THE TEXTUALITY OF CONTEMPORARY HIPLIFE LYRICS

by

PETER ARTHUR

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Centre of West African Studies
School of History and Cultures
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham, B15 2TT

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

ABSTRACT

This research looks at the textuality of hiplife - the Ghanaian version of hip hop - by investigating the hiplife discursive and non discursive practices. The thesis of this research is that hiplife provides the platform for self expression or a new culture for the Ghanaian youth. This ethnography of hiplife covers two main areas of investigation: hiplife as a syncretic and a protest culture.

Chapter one presents the background and research design of the study while chapter two provides a broad scholarly exploration of hiplife, taking into account the history and culture of hiplife against the background of African hip hop literature. Chapter three explores the cultural production of hiplife while chapter four investigates the very core of hiplife rap, its oral rhythmic production. In chapter five, the hiplife culture, like all hip hop cultures, seeks to redefine the Ghanaian normative moral grounds. This redefinition normally presents the oppressed protest against the dominant: two artistes of the same moral ground protest against each other's moral weakness in "dissing". There is no higher moral ground. Chapter six, an extension of chapter five, presents an in-depth treatment of hiplife as a transgressive culture. This transgressive culture serves as the fodder for hiplife business in chapter seven. Chapter eight continues the study of hiplife as a protest culture, projecting the female rapper, within the context of the Ghanaian feminist debate, as a new breed of Ghanaian woman fighting the Ghanaian masculine hegemony.

In investigating a culture like that of hiplife, I choose a qualitative methodology that meets the subtle demands of an enquiry on expressive culture. Using focus group discussions, interviews and participant observation to collect data from the whole country with emphasis on the four main cities in Ghana, this research analyses transcribed data and comes up with new findings about the social and economic realities of the hiplife culture, which can be seen as a metaphor of the contemporary Ghanaian social order.

The generality of the old population in Ghana however consider its discursive and non discursive practices as imitation of a perceived Western moral degeneration and thus antithetical to the Ghanaian mainstream cultural decorum and propriety. This study, however, reveals that, contrary to this popular perception, hiplife has a strong traditional input that is re-invented in modernity and that what gives it its entrepreneurial appeal is located in its cultural shareability, both traditional and modern. Youth culture as seen in hiplife textuality, therefore, is not apocalyptic: it is only an attempt to leave the institutional pathways and develop new ones.

The intended outcome of this research, therefore, is to promote the theory of performance in popular culture in literary studies in the Ghanaian universities, a study that has already started in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana, but with little success. The knowledge gained from this research can also add to a corpus of teaching materials to train young Ghanaian musicians for economic purposes. Again, information from this research is to help Ghanaian readers, and other readers for that matter, understand the realities of the hiplife culture within the context of globalization.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to Margaret Arthur, Nana Adwoa Arthur, Fiifi Arthur and Nana Yaw Arthur

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT
DEDICATION
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE STUDY

1.0. Introduction

Ghana, a West African country which was colonized by the British and gained its independence in 1957, has a population of 24 million at the time of writing and covers a total area of 238,533 square kilometres. Since its contact with the British, it has experienced comparatively rapid changes in its socio-cultural development, not least in its music which is intricately interwoven with the complex web of the history of the country.

The contact with the British, which introduced not only a new system of administration, but a new culture which brought in new types of music and musical instruments, had far reaching consequences for music in the country. In the nineteenth century, these factors cohered into producing a new form of music, a popular music that treated Ghanaians to a blend of traditional and foreign music called highlife. With the introduction of radio in 1935, highlife ruled the air waves and gradually became the staple of all social activities except the typically traditional ones. It was used as an instrument in the struggle for independence. After independence it achieved the status of a metaphor of the Ghanaian personality, the pride of the first nation to be independent in Africa, south of the Sahara. It was even exported to other nations who were then fighting for independence. Highlife dominated the musical scene in Ghana till the 1990s when it ceded its position as the major popular music genre to hiplife, which unlike its parent genre does not represent the proud independent Ghana but epitomizes the modern Ghana and its search for a citizenship in the global community. Hiplife presents performers and audience, mainly the youth, who are members of the same culture. Performers dramatize this culture to the endorsement, admiration and participation of

the audience thus producing a kind of social relationship between them that celebrates Ghanaian youth culture.

1.1. Background of the study

In 1980, what I mistook for Chic's "Good Times"[1] happened to be a revolutionary music called "Rapper's delight" in the US. I wanted to know who played it. I wanted to know who sang those beautiful verses. I wanted to know the name of the band, the title of the song and the year the album was released. Little did I know that I had started an enquiry into a phenomenon that would lead to a musical genre in Ghana, hiplife, which would form the main focus of my PhD research thirty years later.

"Rapper's delight" was just a flash in the pan, but it left in its trail another taste for foreign music: rap music. It lurked in the background and only took over when highlife started losing its grip on Ghanaians. Due to the effect of the curfew that was imposed on Ghanaians and other factors like lack of foreign exchange to import instruments (Collins, 1994), highlife in the early 1980s sank to a woeful level. There were however other artists who were trying to be innovative. K. K. Kabobo's "Nyatenyate" completely passes for a rap song, even in the mid-1980s. Then came Azigizar Jnr. of GBC fame. Indeed, he was a clean rapper and managed to animate the music scene in Ghana in the early 1990s. Mahoney P. also came in with a similar style. We need to add that even in the 1970s, the likes of Gyedu Blay Ambulley had made some adventurous forays into the rap art with his "Simigwado". Then Reggie Rockstone entered the scene in 1996 and the reaction of music fans in the country, with special reference to the youth, was beyond anybody's imagination. It was as if the fans had been expecting him for a long time and having been starved of his presence, everybody

---

[1] Chic was a US band in the 1970s and 80s. The first rap group in the US to produce a commercial rap in 1979, Sugar Hill, sampled Chic's "Good Times" for "Rapper's Delight".

wanted a bit of him on his arrival. Ghana came to a new dawn in its music history and the youth for the first time had a collective voice in this musical genre called hiplife. It is a new form of popular music but it goes beyond music: it is a movement. Indeed, so compelling is the experience that one would like to know what it is that makes the youth so passionate about it. What is hiplife, after all?

1.2. The definition of hiplife

I put the same question to Reggie Rockstone and this was his answer:

> So we took high from highlife and hip…it was proper marketing strategy. But then God works his ways and it became a reality. But it wasn't like we had a big board meeting and we said we were going to rap in Twi, nothing actually happened.

Let us state that he was referring to hip hop when he said "hip" because that was the context. He has been corroborated all over the country. Loving C, a popular DJ in Kumasi, also defines hiplife as a fusion comprising

> Instrumentation from the Americans and the Jamaicans so we have the American and the Jamaican stuff with our linguistic, from here, something that is designed to favour the youth.

And his definition finds resonance in that of Black Moon and Shanti from the Northern region:

> BLACK MOON: … My way of defining hiplife is a kind of music in which we sing, rap and do a lot of things. I am done. It is just singing and rapping. Hiplife is a word American call hiphop so mixed with highlife.

> BLACK SHANTI: it is a combination of highlife and hiphop music. So in short that is how I will define it.

And Paa Kwasi, a rap enthusiast from the Western region defines it as follows in an interview:

PK. I would say it is a different dimension.
PA. What different dimension?
PK. We use the Western beat and we do it our local way in our local language.

Obour shares with this definition but would like to add that any modern Ghanaian music whether with raps or not can be called hiplife. For Richard Agyeman Berko, the producer of Tinny, the most popular Ga rapper, the terminology is misplaced because as he puts it:

> So if you are doing some music and you want to call it something else, do you think it is the best?

In other words, he is against the use of the term hiplife because it is not all the kinds of music by the youth that can be related to hip hop. We cannot bring in all the definitions gathered in the data but what we have here is enough to indicate that hiplife is a mixture of highlife and hip hop and the term itself indicates that it is not a total break from the past but a continuation of the old in a new cultural context.

Hiplife is predominantly a male affair even though there have been occasionally some females like Aberewa Nana, Mizbell and, of late, Eazzy and Tiffany who have hit the headlines. These young men and women are basically secondary school leavers who were often seen climbing the platforms during entertainments nights advertising certain moves and dexterous verbal skills to the admiration of their fans. They were and continue to be so passionate about rapping that even though some do not continue education because of weak grades, others who do have good grades but who might have tasted stardom even before leaving school decide to sacrifice studying for stardom. It must also be pointed out that some hiplife rappers have even completed their university education. All these hiplife rappers are usually seen in what they call "akata", a hip hop outfit: T-shirt and jeans hanging down their buttocks, walking like cowboys and speaking American slang. They may appear the happy-go-lucky type but have confident looks about them. They believe that one needs to be tough to face the harsh economic realities of the country, and this ideology of toughness easily

comes through their performance in the form of energy and even in the way they confront the challenges they are confronted with in production.

The production of hiplife is technologically mediated. Hiplife depends heavily on the computer, making use of digital samplers which are either looped rhythmic lines (Rose, 1994: 63) of known beats or beats of their own creation. All they need is a looped rhythm on the computer and they rap the lines on it to construct a track. Rose is particularly interested in the relationship between traditional oral poetry and technology and sums up her observation as "rap's oral articulations are heavily informed by technological processes" (Rose, 1994: 64). This means that though one would expect that they make the computer fit into the rhythm of the traditional poetry, they rather subject the rhythm of the traditional poetry to the exigencies of technology and allow themselves to be circumscribed by what the computer can offer by way of beat. They nevertheless succeed in bringing out the traditional flavour of their poetry, following the template of our alliterative and praise poetry. Hiplife music borrows heavily from the rhythmic repertoire of traditional poetry reinforcing Asante and Asante's assertion that rhythm is one of the major pillars of Afrocentric modernisation process (Asante and Asante, 1985). Hiplife re-invents the traditional rhythm on the computer to suit its modern audience (Osumare, 2012: 34). Hiplife artists are therefore poets who depend on words rapped on computer-produced beats.

The musicians do not only use the computer to create beats but they also use it to convert the evanescent sound to a permanent sound through modern recording technology. The song tracks are recorded on CDs for commercial purposes. Again, the hiplife artist possesses another intriguing means of keeping the song. This time it is not the computer. It is through the traditional means of

keeping information: memory cues in acoustics and imagery which helps them to recite very long lines of poetry – a feature that is well exhibited in their live shows.

Again, the computer seems to offer endless benefit for hiplife music. It provides a virtual world for performer/audience interaction. The musicians put their sound tracks on the internet and sell them. They also have the opportunity of interacting with their fans through email, Facebook and Twitter correspondence. There is even a better interactive relationship between the performer and his audience which allows the performer to put his demo on the internet and ask for the input of the fans before he releases it, and so co-production of the text is not only restricted to live performance; it is moving to the virtual site too. The lyrics are also given another permanent form by being written on various web pages on the internet.

Being present in their live shows could easily entrance you. The text is co-produced, as mentioned earlier, in that the audience recite the lines along with the rapper, creating a very charged atmosphere; everybody is part of the performance. The high energy level displayed by both the performer and the audience will easily make you catch the excitement that is exhibited during such shows.

The hiplife musicians carry the narrative of their time (Shipley, 2009; Osumare, 2012). Their lyrics reflect the latest technology in communication in town. They sing about the mobile phone, the ipod, internet and all the latest gadgets in multi-media communication and the latest cars in town thus reflecting the kind of modern life in vogue. Hiplife music is mainly recreational and is played in bars, clubs, school entertainment programmes, cars, on radios and on TV. The musicians not only express public opinion on contemporary life in their performance but also patrol the frontiers of the

generational divide between the youth and the old, pointing out the failure of moral responsibility of the old to the youth. Perhaps these may be enough factors that cohere into making the youth follow hiplife, but why the youth are so much riveted by the hiplife experience is a question we have still not answered. It is something that engages my personal attention and forms one of the main reasons that propelled me to go into this research.

1.3 The study of hiplife

I have various reasons for conducting this research. In the first place, I have great passion for music and any research that associates literary work with music appeals to my academic disposition. To investigate, therefore, a musical experience that elicits a binary response – considered a riveting engagement by the youth and considered to have tipped the youth generation into a spiral of moral degeneration by the old – could be an intriguing research project. It may appear, though, that hiplife is ephemeral and the benefits of such a research could be ephemeral too. This argument loses its bite in the face of the fact that hiplife is not a mere genre of music but a youth psychology that is going to be part of them till they become adult. Apart from that, keeping records of such genres is another means of adding knowledge to the world of learning. I also have academic ambitions with this research as well and hope to contribute to knowledge in the theory of oral performance, especially in Ghanaian scholarship, by promoting performance theory (Bauman, 1977) in the literature and language departments in our universities and also to enrich the study of power as a topic in political Sciences, Diasporic Studies, History and Gender Studies[2] departments in our universities. I also, by this research, hope to fill the lacuna in Ghanaian scholarship in the study of popular culture. So far as popular music in Ghana is concerned, comparatively little has been done in hiplife as an academic study. In addition to all that, this research holds a huge prospect for the

---

[2] For further information on the use of lyrics in various universities in Ghana, see John Collin's professorial inaugural lecture at Great Hall, University of Ghana, Legon, 17th November, 2005

Ghanaian youth's chances in the job market. Knowledge acquired in this research could be used to help train young Ghanaians to become better musicians. Thus, as well as contributing to job creation, this research may also help to create stars whose economic activities will boost the nation's economy. This research will facilitate the study of Ghanaian youth culture in general and has the potential of providing Ghanaian governmental and non-governmental organizations related to youth development information with regard to the way hiplife has created a new kind of agency for the Ghanaian youth (Osumare, 2012: 84, 117). Again, there are some African diasporas who will find the Ghanaian indigenization of global hip hop presented in this research a call to their roots and a discovery of a cultural belonging (Osumare, 2012: 2).

1.4 Research design: Introduction

It is said in anthropological circles that the days when a "cultural object of study is fully accessible within a particular site" are over (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000)[3] and that most cultures are "now within the interconnected spaces" (Gupta and Ferguson, 1999)[4]. This is why a study of Ghanaian contemporary lyrics becomes another melting pot for an anthropological enquiry which seeks to interrogate the Ghanaian culture, a culture that is so much intertwined with other cultures. Of course, any attempt to study the entire Ghanaian culture would be presumptuous, and so for the purpose of this study, we limit our enquiry to the performance of hiplife as "texts".

1.4.1 The Scope of Study

I look at performance as an expression of aesthetics and social relations in the Ghanaian community. I am more interested in the formulaic patterns hiplife creates for the purpose of

---

[3] For further reading, see Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2000.
[4] Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson discuss "the field" as multiple sites for anthropological research. This goes contrary to earlier works which would locate in one site. And it is also becoming increasingly clear that one field can serve as several sites for different cultures. In studying the textuality of highlife and hiplife, Ghana is host to both local and foreign cultures.

aesthetics and how these patterns serve as reflectors of the contemporary Ghanaian society from the point of view of social stratification and mobility, the position of the woman in the society, new values and attitudes for the youth and how the youth navigate their social space in modern Ghana and express their disenchantment about the old in the society.

My main preoccupation in this research is about how hiplife uses detachability of cultural materials and introduces them into performance for the purpose of shareability to

- re-invent traditional structures in praise poetry in the modern context of "braggadocia" and "dissing" and that reflects modern Ghana's system of stratification and mobility

- effect an interlocking relationship between the performer and the audience as instances of cultural production during live shows

- demonstrate the position of the woman in the contemporary Ghanaian society

- evaluate the moral responsibility of the old to the young

- construct new values and attitudes for the youth in contemporary Ghana to cope with the exigencies of global modernity

- construct formulaic patterns for aesthetics and memorization

Let us now look at the methodology used in reaching the focus of the research as indicated above.

1.4.2. Methodology

It is important, at this stage, to explain why the qualitative study was most appropriate for this study. First, I was dealing with factors that came as a combination of opinions and analysis through debates "over the merits of symbolic interactions, social system theory, critical theory of society" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), and these are not in measurable terms. The research questions probed people's actions and looked for ideas and reactions on the human level and what people say about

these ideas and interactions. Even though the quantative methodology is widely known for its potential for various fields of investigation including those in the social sciences, I found the qualitative methodology more appropriate in this particular research because it was difficult to put ideas, interactions and reactions on a scale for the purpose of measurement. The quantitative approach was likely to oversimplify issues. Second, the qualitative instruments afforded the participants the opportunity to be more introspective and reflective, a condition that created the appropriate window for the artists and the audience to express their views and tell their stories their own way, disinterring feelings, knowledge, values that would otherwise have been inaccessible through the use of positivistic research instruments (Giddens, 1993, Schwandt, 2000, Creswell, 2003). Human beings move, so to study their lived experience, the researcher needs to follow the lived experience by observing it wherever it avails itself and this calls for flexibility and even sometimes subtlety (Denzin, 1989) that the rigid measuring instrument of positivist research cannot offer. It means that this is an objective qualitative study, heavily supported by participant observation.

1.4.3. Research Questions

The following questions were informed by the broad themes of the study.

a) How were the thinking and feeling of Ghanaians lived, experienced or expressed as a form of consciousness as seen in hiplife performance as "text"?

b) What kinds of ideas, materials or things were thought worthy of being entextualised in performance?

c) Which of these entextualised forms became more popular and recreated in performance?

d) What factors contributed to the dynamics of preference to the performance oral texts, and

e) How does that serve as the narrative of the life of the contemporary Ghanaian?

These questions led to metadiscursive materials that informed both performance and audience of hiplife. It was mainly an investigation into social realities that nourished these texts. It was also about how the texts unravelled hidden meanings that risked being taken for granted if performance theories were not used to liberate the texts from the confines of being mere artefacts. Liberated from the thick walls of being textual artifacts, these texts utilised their new-found freedom to tell stories that provided answers to why the Ghanaian society is undergoing the change it is experiencing today.

1.4.4. Assumptions

I needed to address the issues of assumptions on my part, as a researcher, and on the part of participants as well, in order to avoid stampeding into making misguided conclusions. For example, I had a perception that for such a study, participants were knowledgeable in all the information they were supposed to provide. It turned out that to ensure trustworthiness and credibility, there was the need to check the validity of what they told me from other sources as well. For instance, informants I contacted earlier on in the research suggested that hiplife, Akan rap, started in Accra, but field work in Kumasi pointed to the contrary that it started in Kumasi. Again, the idea that successful practitioners knew it all and that whatever they said would certainly enrich the study was not wholly true. Some of these informants turned the interview sessions into monumentalizing their persona and mythologizing their achievements. One such encounter was with C. K. Mann, the man credited to have started the Western type of highlife. His answers were marvellous, but he tried to push in the story of his spiritual life, a story that sought to inflate his persona. Moreover, it was not true that all informants would be willing to volunteer information. I had to do several phone calls to Reggie Rockstone. It took Okyeame Kwame to take me to him and we had to start the interview

close to 10:00 pm. I had to chase K. K. Kabobo for two weeks and on the day I got him, I had to wait from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm.

1.4.5 Biases

Let us now talk about the problem of biases on my part as a researcher. It must be stated that like any member of a human community, the researcher is bound to carry with him some level of biases (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). As I went through the field work, the phenomenology and the epistemology of the hiplife texts revealed my personal ontology. Having been playing instruments from secondary school, to the university and then even after my university days, and having worked with a lot of known musicians like Egya Koo Nimo, Bessa Simons, Afro Moses, and Okyeame Kwame, I felt I knew a lot about the topic. I was however humbled when I started the fieldwork. For instance, before starting the fieldwork, I had the impression that I had better knowledge in rhythm in rap because, apart from Okyeame Kwame, the other artists I had come in contact with did not demonstrate enough knowledge in rhythm in rap. I met Black Moon, Black Shanti and Kawastone in Tamale and they proved me wrong. Black Shanti taught me how rhythm in rap was used for the purpose of emotional appeal. In Kumasi, Stone of the Bradez and Macafee were very conscious about the effect their rhythm created in the audience. Lord Kenya and Joe Frazer told me something new about rhythm in rap. I then revised my notes and started using unstructured interviews, instead of the semi-structured type of interview I was using, for more information and I operated more from the constructivist's point of view, constructing meaning based on what the practitioners tell me and not what I knew (Schwandt, 2000). This also proved that the qualitative instruments of research had their checks and balances.

My being a researcher from the university also generated some level of bias on the part of my informants against me. Some of them were suspicious of my intentions and would simply withdraw

from the interview even if I explained in clearest terms what my intentions were. For example, Boakye Yiadom at Pocalous Recording Studio would simply not talk and allow any picture of him to be taken by me. Meanwhile he sat throughout the whole period of discussion.

1.4.6 The researcher

It is important to note that the comportment of the researcher could influence the flow of information (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Spradley, 1979; Wax, 1960). It is against this background that I developed two kinds of philosophy that guided the way I presented myself. First, I would wear jeans and T-shirts and use their kind of language. In some sites like God First Recording Studio, I played music with them (Spradley, 1979; Fontana, 1977). They were so happy with me and opened their doors for me at any time. I must say that this kind of self presentation depended on who introduced me and whom they took me for. In Pocalous Recording Studio in Kumasi, however, the style mentioned above could not work. Flames took me there and introduced me as a lecturer from KNUST who was interested in what they were doing. I was amazed at the kind of instant attention I got. Everybody stopped what he was doing and gathered around me. I therefore took it from there and maintained my status as a lecturer – a vertical relationship (Becker, 1956). I was aware this was a practice most researchers including Denzin and Lincoln would not subscribe to, but on that occasion I felt it was an experiment worth trying. I was also very conscious of the fact that if I did anything to let them feel inferior, I was not going to get their support for the exercise (Peil, 1082). I lectured them on the concept of branding of the musician for about thirty minutes and they were very happy. Contrary to my anticipation, they rather became very attentive and when it came to their turn, they were very forthright with their opinions. The point was that they seemed to harbour a lot in their chest about the unfavourable position they found themselves in the affairs of the country and seeing me as somebody of the old generation, they decided to pour their hearts out,

as if to complain. They spoke passionately about matters concerning unemployment in the country and the failure of the old generation. In any case, in a research like this, sincerity was the target and if they would be very sincere to me because they thought I represented the other generation, someone whom they could confide in, then I did not see the reason why I should stop that style of self presentation there. I have to say that for the other sites, I used the egalitarian approach. The question therefore was who were the informants and participants?

1.4.7 The Participants, informants and how they were reached

In all the sites – Tamale, Kumasi, Accra and Takoradi – I had two kinds of informants or participants: performers and audience. The performers were generally the youth who were engaged in hiplife and the old who belonged to the highlife tradition. If I met one of them, just within seconds, he could use the mobile phone to call the rest of the group. This snowball selection of participants (Creswell, 2003) was very helpful throughout all the sites. In Tamale, Moon and Shanti would use their phone to call the rest and made things very easy for me. They also offered to serve both as assistants and translators, a service similar to that which Abd alMalik ben Lahcen gave to Rabinow (Rabinow, 1977). In Kumasi, Okyeame Kwame and Flames played the same role. Okyeame Kwame went with me to Accra and doubled as a facilitator and assistant. Indeed, I had to prepare Black Moon, Black Shanti and Okyeame Kwame for the fieldwork the same way I prepared my permanent assistant, Margaret Quaisie (Mrs). In Takoradi, KD, a sound engineer, could easily link me up to most of the musicians. He would even go to the extent of giving the biography of the musician and this facilitated questions relating to biographical details. I could therefore access the musicians in Tamale, Kumasi and Takoradi without any problem.

I however had to pay attention to views presented and make sure they were original views and not group thoughts. If I felt the view given was influenced by the one presented by someone else, I would ask a lot of questions till the participant surrendered the group view and gave me his personal one (Peil, 1982). I tried to watch closely the body language and the role they intended to play in the interview (Potter, 1997; Silverman, 2000). Any attempt to play the superhero too also brought my attention in the direction of further checks because there was the possibility of facts manipulation on the parts of informants.

I also need to comment on my audience participants. In most cases they were straightforward and made no attempt to hide or exaggerate any fact. I had audience which was part of a live show and that which was picked on the street and these were for various reasons. I wanted to have the reaction of audience members who were not under the influence of either the charm of the artist/live music or alcohol and that was why I went to the street to sample opinions. I also wanted the opinion of participants who were involved with the performance. I sincerely believed this could offer me the opportunity to examine the degree of emotional evolvement in performance, how lyrics resonated with their personal circumstances and the degree of change in consciousness.

1.4.8 Sites

The sites for the study were also carefully selected. I chose the first four cities in Ghana: Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi and Tamale. What informed this selection was the fact that hiplife, the Ghanaian version of global hip hop, is principally an urban culture. The cities therefore serve as the hub that holds the spokes of hiplife movement together and any research of that genre has to start with the cities. Again, no research had been conducted throughout Ghana. Most researchers believed that because it is an urban phenomenon, investigations in Accra and Kumasi were enough,

and this is evidenced by the kind of artists that have previously been discussed in hiplife research. No mention is made of any artist from Tamale and other Ghanaian urban centres such as Takoradi. I therefore selected the major cities all over the country to fill that lacuna.

I hasten to add that in all these sites, I would visit all manner of places: schools, churches, mosques, market places, shops, streets, hotels, clubs and live shows, "trotro" and taxi stations, work places, national cultural centres of the regions, and all the Musiga[5] offices in the regions. Highlife and hiplife covers both the old and young generations so I would speak to people from all walks of life: professionals, market women, pupils and students, academicians, young and old ladies, young and old men, truck pushers, "trotro" and taxi drivers, and so forth. This, coupled with the fact that the cities selected were evenly spread all over the country gave me a broad spectrum of people to speak to and that gave a fair representation of the population I had to cover.

1.4.9 Interviews

I conducted focus group interviews, dyadic, multiple and even telephone interviews.

1.4.10 Focus group

Some critics find the practice a bit cumbrous judging from its potential of yielding large volumes of data. They also complain that it could take a longer time than other forms of methodology. Other critics even doubt its reliability and validity (Kirk and Miller, 1986, Silverman, 1998, 2006, Seale, 1999, 2007). The answer to the first criticism is that a study covering the entire nation like the one I was engaged in certainly required large volume of data coming from all parts of the country to be able to produce results and findings that could be a fair representation of the entire country. In fact, it was part of my research design to use an instrument that could produce a large volume of data,

---

[5] This is the acronym for Musicians Union of Ghana.

which the focus group methodology could do. In that case therefore, time was needed both for the interviews and the analysis. The criticism that this methodology is time-consuming was irrelevant, for the success of this research hinged more on the amount of data I could generate over a period of time and how over this period of time, I could immerse myself in the culture of the sites of these data to be able to do proper analysis.

There are further reasons for choosing the focus group methodology for a work of this nature. The discussion or the debate in a focus group proffered a high quality of data because of the inherent self validation mechanism involved. There was multivocality as participants took turns to express their views and in some cases, participants challenged the views raised by other participants (Krueger and Casey, 2000). In my interview with Newton et al, they challenged each other as to who was the best rapper at that time. There was a hot argument that ensued and as a researcher, I was not so much interested in who was really the best rapper; I was more interested in opinions that would have otherwise been kept away from the interview. Admittedly, they were not professionals or experts as we might expect them to be for a focus group but on that occasion, playing the role of the audience of hiplife, they were exercising their sense of judgement which was very germane to the inquiry. Again, a point by one participant was further developed by another and this facilitated the construction of social meaning (Silverman, 2000). Even the argument itself was part of the social interaction among the practitioners that formed part of my enquiry. This is succinctly summed up by Blumer in his observation that the focus group is used for "A small number of such individuals brought together as a discussion and resource group" and continues that this is "more than any representative sample" (Blumer, 1969). Moreover, focus group interviews offered members of the hiplife subculture the voice of legitimacy and this strengthened their sense of having a common interest and concern. In the interview with Awensem et al, the moment the issue

of unemployment came up, they all became more interested in the discussion because it was a problem that affected all of them.

Perhaps what I found most influential using this methodology was the fact that it had the potential of correcting certain inaccuracies that would have gone unnoticed in other quantitative instruments like the survey methodology. In the quantitative survey methodology, there have been instances when respondents have intentionally given incorrect answers and since the methodology does not have enough check systems, the inaccuracies go unnoticed, and this can affect the results of the study. In the ethnographic approach as we find in the qualitative methodology however, some of these inaccuracies are revealed as the interview progresses. For example, interviews with KNUST Architecture students and the students of Labone Senior High School give fluent testimony to this. At the beginning of the interview, I would ask what their music preferences were and it happened that students who would claim not to like hiplife on both occasions happened to have provided more essential information about hiplife than those who claimed to like it. The implication was obvious: they were pretending. There was and there is still the notion, perpetrated by the old generation, that hiplife is immoral and the young who associate with it do not show signs of good upbringing. Even though it is a myth, it is a belief that is widespread in the country. A lot of the students would therefore create the impression of good upbringing by simply distancing themselves from it in a work like this and would pretend they preferred gospel music, when in reality, hiplife was their preferred choice of music. They were thus well informed because they listened to it all the time, and that was why they could give better information on hiplife. The focus group discussion would give them away because by the time the interview session would end, it would have become clear who was a hiplife fan and who was not. In a quantitative survey, they would just give the answer and

that was all; nothing would indicate that that was the wrong answer. This takes us to the kind of interviews conducted.

1.4.11 Unstructured interviews

I started with semi-structured interviews. It did not take me too long to realise that the informants and the participants had more to provide than what I had put down as an interview guide. As indicated earlier, Black Moon and Black Shanti brought a lot more to the research than what I had put down as questions, so I had to resort more to the unstructured interview. This was to be enable me explore a lot more on the field. I also realised that the unstructured interviews made the interviewees feel very much at their ease. In God First Recording Studio in Kumasi and New Image Studio at Takoradi, the artists were so eager to contribute that I sometimes found it difficult to control the interview. Moreover, the interviews themselves raised other researchable topics. Two young musicians in Tamale hinted at the failure of the old generation of Ghana to take care of the youth, and Awensem was able to put this in clearer language. This opinion was corroborated in many interviews all over the country.

1.4.12 Dyadic interviews

I interviewed artists, sound engineers, producers and other people who were considered more established in the music industry. This included C. K. Mann, Jewell Ackah, K. K. Kabobo, Azigizar Jnr., Reggie Rockstone, Okyeame Kwame, Obour, Joe Frazer, Guru, Zapp Marlet, Morris Babyface, Abraham Ohene Djan and others. I did so for the following reasons: I wanted

a) their personal opinion on the topic,

b) to check what had been said about them, and

c) to establish the historical development of hiplife, hearing not only from those who witnessed it but also from those who created it.

1.4.13 Multiple interviews

There were times, due to the information I was looking for, I could not have enough participants to constitute a focus group. I had two or three participants. For example, when I was looking for what constituted stardom in hiplilfe, it was not easy putting together all the array of stars that I could find in Kumasi. With the limited resources I had, I was able to get Okyeame Kwame and Stone of Bradez and I later got Andy Dosty to join the group. I could easily control the group and the discussion was very successful.

1.4.14 Telephone interviews

On a few occasions, I had to resort to the telephone as a means of conducting interviews. This happened when I needed instant answers or reactions to an ongoing phenomenon concerning the research. For example on the issue of dissing, there were occasions when I heard a song that was "dissing"[6] Okyeame Kwame, I would call him to tune to that station and offer me his instant reaction and comment. I did this because I needed answers that were not premeditated. This was how I could get to the subterranean meanings of the ongoing process. And indeed he was sometimes so emotional and yet could not counter what was being said for reasons of the persona he had put out there as part of his branding: the gentleman. I also interviewed Charles Amoah on the phone, using the same strategy to elicit the needed information regarding "dissing".

1.4.15 Transcription

I recorded all the interviews on either a digital wave recorder or a cassette-tape recorder as social records available for the academic community. I also went on to transcribe them to serve as records not only for the academic community but for the facilitation of analysis, relying on it to identify

---

[6] This is a hip hop term which means to be disrespectful to the other person.

sequences of related talks and using it to examine how speakers take on certain roles and identities through their talk (Silverman, 2000).

1.4.16 Participant observation

I observed closely what the participants and informants had been telling me by visiting them in their houses, attending the live shows of some of them and establishing a very close relationship with them. This made the fieldwork very interactive and that alone had its own way of generating information on the work. It got to a point where I had grown so used to some of them that I could almost predict what they were likely to say or do next in their shows. Apart from the fact that it indicated I had reached the limit of what I wanted to know from them, it was also an eye witness testimony, validating what they had told me. In this case, I assumed the role of an observer-as-participant (Silverman, 2000). There were moments I had to go beyond the role of an observer-as-participant to that of a participant-as-observer (Silverman, 2000), playing the lead or the bass guitar with the St. Peter's Cathedral Gospel Band. I did this to have in-depth knowledge about the stimulus that could trigger certain specific reactions from the audience and being just an observer would not have given me that opportunity. Through this method, I was able to identify shareable cultural materials that could stimulate the religio-emotional response of the congregation in that church. I was able to describe from the point of view of the performer - composing the song, being part of the group which was playing – playing the guitar – observing the way the audience/congregation was reacting to these specially prepared signals in gospel highlife. I was also interested in observing the congregation respond to gospel highlife. I also wanted to see whether it was the same enthusiasm the British in the Norman Catholic Chaplaincy in Birmingham respond to gospel rock in church or even the way the British in the Gospel Life Church, a Pentecostal church in Birmingham, respond to gospel rock music. I must say this research was not only in the Catholic

Church of Ghana. I extended it to the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and other churches too. This role has sometimes been looked at with a cynical eye with the reason that the participant-as-observer could bring his talent and limitations to the exercise and in that case the result could be reached only through his eyes, reducing the exercise to a mere subjective enterprise. I was aware of this therefore I was very specific with what I wanted: looking for shareable materials. That was selective observation. In other sessions of observation, I had to withdraw from the band so that I could properly observe other processes. Other researchers like Angrosino (1992) had played similar roles in their researches.

I went to clubs, funeral grounds, entertainment nights and live performances. At the Sports Stadium Entertainment Centre, Jubilee Park in Kumasi, Ahemfie Hotel and May Spot in Takoradi, the Zanzibar Night Club in Accra and other entertainment centres in other regions where I conducted the research, I did not only observe the performers on the stage but mixed up with the audience and observed closely their response to the performers. I was particularly interested in the performer/audience relationship, the emotional response of the audience and the degree to which the culture became shareable materials between the performer and the audience. I was therefore able to cover any available space that I could find in the observational process as a researcher.

1.4.17 Ethical Considerations

I looked at issues of permission, privacy and mutuality. I would always inform the informants or participants well ahead of time and seek permission. I also had a letter of introduction from my department as a way of introducing myself and the purpose of my visit (Peil, 1982). The offices of Musiga in all the regions I visited were contacted first before I started any fieldwork. I would identify myself and explain the purpose of my work and made the officials understand the risk and

legal implications involved. I would do the same to the individual informants too and make them aware I was recording the interview. The informants should always show willingness to talk before I started recording the interview. I was also particular about the right of privacy of my informants and protected the identity of the individual when information given had the potential of making the image of the giver vulnerable. I was also concerned about mutuality. This meant that I would try to do something in return for information given. I would take them for a lunch, buy them toffees and even give them tips if they requested it.

1.4.18 Analysis

The analysis has four main levels: the text, performance, what people say about texts and performance and my interpretation of all that, following a close examination of fieldwork materials.

First, the work is primarily textual analysis of hiplife lyrics of contemporary Ghana. Texts are words which are performed and the performance can also be categorized under various genres. These words of hiplife are however part of a living experience of the performers and audience of these genres so we look at the living experience of these people on one hand and on the other hand, look at how music is created out of the musicality or the rhythm that the use of these words used in their natural linguistic environment create.

Second, I look at how the texts or the performances comments on themselves. This metatexts study reveals how the texts and the performers indicate how the performance or the text should be seen. Through the use of "braggadocia" and "dissing"[7], hiplife provides enough metatexts and we are instructed as to how we should handle those particular texts as genres.

---

[7] "Bragadocio" and "dissing" are forms of praise poetry which migrated from hip hop to hiplife. This is not to discount the fact these practices originated from Africa. At least in their modern contexts, they are re-contextualized in the

Third, I also take a close look at what performers, other players in the music industry like the producers and audience generally say about and interpret hiplife; the way hiplife reflects their experience as social beings. Some of what they said was based on evidence and other things were hearsay. Sources like adverts, newspapers, and books were always consulted as part of the means of consolidating the veracity of what was said.

Finally, I looked at interpretations that came up looking at levels 1, 2 and 3 as stated in this section. This involved the results and findings of the participant observation, following dominant themes and recurrent patterns throughout the data. Indeed, available literature makes it clear that description and interpretation are separated by a thin breath in qualitative study (Wolcot, 1994) and so both methods of presentation were used without any discrimination against any of them, having recourse to a semiotic structuralist style of interpretation (Leach, 1976)[8] and deconstruction theories (Derrida, 1976)[9] to help bring out the socially subterranean meanings in the texts. These texts were transcriptions and translations of hiplife songs.

1.4.19 Limitations

I had problems with funding and this affected the duration of stay in some of the sites. The problem I had in Accra however was not related to funding. Accra was quite a difficult terrain and as reported in my diaries, I had to trek long distances to meet artists and the situation even got worse when Okyeame Kwame left for Kumasi after the second week, for I had a lot of difficulties

---

American society and it is the re-contexualised version of this kind of poetry we are talking about. "Bragadocio" is self-praising and "dissing" is the inverted form of "braggadocio" when you praise by condemning the other.
[8] This is the study of signs and symbols in their relation to cultural interpretations. For further reading, see Edmund Leach, *Culture and Communication: The Logic by which Symbols are Connected*.
[9] See Jaques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. He deconstructs the works of major writers like Roman Jakobson and Levi-Strauss. He deconstructs these works showing the "silences" or the conflicts inherent in texts which contribute to the meaning of the texts, cracking the story open and disturbing its tranquillity as John D. Caputo would put it.

accessing the artists. Mizbell, for example, failed me on three occasions. Obrafour did the same. Tiny, Edem and Hammer called me to meet them at the Kotoka International Airport only to see them fly to South African without a word to me.

1.5 Theoretical considerations

Hiplife lyrics, unlike traditional poetry, are written and memorized. I could therefore consider hiplife lyrics as text and as performance at the same time but when I used it as performance, text was inclusive.

I was guided by two factors: the performance of the lyrics of hiplife as aesthetics and as expression of social realities. I drew on A. B. Lord and Havelock's contribution to performance theory when considering hiplife lyrics as aesthetics. Lord quotes Milman Parry's definition of formula as "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given idea" (Parry quoted in Lord, 1960: 30). Lord mentions some of the formulaic expressions as "repetitions", "stock epic", and "stereotyped phrases". Others are parallelism, balancing, opposition of words and he concludes that these are what "we designate as melodic, metric, syntactic and acoustic patterns" (Lord, 1960). Perhaps Havelock better captures the aesthetic nature of these elements when he observes that these patterns becomes an "'art' in our modern sense of the term, it cajoles through pleasure the ear" (Havelock, 1982) thus creating virtuosity in the performer who casts his hypnotic spell on his audience and throws them into ecstasy.

Again, these formulaic patterns serve as memory cues for the memorization of the hiplife written text which becomes detached from its immediate context and entextualised in oral performance. It is interesting to note that the written text was itself detached from the culture before it was detached again for oral performance. Indeed, we can talk of two main ideas here: entextualization which

involves rendering a text detachable from its immediate context (Urban, 1996: 21) and the cultural template which is given a material form in successive moments of performance (Urban, 2001). The audience who recites the lyrics with the artist memorizes the lyrics from the head, using the same cultural template or formulaic patterns just as does the artist, exactly the same manner traditional poetry is memorized. Thus memorization of hiplife text is unique in certain respects. This, however, does not mean that every recitation or memorization is the same as the other because while the cultural template in the form of formulaic pattern allows memorization, it is further nourished by the individual artist's sense of creativity at successive instantiations, thus no two hiplife performance occasions have the same performance (Lord, 1960).

These patterns have functions other than aesthetics. They are also "interpretative frame within which the message being communicated are to be understood, and that this frame contrasts with at least one other frame" (Bauman, 1977: 11). They provide the genre called hiplife which has its own conventions and we can only appreciate it following the conventions as we see spelt out in the metatext of "dissing". The metatext and other patterns which help to interpret the lyrics are the metacommunication. We detach the pattern from the immediate context of the society and the pattern provides the nexus of the group (Havelock, 1982), the nexus of the community. This is when the lyrics carry the narrative of the community. Here we see the position of the woman, new values and attitudes, the social stratification and mobilization, the moral responsibility of the old and various ideologies of the youth in the contemporary Ghana.

1.6 Summary
The historical development of Ghana has left its imprints on its music. The new contemporary music of Ghana, hiplife, presents new values, attitudes, cultural behaviours and socio-cultural realities which are integral part of the historical development of Ghana. We see such emerging

Ghanaian culture in the performative structures of hiplife, a contemporary musical genre that seeks to recontextualize old cultures in new ones and foreign cultures in local ones (Shipley, 2009; Osumare, 2012). The study of the textuality of contemporary lyrics like that of hiplife which explores the lived experience and the ideology of the Ghanaian youth can therefore best be done using the qualitative research method. In the next chapter, we will look at the extant literature on African hip hop, region by region, and look at the extent to which this research contributes to this literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW, HISTORY AND CULTURE OF HIPLIFE

2.0 Introduction

Every culture has its antecedents and this chapter basically shows that hiplife is not an isolated cultural development in Ghana. It has its historical and cultural antecedents, internal and external connections as hinted in chapter one. Even though there has not been much literature done on the internal development of hiplife, a lot of work has been done on hip hop's external connections and on parallel hip hop genres across Africa. This chapter therefore starts with a review of writings on hip hop in Africa in general, continues by looking at the hiplife lyrics in a spoken, written and musical word continuum, and finally turns to certain internal historical developments, including the precursors of hiplife and cultural antecedents to hiplife where we look at the hiplife culture and the hiplife art as community memory.

Initial studies on hip hop appeared confined to the US where it started (Hager, 1984; Toop, 1984; Pearlman, 1988; Halberstam, 1989; Rose, 1994).Writings on hip hop as a commercial art in the US have influenced writers from other regions which have experienced the spill over of this cultural revolution and this includes continental Africa. Literature on hip hop or rap[10] in Africa can be grouped into two major categories: that which sees hip hop as constructing social change, and that which sees it as expressing culture (which may include social change). Various works on hip hop in Africa have indicated that rap or hip hop reconstructs the African socio-cultural text to straddle both traditional and modern worlds (Gross et al, 1992; van de Merwe, 1989; Mazouzi, 1990; Moulard-Kouka, 2005; Auzanneau, 2002; Ntarangwi, 2009; Englert, 2008; Stephens, 2009; Journo, 2009; Stroeken, 2005). We also have an appreciable volume of work indicating that the African hip hop or

---

[10] The words hip hop and rap are generally considered not to have separate meanings and the two find themselves inextricably linked in the study of hip hop in Africa. It is therefore convenient to use these terms interchangeably in this study.

rap carries the social narrative of the people and addresses burning social issues through expressive cultures which include the linguistic and other semiotic structures like fashion, body language and other generational signs (Tarek, 2001; Auzanneau, 2002; Akinde, 2007; Hohlhagen, 2007; Ntarangwi, 2009; Samper, 2004; Nyairo and Ogude, 2003, Englert, 2008; Stroeken, 2005, Diab, 2010).

2.1 Literature review

The organization of this literature review adopts a regional approach, grouping continental Africa into five zones: North, West, Central, East and South Africa because even though we are dealing with hip hop as a genre, each region has something unique to offer to African hip hop. It must be pointed out however that selected countries from various regions will be represented and the term African hip hop is used to represent all African contemporary musical arts related to American hip hop, notwithstanding their regional names.

2.1.1. Pioneering works

North Africa, especially Algeria, enjoys a very rich hip hop culture. Writing on how European cultures are now being influenced by Islam through migration, Gross et al describe the early influence of rap on Maghreb culture, offering a rigorous analysis of the manner in which rap has been infused into traditional Maghreb music called rai (Gross et al, 1989; Mazouzi, 1990). The history of rai, specifically in Algeria, dates back to the1930s. It deals with social issues like national liberation struggle, wine, love and the pleasure of marginal life (Gross et al, Parales, 2002). In a country known for its strict moral and religious standards, rai certainly takes on a resistance dimension (Pareles, 2002; DeAngelis, 2003). The killing of Cheb Hosni during a live televised

concert in 1994 by Islamic fundamentalists, who saw rai as anti-Islamic and pro-Western[11], for allowing himself to be kissed on the cheek on stage (Pareles, 2002, DeAngelis, 2003) and subsequent killings of rai singers and producers have done very little to stop the rai movement in Algeria[12]. Today we still have rai superstars like Cheb Khaled, Cheb Mami, Chaba Fadela and Cheb Sahraoui, even though some of them have relocated to France for safety reasons (Gross et al, 1998). The artistes do not only resist the status quo. Rappers like I AM and Human Spirit mix reggae, Nigerian highlife, African American rhythms and Arab melody (Gross et al, 1998) making a fluent statement for globalization, a "cultural interanimation, interaction of ideologies" (Bakhtin, 1981: 29). This has helped the society to produce different kinds of people, that Adil Jazouli[13] classifies into four categories, the assimilationists, those who completely conform to the French culture, the delinquents, known for crime and violence, the ethno nationalists who conform to an Arab or Berber socio-cultural universe and the hybrids who embrace both Arab and French cultures (Gross et al, 1989). Clearly, rai has brought in its trail a cultural flow and an irreversible social transformation in Algeria which is even exported to other Maghreb regions and France, and this may even serve as a historical antecedent to the present political unrest in that region.

Another country worth mentioning in terms of such a social transformation is Egypt. Hip hop is believed to have been introduced to Egypt by Shabaan Abdel Rahim (Loza, 2004; Grippo, 2006, Veash, 2002). It is a fact that Abdel Rahim introduced ghetto culture into public discourse but the hip hop group MTM are known to have produced the first authentic taste of modern hip hop in Egypt (Loza, 2004). Indeed, another Egyptian hip hop group, Mad Skillz Empire (MSE) believes

---

[11] The interpretation of rai in Algeria depends on the side of the divide one belongs to. Outsiders might see rai as modernisation while Islamic fundamentalists see it as disruptive and injurious to their social order. DeAngelis explains that France prevails over the Algerian government to loosen up its grips on rai for the former reason.

[12] For further reading on how Algeria becomes a locus for the dramatisation of the conflict between Islamic and Western worlds, see Nasser Al-Taee, "Running with Rebels: Politics, Identity, and Sexual Narrative in Algerian Rai."In Echo, Vol. 5, Issue 1 (Spring 1993), www. Echo.ucla.edu

[13] See Gross et al.

street culture even exists in traditional Egyptian culture citing examples of pre-Islamic poetry featuring poets who used poetry to criticise one another and concluding that that might have been the origin of MC battles (Loza, 2004). The group Negham Masry with their mixture of traditional instruments like the "oud" and "qanum" do not constitute the only metaphor of cultural ecumenism going on in Egypt. Emmanuelle Amira, a female rapper of international repute, who combines traditional and Western cultures, is a symbol of this cultural hybridity and change in a transforming patriarchal society (Diab, 2010). Even though these artistes are seen as socially disruptive by the elite whose open disapproval is registered in the diatribes they inundate the Egyptian dailies with (Grippo et al, 2006), the hip hop artistes, representing the youth culture of change, simply seem unstoppable.

West Africa is another region where hip hop serves as an instrument of social change. Even though the change in this region may not produce violent generational and political confrontations as we find in Algeria (Gross et al, 1992), this new form of youth expression still maintains its subversive nature and serves as the "voice of the voiceless". Like its North African counterpart, hip hop in West Africa is a combination of traditional and modern cultures (Gross et al, 1992, Grippo, 2006; Atia, 2001; Moulard-Kouka, 2005; Stephens, 2000; Mhlami, 2004; Akindes, 2007; Perullo, 2005; Osumare, 2012) and this is made even more evident in Senegalese hip hop where the ancient Senegalese praise poetry by the griots (Diop, 1995; Camara, 1992), makes rap easily accessible and most amenable to the youth culture there. The rappers therefore present the past through an idyllic lens of positivity (Moulard-Kouka, 2005: 237). In fact, Moulard-Kouka sees Senegalese rap as a hybrid of oral and written texts (Moulard-Kouka, 2005: 234; Zegnani, 2004): it is also seen as a literary text production which starts as an individual enterprise and ends up as a collective one (Moulard-Kouka, 2005). The manner in which she discusses her subject is mentally stimulating,

pointing out that hip hop or rap is a fertile site for linguistic investigation where neologisms, loan words in street French, code-switching, simplification of Wolof morphology, syntax and lexicals can easily be studied (Moulard-Kouka, 2005: 234-242). She concludes that by its very congenial nature, that strand of street French in rap constitutes the unofficial lingua franca in Senegal for occasions that do not require standard French or traditional or classical Wolof (Moulard-Kouka, 2005). Apart from being an instrument of expressing the changing and newly developed linguistic structures in street French (Moulard-Kouka, 2005: 235; Auzanneau, 2002), hip hop also maintains a very lively relationship with politics in Senegal. DJ Magee reveals that it played a very significant role in the change of regime that replaced former President Abdou Diouf with President Wade. Similar roles of hip hop have been recorded in Gabon where the President Ali-Ben Bongo was known to have been on stage rapping, an attempt to sell his political persona and message to the youth in the country and in Kenya where Gidi Gidi Maji Maji's "Unbwogable" was adopted by the opposition parties. This was a move which seemed to have struck the right chord in the electorate, leading to the ousting of Arap Moi who had been in office for more than twenty years (Ntarangwi, 2009: 76-77; Nyairo and Ogude, 2005). We can also mention Benjamin Mkapa, the President of Tanzania's adoption of Prof. Jay's "Ndio mzee" to warn his ministers to avoid giving unrealistic promises (Ntarangwi, 2009). To reinforce the political appeal of hip hop, we could cite further examples from the US experience. Russel Simons galvanized the hip hop energy in mainstream politics, the kind Conrad Mohammed and others have, getting the youth of 18-24 years into civic activism, and Queen Latifah's "click and be heard" project that registered more than 60 million youth in the months leading to the 2000 presidential elections (Kitwana, 2002).

Hip hop has not lost its political appeal in Ivory Coast either. This time, it is used as an agency for peace building. For a country that has experienced war in recent years, coupé-decalé, the equivalent

of the US hip hop in Ivory Coast[14], provides rhythms and lyrics primarily meant to be danced to, not to be meditated upon. The lyrics appear apolitical and this is calculated to turn the people's mind away from political confrontation in the country (Hohlhagen, 2007). However, according to Schumann (2012: 539, 552), there is a related youth genre in Ivory Coast, zouglou, which articulates the grievances of impoverished school drop-outs. In certain circumstances, zouglou voices direct criticisms of the government.

Central Africa is also experiencing an emerging but a vibrant hip hop culture. Countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Congo (Brazzaville) all have very interesting hip hop landscapes but one country in the region that constitutes the apotheosis of the hip hop culture is Gabon. Gabon catches the eye of Michelle Auzanneau who provides a detailed linguistic analysis of hip hop and comparing Gabon to Senegal, he discusses, with amazing clarity, the influence of L1[15] on the French language. Such influence, according to him, creates a hybrid that becomes the nativised form of French (Auzanneau, 2002; Moulard-Kouka, 2005; Kachru, 1982). He postulates that this nativization is the result of urbanization that seeks self expression in combining traditional and foreign cultural forces. Urbanization in such a context, expresses the new and hybrid culture through language (Auzanneau, 2002). He finds adequate support in Moulard-Kouka (2005: 236). These findings have been corroborated by their East African counterparts (Perullo, 2005; Stroeken, 2005; Englert, 2009; Ntarangwi, 2009; Nyairo and Ogude, 2003; Samper, 2004 ; Journo, 2009; Samper, 2004) and even other writers in West Africa who may not specifically have hip hop as their field (Bamgbose, 1971; Sey, 1973; Bokamba, 1982; Kachru, 1982).

East Africa has a comparatively more robust literature on African hip hop. All the writers seem to engage in matters of youth identity: how anti-hegemony ideology constructs youth identity. In

---

[14] Coupé-decalé is an amalgamation of various local and foreign rhythms and it uses rap as well. Since it is the most popular in Ivory Coast, we use it for our analysis.

[15] L1 stands for the mother tongue language of a group of people.

Tanzania, the major preoccupation of these writers is how hip hop is used to create public space for youth identity (Perullo, 2005; Stroeken, 2005; Englert, 2008; Nyairo and Ogude, 2003; Ntarangwi, 2009). Alex Perullo points out that hip hop is the locus for discussing matters like unemployment, inadequate social infrastructure, Aids and many more issues that directly affect youth survival and almost all the writers (Perullo, 2005; Stroeken, 2005; Englert, 2008, Ntarangwi, 2009; Nyairo and Ogude, 2003; Samper, 2004) are in unison on that. They also speak of the combination of traditional and modern cultures and that this hybridity finds expression in a regional collaboration between rappers of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, breaking down the tribal and national barriers and exporting cultural flow and mixtures across the borders in the sub region (Ntarangwi, 2009). Again, it is this hybridity that configures the new youth expression which redraws the Tanzanian cultural lines within the context of power relations, separating the identity associated with the dominant power (Hebdige, 1987)[16], from the identity which is not. We could refer to the generation which is not closely associated with the dominant power as the new generation (Foucault, 1977; Stroeken, 2005). Stroeken proceeds with an interesting debate that the anti-hegemonic culture of the youth is immunized through the concept of "keeping it real", a street philosophy that seeks legitimization in jettisoning the traditional moral grounds and creating a new one on which the accuser and the accused are located on the same moral grounds: the accuser is as guilty as the accused (Stroeken, 2005) as we find in "dissing" (Rose, 1994). This is how hip hop, a hidden transcript (Scott, 1990), subverts the dominant power (Hebdige, 1987). Englert however counters Stroeken's position with the reason that hip hop is mainly an economic enterprise that separates the economic successful artists who are the superstars, from the less successful who are underground rappers (Englert, 2008). Her persuasion is premised on the grounds that bongo flava, the Tanzanian variety of African hip hop, means surviving the harsh Tanzanian economic realities with the brains.

---

[16] This is a term used by Hebdige to refer to the dominant power of the society.

This same anti-hegemonic ideology is practised by the Kenyan rappers. They mainly interpret the "normalizing" power (Foucault, 1977) to be that of the colonial master and unlike artistes in most parts of Africa, they align themselves with the old generation who fought against the colonial powers (Samper, 2004). This has created a platform for them to enter the public sphere hitherto occupied only by politicians, opinion shapers and scholars and through its subversive operations, has introduced youth identity a syncretic culture comprising the traditional and modern cultures (Ntarangwi, 2009: 20-43). Hip hop thus registers a kind of presence that generates a new kind of literary energy in poetry which demonstrates the complexity and fluidity of contemporary urban cosmopolitan experience in which different ethnic groups co-exist. This development helps to erase ethnic allegiances and its accompanying prejudices, hip hop thus assuming the role of a verbal metaphor of Kenyan social hybridization (Journo, 2009).

Again, East African writers on hip hop are also concerned about the epistemics of feminism in that region, considering feminism's anti-hegemonic stance in the modern world (Ntarangwi, 2009; Lakoff, 1975). This is evidenced in Chameleone's "Mama mia" which attempts to break the silence over stronger women whose good works are hidden due to received attitudes of the 'normalizing' (Foucault, 1977, 1990: 30, 39) or the public transcript (Scott, 1990) in Uganda (Ntarangwi, 2009). In addition, Ntarangwi says that hip hop has helped to break the silence on sex in the public space and it has also helped remove the social stigma that surrounds AIDS patients thus paving the way for better health care for victims of the scourge (Ntarangwi, 2009: 68-93). He comments on the cultural flow there and states further that hip hop also serves as a conduit for foreign culture in Uganda.

One African hip hop genre that makes no secret about the cultural flow of foreign origin is South African kwaito. It is a contemporary black dance music, an amalgamation of American hip hop, European house music, other international music and South African traditional music which relies on computer and synthesizers for its production (Stephens, 2000; Steingo, 2007) It appropriates modern entrepreneurial strategies like capital manipulation of culture, commodity aesthetics, consumerism and materialism (Magubane, 2006; Stephens, 2000: 259). Reading through the lenses of Hegelian dialectics, Steingo proves that kwaito's seeming decentering of political power is to make a political statement of freedom and peace (Impey, 2001, Mhlambi, 2004; Steingo, 2007; Coplan, 2005; Stephens, 2000) which is the new direction for post-Apartheid South African politics. Steingo states further that kwaito is a powerful political leverage and while its clandestine power over the youth goes unnoticed, hip hop also plays both a restrictive and liberating role in the lives of the women: objectifying them and at the same time creating agency for their self- representation in post-Apartheid South Africa (Impey, 2001; Steingo, 2007). And as in East Africa, and to some extent isolated cases in Egypt, the women in South Africa have entered the public space, expressing their world view and making their voices heard.

Available literature on African hip hop therefore clearly demonstrates that hip hop constructs African youth identity in variegated ways. Its influence is so powerful that even in the face of Islamic fundamentalist killings in Algeria, the youth are determined to maintain their new-found identity (Gross et al, 1992; Mazouzi, 1990). In other countries like Senegal, Gabon, Kenya and South Africa, the hip hop identity plays a very catalytically significant role in voting (Ntarangwi, 2009: 77; Steingo, 2007; Stephens, 2000; Waterflow, 2008). Again, African hip hop uses languages based on the sociolinguistic energy of the people, creating various varieties from the "norm" of the native speaker (Bamgbose, 1982; Bokamba, 1982; Sey, 1973, Moulard-Kouka, 2005; Auzanneau, 2002;

Journo, 2009; Krachu, 1982; Englert, 2008) and this serves as the most appropriate instrument to express contemporary syncretic experiential realities that Africa is currently undergoing.

2.1.2. Observation

Sophie Moulard-Kouka posits that rap in Senegal is a hybrid of written and oral texts. She predicates her position on the following facts. First, rap texts start with writing, an individual enterprise, before it reaches a collective audience where it assumes its oral character. Second, rap demonstrates literary resources by referring to radical writers like Cheikh Anta Diop, Senghor, Aimé Césaire, and even to the print media. Third, rap uses story telling and theatrical techniques, and she cites Pee Froisse's "Afrika for Afrikans" text, which divides into acts and scenes. My data contain all the elements in Moulard-Kouka's submission, especially the fact that rappers write their lyrics and perform them without reading the written work, but even though rap is mainly an art that thrives on hybridity, evidence from my data does not corroborate her position that rap is a hybrid of written and oral texts: the written and the oral texts co-exist in a continuum[17] and there is no hybridity even though they mutually influence each other. For starters, even though the typology of the text - written or oral – has been a subject of huge debate in literary circles (Goody, 1977; Havelock, 1982; Ong, 1982; Soyinka, 1976), there is enough evidence that text as mediation for knowledge record keeping has a better potential of pointing to whether a text is oral or written. Oral and written texts have their separate means of keeping records of knowledge (Goody, 1977; Havelock, 1963: 61-68; Tonkin,1992; Ong, 2000: 57) The pioneering work of A. B. Lord showed that the poetics of written text is different from that of the oral (Lord, 1960). Jack Goody, similarly, is very clear that the structures used in oral text poetics are mainly formulas that serve as memory cues in cultures which do not write down information (Goody, 1977). The written text can be logically and rationally ordered, while the oral text cannot (Goody, 1977; Ong 1982). Even though there has been a lot of

---

[17] In the next section, I demonstrate that this continuum, in the case of hiplife, extends to the musical word, the hiplife lyric, a phenomenon that has not been paid much attention to in West African hip hop and music literature.

criticism by scholars like Finnegan (1988) of the idea of a sharp divide between oral and written modes as claimed by other writers like Ong (1982) and Goody (1977), my data overwhelmingly provide evidence of formulas and formulaic structures that discernibly tilt more towards the oral, even though the formulas are in the written form.

The position adopted therefore is that even though the rappers write down their lyrics, the text produced is written, on one hand, and oral, on the other, but certainly not a hybrid. Lord explains that the "use of writing in setting down oral texts does not 'per se' have any effect on oral tradition" (Lord, 2000: 128). It is a means of recording and the texts "are purely oral" (Lord, 2000: 128). This is what reinforces my position that writing is only a medium for keeping record of what is to be performed orally. Let us draw an analogy here: if water is kept in a pot, it still remains water and not a mixture of water and pot. The two are separate even though they co-exist. A mixture of the two, as Moulard-Kouka claims, is analogous to a "transitional" text[18] (Lord, 2000: 128). The question that Lord poses is "whether there can be a single individual who in composing an epic would think now in one way and now in another, or, perhaps, in a manner that is a combination of the two techniques" (Lord, 2000:129). He is quick to answer that "I believe that the answer must be in the negative" (Lord, 2000; 129). He is completely aware of the possibility of a "written"[19] text that is oral in essence. Lord calls such a text an "autograph oral", explaining that "the singer would follow his usual oral style" (Lord, 2000: 129). He illuminates the debate further that a text that is written for the purpose of performance "was just one more performance for the singer, one more in a long series" (Lord, 2000: 124) and that performance is what brings life to the otherwise lifeless and fixed text. We however have to note that even though Lord talks about oral texts that are written down after composition or performance (Lord, 2000: 128-130) and that hiplife texts are

---

[18] Lord explains this to be a combination of evidence of literacy and illiteracy in the same text.
[19] The argument is that such a text is in essence an oral one.

written down before performance and are discarded once the artistes get into performing mode, the difference does not change anything in our analysis. It is true that writing down a text before performing it has the potential of changing certain features of the text/performance, but in the case of hiplife, the core structures of both the written and performance texts remain "oral". Even though the text could be written or oral, depending on how you look at it, I focus more on the orality of these texts. From the literature available, it is very clear that the preponderance of the work done African on hip hop is urban-centred and pays most attention to features associated with modernity in the genre. While this work also pays attention to the modern as an aspect of syncretism in Ghanaian hiplife, it brings to the table a deeper understanding of the oral or the traditional aspect of Ghanaian hiplife through linguistic analysis of the texts.

On the issue of identity building in African hip hop, Birgit Englert challenges the widely held position that African hip hop constructs youth identity (Stephens, 2000; Auzanneau, 2002; Samper, 2004; Nyairo and Ogude, 2005; Grippo, 2006; Moulard-Kouka, 2005; Perullo, 2005; Stroeken, 2005; Hohlhagen, 2007; Akindes, 2007; Ntarangwi, 2009). She asserts that African hip hop rather operates on the basis of neoliberal and economic considerations that allow it to reach a larger audience. Even though there is some evidence in my data to support her position that hip hop makes attempts to reach a larger audience, a close examination of my fieldwork materials, the texts, the performances, opinions of people on the texts and performances and my interpretation strongly indicates that Ghanaian hip hop constructs youth identity and supports the widely held position. The data clearly demonstrate that hiplife is the platform of Ghanaian youth expression and ideology and that as a resistance culture, it sets them apart from the dominant power or the "normalisation" of the dominant culture (Hebdige, 1987). As a resistance culture, hiplife has the underground and superstar polarity (Englert, 2009) but both of them, especially the underground rapper, are very

subversive, demystifying taboos and revising values of the dominant Ghanaian culture, attacking authority (Impey, 2001; Journo, 2009; Ntarangwi, 2009) and providing agency for a change through consumerism, commodity aesthetics, cultural commoditization and neoliberalism. This results in a syncretic modern culture (Stroeken, 2005; Hebdige, 1987; Adorno, 1984). The youth, it must be added, through hiplife publicity stunts, create space in the Ghanaian society (Journo, 2009).

Again, on the question of resistance, feminism finds an appropriate ally in hiplife because they all oppose the dominant culture, hiplife or the youth against the old or authority and women against men or patriarchy (Rose, 1994: 146-182; Impey, 2001). This notwithstanding, the observation is that hiplife offers women agency for self-expression on one hand and commoditizes them for commercial purposes on the other (Impey, 2001) and analysis of my data makes that very clear.

Finally, there is not enough literature on hiplife. We so far have two main ethnographic accounts on hiplife which have recently been published by Halifu Osumare (2012) and Jesse Shipley (2013). Interestingly, the fieldwork for both researches is exclusively centred in Accra. We are yet to have fieldwork on hiplife that covers the entire country. This research fills that lacuna. Again, the study of Ghana's contribution to African hip hop is comparatively limited, and it is this limitation in African hip hop scholarship the whole of this research seeks to address. Furthermore, since we have discussed the hiplife lyric as a textual phenomenon, identifying this phenomenon as having more of oral orientation, it is fair to talk about it in terms of its orality as the musical word in its musical environment.

2.2 Hiplife lyrics: the Spoken, Written and Musical word Continuum

The Hiplife lyric is in a spoken, written and musical word continuum, what Lord refers to as "a continuum of man's artistic expression in words" (Lord, 2000: 130). Various reasons have been put forward for this peculiar nature of the musical word, the lyric. Linguistic theories as a framework of analyzing lyrics, especially those of hiplife, have to be approached with caution. Samuel Levin warns that the "techniques of linguistic analysis have been developed to deal with 'language as used for ordinary purpose'" (Levin, 1965: 257). Levin goes further to buttress his position by using the example, "the stone looked forlornly at the surrounding landscape", which to him, fails the test of any existing syntactical rule in the English language simply for the reason that the sequence of inanimate noun and a sense verb does not feature in any syntactic rule of the English traditional grammar (Levin, 1965: 259). He finds adequate support in recent linguists like Arnold Zwicky who opines that, "folk poetry is composed, learned, and performed according to unconscious canons of what 'sounds right', rather than by adherence to explicit formulated rules" (Zwicky, 1986: 69). Other researches on the differences between the poetic system and the linguistic system have been done with researchers emphasizing the poetic function of language (Lotman, 1977; Jakobson, 1987: 117-266; Hymes, 2001: 187; Banti and Giannattasio, 2004: 290-320), the poetic syntax and its relationship to real-time (Smith, 1968; Sinclair, 1972), the syntax and the poetic line (Mitchell, 1970; Tarlinskaja, 1984) and the deviation of poetic forms from linguistic well-formedness (Peters, 1948; Brook-Rose, 1958; Baker, 1967; Fairley, 1975) including the process of metaphorization (Cureton, 1980b; Halliday, 1985). These poetic linguistic transgressions, which in effect constitute the creative force of the poetic system, are not peculiar to the English language. Researches in African hip hop, especially in Senegal and Gabon, have revealed interesting linguistic transgressions made for the sake of creativity in the poetic system (Auzanneau, 2002; Moulard-Kouka, 2005). Poetic language in most Ghanaian languages have similar linguistic transgressions

and the caution given to the study of English poetics using conventional linguistic rules is equally relevant in the study of hiplife lyrics. These deviations notwithstanding, linguistic theories are a sine qua non in this analysis because "there are also poetic uses of linguistic facts, and it is this realm that we can properly speak of ways in which linguists can contribute to the study of poetry" (Zwicky, 1986: 64).

Combining conventional linguistics with Levin's approach to the study of poetry therefore offers a better framework for the study of hiplife lyrics, a multilingual practice, which by its very nature of hybridity, presents "deviances" in its poetic language. As pointed out earlier, this is where Samuel Levin's contribution, courtesy of his concept of linguistic structure in poetry, becomes relevant. We must however clear our minds of certain seeming reservations with regards to Levin's approach so far as hiplife poetics are concerned. Levin is sometimes criticised for using an unscientific approach for isolating the categories he suggests (Heller, 1963:139). Again, there is the perception that his examples are drawn from the English language and not Ghanaian languages. Furthermore, his examples are mainly from written and not oral poetics (Levin, 1965: .256-260). These reservations do not affect the relevance of Levin's approach to our analysis in any way. The fact is that examining the phonic and the semantic with regards to their syntagmatic or paradigmatic positions is possible in oral as well as written poetics in all languages. As for the issue of nonverifiability of criteria for isolating the categories, Levin takes great pains to address that in his book *College English* (260-265). Levin is therefore relevant to this analysis in the sense that he sees the relationship between sound and meaning of poetry as "occurrences of phonically or semantically equivalent forms in equivalent positions either syntagmatically or conventionally defined" (Levin, 1963: 50). He states that "two forms may be equivalent" and he assigns two categories to this concept; Type 1 or positional which is "in respect to the linguistic environment(s) in which they

occur" and Type 2 or natural, which is "in respect to some extralinguistic factor" (Levin, 1963: 29). The echo pattern in Derba's hit track "Derba" is a clear example:

1. Boy bi pɛ sɛ ɔteetee me   A certain boy wants to harass me

2. Mefa bɛɛbi a na ɔtaataa me   He hounds me wherever I go

3. Ama seisei deɛ meho kyere me   I am now really under siege

The vertical echo of "me" in lines 1-3 and the horizontal echo of "ɔteetee" and "ɔtaataa" in lines 1 and 2 are not accidental. The vertical repetition of the sound "me" and the horizontal repetition of similar sounds "ɔteetee" and "ɔtaataa" are selected to create rhythm in the lines thanks to a system of pairing that is made possible due to the fact that sounds are positioned with the intention of creating phonological similarities. And it is the phonological similarities, whether in vertical or horizontal position, that help to construct the rhythmic patterns in the rap.

Such a combination of position of sounds and their related phonological characteristics, as seen in this example, create a rhythm that makes meaning to a group of people. Levin goes further to explicate extensively the relationship between phonological and semantic process in meaning construction in poetry. But what is more important so far as this analysis is concerned is the fact that this sound and meaning relationship can be extended to the relationship between the phonic structures in instrumental and lyrical sounds. This is because, like the example offered above, rhythm constitutes an intersection between language and music on one hand and language and instrumental rhythm on the other. This offers a framework in which harmonization of lyrical rhythms with instrumental ones as seen in the hiplife azonto rhythm become possible. This kind of harmonization of vocal and instrumental rhythms is projected to the neglect of chord progression and other instrumental devices which have the potential of submerging the beauty of the above

combination. Louis Heller (1963: 140) has seen this potential in Levin's approach and recommends that Levin's concept "could apply to many types of music…rhythm for instance, is basically a positional matrix parallel to meter of a poem, and pitch is the correlation of phonological equivalences". Linguistic theories and Levin's approach to poetry, therefore, find easy accommodation in hiplife lyrics analysis because they both serve as convenient tools to disinter the Ghanaian social meanings, especially from the perspective of oral poetics. This works better in relation to Ghanaian hiplife than the notion of a mixture of oral and written poetics, as suggested by Moulard-Kouka (2005), for "The written technique...is not compatible with the oral technique" (Lord, 2000:129). Obviously, Levin's approach is not only applicable in written works but it cuts across the alleged oral-literacy divide.

2.3 Highlife: a historical antecedent to hiplife

Hiplife is another stage in the popular music continuum in Ghana and since highlife immediately comes before hiplife in this continuum, it is proper to go back to it as a historical antecedent to hiplife. This will give a larger picture of hiplife's present phenomenology and epistemics with regards to its origin. From this angle of thinking therefore, we need to start with the question, "What is highlife?"

John Collins and Paul Richards quote Yebuah Mensah's[20] explanation that "Highlife started as a catch name for the indigenous songs played at these clubs by early dance bands…the people outside called it the High Life as they did not reach the class of couples going inside who not only had to pay a then relatively high entrance fee of 7s 6d but also had to wear full evening dress"[21] (Collins and Richards, 1982: 124). This is corroborated by John Miller Chernoff who postulates in addition that highlife is an umbrella term that was coined in the 1920s (Chernoff, 1985). Another account

---

[20] Yeboah Mensah was a leader of the Accra Rhythmic Ochestra, formed in 1914.
[21] See John Collins and Paul Richards, "Popular music in West Africa".

also holds that highlife is Africanizing the use of Western instruments like the guitar and concertina introduced to the littoral regions of Ghana by Liberian seamen while the indigenous Ghanaians sang the traditional songs like "adenkum", "ashewa", "asafo", "kununku", "gome", "kpalongo", "borborbor" and many others to these newly introduced instruments (Collins, 1996; Chernoff, 1985). This development culminated in the first commercial recording of highlife, "Yaa Amponsah", by Jacob Sam, in 1928 (Collins, 1996). Jewel Ackah, one of the leading old highlife musicians still in business testifies to highlife's appropriation of local genres, saying, "whenever you are talking about highlife…we have 'adenkum', 'osode', 'ashewa', 'konkoma'… So it is the thing [sic] that the Western[22] guys used to play when they were having funerals and it was there that the big bands started using it [sic]".

George Gansah, popularly called Penche, who started playing highlife from the 1950's, also confirms Collins' observation, adding "Sometimes, we copied from 'asafo' and other traditional music". Clearly, there is every indication that early highlife was a mixed bag of creativity that kept the traditional roots of Ghanaian songs and mixed them with foreign influence that came its way. This sense of creativity and innovativeness was possible because highlife is basically a recreational genre and due to its flexible nature, it was amenable to any Ghanaian traditional music (Chernoff, 1985). This sense of innovativeness transcended the known popular genres to the very traditional genres like Nwonkro, for the sake of which "Efua Basa, much like other highlife innovators, has been credited with revitalising this traditional music form by expanding its musical range and leading it into new social venues"[23] (Chernoff, 1985) By the same token, highlife had the potential of taking on foreign rhythms. Even the old highlife musicians experimented a lot with foreign

---

[22] The reference here is that of the Western region of Ghana and not Western in the sense of pertaining to Eurocentric traditions.

[23] Maame Efua Basa transformed a traditional genre like Nwonkro to a very popular genre fit for all occasions. In my field work, I recorded nwonkro by the late Maame Efua Basa's group which performed during Good Friday services at St. Peter's Cathedral, Kumasi. The synchrony of the text they used with the one that Catholics use on Good Fridays was very remarkable. For more on Maame Efua Basa's work, see Chernoff, "Africa Come Back".

rhythms as evidenced by what C. K. Mann, who started his trade from the 1960s said that "we have jazz and we have highlife but when highlife became dance band, we wanted to play highlife like jazz". He pointed out other foreign influences at that time as blurro, rhumba, chachacha and quicksteps, thus syncretism can be traced right from the embryonic stage of highlife.

Highlife's syncretic and flexible nature, as suggested by various definitions and explanations above, facilitated its association with trade (Collins and Richards, 1982: 112-118). Indeed, contrary to popular belief, John Collins and Paul Richards opine that the "lineage system"[24] does not have as much influence on the community (Nukunya, 1992) as merchant capital and postulate that merchant capital, which started long before the Black man's contact with White man, but which certainly reached its paroxysm during the contact with the White man, has a more transforming influence on the community due to its potential of forging interaction between people of different cultures. Nketia, tracing the history of Ghanaian traditional drumming seems to support this concept of mixture of cultures saying, "there was cultural interaction that resulted in the borrowing and adaptation of cultural items, including music" (Nketia, 1992: 6). Trade and music became intertwined and the two supported cultural flow in Ghana and that resulted in social changes. For most people in Ghana, changes that affected behavioural expression were a "disorder" but ironically the musicians happened to be one of the agents responsible to help manage this disorder. Highlife therefore, played a double role as an agent of change and at the same time "an agent of affirmation for traditional values" (Chernoff, 1985: 167) and it managed this social role by reflecting current social experiential realities (Mensah, 1970; Bame, 1975; Van der Geest, 1980; Yankah, 1984; Asante-Darko and Van der Geest, 1983; Chernoff, 1985). As pointed out earlier, the artistes did so through entrepreneurial approaches of innovation, creativity and self-promotion.

---

[24] Nukunya defines the lineage system as group of people in a locality who trace their origin from a common ancestry.

Again, another entrepreneurial concept that was adopted by the highlife musicians was specialization. Keeping in touch with the people required some form of association with the kind of class that patronised the art. Music could be oriented towards either rural or urban communities. The dance bands, which evolved from the brass bands, mostly constituting the ballroom dance orchestras, orchestrated local songs and specialised in urban tastes (Collins, 1996) while the guitar bands, which also evolved from palm wine highlife, as the name suggests[25], specialised in rural tastes (Chernoff, 1985; Waterman, 1986, Collins, 1996). The coastal guitar styles like "yaa amponsah" and those inherited from the Liberian seamen, "dagomba" and "mainline", spread inland and became influenced by the "seperewa"[26] and this development in turn created the "odonson" or the Ashanti blues. These became the staple of the guitar bands (Collins, 1996). The dance bands gave us virtuosos like E. T. Mensay, King Bruce, C. K. Mann on one hand and the guitar bands gave us Jacob Sam, his nephew Kow Mensah, E. K. Nyame, who introduced concert party in 1952 (Collins, 1996), Nana Ampadu, Obuoba J. A. Addofo and many more on the other hand.

There is however a very interesting trend in all this development. The influence of highlife on social transformation has a boomerang effect: social transformation also influences the development of various genres in highlife for as people change, the genres of music also change, contingent upon the socio-historical circumstances prevalent at the time in question. Highlife presents quite an interesting exemplification of such developments. In the 1970s, factors like the economic hardship and easier visa requirements to some Western countries cohered to make some Ghanaian musicians migrate to the West. A group of Ghanaians called Osibisa exported the Ghanaian brand of highlife to the UK and called it afro-rock. Kofi Ghanaba or Guy Warren went to the US and practised a

---

[25] Palm wine is the main alcoholic drink used for recreation in villages in most parts of Ghana. It therefore comes with little surprise that the palm wine highlife went the way of the rural people.
[26] "Seperewa" is the equivalent of the European lyre or the Senegalese "kora".

brand of highlife he called afro-jazz. Other musicians like Okukuseku, Snr. Eddie Donkor even went to neighbouring countries like Nigeria and practised the Ghanaian brand of highlife there. During the same period, other musicians came back to Ghana and practised a brand of highlife heavily influenced by Western and Nigerian rhythms. Okukuseku's "Yallo Sisi" and Snr. Eddie Donkor's "Na Who cause am" are a clear imitation of Nigerian pidgin and rhythm. Clearly, highlife's influence on cultural flow as a result of the artistes' sense of entrepreneurship cannot be contested.

In the 1980s, still within the same entrepreneurial paradigm, things took a different turn. While in the 1970s, highlife was being exported to Western countries, the 1980s saw the importation of Ghanaian highlife from the Western countries. Ghanaian immigrants in Germany developed another brand of Ghanaian highlife in Diaspora called burger highlife. The name of this genre of highlife came from the fact that George Darko and his group started this experimentation in Hamburg, Germany. Soon after George Darko's seminal "Akoo Tse Brofo", Ben Brako and Jon K. followed the same trend from the UK and Sloopy Mike Gyamfi and Chikencheese responded in like manner from different parts of Europe. The most enduring of these musicians, staying in Europe but plying their trade in Ghana, have been Daddy Lumba and Nana Acheampong. Internally, the country started experiencing the blossoming of gospel music which provided women the platform to enter the entertainment public space, hitherto considered a male preserve (Collins, 1996: Collins, 2002). This period gave us local gospel stars like Tiwaa and Kofi Abraham. Again, the flexible and the syncretic nature of highlife allowed zouk, reggae, funky, calypso and other forms of foreign rhythms to be part of its staple.

Highlife in the1990s was also not insulated against the vagaries of genre change. This was the time some Ghanaian youth staying in the UK or the US decided to come back home for good. The likes of Panji Anoff, Reggie Rockstone, Abraham Ohene Gyan came back well immersed in hip hop, the prevailing world music at that time. They first started with English raps but for the sake of looking for a wider audience, they morphed themselves into Twi rappers. Even though Twi rap is reported to have been there before Reggie Rockstone's ground breaking "Maka a maka", he was the one to have popularised Twi rap and raised it to commercial status, marking the dawn of another major musical experience in Ghana. In all these new developments, the traditional components in the popular music are kept intact.

Indeed, it is clear from the development of highlife that there is a form of intertextual dialogue (Bahktin, 1981) between highlife and the world culture and that as the global culture changed, especially with respect to migration, highlife, in its usual chameleonic character, also changed in its outlook. It can be said that hiplife, even though a product of cultural flow, evolved from highlife.

2.4 The hiplife culture

Chapter three treats the beginning of hiplife as music in detail. It is therefore enough to consider hiplife as a cultural phenomenon at this stage. The history of hiplife shows that it evolved from highlife and highlife also evolved from traditional music. We have so far been looking at the historical antecedents of hiplife. We now turn to its cultural antecedents and look at how hiplife builds on traditional culture. I say for emphasis that the main philosophy of the hiplife culture is that we do not repeat the past; we recreate it. This is premised on the fact that there is no perfect repetition and that all repetitions are improvisations (Hallam and Ingold, 2007; Lord, 2000: 14, 123). For the purpose of explaining how the hiplife culture recreates the past, I draw on Lord's

theory of oral performance and Urban's concept of replication within the context of entextualisation[27]. Lord observes in the Yugoslavian oral performance that every moment of performance is another moment of composition and he asserts that "an oral poem is not composed for but in performance" (Lord, 2000: 13). This therefore means that the poet "is not a mere carrier of tradition but a creative artist making the tradition" (Lord, 2000: 13). The operative expression here is "making tradition" and by implication any time there is performance, the tradition is evolving. Lord's contribution to this work is that there is nothing like complete repetition of the same performance on two different occasions. The question is how does one performance inform the other performance of the same genre or, better still, how does the culture evolve through tradition? We will answer by looking at Urban's concept of replication. The text can be carried over from one context into another, a "process of rendering a given instance of discourse a text, detachable from its local context" (Urban, 1996: 21). The decontextualised text is therefore one detached from the original setting (Urban, 1996). By implication, one performance at one time is not the same at another time because as the time changes; the context too changes. The second performance is therefore a re-creation of the first one. By inference therefore, the hiplife culture is a re-creation of the traditional culture.

We have so far been using the concept of re-creation in performance as a metaphor of time in hiplife but the same concept is applicable in the literal world too. But then one would ask if the traditional oral performance does not do the same. The traditional oral performance also re-creates during moments of performance but the difference is that while the traditional oral performance like adowa, kete, kununku and others re-create the past within the context of the traditional culture, hiplife recreates the past within the global culture. Hiplife receives a lot more external materials for

---

[27] Put simply, this means taking a text from its original context and placing it in another. But as we move on in the discussion, the definition will assume a more complex nature.

its re-creative and regenerative process than the oral counterpart because it does not only look at the traditional culture but other cultures as well (Ntarangwi, 2009). We therefore agree with Krims (2000) that cultural identity is not only a tie with some pure and distant past but also a matter of continual appropriation, revision, and creation in the present with the future in mind. Identity is therefore evolutionary and dialogic (Stokes, 1994). We should note that even though hiplife receives external materials, this work is more on the contribution of the traditional culture.

2.5 Hiplife: an art of community memory

We have seen that the past is recreated to create a new identity. One of the means by which this evolutionary and dialogic identity is constructed is through community memory. Hiplife espouses the Akan philosophy of time (Gyekye, 1985) "as a line that grows" (Hallam and Ingold, 2007) while making things stick (Barber, 2007). The hiplife art transcends time and space using memorialisation to construct new social space or to create new things within the time continuum thus creating a new culture to suit contemporaneity (Ntarangwi, 2009; Samper, 2004; Englert, 2008). We will first deal with how the craft of hiplife looks back using memorization techniques which Lord calls a special means of composition (Lord, 2000). These techniques are formulas that are used as templates upon which new ideas are entered for new artistic experience. In this chapter, we will first talk about the formulas before we speak about how they are used as memory cues.

Hiplife uses linguistic repetition as formulas. Repetition indeed comes in variegated forms but we will concentrate on acoustic repetition like rhythm, alliteration and vertical acoustics as parallelism and echo. Indeed, during my field work, a lot of rappers would simply tell me they "rhyme" as substitute for saying they were rappers[28]. Let us start with the acoustics. Acoustics in this context means signs that appeal to the ear and acoustic repetition refers to signs of this nature which are

---

[28] Some rappers call it rhyme but we should differentiate between rhyme which is the repetition of the same sound and echo which is the repetition of similar sounds.

repeated regularly for special effect. Rhythm is the main craft in hiplife and will be analysed in detail in chapter 4, but for the time being, it is enough to know that unlike in stress language where the rhythm of speech is measured in meter, it is measured in terms of alliteration in Akan, which is a tonal language. Rhythm in this sense is the musical repetition of a particular consonantal sound and its variants. The variants could be different consonants but sharing similar phonological characteristics. For example, in "M'asan Aba" by the Akyeame, Okyeame Kofi says:

Asɛm a ato me	I am in trouble
Obi nka bi ma me	Somebody should come to my aid
Okyeame ato me, me ne me Nyame	Okyeame, it is left between me and my God
Me ara megye to mu, ɛyo, marushe ati	I accept; I have rushed

Horizontally, the bilabial sonorant /m/ repeats. Again, horizontally, the alveolar voiceless plosive /t/, as in "ato", "to" and "ati", is the plosive variant of the bilabial voiced plosive /b/ as in "obi". Vertically, there is an echo of "me" in the first three lines and this is echoed horizontally in line 3 as well. The rappers call it rhyme but technically there is a difference in the acoustic dynamics in stress and tonal languages, and we need to exercise the utmost care in order not to make it sound as if the two are the same even though they are parallels. These repetitions and echoes create a sense of continuum, not only in sound, but the track upon which the time of the music is running: the rhythm. Line 4 is a structural parallelism reinforcing this sense of continuity. For some of us, these repetitions create a sing-song effect and please the ear (Okpewho, 1992) but for the artist, these repetitions are formulas which allow him a free flow of time and rhythm and subsequently of performance too.

Another form of repetition is putting the same idea in different sentences. In Omanhene Pozo's "Kyɛnkyɛn bi ɛdi me ɛwu" (Somebody has destroyed me), he is trying to establish the cause and effect in relationships:

Mese aboa bɛka wo a, maame	I say if the ants bites you, mother
Na efiri wo ntoma mu	It is from within your cloth
Mframa bɛbɔ wo dan mu nso a	If the wind blows your room
Na efiri wo mpoma mu	It is from through your window
Ɔtan ne ɔdada nyinaa nso wɔ akoma mu	Both hate and love are all the heart
Enti suro nipa na gyae saman	So fear the living more than the dead

Here he is piling up semantically parallel structures in order to make contrasts: paradoxically, it is the creature closest to your skin who bites you, your own window that lets the wind blow on you, and love and hate co-exist in the same heart. Lines one to three set out these ironical contrasts in a series of parallel structures, each example making the same point, and line 4 offers an explanation and draws a conclusion from them.

Again, the hiplife art takes advantage of the syntactic structures of the language to create repetition. It uses connectives in the form of additives, conjunctions and even call and response, and this finds resonance in the traditional story telling technique in which additives and conjunctions string up the story into one continuous piece. In "Esi", Kontihene lists the number women he has met:

Mehyia Christiana, Christie	I have met Christina, Christie
Juliana, Julie	Juliana, Julie
Ɛne Faustina, Fausti	And Faustina, Fausti
Rosina, Rosie	Rosina, Rosie
Ansaana, Cecelia, Sesi	And then, Cecilia, Sesi
Agyei, Felicia, Fili	Agyei, Felicia, Fili
Abigail, Abi	Abigail, Abi
Ɛne Comfort, Connie	And Comfort, Connie
Ɛna, ɛna 3x	And, and, 3x
Mariama, Meli,	Mariama, Meli
Agyei, Caroline, Caro	Agyei, Caroline, Caro
Veronica, Vero	Veronica, Vero
Ɛna, ɛna 3x	And, and 3x

He is listing the names and obviously needs the additive connective "ɛna" for that purpose. As he keeps on listing, he strings up the list with "ɛna" and reinforces this continuity with the call and

response technique in which the full name is echoed in the short but informal and more endearing form as used in Ghana. He uses this syntactic structure to create a string of names into one piece while he emphasises the relationship through the use of the short forms by way of call and response[29]. Kontihene is also linking the past to the present by having recourse to traditional names like Mariama and Meimuna on one hand and Felicia, Cecilia which are foreign names on the other. Interestingly, the Ghanaian culture has "domesticated" or "akanized" these foreign names to short forms like Rosie and Sesi, and these borrowed names are also a link between tradition and modernity. The call and response technique, with the response coming from the co-singers or the audience, presupposes that he does not only use the connectives to link the names into one piece but also uses it to link himself to the audience into one piece; the continuum has moved from temporal to spatial.

These formulas, however, are more than mere conventions by which the art can be judged (Bauman, 1977). They are also memory cues. Like the Homeric Greek who shares a Hellenic world of an "over-all body of experience" (Havelock, 1982: 198) he participates in, the Ghanaian youth resorts to memory not only for recalling the past but as a means of socialization. This generates a strong link between community memory, socialization and personhood. What is memorized belongs to the community and the one doing the memorization, the knower, not only shares in the knowledge of the community but is part of it, the known; the knower is part of the known (Havelock, 1982: 197-214). In hiplife, therefore, every performer owes his personhood to the hiplife community and every single performance is an expression and affirmation of this imagined community. Performance, through memory, is therefore a means of keeping group identity and tradition.

---

[29] While on the field, I observed the audience would join the co-singer on the CD to shout out the response.

Memorialization is where the past coalesces with the present in hiplife. Formulas are not the invention of hiplife; they are in the oral tradition of almost all the Ghanaian languages. Formulas are also found in American hip hop, but there is a difference between the formulas in hip hop and hiplife even though they are all inspired by African oral tradition. While hip hop uses the African oral tradition by entextualising it in the English language, hiplife maintains the original African linguistic tools because it still uses the oral but not written poetics (Lord, 2000: 129-131). What is intriguing about these patterns is that they are pleasing to the ear and manage to stick in the memory in a more durable manner and faster too. They remain in the long term memory as memory cues and can easily be recalled. For example, it is easier to recall the rhythm of a song in your first year in the secondary school than the text of your Geography notes. It is for this reason that for most of us, we may not recall the name of our class one teacher but we still recall the nursery rhymes he/she taught us. What hiplife does is to fit words, thoughts and ideas into these patterns so that whenever the patterns are recalled, they in turn key out the words, thoughts and ideas attached to them. This was the observation by Lord of the young Yugoslav learning to be an accomplished poet (Lord, 1960). Through this process, the lyrics are easily memorized both by the artist and the hiplife community as well. Indeed, Krims report that Ice Cube would rather we did not dance to hip hop music but we listened and participated in "the message" (Krims, 2001). The structures make it easy and they can recite a whole text without a bat of the eye. Memorizing "written" hiplife lyrics is even easier. Again, through this process, the formulas which belong to the past are re-invented in the present to make them look modern. An example is the way Kontihene mixes up traditional names with English names using Akan connectives to create rhythm out of the mixture. Thus memory becomes a collective process and used for collective identity.

We will now turn our attention to how the linguistic repetition is enhanced by the spatial repetition in collective memory. We commence with how the tradition uses spatial repetitive art to complement verbal art and then see how hiplife appropriates this traditional setting for its modernity project.

We first go to the chief's palace for such a study. The space in the chief's palace, from the drawings and various insignia, emblems and other forms of traditional objects hanging on the walls of the palace to clothes and sandals of the chief, his elders and the linguist, including the linguist's staff, are all a cornucopia of signification that forms an unwritten history of the people. Michelle Gilbert presents a graphic description of how the finial on top of the staff of the Asonahene of the Akwapim traditional area carries an image that depicts a proverb serving as a warning to the Omanhene of a bitter rivalry between them. This painful but unspeakable past is epitomized in the proverb carried by the image and constitutes a "threat containing a powerful unspoken reference to history" (Gilbert, 2010). The kind of pattern in the chief's cloth, it could be the "edinkra" symbols or other designs, are all social narratives. For example, the chief arbitrates a case between two brothers and wears the fabric of the "edinkra" symbol "fufurefu ne dɛnkyɛm mmireku", comprising two lizard-like creatures sharing the same stomach. The proverb for this symbol is "fufurefu ne dɛnkyɛm mmireku, wonyina ɛfuru baako naaso wɔredidi a na wɔrefom", literally meaning that these lizard-like creatures share the same stomach but fight over food. This parallel narrative in the form of proverb is calling for unity between the two feuding brothers. We are here dealing purely with semiotics. The sandals, the cloth, the ornaments the chief wears are all semiotic signs that reinforce the message he has for his people on the occasion. This is an entire field that needs investigation. But for the purpose of community memory, the space of the palace, in addition to his costume, communicates the past to the people who make the necessary link to the present for future references. This community memory expresses a philosophy of continuity, in the sense of the past linking up with the present, which is

expressed in the aesthetics of the signs. The lines of the folds in the chief's cloth signify continuity. The lines on the linguistic staff also carry the notion of continuity. The lines on the sandals of the elders also connote continuity. In fact, they are all repetition that indicates continuity of time from the past, to the present and then a search for the future.

The palace aesthetics is adopted by hiplife. This time the palace aesthetics are modernized to suit the taste of their modern fans. In chapter 7, we will discuss how hiplife uses these motifs to commercialize hiplife fashion. But in the meantime, let us concentrate on body movements and stage décor. First is break dancing: we will use the anti-clockwise windmill break dance for this illustration. The dancer gets in a hand spin position with the left arm on the side of the stomach, keeping his legs spread apart and balancing on his left arm. He raises his left leg and turns his body with his left hand firmly rooted on the ground, and this rotates his legs. Using the shoulder as a support, he keeps the legs spread and wide apart. He rolls the body around 360 degrees, repeating this process over and over till his legs hang in the air spinning anti-clockwise. The rotation of the body is a continuity process as a result of the repetition of the moves described. He does this for some seconds, stops, and then reinitiates the same art till the breaks and the moves become another pattern. Rose observes that "in hip hop, visual, physical, musical, lyrical lines are set in motion, broken abruptly with sharp angular breaks, yet they sustain motion and energy through fluidity and flow" (Rose, 1994: 38). Thus the body movement buttresses the verbal art of repetition that signifies continuity, what Rose calls "flow".

Second, let us consider another visual art in the hiplife, which was copied from hip hop, the graffiti. One of the techniques of graffiti is to have a dark background and through the use of layering method, you add all the other colours, which are mostly bright coloured lines, to the dark

background. This also signifies the journey from the past (dark) to the present (bright). In the United States of America, it reminds the African Americans of their dark past and that is why they use it to defy authorities. Graffiti also constitutes the main protest instrument in American hip hop apart from the verbal artistry. Thus, they use it in defacing and disfiguring state property and monuments. In Ghana, they are not used in defying authority per se, but they are part of the designs we see in hip hop T-shirts. The difference in use or interpretation is because Ghana does not share exactly the same historical background with the African Americans. It however forms part of the hiplife paraphernalia of remembering the past and re-inventing it for the sake of modernity. Even the hiplife recording technology is also appropriated to express this philosophy of continuity through repetition in the form of looping or repeating the same beat over and over through the use of the computer and layering one sound on the other to simulate live group performance. Again, sampling in recording is using pre-recorded sounds on the computer and the old pre-recorded sounds, which in comparative terms are formulas, are used to reconstruct new beats for rap tracks. There is nothing completely new in hiplife; the past is re-invented in an innovative manner through a collective memory process which has been modernised. It is now clear that memorialisation and innovation go hand in hand, for through memorialisation or 'making things stick' (Barber 2007), we re-invent the past for the present. Even in the traditional oral poetry, there is innovation in memorialisation, though such innovations, as already stated, are within the remit of the tradition and mostly go unnoticed.

2.6 Summary

Hiplife, like juju music, is a metaphor of social order portraying a modern image but well rooted in tradition (Waterman, 1990). This is especially visible in the use of orality, as seen in the history of highlife in connection with hiplife, the hiplife culture and hiplife as a community memory. Clearly, hiplife is a culture that presents the social narrative of a changing Ghana and it does so by linking

the present with the past and offering a framework that enables us to follow the modern Ghanaian social order.

In the next chapter, we continue investigating the hiplife culture, turning our attention to the cultural production of hiplife, that is, what goes into the production of its performance within the crucible of Ghanaian culture. We also continue with the historical background of hiplife by tracing its very beginnings, when it was started as a mere entertainment activity by a group of young people, to the time it became a culture with its ideology. We also pay particular attention to the principle of shareability of such an ideological thrust in the hiplife cultural production.

CHAPTER THREE

CULTURAL PRODUCTION OF HIPLIFE

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter examined hip hop literature in Africa, dividing Africa into four zones; North African hip hop which represents youth resistance (Gross et al, 1989; Mazouzi, 1990; Pareles, 2002; DeAngelis, 2003; Veash, 2002; Loza, 2004; Grippo, 2006; Diab, 2010), West Africa, where more emphasis is placed on the cultural hybridity of hip hop (Camara, 1992; Diop, 1995; Auzanneau, 2002; Moulard-Kouka, 2005; Hohlhagen, 2007; Shipley, 2007), East Africa, where youth identity is most prominent (Nyairo and Ogude, 2003; Samper, 2004; Perullo, 2005; Stroeken, 2005; Englert, 2008, Ntarangwi, 2009) and South Africa, where cultural flow of foreign origin features very high in studies of hip hop (Stephens, 2000; Impey, 2001; Mhlambi, 2004; Coplan, 2005; Magubane, 2006; Steingo, 2007).

This chapter narrows down the discussion to the Ghanaian hip hop, hiplife, and examines its cultural production, when cultural production means looking at hiplife culture as a text (Ricoeur, 1981), a text that goes beyond sounded speech and exploits various semiotics of "gesture, posture, facial expression, other embodied resources such as physical distance, stance, movement or stasis" (Iedema, 2003: 39; see also Leeuven, 1996: 34; Jewitt and Kress, 2003; Kress and van Leeuven, 2001; Goodwin, 2003: 29) as found in any expressive culture. It also looks at hiplife as a socio-historical development of a verbal art (Bauman, 1977: 8), having its own cultural conventions that make it a Ghanaian musical genre (Bauman, 1977:10), and interrogates the hiplife text as performance that presents it own interpretive frame (Bateson, 1992: 177-93). In this chapter, the terms hiplife cultural shareability, conventions or interpretive cues are used interchangeably

because they all represent the hiplife cultural abstract template re-concretised in successive instantiations.

3.1 Hiplife cultural shareability

Hiplife cultural shareability, in this context means the performer sharing the same cultural meanings with the audience. In this case, convention, that which informs the performer, is the overaching concept and shareability determines where convention end, what the most appropriate convention for a period is or which people form part of the convention. This is the central theoretical concept that grounds the analysis of hiplife cultural production. In this academic enterprise, I draw from two main ideas from Greg Urban: entextualization and metaculture. These two concepts may be closely related to each other but they need to be distinguished to help us develop a clear picture as to the way hiplife culture started and developed in Ghana.

As stated in chapter one, entextualization is when the physical setting – immediate context or the social environment – is stripped off (Haviland, 1996: 58). The text becomes detached. As stated in the chapter one, hiplife culture or performance is here considered a multimodal text (van Leeuwen, 1999: 125; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001; Goodwin, 2003: 29; Jewitt and Kress, 2003; Baldry and Thibault, 2006) and in this case, a text detachable from its immediate context of traditional culture, from the Ghanaian culture[30] of palm wine music (Collins, 1996) to the high life culture in recent Ghanaian history.[31] This type of culture therefore lacks physicality because it "moves through space and time, yet has no Newtonian mass …communicated from individual to individual, group to group …the ghostlike journey of our thing (or is it things) takes place along pathways" (Urban, 2001: 1).

---

[30] The term culture is used in the sense of the kind of culture that prevails during the time of a particular musical genre
[31] It must be pointed out that even though hiplife was the most fashionable musical genre at the time of research, highlife was still doing very well in Ghana.

The second idea borrowed from Urban is the metaculture of hiplife, the culture about the hiplife culture (Urban, 2001: ix). Hiplife cultural circulation, the process that spreads the new culture by presenting ways of learning about it (Urban, 2001: 182), as part of hiplife metaculture, becomes the framework for looking at hiplife as a cultural process. This includes its production and how it has developed to its present stage. This framework presents two main concepts: replication and dissemination. Replication "is an attempt at reproduction, at relocating the original instance of discourse to a new context – carrying over something from the earlier to the later one" (Urban, 1996: 21). Any physical performance of hiplife is a replication of the traditional culture even though it is not exactly the same form as found in its original context. Again, every hiplife live performance is an attempt at giving materiality to the detached hiplife text. The detached text, the abstract cultural model or template to be re-concretized in successive instantiations, is expressed, as said earlier, in material terms through replication. These processes circulate hiplife patterns in a social network that tells members of the hiplife community which portions of the culture are to be dropped and which portions are to be added. What is to be added is what Urban (2001: 57) calls the "new and better, yes, better – with respect to the cultural element they come to replace". The secret of this cultural journey, he continues, "is in the mixture of oldness and newness that makes the journey possible" (Urban, 2001: 1). These cultural filtering and additions – that which construct hiplife modernity - occur at the moment of performance. The result of such a process is the hiplife cultural shareability that informs the setting, the performer and the audience of live hiplife performance. Let us note here that every live hiplife performance is therefore a single creative event, different from the other (Lord, 1960: 17; Bauman, 1977: 137). The discussion of hiplife replication also brings to mind the relocation of the US hip hop to Ghana, the cultural penetration of the US hip hop culture in Ghana, and the huge influence it has on the hiplife culture.

The introduction of electronic gadgets and accessories has however made hiplife production more complex - it is more than merely physical representation as we find in story telling. There is no replication, at least not in the sense explained above. The computer in the recording process, the play back of the CD as a sounded text, the musical video, the television, the internet and a lot more mass media facilities "make it possible for discourse to be disseminated without necessarily being replicated" (Urban, 2001: 171). Most night clubs that play hiplife do not need the physical presence of hiplife artistes. For the purpose of this work, we call it the hiplife play back event. We must here draw the distinction between fully live performance, lip synch performance and hiplife play back event. For example, the student listening to hiplife on his phone is a play back hiplife event. Club goers mostly enjoy a play back hiplife event. In all these cases, there is no physical presence of a performer. On the contrary, when you have the physical presence of a performer whose performance is mediated by electronic gadgets, as we have in lip synch performance, you have a live performance. The fully live performance also uses the agency of the physical presence of the performer but the difference between the lip synch performance and the fully live performance is that while in the lip synch performance, the performer relies on electronically mediated voice, which in many ways presents a cleaner but contrived voice, in singing/rapping, in the fully live performance, the performer uses his natural voice in singing/rapping, giving his audience a better feel of his personal artistry, a good combination of body moves and vocal creativity. The main difference between the two hiplife events, live performance and play back event, is that while every live performance instantiates the hiplife non material culture creatively, the playback is exactly a copy of a live performance and there is no hiplife creativity, at least not from the point of view of the performer whose work is now fixed on an electronic device. This lends more credence to the

fact that culture in its pathways through the world "finds a transient home in biological organisms" (Urban, 2001: 211) and not in inanimate objects like electronic devices.

What is common to both live hiplife and playback events however is dissemination, the vehicle for the non material hiplife culture and "the externalization, or making public or intersubjectively accessible" (Urban, 2001: 42). Dissemination therefore makes hiplife performance or event physically accessible, enabling it to travel beyond certain boundaries and thus strengthening the hiplife culture. This chapter, which seeks to demonstrate the role of the concept of shareability in hiplife cultural production, is divided into two sections: the first is the historical development of hiplife, its very embryonic stage, that is, the role played by a culturally significant city like Kumasi, and live performances in three major cities in Ghana.

3.2 Hiplife historical development

Before Twi rap started in Kumasi, there had been some historical antecedents to the hiplife ideology of mental strength worth paying attention to.

3.2.1 Historical antecedents of hiplife

There have been many changes in youth consciousness in the history of Ghana but it is those related to the political developments that have been widely reported (James, 1982: 86; Shillington, 1992; Adu Boahen, 2000: 136-154). Kwame Nkrumah was known to be a leader who galvanized the energy of the youth against Western imperialism (James, 1982: 56) but when we talk of a Ghanaian leader who has had the most significant influence on the youth consciousness and whose influence still persists, it is Jerry John Rawlings. He took power in 1979 and senior military officers were executed by junior rank officers (Shillington, 1992: 55). Rawlings won huge admiration from the youth because he "had defied established authority" (Shillington, 1992: 59) and for once "the

ordinary down trodden commoner had stood up and defied his exploiters" (Shillington, 1992: 87).

Indeed, his political ideology and governance style of "power to the people" (Shillington, 1992: 89)

has dealt a huge psychological blow to the Ghanaian traditional concept of authority. During his

time as a leader of the nation, the youth were advised to demand accountability from their elders,

thus the age-old concept of social hierarchy that saw the old as an unquestionable power become

vulnerable and subject to contestation. Taking power at the age 32, he himself symbolised youthful

mental strength which here means the courage to demand justice, to challenge injustice, the

intelligence to circumvent difficult problems and the bravery to face the future. All the exhortations

and non-verbal cues he gave to the youth were therefore taken for the need for mental strength as a

major means of survival.

3.3 DJs who started hiplife in Kumasi

Closely related to the concept of mental strength is syncretism. There were DJs who were enacting

these two values in the hotels and clubs by animating these sites with the latest release.[32] They

really helped to construct the shareable culture of hiplife as an incipient Ghanaian musical genre.

Their success in this cultural enterprise resided in the fact that they developed a huge following for

themselves, a sign that they succeeded in constructing the right interpretive cues that made it

possible for them to share the same cultural meanings with the audience. Most notable among these

DJs were Bombaata, Wofjay and Loving C.

3.3.1. Bombaata

He was known in private life as Kwabena Adjei but picked the name Bombaata, obviously to take

advantage of the huge popularity of the US-based hip hop artist and DJ, Afrika Bombaata.

Bombaata was the permanent DJ in Dimlite, a popular club in Kumasi in the early 1990s, and he

---

[32] Wofjay and Loving C explained that patrons went to the clubs and hotels just to go and listen to the latest song in town from abroad. The craze for latest songs helped to heighten the youth's search for foreign culture.

was known to have started the English rap competitions in 1990 to satisfy the taste of the youth especially students who were looking for foreign taste in music. Loving C, privately known as William de Bordes and here represented as WB, one of the pioneers in organizing English rap competitions in Kumasi, when asked who initiated the English rap competition in Kumasi enthusiastically replied:

> WB: Initially, it was myself, Bambaatta. Bambaatta and Jimmy they were older than I was. We were students and we were more in tune with what was happening within the students' world but they were out of school. So we said that let us put the students together to organize rap competition or something and let us see how creative they would be. So we remember, I remember very well in those days that we told the contestants to stick to their own lyrics. They were supposed to write their own lyrics and not to rap any other…It was in English

Bombaata took advantage of the search and quest of the youth for foreign culture and mental strength. The question is: why were the youth clamouring for these values? Urban (2001: 57) explains, "the items come to be evaluated, over time, through internal dialogue and debate, as new and better, yes, better – with respect to the cultural elements they come to replace". Barfour, 17, Emmanuel 16 and Reggie, 16, make it clear that they prefer the American culture to that of Ghana because it makes them more confident in life – a show of mental strength. They lament the seeming lack of confidence and productivity in the African culture and Barfour, BF, sums up their frustration by saying:

> BF: When you watch hip hop stars, they would, like when you watch them, you will see that they are confident in what they are doing so you would like to be like those people.

Bombaata did not only identify this metacultural evaluation on the part of the youth but also provided expression to such metacultural perspective by flavouring these competitions with "wannabe" shows. These were look-alike competitions in which; for example, rappers were to rap and perform like 2Pac or MC Hammer. Wofjay followed him.

3.3.2 Wofjay

Known in private life as Wofa Adjei, he shortened his name to the pseudonym Wofjay to make it more appealing to his audience, who were more disposed towards big names in the American music

industry. The name itself was a hybrid of local and foreign components: the local Wofa (Uncle) became, "Wof", was added to the adulterated form of Adjei, "Jay", which had a foreign appeal following short forms of names of artistes from the US namely Micky Jay for Michael Jackson and Teddy Pee for Teddy Pendergrass. Such types of hybridity constituted cultural interpretive cues for the youth of the time because his name had both local and foreign appeal. He started DJ-ing way back 1976. Then Loving C came next.

3.3.3 Loving C

William de Bordes was known in entertainment as Loving C. This was the time when turning initials into nicknames was in vogue for names of artistes like Pee Tosh for Peter Tosh and Bee Marley for Bob Marley. Loving C got into DJ-ing in 1991 and became the resident DJ for Nsadwaso, the night club for City Hotel. He was cast in the mode of Grandmaster Flash of the United States of America: handled the turn table, did the scratching, cutting and rap (Rose, 1994) in between and on the rhythm being played. Again, he also offered that sense of innovativeness of youth self expression. Another point of attraction was his branding: wearing the tie, supposed to be a foreign symbol, which had the colours of Ghana flag in it, clearly a local symbol against the background of a foreign one. All these combinations of symbols were calculated to have a good cultural shareability. He and Wofjay succeeded in turning these English rap competitions into another major inter-school competition apart from the inter-school sports festivals. Let us also have a look at how these cues influenced the selection of sites.

3.4 Sites where Twi rap started in Kumasi

The search for a conflation of local and foreign cultures by Kumasi youth that endeared the DJs to them drove the youth to sites which could offer them the same interpretive cues of modernity as offered by the DJs. These sites were the hotels and clubs in Kumasi. In the mid to later parts of the 70s, clubs and hotels like Oldtimers, Sphinx, Hotel de Kingsway, all located at the business centre

of the city, Adum, positioned at important interstices in a socially heterogeneous urban community such as Kumasi, were entertainment centres. Let us examine how these entertainment centers influenced the development of hiplife by having a close look at Apatakɛseɛase.

Apatakɛseɛase was located at the Kumasi Cultural Centre. The name in Akan meant "under the big hut", reflecting its traditional setting. The edifice itself was a modern building, located at the tail end of the open space of the Culture Centre when coming from the Quarshie Aidan Hall. It was not the modern architecture and spacious nature that gave it its uniqueness: it was the surroundings. The surroundings were preserved as an old Ashanti village; a cocoa farm with a cottage where cocoa beans were being dried on the left, a village pit latrine followed, then a cluster of huts on your right, all depicting real village life in a cocoa growing area. This setting provided a rare idyllic and nostalgic feeling about the innocence of the old village life of the Ashantis. The blend of this nostalgic recreation with the modern Apatakɛseɛase building reflected the hybrid traditional and modern life of the Ashanti at that time, and that provided a unique setting for an art that conflated the tradition and the modern. Clearly, hiplife is not a sudden break from the past as most of the participants who represented the old generation would like to make us believe. It is certainly a transition from the past to the glomour of the present, which in itself is a shareable culture of modernity.

3.5 Performance of English rap competitions and the beginning of Twi raps in Kumasi

The same shareable culture of syncretism that attracted the youth to these sites facilitated a transition from English raps to Twi raps by the competitors. The competitors were representing their schools and rap competitions became an extension of inter-school sports festivals. Students, past students and friends of the schools went to the rap sessions with the same competitive spirit

they approached the inter-school competition with and the winner could be carried shoulder high by his fans throughout the streets of Kumasi.

The competitors started having their own challenges and this was where the need for mental strength, presented earlier as a cultural interpretive cue, came in. They were now not allowed to sing songs by other artistes. Rapping in English came with its own challenges because the audience were expecting the rapper to represent his school in good English and whenever the rapper became a bit infelicitous with his language, you could hear from the rival audience, "webu", meaning he had broken the neck of the language. The rival audience group would do everything to disturb the confidence of the one on stage to prepare a favourable ground for their representative. Again, in a city known for its links with traditional roots, the English language used on such an occasion to some of the students was an opportunity to express themselves as elites. The exercise was therefore a really thrilling one. Amidst these contestations and heckling from hostile audience members when the English language fell on the wrong side of pronunciation or grammar, the spirit of mental strength, inherited from the PNDC regime of Rawlings (Shillington, 1992) bubbled to the surface. The idea of the embattled artiste's ability to weather the storm by facing his critics without being shaken added a lot of energy to such occasions. For example, Ras Kwesi revealed that when faced with such challenges, Shimole, one of the best contestants, would babble something like "The *a* to the *b* to the *c* to the *d* to the *e*" to tumultuous applause from the entire audience, including those who wanted to intimidate him. Shimole was advertising good performance here because there was a conceptual congruence between his performance and the performance situation and the embedded interpretive cue that created the performer-audience affinity was the show of mental strength; being tough. Ras Kwesi added that Shimole would continue to use such phrases repeatedly but he did it in a manner that would make one think that he had written a long rap. Such phrases too were devoid of

grammatical technicalities so his adversaries could have nothing against him any more. That was what hiplife was all about: being tough.

Other challenges included the fact that the rappers were beginning to sound too imitative. This, in addition to American English syntax, pronunciation and accent problems of the rappers started undermining what non aficionados would have described as excellent performance. American English rap, according to Wofjay, started losing its appeal and what made matters worse was the fact that it was becoming more and more difficult to select who was the best rapper. Meanwhile according to Okyeame Kwame, who was very active in such competitions, there was one rapper from Takoradi who would add humour to his performance, singing "medze nkwasesɛm maaba, nkwaseasɛm maaba…" (I have come to fool around), and he had a huge following. At this time, the English competitions were becoming boring and the number of patrons was dwindling. The contribution of the competitor from Takoradi signalled to the organizers that Akan rap had the potential of pulling back the audience who were growing less enthusiastic. And as indicated earlier they and the DJs, notable among whom was Bombata, introduced it as a means of increasing the competitiveness of the competition and restoring in the audience the kind of enthusiasm they had at the beginning of the competitions. This was in 1991. Apart from appearance, composure and rap attitude, Twi rap became a major marking scheme for the judges and if you wanted to stay in the competition, you had better developed Akan rap which because of the locality had become mainly Twi rap. Again, the use of Twi, against the background of hip hop beat was another interpretive cue of modernity – the mixture of old and new. Most of the judges had sixth form education and had mastery in the English language. Some had even done Literature in English and Ghanaian language at the sixth form level and as indicated by Loving C in an interview, they were very interested in clarity in diction and poetic devices. Indeed, the judges' marking scheme was based on the oral

structures of Ashanti traditional court poetry, as testified by Shipley in *Living the hiplife*. Their names - for example, Akyeame (the linguists), Nananom (the elders), Akatakyie (the nobles), all signifiers of expertise in the Akan court spoken language - indicated their affiliation to court poetry and constituted another cultural interpretive cue[33].

This experiment yielded more than the desired expectation for apart from increasing the dwindling number of patrons to these competitions, it made the youth in Kumasi discover a kind of culture they could call their own, a situation very similar to the development of Azonto dance at the time of research. The concept of having an art they could call their own was yet another cultural interpretive cue. [34]The Twi rap identity, later to be christened hiplife by Reggie Rockstone, constituted a space in which the complexity and the fluidity of youth's contemporary urban experiential realities could be expressed. With the hip hop base thus broadened in Kumasi, Reggie's initiative was hugely welcome to the rappers in Kumasi because they quickly moved onto the national platform and displayed the art they had been harnessing locally.[35] This was why most of the early superstars of hiplife were from Kumasi.

3.6 Hiplife superstars in Kumasi, 1996-2010
 After Reggie Rockstone's initiative, which was a success, mainly in urban areas, Mark Okreku Mante, a business man, started producing the likes of Lord Kenya, Joe Frazer, Akatakyie, Omanhene Pozo, and the Akyeames, all from Kumasi, and turned them into artistes of national fame. By advertising these rappers at the national level, that is, in both urban and rural areas, Mark

---

[33] Regional hip hop's link with oral traditions is also a common feature in Senegalese and Kenyan hip hop . See Moulard-Kouka, 2005 and Journo, 2008.

[34] East Africa's hip hop literature also has a similar development (Perullo, 2005) and in Kenya where African publishers and founders of literary projects had failed to make contact with the new generation, hip hop literature became a new literary space where local experience could be expressed in a manner that was unique to Kenya (Journo, 2008).

[35] Indeed, Ghana is not an isolated case in the role of traditional roots in hip hop cultural production in Africa. Similar local influence on hip hop has been reported in East Africa (Perullo, 2005; Stroeken, 2005; Journo, 2008; Birgit, 2008), in North Africa (Gross et al, 1989; Mazouzi, 1990; Pareles, 2002; Grippo, 2006) and even in other West African countries like Senegal and Ivory Coast (Moulard-Kouka, 2005; Hohlhagen, 2007).

Okreku Mante became one of the first Ghanaian business men who succeeded spreading the hiplife shareable culture nationwide. These artistes were still hiplife superstars nationwide at the time of writing.

3.7 Hiplife underground rappers in Kumasi, 1996-2010

There were other rappers from this tradition who were not and have not been as popular as the superstars mentioned above. Indeed, this category of rappers, if linked with their economic status (Englert, 2008), poses a challenge to the definition of the Ghanaian underground rapper. In this section, we intend to use this terminology as being artistically not as popular as the others but not in the Journo sense of not being economically superior as the superstars. My data indicate that this category presents artistes who are more interested in the hip hop culture than the money associated with it. They use more subversive materials and express a more subterranean level of consciousness, "habitus" (Bourdieu, 1977) manifest in symbols relating to mental strength or toughness that allows them to confront the society. Let us look at the lyrics of "Osama" by Kaboom, one of the underground rappers in Kumasi at the time of research:

Osama mayɛ mo deɛn?	Osama, what have I done to you
Mongyae me ma mennwene meho o	Leave me alone
Osama mayɛ modeɛn?	Osama what have I done to you?
Ewurade e, mereto bomb o	My God, I am detonating a bomb

This piece relies on irony, contrast or double meaning. Osama rhymes with "ɔsaman", the ghost in Akan. One meaning is related to terrorism and the other is about the dead so both meanings evoke fear. While we could take that on face value to mean Osama bin Laden, it could also mean a ghost who is not at peace with himself because of what the living say about him. The irony here is he is about to throw a bomb and yet he says we should leave him alone. Again, the meaning of the irony

comes out of the double meaning of the ghost and Osama. Osama is being hunted[36] but in this poem he is hunting other people and indeed, that is the fact, implying that he is strong and can do whatever he wants to do even if you involve him in a smear campaign.

Again, the underground artistes usually move in groups. I will use the Bomso underground rappers as an example. The Bomso underground rappers were primarily a communal group that thrived, as a group, mainly on a specific version of hip hop shareable culture and while superstars like Obour, Sydney and the Akyeame love to blend the traditional and the modern culture, these rappers would like to make us believe they had just arrived from the US and had nothing to do with the local culture. This group comprised Peewee, Kaboom, Macarfee, George, KC and Flames and they came from different vicinities in Kumasi but had decided to stay together as a family and even though a rapper like Flames, a son of a reputable librarian in the Medical School in KNUST, would visit his family every now and then, he spent most of his productive time with his new-found family. They ate from the same dish, slept together and moved together. The first time I met them in their "ghetto", I would have wondered if I was in Bronx, New York, had it not been for their false American accent. Pictures of 2Pac, Jay-Z, Guru and Puff Addy were boldly displayed on the walls in the room. Loud sounds of 2Pac's "Gangster's Paradise" was blaring from speakers in the room and they would join 2Pac's rap in the song whenever they desired to and sometimes would all shout a line in a chorus, throwing their hands in the air, in the manner of the American hip hop artistes. They were all dressed like American hip hop artists. Peewee wore a blue basketball jersey with white stripes on the sleeves, the number 35 boldly written in yellow. The jersey was tucked into hanging blue jeans with a white belt on. The hook of the belt was exactly like that of Jay-Z as we saw in his videos or any other US hip hop artist. The belt was not on the waist; it was on the hip and

---

[36] This song was recorded before Osama's death in 2011.

the jeans were rolled up midway between the knee and the ankle. He had black sandals on his feet. Kaboom had a black hip hop T-shirt with a graffiti design in front, black jeans and sandals. Perhaps the most hip hop of all of them was Macarfee. He had a black sleeveless shirt, open buttons, showing chest hairs and revealing a shining necklace hanging in between the two breasts. He had oversized shorts we call "nicker boka" coming right down to the knee. And this was matched with black boots.

We have so far been talking about hiplife cultural production, the culture the performer shares in common with the audience because of shareability of the cultural situation. In the discussion that follows, we demonstrate more clearly the importance of cultural shareability within the context of the performance situation of a cultural interpretive frame (Bateson, 1972:177). We also show that good performance is a conceptual congruence between performance and its cultural situation and that bad performance is that which is tangential to the cultural situation or a conceptual mismatch between the performance and its cultural situation. Conceptual congruence here means when the interpretive cues are properly constructed in performance and conceptual mismatch is when the interpretive cues are badly constructed. To be able to demonstrate good performance in hiplife, we need to see the performer in live performance, that is, in live recording, both audio and video and live stage performance.

3.8 Live performance

This is the second section of cultural production of hiplife. It examines the concept of shareability that governs the relationship between the performer and the audience on one hand and audience response to the performer on the other, all within the confines of evaluating performance (Bauman, 1977: 11). This performance is the result of conceptual congruence or mismatch between the performance and its cultural situation.

In this section, it is only the live stage performance which instantiates an occasion of the physical manifestation of the hiplife mental script that has the response of a live participating audience, not a live studio audience used in measuring standards. We first deal with live video and audio recordings of underground artistes before we go to the live video recording of the duo, Bradez, hiplife superstars. We will also examine how good knowledge of cultural shareability plays out in the dynamics of the hiplife market.

3.8.1 Live hiplife video shooting of Scizo, Kumasi

I had to meet TA Scizo, an underground rapper, at 4:00 pm at Pocalous Studio, Tafo Nyiaeso in Kumasi, which stood opposite the famous Tafo community cemetery and contrary to speculations about the foreboding aura of cemeteries and their environs, the vicinity was quite lively, occasionally presenting some modern buildings and some uncompleted ones. Pocalous Studio was located in one of these uncompleted buildings, on the ground floor. The video shooting was supposed to be carried out on the roof top.

The two main actors or musicians looked a bit different in what they wore. They were all dark in complexion, and of average size, but they did not really complement each other in artistic expression. Scizo was well dressed but did not have the hip hop appearance. He had a red cap on to match a red tie, the two contrasting with his white shirt and boots; he wore a light blue pair of jeans and looked too gentle for a hip hop person. His partner, on the other hand, had the appearance of a real hip hopper. He had a pair of trendy dark glasses, tucked his white polo shirt into a pair of brown jeans and had brown Timberland boots to match.

The gadgets for the recording looked simple. They were a camera and its tripod, a cd player, an ipod fixed to the cd player and a loud speaker. They were only going to lip-synch and even though I was told the practice was called miming, I realised that they were singing and sometimes were going off tune to the very music they had made.

It was time for the real shooting. Scizo was the first to go on set. The cameraman cum director signalled Scizo's partner to join Scizo. The non verbal cues were the first to catch my radar. Let us first look at the proxemics. They sang and danced, side by side. Scizo's partner usually moved around a defined area in front of him and within this limited area, he was making hip hop moves, not break dance or any of the intensive energy dances, though, while making sure he did not bump into Scizo. I rather found this idea a bit restrictive and uncharacteristic of the hip hop tradition. Scizo was also too conscious of his limited area and was doing a lot of hip hop moves too. Perhaps the most interesting of the non verbal cues was the kinesics. Scizo's partner advertised sinuous movements involving the body and the hands and would even bend down in a posture suggesting he was polishing his shoes, very symbolic of the authentic philosophy, telling it as it is: polishing shoes is meant to be a job for the lower class, an idea that resonates well with the ghettocentric culture. Both of them would throw their legs up at the same time and his partner would be holding the crotch, a typical gesture of most hip hop artists indicating masculinity and male supremacy (Weitzer and Kubrin, 2009: 8). At one point, Scizo stopped suddenly, folded his arms and presented a very serious face - one would take him for Puff Addy or any of the US hip hop artists, and the syncretic nature of the art came to the fore. This was part of a cornucopia of hip hop meanings recapitulating mental strength in the face of adversaries, and at the same time expressing battle readiness for any confrontation. The cameraman at some points would also tell them to gyrate, an act redolent of sexual act, reflecting the title of the song "Mmaa" (women).

The observation I made was that neither the so-called director nor the rappers gave any clear idea about their target audience let alone offer any analysis of it. The symbols or cultural interpretive cues were too general and sometimes conflicting. For example, the symbol of gyration and polishing of shoes were quite ghettocentric but certainly these symbols were irrelevant to the theme of love of the song and the dress of Scizo was too gentle for hip hop appearance. Again, in one breath we had a symbol of mental strength and in another that of restriction or limitation. The cameraman was the director, the make-up artiste, the computer animator and in charge of montages. This one man crew concept might have worked well for the budget but certainly not for efficiency, especially in terms of minute details that went out there to the audience. Again, apart from holding their crotches, the rest of the movements had nothing to do with the theme of women falling over men as suggested by the theme of the song. For example, looking serious is part of hip hop symbols but within this context, there was no need for a show of battle readiness. In short, the mobilisation of shareable culture in Scizo's music video was badly managed, and when I met him again in 2011 at the Faculty of Renewable and Natural Resource, KNUST, he was on his masters' programme. Obviously music could not offer the opportunities he had hoped for and he was lamenting that the video was a failure in spite of the investment he put into it. I observed a similar scenario of the live audio recording of Kobbie Wailer's "Wone me hemaa" (You are my queen) at Takoradi.

3.8.2 Live hiplife audio music recording by Kobbie Wailer, Takoradi

New Image Recording Studio sat on a hill in Lagos Town, Takoradi, and commanded a beautiful view of the busy vicinity. Little wonder the studio too was a very busy place that morning, bristling with musicians, hiplife, gospel and high life musicians. I went there as a researcher, a participant observer, but I had worked with the engineer on a gospel song in Kumasi before so he was happy to

have me around. The hiplife musician, 24 years old, whose work was to be recorded was already there and introduced himself as Kobbie Wailer, a taxi driver and an underground rapper at the time of research. He spoke English with a false American accent and claimed he had been in most parts of Europe, explaining, "My music is a hybrid of Western hip hop and the Ga traditional 'jama'". The title of the song to be recorded was "Wone me hemaa" (You are my queen). He explained he preferred the "jama" rhythm because he had stayed in Accra for some time. One could conclude that his music fit into the cultural situation of hybridity of cultures (Coplan, 1985; Bame, 1985; Waterman, 1990, Collins, 1996).

The mention of the "jama" rhythm needs further commentary. The rhythm is a celebratory music used for social entertainment among the Ga, and it became associated with hiplife from the early 2000s to 2008 before the crunk craze took over and so it had already entered the syncretic equation of hiplife and constituted a major hiplife cultural interpretive cue. But the question as to which section of the hiplife audience the "jama" rhythm was directed towards was not answered. [37]

The recording started with a rehearsal. Kobbie then asked KD to sample Rex Omar's "Odɔ yɛ wu"[38]. Sampling is a major hip hop practice (Rose, 1994: 73) and in Ghana it is a local syncretic practice which conflates the instrumentation of old genres like high life and modern genres like rap, a practice that runs to the very core of the definition of hiplife. In this case we have two cases of syncretism; foreign influence in the form of Western hip hop music and "jama" rhythm and local influence of a mixture of old and new genres. Clearly, Kobbie was searching everywhere for

---

[37] The "jama" rhythm is the exact equivalent of Ivory Coast's zouglou, which was also used for "animation" or celebration and was appropriated by university students and later became a kind of popular music in the late 1990s and early 2000s for expressing the voice of the "sacrificed generation". See Schumann, 2012: 552 and Kohlhagen, 2007.

[38] This is the usual practice in hiplife. Like hip hop samples from funk and soul music, the hiplife musicians sample songs in highlife and rap in them.

innovation or the popular through syncretism and this practice is not new, given that high life was also a product of such syncretism (Chernoff, 1985: 163).

A lot of the recording process at this stage had to do with feeling one's way through the sonic landscape of the song in question. The engineer, KD, was virtually navigating through a complex acoustic web for the right sonic effect for the song. I must again point out that I had worked with the engineer before, so he asked me to contribute to the process. This implied changing my position as, and perspective of, a participant observer to a full participant and even though a full participation, because of its potential prejudicial results, is sometimes frowned upon, I took that opportunity for it was going to provide a leverage to observe as an insider, to assess better the strengths and weakness of the artiste being observed. At this point, I suggested a bass line to the engineer and he found it useful. Then I also suggested to Kobbie to use the nonsense phrase "geh geh, geh geh, geh geh". He was pleased with the results. The engineer went ahead to programme a sax line to support the rhythm as is normally done in "jama" rhythms. The sax line suddenly achieved a greater level of animation when I suggested that he should syncopate the middle portion of each phrase. He then worked on the tones of the horns. Meanwhile, he played the song over and over to make sure that all the parts were properly synchronised.

The last stage in the recording process was the rap voice over and harmony for the chorus. Kobbie was asked to go through the first voice. I realised he had no idea about the key he was using for the chorus for the engineer continuously had to bring him back to his key saying, "This is your key". He also had no idea about voicing, timbre and breath control. Once in a while, he would tell the engineer to delete what he had sung and would even stop mid-way and shake his head in disapproval of his performance. Clearly, he did not prepare even though he lacked the skills for

good performance. Kobbie was able to sing the third voice but found the second voice an uphill task. KD had to go to his rescue.

Admittedly, Kobbie Wailer had some bright spots in his live performance. He had syncretism of both local and foreign influences and these could be very powerful cultural interpretive cues. He however lacked a precise idea about what his target audience was, whether he had a hiplife audience partying at the beach or during an out-dooring ceremony, a hiplife audience in schools and universities or even older people who liked hiplife. Clearly, audience analysis based on the cultural situation was not done, and for most hiplife audiences in Takoradi, there was going to be some sort of mismatch between performance and the cultural situation of the song. Just like Scizo, the cultural interpretive cues were there all right but they were not properly managed. Perhaps these were minor challenges as compared to his performance skills, the artist's claim to mastery, that which makes him/her "accountable to an audience" (Bauman, 1977: 11). This is where I benefited as a full participant, for when I was contributing to the recording process I had a particular standard in mind which I used as a measuring rod and I could see that he was only a neophyte and failed woefully to demonstrate mastery. Another observation, not necessarily as a full participant, was that the performance situation, which was based on the cultural situation, was not a fixed phenomenon but fluid, changing from place to place, time to time and culture to culture. The fact that the "jama" rhythm was popular in Accra at that time did not necessarily mean it would be popular in Takoradi. This reinforced the position of Leach that "the artistic representations of common objects follow widely different conventions in different cultures" (Leach, 1976: 121). Consequently, when I checked in 2011 from KD, the engineer, how Kobbie's song was doing on the market, he told me reports from Kobbie indicated producers were not eager to invest in the song. This may be due to the fact that his cultural shareability was bad.

Now let us turn our attention to a professional work, that which demonstrated good understanding of the cultural situation and properly defined the performance situation. We have the duo, Bradez, consisting of Stone and Kunta, the two younger brothers of Okyeame Kwame, whose "One gallon" in 2007 made them the toast of the entire hiplife audience in the country, including the old, to do that for us. For the purpose of this exercise, we used their latest song in 2009, "Simple". Here, we see that the success of hiplife performance depends on how well the interpretive cues are constructed, that is, how appropriate performance is to the context of circulation (Urban, 2001: 218) when context of circulation here refers to the prevailing shareable culture of modernity.

3.8.3. Live hiplife video shooting by Bradez, Accra

I went to Laterbiokoshie and was directed to an imposing storey building, climbed to the first floor and was ushered into a studio which had a very professional ambience about it. I was struck by the brightness of two lights standing at the opposite corners of the stage which had white cloth at the background, red cloth covering the other sides of the walls and in the middle of the studio was the camera, a huge black object, majestically seated on the three-footed pedestal and gracefully looking where the musicians were supposed to be on set. The cameraman stooped down over it with one eye squinted and the other fixed on the viewfinder, and there were members of the crew in charge of monitors, lights and make-up. The studio had chairs for a studio audience which was not for participating in the live recording but for helping the production to evaluate the signals in the performance.

Kunta was in a white jacket with blue trimmings and blue stripes on the sleeves. The jacket was open, revealing a beautiful black T-Shirt with graffiti designs at the background. He wore black

jeans and a white pair of boots to match the white jacket. The dark glasses made him look more confident, re-contextualizing the Rawlings legacy of youthful mental strength. Again, Stone, the elder of the two, sported a white jacket with red trimmings and red trappings on the sleeves. He also had black jeans and white boots to match the white jacket. He was also wearing dark glasses.

The first stage was for the artistes to pose for the camera. Stone revealed that the dark glasses were a metaphor of the mental strength needed in front of the enemy but they also used the same symbol "just to make us look good", another re-contextualization of ghettocentric symbols in fashion for the hiplife community. Another cultural interpretive cue was the informal looks of the middle class youth in the country as depicted in their poses. Stone had this to say about it: "Young people most at times, no matter where we come from want to be free, you know" and dismissed any suggestion that they were copying the West. It was his turn to be on set so I turned to Okyeame Kwame for further information. Okyeame Kwame added that, "When you are looking at the same target my brother is looking at; university students and the working class, the young working class, you are looking at bright colours; you are looking at new things; you are looking at attitude". He further explained the intended effect of this approach, "They are looking for people to buy that concept so that they will maintain the most important part of hip hop, which is being real", reinforcing the authentic hip hop philosophy, this time re-contextualising it in fashion for the youth. He went on to offer explication for the means of attaining these goals: "to choose the technical producer …who runs a TV programme called 4-Syte TV and has the most youth audience. He continued that "most of this producer's crew are below 25 and they understand what is going on in the head of the youth". Such careful selection of the production crew further boosts the chances hiplife values becoming desirable to the taste of the hiplife community. It is also part of the pathways through

which the hiplife culture flows across time into future (Urban, 2001: 268), that is, once hiplife becomes commercially viable.

The next to be on set were Okyeame Kwame and two sassy street-wise girls with revealing dresses, advertising sinuous movements and climbing all over him while he was making efforts to distance himself from them. This was quickly contrasted with another scene featuring a tall girl with a very beautiful feminine presence, sporting dimples on her cheeks when she smiled and wearing simple jeans and yellow top, a real pictorial representation of the theme of the song, "Simple". While she was taking various poses, Stone and Kunta were told by the director to make gestures of admiring her, subtly introducing the element of power in class distinction which chooses the noble and bourgeois-looking girl to represent the middle class rather than the sassy looking girls.

This hiplife cultural production had the cultural interpretive cues just like the other recordings that were a failure. The influence of the American culture as an expression of Ghanaian sense of modernity was there. Again the influence of the American hip hop culture – gestures, postures and costume – was also very obvious. This performance had dark glasses, informal looks, bright colours, the search for new things, attitudes that reflect current socio-cultural realities like the need for mental toughness, a hybrid influence of Ghanaian post revolution ideology and that of American hip hop and other symbolic representations. But the advantage of this production over the others was its ability to direct these symbols at a precise target audience: students and the young working middle class, the bulk of the hiplife audience. The video symbols were in consonance with the symbols of the lyrics; "teddy bear", "body curves", "celebrity" which is the diction of carefully selected middle class images incarnated in the simple girl with dimples. The use of good English in the rap and clean hip hop beat also provided the same effect. One striking characteristic of this

production is the attention to details in selecting the target audience which Okyeame Kwame attribute to "knowledge and association; knowing what you want, having a good understanding of the market segmentation and presenting to them the signals they want to see". In other words, good audience analysis and proper management of symbolic communication and, in the context of this research, a conceptual congruence between hiplife performance and its cultural situation is indispensable here. The validity of this analysis is supported by the audience response expressed through various nominations and awards that this production has received. The song received five nominations from Chatter House, Ghana Music Awards: the Best Song of the Year, Best Afropop Song of the Year, Best Rapper of the Year and Best Artiste of the Year, all in 2009. In the same year, the song and the video received the Best West African Song from Africa Music Awards in the UK. The song and the video had a similar award in South Africa in that same year and Sun City, an award house in Nigeria, singled out the video for the Best West African Video for 2009. Clearly, this live recording was a huge success because the concept of cultural shareability was handled with the closest attention to detail.

Indeed, it is the audience behaviour that determines whether there is congruence or mismatch between performance and the cultural situation and in the next performance to be discussed, a live stage show, we are offered the opportunity to follow live audience behaviour.

3.8.4. Live hiplife stage performance, Kumasi

This segment demonstrates the relationship of performance to the occasion and how it contributes to the cultural theme of the occasion, when occasion means any event invested with a cultural theme as in the cultural theme of mourning in funeral celebration and conviviality in birthday partying. In

a similar vein, the hiplife cultural theme of the performance occasion is a very significant part of the hiplife shareable culture and the success of the occasion depends on the matchability between the interpretive cues and the theme of the occasion and on how the performer and the audience co-construct the hiplife cultural identity as expressed on the occasion. Indeed, the hiplife theme and identity the occasion presents are the products of the overarching hiplife cultural situation.

I went to the Sports Entertainment Center, a huge 5-storey hotel behind the Baba Yara Sports Stadium, a modern architecture with a plush swimming pool behind it, a bar on your left, furnished with expensive tables and comfortable chairs that blended well with the tiled floor. The aroma from the kitchen was irresistible. Certainly, the centre had all the senses could feed on but the moment the sounds started, the soundscape imposed itself on the sense of the audience, the functioning of all the other senses were arrested and all attention was redirected to the source of the sound throbbing from the giant speakers on both sides of the stage, and the stage became the centre of attraction. The senses were therefore reduced to sights and sound: performance on stage and music and this was going to be the perception, which through cultural interpretations, could elicit audience behaviour (Merriam, 1955; Blacking, 1973; Feld, 1982, 1994; Turino, 2008).

The audience was basically youthful, of about 16 to 30 years, and all dressed in hip hop fashion, the men with Timberland boots, jeans, baseball caps, sleeveless T-shirts, petty coats, bandanas and other hip hop paraphernalia, and the women were in their usual spaghetti dresses, revealing and bright in colours. The first to mount the stage was Kaboom and his partner and they were all in hip hop outfit. He was shouting slogans like "Yeah, yeah, yeah", "Put your hands up, put your hands up" and "Say ooo". The response was not encouraging but there was an instantaneous response when he shouted, "Yɛreto afa hɔ" (We are going to throw things there, we are passing there or our

bottom will pass there[39]). This was a double entendre with misogynistic connotations and the audience fast caught the cues and reacted favourably. From nowhere, there was electricity in the atmosphere and Kaboom was right on top of his game. He was speaking through the microphone and not doing a lip-synch performance and when he started rapping, it took some few seconds for some of the audience to get into an evaluative behaviour, having been co-opted into the rapper's timing, joining at two main points of entry and joining a call and response pattern of the performance. There were those who were doing full recitation with him and others who would wait till the middle of a line and join the rest of the line. Then it got to a section of the performance when he would rap a line and there was a thunderous response "Meto faa hɔ" (I passed there; I threw things there; my buttom passed there). Indeed Kaboom and the audience were co-rapping and the audience were lost in excitement.

What was going on was a definition of good relationship between performance and the cultural situation. The fact was that Kaboom had played this track to me before but I had neither heard it on any radio station nor seen the album on any shelf but there we were with the audience rapping along, a clear sign of positive evaluative behaviour. I then got to know that he had a section of the audience, a select group, who were his core fans and they knew the track and some of them were underground rappers themselves and one participant said, "the guy just nailed it". Another participant added, "We are hardcore hiplife fans" and needless to say the performers on the bill for the show were enough to select their own audience and a hardcore underground rapper like Kaboom was most likely to attract hardcore hiplife fans, in-group members who were well immersed in the hiplife culture. We are talking about a culture that sought to break free from the clutches of the dominant culture which consigned them to permanent subordination. Of course, it could not be said

---

[39] This is a literary devise of double entendre with the third meaning being close to the first, all of sexual connotation.

that every member of the audience was a hardcore hiplife fan but judging from the response of the audience, the majority of them were. The spontaneous response influenced the others to get into that frenzy but by and large, Kaboom and the audience succeeded in dramatizing a detached text, a mental script they shared in common. This script expressed through a physically spontaneous flow of lived hiplife experience, a platform that offered them the freedom of self-expression, a successful celebration of hiplife predicated upon shareable hiplife cultural interpretive cues. The most significant cue that did the magic was the misogynistic content, linking the performer and the audience through the cultural interpretive frame of hiplife. Through misogyny, the audience were able to exhibit the deviant behaviour of jettisoning the propriety of language concerning sex, one of the instruments of domination by the dominant culture (Foucault, 1990: 10), strategies of hegemony that make them conform to the norm (Adler, Meuller and Laufer, 2001: 186). So the participants in the performance not only provided hints of their resistance to and subversion of gerontocratic authority but expressed their sense of autonomy as well. Their response was more of the appeal of a cultural ideology, partly inherited from the Rawlings uprising which contested the concept of Ghanaian authority at that time (Shillington, 1992: 52, 55, 59) and partly inherited from the hip hop culture, a culture that seeks survival by resisting the established culture (Rose, 1994: 18; Kitwana, 2002) than a musical one. It was a response based on good cultural shareability.

This interpretive frame is what constructed the identity of the occasion, which all members, performers and audience shared; that identity that offered them the opportunity to express themselves freely on issues that could be an abomination on other platforms, that identity that allowed them the same good feeling of being youthful and that identity that set them out as special and gave them a culture they could call their own. While the participants were shouting and rapping along in excitement, the performance morphed into a kind of mob psychology, a collective

effervescence or contagiousness of consciousness (Durkheim, 1915: 324) which Plato refers to as the non-rational of "fluctuating sentiments with which we feel but never think" (Havelock, 1982: 26). That meant that the performance therefore succeeded in mediating the cultural situation, making them lose individual consciousness and making them adopt that of the hiplife culture for that moment. The sight and sound of performance and the audience response, in affinity with the cultural situation, were used to construct their new world (Blacking, 1973; Feld, 1982, 1994) and each participant developed a "psychic wholeness through artistic expression" (Turino, 2008: 4) and perceived his/her "world to be what his/her cultural background suggests" (Leach, 1976: 121). And what this cultural background suggests or instructs (Urban, 2001: 179), in other words, what the hiplife non material culture instructs, constructs the hiplife cultural identity.

It was this new world or new identity they were celebrating that the next performer came to change. He was also in hip hop fashion; he mounted the stage and started doing American hip hop, compromising the idiom of the occasion by rapping in English. The electrifying atmosphere during Kaboom's performance quickly thawed into a cold one; they were just looking at him, detached and unaffected. And while the point of entry of Kaboom's performance was to join in the performance, this time "the point of entry" was to clap him out: "Away, away, away". Their reaction emanated from the fact that he had taken away what made them call hiplife their own, Twi raps. The occasion was supposed to conflate the traditional and the modern cultures. The modern culture was in the form of the hip hop beat, the modern setting – swimming pool, tiled floors, beautiful four storey building – of the performance occasion and the body expression including what they wore. The traditional culture was supposed to be in the form of the Twi language, the inertia culture to be harnessed by the modern culture (Urban, 2001: 18), the space that the idiom of the Twi language provided for them to play around with meanings. Rapping in American English surely robbed them

of such an opportunity. And what made matters worse was his false accent, killing the philosophy of hiplife authenticity, which was not to be confused with that of the American hip hop authenticity on that occasion. That certainly reflected Leach's concept of the symbol that no two symbols ever mean the same in different cultures (Leach, 1976: 121). The performer after Kaboom disrupted the flow of lived experience of hiplife, breaking the rhythm of their new world they were celebrating and like the cultural production of Scizo and Kobbie, his cultural interpretive cues failed to register a smooth blend with those of his audience, causing a mismatch between performance and the cultural situation and this disconnectedness caused his performance to collapse.

3.9 SUMMARY

Obviously data from my field work could not capture every hiplife cultural interpretive cue but the ones captured clearly demonstrate that cultural shareability (Urban, 1996: 21, 2001) that manifests through cultural interpretive cues or symbolic communication that locates participants of hiplife performance in a particular evaluative behaviour is the crucible of hiplife cultural production. The goal of cultural shareability of a mixture of oldness and newness, especially a new-found mental strength, guided the operation of DJs who started the genre, the selection of sites for the genre at its incipient stage and the dynamics of performance, both live recordings and live stage performances. It is cultural shareability that determines the success or otherwise of performance. It is quite instructive to note that while good performance emanates from good shareability, the successful cultural symbolic communication of the hiplife culture or interpretation of hiplife cultural interpretive cues, bad performance is the failure of cultural symbolic communication of the hiplife between the performer and the audience. In the next chapter, we move from the investigation of hiplife cultural production to the dynamics of sound production in hiplife and we point to the primacy of Akan phonology, a major cultural interpretive cue and resource for hiplife rap art.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DYNAMICS OF HIPLIFE RAP LYRICS: THE CONSTRUCTION OF VERBAL RHYTHM

4.0 Introduction

We have seen in the previous chapter that hiplife performance is best seen through the performer-audience interface and we observed that factors that promoted the performer-audience cohesion as a unit were located in a cultural situation (Merriam, 1955; Lord, 1960; Bateson, 1972; Blacking, 1973; Bauman, 1977; Feld, 1982; Havelock, 1982; Yankah, 1989; Waterman, 1990; Diop, 1995; Rose, 1996, Ntarangwi; 2009). Hip hop in particular presents two major cultural situations that we need to pay attention to if we have to appreciate it as a cultural development. They are hip hop globalization, the global culture of hip hop, practised in all corners of the world, from Japan to Tanzania, and hip hop localization, the local culture of hip hop, the regional vernacular hip hop, inspired by the local tradition. In Ghana, as elsewhere, the global hip hop culture is the other side of cosmopolitanism as expressed, among other things, in fashion (jeans, sneakers, base ball caps, spaghetti wear, female tight and revealing wear, boots, sleeveless T-shirts), in rap music and in swagger, the show of confidence. Indeed, these manifestations of the hip hop culture in various parts of Africa have led critics to believe that the American hip hop culture has heavily influenced that of Africa (Gross, 1992; Stephens, 2000; Mitchell, 2002; Samper, 2004; Moulard-Kouka, 2005; Stroeken, 2005; Grippo, 2006; Kelley, 2006). They believe that hip hop in Africa generally borrows its performative structures from those of the US hip hop and that African hip hop is informed largely by global realities (Ntarangwi, 2009: 20). This position is contested by other critics who believe that local hip hop in Africa only fronts the US hip hop culture as a medium of expressing the substantive local culture and that globalised hip hop is only being used to create space for local identities (Bennett, 1999; Auzanneau, 2002; Condry, 2006; Kohlhagen, 2007; Perullo, 2007; Journo, 2009; Shipley, 2009, 2013).

This debate is not restricted to critics of global hip hop; it is a current debate among hiplife practitioners in Ghana, especially in the area of hiplife rhythmic expression. The artistes' own

opinion on this question falls into two main groups. On one hand, there is a group of hiplife artistes who believe in the globalization of hip hop and that the Akan rap shares similar linguistic structures with that of the American English hip hop. On the other hand, there is another group of hiplife artistes who believe in the localization of hip hop and that the Akan rap is an original Ghanaian cultural form, a re-contextualised and modern version of the Akan drum text. This chapter strongly endorses the position of the second group. In this chapter, I argue, in the first of the two sections, that Akan rap and the US English rap do not share linguistic structures and terminologies like rhythm and rhyme as some artistes would like us to believe. I also argue in the second section of this chapter that Akan rap, even though may have been influenced by certain external factors, has its origin, to a greater extent,   in the Akan traditional drum language and conclude that Akan rap is more of a local development than a global one.

4.1 Spoken Akan language

There are quite a number of languages used in hiplife and so the first question we need to address in this discussion is why we isolate the Akan language for this analysis. The Akan language is one of the Kwa group of languages in the Volta basin in Ghana, that is, apart from Ga, Adangbe and Ewe (Dakubu, 1988: 1). It gives us the following ethnic groups with their respective dialects: the Asante, the Fante, the Ahanta, the Guan, the Bono, the Akyem, the Akwamu, the Kwawu, the Akuapen, the Sefwi and the Nzima (Dakubu, 1988: 53; Adu Boahen, 2000: 1), most of them being mutually intelligible or being similar to each other (Dakubu, 1988: 5). The Akans form about half or at least 45% of the entire Ghanaian population (Adu Buahen, 2000: 1) and this is confirmed by figures from the 2000 National Population and Housing Census, 49.1% and statistics of the 2010 National Population and Housing Census which puts the percentage at 45.3%. In addition to this huge percentage it commands in the overall Ghanaian population, it constitutes the second language of most of the non-Akan language-speakers (Dakubu, 1988). Akan is also used in schools, churches

and market places of certain non-Akan speaking areas (Dakubu, 1988: 55) and is the "most widely studied and documented" (Dakubu, 1988: 57) language in the country.

It therefore comes as no surprise that the hiplife cultural community has adopted Akan languages as the most widely used linguistic expression. Apart from some very isolated use of other languages like Hausa, Ga and Ewe and Dagbani, Akan constitutes the remaining huge proportion of hiplife songs. In investigating the verbal dynamics of hiplife rap therefore, the Akan language imposes itself as the foremost area of inquiry, especially in the attempt to find out similarities and dissimilarities between hiplife rap and the US hip hop rap.

4.1.1 The differences between the Akan hiplife rap and the American hip hop rap

The Akan hiplife rap and the American hip hop rap, which uses the English language, may on the surface look alike in terms of rhythm. For example, Azigizar Jnr. believed he started rapping because "I was doing Grand Master Flash… I will be rapping to it; Curtis Blow and I would be rapping to it". He explained that he would be constructing his Akan rap in line with the art of Grand Master Flash and Curtis Blow. K. K. Kabobo also revealed, "Because at that time I was enjoying U-Roy", he constructed the Akan version of what he heard from U-Roy on the grounds that he at that time wanted to have a different kind of brand from the big names in Ghanaian highlife like Papa Yankson and Pat Thomas. For Reggie Rockstone, the English language was "what they spoke to me" at home and that was what got him into rap. He even believed he loved the English language to the extent of dreaming in it. These are the artistes who started the hiplife art on a commercial basis and they make you believe that hiplife rap is inspired by the English language or that the English language in the American rap can easily be restructured into Akan rap. Again, to meet the expectation of the listening public that hiplife is inspired by the American English language, some hiplife artistes like D-Black, Asem and

Trigmatic manage to simulate the American English accent on Akan words. However, the belief that hiplife is inspired by or follows the English language needs interrogation, especially considering the fact that rap, whether in English or in Akan, as a rhythmic art greatly relies on the syllable of the word. The study of the syllable as sound unit therefore gives us a conceptual framework to study sound not only in speech but also in rap.

The syllable as a phonic or phonemic unit has different phonological significances in different languages. A comparison of the way it functions in English and in Akan will help us understand whether the linguistic factors producing rhythm in English rap are the same as in Akan. This means that a clear distinction has to be made between the metrical structures of the two languages. According to Banti and Giannattasio (2004: 300), "phonological relevant units that undergo metrical regulation are not the same in all languages", sometimes not even when they belong to the same family. The syllable as a phonological unit may constitute the stress as the key feature in English, the vowel length in Latin and the tone in most West African languages like Akan. In English, the concept of stress gives us loudness, duration and pitch. The word "pretend" as a verb has "pre" as unstressed and "tend" as the stressed. The stressed syllable is the louder, of longer duration and of higher pitch in contradistinction to the unstressed syllable "pre". The concept of stress in the English language also has a grammatical function, spelling out the difference between word classes as in "object" [**ɔb**djikt] as the noun form, the stress on the first syllable; [ɔb**djɛkt**], as the verb form, the stress on the second syllable. Stress also features prominently in the sentence in English. We could have contrastive stress as in "The pen is **on** the table", that is, it is not **under** it. In short, stress in English is a key feature and therefore we call English a stress language.

The same syllabic concept however does not exist in the Akan language. The phonological sequence that constitutes the key feature in an Akan word like "papa" is not stress but tone, high or low, and it is that tonal structure that gives the meaning and sometimes the class of the word in Akan. For example, the Akan pronunciation for father in English is [pàpá], the first syllable is a low tone and the second is a high tone; the word for "good" is "papa" [pápá] in Akan, two syllables with high tones; the word for "fan" is "papa" [pàpà], two syllables with low tones. Again, "bra" [brà] in Akan as a low tone syllable is a verb form meaning "come" while "bra" as a high tone [brá] is a noun form meaning "menstruation". Unlike in the English language therefore, loudness, duration and pitch are determined by the Akan tonal structure. The Akan tonal structure, as seen above, also has semantico-grammatical functions just like the English stress. Clearly, before we even get into any serious analysis, we see that while the phonological sequence serving as the key feature in the English language is the stress, that of the Akan language serving as the key feature is the tone. Therefore, equating the Akan linguistic structures to those of the English language will be a measurement exercise with the wrong yardstick. The fact that the key features of Akan and English are drastically different constitutes the main dividing line between the performatory structures of the Akan rap and the US English rap. In the ensuing discussion, a lot more attention is paid to the dynamics of Akan rap but as we move along, we make the necessary reference to the US English rap.

This enquiry on localization of hiplife now moves away from the key features of the two languages and mainly hinges on the study of the Akan tone. This is the most phonologically relevant unit in Akan that undergoes metrical regulation, and is thus the main ingredient in verbal rhythmic construction in Akan rap. Looking at the Akan tone is the key to the relationship between poetry and music in this study.

In the Western literary tradition, a lot of work has been done with regards to the relationship between the spoken word, poetry and music, referred to in chapter two as a continuum. We have already cited the examples of poetical structures that produce musicality. There have been studies of syntactic parallelism in poetry (Jakobson, 1987: 117-266; Levin, 1962), how syntax constitutes the poetic line (Mitchell, 1970; Tarlinskaja, 1984), and constructing creativity through deviation of poetic forms from well-formedness (Peters, 1948; Brooke-Rose, 1958; Baker, 1967). An insightful discussion of particular relevance to this study, however, is that of Banti and Giannattasio. They refer to poetry as a special kind of "speech", a poetic discourse, as opposed to ordinary speech or plain discourse, (Banti and Giannattasio, 2004: 306). They argue that the poetic discourse uses the "discourse-like features of music" like "musical phrases and periods, syntactic and strophic structures, refraining, punctuation markers such as breaths and rests, and so on upon which also the so-called pure, i.e, instrumental, music is mainly based in several cultures" (Banti and Giannattasio, 2004: 295). This, in addition to Levin's concept of coupling (Levin, 1963: 140) which we referred to in chapter two, not only goes beyond the Western concept of poetic discourse but conveniently relates poetic discourse to instrumental music in all cultures. Levin's ideas, on one hand, and those of Banti and Giannattasio, on the other, greatly inform the analysis of Akan rap poetry. Interrogation of the localization of hip hop in Ghana, hiplife, therefore goes beyond looking at the differences between the US English rap and the Akan rap for even though the Akan spoken word and the poetic word all depend on the tone, we still need to investigate the differences between them. The reason is that the tone of a syllable of a word in the spoken environment may not be the same as the syllable in the poetic environment. Such a study requires a good knowledge of the Akan tonal structure but the Akan tonal structure is such a huge topic and that we simply do not have enough space to cover every aspect of it. We will select only the

aspects of the Akan tonal structure that is germane to Akan rap. They are the Akan tone bearing unit, syllable type, high and low tones, downstepped high tone, downdrift and gliding pitches.

4.1.2 The Akan syllable as the Tone Bearing Unit (TBU)

Linguists have offered various definitions of the syllable, the most popular being the motor theory which relates the syllable to bursts of chest pulse (Stetson, 1928). For a comprehensive definition of the Akan syllable however, we draw on Catford's contribution which posits that languages have natural rhythm organization based on the emission of timed imitator power burst[40] and that each burst has a single peak (Catford, 1977a). In Akan, the peak here refers to the tone bearing unit as identified by the native speaker (Ewen and van der Hulst, 2001: 58). This concurs with the widely accepted view that the Akan syllable is the tone bearing unit (TBU) of the word (Dolphyne, 1988: 52; Abakah, 2005: 110). In that sense the mora, the phonological unit that determines the syllabic weight, and the syllable in Akan are almost synonymous.

4.1.3 The Akan Syllable Types

The C syllable type is a tone bearing consonant that occurs in word initial, medial or final position which has [+ sonorant]. For example, we have /ˋ**m**.má / "children" (Abakah, 2005: 111) and /kò.**m**´/ "enter" (Dolphyne, 1988). The V Syllable Type is also tone bearing. We have for example /**à**.nʊ́/ "mouth" (Abaka, 2005: 112) and /tɪ̀.**è**/ "listen" (Abakah, 2005: 112; Dolphyne, 1988: 52). The CV Syllable Type is also another instance of the Akan tone bearing unit. It is a combination of a consonant and a vowel to form a syllabic unit or a phonemic tone. We have for example, /**kɔ́** / "go" and /**dá**/ " sleep". We should note that we do not have the CC syllable in Akan and even though it may occur at

---

[40] Catford builds on Stetson's concept of chest pulses in the production of the syllable and adds the timing concept, meaning that each pulse has a regular time space equal to the others.

the surface structure like in "**fr**ɛ″ (call) and "**pr**a" (sweep), the first consonant still carries a [+ sonorant] feature in its matrix in the deep structure and therefore registers as CVCV, /fɨ.rɛ´/ and /pɨ.rá/ respectively (Dolphyne, 1988: 54; Clement, 2000: 140; Abakah, 2005: 112; Marfo, 2005: 47).

4.1.4 High and Low Tones (Ɛnne a ɛwɔ soro ne ɛnne a ɛwɔ fam)

We begin with what constitutes pitch since it is central to the tonal structure of the Akan syllable. In Akan, pitch "refers to the musical level on which a sound is said" (Dolphyne, 1988: 52) while pitch in English is an accented syllable which "may be realised on a higher pitch than the syllables surrounding it, so that the listener can easily identify it…Such syllables are said to bear pitch peaks" (Ewen and Hulst, 2001: 58). Lass (1993) also describes the pitch as a phonetic syllable that produces a single peak. They both take inspiration from Catford's description of what constitutes the pitch in a syllable (Catford, 1977a). We do this comparative study to emphasise that stress languages operate different phonological systems from tonal languages like Akan. In Akan, once again, we have two main types of tones, the high tone which is caused by a fast vibration of the vocal cords and a low tone which is also caused by a slow vibration of the vocal cords. Therefore in the Akan name "Kofi"[41] [kò.fi´], we have two syllables, the first syllable carries a low tone because the vocal cords are supposed to vibrate at a slower rate while the second syllable enjoys a faster rate in vibration. Let us now graphically represent the two types of tones with two parallel lines, the upper case dash under or the symbol [´] on the high tone and the lower case dash under or the symbol [`] on the low tone. The basic tone melody is also represented by H to signify high tone and L which also stands for low tone.

---

[41] Kofi is the name given to a male child born on Friday.

Unlike other researches which investigate hip hop style by allowing individual artistes to speak for themselves (Edwards, 2009: 63-92), this research subjects excerpts of rap text to critical analysis to find out how the texts reflect what artistes say about the rap art. Placing the spoken text and the poetic text side by side puts us in a better position to understand the transition from the Akan spoken language to Akan poetic language.

For this purpose, we choose two texts "Bɔga" and "Hwɛ n'asa" from two hiplife artistes who have enjoyed the most glittering careers in recent times, Sarkodie and Okyeame Kwame respectively. Let us commence our analysis by dividing this section into two: the first is on the two texts as spoken texts and the second is on the two texts as real rap texts. We here produce the two texts and we proceed to look at them as spoken texts.

(4) a. "Hwɛ n'asa" by Okyeame Kwame

```
1. Hwɛ n'asa                        Look at the way she dances
2. Ne ne kasa                       Look at the way she talks
3. Hwɛ m'asa                        Look at the way I dance
4. Ɔpɛ dɔkta                        She loves doctor
5. Sɛ ɔhyɛda de ne hyada            When she wears her shada
6. Ne ne kaba na mayada             And her kaba, I go crazy
7. Nkanka sɛ maka akyerɛ no sɛ      Especially when I have told her
8. Ɔno nkoa na mepɛ                 She is the only one I love
9. Enti ɔnsan nsɔ me nhwɛ            So she should give me a second chance
10. Na ɔnsan nhunu sɛ nokorɛ nkoa    For her to see that I am truthful
    na meka
```

(4) b. "Bɔga" by Sarkodie

```
1. Wodwene sɛ ɛda fam. Gyae nipa ɛrebrɛ     You think it's easy. Stop, we are suffering
2. Obi te Canada deɛ obedi koraa ɔserɛ      Somebody is in Canada and has to beg
                                             Before the hands go to the mouth
3. Bɔgas bebree na ɛntaa nka nokorɛ         A lot of burgers[42] do not tell the truth
```

---

[42] This is a Ghanaian local parlance for Ghanaians who have travelled outside. The idea started with Ghanaian immigrants in Hamburg, Germany, in the early 1980s. They called themselves Hamburgers and the name was later shortened to "burgers". They came back advertising affluent lifestyles in Ghana.

```
4. Anka wobehunu sɛ amannɔne koraa yɛ fo        You will see that life abroad is not
as
   Kyerɛ⁴³                                        pleasant as it is made to seem
                                                 Just give me a break
```

Let us start our analysis of the Akan tonal structure as presented in these rap texts which, for the sake

of our study, we first look as spoken text, the way it will be said in spoken discourse but not in rap

discourse.

(5) "Bɔga" by Sarkodie

(5) a. Wodwene   [wÚʤíní] H H H, or

                              - - -

   (5) b. Canada   [ká.nà.dà]   H L L, or

                           -
                          _   _

   (6) c. Nokorɛ [nò.kó.rɛ́]   L H H, or

                         _ _
                      _

(6) "Hwɛ n'asa"

   (6) a. n'asa   [ná.sa´] H H, or

                         - -

   (6) b. Nkanka   [ńká.ńká] H H H H, or ‾ ‾ ‾ ‾

   (6) c. akyerɛ   [á.kyè.rɛ´] H L H

Indeed, unlike the English stress patterns which are in asymmetrical relationship, that is, they have

unequal levels at varying pitches with each other, with its suprasegmental features like word stress

carrying a different pitch on each syllable and pitches in sentence stress heavily influenced by lexical,

grammatical and attitudinal considerations (Gimson, 1980: 258-60, 285), the Akan tonal patterns, that

---

⁴³ This Akan word expresses disgust, thus the whole idea that migration in certain aspects could be disgusting as described
by the artiste.

is the high and the low tones, are in contrastive two-level relationship; they are polarities. In fact, in the 1950s, it was believed there was a mid tone in Akan but the modern concept on Akan tonal structure is that there is no mid tone as previously believed and that it is now considered to be part of the high tone. (Dolphyne, 1988:55).

4.1.5 Downstepped High Tone

It is important at this stage to keep in mind that high tone in Akan is at one end of the tonal continuum while low tone is in the other. Downstepped high tone, considered to be more appropriate in Akan than the older term mid tone (Dolphyne, 1988: 58), is another manifestation of the complex nature of Akan tones, but for the purpose of this analysis it is when one of the high tones is said with slight fall in pitch (Dolphyne, 1988: 58-59). This fall is nowhere near the low tone and that means it still remains a high tone said with relatively lower energy. Let us have an example from "Bɔga".

(7) a. Gyae, nipa erebrɛ

This otherwise rap text presents an instance of downstepped high tone when you consider it in terms of speech text. The second syllable in "Gyae" is said with slightly lower energy and it becomes [dʒáé], H H but ⁻ \

4.1.6 Downdrift (Fam-kɔ)
"Bɔga" by Sarkodie

(8) a.　　　Wodwene sɛ ɛda fam
　　　　　　　　　　⁻ ⁻　⁻ ⁻　⁻ ⁻
　　　Gyáé nipa ɛrebrɛ
　　　⁻ ⁻　⁻ ⁻　⁻ ⁻　⁻
　　　Obi te Cánada dèɛ óbédí koraa ɔsrɛ
　　　⁻ ⁻　⁻ ⁻ ⁻　⁻ ⁻　⁻ ⁻ ⁻ ⁻ ⁻ ⁻　⁻ ⁻
　　　Bɔ́gàs bèbrèè nà ɛntáá ńkà nokófɛ
　　　⁻　⁻　⁻ ⁻ ⁻ ⁻　⁻ ⁻ ⁻ ⁻ ⁻　⁻ ⁻

‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾
À̀nkà mòbɛ́hú sɛ́ amannɔne kóraá yɛ́ fó, kyerɛ́
‾ ‾‾ ‾ ‾ ‾ ‾ ‾ ‾ ‾ ‾ ‾ ‾‾

This rap text also gives us an instance of downdrift if we consider it as a speech text. We see that apart from the situation given in (7) a in which the high tone is said slightly lower, we also have downdrift and the H2 is also said slightly lower than the H1. This phonological phenomenon spreads throughout the sentence and the H3 is slightly lower than H2 and "there is a gradual drop in the pitches of the high tones from the beginning of the utterance to the end" (Dolphyne, 1988: 57). The lower high tones are called automatic downstep.

4.1.7 Gliding pitches

Gliding pitches are another instance of mid-tones in spoken Akan.

"Bɔga" by Sarkodie

(9a) Wódwéné sɛ ̀ɛdà fám

     ‾ ‾ ‾ \ _ _ ‾ ‾

 (9b). À̀nkà mòbehú sɛ́ àmàn`ɔnnè kóráá yɛ̀ fó, kyèrɛ́

    ‾ ‾ ‾ ‾ ‾ \ _ _ _ _ ‾ ‾‾ _ ‾ _ ‾

Treated as spoken language, this text clearly provides an instance of gliding pitches. The difference between this and (7a) is that this has only a single vowel as opposed to the double vowels in (7a). The examples from (5a), (5b), (5c), (6a), (6b), (6c), (7a) and (8a) clearly indicate that Akan is a register tone language of high and low tones on level pitches. In (9a) and (9b) high-low tones occur on two

vowels or a vowel and a sonorant and specifically with falling pitches which occur on the vowel in conjunction with "sɛ" (that), a short vowel which cannot be treated as a double vowel which are two separate tone bearing units. Short as the vowel is, there is a glide from a high tone to another slightly lower in pitch high tone. We observe that all these instances of downstepped high tone, downdrift and gliding pitches in the text provided are types of mid tones which do not exist in English. It is now obvious that Akan rap, which has tone as a key phonological feature, and American hip hop, which has stress as the key phonological feature, do not share linguistic structures so far as rhythm is concerned. Azigizar Jnr. might believe he is imitating the English rap of Curtis Blow and Grand Master Flash. K. K. Kabobo might believe he is copying the Patois raga, another variety of English, of U-Roy, and Reggie Rockstone might believe he is transposing the English rhythm onto Akan rap. But these are all mere assumptions. The fact is, unknown to them, they have successfully recontextualised and modernized a traditional poetic code that now serves as the foundation for Akan linguistic creativity by other Ghanaian youth who have come after them. A similar development occurs with comparing rhyme in the English literary tradition to that of Akan rap. Let us now look at the other school of thought from some hiplife artistes that the English concept of rhyme is applicable in the Akan verse.

4.2 The use of the term "rhyme" in Akan rap art

As seen above, the differences in the key phonological features in English and Akan problematize the complexity of the tropology of Akan rap and show that substituting English terminology for Akan literary devices, especially in the study of Akan rap, could amount to oversimplifying issues. Another problem apart from the one treated above is the use of the term "rhyme" by certain Akan rappers. We have already mentioned its use in connection with Akan rap in chapter 2 but it is now appropriate to revisit the use of this term in hiplife from a different perspective. The objective of this investigation is to find out how appropriate it is to use the term "rhyme" for any description, literary device or concept

in the Akan rap. As we did with section 4.1 and all its subsections, we compare the term as used in the English literary tradition to how it is used by some hiplife artistes and evaluate if indeed the English concept of rhyme exists in the Akan literary tradition.

Most Ghanaian rappers substitute the concept of English rhyme for Akan rap. In trying to explain his art, Joe Frazer, a hiplife superstar, postulated that, "being a professional lyricist, you have to rhyme to your audience". Kakape, a Kumasi underground rapper at the time of the research, in a focus group discussion of Lazio et al, when asked if his art was rap simply answered, "I rhyme", equating rhyme to rap. This short sentence kept resonating in discussions with underground rappers like Macarfee, Kaboom and others. Andy Dosty also explained rap in terms of rhyme and Okyeame Kwame, the most popular rapper in Ghana in 2008 and 2009, the time of this research, in explaining his art offered the following explication, "the relationship between the rhyme schemes and the distribution of the rhythm are my chest pulses", associating rhyme with rhythm and even went further to cite examples from Jay-Z's rap. These observations by the artistes seem to echo the thinking of Tricia Rose who makes us understand that the rap art is synonymous to "rap rhyme" and "that to perform someone else's rhyme requires that references to its creator be rewritten" (Rose, 1994: 87). Rose in jettisoning Ong's notion of formula as a mode of thinking in oral culture, defines American rap rhymes as not being the "fixed, rhythmically balanced expressions" (Rose, 1994, 87, quoting Ong, 1982) but that "in a rap the rhymed word is often in the middle of a long sentence, and punctuated short phrases are worked against the meter of the base line" (Rose, 1994: 88).

I do not dispute Rose's definition of rhyme but even though internal rhymes also exist in English poetry, rhyme is basically a terminal sound device. But in her defence, it seems that the rappers have re-invented the conventional concept of English rhyme which puts more premium on vertical identical sounds and have terms like the slant rhyme, off rhyme or oblique rhyme when the sounds involved are

not identical (Heffernan et al, 1987: 717). Again, when Rose describes the vertical distribution of rhyme as a terminal sound device, it turns out to be near-rhymes and not the conventional concept of rhyme. She uses the example of Rakim's rap in "Don't Look any Further":

(17) "Don't Look any Further" by Rakim

    Thinking of a master plan

    This ain't nothin' but sweat my hand

    So I dig into my pocket all my money's spent

    So I dig deeper – still comin' up with lint

The word "plan" does not fully rhyme with "hand" and neither does "spent" fully rhyme with "lint". These are near-rhymes because rhymes in English are supposed to have identical sounds (Heffernan et al, 1987: 717). The point, however, is that near rhymes or imperfect rhymes, known in the English poetic theory as assonance, are accepted forms of versification in the English literary tradition because they form part of its taxonomy of rhyme schemes. Such conventions rarely appear in Akan poetry but, be that as it may, they do not have explicit taxonomy as we have in the English tradition. The absence of such taxonomy is evidenced in the Ghanaian literary history where writers like Gaddiel R. Acquaah in the pre-independence period failed to make any great literary impact by using English rhyme schemes in Akan versification. This validates Nana Wilson Tagoe's (2006) observation that texts in Ghanaian literature thrive on certain social, historical and linguistic conditions. No wonder such writings could not travel beyond their time, because the lines looked too contrived for Akan versification. Again, it was clear in chapter two that we do not have this practice in the Akan language and that the closest equivalent in the Akan language is the concept of echo explained in chapter 2. For the purpose of this analysis, we may have to go back to the text we used for that analysis and restate the salient points raised in that chapter in connection with the use of the term "rhyme" in hiplife.

(18) M'asan Aba by Okyeame Kwame

Asɛm a ato me	I am in trouble
Obi nka bi ma me	Somebody should come to my aid
Okyeame ato me, me ne me Nyame	Okyeame, it is left between me and my God
Me ara megye to mu, ɛyo, marushe ati	I accept; I have rushed

We have already emphasized that technically there is a difference in the acoustic dynamics in stress and tonal languages and there is the need to exercise the utmost care in any attempt to equate a development in one to the other in order not to make it sound like the two are the same, even though they may appear similar.

We continue to dichotomize the phonological structures of the English and those of the Akan language, as already discussed in this research to support work done in chapter 2 as seen in the preceding paragraph. We observe that the definition of syllabicity differs; while consonants can be a tone bearing unit (Dolphyne, 1988: 52; Abaka, 2005: 110) in the Akan language, it is not so in the English language.

All these points raised in this chapter constitute fresh supporting details to serve as further proof of the point already raised in chapter 2 that American rap, using the English language operates separate phonological structures from that of Akan rap and using American rap terminology interchangeably with that of Akan rap could amount to a rash generalization that risks robbing Akan rap scholarship the necessary vitality for further investigation and obscuring certain subterranean meanings in the study of Akan rap. It is against this background that this research buys into the thinking of Kofi Agyekum in attempting to find appropriate terms in Akan or to "Akanize" terminologies used for the purpose of stylistic analysis (kasasu mpɛnsɛnmpɛnsɛnmu) in Akan (Agyekum, 2011: 15-32). The issue has got to do with which language is used in naming the devices in stylistic or discourse analysis. Even though we have the English or other European names for universal linguistic concepts like speech sounds, consonants, vowels, tones, elision, illocutionary force and even in this research downstepped tones, gliding tones, mid tone and many more which can be used in Akan stylistic or discourse analysis, there

are still certain stylistic or literary concepts which lend themselves more to regional considerations and applying universal terminologies may not be the best.

One of such regional considerations is sound. We have seen that the English language treats its sound differently from that of the Akan language and such separate treatment of sound reinforces the fact that "Though all poems have sound, it may be helpful to distinguish between its local effect and its overall effect" (Heffernan et al, 1987: 731). Perhaps some of the Ghanaian artistes are compelled to use the term "rhyme" for their art partly because of the currency of its use in the international media and partly because of lack or insufficient literature on Ghanaian hiplife. This situation compels them to resort to literature on American rap which abounds in all forms in the international media (magazines, television, internet and many more), and it has resulted in their confusion in describing Akan rap in terms of American rap. This observation is supported by the fact that when Okyeame Kwame defined his art, he cited examples from Jay-Z's rap and none from his Ghanaian contemporaries. The use of the term "rhyme" by the hiplife community, from our analysis, therefore, provides a jarring note in the description or the definition of Akan rap because it fails to capture the true nature, in phonological terms, of the hiplife art. The literary description or the stylistic treatment of Akan rap is different from that of American rap. Akan rap is an example of hip hop localization, a practice that needs its own investigation and, until the Ghanaian Bureaux of Language or any affiliate body which superintends the use of Ghanaian languages comes out with an appropriate term, the term invented by David Dontoh, a presenter of a TV programme, "Agorɔ", *kasahare* (fast talk), as a substitute for what some of the rappers will refer to as "rhyme", remains a better option.

It is now clear that the Akan rap as a sonic experience is independent of any foreign influence. Let us now investigate the fact that even though it is part of a global development, it is an indigenous art form

with its own independent linguistic structures, inspired by the tradition and constructed out of the creativity of the youth in Ghana.

4.3 The Akan rap art: a local creative art

The first part of this chapter has already established that the key feature in the Akan language, unlike that of the English language, is the tone. This is the second part of the discussion and I argue that the Akan rap has its origin in the Akan traditional drum language. This part uses the Akan tonal structure as the basis for establishing change in meaning from the everyday spoken Akan language to the poetic Akan language, that is, from the referential meaning to the symbolic meaning. This discussion does not ignore the fact that everyday spoken language often include symbolic meanings and that the "ordinary language"/"poetic language" dichotomy has been dismissed by influential critics including Mary Louise Pratt (1978). The use of the term poetic language or symbolic meaning here refers to a language that carries more deliberate artistic patterns as opposed to "normal" language that relies less on deliberate artistic patterning. This offers us the opportunity to look at the Akan rap as an indigenous creative rhythmic art form, examining the changes that come as a result of the transition from the well-formedness of structures in spoken Akan language to deviations from such well-formed linguistic structures. This deviation includes the association of the Akan drum language with that of spoken Akan language. This leads us to investigate the fact that the hiplife art is basically based on the Akan drum language, as suggested by some hiplife artistes. We end this investigation by selecting two songs by two prominent hiplife artistes to examine how true it is that the hiplife art is heavily influenced by the Akan drum language and how true it is that the individual artiste constructs his style out of this poetic code.

4.3.1 From the spoken Akan to poetic Akan

We have seen in subsections 4.1.5, 4.1.6 and 4.1.7, downstepped high tone, downdrift and gliding pitches, the manifestations of some the complications mid-tones present in spoken Akan texts. We will

observe in subsequent analysis of the same texts, this time treated as poetic texts, omissions of these complications, especially with respect to the mid-tones. These omissions change the spoken Akan to poetic Akan because it presents new tonal structure in the poetic Akan. One of the obvious features of this change is the introduction of poetic rhythm. The rhythmic effect, it must be pointed out, is brought about by the use of systematic symmetries or parallelism of the tonal structures which according to Jakobson (1985: 150) "create a network of internal relation within the poem itself, making the poem an integrated whole and underlining the poem's autonomy". The poem's autonomy, which sets apart from the spoken text as pointed out by Jakobson, is signalled by a "flattened intonational contour" (Banti and Giannattasio, 2004: 296). This kind of metrical structure of semi-melodic or very little melodic nature which we can call psalmodizing is of prime importance to this analysis because keeping a single pitch by manipulating the tonal structure or the contour (Banti and Giannattasio, 2004: 295) is a common musical tradition by the Akans. For the purpose of our analysis, however, we concentrate on where to locate Akan rap within the context of such Akan music traditions. The data I have from the field work clearly indicate that the drum text is the closest to the Akan rap in terms of tonal structure used as a resource for rhythmic expression. Black Shanti and Black Moon in Tamale put down the power of their rhythm in their raps to traditional drumming. Okyeame Kwame in Kumasi revealed:

I just did a feature for Tictac and this was my rap, 'Dan, dan, mesi me dan/ Mete m'akoma mu pan, pan'. What I am saying is I am trying to assimilate it to the Kete[44] rhythm.

He then started to drum with his mouth to demonstrate that. Stone of the Bradez also intimated that "The beat comes from the language…you transpose it onto the drum."[45] Joe Frazer's contribution to this discussion is that, "In composing the lyrics, I play the kicks inside my head". Obour in Accra agreed entirely with the opinion of the Kumasi rappers quoted above saying, "when I am writing, I

---

[44] Kete is a special rhythm played for Ashanti kings.
[45] What he means by drum is the drum sample in the computer.

drum, be it chorus, be it rap, I drum. So any time if I am driving and I want to compose, I start my drumming… The drum is what determines your breaks; the drum is what determines the speed of your rap. I think rap generally follows the drum**". Sarkodie, believed to be the fastest rapper in Ghana at the time of writing, also reveals, "I always start with the rhythm like a drummer, and then I find the lyrics to fit it" (quoted in Osumare, 2012: 64). Again, Sydney and Obour emphasise that the hiplife art is from the chief's palace. This group of hiplife rappers believes in the localization of hiplife. The position of these hiplife rappers however requires an exhaustive enquiry. This makes us take a broader look at the poetic Akan language, this time filtered through the prism of the Akan drum language, Akan drum strokes and the Akan drum tonal structure,. We also look at the drum text and the rap text side by side.

4.3.2 Akan drums

We have Akan drums like the "ɔperenten", "apentemma", "bɔmmaa", "mpeti", "nkrawiri", "adedemma", "akuadwo", "akorɔma" and so forth but the drums selected for this work are the "atumpan" and the "asafo" drums.

4.3.3 Drum stroke syllable

Drums stroke syllable means each stroke of the stick or hand is an equivalent to a speech syllable in that it produces a note in the musical sense which indicates the relative duration and pitch of a sound. To be able to understand this properly, we need to anatomize the sound of the drum and this requires some musical concepts which may not have equivalents in the concepts we used in analysing the Akan speech tone structure. A key musical concept is metre, which has been defined in relation to Ghanaian rhythms as "the mental and physical process of ordering time into specific durations (measures),

subdividing the time span into equidistant units (beats and pulses) and feeling patterns of stress within that frame (downbeat, onbeat, upbeat)" (Locke, 1987). Each measure contains 16 pulses: 4 pulses form a beat, so there are 4 beats per measure. Nketia provides us with measures in the Akan language saying that in "the Akan language, for example, there are two syllables: long ♩ , and short ♪ " (Nketia,

1992)[46]. We may also add that there is a shorter syllable, ♪ . The hand or the stick is manipulated to produce long or short syllables. The stick or the hand hits the skin and immediately lifts it to allow the skin to fully vibrate and this is to create a long sound. For the purpose of this work, let us call that the crochet. To hit the skin and while it is vibrating to stop the vibration either through another hit or touch is to produce a relatively short sound. Let us call that a quaver. To dampen the sound by hitting and allowing the stick or the hand to stay on the skin so that the vibration is truncated immediately after the stroke is a very short note and we will call that the semi-quaver. The crotchet is quarter note, the quaver is eighth note and the semi-quaver is sixteenth note. We need to point out once again that while all vowels are tone bearing, not all consonants are so it is the tone they represent in drum text and not consonants or vowels per se. Here are some examples:

(13) a. "ɛnimia" (perseverance). Assuming that each syllable is assigned a note, it becomes

/ɛ/ ♩ /ni/ ♩ /mi/ ♪ /a/ ♪ , v.cv.cv.v and the tone melody is L H H L and the tonal pattern is

ˋɛnímíˋa and we therefore see that the word initial phoneme /ɛ/, the V syllable type, has the

---

[46] Nketia is obviously using the metronomic system. This is an approximation of how to measure syllables for there is no precise means of measuring syllables since one person who naturally speaks slow may pronounce a vowel a bit longer than a person who speaks fast. What we are doing is just a means of standardising the measurement of the syllable.

crotchet note and so does /ni/ , while /mi/ and the final vowel /a/ are quavers. Indeed, the same principle goes for assigning notes to words in songs in Akan (Nketia, 1992).

b. "Dantuo mu awɔ yi oo" *Cold is the room* (Nketia, 1992) becomes dan ♩ tuo ♩ mu ♪ a ♩ wɔ

♪ yi ♪ oo ♩ .

Again, drumming as a skill is equated to human speech production in this analysis.

4.3.4 Drum tonal structure

The Akan drum tonal structure is contingent upon the two-level tonal patterns (Nketia, 1968: 36) but the two tones are not necessarily produced on separate male and female drums. The "asafo" drum is single and yet the stick plays the high tone and the hand plays the low tone. The drum imitates not only the tones but the rhythm and flow of the Akan sentence as well.

(14) a. Wo ho te sɛn? - How are you? (Nketia, 1968) L H L H,

‾ ‾. Note that in normal speech, "sɛn″ would have registered two tones [sɛ́ń] .

(14) b. Rattray uses the M (male) and F (female symbol).

Osai Tutu Firampon   MMF MF MMM, _ _ ‾ _ ‾ _ _ _ (Rattray, 1927)

Changes as a result of transition from the speech text to the drum text have started showing up. We should note that some clusters of consonants have been lumped together and assigned one tone. In [fìràmpˋɔŋ], the consonant medial position /m/ before the medial position /p/ would have had its one tone. Again, the final consonant /ŋ/ would have definitely had its own tone because in Akan language, the final consonant in most cases is a syllable (Dolphyne, 1988: 53). Clearly, even though the drum text is an entextualisation of the speech text, it does not copy exactly the speech text but does some modifications on it. Let us see a drum text of the "atumpan" as presented by Nketia to illustrate the differences between speech text and drum text.

(14) c.
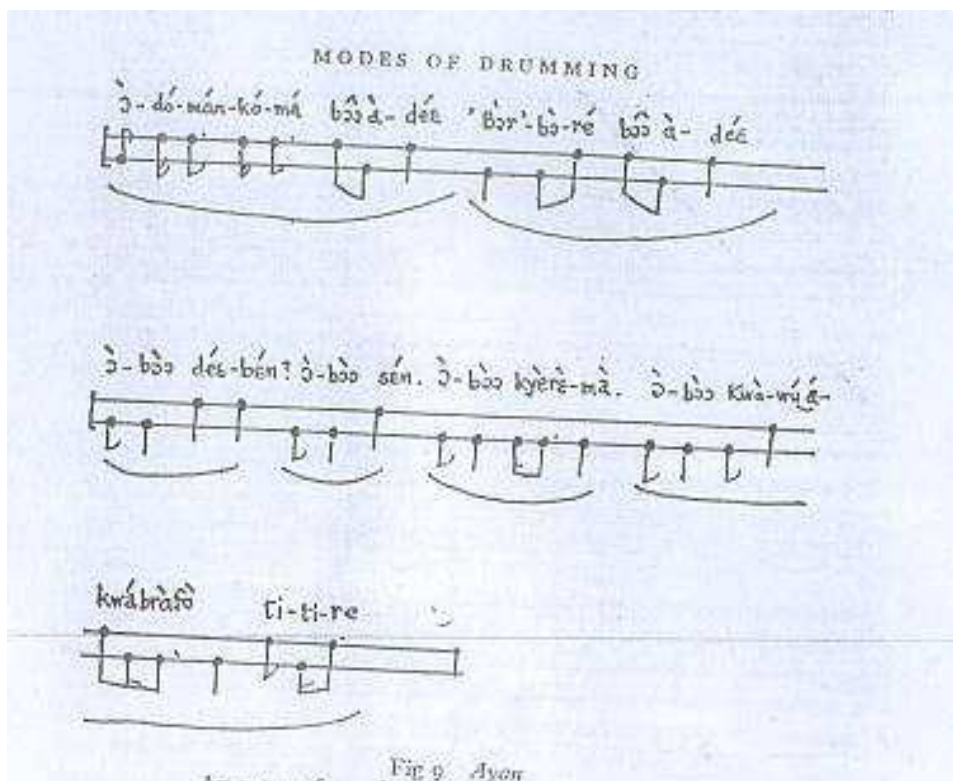
(Nketia, 1963; 25)

We also notice that the tones are only on two parallel lines, high and low. In speech language, the medial consonant /n/ in "ɔdomankoma" would have registered a tone on its own. The word "deɛ" in the first phrase would have also registered two tones instead of one. The word "ɔbɔɔ″ at the beginning of the second phrase would have had three syllables and therefore three tones instead of two in this drum text. These modifications go further to reinforce what we said about the changes in drum text with regard to speech text in (14) c. They will be discussed in detail in the following section.

4.3.5 The Drum text

It is clear from (14) a., (14) b., and (14) c. that there is a transition or a cross-over from the linguistic consideration in speech text to the musical consideration in drum text. There are four major observations, even though there could be others, in this transition. First, the principle of strictly assigning a tone to a syllable in speech text no more operates in drum text. Two or even more syllables could be lumped up and assigned one tone as we have seen in "ɔbɔɔ″, "deɛ" and "ɔdomankoma". Second, the principle of automatic downstep in speech text in which the high tones keep declining till the end of the sentence does not occur in drum text. All the high tones are on the upper line. Third, there are two parallel lines to represent the two tone levels: the upper line is the high tone and the lower line for the low tones. There is no mid-tone. Finally, features like falling pitches as occur in speech text are not represented in drum language as well. These differences are basically between the spoken Akan and poetic Akan, as seen through the prism of drum language.

We should however note that there could also be some murky areas in interpreting the drum language and that has to do with instances that present one tonal pattern for two different words. For example, the tone melody for the drum text for the Akan name Kofi [kòfí] , L H, and that of "beda" [bɛ̀dá], L H, in the command mood, are the same. How do we differentiate the word Kofi as a linguistic unit from "beda"? Carrington provides an answer to this question by saying that the word as a linguistic

unit "is always accompanied by a number of other words which together with it, make a little phrase" (Carrington, 1949). They have more of contextual than rigid tonal interpretation and are indeed stereotyped phrases in the form of proverbs or stock expressions (Carrington, 1949). Once they start, the initiate knows which one follows and that facilitates interpretation.

4.4 The Drum text and rap text

We make two levels of observation at this stage: we look at how the structures of rap text match the modifications in the Akan drum text as a result of transition from speech text and the individual creative additions to these modifications. Okyeame Kwame's position that "there are two types of rhythm; the one that the language carries on itself [sic] and the one that you make conscious effort to bring to bear on language" was quickly endorsed by the remaining two discussants, Stone, a rapper of national reputation and Andy Dosty, another rapper and a DJ of national fame. He implied that "the one that the language carries", that is, the language of rap with its modifications from spoken language, came spontaneously to the artiste but the individual creativity "the one you make conscious effort to bring to bear on language" which had to be worked on is what is known as the individual style (Edwards, 2009: 63). According Kofi Agyekum (2011: 22), style or *kasasu* "na εma εda nso firi daadaa kasa mu", to wit, distinguishes itself from everyday language[47]. In other words, it marks out the individual artiste as a unique performer.

Let us now present the two texts, not as speech texts but as real rap texts and examine how the two levels of observations, transitional modifications from speech text to rap text mediated by the drum text on one hand and the individual creativity on the other. Indeed, by associating rap with drumming, rap becomes a kind of verbal drumming. But we will label Sarkodie's text, even though as individual creativity, as consonantal drumming rap because of its high reliance on the drumming art through the

---

[47] He is not speaking in terms of the difference between the spoken and poetic words but rather referring to the unique feature of the individual style.

use of plosives. We will call that of Okyeame Kwame, even though as individual creativity, as tonal rap because of its high reliance on tonal distribution in the text. This is not withstanding the fact that both consonantal drumming rap and tonal rap within the confines of this analysis are the result of tonal distribution in the text. This classification is therefore based on the cutting edge of individual creativity and if we have to do it for any other artistes apart from the two mentioned, the classification will differ accordingly to make room for the individual creativity in question.

We start our analysis with the rap text of Sarkodie, "Bɔga".

(15) a. Consonantal drumming rap: "Bɔga" by Sarkodie

There are some observations at the level of transitional modification from speech text to rap text. First, there are no mid tones. Second, the tones are polarities of high and low, unlike the observations made in section 4.1.5 which discusses the same text but as speech text that presents downstepped high tone, section 4.1.6 which discusses the same text but as speech text that presents the downdrift and section 4.1.7 which discusses the same text but as speech text that presents instances of gliding pitches. The second observation therefore goes to reinforce the first. Third, the word "fam" in line 1 would have registered 2 tones because of the floating or occluded vowel in the final /m/. The same modifications we found in the drum text with regards to its transition from speech text have been found in Sarkodie's rap text. We must however point out that due to the fact that rap text is produced by a human voice, and not a mechanical instrument like the drum which could strictly stick to the two tones polarities,

there are some rare instances where tones in rap text behave like tones in speech text, like "sɛ" indicated by asterisks in the rap text in line 4. In such a case, the note occurs almost outside the regular meter, overlapping with the end of the previous bar. The presence of repetitive structures like high and low tones, without the complications of tones in the spoken language in Sarkodie's text, liberates the poetic word from the confines of spoken discourse. The poetic text achieves a new status, the verse or "the idea of regular recurrence" (Jakobson, 1985: 23, see also Folay, 1997: 366) in the Akan poetic discourse. Okyeame Kwame is therefore completely right by calling his 2007 album *M'Awensɛm,* My Poetry.

The second observation is at the level of style, individual creativity. Rap is a kind of recitation and has its own energy but Sarkodie increases the energy through the following processes:

a. Consonants are pronounced with more power. Weak consonants are sometimes replaced by strong ones, preferably plosives. In Akan, depending on the context, /r/ is in free variation with /d/ so whether it is /r/ or /d/ in the same position, the meaning is the same. The artiste therefore replaces all the /r/ with /d/ just to effect power in rhythm. Words like "serɛ", "nokorɛ″ and "kyerɛ" are pronounced [se**d**ɛ], [noko**d**ɛ] and [kye**d**ɛ] respectively. These constitute the echoes at the end of the phrases and the powerful plosive serves to concatenate the next phrase as if it forms part of the previous one just to create a bridge between the two phrases. For example, "srɛ" at the end of line 2 links up well with "Bɔgas" which is at the beginning of line 3 with the [rɛ] and [bɔ] still maintaining the CVCV continuum. We therefore have one long recitation or rap.

b. In the pronunciation of "wodwene", the final /ɪ/ is normally not pronounced. The floating vowel /ɪ/ after the final consonant /n/ in "wodwene" is re-introduced after the otherwise final position /n/ to facilitate the CVCV continuum, thus Sarkodie pronounces this word as[wʊ́dʑíní] instead of

[wÚʤí`n]. The general observation is that phrases which consist of mainly the CV syllable type in which consonants are intentionally made more powerful through the linguistic effects as described above increase in speed and the rap reflects or imitates the strokes on the drum. They are given regular time space, creating a powerful rhythmic effect similar to tongue- twisting in the US hip hop which uses multi-syllabic rhyme known as multis, consisting of multiple rhymes in a phrase to create internal rhyme of musical flow akin to musical tap, 1,2; 1,2; 1,2[48]. All these facts in hiplife sound production cohere to create a running effect and this is the trade mark of Sarkodie, who calls himself "Ɔbedempɔnbede", a consonantal repetitive sound play of the Akan word, *berempɔn*, the Great One. That is why he is called Ghana's fastest rapper. Indeed, due to the running effect of rap which undergoes this process, the name rappers in Ghana give to the art of rap is *kasahare*, the art of speaking fast. Stone in "Simple" literally drums with the mouth saying, "Efiefoɔ bebree no etim so, do-do-do no ara etim so, popropo-popropo-dimpo", to wit, everybody has endorsed my lover. These introductions or inventions are the artiste's own creation of new patterns which he has imposed on the traditional way of speaking, his personal style which he can be identified with (Kimball, 2005: 2) and these are the way aficionados in hiplife expect rap to go. This is the artiste's contribution to rap and to the Akan language as a whole. This kind of rap in which consonants form the basis of the rhythmic organization is what, for the purpose of this work, is called the consonantal drumming rap, that is, the consonants running like strokes in drumming. Even though American rap and Akan rap run on two separate phonological tracks, rap in both genres create a similar effect Rose (1994: 67) calls "using their voices as percussive instruments" and voices become part of the polyrhythm provided by the background computer programmed percussive instruments, giving us one big musical experience. It

---

[48] See www.flocabulary.com, accessed 28/03/11. We should not think that syllabicity in the Akan language is the same as that of the English language therefore terminologies like rhyme in English may not carry the same meaning the Akan language. The process being described above can best be described as consonantal syllabic repletion, which is not exactly like the tongue-twisting in English which is a repetitive process of consonants and vowels.

may be this superficial similarity in rhythmic construction between the Akan rap and that of American hip hop referred to by Rose that might make Reggie Rockstone, Azigizar Jnr. and K. K. Kabobo believe they copy their art from the American hip hop or the Jamaican raga.

c) The plosives Sarkodie uses, apart from generating a rhythm unique to his style, also create punch lines, a lyrical instance that is meant to capture the attention of the audience (Edwards, 2009).

d) The sonic effect the use of these words generates in the poetic text upgrades them from the referential meaning to the symbolic meaning. The concept of the tone in the Akan spoken language, registering all the kinds of tone, high, mid and low tones, is mainly for referential meaning (Jakobson, 1985), that is, tones at the spoken language level are signs, conventionalised meanings given to external objects (Leach, 1976: 18). For example, the line "Anka wobehu sɛ amanɔne koraa yɛ fo, kyerɛ" has its own referential meaning that "You will realise that going abroad to seek greener pastures is not worth it" in the spoken Akan version of the text. It has been established, however, that beyond this referential meaning, the same sound produce other sonic effects like the heavy consonantal sounds used in constructing the rhythm for Sarkodie's individual creativity. The manner in which the plosives are being used to create rhythm by Sarkodie amounts to stylistics, "those aspects of poem (or indeed, of any linguistic production) that are unexpected, unpredictable, strategically placed rather than determined by rules" (Levin, 1962: 64), by the individual artiste. Yet this unexpectedness is highly welcome by the hiplife community. The metrical tonal structure these plosives produce in this context creates systematic parallel structures that present an aural perspective and relations of social meaning, constituting shareability between Sarkodie and his fans. In the first place, let use the example of the line cited above. This line as a poetic text offers a meaning beyond the referential meaning given above. These tonal structures take on symbolic meaning, that is, an intrinsic meaning or an individually created meaning given to an external object contingent upon the contextual association (Leach, 1976: 18). For example, the baby who does not understand the referential meaning of the

lullaby and still responds to its lulling effect is a beautiful illustration of meaning beyond the referentiality of the text. Again, Alpha Blonde sings in Diura, a dialect in the northern part of Ivory Coast but Akans in Ghana who do not understand a word in Diura still love his lyrics. The fact is that the tonal structure in such lyrics have timbre, rhythmic, melodic and pitch range procedures in the poetic discourse that sets them apart from spoken language and "that heighten its symbolic effect" (Banti and Giannattasio, 2004: 295). In the first place, these symbolic effects of rhythm in Sarkodie's style synchronize conveniently with the symbolic meaning the instrumental rhythm offers (Heller, 1963: 140). To this effect, we will see as we continue with this analysis that in some respects, musical instruments that produce harmony are taken off from such recordings because they have the potential of overshadowing the percussive instruments. Hiplife songs like "You go kill me" by Sarkodie, "Obuu ma" by EL and "Alintiguitugui" by Keche conveniently avoid harmonic instruments, that is the guitars, horns, keyboards and the rest and still managed to remain top on the hiplife chart at the time of research. In the second place, these verbal rhythms created by Sarkodie combines with the instrumental rhythm and they co-pattern to become a resource for meaning-making. Both vocal and instrumental rhythms synchronize perfectly to follow the hiplife usual beat of 8/16, which, unlike the *nwonkrɔ*, *adowa* or *kete* beat, associated with the old generation, allow the Ghanaian youth body expressions and gestures indicative of modernity, as if to say, "This is our time". This was confirmed by Vera Annor 21, a participant of a group of students from the Faculty of Social Sciences, when she expressed her opinion about the hiplife azonto dance. She was supported by Rugby Sarkeyfio, 19, who quickly added, "we are the new ones". In other words, these phonological patterns Sarkodie introduced in his raps create a meaning of social boundary between the youth and the old. We will treat this in detail in chapter 6.

Let us now go over to "Hwɛ n'asa", a rap text by Okyeame Kwame and see if we can make similar observations. We will also look at "Hwɛ n'asa" from two perspectives: transitional modifications from

speech to rap text mediated by drum text and individual style or creativity. We call it tonal patterning not because that of Sarkodie is not tonal partterning but it is just a convenient term to separate the style of Okyeame Kwame from that of Sarkodie.

(15)   b.   Tonal   patterning: "Hwɛ   n'asa"   by   Okyeame   Kwame

What we see in this text, just like what we saw in Sarkodie's text, is only representative of rap text but not a comprehensive treatment of transitional features of the rap text. First, there are no mid tones as demonstrated in sections 4.1.5, 4.16, and 4.17. Second, two syllables are lumped up into one where they would have been separate syllables in speech text and an example is in line 3, where the first "nka" is in two syllables but the second constitutes only one syllable. On the same line, "no se" would

have otherwise had two syllables but register as one here. Third, we have only two tone polarities, high and low. Obviously the transitional features of Okyeame Kwame's rap text is the same as that of Sarkodie and as Okyeame Kwame indicated earlier on, these transitional features come to the rapper spontaneously so every Akan rapper automatically has them. Now, let us take a look at the personal creativity he introduces to the text that gives him his "trade mark" as Joe Frazer would put it.

We see that bars1 and 3 are parallels. The tonal structure of bar 1 is [hw`ɛ násà], L H L, and that of bar 3 is hw`ɛ másà, L H L. These alternating bars share the same quaver notes. The next tonal pattern is seen in bars 2 and 4 which also share parallel structures, L L H L for the tonal melody and semi quaver, semi quaver, quaver, quaver for the notes. The third tonal pattern in the text is a sequence of parallel structures comprising the lines "Sɛ ɔhyɛ da" and "De ne hyada" of tonal melody L L H L and of semi quaver, semi quaver, and quaver notes.

4.5 SUMMARY

There is no denying the fact that there is hiplife globalization. This might make some participants who represented the old generation in the data like Uncle Abeeku, 54, Kwodwo Forson, 59, believe that the youth is blindly copying Western culture. We have seen that even some hiplife artistes also believe hiplife is a copy of the American hip hop. These positions are generalizations we should avoid because they are not backed by evidence. Analyses in this chapter have demonstrated that, clearly, behind this global hip hop cultural tapestry is a robust hip hop localization and this is a fact that does not elude Obour, Sydney, Okyeame Kwame, Stone, Joe Frazer and other hiplife artistes. The local hip hop may present a façade of global hip hop as a cosmopolitan practice and present the outward trappings of globalization but the core practice remains local (Condry, 2006; Shipley, 2009, 2013; Osumare, 2012). The next chapter provides another window for us to investigate the consciousness of the Ghanaian

youth courtesy of hiplife through one of their arts, "dissing", where the philosophy of mental strength expresses itself in the quest to bring out the truth, even if it means insulting a fellow rapper.

CHAPTER FIVE

"DISSING" IN HIPLIFE AND ITS CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE IN GHANA

5.0 Introduction

In chapters 3 and 4, the emphasis has been on the localization of hip hop (Condry, 2006; Kohlhagen, 2007; Perullo, 2007; Journo, 2009) in Ghana - hip hop as a culture produced by factors located in a specific cultural situation (Bateson, 1972; Blacking, 1973; Bauman, 1977; Feld, 1982; Havelock, 1982; Yankah, 1989; Waterman, 1990; Diop, 1995). In this case, hiplife has for its locus the Ghanaian culture that produces its own cultural cues interpretable by its audience. We have discussed various aspects of Ghanaian hip hop localization, but of particular interest in the hip hop localization project in an oral community such as the one we have in Ghana is the use of speech, "explicitly recognized as an important instrument of social life" (Finnegan, 1970: 448), used in debates and argument (Finnegan, 1970: 449), in settling matters concerning supremacy in socio-political organization, and more important for our analysis, supremacy in matters concerning artistic creativity. In this chapter, oratory or rhetoric within the context of "dissing" in hiplife and as part of the hip hop localization project bears close association with traditional praise and insult poetry (Aggrey, 1977, Agyekum, 2011: 128,203-217,229,230). The term "dissing" is adopted from the American hip hop culture and it means disrespect. We have two main sections for this discussion. In the first section, we look at hiplife as performance by first examining the conceptual relevance of performance in hiplife "dissing" and as seen in the previous chapter, we continue to investigate hiplife as a cultural continuity of Akan orature. We then move on in the second section to examine hiplife "dissing", using the "dissing" saga between Obrafour and Okyeame Kwame as a case study and investigating the sociological and cultural significances of this "dissing" phenomenon.

5.1 The conceptual relevance of performance in hiplife "dissing"

Hiplife "dissing" is a performance oriented practice. I will at this point draw on Richard Bauman's concept of performance to coax out the cultural, linguistic and sociological meanings that this practice offers within the context of the Ghanaian community. For Bauman, orality derives its legitimacy in performance and performance becomes the locus where he discovers "the individual, social, and cultural factors that give it shape and meaning in the conduct of social life." (Bauman, 1986: 2). He posits the keying of performance as an "interpretative frame within which the messages being communicated are to be understood" (Bauman, 1977: 9). The specific frame of hiplife "dissing" not only contrasts with other frames, for example guitar band music in highlife, but also, contrary to the conventional approach of literary criticism, which imposes its canon on the text, presents its own canons. It says "judge me as I am and not as you think". Bateson also postulates that the performance frame provides the receiver with instructions or aids that help him/her to understand the message in the frame (Bateson, 1972). It is the metacommunication, "a range of explicit or implicit messages which carry instructions on how to interpret other messages" (Bauman, 1977: 15), which in turn provides the frame for interpreting performance.

What further clinches our discussion is the fact that performance presents the performer and his audience within the context of role participation: the performer is a role player and so is the audience. Once the performer keys the performance, the audience evaluates the performance and allows the performer to discharge his public duty as a role player (Goffman, 1959) given a particular task to perform on behalf of the audience (Banton, 1968). In this light, through the conventions of the genre, he makes a claim to the audience to pay attention to him as the conventions constitute common grounds for both of them. Indeed, they share the same cultural materials and this shareability elicits "the participation of an audience through the arousal of 'an attitude of collaborative expectancy …Once you grasp the trend of the form, it invites

participation'" (Bauman, 1977, quoting Burke, 1969 [1950:58]). Bauman continues that this "fixes the attention of the audience more strongly on the performer, binds the audience to the performer" (Bauman, 1977). There is therefore an interlocking relationship between the performer and the audience.

5.2 Brief description of the spread of Hiplife "dissing" praxis across Ghana

The American street rap battle, packaged together with the entire hip hop culture, presented to the world by big media houses like CNN, BET and MTV and distributed by "six major record companies: CBS, Polygram, Warner, BMG, Capitol-EMI, and MCA" (Rose, 1996: 6), all big time business entities in the US, brought the attention of the Ghanaian youth to "dissing". In fact, the manner in which these business houses commoditise the hip hop culture (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1969) transforms it from just a street culture to a model of modern global culture. The Ghanaian youth join the bandwagon of the hip hop globalization process, but in practice they conflate their traditional structures with new structures taken from the American hip hop culture. The result is a kind of culture neither American nor traditional, a new Ghanaian culture called hiplife.

Even though most of our analysis is based on lyrics in the Akan language, it is important we look at the praxis of hiplife "dissing" in various parts of the country in order to have a much broader picture of the "dissing" phenomenon in hiplife. Hiplife "dissing" could be intra-city, one rapper "dissing" another rapper in the same city like Mugu versus Dj. Carlos or Don Sigli versus Lil K. all in Tamale, Northern region. It could also be inter- city like Castro from Takoradi, Western Region, "dissing" Kow Kesse in Swedru, the Central region, Quata, from Tema in the Greater Accra region, dissing Kow Kesse in the Central region or Obrafour, from Accra, dissing Okyeame Kwame in Kumasi. In "Maba" (2004), one of the earliest "dissing" song in Ghana, Exdoe, from Accra, claims Chicago hails from Ho. In fact, certain regions have hiplife communities but are relatively quiet

when it comes to counting hiplife stars. Eastern region and Brong Ahafo regions in particular fall within this category and it is no wonder they do not feature on the hiplife "dissing" chart, even though my fieldwork indicates there is a burgeoning "dissing" praxis among the underground rappers in these two regions. The picture presented therefore limits known hiplife "dissing" praxis to the Northern, Ashanti, Western, Central and Greater Accra regions. But for Exdoe and Chicago, the Volta region is a bit peripheral in the "dissing" art.

As has already been mentioned in chapter 4, those who represent the old in the data dismissed this practice as purely an imitation of Western moral degeneration. A close look, however, reveals a strong link with the Ghanaian traditional culture.

5.3 Hiplife "dissing" and its local cultural precipitates

"Dissing" in global hip hop may share certain features but behind these similarities are certain indigenous characteristics peculiar to the locality where a particular version of hip hop is practised. In this section, we consider the localization of hiplife "dissing", following the *asafo* concept, the use of proverbs and boasting as practised in Ghana.

5.3.1 Hiplife "dissing" and insult poetry in *asafo*

One of hiplife's main local cultural antecedents, as seen earlier, is the *asafo* concept, which according to Kofi Agyekum, citing Aggrey (1977), used to be youth groups of dancers. He buttresses this point by explaining the etymology of the word *asafo* as *sa*, to dance and *fo,* the suffix indicating plural form of people (Aggrey, 1977; Agyekum, 2011: 204). The collective energy the youth expressed was re-organised for purposes of self defence. This gives us the modern concept of *asafo*. In fact, in modern times when tribal war is almost anachronistic, the *asafo* concept has reverted to the old practice of drumming and dancing, giving us different types of *asafo* music. In *asafo esi*, we have "nsae nwom, nkanfoɔdwom, sa/ɔko nwom ne anigyeɛ" (Agyekum, 2011: 213),

to wit, innuendos, praise poetry, war songs and celebratory songs. *Asafo* songs are also performed for purposes of "akutia, wɔde hyehyɛ (ahuhuro) ahoroba, wɔde hyɛ ɔmanfo bi abufuo" (Agyekum, 2011: 216), to wit, innuendo, teasing and provocation. This is another level where hiplife intersects with the *asafo* concept. The following examples illustrate the similarities in structure between *asafo* songs and hiplife "dissing":

Ntwa, ntwa, Abɔɔno yɛkɔ Bakano   Cut, cut, from Abɔɔno we go to Bakano
Dɛ yɛrekɔhwehwɛ mbanyin   Looking for brave men
    (Aggrey, 1978: 13)

The *asafo* group singing this song is insinuating to the other groups that apart from the group singing, there are no brave men around. Again, in a call and response approach, the cantor of the *asafo* group asks the group, "Ɔman bi botum hɛn?" can any group fight us? The group energetically answers, "Ohoo", no group can withstand us. They are indirectly provoking the other groups that they are of inferior military status. Similar words of *akutia* (innuendo) or insults suggesting superiority on the part of the artist can be found in other Akan orature like *nwonkorɔ*, a recreational music of the Ashantis, *akɔmfodwom*, traditional priests' songs, and *bragorɔ*, songs used in performing puberty rites. This line in a *nwonkorɔ* song "Wamuna ne tirim a ɔresere n'ano" (Agyekum, 2011: 230), to wit, he frowns in the head and smiles on the lips, a notion akin to the Shakespearean concept of there being no art to find the mind's construction in the face, is directed at enemies who have bad intentions but veil them with smiles. The line "Okyingyefoɔ na owuo" (Agyekum, 2011: 199), it is the sceptic who dies out of ignorance, in an *akɔmfodwom*, targets the sceptics who do not believe in the spiritual powers of the traditional priest. In *bragorɔ* (puberty rites), the songs could equally be very insinuating, for example:

Wɔde nkonto regye awareɛ   Match-makers of the marriage are bow-legged

Wɔde ananta abegyina n'akyi   Supporters of the marriage have crooked legs
   (Agyekum, 2011: 225)

There are other types of non-Akan insult poetry that have similar linguistic structures with hiplife "dissing". The *halo* poetry of the Ewes has isomorphic structures with the *asafo* ones and therefore bears similarity with hiplife "dissing". What one of my informants said about the *gadzo hawo* songs (war songs) indicated that some *halo* poetry emanates from old war songs by war groups, but with wars now a thing of the past, these war groups have changed to musical groups, lyrically challenging one another when they meet for any event. This excerpt:

> When we went drumming
> Some used lizards as a lead singer
> Don't pass me by
> For your scale will touch me[49]

is a very damning insult against the other group: comparing the other lead singer to the lizard is an indication of him having a skin disease that makes his skin as rough as that of the lizard, rough enough to cut. It is indeed believed that some of Kofi Anyidoho's poems (1984), for example, "Awoyo" are heavily influenced by this strand of poetry. In "Awoyo", Anyidoho expresses anger in an unrestrained manner:

> Awoyo, I am not the whore's daughter like you
> Your mother went from this village to that village
> Shitting babies all along her path across the clan
> Did she ever suggest to you
> Who your papa could have been?

Kofi Anyidoho is not an isolated case of the use of *halo* by a Ghanaian intellectual. Kofi Awoonor (1974), another Ghanaian intellectual of Ewe background, is also associated with the *halo* practice. Clearly the spirit of *halo* moves from genre to genre and time to time and therefore when Chicago, an Ewe rapper, "disses" Ex-doe for being an inferior rapper, it is believed by Ghanaians to be the same *halo* spirit responsible for that. The Dagaaba community also has insult poetry in their bridal

---

[49] I owe this to Mr. Akpakli, a fellow member of the Department of English, KNUST, Kumasi. He said this *halo* poem is also popular in the Anexo, Tsevie area of Southern Togo.

songs. According to Black Moon, a rapper from Tamale, the Dagbanis also practise insult poetry in their proverbs. The Nzimas have the *avudwene* (Agovi, 1995). Obviously the spirit of insult poetry moves across the length and breadth of the country. Closely linked to the use of insult poetry in Ghanaian orality re-invented in hiplife is the proverb praxis.

5.3.2 The use of proverbs in traditional and hiplife insult poetry

In both traditional and hiplife insult poetry, there is also a profusion of proverbs. In Akan speaking areas, proverbs are an indication of wisdom and authority (Yankah, 1989: 72) and all the traditional insult poems are replete with proverbs to show maturity in thinking and as a demonstration of assertiveness. The same goes for hiplife "dissing". The title for Tattoo's "diss" song, "Proverbs", demonstrates the importance hiplife "dissing" attaches to proverbs and the tradition. We will cite just a few examples here. Obrafour in "Kaseɛbɔ" says "egyinamowa ni fie a, nkura yi kɛkyɛ" to wit, when the cat is away, the mouse will play. He follows this up with another vintage proverb, "Yɛse ɔkɔtɔ de anibere sɔ deɛ yɛnsɔ a obu ne prɛ" to wit, if the crab aggressively holds what it is not supposed to, the hand drops off. Then Tattoo replies that, "Sɛ opanin tena fie na sɛ wembu noho a, ɔgye boɔ" to wit, if the elderly do not respect themselves, children pelt them with stones. That means if Obrafour, who is supposed to be a senior rapper, will not respect himself and will play with the children[50], he becomes a target of stone throwing. This observation is not only significant in the manner in which he replies Obrafour but it also tells us that while "dissing" should be among equals, the underground rappers could front for the superstars to do the "dissing" by taking up the battle while the superstars they represent stand by. On the other hand, if you are superstar and you behave like an underground rapper, you are treated with less respect. Another significance worth

---

[50] It is believed that in hiplife, even though we often hear superstars dissing one another, dissing is mainly practised by underground rappers. What Tattoo is referring to is that if Obrafour as a superstar, and does not comport himself as such, then he should be prepared to be treated as an underground rapper, here described metaphorically as children.

pointing out is that because they recognize proverbs as the basis of the rap art, Tattoo wonders why "yererapo a worebesan yɛho abebu bɛ" meaning that when we the professionals are rapping, you want to jump the gun and start using proverbs. Undoubtedly, the use of proverbs is a major linguistic resource for the hiplife speech community and as spelt out by the artists, it constitutes a frame by which the audience not only understands but takes part in the activities of the speech community. It must also be pointed out that the use of proverbs has its own conventions as well. For example, the young do not cite proverbs in the presence of the elder without permission (Yankah, 1989: 106-107) but the manner in which proverbs are used in hiplife without recourse to the usual norm suggests the quest for identity autonomy (Yankah, 1989: 72).

5.3.3 Boasting in both hiplife and traditional praise poetry

The continuity of hiplife "dissing" with Akan orature is also seen in the art of boasting. In this traditional strand of praise poetry, images are drawn from the culture to inflate the egos of the artists. *Asafo* groups of Bɔrbɔr Mfantse, the Fantes of Abura, Nkusukum, Tetsi, Anomabu and Ekumfi refer to one of their three leaders, Ɔson, as "n'ekyir nnyi abowa", there is no animal as big as the elephant. This is traditional boasting and it finds its way into hiplife as well. Tattoo proclaims Okyeame Kwame, "Ɔsamarima e, w'ahenie fata wo", to wit, the brave one, you are worthy of your crown. This is the typical Akan praise poetry. You praise the leader in his capacity as a leader or his office as a leader (Farias, 1995) but just as we expect that he continues to praise the office of his leader, he turns himself into the praise object, saying, "hwɛ me wideɛ, metallic, meka gya gu mu a, automatic" which means, look at my muscles, when I put fire in them I become bionic. He has re-invented the traditional praise poetry which requires one person to praise the other by conflating the two into himself, changing the process from transitivity to that of reflexivity. Again, it is not only

the code switching that gives this statement its uniqueness but the images. In Akan, the expression "Twa gya to mu" which translates as put fire in it means to give energy to something, so he is invoking this Akan image to indicate the power in his muscles. He finally invites Obrafour to meet him on the sea of "kasahare"[51] and adds "wobehyia Titanic" to wit, you will meet Titanic.[52] The boasting aspect in rap is seen even in the names of the two verbal combatants; Okyeame Kwame is the spokesman of the chief who straightens the chief's verbal delivery and Obrafour is the rap "sɔfoɔ", the rap priest, who goes about moralising in rap.

The boast is just a prolegomenon to flyting the opponent. Having spelt out the conventions of the art, having been accepted by the audience and emboldened by this acceptance, he then turns to the audience, which is playing the role of the referee, and scolds the other artist whom, he, the performer, believes does not measure up to the standards. The scolding, which, as indicated above, is a form of disrespectful "dissing", is in itself an inverted form of praise poetry, a metatext, constituting "specific ways to key the performance frame, such that all communication that takes place within that frame is to be understood as performance within that community" (Bauman, 1977). It arouses an attitude of collaborative expectancy from the audience who not only expect the performer to perform but also expect the "dissed" to defend himself. Thus it takes just one "diss" song to bring out a chain of "diss" songs as we have seen with Obrafour's. He scolds Okyeame Kwame for being proud even though his albums are not up to five and this attracts a riposte from Tattoo:

| Mempɛ sɛ mɛgye edi sɛ sukuu na w'abɔn | I do not want to believe that you were dull in school |
| Kan no yie; ne album ɛboro five | Count well; his albums are more than five |

---

[51] A local terminology for rap
[52] In contemporary film culture, it is believed to be the biggest ship ever used in a film.

This will bring in A Plus who also uses Half Corner and One Pesewa to scold both Obrafour and Okyeame Kwame for indiscipline. This animates the hiplife speech community, and each member of the trilogy – the "disser", the "dissed" and the audience – is playing his role. Clearly another observation here is that "dissing" is not necessarily a two-way exchange between disser and dissed – other rappers may get involved by taking sides with one or the other of the protagonists.

5.4 The Obrafour and Okyeame Kwame "dissing" saga : a case study of hiplife "dissing"

This section constitutes the second part of this discussion. We present a verbal battle between two rappers from two major cities in Ghana which indexicalises the relationship between these two cities. Each rapper draws his fan base from the city he belongs to, Obrafour in Accra and Okyeame Kwame in Kumasi. In this "dissing" saga, each draws his fan base along with him, bringing to the fore already existing cracks in the relations between the two cities. We first present Obrafour's "Kaseɛbɔ" which started the verbal duel and consider the cornucopia of social and cultural significances embedded in this "dissing" event.

5.4.1 Obrafour's "Kaseɛbɔ" [53]

Obrafour released his "Kaseɛbɔ" in 2009. In a rare creative initiative, the song uses the metaphor of the radio featuring two rappers; Guru plays the radio presenter and Obrafour, the invited contributor. Guru would like to know the whereabouts of Obrafour because it looks like Obrafour's absence on the hiplife scene has created a vacuum for some fingerlings, obviously referring to Okyeame Kwame, using the latter's initials, one of the conventions of "dissing", to have a field day. Obrafour concedes that "agyinamowa nni fie a nkura twe kɛkyɛ", to wit, the cat will play when the mouse is away and that he went on leave just to cool off. He even goes further to warn those happy in his absence that "eneɛ monya adaagye, afei na morebɛhwe ase", meaning that those who do not

---

[53] See appendix for the full text of "Kaseɛbɔ".

wish him well will suffer an earlier demise than expected. Then Guru whets Obrafour's appetite by further telling him that, "Nkra a yɛn nsa aka firi Kumasi ne sɛ Ɔnwontoni OK, nso akɔto mona" to wit, reports reaching us indicate that Singer OK has raped somebody. Then he quickly visits the issue of Okyeame Kwame's awards, "Abodin fata wo a na wodi wo post, naaso deɛ mehunu yi, mehunu wɔn sɛ China phones" to wit, you wear the crown when it fits you but as for these ones, I see them as China phones.[54] This is a metaphor to disparage the achievement of Okyeame Kwame. Perhaps what annoys Guru most was that "Obi agye abɔso 'Best Rapper Alive'…" to wit, there is an imposter calling himself "Best Rapper Alive". Obrafour pretends to calm Guru down that diversity is part of nature. Guru praise sings Obrafour, "Ah, ampa, w'ano ate, gyaberɛ wo firi ahemfie, saa na mate", meaning, you are fluent in language and give every indication that you are from the palace and so everything I have heard about you is true.

This was a creative piece by all standards but while people praised its creativity, some were not comfortable with the referentiality of the contents which they said even though apparently veiled behind poetry, could be read. Tattoo, who happens to be a member of One Mic Entertainment of which Okyeame Kwame is the CEO, immediately fired back in exquisite Akan proverbs, insulting Obrafour that he had a pea brain and that was why he failed to read that Okyeame Kwame had more than five albums. He dismissed Obrafour as being jealous of Okyeame Kwame. This sentiment was echoed by A Plus but he fouled the air even further by hitting the two top musicians where they would bleed most, referring to both as neophytes and mediocre artistes fighting over a title neither deserved. The "dissing" saga became a daily menu in all media houses and whenever Okyeame Kwame was called for interviews, he made it clear that he would not reply to Obrafour. Okyeame

---

[54] In Ghana, around the time of the release of the song, 2009, China phones were considered inferior to those from the West.

Kwame was obviously disturbed but did not want to stir the hornets' nest. He even called Reggie Rockstone to use his position as the Godfather of hiplife to truncate this development which was becoming apocalyptic in nature. Indeed, it is not all the time that "dissing" is considered only for its entertainment value, for, according to Black Moon, in the "diss" problem between Tommy Mugu and Dj. Carlos in Tamale for example, the problem ended in the chief's palace. Okyeame Kwame suspected his former rap partner, Okyeame Kofi, of being behind this plot. According to Okyeame Kwame, Okyeame Kofi instigated Shattarako to go round Kumasi radio stations to tell the whole of Kumasi that he, Okyeame Kwame, had plagiarised Okyeame Kofi's work just to smear him. Okyeame Kwame further told Reggie Rockstone that Okyeame Kofi had intentionally placed an interview he granted to Obrafour on his Facebook. Obviously, Okyeame Kwame had a feeling the conspiracy was prepared by Okyeame Kofi, supported by the Accra rappers who did not like him, and executed by Obrafour.

Meanwhile there were two rappers in Kumasi, Laxio and Dj. Slim, who were obviously not happy with Obrafour for the way he had treated their hero. Fortunately for them, they had done some songs with Guru, the underground rapper Obrafour used in "Kaseɛbɔ". The song was about how young men rush about things these days and Guru's part read, "Hei, this boy, you dey rush". Laxio conveniently erased the "this boy" and replaced it with "Osofoɔ" which happened to be the pseudonym of Obrafour, turning the song into a huge "dissing song" against Obrafour. It became an instant hit in Kumasi: a fitting reply to the "foul-mouthed" Obrafour. All this went on without the knowledge of Guru. He naturally grew disturbed when he heard it and chased Laxio and Dj. Slim up to Sunyani where he nearly had an open fight with them and they had to agree to go round all the FM stations in Sunyani, Kumasi and Accra to dissociate Guru from that song. Guru's moving from

one FM station to the other to clear his name indicates how important the radio medium is in hiplife and that it is one of the conceptual frames hiplife relies on to select its audience.

5.4.2 The use of the radio medium as a convention in Hiplife "dissing"

This is another instance of creatively modernizing the traditional insult poetry. Obrafour's song uses the radio medium, one of the media of communication modernity imposes on the hiplife art. It indicates how modern Ghana places technology at the disposal of language; it forms part of the process of communication and the framing for hiplife is heavily mediated by the media. Obrafour uses the radio metaphor as a creative element and since it is part of the creativity of that song, it forms part of the cultural shareability of it. This kind of shareablity is a selective one. Unlike the *ewi,* a neo-traditional media poetry, which structures its shareability to suit a diffused audience (Barber, 2007: 163-168), the radio medium in this song is only meant for hiplfie in-group members. Little wonder, A Plus also uses the same medium of presentation. At this stage of our discussion, we should not assume that other genres such as highlife are not being mediated by technology, but there is no highlife song in which the persona is a radio presenter of an interactive programme. This medium used by Obrafour sets it aside from other genres, even from other subgenres in hiplife, and gives "dissing" its peculiarity which not only calls attention to itself but tells the audience to judge it according to what they see (Bauman, 1977: 9-10). Obrafour's "diss" is hailed as creative by connoisseurs simply because of the radio metaphor. Guru is a presenter who is telling his audience about the whereabouts of Obrafour and this gives Obrafour a platform to express his opinion on current hiplife goings on, and of course a good opportunity to boast about his supremacy while flyting Okyeame Kwame and Obour. He does this against the background that hiplife is community owned; it is co-produced by both the performer and the audience and the two, the performer and

audience are engaged in a tète à tète or heart to heart evaluation of current happenings in the hiplife art.

On the question of the reaction of the general public, that is, the diffused audience, the youth generally seemed to like it while the adult population remained sceptical. The youth in Accra on the whole relished it saying it was just a game but most of the youth in Kumasi were not comfortable with it. The reason was obvious and actually that constituted the very core of the controversy: social stratification and territoriality are a further reading of linguistic competence which forms a major conceptual framework of the performance of "dissing". Certainly, this saga has disinterred some social subterranean meanings worth paying attention to.

5.5 Hiplife "dissing" and its social subterranean meanings

As indicated earlier, these are ground rules of performance and participation constituting a body of conventions that tells you not to have recourse to any other literary canons outside this performance to judge it. Judgement or evaluation in this context should be done on the merit of the performance in question (Bauman, 1977: 11). It is in judging the hiplife "dissing" as a performance on its own merit that we come to see that the hiplife "dissing" text presents these conventions as having a way of constructing it as a unique performance, a genre that groups all its members under the same shareable conventions. In analysing these conventions as we have done above, we realise that the hiplife "dissing" text as polyvocal and polysemous as it is, presents an ideology that "begins to speak of its own absences because of its presence" (Macherey, 1978: 132). In this case, the hiplife "dissing" text presents an epistemology that, not being a slave to the limitations of literary canons, develops the capacity of revealing meaning beyond its boundaries. It even travels into other related cultures and extends its interpretational boundaries to such related cultures as the broader Ghanaian culture. Similar interpretations have been made in highlife and we can cite the socio-political

meaning in "Ebi Te Yie" (Coplan, 1978; Bame, 1985) and "Ɔtan Hunu" (Arthur, 1998: 59-64), the feminist interpretation of the viricentric nature of highlife as in "So Mu Gye W'adowa". We can also cite the examples of "Aku Sika" (Asante Darko and Van der Geest, 1983) and the critique of the Akan matrilineal system of inheritance in "Agyanka Dabre" (Yankah, 1989: 79). All the songs were recorded by Nana Kwame Ampadu except the last one which was recorded by the Ramblers Band.

The hiplife "dissing" text, as seen in the highlife texts, then begins to reveal subterranean currents of thoughts, the complexity and ambiguity of real thought in practice, that would have otherwise gone unnoticed in the broader Ghanaian culture. One of such subterranean meanings in the broader Ghanaian culture is the social stratification and mobility of the Ghanaian society. Of course, when Obrafour set out to "diss" Okyeame Kwame, little did he intend to betray his position as a fellow artist and offer exegesis of the broader Ghanaian culture about the social stratification and mobility of the country. His text however produces a "surplus" of meaning, which to some extent, undermines his purported intended meaning of destroying the image of Okyeame Kwame. This will be explained below. Such subterranean meanings picked up outside the hiplife culture by the hiplife text presents an interesting case of evaluation of performance. To have a better insight into this sort of evaluation, let us have a look at the sociological and cultural significance of verbal battle in the broader Ghanaian culture.

5.6 The sociological significance of "dissing" in the Ghanaian community

The description of the exchanges between the two camps leaves us in no doubt that Okyeame Kwame and Obrafour belong to the "social statuses that are alike" (Essimeng, 1999: 137), the same stratum of the social hierarchy so far as their profession is concerned: this camp speaks and that

camp replies in equal measure. The power relation seems to be well-balanced. The question is why this finger pointing litigation in verbal exchanges? Why should Guru question the award of Okyeame Kwame? Why should Obrafour cynically and viciously target Okyeame Kwame? Has Okyeame Kwame done anything particularly wrong to deserve that? If investigation could not uncover any previous wrong doing on the part of Okyeame Kwame calling for the outburst of Obrafour, then we are even more confused as to why the finger pointing verbal litigation that was going on between the two. The answer, however, may be found in the traditional society's concept of stratification and mobilization[55] as these exchanges indicate friction bordering on jealousy as a result of one member of a particular social stratum moving up the social ladder to the next stratum by way of success, leaving the rest in the old stratum. Let us first go through certain concepts in the traditional social stratification and mobilization.

Traditional social stratification and mobilization in Ghana operate with three main factors: sex, age (Essimeng, 1999: 140) and heredity (Nukunya, 1992: 184, 186). Traditionally, especially in the pre-industrial times, men were, and still are, supposed to occupy higher positions in the social echelon even in acephalous societies like the Tallensis in northern Ghana. Again, older people are automatically socially superior to younger people in the Ghanaian society. Some people occupy higher positions just by inheritance; one is a chief simply because one comes from a particular lineage and this has nothing to do with one's biological endowment. We must hasten to add that even in the pre-industrial period, there was still some modicum of recognition of individual achievement such as exploits in war and an exemplary life (Nukunya, 1992) but that did not negate the three factors for traditional social mobilization. Thus the traditional concept of social stratification and mobility was a more or less closed system. That notwithstanding, the factors of

---

[55] For further information on social stratification and mobilisation of Ghana, see Essimeng, *Social Structures of Ghana: a study in persistence and change* and Nukunya, *Traditional change in Ghana: an introduction to sociology.*

social stratification and mobilization as mentioned above were strictly adhered to and we were (and to some extent are still) made to accept without question wherever we find ourselves in the social hierarchy. In the modern times however, education, growing of cash crops and trading has helped to improve the system of social stratification in the Ghanaian community (Nukunya, 1992: 189). Modern social stratification and mobility in Ghana operates on the principle of meritocracy, thus changing the closed system of social stratification and mobilization to an open one. However, as we shall see in our analysis of "dissing", the old closed system of social stratification and mobilization based on sex, age, and heredity still lurks at the background, even in the modern days.

Now let us start with the analysis. Okyeame Kwame receives the honour of winning the Artist of the Year Award by Ghana Music Awards in 2009. Guru in Obrafour's song declares that you only wear the crown when it fits you and that somebody has imposed himself on the people that he is the best rapper alive. We all know it is Okyeame Kwame and as if this is not acrimonious enough, Obrafour comes in saying that Okyeame Kwame has become proud because he, Obrafour, has been away and that Okyeame Kwame and his cohort will suffer demise for not wishing him well.

My research indicated Okyeame Kwame had no previous axe to grind with Obrafour. Indeed, Okyeame Kwame had been invited by Obrafour to feature in his song. Okyeame Kwame could however put Obrafour's provocation down to two reasons. Okyeame Kwame believed Obrafour perceived him to be too successful and "hence either they really want to bring me down so that they take my position in rap music or they want to bring me down so that I come to their level and it doesn't make it seemingly look like they are low". The second reason was that Obrafour was having the future in mind and that for both of them, retirement was beckoning. Okyeame Kwame went further to explain that when they had retired, the heritage would be that Obrafour was a mere rap

"sɔfoɔ" (priest) while he, Okyeame Kwame, would be considered the best rapper alive. He went further to opine that Obrafour knew this had to do with his (Okyeame Kwame's) type of branding and so Obrafour wanted to truncate that accolade before Okyeame Kwame retired with it. As indicated earlier, Obrafour repeatedly kept on denying "dissing" Okyeame[56] but the referentiality in the content of the song points otherwise and so it is the content and the referentiality of his song that forms the basis of our analysis. Indeed, in A Plus's song, One Pesawa does not mince words in his observation about Obrafour that "ɔresan so ama n'eni abere adeɛ", meaning, Obrafour is becoming covetous. The supposed caller in that same song makes it more succinct, declaring, "Obrafour tan Kwame", to wit, Obrafour hates Kwame. These opinions are expressed from a third party in the hiplife fraternity. They show clearly that Obrafour's words are directed at OK, as successful as he is, and this smacks of jealousy on the part of Obrafour, taking us to the idea that people of the same stratum find it difficult to see a member climb up the social ladder especially if we belong to the same social stratum by birth, sex and age. Movement up the social ladder as a result of meritocracy is not part of the deal; it is not what we are used to, not even self-made success. It provokes jealousy and there are attempts to cut it down. We therefore resist it and this is being dramatised by Obrafour's attitude. It is the frame of hiplife in relation to the culture that gives us this interpretation. There are further interpretations of cultural significance that disinters more subterranean meanings.

5.7 The cultural significance in verbal battle in hiplife "dissing"

Let us now describe in detail the various means by which the traditional culture manages social stratification and mobility which seem to play out in the "dissing" in discussion. The discussion is based on perceived cultural practices inherent in the culture that are used to control the individual to

---

[56] He denied "dissing" Okyeame Kwame on Yaw Sekyi's Rundown on TV Africa, 23/09/09.

maintain his position in the society so that he does not rock the boat. First, we have the witchcraft system. Ampadu has a song titled "Ɔgyefoɔ ne whan?" (Who is my rescuer?) and there is a portion which goes, "Asona beyie a ɔmpɛ ade pa ei, adeɛ a ɔde ato me so, ɛne ekyinkyinkyinkyin" to wit, the witch of the Asona clan which does not want to see any improvement has placed a curse on me to be a vagrant. Witchcraft is a traditional philosophy that explains the inexplicable (Evans-Pritchard, 1977) and the persona in the song is explaining away his vagrancy. This ties in with the situation of Okyeame Kwame because he cannot proffer any reason for Obrafour's attitude and thus resorts to the omnibus answer of jealousy which is another attribute of witchcraft used in restricting members of a society from moving up. The belief in the spirituality of witchcraft is not our concern here but we are dealing with its attribute of jealousy. That does not however imply that all forms of jealousy amount to witchcraft in the Akan tradition but it becomes applicable here insofar as it is used as a disruptive force in development as Ampadu's song implies. Again, let us look at it from this angle. Okyeame Kwame is speaking on assumption just like we do in the practice of witchcraft so the anti-development notion of witchcraft plays out here. Even though you have no scientific proof of being a victim of jealousy, you can still go ahead and make that assumption if there are grounds that you are being targeted not because you have done anything wrong but because you are more successful than your detractors.

Second, we can also bring into this discussion the pull-him-down syndrome (PHD). What the average Ghanaian means by this is that whenever any member of the same stratum tries to move up the social echelon, the other members who are not making any move upwards will try to pull bring him down. This is even more pronounced in the working places and there are instances of colleagues reporting other colleagues for favour. Again, there are those who report or set other colleagues up for misfortune just to bring them down. We should however not try to be too

particularistic that it is only Ghana where this practice obtains. It is everywhere but we are describing the Ghanaian condition in connection with a sociological condition that seem to define the dynamics of Ghana's social mobilization and the fact that Ghanaians have a special vocabulary for such attitude, "crabology", suggests that what we are discussing is a Ghanaian social reality that cannot be dismissed. The metaphor of this terminology is borrowed from that of a group of crabs in a bucket who will pull any member back to their fold making sure that no one will be able to climb to the top of the bucket. In Obrafour's "diss" song, some of the words were calculated to tarnish the image of Okyeame Kwame. Obrafour claims Okyeame Kwame's albums are not yet five and yet claims he is the best rapper alive, raising his shoulders and that Okyeame Kwame has been successful because of the vacuum his, Obrafour's, absence created. Guru, who is, in fact, a surrogate rapper for Obrafour, claims that Okyeame Kwame is not the right candidate for the crown and that Okyeame Kwame's crown is as fake as the way Ghanaians view China phones. Admittedly, Okyeame Kwame may not have scientific facts, but on the grounds of what Obrafour is saying, he has enough circumstantial evidence to say that he is a victim of envy and that is why Obrafour wants to pull him down.

Third, gossip is another means which the traditional Ghanaian and even the modern Ghanaian uses to manage social mobilization. Gossip runs on the same tracks as rumours and they have the same social function in the Ghanaian community. As a form of hidden transcript (Scott, 1990), it is used to counter abuse of power but when used among equals, it usually functions as instrument to damage the image of the victim. Truths are halved, amplified and whispered around the community, defaming whoever is the target. Thus Pozo Hayes in "Akekakeka" admonishes Ghanaians to stop that practice saying "Adɔfo wongyae akekakeka yi" which means, friends stop gossiping about people and Paa Bobo concludes that "Akekakeka yi adɔɔso, wosene wo yɔnko a ɔtan wo o, ɛno

ntira ne yɛrebere yi", to wit, there is too much hearsay around and when you are better than your friend, he hates you and that is why we are suffering. Paa Bobo nails home the connection between success and envy. Indeed, it is not all that time that the truth is halved; sometimes complete fabrications are put in the rumour mill. A typical example comes from Obrafour's song when he claimed that OK had raped a small girl. In Ghanaian culture, this is the worst any sane person can do and by implication, attacking the moral integrity of Okyeame Kwame, who claimed to be a gentleman, throwing into doubt his moral standing and questioning the fans of Okyeame Kwame's sense of judgement. Meanwhile there had neither been anything like that accusation in the news nor even in the form of a rumour around. It was a total fabrication. This village "tabloid press" modus operandi is employed in hiplife just to destroy the image of the target.

Fourth, Ghanaians usually resort to innuendoes as a means of handling social mobility. It normally happens when the perpetrator has no genuine grounds to accuse his victim. The perpetrator would say something nasty about the victim and the images in the language even though veiled can always point to its referents in the outside world. Yaw Sekyi, in his Rundown programme on TV Africa, an entertainment programme, revealed that Okyeame Kwame texted Obrafour demanding explanation for the "diss" and the reply was that he Obrafour did not have Okyeame Kwame as the target but if Okyeame Kwame believed he was the target then he should take it so. This "nyɛ-me-ne-wo-nso-mene-wo", meaning, I do not mean you but it is you, approach of Obrafour shows him as being insinuating. Obviously, if he cannot muster moral courage to claim responsibility for what appears to be his real intention, then he definitely had something to hide.

All these points justify the observation that even though Ghana operates a modern open system of social stratification and mobilization, there is a parallel system, the old closed system, operating

side by side with the new open system. Again, these are all cultural shareable materials that inform the hiplife art and locate the performer and his audience in the same social context. In this sense "dissing" not only frames hiplfe but does so by re-inventing old cultural structures which constitute the mores of the Ghanaian community - just like Hesiod's description of the interlocking relationship the Greek poet enjoyed with his audience due to his knowledge in the *nomoi* (Havelock, 1982).

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect in this development is the fact that "dissing" represents an ideology of its followers. We have already spoken about hiplife's ideology of looking tough in earlier chapters but in addition to this is the fact that it is used as means of legitimizing factionalism. We just need to recall the 9th May, 2001, tragedy in which 127 people lost their lives as a result of the clash between supporters of Asante Kotoko and Accra Hearts of Oak at the Accra Sports Stadium. We are therefore not far from the idea that there has been some form of hostility between Hearts and Kotoko which has been simmering and once a while reaches the boiling point as it did on May 9th. Hearts is for Accra, and though not everybody in Accra is a Hearts supporter, most people are. The same applies to Kumasi Asante Kotoko so there seems to be some competition as to who is the best between the two cities in Ghana in terms of football. In its usual subversive pose, popular culture presents characters like Master Richard and Wofa Kay, TV soaps from TV stations in Accra, caricaturing the mannerisms of a typical Kumasi "guy". This throws more light on this fight for supremacy between the two cities.

This sense of competition is even more prominent among the Ghanaian radio presenters, and they sometimes extend such contestations to traditional chiefs. Throughout August, 2009, some Kumasi radio DJs like Andy Dosty and some radio DJs in Accra like Kwame Ahinkae of Hot FM were

involved in verbal exchanges with the Accra DJs calling the Kumasi DJs villagers. We see similar developments when radio presenters like Adakabre of TV Africa used strong words against Otumfour Osei Tutu for his comments about the Techiman sub-chief who kidnapped the Tuobodom chief in March, 2010. Kumasi people were up in arms against the Accra people for speaking ill about their king. In recent times, we have seen so many of such skirmishes between the two cities. Some may call it ethnic rivalry but for the purpose of this discussion, we will call it inter-city rivalry or territorial rivalry which is very common in the US hip hop. We also recall that A Plus endorsed Sarkodie, from Tema which is part of Accra, for his signing with Konvict[57]. We therefore understand why Okyeame Kwame would express these sentiments in an excerpt of an interview:

PA. Do you think Obrafour is the only person doing this or there are some other people behind him?
OK. I think almost all the Accra rappers are behind him. Obrafour is only a vessel.

Of course some Accra presenters and DJs expressed open disagreement with the song but on the whole the Accra presenters would normally dismiss the claim that Obrafour's "diss" was inflammatory by calling it part of the game of hip hop. There is therefore an ideology of "we are better than them" which is playing out in this "diss" and just like most Kumasi people were against Obrafour, so were most Accra people against Okyeame Kwame. Indeed, my research indicated that while the generality of the youth in Accra were in love with Obrafour's "Kaseɛbɔ", the youth of Kumasi relished Tattoo's "Proverbs". There is every reason to believe that the Accra, Kumasi rivalry has reared its ugly head in music as well and musicians are now icons for the cities. They take advantage of the division and give it a code in their music as Obrafour did and the code constitutes the ideology of the group – the supremacy ideology. Obrafour is therefore only playing a role, discharging public duty (Goffman, 1959) or performing a task on behalf of his audience

---

[57] This is the music company of Akon, the famous Senegalese-born American hip hop star.

(Banton, 1968), mainly from Accra. And let us signal it here that there could be some people in Kumasi who may belong to this Accra group and the same applies to some people staying in Accra[58]. Obrafour therefore puts on a mask that the Accra audience finds fitting, congenial and satisfying to their expectation. In fact, if it had come from any underground rapper, nobody would have bothered himself but coming from an icon like Obrafour, the message is quickly given an ideological reading. While the fans are lost in the maze of the frenzied performativity of the "dissing", they even fail to realize the danger such an ideology poses to the unity of the country. Again, while some other forms of orality like that of the national anthem, second line of the second verse, "steadfast to build together/ A nation strong in unity" reinforces social cohesion, other sources of orality like "dissing" threatens to undo the ideology behind the national anthem. Hebdige was totally right in observing that subcultures use "gestures, movements towards a speech which offends the 'silent majority', which challenges the principle of unity and cohesion, which contradicts the myth of consensus" (Hebdige, 1987). "Dissing" in hiplife therefore disrupts the order of life as we find in the use of words and by so doing attract attention to itself and thus commercialises the ideology of the "otherness". This sense of "otherness" gives the hiplife community its identity, its communication and its frame. There is no way you can understand this "otherness" without understanding the frame as prescribed by the metatext of hiplife with its sociological implications.

5.8 SUMMARY

Hiplife "dissing" borrows structures from Akan orature (Aggrey, 1977; Yankah, 1989; Agyekum, 2011) and other types of orature from different parts of the country (Awoonor, 1974; Anyidoho, 1984, Agovi, 1995) re-contextualising them to suit modern times by adding foreign elements from

---

[58] In fact, this audience group is too complex in nature to give it an ethnically-based label. There are some football fans who are in Accra but support Kotoko and there are some in Kumasi who support Hearts. The music fan base follows the same lines.

American hip hop (Toop, 1991; Rose, 1994: Krims, 2000; Kitwana, 2002). All these practices narrativize certain Ghanaian social and cultural realities grounded in an interpretive frame of power and marginality (Furniss and Gunner, 1995). This presents the youth with the opportunity to fight in order to broaden the frontiers of their freedom from the dominant culture by constructing identity autonomy through linguistic structures. These attempts constitute a configuration of conventions (Bateson, 1972; Bauman, 1977) that frame hiplife as a protest art. In chapter 6, therefore, we continue to examine, in greater detail, hiplife, as protest art, a performance associated with a subculture that uses symbolic communication to challenge the Ghanaian hegemonic structures.

CHAPTER SIX

HIPLIFE - A PROTEST ART

6.0 Introduction

Dissing, as seen in the previous chapter, is obviously a kind of hiplife transgressive practice through which hiplife, as youth culture, seeks affirmation outside the Ghanaian normative culture. Studies on youth trangressivity have been the concern of two main schools, the Birmingham School, Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies, CCCS (P. Cohen, 1972; Hebdige, 1987; Willis, 1977, 2000; Hodkinson, 2003; 2007) and the Chicago School (Thrasher, 1927; 1933; A. Cohen, 1955; Merton, 1957; Cohen and Short, 1958; Miller, 1958, 1959; Merton and Nisbet, 1976; Fischer, 1995). In consonance with youth studies done by these two schools and other youth culture theorists, hiplife transgressive concepts, expressing hybridity (Waterman, 1990; Pietersee, 1995: 53; Shipley, 2007, 2009; Oduro Frimpong, 2009), creolization (Sey, 1973; Kachru, 1982; Bamgbose, 1982) and syncretism (Waterman, 1990; Shipley, 2007, 2009, 2013; Osumare, 2012) have the potential of using creativity to push the Ghanaian cultural frontiers further. They also provide a conceptual framework that allows us to investigate new cultural identities and blends in Ghana by destroying old cultural boundaries and erecting new ones in their place (Friedman, 1999: 241). Hiplife does so by drawing generational boundaries between the young and the old. However, the youth-elder dimension of Ghanaian hiplife has not been fully elaborated by other scholars (Shipley, 2007, 2009; Oduro Frimpong, 2009, Osumare, 2012) and that is what this chapter sets out to do.

Certain questions automatically come to mind. What methods does hiplife use to draw the generational boundaries? Which group within the hiplife community uses trangressive methods and which group does not? To answer these questions, this research looks at the hiplife discursive practices, how to deal with things and ideas, "name them, analyze them, classify them, explain

them" (Foucault, 2002: 50f) and non discursive practices, practices "that systematically form the object of which they speak" (Foucault, 2002: 54). In this analysis, therefore, verbal expressions are equivalent to discursive practices while non verbal cues are equivalent to non discursive practices. We identify two main groups here; the moderate hiplife protest group and the extreme hiplife protest group. This categorization divides our analysis into two main parts: hiplife moderate protest and hiplife extreme protest. We start with the first part of the analysis, the hiplife moderate protest.

6.1 The hiplife moderate protest

The moderate hiplife protest discourses are basically discursive practices used to present the hiplife side of the power divide, the underprivileged, who support the mainstream morality. This might sound strange since you cannot logically support what you protest against. The fact however is that when I talk about in-groups and out-groups, I am identifying cleavages which divide them. These cleavages could potentially be quite numerous – age, educational status, residential status, gender, wealth, social class. And cleavages tend to intersect – in other words, it is not simply about being young or old, but being young and something else, which allows one to become part of the in-group. Indeed, female teenage mothers, according to the Ghanaian tradition, are regarded as adults, showing that there is no fixed definition of youth within the Ghanaian context. This means that even with an apparently radical stance of hiplife, we still have youth who belong to both hiplife and mainstream culture. What they seek to do within the project of protest is to attack the old by critiquing the mainstream culture moral order with the view to cleaning it up to make possible better living standards for the youth and also to create a smooth transition from the youth stage to the adult stage. Such hiplife protest is mainly through verbal attack and we have two main types: verbal protest and irony as a tool for protest.

6.1.1 Verbal protest

These kinds of hiplife discourses openly attack the elite using discursive practices as exemplified in Sydney and Morris Babyface's "Africa Money" and A-Plus' "Freedom of Speech". Let us first look at Sydney and Morris, the second verse of "Africa Money".

1. Our money eh, aaw wonna money	Our money eh, aaw our money
2. Africa money eh, Oga dey chop am oh	Africa's money eh, the big man steals it
3. Poor man dey work, rich dey enjoy	The poor man works, but it is the rich who enjoys
4. I say how we reach o, the gap between	And how can we bridge this yawning gap?
5. Accountant dey chop oh	The accountant is stealing money
6. Oga dey chop am fuga fuga	The big man is stealing large sums of money
7. Bank manager dey chop	The bank manager is stealing money
8. Oga dey chop am basa basa	The big man steals left right and center
9. Director dey chop oh	The director steals large sums of money
10. Oga dey chop am nyaga nyaga	The big man steals large sums of money
11. Even pastors dey, chop chop, chop chop	Even pastors steal money

The initial position of the words "our" in line 1, "Africa's" in line 2 and "The poor man" in line 3 is very significant. The relationship between the nouns and their antecedent(s) constitutes a climactic parallelism and this structure systematically takes up "our" in line 1 and develops it further by adding a lot more details in line 2, providing the appropriate social environment of the pronoun "our", that is Africa. Line 3 further enriches the identity of Africa by giving it a descriptive precision: "The poor man". In simple terms, there is a repetition of the same idea through backward or cataphorical referencing (Halliday and Hassan, 1976), from the presupposed "The poor man" to the presupposing "our" and this suggests the poor conditions of the economically deprived Africans. Then Sydney and Morris proceed to offer explications as to what or who is responsible for the present poor condition of the African. The linguistic units we have mentioned, except "The poor man" are not agents in their respective sentences. These three linguistic units signify the poor Africans, the first category of people in this text. And even when "The poor man" constitutes the subject or the agent of the verb "work", it is not the beneficiary of the social action "work" but "the big man who enjoys". The significance of the metaphor of the bridge in line 4 reinforces the gap between the poor Africans and the rich African elite. It is significant to note that in line 4, which divides the two groups, the pronoun he uses is still the first person plural (personal pronoun), "we"

and the line is a question, indicating the "we", which alludes to the poor Africans, who do not have answers to their problems. Line 5 starts the next group of people and this time they are the agents of the social actions in their respective sentences. In line 5, the "accountant", the treasurer or the keeper of the money, is the agent of the social action "stealing". Line 6 has "the big man" as the agent and the social action is still "stealing". The same development persists in line 7 where "The bank manager" who is supposed to keep the money of the African is also "stealing" it. The director is not spared the ogre of corruption in line 9 and not even the pastor in line 11. From line 5-11, the grammatical object of "stealing" is money and we are presented with dialectical structures in which the elite including the pastor who are supposed to help build a better social environment have rather turned their back on the people and are stealing their money: the society turned upside down. And that, according to Sydney and Morris, is the paradox of the Ghanaian social environment.

These interpretations are interpretive cues or conventions and they are the knowledge hiplife in-group members need to participate effectively in that community (Garret and Baquedano, 2002: 346). By interpreting the systematic use of these units, we hear the powerless speaking. Thus, the youth and all the underprivileged in the Ghanaian society who share in these cues highly fancy this song because it helps them to get involved in the use of language to de-legimate the power that keeps them down. Indeed, it remained on top of the local music chart by most radio stations for a considerable time in 2008.

So hard-hitting could this song be against politicians that some political parties wanted to use some ruse to buy the rights of the song in order to gag Sydney and when the NDC failed to buy off the rights for the song, it started using it without permission. The reaction of Sydney is contained in Bright Aduasare's report in the *Daily Guide*: "Ghana's controversial hiplife artiste, Sydney Ofori

aka Barima has fired a stern warning to the National Democratic Congress (NDC), threatening to drag the party to court if it continued to use his 'Africa Money' hit track".

In Africa, and Ghana in particular, when hip hop intersects with politics as in the case discussed above, the politicians try to maintain their domination either through threats or through counter-discourse strategies. In the 2000 Ghanaian election, the NPP adopted Sydney's "Scent no", which was perceived as casting aspersions, using the metaphor of the body fluid or odour, in which people hide their stinking feet in respectable shoes (Shipley, 2009), against NDC. As usual, it was in bad odour with the dominant, the NDC government. In 2000, the government officials descended heavily on Sydney, brought his song as a major discussion on the floor of Parliament and even threatened court action against Sydney. In a very interesting twist of events, when Kufuor won the elections in December, 2000, he fully understood the import and the target of the metaphor of the bodily fluid or odour which has "agye beebia" to wit, that has spread everywhere and defended it in a speech he gave at the National Theatre (Shipley, 2009). He quickly adopted it, recontextualised it to mean how the spread of the body odour could be equated to the spread of his political success. He changed Sydney's lyrics to "Scent no, scent no, Kufuor nie, agye beebia", to wit, with Kufuor around, the political success has spread everywhere. This is clearly how hegemony survives and it reinforces John Fiske's concept of "incorporation", by which we mean Kufuor resorts to a "process of adopting the signs of resistance" (Fiske, 1990: 15) and cleverly "incorporates them into the dominant system and thus attempts to rob them of any oppositional meaning" (Fiske, 1990: 15)[59]. He neutralises the threatening effect of Sydney's lyrics by superimposing the meaning of the

---

[59] Another example outside Ghana is that of Kenya. In Tanzania, Benjamin Nkapa [President of Tanzania 1995-2005] in 2001 adopted "Mdio mzee" by Professor Jay, a Tanzanian artiste, to warn his non-performing ministers to buck up (Stroeken, 2005: 86; Ntarangwi, 2009: 69). The song originally castigated the East African politicians for failing to keep their promises. By this recontextualization, Nkapa changed the target and the meaning of the lyrics.

dominant on that of the subordinate. Such a strategy on the part of the dominant does not go far enough to stop the subordinate from being blunt about their underprivileged position. A-Plus is even blunter. In "Freedom of Speech", this is what he says:

1. Yɛwɔ gold, yɛwɔ kookoo	We have gold, we have cocoa
2. Ɛbaa no sɛn na yɛkɔɔ HIPC?	Why did we go HIPC?
3. Insha Allah, we will consult till we finish[60]	Insha Alla, we will consult till we finish
4. 46,000, Ghana money, some bro traffic	A brother has stolen, 46, 000 dollars, all Ghana money
5. Wei deɛ a, hmm na ɛyɛ magic	As for this one, it was through magic
6. Na sɛ motee sɛ kookoo yeraa wɔ po so	And did you hear a whole shipload of cocoa got lost on the high seas?
7. Hmm, that loss too, na ɛyɛ tragic	Hmm, it was a really tragic loss
8. Gyae m'ano, ma menka	Don't cover my mouth; let me say it

Again, the systematic uses of certain linguistic units, which in this analysis constitute interpretive cues, are in this text as well. The use of the pronoun "we" found in lines 1, 2, and 3 are the generic pronoun referring to Ghanaians, who are victims of the social action "has stolen" in line 4 and in the process of looking on as "we" are being swindled under "our" full glare, the whole scene is more of "magic" indicated in line 5. When we string all these linguistic units together, we see the deception the Ghanaian elites or politicians practise in impoverishing Ghana. The youth unfortunately bear the brunt of such mismanagement by politicians and such mismanagement at the political level lead to youth unemployment. Indeed Winston Tamakloe in a report in the *Ghanaian Times* on a youth employment programme in Ho refers to the youth as "the disadvantaged and vulnerable youth". Studies have shown that "youth participation in education and skills training in Ghana is inadequate, hence their vulnerability in terms of employment" (Braimah and King, 2006). A police officer I met at the Pocalous Studio, Amass, AM, Kumasi, lamented:

---

[60] This is in reference to Mallan Issah, the former Sports Minister in Kufuor's regime, who was jailed for embezzling state funds. During his ministerial vetting, he was constantly saying that he was going to consult whenever he could not answer questions put to him and this has become an event people refer to as a comic relief, and so A-Plus was creating a double effect of comic relief while exposing the hegemonic structures.

AM. Some years ago, let me say 20 years ago I happen [sic] to stay with an elder brother and that brother had two companies, NAY, now Renault whatever, opposite Asokwa there. From there he goes to AG Timbers before he comes back. That time the work was available. But what about today?

Awensem quickly responded:

They are selling all the companies and it is like we have a lot to say but we have no opportunity so this is the biggest opportunity that we are having right here, I mean. We have a lot in our chest.

They were not condemning the divestiture programme of the government per se but lamenting the non transparent manner in which money from this programme was used. All these confirm the feeling of neglect and anger expressed by Awensem:

It is one thing that forced me into music. I have a politician kind of mind but when I sat down and think of…so can I go into politics with my education? I say no. So if I get the opportunity of becoming a star, I will get the opportunity to be interviewed on national TV and I will have the opportunity to tell whatever is in me. I think the elderly have failed us especially in our country (underlining mine). What Americans and Britain enjoy today is not the present generation like the 30 years generation who did it. It started about 100 years ago. They stood forth for them. Look at our president today. I learnt Kwame Nkrumah gave them the opportunity. Some of them had the advantage of going to the university for free.

This outburst against the older generation is not peculiar to the males of the Ghanaian youth. The feeling of the females can be summed up by a group of females at the Kumasi Jackson Park, during a music night. Let us follow the lamentation of one of them, Theresa Sarkodie, 27:

TS. They have destroyed us. It is true; they have turned it upside down. Right now, we are going astray because of their behavior. We the youth try to go our way and think we are doing the right thing by not following them but we youth rather are going astray. So that is what they have done to us. They are destroying us.

Clearly, they are even bitterer against the old generation. Christiana Bretuo, CB, 17, one of the participants of the Labone Senior High, Accra, was very pessimistic with regards to the future of Ghanaian youth:

CB: the government is supposed to provide us with facilities that we need. So if the facilities are not there, then that means that we can't be what we want to be.

The failure of the government to provide the students with their needs certainly reflects failure on the part of the old generation. Again, while walking down the main Lagos Town Street, Takoradi, a hiplife cum reggae artiste, Ekkar, 27, concluded in an interview that in spite of all the God-given resources, "still we are poor. That means Africa is not united. Our independence has not benefited us." The burden of this political failure certainly falls on the shoulder of the old generation. This unambiguously demonstrates a feeling of frustration all over the country on part of the youth and hence their protest. They are only searching for an outlet to vent their anger (Pardue, 2007: 702) and resort to the materiality of music as a means of expression (Willis, 1977: 26) as indicated by Awensem to voice the concerns of the underprivileged (Putnam, 2006: 69). This development is not unique in Africa for in East Africa, the same platform is used to express inadequate infrastructure (Perullo, 2005; Stroeken, 2005) and in Ivory Coast, it serves as a means to criticise the government for failing to take care of the youth (Schumann, 2012).

The history of youth protest against social inequalities in Ghana dates back the period of struggle for independence. We can mention, first, the Committee for Youth Organization (CYO) whose protest against Nkrumah's removal as the General Secretary of the UGCC by the old guards in the party better positioned him for the liberation struggle and, second, the crucial role the youth played in events leading to the attainment of Ghana's independence in 1957 (Botwe-Asamoah, 2005). Again, the post colonial political experience, in which the ruling class got exposed in the same manner we are discussing here, occasioning the youth in the Ghanaian army led by J.J. Rawlings, then a young man, to overthrow the regime in 1979 (Shillington, 1992) is still fresh in our memory. Undoubtedly, the youth are still fighting social inequalities in Ghana. Awensem, a firebrand

underground rapper, issued this warning, "One day I will get the opportunity in front of the big guns and I will tell them my piece of mind". This time, not in the 1979 fashion, but as Bombaadzi, a Kumasi rapper I met at Pocalous studio put it, "We don't have the capacity to fight. You cannot fight unarmed. So we use lyrics to fight them." Even though the social line (the battle line) between the dominant and the youth is obvious, we still prefer to name these discourses moderate protest because it is only a verbal exercise devoid of any physical violence that characterizes the US gangsta rap (Rose, 1994:105, 128-130). Fighting with lyrics of hiplife verbal protest discourse is however not the only tool used in confronting the dominant. Irony as an instrument of protest is also used.

6.1.2 Irony as tool for protest

There is another form of lyrical protest, the most poignant of the types of protest, which operates with double layers of meaning; the upper and lower layers, opposite in meaning to each other (Meucke, 1969; Booth, 1974). This form of lyrical protest is in the form of irony. It has two categories of audience: the target and the listener (Meuck, 1969) or the reader and the implied reader (Booth, 1983). The power of irony is most felt when the listener can decipher the meaning of the lower level layer, which, of course, contrasts with that of the upper layer, in reference to the target while the target remains ignorant that he is the destination and laughs at the irony as if he is a listener and not a target. In such a dramatic irony, he is reduced to a caricature, an object of laughter who is laughing at himself. We will use Sydney Barima's "Obiaa nye Obiaa" to illustrate this.

```
Yɛ nyinaa yɛhyɛ mmra ase, President o, lawyer o, yɛ nyinaa yɛhyɛ mmra
ase…Apɔnkye se ɔbɛma wo jaundice aduro a hwɛ ne dwonsɔ…Nkorɔfoɔ
Mmiɛnsa bi tenaa ase, Engineer, ɛna Doctor, na afei nso so,
Politician. Na da koro, ewia ketee wɔhyiaa mu twetwee nkɔmɔ. Nkɔmɔ
twetweɛ mu pa ara no, asɛm bi pa ara tɔɔ dwa. Doctor, Engineer ne
Politician, whan na n'adwuma dii kan wɔ asaase yi so? Doctor na ɔdii
```

```
kan maa ne nsa so sɛ ɛyɛ ɔnoa. Wowerɛ efiri anaa sɛ Nyankopɔn bɔɔ
onipa no, oyii ne mfe mpadeɛ na ɔde bɔɔ nipa? "Right there, surgical operation.
Right there, the doctor was there." Engineer maa ne nsa so sɛ daabi da. Ansaana
Nyankopɔn bɔɔ nipa no, na the whole world was in a mess. Na esum ahyɛ asaase so ma.
Na ɔkaa sɛ nsuo nkɔ ha, na mepɔ nso nkɔ deɛ ɛwɔ. "Right there, the
engineer was there". Politician no seree ara de neho too fam.
"Montie, montie, Engineer rekasa no ɔse the whole world was in a
mess. Merebisa mo, who created the mess?" The Politician.
Politician, doctor, engineer, who created the mess? Amanfoɔ, meto ma
mo; weinom nyinaa, obiara nye obiara.
```

Whether you are the president or the lawyer, we are all under the law… If the goat promises you a cure for jaundice, just take a look at the colour of its urine…There were three people, the engineer, the doctor and the politician. One fine afternoon, they met for a conversation and the question that came up was that, the doctor, the engineer and the politician, whose profession started with the time of creation of the world? The doctor was the first to raise the hand to answer the question, reminding them that God first took the rib of man to create man and "right there, there was a surgical operation and the doctor was there". The engineer also raised the hand and countered what the doctor had said, saying that before God created man, the whole world was in a mess. Darkness covered the world and God commanded water to go one part and the hills to the other. Right there the engineer was there. The politician could not control himself with laughter with regards to the submission of the two. "Listen, listen, when the engineer was talking, he revealed the whole world was in a mess. I want to ask you, who created the mess?" The politician, the doctor, the engineer, who created the mess? Your guess is as good as mine. We are all the same.

The linguistic dialectical structures used in performance to construct social or generational boundaries (Garrett and Baquedano-López, 2002: 350) between the privileged and the underprivileged seen in the previous texts manifest in this text too. In the first line, "we", the subordinates, are opposed to "you", the elite. These discursive practices frame meanings in hiplife and Sydney is cynically saying that with all the so-called authority of the elite/politicians, failure to live up to their responsibility as leaders reduces them to the status of the masses because their social behaviour not only constitutes lawlessness but that which reduces their prestige and brings them at par with the masses. Of course, we are all under the law but cynicism of this idea is located in the irony of the discursive practices in the text. The unpacking of the hermeneutic density of this narrative makes obvious two opposing layers of meaning: the upper layer of supremacy as opposed to the lower layer of creation of mess. The politician however wins the battle of supremacy as to who was present at the creation of the world on the upper layer of meaning. The lower layer of

meaning however offers explication for the supremacy: creating a mess and that, of course, is negative. Let us draw from Derrida's deconstruction which postulates that the silences of a text are also part of the meaning of the text (Derrida, 1997). The silence of mess is order. The reality however is we do not celebrate mess; we rather celebrate order and anybody who celebrates the mess so goes against the grain of normal thinking. The rhetoric of this narrative projects a scathing attack against the Ghanaian politicians and once again provides a platform for the youth and the underprivileged to delegitimize the kind of power that holds them in subjugation (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009: 89). Since the song was released during President Kufuor's regime, we infer he is the most plausible historical referent. His convoy of many cars signified a show of pomp against the background of the country's international label as a HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Country). This is a real concern for A-Plus as found in 6.1.1 in this chapter.

The contrast between the show of pomp (supremacy) by the politician and the poverty of the people (creation of mess) constitute the subject of this irony which exposes the cynical intention of the Ghanaian politician who is happy about his supremacy even though he presides over a mess. This irony attacks the politician's weak sense of judgement that has caused impoverishment among the people because if presiding over a mess makes a politician supreme, then there is certainly something wrong with his sense of judgement. And the politician in the narrative is even not aware of the implication of his "pride" and when he laughs, we all laugh too because he is caricaturizing himself and this effect is heightened by the pretence on the part of the rapper that he knows nothing of the irony (Frye, 1957) and that whatever conclusion we, the listeners have reached is our own imagination and not his. These discourses succeed in constructing the social boundaries between the dominant and the subordinate, repeating the theme of paradox in the Ghanaian social environment. Once again, the power of the shareability of this song made it a hit. Hiplife further expresses this

shareability in a more vitriolic manner and scales up the bouts of attack against the dominant culture through what we call extreme protest.

6.2 The hiplife extreme protest

In extreme protest, the artistes draw generational lines through music and suggest new social values using both lyrics (discursive practices) and transgressive symbolic representations (non discursive practices). I call them extreme protest discourses because unlike the moderate discourses which launch veiled or moderate attack on the dominant, these discourses recommend alternative lifestyles and are vitriolic in their attack against the dominant, a kind of "semiotic guerrilla warfare (Fiske, 1990: 18, quoting Eco, 1986). Even though it has been observed elsewhere that the division between the youth and the old is blurry and ambiguous (Sharp, 1995; Rea, 1998; Gable 2000: Rasmussen, 2000), the Ghanaian experience is different. There is a bold line between the two thus making youth protest reducible to a generational battle (Cook, 2004: 108, citing Condry, 1999, Ginsburg et al. 2002). Again, Fiske's notion of "excorporation", the youth using the resources provided by the dominant members to create their own culture (Fiske, 1990: 14), becomes relevant here. In this case, resistance, a reaction against the dominant, translates into a youth social pleasure derived from alternative way of thinking and new identities (Osumare, 2012: 124) that emanates from such mentalities. Bombaazi, one of the rappers at Pocalous, alludes to that as style. Taking that each subtitle represents the name of the extreme protest discourse under it, we have the following hiplife discourses: "telling it in the face", "keeping it real", the Ananse factor and underground rappers. We also have the "azonto" dance and double entendre.

6.2.1 "Telling it in the face"

It is mainly a non discursive practice, ghettocentric poses and gesticulations, what Rose calls "black ghetto symbolism and representation" (Rose, 1994: 12) or what Fairclough (2009: 162, see also Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 3) calls semiosis, otherwise known as the visual. In Ghana, they are mainly used to challenge existing social norms. Artistes like VIP, Tinny, FBS, D-Black, Guru, Kow Kesse, and others are seen with fists in front of the cameras, making wild gesticulations while shouting out words in defiant moods as if to say they are tired of the Ghanaian hegemony and enough is enough. Kow Kesse, in his shows, interviews and videos, hits his head with a fist calling it "abɔdam", madness. This gesture which is clearly a cultural transgression, is so popular with the Ghanaian youth and the apparent glorification of madness is an attempt to invert the existing Ghanaian social norms that cherish sobriety, the very norm prescribed by the dominant culture to facilitate domination. To fight domination, therefore, one needs to transgress sobriety, confirming Foucault's assertion that to be able to free oneself from domination, one has to have recourse to "a transgression of laws" (Foucault, 1990: 5).

The dominant culture however does not relent in its effort to keep the subordinate culture, hiplife, under domination. This control is legitimated by condemning the youth using the Ghanaian moral frame of reference, that which constitutes sobriety or the official "truth" (Bakhtin, 1984, 17) as the yardstick. Awudu Razak, AR, a participant of the focus group of taxi drivers representing the old generation, Accra, expressed his disgust against the non discursive practices of hiplife which ran counter to his sense of sobriety:

> AR: I don't like the way they present themselves and I sometimes even do not want to switch on the TV.

Francis Essien, FE, 50, also complains, "Today everything is loose. It is not good". Johannes Amakye, AY, 43, another taxi driver in Legon Taxi Station, sums up the opinion of the old generation:

> AY: To me it is their music that makes our wives and children degenerate in morality. Just look at the way they dress to the National Theatre. You can't know the difference between this one is a marriage woman or an unmarriage woman [sic].

6.2.2 "Keeping it real"

There is no fixed definition for the concept of "keeping it real" for several definitions have been put forward by many critics and practitioners of hip hop. In the US, this concept, which has been described as the manner in which Black American youth negotiate their identity through hip hop (Clay, 2003) could be an excuse for all negative activities including crime and refusing to go to school. It is about glorifying the realities of the ghetto (Kitwana, 2002). On a global scale, it is a philosophy of authenticity (Stroeken, 2005), a street oriented art that espouses the concept of being true to oneself and having nothing to hide. This philosophy of authenticity however has its localised meanings and Ghana is no exception. Within the Ghanaian context, the "keeping it real" ideology indicates the rapper has nothing to hide to construct dominion over anybody. They indirectly invite the general public to judge, between them and the dominant culture, which keeps secrets for the sinister motive of domination. In the traditional domain, for example, the youth ask a lot of questions about the aetiology of certain cultural phenomena and selective evaluation of certain norms about sex. Obour complained:

> I have been at an auditorium where there is a play and maybe in the play there is supposed to be a ceremony and that nudity comes in a cultural form, nobody frowns on it. And I have been in the same type of auditorium and someone is wearing western and it is short and exposing, everybody frowns on it. And is that not being hypocritic?[sic] Because all of us, you still see the body anyway.

He does not only demand answers for this apparent show of double standards on the part of the dominant but he also complains about how the youth become manageable subjects (Foust, 2010: 17) as a result of domination, the abuse of power legitimized by "social beliefs that organize and control the social representations of groups and their members" (Van Dijk, 2009: 78). In this regard, Ernest Owusu, EO, a taxi driver, Accra, likens the perceived stubbornness of the youth to:

> EO. staying in the house and being controlled by a woman. What she likes is what she does because your chop money is little but if you have enough money for chop money and you tell her "Adwoa, sleep at nine o'clock", she will sleep at nine o'clock.

They may appear to assign a social reason for the youth's behaviour but their real intention is to be very critical of the "uncontrollable" youth as discussed earlier on. Indeed, Ernest Owusu provides us with a hint about the other group, the female gender, which also appear to be going out of control in the Ghanaian dominant culture. Their objective is, again, an attempt to restore the supremacy of the dominant culture.

6.2.3 The *Ananse* factor in hiplife protest

Resistance is not the preserve of the youth. The youth are only re-inventing the ruse of the folkloric Ananse who represents the traditional resistance to dominant power. Finnegan describes such small but crafty animals in folklore as "the wily character who foils the aggressor" (Finnegan, 1970: 337). The rapper therefore pretends to be on the side of the dominant culture, using so-called hegemonic discursive practices, and is considered a "good boy" but, in other circumstances, he seriously subverts hegemony. An Artiste like Obour belongs to this category.

Obour is known for his pro-traditional lyrics and rhythm but in "Konkotiba", he demonstrates he has an agenda other than merely upholding the tradition because he attacks the very tradition he purports to uphold by using images of failure in terms of the old or the tradition. He says, "Mennɛ mmɔ Black Star no bio/ Cedis no nso, ayɛ dada, menni bio/ Medi dollars, mɛbɔ Starlets" to wit, I

will not play Black Stars again/ the cedi is old, I will not use it again/ I will use the dollar, I will play the Starlets. Clearly, the symbols Black Star and the cedi stand for the old generation while the dollar and Starlets, the under-17 national football team, represent the youth. Obour uses the pronoun "me", me in English, representing the youth, and he is leaving the "mo" as used in verse 2, representing the old. He is not campaigning for the sanitization of the mainstream culture as seen in the moderate protest but clandestinely advocating a shift in allegiance and in social values. These systematic linguistic dialectical structures in the text make obvious the dividing line between these two generations. We see that the artistes have gone beyond using language for the purpose of criticising the dominant as we saw in the moderate protest. They are resorting to other linguistic structures as a platform for creativity to destabilize the power of the old. Unlike the moderate protest which is campaigning for a better society to ensure better lives for the youth and a smooth transition from the youth stage to that of the adult, the extreme protest in this context calls for a total break from any transitional arrangement from the youth stage to that of the adult. This seeming contradiction between the moderate and the extreme protests might not be as accidental as we may think since "Contradictions may signal discoursal and social instability and hence act as pointers to struggle and avenues of change" (Sunderland, 2006: 53, quoting Pecheux, 1982). Such creative linguistic structures for the purpose of social change have been observed in the work of other researches too (Trudgill, 1972a, 1972b; Labov, 1990; Cameron, 2003).

This reaction could be described as youthful excesses because it is not possible to sever oneself from the transition from the youth stage to the adult stage, at least not in terms of age. These seeming excesses are simply an expression of anger. The expression of anger is not unique to Obour but a lot of the participants who represented the youth in my field work including Nana Osei Kwame, known in showbiz as Awensɛm, Amass, a police officer rap artiste and Theresa Sarkodie, a

teacher. Paa Kwesi (PK) in Takoradi bemoans to the researcher (PA) how the old deprive the youth

of social and political space:

PK. The opportunity is not there.
PA. Who does not give them the opportunity?
PK. The old.
PA. Why?
PK. Stop, this thing is done by the elderly so when you have any idea you just stop doing it[61].

This concern is echoed by Ebenezer Oke, 21:

> As children, we are not given the opportunity to show our creative talents. Assuming when
> you are in the house and you do anything that does not conform to the norms at home, you
> are rebuked.

The way they look at the contribution of the old generation to the life of the youth is adequately

represented in Theresa Sarkodie's lamentation that, "They have destroyed us", hence Awensɛm's

unrestrained emotional outpour, "I have some bad sentiments towards them, to be honest with you".

They do not only harbour such bitter feeling, as often is the case, but sometimes make no secret

about their antagonistic stance as exemplified in the reaction of King Fard, "The youth of today, we

are rebels". Similar sentiments have been expressed in other parts of the world (Chang, 2007: 60;

Marshall, 2006: 65; Rose, 1994; Stokes, 1994; Anderson, 1999; Krims, 2000; Lay, 2000; Kitwana,

2002; Weitzer and Kubrin, 2009; Kubrin and Weitzer, 2010; Oware, 2011).

6.2.4 Hiplife Underground rappers

The underground rapper, as an up-and-coming rapper, is tentative and has more room to operate so

far as innovations within the hiplife community are concerned. This is where Albert Cohen's

observation becomes crucial. He observes that each member of the subculture is therefore not only

seeking to adjust himself to the prevailing problem but he is also setting new standards, forming a

new frame of reference that fits his world view (A. Cohen, 1955: 6). Each member of the hiplife

---

[61] In this context Paa Kwesi refers, "this thing", to any initiative that the youth undertake and that the old simply stop
them from taking any such initiative.

underground rappers is seeking to come out with an innovation born out of the desire to invert symbols of the dominant culture for purposes of protest. Cohen also adds that the member tests the temperament of his group "by increments so small, tentative and ambiguous as to permit the actor to retreat, if the signs be unfavourable" (A. Cohen, 1955). The underground stage is thus an incubatory stage for hiplife and is therefore an exploratory one. The artistes, representing the youth, see the dominant culture as an imposition for they share Bakhtin's position that what is publicly held as the "truth" is fixed by the elite (Bakhtin, 1984, 17) and through the trial-and-error method, they keep introducing new ideas into the hiplife culture. Consequently, for the youth or the hiplife community, it is obvious "that we will not be able to free ourselves from it except at a considerable cost: nothing less than a transgression of laws" (Foucault, 1990: 5). By implication, they move away from the formal or the official "truth" by using the language Bakhtin calls "the familiar language of the market place" (Bakhtin, 1984: 17). Indeed, underground rappers like King Fard and Bombaadzi believe rebellious attitude is style. This is what Bombaadzi had to say with regard to how he reached his fans through the rebel ideology converted to style, "I love the style and try to promote [sic] and the people love it". He continues:

> Just like I am saying. (Showing me his T-shirt). This one is New York O7. I could have my name written. Maybe, Bobowak. Maybe two months you see the same top Bobo Q. You see, so every time I create Bobo 3000 so my generations too will come and continue creating the Bobo…You see combat and it could be Boboflex So that is it. That is what I want to do and that is what I am doing.

Perhaps Awensen is more direct:

> A. That is why I say I am rebel. Even the way I appear on stage. I wear military kind of dress and it shows the military attitude in me and anytime that I go on stage and take the mic, it looks like I have a fight with somebody. I am talking to a group of people to listen to what I am saying. I picture those I am fighting with in my mind. You see, any time I pick the microphone…

These artistes have been known to be more radical in their protest art, constantly inventing new ideas to destabilize the mainstream culture. Thus the hiplife genre itself becomes a tentative art

which keeps morphing into other forms due to the invention of new ideas by underground rappers. It is therefore the underground nature of hiplife that makes it fluid and difficult to conduct any epistemological investigation using a deterministic model. Little wonder that researchers of similar youth musical genres or subcultures elsewhere, one after the other, criticise one another for unrepresentativeness of subcultural theory (McRobbie and Garber, 1976; Muggleton, 2000; Hodkinson, 2007).

Indeed current trends in hiplife favour experimental styles than established ones. Superstars like Kow Kesse, Obrafour and Tinny with established styles are no more patronized as they used to be. Hiplife in-group members prefer Sarkodie, VIP, Yaa Pono, Keche and E. L. because of their experimental brand of art. My data therefore indicate that being an underground artiste or a superstar depends on how experimental the artiste is but not how economical superior he is as Englert (2008) claims pertains in Kenya's phenomenon of "maandagraundi". Contrary to the Kenyan experience, most of these underground rappers come from economically average to well-to-do families (Shipley, 2009, 2013; Osumare, 2012: 15). The same concept of underground, creatively subverting the mainstream culture, is extended to body expression, especially in the hiplife "azonto" dance.

6.2.5 Azonto

Indeed, the use of the body for the expression of social ideology (Ingarden, 1986; McClary and Walsa, 1994; Gaunt, 2006) in hiplife is epitomised in the "azonto" ideology which expresses itself through music and dance. As an African musical art, it incorporates almost all the discursive practices discussed in this work. As an African dance form, it incorporates complex co-ordinated

and systematic body movement and non-verbal communication in a rhythmic fashion in very few one-two timed steps. The dance form constitutes the focus of our discussion in this segment.

Very little has so far been said about the relationship of the power capital of azonto which represents the youth and that of Ghanaian hegemony. My fieldwork is however very revealing in matters of power relations between the old and young generations. Nash, 22, claims "azonto is a vigorous dance so it does not suit the older people". Richard Gyan, 24, is very blunt, saying the youth, placing their hands on their private parts and making vigorous waist movements while dancing means "they are driving away the adults" who "do not have the strength" to do that. They are corroborated by a popular rapper, Black Moon and Rev. Koomson, all from Tamale. Indeed, all the participants of the three focus groups I met, 19- 25 years, expressed a high sense of pride being associated with the "azonto" ideology. Grinning from ear to ear, Vera Annor could not hide her emotions about being part of the "azonto" ideology. She said with a smirk, "we own it…it's our time". Rugby Sarkeyfio could not wait to support Vera Annor, "It is our time so it fits [sic] us". Clearly, these non discursive practices by the hiplife in-group members, suggesting that real power is in energy as expressed in the simulated sex act in the "azonto" dance, the kind of energy the youth believe the old lacks, deepen the already existing generational dividing line between them and the hiplife out-group members.

Indeed, in expressing the desire to break away from the Ghanaian social norm, the youth interviewed used the azonto concept as not only a generational divide symbol but also a metaphor for economic emancipation as well. They expressed the view that development is not the study of rocket science but a product of attitude and creativity. Ebenezer Oke, EO, 21, looking very confident, hinted:

EO: Before Ghanaians can change the society, we must learn to change ourselves…our psychological sense.

Kwame Owusu Agyeman, KO, 20, quickly picked up the logic in Ebenezer Oke's contribution and explained what this change entailed:

> KO: If azonto has progressed to the other (outside), that should give us a sense that we have an opening, something inside that we can use to bring out the best out of ourselves.

This echoes the Turkish economic experience where the youth is reported to be making a meaningful input in national economy by producing "alternatives to the state-centric model of modernity" (Keyman and Koyuncu, 2005: 109). Again Ebenezer Oke, came in to support Kwame Owusu Agyman's opinion, claiming:

> EO: If you use a method to do something and it brings the same results, you need to change it because you are going to get the same results all the time.

Jones Osei, 22, concluded this debate saying:

> JO: The fact that we have been able to let the West like an aspect of us makes us confident that some of the things we have, we can now export them.

This is a serious critique on the Ghanaian economic conditions and what they are suggesting is an alternative to the current economic dispensation in the country that seems to yield relatively insignificant results, making Ghana's economy mainly import oriented. The youth interviewed here are not the only section of the society concerned with the dismal performance of the Ghanaian economy and therefore the need for a radical change. Kwesi Pratt, a leading Ghanaian journalist, known for his ardent support for the NDC government, had no option than to blame the NDC government for looking on as foreign interest take over the economy of the country to the detriment of indigenous productivity. He expressed grief for the fact that:

> We import even tooth pick… Look at the amount of money the mobile phone companies generate a day; where is Ghana's interest? We have no interest in mobile phone companies. Look at gold. After everything, it is only 5% that comes to our economy. So if you come and make promises to the people, you are just making a laughing stock of yourself because the economy is not in Ghanaian hands.

The figure of speech of importing the tooth pick does not necessarily say Ghana does not export any produce at all but it depicts how bad the economy is and that is the main concern of the youth too. Indeed, the youth were making allusion to the fact that if Ghanaians could have an indigenous practice that was recognized at the global level, then Ghanaians could promote local brand names and put them on the global market just like global brand names in fashion like Gucci, Louis Vuitton and Tommy Hilfiger have done.

The participants representing the older generation, were however up in arms against the "azonto" dance, describing it as "something that will kill the will of God". We present views that sum up what the generality of the older participants were saying. For Rev. Dr. Nathan Samwini, a Methodist minister in his 50s, it was not a recommended form of self expression in the church and must totally be discouraged. Mr Akpakli, 61, condemned it "because the lyrics do not match the Christian principles". Most of the old participants were of the opinion that apart from being ungodly, "azonto" music and dance signified disrespect for the elderly. This perceived disrespect is vividly captured in E L's "Obuu mu" (You don't respect), a hiplife video, in which the father comes back to the house to see that the house had been messed up and to his utter shock his expensive car had been sprayed like a taxi, a symbol of the rich and authority reduced to that of the masses. When the father rebuked the son, "You don't respect", the son stood watching the father in a very nonchalant manner, as if to say, "I don't care". On the other hand, Rev. Gabriel Ansah, using the argument that if "adowa" with all its erotic symbols could be used in the church, then "azonto" was highly welcome in it, supported "azonto". Rev. Bofa and Mr. Amakye Boateng, belonging to different charismatic churches approved of it. However, they all agreed that the secular meaning should be stripped off it when used in the church. Thus hiplife or youth culture is apparently constructing boundaries between the orthodox churches, believed to be the preference of the old,

and the charismatic churches, believed to be the preference of youth[62]. Hiplife does not stop there; it continues the protest, using polysemy in matters relating to sex as an instrument of attack.

6.2.6 Double entendre

The rapper says one thing and it suggests two meanings, one of which is related to sex. For example, when Etumpan was asked for the meaning of "Small girl, you don't know the ting[63]/ I am teaching you the ting/ and you are playing with the ting" during the Aboakyir jam for 2011, Winneba, his answer was that he was a teacher and when teaching, he could see that some small girls would be playing with what he was teaching and so the song was to advise young girls to pay attention in class. We all however know that the "ting" refers to the sex act and today the expression "He is teaching her the ting" indicates a sexual relationship. Again, as indicated earlier on, when an enthusiastic audience join Kaboom in the chorus "Meto faa hɔ", they are not interested in the first meaning that "I passed there" or a second meaning, "I threw it there" but are more interested in a third meaning with a tacit understanding of, "my buttocks passed there", a very salacious interpretation that can only be deconstructed by the Akan speech community. It is the third meaning, subtly attacking the dignity of womanhood, which constitutes the shareability of Kaboom's performance. It is for this reason that Esi Nyarko, 45, Rita Abu 25, Charlotte Eshun, 25 and Faustina Essandoh, 23, all in Takoradi and Dela Hayes, the leader of the only female highlife band in the country, resent the use of double entendre. In the following interviews, Faustina Essandoh and Charlotte Eshun discern verbal attack against women:

> FE. Something like a certain guy eee "kotebeka deɛ mempɛ, kotebeka deɛ mempɛ"[64] It is not about that. They are using profane words but the way they say it…

---

[62] This conclusion is strictly restricted to this analysis. No comprehensive research has been done on such a topic in Ghana for any definite conclusion.

[63] This is the corrupted pronunciation of the word "thing". The consonant /θ/ does not exist in almost all Ghanaian languages so Ghanaians substitute it with the consonant /t/.

[64] This literally means "I don't like hearsays" but it has a flip meaning of sexual suggestiveness.

CE. I can also say "fa wo twɛ twɛdeɛ bo wie mu"[65] (blow the air). It is not nice. People will not understand it. We want the lyrics…

In few but pregnant words, Sandra sums up the feeling of the generality of women in the data:

They paint women black.

To them double entendre reinforces the gaze theory that offers exegesis on the fetishization of the female body which speaks of treating the woman as an object that satisfies men's desire. This, to them, subjects the female body to discourses in power relations that compromise the dignity of the woman (Mulvey, 1975, 1989). The concept of man's fetishistic pleasure on the female body might have been based on researches in the West but the results are very significant in the Ghanaian hiplife man-woman interactions. The perceived undignified presentation of the woman in hiplife may also explain why it was difficult to get women to speak on matters concerning hiplife during my fieldwork. Double meaning or flip meaning is the staple of Asem, Kow Kesse, Samini and many hiplife stars and underground artistes and the dominant culture finds it very irritating. The youth have however created a bigger public space than ever before through these transgressive symbols and this new found space is found not only in the Ghanaian social life but in politics as well.

6.3 Hiplife generational boundaries: the young and the old in Ghanaian politics

This new found confidence of a "freer me" (Zaitchik and Wiehe, 1993) of the youth experienced since the inception of the hiplife culture, even though not really paid attention to, has helped them to seek affirmation outside normative social behaviours (Gooden, 1997; Ungar, 2001). It has also broadened the basis of their social and political potentialities. This youth empowerment has also

---

[65] The pronunciation of the first syllable of "twɛdeɛ" (the blow), is synonymous to the female sex and the repetition of the first syllable is deliberate.

translated into new roles and new identities and has thus widened the boundaries of Ghanaian cultural and political practices.

The 1979 Rawlings-led revolution, as seen in chapter 5, has been one of the major factors that have influenced the consciousness of the youth with respect to their freedom in the Ghanaian society (Shillington, 1992) but never have Ghanaians seen a bolder expression of youth social and political freedom than the period that starts from the mid-1990s to date. This period has seen the youth ideology of confidence, inherited from the 1979 Rawlings regime and expressed in performative terms through the hiplife medium. Of course, we cannot deny that sometimes when they parade as party foot soldiers, beating up DCEs and ceasing public toilets as presented by Eric Bawuah in the *Daily Guide*, they occupy public spaces for the wrong reasons. Apart from these few negative instances, they usually occupy the public space for the right reason. For example, there were an unprecedented number of young government officials, some of them barely 30 years, in the government of President John Atta Mills. Indeed, the concept of youth in the Ghanaian politics is becoming so popular that President John Mahama, who was 54 at the time of taking over the reins of governance after the demise of ex-President John Atta Mills, used the youth mantra as the main campaign message to canvas for votes from the Ghanaian electorate. Again youth symbols in sports, music, entertainment and fashion have always been with Ghanaians but never have these symbols received the kind of attention in the Ghanaian public life as we find today. Furthermore, never have both indigenous Ghanaian languages and the Educated Ghanaian English been influenced by cosmopolitan practices spearheaded by the youth as we find today. Indeed, hiplife is now not the preserve of the youth because most of these "young"[66] government officials were in their teens and twenties when Reggie Rockstone appeared on the Ghanaian musical scene but most of them are

---

[66] The term "young" in Ghanaian politics does not follow any conventional definition. Since Ghanaian politics normally happens to be the preserve of influential pensioners, any pre-pension age is considered young.

adults now but still carry with them the mind of the new age Ghana, hence the frequent friction between them and their older political counterparts. Interestingly, the ex-President Jerry John Rawlings, whose leadership style is regarded as a major historical antecedent to this development, called such young government officials "babies with sharp teeth" during the 2012 NDC congress, held on 30th August, 2012, to elect their flag bearer for the 2012 elections.

6.4 SUMMARY

Clearly, hiplife protest discourses, whether moderate, campaigning for the sanitization of the mainstream culture, or extreme, proposing new cultural values, appropriate these discursive and non discursive practices, mostly from global hip hop, to construct transgressive local meanings that create social barriers. They are barriers calibrated to keep away the power of the dominant and to construct new values like confidence that translates into new collective youth mentalities, making them well poised against traditional conventions that impede their freedom of expression. In the next chapter, we investigate how these new mentalities and identities express hiplife ideologies that are recast in economic terms. We further look at how these ideologies, as "active construction of meaning" (Street, 1993), are legitimated through the "cultural industry" and the concept of modernity (Appadurai, 1996).

CHAPTER SEVEN

HIPLIFE VISIBILITY AND BUSINESS

7.0 Introduction

We have already discussed how hiplife charts new pathways with its own taxonomy of ideological discourses legitimated through hip hop symbols. In this chapter, we shift to hiplife symbols mediated through hiplife interconnectedness, described in this analysis as the basis of hiplife cultural visibility in and out of Ghana and the source of hiplife cosmopolitanism and business. In this chapter, I argue that hiplife cultural visibility, the presence of hiplife – physical or virtual - in global and local cultures, is converted to hiplife business, exchanges for financial gains based on hiplife creativity. This gives us two parts to this analysis, hiplife cultural visibility and hiplife business, including other affiliated business practices. For the purpose of this discussion, I draw on the theory of detachability of the text and propose the concept of the "looking glass" to serve as the broad framework for this analysis.

7.1 Theoretical Considerations

Regarding the theoretical framework for the concept of detachability of the text, I draw on the definition Greg Urban offers for the concept of entextualization (Urban, 1996: 21). Detachability of the text is therefore an instance of a discourse that can be detached from its immediate context so that it can be re-activated and re-embedded in a new context with a dialogical force that allows the text to construct new meanings in different contexts. By implication therefore, all the physical boundaries on the immediate context, which for the purpose of this work we call the pragmatic context, are lifted, and the time and space of that particular context collapse into the virtual, rendering the detached text virtual as well. The detached or virtual text is subject to a whole range

of manipulations. To be able to investigate the details of such manipulations of the detached text within the context of hiplife cultural visibility, I propose the "looking glass" concept.

THE LOOKING GLASS CONCEPT

The term "looking glass" is borrowed from Sherry Turkle whose notion of interconnectedness based on contact with the screen stems from the fact that, "when we step through the looking glass, other people are there as well" (Turkle, 1997: 9). She uses the term "looking glass" in reference to how people negotiate the virtual and the "real" as they present themselves on the computer screen (Turkle, 1999: 643). According to her, this negotiation is occasioned by a sense of interconnectedness based on imagination and virtuality. It is this same concept of interconnectedness as a result of imagination and virtuality, which, within the context of hiplife culture, is brought about by detachability of text, that which drives the "looking glass" concept in hiplife. This is because it enables us to think of hiplife identities in terms of multiplicity and flexibility. Even though her use of "looking glass" is more of a visual experience, this analysis adopts the term "looking glass" because the metaphor of multiple and flexible identities as seen in Turkle's screen experience runs through not only what we see on the screen about hiplife but also what we hear on the radio, read from the newspapers, magazines, books, billboards, flyers and T-shirts about it. The hiplife "looking glass" concept, as used in this analysis, therefore, goes beyond interconnectedness mediated through the screen as indicated by Turkle. It moves a step further to posit that imagination and virtuality used in constructing multiple and flexible hiplife identities are not exclusive to the computer screen experience but that traditional detachability also uses imagination and virtuality to construct new hiplife identities. It covers the notion of both virtual performance and a live one. This analysis also postulates that while the role played by the horizontal transmission of hiplife culture, that is, the circulation of hiplife in and outside Ghana, the

role played by the vertical transmission, that is, the manner in which the Ghanaian oral tradition helps to construct newness and multiple identities in hiplife should equally be paid attention to.

The "looking glass" concept in hiplife within the context of this work is therefore the interface between the medium which carries the virtual or the detached text and the pragmatic person whose focus is on the medium. The medium, any object on "which symbols can be attached" (Altheide, 1985: 27), can be of physical representation, when the medium carrying the detached text is pragmatic person or object. The medium can also be of virtual representation, when the medium is a technology that mediates virtualization. In this chapter, we look at detachability of hiplife text with respect to how traditional culture, within the context of traditional detachability, and modern cultural expressions, within the context of modern detachability, combine to construct the hiplife cultural visibility. We go further to investigate the influence of shifting cultural realities in the hiplife cultural visibility and in hiplife business.

7.2 Traditional detachability of text: the physical representation medium

In this section, I argue that in hiplife live performance, the performer himself is a physical representation medium of a traditional detached text, a multiple and flexible identity, and the occasion is an interface between the pragmatic performer, carrying a traditional detached text, and pragmatic fans. For the role the physical presentation medium plays in traditional detachability, I investigate the traditional detached text in hiplife as generated by disturbing the deictic field, and as used in music. I also examine how the mental script or the traditional detached text uses the hiplife performance as a medium of expression and that through memorization in performance (Lord, 1960: 13-29; Diop, 1995: 229-251; Havelock, 1982, 61-86; Tonkin, 1992 ; Agyekum, 2011: 21) the traditional detached text acts as a huge artistic resource for hiplife performance.

7.2 .1 Disturbing the deictic field in hiplife

Hiplife takes advantage of disturbing the deictic field to avoid attacks from the dominant. The traditional process of detachability of the text is similar to that of deterritorialization (Virilio and Lotringer, 1983: 142; Ohmae, 1990, 1995; O'Brien, 1992; Appadurai, 1996; Elden, 2005: 8) because it destroys or suspends the pragmatic space and time of the immediate context and converts the detached text to virtuality. This is the traditional means of constructing virtuality without the aid of technology and it comes about when pragmatic structures like the deictic field, pointers to reality like pronouns, time or space are shifted or subverted. This invalidates the pragmatic structures of the pointers and changes them to virtual ones. In deictic fields and contextualization frames where the pragmatic roles or representation of pronouns are shifted for the purpose of destroying the pragmatic or the physical, the presupposed or the reference of the pronouns also become virtual. Let us use this example. The personal pronoun first person "I" indicates a speaker in a physical speaking event and the second person is the listener in the same speaking event. They are real and palpable and the validity of who they are depends on the role they play in the speaking event. Any attempt to subvert their roles like shifting them affects their validity and this equally subverts their pragmatic nature within the deictic field.

They become virtual and certain traditional practices owe their insulation against persecution to this process of subverting the roles of pronouns. The example of using this process as an insulation is the Wolof insult poetry, Xaxaar (Irvine, 1996: 131-159) in which the production team of the insult poetry starts with the sponsor who employs a composer; then the composer creates the song for a singer and co-singers, thus making it difficult to accuse a single offender. This also applies to how hiplife artistes insulate themselves against persecution for purpose of freedom of expression. There is an interface of pragmatic audience and pragmatic performer or even virtual performer all right,

but the pragmatic performer is not the only medium being used by the detached text because he does not possess a unitary persona. He now possesses a multiple and flexible persona. As in the case of the Xaxaar practice, the composer is a medium, the executive producer is another medium, the technical producer takes over the medium of expression and finally the performer expresses the detached text to the audience. If there is any problem with the detached text, the question is: who is to be directly responsible? Kow Kesse in "Ecomini" lampoons President Evans Atta Mills for mispronouncing the word "economics". A Plus seriously reduces the former President J. J. Rawlings to a laughing stock, calling him names like Bongo man, which in that context means a street fighter. Nobody has ever raised a finger against them.

7.2.2 Virtual time in hiplife music

The concept of detachability as part of the process of entextualisation can also create virtuality in music. The universal time like the one produced by the clock on the wall is changed by the time produced in the musical rhythm. The musical time therefore superimposes on the universal time by suspending it. The moment we follow the music, we shift from the universal time to the virtual time of the music. We are separated from the universal time by virtue of our engagement with the virtual time and our consciousness follows the virtual time of the music, which is not natural or universal. We are thus thrown into a virtual time at that material moment we are following the rhythm of the music. This may be the reason why when a particular music is played, you are sent back into time because the virtual time sends you back into time and brings back memory of a period or an event in the past with which the music was strongly associated. Music therefore becomes a memory aid (Lord, 1960; Havelock, 1963; Tonkin, 1992). At the moment, hiplife is drawing the virtual map of our time and in future, will serve as the memory aid, bringing us back to the virtual time of this

physical present period. Music as memory aid enhances the hiplife cultural visibility as it passes through time.

7.2 .3 Memorization and hiplife performance

After disturbing the deictic field of the pragmatic text to have a virtual text, this intangible mercurial insubstantiality, as indicated earlier, is stored in the mind. It becomes the mental script that informs performance. According to Urban (2001:3), this abstract is the essence of culture, the "ethereal" or the "ghost-like" entity which moves from one concrete embodiment to the other in an immaterial form. Again, as indicated earlier, the detached text, using the mind as an archival facility is applied in memorization in performance (Lord, 1960; Havelock, 1982; Tonkin, 1992; Diop, 1995: 230). The mental script used in hiplife memorization, *nwegutirim*, is a template that is used for different events in performance (Lord, 1960; Diop, 1995). The youth are therefore interconnected with their past through the process of traditional detachability through memorization, and they are thus better placed to present the traditional side of the hiplife culture. This reinforces the validity of a Ghanaian maxim that "Tradition die hard". Hiplife artistes like Obour from Accra, Stone and Joe Frazer from Kumasi, Black Moon and Shanti from Tamale all support Sydney that "hiplife is from the palace". Names of hiplife artistes like the Akyeame (the linguists), Kontihene (rear guard military commander), Nananom (ancestors) and Obrafour (the executioner) are fluent testimonies of hiplife's close association with the tradition. Practices of the African traditional culture are thus recontextualised in modern cultural expression like hiplife and this research therefore totally supports Osumare's (2012: 34) observation that an "ancient improvisatory African aesthetic has now been disseminated through technological sampling in the twenty first century". Again, memorization allows the presence of hiplife in multiple settings and enhances its cultural visibility across time. Let us now look at how detachability operates in modern cultural expression in hiplife.

7.3 Modern detachability of text: the physical representation medium

Indeed, it is not only the traditional method of detachability that uses the physical representation media. The modern detachability of text that involves a physical representation medium is a contemporary method of detachability, mainly technologically mediated, in which the detached text can be duplicated into many copies and distributed all over the country. The print media, a modern method of detachability used in newspapers, hiplife billboards, hiplife flyers and hiplife T-shirts also use the physical representation media.

7.3.1 Hiplife news in Ghanaian newspapers

We may also add that writing, which involves an observer taking what he sees from the context of pragmatic or physical event and putting it into another context, a medium of artefactual signs on a paper, is another form of entextualization. The printed words are therefore detached texts because they are not the pragmatic events. Thus when I read a newspaper, I read about events within the context of participation frame of the reported speech (Irvine, 1996), and roles of pronouns shift just like in other instances of entextualization in the tradition. Judith Irvine's explication, "the embedded *I* refers back to the subject of the main clause, *he"* (Irvine, 1996) to the reported speech, "He said, 'I am going'" is very illuminating. It indicates that since it is not the speaker who spoke during the pragmatic time but it is the reporter who is impersonating the pragmatic speaker, the deictic field has been subverted and virtualization is taking place. This process of virtualization allows various prints of the same hiplife message to be shared all over the country at the same time. For example, news on Sarkodie's award at the BET awards in the US was in only one edition of the *Graphic Showbiz* and readers all over the country read it not from one copy of the *Graphic Showbiz* but from different copies of the same edition.

7.3.2 Hiplife billboards

There is an interface between a pragmatic giant billboard and hiplife fans. During Christmas, 2011, Sarkodie's face was on big billboards in Accra and Kumasi. It was the same iconic representation but printed in different copies distributed in Accra and Kumasi. The writing or the picture was detached from its original context and through electronic devices, the detached text was enlarged and duplicated. When pragmatic fans came into contact with a copy, there was a pragmatic fans/medium interface, the "looking glass" concept, and they admired this physical representation medium which influenced them to attend Sarkodie's shows during the festivities.

7.3.3 Hiplife flyers

Hiplife flyers are also the media of physical representation of the detached text. The same process for the hiplife billboard goes for the hiplife flyers. The detached text is duplicated and many copies are distributed just like the way the newspapers are distributed. The interface is that of the pragmatic fans and pragmatic paper that helps to advertise hiplife shows.

7.3 .4 Hiplife T-shirts

The T-shirt bears the detached image or the name of hiplife artistes and has the function of establishing the "looking glass" contact between the artiste and the fans. Thus Papa Zoro, Takoradi, explained:

I will print all my T-shirts, Papa Zoro. Then everybody will be looking, I say, have you seen him? O Paddy has just passed here. So if I hear that then I know I am doing my work.

Papa Zoro's explanation informs the practice of artistes who print replica T-shirt of their images and names. It is the same concept that informs the habit of fans who buy replica T-shirts of artistes

and this practice, apart from promoting the hiplife artistes, culture and industry, has the domino effect of growing the Ghanaian textile industry.

7.4 Virtual representation medium

Apart from the physical representation medium described above, we also have the virtual representation medium. This medium is basically an electronic medium. In this "looking glass" concept, we have the pragmatic person/virtuality interface. This interface constructs deterritorialization (Virilio and Lotringer, 1983: 142) because the fixity of the space and time of the original text collapses (Castree, 2003: 427). We now have a borderless world (Ohmae, 1990, 1995; O'Brien, 1992). This is the pragmatic person/the internet interface, pragmatic person/mobile phone interface, pragmatic person/ipad interface, pragmatic person/radio interface and pragmatic person/television interface.

7.5 Hiplife business

This is the second part of our analysis. The detachable text therefore makes the hiplife text visible in multiple and flexible settings. This flexibility allows it to be manipulated to suit the intention of the one presenting the symbols. These manipulations as a result of shifting cultural realities are cast in "anticipatory and responsive marketing strategies" (Knight, 2000: 19, see also Dess et al, 1997; Khandwalla, 1977; Miller and Friesen, 1984; Morris and Paul, 1987) to satisfy buyer demands (Knight, 2000: 19).

7.5.1 Technology virtualization and hiplife lip-synching

The detached text, commonly known in recording parlance as the data, allows lip-synching. Technology virtualization has again brought about a shift from live performance to the lip-synching

(lip synchronization) or miming performance[67] in hiplife. In the 1970s and 1980s, a truck load of instruments was a common sight. It would take about an hour to unpack the musical instruments and another hour or two to fix the gadgets and check the sound levels. Indeed, the size of the instruments was part of the charm of the performance and advertising the sophistication of the instruments was a sure way of catching the attention of the patrons (Collins and Richards, 1982). Today, even though we still have concert party bands that go by this cumbrous method, with hiplife, this is a practice of the past. I arrived at the Kumasi Jackson Park, 2009, at nine o'clock in the evening. This park is a big open space beside the Prempeh Assembly Hall. The event was sponsored by Vodafone, one of the telecommunication companies in Ghana, and the atmosphere was really charged: Obrafour was on stage. All I could see was DJ Andy Dosty with his computer, amplifier with its accessories and two groups of giant speakers on both sides of the platform. There was no other musical instrument. Obrafour, even though a dimunitive figure, looked "huge" with the microphone in the hand, considering the way he moved the fans. All he was doing was lip-synching to the original track coming from the giant speakers (Stephens, 2001). Simple Obrafour's performance in comparison to highlife performance might seem, but a buyable commodity of real gratification value to the hiplife in-group members there, thanks to the manner in which the hiplife detached text on data was culturally made visible through the mediation of modern technology.

7.5.2 Hiplife commodification

Hiplife commodification relies heavily on the concept of cultural shareability which presents the modernity ideology as an interpretive cue. The detached cultural text, made visible through the medium of virtual technology, contains symbols of modernization. For those who want to be part of

---

[67] There is a pre-recorded version of what the performer is doing and the performer only opens the lips or acts to synchronize with the pre-recorded version , whether audio or video. This is a make-believe performance in which the audience is made to believe that what it hears or sees is originally being performed by the performer, while in reality, what the audience sees or hears is from the pre-recorded version.

this modernity, such cultural texts constitute a gratification. The "looking glass" concept makes available foreign detached texts in Ghana and these texts come with a lot of influences as testified by Emmanuel, 16, who commented on the influence fashion on the screen has on them, saying, "when we see them with that dressing, we could buy the same clothes and we will be nice. We look attractive". These texts are recontextualised in the Ghanaian cultural environment, invested with a higher sense of glamour in modernity within the context of hiplife to satisfy consumer demands.

7.5.3 Commodification of language in hiplife

The ideologies of modernity are extended to the use of language in hiplife and are recast in economic terms (Heller, 2010: 103). Heller (2010: 103) posits that language is an identity marker and this research also sees language as a multiple identity marker. I met Kakape, whose pseudonym was the Akan word for the red ant, but who spoke with a simulated American accent. When I asked whether his accent was hip hop or Ghanaian, his answer was that, "I have been listening to foreign music, watching movies and documentaries because I wanted to sound hip hop. That is why I picked those accents". Obviously, the "looking glass" concept has influenced him by exposing him to the American slang but because he cannot speak exactly as an American, he has developed his own dialect, the Ghanaian version of the American slang. D-Black, Asem, Trigmatic, V. I. P. and countless number of hiplife artistes use the accent Kakape was speaking to enhance their visibility profile because hiplife takes advantage of this potential of language and uses it as a medium of modernity ideology for the construction of hiplife cosmopolitanism, a term which is associated with the worldly, the urbane and the sophisticated (Keyman and Koyuncu, 2005: 284). Thus Kakape and D-Black's accent confers a kind of "been-to"[68] status on them, an identity that constructs hiplife cultural visibility in Ghana. It is also an identity that constructs Ghanaian cosmopolitanism, a development that facilitates the commodification of hiplife because fans yearning for the "been-to"

---

[68] This is a term used to indicate Ghanaians who have been to the West and come back home.

identity simply buy the music of artistes who represent such a linguistic disposition. Dance hall raga that uses the Jamaican Patois, the equivalent of the US slang in the hip hop culture in Ghanaian musical circles, is a huge business for hiplife artistes like Yoggi Doggy, OD4, Samini, Shattarako and Sony Bali.

7.5.4 Hiplife consumer preference

The interpretation of the text of popular art is multi-layered and fluid but no matter how labile it is, there is always a common ground that indicates a discernible change in the society. To study this change, investigating how hiplife is interpreted assumes an indispensable role.

The shift in channel from the radio to the internet also comes with an accompanying shift in interpretation (Fairclough, 1995) from a moral reading of the lyrics of the traditional music text, which is didactic in nature, teaching against social evils and calling for the maintenance of the dominant culture to a protest reading of hiplife lyrics that encourages the youth to stand up for their rights. The introduction of music video, which combines audio and visual, has helped to effect this shift, but we refer more to the internet due to its current leading role in the dissemination of audio-visuals in music. The internet as a channel of communication reconfigures meaning in music from a semantico-moral reading, "the moral or 'lesson' encapsulated and enacted in the narrative" (Barber, Collins and Ricard, 1997) to an absolutist or an ambulatory reading where every element of the music, shapes, (skin) colours, sizes and movements in the setting and of the characters in the video are as important as the verbal text of the lyrics in the song (Metz, 1994). This shift irritated the participants who represented the old generation, especially Uncle Abeeku, 54, who asserted, "it is a bad genre of music" because as Kwodwo Atta, 54, explains:

> There is no lesson in what they say. In the olden days of Kakaiku, we had a lot lesson from that. The tortoise said that he put something there for the bird to take to the funeral and by the time the bird went to the funeral, the tortoise was there.

Indeed, what the old school said ignored the fact that new meanings for these familiar symbols are now used more for their cosmopolitan credentials rather than their moralistic ones. Cosmopolitanism in this context constitutes the hiplife shareability and visibility in youth culture. To a large extent, it amounts to consumer expectation, the response to the "changing meaning of modernity" (Keyman and Koyuncu, 2005: 109) with regards to the contemporary definition of what is urbane and sophisticated (Keyman and Koyuncu, 2005: 284). There is certainly a strong link between the consumer pattern of the Ghanaian youth and his social circumstances that makes foreign culture a local imperative.

7.5.5 How hiplife business started

Clearly, the hiplife cultural visibility in the form of images we see or the sounds we hear from the hiplife "looking glass" concept, as seen earlier, are now manipulated for business concerns. I met Obour at the Chrispat Hotel and seated comfortably in a sofa, he turned to me and said something that keeps on ringing in my mind:

> With the evolvement [sic] of the world when your generation is moving out of office and a new generation is coming into office, always that new generation will also have their own kind of music they are used to so immediately that generation leave their medium through which they can broadcast their music, it gives room to another generation to broadcast the kind of music they like.

Popular music is about a generation of people and the agents that promote it belong to that particular generation. It is this generation that promotes the visibility of any genre they are associated with. Quite understandably, music business in Ghana has shifted visibility, projecting the marketability of music, from highlife of the old generation to hiplife of the young generation. Certain factors however have helped to account for this shift. The first is the emergence of an audience of a particular generation who shared the same ideology of modernity in hiplife. The second is the success story of the rural electrification programme put in place by the NDC

government in the early 1990s. The third is the proliferation of portable radio sets, cell phones and second hand TV sets in the country that went with the electrification programme. All these forms of media easily found their way to the villages and disseminated both foreign and local cultural detached texts thus facilitating the looking glass concept.

Indeed, to a very large extent, the media itself became part of the hiplife message because people started enjoying the use of these gadgets. Presenters, as Obour would opine, found it easier reaching the general population and even much easier appealing to the hiplife community even in the remotest part of the country. Here again, it is the same concept of visibility but hiplife cultural visibility bore different historical details from that of the US hip hop. In other words, the visibility text is detached from the US environment and recontextualised in the hiplife environment and while Black radio stations in the US considered that rap music "scares off high-quality advertising" and therefore depended largely on music video for visibility (Rose, 1994), hiplife in its incipient stage relied heavily on the radio. Obour opines that "Bola Ray, Abeiku Santana, Fiifi Prat…Kwame Adinkra… Kwesi Aboagye, a lot of presenters who held the backbone of hiplife music" made hiplife visible and accessible not only to urban but rural dwellers as well. Indeed, Richard Agyeman Berko, the manager for Tinny, traces the history of hiplife visibility, lamenting that the state-owned print media looked at hiplife dismissively and that hiplife news was only given prominence for the wrong reason:

> You find on the front page Kow Kesse has chopped somebody's money, a sensntional story, or Obrafour has impregnated somebody to give birth to twins, which is not true, something. Tiny has not made front page.

He however revealed that hiplife owed its survival to the private owned print and electronic media whose target audience were the hiplife fans. In fact, this fact had earlier on been observed by K. K. Kabobo. Richard Agyemang Berko observed, "So yes, they dwell on music fans and they do their sensationalism and it works" and concluded that the electronic media had stood by them

everywhere, step after step, creating the audience for them, spicing up their works, introducing their works to their fans, providing information about them to the fans and sometimes getting involved in the controversies and other strategies that the musicians used to call for attention. The radio and the print media started the hiplife cultural visibility. Once hiplife became popular with the youth, entrepreneurs circulated hiplife performance – a combination of traditional and modern detachable texts, for business concerns. Businessmen like Mark Okrekue Mante and Lisaf invested a lot of money in young talents and the results were great hiplife artistes like Lord Kenya, the Akyeame, Akatakyie and Sydney, artistes who pioneered the art in the middle to late 1990s. The country saw the emergence of very talented technical producers like Zapp Marlet and Panji Anoff. Zapp Marlet, comfortably seated in a sofa in his Dansoman residence in a very smooth baritone voice reminisced the good times of the incipient stage of hiplife, "It was great fun. We had to use a lot of creativity and business was good". I found Reggie Rockstone at the Zanzibar Night Club. Seated on a short seat with a glass of wine in the right hand, he smiled triumphantly, "But I knew that the youth got a certain thirst and I could supply it." Today, we have countless technical and executive producers, distributors, managers, dancers, performers, DJs and even body guards making a living out of hiplife by supplying the "thirst" of the youth Reggie Rockstone alluded to using the "looking glass" concept. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the "looking glass" concept of supplying this "thirst" is the internet.

7.6 Hiplife and the internet

It is true the other forms of media, print and electronic were doing hiplife business in the form of advertisement and communicating hiplife information to the public. The internet however has far overtaken the other forms of media in this respect especially due to its interactive platform. That is why it constitutes the main focus of our analysis in hiplife business.

7.6.1 Interactions between hiplife artistes and audiences on the internet

The internet offers the best interactive platform between the artiste and his audience. The "looking glass" concept makes it possible for a meeting between either pragmatic fans and a virtual artiste or a pragmatic artiste and virtual fans. Okyeame Kwame reveals that "Everyday I am on the net speaking to my 30,000 fans that I have on facebook" and that the fans want to "have free reality show with you, the artiste, and know your human side" and this is the story of every hiplife artiste who has established a virtual fan base on the internet since Hi 5 and My Space. Today, facebook, has proven to be the most powerful social site. MTN alone had 10 million subscribers in 2011 and almost all of them had internet on their phones. This is not to talk about subscribers of Tigo, Airtel, Glo, Vodafone and Expresso. Some Ghanaians also have the internet on their personal computers and the aggregate of all that can gives a fair idea of the number of Ghanaians who belong to the virtual community. The Ghanaians meet people from other countries by stepping "through the looking glass" (Turkle, 1997: 9), culturally influencing each other. Nkrumah, 21, an internet café patron in Atonsu, Kumasi, revealed that he visited the internet to look for lifestyles of US artistes. This was corroborated by Dominic Owusu Dapaa, 32, the café administrator of Global Communications Café in Atonsu S-Line, adding that most of the young men and women came there mainly for what Nkrumah was referring to. These transnational cultural exchanges (Ntarangwi, 2009) are a global prevalence as indicated by events leading to the North African and other Islamic nations' political uprising. According to Okyeame Kwame, the artiste segments his audience by looking for people whose musical taste is in consonance with his musical style by becoming a member of a social network. He intimated he could have direct interactive relationship with his fans thus giving his fans their fair share of the thrills and excitement of the internet. He added that he had 25,000 on his fan page where he always managed to give his fans an experience that those who are not there would miss. Then he had 50,000 on One Mic Entertainment blog and all these fans, Ani,

the marketing manager of Okyeame Kwame believed, saw the internet as fashionable, exciting and a must-have experience all youth are crazy about. She saw it as part of the hiplife culture because the internet was associated with the culture of the Ghanaian youth. Her observation provides further credence to a position in media studies that "each medium is distinguished by its own temporal and spatial logic required for presenting events in a particular manner (Altheide, 1985: 31).

7.6.2 The internet and hiplife business

The internet thus becomes a huge gateway for hiplife business. The pragmatic fan/virtual artiste interface helps eliminating the third party (the radio dj or the distributor) in hiplife business; the artiste can now sell his CDs directly to his fans. Okyeame Kwame and Ani revealed that they sell their CDs on African MP.3.com, Nwom.com, Itunes, MTN downloads and colour back ring tones, and beaming with smiles, they indicated that they could do better trade on the internet than using a distributor. Perhaps the association between the internet and hiplife business makes very interesting reading since the artiste can now use the number of fans on the internet to bargain his brand icon status with big companies like MTN and Coca Cola.

7.6.3 Hiplife artistic collaborations on the internet

This interface in the looking glass concept is between artistes; a pragmatic artiste and a virtual one. The internet also now plays a pivotal role in the professional work of the artiste for there are a lot of professional work that can be done without having to meet the other artiste on face-to-face basis. Okyeame Kwame gleefully claimed that:

When you want to do features, you must not travel to Nigeria and Kenya anymore. You just meet them there (internet) and send them your stuff and they send you their stuff. And if they are interested, you send them instrumentals. Then they go to the studio and do it, resend it, you go to your studio and mix it.

Indeed the role of the internet within the context of the "looking glass" concept informs the hiplife culture with the ideology of glamour that uses the agency of the body – fashion. Admittedly, there are other aspects of the "looking glass" concept like the television influencing fashion but the internet – you tube, facebook, mobile phone, ipad and whatz up – offers an interactive platform and has a broader platform for hiplife circulation.

7.7 The body as agency of hiplife expression

The "looking glass" concept, that is, the interface of the pragmatic Ghanaian youth and the media carrying foreign detached texts, influences greatly the cultural content of Ghana. Obour puts it this way:

> People consume the culture but they do not consume the same way they (re)produce
> that culture. I think when they consumed [sic] it, they added [sic] something else to it
> so it came [sic] about maybe as a mixture of consumerism and your own culture.

This mixture of culture that produces the hiplife multiple identity is a product of consumerism as Obour opines and his observation sets the stage for our discussion in hiplife expression or fashion. This part of the research investigates hiplife and fashion, paying attention to the bodily presence of artistes and hiplife fashion symbols.

7.7.1 Bodily presence of artistes

The utilitarian function of the body and the "looking glass" concept as agency for expressing popular culture had already caught the eye of earlier researchers in Ghana. Their position is that "The iconic or charismatic bodily presence of the actors; their stylized or effervescent physical movement; the dance; the music" are all means of expressive culture through the use of the body (Barber, Collins and Ricard, 1997). They are supported by Thokozani Mhlambi (2004) who says the same practice is in kwaito. While in the Akan community masculine beauty is expressed through

muscular bodily presence, that of the female follows "'the Akuaba' (fertility and play dolls)"[69] (Antobam, 1963). The underlying ideology of beauty in the two sexes is grounded in the traditional concept of fitness in which the muscular body does not only signify strength but also fitness of nature, the ability to procreate and the concept of fertility of the woman also follows the same traditional logic. This traditional ideology of beauty had been kept as a mental script since time immemorial and recontextualised in hiplife fashion. Hiplife re-invents old cultural concept about feminine beauty of "substantial thighs and buttocks" (Antobam, 1963) in favour of the female gender and we add more flavour to the traditional-based cosmopolitanism by calling it the guitar or the G-shape. A lot of hiplife lyrics celebrate this traditional concept of feminine beauty and a typical example is found in a line in Kwadae's "Mɛte wo tɛ" (I will quickly lap you up) which reads "Woyi akyea a, pu wo to, na yenhu sɛ ɛrewosowoso" (when you do the cat walk, push your buttocks up for us to see that it is shaking). 4X4's "World Trade Center" is manifestly a celebration of the "big body girl", advertising girls with big butts in the video.

On the other hand, there is another class of hiplife audience that are more influenced by Western detached cultural texts of the female body. This class, mainly senior high school (SHS) and university girls, rejects the "Akuaba" beauty symbol and prefers Western definitions because the looking glass concept is inundated with "anorexic-looking…skinny women" (Rose, 1994) and this has ever had some enchanting effect on Ghanaian women. One of the two slender women on set for Bradez's video on "Simple" answered in a very self-congratulatory tone when asked whether people spoke against the craze for skinny girls that:

> I know a friend of mine who talks a lot about slim girls just because if she had had the chance
> to be slim, she would do the same so she is jealous.

---

[69] There is a spiritual reason for using fertility as a symbol of beauty but we will talk about that in Chapter 8.

A considerable percentage of young women, especially the high school and university students share the feeling of the lady cited above and indeed they even skip meals to maintain their skinny sizes. Simon Stephens also speaks of similar experience in South Africa" (Stephens, 2001). It is not only the women who are crazy over skinny sizes; the men also are. The second slim female on set for Bradez's video alludes to this by saying "we are using our beauty in a reasonable earning way"[70] [sic] and so the symbol of being slim serves as the connectivity between the performer and the men whose concept of beauty is being defined by the performer. These men thus become consumers of a cultural product that expresses beauty through the slim ideology in hiplife.

Furthermore, there is a teeming number of women who are slim, not only by birth but by exercising the body, dieting and by using drugs just to meet the expectation of the modern Ghanaian society. This society views such performance as a celebration of this narcissistic corporeal practice. There is another group of females who are not slim, but who are gripped by the "wannabe" spirit of being slim. The performer therefore reflects their ideals and becomes their model. The performer, the females and the males in the audience, all surrender their individual selves and get into the social self of people with the same ideal, and the members of this group have a perceived importance of their social category. The interesting aspect of this is that "the way one categorizes oneself is what determines one's social behaviour" (Turner, 1982) and this is also mainly mediated through technology virtualization. The cosmopolitan experience, in this sense, as earlier on hinted by Obour, is, however, a "sophisticated appreciation for international mixing and appropriation of cultural styles and symbols from multiple geographically dispersed sites" (Allman, 2004). Indeed, this is where hiplife intersects with other disciplines like nutrition and exercise because young women of "middle class" associated with hiplife are very particular with dieting and exercises to maintain a

---

[70]See interview with two female dancers on location for "Simple" by Bradez, Accra, 26/06/09. She is referring to the economic benefits of being slim in the context of a cosmopolitan environment.

more socially accepted size and shape and are not prone to obesity. This observation is backed by research which has shown that the albatross of higher prevalence of obesity is among women of lower class or rural areas in Ghana (Britwum et al, 2006) who, from the data of this work, are not associated with hiplife. Perhaps medical researchers looking for solution to obesity in Ghana should spare hiplife some thought.

7.7.2 Hiplife fashion symbols

Symbols associated with fashion in hiplife are heavily borrowed from the "looking glass" concept, that is, foreign detached text carried by virtual representation media. For Entwistle, fashion is an extension of the body and a function of economics (Entwistle, 2000) but other critics also believe fashion is an expression of attitude and Perkins rightly posits that "The rap attitude thrives on fashion" (Perkins, 1996; Kitwana, 2002). He makes reference to "designer sweatsuits and sneakers, dookie gold, and leather jackets…tucked-in jeans and camouflage ski jackets, and hunting vests, female wear bandannas, colors, plaid flannel shirts, army field jackets, and boots" (Perkins, 1996). Hip hop is also said to advertise various hair cut patterns: stripes, close shaven sides, dreadlocks and many others. There is a complete transfer of these sartorial details to Ghana, thanks to the "looking glass" concept, and there are even hip hop organizations like Rhymenreason Foundation which produce some of these fabrics and wears locally. Lucky, a fashion designer of Rhymenreason Foundation said they mainly produce hip hop graffiti designed T-shirts and various hip hop paraphernalia like chains. Vorsa and his brother Alex printed hip hop designs and Reggie, 16, brought his jeans trousers to them to print his name, "Reggie", at the upper part of the jeans just like Crazy Legs in America would have it (Rose, 1994). Sarkodie, a fashion brand icon for Akon's Konvict, advertises clothes and head phones bearing his brand name, "Sarks beats". For hiplife artistes, such sartorial details do not only make them fashion models but they provide them with the

kind of identity needed for their profession and this is so crucial that Papa Zoro looked at me, revealing a cautious smile, saying:

> Always they want to see you neat with designer wears and if you can't afford it you have to hide yourself so, I for instance, from here to the house. Studio house, studio house.

We also have the culture of displaying opulence in "bling bling"[71], a concept borrowed from American hip hop and it advertises the latest cars and palatial buildings in videos[72]. Though there are some traditional dresses like the *akɔm* costume of Obour, the Kente wear of Okyeame Kwame or the Northern Traditional wears of Sherifa, the borrowed sartorial details or symbols from the US define current Ghanaian meaning of elegance, with its accompanying confidence and modernity, what hip hop and hiplife refer to as "swagger" and that determines the standards of cosmopolitanism and consumer pattern in Ghana. Business men and women, importers, wholesalers and retailers and fashion houses arrange with hip hop artistes and supporting teams to advertise these brands in the "looking glass" concept. Again, Bombaazi's comments on his sartorial inclinations, "My cap on my locks; my name on my cap" does not only mark him out as fashion conscious artiste but a surrogate voice for businessmen in the fashion industry. Cosmopolitanism at this stage is therefore heavily associated with the glamour of fashion, otherwise known as "swagger", which in turn feeds into the Ghanaian market expectancy. The concept of "swagger" also provides a platform for privileged Ghanaian youth to display personal aspirations through cultural style just as what pertains in Zimbabwe (Neate, 1994; see also Bucholtz, 2002: 543).

There has not been a very comprehensive study of the influence of the sartorial practices of hiplife artistes on audience but the data I gathered indicated they have far-reaching influences on the

---

[71] These are the chains and the rings that glitters, re-enforcing the idea that wealth glitters.
[72] Similarly, in East Africa, we have Cash Presido, the epitome of "bling bling" there, who would hire a helicopter for a show (Ntarangwi, 2009).

audience. The audience "wannabe" (would like to be) like them. As reported by Altman that in a "wannabe" TV show on MTV in which patients show up in a doctor's office and say, "I want to look like Britney Spears" (Altman, 2007) or any other artiste, Ghanaian music fans may not afford the huge bills that go with plastic surgery but they can certainly have the looks of their models by imitating their sartorial taste and all the accompanying bodily praxis. Such imitations are put in the public space through the reality shows, from Big Brother Africa (Dolby, 2006), West African Idol to all local reality shows, except Ghana's Most Beautiful on GTV. The agents of these sartorial practices, especially in hiplife, are icons of fashion[73]. Clearly, hiplife cosmopolitanism is heavily inspired by the fashion the market wants (Knight, 2000: 19). Interestingly, the artiste is not only a fashion icon but a brand icon as well.

7.8 The Performer as an icon

Another business practice that exploits the notion of shareability in the hiplife cultural visibility mediated through the "looking glass" concept is the artiste acting as a brand icon for big Ghanaian companies. In hiplife, the artiste in his multiple identity becomes a brand, a concept that sells the artiste as a person, what he stands for, his aura and his music. As a star, he does not only express the cultural shareability in the form of symbols through his body but through his persona as well. He is of symbolic value to the society: represents the community's values, interprets new and former values – in dialogic and discursive manner - and provides the benchmark for positive and negative evaluation (Alberoni, 1972). This gives us two main categories for the iconography of hiplife culture: the bad boy image and the good boy image.

---

[73]In East Africa, we have the likes of Gidi Gidi Magi Magi who do not believe in cosmopolitanism based on copying from the "looking glass", considering such a practice as a betrayal of the African cause (Ntarangwi, 2009).

7.8.1 The bad boy image

The bad boy image thrives on the other side of the norms of society (Hebdige, 1987: 18). They represent street culture, "an emphasis on physical toughness" and deviant behaviour that shocks the old generation by "challenging existing societal mores and promising liberation and escape from the drudgery of constraints of everyday life" (Fenemore, 2009). This is what Snoop Dogg would call stepping out the box and doing what he likes. Groups like Niggers With Attitude (NWA) in the US use hip hop to celebrate poverty, violence, "anti-intellectualism, ignorance, irresponsible parenthood, and criminal lifestyles" (Kitwani, 2002). Chris Brown's assault on former girlfriend, Rihana, Kanye West's unwarranted arrogance and the murder charges against Snoop Dogg are all calculated to provide leverage for commercial benefits. This sort of iconography has crossed the "looking glass" divide into Ghana and an artiste like Kow Kesse was reported to have stolen his girlfriend's money and yet remains one of the best crowd pullers in hiplife showbiz. Asem known for very controversial lyrics was reported to have left Lynx Entertainment, amidst very worrying allegations of child defilement. Indeed, the one who acted the Shaka Zulu role in the music video of 4X4's "Shaka Zulu" was standing trial for armed robbery and yet the CD was more successful than expected. Such bad boy role, which turns the social moral logic on its head, excites Emmanuel, 16 years, Barfour, 17 years and Reggie, 16 years. The following interview with Reggie, RG, even though he was reluctant to say exactly what he wanted to say, clearly indicates his reservation for the proverbial Ghanaian sobriety:

> RG. You see, we Africans are, I don't know…
> PA. Laid-back.
> RG. Yes.
> PA. We are laid-back.
> RG. Something like that.
> PA.. If I have to use the word timid.
> RG. Yes.

In her preface to her book, Victoria Howard offers explication for why women love bad boys whom "mothers have been long warning daughters to avoid" that psychologist say such a bad boy "exudes

untamed masculinity, independence and confidence" (Howard, 2007). This feeds straight into hiplife's ideology of toughness, a display of extroverted self-indulgence image of bad boy that seeks to break free from societal imposed norms and becomes a symbol of all youth with such ideology. Again, this is the extent of the influence of the looking glass concept.

7.8.2 The good boy image

On the other hand, the rapper creates the good boy image by having lyrics that are supposed to heal a sick society. In the US, Keith Edward Elam and Lawrence Krisna Parker, whose backronyms, GURU, (God is Universal: he is the Ruler Universal), and KRS-One (Knowledge Reigns Supreme Over Nearly Everyone) are suggestive of their lyrical mission. In Ghana, Okyeame Kwame, Obrafour and Obour play such roles and they are patronized by professionals, civil servants, bankers and even executives. Okyeame Kwame comprehensively explains his role as playing the good boy saying:

> My charm lies in the fact that I don't wear baggy clothes. I am not in dreadlocks. I am not in fanticised glasses and my watch is not 100 cms big...So the way I look, how I speak, the ideas in my song, the tempo of my song and my whole demeanour comes to emphasize the politicians, doctors and the elite. It contributed to the award-winning. Who are the people who read the newspapers? The elite. Who are the people who keep phones who will text? The elite. Who are the people who sit at the panel? The elite. Who are the journalists who are writing? The elite. If you can appeal to them, you have longevity. They will hold you because there are very few of you and they are many and they want to see themselves winning.

Thus Ani, the manager of Okyeame Kwame, differentiates between the two categories:

> And we know, Ghana knows that Batman smokes. But he can be pardoned because he looks like it and he tells us that he looks like it. Kwame on the other hand preaches morals, therefore in one of his songs, he said, "ɔno deɛ ɔmpɛ mmaa" (As for him, he does not go after women). Therefore if we see Kwame in a line that portrays something different, then they [sic] stop following Kwame, "mo ngyae no, asɛm no a ɔka no, nyɛ saa na ɔteɛ" (Leave him; he does not practice what he preaches).

What Okyeame Kwame seeks to do is to avoid ghettocentric ideologies that provoke controversy in the mainstream culture and he is reported by Reuben Afriyie, a presenter for entertainment

programme on Luv FM, to build his (Okyeame Kwame's) popularity on such practices[74]. Certainly, both images are mere role playing (Goffman, 1959), played on- and off-stage to segment the audience for commercial benefits. The artistes become the agents of these symbols borrowed from the "looking glass" concept. They in turn put these symbols back into the "looking glass" concept, what Osumare (2012: 1) calls the arc of mutual inspiration, to generate meanings that construct syncretism and cosmopolitanism. The ingenuity with which the performer plays his role as an icon and how visible he is in the "looking glass" idiom determines the number of fans he creates and the more the fans of the performer, the more likely big companies will select him for their brand icon marketing. At the time of writing, Okyeame Kwame was the brand icon for Coca Cola and MTN. Samini was the brand icon for MTN. Reggie Rockstone and Tinny were the brand icons for Glo and 4x4 for Vodafon all not because they were the best artistes but that they knew how to act the "ideal" self which the fans yearn to be part of and thus the persona of the artiste becomes a commodity as Okyeame Kwame revealed.

7.9 SUMMARY

Deterritorialization, a marker of new crisis in the concept of nation-states ((Ruggie, 1993; Appadurai, 1996, 2001; Sussen, 1996; Rosenau, 1997: Scholte, 2000a: 96, 2000b, 179) creates borderless states (Ohmae, 1990, 1995; O'Brien, 1992) and helps to construct the "looking glass" concept. The "looking glass" concept allows the foreign detached texts and the traditional detached texts to enter into constant dialogue and the result of this dialogicality (Bakhtin, 1981: 276) is an amalgamation of foreign and local cultures, hybrid cultures that frame new Ghanaian mentalities and identities, especially new youth cultural agency (Bucholtz, 2002: 525, 257). The performance of these new identities in hiplife, proliferated in both physical and virtual representation media,

---

[74] This was part of the presentation by Reuben Afriyie in a Luv FM programme, *Entertainment Drive*, in which he deputized for Nana Banyin, 17/08/12

fossilizes in the psyche of the youth. Hiplife cosmopolitanism is thus legitimated through media and business practices. Again, hiplife cosmopolitanism now frames the new Ghanaian youth social order, the knowledge and shareability practices one needs to be regarded a competent member of a community (Garret and Baquedano, 2002: 346). The new Ghanaian youth social order, far from destroying the society, presents new Ghanaian cultural business actors and new economies as what pertains in Turkey (Keyman and Koyuncu, 2005: 109). *We are showing that society is evolving and not breaking*[75].There is also a feminist twist to this Ghanaian evolution. This feminist development in the Ghanaian cultural evolution is the preoccupation of the next chapter which examines the dialogicality between the male and female cultural texts in hiplife.

---

[75] This is one of the themes of the banners on the campus of University of Birmingham, UK, at the time of writing this dissertation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE POSITION OF GHANAIAN WOMEN IN HIPLIFE

8.0 Introduction

This chapter is a continuation of the power politics discussed in chapters 5 and 6. It is also an extension of the Ghanaian cultural evolution discussed in chapter 7. The emphasis here is on gender politics, the locus of which is the position of the woman in hiplife. Women are perceived by male hegemony as being difficult to handle and hence the need to be contained through traditional structures (Emecheta, 1979; Ata Aidoo, 1965, 1993; Darko, 1998; Dolphyne, 2000). While highlife reflects this traditional containment of women, leading to a hesitant participation by women (Sutherland, 1970:15; Collins, 2007: 47), hiplife even though demonstrating women's containment by male hegemony, unlike highlife, boldly presents women's resistance and projects women's participation as constituting the representation of modern Ghanaian women.

8.1 Theorizing the position of Ghanaian women in hiplife

The theories that ground this analysis are discourse analysis and the dialogicality of texts. Stubbs defines discourse analysis as "attempts to study the organization of languages above the sentence or above the clause, and therefore to study larger linguistic units such as conversational exchanges or written texts…language in use in social contexts, and particular with interaction or dialogue between speakers" (Stubbs, 1983: 1). "Larger linguistic units" of texts like the lyrics, the verbal component of entire live shows and other symbolic representations of the position of the Ghanaian woman in hiplife are illuminated by discourse analysis because these texts are presented within the context of conversational exchanges between the male and female sexes, each taking his or her turn, like the two chess players guided by the mental script that allows them to take their turns (Searle,

1992). Interpretation of meaning, the interpretation of intentionality, is therefore a two-way affair between the speaker/sender and the listener/destination. Searle mentions this discrepancy between the speaker/sender meaning, the internal epistemology or the speaker's narrative of what he says and the listener/destination meaning, the external epistemology or the narrative of what the listener/destination makes of what the speaker is saying. He further postulates, "When I read, say, a book of philosophy there are all sorts of reasons for believing or disbelieving what the author says but it is not one of my reasons for believing what the author says that I recognize that he intends me to believe it" (Searle, 1969: 47).

This seeming discrepancy in epistemology between the speaker/sender meaning and listener/destination meaning is resolved by the social context. Indeed, what appears to be a discrepancy is "an active participant in social dialogue" (Bakhtin, 1981: 276) in which one participant constructs a text based on one social meaning but the same text is given another social meaning by another participant. By implication therefore, the actual meaning of the text "is understood against the background of other concrete utterances on the same theme, a background made up of contradictory opinions" (Bakhtin, 1981: 281). Meaning therefore becomes indexical. This is where this work builds on the work of Searle. The seeming discrepancy in intentionality between the female rapper and male rapper is not accidental. The male rapper's intentionality in this context is the result of prevailing politics of gender power that manipulates meaning in performance all for the sake of power.

The theory of performance therefore assumes a greater significance for this work for the following reasons. First, Searle's notion of meaning with regards to the listener's action as a result of what he understands by what the speaker says takes discourse into the performance paradigm. Second, the exchanges in discourse analysis are mainly dyadic, a communicational process between two parties,

the adjacent pair. It ignores a third party but well inhered in the hiplife discourse is the third party in the form of the audience – the youth, which mainly form the hiplife in-group members as defined in chapter 6, section 6.1 and the old, which mainly form the out- group members as defined in chapter 6, subsection 6.2.2 - which is not part of the adjacent pair. Performance theory (Bauman, 1977) however covers the audience, even as a third party, by dealing with the male and female rappers as performers on one hand, and the solicitation of the audience to play a visible role in the performance on the other.

8.2 The Akan concept of *Suro basia*, Fear Woman

The Akan concept of "fear woman" takes its roots from the Akan philosophy of sexuality as expressed in the mores and lores regarding sexuality as a complex cultural system expressed through oral practices and rituals. Any analysis of the Akan philosophy of sexuality will have to have recourse to proverb praxis or the folklore. Even though some people do not fully support the notion that proverbs encapsulate total and unified philosophy of a group of people on the grounds that most proverbs are ambiguous and can be differently inflected according to the circumstances and the speaker, this research finds the meaning of proverbs very appropriate. This is because using proverbs in works of this nature is consistent with findings by Gyekye (Gyekye, 1987: 13) and Yankah (1989: 72) who posit that proverb praxis is a major Akan oral resource expressing the Akan world view or cosmology and serving as a critique of the Ghanaian social realities.

There is a body of knowledge in the Akan orature that suggests a tacit fear of the woman. The obvious question is why the woman is feared. There is no direct answer to this question but again, proverbs and idioms in the language suggest answers. In traditional exercises that involve thinking, especially exercises involving intelligence in the palace, the elders say "yɛrekɔ akobisa aberewa"

(Asante Twi), or "Yenkebisa aberewa" (Fante), to wit, we seek the opinion of the proverbial wise old lady. And when they take a decision, they say "Sɛ neɛ aberewa seɛ nie" (Asante Twi), or "Ma aberewa ka nye no" (Fante), to wit, this is what the wise old lady says. There are examples in other Ghanaian languages. The Gas and the Ewes make the same reference to the cultural concept of going to seek the wisdom of the proverbial old lady, the Gas saying, "Wɔyaa na yoomi ni wɔ ba" (We will go and ask the old lady and be right back) and the Ewes saying, "Mieyi ablewa gbɔ miava" (We are going to the old lady and we will be right back). Ghanaian wisdom is therefore generally abstracted in the woman, a tacit recognition of her mental or brain power. Again when somebody has difficulty in doing something and suddenly finds the solution, he says with happiness "Aberewa eyi poma kwan mu" (Asante Twi), to wit, the old lady has finally removed the impediments on our way to the solution to the problem. The metaphorical reference to the woman's wisdom from these examples is clearly a widespread cultural theme in most parts of Ghana: she provides solutions or uses her intelligence to remove the impediments to solutions. Indeed, in the Akan tradition, the female sex is considered "ɔbosom kokroko", the great goddess whom "akɔdaa mmɔ din, ɔpanin mmɔ din" (Asante Twi), to wit, the young and the old cannot allude to it by its real name. The woman thus enjoys a privileged position in Akan folklore which says that "akɔdaa kɔ n'enim a, obu nkotodwe, ɔpanin kɔ n'enim a, obu nkotodwe; onim ɔhene, onim ahenkwa" (Asante Twi), to wit, both the king and the servant kneel before this goddess.   Certainly, the patriarchal world view represents the woman as clever and powerful but surprisingly feels uneasy about its own depiction of her.

8.3 Containment of women in highlife

Patriarchal hegemony however has a huge adaptive capacity (Lay, 2000: 229). It defines the "natural" (Weitzer and Kubrin, 2009: 6; Hall, 1977) that is the ideological confines within which behaviour is acceptable, and labels any value that "contradicts the myth of consensus" or values that offend hegemony as abnormal and a deviation (Hebdige, 1987: 18). Thus the female gender is well contained by patriarchy and when men hurt women, it is tradition, but women hurt men and it is a tragedy (Mosala, 1992: 2). The man is the norm and the woman, within the context of the Akan moral philosophy, is partial, inferior and in need of care (Beasley, 1999: 6).

So pervasive is the traditional hegemonic containment of the woman in Ghana using methods like taboos constructing the menstruating woman as bad luck, unclean and unfit to perform certain social functions that highlife music is not spared. John Collins reports that "until the 1990s female parts and voices were practically always performed by men" (Collins, 2007: 47) because "it would create bad luck for women to move with men" (Collins 1994: 166-170 and 1994: 461/2) and quotes Vida Oparebea, one of the pioneer female highlife artistes as saying that "when females have menstruated and they touch band instruments – as the band may not succeed" (Collins, 2007: 47). Indeed, the traditional hold on the woman was so powerful that an interview he had with Adelaide Buabeng indicated that for her to remain in showbiz, the mother had to give "a bottle of schnapps to the chief to allow her daughter to continue her acting career" (Collins, 2007: 48), perhaps as a bribe to or means of placating him.

8.4 Containment of women in hiplife

The women in hiplife have the misfortune of being contained not only through traditional but also through educational structures because the educational institutions apart from their core mandate of educating the women also serve as incubatory for almost all the female rappers. According to

discussants from Yaa Asantewaa Senior High School, a female institution that has produced two major female rap artistes in the country, Tiffany, Afya, and a host of underground female rappers, education in the school is so much geared towards passing to the university and the authorities are even suspicious of students who give self expressions other than that of academics. One of the teachers confirmed this suspicion by revealing that during entertainment "they will just come to the stage, bring the girls out and ask them to bring the clothes they are wearing". This meant the teachers would ask the girls to undress their unprescribed wears and hand them over to the teachers. Consequently, he added, "they always try to do something which will prevent them from coming out with, what, good programmes". He therefore concludes that for the success of Tiffany, Afya and other artistes, "We have to give credit to the girls themselves…but not the educational structure because there is nothing in the educational structure for women empowerment". Indeed, what goes on in Yaa Asantewaa Senior High School, Kumasi, so far as the self-expressions of the students are concerned, pertains in most of the female or mixed schools in Ghana and Christiana Brenu of Labone Senior High, Accra, expressed similar concerns. She even believed removing restrictions of women self-expression in institutions is the responsibility of the government and any inaction on the government's part "means that we can't do what we want to be [sic]". However, the female students will not wait for the government to make them "what we want to be" but take advantage of other factors to enhance their self-expression.

One of these factors that help them to enhance their self-expression is the influence of the media. Asare Oppong and Erzuah, all of Yaa Asantewaah Senior High, Kumasi; Philip Afum et al, Labone Senior High, Accra; Sandra et al, Takoradi, Mr. Anim Addo et al, Legon Taxi Station and many of the discussants were all in unison of this opinion. This confirms the notion that "communication practices shape cultural life" (Wood, 2006: 96), a notion already popular in communication studies

(Glaser, 1956; Bandura and Walters, 1963; Gerbner et al., 1980; Kubrin and Weitzer, 2010: 129). Such studies consider culture as a unit of systems and when one system is touched, all the other systems are affected and it is on this basis that we say the American hip hop with its American influences in the Ghanaian media has touched the Ghanaian youth culture, thus constructing the youth in a way earlier unknown to them. These young women subsequently started imitating their foreign role models. Aberewa Nana intimated in an interview that she was influenced by the jazz elements in Aaliya and Mariah Carey's music when she was in Aggrey Memorial Senior High School and in Takoradi Polythnic and this greatly influenced her brand of music that brought her to stardom.

Ghanaians adapted such new cultures in local TV programmes like TV 3's singing reality show series, Mentor and the kiddy version Talented Kids; TV3's dancing reality show series, Boogie Down and GTV's women cultural reality show series, Ghana's Most Beautiful; GTV's singing reality show series, Star of the Future and many more from other TV stations. These reality shows were even replicated by bodies like churches. Lisa, a rapper and an R&B singer of Mentor 2 fame was proud to say that the exercise made her gain the kind of confidence she had in competing with men on stage. Afya was the 2nd runner-up of the maiden Stars of the Future, 2006, and her desire to join the women's empowerment crusade in music got triggered by this feat and her winning the Best Ghanaian Female Musician of the Year, 2011, at the City People Entertainment Awards, held in Lagos, Nigeria, came as no surprise to pundits in Ghanaian music.

Another factor is the attitude of the "new generation" woman: she is bold. Erzuah, the entertainment master of Yaa Asantewaa Senior High School described Afya, an old girl and one of the leading hiplife artistes in the country, as being an extrovert and unconventional, showing indications of

thinking out of the box. He added that the likes of Afya would run away to town to attend shows even at the risk of being dismissed and Afya had to escape dismissal by the skin of her teeth in one of such escapades. Tiffany and Mzbel are on record to have been physically assaulted by males who consider their confidence as an affront to the establishment and yet they never give up representing women in their art. This is the spirit of the "new generation" woman, ready to take on the dominant power. Indeed, the historical significance of these "new generation" women cannot go without recounting the circumstances surrounding the entry of Aberewa Nana, the very first female hiplife artiste, into the Ghanaian musical sphere.

In an interview, Aberewa Nana revealed she literally sneaked unto the hiplife platform hiding among male rappers, after having her demo in 1999 and making it available to DJs and Okereku Mante of Slim Music who kept it for eight months obviously afraid of selling a female artiste in male dominated business. She continued that she was discouraged by the male counterparts for introducing inferior style that would not sell and indeed, she never succeeded catching the eye of the main players in the industry till Alhaji Banda of Bandex sported her in the company of Sass Squad, a Takoradi-based male rapping group. She recounted, "Bandex called me the following day after he had listened to my songs. DKB Studios then did my first work"[76]. This encounter gave birth to her first album in 2000 and in that year, she was nominated for three categories by Ghana Music Awards, the Female Artiste of the Year, the Rap Song of the Year and the New Artiste of the Year. She was a single female voice in a male dominated area but was not deterred. She kept throwing all she had into her career and this paid off so in 2001 she won the Hiplife Song of the Year. She again won the Best Female Vocalist in 2004, all from the same award organization, Ghana Music Awards. Nothing was really going to stop her in her tracks to success and she even became a judge for the

---

[76] Aberewa Naa said this in an interview she granted Ghana Music. Com, www.ghana.com, 09/06/2004. Accessed 07/12/11.

West African Idol series. Thus she apotheosized women in music and carried women representation to the apex of Ghanaian music. She was followed by the first female rap group, the Tripple M, Mildred Mark-Hansen, Mercy Quarshie and Monica Tawiah in 2003 but their popularity was short-lived and got drowned by the appearance on the Ghanaian music scene in 2004 of the hiplife diva, Mzbel, whose feminine antics and essentialist feminist lyrics dazed the whole of Ghana. She won the Encouragement Award for her contribution to female empowerment by Shear Power Ventures, organisers of the Portrait of an Excellent Woman, in 2008. Meanwhile, around the same time, other Ghanaian female singers like Becca, Sexy Diamond, Dela and Lib Queen were also specialising in a Ghanaian brand of R&B. These and other factors cohered to provide the platform for women empowerment in music; they developing the ability to exercise collective assertiveness in making their voice heard.

That today women form a small percentage of Ghanaian superstar rappers, not more than ten of them the whole country over, is not a surprise, given the prevailing circumstances. It is therefore obvious that the women, mainly between the age brackets of 20-32, as at 2012, may form a small percentage of the hiplife phenomenon but have located their credibility in numerous awards and are even more poised to make a stronger statement for women's empowerment. While hiplife expresses this empowerment, it demonstrates the forces women have to confront to actualise this expression and the first is the manner in which male hegemony constructs female inferiority.

8.5 Constructing female inferiority in hiplife

Hiplife socializes or constructs the Ghanaian woman to accept her position of inferiority. In this case, hiplife helps to maintain the status quo so far as gender is concerned. Dolphyne asserts that "Every African woman grows up knowing that it is the woman who cooks the meals and generally sees to it that the house is clean and well-kept" (Dolphyne, 2000: 5). Okyeame Kwame, one of the

defunct duo called Akyeame, corroborates this in "Obaa Pa" and articulates the Ghanaian concept of the *obaa pa*, the ideal woman as:

Osi me nnoɔma, na wɔasan ato	She washes my things, and irons them
Mɛfiri ɛdwuma bɛba na woato me pono	I come home from work and table is ready

The woman in man-woman relationships is not a career woman but consigned to household chores and these chores are socially prescribed even if the woman is a professional (Dolphyne, 2000: 5). The *obaa pa* is the emotionally weak and diffident, ready to submit to the wishes and control of the man and this is seen in the way his co-singer Okyeame Kofi presents her:

Obaa a ɔwɔ ahobreaseɛ, whan na ɔmpɛ?	Who does not like a humble woman?
Obaa a ɔwɔ nteaseɛ, whan na ɔmpɛ?	Who does not like a woman who understands things
Obaa a ɔwɔ abotarɛ, whan na ɔmpɛ?	Who does not like a woman who is tolerant
Mebɔ wa, mebu m'ani, ɔte aseɛ.	When I cough or bat the eye, she understands what I mean
Me pilla a mekura mu a menhwe ase	My pillar on whom I rely
Deɛ meka na ɔyɛ	She does exactly what I say
Ɔde ne nsa yɛ ɛdwuma	She applies herself to hard work
Otumi bɔ me din me wura	She calls me my master

Obviously, in man-woman relationships, the woman loses all space for any self expression; all human expression is to please the man. The Foucauldian concept of language as an instrument for power (Foucault, 1990) is relevant here because this is clearly a debilitating slavish condition but this is disguised in the Akan language - nowhere in the Akan language do we have a single word to describe this interaction between the two genders as relating to slavery on the woman's part. Dolphyne reiterates this disequilibrium in gender power that when a woman wants to divorce the husband following his infidelity, the "older women in her family will tell her about several instances in which a woman had patiently tolerated her husband's infidelity" (Dolphyne, 2000: 19)

and cannot help but conclude that this "illustrates how society conditions its members into accepting the norms of the society and that the young girl will hear such stories over and over till she accepts her position of inferiority to be normal (Dolphyne, 2000: 14). Her sentiments are fully shared by other African writers. The Zimbabwean writer Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* presents Tambu's father rebuking her in a manner to spite her education saying, "Can you cook books and feed them to your husband?" (Dangarembga, 1988: 15). The irony, however, is that the woman has been socialized to actualize herself as a real woman by serving the man and Okyeame Kofi rightly articulates this cultural hypocrisy saying "Mesi no ɔhemaa, menyɛ no abaawa" (I will make her a queen, I will not make her a slave) that in consigning herself to the above slavish requirements, she becomes a queen. In this way, the subordination of the woman by man and the resultant feeling of inferiority by the woman become normal and natural (Weitzer and Kubrin, 2009: 6).

The standards by which the feeling of inferiority will be measured are set by the man. In Tamale, Black Moon, one of the hiplife duo called Abada, defines the position of the woman in a man-woman relationship as:

> You the woman should bring yourself low. Respect the man and you must have the [sic]
>
> he is taking care of you.

Thus the woman has been described as vulnerable, weak, needy and incapacitated in a society in which the burden falls on the man to provide for and protect her. This cultural prescription for the woman is also reiterated by Dolphyne, "Moreover, a woman was expected to be provided for by her husband" (Dolphyne, 2000: 49). This is echoed by other feminist writers (Lemish, 2004: 44). For this hegemonic structure to be operative, however, the women have to accept their sense of inferiority or being a weaker vessel to be natural and this is given overt statement by an interview I

made with a focus group of women in Takoradi. Here is an extract of that interview and S is Sandra, 21 and CE is Charlotte Eshun, 25:

S. Yes I am talking like a woman. We have seen our emotional disabilities. We realize that emotionally, women are weak as compared to…if somebody collapses, they will go for the men and not the women so no matter how far we want to be at par with them [sic] but then we are not the same. The ability to stand situations differs. We can never say that we are at par with them. That is why God used one rib to create the woman.
PA. Are you not speaking religion?
S. I am not speaking religion but I am telling you the fact. That is the reality; people are not ready to accept but it is the truth.
PA. (Turns to Charity) Sandra tells me that she likes playing the second fiddle to the man.
CE. It is not like playing the second fiddle to the man but it is about giving honour to whom honour is due.

Perhaps this is the most powerful demonstration of hegemony I encountered in this research. Hiplife, as a social mirror, moves a step further to put this acceptance of being weak into performance to give it a physical manifestation. Mzbel performs the vulnerability of the innocent 16 year old girl, fencing off the libidinal aggression of a male adult:

I be 16 years, I go dey be like this o	I am 16, I will always remain like this o
If you touch my thing o, I go tell Mummy o	If you touch my thing o, I will tell my mother o
I be 16 years, I go dey be like this o	I am 16, I will always remain like this o
If you touch my thing o, I go tell Poppy o	If you touch my thing or, I will tell my father o

She expresses vulnerability vis-à-vis the man, especially in matters of sex, and seeks protection. Vulnerable as the women are, the men prey upon them, taking them to be gullible, ready to swallow anything men tell them. The women are "reduced to this by honeyed mouth youth that prattled only love of make belief" (Newell and Gadzekpo, 2004: 4, quoting Dove, 1931).

Times are however changing and the women are now fighting back, fighting the strictures and structures of hegemony, in the usual dialogical approach, rejecting such stereotypical representations and exposing the lies that men subject them to. Tiffany, representing the modern

Ghanaian woman, in her single, "Fake London Boy" reduces the persona, a male, she is addressing to a mere heap of lying braggart:

He's nothing but a wonnabe, w'agye ne fake walabi	He's nothing but a wonnabe with his fake walabi
Wanya kala bi alie no amma no agye adi	He has succeeded in lying to an innocent girl
Ode Oko nso ɔse ɔde Jayden, Ofiri London,kyerɛ sɛ ɔte Clayton	He is called Oko but pretends he is Jayden, He says he is from London and stays at Clayton
Bra ne ne slanging, are u alright Bruv? Mereka yi ode ka ma yeamma no light off	Just check out his slangs, are you all right, Bruv? Meanwhile his electricity has been disconnected for not settling his bills

Similar work in the US shows how low-income Black neighbourhood adore being seen as "exploiters of women" (Liebow, 1967: 140; Kubrin and Weitzer, 2010: 137).

Women in hiplife, representing the modern Ghanaian woman, have a fitting answer to the Akyeame for constructing them to play subaltern roles to the man. Afya deconstructs the domestic male domination where household chores are the "natural" duty of the woman and brings the woman onto a par with the man:

> When you say
>
> Cook the food, let me wash the bowls
>
> Come here Baby, let me touch your toes
>
> Makes me love you more
>
> When you suggest, wash the clothes, let me clean the house

Man-woman relationship, for the modern woman as seen in hiplife, is premised on equal distribution of chores. This leaves us with the impression that the women have seen that their subordination lies in the roles assigned to them and by adapting androgynous roles, they are

addressing the problems of their inferiority. The modern man does not take this lightly and does everything in his power to perpetuate his domination over her. Again, sex is the locus of this power struggle in hiplife and misogyny is his main weapon of domination, calling the woman names, referring to heterosexual relationship as a game, portraying the woman as gullible, a parrot, a cheap commodity meant to be consumed and treated with disrespect.

8.6 Misogyny in hiplife

Since 2000 when Daddy Lumba's misogynistic highlife "Aben wɔ ha" received the "song of the year" award by Ghana Music Awards, the floodgates for misogynistic lyrics have been opened in Ghana (Arthur, 2002: 11) for purposes of gender politics.

We would define misogyny to cover any belief, practice or concept that helps to fossilize, glorify, justify and perpetrate negative perceptions about the woman (Oware, 2011: 24). In hiplife, playing the role of the double-edged sword, liberating and constraining women, the female sex is singled out for a creative denigration within the context of heterosexuality and this attitude of hiplife, mainly coming from male rappers seriously jeopardizes the image of womanhood in the country. Hiplife reinforces this image of the woman through re-inventing and re-contextualizing traditional meanings as we saw in previous discussions but the manner in which we interpret symbols in misogyny needs to be seen through cultural lenses because it indexicalizes local patriarchal negative stereotypes about women. In examining Ghanaian misogyny, as already mentioned, the Ghanaian broader cultural context serves as an ideological thrust. We may however make references to other cultures, especially that of the US, believed to be the origin of hip hop, to demonstrate how the sameness in symbol can result in differences in interpretation contingent upon their locality.

This work relies on participant observation in shows, data of lyrics and interviews conducted all over the country and it is supposed to address the epistemological lacuna on women's position in hiplife by dwelling on the role audiences play in misogynistic lyrics (Weitzer and Kubrin, 2009). This research covers misogyny of portraying women as cheap commodities, making fun of women's body, re-contextualising symbols of oppression by women rappers, re-contextualising symbols of female power in commercialization and the presentation of the image of the strong woman, all in hiplife.

8.6.1 Portraying women as cheap commodities

The traditional concept about the male-woman ratio is that women outnumber men in the society and this is supported by the provisional 2010 Ghanaian Population and Housing Census released by the Ghana Statistical Service which puts the percentage of the women to be 51.3%. That notwithstanding, portraying women as cheap the way hiplife puts it, needs further interrogation. Nana Boro's "Aha ayɛ dɛ" comes in here for scrutiny:

Anadwo yi me ne boyz boyz yɛresi town	Tonight, the boys and I are visiting town
yerekɔ pɛ mmaa	We are running after women
Yabeduru mmɔsoɔ; na nti mmaa na ɛbu sei,	Look at the glut of women in the club
O wo ara hwɛ	Just look at that

One interesting aspect about men's uncharitable perception about women's being cheap is that which pitches the old male against the young male, fighting over a woman. T-Blaze in "Wosisi yɛ ya" has a narrative of a struggle between the old "sugar daddy" and the young man over a girl:

Wosisi yɛ wo ya, nanso wo pɛ sɛ wo sa	You have a weak waist and yet you want to dance
Akɔkora te sɛ wo, neɛ mepɛ na wopɛ sɛ wo pɛ	An old man like you, what I want is what you want

He threatens the old man, "mebu wo jaw" (I will break your jaw). They are struggling over a commodity each claims ownership of. The reaction of the hiplife out-group, especially the old male, refuting what T-Blaze says, is encapsulated in what Kodwo Atta, 54, said, "They do not communicate any sense".

The female rappers are however very alert this time and will not allow such a perception about them to go without resistance. Eazzy, one of the most prolific female rappers in Ghana, in "Bɔ wo nsamu ma me", which advocates female confidence, represents the Ghanaian modern woman and squarely replies the men:

So many guys be afraid of Eazzy	So many men are afraid of Eazzy
Eno be say Ibe World Cup but Charlie,	It is not that I am the World Cup, but Charlie,
I dey be pass your World Cup	I am more than your World Cup
You wonna be with me, you gotta work hard	And if you want to be with me, you have to work hard.

She makes a very clear statement for women confidence and dispels the notion of the woman being cheap and this appeals to women concerned with women emancipation like Christina Eshun, Takoradi, who like such lyrics for "the words in the music" and dislikes those that mischaracterize women. Eazzy is as expensive as the world cup which is won through hard work and in a way is disparaging men who think women are just there for them.

Such proclamations by the female rappers do not deter the male rappers from denigrating the female for they take liberties with the female body and mischaracterize the female as a consumable item. Rappers like Kow Kesse in "Na yaatar" says the girls do not know how to dance so when they dance, leaving certain parts of their body exposed, "Na yaatar, na yeedzi" (we huddle against each other; we consume each other). The listening public, especially the hiplife out-group members, including the critics, however felt enough was enough and could not remain silent on Asem's "Give me Blow" which says:

1. Afei ɔma wo sign se abranteɛ betwi a   So if she signals you to make love to her

2. Give me blow (3x), blow, blow, blow   Give me blow (3x), blow,blow,blow

3. Fa wo twɛ twɛ, twɛ, twɛ, twɛdeɛ wɔ wia mu   Just blow the air

As if "abranteɛ bra betwi" which literally translates as "come and eat" is not graphic enough, Asem proceeds to use an English word, "blow" (line 2) and according to Ameyaw Debrah, certain members within the Ghanaian audience interpret "blow" to mean oral sex. Asem is still not satisfied with that creativity and makes meaning more obvious by saying in Twi in line 3, decoupling the two syllables that make up twɛdeɛ, the first syllable unambiguously reading the Twi name for the female sex organ. While opinions by junior high school students sampled by the *Graphic Showbiz* hailed the song, the critics were mad and described the lyrics as too explicit and beyond acceptable creativity limits; the newspapers were up in arms and the *Graphic Showbiz*, the leading entertainment news paper in Ghana summed all these up in its caption "Axe hangs over Asem's song"; the female community was entirely embarrassed. Asem was also embarrassed and in response to the moderate and extreme hiplife out-group and even some in-group criticism, had to do a remix and leave out all the Twi hooks that had the potential of defaming women. Another

response of this nature was when Tiffany had to apologise to her audience for displaying her exposed breast on the internet. Sandra, 21, a discussant in a focus group in Takoradi, could not hold back her anger when I asked Charlotte Eshun, 25, if she (Charlotte Eshun) was in favour of such women portrayals in the media, and she (Sandra) simply snapped, "I hate it". All the discussants, who were women, in the focus group expressed their disapproval for they felt men were just making fun of them.

8.6.2. Making fun of women's body

It is not only Asem's "Give me blow" that takes liberties with women's essential body parts. "Ɔdɔ esisi me" by Akatakyie for example mentions " w'enim, w'ekyi, wo front" which creatively takes advantage of the translation into English for other mischievous purposes as we have seen in Asem's " Give me blow". The first phrase, "w'enim" could translate your front in English but the juxtaposition of "w'ekyi" and the presence of "wo front", disambiguates "w'enim" to be your face. Then the third phrase "wo front" could replicate the meaning of "w'enim" but for the reason cited above and for Akatakyie's recourse to multilingualism to signify modernity and yet rely on the Akan oral resource of image building, it achieves a different meaning, and as in conjunction with its contiguous "w'ekyi", it becomes clear he is referring to the round protrusions of the woman's behind, "w'ekyi", and her breast, "wo front". The jeu d'esprit in Akatakyie's "Ɔdɔ esisi me" using the front and back protrusions of the woman as source of fun is also found in VIP's "W'enim, w'ekyi, ahomka wɔ mu/ Wohonam beebiara anigye wɔ mu" to wit, your front and your back generate pleasurable viewing/ Every part of your body makes me feel good. This play upon words indexicalises the fun men make about women's essential parts in the broader Ghanaian culture,

which they consider "extras" that make women abnormal (Beaseley, 1999). Gyedu Blay Ambulley's:

Basia n'ayeradze, biribi hyɛ hɔ 2x	There is something in the groin of the woman
Wetin dey there?	What is there?
Ragm, ragm, zo	Ragm, ragm, zo

clearly gives the male rappers away as targeting these parts for making fun of the women, much to the disapproval of some moderate hiplife in-group members like Gloria and Deborah, students of University of Ghana, who denounced the perceived connection between hiplife and profanity. Here again, the "Ragm, ragm, zo" is a non-sense expression, a dummy expression depicting the supposedly lack of substance of this part of the woman. As remarked by Dolphyne, such language constructs stereotypical inferiority (Dolphyne, 2000) such as the Ghanaian woman who believes her natural space is the domestic and is afraid to claim public space.

I experienced such stereotypes during my field work. Most women I approached either turned down my request for interview or would simply not mind me. In the Tamale market, a woman simply told me to leave her alone because she had nothing to do with hiplife. In Takoradi, Sandra et al were very reluctant to grant me interview because they believed I was a journalist going to show them on TV and friends would call them from all over the place and ask questions. When they saw I was visibly shaken by their attitude they explained that women's association with the media was often interpreted by the community to be indicative of loose morals and that the place of the woman was the house and not the public. This reiterates testimonies given by Grace Omaboe, a famous actress, and Dina Akiwumi-Botwey, the former president of MUSIGA, concerning the link between

the media and their unstable marriage[77]. Indeed the link between the media or public space and women's loose morality has been reported in earlier West African musicological literature (Sutherland, 1970: 15; Omibiye-Obidike, 1987: 4; Harvey, 1992: 237) and the example of Sandra et al shows how women either avoid the public space or are removed from it and why they stick to the private sphere (Ross and Byerly, 2004: 5, quoting Lemish). This narrative of the woman's entrapment (Kolawale, 1997: 155) constructs them to be self-effacing, passive and too ready to accept roles imposed on them (Kolawale, 1997: 156).

Dela Hayes, the leader of All Female Band, the only female highlife group around 2009 in the country, in connection with the domestic entrapment of women, argued that the expression of the woman was contingent on her talent and the essence of the woman was being herself. In the context of women expression therefore, this work identifies two kinds of the identity for the woman or womanhood. One is that offered by Dela Hayes which predicates the expression of womanhood on talent and the other is given by the two dancers for the Bradez video who posit the definition of womanhood on feminine essentialism which from the radical feminists' position is "Woman's inherent advantage… the specific qualities of their bodies" (Beasley, 1999: 18). In the case of the former, the bass guitarist told her story as being naturally good in music but was ridiculed and made to appear strange by her own friends whenever she played the guitar. The lead guitarist had a worse experience. Her own sister talked her out of playing the guitar and she had to contend with the socially defined role for women by the Ghanaian patriarchy (Dolphyne, 2000), the kitchen, preparing *banku* by the roadside. In order words, the essence or the true meaning of the woman was in performance, lending more weight to Searle's concept of external epistemology in which meaning is in performance (Searle, 1969) and jeopardizing the woman's attempt at expressing herself in the public sphere amounts to inhibiting the very essence of the woman. In highlife, the

---

[77] These testimonies were given during a conference titled "Women: Half a Century of Transformation" and organized by the Institute of African Studies in Accra, 13th – 14th November, 2006.

man denied her the public sphere (Collins, 1987: 47). In modern times, the male denies her the public space citing reasons of loose morality and the experience of the bass and lead guitarists of the All Female Band indicates patriarchy employs everybody, including its victims, women, to carry out the get-women-out-of-public-sphere project. Clearly, might is right and the "truth" comes from the mighty. Hiplife, like women writing in Ghana, however, provides the platform for women to express themselves and their problems and even challenges existing structures and strictures that hold them down. In hiplife, they do so through re-contextualising existing symbols used for their oppression.

8.6.3 Re-contextualising symbols of oppression by hiplife women rappers

Ghanaian women re-contextualize or reverse symbols depicting negative meanings associated with their body into very positive meanings. The female rappers in hiplife locate their liberation in essentializing the female body as means of counter discourse, subverting power through the very language the dominant uses (Terdiman, 1985: 14; Scott, 1990). They take advantage of the same concept of the otherness used against them and reinforcing the dialogicality of the gender discourse in Ghana. Feminist essentialism becomes part of the teleological unfolding of the ongoing Ghanaian gender discourse and Kow Ahenakwa, a seemingly moderate hiplife out-group member, is surely alluding to this feminine "power" when he describes Mizbel thus, "In all her songs, Mzbel teases; but she does so with the aim of encouraging young women like her to flaunt their potential, especially as though, she is saying 'come and get me if you can'". This smacks of the idea of using one's natural potential as a fulcrum in a complex web of power relations and Ahenakwa puts everything in the right perspective when he continues to describe her as calling attention to herself

"as a young woman who is conscious of the power she wields". Ahenakwa moves a step further in his description and supports it with some lines in the first song of her album "Saucy Girl":

I'm a little saucy girl
And I'm shy
If you want some hohaha[78]
Be my guest

This made Johanne Amakye, an extreme hiplife out-group member, opine, "To me, it is their music that makes our wives and children degenerate in morality". Kwodwo Forson, 59, also reiterates, "Today everything is loose" for he interpreted such solicitations as a serious lapse in morality. Other female rap artistes in Ghana like Eazzy, however, rally around female essentialism, the same poststructuralist feminist approach to gender relations which the extreme hiplife out-members refer to as immorality, obviously enunciating hegemonic dictates disguised in morality. In "Bɔ wo nsa mu ma me", she sings in English and gleefully displays her female beauty premised on her "extra" (Beasley, 1999) that makes her a woman, "And if you know, that you got a lot of ass, the real type/ Put your hands up for me". Clearly, power is at play here and Eazzy is playing the supremacy role and in "Wengeze", singing in Broken English, she makes power unmistakably clear, "As soon as I walk to the club/ All the guys them dey stand up on their feet", creating the awareness that when Beyonce reiterates this concept of female supremacy in "Who Rule the World", she may have to be given all the attention she deserves for her Ghanaian counterparts and other African female rap artistes belong to the same persuasion. In Ghana, however, these symbols of essentialization are again taken away by the man for business needs.

---

[78] According to Kow Ahenakwa, what she means by "hohaha" "maybe anybody's guess but "what is in no doubt is that, (sic) whoever wants it, has to work for it", forshadowing Eazzy.

8.6.4 Re-contextualising symbols of female power in commercialization

The struggle for power between the genders still keeps raging on for the men will respond to women's show of power as demonstrated above with even more vigour than we have seen. As has been indicated earlier, hegemonic patriarchy has a huge adaptive power of "turning an instance of original subversion into a commodified corroboration of hegemonic discourse" (Lay, 2000: 229). We also need to revisit Stuart Hall's concept of the dominant class's framing of all competing definitions within its range (Hall, 1977). Women's power is certainly refractive from the normative and hegemonic patriarchy that contains it through classification: the norm is normal and natural and the refraction is the "other" (Weitzer and Kubrin, 2009) and linguistically strait-jacketed by the media, the owners of which are mostly males "who use it to tell stories that suit their purposes" (Rakow, 1990: 235). Women's representation is usually sacrificed for business concerns (Rakow, 1990: 231) in business and women's power posited on performance thus classified as the "other" is now located in fantasy by the dominant culture, a phenomenon that says women's power can only be taken seriously for its entertainment value. The "extras" of the women are converted to communicative apparatus of male sexual gratification for commercial purposes. Hegemonic patriarchy's subjecting the woman to capitalist structures seeks explication in its preoccupation with psychoanalytic process premised on the male gaze, that is when the woman, in feminist film theory, is the object of man's gaze for the purpose of pleasure (Riordan, 2004: 95, quoting Mulvey), a concept that resonates very well with the belief of a focus group of underground rappers at Pocalous, Kakraba et al, Kumasi. The male gaze as a male mental activity for the purpose of this work can be grouped into three categories: scopohilia, voyeurism and fetishism.

Scopophilia is when women on the screen are displayed for the "gaze and enjoyment of men" (Mulvey, 1989: 21). We borrow this concept for the analysis of the manner in which the man

sexually objectifies the woman in hiplife and we dwell on the example of the women dancers in the shooting of the video for "Simple" by Bradez, at 4-Syte TV, Laterbiokoshie, Accra. For the purpose of scopophilic pleasure, these ladies were carefully selected to construct spectatorial desire that appealed to the gratification of the consumer. Dark, tall, having a guitar shape and dimpled cheeks, the first woman went to the make-up room to be prepared for the set. After the make-up, she was given her costumes, simple jeans and yellow top. She was told by the producer to make moves redolent of sexual act but not to exaggerate them. The idea was to create the image of a simple but sexy girl. The next was a set of two women of the same size and shape; slim, fair in complexion and of average height. They were told to exaggerate slightly sexual moves. The idea of the make-up and the sinuous movements of lithe figures were calculated to subject the female body to art, rivet the male audience, creatively appeal to men's sensuousness and to tease them to project their sexual fantasies on the figures of the women just to lure them (the men) into seduction and leave them with no option than to buy the video CD. Indeed, the duo, Stone and Kuntakunte, were also instructed by the producer to constantly make gestures of admiring these beautiful women. The dancers are the subject of viewing pleasure by both male heroes and audience (Mulvey, 1989).

Voyeurism is another concept in feminist film theory that holds that the man eroticizes the sight of forbidden parts of the woman (Mulvey, 1992: 29; Henning, 2004: 24). In hiplife, just like elsewhere, we have the consensual voyeurism in which the victim herself is aware she is being watched. Koby Maxwell Veeda's "I am Aware", featuring Red Eye amply demonstrates this feminist film theory. The male, who is doing the viewing, calls the woman's attention to her revealing parts but the woman replies:

Adeɛ yi worehwɛ, naaso worentumi a ka ɛ,	You are looking at it but if you cannot, say it
Meyɛ aware, woahunu a fa w'ani hwɛ	I am aware. Just view it
Na mfa w'ano nka	But do not say what you see

Clearly the persona in this song claims to reveal certain forbidden parts of her body intentionally and again, this is to illicit erotic feeling from the male to seduce him to buy the CD. To the extreme hiplife out-group members, this is completely unacceptable and the discussants in Sekondi, Forson et al, were in unison that such indecent exposure is embarrassing, one claiming "I am not ready to look at such a thing". Dr. Clayton, another extreme hiplife out-group member, also expressed fear when Mizbell performed on GTV. He commented when he heard Mizbell was going to perform, "I immediately became uneasy because I guessed we were about to be subjected to her explicit lyrics and gyrations of a sexual nature". But for Mizbel's target audience, the hiplife in-group, this was an excellent show; they goaded her on and she even threatened to strip naked if members of the audience could pay for that. The moderate hiplife in-group members, especially the females, are not very comfortable with such exposure, for Christiana Eshun explains, "the more you expose yourself … they do whatever they want to you and dump you". This consensual voyeuristic appeal is however simply meant for business controlled by men.

Fetishism occurs when the male, even though the female can also do that, eroticizes materials associated with the female sex that is overvaluing and worshipping of the female movie star by celebrating materials associated with her (Mulvey, 1992: 29). Indeed, Kodwo Forson, 59, Sekondi/Takoradi, an extreme hiplife out-group member, conceded that, "There are some of us when we look at such dresses, we get provoked sexually". Applied to the context of hiplife, this concept conceptualizes female rap artistes and dancers as disseminators of signals in the form of costumes of erotic value in the name of fashion. As an extension of their concept of misogyny, akin to metaphysical essentialism by poststructuralist feminist which challenges the fixity of the status of

established categories of sex (Beasley, 1999: 81) that the fact is that sex is of the mind, Kakraba et al say the man even though may not be in physical contact with the woman, may fantasize a whole lot of things by merely viewing objects related to the female sex. Fetishism through costumes and other signs and symbols constitute a contact feature through which the female hiplife rappers and dancers control the mind and emotion of their male audience. Again, the female rap artistes and dancers become agents of modifying the society's collective consciousness of female beauty for purposes of business. This collective consciousness, according to John Collins, is taken advantage of by entrepreneurs to meet the expectation of the broader culture. This broader culture sees the woman as an object of gratification as exemplified by the article in *the Finder*, "Sex is our entertainment", presenting the sex narrative of citizens of Kpone-Katamanso as the only entertainment in the village. In these power relations, the woman is free to express herself just as the 1st female dancer in the Bradex video shooting said, "What I do with my life is nobody's business" but the reality is that woman is only free within the space provided by the business man. She only uses the symbols that meet consumer demand so she is not as free as the 1st woman dancer makes it appear to be and Obour's rightly observes that once the topic of sex remains a controversy in hiplife, the business men will never move away from hiplife.

8.6.5 The image of the strong woman in hiplife

The strategic hegemonic structures instituted by patriarchy to contain the women do not escape the vigilance of the women in hiplife. They rightly see that the woman is part of the capitalist package in business and this is purely grounded in heterosexual relationship. The Ghanaian woman rapper now reinforces Monique Wittig's idea that "there is sex that is oppressed and sex that oppresses. It is oppression that creates sex" (Wittig, 1992: 2) and you can only deal with matters of sex

oppression by "by abolishing them", in other words, stepping out of sexual relationship with the opposite sex and becoming independent. Afya in "Sexy Sassy Wahala" clearly demonstrates this:

Make my own money
Do my own thing
Can't you get it
Take it from me
In my world, I've got to get prepared everyday

She dispels the hegemonic notion of female naivety implied by a participant of Forson et al., Ernest Owusu, that "Adwoa, sleep at nine o'clock, she will sleep at nine o'clock" and assumes the competitive life of the career woman as we find in Ama Ata Aidoo's Esi Sekyi in *Changes.* This image of the strong woman infuriates the male rappers and they even get more vicious in their lyrics. In "Agyei" by R2Bs featuring Sarkodie, they warn the woman, "Sɛ ɛnɛ anadwe yi woreba ayɛ a nhyɛ nika efiri sɛ mede adwen fi erebebu atopa" to wit, do not come to me this night wearing knickers for I will viciously toss my waist. And a similar sex narrative is offered by Payday, a member of R2Bs, who in the same song teases, "Maataa no tun ma woeguan kalo" to wit, the woman had to run away because she could not sexually face me, reducing sex to physical punishment. Indeed, some of the female artistes are even physically assaulted by hiplife moderate in-group audience, who may like hiplife but certainly not the aspect about women liberation, for being too daring. Mizbel was physically manhandled during a show in KNUST. Certainly, these attackers are not the purely in-group members. She was also sexually assaulted in Accra by three armed robbers, Frank Apau 23; Adu Kwabena, 22 and David Klottey, 18, thus the male audience is physically intimidating the woman not to express herself. Violence by the men is the last stage in the containment strategy.

8.7 SUMMARY

It goes without saying that the struggle between the two sexes in Ghana as seen in hiplife narrative is an interminable one. Mary Anne Doane may criticise the use of sexuality as the main site for feminist discourse (Doane, 1991: 9) and by implication hopes for a better feminist picture if the site is removed from sexuality. Monique Wittig may recommend to women to opt out of heterosexual relations (Wittig, 1992: 2) something Afya also calls for in her song. In Ghana, we even have evidence of women's success in their fight against male oppression if you consider that the number of Ghanaian males in androgynous appearance is increasing in hiplife. All these notwithstanding, a dialogic approach (Bakhtin, 1981; Stubbs, 1983) that incorporates the role of the third party, the audience, to the epistemology of the position of Ghanaian women in hiplife through symbolic representations in performance (Bauman, 1977) clearly demonstrates that hegemonic patriarchy with its huge adaptive power, taking advantage of the collective consciousness of Africans and their belief in family life (Kolawale, 1997: 34) continues to construct women inferiority in Ghana with heterosexuality being the main weapon and women continuously struggle to free themselves from this grip.

CONCLUSION

It is appropriate to conclude this research by stating that it is a study of the textuality of hiplife – the Ghanaian version of hiphop – and it investigates its discursive and non discursive practices. The research undertakes such a study by looking at hiplife as a verbal art within the context of performance through qualitative research. It is a critique of both the cultural and verbal production of hiplife texts on four main levels: texts; how texts and performances comment on themselves; what performers and other stakeholders, including the audience, say about performance of hiplife lyrics in relationship to their lived experience; and my interpretation of levels 1-3. Hiplife is a kind of youth culture that presents experiential realities that elicit a binary response: a passion of the majority of the Ghanaian youth but judged to be the main source of youth's moral degeneration by the old. The research is therefore a study of hiplife not merely as an art form but as an expressive culture. The study was therefore designed to answer the following questions which covered concerns of both hiplife art and culture:

a) What were the experiential realities – the thinking and feeling of Ghanaians – expressed in hiplife performance as a "text"?

b) What kinds of cultural materials (both traditional and foreign), ideas and practices were believed worthy of being entextualised in hiplife performance?

The purpose of this research was to address the above concerns by looking closely at the textuality of hiplife – discursive and non discursive. This was aimed at disinterring subterranean meanings that could go unnoticed and negatively influence the evaluation of this contemporary culture. It must be noted that such wrong evaluations also have the potential of negatively influencing policy on youth culture in the country, thus denying the youth the necessary opportunity of quality growth and becoming members of a competitive global culture.

It is instructive to note that even though some work has already been done on hiplife as an art form and an expressive culture (Shipley, 2009, 2013; Osumare, 2012), not enough has been done on the contribution of the Ghanaian traditional culture to hiplife. The traditional input that adds to the hiplife foreign outlook to make it a syncretic practice of cosmopolitan dimensions has not been adequately addressed. This is what this research adds to the literature of African hip hop. Again, available scholars working on hiplife gathered their data mainly from Accra, the capital of Ghana. Very little data is known from other regions and cities of Ghana. This research also sets out to fill that lacuna.

The analysis of the data reveals interesting meanings in the culture of hiplife. It also shows the manner in which hiplife culture socializes the in-group members and influences the perception of out-group members. These meanings are summed up in the following paragraphs.

First, hiplife started with the quest of the Ghanaian youth for a syncretic culture. Syncretism – the combination of local and foreign cultures – mediated by the DJs, artistes and sites constituted the hiplife ideology. This ideology was given a performative expression through the "wannabe" competitions of hip hop artistes. Competitors were made to look like M. C. Hammer or Grand Master Flash and perform them. With time, the numbers of patrons for such competitions dwindled because they started finding such competitions boring. The competitors and the organizers resorted to innovations like Twi raps to boost their increasingly dwindling fortunes. That was the beginning of Twi raps, later to be christened as hiplife.

Second, Twi rap is a cultural continuity of the Akan drum language. It is the rhythm of the Akan drum language that influences the rhythmic complexion of the modern musical art called hiplife. This research therefore presents details of localization (Condry, 1999; Stephens, 2001; Auzanneau, 2002; Mitchelle, 2003; Nyairo and Ogude, 2003; Moulard-Kouka, 2005; Perullo, 2005; Marshall, 2006; Pardue, 2007; Ntanrangwi, 2009, Shipley, 2009, 2013; Osumaru, 2012) of hip hop and challenges the

popular notion in Ghana that hiplife is totally a phenomenon produced by globalization. Hiplife is constructing new Ghanaian linguistic structures out of old ones.

Third, hiplife has recourse to various discursive and non discursive practices to construct new values, including the quest for new social truths and the protest against hegemony. While the research identifies direct protest as the use of discursive practices to launch direct and open attacks against hegemony, it also identifies modest protest as the use of discursive and non discursive practices to launch indirect but more damaging attacks against hegemony.

Fourth, in the quest to establish new social truths, hiplife does not spare even artistes of equal social statuses. This ideology is given materiality in the form of verbal battle or "dissing" (Rose, 1994) which seeks to change the normative concept of moral ground which sees the one criticizing on a higher moral ground and the one criticized on a lower moral ground and substitutes it with the kind of moral ground that presents the same or equal moral grounds to the two, the accuser and the accused.

Fifth, the "looking glass" concept enables us better to understand what is going on in the hiplife culture. We are here talking about a whole range of issues including hiplife ideologies of syncretism, show of toughness, protests, social change and quest for new social truths. Again, the concept as proposed in this study throws more light on the circulation of the hiplife culture in and out of Ghana. The images in the "looking glass" concept are adopted by fashion houses in and out of Ghana and an example of such an adoption is the signing of Sarkodie as the fashion icon for Konvict, an American fashion business group. Artistes like Eazzy and Mizbels are well known for their fashion credentials. Hiplife artistes are therefore vectors of fashion in and out of Ghana.

Sixth, the research moves a step further to establish that the traditional shareability and transmitability in African orality fuse with modern shareability and transmitability (Urban, 2001) expressed in modern media to project the visibility of the hiplife culture. This visibility in turn serves

as the fodder for hiplife business, which can be seen as a potentially powerful emerging Ghanaian economy.

Seventh, female rappers take advantage of fashion (Perkins, 1996; Kitwana, 2002) – expression of both the body and inner beauty (Entwistle, 2000) – to reconstruct the position of the Ghanaian woman in the Ghanaian society. They hit back at male rappers who take liberties at their gender and resort to fashion, body expression and verbal rhetoric to re-assert themselves in the Ghanaian gender discourse. By so doing, they represent the new breed of Ghanaian women.

There are also other findings which throw more light on existing theories on global hip hop culture. These findings suggest the need to revisit these existing theoretical cases for the purpose of deepening our understanding of not only the hiplife culture but the global hip hop culture as a whole. For example, it has been established elsewhere that the division between the youth and the old is blurry and ambiguous (Sharp, 1995; Rea, 1998; Gable 2000: Rasmussen, 2000). It is however observed in this study that there is a bold line that divides the young from the old in Ghana and this line further makes youth culture reducible to a generational battle. This observation is consistent with findings on other forms of hip hop study (Cook, 2004: 108, citing Condry, 1999, Ginsburg et al. 2002). Again, while applauding Sophie Moulard-Kouka (2005) for her illuminating submission on the various stages the rap text by Senegalese rappers goes through before delivery, from the written character to the oral one, data from this research do not support her assertion that the rap text is a "transitional" one, that is, the rap text is a hybrid of oral and written modes. Data from this study, which are very consistent with existing literature that oral and written texts have their separate means of keeping records of knowledge or separate means of expression (Goody, 1977; Havelock, 1963: 61-68; Tonkin, 1992; Ong, 2000: 57), suggest that no matter how written the rap text may appear to be, it still remains an oral text in substance and in texture (Lord, 2000, 124-128). This research further postulates that the rap art is primarily an oral one. Furthermore, Englert's (2008) contribution of

categorizing Tanzanian rappers into superstars and underground rappers to hip hop literature needs commendation. While the analysis of data gathered in this research strongly supports Englert's categorization of rappers into superstars and underground rappers, it does not support her position that the two are in binary opposition to each other and that being in one category is mutually exclusive to the other category. The difference here is on the system of categorization. Englert bases her categorization on economic factors but the analysis of the data from this research discovered that the distinction between the two categories in hiplife is based on how experimental it is, and, to be precise, on the degree of subversive materials they produce against the mainstream culture. Sarkodie, Guru, Yaa Pono and many more Tema rappers are all superstars, that is, they are rich by the definition of Englert, but they all pride themselves of still being underground rappers because they still keep surprising their fans with more experimental rhythms and lyrics.

All these findings have certain implications. Socially, the Ghanaian youth, using hiplife as a means of expression jettison institutional pathways and create new cultural pathways for themselves. This new cultural development goes in tandem with emerging economies in Ghana which when paid attention to could help improve the economic profile of the country. Again, information from this research is to help Ghanaian readers, and other readers for that matter, understand the realities of the hiplife culture within the context of globalization. Policy makers could also be beneficiaries of these findings. In the educational sector, knowledge gained from this research can also add to a corpus of teaching materials designed to help students at all levels of our educational structure – basic, senior high and university levels – to better appreciate their identity in the Ghanaian contemporary culture. For purposes of helping to solve the current employment crisis in Ghana, music institutions could also use these materials to train young musicians who are interested in taking up rap as a career. With a little bit of conditioning, these findings can even help promote the theory of performance in popular culture in literary studies in the Ghanaian universities, a study that has already started in the Kwame

Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana, but so far with little success. These findings could also help to enrich the study of power as a topic in Political Sciences, Diasporic Studies, History and Gender Studies departments in our universities.

Finally, these findings open up new opportunities for further research on hiplife or other arts, even traditional ones, related to the hiplife. Akan orature is replete with musical genres which have similar psalmodizing structures to the linguistic art of hiplife. This half speech, half melody because of its lack of the requisite range to be called melody and the requisite tonal structure of speech to be called speech, as in the Ghanaian Methodist Ebibidwom, asafo songs and a lot of Ghanaian children rhythms (Braĩloiu, 1956) needs a lot of research attention to throw more light on the role Akan orature plays in some Akan musical structures.

Even though the hiplife culture is generally perceived as compromising moral standards in Ghana by the old generation, this research has revealed that it is an emerging culture worthy of being paid attention to. The findings in this research clearly demonstrate that it is important that all Ghanaians, not only the youth, know the extent to which any contemporary or modern culture of theirs is a localized one (Cook, 2004: 108, citing Condry, 1999, Ginsburg et al. 2002; Moulard-Kouka, 2005) and the extent to which it is a globalised one (Lieber and Weisberg, 2002: 274, see also Appadurai, 1996). Such information, which forms the bulk of this research, will not only help Ghanaians in general and the youth in particular to better construct contemporary identities by knowing which portion of that contemporary culture is local and which is foreign, but as indicated earlier, it will also help them to better navigate the global culture to their advantage.

This emerging culture – a combination of local and foreign culture - is about the new experiential realities of the Ghanaian youth – thinking and feeling of the Ghanaian youth - expressed in performative terms through the hiplife art. Certainly, hiplife art and culture deserve more attention than they have had in recent times.

REFERENCES

Abakah, E. N. (2004b) "Elision in Fante". *Africa and Asia*. 4: 181-213

Abakah, E. N. (2005) "Tone rules in Akan". *The Journal of West African Languages,* 32 (1-2): 109-114

Achebe, C. (1984) *The Trouble with Nigeria*. Oxford: Heinemann.

Ackah, C. A. (1969) "Social Stratification in Ghana." *Ghana Journal of Sociology,* 2: 1-7

Ackah, C. A. (1988) *Akan Ethics*. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.

Adams, A. V. and Sutherland-Addy, E. (eds.) (2007) *The Legacy of Efua Sutherland: Pan African Cultural Activism.* Oxfordshire: Ayebia Clarke Limited.

Adler, F., Meuller, G. O. W and Laufer, W. S. (200)*. Criminology and the Criminal Justice System.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Adorno, T. (1984) *Aesthetic Theory*. Trans. C. Lenherdt. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Adu Boahen, A. (2000) *Ghana: Evolution and Changes in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. London: Longman Group Ltd.

Aggrey, S. (1977) *Ebisaa na Aborɔme*. Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation.

Agyekum, K. (2011) *Akan Kasadwini*. Accra: Dwumfour.

Ahearn, L. M. (2001) "Language and Agency." *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 30: 109-139.

Aidoo, A. A. (1993) *Changes*. New York: The Feminist Press.

Allman, J. (ed.) (2004) *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Altman, H. (2007) "Celebrity Culture." *Annual Edition Mass Media*. 2006/2007 edition. pp. 21-26.

Anderson, E. (1999) *Code of the street: Decency, violence, and the moral life of the inner city.* New York: W. W. Norton.

Antonio, G. (1977) *Selections from Political Writings*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Anyidoho, K. (1984) *A Harvest of our Dreams (Poems).* London: Heinemann, African Writers Series.

Anyidoho, K, and Gibbs, J. (eds.) (2000) *FonTomFrom : Contemporary Ghanaian Literature, Theatre and Film. Matatu* 21-22. Amsterdam and Atlanta GA : Editions Rodopi.

Appadurai, A. (1996) *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Arthur, P. (1998) *The Poetry of Ghanaian Highlife Songs: A study of the wordtext.* M. A. Diss., Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Asamoah, A. (1984) *Classes in Ghana.* Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation.

Asante, M. K. and Asante, K. W. (eds) (1985) *African Culture: The rhythm of unity.* Westport, Connecticus: Greenwood Press.

Auzanneau, M. (2002) "De la diversivité lexicale dans le rap au Gabon et au Sénégal". *La Linguistique* 1/2002, 38: 69-98.

Ayittey, G. (1992) *African Betrayed.* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Babcock, B. (1997) "The story in the story: metanarration in Folk narrative".   In Bauman, Richard (ed.) *Verbal art as performance.* Illinois: Waveland Press. pp. 61-79

Baidotti, R., Charkiewicz E., Hausler, S. and Wieringa, S. (1994) *Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development: Towards a Theoretical Synthesis.* London: Zed Books.

Bally, C. and Sechehaye, A. (1966) *Course in General Linguistics: Ferdinand de Saussure.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Baquedano – López, P. (2000) "Creating Social Identities Tthrough Doctrina Narratives." Issues in Applied Linguistics 8 (1): 27-45

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981) *The Dialogic Imaginations*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1984) *Rabalais and his World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1986) *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. Vern W. McGee, Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.

Bamgbose, A. (1982) "Standard Nigerian English: Issues of Identification" in Braj. B. Kachru (ed.) *The Other Tongue: English Across cultures*. Champaign IL: University of Illinois. pp. 99-111

Banti, G. and Giannattasio, F. (2004) "Poetry." In Duranti, Alessandro (ed.) *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Barber, K., Collins, J. and Ricard, A. (1997) *West African Popular Theatre.* Oxford: Indiana University Press.

Barthes, R. (1975a) *S/Z*, Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang.

Barthes, R. (1977) *Image – Music – Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath: London: Fontana.

Bateson, G. (1972) *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. New York: Ballantine.

Bauman, R. (1977) *Verbal Art as Performance*. Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc.

Bauman, R. and Briggs, C. (1990) "Poetics and Performance as   Critical Perspective on Language and Social Life". *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 19: 59-88

Bauman, R. and Brigss, C. (2003) *Voices of Modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beasley, C. (1999) *Why Feminism?* London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Beaudreau, B. C. (1996) *Mass Production, the Stock Market Crash, and the Great Depression: The Microeconomics of Electrification*. Westport: Greenwood Press.

Becker, H. S. (1986) *Writing for Social Scientists*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Becker, A. L. (1979b) "Text-building, Epistemology, and Aesthetics in Javanese Shadow Theatre." In Becker, A. L. and Yengoyan, A. (eds.) *The Imagination of Reality: Essays in South East Asian Coherence Systems.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex. pp. 211-243

Beir, U. (1968) *Contemporary Art in Africa.* New York: Praeger Publishers.

Benveniste, E. (1971) *Problems in general linguistics*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek. Coral Gables: University of Miami Press.

Biritwum, R. B., Agyapong, J. and Mensah, G. (2005) "The Epidemiology of Obesity in Ghana." *Ghana Medical Journal* 39 (3): 82-85.

Blacking, J. (1973) *How Musical is Man?* Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Blom, J. P. and Gumperz, J. J. (1972) "Social meaning in linguistic structures: code-switching in Norway". In Gumperz, J. J. and Hymes, D. (eds.) *Directions in Sociolinguistics.* New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston. pp. 407-434

Booth, W. C. (1983) *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Bordo, S. (1992) *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of Carlifornia Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Tast*. London: Routledge.

Boyd-Barett, O. and Rantanen, T. (eds.) (1998) *The Globalization of News.* London: SAGE Publications.

Bucholtz. M. 2002. "Youth and Cultural Practices." *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 31: 525-52

Burgelin, O. (1972) "Structural Analysis and Mass Communication". In Mcquail, D. (ed.) *Sociology of Mass Communication.* Suffolk: Penguin. pp. 312-328

Buzzel, R. D. and Gale, B. T. (1987) *The PIMS Principle: Linking Strategy to Performance.* New York: The Free Press.

Cain, P. J. (2002) *Hobson and Imperialism: Radicalism, New Liberalism, and Finance 1887-1938.* Oxford: Oxford Universitiy Press.

Camara, S. (1976) *Gens de Parole: Essai sur la condition et le role des griots dans la société Malinké.* La Haye: Mouton & Co.

Campbell, R. (2003) *Media and Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication.* Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins.

Carrington, J. F. (1949) *Talking Drums of Africa*. London: The Carey Kingsgate Press.

Castree, N. (2003) "Place: Boundaries and Connections in an Interdependent World." In Holloway, S. (ed.) *Key Concepts in Geography*. London: SAGE. pp. 252-282

Catford, J. C. (1977a) *Fundamental Problems in Phonetics.* Edinburg: University of Edinburg Press.

Chernoff, J.M. (1985) "Africa Come Back: The popular music of West Africa." In Haydon, G. and Marks, D.(eds.) *Repercussions*. London: Century Publishing. pp. 152-78

Chomsky, N. and Halle, M. (1968) *The Sound Pattern of English*. New York: Harper and Row.

Cohen, A. (1955) *Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang*. Glencoe, IL: Fress Press.

Cohen, A. and Short, J. (1958) "Research in Delinquent Subcultures." *Journal of Social Issues*, 14: 20-37

Collins, J. (1996) *Highlife Time*, Accra: Anansesem Press.

Collins, J. (2002) "Ghanaian Christianity and Popular Entertainment: Full Cycle". Paper read at the Symposium on Performing Arts organized by the Institute of African Studies, University of Amsterdam, June 13-14, 2002 as part of the 300 years of Ghana/Holland Celebration.

Collins, J. (2007) "The Entrance of Ghanaian Women into Popular Entertainment". In Adams, Anne V and Sutherland-Addy, Esi. (eds.) *The Legacy of Efua Sutherland: Pan African Cultural Activism.* Oxfordshire: Ayebia Clarke Limited. pp. 47-54

Cook, S. (2004) "New Technologies and Language Change: Towards and Anthropology of Linguistic Frontiers." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 33, pp. 103-115.

Coplan, David. (1978) "Go to my hometown, Cape Coast.: The Social History of Ghanaian highlife." In Nettl, B. (ed.) *Eight Urban Musical Cultures*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Coplan, D. (1997) "Lesotho Migrant's Songs and the Anthropology of Experience." In Barber, K. (ed.) *Readings from African Popular Culture.* Bloomington: University of Illinois Press.

Coulthard, M. (1977) *An Introductioin to Discourse Analysis*: Hong Kong: Longman.

Creswell, J. W. (2003) *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Aproaches*. London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Dakubu, M. E. K. (ed.) (1988) *The Languages of Ghana*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Dangarembga, T. (1988) *Nervous Conditions*. London: The Women's Press.

Darko, A. (1998) *The Housemand*. London: Heinemann.

Deaton, A. and Muellbauer, J. (2007) *Economic and Consumer Behavior.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2000) *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Derrida, J. (1997) *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore, Meriland: John Hopkins University Press.

Desmond, J. C. (2001) "Introduction: Making the Invisible Visible – Staging Sexualities through Dance." In Desmond, J. (ed.) *Dancing Desires: Choreographing Sexualities On and Off Stage*. Madison: University of Wisonsin, pp. 3-32.

Dess, G. G., Lumpkin, G. T. and Covin, J. G. (1997) "Entrepreneural Strategt Making and Firm Performance: Test of Contingency and Configurational Models." *Strategic Management Journal*, 18 (9): 677-95

Devanport, T. H., and Beers, M. C. (1995) "Managing information about processes." *J. Management Inform Systems* 12 (1): 57-80.

Diop, S. (1995) *The Oral History and Literature of the Wolof People of Waalo, Northern Senegal*. Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press.

Doane, M. A. (1990) "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the female spectacle". In Erens P. (ed.) *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. pp. 41-57

Doane, M. A. (1991) *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis.* New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc.

Dolby, N. (2006) "Popular Culture and Space in Africa: The Possibilities of Cultural Citizenship." *African Studies Review*, 49 (3): 31-47

Dolphyne, F. A. (1988) *The Akan (Twi-Fante) Language.: Its Sound System and Tonal Structure.* Accra: Ghana Universities Press.

Dolphyne, F. A. (2000) *Emancipation of Women: An African Perspective.* Accra: Ghana Universities Press.

Edwards, P. (2009) *How to Rap: The Art and the Science of the Hip hop M-C.* Chicago: Chicago Review Press.

Elden, S. (2005) "Missing the Point: Globalization, Deterritorialization and the Space of the Wold." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, 30 (1): 8-19

Emecheta, B. (1979) *The Joys of Motherhood.* New York: George Braziller, Inc.

Englert, B. (2008) "Kuchangayachanganya – Topic and Language Choices in Tnazania Youth Culture." *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 20, (1): 45-55

Essimeng, M. (1999) *Social Structure of Ghana: A Study of Persistence and Change.* Tema: Ghana Publishing Company.

Erving, G. (1959) *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*. London: Penquin.

Erving, G. (1974) *Frame Analysis*. New York: Harper & Row.

Ewen, Colins J. and van der Hulst. (2001) *The Phonological Structure of Words: An Introduction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Edwards, A. (2009) "Becoming a Teacher." In Daniels, H ,Porter, J. and Lauder, H. (eds.) *Educational Theories, Cultures and Learning*, vol 1. London: Routledge. pp. 153-164

Eiser, R. J. (1986) *Social Psychology: Attitutes, Cognition and Social Behaviour.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Entwistle, J. (2000) *The Fahsioned Body: Fashion, Dress, and Modern Social Theory.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Ewen, C. J. and van der Hulst, H. (2001) *The Phonological Structure of Words: An Introduction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eyoh, D. (1988) "African Perspectives on Democracy and the Dilemmas of Postcolonial Intellectuals in African Affairs". *Africa Today*, 45(3-4): 281-306

Fabian, J. (1990) *Power and Performance. Ethnographic Explorations through Proverbial Wisdom and Theatre in Shaba, Zaire*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Fairclough, N. (2009) "A Dialectical-Relational Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis." In Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis.* London: SAGE. pp. 162-186.

Fenemore, M. (2009) *Sex, Thugs and Rock 'n' Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany.* Oxford/New York: Berghahn Books.

Fearing, F. (1972) "Influence of the Movies on Attitudes and Behaviour". In McQuail, D. (ed.) *Sociology of Mass Communication*. Suffolk: Penguin. pp. 119-133

Feld, S. (1982) *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics and Song in Expression.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Finnegan, R. (1970) *Oral Literature in Africa*. London and New York: Oxford University Press.

Finnegan, R. (1988) *Literacy and Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication.* Oxford. Basil Blackwell.

Firth, R. (1996) *Religion: A Humanist Interpretation*. London: Routledge.

Fisher, J. and Shay, A. (2009) *When Men Dance: Choreographing Masculinities across Borders.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fiske, J. (1990) *Introduction to Communication Studies*. London: Routledge.

Friedl, J. and Whiteford, M. B. (1988) The Human Portrait: Introduction to Cultura Anthropology. London: Prentice-Hall International (UK) Ltd.

Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the Prison*. trans. A Sheridan. Harmondworth: Peregrine.

Foucault, M. (1990) *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure*. New York: Vintage Books Edition.

Foucault, M. (2002) *The Archeology of Knowledge*. New York: Routledge.

Gable, E. (2000) "The Culture Development Club: youth, neo-tradition, and the construction of society in Guinea-Bissau." *Anthropol. Q.,*73(4):195–203

Gamman L. (1989) "Watching the Detectives: The enigma of the Female Gaze." In Gamman, L. and Marchment, M. (eds.) *The Female Gaze: Women as viewers of Popular Culture*. Seattle: Real Comet Press. pp. 8-26

Gaines, J. (1990) "Women and Representation: Can we enjoy alternative Pleasure? In Erens, P. (ed.) *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. pp. 75-92

Garrett, P. B. and Baquedano-Lopez, P. (2002) "Language Socialization: Reproduction and Continuities Transformation and Change." *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 31: 339-361

Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M. and Signorielli, N. (1980) "The 'mainstreaming' of America: Violence profile no. 11." *Journal of Communication,* 30: 10-27

Giddens, A. 1993. *New Rules of Sociological Method.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Gimson, A. C. (1980) *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English.* London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd.

Gledhill, C. (1999) "Pleasurable Negotiations". In Thornman, S. (ed.) *Feminist Film Theory: A Reader.* New York: New York University Press. pp. 166-79

Goldsmith, J. (1976a) "An Overview of Autosegmental Phonology." *Linguistic Analysis* 2: 23-68

Goldsmith, J. (1976b) *Autosegmental Phonology.* Bloomington: Indiana University Linguistics Club.

Goldthorpe, J. E. (1974) *An Introduction to Sociology.* 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goody, J. (1977) *Domestication of the Savage Mind.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gross, J., McMurray, D and Swindenburg, T. (1992) "Rai, Rap and Ramadan Nights: Franco-Maghrebi Cultural Identities." *Middle East Report,* September –October 1992, pp. 11-16

Guest, R. (2004) *The Shackled Continent: Power, Corruption and African Lives.* London: Macmillan (Pan Macmillan Ltd.).

Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. (1997) *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. (1999) "Culture, Power, Place: Ethnography at the End of an Era." In Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. (eds.) *Culture, Power, Place: Exploration in Critical Anthropology.* Durham and London: Duke University Press. pp. 1-29

Gyekye, Kwame. (1987) *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gyekye, K. (1997) *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Hager, S. (1984) *Hip Hop: The illustrated History of Breakdancing, Rap Music, and Graffitti*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Halberstam, J. (1989) "Starting from Scratch; Female Rappers and Feminist Discourse." 2 (2): 1-4

Halliday, M. A. K. (1978) *Language as Social Semiotic*. London: Longman.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1978) *Cohesion in English*. London. Longman.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1985) *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold.

Hannerz, U. (1992) *Cultural Complexity: Studies in Social Organization of Meaning*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Havelock, E. A. (1982) *Preface to Plato*. London: Harvard University Press.

Haviland, J. B. 1996. "Text from Talk in Tzotzil." In Silverstein, Michael and Urban, Greg (eds.) *Natural Histories of Discourse*. London: University of Chicago Press. pp. 45-78

Hebdige, D. (1987) *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. London: Routledge.

Heller, M. (2010) "The Commodification of Language." *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 39: 101-114

Henshall Momsen, J. (2007) *Gender and Development*. London: Routledge.

Hjarvard, S. (1988) "TV News Exchange". In Boyd-Barett, O. and Rantanen, T. (eds.) *The Globalization of News*. London: SAGE Publications.

Hoare, Q. and Smith, G. N. (eds) (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Hodkinson, P. (2002) *Goth. Identity, Style and Subculture*. Oxford: Berg.

Hodkinson, P. (2007) "Youth Culture: A Critical Outline of Key Debates." In Hodkinson, P. and Deicke, W. (eds.) *Youth Cultures: Scenes, Subcultures and Tribes*. New York: Routledge. pp. 1-23

Hymes, D. (1972b) "On Communicative Competence." In Bride, J. B. and Holmes, J. (eds.) *Sociolinguistics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp. 269-85.

Hyrnes, D. (2001) "Poetry." In Duranti, A. (ed.), *Key Terms in Language and Culture*. Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell. pp.187-189

Iedema, R. (2003) *Discourse of Post-Bureaucratic Organization*. Amsterdam: Banjamins.

Impey, A. (2001) "Resurrecting the Flesh: Reflections on Women in Kwaito." *Agenda,* 49: 44-50.

Ingold, T. and Hallam, E. (2007) "Creativity and Cultural Improvisation: An introduction. In Ingold, Tim and Hallam, Elizabeth (eds.) *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation*. New York: Berg. pp. 1-21

Irvine, J. (1996) "Shadow Conversations: The Indeterminacy of Participant Roles."In Silverstein, M. and Urban, G. (eds.) *Natural Histories of Discours.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. pp. 131-159

Jakobson, R. (1985) *Verbal Art, Verbal Sign, Verbal Time*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Jakobson, R. (1987) *Language in Literature*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

James, C. L. R. (1982) *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*: London: Richard Clay.

Jensen, J. N. (2009) "Transcending Gender in Ballet's LINES. In Fisher, J. and Shay, A. (eds.) *When Men Dance: Choreographing Masculinities across Borders.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 118-145.

Jewitt, C. and Kress, G. (eds.) (2003) *Multimodal Literacy*. New York: Peter Lang.

Joll, J. (1977) *Gramsci*. Glasgow: Fontana/Collins.

Jordan, J. B. (2001) "Light in the Heels: The Emergence of the Effeminate Male Dancer in Eighteenth-Century English History." Ph.D diss. University of California, Riverside.

Journo, A. (2009) "Jambazi Fulani: Hip Hop Literature and the Redefining of Literary Spaces in Kenya." *Postcolonial Text*, 5 (3): 1-22

Jules-Rosetta, B. (1977) "Craftmanship and showmanship in popular African Art: the potters, the painters and the carvers." Paper presented at the 76th meeting of A.A.A., Houston, Texas.

Kachru, B. B. (ed.) (I982) *The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures*. Champaign IL: University of Illinois.

Kaemmer. J. E. (1975) The Dynamics of a changing music systems in rural Rhodesia. Ph.D diss. Bloomington. IN: Indiana University.

Katz, E., Blumler, J. G. and Gurevitch, M. (1974) "Utilization of Mass Communication by the Individual." In Blumler, J. G. and Katz, E. (eds.) *The Uses of Mass Communications: Curent Perpectives on Gratification Research*. Beverly Hills: Sage. pp. 19-32.

Kelly, R. (2006) Forward to Basu and Lemelle 2006, i-x.

Keyman, F. and Koyuncu, B. (2005) "Globalization, Alternative Modernities and the Political Economy of Turkey." *Review of International Political Economy*, 12 (1): 105-128

Kolawale, M. E. M. (1997) *Womanism and African Consciousness*. Asmara: Africa World Press, Inc.

Kotler, P. and Keller, K. L. (2009) *Marketing Management*. Upper Saddle River, N. J. : Pearson Prentice-Hall.

Kitwana, B. (2002) *The Hip hop Generation: Young Blacks and the Crisis in African American Culture.* New York: Basic Civitas' Books.

Kinsella, W. P. (1995*)   The Winter Hellen Dropped by*. Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd.

Knight, G. (2000) Entrepreneurship and Marketing Strategy: SME under Globalization. *Journal of International Marketing*, 8 (2): 12-32

Kress, G. and van Leeuwen, T. (2001) *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. London: Arnold.

Krims, A. (2000) *Rap Music and Poetics of Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kubrin, C. E. and Weitzer, R. (2010) "Rap Music's Violent and Misogynistic Effect: Fact or Fiction." *Sociological Crime, Law and Deviance,* 14: 121-143

Labov, W. (1990) "The Intersection of Sex and social class in the course of Linguistic Change." *Language Variation and Change* 2: 205-254.

Lakoff, R. (1975) *Language and Women's place*. New York: Harper Colophone.

Lass, R. (1984) *Phonology: An Introduction to Basic Concepts.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lay, F. (2000) "Sometimes we wonder who the real men are: Masculinity and contemporary popular music". In West, R. and Lay, F. (eds.) *Subverting masculinity: Hegemonic and alternative versions of masculinity in contemporary culture*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, pp. 227-46

Leach, E. (1976) *Culture and Communication: the logic by which symbols are connected.* London: Cambridge University Press.

Lemish, D. (2004) "Exclusion or Marginality: Portrayals of Women in the Isreali Media." In Ross, K. and Byerly, C. M. (eds.) *Women in Media: International Perspectives*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., pp. 39-59

Levin, S. A. (1963) "Linguistic Structures in Poetry."
 American Speech, 38, (2): 137-140

Lieber, R. J. and Weisberg R. E. (2002) "Globalization, Culture, and Identities in Crisis." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 16, (2): 273-296

Liebow, E. (1967) *Tally's Corner*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Livingstone, S. (2002) *Young People and New Media*. London: Sage
    Publications.

Locke, D. (1987) *Drum Gahu*. Crown Point, IN: White Cliffs Media Company.

Locke, D. (1990) *Drum Damba.* Crown Point, IN: White Cliffs Media Company.

Lord, A. B. (2000) *The Singer of Tales*. London: Harvard University Press.

MacCarthy, J. E. and Perreault, W. D. (1993) *Basic Marketing*. Boston, MA: Irwin, Inc.

Magubane, Z. (2006) "Globalization and Gangster Rap: Hip Hop in the Post-Apartheid City." In Basu, D and Lemelle, S. J. (eds.) *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip Hop and Globalization of Black Popular Culture*, London; Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, pp. 208-29.

Malone, T. W. K. et al. (1999) "Tools for inventing organizations: Toward a handbook of organizational process." *Management Sc.* 45(1): 57-75

Macherey, P. (1978) *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. Geoffrey Wall. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Marshall, W. (2006) "Bling-Bling for Rastafai: How Jamaicans Deal with Hip Hop." *Social and Economic Studies*, 55 (1/2): 49-74

Marfo, C. and Yankson, S. (2008) *The Structure of the CCV Syllable of Akan. Concentric: Studies in Linguistics,* 34 (2): 85-100

Massamba, D. P. (1996) *Phonological Theory: History and Development*. Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press.

Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1848) *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Moscow: Foreign Languges Publishing House. (Ed. 1959).

Mazouzi, B. (1990) *La musique algérienne et la question raï*. Paris: Richard-Masse.

Mbiti, J. S. (1970) African religions and philosophy. New York: Doubleday,
    Anchor Books

McLuhan, M. (1964) *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man*. New York: Mentor.
McQuail, D. (1987) *MacQuail's Mass Communication Theory*. London: SAGE.

Mcrobbie, A. (1991) *Feminism and Youth Culture: From Jackie to Just Seventeen. L*ondon: Macmillan.

Merton, R. K. and Nisbet, R. A. 1976. *Contempary Social Problems*. New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich.

Meucke, D. C. (1969) *The Compass of Irony*. London: Metheun.

Mhlambi, T. (2004) "Kwaitofabulous: The Study of a South African urban genre." *Journal of the Music Arts in Africa*, Vol. 1: 116-27.

Mitchell, J.C. (1956) *The Kalela Dance: aspects of social relationships among urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Mitchell, T. (2002) "Introduction: Another Root – Hip hop Outside of the USA." In Mitchell, T. (ed.), *Global Noise: Rap and Hip hip Outside of USA*. Middleton, Conn.: Weslayan University Press. pp. 1-38.

Morris, M. H. and Paul, G. W. (1987) "The Relationship between Entrepreneurship and Marketing in Established Firms." *Journal of Business Venturing* 2, (3): 247-260

Moulard-Kouka, S. (2005) "Le Rap Sénégalais: Un Mode d'Expression inédit oral et l'Écrit." In Ricard, A. and Veit-Wild, F. (eds.) *Interfaces between the Oral and the Written,* Amsterdam – New York: Éditions Rodopi B. V. pp. 233-246

Muggleton, D. (2000) *Inside Subculture; the Postmodern Meaning of Style*. Oxford: Berg.

Mulvey, Laura. (1989) *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Mulvey, L. (1992) *The Sexual Subject: A Screeb Reader in Sexuality*. London: Routledge.

Newell, S. and Gadzekpo, A. (eds.) (2004) *Mabel Dove: Selected Writings of a Pioneer West African Feminism.* Nottingham: Trent Editions.

Nketia, J. H. (1965) *Ghana Music, Dance and Drama*. Accra: Information Service Department Press.

Nketia, J. H. (1968) *Our drums and Drummers*. Accra: State Publishing Corporation.

Nketia, J. H. (1992) *The Music of Africa*. London: Victor Gollangz Ltd.

Nketia, J. H. (1963) *Drumming in Akan Communities of Ghana*. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd.

Ntarangwi, M. (2009) *East African Hip hop: Youth Culture and Globalization.* Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Nukunya, J. K. (1992) *Traditional Change in Ghana: An Introduction to Sociology.* Accra: Ghana Universities Press.

Nyairo, J. and Ogude, J. (2005) "Popular Music, Popular Politics: Unbwogable and the Idioms of Freedom in Kenyan Popular Music." *African Affairs,* 104 (415): 225-49

Ochs, E., Smith, R., and Taylor, C. 1989. "Detective Stories at Dinner Time: Problem-solving through Co-narration. *Cultural Dynamics*, 2, 238-257.

Oduro-Frimpong, J. (2009) "Glocalization Trends: The Case of Hiplife Music in Contemporary Ghana." *International Journal of Communication* 3: 1085-1106

Okpewho, I. (1992) *African Oral Literature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ohmae, K. (1990) *The Borderless World: Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Ohmae, K. (1995) *The End of the Nation-State: The Rise of Regional Economies*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc.

Omibiye-Obidike, M. A. (1987) "Women on Popular Music in Nigeria." In a paper at the 4th International Conference of IASPM (International Association of the Survey of Popular Music), Accra, 12th-19th August, 1987.

Ong, W. J. (1988) *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. New York: Routledge.

Osumare, H. (2012) *Hiplife in Ghana: West African Indigenization of Hip-hop*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Overby, E. (2008) "Process Virtualization Theory and the Impact of Information Technology." *Organization Science*, vol 19, no 2, pp. 277-291.

Oware, M. (2010) "Brotherly Love: Homosexuality and Black Masculinity in Gangster Rap Music." *Journal of African American Studies*, 15, (1): 22-39

Pardue, D. (2007) "Hip Hop as Pedagogy: A Look into 'Heaven and Soul' in Sao-Paulo." *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 80, no.3, pp. 673-709.

Pearlman, J. (1988) "Rap's Gender Gap". *Option* (Fall 1988): 23-36.

Pellicani, L. (1981) *Gramsi: An Alternative Communism?* Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.

Perullo, A. (2005) "Hooligans and Heroes: Youth Identity and Hip-Hop in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania." Africa Today 51: 75-101

Pollock, G. and Bryant, A. (2010) *Digital and Other Virtualities: Renegotiating the image*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Potter, J. (1997) "Discourse analysis as a way of analysis naturally-occuring talk." In Silverman, D. (ed.), *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*, London: Sage, pp. 144-60

Putnam, M. T. (2006) "Teaching Controversial Topics in Contemporary German Culture through Hip hop." *Die Unterrichtspraxis/ Teaching German*, 39 (1/2): 69-79

Quirk, R. (1990) "Language Varieties and Standard Language;" *English Today*, 6, (01): 3-10

Quirk, R. and Greenbaum, S. (1973) *A University Grammar of English.* Essex: Longman.

Rabinaw, P. (1977) *Reflections Fieldwork in Moroccow*. London: University of Carlifornia Press.

Radway, J. A. (1991) *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature.* Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press.

Rakow, L. (1990) "Feminist Perspectives on Popular Culture". In John Downing, Ali Mohammed and Annabelle Sreberny Mohamadi, *Questioning the Media: A Critical Introducion,* London: Sage Publications Ltd., pp. 231-241.
Ranger, T. O. (1975) *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa, 1890-1970.* London: Heinemann.

Rasmussen, S. J. (2000) "Between several worlds: images of youth and age in Tuareg popular performances." *Anthropol. Q.* 73(3):133–44

Rea, W. R. (1998) "Rationalising culture: youth, elites and masquerade politics." *Africa* 68(1):98–117

Reisigl, M. and Wodak, R. (2001) *Discourse and Discrimination: Rhetorics of Racism and Antisemitism.* London: Routledge.

Reynolds, S. and Press, J. (1995) *The Sex Revolts: Gender Rebellion and Rock 'N' Roll.* Cambridge M. A. Harvard University Press.

Rosenau, J. (1997) *Along the Domestic-Foreign Frontier: Exploring Governance in a Turbulent World*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rose, T. (1994) *Black Noise: Black music and Black Culture in Contemporary America.* Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

Ross, K. and Byerly, C. M. (eds.) (2004) *Women and Media: International Perspectives.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Sacks, H. (1992) Lectures on Conversation, 2 vols. (Fall 1964-Spring 1972). Oxford: Blackwell.

Sarfati, G. (2005) *Éléments d'Analyse du Discours*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Samper, D. (2004) "'Africa is Still Our Mama': Kenyan Rappers, Youth Identity, and the Revitalization of Traditional Values." *African Identities,* 2 (1): 37-51

Sapir, E. (1921) *Language*. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Sapir, E. (1925) "Sound Patterns in Language". *Language,* 1: 37-51

Sharp, L. A. (1995) "Playboy princely spirits of Madagascar: possession as youthful commentary and social critique." *Anthropol. Q.,* 68(2):75–88

Schumann, A. (2012) "A Generation of Orphans: The socio-economic crises in Cote d'Ivoire as seen through popular music." *Africa*, 82 (4): 535-55

Schwandt, T. (2000) "Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry." In Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 189-214

Scott, J. (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden   Transcript.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Seale, C. (1999) *The Quality of Qualitative Research*. London. Sage Publications, Ltd.

Searle, J. R. (1969) *Speech Acts*. London: C. U. P.

Sey, K. A. (1973) *Ghanaian English*. London: Macmillan.

Shain, R. M. (2009) "The Re(public) of Salsa: Afro-cuban music in fin de siecle Dakar." In Barber, K. (ed.), *Africa,* 29, (2): 186-205

Sholte, J. A. (2000) *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Shillington, K. 1992. *Ghana and the Rawlings Factor*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.

Shipley, J. W. (2009) "Aesthetic of the Entrepreneur: Afro-Cosmopolitan Rap and Moral Circulation in Accra, Ghana." *Anthropological Quarterly*, 82 (3): 633-678

Shipley, J. W. (2013) *Living the Hiplife: Celebrity and Entrepreneurship in Ghanaian Popular Music*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Silverman, D. (2000) *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Spradley, J. P. (1979) *The Ethnographic Interview*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Steingo, G. (2007) "The Politcization of 'Kwaito': From Politic to Party Politics." *Black Music Research Journal*, 27 (1): 23-44

Stephens, S. (2000) "Kwaito". In Sense of Culture: South African Culture Studies. S. Nattal and C. A. Micheal (eds.). Cape Town: Oxford University Press. pp. 256-273

Stetson, R. M. (1928) "Motor phonetics, a study of speech movements in action." *Archives Néerlandaises de phonétique Expérimentale 3.*

Stoneley, P. (2007) *A Queer History of Ballet*. London: Routledge.

Strawson, P. F. (1964) "Inteniton and Convention in Speech Acts." *Philosophical Review,* 73, 439-460

Strathern, M. (1988) *The gender of the gift: problems with women and problems with society in Malenasia.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Stroeken, K. (2005) "Immunizing Strategies: Hip-Hop and Critique in Tanzania." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 75. (4): 488-509

Stubbs, M. (1983) *Discouse Analysis: the sociolinguistic analysis of natural language.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Sunderland, J. (2006) *Language and Gender*. London: Routledge.

Szymanski, D., Bharadwaj, S. and Varadarajan, P. R. (1993) "Standardization versus of International Marketing Strategy: An Imperical Investigation." *Journal of Marketing,* 57 (4), 1-17

Talbot, M. (1995) *Fiction at Work: Language and Social Practices in Fiction.* London: Longman.

Tamale, S. (ed.) (2011) *African Sexuality: A Reader*. Oxford: Pambazuka Press.

Taylor, D. E. (1995) "Child as Apprentice-narrator, Socializing voice, Face, Identity, and Self-esteem amid the Narrative Politics of Family Dinner." Unpublished Dissertation, University of Southern Carlifornia.

Toop, D. (199) *Rap Attack: African Rap to Global Hip hop*. London: Pluto Press.

Tonkin, E. (1992) *Narrating our past: social construction of oral history.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Trudgill, P. (1972a) "Sex, Covert Prestige and Linguistic Change in the Urban British English of Norwich." *Language in Society*,1 (2): 179-195

Trudgill, P. (1972b) Review of *Man's many Voices: Language in its Cultural Context by* R. Burling. *Journal of Linguistics*, 8: 306-311

Turino, T. (2008) *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*. London: University of Chicago.

Turkle, S. (1995) *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*. New York: Touchstone.

Turkle, S. (2009) *Simulation and its Discontents*. Cambridge: the MIT Press.

Turkle, S. (2011) *Alone Together: Why we Expect more from Technology but less from each other.* New York: Basic Books.

Ungar, M. (2001) "Constructing Narratives of Resilience with High Risk Youth." *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 20: 58-73.

Urban, G. (1976) "Entextualization, Replication, and Power". In Silverstein, M. and Urban, G. (eds.) *Natural Histories of Discourse*, London: University of Chicago Press. pp. 21-44

Urban, G. (2001) *Metaculture*. London: University of Minnesota Press.

Van Leeuven, T. (1999) *Speech, Music, Sound*. London: Macmillan.

Van Dijk, T. (2009) "Critical Discourse Studies: A Sociological Approach." In Wodak, Ruth and Meyer, Michael (eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis,* London: SAGE. pp. 62-86

Valdivia, A. N. (ed.) (2003) *A Companion to Media Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Wagner, R. (1991) "The fractal person." In Godelier, M. and Marilyn Strathern, M. (eds.) *Big men and great men: personification of power in Melanesia*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 159-73

Virilio, P. and Lotringer, S. (1983) *Pure War*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

Waterman, C. (1986) "Juju: the historical development, socio-economic organization, and communicative functions of a West African popular music. Ph.D diss. University of Illinois at Champagn-Urbana, IL.

Weitzer, R. and Kubrin, A. (2009) "Misogyny in Rap Music: A Content Analysis of Prevalence and Meanings." *Men and Masculinities*, 12; (3): 3-29

Williams, J. M. (1994) *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. New York: Harper Collins College Publishers.

Willis, P. (1977) *Learning to Labor: How Working-class Kids Get Working-class Jobs.* London: Saxon House.

Wilson-Tago, N. (2006) "The Politics of History and the Vernacular in Early Twentieth-Century Ghana: Situating Gaddiel Acquaah's Oguaa Aban in Ghanaian Social and Literary History." *Research in African Literatures*, 37 (3): 83-102

Wittig, M. (1992) *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (2009) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Womack, J. P., Jones, D. T., and Roos, D. (1990) *The Machine that Changed the World.* New York: Free Press.

Wood, J. (2006) *Communication in our Lives*. London: Thomson Learning.

Woolgar, S. (2002) *Virtual Society? Technology, Cyberbole, Reality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yankah, K. (1994) "Visual icons and the Akan concept of proverb authorship." *Passages: a chronicle of the humanities* (Northwestern University), 7: 1-3

Zagnani, S. (2004) "Le rap comme activité scripturale: l'émergence d'un groupe illégitme de letters." *Langage et Societé*, n◦ 110: 65-84

Zaitchik, J. A. and Wiehe, R. E. (1993) *Human Values: Perspectives on Six Themes.* Madison: Wm C. Brown Communicatins, Inc.

Zwicky, A. (1986) "The general case: basic form versus default form." *Berkeley Linguistic Society*, 12: 305-314

APPENDIX

DISCOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

Asem. "Give me blow". Lynx Entertainment. 2009.

Babyface, Morris and Okyeame Kwame, Kumasi. July, 2008.

Bobo, Paa. "Nsɛmkeka".

Bradez. Hiplife live video shooting. 4-Syte Studio. Laterbiokoshie, Accra, 26/06/09.

Clay, Dr. Clayton. "Mzbel's Show on GTV was very Inappropriate". *Daily Graphic*. Kumasi. 03/12/2010,
    p. 10.

Kaboom. Video on live performance. Stadium Hotel, Kumasi, 19/11/09.

Kwame, Okyeame. Video 0005. 2009.

_____. *Rundown* on TV Africa. Video Sanyo 055. 23/09/09.

Laxio. God First Recording Studio. Kumasi. 03/04/09.

Macarfee et al. Videos *KF 034, KF 036* and *KF 037*. Bomso, Kumasi. 26/03/09.

Nelson, Rev. Yaw Akpoh, a minister of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, on Kapital Radio's
    programme, "Day break Kapital", Kumasi, 13/04/12.

Shipley, Weaver. *Living the Hiplife.* 2007.

Sports Entertainment Centre video. Live hiplife performance. Kumasi. 24/12/09.

Jesse Weaver Shipley. Interview by *Afropop Worldwide's* co-producer Siddhartha Mitter.
    FESPACO biennial festival of African cinema in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. 2007.

Quata. "Dissing Kow Kesse". Single release. 2009.

Wailer, Kobbie. Hiplife live recording. Lagos Town, Takoradi. 26/08/09.

INTERVIEWS

Afum, Philip et al. Focus group interview. Labone Senior High School, Accra, 24/07/09

Aberewa Nana. Telephone. Accra, 06/01/12.

All Female Band. Focus group interview. Accra. 30/06/09.

Agyemang Berko, Richard. Personal interview. Accra. 07/07/09.

Akpakli. Personal interview. KNUST, Kumasi. 14/04/12

Awensem et al. Focus group. Tafo Nhyiaeso, Kumasi. 23/04/09.

Barfour et al. Personal interview. Kwadaso, Kumasi. 08/05/09.

C, Loving. Personal interview. Kumasi.15/06/09.

Collins, John. Personal interview. Accra, 30/07/09.

Debora et al. Personal interview. Focus group on Legon campus, Accra. 24/09/09.

Ekkah. Personal interview. Takoradi. 28/08/09.

Enninful, Rev. Personal interview. Kumasi, 05/05/07.

Erzuah, Entertainment Master of Yaa Asantewaa Senior High School. Kumasi, 03/01/12.

Forson et al. Focus group interview. Sekondi/Takoradi, 25/08/09.

Live audience. Random interview. Sports Entertainment Centre. Kumasi, 24/12/09.

Lisa at al. Focus group interview. God First Recording Studio. Kumasi, 16/04/09.

Rockstone, Reggie. Personal interview. Zanzibar Night Club, Accra. 31/07/09.

Kakape. Personal interview. God First Recording Studio, Kumasi. 03/04/09.

Kabobo, K. K. Personal interview. Musiga office, Accra. 13/07/09.

Kakraba et al. Focus group interview. Kumasi, 05/05/09.

Kwesi, Ras. Personal interview. Kumasi, 21/05/09.

Nkrumah and Owusu Dapaa. Personal interview. Global Communications Cafe, Atonsu S-Line, Kumasi.
     05/02/10.

Obour. Personal interview. Chrispat Hotel, Accra. 23/07/09.

Ofosu, Terry Bright. Personal interview. Accra, 12/04/11.

Ohene Gyan, Abraham . OM Studios, Accra, 25/06/09

Okyeame Kwame. Focus group. In his residence, Kumasi. 23/04/09.

_____. Personal interview. Kumasi. 14/05/09.

_____. Personal interview. Kumasi. 26/04/10.

Penche. Personal interview. Takoradi, 01/09/09.

Sandra et al. Focus group interview. Sekondi/Takoradi. 24/08/09.

Shanti, Black and Black Moon. Personal interview. Tamale, 02/09/08.

_____ Personal interview. Tamale.03/09/08.

Stone, Okyeame Kwame and Andy Dosty. Multiple interview. Kumasi, 20/03/09.

Students from University of Ghana, Legon. Focus group interview. Accra, 24/09/09

Taxi drivers at Legon Station. Focus group interview. Accra, 17/07/09

Two female dancers. Personal interview. Laterbiokoshie, Accra. 26/06/09.

Wofjay. Personal interview. Kumasi, 20/05/09.

Zoro, Papa et al. Focus group. Sekondi/Takoradi. 22/08/10.

NEWS ARTICLES

Aduasare, Bright. "Sydney Sacks NDC Over 'Our Money'. *Daily Guide*, Accra. 05/09/08

Ahenakwa, Kow. "Mzbel's Swagger," *Graphic Showbiz* ,Accra, 03/12/ 2009, p. 12

" Axe hangs over Asem's song". *Graphic Showbiz*. Accra, 26/02/2009.

Arthur, Peter. 2002. "Highlife and Sex 1". *The Ghanaian Times*. Accra. 16/11/2002, p. 11.

Arthur, Peter. "Highlife and Sex 2". *The Ghanaian Times*. Accra. 21/11/02, p. 6.

Arthur, Peter. "The Resuscitation of Highlife". *Daily Graphic*. Accra. 24/09/04, p. 14.

Atia, T. 2001. "Shabaan". *Al-Ahram Weekly*. 18-24 January, no 517.

Bawah, Eric. "NDC Youth Beat Up Radio Panelist". *Daily Guide*. Accra.07/04/10.

 "Egypt bans anti-govt protests." *Daily Graphic*, quoting the BBC, p. 5. 27/01/11.

Gomda, A. R. "JJ Goes Wild: Sack NDC Babies With Sharp Teeth", *Daily Guide*, 31st August, 2012. See

also *Daily Graphic*, 31st August, 2012.

Loza, P. 2004. "Hip Hop on the Nile." In Al-Ahram Weekly, Issue no. 723, 30th December, 2004 –
5th
     January, 2005 edition.

Musa, Inusa. "Sex is our Entertainment". *The Finder*. Okushibri, Kpone-Katamanso. 22/11/11, p. 6

Tamakloe, Winston . "The Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Youth under Training". *Ghanaian Times.*
     Accra. 11/02/10.

"UN Drops Equitorial Guinea Award". *Daily Graphic*. 22/10/10, p. 5.

INTERNET ARTICLES

Al-Taee, Nasser. 2003. "Running with the Rebels: Politics, Identity, and Sexual Narrative in
Algerian Rai." *Echo*, Vol. 5, Issue 1 (Spring). www.echo.ucla.edu. Accessed 02/01/11.

 "Asem's fans attempt to save the rapper from a big blow". www.modernghana.com, Accessed
17/11/11.

DeAngelis, Angelica Maria. 2003. "Rai, Islam and Masculinity in Maghrebi Transnational
identity." *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* . www.goliath.ecnext.com. Accessed 03/01/11

Diab, Osama. " The Tunes of Change." *Egypt Today*. February, 2010. www. egypttoday.com.
Accessed
     03/01/11.

en.wikipedia.org. Accessed 18/04/12.

Grippo, James R. 2006. "The Fool Sings a Hero's Song: Shabaan Abdel Rahim, Egyptian Shaabi,
and the
     Video Clips Phenomenon." *TBS Journal*, 16. www.tbsjournal.com. Accessed 02/01/11.

"Mzbel Sues KNUST ?600m, KNUST, VC, Students To Answer", www.ghanamusic.com.
Accessed
     05/05/09.

Pareles, Jon. 2002. "Arabic-Speaking Pop Stars Spread the Joy". *The New York Times*. 06/02/02.
     www.query.nytimes.com. Accesed 04/01/11.

"Robbers Confess To Sexually Assaulting Mzbel And Friends", www.ghanamusic.com. Accessed
     05/05/11.

Osafo-Mensa, Eugene "Tiffany: The nude pictures were meant for my boyfriend",
     www.ghanamusic.com, 07/12/2011. Accessed 05/01/2012.

www.flocabulary.com, accessed 28/03/11.

79

Okyeame Quophi bares it all – Akyeame broke up due to jealousy and ill advice

Certainly all is not well between former members of the popular hiplife group of the late 90's and early 2000's, Akyeame. Following recent comments by Okyeame Quophi advising musicians not to form groups, and blaming Okyeame Kwame for their disbandment, his actions have been interpreted as bitterness in certain sections of the media. However, the rapper/producer/video director/radio and TV presenter says he has too much going for him at the moment to be bitter or jealous about his former group member.

According to Quophi, he is very disappointed in the way the writer on Ghanacelebrities.com made him to look, just because he had expressed his general opinion on the issue of break ups in our music industry, citing Akyeame as an example.

"The story contains bias and it's evident that, it was tailored to destroy me as a person and to speculate what my feeling probably is, concerning an issue I have refused to comment on for seven years. Seriously my decision not release records after 'Quophilosophy' was basically to allow my brother to have his shine since it looked like he was too hungry for it and anything from me would be destruction," comments Okyeame Quophi.

"I have Emklan to run, a wife and two kids to take care of, a radio show every morning, a TV show every weekend, and other businesses and obviously don't have any idle time to discuss people. Who I choose to be happy for is my prerogative and don't think needs publishing. What the writer doesn't know is, it was jealousy and ill advice of his sort and not diverse opinion that destroyed eleven years of blood sweat and tears that was used in making the Akyeame name. That is years of my life and money I am talking about. At the, end of the day, the writer is trying to make a name I guess."

According to him, he and Okyeame Kwame were on cool terms before the release of his last album. He traces the root of any problem that may exist between the two to a number of factors.

"He lived in my house on and off for almost two months, sometimes with his dancers. He received any financial assistance he needed from me during the promotion of the album. That was the period we recorded the two new songs we have. If I am not miscalculating, he even impregnated his wife in my house. During his acceptance speech at Ghana Music Awards, who did he thank for allowing him stay in his house? Was it not KOD?"

Quophi adds that things got worse with the release of Obrafour's controversial hit, 'Kasiebo'

"Later his beef became, why I played Obrafuor's Kasiebo so much on my radio show knowing the song was against him. As a good presenter, I put my choice of music last and rather satisfy the needs of my numerous listeners. What they want to hear is what I play.

This I discussed severally with him and even together sought ways to curb the problem. As fate would have it, when people started talking about this same issue, he decided to play the devil's advocate. He placed a call to my elder brother saying i had joined forces with others to pull him down. That I think is very funny."

But even before 'Kasiebo', there appeared to be some dissatisfaction with Okyeame Kwame's Ghana Music Award Song of the Year, 'Woso'. According to Quophi, the song in its entirety is just the Twi version of a song (Shake Dem Demons Off), which he produced for an American rap artiste by name Dark Side, when he was resident Recording and Mixing Engineer at All for Won Studios in Columbus Ohio, USA.

"I contracted a graphic designer friend of mine to pull a job for me on my computer. He discovered the song (the original by Dark Side), copied it and later played it to a Kumasi based radio presenter who later aired the song. As I speak, am still dealing with this graphic designer. If I had wanted to sabotage the progress of the song in any way, would I have waited till later? Why he didn't call for clarification and went on to make those baseless accusations I don't know.

He explains that he is only human and can only take so much; and that he can't continuously be around people that always expect him to justify his every action. Hence, he is better off apart. According to Okyeame Quophi, solo acts stand a better chance of succeeding in the industry than groups, and he would not at this point in his life want to get himself involved in anything as such.

"When I agreed to do a come back album, it was for the fans of Akyeame who kept pushing for it. Unfortunately, it's evidently beyond repairs and that cannot materialize. That Ghana Music Awards performance will be the last. I am done with it, and a name change is on the way. For my music, it's gotten even better against the wish of the haters and will be putting out singles for my fans soon from.

www.ghanaweb.com, 19/09/10

Kaseɛbɔ (Feat. Guru)

Obrafour

Yee, onwunu adwo, my people,
yɛrebɔ dawuro, nti monyɛ aso
(2x)
Yɛrekyeakyea mo nyinaa, yɛde nkaseɛbɔ
ɛrebrɛ mo nyinaa (2x)
La la la la la, mmiɛnsa, mmienu,
baako, hwii tem
La la la la la, sɛ wɔapue, sɛ asa,
afei, ka w'ano to mu

Yee, it is evening time, my people
We are on the air, so listen
(2x)
We greet you all; this is the news
To you all (2x)
La, la, la, la, la, three, two
One, hwii tem
La, la, la, la, la, you are now out
That is all, just shut up

Guru

Ɔman dehyeɛ merekyea mo, Execution
FM na mo aso gu so
Nɔnsia kaseɛbɔ, mederebrɛ mo
Mo somfo Guru na ɛde kaseɛbɔ yi rebrɛ mo
Nsɛm no dɔɔ so, mɛbɔ no tɔfa
Deɛ adi mu akotene nso na mederebɛto dwa
Yɛwɔ sɔprase bi wɔ ahoma bi a ɛwɔ yɛn tɛlɛfɔn
Ne latest track mpo na mede ayɛ me ringtone
Agya, mema wo akwaaba ba wɔ efidie yi so
FM yi wɔ nsɛm bi a, yɛpɛ sɛ yɛbisa wo
Ɛyɛ a, nkrɔfɔ taa frɛ bisa me sɛ,
merebɛka no sɛn, Ɔbrafoɔ yi wɔ Ghana ha?
Ebinom se yɛtee wo nka wɔ America,
campaign trail, wo ne Obama, ɛyɛ ampa?
Ɛno nti na mebɔɔ kɔntene kɔɔ Twi
kɔɔ Breman, nsɛmtwerɛfoɔ ɛbɛpɛɛ wo
Agya merebisa wo kosan, wo deɛ gyina
so minute tiawa bi ma memmɔ me bow-tie
You've been away for too long

Dear listeners, I greet you all
You are listening to Execution FM
This is six o'clock news
It is your servant Guru with the news
We will sum up all we have
Here are the headlines
We have a surprise on our line
I have used his latest as my ringtone
I welcome you to this station
This FM would like to ask you
where you have been?
Is Obrafoɔ in Ghana?
Some say you were in America
On the campaign trail of Obama
That was why I checked everywhere
Journalists were looking for you
Can I ask you a question?
Can I wear my bow tie
You have been away for too long

Ama mpopɔtwewa bi ahyɛ aseɛ regroo horn
Nti da bɛn koraa na wobɛpue, w'apawa
foforɔ no, da bɛn na woreda no adi

Some fingerlings are growing horns
So when will come out?
When will your latest be released?

Obrafour

Obrafour

Meda wo ase, wose dɛɛn ni, radio bɛn ni — Thank you, you say? Which network?
Hello, hello, hello — Hello, hello, hello
(Yɛte wo nka, wo deɛ kasa) — (We hear you so speak)
Yei, m'ahoma yi koraa deɛn ni? — My line is giving me troubles
Wote me nka (Aane), metumi kasa — Do you hear me? (Yes) Can I speak?
(Aane, kɔ so) — (Yes, go on)

Obrafour — **Obrafour**

Ei, sorry, na m'ahoma no retwitwa — Ei, sorry, the line is breaking
Yoo, wei deɛ woabisa bi, na me nsɛm pa — Yoo, you can now speak
Ɛyɛ nokware trodoo, motee me nka akyɛ — It is true, it is a long time you heard of me
Mekɔɔgye m'ahome, ɛtɔ da a, na mede me ho atɛ — I went on leave, I went into hibernation
Na wose sɛn, wose, me ne Obama na, yɛreto Hosanna, wɔ he? Oh Ghana! — What are saying, that I am with Obama Singin Hosann, Oh Ghana!
Me mpo meteeɛ, yɛse mehyɛ kanta, — I even heard I was behind bars
nkrɔfoɔ se m'anum nsɛm asa, mentumi mpie da — They say I run short of words,
Ɛnso ɛnyɛ nokore, false propaganda — I can't came out, that is false propaganda
Nipa bɔnefoɔ, Taliban na Al-Qaeda — Evil people, Taliban and Al-Qeada
Wɔkankye, nante, me nti na wɔkyante — They chant, walk about because of me
Ɛneɛ monya adaagye, afei na morebɛhwe ase — Just wait, you are now going to fall
Mete ase, afei na merebɛyɛ no gidigidi — I am around and will be stronger
Yɛregyegye mo cedi cedi, mommɛhwɛ me fiili fiili, live on your TV TV — We take your cedi, come and see me Live on your TV, TV
Ɔbrafoɔ mate praka na mereye huri huri, ɛbɛyɛ mo sɛ sini sini Guru — Obrafour, nothing can stop me Guru This will look like the film
Okay, bra panyin, gyina so ansa, amanfoɔ, yɛrekɔgye nkratoɔ aba — Okay, elder bro, stay on the line Let us go for a short break

Obrafour — **Obrafour**

Eii, eii, eh na ɛhyɛ mu! — Eii, eii, eh, so that is how people feel
Sɛ menni hɔ anka, mopɛ, — They would be happier if I were not there
Agyinamoa nni fie a, nkura twe kɛkyɛ — When the cat is away, the mouse plays
Nyɛ mo na moayɛ o, me ara na mayɛ — It is not your fault; it is my mine
Sɛ mekooyɛ, maba, monbɔbɔ mo kɛtɛ — I am back so give me the platform
Na ɛhyɛ mu, eii, ei, eii! — So this is how you feel, eii, eii, eii

Guru — **Guru**

Atiefoɔ, yɛkɔɔgye nkra, afei yɛaba bio — Listeners, we are back from break

262

Me ne Ɔbrafoɔ rebɛtoatoa yɛn nkɔmmɔ dide mu	Obrafour and I will continue Our conversation
Ɔbrafoɔ, wowɔ hɔ? Anaa yɛ tetefon no ate kɔ?	Obrafour, where are you, our line !
Nti mo deɛ, momma yɛntoa kaseɛbɔ yi so	Let us continue with our adverts
Yɛn nsa ka no a, yɛbɛsane de no ato ahoma ne so	We will put him back on line
Nkra a yɛn nsa aka fri Kumasi ne sɛ	Reports from Kumasi says
Nnwomtoni OK, nso akɔto mona	Singer OK, has defiled a small girl
Ɔde abaayewa bi a, adi nfeɛ nnwɔtwe aforo mpa	Who is barely eight years
Wɔanyeni no, wɔayɛ no dosodoso, awengaa	He has destroyed her, peadophile
Ka na wu, ɛyɛ sene sɛ deɛ woretweetwee	It is better to say the truth than to laugh
Deɛ ɔnni nokorɛ awene ne se retweetwee	Those who do not know the truth have
Ɔbɛdane san bɛdane, ɛne n'adwendwene	Started laughing and that is his problem
Abɔdin fata wo a, na wodi ho poosu	Who the cap fit, let him wear it

Nanso deɛ mehunu yi, mehunu wɔn mo te sɛ China phone	But what we see is like China phones There is an imposter
Obi agye abɔso 'Best Rapper Alive',	Who calls himself, "Best Rapper Alive"
nanso yɛhwehwɛɛ mu, ne albums mpo nnuru five	But do not even have five albums
Nana, woaba ahoma yi so, ma menbisa	Nana, now that we have you on the line Let me ask you
wo, nsɛm bi sei, wodwene ho sɛn, anaa mereha wo?	What is your take on that?

Obrafour

Woama m'ani agye, me nnua, si aboterɛ	You make me happy, my bro, just be patient
Dɛmokrasi nti, obiara ne n'adwenkyerɛ	Democracy has brought about free speech
Momma wo bo mfu awiase,	Never be angry in this world
biribiara wɔ ne mmerɛ	There is time for everything
nananom aka ato hɔ dada, masan sen srɛ	Our elders have said it, I repeat
Yɛse ɔkɔtɔ de anibrɛ sɔ deɛ ɛnsɔ a, ɔbu n'aprɛ	When the crab holds where it not supposed to, the hand falls away

Monnyae no, wɔayɛ agrɛ, daakye ɔbɛka nokorɛ	Leave him, he is aggressive, he faces the The truth in future
Abrekyi a, ɔbutu kwan ho mpo, se wɔanyini	The lamb by the roadside claims it is Old and the road also flatters it that it Is old

Wose kwan nso sɛ wanyini, na deɛ ɔde wo butuu hɔ	What about the one who brought It there?

Ɛyɛ a, na ɛyɛ me mɔbɔ, ɔdasani nhu ne ho mɔbɔ,   I sometimes feel sad, he does not
                                                Know he is in a sorry state

Pagya n'abɛti sɛ bɛpɔ na wɔrekeka mu sɛ ɔsebɔ   Raises the shoulder and shouts like
                                                The tiger

Sɛ wogyenegyene wo ho a, wopae sɛ mpɔmpɔ   You misbehave and burst like the boil
Wo ara wokanfo wo ho a, ɛnkyɛ na   If you praise yourself, you fall
woate atɔ

Guru

Ah, ampa, w'ano ate, gyammre   Ah, it is true, you are from the palace
wofiri ahenfie saa na mate   That is what I have heard
Asɛmbisa a, ɛtwa toɔ, Ɔbrafoɔ,   Last question, Obrafour
kɔnkɔnsa nii bi a, ɔbɛtoo nsɛm   A gossip has whispered in my ear
twerɛfoɔ

Metee nnwom bi, 'Killing the   I heard a song, "Killing the game"
game', nti yɛbɛyɛ no yie a, ɛno   So is "atopagyengyen" the way to correct
ne 'Atopa gyengyen'   and repair hiplife?
Mepɛ sɛ wokyerɛ yɛn mu, simple   I want you to explain, they say
and short, yɛse Hiplife awu   Hiplife is dead

Obrafour

Oh, wahyɛ da anaa, Krakye? Ewuu   Oh, are you teasing me
dabɛn na mante   When did it die? And I didn't hear?
Anaa yɛse moakye no awe Auntie Muni waakye   Or you have eaten "waakye" with
Hiplife wu a, yɛbɛsu ama yɛ ti ate   it? If hiplife is dead, we will cry our head off
Ɛneɛ sɛ anka afei na yɛn nyinaa   Then all of us are going to be in tatters
yɛ to bɛtete
Deɛ menim ne sɛ music is dynamic   What I know is that music is dynamic
Deɛ ɔmpɛ nsakraɛ yɛ no na ahunu amane   You are in trouble when there is a change
Sɛ awu o, enwuuɛ o, me deɛ enhia me   If it is dead, that is not my business
Ɛmom, woyɛ ɔdwomtonii, na woyɛ okunini   But if you are a great singer you change
Sɛ ɛmmerɛ dane dane, na sɛ nnwom mane mane a   When time changes
Me nnua, ɛnnwane nwane, dane wo   My brother, don't run, change too
ho bi
(Ɔbrafoɔ, ɛnyɛ mmerɛ)   (Obrafour, it is not easy)
Wo deɛ, to wo bo na menkyerɛ wo   Just let me show you my concern
me me concern
Nsɛmfua a ɛwɔ nnwom mu a Obroni frɛ no content   Content is what is lacking
Ɛno na ɛtɔ siin, mempɛ sɛ mɛbobɔ din   I don't want to mention names

Da foforɔ, ma me mmerɛ na menkyerɛ m'adwene At the appropriate time, I will tell
You my peace of mind

Guru

Yoo, yɛn nsɛm pa o, amanfoɔ
Deɛ moteeɛ ne nka no ne Rap Sɔfoɔ
Mo somfo Guru nie

Obrafour

Yee, onwunu adwo, my people,
yɛrebɔ dawuro, nti monyaa aso
(2x)
La la la la la, mmiɛnsa, mmienu,
baako, hwii tem
La la la la la, sɛ wɔapie, sɛ asa,
afei, ka w'ano to mu
La la la la la, mmiɛnsa, mmienu, baako, hwii tem
La la la la la, sɛ wɔapie, sɛ asa, afei, ka w'ano to mu
Mmiɛnsa, mmienu, baako, hwii tem
Sɛ wɔapie, sɛ asa, afei, ka w'ano to mu

Guru

Yes, this is what we have by way of news
Listeners, the one you heard was Rap Priest
This is your servant Guru

Obrafour

Yee, it is evening time, my people
We are bringing you the news, so listen
(2x)
La la la la la, three, two
One, hwii tem
La la la la la, you are now out
So shup up
La la la la la, three, two , one
La la la la la, you are out,
Shut up, three, two, one,
You are now out so shut up