

DISCURSIVE PSYCHOLOGY OF TRAUMATIZED NIGERIANS IN EC OSUNDU'S VOICE OF AMERICA

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ABSTRACT

Discourse represents lives and conscious living, which society reflects collectively, especially in its cognitive capacities, and shaping of the social metaphor, through the critical appreciation of the nexus between the linguistic expression to the deeper and most persistent intuition of man. This awesome virtue empowers discourse to grasp and transform human nature to human. Thus, a lot of social events or variables influence our aggregate and individual psyche; they therefore, form our character personality through our discursive production in our social interactions and engagements. This paper evaluates the psychological import of the discourses in short stories of EC Osundu's *Voice of America*; the stories are eighteen, but two "The Men they Married" and "Nigerians in America", were selected for the analysis, through the prisms of individual, event-based and collective trauma theories. These discourses reflect the traumatized personality of the Nigerian individual person, which are manifested in the lexical choices of the character metaphor in the stories. They are sociopsychological experiences entextualised into the semiotic discourse of pains in cultural or situated practices. The paper deploys trauma theory to critique the fundamental or remote cause of this personality dysfunction. The research queries the inner world of the repressed thus, qualitative method was used because the study hinges on social reality; its data were drawn from the text and textual analysis was used to distill information from the stories. The textual analysis lays bare that the personality of an average Nigerian is unconsciously conscious being manipulated by some event-based and socially-influence trauma which is endemic and generational. Our discourse is word made flesh, that is, it enables us to reveal our secrete recess of our being, to invoking psychical nature of our mind and soul in expressing grief, sorrows and despair.

INTRODUCTION

What is language? If not an art that reinforces communication and intuition in the social habitation, it therefore embodies the imagination of its local culture and a name. Thereby, compelling us to share, to make know, even "if possible, pass into common currency what once was a private fancy in the agitated flux that" (Osundare 2008: 5) is residual in the individual's or society's mind. So, language being an art creates affect, because every art seeks to create affect. The strength and excitement art deploys in stimulating this depends on the degree of relationship of enabling factors or variables, "such as the degree of originality or stylistic virtuosity of the artist, the socio-cultural ambiance of his operation and its historical imperatives, his view of the roles of art in society and the nature of his own social vision" (Osundare 2008: 5). So, every art is unique, and it unveils its in discourse of varied style, but with equal promptitude or urgency. This discourse wears the toga of variegated lexical and cultural specificity; which seeks to make known the exact and immediate influence on the prevailing social phenomena. Thus, language is an art strengthen by

discourse to be able to express "different cultures, societies, speech communities and various social formation use discourse as an organizing factor of social life, as a medium for structuring the knowledge base of various social groups and constructing different versions of reality" (Ezeifeke 2018: 14). Consequent upon this, discourse analysis offers critical description, explanation and interpretation of textual encodings in both spoken and communications. This implies that discourse analysis is armed with the analytical tools that empower it to look beyond the sentential level of meaning that is at micro-level. Rather, it immerses itself at the macro-level of the interpretative analysis of meaning of the text, by extrapolating or interpreting varied shades of meanings in a text which are encoded in several lexical choices. At this point, discourse analysis enlists pragmatic feature of implicature in its analysis of the intended meanings of a particular lexical choice, at the socio-cultural and contextual dimensions...and what motivate such choice "and what the participants gain by choosing particular versions of reality over others" (Ezeifeke 2028: 14)

Discourse, therefore, renders language as a form of social practice that is part of society and somewhat

external to it, that is, it encapsulates society. However, it is a process that is socially-conditioned by other extra-linguistic elements of the society. The interdependence of language and society means that they are inseparable, therefore, their relationship is not external rather internal and dialectical. "Language is a part of society; linguistic phenomena *are* social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena *are*(in part) linguistic phenomena" (Fairclough2011:56). Linguistic phenomena are socially-conditioned that it reflects the philosophy of what the people speak or listen, read or write, they get these done in ways that socially determined and have social effects. However, this also applied even when one consciously withdraws himself into individuality, he still found himself being influenced by the social phenomena. For instance, within the confines of his family unit, he still uses language as it reflects the social convention. Moreover, Fairclough (2011) avers that using language in the most intimate and private engagements is not only socially determined by the social relationship of the family, it also "has social effects in the sense of helping to maintain (or, indeed, change) those relationship" (56).

DISCURSIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Discursive Psychology (DP) is an approach that came to light with the psychological phenomena. It is the application of discourse analytical postulates to psychological truth, which highlights the individual's or common mental representations of their "world on the basis of innate mental structures and perceptual experience, and talk on that basis" (Edwards and Potter 2019:1). DP is enhancement of discourse, which accounts for talk and text, in theory and practice. Discursive Psychology is about talk and text in order to interpret lifeworld which is under review or description, such as the motivations, thoughts, mental states, dispositions, perceptions and likes (Edwards & Potter, 1992). So, in the realm of DP, mind and reality are constructed conceptually by the individual persons, through the instrumentality of language, in the actual production of language, which is the discourse (Potter, 1996). As a result of this immanent fact in DP, it became obvious that it has some common relation "with ethnomethodology and conversation analysis on the situated, action-performative nature of talk", it is inclined to analyzing the "records of natural interaction, or textual materials produced as part of life's activities (newspaper reports, medical

records, written testimony, etc.) rather than using experiments, surveys and interviews to generate research data" (Edwards & Potter, 2019).

It is the laying on of ideas from discourse analysis to issues in social psychology (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). It draws ideas from the outlook of conversation analysis and applies them to social and cognitive psychological issues (Sacks, 1992; Edwards and Potter, 1992). Potter (1998:3) describes the concept as a constructionist with twin sense which "researches the practices that are sustained by particular constructions of the world (accounts, descriptions); and it researches how those descriptions are built, how they are filled to their context of use, and the recourse the draw on". From the foregoing, what discursive psychology tends to achieve is shifting analysis and the quest to clear of obscurity from the mental process (cognitive) to discursive practices. Potter (1998:4) calls this "anti-cognitivist", this clearly shows that it is against the outcomes or report of activities; it dwells on activity itself. It swells on interaction achieved through talk and text (text is the emphasis of this paper), and the manner in which it occurs, and what raw material or personnel it draws on, and how they are in relation to the issues that bothers on social psychology.

DP is a social constructionist approach that engages itself in studying how participants react in every situation, especially in minding their business, in so doing they construct the world. So, through constructionism, DP seems to mean the way language tries to construct "underlying mental/cognitive processes...made relevant for, and attended to in discourse, rather than something that exists apart from, behind, or as a product of discourse" (Gibson 2018: 6).

There are two major definitions of constructive discourse. First, language user's vocabulary, metaphors, and general patterns of description (also known as interpretative repertoires; Potter & Wetherell, 1987) are used to generate discourse. Second, the mental (psychological) world is one of the representations of the reality that speech is employed to create. DP is interested in how these are worked up discursively, in how they become a live issue for people in the course of going in the daily business, rather than seeing the objects of psychological inquiry (attitudes, identities, personality, motivations, categories, memories, etc) as standing outside of discourse.

DISCOURSE AS FUNCTIONAL

When people speak, they do so to accomplish some form of task. Therefore, discourse functional, or action-oriented. It is not necessary for the functions of conversation to be connected to any formal grammatical aspects of language. For instance, if I enter a seminar room and remark, "It's rather warm in here," what would first appear to be a straightforward observation about temperature may instead serve as a request insofar one or more of my pupils gets up from their seats to open a window. What linguistically seems to a description only actually serves as a request.

DISCOURSE AS VARIABLE

Potter and Wetherell (1987) emphasize variability in their first presentation of the discourse analytic position. Empirical analysis revealed the variety of discourse because the constructive work done by the discourse depends on the function being performed and since the function might change on the setting. When describing to students, Gibson (2018) uses the example of phone or social media interactions, they may have had regarding their campus social lives. If one is speaking to one's parents as opposed to one's friends, one might easily see that distinct versions of, say, a certain evening out, might be built. The fact that we have no way of knowing which description is "true" is relevant because truth is insufficient justification for analytical claims. Although, many things may be true, this does not dictate how they will be created at any particular time (Schegloff, 1972). The primary postulation of Discourse Analysis, according to Potter and Wetherell (1987: 33), is that function entails the building of versions and is evidenced by language variety. Although, it remains crucial in analytical terms, the emphasis on variation has more recently been conceptually supplanted by the more essential notion that speech is located in certain settings (Potter and Hepburn, 2008).

TRAUMA THEORY

Trauma has been part of the Nigerian experience and the collective awareness of its impact has been widespread from the 1970s till date. Castor defined trauma as "what happens when a sudden event or many small events over time overwhelm the body's systems of care; one can no longer feel safe in one's own body, mind, and in the environment" (2019:2). This means that trauma makes its victim not to make sense of events that relates to time and space

but is configured to feel a sense of agitation or unpleasantness. This stance was supported Gabor Mate, a trauma theorist and physician, who said that:

Trauma... does not reside in the external event that induces physical or emotional pain, nor even in the pain itself, but in our becoming stuck in our primitive responses to painful events. Trauma is caused when we are unable to release blocked energies, to fully move through the physical/emotional reactions to hurtful experience... Trauma is not what happens to us, but what we hold inside in the absence of an emphatic witness (2010, n.p.).

This implication of this is a sudden breakdown physiologically and psychologically. In fact, psychologically, the victim feels a sense of utter defeat (Levine & Frederick, 1997). This also enables such a victim to tell a story by distinguishing between attention and sensation especially when there is a change in a particular sensation probably to something distressful (Castor, 2019:3).

Since this paper bothers on investigating trauma, there is the need to categorize it. Erikson (1976:153-154) has this to say:

By individual trauma I mean a blow to the psyche that breaks through one's defenses so suddenly and with such brutal force and one cannot react to it effectively.... By collective trauma, on the other hand, I mean a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality. The collective trauma works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it, so it does not have the quality of suddenness normally associated with "trauma". But it is a form of shock all the same, a gradual realization that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared.

From the above, we are able to identify several types of trauma. The first which is individual trauma deals with the psychological impact that strikes on an individual level which is peculiar to only that individual that makes such individual to react to life by the choices he or she exhibits towards themselves and to others. Simply put, this determines how they see themselves, how they see others and how they perceive others because of the ugly experience(s) they have had. The collective trauma represents damaging consequences of mass catastrophe at the collective level that is on the

social executable programme, relationships, institution, dynamics, practices and functions that is damning to the social construct. Lastly, in this paper, we would want to promulgate a third type called *event-based trauma*. As the name implies, this type of trauma is a result of events that happens to an individual which may or may not be his or her fault but as a result of deception or naiveness which puts them to accept the circumstance unknowingly, and to aid in promoting it maybe to avoid being ridiculed or embarrassed.

This paper seeks to highlight the various mechanisms of these trauma types or theory as they relate to the complex experiences and realizations of those who identify as Black or who society sees as Black. We would find out if in their awareness of having a Black identity and what the society tends to interpret it to be are there projection of trauma. Furthermore is the investigation of society's view on becoming Black and to know if there are traumatic implications. Black here, according to Henry Gates, in his book *Black Literature and Literary Theory*, sees it as "African Caribbean and Afro-American" (1984). Nigeria is a country in West Africa *Voice of America* offers us insight on the trauma Nigerians face while living in America.

SUMMARY OF VOICE OF AMERICA

Voice of America, which is set in Nigeria and America, is a collection of eighteen short stories which changes posture from boys and girls in villages and refugee camps to the disappointment and confusion of young married couples living in America. The collection "presents an unrelentingly grim picture of lives lived in poverty, of the struggle for survival, and of dreams of escape – 'married widows' who bemoans the fates that have handed them husbands so absent from their marriages that they may as well be dead" (the Guardian, 2011, n.p.). "The Men they Married" portrays a more realistic view of immigrant life and the disappointment that usually accompanies it. It is a bunch of anecdotes on the unsatisfied events of some Nigerian women who went to America with their husbands. One of these anecdotes shows a woman who married a man that claims to be an American doctor. He employed deception to get her married by promising her parents and siblings money, gifts and college tuitions. On getting to America, she found that he lied as he is only a certified nursing assistant working in a retirement home. He also lived in a small filthy apartment. In

the end, she accepted her situation and also studies to become a certified nursing assistant. She had to lie to her mother with news that she too was studying to become a doctor. Through this continued deception, the resiliency of the American dream is clearly seen. "Nigerians in America" is narrated by a young girl who is noting her parents' relationship and their response to the imprudence of an old family friend.

"THE MEN THE MARRY"

Extract 1

She joined him a few months later in America and discovered that he had not been anywhere near a medical school. He worked at Duyn Home, a retirement home for the elderly. He came back home every day smelling of the aged, and complained about the ninety-eight-year-old Rose Kelly.... (P. 79-80)

Extract 2

She did not know how she survived those early days – their cramped apartment building ... the mice and roaches apartment, the thin wall separated them from their neighbour.... She felt rage, disappointment, anger, shame, and finally numbness. (p. 80)

Extract 3

The kind of numbness that made everything seem like a dream from which she would soon wake up, with her husband reassuring her that it had been a game devised by him to test her, to find out if she really loved him. (p. 80)

Extract 4

She did not recall at what point she began telling lies to her folks back in Nigeria about him.... She had made excuses. He was attending a course, as soon as he was done, he would take care of all things he had promised to her parents. (p. 80)

Extract 5

And what about the promises he had made to her parents, the plot of land he had promised to buy her father in the old part of Ikoyi, and the duplex he promised to build for him, facing the Atlantic Ocean? What about her younger brothers and sisters he had promised to see through college, what about the car he had promised to ship to her father as soon as he got back? (p. 80)

Extract 6

Soon, she no longer answered those odd-hour calls that came from Nigeria, calls that did not recognize the sic-hour time difference. (p. 81)

Extract 7

Uzo married two men. That was the way she phrased it whenever she was talking about her situation to other Nigerian women in Maryland. Her husband already had a seventeen-year-old son from a previous marriage to an African American woman.... (p. 81)

Extract 8

Jaquante, who she once overheard telling someone on the phone that he was going to kick her ass. When she reported this to her husband, he told her that it was a mere figure of speech, it was the way African American spoke. (p. 81)

Extract 9

She could not hide her shock when she told her husband about it later that night. Back in Nigeria, she had been told that marijuana was a leading cause of insanity, and it was smoked largely by motor park touts and street miscreants. (p. 82)

Extract 10

In the two weeks after Jequante left, her husband had become morose and would not talk to her.... She was the one who begged him to bring Jequante back, if that was the only thing that would make him start talking to her again. Jequante would soon be on his way back and she would be married to two men yet again. (p. 84)

Extract 11

Ebone was said to have given her husband away with her own hands. They had come to America on visitor's visa and had decided to stay on. (p. 84)

Extract 12

The first day she had heard the name Rhonda she had rolled the name around in her head. It sounded short, crisp and authoritative. Little by little things began to change. (p. 85)

Extract 13

She was sure she smelled Rhonda on her husband when he came in that night. She wished they were living in the village back in Africa.... Ebone wished she had a loyal dog in America that could sniff her husband's crotch and confirm for her that he had slept with Rhonda. (p. 86)

Extract 14

Now he was asking her to return to Nigeria. He promised to send for her after a couple of years.... As she watched the day time talk shows, she wished she could take her problems to Oprah or Dr. Phil.... She wondered if they would understand. Americans did not overly concern themselves with the tortuous paths immigrants took to obtain a green card and citizenship. (P. 86-87)

Extract 15

Every night she waited to hear the sound of his key turning in the lock. Was he coming back, or had he decided to move in with Rhonda? Only the click of the lock held the answer. (p. 87)

Extract 16

Malobi's husband wanted a child. His family also wanted her to have a child, because her husband was an only child. They did not want the family name to disappear. Back in Nigeria, they pointed out decrepit houses that had been owned by rich people who had no progeny to inherit the properties after their death. (p. 88)

Extract 17

Her mother in-law sent her by courier all the way from Nigeria medicinal concoctions in dark bottles that stank horribly.... The conversation had left Malobi feeling like the proverbial cow without tail, which was said to be at the mercy of all manner of flies. (p. 88)

Extract 18

Malobi paused and tried to read her mother in-law's tone. There was something in that voice, some inflection she was missing, and days later, after the conversation, it came to her with the clarity of dawn. Not once had her mother in-law said, "my son is dead"; she had kept saying "your husband". (p. 89)

Extract 19

A few months later Baba brought her a copy of one of Nigeria's soft-sell magazines. There was a picture of her husband and his new bride beaming into the camera at the christening ceremony of their new baby at Christ's Church Cathedral. (p. 90)

Extract 20

Once we had dreams of growing old together and reminiscing of our days in this land of big dreams... and that the land of big dreams is also the land of huge nightmares.... This will not be our fate; we will never become married widows in our own lifetime. (p. 90)

“NIGERIANS IN AMERICA”

Extract 21

As we drove off in Father's car with the heat turned on full blast as usual, he began to wind down the glass on his side of the car. "Are you hot?" my father asked. "Oh, yes, quite hot, or have you forgotten I'm coming from Minnesota, where the major economic commodity is snow?" (p. 92)

Extract 22

"Well, it is not that I hate alcohol, it is the smell that I dislike. You know I grew up with my

grandmother in Sapele and she used to sell ogogoro, what the colonialists called illicit gin.... One day I went into the room... and took a sip.... I did not know when I passed out.... I threw up, but did not wake up until the next day. Since that day, I've never really liked the smell of alcohol...." (p. 96)

Extract 23

"I don't know, Uncle; I don't know who I am anymore. That foolish African American girl Sheniqua wants to ruin my life.... She called up the INS and told them that the marriage I contracted with her was fake. She told them I paid her for the purposes of getting a green card". (p. 97)

Extract 24

"I called her names. At first she seemed contrite. Then she got angry and swore she was going to send my sorry ass back to Africa. This is the same girl who I've been paying four hundred dollars every two weeks". (p. 98)

Extract 25

"When soldiers overrun any place, they rape and loot and that is what they are doing to Nigeria. They are raping and stealing the country blind, along with their civilian supporters. If not for then, what would I be doing in this cold country?" he asked. (p. 99)

Extract 26

Uncle Sunny, who worked in the state correctional facility, commented that there was an increase in the number of inmates in the state prison who had Nigerian names. He said that they are mostly young people born here in America to Nigerian parents. He complained that most of them did not even speak any Nigerian language. (p. 100)

Extract 27

"Did you not hear the story of the old white lady in DC whose house was burgled, and she called the cops and told them she suspected that some Nigerian boys who lived in the opposite apartments must be responsible.... 'When Nigerians steal, they steal big', the cop said and left". Everyone laughed and there was silence.

Extract 28

Uncle Sikolo began coming back late from the school. He refused to eat and would go straight to his room.... (p. 101).

Extract 29

"And I thought he was a godly man. What about his wife and his daughter? He does not even talk about bringing them over anymore. Now he wants to bring a white woman to my house, Ava Wilson, or

is it Abba Wilson he calls her? America changes people. He is a grown man, and free to make his choices," my father said.... "Does the Abba, or is it Ava, woman know that your friend is even married"? Mom asked. (p. 102)

Extract 30

"Oh, so she smokes?" my mom said, and hissed and walked to the kitchen. (p. 1104)

INDIVIDUAL TRAUMA

Extract 19 tends to give us a picture of Malabo on confirming the suspicion that her 'dead husband' has really moved on. She would be shocked and enraged at her husband and her mother-in-law. Though this was not clearly stated, individual trauma tends to create a mood of shock and rage in an individual.

Extracts 22 and 30 is another example of individual trauma. The mother of the narrator recounts her experience that made her unconscious and almost in a critical situation had it been her grandmother did not intervene. This made her to hate alcohol and cigarettes or any nicotine content. Adverse effect which results to a near death experience is a leading factor to individual trauma. This does not only affect the individual but also determines how the perceive others when they see others moving in the same direction that led what the experienced. It is worthy to note here that the said experience might be 'conducive' for others to partake as in the case of alcohol and cigarettes intake.

Lastly, extract 28 is another example of individual trauma. Uncle Sikolo is reacting to the treatment that is been meted to him at the university. Earlier in the story he is seen to be lively and refreshing eager to conquer. But much later this mood changed as he is seen to be moody, reserved and unassociating to the amazement of his host. He kept complaining and could not cope. This is a personal blow to him as his expectations where never accomplished. Individual trauma can change a person who was once lively to become moody, reserved and exhibit irritable behavior.

EVENT-BASED TRAUMA

Bulk of our analyses ison event-basedtrauma.

Extracts 1 to 3 clearly shows a trauma that fell on an individual based on event. The lady was married to base on deception. She was not aware of truth probably because of distance and trust; distance –he would take her to America; trust –he is the only

black doctor in the said hospital in America. Extract 2 especially enumerated the effect of the trauma - rage, disappointment, anger, shame, and finally numbness (p. 80). We could see clearly that one feature of event-based trauma deniability; this deniability tends to be serving as an escape route, and later, aids in acceptability of this trauma as part of life. For instance, for the lady in picture, she felt numbness which for her is like a dream in which she will wake up from and find out her husband is just doing a prank to know if she really loves him.

Extracts 4 to 6 brings to our notice one feature of event-based trauma: deception. This is mostly as a result of embarrassment that emanates from the trauma. Deception is a key instrument of event-based trauma. Most times, this deception is done deliberately as can be seen in extract 1-6, and another time, it is event-based in itself as we would see in extract 11 to 15. The victim of the trauma, due to embarrassment tends to lie to cover up which leads to deception. When deception is deliberately used, there is usually a personality to maintain. This 'maintenance' tends to make the trauma victim to cover his or her inflictor by lying instead of speaking out to the extent. Also, the assume the image of their inflictor as is clearly seen in our extract where the said lady started lying to her parents that she too is training to be a medical doctor which is false. Lastly, it tends to make the victim to become an inflictor through the instrumentality of deception and withdrawal – withdrawal, as she no longer answers the call from Nigeria. This act has made those in Nigeria victims of event-based trauma.

Extracts 7 to 9 is an example of event-based trauma revolves around marriage. Uzo, the victim of this trauma, is in a dilemma where she is 'married' to both her husband and his seventeen year old teenage son who keeps exhibiting rascally delinquent behavior. The result of this kind of trauma is that it kept Uzo, the victim, on edge and unsecure as she is not sure of her step-son actions which she felt is cantankerous. The teenager exhibited character that sometimes seemed deliberate which fostered her trauma due to the training he received from the mother. The worst was that this character was excused by the father as signs of adolescents. This further kept Uzo on edge as these events transpire. It has to take one violent action to give Uzo a temporary relieve. Event-based trauma can result to violence

Extract 10 clearly shows that event-based trauma can make its victim to have a feeling of entrapment. The best solution was for the teenage boy to go back to his mother. But that was not the case as it almost led to breakdown of her marriage until he returned. This is a feeling of someone being entrapped.

Extracts 11 to 13 and 15 are other examples of event-based trauma. This particular one has some aspect of social trauma because the couple, Ebone and her husband, came to America to escape the harsh conditions in Nigeria. To further enhance their escapade, the husband decides to marry an American woman in order to acquire a green paper for them. Ebone agreed and that was the beginning of her problem. The main cause for this is naiveness. She lacked the wisdom, experience and sophistication that goes with women engage in such escapade that she and her husband are involved in. She became agitated and anxious. Therefore, event-based trauma could be as a result of naiveness on the side of the victim.

Extracts 16 to 18 show the blow the psych of an expecting Nigerian wife. Though this extracts have a connotation of collective trauma, what Malobi, the expecting Nigerian wife, is going through is event-based. The results of this event-based trauma are first deception. There was a marriage plan that Malobi was unaware of. Second is stigmatization. The victim is being stigmatized as seen in the action of the mother in-law. Also, Malabi felt like the proverbial cow without tail, which was said to be at the mercy of all manner of flies (p. 88), it further buttressed our point to the feeling that she is being stigmatized because of the event. Lastly is the crude dismissal. This feeling of rejection is underneath the theme of trauma. The mother in-law had to use the word 'death' to describe how she rejected her.

In Extract 20, the analogy of America as "a land of nightmares" reveals that victims of event-based trauma tends to attribute 'place' to the cause of their trauma. This is clearly seen throughout the first story where the victims associates their immediate environment to the cause of their trauma and wished they were in Nigeria. This links event-based trauma to the immediate environment of the trauma victim. Most times the immediate environment becomes an entrapment for the victim as leaving there could bring unwarranted embarrassment. In a sense too, the immediate environment also serves as a shield from

embarrassment, truth, and enables them to maintain their obscure 'identity'. Another point here is the use of the word 'married widow' which further describes the 'obscure identity' of the victims. In fact, it sums up the bitter experience of the victims who are affected by event-based trauma.

COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

This type of trauma is replete in this paper. Below are the analyses.

In extract 14, a common situation among immigrants is seen. The victim's trauma is not just personal to her but part of a social trauma associated with people trying to get green card in America: "Americans did not overly concern themselves with the tortuous paths immigrants took to obtain a green card and citizenship" (P. 86-87). The quest for a better life is what usually push Nigerians to America because of the poor state of things in the country. This is a collective trauma on itself. This quest for a better life is mostly the mechanism of collective trauma that runs through this paper. The victim in our extract found herself in a situation where she is struggling with another woman for her husband because of the quest for green card and citizenship, a sign of a better life. Her tortuous experience made her to contemplate whether to seek help from the various TV show's hosts but was afraid because she thought they will not be bothered about the situation. She decided to keep it to herself. This clearly shows that victims of collective trauma do not share their experience with 'outsiders' but those within their social group as we later how she confided in another Nigerian woman to seek for advice.

In Extract 21, in spite being in the same America, there is a representation of Minnesota as a dark place to reside by Nigerians in America. The weather represents a collective trauma for Nigerians as we see throughout the story. There are efforts by Nigerians to leave that place for better livelihood. This is another example of an immediate environment or place being linked with trauma.

Extracts 23 and 24 reiterates a common feature of collective trauma that was discussed earlier. First, is the poor state of things in Nigeria, and quest for a better life. Second, this leads the victims to involve themselves in an activity that usually gives a blow to their psych as is seen in the victim in these extracts. A once happy man is so distraught because his suppose 'wife' who he married to enable him acquire his citizenship is blackmailing him. This is

what most immigrants do and go through in order to enjoy a better life. So this is not just personal to the victim in these extracts, it is collective as his demeanor and tantrum is taken very serious by other people who share the same social identity with him. They had to search for the best possible way to dash the tension that is brewing between the victim and his 'wife'. This clearly shows that there is a sense of shared responsibility as not only the victim is affected but those around him that comes from his social group. The victim here is not allowed to suffer the trauma for long as he gets temporary relief from persons of his social group. Again, because he is part of a social group that shares the same identity with him, he is free and obliged to share his experience hoping to get relief even if temporary from the social group.

Extract 25 is a good example of collective trauma. It also helps to give insight for the 'rush' to America. Here, the victims of this trauma are Nigerians while the government of the day (the military government at that time) is the inflictors. They way "they are raping and stealing the country blind" is so traumatic that the individuals in the story (many more) left the country in search of a better life only for them to be disappointed in America as they are face with the harsh reality that nothing comes easy. This can be seen in the comment where they referred to American as a 'cold country'. By using such word, it is clear that things are not going as planned. This is traumatic as the expected is not what they are seeing.

Extracts 26 and 27 are another case of collective trauma and clearly shows that collective trauma can be a result of negative association, negative identification or stigmatization and colossal embarrassment. Firstly, the quest for a better life bred parents who are not conscious of raising their children in the Nigeria way where children is being raised by every elder in the community, not just their parents. This led to negative association as these children started mixing up with other people outside their social group. Probably, they learn the wrong vices of stealing and ended up in correctional homes. Secondly, it produced negative identity as seen in extract 27 were Nigerians are seen in a bad light as "big stealers". This is a colossal embarrassment. Even though the men laughed, they silence that followed is a reflection of the trauma and stigma they receive as Nigerians in America. So, collective trauma can be as a result of stigmatization.

Extract 29 is another example of collective trauma. The hosts were perplexed (especially the wife) about Uncle Sikolo's resolve to date another woman, an American woman for that matter. In Nigeria, even though polygamy is highly permissible, Uncle Sikolo's resolve to date another woman as against his marriage to his wife who has produced a child was seen as 'ungodly' by his host. His action was attributed to living in America, which they felt has changed him. Their collective view on marriage is seen to be threatened by Uncle Sikolo's individualistic stand to date an American woman in spite of his wife and child. This threat is a collective trauma as we can clearly see that it made his hosts very worried to the extent that the wife of his host threatened to report to his wife. There when things are done against the 'norm' of a social group to the detriment of the standard of that group, it is said to be traumatic.

CONCLUSION

Our state of mind is revealed in our discourses. So, from our discourse we can communicate to others willy-nilly by revealing our state of being, either written or spoken. Discourse has psychical features

of the mind and soul which is being reinforced by the power of words through the invocation of the our experiential personality, expressing despair, sorrows or grief, entreating the awful tool, language, to voracity of time by taxing our minds and hearts to inferring the past and the present. Language is the soul of discourse, which oxygenates it and thus issuing hot and pulsating lexical rendition laden with ultimate representation of ideas and experiences. So, lexical awareness, that is, *what to say and also infer*, through the discursive expression is the beginning of the process of liberation from traditional conceptual, logical and or discursive reasoning. This awareness stimulates lexical and emotive energy, social phenomenon, which does not only rely on communication and self-expression alone, "but orientation in universe. It is the spirit made flesh. The violent muteness, the desperate isolation we experience finally breaks through in language" (Chomsky, 1993:12). It is presumably a function of ever-evolving and expanding horizons of human communication, especially literary communication that is overwhelming all aspect human living.

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