

DEPICTIONS OF RESILIENCE IN SELECTED POEMS BY SUSAN KIGULI AND

STELLA NYANZI



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**A RESEARCH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTORATE OF
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DECLARATION

I, Ampeire Hellen, hereby declare to the best of my knowledge that this dissertation is my original work and has never been submitted for the award of a Master's degree in any other University/ institution.

.....*Ampeire*.....

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.....*7th August 2025*.....

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APPROVAL

This dissertation titled, **Depictions of Resilience in Selected Poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi** has been submitted for examination under my close supervision as a University Research Supervisor.

8th August 2025



.....
Assoc. Prof. Danson Sylvester Kahyana

.....
Date



Prof. Laban Erapu



Date

DEDICATION

For my mother, Jolly Tumushabe; my husband, Sunday Edwin; and our children, Amwesiga Jeremy,

Aturinda Merina, and Ariho Ethan.

In memory of

My father, Gershom Tumushabe.

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ABSTRACT

The study's fundamental goal is to establish how Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi depict resilience in selected poems. Specifically, the research examines the different forms of resilience and the styles used to depict these forms in selected poems. This qualitative research is underpinned by the interpretivism paradigm to understand the multiple realities presented by each phenomenon, as presented by each poem studied. This study adopts a descriptive design that involves an analysis of a single character, situation, or case presented in the selected poems. This research is guided by two objectives: To examine the different forms of resilience in selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi, and to establish how the selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi depict resilience. The findings of this study reveal three forms of resilience: Intellectual, historical and cultural, as well as psychological resilience. Furthermore, the findings show that the two poets use similar devices to depict the theme of resilience: symbolism, irony, personification, allegory, satire, simile, imagery, rhetorical questions, and ellipsis. The two poets' point of departure is in their diction, where Kiguli uses civility and Nyanzi uses Vulgarity to express the traumatic encounters that characters face. This study establishes that Nyanzi rides on her license bestowed by her Ganda culture, which allows her to use language as she deems fit to articulate her concerns. This means that to understand one's writing style, one ought to do well by studying their background. Trauma, which leads to such extreme representation, is born out of hegemony, patriarchy, and politics of assumption and betrayal; hence, the need for resilience. I note that trauma suppresses the urgent need for testimony because it destabilizes speech, leading to either a fragmented witness or a repetition of words or sentences in a stressful attempt to bear testimony, which leads to repetition of traumatic episodes. The study recommends that the government should prioritize the welfare of all its prisoners, irrespective of whether they are law offenders or victims of poor governance, humanely. It should guard against radical violence by safeguarding both physical and emotional spaces. This is on the backdrop that prisons are meant to serve a rehabilitative role to citizens..

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

In postcolonial Uganda, the presidents were; Sir Edward Mutesa 11(1963-1966), Apollo Milton Obote (1966-1971/ 1980-1985), Idi Amin Dada Obote and Idi Amin Dada (1971-1979), Godfrey Binaisa (1979-1980), and Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (1986- to date). Obote was Mutesa's prime minister in the federal government who took over leadership from the colonialists. He became president of Uganda and did not set a precedent for proper rule and it only got worse. (Bahati, 2023) This is evidenced by Amin's government that left so many people dead, attracting the reference; 'Butcher of Africa' and the 'worst dictator in modern memory.' Currently, President Museveni has manipulated the constitution in his favor to extend his presidency, throwing the country into more brutality, deaths, abductions, and incarceration of citizens who question the status quo. It is against this background that Uganda posits as an unfortunate country to have had and continues to have one dictator after another. It is such brokenness and dictatorship that breaks the spine of the citizens, leaving them panting as they struggle to survive.

This state of affairs has prompted some of the citizens to go silent and look on to avoid being brutalized, incarcerated, and or killed. Silence is as loud as spoken word because it points to the resilience or resignation of the traumatized person. In going out of their way to pen different poems, Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi become the voice of the voiceless, the resigned, and the resilient majorly by bringing out issues that have pained not only Ugandans but people in countries with oppressive governments in post-colonial Africa, with Uganda acting the representative role. Kiguli's collections titled *The African Saga* and *Home Floats in The Distance* as well as Stella Nyanzi's *No Roses from My Mouth* and *Don't Come in My Mouth* were studied to analyze the theme of resilience.

1.1 Background to the study

This study analyzed resilience that Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi have addressed in their poetry and how each has achieved this. Resilience is a process or the ability to recover from adversity fortified and more ingenious" (Walsh, 2006). Resilience has been defined as a dynamic process wherein individuals display positive adaptation despite experiences of significant adversity or trauma. This term does not represent a personality trait or an attribute of the individual; rather, it is a two-dimensional construct that implies exposure to adversity and the manifestation of positive adjustment outcomes (Lothar et al., 2000). According to Mlambo (2013), resilience has been frequently defined as the act of positive adaptation despite adversity. Indicators of this adaptation are represented in this study through the four poetry collections.

According to Mlambo (2014), "Resilience, therefore, emphasizes the strengths that the people have, rather than their vulnerability, through exploring the coping strategies that they exhibit." According to Cloete & Mlambo (2014), trauma does not only produce negative consequences but there is the possibility of new beginnings. These new possibilities enable the traumatized person to survive, and by implication, this highlights the value of resilience, which this study clarifies. People react to life's challenges in many different ways. Some will emotionally explode; others might become angry; and others might become physically violent. Others may implode, go numb, feeling helpless and overwhelmed by what has happened. Some might portray themselves as victims, blaming others for what has happened. They bounce back and emerge better and stronger than before. These are resilient people who can quickly adapt to new circumstances and the present study explored the extent to which the characters face traumatic circumstances in a resilient manner.

In post-colonial Africa, and particularly in Uganda, resilience is varied because of the multiple stressors that citizens have had to grapple with (Amanya, 2018). For example, the transition from colonial oppression to independence required collective resilience as their responsibility in as far as fielding Africans, in turn Ugandans for the presidency was concerned (Cooper, 2008). The post-independence era was synonymous with political turbulence and brutality during Idi Amin's regime (Tornberg, 2012). There was also a need for communities in northern Uganda to bounce back during and after the Lord's Resistance Army revolt. The need for the affected people to get out of the trauma inflicted on them and rise to rebuild themselves could only occur because of being

hopeful. Such economic hardships directly impacted social life, which further necessitates the urgent need for resilience. It should be noted that these political and socio-economic challenges have left educational institutions struggling to access education for youth and citizens in the post-colony; this situation leads to the creation of activism platforms to see change occur. There has also been a need for resilience in health regarding the diseases that attack people in the post colony like Human Immune Varius, Ebola, Murburg, COVID-19, among others. The lack of medicines in government hospitals has left citizens asking the status quo or completely going quiet, hence the urgent need for resilience.

1.1.1 Susan Kiguli: Social and Literary Background

Susan Kiguli was born on 24th June 1969 in Luweero, central Uganda. She is a Ugandan poet who has won both national and international awards. She scooped the National Book Trust of Uganda Poetry Award in 1999, following her poetry collection titled *The African Saga* and the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the International Civil Poetry Festival in Vercelli, Italy, respectively. She started writing as early as her high school days at Gayaza High School. She composes, writes, and recites her poetry in Luganda (her first language) and English. She is famous for her strong attack on the cruelty of leaders in the form of oppression, tyranny, and murder. Kiguli's poetry is political and social, and she comes out strongly to denounce fear, frustration, death, corruption, oppression, and tyranny. This study dwelt on the poems of protest from her collection titled *The African Saga*, mainly because they 'bear witness to Uganda's turbulent past and to the atrocities that were committed in the public domain' (Kahyana, 2015), which inversely points to people who have had to endure so much trauma and hence are resilient. Some poems in this collection have been featured in anthologies like *Michael's Harvest* (2005) and *Gifts of Harvest* (2006), which exhibit their exactness at capturing events as well as the varied reactions of the Ugandan citizens.

Home Floats in the Distance, her second poetry collection, is a bilingual edition in English and German. In this collection, she addresses love, life, death, memory, revolution, and feminism, among others. Her poetry was important to this study because it, 'portrays the complexities of post-colonial societies', and how people react or address them (Henri, 2020)

1.1.2 Stella Nyanzi: Social and Literary Background

Stella Nyanzi was born in Jinja, Uganda, on June 16, 1974, to Joseph Nyanzi, a medical doctor, and Harriet Nyanzi, a social worker. She commenced her education at Gayaza Junior School. On accomplishing her primary level, she joined Gayaza High School for her secondary education. From 1993 to 1996, she was at Makerere University, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication and Literature. In 1999, she attended the University College London where she got a Master of Science in Medical Anthropology in 2000. She went on to attain a PhD in Social Anthropology from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 2008. Her interests during her PhD thesis focuses on how youth navigate their sexualities.

In 2017, she gained more attention from both local and international mainstream media outlets when she wrote various posts in which she equated the first family to various sex organs for their failure to deliver a presidential campaign pledge. She was pronounced guilty of using obscene, lewd, and lascivious language. She spent a whole month in prison.

She has published four poetry collections: *No Roses from My Mouth* (2020), *Don't Come in my Mouth* (2021), *Eulogies of My Mouth: Poems for A Poisoned Uganda* (2022), and *Exiled for My Mouth: Poems Across Borders*. (2025) The first two collections were chosen for this study because the poet interweaves satirical elements with graphic descriptions of sexual activity to defamiliarize vices like corruption, hypocrisy, and inequality in Uganda. (George, 2019)

1.3 Statement of the problem

Several critical studies have examined the poetry of Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi, “ including Human Rights Advocacy in Susan Kiguli’s Poetry by Shallon Atuhaire”, “ Dictatorship and Misrule in Susan Kiguli’s Poetry by Danson Kahyana” , “Marginal Space Portrayal in Susan Kiguli’s Poetry by Zam Namakula”, “The Poetics and Politics of Stella Nyanzi’s Facebook Work and The Effects of the Pandemic in Selected Poems of Stella Nyanzi”, both by Danson Kahyana, as well as “Hybridity in *Emergent East African Poetry* by Evan Mwangi”, among others. These studies offer valuable insights into how poetry functions to raise awareness and advocate for justice, often highlighting themes such as oppression, dictatorship, marginalization, and socio-political resistance.

However, the exploration of poetry as a means for expressing hope and resilience in the face of adversity has received limited scholarly attention. Little attention has been paid to how poetry can serve as a mirror to social injustices and as a source of healing, empowerment, and inspiration for individuals and communities navigating hardship.

This gap in studying literary texts calls for a more in-depth exploration of how Kiguli and Nyanzi's poetry exemplifies resilience in the face of personal and collective struggles. By shifting the analytical lens from protest and critique to empowerment and endurance, this study seeks to examine how poetry by these two Ugandan poets becomes a means to affirming human strength, agency, and the will to overcome. Such an approach offers a more holistic understanding of their poetic contributions and expands the discourse on Ugandan poetry as both a form of resistance and a beacon of hope.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The general objective of this study was to establish how resilience is portrayed in selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study were the following:

- i. To examine the different forms of resilience in selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi.
- ii. To establish how the selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi depict resilience.

1.6 Research questions

- i. What forms of resilience are addressed in the selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi?
- ii. How do selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi depict resilience?

1.7 Scope of the study

There are various Ugandan poets, but this study looked at only two of them, Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi. Kiguli and Nyanzi have elaborated on the human ability to navigate social and political challenges as they address themes of protest, resistance, and survival. These poets have been given national and international audiences where they read their poems, an indicator that they articulate issues that have happened or still happen in Uganda and Africa. The researcher based on Susan Kiguli's *The African Saga* ('The Resilient Tree' and 'The African Saga' Home Floats in The Distance, ('Amin is Dead', 'Plain Speaking'), and Stella Nyanzi's *No Roses From My Mouth*; 'Justice Delayed', 'A plea for decongestion') and *Don't Come in My Mouth* (My personal motivation to join politics, 'Speaking, Freedom').

The themes of tyranny, bad governance, political repression, freedom of expression, social injustice, identity and cultural heritage, and poor living conditions were investigated in these poems as implications of the overriding theme of resilience. These poems were chosen because they expound on the multifaceted nature of resilience by expressing characters' lived experiences. The researcher decided to study these poetry collections because they mirror that which is distorted through the use of literary devices. A variety of secondary sources of data were used; newspaper articles, Novels, journal articles, Books, and social media like Facebook, which helped to enrich the information from primary sources and validate the researcher's perspectives, arguments, and lines of thought regarding the depiction of resilience in Ugandan poetry in light of Cathy Caruth's trauma theory.

1.8 Justification of the study

Several studies done on Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi's poetry collections have examined human rights advocacy, marginality, governance, hybridity, dictatorship, language use, and gender among others. They have not examined the depiction of resilience in the poetry collections by the two poets. Julian & Ryan (2022) carried out a study of conceptual resilience based on cases in Northern Uganda from the perspective of survivors while Sophie Namy et al (2017) studied gender, Violence and resilience among Ugandan adolescents.

However, no research so far has been made on the depiction of resilience in selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi. This study, therefore, has unveiled the otherwise unprioritized contribution made by female writers to Ugandan poetry. This study also celebrates the contribution of poetry and in particular women's poetry to development. It further provokes intellectual debate and exposes possible avenues for further research.

1.9 Significance of the study

The findings of this study are important in as far as advancing the critical role which poetry plays as a genre of literature, both nationally and globally. It is of significant importance as it examines the depictions of resilience in selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi. The poetic devices and styles used made this work rich in thematic, discourse, and conceptual dimensions.

This work elaborates how poetry builds hope, identity, and social collaboration as characters articulate personal and collective experiences of loss, pain, and suffering the world over. It also showcases the relationship between the individual and society as well as how poetry expresses the hard truths about governance in the post-colonial era, as well as making the wake-up call for hope and resilience.

Future researchers will use the findings as secondary data for their studies and/or adopt the methodology used by this study and the data collection tools. This study's accomplishment will benefit the researcher by refining the research skills in data collection, literature review, data analysis, and thesis writing. The skills gained will be vital in executing future research-related assignments both at academic and managerial levels.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

The study was based on the trauma theory to interpret characters' behavior in particular contexts in the poems under study, understand how individuals deal with traumatic encounters, as well as appreciate the role of setting in shaping the nature of trauma encountered. This theory was important in understanding how adversity leads to resilience. Ideas surrounding trauma were first

described in the 1860s by John Erichsen and Herbert Page. During their day, trauma was likened to physical accidents, and from there, mental challenges like fear were recognized. This is how the concept of trauma, being a physical injury (wound), came into connection with fear perceived as a memory of the traumatic pain.

Trauma refers to a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat but is in fact a break in the mind's experience of time' (Caruth 1996, 61). This means that the mind does not register what has taken place as the pain interfaced is too gross to allow for its comprehension. Trauma works both at individual and collective levels intimating that an individual belongs to a wider group called society and that society is composed of individuals that are each marked by the effects of the trauma they encounter. Therefore, a traumatized self leads to a traumatized society. Needless to say, there is no boundary to the effects of this 'wound'. Literature then becomes one of the avenues, available to humanity to express aspects of human experience that cannot be contained by ordinary modes of expression and that may even exceed human understanding. (Marder, 2006, p.3). This is why Trauma theory applied to this study that examined the depiction of resilience in different poems.

Trauma theory has several theorists that include, including Cathy Caruth, Shoshanna Felman, Sigmund Freud, Ulman and Brothers, and Judith Herman among others. Sigmund Freud showed interest in the relationship between trauma and neurosis in the years, 1892-1896. He relates the impact of traumatic loss and the duty of mourning for others and self thereby detailing the life before trauma, one's identity and the shape of guilt in the wake of trauma. He emphasizes that one can be traumatized by the pain they inflict on others as well.

Over time, Trauma theory was extended by Ulman and Brothers, in 1988. The word 'trauma' comes from the ancient Greek word, 'titroskein' meaning, 'wound'. According to this statement, there is a kind of wound that is unusual but in existence. Being different from the usual kind of wounds, therefore, we ought to understand it in the contextual presentation by the poets under study. Reaction to trauma occurs as a result of, 'pathological alteration in the images of the self and the outer world. (Ulman & Brothers, 1988, p.59). This quote explains the individual's hopelessness after the self is traumatized. Consequently, the impact of World War 1 and 2 on the globe gave birth to a term known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). (Young & Van Der Kolk, 1995). A

reflection between the relationship of factors like culture, social life, historical events, and the political landscape regarding people's approach continues to grind trauma in people's lives today.

Shoshanna Felman and Dori Laub in the early 1990s reflected on the timing between when the story happens and when it is told. They emphasize that when time elapses between the occurrence of a traumatic event and telling, the victim may begin doubting its occurrence. This consciousness is shared by Judith Herman who contends that there is a thin line between, 'an individual's tendency to refuse to acknowledge atrocities and the will to proclaim them aloud' (1997, 1). This situation is the basis for the call for immediate witnessing by characters in traumatic situations. Felman and Laub encourage this immediacy so that characters process the traumatic encounter to its conclusive end.

This study focused more on Cathy Caruth's insights about the trauma theory. She introduced this theory in literature in the early 1990s. Her work titled *Explorations in Memory* emphasizes that 'traumatic events are unbearable in their horror and intensity; they often exist as memories that are not immediately recognizable as truth.' This is because 'trauma is a crisis of meaning that occurs when an individual experiences an overwhelming event that cannot be fully understood or integrated into their existing cognitive and emotional frameworks'. (Bartzat, 2023). It is this horror and the overwhelming situation that cause a delayed response, leading to a manifestation of its impact in 'unexpected ways.' These various ways are what characters display in the poems under study.

Three tenets guided this study; repetition, fragmentation, and testimony. Repetition is when a character continuously engages in behavior or experiences that echo early experiences, including trauma. This tenet was particularly important to this study because it helped the researcher to appreciate the characters' reactions to repeated traumatic incidents. It helped to reflect on characters' patience as they cope with outcomes of repeated stressors and their choice to bounce back.

Symbolically, it is evidenced by having recurrent dreams on similar subjects, particularly those that are painful. (Kendra, 2023). Literary, repetition is expressed in repeated words, lines, and stanzas. The subject being addressed over and over again marks out an experience as a traumatic encounter. Kendra highlights Freud's reflection that people repeatedly engage in stressful situations as an

unconscious expression of trauma to master them. According to Kela Parker, repetition is important in poetry to emphasize certain ideas or feelings, intensifying emotional significance and creating a focal point that crystalizes what a poem is about and where it is going.

Testimony according to Shoshana Felman is a dialogical process of exploration and reconciliation of two worlds. The one that was brutally destroyed and the one that is. Testimony is a process of facing loss, of going through the pain of the act of witnessing, and of the unending act of witnessing. An individual who takes part in 'breaking the silence and exposing the truth of an occurrence therefore becomes an act of responsibility on the part of the victim toward the community implicated in the trauma. (Felman, 1992. P.204)

This tenet was chosen to give a voice to characters' traumatic experiences as a way of not only affirming their experiences but also appreciating the extent of their pain. This appreciation allows such characters to appreciate their status and create connections with other survivors.

Inherently, testimony is a process of facing loss as a character goes through the pain of the act of witnessing, and of the unending act of witnessing which includes yet another repetition of the experience of separation and loss. (Shoshanna, 1991) A character bearing witness occupies a lonely place as they relive moments of stress and the pain of mental turmoil to give accounts of what happened.

Dori Laub (2016) elaborates that there are three levels of witnessing- telling the truth through testimony. The first level is where a character 'bears witness to oneself within the experience.' The character serves as their audience to the truth encountered. This level is expressed by the first-person singular in the poems under study. The second level of witnessing is where a character 'bears witness to the testimonies of others' while the third level is where a character 'witnesses for the process of witnessing itself.' The three levels are represented by the personae in the poems under study. Important to recall is that regardless of which level the witness is at, they all are, 'driven by an imperative to tell' because, 'the longer the story remains untold, the more distorted it becomes in the survivor's conception of it.' (Felman & Laub, 1992).

These theorists work on a similar understanding that restoration of safety is crucial after the traumatic encounter hence the emphasis on witnessing for and by the traumatized characters. This is the background of testimony as a tenet of trauma theory. This is because testifying serves as therapy

for the victims of the 'wound'. The more a victim mentions the painful words to express the encounter interfaced, the more the poets unconsciously point to the source of their trauma. For example, repeating the word 'death' in a poem cracks the atmosphere of anxiety. (Feldman & Laub. 1992)

These accounts are what the poems under study attempt to capture for us because, there are never the right words or enough words, there is never enough time or the right time, and never enough listening or the right listening to articulate the story that cannot be fully captured in thought, memory, and speech. The story cannot be fully captured because trauma terribly affects memory leading to an exhaustive and fragmented experience.

Fragmentation implies a mental occurrence where a traumatic encounter leaves a character's mental being torn into different uncoordinated parts, leading to disconnected memories, emotions, and identities due to disassociations made during a traumatic episode. Fragmentation is a situation where a character does not remember a traumatic event or they only have flashbacks, dreams, implicit memories like body sensations and feelings regarding what happened. To fragment is to disintegrate the initial feel or knowledge about something.

This tenet was chosen because it helped the researcher to understand how traumatic experiences disrupt a character's sense of self. It also helped to appreciate the disruptive nature of trauma and how it shatters speech. This realization guided the researcher to study how the poets whose work was under study creatively used devices to capture the extent of various traumatic encounters and express the theme of resilience.

Poets use this idea in their poems to present complex realities that reflect a world that is uncertain. The fragmented persona experiences thoughts and emotions that seem to occur with complete randomness and a feeling of disconnected experience. This tenet is expressed by a variety of poetic devices as will be discussed among which is ellipsis.

They further note that trauma may be relieved through flashbacks and nightmares. This is because there is an ongoing struggle for the brain to process the shock within an individual. This results in stress and causes a character to relive what happened in unpleasant ways. Freud refers to this state as 'traumatic neuroses'. This state explains blanks in a character's narration of events as they

occurred. This state is constructed for us by poets with the help of literary devices. This stressful moment causes a traumatic scenario to be disconnected, causing a character to retrieve only bits and pieces of what happened and not the whole event. This situation is referred to as fragmentation, a tenet of trauma theory.

In addition, these theorists note that for any traumatized character, there is a tendency to repeat some elements of the unfortunate incident in their dreams, thoughts, behavior or even real-life situations. For example, a girl raised by an abusive father may marry an abusive husband. This happens so that the character gains mastery over the abusive trait in her male relationships, unconsciously. In poetry, this repetition is evident in words, sentences.

Generally, the trauma theory provided an adequate framework through which resilience is understood as a construct for individuals after the traumatic encounters have taken place. This trauma theory is relevant to the study because it looks at how characters in daring situations manage to survive the harsh realities, they face in the post colony. For a character's behavior to be understood, their behavior must be understood hence the need for theorization. It is against this background that Caruth highlights delay, and repetition as characteristics of such traumatized characters. This implies that a character in the poems under study will take longer than usual to express that pain encountered and also repeat certain aspects of their behavior or expression in an attempt to bear testimony of what happened.

According to Freud, such characters bear testimony in the form of sorrow and lamentation as they decried the situations, they struggle to both comprehend and express. This is why Freud says that the voice is sorrowful because that which they attempt to bear witness to is so traumatic that it fractures the very language supposed to express it.

1.11 Definition of key terms

Resilience: Refers to the process and outcome of successful adaptation to difficulty or challenging life situations mentally, emotionally, physically, and socially.

Trauma: This is a response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope, causes feelings of hopelessness, and diminishes one's sense of self, and their ability to feel a full range of emotions and experiences.

Poetry: It is a genre of literature which aims at evoking an emotional response in a reader through language chosen and arranged for its meaning, sound and rhythm. It uses few words for memorability and creation of intense emotional connections which create impactful feelings on the reader's side.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study, 'Depictions of resilience in selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi' was investigated in the context of the trauma theory, 'identifying ways in which the theory illuminates the representation of catastrophic events' in Uganda poetry. Trauma according to Negin Heidarizadeh (2014) refers to the state of mind that results from an injury. It is a devastating and damaging experience that is lived belatedly at the level of its unspeakable truth, through literature as an avenue. This literature then presents us with characters depicting such devastation as captured by the diction employed by either poet in their collections under study. Such devastation is what Michelle refers to as 'a speechless fright' in post-traumatic eras.

Kiguli, one of Uganda's contemporary poets, has been celebrated for her forceful attack on bad governance in the form of oppression, tyranny, and murder that run through her poetry. Kiguli writes on nature, love and life, her poetry can best be regarded as political and social poetry and, in a bid to address these social and political challenges in her society, she comes out strongly to defend the human rights and freedoms that all human beings should enjoy without discrimination. Fear, frustration, death, corruption, oppression, and tyranny are some of Kiguli's major concerns and her defense of fundamental freedoms cannot be over-emphasized. The Ugandan socio-political environment has had an influence on Kiguli's poetry and its turbulent political history has been a matter of concern for the poet.

In her dissertation, 'Human Rights Advocacy in the Poetry of Contemporary Ugandan Women Poets', Atuhaire Shallon Moreen (2000) notes that Kiguli has not minced words in attacking the rotten governments that have ruled in her age. She has openly attacked those who have propagated discrimination, corruption, murder, and wars in their society, violating human rights in their wake. She asserts the necessity for preserving freedom and other humanistic values. Zam Namakula quotes Atuhaire as being, 'confrontational and bitter' in nature, which suits anyone addressing the themes of tyranny and murder evident in both Kiguli and Nyanzi's work. Marginal treatment leads to gross violation of human rights which increases the challenges women face as they assert their

rights. This makes this study of resilience important to understand how women cope despite the adversities they encounter in the marginal spaces they occupy.

Zam Namakula (2017) in her thesis titled 'Negotiating Marginal Spaces in Susan Kiguli's Poetry', examines how the female personae labor to negotiate the margins where they are placed by patriarchy and politics. She notes that their marginality causes 'their rights to easily be denied or abrogated' leaving them speechless. She addresses themes of love, loss, and politics, among others, which show the impact of marginalization both in the private and public spaces. What she doesn't capture, though, is what keeps characters up in those marginalized positions. She calls on scholars to further examine Kiguli's work. The present study, therefore, sought to discuss what keeps them going until they decide to 'use their positions to re-assert their capabilities in society'.

In his article, 'Hybridity in emergent East African poetry: A reading of Susan N. Kiguli and her contemporaries', Eva Mwangi (2007) studies how Susan Kiguli addresses protean hybrid forms and themes as an articulation of the desire for freedom and democracy expressed with more poignancy and force than earlier poets whose poetry leaned towards accepting assimilation to the West. As such, Kiguli dresses up her characters in an expression of the desire to embrace that democracy which remains infringed upon in her poetry collections. It is because of that infringement that characters suffer at the hands of their political leaders, according to Kiguli. What this scholar does not capture is what helps these characters to keep suffering on end without ever giving up. It is that consistent suffering that fed into the current study, which sought to establish why characters in the collections under study do not give up, but rather resolve to hang on despite the pain they undergo as human beings.

According to Danson Kahyana's article titled, "Writing Dictatorship and Misrule in Uganda: Susan N. Kiguli's *The African Saga*", he examines how Kiguli portrays the theme of dictatorship and misrule in Kiguli's poetry, particularly the literary depictions of political terror. He further explains that misrule is characterized by techniques of power like beatings, detentions, rape, assassinations, massacre, and all. He notes that 'Kiguli portrays a world where violence abounds', where 'women are depicted as suffering untold oppression and exploitation, and 'the exploited women are expected to accept the injustices committed against them with grace and courage'. This study does not address reasons why the characters in Kiguli's poetry consistently endure the kind of pain meted out

to them. The current study, therefore, sought to establish why those women characters in Kiguli's poetry, carry on with such persistence in a world where 'violence abounds' for example, and never give up.

Danson Sylvester Kahyana (2022) in his book chapter titled, "Rudeness, Incivility as Political Strategy: The Poetics and Politics of Stella Nyanzi's Facebook Work", observes that Nyanzi articulates the role of women in fighting repression and misrule in Uganda. He further notes that while some people consider her choice of language robust and poetic, some consider it rude and uncivil. He quotes Nyanzi thus, 'I see radical rudeness as the only viable means to challenge those in power.' 'I view her language as the only way available for her to process and capture the pain of the hurting populace which has had to endure oppression, repression, tyranny, death, dictatorship among many heartbreaking situations.' In using the verb, 'endure', Kahyana implies that the situations in which different characters find themselves are terrible. This study was, however limited to examining how language is used to talk to politicians on the ills of the day. The present study delved deeper to establish what makes characters endure under a broader theme used here as resilience.

Danson Sylvester Kahyana (2023) in his book chapter under the title, 'Writing the effects of Covid-19 in selected poems by Stella Nyanzi. Emerging perspectives in Ugandan literary texts further elaborate the meaning of pain, struggle, and suffering in the post-COVID era in Uganda. However, this scholar did not go ahead to detail the mechanisms that helped Ugandans to withstand the effects of such outbreaks in Uganda. The current study delved deeper into the meaning of resilience viz. Aziz trauma encountered by the characters in the poems analyzed. Danson Kahyana in his book chapter, 'The effects of the pandemic in selected poems of Stella Nyanzi' (2022) studies how the poet portrays themes like tyranny, homophobia, and hunger imposed during the lockdowns to control the spread of the virus. The portrayal of those characters' resilience as a quality that keeps them afloat despite the hard and trying lockdown years is what this study sought to clarify.

Solomon Rukundo's article titled, 'My President is a Pair of Buttocks' focuses on Stella Nyanzi (2018). The controversy generated by her diction regarding her address to the Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni is what this scholar addresses. Nyanzi's pain, born out of the legal penalties slapped on her, is what interests the critical evaluation of Uganda's legislative framework

in this study. This evaluation is so important; however, it does not address the poet's style of writing. This study intended to cover this gap by examining Nyanzi's depictions in some of her poems.

In the same vain, George Tibakuno's dissertation titled, 'Reconstructing the meaning of Stella Nyanzi's literary language on Facebook' examines the literariness of her Facebook posts to deconstruct the negative portrayal of her critics who shun her work on the grounds of being vulgar (2019). He elaborates that Nyanzi's language is an interweaving of satirical and graphic elements to speak against the vices like corruption, hypocrisy, and inequality that continuously affect this country. This study was however limited to only Nyanzi's Facebook posts, a small sample compared to her published works. This study intended to fill the gap by studying her style used to depict resilience in her published works.

Taussant Nothias & and Rosebell Kagumire (2020) in their article, 'Digital Radical Rudeness: The Story of Stella Nyanzi' explain how Nyanzi showcases Uganda's crossroads of resistance to authoritarianism, patriarchy, homophobia, and nepotism in her characters. The present study built on this firm background to demonstrate a particular theme of resilience which is responsible for keeping both the poet and the characters not giving up on themselves.

Bwesigye bwa Mwesigire in his article: 'Stella Nyanzi: Social Justice and social media Icon (2017)' studies how Nyanzi portrays misrule, repression, and Museveni's unending rule in his characters in the posts she makes. The pain endured by such characters and why, the way she presents them was the gist of the present study.

Stella Nyanzi's posts on Facebook portray and criticize corruption, brutality, religious hypocrisy, and dictatorial tendencies in Ugandan society. She is candid, assertive, bold, outspoken, and unreserved in her posts, a blend of factors that have made her a household name. Many Ugandans admiringly talk about her as others consider her posts disgusting, vulgar, profane, lewd, uncouth, and offensive.

All these studies are important to this study because they bring to the fore the varying traumatic situations that characters are dealing with in varying settings and degree. This study sought to

make a scholarly contribution by closing the gap in the ability that helps characters withstand all the stress meted on them. This study was about the Depictions of resilience in selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The researcher examined the theme of resilience in the various poems studied, took notes, and identified tools for data collection, analysis, and data processing for the last task which was report writing.

3.1 Research design

This study adopted a descriptive research design characterized by studying elements of social changes through a comprehensive description and analysis of a single character, situation, or case. This enabled the researcher to determine the forms of resilience represented in the eight poems that were studied. This eased the categorization of poems studied under the forms of resilience established.

3.3.1 Research Approach There are different definitions of qualitative research by different scholars. Punch (2003) defines qualitative research as “empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers” while, on the contrary, quantitative research is “empirical research where the data are in the form of numbers.” Punch (2003) emphasizes that qualitative research investigates social phenomena that are not quantifiable. Jupp (2006) also defines qualitative research as “research that investigates aspects of social life which are not amenable to quantitative measurement.” What is apparent from the above definitions is that qualitative research deals with words and not quantities. Furthermore, qualitative research is concerned with meanings and the interpretation of social phenomena.

In this study, the researcher critically interpreted Ugandan poetry by thematizing resilience as they find expression in Stella Nyanzi's and Suzan Kiguli's poems. Furthermore, this study did not rely on a quantitative presentation of the research findings, but the researcher interpreted the meaning of the data collected by use of content analysis to establish how poets portray resilience in their poetry.

According to Jupp (2006), the nature of qualitative research is such that it emphasizes depth, detail, and interpretation. Furthermore, it is often small-scale or at a micro-level. This entails that the sample in a qualitative study is small. Bui (2014) notes that a small sample gives the researcher the time and opportunity for an extensive interaction with the text being studied. Qualitative research allows the researcher "... to investigate the topic in depth, to interpret the outcomes based on the participants', not the researcher's, perspectives". This was appropriate for this research since all the themes to be raised and analyzed were addressed in the poems under study.

3.3.2 Research Paradigm

The study adopted the interpretivism research paradigm because it helps to understand the subjective world of human experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). It works on the principle that any phenomenon being studied has multiple realities. The epistemology of interpretivism is subjectivism, which holds that both the researcher and the research participants are involved in the knowing process, and the reality is influenced by the context (Nguyen, 2019). There is the understanding that the researcher will construct knowledge socially or through their personal experiences of real life within the natural setting being investigated (Punch, 2005).

The interpretive research paradigm views reality and meaning-making as socially constructed, and it holds that people make their sense of social realities. Interpretive researchers use qualitative research methodologies to investigate, interpret, and describe social realities (Bassey, 1995; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). These methods include textual analysis to interpret characters' perspectives and interpretations. This is the basis of the close reading of Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi's poems.

3.3.3 Data Collection Methods

This study was conducted as a close reading because the researcher used the poetry collections of Stella Nyanzi's *No Roses from My Mouth, Don't Come in My Mouth* and Suzan Kiguli's *The African Saga, Home Floats in The Distance*, to study resilience. According to the Education and Training Unit, close reading refers to seeking facts, general information on a topic, historical background, or study results that have been published or that exist in public documents. In other words, data can be collected without the need for fieldwork. In this study, a literary analysis of Stella Nyanzi's and Suzan Kiguli's poetry was carried out. I also read and analyzed various relevant published sources that were available, to conclude. This included accessing sources in libraries, the internet, websites, and newspaper archives. However, according to Johnston (2014), close reading could also include speaking to someone at a trade association or conducting interviews with experts.

3.4 Procedure for data collection

Findings from the purposively selected poems under study were recorded in a file on the researcher's computer and closely analyzed concerning the set objectives of this study. These findings were then analyzed in light of the theme of resilience using the trauma theory as the theoretical framework on which this study was anchored. The analysis was supported by secondary sources that commented on resilience themes in literature.

3.5 Sampling and sampling techniques

Purposive sampling was used in this study to choose poets of interest based on the knowledge, stake, and experience they have with the particular phenomenon under consideration (Creswell, 2002). The researcher used this technique to select poems that address the theme of resilience and adversity to delve into their linguistic and thematic elements. This further helped to gather data that helped to answer the research questions, leading to the findings advanced by this study. Purposive sampling was used to select poetry collections from the population described above. Therefore, the researcher purposively sampled Suzan Kiguli's *The African Saga, (The Resilient Tree / The*

African Saga) *Home Floats the Distance* (Amin is Dead / Plain Speaking) and Stella Nyanzi's *No Roses from My Mouth*, (Justice Delayed / A Plea for Decongestion), *Don't Come in My Mouth* (My Personal Motivations to Join Politics / Speaking Freedom) to investigate specifically their portrayal of resilience. These poems were selected because they portray characters as struggling to sustain their lives given the unique conditions they face daily. It is the uniqueness of their struggle that feed into the theme of resilience under study.

3.6 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to establish the overriding theme in the poems selected. This was done through examining central ideas and concepts expressed throughout the poems studied. A theme is a main idea or general concern which a poet intends for the reader to realize. In this study, the theme of resilience was noted. Data was analyzed and grouped according to the study's objectives in view of the theme of resilience.

Content analysis was then used whereby the researcher studied words, themes, and concepts in the poems studied. Both explicit and implicit findings were of paramount importance. Explicit terms are those which directly appear in a text while implicit are those terms that are implied by the text. Both explicit and implicit details are a function of diction-a poet's choice of language. This means therefore that language used by both Kiguli and Nyanzi was carefully studied to arrive at the meaning of their poems. The researcher made notes on each of the poems read for comprehension and clarity of choice. She then coded similar or closely similar poems under the same category. Those that aligned by intellect were coded 'a' those that had historical and social leanings were coded 'b', and the third category that expressed characters in mental agony was coded 'C'.

Finally, discourse analysis was done to study the poems and examine language styles and structure used by both poets, concerning the social implication of language, grammar, syntax, and rhetoric thereby arriving at their intent. This analysis further established the power dynamics between characters and their motivations.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

According to Christensen, et al. (2011), the significance of ethical considerations has been emphasized in several studies where the treatment of research participants, the relationship between society and science, as well as professional issues, are the centers of focus. Christensen et al. (2011) further point out that the category of professional issues includes the problem of research misconduct, such as fabricating, falsifying in reviewing research, or reporting research results, and plagiarism. The researcher guarded against fabrication of information, falsifying evidence as well as plagiarism by citing and quoting correctly, as well as acknowledging and referencing all the sources that were consulted. The researcher also obtained ethical clearance from the Research Ethical Committee of Bishop Stuart University, and it was adhered to. To avoid personal biases in the analysis, the researcher reported different perspectives in the analysis of the selected poems, as well as contrary findings, as they were revealed in the poems under study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and an interpretation of the information gathered from the eight poems studied. Data is presented, examined and its implications discussed.

4.2 Forms of resilience addressed

Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi create characters who face hard and painful encounters in varying situations and settings. There are different ways in which characters exhibit resilience in this study that is referred to as forms. In literature, and particularly in this study, forms of resilience refer to the different ways in which characters or scholars demonstrate resilience in literary works. Important to note is that these different forms of resilience occur in both private and public spaces. They include; Intellectual, Psychological, and Historical & cultural resilience as discussed below;

4.2.1 Intellectual resilience

This is a type of resilience where an individual navigates a given challenge because of their mental ability to make timely decisions. An intellectually resilient character can use multiple scientific approaches and concepts in a participative, democratically informed manner (Daniel & Christiane, 2021). This means that a resilient character first of all realizes that they are in a challenge as an initial step because their mental capacity (intelligence) allows them that ability. They then reflect on their situation and come up with particular decisions to help them address those challenges practically. Such decisions are backed by prior planning on the realization that there is a huge need to 'hang in there'. Kiguli and Nyanzi present such characters in their poems; 'The Resilient Tree' and 'My Personal Motivations to Join Politics' respectively.

In Kiguli's poem titled 'The Resilient Tree' the persona notes that her female relations have been suffering untold pain for generations past. She acknowledges what Fridman et al elucidate those unbearable events that tend to be pushed to the margins of consciousness (2011). This is what is defined as the absence or enacted repetitions. She arrests her readers with this initial stanza;

I cannot walk the ways of my mother and her mother before her.

Not because I am not rock enough to endure

The numerous blows from the rough winds

With their urgent urge for control (p. 1)

The title, 'The Resilient Tree' alone gives the reader an idea of the strength of what he is going to read about, literally as that tree that goes through tremendous extremes of sorrow and pain. Despite these extremes, the tree still stands like nothing has shaken it because resilience simply means facing difficulties head-on having dug deep into the reservoirs of one's strength.

Intellectual resilience is witnessed when characters think critically and solve problems. This line points to the persona's resolve to 'productively cope with and grow from challenging ideas' (Parson. 2018). She decides to change the course of things and live differently from the life trodden by her female relations as so close and dear to her as her mother and grandmother. This is because she 'proactively seeks out being confronted with rather than continue believing or worse still, acting on mistaken beliefs.' The two women represent two whole generations that have lived before her, where the women then silently went through life but did not live it because they resigned to their fate. They accepted the fact they were indeed 'rivers' that must 'flow with grace and dignity' regardless of what life had thrown at them.

In 'Cannot' lies the persona's resolve not to take a path trodden by her female relations. Cannot is an auxiliary verb that explains the persona's inability in this case to continue the path trodden by her kin. This introductory line therefore sets the reader's mind on a path of absolute finality and sets him at ease to delve further into a journey of a not-so-familiar yet enchanting path. Kiguli uses such a capturing line as a way of getting the reader hooked by 'The Resilient Tree'. In 'cannot' lies the

persona's ability to hold positive views of herself and her abilities which is a very important characteristic of resilient people. The persona declares;

I cannot walk the ways of my mother and her mother before her

Not because I am not rock enough to endure

The numerous blows from the rough winds

This excerpt shows that the persona is aware of past traumas that her 'her mother and her mother before her' have had to endure. She is aware of the rough winds that will always present themselves in life and that her inability not to take that path which is as familiar to her relations as thunder and lightning shouldn't be misinterpreted as weakness but as an urgent step to rewriting history while she still can.

Kiguli uses diction to clarify the persona's traumatized self. Diction refers to a poet's choice of words to create specific impact to the reader. This specific impact in this case is tone and mood. The word 'cannot' expresses a finality for the persona regarding the walk previously done by her female kin. This persona explains the lifestyle of her female kin before her in clear, simple and sometimes symbolic language. The two women represent two whole generations that have lived before her, where the women then silently went through life but didn't live it because they resigned to their fate and accepted the fact they were indeed 'rivers' that must 'flow with grace and dignity' regardless of what life had thrown at them. Kahyana (2015) asserts that women are depicted as suffering untold suffering and exploitation thereby verbalizing the persona's mind.

Kiguli illustrates the raging storms that go on in this country in the initial line, "I cannot walk the ways of my mother and her mother before her" The poet illustrates the persona's resolve to surmount by breaking camp and moving, to change the course of things and live differently from the life trodden by her female relations as so close and dear to her as her mother and grandmother. The two women represent two whole generations that have lived before her, where the women then silently went through life but didn't live. It is because they resigned to their fate and accepted the fact, they were indeed rivers that must flow with grace and dignity regardless of what life had thrown at them. In 'cannot' lies the persona's resolve not to take a path trodden by her female

relations. This is the reason why the title, ‘The Resilient Tree’ is adequate because the poem captures and expresses the pain that the persona articulates. It is this constant pain that traumatizes the people because they continuously bear witness, ‘to the things that failed to become. ‘In choosing not to walk in their footsteps, the persona acknowledges their resilience in their ability to stand still in the face of fierce storms and blows that life has levied at them. This situation is why Laser defines resilience as a human capacity to take responsibility for sustainability under threat. The image of a river brings out a classic example of how men exploit women to their core and still think that nothing is wrong. Symbols are very important in a work of art because they invoke what is intrinsic to the text by calling on the universal knowledge shared by a particular culture. (Nabukonde, 2012). This stanza reflects Rodriquez’s emphasis on the importance of confronting pain as the starting point of performing genuine resistance and the desire to instigate change. (2023)

Symbolism refers to the use of a concrete object to illustrate an abstract idea. Kiguli deploys the symbol of a tree because symbols relay their message in a way that seems sensibly most appealing to the readers (Nabukonde, 2012). Such a symbol of a tree is appealing because it demonstrates clearly and visibly its reaction when faced with diverse situations. It never shifts location or changes size and shape in the face of adversity like, ‘blows from the rough winds’ This ‘tree symbolizes the resilience rooted in one’s heritage and history, providing a sense of stability and endurance. (Namakula, 2017) She uses symbolism to capture the somber mood at the grave.

The grave in this poem symbolizes the heartache and sorrow that the persona has had to grapple with ever since she lost her parents. It also embodies the major theme of this poem which is death thereby intimating to the reader the setting of the poem. Kiguli further employs figurative language in form of a metaphor to bring out the medicinal quality of this woman;

That a woman, a black woman is a bottle brush

Whose attraction lies in her tears

Whose grace is in her bending

Whose red flowers are a source of strength

To all. (p.2)

Kiguli compares the black woman to a bottle brush to bring out her ability to always provide solutions, a way out in solving life challenges just like the bottle brush which provides medicine to the sick whenever the need arises. The third line reminds us of how graceful this woman is to the extent of 'bending to let the winds and storms pass' without ever fighting back, not that she lacks the strength to hit back but that she doesn't consider it a great move. This tree's ability to produce 'red flowers' mainly to give others strength demonstrates the generous and kind nature of women.

The fourth stanza points to generational/cyclic transmission of the norms of what a black woman is or should be. This is a sad tale of hegemony where women actively train the younger girls /generation in lessons of how they ought to behave if they become women. This is a sad way of causing young girls to emulate their 'uncritical loyalty to patriarchal norms and practices' (Kahyana. 2015.p.4) In as much as they do this core devotedly, they do not seem to realize that they are responsible for the misery they wallow in which only points to resignation on their part

The fifth stanza delves deeper into the qualities of this resilient tree with particular reference to its parts. That it will watch her fruits drop/ and rot on the ground then she will cover them/ with deliberate strength / nurturing other fruits season by season. In facing such hardships of having to bloom but also watching in desperation as the ripened fruits drop off must take an emotional regulator for one to remain sane and deep real deep to gather deliberate strength with which to go forth and nature more fruit just having covered the rotting ones on the ground. This situation resonates with Tibaijuka Kyoairwe Ateenyi's poem titled 'The Tree' in *Uganda Poetry Anthology 2000* where the first stanza reads;

Leaves are falling

Branches are creaking

The tree is swaying (p.131)

This stanza explains what happens when the status quo changes. For example, when the season is so dry and windy, the leaves have to fall off the branches to make way for the next season when new ones will sprout. The branches 'creaking' imply that things are not going on as usual. The emotion

that the branches have to go through are so intense that only an emotion regulator can keep them in check.

Resilience here comes out in the ability to regulate one's emotions enough to be in a position to go forth and nurture more fruit with the utmost optimism. This tree's ability to spread out its branches to comfort all kinds of birds is only a demonstration of the courage and strength exhibited by women, particularly after the loss of a husband or a child. Such confidence born both during and after adversity can only express the generous nature exhibited by women.

In the second part of this poem, the persona takes a deliberate journey to self-realization and discovery about who she is in line with her people and the effects of the colonizers; on who she has become. She decides not to let, 'existing beliefs get in the way of discovering new truths. And so with, 'genuine curiosity and inquisitiveness' (Parson, 2018), she asserts;

Now

I am making a journey

Climbing the hills and descending the slopes

Resting in and outside the valleys of my soul.

I am finding out about myself

Seeking to know me

I am trudging this lonely path

Away from stately highways. (p.2)

'Now' is used in opening this stanza to bring out the idea of urgency as far as changing the narrative is concerned. The persona's ability to 'calmly and rationally look at a problem and envision a successful solution' makes her a resilient character who has problem-solving skills at her fingertips and knows when to weigh in and set the record straight. 'Problem-solving is a healthy coping skill which is required to foster strength and growth compared to her 'mother and her mother before her' who "dwell on their problems and use unhelpful coping mechanisms" like lamentation and

resignation ‘to deal with life challenges’ (Kendra, 2021). The unhelpful coping mechanisms do not help the previous generations as nothing new or better is brought forth for applause.

This persona’s journey on uneven ground in “climbing the hills and descending the slopes/Resting in and outside the valleys of my soul” brings out other unique characteristics of resilience which include “possessing the capacity to make realistic plans and sticking to them” which is deciding to discover who she is in this particular case before proceeding with her grand plan of rewriting history having viewed herself as a fighter rather than a victim.

This assertion therefore devalues the “mother and her mother” perspective as she intends to solve, ‘problems and improve a lot of them all leaving no room for the persona’s perspective to be unwrapped onto the center stage (Parson, 2018). This persona can calmly rationalize and look at the problem in her tradition (irrespective of the fact that this tradition has broken the women in her life) to the point of envisioning a successful solution that makes her stand out as a resilient person. The person exhibits adaptability as she changes her perspective from what used to be, to what she would like to see happen and perseveres in how she handles her resolve for new beginnings.

Her choice is to begin a new life for the female kin after she explains the quote that ‘if you never heal from what hurt you, you’ll bleed on people who didn’t cut you (Tamar, 2021). I reflect that the persona makes this decision so that in the future she does not suffer from failure to be understood by the generations after hers. This fear is born from the understanding that she could fail to fit in then, because of her lifestyle thus, ‘bleeding’ on those people that were not in charge of how she turned out to be. It is against such background that Kahyana elaborates those creative arts do not only entertain but also provide human beings with messages of resilience. (2021)

Konnikova (2016) in her article titled ‘How People Learn to Become Resilient’ elucidates that “if you are lucky enough never to experience any sort of adversity, we won’t know how resilient you are”. It’s only when you are faced with obstacles, stress, and other environmental threats that resilience or the lack of it emerges. Do you succumb or surmount?’ The opening line, “I cannot walk the ways of my mother and her mother before her” points to the persona’s resolve to surmount by breaking camp and moving, to change the course of things and live differently from the life trodden by her female relations as so close and dear to her as her mother and grandmother.

The two women represent two whole generations that have lived before her, where the women then silently went through life but didn't live it. This is because they resigned to their fate and accepted the fact, they were indeed rivers that must flow with grace and dignity regardless of what life had thrown at them. In 'cannot' lies the persona's resolve not to take a path trodden by her female relations.

In the second stanza, the injustices meted on this woman are well elaborated thus;

*A woman, a black woman is a tree
That will stand rain in all its shades
Will receive showers, storms, and hurricanes
And still hold out by the roots
A tree that will hold out by the roots.
A tree that will look into the face of the furious sun
And watch him gulp the little water
She painfully sucks from the deepest waterbed. (P.1)*

The persona here expresses how she received 'multiple strong stressors at vulnerable points. This stanza illustrates Shahid et al and their reflection on Bell Hook's portrayal of strength and how it overshadows experiences of exploitation and oppression (2017). In her attempt to 'frame marginality as a space for resistance, and innovation, Hooks empowers individuals to navigate systematic challenges and assert their agency in the fate of adversity' which the persona takes by the horns in this poem.

The image of seasons/ weather as used by Kiguli is to practically bring out the harsh conditions endured by women throughout their lifetime. The impact of showers, storms, and hurricanes is just too much to bear but the rocky material that she is made of enables her to hang on, to withstand such harsh conditions. This image helps the reader to understand the extremes of the seasons versus the women's resolve to hang in there even in the worst of times even if that means 'sucking in from deep within oneself rather painfully' for the sake of survival. This line from the poem means to

elaborate the traumatic act which the Resilient Tree goes through and the associated stress. It is such a scenario that prompts Caruth to coin the concept that, 'Trauma is hidden but alive.' This second stanza elaborates the reality of hidden trauma as a result of, 'showers, storms and hurricanes' hitting this black woman, 'And still hold out by the roots.' (p.1). It is the presence of trauma that makes the sun, 'furious' a condition that necessitates this tree to 'gulp the little water' so 'painfully' as the source is rather deep. 'Gulp' is a verb that implies a strong emotion prompted by anxiety as the sun continues to hit hard, draining the water bed further. This prompts the tree to quickly swallow large amounts of water. Such a situation is what Judith Herman refers to as situational trauma in her paper titled, 'Atrocities refuse to be buried' (1992).

The third stanza describes a woman who has chosen other means of survival, not just losing the will to live and embrace death.

The woman is a tree

That would change by season than rather die

This woman is a tree that would bend

Under the weight of leaves

Rather than run away and die (P.1)

This stanza explains Hook's insights that 'systems of power, domination, and oppression work in such a way that marginalized people speak back and find ways to resist, to transform their reality, to not just survive but to thrive, to live fully in a world that seeks to marginalize them.' (1984) 'Bend' is a verb that implies having to turn in a certain direction. This for the persona means turning in a way that enables the wind to pass gently so that the Resilient Tree doesn't get to shed all the leaves at the same time, making it hard to thrive.

This is a nuanced understanding of how individuals, from marginalized backgrounds, navigate hardships, cultivate relational strength, and resist oppressive structures which read resilience in this stanza. 'Change' is an active verb that illustrate the extreme movement that attracts discomfort for the persona. Hook's insights underscore the interrelatedness of resilience with issues of identity, power, and social change, which in their totality encourage readers to 'embrace resilience as a tool

for personal and collective empowerment. What Hooks means to say here is that a resilient individual's self-resolve and worth has everything necessary to positively impact others to collectively cause the changes they desire to see in their communities including tearing down oppressive structures in life. This stanza expounds on the adaptive nature of women which should not be confused for weakness but as a stepping stone towards navigation of systematic challenges.

The fifth stanza delves deeper into the qualities of this resilient tree with particular reference to its parts. That she will watch her fruits drop and rot on the ground then she will cover them with deliberate strength nurturing other fruits season by season. In facing such hardships of having to bloom but also watching in desperation as the ripened fruits drop off must take an emotional regulator for one to remain sane and real to gather deliberate strength with which to go forth and nature more fruit just having covered the rotting ones on the ground.

Resilience here comes out in the ability to regulate one's emotions enough to be in a position to go forth and nurture more fruit with the utmost optimism. Kiguli uses this metaphor of a tree;

That a woman is a resilient tree

That will watch her fruits drop

And rot on the ground then she will cover them

With deliberate strength

Nurturing other fruits season by season. (p.2)

'Her fruits' symbolically illustrate this woman's offspring strength exhibited by women and how much selflessness they exercise to raise them to fruition despite the harsh weather conditions changes. The act of covering the rotten fruits on the ground is an act of making peace with those departed in preparation for those yet to come. This readiness to move on with life despite the rude and painful encounters makes this woman exceptional. This tree's ability to spread out its branches to comfort all kinds of birds is only a demonstration of the courage and strength exhibited by

women, particularly after the loss of children. Such confidence born during and after adversity can only express the generous and resilient nature exhibited by women. This resonates with Dalia, a female character whom Arooj Waheed (2021) reflects on in her work titled 'Trauma as a drive for survival'. Dalia is a mother to the protagonist Amal. She loses her son to a Jewish soldier who abducts him as they transition from their village to a refugee settlement in Jenin. The aftermath sees her transition from a fun loving, contended and sober wife to a silent and reflective midwife in that settlement. She actively plays midwife, a role she does devotedly. Her pass time is put to looking after her grapevines in motionless postures. She is quick to rescue people whenever a war erupts which earns her, her daughter's admiration as she refers to her as, 'the bravest protector of life.'

Dalia, just like The Resilient Tree, "appears psychologically wounded, robbed of any chance to be happy again under the trance of irreversible damage" yet moves her traumatized self in ways that are admirable by even her daughter Amal. Her son's disappearance is a wound that I equate to the nurtured fruits falling off the tree one by one in this poem. It is 'an adamant drive' that keeps Dalia, the 'introvert and silent mother deliberate and brave' as she hangs on. This drive is what keeps the tree 'with deliberate strength' even after her fruit are rotting. In this study, this 'adamant drive' is referred to as resilience. This tree nurtures other fruits season by season which Dalia does by continually helping pregnant mothers give birth without ever complaining. Both acts of saving lives are a daily reminder that 'traumatic experiences can work in multiple ways. While a traumatized person may never think of being helpful or even happy, their actions speak otherwise as they continue to 'protect and facilitate life with courage and responsibility'

As the tree shelters 'all kinds of birds' so does Dalia in the camp that has become home for her and many other survivors. I read from these actions that they both, 'pay homage by safeguarding the very life that has probably been denied to'; the fruits that both dry and rot and 'her son and many others among her people'. The tree protects its fruits by covering them in repetitive episodes as per the extreme seasons that affect them just like Dalia who keeps nourishing the lives of the plants in her solitude as well as 'reliving the memories of giving birth and lives, again and again by living the role of a savior for both the mother and the child. As a nurturer, the resilient tree even offers its' numerous branches / for all kinds of birds/ to twitter and sing thereby 'protecting life in its every possible manifestation'. Waheed's work brings an important insight to this study; that the 'relationship between reverberation of past traumas and the repetition of similar responses' is only

possible when Dalia's 'adamant drive' (here termed resilience) is engaged by the character, whether knowingly or unknowingly. This crystallizes Sontag's realization that violence can exalt someone subjected to it into a martyr or a hero (2003).

As the persona takes a deliberate journey to self-realization, 'resting in and outside the valley' of her soul, she is to herself and thus silent. Dalia 'makes no use of words to share her grief' and resorts to positioning her body before her grapevines. The silence in both cases attests to Waheed's insight that a 'traumatic experience leaves permanent marks on one's psyche and the victim shows the sign of emotional shock either in terms of reduced communication or a total lack of speech. Resilience lies in such characters choosing to be silent as they deal with the pain of loss.

Sontag asserts that strong emotions can become transient ones (2003). "Transient" is an adjective of time that refers to impermanence, implying that something changes in this case, the strong emotions at play are temporal. She reminds us that compassion is an unstable emotion so it needs to be translated into action, or it dies. She illustrates this in a metaphor of a reader forgetting the emotions aroused previously in a book as soon as it is closed. This means that the reader is encouraged to go beyond being understanding to rally support for such a character who finds herself in a generational web before that mind gets overtaken by other events.

This persona's journey on uneven ground in "climbing the hills and descending the slopes /Resting in and outside the valleys of my soul" brings out other unique forms of resilience which include "possessing the capacity to make realistic plans and sticking to them" which is deciding to discover who she is in this particular case before proceeding with her grand plan of rewriting history, having viewed herself as a fighter rather than a victim. This assertion therefore devalues "mother and her mother" leaving room for the persona's perspective to be unwrapped onto center stage. This is brought out in the second stanza of part two when she discovers that;

I am a slave of a foreign tongue

I speak about myself and my own

In a language of distant lands

I am a treasonous traveler

A dumb child among my own folks

This tongue betrays me (p.2)

The impact of colonialism makes her, a child who cannot communicate with her people the numerous ideas on her mind, “That demand expression” which has sadly left her a sad and isolated person – self as an island. This state stirs a bitter-sweet feeling (a blend of sadness and happiness) within the being of this persona which resonates with Chinua Achebe’s realization in his 1964 speech entitled “The African Writer and the English Language” he asks:

Is it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else’s?

It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces -: a guilty feeling.

(p.5)

Ngugi (1986) notes a paradox: the possibility, of using their mother- tongue provokes a tone of levity in phrases like a ‘dreadful betrayal’ and ‘a guilty feeling’; But that of foreign languages produces a categorical, positive embrace, what Achebe himself, ten years later, was to describe as this ‘fatalistic logic of the unassailable position of English in our literature (Achebe, 1986). Just like Achebe, the persona feels that her failure to speak the language of her people amounts to utmost betrayal, a slave of a foreign tongue’ yet on the other hand, she feels an overwhelming sense of urgency to launch a revolution as the only way to ‘...weave freedom in the clouds’. This can only be done by acquisition of the Western language, the language of use, ‘for it is best to make the borrowed languages carry the weight of our African experience.’ The word ‘weight’ is used in this context to mean the different experiences particularly those which break the will of the African woman and make her seem almost inhuman compared to her male counterpart. The persona’s ability to regulate her emotions and the willingness to break the chains that bind her people so grounded in tradition, irrespective of what repercussions she may face makes her an extremely resilient person.

This journey helps her to understand the alienating effect of the English language as propagated in Umuofia by missionaries on herself as she constantly feels isolated and left out by her people because she has lost her grasp of the language of her to discover who she is, having found her

mouth and “listened to her talk”. The impact of the effects of colonialism is so deep that she continues to suffer from them to the extent of having to struggle with her identity long after independence. “A dumb child among my own folks” is a demonstration of the colonizer’s ability to displace an indigenous language as elaborated well by Chinua Achebe in his debut novel *Things Fall apart*.

Language has an infinite number of possibilities which includes displacing an existing language to ground itself as a seemingly superior one. This is evident in the novel *Things Fall Apart* where an Igbo speaker learns the “language of the Western people” as language constantly finds itself adapting to changes and facing rebirth in a new land of Umuofia or even suffering the extinction of a lost tongue in a way that the speaker can no longer express herself in the language of her people-Igbo because her tongue can no longer blow it out. (Chomsky, 1979 P. 16)

This extinction of the speaker’s tongue is caused by the speaker’s choices like going to school to acquire an education which is conducted in the Western language, leaving the speaker with no choice but to acquire it. Ngugi (1994) upon entry into Kamaandura Missionary School, Kenya notes that; ‘The language of my education was no longer the language of my culture’ His culture was carried by his native language –Gikuyu which he appreciates because of its, ‘suggestive power beyond the immediate and lexical meaning’ This quality causes him to reminisce daily as he refers to the Gikuyu language- the language of the Limuru peasant community as the ‘ language of our immediate and wider community, and the language of our work in –fields.’) (1979, p.11)

Just like the persona in the poem, Ngugi goes about his studies with English which became the language of his formal education and ‘was *the* language and all others had to bow before it in defense.’ Ngugi shares a trait with the persona- being a traitor. He, along with other children have to witch-hunt fellow children who speak their mother tongue at school because their language must bow to ‘*the* language’ of use. This situation prompts a view that their mother tongue is useless and inferior and subsequently, ought to be discarded to create room for English- ‘The official vehicle.’ Such a decision which initially looks harmless ends up being the last straw that breaks the persona’s tongue as she painfully realizes that she has become that dumb child among her people having realized that her inability to speak their language has isolated her yet she does not feel comfortable even with the new language she has acquired.

Ngugi continues to note that language is a culture as well as history, so not using it makes the persona 'naked' to the outside world as they shade off both garments inseparable from humanity. It is this realization that prompts this persona to think through the circumstances of her people and herself so reflectively which sends the "Goliath" in her "rumbling" (line 5, stanza 10) as she questions those traditions which have so unfairly claimed to "know the mind of a woman" (line 7, stanza 10). This persona can calmly rationalize and look at the problem in her tradition (irrespective of the fact that this tradition has broken the women in her life) to the point of envisioning a successful solution which makes her stand out as a resilient person.

Maria Konnikova (2016) in her article titled 'How People Learn to Become Resilient' says that if you are lucky enough never to experience any sort of adversity, we won't know how resilient you are. It's only when you are faced with obstacles, stress, and other environmental threats that resilience or the lack of it emerges. 'Do you succumb or surmount?' she asks. This persona decides to surmount by 'exploring the surface and depth of me' and making a turnaround, to 'threaten the self-appointed/ pillars of this world'-the colonial masters along with the patriarchs that, 'know the mind of woman'

The image of a river is also deployed to demonstrate the fluid nature of women who in as much as they are faced with countless challenges, problems, and ridicule are still expected to act normal with 'dignity and grace' despite the raging storms on the inside of them. The irony here is how a river so contaminated with all manner of dirt in the form of fecal matter and all manner of rubbish manages to flow freely and still support lives.

This situation is why Svend Erik Laser defines resilience as a human capacity to take responsibility for sustainability under threat. The image of a river brings out this example of how men exploit women to their core and still think that nothing is wrong. Symbols are very important in a work of art because they invoke what is intrinsic to the text by calling on the universal knowledge shared by a particular culture (Nabukonde, 2012). The image of horror in the mind makes one feel 'irrevocably grieved and wounded but part of the feelings simply tightens as something on the inside is crying, making trauma a rude encounter (Kiplan, 2005).

In the second stanza, the injustices meted out to this woman are well elaborated thus;

*A woman, a black woman is a tree
That will stand rain in all its shades
Will receive showers, storms, and hurricanes
And still hold out by the roots
A tree that will hold out by the roots.
A tree that will look into the face of the furious sun
And watch him gulp the little water
She painfully sucks from the deepest waterbed.*

(p.1)

This stanza illustrates Colin and Hanna's (2020) definition of trauma as a psychological injury, lasting damage done to individuals or communities by tragic events or severe distress. They note that, 'trauma has emerged as a social discourse that has a strong moral significance'. This implies that harsh conditions experienced by women in this context leave them with pain with resultant lessons. One would argue that these lessons learnt are not impactful considering the fact that the circumstances under which these women live do not get to change. This is because, 'hardships do not necessarily make us better.' (Greitens, 2024) On reflection, the circumstances do not change because 'moving through the hardship' is in itself a phase in the road to resilience that anyone attains only when they are resilient.

This image of seasons is used by Kiguli to practically bring out the harsh conditions endured by women throughout their lifetime. The impact of 'showers, storms, and hurricanes' is just too much to bear but the rocky material that they are made of enables her to hang on, to withstand such harsh conditions. This situation is what Zam Namakula refers to in her thesis as a 'position of marginality.' This image helps the reader to understand the extremes of the seasons versus the women's resolve to hang in there even in the worst of times even if that means sucking in from deep within oneself rather painfully for the sake of survival. It is such a scenario that prompts Caruth to coin the concept that, 'Trauma is hidden but alive.'

This second stanza elaborates on the reality of hidden trauma as a result of, ‘showers, storms and hurricanes’ hitting this black woman, ‘And still hold out by the roots.’(pg.1)1) It is the presence of trauma that makes the sun, ‘furious’ a condition that necessitates this tree to ‘gulp the little water’ so ‘painfully’ as the source is rather deep. This is what Judith Herman refers to as situational trauma in her paper titled, ‘Atrocities refuse to be buried’ (1992)

The third stanza describes a woman who has chosen other means of survival and just losing the will to live and embrace death.

The woman is a tree

That would change by season than rather die

This woman is a tree that would bend

Under the weight of leaves

Rather than run away and die (p. 1)

The stanza above elaborates the use of repetition- in the line, ‘*woman is a tree*’ that appears twice. This is so, because the poet uses it as a literary device to emphasize her strength in the face of even death. Vladimirovna, E et al (2018) recognize that repetition is a natural stimulus to the brain. This means therefore, that poets use it often to provide specific effect on readers long before ‘suggestions’ about a subject are made.

The persona’s ability to regulate her emotions and the willingness to break the chains that bind her people so grounded in tradition irrespective of what repercussions she may face, making her an extremely resilient person. This persona can calmly rationalize and look at the problem in her tradition (irrespective of the fact that this tradition has broken the women in her life) to the point of envisioning a successful solution which makes her stand out as a resilient person.

This is clear when in the 7th and 8th stanzas, the persona notices that in speaking ‘a language of the distant lands’, she has become a ‘dumb child’ among her people causing her ideas to remain in her head even though they ‘demand expression’. This theory also focuses on attempts made by formerly colonized to reassert the identities they wish to claim for themselves. The persona sets out on a

mission backed by a desire to break the tradition that sets up women to suffer at the hands of men in the name of submissiveness because she has been taught to embrace all manner of pain, insult, and ridicule to be termed as one who is as strong as ‘a rock’

While we all want to move beyond trauma and be resilient, leaving behind the pain and memory of heartache, the part of the brain responsible for our survival is not good at denial. This is because it is reactivated at the slightest hint of danger, long after the traumatic experience has passed. As readers of these works, therefore, we should be aware that unpleasant emotions, intense physical sensations, and impulsive to aggressive actions are all signs of quick and unprecedented encounters with trauma. As such, trauma survivors often feel that they are damaged to the core and beyond redemption. (Bessel & Van der, 2014). This calls every responsive person whether primarily or secondary traumatized to engage with those who choose to work through the road of resilience with loads of empathy and consideration

Nyanzi demonstrates intellectual resilience in her poetry collections. This is a type of resilience where an individual exercises mental flexibility during difficult and challenging times. Critical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving skills are engaged during tough times. Her poem titled, ‘My Personal Motivations to Join Politics’ is from her second poetry collection titled *Don’t Come in My Mouth*. In this poem, the persona reflects on her loss of both parents, previously civil servants in her home country. The act of reflecting is a deliberate move on her side as she is in total pain and would ideally care less about the events proceeding to their demise. Continually she clarifies the reason behind her decision to join politics as;

The anguish of losing my father

The unending longing for a mother resting in power (p.26)

‘Anguish’ is a noun that expresses deep pain, distress, and anxiety, born out of physical or mental suffering episodes. For this persona, her anguish is born out of both physical as she loses both her parents and mental because they die undue deaths caused by ill health facilities. ‘Longing’ on the other hand is how this character expresses her craving for the mother and is quick to reassure self by honoring her for having nursed thousands in her practice as a social worker yet does not get social rescue when she needs it the most. These feelings come up only when the persona says ‘I think’. Thinking involves reasoning of one’s status quo and validating self-regarding her recent loss and

acceptance. This step in the right direction constitutes a healthy coping mechanism on her part. This is because while she takes part in politics, she uses that space to address and engage in national concerns as her way of solving the problems at hand. She further explains;

I joined politics to change national budgeting priorities from bullets to medicines

I joined politics so that no more daughters would unnecessarily grieve their dead daddies. (p.26)

This persona makes immediate decisions regarding her life choices. Her choice of making such realistic plans and sticking to them makes her an intellectually resilient character. These two lines demonstrate the persona's willingness to 'create experiences that create value for everyone involved even when she doesn't know those 'daughters' who are yet to lose their 'daddies'. (Parson. 2018). Parson notes that intellectually resilient people are 'not born but made'. This means that such people find themselves in a situation(s) that require(s) them to make pertinent decisions regarding their status with a mind of providing solutions to other people in the long run.

For Nyanzi, it took the death of both her parents to join politics in a bid to stop more daughters from suffering the anguish of losing their parents. Her intellect makes her not only yearn for change but also be the change she desires to see. By speaking to those in authority, she continually reminds them of the ideals of good governance that includes relevant health care and all. That particular situation pushes the personae to long even for her mother who is gone.

It is in such circumstances that Hazelwood (2023) quotes Hook's work titled *Yearning* where he extends discussions on vulnerability and perseverance, highlighting how practices of love, healing, and hope sustain individuals in their pursuit of resilience. In a way, this persona begins a journey to self-discovery as she begins to execute plans and take on roles, she previously wouldn't have thought possible on her part. She realizes that she could be the voice that everyone else has been waiting for, to hope again.

This is evidenced by the line "I joined politics to change national budgeting priorities from bullets to medicines" This statement situates Reyzabal's conviction that literary writing is a process of continuous reformation more than a brilliant product of a 'moment of ecstasy' (2014). I understand it to mean that a poet like Nyanzi does not write such a poem out of pleasure or happiness but that she does so intending to help the government reflect on its latest priorities for example procuring so many bullets instead of medicines that help to ensure a healthy population. To reform is to make

changes for improvement. In issues of governance, to reform is to make pertinent changes in policies for the effectiveness of service delivery which Nyanzi labors to elaborate in this poem.

The persona echoes another undoing with the current government as poor health care in the country. The persona painfully trudges the journey that she went through with his sick father- a retired medical doctor and mother- a retired social worker. The ‘anguish of losing’ her ‘father’ ‘looking for a vial of medicine/ in a land of many, many, many rounds of bullets.’ being the reason for joining politics illustrates a pained populace.

A people/ leader who joined the liberation struggle because of having gone through and endured so much heartache in turn handed down the same pain to the citizens. Pain spills over from the private fate of losing one’s parents, previously active civil servants in a country that rewards them with an ill-stocked health system that can’t reward them with a bare minimum of life’s basic needs in the form of, ‘a vial of medicine’ as well as, ‘an ambulance’ to save her father and mother respectively from their deaths.

The question then is how to offer therapy to trauma without being traumatized by the exposure. Such pain calls for the navigation of system challenges to understand the situations at hand in a bid to change them for the better. Additionally, this persona joined politics so that, ‘no more daughters would unnecessarily grieve their dead daddies’. The word ‘unnecessarily’ implies a death that would have been ideally saved but wasn’t. This poem illustrates ‘testimony’, a tenet of trauma theory which is the art of bearing witness to one’s traumatic past by sharing it with others. Nyanzi, the persona here understands that testimony, a way of bearing historical responsibility is her way of capturing, the ‘things that failed to become’ so much so that the generations upcoming could understand the extent of trauma that she along with other citizens have had to go through. ‘Having to go through’ implies a people who have had to suffer through a rough patch. That situation is captured by a single word called resilience, the theme underpinning this study.

This situation elaborates what Laub means when he explains testimony as a “realization that the lost ones are not coming back, the realization that what life is all about is precisely living with an unfulfilled hope, only this time with a sense that you are not alone any longer, that someone can be there as your companion, knowing you, living with you, through the unfulfilled hope” (2009). This situation prompts the reader to pity the persona. This is the reason why creative arts do not only

entertain but also provide human beings with messages of resilience that are wrapped up in different characters' lives as depicted by such a poem under study. This is because poetic explorations focus on the individual's experiences, especially sufferers' experiences, and describe the strength of the oft-ignored people in the whirlwind of time (Kahyana, 2023). This whirlwind in this poem is the death epidemic.

According to Sontag (2003), pity is considered to be the emotion that we owe only to those enduring undeserved misfortune. The misfortune here is the loss of the persona's parents in a row, causing devastation. The persona shows acceptance that her parents are dead and gone forever. Forever in this context does not suggest that it is well with her. Rather, it explains that she will never be able to set her eyes on them again. It is a finality that she contends with daily. This study invites us to go beyond pity and reach out to those struggling with traumatic situations at hand, helping them to steady their gaze on resilience options.

'August is still a difficult month' Nyanzi cries. This lamentation is from the backdrop that her father died on 9th August 2014 and her mother on 10th August 2015. Khali's comment on such a traumatic cry is a reflection on Bell Hooks who explains; 'When you hear the broken voice, you also hear the pain contained within that brokenness' (2020). I read from this reflection and the persona's cry, a feeling of brokenness that is born out of so much loss that leaves the persona emotionally shuttered.

The poet uses lamentation as a literary device. Her motive is to enact emotional responses from readers, resulting from the harsh realities faced by individuals, both at personal and communal levels. The reader is set on an interface with anguish and the urgent need for resilience especially for those people who continually mourn in their varying circumstantial losses.

The persona emphasizes that this double loss is her reason for hating the sitting 'dictatorship that murdered both her parents through decrepit health systems'. Albert Einstein's famous quote says that there is only one way to true human greatness; the road through suffering. This is so because greatness is not necessarily achieved by smooth success but rather, by how one navigates traumatic experiences and bounces back to even impact humanity. In Nyanzi's case, she rallies solidarity among those people affected by the politics of her land. She implies that 'something' like resilience 'cannot be acquired quickly' as it needs time as a resource for its payment. So, in the suffering

phase lies the time to digest, analyze, and synthesize the situation just like Nyanzi does. Resilience takes longer to endure pain and in turn, that pain into wisdom.

In writing such a poem, Nyanzi brings to mind what Sontag observes: ‘There is beauty in ruins’ (2003). It is because of the ruin caused by the loss of her parents that Nyanzi rises to do something so that other people don’t go through the same challenges she has had to endure. What this poem does for her and all readers is to open up conversations about what people are enduring in their different walks of life. She in her own right calls upon her readers to hear out patients and participate in action to change that which would wound again.

Another reason for this closure is to rally solidarity for the resilient people not to remain in what Felman & Laub (1992) refer to as a ‘dilemma about an individual’s tendency to refuse to acknowledge such atrocities and a will to proclaim them aloud’. The persona in this poem bears witness according to Caruth because ‘survivors carry the guilt of responsibility with enormous therapeutic value.’ To bear witness therefore is to pay the price for one’s eventual well-being and sanity by, ‘becoming a very central agent for reintegration of the self.’

According to Berry (2008), memories are hard to escape because the separation is an indelible experience that haunts one for memories to come. This is why Susan Brown says that the best trauma narrative she knows is aftermath since violence does not vanish immediately and the self is hard to remake. ‘The ghosts of those departed not only refused to die but, in some cases, have been continually resurrected inspiring a circle of violent repetition.’ The pain lessens because she is now able to speak about the traumatic encounter of her loss even though the scar left behind by the wound of her loss, will never be erased. After all, it is in the mind.

Her journey as a survivor and wounded storyteller is from ‘fragmentation to wholeness, even when the whole is marked by the struggle of loss.’ This is why she aims to integrate personal experiences and beliefs, to create a space in the world where her truths can be heard. She goes ahead to create this space by penning her poetry collections, two of which are informing the discussion in this study. Kahyana in his paper titled, “Singing against the State’s Guns and Goons” reflects on Timothy Wangusa’s poetry and notices many odds including the fact that leaders in the post colony use, ‘politics as a work of death’ (2024, p.3). Simply put, politicians embody the license to kill at

will, as evidenced by the discussion above. What do we do then in such post-independence uncertainty?

Sontag (2003) further calls us to set aside the sympathy we extend to others beset by war and murderous politics for a reflection on how privileges are located on the same map as their suffering. In some way, we might prefer not to imagine being linked to their suffering, as the wealth of some implies the destitution of others. This implies that while the privileged people may never die out of ‘lack of a vial of medicine’ or ‘an ambulance’, because their positions in government allow them the luxury of a standby health facility as previously planned, the same system under looks the other category- the less privileged and therefore never plans their survival thus the implication of ‘murderous politics’.

When Uganda’s *Daily Monitor* (Wed, September 26, 2018) ran an article with a screaming title, ‘Government bans ministers’ treatment abroad’, many Ugandans had a sigh of relief, thinking the less-privileged would this time round benefit from this announcement. That hope was nipped in the bud when the actual story encouraged that privileged class to seek health services ‘from a private hi-tech facility at Lubowa on Entebbe Road owned by an Italian-based Finasi company chaired by Ms. Enrica Pinetti. The irony was in President Museveni’s worry of donating so much money to the western countries instead of keeping it in land yet the company in question was Italian most likely in such a deal to accumulate money and develop his homeland back home. It is this ‘traumatizing shock of a commonly occurring violence’ in the form of loss in all fronts (loss of lives, money to rebuild systems) that prompts Nyanzi to ‘bear witness’ a tenet of trauma theory as her way of giving a ‘voice’ to her ‘wound’ (Caruth.1996).

Such sad scenarios are what prompt Sontag to ask us to go beyond sympathizing with those hurt by such politics and create debates that question the position of the poor on the national ‘map’. ‘Historical and cultural trauma explores events from the margins of history and probes politics of power and cultural hegemony’ thereby implying resilience in the characters depicted. (Sree. 2019)

Nyanzi equally employs diction to make herself clear about the state of affairs in Uganda. She switches between polite and clear language and impolite language which her critics call vulgar/ obscene/ lewd/lascivious/ indecent. She was imprisoned in 2020 on orders by the state that ‘the language she used was vulgar and aimed to ridicule the president.’ she was in prison because of

violating the Computer Misuse Act'. Politely, she says that she joined politics so that 'no more daughters would unnecessarily mourn their missing mothers.' 'Unnecessarily mourn' implies that certain deaths are preventable.

Sasha (2023) states that articulation is a source of catharsis for victims which the two poets labor to do. So, in bearing testimony, Nyanzi lights a torch on the issues that lead to 'unnecessary' deaths so that they can be stopped. This is a core function of testimony, a tenet of trauma theory. Ellisa (2006) notes that the urgent claim of this tenet is to show that even though we do not 'recover' from our traumatic past, nor can we 'cure' it, or even fully understand it, we can and we must *listen* to it and *survive* by listening to its effects as they are transmitted to us through the voices of its witnesses and survivors. Nyanzi therefore uses clear and relevant words to help the reader 'listen' to her ordeal and construct ways of surviving because of it (Katie, 2022). She touches her past not for the mere fun of it but to exhibit acceptance that her parents are gone and sadly for her, forever.

Secondly, Nyanzi uses the first person singular – 'I' to initially emphasize who the persona is and secondly, to emphasize that she, 'is directly affected because her people are part of the struggle for resilience. (Namakula, 2017). The use of this singular form therefore helps to emphasize the emotions behind the diction used as well as helping the reader to appreciate various styles of writing at hand. She also uses this singular address to create a stairway for readers to easily access her thoughts and feelings regarding her loss. This is because this singular gaze brings personal emotions regarding the character's life to the fore, creating an intimate encounter with the reader.

Nyanzi, just like Kiguli uses symbolism which further refers to the use of concrete objects to illustrate an abstract idea. The grave in this poem symbolizes the pain of loss coupled with heartache and sorrow that the persona has had to grapple with ever since she lost her parents. It also embodies the major theme of this poem which is death thereby intimating to the reader the setting of the poem. Besides that, this symbol of the grave also helps the reader to realize the persona's accurate memory as far as the construction of the events of her parents' death is concerned.

Sree (2019) notes that Trauma theory is a discourse of the unrepresentable, a discourse of the event or object that destabilizes language, consciousness, and perception. He goes ahead to reflect on Freud who says that an overpowering event, unacceptable to consciousness, can be forgotten and yet return in the form of somatic symptoms or compulsive, repetitive behaviors. This is the heart of

fragmentation as a tenet of trauma theory. This implies then that fragmentation goes hand in hand with repetition as the latter serves as a symptom of the former. Nyanzi's work bears marks of fragmentation as evidenced in the repetitions of the lines, 'I joined/ He died/ She died' as the persona struggles to perceive her loss.

Nassurah Mambrol (2018) places a critical emphasis on trauma's unspeakability, resting on the claim that extreme experience fractures both language and consciousness, causing lasting damage and demanding unique narrative expressions. At that moment when language cannot be available for the persona to use because of the extremity of the 'wound' inflicted, the poet has an alternative to use to express that inward emotion. Nyanzi uses ellipsis in that case at the end of her lines to express that anxiety born out of the loss that asks her to endure it. The line, 'fuel for the ambulance...' here means that in an attempt to express the reason for her mother's death, the persona fails to contain the emotion of the cause of her mother's failure to access an ambulance. Ellipsis represents the persona's inability to express such a painful reality. This fragmentation and the repetitive behaviors are classified according to Sree under Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) in trauma theory.

In using ellipsis, the poet expresses the silence used to articulate such unspeakable pain (Berry, 2008). This is because it is; 'a speech of suffering which is often the sound that nobody wants to hear'. This refusal to be heard therefore requires unique representation (Khalil, 2020). In being tongue-tied the extent of trauma is noticed which shuts in particular feelings and to ably articulate such traumatic feelings is to, 'bounce back' to reality. Caruth sees trauma as an event that fragments consciousness and prevents direct linguistic representation hence the use of punctuation to articulate trauma. It is against this background that Marie Howe defines poetry as 'a cup of language to hold what can't be said.' because poetry as a genre of literature has a license to use words and punctuation as the poet deems fit. Kalugala (2023) concludes by saying that poetry is the 'best vessel to hold or capture the 'unsayable'-ness of trauma: things that cannot be talked about, expressed, or said.

Kiplan agrees with Gobodo who says that the 'narratives of trauma told by victims and survivors are simply not about facts. That they are primarily about the impact of those facts on victims' lives and about the painful continuities created by violence in their lives' (2005). It is therefore the

impact of that loss that makes speech unable prompting the use of ellipsis to express that intense pain.

Gabriele (2013) contends that trauma kills the pulsing desire, the embodied self that attacks and sometimes kills language' (P.102). In being tongue-tied, the extent of trauma is noticed which shuts in particular feelings and to ably articulate such traumatic feelings is to, 'bounce back' to reality. Such punctuation marks therefore represent, "the unsayable" which is at the heart of trauma studies is captured by Madri (2023) who quotes Schwab and says that 'haunted language uses a gap inside speech to point to silenced history. Madri further quotes Marie Howe who says that poetry is a 'cup of language to hold what can't be said'. For Madri therefore, 'poetry is the best vessel to the unsayable-ness of trauma: things that cannot be talked about, expressed or said (2023). Caruth sees trauma as an event that fragments consciousness and prevents direct linguistic representation hence the use of punctuation to articulate that trauma.

Roger (2008) views this device as evidence of a persona struggling with his mental cage, the ineffable memories (those memories too great or extreme to be expressed or described in words) seeking a way out thereby taking the guise of inexplicable and compulsive behaviors. The compulsion to repeat past trauma calls for silence filled with hauntings hence the use of ellipsis to carry such huge weights of trauma. The government's inability to afford a litre of fuel for the ambulance to transport the persona's mother, a former social -worker to the hospital is so traumatic that it transforms and estranges the very language that is supposed to express it hence the use of punctuation marks (Caruth, 1996).

Nyanzi also uses repetition in the same breath to speak to the trauma experienced by the persona in her poem titled, 'My Personal Motivations to Join Politics'. Lines like, 'He died in search of a vial of medicine' are used to emphasize the pain that comes with the loss of one's father and also to capture the content of what led to his death. Bethany (2022) says that repetition is the unconscious need to re-enact early trauma. In a bid to re-enact that trauma for comprehension in the form of this poem, Nyanzi relives that trauma as the character here. The mere act of reliving such pain daily is what makes such a character and many others who have lost their parents due to failure to access healthcare, resilient.

‘Many, many, many’ is a line used to explain the number of bullets periodically procured in a country that lacks medicines in its hospitals. Nyanzi here explains the nature of Uganda’s priorities regarding the well-being of her citizens. Repetition compulsion, a tenet of trauma theory according to Kendra Cherry (2023) involves repeatedly engaging in behaviors or seeking experiences that echo early life experiences including past traumas. Despite their negative consequences, they continue to seek out reminders of their trauma to gain mastery over them. This repetition elaborates the re-occurrence of this procurement, making it a source of wealth for the procuring team but also the recurrent trauma meted on the recipients of the procured gunfire.

Vladimirovna et al (2018), elaborate that repetition enhances the expressiveness of speech, and transfers more emotionality, expressiveness, and stylization. This means that the more one repeats themselves, the better they are understood with their emotions well-articulated. Repeating the word ‘many’ stimulates the brain and therefore provides specific effects on the reader for the implementation of the formula of suggestion that indeed, the armory is too stocked to the extent that one can’t dare begin to count the number of bullets as it would be such an uphill task. Repetition does not only attract the reader’s attention to the repetitive elements of the text but also adds new colors to its content hence promoting coherence of the entire text.

Another illustration of repetition is the use of the word ‘ambulance.’ The stanza reads in part;

*As I made long-distance phone call after another
Searching for an ambulance, any ambulance, and then an
Ambulance -driver, money for the ambulance driver whose
Salary was unpaid for five months, fuel for the ambulance...*

(p.27)

The poet intentionally presents this repetition to express the ‘re-occurrence of the unfortunate situation’ she is describing. The absence of an ambulance to save her dying mother is unexpected in ideal situations. The fact that even the ambulance driver struggles to survive because he has not been paid for five full months is a second layer of stress. The country is not only unable to stock health facilities but also does not pay the staff for months! It is for this reason that the person has to not only look for money to fuel an ambulance after a long hunt but also pay for the starving driver

to hit the road. Additionally, this repetition expresses ‘the weight of the pain and suffering’ that the persona has to endure as an orphan now. Ellipsis evident at the end of this except demonstrate a ‘silence’ that ‘shows a feeling of inaction.’ This depicts the persona in a stuck situation as she is ‘tongue-tied, unable to sing her mournful song’ (Kahyana, 2022).

Bartzak (2023) asserts that the act of bearing witness to trauma through story telling or other means can be a way of attempting to make sense of and share the traumatic experiences. It is this attempt that locates the persona as one willing to rediscover herself after her loss as a doorway to realize how much potential she is left with, going forward. The mark of an intellectually resilient person is the ability to learn and adapt to new situations positively.

Figures of speech are also used especially the simile. This involves comparing two things that are different from each other but with similar qualities. Such figurative language has multiple meanings which the reader has got to deduce. The line, ‘like a starving pet dog’ is used to explain how the persona’s parents died against the backdrop that they were both retired civil servants who did their fair share in, ‘Building the Nation’ (Henry Barlow, 2000). Such a simile is used to help the reader draw a mental picture of how a retired medical doctor desperate for a ‘vial of medicine’ died ‘unnecessarily’ (26). The same line is used to express how her mother died, ‘upon entry to Masaka National Referral Hospital.’ Because of, ‘A single absent ambulance in Uganda’s public health facilities.’ the use of such similes is to help the reader to also capture the extent of trauma that the victims had to undergo before death beckoned them.’ Roger (2008) says that literature is one way to express whatever kind of memory the traumatic event allows. It appears in the form of perpetual trooping by the psyche, and it is best phrased through figurative language

As the persona bears this testimony, it brings to the fore, the conception of testimony as a problem of an aporia (Arruti, 2007). This means that a persona attempts to express what cannot be expressed as recurrent ideas are analyzed in different poems. The persona then tries to describe the conflict but cannot find words that will ever be true to such horror as the loss of one’s parents, making resilience a reality. This reality is mainly because testimony faces challenges that include difficulty in finding words to capture the sorrow and pain encountered (Olivia, 2023). It is against this background that Khalil (2020) invites us to, ‘spaces that can tell stories and unfold histories through artistic and literary practice.’ making this poetry one of such spaces.

Additionally, Nyanzi uses imagery – a language that stimulates the readers’ senses in her poem. She echoes poor health care as one of the biggest undoing of Uganda as a country. The persona painfully trudges the journey that she went through with his sick father- a retired medical doctor and mother- a retired social worker., she mourns;

I think of Daddy’s grave.

The anguish of losing my father:

A retired medical doctor.

He died moving from a village health center to Masaka National Referral Hospital.

He died in search of a vial of medicine. (p. 26)

Sean (2023) postulates that we should, ‘think of imagery as a doorway of the text.’ This is so because it ‘allows the reader to see, smell, hear, taste, and feel everything happening in the story.’ ‘Looking for a vial of medicine’ helps the reader to ‘hear’ the persona’s disappointment in failure to access a single vial of medicine. ‘In a land of many, many, many rounds of bullets.’ The reader gets to be the reason for joining politics a fact that illustrates a pained populace. A people who joined the liberation struggle because of having gone through and endured so much heartache. Pain spills over from the public domain of a rigged election for example to a private fate of losing one’s parents, previously active civil servants in a country that rewards them with an ill-stocked health system that can’t reward them with a bare minimum of life’s basic need in form of, ‘a vial of medicine’ as well as, ‘an ambulance’ to save her father and mother respectively from their deaths.

The persona joined politics so that, ‘no more daughters would unnecessarily grieve their dead daddies’. The word ‘unnecessarily’ implies a death that would have been ideally saved but wasn’t. This poem illustrates ‘testimony’, a tenet of trauma theory which is the art of bearing witness to one’s traumatic past by sharing it with others. Nyanzi, the persona here understands that testimony, a way of bearing historical responsibility is her way of capturing, the ‘things that failed to become’ so much so that the generations upcoming could understand the extent of trauma that she along with other citizens have had to go through. ‘Having to go through’ elaborates people who have had to suffer through a rough patch. That situation is captured by a single word called resilience, the theme underpinning this study.

Nyanzi shows acceptance that her parents are dead and gone forever. What this poem does for her and all readers is to open up conversations about what people are enduring in their different walks of life thereby making traumatization not unique to individuals but universal to all who speak it (Caruth, 1996). Another reason for this closure could be to rally solidarity for the resilient people not to remain in what Felman and Laub (1992) refer to as a 'dilemma about an individual's tendency to refuse to acknowledge such atrocities and a will to proclaim them aloud'.

She uses symbolism to capture the somber mood at the grave. Symbolism refers to the use of a concrete object to illustrate an abstract idea. The grave in this poem symbolizes the heartache and sorrow that the persona has had to grapple with ever since she lost her parents. It also embodies the major theme of this poem which is death thereby intimating to the reader the setting of the poem. Besides that, this symbol of the grave also helps the reader to realize the persona's accurate memory as far as the construction of the events of her parents' death is concerned. This accuracy is occasioned by the experience harbored because of the traumatic loss experienced.

Sontag (2003) validates her memory by saying that it is achingly the only relation we have with the dead. Therefore, the belief that remembering is an ethical act is deep in our natures as humans, who know we are going to die, and, who mourn those in the normal course of things since they die before us like; grandparents, parents, teachers, and older friends. While the injustice in Uganda's health system causes these deaths in the poem under discussion, remembering it embitters, yet history signals this as a virtue for collective history and responsibility.

Richard McNally (2018) postulates that the stress hormones cortisol and epinephrine that are released during a terrifying trauma tend to render the experience vivid and memorable especially the central aspect, the most meaningful aspect of the experience for the victim'. This is the reason why the persona describes vividly the circumstances surrounding her parents' death. This resonates with Sean's realization that great imagery sets the stage for great storytelling, goading the reader into the world of the work because they are often juxtaposed next to feelings, creating sensory and emotive experiences. (2023)

Caruth (1996) in her work titled *The Unclaimed Experience* quotes Freud in her third chapter of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* that catastrophic events seem to repeat themselves for those who have passed through them which is entirely outside their wish or control. It is because that repetition

is an unknown act by the survivor that Caruth says that it is the heart of catastrophe which in Freud's words is 'traumatic neuroses'.

One would wonder why such a broken persona sticks to such a country that has traumatized her such a great deal. Yaseen & Fayyad (2015) answer this dilemma by stating that staying beats the voice of emigration and consequently, the voice that repeatedly emphasizes that the homeland is above all, overcomes. Arriving at such eloquence is what makes the persona able to navigate her loss and transcend to normalcy albeit the scars underneath their appearance. The persona's ability to read such traumatic times eloquently marks her as an intellectually resilient person.

Meadows et al (2015) elaborate that the bounce-back definition of resilience assumes that stress has a negative effect on well-being and that individuals can do things or access resources like individual attributes, characteristics, qualities, or environmental factors to counteract the negative effect. That individual ability to rise up and still be able to live/survive is what Namakula (2017) calls, 'the refusal to conform.' It is when characters purpose not to conform that resilience is born - a willingness to rise again having fallen.

Herman et al (2011) define resilience as a positive adaptation or ability to maintain or regain mental health, despite experiencing adversity. This definition provides three categories of people. The kind of person who can go through a traumatic experience and immediately make the relevant changes to live with the stress they experience or work around or alongside it without ever giving up (positive adaptation). The second category refers to those people who still maintain their stamina regardless of the stress they face (ability to maintain). The third category refers to a group of people who when they interface with traumatic situations, initially they get destabilized but sooner, they use the means available to them and they manage to survive the stress. This ability is what Freud refers to as the legacy of incomprehensibility at the heart of catastrophic experience. (Caruth, 1996). It is incomprehensible because it is hard to explain or understand how stressful situations aid/enhance human survival. The traumatized individual carries an impossible history within them or they become themselves the symptoms of a history that they cannot entirely process because the incubation period is not yet over. Trauma is a temporary delay that carries the individual beyond the shock of the first moment. All these different abilities are what the characters in the poems under study present.

Ugandan poets address several forms of resilience in their various poetry collections because poetry can show the most intimate feelings of those who write in a determined historical period (Mackay, 2009). In essence, this expresses their ability to read the daily situations that the citizenry goes through. Some of those several forms of resilience are what both Kiguli and Nyanzi reflect in their poetry collections under this study because of the realization that without their voices in written works and oral representations, there will be no articulation of our concerns. (Hooks. 1994). Kiguli and Nyanzi face, ‘the vicissitudes of translating trauma when citizens are vicariously traumatized’ because they do ‘understand the structure of injustice’ and therefore bear witness to curtail it. (Kiplan, 2005).

This study engages the trauma theory propagated by American Cathy Caruth, a theorist who reflects on trauma and the role of testimony, representation, and survival. She is the leading theorist in trauma studies. She is passionate about language and its survival in the wake of trauma. She defines trauma as, ‘an overwhelming experience of a sudden or catastrophic event in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena.’ (1996). In her work titled, *The Unclaimed Experience*, she notes that Freud views trauma as, ‘the moving and sorrowful voice that cries out, a voice that is paradoxically released through the wound.’

Caruth intimates to us that, ‘history like trauma is never simply one’s own, that history is precisely the way we were implicated in each other’s traumas.’ (1996:24) By this statement, Caruth simply means to say that one’s, ‘wound (trauma)’ affects even those around him/ her in the same measure that history does. Therefore, ignoring one’s wound is a selfish act of ignoring oneself. He continues to explain trauma’s effect on consciousness and memory, particularly based on the work of psychologists Bessel Van Der Kolk and Hart who argue that the neurobiological response to trauma elicits a universal response – a ‘speechless terror’ that forecloses the possibility of narrative recall in memory since the event cannot be organized on a linguistic level. (1996. 172)

To Olivia Guy Evans, trauma is the, ‘gap between an external threat and one’s inner resources to deal with it.’ Fear and hopelessness as external markers for a traumatized person are what the personae in Kiguli and Nyanzi’s poetry collections exhibit. The current study clarified on this portrayal.

Michelle Balaev (2008), in her paper, 'Trends in Literary Trauma Theory', asserts that trauma creates a speechless fright that divides or destroys identity. Division of identity entails having different persons in one human figure. This means that one's former self and the one after the trauma both collide in a singular body thereby causing a division. The later (destroyed identity) simply means that the initial being before the traumatic event was smashed and now in their place is a shell of the former person. This is evident in the way the characters are portrayed in the selected poems under study.

The theory established a foundation for understanding how trauma impacts thought patterns, emotional responses, and actions. Trauma theory is based largely on attempts to form an evolutionary basis for human responses including emotional, physical, and psychological responses to certain stimuli (Kleber et al, 1992). Traumatic experiences, generally either severe acute trauma or prolonged trauma, reshape emotional responses, thought patterns, and behaviors in predictable ways. Fight-or-flight responses may play a major role in developing an understanding of how trauma impacts individual psychology and behaviors. Trauma experiences can make individuals more susceptible to having fight-or-flight responses to stimuli. In some cases, individuals become more aggressive and defensive; in others, they become less emotionally responsive and distant.

Repetition, fragmentation, and testimony are the key tenets of trauma theory which underpinned this study. Repetition refers to the unconscious need to re-enact early trauma in new situations. According to Kendra Cherry, 'Repetition compulsion involves repeatedly engaging in behaviors or seeking experiences that echo early life experiences including past traumas. Despite their negative consequences, they continue to seek out reminders of their trauma' in order to gain mastery over them. These reminders can take two forms, 'symbolic like having recurrent dreams focused on subjects similar to initial trauma or literally repeating emotionally or physically painful situations that people have experienced in the past. (2023). Such repetition can be seen in one sticking in a painful or abusive relationships as was seen in some poems under study or even engaging in harmful behavior. Such characters may not even realize that they are repeating their past traumas. As characters indulge in these negative ways of easing tension from their lives, they sadly end up impacting more suffering and pain on themselves that definitely never yield any good. It is against this background that Cameroon Whiteman Stocksy et al (2022) note that repetition compulsion can

act as a barrier to therapeutic change. This tenet helped the researcher to better understand some characters' dispositions.

Fragmentation on the other hand is when, the body divides traits and feelings and groups them into smaller sections, keeping some of them hidden until a safe space for expression is provided. It involves the study of how trauma affects the mind, body, and society (Natalia, 2023). Memories are fragmented because they aren't usually put together properly. They include; intense emotions, sensations, and perceptions. In literature, trauma is represented through four basic tools which are; fragmented narrative voice, the notion of the haunting and ghosts, repetition, and allusion. This study clarified the fragmented voice and repetition. These were illustrated in the subsequent chapters of this study. The basic effects of fragmentation are memory loss, flashbacks, nightmares, and identity confusion.

A traumatic event is a strange sort of an event because once it is understood as a belated consequence of a 'missed encounter' and it must be understood in terms of 'absence' - the absence of something that failed to become located in time or place rather than as a 'positive' presence. (Caruth &Felman, 2007) For Caruth, 'the very structure of repetition inherent to 'traumatic belatedness' compels the traumatized person to survive the trauma by finding ways of bearing witness to it both belatedly and concerning others. Literature, therefore, avails itself as a vehicle through which that 'belatedness 'is conveyed of the things that, 'failed to become'

To explain testimony as a tenet of trauma theory, Shoshana and Laub (1992), explain that 'victims are driven by an 'imperative to tell'. So, the longer the story remains untold, the more distorted it becomes in the survivor's conception of it, so much so that the survivor doubts the reality of actual events. (79). Testimony is a tenet of the trauma theory which explores how trauma can be communicated and understood through language, literature, and art. Testimony also refers to the art of bearing witness to one's traumatic past by sharing it with others. The whole essence of testimony is to create a family of acceptance and solidarity as a way of diffusing the silence that trauma leaves in its wake. Traumatic events are caught in a dilemma between the individual's tendency to refuse to acknowledge such atrocities and a 'will to proclaim them aloud.' (1997)

Testimony is therefore not only a way of processing trauma but also a form of bearing historical responsibility for the people/generations that were not present at the time when such atrocities like murders, wars, and violence were meted on the generations before them. The two poets under study could be said to be compelled by the same unconscious urge to offer their testimony ‘of the things that failed to become ‘through their personae’s eyes.

For Laub (1992), the importance for victims bearing witness to their own traumatic experiences lies in the fact that not only do survivors ‘need to survive so that they could tell their story’: but also need to tell their story in order to survive. (P.78). This need for survival therefore gives a reader a great opportunity to understand events which took place in their absence for the sake of the victims’ lives.

In her paper, *Trauma and Testimony in the Poetry of World War 11*, Sarah Frasnó Vinuelas states that ‘something was set between the words and the world.’ As one bears testimony (words), the world gets to understand deep truths about prevailing circumstances and situations which creates enlightenment regarding the ‘things that were or failed to become’

Caruth and Felman ask, ‘What is literature if not one of the most important ways available to us both to endure what Caruth calls ‘the departures we have all taken from ourselves’ and to reach others by speaking through those very departures?’ Literature therefore helps us to understand human experiences which can’t be understood in ordinary speech. Through poetry for example, we understand that trauma doesn’t always have a negative meaning. It is an episode which illustrates a change that begins from trauma to suffering onto pain and finally to acknowledgement and understanding. (Negin: 2014). The present study sought to establish such positive trauma outcomes as well.

Bessel & Van der ask this urgent question, ‘how can people gain control over the residues of their past trauma and return to being masters of their ship? As practicing therapists, they intimate that talking, understanding, and human connections are all pathways to mastery over oneself as of old with a realization that there is no one-size-fits-all all remedy. What works for one character may not work for another but the most important goal is that the road of resilience is trodden.

Intellectual resilience is exhibited by characters that are faced with choices to make regarding their lives and lifestyles. Top on the cause of this form is hegemony, politics, and patriarchy that keep characters in dreadful circumstances until the courageous ones decide to put an end to it. This implies that people should be allowed to exercise their intellect to work outside the ordinary terms and arrive at authentic resolutions for the betterment of their ordinary and future lives.

In conclusion, the depiction of Intellectual Resilience in Ugandan poetry expresses the pain and the struggle that individuals go through in Uganda as a post-colony. The daily challenges including; deaths relating to poor service delivery, conflict, marginality, and patriarchy, in the country, express governance gaps that independence sought to address on 9th October 1962. The poems analyzed depict individuals who struggle to resiliently hang on and assert their identity despite the political vagaries of post-independent Uganda. The pain and trauma embodied by each character in the poems discussed illustrate the extremity of the legacies that post-colonial Uganda hands down to its citizens daily. This makes the poetry collections under study commentaries of post-colonial realities in post-independent Uganda, which express the citizens' faraway cry and depict resilience and courage as voices in the marginality.

This marginal space is important because it is where characters are, 'transformed individually and collectively, as we make radical creative space which affirms and sustains our subjectivity, which gives us a new location from which to articulate our sense of the world.' (Khalil, 2020). It is such new locations that give the poets the impetus to write their literary work, detailing issues and concerns of our day that poets interface. Bell Hooks applauds such writers for 'speaking up when they are not spoken to' and refers to it as a courageous act. She is quick to assert that this space should not be confused or imagined to be safe, but rather a place which the marginalized occupy, 'to recover their experiences' in an 'intimate manner. The motivation behind such intimacy is purely to perform a resistance to the status quo through their voices as poets, their only hope as they lovingly recollect their broken tongues, and traumatized selves.

This reflection brings to mind Niyi Akingbe's reflection on Harriet Anena's *A Nation in Labor* (Akingbe, 2023, p.38). He looks at Uganda- a post colony as an absurd pretense of leaders creating an appearance as governing an independent state that never was. He expresses the disillusionment that Ugandans continue to grapple with. He contends that Anena, 'invokes the poetics of

lamentation to express Uganda's mismanagement of the post-colonial political dividends.' This further illustrates that the post-colonial era in Uganda showcases a blurred anticipation of what the citizens yearned for in the days running up to the lowering of the Union Jack- a symbol of colonialism in Uganda. The use of figures of speech by both poets expresses the 'unspeakable diminishing, oppressive system, and for the profiling of the loss of a nation.' Loss is expressed not only in the death of the persona's parents in Nyanzi's poem but also in the independence that never existed in this country. It is this multiplicity of the things that never became that Uganda comes to mind when oppressive politics are the topic. In the end, the depiction of intellectual resilience by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi does gain the 'power to essentialize literature, as a veritable platform for articulating grievances and for ventilation of pent-up anger (Akingbe, 2023, p.39)

4.2.2 Historical and Cultural Resilience

Mlambo (2014) defines resilience as the act of positive adaptation despite adversity. He emphasizes the strengths that people have, rather than their vulnerability, through exploring the coping strategies that they exhibit. It is because of these coping strategies that characters bounce back better and stronger than before the occurrence of that adversity. This kind of trauma is that which is experienced by a group of people in recurring terms from one generation to another, due to traumatic events. It also entails experiences by that group that affect their identity and general well-being. According to Jeffrey Alexander (2004), characters in such situations feel that they have been subjected to an awful event that leaves indelible marks on their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future individually in basic and irreversible ways.

The collective's core is forever marked by the aftermath of that traumatic event for life, to a point of no return for some and a stronger bounce back for others. That which is irrevocable according to Alexander, cannot be reversed. Kiguli expresses this form of resilience in her poem titled, 'The African Saga'

Kiguli captures election rigging in a poem titled, 'The African Saga' which doubles as the collection's title. In the poem, she trudges the journey of election malpractice in Africa's post-colony, highlighting the trauma encountered by the electorate as it sets out to execute its constitutional right to vote. The persona narrates;

*Often a farce is acted
Elaborately presented
On the African stage.
The ballot boxes set in place (p.12)*

The first stanza above opens with the word ‘often’ which is an adverb of time that refers to an act that is done almost daily, which implies the frequency with which a farce /mockery /absurdity is so ‘elaborately’ acted in post-colonial Africa, and by implication in Uganda. This expresses how often the electorate has to endure a messy set up. The idea that one has to ‘often’ make time and patience and show up to cast their vote is enough sacrifice to begin with. It is the casual presentation of a hoax election as implied by ‘a farce’ that is a blow to the people. ‘Stage’ as a noun here means a point in African development when democracy is not taken as an important governance issue as an activity as critical as an election are simply staged. The population is indeed traumatized by such an important matter necessitating an urgent embrace with resilience to manage the stress born.

This is because just before the votes are cast, Jotham Tusingwire in his poem titled ‘I like it all’ (Uganda Poetry Anthology 2000) satires the election mood thus;

*I like to see them
Corrupting the masses
Throwing caps, T-shirts, cigarettes, plastic plates
And the hapless wretched of the soil
Reaching desperately
For each other’s throats (p.137)*

This stanza demonstrates a manipulation of the poor by the rich on the eve of voting. The poor and hopeless voters are hoodwinked with cheap things like caps, and t-shirts bearing the candidate's picture thereby acting the mobile billboard role to drive the election frenzy further. Cigarettes further waste their lives away and such plastic plates eat their way into health-related ailments but also the durability index of such petty handouts. This is allegorical as the voters’ input in such an

election is as short-lived as the durability of such t-shirts or plastic plates. To the persona, this common strategy is so cheap as the candidates often lure their voters with the cheapest of items to take the day at the expense of their lives and livelihood. The fact that such commodities end up being the social services makes the situation traumatic. This continuous dishing out of handouts during election periods carries out the purpose for which they are fashioned- to hinder development of strong political systems which prioritize the rights of citizens.

Khisa (2015) notes that state apparatus and the people it presides over cannot undertake fundamental transformation because it is wrapped up in what he calls 'political settlement'. The hopelessness they carry back home after voting is what marks their society of voters as disillusioned, yearly.

People who labor to leave their homes, stand in long queues to vote their preferred candidates are broken by what ensues;

The curtain draws back

To thunderous throbbing drums (p.12)

This adverb of time points to a repetition of such election rigging from time to time in the era of current and previous dictatorships in Uganda. In this absurd act, ballot boxes are set in place for people to vote for their candidates, yet as soon as the votes are cast, the winner is instantly announced in '...thunderous throbbing drums' to the chagrin of the other camp whose rough, broken unstoppable chorus cannot do much in the face of the people whose win is always assured.

Sree quotes Laub who emphasizes that trauma survivors live not with memories of the past, but with an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion as 'the drums are due' already 'to ululate the victory.'. Such an event that had no ending attained no closure', and therefore, as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present and is current in every respect. Resilience lies in the act of having to continually line up to vote, yet the cast votes are not even counted. Such an electorate counts on hope for better.

This is the persona's daily pain and disappointment of a rigged election. It is imperative to note that 'unlike personal memory whose authority fades with time, the authority of the collective memories

increases as time passes, taking on new complication, nuances, and interests.’ This is why ‘all the laughter-filled bellies are roasted by fire’ from the protagonist, unaware that the antagonist isn’t done yet. In a quick turn of events, the uncouneted votes are promptly ‘shipped to oceans’ thereby creating further ‘complications’ for the people involved and causing the country to be, ‘trapped in subsisting quagmire of misery (Akingbe 2023, p.11).

Collective memories allow for the fabrication, rearrangement, elaboration, and omission of details about the past, often pushing aside accuracy and authenticity to accommodate broader issues of identity formation, power and authority, and political affiliation (Sree, 2019). Such a profound realization is what the leaders need to arrive at so as to start taking the individual voters in this country as a serious force. This is because as soon as they unravel the mystery in the power of this collective memory, they identify with each other in different political parties forming a formidable force to oust the leaders that dispense such injustices.

The second stanza reflects the reaction of that person who comes out of such an election dissatisfied;

The antagonist struts out

Like a cock at dawn’

His plumage masking lethal fire

His headdress flaming red

He shoots venomous arrows

Into the expectant audience (p.12)

Kiguli uses this vivid description to capture the sad mood and general election aftermath and what the candidate who allegedly loses an election does as early as dawn. ‘Lethal’ is an adjective referring to the quality of causing sufficient death. ‘Lethal fire’ therefore means that the persona is out ‘With a red-hot headdress’, the antagonist in his speech speaks out very dangerously to the gathered audience because he has just witnessed a messy election. The red headdress is symbolic of danger in this election's aftermath. It is a warning to all that the times are hard, going forward, it is a call for readiness.

The 'venomous arrows' are a warfare tool meant to not only 'wound' but also 'kill' one's enemy. War in this case is a requisite for these voters because the 'Venomous' is an adjective meant to highlight the extent to which the persona is willing to go to stop this 'saga' from being repeated. The arrows are capable of damage. The poet means to rise this persona to an occasion of silencing the author of 'indelible marks.' There is a repetition undertone in this state of affairs which concretizes historical resilience because the president under whose regime this rigging of election occurs is still in power and continues to rig elections. The electorate is so stressed that it only thinks of wiping out its enemy that takes the day by force. The idea that they have what it takes to stop the enemy from ever mishandling them is what helps to envisage the future.

This situation is what Kendra Cherry calls 'repetition compulsion' whereby, individuals repeatedly engage in behavior that echoes past traumas. The third stanza explains the reaction of the audience to the "venomous arrows" as being roasted and stuffed with "red hot winking charcoal!". The truth of the matter which the antagonist articulates to the audience leaves them at the mercy of the effect of their actions in a fake election in which victory is celebrated immediately without letting it sink in. Kiguli just like Nyanzi helps us to realize that, 'art invites us to bear witness to injustices, goes beyond moving us to identify with and help a specific individual and prepares us to take responsibility for preventing future occurrence' like election rigging in the above poem. (Kiplan, 2005)

The, 'traumatizing shock of a commonly occurring event' is what makes this vote rigging so traumatic calling out its survivors to 'hang in there'. (Caruth. 1996). This kind of election malpractice has indeed happened in Uganda very many times and as the dissatisfied party tries to bring up his case, the otherwise shameless state decides to silence such people for their agenda 'To ululate the victory.' to go on uninterrupted. For some of the angry electorate, quitting is not the way out, rather, staying around and producing their, 'ragged and indomitable chorus' with the hope that someday, justice will prevail. This 'indomitable chorus' brings to mind Caruth's realization that one's responsibility as a survivor is to bear witness and that it is this guilt of responsibility that transforms one from survivor guilt (self-condemnation) to responsibility (witness) as in the poem above. This is resilience at its highest level considering that many services promised are never delivered between one election and the next.

The concluding stanza gives the reader a graphic representation of the reaction of the supposed winners of that election as bearing ‘terror contorted faces’ which explains the violent manner in which their faces twisted. This can only be an expression on a thief’s face who has been caught and reminded of his deed. In trying to avoid an eventuality that would guarantee a vote re-counting, the guilty party ships the votes to oceans for destruction as that would- be -evidence of a rigged election, which sight a peasant who is given such a dirty and unethical errand to run can’t help but laugh at, to the point of chocking at how a state fools it’s electorate in the most absurd of ways.

This is what Caruth refers to as, ‘violence of incomprehensibility’. Here, she means that it hard for an on looker to understand what their eyes have just witnessed. This is what Sree refers to as ‘cultural trauma.’ That it is not only an experiential crisis but also a disruption in the symbolic order. Such a blow to the tissues of social life that damages the bonds linking people together and impairs the prevailing sense of community is not only uncalled for but also regrettable as it traumatizes the electorate. Cultural trauma in this sense becomes a metaphor of the damage or wounding to the complex system of representations and meanings that the society weaves around itself to record and understand experience. People in such a post colony must blame each other for the poor conditions of life, and as they accuse each other, they forget to realize that they each require to make some changes in their future individual lives in a bid to reverse the situation. To achieve that, they must embrace resilience first as a way of taking off to that future

This poem demonstrates the scenario in Uganda in the recently concluded presidential elections in 2021 when the country went to the ballot in January to choose its next president. After the 48 hours as established by the law of counting had elapsed, votes from 334461 polling stations across the country accounting for 96.4 % of the total votes cast, President Yoweri Museveni Kaguta Tibuhaburwa who was above 50%, at 58% was announced the winner with Kyagulanyi Robert Sentamu as the second runner up at 35.08%. The results of 83 polling stations accounting for 54357 voters were not included with reasons like ballot staffing, grabbing of polling materials during and after the voting process, Declaration Forms missing in the result envelop, total vote count, exceeding the actual number of registered voters at a given polling station and acts of hooliganism and violence leading to grabbing of polling materials by unknown people.

The African Election Watch reported to have observed irregularities. One of these irregularities was ‘stemming from the fact that 57% voters turned up yet 409 polling stations announced to have had

100% voter turnout' this disparity in numbers indeed situates Kiguli's diction of the poem's title as a The African Saga.

The Guardian, a British daily newspaper run a screaming headline, 'Museveni declared election winner in Uganda as rival Bobi Wine alleges fraud'. This story clarifies how it was the most turbulent election because the vote was fraught and hindered by the actions of state forces. The highest of all disappointments was with the shutting down of internet across the country that undermined transparency. In a twist of fate, Museveni dubbed this election 'the most cheating free election' preceded by killings, arrest of campaigners and civil society groups as well as intimidation by security forces. 'Most' in Museveni's words implies that there has been cheating previously, confirming elections in this country indeed as a 'saga'.

Kiguli depicts the resilience that the electorate depicts in tolerating such a government that chooses to fool its electorate and pays a deaf ear to the sensible speeches made by those oppressed in matters of national governance. Such a struggle is 'emblematic of the struggle between long-time ruling elites, in this case, President Museveni and the younger generation mobilizing against them. The fact that the European Union, United Nations, and the United States of America could not monitor this election as 'most of their staff were denied accreditation' clarifies all the issues related to the denial of such paramount freedoms.

Kiguli in a way castigates the government for mocking its citizens in a hoax election only to disregard votes from a whole 83 polling stations in an unclear manner of slapping such accusations as those already mentioned. The fact that Uganda's Electoral Commission rallies behind the sitting president with but not limited to a causal cancellation of the cast votes qualifies it to be referred to indeed as a Saga.

Nkuubi in a book chapter titled 'Of yellow police, a Cadre Army and the liberation war psychosis: The Question of Electoral Security' argues that in Uganda, 'policing elections is not designed to guarantee fairness but to guarantee continuity and control' It is that urgent need for control of the actual voting results that in the last stanza of this poem, 'The votes are shipped to oceans' to erase any form of evidence of malpractice hence continue to control the system/ government. Based on the poem's title 'The African Saga', this saga occurs in many of the nations on the African continent fielding Uganda as a culprit of election malpractice. Ironically, the same government that

ships off cast votes to be destroyed is the same that confiscates 600 copies of *Controlling Consent* by Uganda's customs authority tagging the material as political as opposed to educational in a bid to further erase evidence of its scrutiny. In analyzing the systems of control, the book amplifies the subject matter of this poem under analysis.

Adam B. Lerner (2022) asserts that narrative events are vital for translating trauma into political imaginaries. These include democracy and the rule of law to rectify the absurdity and saga depicted by this poem. In the election aftermath therefore, 'the electorate bears witness to the past trauma' which the government 'has unwittingly repeated (Caruth,1996). As the citizenry goes on, 'remembering such recent catastrophes', they 'implicate us back into the trauma they have impacted on women, children and families' making every Ugandan a resilient being (Kiplan, 2005).

Culturally, resilient characters are exhibited by a community that demonstrates the power behind groups of people, the power of the collective, unlike the individual. Culturally resilient people mirror 'cultural trauma' that Silverman applauds as opposed to 'individual trauma'. Cultural trauma just like historical trauma has historical ramifications that extend far beyond the individual psyche, making it a group issue. Kiplan says that 'history is what hurts while Silverman says that 'historical trauma is what interrupts and even deconstitue(s) what society assumes to be its master narratives and immanent necessity. Both scholars point to pain in the 'hurt' and 'disruption' occasioned by trauma, making societies/communities affected by the two negative emotions resilient.

Historically, Uganda gained independence from British rule in 1962 but has since gone through political and military coups as well as dictatorships. All these are responsible for shaping the Ugandan society to adapt and endure such political turmoil. The need for adaptation reflects a situation that does not get to change. Such bad governance has been occasioned by presidents who come to power through the barrel. President Apollo Milton Obote came to power according to Jacques Bahati, "by unseating Muteesa from the presidency and forcefully acquiring executive authority through the use of the military.' 100 - 500 thousand deaths are attributed to his regime. Families and friends of the butchered people had and continue to nurse the pains of the loss of their dear ones, illustrating a quote by Peter Levine that, 'Trauma is hell on earth'. The wound continues to bleed as such family members are only left with the memories of those long gone, to 'cherish as though they were alive.'

Apollo Milton Obote was followed by Idi Amin Dada, “the worst dictator in modern memory” who ruled, “through violence, execution of political opponents, grand promises, and grander personal claims” (Bahati, 2018, p.2). With his regime’s death toll at 300-600 thousand deaths, it is clear to any observer that Ugandans have had to ‘hang in there’ as they collectively hope for better days ahead which, unfortunately, served them with another dictator in 1986 to date. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni came to power, ‘as a hero to the Ugandan people’ with promises of ‘democracy as his rhetoric’. Election rigging, abolition of term limits, nepotism, and suppression of freedom of information and expression as his way of denying the citizens democracy. It is only after such decades of uncertainty and the utter breakdown of dichotomies like the colonizer versus the colonized, the ruler versus the subject that the citizenry has been traumatized, alongside the fragility of human memory that is constantly raped by the state, as well as the wobbly nationhood, that there is nothing left to hold onto, hence the urgent need for resilience (Berry, 2008).

The citizenry, as the traumatized party here, harnesses resilience as an urgent need and decides to spread out its abilities by constituting other political factions. The birth of the National Unity Platform for example is one such political party in Uganda. To thwart the election foolery, they feel the need to make inputs into the multi-party dispensation and hope that someday, it will work. On the other hand, artists like authors and poets keep writing about such absurdities, hoping that the government and scholars pick them up and give their work the output for which it is intended, the impetus for change.

Kiguli uses imagery to highlight the extent of trauma interfaced in the country’s election process. The persona in a daze cries that;

The antagonist struts out

Like a cock at dawn

His plumage masking lethal fire

His headdress flaming red

He shoots venomous arrows

Into the expectant audience...(p.12)

Ellipsis is evident in the last line in the stanza above. The persona fails to further express herself because trauma when extreme, disfigures language causing a kind of blankness in speech thereby ridding one of the abilities to articulate issues. Waheed (2021) postulates that trauma shrouds the victim's life, especially in the lack of communication causing disturbed or no speech at all. This is the reason behind the poet's choice of ellipsis to express that blankness. The same linguistic figure is evident at the end of the first stanza where people are ready to celebrate victory even before the votes are cast. The idea of celebrating a victory that is undue is what leaves the persona speechless as 'the puling desire' to tell is silenced by trauma (Gabriele, 2013). It is such a situation that prompts Caruth to see trauma as an event that fragments consciousness and prevents direct linguistic representation hence the use of ellipsis to articulate the traumatic situation at hand.

Arruti (2007) views the conscious representation of testimony as a problem of aporia. This means that there is always a contradiction at work within a character's self that hinders them from expressing that which cannot be expressed. There is always a recurrent idea in the poems analyzed as the person tries to describe the conflict but cannot find words that will ever be true to such horror. It is this inadequacy that causes the person to make use of ellipsis (Shoshana & Dori, 1992).

Kalugala (2023) quotes Schwab who asserts that trauma attacks and sometimes kills language. Trauma as a mode of being violent halts the flow of time fractures the self, and punctures memory and language. It is this puncturing of the language that causes the loss of expression, leaving the persona with no choice but to express herself with the dots. He goes on to reflect that writing from within the core of trauma is a constant struggle between the colonizing power of words and the revolt of what is being rejected, and silenced.

Atuhaire (2011) notes that the image of fire cuts across the whole poem and the aggression is emphasized by the cock symbol and its red plumage that flames red and masks fire. A combination of fire and venomous arrows to an audience that does its part by voting is not only sad but also regrettable. Kiguli uses this style to create mental pictures of the scenario being described as the poet's way of easing the gap between the reader and the text.

Kiguli further uses juxtaposition. This refers to the placement of contrasting ideas closely to highlight their difference. She juxtaposes despair and hope by addressing the African Saga whose output is in the messy voting and election aftermath. She intends to let the people on the African

continent hear the pain that the electorate goes through and in the same breath help them propose to stop such a mess. She indirectly calls out the perpetrators of such violence to relent, thereby heralding a new dawn of healing and purpose and eventual hope for the electorate. As this process starts, the electorate has to ‘hang in’ there.

There is also the use of sensory engagement where the poet engages the sense of sound to deeply make her point clear. The line; ‘Thunderous throbbing drums’ is meant to help the reader draw a mental image of what is being described. It is also emphasizing the deafening sound made as a preview of the assured win. This gives the group away as it comes to the ballot for mere courtesy. Such engagement emphasizes the terrible African vices of election violence that leave voters extremely demoralized and stressed hence the trauma implied.

The persona in Nyanzi’s poetry is herself most times, the subject she addresses and the style she does so expresses her mind. In her poem titled, ‘Justice Delayed’, she captures a frustration with Uganda’s Justice System in the way it unjustly postpones court hearings of eager suspects who, ‘enthusiastically rush’ to court time and time again. The repeated appearances are captured in these lines;

“Your trial magistrate is indisposed

Court adjourned to a month away.

You are further remanded to prison.”

What a disappointment!

What an anti-climax!

After a month of rotting in prison,

I step again into the suspects’ dock.

‘The State Prosecutors are on strike.’

Adjourned to a month away.

Further remanded to prison.’

The following month was a repeat (p.11)

This factual account from the persona gives a sneak peek into what really happens in Ugandan courts of law and is probably responsible for the case backlog which is, ‘frustrating dispensation of justice in the country.’ (Parliament of Uganda News 22nd July 2023). The crucial issue here is about the constant postponement of the court hearings. The countless adjournments in such courts of law constitute, ‘a series of painful events’ yet in as much as they are pained, they can’t get to control it. To both the reader and the persona, this continued postponement of court hearings is not only ‘peculiar’ but also ‘uncanny’ because the catastrophe keeps repeating itself.

Sigmund Freud refers to such repetition of a negative occurrence, in this case of the absence of state prosecutors at every hearing as a compulsion by the those in charge to return to an earlier state of things, the heart of catastrophe causing ‘traumatic neuroses. This is the ‘unwitting reenactment of an event that one cannot simply leave behind.’ In a way, the persona wonders why suspects have to be treated in this way before they are pronounced either innocent or guilty of charges levied against them.

The line, “Adjourned to a month away” is repeated to emphasize the, ‘unsuccessfully repressed emotions from the past experiences.’ such emotions include anxiety, depression, sadness. This implies that when the prisoners’ egos attempt to repress and displace their pain over the delay of their court hearing, in that moment, a similar occurrence happens in form of adjournment and all the trauma that it brings to the suspects.

In repeating the postponement of characters’ court hearings, the poet actually points to the prosecution team as the source of these prisoners’ stress. This makes these prosecutors guilty of not carrying out their constitutional responsibility towards citizens they are meant to serve. To be resilient in this case is to stand such anxiety that constantly gnaws at the characters’ consciousness, resulting into an injury on the psyche.

One would then ask why such characters still have the will to express their pain. Freud answers this question by emphasizing the concept of ‘talking cure’ where they have to talk to reduce the effect of such painful experiences on their mind in a ‘cleansing soul’ endeavor. This idea extends the notion that talking about a painful situation lessens the extent of its impact on one’s psyche and

consequently on their life. This means, therefore, that the more one talks about their problems, the more they understand them and the lesser pain they inflict on individuals

Kendra Cherry (2023) refers to Freud's traumatic neurosis as, 'Repetition compulsion' which involves repeatedly engaging in behaviors or seeking experiences that echo early life experiences including past traumas. Despite the negative consequences of that repetition, they continue to seek out reminders of their trauma to gain mastery over them. These reminders can take two forms, one of which is repeating emotionally or physically painful situations that people have experienced in the past. The persona in the above poem also repeats that line to perhaps master the trauma of her time in prison.

It is against this background that Cameroon et al (2022) note that repetition compulsion can act as a barrier to therapeutic change. This is so because these traumas are relieved in such literary texts as expressions of a heartache that stuck. This is why Freud's theory of trauma captures, 'the moving and sorrowful voice that cries out, a voice that is paradoxically released through the wound' according to the definition of the wound in this study, that wound is trauma. Sree (2019) quotes Geoffrey Hartman who explains that trauma theory tries to turn criticism back towards being ethical, responsible, and a purposive discourse, listening to the wounds of the other.

Olivia Guy Evans (2023) asks, 'Why do we repeat the past?' and goes on to elaborate that certain situation do repeat themselves because of re-victimization. This means that some people in these African states do carry out election violence because that is what they have seen being done for their entire lifetime. This shows that they don't know any better way to do things. They rig elections for example because they grew up seeing rigging take place and so naturally for them, it is the right thing to do.

He further explains that at times situations keep repeating themselves because of the important reason that they have never been resolved. This implies that because no culprits of election malpractice have ever been brought to book, the act of rigging continues unchecked, over and over again. This situation makes such a vice, a normal encounter every election season hence the repetition. The citizens for whom this vice is a hindrance to the ideal electoral processes end up being stressed by it to the point of not looking forward to subsequent elections.

Some citizens are disillusioned by such negative electoral processes that rob them of their trust in political systems. The status quo leaves them thinking that their votes don't make a significant difference. One such Ugandan is reported by one of Uganda's newspaper -The Daily Monitor (Thursday, January 07, 2021) where a 2019 university graduate confesses that 'I get confused each time I walk the streets, seeing a multiplicity of posters with positions quite strange to me'

This explanation warrants constructive discussions that should end in reduced recurrences of similar traumas as a way of 'reconstituting' and 'foregrounding' the aftermath of traumatic events including the political ones discussed as elaborated by the poem discussed above'. In an instance where there is trauma, there occurs a record of that, referred to as history as discussed hereunder.

Such sad scenarios are what prompt Sontag to ask us to go beyond sympathizing with those hurt by such politics and create debates that question the position of the poor on the national 'map'. 'Historical and cultural trauma explores events from the margins of history and probes politics of power and cultural hegemony' thereby implying resilience in the characters depicted. (Sree. 2019)

In Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience*, she notes that repetitions are particularly striking because they seem not to be initiated by the individual's own acts but rather appear as the possession of some people by a sort of fate, a series of painful events, to which they are subjected and which seem to be entirely outside their control.

This form of resilience sounds the bell on how the system of vote buying by politicians by dishing out material incentives is a reality in post-colonial Africa. The electorate is hoodwinked into exchanging their votes for the temporal goods offered, a situation that makes them reliant on such cheap motivations as opposed to thorough political engagements. This situation paralyzes not only democracy but also the establishment of institutions in such states as Uganda.

Repetition is evident in the continued procurement of votes every election period. This continues to undermine free and fair elections in Uganda as it gives money precedence over voters' choice of preference in elections. Consequently, voters sell out their ability to demand accountability for public services, sinking them further in the margins of power. This situation fuels a normalization of the legacies of violence- specifically the emotional kind in political leadings. It is such state of affairs that makes politics in post-colonial Africa and Uganda, specifically, such a traumatic encounter and an activity not worth writing home about.

4.2.3 Psychological resilience

Afek et al (2020) define psychological resilience as the ability to cope with adversity and to adapt positively to stressful events. Positive adaptation entails the ability to maintain mental and physical health despite participating in stressful situations. They go ahead to note that this ability varies from person to person depending on environmental as well as personal factors. These environmental factors when negative turn into 'guises' like exposure to violence/ traumatic encounters for a long time (intensity and duration) (Konnikova, 2023).

Kiconco Milliam (2024) reports how women revealed that they were subjected to psychological violence during different stages of their lives which included; during their childhood, in intimate relationships, and during arrests and trials. She goes on to elaborate those perpetrators were reported to be family members, police officers, lawyers, and judges. This brings to our realization this form of violence is executed by people that are known to characters. Such known people then include, leaders like Amin that openly and consistently shed human blood at will. This violence later translates into emotional abuse and neglect, feeling threatened, insulted and finally the feeling of worthlessness.

This psychological ability to cope then enables one's body to try and move in a way that the onlooker considers unusual considering the amount of trauma interfaced. Considering that this motion can be seen by the eye, I refer to it as physical output or an outcome of what the mind is able to withstand and also achieve.

Human beings encounter several difficulties and challenges during their lives, ranging from daily hustles to major life events (Sarkar, 2011). These challenges call for the engagement of the psyche in negotiating the effect of such challenges that most often than not, leave trauma in their wake. Whenever there is trauma, there is an urgent need to try and manage its effect hence the need for resilience.

Madri Kalugala quotes Judith Herman's work titled *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence* where he says that psychological Trauma is an affliction of the powerless. This means that when trauma is extreme, for some individuals, it denies them the chance for expression and so is

inferred in what an individual eventually does physically. To such characters, ‘the stressors become so intense that resilience is overwhelmed’ which implies ‘their breaking point’ (Konnikova, 2023).

Wikipedia defines psychological resilience as the ability to cope mentally and emotionally with a crisis or to return to pre-crisis status quickly. This definition means that an attempt/ desire to return to one’s original state before a traumatic event occurred is important. Kiguli demonstrates this in her poem titled. ‘Amin is Dead’

This is another poem written by Kiguli in her poetry collection titled, *Home Floats in The Distance*. In this poem, the persona expresses relief with the news that Amin is dead. The problem with such relief is that the death of this president does not necessarily bring with it the utmost happiness. This is mainly because characters that have been traumatized by this ‘blood and laughter’ hungry president for such a long time now don’t know how to transition from grief to gratitude because of his death. To them, their experiences are those that are traumatic and all there is to think about. History sadly for them is, ‘what is written in blood’ (Helga, 2020). This implies that events that have happened to them as victims of the blood-sucking president center around loss, bloodshed, and the wounds thereafter. According to Catherine Merridale (2000) silences of such victims are ‘potentially pathological’ as their voices will never be heard.

This inability is mainly because, the lasting impact of experienced psychological and emotional violence almost always leaves a breaking down, a fragmentation of language that renders the experience unsayable, indescribable, and untranslatable into words (Kalugala, 2023). This poem begins with a simile;

Like Buffaloes charging against the sun

Sweeping up dust to litter the sky

The news arrived

Via a friend then another and another(P. 48)

The persona describes in the stanza above the briskness with which news about Amin’s death travels. She sighs with relief at Amin’s death, reflecting on Sontag’s idea that collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulation of that which is important (2003). This implies that for

traumatized people, remembering what they have gone through is not important, as it presses the 'wound' so badly causing further pain. Sontag emphasizes that 'stipulating' (demanding) is what is important for such victims of Amin's cruelty, so that they can rest from the nightmare of being his next victims. This explains cognitive flexibility, a component of psychological resilience that looks at characters adapting to their thoughts and behaviors to suit the latest situation. The latest being this case, how to react to the news of the death of their tormentor.

This news then does not ask each person to reflect on Amin's undoing with them. Rather, it demands that whoever receives information about Amin's death relays it as a matter of urgency. Sontag means to say that the recollection of the pain of these characters is not what is important but the understanding that the source of their trauma is no more. To the reader, images born out of these poetry collections are so important because 'they invoke the miracle of survival.' Looking back, these characters can't help but wonder how they survived the days of loss, insult, and pain.

The line 'Like buffaloes chasing against the sun' begins with a figure of speech 'like'. This symbolizes an urgent need to transit a terrible hindrance. The buffalo here is an embodiment of an obstacle towards fulfillment of the sun's nourishment. It stands in the way for characters to enjoy nature, causing them to struggle against it overwhelmingly.

Personification is noted in the second line of the stanza above 'Sweeping up dust to litter the sky'. The quality of sweeping and littering gives these human abilities to a piece of news. The act of sweeping implies a need to clean up a previously dirty space in a bid to rid it of any evidence of the murderous encounters. 'Littering' elaborates an optimism that such difficult days are over. Such a persona has endured so much and so litters the sky not only in memory of an end to an era but also as a way of letting everyone know that the life snatcher is now a memory just like his culprits. This physical act of making good mirrors an emotional awareness on the part of the persona that implies an understanding of their emotions to be able to respond to the stress encountered, appropriately.

Kiguli uses personification to create conversations regarding the impact of a human life. She elaborates that it is not only people who get to feel the impact of the departure of this bloodthirsty president but also that nature acknowledges his demise. In a littered sky is a realization of something unusual taking place. This realization elaborates the kind of trauma that is meted out to

the citizens implying that those still alive are but witnesses to the horror they encountered. The act of witnessing requires remembering the turbulent past. Sontag reminds us that, ‘remembering as an ethical act, has ethical value in and of itself.’ Having witnessed so many deaths and bloodshed, the persona relies on her ability to bounce back from such adversity showcasing self-efficacy in such pro-active behavior.

The line, ‘via a friend then another and another’ implies the important aspect of social support in such traumatic times. Such cycles of friendships provide the persona with the urgent support she requires to express their relief about the death of Amin. The practicability of this relationship is in the transmission of this news so quickly for everyone to know about the death of Amin. The persona’s intention is optimistic that such news will help those people struggling with the pain of loss cope with their adversity. This is so because as each person relays the news, ‘socially they support their psyche to process the implication of Amin’s demise.’

In a single sentence, the second stanza starts and ends, ‘Amin is dead’. Single-sentence stanzas are used by poets for several reasons and in this case, it is to draw an image of a dead bloodthirsty president, after which, the reader is given a moment of reflection before proceeding to the next stanza. This stanza is heavy with finality. The echo behind this proclamation is a blend of optimism, purpose, and adaptability. The persona reads hope in Amin’s death so the positivity lodged in this echo internally fosters resilience for such a phase to pass. This is why this stanza in a way calms down the characters, relaying this news as it alleviates feelings of stress and lowers distress levels because their tormentor is finally no more. To foster well-being is to reflect on the effect of this dead man and consequently accept the reality of his actions including the loved ones, gone forever as well as the meaning of their absence. This reflection then fosters a transition from adversity to growth, making bouncing back to reality an inevitable encounter for such traumatized characters.

Kiguli uses rhetorical questions to elaborate on the person’s lack of plan after comprehending the reality of Amin’s demise. She asks;

What do we do with such news?

Then a joke came

From a friend and then another and another

A symbolic image of the man

Blood and laughter (p.48)

It is clear that the persona, just like the traumatized characters are surprised by such a death. This is because they don't think 'the man' at the helm of multiple deaths is in any way prone to it. The persona controls their emotions in a bid to support a positively inclined behavior, which results in a joke. There is a repetition of the rhetoric question at the beginning of the third and fourth stanzas. 'What do we do with such news? / But what do we do with such news?' Kela Parker (2023) postulates that repetition emphasizes certain ideas or feelings, intensifying emotional significance and creating a focal point that crystallizes what the poem is about and where it is going. In this case, it is the idea that Amin is no more and the feeling of helplessness that Kassam addresses as emptiness. Kassam's poem titled 'Emptiness' in a poetry collection titled *Poems from East Africa* addresses this predicament thus;

Someone pronounces, 'Arise'!

But where is the energy?

Another pleads, 'Enliven'!

But where is the blood?

A third says 'illuminate'!

But where is the light? (p.80)

This stanza elaborates the way people have been depleted of the energy to live because they have been reduced to debris and left to look on as life passes them by. To 'pronounce/ plead/' say is to make a sound without necessarily adding actions or movement of the entire body. These verbs suggest a motionless body that attempts to forge a way out of its stupor to achieve dreams once shared before the bloodthirsty president interrupts the course of life. It is against this background that Eckhart Tolle (1997) contends that life gives us whatever experience is most helpful for the evolution of our consciousness because it is the experience, we are having at this material moment.' His idea is that we focus on the now and make great use of it. So, the persona in the stanza above is making attempts in that regard as a way of securing the greatness in the future to come.

‘Blood and laughter’ is what the joke is. The idea that a death causes those traumatized to think of ‘a joke’ is but a sarcastic response to such a tragedy. Kiguli uses sarcasm to capture Amin’s shortcomings, her way of highlighting the absurdity in his doing while president of Uganda. The Guardian newspaper (2003) in its obituary section then reports Amin as;

*The most brutal dictator to wield power in post-independence Africa. He made himself
a field marshal and left a legacy of bloodthirsty killings and economic mismanagement.*

His death toll will never be accurately known, is not less than 80,000, likely around 300,000’

It is such a background that prompts the persona to still ask, ‘But what do we do with such news?’ It is an emotional question as it reflects on so much loss of humanity. ‘But’ is a conjunction that contrasts the previous idea of laughter to bring back the reader to the person of Amin. It is followed by ‘how’, an adverb that seeks how the victims of Amin’s trauma should express their delight at his passing. To them, his death does not translate into happiness as their ‘grief has never hoped / and will never’. The finality of such an impossible hope is sealed in the adverb ‘never’ and confirmed by the death of the perpetrator. To this end, the persona showcases a unique component of psychological resilience; being flexible and allowing to cope with uncertainty and change. The rhetoric, ‘What do we do with such news?’ expresses satirical elements. Yaseen & Fayyad (2015) note that satire constitutes a weapon for the weak and powerless in their confrontation with any oppressor and every tyrant. In such questions lies an assertion that those wounded by the president are still alive while he, the bloodthirsty ‘carnivore’ is no more. By using satire, the poet ‘beats’ those in power in a moral and psychological confrontation that goes beyond direct physical confrontation. This confrontation is generally a foregone conclusion that nature avenges those it swallows in unceremonious deaths to the advantage of the oppressor and tyrant.

The biggest setback though is that even the expression of that gratitude is such an uphill task because the empty homes and compounds (a daily reminder of those people killed by Amin) just can’t let them. Amin’s victims can only contend with history as it always harshly denounces those who incite it. (WuHe, 2003) This is so because there is no historical pain without personal pain. As

he dies, Amin leaves behind a family that is traumatized by the repercussions of his actions that attest to personal pain. This leaves them with an option that other citizens have gotten used to, being resilient. It is such trauma and the urgent need for resilience that one realizes that horrors of history are not confined to the past and historical scars left open do not heal but instead cause new wounds. (Berry, 2008).

Kiguli dedicates this poem to Peter Nazareth to applaud him for paving way for artists to express societal ills and good. As a social, political and cultural commentator, Nazareth receives this warmth to not just get his name mentioned but to add to the work he started many years ago as he wrote about the Ugandan post colony. This poem resonates well with the critical examination of Idi Amin's regime and his impact on Ugandan society especially in one of his critical writings titled 'The General Is Up'. According to Austin Bukenya (2021) his 'gut-wrenching encounters' explain Kiguli's depiction of Amin as the blood-sucking president. To dedicate this poem to the 'octogenarian' therefore is a kind way of honoring those who came before us and their contribution to where we are today.

It is against this background that in Kiguli's poem titled 'Plain Speaking', the person wonders why, 'They call this country mother' yet they do ill things against their women and girls. They rape their women and 'force them into slavery', exchange children for guns, 'loot land', and 'engage in wars' yet this country belongs to them and their future. The repetition of the pronoun, 'They' at the beginning of each stanza is evident. The Cambridge dictionary explains this pronoun as one meant to 'refer to two or more people or things previously mentioned or easily identified.' Kiguli uses it in this particular poem because the 'they' are people whom the reader can easily identify.

Secondly, Kiguli uses 'they', a third person narrator to, 'bring forward a message that the persona never took part in the brutality that was done against the women. This disclaimer detaches her from the despicable harshness.' This way, the persona alienates herself from the events surrounding such horror and implied trauma. The persona in 'Plain Speaking' elaborates;

They call this country, mother

And rape its women

Abduct its girls

Force them into slavery (p.36)

This stanza demonstrates an ironic situation where children force themselves onto their ‘mother’ to derive pleasure from their conquest and leave her so sad and solemn. Namakula notes that. ‘Kiguli uses a bitter tone in this poem to draw a clear distinction between the word ‘mother’ and the contexts patriarchy put around it’ and the misuse of the word mother that ideally should carry with it ‘love’ not hate and pain. Namakula in her dissertation titled, ‘Negotiating Marginal Spaces in Susan Kiguli’s Poetry’ quotes Bryden and Madore (1997) who explain that, ‘they rape because they are products of a ‘rape culture’ consisting of patriarchal laws, practices, and ideology’ (2017, P.33). It is such a traumatic culture that causes people to rape as there are no repercussions for the offenders because patriarchy permits the vice and the people are raised thinking that it is a ‘normal’ habit thus handing it down from one generation to the next even when, ‘rape is a violation of the human body’ (Tibatema. 1999).

They then descend on their siblings and the ‘girls’ and forcefully push them into slavery. This is not a normal way of family engagement because the family does not inflict pain on each other as above. Repetition in the phrase, ‘They call this country home’ not only emphasizes the disguise the offenders use to insult and plunder the country but also to emphasize the re-occurrence of the listed evils. The reader is confronted with a group of selfish people who care nothing about the future of this country as they ‘launch wars to fill their vaults with gold’/ loot land/ Devour people/ Defeat the future.

In this painful excerpt, the persona wonders why such irony is extended by the perpetrators of such trauma who initiate themes of violence and abuse as evident above. The female gender as Namakula notes is so marginalized to the point of suffering and unhappiness (2017). Trauma that comes with/ rape, abduction, and slavery/ is so gross for the perpetrators to ironically call the same people their mother. The plurality in the initial word ‘they’ is what drives the point of collective responsibility home. It implies that such immoral acts are dispensed by so many people in the country that it has now ceased to be a crime. It sadly has become a lifestyle. What do such girls and women do in the face of such grief? Namakula reflects on Hook’s work and notes that such characters should make use of the power beneath the positions they occupy even when they are marginalized.

The idea that one can rape their mother is not only pathetic but also incomprehensible. This is the background of trauma in this poem as the characters are stressed daily. Such bodies can't fail to speak in faltering tones and therefore give mixed messages to the reader. Frank (2013) calls this situation, 'a condition of being shipwrecked by a disease' (p.73). To him, therefore, such a female character is not only fatigued by the countless rape encounters for example but is also uncertain about the future with the situation not under check. This is why he goes on to metaphorically refer to the persona in such a poem as a storyteller whose cardinal intention is to repair work on the wreck to make the future 'thinkable'. The persona performs a straightforward narrative action with dual re-affirmations.

Relationships with other people are expressed with an indirect message for the wrongdoers to stop it while the self is equally re-affirmed by the realization that the story being told is worth being listened to. The self, celebrates because it is still patient as the initial audience for itself (Frank, 2013). This long process can only be occasioned by resilience as the persona acknowledges what went wrong by examining it. As the culprits read this poem and choose to stop the three evils of rape, abduction, and slavery, they are allowed to mourn their irresponsibility to make way for responsibility. The entire poem is so chaotic which Arthur refers to as 'the pit of narrative wreckage' because the women are forced to exchange their children for guns, declared as nothing without their husbands, are hungry, homeless, and horrified. The major truth in such a chaotic story is to reveal the hubris of other stories as exhibited by the actions of characters therein.

Nyanzi illustrates psychological resilience in her poem titled, 'A Plea for Decongestion' from her poetry collection titled, *No Roses from My Mouth*. In this poem, she intimates to the reader the extremity of the harsh physical conditions that she experienced in the confines of Luzira Women's Prison. She notes that;

My thighs press hard onto one's arse.

My arse presses hard onto another's thighs.

This sequence of adult thighs pressing adult arse

Is repeated in two rows of 30 women each. (p.3)

In the above stanza, the persona elaborates on how she and other female characters lie down in their prison cell to sleep overnight. A thigh continually and consistently pressing on one's arse explains the fact that prisoners sleep so close to each other that they end up squeezing themselves in ways that their imprisoned state has caused them to forget. The fact that one such a character decides to pen such a poem demonstrates their indomitable human will to live against all odds. This will is a psychological construct that allows the body to physically pass the moment of the act being pushed into it. The odds here include prisoners sleeping in each other's arses, *'The injustices of our justice system leave us fucked'*. 'Fucked' is a vulgar word that Nyanzi uses to get her 'message across' (Aljazeera, 2017). She labors to explain how the female prisoners either end up in a confused state or an unprecedented sexual encounter with another, in this case, a fellow female.

Nyanzi uses this particular word (fucked) to make an emotional appeal to society through her readers. To her, such an appeal could create awareness of, 'the things that failed to become' and in a way help the incoming female prisoners be accorded better sleeping arrangements. Kiconco Milliam (2024), in her paper titled *Psychological Violence Against Women*, elaborates that psychological violence is the most common form of violence perpetrated by an inmate partner mainly because of the prevailing conditions in prisons. In its commonality, therefore, prison authorities take these uncomfortable facilities as they come and endure their outcomes, being 'fucked'

Kalugala asks, 'What happens to language then when it tries -against itself to express what it fundamentally cannot say? Does it become fragmented, incoherent, elusive (a haunted language) as Schwab posits? (2023, P.2). Both Kalugala and Schwab create awareness regarding the state of the mind of a poet at the time of writing a poem and the choice of language at their disposal. 'Trying against itself' implies a deficiency in eloquence occasioned by trauma. The easiest way out for a poet like Nyanzi 'the angrier, raging, tumultuous and brooding poet' is the use of 'a violent diction' a kind of 'violent tongue' as a manifestation of trauma. Kalugala continues to posit that the impact of psychological violence on the writers' psyches is reflected in and manifested through the imagery, symbolism, and diction of the writing itself. This is the sole reason why Nyanzi uses the genital metaphors that earn her the title of a vulgar poet.

In this way, the persona of a ‘witness and survivor’ bears testimony of the sleeping arrangements in Uganda’s female prison and helps her readers to, ‘listen to it’. Caruth (1996) intimates to us that, ‘history like trauma is never simply one’s own, that history is precisely the way we were implicated in each other’s traumas.’ This means that Nyanzi sleeping in such detestable conditions while in prison does not end with her. This is so because subsequently, other prisoners whether convicts or suspects will in turn sleep on the same ‘dirty thin slices of mattresses’ and ‘hard concrete floor mattresses’ Like history, such pain, and trauma are repeated at different times after court hearings from time to time. Such a situation makes repetition a common occurrence. This is why Caruth (1996) observes that the conscious when faced with the possibility of death (because of traumatic neurosis) can do nothing but repeat the destructive event over and over again which in the long run leads to moral instability.

Testimony cannot simply be relayed, repeated, or reported by another. Without losing its function as a testimony, the burden of the witness -despite his or her alignment with other witnesses radically unique, non-interchangeable, and solitary burden. This in essence means that no one bears witness for the witness. It is for this reason that the person must express herself for others to listen to the ordeal she faces while being imprisoned in Uganda’s female prison.

That one’s thigh casually presses on another’s arse (buttocks) among sixty women is incomprehensible and gives a voyeuristic experience to the reader (Berry, 2008). However, Nyanzi at the heart of such a moral dilemma chooses to write a poem – her way of bearing testimony and also creating awareness about such conditions. Some words like ‘arse’ and ‘fucked’ sound vulgar to the reader yet they help in visualizing the scene at hand. Nyanzi helps the reader to appreciate that language during testimony, is both in trial and in process and that therefore it does not possess itself as a conclusion (Shoshana, 1992). This means that the reader has to read contextually, including the various complexities and nuances to be able to arrive at the meaning behind the ‘vulgar’ words employed by her. She elaborates that language can be used to not only confront trauma but also create meaning out of chaotic experiences. Meaning in this case that the female prisoners are too congested to remain sane. This insanity is what the poet wants the reader to listen to.

Because this prison testimony is addressed to others through the witness, from within the solitude of her stance, she becomes the vehicle of an occurrence, a reality, a stance, or a dimension beyond herself. This therefore hinders the reader from taking her encounter personally but rather as a voice

of thousands of other women on whose behalf she makes this address. Given this situation, Caruth comments that the biggest tragedy of those who survived is transferring our anxieties, our fears, and our problems to the generations to come by our silence for the conscious and unconscious legacy that history and memory, unwittingly or lucidly leave for the forthcoming generations. She disagrees with characters that face daring situations, personalizes them, and shuts them in, denying them the light of day through a core outlet called testimony. Testimony is the process by which the narrator (the survivor) reclaims his position as a witness. For any poet to satisfy their characters' imperative to tell, they employ a host of stylistic devices.

Kahyana (2022) explains that for any reader to understand a poet's choice of style, one must study the background of that particular poet in this case Nyanzi so as not to judge them harshly. He further elaborates that Nyanzi's radical rudeness stems from her Ganda culture, in the Buganda kingdom in Uganda, where the Nnalongo (mother of twins) or Ssalongo (father of twins) are allowed to use vulgar/obscene language during a ceremony dubbed, 'dancing the twins' about sexual intercourse and sexual parts. He concludes by explaining that Nyanzi coming from such a background, rides on the license bestowed upon her by her culture to graphically express herself. (Kahyana, 2022). Kahyana's insights into the Ganda culture help us to understand the literary styles employed by the two poets under study. Important to note is that both poets; Kiguli and Nyanzi have origins in the same Ganda culture but the major difference lies in the fact the latter is a Nnalongo (mother of twins) hence the cultural license.

Given the above, Caruth (1996) notes that catastrophic events seem to repeat themselves for those who have passed through them. This is why these same women keep undergoing the same stressful and traumatic encounters each time they try to lay their bodies down for rest. This stance resonates with Olivia (2023) who emphasizes that the impact of repetition includes but is not limited to; re-victimization, lack of clear resolutions, emotional wounds, self-destruction, and low self-esteem. The women who were the previous night 'fucked' experience the same over and over again hence the implied re-victimization. This then means that the more times those in authority take to reverse these ill conditions, the more impact of the ills listed above, and the more traumatic it becomes for the victims as those in authority fall short of making impactful legislation. The impact of this vicious cycle of pain and numbness is such deep-rooted trauma that warrants the urgency for resilience. The persona laments;

On the floors of the wards of Luzira Women's Prison,

Women sleep as congested as firewood neatly stacked.

Petty crime and debt- none is here for treason.

The injustices of our justice system leave us fucked.

Some sleep on dirty thin slices of prison mattresses.

Some sleep on one-half of their prison blankets.

Some sleep on the hard concrete floor buttresses.

There is no distinction between convicts and suspect (p.3)

The conditions are as clear as day; petty crimes put these women behind bars in Luzira prison that is too congested for life. The poor treatment makes the whole arrangement unjust bringing out the irony in the line ‘The injustices of our justice system’. It is ironical that a system supposed to dispense justice is the one that actually does not. For these prisoners, this injustice meted on this ‘fucks’ their psyche and in that daze, the physical ‘fuck’ implied by this line; ‘My arse presses hard onto another’s thighs.’ ensues throwing this prisoner further into an abyss of trauma. Kalen Dior’s says that ‘a person begging for their humanity to be acknowledged can sound an awful lot like rage yet in actual sense, their solemn request has been refuted.’ It is in that begging for understanding that Nyanzi is misunderstood and labeled vulgar.

The persona in this poem clarifies the story of their illness while in prison to give a voice to their experiences that medicine cannot describe. The idea that they get to survive this ordeal is why Nyanzi, a witness who is both a ‘wounded healer’ as well as the ‘wounded storyteller’ endured illness and these poor conditions. Her body injuries just like those of countless other women incarcerated alongside herself become the potency of their stories. It is these stories that create empathetic bonds between themselves and their listeners (Arthur, 2013). Surviving such bodily wounds and going forth to tell stories about them is what makes this persona so resilient. As a wounded storyteller, who cares for others by sharing this ordeal, Nyanzi executes an ethical act of testimony.

In the end, the inhuman treatment in prison cells becomes but a vicious cycle that Nyanzi labors to put an end to. She does this just like Kiguli, by capturing such traumas in her different poetry collections, as her way of bearing witness to avoid shutting in or locking out history, for when ‘one’s history is abolished, one’s identity ceases to exist as well.’ Sontag (2003) in her book-length essay titled *Regarding The Pain of Others* explains that ‘witnessing requires the creation of star witnesses, renowned for their bravery and zeal in procuring’ and processing issues around them to ably express them on paper in form of a poem which the two poets do excellently. Kiguli and Nyanzi are then applauded for being such brave poets to articulate the issues that Ugandans face in varying degrees of their lives.

Nyanzi and Kiguli's poems under this study therefore stand as exhibits of testimony. This fits Caruth's definition of witness as, ‘a witness of what happens during an event.’ Nyanzi, ‘is driven by an imperative to tell’ (Felman & Laub. 1996) as a victim of the poor conditions in Uganda's cells. According to the duo, in reflection on the Holocaust survivors, one of the women made this statement;

‘We wanted to survive so as to live one day after Hitler, in order to be able to tell our story’

It is from such and so many other testimonies, that Felman and Laub concluded that survivors did not need to survive to tell their stories but they also needed to tell their stories to survive. This imperative to tell, thus ‘is for others to know one's story, unimpeded by ghosts from the past against which one has to protect oneself’. Nyanzi witnesses the physical conditions of this female ward ‘to be able to live one's life.’ It is such a scene where Nyanzi finds herself locked up for cyber harassment and offending the president in 2019 and 2020. This harassment is captured, ‘in a poem where she uses the president's dead mother's vagina as an image to comment on her son's oppression, suppression and repression of Ugandans.’ (Nyanzi. Vii). One would argue that even in a decent, clean, uncongested ward, she would still have served her term to the end. Her ability to detest the circumstances yet choose to patiently ‘sleep as congested firewood/ sleep on dirty thin slices of mattresses’ lights a torch on her ability to physically survive hence resilient.

Sontag (2003) elaborates that there is shame as well as shock in looking at the close-up of a real horror. It is that shame that causes people not to want to read such a poem. When they finally master the courage to do so, they name the poet behind it as vulgar. Sontag concludes by saying that ‘the

people with the right to look at these images of suffering of this extreme order are those who could do something to alleviate it.' She means to say that it is the people in charge of causing such untold suffering who ought to view the product of the misery they met on others.

In this regard, Sontag indirectly means to say that innocent people should not in any way be made to witness such a horror thereby extending trauma to them. She labors to explain this because she understands that, 'the cumulative effect' of such horror is 'devastating'. Nyanzi's way of 'doing something' 'therefore is by making a conscious decision to write about it hence witnessing. By writing this poem as her way of bearing witness, Nyanzi intends for it to reach the attention of the people in authority that cause the horror and change for the better. In the same breath, Nyanzi pays tribute to the victims of these horrors in such a poem as her way of 'drumming up support for their sacrifice' well aware that the rich Ugandans just like 'the well-off countries in the West have the dubious privilege of being spectators of other people's pain'. This tribute helps the victims of this trauma 'not to wait, wait and wait, forever - waiting in the air like flags of unsung countries' for someone to recognize and applaud their resilience (Bulawayo. 150).

For this persona to tell her life is her way of assuming responsibility for it. This responsibility expands in stories as each scholar brings on their diverse interpretations. (Arthur, 2013). Nyanzi at the heart of such a moral dilemma understands this responsibility and chooses to write a poem about it. As a wounded persona, Nyanzi feels the brunt of the violence arising from witnessing. Arthur goes on to explain that eventually, the bodies of such women in prison cells are damaged and wounded, the outcome of which transforms them into the encasement of the battered and broken state. Within this equation lies an attempt to frame a series of incidents, many of which history has silenced. The trauma of what she interfaces is as fresh in her memory as the victims of that act. This encounter of sex and violence in the prison where human dignity should ideally be upheld but is not majorly serves to elaborate how the politics of the state can influence the politics of the body. The body and the state are memo-red in the poem above, then denied equally tragically.

Nyanzi in this poem attests to what Kiplan picks from David. The latter reflected about trauma, that it can be understood regarding specific contexts in which it occurs including; cultural norms, political contexts, nature of the event, organization of the community, and many others (2001). Nyanzi talks about the 'traumatic situations' and not the trauma because trauma reflects an

individual while the traumatic situation reflects what surrounds that person's suffering' thus making it a communal affair.

In his book titled *Wounded Bodies*, Frank elaborates that stories that ill people tell come out of wounded bodies. This in essence is why he said that wounded bodies have two sides. One persona and the other, social. The personal gives voice to the body so fast that the changed body can become once again familiar in these stories. These stories are to be listened to by all including the intellectuals (the leaders of this country) who observe these people and their struggles. The major problem is that one of the most difficult duties as human beings is to listen to the voices of those who suffer as their voices are broken and weak. While listening is hard, it is a fundamental moral act that humanity extends to the wounded bodies both in such physical prison cells as well as the mental ones.

The voices of the ill like those in this poem are so easy to ignore because they are often faltering in tone and mixed in message (Frank, 2013). This faltering and lack of clarity carried by such bodies bespeak conditions of embodiment that most of us would rather forget our vulnerability to even when they are real. A 'thigh pressing hard on one's arse' elaborates the fact that the body is not mute, but it is simply inarticulate. It does not use speech for the reader or viewer to hear it out yet it begets it in its illness story. The reader then falls into a community of shared experience and comprehends the eloquence extended by such pains and symptoms of traumatic experiences. Nyanzi deploys such sexual metaphors and allegorical comparisons between genitalia and other body parts with the aim of, 'provoking thought, discussion, debate, and activism' (Kahyana, 2020). When the reader arrives at such eloquence (which some readers choose to refer to as vulgar) and the subsequent comprehension born out of those metaphors and allegories, of the issues at hand, is when the body's responsibility ends. As the wounded body therefore undergoes such processes, it boasts of the truth of experience that is malleable.

Sontag further explains that just like the feeling that something had to be done about the war in Bosnia by building from the attention to journalists in what was later to be termed as 'the CNN effect' for more than three years, so should the effect of Ugandan poets regarding the war on trauma. As each poet elaborates the varying traumatic issues in their lines and stanzas, readers should be equally informed of the status quo. Just like the Bosnian people watched each night the latest from the war fronts so should the readers in Ugandans read off each page of the many poetry

collections spanning a number of years to cumulatively cover a host of atrocities encountered by Ugandans. It is this resolve that will help the informed masses to finally rise out of their comfort zone and put an end to these traumatic times by routing for a change of treatment and the way how the privileged class regards the less- privileged.

The controversy about language usage brings into focus the post-colonial theory which interrogates the colonial assumptions and the representations of the colonized people. It examines ways in which a colonizing society imposes its worldview on the people it colonizes making them “objects’ of observation and denying them the power to define themselves and the disconnection they feel from their own identities. This is clear when in the 7th and 8th stanzas, the persona notices that in speaking ‘a language of the distant lands’, she has become a ‘dumb child’ among her people causing her ideas to remain in her head even though they ‘demand expression’. This theory also focuses on attempts made by formerly colonized to reassert the identities they wish to claim for themselves. The persona sets out on a mission backed by a desire to break the tradition that sets up women to suffer at the hands of men in the name of submissiveness because she has been taught to embrace all manner of pain, insult, and ridicule to be termed as one who is as strong as a rock.

Hooks emphasizes that the heart’s persistent call to love, healing, and practicing hope all sustain the spirit of perseverance which makes resilience possible. For the two poets, therefore, to love is to lay on the table the wounds of Uganda’s past, and to heal is to appreciate the chaos that the wounds bring. The duo therefore bear testimony through such chaotic stories with a mind of revealing the hubris of other stories (Frank, 2013).

Nyanzi and Kiguli's poems under this study represent missing pages in Uganda’s history (Berry, 2008). This means that if the leadership of this country had done its homework well, there would not be a need for resilience forms because there would not be a need for that resilience. Therefore, these poems stand as exhibits of testimony. Testimony, a tenet of the trauma theory refers to the art of bearing witness to one’s traumatic past by sharing it with others. She therefore fits Caruth’s definition of witness as, ‘a witness of what happens during an event.’ Nyanzi, ‘is driven by an imperative to tell’ (Felman & Laub. 1996) as a victim of the poor conditions in Uganda’s cells. According to the duo, in reflection of the Holocaust survivors, one of the women made this statement;

‘We wanted to survive so as to live one day after Hitler, in order to be able to tell our story’

It is from such and so many other testimonies, that Felman and Laub concluded that survivors did not need to survive to tell their stories but they also needed to tell their stories in order to survive. This imperative to tell, thus ‘is for others to know one’s story, unimpeded by ghosts from the past against which one has to protect oneself’. Nyanzi witnesses the physical conditions of this female ward ‘to be able to live one’s life.’ It is such a scene where Nyanzi finds herself locked up for cyber harassment and offending the president in 2019 and 2020. This harassment is captured, ‘in a poem where she uses the president’s dead mother’s vagina as an image to comment on her son’s oppression, suppression and repression of Ugandans.’ (Nyanzi. Vii). One would argue that even in a decent, clean, uncongested ward, she would still have served her term to the end. Her ability to detest the circumstances yet choose to patiently ‘sleep as congested firewood/ sleep on dirty thin slices of mattresses’ lights a torch on her ability to physically survive hence resilient.

The persona in Nyanzi’s poetry is herself most times, the subject she addresses and the style she does so expresses a mature mind. In her poem titled, ‘Delayed Justice’, she captures a frustration with Uganda’s Justice System in the way it unjustly postpones court hearings of eager suspects who, ‘enthusiastically rush’ to court time and time again. The repeated appearances are captured in these lines;

“Your trial magistrate is indisposed

Court adjourned to a month away.

You are further remanded to prison.”

What a disappointment!

What an anti-climax!

After a month of rotting in prison,

I step again into the suspects’ dock.

“The State Prosecutors are on strike.

Adjourned to a month away.

Further remanded to prison.'

The following month was a repeat (p.11)

This factual account from the persona gives a sneak peek into what really happens in Ugandan courts of law and is probably responsible for the case backlog which, 'is frustrating dispensation of justice in the country.' (Parliament of Uganda News 22nd July 2023). The crucial issue here is the constant postponement of the court hearings. In Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience*, she notes that repetitions are particularly striking because they seem not to be initiated by the individual's acts but rather appear as the possession of some people by a sort of fate, a series of painful events, to which they are subjected and which seem to be entirely outside their wish or control. The countless adjournments in such courts of law constitute, 'a series of painful events' yet in as much as they are pained, they can't get to control it. To both the reader and the persona, this continued postponement of court hearings is not only 'peculiar' but also 'uncanny' because the catastrophe keeps repeating itself.

Sigmund Freud, a famous Austrian neurologist refers to such repetition of a negative occurrence, In this case of the absence of state prosecutors at every hearing as a compulsion by those in charge to return to an earlier state of things, the heart of catastrophe causing 'traumatic neurosis'. This is the 'unwitting reenactment of an event that one cannot simply leave behind.' In a way, the persona wonders why suspects have to be treated in this way before they are pronounced either innocent or guilty of charges levied against them. The line, "Adjourned to a month away" is repeated to emphasize the, 'unsuccessfully repressed emotions from the past experiences.' Such emotions include anxiety, depression, and sadness. This implies that when the prisoners' egos attempt to repress and displace their pain over the delay of their hearing, at that moment, a similar occurrence happens in the form of adjournment and all the trauma that it brings to the suspects.

Kendra Cherry refers to Freud's traumatic neurosis as, 'Repetition compulsion' which involves repeatedly engaging in behaviors or seeking experiences that echo early life experiences including past traumas. Despite the negative consequences of that repetition, they continue to seek out reminders of their trauma to gain mastery over them. These reminders can take two forms, one of which is repeating emotionally or physically painful situations that people have experienced in the

past (2023). The persona in the above poem also repeats that line to perhaps master the trauma of her time in prison.

It is against this background that Cameron et al (2022) note that repetition compulsion can act as a barrier to therapeutic change. This is so because these traumas are relieved in such literary texts as expressions of a heartache that stuck. This is why Freud's theory of trauma captured, 'the moving and sorrowful voice that cries out, a voice that is paradoxically released through the wound' according to the definition of the wound in this study, and called it trauma. Sree (2019) quotes Geoffrey Hartman who explains that trauma theory tries to turn criticism back towards being ethical, responsible, and a purposive discourse, listening to the wounds of those who purpose to bear witness.

This explanation warrants constructive discussions that should end in reduced recurrences of similar traumas as a way of 'reconstituting' and 'foregrounding' the aftermath of traumatic events including the political ones discussed as elaborated by the poem discussed above.'

Catharsis is a literary device that Nyanzi employs in this poem. It is a literary device used to stimulate the release of emotions. Catharsis comes from the Greek word katharsis which means 'purging' or 'cleansing'. This is essential in painful or emotional texts because it helps the reader to, 'purge their negative emotions and feel relief as a result.' (Sasha; 2023). In this poem, the intense emotions stirred by the way 'the arse presses hard onto a thigh' is when the reader finally lets go and receives the cleansing.

Another form of literary catharsis is articulation where a victim narrates their ordeal for their beings to feel lighter and thereby cleansed. He who needs cleansing has gone through some form of trauma and therefore 'hangs in there'. This cleansing resonates with Erin McGlothlin's 'Whew' effect. This refers to the reader's relieved reaction to the moment in the survivor's account that describes his or her eventual liberation. (2021)

Rhyme is evident in the first stanza in the line, 'The injustices of our justice system leave us fucked' Injustice and justice give the poem a sense of rhyme because their last three syllables sound alike. Rhyme is a function of sound rather than the meaning of the rhyming words. In this poem, this rhyme is meant to help the reader appreciate the poor sleeping conditions and also infer the meaning of such a sentence concerning the entire poem. That prediction leads the reader to the irony

produced by both words. One can quickly wonder how a 'justice system' leads to injustices. This means that the persona is ill-treated in a place that claims to be just. For example;

Some sleep on dirty linen slices of prison mattresses

Some on one-half of their prison blankets

Some on the hard concrete floor buttresses (p.3)

Nyanzi notes that this excerpt does not reflect the justice claimed above, hence the 'injustice' cited. The mixing of convicts with suspects, too, doesn't reflect justice at all. Red Riding Hood is a story that has been retold and re-imagined more frequently than most. Where the oral tradition often celebrated Red's sexuality and cunning, literary versions transform the tale into one in which a young girl is blamed for her rape, or, in many feminist versions, where she fights back.

The reader applauds the two poets because in Redstone's words, 'poetry allows them the allowance to process the traumatic events and offer them to the world.' (2001). They do this in a more graphic account of the historical events (poetry) which ultimately sets it apart from other genres. (Reiley, 1986). These poets are further compelled by Negin's reflection on Elisa Marder's insight in her essay titled, 'Trauma and literary studies' that the importance of finding new ways to acknowledge the impact of events that can only be known belatedly is by listening to the power of experience that can only be expressed indirectly. (2006).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to study the depiction of resilience in selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi. Six poems by Ugandan poets were selected and an analysis of them was made to arrive at the discussions in the previous chapter. During the selection of these poems, particular interest was put on their subject matter for suitability in line with the theme of resilience.

This research was guided by two objectives; 1. The forms of resilience in selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi, 2. How selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi depict resilience. The research was to answer two research questions; 1. What forms of resilience are addressed in Ugandan poetry by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi? 2. How do Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi poems depict resilience?

This research was analyzed in reflection of Cathy Caruth's Trauma theory. It hinged on three specific tenets; repetition, fragmentation, and testimony regarding the trauma experienced by characters as depicted by the poems under study.

5.1 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The primary sources of data were the poetry collection of the two poets; Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi. Four poetry collections (two each) by the two poets were chosen with criteria being those written in the English language. I read the four poetry collections titled *The African Saga*, *Home Floats in the Distance* by Kiguli and *No Roses from my Mouth*, *Don't Come in My Mouth* by Nyanzi to study and establish those poems with negative themes that necessitate resilience. Poems of both poets were read such as; 'The Resilient Tree', 'The African Saga', 'Amin is Dead' by

Kiguli and 'My Personal Motivations to Join Politics', 'Justice Delayed', 'A Plea for Decongestion', 'Speaking Freedom' by Nyanzi.

The researcher made notes on each of the poems read for comprehension and clarity of choice. After comprehending each of the poems selected, she then categorized the similar or closely similar poems under the same category; a, b, and c. The researcher then went back and studied each of the poems to finally arrive at the common issues addressed therein or the style used to finally arrive at a similar characteristic that she later named a form. She further studied the similarities and differences of each poem making notes and summaries on a checklist of the evidence of trauma in the subject matter. She finally named the poems under a- intellectual, b- Historical and social, c Psychological to suit the objectives already set.

A variety of secondary sources of data were used; newspaper articles, Novels, journal articles, Books, social media like face book, which helped to enrich the information from primary sources and validate the researcher's perspectives, arguments and lines of thought regarding the depiction of resilience in Ugandan poetry in light of Cathy Caruth's trauma theory.

5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS

After studying the forms of resilience in Ugandan poetry, the study has established that they are as diverse as the causes of trauma are numerous. The three major established are: intellectual, historical, and psychological. These forms of resilience then necessitate the urgent need for the characters affected to establish means of working with the trauma and keep afloat.

The mistreatment undergone by the majority of the characters is in part born out of a patriarchal society that keeps maintaining beliefs that men are more powerful and have the right to control women.' In the same measure, the government of Uganda has fashioned for its citizens systems that are so unjust, leaving them broken both physically and emotionally. It is this status quo that necessitates the need for resilience on their part to mitigate the trauma occasioned by the different forms.

Intellectual resilience is exhibited by characters that are faced with choices to make regarding their lives and lifestyles. At the top of the causes of this form is hegemony, politics, and patriarchy that

keep characters in dreadful circumstances until the courageous ones decide to put an end to it. This implies that people should be allowed to exercise their intellect to work outside the ordinary terms and arrive at authentic resolutions for the betterment of their ordinary and future lives.

Regarding historical and cultural resilience, characters are mainly traumatized by the politics of assumptions and the betrayal of people's rights. A right to a fair election, for example, is what 'The African Saga' advocates for as opposed to some camps jubilating before the votes are even cast. Nyanzi speaks against the lack of judicial discretion in handling court sessions by adjournments and counter adjournments, leaving the suspects in court to suffer more 'fucks' and descending into the abyss of trauma with increased 'unsayable-ness' and incomprehensibility of the matters of politics and the state.

Psychological resilience, on the other hand, pictures a disease of the mind, body, feelings, and sensations. A traumatized character finds it extremely hard to feel relieved, even when their tormentors die. 'Amin is dead' is such a poem, but on hearing such news, the people tormented by him don't get to jubilate because their relatives are long gone/ dead for example. This makes trauma an ongoing encounter that silently kills. The poets whose work is under study have understood the meaning of conformity and have chosen to refuse to conform to patterns established by the politics of the land necessitating the urgent need for witnessing as their way of resilience.

To a reader, such poetry acts as 'suitable sedative to calm internal stresses without resorting to harmful anesthetic drugs' to calm the storms of trauma (Reyzabal, 2014). He goes on to reflect on Goldberg (1993) who declares that 'if you want to get drunk, do not drink whisky; read aloud Shakespeare, Tennyson, Keats, Hopkins, Millay, Whitman and let your body sing with them' so much so that it gets to release the stress and tension born out of traumatic situations.

Reyzabal further encourages Flaubert's notion of embracing the nuances of reading, like 'read to live, read and write to know yourselves and the world, read to equilibrate your life, heal yourselves, grow and become richer as persons to reach so many vital goals. This notion serves to applaud the two poets whose poems are pivotal in this study for fitting into Flaubert's insight (2014).

Of these many devices, the two poets differ in diction. This is because Susan Kiguli expresses her subject matter using clear, symbolic, figurative language while Stella Nyanzi uses 'vaginal

metaphors to speak to power (Blossom, 2012). When Nyanzi uses the metaphor of ‘arse pressing hard on one’s thigh,’ for example, she only does so to articulate her opinions and provoke debate (Kahyana, 2022). It is also ‘her way of expressing the depression she feels in her glum- a condition caused by Museveni's leadership style’. She means to symbolize the idea that the state has been brutal to her citizens and ably does so using this metaphor. In the end, her poetry collections are only a ‘lambast on repressive leadership’ that has choked humaneness out of the ruling class, which Nyanzi calls out in such ‘public insult’ (Blossom, 2021).

This study has established that for one to appreciate a poet’s choice of style, they do well by reflecting a lot about their background. A case in point is Nyanzi, a poet whose poetry is ridiculed and referred to as vulgar yet her Ganda culture where her roots are, bestows on her a license to use language as she dims feet including that which is obscene or vulgar. This Ganda culture, a preserve of the people from the Buganda kingdom in central Uganda, bestows this license to any Nnalongo (Mother of twins) which Nyanzi is, and a Ssalongo (father of twins) to use language about sexual intercourse and sexual parts. This important insight helps the reader to digest such poetry from an informed point of view thereby applauding and comprehending the issues being addressed.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The poems written by both Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi -Ugandan poets equally depict characters as enduring particular circumstances that are painful, daring, and traumatic which occasion the need for resilience. This implies that if the governments, past and present had done their work well, then the various poetry collections would not have seen the light of day because they would not be addressing the issues raised therein. The two poets whose works were under study address the theme of resilience as well as its forms, highlighting their depiction.

This research has established that poets use different forms of language to address themes of interest. While some poets like Kiguli use civil/ polite language to capture the pains characters have had to endure, others like Nyanzi still address the same pain using vulgarity as their style. This then means that the latter should not be abused or misunderstood by her readers or those in power as being made in comparison with another poet like Kiguli, whose style is civility.

In addition, this research has noted that Ugandan poetry explores issues in post-colonial Uganda. In this gaze, the political arena is marred by election malpractice, making democracy a far cry. Social services are not delivered to the electorate, leaving the Ugandan death toll to rise by the day. This situation is what makes death a constant theme in Ugandan poetry.

The characters in the poems under study help readers to uphold resilience as the silver bullet in as far as survival in Uganda's traumatic experiences is concerned. Characters lose their loved ones in open gunfire, poor health facilities for example, yet purposefully survive the scars inflicted on them.

This study applauds the role of female poets in examining the historical landscape through their voices and perspectives. The characters they create see events around them and get to feel the impact of the decisions of the people in authority or in power. As they continue to create characters and address themes around them, they uniquely advocate for a wide range of human rights, making their contribution to society very pivotal in enhancing democracy in Africa.

Furthermore, the depiction of resilience in selected poems by Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi has brought to the attention of the reader that poetry enhances therapy as an intervention to enhance emotional resilience as a way of lessening the impact of anxiety on characters. This is done by allowing poets to creatively use language by diction, symbolism, punctuation, irony, metaphor, simile, and paradox to address the theme of resilience as portrayed by the circumstances the different characters interface in the four poetry collections studied. This implies then that a reader faced with a certain intellectual, historical, and psychological challenge can appreciate, relate, and identify with the characters under study, making this study of paramount importance.

This research has helped to highlight the role of literature in general and poetry in particular in as far as addressing both personal and national concerns is concerned. This has everything to do with breaking biases, attitudes and stereotypes previously held by non-poets, who think that this kind of literature is a waste of time or an activity poets indulge in for just their personal pleasure. Expressing different issues in poems as a motivation for these poets, is their way of enhancing national debates regarding governance and the rule of law of country they both call home.

In the end, the literary expressions employed by the two poets help not only to highlight concerns but also to emphasize the desires of the affected people. This makes it easy for readers to learn and appreciate the lessons extended by the power of literature.

In conclusion, Caruth's trauma theory, styles used by the two authors have helped us understand the reasons behind individual characters' inability to express themselves in moments when they ought to clarify issues that occurred in the past because of fragmentation. The impact of trauma on the human psyche that destabilizes speech is appreciated in artistic representations. The wound breaking one's story into various bits that are hard to articulate makes sense to the reader documented by the use of ellipsis in place of words. The recurrent urge to witness issues as a way of gaining closure and healing cannot be underestimated. This theory underscores the role of trauma in linking different nationalities, cultures, and tribes, as they shade off different pains encountered to confront similar barriers to enhance development and well-being.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Sontag (2003) then asks, 'What do we do with the feelings that have been aroused, the knowledge that has been communicated?' She in this regard asks the readers of such poetry collections to carry out actions that should change the circumstances depicted by the poems in this study.

I recommend that curriculum developers advocate for classroom discussions that focus on analyzing literary works of different authors and how they use literary devices to depict complex psychological and emotional states of characters. Teachers should use Susan Kiguli and Stella Nyanzi's works as a framework for creating creative writing assignments. This is important because it helps students appreciate literature by recognizing how subtle language choices reveal characters' pain, motivations, and abilities. This enhances students' critical reading skills and appreciation of poetry.

I also recommend that government acts on the welfare of prisoners as a matter of urgency in a bid to safeguard their well-being while being incarcerated. This rides on the backdrop that even while in prison, they are still humans and as such, should be handled in a humanistic way. In Sontag's view, it is passivity that dulls the feelings of those in our care (2003). This is because when their welfare

is good, then there are fewer problems regarding their physical and emotional well-being. This shift makes the study relevant as it helps to lessen the trauma experienced by prisoners.

Finally, I do recommend the formation of social platforms, clubs, and organizations to foster resilience-informed interventions. These are meant to enhance the development of social-emotional aspects of humanity. This development helps to enhance peer support to build connections that are relevant in critically extending discussions around the sources of trauma in communities. In the long run, these platforms which offer civic space, become historical for being the voices of change that help to rectify the post-colony into a democratic state that the country looks forward to.

5.6 AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study recommends the following areas for further study:

- i. Depictions of resilience in selected Ugandan novels.
- ii. Depictions of resilience in selected Ugandan drama.
- iii. A comparative study of the depictions of resilience in Ugandan drama and the novel, and poetry.

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