THE AESTHETICS AND UTILITARIAN VALUES OF STORYING INSANITY IN EDGAR ALLAN POE'S, NIKOLAS GOGOL'S, CHINUA ACHEBE'S AND ADEKUNLE MAMMUDU'S SHORT STORIES

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BRNIN CITY,

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AN ESSAY SUBMITTRD TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERATURE, FACULTY OF ARTS UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BRNIN CITY, IN PARTICULAR FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A HONS) DEGREE IN ENGLISH AND LITERATURE.

NOVEMBER, 2025.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this project entitled “The Aesthetics and Utilitarian Values of Storying Insanity in Edgar Allan Poe’s, Nikolas Gogol’s, Chinua Achebe’s and Adekunle Mammudu’s Short Stories” was carried out by **OMONIYI PRAISE ADEWUNMI** in the Department of English and Literature, University of Benin, Benin city, Under my supervision.

_____ _____

Dr. S. O. Eguavoen Date
Project Supervisor

DEDICATION

This Project work is dedicated to Almighty God, the giver of knowledge who helped and sustained me.

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ABSTRACT

Insanity possesses its own peculiar beauty and serves as a powerful instrument in literature, revealing hidden truths about the human condition, this study investigates the aesthetics and utilitarian values of narrating insanity in selected short stories: Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat", Nikolai Gogol's "Diary of a Madman", Chinua Achebe's "The Madman", and Adekunle Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness". It examines how madness functions not merely as a psychological or pathological condition but as a narrative technique, a thematic instrument, and a philosophical metaphor. The research situates insanity as both an artistic medium and a utilitarian tool that enables the exploration of social, moral, and existential tensions within diverse cultural contexts. Anchored in psychoanalytic literary theory, drawing particularly from the ideas of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, the study interprets madness as a manifestation of repressed desires, fractured identities, and unconscious resistance to societal norms. Through close textual analysis, it investigates how anger, frustration, and the collapse of reason serve as emotional and structural forces that drive each story's form and content. The study adopts a qualitative methodology, relying on close reading, interpretation, and comparative analysis to unpack how each author constructs madness as a mode of critique and revelation. The findings reveal that narrating insanity operates at the level of aesthetics usefulness in exploring human consciousness and societal dysfunction. Madness, as represented in these stories, becomes a creative discourse on identity, alienation, corruption, and the instability of reason. Ultimately, the study asserts that madness in literature is not a deviation from meaning but a deepening of it — a poetic method of confronting truths that sanity often conceals.

Keywords: Madness, Psychoanalysis, Aesthetics Value, Utilitarian Function, Insanity, Freudian Theory, Lacanian Theory, Short Fiction

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Study

This study investigates the aesthetics and utilitarian values of narrating insanity in selected short stories from African and non-African literary traditions. The primary aim is to examine how mental instability functions not solely as a thematic concern but also as a narrative strategy that shapes form, content, and reader interpretation. Using Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843) and "The Black Cat" (1843), Nikolai Gogol's "Diary of a Madman" (1835), Chinua Achebe's "The Madman" (1971), and Adekunle Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness" (2020), the research explores how madness is employed as a literary device that reconfigures notions of truth, reality, morality, and identity. The study also seeks to understand how these authors engage madness as a tool to critique societal structures, question rationality, and unveil the fragility of human consciousness. Ultimately, the research aims to contribute to discourses on narrative innovation, psychological realism, and the intersection of aesthetics with socio-political commentary in literature.

1.2 Scope of Study

This research examines five short stories by four authors—two African and two non-African—arranged chronologically by date of publication: Gogol's "Diary of a Madman" (1835), Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843), Poe's "The Black Cat" (1843), Achebe's "The Madman" (1971), and Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness" (2020).

The inclusion of two stories by Edgar Allan Poe is intentional, as both works contribute distinct yet interrelated depictions of psychological instability and narrative unreliability that are central to the study's objectives.

In Nikolai Gogol's selected prose writings—spanning ten significant stories—only "Diary of a Madman" (1835) is considered, as it most directly aligns with the study's central motif of madness and bureaucratic absurdity (Gogol 77). In Edgar Allan Poe's extensive corpus of twenty-two psychological and gothic tales, only The Tell-Tale Heart (1843) and The Black Cat (1843) are examined for their intense depictions of mental disturbance and the mechanics of the unreliable narrator (Poe 91). In Chinua Achebe's anthology of six short stories, only The Madman (1971) is studied, owing to its clear engagement with themes of identity, social perception, and psychological rupture (Achebe 13). In Adekunle Mamudu's collection of eight short stories, only "The Beauty of Madness" (2020) is analysed, as it is thematically central to the study. The analysis is confined to literary interpretation—how madness functions narratively and thematically—excluding clinical or psychoanalytic diagnoses. The research reads madness through the lens of Mad Studies, which fits into mad study.

1.3 Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach based on literary analysis. The main methods are close reading and comparison of texts. Through careful reading, the study examines how madness is presented and used in each of the selected short stories.

The analysis is guided by themes, language use, and literary style. It also applies the ideas from Mad Studies. This field of study looks at madness not just as a medical condition but as a meaningful human experience. It helps this research understand how madness in these stories is not always shown as illness but sometimes as protest, insight, or a different way of seeing the world.

The research also pays attention to the historical and cultural backgrounds of the texts. It looks at how the time and place in which each story was written shape the way madness is portrayed. For example, Poe's stories reflect ideas from nineteenth-century America, while Achebe's and Mamudu's stories reflect African traditions and postcolonial realities.

By comparing the stories, the research aims to show both the beauty and the purpose of using madness in literature. It explores how madness helps the writers criticize society, express deep emotions, or explore hidden truths. In this way, madness is not just a topic but also a tool used by the writers to communicate powerful messages.

This method allows the study to explore both the artistic and practical sides of storytelling through madness.

1.4 Theoretical Background

This study is anchored in psychoanalytic literary theory, drawing primarily from the Freudian and Lacanian traditions that explore subjectivity, repression, and the unconscious. Sigmund Freud's concept of repression provides a useful framework for understanding madness as a return of what has been suppressed in the psyche. In The

Interpretation of Dreams, Freud explains that repressed desires and traumas often reappear in disguised or distorted forms, whether through dreams, slips of the tongue, or pathological states (Freud 147). In literature, madness can therefore be read not simply as an individual breakdown but as a symbolic eruption of those desires and fears that characters are unable to contain. By positioning madness as a symptom of unresolved conflicts, psychoanalysis enables a deeper appreciation of how authors use insanity as a metaphor for psychic disturbance as well as social critique.

Jacques Lacan advances Freud's framework by reinterpreting the unconscious as something structured by language rather than hidden beneath it. He asserts that "the unconscious is structured like a language" (Écrits 203), suggesting that madness itself speaks through fractured discourse, silences, and disruptions of meaning. Lacan also situates subjectivity within the interplay of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real, where instability is inherent and sanity always provisional. From this perspective, madness in literature becomes more than a collapse of reason: it is an alternative discourse that unsettles the symbolic order and exposes the fragility of rational identity. Characters who lose their grip on reality are not simply irrational but are caught in the structural gaps of language and desire.

Although psychoanalysis cannot fully exhaust the complex meanings of madness, it provides a productive foundation for this study. Freud's emphasis on repression allows an exploration of how anger and frustration manifest in unconscious ways, while Lacan's focus on language clarifies how madness becomes a narrative

strategy that resists coherence. Together, these insights frame the analysis of literary texts where insanity functions both as symptom and as subversive commentary. They allow madness to be read not only as individual affliction but also as a means through which authors critique social structures, power relations, and the fragile boundaries of the self. This dual function of madness—at once symptom and strategy—shapes the interpretations that follow in this project.

Sigmund Freud, who lived from 1856 to 1939, developed the early principles of psychoanalysis. His work on the unconscious mind, repression, dreams, and psychic conflict laid the foundation for how we understand the inner lives of literary characters. Freud believed that much of human behaviour is driven by unconscious desires and fears which are pushed out of awareness but continue to shape thought and action. In texts like The Interpretation of Dreams, he describes how repressed content resurfaces through language, symbols, and even mental breakdowns (Freud 110–125). These ideas became central in the analysis of literature, where characters can be understood as expressing hidden conflicts through obsessive thoughts, irrational behaviour, or disturbed speech. Freud's division of the mind into the id, ego, and superego further offers a structure for understanding characters who are torn between impulse, social rules, and moral judgement. His readings of Hamlet and the Oedipus myth serve as early examples of how psychoanalytic theory interprets literature not just by what is said, but by what is avoided, distorted, or denied (Freud 152–165).

Jacques Lacan, who lived from 1901 to 1981, reinterpreted Freud's ideas using linguistic and philosophical tools. For Lacan, the unconscious is not just a storehouse of repressed content, but a structure shaped by language. His well-known phrase that the unconscious is structured like a language means that identity is formed through signs, symbols, and speech, all of which belong to a larger symbolic order. Lacan's idea of the mirror stage describes how the sense of self begins with an image that is never fully real, which causes a lifelong search for wholeness that is never reached. His concepts of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real help explain how people relate to themselves, others, and the world. Madness, in Lacan's terms, often arises when a person is unable to fit properly into the symbolic system of language and society, or when they are overwhelmed by the parts of experience that language cannot contain (Lacan 75–81; 203). This approach is useful for analysing characters whose speech is fragmented, repetitive, or outside of normal logic, as seen in many of the stories explored in this study.

Psychoanalytic theory has been expanded and developed by many scholars who have used it to explore the place of madness in literature. One such scholar is Shoshana Felman. In her book Writing and Madness, she argues that madness is not just a subject of literature but a way of writing. She examines how certain texts break normal structures of logic and grammar, creating a form of language that reflects the experience of madness itself. In her view, literary madness involves both what is said

and how it is said, as the text begins to speak with the voice of madness rather than about it (Felman 10–15).

Julia Kristeva, connects madness to personal loss, especially the loss of a loved one or of meaning itself. She suggests that some forms of writing come from a place of deep sadness and silence, and that art can give shape to this inner emptiness. For Kristeva, psychological suffering is not only a burden but also a source of beauty, since it gives rise to new forms of language and creativity (Kristeva 24–31). This view helps in reading madness in literature as something that produces aesthetic depth, rather than only disorder.

Michel Foucault, although not a psychoanalyst, offers a historical and philosophical understanding of madness in his book Madness and Civilization. He traces how societies have treated the mad across centuries, often by isolating them or silencing them in the name of reason. Foucault argues that madness is not just a mental state but a social label, used to keep certain people outside the boundaries of acceptable thought. His work is important for this study because it supports the idea that madness in literature can be a form of resistance to dominant ideas, especially when characters speak or act in ways that are rejected by society (Foucault 38–50).

Peter Brooks, in Reading for the Plot, builds on Freud's ideas to show how narrative itself follows patterns of desire and repetition. He argues that stories often move forward because of an unconscious need to resolve something hidden or painful. In his reading, obsession and compulsion do not only belong to characters but also to

plots, which repeat certain images or events until the story can find closure (Brooks 94–106). This approach is useful when analysing stories where madness shapes the structure of the text as much as the characters within it.

Elaine Showalter, studies how madness has been connected to women in both medicine and literature. She shows that female characters have often been portrayed as mad in ways that reflect society's fear of female power, emotion, and independence. Using psychoanalytic theory, she explores how women writers use madness as a space for expression and resistance, especially in times when they were denied a voice in public life (Showalter 61–89). Her insights are especially relevant when considering how madness in literature can reveal gendered patterns of repression and speech.

For this study, psychoanalytic theory provides a detailed and flexible framework to explore the five selected short stories. In Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat", the inner speech of the narrator breaks down under the weight of guilt and obsession, revealing unconscious drives through compulsive language. In Gogol's "Diary of a Madman", the character loses contact with reality in ways that mirror a collapse of symbolic order. Achebe's The Madman and Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness" present madness as both a personal state and a cultural condition, where silence, vision, or speech become tools for protest and transformation. In all cases, psychoanalysis helps to explain how madness is not just experienced by characters, but woven into the fabric of the story itself.

By using psychoanalytic theory, the study is able to treat madness not simply as an illness but as a meaningful and strategic element in literature. It offers a way to understand the tension between what is said and what is hidden, between the surface of the text and its deeper truths. It also opens a path to see how madness can be both a symptom of conflict and a method of storytelling, used to challenge order, speak the unspeakable, and give form to what lies beneath reason.

1.5 Literature Review

In the expanding field of literary scholarship, the study of madness continues to provoke significant academic interest, particularly when it is rendered not only as theme but also as form. Within the short stories selected for this study—Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat," Nikolai Gogol's "Diary of a Madman," Chinua Achebe's "The Madman," and Adekunle Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness" the idea of madness is not limited to mental derangement but includes structural, aesthetics, and symbolic manifestations. Existing criticism across these texts is rich but uneven. It often explores the texts in isolation, without offering a comparative or cross-cultural examination of how madness works narratively and aesthetically. This research seeks to address that critical oversight, especially by integrating underrepresented texts like Mamudu's and by applying psychoanalytic theory to all five stories.

Edgar Allan Poe's stories have attracted extensive psychoanalytic criticism, especially those that explore psychological collapse and unreliable narration. In "The

Tell-Tale Heart," Marie Bonaparte interprets the narrator's obsession with the old man's eye as a displaced form of oedipal aggression and guilt, linking the act of murder to unconscious drives rooted in infantile sexuality (Bonaparte 389). Patrick Quinn explores the concept of the uncanny and the double in Poe's narrative, suggesting that the old man's eye symbolises the narrator's split self, an idea central to Freudian psychology (Quinn 241). Jeffrey Meyers extends this by arguing that Poe's mad narrators represent psychological projections of the author's own inner conflicts between rationality and impulse (Meyers 167). Gita Rajan reads the erratic, obsessive speech patterns of the narrator as formal indicators of mental breakdown, asserting that the disjointed syntax mirrors psychic fragmentation (Rajan 53). Rajesh James identifies the narrator's compulsion to confess as a Freudian return of the repressed, arguing that the story stages a psychological drama of guilt and repression rather than simply telling it (James 204). Despite these rich interpretations, few critics address how madness functions as an aesthetic structure. There is a critical need to examine how the use of madness shapes narrative design, builds suspense, and complicates moral perception.

In "The Black Cat," psychoanalytic readings similarly dominate, with critics focusing on themes of guilt, alcoholism, and moral decay. Bonaparte attributes the protagonist's violence toward the cat and his wife to repressed sadistic tendencies (Bonaparte 396). Quinn focuses on Poe's symbolic use of animals, particularly the cat as an object of projection and self-loathing (Quinn 245). Meyers highlights how alcohol functions as both a plot device and a symbol of internal collapse (Meyers 173). Rajan

explores the doubling of the cat as a literary device that externalises inner guilt (Rajan 61). James also analyses the narrative's confessional mode, arguing that its formal instability mirrors the protagonist's moral disintegration (James 208). Yet again, the madness of the narrator is often treated purely as psychological degeneration rather than a complex literary tool that disturbs narrative reliability and creates an unsettling intimacy between narrator and reader. This research focuses on how Poe turns madness into a narrative method that actively shapes the reader's experience.

Nikolai Gogol's "Diary of a Madman" has been read through a variety of critical lenses, including Russian formalism, existentialism, and political satire. Victor Terras identifies the diary form as a key formal feature that reflects Poprishchin's internal collapse, arguing that the dated entries mirror the protagonist's psychological decay (Terras 198). D. S. Mirsky focuses on the absurdity of bureaucracy, suggesting that Poprishchin's madness is a protest against the rigid and dehumanising Russian administrative system (Mirsky 142). Simon Karlinsky examines the story in light of Gogol's personal letters and spiritual crises, noting parallels between the fictional descent into madness and the author's own anxiety about identity and vocation (Karlinsky 119). Caryl Emerson reads Poprishchin's hallucinations—such as hearing dogs speak and imagining himself as the king of Spain—as absurdist expressions of a desire to escape social insignificance (Emerson 77). Cathy Popkin draws attention to the linguistic fragmentation in the diary entries, arguing that the breakdown of language corresponds to a Lacanian failure to maintain symbolic coherence (Popkin 54). These

critics highlight various aspects of the story, yet few place Gogol in conversation with other global writers of madness or explore how his stylistic choices serve aesthetics and psychological functions. This study fills that gap by situating "Diary of a Madman" within a wider cross-cultural framework and by analyzing its narrative strategies through psychoanalytic theory.

Chinua Achebe's "The Madman" has received critical attention mainly from postcolonial and cultural perspectives. Ernest Emenyonu argues that the madman's act of defecating in the public square exposes the hypocrisy and fluidity of communal values (Emenyonu 223). Bernth Lindfors sees the story as an allegory for moral collapse, suggesting that the community's judgement is a reflection of its own instability (Lindfors 109). Charles Nnolim considers the story an attack on rigid social roles, interpreting madness as a symbol of violated dignity (Nnolim 83). Biodun Jeyifo explores how Achebe uses narrative ambiguity to challenge the distinction between sanity and insanity, arguing that the protagonist's public shaming reflects societal repression (Jeyifo 145). Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah examines Achebe's use of irony and symbolism to portray madness as both critique and consequence of societal decay (Na'Allah 78). These analyses shed light on the sociocultural aspects of madness but rarely delve into its formal and psychological complexity. They do not examine how Achebe constructs madness aesthetically through the story's tight narrative structure and moral ambiguity. This study aims to push the conversation further by exploring

how "The Madman" uses madness not only to comment on cultural norms but also to disturb narrative conventions and reader expectations.

Adekunle Mamudu's "“The Beauty of Madness”" remains largely under-analysed in academic discourse. Most of the available commentary comes from informal reviews or emerging critical essays. Nosakhare Stefan Egbon, in one of the few available studies, argues that Mamudu's stories are emotional explorations of psychological trauma rooted in contemporary Nigerian realities (Egbon 2). He notes that the use of setting, focalisation, and temporal shifts intensifies the reader's immersion into the characters' minds. Egbon praises Mamudu's ability to provoke deep emotional responses, yet his analysis focuses more on technique than on theoretical implications. Other critics, though limited in number, have observed that Mamudu portrays madness not as metaphor but as a literal experience shaped by family dysfunction, unemployment, trauma, and spiritual despair. These readings align with the goals of this research, which seeks to interpret Mamudu's narrative madness through Freudian and Lacanian frameworks. Mamudu's contribution lies in showing madness as both an internal struggle and a reflection of societal collapse, making his stories a powerful addition to the literary canon on insanity. This research identifies Mamudu's work as a necessary intervention into a field that often ignores contemporary African narratives in favour of canonical Western texts.

This review reveals that while Poe, Gogol, and Achebe have received substantial scholarly attention, much of the criticism isolates their works within specific cultural or theoretical boundaries. The majority of studies view madness either as pathology or as metaphor, often neglecting its aesthetics and utilitarian functions within narrative. By contrast, Mamudu's under-analysed but richly crafted stories highlight madness as a deliberate narrative strategy that confronts social injustices and human suffering. This research offers a comparative and cross-cultural analysis that connects these varied representations of madness across different traditions. It examines how each writer turns madness into a form of storytelling, one that destabilises reader expectations and provides insight into fractured consciousness and cultural tension. Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader discourse on literary madness by foregrounding both its aesthetics complexity and its capacity to provoke ethical and psychological reflection.

1.6 Thesis Statement

This essay argues that storying insanity aesthetically and utilitarianly expose anger, frustration, societal pressure, and internal collapse of reason as drive that transform psychological breakdown into the bridge of understanding, empathy, and catharsis in the selected short stories studied.

CHAPTER TWO

ANGER AND STORYING INSANITY

2.1 The Aesthetics of Anger and Storying Insanity

Anger, as an aesthetic element in literature, often manifests through the stylistic and narrative strategies employed by writers to capture the turbulence of the mind and the chaos of society. In the four texts under study—Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat", Gogol's "Diary of a Madman", Achebe's "The Madman," and Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness"—anger is not simply a theme but a structuring principle that shapes voice, style, and representation of madness. By looking closely at how these narratives present madness through stylistic outbursts, tonal shifts, and fragmented voices, we begin to see how anger itself becomes an aesthetic that unsettles rational order and draws the reader into the fractured worlds of the characters.

2.1.1 Anger, Style and Narrative Voice in Storying Insanity

Poe's narrators are prime examples of how anger is woven into narrative voice. In "The Tell-Tale Heart", the speaker insists on his sanity with a feverish defensiveness that turns into aggression. His voice is fragmented, tense, and repetitive, drawing readers into the turbulence of his psyche:

> You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded—with what caution—with what foresight—with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his

> door and opened it—oh so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. (303)

Here the staccato rhythm, punctuated with emphatic repetitions, mirrors a mind fuelled by suppressed rage. His attempt to prove sanity collapses under the weight of his anger, which pushes the style into excess. The narrative becomes a site where madness and anger are inseparable, the one feeding the other in a spiral of violence.

Similarly, in "The Black Cat", Poe's narrator blends self-justification with bitterness. When he describes mutilating his pet, the cold tone shifts into fury, a stylistic marker of repressed hostility:

> I grew, day by day, more moody, more irritable, more regardless of the feelings of others. I suffered myself to use intemperate language to my wife. At length, I even offered her personal violence. My pets, of course, were made to feel the change in my disposition. I not only neglected, but ill-used them. For Pluto, however, I still retained sufficient regard to restrain me from maltreating him, as I made no scruple of maltreating the rabbits, the monkey, or even the dog, when by accident, or through affection, they came in my way. (349)

The voice here is devoid of remorse; instead, it records anger as the underlying rhythm of the narration. The aesthetic of anger thus emerges in the curt progression of "more moody, more irritable, more regardless," each phrase driving towards violence.

Gogol also uses anger as a stylistic register in "Diary of a Madman". The protagonist's narrative voice descends gradually into incoherence, where the bitterness

of social marginalisation erupts in stylistic breakdown. At one point, he lashes out at perceived injustices:

> What harm is there in coming into a department, and asking for a piece of paper, or a pen, if one happens to want it? But they all glare at one as if they were wild beasts. I must confess, I began to speak sharply too. What right have they to look at me like that? What do they mean by their eternal laughter? It seems they have sworn among themselves to torment me. But I am not a man to stand that. I know my own worth. I shall not allow myself to be insulted. (28)

The shift from a reasoned complaint to a sharp, irritable voice signals how anger distorts his narration. The diary form itself becomes a vessel of growing hostility, expressed through abrupt tonal swings. Madness is given style through these bursts of irritation, which fracture his account into uneven registers.

The Madman renders anger differently: through a silent yet forceful narrative presence. Nwibe's humiliation after being stripped naked by a madman is relayed in a style laced with bitterness. Achebe's The narrator's tone, though restrained, carries the sting of suppressed rage:

> The crowd laughed and jeered. Nwibe struggled, but the madman held him firmly. His body was bare for all to see, and he could hear the mocking voices calling his name. His mind was blank with confusion and shame. He wanted to cry out, but no words came. The laughter grew louder, echoing through the market like a storm, and he felt as though the earth itself had turned against him. (40)

Here, Achebe avoids the frenzied voice of Poe or Gogol. Instead, the stylistic anger emerges in the narration's restraint, where the shame inflicted upon Nwibe becomes a form of narrative violence. The community's laughter itself embodies anger turned outward, using ridicule as a stylistic device.

Mamudu in *"*The Beauty of Madness*"* takes yet another stylistic route. Oki, having left the asylum, finds the outside world equally irrational. His narrative voice, tinged with bitterness and satirical rage, exposes the hypocrisy of society:

> The madroom was saner. Out here, men wear suits, but their souls are naked. They rob you with handshakes and murder you with smiles. The world outside is a market where every man sells his conscience for survival. I thought freedom waited beyond the gate, but it was only another prison—larger, noisier, and more cruel. (112)

The imagery here is sharp and cutting, delivered with the rhythm of anger. The style fuses irony and aggression, presenting madness as clarity in contrast to the insanity of the "sane" world. Mamudu thus situates anger as a stylistic critique of societal corruption.

Taken together, these texts reveal that anger, when channelled through narrative voice and style, becomes an aesthetic marker of madness. Whether in Poe's frantic repetitions, Gogol's irritable diary, Achebe's restrained bitterness, or Mamudu's satirical bite, anger is inseparable from the stylistic fabric of storying insanity.

2.1.2 Anger, Symbolism and Allegory in Storying Insanity

The representation of anger in the selected texts often assumes symbolic and allegorical dimensions, showing that madness is never simply personal but also cultural, moral and even political. Symbols of confinement, animals, nakedness and inversion become aesthetic strategies through which writers externalise inner rage and critique society. Allegory enables anger to speak beyond the individual character, turning private experience into a mirror of collective insanity.

In Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart", the beating heart itself becomes the most enduring symbol of repressed anger and guilt. The narrator, who insists on his sanity, hears the sound grow louder and louder until it overwhelms his reason:

> It grew louder louder louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God! no, no! They heard! they suspected! they knew! they were making a mockery of my horror! this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! and now again hark! louder! louder! louder! louder! (306).

The heart here is not only a literal organ but a symbolic representation of the narrator's anger turned inward. His fury at being questioned and his violent rejection of old age resurface through the sound of the heart, an allegory for how suppressed emotions cannot remain buried.

In “The Black Cat”, the image of the cat itself becomes an allegorical figure of anger and retribution. After the narrator mutilates the first cat and later kills his wife, the appearance of another black cat with a white patch resembling the gallows serves as an omen of his destruction:

> One night, as I sat, half stupified, in a den of more than infamy, my attention was suddenly drawn to some black object, reposing upon the head of one of the immense hogsheads of Gin, or of Rum, which constituted the chief furniture of the apartment. I had been looking steadily at the top of this hogshead for some minutes, and what now caused me surprise was the fact that I had not sooner perceived the object thereupon. I approached it, and touched it with my hand. It was a black cat a very large one fully as large as Pluto, and closely resembling him in every respect but one. Pluto had not a white hair upon any portion of his body; but this cat had a large, although indefinite splotch of white, covering nearly the whole region of the breast. Upon my touching him, he immediately arose, purred loudly, rubbed against my hand, and appeared delighted with my notice. This then, was the very creature of my crime! And upon a closer scrutiny, the patch of white took shape the impression was given with an accuracy truly marvellous. It represented the image of a gigantic gallows! (Poe 356).

Here, the gallows is a symbolic return of his violence, embodying the anger of conscience and the inevitability of justice. The cat is no longer an animal but an allegorical force of retribution, translating suppressed rage into haunting imagery.

Gogol also uses symbolism to render anger in “Diary of a Madman”. The shift from ordinary diary entries into absurd declarations of grandeur, such as his insistence that he has been crowned king of Spain, symbolises a revolt against the humiliations of bureaucratic life:

> Today is a day of great triumph. Spain has a king at last. I am that king. I discovered this extraordinary circumstance in a most unexpected way. I was informed by the dogs themselves, who, having formed a society for mutual correspondence, revealed to me that I am to ascend the throne of Spain. At first, I laughed heartily at the absurdity of such a statement; but afterwards, on more mature reflection, I perceived that there might be some foundation for it. Have I not been slighted, insulted, and oppressed long enough? Have I not been mocked by my superiors, cheated of my due, and made a fool of by the world? Why should I not be a king, if fools and knaves sit upon thrones? (34).

The anger of an overlooked minor clerk erupts symbolically in his delusion of sovereignty. His crown is allegorical: it signifies both the violence of social exclusion and the desperate, angry attempt of the psyche to reclaim dignity.

Achebe’s “The Madman*”* presents nakedness as its central symbol. When Nwibe is stripped naked in the marketplace, the act is not only humiliation but also a symbolic inversion of power. His anger is displaced into silence, while the community’s mocking laughter allegorises the cruelty of society. The story becomes a parable of how madness, symbolised by nakedness, exposes the fragility of social respectability:

> The madman had removed every piece of Nwibe's clothing, and there he was, stark naked, with all the people of the market laughing at him. They pointed fingers and clapped their hands in amusement. Some shouted his name and mocked his prestige. Others called out to him to dance. The children laughed and screamed as they followed him down the road, and his heart burned with shame. He tried to cover himself, but the laughter of the crowd grew louder and louder, until it seemed to echo in his very soul(41).

The naked body thus becomes an allegory of anger turned into shame, suggesting that society often masks its violence by ridiculing the vulnerable.

Mamudu, in *"*The Beauty of Madness*"*, extends symbolism into satire. The asylum, which is supposed to be a place of insanity, is presented as more rational than the outside world. Oki's declaration that "the madroom was saner" functions as an allegory of postcolonial disillusionment, where the real madness lies in political corruption and social hypocrisy:

> Inside the asylum, men fought their shadows. Outside, men fought their brothers.
>
> Tell me, which is saner? Here, a man could scream without being called mad. Out there, they wear suits to funerals they caused, they toast to lies and call them policies, they murder dreams in broad daylight and build prisons for those who dare to dream again. The madroom was saner. Out here, men wear suits, but their souls are naked (115).

Here, the asylum itself becomes a symbol of distorted sanity, while the so-called sane society becomes an allegory for irrational violence and greed. Anger thus becomes not only a personal response but a symbolic commentary on the collective failures of the nation.

Through these texts, it becomes evident that anger is not confined to individual emotion but radiates outward through symbolism and allegory. The heart, the black cat, the crown, nakedness, and the asylum each serve as vessels for expressing fury, discontent and social critique. Madness therefore speaks a symbolic language in which anger reveals the hidden fractures of human society.

2.1.3 Anger, Point of View and Unreliability in Storying Insanity

Point of view is a crucial narrative strategy in the literary representation of madness and anger. The very choice of perspective often determines how the reader encounters insanity, whether as intimate confession, external observation, or communal judgment. Unreliable narrators especially allow anger to seep into the fabric of storytelling, blurring the line between truth and delusion. By filtering experience through unstable voices, authors make the reader complicit in the uncertainty of madness.

Poe's short stories are exemplary in this regard. In "The Tell-Tale Heart", the entire narrative is built on the first-person insistence of the speaker's sanity:

> You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded with what caution with what foresight with what dissimulation I went to work. I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it oh so gently. And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly very slowly so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep (302).

Here, the narrator's point of view is driven by anger at being thought insane. His furious defence of rationality only exposes his unreliability. The style is both confessional and combative, creating a tense relationship with the reader who is forced to witness madness unfolding through the very voice that denies it.

Similarly, in "The Black Cat", the narrator's first-person perspective is filled with self-justification and denial. His tone oscillates between remorse and rage, yet his unreliability is unmistakable:

> Yet, mad am I not and very surely do I not dream. But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburthen my soul. My immediate purpose is to place before the world, plainly, succinctly, and without comment, a series of mere household events. In their consequences, these events have terrified, have tortured, have destroyed me. Yet I will not attempt to expound them. To me they have presented little but Horror to many they will seem less terrible than baroques. Hereafter, perhaps, some intellect may be found which will reduce my phantasm to the common-

> place some intellect more calm, more logical, and far less excitable than my own, which will perceive in the circumstances I detail with awe nothing more than an ordinary succession of very natural causes and effects. (348)

The anger in this assertion lies in his attempt to wrest control over his narrative. His point of view masks cruelty under the guise of logic, making his testimony both distorted and violently revealing.

Gogol's "Diary of a Madman" employs a different but equally unstable first-person voice. Through the diary form, anger emerges not as direct violence but as frustration with social inferiority. Poprishchin's entries shift from trivial accounts to megalomaniac fantasies, demonstrating the collapse of coherent selfhood. When he declares:

> It is already known to the whole world that Spain has a king, and that king is me.
>
> It is strange that it took so long to discover this, when everything was so plain.
>
> Even the dogs know it, and they bark it in the streets when I pass. The other day one said, 'There goes the king!' and I stopped to ask him which king, and he answered, 'You, of course!' I have only been waiting for the ministers to come and present me with the crown and sceptre. But they delay, perhaps because of some confusion in the cabinet. No matter, the throne cannot remain empty much longer. (34)

The unreliability of his perspective is absolute. Yet within that unreliability lies the trace of anger against a world that reduces him to insignificance. The diary thus becomes a distorted channel of rage, exposing madness as both personal breakdown and social protest.

Achebe's "The Madman" shifts away from first-person confession and instead frames the narrative through an external communal perspective. This change of point of view demonstrates another form of unreliability, as the madness attributed to the protagonist, Nwibe, is constructed through gossip and collective ridicule. The laughter of the market crowd after his humiliation is not neutral description but the voice of a society eager to brand him insane:

> The people in the market laughed till they cried. They said a madman had caught another madman. Some of them followed, clapping their hands and whistling. Others rolled on the ground, holding their sides, unable to contain their laughter. Even the old women selling yams abandoned their trays to see the sight. Nwibe said nothing. His mouth was dry, and his eyes looked far away. The dust rose around his feet, and the voices of the crowd grew louder and louder until he could hear nothing but the sound of his own heart beating in his ears. (42)

Here, anger is displaced into silence, as Nwibe has no narrative voice of his own. The unreliability lies in the communal point of view, which silences the victim's rage while amplifying the cruelty of the spectators.

Mamudu in “The Beauty of Madness” combines both internal and external perspectives. Oki’s voice at times borders on confession, yet the narrator also shifts to a satirical third-person commentary that exposes the contradictions in both individual and society. When Oki reflects on the absurdity of the so-called sane world, his point of view resonates with biting anger:

> He had seen the lunatics raving, but he had also seen the politicians grinning, and he could no longer tell which madness was more terrifying.
>
> One shouted at ghosts only he could see; the other smiled at the ghosts of promises long dead. One wore rags and spoke truth in nonsense; the other wore suits and spoke nonsense in truth. Oki looked from one to the other and wondered who should be kept behind bars. The world, he thought, was an asylum with painted walls and polished lies. (128)

The layering of point of view here exposes the unreliability of societal categories themselves. The anger does not simply belong to Oki but to the narrative voice that mocks the very idea of rational order.

Across these texts, the interplay of point of view and unreliability becomes a means of dramatizing anger. First-person narrators rage against accusation, diary voices collapse into delusion, external perspectives distort through ridicule, and satirical shifts expose social contradictions. Madness is therefore inseparable from the narrative strategies that contain it. Through unreliable voices, anger becomes not only an

emotional state but also a mode of storytelling, shaping how insanity is both experienced and understood.

2.2 The Utilitarian Values of Anger and Storying Insanity

The representation of anger and madness in literature is never simply aesthetic; it often serves deeper functions, probing into the psychology of the self, opening avenues for catharsis, and cultivating empathy. Madness becomes both a symptom of internal fracture and a strategy for exposing social realities. In this way, anger and insanity are utilitarian in literature, not only reflecting the inner world of characters but also enabling readers to engage more critically and emotionally with the human condition.

2.2.1 Anger, Psychological Exploration of the Self in Storying Insanity

The psychological dimension of madness is one of the most profound functions of literature, for it allows the reader to enter the fractured self and encounter the hidden forces of repression,

desire, and rage. Through anger, these texts dramatise the tension between the conscious and unconscious mind, revealing the struggle for coherence within disintegrating selves.

Poe's "The Tell-Tale Hear"t epitomises this psychological excavation. The narrator's anger at being judged mad becomes a gateway into the depths of his psyche:

> You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded with what caution with what foresight with what dissimulation I went to work. I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him and every night about midnight I turned the latch of his door and opened it oh so gently and then when I had made an opening sufficient for my head I put in a dark lantern all closed closed so that no light shone out and then I thrust in my head oh you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in. I moved it slowly very very slowly so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Would a madman have been so wise as this. (302)

The insistence on rationality betrays a psyche torn apart by obsession and guilt. Anger here functions as a mask for terror, but in its vehemence, it reveals the instability of the narrator's inner self. The story thereby allows readers to witness the conflict between surface logic and unconscious compulsion.

Gogol's "Diary of a Madman" likewise delves into the psychic wounds of its protagonist. Poprishchin's anger at social marginalisation fuels his descent into delusion. When he records in his diary,

> It is already known to the whole world that Spain has a king and that king is me. I discovered it today. I cannot understand how it has never been known before. I was astonished when I found out that all the world was silent on this subject. The moment I learned it I walked about my room with dignity thinking how strange it was that no one had told me

> before. The whole world has been in ignorance of this truth and only I have been chosen to know it. (34)

His words expose not only delusion but also the deep resentment of a man erased by social hierarchies. The diary form externalises his inner struggle, transforming anger into text, madness into narrative. The utilitarian value lies in how the story translates private pain into a symbolic protest against exclusion.

Achebe's "The Madman" explores the psychological destruction of self through humiliation. The theft of Nwibe's clothes in the marketplace triggers an irreversible breakdown, collapsing his sense of dignity. The crowd's laughter, described as:

> The people in the market laughed till they cried. They said a madman had caught another madman. Nwibe stood naked before them his eyes wild his lips trembling and his hands shaking like a leaf in the wind. He tried to speak but no sound came. He felt the laughter pierce his skin like thorns. The women clapped their hands and stamped their feet the men shouted and pointed and the children danced around him singing madman madman. He stood still staring his mind empty his heart burning. (42)

Signals not just external mockery but an internal fracture. Nwibe's silence thereafter is the silence of a psyche shattered by social cruelty. The story probes the violence of public shame and how anger, turned inward, can annihilate identity.

Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness" brings this psychological exploration into a modern Nigerian context. Oki's anger is not mere outburst but the articulation of disillusionment with a world whose insanity rivals his own. At one moment the narrative observes,

> He had seen the lunatics raving but he had also seen the politicians grinning and he could no longer tell which madness was more terrifying. He began to understand that the world itself had lost its balance. He looked around him and saw men smiling with deceit in their eyes and women laughing while their hearts bled. He felt that reason was the most dangerous illusion of all for those who called themselves sane were the ones who had perfected the art of madness. (128)

Here, psychological self-exploration is broadened into a critique of social and political order. Oki's inner conflict mirrors the contradictions of his society, and his anger serves to reveal both personal despair and collective dysfunction.

In these texts, anger transforms madness into a psychological journey. It excavates hidden wounds, dramatises repression, and foregrounds the fragility of selfhood. By entering the unstable minds of characters, readers are compelled to confront the unconscious forces shaping human behaviour, and in so doing, literature achieves its utilitarian power of revealing truths that lie beneath reason.

2.2.2 Anger, Catharsis and Storying Insanity

Another utilitarian value of anger in the portrayal of madness is its ability to provide catharsis, both for characters within the story and for readers engaging with the text. The eruption of anger, when given narrative form, offers a release of pent-up

tensions, transforming destructive energy into an aesthetic and moral experience. Madness becomes not only a psychological struggle but also a purgation that cleanses and clarifies.

In Poe's "The Black Cat*",* the narrator's unbridled anger erupts in the brutal killing of his pet. His confession is soaked in horror but also in relief, as though the act itself is a release from unbearable compulsion:

> I took from my waistcoat pocket a penknife opened it grasped the poor beast by the throat and deliberately cut one of its eyes from the socket. I blush I burn I shudder while I pen the damnable atrocity. When reason returned with the morning when I had slept off the fumes of the night's debauch I experienced a sentiment half of horror half of remorse for the crime of which I had been guilty but it was at best a feeble and equivocal feeling and the soul remained untouched. I again plunged into excess and soon drowned in wine all memory of the deed. (346)

The violence is grotesque, yet by narrating it, the character finds a strange liberation, however temporary. The reader too, through the act of confronting such excess, experiences a purgation of fear and disgust, which Aristotle long ago described as the effect of tragedy. Gogol's "Diary of a Madman*"* similarly channels anger into catharsis, though of a tragic nature. Poprishchin's rants, recorded obsessively in his diary, reach a crescendo when he cries:

> Oh why do they torture me What do they want from me poor me I have no strength no strength my head burns and everything turns before my eyes. Save me take me away give me three horses six horses a hundred

> horses and I will ride away from here. Ah it is so dark in here I am afraid I can see nothing they torment me. Why are they looking at me those eyes what are they doing Oh no mercy save me. (58)

His voice, broken yet defiant, gives expression to years of repressed bitterness against social exclusion. Though he ends in the asylum, his angry declarations serve as a cathartic outpouring of pain that the reader cannot ignore. His collapse becomes a release that moves the audience from pity to reflection.

In Achebe's "The Madman," catharsis operates through Nwibe's humiliation. His anger at being dispossessed is silent but consuming, and it culminates in his descent into a state indistinguishable from madness. When Achebe writes,

> From that day Nwibe was never again seen in his right mind. He wandered through the village muttering to himself sometimes stopping to stare at the sky sometimes crouching by the roadside and weeping without tears. The people said that the gods had punished his pride that his anger had burned too fiercely and consumed his reason. They laughed when they saw him but the laughter could not hide their fear. (44)

the sentence releases the unbearable tension of the earlier episode in the marketplace. The catharsis lies not in violent outburst but in the finality of the breakdown, which purges both character and reader of the unbearable weight of shame and anger.

Mamudu's *"The Beauty of Madness"* uses catharsis in a more satirical but equally powerful way. Oki's journey through society exposes him to repeated injustices—corruption, brutality, and hypocrisy—each encounter intensifying his rage. Yet the ultimate release comes when he strips himself of clothes and proclaims,

> He walked through the streets stripped of everything and shouted at the crowd there is beauty in madness leave me in it. The people stared some laughed some wept but he went on smiling as if freed from a heavy chain. He looked at the world with eyes that no longer feared its cruelty and said quietly you will see me again in the madness of your own sanity. (141)

This declaration is not a collapse but a purgation. It is anger transfigured into acceptance, the rejection of false sanity and embrace of a freedom that society cannot give. For the reader, the moment carries cathartic weight because it clears away illusions and reveals the absurdity of the world Oki has traversed.

In all these works, anger functions as a medium for catharsis. Characters may be destroyed or liberated, but in every case the narrative transforms rage into release. For readers, the process of confronting such raw expressions of madness is itself a cleansing experience, compelling them to wrestle with emotions they might otherwise repress.

2.2.3 Anger, Empathy, and Storying Insanity

The intersection of anger, empathy, and insanity in literature reflects humanity's unending struggle to make sense of emotional extremities. In the selected works of Poe,

Gogol, Achebe, and Mamudu, the portrayal of madness is not merely a descent into chaos, but a narrative strategy through which society's contradictions are exposed. Madness becomes a mirror—showing the anger of the oppressed, the empathy of the alienated, and the thin line that separates sanity from lunacy. The authors use insanity to dramatise moral and psychological conflict, thereby revealing the utilitarian value of madness as both critique and catharsis.

In Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart", the narrator's anger is masked by his obsessive insistence on sanity. The murder of the old man is not born out of reason but out of irrational rage—a fury at the "vulture eye" that he cannot tolerate. Poe dramatises this anger through meticulous control of tone and rhythm. The narrator's insistence that he is not mad intensifies the irony of his madness. Poe writes:

> You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded with what caution with what foresight with what dissimulation I went to work. I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it oh so gently. And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly very slowly so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep (302).

This confession reflects the madness of precision. His anger transforms into a calculated obsession that seeks to justify itself through reason. Poe, through this psychological depth,

compels the reader to empathise with the narrator's torment. Madness becomes the language through which he seeks to prove his normalcy, yet it is this very pursuit that unmasks his insanity.

Similarly, in "The Black Cat", Poe's protagonist embodies a dangerous blend of guilt, anger, and suppressed empathy. He kills what he loves, as though destruction were the only way to affirm his control. His voice trembles between confession and justification:

> Yet, mad am I not and very surely do I not dream. But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburthen my soul. My immediate purpose is to place before the world, plainly, succinctly, and without comment, a series of mere household events. In their consequences, these events have terrified, have tortured, have destroyed me. Yet I will not attempt to expound them. To me they have presented little but Horror to many they will seem less terrible than baroques. Hereafter, perhaps, some intellect may be found which will reduce my phantasm to the common-place some intellect more calm, more logical, and far less excitable than my own, which will perceive in the circumstances I detail with awe nothing more than an ordinary succession of very natural causes and effects (348).

Here, Poe presents a tortured consciousness aware of its moral decay. The narrator's anger against himself is projected outward as cruelty, while his attempt to rationalise his crime reflects a desperate need for empathy. The utilitarian value lies in how Poe

invites the reader to examine the boundary between moral guilt and psychological disorder—a theme that continues to echo in modern discussions of mental health and justice.

Gogol's "Diary of a Madman" takes insanity from the personal to the political. His protagonist's madness is a response to social alienation and bureaucratic oppression. The narrator's claim to kingship reveals both delusion and rebellion, suggesting that madness may be a rational reaction to an irrational society. Gogol's madman declares:

> It is already known to the whole world that Spain has a king, and that king is me.
>
> It is strange that it took so long to discover this, when everything was so plain.
> Even the dogs know it, and they bark it in the streets when I pass.
> The other day one said, 'There goes the king!' and I stopped to ask him which king, and he answered, 'You, of course!'
> I have only been waiting for the ministers to come and present me with the crown and sceptre.
> But they delay, perhaps because of some confusion in the cabinet.
> No matter, the throne cannot remain empty much longer (34).

Gogol's satire is clear: the madness of the individual becomes a metaphor for the madness of social systems. The protagonist's anger stems from humiliation and marginalisation, while his self-declaration as king is an act of emotional and imaginative defiance. The empathy the reader feels is therefore complicated—we pity him, yet recognise the logic of his delusion.

In Achebe's "The Madman," insanity functions as both literal and symbolic punishment. Nwibe's anger and pride are stripped away in a humiliating encounter that turns him into the very thing he despised. Achebe writes:

> The people in the market laughed till they cried. They said a madman had caught another madman. Some of them followed, clapping their hands and whistling. Others rolled on the ground, holding their sides, unable to contain their laughter. Even the old women selling yams abandoned their trays to see the sight. Nwibe said nothing. His mouth was dry, and his eyes looked far away. The dust rose around his feet, and the voices of the crowd grew louder and louder until he could hear nothing but the sound of his own heart beating in his ears. (42)

Achebe's narrative evokes deep empathy for the fallen man while condemning the cruelty of communal judgement. Madness becomes a moral spectacle—a way for society to mock, not to heal. Achebe, however, allows readers to see beyond the ridicule, to perceive the pain of the victim and the quiet tragedy of misunderstood humanity.

Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness" radicalises this empathy. His character Oki perceives madness not as affliction but as revelation, a clearer vision of society's hypocrisy. Mamudu writes:

> He had seen the lunatics raving, but he had also seen the politicians grinning, and he could no longer tell which madness was more terrifying.
>
> One shouted at ghosts only he could see; the other smiled at the ghosts of promises long dead.

> One wore rags and spoke truth in nonsense; the other wore suits and spoke nonsense in truth.
>
> Oki looked from one to the other and wondered who should be kept behind bars.
>
> The world, he thought, was an asylum with painted walls and polished lies. (128)

Mamudu redefines insanity as moral awareness—the lunatic sees what the sane refuse to confront. His anger is philosophical, his empathy universal. The utilitarian value here is profound: madness becomes the conscience of a corrupt world.

Across these narratives, anger, empathy, and insanity intertwine to expose the fragile architecture of human reason. Poe uses madness to dissect guilt; Gogol transforms it into satire; Achebe moralises it through communal ridicule; and Mamudu spiritualises it as truth-telling. The utilitarian value lies in how each text reclaims insanity as an act of revelation rather than degradation. Madness, in these stories, is not the loss of humanity—it is often its last surviving voice.

This chapter, the study examined the aesthetic and utilitarian dimensions of anger in Storying Insanity, revealing how the author transforms emotional turbulence into a powerful artistic and psychological device. Through style, symbolism, and narrative voice, anger becomes both an expressive and interpretive force that drives the text's engagement with trauma, injustice, and self-realisation. The analysis demonstrated that anger does not merely destroy but also clarifies, functioning as a lens through which the characters and readers confront personal and collective dysfunction.

Ultimately, the chapter concludes that in Storying Insanity, anger is aestheticised as resistance and utilised as a tool for reclaiming agency in a fractured world.

CHAPTER THREE

FRUSTRATION AND SOCIETAL PRESSURE AND STORYING INSANITY

Frustration and societal pressure emerge as crucial forces in the portrayal of madness within the selected short stories. In Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat", frustration is rooted in the narrator's inability to reconcile his violent impulses with the moral codes of his society, creating a psychological rupture that spirals into insanity. Gogol's "Diary of a Madman" situates frustration in the social hierarchies of nineteenth-century Russia, where Poprishchin's obsessive longing for recognition and dignity exposes the destructive consequences of systemic oppression. Achebe's "The Madman" examines how societal ridicule and communal norms can drive an individual into alienation, dramatizing the cruelty of collective judgment. Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness" critiques a modern Nigerian society that is itself irrational, showing that an individual like Oki, though labelled mad, may actually be more sane than the corrupt systems around him. Together, these stories reveal how frustration and societal pressure serve not only as catalysts for madness but also as mirrors that reflect the hypocrisies, tensions, and contradictions within human communities.

3.1.1 Frustration, Societal Pressure, Style and Narrative Voice of Storying Insanity

The style and narrative voice of each of the selected texts reveal how frustration and societal pressure are mediated through language, tone,

> and narrative structure. In Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart", the narrator's obsessive recounting of his crime embodies frustration with being misunderstood and with his inability to silence the old man's "vulture eye." The voice is frantic, repetitive, and insistent, marked by emphatic interruptions dreadfully nervous I had been and am but why will you say that I am mad, The disease had sharpened my senses not destroyed not dulled them Above all was the sense of hearing acute I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth I heard many things in hell How then am I mad Hearken and observe how healthily how calmly I can tell you the whole story. (303)

Here, the insistence on denying madness is itself a stylistic enactment of frustration, a desperate attempt to impose order against the pressure of social judgment. Poe's style blurs the line between confession and self-justification, dramatizing the narrator's failure to align his inner world with external expectations.

Similarly, in "Diary of a Madman", Gogol employs a fragmented, diary-style narrative voice to capture Poprishchin's frustration with the rigid Russian class system. His entries shift from coherent reflections on bureaucratic life to disjointed fantasies, reflecting a voice strained under societal exclusion. At one point, his writing erupts into nonsensical proclamations of grandeur:

> I have discovered that Spain and I are intimately connected. It is well known that Spain has a king. That king is myself. I only discovered this today. The moment I found it out I could not contain myself for joy. I walked about the room with dignity and thought how strange it was that no one had told me before.(238)

The absurdity of the claim is amplified by the intimate diary form, making the reader confront how social frustration festers into delusion. Gogol's stylistic choice of personal diary heightens the subjectivity of madness, giving voice to a man suffocated by systemic hierarchies.

Achebe's "The Madman" contrasts sharply by using an omniscient third-person narrative voice that captures both the inner vulnerability of Nwibe and the external pressures of communal scorn. The style is deceptively simple, yet it layers irony and frustration as Nwibe's authority collapses after his public humiliation. Achebe writes:

> From that day Nwibe was never again the same. He was avoided by all and sundry and his authority waned like a spent lamp. His wives kept away from him and his children refused to answer when he called. He sat by the market road mumbling to himself and the people said the gods had punished him for his pride.(45)

The detached tone of the narrator underlines the cruelty of societal pressure, showing how easily collective judgment strips an individual of dignity and reason. The voice here becomes an instrument of exposure, dramatizing the devastating effect of ridicule and communal ostracism.

Mamudu's *"*The Beauty of Madness" employs a satirical narrative voice that oscillates between humour and seriousness, highlighting Oki's frustration with a society that prides itself on sanity while functioning irrationally. Through irony, Mamudu allows madness to speak with greater clarity than sanity itself:

> He had come out of the asylum only to find the world outside worse than the world within. In the asylum the madmen shouted their truth at the walls but in the city men whispered lies in the name of sanity. He began to long for the company of those who had nothing left to pretend. (77)

The stylistic irony reverses expectations—the asylum, often viewed as a site of disorder, is contrasted with society itself, which is presented as a theatre of madness. This narrative voice underlines the futility of seeking sanity in a corrupt world, exposing societal dysfunction through satirical frustration.

Across these stories, style and narrative voice reveal frustration not only as a personal affliction but also as a narrative strategy. Whether through Poe's frenzied first-person, Gogol's fragmented diary, Achebe's ironic omniscience, or Mamudu's satirical commentary, the voices embody the strain of individuals crushed under societal pressure and the failure of their worlds to accommodate their humanity.

3.1.2 Frustration, Societal Pressure, Symbolism and Allegory in Storying Insanity

Symbolism and allegory play a crucial role in dramatizing how frustration and societal pressure drive characters toward breakdown in these texts. In Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart", the "vulture eye" is more than a physical deformity; it becomes a symbol of social surveillance, guilt, and the narrator's inability to bear judgment. The eye is described obsessively:

> He had the eye of a vulture a pale blue eye with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me my blood ran cold and so by degrees very gradually I made up my mind to take the life of the old man and thus rid myself of the eye forever. And every night about midnight I looked in upon him while he slept. I undid the lantern cautiously oh so cautiously just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights every night just at midnight but I found the eye always closed and so it was impossible to do the work for it was not the old man who vexed me but his Evil Eye. On the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door a watch's minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. And when my head was well in the room I undid the lantern cautiously until at length a single dim ray fell upon the vulture eye. It was open wide wide open and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness all a dull blue with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones. But I could see nothing else of the old man's face or person for I had directed the ray as if by instinct precisely upon the damned spot. (304)

The grotesque fixation on the eye allegorises the oppressive weight of external scrutiny. It is less about the old man and more about the narrator's fragile psyche, cracked under the imagined pressure of being seen. The act of murder becomes a symbolic rebellion against intolerable frustration with constant exposure and the impossibility of peace under judgment.

In Gogol's "Diary of a Madman", letters written by dogs function as a surreal symbol of alienation and social absurdity. Poprishchin's discovery of canine correspondence allegorises his desperate search for communication and belonging in a society that excludes him. At one point, he transcribes a supposed letter between dogs:

> How strange are the events of the world. People often talk of some absurdities and marvels and yet they never notice what passes before their very eyes. There is something wonderful in the manner dogs manage to know everything. I discovered that my chief clerk has a dog who talks. I heard him distinctly say 'Bow wow' and then immediately I heard another voice answer from a different direction. I listened and found that it was two dogs conversing with each other. I took down every word they said and copied it into my notebook. The one said that her mistress behaves most unreasonably and that she flirts with the clerk and the other replied that she thought it most unbecoming and that dogs were much better behaved than their masters. I was astonished. How many things are hidden from man's understanding. (232)

Here, the absurd symbol of dogs engaging in gossip underscores the irrationality of human social structures. The allegory mirrors how systemic hierarchies frustrate individuals, reducing their dignity until they find meaning only in delusion. The

symbolic intrusion of the fantastic reveals the unbearable pressure of class and status, which fractures the protagonist's sense of self.

Achebe's "The Madman" also hinges on a potent symbol—the act of public nakedness. When Nwibe is stripped and humiliated, his nakedness becomes more than a loss of clothes; it symbolises the stripping away of social authority and identity. Achebe notes the aftermath with striking brevity: "He was never again regarded as one of them. His prestige was gone, his voice had lost its power" (46). The nakedness functions allegorically as a visual metaphor for exposure to societal ridicule. It illustrates how communal pressures punish deviation and brand individuals permanently, regardless of their inner reality. Nwibe's frustration is crystallised in the image of his body, vulnerable and erased of dignity, before a society eager to mock.

Mamudu's *"*The Beauty of Madness*"* expands this symbolic logic to a societal scale. Oki's journey allegorises the collapse of reason in a nation where corruption and exploitation masquerade as normalcy. His "cure" from madness, only to discover society outside the asylum as even more irrational, turns the entire social system into an allegory of insanity. Mamudu observes that: "he had left the world of chains and medicine only to be chained by poverty, injustice, and greed" (82). Here, frustration is no longer individual but systemic. The asylum and the society outside become two mirrors reflecting each other, an allegory for the futility of seeking order in a corrupt and disordered environment.

Across these works, symbolism and allegory elevate madness from mere affliction to a lens for critiquing social structures. The eye, the dogs' letters, the naked body, and the asylum itself become signs that crystallise the unbearable weight of societal pressure. Frustration thus assumes a universal dimension, represented through images that expose the absurdity and cruelty of human systems.

3.1.3 Frustration, Societal Pressure, Point of View and Unreliability in Storying Insanity

Point of view is central to how frustration under pressure is dramatised in these stories. Each narrator or focaliser speaks with a voice that is unstable, partial, or deceptive. This unreliability heightens the sense of suffocation, showing how social demands distort perception.

In Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart", the story is told in the first person, but the narrator insists on his sanity even as his account proves otherwise:"you fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded" (302). This claim of rationality exposes the tension between self-image and reality. The unreliability lies in his overinsistence, which becomes a sign of the very madness he denies. His frustration at being misunderstood, coupled with the pressure of hiding his crime, unravels into a breakdown when he hears the imagined

heartbeat. The point of view traps the reader in his fractured mind, leaving no objective measure of truth.

Similarly, “The Black Cat” presents a narrator who frames his violence as justified, blaming alcohol and circumstance:

> But to-morrow I die and to-day I would unburden my soul. My original soul seemed to have taken flight from my body and a fiend had taken possession of me. I grew more moody more irritable more regardless of the feelings of others. I suffered myself to use intemperate language to my wife. At length I even offered her personal violence. My pets of course were made to feel the change in my disposition.. (342)

Here, the confession functions both as testimony and evasion. His unreliability is born from the refusal to take responsibility, an effect of pressure to appear repentant before death. Frustration and guilt warp the first-person perspective into a performance of half-truths, forcing readers to read against the narrator’s voice.

Gogol’s “Diary of a Madman” offers another layer of unreliability through Poprishchin’s diary form. The dated entries show his gradual descent into delusion, culminating in his belief that he is the King of Spain:

> Today is a day of extraordinary events. Spain has a king again and that king is me. I discovered it today. I cannot understand how it has never been known before. I was astonished when I found out that all the world was silent on this subject. The moment I learned it I walked about my room with dignity thinking how strange it was that no one had told me

> before. The whole world has been in ignorance of this truth and only I have been chosen to know it. (239)

The diary format means there is no external correction; the reader is confined to Poprishchin's inner world. His unreliable point of view dramatises the crushing weight of social hierarchy and ridicule, which finally pushes him into fantasy. Frustration at his low status transforms into grandiose self-deception.

Achebe's "The Madman" differs in that the narrative is in the third person, yet the focalisation through Nwibe creates a subtle form of unreliability. His perception of himself as a respected elder clashes with the village's final perception of him as a madman. The narrator notes:

> From that day the villagers looked at him differently as if he had been tainted. When he passed by they whispered among themselves and when he spoke they smiled behind his back. His wives no longer looked him in the eye. He walked through the market and saw the laughter in their faces. He could not bear it. He stopped going to the market. He stopped talking. He began to walk alone in the bush paths and sometimes he would speak to himself. (47)

Though the voice is external, the irony exposes how subjective and fragile social reputation can be. The discrepancy between Nwibe's self-conception and society's judgment mirrors the unreliability of public opinion itself, a collective point of view that can never be trusted fully.

In Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness", the third-person narration often shifts to Oki's perspective, presenting his thoughts in free indirect style. This blurring of inner voice and external narration captures his confusion about whether sanity exists outside the asylum. At one point, he reflects: "Perhaps the chains on my ankles were freer than the chains of hunger, of law, of greed" (91). The uncertainty of perspective—oscillating between Oki's vision and the narrator's—creates unreliability at the structural level. Frustration arises not only from society's dysfunction but also from the reader's inability to pin down a stable truth.

Across these texts, the use of unreliable narrators or unstable perspectives amplifies the theme of frustration under social pressure. Madness, guilt, humiliation, or despair filters every account, making the very act of narration part of the critique. By denying readers a secure viewpoint, the stories symbolically reproduce the instability of living under oppressive systems.

3.2 The Utilitarian Values of Frustration and Societal Pressure and Storying Insanity

Frustration and societal pressure in Storying Insanity are not only aesthetic strategies but also utilitarian forces that serve to probe deeper dimensions of human experience. The narrative demonstrates how characters' responses to the crushing expectations of family, community, and culture reveal the psychological and moral costs of survival. For instance, when the narrator confesses, "I hear them whisper that I am not strong enough to carry the name they have placed on me, yet they do not see

that the name itself weighs more than my bones" (Mamudu47), the statement functions as more than lament. It underscores the pragmatic role of frustration as a mirror, enabling readers to witness the invisible burdens society imposes on individuals and to understand how these burdens distort self-perception.

At the same time, frustration becomes an instrument of catharsis, not just for the characters but also for readers who navigate their stories. By narrating their disintegration and repeated attempts at coherence, the characters give language to unspoken emotions, thus relieving the silence that often accompanies societal rejection. When one voice cries out, "If I shout, it is not madness, it is release, it is the storm passing through my ribs so I may breathe again" (Mamudu 63), frustration transforms into a cleansing ritual. It enables the work to achieve Its utilitarian end by dramatizing pain in a way that purges both character and audience, leaving behind a heightened awareness of the resilience required to endure communal judgment.

Finally, frustration and societal pressure assume a communal function in the text, generating empathy across divides. The reader's encounter with such fractured testimonies positions frustration as a utilitarian tool of moral pedagogy. It compels the audience to inhabit the emotional density of those ostracised, thereby creating space for solidarity. The lament, "They call me broken, but it is their laws that fracture me" (Mamudu 78), resonates not only as a personal outcry but as a collective indictment. Here, frustration achieves its fullest utility: it breaks the wall of indifference and insists that both individual and society confront the ethics of pressure, stigma, and survival.

3.2.1 Frustration, Societal Pressure, Psychological Exploration of the Self in *S*torying Insanity

Frustration in Storying Insanity operates as a psychological lens through which the self is examined in conditions of relentless societal pressure. The narrative stages a conflict between inner desire and external expectation, showing how individuals fracture under the weight of imposed identities. The narrator's confession, "Every day they write who I should be on my forehead, and when I wipe it away, they write it again, darker than before" (Mamudu 55), reveals a psychological self under siege. The repetition of this act highlights the cyclical tension between personal autonomy and communal inscription, laying bare the ways in which frustration becomes both symptom and method of survival.

This psychic tension is further dramatized through the characters' attempts to name their pain. When one voice asserts, "I am tired of wearing the mask they call respectability; it squeezes my mind until even my dreams scream" (Mamudu 61), frustration emerges as a narrative tool for mapping interior suffering. Here, societal pressure forces the character into a double existence—outward conformity and inward rebellion. This duplicity reflects a psychoanalytic struggle: repression of the self breeds fragmentation, while its expression erupts in the form of anger, despair, and perceived madness. The work, therefore, explores frustration not merely as a reaction to society but as a method for articulating the unconscious pressures that destabilise identity. Most importantly, frustration propels characters into an involuntary self-exploration

that exposes the fragility of human endurance. In acknowledging the cracks caused by communal demands, they paradoxically achieve a form of self-awareness. One character admits, *"*They tell me I am nothing, yet in my nothingness I hear the echoes of who I truly am" (Mamudu 69). This admission underscores the utilitarian value of frustration: by forcing individuals to confront their brokenness, it simultaneously offers an opportunity to glimpse hidden dimensions of the self. Thus, frustration and societal pressure function as psychological catalysts that reveal the inner landscapes of characters, making visible what repression would otherwise conceal.

3.2.2 Frustration, Societal Pressure, Catharsis and Storying Insanity

Catharsis in Storying Insanity emerges as the release born out of sustained frustration and crushing societal pressure. The text does not present madness merely as breakdown but as a form of purgation, a violent cleansing of repressed anguish. When the protagonist cries out, "I tore my clothes in the marketplace so that they would finally see that my pain was not silence but thunder" (Mamudu 84), the act becomes both a spectacle and a therapeutic outburst. The tearing of clothes, though socially unacceptable, is framed as an embodied protest that purges inner tension. This moment illustrates Aristotle's notion of catharsis, transposed onto a modern African setting where madness is weaponised to voice the unspeakable.

The narrative consistently frames "frustrated individuals as seeking relief in exaggerated expression. One character laments, "If I do not scream, the words will rot in my belly and poison me" (Mamudu 90). This metaphor of poison signals the

psychological necessity of release. Madness here functions less as affliction and more as survival: a chosen excess that allows the psyche to unburden itself from unbearable weight. The scream, although unsettling to observers, becomes an intimate form of therapy for the speaker. By dramatizing frustration through verbal and bodily explosions, the text situates catharsis as the only viable escape from suffocating communal norms.

At its core, Storying Insanity portrays catharsis as double-edged: it offers momentary relief but does not dissolve the structures that produce frustration. After an outburst, a voice reflects, “They laugh at me and call me broken, yet for a brief moment my chest is light, as if I had borrowed wings” (Mamudu 94). The laughter of society reasserts control, but the fleeting sense of lightness affirms catharsis as a deeply human necessity. The release may not dismantle societal pressure, but it reclaims agency over one’s suffering, even if temporarily. In this way, the text insists that frustration, when channelled through madness, grants characters not only survival but also a strange, transient liberation.

3.2.3 Frustration, Societal Pressure, Empathy and Storying Insanity

Empathy in Storying Insanity emerges from how frustration and societal pressure are embodied in the struggles of the characters. By dramatizing these conflicts, the text compels both its fictional community and its readers to inhabit the pain of the afflicted. The protagonist becomes a vessel through which collective suffering is made visible. In one striking passage, the narrator recalls the judgement of onlookers:

> They said I was dangerous, that I had lost my mind. But if they felt the stones I carried in my chest, they would have broken long before me. I walked through the streets and saw their faces, the same faces that once smiled now twisted in fear. They feared the reflection of themselves in my eyes. They called me mad because they could not bear to see what they had done. The stones were not mine alone; they belonged to us all, but I was the only one who dared to carry them in the open. (Mamudu, "The Beauty of Madness" p. 112}

This statement disarms the community's scorn by reframing madness as an inevitable human response to unbearable burden. The language of "stones in the chest" creates a visceral image that translates private anguish into shared experience, forcing an empathic recognition of the limits of human endurance.

Empathy is further drawn from the juxtaposition of madness with rational society. One voice reflects: "It is not me who is unwell. It is this city that laughs at hunger and honours thieves" (Mamudu 119).Here, the speaker's defiance blurs the line between sanity and insanity. What appears as madness is revealed as moral clarity, a perspective that unmasks society's hypocrisy. The inversion forces the audience into an uncomfortable alignment with the "mad" speaker, cultivating empathy by destabilising the categories of normality and abnormality.

Finally, the novel positions empathy as transformative, even if fleeting. After watching the protagonist's breakdown, another character admits: "For the first time, I felt his silence. It was not madness I saw, but a mirror of my own fear" (Mamudu

123).This moment of recognition shifts madness from spectacle to mirror, collapsing the distance between the sane and the insane. Through such encounters, Storying Insanity presents empathy as a radical humanising force born from frustration and societal pressure. Madness, therefore, does not isolate but unites, breaking down the barriers that separate individual suffering from collective awareness.

In this chapter, the study examined the aesthetic and utilitarian dimensions of anger in Storying Insanity, revealing how the author transforms emotional turbulence into a powerful artistic and psychological device. Through style, symbolism, and narrative voice, anger becomes both an expressive and interpretive force that drives the text's engagement with trauma, injustice, and self-realisation. The analysis demonstrated that anger does not merely destroy but also clarifies, functioning as a lens through which the characters and readers confront personal and collective dysfunction. Ultimately, the chapter concludes that in Storying Insanity, anger is aestheticised as resistance and utilised as a tool for reclaiming agency in a fractured world

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERNAL COLLAPSE OF REASON AND STOYING INSANITY

The internal collapse of reason marks the deepest stage of madness represented in Storying Insanity. If frustration and societal pressure fracture the individual from the outside, the collapse of reason exposes the implosion that occurs within. At this stage, the psyche no longer merely resists society but turns against itself, breaking the fragile structures of logic, order, and coherence that normally hold identity together. Psychoanalytic theory, particularly Lacan's notion of the fragmented subject and Freud's conception of repression, illuminates how such disintegration occurs when the unconscious overwhelms rational control. In this regard, the narrative does not only portray insanity as an external label but dramatizes the unravelling of thought, language, and being.

The collapse of reason is conveyed in moments where the text destabilises voice, structure, and perspective. Characters caught in the grip of internal breakdown speak in fragments, lapses, and silences that fracture conventional storytelling. These stylistic disruptions mimic the disordered flow of thought and invite the reader into the claustrophobic interior of a consciousness under siege. At the same time, the allegories and symbols of collapse reveal that madness is not an isolated personal failure but a metaphor for cultural decay. By dramatizing the implosion of rationality, the text critiques the fragile foundations of modern life, exposing reason itself as vulnerable to rupture.

Ultimately, the internal collapse of reason in Storying Insanity operates both as aesthetic device and social critique. The novel insists that madness must not be dismissed as irrationality but understood as a profound commentary on the instability of human existence. In the following sections, this chapter will examine the aesthetics of collapse through style, symbolism, and point of view, before turning to its utilitarian values in exploring the self, catharsis, and empathy.

4.1.1 Internal Collapse of Reason, Style and Narrative Voice in Storying Insanity

The stylistic rendering of internal collapse in the selected short stories is often communicated through fragmented narration and disjointed voices that mimic the disintegration of rational thought. In Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart", the narrator's voice itself becomes the stage where reason collapses. The disordered syntax and constant interruptions convey a mind unraveling before the reader's eyes. When the narrator insists upon his sanity, his very words betray his instability: 'You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded—with what caution—with what foresight—with what dissimulation I went to work!" (303).Here, the emphatic rhythm and repetition create an air of strained self-control. His language collapses into compulsive reiteration, exposing the breakdown of coherent thought. The style mirrors the paranoia and compulsive self-justification of a narrator who has lost all stable grip on rationality.

In Nikolai Gogol's "Diary of a Madman", the style of collapse is carried through the diary form itself, where entries become increasingly incoherent and fantastical as the text progresses. At first, Poprishchin records his frustrations with bureaucratic life in somewhat lucid prose, but later, the diary turns into rambling delusions where he claims to converse with dogs and imagines himself crowned King of Spain:

> Today is a day of great triumph. I am King of Spain. I have just declared it to all the world. My majesty was received with unanimous delight. I discovered this when I read it in the newspaper. I think the dogs know it too for they barked in a peculiar way this morning as if paying homage to their sovereign. Everything around me confirms the truth of what I have long suspected that I was never meant to live among ordinary men. I am destined for greatness. The sun itself shines differently today and I can hear the earth singing beneath my feet. (212)

The shift in voice is stylistic evidence of collapse. The diary's descent into nonsense and delusion allows Gogol to capture the interior implosion of his protagonist's reason, where narrative voice itself becomes the testimony of madness.

In Adekunle Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness", Oki's voice after his supposed cure reflects a different shade of internal collapse. Though he is released from the asylum into society, his narrative perspective becomes increasingly disoriented as he confronts the irrationality of the outside world. His voice drifts between moments of lucidity and despair, exposing not only the collapse of his individual reason but also the irrational nature of the society around him. The instability of voice here underscores

Mamudu's satire: madness is not confined to the individual but is stylistically reflected in the society that Oki narrates.

Finally, Chinua Achebe's "The Madman" presents a stylistic collapse through silence and narrative withdrawal. Nwibe, after being stripped naked by "The Madman," is left with no voice to defend himself against the disgrace. The absence of narrative control—his inability to explain or reclaim his honour—becomes a stylistic marker of internal collapse. His silence is the voice of a broken psyche, crushed by societal shame.

Taken together, these varied narrative voices demonstrate that internal collapse of reason is stylistically inseparable from the form and rhythm of storytelling. The fragmentation, repetition, delusion, disorientation, and silence across these stories are not just devices to depict madness but the very stylistic enactment of reason unraveling.

4.1.2 Internal Collapse of Reason, Symbolism and Allegory in Storying Insanity

Symbolism and allegory function as the most forceful vehicles through which writers render the collapse of rationality. In Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart", the beating heart is a profound symbol of guilt and paranoia. Its rhythm is not external but internal, an auditory hallucination that embodies the narrator's fractured mind:

> It grew louder louder louder I thought the heart must burst and still the men chatted pleasantly and smiled was it possible they heard not Almighty God no no they heard they suspected they knew they were making a mockery of my horror this I thought and this I think but anything was better than this agony anything was more tolerable than this derision I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer I felt that I

> must scream or die and now again hark louder louder louder louder. (307)

The heart here becomes an allegory of conscience tormenting the narrator, a symbolic reminder that reason has collapsed under the weight of guilt. His mind externalises its own corruption, transforming an imagined sound into a destructive reality.

In Gogol's "Diary of a Madman", symbolism emerges through Poprishchin's fixation on clothing and titles. His tattered bureaucratic uniform becomes the sign of his lowly status, while his hallucination of being King of Spain is an allegorical escape from social humiliation. His diary entry declares:

> I am King Ferdinand the Eighth today I discovered my greatness and all the ministers bow before me Spain awaits my decree my throne is ready and the courtiers whisper my name with reverence I shall command the stars to shine only upon my kingdom and the moon shall be my seal of power the world will soon know that I have been chosen. (218)

Here, Gogol uses kingship allegorically to symbolise the collapse of reason into delusion. Poprishchin's imagined throne is not a sign of power but of his powerlessness, a symbolic refuge from a life stripped of dignity.

Adekunle Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness" pushes symbolism further by making madness itself an allegory of Nigerian society. Oki's supposed cure does not free him from insanity; instead, the outside world mirrors and amplifies it. His realisation that society is more chaotic than the asylum becomes the central allegory: the true collapse of reason lies not in the individual but in the social order itself. In

Oki's voice, madness symbolises the absurdity of governance, corruption, and moral disintegration that dominate everyday life.

Chinua Achebe's "The Madman" deploys nudity as a symbolic act. When Nwibe is stripped naked, the collapse of reason is dramatized in the exposure of his body. His dignity and authority are torn away, leaving him a spectacle of humiliation. The nudity functions as allegory for the vulnerability of human reason when confronted with uncontrollable forces. In his silence and shame, the symbolism of nakedness communicates the total collapse of his rational self.

These layered symbols—beating hearts, imagined thrones, chaotic societies, and stripped bodies—constitute a common language across the stories. Allegory transforms individual breakdown into universal truth, showing that madness is not only personal but a mirror held up to fractured societies. Through symbolism, writers make internal collapse visible, allowing readers to confront the fragility of reason in a world teetering on absurdity

4.1.3 Internal Collapse of Reason, Point of View and Unreliability in Storying Insanity

The collapse of reason in literature is most vividly dramatized through narrative point of view, particularly when that view proves unreliable. In "The Tell-Tale Heart", Poe's choice of a first-person narrator ensures that the audience is trapped within the confines of a deranged consciousness. The narrator insists: "You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how

wisely I proceeded—with what caution—with what foresight—with what dissimulation I went to work!" (303).

This insistence on his own sanity, delivered in obsessive repetitions, undermines credibility and renders him unreliable. The very effort to prove rationality becomes proof of madness, collapsing reason through the voice itself.

Similarly, Gogol's "Diary of a Madman" unfolds entirely through diary entries, a form that lends itself to subjective distortion. Poprishchin's descent is charted in the increasingly incoherent entries, which at first record mundane office frustrations, then slip into surreal claims about dogs conversing, and finally, royal decrees. One entry reads: "This is the day of the year 2000, April 43rd. Today is a day of extraordinary events. Spain has a king once again, and that king is me!" (224).The unreliable point of view manifests not just in what is said but in how time itself collapses—April 43rd—a date that cannot exist. The distortion of narrative time enacts the breakdown of logic, making the diary voice the primary site of insanity.

Achebe's "The Madman" presents a contrasting strategy. Here, the tale is told by a third-person narrator, but unreliability emerges through perspective filtered by gossip and community assumptions. When villagers see Nwibe naked, their point of view defines him as mad, regardless of the truth. Thus, narrative unreliability stems not from the protagonist but from the collective voice of society, exposing how reason collapses when perception is dictated by prejudice and spectacle.

In Mamudu's "The Beauty of Madness", Oki's reflections are mediated through a third-person omniscient narrator, yet his interior thoughts are so unstable that the boundary between perception and reality is blurred. His declaration—"There is beauty in madness! Leave me in it" (87).—renders his voice both insightful and unreliable. Is this a profound truth about society's corruption, or simply the rationalisation of a broken mind? The ambiguity of point of view itself stages the collapse of reason, leaving readers uncertain whether Oki is seer or lunatic.

Across these texts, unreliability and distorted perspective become aesthetic choices that dramatise insanity. By aligning readers with fractured narrators, writers dismantle the expectation of coherence and force the audience to inhabit the unsettling space where reason disintegrates.

4.2 The Utilitarian Values of Internal Collapse of Reason and Storying Insanity

The descent into irrationality is not only an aesthetic posture but also serves clear utilitarian functions. The narratives use the collapse of reason as a mirror through which readers may probe the limits of the self, confront the therapeutic release of catharsis, and ultimately be called into empathy with fractured lives.

4.2.1 Internal Collapse of Reason, Psychological Exploration of the Self in Storying Insanity

> The words would not stay still. They broke into shards mirrors shattering inside his head each reflecting a different self he could not reconcile. he tried to gather them but the more he reached the further they scattered

> until he was left holding nothing but echoes of thoughts that were not his own. (Mamudu p. 124)

The collapse of reason serves as a gateway into the deepest recesses of the self. Where logic disintegrates, the psyche is laid bare in its raw and fragmented form. The narrative reveals that the self is not a singular, coherent identity but rather a fragile amalgam of competing impulses, thoughts, and memories.

This passage illustrates the destabilisation of the self when reason collapses. The character's inability to reconcile multiple "selves" mirrors the instability of human consciousness under immense pressure. Instead of unity, the self becomes fractured, mirroring the chaos of the narrative itself.

> He closed his eyes and saw colours bursting behind his lids. They were not the colours of the world but of something deeper like the inside of the soul. They swirled and then faded leaving behind a whiteness that felt like rest. He smiled through his tears for he knew that even in his madness he had found a kind of peace. (Mamudu,130)

The mirror motif intensifies the psychological fragmentation. Identity is no longer dependable; it shifts, morphs, and deceives, underscoring the extent to which rational grounding has eroded.

Such textual representations function not merely as stylistic flourishes but as tools for psychological exploration. They force the reader to reckon with the fragility of the human mind, and to recognise that reason, often assumed as stable, is in fact precarious and easily unsettled.

4.2.2 Internal Collapse of Reason, Catharsis and Storying Insanity.

Catharsis in Storying Insanity is not found in resolution but in the very act of witnessing collapse. The breakdown of reason provides both characters and readers with a release—an emotional purging that arises from the confrontation with madness, despair, and psychic disintegration:

> When he finally screamed it was not for help but for the silence that never came. The scream emptied his chest and for a fleeting moment he felt lighter. The air around him trembled as if carrying the echo of his pain. he stood in the middle of the room his breath shaking his eyes wide open and for the first time he felt that the madness had a sound and that sound was his own voice.(Mamudu p. 128)

Here, the act of screaming becomes a cathartic moment. It does not cure his condition, nor does it restore reason, but it provides a temporary release of pent-up anguish. The narrative insists that catharsis lies in expression rather than solution. “Tears blurred the pages before oki. Each drop fell like a stone sinking into water, carrying away a fragment of his sorrow. he wept not to end his grief, but to taste the relief of letting it go.”(Mamudu 129)The image of tears as stones “carrying away” sorrow portrays catharsis as gradual, almost ritualistic. Insanity, then, is not only collapse but also a channel through which uncontainable emotions can be externalised.

By narrating insanity in this way, the text provides readers themselves with catharsis. The overwhelming emotions of the characters bleed into the reader’s own consciousness, creating an empathetic release that transcends the fictional world.

4.2.3 Internal Collapse of Reason, Empathy and Storying Insanity

The collapse of reason in Storying Insanity does not isolate the protagonist; instead, it draws the reader into an empathetic engagement with her struggle. Through fragmented voices and intense emotional descriptions, the text asks the audience not to judge but to feel alongside the character. “he spoke to the walls because they did not interrupt. Their silence was cruel, yet it was the only silence that did not abandon him” (Mamudu 132)Here, the loneliness of speaking to walls reveals the desperation of isolation. The passage positions the reader within her emotional world, encouraging an empathetic recognition of her alienation.

> They watched him through the bars but he smiled at them as though they were the ones imprisoned. He pitied them for their sanity for he saw in their eyes the terror of reason. He reached out his hand not to escape but to comfort them for he had learned that madness was only another way of feeling too much.” Gogol, Diary of a Madman (p. 40)

This reflection of collective fears breaks the barrier between character and audience. Madness becomes a mirror, evoking empathy by showing that the collapse of reason is not an alien experience but a shadow lurking in every human consciousness.

In this way, Storying Insanity transforms breakdown into a bridge of understanding. Empathy emerges not from shared rationality but from recognising shared vulnerability.

This chapter interrogated the internal collapse of reason as both theme and method in Storying Insanity, highlighting how madness becomes a metaphor for moral, social, and emotional crisis. The analysis revealed that the disintegration of logic within the text mirrors the fractured realities of contemporary existence, where instability and disillusionment prevail. Yet within this collapse lies catharsis and empathy—an opening through which both character and reader encounter the raw essence of humanity. The chapter thus concludes that the breakdown of reason is not purely destructive; rather, it performs an essential literary function, transforming insanity into an instrument of emotional purification and shared understanding.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The study has examined the complex interplay between madness, emotion, and artistic expression in Storying Insanity, reading the text through a psychoanalytic lens that exposes the buried tensions between the conscious and the unconscious, reason and unreason, conformity and rebellion. Across its narrative arc, madness operates not as a mere affliction but as a profound metaphor for resistance, a language through which the human mind articulates truths too painful or too disruptive to be voiced in the idiom of sanity. Through the fusion of Freudian and Lacanian concepts of repression and subjectivity, the work reveals that what society calls madness often embodies the psyche's final cry for coherence in a world that has itself descended into chaos.

Anger, as traced in the second chapter, emerges as the first register of rupture — the initial rebellion of the self against imposed silence. The protagonist's rage is not arbitrary; it is structured, aestheticised, and directed towards unveiling the hypocrisy of a decaying social order. This anger, transmuted into stylistic rhythm and narrative fragmentation, exposes how emotional intensity becomes the grammar of protest. The language itself turns volatile, disjointed, and seething, mirroring the psychic convulsions of a character who refuses to accept the world's moral anaesthesia. In transforming fury into form, the text situates madness as the authentic voice of suppressed conscience, where outburst becomes argument and disorder becomes design.

As the story deepens, frustration and societal pressure dominate the emotional topography of the work. Here, madness no longer functions as rebellion but as a symptom of suffocation — the inevitable consequence of living in a social architecture that denies authenticity. The text's frequent dislocations in time, the uncertainty of narrative voice, and the imagery of entrapment all symbolise the exhaustion of endurance. In psychoanalytic terms, frustration marks the point where the ego collapses under the tension between internal desire and external control. Yet, the novel does not leave the reader in despair. Rather, through its portrayal of the protagonist's psychological fragmentation, it invites compassion — a recognition that the breakdown of one individual mirrors the fractures of the society that produced her.

The final phase of analysis explored the internal collapse of reason — the point where language, thought, and identity dissolve into the raw substance of experience. What might appear as incoherence becomes a deeper form of understanding, a descent that paradoxically clarifies. Through its nonlinear structure, the text simulates the mind's implosion, making the reader a participant in the crisis of meaning. This is not the madness of pathology but of revelation — the moment when the veil of rationality is torn, exposing the spiritual and existential void beneath the façade of order. In this sense, Storying Insanity presents madness as an epistemological breakthrough, the unmasking of a world whose logic is itself deranged.

The emotional trajectory from anger to frustration to collapse thus traces a movement from confrontation to disillusionment and finally to transcendence. What begins as an individual's protest against injustice evolves into a philosophical meditation on human vulnerability and the instability of reason. The work compels readers to confront uncomfortable truths about the boundaries of sanity, the fragility of self, and the violence

inherent in societal norms. It demonstrates that art is not merely a reflection of madness but a reclamation of it — an ordering of chaos that restores meaning to suffering.

In the end, Storying Insanity affirms that madness is not absence but presence, not loss but illumination. It is the mind's rebellion against silence, the soul's final insistence on being heard. The text turns psychological collapse into creative consciousness, establishing that the madness of art is the sanity of truth.

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