


## A Critical Discourse Analysis of Metaphors in the Eulogisation of Raila Amollo Odinga: Constructing a Political Saint in the Kenyan Imagination

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### Abstract

This study conducts a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the metaphors used to eulogise Raila Amollo Odinga, a central figure in Kenya's opposition politics. Moving beyond the analysis of his own political rhetoric, this paper examines the posthumous discourse that constructed his legacy. Drawing on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to systematically identify and categorise the dominant metaphorical expressions in eulogies, media reports, and public tributes, the study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as an interpretive lens to unpack the ideological functions, power relations, and socio-political implications embedded within these metaphors. Data for this study were collected across three key phases of the mourning period: immediately after death, during public viewing and during the state funeral and burial ceremony. CMT was used to identify metaphors from official eulogies, media coverage, commentaries and analysis on television and Kenyan Newspapers, radio stations and social media memorial messages, while CDA was used to interpret their ideological and socio-political implications. The findings demonstrate that metaphors such as "Baba," "Lion," "Mighty Tree," and "Guiding Light" actively sanctify Odinga, transforming a contentious political leader into a transcendent symbol of democracy, struggle, and national identity. This process draws heavily on Kenyan political history and local cultural archetypes to legitimise his legacy, sustain his political movement, and influence the nation's socio-political trajectory. The study concludes that eulogistic metaphors are potent instruments for shaping collective memory and perpetuating political ideologies beyond an individual's lifetime, and that the integration of CMT's descriptive rigour with CDA's critical interpretive framework offers a robust analytical model for understanding how posthumous political discourse operates. This study, therefore, makes a contribution towards posthumous political discourse analysis.

**Key terms:** Critical discourse analysis, eulogy, metaphors, politics.

## INTRODUCTION

Eulogies are a unique form of public discourse that serve a dual purpose: to honour the deceased and to actively construct a lasting public image through carefully chosen symbolic language. In the high-stakes arena of Kenyan politics, where lineage, legacy, and national narrative are fiercely contested, the language of mourning becomes a critical site for ideological work. This paper undertakes a critical discourse analysis of metaphors in tributes to Raila Amollo Odinga, investigating the linguistic and rhetorical devices that repositioned him as a cultural icon rather than just a political figure.

African scholarship on political discourse underscores the centrality of language in the construction of power, identity, and legitimacy. Political language in African contexts is deeply embedded in cultural symbolism, historical memory, and postcolonial identity formation (Mazrui, 2005). Similarly, language functions as a carrier of culture and ideology, shaping how societies understand themselves and their leaders (Thiong'o, 1986). Within this framework, political eulogies in Kenya can be understood not merely as commemorative acts but as discursive sites where national identity and political legitimacy are actively negotiated.

In the Kenyan context, scholarship on political rhetoric and nationalism further demonstrates how leaders are symbolically constructed through discourse. Kenyan politics often relies on personalised narratives and symbolic representations that elevate individuals into embodiments of national ideals (Wanyande, 2001). In addition, narratives of struggle, particularly those associated with the fight for multiparty democracy, are repeatedly invoked to legitimise political actors and embed them within national history (Murunga & Nasong'o, 2007). Recent studies on Kenyan media discourse reinforce this pattern, showing how metaphor and framing in news texts actively construct political identities and shape public perception (Omoke, 2025).

Beyond Kenya, broader African perspectives on political discourse reveal similar dynamics across the continent. Studies in Nigeria, Ethiopia, and South Africa demonstrate how political language, whether in speeches, media, or digital platforms, functions as a

tool for constructing authority, contesting power, and mobilising the public. The rise of digital media has further intensified these processes, with social media platforms becoming key arenas for the production and circulation of political discourse in contemporary Africa (Ajaegbu & Ajaegbu, 2024). These studies collectively underscore that political discourse is not merely reflective but constitutive of socio-political realities.

The politics of memorialization further deepens this understanding. Acts of remembrance are rarely neutral; rather, they are shaped by present political interests and ideological struggles (Mbembe, 2001). In this regard, eulogies can be seen as powerful narrative instruments through which the past is reconstructed to serve contemporary purposes. This aligns with the notion of the nation as an "imagined community," sustained through shared narratives, symbols, and commemorative practices (Anderson, 2006). Eulogistic discourse thus plays a crucial role in shaping collective memory and national identity, particularly during moments of collective mourning.

A compelling precursor to the eulogistic metaphors analysed in this study is found in Joshua Bariu's essay "Now That the Cover of the Sewer Is Gone" (*Nation Tribune*, October 2025). Written shortly after Odinga's passing, Bariu's piece functions as a national moral reckoning, using metaphor to interrogate Kenya's longstanding practice of scapegoating Odinga for systemic failures. Through symbolic expressions such as "the storm we accused for every flood" and "the scapegoat we sacrificed to wash away our sins," the essay reconfigures Odinga's image from political antagonist to moral mirror of the nation. From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, this text operates as an act of discursive reversal, transferring blame from the individual to the collective and transforming Odinga into a symbol of national conscience. The central metaphor of the "sewer" with its "cover" removed signifies the exposure of societal contradictions and moral decay, compelling the public to confront its own complicity. By invoking themes of cleansing, exposure, and redemption, Bariu's essay is important to this study as it prepares the ideological ground for Odinga's posthumous sanctification. It demonstrates that even prior to formal eulogization, Odinga had already become a discursive site through

which Kenya negotiated questions of truth, responsibility, and identity.

Metaphors, as conceptualised by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), are not mere linguistic ornaments but fundamental structures of thought that shape how individuals understand abstract concepts. In political contexts, metaphors function as persuasive tools that evoke emotional resonance and moral evaluation (Charteris-Black, 2004). Borrowing from these perspectives, this study analyses metaphors used in Eulogising Raila to understand their underlying meaning and functions.

This study employs a CDA framework to analyse metaphors used across three key phases of the mourning period: immediately after death, during public viewing and during the state funeral and burial ceremony. This approach, informed by Fairclough (1995) and van Dijk (2008), treats discourse as a form of social practice that both reflects and constitutes power relations. The CDA framework is therefore appropriate in analysing political eulogies because it uncovers how language used in memorialization encodes political identity, legitimises a specific historical narrative, and sustains leadership mythologies within the Kenyan socio-political landscape. Ultimately, this paper argues that the eulogization of Raila Odinga reveals the profound power of figurative language not just in mourning a leader, but in sculpting a political saint for the purposes of present and future political mobilisation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Metaphor, Power, and the Kenyan Political Imagination

The study of metaphor in political discourse has evolved from viewing it as ornamental language to recognising it as central to cognition, persuasion, and the construction of political reality. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), advanced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), conceptualises metaphor as a cognitive mechanism through which abstract domains such as politics are understood via more concrete experiences like war, journey, or family. Thus, mappings such as *POLITICS IS WAR* or *THE NATION IS A FAMILY* structure political reasoning and communication. Extending this approach, Charteris-Black's (2004) Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA)

integrates CMT with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to show how metaphor operates ideologically to legitimise power, construct moral authority, and foster emotional identification. CDA, as articulated by Fairclough (1995) and van Dijk (2008), further enables the interpretation of discourse as social practice, revealing how language reproduces power relations and ideological dominance. Together, these frameworks provide a robust analytical lens for examining how metaphor shapes political meaning.

African scholarship deepens this perspective by situating metaphor within culturally and historically specific contexts. Studies such as Chilwa (2012) demonstrate that metaphors of kinship, religion, and warfare are central to political discourse across the continent, drawing on culturally embedded schemas to construct authority and communal belonging. Metaphors such as “father,” “shepherd,” or “liberator” resonate with indigenous understandings of leadership and responsibility. However, while these studies effectively identify recurring metaphorical patterns, they often treat metaphors as relatively stable categories, with limited attention to how meanings shift across genres or critical political moments.

Within Kenya, political discourse reflects these broader patterns while remaining closely tied to histories of liberation, democratisation, and identity formation. Studies on political discourse highlight how political metaphors often draw from oral traditions and indigenous symbolism to frame narratives of heroism and resistance. For instance, the metaphor of the “lion” carries culturally specific connotations linked to community identity and political authority. While Otieno (2019) argues that the usage and understanding of an animal metaphor involves perceptions, attitudes, experiences, and dispositions of both the speaker and the addressee, the metaphorical model “Politics Is an Animal and The Politician Is an Animal and Hunter” conceptualizes politics as an animal and the politician both as an animal and a hunter. Similarly, Gachigua (2018) identifies a dominant State-As-Family metaphor in Kenyatta's parliamentary discourse, where the president is positioned as a paternal figure and citizens as members of a national family. These findings align with broader discourse-oriented approaches

influenced by scholars such as Mbembe (2001) and Wodak and Meyer (2016), which emphasise how narratives of sacrifice and opposition underpin political legitimacy. Nevertheless, much of this work focuses on campaign rhetoric and general political discourse, with limited attention to how specific political figures evolve into enduring symbolic constructs.

Empirical studies on Raila Amollo Odinga provide a more focused lens on these dynamics. Barasa et al. (2023) show that Odinga's rhetoric consistently deploys metaphors of revolution, struggle, and opposition to position him as a champion of democratic reform. Mang'eni and Schroeder (2023), as well as Mang'eni and Habwe (2023), identify clusters of war, socio-democratic, and "savior" metaphors that construct him as a messianic or liberatory figure. Kimenyi et al. (2021) further demonstrate how his post-handshake discourse repositions him as a unifying statesman through strategic linguistic choices. Collectively, these studies reveal that Odinga's political identity is not only rhetorically constructed but also metaphorically stabilised over time. However, their focus remains largely on metaphors produced by Odinga himself, overlooking how such constructions are appropriated, transformed, and amplified by others.

This gap becomes more evident when situated within scholarship on nationalism, memory, and political myth-making. Studies by Werbner (1998) argue that political figures are reconstructed through selective narration and symbolic amplification, transforming them into embodiments of national identity. In Kenya, Odinga's trajectory, frequently framed through narratives of sacrifice, resistance, and democratic struggle, provides fertile ground for such mythologization. Analyses of key political moments, such as the 2018 handshake (Abade et al., 2022), illustrate how discourse elevates him to the status of a unifying national figure. However, these studies do not systematically examine the linguistic mechanisms, particularly metaphor, through which such symbolic transformations are consolidated and naturalised.

An important yet underexplored dimension emerges in studies of funeral and commemorative discourse. Odero (2015) demonstrate that eulogies in Kenya function not merely as expressions of grief but as

political texts that articulate ideological positions and negotiate power. In such contexts, metaphor takes on a heightened role: it does not simply persuade but finalises, sanctifies, and stabilises a political legacy. Unlike campaign discourse, where metaphor mobilises support, eulogistic discourse transfers agency from the individual to the collective, enabling communities to reconstruct the deceased as a moral and symbolic authority. Despite this, existing research on funeral discourse remains theoretically under-integrated, with limited engagement with metaphor analysis or broader frameworks of discourse and memory.

The mediatization of political communication further intensifies these processes. Nyabola (2018) and Ogola (2020) show how digital and mainstream media shape and amplify political narratives, while Kamau (2017) highlights how digital platforms accelerate the circulation of metaphorical and mythic representations. Existing studies largely focus on electoral or protest contexts, with limited attention to how these representations are reconfigured in commemorative or posthumous settings.

Taken together, the literature demonstrates that metaphor is central to political cognition and identity formation, that African political discourse draws on culturally grounded symbolic systems, and that Odinga's rhetoric already contains strong metaphorical patterns that position him as a transformative and quasi-mythic figure. However, a critical gap persists: existing scholarship does not adequately examine how these metaphorical constructions are rearticulated, intensified, and stabilised in eulogization. This study addresses that gap by integrating CMT and CDA to analyse eulogistic discourse as a distinct genre of political communication, one in which lived political authority is transformed into symbolic permanence through culturally resonant and ideologically charged metaphor.

## METHODOLOGY

This study takes a qualitative approach to study the representation and eulogization of Raila Amollo Odinga in Kenyan political discourse. Data were collected across three key phases of the mourning period immediately after death, during public viewing, and at the state funeral and burial to capture shifts in

tone, intensity, and symbolic representation. The corpus comprises official eulogies, media coverage, television and radio commentary, newspaper reports, and social media memorial messages. Purposive sampling was used to select texts rich in metaphorical expressions, ensuring analytical depth and relevance. The study is grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which conceptualises language as a social practice closely linked to power and ideology (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008), and is complemented by Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), which guides the identification and interpretation of metaphor. Metaphor identification followed a systematic CMT-informed procedure: non-literal linguistic expressions were first identified within context, then mapped onto broader source domains such as religion, family, journey, and struggle. From these mappings, underlying conceptual metaphors were inferred, allowing individual expressions to be clustered into coherent meaning-making patterns. The analysis proceeded in two stages. First, CMT was applied to identify and categorise dominant metaphorical patterns. Second, CDA, guided by Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, was used to interpret these patterns within their socio-political context. This integrated approach enables a critical understanding of how metaphors construct political identity, shape collective memory, and influence public consciousness in Kenya. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study. All data were drawn from publicly accessible sources, and care was taken to ensure accurate representation of speakers' meanings while avoiding decontextualization or misinterpretation.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study set out to examine how metaphors in the eulogization of Raila Odinga function to construct his political legacy and influence the Kenyan political imagination. The analysis reveals a systematic use of metaphors that construct Raila Odinga as a sanctified, timeless figure. These metaphors can be categorised into several potent, overlapping themes, each serving a distinct ideological function.

## Familial Metaphors: The Sanctification of Paternal Authority

The most pervasive metaphor was "Baba" (Father), often extended to "Father of Democracy." This is a classic Charteris-Black (2004) legitimisation strategy, but in Kenya, it carries the weight of a patriarchal political culture. By framing Odinga as the nation's father, the discourse imbues him with inherent moral authority, wisdom, and a protective role. It transforms political dissent into filial ingratitude and positions his followers as children in a national family, demanding loyalty and obedience even after his death. This metaphor effectively depoliticises his contested legacy, replacing critical assessment with a narrative of benevolent, paternal care.

## Natural World Metaphors: The Mythologization of Stature

The "Lion of Bondo" and the "Mighty Bongu Tree" are deeply culturally rooted metaphors. The lion (Luo: echoing the folk hero "Lwanda Magere") symbolises not just courage but untamed authority and cultural pride. The felling of a "mighty tree" is a powerful image of loss, but it also implies that the "tree" was once a source of shelter, stability, and rootedness. These metaphors elevate Odinga to a mythical, elemental force. They naturalise his political stature, suggesting it was as inherent and unshakeable as a force of nature, thereby obscuring the human agency and political contingencies that shaped his career.

## Journey and Light Metaphors: The Continuity of Struggle

Metaphors like "sailing on a ship to home beyond" and "guiding light" frame Odinga's life and death as a transcendent journey. The "struggle is not over" chant directly positions death as a mere pause ("usilale"-don't sleep). This has a crucial mobilising function: it denies finality to his political project and charges his followers with the responsibility to continue it. He becomes an eternal "torchbearer," and his ideals the "guiding light." This metaphor ensures the continuity of his political movement by framing it as a moral and spiritual obligation to the departed leader.

## Ritual and Symbolic Metaphors: The Fusion of National and Ethnic Identity

The visual metaphor of the flag-draped casket and the use of Luo mourning twigs (*okumba*) fuse the national and the ethnic. The flag claims Odinga as a national hero, co-opting his legacy for the state. Simultaneously, the *okumba* grounds his legacy in his specific ethnic community, reinforcing the ethnic solidarities that underpin Kenyan politics. This duality is not a contradiction but a reflection of the complex interplay between national identity and ethnic allegiance in Kenya. The ritual objects serve as powerful, non-verbal metaphors for communal grief and cultural continuity, linking the living to the ancestral world and to Odinga's enduring spirit.

The *okumba*, placed on the casket, was a powerful, non-verbal metaphor connecting Odinga to his ancestors and his community. It symbolised a cultural homecoming that existed alongside the national narrative. The wrapping of the casket in the Kenyan flag, however, was the state's attempt to claim him as a national asset, to metaphorically incorporate a once-fierce critic into the official history of the nation. This created a discursive tension between the ethnic-cultural hero and the national statesman.

## The "King Is Dead, Long Live the Crown": A Metaphor of Ideological Succession

Winnie Odinga (Raila's daughter), while eulogising her father, used the expression "The king is dead, but long live the crown." This metaphor historically marked the death of a monarch and the immediate succession of another, symbolising the continuity of authority. In relation to Raila Amollo Odinga, the metaphor transcends its royal origins to represent the endurance of ideals, legacy, and symbolic power beyond the mortality of the individual.

Through the lens of CDA, the metaphor becomes a site where language constructs and legitimises ideology, reflecting how discourse sustains power and identity. The phrase "The king is dead" metaphorically signifies the end of an era, the closure of Raila's political or physical journey, while simultaneously portraying him as a sacrificial figure whose struggles embody Kenya's democratic aspirations. This discursive construction aligns with van Dijk's notion of the ideological square, emphasising Raila's positive traits and moral stature as central to collective identity.

The continuation, "long live the crown," represents the immortality of his ideals, suggesting that while Raila may cease to be an active political actor (dead), the "crown", a symbol of justice, equality, and democratic reform, remains alive within Kenya's sociopolitical consciousness. In this sense, the metaphor constructs a collective political inheritance where leadership transcends the individual, becoming institutional and communal.

Across social media, public rallies, and political commentaries, this metaphor has been recontextualised to assure continuity, reinforcing the idea that Raila's vision and influence persist among the people, the true bearers of the ideological crown. CDA reveals that such linguistic expressions perform crucial ideological work: they mourn, mythologise, and mobilise simultaneously, transforming personal mortality into social immortality. Thus, the metaphor operates as a discursive ritual of continuity, recasting Raila as both a mortal leader and an enduring symbol of resistance, justice, and hope. It situates his political life within a broader narrative of Kenyan democracy, where the fall of the king does not signal the end of leadership but the rebirth of a collective mission. Ultimately, "The king is dead, but long live the crown" encapsulates how language perpetuates Raila Odinga's ideological legacy, ensuring that while the man may pass, the democratic dream, the crown, remains ever alive among the people.

## Strategic Variation Across Speakers: The Discursive Battle for Legacy

President William Ruto's eulogy was a masterclass in employing metaphor for political reconciliation and legacy management. Operating from a complex position as a former rival and the incumbent president, his speech was rich with strategically chosen metaphors. By using the metaphor "A Great Tree Has Fallen," Ruto acknowledged Odinga's immense stature and the national scale of the loss, placing himself as a statesman above the political fray.

Leaders eulogised him as a "Patriot and Peacemaker." This was perhaps the most significant metaphorical reframing. Ruto deliberately focused on the post-2018 "handshake" period, metaphorically painting Odinga not as the "agitator" or "fighter" of old, but as a unifying figure. This served to legitimise Ruto's own

presidency and their political pact, while subtly downplaying Odinga's role as a democratic antagonist to state power. Ruto equally noted "His Legacy is Our Shared Inheritance": this metaphor of shared heritage was a direct attempt to co-opt Odinga's legacy for national unity and, by extension, for the stability of Ruto's government. It was a call to end the "political struggle" metaphor that Odinga's base was chanting, replacing it with a metaphor of national consensus.

In contrast to Ruto's statesmanlike tone, eulogies from Odinga's family and longtime political comrades were more intimate and militant, respectively. His children used metaphors of a "guiding star" and "rock," personalising the loss. His political allies, however, echoed the crowd's sentiment, using metaphors of a "baton" being passed and a "fire" that cannot be extinguished, directly reinforcing the ideology of continued resistance and ensuring the movement's survival beyond its founder.

When applied to a figure like Odinga, metaphors such as "father of the nation," "freedom fighter," or "torchbearer" do more than describe; they invoke a reservoir of collective memory tied to Kenya's historical struggles for democracy and social justice. These metaphorical constructions strategically position Odinga within a pantheon of national heroes, thereby shaping political consciousness and public sentiment.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Conclusion:** This study has demonstrated conclusively that the metaphors used to eulogise Raila Amollo Odinga were not merely acts of mourning; they were the opening salvo in a critical struggle to control Kenya's political future. The discourse of sanctification, while appearing to honour the past, was fundamentally a strategic endeavour to dictate the course of the present and the hereafter. The political consequences of this metaphorical battle are immediate and profound, with direct implications for power, mobilisation, and national stability.

First, the outcome of this discursive contest directly shapes the viability and direction of Kenya's opposition. If the narrative crafted by the grassroots of the "unfinished struggle" and the "eternal torchbearer" prevails, it provides a powerful,

sanctified mandate for continued resistance. This metaphorically charges Odinga's political heirs with a sacred duty, transforming their future electoral campaigns from mere political contests into a moral continuation of his legacy. Conversely, if the state's narrative of Odinga as a "reconciled patriot" and a "shared national inheritance" gains dominance, it effectively disarms the opposition. It co-opts their central symbol, blunts their critique of the incumbent government, and creates a powerful ideological tool for national cohesion that benefits the ruling administration.

Second, this battle for Odinga's metaphoric soul determines the fate of his vast political constituency. The metaphors of "Baba" and the "Lion" are not just symbols; they are the glue holding together a multi-ethnic, multi-generational coalition. By successfully framing Odinga as a sanctified, paternal figure, his allies work to ensure the transference of his followers' loyalty to his political movement and chosen successors. The failure to control these narratives risks the fragmentation of this coalition, as the symbolic centre that held it together is lost or redefined by political adversaries. The very survival of Kenya's most significant opposition force hinges on winning this war of words.

Third, the eulogistic discourse has set the terms for future political legitimacy. By enshrining Odinga as the "Father of Democracy," the discourse establishes a new moral benchmark for leadership. Any future political actor, whether in government or opposition, will now have to position themselves in relation to this sanctified legacy. To claim legitimacy, they must either present themselves as the true inheritors of his "struggle" or, like President Ruto attempted, as the stewards of his final, reconciliatory wisdom. The metaphors have constructed a new ideological battlefield where political legitimacy is won by successfully claiming Odinga's mantle.

Finally, the flood of metaphors in the wake of Odinga's passing was Kenya's most important political event in the nascent post-Odinga era. The eulogies were, in essence, the first draft of the next chapter of the nation's history. The power to define the meaning of his life and death is the power to mobilise millions, to determine the strength and focus of the opposition,

and to shape the ideological terrain upon which the next generation of leaders will compete. The analysis proves that in Kenyan politics, the pen wielding the potent weapon of metaphor is not only mightier than the sword; it is a primary instrument for shaping the destiny of the nation itself.

**Recommendations:** All stakeholders, political actors, media practitioners, civil society organisations, and citizens must recognise that metaphorical discourse is not merely symbolic but materially consequential. Political metaphors shape public perception, construct collective memory, and determine the terms of political legitimacy. Therefore, the following recommendations are offered:

First, for political leaders and their communication teams: The strategic use of metaphor should be approached with ethical responsibility. While metaphors are powerful tools for mobilisation and legitimation, their uncritical deployment can entrench ethnic divisions, mythologise contested figures, and foreclose honest public debate about political legacies. Leaders should be mindful of the long-term ideological effects of the metaphors they employ.

Second, for media practitioners: Journalists and editors should critically examine the metaphors they reproduce in reporting political events. The uncritical adoption of hagiographic metaphors in news coverage can blur the line between journalism and political propaganda. Media houses should develop editorial guidelines for the responsible use of metaphorical language in political reporting, particularly during moments of national mourning.

Third, for civil society and civic educators: There is a need for public education about the power of political

discourse. Citizens should be equipped with the analytical tools to recognise how metaphorical language shapes their political perceptions and to critically evaluate the narratives constructed by political elites. This is essential for the health of democratic deliberation.

Fourth, for scholars and researchers: This study demonstrates the value of integrating CMT and CDA for analysing political discourse. Future research should extend this approach to other political figures, other genres of political communication, and comparative analysis across African contexts. Particular attention should be paid to how eulogistic discourse operates in contexts of political transition, where the struggle over legacy has immediate implications for political stability.

Fifth, for the public: Citizens should remain vigilant consumers of political discourse, recognising that the metaphors used to commemorate political figures are never neutral. The sanctification of any political leader, however revered, should not foreclose critical reflection on their complex legacy. A healthy democracy requires that the memory of political figures be subject to honest public discussion rather than reduced to hagiographic simplifications.

Responsible and ethical use of political metaphors is essential for safeguarding democratic competition, preserving national cohesion, and ensuring peaceful political transitions in the post-Odinga era. The power to name, to frame, and to sanctify is ultimately the power to shape the future. That power must be exercised with accountability to the democratic values that Odinga himself, in the narrative constructed around him, is said to have championed.

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