

CULTURE AND IDEOLOGY: UNPACKING YORUBA PHILOSOPHIES IN SELECT OLAMIDE'S HIP-HOP MUSIC

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Abstract

Philosophy has been perceived as the quest for knowledge that makes the man go out of his way to unravel the world around him. Philosophy differs across different cultures because culture is an inseparable aspect of it. Therefore, this research is motivated by how Yoruba philosophy, a subset of African philosophy, is projected in Nigerian Hip-hop music. The study is focused on identifying the components of African philosophy in the data as a way of indicating the presence of African philosophy in the selected data. Using purposive sampling technique, the study selected two of Olamide's tracks for analysis. Qualitative approach to data analysis was adopted to explain the various philosophical tropes embedded in the songs. Anchoring the discussions on Makinde's (2010) theoretical proposition, the study found that the most dominant philosophical trope in the tracks is the belief in and reverence for Olodumare (the Supreme Being). Others are philosophies of Ori (destiny), Omoluabi (good character) and time. It also found that the singer appeals to Olodumare through his Ori to help him in the journey of life so that the enemies would not overcome him. Additionally, there are instances of answered prayers where Olodumare has blessed the singer and his group. In conclusion, the study submits that considering African philosophy from the perspective of Nigerian Hip-hop music underscores the fact that the philosophy can be projected through as many modes as possible. It thus suggests that African philosophers and scholars in Cultural and Media studies pay critical attention to this neglected area.

Keywords: African philosophy, Nigerian Hip-hop music, Yoruba philosophy, *Ori*, *Olodumare*

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Introduction

The incursion of western civilisation, which has superimposed itself on African mentality and worldview is a sad reality that Africans have lived with for several decades. According to Oguejiofor and Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2015, p. 4-5), “To justify colonialism and cultural subjugation, Africa was presented as a continent without history, without geography, literature, culture, civilization and of course, philosophy. The degrading effect of slavery was therefore reinforced by colonialism”. With this subjugation, Africans have been erroneously perceived as a people without their own philosophy. To worsen the matter, some African scholars, to their own detriment and to the glorification of western ideals and values, also reason along this line by supporting the Eurocentric claims. However, a group of other African scholars who are Afrocentric in approach have not only believed in the existence of African philosophy, but have also sought every opportunity to project it and advance the African ideals and values.

As a result of the superimposition of western philosophy over African philosophy, there has been a manifestation of western values in most facets of African lives. This ranges from wedding to naming ceremonies, from gender roles to dressing patterns, from architectural designs to artistic creativities and even entertainment through the mass media. This last angle – entertainment – is the crux of this present research. It is predicated upon the obvious notion that there has been a replacement of African musical culture with that of the West. In other words, music and artistry in African societies have gradually lost their African expressive forms while gradually putting on the vestiges of foreign music and Artistic forms.

Suffice it to say that, despite the travails of Africans in the hands of the European subjugators, African philosophy still raises its head high in all the areas where it has been pulled down against all odds. In a typical wedding ceremony, for instance, Nigerians will hold a ‘traditional’ ceremony before going to the registry/church/mosque, which is the symbol of westernisation. This, as well as other instances, shows that although our cultural values and philosophy have been tampered with, they are still very much alive and they manifest themselves in different ways including the supposedly ‘foreign’ music.

In this research, we take a critical look at the projection of African philosophy (but narrows it down to Yoruba philosophy, which is an important subset of African philosophy) in Nigerian hip-hop music. The hip-hop musical style is predominantly western in outlook but Nigerians and, indeed, the entire African continent have adapted it to their own socio-cultural milieu, and the music has had a global spread because of the massive influence of both the mass media and social media. This development goes beyond the submission by Akindele and Adegbite (1999) that the English language has provided Nigerians with yet another means of expressing themselves and their culture because the language has also been instrumental in projecting African philosophy. This is because the Nigerian hip-hop music is predominantly performed via the instrumentality of the English language as well as ‘foreign’ musical instruments even though the artist and his philosophical slants are African (Nigerian). Therefore, just as the English language has provided Nigerians with another means of expressing their culture, Nigerian hip-hop music has also provided Nigerians with another means of projecting their philosophy using the entertainment platform.

The choice of hip-hop music in interrogating African philosophy is hinged on the dearth of attention on this aspect as we have observed the paucity of scholarship on how African philosophy is projected in music generally and hip-hop music in particular.

Conceptualising Philosophy

In its most general sense, Philosophy has been referred to as the love of knowledge which results in the desire to become well-informed in a particular discipline or aspect of life. Anthony Ikechukwu (2014, p.86) considers philosophy from its origin and submits that it came from two Greek words: (philo) meaning love and (sophia) meaning wisdom (p.87). Brought together, it means “the love of wisdom”. In a slightly different sense, Rocoer Paul (1992) refers to philosophy as the recovery of the self by overcoming the separation of the self from universal integration. By implication, philosophy is the integration of oneself with other members of society through wisdom. Philosophy, apart from the above “involves a rational inquiry into how we make meaning of existence in human culture. An inquiry into the validity of our culture is one in many thematic philosophical topics” (Balogun, 2013, p.27). This implies that being philosophical is also being rational or logical. Therefore, every philosophy is expected to espouse rationality and logicity in whatever area it is concerned with. As a working definition, we refer to philosophy as the desire to be highly knowledgeable or informed about a particular aspect of human life and rationally utilise the knowledge to advance one’s immediate world and the global world systematically.

One of the most fundamental things that influence the philosophy of any group of people, as submitted by Oladele Balogun (2013), is their culture. Therefore, Joseph Oguejiofor (2009) avers that there is a connection between philosophy and culture (p.91). This shows that before a good

understanding of the philosophy of a group of people, a thorough comprehension of their culture is necessary because the culture does not only highlight the experiences of the people, but also their total way of life.

Apart from culture, there is also a connection between philosophy and history because the culture of a people has to do with their historical antecedents. To understand the culture very well, a right step in the right direction is the study of the people's history. In this regard, Adebayo (2002, p.164) submits that just as history depends on the occurrences of events that a people experiences, philosophy also depends on the historical antecedents of the people.

A subset of philosophers are language philosophers. By exploring philosophy from the linguistic angle, they find a means to explain how language is used in the representation of reality. Because of the great importance of language to human beings, there is no way language philosophers will not be given a place of recognition in the order of things, because; philosophy, in whatever shade, must be expressed through the instrument of language.

Contentions about African Philosophy

While some scholars, especially those that have Eurocentric standpoints, argue that there is nothing like African philosophy (Cf. Levy-Bruhl, 1923), others argue for its existence. Those who argue for the existence of African culture have been referred to as being Afrocentric in approach. Given this, Mose (2010, p.36) posits that “all the fundamental misconceptions about African Philosophy originated from writings of European missionaries and anthropologists, and even some African writers who saw African Philosophy only from the point of view of traditional religions and cultures”. Similarly, Muhammed and Lukman (2023, p. 120) opine that

“the divergent schools of thought within African philosophers themselves equally pose a problem in afro-cultural communication.” It can, therefore, be argued that for most of the cases where such Africans submitted that there was nothing like African philosophy, it must have been due to their closeness and sympathy for European lifestyle and philosophy and the acceptance of same as being superior to those of African. Those scholars are Eurocentric in viewpoint even though they are Africans by origin.

In the attempt to put the debate to rest, Gbenga (2008), Makinde (2010), Ada (2015) as well as Abdullateef and Adelakun (2023), among others submit that we should rather put to work the African philosophy than argue about its existence or inexistence. Following this line of thought, this paper has deemed it fit to substantiate the existence of African philosophy by examining it from the Yoruba perspective since Yoruba is an important subset of the African continent.

Notion, Origin and Aspects of African Philosophy

The African philosophy has been perceived from the lenses of many Afrocentric authors as being an existing and flourishing philosophy though many Eurocentric scholars do not see it as such. According to Mbiti (1969), African philosophy deals with the understanding, state of mind, logical perception of the world around them that anchors the manner through which the African people think. It is based on the totality of the experiences of Africans and their reactions to such experiences within the African environment. This accounts for the submission by Innocent (2018, p.5) thus: “for a philosophy to be described with the adjective ‘African’, it must have an expression of the African life-world.” Consequently, it should be accepted that any philosophy that expresses the African worldview and experience is African philosophy.

African philosophy can only “be seen as growing out of a history of systematic reflection on widespread, pre-reflective beliefs about the nature of humankind and its purposes; and about our knowledge of and our place in the cosmos” (Gbenga, 2008, p.87). The implication of this is that African philosophy is bound to be different from other philosophies of the world because Africans do not have the same experiences and worldview with other people. Just like African philosophy differs based on our knowledge and place, other philosophies of the world are also based on the totality of the experiences of the people who own the philosophy.

Olayinka (2011, p.106), the love of wisdom and its pursuit is not limited to any culture of the world. Therefore, the African culture as well as any other culture of the world also has its own philosophy. Whether the philosophy is widely accepted as such or not is a different thing entirely. Gbenga (2008, p.85) submits that “African philosophy is philosophy per se, and should be recognised as such.” This implies that the African philosophy is indeed a philosophy.

Makinde (2010) divides the origin of African philosophy into three stages as follows: (a) unwritten philosophy and unknown philosophers, (b) re-orientation in philosophy and colonial ethnographers and ethno-philosophers and (c) critical re-orientation in philosophy and the contemporary African philosophers. Makinde (2010) submits that there is no actual record of the time philosophy started in south of the Sahara but philosophy started between 570 B.C. and 430 A.D. in North Africa. This period witnessed unknown philosophers whose philosophical sayings were handed down from one generation to another orally and hence, the name of the period.

The second stage, re-orientation in philosophy and colonial ethnographers and ethno-philosophers, is the stage where the misconceptions created by Eurocentric philosophers and writers got attention from Afrocentric philosophers and writers. At this stage, most of the misconceptions created by the colonialists and European missionaries about the African philosophy were corrected by Africans, who had become enlightened.

The third stage, which deals with a critical re-orientation in philosophy and contemporary African philosophers, has witnessed reactions against the ethnophilosophers by the contemporary African Philosophers, who, by their training and exposure to the western philosophical ideals can measure what should pass as African philosophy (Makinde, 2010). Based on their training and intellectual exposure, they can discern what yardsticks are used to measure Western philosophy. Therefore, they use Afrocentric yardsticks to measure what passes for African philosophy and eventually come up with what has been accepted as African philosophy.

Gbenga (2008, p.86), the subjection of African traditional beliefs and systems “to systematic and critical analysis in which reasons and arguments play a central role” leads to African philosophy. Looking at the first two stages, none of them can be said to have done this. Thus, since many of the scholars in the third stage in the origin of African philosophy look at the African traditional beliefs and systems systematically and critically, it passes for philosophy. By extension, this gives us the African philosophy. This explains why Martin (2016) affirms that African philosophy has come a long way and “after the long debate on the nature and existence of African philosophy, this philosophy became established” (p. 2). With all these as the background, it is safe to affirm that there is an existence of African philosophy.

Many scholars have worked on the classification of African philosophy but a single example, which is Ibrahim's classification, will be given here. Negedu (2014, p.10) submits that the "four categories of African philosophy are: Muntu (human being), Kintu (thing), Hantu (place and time), Kuntu (modality)". Muntu, which is the most important, deals with the concept of humanness, which relates to the fact that no human being exists in isolation from others. This is similar to the South African idea of 'Ubuntu', which Luthans, Wyk and Walumbwa (2004, p.515), imply that there is an individual existence embedded in the self and the simultaneous existence for others. Therefore, the human being has his existence tied up to that of others in society as no man is an island to himself. Kintu deals with things generally, i.e., those things that are nonhuman. They include animals, trees, houses, mountains and rivers. Hnatu, the concept of time and place, refers to the perception of time in terms of day or night, days, weeks, months, and years, as well as distance of place in terms of closeness or distance. The last item refers to kuntu, i.e., modality, which deals with force. Such a force is an unseen force but can influence things that can be seen. Examples include laughter, happiness, beauty, and temperature.

Scholars have argued, and we support their claims, that there is a close link between philosophy, language and culture (Cf. Gbenga, 2008; Egbunu, 2014; Oguejiofor & Ezenwa-Ohaeto, 2015). Kwang-Kuo (2012) submits that language serves as the base upon which the human world is laid because it serves a very fundamental purpose in our understanding of the world. Therefore, the African philosophy reflects the African language and culture just as other philosophies reflect the people's language and culture. In line with this, Egbunu (2014, p.363) submits that the authentic African philosophy should be that which originates from "a systematic analysis of our traditional

worldviews”, which are expressed through our languages or other languages that have been properly adapted to the African sociocultural milieu.

Yoruba Philosophy: A Brief Insight

The Yoruba have a tripartite notion of the constituent parts of a person, divided into *ara* (body), *emi* (soul), and *ori* (destiny), which are intricately linked together (Cf. Oladipo, 1992; Oyeshile, 2006; Balogun, 2007). The body deals with all the material constituents of the human person including his brain, heart, intestine, hands, legs, eyes, and other physical parts of the body. Each part, it is believed, performs a distinct role based on what use the person puts it. The second part is the soul, which refers to the immaterial or intangible but very important component of the human part. It gives life to the body and without it, the body becomes dead and nonfunctional. The soul provides the energy or force necessary for the body to move. Destiny is the third and most important because it controls the soul, which controls the body in turn. It is the part that is directly connected with the Supreme Being or Olodumare, who controls the affairs of the living, the dead and the entire universe. Therefore, whatever happens to *ori* happens to the remaining two components, as *ori* is the major force among the three.

Ori is in charge of a person’s personality and it not only represents but also determines human destiny. Buttressing the importance of *ori* in the Yoruba philosophy, Balogun (2007, p. 119) submits thus: “*Ori* is regarded as an individual personal god who caters for individual and personal interest ... whatever *ori* does not sanction cannot be given to any person by the orisa (lesser gods) or even by Olodumare (God) himself.” Therefore, if a man’s destiny (*ori*) is properly and positively connected to Olodumare, the man will live a successful life in all

ramifications. This accounts for why the Yoruba people believe in the pouring of libation and other activities that are geared towards appeasing Olodumare so that their destiny would choose good things at all times. Apart from the above, other important components of the Yoruba philosophy include the concept of Omoluabi (virtue), the concept of time, and more. Although Omoluabi, which has been referred to as a virtue, goes beyond good character, the closest translation is a virtue. It is expected that virtue should be seen or displayed by people in all ramifications of life. Although the expression of this philosophy is majorly through expressions revealing folk wisdom as espoused in proverbs, idioms, religious chants and such traditional phenomena, this study takes a step further by probing the possible use of hip-hop music as a vehicle for the expression of the Yoruba philosophy.

Theoretical Framework

As mentioned in the abstract, Makinde's (2010) theoretical proposition has been considered as the theoretical framework for the study. Makinde refers to his approach as ethnophilosophy. This approach believes that African philosophy should emphasise the collective wisdom of the African people by entrenching the African worldview through her oral traditions, folklore, proverbs, communal practices, wise sayings, and other related views. By doing this, the African people will be able to establish themselves as a distinct people and will be able to find their place in the league of people in a way different from how the West has painted them. By extension, ethnophilosophy tries to understand the African philosophy by critically examining the underlying principles and philosophies behind her cultural artifacts which stands her out from other peoples of the world.

Makinde also affirms that since the African people see themselves as their brother's keeper, ethnophilosophy focuses on the communal living of the people. Therefore, it eschews

individualism, which has been perceived as a major downside of Western philosophy, but enthrones communalism. This conditions the African thought and makes each man to think beyond the self in an attempt to project the overall good of the community. This philosophy expresses itself in as many areas as possible including greetings, music, arts, paintings, and relationship with others.

A Short Biography of Olamide

Olamide, according to Wikipedia, is one of the most influential artists in Nigeria. The popular Nigerian hip-hop artist was born on 15th March 1989 in Bariga, Lagos, with the name Olamide Gbenga Adedeji. He has adopted his first name as his stage and popular name. He obtained a degree in Mass Communication from the Tai Solarin University of Education in Ijebu Ode, Ogun State. His passion for music, however, led him to pursue a career in the entertainment industry. Much was not known about Olamide until 2010 when he signed a record deal with ID Cabasa's Coded Tunes.

Shortly after then, he released his debut album entitled *Rapsodi*, which was well-received among the Nigerian teeming youth. That marked the beginning of his rise in the Nigerian music scene. That was also followed by another album in 2012 entitled *YBNL*, which established him as a leading artist in the Nigerian hip-hop world. On 17th July 2013, Olamide became the first Nigerian to sign an endorsement deal with Cîroc, a foreign multinational firm (Olapade, 2019, p. 2). The same year, he founded a personal record label, *YBNL Nation*, through which he released a new album, *Baddest Guy Ever Liveth*. The overwhelming acceptability of the album further established him as a force to reckon with in the Nigerian hip-hop music. His selected tracks for this study, 'Eleda mi (My Head) and 'Omo Abule Sowo (Land Property Sellers)' were released in 2013 and 2016 respectively.

Methodology

For this research, a purposive sampling technique was employed to choose two of Olamide's tracks. In the first instance, the choice of Olamide as an artist is hinged on the fact that he is one of the leading Nigerian hip-hop artists. Additionally, he is well-known for his musical renditions that are acceptable among many Nigerian youths, especially those of Yoruba descent. Because he combines English, pidgin, and Yoruba, some people who are non-Yoruba get along with his music.

For analysis, the study adopts the qualitative approach to ethnomethodological data analysis. This is important because it handles the data better than the quantitative approach in light of the cultural issues involved. The data selected, being musical tracks, together with the analytical tools that are to be examined from them, do not support quantitative analysis better than qualitative analysis. What is done, therefore, is to closely look at the African philosophies projected by the musician in the selected tracks by subjecting their transcriptions to detailed analysis after each data set has been sorted purposively by their thematic oeuvres and the philosophical orientations in each song.

The Philosophy of *Olodumare* (the Supreme Being/God)

In the Yoruba worldview, *Olodumare* controls the affairs of men and whatever He says is the final though man may appeal to Him if He says anything negative about man. Thus, the artist has to appeal to him through his destiny, who serves as an intermediary between him and *Olodumare*. Olamide is found repeatedly projecting, here, that when people thought he would not break through, *Olodumare* came through for him. This accounts for his fortune in many areas of his life. Although he does not mention the word "*Olodumare*", he uses the word God/Baba God, which is

the equivalent of Olodumare in English and the concept of the Supreme Being is projected. The following excerpt from datum 1 buttresses this point:

Debby treat me like i no get baba god for back/Baba god wa lo turn up. If not for *Olodumare* that came to his rescue by ‘turning up’, his detractors would have overcome him (Debby, treat me as if I don't have God behind me. If not for Olodumare (God) who came to his rescue by 'showing up,' his enemies would have defeated him).

Throughout the chorus, Olamide prays to God for himself. He appeals to God to make him richer, get money to acquire land, build houses and buy cars. He also prays to God to help him overcome witches and enemies, and make those enemies go mad. This can be found in the following expressions: *Ma ko le, ma ra le/Ma lo wo se, ma ni motor... yeeey/Ma se gun oso, ma se gun ota ye/Wa sa golo de port-har* (I can't be, I won't be/ I won't go and work, I won't have a car... yeeey/ I won't chase after wealth, I won't chase after enemies/ as they will run on insanity from Lagos to Port-Harcourt). In the last line of the above quotation, the artist wishes his enemies go mad. He employs the metaphor of *Wa sa golo de port-har* (picking dirt up to Port-Harcourt) to wish his enemies run mad.

Another excerpt from datum 2 also speaks volumes about the concept of Olodumare. This can be seen in the following lines: *Throw the money in the air bi eni to gba wire/They say my level too low/Baba God dey lift me higher eh* (Throw the money in the air like someone who is receiving a wire transfer/ They say my level is too low/ But God is lifting me higher). In the above expression, the artist throws money in the air like somebody who has received foreign currency, which is much more valuable than the Nigerian currency and he attributes it to the fact that it is Olodumare that lifts

him. Without God, he would not have been lifted by any man because if a man lifts another man, he could be brought down again by the person who has lifted him.

The philosophy of Olodumare is also seen in datum 2 with Olodumare helping the artist where his detractors have written him off. The expressions: ‘*They say my level too low.../Wan le mi local but I'm living lavida local*’ are clear about this (They say my level is too low.../ They want to make me local, but I'm living the local life clearly). While his enemies think his social-cum-economic status is too low, Olodumare lifts him up and he is higher than his detractors. Similarly, they refer to him as a local boy but Olodumare has made him a household name. This implies that it does not matter what the enemies say or do, but what matters is what Olodumare says about a man.

Correspondingly, it can be said that he expresses the belief in *Olodumare* to help him overcome his enemies so he sounds a note of warning to them in the following expressions: *Omo abule sowo (omo abule sowo)/If anybody fvckup (if anybody fvckup)/I go put them in their place (omo abule sowo)* (Child of the village (child of the village)/ If anybody messes up (if anybody messes up)/ I will put them in their place (child of the village). He tells them not to disturb him because if they do, ‘he will put them in their place’, i.e., he will deal with them. The artist also expresses the mysterious nature of *Olodumare* in blessing him and tells his detractors that they would never be able to understand how he is making it just as they cannot understand how water gets into the coconut. This is supported with the expression: *Kole ye wan, bomi se wannu agbon* (It won't fit them, but I will make it work for myself). Therefore, they should let him be.

Philosophy of Ori (Destiny)

One of the major components of the Yoruba philosophy is the concept of destiny, which deals with a man's subconscious guide and guard. Therefore, if a man's destiny chooses good things, he will always be fortunate and vice versa. *Ori* directs everything about a human and can be seen manifesting in a number of ways with some synonyms. For instance, it can be *eleda*, the creator and *iseda*, destiny.

One of the manifestations of *Ori* is seen in Datum 1 where the artist even named the track 'Eleda mi', meaning 'My Creator'. It is believed that a man can speak to his destiny to make way for him and make good choices for him so that he will be fortunate because one cannot succeed without the help of his destiny. Consequently, Olamide appeals to his destiny not to allow his enemies or detractors overcome him. This can be substantiated in the following excerpts: *Eleda ma sun oya turn up/Turn down for kinni/We dey chop up* (God, don't sleep, come and turn up/Turn down for what/We are enjoying).

Beyond the prayer to *Ori* for protection, we also have the answered prayer by *Ori* as presented by the artist in datum 1 as follows: *Them don forget the time wey me and my guys no get shoes/We dey only wear Dunlop/Olohun je ki a se konge ire* (They have forgotten the time when my friends and I had no shoes/We could only wear Dunlop/May God allow us to achieve greatness). The excerpt indicates how the artist and his friends were held down by the claws of poverty in the past before his *Ori* answered his prayer. During the time, they had no shoes so they had to wear ordinary slippers. But later, his *Ori* answered his prayer and he became an object of envy by the people around. This is found in: *Dem won see me finish mo lock up/Them say the boy e don dey fuck up* (They want to see me fail, but I locked myself up/They say the boy has started messing u). The above

quotation from the track shows how envious his enemies become of him but his Ori does not allow them to overcome him.

Closely linked to a man's destiny is that of his parents, especially the mother. If a man's destiny does not choose good things, he can appeal to his mother's destiny to help him in life's journey. With this in mind, Olamide also appeals to his mother's destiny to support his destiny as the Yoruba people believe that no mother would allow her child to suffer hardship. This can be seen in the excerpt: '*Ori iya mi o... mi o, mi o/Won fe ko bo la mi o... mi o, mi o/Ma ma je kan ja mi o... mi o, mi o.*' The above excerpt can be translated as *My mother's destiny, my enemies want to puncture the balloon of my wealth, please do not allow them to succeed.* This buttresses the fact that a man's destiny is connected to his mother's own and he can appeal to both his destiny and his mother's for help or support.

Still exploring the concept of Ori, there is an aspect of prayer against the enemies. The Yoruba people believe that only a man's destiny can save him from his enemies so they appeal to God through their destiny for safety. In line with this, Olamide prays for God's protection from his enemies, especially those who wish him dead. He prays that such people should not die but be perpetually sick so that they would not be able to trouble him and his friends/band members. Simply put, he specifies that their sickness should be so intense that they would not be able to eat, drink or do anything yet they should not die. Such a condition is considered as maximum punishment for his enemies. The following lines from datum 1 explain the notion: *Eni to ba ro ku ro wa/Ko ni ku/Ko ni ru, sugbon a sick/Wa bu omi fun mu ko le mu/Wa bu onje fun je, kole je/Awon to fe da te'yon ru/Tan fe ba te'yon je/Ba wo le se jé* (Anyone who is struggling will not die/It

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won't be in vain, but they may get sick/Bring water to drink, so they can drink/Bring food to eat, so they can eat/Those who want to ruin your path/And those who want to destroy your progress/How will it happen).

He also prays to God not to have mercy on his enemies because they too do not have mercy on him. He adds that his enemies claim that he is using juju to remain on top but Olamide states they are wrong because it is God that makes him stay on top. Therefore, he says: *Messi no mercy no mercy for them o/I tell them say te ba lo be/Mercy mercy no mercy for them o* (Messi, no mercy, no mercy for them! I told them if they go that way/Mercy, mercy, no mercy for them). The only saving grace for his enemies is for them to let him be. If they keep disturbing him, God will not have mercy on them.

Philosophy of Omoluabi (Virtue)

Another important aspect of the Yoruba philosophy is the concept of *Omoluabi*, which serves as an overall symbol of virtue. Embedded in the philosophy of Omoluabi is the idea of good character, which is expected to be demonstrated in all spheres of human life. Olanipekun Olufunmilayo (2017, p.218), virtue, apart from good character, encompasses gentleness, respect, and spoken word, i.e., intelligent and expert use of language, goodwill, truth, bravery, hard work, and intelligence.

Omoluabi (a virtuous child) is expected to be demonstrated in different ways by a man, for instance, in behaviour, speech, relationship with people, and the way one comports oneself, among others. Based on the fact that his detractors have seen his success, the artist insinuates

that his detractors are accusing him of lacking in character. To him, it is an unfounded allegation as he says in datum 1: *Them say the boy, e don dey puff up/Say my belle, e don dey come up/Eleda ma sun oya turn up* (They say the boy is starting to get arrogant/They say my stomach is growing/Creator, don't sleep, let's turn up). From the quotation above, the artist says that his enemies are accusing him of puffing up whereas he is not. Thus, he considers it as a mere distraction and appeals to his destiny to turn up rather than sleep off. His destiny (ori) needs to turn up so that those enemies would not overcome him. The enemies also accuse him of becoming fatter with his tummy getting protruded. That too is just a distraction and he does not care about what they are saying because enemies are known for such.

The philosophy of *Omoluabi* is also projected in datum 2 as follows: '*Because I'm keeping my cool eh*'; '*Ele puro m'omo re*' and '*Emi o waye maya eh*' (because I'm keeping quiet right, nobody can slander her child, and I care less about life vanities). Although these expressions appear at different points in the track, they all point to the philosophy of *Omoluabi*. The first expression submits that the artist is coolheaded or gentle; the second one objects to the idea of lie-telling, meaning that one is expected to say the truth at all times. The third expression shows that the artist is not greedy or difficult. All these are some of the qualities expected of an *Omoluabi*, and he submits that he possesses them.

Philosophy on "Time and Seasons"

Although the philosophy of time can also be subsumed under virtue, this study discusses it differently because of its implication. The Yoruba philosophy of time is perceived from different perspectives. For instance, the Yoruba believe that there is an appointed time for everything.

Therefore, a man may not have a breakthrough until his time even if he is hardworking because it is the appointed time that determines success. This can be buttressed with the following excerpt:

*How many years now we dey on top/Them say na juju we dey top
up/Debby treat me like i no get baba god for back/Baba god wa lo turn up*

(How many years now we've been on top?

They say it's juju (magic) that we're using to rise.

Debby treats me like I don't have God behind me,

But God showed up and helped me.)

With this excerpt, the artist submits that God is on his side and that accounts for his success, which comes at the right time. Besides that, God has also helped him to have lasting success as he has been on top for “many years now”.

Philosophy on Hard Work

Although this is also a subset of the philosophy of virtue, it could be explored on its merit. The Yoruba people believe strongly in the need to work hard as a prerequisite for success. In a typical Yoruba society, it would be quite questionable for a man who is not known for his hardworking nature to succeed or become wealthy. Therefore, in some portions of datum 2, the artist submits, though indirectly, that he is hardworking and that explains why God is blessing him. Line two of the datum reads thus: *And I no like awoof eh (I don't like freebies)*. The expression suggests that the artist works for his money rather than looking for bonuses from any quarters.

Summary of Findings

This paper has examined the projection of African philosophy in Nigerian Hip-hop music using two tracks from Olamide. The analysis of the selected song excerpts has yielded some interesting findings which are here discussed. Firstly, Nigerian Hip-hop music, though aping foreign patterns in terms of rhythm and rendition, has been adapted to Nigerian peculiarities. Thus, it can express African philosophy.

Secondly, it has been found that certain African philosophies like those of *Olodumare*, *Ori*, *Omoluabi*, time and hard work are expressed in the selected data. Of all these philosophies, that of *Ori* is the most preponderant. This is because the Yoruba people pay a lot of emphasis on this philosophy as it is believed that most of what happens to man are caused by his destiny. Thirdly, a man's *ori* is linked to that of his parents, especially his mother. Therefore, the artist does not only appeal to his destiny but that of his mother to help him in the journey of life so that his detractors would not overcome him.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has explored how philosophy can be effectively communicated through diverse mediums, with a specific focus on the African philosophical insights embedded in Nigerian hip-hop music, particularly that of Olamide. Through his music, Olamide provides a rich tapestry of African values and systems, offering philosophical reflections that resonate with contemporary societal issues. This study reveals that Olamide's music does not merely entertain but also serves as a conduit for the dissemination of African philosophy, addressing themes such as identity, resilience, and socio-political struggles. The widespread popularity of Nigerian hip-hop, amplified by mass and social media, positions it as a powerful tool for philosophical engagement, particularly with the youth. By blending entertainment and philosophical teachings, Olamide's music embodies a modern approach to African philosophy that makes it accessible, relevant, and impactful. Therefore, this study underscores the importance of recognizing and further exploring the philosophical dimensions of Nigerian hip-hop as a means of preserving and propagating African thought in the contemporary world.

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Appendix

The Lyrics of Olamide's Selected Songs

Appendix 1

ELEDA MI O

Eleda mi o... mi o, mi o
Ori iya mi o... mi o, mi o
Won fe ko bo la mi o... mi o, mi o
Ma ma je kan ja mi o... mi o, mi o
Ma ko le, ma ra le
Ma lo wo se, ma ni motor... yeeey
Ma se gun oso, ma se gun ota ye
Wa sa golo de port-har
Ma ko le, ma ra le
Ma lo wo se, ma ni motor... yeeey
Ma se gun oso, ma se gun ota ye
Wa sa golo de port-har ye

Them say the boy, e don dey puff up
Say my belle, e don dey come up
Eleda ma sun oya turn up
Turn down for kinni
We dey chop up
Them won see me finish mo lock up

Them say the boy e don dey fuck up
Them don forget the time wey me and my guys no get shoes
We dey only wear dunlop
Olohun je ki a se konge ire
Wabilliahi taofeek
Eni to ba ro ku ro wa
Ko ni ku
Ko ni ru, sugbon a sick
Wa bu omi fun mu ko le mu
Wa bu onje fun je, kole je
Awon to fe da te'yon ru
Tan fe ba te'yon je
Ba wo le se je

Eleda mi o... mi o, mi o
Ori iya mi o... mi o, mi o
Won fe ko bo la mi o... mi o, mi o
Ma ma je kan ki won ja mi o... mi o, mi o
Ma ko le, ma ra le
Ma lo wo se, ma ni motor... yeeey
Ma se gun oso, ma se gun ota ye
Wa sa golo de port-har
Ma ko le, ma ra le
Ma lo wo se, ma ni motor... yeeey
Ma se gun oso, ma se gun ota ye
Wa sa golo de port-har ye

How many years now we dey on top
Them say na juju we dey top up
Debby treat me like i no get baba god for back
Baba god wa lo turn up
Na we boiling, them dey warm up
Na we gangan the girls dey love up
To hell with the champagne you won pop
We getting money like person wey win world cup
I see rolando
All of them
Messi no mercy no mercy for them o
I tell them say te ba lo be
Mercy mercy no mercy for them o
Mo n jaiye lo o
Mo get fila, ma wo be
Omo baby, ma ro se
Ilekun yen, ma close e

Eleda mi o... mi o, mi o
Ori iya mi o... mi o, mi o
Won fe ko bo la mi o... mi o, mi o
Ma ma je kan ki won ja mi o... mi o, mi o
Ma ko le, ma ra le
Ma lo wo se, ma ni motor... yeeey
Ma se gun oso, ma se gun ota ye
Wa sa golo de port-har
Ma ko le, ma ra le

Ma lo wo se, ma ni motor... yeeey
Ma se gun oso, ma se gun ota ye
Wa sa golo de port-har ye
Ra le
Ma ni motor
Ma segun ota yee
De port-har yeee
Ra le
Ma ni motor
Ma segun ota yee
De port-har yeee

Eh eh eh
Wo o... eh eh ye

Appendix 2

OMO ABULE SOWO

You know say i no be gbaroof eh
And i no like awoof eh
Emi o waye maya eh
Set the roof on fire eh
Throw the money in the air bi eni to gba wire
They say my level too low
Baba God dey lift me higher eh

Omo abule sowo (omo abule sowo)
If anybody fuckup (if anybody fuck up)
I go put them in their place (omo abule sowo)
I no do real estate and management but... (Omo abule sowo)
Omo abule sowo (omo abule sowo)
If anybody fuckup (if anybody fuck up)
I go put them in their place (omo abule sowo)
I no do real estate and management but... (Omo abule sowo)

Because I'm keeping my cool eh
Bi ti haier thermo cool eh
Wan loun fi ogidan we ekun eh
Erin wan bow a de'kun eh
You know say I no holy
Biti pastor kumuyi eh
So I change the story
Wanni iru owo wo lo tu muyi eh
Emi alhaji Pablo, Pablo omo Escobar
Eni OT emo genesis, I've gat baking soda
Elo bere lowo mama re
Ele puro m'omo re
Olofo bi ojo'keji oja ni wan
Ko'sowo lowo re, lowo re

You know say I no be gbaroof eh
And I no like awoof eh
Emi o waye maya eh

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Set the roof on fire eh
Throw the money in the air bi eni to gba wire
They say my level too low
Baba God dey lift me higher eh

Omo abule sowo (omo abule sowo)
If anybody fvckup (if anybody fvckup)
I go put them in their place (omo abule sowo)
I no do real estate and management but... (Omo abule sowo)
Omo abule sowo (omo abule sowo)
If anybody fvckup (if anybody fvckup)
I go put them in their place (omo abule sowo)
I no do real estate and management but... (Omo abule sowo)

We are not here for wan ni wan pe
So kanje kori wan pe eh
Sofun omoge toun redi yen
Form mo'n niko pede
Iru oti wo lofe mu
Serve yourself and do the gauge
Iru owo wo lofe na, let me know
Emi bureau the change
Wan le mi local but I'm living lavidia local
Why you sober komole baby do the yoga
Elo bere lowo mama re
Ele puro m'omo re
Olofo bi ojo'keji oja ni wan
Ko'sowo lowo re, lowo re

You know say i no be gbaroof eh
And i no like awoof eh
Emi o waye maya eh
Set the roof on fire eh
Throw the money in the air bi eni to gba wire
They say my level too low
Baba God dey lift me higher eh

Omo abule sowo (omo abule sowo)
If anybody fvckup (if anybody fvckup)
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I no do real estate and management but... (Omo abule sowo)
Omo abule sowo (omo abule sowo)
If anybody fvckup (if anybody fvckup)
I go put them in their place (omo abule sowo)
I no do real estate and management but... (Omo abule sowo)

Kole ye wan, bomi se wannu agbon
Young presido, biti idi agbon
Wan fe mumi, ngbo dey say na who
Ma pe laye biti ebora oru
Kole ye wan, bomi se wannu agbon
Young presido, biti idi agbon
Wan fe mumi, ngbo dey say na who
Ma pe laye biti ebora oru

Omo abule sowo (omo abule sowo)
If anybody fvckup (if anybody fvckup)
I go put them in their place (omo abule sowo)
I no do real estate and management but... (Omo abule sowo)
Omo abule sowo (omo abule sowo)
If anybody fvckup (if anybody fvckup)
I go put them in their place (omo abule sowo)
I no do real estate and management but... (Omo abule sowo)

Kole ye wan, bomi se wannu agbon
Young presido, biti idi agbon
Wan fe mumi, ngbo dey say na who
Ma pe laye biti ebora oru

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