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Echoes of manhood: Language and masculine ideals in Nigerian hip hop

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Abstract

This study examines the construction and reinforcement of masculine ideologies in Nigerian hip hop music, focusing on the critical role of language. Nigerian hip hop, which has significantly influenced the youth since the early 2000s, is known for embedding ideologies within its lyrical content. The research examines nine songs from award-winning artists over a decade (2008-2018) to uncover how these songs construct and perpetuate notions of masculinity. The analysis is grounded in critical discourse analysis, providing a robust framework for understanding the ways language conveys power dynamics and societal norms. The study identifies themes such as the "get rich at all costs" syndrome, materialistic ideals, hypermasculinity, and sexism. These themes are prevalent in the lyrics and serve to entrench and sustain gender inequality in Nigeria's patriarchal society. By examining the linguistic strategies employed by artists, the research highlights how these ideologies of masculinity are not only reflected but also propagated through hip hop music. Moreover, the findings suggest that these masculine ideals are deeply intertwined with societal expectations and pressures, reflecting broader cultural and economic contexts. The research emphasizes the need for critical engagement with the messages conveyed through popular culture, particularly in how they shape and influence gender dynamics. This study contributes to ongoing discussions on language, gender, and discrimination, offering insights into the role of music in social discourse and the perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity.

Keywords: Nigerian hip hop; Masculinity; Hegemonic masculinity; Gender ideologies; Popular culture

1. Introduction

This study investigates the social construction of masculinity in Nigerian hip hop music. The study is motivated by the resolve to identify and explain how ideologies of masculinity that are created in everyday experiences are produced in music, and how discourse, conversation or language is at the core of that process. Masculinity ideologies, according to Pleck (1993, 85) refer to "beliefs about the importance of men adhering to culturally defined standards for male behaviour" They are beliefs about what it means to be a man and propose how men should behave in the society. They express the endorsement and internalisation of cultural belief systems of a particular society about masculinity and male gender, rooted in the structural relationship between the two sexes. Pleck argues that ideology of masculinity is not just beliefs about masculinity, but also entails specific attitudes and dispositions about masculinity. Men's perception of their traits and expectations is not really influenced by their biological characteristics, but by the ideology of masculinity held by their society. A society's masculine ideology is grounded largely in socio-cultural values, which are then used as grounds to justify the rights, responsibilities, and rewards to the male gender. Hence, masculinity ideology plays an essential part in sustaining gender inequality and female subjugation in the society.

There is no single standard or set of ideologies of masculinity due to the very nature of masculinity itself, which is neither a homogenous nor even a stable concept. Masculinity varies across cultures and acquires meaning only in specific socio-historical contexts. It is also shaped and expressed differently at different times, in different circumstances, and in

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different places by individuals and groups. It is also influenced by factors such as age, sex, race, and class. All these factors classify masculinity into variations, with one mostly dominant over others. Connell (1987) identifies various forms of masculinity such as hegemonic masculinity, subordinated masculinity, marginalised masculinity, and complicit masculinity but argues that power and domination are not shared equally among men and that hegemonic masculinity is the most culturally accepted. Connell notes that hegemonic masculinity is the most idealised form of masculinity and a normative standard against which “all other men... position themselves... and [which] ideologically legitimate[s] the global subordination of women to men” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 832). Connell’s definition suggests that hegemonic masculinity becomes the grounds from which other men and boys measure themselves against women and non-ruling masculinity (Ratele 2006; Ayodabo and Amaefula 2021; Ayodabo 2021). Ideologies of hegemonic masculinity differ across time, space, and cultures, and can be contested by other alternative masculinities (Connell 2005). Many scholars have identified certain traits and ideologies of hegemonic masculinity. According to Hatty (2000), hegemonic masculinity embraces traits such as heterosexuality, hierarchy, the use of force and violence. Luyt (2003) also identifies independence, emotional control, and toughness as key ideologies of hegemonic masculinity. It is significant to point out that only a small fraction of men can adequately achieve hegemonic masculine positions. Nevertheless, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, 832) state that “hegemonic masculinity requires that all men position themselves in relation to it, even if they cannot embody it”.

In this instance, in Nigeria as well, the dominant type that is portrayed and venerated in popular music is hegemonic masculinity. The study is interested in highlighting the uniformities in the hegemonic ideologies informing male behavioural norms in Nigeria, and in extension hip-hop music. Although there are various types of masculinity, the study is primarily interested in hegemonic masculinity, showing its relationship with the discourses of virility, financial independence, heterosexuality, drug use, and crime. Hegemonic ideologies of masculinity within the Nigerian context as well as many African societies are heavily stereotypical, with culturally idealized norms of manhood that are socially and hierarchically exclusive. The society shapes men’s lives differently from women by placing men in different social positions and patterns of expectations. Emphasis is placed on physical strength and body size, virility, respect, economic power and the ability to amass and maintain wealth including livestock, women, and children. Traditional marriage system is also characterized by domination and submission. Men are expected to dominate their wives, while such relationship also demands absolute cooperation from the wives. A defiant attitude from the wives, therefore, suggests weakness on the part of the men. The society also conflates masculinity with heterosexuality and virility by reinforcing the dominant role of the male sexual organ. Uchendu opines that “the male genitals...are one feature that makes a whole lot of difference and which a woman can never possess, no matter how much she may do masculinity” (283). Jac Brown (2015) contends that heteronormative masculine discourse is a belief that normalizes and shapes many heterosexual relationships, where the man’s role in the relationship is dominant, a situation closely tied to his sense of masculinity and commonly confirmed by his sexual prowess. Likewise, the female sex is seen as degraded sexual objects to satisfy the pleasure of men. Having a macho image is another important representation of masculinity in Nigeria, and it includes the display of broad shoulders, muscular body, physical prowess, bravery, above average, and an intimidating facial expression. The important thing here is the immense social and political advantages of big muscles, especially during social and political gatherings. In addition, men’s bodies are gradually becoming sexual objects meant for the consumption of women’s eyes, as well as for the sexual gratification of women.

There is also an emphasis on financial independence as it determines the degree of a man’s financial success, marital success, and career success as well as success in social relations. Financial success is important because it assures “greater purchasing power and makes a man live comfortably with all necessary material comforts” (Uchendu 2007, 289). The masculinity of a Nigerian man is measured based on most of these attributes, and to the degree to which he exhibits them. Hegemony in masculinity, therefore, refers not just to practices that promote the dominant social position of men and subordination of women, but also in relation to other subordinated masculinities as well.

Though these traits, behaviours, and ideologies continue to reinforce the domination of men in the society, however, the erosion of traditional structures and the influence of modernization and the entry of women into the formal workplace have led to changes in the dynamics of gender relations and gender role expectations. In addition, the current economic difficulties in the country are plunging most men into financial constraints and making them struggle with their manly expectations. A lot of men are experiencing frustration, stress, and unhappiness, which explains why a lot of young men in Nigeria are engaging in risky behaviours (crime, alcohol and drug use) to prove their ‘manhood’ to their peers and women and girls, or as an outlet from the stress of their ascribed roles and responsibilities. Uchendu (2007, 290) stresses that:

At present, the crime wave among Nigerian youths, educated and non-educated, is very high, with money-related crimes taking the lead. Excluding such an extreme consequence, the obsession with achieving success and financial independence can lead to excessive use of one’s body, the end result of which could be sickness or early physical

deterioration...male drive for control, especially within the family, creates room for the abuse of the repressed group, which if in the larger society may hinder in particular women's display of their potentials, thus resulting in some negative national consequences.

To cope with the current social realities, young men in the society are exploring alternative means to actualize their masculinity, which are disconnected from existing traditional ideals of masculinity. This is especially true due to the current frequent incidences of crimes, such as internet scams, drug trafficking, ritual killings, ransom kidnapping, arm robbery, and electoral thuggery. These alternative forms are currently entrenched in the music, with many musicians overtly encouraging young men to explore crime in a way to survive in a country battling with economic distress. Hence, Ideology of hegemonic masculinity discussed in this study is the combinations of indigenous and non-indigenous masculine notions but also shaped by the political, social changes and power differences that have taken place in the last two to three decades in the country.

Linguistic studies on the Nigerian hip hop music have examined issues bordering on the interrelatedness of language and the sociological implications of hip hop (Adegoju 2009), the construction of identities and language ideology (Gbogi 2016, 2017; Ajayi and Bamgbose 2018), codeswitching (Babalola and Taiwo (2009), vernacular language (Akande 2011a, 2011b; Ogungbemi and Bamgbose 2021), linguistic strategies (Omoniyi 2006), gender construction (Onanuga 2017), sexual themes (Ojoawo 2016), pragmatic function of pronouns (Ajayi and (Filani 2014). Existing studies have identified among other things, codeswitching/ mixing, proverbs, neologisms, local slang expressions, wordplay and rhyme, metaphors, symbolism and allusions. Studies on ideologies in Nigerian hip hop have mostly taken account of language ideology (Gbogi 2017) and gender ideology (Ekwenchi and Duru 2016). The present study deviates from existing studies on ideology in Nigerian hip hop as it, therefore, sought to establish how hegemonic masculinity is constructed in Nigerian hip-hop discourse by analysing features of language used by the artists and the underlying ideology with which they are infused. It is hoped that the songs analysed and findings will add to knowledge and contribute to ongoing discussions on language, gender, and discrimination, as well as shed light on the current nature of masculinity which is currently experiencing economic and social changes.

2. Material and Method

2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary approach that transcends the confines of any single theory or specific science. It uniquely integrates ethical principles into the issues it addresses, distinguishing it from other discourse analysis frameworks. Unlike traditional textual analysis, CDA also considers the social, historical, and cognitive contexts that surround the creation of a text (Van Dijk 1998). When these elements are combined in an analysis, they provide a more comprehensive understanding of the discourse, revealing the subtle ideologies embedded within and between the lines (Ogungbemi 2018).

CDA endeavors to uncover the subtle manipulation of language, thereby bringing to light its ethical dimension. This process equips readers with the necessary tools to recognize hidden and subtle meanings in discourse. Van Dijk (1998) defines CDA as a field focused on studying and analyzing written and spoken texts to expose the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias. He emphasizes that CDA seeks to understand how texts are used to maintain and legitimize social inequalities. Similarly, Fairclough (1995) describes CDA as a systematic exploration of "opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events, and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes; to investigate how such practices, events, and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power, and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony" (p.132).

In essence, Fairclough argues that CDA aims to make transparent the connections between discourse practices, social practices, and social structures, which might be opaque to the layperson. This means that CDA considers the broader social and cultural events, the discursive practices that produce them, and the dialectical relationship between them (Fairclough 1995; Ogungbemi 2016). It examines the role of discourse, which is itself a product of social and discursive practices, in producing and sustaining social relations of power and ideology. O'Halloran (2003) supports this view, stating that CDA is not merely a description of language and the formal features of discourse but rather aims to explain the connections between language, society, and ideology. This explanation helps to uncover how language functions within specific contexts to perpetuate social hierarchies and power dynamics.

Furthermore, Huckin (1995:95) adds that CDA is "a highly context-sensitive, democratic approach that takes an ethical stance on social issues with the aim of improving society." This implies that CDA is not only concerned with academic

analysis but also with the real-world implications of discourse. It explores how nontransparent relationships are crucial in securing power and hegemony and draws attention to forms of domination, social inequities, non-democratic practices, and a plethora of injustices. By doing so, CDA encourages people to engage in corrective actions and social change (Fairclough, 1995). Through this lens, CDA becomes a means to empower readers by showing them how to be aware of the indoctrinating ideologies designed to manipulate them.

CDA's comprehensive approach allows it to address various dimensions of discourse, including the power relations and ideological processes that shape and are shaped by language use. It recognizes that discourse is both socially constitutive and socially conditioned—it shapes and is shaped by social structures and processes. By examining discourse through this multifaceted lens, CDA provides deeper insights into the ways language functions to maintain or challenge existing power structures. In practical terms, CDA involves a meticulous analysis of texts and their contexts. Analysts might examine media reports, political speeches, or everyday conversations to uncover how language is used to assert dominance, marginalize certain groups, or propagate specific ideologies (Ogungbemi 2023; Ogungbemi 2024). This involves looking beyond the surface meaning of words to understand the broader implications and the power dynamics at play. For instance, a CDA of a political speech might reveal how certain groups are portrayed as threats, thus justifying harsh policies against them (Ogunsiji and Ogungbemi 2016). Alternatively, an analysis of educational materials might show how certain narratives perpetuate gender stereotypes, thereby influencing how young people perceive their roles in society.

Critical Discourse Analysis is a powerful analytical tool that goes beyond traditional discourse analysis by incorporating ethical considerations and a focus on power dynamics. It provides a framework for understanding how language is used to construct social realities and maintain or challenge power structures. By revealing the hidden mechanisms of discourse, CDA empowers individuals to recognize and resist manipulative uses of language, promoting a more equitable and just society (Ogungbemi and Okusanya 2016).

The study adopts an explanatory research design, in which a purposive sampling technique was used to select nine Nigerian hip hop songs selected for analysis. These are *Igbeyawo* by Oritse Femi, *Soldier* by Falz ft. Simi, *The Money* by Davido ft Olamide, *Logo Benz* by Lil Kesh, *Fall* by Davido, *Oliver Twist* by D'Banj, *Mr. Endowed* by D'Banj, *Living Things* by 9ice and *Wetin We Gain* by Victor AD. These songs were selected based on their focus on gender related themes in Nigerian society. The selected songs were produced between 2009 and 2018. As at the time of their release, they were ranked in the top 10 songs and enjoyed extensive playtime. The artistes selected are A-list Nigerians and major award-winning artistes who are known both nationally and internationally. We listened to the songs' lyrics, transcribed and translated them. Therefore, the lyrics were examined critically and coded for easy interpretation.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Get Rich at all Cost Syndrome and Materialistic ideals

Many Nigerian hip hop artistes are from the ghetto of Lagos and other cities in the country, environment characterized by scarcity of resources and lack of opportunity for upward mobility. Therefore, the acquisition of material possessions, which frequently indicate having to escape the shackles of poverty becomes very desirable and necessary. Following bell hooks (2004) that African American men confirm their manhood through making money by any means necessary, this section examines how Nigerian male hip hop artistes affirm their manhood through materialism and get rich at all cost syndromes. We begin first with the chorus of 9ice's "Living Things":

3.1.1. Excerpt 1

- As a living thing,
- I wanna be on top of things
- I wanna be doing things
- I wanna be controlling things
- I wanna be enterprising
- Yeh... ki n sa ti l'owo *I just have to be rich*
- Ole lob'omo je *stealing is not a praiseworthy practice*
- Ki n sa ti l'owo *I just have to be rich*
- Wire wire... *Wire wire*
- Ki n sa ti l'owo *I just have to be rich*
- Money order *Money order*
- Ki n sa ti l'owo *I just have to be rich*

- Ole je come and marry It could be come and marry
- Ki n sa ti l'owo *I just have to be rich*

(“Living Things,” 9ice)

In the above, 9ice constructs his masculinity by appealing to what hooks (2004:23) calls “an obsession with money as the marker of successful manhood.” The chorus of his song, “Living Things,” stresses his unbridled determination to be rich at all costs. Some of the lines in the chorus above clearly demonstrate this. In line 6, the expression “I just have to be rich” indicates desperation on the part of the artiste. This desperation is seen in the number of times he repeats the expression “I just want to be rich.” 9ice seems not to be perturbed by the source of the money he wants to make. What interests him is the need to control things, to be in charge as a man. He associates freely with internet fraudsters and their activities. These fraudsters depend on money from innocent foreigners whom they have baited and made to part with their hard-earned money. Some of the established ways of defrauding others are what 9ice refers to as “wire wire,” “money order” and “come and marry.” These sharp practices, also known as *Yahooing*, (see Ajayi and Bamgbose 2018 and Lazarus 2018) are ways through which internet fraudsters defraud their unsuspecting victims who are mainly Whites in Europe and America.

It has been argued elsewhere that the global spread of hip hop is the global spread of African American culture (Bozza 2003; Pennycook 2007). American hip hop is blemished by the trope of the “bling bling” era, celebrating the consumption of material goods such as money, jewellery and cars (Vito 2017). The lyrical content of American hip hop artistes such as 50 cent’s debut album “Get rich or die trying” promotes undying love for materialism and has found currency in the songs of many Nigerian hip hop artistes who are determined to be rich at all costs. At this juncture, we turn to the chorus of Victor AD’s “Wetin we Gain.”

3.1.2. Excerpt 2

- If we no make money If we do not make money
- Wetin we gain o? What is our gain?
- My brother wetin we gain? My brother, what is our gain?
- If we no buy the benz If we do not buy Benz
- Wetin we gain? What is our gain?
- My brother wetin we gain? My brother, what is our gain?
- If we no get control If we do not ‘control’
- Wetin we gain? What is our gain?

(“Wetin We Gain,” Victor AD)

In the above, Victor reduces the essence of man to materialistic pursuit. To him, a man is one who has made money, bought exotic cars and control others; anything short of these makes the man less than a man. With the repetition of the rhetorical question, “wetin be our gain?” Victor emphasizes his desire to be rich at all costs. Regarding materialism, the lyrics above find expression in the observation of Nieminen (2003) that since a good number of hip hop artistes rose from rags to riches, materialistic showing-off is essential to broadcast to others that they have made it. Victor, in this song appeals to what Duranti (2006:479) refers to as the “narrative of belonging” emphasizing his relationship with existential struggle against poverty which afflicts him and a host of others that he sings for. By using “we” and “our,” he creates an “ingroup” with those he refers to as “my brother,” and constructs him as being part of the socio-cultural milieu that dominates his music. This echoes the findings of Alim (2002) and Gbogi (2016) that complex network of pronouns can help configure belonging. Victor’s lyrics above, again, resonates with what Kline (2007) in his discussion of contemporary American hip hop bravado, refers to as flaunting one’s money and cars. A similar understanding is reflected in the emphasis that Victor places, in the same song, on constructing and affirming manhood through materialism. Explaining how men in Nigeria are pressured to provide for their family members, Victor considers being excessively rich as the only way to be in charge as a man. He sings:

3.1.3. Excerpt 3

- Phone dey ring Phone is ringing
- Na family dey call oh It is family that’s calling
- If no be billing, If it is not billing
- na something dey sup oh It is something else
- Anyhow e be, whatever it is,

- | | |
|---|---|
| • omo money is involve oh | Money is involved. |
| • Oluwa bless me cause I no fit dull oh | Lord bless me because I cannot be dull |
| • So much pressure on a male figure | There is much pressure on a male figure |
| • I say in dollar, I still want that ten figure | In Dollars, I want the ten figures |
| • I need the kind money | I need the kind of money |
| • wey go make Dangote say | that we make Dangote asks |
| • “Who be this dark skin man | who is this black man |
| • wey dey worry am | that is oppressing him? |

In the above, the artiste uses the homograph “figure” in the two successive lines: “so much pressure on a male *figure*” and “I say in dollar, I still want that ten *figure*” to reveal the societal pressure on men and discloses what he as a man wants in terms of money. Earlier in the song, he sings about the family making demands which he is expected to attend to as a man, and whatever their demand is, “money is involved.” What Victor sings about agrees with what the American society also expects from an average American man. hooks (2001) in her book, “Salvation” submits that the vast majority of African Americans create family life based on the sexist assumption that men should be the providers working to sustain the material needs of the family. Victor heightens his determination to be excessively rich by stating that he wants to be as rich as the Nigerian and African richest man, Aliko Dangote. This is by no means a feature that is peculiar to Nigerian hip hop music; discussing the American hip hop, Kitwana (2002) confirms that many hip hop artistes and their fans desire to become an overnight millionaire while still quite young.

Making money and living big take on a new dimension in Lil Kesh’s “Logo Benz.” Kesh’s goal as an artiste is to make it in life. To become economically successful, he sings, and offers prayers to both Jesus and Allah. Should he not be successful after working and praying, he is determined to explore other unconventional means. He sings thus:

3.1.4. Excerpt 4

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| • I dey pray to jesuu (jesuu) | I am praying to Jesus |
| • ko wo wole (kowo wole o) | Money has to come |
| • If money no enter | If money fails to come |
| • i go do blood money o... | I will do blood money |
| • I dey pray to Allah, (allah) | I am praying to Allah |
| • kowo wole o... (Kowo wole o) | Money has to come |
| • If money no enter | If money fails to come |
| • i go do blood money o. | I will do blood money |
| • Bo patalá le fun won jo... | Remove the large-sized panties for them |
| • Pata ni logo benz . | A pair of panties is the logo of Benz |
| • Ah afe wa benz | We want to drive Benz |

In the lyrics above, metaphor, which is one of the features of signifying identified by Smitherman (1977), is well pronounced and useful for our purpose here. For instance, when placed in the general context of the song, the word “pata” is a metaphor for ritualistic riches or blood money. The incorporation of Juju and witchcraft in blood money narrative in West Africa has been established in the literature (see Tade 2011; Whitty 2018). The song persona sings of his faith in Jesus and Allah to make him rich. He has an alternative should his prayers to Jesus and Allah not be answered. He would have sex with a lady and use her panties for “blood money.” Read from this lens and having in mind the religious heritages of a typical West African especially (i.e. Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion, especially the ease with which an average Nigerian can combine together two or more religious credos), “pata” in the lyrics above figures not as “a pair of panties” but as a metaphor for blood money. According to Whitty (2018), adherents of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria practice these religions in their own unique ways, and often engage in ritualistic practices. While a correlation has been drawn with a woman’s panties and the logo on Mercedes Benz vehicles, the resources, that is money with which to buy the exotic Mercedes Benz is the metaphor that “pata” as used in this context, figures. The societal expectation that a man is successful only when he is wealthy and drives executive cars is pushing young men into exploring alternative means to actualise their masculinity. In a bid to be successful and drive Benz, young men can go as far as using female panties to do money rituals. This contravenes the value the Yoruba proverb “Şe kóo ní; àbá o di teṅi; èyàn o soogùn oṛo (Work to have; intentions do not become possessions; no one makes money by magic). This Yoruba proverb is used to encourage hard work and to shun short cuts to riches and wealth. This also resonates with hooks’ (2004) observation that young black men in the hip hop generation have pledged their allegiance to self-destructive capitalist and patriarchal fantasies rather than thinking creatively.

3.1.5. Excerpt 5

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| • Eh I want to lowo | I want to be rich |
| • I want to lola | I want to be wealthy |
| • I want to buy Buggati | I want to buy Buggati |
| • I want to hmmm hmm Kim Kardashian | I want to have sex with Kim Kardashian |
| • at the back of my brand new Bentley | at the back of my brand new Bentley |

(“The Money, Davido ft. Olamide)

In these lyrics, the singer persona expresses his desire to be rich and wealthy. A man can only have the best women for himself if he is rich and has the good things of life. He believes being wealthy confers on him access to who is who in the world. Thus, he discloses what he intends to do inside one of his newly acquired cars: *have sex with Kim Kadarshian*. The specific interest evident here conforms to those associated with hegemonic masculinity, such as interest in cars and women, resonating with Morgan’s (2009) assertion that money is a symbol of power which can act as lures for influential and attractive romantic partners.

Masculinity as “a Dick Thing”

In Nigerian hip hop, men are almost always characterised, or sometimes present themselves as hungry for sex. This conforms with what hooks (2004:66) calls “patriarchal notions of manhood” which equates manhood with fucking. I turn to Davido’s “Fall” to illustrate this point.

3.1.6. Excerpt 6

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| • I don’t wanna be a player no-more | I don’t want to be a player <i>no more</i> |
| • Cause, my guys call me Cristiano | Because my guys call me Cristiano |

(‘Fall’, Davido)

In the African linguistic worldview, meaning is multifaceted (See Gbogi 2016; Yankah 1995; Saah 1986). According to Gbogi (2016: 181), in the African worldview, “a simple greeting such as “hello” may connote several semantic ambiguities, which can be determinate or indeterminate, negative or positive, and face-building or face-threatening.” This is what the Yoruba proverb, “Pele láko, ó lábo” when translated “Take it easy can be either masculine or feminine” refers to (See Owomoyela 2005). In excerpt 5 above, “Cristiano” circuitously figures for a highly promiscuous man. The singer-persona takes pride in the fact that his buddies call him Cristiano, a reference to the Portugal and Juventus international footballer. It is a reference to the renowned footballer who is both successful on and off the field. He has scored hundreds of goals on the field of play, and he is also renowned for his off field sexual escapades with beautiful ladies especially models. Davido is in the song likened to

Christiano who symbolizes virility and proficiency. In addition, the singer-persona quotes verbatim a line “I don’t wanna be a player no-more” in the chorus of Joe and Big Pun’s song “Still not a Player.” This once again confirms the influence of American culture and by extension, American hip hop culture, whose history is fastened with associating back men with what Dei-Sharpe (2019:21) refers to as “hypersexual machismo,” on the Nigerian hip hop culture. Davido’s use of the lyric demonstrates the intertextual conversation between Nigerian hip hop and American hip hop and emphasizes the shared linguistic register with respect to masculinity and heteronormativity in the global hip hop nations (see Gbogi 2016, Lane 2011).

This is also evident in Dbanj’s song ‘Oliver Twist’, in the excerpt below:

3.1.7. Excerpt 7

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| • I have a confession | I have a confession |
| • I like Beyonce, but she dey with Jay-Z | I like Beyonce but she is with Jay-Z |
| • I like Nicki, her yansh is bigger | I like Nikki; her buttocks are bigger |
| • I like Rihanna, she dey make me dey go gaga | I like Rihanna; she drives me crazy |
| • You cannot blame me though | You cannot blame me though |
| • I wanna have them all | I want to have <i>them</i> all. |
| • I know it but the truth is that | I know it but the truth is that |
| • I am just an Oliver Twist. | I am just an <i>Oliver Twist</i> |

(‘Oliver Twist’, D’Banj)

The last line of the excerpt above, “I am just an Oliver Twist” contains a metaphor that is useful for our purpose in this section. The significance of Oliver Twist as used in this context is clearly not literal, but metaphoric. Oliver Twist is a metaphor for the life of promiscuity which the singer-persona, D’Banj, lives. The confession by D’Banj in the song is noteworthy. He wants several women at the same time. Although some of these women are married already, he still feels like sleeping with them, revealing in the process what (Dei-Sharpe 2019) refers to as the confluent love ideals of sexual fluidity, sex-centric and non-monogamous unions. The women mentioned by the singer-persona are well known hip-hop artists in America. This again reveals the continuous interaction Nigerian hip hop is having with its American counterpart. Following the hypermasculine tradition, D’Banj judges the women’s bodies, labelling Nicky Minaj’s “yansh” (female butt) as bigger than Beyonce’s and Rihanna’s.

The intertextual reference to the fictitious character, Oliver Twist in Charles Dickens’ novel “Oliver Twist,” in which a young orphan who is a victim of slow starvation mustered courage to ask for more gruel, reveals the continued role of Western colonialism in the familiarity and popularity of British literature in the formation of Nigerian ideology. The implication of this is that the notion of masculinity in Nigeria is produced in conformity with notions of masculinity in other countries especially with Britain, a country with which Nigeria has historical ties. An average hip hop fan in Nigeria is familiar with the story of Oliver Twist. In the Nigerian parlance, an Oliver Twist is one who always asks for more be it relations to women or food. Therefore, Oliver Twist as used by D’Banj in the song is a metaphor to denote a man with an insatiable appetite for women and sex. He considers himself an Oliver Twist because he always wants more women the same way Oliver Twist wants more gruel. The listener must rely on his or her schematic knowledge of the fiction work, Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens to interpret the label ‘Oliver Twist’ as referring to an idealised form of masculinity associated with insatiable appetite for sex. Our position in this study agrees with Lee (1993) observation that the interpretation assigned to the signifying metaphor is derived from prior social knowledge that is peculiarly cultural.

In the next lyrics, D’Banj also directs attention to his phallic strength as a symbol of masculinity.

3.1.8. Excerpt 8

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Hey sexy lady | Hey sexy lady |
| • I heard you have been searching for the special one | I heard you have searching for the special one |
| • So I mon give you a reason to pick me | I am going to give you a reason to pick me |
| • I got so many things that you go like about me | I have got so many things that you will like about me |
| • but I mon give you a few | but I will give you a few |
| • I’m a kind of brother your boyfriend wanna be | I am a kind of brother your boyfriend wants to be |
| • be cos I am so <i>endowed</i> | because I am so <i>endowed</i> . |
| • See the ladies looking at me, I mean because | See the ladies looking at me, I mean because |
| • they want to see <i>it</i> cos I am so <i>endowed</i> . | they want to see <i>it</i> because I am so <i>endowed</i> |

(D’Banj, ‘Mr Endowed’)

The singer persona tries to convince a lady to be his lover. The artiste, D’Banj, gives reasons why he should be the lady’s special one. In the above, the meaning of “endowed” is semantically shifted from its original meaning to mean a huge and functional penis. The singer persona tells the lady why he is the most qualified of the suitors, ‘I am so endowed’. Further, what D’Banj is endowed with is revealed: ‘see the ladies looking at me, I mean because they want to see *it* because I am so *endowed*.’ Here, D’Banj says ladies are looking at him because he has got a huge penis, and the ladies want to see it. He is in effect saying that because he is endowed with a big penis, then he is the most qualified man to marry the lady in question. In the lyrics, D’banj’s penis is considered a dominant object that is in high demand by ladies, “See the ladies looking at me, I mean because they want to see *it*.” The singer persona boasts about having a bigger penis and more desirable to ladies than other men, “I am a kind of brother your boyfriend wants to be because I am so *endowed*.” This echoes what Wallace (1978) and hooks (2004) refer to as phallocentric masculinity, whereby achievement and self-esteem are associated with acts of sexual and physical supremacy.

3.2. Sexism in Nigerian hip hop

Within hip hop culture, sexism is a technique used to assert male dominance (hooks 2004, Rose 1994). Sexism has been linked to gender roles and stereotypes. This phenomenon is by no means limited to Nigerian hip hop; it is a constant feature in the global hip hop culture. It dominates the corporate culture of American hip hop (Rose 1994). Sexism as it

relates to gender roles in Nigerian hip hop and the Nigerian society can be seen Oritse Femi's "Igbeyawo" and Falz featuring Simi's "Soldier." I begin with Oritse Femi's "Igbeyawo."

3.2.1. Ex 9

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| • Se ori iwo iyawo gbo ti oko eh | <i>Wife</i> be submissive to your husband |
| • Se ounje lasiko | <i>Prepare</i> meal on time |
| • Pon omi lasiko | <i>Fetch</i> water on time |
| • Fo aso lasiko | <i>Wash</i> clothes on time |
| • Fun ni tibi je lasiko | <i>Give</i> him sex on time |
| • Tori oun ti a gbe sile | Because it is what is left unattended to |
| • Oun ni omo eran gbe | that the baby of an animal carries |

("Igbeyawo," Oritse Femi).

3.2.2. Ex 10

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Oya stand attention | Stand at attention |
| • Am talking to you, you are responding | I'm talking to you and you are responding |
| • Emi okunrin mesan | I, a valiant man |
| • How can you be asking me question? | How can you be asking me question? |
| • You no dey look face so | Can't you see my worth? |
| • It's like you don't know my name | It's like you don't know my name |
| • Mofe kama date though | I want us to be romantically involved |
| • Eyi to pe ni boyfriend o le to | The one you call your boyfriend is not man enough |

("Soldier," Falz ft. Simi)

In except 8, Oritse Femi spells out a series of actions that a woman is expected to perform to a husband. These include being obedient and submissive to the husband who is usually regarded as the head of the family and hence superior to the woman both in the family hierarchy, preparing meal, fetching water and washing clothes, entrenching the belief that men are superior to women. The lyrics reveal the status of women in society. The roles assigned to women project them as inferior beings when compared to men, leading to women being oppressed in society. This suggests hooks' (1994:116) words, "the sexist, misogynist, patriarchal ways of thinking and behaving that are glorified in gangsta rap are a reflection of the prevailing values in our society." The singer persona believes that men have the licence to gallivant from one woman to another. To guide against this, wives should do everything possible to satisfy them sexually. Failure to offer sex to the husband could result in a wife losing her husband to another woman. This resonates with the findings of Connell (1995, 2005) that in patriarchal societies, the hegemonic man displays hypermasculine characteristics that include unbridled sexual prowess and heterosexuality. Failure of the wife to wash husband's clothes, cook his meal, fetch water and offer him sex on time is a recipe for a failed marriage.

Sexism is again brought to the fore in the song "Soldier" by Falz and Simi. Falz, the male singer persona, is trying to woo a lady in the song. He does this through intimidation and by demeaning both the lady and her boyfriend. In patriarchal societies, women are mainly seen but not heard. In other words, a woman should only pay attention when a man talks. In these two clauses, 'I'm talking to you, and you are responding', Falz emphasizes the prevailing ideology that women's submission to the authority of men is a virtue. To emphasize the social and cultural superiority of men over women, Falz draws on the Yoruba common saying, 'okunrin mesan' describing a valiant and strong man. Taken literally, the Yoruba phrase, okunrin mesan' means 'nine men'. However, when situated in context, it is used to describe a man who is very powerful, whose influence is felt in society. This resonates with the findings of hooks (1994) that hyper-masculine, sexist and misogynist tendencies in hip hop reflect the predominant values in society. In addition, the song also raises the issue of women submitting to the authority of men by obeying without questioning. The rhetorical question, 'how can you be asking me question?' in line 4 is worthy of consideration. It drives home the point that traditionally, hegemonic masculinity is built on the culture of domination and conspicuous silences where the male gender dominates the female gender according to the dictates of culture and society mores.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study have revealed that Hip Hop lyrics are tools in the framing of ideologies of masculinity. We have revealed the fundamental role of language in the construction of ideology. This study has argued that the artistes

construct hegemonic ideals of masculinity characterized by get rich quick and at all cost syndrome, reducing the essence of man to dick and sexual relations, and sexism. It has been established in the study that Nigerian men like in other patriarchal societies adopt hypermasculinity in their dealings with the womenfolk. The hegemonic masculine ideology ultimately upholds the subordination of women and upholds the dominance of men especially in heterosexual relationship. In the family hierarchy, women are expected to be seen but not heard. This is evident in many of the songs where men expect women to submit with questioning even if there is a need to question things that are not clear to her. This is connected to the belief that men are superior to women and more intelligent than them. Thus, whatever men say and do especially when it involves men and women should be taken as perfect.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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