a destination, and the journeyers are likely to encounter some challenges in the process but must be determined to reach home to a heroic welcome. In HOB, the protagonists are said to be "focused on their mission" (13); while the "wide marshy ground" (30), "three shallow rivers" (30), the "difficult...steep" (31) and the "three-headed bulldog" (32) in FHM frame the difficulties that humans encounter on their journey to salvation. The underlying metaphor therefore suggests that life on earth is a hazardous journey but one must be resilient and focused to arrive at the "holy mountain", the city of God. The light which "neither rain nor wind could put out" (FHM, 36) is eternity for those who survive the perilous pilgrimage on earth. Journeyers therefore must constantly engage in an inward search journey of self-discovery to become legitimate citizens in the "kingdom of Goshe" (FHM, 36). Notice the phonological parallelism between "Goshe" and "God".

4.2 The World is a Market Metaphor

The world is a market metaphor can be found in Home of the Brave where human existence is conceptualized as trading in the market. Since life is a journey towards a destination, a market, human beings "travelled long distances by road and river to do business at this famous market" (1). The market is a metaphor for the world which contains all human beings irrespective of their age, race, religion, and social circumstances. The metaphor compels us to understand the world using the knowledge frame we have about the market. Every market has a spatio-temporal dimension: it exists within geo-physical

boundaries; and has opening and closing time for its operations. This implies that every human being operates within certain boundaries and timeline, and must leave the market once their transactions are concluded. The narrator informs that activities at the “ever busy market had ground to a halt. Most people had left for their homes” (15). This implies that every human being must someday return to their metaphorical home (the world beyond) after their sojourn on earth (the metaphorical market). This metaphor seems to remind readers to conduct their affairs on earth with seriousness and fairness because death is inevitable.

4.3 Life is a Gamble Metaphor

Life is also conceptualized as a gamble in HOB and FHM. Within the world as a CONTAINER we have objects like the market. The market itself is a CONTAINER of assorted objects like the kidnapers and money doublers. The money doublers (HOB, 8) present the Manichean side of life: winners vs losers; life vs death; safety vs risk; pain vs joy, etc. The framing image of the game of gamble presents life as a risk, hence Amanda cautions her sister: “Are you crazy? How dare you risk your life. I don't think it is worth a try” (11). The three items in bold print are from the domain of gamble. In gamble the players take a “risk”, weigh the “worth” of their chances and investment, and decide whether to give it a “try”. Thus, the uncertainty that is associated with the game of gamble makes it a “crazy” adventure. The gamble metaphor is extended to activities like kidnapping. The kidnapers soon realized that “the game was up” (HOB, 20). Gamble is a game that ends with a winner and a loser. The phrase “the game is up” is from the English idiomatic metaphor (Chen, 2010) signifying a disastrous end. The life is a gamble metaphor depicts the act of living as being as dangerous as the game of gamble. Therefore, to survive in the world, one has to weigh one's risks, consider whether the risk is worth a try, before taking a plunge. Realizing that life is a dangerous gamble, Oseka (FHM, 28) warns her son to be “watchful, careful and brave”. She framed the journey of life as a “dangerous journey” (28). The underlying ideology of the texts teaches against reckless and thoughtless actions and the need for all human beings to live life with great caution because life is full of risks.

4.4 Light is Life Metaphor/ Light is Freedom metaphor

Light/fire is framed as life/freedom from darkness and tyranny in FHM. The fire from the holy mountain “gave light all around” and “burned without hurting a thing” (35). The fire “lit up the whole surrounding” (38) of Goshe and was a “symbol of peace, truth and justice in the kingdom of Goshe” (38). And “the Kingdom knew peace as never before”(40). The “positives” brought about by the light/fire contrast with the implied “negatives” that preceded them. Lakoff and Johnson (1980:19) contend that “no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis”. Orientational metaphors are concerned with our physical and cultural experiences. They have to do with spatial orientation: up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, and centre-periphery. Based on our experiential bases of metaphor: LIGHT IS UP, DARKNESS IS DOWN; FREEDOM IS UP, TYRANNY IS DOWN; VIRTUE IS UP, DEPRAVITY IS DOWN. In the text we can see instances of the experiences: “The king's wives were happy” (3) - (UP); “Oseka was very unhappy” (2) - (DOWN); “She wept tears of Joy” (8) – (UP); “The king was greatly disappointed” (8) – (DOWN). Kovecses (2002: 37) says that “upward orientation tends to go together with positive evaluation, while downward orientation with a negative one.” Thus, the freedom and peace symbolized by the fire/light are positive evaluation/virtue (UP) while the tyranny and metaphorical darkness of the old king are negative/ depravity (DOWN). Illustrations, as iconic representations, are used by the author to depict these moods. Page 3 shows the favoured and loved wives of the king in high spirits/looking happy (UP) while Page 4 shows Oseka, the hated wife, in a drooped posture, supporting her bowed head with her right arm (DOWN).

4.5 Ruler is State Metonymy: frames of might vs frames of meekness

While *Home of the Brave* and *Fire from the Holy Mountain* are set in traditional Africa under monarchical rule, the authors used the two kings to frame the different power relations between the ruler and the ruled in traditional Africa. The metaphors present the degree of asymmetry in social relations between the high and the low; the ruler and the ruled; the king and the subject. Further, the framing metaphors enable us to understand how the state or community is governed; the degree of intimacy between the ruler and the ruled; and the aura of respect accorded royalty in traditional Africa. Contrasting metaphors were used to distinguish between both rulers in the context of the social relations mentioned above. We shall examine some of these social relations under the following frames:

(a) Name is the individual/person/face: The ruler of Goshe Kingdom (FHM) is simply identified with appellations such as: “a king”; “the king”; “Your Majesty”. His real name is never mentioned. The king of Baguda (HOB) is identified as “Chief Kokori”; and “High Chief Kokori”. Name accords identity to individuals, groups, and entities and determine how others relate to them. The way the two kings are addressed show the degree of intimacy between them and their subjects. The framing metaphors reveal that the king of Goshe is a dreaded ruler whose subjects are too scared to mention by name. The metaphors show he possesses enormous powers that define the relationship between him and his people along the line of master-slave dichotomy. The anonymity of his true identity indexes his unpopularity among his subjects. In contrast, the king of Baguda enjoys more intimate relationship with his subjects hence they could address him by name. Name, therefore, does not just serve the function of identifier of a referent but indexes character and social relations.

(b) Personality determines personal space: Another metaphor that is used to frame both kings is one that reveals that one's personality determines the degree of one's personal space with others. A friendly personality (or disposition) is more likely to attract more people while a hostile personality (or disposition) will repel people. This gives rise to the subframe: FRIENDLY PERSONALITY ATTRACTS; HOSTILE PERSONALITY REPELS. There is a conflation of orientational and ontological metaphors here. While orientational metaphors establish relations along spatial lines, ontological metaphors view our ideas and emotions as CONTAINERS. A friendly personality is therefore a container of sweet fragrance while a hostile personality is a container of offensive odour. While Chief Kokori is framed as a friendly personality who could celebrate with his chiefs and “very many villagers” (2) “dancing and singing”(5); have a “good meal” and spend a “few hours cracking jokes and exchanging banter” (3) with his chiefs, such cannot be said of the king of Goshe. The narrator informs that “people fear him (king of Goshe) the more. People were afraid to give him advice because of his bad temper” (8)

(c) Language is personality/ individual: Language is also used to delineate the two kings and portray their distinct personalities. Here, the type of language used by the kings and that used by others to describe them assist us to have a mental image of their personalities and the kind of social relations that obtain between them and other groups. Chief Kokori is framed as a liberal and accommodating ruler who wishes his people well. This can be seen in the prayer he says at the market place:

“May those who buy and sell in this market enjoy prosperity. May our children grow and be protected from evil. May God of the Bagudans be blessed” (3). And when his daughter was rescued from kidnappers he declares: “Today is a great day for me and all of us” (23). The use of inclusive pronouns *our* and *us* presents a discursive ideology that is positively oriented to certain commonality and oneness between the speaker and the audience. The discourse engenders a fellowship face that is inclusive and friendly. The framing metaphor presents the speaker as showing solidarity, oneness, and common ground with the audience.

In contrast, the king of Goshe has a predilection for language of power, terror and death. He uses language to threaten the autonomous face wants of his opponents: “All right, you want to be tortured before you

“speak the truth...so be it...Tie her up and throw her outside where the sun is hottest. Let her bake alive” (22); “Arrest him immediately, guards!” (25); “He warned that he would kill Oseka and her imposter of a son if she failed to tell the truth” (29). His language shows he is an absolute monarch with the power of life and death over his subjects. This can be seen in the predominant use of imperative and declarative structures: “Tie her up...” (22); “Let her bake alive” (22); “Arrest him immediately...” (25); and “so be it” (22). The speaker’s language reveals the asymmetrical power relations between him and his address(es). The resources of language used in the discourse shows the speaker occupies a social position that enables him to command and brutally manipulate the other. He is however rescued at the end of the story from his high-handedness by Nwakannaya, his son. His closing remarks are those of a man who has learnt a great deal from life itself: “My son, you have taught me love, truth and justice. You shall reign is the kingdom of Goshe, after me” (36). The author used the speaker’s submission to subvert his initial dictatorial tendencies and signify that no society can achieve meaningful development in the absence of love, truth and justice.

4.6 Icons as Metaphors of Reality

Kovecses (2002: 58) contends that conceptual metaphors can be realized in non-linguistic patterns as cartoons, drawings, sculptures, and buildings. Illustration is one of the semiotic regimes that are commonly employed in children’s literature to present a vivid picture of important actions and scenes. According to May (1995: 42) “As the child hears the story and looks at the illustration, he becomes the main character in the story.” This is because the child sometimes depends on the illustrations rather than the words to recall the hero’s adventures. The authors of the two texts under study used illustrations to give physical representations to the story. Thus, illustrations are used to present scenes of bravery, virtue, depravity, depression, excitement, etc. Hence the illustrations become graphic representations of metaphorical linguistic manifestations (Kovecses, 2002: 57). This underlies the crucial place of illustrations in children’s literature.

5. CONCLUSION

Children’s literature is mainly didactic in orientation because it takes upon itself the burden of teaching social, political and moral lessons. Semiotic regimes such as metaphor enable art to provide a better understanding of human situations and actions. Even though conceptual metaphor does not set out primarily to teach or educate the reader; it provides a deep insight into the complex frames and schemata that constitute our reality. It makes us to conceptualize one thing in terms of another. Take the case of kidnapping for example. Long before it became a matter of serious national concern Olabisi Are has alerted the nation in *Home of the Brave* that the war against kidnapping is going to be a long and tortuous journey. *HOB* presents the act of kidnapping as devilish and dangerous and implies that countering it will demand bravery and courage from all citizens.

Our knowledge of CONTAINER metaphors or CONTAINMENT schemas enables us to comprehend our physical beings as being bounded and set off from the rest of the world by the surface of our skins and we experience the rest of the world as outside us. The containment schema enables us to understand that we as human beings operate within objects that have bounding surfaces, and moving from one direction to another is moving from one container to another. The PATH schema helps us to comprehend “our everyday experience of moving around the world and experiencing the movements of other entities” (Saeed, 2009: 368) as a representation of our socio-moral reality. Life is a journey from one direction to another, consequently one can also move from one moral position to another. The virtuous and the depraved are all objects within the **container** we call Nigeria; moving from one direction to another. Our cultural knowledge enables us to understand kidnapping as a movement from the container of virtue to the

container of depravity and animalism. Thus, we say “He has **gone** into kidnapping business”; “He has **come out** of kidnapping business” or “He has been **taken away** by kidnappers”; “He has been **released** by his captors” (metaphors depicting movement from one destination to another). The experiential bases of the Nigerian society enable it to conceive social vices like kidnapping as negative and evil and thus consigned to the farthest fringes of our moral world. This perception is derived from our spatial knowledge - this explains why kidnappers set up their hiding places in thick forests that have surface bounds or boundaries far apart from the normal human residence. This aligns them more with wild creatures than with humans and gives us the impression that kidnappers are no longer normal human beings but wild animals! The Igbo society validates this position by describing such human beings as *anu ofia* (wild animals). The expression involves the mapping of the ontology of wild animals on that of human beings and further makes a discrimination between domestic animals and wild animals. Similarly, containing the urge for and act of kidnapping or dictatorship and social injustice will entail moving from one container to another (moving from the position of depravity to that of virtue), erasing the boundaries of greed and violence, and erecting new boundaries of virtue and moral integrity. It will also involve a moral and psychological rehabilitation of both the kidnapper and the kidnapped; the oppressor and the oppressed. This is the type of education that metaphor provides as part of social semiotic (Halliday, 2007).

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