

## **Diachronizing the Popular: from Hip-Hop to Orality**

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### **Abstract**

*The development of studies in African music has been pioneered in the studies of scholars across the globe. African scholars whose theories help to shape the development do so in the quest to map out the strategy that would march the usual canonical parameter often seen in the fight for an erudite scholarship. In this regard as well, efforts have also been made to see how globalization and civilization have shaped various artistic developments, music inclusive. However, there is a silent trend in the movement of music as an art or a process of socialization. Being an art, when it is African in nature, there is a need to see the diffusive nexus or praxis that might have arisen as a result of global influence, possibly to see the level of syncretism within the African indigenous orientation of music and its current blend with western-oriented form - Hip Hop. The work sets out the origin of the term "Hip-Hop" while it also pays attention to the nature of African music, and the place of African oral poetry in the artistic rendition of the African version of Hip-Hop. In its specific orientation, it also maps out Nigeria as a case for further investigation.*

**Keywords:** *Indigenous, African, Music, Hip-hop, Globalization, Influence, Orality*

## **Introduction**

The nature of African music has assumed overwhelming position, derisively polemic in the academic scholarship. Often time, attentions shift paradigmatically as to whether the theories of African Arts conveniently accommodate what it means to assume several perspectives on the nature of African music, albeit canonical crises in global literature. This work attempts to diachronise the recent flows of hip hop tradition in Africa as a popular culture. It traces the origin of the tradition, and locates the place of African oral tradition in the specifics of what makes African prototype.

## **The Popular Music: The United States of America and United Kingdom**

The term “popular music” has no specific origin. Its definition tilts that the phrase has been used as the generic term for all forms of music that appeal to public taste (Allen, 2004:607; Arnold, 1983:111; Furlong, 2013:237). In this direction the term according to the critics mentioned above has only been used loosely to indicate a broad genre of musical engagement irrespective of the technical and sociological trends it might have aroused in the public. However, the forms of music in this category can be performed with little or no specific “musical training”(Peter Manuel, 1988:11-12; Funk and Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia, 2015) in contrast to “art music” which needs formal training and which is channeled through “written form”( Phillip Tag,1982:62; Brett Lashua, 2014: 23-26).

Larry Star and Christopher Waterman (2007: 12-19) identify that the sources of American popular music is based on three “streams”. The streams are the “European-America stream”, African-American stream” and “Latin America Stream”.

The “European-American stream” developed from ‘ballads’ as at the time of “American Revolution”. They captured that

At the time of the American Revolution, professional composers of popular songs in England drew heavily upon ballads. Originally an oral tradition, ballads were circulated on large sheets of

paper called broadsides. While some broadside ballads were drawn from folk tradition, many were urban in origin and concerned with current events. In most cases only the words were provided, with an indication of a traditional melody to which they were to be sung. Ballad mongers hawking the broadsides sang them on the streets.

This provides the outlook to Eunice Rojas's (2003:266-267) finding that the "English ballads" thrived in America. In the 20th century the "folklorist were able to record dozens" of "old ballads" in the United States. Up till the present time the resources of these "ballads" still constitute the aesthetic domain of some American popular musical forms (Larry and Christopher, 2007:14).

The "African-American stream" according to Larry and Christopher (2007:14) is sourced in the immigrant terrain that pervaded America. The major factor responsible for it was slave trade activities. This took two directions. The first direction was through the process of "syncretism". This refers to the selective blends of "traditions from Africa and Europe". The second is based on the establishment of full "black musical life". "Banjo", an African-American music form is said to have been informed by "black musical life" according to Larry and Christopher (2007). In the "Latin America stream" the same blend of tradition occurred. The "popular music" in this region mixed the tradition of Africa with Europe (Larry and Christopher, 2007:12). These are the outlooks of the sources of the popular music in United States considering the facts that the United States of America is a country of immigrants.

The popular music forms in the United States of America that have been identified by scholars and critics are: "Ragtime" (Harriet Janis and Rudi Blesh 1971:23; Edward Berlin 1988:32-37), "Blues" (Robert Dixon and John Godrich, 1970:85-89), "Swing" (Ira Gitler, 1987:101-121; Lewis Erenberg, 1998:121-127), "Bluegrass" (Bob Artis, 1975:16-32), "Rock" (David Szartmary, 1996:123-142), "Country music" (Richard Peterson, 1999:9), "Rhythm and Blues" (Robert Palmer, 1995:50) and "Hip Hop" (Russel Peter, 1995:151-157; David Toop, 2005: 150-151). Other variants that have also been identified by critics

in the United States of America includes “Doo wop”, “Funk”, “Heavy metal”, “Disco”, “Punk”, “House”, “Salsa”, “Grunge” and “Techno”. All these musical forms have wide audience and the material dispensation of their thematic focus depends largely on issues in the urban side of the country. The central terrain that combined the features of all these forms is based on the amplification of the musical instrument or how they have been modeled on “monotonous low keys” (James, 2007:89).

United Kingdom has its own classic variation; and except for few instances where forms like “Rock” which is a form of music played by using “amplified guitar” (Richard Robinson, 1972: 106-108) were further classified by scholars has having subgenre. The popular music in the United States of America and United Kingdom shares a lot of similarities. Often than not, the same names are given to numbers of popular music genre in the two countries. Except in the case of the United Kingdom where subgenres of forms have been identified by scholars. In the United Kingdom, “Rock” music varies. John Covach and MacDonald Bonne (1997:70-73) identified “Progressive Rock”, “Art Rock”, “Hard Rock” and “Indie Rock” as variants of “Rock music” in the United Kingdom. “Progressive Rock” is characterised by long melodious “solo”, “fantasy lyrics” and “grandiose stage set and costume”(Paul Hegarty and Martin Halliwell, 2011:2-3). The “Hard Rock” is a sub-form of “Rock music” in the United Kingdom with aggressive musical tone and it is played with a lot of “repetitive riffs” culminating into a complex mixture of forms (Roy Shuker, 2005: 12-18). The central patterns of the popular music in the United Kingdom are the musical rhythm and the “guitar” pattern that accompanied each form. At times the form of music is differentiated from another based on the frequent usage of “guitar” or occasional usage of “flutes” (Richie Unterberger, 2002:63-72). There are long lists of musical forms in the United States of America and United Kingdom. The factor responsible for this has been traced to “migration” (Jason Toynbee and Byron Duek, 2004: 102:104) and “racism” (Eileen Southern, 1997: 131-134). The attitudes of the government of the two countries to entertainment at large have also encouraged multifold of musical forms (Mark Daniel, 2003:14-15; David Cowell. 2016:32-35).

### **The Nature of African Music**

African people are traditionally religious (Emeka Ekeke et.al, 2010:209-218; Joseph Awolalu, 1976). The religious inclination of African people has been traced to several origins. One of such origin is evident in African “ folks music”. African traditional music is passed down orally. In terms of division, African music of the sub-Saharan region has been divided into four sections in the work of Arthur Jones (1959:34-45). In the Eastern region category, according to Jones, there are a lot of influence of Arabia, India and Indonesia music. The country in this category includes Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The southern region includes South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Namibia and Angola. To the central region, the music of Chad, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia constitutes a distinct pattern in the African music. In the West Africa, Nigeria, Togo, the Gambia and other countries in west Africa have been classified together.

The music of Ugandan is informed by the multifold level of the ethnic groups in the country and these ethnic groups formed the basis for the indigenous music in the country (Joseph Nketia, 1975:34-36). “Amadinda” is one of the traditional “folk music” in Uganda. The music has been traced to the Uganda kingdom of “Buganda” by Kubik Gerhard (1983:327-329). The mode of its instrumentation according to Gerhad (1983:401) is that

The two essential instrumental parts are Oku naga ( “to lead in”) and Okwawula (“to divide”). Both parts are played in octaves. The third part is Okukoonera is played by a third musician on the top two keys of the instrument only. The musicians interlock their parts by slipping their notes into gaps in the other musicians' parts.

This music tradition is used in the courtly affair of the “Kabaka”, the king of Buganda. In the ancient time, the music is played in the palace to alert the king of the movement of “dawn” and “dusk”(Peter Coke, 1996:35). In the submission of Coke, the significance of the music becomes spiritual as it is used to re-awake the kingship of the kingdom. Another form of music in Ugandan

traditional setting which is associated with the Bantu speaking people is called “*Ekitaguriro*”. This form of music is found in western part of Uganda among the Bantu-speaking people. It is agrarian in nature. Alex Natuhwera (2015:2) submits that

This music is in praise of the long-horned cattle found nowhere else but in Ankole. The dancers in these songs mimic foot sounds, rhythms, and movements of the elegant Ankole cattle. The main instruments used in this type of music are *omukuri* (flute) and *engoma* (drum).

This is celebrative in nature and this kind of music also mimics the tendency of the Ugandan people as people that are tied to nature. The music is divided into four parts; representing the four legs of the “long-horned cattle” (Natuhwera, 2015:4-5). Other music forms that have also been identified with traditionalism in Uganda include “Akadinda”, “Ennanga” and “Entongoli” (Kefa Otiso, 2007:3-5).

The Ugandan society has witnessed a rise in the popular music. In the recent time, the varieties that emerged are infusion of the traditional forms and the incorporation of western oriented musical forms. “Kodongo Kamu”, “Kindandali”, “Dancehall”, “Hip Hop” and “RnB” are the recent forms of popular music that have emerged from the traditional forms in Ugandan (Henry Lewis, 2012:66-68).

The music of Namibia is largely made up of the several ethnic groups that have constituted the country. The language diversity and ethnic separation of the past that have constituted the country are some of the factors that account for the diverse nature of the “folk music” in the country (Minette Man, 2015:3-4). In the northern part of Namibia, music is symbolic; a manifestation of the total outcome of the interaction between a man and another. This view is vividly captured by Man (2015:4)

In the mainly rural northern band, stretching from coast to Kalahari and north of the ‘red’ veterinary border, musical traditions are well retained. Music is often practiced communally. It relates to specific daily

or seasonal functions and displays distinct identities amongst different cultural groups. This means that music is made when there is a need, for example: when an infant is named, at weddings, funerals, harvests, at age-related transitions and for healings.

“Oviritje” is a form of music found among the “Herero people” in Namibia. The “Herero” people are Bantu speaking people in Namibia. The old form of “Oviritje” is “acapella”- which mean a form of music without musical instrument (Francois Tsoubaloko, 2016:53). Tsoubaloko (2016:54) asserts that:

Many of the songs performed by various groups of Oviritje do not contain substantial messages. They mostly sing about things that are meaningless or difficult to understand, such as “shake your body, shake your head” etc. However, there are quite a number of recognised artists who use this genre to sing about impactful subjects to society, for example, by singing about gender based violence, drought, alcohol abuse, genocide, and many other situations prevailing in the various Ovaherero communities and the nation at large.

This is an indication of the social function of the music despite its absurdic composition and lack of socially praised instrumentation. In recent time, this music form has been referred to as “Konsert” because of its public appraisal and the “urbanization” it has espoused in the urban Namibian society (Nicholas England, 1995:34-36). In another submission, David Herbert (2006:65-68) claims that this music form has been approved by urban society because it has been used in a direction to create a critique of the “urban side”. Other forms of folk music in Namibia include “Malgaisa”, “Shambo” and “Hikwa”. All present forms of popular music in Namibia now took their roots from these traditional musical forms (England, 1995:45).

To the central region, the music of Zambia is very significant. The traditional Zambian is spiritually rich in purpose. Every aspect of culture has its own music; “music is an expression of the social fabric of culture”(Ernest Brown, 1976:234). Zambia has about seventy three ethnic groups under the “cultural base” of five languages- “Bemba”, “Tonga”, Nyanja, “Luvale-Mbunda”, “Lozi” and “Kaonde” (Brown Douglas, 1984:44-47). In the submission of Douglas (1984:43), Zambia

Music is generally organised as a social event; musical activities belong to the community as a whole. Because of the high level of practical community participation, music is a legitimate way of looking at the people of Zambia in that music activities are functional and an integral part of everyday personal, religious, social and economic life.

This view is supported in the remark given by Morris Jone (1958:67-69) that several examples of musical situations and rites exist that accompany the educational ceremonies of initiation among Zambian ethnic groups. For instance, the “*Makishi*” masquerades of the “Luvale” people and “*Chisungu*” rituals of the “Bemba” people developed out of the need to assist young people to learn cultural values, norms and lessons about adulthood responsibilities through music because musical performances form the basis of the rituals and masquerade exercises among these people (Douglas, 1984:50).

Harmonising all the facts created by scholars, it is important to state that African traditional music is spiritually inclined. Within this frame, most popular musical forms in Africa have their roots in traditional music in Africa.

### **Oral Root of African Music**

Setting out the task for this work requires having a critical sensibility of the term “orality”. “Orality” is a very broad term that has been used by scholars to indicate a process of folkloric tradition and other components that have to do with the socio-cultural origins of human being (Alexander Ugwukah, 2015:52-54;

Lee Haring, 1994:10-12).“Orality” has several perspectives. The perspective to the understanding of “folklore” being the main constituent of “orality” ranged from the functionalist perspective (Robert Adams, 1968; Alf Walle, 1977;), evolutionist approach (William Bascom, 1953), structuralist theorisation (Karin Knorr-Certina, 1971; Peter Harle, 1999) and comparative proposition (Richard Dorson, 1963). The main resource of each of this perspective is built on the fact that “folklore” or “folkloric tradition” has to do with the aboriginal system of set of people relating to their cultures and several systems of beliefs; including their cosmic beliefs (Ugwukah, 2015:58).

The basic tenet of this section is based on the submission of Walter Ong in his book titled *Orality and literacy, Technologizing of The Word* Published in 1982. In this book Ong asserted that “orality” is “psychodynamic” and features of “orality” are that it is “close to human lifeworld” and “emphatic and participatory rather than objectively distanced” (Ong, 1982:42-45).Ong’s distillation of features of orality is very important in the discourse of anything that has to do with folk traditions. The “psychodynamic” is based on the fact that human beings as part of nature differ in number of factors; and the constituent of belief system and cosmopolitan realities are meant to differ psychologically. In other words, orality appeals to the fluidity of human existence; and this fluidity is a reflection of the diffused nature of human existence (Bruce Manson, 1998:306-329).

African oral tradition flourishes a lot. In the discourse of African arts and sciences much attention has been given by scholars on how oral tradition still persist in this era of technology and civilisation advanced by globalisation. Works that have also been done on African festivals and other traditional practices have served as the basis of observing the critical outlooks of African society (Sheilah Clarke-Ekong, 1997; Oluwatosin Akintan, 2013; Francis Acquah, 2011; Akinbileje Yemisi, 2010). African music took its root from oral tradition and this is an explication of the feature of “orality” theorised by Ong that “orality” is “emphatic and participatory rather than objectively distanced” (Ong, 1982:45). Suffice to say that African music be it traditional form or modern

form, the basic formats of oral based thought are inseparable from African music. This is because orality is “homostatic” (Ong, 1982:41.).

African music is a reflection of traditional African life. Its manifestation occurs at different level. Music occurs during African people “cult initiation” (Paul Kyalo, 2013:35-38), social celebration (Celestine Mbaegbu, 2015:178-182), death of important figure , “cultural festival” and traditional celebration such as coronation and conferment of royal of kingship titled (Nnamani Nnamani, 2014:304-310). The music of these natures depends on the atmosphere which often mediates between anxiety, soberness and rejoice. During these processes, proverbs, axiomatic saying, riddles and other related expressive measurements are used to substantiate the plausibility of the processes that are involved (Adeyemi Ademowo and Noah Balogun, 2014:151-152; Tesfaye Dagneu and Mesfin Wodajo, 2014:95-96) . These platforms are drawn from African folkloric traditions. These “facts”, “proverbs” and “soothsayer messages” are often encoded with the process of musical formats (Laurac Boulton, 1957:67-69). These templates had formed the bases upon which modern musical forms draw their social acceptance from (Dagneu and Wodajo, 2014:98).

Modern African music form took its root from African tradition from two dimensions. Though these dimensions are articulated by scholars not based on postulation that they foreground this root but indirectly they have foregrounded the bases of African music. In due consideration, these dimensions are psycho dynamically African in nature due to the process of their annexation and the significance of their manifestation spanning from oral tradition to the contemporary African society. The dimensions are the “folk tradition” and “ethnicity”.The notion of “folk tradition” is a large body of discourse and it has been well explicated in the works of scholars like Ruth Finnegan (1970), Richard Dorson (1972), Simon Bronner (1986), Isidore Okpewho (1992), Regina Bendix (1997) among others. The central terrain of their discussions are based on folk traditions; and how folk traditions transfuse to the present and how elements of oral traditions have constituted the transcripts of the modern thought pattern.

Specifically, studies on “Ibadan” people of South West Nigeria have shown how African folk traditions or African folklore encompasses a large body of cultural distillation ranging from social dealing, cultural folklore, administrative and political processes, economic, religious and spiritual affairs, clinical matters, literary and aesthetic domain, linguistic and discourse receptions (George Simpson, 1980; Akinyele Babalola, 1981; Femi Osofisan, 2001:3 1981; Alabi Lekan, 2001:129; Falola Toyin, 2012:1; 2013:235). The transfiguration of these elements are manifested and sourced in Africa culture vis-à-vis African “festival” and “ceremony”, “moonlight stories”, “proverbs”, “history”, “myths” and “legends” according to the scholars listed above. These terrains are peculiar to other African ethnic groups.

One of the ways of transmitting these elements across generation is music (Nick Nesbitt, 2001:176-179). These processes constitute the raw material for “artiste” and “artist” and in the world of Geraldine Pelles, an “artist” is not removed from his or her immediate source. When traditional “artiste” composes his or her song, the deep surface of his or her analytical procedure and thematic terrains are sourced in his or her tradition (Geraldine Pelles, 1962: 12-14). For instance, “Kadongo Kamu” a musical form in Ugandan, is a form of music that heavily relies on the “Baganda” oral tradition (Immaculate Kizza, 2010:65-68). The “Jira”, “Gota”, “Bamaya”, “Gahu” among others are forms of music in Ghana society that have drawn their forms from Ghana folk traditions (Sara Mcall, 2003:34-37; Michael Fleder, 2005:3-5, Heather Bergseth, 2011:23-25;). The transcripts of these musical forms still linger in modern Ghanaian musical form referred to as “Highlife”(Sjaak Van Der Geest and Nimrod Asante-Darko, 1982:87-89; William Matczynski, 2011: 46-48; Irniik Akrong, 2012:55-57). In Nigeria, the template of oral tradition flows a lot in both the traditional music and the recent rise of popular music in Nigeria. Among the Yoruba people of South west Nigeria, the traditional music called “Apala” is highly philosophical in terms of usage of Yoruba folk proverbs and exposition of Yoruba culture (Oyebanji Mustapha, 1975:517; Akin Euba, 1988:126; Bode Omojola, 1995:3; Lasisi Sekina, 2012:109-112). Ajetunmobi et.al

(2009:39) even classified the “Apala” music form into five categories based on the tempo of the Yoruba tradition each of them coordinates. The classes are “Apala San-an (cool beat)”, “Apala Songa (hot beat)”, “Apala Wiro (in between Apala san and Apala Songa)” “Apala Igunnu (mixture of beat) ” and “Apala Olalomi (Mixture of beat)” The recent development of “Fuji music” as a variant of popular music in the region has its root in Yoruba “folk traditions” in terms of “style”, “patronage”, “theme” and “audience” (Ani Kelechi and John Mary, 2014:131-142).

The distinction created above is as a result of the constant transfusion of folk tradition in African music. Having established this link, it is also good to show how these transcripts of orality still occur in the contemporary African popular music. This is the task of the next section in this chapter.

### **Indigenous Aesthetics of African Hip Hop Music**

This aspect will attempt to trace the origin of “Hip Hop” music form and its aboriginal features. It will also examine the development of the form in African across region. The peculiar features of African “Hip Hop” shall also be discussed while paying attention to the African traditional aesthetic as an interphase between western variant and African prototype. The African traditional aesthetic will also be examined in line with how it has interspersed between the African “Hip Hop” and western variant.

The origin of hip hop music has been traced to the usage of the term “Hip Hop” as a movement of art and style of a particular tradition in the urban “countryside” in the United States of America. The general formation of the term includes nine different traditions and “Hip Hop” music is one of those traditions (Robert Thompson, 1996:213). In another submission, Dyson Michael (2007:6-8) claims that the “Hip Hop” tradition is a “subculture” and “arts movements” pioneered by African immigrant in the United States of America. It has also been linked to house parties arrangement that started in South Bronx in the New York city (Corvino Daniel and Livernoche Shawn, 2001:9-12). Etymologically, the term was coined by “Keith Wiggins” a member of the “Grandmaster Flash and Furious Five” which is an American

“hip hop” group formed in 1976 in the South Bronx of New York city (Molefi Sante, 2008:106:108). In the tradition of the group, the group makes use of “turntablism” “break-beat deejaying” and “conscious lyricsm”. “Turntablism” is a manipulating process; it is the art of manipulating or mixing sounds in other to produce a new music (Ogbar Jeffrey, 2007:32-41). “Breakbeats” is a form of beat that occurs in “drum loops”. It occurred as a result of pause in a sound and used later as a critical precept in the tradition of “break dance”(Peter Shapiro, 2000:157-159). The concept of “conscious lyricism” has a political undertone; it is a tradition that breaks away from the dominant philosophy and economic substance of the earliest musical tradition in terms of style, themes and assemble of musical instrumentation in the United States of America (George Nelson 2005: 45-50).

The development of “Hip Hop music” in Africa has been traced to 1980s. This development occurred has a result of American influence in Africa (Ariefdien Shaheen and Nazli Abraham, 2006:72-74). Regionally, the development of ‘Hip Hop music” in Nigeria has been traced to the period spanning between 1980s and 1990s. Wale Adedeji (2004:23-26) asserted that the military governorship (especially in Lagos) in Nigeria and lack of jobs for the Nigerian graduates during this period led to the situation whereby Nigerian unemployed youths took the musical form as an “escape” measurement. Since then the music has gained acceptance in the urban sides in Nigeria and the number of artiste has also risen in the last twenty years (Eric Charry, 2012:34-36). Some of the leading artistes in the “Hip Hop” music industry in Nigeria are Olamide Adedeji (AKA Baddo Sneh), David Adedeji Adeleke (AKA Davido), Panshak Henry Zamani (AKA Ice prince), Oladapo Daniel Oyebanjo (AKA D’Banj) among others.

The development of “Hip Hop” music in Zambia has its root in the America musical songs shown on Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation in the 1990s and 1980s. This influenced the youth to create a musical form in the tradition of American “Hip Hop” (N’gandu Joseph and Anri Herbst, 2004:41). Perry Cheelo (AKA Ice Ache-Lips), Chilumbe Lemba and Allan Mvula among others are famous artistes in this region.

The African “Hip Hop music” has a lot of African aesthetic domains. The artistes in this musical industry deployed the precept of African oral traditions. The “Hip Hop” music tradition in Africa has witnessed the incorporation of African lyric tradition (Austin Emielu, 2011:371-378). Austin Emielu sets two paradigms for the understanding of the infusion of African traditions in “African hop” or African popular music in his essay titled *Some Theoretical Perspectives on African Popular Music* written in 2011. The two paradigms he discussed are “indigenisation” and “syncretism”. His concept of “indigenisation” is based on the influence of African traditions on the African popular music. He claims that

Because of the significance and dominant position that traditional music occupies in community life in Africa, all forms of popular music in Africa are rooted in the traditional music of the people. These traditional forms constitute the cultural foundation of the superstructure on which the various popular music styles are built on (Emielu, 2011:374)

This view has created the theoretical benchmark for theorisation of the aesthetical domain of African tradition in the popular music in Africa.

Hip Hop artistes in Ghana relies heavily on the resources of the Ghanaian folkloric tradition. The “Kologo” and “Gonjey” are traditional Ghanaian musical performances and they were named with respect to their leading instruments. Originally, “Kologo” and “Gonjey” are both Ghanaian music instruments (Daniel Avorgbodor, 2008:34-36). The substance of their forms relate to the “Asante” and “Mole” tribes’ traditional engagements in Ghana (Kofi Agwu, 2003:117-120). The aesthetic domains of these forms that are found in Ghana Hip Hop music forms come up in two forms. The first domain is the usage of the musical instruments in the “Hip Hop” tradition. By significance, according to Avorgbodor (2008:35) the thematic transcript of the traditional “Akan” music crept in the “hip hop” music in Ghana. The transcript includes social criticism of the influence of the rich people in the society as against the helpless poor person in the same neighbour. Avorgbodor (2008:38) also noticed that the monotonous

“rhythmic pattern” of “Kologe” musical instrument signals an appeal to the poor people among the “Asante” and “Ga-Adangbe” tribes in Ghana to be patient. These instruments have been used significantly politically and economically in the music of the contemporary hip hop artistes (in Ghana). Ghanaian artistes like Michael Owusu Addo (AKA Sarkodie), Ayigbe Edem, Kwame Ameteppee Tsikata (AKA M.anifest) among others make use of the traditions of “Kologe” and “Gonjey” (Agwu, 2003:141-144). The “Kpalongo” music is a variant from “Mole-Dangbon” tribes in Ghana. Its form is based on the “sexual and gender ideology of the tribe” and it has been adopted by Cyril-Alex Gockel (AKA C.Real) in his urban “hip hop” form (Thomas Solomon, 2005:122-123).

The second traditional aesthetic domain which Africa hip hop forms has preserved is based on the aspect of linguistic repertoires of African cultural heritage. In South Africa, “Hip Hop” tradition has African traditional shapes. Kagiso Mnisi (2014:12) observed that

Traditional music in South Africa has been complicated by the country’s history of entrenched racism, embodied in the system of apartheid and the policy of separate development. Until the dawn of democracy in the early 1990s, the government attempted to classify and separate all citizens in the name of cultural purity. Black South Africans were divided and defined according to ethnic groups. Many were forced to live in homelands, where radio music broadcast by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) played a central role in promoting apartheid ideology, with each group encouraged to listen to their ‘own’ station. Musicians were forced to comply, recording music that was defined by the ethnicity of the artist – to the point where album covers were labeled, for example, ‘Zulu’, ‘Sotho’ or ‘Venda’. Any mixing of languages or collaborations between artists of different groups was prohibited (Mnisi, 2014:12).

The influence of South African oral tradition on South African “Hip Hop” music cuts across the loric traditions of the following tribes and groups; “Khoi”, “San”, “Goema”, “Vastrap” “kwaxhosa”, “Ndebele”, “XiTsonga”, “Basotho”, “Batswana” and “Bapedi” and “Amazulu”. These tribes and group have their own traditional musical forms (Mnisi ,2014:13). The original inhabitants of South African were the “Khoi” and “San” people and they have been joined together under “Khoisan” has a form of political escape from fear of dominancy (Michael Van Wyk, 2013:142). Wyk asserted that

Their music is largely characterised by polyphonic chants, not unlike that incantations of the amaXhosa. Music played a central role in their rituals. For the Khoisan music is a means to transcend to a cosmological existence where engagement with the ancestors is the intent. Their ‘trance dance’ mimics the movements of animals such as the antelope ( Wyk, 2013:145).

South African artiste Pop Mohammed and popular South African hip hop artistes like Quintin Goliath (AKA Jitsvinger) and Richard Roodt (AKAQuaz ) have been linked with the usage of “Khoisan” oral traditions including “proverbs”, “mythological words”, “riddles” in their music. They deploy this aesthetics to show a respect for their ancestral origin or to reduce the tension of dominancy (Mnisi, 2014: 15).

All African countries where “Hip Hop” music tradition is being performed have a peculiar pattern of African oral tradition. Each ethnic group has its own musical variant in the urban movement of musical trends in African society.

### **African Oral Poetry and Popular Music in Africa**

The study of African folklore has enforced scholars to enquire into the nature of African oral poetry. Originally, the studies of African oral traditions were made to show whether Africa do have literary background or to delineate the receptions that are needed to be given to African literature. The works of Ruth Finnegan, Isidore Okpewho among other oral literature specialists in African and

abroad have shown considerable list of evidence that African people have rich literary background before the advent of the colonial masters.

This section details the aspect of African folklore by paying close attention to the scholars' view on African oral poetry and its resources across the region of Africa. It is an attempt to show how the elements of Africa oral poetry have fluidized into the recent upsurge of popular music in Africa.

The study of African oral poetry has gained considerable consideration from scholars across the world. The basis of African oral poetry has assumed the need to assert the substance of African aboriginal roots and the need to claim credency to cultural, economic, political and traditional practices in Africa (Nyigide Nkoli and Egenti Martha, 2014;). Hence, African oral poetry is one of the ways that claim the aboriginal roots of Africa across the world .

A great number of works have been done on African oral poetry. These works provide the critical sensibility and the theoretical outlooks of how oral poetry emerged in different faces and phases of cultures in African. Among authors that have dwelled on the nature of oral poetry from different perspectives are Alex Pongwani (2017), Friday Okon (2006), Luke Eyoh (2011), Getie Gelaye (1999), Mbongeni Malaba (1988), Adeleke Ade (2011), John Johnson (2006), Yaw Adu Gyamfi (2002) among others. They examine African oral literature as an interphase between the African oral tradition, the writing tradition and the recent digitized space for oral poetry performances.

The works of these authors differ perspectively and these attested to the vast nature of African oral poetry. Friday Okon (2006:10-29) examined Okot P'Bitek's *Song of Lawino*, *Song of Ocol*, *Song of Malaya* and *Song of prisoner*. His proposition is based on the fact that Okot relies on the technique of African oral poetry while detailing his poetic praxis. Some of the styles of African oral poetry that Okon identified in the poems are the "use of monologue", the "use of dirge style", "song style", "use of praise names", "uses of exaggeration" and the "use of language". Okon (2006:27) concludes that

P'Bitek has used the song style to identify his poetry closely with traditional African oral poetry. Therefore, his poetry is a continuity of African traditional oral poetry in written form. Besides, his use of language is outstanding in that he makes use of traditional African imagery.

This view conforms to the assertion claimed by David Cook (1977:55) that P'Bitek has theorised oral tradition as sources of inspiration for present and future African poets.

Luke Eyoh (2011:83-91) examines the “flows” of oral poetry and how these “flows” have served as the main points of oral poetry in Nigeria and Africa at large. Eyoh identifies with Nigerian musical instrument as source of oral poetry by paying close attention to the “dance song” among ethnic groups in Nigeria. In Eyoh’s view, “names”, “greetings”, “folk or worksong” and “praise songs” are prominent features of Nigerian oral poetry. As part of the technical domain of Nigeria oral poetry, Eyoh (2011:89) claims that “proverbs”, “symbols” and “symbolism” constitute the aesthetic and semantic domains of Nigerian oral poetry; divination and myth are sources of Nigeria oral poetry. He claims that

Divination and myths provide common sources of ethnic oral poetry in Nigeria and constitute an indicator for common origin of the various groups (Eyoh, 2011:89).

Adeleke Adeeko (2001:181-192) shows how “Oriki” (Yoruba people of south west of Nigeria’s lineage praise) has constituted greater length of Yoruba oral poetry practices. In his article titled *Oral Poetry and Hegemony: Yoruba Oriki*, he details the essential part of “Oriki” as the poetic elaboration of individual names. In his view the “circumstances” that reflect in the “Oriki” as an oral poetic composition are issues surrounding ‘birth’, “circumstance of birth” and “family aspiration”. Luke Eyoh’s (2011) assertions that usage of symbols occurs in African oral poetry correlate with Adeeko’s (2001) claims that Yoruba lineage poetry (“Oriki”) makes use of “symbols”. He discovered this while analysing the texts of two family lineage praises from Ibadan.

John Johnson (2006:119-136) details the aspect of Somali oral poetry and national issues that are involved in compiling the list of Somali oral poetry. Parts of the issues he identified are “the rendition of spoken language into the written form”, ethnic loyalties of the scholars and the traditional performers and adopting theoretical framework for the criticism of “Somali oral poetry”.

Yaw Adu Gyamfi (2002: 104-124) studied the aspect of Yoruba oral poetic form in Wole Soyinka’s *Ogun Abibiman*. Gyamfi asserts vividly that

in discussing orality in Soyinka's *Ogun Abibiman*, I suggest that even Soyinka's use of neometaphysical strains, double- and triple-barreled neologisms, cadences of sprung rhythm, and complex punctuation and language, which many think are derived from European forms, have the basis in Ifa divination and African *apae* (appellation or praise) poetry as well. Gyamfi (2002:105).

His work focused on how Wole Soyinka has deployed the Yoruba “Ifa divination” poetry in his poem.

Kaschulla Russell (1999:55-76) details the place of “griot and Imbongi” in the performance of African oral poetry by paying attention to the technical aspects of “oral poetic” of the south and West African oral poetry.

A lot of works have been done on African oral poetry and the points of all these works have shown how African oral poetry is still relevant in the discourse surrounding African creative aesthetics.

The development of African popular music has witnessed the incorporation of African oral poetry especially among the music that are found in the urban areas. The number of works that have been done on the incorporation of African oral poetry in the popular music in Africa are very few. This is because of the fact that the field of music as academic field of study assumed sociological direction. The sociological treatment of African music as seen in the works of Bode Omojola (1995, 2006), Akin Euba,(1970, 1971, 1975, 1989) Joseph Nketia (1975), Ajirere

Tosin (1992), Austin Emielu (2006) among other musicologists have shown how music has transcended from the cultural, political to the economic usages without paying attention to the oratorical or poetic praxis and African oral traditions and African music has established in the recent development of the popular music in Africa.

However the essay of John Felix titled *Use of Praise Poetry in Contemporary Nigerian Gospel Music: Case Study of Funke Akinokun* attempted to detail the structure of the contemporary Nigerian gospel music of “Funke Akinokun” as the music that incorporate element of Yoruba oral poetry. Felix (2015) noticed that the artiste has used the Yoruba praise chant methods to appraise “God”.

The task of this work is to contribute to the aspect of how African hip hop has developed in terms of language resources and critical resources by paying close attention to the “Hip Hop” music of Olamide Adedeji especially in the area of critical and artistic sensibilities.

### **The Rise of Popular Music in Nigeria**

Attention has to be given to the rise of popular music in Nigeria in the discourse of the general development of “Hip Hop” in Nigeria. This aspect will serve as one of the informed contexts that will be deployed while analysing the data.

Before the advent of colonialism, African people had culture but Arjun Appadurai’s “scapes” (Arjun Appadurai, 1996 ) serves as one of the theoretical bases of the inter-cultural movements that have pervaded the world more than fifty years ago. His theory is also an explication of how cultural practice like music moves globally in term of appraisal and adoption of styles (Jason Powell; Rebecca Steel, 2001:74-79). Though, the theory of Appadurai came later after the discovery of how cultures of the world mingle in term of music, his postulation is very relevant in cultural discourse.

The rise has been traced to several roots. The postulation made by Wale Adedeji (2004:23-26) that the Nigerian “Hip Hop” music started around 1980’s and 1990s constitute the domain

most scholars agreed with. The reason for the emergence according to Adedeji was the “military governorship” that came up during these periods in Nigeria. Part of the factors that he asserted was the lack of gainful employments for the Nigerian graduates that spanned between 1980s and 1990s.

Forchu Ijeoma (2009:23-24) differs in perspective and submitted that the emergence of hip hop in Nigeria needed to be traced to when “Ibrahim Somari”, a member of the American rap group came to Nigeria on exile. While staying in Nigeria, he released the first rap titled “I am an African”. Taiwo Babalola and Rotimi Taiwo (2009:2) claim that one of the aesthetics of Nigeria hip hop is that it has not constrained as far as “age”, “tribal” and “religious sentiments” are concerned.

A number of works had been done on Nigerian “Hip Hop”. These works create the spaces for viewing the development of the Nigerian “Hip Hop”. The essay of Christopher Nkechi titled *An Assessment of The Nigerian Urban Youth Music* (2012) concludes that the urban society witness an influx of radically accepted norms. However, Nkech still noted that

Beyond the shores of Nigeria, Nigerian hip hop artistes have gained international recognition through receiving top awards in competitions in which Nigerian musicians hitherto did not feature. In addition, Nigerian music is being used in popular films and dramas outside Nigeria [e.g. African Queeninhat Girl]. This trend impresses Nigerian youths, making music career attractive to them. Now, parents are less critical of the profession, which in the past was considered proper for only the wayward.

This an appraisal of how the music has been accepted in Nigerian in terms of social and political factors. This gives a strand of how the musical form has developed in Nigeria since its inception.

Adetunji Adegoke (2011:156) substantiates Nigeria Hip Hop music as a marker of identity through the “creolisation” process

the music form has witnessed in Nigeria. This conforms with the Pennycook Alastair's (2003:65-67) submission that "language" can be used to form a unique identity through what he called "semiotic reconstruction and performativity".

The place of Hip Hop in Nigeria has also been captured in the work of Christopher Nkechi (2013), Liadi Olusegun (2012) among other scholars. From the tenets set by the scholars discussed above, it agreed among the scholars that the "Hip Hop" is an urban music and it has contributed a lot to the development of the musical industry in Nigeria generally.

### **Conclusion**

The nature of Africa is as vast as the number of ethnic groups in the continent. This has been examined from two perspectives. Also, the structural formation of traditional music form which took its root from African folk tradition constitute the pattern of acceptance for the contemporary popular music among the countries of Africa. These facts are well established and seen in the music of Nigeria, Namibia, Uganda among other countries that had been discussed in this chapter.

It is also noted that the Nigerian Hip Hop developed as a result of global cultural and "transnational flows" of popular culture. This has been explicated in the works of the authors cited in the discussion of issues relating to African music.

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