

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Oral literature, orature, or folk literature is a genre of literature that is spoken or sung in contrast to that which is written, even though much oral literature has been transcribed¹. There is no standard definition, as anthropologists have used varying descriptions for oral literature or folk literature. A broad conceptualization refers to it as literature characterised by oral transmission and the absence of any fixed form. It includes the stories, music, myths and legends, and history passed through generations in a spoken form². Pre-literate societies, by definition, have no written

literature, but possesses rich and varied oral traditions, such as folk epics, folk narratives including fairy tales and fables, folk drama, proverbs and folksongs, that effectively constitute an oral literature. Even when these are collected and published by scholars such as folklorists and paremiographers, the result is still often referred to as oral literature. The different genres of oral literature pose classification challenges to scholars because of cultural dynamism in the modern digital age³.

The telling of urban legends may be considered an example of oral literature, as can jokes and also oral poetry including slam poetry which has been a televised feature on Russell Simmons' *Def Poetry*; performance poetry is a genre of poetry that consciously shuns the written form⁴. Oral literatures form a generally more fundamental component of culture, but operates in many ways as one might expect literature to do. The Ugandan scholar Pio Zirimu introduced the

term orature in an attempt to avoid an oxymoron, but oral literature remains more common both in academic and popular writing⁵. Orature means something passed on through the spoken word, and because it is based on the spoken language it comes to life only in a living community. Where community life fades away, orality loses its function and dies. It needs people in a living social setting: it needs life itself⁶.

Thus, even where no phrase in local language which exactly translates oral literature is used, what constitutes oral literature as understood today is already understood to be part or all of the lore media with which a society conducts profound and common cultural affairs among its members, orally⁷. In this sense, oral lore is an ancient practice and concept natural to the earliest storied communications and transmissions of bodies of knowledge and culture in verbal form from the dawn of language-based human societies, and oral literature thus understood was putatively recognised in times prior to recordings of history in non-oral media, including painting and writing⁸.

Music, an artistic medium of sound organization, is a natural phenomenon found in every human society⁹. Music is the arrangement of sounds to create combinations of form, harmony, melody, rhythm, or otherwise expressive content^{10,11,12}. Definitions of music vary widely in substance and approach¹³. While scholars agree that music is defined by a small number of specific elements, there is no consensus as to what these necessary elements are¹⁴. Music is often characterised as a highly versatile medium for expressing human creativity¹⁵. Diverse activities are involved in the creation of music, and are often divided into categories of composition, improvisation, and performance¹⁶. Music may be performed using a wide variety of musical instruments, including the human voice. It can also be composed, sequenced, or

otherwise produced to be indirectly played mechanically or electronically, such as via a music box, barrel organ, or digital audio workstation software on a computer. Music often plays a key role in social events and religious ceremony. The techniques of making music are often transmitted from as part of a cultural tradition. Music is played in public and private contexts, highlighted at events such as festivals and concerts for various different types of ensembles. Music is used in the production of other media, such as in soundtracks to films, TV shows, operas, and video games.

Listening to music is a common means of entertainment. The culture surrounding music extends into areas of academic study, journalism, philosophy, psychology, and therapy. The music industry includes songwriters, performers, sound engineers, producers, tour organizers, distributors of instruments, accessories, and publishers of sheet music and recordings. Technology facilitating the recording and reproduction of music has historically included sheet music, microphones, phonographs, and tape machines, with playback of digital musics being a common use for Moving Players (MP3), Compact Disc Players (CD), and smartphones¹⁷.

Composition which is one of the rudiments of music is the act or practice of creating a song, an instrumental music piece, a work with both singing and instruments, or another type of music. In many cultures, including Western classical music, the act of composing also includes the creation of music notation, such as a sheet music score, which is then performed by the composer or by other singers or musicians. In popular music and traditional music, the act of composing, which is typically called songwriting, may involve the creation of a basic outline of the song, called the lead sheet, which sets out the melody, lyrics and chord progression. In classical music, the composer typically orchestrates his or her own compositions, but in musical

theatre and in pop music, songwriters may hire an arranger to do the orchestration. In some cases, a songwriter may not use notation at all, and instead, compose the song in her mind and then play or record it from memory. In jazz and popular music, notable recordings by influential performers are given the weight that written scores play in classical music^{18,19}. Although a musical composition often uses musical notation and has a single author, this is not always the case.

A work of music can have multiple composers, which often occurs in popular music when a band collaborates to write a song, or in musical theatre, when one person writes the melodies, another person writes the lyrics, and a third person orchestrates the songs. In some styles of music, such as the blues, a composer/songwriter may create, perform and record new songs or pieces without ever writing them down in music notation. A piece of music can also be composed with words, images, or computer programs that explain or notate how the singer or musician should create musical sounds. Examples range from avant-garde music that uses graphic notation, to text compositions such as *Aus den sieben Tagen*, to computer programs that select sounds for musical pieces. Music that makes heavy use of randomness and chance is called aleatoric music²⁰. It is associated with contemporary composers active in the 20th century, such as John Cage, Morton Feldman, and Witold Lutosławski.

Performance, another important feature of music, is the physical expression of music, which occurs when a song is sung or piano piece, guitar melody, symphony, drum beat or other musical part is played²¹. In classical music, a work is written in music notation by a composer and then performed once the composer is satisfied with its structure and instrumentation. However, as it gets performed, the interpretation of a song or piece can evolve and change. In classical music, instrumental performers, singers or conductors may gradually make changes to

the phrasing or tempo of a piece. In popular and traditional music, the performers have more freedom to make changes to the form of a song or piece. As such, in popular and traditional music styles, even when a band plays a cover song, they can make changes such as adding a guitar solo or inserting an introduction.

A performance can either be planned out and rehearsed or practiced, which is the norm in classical music, jazz big bands, and many popular music styles or improvised over a chord progression (a sequence of chords), which is the norm in small jazz and blues groups. Rehearsals of orchestras, concert bands and choirs are led by a conductor. Rock, blues and jazz bands are usually led by the bandleader. A rehearsal is a structured repetition of a song or piece by the performers until it can be sung or played correctly and, if it is a song or piece for more than one musician, until the parts are together from a rhythmic and tuning perspective. Many cultures have strong traditions of solo performance where one singer or instrumentalist performs, such as in Indian classical music, and in the Western art-music tradition. All cultures include a mixture of both, and performance may range from improvised solo playing to highly planned and organized performances such as the modern classical concert, religious processions, classical music festivals or music competitions.

Traditional or indigenous music is that type of music which is created entirely from traditional elements and has no stylistic affinity with western music. Representatives of such traditional music are *Apala*, *Sakara*, *Waka* and *Fuji*. Traditional music, in many ways, represents continuity with the past and gives opportunity of learning, in order that the present may be better understood. *Apala* music is a type of socio-religious music that has a strong instrumental component and a vocal accompaniment that draws inspiration from Yoruba poetry and

philosophy. It developed as a nonliturgical Islamic music used during Muslim festivals. As an offshoot of the Quaranic chants and call to worship, Were and Waka musical forms were used by Muslim musicians and enthusiastic youths to wake up the faithfuls to eat 'saari' the early morning meal during the Ramadan fast, and welcome pilgrims back from the hajj pilgrimage in Mecca. Over time, however, *Apala* transcended its religious beginnings and became popular across different communities and occasions. The origin of Nigerian traditional music was traced to Islamic and European contact. It furthered the emergence of highlife music, orchestral works, and vocal works and concluded with the Ghanaian type of traditional music²².

The Yoruba people's music is an essential and fundamental component of their culture. The two primary genres of Yoruba music practice that may be broadly considered are folk music and new music. These include musical typologies which are related to their religious, social (occasional and ceremonial), entertainment (and recreational) activities, together with their musical instruments. While folk music consists of native songs, art music and neo-traditional music are emerging genres that have gained popularity and commercial success due to intra- and intercultural influences such as social, political, religious, and economic ones. Thus, it may be claimed that music is a fundamental aspect of African culture. It chronicles the African's day from dawn till dusk, tracing all the turning points in his life from the moment he entered this planet until the moment he departs from it.

The sound of *Apala* is distinct and is characterised by its use of traditional Yoruba percussion instruments. The most prominent instruments in *Apala* music are the *talking drum* called *dundun* in the Yoruba language, *shekere* which is a type of rattle, *agidigbo*, a thumb piano,

and *agogo*, a type of bell. The rhythm in *Apala* is slow, steady, and hypnotic, with a deep, resonant beat that is central to its appeal.

Vocals are also a crucial part of *Apala* music. The lyrics are usually in Yoruba and often include proverbs, praise singing, and social commentary. The lead singer, often referred to as the *akpala*, is accompanied by a chorus that responds to the lead's call, creating a dynamic call-and-response pattern that is typical of many African musical traditions. *Apala* songs are known for their depth and richness in content. The lyrics often deal with themes such as morality, respect for elders, religious devotion, and social issues. They also serve as a form of oral history, passing down stories, wisdom, and cultural values from one generation to the next. Though *Apala* may not be as widely recognised globally as some other African music genres, it has had a significant influence on Nigerian music. It paved the way for other Yoruba music styles like *Fuji* and *Juju*, and its impact can still be felt in contemporary Nigerian music. Artists like Haruna Ishola and Ayinla Omowura were pioneers of *Apala*, and their music continues to be celebrated for its cultural importance. Today, *Apala* is cherished not only for its musicality but also for its role in preserving Yoruba culture and history. Despite the influence of modern music, *Apala* remains a vital part of Nigerian cultural heritage, reminding people of their roots and the richness of their traditions.

Contemporary Hip hop music has been popular in Africa since the early 1980s due to widespread African American influence. In 1985, hip hop reached Senegal, a French-speaking country in West Africa. Some of the first Senegalese rappers were Munyaradzi Nhidza Lida, M.C. Solaar, and Positive Black Soul. There also have been groups in Tanzania and other countries that emerged before 1989, which knows as Kwanza Unit although it is not very well known.

During the late 1980s to mid1990s, Stevano UGO, Lagos, Nigeria hit "Earthquaking African MC" became the first Afrobeat rap Artist playing on radio Ray Power FM released via Kennis Music founder, Kenny Ogungbe "African Diddy, this sparked more awareness of bilingual rappers started to escalate all over Africa. Each region had a new type of style of hip hop. Rap elements are also found in kwaito, a subgenre of house music which was developed in South Africa in the 1980s. Hip hop in Nigeria dates back to the late eighties and early nineties²³. The first place hip hop gained popularity in Nigeria was in Lagos, Nigeria. The availability of computers and cheap music editing software in the late 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century enabled Nigerian musicians to achieve higher quality recordings which quickly won over the Nigerian audience²⁴. This was a very cheap way to make music and a new Nigerian hip hop musician would make music and sell it on a CD²⁵. This was one way for the youths to be independent from the government by being lucrative and creating jobs for themselves, since the government was not helping them²⁶. Hip hop was used during this time for entertainment, but also to criticize the government and demand change²⁷. Some up-rising artists in Nigeria began to localize hip hop and make songs in English and any other Nigerian language as a means of self-expression, thus making Nigerian hip hop multilingual²⁸.

Just as Nigeria's Nollywood movies have done with Western movies, Nigerian hip hop has begun to displace Western popular music. Musicians such as Eedris Abdulkareem started making multilingual hip hop music and the lyrics were usually in English, Pidgin English and another

Nigerian language such as Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa. For a period, hip hop popularity reduced in Nigeria with the Generation finding it hard to love the standard with all the advancement and change the genre was going through in other countries. Research has shown that from 2010 to

2021 the genre listeners and audience dropped from nearly 15% percent of the Nigerian music market to 7%. But with rise of a new set of rappers since early 2022 in Nigeria introducing the likes of PsychoYP, Cheque and Berry Ivan who have started taking a more recent and rejuvenated approach of making music, hip hop in Nigeria entered a new era defining moment²⁹. Street pop, also known as street hop, emerged in Lagos during the 2010s through a blend of Nigerian hip hop, popular music, and indigenous street sounds. Influences from artists like Daddy Showkey, who popularized the galala genre in the 1990s, and the shaku shaku dance style, initially derived from South African gqom music, played significant roles in its development. Characterised by lively tempos, street pop integrates elements of pop, hip hop and electronic dance music. Its distinct features include melodious arrangements, urban slang, vocals in Yoruba and Pidgin, and a blend of indigenous and Western rap³⁰.

Apala music was traditionally performed during Ramadan by Muslims of the Yoruba ethnic group. The genre evolved as a medium of social commentary, addressing themes such as morality, social justice, and communal values. Key figures in *Apala*, such as Haruna Ishola and Ayinla Omowura, helped popularize the genre, making it an integral part of Nigerian cultural heritage. On the other hand, *Hip-Hop* music, characterised by rhythmic speech or "rap" over beats, often serves as a voice for marginalized communities, addressing issues such as poverty, racism, and social inequality. Pioneers like Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, Run-D.M.C., and Public Enemy shaped *Hip-Hop* into a global phenomenon, influencing various aspects of popular culture worldwide. Hip hop's first significant impact in Nigeria is believed to have started in the early 1980s. This was largely influenced by the popularity of American hip hop, particularly records like "Rapper's Delight" by the Sugarhill Gang. While DJ Ron "Ronnie"

Ekundayo is credited with recording the first rap album in Nigeria, "The Way I Feel" in the 1980s, the genre gained broader recognition through the import of American records and artists³¹.

In conclusion, a comparative study of the literary features in *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs offers a unique opportunity to explore the intersections between culture, music, and literature. By examining how these genres use language and literary devices to communicate complex ideas, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of music in shaping and reflecting societal values.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is a widespread misconception that contemporary music, particularly *Hip-Hop*, lacks literary and moral depth, whereas traditional genres like *Apala* are widely acknowledged as rich in oral literature and cultural wisdom. This bias has led to an academic gap where *Apala* is frequently studied for its proverbs, historical allusions, and didactic themes, while *Hip-Hop* is often dismissed as purely entertainment-driven. However, both genres function as vehicles for oral literature, using storytelling, symbolism, and rhythmic patterns to convey messages about social justice, perseverance, identity, and moral responsibility. *Hip-Hop*, much like *Apala*, employs rhyme, repetition, call-and-response, and figurative language to address contemporary societal issues, yet its contributions to oral literature remain underexplored. This study seeks to fill this gap by comparing the literary features in *Apala* and *Hip-Hop*, demonstrating how both genres serve as tools for cultural expression, moral instruction, and social commentary. By examining their thematic concerns, differences and similarities in literary devices deployed by

the singers and, and storytelling methods, the research highlights the continuity of oral literary traditions across generations, reinforcing the idea that *Hip-Hop*, like *Apala*, carries important moral lessons and reflects the socio-cultural realities of its time.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to compare the literary features in selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs.

The specific objectives are to:

- i. identify the literary features in the selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs
- ii. identify the thematic focuses and cultural significances in the selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs
- iii. compare areas of similarities and differences in the artists' depiction of social concerns and matters of collective consciousness in the selected songs

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What are the literary features in the selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs?
- ii. What are the thematic focuses and cultural significances in the selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs?
- iii. What are the areas of similarities and differences in the artists' depiction of social concerns and matters of collective consciousness in the selected songs?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it offers a comprehensive comparative analysis of the literary elements in traditional *Apala* music and contemporary *Hip-Hop*, demonstrating their roles as cultural and artistic expressions. *Apala*, deeply rooted in Yoruba oral traditions, functions as a

historical archive and moral compass, preserving indigenous knowledge through poetic storytelling and rhythmic instrumentation. Conversely, *Hip-Hop*, originating from African American communities and later embraced globally, serves as a contemporary medium for social commentary, using lyrical ingenuity and rhythm to address pressing societal concerns. By examining these two genres, the study enhances our understanding of music as a literary, historical, and cultural artifact that both preserves and reshapes collective consciousness.

Moreover, this research bridges the gap between traditional oral literature and modern lyrical expression, illustrating how both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* act as vehicles for storytelling, social critique, and identity formation. While *Apala* safeguards ancestral wisdom, *Hip-Hop* reinterprets narratives to confront contemporary struggles such as systemic inequality, youth empowerment, and cultural hybridity. Through a comparative analysis of literary techniques, such as metaphor, imagery, wordplay, and rhythm. This study highlights how both genres continue to shape cultural consciousness and influence linguistic creativity within their respective communities.

The study is also significant within the field of African literary and cultural studies, as it traces the evolution of musical expression across different historical contexts. While *Apala*, once confined to Yoruba-speaking communities, has influenced other indigenous genres like *Fuji* and *Juju*, *Hip-Hop* has been adapted and localized within Nigerian popular culture. Examining these genres together provides insight into the dynamics of cultural exchange and adaptation, demonstrating how traditional and contemporary musical forms interact, coexist, and influence each other.

Finally, the study contributes to the preservation and appreciation of indigenous African music amid the forces of globalization. As contemporary influences reshape musical traditions, recognising the literary depth of *Apala* and its connections with modern genres like *Hip-Hop* fosters efforts to document, teach, and promote traditional African musical heritage. By drawing attention to these literary dimensions, the study encourages further exploration of how oral traditions evolve, endure, and integrate with modern artistic forms, ensuring that these rich cultural legacies remain vibrant and relevant in contemporary discourse.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study conducts a comparative analysis of the literary features in selected traditional and contemporary music, focusing on *Apala* and Afro *Hip-Hop* genre of music. *Apala* artists like Ayinla Adegator, one of the prominent *Apala* artists, had lots of album during his time, and was later stabbed to death by his manager, Bayewu in 1980. Musiliu Haruna Ishola who has according to the African Music Library, nine (9) albums, and Ayinla Omowura who released 22 albums. One track was picked from each of these artists, *Iba Iya mi* by Ayinla Adegator, *Ise Oluwa* by Musiliu Haruna Ishola, *Ise Ile* by Ayinla Omowura.

Olamide Gbenga Adedeji popularly known as Olamide, is one of the most sought after *Afro Hip-Hop* artist, he has a total of 14 albums out of which *Omo Anifowose* was selected. Adedamola Oyinlola Adefolahan widely known as Fireboy is a young and talented Hip Hop artist, he has a total of 4 albums and *Ise Oluwa* was selected for its similarity to one of the *Apala* songs. Ahmed Ololade professionally known as Asake is a fast-growing *Hip-Hop* artist who has 5 albums according to Wikipedia, out of which *Sunshine* was singled out for the purpose of this study. Through this analysis, the research aims to demonstrate how both genres serve as literary

and cultural artifacts that reflect and shape societal narratives. However, the study does not focus on instrumental composition or musical production techniques; instead, it prioritizes the lyrical content, literary elements, and cultural significance through the thematic focus of the selected songs, particularly the localized expression of *Hip-Hop* within Nigeria.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

This study will focus on specific songs from traditional *Apala* music and contemporary *HipHop*, this poses as a limitation because it may not represent the full diversity within each of the genre. Subjectivity poses another threat since analysing literary features involves a degree of interpretation and these interpretations varies between reserchers and this could affect the consistency of findings. Also, understanding the full significance of literary features requires a deep cultural and historical context, this might not be fully covered in this study. Little bits of nuances in lyrics might be missed or misinterpreted because the study involes songs in languages and dialects that are not well understood by the researcher. Apparently, both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* genre are dynamic and evolving genres, therefore, the study may not account for recent changes or emerging trends within these styles. Finally, there might be limited generalization as each of the artists of the selected songs may use literary features in diverse ways.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Traditional *Apala* Music: *Apala*, which is a very important aspect of the study, is from the Yoruba-speaking region of Nigeria and it's characterised by its use of percussion instruments, call and-response vocals.

Contemporary Afro Hip Hop Songs: Hip hop that emerged from African communities. For this study, "contemporary" refers to hip hop songs produced in the last decade, reflecting current trends and styles.

Literary Features: This term includes elements such as storytelling, themes, language, imagery, poetic devices, and figures of speech used in the lyrics of music. It involves how these features contribute to the overall message and emotional impact of the songs selected for the study.

Themes: Central ideas or messages conveyed through the lyrics of the selected songs for the study, such as social issues, personal experiences, and cultural values.

Language: The choice of words, expressions, and linguistic styles used in the lyrics of the songs, including aspects like diction, slang, and metaphor.

End Notes

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Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of issues, comments, opinions and views from previous relevant researchers and literature so as to situate the study within the existing body of knowledge in the field of oral and musical literature.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

- 2.1.1** Historical Development of Nigerian Music
- 2.1.2** Comparative Literature and Music Studies
- 2.1.3** Traditional *Apala* and Contemporary Afro *Hip-Hop* Music

2.2 Theoretical Review

- 2.2.1** Performance Theory
- 2.2.2** Postcolonial Theory

2.3 Empirical Review

- 2.3.1** Historical Evolution of *Apala* Music
- 2.3.2** Features of Traditional *Apala* Music
- 2.3.3** Historical Evolution of Contemporary Afro Hip Hop Music
- 2.3.4** Existing Literature on *Apala* and Afro Hip Hop Literary Features
- 2.3.5** Implications of Empirical Findings

2.4 Conceptual Model 2.5 Summary of gaps

Endnotes

2.1. Conceptual Review

This chapter presents a conceptual framework for the study by defining key terms and exploring the theoretical underpinnings of literary features in both *Apala* and Afro *Hip-Hop* music. The focus will be on the identification of key variables that will be used for the comparative analysis in subsequent chapters. In the vast and diverse landscape of Nigerian music, *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* stand as two distinct yet deeply influential genres that reflect the country's rich cultural heritage and dynamic modernity. This chapter seeks to provide a thorough review of

the literary features, thematic elements, and cultural significance of *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* music, offering a foundation for the comparative analysis that follow. The comparative analysis in this study hinges on the concept of literary features. Traditionally applied to written texts, these features are adapted here to examine the lyrical and musical components of both genres. Key literary elements to be explored include language, style, narrative, theme, and imagery. By understanding how these elements are manifested in *Apala* and *Hip-Hop*, insights can be gained into the cultural and social contexts that shaped their development.

2.1.1 Historical Development of Nigerian Music

The music of Nigeria includes many kinds of folk and popular music. Little of the country's music history prior to European contact has been preserved, although bronze carvings dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries have been found depicting musicians and their instruments.¹ The country's most internationally renowned genres are indigenous *Apala*, *Aurebba* music, *Rara* music, *Were* music, *Ogene*, *Fuji*, *Jùjú*, *Afrobeats*, *Igbo highlife*, *Afro-juju*, *Waka*, *Igbo rap*, *Gospel*, *Nigerian pop*² and *Yo-pop*. Styles of folk music are related to the over 250 ethnic groups in the country, each with their own techniques, instruments, and songs³. Traditional music from Nigeria and throughout Africa is often functional; in other words, it is performed to mark a ritual such as a wedding or funeral but not to achieve artistic goals⁴. Although some Nigerians, especially children and the elderly, play instruments for their own amusement, solo performance is otherwise rare. Work songs are also a common type of traditional Nigerian music⁵. They help to keep the rhythm of workers in fields, while working to avoid laziness and fatigue. Even women use complex rhythms in housekeeping tasks, such as pounding yams to rhythms of music and dancing while they wash and spread clothes on the line.

In the northern regions, farmers work together on each other's farms and the host is expected to supply musicians for the workers to make it interesting and worthwhile.

The most common format for music in Nigeria is the call-and-response, in which a lead singer and a chorus interchange verses, sometimes accompanied by instruments that either shadow the lead text or repeat and ostinato vocal phrase. The southern area features complex rhythms and solo players using melody instruments, while the north more typically features polyphonic wind ensembles. The extreme north region is associated with music with an emphasis on drums, and tends to be more influenced by Islamic music.

The Yoruba on the other hand have a drumming tradition, with a characteristic use of the dundun hourglass tension drums. Ensembles using the dundun play a type of music that is also called dundun.⁶ These ensembles consist of various sizes of tension drums, along with kettledrums (gudugudu). The leader of a dundun ensemble is the iyalu, who uses the drum to "talk" by imitating the tonality of Yoruba⁷. Much of Yoruba music is spiritual in nature, and is devoted to their God. Yoruba music is one of the most important components of modern Nigerian popular music, as a result of its early influence from European, Islamic and Brazilian forms⁸. These influences stemmed from the importation of brass instruments, sheet music, Islamic percussion and styles brought by Brazilian merchants⁹. In both Nigeria's most populous city, Lagos, and the largest city of Ibadan, these multicultural traditions add to the multicultural musical tapestry of Nigerian popular music. Modern styles such as Ayinde Barrister's *Fuji*, Salawa Abeni's *Waka*, and Yusuf Olatunji's *Sakara* are derived primarily from Yoruba traditional music. Many contemporary Yoruba musicians sing in their native language. Akande Abolore Adegbola better known as 9ice

is one of many that broke into the industry with *Gongo Aso*. UK-based saxophonist Tunday Akintan created yorubeat based on Yorùbá rhythms. Timi Korus and Flosha are other Nigerian artists that rap and sing in Yoruba¹⁰.

The earliest styles of Nigerian popular music which were often referred to as Naija Music, were palm-wine music and highlife, which spread in the 1920s among Nigeria and nearby countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ghana¹¹. During this time, a few other styles such as *Apala*, derived from traditional Yoruba music, also found a more limited audience. By the 1960s, Cuban, American and other styles of imported music enjoyed large followership, and musicians started to incorporate these importations into *Jùjú*¹².

The result was a profusion of new styles in the last few decades of the 20th century, including waka music, Yo-pop and Afrobeat. By the start of the 20th century, Yoruba music had incorporated brass instruments, written notation, Islamic percussion and new Brazilian techniques, resulting in the Lagos-born palm-wine style¹³. However, palm-wine originally referred to a diverse set of styles played with string instruments, characteristically, guitars or banjos with shakers and hand drums¹⁴. This urban style was frequently played in bars to accompany drinking, hence the name, which is derived from the alcoholic palm wine beverage. The first stars of palm-wine had emerged by the 1920s, the most famous of whom was Babatunde King. King probably coined the word juju, which is a style of music he helped to create, in reference to the sound of a Brazilian tambourine; alternatively, the term may have developed as an expression of disdain by the colonial leaders because any native tradition was apt to be dismissed as 'mere joujou, a French term for nonsense¹⁵.

British record labels such as His Master's Voice had started to record palm-wine, and more celebrities emerged, including Ojoge Daniel, Tunde Nightingale and Speedy Araba. These artists, along with Tunde King, established the core of the style, and remained one of the most popular genres in Nigeria throughout the 20th century¹⁶. Some Jùjú musicians were itinerant, including early pioneers Ojoge Daniel, Irewole Denge and the blind minstrel-Kokoro¹⁷.

Apala is a style of vocal and percussive Muslim Yoruba music. It emerged in the late 1930s as a means of rousing worshippers after the fasting of Ramadan. Under the influence of popular Afro-Cuban percussion, *Apala* developed into a more polished style and attracted a large audience. The music required two or three talking drums (omele), a rattle (sekere), thumb piano (agidigbo) and a bell (agogo). Haruna Ishola was the most famous *Apala* performer, and he later played an integral role in bringing *Apala* to larger audiences as a part of *Fuji* music¹⁸.

Following World War II, Nigerian music started to take on new instruments and techniques, including electronic instruments imported from the United States and Europe. Rock N' roll, Soul, and later Funk, became very popular in Nigeria, and elements of these genres were added to *Jùjú* by artists such as I. K. Dairo. Meanwhile, highlife had been slowly gaining popularity among the Igbo people, and their unique style soon found a national audience. At the same time, Haruna Ishola, the father of *Apala* music, was becoming one of the country's biggest stars.

During the 1950s, recording technology grew more advanced, and the gangan talking drum, electric guitar and accordion were incorporated into jùjú. Much of this innovation was the work of IK Dairo & the Morning Star Orchestra which was later known as IK Dairo & the Blue Spots, in 1957¹⁹. These performers brought jùjú from the rural poor to the urban cities of Nigeria

and beyond. Dairo became perhaps the biggest star of African music by the '60s, recording numerous hit songs that spread his fame to as far away as Japan. In 1963, he became the only African musician ever honored by receiving membership in the Order of the British Empire, an order of chivalry in the United Kingdom²⁰. *Apala*, a traditional style from Ogun state in Nigeria, became very popular in the 1960s, led by performers including Haruna Ishola, Sefiu Ayan, Kasumu Adio, and Ayinla Omowura. Ishola, who was one of Nigeria's most consistent hit makers between 1955 and his death in 1983, recorded *Apala* songs, which alternated between slow and emotional, and swift and energetic style of music. His lyrics were a mixture of improvised praise and passages from the Quran, as well as traditional proverbs. His work became a formative influence on the developing *Fuji* style.

The late 1960s saw the appearance of the first *Fuji* bands. Ayinde Barrister named *Fuji* after Mount *Fuji* in Japan, purely for the sound of the word²¹. *Fuji* was a synthesis of *Apala* with the ornamented, free-rhythmic vocals of *ajisari* devotional musicians²² and was accompanied by the *sakara*, a tambourine-drum, and Hawaiian guitar. Among the genre's earliest stars were Haruna Ishola and Ayinla Omowura; Ishola released numerous hits from the late '50s to the early '80s, becoming one of the country's most famous performers. *Fuji* grew steadily more popular between the 1960s and '70s, becoming closely associated with Islam in the process. *Fuji* has been described as *jùjú* without guitars; ironically, Ebenezer Obey once described *jùjú* as mambo with guitars²³. However, at its roots, *Fuji* is a mixture of Muslim traditional *were* music and *ajisari* songs with aspects of *Apala* percussion and vocal songs, and philosophical *sakara* music²⁴. Of these elements,

Apala is the fundamental basis of *Fuji*²⁵. The first stars of *Fuji* were the rival bandleaders Alhaji Sikiru Ayinde Barrister and Ayinla Kollington²⁶ Alhaji Sikiru Ayinde Barrister started his *Fuji*

career in the early 1970s with the Golden *Fuji* Group, although he had sung Muslim songs since he was 10 years old. He first changed his group's name to *Fuji* Londoners when he came back from a trip to London, England¹⁸. After a very long time, with hits such as *Orilonise*, *Fuji Disco/Iku Baba Obey*, *Oke Agba*, *Aye*, and *Suuru*, he changed the group's name to "Supreme *Fuji* Commanders". Ayinde's rival was Ayinla Kollington or Baba Alatika, known for fast tempo and dance-able brand of *Fuji*, who also recorded hit albums like *ko bo simi lo'run mo e*, in the '80s he released *ijo yoyo*, *Lakukulala* and *American Megastar*" to mention few of his successful albums. With all due respect Ayinla Kollington is a coherent social commentator. He was followed in the 1980s by growing stars such as Wasiu Ayinde Marshall¹⁶.

In the early 1980s, both Obey and Ade found larger audiences outside of Nigeria. In 1982, Ade was signed to Island Records, who hoped to replicate Bob Marley's success, and released *Juju Music*, which sold far beyond expectations in Europe and the United States²⁷. Obey released *Current Affairs* in 1980 on Virgin Records and became a brief star in the UK, but was not able to sustain his international career as long as Ade. Ade led a brief period of international fame for *jùjú*, which ended in 1985 when he lost his record contract after the commercial failure of *Aura* (recorded with Stevie Wonder) and his band walked out in the middle of a huge Japanese tour²⁸. Ade's brush with international renown brought a lot of attention from mainstream record companies, and helped to inspire the rapidly developing world music industry. By the end of the 1980s, *jùjú* had lost out to other styles, like Yo-pop, gospel and reggae. In the 1990s, however, *Fuji* and *jùjú* remained popular, as did waka music and Nigerian reggae. At the very end of the decade, hip hop music spread to the country after being a major part of music in neighboring regions²².

Afrobeat is a style most closely associated with Nigeria, and Afrobeat recordings are a prominent part of the world music category found throughout the developed world. It is music with elements of *Fuji*, Juju, Jazz and other music genres. The most popular and well-known performer, indeed the most famous Nigerian musician in history, is undoubtedly Fela Kuti²⁹. Although Kuti is often credited as the only pioneer of Afrobeat, other musicians such as Orlando Julius Ekemode were also prominent in the early Afrobeat scene, where they combined highlife, jazz and funk. A brief period in the United States saw him exposed to the Black Power movement and the Black Panthers, an influence that he would come to express in his lyrics³⁰. After living in London briefly, he moved back to Lagos and opened a club, The Shrine, which was one of the most popular music spots in the city. He started recording with Africa '70, a huge band featuring drummer Tony Allen, who has since gone on to become a well-known musician³¹. With Africa '70, Kuti recorded a series of hits, earning the ire of the government as he tackled such diverse issues as poverty, traffic and skin-bleaching. In 1985, Kuti was jailed for five years, but was released after only two years after international outcry and massive domestic protests. Upon release, Kuti continued to criticise the government in his songs, and became known for eccentric behavior. In the 1980s, Afrobeat became affiliated with the developing genre of world music, in Europe and North America, so-called "world music" acts came from all over the world and played in a multitude of styles, Fela Kuti and his Afrobeat followers were among the most famous musicians that happened to be present. Following a surprise appearance in place of his father, Fela, Femi Kuti captured a large fan base that enabled him to tour across Europe. Femi Kuti and Seun Kuti followed their father Fela Kuti's steps in singing Afrobeats while hammering on the ills in the society³².

With regards to reggae music in Nigeria, this brand of music was started by a musician called Terakota. By the 80s, Nigerian reggae stars included Daniel Wilson, The Mandators, Ras Kimono, Majek Fashek, whose 1988 cover of Bob Marley's "Redemption Song", became an unprecedented success for reggae in Nigeria. Like many later Nigerian reggae stars, Fashek was a part of the long-running band The Mandators, who toured and recorded incessantly during the mid to late 1980s and early '90s³³. Eventually leaving room for the reggae musicians Jerri Jheto and Daddy Showkey, coming in. African Caribbean fusion is a genre that has been popular and growing over the years, especially in the 21st century. In this genre of music African musicians incorporate Jamaican patois into their lyrics and beats. Although, very popular in Jamaica, this well blended genre became well known in the African region around the 19th century because of the Nigerian Reggae musician Majek Fashek who attracted international attention to this fusion³⁴.

Hip hop music was brought to Nigeria in the late 1980s, and grew steadily popular throughout the first part of the 1990s. The first acts included Sound on Sound, Emphasis, Ruff Rugged & Raw, Swat Root, De Weez and Black Masquradaz. Moreover, mainstream success grew later in the decade, with attention brought by early hits like The Trybesmen's Trybal Marks, 1999 and the trio The Remedies' "Judile" and "Sakoma". One of The Remedies, Tony Tetuila, went on to work with the Plantashun Boiz to great commercial acclaim³⁵. The 1999 founding of Paybacktyme Records by Solomon Dare, popularly known as Solodee, Kennis Music by Kenny Ogungbe, Dove Records by Nelson Brown, and Trybe Records by eLDee helped redefined and establish a Nigerian *HipHop* scene. Also, the general rapid growth of the entertainment scene with support from the media helped popularise hip hop music in Nigeria. Television Programmes like Videowheels, HipTV, Music Africa, the MTN Y'ello show, Music Africa, Nigezie, and Soundcity played a major role³⁶.

Other prominent Nigerian *Hip-Hop* musicians include Tuface Idibia, Vector, Reminisce, Ice Prince, M.I Abaga, Ruggedman, Eedris Abdulkareem, Erigga, Weird MC, Naeto C, Twin-X, and P-Square. Around the close of 2012 *Hip-Hop* movement began to lose its popularity in Nigeria.

Afrobeats artists began to rule the game notable acts such as Wizkid, Davido, Olamide, Burna Boy, Kiss Daniel, Tekno, Mc Galaxy, Adekunle Gold, Dammy Krane, and Lil Kesh have over the years gotten great attention for their songs. As of 2023, a new chain of hip hop artists once again have proven to keep the genre alive in Nigeria. Although not as popular as afrobeats, artists like PsychoYP have proven to be oriented in drill music, Blue Ivan most times categorized as a modern pop artist has also proven to represent the genre with an endless catalog of trap and psychedelic pop music. In the 20th century, Nigeria produced a number of classical composers; these include Samuel Akpabot, Ayo Bankole, Lazarus Ekwueme, Akin Euba, Fela Sowande and Joshua Uzoigwe. Sowande was one of the first and most famous African composers in the Western classical tradition, and founder of the Nigerian art music tradition. Sowande was also an organist and jazz musician, incorporating these and elements of Nigerian folk music into his work³⁷.

Apala (or Akpala) is a music genre originally developed by the Yoruba people of Nigeria³⁸, during the country's history as a colony of the British Empire. It is a percussion-based style that originated in the late 1930s. The rhythms of *Apala* grew more complex over time, and have influenced the likes of Cuban music, whilst gaining popularity in Nigeria. It has grown less religious centered over time because it was really religious centred. *Apala* music is an offshoot of *Wéré* music. Instruments include a rattle (sekere), thumb piano (agidigbo) and a bell (agogô), as well as talking drums³⁹. Ayinla Omowura and Haruna Ishola, amongst others were notable

performers of *Apala* music, these two icons played a major role in popularising the genre. It is distinct from, older than, and more difficult to master than *Fuji* music⁴⁰. Although *Fuji* music remains one of the popular forms of traditional music amongst Yorubas in Nigeria, *Apala* is still very popular amongst Muslims of the Yoruba tribe⁴¹.

In *Hip-Hop*, music is used to convey an impression of a dramatic action to the audience. Music is also used in literary drama, although its musical accompaniment is more sparingly used than in opera; again, music communicates the mood or tone of events to the audience. An example is John Pepper Clark's *The Ozidi Saga*, a play about murder and revenge, featuring both human and non-human actors. Each character in the play is associated with a personal theme song, which accompanies battles in which the character is involved. Traditional Nigerian theatre includes puppet shows in Borno State and among the Ogoni and Tiv, and the ancient Yoruba *Alààrinjò* tradition, which may be descended from the *Egúngún* masquerade⁴². With the influx of roadbuilding colonial powers, these theatre groups spread across the country and their productions grew ever more elaborate, they now typically use European instruments, film extracts and recorded music. In the past, both Hubert Ogunde and Ade Love produced soundtracks for their movies using very rich Yoruba language⁴³.

Apala is a style of vocal and percussive Muslim Yoruba music. It emerged in the late 1930s as a means of rousing worshippers after the fasting of Ramadan. Under the influence of popular Afro-Cuban percussion, *Apala* developed into a more polished style and attracted a large audience. Haruna Ishola was the most famous *Apala* performer, and he later played an integral role in bringing *Apala* to larger audiences as a part of *Fuji* music⁴⁴. Among the Igbo people, Ghanaian highlife became popular in the early 1950s, and other guitar-band styles from

Cameroon and Zaire soon followed. The Ghanaian E. T. Mensah, easily the most popular highlife performer of the

1950s, toured Igbo-land frequently, drawing huge crowds of devoted fans. Bobby Benson & His Combo was the first Nigerian highlife band to find audiences across the country. Benson was followed by Jim Lawson & the Mayor's Dance Band, who achieved national fame in the mid-'70s, ending with Lawson's death in 1971.

During the same period, other highlife performers were reaching their peak. These included Prince Nico Mbarga and his band Rocafil Jazz, who's *Sweet Mother* was a pan-African hit that sold more than 13 million copies, more than any other African single of any kind. Mbarga used English lyrics in a style that he dubbed *panko*, which incorporated sophisticated rumba guitarphrasing into the highlife idiom⁴⁵. After the civil war in the 1960s, Igbo musicians were forced out of Lagos and returned to their homeland. The result was that highlife ceased to be a major part of mainstream Nigerian music, and was thought of as being something purely associated with the

Igbos of the east. Highlife's popularity slowly dwindled among the Igbos, supplanted by *jùjú* and *Fuji*. However, a few performers kept the style alive, such as Yoruba singer and trumpeter Victor Olaiya (the only Nigerian to ever earn a platinum record), Stephen Osita Osadebe, Oliver De Coque, Celestine Ukwu, Oriental Brothers, Sonny Okosun, Victor Uwaifo, and Orlando "Dr. Ganja" Owoh, whose distinctive style fused *jùjú* and highlife⁴⁶.

Ebenezer Obey formed the International Brothers in 1964, and his band soon surpassed that of IK Dairo as the biggest Nigerian group. They played a form of bluesy, guitar-based and highlife-influenced *jùjú* that included complex talking drum-dominated percussion elements.

Obey's lyrics addressed issues that appealed to urban listeners, and incorporated Yoruba traditions and his conservative Christian faith. His rival was King Sunny Adé, who emerged in the same period, forming the Green Spots in 1966 and then achieving some major hits with the African Beats after 1974's *Esu Biri Ebo Mi*. Ade and Obey raced to incorporate new influences into jùjú music and to gather new fans; Hawaiian slack-key, keyboards and background vocals were among the innovations added during this rapidly changing period⁴⁷. Ade added strong elements of Jamaican dub music, and introduced the practice of having the guitar play the rhythm and the drums play the melody. During this period, jùjú songs changed from short pop songs to long tracks, often over 20 minutes in length. Bands increased from four performers in the original ensembles, to 10 with IK Dairo and more than 30 with Obey and Ade³⁸.

Two of the biggest stars of the '80s were Segun Adewale and Shina Peters, who started their careers performing in the mid-'70s with Prince Adekunle. They eventually left Adekunle and formed a brief partnership as Shina Adewale & the International Superstars before beginning solo careers⁴⁸. Adewale was the first of the two to gain success, when he became the most famous performer of Yo-pop⁴⁹. The Yo-pop craze did not last for long, replaced by Shina Peters' Afro-juju style, which broke into the mainstream after the release of Afro-Juju Series 1. Afro-juju was a combination of Afrobeat and *Fuji*, and it ignited such fervor among Shina's fans that the phenomenon was dubbed *Shinamania*. Though he was awarded Juju Musician of the Year in 1990, Shina's follow-up, *Shinamania* sold respectably but was panned by critics⁵⁰. His success opened up the field to newcomers, however, leading to the success of Fabulous Olu Fajemirokun and Adewale Ayuba. The same period saw the rise of new styles like the funky juju pioneered by Dele Taiwo⁵¹.

Apala music originated in the Yoruba communities of southwestern Nigeria in the early 20th century. Initially, it was performed to wake up Muslims during the Ramadan fast (known as *Ajiwere*), but it quickly evolved into a popular music genre enjoyed by many. *Apala* music is characterised by its intricate rhythms, call-and-response vocal patterns, and deep, resonant percussion. The music often features slowly to moderate tempos, allowing the complex rhythms and rich textures of the instruments to shine. The lyrics of *Apala* songs typically address social issues, historical events, and moral lessons, reflecting the daily lives and beliefs of the Yoruba people.

Several musicians have been instrumental in popularizing *Apala* music. Notable among them is Haruna Ishola, who was regarded as the king of *Apala* music. His contributions to the genre include numerous hit songs and albums that have stood the test of time. Other prominent figures include Ayinla Omowura and Kasumu Adio, both of whom have left a lasting impact on the *Apala* music scene. *Apala* music holds immense cultural significance for the Yoruba people and Nigeria as a whole. It serves as a medium for storytelling, preserving history, and promoting social values⁵². The music's themes often revolve around cultural identity, communal harmony, and moral teachings, making it an important tool for education and cultural preservation.

In recent years, *Apala* music has influenced contemporary Nigerian music genres such as *Fuji* and *Afrobeat*. Modern musicians often incorporate elements of *Apala* into their songs, keeping the traditional rhythms and instruments alive in a modern context. This fusion has helped to introduce *Apala* music to a younger generation, ensuring its continued relevance. *Apala* music is more than just a musical genre; it is a cultural treasure that embodies the history, values, and spirit of the Yoruba people. Its enduring popularity and influence on modern music highlight its

significance and the important role it plays in Nigerian culture. As we appreciate *Apala* music, we also celebrate the rich heritage and traditions it represents.

Nigerian hip hop, began gaining traction in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with Lagos emerging as its initial hub. During this period, Nigeria was under military rule, which contributed to widespread economic difficulties, including currency devaluation, job losses, and high unemployment, particularly among recent university graduates. For many youths, hip hop served as an escape from these challenging circumstances. The genre was initially popularized through the use of Nigerian languages in the lyrics, combined with traditional hip hop beats from pioneers like DJ Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, and Grandmaster Flash⁵³. Due to the scarcity of record labels and limited financial resources, aspiring musicians often produced their own music on modest budgets. Music videos from this era were typically simple and low-cost. The advent of computers and affordable music editing software in the late 1990s and early 2000s enabled Nigerian artists to produce higher-quality recordings, which quickly resonated with the local audience. This era saw a shift towards independent music production and distribution, with artists selling their music on Compact Discs (CDs).

Hip hop provided a platform for entertainment and a means to critique the government, advocating for social change. Notable early hip hop groups and artists from this period include Junior & Pretty, Daniel 'Danny' Wilson, Plantashun Boiz, and The Remedies, featuring members such as Eedris Abdulkareem, Eddy Remedy, and Tony Tetuila. The late 1990s and early 2000s also saw the emergence of artists returning from the Western diaspora, such as eLDee da Don, U.G.O, Madarocka, and Naeto C, along with European-Nigerians like JJC Skillz and the 419 Squad⁵⁴. These artists helped to localize hip hop, incorporating Nigerian languages and English,

thus enriching the genre's linguistic diversity. Despite a decline in popularity from 2010 to 2021, when hip hop's market share dropped from nearly 15% to 7%, a resurgence began in early 2022 with a new wave of artists like Reminisce, Olamide, Falz, Naira Marley, CDQ, PsychoYP, and Cheque, who introduced a refreshed approach to the genre⁴⁰.

Publications such as *Hip-Hop* World Magazine, African Beatz, Blast, and Bubbles have played a significant role in shaping and promoting hip hop culture in Nigeria and across Africa⁵⁵, Street pop, also known as street hop, originating in Lagos is an experimental rap-vocal genre that evolved from a fusion of Nigerian hip hop, popular music, Afrobeats, and Nigerian street music. It draws influence from artists such as Danfo Drivers, Baba Fryo, and Daddy Showkey, whose music was initially inspired by gqom but eventually developed into its distinct genre⁵⁶. Characterised by vibrant tempos, street pop incorporates elements of gqom, highlife, pop, hip hop, and EDM. While it is predominantly fast-paced, slower variations are also common within the genre. Street pop is known for its melodic arrangements, use of urban colloquial language and Pidgin, and a blend of indigenous and Western rap styles^{57,58,59,60,61,62}. Variants of street pop include neo-*Fuji*, shaku shaku and zanku^{63,64,65,66}.

Prominent figures in the street pop scene are Olamide, Fireboy, Rema, Wizkid, Phyno, Slimcase, Mr Real, Idowest, Naira Marley, Zinoleesky, Mohbad, Balloranking, Reminisce, REXxie, Zlatan Ibile, Sarz, 9ice, Lil Kesh, T.I Blaze, Asake, Portable, Bella Shmurda, Seyi Vibe, and DJ Kaywise^{67,68,69,70,71,72}. From the good old days of waist breaking to *Busy Body* by Psquare, to shouting *mo lenu bi pon pon pon* each time the Dagrín hit record came on at every function, it is clear that Nigerian *Hip-Hop* is definitely non-conforming to the unspoken standards created by African Americans in the 1970's as the creators of Hip hop genre of music. The traditional

HipHop vibe of the early 1990's-2000 is still what is expected from Nigerian rappers even though it is heavily out of date. As much as dancing to *Ijoya* by Weird MC is most definitely still a vibe, it is only natural to expect Nigerian artists to evolve with the times⁶⁴.

Hip-Hop across multiple sources is said to be a genre of music that features strong percussion and a powerful rhythm accompanied by rapping. Without thinking, if anyone is asked to give an example of what they feel real-hip hop should sound like, they would most likely describe a 1-3 beat per second song with someone rapping a diss to it. Most people would most likely reference records like *Hit Em* by Tupac or Ice Cube's *Gangsta Rap Made Me Do It*. In the Nigerian *HipHop* scene, the standard is set pretty high of course because we're Nigerians and mediocrity is not acceptable⁷³. From rap pioneers like Mode 9, Eldee the Don, Ruggedman to the current rappers on scene at the moment, it just goes to show that experimenting is not a harmful practice. We watched

Olamide serve us *Eniduro* and *Shakiti Bobo*, alongside MI with *One Naira* with Waje with *Undisputed Champion*. These only proved the versatility that Nigerian *Hip-Hop* holds, it is actually not a question of versatility but a question of consistency. We have watched international artists rap to slow beats and we have accepted it as hip hop nonetheless so why do we question Nigerian rappers and their art⁶⁸.

Nigerian *Hip-Hop* has taken a swift turn in recent years to fit in to the afrobeat demand. Afrobeat has become one of the most demanded genres on the global stage. We now have artists from different continents jumping on afrobeat songs. Artists like Chris Brown, Justin Bieber, Ed Sheeran, Selena Gomez, Elgrande Toto have all had a feel of the afrobeat scene and without any doubt, they are coming back for more. Rap music in Nigeria is still exactly what it is but this

time, it's wearing the face of afrobeat and afro-futuristic subgenres. Art imitates life and it's only natural to see artists like Falz, Blaqbonez, Ycee, Psycho YP, Olamide and many more Nigerian rappers try out genres like afrobeat and dancehall to test out their versatility. In hindsight, music in general cannot depend on one form/ method, artists are expected to move towards the market to appeal to their audience's ever-changing tastes. Music is a vital form of art that heavily appeals to its audience's emotions. Music of every genre functions as a tool to create and stir up every emotion from good to bad, regardless of who or where you are⁷⁴. As a work of art, it is expected that music represents certain life experiences that are relatable. Culture, belief, religion and every social structure is highlighted through music therefore, music is created from a personal perception of life.

Above all, we cannot place restrictions on what an artist can put out because we want songs that appeal to us or our need for the next TikTok trend. Music is expressive of the artist's beliefs and experiences thus there should be no limit to what genre an artist can sample to create their own sound. The entire *Hip-Hop* scene has evolved immensely in the past five years and in another 5 years we most definitely would see hip hop take a different turn. Art is subjective and perception of art is based solely on the audience's belief. The adaptability of Nigerian *Hip-Hop* artists shows that there is no reservation or limit to what they can fit in to. In a nutshell, Nigerian rappers are still rappers regardless of whether or not they abide by the familiar perception of what hiphop is. Their ability to diversify is only true evidence that they are artists imitating life and the afrobeat culture. Nigerian *Hip-Hop* still exists, it just comes with a different face.

2.1.2 Comparative Literature and Music Studies

Comparative literature studies is an academic field dealing with the study of literature and cultural expression across linguistic, national, geographic, and disciplinary boundaries. Comparative literature performs a role similar to that of the study of international relations but works with languages and artistic traditions, so as to understand cultures from the inside⁷⁵. While most frequently practiced with works of different languages, comparative literature may also be performed on works of the same language if the works originate from different nations or cultures in which that language is spoken. The characteristically intercultural and transnational field of comparative literature concerns itself with the relation between literature, broadly defined, and other spheres of human activity, including history, politics, philosophy, art, and science. Unlike other forms of literary study, comparative literature places its emphasis on the interdisciplinary analysis of social and cultural production within the economy, political dynamics, cultural movements, historical shifts, religious differences, the urban environment, international relations, public policy, and the sciences⁷⁶.

Students and instructors in the field, usually called comparatists, have traditionally been proficient in several languages and acquainted with the literary traditions, literary criticism, and major literary texts of those languages. Many of the newer sub-fields, however, are more influenced by critical theory and literary theory, stressing theoretical acumen and the ability to consider different types of art concurrently over proficiency in multiple languages. The interdisciplinary nature of the field means that comparatists typically exhibit acquaintance with sociology, history, anthropology, translation studies, critical theory, cultural studies, and religious studies. As a result, comparative literature programs within universities may be designed by

scholars drawn from several such departments. This eclecticism has led critics (from within and without) to charge that comparative literature is insufficiently well-defined or that comparatists too easily fall into dilettantism because the scope of their work is, of necessity, broad. Some question whether this breadth affects the ability of PhDs to find employment in the highly specialized environment of academia and the career market at large, although such concerns do not seem to be borne out by placement data, which shows comparative literature graduates to be hired at similar or higher rates than English literature graduates⁷⁷. The terms comparative literature and world literature are often used to designate a similar course of study and scholarship. Comparative literature is the more widely used term in the United States, with many universities having comparative literature departments or comparative literature programs.

Comparative literature is an interdisciplinary field whose practitioners study literature across national borders, time periods, languages, genres, boundaries between literature and the other arts (music, painting, dance, film...), and across disciplines (literature and psychology, philosophy, science, history, architecture, sociology, politics...). Defined most broadly, comparative literature is the study of "literature without borders". Scholarship in comparative literature includes, for example, studying literacy and social status in the Americas, medieval epic and romance, the links of literature to folklore and mythology, colonial and postcolonial writings in different parts of the world, and asking fundamental questions about the definition of literature itself⁷⁸. What scholars in comparative literature share is a desire to study literature beyond national boundaries and an interest in languages so that they can read foreign texts in their original form. Many comparatists also share the desire to integrate literary experience with other cultural phenomena such as historical change, philosophical concepts, and social movements.

The discipline of comparative literature has scholarly associations such as the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) and comparative literature associations in many countries^{79, 80}. Literature is a verbal form of art that establishes numerous connections not only between individual literary works and genres but also with other, non-literary discourses and various forms of art⁸¹. Due to this characteristic, it has been aptly described as an interdiscourse⁸². This interdiscursive quality includes intramedial relations, which occur within the same (verbal) medium, whether between texts from different national literatures, as explored in comparative literary studies, or between texts of any kind regardless of their national origin, as examined in intertextuality theory. Furthermore, the interdiscursive nature of literature is most notably evident in its extensive intermedial relationships with other arts and media, as analysed in intermediality theory.

The relationship between literature and music, which is the focus of this chapter, constitutes a specific subfield within intermedial relations (or "intermediality") while also maintaining links to the other areas mentioned. Historically, it is not coincidental that literature and music studies originated within comparative literature and have often been conceptualized in terms of intertextuality. Traditionally, musico-literary research was conducted by literary critics and therefore exhibited a strong literary bias. The earliest and most common form of this research involved collecting evidence of references to or occurrences of music in literary texts and analysing their functions and significance. The history of what was formerly known as musico-literary interart studies began with Calvin S. Brown's seminal comparative study *Music and Literature*⁸³, which focused on structural analogies between the two arts.

Following Brown's work, an increasing number of scholars engaged in this field. One of the most influential among them was Steven Paul Scher. His initial contributions, particularly his research on verbal music⁸⁴, were also literature-centered. However, in recent decades, literature/music studies have broadened their scope to include more general topics. This expansion is evident in John Neubauer's investigations into the narrative potential of music⁸⁵. This broadening of the field is also reflected in the name of one of its principal scholarly organizations, the International Association for Word and Music Studies, along with its book series Word and Music Studies, published annually since⁸⁶. The previous dominance of literary scholars in this area was challenged by musicologists such as Lawrence Kramer, a pioneer in Musical Narratology⁸⁷. Kramer also examined the shared purposes, effects, and values of music and literature in their historical contexts, employing a tandem reading approach to musical and literary works⁸⁸. Among more recent contributions to the field by musicologists, Michael Halliwell's research on the adaptation of Patrick White's classic Australian novel Voss into an opera⁸⁹ is noteworthy, along with his book on operatic versions of works by Henry James⁹⁰.

Music often plays a key role in social events and religious ceremony. The techniques of making music are often transmitted as part of a cultural tradition. Music is played in public and private contexts, highlighted at events such as festivals and concerts for various different types of ensembles. Music is used in the production of other media, such as in soundtracks to films, TV shows, operas, and video games. The modern English word music came into use in the 1630s⁹¹. It is derived from a long line of successive precursors: the Old English *musike* of the mid-13th century; the Old French *musique* of the 12th century; and the Latin *mūsica*⁹². The Latin word itself derives from the Ancient Greek *mousiké (technē)*—μουσική (τέχνη)—literally meaning (art) of the Muses⁹³. The Muses were nine deities in Ancient Greek mythology who presided over the

arts and sciences⁹⁴. They were included in tales by the earliest Western authors, Homer and Hesiod⁹⁵, and eventually came to be associated with music specifically⁹⁶. Over time, Polyhymnia would reside over music more prominently than the other muses⁹⁷. The Latin word *musica* was also the originator for both the Spanish *música* and French *musique* via spelling and linguistic adjustment, though other European terms were probably loanwords, including the Italian *musica*, German *Musik*, Dutch *muziek*, Norwegian *musikk*, Polish *muzyka* and Russian *muzika*⁹⁸.

Music is composed and performed for many purposes, ranging from aesthetic pleasure, religious or ceremonial purposes, or as an entertainment product for the marketplace. When music was only available through sheet music scores, such as during the Classical and Romantic eras, music lovers would buy the sheet music of their favorite pieces and songs so that they could perform them at home on the piano. With the advent of the phonograph, records of popular songs, rather than sheet music became the dominant way that music lovers would enjoy their favorite songs. With the advent of home tape recorders in the 1980s and digital music in the 1990s, music lovers could make tapes or playlists of favorite songs and take them with them on a portable cassette player or MP3 player⁹⁹. Some music lovers even create mix tapes of favorite songs. Amateur musicians can compose or perform music for their own pleasure and derive income elsewhere. Professional musicians are employed by institutions and organisations, including armed forces (in marching bands, concert bands and popular music groups), religious institutions, symphony orchestras, broadcasting or film production companies, and music schools. Professional musicians sometimes work as freelancers or session musicians, seeking contracts and engagements in a variety of settings. There are often many links between amateur and professional musicians. Beginning amateur musicians take lessons with professional musicians.

In community settings, advanced amateur musicians perform with professional musicians in a variety of ensembles such as community concert bands and community orchestras.

Composition is the act or practice of creating a song, an instrumental music piece, a work with both singing and instruments, or another type of music. In many cultures, including Western classical music, the act of composing also includes the creation of music notation, such as a sheet music score, which is then performed by the composer or by other singers or musicians. In popular music and traditional music, the act of composing, which is typically called songwriting, may involve the creation of a basic outline of the song, called the lead sheet, which sets out the melody, lyrics and chord progression. In classical music, the composer typically orchestrates his or her own compositions, but in musical theatre and in pop music, songwriters may hire an arranger to do the orchestration. In some cases, a songwriter may not use notation at all, and instead, compose the song in her mind and then play or record it from memory. In jazz and popular music, notable recordings by influential performers are given the weight that written scores play in classical music¹⁰⁰. Even when music is notated relatively precisely, as in classical music, there are many decisions that a performer has to make, because notation does not specify all of the elements of music precisely. The process of deciding how to perform music that has been previously composed and notated is termed interpretation. Different performers' interpretations of the same work of music can vary widely, in terms of the tempos that are chosen and the playing or singing style or phrasing of the melodies. Composers and songwriters who present their own music are interpreting their songs, just as much as those who perform the music of others. The standard body of choices and techniques present at a given time and a given place is referred to as performance practice, whereas interpretation is generally used to mean the individual choices of a performer¹⁰¹.

Although a musical composition often uses musical notation and has a single author, this is not always the case. A work of music can have multiple composers, which often occurs in popular music when a band collaborates to write a song, or in musical theatre, when one person writes the melodies, a second person writes the lyrics, and a third person orchestrates the songs. In some styles of music, such as the blues, a composer/songwriter may create, perform and record new songs or pieces without ever writing them down in music notation. A piece of music can also be composed with words, images, or computer programs that explain or notate how the singer or musician should create musical sounds. Examples range from avant-garde music that uses graphic notation, to text compositions such as *Aus den sieben Tagen*, to computer programs that select sounds for musical pieces. Music that makes heavy use of randomness and chance is called aleatoric music, and is associated with contemporary composers active in the 20th century, such as John Cage, Morton Feldman, and Witold Lutosławski¹⁰². A commonly known example of chance-based music is the sound of wind chimes jingling in a breeze. The study of composition has traditionally been dominated by examination of methods and practice of Western classical music, but the definition of composition is broad enough to include the creation of popular music and traditional music songs and instrumental pieces as well as spontaneously improvised works like those of free jazz performers and African percussionists such as Ewe drummers.

2.1.3 Traditional *Apala* and Contemporary *Hip-Hop* Music

Apala music is a traditional genre that originates from the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria. Rooted in the cultural and religious practices of the Yoruba, *Apala* emerged as a form of social commentary and moral instruction, often performed during important cultural ceremonies. The lyrics of *Apala* songs are deeply poetic, drawing on proverbs, allegories, and storytelling to

convey messages about life, morality, and communal values. As a genre, *Apala* not only serves as a means of entertainment but also plays a crucial role in preserving the oral traditions and cultural heritage of the Yoruba people¹⁰³.

Contemporary *Hip-Hop* music in Nigeria on the other hand is a vibrant and dynamic genre that reflects the pulse of urban life and the realities of modern society. Emerging in the late 20th century, Nigerian *Hip-Hop* draws inspiration from the global *Hip-Hop* movement while infusing it with local languages, rhythms, and cultural references. This genre has become a powerful platform for self-expression, particularly among the youth, who use it to voice their experiences, aspirations, and frustrations.

Nigerian *Hip-Hop* is characterised by its sharp wordplay, intricate rhymes, and bold social commentary. The lyrics often address issues such as poverty, corruption, identity, and social justice, resonating with the lived experiences of many Nigerians. With its roots in the streets of cities like Lagos, contemporary *Hip-Hop* serves as both a reflection of and a response to the challenges and opportunities of modern Nigerian life. As a genre, it not only entertains but also challenges societal norms and inspires change, making it a significant cultural force in the country.

These two genres, though separated by eras and styles, share a common ground in their ability to reflect and influence societal dynamics.

Apala, a traditional Nigerian music form, is deeply rooted in Yoruba culture. Its origins trace back to a period of significant social and political transformation, where it emerged as a voice of the people¹⁰⁴. Lyrically, it delves into themes of love, reverence for elders, morality, loss, social commentary, and spirituality, offering a rich tapestry of human experience. In contrast,

Hip-Hop, a product of urban America, has evolved into a global cultural phenomenon. Its Nigerian counterpart is a vibrant reflection of contemporary society, addressing issues of youth, identity, and social inequality. *Hip-Hop* is characterised by its rhythmic innovation, often employing sampling and electronic beats. Thematically, it encompasses a wide range of topics, from personal struggles to social activism.

Furthermore, the study will examine the concept of intertextuality, a theory suggesting that texts are interconnected and influenced by other texts. In the context of music, intertextuality can be applied to explore the ways in which *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* have influenced each other and how they engage with broader cultural discourses¹⁰⁵. This conceptual framework provides a foundation for the subsequent chapters, which will delve into a detailed analysis of selected *Apala* and *HipHop* tracks. By comparing and contrasting these genres, the study aims to uncover the complexities of their literary features and their impact on listeners. The literary features in *Apala* are reflective of its role as a medium of moral instruction, historical documentation, and cultural preservation. Through the use of proverbs, *Apala* songs often impart wisdom and offer reflections on life, morality, and communal values. The use of allegory and metaphor in *Apala* music serves to convey deeper meanings, allowing listeners to engage with the content on multiple levels. This section will delve into the specific literary techniques employed in *Apala* music and how they contribute to the genre's cultural significance¹⁰⁶.

Hip-Hop's literary features are marked by sharp wordplay, vivid imagery, and intricate rhymes. The genre's focus on themes such as identity, struggle, and resistance resonate with the experiences of many Nigerians, particularly the youth. Nigerian *Hip-Hop* artists often use their lyrics to address pressing social issues, such as corruption, inequality, and the quest for justice.

This section will explore the literary techniques that define Nigerian *Hip-Hop*, highlighting how they reflect the genre's role as a mirror of contemporary society. The juxtaposition of *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* music offers a unique opportunity to explore the ways in which different genres can reflect the same cultural landscape through distinct lenses. While *Apala* music draws heavily on the past, preserving the traditions and wisdom of the elders, *Hip-Hop* looks to the present and future, engaging with the realities of modern life and the aspirations of the youth. This section will outline the comparative framework used to analyze the literary features, themes, and cultural significance of the two genres¹⁰⁷. **2.2.**

Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Performance Theory

Performance theory, as developed by Richard Schechner and Victor Turner, explores how performances, including musical performances, function as sites of cultural expression and social interaction¹⁰⁹. This theory focuses on the performative aspects of music and how performances create and reinforce cultural meanings. In examining *Apala* and *Hip-Hop*, performance theory will be used to analyze how these musical genres are performed and received by audiences.

Traditional

Apala performances often involve live interactions with audiences, ritualistic elements, and social commentary, while contemporary *Hip-Hop* performances might include elements of spectacle, improvisation, and audience engagement. The study will explore how these performance practices contribute to the construction of meaning and cultural identity in both genres. Scholars in today's field of performance studies may trace their roots to a number of

other fields such as elocution, interpretation, theatre, anthropology, and speech communication. What these genres have in common is their shared object of study, the performance, in the broadest possible sense, as a process, praxis, and episteme, a mode of transmission, an accomplishment, and a means of intervening in the world.

Performance studies examine performances in two categories, the first being artistic performance, marked and understood as art. This includes solo-performance, performance art, and performance of literature, theatrical storytelling, plays, and performance poetry¹¹⁰. Artistic performance considers performance as an art form. The second category is cultural performance, which includes events that occur in everyday life, in which a culture's values are displayed for their perpetuation: rituals such as parades, religious ceremonies, community festivals, controversial storytelling, and performances of social and professional roles, and individual performances of race, gender, sexuality and class are all considered a form of cultural performance¹¹¹.

Performance theory is an interdisciplinary framework that offers a powerful lens for analysing not only staged events but also everyday expressions and cultural manifestations, including music¹¹². Rooted in the overlapping fields of anthropology, theatre studies, linguistics, literary criticism, and sociology, performance theory examines how meaning is enacted, embodied, and interpreted in live and mediated forms¹¹³. When applied to a comparative study of literary features in traditional and contemporary music, performance theory underscores the significance of context, embodiment, orality, participation, and identity in shaping the aesthetic and communicative functions of musical texts¹¹⁴. Whether in the ritualistic chants of indigenous cultures or in the digitized beats of contemporary soundscapes, music functions as a form of

performance through which emotions, ideologies, values, and narratives are actively conveyed and received¹¹⁵.

One of the foundational assumptions of performance theory is that performances are not merely representations or reproductions but rather creative acts of meaning-making¹¹⁶. According to a major figure in performance studies, performance is a restored behavior a reconstruction or re-enactment of actions already known ¹¹⁷. This concept is especially pertinent to traditional music, which often draws upon collective memory, oral tradition, and ritual to preserve and perform cultural identity. The griots of West Africa, for example, do not simply sing songs but re-perform historical consciousness, social values, and communal memory. Their performances are embedded with poetic devices, symbolic structures, and performative gestures that transmit cultural knowledge across generations. In this context, the literary features, imagery, repetition, parallelism, and allusion are not ornamental but functional tools for the embodiment and transmission of meaning¹¹⁸.

In contemporary music, performance still retains its power as a communicative act, though often mediated by technology and commercial platforms. The performance of a contemporary rap artist, for instance, goes beyond lyrical content; it encompasses visual aesthetics, gestures, clothing, and even social media presence¹¹⁹. Each of these elements contributes to the overall meaning conveyed in the musical piece. In both traditional and contemporary contexts, the performer becomes a mediator of literary and cultural expression. The application of performance theory in analysing these domains enables a deeper understanding of how poetic and rhetorical features are activated in real-time interaction between performer and audience¹²⁰.

The significance of context in performance theory cannot be overstated. According to anthropologist Victor Turner, performances must be situated within their social and cultural milieu to be fully understood¹²¹. He introduces the concept of social drama to illustrate how performances serve as arenas for negotiating societal conflicts and reaffirming communal bonds. Traditional musical performances often occur in culturally specific settings such as festivals, initiation rites, marriages, or funerals. These settings are not passive backdrops but integral to the meaning of the performance. The same lyric, when performed in a communal village square versus a recording studio, may convey different levels of intimacy, authority, and authenticity. For instance, a Yoruba folk song celebrating harvest yields a different impact when sung during an actual harvest festival than when reproduced in a classroom setting¹²².

Contextual analysis allows researchers to see how elements such as tone, rhythm, and gesture are adapted to suit particular performative environments¹²³. In the realm of contemporary music, the concept of virtual performance has expanded the parameters of context. With digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Spotify, artists now perform for a dispersed, often anonymous audience¹²⁴. This shift has implications for how literary features are used and perceived. For example, a trap song might use heavy alliteration and punchlines not only for aesthetic effect but also for algorithmic visibility phrases that are catchy and shareable tend to perform better online. Performance theory thus helps explain the changing functions of literary devices in the age of mass media¹²⁵. The transition from communal to commodified performance raises questions about authenticity, audience interaction, and the evolving role of the artist¹²⁶.

Embodiment is another crucial component of performance theory. The body is not merely an instrument but an expressive medium through which meaning is performed¹²⁷. In traditional music, bodily movements such as clapping, drumming, dancing, and gesturing are synchronized

with vocal expression to enhance poetic and rhythmic qualities. These embodied performances often feature call-and-response structures, tonal inflections, and kinetic patterns that resonate with the collective experiences of the community. The oral performance of a praise singer, for example, is not fully grasped by examining the lyrics alone. One must also consider the tempo of delivery, facial expressions, and interactive feedback from the audience, all of which contribute to the overall communicative effect¹²⁸. In such contexts, literary features are enacted through bodily performance, making them living texts rather than static artifacts. Contemporary music, too, involves embodiment, though often stylized and commodified. Consider the stage performance of a pop star or a *Hip-Hop* artist: body language, choreographed movement, and fashion play significant roles in interpreting the song's message¹²⁹. The delivery style, whether breathy, aggressive, soulful, or autotuned, adds layers of meaning to the lyrics. Even in audio-only formats, vocal inflections serve as performative cues that shape the listener's interpretation¹³⁰.

Performance theory allows scholars to unpack these layers and see how literary features like metaphor, simile, hyperbole, or irony are not only textual but also embodied¹³¹. This holistic approach is particularly relevant in a comparative study, as it allows for an equitable analysis of both oral traditional forms and technologically mediated contemporary genres. Another core element of performance theory is the role of the audience. Unlike literary criticism that often prioritizes the author or text, performance theory highlights the relational dynamics between performer and audience¹³². In traditional music, the audience is not merely a passive observer but an active participant. Their responses, whether through dancing, clapping, ululating, or call-backs, shape the flow and energy of the performance. The literary features in these songs are therefore designed to be participatory: refrains, mnemonic patterns, and poetic structures invite

engagement. A proverb embedded in a folk song, for example, is meant to resonate communally, inviting reflection or eliciting shared laughter¹³³. In contemporary music, the audience's role is redefined but no less important. Social media comments, live chats during streaming, fan remixes, and user-generated content are new forms of audience participation¹³⁴. These responses feed back into the performance loop, influencing future performances or adaptations. For instance, if a particular metaphor in a rap verse becomes a meme, it gains extended cultural life beyond the original context¹³⁵. Performance theory provides tools for examining these feedback loops, thereby recognising that meaning in music is co-produced by performers and audiences alike¹³⁶.

The theory also addresses the question of identity and representation. Music performance often serves as a stage for negotiating personal and collective identities¹³⁷. In traditional settings, performers often embody communal roles, such as the storyteller, healer, or moral guide, using literary elements to reinforce cultural norms or challenge social injustices. Gender, age, social status, and lineage may influence how songs are composed and who is authorized to perform them. For instance, lullabies sung by elderly women may carry authority in child-rearing practices, while war songs sung by men may assert bravery and territorial integrity¹³⁸.

In contemporary music, identity performance is equally complex. Artists often use literary features to construct personas, challenge stereotypes, or assert marginal identities. Consider the use of metaphor and allegory in the music of Kendrick Lamar, who blends poetic devices with social commentary to perform a narrative of black consciousness¹³⁹. Similarly, female artists like

Beyoncé use hyperbole, anaphora, and symbolism to articulate feminist resistance and empowerment. Performance theory allows scholars to see these artistic expressions not merely as entertainment but as acts of socio-political performance¹⁴⁰.

Furthermore, performance theory helps bridge the temporal and stylistic gap between traditional and contemporary music. While the mediums and contexts may differ, both forms employ literary features for affective and rhetorical impact. Traditional music may use parallelism and repetition to facilitate memory and oral transmission, while contemporary music might use rhyme and intertextuality to establish thematic coherence or market appeal¹⁴¹. Performance theory does not privilege one over the other but invites a comparative analysis that appreciates the unique affordances of each. It recognises that both a dirge sung at a rural funeral and a rap performed at an urban concert are legitimate performances with distinct poetic grammars and cultural implications¹⁴².

In addition, performance theory emphasises the ephemerality and improvisational nature of performance. Traditional music often relies on improvisation, with performers adapting lyrics or rhythms based on real-time audience interaction or situational context. This spontaneity is also present in contemporary genres such as freestyle rap or live DJing¹⁴³. The ability to improvise requires a mastery of literary and rhetorical tools, metaphors, puns, alliteration, and irony, which are mobilized on the spot. Such practices reveal the cognitive and creative dimensions of musical performance, reinforcing the view that performance is a form of knowledge production¹⁴⁴.

Finally, performance theory contributes to methodological innovation in musical studies. It encourages ethnographic approaches that prioritize fieldwork, participant observation, and

contextual analysis over purely textual interpretation¹⁴⁵. This is especially crucial in a comparative study that seeks to analyze both traditional and contemporary music. By engaging with performers, audiences, and performance settings, researchers can gain richer insights into how literary features are used, transformed, and experienced in different cultural domains. Performance theory thus serves as a dynamic and inclusive framework that bridges the gap between orality and literacy, tradition and modernity, text and embodiment¹⁴⁶.

In essence, performance theory offers a robust analytical toolkit for understanding the literary features of music in both traditional and contemporary contexts. It emphasises the importance of embodiment, context, audience interaction, identity, and improvisation in shaping the meaning and function of musical texts. Whether analysing the rhythmic parallelism of a traditional chant or the metaphor-laden lyrics of a contemporary pop song, performance theory allows for a nuanced and culturally grounded interpretation. As such, it is an indispensable framework for any comparative study of musical literature, illuminating the ways in which performance breathes life into text, and how text, in turn, shapes the performance of culture¹⁴⁷.

2.2.2 Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory is a critical framework that examines the cultural, political, and historical legacies of colonialism and imperialism, particularly as they relate to the representation of identity, power, and resistance in formerly colonized societies. Emerging as a response to the epistemological and material disruptions caused by colonial domination, postcolonial theory offers a robust lens through which to interrogate texts, whether literary, visual, or musical, that embody or contest colonial ideologies. Within the context of a comparative study of literary

features in selected traditional and contemporary music, postcolonial theory is indispensable. It not only helps decode the latent colonial structures embedded in musical expressions but also highlights how music becomes a site for cultural resistance, decolonization, and the rearticulation of indigenous worldviews¹⁴⁸. At its core, postcolonial theory challenges the dominance of Western epistemologies and foregrounds the voices, aesthetics, and experiences of the marginalized. The foundational scholars of postcolonialism, Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, have interrogated how colonial discourses constructed the 'Other' and shaped the production of knowledge¹⁴⁹. Edward Said's concept of Orientalism, for instance, reveals how Western representations of the East were laden with stereotypes that served imperial interests. Though largely focused on literature and historiography, Said's framework has relevance for music as well, particularly in the ways traditional African musical forms were once dismissed as primitive or irrational by colonial authorities¹⁵⁰. Postcolonial theory compels scholars to examine how these assumptions have lingered in cultural institutions and aesthetic hierarchies, often positioning Western classical or commercial music as superior to indigenous forms.

Traditional music, in postcolonial terms, can be seen as a repository of precolonial identity and cultural resilience. It embodies indigenous ontologies, cosmologies, and knowledge systems that were often repressed or overwritten during colonization. For example, traditional songs that narrate folktales, historical events, or spiritual rituals are not merely artistic expressions but acts of cultural memory and resistance¹⁵¹. They sustain local languages, oral traditions, and social norms that colonial regimes attempted to eradicate. From this perspective, the literary features embedded in traditional music, such as metaphor, allusion, personification, repetition, and proverb, function as mnemonic devices that preserve and transmit anti-colonial

consciousness across generations¹⁵². A proverb-laden dirge, for instance, might serve not only to mourn the dead but also to reaffirm communal values undermined by colonial ideologies. Furthermore, traditional music often defies the Eurocentric separation of art and function. It is ritualistic, performative, and communal. These characteristics were historically misinterpreted by colonial anthropologists and missionaries, who often failed to recognise the intellectual depth of oral aesthetics¹⁵³. Postcolonial theory, however, rehabilitates these traditions by framing them as alternative epistemologies. In a comparative study, it is crucial to analyze how literary features in traditional songs perform functions beyond entertainment, educating the youth, legitimizing authority, resisting oppression, and maintaining ecological balance¹⁵⁴. These elements underscore the political dimension of traditional music, a key concern in postcolonial thought, which views culture as a terrain of ideological struggle.

Contemporary music, while shaped by global and commercial influences, also operates within postcolonial dynamics. Many contemporary African musicians consciously or unconsciously engage in cultural negotiation, blending indigenous idioms with Western genres such as *Hip-Hop*, reggae, Afrobeats, and R&B¹⁵⁵. These hybrid forms reflect what Homi Bhabha calls the “Third Space” of enunciation, where new identities and meanings emerge through cultural translation¹⁵⁶. In such musical works, literary features are mobilized to navigate the contradictions of postcolonial existence. For instance, code-switching between indigenous languages and English, or the juxtaposition of traditional proverbs with urban slang, illustrates a layered aesthetic that speaks to both local and global audiences¹⁵⁷. This hybridization challenges the purist notion of authenticity and instead celebrates multiplicity and adaptation. The themes addressed in postcolonial music are also telling. Contemporary artists frequently critique neocolonial structures, such as corrupt governance, economic dependency, and cultural alienation,

through satire, irony, and allegory¹⁵⁸. These literary features are strategically deployed to mask subversion and avoid censorship, echoing tactics used in colonial times. For example, a contemporary protest song may use metaphor to critique foreign exploitation without directly naming it. This continuation of resistance aesthetics is rooted in postcolonial theory's assertion that colonialism did not end with political independence; rather, it morphed into new forms of domination, cultural, economic, and psychological¹⁵⁹. In this regard, the analysis of literary features in contemporary music offers insight into how artists grapple with post-independence disillusionment and reimagine national identity.

Postcolonial theory also engages with the politics of language, a central concern in both traditional and contemporary music. The colonial imposition of European languages disrupted indigenous linguistic ecologies and created hierarchies that still persist. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's advocacy for writing in African languages, for instance, parallels the insistence of many musicians on singing in their mother tongues¹⁶⁰. Literary features such as idioms, neologisms, and tonal metaphors are often untranslatable, and their use affirms cultural specificity. Traditional music, rooted in oral languages, uses sound and rhythm in ways that resist linguistic colonization. Similarly, contemporary artists like Burna Boy, Sho Madjozi, or Angelique Kidjo often reclaim linguistic identity through multilingual lyrics, asserting pride in their linguistic heritage¹⁶¹. Postcolonial theory thus underscores the importance of analysing not just what is said in music, but how and in what language it is said.

The postcolonial lens also reveals the asymmetrical power relations in the global circulation of music. The commodification of traditional sounds by Western producers, the misrepresentation of African cultures in global music markets, and the appropriation of

indigenous rhythms without credit are all forms of cultural exploitation¹⁶². Postcolonial theory critiques these practices by exposing how the global music industry often reproduces colonial patterns of resource extraction and narrative control. Literary features such as pastiche, parody, and intertextuality become tools through which musicians reclaim agency, challenge stereotypes, and subvert dominant narratives¹⁶³. A reggae song that samples colonial anthems ironically, or a *Hip-Hop* track that reinterprets traditional chants, exemplifies how postcolonial aesthetics can be both creative and critical. Gender is another critical dimension within postcolonial theory that intersects powerfully with musical expression. Colonial regimes often imposed patriarchal structures that marginalized women and erased their roles in traditional performance. However, both traditional and contemporary music have long served as platforms for women's voices¹⁶⁴. In traditional contexts, women's songs, such as lullabies, wedding chants, and dirges, are rich with literary features and often function as social commentary or moral instruction. These songs may use metaphor and symbolism to subtly critique male dominance or express female solidarity¹⁶⁵. Contemporary female artists, meanwhile, use poetic devices such as repetition, parallelism, and rhetorical questions to assert autonomy and resist objectification. A feminist reading of postcolonial music reveals how literary features are used not only to articulate identity but also to contest gendered power relations embedded in colonial and postcolonial structures¹⁶⁶.

Additionally, postcolonial theory offers insights into the diasporic dimensions of musical expression. The African diaspora, formed through slavery, migration, and displacement, has generated transnational musical cultures that embody both loss and continuity. Genres like reggae, jazz, blues, and Afro-Caribbean calypso are infused with postcolonial sensibilities, reflecting struggles for liberation, justice, and belonging¹⁶⁷. These diasporic genres often feature literary devices such as allusion, allegory, and biblical imagery, connecting historical trauma to

present resistance. In recent decades, transnational collaborations between African and diaspora artists have created new lyrical forms that bridge continents, histories, and futures¹⁶⁸. Postcolonial theory enables scholars to trace these connections and appreciate how literary features function as tools for cultural memory and solidarity.

Moreover, postcolonial music often engages in what scholar Frantz Fanon described as the “revolutionary phase” of cultural resistance. In this phase, artists use indigenous forms to inspire political activism and reclaim sovereignty¹⁶⁹. The literary features of revolutionary songs, slogans, refrains, and declarative metaphors, are deliberately accessible, mobilizing collective energy toward social change. Whether in liberation songs during anti-apartheid struggles or in contemporary anthems for climate justice, music becomes a vehicle for decolonial praxis. Postcolonial theory insists that such performances are not peripheral to politics but central to the reimagining of postcolonial futures¹⁷⁰.

Above all, postcolonial theory offers a multidimensional framework for analysing the literary features of both traditional and contemporary music. It highlights how music, as a performative and linguistic act, engages with the histories of colonialism, the politics of identity, and the strategies of resistance. Traditional music, often viewed through a colonial gaze as primitive, is revalued as a rich site of cultural knowledge and poetic sophistication. Contemporary music, shaped by hybrid influences and global flows, is seen as a space for negotiating postcolonial realities and reclaiming agency. Through devices such as metaphor, allusion, code-switching, repetition, and irony, musicians articulate complex postcolonial experiences, grappling with history, contesting oppression, and imagining liberated futures. In a comparative study of musical literature, postcolonial theory thus provides not only a critical

vocabulary but also an ethical imperative: to listen to music not just as sound, but as speech from the margins and song from the center of cultural survival¹⁷¹.

2.3 Empirical Review

The empirical review of a comparative study on the literary features in selected traditional *Apala* and Afro *Hip-Hop* music requires a detailed examination of existing research and case studies that explore the intersection of literature, music, and culture in these two genres. This section reviews recent studies that have empirically analysed the literary elements of *Apala* and Hip Hop, focusing on the themes, narrative structures, and linguistic devices that characterize these musical forms.

2.3.1. Historical Evolution of *Apala* Music

Apala also known *akpala* in some places, is a music genre originally developed by the Yoruba people of Nigeria¹⁷², during the country's history as a colony of the British Empire. It is a percussion-based style that originated in the late 1930s. The rhythms of *Apala* grew more complex over time, and have influenced the likes of Cuban music, whilst gaining popularity in Nigeria. It has grown less religious centered over time. One indigenous social music type which needs exploitation for contemporary appeal is *Apala*¹⁷³. *Apala* is a Yoruba popular music whose origin could be traced to many sources cutting across such disciplines as music, linguistics, history, religion, and so on. Some studies suggest that *Apala* evolved from indigenous music of the Yoruba and can be regarded as folk songs which later metamorphosed into social music¹⁷⁴.

Ayinla Omowura and Haruna Ishola - amongst others were notable performers of *Apala* music, these two icons played a major role in popularizing the genre. It is distinct from, older than, and more difficult to master than *Fuji* music¹⁷⁵. There are numerous other *Apala* artists, including Musiliu Haruna Ishola, Yusufu Olatunji, Terry *Apala*, among many others. Although *Fuji* music remains one of the popular form of traditional music amongst Yorubas in Nigeria, *Apala* is still very popular amongst Muslims of the Yoruba tribe¹⁷⁶. Traditional music is that type of music which is created entirely from traditional elements and has no stylistic affinity with western music. Representatives of such traditional music are *Apala*, Sakara, Waka and *Fuji*¹⁷⁷. Traditional music, in many ways, represents continuity with the past and gives opportunity of learning, in order that the present may be better understood¹⁷⁸. Recent empirical studies on *Apala* music emphasise its rich oral tradition, which is deeply rooted in Yoruba culture.

Ede is the birthplace of *Apala*. That a man called Balogun and his son Tijani, were *Apala* singers, as early as 1938. Another suggested that *Apala* music had long started before 1938. Ajadi Ilorin for instance, was remembered to have played *Apala* music as early as 1930¹⁷⁹. Whatever position is true, what is certain is that *Apala* evolved among different Yoruba sub-groups that drew their inspirations from popular Yoruba musical forms at different times. Studies also affirmed that *Apala* music originated from different Yoruba sub-groups. This explains why there are more than three different styles or forms of *Apala* music, as dictated by the frequency of sound production and combination of instruments used at different times. Each individual developed his own *Apala* version among the people of his community, getting inspiration from other Yoruba music, local experiences and creative ingenuity.

2.3.2 Features of Traditional *Apala* Music

Researchers have explored the use of proverbs, metaphors, and allegories in *Apala* lyrics, demonstrating how these literary devices are employed to convey moral lessons, cultural values, and social commentary. A study based on the analysis of several *Apala* songs, highlights the genre's reliance on Yoruba oral tradition, where the spoken word is a powerful medium for storytelling and the transmission of cultural heritage. This research indicates that *Apala* music functions not only as entertainment but also as a means of preserving and communicating Yoruba cultural identity¹⁸⁰.

Moreover, empirical studies have shown that *Apala* music often reflects the socio-political context of its time. In a study conducted, *Apala* songs were analysed to reveal how the genre addresses issues such as colonialism, religious influence, and social change¹⁸¹. Research involved the textual analysis of *Apala* lyrics from different periods, demonstrating how the genre evolved to incorporate contemporary issues while maintaining its traditional literary forms. This study underscores the dynamic nature of *Apala* music, where literary features are adapted to reflect changing societal contexts.

The sound of *Apala* is distinct and is characterised by its use of traditional Yoruba percussion instruments. The rhythm in *Apala* is slow, steady, and hypnotic, with a deep, resonant beat that is central to its appeal. Vocals are also a crucial part of *Apala* music. The lyrics are usually in Yoruba and often include proverbs, praise singing, and social commentary. The lead singer, often referred to as the *akpala*, is accompanied by a chorus that responds to the lead's call, creating a dynamic call-and-response pattern that is typical of many African musical traditions¹⁸².

Apala songs are known for their depth and richness in content. The lyrics often deal with themes such as morality, respect for elders, religious devotion, and social issues. They also serve as a form of oral history, passing down stories, wisdom, and cultural values from one generation to the next. Though *Apala* may not be as widely recognised globally as some other African music genres, it has had a significant influence on Nigerian music. It paved the way for other Yoruba music styles like *Fuji* and *Juju*, and its impact can still be felt in contemporary Nigerian music. Artists like Haruna Ishola and Ayinla Omowura were pioneers of *Apala*, and their music continues to be celebrated for its cultural importance. Today, *Apala* is cherished not only for its musicality but also for its role in preserving Yoruba culture and history. Despite the influence of modern music, *Apala* remains a vital part of Nigerian cultural heritage, reminding people of their roots and the richness of their traditions.

2.3.3 Historical Evolution of Contemporary Hip Hop Music

Street pop (also street hop), is a genre from Nigeria that merges experimental rap with vocal performance. It originated from Nigerian hip hop and Nigerian street music, integrating aspects of Western music and contemporary Nigerian and African genres. Emerging in the 21st century, street pop is notably influenced by *Apala* music, and includes variants such as *Apala* pop, *Apala* trap and *Apala*-fusion. Terry *Apala* and Seyi Vibe are predominantly associated with the *Apala*-centered, street pop musical styles¹⁸³.

Contemporary Hip hop music has been popular in Africa since the early 1980s due to widespread African American influence. In 1985, hip hop reached Senegal, a French-speaking

country in West Africa. Some of the first Senegalese rappers were Munyaradzi Nhidza Lida, M.C. Solaar, and Positive Black Soul. Hip Hop the genre itself was created by African Americans during the early 1970s in The Bronx, New York. African *Hip-Hop* and Rap has also women or girls like rapper. They began Rap in 1980 in South Africa and West Africa¹⁸⁴. Hip hop in Nigeria dates back to the late eighties and early nineties¹⁸⁵. The first place hip hop gained popularity in Nigeria was in Lagos, Nigeria. During this time (1980s), Nigeria was under a military governorship¹⁸⁶. This period of military governorship brought about crisis in Nigeria which involved the devaluation of currency, loss of jobs and persistent unemployment especially for new graduates from the University¹⁸⁷.

Hip hop during this time was used as a means of escape by youths from the country's crisis. It was made popular by using Nigerian languages in the lyrics along with traditional hip hop beats, such as those made by the founding fathers of hip hop, DJ Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa and Grandmaster Flash¹⁸⁸. Since there were very few record labels to sign a new musician at this time, the youths decided to start making music on their own with a very little budget. The music videos were very simple and not grand and expensive¹⁸⁹. The availability of computers and cheap music editing software in the late 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century enabled Nigerian musicians to achieve higher quality recordings which quickly won over the Nigerian audience¹⁹⁰. This was a very cheap way to make music and a new Nigerian hip hop musician would make music and sell it on a CD¹⁹¹. This was one way for the youths to be independent from the government by being lucrative and creating jobs for themselves, since the government was not helping them¹⁹². Hip hop was used during this time for entertainment, but also to criticize the government and demand change¹⁹³. Groups and solo artists during that period

include the likes of Junior & Pretty, Daniel 'Danny' Wilson, Plantashun Boiz, Remedies with members Eedris Abdulkareem, Eddy Remedy & Tony Tetuila.

The late 90s and the early years of the new millennium saw an outburst of artists and groups, many returning home from the Western Diaspora, like eLDee da Don of Trybesmen, U.G.O, Madarocka and the S.O.U.R.C.E. Intl Clique, Naeto C of W.F.A, and from Europe, JJC and the 419 squad became a part of mainstream Nigerian music after the collapse of pop trends like Yo-pop¹⁹⁴. These up-rising artists in Nigeria began to localize hip hop and make songs in English and any other Nigerian language as a means of self-expression, thus making Nigerian hip hop multilingual¹⁹⁵. Just as Nigeria's Nollywood movies have done with Western movies, Nigerian hip hop has begun to displace Western popular music. Musicians such as Eedris Abdulkareem started making multilingual hip hop music and the lyrics were usually in English, Pidgin English and another Nigerian language such as Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa. For a period, hip hop popularity reduced in Nigeria with the Generation finding it hard to love the standard with all the advancement and change the genre was going through in other countries. Research has shown that from 2010 to 2021 the genre listeners and audience dropped from nearly 15% percent of the Nigerian music market to 7%. But with rise of a new set of rappers since early 2022 in Nigeria introducing the likes of PsychoYP, Cheque and Berry Ivan who have started taking a more recent and rejuvenated approach of making music, hip hop in Nigeria entered a new era defining moment¹⁹⁶. Street pop, also known as street hop, emerged in Lagos during the 2010s through a blend of Nigerian hip hop, popular music, and indigenous street sounds. Influences from artists like Daddy Showkey, who popularized the galala genre in the 1990s, and the shaku shaku dance style, initially derived from South African gqom music, played significant roles in its development. Characterised by lively tempos, street pop integrates elements of gqom, pop, hip

hop and electronic dance music. Its distinct features include melodious arrangements, urban slang, vocals in Yoruba and Pidgin, and a blend of indigenous and Western rap.

Thematically, street pop often explores topics such as improving quality of life and spiritual devotion across various faiths. Variants such as neo-*Fuji*, *zanku*, *Fuji-fusion* and *Apala-fusion* enrich its diverse musical landscape. Notable figures in the street pop genre include Slimcase,

Olamide, Idowest, Burna Boy, Reminisce, REXXIE, Zlatan Ibile, 9ice, Lil Kesh, Zinoleesky, MohBad, T.I Blaze, Asake, Portable, Terry *Apala*, Bella Shmurda, and Seyi Vibe¹⁹⁷. Hip Hop music has been extensively studied for its complex and innovative use of language, particularly in its lyrical content. Recent empirical research has focused on how *HipHop* artists use literary devices such as metaphor, simile, alliteration, and wordplay to craft narratives that address social issues, personal experiences, and cultural identity. For instance, a study analysed the lyrical content of contemporary *Hip-Hop* tracks, revealing how artists use metaphor and allegory to comment on issues such as racism, economic inequality, and political disenfranchisement¹⁹⁸. Morgan's research, which included a corpus analysis of *Hip-Hop* lyrics, highlighted the genre's role as a platform for marginalized voices, where literary features are employed to articulate resistance and resilience¹⁹⁹.

Additionally, *Hip-Hop*'s global influence has been the subject of empirical research, with studies examining how the genre's literary features are adapted in different cultural contexts. In a comparative study, the adaptation of *Hip-Hop*'s lyrical techniques in non-Western contexts was explored, focusing on how artists in Africa, Asia, and Europe incorporate local linguistic and cultural elements into their music²⁰⁰. Alim's research provides empirical evidence of the genre's

adaptability, where literary features such as code-switching, puns, and localized metaphors are used to engage with global and local issues simultaneously. This study illustrates the universal appeal of Hip Hop's literary features, which resonate across diverse cultural landscapes.

2.3.4 Existing Literature on *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* Literary Features

Comparative studies that empirically examine the literary features of *Apala* and Hip Hop are relatively recent, with researchers beginning to explore the parallels between these two genres. A study conducted a comparative analysis of the narrative structures in *Apala* and Hip Hop, focusing on how both genres use storytelling to convey cultural values and social commentary²⁰¹.

The study employed a qualitative approach, analysing the lyrics of selected songs from both genres to identify common themes and literary devices. The researchers found that while *Apala* and Hip Hop originate from different cultural contexts, they share similar approaches to narrative construction, often using repetition, parallelism, and call-and-response techniques to engage listeners.

Both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* music are rich in literary elements, such as metaphor, simile, allusion, and symbolism, making them powerful tools for storytelling and social commentary. In *Apala*, the lyrics are often infused with proverbs, idiomatic expressions, and religious references, reflecting the Yoruba culture's deep connection to oral traditions. The music's poetic nature allows it to communicate complex ideas and emotions in a culturally resonant manner. Similarly, *HipHop* lyrics are known for their use of wordplay, alliteration, and rhyme schemes, creating a

complex interplay between sound and meaning. The genre's emphasis on lyricism has led to the emergence of "conscious rap," where artists like Nas, Kendrick Lamar, and Lauryn Hill use their platform to address social and political issues. *Hip-Hop's* reliance on intertextuality, where artists reference other works, events, or figures, adds layers of meaning to the music, allowing it to resonate with diverse audiences.

A scholar analysed the lyrics of popular *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs, identifying the ways in which both genres use metaphor to address themes such as identity, resistance, and spirituality. The study revealed that while the specific cultural references differ, the underlying literary strategies are remarkably similar, suggesting a shared linguistic heritage rooted in African oral traditions²⁰². This research contributes to a growing body of literature that highlights the interconnectedness of global musical traditions through their shared literary features.

2.3.5 Implications of Empirical Findings

The empirical studies reviewed suggest that both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* music utilise literary features to serve as vehicles for cultural expression and social commentary. The findings indicate that despite their distinct origins, these genres share common literary techniques that reflect their roots in oral tradition and their role in articulating the experiences of marginalized communities. Moreover, the comparative analyses highlight the potential for further research into the ways these genres intersect and influence each other, particularly in the context of globalised cultural exchange. These empirical findings are significant for scholars interested in the intersections of literature, music, and culture, as they provide evidence of the rich literary traditions embedded in *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* music. The studies reviewed demonstrate that both

genres offer valuable insights into the ways in which literary features are used to navigate complex social and cultural landscapes, making them worthy of continued academic exploration.

A significant aspect of both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* music is their deep connection to oral traditions, which shape their literary features. Oral tradition plays a pivotal role in the transmission of cultural values, historical narratives, and societal norms, which are reflected in the music of both genres. In *Apala*, the oral tradition is evident in the use of proverbs, storytelling, and the rhythmic delivery of lyrics. *Apala* artists often draw on Yoruba oral traditions to create music that resonates with the audience's shared cultural knowledge. This connection to oral tradition ensures that the music remains relevant to its cultural context, even as it evolves over time²⁰³. Similarly, Hip Hop is rooted in the African American oral tradition, particularly in the practices of spoken word, call-and-response, and rap battles. These elements of oral tradition are central to the genre's literary features. Hip Hop's reliance on oral tradition allows artists to convey complex narratives, engage in social critique, and assert cultural identity through their music²⁰⁴. The use of rhythm, rhyme, and repetition in Hip Hop is not only a stylistic choice but also a reflection of its oral roots, making it a powerful tool for storytelling and cultural expression.

The comparison between *Apala* and Hip Hop in terms of their reliance on oral tradition highlights the importance of these practices in shaping the literary features of both genres. The oral tradition serves as a bridge between the past and the present, allowing artists to draw on historical and cultural knowledge while addressing contemporary issues²⁰⁵. This continuity is evident in the way both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* artists use literary devices to create music that is both culturally significant and socially relevant.

Themes of identity, resistance, and spirituality are central to both *Apala* and Hip Hop music, and these themes are often explored through the use of literary features. In *Apala* music, themes of identity are closely tied to Yoruba cultural practices and beliefs. For example, *Apala* lyrics often emphasise the importance of communal identity, social harmony, and respect for tradition¹⁷⁵. These themes are conveyed through the use of allegory, metaphor, and proverbs, which allow artists to communicate complex ideas in a manner that is accessible to their audience. In Hip Hop, themes of identity are often explored through personal narratives and social commentary. Hip Hop artists frequently address issues of racial identity, economic inequality, and systemic oppression, using literary devices such as symbolism, metaphor, and irony to convey their messages. Morgan highlights how Hip Hop artists use their lyrics to assert their cultural identity and challenge dominant narratives²⁰⁶. This thematic exploration is not only a reflection of the artists' personal experiences but also a commentary on broader social issues that affect their communities.

Resistance is another key theme in both *Apala* and Hip Hop music. In *Apala*, resistance is often expressed through subtle critiques of colonialism, social injustice, and cultural change. *Apala* artists use literary features such as satire and irony to challenge the status quo and advocate for social change²⁰⁷. Similarly, Hip Hop artists use their music as a form of resistance against systemic oppression, discrimination, and inequality. The use of literary devices such as metaphor and allusion in Hip Hop allows artists to address these issues in a way that resonates with their audience while also challenging societal norms. Spirituality is also a prominent theme in both genres, with *Apala* music often incorporating references to Yoruba religious practices and beliefs. *Apala* lyrics frequently draw on religious symbolism and imagery to convey messages

about morality, destiny, and the human condition²⁰⁸. In Hip Hop, spirituality is explored through references to religion, personal faith, and existential questions.

The thematic exploration in *Apala* and Hip Hop music demonstrates the depth and complexity of these genres, highlighting the importance of literary features in conveying important cultural and social messages. The empirical evidence suggests that both genres use literary devices to navigate the intersection of identity, resistance, and spirituality, making them powerful tools for cultural expression and social critique. Globalization has had a significant impact on the literary features of both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* music, influencing how these genres evolve and adapt to new cultural contexts. In recent years, there has been an increasing exchange of musical styles and ideas across cultural boundaries, leading to the hybridization of literary features in both genres. According to Alim, Hip Hop has become a global phenomenon, with artists from around the world incorporating elements of the genre into their music²⁰⁹. This globalization of Hip Hop has led to the incorporation of local languages, dialects, and cultural references into the lyrics, resulting in a rich tapestry of literary features that reflect both global and local influences.

In the context of *Apala* music, globalization has also played a role in shaping its literary features. As observed, *Apala* music has incorporated elements from other musical traditions, such as Islamic music and Afrobeat, leading to a fusion of literary styles and themes²¹⁰. This crosscultural exchange has enriched the literary features of *Apala*, allowing it to resonate with a broader audience while still maintaining its distinct cultural identity. The influence of globalization on the literary features of *Apala* and Hip Hop music underscores the dynamic nature of these genres, as they continue to evolve in response to changing cultural landscapes. The empirical evidence suggests that globalization has not only expanded the reach of these

genres but has also contributed to the diversification of their literary features, making them even more relevant in a globalised world.

2.4. Conceptual Model

In order to effectively analyze the literary features of traditional and contemporary music, this study adopts a multidimensional conceptual model that integrates insights from Performance Theory and the Postcolonial Theory. These frameworks collectively provide a structured approach for examining the stylistic, thematic, and functional elements of musical lyrics across temporal and cultural boundaries. The table below presents a comprehensive outline of this conceptual model, highlighting the core concepts of each framework, their specific application to both traditional and contemporary music, and their relevance to the study of literary features. This synthesis not only enhances the extent of the comparative analysis but also positions music as a rich site of cultural expression, literary innovation, and ideological negotiation.

Table 2.1: Application of Traditinal and Contemporary Music

Framework	Core Concepts	Application to Traditional Music	Application to Contemporary Music	Relevance to Literary Feature Analysis

Performance Theory	Performance as action, orality, audience interaction, embodiment	Traditional music as performative, ritualistic, and communal. Emphasises oral transmission, audience feedback, and cultural immersion.	Contemporary music as dynamic performance in live shows and digital media. Uses staging, persona, and audience engagement strategically.	Highlights features like repetition, metaphor, call-and-response, symbolism, and oral-formulaic expressions.
Postcolonial Theory	Identity, resistance, decolonization, hybridity, cultural memory.	Music as resistance to colonial erasure. Preserves language, identity, and indigenous values through metaphor and allegory.	Music as hybrid form negotiating local and global identities. Critiques neocolonialism through satire and intertextual reference.	Analyzes how songs use metaphor, repetition, satire, proverbs, and codeswitching to express postcolonial realities.

The table encapsulates the theoretical orientation of this research, illustrating how each framework contributes uniquely to the comparative analysis of literary features in traditional and contemporary music. By interweaving performative and comparative lenses, the model offers a robust analytical structure that captures the complexity and dynamism of musical texts. It enables a critical examination of how messages are constructed, transmitted, and transformed through literary devices across differing sociocultural landscapes. This conceptual model, therefore, serves not only as a foundational guide for data analysis but also as a means of grounding the

research in relevant scholarly discourse. It ensures that the comparative study is theoretically sound, contextually anchored, and literarily insightful.

2.5. Summary of Gaps

The literature review identifies several gaps in the comparative study of *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* music genres. First, while both genres have been extensively studied independently, there is limited research that directly compares their literary features. This gap is significant because both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* utilise rich narrative structures, proverbs, metaphors, and other literary devices that reflect their cultural and social contexts. A comparative analysis of these elements could offer deeper insights into how traditional and modern Nigerian music genres convey social commentary and cultural values. Another gap lies in the exploration of intertextuality between *Apala* and Nigerian *Hip-Hop*. While intertextuality has been applied in various fields to show the relationships between different texts, there is a lack of studies that examine how these two genres influence each other, especially in terms of shared literary and cultural elements. Understanding the intertextual connections between *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* could reveal how these genres engage with Nigeria's cultural memory and contemporary social dynamics.

Also, studies that do engage literary features in music tend to rely on isolated theoretical perspectives, rarely integrating performance theory, postcolonial theory, and comparative literature methods to construct a holistic analytical model. As such, there is a need for interdisciplinary approaches that account for the layered nature of musical expression, where literary technique, cultural identity, historical memory, and performative context intersect. Without such integrated frameworks, the analysis of musical literature risks remaining fragmented and reductive. Additionally, the impact of globalization on the literary features of

both genres has not been fully explored. Although the global influence on *Hip-Hop* is well-documented, there is insufficient research on how globalization affects *Apala* music. In particular, more studies are needed to investigate how *Apala*, a traditional genre, has adapted or blended with modern literary forms as it interacts with global music trends. This gap is crucial for understanding the evolution of *Apala* in a globalised cultural landscape.

Furthermore, there is a need for more research on how both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop*, rooted in oral traditions, maintain and transform their narrative and thematic structures in modern contexts. The oral tradition plays a vital role in shaping the literary features of these genres, yet few studies have focused on how this tradition continues to influence contemporary music. Research in this area could provide valuable insights into the resilience and adaptation of oral storytelling in modern musical expressions.

Finally, the review highlights a gap in the exploration of how these genres articulate identity and cultural heritage. While both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* are known for their role in expressing cultural pride and resistance, particularly in post-colonial contexts, there is a need for more studies that examine how these themes are conveyed through specific literary techniques. Investigating how these genres use metaphors, symbolism, and narrative forms to articulate identity and resistance could deepen our understanding of their cultural significance in Nigeria and beyond.

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Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a Content Analysis Research Design, to examine and interpret the literary features embedded in selected traditional *Apala* and contemporary *Hip-Hop* musical lyrics. The qualitative approach is most suitable for this research as it emphasises depth over breadth, enabling a detailed exploration of meaning, symbolism, and aesthetic techniques employed within the lyrics of the selected songs. Through the comparative method, the study investigates similarities and divergences in the use of literary devices such as metaphor, symbolism, proverbs, imagery, personification, and allusion across different musical traditions

and eras. This design is rooted in the belief that music, like other forms of literature, can be deconstructed and analysed to reveal deeper cultural, historical, and ideological significances.

The study adopts a field-sensitive strategy that appreciates music as a cultural artifact with embedded literary values. The research is guided by a critical and descriptive orientation, comparing both genres not only in terms of structure and style but also in the depth of cultural and linguistic expression. This design allows for the flexible exploration of how tradition and modernity shape literary expression in music, especially within the Yoruba cultural context, this study interrogates how traditional musical forms preserve communal memory, cultural identity, and moral instruction, and how contemporary musical expressions recontextualise these elements in response to modern realities. The comparative analysis not only highlights literary continuities but also uncovers creative reconfigurations that speak to evolving socio-political contexts.

Additionally, the design allows for the application of multidisciplinary theories, the performance theory and comparative literature, which offer layered interpretations of the selected texts. Ultimately, the research design provides a flexible yet rigorous structure for analysing musical features and lyrics as dynamic literary texts situated within specific cultural and temporal spaces.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises the broad body of traditional Yoruba *Apala* music and contemporary Nigerian *Hip-Hop* music, particularly those composed in or influenced by the Yoruba language and cultural heritage. These two musical traditions serve as the foundation from which the samples for this research were drawn. The focus on Yoruba *Apala* music stems from its deeply rooted oral traditions, rhythmic sophistication, and the use of rich poetic devices that have long served as a vehicle for preserving indigenous knowledge, values, and communal

identity. Similarly, the inclusion of Yoruba-influenced contemporary *Hip-Hop* music is based on its innovative adaptation of traditional literary forms into modern, urban, and often globalised expressions. The traditional *Apala* population includes works by artists whose music is characterised by philosophical themes, praise poetry, didactic narratives, and proverbial diction, often delivered with the accompaniment of traditional percussion. This genre continues to be a vital repository of Yoruba orature and literary performance. On the other hand, the contemporary *Hip-Hop* population encompasses tracks that reflect urban youth culture, social critique, identity negotiation, and stylistic experimentation, all while embedding core elements of Yoruba language and symbolism.

This population is not limited to mainstream or widely commercialised songs but also includes culturally relevant tracks that may exist within local, grassroots, or digital communities. The diversity within each genre ensures that the population is sufficiently rich in literary and cultural content, making it suitable for a comparative study of literary features across generations of Yoruba musical expression. By focusing on this defined population, the study is able to investigate how cultural continuity and transformation are manifested through the literary strategies embedded in both traditional and modern musical texts.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

This study employs a multi-stage sampling procedure to select six musical tracks that serve as the representative sample for the research. The sampling method was carefully structured to ensure that the chosen songs reflect the core characteristics of both traditional *Apala* music and contemporary *Hip-Hop* music within the Yoruba cultural landscape. Although a large

number of songs exist under both genres, only three tracks from each category were purposively selected.

The key consideration in the final selection was the richness of literary features and the depth of Yoruba cultural expression embedded in the lyrics. This selective process ensures that the study engages with musical texts that are not only artistically crafted but also thematically significant in terms of literary and cultural value.

The sample consists of six (6) songs: three (3) from traditional *Apala* music genre and three (3) from contemporary *Hip-Hop* music genre. These tracks were selected after compiling a broader pool of potential songs known for their cultural relevance and artistic merit. From this pool, songs were randomly filtered and cross-checked for the presence of literary features such as metaphor, allusion, repetition, personification, and cultural references. The chosen traditional *Apala* songs are *Iba Iya Mi* by Ayinla Adegator which runs for 17 minutes and 46 seconds, *Ise Oluwa* by Musiliu Haruna Ishola which was for 2 minutes, 30 seconds, and *Iwa* by Yusuf Olatunji which ran for 17 minutes 27 seconds. These songs were selected for their poetic richness, philosophical undertones, and deeply rooted traditional narratives reflective of Yoruba orature. The contemporary *Hip-Hop* tracks selected include *Omo Anifowose* by Olamide Baddo running for 4 minutes, 11 seconds, *Ise Oluwa* by Fireboy which was for 3 minutes, 18 seconds, and *Sunshine* by Asake which was for 3 minutes, 8 seconds. These songs represent the modern reimagination of Yoruba literary and cultural elements in contemporary soundscapes. Each of these *Hip-Hop* tracks creatively blends indigenous expression with urban themes, maintaining continuity with the past while embracing new stylistic forms. The choice of these songs allows the study to explore how literary techniques transcend musical eras and how contemporary artists continue to draw inspiration from traditional aesthetics.

By limiting the sample to six tracks, the study achieves a balance between depth and manageability, allowing for detailed comparative analysis within the qualitative framework. The multi-stage sampling ensures the reliability of the selection process, while the literary and cultural depth of the songs justifies their inclusion as data for this research. Overall, the sample is reflective of the larger population and sufficient for drawing meaningful conclusions about the literary features present in both traditional and contemporary Yoruba music.

3.4 Description of the Research Instruments

Given the nature of this study, the research instrument employed is a literary feature checklist, developed to guide the structured observation and documentation of relevant literary elements present in the selected musical tracks. This instrument was designed to ensure consistency in the analysis across the two genres under comparison, traditional *Apala* and contemporary *Hip-Hop*. The checklist includes categories such as metaphor, imagery, repetition, allusion, personification, cultural symbolism, tonal quality, thematic depth, and the presence of indigenous proverbs or idiomatic expressions. These elements are central to the study's aim of identifying and comparing the literary features embedded in Yoruba musical texts across generations.

In addition to the checklist, field notes were used to capture contextual information, including language use, delivery style, and the cultural significance of particular expressions within each track. These notes provided qualitative depth to the analysis, especially where certain lyrics required interpretive insights rooted in Yoruba socio-cultural knowledge. The use of field notes also allowed for reflective observation on the artistic intention and audience impact, based on the researcher's informed listening and engagement with each song.

Moreover, audio recordings and lyrical transcriptions served as supporting materials for data extraction. The songs were transcribed to allow a detailed inspection of the literary features in textual form. This process facilitated the identification of linguistic patterns, poetic structures, and rhetorical strategies that may not be immediately apparent through auditory analysis alone. The combination of auditory listening and text-based inspection provided a multi-dimensional view of the literary richness embedded in the selected tracks. Together, these instruments ensured a thorough and systematic engagement with the musical data. They enabled the researcher to identify recurring literary devices, compare thematic concerns, and evaluate how each genre handles the intersection of language, culture, and creative expression. The instruments were designed not only to capture surface-level features but also to uncover the deeper cultural and artistic meanings encoded within the musical narratives. This approach affirms the validity and depth of the study's comparative literary analysis.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

The data collection process is consistent with the study's comparative focus. Six selected musical tracks, three traditional *Apala* songs and three contemporary *Hip-Hop* tracks, form the basis of the data. These tracks are sourced from publicly accessible platforms and digital archives, with consideration given to their authenticity and cultural relevance. Each song undergoes transcription to facilitate a detailed analysis of the lyrics, while repeated listening sessions provide access to tonal and rhythmic elements that enhance the literary experience conveyed through sound. A literary feature checklist guides the process, offering a standardised tool for identifying devices such as metaphor, repetition, allusion, personification, and cultural references.

across all six tracks. Transcribed lyrics are examined for the presence of these literary features, with attention to how language constructs meaning, transmits cultural values, and reflects artistic creativity. The checklist ensures uniformity in observation and aids in comparing traditional and modern literary techniques used within the songs.

Beyond transcription, field notes accompany the listening process, capturing non-verbal and paralinguistic aspects like intonation, call-and-response patterns, instrumental backing, and stylistic variations. These performative dimensions enrich the understanding of each song's literary and cultural significance. Both auditory and textual forms of the songs are treated as critical sources of data, enabling a multi-layered examination of literary expression within each musical tradition. Through this method of data collection, the study ensures a holistic engagement with both lyrical and performative content, providing a rich and balanced foundation for subsequent analysis and interpretation.

3.6 Data Analysis

The method of data analysis adopted in this study aligns with its qualitative and comparative design. After collecting and transcribing the six selected musical tracks, the content of each song is subjected to a systematic interpretive analysis using a literary feature checklist. This checklist provides a framework for identifying recurring literary elements, including metaphor, imagery, allusion, repetition, symbolism, personification, and other figures of speech commonly found in both traditional and contemporary musical texts. The presence, function, and stylistic presentation of these features are examined in relation to the cultural and thematic essence of each track. Each track is analysed independently to establish its unique literary and

cultural dimensions, after which a comparative reading is conducted across genres. This two-level process enables a contextual and stylistic juxtaposition of the literary techniques found in *Apala* and *HipHop* music, offering insight into both continuity and innovation within Yoruba musical expression. Traditional *Apala* songs are analysed with attention to their rootedness in oral poetry, proverbial wisdom, and communal values, while the *Hip-Hop* tracks are examined for their integration of contemporary themes, urban narratives, and creative adaptation of indigenous linguistic forms.

In addition to the checklist-based analysis, interpretive notes drawn from lyrical performance, tone, rhythm, and cultural symbolism inform the overall understanding of each song's literary depth. Attention is paid to the interplay between language, sound, and cultural meaning, recognising music as both an artistic and sociolinguistic medium. The analysis not only identifies patterns and themes but also explores the artistic functions these literary features serve within each genre. This method ensures that the analysis goes beyond surface-level description to capture the nuanced ways in which language, culture, and artistic creativity intersect in Yoruba traditional and contemporary music. The comparative perspective allows for a meaningful discussion of how musical forms continue to evolve while retaining deep cultural and literary significance.

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion of Findings

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the qualitative analysis conducted on the selected traditional *Apala* and contemporary *Hip-Hop* tracks. The analysis is organized into

sections to facilitate a detailed and structured interpretation of the literary features observed across the two musical genres. The first section explores the historical and contextual backgrounds of the selected songs, establishing the cultural, thematic, and performative frameworks within which the songs were created. This section addresses the research questions raised in the study. It provides a detailed presentation of how literary devices such as proverbs, panegyrics, repetition, imagery, rhythm, and symbolism, manifest in both traditional and contemporary music. It also highlights how each genre reflects cultural identity, values, and transitions through its lyrical content. The comparative focus sheds light on both continuity and transformation in literary expression within Yoruba musical traditions. Another section synthesises the major findings of the study, discussing them in relation to existing literature and the broader context of literary representation in music. It draws connections between the artistic choices made in both genres and the socio-cultural environment that shapes them. Through this, the chapter contributes to an enriched understanding of how music serves as a vehicle for literary creativity and cultural preservation.

The analysis of the selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* musical tracks provides rich and nuanced answers to the three central research questions guiding this study.

4.1 Presentation of Data

4.1.1 Analysis of Research Question

What are the Literary Features in the Selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* Songs?

In the analysis of the selected musical tracks, a variety of literary features are identified as integral to both the traditional *Apala* and contemporary *Hip-Hop* genres. The presence of these features underscores the artistic depth of Yoruba music, affirming that beyond their entertainment

value, the songs serve as vessels of cultural communication, creative expression, and sociolinguistic relevance. Among the most recurring literary features observed are:

- Metaphor,
- Repetition,
- Imagery,
- Alliteration,
- Assonance,
- Symbolism,
- Rhythm,
- Panegyrics, and
- Proverbs.

These devices are not merely decorative; they function as foundational components that shape meaning, structure, and emotional appeal in each song. In the selected tracks, the literary features and devices used are deeply embedded in the narrative flow and linguistic construction.

Metaphor, one of the most prominent literary devices in the tracks, is often used to project abstract moral values onto tangible elements. For instance, Yusuff Olatunji's *Iwa* elevates the concept of good character into a living force that can guide, protect, and uplift individuals.

Oju ti yawo ti o muwa rele oko
(Shame on a wife who gets married without good character)
Oju ti' yawo ti o muwa lo le oko
(She is ashamed, a wife without good character)
Oju t'orogbo a paa, ko la wé o
(Shame on the bitter kola that is broken but not divided)

The artist draws his message deeply from Yoruba proverbial philosophy to express the centrality of good character in matrimonial and communal life. Here, the metaphorical construction hinges particularly on the image of *orogbo* (bitter kola) and *iwa* (character), conveying the disappointment and shame associated with a wife entering her husband's home without virtuous comportment. The artist used the bitter kola, known for its toughness and resistance to clean division, no matter how you break it, it divides into uneven parts unlike the kolanut that has even a symmetry line on it that breaks it into two equal pieces, metaphorically linking it to the concept of character. In the Yoruba tradition, the act of breaking kola nut or bitter kola is not only symbolic but ritualistic, often associated with hospitality, blessings, and communal unity. Thus, by saying *Oju t'orogbo, a paa, ko la wé o*, the singer implies that a person (specifically a wife) who appears externally whole but lacks internal virtue is akin to the bitter kola that fails to divide, useless in function and disappointing in expectation. The metaphor use also reinforces the proverb *Ìwà l'ẹwà* (Character is beauty), which serves as a cornerstone of Yoruba ethical worldview. In this context, beauty is not merely physical or aesthetic; it is moral, behavioral, and communal. The wife's shame (*oju ti yawo*) stems not from physical appearance but from a lack of *iwa rere* (good character), which, in Yoruba ontology, defines true human worth. The repetition of *Oju ti' yawo ti o muwa re le oko* further intensifies the condemnation and underscores the social repercussions of such character deficiency.

By employing this metaphor, Yusuf Olatunji connects personal morality with societal expectation, framing good character as a necessity for communal integration and marital success. Moreover, the bitter kola metaphor bridges the natural world and human behavior, a typical trait of Yoruba oral and musical tradition. This alignment not only reflects indigenous philosophy but

also functions pedagogically, guiding listeners, women most especially, toward introspection and cultural conformity.

Musiliu Ishola in his *Ise Oluwa* skillfully used metaphor to position himself above rivals and critics, grounding his success and artistic superiority in divine ordination.

Ise Oluwa ko seni to ye
(The works of God cannot be understood)
Ise Oluwa ju t'alfa lo
(The works of God surpasses that of an Alfa)
L'olorun oba fi gbe wa ga/2x
(That's why we have been uplifted by God)
le fi n binu, le n pegan
(And now you're angry and bitter)
Musiliu Babatunde, President awon alApala/2x
(Musiliu Babatunde, president for all *Apala* singers)

The opening line *Ise Oluwa ko seni to ye* (The works of God cannot be understood), elevates the artist's achievements to a realm beyond human comprehension. Here, Musiliu Ishola constructs his artistic success as not self-made, but as a manifestation of divine will. This metaphoric positioning disarms criticism and envy, portraying them as futile in the face of God's providence. The line *Ise Oluwa ju t'alfa lo* (The works of God surpass those of an Alfa) intensifies this metaphor by comparing divine work to that of a religious scholar (*Alfa*), a figure traditionally revered for spiritual insight. By declaring that *Ise Oluwa* surpasses even this authority, the artist metaphorically asserts that his own rise and excellence are the result of something greater than talent or effort, they are divinely orchestrated. This metaphorical framework then extends into a subtle confrontation with competitors: *L'olorun oba fi gbe wa ga, le fi n binu, le n pegan o* (That's why we have been uplifted by God and now you're angry, now you're slandering). The

divine elevation is likened to a *shield* that naturally invites envy but renders such bitterness impotent.

Thus, Musiliu uses metaphor to redefine hate and rivalry not as a threat but as confirmation of divine favor. The underlying message is so clear that opposition is the natural response to greatness that is heaven-ordained, and such opposition cannot prevail.

Musiliu Babatunde, President awon alApala (Musiliu Babatunde, president of all *Apala* singers) crowns the metaphorical performance. Though it appears boastful, within the context of the previous lines, it is positioned as a destined role, not a self-assigned title. This metaphorical self-coronation reinforces his dominance in the *Apala* genre while implicitly discrediting his rivals. By grounding his leadership in divine will (*Ise Oluwa*), he implies that no amount of competition or slander can dethrone him.

Ayinla Adegator's *Iba Iya Mi*, a song that pays homage to the maternal figure, not only as a biological mother but also as a symbolic representation of nurturing, sacrifice, and cultural preservation has its historical setting reflecting a period in Yoruba society where matriarchal reverence was a cultural norm, embedded in community values and reinforced through oral performance. Adegator in this track, used metaphor, likening the mother figure to lots of entities as long as they protect, nurture, pray for and nourish.

The song is saturated with the metaphor feature, for instance, the image of the mother is elevated through metaphorical constructs that liken her endurance to the timelessness of the earth. This reflects Yoruba cosmology, where motherhood is central to the cycle of life, cultural education, protection, nurture, and spiritual continuity. *Iyá mi* which means 'my mother' is a

phrase that was used repeatedly in the lyrics of the song which emphasises again and again the importance of a mother, whether biological or not, a matriarch entity in a man's life,

Mo fe gbe mi relu owo,
(They're taking me to a place full of wealth)
Alasela, iyá miiii, Abeni alasela,
(Alasela, my mother, Abeni alasela) mo
fe gbemi relu owo
(she wants to take me to a place full of money)
mo fe gbemi, won fe gbe mi re lu owo
(They want to take me, they want to take me to a place full of wealth)

In this lyrical excerpt, we see a rich metaphorical representation that intertwines the ideas of maternal influence, social mobility, and aspirational wealth. The speaker draws on the image of a mother figure, *Abeni Alasela*, who is depicted not just as a biological parent, but as a powerful intermediary in the pursuit of success and affluence. This metaphor constructs the maternal figure as a symbolic bridge or channel to a life of wealth, painting her as both nurturer and destiny-shaper. The repetition of *won fe gbe mi relu owo* (They want to take me to a place full of wealth) uses a journey metaphor to symbolise social elevation and economic empowerment. The phrase suggests movement, not just physical, implying transition from a state of lack or ordinariness to one of abundance. This metaphor of “being taken” speaks to the cultural reality of seeking connections or divine helpers to break barriers and rise into prosperity.

The central figure in this journey is “*Alasela, iyá mi, Abeni Alasela*”, a name that blends praise-singing with maternal reverence. The name *Alasela* loosely suggests a person with economic power or influence, someone who facilitates wealth-making. By appending this title to the mother *iyá mi*, the artist is not merely praising his mother but metaphorically likening her to a benefactor, sponsor, or fate-changer. This shifts the role of the mother from traditional caregiver

to someone possessing agency in economic transformation, a deeply symbolic representation that combines love, loyalty, and strategic aspiration.

On the other hand, the selected contemporary *Hip-Hop* songs, reveal a creative adaptation of traditional literary devices into urban narratives. While Metaphor and the other literary features is still predominant, they are employed in ways that reflect modern experiences, personal stories, and global aesthetics.

Olamide's *Omo Anifowose*, metaphor, which is an agent of comparison, was used to narrate a personal journey from poverty to success. Olamide utilises metaphor not only as a literary device but as a powerful emotional and narrative tool to trace his journey from deprivation to stardom. The song is a heartfelt autobiographical reflection, and metaphor plays a central role in conveying the intensity of his past struggles. Unlike more traditional forms of metaphor that rely on abstract comparisons, Olamide's metaphors are grounded in concrete, everyday imagery that resonates with his audience's lived experiences.

mummy ta aso e ati bata e fun paro,
(mummy sold her clothes and shoes for exchange)
daddy taso ati bata fun paro,
(daddy sold his clothes and shoes for exchange)
to put food on the table,
because salary mummy o wa stable
(because mummy's salary is not stable)

The lines, *Mummy ta aso e ati bata e fun paro, Daddy ta aso ati bata fun paro* (Mummy and Daddy sold their clothes and shoes in exchange), are direct yet metaphorically rich. Though the lines appear literal, they carry a deeper figurative significance. The act of selling one's clothes and shoes, items essential for dignity and survival, becomes a metaphor for sacrifice, love, and parental endurance. It is not merely about exchanging items for money, but *about* stripping

oneself of comfort and identity for the sake of a child's future. In this context, clothes and shoes symbolise pride, protection, and basic human dignity, things that the parents are metaphorically willing to lose in order to preserve their child's sustenance. This metaphor becomes a vessel for narrating poverty not just as economic lack, but as emotional weight. The mention of *paro* (exchange or pawn) links the idea of trade to emotional cost. The parents' sacrifice is not transactional but existential, they give up parts of themselves to nourish and empower their son. Hence, the metaphors here do not merely describe, they evoke empathy and emotional resonance.

Olamide's use of metaphor is deeply tied to his identity as the *Omo Anifowose*, the child of a prayerful, humble lineage. His personal hardship is metaphorically likened to the universal story of the poor man rising through struggle, which is a recurring theme in Nigerian hip hop and urban music. The parents' sacrifices are metaphors not just of love but of unseen investments, the kind that yield intangible emotional capital before material results are seen. In essence, metaphor in *Omo Anifowose* is used not only for decorative effect but as a tool for storytelling and emotional engagement. Olamide uses metaphor to transform personal history into shared experience, pain into poetry, and poverty into purpose. His lyrics mirror the contemporary Nigerian youth's reality, demonstrating how modern hip hop continues the tradition of figurative expression seen in older genres like *Apala*, yet with a sharper focus on individual experience and social mobility.

In Fireboy's *Ise Oluwa*, he employs metaphor to weave a poignant narrative about divine grace, endurance, and transformation. Drawing from the traditional Yoruba tradition, the artist modernises this spiritual foundation and uses metaphor to express a deeply personal journey from struggle to triumph.

Ise Oluwa ko seni toye/2x
(no one can understand the works of God)
Bi mo se se mi o mo
(the way I did it, I don't know)
I just dey stay on my grind everyday
I keep my eyes looking up

A central metaphor in the song is the repeated line: *ise oluwa ko se ni to ye* (The works of God can never be understood), Fireboy uses the works of God metaphorically to represent his own life, purpose, and career journey. It implies that his progress and achievements are not merely human efforts, but divinely orchestrated, unshakable, and eternal. This metaphor of divine craftsmanship frames his success as sacred, stable, and protected from external harm or failure.

He also sings: *I came from nothing, made it to something*, this line employs metaphor to suggest that his once-challenging life has become harmonious and beautiful, like a song. Here, “something” becomes a symbolic representation of peace, success, and joy, showing how his life has transformed into something pleasing and fulfilling. Throughout *Ise Oluwa*, metaphor serves as a bridge between spiritual reflection and contemporary self-expression. Fireboy blends traditional religious references with modern urban imagery, creating a hybrid metaphorical space where faith, ambition, and artistry coexist. The metaphors in this song echo Yoruba oral traditions, particularly in the belief that one's destiny is divinely shaped and sustained, a thematic concern also prominent in *Apala* music. In sum, Fireboy's use of metaphor in *Ise Oluwa* mirrors the literary and spiritual depth of traditional Yoruba music while adapting it to a contemporary Afrobeats context. The metaphors elevate his personal story into a universal message of hope, faith, and perseverance, contributing meaningfully to the evolution of metaphorical expression in Nigerian music.

In Asake's *Sunshine*, metaphor was used as a powerful artistic tool to convey emotional and spiritual resilience in the face of adversity. The recurring line, *The sun's gon' shine on everything you do* functions as a central metaphor, where *the sun* is not merely a celestial object, but a figurative representation of hope, clarity, divine favor, and positive transformation.

The sun's gon' shine on everything you do,
Ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah/2x
The sun's gon' shine on everything you do

The metaphorical use of the sun transforms it into a symbol of breakthrough after a period of darkness, echoing a common cosmological belief that *there is light at the end of the tunnel*. In this context, *sunshine* represents a turning point, an emotional and spiritual uplift after enduring pain, confusion, or failure. The artist assures the listener that divine light (sunshine) will illuminate their path, signifying a season of success and restoration.

The contrast between *sunlight* and its implied opposite, *darkness* or *shadow*, further deepens the metaphor. Although the shadows are not mentioned explicitly, the presence of sunlight metaphorically implies their prior existence. The metaphor functions on a psychological level, where darkness may represent depression, hardship, or emotional turmoil. In turn, *the sun* metaphorically brings clarity, direction, warmth, and renewal. This reflects the artist's attempt to motivate the listener, suggesting that struggles are temporary and that divine intervention is inevitable.

Asake's use of metaphor in this song also draws from gospel and Afrobeat traditions, where natural imagery such as rain, fire, and sun is often metaphorically employed to discuss spiritual warfare, emotional healing, and blessings. His delivery which was calm, rhythmic, and chant-like, supports the metaphor's soothing quality, turning the song into a musical prayer and

emotional balm. The repetition of *the sun's gon' shine on everything you do* acts as an affirmation, reinforcing the metaphor's emotional and spiritual resonance. Also, the use of sunshine as a metaphor aligns with Yoruba and African oral traditions where natural elements are often personified and used to carry profound philosophical meanings. In this case, *the sun* becomes an agent of change and divine timing, shedding light on destiny, purpose, and individual journeys.

Metaphor in Asake's *Sunshine* is used to communicate a universal truth through accessible imagery: that light will eventually replace darkness, and that favor will follow struggle. By using the sun as a metaphor for divine intervention and emotional upliftment, Asake contributes to the continuity of metaphorical expression in African music while adapting it to a modern Afro-fusion soundscape.

Repetition, the repeat or reoccur of lines for the purpose of laying emphasis, is another striking literary technique common to *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* music, serving both structural and stylistic functions.

In Musiliu Ishola's *Ise Oluwa*,

T'a ba n pe **olori**, ko'lori je

(When we call on the leader, let the leader respond)

Olori kankan ko gbodo fohun, Tori pe **olori** ju **olori** lo

(No other leader should respond because there is hierarchy in leadership)

Babatunde Ishola, Omo egungun jobi, Musiliu Ishola, Omo egungun jobi

(Babatunde Ishola, the son of egungun jobi, Musiliu Ishola, the son of egungun jobi)

Awa ni baba, e ye ma a shagidi

(We are the boss, stop being stubborn)

Ka korin, ko da, Ishola la'siwaju

(When we talk good singing, Ishola is the leader)

The artist in the track, repeated the word ‘olori’ which was later substituted for ‘asiwaju’ as well as ‘baba’ which means ‘leader’ or ‘boss’ laying emphasis on the fact that he is the one and only boss in the history of traditional *Apala* performance, boasting of his prowess and expertise in the genre. In the track, repetition is employed as a powerful literary and musical device to underscore divine intervention, assert personal identity, and respond to envy and rivalry. The song blends spiritual affirmation with personal testimony, using repetition not merely for rhythm but as a form of reinforcement and emphasis.

The line *L’olorun oba fi gbe wa ga* (That’s why we have been uplifted by God the king) is repeated twice in the extract, serving to emphasise divine elevation. This repetition strengthens the claim that the singer’s rise in status and success is not of human making but is the *work of God*, a theme introduced in the preceding lines: *Ise Oluwa ko seni to ye / Ise Oluwa ju t’alfa lo* (The works of God cannot be understood/The works of God surpass that of an Alfa). By declaring and then repeating *L’olorun oba fi gbe wa ga*, Musiliu establishes a firm connection between divine providence and his personal achievement. The repetition helps listeners internalise this belief, transforming a statement of faith into a lyrical affirmation.

The repetition of his title, *Musiliu Babatunde, President awon alApala*, also serves a significant rhetorical purpose. The line appears twice in quick succession, acting as a self-assertive declaration. Through repetition, the artist reaffirms his authority and dominance within the *Apala* music scene. This repeated self-identification is not mere pride; it is a strategic reinforcement of identity, particularly in response to perceived envy, as referenced in the line: *le fi n binu, le n pegan* (And now you're angry and bitter). Here, repetition becomes an act of

defiance and confidence, asserting that no amount of bitterness or slander can undermine the status that God has granted. The repeated phrases also carry musical significance in the *Apala* genre, where rhythm and chantlike delivery are central. In this context, repetition is a stylistic feature that enhances audience engagement and retention, ensuring that key messages linger in the listener's mind. Much like oral poetry and praise-singing in Yoruba tradition, repeating significant lines solidifies their importance within the collective memory of the audience.

Repetition in Musiliu Haruna Ishola's *Ise Oluwa* performs multiple functions, it emphasises divine endorsement, defends the singer's status, and amplifies the emotional and spiritual power of the song. It is both a musical and rhetorical strategy, deeply rooted in Yoruba oral aesthetics, yet fully adaptable to modern *Apala* expression.

Repetition in *Apala* operates on multiple levels, it reinforces memory, creates rhythm, and serves as a call-and-response mechanism in live performance. This pattern draws from oral poetic traditions where repetition is a tool for audience engagement, as well as a mnemonic strategy in non-literate societies. It is a powerful stylistic feature that echoes the rhythm of traditional drumming and the cyclical nature of Yoruba religious rituals.

Mo fe gbe mi relu owo,
 (They're taking me to a place full of wealth)
 Alasela, iyá miiiii, Abeni alasela,
 (Alasela, my mother, Abeni alasela) mo
 fe gbemi relu owo
 (she wants to take me to a place full of money)
 mo fe gbemi, won fe gbe mi re lu owo
 (They want to take me, they want to take me to a place full of wealth) In this

lyrical excerpt, repetition serves as a crucial device to emphasise maternal influence and the aspiration for wealth and social elevation. The repeated invocation of *Abeni Alasela* (My mother, Abeni Alasela) underscores the centrality of the mother figure, portraying her as a vital agent in

the artist's journey toward prosperity. By repeating the mother's name multiple times, the artist highlights her pivotal role, not merely as a caregiver, but as a facilitator and protector who guides him towards economic success. This repetition creates a rhythmic anchor that reinforces the message of reliance on maternal support and blessings. It also deepens the emotional connection between the artist and his audience, as the repeated maternal reference evokes feelings of respect, love, and gratitude.

The lines *mo fe gbe mi re lu owo* and its variations emphasise the goal of being *taken to a place of wealth*. By repeating this phrase and its variants, the lyrics stress the aspirational nature of the journey and the strong desire for upward mobility. The repetitive structure mimics a prayer or chant, invoking both hope and determination. This kind of repetition is reminiscent of Yoruba oral traditions, where important ideas, especially those involving family and destiny, are reiterated to ensure they resonate deeply with listeners. Here, repetition does more than reinforce meaning; it acts as a verbal manifestation of hope and affirmation, asserting that with maternal support, the path to wealth and success is assured, in all, repetition in this excerpt functions to highlight the transformative power of maternal agency and the aspiration for economic prosperity, making the message both memorable and emotionally compelling.

Oju ti yawo ti o muwa rele oko
(Shame on a wife who gets married without good character)
Oju ti' yawo ti o muwa lo le oko
(She is ashamed, a wife without good character)
Oju t'orogbo a paa, ko la wé o
(Shame on the bitter kola that is broken but not divided)

These lines demonstrates how repetition is used to emphasise the importance of good character (*iwa*), particularly for women entering marriage, while also echoing communal disapproval of moral failure. The repetition of the line *Oju ti yawo ti o muwa* (Shame on the wife without good

character) with slight variation in structure serves both aesthetic and didactic purposes. On one hand, it maintains the musical rhythm of the *Apala* performance; on the other, it reinforces the moral point through repetition. The phrase is rendered in different forms, *re le oko* (into her husband's house) and *lo le oko* (going to her husband's house) to expand on the scenario while maintaining the core warning. This strategic repetition ensures that the message remains clear, firm, and memorable to the audience. Through this lyrical repetition, Olatunji instills cultural norms and expectations, especially as they relate to feminine behavior and marriage. The repeated declaration of shame (*ojuti*) evokes communal judgment and collective values.

In Yoruba tradition, such repetition reflects the power of the spoken word (*oró*), where important teachings are echoed until they become ingrained in public consciousness. The final line, *oju t'orogbo a paa, ko la wé o* (Shame on the bitter kola that is broken but not divided) while metaphorical, also functions as a repeated motif of disappointment and moral failure. Though the image changes, the thematic repetition of *oju ti* (shame) links the moral condemnation of the woman with that of a bitter kola that does not serve its expected function. This use of repetition across different images builds a layered moral narrative, where both human behavior and natural objects are judged by their ability to fulfill communal roles. Thus, in *Iwa*, repetition is not merely a stylistic feature, it is a cultural device used to teach, caution, and also to correct. It captures the oral, performative nature of *Apala* music, where rhythm, message, and morality are intertwined. In comparison to contemporary Hip Hop, which often uses repetition for emotional reinforcement or branding, the artist's repetition serves as a moral echo, guiding listeners toward characterbuilding through repeated wisdom.

Repetition in *Hip-Hop* is equally powerful, though stylistically distinct. It often mirrors

Western rap structures, reinforcing rhymes and emphasizing hooks.

Asake's *Sunshine* uses repetitive choruses was used to instill hope and emotional upliftment. In *Sunshine*, Asake harnesses repetition as a lyrical and emotional device that goes beyond musical aesthetics, functioning as a form of emotional reinforcement and psychological healing. The repeated chorus line, *the sun's gon' shine on everything you do* is not simply a catchy hook; it is a rhythmic mantra designed to instill hope, optimism, and inner strength. The repetitive structure of this phrase makes it resonate more deeply with the listener, allowing the message of encouragement to settle in the subconscious. Asake follows the repeated phrase with a melodic vocal chant *ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah* /2x this non-lexical repetition serves as an emotional pause, almost like a meditative breath between affirmations. It helps to soothe the listener while creating a trance-like atmosphere that enhances the spiritual and therapeutic tone of the song. In this sense, repetition is used to regulate mood, offering calm in a world that often feels chaotic and uncertain. By repeating *the sun's gon' shine on everything you do* multiple times throughout the track, Asake reinforces the core message that perseverance will be rewarded. The sun becomes a metaphor for breakthrough and blessing, while the repetitive delivery becomes a verbal anchor, assuring the listener that no matter how long the night, the dawn is inevitable. This kind of lyrical repetition mirrors traditional Yoruba incantations and praise-singing patterns, where important lines are echoed to establish spiritual or emotional certainty. Furthermore, this repetitive device functions as a form of lyrical therapy. In a high-pressure, fast-paced society where mental health challenges are common, such affirming repetition acts as a soothing balm. It gives the listener something to hold onto, a repeated promise that their hard work, pain, and resilience will not go unrewarded. In this way, repetition becomes more than a musical tool; it becomes a psychological lifeline.

In conclusion, repetition in Asake's *Sunshine* plays a crucial role in amplifying the emotional depth and motivational tone of the song. It reaffirms the track's central message, that there is light at the end of every tunnel, and delivers it with enough consistency to make it both memorable and impactful. Through this technique, Asake joins a long tradition in African music where repetition is not just for beauty but for emphasis, healing, and hope.

Ise Oluwa ko seni toyè/2x
(no one can understand the works of God)
Bi mo se se mi o mo
(the way I did it, I don't know)
I just dey stay on my grind everyday
I keep my eyes looking up
Ise oluwa ko se ni to ye
(the works of God can't be understood)

Fireboy DML's *Ise Oluwa*, strategically employs repetition to enhance emotional resonance, emphasise divine dependence, and create a meditative rhythm that mirrors the spiritual tone of the song. The lines, *Ise Oluwa ko seni toyè /2x* (The works of God cannot be understood) introduce the song with a direct repetition of a traditional Yoruba phrase, immediately grounding the track in spiritual consciousness. This double-line repetition serves to draw attention to the mystery and supremacy of divine action. By repeating this statement, Fireboy underscores the awe and humility with which he views his success, situating it as something beyond human comprehension. The repetition continues in the lines: *As you dey see e e e, I give the glory to God*. Here, Fireboy not only reiterates the act of giving credit to God but also maintains a rhythmic cadence that reinforces the song's central message: that his achievements are rooted in divine grace. The second delivery of the line functions as both confirmation and reinforcement, compelling the listener to internalise the idea of gratitude and spiritual accountability. Additionally, the repeated structure of *Bi mo se se mi o mo* (I don't know how I do it) functions

as a subtle refrain, expressing a blend of wonder and surrender. It reflects the artist's acknowledgment that his consistency and success in life and career are not merely the result of personal effort but the result of something greater, an unseen, divine force. When paired with the line *I just dey stay on my grind everyday, I keep my eyes looking up*, this reinforces a message of hard work guided by faith. Fireboy's use of repetition thus goes beyond musical appeal; it becomes a spiritual mantra, creating a meditative and reflective listening experience. The repeated lines simulate the chant-like quality found in Yoruba praise and worship traditions, where affirmations are repeated to invite spiritual presence and to reinforce belief. In this way, Fireboy bridges traditional Yoruba musical elements with contemporary Afro-life and pop aesthetics.

Repetition in Fireboy's *Ise Oluwa* is a deliberate artistic and spiritual strategy. It emphasises his reverence for divine influence, celebrates resilience and humility, and reinforces the song's central theme of gratitude and grace. The repeated phrases not only echo the style of traditional music like *Apala* but also serve as a personal testimony wrapped in rhythmic devotion.

Versace Versace you rocking Versace
Your mommy is suffering oloshi
Emi ti flourish awon parents mi jeun to nourish
(I have flourished, my parents are eating healthy)

In *Omo Anifowose*, Olamide employs repetition as a key lyrical strategy to assert identity, celebrate success, and emphasise cultural pride. The repeated phrases, *Versace, Versace, you rocking Versace* and *Omo anifowose, iru kileyi omo anifowose*, function on multiple levels, from reinforcing material accomplishment to asserting lineage and personal narrative.

The repetition of *Versace* highlights the symbolic importance of luxury and success. Versace, a globally recognised high-fashion brand, becomes a metaphor for status and achievement in Olamide's narrative. By repeating the brand name, the artist amplifies the image of affluence, underscoring a transformative journey from humble beginnings to material prosperity. The cadence created by the repeated word draws attention to the contrast between past struggles and current success, serving as both celebration and declaration. It also contributes a rhythmic hook that enhances memorability and audience engagement. Similarly, the refrain *Omo anifowose, iru kileyi omo anifowose* (The child of Anifowose, what kind of thing is this, the child of Anifowose) is a repeated invocation of lineage and identity. 'Omo Anifowose' refers to the artist's heritage and familial background, grounding his success in cultural roots and collective history. The repetition here serves as an affirmation of pride and authenticity, reminding listeners of the foundation from which the artist rises. It functions as a verbal signature, branding Olamide not just as an individual achiever but as a representative of his community and family. The dual repetition of these phrases, one focusing on material success (*Versace*), the other on ancestral pride (*Omo Anifowose*), creates a dynamic interplay between modern urban achievement and traditional identity. This interplay is essential to Olamide's narrative, reflecting the Nigerian youth's negotiation between global aspirations and local roots.

Furthermore, repetition in these lines reinforces emotional intensity and audience participation. The chant-like quality invites listeners to join in, turning the song into a communal celebration. The repeated phrases serve as anchors in the track's structure, providing familiarity amid the complex lyrical flow. In conclusion, repetition in *Omo Anifowose* is more than a stylistic device; it is a means of cultural assertion, identity formation, and emotional engagement.

Through repeated invocation, Olamide crafts a narrative that celebrates upward mobility while honoring the legacy that informs his journey.

Vivid imagery, which deals with using descriptive words to tell how something really feels, is not left out, the artists' use of imagery is drawn from nature and community life to tell stories that resonate deeply with listeners. In the *Apala* tracks that were used, the artists paint a rich narrative landscape using elements of the natural world and communal experiences to symbolise personal growth, challenges, and transitions. In Ayinla Adegbale's *Iba Iya Mi*, for instance,

Sowun lo yan won lale, eni mowe lo lo gbomo fun,
(she got herself a concubine, giving her child to an educated man)
mo tun da e duro na mo kan ti e gbo,
(wait a bit, listen to me)
mo kiri titi oju mi da Omo ifakorede, (I traveled all
around, the child of Ifakorede) mo de eko, mo
dokun, mo dosa, mo ti lo sagunrege
(I went to Lagos, the sea, the beach, I even went to Agunrege)

The transitions between places, literal moves and shifts, speak to the universal human experience of navigation, navigating identity, purpose, hardship, or success. This not only creates a vivid mental picture for the listener but also reaffirms the Yoruba worldview that sees the natural and spiritual worlds as coexistent and interactive.

Contemporary *Hip-Hop* artists also employ vivid imagery, but with urban and emotional lenses. In Fireboy's *Ise Oluwa*, the traditional refrain is re-contextualised in a song about faith, hustle, and inner strength.

Ise Oluwa ko seni toye/2x
(the works of God cannot be understood)
Bi mo se se mi o mo

(I don't know how I do it)
I just dey stay on my grind everyday, I keep my eyes looking up
As you dey see e e e, I give the glory to God/2x

Fireboy paints a picture of a struggling youth walking an unknown path in life with God being his only companion. The imagery in his verses gives a vivid description of how the Almighty God is helping him, and how he wouldn't have been able to achieve anything without him. This creative approach updates traditional symbolic language to reflect the urban Nigerian experience.

Allusion, which is making indirect reference to something, is another shared literary feature in both genres, although its deployment varies. *Apala* artists allude to Yoruba proverbs, panegyrics, and Ifa verses, invoking a sense of ancestral authority and continuity. These allusions deepen the song's meaning for culturally literate audiences who can decode the references. In *Hip-Hop*, allusion shifts to popular culture, historical moments, and contemporary icons.

Versace Versace you rocking Versace, your
mommy is suffering oloshi, emi ti flourish awon
parents mi jeun to nourish (I have flourished, my
parents are eating healthy)
Omo anifowose, iru kileyi omo anifowose/2x
(the child of Anifowose, what kind of thing is this, the child of Anifowose)

Olamide, in *Omo Anifowose*, for instance, alludes to his upbringing in Bariga and references social struggles that resonate with a younger, urban demographic, insinuating that a young guy is wearing luxury brand of clothing while his parents are suffering, but him, the artist, takes good care of his parents, this grounds his song in lived reality, lending authenticity to artistic persona. This sheds light on irresponsibility where some certain people tend to neglect their parents as they grow and struggle in life. One notable allusion appears in the lines, *Versace Versace you rocking Versace, your mommy is suffering oloshi*. Here, Olamide indirectly references the social

irony of youth culture: wearing expensive designer brands like *Versace* while one's parents still live in hardship. The use of *Versace*, a symbol of global luxury, functions as an allusion to contemporary consumer culture, making a subtle critique of misplaced priorities among some youths who chase status but abandon their familial responsibilities.

The allusion continues with: *emi ti flourish, awon parents mi jeun to nourish* (I have flourished, my parents are eating healthy). This line contrasts Olamide's own choice to uplift his parents, alluding to his background, growing up in Bariga, a working-class area of Lagos, while subtly referencing the Yoruba value of filial piety. By referencing his roots through the repeated phrase *Omo Anifowose* (child of Anifowose), Olamide alludes to his own family name and upbringing, grounding his success story in cultural and personal authenticity. This contrasts with the type of allusion often seen in traditional *Apala* music, where artists allude to Yoruba proverbs, panegyrics, and Ifa verses, invoking ancestral wisdom. In Olamide's case, however, allusion shifts to urban realism and global symbols, making the song resonate with younger, contemporary audiences who may not be rooted in traditional knowledge systems but are familiar with both street culture and global consumer trends.

In essence, allusion in *Omo Anifowose* is used to bridge the personal with the social, the local with the global. It not only strengthens Olamide's artistic persona as a voice of the streets but also challenges societal values, encouraging a more responsible and grounded approach to success.

In Musiliu Haruna Ishola's *Ise Oluwa*, allusion plays a central role in anchoring the song within Yoruba spiritual, cultural, and moral frameworks. Allusion, as a literary device, involves indirect references to cultural, historical, or religious texts, and in this *Apala* track, it manifests

primarily through the invocation of Yoruba traditional wisdom and Islamic influence. The phrase *Ise Oluwa ko seni to ye* (The works of God cannot be understood), which opens and repeats throughout the song, is a direct allusion to a well-known Yoruba cosmological belief, and also resonates with Islamic theological ideas about the inscrutable nature of divine will. Musiliu Haruna Ishola repurposes this sacred phrase within a secular musical context, using it to affirm divine sovereignty and justify his success as God-ordained. This recontextualization reflects how *Apala* music often draws from religious and cultural sources to create layered meanings that resonate with spiritually literate listeners. Beyond the overt religious reference, the song also alludes to traditional Yoruba morality. When Musiliu sings: *L'olorun oba fi gbe wa ga* (That's why we have been uplifted), he indirectly references the Yoruba belief in divine based elevation and spiritual order of things. This resonates with Yoruba oral tradition, where artists often allude to ancestral blessings, destiny, and communal values in their praise-songs or philosophical commentary.

Additionally, in declaring himself *President awon alApala* (President of all *Apala* singers), Musiliu also makes an allusive statement about lineage and legitimacy. This can be interpreted as an indirect reference to his late father, Haruna Ishola, the iconic pioneer of *Apala* music. Thus, this self-title is not just boastful, it alludes to musical heritage, inheritance, and continuity, reinforcing his authority within the genre.

In summary, allusion in *Ise Oluwa* functions on multiple levels: it connects the personal to the spiritual, the secular to the sacred, and the contemporary to the ancestral. Musiliu Haruna Ishola uses allusion not only to enrich the lyrical texture of his music but also to affirm his moral position, spiritual worldview, and artistic inheritance, aligning with the core functions of traditional *Apala* music as both entertainment and cultural education.

Symbolism, which is a method of artistic imitation, functions profoundly in both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* tracks, encoding layered meanings in simple images. In Asake's *Sunshine*, the sun symbolises hope, clarity, and divine favor.

The sun's gon' shine on everything you do,
Ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah/2x
The sun's gon' shine on everything you do

The symbolic contrast between sunlight and shadows is used to frame psychological states such as depression during hard times and the healing that comes with breakthrough. Through this symbolism, Asake communicates a universal truth: no matter how long the night, daylight will eventually come. This draws from deep-rooted oral traditions where the elements of nature are used to reflect human experience and spiritual insight. Thus, the sun in *Sunshine* is more than weather imagery, it is a metaphorical embodiment of hope, resilience, and divine alignment. In conclusion, Asake's use of symbolism in *Sunshine* blends traditional African cosmology with contemporary Afrofusion, making the message accessible and spiritually resonant for modern audiences navigating daily struggles.

In Musiliu Haruna Ishola's *Ise Oluwa*, the enduring work of God becomes a symbol of spiritual immutability amid changing social conditions.

Ise Oluwa ko se ni to ye, ise Oluwa ju t'afa lo
(The works of God can't be analysed, it surpasses any Alfa)
Ise oluwa ko seni to ye see, ise Oluwa ju t'afa lo
(The works of God can't be understood, it surpasses any Alfa)
Lo lohun figbe wa ga/2x
(That's why God has uplifted us/2x)
Le fin binu, le fin pegan o
(That's why you're angry and bitter)

These symbolic devices reflect a shared cultural understanding of signs and their emotional connotations. They allow the songs to communicate on multiple levels, literal, emotional, and spiritual, thereby enhancing listener engagement.

Panegyrics which refers elaborate praise, are a foundational feature in Yoruba musical traditions like *Apala*, where artists celebrate divine power, moral virtues, and social status through poetic exaltation. In *Ise Oluwa*, Musiliu Haruna Ishola employs panegyrics extensively to praise God's supreme works, his own musical legacy, and the collective strength of the *Apala* community. From the outset, the song exalts divine mystery and greatness: *Ise Oluwa ko seni to ye* (The works of God cannot be understood) and *Ise Oluwa ju t'alfa lo* (The works of God surpass that of an Alfa). These lines are profound panegyrics praising God's unfathomable power, surpassing even learned religious leaders (Alfas). The praise here not only elevates God but also establishes the spiritual foundation upon which the artist's success rests, implying that human understanding is limited before divine grandeur.

Furthermore, Ishola sings: *L'olorun oba fi gbe wa ga* (That's why God has uplifted us). This line serves as a panegyric both to God and to the artist himself, suggesting divine favor has raised them to prominence. The notion of being "uplifted" by God is a traditional Yoruba motif praising both spiritual blessing and social elevation. Importantly, Musiliu Haruna Ishola also uses panegyric praise for himself and the *Apala* music tradition: *Musiliu Babatunde, President awon alApala* (Musiliu Babatunde, president of all *Apala* singers). This line is a self-praising declaration, typical in Yoruba praise poetry, where artists assert their status and leadership within their artistic community. It serves to legitimize his position as a custodian of the *Apala* legacy and commands respect from listeners and rivals alike.

Throughout *Ise Oluwa*, the panegyrics intertwine divine exaltation with personal and communal praise, reflecting a Yoruba worldview that links spiritual favor with earthly success. By doing so, Ishola situates his artistry within a continuum of cultural and spiritual authority, underscoring that his achievements are part of a divine plan. In summary, panegyrics in *Ise Oluwa* function to honor God's omnipotence, affirm the artist's elevated status, and celebrate the *Apala* tradition. The song becomes a multifaceted praise poem that educates, inspires, and asserts cultural identity through poetic exaltation.

The use of proverbs in *Apala* music is arguably one of its most defining literary characteristics. Proverbs condense communal wisdom into short, rhythmic statements, functioning as both aesthetic and pedagogical tools. In the selected tracks, proverbs are not only quoted but sometimes form the thematic spine of the song. *Hip-Hop* songs on the other hand, while using fewer proverbs directly, often remix them or reinterpret their meanings within modern contexts. This reinvention demonstrates the dynamic elasticity of Yoruba oral traditions as they meet global musical forms. The excerpt below is from Musiliu's *Ise Oluwa*:

Ise Oluwa ko se ni to ye, ise Oluwa ju t'afa lo
 (The works of God can't be analysed, it surpasses any Alfa)
 Ise oluwa ko seni to ye see, ise Oluwa ju t'afa lo
 (The works of God can't be understood, it surpasses any Alfa)
 Lo lohun figbe wa ga/2x
 (That's why God has uplifted us/2x)
 Le fin binu, le fin pegan o
 (That's why you're angry and bitter)

Though, *ise Oluwa ko seni to ye* is not a classical Yoruba grammar, it has a proverbial tone, which is widely used in religious and cultural context, functions like a proverb in modern usage, this line comes out at the most frequently used in Musiliu's '*Ise Oluwa*' track. It was repeated

from the beginning of the song to the end thereby foregrounding the message of the Supreme Being in existence, also the mystery of divine actions.

Proverbs, as concise and potent carriers of cultural wisdom, are a significant feature in Yoruba oral traditions and find a modern expression in Olamide's *Omo Anifowose*. While *HipHop* as a genre often employs direct language and street slang, Olamide creatively integrates proverbial expressions and their spirit to connect contemporary realities with ancestral wisdom.

In *Omo Anifowose*, the very title itself is an allusive nod to lineage and identity. The phrase *Omo Anifowose* (child of Anifowose) functions proverbially by invoking familial legacy and social reputation, themes deeply embedded in Yoruba proverbs that emphasise the importance of one's roots and upbringing. The line: *Versace Versace you rocking Versace, your mommy is suffering oloshi* embodies a proverbial warning against superficial wealth and neglect of family responsibilities, echoing traditional Yoruba proverbs. This line metaphorically critiques ostentation devoid of substance, encouraging moral uprightness over mere display of designers.

Further, the artist's affirmation: *Emi ti flourish, awon parents mi jeun to nourish* can be read as a modern proverb celebrating perseverance and filial piety, reflecting the Yoruba proverb: *Ile ti a ti wa, ki i je k'omo royin* (The home we come from shapes the child's future).

Here, Olamide praises the reciprocal relationship between success and care for one's parents, highlighting values central to Yoruba society.

Though Olamide's language is contemporary, the spirit of proverbs, concise, metaphorical, and didactic, is deeply embedded in his lyrics. This fusion allows *Omo Anifowose* to resonate with younger audiences while maintaining a connection to Yoruba cultural wisdom.

In summary, Olamide's *Omo Anifowose* skillfully reinterprets Yoruba proverbial wisdom, blending it with modern realities to address themes of identity, responsibility, and success, thus bridging traditional values and contemporary urban experience.

Rhythm plays a pivotal role in *Sunshine* by Asake, driving the song's energetic vibe while reinforcing its thematic message of hope, perseverance, and divine favor. The rhythmic patterns in the song combine repetitive lyrical structures and a pulsating beat to create a hypnotic flow that resonates both emotionally and physically with listeners. One of the most striking features of *Sunshine*'s rhythm is its use of repetitive choruses, particularly the line: *The sun's gon' shine on everything you do* which recurs multiple times throughout the track. This repetition establishes a steady, cyclical rhythm, functioning like a mantra or refrain that anchors the song. The phrase is rhythmically balanced with a simple, consistent syllabic count (8 syllables), which fits neatly into the beat's time signature and allows the listener to anticipate and internalise the message. This repetition is not only musical but also psychological, creating a comforting sense of predictability and reassurance. Additionally, the accompanying vocalizations: *Ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah ah* intensify the rhythmic texture. These syllabic vocal patterns act as rhythmic fillers that build momentum and contribute to the song's infectious groove. Their syncopated placement against the underlying beat adds a layer of rhythmic complexity while maintaining accessibility, encouraging listeners to engage physically by clapping or dancing along.

Asake's rhythm also reflects the influence of Afrobeat and street-hop, genres characterised by polyrhythms and syncopation. The beat behind *Sunshine* combines steady drum patterns with off-beat percussion accents, complementing the rhythmic flow of the lyrics. This synergy between instrumental rhythm and vocal phrasing makes the song highly danceable,

evoking communal energy typical of Yoruba musical traditions, where rhythm serves as both a social connector and a spiritual conduit. Moreover, the rhythmic emphasis on certain words like “sun,” “shine,” and “do” aligns with the upbeat tempo and melodic hooks, enhancing the song’s positive, uplifting atmosphere. The rhythm mirrors the thematic contrasts in the song between hardship (darkness) and hope (sunshine), with the persistent beat symbolising resilience and the repetitive chorus embodying the certainty of breakthrough.

In conclusion, rhythm in *Sunshine* is a foundational element that shapes the song’s emotional impact and cultural resonance. Through repetitive phrasing, syncopated vocalizations, and a lively instrumental pulse, Asake crafts a rhythmic landscape that embodies the spirit of hope, persistence, and divine blessing, making the song both a musical and motivational anthem.

Rhythm in *Ise Oluwa* by Musiliu Haruna Ishola is a vital feature that drives both the musicality and the communicative power of the song. As a classic *Apala* track, the rhythm is deeply rooted in traditional Yoruba musical aesthetics, characterised by intricate percussive patterns, syncopation, and call-and-response structures that engage listeners and convey layered meanings. A key rhythmic element in *Ise Oluwa* is the repetition and pacing of the opening refrain: *Ise Oluwa*

ko seni to ye (The works of God cannot be understood) repeated twice at the start of the song. This repetitive phrasing establishes a meditative, almost incantatory rhythm that aligns with Yoruba praise singing and oral poetry traditions. The measured delivery of the line, with its steady cadence and balanced syllabic structure, creates a hypnotic rhythm that invites reflection and communal participation. Following this, the complementary line: *ise Oluwa ju t’alfa lo* (The works of God surpasses that of an Alfa) introduces a rhythmic variation while

maintaining the core pulse, emphasizing divine supremacy over human knowledge. The alternating rhythm between these two phrases produces a rhythmic dialogue that mirrors the call-and-response dynamic prevalent in *Apala* performances.

Furthermore, the phrase: *Lo lohun fi gbe wa ga* (That's why God has uplifted us), repeated twice, is rhythmically charged with alliterative consonant sounds and balanced vowel sounds that enhance the percussive flow. The rhythmic emphasis on syllables here reinforces the message of elevation and triumph, while the musical beat, often provided by talking drums and shakers, interlocks tightly with the vocal rhythm, creating a polyrhythmic texture typical of *Apala* music. The line: *Le fi n binu, le fi n pegan* (That's why you're angry and bitter) introduces a shift in rhythm, featuring quicker delivery and a sharper, more staccato phrasing that reflects the bitterness and tension described in the lyrics. This rhythmic contrast heightens emotional intensity and engages the listener's attention.

With *Apala* music, rhythm is not merely a background element but an active participant in storytelling and meaning-making. Musiliu Haruna Ishola's rhythmic choices in *Ise Oluwa* reinforce the spiritual and social themes of the song, divine mystery, upliftment, and rivalry, while maintaining the genre's traditional rhythmic vitality. In conclusion, the rhythm in *Ise Oluwa* is foundational to its power as a cultural and musical expression. Through repetition, syncopation, and dynamic phrasing, Musiliu Haruna Ishola crafts a rhythm that resonates deeply with Yoruba musical heritage and spiritual sensibilities, making the song both captivating and meaningful.

Furthermore, narrative structure itself becomes a literary feature. *Apala* songs typically follow a storytelling arc that blends exposition, moral commentary, and conclusion. The

narratives are often cyclic, returning to the chorus or refrain to reinforce the moral point. *Hip-Hop* songs adopt a linear narrative structure, often progressing from problem to resolution. Story telling is an integral part of Yoruba culture and it is used to educate, correct, rebuke, inform, condemn and so on. This part of Yoruba culture is reflected in all aspects of their discourses, *Apala* music is not an exemption. There are instance of storytelling to drive home the point in the selected *Apala* songs. Ayinla Adegator employed the use of story- telling in his songs, each theme illustrated and presented in form of different stories

Mi o fe korin wewe mo
(I don't want my songs to make little impacts again)
S'e ngbalaye mi itan ni mo fe mi a so
(are you listening to the story I'm about to say)
E ma gbo *matter* ti mori
(listen to this matter that I saw)

This structural difference highlights not just genre distinctions but also differences in audience expectations and cultural rhythms.

Ultimately, the literary features identified across the selected songs reveal a rich continuum of cultural expression. *Apala* music anchors its literary devices in oral tradition, moral instruction, and spiritual reflection. Its literary strength lies in its performative roots and communal relevance. *Hip-Hop*, on the other hand, adapts these devices to urban life, modern struggles, and individual aspirations. While the tools are shared, metaphor, imagery, repetition, symbolism, proverbs, allusion, their application reflects differing orientations, one towards preservation, the other towards reinvention. Together, they illustrate the evolving face of Yoruba music as a literary form, rooted in tradition, alive in the present, and open to the future.

Research Question Two: What are the thematic focuses and cultural significance in the selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs?

The thematic focuses and cultural significance embedded within the selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs reveal a profound tapestry of Yoruba identity, societal commentary, intergenerational values, and the continuous negotiation of cultural heritage amidst modernity. These songs, though rooted in distinct musical eras and stylistic expressions, serve as vessels through which artists articulate experiences, beliefs, and social realities. A close thematic examination of the *Apala* songs, the enduring values of reverence, moral uprightness, and divine constancy. In contrast, the *Hip-Hop* tracks, demonstrate themes of urban struggle, ambition, personal growth, and cultural continuity within the context of contemporary Nigerian life. Thematically, these songs act as socio-cultural documents that reflect and shape listeners' worldviews, offering commentary on human behavior, community expectations, spiritual beliefs, and personal identity.

In the *Apala* tracks, thematic focuses tend to revolve around reverence for elders, moral guidance, and social conduct. For instance, Ayinla Adegator's *Iba Iya Mi* is thematically grounded in the Yoruba principle of honoring one's parents, especially mothers, whether biological or not, who are perceived as the gateway to earthly and spiritual success.

iyá mi Abeni Alasela, (my
mother, Abeni alasela) mo
fe gbe mi re lu owo
(taking me to a place of wealth)
Iyá mi Abeni Alesela, won fe gbe mi
(Abeni alasela, my mother, she is taking me) wo
fe gbe mi relu owo
(taking me to a place filled with money)

The song's lyrical praise of maternal sacrifice whether biological or not nurture and underlines the cultural emphasis on family bonds, gratitude, and the transfer of wisdom. 'Abeni Alasela' was been praised by the artist for taking him to a place filled with wealth. The reverence of motherhood in this track extends beyond individual experience to reflect communal values where respect for lineage and ancestry is a moral obligation. Similarly, Musiliu Haruna Ishola's *Ise Oluwa* on the other hand, explores the divine constancy of God's work, a theme that resonates with spiritual resignation, faith, and the cultural notion of "Ori" (destiny).

...lo'lohun oba fi gbe wa ga (its why
God has lifted us up) lo'lorun oba fi
gbe wa ga, le fin binu
(its why God has lifted us and you're angry and bitter about it)
le fin pegan ooo (and you're mocking)

Another

example:

Ise Oluwa ko seni to ye,
(the works of God cannot be undertood)
ise Oluwa ju t'afa lo...
(the works of God passes that of an Alfa)

The track thematically encourages patience and trust in divine will, reinforcing Yoruba cosmological perspectives. Yusuf Olatunji's *Iwa* indirectly channels the Yoruba adage "*Iwa l'ewa*" (Character is beauty), promoting ethical living as a foundation for societal harmony. The theme of good character is examined through proverbial wisdom and narrative exemplars, reflecting the communal value placed on behavior and reputation. Yusuf in his track frowns at a wife who goes to her husband's house without a good character,

oju ti iyawo ti o mu'wa re'le oko
(shame on the lady who gets married without good behaviour)
oju ti orogbo...
(shame on the bitter kola) oju
ti'yawo ti o mu wa re'le oko

(shame on the lady that gets married without good character)
oju t'orogbo, a paa, ko laawe
(shame on the bitter kola that is broken but can't divide)

Having a bad character here, is seen as a really big disappointment, likened to the differences between a bitter kola and kolanut, their insides been compared to each other. These themes are not merely aesthetic; they are pedagogical tools designed to instruct and reinforce cultural norms.

Conversely, the selected *Hip-Hop* tracks demonstrate a shift in thematic expression, even as they retain cultural elements. In Olamide's *Omo Anifowose*, a personal narrative of rising from poverty, emphasizing themes of resilience, street intelligence, and the pursuit of self-actualization.

Won ni kilode
(they ask me why, what is is) kí ló
ba dé, kí ló n wa n bi, ki lo fe
(what is it, what are you looking for here, what do you want)
They never thought I'll make it to the top, but that's not fair to
ri mommy wa o l'owo, to ri daddy wa o l'owo...
(just because my mother is poor, because my father is poor)

Through the urban and contemporary in setting, the song contains echoes of traditional Yoruba values such as respect for parents and the effects one's background can have on them. Olamide repeatedly acknowledges his roots in the track, showing how cultural identity coexists with urban aspiration. The track serves as an autobiographical account that mirrors the social realities of many

Nigerian youths who navigate socio-economic challenges with cultural consciousness. Fireboy's *Ise Oluwa* adopts a modern sonic and lyrical approach, yet retains a certain spiritual gravity.

Mama say make I listen to Jah, make I no reason too far...
Life has been good to me, I do not take this with levity nothing
is new to me, but low key I'm grateful for everything
The good, and the bad and the ugly, all of the joy and the suffering...
Ise Oluwa ko se ni to ye, bi mo se se mi o mo
(no one can understand the works of God, I don't operate on my own)

I just dey stay on my grind everyday, I give the glory to God, as
you dey see e e I give the glory to God/2x

Here, the theme of divine purpose and unwavering destiny is reimagined through a youthful lens, demonstrating the continuity of spiritual themes across musical genres. Depicting how gratitude to God with hardwork relentlessly is the key to living a fulfilled life. The cultural significance lies in the song's ability to bridge generational audiences through a shared motif.

Asake's *Sunshine*, thematically centers on hope, perseverance, and triumph over adversity.

O fe lowo bi Dangote, o ni lati jagun
(you want to be wealthy like Dangote, you need to fight)
igbadun aye por leyin eponju
(there is so much joy and enjoyment after suffering)
maberu roju
(don't be afraid and persevere)
Sun's gon shine on everything you do

The track uses metaphor and uplifting language to portray emotional resilience, aligning with traditional themes of self-belief and destiny while resonating with contemporary listeners' lived experiences.

Sun's gon shine on everything you do
Omo lo wun ole waku (waku)
(the child said 'I can't come and die')
Aku ti gbe banku (banku, banku, banku)
(we are already high on banku(drugs))
No dey form say you jaju
(don't act like you know it all)
Try to dey calcu (calcu)
(always try to calculate your steps)
Highly Celestial handles my situation
All my pain and my troubles
Steady lighting my candles
Chop knuckle if you are part of the struggle, no wam
Sun's gon' shine on everything you do

The cultural significance of this track is located in its ability to offer psychological affirmation and emotional encouragement within the fast-paced modern lifestyle. Depicting the theme of endurance and perseverance in times of struggles, because a time is coming when sun would shine through those dark clouds.

The comparative thematic analysis reveals that while *Apala* music is thematically full of communal values, moral instruction, and spiritual orientation, *Hip-Hop* tracks exhibit themes of individualism, personal struggle, and redefined cultural expressions. However, the differences are not oppositional; rather, they reflect adaptive transformations within a shared cultural matrix. *Apala* songs are structured around collective experiences, often using allegories, panegyrics, proverbs, and chants to impart cultural knowledge. The thematic focus is communal, often addressing the listener as part of a larger whole. In contrast, *Hip-Hop* songs are more introspective and individualistic, emphasizing personal journeys, emotions, and urban life challenges. Yet, beneath this individualism lies a strong undercurrent of cultural pride and ethnic identity. Artists in the *Hip-Hop* genre often reference their Yoruba roots through language choice, invocation of traditional motifs, and adaptation of folkloric expressions, suggesting a deliberate attempt to maintain cultural continuity amidst innovation.

The cultural significance of both genres is evident in their social functions. *Apala* music historically served ritualistic and communal purposes, they are performed at naming ceremonies, traditional festivals, and gatherings. Ayinla Adegator's *Iba iyá mi* and Yusuf Olatunji's *Iwa*, two out of the three *Apala* tracks used were recorded live, which means they performed at shows and gatherings. It transmitted values from one generation to another and maintained societal cohesion. The music was a medium of education, entertainment, and spiritual reflection. Today, its cultural relevance persists through sampled rhythms, lyrical borrowings, and thematic homages in

contemporary music. *Hip-Hop*, though urban and global in origin, has become a vehicle for rearticulating Yoruba identity in modern contexts. Through their music, artists assert cultural pride, challenge social injustice, and navigate identity in a globalised world. The thematic richness of *Hip-Hop* allows for a hybridized cultural performance where indigenous values coalesce with modern sensibilities. Songs become instruments for both self-expression and cultural negotiation, reflecting the complexities of contemporary African life.

Furthermore, the emotional and spiritual tone of the selected tracks reflects thematic convergence. Songs like *Ise Oluwa* in both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* renditions carry emotional gravitas that transcends genre.

Ise Oluwa ko se ni to ye, ise Oluwa ju t'afa lo
(the works of God cannot be understood, it passes any Alfa's) lo'lohun
oba fi gbe wa ga/2x - *Ise Oluwa* (Haruna Ishola's *Apala*)

Ise Oluwa ko se ni to ye, bi mo se se mi o mo
(the works of God can't be understood, I don't know how I do it)
As you dey see e e I give the glory to God/2x – *Ise Oluwa* (Fireboy
DML's *Hip-Hop*)

They function as therapeutic expressions of hope and existential reassurance, knowing one can be as confused as anything but God will still keep you moving. Whether sung with the deep percussions of *Apala* or the airy synths of Afrobeats-infused *Hip-Hop*, the theme remains universally resonant: the divine will prevail and is always with us every step of the way. The cultural significance here lies in the preservation of metaphysical thought within Yoruba music, irrespective of stylistic evolution. This suggests that Yoruba music, while evolving, retains its philosophical grounding. The artists become custodians of belief systems, using music to perpetuate ontological truths embedded in Yoruba thought.

Gendered themes also surface subtly in the thematic compositions. *Apala* music, traditionally performed by male artists, often reflects patriarchal values. However, in Ayinla Adegator's *Iba Iya Mi*, the exaltation of motherhood highlights the nuanced gender dynamics in traditional Yoruba society, where women, though often peripheral in public musical performance, are central thematic subjects. In *Hip-Hop*, gender themes are more fluid, with artists increasingly acknowledging the strength and struggles of women, as well as the ills that is concerning them too, reflecting shifting societal values. However, the focus in the selected songs remains largely on male experiences, suggesting a thematic gap that mirrors real-world gender discourse within Yoruba society and popular culture.

Moreover, the theme of cultural preservation itself becomes a meta-theme. The deliberate inclusion of Yoruba proverbs, chants, and linguistic cadences in *Hip-Hop* signals an intentional cultural retrieval. Artists like Olamide and Fireboy are not merely entertaining; they are archivists and innovators who adapt ancestral themes to contemporary frameworks. This self-referential awareness of culture as both content and context is culturally significant. It signals that the Yoruba identity is not static but a living, breathing entity that adapts to time and space. Thematic content becomes a means of inscribing this dynamic identity into public consciousness.

In summary, the thematic focuses and cultural significances in the selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs reveal the richness and resilience of Yoruba music as a cultural form. While *Apala* emphasises communal values, moral instruction, and spiritual reflection, *Hip-Hop* explores individual struggle, ambition, and contemporary identity within a culturally rooted framework. The songs function as both mirrors and molders of society, using thematic depth to educate, critique, affirm, and inspire. The cultural significance of these themes lies in their capacity to articulate the Yoruba worldview, adapt it to modern realities, and preserve it for

future generations. Through thematic expression, these musical forms continue to serve as cultural touchstones, bearing witness to the complexities, continuities, and transformations of Yoruba life in both traditional and contemporary forms.

Research Question Three: What are the features of similarities and differences used by the artists in depicting African cultural beliefs?

The selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs, while drawn from different musical genres and temporal contexts, share both similarities and differences in their depiction of African cultural beliefs. Despite the stylistic divergences between traditional Yoruba *Apala* music and modern Nigerian *Hip-Hop*, both genres serve as cultural vehicles that communicate and perpetuate African values, especially those rooted in Yoruba traditions. The artists in both genres employ various literary techniques, thematic content, and cultural references to create songs that resonate with their audiences. A careful examination of the similarities and differences in these musical expressions reveals how African cultural beliefs are maintained, adapted, and reinterpreted in the face of modernity.

Similarities in Depiction of African Cultural Beliefs

One of the primary similarities between the *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs lies in their shared thematic focus on the values and beliefs of the Yoruba people. Despite the differences in sound, instrumentation, and performance, both genres reflect deeply rooted Yoruba cultural ideologies such as respect for elders, reverence for spirituality, the importance of character *Iwa*, and the acknowledgment of divine influence in daily life. In this regard, the music serves as an important cultural tool for preserving and transmitting these values to younger generations.

For instance, both Ayinla Adegator's *Iba Iya Mi* and Olamide's *Omo Anifowose* emphasise themes of respect for one's heritage, family, and ancestors. Adegator's song is an expression of reverence for mothers, who are considered central figures in Yoruba cosmology. 'Mo da gbere ni le, 'gbere fa'won iyá mi, Iyá mi oninu re'. The lyricism in this *Apala* track communicates the Yoruba belief in the nurturing power of mothers, portraying them as the foundation of both the spiritual and physical realms.

Similarly, Olamide's *Omo Anifowose*, while rooted in a contemporary urban context, reflects a deep respect for parental figures and the ancestral connections that inform the artist's identity.

mummy t'aso e ati bata e fun paro
 (mummy gave up her clothes and shoes in exchange)
 daddy ta'so e ati bata e fun paro
 (daddy gave up his clothes and shoes for exchange)
 to put food on the table, salary daddy o wa stable...
 (to put food on the table, because daddy's salary wasn't stable)
 emi lavish, awon parent mi jeun to nourish (I am now rich, my
 parents eat nourishing food)
 oh my God I love this...

The song acknowledges the struggles and triumphs of the artist's family and the joy that comes with him being able to take care of them at a point in life, echoing the Yoruba concept of responsibility to parents and ancestral pride. Both songs, though stylistically different, serve the purpose of reinforcing respect for one's roots, underlining the significance of family bonds and cultural continuity.

Another shared thematic element is the portrayal of divine agency and spirituality. In Yoruba culture, the belief in Olodumare (the supreme God) and the forces of destiny is central to daily life and understanding one's place in the world. Both *Ise Oluwa* by Musiliu Haruna Ishola

and *Ise Oluwa* by Fireboy emphasise divine intervention and the influence of fate in shaping individual and communal existence. Ishola's traditional *Apala* rendition presents God as the ultimate controller of destiny, urging the listener to recognise and surrender to divine will.

Ise Oluwa ko seni toyé
(the works of God can't be understood)
Ise Oluwa ju t'afa lo
(his works surpasses any alfa's work)

Fireboy's modern *Hip-Hop* version, although performed in a more secular tone, retains the same message of spiritual surrender and trust in God's plan, reflecting the continuity of spiritual beliefs within contemporary music. '... *I keep my eyes looking up, as you see e e I give the glory to God/2x*'. Through their lyrics, both artists convey the Yoruba belief in divine omnipotence and human dependence on a higher power.

Similarly, the theme of good character (*Iwa*) is a common thread in both *Apala* and *HipHop* genres. The value placed on character and integrity is central to Yoruba philosophy, and songs that focus on this theme serve as moral teachings for the listener. In *Iwa* by Yusuf Olatunji, the artist emphasises the importance of maintaining a good character, using proverbial wisdom and Yoruba proverbs to impart the cultural belief that one's behavior is a reflection of their inner essence. In a parallel fashion, *Hip-Hop* songs such as *Sunshine* by Asake also explore themes of personal growth, ethical behavior, and self-improvement, albeit in a more individualistic context. While Olatunji's song places emphasis on communal behavior and the societal repercussions of one's actions, Asake's track speaks more to personal resilience and the inner strength required to navigate the challenges of life. Nevertheless, both songs highlight the enduring cultural belief that one's character is integral to their identity and success, whether in a traditional or modern setting.

Differences in Depiction of African Cultural Beliefs

While there are clear similarities in how both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs depict African cultural beliefs, significant differences emerge in how these beliefs are articulated and adapted to their respective musical contexts. These differences stem from the socio-cultural environments in which the songs are created and the differing purposes the genres serve in their respective periods.

A notable difference lies in the way the two genres engage with the concept of modernity. *Apala* music, being a traditional genre, largely reflects and reinforces established cultural norms, its audience are known as elite, not just everyone understands the concept of *Apala*. Its primary function is to preserve and promote Yoruba traditions, using musical conventions, storytelling, and oral poetry to reinforce the cultural values that have long defined the Yoruba worldview. The songs are deeply embedded in the communal life of the Yoruba people, and their primary role is to educate, entertain, and guide the community in line with traditional norms. For example, in Yusuf Olatunji's *Iwa*, the artist emphasises the importance of ethical behavior, responsibility, and communal living, all of which align with the core values of Yoruba society. The *Apala* genre, therefore, is more focused on transmitting cultural beliefs in their most orthodox form, without significant alteration or adaptation to modern sensibilities.

In contrast, Afro *Hip-Hop* music, though often rooted in African traditions, is a genre that has emerged in a modern, urban, and globalised context. This genre is more reflective of contemporary life, grappling with issues of identity, social mobility, and personal empowerment within the framework of a rapidly changing world, it is widely known as music for the street.

While *Hip-Hop* retains many elements of Yoruba culture, such as the use of indigenous language, folklore, and proverbs, it also incorporates elements from global pop culture, urban experiences, and modern-day struggles. In Olamide's *Omo Anifowose*, for example, the artist reflects on his personal journey, blending traditional Yoruba themes of family and ancestry with themes of urban survival, economic success, and personal ambition. The track speaks to the desire for social mobility, a characteristic of modern urban life, and it is less concerned with preserving traditional values than with redefining them in a modern context. This reflects a shift in how cultural beliefs are depicted: while traditional *Apala* songs focus on maintaining established norms, *Hip-Hop* songs often engage with those norms in a more flexible, evolving manner, questioning, adapting, and sometimes even challenging the status quo.

Another difference is evident in the approach to gender and social roles. Traditional *Apala* music, while deeply reflective of Yoruba societal norms, often adheres to a patriarchal structure in its representation of gender roles. In Ayinla Adegator's *Iba Iya Mi*, women are primarily celebrated for their roles as mothers and nurturers, emphasizing the importance of their contributions to family and society. Although women are revered in these songs, their roles are largely confined to the domestic sphere, reflecting traditional gender expectations. Conversely, contemporary *HipHop* music, while still influenced by patriarchal norms, often portrays a more complex and nuanced understanding of gender. For example, in Asake's *Sunshine*, the artist speaks to universal themes of struggle and resilience, which are not gender-specific. While the track may still predominantly reflect male experiences, it subtly acknowledges the growing visibility of women in public spaces and the evolving roles they play in society. *Hip-Hop*, as a more globalised and progressive genre, tends to incorporate more diverse gender perspectives, even though the influence of traditional values remains strong.

The use of language in both genres also highlights differences in cultural adaptation. *Apala* songs are often sung in Yoruba, utilising the full richness of the Yoruba language to convey cultural and spiritual messages. The language itself is a vehicle for expressing African cultural beliefs, as it carries specific meanings, nuances, and proverbs that are deeply embedded in Yoruba thought. In contrast, *Hip-Hop* songs frequently blend Yoruba with English, Pidgin, and other languages, reflecting the multicultural and globalised nature of contemporary Nigerian society. This linguistic hybridity allows *Hip-Hop* artists to reach a broader audience while still retaining elements of their cultural identity. For example, Olamide's use of Yoruba in *Omo Anifowose* juxtaposed with English and Pidgin reflects the globalizing influences on contemporary Nigerian youth culture. This linguistic code-switching is a key feature of modern Nigerian *Hip-Hop*, indicating a cultural negotiation between tradition and modernity.

In summary, the similarities and differences between the selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs in terms of their depiction of African cultural beliefs reveal a fascinating interplay between continuity and change within Yoruba cultural expression. Both genres share a commitment to preserving and promoting Yoruba values, such as respect for elders, the importance of family, the belief in divine intervention, and the centrality of good character. However, the way these beliefs are articulated differs significantly. *Apala* music, grounded in tradition, emphasises the transmission of cultural norms, while *Hip-Hop* music, reflective of modern urban realities, adapts and reinterprets these beliefs in ways that speak to contemporary audiences. Despite the differences in style, purpose, and context, both genres serve as powerful vehicles for preserving, reimagining, and communicating African cultural beliefs, ensuring that these values continue to resonate across generations.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the analysis of the selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs offer a rich insight into the literary and cultural dimensions of Yoruba traditional and contemporary musical forms. This section discusses the findings in alignment with the research questions, drawing connections between the observed literary features, thematic directions, cultural significances, and the similarities and differences that underline each genre's artistic representation of African beliefs.

In relation to the first research question on the literary features in the selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs, it is evident that both genres rely heavily on a rich spectrum of literary devices to communicate meaning, evoke emotion, and maintain audience engagement. *Apala* music, deeply rooted in Yoruba oral tradition, makes extensive use of proverbs, repetition, metaphor, symbolism, and allusion. For instance, tracks like Yusuf Olatunji's *Iwa* and Ayinla Adegator's *Iba Iya Mi* encapsulate traditional wisdom and moral teachings, expressed through metaphor-laden verses and proverbial language. These literary elements function not only as aesthetic tools but also as conveyors of ethical standards, communal values, and spiritual consciousness, all central to Yoruba cultural worldview.

On the other hand, the *Hip-Hop* tracks analysed such as Olamide's *Omo Anifowose* and Asake's *Sunshine* demonstrate a modern adaptation of these literary traditions. While employing similar devices like metaphor, personification, and alliteration, the context and presentation differ significantly. *Hip-Hop*, as used in these songs, channels personal experience, urban realities, and sociopolitical commentary. The presence of indigenous expressions, code-switching between Yoruba and English, and the use of street slangs represent a deliberate literary strategy to situate

the music within a contemporary cultural space while still drawing from traditional narrative forms. Hence, while the literary techniques may overlap in form, their usage aligns differently with each genre's contextual goals, *Apala* leans toward preservation of heritage, whereas *Hip-Hop* promotes a fusion of heritage with modern identity.

In addressing the second research question on thematic focus and cultural significance, it is clear that both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* serve as cultural texts reflecting Yoruba life experiences, philosophies, and transformations. *Apala* music themes gravitate around respect for elders, morality, religious devotion, communal responsibility, and ancestral reverence. Musiliu Haruna Ishola's *Ise Oluwa* praises the divine work of creation, invoking themes of gratitude and spiritual submission, with cultural references to Yoruba cosmology. Such songs are significant not just musically but as carriers of Yoruba epistemology, passed down orally from one generation to another.

Conversely, the *Hip-Hop* tracks reveal themes shaped by urban experience, modern struggles, aspiration, identity assertion, and resistance against societal odds. In *Omo Anifowose*, Olamide constructs a narrative of perseverance and transformation, drawing from his grassroots background to inspire ambition and self-belief. Asake's *Sunshine* employs vivid imagery and poetic allusions to discuss mental resilience and the hope for better days, with the use of Yoruba incantations subtly emphasizing cultural rootedness. These themes resonate with the present-day youth, reflecting changing societal norms, yet maintaining cultural pride and awareness. Hence, while *Apala* celebrates and preserves traditional values, *Hip-Hop* negotiates contemporary relevance within the framework of cultural memory and linguistic identity.

The third research question explores the similarities and differences in how the selected artists depict African cultural beliefs. It is evident that both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* artists serve as cultural mediators, retelling, reframing, and reinterpreting Yoruba beliefs through their artistic expressions. A key similarity lies in the intentional use of the Yoruba language, folklore references, and allusions to traditional rituals or values. Both genres reflect a deep engagement with the Yoruba worldview, whether it is through chants, prayer motifs, or proverbial expressions. This shared use of linguistic and symbolic elements underlines the continuity of cultural transmission through music.

However, stark differences exist in delivery style, structural composition, and audience orientation. *Apala* music, performed with traditional percussion instruments, often adopts a didactic and solemn tone, targeting an audience that values ancestral heritage and oral poetry. The structure of *Apala* songs is less constrained by modern rhythm schemes, allowing for flexible storytelling and lyrical depth. In contrast, *Hip-Hop* adopts a more upbeat, digitally produced sound, shaped by global music trends. The language, while still rich, is more fluid, mixing English, Yoruba, and pidgin to appeal to a wider, younger demographic. The messaging in *Hip-Hop* is often more personal and individualistic, yet it retains communal undertones through shared cultural symbols.

In summary, the discussion of findings reveals that Yoruba *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs, though generationally and stylistically distinct, intersect meaningfully in their literary and cultural intentions. *Apala* maintains traditional forms, echoing the collective voice of ancestral wisdom, while *Hip-Hop* reimagines those traditions within contemporary realities, creating a hybrid form that speaks to the evolving Yoruba identity. Both genres, through their distinct literary features and thematic concerns, contribute significantly to the preservation and

reinvention of Yoruba culture in the musical space. This validates the study's central thesis that the literary features embedded in both traditional and contemporary music serve as dynamic instruments of cultural expression and continuity.

The comparative exploration of literary features in selected traditional *Apala* and contemporary *Hip-Hop* songs reveals a compelling narrative of cultural resilience, transformation, and creative expression. The study affirms that both genres, though differing in musical form, audience appeal, and performance context, serve as vessels for deep literary engagement and cultural documentation. *Apala* music, characterised by its rootedness in Yoruba oral tradition, employs proverbs, symbolism, allusion, and metaphor to reinforce communal values and ancestral wisdom. These literary devices are intricately woven into themes of morality, respect, spirituality, and social order, making *Apala* not just a musical form, but a cultural archive.

In contrast, contemporary *Hip-Hop* music, while drawing inspiration from traditional elements, reinterprets them through modern linguistic patterns, digital instrumentation, and urban storytelling. The genre encapsulates the dynamism of youth culture and the evolving identity of the Yoruba people in a globalised world. Its literary texture is equally rich, featuring complex rhyme schemes, intertextual allusions, and imagery that reflects contemporary struggles, aspirations, and resistance to societal constraints. The interplay of Yoruba, English, and street slang in *Hip-Hop* mirrors the fusion of the traditional and the modern, the sacred and the secular, in present-day African experiences.

Ultimately, the conclusion of this analysis underscores the enduring role of music as a literary and cultural medium. *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* are not just genres for entertainment; they are creative canvases where language, rhythm, and cultural symbols converge to articulate both inherited and emerging realities. The findings demonstrate that while *Apala* preserves the essence

of Yoruba literary tradition, *Hip-Hop* adapts and reimagines it for newer generations, ensuring its continuity in a rapidly changing cultural landscape. This evolving relationship between tradition and modernity confirms the thesis that Yoruba music, whether traditional or contemporary, remains a fertile ground for literary craftsmanship and cultural expression.

End Notes

1. A. Adegator, *Iba Iya mi*. **Sharazeem Records (SHLP 006)**, 2021
2. H. Musiliu Ishola, *Ise Oluwa*. **Express Record Dealers Association**, 2000
3. Y. Olatunji, *Iwa*. **NPC Records Audioworks**, 2021
4. O. Ahmed, (Asake) *Sunshine*. **YBNL Nation Record Label**, 2023.
5. O. Adedeji, (Olamide) *Omo Anifowose*. **YBNL Nation Record Label**, 2013
6. O. Adedamola (Fireboy), *Ise Oluwa*. **YBNL Nation Record Label**, 2024
7. Spotify Music App
8. Audiomack Music App
9. Shazam Lyrics App

Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings

The comparative analysis of the selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs has revealed insightful dimensions of literary artistry embedded within Yoruba music, both in its traditional and contemporary forms. The first major finding centers on the richness and variety of literary features utilised across both genres. Devices such as metaphor, allusion, repetition, personification, and symbolism appeared prominently in all six tracks analysed, albeit with varying degrees of emphasis and stylistic application. In *Apala* music, these features often reflect proverbs, oral traditions, religious motifs, and communal philosophies, affirming the genre's deep ties to Yoruba indigenous epistemology and aesthetic values. *Hip-Hop* tracks, while more urban and globally influenced in language and rhythm, similarly demonstrate profound literary

depth, showcasing creative wordplay, allegory, and social commentary through poetic expressions.

Secondly, the study found clear thematic distinctions and overlaps between the genres. *Apala* songs predominantly dwell on themes of moral uprightness, divine providence, the dignity of labor, and respect for elders and cultural heritage. These themes are delivered through a tone of wisdom and ancestral authority, often couched in traditional Yoruba expressions and tonal emphasis. Conversely, *Hip-Hop* songs explore a broader spectrum of themes including social inequality, identity assertion, youth empowerment, economic hardship, and spiritual reflection. Despite this generational divergence, both genres maintain cultural significance by echoing collective experiences and shared values in distinctly relatable ways.

Furthermore, the analysis uncovered notable similarities and differences in how each genre portrays African cultural beliefs. *Apala* music maintains a conservative approach, preserving traditional storytelling structures, idioms, and ceremonial functions. *Hip-Hop*, though more experimental and linguistically hybridized, still draws heavily on Yoruba expressions, cultural references, and moral ideologies, albeit recontextualised for modern sensibilities. This suggests a continuity of cultural heritage even amidst stylistic evolution. The integration of traditional motifs in contemporary tracks reflects the artists' awareness of their roots, while simultaneously asserting creative autonomy and innovation.

The findings confirm that literary expression in Yoruba music is not genre-specific but culturally inherent, manifesting across both traditional and modern platforms. While the linguistic tools and thematic emphases may differ, both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* serve as vibrant canvases for the articulation of Yoruba identity, values, and experiences. The study thus

highlights music as a dynamic site of literary activity, where the boundaries between tradition and modernity are constantly negotiated through language, rhythm, and cultural consciousness.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has examined the literary features present in selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs with a view to understanding how these musical forms serve as vehicles for cultural expression and creative literary articulation in Yoruba music. The findings reveal that both traditional and contemporary genres, though distinct in sound, audience, and delivery, share a deep literary and cultural commitment. *Apala* music, rooted in Yoruba oral traditions, exhibits a wealth of proverbs, symbolic narratives, and moral themes that uphold communal values and ancestral knowledge.

These songs function as more than musical entertainment, they act as cultural documents that sustain indigenous worldviews and societal norms.

In contrast, *Hip-Hop* songs reinterpret these literary traditions in ways that resonate with modern urban realities. While adopting a more dynamic, globalised musical form, contemporary Yoruba *Hip-Hop* still retains a strong cultural foundation. Artists in this genre embed local idioms, linguistic creativity, and social commentary into their lyrics, thus maintaining a dialogue with their heritage while speaking to present-day issues. The presence of similar literary elements such as metaphor, allusion, and repetition across both genres underscores the continuity of literary practice despite changes in form and function.

The comparative findings demonstrate that Yoruba music, whether in its traditional *Apala* form or its modern *Hip-Hop* adaptation, remains a potent medium for the transmission of cultural

values, historical consciousness, and artistic identity. The fusion of literary elements with musical performance highlights the flexibility and resilience of Yoruba cultural expression in adapting to changing times. Importantly, the research shows that these musical genres are not merely stylistic categories but serve as cultural texts through which artists express ideology, contest social realities, and assert creative individuality.

Overall, the study concludes that literary features in Yoruba music are integral to its cultural significance, and the evolution from *Apala* to *Hip-Hop* is not a break from tradition but a reimagining of it. This continuity, despite stylistic differences, affirms that Yoruba musical artists remain custodians of literary tradition, ensuring its relevance across generations and musical landscapes.

5.3 Recommendations

1. Incorporation of Indigenous Music into Literary Studies

Given the depth of literary features observed in both traditional *Apala* and contemporary *Hip-Hop* songs, it is recommended that these musical forms be included more deliberately in academic curricula for literary and cultural studies. Music should not be sidelined as mere performance art but appreciated as a reservoir of metaphor, symbolism, and other rhetorical devices that are foundational to African literature and oral tradition. This will help broaden the scope of literary scholarship and encourage a deeper appreciation of indigenous creative expression.

2. Encouragement of Cultural Continuity in Contemporary Music

Contemporary artists, especially those in the *Hip-Hop* genre, should be encouraged to continue integrating Yoruba linguistic forms, proverbs, and cultural symbols in their music. While innovation and modern influences are inevitable, intentional preservation of traditional literary elements will help maintain cultural identity. This ensures that the bridge between ancestral wisdom and modern creativity is not lost, and that the younger generation remains connected to their heritage through relatable musical content.

3. Support for Documentation and Archiving of Indigenous Musical Content

Stakeholders in the cultural and educational sectors should invest in the systematic documentation and archiving of indigenous music, especially those with rich literary content like *Apala*. Many traditional songs risk being lost due to the oral nature of their transmission. Archiving these works along with contemporary adaptations will preserve not only musical heritage but also the literary and philosophical insights embedded within them, making them accessible to future scholars, artists, and cultural historians.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study makes substantial contributions to the growing body of knowledge at the intersection of literature, music, and African cultural expression. By engaging in a comparative analysis of selected Yoruba *Apala* and contemporary *Hip-Hop* songs, the research establishes a critical foundation for appreciating African music not only as a performative or entertainment-driven genre but as a deeply literary and culturally encoded form. This

understanding is particularly valuable within literary scholarship, where the boundary between written text and oral performance often limits the scope of study. By identifying and evaluating key literary devices such as metaphor, allusion, repetition, and symbolism across both traditional and modern musical forms, the research extends literary inquiry into the realm of musical artistry, thus broadening the conceptual framework of African literature to include performative texts.

Another critical contribution lies in the demonstration of cultural continuity and transformation. The study reveals that while the modes of musical expression may have shifted from the acoustic and indigenous performance style of *Apala* to the digitized and globally influenced form of *Hip-Hop*, the core literary elements and cultural themes have remained consistent. This finding offers evidence of how Yoruba musicians, past and present, have acted as custodians of tradition while creatively adapting to new environments and technologies. The presence of traditional motifs in contemporary *Hip-Hop* lyrics challenges the misconception that globalization erodes indigenous values. Instead, the study shows that artists actively reinterpret and preserve their heritage through new forms, suggesting that tradition and modernity can coexist in a mutually enriching relationship.

The work also introduces a practical and replicable methodological approach for analysing music through a literary lens. Through its use of a literary feature checklist and interpretive commentary rooted in cultural context, the study develops a structured model for examining the aesthetic and thematic depths of musical texts. This methodological innovation can be applied in other regions and linguistic contexts where oral and musical forms dominate cultural expression. As such, the study invites further scholarly exploration across different African languages, musical styles, and cultural narratives, making it a foundational reference for interdisciplinary studies in African literary criticism, musicology, sociolinguistics, and cultural anthropology.

Moreover, the research makes an original contribution by highlighting the sociopolitical dimensions embedded in Yoruba music. Both *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* artists use metaphorical language and narrative frameworks to address issues such as morality, social inequality, hard work, identity, and cultural pride. In doing so, they not only entertain but also educate and critique. This underscores the vital role of musicians as social commentators and the function of music as a mirror of collective consciousness. The study brings these insights into the academic arena, allowing music to be recognised not only for its rhythm and beat but also for its philosophical, pedagogical, and ethical value.

In summary, this research contributes to knowledge by redefining what constitutes a literary text, demonstrating the enduring presence of cultural narratives in modern creativity, and advocating for the scholarly inclusion of music in the study of African literature. It elevates Yoruba music as a legitimate and valuable source of literary expression and cultural history. The findings ultimately challenge scholars to think beyond traditional literary genres and to embrace a more inclusive and dynamic understanding of how literature functions within African societies.

5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Research

While this study has explored the literary features of selected *Apala* and *Hip-Hop* songs within the Yoruba cultural context, it has also opened up several avenues for future inquiry. One important area for further research is the inclusion of a broader spectrum of musical genres within the Yoruba tradition and beyond. For instance, genres such as *Fuji*, *Juju*, *Afrobeat*, and *Gospel* contain rich literary and cultural materials that deserve academic attention. Future studies

can expand the comparative framework to include these other forms, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of how Yoruba oral aesthetics manifest across musical traditions.

Another potential area lies in the use of multilingual or hybrid linguistic elements in contemporary music. While this study focused primarily on Yoruba and its integration into modern *Hip-Hop*, further research can investigate how artists blend Yoruba with English, Nigerian Pidgin, and other local languages. This would not only provide insight into linguistic creativity but also reveal how language use in music reflects identity negotiation and socio-political dynamics in multicultural settings. Such work can help uncover the linguistic strategies through which artists connect with diverse audiences while maintaining cultural specificity.

Additionally, future researchers might consider examining audience perception and reception of literary features in music. Whereas this study relied primarily on interpretive textual analysis of song lyrics, subsequent investigations could adopt ethnographic or sociological methods to explore how listeners interpret and respond to the literary content of songs. This would provide a user-centered perspective on how musical messages are decoded, appreciated, or contested within different social groups, thereby linking literary analysis with media studies and popular culture.

There is also scope for studying the gendered dimensions of literary expression in music. This current research does not focus specifically on the representation of gender or the roles of male and female artists in the literary articulation of cultural values. Future studies could compare the lyrical styles, themes, and cultural symbolism employed by male and female Yoruba musicians, shedding light on how gender influences literary production in the musical space.

This could contribute meaningfully to feminist literary criticism and gender studies within African cultural contexts.

Finally, digital media and technological influence on music composition, performance, and dissemination present another rich field of exploration. Future research could analyze how advancements in music production technologies and online platforms affect the literary quality and cultural framing of Yoruba music. Investigations into how digital tools shape the poetic structure, rhythm, and accessibility of musical texts could help bridge the gap between traditional oral performance and digital-era creativity.

These suggested areas of further research reflect the dynamic and interdisciplinary nature of studying African music as literature. They provide opportunities to deepen and diversify academic inquiry, ensuring that African artistic expressions are analysed in ways that honor their complexity, richness, and evolving forms.

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3. Higher Educational Institutions Attended with Dates & Qualification

Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, 2014-2018, B.A (English and Literary Studies).

Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, M.A English and Literary Studies (Literature Emphasis)
In view.

C. Awards and Fellowships: Nil

D. 1. Work Experience: With Dates:

- a) Editor at Lead City University Press, Lead City University, Ibadan - 2022 till date
- b) Content Writer, Difm.tech. Online Internship- 2023
- c) Customer Relations Officer at LightFlames Digital Solutions, Oluyole, Ibadan -2021- 2022
- d) Commercial Officer at Marketing Department, Ministry of Lands, Survey and Urban Development, Secretariat, Ibadan, Oyo State (Contract Staff) -2020

- e) Subject Teacher at Government Girls' Secondary School, Minna, Niger State (NYSC) 2019
- f) ADHOC Staff of Independent National Electoral Commission -2019

E. Membership of Academic Professional Bodies

Institute of Personality Development and Customer Relationship Management (Graduate Member)

F. Publications

- **B.A. Project:** The Use of Drama to teach Vocabulary Development in English Language
- **Journal: (INJOCORH)** Industrial Revolution and Sustainable Development Goals in Linda Winchell's "Industrial Revolution"
- **Journal: (LGSS)** Comparative Study of Literary Features in Ayinla Adegator's '*Iba Iya Mi*' and Asake's '*Dupe*'
- **Creative Writing:** Shadows

G. Major Conferences/Workshops Attended

- i. Annual Departmental Lecture, Department of English and Literary Studies
- ii. Annual Faculty Lecture, Faculty of Arts
- iii. Lead and Leap Art 1.0 Theatre and Media Workshop, Department of Performing Arts and Film Studies
- iv. Emotional Intelligence and Attitudinal Change for Enhanced Team Performance

H. Extra- Curricular Activities: Reading, Organization, Singing

I. Names and Addresses of Referees

Dr (Mrs) Adekolarin Adewole

Academic Planning Unit
Lead City University

Hon. Femi Julius Okedoyin

Oyo State House of Assembly,
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J. Date & Signature

The University Compliance Certification

This is to certify that the thesis by Marvellous Gift GBADEGESIN with the matric number LCU/PG/005874 in the Department of Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State is in full compliance with the approved University Format and Style.

Signature

Date