

Ethnomedicine in the USA: Aesthetics of Performance and Organic Wellness as a Posthuman Construct In the 'Ifa' Ritual of the Santeria

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Abstract

Performances across time have promoted human wellness, especially as we continue to incorporate the lived experiences of healing rituals into our contemporary artistic practices. Audience members practice good physical, emotional, social, and psychological health through their ability to create an illusion of mental escape, enlightenment, and entertainment. The paper comments on a specific shamanistic practice – “Ifa Ritual,” practiced by the African diaspora of the Americas as a metric for evaluation. I shall explore documented research on the performance expressions noticeable in the Yoruba Ifa ritual exemplary in the Santeria and their communal benefits to Afro-Cubans in the USA. The Afro-Cuban Yorubas called Lucumi are believed to have migrated as slaves from the Yoruba subgroups of Africa to the New World, and there they introduced a cultural practice called the Santeria. The Santeria is an attempt to decolonize the impact of Western religious ideologies on their spiritual and social life by performing Ifa rites as a mode of worship and healing. I interrogate how the performative styles and elements of “Ifa” including the divination techniques contribute to promoting the well-being of contemporary Ifa practitioners. Theoretically, the study considers rituals as a fundamental approach to performance and wellness that seeks to reinforce and provoke discourses in post-humanism. The scope of this study is confined to the branch of humanities and soft sciences devoted to prevalent research on the Yoruba belief system and Lucumi Santeria, aiding the discussion of “Ifa” as a post-humanist construct of performance and wellness.

Keywords: Anthropology, African American Studies, African Diaspora Studies, Ethnomedicine, Organic Health and Wellness, African Philosophy and Religion, Global Ritual and Performance Studies, History, Sociology, Dramatherapy and Ritual Theatre.

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1. INTRODUCTION: IFA, BRIEF ORIGIN, AND THE RITUAL PHENOMENON

Ifa is a knowledge and healing system based on the mystical figure Ifa or Orunmila, revered by the Yoruba people as the deity of wisdom and intellectual development, as per UNESCO [1]. The origin of the Ifa ritual is as old as the existence of the Yoruba ethnic group. The Yorubas are descendants of the Indigenous Yoruba nation that spans several West African countries because of colonization and the geographic partitioning

of Africa after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 [2]. Yorubas are in Nigeria, Togo, Benin Republic (Dahomey), Ghana, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, etc [3]. The 16th through the 19th centuries witnessed the migration of West Africans in slave ships into the Americas forming a predominant population of the African diaspora. Of this African diaspora in the Americas, the Yorubas were among the major ethnic groups to retain an indelible mark on the Americas through their traditional belief system [4].

¹ UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage 1992-2023, (2023): accessed September 10, 2023, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/ifa-divination-system-00146#:~:text=The%20word%20Ifa%20refers%20to,%20of%20wisdom%20and%20intellectual%20development.>

² Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa: White Man's Conquest of the Dark Continent from 1876-1912* (New York: Perennial, 1991), 201 -265.

³ Mari Silva, *Yoruba: The Ultimate Guide to Ifa Spirituality, Isese, Odu, Orisas, Santeria, And More*, (CreateSpace: Amazon Digital Services LLC - KDP Print US, 2021), 9.

⁴ Marta Moreno Vega, “The Candomble and Eshu-Eleggua in Brazilian and Cuban Yoruba-Based Ritual,” in *Black Theatre Ritual Performance in the African Diaspora* ed. Paul Carter Harrison, Victor Leo Walker,

Among these Yoruba subgroups were the Afro-Cuban Lucumi, who established the Santeria practice in Cuba with major influences from the Ifa healing system and Western Catholicism. The Lucumi community coercively migrated to the US in 1960-80, during Fidel Castro's regime settling predominantly in the urban centers of the Eastern seaboard [5]. As of 1993, Santeria was practiced by some 70,000 Cubans living in South Florida, and experts put the number nationwide at many thousands, with concentrations in New York, Chicago, and other cities with large Caribbean Hispanic populations [6]. Lucumi assimilated to American culture through Western Catholicism, retaining the Santeria practice of the Ifa divination. The Santeria practitioners aided in incorporating the African Ifa rituals into the Western traditions of the US.

Most of the time there are contemporary connotations associated with rituals such as sacred and secular habits. The secular habit involves perfunctory usage which is any repetitive activity performed out of a relatively unconscious or conscious manner, and the cynical usage coincides with the denotative understanding of the spiritual or sacred potentials of rituals to equate superstition and diabolist practices [7]. However, ritual as a sacred habit is closely linked to the historical origins of performance and wellness in religious and indigenous cultural practices of the world to date. This paper examines the indigenous Ifa ritual of the Santeria and its performative and wellness attributes from a posthuman point of view.

2. Examining Posthumanism and Indigenous Ritual Performance

This section examines indigenous rituals as a posthumanist mode of performance in contemporary societies by subjecting our focus to the radical deconstruction of the human against Western humanist concepts. Posthumanism is genealogically related to the radical deconstruction of the "human," which began as a political cause in the 1960s, turned into an academic

and Gus Edwards (Philadelphia: Pa Temple University Press, 2002), 154.

⁵ George Brandon, *Santeria from Africa to the New World: The Dead Sell Memories* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2000), 104.

_____, "Lucumi Divination, the Mythic World and the Management of Misfortune," *Anthropologica* 54, no. 2 (2012): 167-88, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24467400>.

Jenna Weissman Joselit, *Parade of Faiths: Immigration and American Religion* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2007).

⁶Linda Greenhouse, "THE SUPREME COURT: Animal Sacrifice; Court, Citing Religious Freedom, Voids a Ban on Animal Sacrifices (Published 1993)," *The New York Times*, June 12, 1993, sec. U.S., <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/06/12/us/supreme->

project in the 1970s, and evolved into an epistemological approach in the 1990s, resulting in a multiplication of situated perspectives [8]. Critics say that the genealogy of posthumanism is traced from the "Letter on Humanism" in 1947 by Martin Heidegger and passes through postmodernism.

Stating that posthuman thought is detected in the studies of difference (including, among others, gender studies, critical race studies, queer theory, African diaspora and postcolonial studies, and disability studies), and cyborg theory [9]. Interestingly, from another angle, Michel Foucault is regarded as the pioneer of the academic ascendancy of the posthuman theory, according to literary scholar Barbara Christian he "surfaced, interestingly enough, just when the literature of people of color, of black women, of Latin Americans, of Africans, began to move to 'the center.'" [10]. Other leading contemporaries that preceded the study are Franz Fanon, Aime Cesaire, and Edward Said whose theoretical ideologies influenced the emergence of the posthuman study [11].

This explains why posthumanism aligns itself effectively with postmodernism, questioning reasoning, biology, aesthetics, performance art, culture, perfection, etc. Interestingly, the works of Edward Said focused on decolonizing Euro-Western influences by advocating for ideological freedom for the practices and cultures of indigenous societies. Said's decolonizing principles are fundamental to understanding contemporary Ifa ritual as an organic representation of posthumanist thought [12]. Said's advocacy for the revival of the suppressed languages and cultures, explains the global recognition and assertion of cultural ritual traditions and glorious ancestors [13]. In fact, performance scholars assert that early European and American anthropologists derived theories from the observations of colonists, missionaries, and adventurers who wrote reports about Africans,

court-animal-sacrifice-court-citing-religious-freedom-voids-ban-animal.html.

⁷ Gary Raucher, "Towards a Metapsychology of Rituals in Healing in Dramatherapy," in *Ritual theatre: the power of dramatic ritual in personal development groups and clinical practice*, ed. Claire Schrader (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2012), 62.

⁸ Francesca Ferrando, *Philosophical Posthumanism*, (S.L.: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 2.

⁹ Ferrando, 2.

¹⁰ Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory," *Cultural Critique*, no. 6 (1987): 51, accessed February 12, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1354255>.

¹¹ Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 46.

¹² Edward W Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 37.

¹³ Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 16.

Native Americans, Australians, and elsewhere performing rituals using dance, music, and theatre [14].

Cultural performance theorist and anthropologist, Tok Thompson, raises the critical question of whether humans have always been posthuman during his study on Native American rituals. He explains that there is a strong sense of connection to other living things – animals, plants, even stones, and forces of nature in the Native American ritual culture [15]. He provides us with a documented account of an indigenous ritual where the interrelationship between the human and non-human agents is prioritized during their seasonal rite of passage. Thompson notes that human relatedness in terms of kinship, ethics, spirituality, and ontology with other material and living forms is experienced from customs to art to song, to dance, and so on [16]. Thompson concludes by acknowledging a rather radical posthumanist view that the universe, and/or humans are created by “divinities that are explicitly non-hominid.”

However, this study argues that the central theme of non-human divinities is part of a larger animism-shamanism ritual performance that is not synonymous with the Native Americas alone but can be found in other indigenous cultural rituals of the world to date. This will potentially lead to an appraisal of the aesthetic and expressive attributes identifiable in the indigenous Ifa ritual of the Santeria, which will be discussed in the later section of this paper. Firstly, the next section addresses the interrelationship between posthumanism and wellness coming from a humanist understanding of Biology.

3. Post-Humanism and Wellness: A Critical Discourse

Posthumanist thought and wellness share a close relationship considering the writings of Charles Darwin. Darwin was a naturalist, and evolutionary theorist of the early modern era and his argument contrasts that of the classical Greek philosopher Protagoras who stated that man is the measure of all things on earth. Darwin conclusively explained in his book that the diversification of homo sapiens occurred

through aesthetic choice within sexual selection, which worked in tandem with natural selection [17]. Darwin provides a lens to understanding the biological relationship that exists between a human mind and body to other humans and to some degree with non-human species, both habitually and instinctively which makes us interconnected beings of the ecosystem. Similarly, posthumanism demolishes the sovereign and central human subject, unraveling the divergence between subject and object, human and animal, person, and thing [18]. As a result of this, radical and cultural posthumanism by the end of the 1990s developed into a more philosophically focused inquiry in a comprehensive attempt to re-access each field of investigation through an awareness of the limits of previous anthropocentric and humanistic assumptions [19].

To this end, Karen Barad argues that essentially posthumanism “does not presume that “man” is the measure of all things,” nor does it “presume the separateness of any ‘human’ or ‘thing,’ not to mention the alleged spatial, ontological, and epistemological distinction that sets humans apart [20]. In Western history, the word “human” referred, more specifically, to white, male, heterosexual, and propertied citizens, who would comply with institutionalized norms, as well as with ethnic, cultural, and physical characteristics [21]. Let us critically interrogate this model of Protagoras’s classical ideal man represented in Leonardo da Vinci’s drawing of the Vitruvian Man as of bodily perfection owing to the classical dictum *mens sana in corpore sano*, which combines a set of discursive, mental, and spiritual standards [22]. Meaning a healthy mind in a healthy body.

Looking at Da Vinci’s image, man becomes a symbol of Humanism, a canon that combines the biological, discursive, and moral expansion of human capabilities into rational progress. The image supports a Western or White supremacist view of what is ‘human’ about humanity. Rosi Braidotti, a posthumanist explains that Humanism historically developed into a White man’s civilization model of superiority over other races which propelled the imperial destinies of 19th-century

¹⁴ Richard Schechner and Sara Brady, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2013), 80.

¹⁵ Tok Freeland Thompson, *Posthuman Folklore* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2019), 163.

¹⁶ Thompson, 164.

¹⁷ Charles Darwin, John Tyler Bonner, and Robert M May, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (Princeton Princeton University Press, 2008).

¹⁸ Samantha Pergadia, “The Rise of Animals and Descent of Man, 1660–1800: Toward Posthumanism in British Literature between Descartes and Darwin by John

Morillo (Review),” *Eighteenth Century Studies* 53, no. 1 (2019): 134.

¹⁹ Francesca Ferrando, “Posthumanism, transhumanism, antihumanism, metahumanism, and new materialisms: Differences and relations,” *Existenz* 8, no. 2 (2013): 30.

²⁰ Karen Barad, “Agential Realism: How Material-Discursive Practices Matter.” in *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2007), 136.

²¹ Ferrando, *Philosophical Posthumanism*, 4.

²² Braidotti, 13-16.

Germany, France, and, particularly, Great Britain [23]. This Western cultural model came with a notion of difference with its Universal Humanist ideology of “self” and “other” to bring the dialectics or binary logic of identity and otherness into discourse.

To recontextualize the humanist model of the Vitruvian healthy man, an acknowledgment of the attempt of scientists, Janos Vincze and Gabriella Vincze-Tiszay’s modern reinterpretation of “mens sana in corpore sano” as a model of the universal wellness ideology is needed. This basically refers to the inseparable unity of the body and the psychic. Neither can exist without the other. No matter how elusive psychic events are, the organic substrate for this is provided by an individual biological structure.²⁴ In this context, the next section interrogates the features of the “Ifa ritual” of the Santeria that makes it a product of the posthuman performance and wellness schools of thought.

4. Posthumanist Conceptualization: “Ifa” Healing Ritual of the Santeria

Tok Thompson asserts that postcolonial philosophy leads us back to the potential of posthumanism: by looking at the overlooked, the underheard, and those with agency and personhood denied [25]. This research attempts to grant agency to an underrepresented group of American society, notably the Afro-Cuban community who practice the Ifa ritual in a syncretic form of Santeria. The aesthetics of performance and wellness in the Ifa divination are analyzed through the radical posthumanist school of thought. Radical posthumanism is a position that transposes hybridity, nomadism, diasporas, and creolization processes into means of re-grounding claims to subjectivity, connections, and community among subjects of the human and the non-humankind [26]. Humans, plants, animals, objects, and other non-human agents of the ecosystem are part of Ifa divination, and these dynamic hybrids can be argued to possess attributes conceivable mostly as posthumanist performances.

The human body has never been more decentralized than in the present age of the twenty-first century where there are cravings for lost cultures and organic healing due to the global effects of environmental degradation in industrialized societies.

²³ Braidotti, 15.

²⁴ Janos Vincze and Gabriella Vincze-Tiszay, “The Human Organism is A Biophysical–Biopsychological System,” *Technium* 2, no. 7 (2020): 33, accessed February 23, 2023, <https://doi:10.47577/technium.v2i7.1669>

²⁵ Tok Freeland Thompson, *Posthuman Folklore* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2019), 174.

²⁶ Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 50.

²⁷ Tony M Kail, *Magico-Religious Groups and Ritualistic Activities* (CRC Press, 2008), 62.

5. Summary and Findings: Appraising the Aesthetics of Performance and Wellness in Ifa Divination of the Santeria

Radical posthumanism requests academics to start interrogating how the categories of humans who have been consistently dehumanized, underrepresented, and objectified dealt with their humanness. For the Afro-Cuban practitioners of Santeria in America, the Santeros as men and Santeras as women, they believe “soul” is synonymous with the mind. The traditional Ifa concept of wellness within Santeria practice is based on a harmonious partnership between the deity, human body, and individual soul [27]. Synonymous with Vincze and Vincze’s concept of the inseparable unity of the body and the psychic. In Ifa, the cause of an ailment is irrelevant, be it microbe or spirit. What matters is that the body, soul, and presiding deity that is nature personified, work together to restore wellness. However, critical questions are raised regarding the performative elements of Ifa divination that stimulate a curative encounter. And how it can transform the body and mind through the inner workings of an individual interacting with other human bodies and non-human agents in the ecosystem. This can be evaluated and explained below in five segments as some fundamental performative and healing elements of Ifa divination described through select works by Ifa practitioners and scholars alike.

5.1 Odu-Ifa: Ifa Performative Composition

Ifa divination relies on an oral and written scripture known as Ifa-corpus, or Odu-Ifa. The Odu-Ifa is a sacred book of wisdom that is a blueprint or a performance text for Ifa practitioners. It can be likened to a dramatic text with its collection of folkloric stories and chants known as Patakis and Orikis respectively. It consists of 256 Ifa signs (Odu), each representing a folkloric story and poems from divine prophets or dieties (Orisas) that form the foundation of the Yoruba tradition [28]. Like the hexagrams of the I-Ching, the Odu is a set of binary symbols or mathematical codes comprising 256 stories from the oracle [29]. The 256 stories of the Ifa corpus set the context for understanding and applying the power and wisdom of the Ifa divination to modern ritual performance. The Odu-Ifa guides Ifa practitioners during divination to consult the Orisas in diagnosing any physical, emotional, or economic malady [30]. The sacred texts of Odu reveal explicitly how the principles of the

²⁸ Afolabi A Epega and Philip John Neimark, *The Sacred Ifa Oracle* (Brooklyn, Ny: Athelia Henrietta Press, 1999).

²⁹ Philip J. Neimark, *The Way of Orisa: Empowering Your Life Through the Ancient African Religion of Ifa* (United Kingdom: HarperCollins), 1993.

³⁰ Matthew Bond and Jessica Worden, “The Healing Practices of Santeria in America Medical Anthropology,” www.academia.edu (Academia), accessed October 15, 2023, 5.

Ifa provide advice and solutions that apply to physiological, psychological, and emotional problems.

5.2 The Orisas of the Odu-Ifa

Santeria in the US retained the original divination system of the West African Ifa after transposing the role of the Western Catholic saints to dieties known as Orisas of the Odu-Ifa as shown in the diagram. The Orisas in the Yoruba tradition are divinities who intercede on behalf of humans and God known as "Olorun". As a consequence, there is a continuous

human struggle in search of one's true purpose on earth which the Yoruba traditionalists believe is forgotten at birth and humans need to perform Ifa rites to Olorun for direction [31]. The Yorubas connect in a state of oneness with Olorun which suggests that humans will inevitably unite in soul and spirit with the divine creator who is the source of all existing energy and destiny. The Orisas are the guardians and the explicators of human destiny, and the people turn to them for help and advice for the challenging problems of life [32]. (See Figure 1)

Power (Ase/Ashe)	Lucumi Orisas/Orishas	Colors
Supreme God	Olodumare /Olorun	White
Creation	Obatala	White
Sea	Yemaya	Blue and white
Thunder	Shango	Red and White
Messenger/ Trickster/Communication	Eshu Eleggua	Black and Red
Iron	Ogun	Green, Dark Blue, and Black
Hunter	Ochosi	Violet, Turquoise Blue, Lavender, and Blue
Sweet Water	Oshun	Golden Yellow
Knowledge	Orula	Green and Yellow

Figure 1: Ways of Representation of Orishas in the Ifa Divination of the Santeria (Moreno Vega, 161)

5.3 The Organic Healing Performance

Ifa practitioners of the Santeria have historically relied on three primary forms of Ifa divination systems and the Bata Dance/Drum Ensemble: Obi, Diloggun, and Opele [33]. The Diloggun is a 16-cowrie shell divination, and the Obi means Kola-nut which is typically performed using 16 palm nuts (ikin). The Opele is executed with a chain (opele-ifa) made of a metal or cotton thread linking eight shells from the fruits of a tree [34]. Ifa divination sessions are conducted by a shaman sitting or standing in a room to facilitate communication between different realms. The Babalawo or Iyanifa places a divination tray (opon-ifa) on a surface area and welcomes the client to a

safe space. The shaman instructs the client to silently convey their issue to a cowry shell, coin, or legal tender [35]. After a series of rites, the shaman ends with a recollection of a storyline or folklore (pataki) that correlates with the predicament of the client as suggested by an Odu sign. The healer recites the story through Odu-Ifa chants and urges the client to remain attentive during this phase because the diagnoses and sometimes, solutions to the problem are revealed in the chants [36]. The healer makes use of a variety of functional Ifa artifacts and organic plants i.e., herbs for the divination process of wellness to be complete. (See Figure 2)

https://www.academia.edu/1911333/The_Healing_Practices_of_Santer%C3%ADa_in_America.

³¹ Brandon, *Santeria from Africa to the New World*, 14.

³² Brandon, 14.

³³ John Mason, *Four New World Yoruba Rituals*, Second ed. (Brooklyn N.Y: Yoruba Theological Archministry, 1985).

³⁴ Ogunnaike Oludamini, Jacob Olupona, Ousmane Kane, Khaled el-Rouayheb, David Carrasco and Barry

Hallen, "Sufism and Ifa: Ways of Knowing in Two West African Intellectual Traditions," (Doctoral Dissertation, Harvard University, 2015), 257.

³⁵ O. I. Pogonson, and A. O. Akande, "Ifa divination trays from Isale-Oyo," *Cadernos de estudos Africanos* 21 (2011):

³⁶ Pogonson and Akande, "Ifa divination trays from Isale-Oyo," 22.



Fig. 2: Ifa Divination (Retrieved from Wande Abimbola for UNESCO)

5.4 Bata Dance/Drum Ensemble of Ifa Divination

The Ifa divination is also performed to celebrate the divinity of the Orisas and other agents of the four parallel worlds to ensure a healthy balance in the lives of practitioners. For instance, the batâ drumming ritual of the Orisa “Sango” and “Osun” is an Ifa divination system that takes effect the very moment a devotee gets possessed by the energetic sounds of the batá drum and dances [37]. Bata drumming has its orature, tactic, and sacred equipment or accouterments that must be well coordinated to “effect proper social ordering.” [38]. Bata drumming solidifies the non-logical mode of cognition to receive a non-logical mode of communication. This can be observed in the bodily movements of the trance dancers and devotees who listen and understand the language and folkloric stories (patakis) narrated through the playing of the Bata mother drum (Iyaalu) [39]. This makes Western social sciences have a perceived reluctance to validate mediumistic types of indigenous divination due to prejudice against non-normal sensory activity [40]. The organic health benefits of bata dancing established by scholars are as follows.

Yvonne Daniel, a dancer, and anthropologist asserts that these bata trance dances serve as a strong medium of social medicine which applies the integration of the kinesthetic of dancing with the music. He underlines the capacity of the dancers to inject the Orisa presence into the social and political bodies to ease the integration of spirituality as an important element of

human social behavior and interaction [41]. The music that causes this altered reality consists chiefly of graded tonal instruments of talking drums while the participants chant and sing to a point of hysterical involvement [42]. The participating trance dancers’ attention must be grabbed and focused with enlisted and directed energies for the healing to take effect [43].

Edmund Casey’s biophysical studies have shown that an individual “self” benefits from good bodily-kinesthetic intelligence as this enhances cognitive, social, and emotional development by strengthening the brain’s capacity to retain information. The kinesthetic (kinematic) sense in the human tells him where his hands are even when his eyes are closed which may be experienced during a trance episode in Ifa bata divination [44].

In the Bata drum ensemble of the Ifa divination, participants engage in a trance dance, where their movements create physical vibrations that can affect their body at the molecular level. These vibrations can be said to stimulate cell growth and help to release tension and stress. Thereafter, originates to a balance in the way Ifa practitioners tend to live a more purposeful and happy life. Hence, wellness is improved.

6. CONCLUSION

Finally, the self-actualization of wellness in the Ifa rituals in its sublime and posthuman configuration

³⁷ Michael Marcuzzi, “Dancing with the Divine (r): Bata Drumming, Ifa Divination, and Orisa Worship in Cuba,” *Canadian University Music Review* 19, no. 2 (1999): 73.

³⁸ Philip M. Peek, “Introduction: The Study of Divination, Present and Past,” in *African Divination Systems: Ways of Knowing* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Pr, 1991), 2.

³⁹ Marcuzzi, “Dancing with the Divine (r): Bata Drumming, 73.

⁴⁰ Peek, “Introduction: The Study of Divination,” 199.

⁴¹ Yvonne Daniel, *Dancing Wisdom: Embodied Knowledge in Haitian Vodou, Cuban Yoruba, and Bahian Candomble* (Urbana; Chicago: University Of Illinois Press, 2005), 271-274.

⁴² Dapo Adelugba, “Trance and Theatre: The Nigerian Experience,” in *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*, ed. Yemi Ogunbiyi (Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 2014), 210.

⁴³ Schechner and Brady, *Performance Studies*, 203.

⁴⁴ Edmund J Casey, *Biophysics; Concepts and Mechanisms* (Reinhold, 1962), 302.

entails the imaginative, emotional, and expressive attributes of dance, music, chants, myths, drama, drumming, natural space, etc. during the divination. This may help to improve an individual's body and mental well-being. African anthropological writer on indigenous ritual culture, Malidoma Patrice Some observe that the West is crowded with people who seek healing and serenity, freedom from the dissonances of the machine and industrial revolution which generates a type of illness only organic ritual can cure [⁴⁵]. Aligning with Some's view, American performance researcher and anthropologist, Thomas Riccio advocates for the recognition of indigenous ritual healing [⁴⁶]. Partnership between Western medicine and Indigenous healing should be encouraged so both doctors can work hand-in-hand predicated on the cooperative healing model advocacy in many parts of the world [⁴⁷]. This can essentially be the case for the Ifa divination techniques and other rites performed in the Ifa healing practice to be coopted to assist in the therapeutic practice of multicultural societies especially when dealing with patients of African descent in the US.

Caveat: The views, submissions, arguments, and counterarguments expressed in this work are open to criticism as the study depended on only the research materials and resources available to the author.

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⁴⁵Malidoma Patrice Some, *Ritual: Power, Healing and Community* (Swan Raven & Company, 1993), 96.

⁴⁶ Thomas Riccio, "Today We Sing! Healing Rituals of the! Xuu and Khwe Bushmen," *Shaman's Drum: A*

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⁴⁷ Riccio, 54.

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