



Fashion and music trends in the 21st century Nigeria

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Abstract

Fashion and music are vital constituents of music videos, and the Nigerian entertainment industry which has risen from a place of obscurity to global relevance. From the Afrobeat genre which is traceable to the music of Fela Anikulapo Kuti, to the most recent - Afro-pop or Afro-fusion which is traceable to contemporary Nigerian artists like Wizkid, D-Banj, Davido, Yemi Alade, Burna Boy, Niniola, Omah Lay and many others. Nigerian artists have continued to make bold statements with their fashion and music styles around the world. Using two Nigerian artists – Burna Boy and Yemi Alade, this study examines the influence of fashion and music in African entertainment and the world by extension. This qualitative research employs Molefi Kete Asante's (2003) "Theory of Afrocentricism" as its theoretical framework and argues that both artists use their fashion and music styles to make social commentaries on issues affecting Nigerians, while promoting the Nigerian culture as well as combating negative narratives of Africa.

Keywords: fashion, music, Burna Boy, Yemi Alade, Nigeria

Introduction

Music and fashion have shared robust relationship because musicians are artists who perform and every performer must be clothed in costumes. Fashion which describes the latest style of clothing in vogue at a particular place and time is synonymous with costume in the theatre. Costumes are basically clothes worn by actors or performers to cover their nakedness but beyond that, costumes give life to the characters actors portray whether on screen or on stage, and can accentuate the mood and theme of a performance. According to William Shakespeare (1993) in *King Lear*, "through tattered clothes great vices do appear; Robes and furred gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold and the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks. Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it" (p. 64). In this quote, Shakespeare compares a character's clothing to his or her virtues and demonstrates the power of clothing to hide or reveal a character's personality. Similarly, Maranovna (2009) observes that the entertainment industry and the fashion world have been interlinked for hundreds, if not thousands of years. However, what probably started as getting dressed up for shows, has evolved into intertwined fortunes in which entertainment drives fashion, and fashion drives entertainment.

In today's world, celebrities and stars have become fashion icons, as such, television shows, film and music, beyond serving as outlets for creativity, have become fashion outlets, if not the driving force of creativity in the entertainment industry. It is also important to observe that musicians are intentional about their clothing styles, and project their music through their clothing styles. It is common to see fans dressed like their favourite music stars in concerts or other shows, and some music stars have gone a step further by owning their own fashion brands. An example is the American rapper Kanye West who owns a fashion brand known as Yeezy. According to Webb (2018), while Kanye West's primary occupation has always been music, for most of his career, he has

also crossed into fashion. While he's known for his ongoing Yeezy line, comprising show-stopping runway presentations, Adidas collaborations, the rapper has also released sneakers with Nike and Louis Vuitton and launched a few clothing lines. Also, Lady Gaga, another American singer and fashion icon, according to Alexandre (2019), Gaga made waves at the 2011 Council of Fashion Designer's of America Awards (CFDA), where she took home the Fashion Icon from the Council of Fashion Designer's of America award, and rocked the red carpet in sky-high 24-inch platform shoes!

The Nigerian afrobeat musician Bisade Ologunde popularly known as Lagbaja, quickly comes to mind when it comes to a good blend of the arts of music and fashion in Nigeria. Known for his masquerade-like attire, and unlike traditional masquerades who only appear during festivals and rituals to dance and recite incantations, Lagbaja is a masquerade who rather than mumble incantations, sings, dances, plays the saxophone and instead of spitting fire or wielding canes on people, uses his songs to entertain and comment on social anomalies in the society. According to Michael (2018), Lagbaja's mask or masquerading is not to keep the masquerade tradition alive or to represent the ancestral spirits. His mask is used as an icon of man's facelessness; the anonymity of the 'so-called common man'. The mask and the name embody the faceless and the voiceless in the society, especially in Nigeria. Lagbaja is a Yoruba word that means 'nobody in particular'. In the same vein, other contemporary Nigerian musicians like Wizkid, Davido, Tiwa Savage, Rema, Fireboy, Adekunle Gold, Simi, Yemi Alade, Burna Boy, Tekno, Flavour and many others, have continued to influence Africa and the world through their music and fashion styles. Using two Nigerian artists – Burna Boy and Yemi Alade, this study examines the influence of fashion and music in African entertainment.

Biography of Burna Boy

The Nigerian singer Burna Boy whose real name is Damini Ogulu was born on the 2nd of July, 1991 in Port Harcourt city, Nigeria to Bosede and Samuel Ogulu and the only son and eldest of three children. He began producing music at the age of ten years old. He attended Montessori International primary school in Port Harcourt (1993-2002) and Corona Secondary School, Lagos (2002-2008). After this he relocated to London to pursue university education. He studied Media Technology at the University of Sussex (2008-2009) and Media Communications and Culture at Oxford Brookes University (2009-2010) but dropped out and moved back to Nigeria where he continued with his music career. He did a one year internship with Rhythm 93.7 FM Port Harcourt before officially launching his professional music career with Aristocrat records; making him to relocate to Lagos permanently.

The musical influences from his mother and his grandfather Benson Idonije, who was Fela Anikulapo Kuti's music manager had a lot of impact in the music of Burna Boy. He released a series of EPs, singles, mixtapes and in 2018 he released his album 'Outside' which led to his breakthrough in the U.S debuting at No. 3 on Billboard's Reggae Albums chart, especially with the song "Ye". In 2019, he released another album 'African Giant' which enjoyed positive media attention and reviews from within and outside Nigeria and was nominated for the 62nd Annual Grammy Award in the Best World Album category.

His unique style of Afro-fusion attracted the American R & B singer Beyonce Knowles-Carter's Lion King soundtrack "The Gift". He also won the 2019 BET Best International Act Award and 2019 MTV Europe Music Award for "Best African Act". The highlight of his career came in 2021 when he won the Best Global Music Album with his album 'Twice As Tall' in the Grammy Awards show. Since then, he has continued to enjoy positive media coverage both locally and internationally.

Biography of Yemi Alade

Yemi Eberечи Alade known professionally as Yemi Alade was born on the 13th of March 1989 is a Nigerian Afro-pop singer and songwriter. Her father Jame Alade was a Police Commissioner of the Yoruba descent and her mother Helen Uzoma was from Abia State in Nigeria. As the fifth child in a family of seven, she attended St. Saviour British Primary School in Lagos and Victory Grammar School Lagos for her secondary school education and proceeded to the University of Lagos to study Geography.

Her obsession for music made her to keep writing and singing songs. In 2005, she was part of an all girl group called, Noty Spices. In 2009 she won the Peak Talent Show, and in 2014, her single "Johnny" brought her to the limelight. She was signed to Effyzzie Music Group in 2012 and released her single "Ghen Ghen Love". On October 2, 2014, she released her debut studio album 'King of Queens' which featured collaborations with producers such as Selebobo, Sizzle Pro, Shady Bizniz, Philkeyz, Young D, GospelOnDeBeatz, DIL, OJB Jezreel, Mr. Chidoo, Fliptyce, EL McGee, and Beat Nation.

Yemi's second studio album 'Mama Africa', released on March 25, 2016, focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the African woman and combines elements of Afro-pop, highlife, R&B, coupé-décalé, hip-hop, and pop. She won the MTV African Music Awards for Best Female in 2015 and 2016 and was nominated for Artist of the Year in 2015, making her the first female to win the MAMAs for Best Female consecutively. In 2015, Alade was the first Nigerian female to be nominated for the MTV Europe Music Awards (EMAs) for Best African Act and was a coach on season two of *The Voice Nigeria*.

She was appointed Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in September 2020. Her music has been of influence in many African countries and the world, as she sings in six languages and has made a lot international

collaborations including the five times Grammy Award-winning artist Angelique Kidjo. She sings in six languages and her good blend of music and flamboyant display of African fashion in her music videos distinguishes her amongst Nigerian musicians.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Molefi Kete Asante's (2003) "Theory of Afrocentricism" which focuses on the use of African ideals as the foundation of any discussion that borders on African culture. It aims to celebrate African origin, history and the characters of the black race. Founded by Molefi Kete Asante, an African-American professor and philosopher in the 1980s, Asante (2003) argues that Afrocentricism is a mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interest, values, and perspectives predominate. Challenging the theory of Eurocentricism, Afrocentricity argues that:

Unlike the Eurocentric view of black relationships, the Afrocentric view places great emphasis on the existence of distinctive and common cultural expressions such as music, dance, and folk tales. Unlike the Eurocentric view, which traces the origins of black Americans to urban ghettos in the North or slavery in the South, the Afrocentric perspective traces distinctive black American socio-cultural patterns to their rightful origins, the larger continent of Africa (Moikobu, 1981, p. 7).

Reacting to how Eurocentricism propagates an interpretation of world history that mirrors Africa on a negative light, Hoskins (1992) states that:

Afrocentrism presents and deals with an authentic and specific culture and history - a cultural history that did

not begin in Father Europe but a human/world history that began in Mother Africa. Indeed, the stark reality is that Eurocentrism had to – and still continues to – falsify, misrepresent, and distort human/world history as His-Story, His-Eurocentric-Story in order to maintain European global dominance/hegemony. Eurocentrism indeed represent racist, divisive, ahistorical, and dysfunctional view of world history (p. 247).

Five key principles guide the Afrocentric idea, and these are:

1. An intense interest in psychological location as determined by symbols, motifs, rituals, and signs.
2. A commitment to finding the subject-place of Africans in any social, political, economic, or religious phenomenon with implications for the issues of sex, gender, and class.
3. A defense of African cultural elements as historically valid in the context of art, music, and literature.
4. A celebration of 'centeredness' and agency and a commitment to lexical refinement that eliminates pejoratives about Africans or other people.
5. A powerful imperative from historical sources to revise the collective text of African people (Asante, 2008, pp. 104–108).

Afrocentricism is an appeal to Africans and black people to reject and resist all forms of cultural, psychological, political and economic domination and discriminations based on race, sex, gender and class by the West and Europe. Asante urges Africans and blacks to return to African spiritual base by studying African cultural heritage.

Fashion Trends in Nigeria

The origin of fashion can be linked to the desire to adorn oneself in beautiful attire. There are a lot of technological advancements and

contemporary innovations that have shaped the trajectory of fashion and culture in Nigeria. Discussions surrounding fashion and dress styles in Nigeria show that dress was a tool for distinction of class and an expression of one's personality. Those distinctions seem blurred especially with contemporary fashion trends as well as international influence especially from western countries. Ochuba (2015) points to the fact that clothing other than its functionality, has from time immemorial served also decorative purposes. Many people would have owned very few clothing if the desire was solely functional. Fashion however expresses individuality and emphasizes social stratum.

According to Ekanem (1987) in an interview with Mr Orok Duke of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Calabar, Nigerians are bereft of written histories about the kinds of materials and fabrics used by our forefathers mainly because there was no formal writing at the time. Information on some of the fashion styles practiced by our ancestors were deduced from oral stories handed down by elders during casual discussions, interviews or folklores. Jefferson (1974, p.26) agrees that African style of dress like many tribal costumes and ceremonies have persisted through the ages and even into the twentieth century. Ray (1985) while discussing "The Old and New Fashion," notes that many people wore amulets to protect themselves from hostile magic. In contemporary times, similar ornaments are worn to generate self esteem and display wealth. Occasionally, some ornaments have been seen to have ritualistic tendencies.

Contemporary fashion has developed into what many researchers have termed as wearable art. This of course involves a wide range of styles and techniques with clothing embellishments derived from a variety of sources not limited to discount markets, retail stores, used or old dresses, fabric and tailoring shops. These items have become very useful media to making creative fashion statements while pushing the boundaries of textile and fashion in

Nigeria and beyond.

The former president of the Fashion Designers Association of Nigeria, Folorunsho (1993) acknowledges that fashion is relevant, relative and dynamic to its environment. In her creative works, she explores fabrics and motifs that represent Africa as well as captures the symbols, aspirations, styles and dreams of Africa. The result of her research led to production of designs that embraced contemporary realities while retaining its African originality. For Folorunsho, designs should be a hybrid of African heritage while embracing exemplary western designs. This seems to be the controlling narrative in contemporary fashion in Nigeria today. The result of her study is also very relevant here.

It is important to note that the craze for Western attire seemed to take over the fashion atmosphere for a while. This period saw many Nigerians abandoning their indigenous fabrics and embracing Western dress practices. This trend was more noticeable among many civil servants. According to Ukwu (2007), the campaign effort of late Mazi Mbonu Ojike of the “Boycot the Boycottables” fame caused the federal government at the time to make it compulsory for its public servants to wear Nigerian attires to their offices on Fridays. The flamboyant wears of Chief Okotie Eboh, the former finance minister for Nigeria, and many prominent politicians and leaders such as Chief Tom Ikimi, Ibrahim Babangida and even former president Olusegun Obasanjo, helped inspire tons of Nigerians to appreciate more the beauty and uniqueness of Nigerian fabrics. Before long, many premium brands, Western designers and celebrities began to appropriate African textiles into their fashion look books. Folorunsho (2003) notes that this was the point of evolution for African fashion, which makes more evident the fact that tons of individuals are no longer satisfied with the functionality of textiles and are constantly in search for new ideas. The infusion of global practices, occasioned by technological advancement in different spheres of life, has influenced a lot of our

localized practices especially how Nigerians now view fashion. This has caused a decline in what was culturally acceptable especially when dressing in fabrics and attires indigenous to Nigerians. Prior to this time, an African woman took pride in appearing in a double wrapper and blouse and sometimes with matching head gear. However, many of those practices are not as common as they were previously. Many African women have devised trendy ways of incorporating African designs, fabrics and cultures into their everyday fashion. This has paved dimensions for African men, women and children to stay fashionable while still portraying culture. Several scholars have shown similar interest in the development of fashion and fashion trends in Nigeria. Many of them agree that the intricacies in designs and splash of colours that our fabrics present make for more interesting Western designs. Jennings (2011) notes that Nigeria's Shade Thomas-Fahm returned to Nigeria in 1960 after her training at the Central Saint Martins in London to launch the Shade's Boutique Chain where she offered modern versions of traditional garments. The pre-tied gele, turning iro and buba into a zip-up wrapper skirt and adapting a man's agbada into a woman's embroidered boubou were some of her first exhibits. This was a welcome development for a period when many women wore imported dresses while African garments were seen as less fashionable. Aside fashion designers, photographers like Samuel Fosso who grew up in Nigeria but fled to Bangui in Central African Republic in the wake of the Biafran war, shot paying clients by day but became his own muse at night. His focus was on African costumes. With different sets and costumes, he transformed his character to tell stories of colonialism and the contributions of both the colonialists and the colonized who enabled slavery. Many of these photographs absorbed African culture while engaging in the ongoing dialogues between fashion and music trends on the international scale.

Over the years, several other designers, photographers and

music artists have capitalized on the successes of Shade Thomas-Fahm which has given rise to many of the recent innovations burgeoning fashion designers have recorded. Artistes like Fela Anikulapo Kuti also intentionally sold the African culture through his costumes, chants and rhythms.

Nigerian Music: An Overview

The nation Nigeria is an assemblage of different languages and cultures. Prior to the arrival of the colonial masters, there existed religious and social cultural practices in the form of rituals, rites and festivals amongst the many ethnic groups that make up Nigeria, and music was a vital part of these cultural performances. According to Buchanan (1955), there are over 400 ethnic groups in Nigeria (Buchanan cited in Omibiyi-Obidike, 2012, p.187). Similarly, studies on African linguistics by Greenberg (1959) and others revealed that most of the languages spoken in Nigeria fall under the big Niger-Congo family and are subdivided into seven sub-families, three out of which are spoken in Nigeria. This linguistic diversity reflects the cultural diversity of Nigeria; a diversity which is also highlighted in the country's musical culture. This explains the reason why each ethnic group in Nigeria has its own music that differentiates it from others. In this regard Nketia (1964) observes that:

...until a few decades ago the music picture in many parts of Africa was primarily that of traditions of linguistic groups as cultural units. So, there was Akan music, Adangme music, Yoruba music, Kalabari music, etc. each one practiced by communities sharing common beliefs, common values and common idea (p. 34).

Notwithstanding, the contact with foreign musical cultures during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries resulted in influences that redefined African music in terms of type, structure and

performance. In this regard, Omibiyi-Obidike (2012, p.187) opines that, “although indigenous music of the heterogeneous African peoples still exist and are practiced for appropriate traditional socio-cultural events, new idioms of music have developed such as those performed by Christians and Muslims communities”, as well as those whose origin is traceable to the indigenous traditions of the African peoples. This particular brand of African music is inter-ethnic in nature as it cuts across different ethnicities and is designed mainly for communal celebrations, entertainment and seen as a cultural heritage and fulfillment of traditional obligations, while the music composed by Western trained Nigerian musicians is performed in concert halls.

The Afrobeat genre is another major export of the Nigerian music industry which was pioneered by Fela Kuti. Its origin is traced to the 1960s and 1970s and is a blend of traditional Yoruba music with jazz, West African highlife and funk. Fela was known for his musical talent, eccentric character, and involvement in post-colonial African politics. Born into a prominent Yoruba family prominent in anti-colonial activism, according to Pettas (2017), Fela was first inspired by the fertile African jazz scene in London, where he was studied medicine in the 1960s. Although he abandoned his studies and returned to Nigeria for a career in music, it wasn't until almost a decade later that his band started to see success. Their timeless recordings from the 1970s made a significant impact on the Nigerian music scene before gaining popularity around the globe. He is now considered one of the most influential musicians in the world. His albums *The 69 Los Angeles Sessions*, *Best of the Black President*, *Expensive Shit*, *Live!*, *Zombie* and *The Underground Spiritual Game* remain extremely popular.

With influences from the Black Panther movement, Fela's songs criticized the socio-political scenes in Nigeria, and were furnished with Nigerian proverbs. A common characteristic of his songs involved criticisms of military dictatorship in post-

independence and a call to Nigerians to stand up for their rights and be self-reliant.

Similarly, the hip hop genre whose origin is traceable to America emerged in the late 1980s in Nigeria. According to Adedeji (2017), youths embraced the genre in order to find their own voice, tell their own stories and hopefully effect a change in the country's socio-political climate. Globalization played an important role in exposing youths to the music while the harsh economic condition and unfavorable political climate from the late 1990s upwards fueled the determination of youths to find in hip hop an avenue for self-expression and a voice with which to depict the realities of their time. This is well captured in the track "Questions and Answers" by Sound Sultan one of the pioneer hip hop artistes in Nigeria (pp. 76-77).

The Nigerian Afro hip hop genre was initially an imitation of the American version and this alienated the Nigerian audience from it. However, Nigerian singers began to rebrand, modify and domesticate it, giving it a more-Nigerian identity through language, performance and visual projection. Adedeji(2017) observes that this new hip hop portrays a lot of peculiarities and the earliest exposure of the Nigerian audience to this was through "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 consolidation of the unique style of afro-hip hop that is fully Nigerianized which is now being taken to higher level by the crop of the new wave players in the field like Olamide, Wizkid, Phyno, Reminisce and many others (p.77).

The Afro-pop or Afro-fusion is another brand of Nigerian music which is a blend of African and Western music styles; often

with electronically amplified instrumentation. Popular Nigerian Afro-pop musicians include Wizkid, Davido, Burna Boy, Tiwa Savage, Olamide, Mr. Eazi, Yemi Alade, Simi, Adekunle Gold, Falz, Joeboy, Iyanya, Wande Coal and many others. In the same vein, neo-traditional popular music cultures like juju, fuji, and highlife have been synchronized with hip hop beats to make them more fashionable and appealing. This is seen as Adedeji(2017, p.78) notes, in the releases of new wave Nigerian hip hop where the rhythmic contour and sonic reverberation always progress seamlessly between fuji , highlife or juju pattern in a synchronized fashion as typified in songs like “Woju”- Kiss Daniel (2015) , “Connect” -Phyno (2014), “Ojuelegba” - Wizkid (2015), “Daddy” Reminisce (2015), “Ovation” -Tiwa Savage (2016), “Abulesowo” - Olamide (2016) among others. Burna Boy’s album *African Giant* which was released in 2019, borrows a lot from Fela’s Afrobeat in terms of style. Burna boy’s mother Bose Ogulu is alleged to be one of Fela’s dancers and Burna Boy’s grandfather, Benson Idonije; a renowned Nigerian music critic, used to be Fela’s manager. This perhaps, accounts for Fela’s influence in the music of Burna Boy. His wining of the Best Global Music Album with his album *Twice As Tall* and Wizkid’s winning of the Best Music Video for his song with Beyonce entitled “Brown Skin Girl” from *Lion King: The Gift* album, in the 2021 Grammy Awards show, are a testament of the growing influence and popularity of Nigeria’s music around the world.

Yemi Alade’s Appropriation of 21st Century Fashion

Yemi Alade, just like Burna Boy and other artistes in Nigeria has constantly engaged her music and art to interrogate contemporary societal issues. Since “Johnny,” taken from her debut studio Album broke the internet in 2014, there has been deliberate intentionality in promoting the African culture in her costumes, dance and music. A run through some of her songs, show that she circles unapologetically

the theme of the African woman and what she exemplifies: her expectations, triumphs and sometimes disappointments. On many occasions, she puts herself on the spotlight as she portrays these attributes. Yemi Alade works with several other artistes but does not deviate from her theme of promoting the female gender either as a single or married hardworking mother or lady. Some of her songs that properly fall into this category include but not limited to “Ferrari,” “Kom-Kom,” “Mama,” “Single & Searching,” “Shekerere” featuring Angelique Kidjo, “Mama Oyoyo”. Some of her songs also exemplify the falsehood and excessive deceit by members of the opposite gender in their desperate need for sexual gratification. In this article, we will discuss Yemi Alade’s “Ferrari” (2016) and “Shekere” (2019) ft Angelique Kidjo. The lyrics of “Ferrari” are presented thus:

Oh oooo ah ah
Uhmm oh baby ah ah
Ferrari salary ah ahah



(Chorus)

If you love me you go buy me Ferrari ha ha
If you like me you go pay me salary eh eh
Soup wey sweet na money dey cook am
If you want it you go spend to chop eh eh
Cos I love you no be mouth oh oh oh
No be mouth oh eh
Love no be for mouth oh ah ah
No be mouth oh eh
I love you no be mouth oh oh oh
No be mouth oh eh
Love no be for mouth oh ah ah
No be mouth oh eh

Oga tinye aka na akpa we tego
My mate they do holiday for Chicago
Container no na high sea na normal excuse o
I don dey wait so tey wait come dey wait me oh

My front eh my back eh
Dey do you ishingbaka
If you want to gbadun me well
Mr Man you must ginger
Gucci oh Fendi oh
Go te louboutine tinyem nuku
No dey call me sweet pie with nothing oh

(Repeat Chorus)

Oga I don tire to stay mainland
E no go bad if you buy me mansion for Banana Island
Open supermarket for me for Netherlands yes
Nothing suppose too much for me as your sweetheart oh eh

My front eh my back eh
Dey do you ishingbaka
If you want to gbadun me well
Mr. Man you must ginger
Gucci oh Fendi oh
Go te louboutine tinyem nuku
No dey call me sweet pie with nothing oh

(Repeat Chorus)

Efisi
YemiAlade
E dey cool along

(Capasso, 2016, track 3).

In the song, Yemi Alade x-rays her views on issues surrounding women. In the first verse, she gives her prospective admirers conditions for accessing her love. She validates this by insisting that a well prepared meal costs good money when she said “soup wey sweet, na money dey cook am” (Capasso, 2016, track 3). This song by Yemi shows the struggle of the African woman for the nice things of life and the various options available to her to get her desires. Through this song, she shows how many women exploit the generosity of men to get a ‘salary’ even though she’s not his employee. The man must provide items like cars and houses in choice locations around the world, the most expensive gadgets, including shoes and accessories even when it is not within his capability. The video of Alade’s “Ferrari” shows a suitor who poses as a very successful village farmer is willing to give all he can afford but his best is not good enough.

Fig. 1: A suitor wooing Yemi Alade



In three scenes, Yemi Alade compares the similarities in the desires of different kinds of women. The first scene examines the desires

of the woman in the rural setting as similar to the lady in the city, even though the circumstances are different, their desires are the same. The last part of the video presents a young man, properly dressed who pulls up in a nice car driven by his friend. The irony here is that he doesn't even offer her anything as in the previous scenes but the resistance from the woman is almost non-existent as it seems she is now the one flaunting herself to catch his attention because he looks like he can handle her needs.

The story portrayed in the video points to why many young men and women in the 21st century indulge in issues relating to cyber fraud and other related crimes in a bid to appear comfortable enough to handle the vanities of women among other things. The trajectory of "Ferrari" also supports the mainstream belief that life is easier and better for women as they seem to get things more effortlessly than their male counterparts. This may also be one of the reasons why there is an increase in transgender men and crossdresser in Nigeria who feel more comfortable presenting themselves as women. We have such examples as Okuneye Idris also known as Bobrisky and James Obialor popularly referred to as James Brown. For James Brown and Bobrisky, a lot of their following on social media is as a result of the controversial contents they put out especially as it relates to their female identity. This automatically means more money as they now have more traffic on their pages to charge highly for adverts and promotions.

Yemi Alade's portrayal of the African culture in her music *Ferrari* shows that these issues are not peculiar to people in the Western part of the world. It also points to the insatiability of man's desires. The issues raised in "Ferrari" however, doesn't negate the fact that there are tons of hard working women who give and receive love without over emphasizing on money as well as other material things. Yemi Alade also discussed this when she released her song titled "True Love" in 2020. Alade also exemplifies the benefits of unity in diversity by skillfully blending two African

cultures in the song “Shekere” where she featured Angelique Kidjo a multiple Grammy award winner from the Republic of Benin. The lyrics of “Shekere” are presented thus:

I see o be
Yemialadeoooo (wombolombo)
I see o be
Ma mama (wombolombo)

I dey hear the sound of a tambourine o
Talking drums and shekere combination (wombolombo)
I see people under the tambourine o (wombolombo)
Dancing like sey there’s a celebration (wombolombo)

Mamawaloko loko o
Legbeolo
Hmm baba tisereloona I’m the only one at home
All I want to do now is dancing wombolombo
So I lock up and keep kokorolabekondo

Waka enter weli well e dey happen uhh yeah
Come see small pikinatiiyaarugbodey dance

Wombolombo (wombolombo)

Wombolombo (wombolombo)
Legbeolo (wombolombo)
Mi onieniko da mi lohun (wombolombo)

Gbogboeniyen so peonijokan be
Moni morimoniniko da mi lohun
Ile onijopelegbeodo (wombolombo)
O ninu re eko network ati ija

Mamawalokoloko o

Legbeolo

Hmm baba tisereloona I'm the only one at home

All I want to do now is dancing wombolombo

So I lock up and keep kokorolabekondo

Waka enter wey the gbedudey happen uhh yeah

Come see small pikinatiiyaarugbodey dance

Wombolombo (wombolombo)

Wombolombo (wombolombo)

I see o be

Legbeolo (wombolombo)

I see o be

Mi onieniko da mi lohun (wombolombo)

I dey hear the sound of a tambourine o

Talking drums and shekere combination

I see people under the tambourine o

Dancing like sey there's a celebration

Them go dey dance wombolombo

Waka enter where the gbedudey happen uhh yeah

Dance wombolombo (wombolombo)

Make you no dance wombolombo

'Cause them go dey dance wombolombo (wombolombo)

Dance wombolombo (wombolombo)

(Ugo, 2019, track 6).

In "Shekere," Alade and Kidjo team up to showcase the beauty and wealth of the African continent in a lavish display of dances, costumes and ornaments that serve different purposes and

showcase the rich scenery of various locations which add colour to the rendition. The video opens with a young man seated under a tree playing a musical instrument that invites others to join him in a happy dance. The music is rendered in Yoruba, pidgin and spiced with verses in a native language of Republic of Benin by Angelique Kidjo.



Fig. 2: Yemi Alade adorned in colourful costumes

Source: Alade's "Shekere" (2019).

The similarities in the two cultures are highlighted in the display of beads and amulets on the bodies of the dancers Alade appears severally in beaded looks and Ankara prints. Worthy of note is the Zulu headdress worn by Kidjo and the adornment on her neck and arm which is very similar to how brides in the Riverine area of the southern part of Nigeria appear in on very special events.



Fig. 3: Yemi Alade and Angelique Kidjo in African costumes
Source: Alade’s “Shekere” (2019).

This upbeat song which includes interpolations from Kidjo’s 1996 classic *wombo lombo* as noted by Pulse Nigeria also points to Africans as having their distinct signature of beauty as seen in the appropriation of the different body adornments as displayed in the video. The video ends with energetic body movements synonymous to the African continent as well as the inclusion of African symbols as a backdrop.

Social Commentary and Afrocentricism in Burna Boy’s Music

Like many African singers, Burna Boy is one of the many African artistes using music to reconstruct and promote the African identity and to advise and warn Nigerians and Africans against attitudes and anti-social practices that can inhibit their progress. Two songs from Burna Boy: “African Giant” from his *African Giant* (2019) album and “Monsters You Made” from his *Twice as Tall* (2020) album would be used for the purpose of analysis. The lyrics of Burna Boy’s “African Giant” are presented thus:

Tell 'em Africa we don tire
So here comes the African Giant
Many, many people don try ah
But you can't test the African Giant
Emi omo ologo ologo
E no get e person wey e no know
Making dem loko oh no
Make you no dey do like otokoto

See nobody do it better' better than me
Can't nobody do it better
Check am and see
I know say one day e go better
I go carry grammy
Because anything wey better require planning

Don mi don mi o
Nothing you can do
Because God no give you
More than you can handle
Na so dem mama go hala
'Ebelebe lo'
Na so dem papa go hala
'Ebelebe oo'

Obododelugo jim jim
Obododelugo jim jim
Obododelugo jim jim
Ele li le le oo
Obododelugo jim jim
Obododelugo jim jim
Obododelugo jim jim



Ele li le le oo

Tell 'em Africa we don tire
So here comes the African Giant
Many, many people don try ah
But you can't test the African Giant
Emi omo ologo ologo
E no get e person wey e no know
Making dem loko oh no
Make you no dey do like otokoto
(Ogulu & Chibuike, 2019, track 1).

The above song has three verses and a chorus. In the first and second line of the first stanza (the chorus), Burna boy begins by telling the world with the words "Tell 'em Africa we don tire... So here comes the African Giant" (Ogulu & Chibuike, 2019, track 1), that Africans are tired of the negative stereotypical representation that Africa suffers especially in Western media. A representation that is highlighted in the structural inequalities and unequal power relationships that exist between the Global North and the Global South; a relationship that keeps African nations perpetually dependent on her ex-colonial masters even years after independence. He mixes the Nigerian pidgin English with the British English to represent the influence of imperialism in Africa and Africa's struggle to find a voice in this turbulent relationship. In lines three and four, the words, "Many, many people don try ah... But you can't test the African Giant" (Ogulu & Chibuike, 2019, track 1), reveal the many unsuccessful efforts by Africans to free themselves from the control of Europe and the West and suggests that Africans have been denied the rights to determine their future because of the fear on the part of the Global South of the giant that could arise if Africa is given a chance. In lines five to eight, Burna Boy injects some Nigerian Yoruba words as he boasts of the

greatness of Africa in the words “Emi omo ologo ologo” which translates in English as “a glorious destiny.” Africa here is a child with a glorious destiny that is glaring to all. This is seen in the huge number of human and material resources in Africa that are lying in waste unharnessed. He advises the world to acknowledge this instead of behaving like ‘otokoto’, a ritual saga which was popular in 1996 involving the murder of a groundnut seller by name Ikechukuwu Okoronkwo, who was lured by a group of men into a hotel called Otokoto in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria and beheaded. The men were later caught and arrested. Sadly, ritual killing is still one of the vices challenging Nigeria today. Burna Boy likens the unjust treatments Africans suffer in the hands of the West and Europe to the anti-social behaviours of the Otokoto killers against Nigerians.

In the second stanza (first verse), Burna Boy uses himself as an embodiment of Africa and says nobody can do it better than him (Africans themselves) and echoes a message of hope that things would be better for Africa some day, and the he would win a grammy award. A prophesy that materializes when he won the Best Global Music Album with his album *Twice As Tall* in the 2021 Grammy Awards show. However, Africa’s victory and freedom would only come through good planning and hard work. The same way Burna Boy worked hard to win his Grammy award.

In the third stanza (second verse), Burna Boy says there is nothing Africa cannot do and that God will not give Africa what it cannot handle. The implication here is that, Burna Boy believes that the challenges of Africa are man-made, and whether self-inflicted or coming from an external source, Africa has the solution and what it takes to address these challenges. In lines five to lines eight, Burna Boys opines that the pains of Africa are represented in the cries African Fathers and Mothers who scream ‘Ebelebe”. In his words, “Na so dem mama go hala Ebelebe lo... Na so dem papa go hala Ebelebe lo” (Ogulu & Chibuike,

2019, track 1). Burna Boy mixes the Nigerian Igbo dialect with the Nigerian pidgin English to describe the sufferings of Africans and the word 'Ebelebe' is an Igbo word that describes a state of calamity and disaster.

In the fourth stanza (third verse), Burna uses the Igbo words "Obodo delugo jim jim" to depict the moment of triumph and victory of Africa. The words "Obodo delugo jim jim" is an Igbo chant for jubilation and celebration. It is used to celebrate greatness or to honour great people. Burna Boy uses this chant to celebrate the greatness of Africa. It is also used during Igbo war battles to signal to an opposing side that one is great and has what it takes to overcome and defeat them. This song serves to tell the world that Africa is rising from its ashes to reveal the greatness that is inside of it, and to set the stage, Burna Boy concludes the song by celebrating the African identity and its greatness. The next analysis is on Burna Boy's "Monsters You Made". The lyrics are presented thus:

[Intro: Ebikabowei "Boyloaf" Victor-Ben]

If the government refuse to develop the region
And continue the marginalization and injustice
The youths or the next people coming after us
I think will be more brutal than what we have done

[Chorus: Chris Martin]

Calling me a monster, calling us fake
No way, no way, no way
Calling me a monster just 'cause we said

[Verse 1: Burna Boy]

We're from the block where it rains
Where we create barricades
Keep opposition away
That's why we strapped with AK's

Don't get kidnapped from your place
'Cause it could happen today
Not knowing how to behave
That is a sign that you may
Just lose your life, what a waste
Your body found in a lake
You fucked around and the fisherman
Found you drowning for days
You know we come from a place
Where people smile, but it's fake
How could they smile?
If you look around, they surrounded by pain
I've seen the sky turn to grey
It took the light from the day
It's like the heads of the state
Ain't comprehending the hate
That the oppressed generate
When they've been working like slaves
To get some minimum wage
You turn around and you blame
Them for their anger and rage
Put them in shackles and chains
Because of what they became
We are the monsters you made

[Chorus: Chris Martin]

Calling me a monster, calling us fake
You make the Minotaur, the dinosaur wake
Calling me a monster just 'cause we said
No way, no way, no way
Calling me a monster, make no mistake
That there's only so much that you can take
La-di-da-da-do-di-da-da-do-day

We are the monsters you made

[Verse 2: Burna Boy]

I bet they thought it was cool
Probably thought we was fools
When we would break all the rules
And skip them classes in school
Because the teacher dem teaching
What the white man dem teaching
Dem European teachings in my African school
So fuck the classes in school
Fuck Mungo Park and the fool
That said they found river Niger
They've been lying to you
Ain't no denying the truth
See what I'm tryin' to do
Is draw the line for the mothers crying
We're dying as youths
Come walk a mile in my shoes
See if you smile at the truth
See if you digest your food
That's when you might have a clue
Of what the fuck we go through
You're fucking lucky if you
Live through the day, better pray
That God always staying with you
Ain't fuckin' safe, any day
The reaper'll be coming for you
We need a change and it ain't no way I'ma take an excuse
My niggas findin' a way
Or fuckin' smile in the grave
This is the price that you pay
We are the monsters you made

[Chorus: Chris Martin]

Calling me a monster, calling us fake
You make the Minotaur, the dinosaur wake
Calling me a monster just 'cause we said
No way, no way, no way
Calling me a monster, make no mistake
That there's only so much that you can take
La-di-da-da-do-di-da-da-do-day
We are the monsters you made

[Outro:]

Since we met you people five hundred years ago
Look at us, we have given everything
You are still taking
In exchange for that, we have got nothing
Nothing
And you know it
But don't you think that this is over now?
Over where?
Is it over?
(Martin, Ogulu, Utere, & Jackson, 2020, track 12).

The song "Monsters You Made" features the British singer Chris Martin who sings the chorus and an excerpt from a 1987 interview of Ghanaian novelist Ama Ata Aidoo which serves as the outro. The song has the following sections: an intro, an outro, two choruses and two verses. The intro features the voice of Ebikabowei Victor-Ben, popularly known as "Boyloaf"; a former commander of a Niger Delta militant group known as Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta who warns that if the Nigerian government continues to marginalize and promote atmosphere of injustice in Nigeria, the next generation of youths would be more

brutal in their stance against corruption than the present generation of Nigerian youths. The nation Nigeria has been rocked with all forms of anti-government protests and secessionist tendencies born out of a feeling of poor representation, suppression and oppression as many Nigerians feel that the Nigerian government is not doing enough to make Nigerians feel the dividends of her democracy. The album *Twice as Tall* was released on the 12th of August, 2020, and few months later many Nigerian unarmed youths were killed by Nigerian security operatives at the Lekki toll gate in Lagos, after they came out to protest against police brutality in the country known as the “End Sars Protest”. This serves to show the environment and events that had inspired Burna Boy’s song “Monsters You Made”. The song’s title itself is symbolic of the present state of things in the country such politically motivated killings, kidnapping, the Boko-Haram Islamic fundamental group terrorizing the North, the Fulani-Herdsmen and farmers conflict, the clashes between the Nigerian Army and members of the Eastern Security Network (ESN); a paramilitary organization of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) known for insurgency in Eastern Nigeria. As a separatist group, who leader is Nnamdi Kanu, their fundamental goal is to break away from Nigeria due to a feeling of marginalization and suppression and create their own nation-state.

In the first chorus, Chris Martin admits that Nigerian youths have been called monsters and branded fake for demanding their rights to better governance. This is followed by the first verse in which Burna Boy describes the use of barricades by Nigerian youths to protect themselves from government forces, and warns that these youths may be turned into monsters and forced to use AK-47 riffles to kidnap politicians some day and even kill them, if the government keeps resisting their demands. In the second chorus which follows, Chris Martins rejects the branding of Nigerian youths as monsters and fake by the Nigerian government

and reiterates that the Nigerian government created these monsters because of bad governance.

In the second verse, Burna Boy argues that the Nigerian government mistook Nigerian youths for fools, but in resistance against oppression, these youths could no longer abide by the dictates of their oppressors, and the climax was a rejected the Whiteman's education which Burna Boy calls lies. He takes a swipe at colonization arguing that colonization has not helped Africa but kept her perpetually in slavery and servitude to their imperial masters. He uses swear words to express the frustrations and anger of Africans upon this realization. In his words "Fuck Mungo Park and the fool...That said they found river Niger...They've been lying to you" (Martin et al., 2020, track 12). Burna Boy warns that African youths would come after those reaping and benefitting from their oppression, and in spite of the fact that African mothers are crying, youths are dying, Africa youths have no other choice but to continue to fight oppression, and even if they die, they will smile in the grave. He concludes that this is the prize Africans must pay if they must be free. This is followed by a repeat of the second chorus then the outro. In the outro, Ama Ata Aidoo decries the deplorable state of things in Africa after years of colonization by Europeans. In her words, "Since we met you people hundred years ago... Look at us, we have given everything. You are still taking... In exchange for that, we have nothing..." (Martin et al., 2020, track 12). She concludes by hinting at a possible revolution as she believes that Africa's struggle to be free from the oppression of the Global North is not over.

Conclusion

The African continent has suffered negative representation for years by Western media; a representation that ignores many of the success stories of the continent. Interestingly, many Africans have risen up to challenge this stereotypical mirroring of Africa by pitching positive

stories about the continent, and making constructive criticisms of Africa through the vehicle of entertainment. This study examines fashion and music trends in the 21st Century Nigeria using two Nigerian artists – Burna Boy and Yemi Alade. The findings revealed that both artists use their fashion and music styles to make social commentaries on issues affecting Nigerians, while promoting the Nigerian culture as well as combating negative narratives of Africa.

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