

UNVEILING THE INSIDIOUS EROTICISM IN SAINT JANET'S MUSICAL PERFORMANCES

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Abstract: This article explores the insidious eroticism in the musical performances of Saint Janet, a Nigerian female pseudo-juju-gospel music practitioner. The paper analyzes her techniques incorporating socio-cultural themes such as didactic, religious and therapeutic aspects to trap her audience in her web of eroticism. Parody has been her major compositional technique, with emphasis on reconstructing several Juju-gospel music. The article suggests that the Christian religious background of the artist and the need to fulfill her daily needs have been the factors responsible for her insidious creativity. The article also examines the aggressive erotica in Nigerian popular music and its impact on listeners. The paper argues that in spite of the Christian religious background of the artiste, it has not stopped her from embarking on the journey of erotica. Rather, it has been of assistance in her subtle approaches to erotica musical performances.

Keywords: Saint Janet, insidious eroticism, socio-cultural themes, parody, Nigerian popular music, Christian religious background, aggressive erotica.

Introduction:

The Nigerian popular music industry has enjoyed the support of the masses aided by virtual communities in propagating its message of eroticism. Nigerian popular musicians use different techniques, including euphemism and direct and lewd expressions of sexuality. Social media and the internet have made it easy for young people to access this music. The article suggests that contemporary popular musicians leverage African oral literature to include lewd lyrics in their musical performances. The insidious eroticism in musical performances by Saint Janet is a prime example of this trend. This paper aims to explore the techniques employed by Saint Janet, incorporating socio-cultural themes such as didactic, religious, and therapeutic aspects to entrap her audience in her web of eroticism. Parody has been her major compositional technique, with emphasis on the reconstruction of several Juju-gospel music. The paper suggests that the Christian religious background of the artist and the need to fulfill daily needs have been the factors responsible for her insidious creativity. The article also examines the aggressive erotica in Nigerian popular music and its impact on listeners. The use of lewd lyrics and explicit imagery in music videos by popular musicians has raised concerns regarding the influence of such music on young people. In conclusion, this paper offers insights into the socio-cultural and psychological factors that contribute to the insidious eroticism apparent in the musical performances of Saint Janet and other contemporary Nigerian popular music artists.

Theorizing the Socio-Psychological Needs

There is always a reason for an action despite the pros and cons of such action. The socio-psychological theory of human needs offers a perspective that is based on all human actions and behaviours in the pursuit of fulfilling his/her needs, irrespective of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the action. The earliest and most widespread version of this is Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs which includes five motivational needs,

often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. Neglects of any form of deficiency tend to motivate people to attempt the unthinkable to meet their needs with little or no regard for the possible consequences, including the appropriateness or inappropriateness of their actions. According to Maslow, it is not until the needs at the base are satisfied that the individual could aspire to progress to meet higher level growth needs.

1. Psychological or biological needs include; air, food, cloth, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep...
2. Safety needs include protection from physical and natural causes, security, order, law, freedom from fear
3. Social needs include love, friendship, family, friends and romantic relationship
4. Esteem needs include achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, self-respect...
5. Self-actualization includes realizing personal potential, selffulfillment, seeking personal growth, and peak experiences.

One of the ways to comprehend the erotic and lewd performance of Saint Janet in lieu of Maslow's socio-psychological hierarchy of need is to study the activities of various popular musicians who in pursuit of money, fame and power would opt to perform any musical compositions. The lowest form of their needs, which is physiological and at the base must first be met before attempting to move up the ladder to the higher ones. Many popular musicians are from the mass and low culture where they live below one dollar (\$1) per day.

Moreover, the benefits of the lyrical performance of Saint Janet are not limited to her and her musicians alone but also her audience. Some of her listeners are people who patronise the pub house, bars and clubs - hence, they find solace and encouragement in the performance of Saint Janet as they enjoy their time and activities at the pub house. Also, some of her listeners talk about the therapeutic benefits of deriving sexual pleasure thereby increasing their libido, which in return helps them in securing their marriages especially as regards to sexual intimacy with their spouses.

Aggressive Eroticism in Nigerian Popular Music

The mass media and the internet have been a major avenue to spread an idea, concept or message. Hence, the Nigerian popular music industry has ridden on such a prospect. Though the media has a way of censoring the use of vulgar words, this has not in any way stopped aggressive erotica display by the music artistes using audio and visual tracks. Kelly (2013) expresses the importance of the video to popular music artistes, states that „the video clip is a visceral medium to exploit the theatrics of spectacle. For many woman artistes it is also a vehicle to address issues of body politics – questions of representation, sexuality and identity... for example, selfobjectification, aggressive sexuality, sadomasochism, violence, horror and so on are all seen to beat play'.

Most young people access the music of their country, the West and especially of Americans and any other countries via the various social media on the internet. Besides, music can be accessed and recorded from the various music and television houses as the country are open to different pay-tv that are foreign-based. In that way, there exist a very good opportunity and possibility for the youth to get exposed to the different cultures of the West and most especially their expression in lyrics, styles and dressing. Like several other musical genres, popular music has the capacity of attracting people's attention through its melodic and rhythmic power (Adeola, 2001). Its effect on the listeners is enormous and quite evident in the kind of language, dance movements, facial expressions and gestures as well as the kind of moods displayed by the music enthusiasts, given the fact that it is learned by fans as dictated by the popular musicians.

Many music videos of popular musicians in the country contain erotica scenery both in words and sight. From women dancing naked and shaking their „buttocks“ to men calling out those erogenous words with or without euphemism being applied to censor these acts. Oikelome (2013) in his work titled “Are Real Women Just Bad Porn?: Women in Nigerian Hip-hop Culture” ascertain that there is a tremendous trend in the development of using and displaying women as sex symbols on the music video of popular music genres. He continued:

However, sex symbolism is taken to an alarming dimension in the music industry where women are seen as a commercial venture, useful for commercial purposes. This is because generally, in Western culture and

societies that follow the West, a woman's body is considered sexually provocative to man; and thus, there is a growing concern over the near-naked female postures in some music videos. (Oikelome: 2013, 86).

There is a similar genre among the Yoruba known as ijálá, mainly performed by men of any age (Ajibade, 2005). Although it contains more vulgar and erotic words than nuptial songs, there are no restrictions on its performance in public. In other words, if ijala (praise chant genre of the hunters' guild) grants an unrestricted license to men for vulgar expressions and erotic words, nuptial songs equally permit women to perform such acts. Ajibade notes further that:

This song may be funny and amusing, and it is deliberately so. One can be in an erotic mood when listening to this song. This song conjures both male and female reproductive organs ready for sexual intercourse. This can stimulate the new wife to be into getting ready for the conjugal rites. This song is usually sung when the bride and her friends dance around the town usually a day before the marriage ceremony. They usually sing it when they notice the presence of males around them. They do not limit themselves to a mere description of the reproductive organs but go further to depict sexual acts between men and women. (Ajibade 2005: 104).

One of the songs cited in Ajibade's work goes thus:

Olóríburúkú l'ókó – A penis is a heady ill-fated individual Ajígòsè l'epòn – The scrotum is a debtor

Àfi tó bá wo "nú òbò sin-sin – It will not desist until it forcefully penetrates the vagina.

One can, therefore, infer that contemporary popular musicians sometimes leverage on references to sex and sexual objects in African oral literature, especially those found in performances of ijala, ewi, oriki and ekuniyawoo of the Yoruba to launch and justify the inclusion of lewd lyrics in their musical performances.

Olajubu (1972) and Dare (2005) quoted the annual Oke'badan – Ibadan hill – festival in Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State of Nigeria. This is an annual festival celebrated by the adherents of the deity of the hill in Ibadan. Expressions of obscene songs and gestures are allowed during the festival wherein boys and girls (below puberty) parade the streets, singing obscene/lewd songs accompanied with obscene gestures. The freedom in expressing lewd act and performance is permitted only once in a year and in the context of Oke'badan festival. However, in contemporary times when social and mass media are widespread with accessibility to users from the comfort of their houses, vulgar songs and lewd performances have been taken outside the context of the pub, beer parlours and nightclubs. They have extended to public space, including homes, offices, fuel stations and markets as well as on the radio, television and the internet.

Examples of popular music artistes in the country who are fond of adopting erotic displays aggressively in their performances are Burna Boy, Olamide, Reminisce to mention but a few. For instance, a part of the texts of the song entitled; „Ladi“ by Olamide and Phyno, featuring Lil Kesh, Lil Kesh expresses his desire to have sex with a lady named „Kemi“ as used in the musical video.

Iranu, abasha

Nonsense! Rubbish!

Olorun, jeje mi ni mo joko sita My God! I was sitting outside quietly

Mo ba ri omo kan tan pe ni Kemi Then, I saw a girl named Kemi

Nigbati mo ri idi Kemi mo pariwo aaah When I saw her buttocks, I shouted ahh!

She say Kesh do you want to sample me She said, Kesh do you want to have sex with me

Quite recently, relevant regulatory bodies in Nigeria have sanctioned the works of some music artistes, which are considered grossly offensive and contain erotic and vulgar lyrics. The table below shows a list of music productions banned by the different censoring authorities in the country for promoting obscenity and thereby „corrupting the society“ through their videos.

NOT TO BE BROADCAST (NTBB) LIST OF JULY 2015				
S/N	ARTISTES	TITLE	REMARKS	CLASSIFICATION
1	PHYNO	YAYO	Obscene Video	NTBB

2	REMINISC -ENCE	TESOJUE	Vulgar Lyrics	NTBB
3	NICKI	ANACONDA	Vulgar Lyrics and	NTBB (AUDIO

	MINAJ		Obscene Video	& VIDEO)
4	OLAMIDE	INDOMIE	Obscene Video	NTBB (VIDEO)
5	PRE	THE GIRL		SFB
6	WIZKID	IN MY BED		SFB
7	NAETO C ft D'BANJ	TONY MONTANA	Video depicts violence	NTBB (VIDEO)
8	ACE HOOD & RICK ROSS	BUGATTI		NTBB
9	OLAMIDE	FALILA KETAN		NTBB (VIDEO)
10	LIL KESH	GBESERE	Vulgar Lyrics	NTBB
11	MAY D	IBADI	Obscene Video	NTBB (VIDEO)
12	OLAMIDE	BOBO		SFB
13	DR SID FT TIWA SAVAGE	OYARI		SFB
14	KONET	MUMMY JOANNA		NTBB (VIDEO)
15	DAVIDO	FANS MI	Video promotes ostentatious lifestyle, violence, drug trafficking and indecent exposure	NTBB (VIDEO)
16	IYANYA FT DON JAZZY	GIFTS		SFB

17	OMARION FT CHRIS BROWN AND	POST TO BE		SFB
	JHENE AIKO			
18	JHIBO	LOMO	Obscene and Video Lyrics	NTBB

Source: NET Newspaper

Insidious Eroticism and the Music Performances of Saint Janet The first erotica music album of Saint Janet contains a large number of texts that refers to sex and sexual activities without restriction. While other popular musicians adopt euphemism in mentioning the male sexual organs by using terms like „banana“ and „pandororo“, Saint Janet opted for dysphemism by literarily calling human sexual organs by their descriptive anatomical names: oko (penis), obo (vagina) and omu (breast). The release of her music album was a rude shock to the public, especially wherever the music is being played in Lagos State and the environment where she usually performed. Although the Lagos State Government announced that her music has been banned, it was later found out that some radio stations were granting airtime to it, while interested individuals played the music at gatherings and private parties.

An example of a song from her first album that shows a dysphemism approach to her erotica performance is B“oko ba le laleju, ase“yun

B“omode ba m“oko do o, a l“oyun

Boda rora se,

B“oko ba le laleju, ase“yun Translated as:

If the penis is too turgid (strong erection), it can abort pregnancy

If a young lady loves to have incessant sex, she will get pregnant

Brother, take it easy (exercise caution)

If the penis is too turgid (strong erection), it can abort pregnancy

It could be argued that the above musical lyric is didactic being that it warns of the risk of unwanted pregnancy on a girl-child who is sexually active; nonetheless, the affront with which she mentioned the male sexual anatomy largely remains unacceptable and the fact that the society frowns at such defiance cannot be pushed aside. Perhaps, the negative reaction that greeted her first album was the motivation that led her to adopt euphemism and insidious approaches to subsequent musical performances and productions.

A subtle approach to erotica performances can be seen in her adoption of parody to common gospel songs that have gained much popularity among the general public, including children before throwing caution to the winds in her erotica journey. Instrumental articulations of well-known tunes/songs laced with syncopated rhythmic gestures after the order of juju-highlife mode are presented as preludes before initial verses in her musical performances. The melodic construct is predominantly tonal with a strong adoption of western-oriented harmony. Instruments include electronic keyboards, (one of which is used as synthesizer for the horns section, especially set to saxophone timbre), lead, rhythm and bass guitars, and the trap set (drums) all combining to make the musical performance comfy and appealing to the audience.

Also, the Africanization of popular church hymns remains one of the strategies and constituent elements in her insidious approach to ensure a higher level of acceptability of her music. To this end, Saint Janet utilizes the choruses commonly used for liturgy in Yoruba churches in her performances to draw her audience towards her music. This is a common tactic by popular juju musicians, especially whose work tends to combine juju with gospel genres. A juju gospel music artiste is most likely to begin his/her performance with core gospel songs singing with full instrumentation that is akin a juju musical performance with the use of all the percussive

instruments available, including the sakara (circular-shaped membrane drum with earthen resonator) and sekere (rattle). Meanwhile, as part of a means of entertaining the audience, s/he would often juxtapose gospel music form with juju style of performance by singing the praises, eulogy of the people in her performance circle. At times, such music artistes infuse their names in the performance in the form of vocables or rearranging the lyrics to suit panegyric mode of performance.



A musical example

Olorun t'oda awon oke igbani
ancient hills

The Lord who created the

(Un)to You all my thanks/praise

Eyin ni mo fi ope mi fun is due

The above popular gospel song is commonly vocalized by Saint Janet at social functions regardless of the event or performance context. No doubt, the song is a parody of „My Grandfather’s Clock” written in 1876 by Henry Clay Work. Saint Janet’s parodied version, though gospel, is presented in a simple cantabile form akin to the juju rhythmic style. The chorus is kept short and simple following the repetitive structural form. Thereafter, she begins to make a roll call of her patrons by eulogizing and appreciating them for their generous support and for promoting her musical career, especially invitations extended to her to perform at their social functions. Panegyric form remains a common element in her music just as it is typical of juju music (Vidal, 2012). Her style of presentation may be described as midway speaking and singing (not entirely chant-like). In addition, her music performance brings a remembrance of an aspect of folklore and mass culture that finds its quotidian relevance to cultural expression in the form of contemporary hybridity as opined by Omojola (2012). The song texts of Saint Janet also feature socio-cultural themes including entertainment and ironically, that of social control.

The starting section of her live performances and her studio-recorded files could be subtly captivating as one listens to and participates in it. Listeners who are not quite familiar with her voice may find themselves singing and dancing alongside at this point. Examining the first live album of Saint Janet titled „Faaji Plus”, the 44 minutes, 19 seconds musical album begins with a tuneful popular gospel music used as choruses in the liturgical service of some churches in the country, such as „Heavenly Lord, your name is wonderful, your name is excellent, your name is beautiful, I worship you, Lord, for you are mighty, you've got the whole world in your hands”.

As expected, the lewd portion of the live performances of Saint Janet’s has given rise to the controversies surrounding her career. A majority of her critics are clergymen and church authorities who vehemently oppose the use of gospel songs as parody to her compositions. Apart from the fact that she always starts her performance with gospel/church lyrics and songs mainly comprising church choruses, she is also fond of changing the songs to suit her erotic/lewd performance thereby alternating the lyrics in the songs. On the other hand, a reconstruction of gospel songs as used by Saint Janet is a way of giving thanks to God who supposedly is responsible for her musical gift, creativity and success in the musical industry. In her words: there is nothing one can do aside God, I get my inspiration for my lyrics from God, whether before a performance or while performing and I need to improvise, all these creativeness comes from God (sic). It could be argued that perhaps this is the main reason for her insidious erotica performances compared to the aggressive erotica performances of some popular musicians.

The theological themes explored by the music artiste can be identified as part of her insidious movement. Another of such songs used by Saint Janet is:

Olorun to da awon oke igbani Lord, the creator of the heavens
 Eyin ni mo fi ope mi fun... Unto You, I give all my praise
 Ta ni un o tun gbe o Who else can I adore,
 Bi ko se Baba l'oke If not You my heavenly Father
 Ta ni mo tun fi gbogbo ope mi fun... Who else deserves all of my praise

The sheer number of church buildings and religious activities in Nigeria is a proof that its citizens are extremely religious. Many gatherings and secular meetings always start with opening prayers from at least the two major religions in the country (Christianity and Islam). Saint Janet is seen to adopt religious style in performances irrespective of the location/venue. She often begins her performances with songs in praise, honour and worship of God. In her words: „There is nothing anybody can do outside God. I can tell you boldly that, my inspiration is from God“. Unsuspecting listeners easily connect with such a musical idea before being swayed by her erotic lyrics.

Another factor responsible for insidious eroticism in the performances of Saint Janet is audience appreciation of the sociocultural themes in her music compositions. As popular juju/highlife songs, her performances have a strong appeal to her audience. Besides, most of the songs, though flavoured with erotic texts are sometimes a form of supplication, with strong appeal to religious-inclined members of the audience and didactic through effective use of euphemism. Such songs include:

Adara adara fun mi It shall be well with me
 A ma ko'le mo'le We will build houses upon houses
 Atun ma ra'le mo'le We will procure plots of land
 Opeke to mu'le t'ikoko A damsel that lives next door to the wolf
 Ikoko a naa l'egba The wolf will spank (devour) her

The first aspect is more or less a prayer, but the second, through euphemism, attempts to caution a sexually active girl-child against promiscuity. From the gospel songs to the socio-cultural themes being used by Saint Janet, her listeners are somehow gradually caught in the web of her erotic performances. Subtly, both the young and old begin to swing to the rhythm of what seemed like a „praise and worship' form, until she interjects with erotic lyrics. At this level, both euphemism and dysphemism are applied in mentioning the sexual anatomy of both male and female along with indistinct terms

(languages) depicting sexual activities. Example of such songs is:

B'owo mi bawa l'oyan re If I am fondling your breasts
 T'enu mi wani enu re When kissing you
 Ti kini mi wani sale When having sex Sha r'oju duro ma yedi Please, be
 patient

Chorus: Duro, r'oju duro ma ye di... Be Patient...

B'o - wo mi ba - wa l'o - yan re Te - nu mi wa - ni e - nu re Ti ki - ni mi wa - ni s'a - le Sha

Chorus

r'o - ju du-ro ma ye - di Du - ro, r'o - ju du-ro ma ye di Du - ro, r'o - ju du-ro ma ye di Du-

- ro, du - ro sha ro - ju du-ro ma ye di

The above song is a parody of the hymn titled; „wait and murmur not“ with lyrics by W. H. Bellamy and music by W. J. Kirkpatrick. In the adaptation of this hymn, not only that the lyrics have been modified to satisfy the eroticism desire of Saint Janet, but also the melody was readjusted to accommodate the tonal inflection of the language of performance. This was done by adding a semitone to the already raised fourth note (as shown below) within the first melodic phrase.

Music: W.J. Kirkpatrick

Words: W.H. Bellamy

O, trou - bled heart, there is a home Be - yond the reach of toil and care; A home where chan - ges ne - ver

Chorus

Another song by Saint Janet goes thus:

O ti gbomi l'ataro ko ma je ki sun He's been having sex with me all day long
 Oba mimo, wo run „sale mi, meta loku Holy God, My pubic hair remains only three
 Adogan l'obo, eyin bobo e to gi si The vagina is meant for sexual activities

The last sentence is more or less a metaphor in which the vagina, likened to the cooking pot, in need of firewood, symbolic of man's penis, to ensure the making of delicacies is done.

Conclusion

This article attempted to demonstrate that unlike many Nigerian popular music artistes who make use of aggressive erotica musical performances (in lyrics and audio-visual), Saint Janet is a creative insidious erotica music artiste. The socio-psychological theory adopted by the authors in this paper reveals that human actions and behaviours in the pursuit of fulfilling their needs/wants do little or have no regard to the appropriateness or inappropriateness of their actions. As a result, the insidious creativity in her performances was birthed to accommodate more followers and patronages utilising genres ranging from the gospel to juju and highlife musical forms before the eroticism found in either the reconstruction of gospel music or the parody engaged in her compositions.

The paper argues that in spite of the Christian religious background of the artiste, it has not in any way stopped her from embarking on erotica journey. Rather, it has been of assistance in her subtle approaches to erotica musical performances. Apart from the eroticism displayed by Saint Janet, other socio-cultural themes were

explored in terms of the functionality of the musical lyrics, extending from didactic to the therapeutic themes in her musical compositions and performances. This insidious approach to her performance implies that many listeners could possibly be entrapped unconsciously and insidiously in the web of her eroticism.

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