

## Sexuality Discourse in Contemporary Yoruba Music: A Study of Abass Akande 'Obesere' and Janet Ajilore 'Saint Janet'

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### **Abstract**

Sexuality is a central aspect of human life that encompasses sex, gender, identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. It is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs and, in some cases, misinterpreted as nothing but vulgarity. The desire to preserve the 'sanctity' of the Yoruba language so that it will remain 'morally clean' despite its use in music has made sexuality discourse in music a discouraged subject among the Yorubas. Hence, the derision of sexuality related discourses on the public space. Using Foucault's theory of sexuality embodied in his history of sexuality as a foil, we aver that the stigmatization of Obesere and Saint Janet's music as "immoral" and 'not fit for the ears' is basically because they both frustrate efforts to control sex at the level of speech, and inadvertently intensify discourses on sex, sexual performance and the power relations among Yoruba men and women which all had concomitant effects on morals on and off the public space.

**Keywords:** Sexuality, Yoruba Music, Foucault, Obesere, Saint Janet

### **Introduction**

To delve into sexuality discourses in Nigerian public space, against societal expectations, often results in two situations namely, guilt and guilty by association. In both cases, the subjects, discussants, and the scholars involved, are considered morally questionable for their involvements. Hence, Plummer is right to have observed, albeit rightly, that "researching into the subject 'sexuality' makes the researcher morally suspected" (Plummer, 1975:4) and sometimes as guilty as those he/she studies. Current discourse on sexuality in Nigeria, most especially among the Yorubas of southwestern Nigeria, are centered on respectable themes such as marriage, gender studies on politics and political relations; sexuality proverbs and taboos which are the accepted and respected expressions of sexuality (Benjamin 2008; Makinon 2008; Irigaray 2008; Allan & Burrige 2006; Ikpe 2003 & 2004, Ademowo & Balogun 2015). Apart from these, human sexuality discourse is negatively perceived to be linked with urban decadence, prostitution and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Unfortunately, the foregoing submission is a clear case of grossly mistaken conclusion because sexuality goes beyond marriage, reproduction, immorality and disease to include but not limited to power, intimidation, stereotypification, conflicts, etc. Hence, the banishment of all that is 'sexual' and 'sex' related from the public domain, even the domain of the academics, is rather incoherent with the ethics and the dictates of the public space, as observed by Lawuyi (2008). It is on this premise that this study explores the constructions of sexuality in Obesere and Saint Janet, the two most popularly alleged Yoruba lewd singers. Using Foucault's theory of sexuality embodied in his history of sexuality as a foil, the study suggests that the stigmatisation of Obesere and Saint Janet's music as "Immoral" and 'not fit for the ears' is basically because they both frustrate efforts to control sex at the level of speech, and inadvertently intensify discourses on sex, sexual performance and the power relations involved.

### **Foucault, Sexuality and the Human Society**

Foucault's theory of sexuality focused on the perception of sexuality in societies; the notion that societies experience a repression of sexuality. He dispels the idea that sexuality has not been the subject of an open discourse. Thus, Foucault raises three doubts in "A Will to Knowledge", volume one of the trilogy, *The History of Sexuality*. Firstly, sexual repression, to Foucault, is an established historical fact; what first appears to our view as the accentuation of a regime of sexual repression. Secondly, the workings of power in our society belong to the category of repression and that power is generally exercised through prohibition, censorship and denial. His final position of enquiry is that the critical discourse that addresses itself to repression somewhat later acts as a block to the power mechanism that has operated unchallenged to this point; and/or as a part of the same thing it denounces and misrepresents by calling it 'repression'. The question then is: "was there really a rupture between the age of repression and the critical analysis of repression?" (Foucault 1998).

Foucault shatters the illusion that from the middle Ages onward, a prudish Victorian culture did everything that it could to silence sexuality when he claims that sexuality was, in that period, the subject of immense verbosity. Foucault states that the desire to speak about the repressed nature of sex participated in the very structure that it was seeking to decipher (Bristow, 1997). Foucault argues further by suggesting that it is peculiar to modern societies not to consign sex to a shadowy existence but to speak about it *ad infinitum* while at the same time exploiting it as the secret. To Foucault, rather than a prudishness of language or a uniform concern to hide sex, what distinguishes the last three centuries is the proliferation of devices that have been invented for speaking about it, having it spoken about, inducing it to speak of itself, for listening, recording, transcribing and re-distributing what is said about it: a whole network of varying, specific and coercive transpositions into discourse. Rather than censorship, what evolved was a regulated and polymorphous incitement to discourses (Foucault, 1978). Foucault has no patience at all with what is termed the 'repressive hypothesis' as he feels that a society cannot be sexually repressed when there is such an incitement to discourses upon this very belief (Bristow 1997). Foucault desired to trace the thread through so many centuries that have linked sex and the search to identify the truth for our societies. He said; "how is it that in a society like ours,



sexuality is not simply a means of reproducing the species, the family and the individual? Not simply a means to obtain pleasure and enjoyment? How has sexuality come to be considered the privileged place where our deepest “truth” is read and expressed, most times without out contextual clarifications and misrepresentations?

Sex has always been the forum where both the future of our species and our “truth” as human subjects is decided. Confession, the examination of the conscience, and the insistence on the important secrets of the flesh, has not been a means of prohibiting sex or of repressing it as far as possible from consciousness, but was a means of placing sexuality at the heart of existence and of connecting salvation with the mastery of these obscure movements. In Christian societies, sex has been the central object of examination, surveillance, avowal and transformation into discourses” (Foucault 1988). This intersection of the technology of the confession with a scientific investigation and discourse has constructed the domain of sexuality within modern societies as being problematic and in need of interpretation.

### Locating “Sex”, “Sexual” and the “Lewd” in Obesere and St. Janet’s Brands of Music

... tighter controls were placed on discourse about sex, and on discourse about sexuality discourse. There was an effort to control sex at the level of speech. On the other hand, though, this effort to control sex also intensified the discourse on sex (Foucault, 1998:1).

Blatant expression of sexuality and the mentioning of sex organs are considered lewd among the Yoruba, and rarely would anybody openly engage in it. This is essentially because, as opined earlier, sex and related topics are tabooed in public discourses, both in Western and African cultures. Britain, for example, has been very severe in its censorship of what is tagged as ‘obscenity’, legally coded as “obscene libel” or “matter tending to deprave or corrupt”. With the attendant sexuality music around, one would gape at the people’s reception of them. It is somewhat ironic that people reject the seemingly ‘obscenity’ in the open, but pay millions of naira to buy millions of copies of the same album (to listen to it in their closets), or how do we explain the ‘Diamond’ and ‘Platinum’ spread of such albums or tracks? This ‘double speaking’ or insincere denial suggests a reinforcement of Foucault position on sexuality discourse in the opening quotation.

In our case study, the free expression of sex and sexuality-related issues by Obesere, whose self-proclaimed sobriquet is “Oba Asakasa” (the master of lewd songs), has quite expectedly elicited opprobrium and disdain from a large section of the public and what we call the public moral imaginings (Lawuyi, 2014). The public’s squeamish taste has been fostered as such by religious experience as by the traditional culture. Artists who violate the propriety placed on the subject as Obesere and Saint Janet did are not just coarse or uncouth but also lack value and morality. Although this disdain applies to all violators in all sections of the society, it would seem that Obesere and Saint Janet take liberties with lewd-jokes and slangy expressions in their songs. This *deviance* is typical of the uncertain morality with which the trade is identified. Ironically, it is interesting that off-stage or outside business hours, they conform to the social

expectation. What accounts for such an exercise experienced from Obesere and Saint Janet's music? And what can be adduced to as a determinant factor for their non-conformist performance?

It is noteworthy that Foucault and Freud have both opined that sex occupies a core area of the human's psychology, which was controversial then, and now in Nigeria like in other places all over the world, may be difficult to ignore. Sex is a subject strongly restricted in public discourse; lexical choices in direct reference to sex and sexual organs are allowed to feature only in periphrastic and euphemistic terms (Kaplan 1990: 61; Forte 1996: 20-27). Thus, in Yoruba language, penis is referred to as "nkan omokunrin", meaning "the thing of a man or the thing of manhood". It is also humorously referred to as "eketa itan" (the third thigh) or 'esc keta' (the third leg). Vagina is described as "oju ara" (the body's opening/the point of entry into the body) or 'nkan omobinrin' (the female thing). Similarly, sexual intercourse is presented in euphemistic descriptions: "o baa sun" (he slept/lay with her), "o ba lo po" (he interacted with her/he related with her) and "won ni ajosepo" (they had mutual dealings/relationship). Similar periphrases are found in the Judeo-Christian literature; "And Adam knew his wife" (Genesis, 4:1) where "knew" is a euphemism for having sexual intercourse. Thus, Paul in the following passage refers to sex:

... Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath no power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. (I Corinthians, 7:3-5).

The word "benevolence" means being physically available to each other for sex; the word "body" is used symbolically (in reference to the penis and vagina). Contextually, the verb "defraud" is the antithesis of "come together," a phrase mediating the idea of sexual union (Samson, 2005: 90). As explicated earlier, the Yoruba speaking people of Southwestern Nigeria are no exception to the reality of being euphemistic on issues of sex and sexuality. Abass Akande Omorapala Obesere sings Fuji which originates from the development of "Ajisari/Ajiwere" music tradition, a kind of music performed to wake Muslims before dawn during the Ramadan fasting season.

*Ajiwere/Ajisari* itself was made popular by the likes of Ajadi Ganiu, Ayinde Muniru mayyegun, Mufu Fuji Lawa, Jibowu Barrister, Abinuwaye Bashiru, Akande Monsuru, among others, until Sikiru Ayiinde refined and metamorphosed 'Were' into Fuji music with attendant reference to teaching Islamic morals and piety. On the other side, Saint Janet sings Juju with a bent of Gospel and Fuji, a genre of music popular among the Christian Yorubas in Southwest, Nigeria. Juju is known to be a high music, a reserve for the elite, and the bourgeois. However, with the coming of Abass Akande Omorapala Obesere and Janet Omotoyosi Ajilore in the early 1990's and early 2000s respectively, sexuality becomes an open discourse as against the tradition that propelled the genre of their music.

Early in his career, Obesere retorted that "lowo yi, o consolijapo", meaning 'this time around, it is going to be a potpourri of all'. Wasiu Ayinde Marshal, one of his disputed contemporaries in



the Fuji music terrain, had earlier released an album titled *Consolidation*. It is instructive that Obesere announced his brand of song as *consolijapo* as a parody of Wasiu's conservative brand of Fuji, meant for the elites. For Obesere, "japo" also means to jam and scatter, and to produce a kind of Fuji that everyone can listen to. He also announced his arrival with names such as "Ibinu Olorin, Oba idan, Papa tosibe, apede f'oge rababa" which all means "the Angry Musician, the King of Magic, Father of Ejaculators/active sex fellows, the one that sings to a damsel to dance and get intoxicated" respectively. Obesere also sang a popular line in one of his albums that described the female ass: "momari kaka kan o kaka, ikebe ni won pe be, se ki n tosibe", meaning "I see something big called kaka, it is also called buttock, should I urinate there?" 'To urinate', for him means 'to have sex and ejaculate'; 'Kaka' has no direct meaning in Yoruba other than a symbolism of something big. In fact, it is arguable that it was Obesere who introduced the lexicon, "kaka", into Yoruba dictionary of slang, just as the expression 'Lepa Gau' has no meaning but wrong adaptation of the theme of the track of popular French Ivory Coast's artiste, Magic System, 'Le premier gau' (the first fool).

It is important to note that Obesere emerged in the early 1990s when Apala, Juju and Fuji were popular music genres on Yoruba musical landscape but with difficulty for many younger musicians/artistes to navigate until he brought lewd street slang/song called "Asakasa" into the Fuji scene. As against the *status quo*, Obesere became popular with the streetwise type and even the educated, as they buy and hide his album in their cars and rooms for their listening pleasures and to play it at its loudest at parties whenever the tempo seems low and there is need to reawake the tempo. Obesere pride himself as the originator of lewd-slang in the Nigeria Fuji music landscape. To justify his brand of music as 'God-ordained', he once narrated a story of how he visited God almighty and requested for wisdom to sing songs that will be receptacle to all and sundry, to grant him abundance of music, but to his surprise, God informed him that morally/non-lewd songs have finished, but that out of his ingenuity he demanded from God to give him the power over 'the remnant', which he then tagged *Asakasa*. Hence, the moral of his story is that God sanctioned his desire to bring forth sex and sexuality related songs into the public domain.

On how he was able to compete favourably with the musical icons of the 1990s and succeeded in endearing himself to the public, he explains (in one of his albums):

"igba ti a gbe asakasa de l'oyo ojo si, won leri s'Alakande won ni ibo loma de, Asakasa nan re ori sunmi bare ni, agbe de ilu London, agbe de Germany, Agaga l'America won oje kawale mo" (Obesere, *Asakasa*)"

Meaning:

when we introduced lewd-slans and songs into the public domain in those days, many doubted if we could succeed, now they have all embraced our style, the lewd-slang is now bringing forth prosperity, we have taken it to London, to Germany, surprisingly in America, they felt reluctant to let us go (to return to Nigeria).

Bewildered about Obesere's blatant expression of lewd-slang in a conservative Yoruba religico-moral and conscious public space, many items of rumours were peddled to discredit him. The chief of all was that he is never and cannot be a Yoruba man. The conclusion then was that he must be a non-Yoruba, precisely rumour has it that he is a Ghanaian. This was at a time when Ghanaians flooded Nigeria in thousands. To the rumour, Obesere responded that people should stop referring to him as a Ghanaian. He thus sang that, "ema pemi lomo Ghana mo o, ..Ibadan sa ni ile, Oluyole" (stop referring to me as a Ghanaian, I am from Ibadan, in Oyo State). Realizing that his music is still gaining popularity and the society is simply hypocritical about the popularity of his song, his lewd-slang waxed stronger in albums titled *Omorapala Overthrow* and *American Faaji*. And in the album titled *Apple Juice*, Obesere featured Cossy Ojiakor, a lewd dancer, who has since then been popular for dancing half-nude and effectively throwing her boobs seductively and two almost nude females on bikes, first in the history of popular music in the country.

In *Egungun Becareful*, Obesere sang:

"Isan t'eba na ti o ba le, e gbe senu. Awo teba na ti o ba ro ewon omi si. Ke ma pariwo omi o, ooomi omi oo ooomi".

Meaning:

any muscle (penis) that you try to make hard and is not yielding, you should be put into the mouth and any hide (vagina) that you beat but refuses to get soft (get wet for penetration), should be softened with water (lubricant), then you may call for water! Water!! Water!!!

For every fan of Obesere and good Yoruba speakers, "Isan" as used in this context will literally translate for muscle and consequently, to penis. And "Awo" which would also literally translate for skin is used to connote vagina. Beyond just the music, a sociolinguistic appraisal shows that the linguistic turn and mistune located in the core of Obesere's music are socially contextualized. Thus, Obesere sang that:

"oko mi osi nile ojojumo lo n phone, sugbon oro orii phone kodabi afojuri, e so fun koma bo nile kowaa bami gbonmisi, koinabonile o kowa bamigbonmisi, omoge otutu yi poju kowabaini gbonmisi".

This literally means:

"my husband is not at home but he calls me everyday to get in touch, but getting in touch over the phone is never like getting in touch by seeing physically, please help canvass him to return home so as to help me fetch water into the place".

"Gbonmisi" means 'help fetch water'. Water as used in this context connotes sperm, and "gbonmisi" which literally means to fetch water would connote actual love making.



Likewise, in *American Faaji*, Obesere sang:

“bobomi lale bobomi loru, bobo bobo oma kuu ise, isan re ti kii ro nigbokanle mi, modupe omi ana modupe omi oni, iyin ogo ye e o, to se n se loru ana yen ni ko maa se... e wo awon boys won gbadun omu, ewo awon ladies won n gbadun oko. Gbogbo ise ti mo ba se maa ko sori omu.

This literally means:

“my boyfriend in the morning and night, my boyfriend I salute you for the job well-done; that your muscle is never weak; it is my hope and comfort and I am thankful for the muscle of yesterday and today, glory be to you as you did yesterday. It is what you should be doing more.

“Isan”, translatable to muscle in this context is Penis. And to replace muscle with penis in the translation is to land us into obvious vulgarity. What Obesere did was to touch the hitherto unvoiced pains and pleasure of the women folk. This particular song became an anthem for women who wanted to appreciate their men/sex partners who did the needful by satisfying them sexually. Women and girls in this category only needed to slot in the CD into the player and sing along, enthusiastically (afterall, they are only singing Obesere song, not saying ‘Thanks for a good sex’ directly to anyone even though both partners understand the message).

However it must be noted that it is not the case that Obesere has never sang to promote some moral inclinations. Not to do such would mean that he does not take cognisance of conscience of his public space. In one of his many tracks, *Iwa lewa*, he sang that “Iwalewa, iwo iyawo to n rele oko mori lo mama mewa lo”, preaching to the newly wedded bride to embrace good behaviour so as to be able to cope with the vagaries and differences in groom’s place.

Let us at this juncture turn our attention to Omotoyosi Ajilore, popularly called Saint Janet, her other appellations include the ‘General Overseer of St. Bottles Cathedral’, Sinners Chapel, and ‘Mama Yabis’. Saint Janet was said to be lured into a highlife/Juju band of certain gentleman known in Abeokuta as ‘Los Kenge’ where she served faithfully before launching out on her own, ‘by popular demand’ (which is usually the general explanation for young artistes moving on with their career away from their Master’s band). When asked if she thinks she is wrong, she quickly linked herself to some historical fact of her space. Thus, she defends:

In my music, I am not saying anything that has not been said before by the likes of Sir Shina Peters, Obesere and King Sunny Ade. The entire hip hop generation of today is about sex and they are sometimes very explicit about it. So what have I done wrong? Is it because I am a woman? Women are the ones who are used as mere toys for sexual appeasement of the male in many musical videos. Why does anyone not see anything wrong in that? I am fighting for women. If you listen to the fun part of my songs, you may miss the moral lessons which abound therein. (*This Day Live*, Saint Janet)

In a quick rendition similar to what we have in churches, her performance begins with gospel songs wherein she would acknowledge God and welcome people to St. Bottle's Cathedral (the Cathedral, in this context, being a fictitious edifice filled with active listeners and fun lovers). Acknowledging God is necessary because the next songs are, by conservatives' standard abominable. Her brand of Juju is spoofed with sexual and humorous Yoruba lyrics, what can be described as gospel meets perversion. She seems unapologetic about it particularly as she is aware that her environment is filled much pretentiousness. Her brand of music, like Obesere's, raises eyebrow but she is daring as she makes passersby uncomfortable. Some people however take the lewd jokes and repress laughter. She for instance signs:

Kinni e to nle lo loju e loju,  
kinni e to nle o l'oya e lenu,  
Buoda onisan ope lo ye e.

Meaning,

It is your thing that is strong that is a big deal to you,  
It is what is surprising you,  
My dear brother with 'big muscle' (penis), you should be thankful.

Another lyric of 'Saint Janet' reads:

Oyin ni kinni abe re o oyin ni,  
O fi le Sisi yen ko tun m'ona ile mo (2ce)  
Oyin ni kinni abe e oyin ni.

Meaning:

It is sweet, what you have under (in your pant) is sweet.  
You used on that lady and she forgets his way home (wanting to be with you);  
It is sweet, what you have under (in your pant), your sweet babana is sweet

Like Obesere's lyrics, for Saint Janet's fans and good Yoruba speakers, "Kinni" and/or "Isan" as used in the context of her music will literally translate for 'muscle' and consequently, to 'penis'. And "Awo" which would also literally translate for skin/hide is used to connote vagina. Beyond just the music, a sociolinguistic appraisal shows that the linguistic turn and mistune located in the core of Saint Janet's music are socially contextualised.

It is noticed that usually when the party is on high tempo, Saint normally switch to referring to the sexual organs sometimes with their known names by calling penis, penis and vagina, vagina. In one of her albums, *Faji Plus* she praises the importance of 'buttocks': "idi bebere ni Buoda ngbe lo nkan nbe", meaning: 'big buttock, very large buttock is what bother is going with, there is surprise'. In another track she sings:

Bi owo mi bawa loyan re,  
B'enu mi ba wa ni enu e,



Ti something mi wa nisale e,  
 Sa roju duro ma yedi,  
 Duro o roju duro mayedi,  
 Duro o mayedi, sa roju duro mayedi”,

Meaning:

If my hand is on your breast, and my mouth in your mouth,  
 and my something down inside your body,  
 Please don't move your buttock, please endure don't remove your buttock,  
 Please endure.

Noteworthy is that like poets with poetic license, Saint Janet sometimes switch from Gospel genre from church and club lyrics to her creatively vulgar approach especially with lyrics that her audience is familiar with in churches and clubs.

In one of her tracks she sang a parody of the popular Christian song: He is alive, Amen; He is alive, Jesus is alive amen. Saint Janet cleverly turned it around to reflect some sex symbols and concepts by inserting 'Kolabo' or 'COLlabo\*'. 'Kolabo' here means sex and related activities:

Iya Lai,  
 Eni ba Kolabo Iya Lai  
 A rija baba Lai dandan

(Iya Lai, whoever have sex with Lai's mum will have her husband, Baba Lai, to contend with)

Another instance of the foregoing reflects when she sang that “Omoge meta lomooko do, Kerubu, Cele ati Christ Embassy” meaning, ‘there are three categories of Ladies that enjoy sex most; namely, Cherubim, Celestial and Christ Embassy are experts on bed’. Like a leader trying to lead by example, she would retort: \*E ma je ko ya yin lenu, emi ti mon nsoro omo Kerubu ni mi, mo tun wa lo fe Sele, e o ri wipe a ti ko gbogbo e po. Producer Sina Ayo Eniola is a Christ Embassy”, meaning: don't be surprised, I am also a Kerubu and I am married to Sele, you can see we have brought everything together. My Producer Sina Ayo Eniola is also a Christ Embassy member. Can't you see that we are experts in sex discourses’.

Another track runs:  
 Boko ba le lale ju a seyun,  
 Bomoge ba mokodo o a loyun,  
 Buoda r'ora se  
 Boko ba le laleju a seyun

Literally the track means:

When a penis is too turgid it can abort pregnancy,  
 If a lady knows how to make sex she would be pregnant,  
 My brother be gentle because if penis is too turgid it will abort the pregnancy.

Sometimes, Saint Janet results to 'question and answer' session with her audience; she would for instance ask the audience thus: *se eti lalalala? Ta lo ti labe ri? Talo ti do abuke ri? Talo ti do aro ri?* This means: "has anybody lalalal"? Who has licked under? Who has had sex with person with hunchback before? Who has had sex with a crippled person before?"

Like Obesere, Saint Janet also sings to the moral public. An instance of this is seen in *Faaji Plus* where she sang that "sebi aye yi nan nio, abi a baye yin nan ko, tori pe k'ato d'aye, araye nsayo lo, nigba tadaye atun bawon se, taba tun kuro laye araye a ma saye lo". This literally means: is it this life, or is it not this life, because before you came to being, people were already in existence; when you came into being, life goes on, when you leave and die life will continue to be". Also in *Faaji Plus*, Saint Janet sang that "Biribiri laye o, biribiri o laye nyi, boba yi kan mi o le yi kan o boba yi kan mi a pada s'odo e, asiko to ba ndara fun e ko seranti onio lakeji". Meaning, that "this life is fleeting, sometimes it fleets to you and sometimes to me, when it is good to you you should remember your fellow men and assist them".

Still churning out some moral lessons but taking cognisance of her sexual audience, Saint Janet sings that "o fe sisi kan lowuro odale od'oko si e nigba, to ba nba sisi s'oro a l'obe to dun owo lo paa, to ba nba alakori s'oro a s'ope owo lo paa, ko ba e bere se oshodi oke l'obe ni abi bakassi lowo pa. Literally it means:

you married a lady in the morning and at night she becomes the Boss, when you talk to her she tells you that a sweet soup is killed with good amount of money, you can ask: is it Oshodi Oke or Bakassi that money kills

It should be stated however, that St. Janet is not for the moral vigilantes. Her themes are mostly about man-woman relationships, sexual intercourse, genitals and making funny commentaries on everyday life. She goes straight for the shock value, albeit laced with humour. Where Obesere is the Captain of naughty lyrics, St. Janet is the General (Ogunlowo, 2014). Admittedly, her mention of sexual parts can even make the staunchest liberal mind flinch in embarrassment. And with Yoruba, a language that impresses with sensational descriptions of genitals- ask Yoruba speakers; she feeds listeners with a cocktail of sexual alluding words and metaphors- "Vagina", in lettering is visually laborious and vocally unmelodious by comparison to "Obo". "Obo" sounds naughty, raunchy from a Yoruba tongue, and it should be mentioned with such abandoning (Ogunlowo, 2014).

Sometimes, one wonders if Saint Janet is attempting a feminist agenda, perhaps unconsciously. Her kinds of lyrics are not easily associated with women, at least not among the Yorubas. In other words, they are lyrics that adorn Victor Olaiya for the original "Mofe Muyan" track with its brazen mentioning of breast (breast, *oyan* in Yoruba). A world that pardons Flavour N' a baria for its creative remix of Rex Lawson's "Sawale" and his "Nwa Baby" (Ashawo) cannot embrace a woman acting alike. If this is just an artistic endeavour for her, this is commendable. But beyond her creative prowess, she will scold ladies who are not adventurous with penises. No doubt she has special fondness for the phallus. For Janet, music should be a weapon for women to remake their images. In his description of Janet, Adebola (2012) explains:



Saint Janet is a highly live performer that caused a big stir when she made her debut with her album entitled *Faaji Plus* and later with *Orin Ayo* and *Surprise*. Interestingly the controversial album, *Faaji Plus*, instantly became a talking-point and an object of scorn from the church podium to the lawmakers' chambers yet sold like a hot cake. While it was banned on radio and many homes, however at street comers and beer parlour, her song still blares with gusto (Adebola, 2012).

Saint Janet is a story of someone who changed from being a devout chorister; she acquired erotic boldness that was previously unknown.

Explanations were given to explain out the supposed anomaly in Saint Janet. It was said that Saint Janet is an Ijsha/Ekiti lady (Ijsha/Ekiti is a tribe in Yorubaland known for bluntness in calling a spade a spade without making allusion to any subtle euphemism), and perhaps this is a factor for it is a belief among the other dialects in Yorubaland that the Ekitis and the Ijshas can be vulgar in their approach to explaining issues. The sub-tribe is known to be unique for calling the private part organs in their stark names without being euphemistic; as against and unlike the other Yoruba ethnics, they call penis 'penis', vagina 'vagina' and sex 'sex' without any oblique allusion (Ogunlowo, 2014). . No doubt, it takes a lot of courage and boldness to face audience and use figurative speeches and sometimes unambiguous lyrics, calling sensitive private parts of the body in explicit words in this part of the world as Obesere and St Janet have done.

### **Conclusion: Sex and Sexuality as Moral Truths**

Defying the dictates of tradition that produced them and acting to Foucault's narrative on sexuality, Obesere and Saint Janet introduced to their music lewd-laden and sexual issues which inevitably employ jargon that is socially regarded as repugnant. Their handling of the issues as well as the accompanying sexually provocative but sometimes moderate linguistic choices is not totally without control. There is an indication that they are conscious and have acted against the limits imposed on them by the tradition and an unremitting ban placed upon their music by social conventions. Example of such consciousness in them is their attempt to conform to the convention which allows users of the language to mention sex organs. This is completely an effective strategy, since they frustrate themselves along the line by bringing in obscene statements which end up being more repugnant than those items that are socially stigmatised. As noted within our moral imaginings, total controls were placed on discourses about sex and sexuality; there was an effort to control sex at the level of speech. Ironically, this effort to control sex also intensified discourses on sex chief methods by which both the Yoruba and English traditions avoid the employment of the socially unacceptable linguistic expressions, but when periphrases are employed without euphemisms, as they are used in the case of Obesere, they succeed in making sex more explicit than do the offending words!

The principal strategy that lauds Obesere and Saint Janet from the charge of containing instances of pornography is their masterly use of ambiguities, ambivalences and metaphor, where their ability is employed to make people doubt whether their textual experience involves purely sexual matters or whether sex is a metaphor for something deeper and of higher value. It is

arguable, however, whether this is a totally successful strategy. It may be noted, finally, that musicians are very much like poets who are not linguistic or stylistic outlaws or islands, although they enjoy an uncommon liberty in their linguistic choices - a freedom called poetic license. When an issue involves public morality, as does the issue of sex and its linguistic intimations, the poet is "rebellious" at the expense of the respectability and acceptability of his works, for all literary creations made with the expectation that they will be read by the public. Where the public's sensibilities are offended, the consumption of the products is necessarily restricted to the poet and possibly a few of his brethren in rebellion. It can be seen, then, that "censorship" is not a government's action and moralizing sexuality is a public duty. It is often self-imposed by artists who are aware of the grave implications of lack of it and want to exploit the avenue for some profit (Samson 2005). The public perception of immorality of the music and the reactions to it best mirrors the impending character of Nigerian society where moral consciousness is high only in the saying in the public space, but with little or no adherence to its dictates when people get to the corridors of their private life.

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## Discography

### Obesere

*Asakasa* (Sony)

*Omorapala Overthrow* (Dudu Heritage)

*American Faaji Series 1&2* (Dudu Heritage)

*His Excellency* (Bayowa)

*Egungun Be Careful* (Bayowa)

*Apple Juice* (Bayowa)

### Saint Janet

*Faaji Plus*

*Orin Ayo*

*Surprise*