

EDITOR'S NOTE FOR THE MAIDEN EDITION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA JOURNAL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES (AUNJAH) VOL. 1 NO. 1(2025)

Charting New Terrains in Humanistic Inquiry

The inauguration of the *American University of Nigeria Journal of Arts and Humanities* (AUNJAH) marks a defining moment in the intellectual life of our institution and, by extension, the academic community in Africa and beyond. The journal emerges out of a growing recognition that the humanities remain indispensable to the understanding of human experience in its fullness—its aspirations, anxieties, contradictions, and possibilities. At a time when the world grapples with polarization, inequality, and the fast encroachment of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the creative and ethical domains of human life, there is a renewed urgency for scholarship that re-centers the human subject, interrogates culture and power, and reimagines the moral responsibilities of knowledge.

The *AUN Journal of Arts and Humanities* seeks to be a vibrant forum for critical, comparative, and interdisciplinary inquiry. It welcomes voices that engage with the complex intersections of language, literature, philosophy, religion, law, art, and culture. More importantly, it aims to foreground perspectives from Africa, situating them within global conversations on identity, ethics, creativity, and justice.

This maiden edition presents five essays that exemplify the scope, depth, and vitality of the humanistic imagination. Each paper offers a unique lens through which we might read our societies and ourselves—through law, literature, language, psychology, and film. Collectively, they gesture toward a central intellectual concern: how the humanities illuminate the tensions between individual agency and structural constraints, between tradition and modernity, and between life and death itself.

The opening paper, “A Comparative Analysis of the Legal and Ethical Implications of the Kaduna Preaching Bill” by Segun Olulowo and Samuel Ogunjobi, engages with one of the most pressing debates in Nigeria’s contemporary democratic experiment, the management of religious expression within a pluralistic state. Through a careful comparative legal analysis, the authors examine the proposed legislation’s implications for freedom of religion, speech, and conscience. Drawing on both constitutional and ethical frameworks, the paper interrogates the balance between the state’s responsibility to maintain public order and the individual’s right to spiritual self-expression. Its relevance transcends the immediate case of Kaduna State, resonating with broader questions of governance, tolerance, and human rights in multi-religious societies.

In “Stylistic Presentation of Metaphor and Discourse Issues in Eyibo’s *The Forbidden Tongue*” by Ojo Ayinuola and Adenike Omolayo, the authors turn our attention to the poetics of resistance. Through a detailed stylistic analysis, the paper explores how Eyibo’s metaphorical language becomes a site of ideological contestation, how metaphors construct silence, dissent, and identity within oppressive systems of power. The study underscores the significance of style not merely as an aesthetic choice but as a mode of political engagement. By revealing how language can both constrain and liberate, the paper invites us to reflect on the ethical power of literary discourse in shaping consciousness and social change. The third paper, “Language, Gender and Identity in the Igala Marketplace: An Ethnographic Study of Food Vendor Terminology by Ocheja Attabor,” situates linguistic inquiry within lived social practice. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork, the author examines how gendered identities are negotiated and expressed through the everyday language of commerce. The marketplace emerges as both a linguistic and cultural arena where social hierarchies, humor, and survival strategies converge. This study’s contribution lies not only in its documentation of a vital linguistic phenomenon but also in its illumination of how

Journal of Arts and Humanities Vol. 1 No. 1(2025) 1-2 power and identity are enacted through seemingly ordinary speech acts. It exemplifies how the humanities bridge the gap between text and context, revealing the symbolic dimensions of daily life.

The fourth contribution, Salisa Yahaya Wurma's "Unveiling the Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Adolescent Identity in Bolaji Abdullahi's *Sweet Sixteen* and Khadija Abubakar Jalli's *The Life Changer*," offers an incisive psychological exploration of two influential Nigerian novels. Anchored in Freudian and post-Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Hence, the paper examines how adolescence, as both a biological and cultural phase, is represented through conflict, desire, and moral awakening. By juxtaposing Abdullahi and Jalli's narratives, the author exposes the tensions between societal expectations and personal individuation in contemporary Nigeria. The study contributes to ongoing discourses on youth, education, and identity formation, offering fresh insights into the literary portrayal of psychological development.

The concluding paper, "Death in Life / Life in Death: Two Film Images of Atrocity by Robert Tindol" brings visual culture into the conversation. It explores how cinema represents trauma, mortality, and survival in contexts of human violence. Through a comparative reading of two films, the author demonstrates how art mediates the experience of horror and remembrance—how the moving image transforms pain into narrative, and narrative into collective memory. This work not only extends the journal's interdisciplinary vision but also affirms the continuing power of the arts to bear witness, heal, and provoke ethical reflection in the face of atrocity.

Toward a Renewed Humanism

Together, these five essays remind us that the humanities are not peripheral to development—they are central to it. They challenge us to think critically about justice, identity, gender, youth, and memory; to listen to the silenced voices in our societies; and to engage the world with empathy and imagination. As the *AUN Journal of Arts and Humanities* takes its first step into the intellectual landscape, we do so with humility and conviction. We are indebted to our contributors for their scholarly rigor, to our reviewers for their discerning engagement, and to our institution for its unwavering support of research and publication.

This edition, though modest in number, is rich in insight and promise. It signals the beginning of what we hope will become a dynamic platform for dialogue, innovation, and excellence in humanistic scholarship. We invite readers, researchers, and students to join us in sustaining this journey, one that seeks to reaffirm the place of the humanities as a compass for moral imagination and a lens for understanding our shared humanity.

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