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University of Port Harcourt (Nigeria)

Isaac Osakpamwan Ibude

University of Port Harcourt (Nigeria)

Interpretation of Tekno's Music Video *Woman* and Women Identity

ABSTRACT. Women's identity in most undeveloped African nations as moderated by culture, patriarchy and chauvinist ideologies has continued to generate the attention of critics and scholars from different spheres. Using the literary and artistic methods of qualitative approach, this paper interrogates the portrayal of women in the music video of Tekno entitled *Woman*. The paper observes that the song understudy clearly disagrees with cultural, patriarchal and chauvinist ideologies that dehumanize and relegate the importance of women to the development of the society. The paper notes that such songs are very useful as campaign platforms against the poor identity given to women in most underdeveloped nations in the continent of Africa and, as such, calls on more Nigerian musicians to continue in this regards.

KEYWORDS: woman, underdeveloped, music video, identity

Introduction

Music is a phenomenon which finds use in the life of individuals or groups within a culture. African music(s) is divers and functional in every area of human endeavour. According to Garnett, (1998, p. 5) as cited by Mans, the meaning of music in a given culture can be transplanted from one environment to another in terms of distance and time, acquiring a new meaning in the new context. Mans (2006, p. 33) noted that meaning in African music is associated with musical performances which maintain social structures and values in a community and or cultural milieu as expressed in language, gender, age, religion and so on. Music in Nigeria as well as in other countries in Africa, is used as a popular means of communication within its context. This ability of music to convey meaning(s) within and across ethnic nationalities during musical performances is what defines its function.

Musicians in Nigerian can be broadly divided into two societies: traditional and contemporary societies. Their music is broadly classified into three: folk, popular and art (Okafor, 2005, p. 2). Folk music is functional and rooted in the culture and traditions of the people. Popular music, which has great appeal to young people is associated with social aspects of humanity. In the past, popular music was promoted through electronic media in cities and metropolis; but in recent times popular music of various genre are made available via the internet and therefore readily accessed in remote villages across Nigeria. The third type is Art music made up of many variants which can be categorised as classical and neo-classical.

The performer of music in the indigenous culture according to Nzewi (2007, p. 204) engage society during public performances as system-mediator singers. The musician, whether male or female has the mandate to commend, rebuke and warn on societal ills. This type of corrective singing in public space is a strategy for communicating important socio-political issues transacted through theatrical musical performance employing jokes, humour and laughter for a listening audience. This African concept of musical performance has been partly replicated by contemporary popular musicians in correcting social ills related to sex, gender, race and other forms of exclusions/marginalization.

The subject of equality as well as inclusion is multifaceted and most debated in society (Biesta, 2006). Music by its nature is veritable for enlightenment and education leading to a desired change in behaviour. Music creates an environment that makes gender inclusion and equality possible through acquiring knowledge and understanding embedded in the lyrics of the music. Equality is often reinforced not only through rational engagement in dialogue but also through their interpretation and understanding of gender based music shaped by associations and experiences from social media, the internet, and society. This paper interrogates Clarence Peters' directorial interpretation of Tekno's music video entitled *Woman* and its implications to the identity of women.

Biographical Notes on Augustine Miles Kelechi (Tekno)

Augustine Miles Kelechi popularly known as Alhaji Tekno is a Nigerian popular musician, song writer, producer who was born on the 17th of December in 1992 at Bauchi State. His father was a strict disciplinarian and a soldier who worked in different parts of northern Nigeria. Tekno

entertainment qualities started from the church as an instrumentalist who drew inspiration from his father who was an expert in playing the acoustic guitar. As documented in Wikipedia, Tekno is a lover of music and entertainment was nurtured and brought to the limelight by a seasoned comedian called Julius Agwu in an amazing event been held in Abuja in the year 2012, this famous comedian spotted great potential in him (Augustine Miles) and encouraged him to forge ahead with his music career and as Tekno would have it, he has now become famous in the latter years after the great encounter with the famous comedian named Julius Agwu. Some of his songs are Duro, PuTTin, Jogodo, Old Romance, Skeletun, Woman, etc.

Analysis of Women identity in Tekno's Music Video *Woman*

Tekno begins the song with an exposition that is more of his usual singing style. In what appears to be the prologue or may be an exposition he reveals his identity which helps to inform the audience that the statement captured in the song has been made by a man who ought to be among the patriarchal class that victimizes and dehumanizes women on account of their biological difference. The following lines from the prelude of the song capture the identity of the singer

Afam bu Tekno (My name is Tekno)
But you can call me Mbaku

This image below unveils the musician and women's right activist in an art studio painting the image to portray the embodiment of woman's beauty.

After unveiling his identity, Tekno proceeds with a pre-chorus line that is repeatedly expressed as the chorus of the entire song. This pre-chorus undoubtedly unmasked the thematic preoccupation of the song as captured in Figure 1 in the music video where the performer engaged in the painting of women with beautiful combinations of colors on a canvas. The lines in this part of the song clearly exposed the unguarded impression of chauvinists relating to the identity of women. In their uncivilized wisdom, the woman's place is in the kitchen and must be domesticated as a cook who ultimately has nothing to contribute in decision making for the betterment of the society. Relegating a woman to the kitchen implies that her job is interior, inferior and domestic. She is expected to prepare food for



Tekno - Woman

Figure 1. Pictorial representation of a Women painting from the video

Source: YouTube, TeknoMilesVEVO, 2021

the man to eat and can only act as instructed and must not contribute to even decisions concerning her. The lines of the pre-chorus as expressed below indeed, unveils the mindset of most African men in the name of culture and tradition regarding womanhood as slaves who must obey all instructions without asking questions.

[Pre-Chorus]

Them say woman place na for Kitchen
 Say she suppose to fry all the chicken
 No suppose to talk for the meeting
 Concern herself with the cleaning

The main chorus of this song debunks the above impression as shown in figure 2 in the section of the music video that domesticates women to be kitchen material rather than co-partners in making a decision for the growth and development of the nation. The song cautions individuals who parade such impressions and exhibits such action to remember their biological roots that came from the woman. The fact that their mothers are women is enough for them not to contemplate such relegating roles as it



Figure 2. Pictorial representation of Women as hardworking from the video

Source: YouTube, TeknoMilesVEVO, 2021

will connect them in one way or the other. The song further exposes some female idols like Rihanna as a female that has made exploited in the music world and attracted numerous fans of both genders. In the opinion of Tekno, his love for the legendary musician Rihanna cannot allow him to join the bandwagons relating to women as objects and voiceless groups. The song also calls on women to rejoice and express their worries to men and dance freely in a graceful dance to refute such identity labelled on them. The song also clarifies that men need women in their survival and must respect them in their journey of survival. Consider the lines below:

[Chorus]
 Yo yo yo
 My mother is a woman (yo)
 You cannot talk like this (yo)
 Rihanna is a woman
 I say come whine it for Daddy o (whine it oh)
 Come whine it for Daddy o (baby)
 Control it Mummy o
 I want to teach you the dance oh eh

The song went further to appreciate womanhood by metaphorically adoring its beauty with “Tomato wantanamera, Potato dance, do shakara and dance kira. These descriptions help to portray the beauty, usefulness and indisputable creature of the woman. The use of tomato and potato to qualify her usefulness indicates that a woman does not hide or cannot be hidden as one cannot enjoy stew without tomato and stew can be used to eat different meals such as rice, yam, beans and even some swallow. Similarly, potato is sweet and physically colorful for human use and nature’s beauty. This implies that the world especially Africans must appreciate the value of women as existing creatures. The lines of the bridge chorus are here captured it thus;

[Bridge]
 Jigi-jigi ko-gbewa
 Tomato wantanamera
 Ahan dance kira
 Potatoo dance, do shakara oh eh
 Jigi-jigi ko-gewa
 Tomato wantanamera
 I say dance kira
 Potato dance, do shakara oh eh

The following images as represented in figures 3 and 4 were captured from the video to demonstrate the pride and positive portrayal of women in the interpretation of the song in the musical video. The director project the joy Tekno wants the woman to have rather than feeling oppressed by cultural oppressive tendencies.

The first verse of the song exposes what a woman has been and can be as against the impression of seeing her as a mere kitchen and domestic material. The verse identifies a woman as someone that can take up important and challenging roles in the society. Such roles as helper, lover, teacher and president are clearly projected in the song as responsibilities women can effectively handle. These roles captured in the song are serious roles that determine the success of any developed society. For example, teachers are the molders of the society as they engage in teaching and discovering hidden possibilities in students. As helpers they provide supporting inputs which are seriously needed in the society. There is no individual that does not need help, even nations expect help from other nations. Society expects love from inhabitants to be able to achieve the needed peace that will ignite development. The descrip-



Tekno - Woman

Figure 3. Pictorial representation Joy of Motherhood from the video

Source: YouTube, TeknoMilesVEVO, 2021



Tekno - Woman

Figure 4. Pictorial representation of Joy of womanhood Projected in the video

Source: YouTube, TeknoMilesVEVO, 2021

tion of the woman as one that can be a lover is not in doubt because in our various homes is mostly championed by the mothers, wives and daughters. Their lovely disposition sustains the home irrespective of the cultural background or the belief system. Tekno description of the woman as one that can be a president is evident in the number of women that have occupied important positions across the world including the presidency. In Africa such women as Nawal El-Saadawi, Mme Kathilili, Yaa Asantewa, Queen Amina, Funmilayo Ransom Kuti, Professor Dora Akunyili, Okonji Iweala and Helen Johnson are examples of powerful women who have demonstrated superiority and debunk the ideology that they are meant for the kitchen for domestic roles only. The potential nature of the woman as projected in this song is not in doubt and as such Tekno takes a personal position that for him he wants his woman besides him making money to support the family. The implication of this conclusion that a woman is what you make of her if you want to see her as a mere kitchen material, a slave, an irrational being, that is what she will but if you see the potentials in her when will be very useful to you and the society at large.

[Verse 1]

A woman can be a helper (A woman)

A woman can be a lover (A woman)

A woman can be a teacher (A woman)

A woman can be the President (A woman)

Say you want your baby for kitchen

I want my baby beside me

Say you want your girl for the cleaning

I want my baby to get a lot of money

The following images as represented in figures 5 (a-d) which were extracted from the video as directed by Clarence Peters celebrate the beauty of womanhood. Each of the images from the musical video celebrates the beauty of the woman which must be adored and preserved rather than relegating her to the background. This imagery of beauty and elegance were successfully achieved through the use of woman in well-designed costumes and matching colours in both indigenous and western outfits. This section of the music video is a contrast from how women are generally portrayed and perceived by many in the society.



Tekno - Woman



Figure 5a. Pictorial representation Beauty and Elegance in the video

Source: YouTube, TeknoMilesVEVO, 2021



Tekno - Woman



Figure 5b. Pictorial representation of Beauty and Elegance in the video

Source: YouTube, TeknoMilesVEVO, 2021



Tekno - Woman



Figure 5c. Pictorial representation of Beauty and Elegance in the video

Source: YouTube, TeknoMilesVEVO, 2021



Tekno - Woman



Figure 5d. Pictorial representation of Beauty and Elegance in the video

Source: YouTube, TeknoMilesVEVO, 2021

African women multitask in many areas of life as managers of their homes and other endeavours they engage in as teachers, administrators, leadership, professionals in areas such as science and technology. Figure 6 captures an image in the music video that attest and exemplify the innate ability of women to engage in carrying out different functions requiring diverse skills at the same period. This attests to the helping and multidimensional characteristics of the woman as she has the capacity to do several things including what men think is exclusive of them.

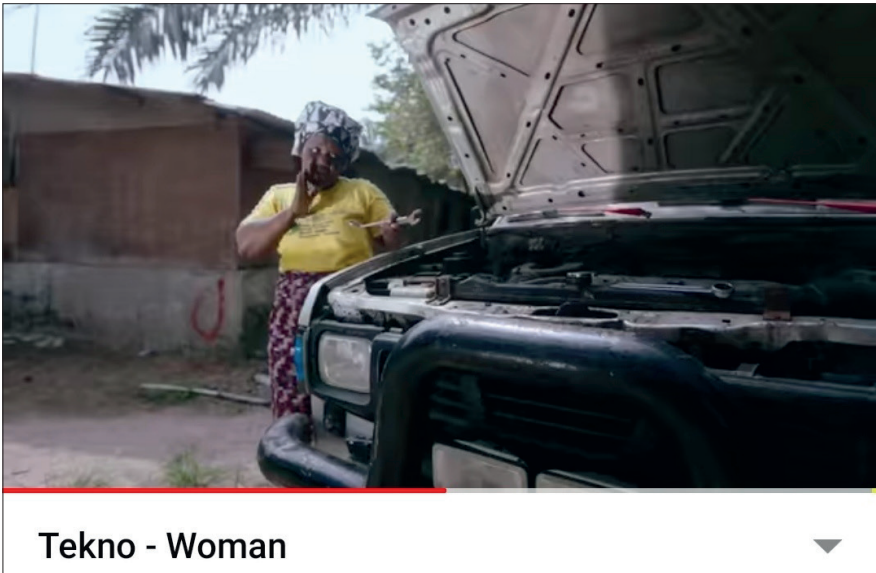


Figure 6. Pictorial representation of a hardworking Woman

Source: YouTube, TeknoMilesVEVO, 2021

The very final verse calls on men to treat women with love, kindness and equality. The verse explains the relevance of women in providing comfort through cooking and eating together and drinking. Women can make delicious meal for our comfort and help in maintaining the progress of the family.

[Verse 2]

I treat my baby equally

She cook for me nkwo bi

Sometimes we dance and drink pami o, not matter the economy

They we be family
Something happen, you can call on me
I'm like "Women sweet like melody"
Play them like do re mi

Indeed, the role of women in providing comfort for the survival of man as captured cannot be overemphasized. This explains the different pictorial projections as captured in the music video.

Conclusion

The interpretation of the song in this analysis from the video is quite unique and highly revealing. The use of images dominated by women who attempt to dramatize the lines in the song is novel and supports the issue of women identity. The use of adorable words like teacher, lover, helper, tomato, and president demonstrates the positive image associated with womanhood in spite of wrong and stereotypical image. Music helps to engage individuals and groups in a dialogue critical of challenging our presuppositions and promote gender equality. Music on gender equality articulates the understanding of individuals as it helps to integrate different experiences associated with divers' themes and contexts. This phenomenon, without awareness of individuals within the society leads to acquiring norms and values thereby promoting socialization through music. Music as an aspect of culture, defines cultural and collective identities of individuals within a community. It expedites and is significant in terms of telling stories of the past, present and most importantly of the future. This becomes helpful as a means of communicating the truth and exposing aspects of our culture and society that are hostile to women who usually are taken for granted. Music is a vehicle for intervening in gender equity, destroying gender stereotypes that promote the exclusion of women from playing certain roles in the society. Furthermore, it authenticates individual and collective communication as it opens up the opportunity to be heard and visible in an environment dominated by male.

Achieving gender equality interventions mediated through music serves as instrument to work with disenfranchised, especially women as well as minority groups to empower and instil resilience. Music being an integral part of culture helps in socialization and therefore a powerful tool

for inclusion and exclusion. In other words, music becomes an imperative for challenging societal constructs such as gender inequality. There are critical issues in the video that are obviously missing in the video. One expected the director to properly narrate the woman question portrayed in the lines expressed by the singer. However, it is important to note that the release of the video which showcases and celebrates women in different fields of endeavour, whilst advocating their strength, importance was released on the 8th of March 2019 the date that the world celebrates International Women's Day.

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