Narrativising Peace and its Significance in Multicultural Resource Conflicts: The Example of Emmanuel Egya Sule's *Makwala*

Joyce Onoromhenre Agofure

Department of English and Literary Studies Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

onorojoyce@gmail.com

Abstract

Several studies have shown how artworks reflect the magnitude of human disaster on the environment, and well-being due to the exploitation of natural resources such as oil, gas, and timber by capitalist multinational companies. However, these researchers have not paid due attention to the fundamental role of Nigerian fiction in communicating peace in a natural resource and multicultural setting. Drawing from Emmanuel Egya Sule's novel Makwala (2018), this paper delineates how abundant natural resources bound to certain regions in Nigeria are causing a specific type of natural resource conflict, friction, and diverse unrest. In this light, natural resource conflicts are skirmishes triggered by the unfavourable manner in which resources are harnessed. The presence of natural resources has created deep-seated disgruntlement because the resource barely trickles down to the common people. Consequently, this paper explores how conflict disrupts, thereby creating dissonance, hence the dire need to communicate peace. Using the theoretical tool of Non-Violent Communication (NVC) by Marshal Rosenberg to reframe resource conflicts, NVC's emphasis on authentic dialogue, empathy, and unmet needs offers a pathway to transform conflicts into collaborative peacebuilding. This study, therefore, proposes that communicating peace amidst natural resource conflict is imperative to forestall anarchy in Northern Nigeria's multicultural setting.

Keywords: Fiction, Natural Resource Conflict, Peace, and Non-Violent Communication.

Introduction

The role of fiction in communicating peace in a multicultural setting cannot be overemphasised. In this context, the fiction (novel) is a veritable form of literary activism. It is a narrative that describes the intimate human experience. It illustrates the social, political, and personal realities of a place, people, and period in detail, not easily accessible in other genres. Artists/writers often deploy the novel form to reflect salient concerns in society. Nonetheless, it not only "replicates the society but also serves as a mirror in which members of the society

can examine themselves and perceive the need for positive change" (Agofure, 2017, p.303). Given this, Vazquez posits that "there is a strong unavoidable relationship between art and society, for every society gets the kind of art it deserves because artists are members of the society and they create and write by the particular type of relationship they have with that society" (1984, p. 122) thereby, creating conditions for peace. By so doing, literary artists and writers are shapers of life; they are the rudders controlling what route human minds travel. To serve this end, in communities and a world ravaged by uncertainties and socio-political travails, it is the novelist's duty, according to Ojaide (2012: xi-xii) in *Contemporary African Literature: New Approaches*:

> … to sensitise the public … for peace and harmony in our respective communities, societies, and the entire world. There should be a promotion of human rights. Majority populations should be sensitive to the feelings of minorities, as the powerful should be towards the weak, the rich to the poor, and there should be fairness and justice and avoidance of exploitation and oppression of all kinds.

The novel has a vital role to play in communicating in a nonviolent and inoffensive manner to forestall conflicts and the opening of fresh wounds amidst aggrieved people and communities. It supports livelihoods and communities that depend on natural resources from land to agriculture, forestry and others by offering ways to facilitate and resolve natural resource conflicts in the regions. Literature, particularly the novel as an agent of cultural production, can perform a huge role in the transition from a culture of natural resource conflict to a culture of peace through narrativization. Thus, in a multicultural setting, that is, "an environment where multiple cultural groups coexist within a society. This includes diverse ethnicities, languages, religions, traditions, and values co-inhabit" (Ahirai, n.d). The novel, therefore, can play a crucial role in communicating peace by helping to promote understanding and empathy between different cultures and communities. By narrativising diverse perspectives as well as exploring the experiences of people from different backgrounds, the novel can help to break down stereotypes and promote a sense of connection among people who might otherwise feel isolated or misunderstood.

Literature Review
Existing literature has interrogated Emmanuel Egya Sule's literary works from diverse viewpoints. For instance, Paul Liam (2019) in "The Burden of

Motherhood, Womanhood and Debased Sexuality in E.E. Sule's *Makwala*" examines how men represent women in literature. The researcher emphasised that male-authored portrayals are frequently subjective and influenced by patriarchal biases. In a similar vein, Azuike, M. A., Longdet, P. S., and Ezekulie, C. J. (2021) explore the representation of the male body in their work "Unmasking the Veiled, Exploited Male Body in Nigerian Fiction: Representation of Environment, Trauma, and Dysfunctional Masculinities in E. E. Sule's *Makwala*." They utilise two male-adolescent characters to demonstrate how the male body is both used and abused under the pressures of socio-cultural forces.

Uthman Qasim (2022) "In the Oddities of Homosexuality in an African Enclave: A Review of E. E. Sule's *Makwala*" emphasises that male-to-male rape is engendered by violent homosexual behaviour that preys on young, vulnerable males. The character, Jackson, in the text, exemplifies the vulnerability of victims of gay rape in an emerging culture of homosexuality. Furthermore, Umar, O. (2023), in his article "Identity conflicts in post-colonial Northern Nigeria: An example of E. E. Sule's *Sterile Sky*," argues that the author delineates "ethnicity and religion which have continued to play significant roles in preventing the attainment of national identity in post-colonial Nigeria." He also examines the concepts of identity and hybridity within the framework of post-colonial theory, focusing on the inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations that contribute to the recurring violent crises in Northern Nigeria, as illustrated in Sule's novel, *Sterile Sky* (p. 46).

Furthermore, the notion of peace has been problematized by what might be termed an "unpeaceful" structural approach to the environment and the uneven distribution of wealth, as exemplified in E.E. Sule's *Makwala* and critiqued by scholars like Bizuum Yadok (2023) and Joyce Onoromhenre Agofure (2023). Yadok, in "Of Dysfunctional Families and a Decaying Society: A Review of E.E. Sule's Makwala", argues that the novel mirrors the despair of Nigeria's urban peripheries, where residents, embodied by characters like Odula, Simon, and Ogoja Boy commute to cities for work only to return to "communities ravaged by systemic neglect and economic exclusion" (Yadok, 2023). This cyclical deprivation underscores how fiscal inequities actively undermine peace by perpetuating conditions of alienation and structural violence. Agofure in "Films, Fictional Works, and Social Media in Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: Harnessing a Non-Violent Approach" engages films such as *Blood and Oil* directed by Curtis Graham, *Black November* directed by Jeta Amata, and novels such as Egya Sule's

Makwala and Adamu Kyuka Usman's *Death of Eternity* to investigate the excessive natural resource extraction that has severely degraded the environment in two Nigerian communities- Bagega, a gold mining area in Zamfara State (Northwest), and Uzere, an oil-producing region in the Niger Delta disrupting the ecosystems that support local livelihoods. These sites show how environmental exploitation and wealth concentration fracture social cohesion. It also reveals that peace is an impossible ideal without addressing ecological justice. In contrast to existing works, this paper examines Emmanuel Egya Sule's fictional piece *Makwala* in the context of multicultural resource conflicts, aiming to communicate themes of peace from the theoretical perspective of Non-Violent Communication (NVC).

Elucidating the Concept of Peace
Michael Pugh, a scholar in peace and conflict studies, puts it that peacebuilding is not just about ending violence but involves deeper structural changes to address the root causes of conflict. His assertion "peacebuilding has come to mean revising the structures that led to conflict" (2013: 21) underscores that sustainable peace requires transforming the political, economic, and social systems that fuel conflict. This aligns with the UNESCO declaration of peace, which defines peace as "not only the absence of conflict but requires a positive, dynamic, participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are resolved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation" (UN resolution 52/13). Furthermore, this culture of peace is "a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations" (UN Resolutions 52/13).

For Lederach (2003: 21), the notion of "Peace" does not imply the absence of violence and does not eliminate conflict over injustices. It is not a fixed situation/condition. Rather, "it is a continuously evolving and developing quality of relationships… characterised by intentional efforts to address the natural ebb and flow of human conflict through nonviolent approaches which address and increase understanding, equality, and respect in relationships." Thus, peacebuilding is the collective process to end or mitigate conflict, rebuild and reconcile post-conflict, and foster conditions that avoid conflict in the first place (2003: 30). In this context, Mac Ginty argues that, "peacebuilding means that we have to look beyond the practices of peacebuilding or the world of initiatives, projects and programs. We need to look at the ideas of structures that shape these

practices" (2013: 2). By this, he calls for a shift in addressing ideas and systems that sustain violence, such as economic exploitation or unequal power relations, to achieve transformative peace.

Defining Natural Resource Conflict

Natural resources are raw materials that are extracted from the ground or soil. They are found naturally embedded in the soil and can only be modified by man for his benefit and use. Natural resources include fossil fuels, coal, crude oil, natural gas, gold, copper, iron, diamonds, and minerals (Okonkwo, 2017: 162). Natural resources are bountiful, geographical and economic endowments. Okonkwo describes natural resources as "a gift of nature and an endowment of comfort that makes the existence of mankind complete" (Okonkwo, 2017: 163). Natural resources are vital to existence on earth, and they can be manipulated to boost the wealth of a country; their ownership and management are crucial issues in political, socioeconomic, and cultural discord.

Conflict, on the other hand, is inevitable in human affairs. According to Hamilton, conflict is the expression or prosecution of personal or group interest through the use of force or coercion (2011: 15). Conflict disrupts, thereby creating a deeply felt dissonance. It hinders the normal process of making sense through accepted and often unquestioned assumptions about what events, people, and issues mean. Conflict prompts us to inquire… (Lopez, 2009). Emuedo writes that "conflict is not only a pervasive phenomenon in human relationships but often, it is the 'basic unit for understanding social existence" (2014, p. 954). Hence, conflicts may be internal or external. External conflicts are not caused by interactions within the group or community but impact its functionality. Whereas, internal conflicts may occur among or between actors within a group or community." (Emuedo, 2014: 954).

Explicating Non-Violent Communication Theory

Non-Violent Communication (NVC) theory was created by Marshal Rosenberg, a clinical psychologist. For over a period of forty (40) years, Rosenberg applied his ideologies in a broad range of educational and peace-making activities with an emphasis on empathetic processes. He first harnessed NVC in a federally funded school integration project to provide mediation, communication skills, and training during the 1960s. The approach is founded on language communication skills that replace old patterns of defending, withdrawing, or attacking in the face of judgment, criticism, and relationships. NVC centres on the assumption that all

human beings have the capacity for compassion, which can translate to harmful conduct when one does not deploy better strategies. The approach requests real actions from others in a manner that fosters relationships based on honesty and meets both party's needs. In other words, NVC gives one the tools and consciousness to understand what triggers one, take responsibility for one's reactions, and deepen our connection with ourselves, and others, thereby transforming usual responses to life. It involves a radical transformation in how people ponder life and meaning.

Tenets of Non-Violent Communication

NVC promotes tenets that can enhance nonviolent and collaborative communication through four components of the NVC model - observation, feeling, needs, and requests. Observation is the first component of Non-violent Communication. It requires that one learns to make a clear observation that affects one's sense of well-being without evaluating it at the same time. It relates to observing what is happening in a situation. Kashtan and Kashtan (2020) state:

What we see or hear that we identify as the stimulus to our reactions. Our aim is to describe what we are reacting to concretely, specifically, and neutrally, much as a video camera might capture the moment. This helps create a shared reality with the other person. The observation gives the context for our expression of feelings and needs, and may not even be needed if both people are clear about the context…. The key to making an observation is to separate our judgments, evaluations, or interpretations from our descriptions of what happened. Learning to translate judgments and interpretations into observation language moves us away from right/wrong thinking and helps us take responsibility for our reactions by directing our attention to our needs as the source of our feelings rather than to the other person. In this way, observations – pave the way towards a greater connection with ourselves and with others – emerge as a crucial building block towards a profound consciousness shift.

Feeling is the second component of Non-Violent Communication. Feelings represent the emotional experience and physical sensations associated with needs that have been met or that remain unmet. The key to identifying and expressing feelings is to focus on words that describe our inner experience rather than words that describe our interpretations of people's actions. By expressing feelings, we continue the process of taking responsibility for our experience, which helps others hear what is important to us with less likelihood of hearing criticism or

197

blame for themselves. This increases the likelihood that they will respond in a way that meets our needs.

Need is the third component of Non-Violent Communication. All human engagements represent needs that people are seeking to meet. Therefore, understanding these needs can initiate a shared basis for collaboration and peace. For Rosenberg, "the conception of needs is 'resources life requires to sustain itself. For instance, our physical well-being depends on our needs for air, water, rest, and food being fulfilled…. All human beings have the same needs, regardless of gender, educational level, religious beliefs, or nationality. What differs is the strategy for fulfilling the needs" (2003: 3). Therefore, "understanding, naming, and connecting with our needs helps us improve our relationship with ourselves, as well as foster understanding with others, so we are all more likely to take actions that meet everyone's needs." (Bhanden, 2020: 32).

Request is the fourth component of Non-Violent Communication. This step calls for the need to address what one wants from the other person that would enrich life or make life more wonderful for all. Increasing the "likelihood that our requests would be understood requires a language that is doable…that is truly a request and not a demand." (Kashtan & Kashtan, 2020). The Non-Violent Communication approach underscores that all human beings have particular needs. These needs are connected to feelings. When these feelings are not respected and their needs are not met, people can get upset, angered, or distressed. This translates to conflict with the person one is communicating with. This paper explores online exchanges to uncover critical insights into the root of natural resource conflict and how it can be mediated using non-violent communication principles. This will be done by scrutinising the fictional work *Makwala*.

The Dynamics of Resource Conflict and Peace in *Makwala*
Sule's *Makwala* is notable for its setting in the North West region of Nigeria, where it vividly portrays the life and struggles of a mineral resource refining settlement. The narrative delves into the socio-economic realities of the community, underlining the juxtaposition of the potential wealth generated by natural resources against the backdrop of environmental degradation and the filth that permeates the neighbourhood. Through *Makwala*, Egya not only tells a compelling story but also raises critical questions about resource management, environmental justice, and the impact of industrialisation on local communities.

His work invites all to reflect on the broader implications of resource exploitation and the human cost associated with it.

On another facet, Sule's *Makwala* offers a safe space to express the writer's mixed feelings of grief, hope, despair, and regret. It draws attention to the novel's ability to bear witness, awaken empathy and create compassion in the reader's unconsciousness, which is a key component in peacebuilding. The novel's opening captures a depleted landscape occasioned by destructive mining activities, among other contradictions. The novel reflects a society basking in and subjugated by natural resource unrest. Sule (2018: 12-53) submits:

Workers were returning from work, most of them in factory clothes. Some are still wearing hand gloves…. Around the pit which nature had generously placed between Makwala and Makwala layout, men and women from both sides… The rich of the layout and the poor of the slum traded flesh in the great anonymity, abandonment, and recklessness that the pit offered.

The novel recreates the wreck that has become a multicultural community of natural resource exploration. The writer brings to the fore the diverse engagements that are witnessed in the locale as a result of resource exploitation. Though the novel does not state categorically the kind of mineral resource in abundance in the region, the imagery depicted are shreds of evidence that it is a gold mining site. This is conveyed in the use of "pit," an apparent leftover after miners have dug up a particular site. The novel depicts all sorts of characters inflicted by harm, and events they wish to blot out. Sule's portrayal appraises the structural violence/conflicts of capitalism while exposing the human cost of resource inequality. The "pit" reveals a contested space of economic and social exchanges between two divided communities, the affluent Makwala Layout and the impoverished Makwala slum. The lives of Ende, Jackson, Odula, Kemi, Martha, Hajia, and Mama China are testaments to the cruelty and repression in these spaces.

Using the aforementioned characters, Sule raises concerns regarding the recurring themes of conflict, immorality, decay, dirt, and death that thrive in the mining environment. This is further juxtaposed by the divide between a low-class and high-class society- "the Makwala slum and the quiet neighbourhood of Makwala Layout" (Sule 2018: 31). Jackson, for instance, is a persistent victim of rape in the mining environment. He is filled with so much hate that he plans to bring revenge

on those who had defiled him and brought him pain. In another vein, the character Odula bemoans the inequality and exploitation going on in the refinery where he works. He laments: "These Lebanese factory owners will maim all of us one day. Friday, my friend, has got his three fingers, three fingers chopped off by a machine!" (Sule, 2018: 38). The writer uses the characters of Odula and others to bring up and question the odd experiences in the mining community for the readers to witness and for the purpose of mediation. This lends credence to Ruppert's assertion that the "mediational approach explores how texts create a dynamic that brings differing cultural concerns into confluence to reinforce the structures of human life." (1995: 15).

Thus, Sule's *Makwala* awakens all to note the dire need to work toward building peace in their surroundings. Along this line, a character named Kemi creates an avenue for communication to address the grievances in the Makwala community. Kemi focuses on a process of reconciliation for former abused victims through a problem-solving Foundation where awareness through education can bring about change that will create peace in the locality. She states:

Invited Ende to this private time with Jackson….
I have an idea. That is why I invited Ende, Kemi began.
"What idea?" Ende said, blinking rapidly.
"I want us to form a group". She deliberately paused.

Ende asked, "A group of what? To do what?"
"To bring about a change" ….
It is we, the youth that can rise and change the way things are going.

I want to have a foundation…. We have to have a way of letting the foundation and other foundations know… (Sule, 2018: 127-128).

In the above excerpt, Kemi resorts to peace mediation to enable abused victims such as Jackson and others like him to strengthen their efforts to be healed. This corroborates the notion that no one person or level of society is capable of delivering peace on its own. It involves a system of interconnecting people, roles, and activities, linked together. By so doing:

The novel form is indeed a narrative genre well suited for examining how the ways of knowing function in a multicultural world where the meanings of

narrative are often twisted and tangled. The… novel… brings readers to a standpoint where they can untangle …misreading, taking them to their exponential roots. Readers read and form hypotheses about meaning only to have those revised and questioned (Ruppert, 1995, p. 15).

Makwala also uncovers how natural resource conflict is triggered by agricultural produce, as delineated in a letter by Murtala to his father Odula:

> When we relocated to the village, there was so much hostility between our village and other neighbouring villages. Something to do with a fishing pond. I don't know what has become of that. I don't know if there is peace now. I'm worried about them (Sule, 2018, pp. 81- 82).

In another scene in the novel, Odula is alerted to the conflict in his village "clashes claiming the lives of many…. Ogam and Ogwufa… in a dance of violence…" (Sule, 2018, pp. 258-261). Odula opts for violence reduction rather than shying away from the unrest in his hometown. Sule directs the reader's attention to how leaders/mediators such as Odula should be concerned with ethnic and metropolitan life which is a site for multicultural resources and conflicts. On this pedestal, Sule (2018: 260-265) observes:

Young men of amazing height and elongated limbs… painted their faces black. And their eyeballs, bloodshot and bulging from drinking and smoking hard substances. Stared intensely at me. Who are you? "My name is Odula". He is a spy. "He's the one bringing ammunition for his people". The desperation in my voice was palpable as I said, "How could I come all alone, without any weapon if I were here to fight?... They didn't like the sentiment I was whipping up…. Then they went into a session of discussion, their voices kept very low, mumblings and whisperings. The hands of the eldest one unknotted the blindfold, then the rope. Is it you, Oche? "Keep your voice down". I know you knew me. I didn't even know it was my very good friend, my primary school classmate. What's this woe that has befallen us, brother?" "Greed. Impatience.

The excerpt above depicts a scene with a tense confrontation between Odula and a group of armed young men whose aggressions are marked by their blackened faces, bloodshot eyes, and immediate suspicion, which reflects desperation. Their accusation that Odula is a spy, bringing ammunition to his people, reveals the deep-seated anger that fuels conflicts, especially where outsiders are seen as

threats. The physical and psychological violence of blindfolding, binding, and dehumanising rhetoric illustrates how resource conflicts erode trust and reduce individuals to mere combatants or enemies. Odula puts his life at risk, he communicates with the bandits in a way that could melt their hearts. It was in that process Odula meets his primary school classmate Oche among the bandits. The moment of recognition between Odula and his childhood friend Oche introduces a crucial turning point. Odula's whispered question, "Is it you, Oche?" Oche's subsequent decision to untie Odula exposes the tragedy of a fractured kinship, where greed and impatience have turned brothers into adversaries. Odula laments, "What's this woe that has befallen us, brother?" This question brings to light how art forms can set communities or people on the road to death or the road to life. As well, the question underscores the human cost of conflicts and hints at the potential for reconciliation, thus aligning with peacebuilding models that emphasise the restoration of communal relationships.

Non-violent Communication in Sule's *Makwala*
In Sule's *Makwala*, non-violent communication is perceptible. Non-violent communication (NVC) is a language of compassion, and it provides the consciousness to deepen the connection with one's and others, thereby transforming habitual responses to life. This is obvious when Kemi observes the diverse ills associated with the youths in the mining community where she resides. She observes the need for abused victims such as Jackson, Ende, and others to go through a foundation where awareness through education and training can bring about the radical change that will pave the way toward a community with fewer conflicts through non-violent communication with others. She states: "I want us to form a group," meaning one that will "bring about a change" (Sule 2018: 127-128). This reflects multicultural resource conflict resolution through collective action. The suggestion to form a coalition arises in a context where competing ethnic or cultural groups (implied by Makwala's diverse urban slum and layout) struggle over limited resources- land, jobs, or political power. Kemi's call to create a non-violent form of power to meet human needs for justice, healing, and education is geared toward peaceful mediation. This is paramount to educate and heal abused victims such as Jackson and others like him. Therefore, Kemi's action corroborates the notion that "underlying all human actions are needs that people are seeking and understanding and acknowledging these needs can create a shared basis for connection, cooperation and more global peace" (Kashtan and Kashtan, 2020).

Furthermore, expressing observations and feelings is a unique part of non-violent communication. This case is apparent in *Makwala* when the character Odula describes a kidnapping scenario. He keenly observes the young men who were out to hold him captive. He felt for them by relating to their circumstances, saying: "The desperation in my voice was palpable as I said, 'How could I come all alone, without any weapon if I were here to fight?" (Sule: 260-264). The excerpt reveals how Odula continues to communicate with the bandits in a compassionate manner that showed his empathy for their humanity and the way of life they had resulted in: "We're brothers, Ogam and Ogwufa, brother- villages- what about our common ancestral lineages, our inter-marrying …?" I was rudely interrupted by one of the young men. They didn't like the sentiment I was whipping up…. What's this woe that has befallen us, brother? Greed. Impatience" (Sule, 2018: 260-265). The excerpt explains Odula's compassionate approach in his communication with the bandits, emphasising his empathy for their shared humanity and the cultural ties that bind them. He refers to them as "brothers," invoking a sense of kinship and shared identity by mentioning "brother-villages" and their "common ancestral lineages." This appeal to their interconnectedness suggests that Odula recognises the complexities of their situation and the historical relationships that have shaped their lives. However, his attempt to foster understanding and unity is met with resistance. The interruption by one of the young men indicates a rejection of Odula's sentiment, suggests that the bandits are not receptive to discussions of brotherhood or shared heritage at that moment. Instead, they are consumed by their immediate grievances, which Odula identifies as "Greed" and "Impatience." This response underscores the tension between Odula's idealistic view of community and the harsh realities faced by the bandits, revealing a deeper commentary on the socio-environmental issues that have led to their current predicament.

Utilising the NVC strategy of observation, feeling, needs, and requests to inspire connection, understanding, and self-discovery brings about positive dialogue with the bandits. Soon, something happened in the course of action as the bandits: "went into a session of discussion, their voices kept very low mumblings and whisperings". The hands of the eldest one, unknotted the blindfold, then the rope" (Sule, 2018: 265). There was a transformation and conversion on the side of the bandits. Soon, Odula regains his freedom from the bandits. Odula's liberation symbolises the transformative power of kindness and thoughtfulness, which emerge from the bandits towards their victim. This scenario illustrates the principles of Nonviolent Communication (NVC), which emphasises the

importance of addressing needs instead of resorting to blame, harsh language, or criticism. By focusing on mutual needs, conflicts and tensions can be resolved peacefully, leading to constructive solutions among individuals.

Put together, Sule's *Makwala* signifies the ways through which the novel form can narrativize complex issues related to peace and conflict through the lens of storytelling. It demonstrates not just the power of narrative, but how multiple perspectives could be narrativized to give a broad view on socio-political and economic concerns bedevilling the society. Sule's *Makwala*, through its multiple characters, show how significant it is to deploy prose fiction, the novel in this case, to resolve multicultural resource conflict. Sule demonstrates that fiction can encourage readers to engage with different perspectives and consider new ways of thinking about important issues, especially issues of peace and mutual understanding. Through the exploration of different characters and situations, the novel contributes to communicating peace by echoing themes of change, justice, empathy, and compassion through direct and indirect conversations geared towards healing wounds in conflict-ridden societies in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Sule's *Makwala* examines the role of fiction and the manner or style of narrative in conveying the message of peace within a multicultural context that has been marked by natural resource conflicts. By portraying characters from diverse cultural backgrounds and narrating their stories with care and depth, Sule illustrates how the novel form can amplify varied perspectives and foster a more inclusive understanding of life in a multicultural society. The paper emphasises the feelings of grievance, discontent, and marginalisation experienced by the natural resource-extracting communities in Northern Nigeria, who continue to seek meaningful dialogue, improved treatment, and essential social amenities. Drawing on the principles of the Non-Violent Communication approach, this paper illustrates the necessity of reshaping preconceptions to cultivate attitudes of love, compassion, and empathy, which are essential for fostering peace in areas affected by natural resource conflicts. It contributes to the larger literature of peace and conflict resolution by demonstrating how the novel, through a careful narrativization of socioeconomic and political decadence, could be a veritable tool in the archive of peacebuilding, particularly in a multicultural resource conflict situation or site.

References

Agofure, J. O. (2016). "Colonial Legacies and Impact: A Case of the Nigerian Movie Jenifa" in Muhammed O. Bhadmus (ed) *The Nigerian Cinema: Reading Nigerian Pictures* Ibadan, Spectrum Books, pp. 237- 246.

---. (2023). "Films, Fictional Works, and Social Media in Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: Harnessing a Non-Violent Approach" *Kujenga Amani* Films, Fictional Works, and Social Media in Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: Harnessing a Non-Violent Communication Approach - Kujenga Amani Retrieved 20 June 2025.

Ahirai,   (n.d).   "Understanding   Multicultural   Societies" https://www.diversityresources.com/multicultural-societies/ Retrieved 19 June 2025.

Azuike, M.A., Longdet, P.S., & Ezekulie, C.J. (2021). "In Unmasking the Veiled, Exploited

Male Body in Nigerian Fiction: Representation of Environment, Trauma and Dysfunctional Masculinities in E.E. Sule's Makwala**"** in Chukwumah I. & Ogba, M.O., *Shadows of Interstitial Life: Essays on African Literature in honour of Rev. Fr. Professor Amechi N. Akwanya*. Germany: Galda Verlag.

Emuedo, G. O. (2014). "Oil Multinationals and Conflict Construction in Oil-Host Communities in the Niger Delta". *Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(6B), p. 954-964.

Hamilton, I. D. (2011). "Oil and Gas Companies and Community Crises in the Niger Delta". *American Review of Political Economy*, 3(17), 3-17.

Kashtan, I. & Kashtan, M. (2020). "Basics of Non-violent Communication" *BayNVC*   https://baynvc.org/basics-of-nonviolent-communication/ Retrieved 19 June 2025.

Lederach, J.P. (2003). *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*. New York: GoodBooks.

Liam, P. (2019). "The Burden of Motherhood, Womanhood and Debased Sexuality in E.E. Sule's *Makwala*" https://www.africanwriter.com/the-burden-of-motherhood-womanhood-and-debased-sexuality-in-e-e-sules-makwala/ Retrieved 20 June 2025.

Lopez, G.A. (2009). "Dynamics affecting Conflict, Justice and Peace" in McElwee, T.A., Hall, W., Luchty, J. and Garber, J. *Peace, Justice*, *and Security Studies: A Curriculum Guide* Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Mac Ginty, R. (2013). *Handbook of Peacebuilding*. New York: Routledge.

Ojaide, T. (2012). *Contemporary African Literature: New Approaches*. Durham: Carolina Academic Press.

Okonkwo, T. (2017). "Ownership and Control of Natural Resources under the Nigerian Constitution 1999 and Its Implications for Environmental Law and Practice". *International Law Research* 6(1), 162-184.

Pugh, M. (2013). "The Problem-solving and Critical Paradigms" in Mac Ginty, R.(ed). *Handbook of Peacebuilding*. New York: Routledge.

Rosenberg, M.B. (2003c). *We can Work It Out: Resolving Conflicts Peacefully and Powerfully*. New York: Puddle DBandhanress.

Ruppert, J. (1995). *Mediation in Contemporary Native American Fiction*. New York: University of Oklahoma Press.

Sule, E. E. (2018). *Makwala*. Lagos: Parresia Publishers.

Umar, O. (2023). "Identity Conflicts in Post-Colonial Northern Nigeria: An Example of E. E.

Sule's *Sterile Sky*" *International Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics*. Vol. 6, Issue 1, pp 46-56.https://abjournals.org/ijlll/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/journal/published_paper/volume-6/issue-1/IJLLL_JPRIU0ET.pdf Retrieved 20 June 2025.

UNESCO. (2000). "Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace"

UN/GA/A/Res/53:243   www.UNESCO.org/cpp/uk/declaration/2000.htm Retrieved 10 April 2025.

Qasim, U. (2022). "In The Oddities of Homosexuality in an African Enclave: A Review of E. E.

Sule's *Makwala*" https://nigeriareview.com.ng/the-oddities-of-homosexuality-in-an-african-enclave-a-review-of-e-e-sules-makwala-uthman-qasim/ Retrieved 20 June 2025.

Vazquez, A. S. (1984). *Art and Society: Essays in Marxist Aesthetics*. London: Merlin Press.

Yadok, B. (2023). "Of Dysfunctional Families and a Decaying Society: A Review of E.E. Sule's *Makwala*" *Sevhage*

https://sevhagereviews.wordpress.com/2023/10/21/makwalareview-byadok/ Retrieved 20 June 2025.