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Ignore the Lyrics and Dance to the Beats?: A Discourse of Misogyny in Kenyan Rap Music

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Abstract:

Misogyny is the detrimental effect of men's aggressive, hostile and scornful talk about women. This paper offers a linguistic analysis of misogynistic discourses expressed by Kenyan male artists in Kenyan rap music. A cross sectional analysis of five Kenyan rap lyrics revealed derogatory terms used to refer to women. More so, women were portrayed as readily available sexual objects whose sole purpose in life is to satisfy men's sexual desires. Lastly, women were characterised as materialistic 'gold diggers'.

Keywords: misogyny, Kenyan rap music

1. Introduction

The patriarchal structure of our Kenyan society places men in positions of power while relegating women to positions of subordination. These dominant assumptions about gender relations infiltrate into social contexts including rap songs to present a picture of gender as practice and ideology. To maintain the power balance in the society, men are forced to constantly assert their masculinity by warding off threats of femininity. The disastrous outcome is aggressive and antagonistic talk about women, aptly referred to as misogyny.

Over the years, rap music has generated a lot of scathing criticism for allegedly peddling excessive misogynistic ideology. Scholars and critics have contended that some rap music is awash with messages that debase, objectify and devalue women (Adams and Fuller 2006, Conrad et. al 2008, Fitzpatrick 2005, Nelson 2000, Pareles 1994 and Rose 1994). The existing body of literature on rap music clearly shows that the genre does occasionally contain messages that trivialize women. However, much of the literature is based on circumstantial evidence rather than a systematic analysis of the lyrical content of the music. More so, most of the literature is in the British and American contexts thus suggesting an important opening for research on rap music and misogyny in the Kenyan context.

This research poses the question, what specific misogynistic messages are expressed by men in the lyrics of Kenyan rap music? This question is addressed through a linguistic textual analysis of five Kenyan rap songs. The research paper is organised as follows. The terms 'misogyny' and 'Kenyan rap music' are briefly described in the second part of the paper. This is followed by a discussion of the theoretical framework of Hegemonic Masculinity (Connell 1987, 1995, 2000) and a review of the relevant literature on rap music and misogyny in the third part. Part four outlines the methods used to collect and analyse data. Part five details a textual analysis of the lyrics of five Kenyan rap songs using the pragmatic resources of presupposition, denotation and connotation. Lastly, part six presents the conclusion of the paper.

2. Definition of Terms

2.1. Misogyny

Adams and Fuller (2006) broadly define misogyny as hatred or disdain of women. The two scholars then narrow down to the definition of misogyny in rap music as the 'promotion, glamorisation, support, hamorization or normalisation of oppressive ideas about women.' (p.940). They emphasise that in rap music "this ideology reveals itself in many ways, from mild innuendos to blatant stereotypical characterization and defamation" of women. This definition captures the multifaceted form of misogyny and its existence as part of a larger social, cultural and economic system that sustains and propagates it. As Hooks (1994) observes, 'the sexist, misogynist patriarchal ways of thinking and behaving that are glorified in gangsta rap are a reflection of the prevailing values in our society...' (p.2). Such misogynistic lyrics thus empower male artists to exalt their power and masculinity in their patriarchal society.

2.2. Kenyan Rap Music

Bennet (2000:134) defines rap as a "narrative form of vocal delivery in which rhyming lyrics are spoken or "rapped" in rhythmic patois over a continuous backbeat." The rap vocals typically emphasise lyrics and word play over melody and harmony (Wekesa 2007).

Kenyan Rap music is believed to have exploded in the mid 1990s. Pioneering rappers include Hardstone (Harrison Ngunjiri) with "Uhiki" (wedding), Kalamashaka with their national hit 'Tafsiri Hii', K-South with 'Tabia Mbaya' and also the late Poxi Presha with his break out hit 'Dhako' (Ntarangwi 2009). Contemporary prominent Kenyan rap artists include Nonini, Jua Cali, Prezzo, Ken Razy, Tapeli, DNA, Bamzigi, Circuite, Nazizi, Nameless, Fundi Frank, Ebony Affair, E-Sir and Lady S. it is important to note that demographically, Kenyan rap music is a male dominated genre.

3. Theoretical Framework And Literature Review

3.1. Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded in the theoretical perspective of Hegemonic Masculinity. In the theory of Hegemonic Masculinity, masculinity is perceived as a structure of social relations and particularly as a structure of power relations (Connell 2000). Here then, the social construction of masculinity is connected with male domination. Connell (1987) proposes that hegemonic masculinity is a dominant form of masculinity which preserves the interests of men while marginalizing and subordinating the interests of women. Connell also states that hegemonic masculinity is the culturally idealized form of masculine character; the current ideal. Epprecht (1998) asserts that throughout history and across cultures, certain characteristic features of masculinity occur with striking regularity. For Epprecht 'real' manliness has tended, for instance to put emphasis on men's heterosexuality, virility, control of emotions and the acquisition and exercise of power. Additionally, the numerous attributes that characterize hegemonic masculinity and seem to be relatively universal include domination, aggression, competitiveness, athletic ability, stoicism and control (Cheng 1999).

The framework of hegemonic masculinity is useful for this research since it emphasizes power relations between men and women. The lens provided in the theory enables an examination of the dominant misogynistic ideologies articulated by male rappers in Kenyan rap music.

3.2. Literature Review

Nelson (2000) identifies the 'pimp' or promiscuous man as a primary role model according to the values of the code of the street. He indicates that this is substantiated by the audio-visual images in rap music, which often represent men as dominating over their environments. Nelson suggests that in order for this power imbalance to exist, it requires the oppression of women. In Hip-hop language, the dynamic is often reinforced by the popularity of public discourses that exalt promiscuous behavior by men while simultaneously detesting that of women. This line of thought is taken up by Fitzpatrick (2005) who describes a 'whore', a derogatory term of describing women, as one of the many women serving a 'pimp'(a promiscuous man). In tandem with the expressed dominant ideologies, this labelling serves to characterize women as sexual objects. Nelson's and Fitzpatrick's studies are in line with this research which scrutinizes the language of rap music to establish whether artists use sexist language. The two scholars identify words in rap lyrics that rap glamorise misogyny. However, unlike this research, they fail to systematically interrogate the language of rap music to unravel misogynistic discourses and ideologies articulated.

Pareles (1994) observes that people who monitor lyrics worry that some rappers are overtly homophobic, sexist and violent. He also points out that rappers accrue social and economic capital for themselves through their ability to rhyme, speed of their articulation and 'their ability to create outsized personas through words alone.' Pareles further states that rap is a tool for the affirmation of a rapper's self. Rap may define a rapper as successful through flaunting of status symbols such as jewellery and cars. It also often defines a rapper as sexually insatiable and a bit of a rebel of societal laws. Pareles gives an example of the American rap group '2 Live Crew' which has been accused in the 'Times' of misogyny and glorifying abuse of women. He agrees with the critics that the group's rhymes on "As Nasty as They Wanna Be" are clearly sexist since they treat women entirely as objects. At a literal perspective, Pareles suggests that the machismo in rap music reveal 'adolescent attitudes toward women, who are either presented as either materialistic and cold or easy sexual conquests.' While Pareles emphasises how the lyrics of this single group directly comment on sexism and exploitation of women, she fails to consider how this constructs masculinity. Besides, her observation is not based on a systematic content analysis of '2 Live Crew's' music videos. By conducting a textual analysis of a much larger sample of rap lyrics, my research provides an empirical basis for identifying the ways in which Kenyan rappers reproduce their masculine identities through a myriad of discourses including the discourse of misogyny.

Lastly, Adams and Fuller (2006) examined the use of misogynistic ideology in gangster rap music. The two scholars identify six misogynistic themes prevalent in rap music: "a) derogatory statements about women, particularly in relation to sex, b) statements involving violent actions towards women, c) references of women causing trouble to men, d) characterization of women as 'users' of men, e) references of women being beneath men, and f) references of women as usable and discardable beings" (p.940). The two scholars further identify two images namely, the sapphire and jezebel stereotypes which are regularly found in many misogynistic rap lyrics. They define the sapphire (in rap referred to as 'bitch') as an African-American woman who dominates her entire household including her husband. The sapphire also takes the form of a money hungry, scandalous manipulating and demanding woman. The jezebel (referred to as 'ho' [whore] in rap lyrics) on the other hand is described as a sexually loose and aggressive woman. The jezebel is illustrated as a sex object that can be abused in any way to satisfy a man's sexual desires. Adams and Fuller rationalize that rap artist's use misogynistic imagery in their music for various reasons. First, they may have internalized negative stereotypes about women from their culture. Second, the subjugation of women enables these male artists to

exalt themselves in an oppressive world. Lastly, by debasing women lyrically, male artists are provided with a means of asserting their masculinity (p. 94. Like this research, Adams and Fuller's study reflects two interacting ideologies of language and gender. In their study, the operative gender ideology links successful masculinity to the oppression of women. This study is in a way reminiscent to ours which looks at misogynistic ideologies in Kenyan rap lyrics. However, Adams and Fuller analyse misogynistic ideologies in American rap music whereas in this study, I analyse the misogynistic ideologies in Kenyan rap music.

4. Methodology

Purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of six Kenyan rap songs from fifty randomly selected Kenyan rap songs. The songs were purposively sampled and chosen on the basis of particular characteristics. To begin with, they featured rap songs performed by male artistes only. An additional criterion for selection was that the performers whose songs were included had a Kenyan heritage. This was judged from their biographies posted on www.kenyanlyrics.com. The sampled lyrics were collected from the same website (www.kenyanlyrics.com). Guided by the need for accurate data, the sampled lyrics were collected from the website www.kenyanlyrics.com. The lyrics were viewed and then printed.

Next, each chosen lyric was read and in the course, salient features related to the discourse of misogyny were noted. This was followed by rereading of the texts at minute levels of analysis (from text level to sentence level to word level). After this, parts of possible interest related to the guiding discourses of misogyny were marked and highlighted in each of the lyrical texts. The various highlighted sections were then separated and grouped together under similar relevant sub discourses. Lists of examples to illustrate arguments related to the given sub-discourses were then compiled and analysed using the pragmatic tools of presupposition, denotation and connotation. A brief description of these analytical tools is provided hereunder.

4.1. Presupposition

Yule (1998:25) defines a presupposition as 'something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance'. This is in line with Saeed (1997:3) who states that when we presuppose something, we assume it. In broad terms, presuppositions can be said to be 'implicit meanings which are subsumed by particular wording in the sense that its interpretation is conditional upon the tacit acceptance of the implicit meaning' (Hosney, 2011, p.30). These implicit meanings that Hosney mentions are pragmatic inferences 'based more closely on the actual linguistic structure of sentences' (Brown and Levinson 1987: p.167).

The linguistic entities that generate presuppositions are referred to as presupposition triggers. Yule (1998) divides presuppositions into several types: potential, existential, factive, lexical, structural, non-factive and Counter-factual.

Yule expounds on the types of presuppositions in the following ways: a potential presupposition is that which is triggered by some part of an utterance such as a subordinate clause taken in isolation, but may or may not be a presupposition of the whole utterance. For example the utterance 'John says that the president of Kenya is old' has two potential presuppositions: 1) there is someone identified as John and 2) there is a president of Kenya. An existential presupposition is generally found in definite noun phrases. For instance, the sentence 'The tribal clashes in Kenya ended' presupposes the existence of the entities it refers to; in this case 'the tribal clashes'. A factive presupposition is triggered by factive verbs including know, regret and realise. For example 'I regret having done that' presupposes that 'I did it'. In the lexical presupposition, the asserted meaning of one form is conventionally interpreted with the assumption that another non asserted meaning is understood. In the sentence 'she managed to come' it is presupposed that she 'attempted to come' Structural presuppositions are defined as those that use specific sentence structures (such as a question) so that it is expected that the information given in the sentence is true. For instance, 'who is coming?' presupposes that 'someone is coming.' 'A non-factive presupposition is one that is assumed not to be true' (Yule, 1998:29). Here, verbs such as dream, imagine and pretend are used. An example is 'she imagined I was sick'. The presupposition of the sentence is that 'I was not sick.' Lastly, the counter-factual presupposition is one that represents structures from which it is understood that the given information is the opposite of what is true (Yule, 1998). 'I am ill' is the presupposition drawn from the statement 'if I were not ill.'

4.2. Connotation and denotation

The study of semiotics as propounded by Ferdinand de Saussure (1974) and expounded on by Barthes (1967 in Hartley, 2002) has led to a concern with the denotative and connotative meanings of language in use. Denotation has been described as the first order of signification (Barthes ibid) because it describes the relationship within a sign, that is, 'between the signifier (physical aspect) and signified (mental concept) (Barker 2008:p79).

Barthes (1967 in Hartley, 2000) argues that there are two systems of signification: denotation and connotation. He defines denotation as the descriptive and literal level of meaning mutually shared by all members of a culture. Thus 'tree' denotes the concept of a vegetative plant. The denotative meaning therefore has the characteristics of universality and objectivity. Barthes defines connotation as meanings that are generated by connecting signifiers to wider cultural concerns of meanings. Unlike denotation, connotative meanings are variable and in accordance to the culture of the recipient and entities of analysis (Barthes, 1972 in Mcquail, 2005:p.348). Thus 'tree' may connote nature. Denotation and connotation is useful in the analysis of both the lyrics and visuals in the rap videos to reveal meanings of masculinity.

5. Analysis Of Rap Lyrical Texts

The rap texts chosen for analysis in this section revealed a misogynistic ideology in both implicit and explicit ways. The rap texts were drawn from the songs, 'Kinyau nyau' by Deux Vultures, 'Uta do' by Syd Justice and Bobby Mapesa, 'Manyake' by Joel and Circuite, Mtoto Mzuri by Nonini, 'Tichi' by Kenrazy, '2050' by Abass ft Chiwawa and lastly 'kuta Vitu' by Nonini. In the analysis, three themes that promote ideas that degrade women were identified. These are, (a) references to women using

derogatory terms, (b) reference to women as sexual objects, (c) characterisation of women as users of men. Excerpts from the aforementioned texts relating to the various themes were grouped together and discussed in the subsections that follow:

5.1. References to women using derogatory metaphors

The illustrations exploited under this section are from various misogynistic rap texts. The analysis in this subsection largely employed denotation and connotation. The first example is an excerpt from a song entitled "**Kinyau nyau**" by Deux Vultures. The entirety of this song refers to women in a humiliating manner. Women are referred to using the metaphors 'kinyau nyau' and 'ndogo ndogo':

2 kinyau nyau hawa ndogo ndogo These 'kinyau nyau' young young

The term 'kinyaunyau' is derived from 'nyau nyau' which alludes to the sound that cats make. The Kiswahili morpheme 'ki' indicates an object. Therefore, the term 'kinyaunyau' can be assumed to refer to an object that has a characteristic of a cat. Assuming this, we can argue that the rappers metaphorically characterise women in relation to cats. The connotation of this metaphorical reference is a loose, sexually aggressive woman otherwise known as a 'whore' or 'prostitute'. The metaphor 'ndogo ndogo' (young, young) connotes young sexually attractive women who have a reputation of home wreckers. They are high maintenance women. These young women avail themselves to men for sexual exploitation with the sole aim of material gain. The reference terms 'kinyau nyau' and 'ndogo ndogo' are pejorative as they depict some women as lacking in morals and self-esteem. This association of women to sexual promiscuity provides a rationale for men to sexually assault them. It is worth noting that whereas the women in the song are presented as materialistic and promiscuous, one of the rappers boastfully refers to himself as a lion, a metaphor which invokes the image of a hunter.

26 mimi ni simba.

I am a lion,

The above metaphoric reference ratifies the expected gender norms in which men 'hunt' for women with the aim of being intimate with them. Like a lion which hunts down animals for food, the rappers hunt down women for sex to bolster their masculine status. In the text 'Uta do' by Syd Justice and Bobby Mapesa, Syd also validates his masculine power by verbally attacking his treacherous girlfriend. The rapper demeans his girlfriend by referring to her as a wild dog. This is reminiscent with the study conducted by Sutton (1995) which revealed the prevalence of animal metaphors as references for women.

Verse 2

27 sitaki ukoo, sitaki mbwa koko

I don't want a relationship; I don't want a wild dog

A wild dog denotes a kind of dog that roams, lacks in training and is sexually permissive. The connotation of the reference is that like the wild dog, the rapper's girlfriend is untamed and lacking in morals since she is unfaithful. Akin the discussed women termed as 'kinyau nyau' and 'ndogo ndogo' (line 2) the woman characterised in this song is sexually permissive.

Another example is from the song 'Manyake' by Joel and Circuite. The lexeme 'manyake' is derived from the Sheng word 'nyake' which denotes meat. This is collaborated by images in the video of the song whereby one of the rappers is pictured surrounded by meat in a butcher. However in the context of this song, 'manyake' is metaphorically used to refer to girls (and women) and their buttocks. This connotation is underscored by the images in the music video which focus on the buttocks of various girls walking on streets. The following lyrics taint and assault the image of women:

1Manyake...all sizes

Buttocks (women or girls) ... all sizes

2Manyake...kama prizes

Buttocks (women or girls) ...like prizes

3Manyake...kama loons na maji

Buttocks (women or girls) like balloons filled with water

4Juala ndio wahitaji

A condom is what you need

The reference to women, girls and their sexual organs in food terms (meat) is clearly offensive. It is connoted that like meat which is eaten, women are 'eaten' or rather sexually exploited by men. In the above data set, a cynical attitude towards women is enhanced when the artists sexually evaluate women by claiming that they (women and their buttocks) come in different sizes (line 1). Women are also compared to prizes; things that are awarded to people who are successful in a competition. Women in this sense are connoted to be sexual conquests of men. Women's buttocks are also pejoratively des1cribed as balloons filled with water (line 3). This evaluation implies that the rappers find women with big, round buttocks sexually appealing. At the end of these demeaning descriptions, the rappers presuppose that men are at liberty to sexually exploit women because all they need are 'juala' (condoms) (line 4). This line suggests that women are sub humans who cannot voice their opinions on sexual matters. If a man wants to have sexual intercourse with a woman, he can do so with or without her permission as long as he has a condom. Like Joel and Circuite who describe women in food terms, the rapper DNG in the text 'Banjuka Remix' describes the woman who is gazing at him as fresh coca cola. Coca cola is a soft drink widely consumed by people of different ages. This metaphor

connotes that the girl is young (fresh), sexually appealing and readily available for sexual exploitation by men. The woman's

young age, small stature and defencelessness are implicated when DNG derogatively uses the kiswahili morpheme 'ka' before the words describing her: This morpheme is normally used to diminutively refer to someone or something as small.

34 ni coca cola ka-fresh kananicheki tu.

It is coca cola (diminutive) fresh (diminutive) just checking me out]).

In the texts 'Ti chi' (Teach) by Kenrazy and '2050' by Abass ft Chiwawa, the rappers also affix the diminutive Kiswahili morpheme (ka-) on words used to describe girls. Underlying this reference is the presupposition that the girls (and supposedly other female) are small in stature thus less powerfull than men. Again the contempt the rappers feel for women is presupposed in these examples:

'Tichi' by Kenrazy

6 nikapata kamanzi kameketi kwa kiti I get a (diminutive) girl (diminutive) sitting on a chair 8 na ka kawaida kalikuwa kabeauty And as usual (diminutive) she was (diminutive)a beauty

'2050' by abbas Kubaff, Chiwawa and Maleek

3 mi natafuta kadame kafulani kakamu kaketi kapewe am looking for a (diminutive) girl (dim) some (dim) she comes and (dim) sits (dim) be given drinks

3 mi natafuta kijana na pesa na nyumba na gari

I am looking for a boy with money a house and a vehicle

It is worth noting that whereas the rappers Abbas, Chiwawa and Maleek refer to the girl in the diminutive, contrary boys are referred to normally without the affixation of the diminutive- ka- (line 3). The 'men as providers' myth is invoked when the girl is instructed to sit and take a drink on the man's account. It is presupposed that the girl is financially dependent as the drink is bought by a man. The masculine ideals of independence and economic empowerment are weaved in (line 3) where the rappers state that they are looking for a boy who possesses money, a car and a house. This contrast between the dependent girl and independent boy normalises the unfair gender power balance of the Kenyan society.

Lastly, in 'Mtoto Mzuri Remix' (A Good Child) by Nonini ft Bobby Mapesa, girls and women are referred to using the metaphors 'mtoto' (baby), 'swara' (gazelle), 'kigwara' (pest) and 'baboon:

Verse 1

1 ushaona mtoto amasimama ka range four point six Have you ever seen a baby standing like range four point six

Verse 2

5 kama wewe ni wa kusalimiana na watu If you like exchanging greetings with people 6 Kwa barabara we ni swara On the road you are a gazelle 7 kama wewe ni wa kuchekesha maconcodi If you like laughing with conductors 8 usilipe kodi we ni kigwara So as not to pay fare you are a pest 12 usiwe kula kula ka baboon Don't be an eater like a baboon

The metaphor 'baby' though used with some level of affection has a myriad of negative connotations. It implies that a woman is senseless, defenceless, timid and dependent like a baby. This metaphor positions the artist in opposition to the girl. The artist is constructed as tough, strong and independent: masculine ideals. The rapper therefore patronises the woman and other women by using the term 'baby'. The image of a 'gazelle' invokes the perception of women (or some women) as wild. This carries a negative connotation of sexual promiscuity. The metaphor 'pest' underscores the dependence of women on men while 'baboon' pejoratively connotes ugly, gluttonous women. Eating in this context is not just confined to food but also the act of women extorting money from men. Strikingly, the rapper uses the terms 'mtu' (person) and plural 'watu' (people), when referring to himself and other men (lines 5 and 10). These terms are used to refer to both the female and male gender and thus can be termed neutral. So, by using these neutral terms to refer to himself and other men, the artist insinuates that women are sub humans. This self referencing also presupposes the rappers' power and domination over women:

5 Kama wewe ni wa kusalimiana na watu

If you are the type that likes exchanging greetings with people

10 Akipita baze kila mtu anamwita aunty

When she passes every person calls her aunty

It is striking that most of the reference terms in this subsection emphasise on women's sexuality. Terms such as 'baby' refer to a sexually attractive woman whereas 'baboon' is a referential term for a sexually unattractive woman. Referential terms that

characterise women as sexual objects include 'manyake' (meat) and coca cola. The reference terms 'cat', 'dog' and 'gazelle' fall under the semantic category of sexually unfaithful or promiscuous women. The cited derogatory terms confirm Mc-Connell-Ginet's (1989) observation that language reflects a male centered view of the world and serves men's interests more readily than women's. Perhaps, the rappers are compelled to use the illustrated demeaning terms so as to prove to fellow men that they are not as weak as women.

5.2. References to women as sexual objects

This subsection looks at the representation of women's bodies in rap texts. The first example is derived from the song 'Mtoto Mzuri Remix' (A Good Child Remix) by Nonini and Bobby Mapesa. In the opening line of the first verse of the song, a woman's body is equated to that of a range rover vehicle

1 ushaona mtoto amesimama ka Range four point six

have you ever seen a baby standing like a Range four point six'.

The Range Rover is one of the powerful vehicles in the world. It is a vehicle that is desired by many. The comparison of a woman to a Range Rover connotes that the woman's body is well built, sexually desirable and can be bought just like a Range Rover from the show room. As if this is a certification for sexual exploitation, the rapper goes on to express what he would like to do to the woman'.

4 nimpande ka maji kwa tap ikitoka kwa mita

I climb her like water in a tap coming from a meter

In the above line, the metaphors 'climb', water' and 'tap' connote the sexual act. The rapper liberally fantasises about having sex with the woman, her consent notwithstanding. In the line (4), it is presupposed that women's bodies are readily accessible for men's sexual fantasies and satisfaction. This interpretation is enhanced in the ninth line where the woman's sexual availability is emphasised. In the line, the rapper states that the girl laughs when he suggests that he wants to have sex with her. The laughter presupposes the woman's consent to the man's advances:

9 na anacheka nikimwambia nataka kumtiaaaah

And she laughs when I tell her I want to have sex with her

The notion of women as accessible sexual objects for men is further accentuated in the text, 'Kuta Vitu' by Nonini. In both the chorus and the third and fourth lines of the first verse, the rapper urges fellow men to have sex with women regardless of their economic status. It is presupposed that men have the power to have sex with the women they want, and the women have no option other than participating in such an unfair act.

Verse 1

3 machali mukiwaona hawa mamanzi Guys when you see these girls 4 lazima kitu mutawafanya. You must do something to them (have sex with them)

chorus

1 Miss Kenya, kuta vitu have sex with Miss Kenya
2 mama wa mboga kuta vitu have sex with the woman who sells vegetables
3 manzi ya beshte wako, kuta vitu have sex with your friend's girlfriend
4 mboch wenu, kuta vitu have sex with your housemaid

In another example that showcases contempt for women, the rapper focuses on a barmaid's buttocks which he describes as big. His gaze is also drawn to the miniskirt the barmaid is wearing and he disrespectfully states that the woman has not covered 'the crack'. 'crack' denotes a line of division caused by splitting. However, in this context it connotes the female genitalia. 'Covering the crack' means wearing underwear. The assumption that the woman is walking around without underwear presupposes her readiness for sexual exploitation. The rapper goes overboard when he cheekily drops some money on the ground so as to peep at the woman's genitals:

8 huyo barmaid akipita

When that barmaid passes

9 lazima nimemwita

I must call her

10 vile amebeba mimi najua ni Mtaita

The way she has carried (big buttocks) I know she is a Taita

11 hiyo mini ni fupi unasikia hajaziba ufa

That mini is short; you've heard she's not covered the crack

12 naangusha fifty bob halafu namchungulia

I drop fifty shillings then I peep at her (genitals)

In other lines of the same verse of the song, the rapper boasts about sexually violating the barmaid whom he goes home with. It is presupposed that the woman has loose sexual morals since she eagerly has sex with a man she hardly knows. Line 17 and 18 encourage men to use sexual violence against women. In line 17, the rapper boasts about 'bending' the girl he is having sexual intercourse with until midnight. 'Bending' here implies the posture of the woman during the sexual act. After meting out such violence on the woman, the rapper comments that he switches on the lights to find that the woman has become useless. This implies that women are rendered powerless when men sexually assault them:

15Nampeleka kejani mlango namfungulia I take her to my room and open the door for her 16twaruka ndani ya bedcover halafu tunajifunikia We jump inside the bedcover then cover ourselves 17Nimkunje, nimkunje mpaka saa sita ya usiku I bend her, I bend her until mid night 18Nikiasha taa nione huyu manzi si kitu

When I switch on the lights I see that this girl is useless

The song 'Banjuka Remix' (by DNA and several other artists) also glorifies the sexual objectification of women. The rapper Kaya brings out this theme by exploiting the 'male gaze'. The male gaze is a term from Gaze theory (Mulvey: 1975) that describes the tendency of men to ogle women in the public and private domains. From this angle, the male gaze can be said to be a form of aggressive heterosexual behaviour routinely engaged by males. Women thus are transformed into subjects of implicitly male visual appreciation and therefore, sexual commodities. This is illustrated hereunder:

30 nacheki chupi dress ni ka kichungi

(I see a pant (her) dress is like a net)

31 life ni fupi na mi sijifungi

(Life is short and I don't inhibit myself)

32 nabeba take away asubuhi katatu maze (ndani ya nyumba)

(I carry take away in the morning [diminutive]three (in the house)

33 sijui nachaguaje

(I don't know how to choose)

Kaya ogles desirously at a woman and sees her underwear. The woman in turn seems to welcome Kaya's gaze as she is wearing a revealing dress (30 I see a pant (her) dress is like a net). This is meant to enhance the sexual pleasure of the heterosexual men including Kaya. And indeed, the rapper is pleasured to the extent of going home with three women (32 I carry take away in the morning [diminutive] three (in the house). In this line, women are described as 'take away' food that is bought from fast food restaurants, packed to be eaten from elsewhere. The description of women as 'take away' bolsters the sexual objectification and degradation of women as they are depicted as food which is readily available and can be packed to be eaten from elsewhere. Women are also portrayed as easy sexual targets as three women end up in Kaya's house and he is spoilt for choice. (31...three (in the house), (32 I don't know how to choose).

The examples cited under the sub discourse of women as sexual objects illustrate that women are sub-human beings. Women are meant to serve as objects of male desire and sexual exploitation. This one dimensional depiction of women as objects of male pleasure undermines women's assertion of autonomy.

5.3. Reference to women as users of men

This discourse also ideologically supports the mechanism that oppresses women while exalting men's position in the society. Men perceive themselves as gold mines which women exploit in exchange of sex. Thus, whereas men are constructed as independent and providers (desirable masculine qualities), women are reduced to dependent, materialistic and unreasonable sub humans as demonstrated in the following lyrics:

The first illustration is derived from the song 'Kinyau nyau' by Deux vultures:

Verse 1

1 Manze huyu manzi anapenda kunitoanisha This girl likes extorting money from me
2 Nikisota atafika na fujo kwa nyumba When I am broke she raises a storm in the house
3 We ndogo ndogo anataka kuenda shopping This small small wants to go shopping
4 South Africa, German si Nairobi
5 wacha basi nikupe ngiri kumi Nyoh
Let me give you ten thousand shillings first
6 shika kwanza hii ni ya matumizi
Take this for your use
8 sijalala siku mbili mi napiga dili

I've not slept for two days working on a deal 9 we kinyaunyau unapenda kunitesa tu You 'kinyaunyau' likes frustrating me 10 leo ni phone, viatu, pia na heels za blue Today it is a phone, shoes and blue heels 11 zote hizo unataka ununuliwe tu All those you want bought for you 12 Na usiku unataka kwenda out tuu And at night you just want to be taken out. 14na ikifika ntaimanga tu kwa hamu And when it comes I will eat it ravishly 15kinyaunyau anasema apewe gari Kinyaunyau demands for a car 16 na nyumba ya gorofa kule pwani And a storeyed house at the coast 17 okay shika pesa sio shida Okay take money is not a problem 19 mvumilivu hula mbivu The persevering eat ripe (fruits) 20 ngoja ifike usiku Wait for nightfall 21 utakiona cha moto we mtoto You will experience fire you baby 27kinyau nyau wa Mombasa anapenda raha Kinyau nyau of Mombasa likes partying 28 na yule wa Kisumu anapenda beer And that of Kisumu loves beer 29 wa Nairobi anapenda kunipigia That of Nairobi likes calling me 31 wakati wa baridi anapenda kunywa chai When it is cold she likes taking tea 32 na wakati wa joto anapenda kula icecream And when it is hot she likes taking icecream

The woman depicted in the above lyrics is characterised as a sexually aggressive, demanding and unreasonable parasite. Such a presupposition is derived from the irrational demands she heaps on the rapper. She extorts money from the rapper (lines 1&2), demands for money to go shopping in foreign countries (lines 3 & 4). As if this is not enough, she also demands that the rapper buys her a phone, hipster and shoes (line 10). He also has to dig deep in his pocket to furnish the woman with a car and storied house situated at the coast (lines 15 &16). At night, the 'pest' of a woman wants to be taken out (line 12). The rapper's autonomy and independence is presupposed since he works hard to furnish the woman with money to live lavishly (lines 5 & 8). The statement 'money is not a problem' also presupposes that the rapper is economically empowered (line 17). In lines 19- 21, the rapper discloses that he tolerates the relentless demands because he knows that at night he will sexually assault the materialistic woman. Sexual violence is connoted in the statements, 'I will eat it lavishly' (line14) and 'you will experience fire' (line 21).

The rapper creates the presupposition that he is speaking about Kenyan women in general as he identifies the likes of women from the various regions in Kenya. He states that the 'Kinyau' from Mombasa likes to party (line27), that of Kisumu loves beer (line 28) and that of Nairobi loves tea and ice-cream (lines 31 and 32). In over all, the song's message is that women's sexual favours have to be expensively bought by men. This unfair presentation of the relationship between man and woman wrongfully signifies women's continued quest to be subsumed by male dominance.

The last example is from the lyrics of the song 'Mtoto Mzuri Remix' by Nonini and Bobby Mapesa. This song contrasts the qualities of an ideal woman with those of an undesirable woman who is depicted as a user of men. The ideal woman's physical and behavioural attributes are praised by the male rap personaes. On the other hand, the undesirable woman is described in despicable terms which conjure up a picture of a gold digger as illustrated in some lines in the second and third verses of the song. The rapper addresses the undesirable woman as follows:

Verse 2

7 hapana itisha mimi thao ya saloon
Don't ask me for one thousand (shillings) for salon
8 Shika mbao nyoa kichwa saf ka balloon
Take this twenty shillings and shave your hair clean like a balloon
9 Za lunch za noon, see you soon.
(money) for lunch at noon, see you soon.

In line seven, the rapper presupposes that the woman habitually asks him for one thousand shillings to spend in a salon. This presupposition constructs the artist as a provider and the woman as dependent. The use of 'don't ask me' may implicate a criticism as the rapper does not want the woman to rely on him financially. The rapper's contempt for the dependent woman is implicated when he gives her twenty shillings (as opposed to the expected one thousand shillings) and asks her to visit a barber's shop to have her head shaven clean (line 8).

The image of a woman as a user of men is further presupposed in the third verse:

5 na usiwe wa kifalafala

And don't be useless

6 kukaa tu ndee kimalamala

Sitting just lazily

7 zako ni kuflash tu na kungoja hala

Yours is just to flash and wait for calls

8 kwa maboys wa ki-white collar

from boys of white collar (jobs)

9 jua kusaka dollar

Know how to look for money

10 na usiulize Nonini huwaga na gari gani

And don't ask which vehicle Nonini has

12 kwenda panda matatu usiniitishe fare tafadhali

Go board a 'matatu' don't ask me for fare please

The woman's dependence on the rapper and other men is presupposed when she 'flashes' instead of buying mobile phone credit and calling the men. She waits to be called by the men she 'flashes' (lines 7 & 8). A criticism is connoted in the rappers' reference to such women's disposition as 'kifalafala' (useless) and 'kimalamala' (lazy). The woman's materialistic nature is further implied when the rapper rudely warns her not to ask what vehicle he drives. The warning presupposes that the woman or other women had asked the question before with the intention of flossing in it. Again, the rappers despise for such women is implied when he asks the woman to board a public service vehicle 'matatu' (line 12). In the same line twelve, the clause 'usiniitishe fare' (don't ask me for fare), triggers the presupposition that the woman (and other women) rely on men for bus fare.

6. Conclusion

This essay analysed misogynistic messages expressed by male rappers in Kenyan rap lyrics. A linguistic textual analysis of five Kenyan rap songs revealed three main discourses of misogyny. From the analysis, it was evident that rappers assigned women derogatory metaphors. The metaphors were largely categorised under food and animal terms. In the second discourse of misogyny, women were crudely presented as sexual objects whose sole purpose in life is to serve men's sexual desires. The analysed texts present men who are hungry for sex and women who willingly satiate these men's desires. Whereas men's virility and promiscuity is celebrated, the women's is decried. In the last discourse of misogyny, women (or at least some women) are portrayed as materialistic, dependent, 'gold diggers' who extort money from men in exchange of sex. This finding presents an interesting contradiction of 'women are weak, men are powerful' notion. Women wield more power since they can get what they want from men. Unfortunately, this only occurs at a cost: sex. In essence then, it is the men who emerge as more powerful since they 'buy' sex from women.

The deliberate, stereotypical and offensive characterisation of women in the three discourses of misogyny sanction dominant modes of thinking about gender as dichotomous and hierarchical. As Hermes (1993, in Van Zoonen, 1995:.327) suggests, popular culture 'may be used to realign oneself with dominant ideologies.'

Rappers who glorify hegemonic and misogynistic ideologies in their lyrics should be lambasted for sanctioning unequal gender relations. As the youth's role models, rappers should thoughtfully infuse messages in their lyrics that reveal a more authentic aspect of masculinity that destabilise the cultural hegemonic view of masculinity. If psychologists' and counsellors' claim that boys and girls are influenced by what they view and hear hold some substantial truth, we can rightfully assert that Kenyan rap lyrics have an effect on the Kenyan youth who listen to them. The young Kenyan boys may grow into men interpreting masculinity as a hegemonic category and ape this model of manhood. On the other hand, the young girls may grow into women interpreting femininity as a subordinate category and inadvertently enact this limited form of femininity.

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8. Appendeces

8.1. Text 1

ARTIST:DEUX VULTURES SONG:KINYAU NYAU

Chorus

Kinyaunyau hawa ndo ndogo Wanataka nini moto moto Hi wapewe, zo wapewe vitu zao

Verse 1

Onyango shika dame kamata ha! Lyee mama Manze huu manzi anapenda kunitoanisha Nikisota atafika ni fujo kwa nyumba Wee ndogo ndogo anataka kuenda shopping SouthAfrica, Germany si Nairobi, wacha basi nikupe ngiri kumi shika kwanza hii ni ya matumizi kabla mambo ya kuhanya kuwa kamili dada sijalala siku mbili napiga diri wee kinyaunyau unapenda kunitesa tuu leo ni phone viatu pia na heels za blue zote hizo unataka ununuliwe tu na usiku unakazi ya kuenda out tu mi ntangoja hiyo cargo mpaka round two ntaimanga tu kwa hamu na ikifika ntaimanga tu kwa hamu

verse 2

onyango shika dame kamata hah lyee mama kinyaunyau anasema apewe gari na nyumba ya gorofa kule pwani ok shika pesa si shida mimi ni simba najua kile nawinda mvumili vu hula mbi vu ngoja ifike usiku utakiona cha moto wewe mtoto kinyaunyau wa Mombasa anapenda raha na yule wa Kisumu anapenda beer wa Nairobi anapenda kunipigia

kila time ananiambia nitoe mpango wakati wa baridi anapenda kunywa chai na wakati wa joto anapenda kula icecream apewe anachotaka ndio usiku nikitaka pia mimi nitapata kile nachokitaka

verse 3

anasema anataka mali yangu anasema anataka vitu zangu anasema anataka phone na anataka gari alafu ndio awe wangu

8.2. Text 2

ARTIST: Circuite and Joel SONG: Manyake

Intro

Yeah, Calif records Circuite and Joel bursting up your glass, Bringing breaking news Manyake!

Chorus

Manyake All sizes Manyake Kama prizes Manyake Ka ballon zina maji Juala ndio unahitaji

Verse 1

Ok,oh right,

Tuongee ju ya manyake

Za mchick musawa definitely not za mnyanye,

Akipita mbele ya wasee,

This is what de kerende will say

Does she have manyerere?

Mikono juu if she has manyake

Piga nduru if she has manyerere

Manze tumia protection to avoid the disease infection injection

African men wako obsessed, possessed, depressed na manyake

But pause

W'zup neke?

Do you have some juala?

Ama utaend up ukicheki ceiling ya mortury, ka fala,

Ati nini? Ka fala,

Tumia protection y'all

Verse 2

Juala ni ashu tu Na bado mnacheza na maisha mandugu Hata kama nyerere ni poa aja Juala ndio wahitaji

(Circuite)yeah

Cheki hizi facts na hizi figures Wasee soo tano wana die daily It's like wanabondwa na mandinga Ati you want bila protection? Are u- a grave digger? Ah! Ah!

Nyonya finga we mjinga Bila protection naringa

Usichape hizo vitu bila juala

Wacheni story za manyake!

Verse 3 (Joel)

Eeeh!

Naongea kuhusu manyake

Na sizile za butcher

Manyake zikipita mtu anakula kucha

Si unajua zile zimefura

Kama zako hazijafuraenda father's ukule mtura

Alafu ungojee pengine watu watakupigia kura,

Manyake

Mtu anaeza ziworship

Manyake zina fanya mtu a lose frindship

Ebu enda club

Watu wanafight kwa nini

Watu wanajaribu kuimpress akina nani?

Pastor alikosana na wife kwa sababu ya nini/

Lakini usichanganywe akili kwa sababu ya mwili,

Tumia juala ama uta haribu mwili

Eeh?

Tumia juala ama utaaribu mwili,

Hiyo ndio ukweli jo...

8.3. Text 3

ARTIST: KEN RAZY SONG: TI CHI

Verse 1

Morning story huwanga tu

Salamu sasa unajibu fi-ty

Kuna show fulani inafaa nifike

Ju already niko na tiki-ty

Saa hii siku nishaingia clabu

Nikapata kamanzi kameketi

Kwa ki-ty

Nikamwambia niaje kaa kawaida

Fity

Na kalikuwa kabeauty

Wee ni muisilamu?

Ka kawaida juu ye huenda kwamsiki-ty

Kabla jo sijabonga ashatoa

Mpango akanishika sha-ty

Akang'ang'ana hadi akapata

Manze akashika hiyo mi-ty

Chorus

Tichi beshte sema Ti-chi

Kenrazy atakufundisha yani

Atakutichi aah

Ti-chi ndio mimi nawapa

Buruka mama una mabawa

Ti-chi ndio mimi nawapa

Katika na mi-mi,

Verse 2

Ngoma inabamba genge Inashika utakatika ata

Kwa ki-ty

Story bado inaendelea pesa

Ziko nyingi manoty kama fif-ty

Story ya clabu pesa hutarushwa

Juu already kuna masecurity

Nishagizia manzi vitu ka

Amarula, masoda nahate-ty

Akaniambia "Ken Razy manze

Unanibamba nishike kwa mati-ty

Nikarelax awake mpaka

Achizike dakika kumi thir-ty

Kumbe sikujua nilikuwa natupa baha-ty

Waider flani akacome ndani

Ya club akaget nimekaa kwa kaba-ty

Huku dem yuko job na ule

Mzee huko down ka amepiga mago-ty

Chali akanicheki manzi

Akamcheki huku mimi jo

Sinyi-ty

(Akasonga amekunja sura akaniseti maviji-ty)

Verse 3

Story ya Ti imekatika saa

Nikisema kitu unania,mbia

Tu chi

Ule chali alikuwa mkikuyu

Alikuwa anaitwa Mwachi

Na huyo dem nilikuwa

Nimepata alikuwa wake

Anaitwa chi-chi

Ndio hii message

Ya ngoma basi ni ukweli

Mimi siwa fi-chy

"ukipata manzi bora ni over 18

mrarue tu hivo uch-y"

mi huwanga muandishi

mi huwanga msanii ngoma

imeiva si mbich-y

8.4. Text 4

ARTIST:ABASS FT CHIWAWA SONG:2050

chorus

Niaje, niaje

Mi natafuta kadame kaflani

Kakamu kaketi kapewe

Nami natafuta kijana na pesa na nyumba

Na gari

Sema shoti pewa shoti

Moja mbili kadha ulewe zote

Sijawahi skia beat kama hii

Verse1

Nikikam minakam ka visteady

Nashika watu ka maveady

Nacheki diabaz hadi nasteady

Nikicheki mi nakam tu vishenzi

Hiki shati mimi nacheki

Nicheki niwashike ka vibeti

Marapperz wote mi hawanioleti

Wanazusha na sitetemeki

Twende sasa tuone nani jeki

Ni sedism

Mnashindwa mbona hanipendi

Ni juu namada hadi wadhi

Mnapatikana ndani naleta hadhi

Verse 2

Mbona wanicheki minawapa kisogo Ma emcee wanaandika zinawahatarisha Juu ya kitu kidogo nawapa kisogo Bado huskii na watafuta hongo Juu hii hauskii ni ile...

8.5. Text 5

ARTIST:NONINI SONG: KUTA VITU

Verse 1

Kuta vitu x3

Kama wengine Nonini hakuhanya,

Songea speaker pump radio usione haya mamanzi

Unajua nishapewa sifa sana

Lakini niliandika ngoma ingine

Niliandika jana mchana

Ya machali mukiona hawa mamanzi

Kitu mtawafanya.

Kuta vitu, kuta vitu ndio musiseme ati

Nonini amewatupa tupa

Chupa moja kwanza niletee kichupachupa

Huyo barmaid akipita itabidi nimemuita

Vile amebeba mi najua lazima ni mtaita

Hiyo mini nifupi unasikia hajaziba ufa

Naangusha fifty bob chini halafu namchungulia.

Nampeleka kejani mlango namfungulia

Twaruka ndani ya bedcover halafu tunajifunikia

Story beste jo siko jioni

Niko na mtoto kwa keja jo kwa hivyo

Usikuje kwetu

Miezi sita ni mingi leo lazima nikute vitu

Nimkunje nimkunje mpaka saa sita za usiku

Nikiasha taa nione huyo manzi si kitu

Kwa nini naendelea kufanya?

Kuta vitu

Chorus

Miss Kenya kuta vitu Mama wa mboga kuta vitu Manzi ya beshte yako kuta vitu Mboch wenu kuta vitu Bora ameiva kuta vitu Working class kuta vitu

Verse 2

Hey yo hii verse strictly ni ya pili, Naiandikia nikiwa Kasarani kikazi kazi gani?

INAIAHUIKIA HIKIWA KASAFAHI KIKAZI KAZI GAHI

Animal farm G-draft! Nakamu

Unafanya nini

Naflush might black madam

Harakisha, mulisikia nikisema natafuta kipusa mwafrika

Sasa kila nikipita maseneorita wanajipa nami nawakuta

Maze

Mimi huvuta kitu kasha nakuta vitu

Iwe mchana au usiku,K1 ama K2

Bora nina ashu si ninajua la tatu Halafu mimi ninawika sare kwa matatu

Mbona nikuvako eti mi si msee uhanya

Ili hali Nonini anajua vile sisi hufanya

From sweet 16,sweet 23 mpaka 33

Sisi huchafua eeh.

Ni kwa sababu yako unaropokwa ropokwa maneno

Bila mpango, kuta vitu joo

Na akijificha kwa choo

Atalala huko

Verse 3

Kwa dance floor kuna mamanzi wa power

Mna tupa leo jamaa kwani leo hamukushower

Ni vile mumezitoka mukasweat

Na hiyo ni kawa

Manzi ako 30 na anajipa

Hata si manzi jamaa ni mother anajipa

Cheki cheki na uchague manzi yuko na mahaga

Zikimubammba si unajua tu munamalizia wapi?wapi?

Kwa keja safi safi

Lakini huyo mtoto nahope hukumchota carnivore,

Ile light ya purple inaeza kudanganya ukathani umeangukia

Mtoto wa power kumbe mtoto muhandi

Utapataje mtoto anakaa kichalichali

Wewe unafanya speedy bila kuuliza maswali

Wewe unafanya kitu yeyote bila kujali

Mushike, mkunje

8.6. Text 6

ARTIST: Nonini and Bobby Mapesa

SONG: Mtoto Mzuri remix

Verse 1 (Nonini)

Ushaona motto amesimama ka range four point sita

Aitwa lima ama Anita

Mrefu kidogo ameniacha ka kitu ka three metres

Nimpande ka maji kwa tap ikitoka kwa mita

Mdogo mdogo anaeza nikatikia

Nikiwa nyuma yake unaweza dhani mi ni mkia

Hii drink yangu amenifanya nikajimwagia

Na anacheka nikimwambia nataka kumtiaaah

Akaipita base kila mtu anamwita auntie

Tabia tabia zake waeza dhani ye ni mlami

Ngozi yake laini na ni rangi ya lame

Macho ukimcheki nawish ningekuwa ndani

Ndani ya jeans yake

Anipeleke kwake

Aishi kwa mamake

Kila Monday nimuamushe ngware tusilale

Mateeee aaaaah

Chorus

Mtoto mzuri kwangu asiwe ma...

Hataki nimpeleke ka...

Haoni...tukimaliza...twaruka...

Verse 2 (Bobby Mapesa)

Shida yenu madame wataka tuwe same Mkilemewa na shame wataka kutu-blame Hii ni kama game hatuwezi kuwa same Sitakutaja name unanipenda juu ya fame Kama wewe ni wakusalimiana na watu kwa barabara wee ni swara
Kama wewe ni wa kuchekesha makonkodi usilipe kodi wee ni kugwara
Hapana itisha mimi thao ya salon
Shika mbao nyoa kicwa saf ka balloon
Za lunch za noon, see you soon
Usiwe kula kula kama baboon
Siwezido kama hujaiva, na pia
Siwezi do kama sijaiva
Kwanza make list ya watu washaku-feast
Naskia ushachafua mpaka kwetu East kwa ma beast

Verse 3

Manze naeza like mtoto anapenda ma-rap sana Hata kama anapenda mablues pia ni sawa Mflexible kila kiungo By nature Na amejibeba vimaja Na usiwe wa kifalafala Kuka tu ndee kimalamala Zako ni kuflash na kungoja hala Kwa maboys wa ki white collar Jua kusaka dollar Na usiniuliza Nonini huwaga na gari gani Gari gani? Gari gani?... Kwenda panda matatu usiniitishe fare tafadhali Usijam nikakam home Nikinukia madame after ku perform Mtoto mzuri anavaa ka Origo Manduli Tabia nzuri, nywele nzuri