

The background of the cover is a dense, overlapping arrangement of numerous open books. The pages are a light cream or off-white color, and the text on them is small and mostly illegible due to the perspective and focus. The books are scattered across the entire frame, creating a textured, layered effect.

# BEYOND THEORY: ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

ON

EMMY I. U IDEGU'S EXPERIENTIAL  
TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY (ETC)

**Olagoke Olorunleke Ifatimehin**

*BEYOND THEORY: ESSAYS AND CRITICISM ON EMMY I. U. IDEGU'S EXPERIENTIAL TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY (ETC)*

**BEYOND THEORY: ESSAYS AND CRITICISM ON EMMY I. U.  
IDEGU'S EXPERIENTIAL TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY (ETC)**

**Editor:**

**Olagoke Olorunleke Ifatimehin**

*Copyright © Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Ahmadu Bello  
University Zaria, 2025*

**ISBN: 978 – 978 – 777 – 310 - 9**

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise—without the prior permission of the author.

Published by Zilies Prints & Publishing  
No. 25 Imgbi Road  
Amarata Yenagoa,  
Bayelsa State,  
Nigeria  
+234-7083741065  
Ziliesent1@gmail.com

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

DEDICATION..... 8

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... 9

CONTRIBUTORS..... 10

FOREWORD.....15

INTRODUCTION .....18

**SECTION A .....26**

BETWEEN EXPERIENTIAL TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ANTAGONISM: WHITHER THE CREATIVE CONSCIENCE OF THE PLAYWRIGHT?..... .27

***EMMY IKANABA UNUJA IDEGU***

WHEN PAIN INSPIRES PLAY: A PLAYWRIGHT'S VALIDATION ON IDEGU'S EXPERIENTIAL TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY (ETC) THEORY ..... 48

***IHEANACHO C. IWEHA***

EXPERIENTIAL TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY AND THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT AS TOOLS AND SITES FOR PUBLIC PEDAGOGY ..... 61

***PATRICIA N. NKWETEYIM***

A DISCOURSE OF EMMY IDEGU'S EXPERIENTIAL TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY THEORY: *THE FIELD MARSHALS' EXEUNT* AND *KWARAPCHAN* IN FOCUS..... 73

***OJA PAUL EGWEMI & JIBRIL IMAM MOHAMMED-KABIR***

EXPERIENTIAL TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY THEORY: PROVOKING THOUGHTS FOR DRAMATIC CRITICISM ..... 91

***OLIVIA ELAKECHE IDOKO & PETER OGOHI SALIFU***

*CREATIVE WRITING AND THEORY IS A GOATSKIN BAG: IDEGU CARRIES HIS OWN IN THE SELECTED PLAYS*..... 104

***ONYEKACHI Peter Onuoha***

FRAMING EXPERIENTIAL TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY AS THEORY ..... 120

***OLUWASEGUN MICHEAL BABATUNDE***

READING IDEGU'S PLAYS FROM THE LENS OF EXPERIENTIAL TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY THEORY ..... 132

***GODWIN ONUCHE***

INTERROGATING AN EXPERIENCE OF ACADEMIA POLITICS IN EMMY IDEGU'S DRAMATURGY ..... 148

***JIBRIL IMAM MOHAMMED-KABIR & MUSA SALIFU***

OF ALIENATION AND FIXATION DISCOURSE OF THEATRICAL PERSONALITIES BEYOND THEIR DRAMATURGICAL REPRESENTATION ..... 164

***OLUWAFEMI AKINLAWON ATOYEBI***

OF EMOTIONAL PROXIMITY AND CREATIVE RESPONSE IN PLAYWRITING: AN ETC READING OF EMMY IDEGU'S DRAMA..... 183

***YUSUF NINZIM SHAMAGANA***

THE NATIVE NARRATOR IN A CRAZY WORLD: A SCRUTINY OF "THE CRAZY WORLD" IN LUCKY DUBE'S *CRAZY WORLD* ..... 203

***IHUOMA OKORIE***

RETHINKING THE TRAGIC, THE ABSURD AND THE CONCEPT OF HEROISM IN TWO DRAMATIC MEMOIRS ON UNIOSUN SEX SCANDAL BEYOND 'EXPERIENTIAL TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY THEORY' ... 221

***OLABODE WALE OJONIYI***

THE UNIVERSALITY OF EMMY IKANABA UNUJA IDEGU'S EXPERIENTIAL TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY (ETC)..... 241

***GAMBO SANI***

OF ACTIVIST THEATRE AND HEGEMONIC MISCHIEF IN LITERARY CENSORSHIP: A PERSPECTIVE OF EMMY IDEGU'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DRAMA..... 255

***OLUWAFEMI AKINLAWON ATOYEBI***

TWO ANGRY WRITERS, ONE COUNTRY: INTERROGATING THE EXPERIENTIAL TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY THEORY IN THE INTERVIEWS AND PLAYS OF EMMY IDEGU AND ESIABA IROBI..... 274

***REUBEN EMBU & IHEANACHO IWEHA***

EXPERIENTIAL TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY THEORY AND THE SEARCH FOR SAFE SPACE: AN INSTANCE OF EMMY IDEGU'S *THE FIELD MARSHALS' EXEUNT*..... 290

***ONOGU WILLIAMS SUNDAY, ATULE EGWU EMMANUEL & ALI UMAR OJODALE***

BECOMING MALCOLM: AN ACTOR'S EXPERIENTIAL JOURNEY OF IMMERSION IN THE STAGE PERFORMANCE OF JEFF STETSON'S *THE MEETING* ..... 302

***PRINCE NATHAN KURE***

THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF ANOTHER: A  
PHENOMENOLOGICAL READING IN EMMY IDEGU'S EXPERIENTIAL  
TESTIMONIAL CREATIVITY (E.T.C) ..... **322**

**VICTOR OSAE IHIDERO**

**SECTION** **B**

..... **273**

THEORY AND CREATIVITY IN CONTEMPORARY PLAYWRITING: AN  
INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR  
EMMY I. U. IDEGU.....274

## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to Almighty God and to the memory of my teacher and mentor, Prof. Dapo Adelugba.

## **Acknowledgements**

This book has been a long time coming. It is here today because God desires for it to be. I acknowledge God Almighty for directing my path and making this book possible. Special gratitude goes to Prof. Emmy Unuja Ikanaba Idegu (The Field Marshal) for offering ETC to us and for his “elastic” patience and continuous faith that this work would come through. I also thank Drs. Emmanuel Gana, Iheanacho Iweha, Victor Ihidero and Ihuoma Okorie for their meaningful contributions and efforts towards the actualization of this project. I am grateful to all those who contributed their essays to this immense project; your resilience is duly acknowledged.

## Contributors

**Emmy Ikanaba Unuja Idegú Ph.D** is a trained theatre artist; properly nurtured from the prestigious University of Jos and later, the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria where he got his promotion to the rank of Professor. He is an award-winning playwright, director and administrator. Fondly called The Field Marshal, Idegú propounded the Experimental Testimonial Creativity (ETC) Theory; exhuming, expunging and interrogating the contours of creative writing with the intent and purpose of the writers examined from both the first and the second levels as stipulated in ETC. Currently Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences with the HENSARD University, Bayelsa State, he is however, due back to the Department of Theatre and Media Studies, University of Calabar after a short while. Email: [emmyidegu@gmail.com](mailto:emmyidegu@gmail.com)

**Reuben Embu Ph.D** teaches in the Department of Theatre and Film Arts, University of Jos. He is a Professor of Drama and Development Theatre with several publications to his credit. He is an alumnus of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, University of Jos and University of Ibadan. Email: [reubenembu@gmail.com](mailto:reubenembu@gmail.com) [ereuben67@hotmail.com](mailto:ereuben67@hotmail.com)

**Iheanacho C. Iweha Ph.D** is a lecturer with the department of Theatre Arts, Federal University of Education, Zaria. He is a playwright and Theatre for Education practitioner. Dr Iweha leads the Theatremass Initiative committed to youth empowerment through Film and Drama pedagogy. He is a researcher passionate on Idegú studies. Email: [iheanachoiweha@gmail.com](mailto:iheanachoiweha@gmail.com)

**Oluwafemi Akinlawon Atoyebi** is a researcher at Centre for Performing Arts and Film Studies in Education. He also lectures on Part-Time bases at Centre for Human Development and Long-Life Learning, Osun State University Osogbo, Nigeria. His research interest is in Dramatic Literature, Verbatim &

Autobiographical Theatre, Black Diasporic Performance Studies, Cultural Studies, Existentialism. Email: [atoyebi2016@gmail.com](mailto:atoyebi2016@gmail.com)

**Peter Ogohi Salifu** is a theatre director, critic, playwright, and researcher-practitioner. With academic backgrounds in Theatre Arts (Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria), Dramatic Theory and Criticism (University of Nigeria Nsukka), and Applied Theatre (University of Warwick, England, UK), his work explores intersections of theatre, culture, and community development. Email: [salifupeterogohi@gmail.com](mailto:salifupeterogohi@gmail.com)

**Gambo Sani Ph.D** holds a doctorate degree in literature from Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria. He lectures at Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Kogi State, Nigeria, and researches African and postcolonial literatures as well as literature and the environment, with numerous publications in reputable national and international journals including *Research in African Literatures* and *African Literature Today*. His latest work is *Critical Readings of the Works of Ngugi wa Thiong'o*. Email: [lifeway4ever@gmail.com](mailto:lifeway4ever@gmail.com)

**Patricia N. Nkweteyim Ph.D** is a lecturer in the Departments of Performing and Visual Arts, and English and Cultural Studies at the University of Buea, Cameroon. She is open to collaborate with researchers in fields like Applied Theatre, Theatre for Young Audiences, Sustainable Development, Cultural Studies, and, Children and Women's Issues. Email: [patricia.nkweteyim@ubuea.cm](mailto:patricia.nkweteyim@ubuea.cm)

**'Bode Ojoniyi Ph.D** is a 2017 award winning playwright of Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists. He is also a Postdoctoral Fellow of America Council of Learned Society African Humanity Programme. He has published several plays and articles. He is currently the Acting Director, Centre for Wole Soyinka Studies, University of Abuja. Email: [bodetope@gmail.com](mailto:bodetope@gmail.com)

**Ihuoma Okorie PhD** is a lecturer in the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Bayero University, Kano with an expertise in Scriptwriting, Textual analysis and Film analysis. With a Ph.D. in Theatre and Performing Arts, Ihuoma has published extensively in reputable local, and International Journals. She has a penchant for inspiring students to push boundaries of creative expression. Email: [oihuoma.tpa@buk.edu.ng](mailto:oihuoma.tpa@buk.edu.ng)

**Onyekachi Peter Onuoha** lectures in the Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria. he teaches African digital literature, social media literature and trends, creative writing, new media and critical theory. His main areas of research are creative literature and sustainable futures, social narratives and ideologies. Email: [onyekachidara@gmail.com](mailto:onyekachidara@gmail.com), [onyekachi@unical.edu.ng](mailto:onyekachi@unical.edu.ng)

**Godwin Onuche Ph.D** is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts Kogi State University, Anyigba. He is a highly motivated scholar, a drummer, dancer, playwright and a flutist per excellence. He has published extensively in peer reviewed learned journals both local and International. He has equally participated in conferences with published proceedings and book chapters. E-mail: [onuche.g@ksu.edu.ng](mailto:onuche.g@ksu.edu.ng)

**Oluwasegun Michael Babatunde Ph.D** is a lecturer with the Department of Mass Communication, Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa. His research interest focuses on issues in linguistics and communication studies, communication theories, media law and regulations with special interest in new media (social media), political and development communication and the application of new media in marketing and health communication. Email: [batunde.o.m@gmail.com](mailto:batunde.o.m@gmail.com)

**Jibril Imam Mohammed-Kabir Ph.D** is a Senior Lecturer with the Department of Theatre and Media Arts, Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

His areas of research interest cover theatre, film and literary criticism, African aesthetics and semiotics. He is a drama, theatre and film critic. Email: [kabirjib@gmail.com](mailto:kabirjib@gmail.com)

**Olivia Elakache Idoko Ph.D** has worked in the development field in Nigeria on issues relating to women and girl-children. Her areas of research interests include Tfd, Literary Criticism, and Gender Studies with several years of field experience in community development and gender. She currently lectures at the Taraba State University, Jalingo. Email: [idokoolivia@gmail.com](mailto:idokoolivia@gmail.com)

**Oja Paul Egwemi Ph.D** is a Professor of Dramatic Literature and Film Studies. He has widely published in these areas. He is currently the Head, Department of Theatre Arts, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba. Email: [egwemi.op@ksu.edu.ng](mailto:egwemi.op@ksu.edu.ng)

**Musa Salifu** is currently a Ph.D candidate the the Department of Theatre Arts, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba. He holds a B.A and M.A from the same university. His area of research interest is Technical Theatre (Design and Stage Construction). He is currently serving with Nigeria Security Civil Defense Corp (NSCDC), Ankpa. Email: [mcdegreat@gmail.com](mailto:mcdegreat@gmail.com)

**Yusuf Shamagana Ph.D** has his doctorate in Development Communication from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. His research interests include Disability Studies, Cultural Studies, Drama and Theatre for Development and Dramatic Criticism. He currently lectures in Kaduna State University where he heads the Theatre Arts Department. Email: [yusufshamagana232382@gmail.com](mailto:yusufshamagana232382@gmail.com)

**Atule Emmanuel Egwu Ph.D** is a Chief Lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts, Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa. He is the immediate past Head of Department. His areas of research interest include Theatre for Development and Child Trafficking. Email: [egwuemmatu@gmail.com](mailto:egwuemmatu@gmail.com)

**Ali Ojodale Umar** is the current Head of Department, Department of Theatre Arts, Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa. He holds a B.B(Hons) and M.A degrees in Theatre Arts and Film Studies from University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He is currently a Ph.D candidate at Prince Audu Abubakar University, Amyigba, with interest in Media and Film scholarship. Email: [aliumarojodale@gmail.com](mailto:aliumarojodale@gmail.com)

**Onogu Williams Sunday Ph.D** earned his Ph.D from Benue State University, Makurdi and his Masters and Bachelor degrees from University of Jos, Jos. He has published extensively locally and internationally. He has held so many responsibilities as Head of Department, Dean of Faculty, Dean of Postgraduate Studies and a member of Council. Email: [onogwuwilliams@gmail.com](mailto:onogwuwilliams@gmail.com)

**Prince Nathan Kure** is a theatre and film director, actor, and lecturer at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, pursuing a Ph.D. in Theatre and Performing Arts. With experience in stage and screen, he has collaborated with organizations like BBC (WST) and the American Embassy, using storytelling to drive cultural and social change. Email: [preencenethkurr@gmail.com](mailto:preencenethkurr@gmail.com)

**Victor Osaeh Ihidero Ph.D** teaches and researches at the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. His area of research interest includes Cultural studies and Performance as they intersect with drama, film, gender discourse and critical theory. Email: [videro@gmail.com](mailto:videro@gmail.com)

## **Foreword**

It is with a feeling of great excitement and profound humility that I write the foreword to this collection of critical essays in reaction to Professor Emmy Ikanaba Unuja Idegú's Experiential Testimonial Creativity (ETC) Theory. I am particularly excited because this collection solidifies and advances a discourse which was birthed 10 years ago at the premiere Conference of Theatre & Media Studies held in the then Department of Theatre & Media Studies, University of Calabar in September 2015. Having been present at the conference to witness the positive reception of Professor Idegú's astute postulations in the ETC theory, I knew then that a book of this nature is inevitable. Although conceived as a theory which interrogates the output of creative writers as a product of two levels of experience, the ETC encapsulates what I consider to be Idegú's contribution to critical theory in Nigeria and indeed Africa. Critical theory because I consider ETC theory as capable of operating beyond the confines of literary theory to offer possibilities into other profound aspects of knowledge production.

This optimism is drawn from my understanding of the two levels of ETC; the first level posits that the playwright acts as a mouthpiece for societal experiences, reflecting the emotions and situations faced by a community, even when they are not directly affected by these issues. In this case, Idegú posits that the playwright draws on imaginative impulse to relay the feelings of others, essentially representing their experiences from a distance. In contrast, the second level of the ETC theory centres on the playwright's deeply personal emotions and experiences. Here, the playwright creates work that encapsulates his own first-hand experiences, portraying feelings in a raw and undiluted manner. This level emphasizes the immediacy and authenticity of personal expression, allowing the playwright to share unique perspectives and emotional responses directly with the readers, thereby creating a more intimate and personal narrative. There are, of course, critical questions to be answered resulting from Idegú's postulations some of which include: how does the first level of the ETC theory influence the cultural

representation within playwriting? In what ways can personal experience enhance or limit the effectiveness of a playwright's work at the second level of the ETC theory? Can the emotional intensity of personal narratives in the second level of the ETC theory impact audience reception? How might the ETC theory extend beyond the confines of literary forms? What methods can be utilized to critically assess the effectiveness of the ETC theory in analyzing a specific play text? And most importantly, can ETC be considered as a theory? Answers to some of these questions have been provided in this book which, I believe will provoke further debates even beyond the limits of this collection.

The book, *Beyond Theory: Essays and Criticism on Emmy I.U. Idegu's Experiential Testimonial Creativity (ETC)*, is therefore undeniably a unique contribution to the body of critical works which exist within the sphere of Nigerian theatre scholarship. I dare say that the book is timely, coming at a time when scholars have consistently alluded to a dearth in available of critical works interrogating indigenous theories from Nigerian theatre scholars. While there is a barrage of critical works celebrating the scholarly contributions of distinguished scholars, same cannot be said about special issues focusing on indigenous Nigerian theories. Thus, this book offers readers a rare opportunity to engage with the dynamic predilections of the ETC theory. The contributions in this collection which, have been peer-reviewed, cover an appreciable spectrum of interrogation as well as application of ETC within the areas of literary criticism, performance, playwriting, media, and communication. Such critical responses to intellectual propositions present readers with fresh insights, and opens up a crucial sphere to a process of new knowledge production. I can unequivocally say that this book is not a celebratory output, but a critical resource which is intended to provoke further understanding or rather "mis-understanding" of the ETC theory, a tradition which is needed to enhance scholarship.

The editor of this book, Dr. Olagoke Olorunleke Ifatimehin, deserves special commendation for his dedication and professionalism which has resulted in the quality of this book. It is clear that he has made a significant decision regarding focus, based on the outstanding combination of scholars whose contributions comprise this volume. The contributions are well written, and certainly deserve our reading attention, I dare say it is a must read for all those who are lovers of theory and criticism.

**Emmanuel Tsadu Gana Ph.D**

Department of Theatre and Performing Arts,  
Ahmadu Bello University,  
Zaria.

## Introduction

This book draws readers into the speculation and interrogation of Emmy Idegú's Experiential Testimonial Creativity (ETC) both as theory and as a critical canon in understanding auto/biographical drama. It is a collection of essays which examine the subject matter of Idegú's postulations. Driven by the critical desire to put ETC's basic assumptions to the test, the book is comprised of submissions which assess and reassess the limits, and possibilities, of ETC as a tool of analysis, form for dramatic conception, method of research, and critical purview of interpretation. Largely founded upon the open claim that art is experience, ETC locates the nexus of experience and creative expressions. It sees art as a representation of events that have shaped, and are shaping, a person, a people or human society. It operates on the paradox of the personal and the communal, the intrinsic and the extrinsic, the performative and the witnessed.

Emmy Idegú's earlier plays reveal a playwright whose essential concern is with the existential realities of his society, especially the Igala race. He made himself an archetypal creative who stands as medium in the dramatic conjuration and projection of the experiences of his people, both historical and contemporary. His plays, *Omodoko* and *The Legendary Inikpi* are creative negotiations with history, and myth, to situate a people's firm belief in its communal ethos and heritage while surmounting conflictual dimensions through indigenous tropes for collective pathos and salvation. In *Tough Man* and *Attah Igala the Great*, the playwright articulates the worldview of his people away from the 'hegemonic' conceptualization of an "African worldview" which attempts to impose a worldview that is inimically distant and characteristically different from the unique belief system and fate of his nation and nationality.

Of course, his plays go beyond the primary constituency of his cultural origins to encapsulate Nigeria and humanity. While largely operating from the leit motif of his Igala identity, Idegú has errandiously rendered his drama to the service of

wider interests. His plays, *Kwarapchan*, *Odolu Kingdom*, *Beloved Odolu Kingdom*, *Another Odolu Kingdom*, *Great Odolu Kingdom*, *Beloved Atanegoma Kingdom* are testimonies of dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the political cluelessness and lack of direction bedevilling the Nigerian state. These plays are lamentations calling upon the people to rise and take action for a better country. *The Humans are not to Blame* is an ideological response to the analogous superintendence of gods and ancestors upon the 'destinies of mankind'. It is a transposition of Ola Rotimi's *Gods are not to Blame* which clearly reveals Idegú's humanist sensitivity that empowers women and men above the divinities of forces that were portrayed as all powerful and unquestionable in the source text.

Idegú has also authored plays which can be categorized as sociodrama, addressing specific societal problems. *Six and Half a Dozen*, *Amina*, *Chinyere*, *Hassan*, *Larai*, *Mairo*, *Nike* are instances of plays by Idegú that are crafted after the conceptual frame of drama in education and drama for development. Significantly, the playwright had sacrificed himself as the "saviour" who dared to present himself on the behalf of his community in order for it to self-reflect and be reborn. This daring, the functionalist orientation to serve a purpose even in spite of self is what Idegú conceptualizes as the first of two levels in creative writing. Then there is the second level, the level where the struggle, both dramatic and real, shifts from the communal to the personal, from without to within the reactive apprehensions of the playwright himself. At this level, the playwright becomes the society he has been writing for. Now, he has to write to express his own angst; he stands for himself.

This second level has inspired Idegú's recent plays that have now dramatically shifted from direct societal concerns to personal responses as a result of "environmental antagonism". The playwright's creative energy is now fundamentally, a reaction to actions and scenarios which pose(d) a threat to his person and self. He pours himself into his art so as to express his pains and

displeasure while also trying to make sense of it. *The Conspiracy and Truth on Trial* are reimaginations of bitter personal experiences which portend deep traumatic references to the playwright's existence and well-being. While what may be considered as "environmental antagonism" may vary (Ihidero, in his essay, actually initiates the important consideration of hearing from the other parties before arriving at what may be considered as "environmental antagonism" as the one sharing his/her experience may be involved in 'self-evidencing' and sentimentalism for a harvest of sympathy), the consequential contemplation of the thought, for the playwright, is a clash against his person by an incident, or force, outside of himself. This inversion of dramatic conflict holds a number of speculative imperatives and inferences.

One is the psychoanalytical purview. The creative self-assessment of a traumatic problem by a playwright signifies a psychological evaluation of the phenomenon, on one hand. It reveals, according to Held, what Freudian theory refers to as "the socio-psychological formation of the individual" (110). In this regard, he submits that, "Every society reaches into the individual, but within the individual, it is translated into a language quite distinct from that of everyday life- 'the language of the unconscious'. The languages of society and the unconscious are related but separate entities" (110-111). The individual (artist) expresses his unconscious through a conscious act of lamentation, revealing his deep-seated perception of his society by the reimagination of his experience of the traumatic. Perhaps, it is the fissures of opposition between the playwright and his 'society' that inspires the referencing of environmental antagonism. How a playwright (artist) reacts to societal happenings which affect him directly, rather than vicariously, reveals his commitment to self above society.

On the other hand of the psychoanalytic is the search for closure. When a playwright returns to the medium of creativity to present a testimony of his experience, notions of what Henke describes as scriptotherapy are invoked.

Scriptotherapy is a writing practice aimed towards a therapeutic experience. Its basic assumption is that when one writes, one takes a voyage from pain and depression into clarity, control and healing hitherto caused by a traumatic experience. It connects to the description of psychoanalysis as, when the analysand talks to the analyst, “the talking cure” (Parker, 148). For Henke, “Scriptotherapy is a discursive space within which all the psychological wounds one suffers from are re-enacted with the purpose of making them heal.” Raj and Rajasekaran noted that,

The basic urge to employ self-writing happens to an individual for many reasons. Many writers write to record history, to record their self and a few writers write to help them survive. Witnessing a tragic blow and acquainting those circumstances as a whole create a great impact on one’s life. Writers try to overcome it through the writings” (4387).

The essays of Iweha, Egwemi and Mohammed-Kabir, Atoyebi, Shamagana, Iweha and Embu, and Sunday, Emmanuel and Ojodale revolve around the subject matter of the psychological. They treat issues of trauma, anger, pain and their reflections in the creative testimonies of playwrights. The psychological perspective provides incursions beyond the textual manifestations of meaning. It allows for interpretive mechanisms beyond the written text to implicate aspects of acting and actor training, performance and reception. It hinges upon the experiencing of creative testimonies and the testifying itself. For instance, Atoyebi’s essay catechizes on the “psychic effects” of a play and/or theatrical performance on the playwright, the actor, the reader and the audience. Prince Nathan Kure’s essay also demonstrates how experience and experiencing aids an actor into becoming a character. His essay is an account of himself and the experiences of becoming Malcolm X, and this hands the baton to another vista of the ETC.

Another range of vision for Experiential Testimonial Creativity (ETC) falls under the scope of autoethnography. Autoethnography is when personal experience (auto) is analysed (graphy) in order to understand a cultural experience (ethno). At this rate, personal experience becomes the primary criteria for writing and research. The vista here, is that, while social research, or any other one at that, is occurring, the primary source of information lies in the personal experience of the researcher and not those of others around the researcher. How the researcher experiences a phenomenon can be analysed and understood in connection to wider cultural, social, political, economic and ideological dispositions. ETC positions itself as a frame of contemplation in Applied Theatre and other socially characterized practices, as can be deduced in Nkweteyim's essay, in the manner that the subject of research is no longer the straightforward intervention with a community to address particular issues of development as seen by the community, but a deliberate engagement with persons, with a view to understanding how their personal experiences, alongside those of the individual researcher, combine to make sense of the society via creative testimony such as dance, drama and so forth.

This can also be stretched to a point of new-historicist elasticity. While New Historicism allows for the treatment of creative works as "history", ETC can be applied in a way that presents the author/character as archive, whose experiences, beyond creative testimonies, hold immense historical value that could be studied in its validity and authenticity as text. The sense making propensities of a text are thereby resident in the author/character who tells the story. Meaning and the overarching dimensions of a text are articulated and comprehended from his/her creative testimonies. As the playwright/character says it, so it is. This, essentially, is why the book is composed of two parts; essays on the theory and its criticism; and an interview with Emmy Idegu.

Finally, but not conclusively (for I believe that the essays herein contained would merely spark wide and immense critical interest to further set new sites of the

problematic for the theory), ETC promises to test the experience of limits, and the limits of experience. Ojoniyi, in his essay, for instance, has begun by questioning the conceptual phrasing of Idegu's submission, examining it as Existential Testimonial Creativity. He interrogates it beyond experience to implicate a verification of the notion of heroism from the tragic to levels of absurdity. A valuation of self-sacrifice to save the community, as would be expected, is countered by the seemingly ludicrous, but quite logical, insistence on self-saving, not face-saving, in order to lead the community into a disintegration that heralds its own rebirth, or death. Somewhere in-between the conflictual lies the tragedy and the tragic, and the hero (How pleasantly absurd!). The essay by Sunday, Emmanuel and Ojodale also cautions that while pain, bitterness and anger may inspire a creative work, the artist should not intensify the animosity by further demonizing the 'antagonists' and heightening the conflict but should look towards resolutions for the creation of safe spaces.

The essays in this book reflect the purpose of theory, which, according to Held, "is to analyse and expose the hiatus between the actual and the possible, between the existing order of contradictions and a potential future state" (22). They are subject to further interrogation and assessment. Idegu's claims in his paper, reproduced in this book, and his perspectives as captured in the interview section also welcome contestations. The essays provide validity and objections to the basic assumptions proffered by Idegu. On the whole, the book presents us with an appraisal of Experiential Testimonial Creativity (ETC) as theory. Idoko and Salifu, Onuoha, Babatunde, Onuche, Mohammed-Kabir and Salifu, Okorie, Sani and Atoyebi have adopted the principles of ETC in their analytical expositions of select texts.

In sum, Chapter One is Idegu's submission on ETC which provides the basic context for all the following chapters. Chapter Two examines the potentials of ETC in reflecting how pain inspires creative testimonies. Chapter Three explores how ETC can be applied to Theatre for Development. Chapter Four argues for

ETC, on both levels, as an emotional apprehension of repressive experiences for society and for self. Chapter Five studies ETC as method for evaluating the “creative process that guides a playwright’s creation and also possibly, for dramatic criticism.” Chapter Six presents ETC as a theoretical reflection of Idegu’s oeuvre, citing three of his plays as case study. Chapter Seven also adopts ETC as a tool for analysing texts. Chapter Eight examines how toxic environments in the Academia inspired Emmy Idegu’s dramaturgy in ETC. Chapter Nine extends the analysis of ETC to include role play that exists among the playwright, the actor and the audience serving as one conscious entity. Chapter Ten is an exegesis of the role of emotions in creative response, instigating notions of “my-perience” and “our-perience” to deepen the second level of ETC. Chapter Eleven presents the musician as native narrator, composing songs from his personal experiences and the experiences of his people. Chapter Twelve is a reflective contribution of a playwright who has himself experienced repressive antagonism, not as a result of his creative work, like Idegu, but for standing by principles he upholds as a real time ‘absurd hero’; his peculiar experience makes the chapter question Idegu’s position on the experiential. Chapter Thirteen conducts a textual survey to test the validity and authenticity of ETC as a mode of textual interpretation and analysis. Chapter Fourteen invokes ‘Yoruba Omoluabi Performance Aesthetic’ to accentuate the relevance of ETC as an important tool in countering hegemonic artistry and social suppression. Chapter Fifteen explicates on how anger has served, from history, as motivation behind creative testimonies, and how it is the essential cornerstone for conflict in autobiographical drama. Chapter Sixteen analyses ETC outside the context of anger and threat; it provides a contradistinctive position on “environmental antagonism” by arguing that safe spaces can inspire creative testimonies too, and playwrights should adopt imaginative/emotional distancing in articulating their experiences in their works. Chapter Seventeen is a personal account of an actor on a journey to becoming a character. It presents how experience is crucial in character embodiment and representation. Chapter Eighteen interrogates the validity of abandoning one’s

consciousness and assuming the consciousness of a writer in order to understand his experience; it queries the notion of the two levels in ETC and the 'pretentiousness' of drawing sympathy by creating villains and antagonistic environments in dramatic self-writing.

**Olagoke O. Ifatimehin Ph.D**

Editor