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The University of Sheffield

Department of Music

**YORUBA CULTURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE
DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN POPULAR MUSIC IN NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

YORÙBÁ CULTURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN POPULAR MUSIC IN NIGERIA

This thesis focuses on the contributions of the Yorùbá culture to the development of modern Nigerian popular music. It traces the origin, conception and growth of popular music styles in Nigeria and highlights the underlying Yorùbá cultural cum linguistic influence that nurtured their growth within the urban space of Lagos city. It examines how contemporary Nigerian popular music practitioners appropriate the Yorùbá culture in negotiating their musical and national identities and counteract popular music homogenization through the creation of hybrid musical styles and cultures. The work adopts a multi-dimensional research approach that involves cultural, musicological, historical, anthropological and socio-linguistical tools. Adopting the participant-observer method with Lagos as the primary fieldwork site, additional data were sourced along with interviews of key informants through bibliographic and discographic methods.

The study reveals the importance of Lagos as a major factor that contributed to the development of Nigeria's popular music practice as exemplified in genres like jùjú, fújì and afrobeat, and discovers that the Yorùbá language has gradually become the dominant medium through which artists express their musical identity as typified by current mainstream hip hop music. Extending earlier work by scholars such as Barber, Waterman and Euba and recent works in hip hop linguistics by Alim and Omoniyi, the thesis contributes to the growing body of research within popular music through the discipline of ethnomusicology, especially in the emerging area of academic inquiry into indigenous African hip hop culture.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of my father Chief Daniel Ayòadé Adédèjì (1921-2009). I will never forget all that you taught me and your words will continue to be a source of inspiration to me. I will never forget your love, kindness and selflessness. I miss you Daddy.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a country of diverse ethnicity with over two hundred languages and cultures. The Yorùbá are one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria with a language widely spoken in the West African sub-region and cultural influences spreading across the world to countries like Cuba, the UK, USA and Brazil. This study is an inquiry into Nigerian popular music, which in recent years has witnessed some proliferation, recognition and international presence especially through its emergent hip hop culture. Working within the framework of language use in music and the concept of identity I will be placing Nigerian popular music against the backdrop of Yorùbá language and culture to extract the convergences, influences and the underlying Yorùbá linguistic identity in the popular music styles of Nigeria.

Theoretically, this work extends the pioneering studies of Nigerian popular music culture by Euba (1989), Waterman (1990, 2000) and Barber and Waterman (1995) as well as anthropological inquiries into African popular arts by Barber (1987, 1991) and Barber et al. (1997). It examines how the present day contemporary musician balances the local expectations with the demands of modern technology and globalization. It highlights how the categories of ‘traditional’ and ‘popular’ are constantly intertwined when new musical idioms are formulated and how the artists strive to remain ‘authentic’ by using the Yorùbá culture as a bridge and identity marker. By authentic here I mean creating an idiom that possesses a quality that makes it significant within the culture of

its origin while also sounding different to music of other people. According to Martin Stokes this assumed authenticity is ‘a discursive trope of great persuasive power [which] focuses [on] a way of talking about music; a way of saying to outsiders and insiders alike “this is what is really significant about this music; this is the music that makes us different from other people”’ (1994: 7).

Within the paradigm of the artist’s bid to establish authenticity by creating a new musical idiom is also the issue of urban space: Lagos, a cosmopolitan city and predominantly Yorùbá speaking, which served as Nigeria’s capital from 1914 through independence in 1960 till 1991 when the capital was relocated to Abuja. Lagos which is now multicultural remains Nigeria’s commercial nerve centre and economic capital that has become a sort of ‘Mecca’ for aspiring performing artists, providing an enabling environment, resources, patronage and technology that forms the basis of the music industry. This therefore is also an inquiry into urban space and those who have come to occupy it musically and how the city is able to exert its influence on them with its Yorùbá culture and language.

This is a study of music and the city that has provided the space for its development, while looking at the linguistic implications of the interaction between the artists especially in the mainstream hip hop genre and the location of their activities particularly in a country that has no official indigenous language, aiming to ascertain what informs the artists’ language choice when disseminating their music. This work therefore is also in line with related studies on the importance of a linguistic approach in analyzing music (hip hop) as opined by Alim (2009), as well as, the phenomenon of ‘code-switching’ in Nigerian hip hop as analyzed by Omoniyi (2006, 2009), Agbo

(2009) and Babalola and Taiwo (2009). While these studies offer logical explanations of code-switching and the way it is presented in Nigerian hip hop texts, this research goes further by asking why the Yorùbá language is the predominant language employed by artists when engaged in language mixing and of paramount interest by those not of Yorùbá ethnic extraction while highlighting the role of Lagos in this process.

1:1 Background to Study

From the pre-colonial era the Yorùbá have occupied a special position in influencing the musical direction of Nigeria. For instance, jùjú, a ‘form of popular music that originated in Lagos in the 1920s [which] blends Yorùbá aesthetics, texts and talking drum with Western instruments and technologies’ (Waterman 1995: 38-39), has represented Nigeria globally through icons like king Sunny Ade being signed to a major label like Island records in the 1980s. One can understand why Akin Euba in 1989 classified jùjú as Yorùbá’s most important contribution to modern popular music in Nigeria. Euba foresaw that ‘the creative inventiveness of modern African popular artists is reflected in new type of music in which Western and African elements have been combined to forge new idioms that has a distinctively African nuance’ (Euba 1989). This suggests that popular music in Africa will continue to be influenced globally due to the arrival of new technologies while the real inventiveness will be in maintaining the African ingredients while still subscribing to the use of modern technology.

Nigeria being a fast developing nation where the music and entertainment industry is not an exception, new musical idioms are being developed constantly welding the modernised style with the traditional. Lagbaja! for instance performs a variant of afrobeat, a form of popular music whose origin has been credited to Fela Anikulapo-

kuti, in which the music is based on African rhythm and percussion with influences from Western jazz and a song text in Nigerian pidgin laden with Yorùbá nuances. Lagbaja! however branded his music ‘africano’ and included a whole ensemble of Yorùbá talking drums to replace Fela’s horn section.

Along with other forms of popular music where the Yorùbá influence is traceable, the hip hop culture is growing rapidly in Nigeria. Lagos, a Yorùbá city in the western region, has become the musical capital where reputations are made and the Yorùbá language is fast becoming the vehicle in which Nigeria’s popular music is represented locally and globally. If ‘identity is a terrain to negotiating the local and the global via representation’ (Okwori 2002: 149) then through Yorùbá identity, Nigeria’s modern popular music has been represented and projected both locally and globally in genres like jùjú, fújì, afro beat and hip hop.

This brings us to the question of why Yorùbá? And how? In his extensive study of jùjú in Nigeria Waterman believed that ‘musical style may articulate and define communal values in heterogeneous, rapidly transforming societies’ (Waterman 1990: 8). One would then like to know why other forms of culture in Nigeria besides jùjú have also found it imperative to embrace the Yorùbá musical styles. Euba remarks that ‘the Yorùbá have always been placed in a strong strategic position as receivers and disseminators of ideas, proximity to the west facilitated contact with Europeans and other western cultures’ (Euba 1989: 19). This raises the issue of the ‘Lagos factor’. Lagos, which I believe is the centre of Nigeria’s urban popular culture, is a Yorùbá speaking town that is also becoming multicultural and offering an enabling environment to musicians and integrating them into the Yorùbá-influenced culture and style, of

which Afro hip hop is one example. This creates a situation in which ‘geography of identity is changing through the inevitable mixes, integration and assimilation that occur’ (Omoniyi 2004: 195).

Although I agree with Waterman’s conclusion that ‘Yorùbá musicians may retain the power... to foster among their people the sense of national and regional purpose upon which Nigeria’s future... critically depends’ (1990: 228), I propose that the Yorùbá influence now transcends the jùjú genre and extends to the development of Nigeria’s own hip hop where artists from other tribal affinities now have to embrace the language and culture to enter the mainstream of artistic recognition.

1:2 The Beginning

The desire to undertake this research arises in response to a series of experiences which concern my orientation as a performing artist, as a keen observer of the trends in Nigerian popular music in the last ten years and above all as a participant in the music industry. I have been involved with music as an undergraduate at the University of Ibadan where I led a campus band in the early 1990s, performing in and around the campus including the famous ‘Havana’ Music Festival’.¹ I have witnessed the transformation of the Nigerian music industry and the music the system produces based on a series of socio-economic and political changes that have affected the country since the mid-1980s.

¹ This is a popular music festival organized annually by Sigma club and has witnessed performances by Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, King Sunny Ade, Sir Shina Peters, Blackky and Mike Okri among other artists.

I have listened to fújì music in the 1980s and followed the trend of jùjú. I have been inspired by the revolutionary music of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti's afrobeat and attended his burial rites in Lagos travelling from Warri where I served as a youth corper. However when all these were happening I never looked at them with an analytical mind but was just participating as part of the system. I performed reggae infused with a dance hall beat as a student, as it was the music of the early 1990s, and recorded my first demo tape and scouted for a deal like any aspiring artist of that time. I noticed the influx of American rap that changed the way we perceive music during the arrival of independent F. M. radio stations at a time when the government-owned stations were excluding hip hop, and also felt a connection with the genre as a culture that had a lot to offer.

However when I embarked on my Masters degree programme in theatre arts at the University of Ibadan in 1999 there was a new wave of music that caught my interest: Lagbaja! who had just released his third album in the trilogy *We, Me and Abami* (2000). His music struck me as something totally different, exotic, yet traditional not to mention his appearance as a 'masquerader' and most interestingly his language of delivery, which was eighty percent Yorùbá (the rest being Nigerian pidgin). Transending ethnic popularity Lagbaja! had gained international recognition, he was on the ICRC 'So Why?' (1997) project with Youssour N'dour, Lucky Dube and Papa Wemba.² I started to think that this is a new wave, a new direction in our popular music: Afrocentricism with a new dimension, having strong connections with the appropriation of Yorùbá

² This the International Council for Red Cross (ICRC) charity album conceived as a call against ethnic cleansing in Africa where Lagbaja! contributed a track as well. The album was produced by Wally Baradou.

language and culture. I met with Lagbaja! then and did a case study on him for my dissertation submitted in 2000.

When I started recording again around 2006 the trend that I had been noticing was in full bloom. Although Nigeria has been introduced to optical disc audio (CDs) in the mid 1990s, this had been very scarce and expensive and digital recording was also almost unavailable while it was expensive for artists even to book an analogue studio for recording an ordinary demo tape. But in the new millennium the country had caught up with the digital age as I recorded and mixed what could amount to a full CD release in my apartment with a computer and other appliances assembled as a home studio with the help of a friend who handled the production.

That impetus for this research came back when I started presenting the songs for people to listen to and pass comment. I noticed that the majority of those that listened were always picking on a particular song ‘Wa Jo’, a hip hop song done in Yorùbá with heavy leaning towards the fújì genre, suggesting that this should be promoted as the first single although I did not feel the same way (see www.myspace.com/walemanonline). To most listeners it was *àlùjò*, a Yorùbá term popularised by fújì musicians to indicate a dance rhythm or music that beckons you to dance. When I was seriously thinking of promoting the album and needed to boost some of the tracks and remix them I noticed the same reaction from another artist I contacted, Pasto Goody Goody, a dancehall artist/producer who also indicated that I need to push ‘Wa jo’. Suprisingly he is not Yorùbá and at that time had just recorded a track with fújì artist Wasiu Alabi Pasuma called ‘Iwo lomo’ meant to herald the release of an album of his own.

This led me to wonder why so many artists were leaning linguistically in Nigeria's popular music towards Yorùbá and its associated musical styles. Even a music marketer that listened to the whole work agreed to market the album when it was ready because of that single track and wanted to pay some money upfront if I was willing. That was when I started adding the facts together taking a critical look at the present musical scene and looking back to realise that the trend had always been there: there had always been the Yorùbá cultural influence on Nigerian popular music, although largely unrecognized. The present crop of hip hop artists simply made the prominence of Yorùbá language choice in music more dominant.

It was these experiences, observations and participation within the popular music industry that motivated me to engage in an academic inquiry into this trend, thereby using these experiences as a launching pad for me as an ethnomusicologist to engage in this research and find out the agenda (if any) and the purpose that informed this language choice in popular music along with the socio-economic or political conditions that surrounded it. As observed by Ruth M. Stone, 'knowledge in ethnomusicology depends on experience. That is anything we know in ethnomusicology, if it's to be meaningful must be brought in relation with experience or background knowledge [which]... depends on our particular orientation' (2008: 6). This led me to think: if Lagbaja! (Bisade Ologunde) or 9ice (Abolore Akande) use Yorùbá as a medium of delivery in their music one might say this is not surprising as they are Yorùbá and that is their mother tongue. But if an artist like Ruggedman (Ugochukwu Michael) or The Prince, both of Ibo ethnic extraction, engages in the same trend, one is bound to ask: what is the agenda or purpose?

1:3 Aim and Purpose of Research

This research aims at establishing why Yorùbá culture forms one of the dominant cultures of Africa and how Yorùbá language, culture and ideology cuts across various genres of modern popular music in Nigeria. While Euba (1989: 14) opined that the most important contribution of the Yorùbá to modern popular music was jùjú, this work shows that Yorùbá culture has contributed positively, influenced and help popularize other forms of music in Nigeria and more especially linguistically through code-switching in current hip hop whose success as we will see later thrives on the use of the Yorùbá language. I hope this work will contribute new knowledge in African popular culture and provide a foundation for further research in such fields as performance studies, modern history, anthropology and popular culture studies.

1:4 Scope of Research

The scope of Nigerian popular music and performance is wide with styles ranging from the predominantly Yorùbá originated forms of music like *jùjú*, *fújì*, *àpàlà* and *sákàrà* to intercultural genres like afrobeat, reggae and hip hop. However the primary focus of this research will be a kind of urban musico-cultural ethnography based on the ‘Lagos axis’. The Nigerian music industry is heavily dependent on the position of Lagos as Nigeria’s commercial centre and the seat of the country’s popular music industry. Karin Barber’s work (1991) on Yorùbá oral poetry establishes the fact that *oríkì* (a form of Yorùbá personal praise song) is fundamental to identity in that it is within the text of this oral poetry that memory is aroused, and a persona or identity is evidently dependent on memory as ‘personal *oríkì* are means by which a... man’s reputation is established’ (ibid: 5). In a later publication (Barber and Waterman 1995), Barber shows that praise singing is also a major characteristic of Yorùbá traditional popular music.

However I argue that in the modern setting a variant of Yorùbá *oríkì* is also bridging the gap between traditional and modern where contemporary artists have been given praise names. For example Lagbaja! is called ‘*omo bàbá mùko-mùko*’ (the son of the pap drinker). Fela is ‘*abàmì èdá*’ (the weird one), 9ice adds ‘*àdìgún alápòméjì*’ (the cute one with two pockets) after his name and Ruggedman is addressed as ‘*òpómúléró moja lekàn*’ (the pillar that hold the structure [of Nigerian hip hop]). This reflects the multi-faceted influence of Yorùbá in modern popular music genres.

This research seeks to examine works of notable Nigerian artists who perform music of diverse styles and genres to ascertain the degree of Yorùbá cultural and linguistic influence and how it has affected them. Of particular importance is hip hop music which is in the current mainstream. My interest in hip hop stems from its origin as music that is borrowed, while the philosophy of this idiom has been of tremendous influence in Africa, Nigeria included. This work examines how the Nigerian hip hop artists re-territorialize this genre through the use of indigenous language, predominantly Yorùbá.

1:5 Research Questions

This research specifically addresses the following questions:

(1) What has been the effect of Yorùbá culture and its influence in the emergence of different popular music genres in Nigeria?

(2) Why has Lagos been central or important to the development of Nigerian popular music and what influence does the Yorùbá language and culture have in fostering Nigeria's musical identity?

(3) Why is Yorùbá becoming the language of choice in today's hip hop and to what extent are hip hop artists using Yorùbá language to negotiate their Nigerian identity?

(4) What role has Yorùbá culture played in relation to the Nigerian music scene's efforts to resist popular music homogenization?

(5) How has Yorùbá language and culture helped to bring Nigerian popular music to international recognition?

1:6 Research Methodologies

Data for this research was gathered and obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources were drawn from my fieldwork on Nigeria's popular music conducted between 2008 and 2009 in Lagos, complemented by my experience as a performing artist in Nigeria from the 1990s. I have had personal communication with artists and conducted interviews with them including music patrons, marketers, producers and other music industry stakeholders, and have been a participant-observer in musical production and performances while conducting fieldwork.

Secondary sources for the research include published and some unpublished materials that gave historical and background information. This includes books, journals, newspapers, magazines, unpublished theses and dissertations as well as the internet.

Recorded music in terms of CDs, music videos and documentaries was also consulted and analysed while television programmes and interviews on popular music also served as part of my secondary sources. My fieldwork has been fully analysed and transcribed and I have also used textual, music and video analysis to address the various research questions.

1:7 Fieldwork Experience

Culture is dynamic and urban popular culture is rapidly changing especially in a cosmopolitan city like Lagos, the main fieldwork site upon which this work is based. Keeping up with the ever changing popular music culture in Lagos itself involves the researcher meeting with artists, producers, radio DJs, awards promoters, music managers, record/label owners and music marketers whose views were analysed and voices used in this work.

My fieldwork was principally conducted in Lagos while I had a short stint in Ibadan (about 120 kilometres from Lagos) in 2009 where I interviewed Sola Wright, a jùjú musician. I made two trips from the UK to Lagos for my fieldwork, a year apart. The first phase of the fieldwork was performed in the summer of 2008 when I met artists like 9ice, Sound Sultan, Baba Dee J-Black and music producer ID Cabasa among others. The second phase took place in the summer of 2009 when I met industry stakeholders like CallyIkpe (C. E. O. of Callivision and producer of Nigerian Music Video Awards), Efe Omoregbe (artist manager/showbiz Consultant, C. E. O. of Now Muzik Ltd), Stanley Afrobrest (music distributor and CEO Afrobrest Ltd), and artists like K-lite, Frank D’Nero, 2Phat, Baba Dee, Sola Wright, ID Cabasa, Mike Ade-Idowu, Nigga Raw, 2Face.

Fieldwork is important to the discipline of ethnomusicology and most often requires the use of the ‘participant-observer’ method. However going to the field poses questions about identity which have implications for the research. It makes a difference whether the researcher is an ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ since ‘some ethnomusicologists define themselves as any persons from any cultural background who (as outsiders) study the musical cultures of the world’s societies’ (Nettl 2005: 150). ‘Outsiders’ are researchers studying music of other cultures not their own, which is one definition of an ethnomusicologist, while ‘insiders’ study the music of their own cultural origin, which raises the question of objectivity along with ‘the rise and subsequent critique of the concepts of emic (often, but sometimes unhelpfully, glossed as insider or subjective) and etic (outsider/objective)’ (Chou 2002: 456).

However, much research has been conducted from the position of ‘insider-subjectivity’ as evidenced by scholars like Euba (1970), Nketia (1988, 1974) and Chou (2002). More important than the identity of the researcher is ‘implementation of “proper field[work] techniques” as paramount to one’s investigations’ (Nketia 1962: 3, quoted in Keyes 2004: 7). In another dimension I believe the use of the connotation ‘insider/outsider’ is actually relative as each ‘field’ presents its own unique situation. For instance Keyes (2002) as an African-American studying rap music of her cultural origin was still perceived as an ‘outsider’. She wrote ‘my interpretation of an outsider differed from my consultants’: for them it [outsider] signifies one who is not a music industry member’ (Keyes 2004: 8).

Going to the field for the first time in Lagos (June 2008) for the purpose of this work I saw myself as a ‘native researcher’ (insider) based on Chou’s definition as ‘researchers who are themselves already experienced musicians within the traditions that they subsequently choose to investigate ethnomusicologically’ (Chou 2002: 458). This is based on my experience and orientation within the terrain of Nigeria’s popular music as described earlier. The implication of this identity has been positive and important in gaining contacts and interviews because of my familiarity with most of my targeted subjects. Lagos’ popular culture scene is a familiar terrain for me and in the course of the fieldwork I did not need to use any of the documents I had prepared from the university, like the letter of introduction and information sheet. Most of my subjects were happy for me to inform them orally about my research and none actually requested to sign the consent form as they gave their consent orally, though I still followed the requirements of research ethics by letting them understand their rights as regards information and materials provided.

For example on one occasion I went to Satellite Town, Lagos to see Baba Dee (a hip hop artist, friend and coursemate from undergraduate days in the university) and an elder brother to Sound Sultan whose interview I was also trying to obtain. Introducing me to Sound Sultan he said ‘Sultan this is Waleman [my stage name] you remember him now, when *we dey* perform for U. I. [university], *he wan* interview you’.

Sultan’s reaction was quite friendly although the last time we met was over five years ago when he entered the Benson and Hedges ‘Grab the Mike’ talent contest in Ibadan. He answered casually ‘How far now no *yawa* (problem), make you just wait make I change. You know I just *dey* come from studio’.

Thus I was able to interview both of them that same day which I believed was facilitated by my ‘insider’ identity. This had similar effects with most of my other informants during the the second phase of my fieldwork in 2009.

1:8 Preview of Chapters

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter one discusses the background to the study and offers a presentation of the methodological approaches adopted for the research. Chapter two provides the theoretical premise of the research and presents definitions of salient terminologies and concepts such as identity, culture, traditional and popular as relates to Nigerian music, linking it to the theoretical premises on which the work is based.

Chapter three presents a profile of Nigeria which is the geographical location for the study. It also traces the historical background of the Yorùbá people in terms of culture, arts and language. The chapter concludes by examining the development of Nigeria’s urban popular culture and argues that Lagos city forms the hub of Nigeria’s urban popular culture and that Yorùbá-derived popular arts and culture are the precursors of Nigeria’s popular culture and music.

Chapter four traces the origin of Nigerian popular music styles and isolates the influence of Yorùbá culture in their conception and development while taking a critical look at the socio-economic and political circumstances that determine different idioms emerging from the country at various points.

Chapter five is an exploration into the world of hip hop culture. It outlines the origin of hip hop and offers background information to the emergence of Nigeria's hip hop and the development of its variant 'Afro hip hop', while looking at its style and peculiarities with the underlying Yorùbá influence which is quite evident. The chapter also takes a critical look at the concept of 'the street' in hip hop culture and compares the Nigerian perspective of this phenomenon with its American counterpart.

Chapter six presents a typical case study of how Nigeria's hip hop appropriates the Yorùbá culture towards negotiating a national identity. Using the music of Ruggedman (Ugochukwu Stephens) of Ibo ethnic extraction, this chapter establishes why the Yorùbá language is almost becoming the language of popular music in Nigeria. Using textual analysis of lyrics as well as visual interpretation of the video it identifies why Ruggedman finds it imperative to use Yorùbá culture as a symbol in negotiating his national identity.

Chapter seven is an exploration into two of Nigeria's formidable popular music idioms: hip hop and fújì. It examines the similarities and almost seamless synergy that exists between the two genres within the commonalities of Yorùbá culture. Working within musical concepts of 'fusion' and 'crossover' and phenomena like the cultural imperialism thesis, globalization and hybridization, this chapter uses music examples from Baba Dee and Adewale Ayuba to highlight how hip hop and fújì appropriate the Yorùbá culture to create a hybrid idiom that resists popular music homogenization brought about by globalization.

Chapter eight profiles the state of the Nigerian music industry; it offers an overview and assesses the conditions hindering the industry from achieving its ultimate potentials. Analyzing the challenges facing the artists and stakeholders, the chapter proposes some possibilities and recommendations for a sustainable and formidable music industry. Taking a hint from applied ethnomusicology, the chapter offers a kind of bridge between the presumed ‘town’ (research subjects—here, music practitioners) and ‘gown’ (academia/researchers).

CHAPTER TWO

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2:1 Introduction

This section provides the theoretical framework on which the research is based and offers definitions of various salient concepts and issues that run through the bulk of the research while presenting the parameters in which they are used in this work. These include the connotation of ‘popular’ and traditional’ as they relate to music in Nigeria (and Africa in general) as well as the theoretical grounding of the concept of identity in popular music as it relates to language and culture within the framework of this study.

2:2 Popular Music, Language, Culture and the Issue of Identity

The issue or concept of identity has generated much academic discourse in recent years, cutting across various disciplines from sociology, anthropology, history, politics and cultural studies to ethnomusicology. According to Timothy Rice in recent times ‘the relationship between music and identity... [has been] one of the most common themes around which ethnomusicologists organize their work’ (2010: 319). This is indeed a statement of fact as one can see in scholarly works by Waterman (1990), Turino (2000) and Stokes (1994). As a field of academic inquiry my own research has a conceptual affinity to the issue of identity while drawing from other approaches to language and culture. This is not uncommon as most work in ethnomusicology has been known to draw on multiple approaches (Stone 2008: xi).

The relationship between language, culture and popular music has been of paramount concern in this project. While looking at language as a means of communication or vehicle of culture, language itself appears as culture. How then does the modern day Nigerian artist employ language? What informs his/her language choice and how has this affected the music? And what role has this taken in projecting or negotiating their identity through music?

Language

Language in basic terms is a means of communication either in spoken or written form, a kind of code through which people relate to each other and understand each other. According to Harris and Rampton (2003b: 2), '[language consists of] sets of conventions for making sense that are shaped in distinctive ways within particular social groups, conventions operating at the level of sounds, words, grammar and/or ways of organizing spoken and written text (discourse)'. It should also be noted that any language has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture, as opined by the renowned African writer Ngugi Wa Thiong'O,³ who started writing in his mother tongue Gikuyu after seventeen years of writing in English (Ngugi 2003[1986]: 69). The relationship between language and music is also crucial, and if music in its totality functions as a form of human communication then a linguistic approach to the study of ethnomusicology is of paramount importance.

³ For an explanation of how he came to terms with writing in his mother tongue as well as the reasons for other African writers to embrace their mother tongue, see Ngugi Wa Thiong'O (1986).

In Africa the relationship between music and language is seamless considering the fact that ‘music’ in the African context is a total embodiment of performance where ‘it is difficult to separate song from movement or playing the drum from speech’ (Stone 2005: 15). In the Yorùbá society, which is representative of most African musical practice in this respect, songs are derived from speech patterns while instrumental music is also used to convey messages through speech simulation by the ‘talking drum’ based on the tonality of the Yorùbá language. Therefore understanding or analyzing Yorùbá music or African music in general outside of its basis in the language seems to be narrow, as observed by Micheal Olatunji: ‘[An] attempt to conceptualise or analyze any Yorùbá instrumental music purely as a musical sound would amount to belittling its functions [as] words and music have to be viewed in one context in order to appreciate the totality of a musician’s performance’ (2008: 28).

Like the the African musical context, hip hop also offers a fertile ground in which the implication of language and its appropriation has been of paramount importance. Even though this genre of music originated from the USA it has taken roots in countries around the world, including Nigeria where it is now the mainstream music. Hip hop can best be understood or conceptualised through the language, as the core of this musical idiom is based on a stylized, rhythmic speech pattern called rapping and the specialised language of rapping in this parlance is called ‘*tha cipa*’ (Alim 2008: 1). Stressing the importance of language as well as a linguistic approach to the analysis of hip hop further, Alim suggested that ‘language [is] the omnipresent medium through which hip hop cultural practices, performances and production are both expressed and constituted... Given the dominance of rapping’ in hip hop cultural practice, language is perhaps one of the most useful means by which to read hip hop culture’ (ibid: 5). This

emphasis on the importance of language in relation to music and the value of a linguistic approach to the study of popular music is shared by the present research.

Culture

However we define culture, one thing remains constant: it is dynamic and always evolving in response to influences of time, contact, technology and many other variables of which the most recent is globalization. Ngugi Wa Thiong'O (2003, [1986]: 75) asserts that 'culture embodies those moral, ethical and aesthetic values, the sets of spiritual eye glasses through which... [a society] view themselves and their place in [the] universe. [These] values [encoded in culture] are all bases of a people's identity, their sense of particularity as members of the human race' . Walter Rodney (1982: 41) suggested that 'culture is a total way of life. It embraces what the people ate and what they wore, the way they walked; the manner in which they treated their dead and greeted their new born' (quoted in Knor 2008: 76).

If so one may then ask: How do these encoded values and beliefs get transmitted, recorded or exhibited? This brings us back to the issue of language as it is the main conduit through which culture is passed on and it is through language above all that the richness of a culture, its history and origin can be decoded. According to Edward Sapir 'language does not exist apart from culture... the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of our lives' (2003[1921]: 28).

This establishes the fact that one cannot learn a particular language in isolation from the culture of the people where the language originates; otherwise it would be very difficult to have a proper understanding of that particular language. Most words and expressions

are grounded in historical and cultural undertones of the language, because ‘the modes of thought and the culture of a people can only be studied and analysed in and through language’ (Riley 2007: 9).

I can remember as a child being introduced to Junior Reader English literature books like *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield* as part of English language classes. Reading those texts automatically transfers the mind into an English cultural setting as it is with these sets of values and beliefs that the literature books are encoded. I therefore argue that the linguistic medium in which music is disseminated is highly important as it is in this that culture is encoded and thus the medium in a sense is inseparable from the message.

Language as Culture

Language and culture can then be seen as inseparable entities while it is through language that the ‘documentary’ aspect of culture is fully exhibited. According to Raymond Williams (1998: 48) the documentary aspect of culture ‘is the body of intellectual and imaginative work in which in a detailed way, human thought and experience are variously recorded’.

How do these thoughts and experiences get recorded in language? Ngugi asserts that ‘written literature and orature [oral literature] are the means by which a particular language transmits the images of the world contained in the culture it carries’ (2003 [1986]: 76). Apart from literature and orature, language can be seen as active also in transmitting and recording experiences and values in other ways, especially in music and theatre where it plays a major role. Aside from the fact that language and culture

are inseparable and that it is through language that culture is exhibited and disseminated, I also argue that language is culture in that using a particular language or appropriating it in any way actually means adapting that culture.

In the Nigerian popular music context for example *fújì* is a category of music that originated from Yorùbá musical practice and culture, and its language of delivery is Yorùbá. For any artist to be classified as a *fújì* artist, his mode of delivery must be primarily Yorùbá, while artists in other genres that want to appropriate *fújì* in their music also must use Yorùbá language for that part. This illustration shows how language plays a dominant role as a culture determinant. This also applies to other cultures such as that of Jamaica where the use of Creole or Patois plays a determinant role in the music of reggae. Even though reggae rhythm is easily recognisable and most artists perform it without using patois, many artists strive to be ‘authentic’ by learning ‘patois’ and using it in their recordings despite the fact that they are not Jamaicans. A typical example is Ras Kimono from Nigeria, a successful reggae artist now based in the U.S.A., who has adopted the ‘patois’ as his own language making him heavily rooted in the culture of the music he practices. In this light, if anybody holds a guitar and speaks in ‘patois’ it tends to imply that he is a reggae artist whether or not he practices other forms of music.

Emphasising the concept of language as culture, Ngugi also asserts that ‘language as culture is the collective memory bank of people’s experience in history. Culture is almost indistinguishable from the language that makes possible its genesis, growth, banking, articulation and indeed its transmission from one generation to the next’ (2003[1986]: 75). Thus I propose culture to connote primarily language, thereby

‘Yorùbá culture’ is primarily identified by ‘Yorùbá language’ as it is the Yorùbá language that is the main cultural determinant in relation to popular music. It is Yorùbá language, more than the musical style, that distinguishes a particular musical idiom as fújì or jùjú as opposed to afrobeat, and it is also the language that is being exhibited in Yorùbá instrumentation through the talking drum *dùndún* ensemble as the language of the drum is specifically Yorùbá. In the area of oral poetry where the Yorùbá culture has a strong hold, it is the language that transmits the message and it is the vehicle that the poet or performer employs stylistically. It is the Yorùbá language that delivers *ìjálá* or *ewì* (variants of Yorùbá orature) and it is in Yorùbá language that the repertoire of these oral arts are stored. *Ìjálá* can be translated and explained on paper but cannot be delivered in English as the result will be gibberish. In that sense the language is the culture and ‘Yorùbá culture’ is an extension of ‘Yorùbá language’.

Popular Music and Identity

Identity is one of the major themes in which this research work is centred and a connecting factor between the Nigerian popular music and artists on the one hand, and the Yorùbá culture on the other. It has been observed that ‘identity markers are important in understanding human behaviour’ (Stone 2008: 152), which can be manifested in various ways ranging from gender, linguistic and ethnic to rural-urban identities. This reveals how the Yorùbá culture has been used by artists to represent the Nigerian musical identity through genres like jùjú and fújì, and how the Yorùbá culture also has been used in genres like hip hop to assert linguistic independence in the face of globalisation.

Timothy Rice (2010) has stressed the need for ethnomusicological writing on the relationship between music and identity to clarify or supply some theoretical framework informing the use of the term identity in order to make the discipline more grounded theoretically. He proposed, ‘if we want to build a thematic brick, and thereby build our discipline in the domain of music and identity, where would we look for our theoretical moisture? It can come from at least three sources: (1) from general theories or paradigms we read from outside the discipline; (2) from reading on the topic of identity in other fields; and (3) from our own ethnographic work on music’ (Rice 2010: 321). Here I try to combine these three sources to explain what identity denotes in my research.

Identity in simplest terms means the distinction or state of being oneself and not another: identity is what differentiates A from B and answers the question, Who am I? Apart from this at times identity can be a case of Who do I want to be?, in which case it is by choice, a choice to identify with a purpose, a group or belief due to certain reasons. Identity according to David Newman is ‘our most essential and personal characteristic. It consists of our membership in social groups (race, ethnicity, religion, gender and so on), the traits we show and the traits others ascribe to us. Our identity locates us in the social world, thoroughly affecting everything we do, feel, say and think in our lives’ (quoted in Christian 2000: 2).

Sites like literature (oral and written), music, and culture are fertile grounds where identity is negotiated or formulated. Here language plays a very important role as a determinant in the way it is being used as culture and in music. According to Ngugi ‘the choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people’s

definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment [and] indeed in relation to the entire universe' (2003[1986]: 69). The position of music in the society as a way of life places it within the centrality of culture which is 'constitutive of a person's identity... [in] that it is the source of a person's value and commitment' (Feinstein 2005: 14). This further places popular music in a strategic position as 'it enters the equation to provide an aesthetic sphere among others through which identity/ies can be expressed, experienced and socialised' (Reily 2010: 332).

The discourse over the issue of identity and the recent interest in it among music scholars has also changed the way music is viewed, analysed or conceptualised. At present 'in ethnomusicology the question of identity has focused on discussion whether music should be viewed as having embodied meaning (as essentialistic) or referential' (Kirkegaard 2002: 9). That is, does popular music possess another meaning other than being an art? On this point Stokes suggests that 'music is socially meaningful not entirely but largely because it provides means by which people recognize identities and places and boundaries which separate them' (1994: 5).

Popular music has gone beyond being viewed or interpreted only as an art and is now seen as representing more than that as in it are encoded strands of messages that represent the way the artist wants to be seen or who he is representing or what he stands for. In essence 'music [now] not only reflects what is happening beyond the immediately visual or aural, but rather is the particular space of negotiation over identities, ethnicities and human relationships' (Kirkegaard 2002: 47).

The relationship between music, identity and the appropriation of Yorùbá culture within the Nigerian popular music context seems to be varied and can be ethnic, national or Pan-African depending on the way the portrayal of identities is interpreted in various musical genres. Taking jùjú music as an example, its conception and development is deeply immersed in Yorùbá culture while its performance also significantly borrows from the Yorùbá orature of *oríkì* which means that this music in its totality can be seen as representing the Yorùbá ethnic identity. However through its popularity it became a mainstream music in Nigeria and a significant point of reference when it comes to Nigerian musical culture. This has brought about a shift in the identity it now represents on the world scene as jùjú and its most popular artist King Sunny Ade is now seen as representing Nigerian national cultural identity musically through using the Yorùbá culture and musical practice.

Hip hop also offers another dimension for examining the relationship between music and identity in Nigeria, while Ruggedman, an established hip hop artist, offers a good exemplar. The hip hop music scene is booming and Ruggedman thinks there is a reason to have a truly Nigerian brand of hip hop that makes it distinct. The only way he achieves this is through the language of delivery that should actually portray the Nigerian identity, for which I believe the Yorùbá language is the most appropriate (based on many factors analysed in this research). One might think that Ruggedman being of Ibo extraction would rather employ his own mother tongue of Igbo to advance his cause, as Nigeria is a country where ethnicity and tribal loyalty constantly plays a major role in politics and social life making it impossible to specify a national language due to fear of a particular ethnic domination (Simpson and Oyetade 2007: 184).

To this effect Ruggedman appropriated the Yorùbá language through 9ice who features to deliver the Yorùbá chorus line that actually became the hook line of the song while he [Ruggedman] made a bold statement about it and also acquired the Yorùbá *oríkì* of ‘Ruggedy Baba *òpómúléró mo ja lekàn*’ (the pillar post or one with strength to take Nigerian hip hop to the next level). This is a case of an artist shunning ethnic or regional identity and portraying a broader national identity through music.

The afrobeat genre offers another angle on music in relation to identity in a more Pan-African way. Afrobeat has been classified as Yorùbá popular music by many scholars (see Omojola 2009; Waterman 2002; Olaniyan 2004) as it has its conception and performance practice deeply entrenched in Yorùbá cultural practice. However, the originator of afrobeat music, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, portrays and represents a broad African identity using Nigeria as his launching pad. A major example would be one of his classics ‘Buy Africa’ where he chastised Africans for not patronising African items but instead spending a fortune on European items. He might have sung ‘Buy Nigeria’ or ‘Buy goods made in Nigeria’ but he is deeply rooted in an African identity based on the philosophy of his mentors such as Kwame Nkrumah and W. E. B. Dubois.

In this study I will be highlighting how identity has been negotiated by Nigerian artists in various ways but with the commonality of appropriating the Yorùbá culture. For example the hip hop and *fújì* artists (see chapter six) have been able to collaborate in various dimensions to foster a new idiom that ensures the relevance of both genres within the Nigerian community as well as internationally.

2:3 Nigerian Music: Between Popular/Contemporary and Traditional/Folk

There has always been an air of ambiguity surrounding the term ‘popular music’ or rather the term ‘popular’ when used in the context of African music or culture. There has been a concern with the complexities in its contrast to the term ‘traditional’ or ‘folk’ making its usage more or less riddled with misconception or mis-interpretation. As observed by Ruth M. Stone (2000: 7), ‘specialists in the West have often used the notions of “folk”, “popular”, and “art” to categorize music, [but] these concepts [have] prove[d] problematic in African settings [as] they often indicate more of social formations associated with music than of music sounds’. The above concern also encompasses the Nigerian popular music context which forms part of the African music repertoire. The discourse of this work is premised on popular music, which makes it imperative to define the usage of ‘popular’ according to the connotation I am ascribing to it in contrast to ‘folk’ or ‘traditional’, with an attempt to dissipate its pre-conceived complexities.

According to Karin Barber et al. (1997), writing within the context of the culture industries, popular is ‘what is produced and/or consumed by the people as opposed to the wealthy and well educated elites’ (p. xviii). Taking a cue from this, popular music denotes that which is produced, packaged and targeted for the consumption of the generality of the people, the common man or woman in the urban setting, which by extension reflects the consumer’s daily life, and concerns as well as fulfilling their cravings for pleasure and entertainment. Some early conceptualization of Nigerian popular music by scholars includes Omibiyi (1981: 151-152) who described it ‘as corpus of music which is widely accepted and commonly liked by the masses... [while] its popular acceptance is usually overtly demonstrated by large scale participation... [It

is usually] created specifically for commercial purposes but with the objective of providing entertainment'. Also using the Yorùbá music practice as a reference Akin Euba (1989: 1) described popular musics as 'those associated with nightclub or with private parties or other social contexts in which merriment (*àrìyá*), leisure and consumption of beverages are prime objectives'. These descriptions seem adequate if one looks at popular music as a type that can easily be understood, experienced and enjoyed without having any specialized training in music, which is usually true of popular music.

The content of these musics, described as popular in the Nigerian and broader African context elicits some interpretational curiosity as Africa the continent is perceived within and from the outside perspective as an embodiment of 'traditionalism' and cultural items which are 'folkish' or 'ethnic'. This might not be unconnected with the early contact or study of the continent's music practices that gave Africa the 'ritual', 'native', 'folk' or 'traditional' appellation before the recent emergent styles that now show potent retentions of the former (traditional) elements.

Before going into the problems posed by this categorisation and attempting a better classification, let us examine what 'folk' or 'traditional' music denotes. Basically these are types of music that represent each community, in which the very essence of that locality is encoded in sounds and orature. In the Yorùbá life for example 'drumming (particularly the playing of hourglass tension drums) and the use of percussion in general are among the most outstanding elements of... music found throughout Yorùbá land' (Euba 1989: 2). Omibiyi also opined that 'traditional music is circumscribed in its

coverage, understanding and ability' (1981: 152), which in a sense means it is limited in terms of coverage and not mobile and can only be found within a set rural locale.

This I believe is due to time, as in contemporary times change is the only thing that is constant, and to modern people these musical traditions described as 'traditional' have become historical, though they might still be enjoyed in their 'authentic' forms in rural areas, as corroborated by Stone who asserts that "'folk" is often equated with "traditional" or music performed in rural areas' (2000: 7). This now allows us to associate or align the popular with urban settings while the traditional remains rural.

However, the terms popular and traditional raise complexities as regards the music they describe. In Nigeria, jùjú, fújì and afrobeat are among the well known popular music categories recognised worldwide yet they are still misinterpreted at times when the term 'popular' is applied to them because they 'develop from traditional music... [and] through contact with foreign culture evolve into inter-ethnic idioms in contemporary times' (Omibiyi 1981: 152).

It is on the principle of inter-culturalization, mixing of styles and a blend of traditionality and modernity that most of Nigeria's popular music is founded. This basis is also the source of its complexities and at times misinterpretation. As Waterman argues, 'to draw a sharp boundary between "traditional" and "popular" music in Yorùbá society is impossible... [as] Yorùbá popular music provides a complex commentary on the relationship between trial and foreign influence on an epoch of profound change' (2000: 185). This is also corroborated by Barber (1997), who argues that in Africa 'there is a vast domain of cultural production which cannot be classified as either

traditional, as oral or literate, as indigenous or Western in inspiration because it straddles both and dissolves these distinctions' (quoted in Ugor 2009: 6). It is however understandable to see the problems encountered in attempts to distinguish traditional from popular/contemporary in the Nigerian (and African) context, which have forebears as old as the first contact between Africa and the West. Colonialism in its entirety is the main agent that can be said to have turned Africa into a land of complexities and led its inhabitants to concoct a culture of hybridization as a strategy for survival.

Recording technology was introduced to Nigeria in the 1930s (Waterman 2000), thereby starting commodification of music at the same time as Lagos was spearheading the growth of major cities in the country. These two trends have changed the way music was perceived in the Nigerian 'traditional' way, and, coupled with the post-colonial trend of globalization they have placed the average artist in a dilemma between the need to retain a Nigerian identity through traditional elements and to meet the demands of the market (here the promoter/agent or label) and the trends of modernity brought about by globalization.

Here for the purpose of this work I choose to highlight commodification (commercialisation) and urbanization as the key determinants for my usage of the term 'popular music' in respect to the categories I will be discussing henceforth. This music falls among those produced, performed, and situated in urban centres and for urban dwellers which have been commoditised making the primary goal for it to be commercial. In this vein the traditional elements located in this music have been appropriated in a modern way to give it a more universal appeal thereby transcending ethnic or regional boundaries.

A typical example here would be Lagbaja! (See Figure 2:1) the masked afrobeat musician. He employs the most modern musical equipment for the production of his music, even using an auto tune cum vocoder on his tracks, while using animation in his videos, yet his appearance is a semblance of the *egúngún* (masquerade) and he employs an assemblage of *dùndún* and *bàtá* traditional instrumentation for both recording and performance.



FIGURE 2:1 Lagbaja! the masked musician (234next. com)

I would argue that Lagbaja! is engaged in popular music without any ambiguity as his appropriation of the *dùndún/bàtá* drumming tradition is located within the urban and cosmopolitan Lagos while it is being processed with the latest musical/recording technology for commodification. The interpretation of these drums is different as opposed to an itinerant *bàtá or dùndún* drummer performing in a rural setting.

The traditionality in these drums has been somehow ‘de- traditionalised’ and relocated by Lagbaja! situating it in the realm of urban popular culture. It is based on this analogy that I used the term ‘popular’ as it applies to music discussed in this project which I believe to some extent can alleviate the complexities posed by the unclear distinction between ‘traditional’ and ‘popular’ within the Nigerian music context.

CHAPTER THREE

AN INTRODUCTION TO NIGERIA AND THE YORÙBÁ PEOPLE

3:1 Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to Nigeria, giving a brief historical background and basic familiarization with the nation's music culture. Here I also give an insight to the Yorùbá people and their language, culture, arts and music practice while introducing the Yorùbá city of Lagos and highlighting its importance in the development of Nigeria's urban popular culture. Having background knowledge of Nigeria is important towards understanding its diversity culturally and ethno-linguistically which in the course of the thesis helps explain how a particular language or culture can exert such a profound influence on the country's musical practices.

3:2 Nigeria: A Short Profile

Nigeria is a country in the western part of Africa, bordered to the west by Benin, to the north by Niger, to the east by Cameroon, while to the south it rests on the shore of the Bight of Benin and Biafra on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic ocean. The country has a considerable amount of land mass 'covering 356,668 sq miles... roughly the size of California and three times the size of the United Kingdom' (Falola and Heaton 2008: 2). According to the 2009 United Nations report the population stands at 154.7 million making Nigeria the most populous African country and the eighth by world comparison.

As a former British colony Nigeria gained independence on October 1st 1960. It became a republic in 1963 and assumes the full name 'Federal Republic of Nigeria'. The

country is divided into thirty-six states and a federal territory (Abuja) while the capital is also Abuja though Lagos was the capital from 1914 after the amalgamation of Southern and Northern Nigeria by the British until 1991. The monetary unit is the Nigerian Naira (NGN) made up of 100 kobos and at the time of this research £1 equals approximately 240 NGN.

3:2.1 Nigeria: The People and Languages

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual country with over 250 ethnic groups and languages. The the major ethnic groups are the Hausa/Fulani, the Ibo and the Yorùbá. The minority groups are the Edo, Efik, Ogoni, Idoma, Igala, Jukun, Tiv and Fulfulde among others. In terms of the geographical locations and proportions of major ethnicities, ‘the Hausas located in the Northern Savannah accounts for roughly 21 percent of the population, the Yorùbá located in the south western part of the country make up 20 percent, and the Igbo of the south east 17 percent’ (Falola and Heaton 2008: 4).

Major cities in the north with Hausa/Fulani background include Kano, Kaduna, Jos, Maiduguri, and Bauchi. Yorùbá cities in the south west include Lagos, Ibadan, Ife, Oshogbo, Abeokuta, and Oyo while the Ibo have major cities like Asaba, Owerri, Enugu, Onitsha and Umuahia. The official language adopted on independence in 1960 was English, a legacy of the British, even though there was a move to develop an official language(s) out of the indigenous ones to create and foster a truly Nigerian identity, but the issue of language(s) and the need to adopt one or more official language(s) in Nigeria has been a sensitive one due to ethnic rivalry and its effects in politics. According to Simpson and Oyetade (2007: 183) it was ‘quietly concluded that

it would be wiser and indeed safer to err on the side of caution rather than experiment with open grooming and promotion of the major three languages while there was strong public opposition to such a move and serious instability caused by poor inter-ethnic relations'. However, the three major languages of Hausa, Yorùbá and Igbo still remain widely spoken at the regional levels as well as the Nigerian pidgin.



FIGURE 3:1 Map of Nigeria showing major towns and cities (New World Encyclopaedia)

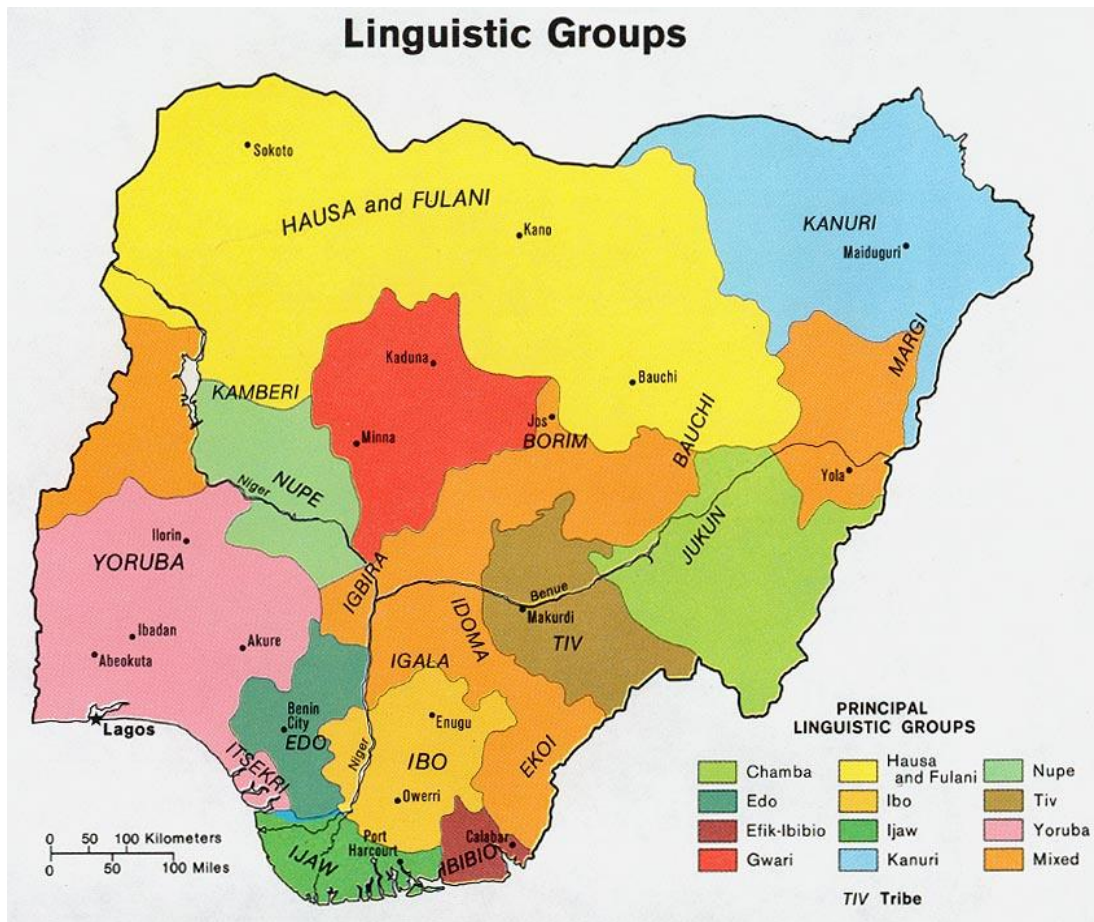


FIGURE 3:2. Map of Nigeria showing principal linguistic groups (New World Encyclopaedia)

3:2.2 The Resources

Agriculture and allied industry has been the major occupation of the Nigerian people and has been the basis of Nigeria's economic activities with major agricultural exports being cocoa, timber, groundnut and palm oil prior to the discovery and expansion of crude oil exploration. However, 'since the 1970s [oil] has become the most important single commodity in the Nigerian economy and sales of petroleum constitute over ninety percent of the country's export earnings and seventy-five percent of public revenue' (Falola and Heaton 2008: 3). Nigeria exports an average of 23 million barrels per day (2007 estimate) making it the 7th largest oil exporting country in the world (C.I.A. Fact Book 2010).

3:2.3 Politics and Governance

The political history of Nigeria has been a complicated and tumultuous one as the geographical entity called Nigeria today was originally inhabited by people who, prior to being forced under British rule in 1914, were subject to different systems of governance, with varieties of culture and languages under their individual pre-colonial kingdoms. This resulted in the fact that ethnicity, tribal religion and loyalty to regional interest play a large role in post-independence politics.

In fifty years of existence as an independent country Nigeria has been ruled for more than twenty-eight years by the military which has left an indelible mark on the country's socio-economic and cultural history. The country is presently in its 4th republic having returned to civil rule in 1999 and successfully made the transition to another democratic government in 2007, the first such transfer in the annals of its political history and the longest uninterrupted period of civilian rule.

3:2.4 Musical Practice

Historically in Nigeria as in any other African society music has always been a strong medium of expression and, apart from its aesthetic value it serves various purposes from entertainment, communication, and preservation of socio-cultural values to performing rituals and symbolic functions, as exemplified by different types of drums in the Yorùbá ensemble as well as other African societies. For instance, the 'igbin drums are typical of the ritual-symbolic nature of many Yorùbá drums [and] are ritually exclusive to the worship of *Obàtálá* the Yorùbá god of fertility' (Omojola 1989: 114). Music in Nigerian society has also served as a resource for history through oral poetry

being passed down from generation to generation where documentation of past events could be found in song texts of *ewí* or *èsà* in Yorùbá land.

The music scene in the country is vibrant, expressing its many ethno-linguistic affiliations while attesting to a rich cultural heritage. As observed by Servant ‘Nigeria is a gigantic reservoir of mixed rhythms, reflecting the internal migration of its countless ethno-linguistic groups’ (2003: 26). However it should be noted that most of its musical expression is intertwined with, or rather diffused and expressed through, extra-musical activities. According to Omojola (1989: 111) ‘the association of music with language (words), dance, religions, social and other extra-musical ideas and activities is a common feature of musical performance in Nigeria’.

This further explains why there is no single word that captures ‘music’ in most Nigerian languages. Frankel also observed that ‘in many of Nigeria’s cultures, there is no word for music, but rather a variety of highly evolved categories for speech, poetry and metaphor as well as terms for drumming, dance and song. Thus Nigerian music is primarily shaped by the power of words and verbal expression’ (2006: 288). This has come to play a determining role in popular music where the power of oratory has been cognizant in the popular music forms like *jùjú* and *fújì*.

Taking this further Omojola explained that ‘in Igbo culture, music is not defined in absolute terms. Indeed the Igbo’s have no word for music as it is understood in Europe. Thus the word *Egwu* (or *Nkwa* or *Uri*) refers not only to the phenomenon of sound but also to features such as drama, poetry and dance. A musical performance is therefore a multi-dimensional activity which involves not only singing or instrumental playing but

also features dance, drama and poetry' (1989: 111). In this same vein among the Yorùbá people it is very difficult to find a single word meaning music but rather different words describing a variety of activities through which music is performed. We have words like 'orin' (songs) 'orin kiko' (singing) 'ijò-jíjò' (dancing) 'eré' (play or act), 'seré' (to entertain) and 'eré-síse' (performance). All these words describe a compendium of performances which encompasses various acts ranging from instrumental performance, oral poetry and singing to dancing.

Therefore in the Nigerian context the concept of music is all-encompassing, a sort of total art and what is referred to in the theatrical parlance as 'total theatre' made up of different spectacular acts; the movement, the rhythm and the vocals, while Nigerian music can be viewed under two broad classifications which are the traditional and popular music practice. Traditional music is primordial and closely woven into the socio-cultural practice of the Nigerian community which is often strong in the rural areas while popular music has borrowed from the traditional practices, moulded with other influences while being conceived and nurtured in the urban settings. Using the three major ethnic groups in the country as an exemplar let us examine how these classifications of music manifest within the Nigerian society.

3:2.4 (a) Hausa Music Tradition

From the northern region of Nigeria where the Hausas and Fulani are the majority, the music is strongly dominated by percussive instruments and the vocal tradition of praise singing. However there are other types of instruments like the one-stringed *goje* fiddle and the brass trumpet called *kakaaki* as well as the hour glass tension drum called *kalango*.

Music serves various purposes from religious to socio-political and celebration of various life events like birthdays, weddings, marriages and royal court functions. Omojola asserts that ‘the musical performances of the Hausa are closely tied to the political, religious and social events. As a result of the introduction of Arabic and Islamic culture as far back as the thirteen[th] century, the area is predominantly Islamic. Musical practices therefore reflect the political and social features of an Islamic state’ (1995: 3).

In performing all these aforementioned functions within the northern region of Nigeria where the Emir still remains as the political and religious leader of the community ‘royal arrivals are announced by the Kakaki... one of the iconic symbols of the nation [while the] hourglass shaped talking drum (*kannango*) of slightly different construction from its southern counterpart... is played in small ensembles to support courtly praise song’ (Franknel 2006: 290).

3:2.4 (b) Yorùbá Music Tradition

Music is an integral part of the Yorùbá society, a harbinger of history, custodian of culture, and mode of communication that comes in two discernable forms, i. e. religion as a mode of worship of various Yorùbá ‘*òrìsà*’ or gods and in the secular from as a means of entertainment in social events like coronation or ‘*egbé*’ celebrations i.e. societal celebrations, festivals naming, wedding ceremonies and so on.

Basically, Yorùbá music is highly percussive and heavily dependent on vocals or oral aesthetics because ‘the heart of the Yorùbá music is the spoken language, [so] elaborate

language, formulaic speech (metaphor, proverbs and poetry) and a deep tradition of oral history are central to traditional Yorùbá cultural identity' (Franknel 2006: 289). The Yorùbá percussion varies and forms the instrumental aspect of the music; thus Euba asserts 'drumming is an important feature of Yorùbá music. Although Yorùbá musical instruments also include chordophones, aerophones, and idiophones, membranophones are used more often than the other classes of instruments and drumming constitutes the principal medium of instrumental music' (1990: 27).

This attests to the highly regarded advanced drumming tradition of the Yorùbá 'where instrumental music types are... usually named after the instruments employed in them. For example... "ere kiriboto" (kiriboto music) an ensemble of five drums of the membranophone family made of calabash resonator (kiriboto), covered with the skin of an animal; and "ere dùndún" (dùndún music) an ensemble of double-headed hourglass tension drums (dùndún)' (Omojola 1995: 2-3). The *bàtá* ensemble is another form of instrumental music named after the *bàtá* drums which have a unique feature of being cone-shaped and beaten with a leather strap called *bílálà*, traditionally associated with *sàngó* the Yorùbá god of thunder.

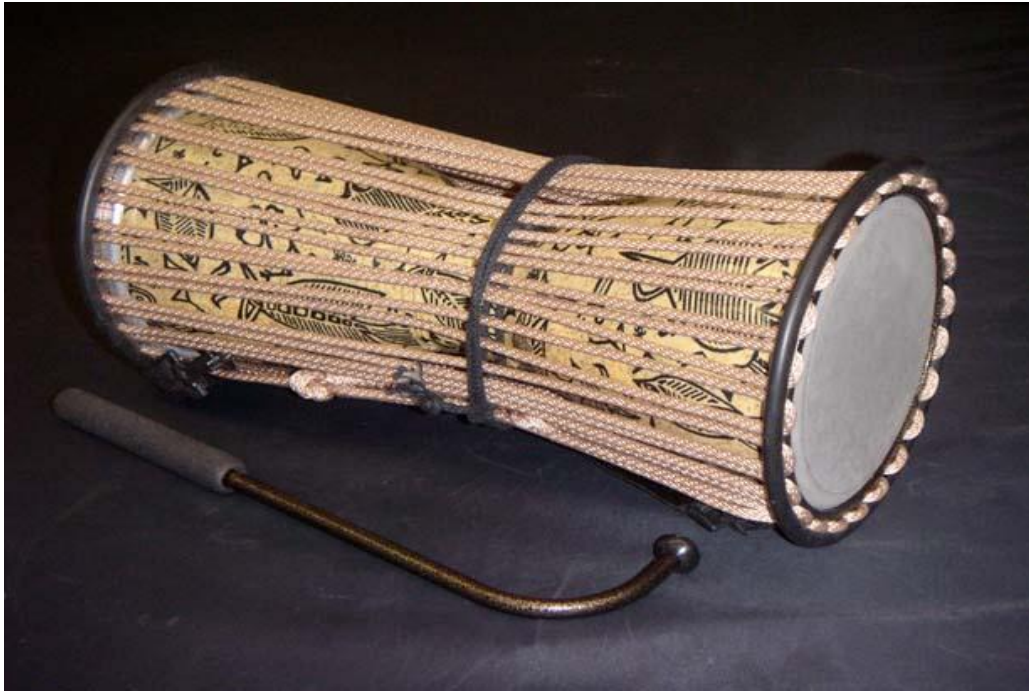


FIGURE 3:3 The Yorùbá *dùndún* talking drum (wikimedia.org)

3:2.4 (c) Igbo Music Tradition

Igbo music practice like any other Nigerian music culture serves both social and religious purposes. The structure of the music is also percussive as well as vocal, and in Igbo music ‘oral literature and music are inseparable [as] there is no conception of poetry without a tune and no tune exists without words. The drum is [also] fundamental to Igbo music [where] the lead drummer creates a rhythm; the second drummer then responds by interweaving another which complements it’ (Isichei 1983: 357).

Music performance is also used to complement various events while also serving the traditional court purpose. Omojola itemised some of the social and religious uses of music in Igbo land to include ‘those that accompany initiation rites into the masquerade cult (egwu mgbà) [while] prominent musical instruments in Igbo land include

ngedegwu (a xylophone made of wooden planks laid on a banana tree resonator), *ekwe* a wooden slit drum, *ogene* (a metal gong) and *oja* (a wooden fire hole flute). One of the most popular forms of instrumental music which makes use of all these instruments is the *egwu mgba*' (1995: 4).

3:2.5 Diversity and Similarity

Through Nigeria's three major ethnic groups one can see that the musical practices present in the country are as diverse as its ethnic and cultural background, yet within this diversity one can discern many similarities which form a unifying and coherent factor that binds the Nigerian music practice together as well as with its other African counterparts. One of these unique areas of similarity is the use of vocal poetry and the emphasis on drums. According to Franknel, 'one principle is consistent throughout all of Nigeria's forms of musical expression: the power and primacy of words as the formative elements of expression' (2006: 288).

Writing on the background of Nigeria's traditional music Adeogun also highlighted some common identifiable characteristics among the various music practices:

Emphasis on spontaneous creations; performance-composition, and skilled improvisation; the use of drums; emphasis on call and response in interpretive skill for musical quality or effectiveness. Others include the communal determination of performance occasions, the communal ownership of musical quality and musical standards of property, the conception and understanding of music as a social fact, cultural experience based on oral traditions; music as integral to lifelong education; music as a way of thinking, doing and being as well as music making for life's sake. (Adeogun 2006: 7)

Although he agrees that most of these attributes can also be found in the music practices of other parts of Africa and other parts of the world, Adeogun argues that 'the nature of

their non-static but stable usage in Nigeria gives them a unique identity as they reflect the full texture of Nigerian life' (ibid.).

3: 3 The Yorùbá People: Historical Background

Yorùbá generally refers to an ethno-linguistic group that inhabits the south western part of Nigeria as well the language used by this group as a means of communication. Studies have also indicated that 'Yorùbá' as a word originated outside of the present Yorùbá group. According to Isichei (1983: 1) "Yorùbá" is a word of Hausa origin which was originally used by northerners to refer to the Oyo empire [and] was first used in the modern sense in 1832 by a foreign missionary, Raban, engaged in linguistic studies in Sierra Leone'.

This is indicative of the fact that prior to the general acceptance and designation of the ethnic group in this study as Yorùbá they probably regarded or referred to themselves with a nomenclature based on their spatial location, town, sub-group or kingdom affiliation or 'were [simply] referred to by various forms of *oluku mi* (my friend), an attractive enough name for an ethnic group [which] survives into modern times in the word 'lucumi' which describes people of Yorùbá ancestry in Cuba' (Isichei 1983: 1). In the same vein and isolating what I term the 'pre-Yorùbá connotation era' for the ethnic groups' influence on the contemporary Yorùbá people, Waterman observes that 'the modern Yorùbá identity is cross-cut by older kingdom-based ascriptions, such as *Oyo, Egba, Ijebu, Ife, Ijesa, Ekiti, and Ondo*. Many individuals thus identify themselves first as Egba, Ijebu or Ekiti and only secondarily as Yorùbá' (1990: 12).

3:3.1 Origin of the Yorùbá

The Yorùbá people, who can also be found in the present Benin Republic and Republic of Togo both to the West of the Nigerian border, are actually a legacy of the British colonialists who created boundaries and divisions for administrative purposes without considerations for ethnic or language affinities. As recounted by Isichei, these creations have placed ethnic groups in different units and ‘the most notorious example [is] that of the Yorùbá who were divided between Nigeria, Dahomey (Benin Republic) and Togo’ (1983: 5). There is also considerable Yorùbá population in the diaspora totalling around two million with considerable presence in Cuba, Brazil and North America among other places.

In tracing the origin of Yorùbá people two stories have been widely circulated. One is a story of migration while the other is the Yorùbá cosmogony which explains the origin or creation of man. The migration story asserts that the Yorùbá people migrated from the east, Mecca in Saudi Arabia to be precise, and were led by a certain Lamurudu to settle at Ile-Ife or Ife which became the origin of the Yorùbá people. The second story based on the creation mythology also credited Ife as the ancestral home of all Yorùbá people. Adejumo explained that ‘according to Yorùbá cosmogony Ile-Ife commonly referred to as Ife was where Oduduwa known as ‘father of Yorùbá’ descended from heaven and established the first human settlement’ (2005: 135). The offspring of Oduduwa are Okanbi and his seven children, who ‘became the progenitor of the original seven Yorùbá kingdoms which are, Oyo, Benin, Ketu, Sabe, Popo, Ila and Owu’ (Adejumo 2005: 136). The growth and development of these original seven kingdoms resulted in the formation of several other city-states. While Yorùbá land had various nation states in the pre-colonial period the Oyo Empire has grown to be known as the

most powerful of the Yorùbá states in pre-colonial history. Yorùbá land also witnessed the foundation of many nations and cities following the fall of Oyo Empire with the resultant Yorùbá civil wars of the 19th century when city-states like Ibadan and Abeokuta emerged.

3 3.2 Yorùbá Language

The Yorùbá language has been classified among the Kwa language sub-group of the Niger-Congo family. The Kwa sub-group is distributed within the West African sub-region and within Nigeria it includes languages like Yorùbá, Itshekiri, Igala, Edo, Urhobo, Igbo and Igbira among others (Isichei 1983: 7).

Yorùbá is a tonal language and ‘in Yorùbá, and indeed in all African tone languages [the tone] is semantically significant i. e. serves to distinguish between words having different meanings but which are otherwise phonetically identical’ (Fajobi 2005: 186). The language consists of three tones, the high tone (H) marked in writing by an acute accent (´), the middle tone that has no marking in writing and the low (L) tone that is marked by a grave accent (`) in writing. An example is the Yorùbá word *osan* that can be pronounced differently to have different meanings as dictated by the tone which includes *osàn* (orange), *òsán* (afternoon) and *osán* (leather strap for talking drum).

Among the Yorùbá speakers in Nigeria and the West African sub-region, there is a standard way of speaking the language that is understandable and intelligible to all speakers. According to Mosadomi (2005: 231) ‘the Yorùbá language has been classified into three major dialect groups: the central Yorùbá, i.e. Ile-Ife, Ilesha and Ekiti areas; the North West Yorùbá, i.e. Egba, Ibadan, Oshun, and Oyo areas and the south east

Yorùbá i. e. Okiti-pupa, Ondo, Owo, and some parts of Ijebu. Standard Yorùbá i.e. North Western Yorùbá (also called Oyo dialect) has been chosen to be the norm because of its uniformity and wide use in schools, textbooks, and the media’.

There are as many speakers of the language as the Yorùbá population in Nigeria and around the globe: ‘users of the language have been estimated at up to ten million. This include the Yorùbá people of the south-western part of Nigeria and their remnants found in many parts of the world such as Cuba, Brazil and in other parts of south America’ (Fajobi 2005: 185). According to the Yorùbá page on ‘Languages of the world’ Yorùbá literacy began very early in the African context becoming one of the first African languages to have a written grammar and a dictionary that were published in the mid-1800s and a writing system for Yorùbá based on the Roman alphabet which was developed by the church missionary society in Lagos in the mid-1800s (ntvc. gov 2008).

The adaptation of the Yorùbá people to written tradition and their acceptance of European education via the missionary has in no small measure contributed to the preservation and projection of Yorùbá art,culture and tradition around the world because ‘as the Yorùbá received both [literacy and Christianity] they began to translate traditions into writing, established newspapers, and produced creative writings [in the Yorùbá language]’ (Falola and Genova 2005: 6), while through published texts and literature they were able to stimulate the interest of Africans and non-Africans alike in learning the language and experiencing the culture more.

3:4 The Yorùbá Arts and Cultural Worldview

Among the Yorùbá people artistic endeavours are closely rooted in religious belief, worldview or ritualistic expressions which are often mythical. Yorùbá religious belief is grounded in *Olòdúmarè* (the Supreme Being) and the many *Orisas* (deities) which form the link between *Olòdúmarè* and Man. This is manifested in the strong conviction of the Yorùbá about life after death and the belief that to die is just to engage in a journey. According to Drewal (1992) ‘In Yorùbá thought the other worldly domain (*Orun*) co-exists with the phenomenal world of people, animals, plants and things (*Aye*). *Orun* includes a pantheon of countable deities (*Orisa*), the ancestors (*osi, egun*) and spirits both helpful and harmful. The world and the other world are always in close proximity and both human and other spirits travel back and forth between the two’ (p26). It is very important to understand the religious undertone of the Yorùbá in order to understand the arts. As is often encountered in African artistic discourse there might be two areas of division here: ‘traditional art’ and contemporary art.

Traditional art ‘is synonymous with the early art form produced in the [Yorùbá] region [which] consists of religious icons and domestic objects such as... jewellery, basketry, doors, and furniture’ (Adejumo 2005: 139). In other words the Yorùbá traditional art is not for aesthetic purposes alone but serves a religious function and is symbolic of the deities for which it is made. It is often sacred and serves as a link between the mortal and immortal, commissioned by the priests or king and involving sacrifices at different stages of work.

According to Adejumo this type of Yorùbá art is ‘as diverse as the number of deities or orisa that influence their contents... [They] are fashioned in various media by Yorùbá

artists whose patrons range from Obas to religious cult... As a result of this pattern of patronage, the survival of traditional Yorùbá art has somewhat depended on the continuous existence of Yorùbá religious institutions and related cults' (2005: 137). The *Òsun* (river goddess) shrine in Osogbo offers a vivid example where traditional art exists in full bloom, while these kinds of carvings, sculptures or figurines can also be found among various groves and shrines of other traditional religious practices like *Ògún* (god of iron), *Sàngó* (god of thunder/energy), or *Èsù* (the messenger and trickster) and among the *Egúngún* (masquerade) cults.

Contemporary art can be seen as one that is not devoted to any religious representation while accommodating various media outside of the Yorùbá form based on contact and exposure to Western ideas. Basically, when traditional art came under condemnation with the introduction of Christianity with the missionaries' target of destroying the religious practices that sustained them, contemporary art became the alternative and was encouraged and supported. Contemporary Yorùbá art now includes various forms of painting, graphic arts, printmaking and various urban forms of sculpture that has received recognition worldwide.

3:5 Lagos City and the Evolution of Nigeria's Urban Popular Culture

Lagos, the most populous city in Nigeria, is a Yorùbá-speaking territory whose indigenous settlers are the 'Awori' people and the site called 'Okò' (village) later became known as 'Eko' the present local name used to refer to Lagos. At present it has become an assemblage of different people who migrated from the mainland to form what is collectively called 'Lagosians' or 'Eko's', these include Ijebus, Bini, Popo (Egun) and Anago (Vidal 1970). With the present population of 7.9 million (2006

census) Lagos from the 15th century has been a trading post for the Portuguese who gave the city its name, but later became a British colony in 1861. The rest of the present day Nigeria was seized in 1887 and in 1914 the colony and protectorate of Nigeria was established by the British and Lagos was declared its capital. Lagos continued to be the capital after Nigeria gained independence in 1960 until 1991 when the capital was moved to Abuja.

As a major Yorùbá city that has become multi-cultural, Lagos was destined to play a vital role in Nigeria's musical and cultural history and development. To an average Nigerian Lagos is the place to be as it is the commercial nerve centre of the country offering many opportunities and possibilities. Lagos, also to a non-Nigerian, signifies or epitomises the country, as the city appears in most of the country's musical or cultural exports as the melting point of Nigeria's urbanization and popular culture.

Lagos, the city offers its own ambience which is often mythical and formidable to an outsider. To Nigerians living outside Lagos, to be here can be likened to the old saying 'see Paris and die' while to its residents called 'Lagosians' to come here you need to 'shine your eye' that is 'wisen up or smarten up'. Such is the reputation of Lagos which according to Niyi Osundare 'is an uncanny combination of myth and reality, of esoteric indigeneity and imported alienation, a city where zinc-walled, paper-windowed shacks tremble in the concrete shadows of ultra-modern skyscrapers; where tears and laughter erupt and wrestle before seeking a fitful trance in the belly of sea' (quoted in Aina 2003: 175).

Osundare captured Lagos within the realm of two distinctive trajectories: urban yet localized, modern yet traditional. The synergy and co-existence of modernism with traditionalism is a trademark of any urban city in the world where the ‘up town’ and ‘down town’ co-exist. As Lagos has its *Ajgunle* (downtown), so London has its Brixton, and New York the Bronx—let alone Beijing where the donkey cart still exists as a viable means of transportation alongside the subway.

Lagos is an urban space, and urban spaces provides an ad-mixture of possibilities and surprises that can often keep one petrified as most urban dwellers still maintain a close link with the rural as well as their inner traditionalities. This is described by Kathleen Van Buren (2006: 3) taking a look at urban Nairobi. To her urban space ‘in some ways reflects characteristics of localities across Africa and around the world. It is a place in which urban and rural are interlinked and multiplicity of traditional and non-traditional beliefs and practices co-exist’.

Urban space is a ‘pot-pourri’ of socio-cultural multiplicity and a playground of economical survivalism. As observed by Murray Foreman ‘cities are... complex in both their physical and symbolic character, and like most complex systems, they are subject to imbalances, hierarchically structured divisions, competition and contradictions that can in turn produce uneven conditions in which chronic social tension and civil unrest might unfold’ (2002: 35-36).

In line with the above observation Lagos is complex, and imbalances exists to the fullest while there are divisions and contradictions everywhere. However within this realm of complexities Lagosians have formulated their own code of conduct or rather

ethics of living which has come to be known as 'Lagos life' which to Tade Aina (2003:176) 'is about a specific and peculiar cultural amalgam in which different ethnic groups and classes, and types of persons attempt to make their own lives, "find their own ways", express themselves as they can and experience the many-sided realities that are both theirs and of others'.

'Lagos life' itself is not peculiar to Lagos as most cities have their own silent code of survival or way of living, but in the instance of Lagos this code has been nomenclaturized. This 'code of living' forms a similar representation of an urban setting to what Adam Krims (2007:7) refers to as the 'urban ethos', which 'is not a peculiar representation but rather a distribution of possibilities always having discernable limits as well as common practices. It is not a picture of how life is in any particular city [but] distils publicly disseminated notions of how cities are generally'.

In the Lagos context this 'urban ethos' or 'Lagos life', 'like life in any other large city is... not just about polarities and contradictions but also about mixtures and interspersions... about simultaneously borrowing from, while lending to others... of existences between extremes, yet not being of either. It is this many-sided quality of Lagos that [has come to be] referred to as the "cosmopolitan" character of Lagos' (Aina 2003: 176).



FIGURE 3: 4 CMS in Lagos Island: ‘Lagos life’ coping with city’s complexities.
(Picture by author, September 2009)

Against these backdrops of urbanism and cosmopolitanism let us see how the city becomes the melting point for the evolution and development of Nigeria’s popular culture and the factors that led to the growth of this urban space. According to Anahid Kassabian (1999: 116) ‘Popular [culture]... means contemporary mass produced and consumed culture’ while the *Cambridge Advanced Dictionary* defines ‘pop culture’ as ‘music, tv, cinema, literature etc that is popular and enjoyed by ordinary people...’ Aina (2003: 180) believes popular culture is about ‘the creation, generation and consumption of meaning produced or inherent in both material and non-material life not systematically or specifically geared towards work. But it is popular because it refers to domains and processes accessible to large numbers of people’.

From these explanations and meanings it is discernable that popular culture is people-oriented, even though it might be created or generated by the culture industries, but it is the people that will make it into being a popular culture. This is also emphasized by John Fiske (1989: 24), who suggests that ‘popular culture is made by the people [and] not produced by the culture industry. All the culture industry can do is produce a repertoire of texts or cultural resources for the various formations of the people to use or reject in the ongoing formation of their popular culture’. Drawing further from Fiske, on the notion of ‘the people’ that can either mar or make a cultural context into being generally accepted as popular culture, the people are often faceless, neither can they be identified with an ‘empirical category’, but ‘these popular forces are a shifting set of allegiances that cross all social categories; [they are] various individuals belong[ing] to different popular formations at different times, often moving between them quite fluidly’ (1989: 24).

One of the aims of popular culture is the generation of pleasure or entertainment within a social system thereby making the issue of commerciality or commodification come to play as its popularity is ensured or rather measured by the number of people ready to buy into it. In a way ‘[being] commercial in organization and distinctively urban in tone are two principal features of popular culture’ (Chambers 1985: 6), while its relevance to the social situation of the people is paramount as it is for the cultural context to fulfil the urban yearning and aspiration of the people. Only when these conditions are met can a designated cultural context or concept be mainstreamed by the people into becoming a popular culture.

From these notions, and coming down to the space of Lagos, urban popular culture has been considered to manifest itself in the following cultural texts: popular music, popular theatre, film, home video, fashion, comedy shows, sports and so on. Lagos has also been the connecting factor for the emergence of these cultures as evidenced in works and studies on various aspects: popular music in general (Euba 1989), jùjú music (Waterman 1990, 2000), fùjì music (Barber and Waterman 1995), Fela Kuti and afrobeat music (Olaniyan 2004, Schoonmaker 2003), hip hop (Omoniyi 2002, 2009), and popular theatre development (Jeyifo 1984, Barber 1987, Barber et al. 1997, Clark 1979).

These studies exemplified the interrelationship between the city and popular arts. While the structural and somehow heterogeneous composition of Lagos has been of tremendous effect on its popular culture, these popular cultures have also been projecting the city's urban ethos both in text and visuals. Even though Krims maintained 'it is not an autonomous characteristic of popular music [to exhibit urban ethos solely] it is a multimedia phenomenon developed among music, music video, films, newspapers and magazines, novels, theatre and recently [the] internet' (2002: 8).

To Lagbaja! the masked maestro popular music is a fertile ground to showcase the city (Lagos) and Nigeria's urban popular culture. He perceives his brand of afrobeat music as 'an opportunity to present African culture, *bà a se n se e gan gan l'èkòó ilé*, (the way we do it in Lagos) for them [abroad], *bí eni pé oko ni* everywhere (it is as if everywhere is a village)... so what we do is that we present urban artwork. This is how life is in

Lagos. Lagos *gan* be (is) like your New York... Anything *wey dey* there (whatever there is) [in New York] *he dey* here (is available here)'.⁴

Some of the factors that make Lagos a vantage point for the development of Nigeria's popular culture are its history, position and proximity to the coast making it a place of early contact with the European West coupled with the position thrust upon it as the nation's capital from 1914 to 1991. Other factors are its urbanization, economic growth, and needs of the people due to its heterogeneous composition based on migration. Popular cultures originating from Lagos based on the above factors have always been absorbed into the mainstream as representing the country's cultural identity. Lagos being a Yorùbá city, the Yorùbá language and culture always leave an indelible mark on most of these cultural texts, most especially in popular music and popular theatre.

Let us now examine two aspects of urban popular culture to emerge from Lagos, popular theatre and of course popular music which is the subject of this research. I will be examining popular theatre here because it belongs to the area of performance and like any other African theatre it is total in nature embracing music and dance, which is an inseparable element of popular music.

3:5.1 Popular Theatre

The colonial Lagos of the 1940s witnessed the birth of popular theatre when Hubert Ogunde, credited as the father of Nigerian theatre, started a professional group called

⁴ This is from the exclusive interview conducted by on-air personalities Kenny 'Keke' Ogungbe and Dayo 'D-1' Adeneye released on Lagbaja!'s video collection *First Steps* in 2006 on Motherlan' Music label.

‘African Music Research Party’ in 1949 (Clark 1979), which eventually became ‘Ogunde Concert party’ and finally ‘Ogunde Theatre’ during the course of his career. He took dramatic performance that was previously part of the church into the public sphere for a paying audience in Lagos.

Barber et al. (1997:4), pointed out that ‘[the]economic boom, urbanization, education and nationalism created the conditions in which commercial popular theatre could take off; they also imprinted these theatres’ outlook through and through [while] the expanding cities provided both the practical base for theatre companies’ activities and an ideological landscape’. Ogunde’s company was noted to produce and stage many successful performances such as ‘Liberty’ (1947), ‘Gold Coast Melody (1949), ‘Seranko Se niyan’ (1949), ‘Olowo ojiji’ (1958) and his most political and highly successful play ‘Yorùbá Ronu’ (Yorùbás Think!, 1964). His performances took him to all the nooks and crannies of Nigeria and actually captured West Africa starting from Ghana (then Gold Coast) to Ivory Coast. Thus was set in motion the process of this cultural text into becoming a popular culture as it fulfilled the needs of the people, while Lagos and its urbanism provided the structure as the growing colonial city economy provided the cash flow to pay for entertainment. Thus all the aforementioned factors required for popular culture evolution coalesced to ensure Ogunde’s success in pioneering a new urban popular culture.

Through the theatre, Ogunde was able to represent the country internationally at the Expo in Montreal, Canada in 1967, and had many other successful international outings. ‘Between 1968 and 1970, the troupe staged... [series of] plays in London [which includes] “Mama Eko” (1968); “Obanta” (1969); and “Oh Ogunde” (1969); and “Ogun

Pari” in 1970 to celebrate the end of the Nigerian Civil War’ (Anikulapo 2008). The post-independence Lagos and later part of his career enabled Ogunde to develop the theatre into film having established the ‘Osoosa Film Village’ in his home town in Ijebu land. He produced four classic films on celluloid making him the first to evolve the indigenous film culture in Nigeria: *Aiye* 1976, *Jaiyesinmi*, 1980, *Aropin N’tenia*, 1982 and *Ayanmo*, 1989.

It should be noted that the medium of delivery for these performances (and later as captured on films) was the Yorùbá language, with the predominant aim of projecting the cultural heritage with the accompaniment of Yorùbá traditional music and dance. As noted again by Barber et al. ‘the Yorùbá popular theatre as a whole was pervaded with an intense and creative engagement with the Yorùbá language [and] like the church it came from was a significant agent in the process of creating this [Yorùbá] ethnic solidarity [or] sense of Yorùbáness’ (1992: 49-50). The Ogunde Company was also fundamental to the establishment of the Nigerian National Troupe which came into being as an offshoot of the ‘Ogunde Theatre’. As observed by Jahman Anikulapo:

[Ogunde was appointed as] the founding Consultant/Artistic Director of the National Troupe of Nigeria... [He] took up the onerous responsibility; travel[led] all over the country to sample over a thousand potential talents for the troupe...[and] later congregated an initial 46-member troupe called the Osoosa Experiment, comprising mostly members of his own troupe and selected artists from parts of the country, whom he took on tour of Burkina Faso and Morocco. (2008)

It was from this experiment that the National Troupe of Nigeria was born, comprising 120 members whom he groomed and nurtured to international standard.

3:5.2 Popular Music and Nigeria's 'Golden Era'

The evolution and blossoming of the Nigerian popular music culture can be linked to what I term the 'Golden Era' which started in the 1970s after the end of the civil war when the county witnessed the 'oil boom'. At this period the urbanization of Lagos was in full gear with massive structural development while the population of Lagos was soaring due to migration, there was money in circulation and Lagos was the place to be to cash in on the oil spoils. As observed by Aina 'the [oil] boom translated into the opening and expansion of the economy and accompanying boost for spending power and consumption [while] Aspects of popular culture in terms of the growth of entertainment, popular music, arts (plastic and performing) and crafts expanded and grew' (2003: 184).

This era witnessed the immense development and mainstreaming of popular music styles like jùjú, fújì and afrobeat that had hitherto been developed in Lagos. As the people's spending power increased, the patronage and fan base of these artists crossed from the middle class to the 'overnight millionaires' produced by the oil economy. In his study of jùjú Waterman (1990: 116) also noted that:

The Oil Boom affected the production of jùjú music in several important ways. It led to the formation of high elites, consisting of... government administrative bourgeoisie; a private sector bourgeoisie who accumulated wealth through trade, finance, state contracts and construction; and highly educated professional and technocratic elites... As the rich got richer the stars they patronized rose higher... Well placed band captains were able to accumulate theretofore unheard of amounts of cash for investment in musical and non-musical enterprises (e. g. recording labels, hotels, construction firms, milk companies).

It should however be noted that while bourgeois patronage and spending power became a vital power in concretizing jùjú and fújì music as part of Nigeria's mainstream

popular culture during the ‘golden era’, the masses or the ‘people’ actually constituted the forces behind Fela’s afrobeat as his music offered a check, becoming a voice against the corruption of the prevailing governments that had started looting the country’s wealth created by the oil economy.

3:5.3 Lagos and its Nightlife Culture

Closely associated with the booming of popular music culture during the ‘Golden Era’ is the Lagos nightlife scene which has become one of the city’s attractions exhibiting its cosmopolitanism to the fullest. Following the boom of popular music and its teeming patronage from the 1970s most artists had an incessant urge to have a venue or ‘home’ where they could constantly perform for their fans as well as generate more revenue. As commercial forms of entertainment became entrenched within the Lagos polity due to its growth and booming economy increasing its ‘wage earning populations’ (Barber et al. 1997: 5), most band leaders started establishing night clubs which began the nucleus of Lagos night life as a form of the city’s popular culture.

Within the jùjú genre we have King Sunny Ade who established the ‘Ariya Nite Club’, Ebenezer Obey the ‘Miliki Spot’, and fújì artist Ayinde Barrister the ‘Fújì Chamber’. The afrobeat legend Fela also established the ‘Afrikan Shrine’. These venues and many other night spots became melting points where people sought to relax, socialize and see their favourite artists in action while contributing to the development of the evolving vibrant nightlife culture of the Lagos metropolis.

At the present time artists in Lagos still find it imperative to have a place of performance where they can fully exhibit their creativity while building their fan base.

One of the present artists with a venue of his own is Lagbaja! Following his popularity and success in the early 1990s he has since put a club together called ‘Motherlan’ where he performs every last Friday of the month for his teeming fans (see Figure 3:5). According to Lagbaja! ‘the name Motherlan’ tells the full story, Motherlan’ is Africa, so the whole thing is about African culture, it is what will manifest in that place, musically artistically and... theatrically because the concept in my mind is to have a full theatre production. So it is actually called “Motherlan’ Performance Arts Centre” (interview cited from Adedeji 1999).



FIGURE 3: 5: Lagbaja! In front of Motherlan’ Opebi, Lagos (museke.com)

Different clubs and venues are also scattered all over Lagos offering artists who cannot afford to establish a personal venue the opportunity of a regular performance. One of

these is the ‘Niteshift Coliseum’ in Opebi, Lagos where the afrobeat musician Dede Mabiaku⁵ popularly called ‘Fela’s unborn son’ has been performing regularly for years on a monthly basis. The ‘Niteshift’ is perhaps one of the oldest venues in this business having been run for over twenty-two years by its founder Caleb Olumense dubbed the ‘Guvnor’. Apart from its normal club activities the venue also has a resident band and organizes regular music concerts, one of which was the ‘Coliseum-In-Concert: The Command Performance’ held in September 2009.

Witnessing the rehearsal for this command performance, the researcher noticed that the club actually resembles its name as it is an edifice built in an amphitheatre style. The performance arena is dome-shaped with all the paraphernalia of a modern venue having standard musical equipment and lighting effects that aid and complement the artists. These included 2Face Idibia, Nigga Raw, Muma Gee, and Black Tribe among others as they took their turn to rehearse with the resident band.



FIGURE 3: 6 From left NIGGA Raw, Muma Gee and 2Face Idiba at Niteshift rehearsal, Lagos September, 2009 (picture by author)

⁵ Dede Mabiaku is best known for covering most of Fela’s song and is yet to release an album of his own. He was one of the judges at the ‘Idols West Africa’, an Idols series talent hunt held in Lagos in 2007.

3:6 Conclusion: Nigeria's Urban Popular Culture and the Yorùbá Influence

As culture is dynamic and ever changing so also are the needs of the people that determine whether a cultural context is mainstreamed or not. However one factor has been very constant and closely linked with all the forms of popular culture discussed here within the Lagos context: the influence of the Yorùbá culture and music practice. Most of the cultural contexts that emerged into being the mainstream actually originated out of the Yorùbá popular culture. Looking at popular theatre for example, what has formerly been referred to as 'Yorùbá popular theatre' (Jeyifo 1984, Clark 1979, Barber 1987, Barber et al. 1997) eventually became the 'Nigerian popular theatre' with Hubert Ogunde playing a vital role in actually putting together an official Nigerian 'National Troupe' the nucleus which came from his own troupe based on the 'Osoosa Experiment'.

In the realm of popular music as well, what has been hitherto referred to as 'Yorùbá popular music' (Euba 1989, Waterman 1990, 2000, Barber and Waterman 1995), actually became the nucleus of Nigerian popular music, with the different genres evolving to represent the country both nationally and internationally. The role of Lagos in developing various genres of popular music in Nigeria with the underpinning Yorùbá influence is further discussed in chapters four and five.

CHAPTER FOUR

NIGERIA: WHAT MANNER OF MUSIC?

4:1 Introduction

In this chapter I will be discussing the various forms of popular music practice in Nigeria while looking at the historical factors that aided the origin of these practices, as well as the socio-economic cum political factors and forces that assisted in the organization and developmental pattern of these musical forms. Also important in this discourse is the extraction of the underlying Yorùbá language and cultural factors significant to the formulation and nurturing of these musical practices from their neo-natal stages to the mainstream of the Nigerian popular music scene and the international platform.

4:2 Nigerian Popular Music: An Overview

Nigeria has a very vibrant popular music scene that has come to reflect Nigeria's cultural richness, earning the country international accolades in the popular music arena. With its huge population Nigeria offers a domestic market large enough to sustain and ensure the commercial success of most artistic endeavours, hence most popular artists fashion their music towards domestic needs, and project the regional languages and appropriate indigenous cum traditional styles of music while subscribing to the use of modern production technology.

Nigeria based on its music and cultural output has been described as 'the musical heartbeat of Africa [which] still is seen as a vivid and strong power centre of African

popular music' (Servant 2003: 5). Franknel, in introducing Nigerian popular music in the *Rough Guide to World Music* asserts 'In terms of cultural output Nigeria is unrivalled in Africa, with hundreds of studios, thousands of performance venues of all sizes and countless artists and performing groups throughout the country' (2006: 288). Modern popular music in Nigeria has strong roots in the existing traditional music practice and culture while its development and modernisation has been brought about through needs, contacts, foreign influence, changes, religion, governance and economy as well as urbanization. These reflect the dynamic nature of culture coupled with the incorporation of newer ideas, values and lifestyles from the West (Falola and Heaton 2008: 6).

The urban centre provided an enabling environment for the conglomeration of all these factors resulting in the conception of many styles of popular music that have now become identity markers for the country. These styles include jùjú, afrobeat, fújì, gospel, reggae and hip hop among others, producing musical icons of international recognition like the late Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, King Sunny Ade, Osita Osadebe, Sikiru Ayinde Barrister, Lagbaja! and Femi Kuti, with a new younger generation in the hip hop genre like P-square, 2Face Idibia, 9ice, D'banj, Edris Abdulkareem and Ruggedman amongst others.

Most scholars on Nigeria's popular music have ascribed two major line of influences on the development of modern popular music in Nigeria: the Islamic influence and the Christian influence (Euba 1989, Omojola 1995, Waterman 1990, Barber and Waterman 1995, Adeogun 2006). While the effects of Christianity have aided the formulation of a musical idiom like jùjú that greatly borrowed from church music among other forms of

syncretism, the Islamic influence resulted in the birth of *fújì* music that came out of the muslim *wéré* or *ajísààrì* music (discussed later in this chapter).

While these two lines of influences left an indelible mark on the Nigerian music scene and resulted in the formation of most of its major popular music genres, it is also pertinent to take cognizance of a new factor that has changed the way Nigerians perceive and perform music: ‘globalization’ has resulted in the production or formation of different hybrids of music culture and sub-genres among which is the emergent Nigerian hip hop scene named ‘afro hip hop’.

Despite all the intercultural effects on the Nigerian music scene, one thing that is discernable is the fact that most of the modern popular music still remains deeply rooted in the indigenous Nigerian tradition in terms of its appropriation by artists to project their cultural identity. This has been observed in the popular afrobeat music of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti while the popularity of hip hop music in Nigeria also gives credence to the capacity of artists in combining the local musical culture with foreign influence while still retaining a strong indigenous identity (Falola and Heaton 2008: 6).

In the Nigerian context popular music has gone through various processes of evolution, adaptation, synthesis, syncreticism and hybridization which constantly result in the emergence of new styles and idioms on a periodic basis. This is not unexpected as creative processes should not remain static in the face of globalization and technology when culture itself is dynamic and music is undoubtedly an integral part of culture. As Impey observes, ‘African pop embodies creative interaction between foreign values and local styles, [and] popular music is therefore a site for adaptation, assimilation,

eclecticism, appropriation and experimentation’ (Impey 2002: 116). This experimentation and assimilation is highly discernable in a style like jùjú which has combined the use of Yorùbá talking drum with Western instrumentation like guitar and keyboards to produce a perfect mix of entertainment music rich in Yorùbá oral text. The strong retention of Nigeria’s cultural identity and tradition is also vivid in the mainstream hip hop, where the Yorùbá language, culture and music practice has been of tremendous influence. Franknel also opined that ‘while contemporary Nigerian rap is obviously aimed at an international audience, it is also clearly rooted in Nigerian culture [with] song titles and vernacular that regularly delve into pidgin English and local languages’ (2006: 299).

Popular music ⁶ has generally been regarded as the type of music form or practice that is targeted towards audience satisfaction, with crowd appeal and ‘encompassing several styles that [are] readily comprehensible to a large proportion of the population [where] its appreciation requires little or no knowledge of musical theory’ (Onyeji 2002: 24). Popular music under different nomenclature has emerged in Nigeria over the years based on the above premise and process and for the purpose of this research I will be discussing jùjú, fújì, afrobeat, reggae, gospel and hip hop. I have chosen these because they still remain in the mainstream of Nigeria’s urban popular culture from the 1990s to date even though in Nigeria there has been series of genres and sub-genres evolving from time to time.

⁶ I am using this term now based on my definition and explanation in chapter two (2: 3) and applying it to the music I am discussing henceforth.

Those familiar with sub-Saharan Africa's music will wonder why the genre highlife has not been included here, in that Nigeria has been identified with this music also at a time. Highlife has been a sort of West African popular dance music and according to Austin Maro Emielu (2009) who has conducted research in this field:

What later came to be known stylistically as Highlife has its origin in the social recreational music of various ethnic groups which had different appellations in different regions. Such social music includes *Gumbey* music in Sierra Leone; *Adaha*, *komkomba*, *Kpalongo*, *Osibisaba*, *Nyomkro* in Ghana; *Asiko* and *Agidigbo* music in Nigeria and *Paiko* music in Cameroon... These ethnic based social musics were fused with European tonal harmonies, brass band and other musical styles from America and the West Indies. (p. 31)

While most of the current popular music genres like jùjú, afrobeat and fújì have borrowed from time to time from highlife, at the time of this research it is no more on the mainstream of Nigeria's urban culture as an individual genre,⁷ but it is likely that reference is made to 'highlife' while discussing other genres thereby making this clarification essential. As observed by Omojola (2006: 122) 'by the end of 1980s, the musical entertainment scene in Western Nigeria was typified by proliferation of jùjú and fújì bands and a corresponding decline in profile of Highlife music' (quoted in Emielu 2009: 29-30).

4:3 Nigerian Popular Music: The Nation and Process of Emergence

Music totally or partly reflects the mood of the society and period in history, and the state of the nation politically or economically either intrinsically or extrinsically

⁷ However highlife music has continued to be appropriated in various forms among the present crop of artists, especially the jùjú musicians who often incorporate old highlife tunes into their records and performances. Highlife has also re-surfaced in hip hop through remixes and sampling, one of the most recent examples being Osita Osadebe's 'Osondi Owendi' as remixed by MC Flavour (2009). Omojola (2009) also observed highlife as part of the components in Lagbaja's music.

determines the creative output of its artists because ‘political process affects music, it always does’ (Jahman Anikulapo, quoted in Servant 2003: 53). The Nigerian situation is not an exception to the above statement as it has been observed that various types of music and their popularity as well as emergence to the mainstream have been influenced by a number of variables that have to do with the socio-political and economic situation in the country.

The ‘Oil Boom’ era of the 1970s created increased commercial activities in Nigeria as well as heavy traffic and movement of people from within Nigeria to Lagos where obviously ‘everything is happening’ as the seat of government as well as commercial nerve centre of the country, and ‘for the aggressive aspirant to the status of the wealthy, Lagos is a Mecca to flock to’ (Olaniyan 2004: 89). The flow of money brought about the emergence of millionaires who had suddenly hit big money in contracts or otherwise, so that ‘the problem with Nigeria is not money but how to spend it’ (ascribed to Gen Yakubu Gowon, the then military head of state).

With this trend of finding how to spend money, there was an increase in the patronage of the panegyric style of music which is jùjú, resulting in a proliferation of jùjú bands (Waterman 1990) who wanted to cash in on the money spraying windfall that became the trademark of jùjú patrons. Associated with this was also the emergence of fújì with a similar trait and capitalizing on the goodwill of the nouveau riche patron, though as a musical form it has lived under the shadow of jùjú for a long time.

Afrobeat was created in the 1970s (Waterman 2000, Olaniyan 2002) but was consolidated in the 1980s. It should be noted that the oil boom gave birth to corruption,

and the utopian state of the Nigerian economy basking in the euphoria of affluence soon collapsed, ravaged by corruption and bad leadership as evidenced in the poverty level of the people. The military era of the 1980s and its attendant vices became a fertile ground for Fela's afrobeat to thrive making it the protest music it is and stamped with powerful political messages in classics like 'I. T. T' (1980) and 'Army Arrangement' (1985).

Reggae is another form of popular music that toed the line of Fela's afrobeat as regards political consciousness in a subtle manner. Its popularity in the mid-1980s to late 1990s is also a reflection of the harsh economic situation and a reaction to the hardship of the military junta. As a predominantly conscious music originating from the Caribbean the Nigerian reggae scene was flooded in the 1990s with artists unleashing messages of hope, patriotism and liberation.

Hip hop came into the mainstream in the late 1990s reflecting the global influence of the American culture while its success is not unconnected with the availability of computer-aided music recording technology and the proliferation of privately owned broadcasting stations that supported the promotion of the fashionable hip hop culture. The changed mood of the country was reflected musically as Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999 and protest music as personified by afrobeat became less fashionable according to Olaniyan: 'by 1990s afrobeat had lost its newness though not its uniqueness. It had become an old established genre on the African popular music scene' (Olaniyan 2002: 176). Not only did afrobeat give way from the mainstream, but so did reggae leaving the field open for hip hop with the era of a new generation of artists with attitude and swagger.

At the turn of the millennium popular music in Nigeria assumed a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional role with hip hop, whose practitioners are youths. Thus, this idiom became a form of self expression, and youth empowerment and a means of economic survival, based on the number of aspiring MCs flocking daily to audition venues to grab any opportunity at talent hunt shows. Above all, popular music through hip hop was now seen as a means of portrayal and negotiation of identity, whether ‘Africanity’ or ‘Nigerian-ness’, through the local variant that has been dubbed ‘Afro hip hop’.

4:4 Major Forms and Styles

The major forms and styles of popular music to emerge in Nigeria are discussed below.

4:4.1 Jùjú Music

Jùjú remains one of the most popular styles from Nigeria and can be perceived as a typification of cultural syncretisation combining the Yorùbá culture as source—as reflected in song texts, orature, patronage and rhythm—with the Western culture in terms of borrowed instruments like guitars, and the afro-Brazillian culture based on the influence of descendants of freed slaves that settled in Lagos. As observed by Euba ‘[jùjú’s] origin are partly connected with the descendants of former slaves who returned to Nigeria from Brazil and settled at Lagos. These returnees influenced the development of a modern culture in Lagos in which cultural traits imported from South America were combined with indiginous forms’ (1989: 14).

Attempting to account for how the genre got its name, one of its veterans Fatai Rolling Dollars explained ‘[it] is called jùjú because of the tambourine... When they used to

play it on the street they would shout *ju soke* (i. e. throw it up)... they would then throw the tambourine up and shake it *shuku shuku* (i. e. here and there)... that is how jùjú got its name' (Fatai Rolling Dollars 2001). One of the pioneers of this idiom is Tunde King credited to have 'made the first recording with the term jùjú on the label recorded by Parlophone in 1936' (Waterman 2000: 176), while Ayinde Bakare was popular for being a great singer with a sonorous voice who 'really knows how to praise people' (Fatai Rolling Dollars, 2001).

The arrival of electronic technology, which brought amplification and use of electric guitars with its appropriation in Lagos by itinerant palmwine artists, aided the development of jùjú to its modern form while allowing for further intensification of Yorùbá instrumentation, tradition and orature. As observed by Waterman:

The amplification of voices and guitar allowed jùjú groups to expand along patterns grounded in Yorùbá values and techniques. In particular it enabled the incorporation of more drummers without upsetting the acoustic balance between singing and instrumental accompaniment. Electronic technology thus appears to have facilitated the application of deep Yorùbá musical techniques. In short Westernization of musical means enabled indigenization of musical expression. (Waterman 1990: 84)

With this began the modernization of jùjú whose typical line up includes multiple guitars and percussion made up of various talking drums while some artists have added electric drum and synthesizer to the ensemble in order to give the genre international appeal (Euba 1989: 15). Praise singing is one of the strong points of jùjú which is heavily dependent on patrons who reward artist with money at parties, and it is not unusual to find a whole album dedicated to a person or group of persons who commission an artist to make an album for them in return for financial gain and

patronage. A typical example is Ebenezer Obey's 'Board Members' (1972), where a whole album was dedicated to a Lagos elite social club named 'Board Members'. King Sunny Ade (KSA) is another superstar who brought jùjú to its peak having introduced a new dimension by substituting *àgídìgbo* with bass guitar as well as using imported instruments to record (Waterman 2000). KSA internationalized the genre by making it the brand that represented Nigerian identity musically on the global scene for many years.

The zenith of jùjú came with the album *Syncro System* (1972) by KSA and his eventual signing on by Island Records where he released *Jùjú Music* in 1982 and re-released *Syncro System* in 1983 on the international market, followed by series of promotional tours worldwide and his eventual nomination for the Grammy Awards in 1983 and 1998.

Even though jùjú still remains a very relevant genre in the Nigerian popular music scene and has been formidable within the social circuit in respect of celebrations and entertainment at occasions, there seems to be scarcity of new recordings of this genre in the market while new generations of young artists seem not to have a preference for taking up the style. Sir Shina Peters created a buzz with his 'afro jùjú' style with the release of his *ACE* album in 1989. Délé Taiwo is best remembered for his vigour and youthful energy through his 'funky jùjú' style with the album *Magic Moments* (1998), while Wale Thompson bridged a gap between jùjú and hip hop with 'Alale friday' (hip jùjú remix)' a remix featuring the hip hop sensations The Remedies in 2000. All these were innovations in jùjú music which now seem to be lacking, making the genre to look somehow moribund.



FIGURE 4:1 Sir Shina Peters on the cover of his *ACE* album, 1989 (sternmusic.com)

Sola Wright is a jùjú musician with five albums to his credit, who performed regularly at social functions and has a weekly gig at the Green Springs Hotel Ibadan. Wright in an interview with the researcher in 2009 commented that jùjú is not declining as it still remains the toast of celebrants in the entertainment circuit while jùjú artists are always busy performing every weekend, which is more than their counterparts in other genres. However, he ascribed the dearth in the availability of new jùjú recordings to the nature of the music itself within the present economic situation coupled with the state of the music industry now that is not well defined (see chapter seven).

It is cheaper for other types of music to record now [as they pay little attention to details], while jùjú is very specialized in terms of arrangement. You have your keys, you have your frequency that must not be altered, jùjú musician will tell you the kind of musical instruments they can use because he knows what he want to push out. If anything is below what he expected, he won't do it as he

knows what his people [fans] are expecting from him will not be achieved. When you are a jùjú musician you have a group of [music] professionals with you that knows what they are playing and you go to studio with them [which is at extra cost for recordings]... You have about three guitarists, you have a percussion team, you have a keyboardist, you have chorus team, you have your technical section, you have your admin[inistration] section... If you now have a [recording] project [having invested so much to have a work ready], the marketer[as music distributors are called in Nigeria, see chapter eight] will say he printed (say) 5,000 copies [of CDs] whereas he already printed [and sold] 50,000 copies and will pay you based on 5,000 copies. How will you recoup your cost of production when you still have your band members to pay based on whatever [money] you get based on the album released? That is why you have not been seeing jùjú CDs as we cannot be working for someone else to *chop* [feed on]... When you go to parties you see them [jùjú acts] performing heavily, Délé Abiodun is performing, and Shina Peters is performing seriously, Ahuja Bello⁸ is performing and they are unbeatable.

It is obvious that according to Wright, the issue of piracy and mistrust within the music marketing (distribution) sector might be a major reason for the decline in CD releases in jùjú, but it is still evident that since they have an alternative source of income through patronage and endless invitations to *ariya* (parties) for performance they might not be troubled by this trend. Thus jùjú still remains an important popular music genre in the Nigerian social setting.

4:4.2 Fújì Music

According to Barber and Waterman (1995), the term fújì can be used to identify a type of popular music mostly patronized by Muslims with a lot of dance styles performed at parties. It is well known that fújì emerged from the Muslim wake-up music that is widely performed during the Ramadan (fasting) festival by ‘*ajísààrì*’ (i. e. singers that wake us up to eat ‘*sààrì*’ or break our fast). Fújì in the modern setting is perceived as ‘an enticing blend of pure, raw Yorùbá traditional percussion and choral vocals that

⁸ These are jùjú musicians that have put in over twenty five years in the music industry.

reflects the Arabic tonality of Nigeria's large Muslim population' (africasounds.com 2009), while 'fújì' itself derives from the Yorùbá word *fàájì* meaning enjoyment (Euba 1989: 12).

The musical composition of fùjí consists of assemblages of Yorùbá drums which are combined in various modalities where the *sakara*⁹ plays an important role. Fújì is a percussive music that thrives on Yorùbá rhythmic accompaniment and any introduction of Western instruments is a latter adaptation. It is this that makes it different from jùjú, aside from its thematic content that is always laden with quranic citations while the beginning of most fújì music is introduced in a Muslim chant-like vocal delivery style similar to that used in the mosque to call the faithful to prayer. According to Waterman (1986: 280) a typical fújì ensemble may 'utilize some or all of the following instruments in various combinations; *dùndún*, *gangan* or *adamo* talking drums; *igba* calabash idiophone, played with ringed fingers; *sekere*; rattles and maracas; *agogo* (iron bells)... and various locally produced conga-type drums; and *double toy* (bongos)' (quoted from Euba, 1989: 13). However there has been a lot of appropriation lately by fújì artists in terms of instrumentation. For example the line-up of the famous fújì musician Pasuma Wonder as observed by the researcher in one of his live shows now includes a keyboardist, bass guitarist and a saxophonist in addition to the one observed by Waterman. This is now typically becoming the norm with fújì backups now almost becoming similar to jùjú, but the difference is that none of the fújì artists can play any of these instruments themselves. According to Wright:

⁹ This is a locally made flat membranophone which resembles the tambourine. The surface is made of goat skin while the tonal variation is achieved by applying pressure on the surface with the fingers.

They are [now] copying the core components of jùjú music to add value to their music and basically fújì has its own components... but now come in to jùjú while none of them even knows how to handle any of the instruments they are playing for them. (Interview, 2009)

Although fújì developed out of the Yorùbá Islamic music tradition it is now secularised, modernized and enjoyed by all and sundry, and while most of its lyrics still possess extraction of quranic texts and citations, as an art form it is totally panegyric in nature toeing the line of jùjú in terms of its dependence on the patronage of the rich and powerful.



Figure 4:2 Dr Sikiru Ayinde Barrister, pioneer fújì musician

Fújì has had two strong personalities over the years, Dr Sikiru Ayinde Barrister (see Figure 4:2) and General Kollington Ayinla, who have both claimed originating the idiom at various points. According to Barber and Waterman ‘Fújì emerged as a named genre and marketing label in the late 1960’s, when former *ajísààrì* singers Barrister and Kollington were released from active duty in the Nigerian Army, made their first recordings, and began their periodically bitter rivalry’ (1995: 244). Barrister struck it

big with the album *Fújì Garbage* (1995) followed by many international tours selling fújì to North American and European audiences while Kollington responded with similar tours. When Barrister introduced the trumpet to fújì in the 1990s, Kollington also scored with the introduction of the piano and the *bàtá* talking drum that became an identity marker in his fújì compositions.

Perhaps one of the players that came on board to bridge the gap between the old and new generation is King Wasiu Ayinde Marshal popularly called KWAM 1, who recently assumed the title K-1 De Ultimate. He came to the limelight following the release of his 1984 'Talazo 84' album: 'The album became an instant hit and fújì music has never been the same again. The album transformed Wasiu to a national icon and within a few years he had incorporated western elements into the music such as keyboard, saxophone and the guitar (even rap!)' (Womad 2009).

K-1's brand of fújì and his rebranding of his corporate image in the 1990s made him almost a suave and quintessential fújì star as opposed to the older generation with his music now sounding jazzy and sophisticated in songs like 'Oko faaji', 'Vivid imagination', 'Show colour' etc. It should be noted that in recent years fújì music has become stronger while devising diverse formulations to remain relevant especially now that hip hop has taken over the Nigerian music sphere. As observed by Barber and Waterman 'fújì has out-stripped its major competitor, jùjú music, in terms of record... sales and the vigour of the genres' respective segments of the live music economy' (1995: 244), and even now the younger generation of fújì artists constantly seek cutting edge innovation through collaborations especially with mainstream hip hop artists to

ensure the continuous recognition of the idiom. Artists like Abass Obesere, Pasuma Wonder and Adewale Ayuba readily come to mind in this direction.

4:4.3 Afrobeat Music

Afrobeat has been described as ‘a combination of James Brown style funk and American Afro-Cuban jazz injected with a good dose of traditional Yorùbá and highlife music’ (Schoonmaker 2004: 2). Lagos is home to this brand of music as well as other styles to emerge from Nigeria, and Fela Anikulapo-Kuti (see Figure 4:3), popularly called ‘Abami Eda’ (the weird one), is the originator of this sound, assisted by Tony Allen his drummer (see Figure 4:4) who is credited with having introduced the pulsating polyrhythm drum kick into the groove as one of the driving forces of afrobeat music. Polyrhythm however is one of the major features of sub-Saharan African music in general and it simply means playing two or more rhythms sounding differently at the same time.

The core of the music is the rhythm which is driven by the percussion being led by the drum beat accompanied by the horns. The music follows the African pattern of call and response while repetition employed for aesthetic purposes is evident. The beauty of the groove can be perceived in its syncretism where the core of African rhythms is being blended with Western jazz horn lines in a very creative manner. Through afrobeat the use of Nigerian pidgin was popularised by Fela while this medium has been one of the trademarks of the music but heavily rooted in Yorùbá slang and overtones.

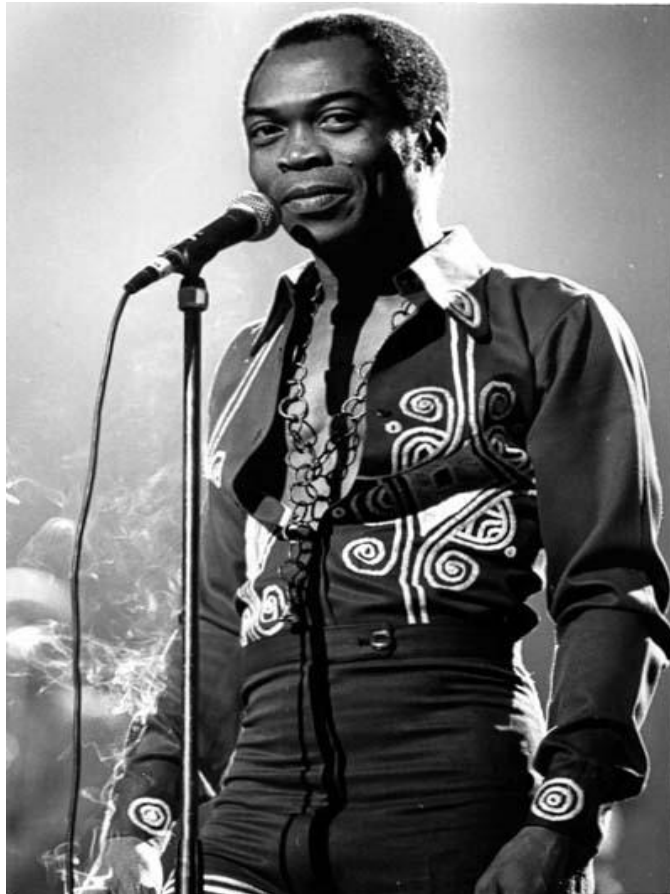


FIGURE 4:3 Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, afrobeat creator (nigerianshowbiz.com)



FIGURE 4:4 Tony Allen (234next.com)

Protest and anti-establishmentalism has been the hallmark of afrobeat because to Fela ‘music is the weapon of the future’ (1982) and this was the mission statement of afrobeat music throughout his career. It is also well known that ‘afrobeat of all Nigerian popular music is the one most identified with a particular inventor figure for a long time’ (Olaniyan 2004: 175). Prior to creating afrobeat Fela played various kinds of music around Lagos after returning from London where he studied music at Trinity School of Music. He experimented with different styles ranging from highlife to afro-jazz and singing love songs before going to America on tour where he met Sandra Isadore, an African-American woman who introduced him to struggle and activism through reading the works of Malcolm X.

To a large extent this American contact became a turning point in Fela’s life that was reflected in the birth of afrobeat with the mission of using music as a weapon of struggle and protest against the oppression, corruption and bad leadership that characterized Nigerian political governance. Benson Idonije, Fela’s first manager, asserted ‘it was not until 1971 that afrobeat proper was born with the song ‘Jeun koku’ at EMI studios Apapa (Lagos)’ (Idonije on BBC 1-Xtra 2008).

Fela released many songs that are vintage afrobeat and heavily laden with political messages. He became Nigeria’s music superstar while afrobeat became Africa’s musical export that has inspired other artists worldwide, with Fela being addressed as ‘Black president’ by fans all over the world. He engaged in constant battle with Nigeria’s military junta which led to many incarcerations before his death in 1997, leaving behind a legacy of struggle and music that is being followed by a whole new generation of afrobeat artists.

Afrobeat has continued after Fela despite his overbearing image on the music for more than 30 years, including afrobeat clusters in Europe and America. Tony Allen is still performing the brand in Paris, as is Délé Sosinmi, a former Fela keyboardist, in the UK. In Nigeria the Kuti clan carry on the tradition with Femi Kuti who has rebuilt a new 'African Shrine' where he performs every Sunday, and has two Grammy nominations to date. His younger sibling Seun still leads Fela's Egypt 80 band and recently released a debut album *Many Things* (2009). Lagbaja! is another afrobeat musician that has garnered international accolades for his aesthetic use and inclusion of the Yorùbá traditional talking drum ensemble in afrobeat. His replacement of the whole horn section that characterised Fela's band with Yorùbá talking drums defined his unique style which thrives on Yorùbá rhythmic percussion with vocal language driven by Yorùbá.¹⁰

4:4.4 Reggae Music

Reggae originated from Jamaica and its popularity and global acceptance has been credited to Bob Marley, its first international superstar, with classic songs like 'No Woman, No Cry' and 'One Love'. Reggae emerged out of the traditional Jamaican 'ska' music which became 'rocksteady' and eventually reggae. It now has a worldwide following as '[with] its prominent baseline, drum section and unmistakeable rhythm

¹⁰ Lagbaja! named his style of afrobeat as 'Africano' in 2005 following the release of an album with the same title. . To him 'Africano' is the 'mother of all grooves' in which he presents an undiluted African rhythm because 'Rather than breed cliché grooves we'd love the world to hear the sophisticated rhythms of the motherland. So once again, we go back to the source and play the drums the way they are traditionally played with all the inflections and nuances, polyrhythms and shifting accents. The Yorùbá groove in all its subtlety and complex glory. No distillation for simplification'. See <http://www.Lagbaja!.net/africano/africano.php> for the full expatiation of his Africano concept.

guitar line striking the second half of each beat in time with emphasis, it propels listeners and fans to wild motic responses' (Onyeji 2002: 30).

Reggae's strong point is the message characterised by protest with political undertones denouncing the oppression of the masses in the Jamaican ghetto while in the spiritual aspect reggae embraces Rastafarianism, a religion identified with the growth of dreadlocks and use of 'herb' (ganja). The Nigerian reggae experience can be traced back to the late 1970s song 'Fire in Soweto' (1978) by Sonny Okosun who is a pop/highlife hybrid artist whose style is dubbed 'Ozzidi', so he cannot be classed as mainstream reggae artist although he has drifted into reggae style from time to time.

The first artist to release a reggae album in Nigeria was Tera Kota (Femi Gboyega) with *Lamentation for Sodom* produced by Lemmy Jackson in 1984. The album was an instant hit as it aptly described and resented the oppression of the poor by the rich as well as the gory economic state of Nigeria, an obvious result of mismanagement and corruption in the government. To a larger extent and as the title of the album implied 'Sodom is Tera Kota's reaction to what Jamaicans call Babylon... Sodom is oppression of blacks by blacks' (*Primepeople* interview of 1988 quoted in Comb and Razor 2008).

Tera Kota provided leeway for this new style of politically conscious music from the Caribbean and Lemmy Jackson would eventually produce the majority of a whole new set of artists including The Mandators, Majek Fashek, Oritz Williki, Ras Kimono and Peterside Ottong. Reggae became the sound of the 1980s and 90's while Majek Fashek scored as Nigeria's first international reggae star with the album *Prisoner of Conscience*

(1988) that contained the hit track 'Send Down the Rain' and the equally successful cover of Bob Marley's 'Redemption Song'.

Following responses to global trends and influences reggae is changing worldwide and a brand new style with faster pulsating drum kicks called 'dancehall' is taking over. Nigeria followed suit with dancehall (reggae) acts like Daniel Wilson, Blackky and Daddy Showkey who emerged from Ajegunle, Nigeria's most populous ghetto, with a Nigerianized dancehall called 'galala' whose strong point is the definitive dance style. Towards the end of the 1990s reggae/dancehall was gradually losing its appeal due to many factors associated with a bad economy which affected the whole entertainment industry, resulting in an exodus of the major labels that were home to most reggae artists.

4:4.5 Gospel Music

Gospel music is among the fastest growing forms of music in Nigeria lately, based on the crop of its recent practitioners who are young and vibrant and endowing the genre with much energy and diversity of taste and flair, while appropriating different styles of the existing popular music to make it more appealing especially in the Nigerian popular music sphere.

From the term 'gospel' one can deduce that this form of music has a religious undertone which is quite affirmative. Gospel is associated with the work of Jesus Christ after whom the religion of Christianity was fashioned meaning that a 'gospel music' will have a bearing with Christianity. According to Ojo (1998:211) gospel music is 'a distinct kind of music composed and rendered by men and women who call themselves

Christians and who refer to their music as “ministration of the good news in songs”, while Ezra sees gospel music as one ‘laden with Christian themes and performed by individuals who regard themselves as Christians. These individuals seek to preach the word of God through music’ (2002: 14). Aside from its thematic content that is primarily Biblical, Femi Adedeji (2005: 226) goes further to explain that gospel music ‘was made popular by radio and television media, albums and public performances. As a distinct genre it differs from church music on the basis of function, organizational structure and performance practice/contexts’.

From these definitions it is clearly discernable that Christianity and Christian themes are a crucial factor for any music to be boxed into this category. Thus gospel music is defined by its message and functionality and for music to be classified as gospel it must serve the primary aim of lifting souls, bringing them nearer to God and preaching the gospel according to Jesus Christ musically. The origin of gospel music in Nigeria can be traced back to the church in the 1960’s ‘as all available records points to the validity of the 1960’s as the period of origin, more so that the term *gospel music* was first used in Nigeria by the pioneers in the same period’ (Femi Adedeji, 2005: 228).

The process of its development and popularization began with the church choirs whose main responsibility was to provide liturgical music accompaniment needed in church services. This was extended to composing special songs for church activities and festivals like harvest, wedding and naming ceremonies, leading to the choir fulfilling some social responsibilities through music to church members outside the church. One of the major activities which contributed immensely to the formation of Nigerian gospel music by taking church music outside of the church to the public space was the radio

programme of the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA). Broadcast on their privately owned radio dubbed 'Radio ELWA', the station was situated in Igbaja Kwara state and the broadcasts started in the 1950's (Femi Adedeji 2005). This radio programme involved inviting different groups from churches, individuals as well as choirs, to come and minister and perform gospel songs, while 'most of the songs played on the radio were those produced by the various ECWA churches in Kwara environs' (Ajirire, n.d.).

The first known indigenous gospel album in Nigeria was titled '*Kristi Mo Fi Ara Mi Fun O*' (Meaning 'Christ I surrender my Life to You') by Prince S. O. Adeosun leading the CAC (Christ Apostolic Church) Yaba Lagos Choir and released in 1965 by Decca Records. According to Adeosun:

I was the first to release a gospel record in Nigeria and I never collected a *kobo* [the smallest unit of Nigeria's currency, like British pence] from either Decca or the church. The gospel songs I heard before the release of my record were songs of one 'Baba Sowande' (pioneer and Nigerian art music composer) which were only played on radio. I composed all the songs and I own them but the instruments were provided by the church and Decca. (Adeosun 2006)



FIGURE: 4:5 Pa Samuel Adeosun, who released the first Nigerian gospel album in 1965 (gospelmusicnigeria.com)

From the 1960s to the present time gospel music has changed tremendously. While spreading from Lagos to different parts of Nigeria it has become laden with controversies at times concerning the true intention and authenticity of most of its recent practitioners. The major factor that changed the face of gospel music was professionalising the genre when it turned to be a career, or a job instead of being an appendage of the church in case of the Adeosun era.

With this trend most gospel performers started having booking offices outside the church, performing at different functions for entertainment, recording albums privately and building a fan base outside the church but within the urban space of Nigerian popular culture. These changes now cause gospel to be perceived in a different light. While most practitioners still retain the vestiges of a liturgical foundation in terms of their thematic presentation, most of its ambassadors now yearn to satisfy the social and entertainment needs of the public by going as commercial as possible.

Commercialization in gospel comes with making the choice of trying to sell to the public, making most gospel artists disseminate their music within the conduit and context of the existing styles of ‘secular’ popular music, so that at present it might be difficult to differentiate between most gospel and secular artists in terms of their sound, attitude, fashion and stance. Among gospel practitioners in the last ten years, and using the popular music styles they appropriate to perform gospel as a form of categorization we have gospel reggae (with artists like Broda Martins and Righteous Man), gospel afrobeat (Israel Abiara), gospel hip hop/R’n’B (Kenny St Brown, B.O.U.Q.U.I., Rooftop MCs), gospel fújì (Dekunle Fújì, Midnight Crew) and gospel jùjú (Yinka Ayefele).

This development to a large extent influenced this researcher in placing gospel music within the category of popular music, unlike other scholars like Femi Adedeji (2005) and Ojo (1998), who classify it under the heading of religious music. The trend following the mainstreaming and commercialization of gospel music has made the thin line between secular and gospel music almost disappear, with gospel artists constantly competing in different categories of awards with their secular counterparts while there has also been an increase in the popularity of collaborations between gospel artists and established secular acts. At the just concluded Hip Hop World Awards (HHWA) 2010, Kefee (see Figure 4:6), a gospel artist, received multiple nominations for her song 'Kokoroko' as 'Pop single of the year', 'Song of the year' and 'Best collaboration' to mention a few, while she won the 'Best collaboration' category and it should be noted that the song features Timaya an established and award winning hip hop/dance hall artist.

Rooftop MCs were once nominated for 'Best rap single of the year' at HHWA 2008 for their song 'Lagimo' (2007) while they have a new single now called 'Sitting on the rooftop' (2010) that features MI, an award winning rapper (nominated for BET awards 'International act category' 2010), and Jezza Jagz, an award winning producer and debutante rapper.



FIGURE 4:6 Kefee, popular Nigerian gospel artist (nigerianbestforum.com)

This mixing of secular and gospel music has placed the so-called gospel music artists and the music they produce more into the realm of popular music. As observed by Onyeji, ‘except for the text of songs it is difficult to distinguish between secular pop and gospel music which may well be called ‘sacred pop’. The question is whether they really help in spiritual upliftment during worship or are they providing ‘needed’ social/recreational punctuation during worship’ (2002: 35).

This lack of differentiation is also a concern for one of the genre’s pioneers as he lamented on the quality of music tagged ‘gospel’ nowadays: ‘we can hardly hear good lyrics in these songs, what we hear includes rap, hip hop etc. These young ones now bring gospel to fit into the parameter of the world rather than conform the world to the spirit of God’ (Adeosun 2006).

4:4.6 Hip hop

Hip hop originated from The Bronx in New York (Keyes 2004) while Nigeria's initiation into the hip hop culture began in the 1980s when the Sugarhill Gang's 'Rapper's Delight' prompted the emergence of local groups and MCs. The first rap album to be released in Nigeria was credited to Ronnie (Ron Ekundayo) with *The way I feel* in 1981 while the real mainstream success of the genre began with 'Sakomo' (1998), the first hip hop hit song. This was followed by a series of transformations that ensured the genre's survival despite the ailing music industry of the 1990s.

At present 'here in Nigeria a distinct sound has been cultivated' (BBC 1-Xtra 2008) and the country has finally arrived at its own variant of hip hop, 'afro hip hop' which is 'a unique blend of African beat and contemporary rap' (ibid.) that has a distinct feature of multilingualism characterised by 'code-switching' or 'code-mixing', where the music is performed in a mixture of standard English and one or more indigenous languages.

In the opinion of Efe Omorogbe¹¹:

[The] average Nigerian artist has been able to fuse a collage of [different] influences like reggae, dancehall, rap, techno [and] jazz to make music with strong appeal without being afraid to stamp his own identity or flavour into it, while people are not prejudiced towards this sound in terms of acceptance or comparison to international artists. (Interview, 2009)

¹¹ Omoregbe is a music consultant and artist manager who has been active in the entertainment industry for over 15 years. He is the CEO of Now Muzik Management in Lagos that currently manages 2Face Idibia, NIGGA Raw, Ruggedman and T.W.O. among others, and he has been in the forefront of the fight against copyright infringement and piracy in Nigeria. He is also the Secretary-General of the Copyright Society of Nigeria (COSON), the newly approved collecting body for Nigerian artists.



FIGURE 4:7 Sound Sultan, a popular Nigerian hip hop artist (Modernghana. com)

Factors surrounding the emergence of hip hop and its success on the Nigerian popular music scene, with the subsequent creation and development of the Afro hip hop sub-genre, are further examined in chapter five.

4:5 Nigerian Popular Music and the Underlying Yorùbá Influence

The hub of Nigeria's popular music is Lagos which is predominantly a Yorùbá speaking city. As Lagos has given birth to major popular music styles in Nigeria, it is therefore not out of place to say that Lagos laid the foundation for the development of Nigeria's urban popular culture where the influence of Yorùbá language and culture is

evident. Factors leading to Lagos assuming this role and possessing the observed ‘Lagos factor’ will be discussed in detail in chapter five.

In the popular music styles from Nigeria discussed above, one can identify the underlying Yorùbá influence that cuts across the genres in the following areas:

- (i) Creation, conception and development.
- (ii) Language of delivery.
- (iii) Instrumentation and vocal delivery.
- (iv) Negotiation of identity.

(i) Creation, Conception and Development

If Lagos laid the foundation for the development of Nigeria’s urban popular culture then the Yorùbá culture and popular music practice can then be said to have laid the foundation which transformed into Nigerian popular music. Let us now examine how the Yorùbá culture and language contributed to the creation, conception and development of these music genres.

Jùjú, fújì, afrobeat and gospel music

In terms of creation, conception and development, jùjú, fújì and afrobeat originated out of Yorùbá popular music practice to later become genres by which Nigeria is identified musically on the global level. Gospel music on the other hand has not been taken from Nigeria to the international platform although it also originated from the indigenous Yorùbá church music practice of the CAC popularly called ‘*aládiúrà*’ before becoming a national phenomenon.

Jùjú and fújì emerged out of core traditional Yorùbá music practices where the use of *oríkì*—Yorùbá genealogy praise-singing—is vital, and this can be seen as an ‘essential aspect of Yorùbá traditional life (which) survived the impact of modern society’ (Euba 1989: 2). In today’s ever changing music scene with all the modernisation and hybridization both genres have gone through *oríkì* praise singing still remains a constant and permanent feature like a stamp of identity on jùjú and fújì music styles. Below is a song sample from a veteran of jùjú music, Chief Ebenezer Obey, where the use of *oríkì* is evident:

‘Lánrewájú Badmus’, Chief Ebenezer Obey:
In The Sixties Vol 2 (Decca WAPS 436, 1979)

Lánrewájú ọmọ Badmus, ènìyàn
Lánrewájú ọmọ Badmus, ènìyàn rere
Lánrewájú oko ọmọlará, ènìyàn
Lánrewájú ọmọ Badmus ènìyàn rere
Baba Rótímí o se baba Dérémí, ènìyàn
Lánrewájú ọmọ Badmus ènìyàn rere
Baba ọmọbólá, ènìyàn
Lánrewájú ọmọ Badmus ènìyàn rere
Ọmọ Alhaja Mábolájé, ènìyàn
Lánrewájú ọmọ Badmus ènìyàn rere
Larry publicity ọmọ ni, ènìyàn
Lánrewájú ọmọ Badmus, ènìyàn rere
Awo Alákàá o sé oko Betty, ènìyàn
Lánrewájú ọmọ Badmus, ènìyàn rere
Baba Káyòdé mi ò awo Jayéolá, ènìyàn
Lánrewájú ọmọ Badmus, ènìyàn rere
N’lé yé onítèmi ni, ènìyàn
Lánrewájú ọmọ Badmus ènìyàn rere

Lánrewájú o, ọmọ i Badmus mi
Lánrewájú ọmọ óloyè ní Bádàn
Èdùmàrè má mà jé o sè ní sòro
Aláhù rà má mà jé o rìn ní jó tébi n’pònà o
Lanre Badmus mà bá e délé
Ọmọ olóyè, ọmọ Alhaja Mábolájé

Lanre Badmus, mà bá e délé
Ó d'ilé olóyè baba Rótímí ọmọ ni
Lanre Badmus, ma ba e délé
Awo Alákàá, oko Betty Baba Káyòdé
Lanre Badmus mà bá e délé
Ọmọ olóyè ọmọ gbajúmò
Lanre Badmus, mà bá e délé.

Translation:

Lánrewájú the son of Badmus, a good man
Lánrewájú the son of Badmus, a very good man
(Repeated after each line)
Lánrewájú, the husband of ọmọlara
The father of Rotimi thank you, the father of Deremi
The father of ọmọbola
The son of Alhaja Mobolaje
Larry publicity such a nice man
The friend of Alaka, thank you the husband of Betty
The father of Káyòdé, friend of Jayéolá,
How are you my bossom friend, good man.

This is Lánrewájú the son of Badmus
Lánrewájú the son of an Ibadan Chief
God will not lay difficulty in your way
God will not allow you to travel when the roads are famished.
Lanre Badmus I will follow you home
(Repeated after each line)
The son of a chief, the son of Alhaja mabolaje
Now let's go to the house of a chief the father of Rotimi a, good man
Friend of Alaka husband of Betty, father of Káyòdé,
The son of a chief, son of an eminent man.

The above is a typical appropriation of *oríkì* in *jùjú* which to a large extent is now a trademark of the genre. Here Chief Ebenezer Obey praises a socialite as a good person linking this to his genealogy in Ibadan, his place of birth, by mentioning his father and mother while also citing his immediate family, wives and children. This is a typical use of personal *oríkì* citation, '[a] means by which a big man's reputation is established... [giving] access to the dynamic process of self-aggrandisement and the values it generates... [and showing] that big men are a central and long established feature of Yorùbá social processes' (Barber 1991: 5). *Fújì* music also engages in this discourse of

oriki citation in a similar manner where this form of Yorùbá orature has now been appropriated in music to transcend ethnic and regional boundaries.

Afrobeat as created by Fela also developed out of Yorùbá popular music practice and folklore. Fela, himself a Yorùbá man, has been greatly influenced by the language and Yorùbá cultural practice which assisted him in creating a fusion in afrobeat consisting of Yorùbá highlife and jazz blended with pulsating rhythmic patterns. Despite all the mysticism and idiosyncrasies surrounding his personality Fela and the afrobeat he created 'is as much a product of Yorùbá historical experience as King Sunny Ade (i.e. jùjú)' (Waterman 2000: 182) and other forms of popular music derived from Yorùbá origin.

Nigerian gospel music was conceptualized in Lagos and as such evolved out of the Yorùbá-speaking cultural and musical practice. The first recorded album in the genre was performed by a Yorùbá man leading the choir of an indigenous Yorùbá church performing gospel music delivered in the Yorùbá language. For many years to come the Yorùbá-speaking part of Nigeria became the centre of gospel music, which continued to be delivered in the language primarily until the late 1970s when the genre extended to the eastern part of Nigeria and gradually the north.

Regardless of this development and the professionalism of gospel music, Yorùbá language and culture still plays a vital role as most contemporary gospel artists still appropriate Yorùbá-derived styles of music like jùjú, fújì and other traditional forms

while those with an affinity for hip hop do so in the confines of code-switching where the Yorùbá language is vital.¹²

Reggae and hip hop

Looking at the conception of reggae on the Nigerian popular music scene one cannot but observe the Yorùbá influence because the first reggae album recorded and released in Nigeria in 1984 was by Tera Kota (real name Gboyega Femi) who was of Yorùbá extraction in an album titled 'Lamentation for Sodom'. This included a Yorùbá track titled 'Nitori-owo' (Because of money), making the album multi-lingual English/Yorùbá. Likewise Nigeria's first reggae superstar Majek Fashek (real name Majekodunmi Fasheke) is Yorùbá and created a brand of new Africanized reggae dubbed 'pangolo' rhythm, a Yorùbá word denoting empty cans.

Hip hop that has now become the mainstream in Nigeria's popular music, as well as the local variant Afro hip hop, might well have been greatly influenced by Yorùbá culture as the first known rap album in Nigeria (and probably Africa) was by Ronnie (Ron Ade) who is Yorùbá while the earliest independent recording labels dedicated to hip hop were founded by hip hop fans of Yorùbá extraction. Solomon Dare (Solo Dee) founded the Paybacktyme Records in 1996 with the crew called Swatroots and has recorded rappers like Mode-9, eLDee, O. D and Terry Tha Rapman while the duo of Kenny 'Keke' Ogungbe and Dayo 'D1' Adeneye founded Kennis Music¹³ which developed the

¹² A typical example here is 'Lagimo' (2007), the award winning gospel hip hop song by the group Rooftop MC, and 'Turn Me Around' (2009) by Kenny St Brown, where both songs used Yoruba hookline and rap verses. The gospel group Midnight Crew were also known for appropriating fùjì as a mode of delivery as exemplified in tracks like 'This fùjì Thing' (2007).

¹³ Kennis Music founded in 1998 revolutionized the music industry through its support of hip hop culture and has been home to nearly all successful hip hop artists at one time or the other... Some artists that

career of Remedies who created a defining moment in Nigeria's hip hop in 1998 with the song 'Sakomo' (1998).

(ii) Language of delivery

Jùjú and fújì were originally Yorùbá popular music that became a mainstream Nigerian popular music, and as might be expected their major language of delivery is Yorùbá, which is another area in which the Yorùbá culture has been able to permeate and represent the Nigerian popular music culture. Jùjú and fújì are performed to audiences of diverse ethnicity and linguistic affiliation outside the Yorùbá region where they project the language and culture to all and sundry who have to come to the understanding of the language to share in the aesthetics and entertainment value of the music.

Afrobeat which also made it to the world stage is a mixture of 'elements of at least three languages namely standard English (STE), Nigerian pidgin (NP), and West African Yorùbá' (Coester 1998: 1). It should be noted that Yorùbá played a vital role in Fela's afrobeat and when he sings in Nigerian pidgin it is always punctuated with Yorùbá words, slang and expressions. Hip hop having originated from America, one would expect it to be delivered in American English, but it is interesting to note that the majority of artists in this genre have adopted the 'Naija way' (Nigerian way) of 'keeping it real' where lyrics are delivered in one of the Nigerian languages or in a mixture of Nigerian languages, Nigerian Pidgin and standard English in a concept called 'code-mixing' or 'code-switching'. It has been observed that the Yorùbá

passed through the label now called 'Africa's No. 1 music label' include 2Face Idibia, Sound Sultan, Baba Dee, Rasqi, Remedies, Azadus, Olu Maintain, Tony Tetuila among others.

language has been the preferred language for code-mixing by hip hop artists. According to the Nigerian hip hop artist Eedris Abdulkareem ‘I would rather rap in Yorùbá, hausa or pidgin because that’s how my people can feel me’ (BBC 1-Xtra 2008). The issue of code-switching in Nigerian hip hop culture is discussed further in chapter five.

(iii) Instrumentation and vocal delivery

As expected of jùjú and fújì, the instrumentation is predominantly dominated by the Yorùbá set of percussion instruments made of various drums, among them talking drums like *dùndún*, *gan-gan*, *bàtá*, *omele*, *àkùbà* and *shèkèrè*, coupled with (in the case of jùjú) foreign elements like guitar, keyboard etc. Euba (1989: 2) observed that ‘drumming (particularly the playing of hourglass tension drums) and use of percussion in general are among the most outstanding elements of Yorùbá music and are found throughout Yorùbá land’.

In line with Euba’s observation, talking drums play a vital role in jùjú and fújì’s musical pattern. Fela’s afrobeat is also known to use the *gbèdu*¹⁴ drum (see figure 4:8) in its line-up while Lagbaja! has taken afrobeat to another level, projecting the traditional Yorùbá culture with it, by the inclusion of a whole Yorùbá drum ensemble in his line-up and also by wearing a mask which is characteristic of the Yorùbá *egúngún* masquerade. This suggests how far the Yorùbá culture has gone in influencing Nigeria’s urban popular culture. Coming to reggae, the Yorùbá talking drum has also found an alliance as Majek Fashek in creating his brand of reggae called ‘pangolo’

¹⁴ *Gbèdu* is a traditional Yorùbá drum that is associated with royalty and is often called ‘*Gbèdu - Oba*’ or the King’s drum. It is perhaps the biggest among Yorùbá drums and can be as tall as 5ft and above with an aesthetically carved wooden frame. See Adegbite 1988, and Amayo 2007 for a demonstration of the use of *gbèdu*.

introduced the talking drum to his band, resulting in a blend of exotic rhythms and pulsating effects which can be heard on tracks like ‘So Long, Too Long’ (1997) and ‘Spirit of Love’ (1991).



FIGURE 4:8 Amayo standing beside the *gbèdu* drum; notice the height (youtube.com)

(iv) Negotiation of Identity

Though much of the theoretical background of identity has been dealt with in chapter two, I would like to reiterate that music as a medium of self expression has always been a potent way of identity formulation as it is ‘about using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being’ (Okwori 2002: 149). In the present mainstream popular music in Nigeria where hip hop music has been dominant for some time, the Yorùbá language and culture has been the widely accepted medium in which artists portray their ‘Nigerian-ness’ while factors leading to this will be explored in chapters five to seven.

4:6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have been able to trace the origin of Nigeria's popular music genres, situating their conception and development within the confines of Lagos city. Here it is imperative to note the role of urbanization in the development of popular arts while the genres discussed gave credence to the idea that urbanism and commodification has a crucial effect on what can be termed popular as opposed to traditional.

This chapter also highlighted the fact that Yorùbá music practice is an antecedent to what has come to be generally accepted as Nigerian popular music as exemplified in genres like jùjú, fújì and afrobeat. This can further be ascribed to the position of Lagos and the general nature of Yorùbá society that has been aptly described as 'highly cosmopolitan and dynamic... [while people have lived] in large cities for centuries... [with] sophisticated philosophical systems, and a general openness to the incorporation of foreign styles and technologies' (Campbell and Waterman 1995: 38). This is reflected in the indigenizational approach of Yorùbá artists to Western derived styles like reggae and hip hop through the use of Yorùbá language and music practice that is now becoming the generally accepted norm by other artists from different ethnic backgrounds.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NIGERIAN HIP HOP SCENE AND THE 'AFRO HIP HOP' IDENTITY

5:1 Introduction

The global influence of hip hop music and its urban cultural paraphernalia from America is undisputed and this form of music has found itself in the mainstream in many countries of the world. In Nigeria hip hop has been in the mainstream close to a decade signifying the openness of the music scene to global influence as a result of trans-cultural flows. This chapter introduces the origin of hip hop music from its African-American descent and traces the development of the Nigerian hip hop, style and content with its underlying Yorùbá influence.

5:2 Origin of hip hop

The origin of rap has been credited to The Bronx, an ethnic community in West New York where DJs developed the art of talking over sampled beats in a particular manner. The DJ or 'turntablist' (Keyes 2004: 1) provides the soundtracks with the latest sound while those that do the talking or rhyming on it are dubbed the MC or Master of Ceremonies.¹⁵ This can be likened to the style of the Jamaican Disc Jockey or DJ of the

¹⁵ The use of the term MC was predominant in early rap and hip hop where artists attach it as a prefix before their name e.g. MC Hammer. The acronym is associated with a wordsmith or person proficient in rhyming, however the acclaimed rap group A Tribe Called Quest put forward the meaning of MC in the liner notes of their 1993 album *Midnight Marauders* as follows 'The use of the term MC when referring to a rhyming wordsmith originates from the dance halls of Jamaica. At each event, there would be a master of ceremonies who would introduce the different musical acts and would say a toast in the style of a rhyme, directed at the audience and to the performers. He would also make announcements such as the schedule of other events or advertisements from local sponsors. The term MC continued to be used by the children of women who moved to New York to work as maids in the 1970s. These MCs eventually created a new style of music called hip hop based on the rhyming they used to do in Jamaica and the breakbeats used in records. MC has also recently been accepted to refer to all who engineer music'.

1970s U-Roy, who pioneered the art of 'toasting' which was later modernized and taken to centre stage by another Jamaican act, King Yellowman.

The greatest influence and pioneer of this art form according to Davey D, an American hip hop historian, is DJ Cool Herc who migrated from Kingston, Jamaica to the Bronx, New York and brought with him the Jamaican style of Dee-jaying, improvising and chanting on the most current music, using popular sound instruments of the period with dexterity and combining two turntables (Davey D 2008). Rap music can be described as the foundation on which hip hop is built while hip hop is 'a youth arts mass movement' (Keyes 2004: 1) and a culture which is multifaceted, so it is not unlikely that at times rap and hip hop are used interchangeably. Rap music is:

a form of rhymed storytelling accompanied by highly rhythmic, electronically based music... From the outset, rap music has articulated the pleasures and problems of black urban life in contemporary America [where] rappers speak with the voice of personal experience taking on the identity of the observer or narrator. (Rose 1994: 2)

As earlier stated DJs are pivotal to the emergence of this art form which started on the streets, where itinerant DJs performed mixing pre-recorded hit songs by using two turntables while rendering party phrases and tropes (Keyes 2004: 1). This later metamorphosed into the hiring of rhyming experts known as MCs to support the DJs with a couple of dancers as well, and with this a foundation was laid for what would become the hip hop crew of rappers, DJs and dancers. Earlier rap music acts include Grandmaster Flash (DJ) and the Furious Five (MCs/performers), Run D.M.C. and Jam Master Jay (DJ), while Kurtis Blow has been credited with being the first rap artist to be recorded on a major label (Mercury Records 1970s).

Musically at present hip hop is a combination of styles from rap (its foundation) to rhythm and blues while the underlying theme is the creation of a particular kind of urban street conscious culture which is broad extending from music to street arts of graffiti, fashion and sports. Looking at hip hop from its socio-historical forebears, Tricia Rose believed:

Hip hop emerge[d] from the de-industrialization meltdown where social alienation, prophetic imagination, and yearning intersect... [It] is a cultural form that attempts to negotiate the experiences of marginalization, brutality, truncated opportunity, and oppression within cultural imperatives of African-American and Caribbean history, identity and community. It is the tension between the cultural fractures produced by post-industrial oppression and the binding ties of black cultural expressivity that sets the critical frame for the development of hip hop. (Rose 1994: 21)

There has always been some contention about what is rap, or what is hip hop, while Krims (2000: 10) asserted that “rap” describes only a kind of music, whereas there is also hip hop dancing (breakdancing), hip hop visual arts, (graffiti), hip hop clothing’. What is however sure is that rap is a verbal projectile of hip hop and most hip hop insiders trace the origin of the culture back to West Africa where the use of poetics is at its fullest, a claim supported by hip hop’s proclaimed Godfather Afrika Bambaata because to him ‘it goes back to Africa where you had chanting style of rapping’ (Keyes 2004: 17).

This also explains why Kenny ‘Keke’ Ogungbe, a Nigerian hip hop executive, describes rap as ‘Ewi’—a form of traditional Yorùbá poetic chant (BBC 1-Xtra 2008). MC KRS-One believes rap is something you do or perform while hip hop is what you live or experience, and to Mos Def as exemplified in his song ‘Fear not of man’ (1999) hip

hop means ‘the people’ (Keyes 2004: 6). If we begin to look at all these variations ‘the people’ can translate to ‘the street’ and ‘the street’ is ‘the school of life’, the American ghetto that offers an alternative education as opposed to the conventional school, ultimately teaching the reality of everyday life and offering alternative linguistic codes in terms of street vernacular as exemplified by many rap lyrics.

Being ‘street conscious’ means hip hop is the language of the hustlers, the downtrodden, pointing to the unbalance in the American society, the poor condition of living, segregation and police brutality as projected in the music of artists like KRS-One in ‘9mm Goes Bang’ (1986) and Public Enemy in ‘Fight The Power’ (1989). This can be best summarised in the definitive description of hip hop by Chuck D of Public Enemy, who asserted that hip hop is the ‘Blackman’s CNN’ (BBC 1-Xtra 2008). Nowadays the strength of hip hop lies in its youth appeal as this movement (as hip hop is often referred to) gives youths a sense of belonging, offering an identity and becoming a rallying point by which their personality is defined. Youths look up to hip hop heads¹⁶ and artists as role models and aspire to live the diamond life of their idols as portrayed in the present day music videos.

From America hip hop has spread across the world, dominating local musical cultures, and we have a kind of global pop culture based on music dance and video and somehow marketing a modern lifestyle through different brand names and symbols of consumer goods like shoes, clothes, sportswear and headgear, creating the materiality of global

¹⁶ A term generally used to refer to successful hip hop artists or veterans of the genre and those that support and are instrumental to the success of hip hop in other aspects, e.g. personalities like Russel Simmon, founder of Dej Jam Records and urban wear outfit Phat Farm.

youth-oriented culture (Osumare 1989) identified with the hip hop generation (Kitwana 2002).

Different parts of the world now have their own version of hip hop while appropriating from and following the American trend in what can be referred to as an indigeneous hip hop culture but still subscribing to the global hip hop nation. In Nigeria it is called 'Afro hip hop' with MCs like Eedris Abdulkareem, Rugged man, Mode-9, and 2face P-square to mention but few at the forefront. In Ghana it is called 'hip life' where they have an exceptional blend of the traditional highlife and hip-beat with Tic-Tac and V.I.P at the forefront while in the UK it is called Grime with artists like Kano and Dizzy Rascal blazing the trail.

5:3 Background to Nigerian hip hop

Hip hop and all its paraphernalia is now a phenomenon which is standing in the forefront of Nigeria's popular music with a unique style which is also gaining global recognition. The presence and dynamism of artists as well as music industry apparatus involved in promoting the culture have also been receiving commentaries with diverse reviews. Despite criticising Nigeria hip hop in his controversial article in *The Guardian*, Abati (2009) still attested to the popularity and strength of hip hop in Nigeria, noting that 'the strange thing is that they [hip hop artists] are so successful... Nollywood [Nigeria's movie industry] has projected Nigeria, [and] the next big revelations are hip hop... Nigeria's hip hop is bringing the country so much international recognition'.

In the same vein and reacting to Abati's earlier attack, Tony Okoroji¹⁷ a former president of PMAN (Performing Musician Association of Nigeria), also attested to the resilience and strength of the hip hop artists, saying 'they are professionals creating a positive identity for the Nigerian nation at this point under terrible conditions and without any contributions from our national treasury, these young Nigerians have done what had appeared impossible a few years ago... They restored our dignity by ensuring that when you come to Nigeria the music you hear on the airwaves... [is] predominantly created by Nigerians' (Okoroji 2009a).

The trend and the popularity of Nigerian hip hop can be traced back to the 1990s when hip hop culture was stamped in the annals of the country's entertainment with the release of 'Sakomo' (1998), a song in Yorùbá with a blend of English on a sampled beat of MC Lyte's 'Keep on keeping on' by a group called 'Remedies' consisting of the trio of Tony Tetuila, Eedris Abdulkareem and Eddy Brown. The success of this song as a radio release with the later release of a full album by Kennis Music paved the way for what was to be a redefining factor of Nigeria's music industry and the birth of a unique style of hip hop that is fully Nigerianised which would later be known as 'afro hip hop'. Perhaps it is pertinent to examine the socio-political situation in Nigeria at that time as well as the state of the Nigerian music and recording industry that eventually led to the birth of 'afro hip hop'. The perimeter of this discourse will be between the 1980s and the 1990s when hip hop became popularized, a precursor of the socio-political and economic situation in Nigeria at that time.

¹⁷ Tony Okoroji has been a musician/producer in the early eighties and once worked for EMI Nigeria as A and R manager. In recent years has been an activist for intellectual property rights and at present is the chairman of Copyright Society of Nigeria (COSON).

The second phase of military rule began in Nigeria in 1983¹⁸ with the seizure of power from Alh. Sheu Shagari the then elected executive president by the duo of General Muhammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon. The country has been under military rule (first phase) from 1966 to 1979 while the military take-over of 1983 was to eventually end in 1999 and it was within this period (which witnessed different successive military governments due to incessant coups) that many changes took place in the country's economy which vitally affected the business sector among which is the entertainment industry. The country was wallowing in external debt and in 1986 introduced the Structural Adjusted Programme (SAP) with strict economic measures accompanied by devaluation of the currency. Capturing this period of Nigerian history Falola and Heaton wrote:

Devaluation of the currency brought with it rapid inflation and a decrease in the purchasing power of the average Nigerian. The Naira which stood at ₦1 = \$1 in 1985 fell to ₦4.21 to the dollar in 1988, ₦7.48 in 1989, ₦22 by 1994. The inflation rate stood at between 40 and 70 percent from about 1988 to 1995 and per capita income declined from estimated \$778 in 1985 to just \$105 in 1989 making it difficult for people to afford basic necessities such as food, clothing electricity, health care, education and anything else that cost money. (2008: 219)

This serious economic crisis led to the collapse of most businesses while the music industry was not spared, and there began an exodus of major international labels like Polygram, EMI, and Sony Music while the indigenous independent labels that were hitherto vibrant became moribund (see also chapter seven). Most artists were finding it

¹⁸ See chapter 3 section 2 for the discussion on Nigeria's political history and military regimes.

very difficult to survive due to low patronage and as the economy put pressure on people the country started witnessing mass migration:

Those with means or marketable skills began to leave Nigeria in increasing numbers. Professionals such as doctors, lawyers, engineers and businessmen found that they could find more stable employment and higher salaries working as expatriates in the United States and Europe... This outflow of skilled professionals from the country [is] dubbed 'brain drain'. (Falola and Heaton 2008: 223)

This 'brain drain' also affected Nigerian established artists who found it difficult to survive due to the economy and also due to the departure of the labels. There was an exodus of Nigerian artists into the diaspora in search of greener pastures along with other experienced professionals, and big players in the music industry like Mandators, Majek Fashek, Mike Okri and Ras Kimono left Lagos in quick succession leaving a huge vacuum in the industry.¹⁹

If success is finding a need and filling it (Pearle 1996) then hip hop came at the right time in Nigeria's music history, filling the interregnum and satisfying people's desire to listen to something new, global but with the local ingredient. The success of hip hop is also connected to the development of computer-aided music technology which made its inroad into Lagos around this time, making it easy and cheap to make music. As there were fewer labels around ready to bankroll or sign an artist, an average aspiring Nigerian artist during this lull resorted to the art of DIY, making music with sampled

¹⁹ These are only some of Nigeria's major artists that left the country around this period. The list is in no way exhaustive and many artist have also left the country prior to this time, including Lijadu Sisters, Dora Ifudu, Orlando Julius, Alex Zitto, Tera kota, Jheri Jatto, Felix Lebarty, Dizzy K Falola etc.

beats and producing promotional radio releases on CDs whose subsequent air-play on radio encouraged a proliferation of hip hop songs on the charts.

The growth of hip hop around this time can then be seen as a bridge and a form of expression by the youth taking advantage of the digital technology and finding a way of reacting to the prevalent socio-economic impoverishment by having a sense of connectivity with their counterparts in North America, where hip hop has been used as a weapon by the marginalized social class and a mouthpiece of expressive and militant advocacy. According to Ugor 'through their music young artists now criticize the political class for the failure of the state, the collapse of the economy, and the absence of basic infrastructure such as electricity, good roads, decent housing and an efficient health care system' (2009: 66).

Closely associated with this are other facilitators and promoters of Nigeria's hip hop among which are the duo of Kenny 'Keke' Ogunbe and Dayo 'D-one' Adeneye who were both on-air personalities at Ray Power, FM Nigeria's first independent private radio station dedicated to promoting local acts. The duo of Keke and D-One played a pivotal role in the success of 'Sakomo' with massive radio promotion and they were to later become executives of Kennis Music, a Lagos indigenous label which later released the debut of 'Remedies' and pioneered the releases of other hip hop acts. Others include producers like Solo D (real name Solomon Dare) with Payback Tyme Records established in 1996 and promoting groups like Swatroot and acts like El Dee, Mode-9

and 6-Footplus;²⁰ Nelson Brown producing and promoting ‘The Plantashun Boyz’; Omololu²¹ who produced Nigeria’s first hip hop hit ‘Sakomo’ and later became in-house producer for Kennis Music; and ID Cabasa with the Coded Tunes label that pushed Lord of Ajasa and 9ice to the mainstream.

The role of talent hunt shows cannot be over-emphasized in the promotion of hip hop culture which helped pushed some players to the mainstream. Benson and Hedges’ ‘Grab The Mike’ competition produced P-Square, Sound Sultan, and 6-Foot Plus. Nigerian Breweries Ltd’s ‘Star Talent Hunt’ produced NIGGA Raw and KC-Presh while Baba Dee emerged after winning the 1995 Lekki Sunplash Talent contest.²²

The media also helped in shaping the course of Nigeria’s hip hop especially through video promotion and with the establishment of MTV’s base in Africa and Channel ‘O’ where Nigerian hip hop takes the forefront it has gone international. As rightly observed, ‘one popular media source for Nigerian hip hop has been MTV-UK *MTV Base Request Show*. Several of the requests on the programme (e. g. kick off airing primetime February 19, 2005, 5-8pm) came from Nigerians or Nigerians in diaspora’ (Omoniyi 2006: 197).

²⁰ The group Swatroot and the label Payback Tyme Records were among the pioneering platforms for hip hop culture in Nigeria. However towards the millennium most of the rappers in the clan had either gone solo or relocated. El Dee later started Trybe Records and scored with the Trybesmen before re-locating to the U. S but is now back in Lagos. Mode 9 was signed to Question Mark Record Lagos and later floated his own label Red Eye Music, while O. D. is now on X3M Music Label. For an insight to the early Swatroot years see <http://www.paybacktymerecords.com/swatroot.htm>.

²¹ See ‘Omololu Back on Track’ at <http://saentertainment.org/omololu-back-on-track/>

²² The author witnessed most of these moments in Nigeria’s hip hop development.

Likewise there was the arrival on the scene of creative entertainment journalists and publishers with magazines solely devoted to the promotion of hip hop culture like Ayo Animashauns's *Hip hop World magazine* which debuted in 1995 and now has an annual Hip Hop World Awards (HHWA)²³ as well as Hip-on TV (see Figure 5:1) as well as Biodun Caston-Dada's *African Beatz* which also came into being in 2000, and both have gone a long way in promoting the music and making information about artists readily available.



FIGURE 5:1 Hip Hop World Awards 2009 Flyer (hiphopworldawards.com)

5:4 Hip Hop, ‘The Street’ and The Nigerian Experience

In discussing hip hop it is practically impossible to exclude the ‘street’ factor based on the fact that hip hop itself is a movement, way of life and music genre that is borne out of the urban street culture. In this section I will be examining the concept of ‘the street’

²³ With the maiden edition held in 2006 it has become the most sought after awards ceremony for artists since the Nigerian Music Awards (NMA) have become moribund.

and how it has become an inseparable appendage in hip hop music, while looking at how 'the street' in the American context and the Nigerian context interlaces and differs in relation to hip hop.

'The street' as an expression originated out of African-American culture and has been sold worldwide through the success of hip hop. It denotes the process or 'place' of getting an informal education and the acquisition of skills to deal with and get on with the realities of life. It signifies survival and extols toughness, pride and display of masculinity. According to William Oliver:

'The street' is used... to refer to the network of public and semi-public settings (e.g. street corners, vacant lots, bars, clubs, after hours joints, convenience stores, drug houses, pool rooms, parks and public recreational places, etc.) in which primarily lower and working class black males tend to congregate. (Oliver 2006: 919)

This is further clarified by Yasser. A. Payne who views street culture as:

a spectrum of networking behaviours that can be captured through two sets of activities: (1) bonding (e.g. 'playing the dozens', 'hanging on the block', rhyming, playing basketball, etc.), (2) illegal activities (e.g. robbing, selling drugs, committing violent acts, etc.) generally employed to confront the effects of socio-economic impoverishment. (Payne 2006: 288)

The evolution of 'the street' has a historical bearing immersed in socio-political and economic factors within the African-American community who have suffered years of marginalization, unemployment, racist policing etc., resulting in high incarceration rates, poverty and poor living conditions. To this effect taking part in street activities by young black males is seen as a cogent socialization institution that can redress these

issues and give them leverage through hustling to attain economic independence and earn respect.

In furtherance to this, it can be asserted that ‘the street’ came into being as ‘the cumulative effects of intergenerational exposure of historical and contemporary patterns of racial and gender oppression directed against black males to socially construct masculine identities that place emphasis on toughness, sexual conquest and street hustling’ (Oliver 2006: 921). Apart from socialization through bonding and hanging out that can be achieved on the street, it also offers a gateway to many vices where the alternative (illegal) economy operates to its fullest. The ‘street hustler’ believes if he can’t succeed or make it within the mainstream (legitimate) economy due to unfairness, marginalization or ‘no level ground to play’, he might as well succeed within the ‘underground’ (illegal) economy by taking part in illegitimate activities like robbery, drug dealing, pawning, gun running or pimping where he believes he can come to affluence and get the respect he deserves in the society.

The street phenomenon can thereby be seen as a product of struggle and weapon of resistance in the face of limited opportunities, hardship and poverty, a situation which is in existence in many parts of the world even though the root cause might be different from the African-American community. Going through or being brought up on ‘the street’ can also be parallel to ‘the ghetto’ as popularized through reggae music by Bob Marley in describing the deplorable condition of the ordinary people in Jamaica, where ‘the ghetto’ denotes shanty towns and settlements in places like Kingston and inhabitants called downtown people as opposed to the rich and affluent who live in the uptown.

In the Nigerian context, hardship is rife, the unemployment rate is high, and inflation is at its peak, while opportunities are limited. These are similar to the situation that resulted in the resistance which triggered the ‘street’ phenomenon within the African-American community but with a different root cause. While racism and marginalization is a major factor in America, the Nigerian state of affairs is tied to corruption perpetrated by the political class that have sucked the nation dry while they accumulated wealth, putting the nation in a state of economic coma for over twenty years. The gap between the rich and poor widens daily while the middle class has become extinct.

In Lagos, cosmopolitan as it is, the attribute of poverty is still evident physically. Despite all the massive structures in places like Lekki or Victoria Island²⁴ where the rich and affluent congregate, there still exist a number of ‘ghettos’ with the most populous one called *Ajegunle*²⁵ where the likes of Vocal Slender, an aspiring artist, lives and has to work on a refuse dump site to make enough money in furtherance of his music career (as portrayed on BBC 2 television documentary ‘Welcome To Lagos’ March 2010).

5:4.1 ‘The Street’ and Hip Hop

From the African-American community where hip hop originated ‘the street’ has been in existence long before hip hop music came on board. It is the realities of ghetto life,

²⁴ These are expensive neighbourhoods in Lagos Island that offer the sea views now characterized by the development of luxury flats and penthouses.

²⁵ The most notorious ghetto in Lagos and now a generic representation for hard life and suffering in Nigeria.

poverty and marginalization that fuelled the development of rap and hip hop culture. Hip hop became a platform where the youth can become radical using their music and lyrics to expose the realities of their situation by bringing the activities of the daily life into public sphere, especially glorifying the street activities and singing about them. This makes hip hop and 'the street' inseparable as most of the hip hop MCs have themselves been engaged in one street activity or another. Also the whole concept and development of hip hop itself was based on street hustle, resilience and skills as the genre remained underground for many years but became a phenomenon based on the resilience of its players.

The street activities as amplified in the videos and portrayed in songs can also be seen as one of the factors that sold the music globally. In a way youths in other parts of the world can connect with the realities of the ghetto situation in America to isolate the hardship and decadence in the socio-economic climate of their own society, giving them a motive to resent these and write lyrics to talk about their own situation through the embrace of hip hop. With the subsequent popularity that hip hop is gaining, many African-American youths now see the art form as an alternative to the 'real' street hustle which is illegal, as asserted by William Oliver: 'the economic opportunities associated with hip hop culture are now perceived by many young black men as the new "street game" and a viable and legitimate alternative to selling drugs or committing burglaries or robberies and other forms of street hustling as a means of acquiring money' (2006: 926).

The rapper 50cent (real name Curtis Jackson) is an exemplar in this vein. Having grown up on the street and become a drug entrepreneur as a teenager, even owning an

expensive car like the Mercedes 500 S Class, he eventually ended up in prison, where he perfected and resuscitated his gift of rapping and upon release from prison was to become a big player in the hip hop genre. His 2003 release *Get rich or die trying* was a massive hit. Akon is another act whose street life got him convicted, but he turned a new leaf upon release from prison with his 'Lonely' single catapulting him to the mainstream hip hop scene and eventually adopting the 'Convict' as his recording label name.

5:4.2 'The Street' and Hip Hop in the Nigerian Context

In the Nigerian context and using Lagos as a point of reference there is also a prevalence of street activities, some related to and some not related to hip hop but the major connection is that like the American situation, the street phenomenon also is a product of struggle and an object of resentment where ghetto life and hardship is imminent and apparent. Street life in Nigeria in the context of hip hop players is actually in contrast to what obtains in America as regards the activities that go on there, because those on the street in Lagos (Nigeria) are different and were not the ones that transited into performing hip hop or adopting the hip hop culture. We can also link this contrast to who the hip hop generation are in Nigeria, i.e. the hip hop heads, the promoters and players alike whose orientation and educational background are actually different but have connectivity with their American counterparts in terms of ideology as reflected in their resentment to oppressive politicking and their overt culture of resistance.

In highlighting the activities of the Lagos street vis-a-vis the hip hop practitioners in Nigeria, Omoniyi stated:

The identities we discern in the HHNL [hip hop nation language] community in Africa are not about 'representing the street' in the US sense because Africa's street for now has a different subcultural topography and belongs to urchins called *Area Boys* in Lagos. Rather the HHNL community (in Nigeria) comprises politically conscious youths liberated by education and critical of the establishment. They display a different kind of angst; a disdain for maladministration, plundering of state resources and a resultant harsh, economic climate that have left them roughshod and battered. (2009: 123)

The street of Lagos in the real sense is inhabited by the area boys who consist of organised gangs of street children often called '*agberos*' or bus conductors. They roam the street and engage in illegal activities like extorting money from passengers, picking pockets, often selling drugs and always come handy as political thugs. They often organise themselves into brigades or groups depending on what part of the city they reside in, thereby claiming ownership of a particular 'area', and will 'tax' (extort) from people that come in and out of their area. Perhaps that is how the name 'area boys' originated.

In most parts of Lagos Island area boys operate illegal car parks, getting money from drivers before they park. The majority of the area boys are illiterate and uneducated with no means of livelihood, and some are probably a product of the Nigerian socio-political decadence caused by corruption which reduced the bulk of the populace to a social underclass. The area boys do not rap or subscribe to hip hop culture and within this class of people *fújì* is the music genre of choice, even though most of the street language and slang used daily by them is now becoming regular lingo in today's hip hop lyrics.

While the street is being controlled by the area boys the hip hop music and the promotion of the culture is being sustained by different sets of people who had their street life orientation based on their life trajectories.²⁶ Most of Nigeria's hip hop artists are educated, and their street orientation is different from their American counterpart. Within the mainstream players of hip hop in the last decade what is discernable is that the majority have a university degree. Rapper Mode 9 is a graduate of Kaduna Polytechnic, Sound Sultan and Ruggedman both have a Lagos State University degree,²⁷ Baba Dee²⁸ has a Master's Degree, 2face Idibia attended a Polytechnic (IMT) in Enugu, and Artist Producer ID Cabasa has an M.Sc. degree in Economics²⁹ while 9ice did a post-secondary school Diploma³⁰ in Computer Studies. Their street connectivity however lies in the Nigerian situation immersed in a harsh economic climate that has left most young people hopeless, with hip hop offering a creative outlet with which they can be heard and also be empowered financially or otherwise.

Taking a critical look at the Nigerian hip hop scene presently one can see a tremendous influence of 'the street' on the music while there are many similarities of these influences in relation to their American counterparts in areas like message/consciousness, street hustling, language and slang and at times portrayal of sexuality. There is distinction or difference however from their American counterparts

²⁶ A typical example here is Efe Omoregbe who is a graduate of English Language from the University of Lagos. He belonged to Nigeria's hip hop generation; he is an ex-MC and dancer while in his present capacity he promotes hip hop culture and has contributed artistically and lyrically to hip hop albums (personal interview, 2009).

²⁷ See www.myspace.com/soundsultan01 and www.myspace.com/ruggedmanonline respectively.

²⁸ Schoolmate with author at the University of Ibadan.

²⁹ Interview, 2008.

³⁰ Interview, 2008.

in the area of illustrating crime or violence, glorifying jail/incarceration, misogyny, drug dealing references and gun running.

5:5 Nigeria's Afro Hip Hop: Style and Peculiarities

Nigeria's Afro hip hop can be classified as a variant of America's hip hop which is already a global phenomenon, while Afro hip hop's indigenization and uniqueness in style has earned it a place on the world stage. The uniqueness of Afro hip hop lies in its language of delivery giving it a distinctive characteristic because 'the real ingenuity is revealed in the use of pidgin English blended nicely with Yorùbá, Igbo, Hausa or any other language to produce melodies just as nice as any of the foreign ones we have craved all these years' (Ebele 2006).

Scholars have observed that music is a kind of tool towards the creation of an identity (Euba 1989) which in a way manifests the projection of Nigeria's Afro hip hop, that is, creation of a unique sound that is truly African in style and language of delivery. According to Eedris Abdulkareem 'you don't have to rap in English, nobody's gonna feel you, I wanna rap in broken [Nigerian Pidgin English], Yorùbá and Ibo' (BBC 1-Xtra 2008). Hip hop is being re-defined by Nigerian artists and taken back to Africa which has been credited as its origin.

Looking at the progression of hip hop in Nigeria, it has been rightly observed that in the past:

Many [artists] have tried, unsuccessfully, to mimic the lyrics, beats and sounds of American hip hop. Some would rap in English, not necessarily the language they were most at ease with. Others would adopt fake American accents and use

slangs that originated from America's inner cities but bore little resemblance to the reality of modern Nigerian life... It is not surprising that [these] Nigerian urban artists soon found themselves ridiculed as poor imitators of American hip hop. (Adesioye 2009)

Perhaps in reaction to this rejection and lack of patronage in the formative years when Nigeria's hip hop was still looking for acceptance while the culture was beclouded with rejection as being too foreign and incomprehensible. This propelled young Nigerian hip hop artists to make a change of agenda by going back to their roots while engaging with their audience directly in the language they understand, the Nigerian mother tongues, and appropriating elements from the existing popular music genres like jùjú, fújì or highlife. The result is that Nigerian hip hop has become the mainstream music in the country while its presence is being felt internationally. Observing a club on a Saturday night in Brooklyn, New York, Adesioye (2009) also wrote:

Inside the club there's barely an American track to be heard, because this crowd isn't particularly interested in listening to American music. Instead the majority of the tunes the DJ spins are the latest urban hits from Nigeria, and the punters are mainly young Africans are hooked on everyone. It's all part of the boom in Nigerian music... with clubs from New York to Paris to London to Nairobi playing club hits from Lagos.

Nigerian hip hop has been successful through the adoption of the Nigerian languages and slang to describe the Nigerian situation. The use of these mother tongues has been one of its major peculiarities which now gives it a distinct and unmistakable identity: as El Dee put it 'You can't listen to Nigerian Music [now] and mistake it for anything else—we have created our own identity and sound' (quoted in Adesioye 2009).

Afro hip hop is distinguished by its use of a blend of native languages that can be termed in the linguistic parlance as 'conventional code switching' (which is discussed

in the next section) and also the absence of heavy sexualisation, misogyny and gangsterism. The use of multilingualism and code switching is a major peculiarity that gave Afro hip hop its unique identity and originality.

5:5.1 Afro Hip Hop and the Use of Code-switching

Hip hop as an expressive art is heavily dependent on narratives which are born out of experiences. Here language plays a significant role and one of the ways in which the Nigerian scene adapted the genre to suit the home context is by employing the art of code-switching which has gradually become the identity marker of Afro hip hop. Here an artist performs music using more than one language or code. Socio-linguistic studies have found that this phenomenon is commonly exhibited in a multicultural society in which languages influence each other through contact.

According to Bokamba (1989) ‘code-switching is a mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical (sub) systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech events’ (quoted in Ayeomoni 2006: 91). To Babalola and Taiwo (2009) code-switching is ‘a means of communication which involves the speaker alternating between one language and another in communicating events. In other words, it describes someone who code-switches using two languages (interlingua) or dialects (intralingua) interchangeably in a single communication’ (p. 2). While the phenomenon has often been studied in relation to conversation it has also been observed in other communicative spheres like music or poetry where according to Davies and Benthalia (2008: 2) ‘in addition to being a useful resource for a bilingual in everyday interaction with other bilinguals, [it] may also serve a poetic function, contributing to the aesthetic

and rhetorical effects of discourse that is not spontaneous but carefully constructed' (quoted in Babalola and Taiwo 2009: 4).

Hip hop outside America has been observed as a fertile ground for code-switching where the use of the indigenous language is seen as a way of 'domesticating' the genre to give it a local tenor. Some perspectives outside Nigeria present interesting discoveries. Oduro-Frimpong (2009) presents contemporary hip hop in Ghana as hip life, 'a blend of the US music variety *hip hop* and *highlife*, a Ghanaian popular music genre that blends distinct African rhythm with that of Euro-American and African diaspora' (p. 1086), while its unique attribute is the blend of two or more languages, primarily Akan, Ga, Standard English and pidgin.

On the Montreal hip hop scene Sakar et al. (2005) observed that using French as a base language 'several languages and varieties are commonly used and mixed by Montreal rap artists' (p. 2057). Here commonly used languages include Standard Quebec French, Non Standard Quebec French, Carribean Creole, African-American English among others, where 'hip hop groups are a mirror of the ethno-linguistic diversity that is so salient a feature of the downtown Montreal scene' (ibid: 2060). In Kenya, hip hop has developed its own language *Sheng*, 'a mix of broken Swahili, English and tribal languages... [which] has inspired many others and given Nairobi hip hop its own distinctive classless flavour' (Howden 2009).

In Nigeria's Afro hip hop code-switching has been constantly employed combining two or more languages which include Standard English, Nigerian pidgin, Yorùbá, Igbo and other languages. Sound Sultan and 9ice are two prominent Nigerian hip hop acts and

presented below are excerpts from their songs to show a typical code-switching pattern in Nigeria's hip hop.

'Motherland' by Sound Sultan (2006).

Yea, Sound Sultan, Naija ninja
Kennis, you know how we dey do am
This one na for all ma brothers
Who don go outside Naija
*Who don **ja** commot for Naija*
Always try to dey look back
Because there's no place like home
you know what I mean?
Yorùbá man tell me say

Translation:

Yeah Sound Sultan Naija Ninja
Kennis Music, you know how we do it
This is for all my brothers
That left Nigeria
That gone outside Nigeria for good
Always try to look back
Because there's no place like home
You know what I mean
Yorùbá man says that

Bridge
Ajo o dabi ile
Na true
Check this out
Oh oh, yea
Ajo o dabi ile
No matter where you go
Make u no forget area oh
Area oh
Na naija
Ti ode ba til
Pada wale o, wale o

Translation:

There is no place like home
It's true
Check this out

Oh yeah
Theres no place like home
No matter where you go
Don't forget where you come from
Where you come from
Is Naija (Nigeria)
If it gets tough out there
Come back home

The above song lyrics shows that the chorus line of the song is rendered in Yorùbá (shown in bold) and Nigerian pidgin (italics) while the intro and body of the song is rendered in Yorùbá, international English (underlined), and Nigerian pidgin.

'Gongo Aso' by 9ice (2007)

Chorus:
Gongo à so kutupu à hu
Anywhere I dey now
Gongo à so kutupu à hu
Any show I go now
Ajisebí Òyó Làá rì,
Òyó ò sebì Baba ẹnì kóòkan
I be double now
Ayé únlo E' ò rí n kan

Translation:

Great things and ovations will happen
Anywhere I am
Great things and ovations will happen
At any show I perform
It's others that copy Oyo (Yorùbá) people
Oyo (Yorùbá) don't copy anybody
I'm double now
Times are changing, don't you see?
1st Verse

Gongo á so you know
Am on fire not be beans talk
Gongo á so you know
Ení fojú ànà wòkú ebora à bó o lásó
This time no dulling
Everywhere weh

I deh na party
Hennessey nlo, Moet **nlo**
Bacardi **nlo**
we no go stop,
Till the break of dawn
Bebe nlo

Translation:

Ovations abound
I am on fire it's not a joke
Ovations abound
Don't underestimate me
This time around it's merriment
Everywhere I am
It's going to be a party
With plenty of Hennessey, Moet
And Bacardi
We won't stop
Till daybreak
Ovations abound

The above extracts from 'Gongo Aso' are also a rich blend of international English (underlined), Nigerian Pidgin (italics) and Yorùbá language (bold) with an intra-utterance pattern of code-switching and it should be noted that the Yorùbá used here is a deep one called *djìnlè Yorùbá* (deep traditional Yorùbá as opposed to modern everyday conversational Yorùbá that is prevalent for a Lagosian youth) especially from the chorus line.

While the use of code-switching is now a sort of identity mark to Nigeria's afro hip hop, it is however discernable that the Yorùbá language is becoming the most used language, and this trend also applies to artists not of Yorùbá ethnic extraction, most surprisingly non-Nigerians as well. Those that can speak the language use it in their narratives and chorus while some prefer to feature an artist of Yorùbá ethnic extraction to perform Yorùbá verses in their track as a hook line or narrative in order to have

Yorùbá expression or slang in their music. Various reasons for this trend are examined in the latter part of this chapter. However in Yorùbá-influenced code-switching which is prevalent the following patterns have been extracted:

Pattern **A**- Chorus in Yorùbá and Narratives in Nigerian Pidgin (NP).

Pattern **B**-Chorus in Yorùbá/Nigerian Pidgin with Narratives in Yorùbá/Nigerian Pidgin.

Pattern **C** –Chorus in Yorùbá and Narratives in Standard English.

Pattern **D**-Chorus in Yorùbá/NP/other languages with Narratives in NP/Other languages.

Figure 5:2 is an attempt to list some popular Nigerian hip hop songs which show the feature of the code-switching; while the list is in no way exhaustive an attempt is made to emphasise artists that come from outside Yorùbá ethnic extraction.

FIGURE 5:2 Nigerian hip hop artists' code-switching feature

Artist	Song Title	Year	Category	Artist's Ethnicity
2shotz ft 9ice	Make dem talk	2006	B	Igbo
P Square	Omoge Mi	2005	B	Igbo
2Face Idibia	Only you	2009	B	Tiv
Style plus	Olufunmi	2003	C	Edo/Yorùbá
NIGGA Raw	Ko Gbadun	2008	D	Igbo

Ruggedman	Ruggedy Baba	2007	B	Igbo
9ice	Gongo Aso	2008	B	Yorùbá
Remedies	Sakomo	1998	A	Yorùbá /Edo
Weird MC	Ijo Ya	2005	A	Yorùbá
Plantashun Boyz	Iwo ni mo fe	2000	B	Tiv/Igbo
Nii ft Samini	Moni fe re	2009	C	Ghanaian
TicTac ft Keynote	Bosue	2009	D	Ghanaian

With the above analysis one can see clearly that in creating the Nigerian Afro hip hop identity multi-lingualism and code-switching has become a trademark of Nigerian hip hop. Audiences worldwide and outside the local languages have become used to this peculiarity and still enjoy Nigeria's delivery styles, as attested to by Nicholas Geogakis (a German) who without understanding a word of Yorùbá has performed an acoustic version of 'Gongo Aso' and posted it on youtube (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVFPGXVte4Y>) where it has a total of 174,915 views to date (21st Oct 2010).

Nigerian artists in diaspora also identify with this trend as portrayed in the lyrics of UK based JJC and the 419 Crew in songs like 'Gba o' (2002) and 'Ki lonsele' (2003) and also US Based El Dee in 'Bo si gbangba' (2008) which is 'indexical of a Nigerian root identity and culture that the diasporadic artists retain as a way of retaining their homeland identity' (Omoniyi 2006: 200). Nigeria's Afro hip hop has succeeded in creating the African identity and image while still retaining a spot on the world scene.

To Sound Sultan 'Afro hip hop plays more on the 'Afro' part. In Nigeria you have to represent where you come from and 'Afro' defines Africa' (Interview, 2008).

5:6 Major Themes in Nigeria's Afro hip hop

Music as a means of communication also functions as an avenue foreducation and instruction within the entertainment paradigm, while hip hop as an art form and cultural movement re-echoes this stance due to the socio-economic situation that resulted in its origin. According to Chuck D of the Public Enemy rap group 'hip hop is first and foremost a communication tool... For the last twenty years, hip hop has communicated to young people all across the world, people in different time zones who speak different languages' (quoted in Ards 2004: 318).

Every piece of music has a subject matter, a central idea or ideas that the artist tries to pass across to the listener. This 'theme' is transmitted via different formats whether recorded or performed. In hip hop where rapping is employed primarily, the theme is mostly transmitted via narratives created in a constructive and sequential manner describing or unfolding an event. The hip hop terrain on the global scale is a pot-pourri of thematic outputs ranging from subject matters like marginalization, identity, love and relationships, police brutality, and poor economic conditions to violence, affluence and misogyny.

It should be noted that in recent years hip hop in America has faced much criticism as regards the theme and message it projects while critics have wondered if the genre has not actually lost its potential and potency towards effecting change and influencing the present generation positively. As Angela Ards observes, 'Rap music has gone through

various phases—the early eighties message raps, late eighties afrocentricity, early nineties gangsta raps [and] today’s rank materialism’ (2004: 313). Concern for this recent promotion of sexuality and misogyny instigated the BET roundtable talk programme ‘Hip Hop Versus America’ while the debate still continues prompting Todd Johnson (2010) to ask in his recent article/documentary ‘Will hip hop return to its activist role?’³¹

Similar concern with the message has been expressed within the Nigerian hip hop scene while the most sensational statement has been that of Reuben Abati in his 2009 article ‘A Nation’s Identity Crisis’ (2009). While there have not been cases of gangsterism, violence, overtly sexual lyrics and misogynist expressions in Nigeria’s hip hop, concern has been expressed as to whether the type of message being conveyed presently is actually conscious enough or addressing the state of affairs in the country. To Abati ‘a country’s character is indexed into its arts and culture, eternal purveyors of tones and modes. Nigerian youths now sing of broken heads, raw sex, uselessness and raw aspirational emotionalism. A sign of the times?’ (2009).

While Abati’s opinion is highly debatable, there are many factors militating against some songs/artists getting heard, partly due to the themes of their music: if it is highly political and critical of government policies, it enjoys less publicity. While on the other

³¹ It should be noted that the synergy that now exists between most of rap’s independent labels and the major labels that are buying into them is one of the major causes of the shift in focus for hip hop in America and this can be termed ‘corporate commodification’ of the genre. A similar instance was expressed by Nelly on ‘Hip Hop Vs America’ who believes they need to dance to the tunes of these corporations for the commercial success of their albums to be ensured... This was also expressed by Keith Negus: ‘commodification of music and the control of its production by... major corporations... has a detrimental impact on the sound we get to hear, leading to the erosion of oppositional “anti-materialist’performance”’ (1999: 15).

hand less volatile ones with teenage-oriented themes enjoy media publicity and endorsement. However according to ID Cabasa:

Because of the economic situation of people getting into music [nowadays] they forget what music is supposed to represent. They don't want to sit down and write good lyrics, but [are] just interested in getting people to dance, let everybody feel good [then] I make my money and go. But I think what distinguish [es] an evergreen song from one that will come and go is definitely the... content... All in the name of commercial music people go about doing songs without [good] content... What I want people to consider is [that] a great song with great lyrics [message] will be a greater hit [while] a whack song with whack lyrics [that lack message] that becomes a hit will just be a hit for a short time but won't be an everlasting one. (Interview 2009)

Major themes found in Nigeria's Afro hip hop can be sub-divided to eight discernable categories as follows:

- 1) Dance/Party raps
- 2) Love and relationships
- 3) Ego tripping/self praise
- 4) Glamour/materialism
- 5) Girls/sexuality
- 6) Struggle/Ghetto life
- 7) Nationalism/Afrocentricism
- 8) Politics/Social consciousness

Some song extracts that reflected these themes are discussed below and the artists are selected based on their popularity within the Nigerian music scene at present while some of the songs have also either been nominated or won awards in various categories. It should also be noted that most of the songs followed the already discussed code-

switching pattern and attempts have been made to translate these extracts for proper understanding.

Dance/Party Raps

These are hip hop songs whose thematic outline simply calls the listener to the dance floor. In Nigeria most artists strive to have a party track which they believe contributes to making an artist popular and relevant while it also brings financial gratification. When a song is a ‘party jam’ as it is often called, it brings the artist more shows and appearances which are major sources of revenue for performing artists in Nigeria. The 2006 release ‘Ijo ya’ by Weird MC is a typical example, where the artist simply beckons fans to the dance floor:

*Ijó yá, Ijó yá
Àwa mà ni Ijó yá
Ijó yá, Ijó yá
Àwa mà ni Ijó yá*

Translation:

It’s time to dance,
It’s time to dance
We are the ones
It’s time to dance
We are the ones to dance

*Désolá lóní flow
Lyrics lóri gáangan
Sola lóri gáangan
Òrò lóri gáangan*

Translation:

Desola owns the flow
Lyrics on the talking drum
Desola owns the dance
Rhyming on the talking drum... (etc).

Love and relationships

Love and relationships are among the most exploited themes in popular music and the Nigerian hip hop scene presents an array of songs on this theme. D 'Banj's 'Fall in Love' (2009) exemplifies this theme where he narrates how he fell in love in the following excerpts:

Chorus

*Omo, you don make me fall in love
Fall in love o (2x)
We suppose marry because you don make me fall in love
Fall in love o (2x)*

1st Verse

*My sweet potato
I wanna tell you my mind, wanna tell you my mind o
I no understand o
Cause I dey see well well when they say love is blind o
You see as you dey so
You are the love of my life, you are the love of my life o
I cannot deny o
I wanna make you my wife, wanna make you wife o
See, I never thought that I will find someone like you
That will capture my heart and there's nothing I can do
I used to brag to my friends that I will always be a player
But since I set my eyes on you (You don make me fall in love... etc.)*

Translation:

Chorus

Oh girl you've made me fall in love
Fall in love
We should get married,
Because you've made me fall in love
Fall in love

1st verse

My sweet potato, I need to tell you what's on my mind
I can't understand it
As I can see very well when they say love is blind
As you are, you are the love of my life
I want to make you my wife
See I never thought of meeting someone like you

That will capture my heart making me powerless
I used to brag to my friend I will always be a player
But since I set my heart on you. (You've made me fall in love... etc.)

Ego Tripping /self praise

Ego tripping or the art of self praise is a common phenomenon in hip hop culture where battling among MCs is a permanent feature availing rappers the opportunity to engage in lyrical contests. This theme has constantly appeared on hip hop recordings where artists boost their reputation and maintain their street credibility and self worth by throwing punches at rivals. In verse three of 'Elbow Room' (2007) rapper Mode 9 engaged in a lyrical ego trip:

I don't knock about or barge in
so call me major interference
I come to make MC's mum like one of my parents
My appearance at a show got ma foes darting
Cos they make me laugh hard like 30mins of Martin
I'm making more headlines than corn roles and partings
While you be puffing shit gas like greedy people farting
Most times when I'm done with it, ya scared of starting
I put ma heart in the game blood plus my soul
Like a surgical transplant, my lyrics and my flow
Get me more hugs than skillful soccer players scoring goals
I'm hungry like Snoop in the deep cover of death row
So I eat rappers like they made of egg rolls
Keeping it real types always have to learn to let go
I keep it real for me not because one young punk said so.... (etc).

Glamour/Materialism

Themes of glamour and materialism, as reflected in hip hop rhymes, lyrics and videos projecting affluence and what has come to be known as a life of 'bling' in this sub-culture, is now a prominent feature in hip hop. This portrayal and narratives about wealth and affluence in recent times has resulted in the creation of a stereotype for how

hip hop artists should talk, look or live, a model now being appropriated by most artists globally. Talking about the life of affluence Olu Maintain present a typical example in this realm with ‘Yahooze’³² (2007):

*Yahooze, Yahooze oh oh.
Ti n ba hammer first thing na Hummer
One million Dollars
Èlò ló máa jé tí n bá se sí Naira
Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday
Boys’ dey hustle
Friday Saturday Sunday, Gbogbo ayé
Champagne, Hennessy, Moet For everybody
Ew’awon omoge Dem dey Shake their body
Everybody enuff efizy take am easy
It’s all about the Benjamin’s baby... (Etc)*

Translation:

Yahooze Yahooze,
When I hammer [come into sudden wealth]
The first thing to buy is a Hummer Jeep
One million dollars, how much will it be when I change it to Naira
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, boys are hustling
Friday, Saturday, Sunday is time to enjoy
Please give everybody Champagne, Hennessey and Moet
See the girls just shaking their body
Everybody try and display affluence
Don’t be surprised because it’s all about the Benjamin’s baby... (etc.)

Girls/Sexuality

Closely associated with the life of ‘bling’ in hip hop are songs centred around girls and sexuality. This theme has been very rampant in hip hop of North American origin, complimented by the life of ‘bling’, amidst wide criticism. While the Nigerian hip hop scene has also taken a cue from this thematic trend, the artists however go about it in a

³² The song has been a reference point in recent times for portrayal of affluence in Nigerian hip hop as the video did justice to this more than the lyrics with the display of state of the art cars, champagne, women and dollars. It received much criticism for supporting internet fraud as ‘Yahoo Yahoo’ is a term used in Nigeria for internet fraudsters though debunked by the artist. See ‘419 Scams & Nigerian hip hop’ [http://africa.wisc.edu/hybrid/2009/07/07/419-scam-nigerian-hip hop/](http://africa.wisc.edu/hybrid/2009/07/07/419-scam-nigerian-hip-hop/) Accessed 1st November, 2010.

more subtle and coded manner avoiding stark references to sensitive body parts or sexual organs while substituting these with slang or words that are ambiguous. In ‘Kondo’ (2009), Dagrín engages with sexuality through:

*Mummy mi ti lo sójà
Daddy mi travel lo Lokoja
Èmi nikan mo wà ní'lé
So ma wá ba mi seré
Lóri bed ni o tàbí lóri rug oo
Àbí sé ká t'èní ọmọ ọmọge tell me
I dey feel you oh oh, E be like say I smoky.
Don dey make man kolo,
ọmọ ele you go for sure
Na today let me take you to my house
Tell you something.
Na today, me and you go do.*

(Chorus)
*Daddy mi ò sí nílé
Mummy mi ò sí nílé
Ègbón mi ò sí nílé
Wá gba Kóndó, Kóndó
Wá wo Commando, Commando*

Translation:

My mummy has gone to the market
My daddy has travelled to Lokoja
I'm home all alone
Are you coming over to keep me company?
We can mess around on the bed, or on the rug
Or do you prefer us spreading the mat
Just tell me baby
As I am feeling you
And you driving me crazy
It's gonna happen today
Let me take you to my room... (because)

My daddy is not around
My mummy is not in
My siblings are not in
Why can you come around for ‘Kondo’
And you can see ‘Commando’

Here the rapper played on the word ‘kondo’ a Yorùbá word that denotes and is associated with the police baton which in the full usage is *Kóóndó olópàá*. The narratives and context of the song suggested sexual innuendos and gave the artist’s intention away. However through the use of this verbal indirection while playing on words and putting ‘Commando’ after ‘Kondo’ and using their sound affinity aesthetically for rhyming, he has actually secured some detachment from the suggestive sexuality of the song. When asked what the term ‘kondo’ actually denotes in respect of the song, Dagrín claimed ‘kondo’ is Condition,³³ a nonsensical assertion and another stride deeper into the sea of ambiguity.

Struggle/Ghetto Life

It has since been established that marginalization and ghetto life realities have been a major impetus towards creating rap, while hip hop’s survival, growth and mainstreaming in the United States and Nigeria has a testimony of struggle. Narratives of struggle and survival with the depiction of ghetto life and the limitations it poses to its inhabitants has since been one of the strong points in hip hop around the world, Nigeria inclusive. In ‘Ghetto Dream’ (2007) Dagrín³⁴ presents a narrative of his struggle in the street and how he persevered using hip hop as a way out of the ghetto:

*Sometimes when Im dreaming
I just don't wanna wake up
Its like im married to the game
Me and my bitches never break up*

³³ This was on the Liz Yemoja show aired on BEN TV, UK in February 2010 but can be retrieved on youtube at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD4jnXVufOI...> Accessed May 1st 2010.

³⁴ It is sad to note that Dagrín died on April 23rd 2010 at the age of twenty-three years following injuries sustained after a ghastly motor accident. His sophomore album *CEO –Chief Executive Omoita* (2009) was just yielding fruits having received multiple nominations for the year’s Hip Hop World Awards (HHWA).

Àìmoye ìgbà tí mo ti dide Tì mo ti subú,
 Àìmoye èé bù tán tipè mí lólóri bú
 Àìmoye clubbing tí mi le afford one red bull
 Àìmoye many colored t-shirt but one red shoe
 Àìmoye aje Àìmoye osho
 Àìmoye many times tí mo n play free show
 Àìmoye ìgbà táwon ee yan ti ní kin lo give up
 Wón ní mo local p' óná mi o'nse hip hop
 But mo wà determined, mo dè wà focus
 T'orìè ni orúko mi se n spread bi Staphylococcus
 Àìmoye yawa, Àìmoye insult
 Àìmoye je concoction without no salt
 Àìmoye àlá ti mo lá pé mo di celebrity
 Tí n bá jí ma tún bèrè hustle lójú títì
 It's a pity ojó wo ni mo fé ra infinity

Translation

Sometimes when im dreaming
 I don't feel like waking up
 It's like I'm married to this game [hip hop]
 And there's no breaking up...

So many times I've fallen but stood up on my feet
 So many times I've been cursed and abused
 So many times I've gone to clubs
 But can't afford a Red Bull [popular energy drink]
 So many times I've been wearing
 A coloured T-shirt and only one red shoe
 A lot of witches and wizards have tried to cast a spell on me
 So many times I've performed for free just to be heard
 So many times people have told me to give up on music
 They said I'm too local and can't succeed in hip hop
 But I have been determined and focussed
 That's why my name has now been spreading like staphylococcus³⁵
 There's been countless trouble and insults
 So many times all I can afford to eat is cheap food without salt
 Then I used to dream that I'm a celebrity
 But after waking up I have to start hustling again on the street
 It's a pity when am I gonna buy Infinity (a 4WD SUV)... (etc.)

³⁵ A strain of bacteria.

Nationalism/Afrocentricism

In the last decade love for one's country or nationalism has been a subject matter that artists have delved into seriously in Nigeria. Hip hop has been used by youths to express hope for the country despite the hardship and instability. Most artists profess undying love for Nigeria which has been given different acronyms like '9Ja' or 'Naija'. Within this fabric of nationalism, the issue of African identity and loyalty to the African continent has also been given greater attention and amplification. Putting himself in the position of the antagonist, Sound Sultan in 'King of My Country' (2009) is a typical example in this category where he professed his love for Nigeria and why Nigerians should endeavour to stay in the country:

*I dey come back home (I've been there too long)
Pada wale Wa joba
For my people out there
Cos ive been there too long
I be 9ja boy in an English town
Breaking bounds, making pounds
Everybody know me, that's what I thought
Identification Na green passport
Feel like tile but not really
In no get the green road down for orile
But if na tile omọ dem kunle
Plenty like ekute down for my village*

*King like me suppose get
An excess amount of freedom
Get anything I wan get
Cos im a King of My kingdom
See im a king where I come from
How come im a common man in London
I get plenty land back home
But now im a tenant in England
9ja na the place where we dey stay
Everything is free like light of day
Night and day hustle for pay
Fight and play na the same we see
Nigeria na home, na home
Na home na home for black kings o
I prefer to live like a lion in the jungle
Than to stay like a dog in the city...*

TRANSLATION

I'm coming back home
I've been out there too long
(Come home and ascend the throne)
I'm a Nigerian boy in an English town
I'm breaking bounds and making money
Everybody knows me by my name
Because my identification is the green [Nigerian] passport
Here feels like home but it isn't really
There's no place that looks like *orile* [a neighbourhood in Lagos]

A king like me is supposed to get
An excess amount of freedom
And get anything I need because I'm a king of my kingdom
See I'm a king where I come from
But now I'm a common man in London
I have plenty land back home
But now I'm a tenant in England
Nigeria is the place where we live life in full
And everything is free like light of the day
Night and day we work for our money
Fight and play we look at it from same angle
Nigeria is the home for black kings
I prefer to live like a lion in the jungle
Than to stay like a dog in the city... (etc.)

While this theme is reflected lyrically it should also be noted that most hip hop artists have also represented the country visually in their music videos as well as through the use of Nigerian made fabrics and design, while many T-shirts have been designed and used in videos portraying the national colours of green and white with nationalistic inscriptions.

Politics/Social consciousness

The message is an integral part of hip hop because 'from its inception [it] has been an active vehicle for social protest in the US and around the world... Its targets have been racism, discrimination, police brutality, mis-education and other social ills' (Alim 2006:

25). In Nigeria and around the world artists want to be commercially successful, a bid that has put many artists in the position of choosing fame and success over message or consciousness.

When artists become too politically critical their music may not get played often while endorsements and other extra-musical opportunities can come short. This might be one of the reasons artists usually tread softly on this path. Despite this, politically conscious and socially relevant lyrics have not been lacking in the Nigerian hip hop scene. However it should be noted that airplay and promotion of these types of songs is always limited as most media houses want to be in the good books of the government of the day. On the other hand, artists and songs that basically reflect dance or entertainment most times get media attention with maximum airplay. Below is an excursion into some hip hop with politically conscious themes that have been acclaimed in Nigeria.

In 2004, three years into Nigeria's democratic regime, rapper Eedris Abdulkareem released 'Jaga Jaga'. Not satisfied with the state of things in the country despite the so-called 'democracy' he declared:

*Nigeria jaga jaga
Everywhere scatter scatter
Poor man dey suffer suffer
Gbosa Gbosa gun shot inna di ear.*

Translation:

Nigeria is in ruins
Everything is in shambles
The masses are suffering
You can get shot at any time.

Following this aggressive chorus he asked in verse 3:

*Eedris, what about COJA³⁶ now?
Won ti ko owo wa ja
NEPA, won ti di regular,
419 in Nigeria
Agege to Ikeja Na 100 naira
Fuel scarcity Na popular
Action film for Nigeria... (etc)*

Translation:

What of COJA
They have embezzled all the money
NEPA [power Supply Corporation]
Is now a regular fraudster in Nigeria
[People are paying bills without getting power]
Going from Agege to Ikeja
Now cost you 100 naira
Fuel scarcity is a daily routine
In the country... (etc)

Sound Sultan is another artist who has made social commentary and politically conscious lyrics one of his strong points. The name of his band, or ‘posse’ as it is called in hip hop culture, reflects his mission as they are called JAGBAJANTIS—a Yorùbá slang coinage that means ‘nonsense’ or ‘waste’ which he adopted as an acronym from ‘Justice Against Barawo And Jaguda and Thieves In our Society’. In ‘Bushmeat’ released in 2009 Sultan called the political class names, referring to them as thieves, and declared that one day the bushmeat (game) will catch the hunter and the hunter will become the hunted:

*Ebámi kígbe olè! olè!! olè!!!
Ebámi kígbe olè! olè!! olè!!!*

³⁶ This is the acronym for Comité d’Organisation des Jeux Africain; responsible for holding the 8th All African Games held in Abuja, Nigeria in 2003 under the directorship of Dr Amos Adamu. COJA was riddled with controversies concerning embezzlement and mismanagement of funds during and after the games. See: http://www.nigerianmuse.com/nigeriawatch/officialfraud/?u=TheNews_COJA_Flawed_African_games.htm and <http://www.sunnewsonline.com/webpages/sports/2010/nov/19/sports-19-11-2010-001.htm>. Despite these criticisms Adamu still held a managerial position in Nigerian sports administration and was among the four FIFA members penalized by the ethics committee for demanding bribes towards the World Cup hosting vote; see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/football/9203378.stm> (sites Accessed 29th November 2010).

*One day bushmeat go catch the hunter
 See them fly for the aeroplane
 On top of the pain
 My people dey maintain
 I don tire to dey explain
 Picking wey never chop dey complain
 Water, light Na yawa
 Everywhere just black no power
 Only power wey dem get
 Na the one wey dem take to dey oppress
 My people for the ghetto
 What could be the answer
 Could it be that we don't matter to them
 Cos they chop my money your money
 Every other person money...
 Ebami kigbe ole!, ole!!ole. !!!... (etc.)*

Translation:

Help me shout thief, thief, thief!!!
 One day the game will catch the hunter
 See as they fly on the aeroplane
 Despite the pain the masses are quiet
 I'm tired of explaining
 Kids that have not eaten are complaining
 Drinking water and electricity is lacking
 Everywhere is dark no power
 The only power they have
 Is the one they use in oppressing people in the ghetto.
 What could be the answer?
 Is it that we don't matter to them?
 Because they have embezzled your money
 My money everybody's money
 Please help me shout thief! thief! thief!!!... (etc.)

5:7 Afro Hip Hop: Why Yorùbá is the Preferred Medium of Communication

The success of 'Sakomo' by Remedies in 1998 became a reference point in Nigeria's music history due to the multilingual approach of the song, code switching between English, pidgin and Yorùbá to sing and rap on a sampled funky beat (MC Lyte's 'keep on keepin on') and heralding a new line of Afrocentric direction in the emerging urban popular culture of Nigeria. At that year's AMEN (Awards of Musical Excellence in

Nigeria) the song won two awards making the group ‘Best Hip Hop Artist of the Year-1998’ and ‘Best New Artist-1998’ and also nominated for the ‘Musician/Song of the Year’ category. This shows the impact the song had in the industry at that time as it signalled the beginning of Nigeria’s Afro hip hop with Yorùbá language as the trademark of identity.

The trend of Yorùbá-influenced hits in Nigeria’s popular music scene has been that of a gradual process dating back to the 1980s where the language has been used as a medium of delivery, especially in a situation where English language is predominant to the genre of music. Dizzy K Falola’s ‘Baby kilode’ (1986), a bilingual pop song cut in Yorùbá and standard English, shot him to the limelight in an era dominated by Western influenced pop music. Mike Okri’s ‘Omoge’ (1988) was rendered in Yorùbá and pidgin and became a classic. Christy Essien had hit tracks like ‘Seun Rere’ (1981) and ‘Ife’ (1980) both in Yorùbá and they were classics winning international recognition and awards. Likewise Daniel Wilson, acclaimed ‘Ragamuffin King’ at the peak of his career, collaborated with the renowned album sleeve designer Lemi Ghariokwu³⁷ in a track called ‘Omolakeji’ (1994) which was acclaimed. It should be noted that none of these artists (except Dizzy K. Falola) were from the Yorùbá tribe in Nigeria but rather they preferred to sing in Yorùbá because of the general acceptability of the language and perhaps to reach a larger audience.

³⁷ He is best known for designing most of the acclaimed album sleeve for Fela Anikulapo –Kuti. See Ghariokwu 2004.

Two outstanding groups also provided a musical conduit that linked the pop/protest music era of the 1980s/1990s to the beginning of the Afro hip hop era of the late 1990s with their success closely linked to the Yorùbá influence. The first was the musical duo of Fellyx and Mozzyz with the popular song ‘Free’ (1987), though cut in English with a hip hop trope of ‘Eja ka Jo’ in Yorùbá, which was its strong point giving it a street and club appeal, with call and response also in Yorùbá. The second were the duo of Junior and Pretty with the hit track ‘Bolanle’ (1994), one of the earliest rap songs delivered in Nigerian Pidgin and Yorùbá. These two groups paved the way and prepared the ground for the ‘Sakomo’ era which began the period of Yorùbá-influenced Afro hip hop in Nigeria. Let us now examine the factors that contributed to making Yorùbá the preferred language and medium of expression that has helped shape Afro hip hop while contributing to the over-all influence the language has exerted towards the development of modern popular music in Nigeria. Here I will be dividing those factors as follows:

- 1)-The Lagos factor.
- 2)-Market and commercial exploitation.
- 3)-The emergence of Afrocentricism.
- 4)-Street credibility.
- 5)-Yorùbá’s global/diasporic presence.

5:7.1 The Lagos Factor

The role of Lagos from the pre-colonial era to post-independence modern Nigeria has positioned the city as the economic and commercial capital of Nigeria and has continuously attracted migrants from all over Nigeria and beyond hoping to find fortune in the city, with musicians not being an exception. ‘While the state [Lagos became a state in 1976] is essentially a Yorùbá speaking environment it is nevertheless a socio-

cultural melting pot attracting both Nigerians and foreigners alike... [This] is attributed to its sound economic base and socio-political importance which induced a high rate of rural-urban migration to the state metropolitan region' (Lagosstate.org 2008). As the commercial nerve centre of the country Lagos has provided an enabling environment for the development of the music industry. It is where different styles of Nigeria's popular music were developed and nurtured to international recognition including highlife, jùjú, fújì, gospel and afrobeat while it is now the seat of the present Nigerian hip hop culture.

With its advantageous position Lagos has continuously attracted artists from different parts of Nigeria and beyond seeking to test their popularity and make a fortune out of music because 'that [Lagos] is where the money is, it is where the show is based, Lagos is where we have most of the structures' (ID Cabassa interview, 2008).

Timaya in his 2008 hit song 'Don Blow' announced 'I don blow, I don blow (I have arrived, I have made it). All the way from Port Harcourt, I break into their Lagos market.' Likewise M. I. the award winning rapper who was recently nominated for BET awards 2010 (International artist category), at the 'AY Comedy Show' in Abuja 2009 stated: 'Two years ago I packed my bags and left Jos for Lagos in pursuit of my Dream, but I thank God today and you people my dreams have come true'.

Timaya is an upcoming artist who was based in Port-Harcourt, in the southern part of Nigeria, before coming to Lagos, and his statement in 'Don Blow' highlighted the importance of Lagos and the need to break into the Lagos market to be in the mainstream. Likewise M. I., formerly based in Jos, and performing around the Northern

part of Nigeria, had to move down to Lagos and to him it has worked out. This same view was expressed by Frank D’Nero, an established hip hop artist in Port Harcourt, who had just moved to Lagos to promote his single ‘Cure My Craze’ and secure a marketing deal for his album:

This is the first step for me to move away from P. H. [Port Harcourt], I have done a lot there [and] I need to expand, There is a difference between P. H. and here [Lagos], here the business has already been established, back there we are the one struggling to make things happen...’ (Interview, 2009).

The duo of P-Square were originally based in Jos but migrated to Lagos for the release of their debut album ‘Last night’ (2002) and have since relocated to Lagos. D’Banj relocated to Lagos from London for the promotion of his ‘Tongolo’ (2005) album and has stayed since following the success of the album. Maintain were originally an Ibadan based hip hop crew but relocated to Lagos. Plantation boiz’ 2face and Black face were originally from Makurdi but relocated to Lagos to team up with Faze, becoming a success thereafter.

Eedris Abdulkareem was formerly in Kano but relocated to Lagos to team up with Tony Tetuila and Eddy Brown to form the successful Remedies hip hop group that later revolutionised the industry. The list is in no way exhaustive. Coming to Lagos to work and seek a fortune offers more than an enabling environment to residents as there is always interaction and cultural assimilation brought about by the linguistic influence of the Lagos environment. Residents started adopting the official language of Lagos which is Yorùbá as well as Nigerian pidgin which in the Lagos environment is heavily laden with different Yorùbá expressions and slang.

Artists were not left out of this assimilation and its effect is quite visible in the present-day Nigerian Afro hip hop artists using a lot of Yorùbá in their music even if they are not originally from a Yorùbá speaking tribe, as they tend to think more of their immediate audience, patron and environment which is Lagos. Though Nigeria offers a huge marketing potential with its estimated 154 million people, Lagos offers a determining factor as that is where the projection and branding of an artist starts. This is instrumental to what the larger Nigerian people accept because ‘in a way what becomes a hit [song] in Lagos is a hit in Nigeria, even you see an Hausa man [now] trying to sing in Yorùbá as Lagos is a contributing factor to the [overall] Yorùbá influence’ (ID Cabassa interview, 2008).

5:7.2 Marketing and Commercial Exploitation

Closely related to the Lagos factor is the issue of marketing a song or artist to make a commercial success out of it. Every artist wants to be rewarded for their efforts because the market is huge: as observed by Kenny Ogungbe ‘we sell in millions, forget the pirates’ (BBC 1-Xtra 2008). With the growing numbers of hip hop artists emerging daily on the scene in Nigeria, it is now very competitive with each artist trying to find a hook line to make their song a commercial success.

Many found this in their alliance with Yorùbá language using it as a hook line in songs, especially as a chorus line with the rest of the song rendered with intra-utterance code-switching between pidgin and standard English, and at times, songs are delivered solely in Yorùbá language. Comparing the two albums released by 9ice so far, ‘Certificate’ (2006) and ‘Gongo Aso’ (2008), I observed the dominance of Yorùbá influenced and

delivered tracks in the latter as opposed to the *début*. The reason according to 9ice was that:

Yorùbá is what is selling for me... [In] the first album I made use of Yorùbá and English but in the course of marketing the album I realised that most tracks that people appreciate are the Yorùbá ones... Over the years in Nigerian music industry I've realised it [Yorùbá] as my number one selling point. (Interview, 2008)

Perhaps this is evident in the success of the 'Gongo Aso' album that won him a place to perform at Nelson Mandela's 80th birthday concert at Hyde Park in London (June 2008) and a recent MOBO³⁸ award as the 'Best African Artist-2008' among others.

Ruggedman is another hip hop artist who found fame and commercial success in his alliance with a Yorùbá hook line as he was more of an underground hip hop artist until he did a dance track 'Baraje' (2005) with a Yorùbá hook line. This became a turning point in his career while giving him 'fame and money faster' (Ruggedman in 'Ruggedy Baba' 2007) and was followed by the 'Ruggedy Baba' album of 2007 (discussed in the later part of this work) where he takes this direction to another level with a mission statement. Many other artists have also exploited this factor to make a huge commercial success out of their musical career as evident in the success of hit songs like 'Yahooze' (2006) by Olu Maintain, Weird MC's 'Ijoya' (2006), X-Project 'Lorile' (2007), Big Bamo 'Kowonje' (2007), Sasha 'Adara' (2007) and Sound Sultan's 'Bushmeat' (2008) among others.

³⁸ This is Music of Black Origin Awards held annually in the UK.

5:7.3 The Emergence of Afrocentricism

The Nigerian Music industry has passed through many phases and the effect of Western domination is visible in the kind of music that was popular in the country in the 1980s. This was the pop and disco era and most artists at that period liked to imitate the likes of Michael Jackson or James Brown as projected in the works of singers like Kris Okotie, Jide Obi and Dizzy K Falola. This is not unconnected with the fact that the Nigerian audience had been swept off their feet by the ‘disco fever’ and all one could hear on the radio then were foreign artists as that was an era of ‘musical imperialism’.

Towards the tail end of the military rule from the mid 1990s there was a gradual change in the cultural and entertainment industry with players becoming more Nigerianized and becoming popular with the projection of a more African flavour. Perhaps closely associated with this trend was the new political and cultural re-awakening that engulfed black people all over the world and especially in America. It was a period when ideologies like ‘Reparation’ and most importantly ‘Afrocentricism’ reigned supreme. In a way Afrocentricism is a term that replaced such ideologies as ‘Nationalism’ of the colonial era in Africa and ‘Pan-Africanism’ of the post-colonial era, but which is more culturally oriented.

According to the renowned Afrocentric scholar Molefi Asante, ‘Afrocentricity is a paradigm based on the idea that African people should re-assert a sense of agency in order to achieve sanity... [It] is a revolutionary shift in thinking proposed as a *constructural* adjustment to black disorientation, decenteredness, and lack of agency. The Afrocentrist asks the question, “What would African people do if there were no

white people?”” (Asante 2008).³⁹ In this dispensation it has become ‘the ideological term of this age that has been embraced by Africans and blacks all over the world who believed that after years of struggling for and attaining independence from colonial powers, black people are still living under the shadows of neo-colonialism so there is a need to develop an African identity and personality and achieve cultural emancipation’ (Adedeji, 2000: 6).

The embrace of this school of thought within the walls of the Nigerian music industry found a great partnership in the use of Yorùbá language and culture as one of the best ways of creating Afro hip hop because ‘wetin go (what will) let them know where you come from in the long run is the fusion of grammar your slang and your mother tongue’ (Ruggedman in ‘Ruggedy Baba’ 2007). Fela Anikulapo-Kuti became one of the pioneers of Afrocentricism in Nigerian music when he changed his surname from ‘Ransome’ (an English name and obviously a product of colonialism) to ‘Anikulapo’ (a Yorùbá name meaning ‘a man who has death in his pouch’ and portraying invincibility) in the 1970s and there after establishing a new brand of music called ‘Afrobeat’.

Other artists in this vein, and using the Yorùbá culture as a medium, include the reggae star Majek Fashek (now based in the U.S.) who introduced the Yorùbá talking drum *gáangan* to reggae music to produce a unique afrocentric blend of rhythm dubbed ‘pangolo rhythm’ in the late 1980s. Ras Kimono also became the first reggae artist in Nigeria to introduce the Yorùbá ‘Bàtá’ talking drum to reggae music performance in the

³⁹ Asante also asserts that ‘Afrocentricity enthrones the centrality of the African, that is, black ideals and values, as expressed in the highest forms of African culture, and activates consciousness as a functional aspect of any revolutionary approach to phenomena’ (ibid).

1990s. This trend was followed later on by Daddy Showkey whose performance of dancehall reggae has more of the jùjú/highlife tenor in terms of rhythm and instrumentation, especially as exemplified in his later collaboration with the jùjú music legend Fatai Rolling Dollars in the remix of his 1970s hit track ‘Won kere si number wa’ (2006).

Lagbaja! is another afrobeat artist that has taken Afrocentricism to another level. Apart from using Yorùbá language as a medium in most of his songs as well as performing with a complete ensemble and assemblage of Yorùbá talking drums, he has also adopted the Yorùbá art of masquerading called ‘*Egúngún*’ to communicate by using a mask thereby popularising the Yorùbá culture and carving an identity for himself. According to him ‘I am afrocentric but I also like to look at myself as a citizen of the world. Afrocentric because I want to see Africa at his rightful place’ (Lagbaja! interview in Adedeji 2000).

With the success of ‘Sakomo’ in 1998 Nigerian hip hop found a true portrayal of Afrocentricism in the use of Yorùbá language and culture and succeeded in creating a truly African identity for Nigeria’s Afro hip hop that now has world recognition. To Sound Sultan Afro hip hop ‘defines Africa... In a nut shell it qualifies the hip hop we have in Africa by putting a lot of African content [in it] which is what [we] guys are doing’ (Interview, 2008).

5:7.4 Street Credibility

Hip hop music is about having an ear on the street or being credible on the street and according to Keyes in her definition of rap music the use of ‘street vernacular’ in the

lyrics among other things is one of the essential ingredients of hip hop (Keyes 2004). In Nigerian Afro hip hop being street credible is not an exception because to be recognized on the street you need to use the language the street understands.

Lagos being Nigeria's commercial and entertainment centre has its street language embedded in Yorùbá and Nigerian pidgin while the pidgin spoken in Lagos is more or less heavily laden with Yorùbá. To be a 'street wise' artist the use of Yorùbá language is more or less required as most street slang is developed in Yorùbá 'lingo', hence the use of pidgin and Yorùbá by many hip hop artists like 2face Idibia, Olu Maintain, Ruggedman, and 9ice. The creation of new words and expression can also be seen as a reflection of the dynamism of a language as well as the creativity of its users. These new slangs and expressions have been referred to as 'Yorùbá idioms' by Olateju who believes that:

their creation and usage illustrate the creative propensity and linguistic competence of Yorùbá artists, and other users as well, who out of communicative necessity arising from global economy, politics, science and technology have to coin new words and expressions and/or assign new meanings to existing ones in order to express particular ideas. (Olateju 2005: 276).

Emeka Esogbue (2008) also observed that 'the influence of these musicians mostly from the south western part of the country have made expression from Yorùbá language, the most frequently used in pidgin English as spoken in Nigeria, 'omo' (a girl or individual based on usage) 'magoo' (don't be slack) 'sha' (emphasis) 'jare' (emphasis) 'she' (is it?) are all aspects of Yorùbá words commonly spoken by Nigerians'. Perhaps the people that can best exemplify the street in this parlance are the bus conductors in Lagos and it is through getting in contact with them, which is almost

inevitable, that the street slangs are picked up by others thereby becoming widespread. In Ojota (bus terminus) Lagos, a typical example of the way conductors call passengers (almost in a sing-song pattern) in ‘*Yaba, Palmgrove, Onipaanu, Anthony ma ‘wole oo’*’ meaning I’m going to Yaba, Palmgrove, and Onipaanu (popular destinations within Lagos metropolis) but if you are going to Anthony (another destination along the route where buses don’t like to stop) don’t enter.

‘*Agò*’ in Yorùbá means stupidity but in Lagos you will hear a conductor telling passengers ‘*Má-go ra e*’ a slang which is an adaptation of ‘*agò*’ to mean don’t be stupid. Most of this slang has gradually found its way into Afro hip hop lyrics. To be able to express a thought and be down to earth as well as reach out to the street the Yorùbá language has been a major medium employed by hip hop artists in Nigeria. A typical example is the popular song by the hip hop duo Black Tribe ‘*Ma go o*’ (2008). Here the artists appropriated the Yorùbá slang ‘*Ma go o*’ infusing it with Nigerian pidgin and Hausa⁴⁰ to carve a hook line for their song which actually became a street hop (popular among the youths on the street) due to the popularity of the Yorùbá slang in Lagos. In the song Black Tribe admonish their love subject telling her why she shouldn’t give the other guy a chance. An extract of the hookline is presented below while an attempt is made to underline the slang ‘*Ma go o*’ which is actually used as the trope of the chorus.

Ólò un féran rẹ̀, Baby má go ò
Író ma lón pa ò, Baby má go ò
Ya ce ya na son kí, Baby má go ò

⁴⁰ The group consists of one Ibo and one Hausa while most of their songs are delivered in Yorùbá and Nigerian Pidgin. See <http://www.articlesbase.com/music-articles/black-tribethrilling-you-with-sweet-music-from-nigeria-438371.html>

Suna gaya miki karya, ⁴¹ ***Baby má go ò***
Èyin b̀̀bo ti b̀̀ kía kía
Emujo keep on rocking kía kía
Emujo Keep on loving kía kía....

Translation

He says he loves you, Baby don't be fooled
He is lying, Baby don't be fooled
All the guys should just ignore her
Let's dance and keep on rocking
Let's dance and keep on loving...

5:7.5 Global and Diasporic Presence of Yorùbá Language

Perhaps one of the most important reasons that positioned Yorùbá as the most preferred medium of communication by Nigerian popular artists as well as outside the country is the strength of the language as a result of its presence in the diaspora. Apart from its 18.8 million people who speak the language as a first language speakers in Nigeria (Nvtc, 2008) it has an estimated 30 million speakers among West Africans encompassing Togo, Benin republic and Sierra Leone.

As a result of the slave trade between the 17th and 19th centuries the language also had dominance and has survived in countries like Brazil and Cuba and the United states while an estimated 2 million second language speakers of Yorùbá exist worldwide.

Using America as an example:

Most of the slaves brought to North America during the 18th and 19th centuries came from Yorùbá-speaking areas (and) based on the number of people for whom Yorùbá is the first language, the political cultural and social importance of the language within Africa and United states national interest tied to the economic and diplomatic relations with Yorùbá-speaking areas Yorùbá was

⁴¹ These two lines in bold are in *Hausa* language which repeats the Yoruba lines that says: He says he love you, he is lying.

recognised among the less commonly taught languages as first priority language by a panel of language teachers. (University of Wisconsin-Madison 2000)

Harrison Adeniyi also wrote that

There are about twenty universities where the language is being taught in the United States [and] in... those universities the study of Yorùbá is in three layers: elementary, intermediate and advanced levels. This is apart from other universities that offers it in tutorials on demand... More and more programs in African languages in other universities have shown considerable interest in developing programs in Yorùbá for their Universities (Adeniyi 2005: 245).

Apart from the United States where the language has achieved a priority status and students can receive up to a PhD in the language, it is also being recognised and taught especially within the discipline of African Studies in the United Kingdom where students can specialise in the Yorùbá language and culture, literature or music while also gaining a degree up to a PhD level at the Universities of London and Birmingham among others. With the language having such great recognition in Europe and America, Nigeria's hip hop scene only gives credence to its popularity in reaching a global audience and projecting an African identity by Nigerian artists.

Besides artists based in Lagos, hip hop artists in the diaspora are not excluded in this influence as they have in many ways used the language as a medium of song delivery to retain their identity while also maintaining a link to the home audience in Lagos. In this vein artists like JJC and the 419 Squad based in the U.K. is a typical example with songs like 'Ki lonsele' (2003) having gained the group international recognition. Other artists include Eldee based in the U.S. with songs like 'Champion' (2006) and Beautiful Nubia based in Canada with songs like 'How do you do? (Owuro l'ojó)' (2006). On the basis of its strength and diasporic/global presence the Yorùbá language has been used

by most Nigerian hip hop artists in order to reach a wider global audience whether performing in Lagos, London or New York

5:8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have been able to trace the emergence of hip hop in Nigeria while giving background information on the phenomenon from its American source. Comparison of Nigerian hip hop and its American counterpart as it relates to the streets indicated some disparities where the inhabitants of the street and the hip hop generation differ, though there is a connectivity in terms of vision and the didactic purpose of hip hop as a rebellious culture which the youth engaged in to deal with the realities of everyday life and the failure of the system in which they live. It was also established that one of the peculiarities of Afro hip hop is exhibited in code-switching, a form of multilingual expression in music where the Yorùbá language has been of tremendous influence. Code-switching has been identified as prevalent in most hip hop cultures outside of America, Nigeria inclusive, where it is being employed as an identity marker.

The issue of code-switching has exemplified the importance of language in expressive popular art, and in an urban popular culture like hip hop's engagement with the homegrown or indigenous languages is seen as a way of authenticating an appropriated music form in a process now termed 'glocalization', where a sub-genre and hybrid idiom like Afro hip hop in Nigeria or hip life from Ghana has been produced, pointing to the fact that 'the outside world... [can be] "domesticated" through music and 'domestication' of musical difference is an essential process of musical ethnicity' (Stokes 1994: 17). This is reflected in the use of Yorùbá here to exhibit Nigerian

authenticity in hip hop, a global phenomenon which has been 'glocalized' through code-switching to exhibit Nigerian cultural identity.

CHAPTER SIX

RUGGEDMAN'S 'RUGGEDY BABA': AN AFRO HIP HOP CASE STUDY

6:1 Introduction

In this section I will be examining the work of Ruggedman in a song titled 'Ruggedy Baba' with the purpose of bringing out the Yorùbá influence in the song lyrics. I will also try to establish the extent to which the use of Yorùbá language has contributed to his success so far as an artist through textual analysis of the song and especially looking at 9ice's collaboration and how his chorus (hook) line further exemplified the linguistic phenomenon of code-switching in Nigeria's hip hop.

As Cally Ikpe⁴² asserted 'hip hop has truly revived the dying Nigerian music industry' (interview, 2009) and gained mainstream popularity thereby constituting the paradigm on which the music industry is now defined. Against this backdrop it becomes imperative to use the mainstream genre for exemplification of my argument. Also in chapter four, it has been established that the Yorùbá-derived forms of popular music especially jùjú and fújì laid the foundation for the Nigerian modern popular music, which makes it appropriate to look 'outside the box' by picking a genre that has no conceptual derivative and origin from the Yorùbá idiom and to see how the Yorùbá influence and impact has helped shaped it to become the mainstream music defining Nigerian urban popular culture.

⁴² Cally Ikpe is the CEO of Callivision TV that produces *Livebeat*, credited as the longest running music programme on television. He has also been producing the Nigerian Music Video Awards (NMVA) for the past three years.

Isolating Ruggedman as an artist and his music for scrutiny is also not for convenience but rather pivotal, specific and crucial based on his ethnic cum linguistic extraction. He is an Ibo from the eastern part of Nigeria; therefore his mother tongue is not Yorùbá but Igbo, which raises the question how he arrived at the point of appropriating the Yorùbá language as the best medium to get his message across at a particular point of his music career.

6:2 Ruggedman: Artist Profile

Ruggedman, born Michael Ugochukwu Stephens, hails from Ohafia in Abia State which makes him an Ibo from the eastern part of Nigeria. He completed all levels of schooling in Lagos and graduated in Political Science from the Lagos State University. Thus he grew up in Lagos having migrated to the city at a very young age with his mother and attended primary school there. He speaks Igbo and Yorùbá fluently.

He adopted the stage name ‘Ruggedman’ when in high school and has been a performing artist in the rap genre since 1989, but became well known around 1999 after putting two tracks out for air play. His influences include NWA, KRS-one, Dr Dre, and Eminem and his style in his own words ‘is hard ’cos of my coarse voice texture and I used to rap in all English like I heard it from cats [rappers] that inspired me, but now I’ve had to fuse our local lingua so as to have local appeal and make peeps [people] know where I’m reppin [representing]’ (Ruggedman interview with Okoh, 2003).

His recognition and popularity in the music industry began in 2002 with the single ‘Ehen Part 1’ when he criticised the then mainstream rappers in Nigeria, specifically

Eedris Abdulkareem (formerly of 'The Remedies'), Rasqi, Maintain and Black Reverendz, asking them on the track 'Why you dey rap like *mumu*?', literally 'Why are you rapping like you are stupid?'. This song projects a kind of communicative line of attack which is identified as 'verbal indirection' (Oduro-Frimpong 2009), which stemmed from American rap culture where the 'verbal indirection is manifested under the communicative practice referred to as "dissin"... where the message is meant to deride and disrespect a particular person or groups of people' (ibid: 1096). As observed by an entertainment journalist 'his singular effort of voicing what we all know opened a new chapter in Nigerian music and rap in general as artists who fell below standard stepped up their game while some opted out of music completely. He named names regardless of whose ox is gored' (George, 2010). In short for him to mention names of other rappers that were well established then in a 'dissin' song was seen as an act of boldness and confidence, in that if the track was not well received at a time when he was struggling to be known, it might just signal the end of his hip hop career, but it turned out to be a career boost for him.

This aggressive way of getting noticed and entering the mainstream hip hop scene actually earned him the appellation 'diss master' making him the most controversial rapper in Nigeria to date. He has several singles to his credit as well as two albums, *Thy Album Come* (2005) and *Ruggeddy Baba* (2007). Perhaps the turning point in his career was when he released the single 'Baraje' (2005) which made him a household name and earned him the alias 'Baraje Master'. He has since built on this popularity with the song 'Ruggeddy Baba' that featured the then upcoming Afrocentric hip hop artist 9ice who was just getting known for his skillful use of Yorùbá crafted with proverbs and metaphors. 'Ruggeddy Baba' became the most successful track in Ruggedman's

sophomore album of the same title and earned him the ‘Best Rap Album of the Year’ award at the Hip Hop World Awards (HHWA), 2008. For his exemplary performance on the track 9ice also got the ‘Best Vocal Performance’ award for 2008 at HHWA.



FIGURE 6:1 Ruggedman (gidilounge.com)

6:3 ‘Ruggedy Baba’–Ruggedman Featuring 9ice (Lyrics and Translation)

Below are the lyrics of the song ‘Ruggedy Baba’. For clarity I am dividing the lyrics numerically with lines from 1 to 129. The Yorùbá verses are in bold while the Standard English is underlined and the Nigerian pidgin verses are in italics. An English translation is provided in parentheses after each line where it is not in Standard English.

Intro

RUGGEDMAN (RM): Rugged records...

9ICE (Chorus 1):

1- **Àtèwó mó balá** (I found lines on my palms)

- Á o meni tòò Koó,** (But never knew who put it there)
 2- *We spit in pidgin,* (We sing in pidgin English)
Àwòn Kan ún wúkó, (Some people are complaining)
 3- **E jé Kán ma pòfóló** (Let them choke)
 4- You better show them where you belong
 5- *Ruggedy baba* (All hail Ruggedman)
Òpómùléró mo jalekàn (The pillar that holds Nigeria's hip hop)
 6- **Sá ma wò wón níran** (Just keep looking at them)

RUGGEDMAN: (verse 1):

- 7- Once again it's me the individual
 8- Running the game physical
 9- I'm here to open my mouth
 10- *Again to yearn spiritual* (And speak in a spiritual way)
 11- To speak from my heart to let you know
 12- *Where he dey pain me* (Where it's paining me)
 13- *As people dey backbite* (As people are backbiting)
 14- And talk about me in the industry
 16- *Where dem dey* (Where are they)
 17- *When I dey yearn* (When I was singing)
 18- About mechanics and shoemakers
 19- *Dem dey talk about the subjects* (They were avoiding the subjects)
 20- Like our lawmakers.
 21- Before I dropped 'Ehen'
 22- The industry was messed up
 23- *Fakers dey rule* (Fake rappers were ruling)
 24- *Where real rappers dem dey stressed up,* (And real rappers were stressed up)
 25- Nobody did a damn thing
 26- Until I came through,
 27- *I clear the whole area* (I paved the way)
 28- Now real rappers have a say too.
 29- *Now people dey listen to em* (Now people are listening to our rap)
 30- *Come for our show and clap for em* (Come our shows and clap for us)
 31- *Some dey take am to the next level* (Some has taken it further)
 32- With hip hop forum.
 33- From Nigeria the world only know
 34- Jùjú, fújì and afrobeat⁴³
 35- But we all know hip hop is running The Street,

⁴³ It is interesting to note here that Ruggedman gave credit to these three Yorùbá-derived popular music genres as the foundation of Nigeria's popular music culture.

- 36-*Wetin go let them know* (What would make people know)
 37-Where your music comes from in the long run
 38-Is the fusion of grammar
 39-Your slang and your mother tongue.

9ICE (Chrs):

- 40-**Àtèwó mó balá á o meni tóò Koó,**
 41-*We spit in pidgin, àwòn Kan ún wúkó,*
 42-**E jé Kán ma pòfóló,**
 43-You better show them where you belong
 44-*Ruggedy baba òpómúléro mo jalekàn*
 45-**Sá ma wò wón níran**
 46-Spit more in your mother tongue
 47-Till the people say
 48-They want more

RUGGEDMAN (verse 2):

- 49-I'm telling people that gossips
 50-*I don switch from smile to frown* (I have switched from smiling to frowning)
 51-I'm tired of so called hip hop heads
 52-Whispering that I'm not holding it down
 53-*Say I don change* (Saying I have changed)
 54-From the way I've been before
 55-*Say now I dey speak for pidgin* (That now I sing in Pidgin English)
 56-*Say dem prefer me when I bin hardcore* (That they prefer me when I was hardcore)
 57-Like when I dropped 'what if'
 58-It splits the airwaves
 59-But financially it made me grounded
 60-Like Nigerian airways.
 61-*What if I tell you say* (What if I tell you that)
 62-I only did one or two shows
 63-*What if dem no pay me well enough* (I wasn't remunerated well enough)
 64-To buy one good shoe or some good clothes
 65-And say Paul Play⁴⁴ had a hand
 66-To let me know what it would take me
 67-To rearrange and eventually blow
 68-While you sit around and talk shit.

⁴⁴ Paul Play is the son of late jùjú maestro IK Dairo, a successful artist performing jùjú-influenced pop, and a reference to him here indicates one of the influences Ruggedman has which further strengthened his affinity for the Yorùbá culture. Paul Play produced his first single.

- 69-Our elders mock our shit
 70-Cos of our too much metaphorical
 71-Out of space type of shit
 72-*Wen some rap* (When some people rap)
 73-*Dem no know where we dey come from* (They do not know where we are coming from)
 74-Back then two rappers on stage
 75-Was like seven throwing a tantrum.
 76-We need to change that
 77-Put a face to our music
 78-Let the world know where we come from.

9ICE (Chorus):

- 79-**Àtèwó mó balá á o meni tóò Koó,**
 80-*We spit in pidgin, àwòn Kan ún wúkó,*
 81-**E jé Kán ma pòfóló,**
 82-You better show them where you belong
 83-*Ruggedy baba òpómúléro mo jalekàn*
 84-**Sá ma wò wón níran**
 85-Spit more in your mother tongue
 86-Till the people say
 89-They want more

RUGGEDMAN (VERSE 3):

- 90-Now let me address this issue of ‘keeping it real’
 91-*Na one subject wey dey make me vex still*
 (Its one subject that makes me angry)
 92-Cos of how some MCs feels
 93-About these three words
 94-When they open their mouth
 95-*My guy I no fit shout* (My friend I can’t shout)
 96-I go only ask what is ‘keeping it real’.
 97-Is it singing or rapping like ‘oyinbo’ [White people]
 98-Or doing what you or your own people can feel?
 99-*Say I sell out when I do dance track* (That I’m a sell out to do a dance track)
 100-They call me ‘Baraje’ master
 101-Forgetting it got me fame and money faster,
 102-Forget the latter I move to the next chapter fast
 103-And speaking my mind
 104-Playing my controversial character
 105-The way I’ve been known to you

- 106-When I spin to you,
 107-You better recognize
 108-A real brother reaching out to you,
 109-Speaking pidgin and dance track
 110-*No mean say I no keep am real* (Does not mean I'm not keeping it real)
 111-That's just me and how else I want to be real?
 112-My rules are speak whatever language
 113- But make sense.
 114-I did that and have been hot ever since.

9ICE (CHRS):

- 115-**Àtèwó mó balá á o meni tóò Koó,**
 116-We spit in pidgin, àwòn Kan ún wúkó,
 117- **E jé Kán ma pòfóló,**
 118-You better show them where you belong
 119-Ruggedy baba **òpómúléró mo jalekàn**
 120-**Sá ma wò wón níran**
 121-Spit more in your mother tongue
 122-Till the people say
 123-They want more

RUGGEDMAN (OUTRO):

- 123-*Ruggedman Nigeria representer* (Ruggedman representing Nigeria)
 124-Putting a face to Nigeria rap music and language,
 125-That don't mean I'm not keeping it real
 126-That doesn't mean I'm 'whack', [Not real]
 127-That doesn't mean I'm a sell out
 128-Show me where you come from
 129-Let the world know

6:4 The Yorùbá influence in 'Ruggedy Baba'

The song 'Ruggedy Baba' (2007) is the first single from the album with the same title released by Ruggedman in 2007. This is the major track in the album that best summarises the theme of the whole album project, which is creating a Nigerian cum African identity with hip hop music, and it goes a long way to support the overall argument of the influence of Yorùbá language and culture in Nigeria's hip hop and

popular music in general. ‘Ruggedy Baba’ is telling a story of his career and Nigeria’s hip hop industry, boldly stating his stance as an Afrocentric artist from the chorus to the end of the song. The song is delivered in the usual code-switching manner of Nigeria’s Afro hip hop made, up of three languages: Yorùbá, Standard English and Nigerian pidgin.

Ruggedman actually had a concept in mind about creating a hip hop song that would fully exemplify his idea of Afro hip hop and have a deep African flavour that would have wide acceptability. As far as popular music is concerned in Nigeria the Yorùbá language is the only medium he could use to achieve this acceptability, which explains the presence of 9ice on the track as a featured artist.

This was further corroborated by 9ice:

I would say I translated what he [Ruggedman] had in mind, He was working on his album in the studio and I think he must have been talking with Cabasa [the producer], so he [Cabasa] asked me if I can do a hook on his song... He played the instrumental and I listened... We rubbed mind, He [Ruggedman] talked to me about the message of the song, what he had in mind and what he want the chorus to be like, so right there I did my thing. (Interview, 2008)

Using a Yorùbá chorus as performed by 9ice to introduce the song gave this song a wide acceptability and further supports the impact Yorùbá had in Nigeria’s popular music.

The body of the song contains many bold statements. In verse 1 Ruggedman takes us back through time in Nigeria’s hip hop history, recounting his contribution in making the genre a popular one. However of particular interest are lines 36-39 stating ‘Wetin go

let them know [What would make people know] where your music comes from in the long run is the fusion of grammar you slam in your mother tongue.’ This promotes the over-all concept of the album: creating the African identity and giving a face to Afro hip hop through the use of a mother tongue which obviously is the Yorùbá language.

The issue of mother tongue here might pose some complexity as Ruggedman is Ibo and now adopting Yorùbá as a mother tongue to project hip hop and not Hausa or Igbo. The reason behind this can be attributed to the hip hop scene and its marketing strategy in Lagos. The Ibo hold sway at Alaba market where music is distributed, yet the Igbo language does not seem to be a commercial one for hip hop based on Ruggedman’s experience, as it is ‘Baraje’ where he used Yorùbá hookline that actually made him a commercial artist. In the same vein the use of Hausa language is not an option despite the fact that the Hausa have the highest population in Nigeria. The north is not hip hop friendly and there has been much censorship due to the regional adoption of Islamic Sharia⁴⁵ in northern Nigeria. Making an album in the language would be suicidal as it would not be played in the north, and the south where the music market is in Lagos is a Yorùbá speaking region. This left him with no other language but Yorùbá.

In verse 2, Ruggedman replies to critics who objected to his using pidgin and local language and said that he would be better off using standard English as he used to as a hardcore rapper (line 55-56). To him those years of delivering his messages through the medium of standard English is gone. Though songs he did in that era such as ‘What If’

⁴⁵ This is the Islamic legal system that applies to the Muslim while its adoption in many states in the northern part of the country has resulted in censorship towards different aspects of popular culture. See Servant (2003).

were well received they brought him no financial gain and he could not even afford a good pair of shoes or clothes (line 57-65). The next verse (3) explains how he got out of this financial crisis which indicated how the Yorùbá language was appropriated through rearrangement of his agenda, resulting in the recording of 'Baraje' (2005) with the Yorùbá hookline that now gave him 'money and fame faster' (line 101). This statement highlights the impact of the Yorùbá language in the commercial success of most Nigerian hip hop artists.

In conclusion, this song supports Ruggedman's bid to give a face to Nigeria's Afro hip hop and carve a truly African identity out of this genre. Despite being an Ibo from the eastern part of Nigeria the only way he believed he could make this impact and fully represent Nigeria was by delivering his message in Yorùbá (line 123-124). The use of Yorùbá in this song contributed to its commercial success and acceptability both nationally and globally while establishing Ruggedman's street credibility as an Afro hip hop artist. To him, to 'keep it real' you need to do songs the way your people can 'feel it' which is not 'singing or rapping like *oyinbo*' (line 97), hence the use of the street credible medium which is Yorùbá.



FIGURE 6:2 Ruggedman holding the Hip Hop World Award 2008. (Hiphopworldawards.com)

Here the reference to *oyinbo* stems out of the Nigerian orientation which equates anybody trying to phonetize words or projecting any kind of Westernized fake accents to impress people as trying to imitate *oyinbo*. It might look complex as African-Americans created hip hop and they are not whites, but their kind of accent is being equated to an *oyinbo* accent here. Finally ‘Ruggedy Baba’ typically supports the fact that when most artists in Nigeria want to express their Afrocentricity they find it appropriate to use the Yorùbá language because of its wider acceptability and global/diasporic presence.

6:5 ‘Ruggedy Baba’ and The Negotiation of Nigerian Identity

Extracting the commonality of music as identity projection, Waterman (2002) commented: ‘Why does she sing like that? She sings like that to express her identity. Why does she express her identity through music? Because music is intimately bound

up with memory, the emotions and other foundations of identity' (p.19). Language is an important appendage of music: in it lie the coded sounds and texts of communication making it an important angle through which popular music is studied. Stone (2008: 51) also asserts that 'linguistic orientations to the study of music as human communication have been of considerable interest to ethnomusicology as well as other music disciplines [because] the relationship between music and language has long been recognized'.

In 'Ruggedy Baba' the appropriation of Yorùbá language through the vocal performance of 9ice and the definitive statement towards expression of identity in the rap lyrics of Ruggedman informed the inclusion of this section which aims to scrutinise and inquire into which kind of identity Ruggedman is trying to formulate and the underlying issues associated with it.

Whose identity?

It has been established that the whole idea of 'Ruggedy Baba' is about carving out an identity, giving a face to Nigerian hip hop with the mother tongue, but at this juncture one may ask whose identity he is projecting, or whose culture, considering the fact that he did not speak a word in any of the Nigerian mother tongues on the track, but rather employed 9ice to drive home his message in Yorùbá.

Having a common lingua franca that is totally Nigerian, aside from the official language which is English as inherited from the British colonial government, has been a difficult

task in Nigeria where over three hundred languages are in existence.⁴⁶ The acclaimed reggae super star Evi Edna-Ogholi even sang about it in the late 1980s asking ‘Which one of them you go speak?... You travel go Benin they speak Edo, you travel go Akure they speak Yorùbá, you travel go Warri they speak Urhobo, you travel go Kano they speak Hausa... All I’m saying lingua-franca’ (Ogholi, ‘Lingua-franca’, 1988).

The closest the country gets to having a common ‘Nigerianized’ code of communication is the use of the Nigerian pidgin (though un-official), made popular through afrobeat music by Fela who employed it for over three decades as the language of his music. This is still not totally a Nigerian language but rather a convenient or ‘broken’ way of speaking English by defying all the set rules of the language and infusing some local dialects and lingos derived from the southern part of Nigeria into it.

To Ruggedmam, the fusion of ‘grammar’ (English) and mother tongue is very important in creating hip hop that is fully Nigerian (see line 36-39 of the ‘Ruggedy Baba’ lyrics) which means that using the Nigerian pidgin to rap (as he did) will not fully substantiate his proposition, hence the use of Yorùbá language which is the official language of Lagos where he lives and not his own mother tongue. This brings us to the issue of experience and orientation as an important foundation towards identity formulation.

⁴⁶ For more on problems associated with official lingua franca in Nigeria see Simpson and Oyetade (2008).

Why Yorùbá? Whose Cultural identity?

Experience and orientation plays an important part towards identity creation as it goes a long way in shaping an individual's personality (which is the basic unit of identity), while geographical location or spatial locale also plays a crucial role in determining what our experience and orientation will be.

Against this backdrop we can now know what determined Ruggedman's choice of Yorùbá in 'Ruggedy Baba'. Even though he is of Ibo descent, he has lived in Lagos from his early years and his musical career and development started in Lagos. Thus the city and Yorùbá language and culture moulded his experience and helped shape his orientation. Capturing this in his own words he said 'my parents split when I was six years old. That is why I am not too fluent in Igbo because I was brought up in Lagos. When I speak Yorùbá, you [will] mistake me for a Yorùbá guy, because I grew up with my mum and other siblings in Lagos' (Ruggedman in sunnewsonline. com 2010).

Migration, mobility and multiculturalization have always played a core role towards shaping popular music. In the Nigerian context 'the Lagos factor' is an issue recurring at every point in this work though this has been discussed fully in chapter four. The pattern of urban migration to Lagos for the purpose of commerce and otherwise is discernable and in case of Ruggedman has come to play an important role in shaping the course of Nigerian hip hop. Efe Omorogbe, who shares in this pattern of migration, tried to define what cultural identity is for a Lagosian like himself:

What is cultural identity?... Whose culture? Yorùbá culture or Edo [his tribe] culture?... My mum is Isoko/Urhobo, my dad is Edo [mid western Nigeria], I was born in Warri [Niger delta area], I came to Lagos in 1991. I've been here

for almost eighteen years, since I came I've not spent one month outside Lagos. So what's my culture?... I've been married for eight years, my mother-in-law, I see her I prostrate [a Yorùbá way of showing respect when greeting an elder], If I go to Benin [Edo land] and see my uncle instinctively I will prostrate, I won't kneel [the proper way an Edo man greets an elderly person]. I've been here in Lagos, a Yorùbá land for eighteen years, men here don't kneel they prostrate. So what's my culture? How do I switch instinctively to Edo or Benin culture? (Interview, 2009)

This is a rhetorical question that makes one think of the phrase 'It's not where you are from but where you are at' commonly used in the hip hop community, supporting the fact that the experiences you have are a product of the community you belong to, your affiliation and contacts. Then why Yorùbá? Because Ruggedman can only give or share what he has which is the Yorùbá culture he grew up on. Upon the success of the 'Ruggedy Baba' album he now answers to the *oríkì* '*Òpómúléro moja lekàn*' signifying his embrace of Yorùbá to the fullest as its only Yorùbá people that bear an *oríkì* which has a deep meaning of lineage and descent.

Further to this issue of migration and cultural identity as exemplified by both Ruggedman and Omorogbe is the credence it gives to the seeming trend of 'cultural and linguistic homogenization' occurring in Nigerian popular music, facilitated by Lagos where Yorùbá is now the language of choice for commercial reasons.

'Ruggedy Baba' (Hip hop?), Yorùbá and National Identity

With the release of 'Ruggedy Baba' and creating the Nigerian hip hop, Ruggedman followed the pattern of 'Baraje', the song that gave him success and fame, and carved his own identity with the infusion of Yorùbá language. He has used the Yorùbá language to negotiate a common ground towards fostering a national unity in hip hop, making him an activist of a sort.

The idea of code-switching is prevalent in Nigerian hip hop as ‘a way of exhibiting the Nigerian identity where these artists flag up their membership of a new generation of Nigerians by rapping in multiple indigenous languages including those that are not necessarily their mother tongues, so that language crossing... facilitates the construction of a national/regional rather than ethno-linguistical identity’ (Omoniyi 2009: 124). But Ruggedman is the only artist that actually set out to make a declaration and statement about this and why Nigerian hip hop should be given its own identity through indigenous language. Apart from the lyrics of the song that boldly stated this, he also declared this boldly visually in the video of the song with the opening montage showing the text: ‘From Ohafia, Abia state comes a rapper with a mission, to give Nigerian rap a face with our local languages like South Africa did with kwaito and Ghana with hip life: *I am proudly Nigerian*’ (emphasis mine). The opening montage clearly presents Ruggedman’s intention, he introduced himself boldly as an Ibo man using his hometown Ohafia as a launching pad while the last line concomitantly points to the nationalized concept of his mission to create an identity for hip hop that is ‘proudly Nigerian’: not a Yorùbá identity, not an Ibo identity but a national identity through the embrace of Yorùbá language. This once more illustrates the strength the language has in popular music practice in Nigeria.

6:6 Backgrounds to Popular Music Video and The Nigerian Experience

In terms of functionality a video is designed primarily to sell the song it visually interprets and also sell or publicise the artist, which means that commercial exploitation is the keyword of video production and as observed by Keyes ‘videos are deployed as marketing tools by the music industry’ (Keyes 2004: 210). Music video has become

popular especially among the youths as a unique expression of urban popular culture setting paces in fashion, expression, dance and hip hop culture and becoming more of a fad or vogue as it rapidly changes in style (Vernallis 1996) while creating a world where image is reality, making it an accessible form of the larger tendency of postmodern art (Aufderheide1 1986).

Artists themselves use their videos to make a statement, create an identity or personality or promote a value. Bjork has been credited for projecting her national identity visually especially in the music video 'Joga' (1997) which 'articulates a pre-existing image of Icelandic identity which represents the narratives and histories shared by Icelanders... [becoming] an instance of "national music"' (Dibben 2009: 42). Michael Jackson kept producing new versions of himself after the release of his monster hit 'Thriller' in 1983. With each subsequent album the video has always been the platform to show the world his latest version. Jay-Z is used to making fashion statements in videos with his endorsement of the successful clothing label 'Rocawear' and has been credited as the originator of style and suaveness in modern hip hop culture. Lagbaja! has always been an afro-centric artist but an embrace of the latest technology is evident in his 'Surulere' video (2000) using computer generated animation; he has been credited as the first Nigerian artist to produce animated video. This has been followed by other artists like Weird MC with 'Ijoya' (2006) and 2face Idibia's '4instance' (2007).

Hip hop videos have been facing tough criticism due to the kind of images projected on screen by the artists, and in discussing this it is ideal to look at the American hip hop scene as that is where the genre originated from and America dictates (positively or otherwise) the trend of hip hop on the world scene. Keyes emphasised that 'the imagery

of rap music videos documents the history and dreams of urban black culture that are specific to its audience' (2004: 211). She also asserted further that the essential ingredient of such video is the visual projection of 'iconic memory' which is 'the referencing of places, historical events and music familiar to hip hop viewers. These... contain encoded cultures, capsules of meaning that add power and depth to the artist's messages... The employment of iconic memory is an essential unifying and nearly omnipresent trademark of hip hop videos' (2004: 211).

The above highlights the fact that referencing of places and images is relevant in hip hop videos as a way of bringing the viewers to the artist's level as regards understanding the message being passed across. Rose also opined that 'identity and location' is primary to rap videos and has been one of its vital thematic concerns:

Rap videos' themes have repeatedly converged around the depiction of the local neighbourhood and local posse, crew, or support system. Nothing is more central to rap music video narratives than situating the rapper in his or her milieu and among one's crew or posse... [Thus] rap music videos are set on buses, subways, in abandoned buildings, and almost always in black urban inner-city locations. This usually involves ample shots of favourite street corners, intersections, playgrounds, parking lots, school yards, roofs and childhood friends. (Rose 1994: 10)

Closely linked to the projection of 'iconic memory' and situating a rapper in his 'hood' or locality is the use of dance and choreography. Considering the way hip hop originated with the assemblage of crews or 'posse' of dancers called 'B-Boys' and 'B-Girls' as a vital unit of the rap group, this might not be out of place but needed for proper illustration in the videos. Emphasis on dance and choreography is evident in videos like 'Naughty by Nature's' 'OPP' (1991), MC Hammer's 'U can't Touch This'

(1990), Run DMC's 'Walk This Way' (1986) and in recent times Beyonce's 'Crazy in Love' (2003).

Hip hop videos in recent times have been filled with the projection of illusionistic lifestyles, stereotypical creation of an ideal male or female figure and over-exhibition of eroticism that tend to almost sever hip hop from the realm of music. Osumare (2000: 172) also observed that 'although rap music is situated in the continuum of historical exportation of American pop music, hip hop as a culture has interjected its own often self-empowered messages and attitudes that are not necessarily under the control of the music industry'.

On the Nigerian music scene, music videos have assumed a life of their own almost independent of the music itself in terms of marketing and nearly competing with Nollywood, the Nigerian movie industry as regards sales. Most music videos are marketed and invested in by a film marketer or music distributor who advertises and strategises the same way they market the movies, and this is evident in terms of the trailers most of the time being included in movies, the way the commercials and jingles are made all similar to Nollywood style.⁴⁷ A typical example is the video compilation for 9ice's album 'Gongo Aso' which according to the marketer, as he revealed to me in an interview (2009) is a joint venture between 9ice and Afrobest.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Nollywood is the appellation for Nigerian movie industry, the Nollywood style here indicates the marketing and advertising campaign for a music video in replica of the way movies are marketed through production of trailers which are often inserted in between home videos as well as commercials on TV for the music video.

⁴⁸ This is reflected on the video compilation as 'Afrobest' appears at the beginning of the disc as the Executive producer.

While different genres of music in Nigeria employ different styles of video production there still exists the common goal among them, to sell the song and artist. Genres like jùjú and fújì have a trend of using drama and storyline in their videos as well as engaging popular actors from the mainstream film industry to illustrate this visually. This can be attributed to the fact that music in this category is full of narratives where the thematic notion is based on typical Yorùbá beliefs like *ìwà rere* (good character or virtue), *sùúrù* (patience) or *àfaradà* (tolerance and perseverance), while in most cases these musicians employ storytelling to make their messages persuasive to the audience while popular Yorùbá actors come in handy to dramatise this in the video, using their popularity to sell it as well as the music. A typical example is Alhaji. Sikiru Ayinde-Barrister's 'Fújì Fantasia' (1993) with the popular 'Ajileye Theatre Group' acting out the story using the popularity of their successful Television Drama '*Kòtò Òrun*'⁴⁹ to make the video popular, as some of the popular characters in the series like *Orí Adé* and *Ògùnjími* were enacted in the music video.

Hip hop videos in Nigeria have come a long way with the increasing popularity of the genre over time in the music scene. One of the earliest music videos in this genre was 'Da Trybe's 'Oya' (2002) directed by Ayo Sonaiya which exhibited great street suaveness, encompassing attitude, dance, choreography and use of urban street gear. It was shot on a basketball court, one sport that has been associated with the street and the projection of hip hop attitude to the fullest. Gino's 'No Be God' (2007) has been adjudged one of the best hip hop videos to come out of Nigeria in recent times having won the NMVA in 2008. Apart from its film quality, being shot on 35mm camera, it

⁴⁹ This was a popular TV series running on the national television at that period and can be equated to programmes like 'Coronation Street' in the UK.

shows the portrayal of street hustle with the rapper assuming different roles from being a street hawker to being a successful artist, incorporating the typical street arrest by the police (common in American gangsta rap videos) played out in harmony with the overall message of the song encouraging the hustlers to keep their head up as tough times don't last but tough people do.

In recent times hip hop videos in Nigeria have a similar characteristic to their American counterpart in that dance and choreography is emphasised, for instance in videos like 'Baraje' and 'Baraje remix 2006' by Ruggedman, or 'Get that feelin' 2005 by 2Face Idibia. One can also see the projection of the mundane, fantasy and 'bling-bling' in videos like 'Yahooze' 2007 by Olu Maintain where there has been an exhibition of affluence with a line-up of state-of-the-art cars like the Hummer 4WD, the spraying of dollar bills and popping champagne.

However, unlike their American counterpart Nigerian hip hop videos have not gone to the extremity of eroticism. This might be partially due to the censorship law that is enforced by the Nigerian Censorship Board where some videos have been branded 'Not To Be Broadcast' in the past, although there has been argument that this is often political, especially when Femi Kuti's 'Bang Bang' video was banned and many people wondered if it actually contained any lewd visuals to warrant such a ban.⁵⁰ However, despite censorship, the UK based Nigerian hip hop group JJC and The 419 Crew

⁵⁰ The ban has been associated with political motives rather than the nature of the video. This is characteristic of silent censorship on 'afrobeat' due to the nature of its message and non-conformist attitude of Femi.

released a video compilation in 2006 containing an x-rated version of their successful song 'Gba o' which was successfully marketed in Nigeria.

Looking at the music video scene in Nigeria critically as regards the latest trend of urban popular culture, it is apparent that commercial gratification is also a driving force as in America, as many songs have been classified or rated below average by industry critics, arts writers and music enthusiasts alike through online forums but still have a heavy investment in the video. The world of music video is expanding daily with different programmes dedicated to music video on television in Nigeria such as Sound City, Nigezie, or Livebeats and on satellite television, Channel 'O' and especially with the presence of MTV Base Africa, in Lagos and Johannesburg. Now thanks to the internet technology and youtube.com there is enormous pressure on the Nigerian artist who believes video now comes almost before music.

Clinching an award in the video category is now as important to artists as with music, as this is seen as a career booster thanks to the many video awards now available to artists. The Nigerian Music Video Awards (NMVA) held its third edition in November 2009 in Lagos with the theme 'Music Edifies' and it was an interesting scene witnessed by the researcher as many artists rushed in to submit their work for consideration at the awards office in Ikeja Lagos around September 2009 in order to meet the deadline. Cally Ikpe, the producer of 'Livebeats' on television and CEO/founder of NMVA, believes 'some music videos are projecting Nigeria positively and some negatively. At the NMVA we emphasise on the ones that project us positively. If you make your videos offensive, it would not be entered for NMVA' (interview, 2009). This was probably the reason for the year's theme of 'Music Edifies'.

The music video industry has also created job opportunities as we have seen the emergence of new creative videographers whose work has been acclaimed by bringing in new innovations through the use of the latest technology and raising the bar of music videos with exotic scenic designs, dramatic effects and digital aesthetics. DJ Tee is the most sought after director on the scene and holds the Hip Hop World Awards (HHWA) 2008 Director of the Year for DJ Jimmy Jatt's 'Stylee' (2007) video. Other directors include Jude 'Engees' Okoye who has numerous Awards for Directing P-Square's video exclusively with the recent being for 'Do Me' at the KORA 2010 Awards; Clarence 'Capital' Peters; Wudi Awa acclaimed for Gino's 'No Be God'; and Emeka Obefe who got the Director's Award for 'Best Indigenous Concept' at NMVA 2008 for Ruggedman's 'Ruggedy Baba'; and Tade Ogidan, a renowned Nollywood director whose creative ingenuity on Lagbaja's 'Skentele-Skontolo' (2006) has been highly acclaimed with his use of the theatrical art of pantomime to bring out an aesthetic value in a modern popular music video.

6:7 'Ruggedy Baba': Video Analysis

Introduction

As observed by Collin Chua (2009: 219) 'the images of music videos work to offer the music an added value, whereby the images enrich a given song, by providing a visual expression that in many ways seeps into and infuses the song. The visuals do not simply support the music, but in a sense fuse with and resonate with the music'. This projects the fact that synchronization of sound with images can be achieved in different formats depending on the inspiration and design of a video director: it might be through

narratives, costume, or use of space and at times it might be through an abstract idea in a way that might seem totally contrasting to the song.

Andrew Goodwin (1992) established three parameters in which music video can be viewed by postulating three relationships that exist between a song/music and the visual text of video: *illustration* in which the video is telling the story of the song lyrics, *amplification* in which it introduces new meanings to the song without conflicting with the lyrics and *disjuncture* where the image and interpretation of the video has nothing to do with the lyrics or even contradicts the lyrics in their entirety (cited from Keyes 2004: 211). The music video ‘Ruggedy Baba’ can be situated within the category of *illustration* in the afore-mentioned relationships. This video gives credence to the song ‘Ruggedy Baba’ (2007) released on Rugged Records. The song is thematically Afrocentric and through the powerful lyrics delivered in Yorùbá, English and Nigerian pidgin Ruggedman defends his stance of using a Nigerian language to perform rap while asserting the claim of giving a face to Nigerian hip hop music. The language of the chorus of the song is Yorùbá and this is the hook on which the video is based, hence the heavy portrayal and dominance of Yorùbá culture in the video.

Caption

The video commences with a caption used as a kind of opening montage making a statement or assertion which reads:

From Ebem, Ohafia Abia state comes a rapper with a mission to give Nigerian rap music a face with our languages, like South Africans did with *Kwaito* and Ghanaians with *Hiplife* –I’m proudly Nigerian.

This caption dictates a stance from the beginning portraying the artist as an advocate with a mission, thereby allowing the viewers to understand where he stands and what to expect from the video. What also requires some cognizance is the typewriter effect that goes with the caption which sounds quite emphatic and significant drawing the viewers' attention to this message.

The Setting

The importance of a setting cannot be over-emphasised in music video; setting denotes a locality and place where a video is situated. In the production process it is a way of allowing sound (music) to occupy and inhabit a space which can either be imaged (created), imagined or real. Setting is also a kind of framework on which the entire video rotates and it has many implications for the artist, the song or the genre, especially as regards identity, because 'an integral part of cultural identity is the need to belong in and/or to a 'place', physical or not—place and identity thus have an important relationship' (Chua 2009: 221).

Hip hop music has a strong rootedness in the sense of place and locality, as observed by Vernallis (2004: 78): '[the] emphasis on visual detail and on the political and cultural functions of place resonates with the practices of hip hop', and this points to the reason why 'rap music videos... have traditionally taken place on the street and used a realistic mode of depiction' (ibid: 73). 'Ruggedy Baba' has implicitly emphasised this with the use of a realistic setting which is principally a village square that translates to 'the street' in a hip hop setting, thereby complementing the afrocentric message of the song.

The use of the village square as the major location involves the creation of a throne where Ruggedman is situated as the principal character, which pointedly makes him the 'king' or *òpómùléro* of Nigeria's hip hop. This is an aesthetic and creative re-creation of a rap setting into the traditionally Afrocentric space which completes or supposedly signals the (re)birth of Nigeria's indigenous hip hop, or 'Afro hip hop'. This realism in setting was further accentuated by some establishment shots at the beginning of the clip. First was the local hornsman (see Figure 6:3) who was projected in a silhouette sounding the call or summons which was followed by the shot of the mother hen and chicken (Figure 6:4). Both are indicative of typical African settings where the call was used in the olden days as a means of communication or public announcement, while the hen and the chicken signifies nature and freedom which is seen as an attribute of Africa.



FIGURE 6:3 Silhouette of the hornsman making the call (video still)

The major setting is complemented by some additional minor settings or localities and abodes which support the dictates of the narratives. This includes a sitting room,

backyard compound and street corner which were projected through flashing cuts of shots to visualize activities going on there as they stem from the narrative and rap verses.



FIGURE 6:4 The mother hen and chickens denoting nature and Africanness (video still)

The Plot and Storyline

The presence of a story line is seen by many as a requirement for understanding a song through its video, which can be likened to having the song played (or acted) out in visuals. Yet pop music videos have been very diverse in terms of presentation and ‘music video presents a range all the way from extremely abstract videos emphasizing color and movement to those that convey a story... [while] most videos tend to be nonnarrative’ (Vernallis 2004: 40). Even within the narrative ones ‘the images of music video do not really adhere to traditional narrative structures; the images are deliberately placed to articulate with the music’ (Chua 2009: 230). Nevertheless most music videos

within the hip hop genre still thrive on narratives due to rap's generic emphasis on creating a sense of place.

Narrativity of a music video is exhibited through a plot performed by various characters. In this vein 'Ruggedy Baba' is presented from a narrative angle which stems from the video being 'illustrative'. It has a linear plot that has been carefully storyboarded and compressed within the frame of time using shots that function in coherence with the lyrics and melody.

Ruggedman is the king and 9ice his second in command. The scenario is that the king is making an important statement and everybody is summoned to the square to listen as well as have the opportunity to see his 'majesty'. So we hear 'the call' at the beginning and people rushing to the village square, while those that are unable to make it to the square stay glued to their transistor radio or black and white television at the compound. Assuming the role of the protagonist Ruggedman makes his statement in the verses where he recounts his achievements in the rap game, castigates his detractors who think he is not 'keeping it real' and puts forward his proposal as regards using the mother tongue to create an authentic Nigerian hip hop. The video ends after delivering this message as the king leaves the square with his entourage. The narrative also makes use of a visual switch from the main setting—the square—to other settings where we see extras acting out different scenes. The plot presents an aesthetic intertwining of the traditional African socio-political setting with urbanity, both occurring within the same time frame in a coherent manner.

Characterisation

Characters are roles performed by actors on stage or screen and the process of defining a role or making each character distinct or identifiable through speech, gesture, looks etc. is called characterisation. Role playing also occurs in music videos as artists are put in a position to perform their music visually by lip-syncing, and most importantly in narratively inclined video where the artist assumes a role that can be definable through various techniques of visualizations as adopted by the director and in relation to other performers in the video. In ‘Ruggedy Baba’ Ruggedman is the protagonist and characterized as the king (leading role) while 9ice the featured artist is characterized as a chief or second in command and the supporting characters are downplayed and put on the same level without any prominence.

The position of Ruggedman as the star performer in the video is adequately negotiated right from the beginning as what we can infer from him stems from the way he is placed and how he is projected by the shots. 9ice starts off the video after the initial introduction and caption when he is projected with a close-up performing the hook line ‘*atewo mo bala*’ (see Figure 6:5). When the shot cuts wider his position is established sitting on the mat surrounded by the townspeople on the same level. Before the end of this chorus there is a quick cut establishing the entrance of Ruggedman showing his feet and the accompanying entourage while quickly cutting back to him sitting on the throne to render his first verse.



FIGURE 6:5 9ice with the opening line ‘*atewo mo bala*’

What can be noticed here in characterisation is the establishment of hierarchy: the subjects are waiting for royalty and Ruggedman coming in to address the waiting crowd establishes him as the star performer. Also the arrangement and positioning at the square with Ruggedman seated on a raised platform while the rest are on the floor including 9ice clearly indicates who holds the position of authority. The role of Ruggedman as the star performer is also reinforced through camera techniques detailing his moves and gestures especially through close-up shots. As observed by Vernallis:

The close-up of the singer’s face is shot and edited to emphasize one simple gesture—a gesture that in its abbreviated simplicity will indicate a way of paying attention to or grasping some element of the music. It may be the main hook, a lyric, or a small rhythmic or melodic feature. (2004: 55)

A typical example of this is the last line of Ruggedmans first verse where the emphasis on the word ‘mother tongue’ was laid through gesture with the artist touching his tongue and the camera capturing this in close-up (see Figure 6:6).



FIGURE 6:6 Ruggedman emphasising ‘mother tongue’ with gesture

The relationship between Ruggedman and the supporting actors is also used in highlighting his lead role status especially in an instance where one of the maids has to kneel to give him a glass of water (see Figure 6:7).



FIGURE 6:7 Maid kneeling to present water to Ruggedman

Costume and Props

Costume and props are important paraphernalia of music videos which complement the settings. They function in many ways including defining a character or establishing the relationship between different characters, making a statement about the artists or at times indicating the generic category of a particular music. ‘Ruggedy Baba’ presents the general code of traditionality in terms of costume and props, illustrating visually the message of indigeneity and Afrocentricism as signalled with the opening caption of the video.

The costume worn in the video for the main act is purely African and Ruggedman is in African regalia of a Yorùbá type portraying a first class *oba* or king holding the *òpá àse*, an artististically carved staff of authority, in his right hand. The first thing that is recognizable is his donning of a crown—a Yorùbá *Adé ilèkè* (beaded crown) which is a characteristic mark of the Yorùbá traditional kingship. In Nigeria it is only within the Yorùbá that a beaded crown is used, and among the Ibo that Ruggedman comes from the traditional rulers only use caps. (See Figure 6:5 above and note the *òpá àse* on Ruggedman’s right hand as well as the *adé ilèkè* with the veils).

The use of the beaded crown by Ruggedman is of tremendous significance as the crown represents political and spiritual authority within the Yorùbá cultural precincts. It should be noted that:

[The] beaded crown was considered the prerogative of only rulers of Yorùbá Kingdoms who as descendants of Oduduwa, of Ife kingdom were of divine nature... [It] was believed to be by virtue of elements of its design an instrument of power by which the *oba* was able to intercede with the spirit world, and

particularly with his royal ancestors, for the benefit of humanity. (Minneapolis Institute of Arts 1998)

Drewal et al. (1989: 39) also asserted that:

The beaded veil masks the identity of the oba. His awesome performative powers are intensified when he wears the crown. It is taboo for people to look directly at the head of the king because of the powers it embodies... [Here] concealment constitutes heightened spirituality... For the Yorùbá the use of the crown is awesome. When the chiefs kneel before their crowned ruler, they greet the crown and the one who wears it with the salutation: *Kabiyesi Oba! alaase ekeji orisa!* ('Your Highness! The king's power is next to the gods'). (Quoted in Adejumo 2005: 136)

The above signifies the spiritual and political power a beaded crown holds while its use in 'Ruggedy Baba' is a declaration of allegiance and subscription to the Yorùbá socio-cultural belief that marks the final 'rites' for a presumed 'Yorùbá-nization' of Ruggedman.

9ice was also attired in a 'danshiki' garment made from the Yorùbá traditional fabric *aso òkè* which is typical of a Yorùbá chief. The king's court are also in typical African uniform while the extras are wearing what is common for everyday people in Nigeria, a mix of shirt, trousers or blouse dabbed with different African designs. Apart from these principal characters the rest of the cast in the video project the normal everyday wear like shirt, and trousers and the rappers wear the usual hip hop jeans and hoodies. The use of traditional attire by the principal character clearly defines his position as an advocate for the domestication of hip hop which literally and visually completes the indigenization of rap as proposed lyrically in the song. Performing rap and visualizing it traditionally is also indicative of the syncretism of tradition and modernity that exists in everyday African life.

The Flow and Tempo

The aim of any music video is to achieve a perfect synchronization between the sound and the image in a way that will give meaning to the song. Within this trajectory we also have the lyrics whose proper interpretation contributes towards achieving this perfect flow. The music video ‘Ruggedy Baba’ is able to achieve this syncretism by using harmonized motion of shots to maintain and sustain the song’s impetus while using interpretative shots to give meaning to the lyrics and establish their relationship with the the image. A typical example is the song’s hook line performed by 9ice and interpreted visually: every time he says ‘*Ruggedy Bàbá òpómùléró...*’ he genuflects and points to Ruggedman on the throne, and this act is given tangible visual prominence (see Figure 6:8). This technique ensures continuity which creates a kind of lucid flow that the song tempo dictates.



FIGURE 6:8 9ice genuflecting to Ruggedman while on the hookline ‘*Ruggedy Bàbá òpómùléró...*’

Editing/Visual Effects

Editing performs an important function in music video as it is through this technique that shots can be arranged and sequenced to achieve an overall synergy and statement that the music video is supposed to project:

Most importantly, the editing in a music video works hard to ensure that no single element (the narrative, the setting, the performance, the star, the lyrics, the song) gains the upper hand... [Moreover] it prevents powerful images from acquiring too much weight and stopping the flow of information... [Therefore editing] preserves the video's momentum and keeps us in the present. (Vernallis 2004: 27).

The music video subscribes to an overall theme of realism in terms of visual interpretation, as it was shot and edited as close to nature as possible as there are no flashes, exotic sets or computer-generated virtual or imaged backgrounds.

The editing style adopted for the video contributes to the overall flow and tempo of the music stressing the rhythmic structure while accentuating and complementing the lyrical message through continuous flow without distancing the viewer's attention from the music. This is prominent through the use of cross-cutting shots from the major set—the village square—and the supporting sets in a seamless and non-disjunctive fashion. Cutting to these other sets is a way of giving visual interpretation to some messages by Ruggedman as well as establishing coherence in the narratives. (See figure 6:9 where the shoemaker is on the left side of the frame to accompany Ruggedman's reference and figure 6:10 which depicts one of the secondary settings of the town's people).



FIGURE: 6:9 Use of two shots to complement Ruggedman's statement about a shoemaker (on left of frame)



FIGURE 6:10 The use of a cross-cutting shot to depict a secondary setting. (Townspeople watching Ruggedman's broadcast on black and white television)

There are two effects noticeable in the 'Ruggedy Baba' video which has been purposefully appropriated. The first one is the use or rather non-use of colour as the

final cut of this music video is presented in black and white while it is obvious that it was shot in full colour. The second is the use of an ‘antiquated’ effect which presents the video as being blurred or coarse and far from smooth visually. Watching the video one is quick to notice this with the presence of some erratic thin white lines that constantly appear on the screen and spread across the music video’s frame. Both effects can be discerned as not incidental but purposeful towards the overall statement of the music video.

The use of the ‘antiquated’ effect can be interpreted as transporting us to the past from the present, while the archival look created by this effect presents a historical excursion into the past. In the hip hop milieu this is called ‘old school’ indicating hip hop is a kind of institution and in this context Ruggedman becomes the ‘teacher’, which also indicates he has been around for a while and has got the status-quo to instruct, propose and take Nigerian hip hop to the next level through indigenization.

In terms of colour presentation making the video in black and white stems from appropriating the pioneering rap videos of 1980s America in the era when afrocentricism was the most popular theme in texts and visuals. Here presentation in black and white can be projected as a symbol of Africanity depicting ‘Blackness’ and complementing the theme of authenticity which Ruggedman is trying to achieve. It also situates the video within a context where modernity and tradition exist side by side as the effect is achieved digitally thereby situating Nigerian popular music and its multimedia accompaniment within the trajectory of current global technology.

Conclusion

Based on the storyline and visual presentation of the ‘Ruggedy Baba’ video, the video gives credence to the multi-cultural nature of Lagos and also presents the Nigerian popular music scene as having an overriding influence of Yorùbá language and culture. The video is very illustrative as it gives meaningful interpretation in conformity to the song lyrics, statement and the identity the artist is trying to formulate. The total projection of the music video situates and places Ruggedman within the fabric of Yorùbá culture. Starting from his role and characterisation as a Yorùbá king to his partnership with 9ice—a Yorùbá artist—to project his view about the use of the mother tongue, to his answering to the *oríkì* of *òpómúléró*, he has openly negotiated for the authenticity in hip hop via the Yorùbá culture despite his being from another tribal ethno-linguistic group which is Igbo as implied by the opening montage.

In the critical sense the video is in contrast to some of the past music videos from the artist in question, who had employed urban hip hop culture in terms of costumes, set and location to give meaning to his music. Here he has fully given a new interpretation to rap music video that it can be fully traditionalized visually, which presents a case of effective border crossing in modern popular music.

6:8 Conclusion and Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have been able to use the music of Ruggedman to exemplify and argue for the influence of Yorùbá language and culture on the success of mainstream Nigerian hip hop. I traced the artist biography of Ruggedman and how he emerged to be in the mainstream through his earlier ‘diss’ track. In this chapter it is established that Ruggedman is on a mission which can best be understood through the text of the song.

Hence there was a textual analysis of ‘Ruggedy Baba’ where it became evident that his use of Yorùbá stemmed from his earlier single ‘Baraje’ that instituted him as a commercial artist due to the Yorùbá hook line employed.

On the closing track⁵¹ of the *Ruggedy Baba* album Ruggedman declared that:

If the culture is not Nigerian, its not Nigerian, so the American culture, the British culture is different from the Nigerian culture... [As] Nigerian[s] our hip hop culture must contain elements of Nigerian customs, beliefs, arts and way of life. To cultivate our own hip hop culture our... hip hop has to contain Nigerian dance steps, the Nigerian language, instruments... and the Nigerian way of dressing... that’s the way we can tell the world straight up where we are from. (Ruggedman 2007)

Though ‘Ruggedy Baba’ is music on a path of hip hop revolution, it is discernable that the use of an indigenous language is an agency of authenticity making the hip hop of a particular location relevant to the artist’s situation and negotiating a boundary for him within the global hip hop community. Here the issue of ethnic and regional affiliations also arises as Nigeria has a history of conflicts in that respect. However by his use of Yorùbá language in this song and portrayal of the culture to the fullest in the video, Ruggedman has been able to use the popular cultural space as an arena where loyalty to ethnicity can be neutralized for a unified positive goal, which can be a means towards national integration.

Omoniyi (2009), while discussing the choice of language in hip hop, observed that ‘multilingualism is widespread and growing as a result of global cultural flows, [while] it seems that in some environments hip hop artists deploy linguistic convergence in performing in the dominant official language of the cosmopolis’ (p. 124). Lagos city

⁵¹ ‘Hip hop 101’-part 2 (track 21).

being the musical hub of Nigeria (the cosmopolis), and Yorùbá being the official language of Lagos, the fate of the ‘Ruggedy Baba’ project is already tied to the Yorùbá language and culture in delivering its mission statement, and it is not unexpected to see the level of success the album achieved commercially and otherwise both in Nigeria and abroad as evidenced by the recognition accorded the artist through awards and shows following its release. This is also an indication of the significance and commercial viability of the Yorùbá language within the popular music industry in Nigeria.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HIP HOP, FÚJÌ AND THE USE OF YORÙBÁ CULTURE IN PREVENTING POPULAR MUSIC HOMOGENIZATION

7:1 Introduction: Hip hop and Fújì; The Synergy

In discussing changes and trends in the Nigerian popular music scene, hip hop is indexical and paramount, being the mainstream music in the country now for over a decade and still waxing strong in representing the country's identity musically at home and on the international scene. Placing fújì alongside hip hop in this discourse is not coincidental but complimentary because of the kind of synergy that has been observed to exist between the two genres. Most hip hop artists have appropriated elements from fújì ranging from vocal delivery pattern, and language use to production style in terms of sampling and instrumentation, while fújì as well has re-appropriated a lot from hip hop from arrangement, and instrumentation to visual representation. Thus in this chapter I will be placing hip hop and fújì against the backdrop of their affinities and synergy to examine the fusion they have created vis-a-vis two major interdisciplinary concepts of globalization and hybridization, while highlighting the role of the Yorùbá culture in this distillation and the implications of the synergy for Nigeria popular music in general.

Without doubt the popularity, strength and acceptance of hip hop as the mainstream popular music in Nigeria has been established, and its success to a large extent has been driven by its domestication and re-territorialisation based on its language choice as coupled with the infusion and amalgamation of the traditional African elements in

which fújì played a crucial role. This supports the view that any emergent style of popular music is a product of cultural mix and assimilation, with jùjú music forming a typical example (Waterman 1990, 2000), as also corroborated by Shuker (2005: 12) who suggests that ‘in a sense all contemporary popular music is the result of syncretism with the co-existence of various genres fuelling the emergence of new styles’.

In this same line of transformation, for the Nigerian hip hop called Afro hip hop to grow into the powerful phenomenon that it is, it has gone through series of adaptations and appropriations, firstly with the language choice of code-mixing where Yorùbá language is the most influential and now, as we shall see, with the appropriation of fújì elements. At present the synergy of hip hop with fújì music, a Yorùbá popular music with street appeal, brings the terms ‘fusion’ and ‘crossover’ into play and shows once more the strength of the Yorùbá language in influencing and shaping the course of Nigerian popular music development.

7:2 Hip Hop and Fújì: The Yorùbá Connection, Influences and Similarities

Here I try to look at the point of convergence between hip hop and fújì based on their structure, origin, delivery and patronage which enables them to blend in such a seamless manner. It is almost impossible to look at the Nigerian hip hop scene presently without observing the intertwining of fújì music in it. While fújì is rebranding and collaborating with hip hop for greater acceptability as exemplified by Ayuba, hip hop is going down the traditional way through language use and fújì style appropriation to create an African identity and musical independence within the global hip hop community.

As observed by Ayuba while commenting on 9ice's music, to him '9ice is a fújì musician. He now infused R'n'B and American rhythm into his music. That's not good enough because it only have voice that is fújì' (Ayuba quoted in Pius, 2009). In essence what Ayuba is trying to convey is that the similarity between most of today's hip hop and fújì is enormous. Hip hop and fújì shared several similarities that allow for a perfect fusion and collaboration, ranging from their origin and development to language use and adaptability.

Development and Street Culture

Among the ties that closely bind hip hop and fújì within the Lagos context, none more readily comes to mind than their similarity in the process of origin, evolution and development that allows the street culture to remain prominent in both genres. Hip hop's transformation from being an underground scene in Nigeria in the late 1980s to the mainstream music from the late 1990s can be seen as the product of the resilience of its players who had no support from anywhere but had to depend on their own talent and wits in what is known within this circuit as 'the hustle' in order to be heard.

When I mention support in this context it refers to the structures and conducive environment of operation for creative work, which was almost non-existent when hip hop started in Nigeria. In the late 1980s most aspiring hip hop acts were unable to get a deal from the major labels that still existed in Lagos, probably due to their indifference to rap, while in the early 1990s the economic situation forced most labels to close shop. Despite winning the 'Lekki Sunsplash Talent Hunt' in 1995 Baba Dee did not get signed by Polygram Records who reneged on their promise to get him recorded through the label. He had to depend on his own hustle to get his debut album *Most Wanted*

(1997) released (on cassette) through an independent label, Spyder Records. The above is typical of many acts in the hip hop sphere who cannot give up the struggle despite all odds, pointing to the fact that hip hop is not just music but a cultural movement that was sustained despite all hostilities.

Among many examples, this same spirit gave birth to 'Trybe Records' by El Dee (1997) that released his group 'Trybesmen's' 'Shake Bodi' (1999) and also became an umbrella for its loose posse 'Da Trybe' which gave birth to acts like Dr Sid, Sasha P, 2Shotz, Freestyle and of course El Dee who are now very active on the Nigerian hip hop scene. In a recent television interview, commenting on the new hip hop sound that is now defining the Nigerian music scene. One of Nigeria's prolific producers Laolu Akins,⁵² who produced the successful *Ace* album by the jùjú star Sir Shina Peters in 1989 among other works, also admitted to the resilience of hip hop acts, saying 'the environment in which I started producing is quite different from what we have now. These boys were practically doing everything by themselves and they deserved to be encouraged' (On 'New Live Beats' BEN TV, March 2010).

Looking at fùjì as well one can see this element of resilience and street-wise hustle in the process of its evolution. Its transformation to secular music from '*were*', the Islamic wake up sound, has an undertone of street hustle that cannot be overlooked as *were* itself as an Islamic art form is practically a mobile form of music where the performers move from place to place, making it highly immersed in the street culture. However, the

⁵² Laolu Akins has been one of Nigeria's foremost musicians and a prolific producer. He was once A and R manager/controller for Sony Music, Nigeria and now runs a music consultancy/publishing firm in Lagos.

success of a fújì act does not totally depend on making records but is heavily dependent on patronage, which makes the idea of what is popularly called ‘jump’ a required ingredient for an aspiring fújì artist to get to the mainstream.

‘Jump’ is a form of street jam organised by fújì acts to showcase their talent, where people come to see these performances for free in their neighbourhood and to some extent is an expression of hip hop’s resilience and hustle. The more ‘jumps’ a fújì artist organises and performs the more fans and patrons he gets. By becoming more popular through jumps, opportunity is likely to be opened through patrons who will likely get the artist introduced to those who can sponsor an album recording for him. This is a clear indication of the bond that exists between hip hop and fújì as regards street hustle as Baba Dee also observed ‘fújì is the hip hop on the street of Nigeria, the same way that hip hop came out of the struggle with little air play, that’s the same way fújì defined itself on the street of Nigeria with no airplay, no promotions, they had their gig’ (interview, 2008).

Lower Cost of Production

One of the major features of popular music is its commercial exploitation made possible through dissemination in various forms like making records (CDs etc.), digitally through the internet, and through performance, all based on production. Music has to be produced before being made available for consumption and the process of production differs from genre to genre. In terms of hip hop and fújì they share many similarities in that basically both forms are cheap to produce in the Nigerian context.

There have been arguments in various quarters regarding the artistic value of rap or hip hop music, while Keyes observed that ‘most of these arguments point to the manner in which rap DJs create music through digital sampling of whole musical tracks or pre-recorded musical motifs in lieu of composing newly inspired pieces’ (2002: 5). Production-wise, hip hop is now almost totally dependent on digital devices in terms of programming and sampling, making it relatively cheap to produce with less manpower demand. Access to digital recording devices contributed to the development and growth of hip hop in Nigeria where there is a lack of musical infrastructure, and in today’s hip hop performance shows are digitally programmed while acts perform on recorded soundtracks making it less cumbersome, and more immediate, mobile and cheap.

Fújì on the other hand may not be highly digital in its production and process of dissemination but it is also relatively cheap to produce. A basic fújì assemblage consists of a combination of local Yorùbá drums like *omele* and *gáangan* (talking drums) with percussion instruments like *agogo* (gong), *saworo* (tambourine) and *shèkèrè* (gourd shakers). All these are cheap to purchase and relatively available in local markets. Citing the cost effectiveness of fújì as one of the reasons he chose to practice the genre, Adewale Ayuba also opined:

I took to fújì because it was the most cost effective form of music. It was the least expensive. Highlife, jùjú and other ones would have required sophisticated and expensive instruments like guitar, piano and drums. And again I would need to be knowledgeable in a couple of those instruments. But with fújì all that was needed was one or two cheap drums and I don’t even need to learn any. (Quoted in Adeboboye 2006).

Lagos Factor

It is practically impossible to discuss any form of popular music in Nigeria without mentioning Lagos as it is the city that forms the centre of Nigeria's urban popular culture while nurturing its many forms of popular music. The urban space of Lagos city itself has been a form of artistic inspiration to artists and has inspired many compositions in which the city has been the thematic subject, including songs like 'Stylee' (2006) by DJ Jimmy Jatt featuring 2 Face, Mode 9 and Ela Joe, 'Lagos Party' (2009) by Banky W, and 'Eko Ile' (2006) by Jazzman Olofin.

Looking at afrobeat and Lagos and how the city influenced the music and vice-versa, Olaniyan (2002: 87) asserted, 'it has become difficult to think of Fela, both music and lifestyle, without Lagos or indeed to study post-colonial Lagos without considering Fela... Only a post-colonial metropolis like Lagos could have produced Fela, he could hardly have thrived the way he did in any other Nigerian city'. Lagos being the birthplace of hip hop and fújì where both forms have been nurtured to the mainstream, the city facilitated the generic mix of the two musical forms and further provided for an avenue of collaboration and appropriation in a more symbiotic manner.

Language Affinity

Closely related to the Lagos factor is the choice of language, or rather the language affinity expressed in Yorùbá, which closely binds hip hop and fújì and makes the idea of fusion and collaboration between the two forms of music almost seamless. Language, a part of cultural manifestation and a coded means of communication, constitutes an important medium in which popular music is disseminated. The Nigerian hip hop community has already used the concept of code-switching as a way of asserting a

Nigerian or pan-African identity in music, in which the Yorùbá language plays an influential role.⁵³ Fújì music as a Yorùbá popular music style is principally and conceptually delivered in the Yorùbá language, aside from some fújì artists like Adewale Ayuba who strategically punctuate their album with English occasionally in order to garner a broader fan base.⁵⁴

The point of convergence and similarity in both hip hop and fújì language-wise is Yorùbá which is employed tactically and strategically through code-switching by hip hop and consistently by fújì, making it a major form of influence and a sort of magnetic pull that aided both genres to create a perfect blend. It should be noted that the majority of slang that becomes popular hip hop tropes in Nigerian popular music originated from people on the streets, meaning people that will normally be referred to as fújì fans who fall within a particular low working-class grade, like bus conductors, mechanics, drivers and those generally referred to as ‘area boys’ that rule the car parks and garages. Their kind of codified Yorùbá way of speaking forms the strong point of fújì language which has now also become to a large extent prevalent as an acceptable mode of rap lingo in Nigerian hip hop.

A typical example in this pattern of delivery is the popular song ‘O-4-Kasibe’ (2009) by DJ Zees, a hip hop act who became popular with his 2007 single ‘Same Ni’ but actually came on to the mainstream with the song ‘O-4-Kasibe’ - a Yorùbá expression or slang linguistically written ‘*ó fò ká síbè*’ and literally meaning ‘to scatter all over the place’.

⁵³ This was discussed fully in chapter five.

⁵⁴ Pioneering fújì artists like Sikiru Ayinde Barrister and Kollington Ayinla are also known to occasionally infuse lines in English language within their compositions.

Zees played on the sound and substituted *fo* with '4' as it is pronounced the same way, sounding 'oh-four-car-see-bay'. '*O fo ka sibe*' is an expression used by the street urchins and area boys to praise-sing the '*bàbá alayé*' (nouveau riche) on the street or at functions with the aim of getting monetary reward. In their own coded linguistic parlance it means their 'client' is so rich or affluent that everything he has is so plentiful that it is scattered all over the place. Zees adopted this slang and used it as a chorus: '*Orie o 4 kasibe*' (your head is scattered there). In literal translation the chorus looks like gibberish, but Zees, in defending it and giving his appropriation a lyrical and linguistic validation, says 'it is a slang that was common among my neighbourhood pals in Bariga⁵⁵ in those days. They use it to show respect to people they honoured. They use the slang when they want to hail the person. The concept is that '4' in the word represents the four cardinal points—north, east, west and south. When you say 'O-4-kasibe' it means you are making positive impact on people globally, not just where you are' (DJ Zees 2009). His use of this slang is typical of the relationship that exists between *fújì* and hip hop, where hip hop now adopts the street language of urchins that has been hitherto exclusive to *fújì* music.

Adaptability

As popular music in its entirety is a product of change, experience and experiment, it is to be expected that hip hop and *fújì* will be dynamic, flexible and adaptable, an important feature for a popular music genre that wants to maintain its relevance in the rapidly changing world of today's entertainment. Being adaptable is another reason why hip hop and *fújì* have been able to blend as both styles are open to experimentation, an

⁵⁵ A popular neighbourhood in Lagos mainland.

attribute that has gone a long way in sustaining them on the Nigerian popular music scene. Hip hop, though it originated from the United States, has taken root and grown in many parts of the world, mixing with the local cultures and adopting different names like hip life in Ghana or kwaito in South Africa as a result of its flexibility. This has been able to aid its popularity and continuance where other forms of music wane.

There have been many successful collaborations between hip hop and other genres of music such as reggae/dancehall, with the *Distant Relative* Collaborative album between Nas and Damian Marley (2010); R'n'B, with 'Empire State of Mind' (Jay Z featuring Alicia Keys 2009); and even afrobeat where Femi Kuti featured the rapper Mos Def in 'Do Your Best' (2001) among others. On the local scene hip hop is collaborating with as well as appropriating various older styles, such as jùjú in 'Ale Friday' (2000) by Wale Thompson featuring Remedies, highlife in 'Osondi Owendi' (remix) by MC Loph featuring Flavour (2009), as well as with fújì (as discussed earlier).

Regarding hip hop's success on the Nigerian scene, Omorogbe believes:

Why hip hop has grown and survived this much is because of its adaptability... It has always had the ability to blend into jazz, classical, blend into Latino salsa type of music, blend into fújì, blend into country, blend into jùjú, [and] blend into àpàlà... That's hip hop, that's the beat. These are kids who grew up in the midst of all these influences now coining elements of these influences to express themselves and their styles and talk about their situations. (Interview, 2009)

The Nigerian fújì artists on the other hand have also mastered the art of experimentation and adaptability as one of the indispensable skills that keep them on the mainstream and ensure their relevance on the Nigerian popular music scene. Fújì itself is a product of

this concept, emerging from *wéré* as its secular offshoot. For *fújì* to evolve and get to its present state it has gone through various adaptations and syncretisms through its various practitioners who introduced different styles into it.

Also for *fújì* to maintain its strength and not be a passing phase in Nigerian popular music history, experimentation remains its most important means of retaining its relevance. ‘The *fújì* artist has responded to this by gradually increasing and diversifying his range of instruments. The... [traditional] membranophone is suddenly yielding space to wind instruments and, though tentatively, the keyboard... [and] its compositional style has been substantially... [adopted] in order to amalgamate other musical forms and sensibilities’ (Olorunyomi 2001: 26).

7:3 Hip Hop, Fújì and the Idea of ‘Fusion’ and ‘Crossover’

Nigerian Afro hip hop is an appropriation of American hip hop while the ‘afro’ denotes the infusion of the African element into it ranging from language use to instrumentation. *Fújì* itself emerged out of Islamic cultural tradition and has gone through different adaptations to become a frontline Nigerian popular music style. In this section I will be examining hip hop within the concept of fusion and crossover while placing it alongside *fújì* to trace the origin of their collaboration and determine how hip hop and *fújì* blended to achieve a viable mix.

Fusion and crossover are two musical or descriptive terminologies that have been used more often in Nigerian popular music in the last few years, and to some extent they are becoming more of a musical categorization and stylistic nomenclature. 9ice, a fast rising Nigerian hip hop artist, when posed with the question of the type of music he

plays, asserted ‘my kind of music is world fusion, [and] it brings different brands of music like awarebe, sakara, jùjú, fújì, together’ (interview, 2008). Alariwo of Africa is another artist whose music is a blend of various styles from jùjú and, highlife to fújì but with a heavy leaning to afrobeat, as exemplified by the song that brought him to fame, ‘Yawa go gaz’ (1998). He has been dubbed ‘the crossover king’. To him ‘music is music but if you start talking about brands I’ll say I play crossover music because in my kind of songs you’ll hear highlife, afrobeat, you’ll hear different kinds of music. So I address my kind of music as crossover music’ (Alariwo 2008).

Some theoretical background helps explain what fusion and crossover means and why these concepts are being deployed as a negotiating strategy by popular music practitioners in Nigeria. Roy Shuker (2005: 149) asserts that ‘the term ‘fusion’ is variously used to designate the amalgamation of two types of music as in the fusion of folk and rock [for example] to form folk rock, a mix of electric and acoustic instrumentation and sounds’. Fusion in music can thereby be perceived as the combination of two or more musical traditions, which somehow poses a difficulty in trying to categorize the artist or the music produced as it always retains the elements of the individual genres combined in its formation. From 9ice’s perception of his music we can see the overall idea of fusion in play as different elements of the traditional musics he combines can be discernable in different tracks and he can be identified in part with these individual genres, especially fújì.

The commercial implications of fusion or genre-mixing are important and equally relevant as forces propelling artists to look further to get the right sound and achieve a perfect mix. Fusion in music thus presents a path in which the main idea that runs

through the concept is to merge, join or integrate musical idioms in the process of coalition, adaptation or blending to produce something beyond the different components it is made of, and in the same light we see hip hop in this context as a product of syncretism combining with *fújì* to create something new, presumably with the purpose of having general/wider acceptability through ‘crossing over’ to different audiences. Crossover has been described as ‘a move of a record/performer from a success in one genre/chart area to another, usually with a more mainstream audience. The term is usually associated with black music achieving more mainstream chart success’ (Shuker 2005: 62), while its dictionary meaning is ‘an act of crossing over in style usually with the intention of broadening the commercial appeal to a wider audience’ (dictionary.com 2010). Both definitions emphasise wider acceptability as the main aim which stems from the pursuance of commercial success as the major factor, which also places hip hop and *fújì* within this constellation.

Fusion and crossover is not a new phenomenon in Nigerian popular music as most popular styles in Nigeria emerged out of these concepts ranging from *jùjú*, and *fújì* to afrobeat. These styles show a common pattern of reacting to an external or foreign influence in the process of their coming to being, e.g. *asiko* and palmwine music reacted to the arrival of the electric guitar, synthesisers and electric amplifiers, thereby jettisoning the ‘*agidigbo*’ (thumb bass) and integrating foreign instruments to become *jùjú* and entering the mainstream (see Waterman 1990, 2000). Fela on the other hand created afrobeat out of highlife which was an already existing genre, and appropriated

two major influences of jazz (sound) and protest (ideology) through contact with Sandra Isidore⁵⁶ in America (see Olaniyan 2002).

The synergy between hip hop and fújì, as we will see later, is also a process of reaction to an external influence, and in order to perceive the influence of the blend and the way it is shaping the present music scene, below is a list of some of the successful tracks spanning a period of about ten years. I will be analysing two songs out of the list to pursue a particular line of thought while examining the reason for the synergy and what they were able to achieve through it on the Nigerian popular music scene. The following list is arranged according to year of release and is no way exhaustive:

- 1-'Jealousy' (1999) - Remedies (hip hop group) featuring Pasuma Wonder (fújì artist)
- 2-'So di ' (2001) - Baba Dee (hip hop) featuring Obesere (fújì artist)
- 3-'Gunshot' (2002) - Adewale Ayuba (fújì artist) featuring X-Appeal (hip hop duo)
- 4-'So ligali' (2002) - Eedris Abdulkareem (hip hop) featuring Pasuma Wonder (fújì artist)
- 5-'Raise da roof' (2002) - Jazzman Olofin (hip hop) featuring Adewale Ayuba (fújì artist)
- 6-'Fújì' (2006) - Dare Art Alade (hip hop artist singing fújì in a hip hop blend).
- 7-'Made in Nigeria' (2006) - Tosin Martins (gospel/RnB artist singing outright fújì)
- 8-'Shock Therapy' (2006) - Roof Top MC (hip hop artist rendering a fújì verse as hookline)

⁵⁶ Formerly known as Sandra Smith a native of Los Angeles and black rights activists who introduced Fela to the philosophy of Malcom X and black rights movement that changed his music forever.

- 9-‘Iwolomo’ (2007) - Pasto Goody Goody (hip hop) featuring Pasuma Wonder (fújì artist)
- 10-‘Bonsue’ (2008) - Tic Tac (A Ghanaian hip hop artist) featuring Keyhole (a Nigerian delivering fújì verse as the hook line of the song)
- 11-‘Jobobalejo’ (2008) - Sound Sultan (hip hop) featuring Pasuma Wonder (fújì artist).
- 12- ‘Igboro’ (2008) - Lord of Ajasa (hip hop) featuring Pasuma Wonder (fújì artist)
- 13- ‘Kin l o nso’ (2008) - Obesere (fújì artist) featuring 9ice (hip hop)
- 14-‘Bo Sokoto’ (2009) - Diamond (hip hop group) featuring Obesere (fújì artist)
- 15-‘Oyin ati Alafia’ (2009) - Sound Sultan (hip hop artist), bringing fújì panegyric on hip hop artist
- 16-‘Mo Fe’ (2009) - Adewale Ayuba (fújì artist) featuring Sound Sultan and Luralph (both hip hop artists)

The above list indicates considerable diversity in the way hip hop and fújì blend, giving us three patterns of synergy as follows:

[a] Where the hip hop artist invites a fújì artist to feature on his song and renders a fújì vocal verse. Here I will be using ‘So di e’ (OPC Version) by Baba Dee featuring Obesere for further classification.

[b] Where a fújì artist invites a hip hop artist to feature in a song and render a rap/hip hop vocal verse. Here I will be using Adewale Ayuba in ‘Mo Fe’ featuring Sound Sultan and Luralph for further clarification.

[c] Where a hip hop artist appropriates fújì elements into his song and renders a fújì verse /hook line on a song by himself.

[a] Where a hip hop artist invites a fújì artist to feature on his song and renders a fújì vocal verse: Baba Dee ‘So di ’ (OPC Version) featuring Obesere.

‘So di ’ is a light hip hop song released in 2001 which succeeded in getting the artist Baba Dee to the mainstream. This song is a fusion in its entirety and it should be noted that the version in review is called ‘OPC’ version as it is the remix of the original version; both are included in the album *Unfinished Bizness* (2001).

Baba Dee (aka Dare Fasasi) attended the University of Ibadan, Nigeria where he graduated in Theatre Arts and also the University of Salford, UK where he received a Masters Degree in Film Directing. Prior to the release of ‘So di ’ he was a struggling artist trying to get to the mainstream in the 1990s when hip hop was just coming up while the music industry was also going through a hard time. He won the talent show ‘Lekki sunsplash’ in 1995 and was supposed to be signed to the Polygram label like the past winners like Blackky and Alex Zitto but this never came to pass. He had his debut released (on cassette) in 1996 with an independent label called Spyder Music which included a song ‘Domitila’ (1996), one of the hip hop songs that heralded the trend of ‘code mixing’ of Yorùbá with English and Nigerian pidgin. The song was well received but did not reach the mainstream while ‘Shakomo’ by the Remedies (1998) succeeded in taking hip hop to the mainstream with the same fusion of code mixing.

The act of infusing the local language into hip hop in ‘Domitila’ portrayed Baba Dee as one of the pioneering acts introducing the African side to hip hop in Nigeria in what is later known as ‘afro hip hop’ which he believed he originated. According to Dee ‘I coined that word in 1996 [on] “Lunch Break with Jumobi Adegbesan” [a TV presenter],

that was when the word first came out from me “afro hip hop” and over the passage of time it became a genre of music’ (interview, 2008).

With his leaning towards the African side of hip hop, it was not surprising when he came out with ‘So di ’ in 2001 which follows the indexical pattern of code mixing that has become the trade mark of Nigerian hip hop today. It came in two versions which were equally successful and took him to the mainstream as a hip hop act. I will now be examining the song ‘So di’ using some of the extracts to portray the concept of ‘fusion’ and ‘crossover’ within the context of Yorùbá influence.

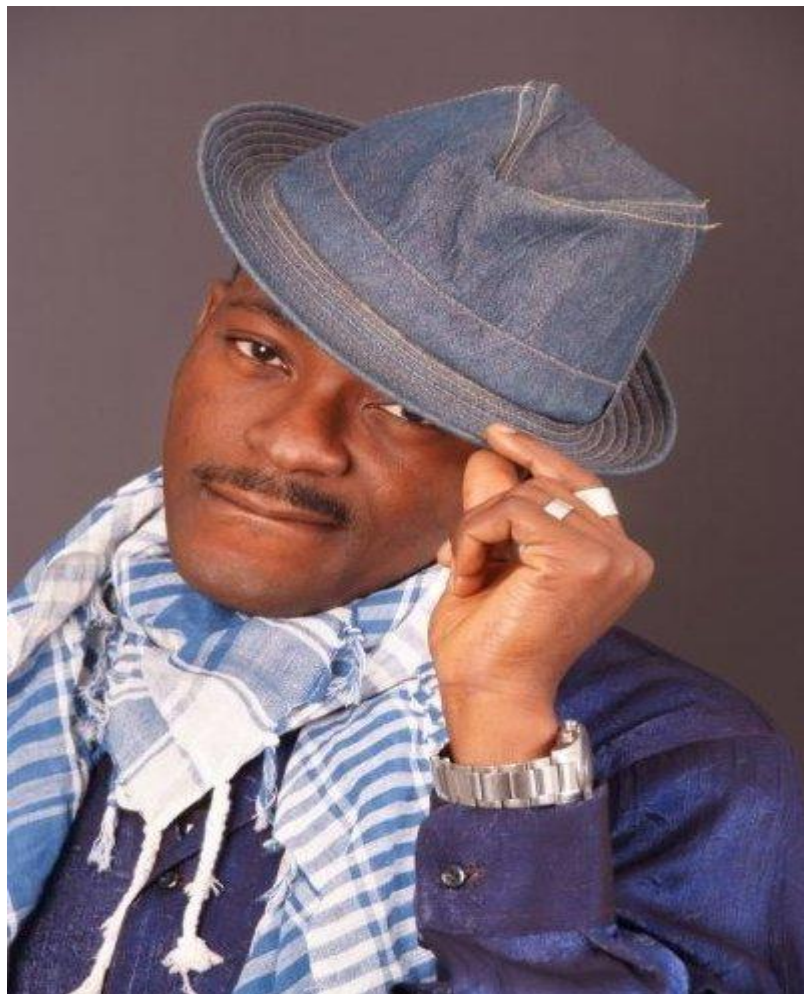


FIGURE 7:1 Baba Dee (Notjustok. com)

Song Title

This song is actually titled ‘So di’ (OPC version) which prompts the question why not just ‘the remix’ and why OPC version? OPC is an acronym for Oodua People’s Congress which is a pan-Yorùbá movement that was popular in the period of political struggle for democracy. At that time prior to 1999 when Nigeria returned to democracy and after, there were many quasi-political movements in Nigeria that portrayed regional and ethnic identities, such as the Arewa Movement from the north comprised of mainly Hausa/Fulani, ‘Nndigbo’ from the east mainly Igbo and the OPC which was formed by Fredrick Faseun but with another faction headed by Gani Adams which was more militant and got a reputation for being a vigilante movement.

For this sort of title to appear on a hip hop record suggests the artist’s affiliation to a pan-Yorùbá identity, which might lead to his acceptance into the Yorùbá ‘imagined community’:

Yorùbá popular music portrays an imagined community of some 30 million people—a solidarity that no individual could know in entirety through firsthand experience and embodies the ideal affective texture of social life and melding of new and old, exotic and indigenous within an undying synergetic framework. (Anderson 1983: 16, quoted in Waterman 1990: 376).

Language and Style

The language of the song follows the typical code mixing style and it was rendered in Yorùbá and English. English is believed to be the language of hip hop based on its origin while the Nigerian variant introduces the indigenous language for African flavour. Fújì is a Yorùbá popular music and its language of delivery is Yorùbá, and now

where Fújì and hip hop meet the result is fusion/crossover as heard in this song. Let us look at an extract from the introduction and accompanying chorus:

Intro:

Obesere:

*Oun tun tún ti dé, ké yin ladies ke jó
Baba Dee ló ún seré pèlu Tòsibè ke Jó
Eni a bá lábà Ni baba, Papà Tòsibè Rápálá.....*

Translation:

Here's a new brand sound for you ladies to dance
Baba Dee is performing
With me Tosibe [title] so you got to dance
I am the master of my art
I am Tosibe and Rapala [self praise]

Baba Dee:

Hee! Hee! Hold on Obesere
Let the big bad wolf get in place
Drop the beat OJB Jezrel,
Drop the beat
(Chorus)
*So di to the left girl
Judi to the right girl so di e /2ce
Sò dí yen, ju di yen,
Sò dí yen ko jù dí yen ko rè dí yen.*

Translation:

Shake it to the left girl
Shake it to the right girl
Shake that booty, come on shake that booty

The intro for the song by Obesere was done in a typical fújì rendition in Yorùbá with the suave vocal performance characterised by most fújì album introductions, though more often than not in fújì it is a quranic text that is used. In this case if you stopped the music after the introduction you would assume it was just another fújì song. Introducing

the song in Yorùbá as well as in fújì style suggests the artist using Obesere strategically to negotiate for him his acceptance within the fújì kingdom. The intro is catchy and pulsating, which would make any fújì aficionado hearing it for the first time to think that Obesere just released a new track.

The chorus which forms the hook line for the song is in Yorùbá and English which follows a repeated pattern throughout the song with the track borrowing greatly from the typical *àlùjò* concept of Yorùbá music that is popularised by fújì. *Àlùjò* means creating a repetitive danceable rhythmic pattern with percussion in a flexible manner which is a unique trademark of fújì. *Àlùjò* in Yorùbá literally means to beat a drum or create rhythm to dance with, and it is always noticeable in any other form of music appropriating fújì for mainstream acceptance. Sir Shina Peters, a jùjú artist, did something similar in 1990 by creating a new jùjú style tagged ‘afro jùjú’ and releasing his *Ace* album, while ‘Peters’ style represents an attempt to bring dance rhythm from fújì music to jùjú’ (Waterman 2000: 181). While the style ‘So di’ is driven by *àlùjò* the singing pattern goes back and forth from fújì to rap in a synchronised manner throughout the song. Let’s take a typical extract from the body of the song:

Baba Dee:

Haba ijo lani o Jo ko ma palolo
Turaka ko baraje get on the dance floor baby, baby
Sun mo bi ki lo wi
Oti laun ju

Translation:

Come on it’s time to dance
Open up be happy get on the dance floor
Move nearer what you say
Don’t be shy

The above (from verse 1) is rendered in a typical rap style characterised by the usual code mixing while the last 2 verses take on the typical Yorùbá call and response singing pattern indicating the Fújì influence in Baba Dee but producing a perfect fusion and balancing between this and Obesere.

Obesere: (fújì verse extracts)

*Óya pretty lady jé ká Jó
E òdè e má pa lóóló
E bó ságbo Abasidó
Efesè mejì gbe jó
Omo yòdí e sità a féréfé,
Olómoge jé ká jó
Ko yò díe síta bombo
Sido lo lórin egbàà mí o
Pèlú Baba Dee terí yen Ati yàtò jù o
Èèri pé aàyàtò fo, aàyàtò fo...*

Translation:

Pretty ladies let's dance
Come on get up don't drag
Get on the floor with Abasido
Babies shake your booty, let's dance
Babies shake your booty, let's dance
Sido (Obesere) is the man
With Baba Dee, we are incredible
We are so incredible
We are so incredible
We are so incredible

The above, is an extract of Obesere's verse in the middle and towards the end of the track. This shows him in his typical domain singing fújì and exhibiting all the street parlance or slang that is a typical strong point of fújì in àlùjò pattern. The above is just asking pretty girls to dance and shake their booty and using different Yorùbá slang and street synonyms. In terms of language style the song is a typical fusion which succeeded in crossing over between fújì and hip hop.

The Fújì Act

Creating a fusion out of hip hop and fújì points us to a particular focus of attention which is the language. Language becomes a medium in which the artist tries to negotiate his stance, identity or purpose and the language in this case is Yorùbá which is the medium of delivery in fújì. Obesere happens to be a successful fújì act who has even toured north America at the period the song was recorded and goes by different aliases such as ‘Tosibe’, ‘Rapala’, ‘Abasido’, and ‘Ayamakute’, all borne out of street slang resulting from his being considered the king of lewd lyrics for his vivid portrayal of body parts and sexuality in his songs.

Explaining why he chose Obesere to collaborate with, Baba Dee reminisces:

Obesere happens to be my favourite fújì artist because he has so many lingo. I was thinking this guy should be a rapper because he has all the lingo and he never runs out of it... I’m happy that was the first time hip hop and fújì is coming together (and) that is what we have now, a lot of fusion. (Interview, 2008).

The Purpose

The aim and purpose of a fusion or crossover song is for the artist to gain more popularity, achieve commercial success and enter the mainstream. ‘So di’ is not an exception because ‘it is the best of both worlds. You get the hip hop crowd and you get the fújì crowd’ (Baba Dee interview, 2008) and it capitalized on this in making Baba Dee win over the street through Obesere. This is also a pointer to the fact that in creating fusion and crossover in the Nigerian popular music scene, the use of Yorùbá language or appropriation of Yorùbá-related music forms has always been crucial to achieve the desired effect as exemplified by the success of ‘So di e’ (OPC version).

The appropriation of fújì into hip hop by Baba Dee in ‘So di e’ won him mainstream acceptance as an artist, thereby boosting his popularity which resulted in the commercial success of his album *Unfinished Bizness*:

I went up like this [raising his hand up in demonstration] with people you don’t expect to recognize you, when I went to Ibadan I was surprised the way people were shouting my name at the [car park], all and sundry, why? Because I did ‘So di’ with their man and they were feeling ‘So di’ with Obesere. (Interview, 2008)

This researcher also bought a copy of Baba Dee’s *Unfinished Bizness* VCD video collection that contained ‘So di’ at a motor park in Ibadan metropolis in 2006. This is not unusual but what aroused my curiosity is that the kiosk it was purchased from normally stocks Yorùbá-derived music, especially fújì CDs, which indicated that it was actually marketed like fújì because of that one track that featured Obesere, thereby giving Baba Dee a slice of the fújì music crowd and market while still selling among the hip hop crowd.

(B) Where a fújì artist features a hip hop artist on a song: ‘Mo fe’ – Adewale Ayuba featuring Sound Sultan and Luralph.

‘Mo fe’ is a promotional single released in 2009 by Adewale Ayuba from his *Camellion* album released later same year. The *Camellion* album is a whole new dimension for Ayuba as a fújì artist and ‘Mo Fe’ heralded this direction featuring two hip hop artists to indicate his aim of producing a synergy between hip hop and fújì, resulting in the release of a crossover album. Let us look into Ayuba’s musical background and how he arrived at the point of creating a fusion with hip hop and albeit a crossover album.

Ayuba came into prominence in 1990 with his *Bubble* album having released five albums before then that did not enter the mainstream. *Bubble* was a phenomenon as it introduced something new to the already existing traditional genre borne out of Ayuba's own research and innovation:

I thought of how to distinguish myself. I did some research and I discovered that Fújì appealed to a certain kind of people. I started thinking of how I could attract other people like business executives, students and people in the corporate world to Fújì music in a way that traditional Fújì lovers wouldn't feel alienated. The first thing I did was to start injecting English into Fújì. I then created my own unique beat and dancing style making the tempo making faster than before. My outlook also changed. (Adeboboye 2006)

With *Bubble* Ayuba came to national recognition, appealing to crowds across board especially students of tertiary institutions. Ayuba has continued since *Bubble* and has taken fújì also to the international stage, touring America and sojourning there for several years with his Bonsue fújì organization that has concentrated their efforts of the past several years on touring, recording and acting as cultural ambassadors of fújì music (Fuller, n.d.).

Ayuba has a history of musical syncretism and experimentation, the earliest resulting in the 'Bubble' album that created his 'Bonsue' fújì style. He has also collaborated with hip hop group X-Appeal and Jazzman Olofin in the past while his duet with the Nigerian German based artist Ade Bantu 'Fújì Satisfaction' (2005) made him the only fújì act to win a Kora Award. With his musical pedigree it was not a surprise that he engaged in producing a hip hop album at this time. In his own words:

The title of the album is ‘Chamellion’. I am a fújì musician that is like a project I just decided to do... just to let people know that Ayuba is versatile... I just felt like doing an album for myself that would showcase that Ayuba can as well be a hip hop artist. It’s just like a crossover thing... That is the album we are releasing very soon. (City People, September 2009: 44)

The song

The song has an approximate running time of 5 minutes which is the first indication of hip hop appropriation, as most fújì songs come in long play joined together to form an album devoid of discernable tracking system. Analytically we can divide the song into three parts: the chorus done by Luralph (with a one-off bridge occurring mid-song), the body by Ayuba (in fújì) and the rap text by Sound Sultan. While each part exhibits a distinctive characteristic, it blends smoothly with the underlying rhythm of fújì which is characterized by heavy traditional Yorùbá percussion with an appropriation of mild saxophone accompaniment.

Language and Style

The medium of delivery for fújì music is primarily the Yorùbá language which is the major medium on this song as characterised by Ayuba, while the collaborators go back and forth in Yorùbá, English and Nigerian pidgin. While Luralph starts the song with a Yorùbá chorus, Sultan delivers his rendition in the usual Afro hip hop context rapping in Yorùbá, English and Nigerian pidgin. Let us examine this fusion through the song extracts below.

Luralph [a] Chorus:

*Bó jó wó, mo fé o,
Bó jómo mo fé o,
Òùn èda fé inù rẹ̀ lómò,
Kì bàbà lóke sá ti fùn nìse la únfé.*

Translation

If it's money, I want it
If it's children, I want it
Whatever a man desires he knows
May God in heaven grant us our desires

Luralph [b] Bridge:

In my father's house, there's so many rooms
It's so big enough for me and you (come).
Halle, Halle, Halleluyah, Halle Halle, Halleluyah!

From the extracts above [a] shows Luralph starting off the song with the chorus in Yorùbá with a wishful prayer asking for wealth and children, a common theme for fújì song. In [b] Luralph delivers a brief rendition in the middle of the song and the line 'in my father's house' is actually a Biblical verse that has been turned to a popular hymn. The inclusion of this line in a fújì song that is deeply rooted in Islamic tradition becomes a negotiating strategy to take Ayuba's endorsement of fújì's secularity further, almost severing it from its Islamic roots.

Now let us take extracts from Ayuba and Sound Sultan's renditions in [c] and [d] respectively below:

Adewale Ayuba [c] 1st Verse:

*Kokoko mo ní ko ko ko
Mò nkan lè kùn re lé kan si
Wá dá mi lóùn sé,
Olórùn má fì gbígbó sa láì gbó
Adéwálé Ayúbà re ni
Oti ni ti nbá pè ó,ó sí dá mi lóùn o
È mi mà tún ni olórùn mi ni o
Mò únkan lèkùn re léèkan.*

Translation:

I am here knocking
I am knocking one more time
Please answer me lord
Its your own Adewale Ayuba
You said any time I call
You will always answer
Now I'm knocking once more

Sound Sultan [d] Rap Verse:

*Anything that I want anything
Anything that I need
Baba God E go do am for me
Even if enemies try to push me down
I know say nothing do me
Nisó kálo wá lo mobè
Nisó tèle mi ká lo débè
Nisó kálo wá lo mobè
Omo wen you know there
You no go wan leave there... (etc.)*

Translation:

Anything that I want
Anything that I need
God will do it for me
Even if enemies try to push me down
I remain unperturbed
Move on, go ahead
Let's get there because
When you get there
You won't feel like leaving there... (etc.)

In [c] Ayuba delivered the first verse of the song in a typical fújì rendition and in Yorùbá language blending with Luralph's chorus while in [d] Sound Sultan came in with the rap in a distinct tonality and character associated with Nigeria's Afro hip hop. The overall style is that of fújì, with the rhythm flowing from the beginning to the end with occasional fillings with horns and keyboard, as appropriated before into fújì by Wasiu Ayinde Marshal. The rap verse by Sultan and brief hymn rendition by Luralph

come out distinctly giving the song an exotic flavour with the rap giving the music an upbeat rhythm, taking the tempo higher than a normal fújì rhythm but in a controlled manner.

The purpose

Fújì is basically a Yorùbá entertainment popular music genre and popular in parties called ‘*owanbe*’ where praise singing and money spending is prevalent. Ayuba as an artist in this genre has been successful and recognised internationally. However, in the Nigerian music scene currently there is a development as Ayuba admitted: ‘Hip hop rules today’s Nigeria. If you go to any party today R&B and hip hop are in vogue. You hardly hear them play fújì or any indigenous music’ (Ayuba in Vanguard 2009).

To correct the misrepresentation of fújì on the mainstream the answer is to create a mix of hip hop and fújì rhythm—a fusion resulting in the crossover album ‘Chamellion’ of which ‘Mo fe’ is the first single. To Ayuba whose dream ‘is to achieve with fújì what Bob Marley did with reggae’ (Adeboboye: 2006), it is imperative that change should begin at home through taking fújì back to mainstream while in creating fusion with ‘Mo fe’ he asserts ‘I am taking fújì music to the clubs so that they can be listening to Ayuba’s music in clubs and it won’t be only ‘*Owambe*’ party that you will actually listen to Ayuba’s music’ (City People 2009).

‘Mo fe’ has been strategically crafted to achieve this purpose as asserted by Ayuba, starting from the running time which makes it easy for any DJ to use the track for a dance mix and also making it easy and adaptable for a ring tone, another aspect of hip hop marketability in Nigeria. Featuring Luralph and Sound Sultan as hip hop artists on

the song, Ayuba is able to negotiate his way for acceptance with the Nigerian hip hop audience and take fújì to a more exotic clientele.

7:4 Hip Hop and Fújì in Relation to Globalization and Hybridization

Globalization and hybridization are two concepts closely connected and cutting across many disciplines from history, anthropology, religion, linguistics, and medicine to cultural studies and most importantly popular music studies. In discussing globalization and popular music one cannot but look at the angle of ‘cultural imperialism’ and ‘popular music homogenization’ which has been closely linked to globalization as a result of international communication flow. Nigerian popular music over the years has been greatly influenced by conditions in the international scene as the world has gradually become a global village. Here I will be using hip hop and fújì to examine and determine how popular music has fared in the face of globalization with the resultant process of hybridization.

Globalization in its simplest meaning ‘refers to a world in which societies, cultures, politics and economies have in some sense come together’ (Kiely 1998: 3). This implies that the world has been brought together as an entity through some means so that it is possible to look at the same thing at the same time in a synchronised manner irrespective of location. In another perspective one can sense an undertone of dominance and hegemony: did the whole world actually want to be homogenized? Or are there some powerful forces determining trends and events elsewhere? According to Turino (2000:6) ‘the contemporary language of globalism rhetorically and ideologically links a particular cultural aggregate (modernist capitalism) to the totalised space of the globe, leaving people with alternative life ways no place to be and nowhere to go’. This

is an indication that the proliferation, dissemination and dominance of a particular (stronger) culture over the weaker ones, if left unrestricted and uncurbed, will be inimical to the growth and development of the local cultures and musical practices. This leads to what has been generally referred to as the CI thesis, meaning cultural imperialism as associated with globalization and in particular where the third world is concerned.

Hesmondhalgh (1998) remarks that:

[Cultural imperialism] implied that the age of direct political and economical domination by colonial powers was (supposedly) ending [and] a new form of international domination was beginning. The new hegemony was based on a more direct form of power: the fostering of cultural forms which would sap the cultural strength of the less-developed countries and which would allow the Western based transnational corporations to dominate non-Western economies by encouraging a desire on the part of post-colonial peoples for Western products and life-styles. (Hesmondhalgh 1998: 164).

In the midst of global influence the African musician is now caught in a dilemma over how to remain relevant in the local context despite the yearnings of his audience for foreign culture and lifestyle. The proliferation of hip hop music outside America and especially in the third world is a clear indication of international cultural flows and globalization which is almost making the local music practices less fashionable. There has been a sudden rise in the development of hip hop culture in the African region from Kenya to Ghana, South Africa to Tanzania with players referencing American acts while subscribing to the global hip hop nation.

This surge and thirst for hip hop to some extent facilitated the establishment of MTV Base Africa in 2005 and also the incorporation of MTV Africa Music Awards (MAMA) which is now a yearly event. In Nigeria, the extent of the global influence on local

music practice cannot be overestimated as it remains a powerful force shaping the existing style, with the practitioner especially in hip hop constantly negotiating the terrain through compromise. This leads to the creation of fusion and crossover as earlier discussed in the process I will henceforth refer to as hybridization and the product I will call hybrid music, which to me is a strategy designed for resistance as we will see later.

Hybridity or the process of hybridization is originally a biological term denoting cross-breeding to produce an offspring which is referred to as 'hybrid'. Now the term and procedure has surfaced in nearly all aspects of human endeavour, so that among others we now have cars that are called 'hybrids' in that they were designed to be powered by both fuel and electricity. According to Kerri Iyall Smith (2006: 9) 'hybridity results when two or more cultures are incorporated to create a new cultural identity, the identities are not assimilated or altered independently [but] bits of identities become elements of a new identity'. Jan Nederveen Pieterse also believes:

[Hybridity] follows older themes of syncretism in anthropology and creolisation in linguistics. In cultural studies hybridity denotes a wide register of multiple identity, crossover, pick-n-mix, boundary crossing experiences and styles matching a world of growing migration and diaspora lives, intensive intercultural communication, everyday multiculturalism and erosion of boundaries. (Pieterse 2001: 221)

Hybridity is an amalgamation and coalescing of different cultural or musical forms to foster or create a new identity thriving on the idea of border-crossing. Nigerian hip hop has been able to do this by creating a sub-genre in 'Afro hip hop' and fostering an African identity in it by infusing traditional musical forms, especially fújì. Let us now see how Afro hip hop as hybrid music is becoming a strategy of resistance towards musical homogenization brought about by globalization.

Language is an important means of communication and where popular music is involved the language of delivery is a coded embodiment of the speaker's culture. It is also a common saying that 'music is a universal language' meaning music should be enjoyed and felt the same way anywhere irrespective of the language of delivery and location. However writing about indigenous hip hop cultures and in particular the South African variant Kwaito, Kelefa Sanneh in the New York Times (2005) asks 'Why is kwaito so much obscure in America? Part of the problem is language: kwaito lyrics are usually delivered in a mashed up slang that draws heavily on Zulu, and Xhosa and Afrikaans' (retrieved from newyorktimes.com 2009). I tend to believe that kwaito's non-popularity in America based on language is rather parochial pointing to the fact that globalization is just a one-way affair and the third world can only be a consumer. If Jay-Z or Lil Wayne can be played on African radio and enjoyed irrespective of the language/accents there should be no reason Spikiri (a South African kwaito veteran), 2Face Idibia or Ruggedman cannot be accorded the same privilege in America or elsewhere.⁵⁷

Looking at globalization, popular music and language critically it is obvious that 'English is the language of popular music, arguably a form of linguistic globalization...' (Shuker 2005: 127) and Nigerian hip hop has been able to use hybridization as a strategy of resistance to popular music homogenization by exhibiting linguistic independence from English and adopting multilingualism where the Nigerian pidgin

⁵⁷ The tenor of this trend is still evident in the fact that hip hop music and its artists from Africa are still branded as world music in terms of categorization, which is indicative of the West not accepting popular culture outside of the Euro-American axis into the mainstream.

and Yorùbá language become prominent. Giving credence to the assertion of linguistic non-conformity in Nigeria's hip hop as a resistance strategy Omoniyi (2009: 124) also believes that 'Nigerian hip hop artists as social critics and activists explore language choice as a multilingual skill and in the process establish for themselves a creative patch and a non-subordinate local identity within the global hip hop constituency'. Still taking the resistance further it is pertinent to note that in terms of music production and fusion of styles the appropriation of fújì to create a crossover and hybrid that has international recognition is a powerful negotiation and resistance move. With this Nigerian hip hop is able to retain and assert its African identity while still subscribing to the global hip hop world in a process of cultural re-territorialisation.

Taking a critical look at the effects of globalization on the local setting Shuker asks, 'Do policies and activities of multinationals inhibit the development of indigenous music in local markets? The response is complex and varies from country to country' (2005: 127). In the Nigerian scene a traditional music like fújì is feeling the impact as Ayuba says: 'Hip hop rules in today's Nigeria'.

The sapping of local musical practices like fújì has triggered a reaction also in Ayuba who is now using hybridization as a tool of resistance to revive fújì in the face of globalization and produce a hip hop album that has the best of the two worlds. This will ensure the survival of his genre: fújì, and garner more exotic patrons for him. Hybridization is an indication of change which comes as a result of contact and multiculturalism and also can be positive in maintaining and preserving the local cultures and practices from homogenization, as exemplified by Nigeria's hip hop which is very cogent as 'the transcultural character of current hybridity territorialises

international music and prevents the homogenization of popular music from the world' (Martinez 2007).

7:5 Conclusion

In this section I have been able to establish that hip hop and fújì shared common identifiable similarities from conception to development and most importantly their adaptability. While these similarities encouraged collaborations and cross-generic mixing between both musics resulting in a form of synergy, flexibility and experimentation have also been the pivot on which they rotate in order to continue to produce new idioms in a bid to ensure their continuing relevance on the popular music scene.

It is also noted that Lagos has been of tremendous importance to both genres as an enabler, providing the ambience and space which encouraged cross-fertilization of musical cultures where hip hop and fújì have been able to foster creative collaborations resulting in various crossover records in the process of hybridization. Both genres have been able to use this synergy strategically for commercial exploitation and fan base expansion as exemplified by Baba Dee and Adewale Ayuba. Creating hybrid forms of music from hip hop and fújì supplants the homogeneity of popular music promoted by globalization while ensuring the relevance and development of homegrown music.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE NIGERIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

8:1 Introduction

The need to include this section in the project stems from various reasons and considerations. Firstly the subject of my research which is popular music falls within the fabrics, if not the driving force of the music industry. As a researcher who has been on the field to interact with the stakeholders, ranging from artists to promoters, producers and distributors, I see it as my responsibility to document their sentiments, challenges and hope and try to propose some recommendations for a better industry. Secondly I am of the opinion that within academia, research work should have a more didactic (applied) approach, and in a discipline like music, there should be more in terms of bridging the assumed gap between the ‘gown’ and the ‘town’ to foster a more seamless and beneficial relationship between music practitioners and researchers. Thirdly I see myself and my discipline ethnomusicology as part of the music industry/ies, that has been of tremendous importance for the growth of the discipline within the academia, as observed by Stephen Cottrell (2010: 4): ‘It is generally accepted that the discipline [ethnomusicology]—if that is what it is—is unlikely to have flourished successfully in its early stages were it not for the development of recording technology from the 1800s onwards’. This points to the fact that as ethnomusicologists we need to be more sensitive to current industry trends like (but not limited to) the effects of global market forces, implications of new technologies, and any other peculiar challenges facing artists and stakeholders within the locality of our study. This is relevant because at this period ‘ethnomusicologists now need to be familiar with

copyright law and sampling technologies as they were with ritual and kinship system' (Cottrell 2010: 16).

One of the music industry stakeholders and world music producers, Ben Mandelson recently observed:

It really surprises me still that most schools in ethnomusicology don't have real-world classes in how to run a record company or how to deal with the practical aspects in tandem with a creative person for benefit of both. There is a certain level of responsibility that until now people [ethnomusicologists/researchers] have tended to avoid by saying that 'I don't understand it' or 'It's just for my own use' or 'It's my PhD and I need to do that'. (Interview in Cottrell 2010b: 64).

The above is indexical of the kind of opinion practitioners have of researchers and by including a section like this in projects based on real concerns for artists, it will go a long way in ensuring both researchers and practitioners have a relationship, devoid of mistrust and beneficial to both parties.

8:2 The Nigerian Music Industry: An Overview

The Nigerian music industry in the last ten years has witnessed great impetus and its vibrancy has been widely reported within the African continent and beyond. According to ID Cabasa:

Our music is sounding better and it's up to international standard, likewise in lyrics and content, we are growing in terms of acceptance, likewise in Africa we are the best, [and] in terms of music video we are growing. (Interview, 2008)

Perhaps the growth of the industry as reflected by its artists can best be captured by 2Face Idibia in a 2007 Jimmy Jatt Award winning song 'Stylee' where he reminisced:

I remember well
The beginning of this struggle
When we used to hang around the block
Doing accapellas and just staying out of trouble
Seems like yesterday when we started the game
Hoping for some fame and some fortune
Now what's the gain without pain
That explains all the hustle and the bustle I remember
Like when we enter bus, we can't stop cuz we no get money
Trekking to Ikeja, it was not very funny
When we started, then *we dey talk say, we dey mental* [We use to say we are going crazy]
Back then *na* [its] Jimmy Jatt *na in dey* [used to] give us instrumental
And up till now we still dey stay strong
Dey hold on, the struggle still goes on
Up till now we still here
And we ain't going nowhere.

This vibrancy is also reflected in the recognition of works produced by these artists on the international scene. Femi Kuti won the 'African Artists of the Year' at KORA's premier in 1999 and has since received two Gammy Award nominations. The feat at KORA was repeated by the duo of P Square who won the African Artist of the Year at the 2010 edition in Ougadougou. 2Face Idibia has been a multiple award winner from MOBO to MTV Awards for Africa and Continental, capping it with Best Selling African Artist at the World Music Awards in 2008. 9ice won the MOBO with his sophomore album 'Gongo Aso' and peaked in 2008 with a performance at Nelson Mandela's birthday at Hyde Park in London.

The popularity of Nigerian music and the industry is also reflected in its international collaborations, such as Wyclef Jean featuring 2face Idibia, Sound Sultan and Faze in 'Proud to be African' (2005) while many famous Western popular artists have collaborated with Nigerian acts, including Beyonce, Nas, 50 Cent, Missy Elliot, Jay-Z,

Sean Paul, Akon, Fat Joe, Snoop Dogg, Wyclef Jean and in gospel music, Kirk Franklin and Donny McCulkin.⁵⁸



FIGURE 8:1 ID Cabasa at Coded Tunez Studio, Lagos (photo by author, September 2009)

Despite all these displays of musical vitality, overtly international presence and success there still exists an argument as to whether there is a music industry in Nigeria that caters for the myriads of its talents and players. And if there is actually an industry it is apparent that it needs a lot in terms of standardization based on the concerns and expressions of its stakeholders.

⁵⁸ Some of the notable collaborations include ‘King of My Country (Remix)’ - Sound Sultan featuring Wyclef Jean (2009), ‘Shorty’ - Shank featuring Akon (2009), ‘So Te (Remix)’- The Pulse featuring Busta Rhymes (2010), ‘Flex’ - 2face Idibia featuring R Kelly (2008) and ‘Hands Across The World’ (2010) R Kelly in One 8 project for Sony Music featuring 2face Idibia and other African artists.

Let us examine what an industry actually connotes and what the components of a music industry should be. The music industry basically takes care of all aspects of the music business and has different organizations and outfits working together for a common goal which includes the artists, composers and managers/talent developers, the media, producers/concert promoters and distributors among others. 'Industry' has been defined as 'commercialization of any product or thing... Music as industry is a relatively modern concept. It is the non-physical aspect of music... [where] sophisticated communication technology of the modern age is now being used for recreating and preserving all kinds of music... It is in this context that... music as an industry... [was] developed [where] the potential[s] of modern technology can now be fully exploited by persons engaged in the music industry' (Abdul Khaleque 2003: 44).

The music industry functions within the culture and entertainment industries and encompasses various components of professionals working towards commodification of music within the paraphernalia of multimedia like 'recordings, video, films, televisions, magazines, books, and via advertising, product endorsement, and sponsorship over a range of consumer merchandise' (Negus 1992: 1). Having known how it ought to be, the Nigerian situation poses many puzzles as it looks almost chaotic for an aspiring artist to get a start in a situation that many industry headliners consider chaotic. To ID Cabasa while looking at the present situation from his Economics background:⁵⁹

I don't think we have an industry, for you to have an industry, the industry must be defined, and you must have a structure... a point where stakeholders will come together, and there's nothing like that, there is no functional process for an

⁵⁹ He is an Economics graduate and was working in the banking sector before resigning to go into full-time music production.

artist, like artist and producers being demarcated from being a singer to promoter, whatever we have is a music scene that is gradually developing to become probably an industry. (Interview, 2008)

This aptly describes the present structure of music making in Lagos where an artist functions in the capacity of all the aforementioned components that make up the music industry. Most music released presently (apart from an artist like Femi Kuti who is on a foreign major label) is being financed and produced independently by the artist, who has his own imprint, directs his own video and takes CDs to radio stations and media houses for promotion by himself, which most of the time involves bribing the DJs to get air play. According to K-Lite, an aspiring and upcoming artist in Lagos who has three recorded singles while still looking for funds or a sponsor to shoot his promotional video:

If you don't pay those DJs you don't get played on radio, and you need to drop something heavy to get repeated air play, if you drop something like N10,000 you get played like twice and you know those ones that are successful now like D'Banj have money so they get played all of the time. (Interview, 2009).

Perhaps it looks like a Herculean task to make headway as an aspiring artist in Lagos as there is virtually no platform to start from except one's own wits. Ruggedman, perhaps talking out of experience, also presents the way the 'industry' works in Lagos in 'Hip hop 101' (2007), an introduction in the 'Ruggedy Baba' album where he offers a lecture to the aspiring artist:

Pick out two songs to radio as your first single, for 9ja [Nigeria] a dance track and a slow one for the mingle cut like 200 to 300 copies, if you can [try and] design a sleeve for it... Drop at least eight copies in each radio station not just in your city, if you can [drop it] around the nation, follow up with SMS and occasional phone calls of course *you go still meet presenters wey go try to play God, bone them and give only to those wey feel your music* cos when you blow

up they will turn around and use it. Do a lot of interviews; don't let pride get into you... Grease the right thumbs if you can and you have to, I'm being realistic because money plays a part too. (Ruggedman 2007)

Ruggedman's hip hop class presents a typical situation of how the music 'industry' operates in Lagos and not forgetting the need to 'grease a few thumbs', indicating the notion of 'payola'⁶⁰ as expressed by K-Lite who obviously is incapacitated by lack of funds. However this formula has worked for Ruggedman as he said at the beginning of the track 'I'm teaching from experience... [That's] how it worked for me though' and has somehow become the 'normal route' in the music making process for artists who like Ruggedman did not meet any standard procedure.

Describing this appalling situation music consultant/artist manager Efe Omorogbe also painted the picture of a present day artist in Lagos thus:

What we have now is a lot of artists with indie [independent] labels run by their cousins, and their mothers, and their girlfriends, and their brothers and their grandmothers and all of that. And the entire business plan in somebody's laptop, he carries it in his bag and hop to his car, and that is the entire business, office, no over-heads, no staff, no training, no experience, no expertise, you know, they might have one or two consultants, a PR consultant who doubles as a publicist. They want to record; they hire a producer who works with them. You know we don't have a proper recording label structure where the company hires producers, where producers sit down and craft music, where you have a proper publishing company, where song writers and composers get some kind of funding and payment for works they've done and whoever runs the publishing outfits starts working with record labels to get materials out for new talents, for old talents,

⁶⁰ According to the PMAN Draft Bill (2002) 'payola is a term describing secret payment to and acceptance by broadcasting station personnel (usually disc jockeys, record librarians, or programme managers and directors) of money, service, or other valuable consideration in return for their broadcast use of a particular record or song. This practice that has succeeded in slowing down the growth of the Nigerian music industry over the decades. Constant demand by radio and TV presenters and producers for financial gratification from musicians has been a tremendous barrier to the development of Nigerian music... The struggling Nigerian musician has to add this financial burden to his or her already excruciating list of expenses ... all in the quest of introducing his or her music to the public.' (Quoted in Servant 2003: 44)

for people to interpret and record and release. You know we don't have all these kind of specialised structure. (Interview, 2009)

While the industry looks as if it is booming due to the number of artists coming out daily with their videos on MTV and other outlets, the implication for this straight-jacketed 'hustle-based' type of music business practice is the proliferation of mediocrity in music where every artist wants to do the style of music that is 'reigning' irrespective of their talent and ability, since there is no exposure to professional advice, while the marketers who are merely traders now determine the type of music that artists put out and on a larger scale the corporate sector that depend on music and artists for their campaigns now exploit the artists who, being naive, believe they are getting a fair deal. The more corrupt the music industry is the more it is to the advantage of the corporate sector.

8:3 Exit of Major Recording Labels

With a clearer picture of what obtains at present it is important to examine how the structure collapsed by digging into the past, as the past is often the key to unlocking the fortunes of the future. What can have gone wrong in a city that once had a world class studio built by the famous Ginger Baker in Ikeja.⁶¹ Basically now the major problem the industry is facing is lack of proper business structure as obtains in places like Britain and America where an artist has a contract and it is the label that harnesses all other forms of the industry to work for the mainstreaming of their act.

⁶¹ Internationally recognized drummer who did a lot of collaborations and recordings with Fela Anikulapo-Kuti in Lagos in the 1970s. According to Okoroji 2009(b) he set up a 16 ARC studio in Ikeja which was later acquired by Phonogram in the early 80s.

This type of structure has helped the development of many well known Nigerian artists of international repute. In the 1970s for example ‘the Nigerian recording industry was... dominated by three Lagos-based multi-national recording companies... These companies were Philips, which later became Phonogram, and then Polygram... EMI... and Decca which eventually became Afrodisia’ (Okoroji 2009b: 17). The 1980s and beyond also witnessed investment into music by local investors like Chief GAD Tabansi’s Tabansi Records, Haruna Ishola’s Phonodisk, Roger All Stars (RAS) Records in eastern Nigeria and ‘CBS Records which had previously been distributed in Nigeria by EMI set up offices in Ikeja [Lagos]...’ (Okoroji 2009b: 22).

The above is a picture of what obtains in the music industry that has produced artists like Fela, Sonny Okosuns and Onyeka Onwenu (EMI), I. K. Dairo and Ebenezer Obey (Decca), Sir Shina Peters, Adewale Ayuba, and Majek Fashek (CBS Later Sony Music), Ras Kimono, Blackky, Oritz Williki, Evi Enda, Mandators, and Femi Kuti (Polygram Records). These were just samples amongst myriads of artists that went through the proper structure from the 1970s to the early 1990s when the structure collapsed. The system of governance/policy in Nigeria coupled with the economic situation contributed in no small measure to the exit of major labels and the incapacitation of indigenous but functioning ones in the 1990s. The Nigerianization policy of the government affected the multinationals while piracy that set in from the 1970s came to signal the end of a proper music industry.

According to Mike Wells, the West African regional director of EMI in 1978:

EMI head office instructions were simple: disinvest as fast as possible. The main problem for all of us was the continual lack of royalty remittances. Moreover the government Nigerianization policies were making life hard for foreign business. (Quoted in Servant 2003: 34)

The exit of Polygram Records from Lagos in 1989 marked the end of the major labels' operations in Nigeria. According to Femi Kuti who was once signed to the label 'they sold Polygram to Premier. And immediately they left music went down right to the end' (quoted in Servant 2003: 34).

This was the state of the industry that young artists entered around the late 1990s. They met no structure on the ground and most successful acts were already in self-exile in the trend of 'brain drain', but there was still a need to diffuse their creative energy and voice their concern about the kind of world they live in. So 'devoid of big record labels and incredibly starved for big finances and the latest recording facilities, young men and women all over the country have independently evolved a booming local music industry. With small but effective amplification equipment and personal PCs loaded with the latest recording software... young artists are able to independently cut a complete album' (Ugor 2009: 66).

It should however be noted that music-making in this new age goes beyond cutting an album or getting your music heard as it is becoming a whole multimedia and entertainment fiesta around the world, in which case the Nigerian artist seems to be loosing out due to lack of structural organization, making investment in the business from outside the country look like financial suicide to a would-be investor. While the young generation of artists that came in with hip hop culture in the 1990s should be credited for revitalizing the music scene with their resilience and do-it-yourself attitude,

it looks as if the existing formula cannot cope and catch up with the trend of music in the world, which is now a technological and digital-driven entertainment industry. Therefore there arises a need for re-assessment, re-organization and re-structuring of whatever scene there is musically.

8:4 The Challenges

The major challenge that the industry is facing stemmed from the exit of the major labels, which marked the collapse of the structure for artists. This collapse can be linked to the decline in the economy which also created piracy and abuse of intellectual property. Piracy has not allowed those that remained to be properly remunerated and it is stifling the artists as well. To Omorogbe, the situation on the ground will remain if the atmosphere is not conducive for a record label as it is the label that forms the skeleton of the recording industry, because:

Once you make it difficult for the record label which is the primary unit of the music industry to survive... [the result would be what obtains now]. It is the record label that aggregates all the other factors together, they give the artists a platform, the producers they hire, the song writers, publishing people they contract and deal with, they do the PR, they do the packaging they do the marketing, they do the promotion, they are the ones who hire the photographers to do photo shoot for the album, they are the ones who hire the video directors, scriptwriters, dancers and what have you. If you make it difficult for the record label to survive what you have is what we have now, utter chaos! (Interview, 2009)

It is indeed clear now that that the major challenge is piracy as it is the only cancer eating deep into the entertainment industry where a dearth of proper labels has been observed. When we have a proliferation of amateurs, piracy has not allowed or attracted big time investment since the exit of multinationals who are not interested in returning because at present ‘the importance of the industry in the least developed countries is

made more difficult by its informal and unquantified nature. the availability of sales data reflects the interest of international recording music business, which continues to see these countries [like Nigeria] as potential consumers and not producers' (Kozul-Wright 2003: 12).

Perhaps in what looks like a third world syndrome Henry Stobart (2010) observed a similar situation in Bolivia studying effects of piracy, where he observed that the country 'provides a striking case study given the almost complete collapse of its large-scale and long established national record industry and exodus of trans-national labels due to effects of piracy' (p.30). The challenges and problems associated with the Nigerian music industry can be grouped under the following categories:

- i)-Piracy /copyright issue and the 'Alaba Marketers'.
- ii)-Lack of official government policy.
- iii)-Lack of proper understanding of the music industry by artists.

These challenges are discussed below followed by an attempt to look at some possibilities for the future growth and development of the industry.

i)-Piracy/Copyright Issue and The 'Alaba Marketers'

Piracy is the 'insidious animal activity that threatens musicians' livelihoods, musical creativity and production of culture' (Stobart 2010: 29). Piracy I believe exists everywhere there is a musical activity and commodification, though at different levels, but in Nigeria it is practiced with impunity and utter openness. Omorogbe also agrees that piracy is the major problem the industry is facing, and highlights this with the intellectual property issues:

Piracy in the sense of bootlegging of physical copies, piracy in the broadcast medium where people exploit your work commercially without paying for the use of such materials, piracy at the level of corporate organizations exploiting your music commercially or using same to drive advert campaign and not paying the right owners, has made it difficult for legit[imate] business people to survive. (Interview, 2009)



FIGURE 8:2 A View of the audio visual section at Alaba Market, Lagos
(Photo by author, September 2009)

Tony Okoroji traces the roots of piracy in the Nigerian music industry which he termed a ‘cancer’ to the 1980s with the introduction of cassette technology:

The cassette tape was quietly taking over the major carrier of music, [but] the music industry in Nigeria was slow to notice this development. There was virtually no established facility for the production of legitimate music cassettes. Yet there was a huge demand for them. While the industry ultimately reacted, the pirates had moved in long before... [and a] pirate version of every successful release on vinyl appeared in the market sometimes even before the official release of a record. (Okoroji 2009b: 23).



FIGURE 8:3 Typical CD/DVD retailer inside Alaba Market (photo by author, September 2009)

This tradition continued with the introduction of optical technology for music dissemination in the 1990s which made piracy even easier and copying faster and more accessible as long as you can afford a computer and blank CD-R. Piracy in Nigeria in recent years has risen steadily and peaked at 95 percent level (records and music) in 2006 resulting in an estimated loss of \$119.0 million US (see Figure 8:4) in the music and allied industries, which places the country under the ‘watch list’ according to the I.I.P.A reports of 2007.⁶²

⁶² This is International Intellectual Property Alliance, while the special report on Nigeria can be retrieved from: <http://www.iipa.com/rbc/2007/2007SPEC301NIGERIA.pdf> Accessed 2nd October 2010.

The proliferation of piracy and abuse of intellectual property rights had roots in the void created by the exit of major labels that used to have accredited agents and networks for music distribution. What has come to be known in Nigeria today as ‘music marketers’ came into being to fill the void of what should be a proper distribution channel for recorded works, and now have their business concern situated within the famous ‘Alaba international market’ Ojoo Lagos (see Figures 8:2 and 8:3 respectively). These ‘marketers’ were formerly electronics/parts dealers who sourced their wares from China and Singapore, explaining how they rapidly got into the CD replication process as the heart of piracy operation in Nigeria still remains the Alaba market. According to Baba Dee:

[The industry presently] have a lot of people, some making music, and some stealing music, [and] some trying to sell it. We have the Nigerian spirit, doggedness, aggressive push, we once had a structure... and proper distributing channel, but when the economy in Nigeria took a pinch on everybody the structure disappeared giving rise to marketers filling the space, and when the structure comes [back] they will rightly take their leave. (Interview, 2008)

As it is now, the Nigerian artist stands ‘between the devil and the deep blue sea’, as Alaba market which is the heartland of piracy is still the only outlet he needs to deal with to get his music on the retailers’ shelf, which leaves him with no negotiation power as the marketers hold all the aces.

This frustration was also expressed by the recording artist Slam (Udoka Oguamanam) who asserted:

The distribution level in Nigeria is on zero level. Because of piracy, a marketer tells you how much he is going to buy your album and you don’t have a choice but to sell it to him because if you decide to handle it on your own, pirates will

deal with you and you may end up not getting a dime. They tell you how they want to handle your work, which is not supposed to be so and so we are at their mercies. Most of the musical and entertainment organisation that are supposed to fight for us are not doing anything. A musician that is a citizen of this country is not supposed to pay a TV station or radio for his songs to be aired but some of us want our songs to be aired to get signing deal to recover what we have spent. (Quoted in Meze 2009).

The issues of piracy, copyright and intellectual property abuse are all intertwined and deeply rooted in the present distribution system that favours Alaba market while the artists and all associated with the entertainment industry keep losing money. The way artists are losing money from physical piracy is the same way they lose revenue from media houses, telecom companies and public places that use music in Nigeria without proper licensing.

FIGURE 8:4 Estimated Trade Loss and level of Piracy in Nigeria 2002-2006
(Source: International Intellectual Property Alliance 2007 Special 301 Report: Nigeria)

NIGERIA ESTIMATED TRADE LOSSES DUE TO COPYRIGHT PIRACY (IN MILLIONS OF U.S. DOLLARS) AND LEVELS OF PIRACY: 2002-2006										
INDUSTRY	2006		2005		2004		2003		2002	
	Loss	Level	Loss	Level	Loss	Level	Loss	Level	Loss	Level
Records & Music	52.0	95%	52.0	95%	50.0	99%	NA	NA	NA	NA
Business Software ³	59.0	82%	46.0	82%	30.0	84%	29.0	84%	4.3	67%
Books	8.0	NA	6.0	NA	4.0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Motion Pictures	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Entertainment Software	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
TOTALS	119.0		104.0		84.0		29.0		4.3	

ii) Lack of Official Government Policy/Enforcement

The Nigerian government is yet to have any efficient official policy or proper way of enforcing policies to protect the intellectual rights of artists. This might not be unconnected with the fact that the government is yet to see the viability of the music and entertainment industry as a sustainable sector for revenue generation. The I.I.P.A.

(2007: 351) has observed that ‘there is little enforcement activity in Nigeria, and cooperation between government agencies to implement and enforce the law, including law enforcement, is sparse and erratic’. There exists the Nigerian Copyright Council (NCC) but the sale of pirated CDs, DVDs and VCDs is still going on unabated while Alaba market remains untouchable.

The NCC launched the STRAP (Strategy Against Piracy) in 2005 which is supposed to be the effective anti-piracy campaign organ of the commission. One of the components of STRAP is enforcement which the agency hopes to realise ‘in accordance with the powers of the Commission under the Copyright Act through Anti-piracy raids. Destruction and seizure of pirated works. Arrest and prosecution of offenders’ (STRAP 2009). But despite this agenda the author (2009) still noticed piracy in full gear at Alaba market where business is booming as usual with display of these products in the open. Part of STRAP policy also requires licensing for optical disc manufacturers:

The regulations require all persons involved in the manufacture of optical discs or the production parts; or importation and exportation of optical discs, production parts, raw material, or manufacturing equipment to be registered by the Commission before engaging in such activities. A production licence is renewable annually, while a separate licence is required in respect of each exportation or importation of optical discs, production parts, raw material or equipment. Persons carrying on the business of commercial optical discs duplication, namely, the recording of copyrighted materials owned by others onto recordable optical discs are also required to register with the Commission.⁶³

It is interesting to know that Lagos is gradually becoming a hub for piracy network and production West African subregion as reported by I.I.P.A.:

⁶³ See ‘Optics Disc Plant Regulation’ Retrieved from: http://www.nigcopyright.org/Docs/OPTICAL_DISCS_REGULATIONS.pdf Accessed 1st November 2010.

There are... reported 15 optical disc plants that have been in operation in Nigeria, some of which have migrated to Nigeria from Asia and operate to supply Central and West Africa. IIPA is aware of at least 52 production lines capable of producing at least 182 million discs per year. Many of the plants are not licensed to produce any kind of copyright content. Two of these plants (Akina and Nasinma) were raided in June and July 2004, and were raided again in 2006. However, to date there has been no outcome with respect to actions against these plants. This massive over-capacity, plus pirate imports, results in pirate production not only for domestic consumption but also for export (or 'take out' as it is called, as people come from all over West Africa to buy pirated discs from the Alaba International Market in Lagos). Pirated product from Nigeria has been found in Algeria, Senegal, Ghana, Zambia and South Africa. (I.I.P.A. 2007: 350-351)

The above trend of events and the increasing growth of piracy and the plants where these discs are being manufactured without proper licensing points to the fact that the efforts of government agencies are inadequate and that a drastic measure is needed to curb and prosecute the perpetrators of these acts in accordance to the law.

iii) *Lack of proper understanding of the music industry by artists*

Artists' not understanding the intricacies of the music business is a dangerous trend that might hinder the growth of the industry and even destroy any structure that the stakeholders are trying to build. Inadequate awareness of issues leads to display of unprofessionalism which make some artists even engage pirates as an avenue of publicity at times. Lack of awareness about copyright and intellectual property has led many artists to commit blunders they end up regretting. Typical in this line is the trend of some artists selling their master tapes to marketers outright at Alaba for an agreed fixed sum and ending up regretting after finding out the way their CDs sold making them feel short-changed and also losing what might be a source of further income for them.

8:5 Possibilities/Recommendations

The Nigerian Music industry offers a great potential and can yield millions of Naira in terms of revenue for the government and its players if given the right boost and steered in the right direction. It should also be mentioned that great activism has been going on of late by industry stakeholders to try and build a proper structure where people can be adequately remunerated and also attract investors both locally and internationally. Among some recent moves are the efforts of Efe Omoregbe through the ‘Coalition of Nigeria Music Industry’ which includes five major associations within the sector that have been engaged in series of activities to sensitize the public and the government on copyright issues. They have organized a series of rallies in Lagos and also instituted ‘no music day’ for 1st September yearly so people can be aware of piracy.⁶⁴ Also there has been a move towards having a collecting body for artist’s royalties through the ‘Copyright Society of Nigeria’ (COSON).

Against this backdrop I will enumerate possible actions that still needed to be put in place to complement these efforts towards creating the proper structure:

- (i) Intervention of financial institutions in Nigeria by investing in the industry to give it a boost the same way some ailing banks were saved in Nigeria.
- (ii) Official government policy about copyright and strict enforcement of the same to deter pirates.

⁶⁴ The 2010 edition has been adjudged as most successful so far which indicated the willingness of media houses to participate and hopefully follow suit in paying royalties to artists for air play as against the present ‘payola’ that exists. See <http://www.nigeriafilms.com/news/8921/22/okoroji-%20omogbecommend-the-media-on-the-success-.html> Accessed 2nd October 2010.

- (iii) Creating a proper distribution network that all labels/artists must go through and having accreditation of distributors through government policy.
- (iv) Creating a music database/chart system through music distributors. This will go a long way in opening international markets for artists.
- (v) Creating a proper avenue for collecting artists' royalties as done in developed countries.
- (vi) Harnessing the potential of the musicians' trade unions towards artist development by collaborating with experts in music to give training/seminars to artists from time to time. Most of the industry's informants see this as a positive move, Cally Ikpe expressed willingness to offer the author a potential role in the future, through his video awards and music promotion facilities for collaboration that can take the industry to another level (Interview, 2009).

8:6 Conclusion

Supporting Cottrell (2010: 22), who noted that 'the discipline [ethnomusicology] is finding a new voice for itself in the twenty-first century as it becomes more active and applied on a variety of fronts', this chapter has attempted to be 'twenty-first century compliant' while being applied and didactic in placing the research within the confines of the music industry by highlighting the problems of music making in Lagos, the city that has been a major factor in this research. Lagos connects both the artists in this work like Ruggedman, 9ice, Sound Sultan, ID Cabasa, and Baba Dee, as well as industry practitioners like Efe Omorogbe. It is the city that supports their work and artistic output and it is the same city where the music industry exists, which makes it imperative that while making music the business of the researcher, the researcher also

needs to look at the music business and how it operates and take cognizance of how these structures or lack thereof affect the art of music-making positively or otherwise.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis I have been able to argue that the Yorùbá culture has had a tremendous impact on the development of modern popular music in Nigeria. Basing my analysis on the popular music scene in Lagos, which over the years has come to define the mainstream Nigerian music, the importance of Lagos as the hub of the nation's urban popular culture has been established. By also tracing the origin and development of various popular music genres to Lagos, the city's gravitational pull on artists from the nooks and crannies of the country is understandable due to the structure it offers, while its attendant impartation of Yorùbá culture to their works has evidently been recognized.

This work has yielded the following answers to the research questions set out at the start:

1) Based on the popular music of Lagos which has reached the mainstream within and outside Nigeria, the research established the effects and contributions of Yorùbá culture in the emergence of Nigerian popular music through all the established popular music styles and in varying proportion as regards their conception, development, language use and instrumentation.

2) The research has isolated the importance of Lagos and the role it has played due to its political importance as the capital from 1914 until 1991 and beyond as the commercial nerve centre of the country. Based on this position and population growth due to migration, multiculturalism has been imminent while urbanization has been a

precursor to the development of different musical practices through experimentation and access to foreign instruments and technology. Here the dominance of Yorùbá culture also became apparent as exemplified by idioms like jùjú, fújì and afrobeat while the trend has continued in the current hip hop music.

3) The reason for the dominance of the Yorùbá language as the language of choice in popular music was also highlighted and linked to the ‘Lagos factor’. The use of Yorùbá language by hip hop artists has been linked to its commercial viability as a medium through which their music can travel faster and reach a wider audience. This is also associated with its diasporic presence which the artists use for international recognition. The language has also been appropriated for Afrocentric purposes and as a symbol of Nigerian representation and identity through hip hop, where Ruggedman has been used as an example to establish this dominance in his appropriation of Yorùbá language and culture to represent his musical identity textually and visually.

4) The importance of Yorùbá culture and musical practice and its use in resisting popular music homogenization was also illustrated through the synergy created by fújì and hip hop. Here the issue of globalization was discussed along with the creation of a hybrid idiom used as a musical culture of resistance in response to globalization.

5) In its entirety the work has established that more than any culture in Nigeria the Yorùbá culture has brought Nigerian popular music to the international arena, and received recognition which is quite evident in the success of jùjú, fújì, afrobeat and the current hip hop. It is through the Yorùbá culture that the Nigerian musical identity has been represented internationally.

Reflections and Implications

Reflecting on this work using the hip hop cultural practice as a point of reference it can be asserted that:

African hip hop artists use hip hop to represent Africa and an African identity in three prongs: an Africa that stands in great contrast to Europe and the west both culturally and politically; an Africa that is vernacular and traditional and an Africa that is cosmopolitan, holding on to its tradition while embracing transnationalism and transcultural realities. (Ntarangwi 2009: 20)

These three possibilities and realities are adequately represented within the Lagos urban space where traditionality and cosmopolitanism seamlessly fuse to present a unique popular music practice. Here hip hop's domestication has also been established through indigenous language use while Ruggedman has projected these possibilities textually and visually in 'Ruggedy Baba'. Indeed Nigerian artists, through the appropriation of Yorùbá culture and language as a vehicle, were able to elevate the indigenous language to a world class standard which 'is also a statement to the world that Nigerian languages have the right and capacity to be used to entertain a world audience' (Agbo 2009: 56). They have also demonstrated that the real nationalism and formulation of a truly Nigerian identity in popular music (especially with the Afro hip hop idiom) lies in the indigeneity of the language of delivery.

This finding is indicative of the fact that popular music can be a space and common ground towards achieving national unity and ethnic integration in a country like Nigeria that has always been beclouded by ethnic issues. The appropriation of Yorùbá language as exemplified by Ruggedman among other hip hop acts, and the kind of unity that the arena of popular music availed them through a series of collaborations using the Yorùbá cultural commonalities, points to the direction that through popular culture Nigeria can

achieve its much sought-after de-tribalization and ethnic integration that has eluded it through politics and governance. This work aims to contribute to scholarship in the fields of ethnomusicology, popular culture, African studies and of course ‘hip hop linguistics’ (Alim 2006), and I hope will be useful to students and scholars in these disciplines who can also develop other research ideas for future work from it.

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APPENDIX

Song List of Sample Disc 1 and 2

DISC 1 (Audio Sample CD)

1. 'Hip hop 101' - Ruggedman. *Ruggedy Baba* Rugged Records, 2007.
2. 'Hip hop 101' (Part 2) - Ruggedman. *Ruggedy Baba* Rugged Records, 2007.
3. 'Ruggedy Baba' - Ruggedman featuring 9ice. *Ruggedy Baba* Rugged Records, 2007.
4. 'Motherland' - Sound Sultan. *Textbook*, Kennis Music, 2006.
5. 'Bushmeat' - Sound Sultan featuring 2face and W4.SS4, Naija Ninja Records, 2008.
6. 'King of My Country' - Sound Sultan. *SS4* Naija Ninja Records, 2008.
7. 'Mo Fe' - Adewale Ayuba featuring Sound Sultan and Luralph. *Camellion*. 2009
8. 'Gongo Aso' - 9ice. *Gongo Aso*, Alapomeji Records, 2007.
9. 'Ijoya' - Weird MC. *After Da Storm*, 0907 Entertainment, 2005.
10. 'So long, Too Long' - Majek Fashek. *Spirit of Love*. Interscope Records. 1991.
11. 'Bosoe' - Tic Tac featuring Keynote. *10th Day*, TN Records, 2009.
12. 'Mo Nife' - NII featuring Saminni. *Like Nii*, Solid Multimedia, 2009.
13. 'Kondo' - Dagrín. *C.E.O*, Missofunyin Entertainment/Edlyne Records, 2009.
14. 'Ghetto Dream' - Dagrín. *C.E.O*, Missofunyin Entertainment/Edlyne Records, 2009.
15. 'Only Me' - 2face Idibia. *Unbeatable*, Hypertek Music, 2010.
16. 'Turn Me Around' - Kenny St Brown featuring Dagrín. *Turn Around*, Kennis Music 2010.
17. 'Alujo Repete' - ID Cabasa featuring Banky W. *My ID-Entity*, Yes Records/Coded Tunez, 2009.
18. 'Mago o' - Blacktribe. Single, Globedisk Entertainment, 2008.

Disc 2 (Video Sample DVD)

1. 'Ruggedy Baba' - Ruggedman featuring 9ice (Video). Available on youtube at, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojsZwXva6aU>