



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES,
IGNATIUS AJURU UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION
PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA

BOOK OF

CTS



PROFESSOR KONTEIN TRINYA
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

THEME:

HEALING NARRATIVES:

THE THERAPOETICS OF ART-MAKING
AND ENGAGEMENT



WED. 19TH – SAT. 22ND AUG., 2026



10AM DAILY



POSTGRADUATE HALL, MAIN CAMPUS IAUE, PORT HARCOURT

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

HIS HIGHNESS G. EBINYO
OGBOWEI

CHIEF HOST

PROF. OKECHUKU ONUCHUKU
VICE CHANCELLOR - IAUE, PORT HARCOURT

CONVENER

PROF. GLORY WORUKWO
HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES,
IAUE PORT HARCOURT

LEAD PAPER PRESENTER

PROFESSOR GODWIN B. OKON
DIRECTOR, RESEARCH AND DEV., RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY

HOST

PROF. IBIERE KEN-MADUAKO
DEAN, FACULTY OF HUMANITIES - IAUE, PORT HARCOURT

EPONYMOUS HONOREE

PROF. KONTEIN TRINYA

SYNDICATE/PLENARY SESSION:

EMMANUEL AGUMA POSTGRADUATE



BOOK OF ABSTRACT



A

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

WITH

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
IGNATIUS AJURU UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION,
RUMUOLUMENI, P.M.B 5047
PORT HARCOURT.

T H E M E :

HEALING NARRATIVES: THE THERAPOETICS OF ART-MAKING AND ENGAGEMENT

SYNDICATE/PLENARY SESSION
EMMANUEL AGUMA POSTGRADUATE

TIME: 10.00 AM DAILY

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME AND BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Wednesday, August 19, 2026

Arrival of Participants and Guests

Thursday, August 20, 2026

8.00 am	Registration of Conference Attendees
10.00 am - 12.30pm	Opening Ceremony
12.30pm – 1pm	Lunch Break
1pm – 5pm	Syndicate Sessions

DAY 1

Chairman: Mr Cyprian Ojum, Total Energy

Convener: Professor Glory Worukwo

Chief Host: Professor Ibiere Ken-Maduako, Dean, Faculty of Humanities

Special Guest of Honour: Professor Okechuku Onuchuku, Vice Chancellor, IAUE

1. Recognition of Guests
2. National and University Anthems
3. Opening prayer
4. Addresses
 - a. Chairman of the Planning Committee
 - b. Convener: Professor Glory Worukwo, HOD, English and Literary Studies
 - c. Professor Ibiere Ken-Maduako Dean, Faculty of Humanities
 - d. Chairman's Opening Remarks
5. Vice Chancellor's remarks and decelerations
6. Poem citation by
7. Keynote Paper Presentation: His Highness G. Ebinyo Ogbowei
8. Lead paper presenter By Professor Godwin B. Okon
9. Goodwill messages
10. Remarks by Professor Kontein Trinya
11. Closing Prayers
12. Session of Photographs
13. Lunch Break
14. Syndicate/Plenary

DAY 2

Friday, August 21, 2026

9.30am – 10.am	Opening Session
10.am – 1.30 pm	Syndicate/Plenary
1.30pm – 2pm	Lunch Break
2pm – 3.30pm	Plenary <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Announcementsb. reading of Communiquec. Issuance of Certificates of Participationd. Interactions/Networkinge. closing

Saturday, August 22, 2026

Departure



WELCOME ADDRESS BY Chairman, Local Organizing Committee, 5th Conference

Distinguished scholars, respected academics, artists, researchers, practitioners, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure and honour to warmly welcome you all to this important conference, organised around the thought-provoking theme, “Healing Narratives: The Therapoetics of Art-Making and Engagement.”

On behalf of the organisers, I sincerely appreciate your presence and participation. Your decision to be part of this conference demonstrates a shared commitment to exploring the transformative possibilities of the arts and their capacity to speak to the human condition. The theme of this conference is both timely and significant. We live in a world characterised by social tensions, displacement, violence, loss, inequality, cultural dislocation, psychological distress and numerous forms of human suffering. In the midst of these challenges, art continues to provide humanity with a language through which pain can be expressed, experiences can be remembered, identities can be reconstructed, and hope can be restored.

“Healing Narratives” therefore invites us to consider the stories we tell about ourselves, our communities and our societies. Narratives do more than entertain us. They preserve memories, interpret experiences and give meaning to events that may otherwise remain difficult to articulate. Through literature, theatre, music, dance, visual arts, film, storytelling and other creative practices, individuals and communities can transform experiences of pain into narratives of survival, resilience and renewal. The concept of “therapoetics” is particularly compelling because it brings together therapy and poetic or artistic expression. It encourages us to examine how the creative process itself can become a pathway towards healing. The artist does not merely produce an aesthetic object; the act of creating may provide a space for reflection, dialogue, emotional expression and reconstruction.

Art-making can give voice to those whose experiences have been silenced. It can create bridges between generations and cultures. It can help communities remember difficult histories while also imagining alternative futures. It can challenge oppressive narratives and replace them with stories that affirm dignity, resilience and human possibility. This conference, therefore, provides an important platform for scholars, artists, practitioners and cultural workers to interrogate the relationship between art, memory, trauma, identity, healing and social engagement. I am confident that the papers, performances, discussions and creative engagements that will emerge from this gathering will expand our understanding of what art can do in individual and collective life.

I encourage all delegates to participate actively in the intellectual conversations of this conference. Let us listen to one another, exchange ideas freely and respectfully, and create opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. Let us also move beyond discussing art as an object of study and consider art as a process of engagement, intervention and transformation. As we begin this conference, may we remember that healing does not necessarily mean forgetting the past. Sometimes, healing begins when painful experiences are given a voice, when difficult memories are acknowledged, and when people are empowered to tell their own stories. I hope that our deliberations will produce not only scholarly contributions but also new perspectives and practical possibilities for using artistic expression to promote individual well-being, cultural understanding, social cohesion and community renewal.

Once again, I warmly welcome all our distinguished delegates, keynote speakers, presenters, artists, researchers, students and guests. Thank you for honouring this conference with your presence. I wish us all stimulating intellectual engagements, meaningful artistic experiences and fruitful collaborations. You are all most welcome.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

Dr. Harrison Nwachukwu
Chairman LOC



Letting Go as Therapoetic Practice: A Reading of Etire's Abureni poem *Alimon Odigh Ewel*

By

Daniami ETIRE

Department of Linguistics and Language Arts
University of Port Harcourt
dan.etire@dipato.com

Abstract

This paper examines Etire's Abureni poem *Alimon Odigh Ewel* as a cultural model of emotional healing. The poem centres on the phrase *odigh ewel*, glossed as “acting goat”, which describes a deliberate choice to let go of provocation and respond with restraint. In Abureni thought, this act is understood as emotional intelligence that supports long term wellbeing. Across twenty-two stanzas, the poem links “acting goat” with blessing, patience, hidden wisdom, relationship, healing, courage, and new birth. These associations create a narrative that encourages readers to reinterpret anger, conflict, and disappointment through a healing lens. Methodologically, the study used a questionnaire containing customised closed and open questions to gather data from respondents across age grades, gender, literacy levels, native residents, and selected diaspora participants. This method helped confirm that the meanings attached to *odigh ewel* arise from lived experiences rather than impressionistic views. The responses provided evidence that the poem reflects shared cultural practices of emotional restraint and relational balance. The study draws on research about Indigenous healing systems, which emphasise community wellbeing, relational harmony, and culturally grounded emotional practices. These frameworks show that healing often involves collective values and narrative reframing rather than individual diagnosis. This perspective supports the argument that *odigh ewel* is a therapoetic practice that guides emotional release and self-control. By analysing the poem through narrative healing techniques and Indigenous psychology, the paper demonstrates how Abureni poetic expression offers a culturally specific method for managing tension and cultivating resilience, with scope for wider application.

Keywords: Abureni, poem, therapoetic practice, Indigenous psychology, emotional restraint

Unhoming the Domestic: Fictional Narratives as Coping Mechanisms in Selected African Women's Fiction

By

Felicia Ukachi Eze-Dike, PhD & Mangibo Bomatebo Ikegboma.

Department of English, Faculty of Humanities
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt
Phone No: 08037327736, fellydyke@gmail.com,
Mangiboikegbom@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines how domestic space functions as a contested site of power, identity formation, and healing in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*, Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, and Mariama Bâ's *So Long a Letter*. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's theory of the social production of space, Doreen Massey's relational conception of place, Homi K. Bhabha's notion of the unhomely, and African feminist perspectives articulated by Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie and Obioma Nnaemeka, the study employs qualitative textual analysis to investigate how domestic environments simultaneously produce oppression and create possibilities for resilience, identity reconstruction, and healing. The study advances the concept of Unhoming the Domestic to explain the literary reconfiguration of home from an assumed site of stability into a politically contested and emotionally dynamic space where women negotiate belonging, challenge patriarchal authority, and reimagine alternative futures. It argues that healing in the selected novels emerges not through escape from domesticity but through women's continuous negotiation of domestic space, thereby contributing a new spatial perspective to African feminist literary criticism and healing narratives.

Keywords: African women's fiction, domesticity, healing narratives, gendered space, female agency, belonging, Unhoming the Domestic



Listening as an Act of Reconstruction: The Recipient's Role in Shaping the Speaker's Self

By

Vivian Ijeoma NWOKE, PhD & Irene Nkeiru AGU, PhD

Center for General Studies, Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, Bayelsa State.

nwokevivianiije@gmail.com/aguiirenen@gmail.com

08056765309/08034746248

Abstract

This opinion paper advances a reconceptualization of listening as an active, performative, and co-constructive process rather than a passive act of reception. Drawing on symbolic interactionism, dialogic theory, and contemporary listening scholarship, we argue that through specific listening practices, the recipient functions as a "co-author," actively reconstructing the speaker's self-narrative, identity, and sense of agency. This paper examines the mechanisms through which this reconstruction occurs including active silence, paraphrasing, non-verbal cues, and questioning. It explores the implications of this reconstructive power for the speaker's self-perception and agency. The argument culminates in an ethical framework that positions listening as a moral act, distinguishing between listening for discovery and listening for confirmation. By reframing listening as foundational to identity formation, this paper calls for a fundamental shift in how communication scholars theorize reception: from valuing expression to practicing accountability, and from treating the self as fixed to understanding it as emergent within the listening space. The paper concludes that true listening constitutes the highest form of respect and the most profound form of influence we can offer another person.

Keywords: Listening, Self-construction, Symbolic interactionism, Co-construction, Ethical listening

Restoring the Nation: The Therapeutic Function of Poetry in David Diop's "Africa"

By

Dr Blessing Omofowe Odhe

blessodhe@gmail.com

&

Dr Mark-Inwang Kate Chinomso

kaygeogian@yahoo.com

Abstract

In postcolonial African literature, poetry has functioned not only as protest but as medicine. African writers turned to literature as a site of repair. This paper examines David Diop's "Africa" as a therapeutic text that addresses the psychological, cultural, and historical wounds inflicted by colonization. Drawing on Post-colonial Theory and theories of literature as healing, the study argues that Diop's poem functions as cultural therapy: it names colonial trauma, reconnects the African subject to a dignified past, and projects a future of restoration. Through imagery of the body, blood, and rebirth, Diop transforms poetry from aesthetic expression into a tool for national healing. This research concludes that "Africa" does not merely lament; it restores by re-imagining the nation beyond the damage of empire, thereby providing psychological healing, restoring cultural identity, and offering communal catharsis from historical and modern traumas such as colonialism, displacement, and social oppression.

Keywords: Postcolonialism, Healing, Trauma, Negritude, Restoration, and cultural



Narrating Healing: Cura Divina, Ritual Performance, and Therapeutic Engagement in Selected Indigenous Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria

Peter ALOKAN, PhD and Opeyemi Mayowa ADEWALE

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies,

Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji
Osun State, Nigeria

Email: papacygo@gmail.com,

adewaleopeyemi38@gmail.com

Phone Number: 08034741729, 08050449687,
08138809141, 09161322586

Abstract

This paper examines Cura Divina (divine healing) in the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), the Cherubim and Seraphim Church (C&S), and the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) as forms of healing narratives expressed through ritual performance, testimonies, prophetic discourse, prayer, and communal participation. Drawing on qualitative data generated through thirty semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentary sources, the study argues that healing in these churches extends beyond physical recovery to include the reconstruction of identity, hope, and communal belonging through narrative and symbolic practices. Rather than treating healing solely as a theological doctrine, the paper explores how believers narrate suffering, interpret illness, and perform recovery through culturally meaningful religious expressions. The findings reveal that while the three churches share biblical foundations for divine healing, they differ in their narrative styles, ritual symbolism, and modes of therapeutic engagement. The Christ Apostolic Church privileges prayer and faith as dominant healing narratives; the Cherubim and Seraphim Church integrates symbolic ritual and prophetic storytelling; and the Celestial Church of Christ constructs elaborate ritual performances that dramatize divine intervention. The paper concludes that Cura Divina functions as a therapeutic narrative through which individuals and communities negotiate suffering, restore meaning, and cultivate resilience. By bringing Religious Studies into conversation with narrative theory, performance studies, and African literary

criticism, the study contributes to interdisciplinary discussions on healing narratives in contemporary Africa.

Keywords: Healing Narratives, Cura Divina, Ritual Performance, Testimony, African Pentecostalism, Therapeutic Engagement, Narrative Studies.

Headhunt against Panafricanism in *Lettre Officielle de Kemi Seba en Direct de Prison en Afrique du Sud*

Fiacre AHO

English Department

University of Abomey-Calavi

Email: fiacre.aho@uac.bj

Orcid: 0009-0006-5784-1582

Phone Number: +2290166393265

&

Queen Olubukola AYENI

Department of Foreign Languages and

Diplomatic Studies

University of Calabar

Email: buckyayeni@gmail.com

Orcid: 0000-0002-8457-3214

Phone number: +2348033948

Abstract

This paper examines the destructive machine put in place by colonial masters to silence famous and influential pan-Africanist voices. It presents the prison testimony of Kemi Seba, a letter written during his detention in South Africa. Through anti-colonial theory and post-colonial theory that expose colonial machinery, comment on 'the imperial gaze' and empower 'writing back', the paper denounces the coordinated political conspiracy involving the French, Beninese and South African authorities. It regrets the absence of pardon from the political authorities of the pan-Africanist's home country and deplores the commitment of Beninese authorities to comply with the desire of France for the downfall of the movement of Kemi Seba. The paper considers the allegations linking the pan-Africanist to terrorism, money laundering and violent activities as neo-colonial machinations to undermine his movement that compromise the interests of France in Africa. It shows that the movement of pan-Africanism is non-violent and aims at African sovereignty and pan-African emancipation. The paper highlights



how Western machinations function as a very pernicious network to neutralise the anti-imperialist resistance. Ultimately, the article launches a call for African collective conscience, solidarity, resistance and self-determination.

Keywords: colonial master, collective conscience, destructive machine, downfall, pan-Africanist voices, pernicious network, solidarity.

Trauma, Memory and Therapoetics of Storytelling in Chigozie Obioma's *The Road to The Country*

Grace M. AJALA & God'sgift E. ADEPOJU

Department of English, Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji Arakeji, Osun State

sufficientgrace06@gmail.com, 08034919078

geadepoju@jabu.edu.ng, 08165061572

ABSTRACT

Psychological and emotional scars are commonly attached to traumatic experiences, which lasts longer in the minds of victims, and leaving them with memories of pains. In contemporary African literature, storytelling has become a therapeutic process that preserves memory, confronts trauma and imagines possibilities for healing, while serving as a way to record painful histories. The historical and sociopolitical aspects of Chigozie Obioma's *The Road to the Country* have been extensively studied in previous researches but the therapeutic role of storytelling as means of negotiating trauma and memory has received less attention. This study examines the use of storytelling as a therapeutic technique for overcoming trauma and maintaining memory. The analysis is anchored in Trauma Theory as its theoretical framework and a critical lens through which the memories and experiences of Chigozie Obioma's characters in the novel are shaped by extreme pain. The study uses a qualitative textual approach and also performs a close reading of *The Road to the Country*, to explore how narrative techniques construct healing through storytelling. The study finds that *The Road to the Country* offers storytelling as a therapeutic technique for revisiting, negotiating and transforming traumatic memories into

avenues for both individual and collective healing. It also shows that memory presentation prompts emotional healing, historical awareness and resilience. The study contributes to the growing discourse on therapoetics by revealing how literature serves as therapeutic space for memory, healing and resilience.

Keywords: Therapeutic, Memory, Trauma, Storytelling, *The Road to the Country*

Poetic Weaving as a Form of Therapeutic Art in Obari Gomba's, *Pearls of the Mangrove*

By

Ayebanoa Timibofa, PhD

Department of English Education,
Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education
Sagbama, Bayelsa State, Nigeria
+2347062918048

Theophilus Kika OTUARE & Tuoyo-Matida JACK, PhD

Delta State Maritime Polytechnic, Buruu

&

Ebiere Mathias,

English Education, Isaac Jasper Boro College
of Education, Sagbama

Abstract

This study examines poetic weaving as a form of therapeutic art in Obari Gomba's *Pearls of the Mangrove*, arguing that the collection transforms poetry into a restorative medium through which ecological devastation, social injustice, and collective trauma in the Niger Delta are confronted and imaginatively healed. While existing scholarship has predominantly interpreted the collection from environmental justice and socio-political perspectives, limited attention has been paid to its therapeutic aesthetic and its capacity to facilitate emotional resilience, memory reconstruction, and psychological recovery. Adopting an interdisciplinary framework that integrates expressive arts therapy, trauma theory, and ecocriticism, the study undertakes a qualitative textual analysis of selected poems to demonstrate how Gomba intricately weaves images of nature, memory, loss, hope, and resistance into a poetic fabric that transcends



mere environmental protest. The analysis reveals that the poet employs symbolism, metaphor, lyrical cadence, and ecological imagery not only to document the destructive consequences of oil exploitation but also to create imaginative spaces for mourning, healing, reconciliation, and cultural renewal. The mangrove, recurrently represented as both a wounded ecosystem and a resilient cultural symbol, functions as a therapeutic landscape where fractured identities and communal memories are reconstructed. The study contributes to emerging scholarship on literature, environmental humanities, and therapeutic arts by establishing *Pearls of the Mangrove* as a significant example of how contemporary African poetry promotes healing, resilience, and human-environment interconnectedness in contexts marked by ecological violence and historical trauma.

Keywords: Poetic weaving, Therapeutic art, Ecopoetry, Trauma, Healing

Exploring the Healing Potential of Musical Engagement in Trauma Recovery from a Therapoetics Perspective

Irene Nkeiru AGU, PhD

Department of Mass Communication
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt
aguirenen@gmail.com
08063897554

Vivian Ijeoma NWOKE, PhD

Center for General Studies
Federal Polytechnic
Ekowe, Bayelsa State
nwokevivianije@gmail.com

Abstract

Trauma disrupts memory and disturbs the ordinary sense of a coherent life story. Talk-based therapies, though valuable, often struggle when trauma is deeply embodied or when survivors find it difficult to put their experience into words. Music offers a different way in. It engages the body and emotions directly, without requiring survivors to explain what happened in a straight, logical order. This paper proposes a therapoetics approach to trauma recovery, treating musical engagement not as a background activity but as an active process of

healing and meaning-making in its own right. Drawing on Arthur Frank's work on illness narratives and Tia DeNora's writing on music and everyday life, the paper considers how making or engaging with music allows survivors to rebuild a sense of self after trauma has fractured it. The study uses a qualitative approach, drawing on interviews and listening sessions with people who have taken part in structured musical activities after traumatic experiences, analysed through thematic and narrative methods. Findings show that musical engagement helps survivors regulate their emotions, restores a sense of continuity in their lives and gives shape to experiences that are otherwise difficult to express in words. Rhythm and melody appear to support memory processing, offering survivors an alternative language when words are not enough. The paper argues that therapoetics principles deserve a stronger place in trauma-informed care, especially in settings where formal psychological support is limited and makes the case for music as a genuine form of healing knowledge in its own right.

Keywords: therapoetics, musical engagement, trauma recovery, narrative reconstruction, embodied healing

Digital Storytelling as a Therapeutic Communication Tool: Social Media Narratives and Mental Health Advocacy among Nigerian Youth

By:

Margaret Jack Adebisi

margaret.jack-adebisi@rsu.edu.ng

Abstract

The increasing prevalence of mental health challenges among Nigerian youth has intensified the need for innovative communication approaches that promote awareness, reduce stigma, and encourage help-seeking behaviors. As social media continues to shape contemporary communication, digital storytelling has emerged as a powerful medium through which individuals share lived experiences, foster empathy, and create supportive online communities. This paper examines digital storytelling as a therapeutic communication tool, exploring how social



media narratives contribute to mental health advocacy among Nigerian youth. Anchored in Narrative Theory and Narrative Transportation Theory, the paper argues that authentic digital narratives facilitate emotional healing, identity reconstruction, social connectedness, and public engagement while challenging misconceptions surrounding mental health. Adopting a conceptual approach through an extensive review of contemporary literature, the study synthesizes existing scholarship on digital storytelling, therapeutic communication, and mental health advocacy within the Nigerian context. The paper highlights the transformative potential of user-generated content across platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, X, YouTube, podcasts, and blogs in amplifying marginalized voices, encouraging peer support, and normalizing conversations about psychological well-being. It concludes that digital storytelling extends beyond information dissemination to become a participatory therapeutic process that empowers individuals and communities to confront mental health challenges collectively. The study recommends greater collaboration among communication scholars, mental health professionals, policymakers, and digital content creators to harness storytelling as a sustainable strategy for mental health advocacy and public engagement in Nigeria.

Keywords: Digital storytelling; therapeutic communication; mental health advocacy; social media narratives; Nigerian youth; therapeutics.

Digital Healing: The Narrative of Self-Compassion and Emotional Resilience Among Contemporary Nigerian Youths

God'sgift E. ADEPOJU & Grace M. AJALA

Department of English

Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji Arakeji,
Osun State

geadepoju@jabu.edu.ng, 08165061572

sufficientgrace06@gmail.com, 08034919078

Abstract

Digital storytelling beyond traditional literary texts, has expanded the therapeutic possibilities of self-narratives. The increasing prevalence of psychological distress among Nigerian youths,

caused by insecurity, limited access to mental health services, social isolation, has intensified the search for accessible and responsive pathways to emotional healing. Mental health discourses within the digital space is the focus of this study. While scholarship on Nigerian literature has predominantly focused on trauma, gender inequality, and violence, considerably less attention has been paid to the narratives that actively cultivate healing through self-compassion. Hence, the study examines digital healing narratives as contemporary expressions of therapoetics. It argues that storytelling functions not merely as a representation of suffering but also as an artistic practice of emotional recovery, identity reconstruction, and self-renewal. The study draws on Kristin Neff's Self-Compassion Theory as its primary theoretical framework, alongside Narrative Therapy and Narrative Identity Theory. The study adopts a qualitative research design that employs digital ethnography, narrative inquiry, and thematic analysis to explore how these digital narratives challenge stigma that surround mental health while encouraging self-acceptance and psychological resilience among young Nigerians. Through the shared experiences, the study finds out that the narrative of self-compassion is often achieved through hope, renewal, resilience, and self-kindness that reconstructs individual identity. The study contributes to the interdisciplinary studies of literature, digital humanities, and medical humanities. It further demonstrates that digital healing narratives constitute an important contemporary form of artistic engagement capable of fostering emotional well-being and strengthening community-based mental health advocacy in Nigeria.

Keywords: Digital Storytelling, Self-Compassion Narratives, Mental Health, Therapoetics, Medical Humanities



Digital Storytelling as Therapeutic Intervention: Narrative Healing and Mental Health Advocacy in Okechukwu Oku's Strained (2023)

By

Goodluck Ayodeji Babatunde

Department of Performing Arts and Film Studies

Lead City University, Ibadan

Storytelling and therapy share a longstanding kinship: both are structured around the ordering of experience, the externalisation of pain, and the possibility of transformation through narrative. This paper examines how that kinship is reconfigured in the digital age, exploring digital storytelling as an instrument of mental health advocacy within Africa's expanding streaming ecosystem, using Okechukwu Oku's Netflix film *Strained* (2023) as its case study. Set in Enugu, Nigeria, the film follows Eberé, whose fractured relationship with her mother is offered an unexpected path toward repair following childbirth, addressing postpartum strain, intergenerational trauma, and domestic violence with restraint, refusing both clinical detachment and moral judgement in favour of compassionate, human-centred narrative logic. Drawing on indigenous aesthetic scholarship (Abiodun; Drewal and Drewal) and decolonial media theory (Ndlovu-Gatsheni; wa Thiong'o), this paper argues that *Strained* exemplifies a distinctly African model of narrative healing, privileging communal accountability over individualised clinical paradigms, while streaming platforms' global reach confers unprecedented capacity for cross-border psychosocial impact. The paper offers policymakers, cultural institutions, and mental health practitioners a critical framework for harnessing digital narrative art to advance public conversations on psychological wellbeing across Africa and its diaspora.

Keywords: digital storytelling; narrative therapy; mental health advocacy; Nollywood; decolonial media theory; postpartum trauma; streaming platform

Digital Storytelling for Mental Health Advocacy

By

Precious Sunday Augustus

Department of English

University of Uyo

preciousaugustus@uniuyo.edu.ng

Abstract

This paper examines digital storytelling as a cultural and rhetorical practice through which mental health is narrated, performed, politicized, and humanized in contemporary society. Drawing on perspectives from literary studies, media studies, cultural studies, and narrative theory, the paper interrogates how online stories—shared through blogs, Instagram posts, podcasts, YouTube videos, short documentaries, and mental health campaigns—function as counter-narratives to dominant representations of mental illness as shameful, invisible, or socially disabling. It argues that digital storytelling transforms private pain into public discourse by making lived experience legible within a networked culture of witnessing, affect, and participation. Through autobiographical fragments, confessional modes, testimonial narratives, and multimodal self-representation, digital storytellers construct spaces of recognition, solidarity, and resistance where mental health struggles are not merely medicalized conditions but deeply social, cultural, and political experiences. The paper further explores the ambivalent power of digital platforms as sites of advocacy. On one hand, they democratize voice, foster community, and enable alternative archives of suffering, healing, and resilience; on the other hand, they expose mental health narratives to surveillance, commodification, algorithmic visibility, and performative vulnerability. By reading digital storytelling as both aesthetic expression and activist intervention, the paper contends that mental health advocacy in the digital age is increasingly shaped by narrative practices that blur the boundaries between testimony, therapy, performance, and public pedagogy. Ultimately, the study positions digital storytelling as a transformative cultural form that not only gives language to psychic pain but also reimagines mental health advocacy as an ethics of listening, witnessing, and collective care in a digitally mediated world.



Healing Beyond Shame: The Art of Self-Compassion as Resistance to Self-Condemnation

Felicia TAMUNO, PhD

Independent Researcher

Email: tamunofelicia@gmail.com

Telephone: 08033956321

Abstract

Healing is often understood as recovery from trauma, illness, or adversity. Yet, one of the greatest obstacles to healing is not the original wound itself but the enduring burden of shame and self-condemnation that frequently follows suffering. Individuals who experience failure, grief, rejection, abuse, loss, or personal setbacks often internalize critical self-narratives that perpetuate emotional distress long after external circumstances have changed. While contemporary scholarship has established the psychological benefits of self-compassion in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression, comparatively little attention has been devoted to understanding self-compassion as an intentional act of resistance against internalized shame and self-condemnation. This conceptual paper addresses that gap by examining how the art of self-compassion facilitates healing through the transformation of one's relationship with the self. Drawing on Kristin Neff's Self-Compassion Theory, Paul Gilbert's Compassion-Focused Therapy, Narrative Identity Theory, and Brené Brown's scholarship on shame and vulnerability, the paper argues that authentic healing does not require the erasure of painful experiences but the compassionate reinterpretation of those experiences. Rather than viewing self-compassion as self-indulgence or emotional avoidance, the paper conceptualizes it as a courageous ethical practice through which individuals resist harsh self-judgment, embrace their shared humanity, and cultivate mindful acceptance of suffering. Through this process, destructive narratives of guilt, inadequacy, and unworthiness are transformed into narratives of resilience, hope, and flourishing. Situated within the framework of Therapoetics, the paper further contends that healing is fundamentally narrative in nature. The stories individuals tell themselves about their wounds often determine whether those wounds become sources of lifelong self-condemnation or opportunities for growth. Self-compassion therefore becomes a therapeutic art

that enables individuals to rewrite internal narratives without denying pain, replacing condemnation with understanding and shame with dignity. It concludes that healing begins not when suffering disappears, but when individuals cease to become the authors of their own condemnation and instead embrace themselves with the same compassion they readily extend to others.

Keywords: Self-compassion; Shame; Self-condemnation; Narrative Identity; Compassion-Focused Therapy; Psychological Well-being.

Healing Through Leadership Narratives: Identity Reconstruction, Language, and Women's Resilience in Nigeria's Banking Industry—A Critical Narrative Review

Felicia TAMUNO, PhD & Victoria Edet UDOEMA, PhD

Independent Researcher

Chartered Mediator and Trained Arbitrator
Fellow, Chartered Institute of Human Resource
Management

Email: tamunofelicia@gmail.com

Phone: 08033956321

Victoria Edet UDOEMA, PhD

Department of English and Literary Studies
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE)
Phone: 07065828968

Abstract

This paper examines how leadership narratives function as acts of meaning-making and healing through which women reinterpret adversity, reconstruct professional identities, and sustain leadership aspirations within Nigeria's banking industry. The paper adopts a critical narrative literature review informed by Narrative Therapy, Narrative Identity Theory, interpretive narrative inquiry, and feminist leadership scholarship. It synthesizes interdisciplinary scholarship on women's leadership, narrative identity, organizational communication, workplace well-being, resilience, and gender in financial institutions. Drawing on literature from leadership studies, gender studies, communication, organizational psychology, and narrative inquiry, the paper examines how storytelling and language serve as mechanisms for identity reconstruction and resilience among



women professionals. Rather than treating workplace stories merely as accounts of experience, the paper conceptualizes them as narrative acts of healing through which individuals construct meaning, negotiate professional identities, and transform workplace adversity into opportunities for personal and leadership growth. The review demonstrates that storytelling, reflective practice, mentoring relationships, peer dialogue, and professional communities constitute important narrative spaces through which women make sense of workplace exclusion, gender bias, burnout, career setbacks, and leadership challenges. These narratives facilitate emotional recovery, strengthen self-efficacy, reinforce professional identity, and sustain leadership aspirations despite organizational constraints. The literature further suggests that inclusive organizational cultures, psychologically safe workplaces, and supportive leadership environments enhance the healing potential of these narratives by creating spaces where women can share experiences, receive validation, cultivate resilience, and build supportive professional networks. The paper argues that leadership development should extend beyond technical competence and managerial capability to embrace narrative-based approaches that recognize the significance of lived experience, emotional well-being, and identity formation. Integrating storytelling, reflective dialogue, mentoring, and narrative practices into leadership development programmes can strengthen resilience, promote workplace inclusion, and support women's progression into senior leadership positions within the banking industry. By bringing together leadership studies, narrative theory, communication, organizational psychology, and feminist scholarship, this paper offers an interdisciplinary contribution to emerging conversations on healing narratives and women's leadership in Africa. It argues that storytelling is not merely a means of recounting experience but a transformative practice through which women reconstruct identity, cultivate resilience, and reimagine leadership within complex organizational environments. The paper concludes that healing narratives are strategic leadership resources capable of fostering resilient professionals, promoting inclusive organizational cultures, and advancing sustainable leadership development in Nigeria's

banking industry.

Keywords: Healing Narratives; Narrative Identity; Women in Banking; Leadership; Resilience; Identity Reconstruction; Organizational Communication; Narrative Therapy; Nigeria

Indigenous Language Shift and Identity Reconstruction Among Gen-Zs. The South-South Situation

By

Merosobo Lawson-Ikuru

Federal University Otuoke

lawson-ikurumm@fuotuoike.edu.ng

Abstract

This study investigates the phenomenon of indigenous language shift and its implications on identity reconstruction with a focus on the Gen-Z population in South-South Nigeria. It examines the sociocultural and technological factors influencing indigenous language shift and explores the relationship between language and identity reconstruction. The research design is mixed method. Data were collected through structured interview designed for Gen-Zs using the google form tool and were analysed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics and the qualitatively, they were analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns and meanings. Findings reveal that the constant abandonment of indigenous languages domains of language use in South-South Nigeria for dominant Nigerian Pidgin and English even in local communities, has led to the rapid loss of personal and community identity, language endangerment, cultural heritage and indigenous language systems. Recommendations include the inclusion of technology in the preservation of indigenous languages especially as technology has become the new normal for Gen-Zs.

Keyword - Language Shift, Identity Reconstruction, Gen-Z, South-South



Identifying with the Homeland: Evaluating Poetry as an Art of Healing, Recovery and Memory Preservation in Ojaide's, *Songs of Myself*

By

Arthur Oroukpo, PhD, Ayebanoa Timibofa, PhD, Orusengha O. Rejoice

English Department,

Isaac Jasper Boro College Education

Sagbama, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

arthurorupou@gmail.com, +2347062918048,

Ayisat24@gmail.com,

orusengharejoice@gmail.com

&

Ogbor, Bulounemugha Faith (Ph.D)

Delta State Maritime Polytechnic, Burutu

School of General, English Department Email:

bulounemugha@gmail.com

Abstract

Scholarship on Tanure Ojaide's *Songs of Myself* has largely approached the collection through ecocriticism, postcolonial environmental discourse, and indigenous ecological consciousness, with particular emphasis on its critique of oil exploitation, environmental degradation, and political marginalization in the Niger Delta. Although these studies have substantially advanced understanding of Ojaide's environmental activism and cultural nationalism, they have devoted comparatively little attention to the therapeutic dimensions of his poetry, especially its capacity to foster healing, recovery, and the preservation of collective memory in the aftermath of ecological trauma. This omission limits appreciation of the collection's broader aesthetic and psychological significance as a literary response to environmental violence and cultural dislocation. Addressing this gap, this study examines *Songs of Myself* as an artistic medium through which traumatic experience is transformed into narratives of resilience, remembrance, and communal renewal. Drawing on Trauma Theory, particularly the work of Cathy Caruth. The study employs qualitative textual analysis to explore how Ojaide reconstructs the homeland as a symbolic space of identity, healing, and cultural continuity. The analysis shows that the poet moves beyond environmental protest by deploying memory, indigenous oral aesthetics, ancestral consciousness, and ecological imagination as therapeutic resources for

negotiating individual and collective trauma. Rather than representing the Niger Delta solely as a devastated landscape, Ojaide reimagines it as a repository of cultural memory whose preservation is essential to psychological recovery and communal resilience. The study concludes that *Songs of Myself* expands the possibilities of African ecopoetry by positioning poetry not only as a vehicle for environmental advocacy but also as an instrument of healing, recovery, and memory preservation. It further contributes to African literary scholarship by integrating Trauma Theory with ecocritical readings of Ojaide's poetry, thereby offering a fresh interpretive framework for understanding the intersections of ecological trauma, homeland, identity, and cultural survival in contemporary African literature.

Keywords: Identifying, homeland, healing, recovery and memory

Stories as Panacea to Human Exigencies

By

Everest Onyekaziri ANYANWU

Department of English Studies

Faculty of Humanities,

University of Port Harcourt.

everestanyanwu9@gmail.com

Abstract

This work explores the narrative paradigm. It is a concept that views humans as storytellers. Stories better make sense of the world. It examines stories of 'living and stories of the imagination'. It involves engaging in the use of persuasion, or using the stories in conveying meanings in order to establish a meaningful life-world as against the use of logic and argument. It is a discourse theory postulated by Walter Fisher, a twentieth century narrative linguist. The theory holds that humans are homo narrans, essentially storytellers. A descriptive method has been adopted. Two stories are presented and analysed. The Franklin's Tale by Chaucer, and the madman by Chinua Achebe. Findings: the Franklin's Tale is an example of a narrative paradigm. It focused on characters display of bigheartedness and loyalty to a code of behaviour. The thematic refrain also explores the complexities of love, promises and honour. Here, this tale aligns with narrative paradigm. The story shapes our understanding. This narrative focuses on love, genuine love at a



superlative display. Honour, generosity, keeping one's words, faithfulness to a code of conduct. It also hinges on oath fulfillment; it evokes a strong emotional empathy. Another story is the story of the Madman by Chinua Achebe. It is a story that believes on the allegory: 'the individual is a product of the matrix, never the matrix itself'. No matter how influential, famous or wealthy a person becomes, the individual is still not greater than the society. The individual remains silent having been overwhelmed by the larger society. Silence is needed on the side of nwibe. There was nothing he could say that would justify his being stark naked even in a market square. Also appearance is deceptive. The story spotlights the importance of appearance in our societies. One is usually addressed by one's appearance. Nwibe is regarded a madman because only an insane person could walk out his or her home naked. Narrative paradigm is therefore a better approach to handle complex societal problems.

Key words: Narration, paradigm, Rationality, presuppositions, rhetorical beings

Melodic Healing: Music and Deliverance in Traumatic Recovery.

By

Barnabas KOMI

Department of Religious And Cultural Studies,
Faculty of Humanities,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt.
barnabas.komi@iaue.edu.ng 08068058364

Abstract

This paper examined the healing therapy that is embedded in melodic music and healing as a means of traumatic recovery and deliverance. As noted, that music can be explained as an organized noise. This noise needs interpretation but its aim is to bring messages to the hearer for traumatic recovery. Music is seen in forms and processes that become the medium of communication and recovers whatever ailments. In this context, music is subdivided into praise, lullaby that is song that serves as aesthetics' and sleeping pill. Generally, music has done more harm than good if it is not properly utilized as means of healing to the human body. This work engaged the advocacy criticism as its hermeneutics. The case study of

king Saul who was traumatized out of depression but was remedied through melodious songs. This research explores the theory of collective effervescence advocated by Emile Durkheim, which reveals that man is dynamic and becomes an influence in a social group which implies that most of man's trauma is socially deduced. It implies that when a piece of music is put together it creates alto, bass, treble, and in its crescendo the best of its medicine can be produced. This work engaged the qualitative method of data analysis, primary and secondary sources of data collected. Nevertheless, a maximum of 30-50 oral interviewee was selected as sampling technique. The work contributes to knowledge applying afro-gospel songs had given to healing of those who were mentally oppressed and recommends such song for trauma recovery and deliverance.

KEY WORDS: Trauma, recovery, music, deliverance, healing

Healing Narratives: The Therapy of Role Playing

By

Inyingiwari Christopher Violet FUBARA

Department of English and Literary Studies
Faculty of Humanities,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port
Harcourt

Email: inyingiwari.fubara@iaue.edu.ng
Phone number: 08064020113

Abstract

Role-playing has emerged as a compelling performative and literary practice through which individuals reinterpret lived experiences and reconstruct fractured identities. Drawing on Reader-Response Theory, particularly the premise that meaning is actively produced through the interaction between text and reader, this paper examines role-playing as a therapoetics art form in which participants become both readers and performers of their own life narratives. Situated at the intersection of literature, performance studies, psychodrama, and drama therapy, the study argues that role-playing transforms personal experience into an interpretive text capable of generating new meanings, emotional healing, and narrative renewal. The paper explores how improvisational performance enables participants to revisit traumatic memories, inhabit alternative identities, and negotiate



multiple perspectives within a supportive aesthetic environment. Through embodied interpretation, the self assumes the dual role of author and reader, continually revising narratives that were once defined by silence, fear, and emotional fragmentation. Reader-Response Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding this process, as healing emerges through active engagement with personal stories rather than passive recollection. Meaning is therefore not fixed but continuously recreated through performance, reflection, and dialogue. The study contends that role-playing is both an interpretive and creative act that restores narrative agency and strengthens empathy, self-awareness, and emotional resilience. By integrating literary interpretation with trauma informed and culturally responsive practices, role-playing becomes a transformative space where lived experience is re-authored through performance. Ultimately, the paper affirms that healing, like literary meaning, is a dynamic process of interpretation in which individuals become active participants in recreating their stories as enduring narratives of hope, resilience, and human flourishing.

Keywords: Reader-Response Theory, Role-playing, Therapoetics, Performance Studies, Drama Therapy, Narrative Identity, Trauma, Literary Interpretation, Healing, Psychodrama.

Indigenous Proverbs in Conflict Resolution in Olomu Kingdom of the Niger Delta: A Therapeutic and Peacebuilding Perspective

By

Mark Omorovie IKEKE, Matthias JARIKRE, PhD & Ijeoma LADELE, PhD

Department of Peace Studies & Conflict Resolution,

National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

nou248189491@noun.edu.ng

08067426895

Abstract

Indigenous proverbs perform diverse functions in conflict resolution by promoting peaceful dispositions, encouraging reconciliation, reinforcing communal solidarity, and facilitating emotional healing. As repositories of collective wisdom, they help calm heightened emotions, foster forgiveness, reduce hostility, and restore broken relationships. Beyond their

application in the settlement of disputes, indigenous proverbs also serve as preventive instruments by cultivating values and behaviours that discourage conflict and promote peaceful coexistence. Among the Olomu people of the Urhobo ethnic group in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, proverbs constitute an integral component of indigenous conflict resolution and management, addressing a wide range of disputes, including land, family, marital, age-grade, intra-community, and resource-related conflicts. This study employs critical analytic, hermeneutic, and evaluative methods to examine the therapeutic and peacebuilding functions of indigenous proverbs in conflict resolution within the Olomu Kingdom. It argues that the therapeutic value of these proverbs lies in their capacity to de-escalate tensions, encourage mutual understanding and forgiveness, facilitate reconciliation, and promote emotional and psychological healing among disputing parties. Their peacebuilding significance is reflected in their ability to strengthen social cohesion, reinforce shared moral values, and sustain harmonious communal relationships. The study finds that indigenous proverbs remain indispensable instruments of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the Olomu Kingdom because they integrate cultural wisdom with restorative approaches to justice and reconciliation. It concludes that greater recognition and preservation of indigenous proverbs within community-based conflict resolution mechanisms would contribute to strengthening sustainable peace and preserving the cultural heritage of the Olomu people.

Keywords: Conflict, Indigenous, Olomu, Niger Delta, Nigeria, Peacebuilding, Proverbs, Resolution, Therapeutic.



Platforms of Disclosure: Digital Storytelling and the Making of Mental Health Publics in Nigeria

By

Precious Sunday Augustus, Ndifreke Victor Obot & Imoh Okon

Department of English

University of Uyo

preciousaugustus@uniuyo.edu.ng &

ndifrekevictorobot@uniuyo.edu.ng

Abstract

Mental health remains heavily stigmatized in Nigeria, where cultural beliefs, religious interpretations, and limited access to psychological services often discourage public disclosure and help-seeking. However, the rise of digital media has transformed online platforms into important spaces where individuals narrate experiences of psychological distress, challenge social silence, and foster communities of empathy and support. This paper examines digital storytelling as both a therapeutic narrative practice and a form of mental health advocacy, arguing that digital platforms function as contemporary publics where personal testimonies reshape collective understandings of mental wellbeing. Drawing on Arthur Frank's theory of the wounded storyteller, Rita Charon's narrative medicine framework, Nancy Fraser's concept of counterpublics, and emerging perspectives in digital therapeutics, the study analyzes mental health narratives published on two leading Nigerian digital platforms—Zikoko and BellaNaija. Through qualitative textual and discourse analysis, the paper identifies three interconnected modes of disclosure: anonymous confessional narratives, NGO-mediated testimonies, and celebrity-driven advocacy. These narrative forms negotiate varying degrees of visibility, vulnerability, authenticity, and audience engagement, while simultaneously transforming private experiences of trauma into collective conversations about psychological wellbeing. The paper argues that digital storytelling extends beyond personal expression to become a therapeutic, cultural, and political practice that contests stigma, promotes emotional recognition, and constructs alternative publics outside formal medical and governmental institutions. By enabling survivors and advocates to reclaim narrative

agency, these platforms democratize mental health discourse, encourage help-seeking behaviour, and cultivate networks of solidarity within Nigeria's evolving digital ecosystem. In doing so, they redefine storytelling as an instrument of social healing, public education, and civic participation. The study contributes to scholarship in African digital humanities, health communication, narrative medicine, and postcolonial literary studies by demonstrating how Nigerian digital platforms are reshaping the relationship between technology, storytelling, and mental health advocacy. It further advances the concept of digital therapeutics by illustrating how online narratives function simultaneously as acts of self-recovery, public pedagogy, and social intervention. The paper concludes that digital storytelling is increasingly central to the making of inclusive mental health publics in contemporary Nigeria, offering a culturally responsive model for advocacy and community-based healing that has significance for global conversations on digital health and narrative practices.

Keywords: Digital storytelling; mental health advocacy; digital therapeutics; narrative medicine; counterpublics; public health communication.

Digital Storytelling for Mental Health Advocacy: A Stylistic Reading of Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* **Rita Emonena Otutu-Flo**

Department of English and Literature
College of Education, Warri, Delta State,
Nigeria

otutuflo.emonena@coewarri.edu.ng |

ritzflonow@gmail.com

+234 8034056944; +234 7082226741

Abstract

This paper examines the stylistic resources of Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* (1977) as a basis for designing digital storytelling interventions in mental health advocacy within Nigerian contexts. Rotimi's play deploys "madness" as a political metaphor rather than a clinical condition, and its stylistic apparatus, linguistic code-switching between military jargon, pidgin and affected English, proverbial speech, farcical structure and direct audience address, offers a rich but ethically complicated resource for



advocacy work. The paper argues that these devices can inform the design of digital stories that engage Nigerian audiences on their own linguistic and performative terms, but only if the metaphorical use of madness in the source text is not mistaken for, or allowed to reinforce, the stigmatising conflation of political folly with mental illness that already circulates in Nigerian public discourse. Drawing on stylistics, digital storytelling theory and Nigerian mental health scholarship, the paper proposes a set of design principles for adapting Rotimi's techniques to advocacy contexts, while treating the tension between satirical and clinical registers of "madness" as the central problem any such adaptation must resolve rather than a footnote to it.

Keywords: digital storytelling; mental health advocacy; stylistics; Ola Rotimi; Nigerian drama; stigma

Reconnecting With Healing Narratives: Does Music Serves as a Catalyst for Trauma Recovery

By

**Karibi Benson BOBMANUEL, PhD, Queen
BARILE, & Owajima Benson UGBANA**

Department of Mass Communication
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Email: karibibobmanuel@yahoo.com,

queen.barile@iaue.edu.ng &

Ugbana.benson@iaue.edu.ng

Abstract:

This study was an exploration of various benefits derivable from music as catalysts for trauma recovery. Using the critical review approach, the study argued that music serves as an effective therapeutic tool for people suffering from trauma. Other benefits as noted by Reynolds and others includes; music have been used in providing a safe and supportive environment for healing and building resilience while decreasing anxiety levels and improving the functioning of depressed individuals, implicit in the applications of music has been the assumption that, music has a direct effect on the human mind and body and can efficiently shift psychological and mental state to promote health, growth, and restoration. Thus, much functionality it helps retune the nervous system's capacity to regulate visceral organs, shift mood state, as well as optimize social behavioral patterns, build trust

and connectedness. Based on these benefits, it was recommended that the pro-social influence of music can support and connect, breaking down barriers and bridging divides, and has the propensity to enhance and develop emotional competence with a view to building relationships based on shared musical affinity.

Keywords: Healing Narratives, Music, Trauma, Recovery, Tendencies

The Verse as Therapeutic Strategic Communication: Recovery, Trauma and Social Resistance in Modern Nigerian Poetry

By

Emmanuel E. NZEAKA, PhD

Business Innovation Support

Institute Of Humanities (I.O.H)

Pan-Atlantic University

Main Campus, Km 52 Lekki-Epe Expressway,
Ibeju-Lekki, Lagos, Nigeria

(+234) 902 463 7122, enzeaka@pau.edu.ng

Modern Nigerian poetry has evolved into a therapeutic, strategic form of communication, using pictorial expressions to ameliorate trauma, promote psychological healing, and support social fortitude in communities affected by skirmishes, uncertainty, displacement, poverty, and communal memory. Notwithstanding growing research on African poetry as a form of social demonstration, scant consideration has been given to its therapeutic communicative functions and the dimensions that inspire emotional reclamation and communal regeneration. This study investigates how select existing Nigerian poems strategically adopt metaphor, symbolism, narrative voice, and indigenous cultural images to transform personal and group agony into hope, resistance, and social encounter. Drawing on Strategic Communication Theory and Narrative Therapy Theory, the study conducts a qualitative textual exploration of poems by selected Nigerian poets published between 2000 and 2025. The analysis illustrates that poetry works not merely as creative mien but as a communicative intercession that enables emotional catharsis, rebuilds broken personalities, encounters cultures of viciousness, and encourages dialogue, empathy, and compromise. The results demonstrate that therapeutic poetic discussion



functions as an emblematic universe in which trauma is discussed, memories are reframed, and communal strength is fostered through socially grounded stories. The study supplements the interdisciplinary research by locating poetry as a strategic communicative resource for psychological well-being, peacebuilding, and social revolution within postcolonial African cultures. It suggests greater incorporation of therapeutic poetry within educational curricula, community therapy initiatives, and cultural strategy as an Aboriginal communication plan for viable social resistance.

Keywords: Strategic communication, poetry agony, community, therapy, resistance.

The Art of “Moving On”: Migration as Metaphor for Self-Compassion in Michael Afenfia's *Leave My Bones in Saskatoon*

By

Ireoma Noble ALBERT

Albertlincoln46@gmail.com

Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Abstract

The act of migration is not only a physical relocation and an identity change; rather, it can constitute a profound mental and emotional change and consequently self-compassion. It can essentially be used as a stepping stone to self-atonement for past wrongs and “moving on”. It is against this backdrop that this paper examines Michael Afenfia's *Leave My Bones in Saskatoon* as a literary equivalent of the forgiveness of oneself and the role migration can play as a metaphor in interpreting self-compassion. The paper adopts Cathy Caruth's trauma theory with specific strands by Dominick LaCapra, Jonathan Shay, Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun. The theory plays an important role in establishing Afenfia's text within the migration and psychological theoretical framework and focus of the paper. The paper also applies a qualitative methodology in the gathering and analysis of primary and secondary data. The findings of the paper reveal the absoluteness of self-compassion in the life of a person: a victim of traumatic experiences. It also situates Afenfia's take on migration in the 21st century as a spatial representation of “moving on” and healing. The study recommends further examination of Afenfia's text beyond the migration-identity

trope for a more wholesome analysis of the text and characters. The paper concludes that Afenfia's take on migration as a literal representation of moving on is crucial and rooted in healing, pseudo-therapy and self-compassion.

Keywords: Self-Compassion, Migration, Moving on, Trauma, Michael Afenfi

The Therapeutic Poetics of Anglican Hymns

By

Ebipreye Egbenpere

Bayelsa Medical University (BMU),
Yenagoa.

+2348031982911, ebipreye4best@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines the poetics of healing in selected Anglican hymns, focusing on requiem renditions by the Bayelsa Anglican Classical Choir during services of songs. It investigates how the poetic and musical features of these hymns foster emotional, psychological, and spiritual healing among bereaved congregants. Anchored on Trinya's Therapoetics, alongside Reader-Response Theory and Functionalism, the study explores how hymnody mediates grief, trauma, loss, sorrow, and emotional distress while promoting hope, faith, resilience, forgiveness, and communal solidarity. Employing a qualitative literary-ethnographic approach, data were collected through oral interviews, textual analysis, and relevant documentary sources. The findings reveal five dominant healing techniques in the selected hymns: repetition, shelter metaphor, temporal shift, communal voice, and the descent-ascent motif. These poetic devices, reinforced by melodic expression and congregational participation, facilitate psychological comfort, spiritual restoration, moral renewal, and emotional resilience. The study argues that Anglican hymnody functions as an effective therapeutic medium that integrates poetry, music, and Christian worship to alleviate anxiety, strengthen the bereaved, and restore communal harmony. It further demonstrates the relevance of Therapoetics as a viable interdisciplinary framework for examining the healing potential of sacred literature. The study contributes to scholarship in literature, musicology, religious studies, performance studies, cultural studies, and the emerging



intersection of the humanities, mental health, and medicine. It recommends further research on Christian hymnody as a significant resource for psychosocial care in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Poetics of healing, Anglican hymnody, Therapoetics, requiem, Reader-Response Theory, psychosocial healing

Niyi Osundare's Poetry as Antidote to Social Decay: Analysis of Songs of the Season and Village Voices

**Caroline O. Nwaka¹, Henry E. Macaustin²,
Ogechi C. Nwanesi³, Seye A. Olawoyin⁴,
Anthonia-Greg N. Chibuke⁵**

The use of English Unit¹
School of General Studies
University of Nigeria, Nsukka
Caroline.nwaka@unn.edu.ng
+2348037163585

Department of General Studies,²
University of Agriculture and Environmental
Sciences,

Umuagwo, Imo State, Nigeria

*[Http://orchid.org/0009-0005-9900-2421](http://orchid.org/0009-0005-9900-2421)

*henry.macaustin@uaes.edu.ng/mcaushen@gmail.com

*+2348024069620/+2348033765896

General Studies Department³,
Federal College of Agriculture,
Ishiagu, Ebony state
+2347030268929

Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri⁴
Imo State.

aolawoyin@fpno.edu.ng
+2347033147433

The use of English Unit⁵
School of General Studies
University of Nigeria, Nsukka
Anthonia.chibuke@unn.edu.ng
+2347037572585

Abstract

This study examines Niyi Osundare's poetry as an antidote to social decay through an analysis of *Songs of the Season* (1999) and *Village Voices* (1984). Within Nigeria's postcolonial context, marked by political corruption, cultural erosion, and socio-economic disintegration, Osundare

deploys poetry as a counter-discourse that restores communal values, moral consciousness, and ecological harmony. Drawing on postcolonial and ecocritical frame works, the paper argues that Osundare constructs therapeutic and restorative poetics by reviving oral traditions privileging rural wisdom and employing satire and lyrical imagery to critique state violence and moral collapse. In *Village Voices*, the poet foregrounds the resilience and ethical integrity of rural communities against urban alienation and neo-colonial exploitation. *Songs of the Season* extends this project by using seasonal and ecological metaphors to diagnose national malaise and to propose renewal rooted in collective memory and cultural re-rooting. The analysis demonstrates that Osundare's language that is characterized by oral cadences, proverbs, and neologisms functions not merely as aesthetic form but as a cultural corrective. The study concludes that Osundare's poetry operates as both indictment and remedy which offers a linguistic and ethical antidote to the forces of social decay in contemporary Nigeria. The findings contribute to ongoing discussions on literature's role in social healing, civic responsibility, and postcolonial nation-building.

Keywords: Niyi Osundare, social decay, postcolonial poetry, ecocriticism, oral tradition, Nigerian literature

Unmasking the Shadows of Genocide: The Therapeutics of Narrative Healing in Veronique Tadjo's The Shadow of Imana

By

**Nse Issac UKPONG & Stellamaris C.
NEBECHI**

Department of English and Literary Studies
University of Nigeria
Nsukka

ukpongense3@gmail.com,
stellaharford33@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper examines the therapeutic potentialities of narratives as veritable tools of bringing about healing and recovery to the victims of the 1994 Rwanda Genocide in Veronique Tadjo's *The Shadow of Imana: Travels in the Heart of Rwanda*. This paper submits that Veronique Tadjo, whose self assigned mission to Rwanda is to "exorcise"



(unearth) the muffled and silenced voices of the victims, survivors and witnesses of the genocide, in order to give them a voice and agency well as debunk, the official denials of the genocide, deploys travel narrative technique to make them human by making them to tell their own stories, which process brings about healing, recovery and national recuperation. Using Caruth's model of Trauma Theory as framework, this paper unmasks the ugly incidents of man's inhumanity to man that was associated with the genocide, lodged in the minds of the victims and survivors of the genocide, who present their own accounts of the genocide, as pieced together by Tadjó's work. This paper concludes that the novel clearly demonstrates that storytelling (narratives) and forgiveness are powerful tools of recovery and healing, individually, collectively and nationally. By purging themselves of harmful and bottled-up emotions through narratives and witnesses' accounts, survivors experience healing from trauma and attendant health maladies. This demonstrates and buttresses the fact that Literature is a powerful tool for giving the oppressed, the silenced, the traumatized, and the stigmatized by giving a voice, agency and ushering in national recuperation.

Keywords: Narrative, Trauma, Healing, Genocide, Agency.

The Son as Diagnostic Instrument: Foil, Failure and Adaptive Continuity in *Things Fall Apart* and *Death and the King's Horseman*

By

Abasi, Tortivie Sorbo

Department of English and Literary Studies
University of Africa, Toru-Orua
Bayelsa State.

abasitortiviesorbo@gmail.com

Abstract

Colonial Nigeria between the 1890s and the 1940s subjected Igbo and Yoruba cosmological order to the imposition of British law, religion and administrative authority, and Achebe and Soyinka each set their central crisis within the years that pressure bore down hardest on an ageing custodian of tradition. Okonkwo and Elesin Oba embody a rigidity that cannot survive contact with colonial disruption, yet neither novel nor play treats that rigidity as purely

personal failing; both writers position a son at the point where the father's collapse becomes visible, and it is the son, not the father, who is left to answer for what the culture requires next. This paper adopts Erik Erikson's distinction between generativity and stagnation as an initial lens, then tests that lens against Homi Bhabha's account of a hybrid third space, arguing that a psychosocial model built from mid-century clinical observation cannot be applied to Igbo and Yoruba fathers without first accounting for the historical compression that narrows their options before any personal failure occurs. Comparative close reading of *Things Fall Apart* and *Death and the King's Horseman*, read against foil theory and against the sons' own reported speech, rather than against the fathers' interiority alone. This paper assumes that literature can dramatise cultural adaptation without endorsing every cost of that adaptation; a foil diagnoses rather than merely opposes; and a reading that stops at the son's success has not yet asked who paid for it. Nwoye and Olunde answer the same structural problem, a father whose identity cannot be handed on, with opposite strategies, exit into a borrowed institution and re-entry into an inherited one, and neither strategy is available to the women whose labour and silence make each son's resolution legible in the first place. These texts should be read as arguments about adaptive continuity under duress rather than as elegies for a vanished order, and any extension of that argument must account for the market women, the Bride and Jane Pilkings, whose absence from the son's resolution the therapeutic reading has so far left unexamined.

Keywords: Diagnostic Instrument; Foil; Decolonisation; Adaptive Continuity; Fathers' Failure



Media as Therapy: Assessing Community-Led Digital News Platforms in the Niger Delta for Mental Health Advocacy and Healing Narratives

Tamunobarabi Gogo IBULUBO, PhD

Rivers State Television (RSTV), Port Harcourt,

E-mail: tamsgi@yahoo.com Phone:

07054651075

&

Ibim Brother Asako WALSON, PhD

Rivers State Broadcasting Corporation

(RSBC), Radio-Rivers FM, Port Harcourt

E-mail: wibim@yahoo.com, Phone:

07039372054

Abstract

This study investigates how community-led digital news platforms on open social infrastructure serve as therapeutic environments for mental health advocacy and healing narratives in Nigeria's Niger Delta. The aim was to examine how grassroots networks process systemic trauma outside gatekeeping mainstream media within a tripartite framework of digital spaces (N-artifacts), narrative creators (N-creators), and interactive audiences (N-interactants). It adopts an immersive netnographic and qualitative content analysis design, focusing on six citizen-moderated Facebook groups purposively sampled across Rivers, Akwa Ibom, and Cross River states. The primary unit of analysis is the discrete media thread, establishing an empirical baseline of 300 threads (n=300; 50 threads per platform, averaging 15 comments per thread) analyzed in NVivo using Braun and Clarke's Reflexive Thematic Analysis. The findings reveal eight research themes detailing distinct regional trauma profiles. Rivers State operates as a petro-trauma hub, processing environmental ruin and cult violence through radical structural defiance. Akwa Ibom serves as an arena for collective grief against public utility failures and exploitative estimated billing. Cross River highlights severe transport deficits threatening maternal health, ethno-pastoral conflicts, and generational tensions between youth-led digital transparency and traditional spiritual authority (juju). These platforms, the study concludes, function as affective public spheres and spaces for collective narrative therapy. By uploading unedited user-generated content, subaltern populations transform isolated pain into shared

communitarian validation. This organic digital mobilization signals a profound loss of trust in postcolonial state structures, transforming passive media consumers into active community advocates.

Keywords: Affective Public Spheres, Grassroots Advocacy, Narrative Therapy, Netnography, Niger Delta, Open Social Infrastructure.

Music and Trauma Recovery: Healing and Relief in Yoruba Folktale Songs

By

Bukola Comfort Adeyemi

Department of English and Literary Studies

Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

adeyemiadebukola81@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study examines the intersection of music, trauma recovery, and cultural resilience through the lens of Yoruba folktale songs. Rooted in oral traditions, these songs convey narratives of suffering, endurance, and eventual relief, offering psychological comfort and communal solidarity. Drawing on Boitumelo Kembo's *African Postcolonial Trauma Theory* (APTT, 2026) and a pragma-linguistic application of Jacob Mey's *Pragmatic Acts Theory*, the paper explores how Yoruba folktale songs function as therapeutic tools. They provide emotional release, foster hope, and reinforce collective identity in the aftermath of trauma. The analysis highlights healing mechanisms embedded in metaphor, rhythm, and communal performance, demonstrating how these elements enable listeners to process grief, resist despair, and reimagine recovery. By situating Yoruba folktale songs within broader discourses on indigenous knowledge and mental health, the study underscores their relevance as non-clinical interventions that complement modern therapeutic practices. Ultimately, Yoruba musical traditions are shown to transcend entertainment, serving as culturally grounded modalities of trauma relief and psychological healing. The paper calls for deeper interdisciplinary engagement between music, folklore, and trauma studies to enrich approaches to recovery in African contexts.

Keywords: Music; Trauma; Recovery; Yoruba Folktale Songs



The Wound and the Word: Trauma, Re-Authoring, and Recovery in Nigerian Urban Oral Poetry

By

Agbeye Oburumu

Email: Agbeye.Oburumu@iaue.edu.ng

Abstract

This paper investigates Nigerian urban oral poetry as a counter-mnemonic practice through which foreclosed collective traumas are recovered into communally witnessed speech. The researcher contends that historical injuries of violence, loss, and rupture persist as unincorporated wounds that official memory neither mourns nor narrates, and that the performed poem undertakes the reparative labour hegemonic historiography abdicates. Reading a delimited corpus of contemporary performances, the study advances a four-part theoretical framework. Alexander's cultural trauma positions the poets as a carrier group that transposes discrete injury into collective memory. Craps's postcolonial critique displaces the trauma paradigm's Eurocentric assumptions and relocates the therapeutic within indigenous performance form. White and Epston's re-authoring specifies the mechanism by which the poem reorders silencing recollection into narratable sequence. Felman and Laub's testimony elucidates the interlocutory dimension, since the audience assumes the office of witness. The researcher concludes that recovery in this poetry is irreducibly public, that enunciation performs re-authoring while audition performs witness, and proposes a decolonised therapoetics that apprehends the Nigerian performed poem as a healing praxis legible on its own cultural terms.

Keywords: Cultural trauma, postcolonial witnessing, re-authoring, oral poetry, therapoetics

Therapoetics, Emotional, Recovery and Identity Reconstruction in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Dream Count*

By

Grace M. AJALA

Department of English

Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji Arakeji,
Osun State

E-mail: sufficientgrace06@gmail.com
0803 491 9078

&

Funmilayo Femi OLADEJI

Department of European Language Education
Emmanuel Alayande University of Education,
Oyo, Oyo State

E-mail: oladejiff@eaudoyo.edu.ng

Abstract

Emotional trauma arising from loss, fractured relationships, displacement, and unfulfilled aspirations continues to shape human experiences. Increasingly, contemporary African fiction portrays storytelling as a therapeutic space where emotional wounds are confronted making healing become possible through self-reflection and interpersonal connection. Although studies have worked on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Dream Count* as they focus on aspects of grief, representations of gender, migration, and identity, yet, limited attention has been paid to its therapoetic dimension and the dimensions through which storytelling facilitates emotional recovery and identity reconstruction. This study therefore examines how Adichie's *Dream Count* employs storytelling as a therapoetic practice through which emotionally wounded characters negotiate grief, loneliness, and personal loss. Drawing on Lauren Berlant's foundational framework of Affect Theory, Michael White and David Epston's Narrative Therapy, the study examines how storytelling mediates emotional healing and facilitates identity reconstruction in the novel. The study adopts a qualitative research design to examine the representation of emotional trauma, healing, and identity reconstruction in the novel. The study finds that *Dream Count* portrays storytelling as a therapoetic practice through which emotional wounds are acknowledged, processed, and transformed into opportunities for self-discovery and identity reconstruction. The study contributes to contemporary African literary scholarship by foregrounding the therapeutic potential of storytelling and expanding interdisciplinary discussions on therapoetics, emotional wellbeing, and identity reconstruction.

Keywords: Therapoetics, Emotional Recovery, Identity Reconstruction, Storytelling, Contemporary African Literature.



Narrative Dynamics and Rhetoric of Proverbs in Lambert Ototo's "The Great Abomination"

By

Amatareotubo Mozimo,

Author, poet, biographer, and literary critic

Mobile Phone: 08066001713

Email: mozimoamas@gmail.com

Abstract

Lambert Ototo's novel "The Great Abomination" engages deeply with the socio-spiritual complexities of traditional African society, specifically within the cultural ecology of the Niger Delta. Centering on a severe breach of customary law ('aru' or taboo), the narrative interrogates the delicate balance between individual agency, communal cohesion, and ancestral sanction. This paper provides a critical examination of the novel's narrative structure alongside an analytical investigation of its paremiological framework, the strategic deployment of proverbs. Utilizing traditional African literary theories and socio-rhetorical frameworks (Yankah, 1989; Obiechina, 1975), this study demonstrates that proverbs in Ototo's work function not merely as ornamental linguistic devices, but as essential structural pillars, juridical tools, and mechanisms of moral characterization. Ultimately, the novel illustrates that while proverb usage asserts traditional authority and preserves cultural continuity, its ethical efficacy remains tied to the moral integrity of the speaker.

Keywords: Lambert Ototo, The Great Abomination, African Literature, Proverbs, Oral Aesthetics, Taboo, Niger Delta Literature.

Analysis of Selected Proverbs in Fulfulde Language

By

Ahijo Ibrahim Mustapha

08128803932,

ahijoibrahimmustapha@gmail.com

&

Saudatu Abba

Department of English Language Education

Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola

08069970335, saudatahmed@gmail.com

Abstract

This study presents a pragmatic analysis of selected proverbs in Fulfulde language, with a

view to uncovering the communicative intentions, contextual meanings, and socio-cultural functions embedded in these indigenous expressions. Proverbs are widely recognized as repositories of cultural wisdom and serve as powerful linguistic tools for indirect communication, and often requiring shared background knowledge for proper interpretation. Anchored in the theoretical frameworks of Speech Act Theory and Grice's cooperative principles. The study examines how proverbs, (those that convey meanings beyond their literal forms) operate within discourse to perform specific pragmatic act. The study concludes that proverbs are essentials tools for effective communication and cultural transmission in Fulani society. It recommends for integration into language teaching, preservation efforts and further comparative studies to enhance understanding indigenous knowledge system and linguistic diversity.

Keywords: Fulfulde Language, Proverbs, Speech Act, Society, Cultural Communication

The Role of Language Identification in Enhancing Security of Rivers State

By

Chukwuemeka NWOKOJI, PhD

Department of English and Literary Studies,

Faculty of Humanities

Rivers State University

chukwuemeka.nwokoji@ust.edu.ng,

nwokojiemeka@gmail.com

Abstract

Security challenges in Rivers State continue to threaten public safety, economic growth, and social stability. The state's linguistic diversity presents both challenges and opportunities for security operations. This study examines the role of language identification in enhancing security through improved intelligence gathering, surveillance, crime prevention, emergency response, and communication with local communities. Using a qualitative review of existing literature, security reports, and language studies, the research explores the integration of language identification with artificial intelligence and speech recognition technologies. The findings indicate that accurate language identification can support faster threat detection, strengthen communication between security agencies and residents, and improve operational decision-making. The study



concludes that incorporating language identification into the state's security framework can enhance overall security effectiveness. It recommends greater investment in language technologies, specialized training for security personnel, and collaboration with linguistic experts to ensure successful implementation.

Between Myth and Reality: A Critical Demystification of Ancestral Veneration and Ritual Practices among the Kalabari People

By

Harrison Iweka NWACHUKWU (PhD) & Dickson Alexander YOUNGMAN

Department of English and Literary Studies,
Faculty of Humanities,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port
Harcourt

harrison.nwachukwu@iaue.edu.ng,

08035251717

dialyoung77@gmail.com, 08038293855

Abstract

The study explored how rituals such as libation, invocation, chants, incantations, and ceremonial speech operated as channels of sacred communication and social order. It showed that these practices preserved collective memory, reinforced cultural identity, regulated conduct, and offered explanations for existential realities within the community. By focusing on oral literature as the main vehicle of transmission, the research revealed that myths, ritual utterances, and ancestral narratives were not empty tales but symbolic archives of history, philosophy, ethics, and spirituality. The work further demonstrated that ritual practices among the Kalabari people served practical purposes in conflict resolution, healing, decision making, and communal continuity.

The study also addressed the tension between tradition and modernity, showing that although external religious and cultural influences had challenged indigenous spirituality, Kalabari ritual life had remained resilient by adapting without losing its essential worldview. In moving beyond simplistic interpretations, the research established that the so called mythical elements of Kalabari spirituality contained deep cultural truths and reflected a coherent

understanding of reality. It therefore recommended serious documentation of oral traditions, stronger scholarly attention to indigenous African spiritual systems, and renewed efforts to preserve ritual knowledge for future generations. Ultimately, the study concluded that Kalabari ancestral veneration and ritual practices remained powerful expressions of identity, continuity, and spiritual meaning, standing not at the margins of reality but at the very center of Kalabari cultural existence.

Keywords: Kalabari spirituality, ancestral veneration, ritual practices, oral literature, myth, reality, sacred communication, cultural identity

Contesting the Past: Memory and Testimony in Elechi Amadi's *Sunset in Biafra* and Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country*

By

Atankere John OTOKWALA, Nsan ENEYO, and Unwene HANNAH

atankere.otokwala@iaue.edu.ng

Department of English and Literary Studies,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt
Rivers State

Abstract:

One of the recurring motifs in Nigerian literature is the memory of the wars and conflicts that have shaped the nation. More than fifty years after its end, the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) remains an open wound in the African literary imagination. It is marked by competing truths and unresolved grief. This article examines how Elechi Amadi's *Sunset in Biafra* and Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country* use personal testimony to challenge official accounts of the war. Rather than treating memoir as mere historical documentation, the article explores how both writers transform personal experience into a site of cultural memory. The contrast between the two works is striking. Achebe presents an Igbo centred account of Biafran idealism and systemic marginalisation. Amadi offers a critical voice from the Niger Delta minority and draws attention to internal coercion



and divisions within the secessionist republic. Drawing on memory studies and trauma theory, the article examines how Amadi and Achebe negotiate the space between private grief and public history. It argues that their conflicting eyewitness accounts do more than record the past. They reshape how power, belonging and nationhood are understood in post civil war Nigeria. Reading *Sunset in Biafra* alongside *There Was a Country* therefore reveals that literary testimony in Nigeria is not simply concerned with settling the past. It also keeps its most difficult and important questions alive.

Keywords: Nigerian Civil War, Biafran literature, memory studies, testimony, Elechi Amadi, Chinua Achebe, postcolonialism, minority discourse..

The Therapoetics of Art-Making: Language, Healing Narratives, and Identity Reconstruction in Nigeria

Boma Hayes DIRI, Ph.D.

Rivers State College of Health Science and Management Technology, Oro-owo, Rumueme, Port Harcourt.
Email: bomsie4jesus@gmail.com

Abstract

Trauma in Nigeria produces a double wound: physical violence and the collapse of language needed to narrate the self. Clinical and legal discourse often fails survivors, leaving identity fragmented. This paper asks: how do contemporary Nigerian artists use language to produce healing narratives? Using narrative identity theory, postcolonial language theory, and African oral literary theory, the study analyses spoken word and community theatre from Port Harcourt, Lagos, Jos, Ibadan, and Abuja. Findings identify three therapoetic processes: (1) naming through metaphor and code-switching, which reclaims linguistic sovereignty; (2) re-authoring through communal call-and-response, which converts private pain into witnessed narrative; and (3) weaving through syncretic forms, which restores cultural belonging, embedding oral

traditions in contemporary genres; the study argues that spoken word, community theatre, and digital poetry perform a therapoetics of art-making. The paper concludes that therapoetic art-making enacts language justice, the right to narrate trauma in one's full linguistic repertoire and be heard by a community that understands its codes. Nigerian artists are not only representing trauma; they are performing the therapoetics of art-making that institutions must recognize, resource, and defend. It recommends that cultural policy and mental health programmes in Nigeria fund multilingual, community-engaged art platforms as core infrastructure for healing.

Keywords: Therapoetics, healing narratives, art-making, engagement, language justice, narrative identity

Narratives of the Mind: Digital Storytelling, Visual Art-Making, and the Therapoetics of Mental Health Advocacy

Comfort Oluwayomi ANYIA

Department of Fine Arts and Design
University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
Email: oluwayomi.anyia@uniport.edu.ng
Phone: +234 703 207 8764

Abstract

This paper explores the therapoetics of art-making and engagement through a practice-based investigation of digital storytelling as a mode of healing narrative and mental health advocacy. Drawing on in-depth qualitative interviews with individuals who have experienced psychological distress, the study examines how personal testimonies of trauma, resilience, and recovery can be translated into illustrated digital narratives and comics. Situated at the intersection of literary narrative theory, the therapeutic power of visual arts, and graphic design practice, the research treats creative visual translation itself as a form of scholarly and therapeutic inquiry. As a graphic artist-researcher, I transform spoken testimony into sequential visual works that foreground



The analysis focuses on how composition, colour, imagery, sequencing, and typography mediate authenticity, empathy, and ethical representation, while also serving as tools for stigma reduction and public advocacy in digital contexts. The paper argues that illustrated digital narratives extend literary traditions of testimony into multimodal forms capable of holding complexity and affect. In doing so, they enact a contemporary therapoetics: art-making that fosters emotional well-being, personal growth, and social change. Ethical questions of consent, ownership, and fidelity to the speaker's voice remain central throughout. By positioning the graphic artist as both narrator and advocate, the study demonstrates how creative practice can function as a powerful mode of healing narrative in the digital age, contributing to conversations in literary studies, digital humanities, and the broader field of therapoetics.

Keywords: healing narratives, digital storytelling, visual arts therapy, mental health advocacy, illustrated narrative, graphic medicine.



SCHEDULE OF PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Papers	Presenter(s)
PANEL A: English Library	
1 Digital Storytelling as a Therapeutic Communication Tool: Social Media Narratives and Mental Health Advocacy among Nigerian Youth	Margaret Jack Adebisi, margaret.jack-adebisi@rsu.edu.ng
2 Digital Healing: The Narrative of Self-Compassion and Emotional Resilience Among Contemporary Nigerian Youths	God'sgift E. ADEPOJU & Grace M. AJALA, Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji Arakeji, Osun State
3 Digital Storytelling as Therapeutic Intervention: Narrative Healing and Mental Health Advocacy in Okechukwu Oku's Strained (2023)	Goodluck Ayodeji Babatunde, Lead City University, Ibadan
4 Digital Storytelling for Mental Health Advocacy	Precious Sunday Augustus, University of Uyo, preciousaugustus@uniuyo.edu.ng
5 Indigenous Language Shift and Identity Reconstruction Among Gen-Zs. The South-South Situation	Merosobo Lawson-Ikuru, Federal University Otuoke, lawson-ikurumm@fuotuoike.edu.ng
6 Stories as Panacea to Human Exigencies	Everest Onyekaziri ANYANWU, University of Port Harcourt. everestanyanwu9@gmail.com
7 Platforms of Disclosure: Digital Storytelling and the Making of Mental Health Publics in Nigeria	Precious Sunday Augustus, Ndifreke Victor Obot & Imoh Okon University of Uyo preciousaugustus@uniuyo.edu.ng & ndifrekevictorobot@uniuyo.edu.ng
8 Digital Storytelling for Mental Health Advocacy: A Stylistic Reading of Ola Rotimi's Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again	Rita Emonena Otutu-Flo, College of Education, Warri, Delta State, Nigeria, otutuflo.emonena@coewarri.edu.ng ritzflonow@gmail.com
9 Media as Therapy: Assessing Community-Led Digital News Platforms in the Niger Delta for Mental Health Advocacy and Healing Narratives	Tamunobarabi Gogo IBULUBO, PhD, Rivers State Television (RSTV), Port Harcourt, E-mail: tamsgi@yahoo.com & Ibim Brother Asako WALSON, PhD, Rivers State Broadcasting Corporation (RSBC), Radio-Rivers FM, Port Harcourt E-mail: wibim@yahoo.com
PANEL B: FACULTY OF HUMANITIES CONFERENCE HALL	
1 Healing Beyond Shame: The Art of Self-Compassion as Resistance to Self-Condensation	Felicia TAMUNO, PhD, Email: tamunofelicia@gmail.com
2 Healing Through Leadership Narratives: Identity Reconstruction, Language, and Women's Resilience in Nigeria's Banking Industry-A Critical Narrative Review	Felicia TAMUNO, PhD & Victoria Edet UDOEMA, PhD, Email: tamunofelicia@gmail.com, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education



3	Identifying with the Homeland: Evaluating Poetry as an Art of Healing, Recovery and Memory Preservation in Ojaide's, <i>Songs of Myself</i>	Arthur Oroukpo, PhD & Ayebanoa Timibofa, PhD, Isaac Jasper Boro College Education Sagbama, Bayelsa State, Nigeria arthuroroukpo@gmail.com, Ayisat24@gmail.com
4	Melodic Healing: Music And Deliverance In Traumatic Recovery.	KOMI, BARNABAS, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt. barnabas.komi@iaue.edu.ng
5	Healing Narratives: The Therapy of Role Playing.	Inyingiwari Christopher Violet FUBARA, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt inyingiwari.fubara@iaue.edu.ng
6	Indigenous Proverbs in Conflict Resolution in Olomu Kingdom of the Niger Delta: A Therapeutic and Peacebuilding Perspective	Mark Omorovie IKEKE, Matthias JARIKRE, PhD & Ijeoma LADELE, PhD, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja nou248189491@noun.edu.ng
7	Reconnecting With Healing Narratives: Does Music Serves as a Catalyst for Trauma Recovery	Karibi Benson BOBMANUEL, PhD, Queen BARILE, & Owajima Benson UGBANA, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Email; karibibobmanuel@yahoo.com, queen.barile@iaue.edu.ng & Ugbana.benson@iaue.edu.ng
8	The Verse as Therapeutic Strategic Communication: Recovery, Trauma and Social Resistance in Modern Nigerian Poetry	Emmanuel E. NZEAKA, PhD, Institute Of Humanities (I.O.H), Pan-Atlantic University, Lagos, Nigeria, enzeaka@pau.edu.ng
9	The Art of "Moving On": Migration as Metaphor for Self-Compassion in Michael Afenfia's <i>Leave My Bones in Saskatoon</i>	Ireoma Noble ALBERT, Albertlincoln46@gmail.com, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
10	Letting Go as Therapoetic Practice: A Reading of Etire's Abureni poem <i>Alimon Odigh Ewel</i>	Daniami Etire, University of Port Harcourt, dan.etire@dipato.com
11	Unhoming the Domestic: Fictional Narratives as Coping Mechanisms in Selected African Women's Fiction	Eze-Dike, F. U. & Ikegboma, M. B. Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, fellydyke@gmail.com, Mangiboikegbom@gmail.com
12	Listening as an Act of Reconstruction: The Recipient's Role in Shaping the Speaker's Self	Vivian Ijeoma NWOKE, PhD & Irene Nkeiru AGU, PhD Center for General Studies, Federal Polytechnic Ekowe, Bayelsa State. nwokevivianije@gmail.com/aguirenen@gmail.com
13	Restoring the Nation: The Therapeutic Function of Poetry in David Diop's "Africa"	Dr Blessing Omofowe Odhe & Dr Mark-Inwang Kate Chinomso kaygeogian@yahoo.com, blessodhe@gmail.com
PANEL C: IDL CONFERENCE HALL		
1	The Therapeutic Poetics of Anglican Hymns	Ebipreye Egbenpere, Bayelsa Medical University (BMU), Yenagoa. ebipreye4best@gmail.com



2	Niyi Osundare's Poetry as Antidote to Social Decay: Analysis of Songs of the Season and <i>Village Voices</i>	Caroline O. Nwaka ¹ , Henry E. Macaustin ² , Ogechi C. Nwanesi ³ , Seye A. Olawoyin ⁴ , Anthonia-Greg N. Chibuoke ⁵ University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Caroline.nwaka@unn.edu.ng, henry.macaustin@uaes.edu.ng/mcaushen@gmail.com, aolawoyin@fpno.edu.ng, Anthonia.chibuoke@unn.edu.ng
3	Unmasking the Shadows of Genocide: The Therapeutics of Narrative Healing in Veronique Tadjo's <i>The Shadow of Imana</i>	Nse Issac UKPONG & Stellamaris C. NEBECHI, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. ukpongense3@gmail.com, stellaharford33@yahoo.com
4	The Son as Diagnostic Instrument: Foil, Failure and Adaptive Continuity in <i>Things Fall Apart</i> and <i>Death and the King's Horseman</i>	Abasi, Tortivie Sorbo, University of Africa, Toru-Orua Bayelsa State. abasitortiviesorbo@gmail.com
5	Music and Trauma Recovery: Healing and Relief in Yoruba Folktale Songs	Bukola Comfort Adeyemi, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. adeyemiadebukola81@yahoo.com
6	The Wound and the Word: Trauma, Re-Authoring, and Recovery in Nigerian Urban Oral Poetry	Agbeye Oburumu, Email: Agbeye.Oburumu@iaue.edu.ng
7	Therapoetics, Emotional, Recovery and Identity Reconstruction in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's <i>Dream Country</i>	Grace M. AJALA, Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji Arakeji, Osun State. E-mail: sufficientgrace06@gmail.com & Funmilayo Femi OLADEJI, Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo, Oyo State. E-mail: oladejiff@eaudoyo.edu.ng
8	Between Myth and Reality: A Critical Demystification of Ancestral Veneration and Ritual Practices among the Kalabari People	Harrison Iweka NWACHUKWU, Dickson Alexander YOUNGMAN, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
9	Contesting the Past: Memory and Testimony in Elechi Amadi's <i>Sunset in Biafra</i> and Chinua Achebe's <i>There Was a Country</i>	Atankere John Otokwala, Nsan Eneyo, & Unwene Hannah, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
10	Headhunt against Panafricanism in <i>Lettre Officielle de Kemi Seba en Direct de Prison en Afrique du Sud</i>	Fiacre AHO, University of Abomey-Calavi. Email: fiacre.aho@uac.bj & Queen Olubukola AYENI, University of Calabar buckyayeni@gmail.com
11	Narrating Healing: Cura Divina, Ritual Performance, and Therapeutic Engagement in Selected Indigenous Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria	Professor Peter Alokun, Adewale and Opeyemi Mayowa, Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji Osun State, Nigeria.papacygo@gmail.com, adewaleopeyemi38@gmail.com
12	Trauma, Memory and Therapoetics of Storytelling in Chigozie Obioma's <i>The Road to The Country</i>	Grace M. AJALA, & God'sgift E. ADEPOJU, Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji Arakeji, Osun State, sufficientgrace06@gmail.com, geadepoju@jabu.edu.ng
13	Poetic Weaving as a Form of Therapeutic Art in Obari Gomba's, <i>Pearls of the Mangrove</i>	Ayebanoa Timibofa, PhD, Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education, Sagbama, Bayelsa State, Nigeria Ayisat24@gmail.com, Theophilus Kika OTUARE & Tuoyo-Matida JACK, PhD, Delta State Maritime Polytechnic, Buruu
14	Exploring the Healing Potential of Musical Engagement in Trauma Recovery from a Therapoetics Perspective	Irene Nkeiru AGU, PhD, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt, aguirenen@gmail.com & Vivian Ijeoma NWOKE, PhD, Center for General Studies Federal Polytechnic, Ekowe, Bayelsa State, nwokevivianije@gmail.com

30



**PROFESSOR KONTEIN TRINYA
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**