

Oratory and Traditional Healthcare Intervention in Contemporary African Society

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Abstract

This study investigates oratory performance as traditional healthcare intervention with a view to promoting psychological wellbeing of individuals in socio-cultural settings. It adopted the survey-descriptive approach as the data and information were collected from natural environment. It is underpinned by Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic therapy that brings unconscious materials to consciousness of patients to improve their health and psychological wellbeing. The data were collected with audio recordings which were later transcribed and translated from the Urhobo language into the English version. In-depth interviews were also conducted to obtain first-hand information from respondents, specifically Orators and other people who have profound knowledge of oratory works and their therapeutic functions in traditional settings. The respondents were purposively selected and interviewed. The data collected in the field were qualitatively analyzed using descriptive and analytical methods. The study found that Orators provide healing to individuals, families and society by addressing behaviour disorders, phobic-anxieties, emotional conflicts, depressive symptoms, marital crises, antisocial disorders, and so on. It concluded that Orators weave songs, proverbs and stories into their oral performances which function as distractive therapy, adaptive, supportive and subliminal techniques, to mention a few to patients.

Keywords: Oratory, verbal, psyche, healing, health.

Introduction

Oratory is a verbal art that cuts across all cultures and in African traditional societies specifically Urhobo, its clinical relevance cannot be quantified. It is a formal mode of expression that is basically aimed at persuading, counseling, condemning and consoling listening audience through writing or speaking. In traditional settings, oratorical form involves verbal expression of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and behaviours before a certain category of people. According to Bula (2019:109), Verbal art is not the same as the normal or ordinary speech of human beings. Verbal art is deliberately and skillfully undertaken...the 'verbal art' of the verbal artist is always intentionally and artistically executed, not in the act of speaking per se but in that of oral performance. As clinical intervention, oratorical verbal art can change disordered thoughts of negative behaviours and perceptions of patients in society because during its performance, the minds of patients are diverted from their unpleasant experiences to something soothing and excitatory.

Studies have traced the origin of oratory to Ancient Greece and Rome. However, it should be noted that the practice of oratory is as old as every culture because whenever people are gathered for a public discourse or ceremony, speeches are made and speakers who are fluent in navigating crucial issues are applauded and respected. Oratory, according to Hambleton (1907:1-6), "was the first in which literature appeared. Its sister type was poetry." This scholar has categorized poetry and oratory as genres of literature but this would be in a pre-literature culture as new technologies were not in vogue during the period of the researcher. The foremost Orators that have emerged in different periods of oratory in world history include Demosthenes (the Greatest in Greece Oratory), Marcus Tillius Cicero, Mirabeau (the Greatest Orator during the French Revolution), Lord Chatham (the Greatest Orator in England in 1756), and Martin Luther King Jr. (America's Orator), to mention a few.

The orations of the above great men produced objective results and motivated people into actions in the past because of their

oratorical skills garnered over the years. Some of the verbal artists employ oratory containing emotive words to provide therapy to people consciously or unconsciously. Though the purpose of their speeches could be for persuasion, the audience's minds are being regulated during performances in public gathering and so people react differently to the messages conveyed to them by orators. Oratory could therefore trigger both positive and negative responses from the audience or individual listeners because they throw up latent contents repressed in the unconscious minds people. In corroborating the foregoing, Altgeld (1901:8) posits that, "the Orator must have a general knowledge of history, of literature, of religion, of the sciences, of human nature, and of affairs. He must have a full and special knowledge of the subject he attempts to discuss." A highlight of the characteristics of oratory as verbal art is presented by Hambleton (1907:8) who found; (i) Oratory depends on thought and its expression; (ii) the Orator must be inspired by a high and worthy motive; (iii) the oration cannot be trivial and ephemeral; (iv) the subject matter must be of general interest; (v) attracting all persons and not a single class; (vi) it should be full of the general truths of all subjects; (vii) the Orator must be widely read and possess an understanding knowledge of many subjects; (viii) he could be a specialist in the study of human nature if necessary; (ix) he must express his subject matter to impress and arouse listeners; and (x) and Orator may use every means to produce effect and add to his eloquence. All the foregoing features of oratory are also applicable to a *Public Speaker* and the *Rhetorician* which are synonymous with *Orator*.

Studies that have been carried out on oratory by researchers across the world appear scanty even though people have great importance for this verbal performance especially in traditional African societies. Even scholars who have published some works in this area prefer the use of rhetoric to oration. The research carried out by Eyoh (2011:88) revealed that "there are Orators in the traditional society across our ethnic groups who should be encouraged to make a

living. The point about oratory readily throws up the idea of bards and praise singers, which forms part of the next segment of the section." The findings have shown that the practice of oratory performance is not restricted to a particular society since it is an integral aspect of oral traditions. The aim of this paper therefore is to examine oratory performance as traditional healing intervention with a view to promoting positive health and psychological wellbeing of individuals for societal development.

Theoretical Framework: Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy

There are numerous theories of psychotherapy across the world. However, the current study adopted the Psychoanalytic Therapy which originated from Sigmund Freudian Psychoanalysis. It is synonymous with psychodynamic therapy. According to Shoai (2014), 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.

Psychoanalytic therapy is an aspect of psychology that deals with the treatment of patients with words, instead of drug medications, surgical operation and herbal medicines, to mention a few. It is traceable to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in order "to cure mental disorders 'by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the minds. Psychoanalysis examines the articulation of our most private anxieties and meanings to culture and gives us a perspective on them as cultural formations" (Hossain, 2017:42). Psychotherapy as a concept is defined by Oniyama, Omoraka and Arumala (2009) as the way of using psychological techniques to modify the debilitating behaviour of an individual. Whichever perspective scholars view psychotherapy, the fact remains that it is treatment of individuals with unwanted behaviour or psychological problems using the words of mouth. The term, "Psychotherapy" is

also referred to as “talking cure.” It is an interpersonal process in which therapists communicate to patients that they understand them, respect them, and want to help them (Weiner and Bornstein, 2009). By this definition the procedures employed in addressing psychological problems in psychotherapy include understanding, respect, and help. According to Koziol (2000), the goal of psychotherapy is for the patient to attain insight, and consequently the change which boils down to the removal of disorders in experiencing, disorders in the functions of the body organs, and widely understood behaviour of an individual, as well as the causes of these disorders (cited in Gluszek-Osuch, 2016).

This therapeutic orientation will foreground the current study because the main aim is to examine oratory as a psychological method of addressing health problems triggered by psychic and emotional conflicts. Through public performances of oration, certain dysfunctional thoughts and maladaptive behavioural patterns of individuals and group will be addressed for growth and development of society. It is against this background that Shoai (2014) posited 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. Oratory therapy sessions therefore help to bring the unconscious latent contents of audience to their conscious awareness. The role of therapists in this work shall be taken by Orators with audience as patients whose maladaptive behavioural patterns, dysfunctional thoughts and negative emotions would be brought to their consciousness.

Indigenous Knowledge and Practice of Oratory

Traditional orators and therapists are healers who play significant role in promoting health in society alongside western healthcare providers. They are endowed with indigenous knowledge and skills that are transmitted from one generation to another. According to Odunuga and Ogunrinde (2015:11), “indigenous knowledge in a broad sense is

knowledge developed and held by the original inhabitants of an area and their use of it in daily life. It has to do with the beliefs, knowledge, arts and other forms of cultural expression handed down through generations." In African societies like the Ibo, Yoruba, Isoko, Ijaw, Urhobo and so on, orators are mainly engaged for entertainment purpose but their performances can equally provide healing to patients experiencing psychological problems, an aspect that remains unexploited by scholars. Though most of these oral performers have become famous through informal training, there are some that discovered their talents and developed them through constant practice until they become mastery of oratory works. As a proof, through proverbs, riddles, folktales and songs which they weave into their performances, they modify maladaptive behaviours and alleviate emotional problems such as emotional distress, depression, phobia, anxieties and so on.

Occasions and Functions of Oratory Performers

Orators play significant roles in Urhobo society especially during their performances at marriage and funeral ceremonies, coronations, chieftaincy confirmations, political rallies or campaigns, anniversaries, and cultural day celebrations, to mention a few. Their functions in communities are numerous but not restricted to entertainment, coordination of activities at events, conflict mediation, education and enlightenment, campaigns, social mobilization and clinical intervention. From therapeutic perspective, Oratory performers address psychic and emotional problems of patients using verbal utterances in order to promote health and psychological wellbeing in society. Like song performers, the services of at least one Orator could be sought to coordinate the activities of a particular event and unconsciously render healthcare services to the audience and the celebrants. The patients feel emotionally relieved of their pains after the therapy sessions being provided by the traditional therapists. For instance, Orators counsel and encourage people (patients) with words, reinforce positive actions but condemn

negative thoughts and behavioural patterns that go contrary to societal norms and ethics of conduct. With their utterances, they explore the inner world of individuals, identify unhelpful thoughts and feelings that influence their actions negatively and also proffer measures to improve their health and general wellbeing. As traditional therapists and healers, Orators diagnose the ailments (physical or psychological) of patients through emotive words and shared personal experience, analyzed their effects and proffer curative measures to them during performances.

Orators can function at both group and individual therapy sessions as our investigation has revealed. For instance, in a larger ceremony, the services of more orators can be sought with each addressing certain specific health problems in social gathering. The audience in this context has assumed the position of a group of patients waiting for therapy services. The Orators and therapists take turns to address issues when they are close by at events. However, they perform simultaneously when they are positioned at some distance apart to enable them perform effectively. At funeral ceremonies, they console the deceased families with speeches that can inhibit their emotional pains and encourage them to bear the great loss. They also counsel new couples, older ones, singles and parents during marriage ceremonies. In fact, their subjects during performance are contextual based and they use proverbs consciously and repeatedly to bring individuals to their conscious awareness of certain circumstances in life that need to be addressed. In actualizing their psychotherapeutic goals, Orators like traditional music therapists, adopt the techniques of questioning, stream of consciousness, free association and assignments, modeling, confrontation and reinforcement, to mention a few. They perform dual functions (as therapists and patients) during therapy sessions hence they also purge themselves of psychological pains and also address existential problems such as marital conflicts, jealousy, greed and avarice, anxiety disorders, disruptive behavioural patterns, gender inequality and so on.

Through the techniques of stream of consciousness and free association, the psychic pains and emotional problems of orators are brought to public awareness and provide personal healing. With the strategy of free association, orators report past and current issues in order to modify negative thoughts and behaviours of people as they perform at ceremonies. Oratory sessions are characterized with humorous speeches and verbal arts such as proverbs, storytelling, folksongs, riddles (verbal puzzles) and emotive words that can modify unhelpful thoughts and behaviours of audience and also regulate their emotions.

Oratory Therapy and Emotive Utterances

Urhobo Orators including the late Chief Samson A. Ofua and Olorogun Rapheal Okejepha (Achonacho) are traditional philosophers whose expressions convey images and ideas that subject listeners to critical thinking. Their speeches which are usually pregnant with multiple meanings can alleviate psychological pains and distress by diverting their minds to pleasant. For instance, an orator may stimulate and enhance the emotions of audience through the following statements:

'Pepper soup needs a spoon while smoking of Indian hemp requires frown facial expression.'

'A stutterer will surely pronounce his surname; it will only take some time.'

'A trader that sold a blind cock to a friend should expect it back because it is wrong to sell things that are bad to close costumers.'

'A native doctor will be well respected when he looks ugly with a blind eye.'

'Housewives prefer taking photographs with beautiful things within and outside their home. They will never take a snapshot with the old bicycle that has been abandoned at the backyard.'

'As a policeman gets promotion at work so shall the length of his gun be reduced. The higher his rank; the shorter the length of his gun.'

'A woman that loves a young man does not consider his age; she genuflects whenever she meets him.'

'The person that lives close to the pit will surely hear the croaking of frogs.'

'If your name is *Esiwveneta* (I have been freed from talks/troubles) yet you always find yourself in troubles, then examine yourself. Something is wrong.'

'Even though your name is *Eghwubare* (Death has ended), that does not mean you should stand in the middle of roads. Always be careful before crossing the roads'

The foregoing are some expressions that orators introduce into their performances to alleviate emotional conflicts of guests and calm their nerves. They serve as diversionary strategy to emotionally disturbed patients among listening audience. Orators make their utterances spontaneously and contextually whenever they are invited to perform before any audience. For instance, when they suspect some thieves around, they announce to every guest to be vigilant, thus: "There are some boys around who are not thieves but immediately they leave a place, things get missing." With this statement, everyone becomes security conscious until the ceremony ends.

Orators usually display their verbal skills and talent sometimes by eulogizing the womenfolk, asking everyone to appreciate them with a round of applause. He thanks all women present for giving birth to children who are now President, Governors, Ministers, Monarchs, Billionaires and Senators. Another round of applause may also be given to the women for giving birth to children who have become professors, engineers, pharmacists, medical doctors, trade doctors and so on, in our society. Yet another round of applause goes to all women for giving birth to children like kidnappers, armed robbers, *Boko Haram* members, bandits, killer herdsmen, looters and slay queens (prostitutes) among us. At this point, the audience becomes thrilled and also disappointed at the level of moral bankruptcy in our contemporary society. The verbal art of

the Orators at various occasions contain poetic devices like similes, exaggerations, paradoxes, ironies, innuendoes, metaphors and repetitions. This affirms Bula's (2020:24) submission that what constitutes the literariness of the African verbal genre is the utilization of literary devices like alliteration, rhythm, proverbs, idioms, and imagery, the performative ingredient of the concerned art lies in singing accompanied by gesturing, facial expressions, dancing, and so on. Orators among the Urhobo as could be found elsewhere bring live into their performances through dance and movements, singing, clapping, demonstrations and other expressive arts.

Oratory Therapy Sessions and Proverbs

The infusion of proverbs into oratory performance became prominence among the Urhobo when Chief Samson Ofua and his Kokakoka Group of Ovu emerged in the 1990s. As the founder of Urhobo Orators' Association, his primary purpose was to promote Urhobo oral literature and particularly utilized proverbs as extrinsic elements with the songs to convey his messages to the audience during public performances. Besides entertainment, these orators employ songs and proverbs to identify, analyze and modify negative thoughts, beliefs and maladaptive behaviours of people. African proverbs could be used independently in various contexts by individuals or be integrated into song performances to add flavour to the messages being conveyed to listeners and further boost the health and psychological wellbeing of people. A couple of Urhobo proverbs which Orators weave into their performances to perform therapeutic functions in socio-cultural settings are as follows:

(i) Omote ro vwe erhuvwu je ovwe uruemu-un, oke kpe orovwe je oka dia kre-e; (A beautiful lady without good characters will certainly get married but shall not stay long in marriage). Orators can introduce this proverb into verbal performance to activate the mental consciousness of ladies especially the unmarried ones to display good

moral conducts in society. It provides supportive skills to women in terms of counseling and encouragement.

(ii) *Osho de bre okpakpa ko du vwe ere*: (If a penis is so in a hurry, it hits the mat). This proverb will activate the consciousness of men and women alike to be patient in their daily activities. It also serves as supportive strategy to listening audience during performance.

(iii) *Oderotor de te ewerhe je oke ne iruo*: (If a night guard narrates his nightmare, he shall be dismissed). This provides counsel to listening patients and encourages them to be vigilant at all times. Apart from this clinical function, it will activate the mental awareness of people who are employed as security agents.

(iv) *Urhiobor ovo se mue ishu ne uyovwi-in*: (One finger cannot remove a louse for the head). This proverb provides support, encouragement and advice to people in order to promote unity and harmonious co-existence within a family and in society at large.

(v) *Owevwe lerhe arie emu ro nieda*: (It is hunger that makes one eat the food prepared by a witch). This cultural proverb is meant to activate the conscious awareness of hungry patients to be careful in their moral conducts especially when it comes to consumable goods.

(vi) *Ogho oya vwo rie ikara; eye, ove evu-un*: (A bean cake is eaten due to respect; it does not actually make one satisfied). This activates the consciousness of people with regard to respect and humility in socio-cultural settings.

(vii) *Otevwe re-e, avow die ovworhuru*: (It is not enough for me to consume makes one to be known for greediness). This is applied to advise and encourage people to be generous and accommodating in society. A proverbial expression such as this will activate the consciousness of individuals and improve their interpersonal relationships in a family of community.

(viii) *Denden hwe oche-e*: (Gentility does not break the earthen pot). This provides social support to people and activates their consciousness on the need to handle issues diplomatically. The proverb is often weaved into utterances where there is confusion and tension in a social interaction.

(ix) *Omote je ohwo*: (A girl-child is still a human being). Orators like elders often introduce this proverb into discussion to regulate tension and pent-up emotions especially of mothers who are worried for giving birth to only female children. Africans believe that male children are valuable assets and this triggers anxiety and fear in the minds of mothers who have only girls especially in a polygamous family.

(x) *Urhie horan je ebio*: (In spite of the storm in the sea, sailors still navigate). This proverb becomes relevant in oratory speeches to stimulate the emotions of audience and inhibit their anxieties over existential issues. It implies that life is characterized with turbulence however people should remain calm, courageous and optimistic.

(xi) *Omopharen oyi kpe onoge*: (It is a small palm tree that becomes a full grown palm tree). This proverbial expression is used by orators like community elders in Urhobo communities to stimulate and encourage people especially the youths who are emotionally disturbed due to existential challenges facing them to be hopeful. It will inhibit their phobic-anxieties and instill confidence in listening audience at ceremonies where they are performed.

All the above proverbs can be employed by Orators during public therapy sessions to achieve various clinical purposes and improve psychological wellbeing of individuals. The proverbs introduced into oratory therapy sessions at ceremonies might be meaningless to non-native speakers and those who do not understand their usages in social context. However, they are selectively and artistically employed by Orators because of their therapeutic values. Apart from adults (patients) who shall benefit from the application of the above linguistic resources, children will be well educated through them. This brings to mind the assertion by Sone and Toko (2007) that African folklore helps in public education. In fact, "it teaches young members of the community adherence to social norms, validates social institutions and religious rituals, which all safeguard the sustainability of the best of African traditions and culture." During

therapy sessions, traditional orators educate listening audience and at the same time provide clinical services to them for the growth and development of society.

Oratory Therapy Sessions and Storytelling

Urhobo Orators also introduce stories into their performances to activate mental alertness of patients, alleviate emotional wounds and improve their wellbeing. They are utilized with a view to diverting the minds of listening audience from their physical and psychological pains. The consequences of patients' health challenges and their solutions are sometimes proffered during performances. The subject of speech is contextually-based on the occasions which could be funeral, coronation, marriages, political campaigns, chieftaincy confirmation, and so on. Orators in traditional Urhobo society as in other socio-cultural settings weave stories into their therapy sessions to provide diversion, coping skills, stimulants, sublimation, supportive strategies, activation of mental consciousness and behaviour modification of patients for the growth and development. For instance, Akporobaro (2005) noted that:

the telling of a story helps to ease emotional tensions and to express, dissolve and resolve repressed antisocial passions of anger, hatred, jealousy, etc., Telling stories about these negative passions, the mind of the individual is as it were cured of its neurosis. A story teller feels better after telling a horror story, since the act of telling it helps to exorcise and resolve his fears (61-62).

Most of the narratives convey central themes such as polygamous marriage, gender inequality in society, politics and sound education, focus and determination, language and security, to mention a few. They are in two segments: the narrative and the question. For instance, an orator may narrate the story of a certain man who harvested a premature bunch of plantain from his farm and sold it at

the market. At the end of his narration, he asks the audience to state the person who is more poverty-stricken between the seller and the buyer. Another story usually follows the first narrative while the audience tries to provide an answer to the question raised by the orator. A man married three wives: one is good at sex, the second is an expert in cooking while the third wife has good manners. Of the three wives, who shall be the man's favourite? Yet another narrative could be about three friends that were kidnapped on their way to attend a marriage ceremony. One is a police officer, the second is a medical doctor while the third person is a staff of electricity distribution company. If one of the captives is to be released, who will you plead for his freedom? These are puzzles that can activate the thinking faculty of audience and alleviate their emotional disturbances as their minds are diverted from unhelpful thoughts to something exciting. Without mincing words, a good orator and therapist should have creative ingenuity, profound knowledge of his oral traditions and improvise to make his artistic products therapeutic. Orators should be able to utilize verbal resources or tools effective to stimulate the emotional feelings of people they are meant to entertain and heal their wounds at ceremonies.

Oratory Therapy and Folksongs

Orators usually render certain songs during their public performances to also stimulate happy mood of audience. Their observations in society informed the central themes of their songs. For instance, they have observed that in various Urhobo communities, children often compose songs to eulogize their mothers especially at ceremonies. Such folksongs include:

Song I

"Oni me-ee, omamo oni-ooo" (Oh, my mother! Good mother!!)

"Oni me-ee, omamo oni-ooo" (Oh, my mother! Good mother!!)

"Oni me re orie oja vwo ke vwe" (My mother that suffered for me)

"Oni me-ee, omamo oni-ooo" (Oh, my mother! Good mother!!)

Song II

Lead Singer: Oni me wo ru nor.

Chorus: Dooo, wo ru nor, iye;

Lead Singer: Oni me wo ru nor.

Chorus: Dooo, wo ru nor. iye;

Lead Singer: Oni me wo ru nor.

Chorus: Dooo, wo ru nor. iye;

Lead Singer: My mother, you have done well.

Chorus: Thanks, you have done well. I salute.

Lead Singer: My mother, you have done well.

Chorus: Thanks, you have done well. I salute.

Lead Singer: My mother, you have done well.

Chorus: Thanks, you have done well. I salute.

The above lines are lyrics which people usually performed for their mothers but fathers are only honoured with dirges such as;

Turere, turere ibaba rue iruo ro ye
turere-eee

Turere, turere ibaba rue iruo ro ye
turere-eee

Turere, turere ibaba rue iruo ro ye
turere-eee

To the end, to the end; father has
done his work to the end.

To the end, to the end; father has
done his work to the end.

To the end, to the end; father has
done his work to the end.

The performance of these contradictory songs often evokes laughter in social gatherings because the rendition for the fathers implies that they are only appreciated or honoured after death. Apart from emotive words of Orators which are powerful and therapeutic, certain songs performed by these verbal artists can stimulate emotional feelings and modify negative behaviours if applied in our daily life. In essence, "the therapist encourages new behaviours, including new recognitions of feelings, new experiences and new cognitions" (Robak, 2001: 530-531). For instance, the recorded oratory works of Samson Ofua, Rapheal Okejephan, Emmanuel Onodaraboke and Awhotu Joseph Ujeya, to mention a few, contain inspirational words and songs that can spur individuals towards greatness in life. Such performances encourage emotionally disturbed individuals to look inward and apply personal coping strategies. Sometimes they satirize corrupt public officers, religious leaders and their followers, unfaithful couples, prostitutes and even evil doers, to mention a few, in order to modify their negative thoughts and ensure wellness in various communities.

Popular Oratory Works and Clinical Intervention

The practice of individual therapy is also common in African societies as could be found in the Western world. In this therapy session, individuals listen to audio recordings of different performances by orators during their moments of relaxation and the positive effects of the utterances are unquantifiable. Besides listening to recorded speeches which are in some cases presented in form of music, discussing them also provides therapy to individuals who may not have the opportunity to attend live performances of traditional oratory therapists. Patients in their homes, vehicles and offices could select specific audio recordings of cultural Orators and therapists of their choices and listen to the central themes contained in the songs or performances.

The therapeutic functions of Orators in shaping lives and promoting wellbeing in society are therefore immeasurable. They render talking therapy to individuals and society drawing on songs, legendary stories, folktales, and other verbal arts. This corroborates the view of Cave (1999:9) that a therapy may be an attempt to 'cure' or it may be an attempt to teach the individual how to cope with problem." The Orators thus coordinate social activities and make utterances that could subject human minds to positive thinking and condemns negative beliefs and behavioural patterns of people.

Conclusion

The study found that oratory performance is prominence among the Urhobo as could be found elsewhere in African traditional societies. Though various terms like Rhetoric or Public Speaking are ascribed to this oral performance, the infusion of proverbs, songs, stories and other linguistic resources into it made the Urhobo people pay more attention to it. There is hardly a traditional ceremony in Urhobo traditional society where the services of Orators will not be sought. In fact, at public events they provide adjunctive treatment to song performers in terms of entertainment. However, this study extended scholarship by exploring the clinical functions of the oratory in

traditional African societies, particularly Urhobo land. The investigation revealed that during performances, Orators skilfully utilize linguistic resources to alleviate psychic and emotional pains of individuals, address family conflicts and societal problems in general in order to promote health and psychological wellbeing of listening audience.

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