

Music as Therapy in African Movies: A Case Study of Ghallywood and Nollywood Films: Frank Rajah Arase's *Passion of the Soul* (2008) and Andy Amenechi's *A Cry for Help* (2002)

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Abstract

*This work investigates how music is represented therapeutically in movies, especially from Africa. An examination of the functions of traditional African music in African societies reveals that music is woven around every event from birth through to death. Music therapy is the art of using musical sounds in bringing about changes from undesirable, depressing and unhealthy conditions to a more comfortable one in a person's circumstances. However, there appears to be comparatively less academic engagement in this domain. The research gap which this research covers is how music is incorporated into movies in the wellness process. Thus, apart from getting well through the universally-dominant intake of medication mostly in the forms of tablets, syrups, capsules, and injections, therapy involves the application of soft treatment in the form of music. This research project engages the question of: How music is represented as therapy in films. Since music comes in different forms, some of which use diction while others do not, the research further engages the question: How does diction contribute to music therapy? The research hypotheses holds that diction and sound in music are therapeutic. This can be represented through construction, using filmic language, codes and conventions. The Structuralist Film Theory and the Gate Control Theory are used in analyzing this work. Data is collected using the simple survey design wherein a qualitative analysis of data is done by reading movies: two of which are then selected to represent music as therapy in Franck Rajah's *Passion Of The Soul* and Amenechi's *A Cry for Help*. The analysis and results reveal*

that music is indeed therapeutic as many sick cases both spiritual and psychological are healed through music in the two movies.

Key words: Africa, music, films, music therapy, diegetic music.

1. Background to the study

Like other forms of creative expressions by Africans, filmmaking constitutes a form of discourse and practice that is not just artistic and cultural, but also intellectual and political. The rise of African film industry can be traced back to the decolonization period of the continent dating to the early 20th century. A significant portion of African cinema has focused and continues to focus on thematic issues of racism, love and marriage, colonial exploitation and injustice, tradition and modernity, hopes, betrayals and disaffections of independence, immigration and many other social justice issues. It is a way of defining, describing and interpreting African experiences with those forces that have shaped their past and continue to shape and influence the present. The Nigerian film industry remains one of the largest in Africa that has been producing a plethora of films annually. Also, film making has been flourishing in Ghana to date after its introduction to the British colony of Gold Coast now Ghana in 1923. African cinema is a product of the historical experiences of Africans, which is vital to the challenges that African societies face in our contemporary world and why not in the future. Thus, film making provides one of the most productive sites for experiencing, understanding and appreciating such diversity and complexity. Music being ubiquitous across all cultures has been greatly explored by African cinema both diegetically and non-diegetically as it is used for different purposes ranging from entertainment, healing, praise and worship, communication to recreation. At a time when many thought that the grass was greener on the other side, only to get there and realize it wasn't the case leading to trauma, hopelessness and stress, music remains one of those modes of communication that can help them heal rapidly and revive their lives better. In this direction, Nigerian and Ghanaian film industries are not left out in emphasizing the therapeutic effects of music in our daily lives through their movies.

There are many media in which human beings may express and communicate their information, idea, thought, emotion, and desire by using language, our basic means of communication. Language is the association of speech sounds with thoughts, concepts, or image in the mind. The primary purpose of language is communication among persons (Encyclopedia Americana, 1991: 727). Prosodic features of language such as pitch, rhythm, tone, stress, harmony and melody are also inherent in music. Fluctuation in any of these features may convey happy or sad messages. Specific features of melody contribute to the expression of emotion in music. In the hand of artist, the information, idea, thought, emotions, and desire are expressed in poem, prose, painting, drama, film, and music. Music is called the language of emotions (Rowiatun, 2014:2). Music can be a tool to share feeling between human beings. There are human beings who choose music to express and share their own feeling because human beings have sense of music. Implicitly, musician creates music not only to entertain but also to communicate through expressing or sharing his/her own feeling to the others whether it is sad or happy. Actually, music is not only music itself but also lyric. This implies that music embodies both the spoken and written form of communication. Through the lyric, the readers or listeners will know the message and context of the song. Therefore music uses language to communicate. Every song has its own special arrangement in music and lyric. There are songs that talk about sadness, happiness, love and social critique. Songs speak to us directly about our experiences; they reassure us in our moments of trouble (Griffie, 1992: 4). Music also uses imaginative diction and rhyme to express someone's feelings or tell their story. It is very interesting to see how the composer plays with words and cords in music to convey the message which has the ability to influence emotions. The message contained in a song lyric can be delivered depending on how the writer puts the words in the lyrics (Bertoli-Dutra and Bissaco, 2006: 1053).

Nowadays, we find ourselves in a troubled world with people suffering internally from traumatic experiences and are looking for relief from a wide variety of psychological, physical and emotional disorders. The proliferation of chronic disease is rampant and extremely costly, and the underlying causes are not

always obvious. When Western medicine does not work, people often turn to the alternatives. Some of these alternatives seem strange at first, but when they do things that regular medicine cannot accomplish, attitudes can change quickly. Fact is good news travels fast, and today alternative and integrative medicine are rapidly becoming main-stream. Healing through music being one of such alternatives urges this research on the representation of diction and sound in music as therapy in Frank Rajah's *Passion of the Soul* and Andy Amenechi's *a Cry for Help*.

Music plays an invaluable role in our lives and is used differently across cultures for various purposes and listened to by persons of all ages, races and ethnic backgrounds. Not surprisingly, different kinds of music appeal to persons of different ages and ethnic backgrounds and the same persons may desire different kinds of music under different circumstances. Since ancient times, music has been used to enhance well-being and reduce pain and suffering wherein tablets failed. Pythagorus, Plato and Aristotle, were all aware of the prophylactic and therapeutic powers of music (Ashwani, 2012:2). Several scientific studies have been conducted to indicate the healing power of music. These interesting studies have given rise to a new form of therapy called music therapy (MT). Music therapy involves the use of music to promote physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing. Music has been used for healing since ancient times. Music is capable of improving happiness, peace, health and concentration. It is believed that music stimulates the pituitary gland, whose secretions affect the nervous system and the flow of blood. The right kind of music helps one to relax and refresh. Even during the course of work, light music improves efficiency. In addition, it can help cure headache, abdominal pain and tension. So, in this regard music stands for- M - Man and other living beings U - Under a range of frequencies of S - Sound I - Influence the C - Common and Crucial life (Ashwani, 2012:14)¹. This paper analyses the medically-relevant effects of music focusing on pain, anxiety and mood among others. Providing

¹ Ashwani Kumar Goyal, Geeta Yadav and Sarita Yadav (2012). Music Therapy: A Useful Therapeutic Tool for Health, Physical and Mental Growth. *International Journal of Music Therapy* vol.2

music in a hospital ward or in waiting areas can create a positive milieu for patients, families and staff. Creating such an environment can have significant effects on patient's moods in terms of anxiety, depression and perceived stress. By singing or listening to music, people suffering from pain or depression feel relieved. In this case music serves a therapeutic function.

Equally, music therapy can help improve the quality of life for dying patients. In working with persons who are dying, it can foster supportive interactions between patients and loved ones and help patients connect with and express emotions in a less threatening manner and why not bring patients back to life in case of stroke? Music therapy has been found to increase positive social interaction, positive emotions, and improved motivation in stroke patients. However, a number of studies have shown that rhythmic entrainment of motor function can actively facilitate the recovery of movement in patients with stroke, Parkinson's disease, cerebral palsy and traumatic brain injury (Thaut, 2005). Studies of people with memory disorders, such as Alzheimer's disease, suggest that neuronal memory traces built through music are deeply ingrained and more resilient to neurodegenerative influences (Trimble, 2017). Findings from individual randomised trials suggest that music therapy is accepted by people with depression and is associated with improvements in mood disorders (Maratos et al, 2008).

Generally, music may have different effects based on listener characteristics such as age, culture, medical conditions that affect hearing, musical aptitude and experience. Other factors affecting music influence include elements of music (tempo, pitch, harmony, melody, rhythm), means of delivery (headphones, speaker, open air, live versus recorded), setting (group or alone) and active versus passive participation. This paper analyses how Rajah and Amenechi represent sound and diction in music as therapy by bringing out the health benefits that come with singing or listening to music ranging from physical, psychological and spiritual benefits. Hence Ghallywood and Nollywood film industries have not failed to showcase the healing power of music in their movies. Little wonder the ancient Greeks assigned the god Apollo to reign over both music and healing (Trehan, 2004). Plato prescribed both music and dancing for the fearful and anxious while Aristotle spoke of the power of

music to restore health and normalcy to those who suffer from uncontrollable emotions and compared it to medical treatment (Gallant and Holosko, 1977).

2. The research problem, questions and hypothesis

Though we all consider music as a mode of relaxation or entertainment; very few of us view it as medicine having magical healing and therapeutic properties. It has been observed from films that music is represented in different ways and has many physical, psychological and social benefits associated with it especially for people suffering from cognitive and psychological challenges yet people are still accustomed to the traditional way of taking medicines fabricated in laboratories as the only way out. They fail to understand that music works in certain situations where all other forms of medication such as tablets, capsules, injections have failed. In this age of advanced technology, the science of medicine alone is unable to cure patients. Music incorporates prosodic features of language like pitch, tone, stress, harmony, rhythm and melody to convey its meaning. Modern medicine is obsessed with giving prescription drugs that are filled with all sorts of unnatural ingredients that may be healing one part of our body while harming another. It is safer to use alternative healing methods like music rather than taking medicine with ingredients that are unknown to us that have the potential to cause dangerous side effects. Musical components such as rhythm, harmony, pitch, melody, instruments and lyrics have enormous healing properties. The diction of every song carries varying messages that suit different listeners at any given situation. Language constitutes part of culture, so the language in songs is more therapeutic especially when the music stems from one's culture. This is because people identify more with music inherent in their culture. Hence the therapeutic ability of music to heal cannot be underestimated as it helps people to reconnect with the world by stimulating the brain, lessening stress and anxiety, reducing depression, improving mood, lessening feelings of isolation and loneliness and fostering happiness and pleasure.

We then pose these **questions**:

- i. How are diction and sound in music represented as therapy in films?
- ii. How are patients or people treated with music?

The **hypotheses** are that:

- i. A view of Ghanaian and Nigerian films reveal that Africans use music in their movies to heal where other forms of therapy such as tablets and or injections have failed. It can be hypothesized that sound and diction in music are therapeutic when words and sounds of a song have soothing effect on a character.
- ii. People are treated with music when they are made to listen to music, sing or play a musical instrument.

3. Theoretical framework and literature review

The **Structuralist Film Theory and the Gate Control Theory to Music Processing** will be used to analyse this work.

The Structuralist Film Theory is a branch of film theory that is rooted in structuralism, itself based on structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure which developed in Europe in the early 1900s. This theory emphasises how films convey meaning through the use of codes and conventions not dissimilar to the way languages are used to construct meaning in communication. This theory aims at giving the film-goers a taste of what a film of any genre is all about by presenting the very essence of a film, making the viewing public realise and understand the potential and the very core significance of a film. It aims at presenting a film in structures that can make the audience easily adapt into by means of the usage of structural techniques such as film elements that effortlessly grab the curiosity and attention of an individual or a group of people.

Structuralist Film Theory desires to make it known that a film is not just a mere film flickering in the silver screen of a cinema house but also a much broader reflection of the daily life of every individual of all ages, ranks and race, in short, every single person in all aspects of life. It aims to teach people how to appreciate, understand and relate to a film down to its tiniest

details. It does this by capturing people's fancies and interest, making them relate their day-to-day lifestyles to a film's sound score, a film's sound effects, the film's themes and most of the time gripping scenes and even the actor's portrayal of a character. Finally, it aims to probe deep in the heart of every film going, capturing their very emotions and making them fall in love down to the smallest aspect and details of a particular film. Since this theory entails that audiences relate to the film down to its tiniest details through the film's codes and conventions, it is undoubtedly appropriate for the analysis of this work

Meanwhile in 1965, Melzack and Wall introduced the Gate Control Theory of pain, which is still the dominant theory accepted today (Melzack & Wall, 1965). The gate control theory states that pain signals are transmitted from the place of injury via nerve receptors in the spinal cord to synapses that receive the pain information in the brain. The synapses are believed to act as gates that open and close in response to the pain impulses. When the gates are closed, the pain signal is prevented from reaching the brain. However, when they are open, the impulses are able to travel to the brain where they are consciously perceived by the person as pain. Whether other sensory impulses in addition to the pain are being simultaneously sent to the synapses determines if the gates are kept open or close.

Music is believed to send enough competing sensory inputs through pathways descending from the brain to cause the brainstem to signal some of the gates shut, thereby reducing the amount of pain that the patient listening to the music perceives Tse, Chan and Benzie (2005). The perceived distracting and relaxing aspects of music therapy are believed to not only inhibit the brain from transmitting pain signals but to also cause the body to release endorphins (are naturally 'feel good' hormones) through a process known as autonomic modulation. Neurotransmitters in the brain are believed to be released in response to musical impulses which in turn stimulate other biological systems such as the endocrine glands that release hormones (i.e endorphins). By dampening the pain response and stimulating the release of our body's endogenous opioids, music enables the patient to contain more effectively with the adverse repercussions of surgery Krout (2007).

The aforementioned theories analyse this work to delineate diction and sound in music as therapy in the films *A Cry for Help* and *Passion of the Soul*. The Structuralist Film Theory emphasises how films convey meaning through the use of codes and conventions and how they are a reflection of our daily lives. It is only by relating the diegetic music represented in a film to our daily lives that the therapeutic nature of music can be easily grasped. To complement this theory, the Gate Control Theory of pain is added to analyse the role played by music in reducing pain perception since this theory looks at what opens or closes the gates that transmit pain messages to the brain. Hence a combination of these theories ensures a proper analysis of this work.

Lots of works have been reviewed as far as music therapy is concerned. According to Dawn Kent (2006), music has a vast influence over the nations and people on this planet. It has been used in every culture and is often connected with anxiolytic and analgesic properties. Today, it is used in many hospitals to help patients relax and help relieve or ease pain, confusion and anxiety. Music is also commonly used in counseling. Music therapy techniques may include guided listening or improvisational playing and are used within the context of many theories and for many types of mental disorders from depression to schizophrenia. Many of the healing qualities of music in counseling are connected to its use as a nonverbal medium for communication. Music is read differently in the brain than nonmusical tones and is connected to many different areas of the brain. Learning music relegates a larger part of the brain to recognizing and interpreting music. Listening to music has also been found to have an effect on learning. A survey studying the difference in GPA between students who listen to music while studying and those who do not find no overall significant difference but does find that students who listen to hip-hop and rap while studying score significantly lower while students who listen to easy listening and classical are likely to have higher GPAs according to findings from the survey. In addition, music has been found to produce a relaxed mood and stress reduction making it a plausible way to accommodate coping with pain and anxiety (Hendricks, Robinson, Bradley & Davis, 1999).

Anna Maratos et al (2008) postulate that music therapy has been used in a range of ways to treat depression. They note that approaches can be active or receptive: active techniques might be used when participants cannot articulate difficult feelings. Here the therapist uses clinical techniques to connect with the patient in an improvised dialogue, which can then act as a springboard to emotional awareness. Receptive techniques involve the use of precomposed music for relaxation, reflection, guided reminiscence and change of mood. They conducted a systematic review to find out whether music therapy is effective in reducing symptoms of depression. Five studies met the inclusion criteria for the review. Marked variations in the interventions offered, the populations studied and the outcome measures used meant that quantitative data synthesis and meta-analysis were not appropriate. Four studies reported greater reductions in symptoms of depression among those randomised to music therapy. The fifth study reported no change in mental state among those receiving music therapy compared to those randomised to standard care alone. Findings from individual studies suggested that music therapy for people with depression is feasible and indicate a need for further research.

James (2018) acknowledges that in many cultures around the world the human voice, in the form of songs or chants, has long been used for healing. This article summarizes how such a traditional sound therapy has been enriched using modern acoustic technologies. A system, called HUSO, an acronym for "human sound," combines the ancient tradition of sound healing with modern technology. To create the tones used in the HUSO system, experienced sound healers recorded powerful sacred vocal sounds that have been found to evoke healing and balance in most people. After 90-minute recording sessions the toning and chanting were separated electronically into specific frequencies. Each individual tone was then manipulated and enhanced by adding different harmonics and waveforms until the combination produced a specific oscillating vibration with the most beneficial effect on the body and mind. To restore healthy balance the whole body is treated. The brain receives the tones by listening through headphones, while the whole body receives the modulated frequencies by means of vibrating pads located at acupuncture points. Feedback from individuals using the HUSO technology is

that the process enables them to relax and de-stress, with a variety of profound benefits. HUSO is a completely new and unique sound healing system that is achieving results never observed before. The technology is easy to use in the clinic or at home and gives people an individualised whole-body experience of natural therapeutic sounds derived from the human voice. The system is being used successfully in wellness centers and by a growing number of prominent physicians in various specialties such as chronic illness, anti-aging, psychiatry and neurology. Relaxing with these sounds passing through the body helps with a variety of difficult or otherwise untreatable conditions.

Baltazar et al (2019) found that music is a common resource for the regulation of emotions, moods, and stress. Their study aimed at determining the individual and relative impact on stress reduction of two of the main factors involved in musical affect regulation: regulation strategies and music itself. The current study took place in an experimental setting and followed a factorial within subjects design. First, the participants filled in an online survey where they identified their self-perceived adequate/inadequate music examples for the purpose of reducing stress and self-perceived adequate/ inadequate strategies for the same purpose. In the lab they went through a stress induction procedure and then were instructed to calm down. They did so by listening to their adequate/inadequate music and employing the adequate/ inadequate strategy, depending on the experimental condition. The primary outcome measure was self-reported tension, complemented by self-reported energy and valence, skin conductance levels (SCL), startle blink amplitudes, and risk aversion. The results showed that both music and strategy had a strong significant effect on the self-reported tension. Additionally, music had strong significant effects on energy, valence, SCL, and risk aversion. Pairwise comparisons revealed that the condition adequate strategy-adequate music was consistently more beneficial for stress reduction than condition inadequate strategy-inadequate music. Moreover, close inspection of the results showed a larger impact of music on the short-term outcomes of self-regulation in comparison to strategy. These findings suggest that successful affective regulation depends on the adequacy of the chosen strategies and music, but that music is more determinant for the affective outcomes in the short term.

The importance of music in life cannot be overemphasized. A lot of extensive research has been carried out on music and music therapy as a whole and the healing tendencies it has but none has dwelt on the representation of diction and sound in music as therapy in African films. So, the specificity of this work lies in the fact that it analyses the therapeutic benefits of music in the two selected movies under review. That is "passion of the soul" and "a cry for help".

4. Methodology and analysis

4.0. Research Design

The simple survey design is the research design chosen for this work. This is a design in which a group of items are studied by collecting and analyzing data only from a few items to represent the entire group. In this case, one Ghanaian movie and one Nigerian movie will be used to represent African movies wherein we would examine, interpret and analyse information on representation of music as therapy in the said movies with the guidance of the aforementioned theoretical frameworks. This is in view to answering these questions: (i) How is music represented as therapy in movies? and (ii) How are patients treated using music?

4.1 Sampling and Sampling Techniques

The researcher watched a lot of movies online then selected the ones that tied with the subject matter. Through the simple sampling technique, data was gotten from watching, analyzing and interpreting the two movies by bringing out instances where music is represented as therapy and how music is used to treat patients.

4.2 Instruments of Data Collection

Data for this research was collected mainly from consultation of files online and from watching the selected movies. As such, the tools for data collections are through a thorough observation/ watching, evaluation and analysis of the movies with the aid of the above theories. The researcher watched the movies several times, understood the story line, and collected data patterning to the topic of the research work.

4.3 Data Collection and analysis

Since this work analyses diction and sound in music as therapy, data is collected using the descriptive qualitative method. This method is relevant to this study since it describes, analyzes and interprets data by watching or collecting data from the two selected movies; “passion of the soul” and “a cry for help”. The researcher first of all watched several movies online then sampled two that tied with the ideology under study succinctly. One Nollywood and one Ghanaian film were selected so as to compare and contrast their usage of diegetic music in films in order to see their point of divergence and convergence thereby giving the work its authenticity. Both movies were then downloaded from a popular download site called vidmate. The movies were watched and read meticulously, taking note of all cool, soft and soul diegetic songs therein. In the course of watching the films, invaluable scenes were screenshot and later on, the ideas were classified into various groups pertaining to where music played a therapeutic role in different places and situations. In analysing and interpreting the data, the researcher uses the theories under study for a better reading of the films.

A film content analysis guide was downloaded to aid in analyzing relevant material that will be imperative for the study such as aspects of setting, how the plot is structured to build suspense, internal and external conflict and the interaction of characters towards other characters. Film imagery like symbols and images that depict meaning will also be analysed followed by themes to decipher the effect that choice of music has on the themes and why some sounds are accentuated. Camera shots such as close-up, long, medium and full shots are identified to see how they contribute in bringing out meaning. Since lighting set the mood or atmosphere of the film, special lighting effects are also analysed to see how they incorporate meaning. Hence, these elements work together to bring out the general message of the subject matter under study.

4.4 Summary

This section presents a recapitulation of the two selected films used for this study.

The [Ghallywood], “Passion of the soul” is a passionate, romantic love story that revolves around Najah whose role is

played by Jackie Appiah and Joe, whose role is played by Majid Michel. These two are so much in love that one may be tempted to conclude that they were destined to be but Najah's father; Justice Sarbah vows that this love encounter must end as his beautiful and adorable daughter must marry his friend's son, Jerry. His reasons are simple, this friend of his helped him to be the Justice he is. Besides his daughter's wellbeing will be guaranteed since the said friend is wealthy and so is his son, unlike Joe who is comparatively a nobody. Najah and Joe go through lots of rough times and music is the only thing that comforts them during such dark moments.

"A cry for help" on the other hand, is a very pathetic and sorrowful movie that centers around the agonies of an orphan, Blessing whose role is played by Nkiru Syvanus. Throughout her life she suffers from one tribulation to another, and music happens to be her therapy in such critical moments. When the movie commences, she is crying and singing on her parent's graves then later she relocates to live with her uncle in the city, Uwoechi whose role is played by Clem Ohameze just to make ends meet as staying in the village only makes her sober. While in the city she suffers from many trials and agonies. In such trying moments, music works better for her as she sings whenever things get sour.

5. Results and Conclusions

Though the Ghallywood narrative portrays passion while the Nollywood reveals pity, the two directors of both movies share a common point of convergence when they employ the therapy of music to heal their characters. Both films document several instances where and when the directors resort to music as therapy. This therapy reveals and manifests itself in several ways that represent healing both psychologically, emotionally and spiritually.

5.1. Diction in Music as Therapy

Music is not music until its lyrics are embedded with meaning. Lyrics are the words that make up a song. Words constitute an important aspect of language. So in essence we are interested in how words become therapeutic when put meticulously in music. Nowadays, some songs do not appeal to a

certain group of people simply because the lyrics do not carry meaning as compared to music of the yesteryears where musicians took cognisance of choice of words in their songs. The lyrics of a song tell a story and emphasize strong emotions through the lyricist's themes. Carefully chosen diction for a song can offer a personal connection to life events, convey a message, or enact feelings of joy and relaxation to the listeners or composers. The meaning of a song's lyrics will depend on its interpretation. When interpreted on the individual (psychological) level, the lyrics provide insight into the client's personal world, and depending on orientation, that personal world can be conceived in terms of target outcomes, unconscious projections and symbolic representations, transitional objects and space, personal and interpersonal contact, genuineness, and authenticity, when interpreted on an archetypal level, the lyrics reveal aspects of the human condition, life, the nature of the universe, etc. and when interpreted on the socio-cultural level, the lyrics provide information on the beliefs and values of a particular group, community, nationality, religion, organization, society, gender, or age bracket Bruscia (2018).

According to Dallin (1994)², "Lyrics are written as a form of interaction between the writer and the listeners. Most of the times, they carry a message (whatever that might be) with the purpose of motivating the listeners, at least, to think about it. Such a purpose and form of interaction are embedded in the cultural context of these people, according to their musical preferences, time, etc." This implies that every song has a message that appeals to its listeners and the effectiveness of this song is dependent on the lyrics as lyrics give the audience deep understanding about the message contained in the song. The message contained in a song lyric can be delivered depending on how the writer puts the words in the lyrics (Bertoli-Dutra and Bissaco, 2006: 1053). Therefore music invites listeners to search for deeper meaning in lyrics. Whether silly love songs, indulgent songs about personal growth, or naïve political songs, messages

² Dallin, R. (1994). *Approaches to Communication through Music*. David Foulton Publishers. Available online at: [http://www.southdowns.nhs.uk /index.cfm?request=c2007985](http://www.southdowns.nhs.uk/index.cfm?request=c2007985).

conveyed by lyrics seem richer, more profound, more persuasive and more emotional when embedded in a musical context than when read as straight text Galizio & Hendrick (1972).

In *passion of the soul*, the lyrics of the film score are embedded with lots of meaning. This song is used both diegetically and nondiegetically throughout the film. Joe and Najah sing and listen to it whenever they are traumatised. The song equally carries the film's theme; that of love and assurance. Love is universal and experienced by every human being. The Structuralist Film Theory posits that films are a reflection of our daily lives. The fact that the film tackles the theme of love concurs this structuralist view. The song by Mark Clinton goes thus

It is with these eyes that I see
And it is with my heart that I feel
Eh eh bum bum titi bum bum
I can feel this way when I see you

chorus
Sweetly sweetly mo say I go die go for you
Lovy lovy mo say I just de pray for you
If you love me eh heh, I love you
Anything you want I go do for you

I like the way you make me feel
The way you say I love you too
Eh heh bum bum The way you love me bum bum
Music to my heart when I see you

Actually, music is not only music itself but also lyrics. Through the song lyrics above, we are aware of the film's theme (that of love) which resonates throughout the film. It is clear from the lyrics that Najah and Joe (film's protagonists) are head over heels in love with each other and nothing can tear them apart. The lyrics compliment the action in the film whenever these two are seen. The appearance of either of them becomes like music to the other's heart. The smile on their faces justifies this. The song lyrics communicate feelings of love and reassure both lovers. Songs speak to us directly about our experiences; they reassure us in our moments of trouble (Griffie, 1992: 4). This song literally

sets them in a happy mood when they are breaking down due to pressure from Najah's father to let go of Joe. When he finally succeeds to separate them temporally, it is this song that consoles and brightens them. The repetition of 'sweety', 'lovy' and the regular rhyme scheme in the song emphasise the love shared by the lovers. The use of the zero conditional in line three of the chorus (if you love me I love you) reiterates the love these two have for each other. We should bear in mind that conditional type zero talks about the truth. Perhaps the most impactful words are the last lines of verse one and two: I can feel this way when I see you and music to my heart when I see you. These two lines serve as an all-encompassing label of what both lovers mean to each other.

In a *Cry for Help*, Blessing sings the song transcribed below to heal people. Her canorous voice is not only uplifting but curative. Changing our own voice pattern changes our brain wave frequencies and reduces illness. Removing the stress frequencies in the voice has helped to reduce high blood pressure; it has helped diabetes, emphysema, and eye problems, reduced pain and speeded up the body's healing (Beaumont, 1988)³. Our voice is the ultimate healing instrument. When we sing we resonate every cell in our body.

He holds the key to your life 2x
When sickness and trouble seems to take your life away
He holds the key to your life

Though made up of just seventeen words, the lyrics of this song are super powerful. First, Blessing sings it at home to heal her madam's son, at the hospital to heal a child who has been on coma for weeks and in church to heal a little boy coincidentally. This is suggestive of the healing power possessed in religious music as believed by Christians. The personal pronoun "He" refers to Jesus Christ believed to be God by Christians. According to these set of people, with God everything is possible and He is the controller of our lives. This implies that no other force can take away the life of a Christian unless God wills it. The bible says that singing a religious song is praying double. It is

³ Beaumont, R. Breaking the Sound Barrier. *Kindred Spirit* 1988, Vol. 3, No 5.

interesting to note that God is still considered by the Jews as the "Great Medicine-Man" the Jehovah Rapha, the Healer of His people (see Exodus 15:26) and as such the afflicted basically look up to Him for help (Fatokun 2004:42)⁴. This could account for the usage of this particular song by Blessing which heals in three different situations.

5.2. Sound in Music as Therapy

Generally, music consists of two elements, sounds as the primary and lyrics as the secondary (Dallin 1994). Sound healing is the therapeutic application of sound frequencies to the body/mind of a person with the intention of bringing them into a state of harmony and health. Sound healing can be transmitted to a person through one's own voice, listening to an instrument, using one's voice while listening to music or through listening to music or sound through a loudspeaker or through headphones. Rhythm, the instrument's smooth melody, pitch, harmony, tone, stress and tempo combine to give music its therapeutic source. Fluctuations in either of them can evoke feelings of happiness or sadness. According to Simon Heather (2007:8) some of the benefits reported by those receiving sound healing treatments include: improved joint function, reduced pain and inflammation, kidney stones and bunions disappearing, ovarian cysts shrinking in size, improved sleep pattern, reduction in number and severity of headaches, a more positive attitude to life, an increased ability to deal with life's challenges, deep relaxation and improved memory and concentration. *A Cry for Help* commences with Blessing singing and crying on her parents' tomb devastatingly. This gives her a more positive attitude towards life and prepares her mind better to face the challenges that lie ahead. In the same vein, *Passion of the Soul* begins with the maid singing for Najah who is teary on her wedding day. This relaxes her mind and brightens her mood. In fact, in both films, the songs used are such that one can easily detect those that have a restorative effect

⁴ Fatokun SA 2004. GOD, A Medicine Man: A Historical Appraisal of Christianity and Medicine from the Ancient times to Date. In: Egbe Ifie (Ed.): Lambart Eradiri: *The Legend in the Oasis of the Niger*. Ibadan: Oporu Books

just by identifying fluctuations in prosody such as rhythm, melody, stress and other speech related attributes.

5.3. Representation of Music as Therapy at Home

The directors of both films aptly portray music as therapeutic especially for children since it provides them with mental and physical relief. No matter how much medicine is given to them, sometimes it is still not enough. Through listening and playing music as well as song writing and singing, pain among patients reduces resulting in physiological changes including improved respiration, lower blood pressure, improved cardiac output, reduced heart rate and relaxed muscle tension. This is evident in the films under study. In *a Cry for Help*, Blessing through her singing heals a lot of people. The pastor even attests to this when he tells her, **'You have healed and touched so many people's lives through prayers and singing'**. Figure one shows Blessing in the house after she sings and heals Junior..

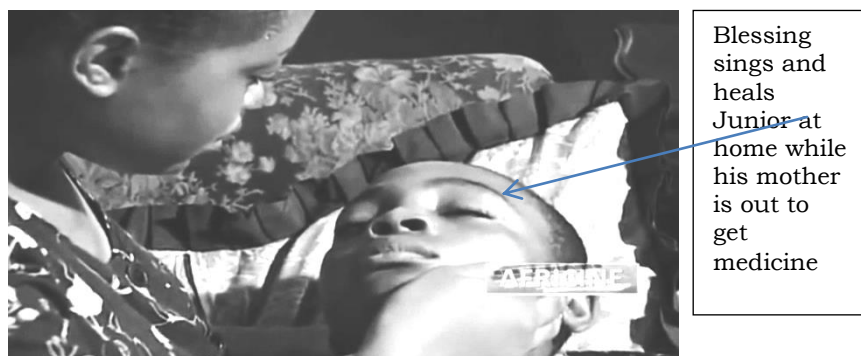


Figure 1: *A Cry for Help* part one 20:44secs. Healing of boy at home through music

Figure one 5shows that music actually heals where other forms of medication have failed. The arrow points to the boy's face which reveals his wellbeing is deteriorating. This is Blessing at home with Junior; her madam's son. Her madam cautions her to take care of her son who is seemingly ill while she rushes out to probably buy some medicine. She tells her," Blessing please take

good care of Junior, let me rush out, I will soon be back, do not leave him alone at home, make sure you are here with him". These imperatives reveal that Junior's health situation is critical. Immediately she leaves, Junior starts coughing and is at the verge of dying when Blessing not knowing what to do lays her hand on him and starts singing this song by Albert Kalu

He holds the key to your life (2x)
When sickness and trouble seem to take your soul away,
He holds the key to your life

As she sings melodiously, Junior wakes up instantly. Her pitch is low and the undulating rhythmic pattern of her voice gives the song a soothing effect. Her sitting posture with hand on the boy's face reveals that he is in a critical condition. The personal pronoun "he" used in the song symbolises God. The choice of words like sickness, trouble, soul refer to Junior's dying state while key, holds, life imply God is with him. This is indicative of the healing power of music. The lyrics reveal that sickness and trouble cannot take away Junior's life because God has the key to his life. According to the Structuralist Film Theory, films convey meaning through the use of codes and conventions. Technical codes like camera range indicate the distance between the object and the camera enabling a better analysis which depends on how near or far the camera is. The close-up shot shows that the little boy is in dire need of healing and Blessing's singing is timely enough.

5.4. **Healing Power of Music at the Hospital**

While in the hospital in part two of *A Cry for Help*, Blessing lays her hand on a little boy who has been on coma for days, and starts singing

He holds the key to your life (2x)
When sickness and trouble seem to take your soul away
He holds the key to your life
By Albert Kalu

The hospital setting reveals that the boy's situation is critical. As she sings this boy gradually wakes up. The mother of the boy and the nurses are flabbergasted. The nurses attest they have given him tablets and injections to no avail. In fact they had

done all within their medical power to save the little boy and finally abandoned him with the mother. Yet, just a song is enough to heal this boy as seen in the figure two. The soft tone and melodious nature of Blessing's voice are restorative. The medium long shot captures the surprise on the faces of those at the hospital ward. The lifeless posture of the boy on the bed, the posture of Blessing's uncle with hands folded and the fact that Blessing lays her hand on the boy's head before singing paints a sad picture of the situation and makes one feel the mother's pain.



Figure 2: *A Cry for Help* part two 1:33:22secs. Blessing sings and cures a boy in the hospital

5.4. Healing at Church Using Music

A lady's son falls terribly sick and from her conversation with her friend, we can tell that she has moved from hospital to hospital with the son to no avail. This time around she rushes with the child to church while Blessing is singing. She enters unnoticed with her breathless child. While singing continues, the little boy is awoken miraculously to the amazement of everyone as captured in figure three. Equally, in church, people sing to feel better and forget their problems since music has a soothing effect. In part two of the film, while singing and prayers are ongoing in church Blessing heals a woman suffering from a spiritual ailment as seen in figure four. She rolls on the floor as singing persists by the congregation. This act of hers represents the effect of the song

on her. Blessing lays her hands on her enabling her to lie still presupposing that healing has taken place. This is very evident in our society today especially with the proliferation of churches wherein pastors extort money from their Christians through healing. They sing the song transcribed below.

There is power there is power there is power in the Lord
Ike njimo taraya ike njimo tarayaaaa
He holds the key to your life
When sickness and trouble seem to take your soul away
He holds the key to your life



Boy heals as
Blessing and
congregation
sings

Figure 3: A Cry for Help part I 1:57:26secs



Figure 4: A Cry for Help part two 19:17secs

The medium long shot indicates the perplexed yet joy-filled Blessing at the boy's healing. This camera range equally shows the amazement on the faces of the congregation at the boy's healing. It should be recalled that Christians believe that their God possess enormous healing power. This could account for the choice of words like power, lord, key to show that he has the power to unlock any stumbling block in a person's life. This ties with the Structuralist view that a film is not just a mere film flickering on the screen but a much broader reflection of the daily life of every individual in all aspects of life.

5.5. Power of Music to Reduce Stress

Another therapeutic effect of music exemplified in the films is in its power to reduce stress. Music has been widely shown to be an effective tool for reducing stress Pelletier (2004) Stress is an illness that affects the body in several ways. Some common effects of stress on the body are that it causes headache, muscle tension, fatigue, sleep problems as well as chest pain. These often make a person depressed and angry. One of the best remedies for stress is music since it helps in fighting stress and depression. Normally a person becomes stressed up when the serotonin levels are low. Since music boosts the secretion of serotonin which lowers stress hormone levels, this helps to overcome stress and

anxiety. Listening to music has been proven to affect the levels of serotonin in healthy subjects Evers et al. (2000). Thus many people are often advised to pick up a musical instrument or sing the songs they like as it helps them to cope with stress. The Gate Control Theory of Pain informs us that doing an activity we like such as playing a musical instrument closes the gates allowing fewer messages to get to the brain. This enables one to experience less pain. No wonder Joe in *Passion of the Soul* plays his guitar after Najah's father refuses him from marrying her. He is in a bad mood and becomes nostalgic about his past love experiences with Najah. He flashes back to a conversation where they declared their love for each other.

Joe: like the moon, you have lighted the darkness in my eye and thus bringing me new meaning to my life. I love you.

Najah: There is no star under the horizon my heart craves for but those that I see in your eye.

Joe: what do you see in my eyes?

Najah: In those eyes I see myself in a glorious world and each time I melt in your hands I feel like this road is ours. Keep loving me like this forever Joe.

Joe: I will

These words echo in his mind as he plays the guitar while crying. From the diction, one can quickly tell how much these two are in love. The fact that they cannot be together breaks Joe completely. He has only his guitar to console and help him forget those hurtful past experiences as portrayed by figure five. This action further emphasizes the theme of love in the film. The rhythmic strings and melody produced by the guitar are pleasing to the ear. The full shot reveals Joe's facial mood which shows that he's at sixes and sevens. The fact that he is dressed in black reveals his enigma for black clothes connotatively stand for mourning clothes. Indeed Joe is mourning the loss of his better half. This makes one empathise with him. One of the aims of the Structuralist Film Theory is for people to understand and appreciate a film by relating their daily lifestyles to a film's themes and actor's portrayal of character



Figure 3: Joe playing his guitar in part one of Passion of the Soul 57:36secs

Also, *A Cry for Help* begins with Blessing completely stressed up. She is lamenting on her parent's grave while crying and singing in the mother tongue as captured in figure six.

Eboma sirigi nogagiri motiuwa
Eboma sirigi (2x)
Eboma sirigi nogagiri motiuwa oh
Eboma sirigi noma sirigi
By Blessing

Singing gives her the strength she needs to push forward as an orphan. The cross here is a symbol of death and just by seeing it gives Blessing the zeal to die and meet her parents. This makes her sad always that she cannot help but sing to get herself off such feelings. The fact that the story is told from the first person's point of view makes the audience to empathise better with Blessing. Her dressing communicates the misery she will encounter throughout the film. The dark and red clothes she is wearing are symbols of pain and danger respectively. The image of

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the cross stands for death which continually reminds her of her parents' death. Her sitting posture on her parents' grave paints a picture of one in agony. Singing becomes the only thing that uplifts her.



Blessing sings on her parents' grave to reduce stress as film commences

Figure 4: Blessing sings on parents' grave as part one of A Cry for Help begins

In the same light, Blessing sings same song in the mother tongue when her madam scolds and beats her for not doing laundry on time.

Eboma sirigi nogagiri motiuwa
Eboma sirigi (2x)
Eboma sirigi nogagiri motiuwa oh
Eboma sirigi noma sirigi

Her madam returns home and there is nobody to open the get for her. She becomes annoyed, goes inside and finds Blessing filling the drum with water. The madam notices that she has not done laundry yet and becomes furious. She scolds at her and demands that she does the laundry immediately. As she leaves, Blessing takes food to eat. She has been fetching water since morning and did not have time to eat. Suddenly, her madame opens the door only to find her eating. She becomes even angrier,

pours the food on her face and gets her well beaten. This short conversation captures it better.

Madam: what are you still waiting for?

Blessing: I'm eating my food

Madam: (*beats her mercilessly and throws the food on her face saying*) what are you eating when you have done nothing, you have fetched water all day idiot nonsense.

Blessing becomes devastated and can only sing at this point as seen in figure seven. She looks up to heaven while singing probably seeking help from God and questioning rhetorically why she has to be scolded and beaten for absolutely nothing. Music is the only thing that keeps her at peace after all the trauma. The human body responds to stressors by producing chemicals such as endorphins that reduce distress (Sarafino, 2006). Probably, these endorphins alleviate her pain and give her the strength needed to work as seen in the photo below. The close-up shot is telling of her devastated state and reveals the internal conflict Blessing has been battling with for a long time. Music helps to close the gates thereby reducing the pain that gets to the brain as postulated by the Gate Control Theory of Pain.

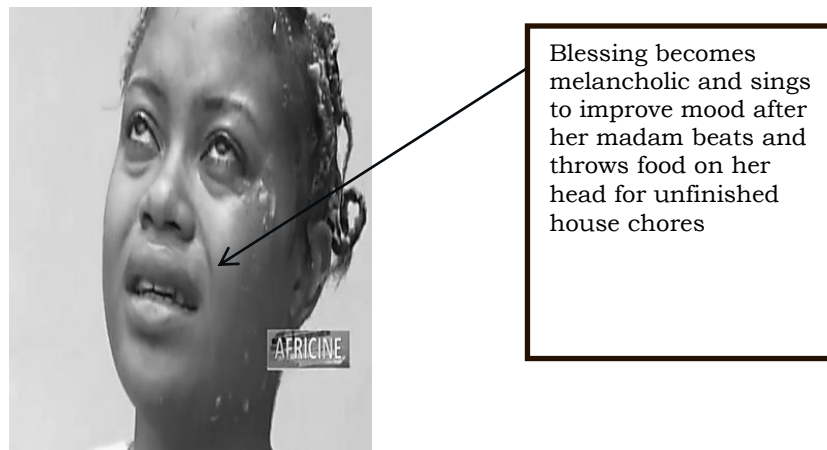


Figure 5: A Cry for Help Part one 15:11secs. Blessing sings to reduce stress

Moreover, Blessing recalls her sorrowful moments ranging from maltreatment meted by her madam to the death of her parents. In this particular scene, Blessing gives Junior food but he refuses. She sits on the table and starts eating the food when her madam returns. She reprimands her for eating on her dining table and for starving her son. She beats her and asks her to pack her belongings to the kitchen where she would be sleeping henceforth. Even Junior is bemused at the mother's behaviour and questions her. Meanwhile Blessing flashes back on how she used to mourn on her parents' grave and numerous beatings from her madam. Consequently, she becomes teary and starts singing. Songs speak to us directly about our experiences; they reassure us in our moments of trouble (Griffie, 1992: 4). Of course this song by Albert Kalu transcribed below becomes her instrument of reassurance after the painful flashback.

My God I cannot make it again
My heart is failing me,
All my hope is gone,
Nobody cares,
I will take it over with the Lord,
I know, yes I know
He will listen
By Albert Kalu

From this we can tell that she is disillusioned and traumatised and at this point music serves as her only therapy. It becomes her pain and cure as she cries at the same time while singing as seen in figure eight. The lyrics of the song tell us that it has a religious undertone and Christians believe that in moody moments, God becomes their strength and refuge as He is the only one who can carry their burdens. The choice of Blessing's song herself being a staunch Christian highlights this belief. Her tone and pitch are sorrowful. The lighting effect of the dark night is revealing of Blessing's agony and melancholy and even her sitting posture, with hands supported on the jaw while tears of sorrow drip from her eyes down her cheeks only go a long way to heighten her depression as captured by the close-up shot. The perceived distracting and relaxing aspects of music therapy are believed to not only inhibit the brain from transmitting pain signals but to also cause the body to release endorphins (are

naturally 'feel good' hormones) according to the Gate Control Theory of Pain.

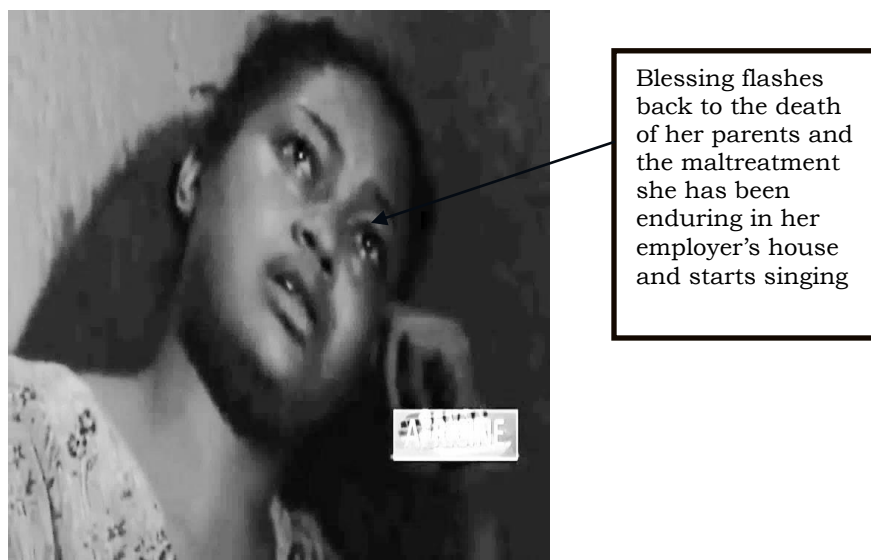


Figure 6: **Blessing sings to reduce stress in part one of A Cry for Help 28:05secs**

5.6. Power of Music to Improve Mood

In addition, music helps to improve one's mood and increases self-esteem as portrayed by the directors in the two films. It can motivate and boost self-confidence. Remember that stress affects mood in that it makes one sad, angry, restless and anxious. Music is often linked to moods and certain songs can make individuals feel a variety of emotions ranging from happy, calm, energetic to feeling relaxed. For instance, when *Passion of the Soul* begins, the song transcribed below is being sung by a maid to Najah who is completely in tears.

Oh Najah you are so beautiful (2x)
Oh Najah you are so pretty
Oh Najah you are an angel,
Oh Najah, Najah Sarbah

This is because she is about to marry a man she does not love. This decision is taken by her biological father. He claims that the only way he can reward his friend who helped him to be a justice is by allowing his only daughter to marry his son. Her father still promotes the archaic African culture where parents believe they can choose spouses for their children. The voice of the maid is soft and melodious. The song in a way helps to build her morale and motivates her to stop crying thereby improving her mood to face her marriage as captured in figure nine. The repetition of some lines and the reminder of her irresistible beauty as echoed in the song invigorate her. As the maid sings, Najah flashes back to the song she used to sing with Joe. They are actually dancing and having fun. This plays on her psyche as she probably wonders how life would be without Joe. In fact they had built lots of lofty memories together. Letting go is what Najah is battling with inwardly. It is thanks to the song sung by the maid that she is able to pull through. The long-shot reveals the maid singing and another wiping the tears of sorrow from Najah's face on her wedding day. Music is believed to send enough competing sensory inputs through pathways descending from the brain to cause the brainstem to signal some of the gates shut, thereby reducing the amount of pain that the patient listening to the music perceives (Tse, Chan and Benzie, 2005). As a romantic genre, this keeps the audience at suspense as to what will happen next, will she turn down the marriage and marry the love of her life or finally please her father and live in sorrow while hoping that love grows?



Najah is teary. She is about to marry a man she does not love just to fulfill her father's wish. Her maid sings to cheer her up and improve her mood

Figure 7: Maid sings for Najah as Passion of the Soul commences

Also, still in *Passion of the Soul*, Najah and the prince are finally celebrating their white wedding after all the turmoil. A lot has happened since Najah lost her baby and the fact that the prince is back in the country is the perfect time for this reunion. Najah has seemingly forgotten about Joe. Unknowing to Najah, the little girl who pleads to sing at her wedding lives with Joe. It is when she begins to sing that it dawns on Najah that it is the same song she used to sing with her former lover as seen in figure ten. Even though the girl sings to entertain the guests, it indirectly serves as therapy for Najah. She goes down memory lane to recall how they used to sing and dance together. The prince and her father are surprised by the look on her face. Tears feel her eyes as she wonders where the little girl must have learnt the song. She rushes towards the girl and demands to know where she learnt the song. She tells her that her uncle taught her the song. Though this song makes her cry, it equally brightens her because it reminds her of the love of her life. The rhyme scheme of the song foretells that the love they share is reciprocal. The use of repetition of sweetie sweetie, lovie lovie in the song emphasizes the theme of love. According to the Gate Control Theory, memories of a positive prior experience decrease pain signals that go to the brain. The song goes thus

It is with these eyes that I see
It is with my heart that I feel
I can feel these beats when I see you
Loving you with paths have no fear
It is with these ears that I hear
Eheh bum bum tiitti bum bum
Music to my ears when I see you
Sweetie sweetie oh say I go die for you
Lovie lovie oh my heart just di crase for you
If you love me eh eh I love you
Anything you want I go do for you
Now I see my dreams come true
Loving you is just so cool
E eh chum chum the way you make me
Oh you give me joy I'll die for you

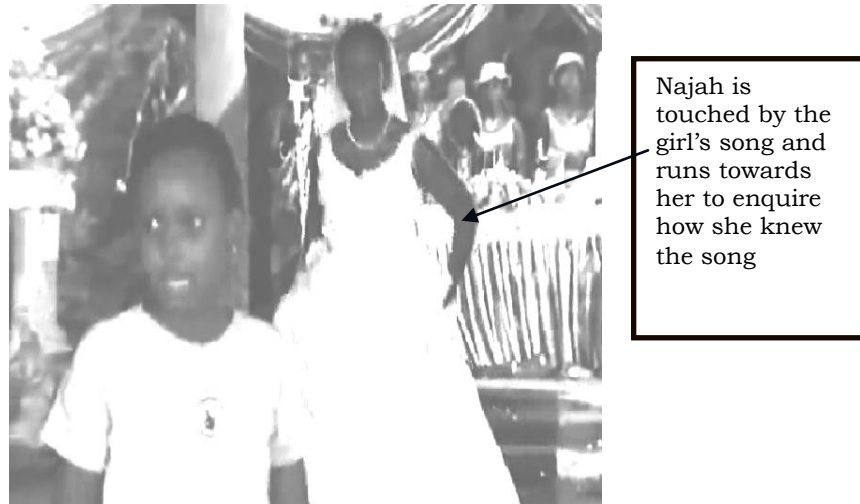


Figure 8: Passion of the Soul Part three 40 mins. little girl sings at Najah's wedding

Furthermore, in her moody moments in *A Cry for Help*, Blessing engages in singing. The song she sings enhances the atmosphere of the film and suits the theme of the film. For instance, she sings when accused of killing her husband by her in-laws and is consequently locked in the same room with the corpse where she spends the night as captured in figure eleven. The medium shot reveals a woman in prolonged distress. The dark room and dark clothes she is wearing presupposes her melancholic state. Connotatively, black symbolises death, despair and misfortune. In our Cameroonian context, widows wear black clothes to mourn their husbands. The black clothes are signs of misfortune for Blessing. She has not had peace since he died. The state of being locked up in a room with a corpse further magnifies Blessing's trauma and sorrow. Consequently, she begins to cry sorrowfully especially when she is forcefully locked in the room with her husband's corpse by her sisters-in-law. One of the ladies voices that **'you will sleep with him this night if truly you are guilty of the allegations or not, let the angry spirits decide'**. This is one among many traditions that widows are subjugated to

upon the death of their husbands. It is not only dreadful but dehumanising. It pains more because Blessing is innocent. Ironically, her name is not a blessing but a curse to her whole existence. At this juncture, she starts singing in her mother tongue. Singing is one of those activities that close the gates to pain thereby allowing fewer pain messages to pass through to the brain. In fact, she sings this particular song when she is experiencing such traumatic experiences.

Ezitieme maluso byata muagi oh
Ezitieme maluso byata mo
Ariria karia gini kam geme
Ezitieme moso byata mo
Imosa guwa motimwe
Chime gini kan gbere oh
Ariria karia munobi oh
Chimo basa moso byata mo
Ezitieme maluso byata muagi oh
Chime maluso byata mo
Ariria karia gini kam geme
Ezitieme moso byata mo



Blessing is locked up in the same room with the corpse of her husband. She has been accused of killing him. Consequently she cries and sings

*Figure 9: **Blessing with dead husband 1:39:50secs Part two A Cry for Help***

In addition, Joe finally accepts the fact that Najah is gone in *Passion of the Soul*. This is because he has found new love. He has fallen in love with a lady (Eve) he helped at night after she had consumed alcohol to stupor though we wonder if it will last. As a result, Joe and family sing and dance as seen in figure twelve. Joe particularly sings while playing his guitar to forget his past and embrace new love. It is always fulfilling to fall in love again after a heart break. Their dancing styles and moves communicate love and harmony. The bright sunny weather foreshadows happy days ahead for this is another turning point in Joe's life. The medium long shot shows Joe dancing and playing his guitar together with his daughter, nanny and Eve during the engagement party. This brightens him completely. We see a happy Joe ready to move on despite the odds. At least he now has a better job and is capable to fend for his family. The lyrics of the song are informative of a man in love. According to it, his dreams have finally come true.

It is with these eyes that I see
It is with my heart that I feel
I can feel these beats when I see you
Loving you with paths have no fear
It is with these ears that I hear
Eheh bum bum tiitti bum bum
Music to my ears when I see you
Sweetie sweetie oh say I go die for you
Lovie lovie oh my heart just di crase for you
If you love me eh eh I love you
Anything you want I go do for you
I love the things you make me do
The way you say I love you too
Eh eh chom chom the way you make me
It's the dance of love I'll dance with you
Now I see my dreams come true
Loving you is just so cool
Eheh chacha the way you make me
Oh you bring me joy I love you too
Sweetie sweetie oh say I go die for you
Lovie lovie oh my heart just di crase for you

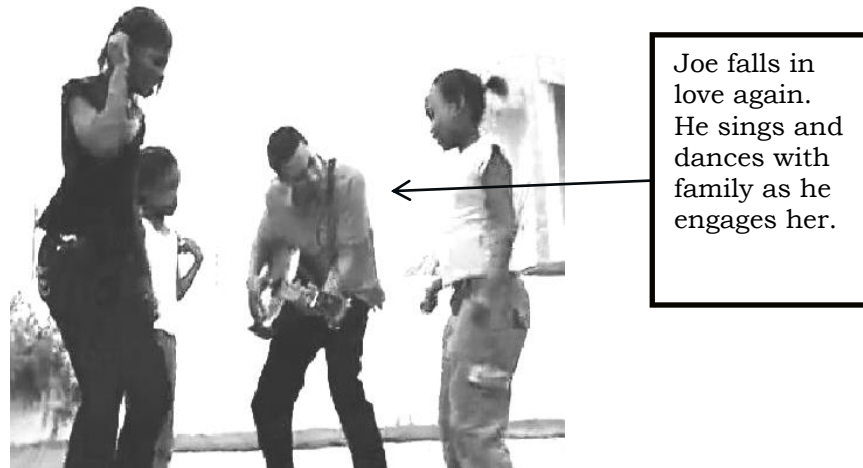


Figure 12: Passion of the Soul Part two 1:05:10secs Joe sings and dances with family

5.3. Power of Music to Mitigate Depression

Depression is a common problem affecting about 121million people world-wide and is characterized by persistent low mood, which leads to changes in appetite, sleep pattern and overall functioning (WHO 2000; Moussavi 2007) In part two of *A Cry for Help*, Blessing is seen singing on her way to commit suicide after her excommunication from the village following the death of her husband as captured in figure thirteen. At its worst, depression can lead to suicide, which is associated with the loss a million lives per year (WHO 2000; Moussavi 2007). This lady has accumulated so much pain from the start of the film. Every place or situation where she finds herself meets with malediction. Whatever she does with good intentions usually turn out bad. She gets married as the last resort thinking it may be a solution to all her problems but she rather meets her doom. Everything seems to be going on well until her husband loses his job. He does not only maltreat her but violates her physically leaving her with indelible injuries. The situation becomes worse when he finally dies and Blessing is accused of killing him. Such accumulated episodes of pain depress her to the core. Her physical appearance

alone is enough to tell one she is suffering from depression. As tradition demands, a woman who kills her husband is exiled from the village. In film semiotics, conventions are generally accepted norms and behaviour that we see as natural in a particular culture. The setting is in a cold, silent forest. Even the trees are painted black to signify the gloomy situation. This is to say that even nature frowns at the action Blessing is about to take. She sings on her way to commit the suicidal act. The long shot shows her in black clothes which symbolises death and the solemnity of the forest as she walks coupled with frightful background sound all indicate that the end is near for Blessing. After her being extrocized from the village, Blessing no longer has reasons to live. This makes the audience to sympathise with Blessing on her way to Calvary as she braves it with singing.



Blessing has been excommunicated from the village following the death of husband. She resolves to commit suicide and sings on her way to this journey

Figure 13: Blessing sings on her way to commit suicide 1:52:36secs part 2 of A Cry for Help

In addition, in *A Cry for Help* ever since Blessing stepped foot in the pastor's house, life has not been a bed of roses for her. The pastor's wife and daughter (Cynthia) intentionally make life unbearable for her. Though having everything at her disposal, Cynthia becomes increasingly jealous of Blessing especially when the pastor decides to channel the scholarship which was meant for Cynthia to Blessing. To worsen the consternation, Cynthia discovers that the only man she fell in love with loves Blessings

dearly instead. Consequently, she seizes any opportunity in the absence of her father to torment Blessing. A good example is this scene where she accuses Blessing of insulting her. Blessing is at the backyard doing chores when Cynthia arrives and starts punching her with a broom in a way that blood starts oozing from her nostrils. While doing this, she arrogantly tells her, **“First you stole my father’s love and now my boyfriend”**. Blessing begins to cry and rushes to inform the pastor’s wife about the daughter’s misconduct. Instead, the pastor’s wife quickly sides with her daughter’s version of the story. As a result, Blessing suffers snake beating from them and becomes very moody. As such she starts singing and crying in her room as seen in figure fourteen. According to Simon (2007) our voice is the ultimate healing instrument. She can no longer put up with the external conflict she has been enduring. The medium long shot reveals her sitting posture at the edge of the bed with head resting against the wall. This reveals her devastation. The act of singing prevents pain signals from being transmitted to the brain, hence reducing the pain she feels. She sings the song transcribed below in her room after the beatings.

Chimo chinekam ghere
Ariria kara munobi oh
Chimo mata ohso byata mo
Ezitiema maluso byata mo
Ezitiema moso byata mo
Hmmm moso byata mo
Ezitiemo moso byasa mo

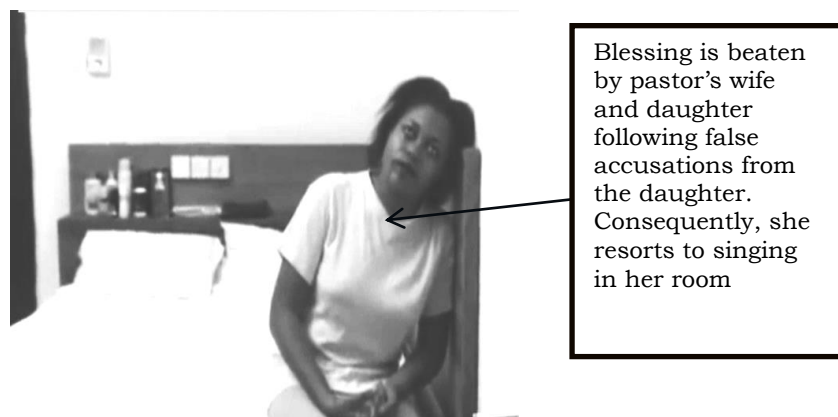


Figure14: Blessing sings in her room 2:44:36secs Part 2 A Cry for Help

Finally, Blessing is seen parking her stuff to leave the pastor's house. She is crying and singing in the process. She has just been accused of theft by Cynthia, the pastor's daughter. Cynthia recounts to her mother that Blessing has been stealing things from her room, the latest being the money which her mother gave her. The mother does not give this matter a second thought. Blessing is again beaten pitilessly by Cynthia and her mother for allegedly stealing Cynthia's money and other belongings. This time, pepper is rubbed into her eyes whereas she is innocent. Blessing finds herself in an imbroglio and in a bit to improve her mood even when everything seems to be working against her, music becomes the only therapy during such moments. The long shot in figure fifteen clearly portrays Blessing during this precarious moment. She parks her belongings as she sings the song written below.

Eboma sirigi nogagiri motiuwa
 Eboma sirigi (2x) oh
 Eboma sirigi nogagiri motiuwa oh
 Eboma sirigi noma sirigi

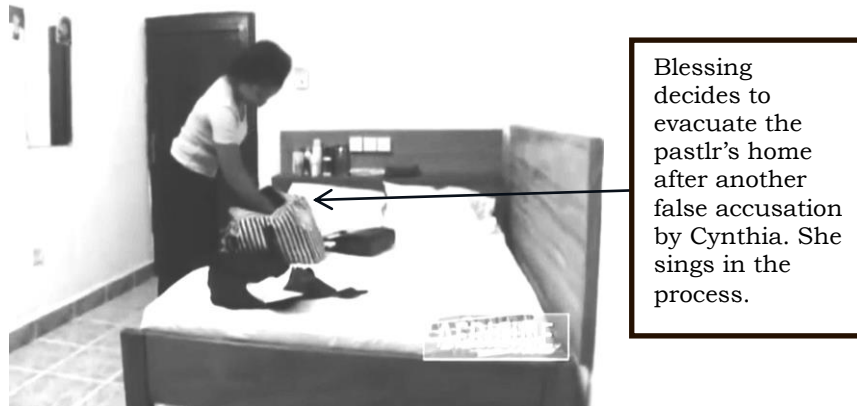


Figure15: Blessing sings and parks to leave Part two 2:46:44secs A Cry for Help

Lastly, another instance of depression is when Blessing is forced to drink water used in washing her husband's corpse. This is because the in-laws claim that she is responsible for his death. According to them, by drinking the water, Blessing will prove her innocence but if guilty of the accusation, upon drinking the water, she will pass away. This is so traumatising and dehumanising especially as it is perpetrated by fellow women. Blessing faced with such calamity begins to weep bitterly and sings after being forced to drink the adulterated water. The look on her face depicted by the close-up shot tells of how depressive she is as seen in figure sixteen. She feels worthless and this impacts her self-esteem. Her dark clothes connote pain and misery. The tears of sorrow running down her cheeks are signs of prolonged depression. Everyone jeers at her hoping she will kick the bucket after drinking the water. Her mood is at its worst. Unfortunately for them, she drinks and does not die. She sings the song written below to be at peace within.

Eboma sirigi nogagiri motiuwa
Eboma sirigi (2x) oh
Eboma sirigi nogagiri motiuwa oh
Eboma sirigi noma sirigi



Figure16: A Cry for Help part two 1:42:30secs Blessing sings to alleviate depression

Conclusion

In the 21st century where nothing is left unexploited especially with new innovations in technology, new possibilities of disease management with music are being discovered. Hence there has been a rapid transformation of music from a passion or art to a disease healing technique. New researches in the field of MT are pointing to the promising fact that exposure to music therapy can bring about tremendous desirable health conditions. Different intonations of music like rhythm, melody, pitch and harmony combine to give music its therapeutic source. Music and its aesthetics cannot be over emphasised. It existed in the past and still dwells in the present even in films. Hardly can one find any culture without music. Have you ever thought of how life would be without music? Well, we did in this research and found that the world would be a quiet place. So far our analysis has shown music as something extraordinary; it is what makes humans human. Music is in a number of ways the fabric to our lives and the definition of society as everyone enjoys music. Through its relaxing and soothing effect, it can make our bad days better.

Music is a universal language that has the ability to evoke deep feelings at the core of shared human experiences. At the individual level, it can induce multiple responses; physiological, mood, emotional, and behavioral. The power of music to act therapeutically has long been recognised. The increased availability of music seems to be encouraging people to use music to manipulate their own moods, reduce stress, alleviate boredom while doing tedious work and create environment appropriate for particular kinds of social occasion. In short, music is being used by individuals to enhance the quality of their lives.

In this study, after watching the two films, we examined its therapeutic representation. Both films showcased music as healing and beneficial to our health. In *a Cry for Help*, there are several instances where Blessing uses music to heal children in a lifeless state as well as to heal herself from stress just like in *Passion of the Soul* where music seems to be Joe's only therapy in his stressful moments. The directors equally indicated music as something that can be used to improve people's mood and mitigate depression as it is what keeps Blessing going in several scenes of *a Cry for Help* and Najah in *Passion of the Soul*.

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