



## UNIBEN ENGLISH AND LITERATURE JOURNALS

Department of English and Literature  
BENIN JOURNAL OF LITERARY STUDIES (BJLS)



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### EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the first edition of *Benin Journal of Literary Studies (BJLS)*, a journal designed for reading, writing and researching into all forms of literature at the tertiary level. In our opening edition, we feature contributions from a variety of researchers – ranging from postgraduate students to professors – who investigate the literature of both established and upcoming writers. The geographical scope of the articles is comparatively broad, with our boundaries reaching to Ogun State in the west coast, up north to Zaria in Kaduna State, and to Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, in the south-south border. We hope that in the very near future our radius will extend across oceans, but in the meantime the present edition introduces our readers, through imaginative and insightful criticism, to the concerns, aspirations, and literary art of people of African descent both within and outside the continent.

The contributions cover current and diverse topics. Iniobong Uko and Mabel Onyemelukwe approach ecocriticism from unusual perspectives. Uko suggests practical ways forward for eco-literature in the coming decades, examining options that do not necessarily centre on protest against environmental pollution. Onyemelukwe presents an ecocritical analysis of Femi Ojo-Ade's debut novel in French, *Les paradis terrestres*, a text not previously translated or inspected. Esther Jamgbadi and Edafe Mukoro shift the focus from slow violence against the environment to the ferocity of religious violence in a detailed study of the poetry of Kola Eke. Still on the topic of violence, Samson Eguavoen discusses the poetry of war and other conflicts, and the disturbing phenomenon of trauma transferred from generation to generation. Ezekiel Akuso and Catherine Innih, also discussing war from the angle of psychology, examine expressions of war in the novels of Helon Habila. A number of compositions handle a more subtle type of violence, the abuse of women. Steve Ekundayo, Solomon Osekene and Maryann Ilebor treat the issue of rape; Kufre Akpan evaluates widowhood rites and the dehumanization of the widow; and Tayo Agboola considers snail-sense feminism and its potentially liberating power for the oppressed woman. Abigail Eruaga, in different tenor, combines law and literature in her comparison of deviant behavior in Achebe's canonical *Things Fall Apart* and Okey Ndibe's contemporary *Arrows of Rain*. Durojaiye Owwoeye concentrates on postcolonial matters as opposed to legal ones, exploring heroism in the work of the Indian American novelist, Simon Rushdie, and Ben Okri. Dele Ugwanyi equally adopts a postcolonial stance in his study of African migrants in the Diaspora. Edwin Onwuka and Joy Eyisi, Jr., in an essay well worth reading, discuss the (African) Caribbean experience of displacement and migration in the poetry of Kamau Brathwaite. We feature only one book review, Ethel Okeke's assessment of

Imbolo Mbue's "Behold the Dreamers," a text reiterating the themes of racism and migration evident in a number of the essays in this edition.

The heterogeneity of the researchers, the topics, and the perspectives reflects in small measure our goals as an editorial team – to be cosmopolitan as well as scholarly. We hope you enjoy the reading.

*Sophia Akhmemokhan*