

## Psychopathology, Mental Fragmentation And Subliminal Performance Poetry

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### Abstract

The performance of song-poetry is an expressive method of communicating introspective and observational experiences, worldview, thoughts and feelings to psychological expectant audience in socio-cultural settings. The psychic materials which encapsulate ethno-cultural, religious and economic values are capable of co-activating the unconscious minds of listeners and improve their wellbeing. In this paper, the researchers examine song-poetry of two traditional Urhobo musical minstrels, Johnson Adjan and Orhire Okoro with a view to establishing how the oral performances address women psychopathological condition activated by existential experientially in postcolonial society. The study adopts the library-based research and the psychodynamic theoretical framework to foreground the discourse. The oral texts purposively collected from the numerous songs of the artists are subjected to literary analysis. The study shows that song-poetry is the manifestation of the mental fragmentation of oral artists whose expectations of behavioural patterns of individuals in postcolonial society are overwhelming and capable of causing

psychopathological disorders. The performance poetry interrogates the issues of gender disorder and sexuality in patriarchal community. The paper concludes that the oral texts serve as subliminal coping mechanisms deployed by the traditional song artists impersonating housewives who are experiencing mental fragmentation in their matrimonial homes.

**Keywords:** Performance, sublimation, mental fragmentation, sexuality,

### Introduction

Oral performers like literary writers communicate their psychic and emotional pains to audience through their artistic productions. They employ performances as therapeutic method of addressing their personal psychological sufferings instead of directly confronting individuals and institutions that are responsible for psychopathological condition. Psychological sufferings of individuals can manifest in forms of anxieties, phobias, thought broadcast, neurosis, psychopathy, antisocial personality disorders and substance abuse disorders, to mention a few. These psychological problems are diagnosed and handled by physicians, psychologists, and social workers and so on in formal settings while elderly people, experienced parents, cultural orators and oral artists deploy song performance for such intervention purpose in traditional society. In some cases, individuals can employ self-therapeutic strategy such as singing and dancing.

Oral productions are to a large extent the outcomes of thoughts, feelings and perceptions of artists. In marital context, psychological problems could be triggered by various threat of divorce, economic hardship, food insecurity, disagreements, affection, communication gap and distress, to mention a few. An attempt to provide peace and conflict resolution within marriage informed the intervention of marriage therapy, using expressive

oral performances. Marriage therapy or counselling is a form of therapeutic intervention that is employed for the treatment of psychological problems with a view to strengthening interpersonal relationships in marriage institution. Research has revealed that the unconscious mind that contains repressed memories inherited from parents and those introjected into the mind from childhood till maturity. It contains the instinctual drives, urges, excessive demands, and uncontrollable desires for gratification. Ahamefule (2003:138) notes that “the Id is inaccessible to conscious awareness. It is entirely buried in the unconscious layer of the mind. The id follow the pleasure principle, and caring along a motivating force oriented towards the immediate and total gratification (satisfaction) of sensual needs and desires (instinctual needs).” The instinctual energy underlies the driving (cathexes) or restraining forces (anticathexes) of the id. The uncontrollable forces of the latter result in impulsive disorders, destructive or aggression, and so on. All these are beyond the conscious layer of the human mind. The Ego is the realistic principle of the human mind that is conscious, logical and rational in thinking. It is located at the center for conscious awareness and functions to give the individual the mental capacity for judgement, memory, perception and decision making which will enable the individual to adopt to the realities of the external world ( Ahamefule, 2003:140). The Superego refers to the aspect of the personality structure that strive independently towards perfection. It is morality principle and conscience of individuals. It creates the emotional feelings of guilt when the ego is overpowered by the id and vice versa. The superego is the level of righteousness, heroism, self-sacrifice and idealism.

In investigating the behavioural disorders and dysfunctional thoughts of people particularly in marriage. The concept of instincts must be explicated. Sharf (2010:33) asserts that in Freudian psychoanalysis, “the term *instincts* and *drives* are often used interchangeably. He observed self-preservative drives (including breathing, eating, drinking, and excreting) and species-

preservative drives (sexuality).”The instinctual drives are predominant in every individual and it influence thoughts and behavioural patterns. Omiegbe (2005) notes that behaviour disorder is a deviant behaviour exhibited by a person who has a disturbance of the normal processes of the body or mind, which irritates or has negative effect on other people. The scholar maintains that “behaviour disorders imply any abnormal behavioural pattern shown by individuals that adversely affects interpersonal relationships.” Research has also shown that “the mind is responsible for both conscious and unconscious decisions based on drives and forces. Unconscious desires motivate people to act accordingly”(Shahwan, 2017:1).

The human mind essence contains repressed psychic materials including emotions, memories, experiences and symbols observed in society or assimilated through introjection. The unconscious mind contains repressed feelings, images, experiences and memories, to mention a few, which are either pleasant or unpleasant. These can be activated or expected to surface unconsciously in the physical world. “Bhuvaneshwari (2017) observes that “The state of repression, being between preconscious and unconscious state, functions like a storehouse of all the unfulfilled desires or traumatic past events and experiences. The reflections of this storehouse have a powerful influence on all the human actions. When the feelings of repression become excessive, they make the people sick” (49). It is therefore helpful for individuals with emotionally disturbed minds to express themselves openly instead of suppressing their psychic and emotional pains. Psychological disorders are also referred to as psychopathology and such abnormal condition requires urgent therapeutic intervention from healthcare specialists in socio-cultural settings.

Ojiofo (2016:109) acknowledges Morgan (2006) who states that “in everyday life, the terms insanity, mental illness, psychopathology, emotional disturbance, behaviour disorder,

mental disorder, abnormality and psychological disorder have roughly similar meanings”. The foregoing therefore implies that psychopathology deals with the study of mental disorders and abnormal behaviour in society. Schwarz, *et al* (1993) note that psychopathology is “the part of psychology that deals with abnormal workings of the mind; an abnormal psychological condition” (cited in Ojiofo, 2016:109). Psychopathological condition can cause mental Fragmentation which refers to disintegrated or inorganic psyche of individuals. Fragmented mind results in abnormal behavioural patterns, dysfunctional thoughts and even depressive symptomology. Coyne and Fechner-Bates (1992) note that “depressed persons may have trouble reciprocating pleasantries, showing enthusiasms or affection, or simply being attentive enough to participate in a conversation. They may find it difficult to express how badly they are feeling and may simply withdraw rather than face the lack of sympathy, useless advice, and outright hostility that they receive from others”(204). The scholars further reveal that “the serious stressors precipitating depression in a parent and the marital problems that are associated with it may have direct effects on both parenting and the well-being of children” (207). In relation to family system discourse which is the thrust of this research, Coyne and Fechner-Bates (1992:204) acknowledge (Coyne et al., 1987) who state that “the depressed person's relationships and family are distressed. Conflict and inadequacies in these relationships are likely to have played a role in the person having become depressed. Yet it is also difficult for depressed persons to maintain their relationships, and life with a depressed person can prove burdensome.”

Subliminal coping mechanisms essential in management of psychological sufferings in socio-cultural settings. Since psychopathological condition can lead to emotional depression and untimely death if not promptly addressed, individuals are expected to adopt subliminal coping strategy to tackle psychological problems especially those triggered by marital

conflicts in traditional society. Sublimation is the diversion of libidinal energies to something that is socially acceptable and economically viable. Sharf (2010:36) notes that sublimation refers to “the modification of a drive (usually sexual or aggressive) into acceptable social behaviour” This research explores how the oral artists in an antiphonic and dramatic monologue employed subliminal ego defense mechanism by channelling their physical and mental energies into singing, dancing and dancing. The current study therefore examines performance poetry as subliminal coping mechanism for psychopathological and mental fragmentation, using folksongs of two popular Urhobo traditional artists. The researchers examine song-poetry of two traditional Urhobo musical minstrels, Johnson Adjan and Orhire Okoro with a view to establishing how the oral performances address the psychopathological condition activated by marital experientiality in postcolonial society.

### Methodology

The study adopts the psychoanalytic theoretical framework and ethnographic design, exploring cultural materials to determine their psychotherapeutic values in traditional society. The oral texts purposively collected from the numerous songs of the artists based on their thematic relevance are transcribed from indigenous Urhobo language into English for non-native speakers to understand. The oral resources were subjected to literary analysis. Apart from the primary data used in this research, secondary materials sourced from the internet were consulted with their relevant information used to buttress arguments and views in the discourse.

### Literature Review

Studies abound on performance of songs in traditional society particularly in Urhobo land. However, no significance attention has been paid to the aspect of subliminal coping mechanisms deployed by traditional song artists experiencing mental fragmentation in marital context. Darah (1982) focuses on

satirical nature of Udje tradition of Urhobo, Ojaide (2000) investigates poetry, performance and art in Udje dance songs of Nigeria's Urhobo people while Idamoyibo (2010) explores conceptual analysis of Igoru musical communication. Aleude's (2006) study examines music therapy in traditional African societies with a focus on origin, basis and application in Nigeria. Aleude (2012) explores music as Adae, focusing on the implications for music therapy in Nigeria while Awhefeada (2007) investigates praxis and aesthetics of Urhobo "disco." Chambers (2008) explores song and metaphoric imagery in forensic music therapy while Chiwome (1992) examines traditional Shona poetry and mental health. Moreso, Coker (2012) investigates poetry as psychotherapy with a focus on Orin aremo in Yoruba folklore. The foregoing studies illuminate the current research which focuses on deployment of oral performances as subliminal coping mechanism for mentally fragmented of women in traditional marriages.

The term, "Therapy" is the short form of psychotherapy which is traceable to Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic theory. Psychotherapy is a psychological method of treatment for mental and behavioural disorders in society. This psycho-theoretical approach that originated from Sigmund Freudian Psychoanalysis is synonymous with psychodynamic therapy and psychoanalytic therapy. Sommers-Flanagan and Sommers-Flanagan (2004:6) find that "Psychoanalytic or psychodynamic psychotherapy is a form of clinical practice based on psychoanalytic theory and principles." Shoai (2014) establishes that "Psychoanalytic or psychodynamic psychotherapy is a form of clinical practice based on psychoanalytic theory and principles. These multiple theories focus on increasing self-understanding and deepening insight into emotional issues and conflicts that underlie the presenting difficulties." This clinical orientation will foreground the current study because the primary objective is to examine the application of poetry therapy as intervention for behavioural disorders in society. Shoai finds that "therapists pay particular attention to the

exploration of unconscious thoughts and feelings, understanding aspects of the relationship between therapist and client-which may relate to underlying emotional conflicts." Levy (2009:182) establishes that "the terms *psychodynamic* and *psychoanalytic* are often used interchangeably. However, within the psychodynamic and psychoanalytic communities, *psychoanalysis* is the term used when referring to a psychological treatment where the therapist, called a psychoanalyst or analyst, adheres to standard techniques focused on *interpretation* leading to insight in the context of the transference."

Psychoanalytic psychotherapy is rooted in the theory of psychoanalysis which was founded by Sigmund Freud. Though there are psychoanalysts like Alfred Adler and Carl Jung who deviated to develop their own theories, Freud's achievement in psychology has become indelible with his introduction of psychoanalysis which focuses on conflict between the conscious and the unconscious. Wright (2013:56) notes that "psychoanalysis is a science that concerns itself with the interaction between the unconscious and conscious. Psychoanalysis was founded by Sigmund Freud on the basis that people can be cured by making conscious of their unconscious motivations and thought processes." Psychoanalytic and psychodynamic therapies focus on factors that are responsible for dysfunctional thoughts, maladaptive behaviour and negative feelings of individuals. These factors are repressed memories of events usually unpleasant that happened in the past which are mediated by unconscious processes. These memories are buried in the unconscious of individuals and they can be expressed spontaneously in several patterns of behaviour that affect their relationships and wellbeing. In actual sense, "the psychoanalysis makes it possible to understand the meaning of the analysand's symptoms, psychological patterns, internal conflicts, adaptations to trauma, self-deficits, deprivation, and other conditions" (American Board of Examiners, 2004:16). However, during the verbal communication that takes place between the psychoanalyst

and the analysand (patient), both parties are bound to be beneficiaries. Apart from other ego defense mechanisms used in addressing psychopathological disorders, subliminal technique which is often employed by oral artists. In this research, therefore, the performance serves as purgatory strategy for the artists and their choral groups.

### Discussion of Findings

The psychological performing artists chosen for this study have performed several songs which address issues of affection, marital conflicts, childbirth, divorce, forgiveness, criminality and punishments, inevitable death, materialism and hospitality, to mention a few. Johnson Adjan's song, "Emeya ri tete na je ka ghwa" (The Young Wives Shall Also Get Old) is performed through the technique of dramatic monologue, being a method of expressing the sufferings of female characters who undergo psychological torture in a patriarchal structural family system. An excerpt of the song is presented, thus:

**Lead Singer:** Emeya ritete na je ka gwa vwe orovwe na ooo!

Emeya ritete na je ka gwa vwe orovwe na  
Gbe nughe, Emeya ritete na je ka gwa vwe orovwe na

**Chorus:** Emeya ritete na je ka gwa vwe orovwe na

Emeya ritete na je ka gwa vwe orovwe na  
Emeya ritete na je ka gwa vwe orovwe na  
Emeya ritete na je ka gwa vwe orovwe na

**Lead Singer:** The young wives shall also get old in the marriage ooo!

The young wives shall also get old in the marriage

**Chorus:** The young wives shall also get old in the marriage

The young wives shall also get old in the marriage  
The young wives shall also get old in the marriage  
The young wives shall also get old in the marriage

The performance is presented in purgatory style with the oral artist imaginatively exposing the mental fragmentation of older wives

in polygamous marriage system in traditional society. The notion of permanence in human existence is faulted to activate the psychological consciousness of the husband who has instinctual drives for women with firm breasts. Emotional disturbances can be express through thought broadcast, complaints and singing. Davis (2010:126) affirms the unquantifiable function of performance or folkmusic and establishes that "music creates powerful connections between people as it provides a means to communicate, entertain, remember, mourn, or celebrate the lives of people."

The poet-minstrel describes the psychic and emotional sufferings of betrayed an old housewife but respectfully addressing her husband by children's names, "Ose Iboyi" (Iboyi's father) and "Ose Ititi" (Ititi's father). The culture of addressing husbands by children's names in the song depicts the high regards which married women bestows on their spouses in matrimonial homes. The referential use of "masa" which stands for the English equivalent of "Master" further reveals housewives' total submission and declaration of lordship status of African men, particularly in Urhobo socio-cultural settings. The foregoing is vividly captured in the excerpt of the performance below.

**Lead Singer:** Obrare re masa me

**Chorus:** Obrare re masa

**Lead Singer:** Oshare me onana wo rue na

**Chorus:** Obrare re masa

**Lead Singer:** Ose re Iboyi ona wo ru vwe na

**Chorus:** Obrare re masa

**Lead Singer:** Ose re Ititi ona wo ru vwe na

**Chorus:** Obrare re masa

**Lead Singer:** Obrare re masa

**Chorus:** Obrare re masa

**Lead Singer:** Obrare re masa

**Chorus:** Obrare re masa

**Lead Singer:** Ose re Iboyi ona wo ru vwe na

**Chorus:** Obrare re masa

**Lead Singer:** Oyota!

**Lead Singer:** It's not bad my master  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** My husband what you are doing to me now  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** Iboyi's father this act you are displaying towards me  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** Otiti's father this act you are displaying towards me  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** It's not bad master  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** It's not bad master  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** Iboyi's father this act you are displaying towards me  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** It is true!

Despite the emotional brutalization metted on the older wife by her husband, the former also acknowledges the supremacy of the “Masa.” The performance thus serves as a psychological coping mechanism, deployed by the emotionally depressed housewife. Through the rendition, the underlying factors that triggered the emotional outburst of the older wife is exteriorized. Moreso, the song-poetry provides therapeutic support to audience particularly married women who experience similar marital conflict, in terms of counselling and encouragement. Research has shown that “use of song lyrics in counselling is common and effective as an emotional recessing tool to evoke deep emotional responses from client” (Gladding, *et al*, 2008).

Psychological performative arts among the Urhobo are presented in indigenous language and they contain other linguistic resources such as myths, legendary stories, folktales and archetypal characters, to mention a few. All these are infused alongside the oral performance to activate and sustain the mental consciousness of listening audience. Johnson Osetejevwore Adjan is among the legendary folk minstrels in Urhobo society whose performances are philosophical, didactic, expository and

metaphysical with cultural proverbs introduced to illuminate the subject matter. In this purgatory song, the oral artist deploys the proverb, “Ame ro te osho je ke te ivwrite” (The water that touches penis will also get to the testis) as a notional illustration of non-permanence of beauty of women.

**Lead Singer:** Obrare re masa  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Wo rovwe ivie me she nure  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Wo gbo bo ye vwe ere rharan koye wo ne  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Ame ro te osho je ke te ivwrite  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Ame ro te osho je ke te ivwrite  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** E-eeeh! Inene mo-ooo!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa

**Playing of gongs...**

**Lead Singer:** It's not bad master  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** You have caused the sagging of my breasts  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** You abandoned me to seek firm ones.  
**Chorus:** t's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** The water that touches penis will also gets to the testis  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** The water that touches penis will also gets to the testis  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master.  
**Lead Singer:** E-eeeh! My mother –ooo!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master

**Playing of gongs...**

The rendition provides audience insights into the psychologically fragmented world of the imaginary character who is an old housewife with uncontrollable desire to marry a young lady with firms and pointed breasts whose husband demonstrates

cultural instinctual drives for younger women as a polygamist. The performance could be reminiscent or imaginative presentation of nostalgic experiences that require attention of conflict mediators. The artist demonstrates close psychological observation and philosophical investigation into the plights of female characters being symbolic reflection of happenings in life.

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The old wife adopts defense coping mechanism by acknowledging the nature of man in traditional African society, particularly among the Urhobo. Man is perceived to be polygamist in nature and the old wife in the performance ascribes the cause of her sagging breasts to feeding of children. However, she expresses euphoria over her childbirth:

**Song Leader:** Oshare me me rie re  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Me rie re jo vwo  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Oshare ke ohwo re otu!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Oshare ke ohwo re otu!!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song leader:** Oghene ko ye chobo ruo  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song leader:** Ivie me sheri ye emo rhe vwe!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa

**Song leader:** Ivie me sheri ye emo rhe vwe!!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song leader:** Ivie me sheri die ababo re-e  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song leader:** Omo re ovie re ye ghwaro rhe-e!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song leader:** Omo re ovie re ye ghwaro rhe-e!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song leader:** My husband, I know.  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song leader:** I knew before.  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song leader:** Man is for everyone!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song leader:** Man is for everyone!!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song leader:** God has even done it.  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song leader:** My breasts are sagging but I have children!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song leader:** My breasts are sagging but I have children!!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song leader:** My breasts are not sagging for nothing.  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song leader:** The child who sucked them caused it!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song leader:** The child who sucked them caused it!!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master

The psychological reflections of the older wife on her achievements in the marriage provide consolation and emotional stimulant to her. According to her narratology, they include procreation of both male and female children who shall be inheritors and inheritress of her husband's estates in accordance with Urhobo customs and traditions.

**Song Leader:** Ehware vwe rhe re  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa

**Song Leader:** Ehware vwe rhe we omo re-e!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Mi vwie owaran  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Mi vwie odede  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Emo ive re die erivwin-o  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Mi vwie aye gba  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Mi vwie omoshare  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Mi vwie omote-e  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Mi vwie omoshare-o  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Sex is pleasurable  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** Sex is pleasurable but it's incomparable to a child  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** I have the heir apparent  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** I have the heiress  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** The two children found in the spirit world  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** I gave birth to them  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** I gave birth to a male child!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** I gave birth to a female child!!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song leader:** I gave birth to a male child!!!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master

The first wife acknowledges her husband's freedom to explore the world and establish polygamous family system with several wives and children. Nevertheless, she is optimistic of bright future for her children who are the major beneficiaries of the

inheritance of the man. The excerpt below indicates the therapeutic utterances of the old wife:

**Song Leader:** Ode-e! Oshare me  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Asa ro je we wo me yan te!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Asa ro je we wo me yan te!!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Wo re ye aye ofa dede  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Oda die oyibo ko ye ovwie re-o  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Oye na ke obuko re emo me!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Oye na ke obuko re emo me!!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Erawevwi re okobaro ghwe us inure-e!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Song Leader:** Erawevwi re okobaro ghwe us inure-e!!  
**Song Leader:** O-oh! My husband  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** You can go to anywhere!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** You can go to anywhere!!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** Even though you marry another wife  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** Even if the born child is a white,  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** That child queues behind my children!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** That child queues behind my children!!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** The rat at front has become famous!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Song Leader:** The rat at front has become famous!!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master



The foregoing excerpt reveals the thoughts and popular views of most Urhobo housewives from primordial period till date where the procreation of first male and first female children are considered paramount. In Urhobo society like other communities, these children play vital roles in a traditional family system because they can represent their parents, provide counsel and support to the entire family members when the need arises. In the song performance, the old wife acknowledges the foregoing hence she declares that her children have assumed the leadership role while others irrespective of their genders and race must abide by the decisions of the heir apparent and the heiress. The intermittent repetition of the chorus by the performing artist indicates the degree of psychological conflicts causing disintegration world of the old wife. This is captured in the excerpt below:

**Lead Singer:** Oshare me, asa ro je we wo me yan te!  
**Lead Singer:** Oshare me onana wo rue na  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Ose re Iboyi ona wo ru vwe na  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Ose re Ititi ona wo ru vwe na  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** My husband what you are doing to me now  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** Iboyi's father this act you are displaying towards me  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** Otiti's father this act you are displaying towards me  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master.

The performing artist through this song counsels the senior housewife, reveals the underlying factors responsible for the polygamous nature of married men in matrimonial homes through circumlocutory utterances:

**Lead Singer:** Johnson, me kparunu se aye na  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Me kpare unu se aye na

**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Ophrophro me, we muophu-n!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Ophrophro me, we muophu-n!!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Wo mre akpo re arhe re na,  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Wo de je okare emu ovuovo erio,  
 Oyovwiri-n!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Asa ne emu ria, oda vwe rha!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Asa ne emu ria, oda vwe rha!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
  
**Lead Singer:** Johnson, I called the woman!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** I called the woman!!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** My co-wife, don't be angry!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** My co-wife don't be angry!!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** In this life we are...  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** If you always eat one kind of food.  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** It's not good!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** One selects food to eat, there lies delicacies!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** One selects food to eat, there lies delicacies!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master

The performing artist provides *uchebro*, counselling to the depressed housewife and posits that man deserves the right to consumption of varieties of food. The concept of “food” in this context connotes heterosexual intercourse between man and other

women in society. John Owhona, a community leader who was interviewed in the field argues that having sexual intercourse with only one wife psychologically affects manhood and reduce sexual urge of man. He asserts that a monogamous husband sees his wife as a sibling due to familiarity. The respondent concludes that sexual orientation with other ladies promotes mental health of man.

**Lead Singer:** Oshare me uchebro vuovo me vwo ke we  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Wo mue emiavwe re ugbere bru vwe cha-a!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Wo mue emiavwe re ugbere bru vwe cha-a!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Because wo mre akpo na re arhe re na  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** E-eh, okpetu she bere abo!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** E-eh, okpetu she bere abo!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Eriwin gbo bo ye oro hwere  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Okoko ke oye one!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** Okoko ke oye one!!  
**Chorus:** Obrare re masa  
**Lead Singer:** My husband, the only advise I have for you  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** Do infest me with venereal diseases!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** Do infest me with venereal diseases!!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** Because in this world we found ourselves  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** Trouble falls and spread its wings!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** Trouble falls and spread its wings!!

**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** Spiritual being ignores its murderer  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** It continues to look sideways!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master  
**Lead Singer:** It continues to look sideways!!  
**Chorus:** It's not bad master

*Uchebro* is a psychotherapeutic technique, usually verbal utterance, that is deployed by experienced people particularly elders to alleviate psychological sufferings and moulding of characters in socio-cultural settings. The housewife through the voice of the performing artist cautions her husband against the consequences of sexual promiscuity such as contraction of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). The performing artist introduces proverbs, myths, legendary stories and other verbal arts into this songs to further activate mental consciousness of audience and enhance their emotions.

Through the Opiri music performative art, Johnson Adjan objectively interrogates happenings in society. Okpeki (2021:166) notes that "Urhobo music consists of different genres, which include Udje music, Igoru music, Opiri music, Ema music, Opre music, Adjuya music and, most recently, Urhobo Disco music." The scholar maintains that "Each of the listed Urhobo music genres are engaged as an entertainment medium employed by Urhobo musicians to convey the socio-cultural experiences of the Urhobo people" (166). The communication of experiences through indigenous language is common among Urhobo song performers even though there are infusion of English and pidgin into the performances. Omokomoko Osokpa, D. Djanere, Diamond Ichege, Egwheyanudje Otubure, Okpan Arhibo and recently Ovedje Ayonowe, Orhire Okoro, Nathaniel Oruma, to mention a few, mostly perform their songs in Urhobo language. Awhefeada (2007:137) finds that "language is the most important element of one's identity, but most people who are ignorant of this,

resort to speaking other languages to the detriment of theirs.” Awhefeada's submission is corroborated by Akpofure-Okenrentie (2018:206) who notes that language is “a binding force, for, when a people can communicate with one another there is an unbroken chain of understanding which holds a people or peoples together.”

Johnson Adjan's performance under discourse contains several poetic devices such as antithesis, synecdoche, metaphor and irony. The expression, “those young wives will still get old” is antithetical, setting the “young wives” with firm and pointed breasts against “the old ones” who have sagged breasts. There is synecdoche in the expression, “When my breasts were firm you used to praise me.” Here, “firm and pointed breasts” represent young brides who have just been married into the extended family while “sagged breasts” depicts the old wives. Metaphor is also evident in the song especially in the expression that “water that touches penis will not spare the scrotum.” These devices are significant in marital life, depicting that age comes with time and no one is exempted. It is ironical that the once-sought-after young wives will become old like the rejected old lover in the song. The repetition of the above expressions will make the subject matter memorable in the minds of audience until their unhelpful thoughts and negative mood are gradually eliminated. The deployment of poetic devices will help activate the mental consciousness of audience about the psychological condition of women in polygamous marriages. Research has affirmed that “Consciousness indicates the entire area of mental attention, from pre-consciousness on through the levels of the mind up to and including the highest one of rational, communicable awareness”. (Hoffman 1945:126-129). Most Urhobo songs performed by Johnson Adjan, Okpan Arhibo, Orhire Okoro, Ovedje Ayonowe and a host of others usually focus on peace and harmonious co-existence within family units and Urhobo society as large.

In Orhire Okoro's song, “Ifri kere ophe” (Frying is Free), the emotionally distressed mistress laments over her sexual denial

or starvation from her husband even though she prepares delicious meals for him. According to the song performance, after eating the delicious meal she prepared, her husband who she fondly calls, *Imasa* (master) deprives her of love play and sexual intercourse. She condemns this sexual denial and wonders why her husband neglects her with her emotions growing beyond her control on daily basis. The introductory part of the song is literally translated as follows:

**Song Leader:**

Ifry ke ro phe nene, utitan ke ro phe.  
Ifry ke ro phe nene, utitan ke ro phe.  
Me fry re utitan ke imasa  
Imasa re nu ko re ye uko vwo ni vwe  
Mi dje obo te imasa,  
Imasa sa re obo me kufia  
Omana ru vwe vuvuu  
Okebe si vvwe vuvuuu  
Ki die mi rue imasa-a?**Song leader:**  
Frying is free mother, onions are free.  
Frying is free mother, onions are free.  
I fried onions for master  
Master ate and turned his back against me  
I touch master but,  
Master pushed my hand away.  
I feel sensations all over my body  
I feel sensations on my buttocks  
What should I do to master?

The song performer employs this song to explore the inner world of married women who are facing emotional distress owing to sexual denial by their spouses. The song is meant to appeal to married couples to perform their primary responsibility with their spouse in matrimonial homes to avoid adultery or promiscuity. The above songs function as supportive therapy, providing advice and encouragement to married patients with a view to strengthening their coping skills and promote their interpersonal

relationships within family unit and the Urhobo society in general.

- Chorus:** Me de die ore uchere ovo, gba vue vwe.  
**Chorus:** Me de die ore uchere ovo, gba vue vwe. **Chorus:** If I am for only cooking, please tell me.  
**Chorus:** If I am for only cooking, please tell me.

The performing artist through the performance illustrates sexual satisfaction as important as food consumption in marriage. The denial of a spouse this marital responsibility is counterproductive and capable of activating emotional depression. In the above song captures the psychological sufferings being experienced by the mistress which requires urgent attention.

### Conclusion

The study shows that the oral texts are presented in narrative mode where intrapsychic and emotional conflicts, unhelpful thoughts and feelings of the female sufferers are presented by way of uninterrupted flow of thoughts from the mind of the narrator-performing artists. There is also externalization of negative thoughts and feelings of the imaginary complainant in the song performance. There is therefore the exposure of subjective life and experience of characters in the renditions. There is articulatory dramatic voice as the artists echo thematic thrusts of sexual denial, alienation, marital conflicts and disillusionment. The entire performances are presented in Urhobo language. Akpofure-Okenrentie (2018:206) notes that “language is a means of expression amongst people of a given community. By means of language a people can express their emotions, emotions such as joy and sorrow; wants and needs; feelings such as cold and warmth. Language is used to express, to articulate aspirations and ambitions.”

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