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PERFORMING GENDER FLUIDITY IN MEDIATED POPULAR CULTURE IN GHANA

BY

DAVID AGYEI-YEBOAH

(ID. NO. 10522617)

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DECLARATION

I, David Agyei-Yeboah, hereby declare that, with the exception of references to other works which have been duly cited and acknowledged, this work is entirely mine and conducted under the supervision of Dr. Emeka Umejei of the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. This piece of work, has neither been submitted in part nor in whole for any other degree from elsewhere.



.....

David Agyei-Yeboah

(Student)



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Dr. Emeka Umejei

(Supervisor)

ABSTRACT

This study examined the performative of gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos. The study draws on Judith Butler's theory of performativity as well as the feminist perspective as theoretical foundations. Furthermore, through purposive sampling of five music videos, Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was employed as an analytical framework.

The findings suggest that gender fluidity is performed through androgyny and drag performance in Ghanaian music videos. Gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos follows global trends with the shattering of gender binaries and blurring of what it means to be male and female. However, gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos is nuanced as it manifests only in the fashion and movements of characters. While performers of gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos have shown a predilection for going against societal understanding of gender binaries, they do not reflect it in their lyrics. Also, certain expressions of gender fluidity are a means to an end; simply to create a comic effect and drive home a message. As a result, these expressions do not necessarily present an authentic portrayal of gender fluidity. This study also found that the performance of gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos poses a challenge to the conservative gender binaries in the Ghanaian society through depictions of drag queens and androgynous women.

Keywords: Gender identity, performativity, gender fluid expression, drag, androgyny

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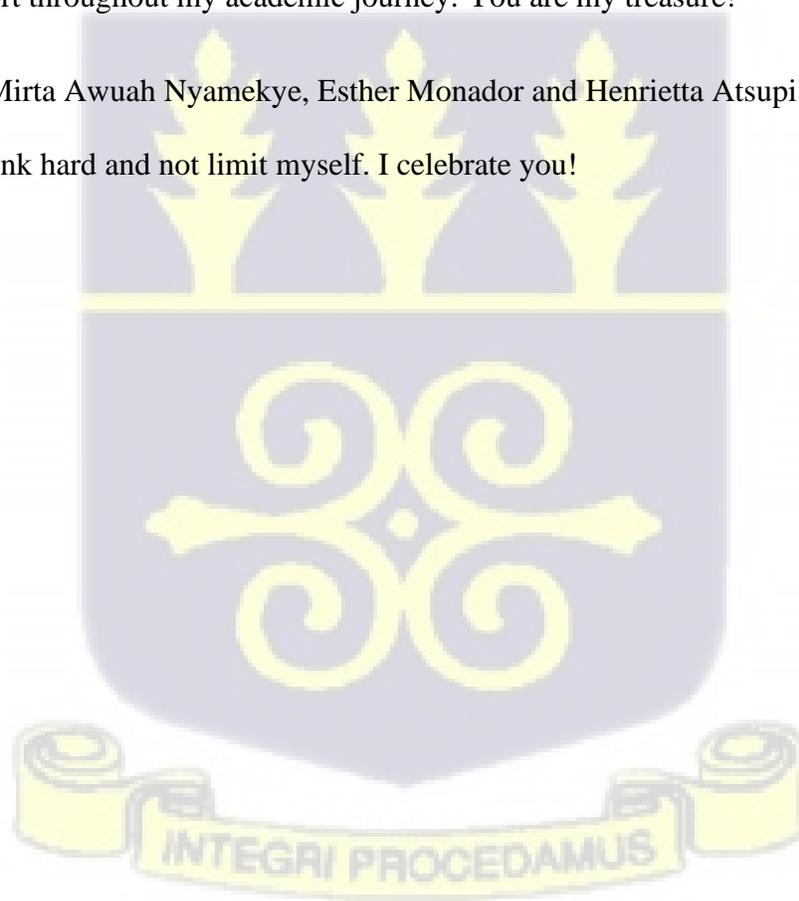


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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

Gender is a social construction that determines the binary genders in society (Rubin & Reiter 1975; Davis 1976; Scott 1999; Nicholson 1990). It is also maintained or challenged by social interactions (Deutsh, 2007). It is described as not something we are but something we do, indicative of performance (West & Zimmerman, 1978). According to Fonatella et al. (2014), gender is a basic defining trait of a person's full sense of self that influences every aspect of the person's life, from relationship to work to family to social institutions. It depends on one's sense of self as male, female or floating in between. It is better understood when distinguishing between the concepts of 'sex', 'sexuality' and 'gender'. They further explain this complexity by stating that:

Even if gender seems to flow naturally from biological sex, gender and sex are not interchangeable terms. While sex principally refers to the biological aspects of male or female, being related to their physical anatomy (sex chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, internal reproductive structures and external genitalia), gender includes, in addition to the biological elements, the behavioral, psychological and social characteristics of men and women. (Fonatella et al., 2014, p. 2554)

Fonatella et al. (2014, p. 2554) posit that gender identities are now perceived as “plural, multidimensional and difficult to demarcate or classify”. Gender fluidity is then seen as one of

the reasons for the multiplicity of identities (Bauman, 2000, 2003). According to Golden (2000), gender fluidity as a concept is construed as “changing, unstable, inconsistent and ambiguous”. Gender fluidity has been defined by some theorists as “opposing notions of bodies, behaviors and identities as fixed, stable coherent or clearly definable” (Golden, 2000).

There have been various debates about gender that give rise to the concept of fluidity. Gender is generally perceived as socially constructed, however, many scholars such as Foucault (1978) and Butler (1990) have questioned its tenets. These scholars do not perceive masculinity or femininity as having fixed meanings (Kulish, 2010). Layton (2000) argues that the gender binary of male and female is the cause of gender inequality. He qualifies the gender binaries as being culturally induced and a changeable splitting of the world into two categories. Benjamin (1998) adds to this by stating that often, masculinity or femininity are defined by each other and what the other is not. Dimen (1991, p. 335) qualifies this by stating that at the heart of gender is difference.

Concepts of gender were framed in the past by Freud’s idea of psychosexual development. Freud (1923) argues that gender is formed by identification with the same sex parent. He further argues that a young child’s male or female development is influenced by the discovery of anatomical differences between the sexes (Freud, 1925). This foregrounds Freud’s idea that masculinity and femininity start with ‘difference’ and often arise at specific points of a child’s development. This then evolves as an outcome of the Oedipus Complex for boys and Electra Complex for girls. The Oedipus Complex/Electra Complex is the period of development (usually between 3 and 6) where the child experiences feelings of desire for their opposite sex parent and envy toward same-sex parent. Boys harbor envy toward their fathers and this leads to castration anxiety – the irrational fear that a father will castrate his son as punishment. This consequently

causes the boy to identify with his father to cope with the anxiety. The child models masculinity through identification with the father and substitutes desire for his mother with other women (Freud, 1923). For girls, there is the belief that there is already castration and she blames her mother for this. This results in penis envy and she often has to give up her desire for her father and identify with her mother to pave the way for female development and femininity. Carl Jung, who was Freud's protégé, contributed greatly to this Freudian idea of psychosexual development by stating that it is clear that there is a greater impetus for boys to disidentify with their mothers than girls as boys harbor the fear of castration while girls already believe themselves to be castrated. To this effect, per the Electra Complex, girls' identification with their mothers is weaker and less complete than boys' to their fathers (Jung & Kerenyi, 1963).

Scholars such as Stoller (1976) refuted the Freudian idea by stating that a girl's femininity is not based on penis envy. Rather, both sexes have a primary femininity due to an early symbiotic relationship of a child to his or her mother. Primary femininity continues as the female child continues to identify with her preoedipal mother. For boys, it is more complex as they would have to shift identities swiftly from mother to father to establish a stable masculinity. Chodorow (1978) adds that girls experience a more continuous attachment to their mothers after birth and this ensures a stability in gender but boys' relationship is discontinuous as they have to turn away from their mothers and repress their relationships to 'learn' masculinity from their fathers.

Then came Fast's proposition. Fast (1978) posits that gender identity develops through a process known as differentiation. She fleshes out the idea that when children are born into the world, they have no conception of gender. They do not know the limits of societal norms of maleness and femaleness. Their sense of gender in this sense is boundless and undifferentiated.

Often, their conceptions of gender are developed by the family they are born into. Family help them distinguish maleness from femaleness and this process of differentiation makes them realize that they cannot be everything. This idea has been challenged by current gender scholars that refute the idea of a child being conscious of gender limitations (Bassin, 2000). These scholars argue that the idea of ‘renunciation’ in Fast’s theory, which means that a child would have to limit his or her idea about the boundless nature of gender because of family, is problematic.

The gender binary is common in modern society (Mitchell, 2021). Defined by social norms, the gender binary reflects what is appropriate for each gender (Blackstone, 2003). Mitchell (2021) posits that “gender norms are based on the different expectations that individuals, groups and societies have of individuals.” Traditional gender norms stipulate a host of ideas, such as the fact that blue represents masculinity and pink, femininity. Similarly, it ascribes clothing to gender, with the prevailing idea that men wear trousers and women wear dresses and skirts (Mitchell, 2021).

In Africa, there are diverse cultures with different ideas about gender, however women are often subordinate to men. Women were often relegated to taking care of their family while men were providers for the family and community (Egerton-Idehen, 2017). This reflected a larger macrocosm of the world. Men are expected to be stoic, competitive, demanding and uncompromising which would aid them to be good warriors. Women, on the other hand are to be affectionate, passive and submissive to their husbands. This nature is to assist them in nurturing their offspring and a successful home (Egerton-Idehen, 2017). This presents masculinity as ‘tough’ and ‘femininity’ as soft. There is resistance therefore to men wearing skirts as there is an

assumption of weakness and attention seeking through subverting the social norm (Thorpe, 2017).

Ghana is no different. In contemporary Ghanaian society, the perception of gender is through a fixed lens: male or female. Any variable to this fixed identity is considered anti-society and could attract criticism and discrimination in the Ghanaian context. This manifested recently in the debate over LGBTQ+ in Ghanaian public life.

In February 2021, when LGBT+ Rights opened an administrative office in a suburb of Accra, Ghana, it generated widespread attention and tension across the whole gamut of the Ghanaian society. The tension resulted in debates over the morality of having any form of representation of LGTBQ+ in Ghana considering it is a deeply religious and conservative society. The debate pitched two groups against each other: those in support, which are in the minority and those against, which are in the majority. In the long run, the majority carried the day and security operatives were dispatched to shut the office.

Expressions of gender fluidity trickled onto the music scene by popular artistes such as Wiyaaala, a Funsu native, as typified by her unconventional fashion and look. This triggered conversations about androgyny in the media space in 2014 (Pilling, 2019). It also scratched the surface of gender fluidity in Ghanaian music. However, these conversations have evolved over time. At present, there have been media conversations about gender fluidity on popular TV programs such as Nana Ama McBrown's United Showbiz and radio programs such as Abeiku Santana's Ekwansodwoodwo. These media platforms have showcased and engaged personalities such as Richard Brown, who is a fashion icon and co-parent with the popular media personality Nana Aba Anamoah. Brown, popularly known as 'Osebo', expresses gender fluid attributes through wearing skirts. Together with his mentees, he has challenged prevailing

Ghanaian norms about male fashion. This has, in turn, fueled numerous controversies and gay accusations.

Gender fluidity has become more broadened in scope with many nuances in Ghanaian popular culture. While Wiyaala opened up conversations about androgyny in Ghana's media space through her fashion and overall look, other artistes have similarly expressed otherness, deviating from societal norms of the gender binaries. Music artistes such as Ama Serwah Genfi, known professionally as Amaarae, and Emmanuel Osei Bonsu, known professionally as Wanlov the Kubolor have created popular art that expresses gender fluidity boldly. Amaarae is a Ghanaian-American alternative artiste that is making a huge impact internationally from Ghana, her recent remix song with Kali Uchis 'SAD GIRLZ LUV MONEY' featuring Moliy breaking into the Billboard Hot 100 chart and topping Spotify, Tiktok and Shazam charts (Music News, n.d.). Stepping into the spotlight after releasing, 'Fluid' in 2017, she has been noted by the media for her gender-defying content as well as her expressions of androgyny and gender fluid fashion (Sotire, 2021).

In similar fashion, Wanlov the Kubolor is quite the anomaly per his gendered expressions in music. According to Yiptong (n.d), Wanlov the Kubolor is a Ghanaian-Romanian artiste that is part of the duo FOKN Bois. He also releases music as a solo artiste and is popularly known for donning skirts and walking barefoot in public. While Wanlov the Kubolor has been making music since 2007, his most prominent gender fluid content materialized in 2020. Hence, while gender fluidity remains a contested terrain in the Ghanaian public domain, mediated popular culture seems to be providing an avenue for its expression. This study examines the performance of gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos using Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

However, it is important to emphasise that while music artistes mentioned in this study have expressed gender fluidity, none of them openly self-identify as LGBTQ+. It appears that their expressions simply deviate from prevailing gender norms and draw parallels to the LGBTQ+ in the eyes of the Ghanaian public.

1.1 The complexity and fluidity of gender

Contemporary scholarship on gender identity emphasises fluidity and complexity (Elise, 2000b). Harris (2005) argues that gender is a social construct, is regulated by family and society and manifests in the interactions between a person and self. According to Harris, gender is softly assembled and has different patterns and different contents suggesting that gender is not fixed and predictable (Harris, 2005). Young-Bruehl (2003) questions old categories of gender as well. He states that:

Ours is the era in which psychoanalytic interest is focused on phenomena that call the categories Woman and Man, Masculinity and Femininity, directly into question as categories...Historians working in the relatively new sub-discipline history of sexuality have shown the many ways in which even physiological and anatomical differences between the sexes, once thought to be matters of objective knowledge, are always interpreted. (Young-Bruehl, 2003, p. 158)

Yanof (2000) adds to this argument by stating that gender development is not linear but chaotic and complex. Dimen (1991, p. 335) describes this fluidity, seeing it as “less as a determinate category than as something resembling a force field, that is, a set of complex and shifting

relations among multiple contrasts or differences”. She states that one must look at the space “in between” gender dichotomies. In this, gender is constantly shifting where it can encode experiences of difference and be encoded by them as well. She adds that gender may be influenced not only by the cultural context but the psychological context as well. Goldner (1991, pp. 258—259) expounds upon this by stating that “since gender is a psychic and cultural designation of the self that 'cleanses' itself of opposing tendencies, it is, by definition, a universal, false-self system generated in compliance with the rule of the two-gender system”. She suggests that it is often the “system” of gender that is internalized, that is prevailing patterns of relationships rather than actual monolithic identities. As this occurs, gender becomes destabilized.

The fluidity of gender is keenly debated in scholarship. Some scholars have argued that young boys must ‘disidentify’ with their mothers to achieve masculinity, however Diamond (2004a, b, 2006) argues against this idea. Together with a host of scholars such as Ross (1986), Elise (2001), Fogel (1998) and Reichbart (2006), he has unpacked rigid ideals of masculinity and shown how gender identity can be reworked. These studies suggest that gender is not constant; it is fixed at certain times and fluid in certain contexts (Kulish, 2010).

1.2 Gender and mediated popular culture

Mediated popular culture reflects gender. Through mediated popular culture, ideals of masculinity and femininity are propagated by players for the broader society. These either fit neatly within societal norms or actively challenge them. Players within mediated popular culture express gender through the performative agency. Butler (2010, p. 147) posits that “when gender

is performatively constituted, then we call into question whether there is a stable gender in place and intact prior to the expressions and activities that we understand as gendered expressions and activities.” She also posits that performativity works when it counters prevailing assumptions about culturally constructed categories and serves to usher in realities that lead to certain socially binding consequences. She adds that “performativity also describes a set of processes that produce ontological effects” (Butler, 2010, p. 147). In this sense, it helps to usher in certain social realities that have binding consequences on all affected parties. This means that as players within mediated popular culture express gender through creativity, they affect the social order and this often leads to certain effects that affect the consumers of popular culture.

1.3 Problem statement

Scholars have explored gender fluidity, especially in the Global North in mediated popular culture. Bradley and Page (2017) explore the complexity of gender identity and expression in American pop culture through the music icon, David Bowie. Hawkins (2015) builds upon this argument by exploring more artistes such as Lady Gaga, Freddie Mercury and Madonna, amongst others. His exploration highlights fluidity all couched under the broader conversation of gender queerness and sexuality in Western pop music videos. Geffen (2020) also details how gendered binaries are subverted in Western pop music, exploring gender fluidity in Western pop from the early twentieth century to present day. Scholars such as Oh (2015) have explored gender fluidity in Korean popular music, also known as K-Pop. Oh (2015) examines the nuances of gender fluidity in K-pop by teasing out its intersections with racial hybridity. In another paper,

she explores the notion of the androgynous male in K-pop, fleshing out how androgynous gender fluidity provides a space for queering female desire against normative white masculinity (Oh, 2015). Cogan and Cogan (2007) examine the gender binaries in Japanese pop music, focusing on the fluidity of male/female role-playing in Japan and its relations to Western notions of rock authenticity. They found that bands sampled subvert traditional gender roles in Japan through the manipulation of their visual identities.

Scholarship about gender fluidity in popular music videos in Africa is limited. A lot of scholars investigate gendered dynamics and portrayals in music videos instead. For example, Subban (2011) explores gender representation in MTV Base Africa videos and his discourse provides a wealth of information about hegemony in portrayals. It also reflects the intersections of race and class with gender in African music videos. Ammann and Staudacher (2020) also examine how gender intersects with age, class, race, ethnicity and sexuality in Africa. Scherzinger (2007) treads similar ground by examining gender and sexuality specifically in South African music, teasing out the politics of repressed sexual desire. Amongst scholars that do examine gender fluidity on the continent, there is hardly an examination of popular music videos. For example, although Clarke (2021) examines gender fluidity in Zambia, she analyzes female-husbands and their position of influence within the extended family system in Zambia. Overall, studies about gender on the continent often focus on fluidity per the constructs of identity as well as its intersections with sexuality and issues of heteronormativity (Davidson, 2020; Sumerau et al. 2016). Chipenembe et al. (2021) for example, explore experiences of being transgender in Mozambique. However, scholarship on gender fluidity clearly lacks a plethora of perspectives about gender fluidity in popular music videos from the Global South.

In this vein, scholarship about gender fluidity in Ghana is limited. It also fails to examine gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos. Geoffrion (2012), for example, explores cross-dressing at certain festivals by people in the Southern part of Ghana. Jabbar-Gyambrah (2008) also opens up a conversation about gender and sexuality as he explores hip life music in Ghana but his conversations do not zero in on fluidity. There is clearly a gap in the literature as Ghana's cultural context and nuance is not factored in global scholastic conversations about gender fluidity in popular music videos.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The following objectives undergird this study. This study ultimately seeks:

1. To explore the expressions of gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos
2. To explore what differentiates gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos from music videos in the Global North
3. To examine the tension that gender fluid expressions in Ghanaian music videos create in Ghana's social fabric



1.5 Research questions of the study

This study will be guided by the following questions:

1. How is gender fluidity expressed in Ghanaian music videos?
2. What are the nuances of gender fluid expressions in Ghanaian music videos in comparison with music videos from the Global North?
3. How do expressions of gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos defy Ghanaian societal norms?

1.6 Significance of the study

The study seeks to enlighten and inform through examining the performative of gender fluidity in Ghanaian videos. In light of global conversations about gender fluidity, this study seeks to present authentic Ghanaian perspectives that are slowly permeating popular culture.

1.7. Key terms in the study

1. Gender - Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male and to the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as to the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialisation processes. They are context- and time-specific, and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context.

In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader sociocultural context. Other important criteria for sociocultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age. (World Health Organization, WHO)

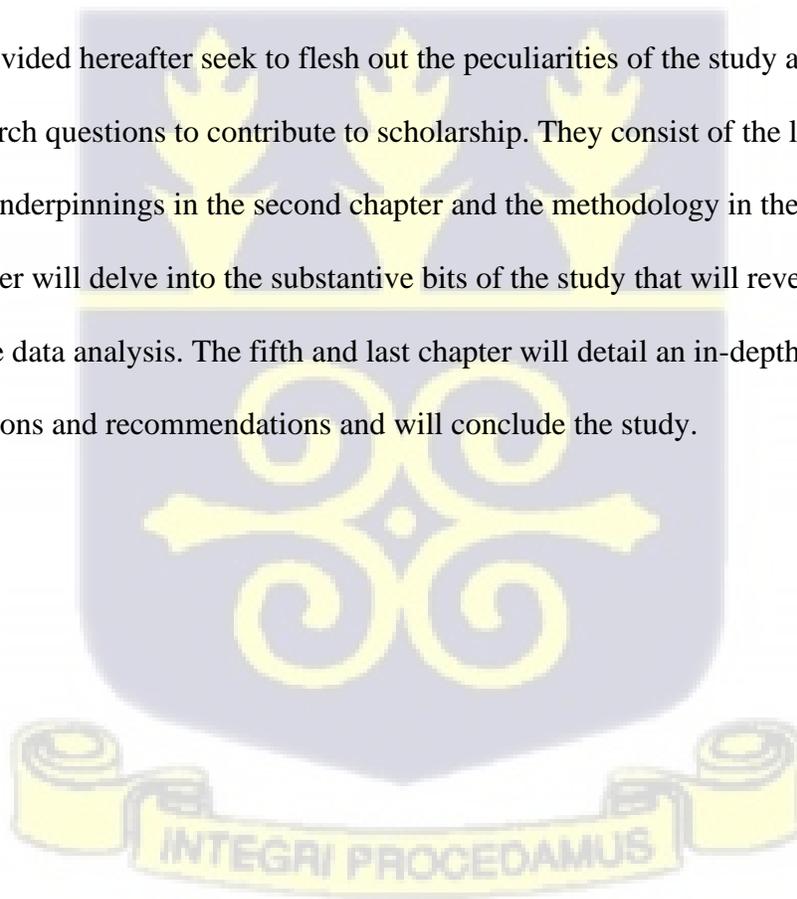
2. Gender fluidity – This refers to a change in a person’s gender expression or gender identity or both. That change might be in expression, but not identity, or identity but not expression. Or both identity and expression might change together (Katz-Wise, 2020).
3. Genderqueer – A person who is genderqueer does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions but identifies with neither, both or a combination of male and female genders (Gosling, 2018, p. 75).
4. Cisgender - This means a person’s gender identity matches the sex – female or male – designated on their original birth certificate (Katz- Wise, 2020).
5. Cisnormativity – The assumption that all individuals are cisgender (Russo, n.d).
6. Transgender – People whose identity does not match the sex assigned to them on their original birth certificate (Katz-Wise, 2020).
7. Non-binary – This means a person’s gender identity does not fit into strict cultural categories of male and female (Katz-Wise, 2020).
8. Androgyny – A type of gender presentation that mixes masculinity and femininity. It means someone has both masculine and feminine traits (Boskey, 2021).
9. Baby boomer – A person born between 1946 and 1964 (Barnier, 2021).

10. Millennial – Anyone born between 1981 and 1996 (Dimock, 2018).
11. Gen Z – Anyone born beginning in 1997 after Millennials (Dimock, 2018).
12. Drag queen – A man who dresses ostentatiously in women’s clothes (Oxford dictionary).

1.8 Summary

This chapter has provided the relevant context for the study, detailing the need for the study. It has pointed out the problem statement and outlined the objectives and research questions that will guide this study. Certain keywords integral for a deeper understanding of this study have also been provided accordingly.

The chapters provided hereafter seek to flesh out the peculiarities of the study and attempt to answer the research questions to contribute to scholarship. They consist of the literature review and theoretical underpinnings in the second chapter and the methodology in the third chapter. The fourth chapter will delve into the substantive bits of the study that will reveal the findings discovered in the data analysis. The fifth and last chapter will detail an in-depth discussion of findings, limitations and recommendations and will conclude the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the various debates in the academic literature on gender fluidity in mediated popular culture. I draw on the literature to make a case for the performative of gender fluidity in mediated popular culture in Ghana.

2.1 Gender fluidity

Gender fluidity is described as being unbounded or unconstrained (Davis, 2008). Bornstein (1994, p. 52) asserts that “gender fluidity recognizes no borders or rules of gender.” Davis (2008, p. 101) posits that this implies “an escape from the constraints of gender assumptions and a refusal to stay within one category or another”. However, certain scholars such as Schacht (1998) have opined the contrary; that gender is indeed not static but also not unbounded (Davis, 2008). He argues that even in environments where multiple gender identities exist, gender still remains bound. According to him, “gender benders who challenge prevailing images of female beauty are summarily boycotted.” He hinges his argument on the fact that there is often regulation of identity (Schacht, 1998, p. 210).

Hale (1997) argues that the multiplicity of gender in a region hinges on context. He states that “multiple, context-specific, and purpose-specific sex/gender statuses” performed within the leatherdyke community illustrates the “cultural situatednesses” of gender performance and identification (Hale, 1997; Davis, 2008). He adds that a variety of subcultural gender norms exist

alongside hegemonic norms. Scholars such as Namaste (1996) have then argued that fluidity as a concept must be situated with regard to broader social processes and that acknowledging gender variance is not enough.

Davis (2008) posits that fluidity is also about the desired rejection of identity. As part of a “strategy of identity destabilization,” postmodern queer theories have questioned the “unity, stability, viability, and political utility of sexual identities.” (Gamson, 1996, p. 404). Identity is often believed to be stifling and oppressive, something that individuals need to move beyond (Davis, 2008). Halberstam (1995, p. 19) expounds upon this by saying that, “postmodern gender theory has largely been wrongly interpreted as a description of and a call for greater degrees of flexibility and fluidity.” He adds however that, “Many young gays and lesbians think of themselves as a part of a ‘post-gender’ world and for them the act of ‘labeling’ becomes a sign of oppression they have happily cast off in order to move into a pluralistic world of infinite diversity” (Halberstam, 1995, p. 19). Fixed identities are often rejected due to the potential of fluid performances and affiliations of gender (Davis, 2008).

Katz-Wise (2020) expounds on the concept of gender fluidity. She distinguishes between gender identity and gender expression. She posits that individuals identify as either male, female or another gender. Likewise, how individuals show their gender to the world is a whole ball game altogether. Gender expression basically covers concepts such as how individuals look and act, in other words, how they express themselves to the world. Gender identity and expression may change over time or remain the same (Katz-Wise, 2020). So, for example, she states that at certain points in her life, she had shorter hair yet a fondness for men’s dress pants and dress shoes. She occasionally played roles portraying men in theatre. Other times, she’s had a fondness for longer hair and dangly earrings and female eccentricities. This shows that at certain points,

she has leaned towards masculine expression in fashion and career and at certain points, she's reveled in her femininity. Her gender expression has drifted from masculinity to femininity and this has occurred across a vast spectrum of time.

However, she states definitively that her identity as a woman has never wavered. She has never wanted to be a man, although her expression has sometimes bent towards masculinity. Katz-Wise in this sense expresses fluidity in gender expression where she doesn't always conform to conventional expectations of femininity. Davis (2008, p. 97) also presents anecdotal evidence that reflects gender fluidity:

Sometimes I just want to be a person. I don't want to be a gender, one way or the other. . .

I want to do what I want to do. And I want to do it how I want to do it. And with who I want to do it. And not have to worry that men don't do this and men don't do that.

Women do this and women don't do that. . . . I don't like that we as a society judge people based on what we assume they have under their clothing. Why is it so important?

(Jeffrey, a thirty-one-year-old man)

Gender fluidity challenges social norms. The concept of fluidity negates the traditional gender binaries, presenting gender, much like sexuality, as open and neutral – on a spectrum. Gosling (2018, p. 75) posits that, “the concept of gender fluidity expressed by genderqueer persons is leading us away from our customary binary gender identities and cisnormativity toward the possibility of non-conforming gender neutrality.”

Katz-Wise adds (2020) that, “gender fluidity may be a way to explore gender before landing on a more stable gender identity and expression”. In this sense, individuals gauge what is right for them by exploring both femininity and masculinity before deciding which one to stick to. It

could be a man exploring femininity to the point where he feels comfortable expressing femininity as part of his daily existence. He could take it further by transitioning to become transgender, for example. When individuals believe themselves to be transgender or non-binary, the discussion drifts from gender expression to gender identity. However, their expressions may or may not be fluid. Katz-Wise (2020) states that certain individuals describe themselves as ‘gender-fluid’. However, not everyone that expresses gender fluidity claims this title. Also, one can simply remain fluid in the expression of gender without switching identity (Katz-Wise, 2020). Evidently, this discussion is heavily nuanced.

2.2 Gender fluidity development and the age dichotomy

Katz-Wise (2020) posits that people begin developing gender identity in early childhood, around 2 or 3. This is developed in multiple contexts – one’s individual family unit, the broader social community and even the historical period in which one has lived. This explains why to some, gender fluidity is anathema. Gosling (2018, p. 75) for example, mentions that individuals born in the Baby Boomer era do not readily connect or understand gender fluidity. They often vilify it and while discussions of gender fluidity have been ongoing in global media with greater frequency, it is some Millennials and Gen Z that have unshackled themselves from rigid cisgender conformity and courageously seek alternatives to express themselves. Fontanella et al. (2013, p. 2553) suggest that recent studies have proven there are multiple ways that gender can be performed and experienced and that gender identity is changing. Gosling (2018, p. 76) then adds that gender fluidity has a wider breadth of expression; one that is not tied to the anatomy of genitalia. Individuals that express fluidity move beyond typical gender behaviors and interests. They vehemently resist the restrictive boundaries of stereotypical, patriarchal and culturally

determined expectations of men and women. They are also not confined nor defined by conventional gender roles; on some days they feel more female, other days they feel more male. Others reject the gender binaries of male and female altogether as they feel it does not accurately describe them.

Fluidity manifests in concepts such as androgyny where Gosling (2018, p. 75) states that the idea of gender fluidity is from a psychological perspective that references androgynous archetypal energies. This is referred to as 'The Original Man' by Jung, which is often hermaphroditic. Katz-Wise exemplifies this historical or age gap complexity by stating that a child might live in a family during a time where gender fluidity is stifled. Similarly, a child may live in a time where boys are not bound by societal norms to look like boys and girls are not bound to look like girls. In the Baby Boomer era, this was a defining norm. At present, although gender binaries are still enforced in a lot of societies, with the influx of social media and youth culture, it is more flexible for Gen Zs and millennials to express gender fluidity openly. Also, in a family that allows fluidity, the child may grow up to freely express non-conformity to societal expectations of masculinity and femininity. Gender identity and expression develop early and stay the same over time while for others it may change. These changes are more common during adolescence and childhood than in adulthood (Katz-Wise, 2020).

2.3 Drag performance

According to Egner and Maloney (2016, p. 876), drag performers occupy a grey area in gender as they do not neatly fit the gender dichotomy of male and female. They often perform extreme expressions of gender for an audience and through their performative nature, drag performers

(also referred to as drag queens and kings) draw a lot of attention to themselves. Drag performance rejects the idea that gender is fixed, constant and unchanging. According to Egner and Maloney (2016, p. 878), these performers “strive to disrupt the rules of mainstream society by blurring the gender dichotomy. Thus, drag performers often use their understandings of local norms to construct counter-hegemonic, fluid, counter-heteronormative, and, ultimately, queer identity presentations.” In essence, these drag performers ‘do’ gender uniquely and differently. Gender is often performed or ‘done’ within societal boundaries. West and Zimmerman (1978) contend that gender is an achievement that is situated socially. They posit that the performance of gender is executed by men and women whose competence as members of society is necessary to its production. Often doing gender involves a host of activities that casts certain pursuits as definitive expressions of the masculine and the feminine nature (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126). However, drag performance subverts this idea as performers free themselves of the strict gender categorization and norms.

Drag performers construct identity and representation within their social groups, which consists of drag clubs and other performance spaces. Therefore, their conceptions of gender are influenced by the spaces that they occupy and perform in (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126). Egner and Maloney (2016) argue that the concept of performing or doing gender can translate into doing sexuality. They posit that it is possible that just as drag performers see gender as flexible, they may see sexuality as flexible as well; that just as they are not confined by societal gender rules and see them as shackling, they may see rules about sexuality as opportunities to be defiant. However, these gender and sexuality representations are heavily dependent on the context and the composition of the audiences catered to in performance.

There are extensive debates about the subversive potential of drag (Piontek, 2003; Schacht, 2003; Surkan, 2003; Taylor & Rupp, 2004; Wright, 2006). Certain scholars such as Butler (1993b) see drag as subversive while others such as Schacht (2002) and Wright (2006) do not see it as disrupting social and political constructions of gender (Egner & Maloney, 2006, p. 878). Certain scholars view drag as subversive when it is performed in a group or with a collective feminist identity (Shapiro, 2007). Others view drag as subversive only when the gender identity of the performer is stable (Surkan, 2003). Then again, others claim that it depends on the setting (Piontek, 2003). On the other hand, drag is seen by other scholars as not subversive, rather hegemonic. Drag queens, who are men that perform as women, are seen as privileging homosexual masculinity over hegemonic masculinity, which sometimes comes across as misogynistic (Wright, 2006; Schacht, 2002). This argument is simply premised on the fact that drag queen performance does not challenge patriarchy to the advantage of women, rather to the advantage of queer men. So in the long run, men are still at the top of the hierarchy while the gender 'female' is used as a tool to still advance men. Certain scholars argue that drag performance is not subversive because men (drag queens) imitate women to exercise masculine power over others and this still feeds the patriarchy (Schacht, 2003). Other scholars also argue that drag kings (women who perform as men) are rather subversive as they come from a position of subservience and assume a position of privilege in performance (Ayoup & Podmore, 2003).

Many scholars agree that drag demonstrates gender fluidity (Kumbier, 2003; Piontek, 2003; Shapiro, 2005). For many of them, drag performers represent a third gender category in a society that insists that there should be two (Taylor & Rupp, 2004, p. 140). They perceive drag as an intersection of gender and promoting the possibility of identifying with multiple genders

simultaneously (Shapiro, 2005). This helps performers see gender as fluid and construct their own unique identities (Taylor & Rupp, 2004).

It is important to note that drag has an extensive history with the LGBTQ+ community who often serve as members or performers. It has also been enriched by queer culture for consumption by even heterosexuals (Hillman, 2011; Rupp & Taylor, 2003; Taylor, 2005).

Edgar and Maloney (2006, p. 878) opine that it is essential to study how drag breaks gender boundaries because in doing so, there can be a deeper understanding of not only drag constructions of gender but traditional constructions of gender. They add that it is in only examining the negative space that we can understand the positive space.



A drag queen





A drag king

2.4 Androgyny

According to Jossey-Bass (1998), androgyny comes from two Greek words: ‘andro’ meaning male and ‘gyne’ meaning female. McCormack (1983, p. 118) situates androgyny within psychology as she describes it as a state of mind where individuals that are uncomfortable with conventional definitions can describe themselves as being both male and female and can view themselves as closer to the emotional and cognitive styles of both sexes. Androgyny as a term is not lucid. It can mean that both the masculine and feminine are a dual source of reference according to whichever is appropriate for the situation at hand or it could also mean that both the masculine and feminine modify each other in all contexts. According to Bem (1976):

It is possible, in principle, for an individual to be both masculine and feminine, both instrumental and expressive, both agentic and communal, depending upon the situational appropriateness of these various modalities; and even for an individual to blend these complementary modalities in a single act...

McCormack (1983, p. 118) adds that androgyny can mean that duality is synthesized to form a new behavioral pattern and predisposition. Scholars have often assumed that androgyny is of a single type and that variations emerge out of its single type. However, research has proven that there are two types that include androgynous men and androgynous women who are invariably different. Scholars agree that androgyny does not alter fundamental societal norms. No woman, for example, is called to repudiate childbearing functions. However, androgyny challenges the more traditional models of social life in both private and public spaces (McCormack, 1983, p. 119). In essence, it challenges conservative social norms.

Amongst feminist scholars, there is a debate about the ideological framework of androgyny. McCormack (1983, p. 119) posits that some criticize it saying it does not go far enough to challenge patriarchy and others claim it goes far enough. To set the context of this debate, it is argued that patriarchy and the oppression of women are sustained by an ideal of femininity that serves to disadvantage women in all spheres of public life. Women are subservient as men take the dominant position and make decisions that affect a vast array of individuals. To seek liberation then would be to prescribe a broader definition of acceptable behavior for women. Thus, a question that feminists often raise is that, "Does equality require a type or range of personality?" In this vein, certain scholars argue that androgyny is a radical salvation from patriarchy. Others argue against this stating that it is simply a long-overdue adaptation to modern society but patriarchy can still accommodate it and dominate. Certain scholars feel that it is a

step forward in non-sexist thought while others view it as backward. To some, it is transitional and limited while others consider it the final stage of the evolution of male-female consciousness. There are numerous scholars that criticize androgyny. Some argue that androgyny is a bundle of logical contradictions and faulty reasoning. They further argue that it is neither possible nor desirable. Other scholars have opined that androgyny perpetuates sex role stereotypes (Stark-Ademec et al., 1980).

McCormack (1983, p. 120) argues that ideal personality types or limited personality types are often congruent with certain social structures. Therefore, any individual that deviates from the norm has to deal with tension within and without. It is important to note that now, the concept of androgyny is used almost exclusively used to refer to looks and fashion and style rather than identity (Crepax, 2016, p. 284).



An androgynous woman



An androgynous man

2.5 Culture

In order to offer a broad scope to this study, the notion of culture will be expounded on and connections drawn for a deeper understanding. According to Williams (1983, p. 87), “culture is one of the two or three most difficult words in the English Language.” He suggests three broad definitions. The first is that culture is “a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development” (Williams, 1983, p. 90). This means that various individuals and careers ensure that a nation develops sporadically through procedural means. These three areas mentioned – intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development reflect the need for individuals such as poets, intellectuals, thinkers, philosophers and artistes. These players are required as they are the

section of the populace that have the requisite skills necessary to contribute in that regard.

Perhaps the most common notion of culture is what Williams (1983) defines as “the way of life of a people, a period or a group” (Williams, 1983, p. 90). This notion extends the definition of culture beyond civilization and development to everyday activities that construct collective meaning such as festivals and religious ceremonies that are characterized by pomp and pageantry. His third definition of culture is what structuralists and post-structuralists call ‘signifying practices’. This speaks of archetypes such as music, theatre, film novels, poetry, ballet and fine art.

Storey (2018, p. 2) mentions that often, to speak of culture is regarded as galvanizing the last two meanings of culture, where culture as a way of life helps us speak of everyday practices that have become so vital and recurring in our lives such as seasonal holidays, Christmas holidays and youthful subcultures. These speak of ‘lived’ culture whereas the third meaning, ‘signifying practices’, allow us to delve into the actual texts being explored, be it soap operas, pop music and comics. Frequently, these texts are intertwined with the second definition, “culture as a way of life”. This is because texts such as music and dance are prevalent during holidays and other celebrations.

2.6 Popular culture

Kidd (2017) posits that popular culture refers to a set of practices, beliefs, and objects that embody the most broadly shared meanings of a social system. This includes media objects, entertainment and leisure, fashion and trends, and linguistic conventions, amongst other things. It also includes popular music, print, cyber culture, sports, leisure, fads and television. Popular

culture is often differentiated from high culture and various institutional cultures such as legal culture, educational culture and political culture. It is often associated with the masses thus has a high profit motive, as it is fueled by capitalism. This explains why there is almost always a focus on youth culture as these often constitute the masses. Thus, there are always cultural products produced for the consumption of the masses. These products are simply the ‘signifying’ objects that Williams (1983) identifies in his seminal book as the last definition of culture. For the purpose of this study therefore, popular culture will be analyzed through popular music videos. These have been chosen as they represent a major source of interest and cultural production for Ghanaians.

Williams (1983, p. 237) argues that certain words jump to the fore of one’s consciousness when thinking about the preceding word, ‘popular’; a string of words such as “well-liked by people”, for example. This suggests that popular culture would be work that sets out to actively win the favor of people. He also suggests other definitions such as “culture made by the people for themselves”.

Brummet (1991) mentions that “popular culture involves the aspects of social life that is most actively involved with the public”. As the culture of the people, certain variables are always present when considered: one’s way of dressing, the use of slang, greeting rituals and foods, amongst others. He then goes ahead to mention that popular culture is informed by the mass media. Delaney (2007) mentions that “popular culture involves the most immediate and contemporary aspects of our lives”. He specifies that television is one of the great avenues for influencing through popular culture. It informs what is current and what people subscribe to on a daily. This power of influence explains why Sellnow (2018, p. 3) explains popular culture as

everyday “objects, actions and events that influence people to behave and believe in certain ways”.

An important point to note that is so vital to this study is that popular culture is described by Delaney (2007) as “the products and forms of identity and expression that are frequently encountered or widely accepted, commonly liked or approved, and characteristic of a particular society at a given time.” For the purposes of this study therefore, one can say that popular culture reflects gender expression. It also means that popular culture reflects the attitudes, behaviors and cultural norms that define a people. However, Delaney (2007) also notes that popular culture offers individuals the chance to change prevailing sentiments and societal norms and forge a different path ahead. Creators of popular culture have the opportunity to influence mindsets to their fold, no matter the cultural norms of the day. Hence, popular culture is a means for cultural and ideation reconstruction. Often, the appeal of popular culture is the tool that is utilized for mass communication.

2.7 Religion and conservatism in Ghana’s culture

Ghana is a highly religious country. According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, approximately 99% of Ghanaians practice a religion. Amongst this percentage, a little over 70% constitute Christians, while about 20% constitute Muslims. Religions such as the traditional religion and other alternative religions are about 8%. As Christianity and Islam are the majority, the majority of Ghanaians are influenced by their faith. Anderson (2013, p. 166) affirms this as he states that religion is often a determinant of morality for Ghanaians. This follows through from the broader perspective that Africans are generally religious people. According to Leonard

(1966): “Africans are in the natural sense of the word truly and deeply religious of whom it can be said that they eat religiously, drink religiously, bathe religiously, dress religiously and sin religiously”. Scholars have opined that Africans are notoriously, incurably and even in all things religious (Mbiti, 1989; Parrinder, 1969; Idowu, 1962). They add that religion permeates the very lives of Africans so much so that it affects the non-religious aspects of their lives. Ghana is no different as its ethics and laws are even religiously determined (Anderson, 2013, p. 168).

According to Pobee (1991), religion influences customs, beliefs, politics, food, proverbs, dance, print, writings, symbols and many others. In this sense, religion influences popular culture and this accounts for why Ghanaians readily cling to these values and are hesitant in accepting alternative values. Similarly, in many traditional societies or ethnicities in Ghana, religion is their bulwark (Anderson, 2013, p. 168). In the Akan society for instance, which is the dominant ethnic group in Ghana, traditions and laws are religious-based. Every member is to adhere to the decrees given to society by religious beings. Religion is woven into every aspect of their culture, for instance, proverbs and rhymes. The proverb below exemplifies this:

Onyame wɔhɔ, (God is, exists)

Onyame wɔhɔ, (God is, exists)

Onyame wɔ mbea nyinaa, (God is everywhere)

Woye bɔne a ɔbehu, ɔbete, ɔbetwere, (If you sin, He will see, He will hear, He will write)

Woye bɔne ɔrenhyira wo, (If you sin, He will not bless you)

Ghana’s deep religious core explains why in society, people do not fish on certain days nor farm on certain days. Religion influences the way Ghanaians think and prescribes codes of behavior for its adherents (Anderson, 2013, p. 170).

As such, one can understand why Ghanaians are not accepting of LGBTQ+. It vehemently goes against religion and culture. None of the dominant religions, Christianity and Islam subscribe to the LGBTQ+; it is seen as an aberrant form of life for various ethnicities and this accounts for the negative attitudes towards it (Anarfi & Gyasi-Gyamerah, 2014; Owusu, Anarfi, & Tenkorang, 2013). This is evidenced by Adamczyk (2009) who posits that most religions perceive homosexuality as an abomination, very “unnatural”, “ungodly”, “impure” and sordid. This explains why the previous Secretary-General of the Christian Council, Reverend Dr. Opuni Frimpong categorically stated that LGBTQ+ goes against cultural values and will not be accepted (Ghanaweb, 2021). The current secretary General Rev. Dr. C.K. Fayose, in light of recent conversations about LGBTQ+, has reiterated this position by Opuni through releasing a press statement to that effect (Ghanaweb, 2021). The Chief Imam has also spoken against the LGBTQ+ in Ghana. Traditional leaders have spoken against the LGBTQ+. For example, the Tema Traditional Council has described acts of the LGBTQ+ as “ungodly and morally repugnant” (ModernGhana, 2021). Also, the Duayaw-Nkwanta Traditional Council refer to the activities of LGBTQ+ as eroding family and cultural values (NCCE, 2021). Traditional leaders oppose the LGBTQ+ so much so that they threatened to burn down the LGBTQ+ office that opened in Accra in February (Aljazeera, 2021). It is evident that the majority of religious and traditional leaders seek the criminalization of LGBTQ+ activities. Thus, it is clear that LGBTQ+ are not readily accepted in Ghana.

Expressions of gender fluidity hints at LGBTQ+. The dynamic of gender fluidity is that often, individuals that express fluidity may not even be a part of the LGBTQ+ community but their expressions are in many ways suggestive of the LGBTQ+ identity so these expressions are frowned upon as well by the broader Ghanaian society.

2.8 Mediated popular culture

Sellnow (2018, p. 3) describes mediated popular culture as “the everyday actions, objects and events that we experience through a media channel.” For example, they could be movies, TV programs, songs, music videos, comic strips and advertisements that happen to affect and influence us in one way or the other. We encounter mediated popular culture through print and electronic media such as magazines, newspapers, billboards, brochures and TV and radio as well as new media such as Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and Youtube, amongst others.

2.9 Music videos

This study now offers an exploratory overview of music videos as a manifestation of popular culture, bringing to the fore what gender scholars have posited about this medium, thus far. According to Gow (1996), music videos have always existed but because of the preponderance of MTV videos, they skyrocketed as they had a global outreach. They were often accessed through traditional media, however, with the emergence of Youtube and other online platforms, their popularity has increasingly soared (VanDyke, 2011, p. 4). Vandyke (2011, p. 4) also asserts upon research that multiple studies and analyses of music videos have been done but most have focused on the gendered portrayals of men and women. This has been mainly expressed through feminist social theory as well where scholars such as hooks (1990), Bobo & Sieter (1991) and Valdivia (1995) have questioned how women for example are portrayed through music videos negatively. These discussions have been multilayered as there are always intersection with race and class. In music videos for example, prevailing scholarship explores how women are denigrated through fetishizations. Hill Collins (2004) explores this for black women and states

that ‘the sexualized black woman has become an icon in hip-hop culture’. Scholarship has shown that women’s bodies are objectified in music videos and this is harmful as it presents impossible beauty standards for women (Perry, 2003). Hill Collins (2004) then mentions black female sexual agency, where African American female rappers in music videos are vociferous about their sexual desires and states that this does not make them trampish or ‘a hoe’. Ultimately, music videos inform viewers about what is normal in terms of gender (Jhally, 2007). As individuals feast on images in music videos, their mental faculties are constructed to accept what they are supposed to be, look like and do to fit into society (Sipiora, 1991). In essence, these videos seemingly project what is normal and what is not (Gow, 1996).

2.10 Gender fluidity in music videos

There are discussions about gender fluidity globally where Bossi (2020) states that Bad Bunny’s music video, “Yeo Perreo Sola” features richly colored visuals and fashion and champions gender fluidity in his work. This Puerto Rican musician and actor once starred on a popular American show – the Jimmy Fallon show and wore a black skirt with a statement shirt reading, “Mataron a Alexa, no a un hombre con flada”. This translates as “They killed Alexa, not a man in a skirt.” He expressed this as he sought to draw attention to the killing of a homeless transgender woman in Puerto Rico. Geffen (2020) states that music and gender non-conformity have long gone hand in hand long before pop music emerged. However, patriarchy stifled it as it was scared of it. She adds that white capitalist patriarchy has always sought to erase difference to maintain its status quo. This long fed into colonialism where white men and women desperately clung to their conventional binary to prevent any clashes with variables such as religion during American slavery. Thus, whenever they encountered racialized people of difference, they sought

to vehemently erase this difference. Music is a powerful tool that individuals use to express difference and in many ways revolt. Thus, the famous blues artiste, Ma Rainey, a Southern American singer who signed a deal with Paramount in 1923, became famous for her androgynous voice and presence in music. This rebellion to the patriarchy similarly birthed drag in music videos where drag queens such as Julian Eltinge became a huge star in a time where unconventional gender expression was not widely accepted. However, some of the world's most influential artistes that expressed gender fluidity in their music videos were Prince, David Bowie and Freddie Mercury. These artistes were beloved widely and vilified in like manner. The world didn't react well to celebrities like Prince, for instance, who wore black bikini briefs and thigh high stockings on stage and thus, he was met with widespread homophobia and cultic violence.

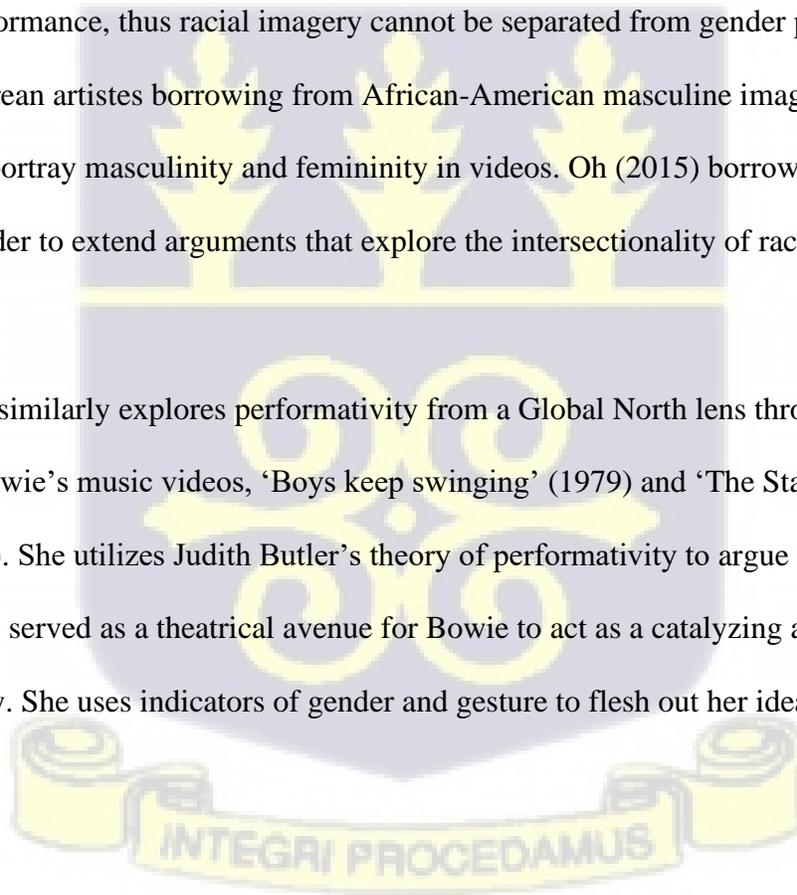
Hawkins (2015) explores the concept of queerness in popular music videos. He utilizes existing theories of temporality and opacity combined with an interdisciplinary approach to expound on music analysis. He further explores gender fluid artistes such as David Bowie, zeroing in on his 'The Jean Genie' video (2007) directed by Mick Rock. In this four-minute video, Bowie wears flamboyant clothing with an occasional naked torso. There is an opulent display of androgyny, queer stylistics and subtle homo-erotic behavior. Hawkins (2015) argues that Bowie invented himself and was honest and this helped other generations of pop artistes to embrace and display queerness in their music. One of such artistes influenced in this regard was Madonna.

Hawkins (2015) posits that as a gender fluid artiste, Madonna often uses queering as a tactic for enticement. Genderplay is at the heart of her music as she challenges conventional Western norms in her music videos. This is what accounts for the huge appeal of her music. Taylor (2012) treads similar ground by arguing that Madonna's performativity is viewed as an imaginative

construction of femininity that is political. By expressing ideals such as sexual explicitness, homosexuality, androgyny, sadomasochism and queer fashion in her videos and lyrics, there is almost always resultant tension with the broader society. However, this tension is what heightens consumption of her art as consumers are always at the edge of their seats, awaiting her next unruly move.

Oh (2015) examines how gender fluidity in Korean pop (K-pop) challenges racialized gender norms in the west as it relates to masculinity, femininity, sexuality, amongst others. She examines bodily representations through performance in popular Korean music videos and utilizes Judith Butler's theory of performativity to examine gender through performance. She argues that Judith Butler's theory of performativity situates gender as a social and historically constructed performance, thus racial imagery cannot be separated from gender performance. This accounts for Korean artistes borrowing from African-American masculine imagery and white womanhood to portray masculinity and femininity in videos. Oh (2015) borrows Butler's thoughts on gender to extend arguments that explore the intersectionality of race, gender and sexuality.

Perrot (2017) similarly explores performativity from a Global North lens through analyzing two of David Bowie's music videos, 'Boys keep swinging' (1979) and 'The Stars (Are out Tonight)' (2013). She utilizes Judith Butler's theory of performativity to argue that the music video format has served as a theatrical avenue for Bowie to act as a catalyzing agent in the cycle of performativity. She uses indicators of gender and gesture to flesh out her ideas.



2.11 Gender fluidity in hip-hop music

Hip-hop is an integral part of popular culture and some of the music videos to be sampled in this study are heavily influenced by gender fluidity in hip-hop. This section also provides a deeper understanding of gender fluidity in pop music as the artistes examined in this section are popular or mainstream artistes. Opie (2020) discusses the influence of gender fluidity in hip-hop music. This is reflected in fashion choices in music videos. Kanye West is quoted as saying, “Being fresh is more important than having money” and this definition of fresh, according to Opie (2020) changes every day. Gender fluid fashion has increasingly become what the fashion industry regards as fresh and this is reflected in music videos. According to the Williams Institute Study, 1.4 million adults in the US do not identify with their birth gender especially Gen Z, thus this is reflected in their fashion. Hip-hop has always been an outlet for machismo and hyper masculinity and although artistes such as Kid Cudi and Kendrick Lamar have started to dismantle it, there are still a lot of knockbacks especially when it comes to gender fluidity (Opie, 2020). This is evidenced by Anderson Paak donning a look outside the norm at the Met Gala. This was met with widespread criticism through the infamous, ‘U look terrible’ comment by ScHoolboy Q on social media.

However, certain artistes such as Jaden Smith and Young Thug constantly express fluidity in their music videos and push the boundaries of what is definitively male. It is expedient to note that these contemporary artistes, though hailed for their bravery, are widely considered precursors and this notion is debunked by Refinery29 as he affirms the arguments put forth earlier that gender fluidity in music was even stronger in the past, such as in the 70s where the Isley brothers dressed androgynously and cult disco icon, Sylvester incorporated a drag queen aesthetic into his art.

One interesting thing that Opie (2020) notes is that before African-American rappers began to own their femininity and express themselves more provocatively in music videos, there was the preponderance of the ‘tomboy chic’ in music videos, where women such as TLC, Aaliyah and Salt-N-Pepa wore oversized T-shirts and baggy pants that were prevalent in hip-hop at the time. This look in hip-hop mimicked what black youth wore on the streets and was sort of a revolutionary recourse in art to a system that denigrated the lives of African Americans. Streetwear labels such as FUBU and Diddy’s Sean John were birthed out of this movement in art. These fashion choices were influenced by prison culture and although presenting a hypermasculine image of what a man should look like, snowballed to influence women, representing fluidity for African-American women (Opie, 2020). Donning on gender fluid fashion in music, as represented in the videos put out, sought to present women as more than their bodies. It meant that global audiences were forced to reckon with the talents of the female artistes and not their looks or aesthetic. This was a well calculated and combative move against misogyny. Similarly, after ‘the tomboy chic’ look faded away with artistes like Lil Kim and Foxy Brown owning their sexuality in their music videos with sexually provocative clothing; artistes such as Ciara, in 2007, boldly expressed gender fluidity in the music video for the song, “Like a boy”. While hugely successful, it ruffled a lot of feathers and created a lot of tension within the American society as it openly challenged gender norms. This occurred only after 12 years of ‘tomboy chic’ yet rumors began to circulate about Ciara’s gender and sexuality, proving how uncomfortable society had gotten with fluidity over time for women in hip-hop. At present, artistes such as Rihanna express fluidity with ever-evolving looks that break convention and that incorporate both masculine and feminine energy into music videos.

Opie (2020) posits that the need to express fluidity is rooted in the need for authenticity and individuality. Artistes constantly seek to set themselves apart from each other and for that reason, often radical forms of expression are embraced. This explains why artistes such as CeeLo Green and Andre 3000 were among the first in hip-hop to express fluidity on the red carpet. Andre 3000 for example expressed this blaringly on his group, Outkast's hit single, "Ms. Jackson".



Andre 3000 in his cream long flowing dress

This dress by Andre may draw associations to the thobe worn by Muslim men. However, the contexts are different. Andre 3000 grew up in a Christian home but as he grew up, distanced

himself from religion (Utz, 2020). In this regard, interviews and discussions in the media space do not mention a thobe, rather a dress, representing gender fluidity (Utz, 2020; Nnadi, 2019).

However, one of the biggest expressions of fluidity in music was when Kanye West in 2011 was spotted wearing a leather Givenchy kilt on the Watch the throne tour. It was laughed off on social media and many responded with homophobic slurs. Interestingly, however, it was this look that marked him as having crossed over into high fashion and he was subsequently accorded a new level of respect in the entertainment industry (Opie, 2020).



Kanye West in his kilt inspired fashion

This then paved the way for new hip-hop artistes such as Kid Cudi, Lil Uzi Vert and Young Thug to be even bolder in their expressions of gender fluidity. For example, Young Thug expressed bold gender fluid content on the cover of his mixtape, stating in an interview with GQ that 90% of all his clothes are women's and that it would be hard for any man or woman to put on the outfit that he put on.





Young Thug's cover for his mixtape, 'No my name is Jeffrey'

According to Opie (2020), artistes such as Young Thug do not see gender. This is something Young Thug famously said in a Calvin Klein Fall 2016 Campaign. He sees himself emancipated from societal conceptualizations of gender and simply seeks to express this freedom from societal norms by being provocative in his music. Opie (2020) suggests, however that it is easier for major stars to challenge gender tropes than for the ordinary man. This is often due to their celebrity and influence. The shock value attached to such expressions bring more traction to their

endeavors. In this, should reception be good or bad, it fuels their celebrity. Opie (2020) adds that it is evident that individuals react negatively to gender fluidity due to the presumption of gayness. However, as espoused earlier about historical factors affecting gender fluid expression by Katz-Wise (2020), Opie (2020) states that Gen Z are fearless in their expression of fluidity as they are more receptive to it.

2.12 Gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos

There is hardly original scholarship about gender fluidity within Ghana's evolving music landscape. Perhaps, it has been thought of as non-existent. Even in the wake of national conversations about the LGBTQ+ in the country, there have hardly been scholarly discussions about gender queerness in music, as perhaps it is assumed to be minimal, thus non-deserving of critical attention. There have been numerous studies though, about gender in Ghanaian music videos by scholars such as Ampofo and Asiedu (2012) and Collins (2000). In Ghana, scholarship has reflected certain sentiments of black feminist scholarship. Collins (2000) argues that objectification of women is still an issue in Ghanaian pop culture. Ampofo and Asiedu (2012, p. 260) affirm such sentiments by stating that women are often fetishized in popular music videos and this serves to disempower them. They add that this is highly representative of African music. This is evidenced by Chiweshe and Bhatasara (2013, p. 153) that posit that in Zimbabwe, women are portrayed as objects of caricature to be adored by men in a misogynistic society.

Scholars such as Collins (2000) assert that contemporary highlife music is built upon romantic love and sexual innuendos where women are objectified in music videos and men have a macho flavor in the lyrical content. However, prevailing literature has brought up the concept

of empowerment and female sexual agency where African feminists have pointed out that there is a huge silence with regard to sexual pleasure within female sexual agency in Ghana and Africa at large (Ampofo et al., 2012; McFadden, 2003; Mama, 1996). These studies explore masculinity as well where often white masculinity is regarded as the invisible norm (Brooks & Hebert, 2006, p. 304). Burks (1996) mentions that there is white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. Black men are seen as deviants and sexually aggressive. Masculinity is heavily tied to muscular bodies and thuggish innuendoes in music videos and masculinity requires performance (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009).

In all of these postulations about gender in Ghanaian music videos, limited literature still exists for gender fluidity in Ghanaian popular music videos. However, this is why this study seeks to provide original research on the topic and argues that gender fluidity is a reality in the country and that there is a crop of popular music artistes that reflect this in their work.

2.13 Theoretical framework

2.13.1 Judith Butler's Theory of performativity

For this study, Judith Butler's theory of performativity was used. This theory was first introduced through her book *Gender and Trouble* released in 1990 that has helped countless gender scholars understand gender. Butler formulated a post-modernist notion of gender contrary to the traditional notion that genders are fixed categories. She basically defines gender as a social role enacted or performed by individuals and validated and accepted by society, claiming identity is "performatively constituted" (Butler, 1990).

Butler (1990) argues that gender depends on culture and is continual performance, stating that “gender is not internal but is a repeated performance of acts, gestures, and desires evident on the body’s surface” (Butler, 1990). Butler (1990, p. 173) further argues that the acts, gestures and enactments are performative because their essence are often fabrications that are sustained through physical means. By being performative, gender is real to the extent that it is performed. She also argues that there is not actually a doer behind an action, rather the doer is an illusion; that it is in and through the deed that the doer is constructed (Butler, 1990, p. 173). This idea was elucidated upon when Butler began conversations about how gender performativity can be realized in the context of drag and how it imitates gender.

Butler’s theory of performativity states that performativity is not a choice and that often individuals that do not perform gender per societal constructs, in other words, individuals that do not perform gender ‘right’ are ostracized within the culture (Butler, 1990, p. 178). This is because the broader society seeks to enforce stricter notions of gender binaries or polarity. Often gender norms are what determine social acceptability and she states categorically that gender norms establish what is reasonably human or not and what is ‘real’ or not. (Butler, 1991, xxiii).

Butler (1990/1999) also states that through repetition, performativity paves way for agency in the sense that new gendered expressions have the ability to displace prevailing gender norms. According to her, gender norms can be subverted only through repetitive signifying practices. (Butler, 1990/1999, p. 185). In this sense, there can be new approaches of gendered expression, be it repetitive acts, behaviors and desires that then offset prevailing norms.

This theory proved crucial as it helped the researcher to analyze the performative of gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos and helped draw out the tensions that arise as prevailing gender norms are openly challenged.

2.13.2 The feminist perspective

The feminist perspective was utilized in conjunction with with Butler's theory of performativity. Butler (1990) posits that practices that support the contestation of prevailing gender norms can utilize feminist politics. According to Sellnow (2018, p. 11), the feminist perspective focuses on acceptable, appropriate and desirable traits for men and women. It covers roles and rules for men and women in society as well as heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. Nancy (n.d). posits that the proponents of this theory assume that gender is much more than biological distinctions and consists of assumptions and societal expectations regarding what it is to be female or male.

Feminists have distinguished between sex and gender. Sex often denotes the distinction of male and female based on biology (sex organs, chromosomes, hormones, amongst others) while gender denotes distinction of men and women based on social factors (identity, behavior, position, etc.) (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2022). Feminist scholars find it useful to distinguish between biology (sex) and gender as they argue that many differences between males and females are socially engineered, thus are changeable. Rubin (1975, p. 159) describes gender as "the socially imposed division of the sexes". She argues that as biological distinctions between men and women are fixed, gender distinctions reflect the oppressive results of social interventions and norms that dictate how males and females should behave. She then adds that feminism should aim to create a genderless (though not sexless society) where one's anatomy is irrelevant to who one is, what one does and with whom one makes love (Rubin, 1975, p. 204).

This view was proposed in sharp contradiction to earlier postulations about gender and sex which were often seen as complementary. Nicholson (1994, p. 81) argued that our sexed bodies are like coat racks and provide the site upon which gender is constructed. This coat rack perception of gender captured the prevailing idea of the time, that, “Gender is the social interpretation of sex”. Masculinity and femininity were thus influenced by society’s idealizations of sexed bodies and this placed society as the main source of gender construction. The feminist perspective counters this ideal with scholars such as Haslenger (2000b) and Stoljar (1995) positing that distinguishing gender and sex enables both entities come apart; in that one can be sexed male and yet be gendered as a woman. Thus, these feminists have then argued that gender differences result from cultural practices and social expectations. This is what is commonly referred to in the definition, “gender is a social construct”.

The feminist perspective is what is often used to flesh out stereotypes and is utilized by many feminist scholars such as Ampofo and Asiedu (2012), whose scholarship has been espoused earlier. As this perspective explores expressions, traits and roles of both men and women, this perspective will be helpful in fleshing out the gendered expression or traits in Ghanaian music videos, examining in my research, the nuances of gender expression and its tension with prevalent societal norms, all under the umbrella of gender fluidity.

2.14 Summary

This chapter has provided the relevant literature and the theoretical framework to ground this study. It has utilized a wide scope of scholarship to provide relevant information about gender fluidity in mediated popular culture.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the research design for the study as well as the sampling, data collection and analysis procedure that was utilized.

3.1 Research design

According to Neuman (2014, p. 106), there are two approaches to the research design: the qualitative approach and the quantitative approach. Both approaches help to systematically collect and analyze empirical data. They also assist researchers in examining patterns in data that explain social life. He states however that the distinguishing factor between both approaches is the nature of the data. Whereas the qualitative approach uses soft data, the quantitative approach utilises hard data. Soft data is exemplified in impressions, words, sentences, photos, symbols, etc while hard data is exemplified in the form of numbers. This study utilized the qualitative research tradition. This is because the data analyzed consisted of the words, impressions and moving pictures in the music videos. No numerical data whatsoever was analyzed.

3.2 Sample

The researcher used purposive sampling. According to Robinson (2014), purposive sampling refers to the “intentional selection of informants based on their ability to elucidate a specific theme, concept or phenomenon”. According to Alchemar (2021), it is judgmental, selective or

subjective sampling and a type of non-probability sampling. Usually, the sample being investigated is quite small. The researcher chose purposive sampling as popular artistes that express gender fluidity in Ghanaian music are not numerous, however, the limited number within those spaces are quite potent in their art as it has garnered great interest both locally and internationally. This study purposively sampled four Ghanaian musicians, namely Wiyaaala, Wanlov the Kubolor, Sefa and Amaarae in order to flesh out the themes that emerge with regard to gender fluidity in music videos. These have also been chosen because they have a stronger and larger body of work that reflects gender fluidity. Two music videos will be sampled for Amaarae, as amongst the four artistes being sampled, her expressions of gender fluidity are most prominent. These videos include: 'Like it' and 'Fluid'. For Wiyaaala, one video will be sampled which is "Rock my body", as this is her most prominent expression of gender fluidity. For Sefa, one video will be sampled which is 'Shuga' featuring DopeNation. Lastly, for Wanlov the Kubolor, the video, 'PPP' featuring Mensa and Mind You will be sampled as this also represents his strongest music video replete with gender fluidity. Thus, in all, five music videos will be purposively sampled and analyzed.

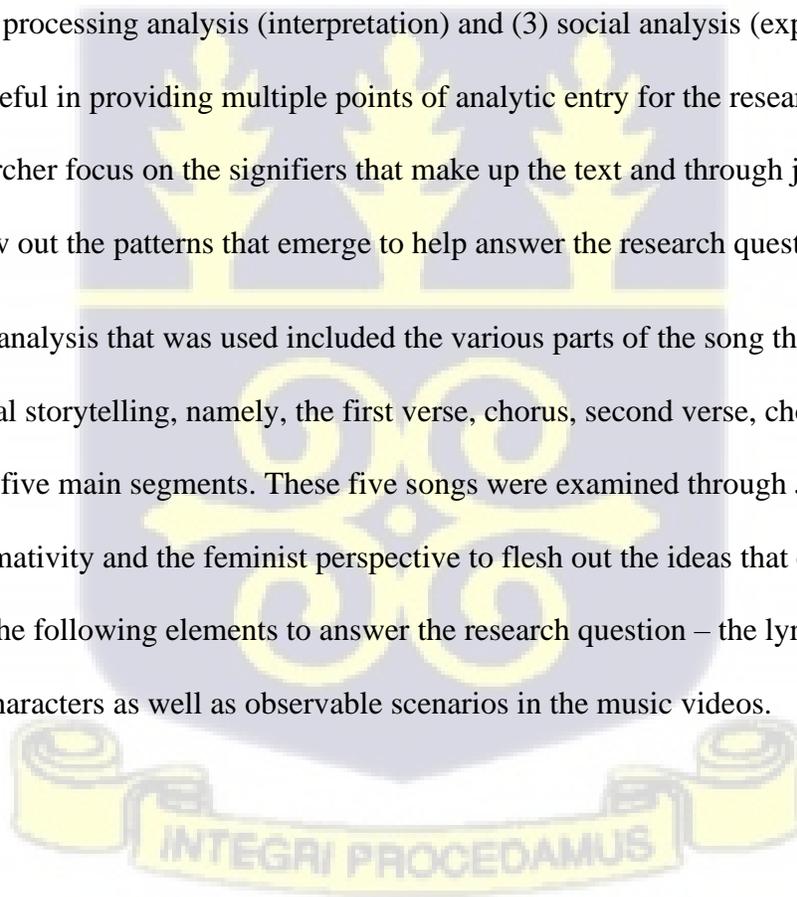
3.3 Data collection and analysis

The samples were collected through new media, namely YouTube where they were downloaded and analyzed thoroughly to generate answers for the research questions stipulated. However, for the purposes of this study, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used. Van Dijk (2006, p. 252) posits that CDA is grounded in the need to understand pressing social issues. According to Janks (2006, p. 329), CDA is a critical theory of language that sees language use as a form of social practice. Social practices are grounded in specific historical contexts and are often the means by

which existing social relations are reproduced or contested. CDA examines how a text is positioned, whose interest it serves or negates, the consequences of this positioning and the interplay of power structures. CDA is often utilized when a researcher seeks to analyze discourse and power relations.

The researcher utilized Fairclough's model for CDA. Fairclough (1989, 1995) posits that there are three interrelated processes of analysis in CDA. They include: (1) The object of analysis (including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts). (2) The processes by means of which the object is produced and received (writing/ speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) by human subjects. and (3) The socio-historical conditions which govern these processes. In this vein, these three processes require (1) textual analysis (description) (2) processing analysis (interpretation) and (3) social analysis (explanation). This model proved useful in providing multiple points of analytic entry for the researcher. It also helped the researcher focus on the signifiers that make up the text and through juxtaposition and sequencing, draw out the patterns that emerge to help answer the research questions.

The units of analysis that was used included the various parts of the song that are related through the visual storytelling, namely, the first verse, chorus, second verse, chorus and bridge, thereby offering five main segments. These five songs were examined through Judith Butler's theory of performativity and the feminist perspective to flesh out the ideas that emerge. The study observed the following elements to answer the research question – the lyrics, fashion, movements of characters as well as observable scenarios in the music videos.



3.4 Summary

This chapter explained the methodology utilized to gather data and analyze. It stated and explained the research design, sampling technique as well as data collection and analysis relevant to this study.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF STUDY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter reveals the findings of the data that was analyzed. It first offers short biographies and descriptions of the music videos to provide context before answering the research questions posed in Chapter One.

4.1 Description of sampled music videos

4.1.1 Amaarae

a. Biography

Born on July 4, 1994, to Ama Bawuah and Kwadwo Boateng Genfi; Ama Serwah Genfi (popularly known as Amaarae) is the eldest of two children. She is a multifaceted artiste that juggles her numerous talents as singer, songwriter, producer and sound engineer with excellence. She made her mark in Africa's alternative music scene, also known as 'Alte', bursting onto the scene with an eclectic sound and bold multi-colored hair that made her stand out amongst her peers in Ghana and the world at large. Although she looks up to artistes such as Billie Holiday, Anthony Kedis and Fleet Mac's Stevie Nicks, her sound is a unique potpourri of eclectic tastes and incorporates African rhythms.

Her first live shows were in Café Kwae, Shop Accra and Vine Lounge. She also performed in New York and expanded her international portfolio. These experiences helped her perform to

larger crowds at Lagos' Art X and Backyard Lagos in 2018 and Boiler's True Music Africa in Accra in March 2019. She then curated her own concert, JulyFest in Accra.

Amaarae's talent has been recognized nationally and internationally by Boiler Room, Apple Music and Vogue. She was named as Apple Music's Favorite New Artiste in April 2018 and became an Apple Music Beats 1 Featured Artiste for her debut EP, 'Passionfruit Summers' in the same year. She has worked with Stonebwoy and Santi and Odunsi which has brought her more fans and acclaim. Amaarae is considered a style icon and she was featured in an article on Vogue Magazine online about women across the globe that have buzz haircuts. She was also mentioned as one of Vogue Online's Top 100 style influencers of 2018 and nominated as Artiste of the Year at the Glitz Style Awards in Ghana. Her defining traits as an artiste are her lyrical dexterity, exceptional style and unique voice. Undoubtedly, Amaarae is a global force to reckon with.

Source: Amaarae's website

<http://amaaraemusic.com/>

b. 'Like it' music video

Amaarae's 'Like it' was released on October 10, 2019. It begins with her approaching a storey building emblazoned with "The Lost Motel" in fluorescent lights. The music slowly builds up as she ascends a flight of stairs and meets a man in a green suit and pink hat bound with a blue cord at the middle. She wears a puzzled look across her face throughout her journey as the man waves her in. A bare-chested dwarf, with his face dotted with white paint, hurries in before her. The room is painted in lurid pink and purple. Amaarae dons a multi-colored and patterned short sleeve shirt and long trousers. She also has a clean and low haircut, with her hair dyed pink,

green and blue. As the music progresses, she walks across the corridor. The camera pans to fluorescent lighting and a clock that sits at a 5:00pm, and a light emitter that is designed in the words, 'LOVE'. As Amaarae walks down the corridor, her puzzlement is still apparent, especially as other characters are revealed in the scenario. A man and woman are engaged in conversation. The woman slides her hand across her supposed lover's chest suggestively. Another woman leans across another section of the wall, an aloof expression reading from her body language.

The dwarf recognized at the beginning is seen to be engaged in banter with another dwarf as they tug at each other's arms. As the scene progresses, a voluptuous woman clad in pink and black lingerie dances provocatively across a man in a pink-purple suit with a cap. She twirls across his crotch and then faces him, going down on him in a sensual manner. As she does this, the man drinks directly from a green bottle. The lady then goes ahead to play with the two dwarfs that were engaged in banter. One dwarf picks up the other and they race across the corridor to a mud-brown colored room that has several characters. A man, in a pink suit, white shirt, white trousers as well as a red and white bandana grinds on another lady dressed in lingerie and a cream full-flowing wig. Amaarae follows the dwarfs into the room and sits across a surface. A skinny and dark man wearing a tight transparent blue dress buckled in his midsection, accessorized by yellow, blue and pink bangles and a floral-patterned crown on his head explodes in pronounced feminine movement around her. He has bright make-up on as he twirls frantically around her.

The camera pans to reveal two individuals in a glass-enclosed area within the room, the kind that whales and other marine creatures are put in for a display for individuals embarking on an excursion. There is a dark-skinned lady in pink lingerie twirling and a man in a predominantly

ivory white tight-fitting dress that bends provocatively and sticks his tongue out. He has a full beard and short curly hair styled with a bandana. This style is different from the man in the previous room. Whereas that man had a masculine haircut, this man's hair is presented as the kind of short curly hair that women would wear. He seems a cross between a man and a woman as without his beard, from afar, one might mistake him as a woman with his tight garb and feminine gestures. The woman and man in the glass enclosed area continue to twirl provocatively.

The camera now reveals the man in a tight blue outfit winding in the full brightness of the light, his mouth agape, tongue curling softly, intent sure, and movements still feminine. As he dances and walks across Amaarae, puzzlement still registers across her face. She then follows one of the dwarfs to another room where a birthday cake with an inscription of zero for the years is revealed. A camera is planted firmly on the wooden table and the camera reveals an individual laughing heartily. This individual's face is painted like a clown's and one of the dwarfs plays discordant music on a piano that has leaves stretching across the keys. The clown takes a picture of Amaarae. Children are revealed in party clothes, holding balloons, aloof. The clown then has a bat strewn across the shoulder as another dwarf eats food as he walks across the room. The camera does not reveal what he is eating. Then, a picture of Beyonce, in a white robe with a necklace across her chest is revealed at the curtains. She is smiling, giving off a divine aura, and the picture is reminiscent of the smiling white Jesus portraits that have been popular amongst Christians in Ghana. A black sculpture that resembles a screaming creature lights up with fluorescent green lighting in both eyes and its open mouth.

A dwarf leaves the room in haste and in a spirited manner and Amaarae follows him. A rustic environment is revealed as there are numerous green plants on display and women in lingerie,

others in shirts and shorts, dance. At this point, Amaarae is wearing a different dress. She has a black, intricately patterned long sleeve shirt and a green trouser, with delicate red, green and black rectangular patches that accentuate her androgynous look. She dances to the music. Her movements are subtle and not provocative in any manner like all the other women in the video – a slight bob of her head from side to side, curling her fingers and moving them in synch with the music and at most a light full-body movement from left to right as the light is directed fully at her face before the video ends. The video all in all runs for 4:05 minutes.







Images from Amaarae's 'Like it' video

INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

c. 'Fluid' music video

'Fluid' was released June 7, 2018. This video reveals Amaarae with minimal makeup and a bright sunflower-gold low haircut. Her hair has been arranged symmetrically to seem like cornrows as she sings. Only her face is shown in a white container that seems like a large cup. Within the cup are numerous and varying petals floating in colorful liquid. First, the liquid shown is sea blue, then it becomes milky white. It alternates from blue to white throughout the video with brightly colored petals that range from white to pink to yellow to violet to wine and to green respectively. She keeps singing as the color of the water changes. One could easily mistake Amaarae as male when watching the video. The video runs for 2:26 minutes.





Images from Amaarae's 'Fluid' video

4.1.2 Wiyaala

a. Biography

The name 'Wiyaala' means doer in her native dialect Sissale. She is a singer, songwriter, guitarist, visual artist and dancer that hails from Funsu in the Upper West Region of Ghana. Her

musical references are West African folk traditions and contemporary Afro-pop and she is often compared to Angélique Kidjo, Brenda Fassie and Mariam Makeeba. Wiyaala is the second of four children and growing up, avoided Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child marriage in Funsì. She was also a child entertainer, dancer, visual artist and footballer and these experiences helped fuel her growth as an entertainer.

Wiyaala won the Vodafone Icons Reality Show in Accra in 2012. She was then discovered by Rita Ray of BBC's Global Beats in 2014 and since then has become one of Ghana's biggest musical exports. She represented Ghana at the Commonwealth Games 2018 in Australia, The African Union in Addis Ababa, WOMAD UK, Green Man, Kendal Calling, Shambala and the Timitar Festival in Morocco. She charted on the Billboard in 2014 with her 2014 FIFA World Cup Song, 'Go Go Black Stars', the first Ghanaian artiste to do so after Osibisa in 1970. She has two albums to her credit, 'Wiyaala' and 'Sissala Goddess' and a third, 'Yaga Yaga' due in 2022. She is also a member of the international female group GRRRL.

She designs her own costumes and lives in and promotes Funsì to attract foreigners to experience authentic African life and culture. Visitors have included Thomas Naadi of BBC Africa, Deutsche Welle (DW) News, international travel blogger Drew Binsky and TV3 Ghana. She is philanthropic as she has built an Arts Centre, Guest House and restaurant in Funsì where she holds festivals and encourages children to believe in themselves and develop their gifts and creativity. Her efforts have been recognized as a street in Funsì has been named after her to celebrate her impact.



Advocacy

Unicef Ghana

GACA - Ghana Against Child Abuse

Water Aid Ghana

Teach2Teach

Awards & Citations

Laureate of The Cité Internationale Des Arts 2021 - Institut Francais Paris France

Alternative Song of the Year - Ghana Music Awards 2021

Best Ghanaian Cultural Act - Ghana Music Awards UK 2021

Woman of the Decade – Women’s Choice Awards Africa 2020

Artiste of the Year - Ghana Arts & Culture Awards 2019

International Touring Artiste of the Year - Ghana Music Awards UK 2019

BBC's Celebrated African Women 2018 - BBC News

Young and Gifted - Ghana Women of the Year 2017

Discovery of the Year - Golden Movie Awards 2016

Music Video of the Year - All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA) 2015

Songwriter of the Year - Vodafone Ghana Music Awards (VGMA) 2015



Best Female Vocal Performance - Vodafone Ghana Music Awards (VGMA) 2015

Best Individual Style - Glitz Fashion Awards 2015

Most Promising Artiste in Africa - All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA) 2014

Revelation of the African Continent - All Africa Music Awards (AFRIMA) 2014

Source: Wiyaala's website

<https://wiyaala.com/>

b. 'Rock my body' music video

Wiyaala's 'Rock my body' was released on June 18, 2022. It begins with Wiyaala in bed. She sits up and grabs her outfit. She dons a black tank top and a blaring red African print trouser, puffy from waist to knee level and tight at the bottom. She also has high heels on, designed with the fabric of her trouser; traditional beads encircling her wrists, with pale red lipstick as she jumps onto her motorcycle and heads off to the market. There are moments where she pauses and dances on the motorcycle before reaching her destination. Upon reaching, a man greets her as she begins to walk across the street, dancing vivaciously as market women wave at her. She then hi-fives another woman dressed in a yellow blazer. The artiste she features, Jupitar, wears a simple blue shirt and blue jeans. Box television sets are seen on wooden surfaces under a kiosk. These televisions are already turned on and Jupitar is seen singing the lyrics on screen as three women ogle, starstruck by the image. Then Jupitar, in flesh, suddenly emerges from the kiosk in the same outfit that was seen on the screen, much like if one was watching a music video on

television and the artiste in the video appeared to you in person in the same outfit. The three women chase Jupiter frantically as he runs away from them.

Wiyaala is shown next as she wears a pale blue-green military outfit and large, round, bright-red earrings, red bangles and tinted blue shades. Whereas from the onset, her lipstick was pale, now it is brighter and more prominent. The scene then reveals her without shades, with crisply done eyebrows and blue eyeshadow, fingernails all painted in different colors – yellow, blue, green, red and then yellow. She is seen in a butcher's kiosk where she places her hand on the butcher's bare chest and bends down provocatively. The scene changes to reveal 7 skinny yet athletic-looking bare-chested men in army trousers. They form a pyramid dance formation with Wiyaala at the apex. She rubs her hands across the bare chests of the men flanking her and the dancers begin winding to the left and right. The camera then reveals Jupiter singing to a plus-size woman in another scene as Wiyaala dances with her male backup dancers.

A fully clothed dwarf is seen staring at Wiyaala. He is wearing a blue multicolored Lacoste shirt, blue-grey trousers, a cream and blue cap as well as shades. He is then bare-chested as he dances behind Wiyaala. Her fingernails graze his skin as she repeats in the song, "I want to crush his body". The dwarf is seen exercising with dumbbells. The camera portrays another man, bulkier, exercising. He lifts the dwarf as replacement for the dumbbell a few seconds later. Then a tall white man is seen bare-chested in a blonde wig and black shorts dancing with the dwarf on an elevated surface where so many market folk watch them, laughing and dancing. At the end of the video, the dwarf, now fully clothed again on the street looks distraught as he walks away. Wiyaala, in the garb she had on at the beginning of the video, gets onto her motorcycle and honks at the dwarf, waving her finger at him to join her on the motorcycle. He joins her and she

speeds off as market and town folk stare, a couple of children laughing heartily at what just transpired. This video runs for 04:14 minutes.







Images from Wiyala's 'Rock my body' video

4.1.3. Sefa

a. Biography

Sefeadzi Abena Amesu, known in the music world as Sefa, is an Afrobeats, soul, highlife and RnB singer and songwriter. She signed onto Black Avenue Muzik label in 2018 and released 'Marry Me', 'Odo Yewu' and 'Pepper' featuring Bisa Kdei before releasing her number 1 hit single 'Shuga' featuring DopeNation in July 2019. She scored nominations in 2019 at the 3 Music Awards, 4syte Music Awards, C Base Music Awards and 3rdTvMusic Awards. Her popularity rose sharply after this.

Sefa has performed at The Ghana Meets Naija Concert, The Fill The Dome Bhim Concert, The 3 Music Awards, The Glitz Fashion Awards, Sarkodie's Tema Music Festival, Shatta Wale's Reign Concert amongst others.

She has bagged a total of 10 award nominations in 2020, including Woman of the Year and Best New Artiste of the Year 2020 at the 3 Music Awards 2020. After the release of ‘E Choke’ featuring Mr. Drew in 2021, Sefa became a household name.

Source: Black Avenue Group (The label Sefa is signed onto.)

<https://www.blackavenuegroup.com/sefa>

b. ‘Shuga’ featuring DopeNation music video

‘Shuga’ was released on May 13, 2019. The video begins with Sefa wearing a tight tangerine-orange bathing suit, reclining on a pink mat. She is surrounded by four young women in bathing suits lying on similar pink mats. Their bathing suits are colored yellow, deep blue, orange and sea blue in anti-clockwise order. The scene then changes to reveal Sefa upright, in her bathing suit cinched at the waist by beads; her voluptuous body on full display, the sea’s waves lapping gently behind her as she begins to assume provocative positions in succession with the music. The woman in the yellow bathing suit who was lying on the mat is revealed also assuming a provocative gait on her knees.

The camera now focuses on the male artiste. He wears a white long-sleeved sweatshirt that is customized with text emblazoned in orange and black as he sits at the lifeguard tower. All the other women previously on the mat with Sefa are now revealed assuming provocative positions. They are also shown walking toward the sea together. The camera then reveals Sefa in a tight black blouse and black short shorts with golden strands at her waist. She is surrounded by four

women. The woman flanking her at the right wears tight blue jean shorts and a multicolored blouse. Prominent colors from the blouse are blue, yellow and red. She also has a shirt tied around her waist and her hair is beige and black. The woman flanking her at the left has on a blue long-sleeved shirt and tight blue jean shorts. Her wig is bubblegum pink. Behind Sefa, to the left is a woman in a bright blue wig and pink crop top. She has blue jean shorts and a shirt tied across her waist. The last lady wears a bright yellow shirt, a yellow wig and African print short shorts.

The camera now reveals the woman in a white bathing suit, immobilized all of a sudden, lying prostrate on the sea bank, drowned as Sefa and the woman in the yellow bathing suit surround her, deeply concerned. The male artiste leaves the lifeguard tower and as he leans in to place his mouth over hers, the women stop him and the lady in yellow places her mouth over the drowned woman instead. Sefa is revealed in a white bathtub surrounded by bright and conspicuous flowers of multiple colors as she hammers the chorus, “Say you want to eat but your money no dey reach”. There are flowers in the bathtub as well and a large pink background behind her.

The camera now reveals two male artistes – the twin duo DopeNation. The twin rappers rap in an open party – several young women and men holding paper cups as they grind on each other in an open space filled with bright lights. Then two sets of high heels are revealed opposite each other on a moving treadmill. Sefa is revealed on the left end. Directly opposite her is a skinny young man in a black tank top, tight black trousers and black shades. He has super high wedges on, encrusted with silver patterned designs. Sefa and the man both bend as the treadmill slides them along steadily till other young women are shown in a gym exercising. The final scene is the

party scene where there is energetic movement and frenzy ending the video. The video runs for 3:07 minutes.





Images from Sefa's 'Shuga' video

4.1.4 Wanlov the Kubolor

a. Biography

Emmanuel Owusu-Bonsu, known in Showbiz circles as Wanlov the Kubolor was born on September 8, 1980 in Romania. His dad is Akan and his mum is Romanian. He is a Ghanaian-Romanian musician, film director and cultural icon. His music pushes the boundaries of Afropop and he mainly utilizes Pidgin to rap. He is the brother of fellow musician, host and model Deborah Owusu-Bonsu, known popularly as Sister Derby.

Wanlov's parents moved to Ghana when he was a year old and he grew up in a household that loved music and the arts. He attended Adisadel College and that is where he began rapping with his friends and performing at Cape Coast and Takoradi's local circuits. At Adisadel, he formed a partnership with M3NSA and they, later on, formed the duo FOKN Bois. After

Adisadel, he moved to the United States to study Computer Science and Business Administration at the University of Mary Hardin Baylor but dropped out after 2 years to pursue music full time.

Wanlov is affiliated with the Ghanaian-based production house, Pidgen Music and when he began creating his music, he refused to conform to conventional expectations in music, thus created an eclectic and versatile debut album, 'Green Card' in 2007. 2008 was his breakthrough year as he bagged four Ghana Music Awards nominations (Discovery, Record, Video & Hip Hop Song of The Year). So far, he has collaborated with Gyedu-Blay Ambolley, Femi Kuti, King Ayisoba and Reggie Rockstone amongst others. He was recently chosen as one of 5 artistes to represent Africa in the 'Routes to Roots' project as a lyricist/songwriter. He has released 4 solo albums and 9 albums as part of the duo, FOKN Bois. Together with M3NSA in FOKN Bois, he wrote and starred in the world's 1st & 2nd Pidgen Musical 'Coz Ov Moni'. As part of FOKN Bois, he has also supported acts like Snoop Dogg, Gentleman and the Gorilla. He has been nominated for a MOBO for Best African Act, has gained BBC & Al Jazeera recognition and is a finalist for RFI Decouvertes,

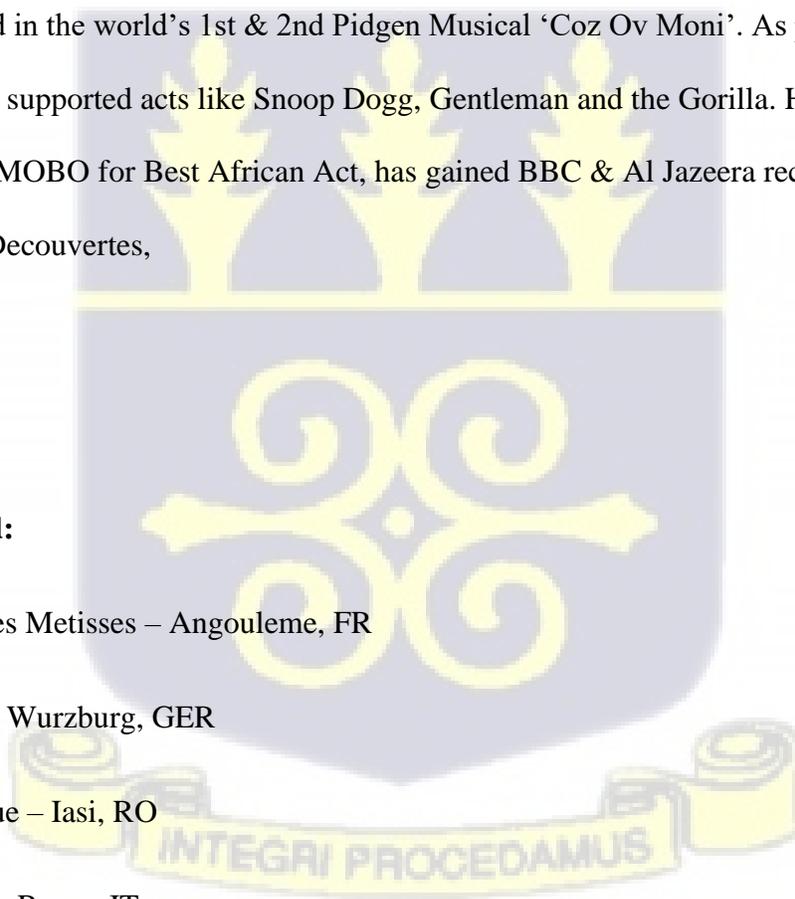
Festivals Played:

Festival Musiques Metisses – Angouleme, FR

Africa Festival – Wurzburg, GER

Equation Musique – Iasi, RO

Suona Francese – Rome, IT



Mosaique Festival – London, UK

Trans Amazoniennes – Saint Laurent Du Maroni, GUY

Asabaako Music Festival – Busua, GH

Alliance Francaise Francophone Month Festival – Accra, GH

Source: Ghanaweb, Profileability

<https://www.ghanaweb.com/person/Wanlov-the-Kubolor-367>

<https://profileability.com/wanlov-the-kubolor/#.YiXd5NXMLIU>

b. ‘PPP’ featuring Mensa and Mindy You

‘PPP’ was released April 19, 2022. It begins with Wanlov on the porch of a storey building that seems homely, wearing a pink female dress with bright red lipstick. He has short dreadlocked hair with a single long-flowing lock that stretches to his abdominal area. This is the only scenario presented as his rapping is the focus of the song and his gestures, subtle and vulgar at first, nosedive to become aggressive and unconventional to accentuate the gravity of his lyrics. Throughout the video, his movements are very masculine till the end when his back faces the camera and he begins to dance in feminine fashion. The video runs for 2:20 minutes.







Images from Wanlov the Kubolor's 'PPP' Video



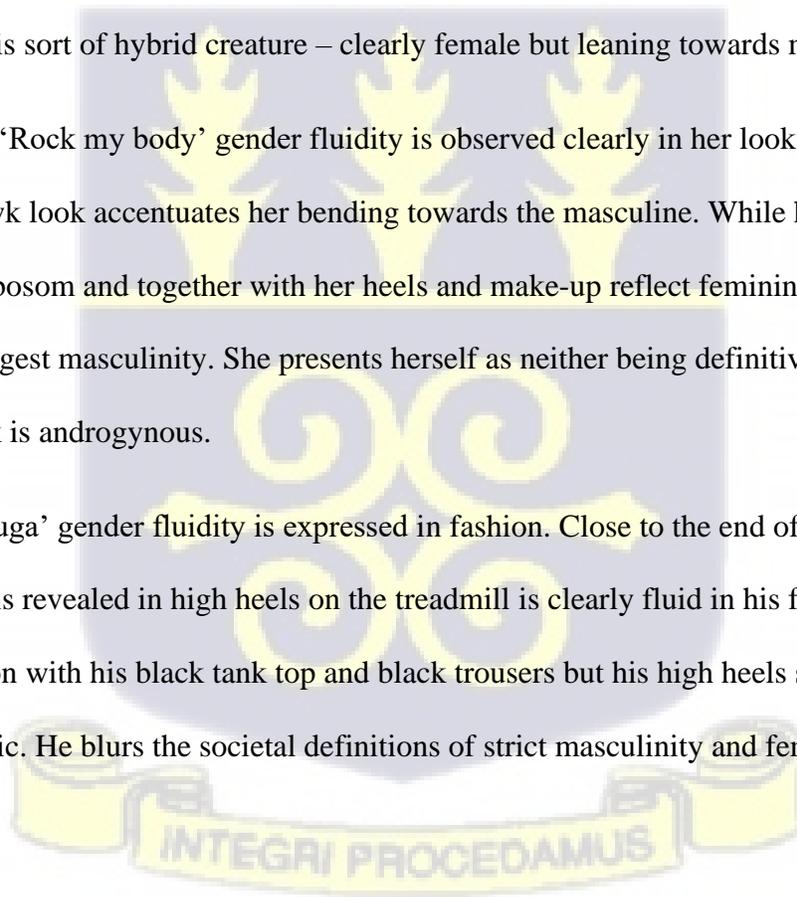
4.2 Answers to research questions

4.2.1. How is gender fluidity expressed in Ghanaian music videos?

The videos sampled reveal myriad expressions of gender fluidity. They broadly showcase androgynous men, androgynous women and drag queens. In Amaarae's 'Like It' music video, her look expresses fluidity. She expresses genderfluid fashion with her masculine aesthetic – her long flowing trousers and short sleeves. Her haircut completes the masculine look that she portrays as she walks from room to room. In the video, there are drag queens – men in female garb, such as the man in a tight blue dress and the man in a white dress. These men have full beards yet they wear female clothes and their dancing is feminine. In 'Fluid', Amaarae's minimalistic makeup and yellow colored short hair blur the lines between male and female and present her as this sort of hybrid creature – clearly female but leaning towards male.

In Wiyaala's 'Rock my body' gender fluidity is observed clearly in her looks and fashion. Her signature mohawk look accentuates her bending towards the masculine. While her tank top accentuates her bosom and together with her heels and make-up reflect femininity, her puffy trousers also suggest masculinity. She presents herself as neither being definitively male or female. Her look is androgynous.

In Sefa's 'Shuga' gender fluidity is expressed in fashion. Close to the end of the video, the young man that is revealed in high heels on the treadmill is clearly fluid in his fashion. He has on masculine fashion with his black tank top and black trousers but his high heels suggest a feminine aesthetic. He blurs the societal definitions of strict masculinity and femininity with his fashion.



In Wanlov's 'PPP', gender fluidity is clearly expressed in his fashion and movement. His pink female dress and pink lipstick expresses femininity; however, his hairstyle suggests masculinity. His dance movements and gestures are largely masculine, however, towards the end of the video increase in femininity.

4.2.2 What are the nuances of gender fluid expressions in Ghanaian music videos in comparison with music videos from the Global North?

From the data observed, the researcher noticed that for Amaarae, Sefa and Wiyaala, expressions of fluidity followed gender fluid trends from the Global North with the conventional blurring of the masculine and feminine in fashion and movement. These depictions appear deliberate.

However, there was nuance observed in Wanlov the Kubolor's video. Wanlov's expression of fluidity appears comical/satirical and not as authentic as the drag queens in Amaarae's 'Like It' video who revel in their femininity. His make-up and overall aesthetic appear comical. Also, Wanlov seems to be using his expression of femininity as a means to drive harder his scathing message to the powerful agents in Ghanaian society abusing their power. He says for example:

Mo papa twe mo mami coti (Your father's vagina, you mother's penis)

Fokn politicians hwe mo kɔn ekyi sokyɛ sokyɛ (Stupid politicians, look at your rotund necks)

We go kidnap yor pikins den raise dem for the ghetto (We will kidnap your children and raise them in the ghetto)

Stone yor land cruiser windscreen plus catapult like okpo (Stone your Land Cruiser windscreen with a catapult)

We shun dey giv a foko go make u vomit wana moni (We will stop caring so you vomit our money)

Sake of u common malaria kill sombodi momi (Because of you, common malaria has killed someone's mother)

Momoni like u u useless piece of stinkin shit (Stinking fish like you, you useless piece of stinking fish)

Wen I c yor face I go cover am plus ma spit (When I see your face, I will cover it with my spit)

His gender fluid look makes the message even more provocative, annoying and hard-hitting to these powerful entities and anyone else that listens in.

Also, the videos sampled reflect that gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos at present is only reflected in fashion and movement. Gender fluidity is not reflected in the lyrical content of music videos. For example, in Amaarae's 'Like it', she sings about love and sensual desire. This is reflected in the chorus:

Do you like it like I like it?

Do you want it like I want it?

Do you need it like I need it?

You know your loving completes me

Do you like it like I like it?

Do you want it like I want it?

Do you need it like I need it?

You know your loving completes me

There is no reference whatsoever to an expression of freedom from gender binaries as reflected in the fashion and movement of the characters or anything else related to gender fluidity. This is also reflected in 'Fluid'. Although one reading this research might think that, the title 'Fluid' in some way reflects gender fluidity, this view would prove to be false. The chorus or hook rings as:

I'm feeling so fluid, fluid, yeah yeah

Baby let go, you can do it, just do it, fluid

These lyrics suggest love and romance. This is further proven by the rest of the lyrics:

See I didn't think I'd see the day

Where I shed all this water weight

You had me plummeting like anchor babe

Had me drowning in your fountain shape

Aw yeah, kissing easter pink

Summer swim in some insides and sink

You make a baddie wanna write you song to sing

Oh, na na na na na na

So please don't waste my time

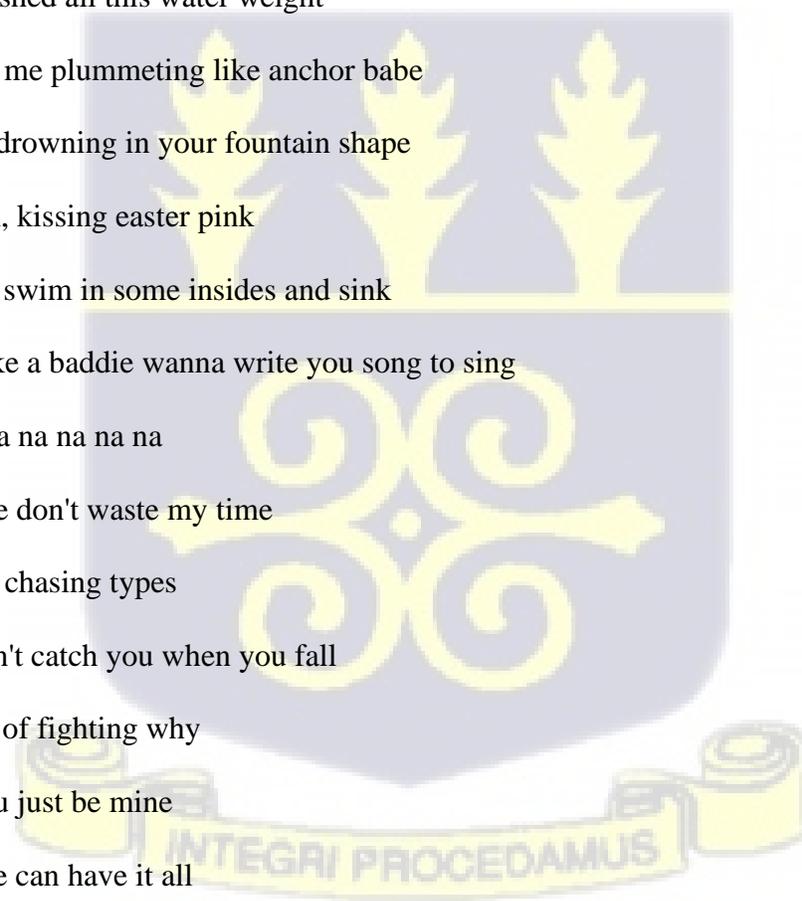
Don't go chasing types

That won't catch you when you fall

I'm tired of fighting why

Can't you just be mine

Baby, we can have it all



One might contend that Amaarae utilizing words such as ‘fountain shape’ and ‘easter pink’ suggests queer desire, thus this may reflect gender fluidity. However, queer desire and gender fluidity, although related are completely different concepts. Gender fluidity may or may not be rooted in queer desire but this research explores the manifestations of gender binaries and not sexualities. This research delimits the analysis of music to the performance of masculinity and femininity. It is not a space for examining how sexuality is performed. Thus, while her lyrics may suggest queer desire, it does not reflect a freedom from gender binaries.

Wiyaala’s ‘Rock my body’ similarly reflects this finding as her lyrics reflect a different subject matter than her fashion suggests. Much like Amaarae, she explores love and sensuality:

I need a man to rock my body

A big strong man to rock my body

and if he is ugly I dont mind

He has got that thing and I want to grind, I want to grind, I want grind, ooo

I want to crush his body.

Sefa’s ‘Shuga’ also does not reflect fluidity in lyrical content. Her lyrics suggest sensuality and love/relationships:

Sugar sugar

Give me that sugar

Say you wan the body on low (You say you want this body on the low)

Baby say you no fit control (Baby you cannot control it)

If I take dis body on low a (If I take this body on the low)

Baby boy you no fi control (Baby boy, you cannot control it)

If you get the money you for show (If you get money, you have to show it)

Anadwo di odo we go blow (This night, we will be wild)

If I take this body on low ao (If I take this body on the low)

Baby boy you no fi control (Baby boy, you cannot control it)

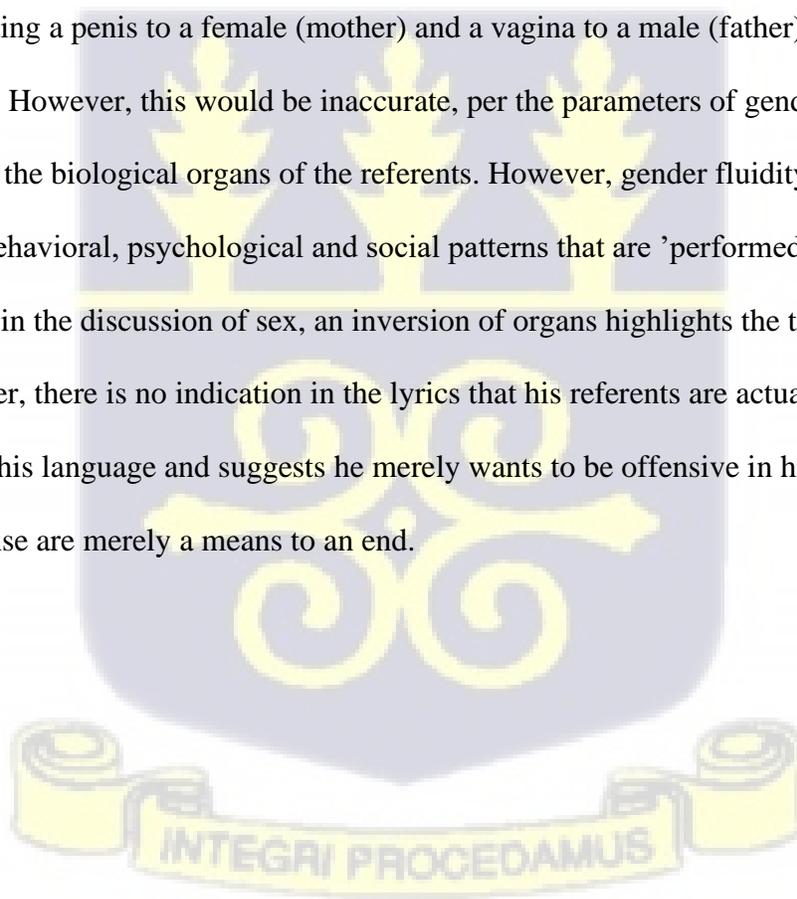
Say you wan lick that shuga (You say you want to lick that sugar)

Share that nicka

You for coolo temper (You have to calm down)

You for coolo temper (You have to calm down)

These observations prove that all four artistes, including Wanlov whose song is highly political, do not express gender fluidity in lyrical content. One might contend that Wanlov's statement in his song, attributing a penis to a female (mother) and a vagina to a male (father) represents fluidity in lyrics. However, this would be inaccurate, per the parameters of gender fluidity. His insult references the biological organs of the referents. However, gender fluidity as performance focuses on the behavioral, psychological and social patterns that are 'performed'. Gender may include sex, and in the discussion of sex, an inversion of organs highlights the transgender concept. However, there is no indication in the lyrics that his referents are actually transgender. His vitriol laces his language and suggests he merely wants to be offensive in his language. His words in this sense are merely a means to an end.



4.2.3 How do expressions of gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos defy Ghanaian societal norms?

The music videos challenge the strict traditional binaries of male and female. In Ghana, men do not wear skirts and flowery makeup and women that project a masculine energy in looks, fashion and movement are seen as social deviants. Hardly would one find the blurring of such lines in music videos; however, these music videos prove that gender can be performed differently.

Amaarae's 'Like It' defies these strict binaries by the introduction of drag queens. Drag queens are not part of Ghanaian culture so to most Ghanaians, this concept would seem aberrant, foreign and weird. While there has been the concept of tomboys in the Ghanaian society, Amaarae's 'Fluid' celebrates the hybridity of male and female as she sings in the video. This celebration and brazen expression of androgyny is in many ways lacking in Ghanaian culture. Wiyaala's 'Rock My body' video similarly celebrates androgyny and this is also a strict defiance of Ghanaian gender binaries and norms.

Sefa's 'Shuga' presents a man boldly wearing extremely high heels. Men don't wear heels in Ghana. However, the male character defies gender norms even further by wearing heels extremely higher than what the average Ghanaian woman would wear. He would seem to be subverting Ghanaian norms about fashion and projecting fluidity as ideal. This can be realized through the confidence he oozes as he relishes in his feminine fashion. Wanlov's 'PPP' similarly breaks the convention of men being seen as tough and presents men as soft per his pronounced feminine energy at the end of the video. The added dynamic of Wanlov being a rapper further challenges notions of machismo being the definitive trait of rappers in Ghana.

Ghanaians often lean towards modesty as a people although music video culture suggests otherwise. While studies on gendered portrayals in music videos have shown that women are

shown provocatively and are sexualized, these depictions feature highly feminine women. Often, men in music videos display machismo, hardly bending towards feminine expression in movement and clothing. The data suggests that the videos challenge how men and women ought to look like and act like in the Ghanaian society.

4.3 Summary

This chapter found that there are multiple forms of gender fluid expressions in sampled music videos. These include drag queens, men exuding feminine movement and fashion as well as androgynous women. The main nuance of gender fluidity in Ghana is that gender fluidity is expressed in the fashion and movement of characters in music videos but hardly in lyrics. Lastly, the chapter showed that expressions of fluidity conflict with Ghana's conservative culture by openly challenging strict gender norms.



CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study against the literature on gender fluidity as well as the theories being utilized for this study. It also presents the recommendations for future studies, limitations and the final conclusive remarks for the study.

5.1 Discussion

The study found that one of the nuances of gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos is that gender fluid expressions are often not reflected in the lyrical content of the music videos. This finding proves crucial because music videos from the Global North often have definitive expressions of fluidity in lyrics. In 2019, American singer, Miley Cyrus released the music video to the song, 'Mother's daughter' where she celebrates trans and non-binary bodies (Leighton-Dore, 2019). However, in this video, as much as the videos express fluidity, the lyrics suggest freedom from gender and societal norms. And while her music is inclusive of fat people as well in this video, her lyrics project a cry for freedom from these norms as she preaches in the chorus that no one should mess with her freedom. A reputed American music and entertainment entity, 'Billboard' sampled 25 songs from the Global North that express fluidity in lyrical content (Bendix, 2017). While some of these songs are open about gender fluid expression and living,

some advocate for it. In The Replacement's song, 'Androgynous', gender expression is displayed in the lyrics:

Here come Dick, he's wearing a skirt/Here comes Jane, you know she's sporting a
chain/Same hair, revolution/Same build, evolution/Tomorrow who's gonna fuss/And they
love each other so/Androgynous/Closer than you know.

Lady Gaga's infamous 'Born this way' champions LGBTQ+ experiences and by so doing, also champions gender fluidity as characterized by the line, 'Don't be a drag. Just be a queen.', alluding to drag queens. This shows that gender fluidity hasn't reached a point in Ghanaian videos where there is overt advocacy in lyrical content. Artistes that do express them are limited in their expression per the parameters of lyrics and are far behind artistes in the Global North.

The findings also indicated that certain expressions of gender fluidity are simply comical and to drive home a point and are not necessarily indicative of authenticity as compared to others. Wanlov's expression of gender fluidity is purely comical and is meant to beef up his social criticism. This finding indicates that authentic gender fluidity in music videos from male players in the music industry is limited as compared to females. Although Sefa has not claimed gender fluidity in her interviews, Amaarae has claimed the gender fluid tag and Wiyala the androgynous tag, revealing that the majority of females that express gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos claim fluidity as an authentic expression of self. (Harle, 2020; Oakley & Lunn, 2018). Wanlov, on the other hand, has not claimed fluidity as his definitive expression of self. This is also evidenced by his LGBTQ advocacy in interviews where he self-proclaims as an ally. He does not identify as gay or a drag queen. His overt LGBTQ overtones in his music are a means to an end and not necessarily a reflection of self (DW Africa, 2021; AdomOnline, 2020; Mx24; n.d). The same goes for all the male artistes he featured in 'PPP' as well who lean

towards allyship (Peyton, 2019). One might contend that DopeNation, who Sefa featured, are male artistes/rappers that rapped and partook in a song that expressed fluidity, thus may subscribe to gender fluidity. However, it is important to note that they were simply featured on Sefa's song, were not associated with the gender fluid portions of the video and have not expressed gender fluidity of any sort in their own videos. These beef up the argument that amongst male musicians and rappers in Ghana, authentic gender fluidity in music videos is visibly non-existent.

The study also found that gender fluidity was expressed through drag queens in Amaarae's 'Like It' video'. This finding is very important as there has hardly, if ever, been the use of drag queens for an artiste in Ghanaian mainstream music. This, therefore, means that this is a landmark in Ghana's popular culture as gender norms are being openly and directly challenged. Per the theory of performativity, society seeks to enforce the strict gender binaries or polarities and this accounts for the tension and ensuing ostracizing that occurs when gender is performed differently from the norm. Interpreting this visual text with CDA, it is evident that Amaarae presents herself as a representative of the society experiencing the clash in societal and gender norms. She wears a look of intense puzzlement as she watches the events play out before her. When she experiences the drag queens, the camera focuses on her face and how puzzled she looks as they dance. Even as a self-proclaimed gender fluid musician, the data suggests that there is tension between the outlook of the persona presented in the video and what is being experienced which accounts for the bewilderment.

One might contend that in Ghana, there has been the culture of concert parties as a site for gender performativity. Yeboah (2021) posits that concert parties refer to local Ghanaian drama that began in the 90s and was used to tackle the ills in the Ghanaian society in a humorous

manner. It was made accessible to the public through utilizing the local language, mainly Akan. In concert parties, there were female impersonations performed by men. Some men impersonated women because women were discouraged from acting on stage. Female impersonations were widely accepted and well within the framing of theatre. However, this research situates discussions within the music video format. Amaarae's videos do not draw from the concert party tradition of cross-dressing. Also, coupled with recent national tensions with LGBTQ+ representation, hints of cross-dressing by artistes and entertainment personalities are frowned upon by the Ghanaian public. This explains the gay bashing of Richard Brown (Osebo) as well as harsh criticisms of Kwabena Kwabena and Kofi Mole for painting their nails (Issahaku, 2020; Pobe, n.d.). Further studies would be required to glean the evolution of audience reception to cross dressing as against drag-queen culture in Ghana in this regard.

Perhaps, the reason why gender fluidity is not openly expressed in lyrics but is mainly performative could be the variables of religion and ethnicity. Ghana is a highly religious country and ethnic groups frown on expressions of gender fluidity, which suggest associations with the LGBTQ+. Although none of the artistes sampled have openly identified with the LGBTQ+, they may lean towards allyship or may simply want to express themselves independently of social norms with or without associations to the LGBTQ+ (Peyton, 2019; Sotire, 2021, BBC, 2019). Further studies would be required in this vein to explore motivations and the whys.

The findings confirm the feminist perspective that as gender is social, it is thought to be alterable. Gender is often perceived as only masculine and feminine and this is often superimposed by society on the basis of sex. The society also prescribes gender roles as well (Haslanger, 2000; Stoljar, 1995). However, according to Rubin (1975, p. 204), feminism should aim to create a genderless (though not sexless society) in which one's sexual anatomy is

irrelevant to who one is and what one does. In this sense, gender expression should not be stifled by one's biological sex. Feminine and masculine gender norms are said to be problematic as they enforce patriarchy (Millet, 1971, p. 26). Scholars such as Ampofo and Asiedu (2012) explore this in their seminal paper, however, through this lens, it can be argued that individuals that deviate from these social norms find the prevailing norms problematic. It also confirms Butler's theory of performativity that states that individuals that do not perform gender 'right' are often ostracized within the culture (Butler, 1990, p. 178). This explains why artistes like Wiyaala in interviews has alluded to being an anomaly as a woman as she has always loved short hair and trousers, hence her androgynous look. She has often alluded to being disregarded because of her look. Patriarchy and prevailing norms sought to change her to, in her own words, "fit in" and when she didn't fit in, she was not patronized as compared to some of her peers that fit neatly within the gendered norms of the Ghanaian society (BBC, 2019; Pulse, 2018).

5.2 Limitations

This study faced one major limitation. Since the phenomenon of gender fluidity is novel in Ghanaian popular music, there were not many music videos to sample for a thorough understanding of the phenomenon. As such, findings may not be sufficient to generalize. However, the findings do provide an in-depth description of the emerging phenomenon that is slowly manifesting in other music videos.



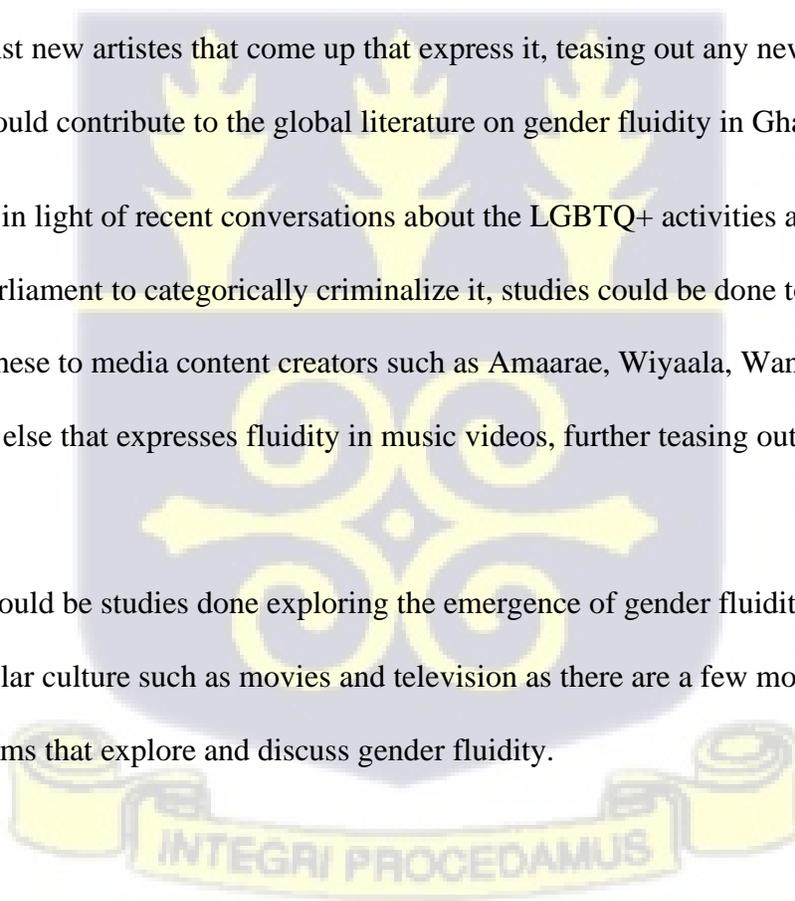
5.3 Recommendations

This study just focused on expressions of gender fluidity; however further studies need to explore the audience reception of Ghanaians to gender fluidity in music videos. These studies also need to explore how variables such as religion and ethnicity shape audience reception to gender fluidity in music videos. Studies could also be done to flesh out deeper perspectives and nuances of Ghanaian genderfluid content creators through in-depth interviews to examine the tension in ideals of content creators and society.

Also, as this phenomenon is relatively new in Ghana, future studies could be done to track the evolution of gender fluidity in Ghanaian music. There could be comparative studies done exploring gender fluid expressions by the originators of this in Ghana such as Amaarae and Wiyaala as against new artistes that come up that express it, teasing out any new nuances in its evolution that would contribute to the global literature on gender fluidity in Ghanaian music.

Additionally, in light of recent conversations about the LGBTQ+ activities and a bill being deliberated in parliament to categorically criminalize it, studies could be done to explore the implications of these to media content creators such as Amaarae, Wiyaala, Wanlov the Kubolor, Sefa and anyone else that expresses fluidity in music videos, further teasing out the tensions that may lie therein.

Lastly, there could be studies done exploring the emergence of gender fluidity in other products of popular culture such as movies and television as there are a few movies and television programs that explore and discuss gender fluidity.



5.4 Conclusion

The study found that there is a limited expression of gender fluidity in Ghanaian music videos that is slowly permeating popular culture and at present, this manifests in the fashion and movements of characters in music videos and hardly in lyrical content. It also found that gender fluid expressions follow global trends with the shattering of the gender binaries and blurring of what it means to be male and female per the artistes sampled. Also, the study found that certain expressions of gender fluidity are simply done to create a comic effect and drive home a message and not necessarily present an authentic portrayal of gender fluidity. Through Judith Butler's theory of performativity and the feminist perspective, this study also found that gender fluidity in music videos challenges the strict gender binaries in the Ghanaian society. It challenges how men and women ought to look like and behave in a conservative Ghanaian society through depictions of drag queens and androgynous women.



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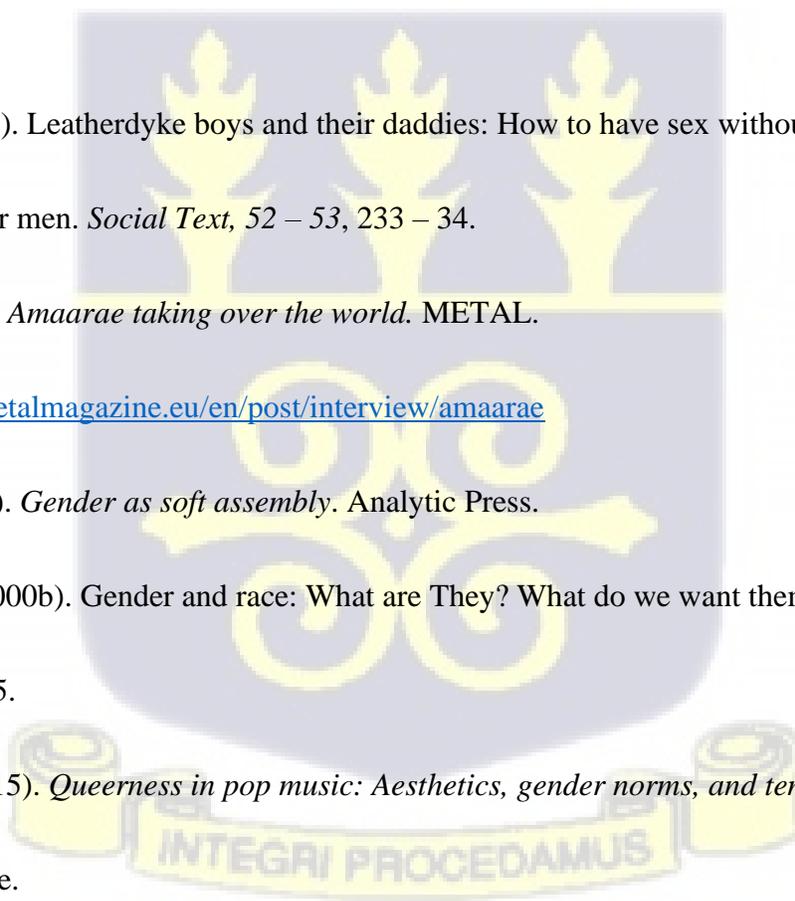
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APPENDIX: CODING GUIDE

NAME/TITLE OF SONG:

DATE/TIME OF RELEASE OF SONG:

LENGTH OF SONG:

SOURCE OF RECORDING:

FIRST VERSE

- Observations of gender fluidity (LYRICS, FASHION, MOVEMENTS OF CHARACTERS AND OBSERVABLE SCENARIOS)

CHORUS

- Observations of gender fluidity (LYRICS, FASHION, MOVEMENTS OF CHARACTERS AND OBSERVABLE SCENARIOS)

SECOND VERSE

- Observations of gender fluidity (LYRICS, FASHION, MOVEMENTS OF CHARACTERS AND OBSERVABLE SCENARIOS)

CHORUS

- Observations of gender fluidity (LYRICS, FASHION, MOVEMENTS OF CHARACTERS AND OBSERVABLE SCENARIOS)

BRIDGE

- Observations of gender fluidity (LYRICS, FASHION, MOVEMENTS OF CHARACTERS AND OBSERVABLE SCENARIOS)

