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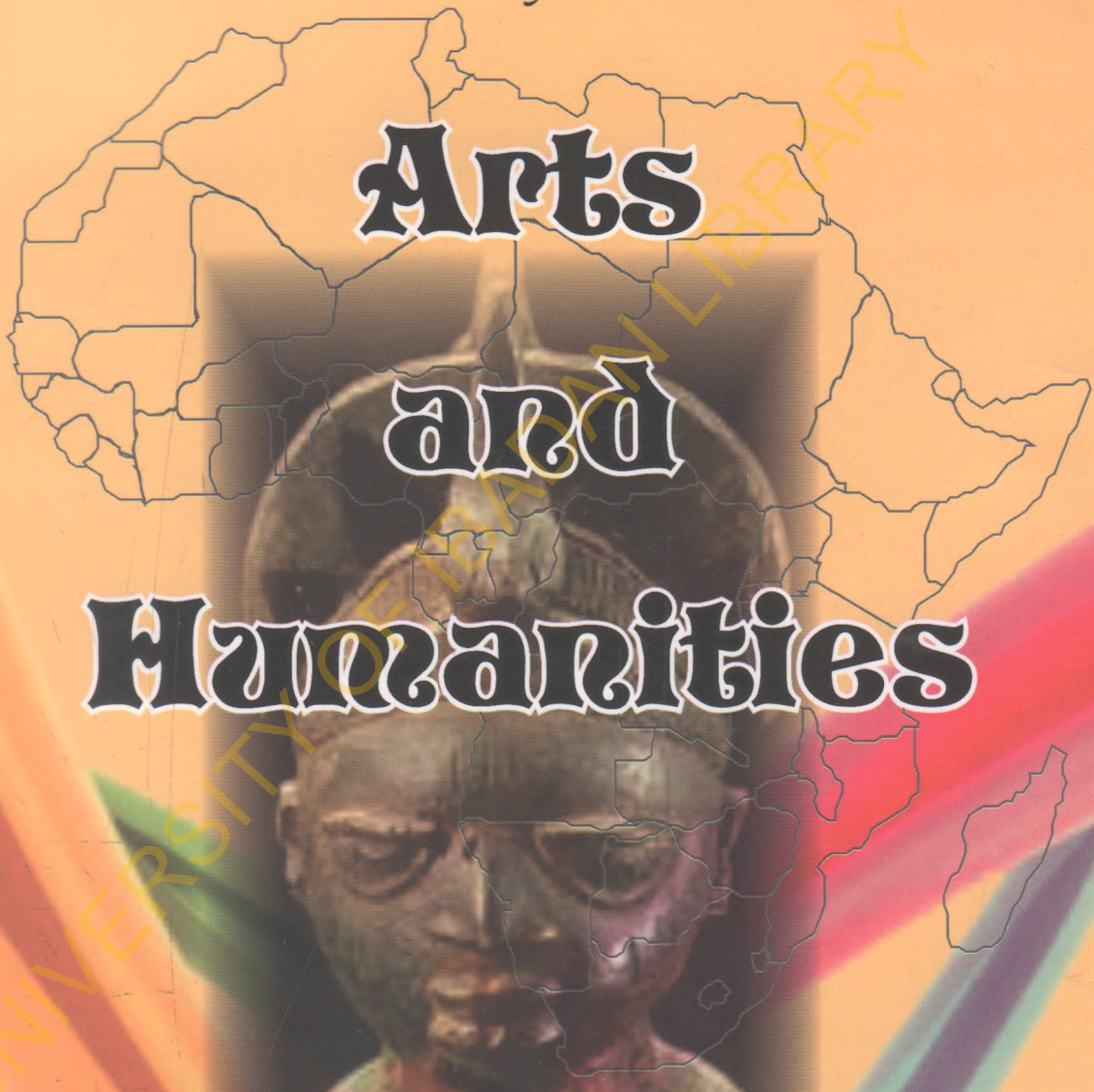
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# MUSICAL FIGURING OF POSTCOLONIAL URBAN SEGMENTARITY IN WASIU AYINDE'S FUJI WORKS

Kayode M. Samuel

## Abstract

In this paper, I gleaned from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of segmentarity to examine the how postcolonial urban forms of social segregation and marginalization are figured in selected musical works of Wasiu Ayinde – a prominent fujimusician. The study adopted semi ethnographic design. Purposive sampling technique was used to select two tracks from different albums by Wasiu Ayinde, namely, 'K1' on the album *Fact* and 'Action Congress' on the album *Promising*, where the artiste portrays the challenge of urban social conditions such as poverty, unemployment, epileptic power supply and so forth which are largely stratified along class distinction. In the work – *Fact* – Ayinde represents his criticism of the type of maladministration that characterized President Obasanjo's civilian regime between 1999 and 2007, particularly the ruler's failure in redressing inequality and the widening segregations between different classes of people. I argue that although the musician shows a strong desire to eliminate this postcolonial urban segmentarity and marginality, he, nevertheless, also performatively participates in maintaining and reproducing it. This is based on the musician's ambiguous responses to similar conditions, especially when viewed against this eulogy of, and collaboration with the then major opposition political party, Action Congress, widely criticized for its ineptitude in political governance.

**Key Words:** Urban segmentarity, Wasiu Ayinde, Nigerian popular music, Fuji works, Musical figuring

## Introduction

In a general sense, popular music has been defined as the social music of urban people with its new set of cultural values, aesthetics tastes and preferences. Perhaps because of its evolution, it is sometimes erroneously referred to solely as the westernized music of urban youth, the music of the new breeds and the product of a change in Nigeria (Vidal, 2012). According to Idolor (2002), popular music is a genre which encompasses several styles and readily comprehensible to a large proportion of the population. Its appreciation requires little or no knowledge of musical theory or technique. In other words, it embraces all styles of music that is pleasing to and suited to the understanding of ordinary people. The roots of the Nigerian Popular Music (NPM) are often traced to the composite influence of European missionaries, colonial administrators, ex-slave returnees and Arabic/Islamic movements (Stapleton, 2005; Vidal, 2012; and Omojola, 2014). These traditions contribute significantly towards the emergence of new popular idioms in Nigerian music. To a large extent, popular music in Nigeria reflects the country's multi-ethnic population as well as the

pervasive influence of Western culture in the society through a diverse array of styles such as juju, highlife, akukon'egwu, reggae, punk, funk, gospel, makosa, hip-hop, afro-beat, country, disco, congo, jazz, disco, rhythm and blues among others (Ijeoma, 2008). There are also many examples of NPM genres that undeniably bear the fingerprints of Arabic/orthodox Mohammedanism, especially their vocal and instrumental idioms (Olaniyan, 2007). They include: apala, sakara, waka and fuji. The focus of this paper is on fuji.

## Stating the problematique and scope

Although many studies exist on the origin, development, features, main practitioners and characteristics of fuji music (Euba, 1989; Omibiyi, 1994; Adesokan, 2004; Omojola, 2014), few attention has been paid to how the subject of urban segmentarity is represented in fuji music, a gap in knowledge this paper attempts to fill using the music of King Wasiu Ayinde. To this end, this paper identifies themes bordering on urban segmentarity in Wasiu Ayinde's selected works, and thereafter interrogates some contradictions in the messages of his

music and his life. The focus of paper is limited to some specific fuji works of Wasiu Ayinde, especially those that address the theme of urban segmentarity. It is restricted to the lyrical contents of two of his compositions for the purpose of analysis of their musical elements.

### **Setting the agenda**

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) identify three forms of social classification in human life: binary, circular and linear. The binary form speaks to social classification based on dual opposite such as high class/low class, rich/poor, man/woman, etc. The circular form is essentially based on social identification, while the linear form deals with social classification based on one's changing status from one level to another, as in the family, in schools, in the army, and in the kind of job (pp. 208-209). In addition, both scholars describe the ways in which the three forms of social classification are interconnected such that in crossing over, "they are inseparable, they overlap, and they are entangled" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 234).

In this paper, I subscribe to the binary fashion of urban segmentarity to describe what is contained in Wasiu Ayinde's fuji music. Besides the male/female dichotomy, the social life of the people in the postcolonial Yoruba has largely been stratified along a binary class distinction with segregation following the urban-rural, rich/poor, elite/non-literate lines; all presented in different layers and forms of spatial segregation. For instance, it is common to find in urban centers specific locations designated as Government Reservation Areas, which are mainly populated by persons of high socio-economic status. These are places dominated by high horizon and tall buildings, which usually house multinationals and big companies. Those who reside in such areas are

predominantly of high social status compared to some other areas of the city characterized by slum with unorganized buildings, deplorable living conditions including poor housing and conditioned to cope with little or no social amenities. These areas usually have high population of persons of low socio-economic status with many of them living in squalors. For instance, in Lagos, which is Nigeria's economic nerve center, areas such as Ikoyi, Victoria Island, Lekki are remarkably different from places like Ajegunle, Bariga, Mushin, and so forth. Likewise, in Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo State, areas like Bodija Estate, GRA, Oluyole Estate and so forth cannot be compared with areas like Beere, Oje, Foko and Idi-arere. In the foregoing examples, those who reside in the first set of areas are often considered as rich or a privileged few while the second set of areas in both cases serve as residences to the poorest in the society.

It is not uncommon to find some specific musical performances organized for entertainment and the listening pleasure of the elite class, such as the royalty and members of religious cults. Some good examples can be found as far back as the Yoruba traditional societies. For instance, court musical activities were rendered as entertainment exclusively for listening pleasure of the king and his preferred visitors. Such court music could be presented as praise in honor of the royalty, as performances at important ceremonies involving the king, and as veritable means of disseminating information from the palace to the king's subjects. Similarly, in terms of religious activities, the bata-encoded vocables/narratives served as an attempt to disguise the protocols and rituals of Sango devotees and preserved the secrecy of the cult in the defunct Oyo Empire. Both examples referenced above insinuate that the music were performed for the elitist

and special religious groupings but may not necessarily exclude participation of the entire folk community.

Since Hollandet al (1998) introduced the concept of figured worlds in their seminal book: *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, some scholars have successfully used musical elements, including lyrics/songtexts to represent certain materials in a musical or art works, in what is conceptually known as musical figuring. They predicated their argument on the fact that the term, 'figured worlds', is not an isolated concept but a larger theory of self and identity. Samuel (2015) reminds us that as far as the discipline of music is concerned, Meintjes (2003) was the first scholar to introduce the concept of figure; an idea which Imani Sangakeyed into and adopted in many of his writings (Sanga, 2012; 2013; and 2017). In one of such works, Sanga defined a figure as a motive that is subjected to ornamentation, variation, repetition and various musical elements, including how lyrics are used to realize particular urban social identities and relations (Sanga 2012:160). This paper borrowed Sanga's concept of musical figuring to interrogate the ways musical elements are used to interpret urban segmentarity in selected works of a notable fuji exponent by the name of Wasiu Ayinde (K1).

### Methodology

In this study, I adopted a semi-ethnographic research design. This is a combination of first hand personal experience of the investigator of fuji music and the use of qualitative method of gathering data. Purposive sampling technique was used to select two different tracks from two different albums by Wasiu Ayinde. They are K1 in *Fact* and *Action Congress in Promising*. In-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with selected fans of the

musician. In addition, a close listening tool of recorded audio tapes and watching of video musical performances formed part of the primary source. Recorded materials were transcribed and subjected to thematic and structural analysis, while IDIs were content analysed.

### Theme of Urban Segmentarity in Wasiu Ayinde's *Fact* and *Promising*

The first song to be analyzed is the song K1 in *Fact* by Wasiu Ayinde. The song begins with an instrumental introduction comprising *gangan* (talking drum), electronic keyboard and electric guitar, followed by the lead vocal; thereafter, other instruments, such as the saxophone, and drum sets were introduced. Wasiu Ayinde made a declaration to the studio sound engineer in charge of the performance that he was prepared to voice out in songs. He begins by narrating a song he composed in the year 1999, entitled *New Era* as part of a campaign exercise prior to the general elections where he urged Nigerians to support the candidature of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) at that year's presidential election. The song centered on the need to grant Chief Obasanjo the benefit of the doubt by allowing him to occupy the exalted executive position due to his pedigree and good performance as a past military Head of State.

However, in the album: *Fact*, Wasiu Ayinde employed direct address to voice his criticism against the former president by condemning him for his failure to represent the Yoruba nation well based on his perceived poor performance of Obasanjo in office this time around as a civilian leader. Wasiu Ayinde Marshall's representation contained the everyday reality of postcolonial Nigeria, which draws attention to issues bordering on poverty, poor healthcare system, gender inequality, poor education, poor environmental sustainability, marginality,

social class segregation or social classification, epileptic power supply, poor infrastructural facilities and so forth.

Fact portrays the issues of urban social conditions such as bad roads, poor power supply, unemployment, social segregation and so forth. However, Wasiu Ayinde may not be adjudged as a social crusader considering that the piece: Promising and Fact, are somehow

### **Text**

*Gbogbo nkan omo eniyan ko lo deede mo,  
Kosiise,  
kosiina,  
Al'onje nilu a tun de ebi o,  
Alason'ile,  
A nwoakisa,*

*Iya nje ara ilu,  
Gbogbo titi di koto,  
Agbe o r'owo l'oko,*

*Awon ara ilu won o riise se,  
Won o ri owo jeun,  
Omo o ri ile iwe lo,  
won o ka iwe gidi,  
Omo obinrin wa di asewo, a wi tan,*

*Omo n se aisan ni hospitu, won o ri ogun fun...*

The urban social conditions realities of the people comprising the material living conditions of people such as standard of living, means of feeding, clothing, housing, rate of unemployment, education, transportation, social classification, poverty and so forth. The transport condition, although not mentioned in the foregoing texts is obliquely referred to when the musician calls attention to the deplorable condition of the roads. The transport condition is one of the indicators of urban segmentarity in term of environmental management and some of the indicators of environmental management included

in binary opposition to each other. On the other hand, specific indices of urban segmentarity can be figured out from the textual analysis of Wasiu Ayinde's Fact. The fuji exponent complained about the inability of the erstwhile PDP-led government to provide good social amenities as captured in the following selected lines:

### **Translation**

The masses are in hardship  
There are no jobs  
There is no electricity  
We hunger amidst plenty  
We go about in rags,  
Yet the country boasts of bales of cloth  
The people suffer  
Potholes litter all roads  
Farmers make no profits from their farms  
The masses are unemployed  
Rendered impecunious  
Children are unable to go to school  
there are no good schools  
Our daughters have now become prostitutes  
There are no drugs for patients in hospitals

urban population growth, planned settlements, water supply, solid waste disposal, travel time, travel modes and so forth (UN Habitat, 2009). Out of the listed indicators of urban environmental management, travel time fits in into a key performance measure of transportation systems. Having to contend with a long period to transport/travel to work or short distant places is an obvious sign of urban dysfunction. More often than not, this is associated with severe traffic congestion, uncontrolled mixes of traffic types, preventable accidents and so forth due to the poor condition of the roads. Mbembe also makes a clear description of urban

social conditions in his writing when he notes "the roads are always crowded with traffic" (Mbembe, 2001:147).

Musical Example: 1

ba ko si se o mo Gbo-la-han mi ko so wo ni lu

gbo-gbo kan o-mo e-ni-yan ni ko lo de de ni lu e so gbo gbo ba le le

e so won do e e so gbo gbo o mo kun rin di ja gu da o san gan

#### Text

*Kosi se Omogbolahan mi*

*Ko so wonilu*

*Gbogbo nkan omo eniyan ni ko lo dede nilu*

*E so gbogbo baale*

*E so won d'ole*

*E so gbogbo omokunrin di jaguda osan ganagan*

#### Translation

There are no jobs

There is no money

The masses are in hardship

You have turned all family heads

You turned them into thieves

You turned young men into armed robbers

Unemployed persons are defined as those individuals without work, seeking for work and currently available for work. When graduates roam the street without job, it is an indication that a nation is underutilizing her economy and available resources in the best possible way. For instance, a large number of able-bodied young Nigerians survive by hawking items like handkerchiefs, empty cassettes, second-hand clothes, drinks and a host of other consumables items. A few of these have to supplement their income by taking to pick-pocketing, stealing, armed robbery, prostitution, drug peddling and other things regarded as vices by the optimistic job seekers. This also fits into Mbembe's assertion that the deregulation policies introduced in the 1980s caused untold hardship for the citizens and more or less opened the floodgate for deepening mass poverty. If a neo-liberal

Unemployment and poverty are part of the factors responsible for urban segmentarity as observed in the song:

way out of the crisis has-so-far led to any renewal of growth, it is the growth with unemployment and the deepening of poverty is associated with several factors, one of the most important is unemployment, and joblessness is striking a growing number of households (Mbembe, 2001: 55).

Education is one of the indicators of urban segmentarity as represented in the song. Education is one of the most important aspects of human development and it is a part of everyday realities of the people. The salary scales or the economic disparities that often fall along the class of an individual largely determine the kind of school the child of such an individual will attend. For instance, members who belong to the high class often enroll their children/wards in classic and expensive schools, where as those who occupy the lower rung of the ladder

cannot afford to enroll their children in such institutions of learning due to limited resources. Another indicator of urban

segmentarity is durable structure as observed in these lines:

### Text

Ilu tiwa, a wa n wo akisa,  
Awa de ni to n sun bi eni n gbe abule

### Translation

Here, however, we go in rags  
And we live like rustics

### Musical Example: 2

### FACT

KWAM I

E yin te un se jo ba wa ni le yi  
ni I-ba-dan ka ki ri gbo Ni-ge-ri-a

In addition, the political leaders are corrupt and there is no transparency and accountability. There are advantages and privileges that holders of positions of authority grant themselves cumulative value sometimes far greater than their salary: housing, furniture, water, electricity, cars, domestic help, entertainment and travel expenses, bonuses, reserves funds and so forth. This is what Mbembe terms: a system of double accounting (misappropriation). He writes: "there is double payment of rent, false administrate leases, secret commission,

'back handers' and under-invoicing in the granting of public contracts, bank loans, misappropriation under cover of performing customs and tax procedures" (Mbembe, 2001: 26).

The song does not only mention the inability of the government to provide social amenities but more importantly, articulates what typifies urban social classification which is an indicator of urban segmentarity. This is seen in the following lines as Wasiu Ayinde complains:

### Text

#### **Eyin ke re l'Abuja**

*Jagudani yin lojoojumo  
Omogbolahan mi apojjoba  
Bo se n jo lo wo yin lo n jo*

*omo ti yin lo nri ina tan  
awa n tan lantan ni o  
Ara ilu o le ma ke,  
Ki omo ti yin maa dunu*

### Translation

When you in Abuja have raped the treasury

Have raped the treasury  
Omogbolahan the treasury  
You bleed the treasury and your children do same  
Only your children enjoy electricity,  
We make do of kerosene lantern  
Your children cannot rejoice  
While the masses groan



*Iyawo yin lo n lo goolu to da,  
lo n wo bata to da*

In terms of housing conditions, generally, a housing structure is considered durable when certain strong materials are used for the roof, walls and floors. Although, there are non-durable household dwelling units and these dwellings are found in the slums. A portion of the song states: *arayin te kuku mu tek'owo je wayi*, meaning: those caught stealing are of your cabal and *eyin kere l'Abuja, Jagudani yin lojoojumo Omogbolahan mi apo ijoba*, meaning: When you in Abuja have raped the treasury Omogbolahan the treasury. The lines show that Wasiu Ayinde was direct in his message particularly to the Nigerian government leaders at that period who are believed to have enriched themselves from state coffers.

There is a common perception by the general public that successive leaders, political elite and public office holders, particularly at the federal level, are essentially corrupt. This class of individuals along with rich business people belongs to the high social class and therefore, tends to enjoy or have accessibility to some benefits or resources which others, who belong to the low class are denied. Such resources include social amenities, good and upwardly adjustable salary scales/incomes, civic spaces, enforcement of the law and so forth. In other words, the lifestyle of those of high social class cannot be compared with that of low class people. As earlier mentioned, notable differences exist between a set of people that reside in GRAs compared to those that reside in high density area, including slums.

The rich individuals, who reside in GRAs have the privilege of enjoying numerous social amenities such as electricity, schools, pipe water, civic spaces and so forth, while those residing

Your wife flaunts golden jewelries  
And fashionable footwear

outside the GRAs are often deprived such urban social amenities. To buttress this point, Mangvwat observed that the GRAs, wherever they exist, are designed for the elite; examples include the Independence Layout in Enugu; Bodija and Oluyole in Ibadan; Ikpoba Slope in Benin and Victoria Island, Ikoyi and Ilupeju in Lagos. In contrast, the workers and an overgrowing army of underemployed and unemployed workers are concentrated in the slums of these same towns thus dramatizing the class distinction of the urban setting (Mangvwat, 1995:19). All these are continuation of colonial urban social segregation along with other features of the cities under colonial rule. According to Falola, they were marked by segregation: the British officials lived in the best parts – the Government Reservation Areas – with exclusive clubs, recreation centers, hospitals and other facilities, while the indigenes lived in less comfortable places (Falola, 1989: 217). In addition, those in high class status make use of expensive materials compared to the low class people. Wasiu Ayinde points out that those of high class put on gold jewelry and lovely pairs of shoes. In the song, he wants to relate this experience to the way in which better places or resources meant to be accessible by both the high class and low class people somehow excluded persons of low socio-economic status. In other words, only the high class benefit from such things because they can afford them.

Furthermore, a portion of the song with the following text: *E wa n pe wa l'asewo, e n pewa l'alagbe, Eyinke re l'abuja, Jagudani yin lojoojumo omogbolahan mi apo ijoba*, meaning: How dare you brand us as prostitutes; how could you refer to us as beggars, when those of you residing in Abuja have

looted the nation's treasury?, specifically addresses the corruptive practices of the political class. The foregoing lines also portray the socio-economic status of musicians as belonging to a class of poor citizens. I argue that the social status of musicians can be examined from two perspectives, first, within a musical performance context, and second, a status outside musical performance. In terms of the former, the musician is regarded as a multi-talented artiste with the gift of wisdom, wise counsel, and ability for social discernment and tenaciousness for ethical standards. For example, the musician is often prepared to focus part of his next public performance on exposing those who engage in anti-social behaviours with a view to calling them to order. On the other hand, the status of the musician outside a musical performance is "one with considerable respect enjoyed by the musician that does not confer stardom on him outside the performance" (Euba, 1990: 94).

Since economic power often confers a social status even in traditional Yoruba communities, the social prestige enjoyed by musicians, therefore, exists only as some kind of honorary privilege (Adeduntan, 2016). In addition, Yoruba musicians often derive at least part of their livelihood from the munificence of patrons and that is the reason Yoruba musicians are sometimes referred to as *alagbe* (beggar). Thus, Omojola (2014) explained the use of *alagbe* as a derogatory term indicating that the Yoruba musicians perform within a patronage system that relies on the willingness of community members to offer gifts. More so, the concept of *alagbe* seems to be a relatively modern phenomenon as Omojola submitted that the offer of gifts to roving musicians does not impart a beggarly status on the musicians, rather within the social equation of modern environment in

Nigeria, a social environment that is characterized by intense competition for scarce resources, is probably unenthusiastically sympathetic to itinerant traditional musicians who often showed up uninvited at public ceremonies with the hope of gaining some gifts.

The second song selected for analysis is: Action Congress from the album: Promising by Wasiu Ayinde. In the video version of the song, Wasiu Ayinde is shown gaily dressed in a white attire with a black cap to fit in a conversation with Gbenga Adewusi, a late popular television presenter. They were waiting for the arrival of the gubernatorial aspirant of the Action Congress in person of Babatunde Raji Fashola. Upon his arrival, Wasiu Ayinde accompanied him into his office. The discussion of Wasiu Ayinde and Babatunde Fashola was however not revealed in the video. In the song, Wasiu Ayinde praised Action Congress party and urged people to 'sweep' useless government away (as represented by the federal government-led government), if the people wanted good development.

There seems to be a display of a tactic by the musician through which post colonial Nigerian musicians are able to survive. The gains from such a tactic may be financial in form, fame, or the reward may be in form of an offer of appointment into a political position. This could be related to the assertion of Michel de Certeau (1984) quoted in Sanga (2013), that "a tactic depends on time. It is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized on the wing. Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into opportunities" (Sanga, 2013: 398). Therefore, this is related to cases concerning the use of music in favour of political establishments such as kings, chiefs, politicians and other dignitaries whereby these people have been calling

and are still calling upon musicians to sing and play music for them. For example, in many African societies, royal musicians or court musicians are employed to live in the king's palace. Specifically, there are royal musicians in Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba palaces who sing for their rulers and recount histories of their kingdoms. Euba (1990) has observed that the functions of music in Yoruba palaces included waking up of kings in the mornings, the announcing of the approached visitors, singing the praises of the king, as well as performing at royal functions.

Another point is that Wasiu Ayinde was reported to have expressed that "he is a politician and has been in active politics since 1976 but up till this moment; he has never sought for an elective office even though he has his own associates" (The Punch, 2013). It is evident that Wasiu Ayinde belongs to the circle of supporters of Chief Ahmed Bola Tinubu's political machinery. This is because he is often called upon to entertain crowds during electoral campaign exercises of the APC. There is the question of antinomy in Wasiu Ayinde's *Fact and Action Congress in Promising*. According to Olaniyan (2001), antinomy is a contradiction between conclusions or inferences drawn from equally warranted or necessary principles. It marks the radically dispersed heterogeneity of desire and a reaffirmation of the irrepressible bursting seams of the social in the face of the usually disciplining aspirations of thought, of the knowing subject.

From this perspective, in *Fact*, Wasiu Ayinde criticizes the political leaders and the government for failing to provide basic social services to the masses. He speaks against the social discrimination that is being continued by members of the political class, especially those in government at the expense of the entire society. On the other hand, in the song,

*Promising (Action Congress)*, Wasiu Ayinde met and sang for one of the political aspirants of his preferred defunct political party (now amalgamated with some other parties to form the All Progressives Congress – APC). A contradiction is observed in Wasiu Ayinde's criticism of the Federal Government for its inability to provide social amenities and as he articulates his strong desire for a change in the society. He is also seen as performatively participating in maintaining the repressive structure in the sense that the use of music between both the musician and the political leaders or government leaders helped the government leaders to maintain, regulate or reduce their political power while the musicians become more famous and get rewarded in terms of cash or kind. One way or the other, Wasiu Ayinde would have been rewarded monetarily or must have received some form of payment in kind. To buttress this point, Vidal (2012), submitted that Africans know the true value of music, its power to enthrone, dethrone, educate, document and remind the ruler of the history of his domain and predecessors in order to guide his affairs and government. In addition, Sanga also noted that 'for the politicians, their power is regulated and reduced when musicians use their opportunities to offer criticisms or complaints' (Sanga, 2013:400). For example, the political party known as *Action Congress*, in *Promising* may function to remind people the message in *Fact* which had a critical message against the government in terms of its inability to provide necessary social services.

### Summary and Conclusion

In this paper, I set out to use musical figuring as an interpretative model to analyse a representation of issues bordering on urban segmentarity in selected works of Wasiu Ayinde's fuji. A

notable antimony was identified in the fierce and message of criticism by this renowned fuji exponent when compared with his actions. One remarkable point that emerges from the foregoing is the renaissance of postcolonial narratives in the artistic works of African musicians, wherein the artist is caught in the usual contraption web of a system he is attempting to critique by inadvertently being a direct or indirect reflection of the same system.

Specifically, my analysis tries to show that on the one hand, the music exponent seems to identify with the downtrodden as he sings about the prevailing social inequalities among the people. Wasiu Ayinde is presented as an agency with a mandate and mission of articulating multifarious challenges confronting the masses as he urges them to seek pragmatic means to change their misfortunes. On the other hand, the musician's association with a section of the political elite (though in opposition) but with inexcusable fringe (financial) benefits accruable to him, without a shadow of doubt, places him as part of the problem. The paper draws attention to this dilemma, especially against the backdrop that the musician is himself, a millionaire in many respects judging by the fact that he has landed properties in the high brow sections of the cosmopolitan Lagos compared to the abodes of the poor with the society.

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