

## **EIGHT**

### ***Larayetan Rapheal:***

### **World racism and African consciousness in Bob Marley’s “War” and Fela Anikulapo Kuti’s “Beast of No Nation”**

#### **Abstract**

This paper underlines the meeting point of two musicians – Bob Marley and Fela Anikulapo-Kuti – who made their names in two different genres – reggae and Afrobeat. I pay attention to their expression of pan-Africanist views, especially within the contexts of racial tensions and oppressive regimes. With focus on purposively selected songs, Bob Marley’s “War” and Fela Anikulapo-Kuti’s “Beast of No Nation” being politically conscious music. I trace the two musicians’ artistic and personal lives to their different backgrounds and influences which informed the trajectory of their careers by applying the parameters of psychoanalytic theory to the exploration of the representations of the challenges besetting the African (black man) regardless of where they reside. The study identifies the themes of displacement, repression and unresolved conflicts among other things which prompted the musicians to assume the role of liberators to reawake their fellow Africans about their heritage and stand up against oppression or denigration of any kind, perpetrated by their fellow blacks as neo-colonialists or the whites as colonialists. The paper further argues that the musicians’ activist outcries against Black repression and alienation emanate from their personal experiences as well as the gaping realities of international politics which continue to marginalize people of African heritage. One can thus conclude that these artistes, through their songs, seek to stimulate social consciousness as well as draw attention to the plight of their people. Indeed, these musicians see themselves as authentic representatives of Africa and Africans.

**Keywords:** Africa, music, reggae, afrobeat, Bob Marley, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, racism, politics, consciousness, black

*Racisme mondial et conscience africaine dans "War" de Bob Marley et "Beast of No Nation" de Fela Anikulapo Kuti*

### **Résumé**

*Cet article montre la rencontre de deux musiciens – Bob Marley et Fela Anikulapo-Kuti – qui se sont fait une renommée dans deux genres artistiques différents – le reggae et l'afro beat. Je prête attention à leur expression de points de vue panafricanistes, en particulier dans les contextes de tensions raciales et de régimes oppressifs. En mettant l'accent sur des chansons choisies à dessein, "War" de Bob Marley et "Beast of No Nation" de Fela Anikulapo-Kuti sont des musiques politiquement conscientes. Je retrace la vie artistique et personnelle des deux musiciens à leurs différents horizons et influences qui ont jalonné la trajectoire de leur carrière en appliquant les paramètres de la théorie psychanalytique à l'exploration des représentations des défis qui assaillent l'Africain (homme noir) quel que soit l'endroit où il réside. L'étude identifie entre autres les thèmes du déplacement, de la répression et des conflits non résolus qui ont poussé les musiciens à assumer le rôle de libérateurs pour éveiller leurs compatriotes africains sur leur héritage afin de se dresser contre l'oppression ou le dénigrement de toute nature, perpétrés par leurs compatriotes noirs comme néo-colonialistes ou les blancs en tant que colonialistes. L'article soutient en outre que les cris des militants musiciens contre la répression et l'aliénation des Noirs émanent de leurs expériences personnelles ainsi que des réalités tangibles de la politique internationale qui continuent de marginaliser les Africains. On peut donc conclure que ces artistes, à travers leurs chansons, cherchent à éveiller la conscience sociale*

*ainsi qu'à attirer l'attention sur le sort de leur peuple. En effet, ces musiciens se considèrent comme d'authentiques représentants de l'Afrique et des Africains.*

**Mots clés:** *Afrique, musique, reggae, afrobeat, Bob Marley, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, racisme, politique, conscience, Noir*

## **Introduction**

Reggae and Afrobeat as protest genres have been effective vehicles towards the awakening of African consciousness, not only in their respective Jamaica and Nigeria but globally, as weapons of activism and protest. Music is instrumental to the development of people's minds and it is so influential as –an art form and source of power. Many forms of music reflect culture and society, as well as, containing political content and social message (Scott Carlis, 2002). In the context of spirituality which Fela as a traditional worshipper and Marley as a Rastafarian associated with their music, the opinion of Adebayo (2017, p. 56) that –to the African, music is not just a pastime, it is a ritual can be said to be true. Narrowing the genres of reggae and afrobeat to the awakening of the African consciousness will make me toe the historical narrative of slavery which has greatly influenced the songs of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti and Bob Marley, a view supported by Onyebadi (2018) who opines that –African politics and political activities are also impacted by music. For instance, the history of colonialism and independence in the continent will be incomplete without adequate attention to the music and songs that were used to mobilize people to agitate for political freedom. As fate would have it for Africans, slave trade and colonialism have become a part of our everyday lives that it reflects in every activity from our homes to the frontiers of government. The effects of the slave trade have persisted to the extent that many Africans and emergent African countries still struggle with loss of political, religious and socio-cultural values that have since been replaced with the colonialists' ideologies. Without digging much into the roots of slavery and its effects, a touch on Peter Tosh's

line from the song –African|| throws a wide net on the spread of the black man through the ships of slavery:

*Don't care where you come from  
As long as you're a black man, you're an African  
No mind your nationality  
You have got the identity of an African*

This paper attempts to add to the vast discourse on the awakening of the African consciousness through political and protest songs which Eesuola (2012) posits that –Songs have played significant roles in major protests of the world, ranging from the 1980s apartheid resistance in South Africa, to the 2010s Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan Revolts of the Middle East||. The focus on Fela Anikulapo-Kuti and Bob Marley is partly informed by the fact that, though dead, they have left behind a global legacy with their unfettered criticisms and political awareness that point to imperialism, bad governance and corrupt political rulers among other societal ills that inhibit the growth of the black race. One of such black men that Peter Tosh was referring to is Bob Marley born to a white Jamaican father of English ancestry and a black Jamaican mother. The reggae icon, even in death, still remains Jamaica’s most famous cultural export. Fela Anikulapo-Kuti is a Nigerian born to Nigerian parents, which authenticates his status as an African. The background of these two musicians would be x-rayed to establish the psychoanalytic influences which formed their worldviews and became a subject-matter in their songs. As stated, the choice of ‘\_War’ by Bob Marley and ‘\_Beast of No Nation’ by Fela Anikulapo-Kuti is premised on the treatment of the quest for equality and respect for the African coming from a political background traceable to events that happened in their time.

**Bob Marley, Conscious Reggae and the Making of a Global Icon**  
Bob Marley was born Nesta Robert Marley to Captain Norval Sinclair Marley, a colonial supervisor and a Jamaican mother

Cedella. Norval Marley's family was made up of white Jamaicans from the parish of Clarendon. Norval was relocated for work purposes to St. Ann where Cedella had grown up and resided (Gurtman). The little boy never enjoyed fatherly presence as his father left shortly after his birth and died ten years later. Describing the relationship with his father, Marley said:

My fadda was a guy yunno, from England here, yunno? Him was like...like you can read it yunno, it's one o'dem slave stories: white guy get the black woman and breed her. He's a English guy...I t'ink.

Cos me see him one-time yunno. My mother? My MotherAfrican. (Bob Marley, 1978)

By nature, a child looks up to the father as the head of the house but in his own case the man was absent; there was no one to educate him on the social structures which led to his identity crisis because being a brown-skinned man set him in the middle of the Jamaican society of the 1960s where they classified themselves as black, brown and white. So, as a little boy, he had seen the white man, his father, as a usurper, and his mother, the black woman, as the victim—a symbolism that can be likened to the colonial masters and their domination of Africa. This view is supported by Gurtman:

*It is not uncommon to encounter examples of abandoned children who rebel against society, and it is apparent that Bob Marley fits this mold. During his adolescence, the absence of a father forced Marley to turn to the streets of Trench Town for guidance and lessons. This led to Marley's adoption of the prevailing Rude Boy mentality and the tough attitude that it represented. These character traits would stay with the reggae star for his entire career and certainly influenced his work on several different levels. The rebel attitude is clear in Marley's lyrics and his later attempts at reform in the social and religious arenas. The influence of being an abandoned child on Bob Marley's rebel attitude is evident and these circumstances changed the musician's life forever.*  
(Gurtman 2002)

The above implies that the young Marley had to start taking conscious decisions that will shape his life path. As interesting as things turned out for him, we can't argue that it would have turned out differently if his father were actively present in his life. Historically, the emergence of blacks in Jamaica was as a result of British colonization of the island having fought off Spanish domination –In May 1655, around 7,000 English soldiers landed near Jamaica's Spanish Town capital and soon overwhelmed the small number of Spanish troops (at the time, Jamaica's entire population only numbered around 2,500). Spain never recaptured Jamaica, losing the Battle of Ocho Rios in 1657 and the Battle of Rio Nuevo in 1658 (Meditz and Hanratty, 1987). The English leader Oliver Cromwell was the mastermind of the attack and it happened at a time when slavery was rife. At first, he –increased the island's European population by sending indentured servants and prisoners to Jamaica, those who were mostly Irish because of the war in Ireland. The tropical diseases which were strange to the Europeans led to the deaths of many which affected their population growth. However, the imports of slaves from Africa increased the population, mostly blacks because ships coming from the west coast of Africa preferred to unload at the islands of the Eastern Caribbean. At the beginning of the 18th century, the number of slaves in Jamaica did not exceed 45,000, but by 1800 it had increased to over 300,000 (Meditz and Hanratty, 1987).

One of the descendants of these black slaves was Bob Marley's mother while his father was from the lineage of the British settlers, thus, biracial marriages happened which resulted into a three-faced spectrum of race being white, black and brown (mulatto). Stephens profiles it thus: At the time of Jamaican independence in 1962, when Marley was seventeen years old, Jamaica was 77 percent black, 20 percent brown, 1 percent white, and 2 percent Asian (Stephens 167). The whites considered themselves superior to the other races while the blacks accept the stance; they felt they were better than the browns. The browns were the products of biracial marriages which produced Bob

Marley, so it was a struggle living in a society that never accepted him.

This anti-mulatto sentiment was something that Marley experienced for his entire youth. It certainly shaped him as a person as others were constantly viewing him as inferior. Experiencing racism from both the black and white sides was also difficult because early on Marley had difficulties identifying with either racial group (Gurtman).

He was displaced due to a lack of identity and his skin colour which should have earned him an economic advantage but instead posed a lot of problems for him as argued by Boot and Salewicz: Considered a white boy, his complexion would often bring out the worst in people: after all, why was this boy from ‘\_country’ living down in the ghetto and not uptown with all the other light skin people (Boot and Salewicz, 63).

Buttressing the displacement due to the colour of his skin, Gurtman (2002) argues that –This anti-mulatto sentiment was something that Marley experienced for his entire youth. It certainly shaped him as a person as others were constantly viewing him as inferior. Experiencing racism from both the black and white sides was also difficult because early on Marley had difficulties identifying with either racial group.

The identity he was looking for came through his talent and a commitment to the cause of awakening the minds of people. It didn’t come easily like his inspiration, but it came through hard work and the adoption of many father figures. The lessons taught to Nesta Robert Marley by those who filled in for his absent father clearly contributed to creating the character and psyche of the reggae great. Because Marley’s father had abandoned him at a young age, young Marley was forced to look to other men as role models.

The profound psychological effects that each of these men had on Marley are evident in his work and character. The folk ideologies that were relayed through Marley's grandfather are alive in his beautiful lyrics. Moreover, the firm guidance of Coxson Dodd forced Marley's career on the right track, and the man provided Marley with sound advice with regard to issues in his love life, Rita. The mental effects of being forced to turn to other men as mentors certainly affected Marley. It must have been difficult for him to immediately confide in these men, and therefore, much time was spent developing trust. Additionally, it must have been hard as a youngster for Marley to see others with father figures while he had no one. The psychological implications of seeking male role models outside of his family altered Bob Marley's life (Gurtman, 2002).

As his music career blossomed so did his political awareness which culminated in the adoption of Rastafarianism which was inspired by his meeting with Haile Selassie I; a prominent figure that will go on to inspire one of his greatest songs –Warl. Gurtman (2002) notes that –The religion provided the musician a constant in his life that would never betray him, while it provided guidance during difficulties, and offered religious figures that genuinely cared. His superstar status as a reggae icon and belief in the supreme through Rastafarianism must have been responsible for his change of ideology which embraced humanity above the prejudices of race and nationality as he declared:

*My father was white and my mother black, you know. Them call me half-caste, or whatever. Well, me don't dip on nobody's side. Me don't dip on the black man's side nor the white man's side. Me dip on God's side, the one who create me and cause me to come from black and white, who give me this talent. (Bob Marley, 1978)*

This view is supported by another of his statements in one of the interviews he granted a year before his passing: –We know that



there is a God Jah Rastafari, Selassie I. I believe in Selassie I more than I believe in myself. And I believe in myself. I do everything for Selassie I. I sing for Selassie I. If I eat a grape [Marley paused and dramatically reached for and ate a grape] I do it because Selassie I wills it. Jesus Christ came to earth and said "In two-thousand years I will come again." Well, two-thousand years have come and Selassie I is on earth. Now is the time(O'Neill, 1980:23). This buttresses his spirituality and sense of self which has rejected the stereotypes around him and makes him assume the position of a spiritual elder. The combative Marley has gone and now he sees no difference in black and white because spirituality preaches unity.

### **Fela, Afrobeats and the Radical African postcolonial**

Fela Anikulapo-Kuti was born to Nigerian parents, Israel Oludotun Ransome-Kuti and Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. He enjoyed a normal upbringing under the roof of two Christian parents who molded him and desired that he becomes a doctor by sending him off to London in 1958 to register as a medical student but instead, upon arrival in London, Fela registered at Trinity College, to study classical music. Describing his influences at a young age, John Dougan writes:

*Kuti grew up in a firmly middle-class family who were politically active. His father was a pastor and talented pianist; his mother was active in the anti-colonial, anti-military Nigerian home rule movement. So, at an early age, Fela experienced politics and music in a seamless combination.*

His understanding of the world began in his home and being a child of the late 1930s; he witnessed the colonial government and grew up to know more about the struggle for independence through his activist mother who was –a notable political campaigner, particularly on women’s rights. She was involved in a great variety of organizations, including the National Council of

Nigeria and the Cameroons (where she was also President of the Women's Association of the organization's Western branch), and the Women's International Democratic Federation, springing from the French resistance movement in 1945 and backed by the former Soviet Union. Influential on both a national and international level, she was one of a number of West African female activists, including Adelaide Casely-Hayford for instance (Cheryl Johnson-Odim) (Farigan). His international studentship in London exposed him to his colonial roots and the boredom of studying European composers made him form his first band, Koola Lobitos, in 1961, and quickly became a fixture on the London club scene' (Dougan).

His formation of Afro-beat was partly as critique of African performers whom he felt had turned their backs on their African musical roots in order to emulate current American pop music trends (Dougan). He had styled his music on the rhythmic hybrid of the singing styles of James Brown and Geraldo Pina combined with the elements of traditional highlife and jazz. His tour of America where he resided in Los Angeles in 1969 would eventually fashion his theme and position Afro-beat as protest music when he met Sandra Isidore -who introduced him to the writings and politics of Malcolm X, Eldridge Cleaver (and by extension the Black Panthers), and other proponents of Black nationalism and Afrocentrism<sup>11</sup> (Dougan). This experience infused political activism and nationalism in his sense of self which reflected in his songs that he had to change the band's name from Koola Lobitos to Nigeria 70; though the band will later be known as Afrika 70. According to John Pareles of the New York Times,

He called the band Afrika 70; in 1981, he changed the name to Egypt 80 as a statement of pan-African unity. "I'm playing deep African music," he said. "I've studied my culture deeply and I'm very aware of my tradition. The rhythm, the sounds, the tonality, the chord sequences, the individual effect of each instrument and

each section of the band - I'm talking about whole continent in my music." 'More Spiritually Aware'. (1986)

His colonial upbringing is reflected in his statement that "Being African didn't mean anything to me until later in my life. When I was young, we weren't even allowed to speak our own languages in school. They called it 'vernacular', as if only English was the real tongue. (Spencer, 2010)" This can be traced to his father's preferences which can be deduced from his portrayal as a man with a colonial mindset by David M. Herszenhorn: -His father, the Rev. Ransome-Kuti, was an Anglican priest, one of the country's best-known clergymen and educators. He raised his children to respect England, the colonial ruler, and saw to their education'. This repressed feeling must have been the basis of his rejection of -his given middle name "Ransome," which he claimed was a slave name, and took the name "Anikulapo" (meaning "he who carries death in his pouch" (Dougan). It can also be summed as a total rejection to oppressive authority and a family heritage which he deemed subservient to colonial mentality. In a larger scope, it might be argued that he took the struggle he was trying to shrug off with his father to a larger authority in the Nigerian government following an event that forever marked him as an enemy of the state because he spoke against the government.

On the steamy afternoon of Feb. 18, a swarm of 1,000 soldiers gathered around Fela's Kalakuta Republic, a two-story yellow building in the sprawling Lagos slum of Surulere. In the ensuing siege, the house was burned to the ground and most of its 60 occupants were hospitalized. Fela was beaten unconscious and held under armed guard in a hospital room. His 77-year-old mother was thrown from her bedroom window and died of her injuries the following year ( Herszenhorn 1997).

Growing up as a child in a colonial home under the influence of a father who modeled his family to respect England was some form

of internalized racism for the young Fela who saw it as a degradation of his African and Yoruba heritage. He addressed some of these issues in his song; –Colomentality||, he even attacked his family name with the line –Mr. Ransome dey for therell. Having found his identity through music and cultural exploration, he turned to liberating Nigerians by bringing the government to accountability through scathing criticisms in his songs. These criticisms didn't come without consequences like the 1997 raid that led to the death of his mother and his exile to Ghana. Nigeria's ruling classes both military and democratic government gave him voice and he suffered extremely in the hands of the military, going to prison on several occasions. His adoption of Pidgin English in his songs according to Fargon, was

...aimed to reach the widest possible Nigerian audience by singing in English and in Pidgin, in a country with over 500 living languages'. After his many calls on the inefficiencies of the Nigerian government and the ceaseless battles, he took the battle higher targeting the international community in a song that unarguably became one of his greatest hits, –Beast of No Nation'. Corroborating the view that he had a bigger fish to fry than the Nigerian government in the words of Barret Lindsay:

*Before the breakdown of apartheid in South Africa at the beginning  
of the 1990s he began to turn his attention to the subject of world  
racism,  
and the Just economic exploitation and international hypocrisy that  
sustained it.  
(1998)*

The above establishes the context of world racism as inflicted on Africans by imperialists after having given the country's independence only to operate neo-colonialism through global institutions like World Bank, IMF, United Nations, thereby having indirect control over governance in Africa which prompted the political outcry in Fela's songs.

## **„Beast of No Nation“ and „War“ - Contextualizing post-colonial African agitations**

In one of his interviews, Fela stated that "Music is supposed to have an effect. If you're playing music and people don't feel something, you're not doing shit. That's what African music is about. When you hear something, you must move. I want to move people to dance, but also to think. Bordowitz, Hank (2004) This sets the tone of social awakening in Afrobeats which is peculiar to Reggae because Marley says –Reggae music is a people music. Reggae music is news. Is news about your own self, your own history, things that they wouldn't teach you in a school..." (Time Will Tell 1992). The similitude in the train of thoughts of these two great musicians situate their commitment to politically awaken the minds of their people through songs that talk about their history and future not denying them lyrics and sounds that will sway their bodies but also move their souls and mind to think of their lives.

The two songs have an historical background in landmark speeches of two prominent political figures, President P.W Botha who was the President of South Africa from 1984- 1989, and the Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie 1 (born Tafari Makonnen) from 1930 to 1974. While that of Haile Selassie was an agitation for freedom, that of Botha was a call for oppression; it was an outright show of racism and denigration of Africa as depicted by the apartheid regime of that period.

Fela picked the infamous line –This uprising will bring out the beast in us from Botha's statement which was a tough response that the apartheid government will take a strong stance against the many protests by the black population over white oppression. In the song, Fela portrays the hypocrisy of world leaders and the foolery of Africa to continue looking up to Western Powers or so-called First-World for economic and political support that will bring about economic prosperity and good governance. While Bob Marley on his part, found inspiration to preach a world of

lasting peace in Haile Selassie's speech which he put a part of it to music slightly modifying it to achieve his aim of an outcry against world racism and liberation of Africa in the manipulative hands of the international community.

Having established the connection between the songs in relation to their political backgrounds and focus on world racism as well as the repressive psychological battles fought by the musicians to break cultural and political barriers to establish their names, this paper will now analyse the content of the songs in relation to their psychoanalytic backgrounds.

### **Political Outcry and World Racism in „War“ and “Beast of No Nation”**

It can be argued that Bob Marley found a connection with the speech of Haile Selassie because it resonates with his personal struggle for identity. It addresses his biracial parenthood which made him the object of ridicule in his native Jamaica where he was categorized as mullatto. The lyrics of the song crosses the divide of race in all ramifications by preaching equality and advocating for peace.

*Until, the philosophy*

*Which holds one race superior and another Inferior*

*Is finally*

*And permanently*

*Discredited*

*And abandoned*

*Everywhere is war (War)*

*Me say war (War)*

The song also reflects Marley's sense of responsibility to a better world as a global figure which Stephens (1985:198) argues that –It is also possible that he had a growing sense of international responsibility: in June 1978 the African delegations to the United Nations gave Marley the –Peace Medal to honor his efforts for

–equal rights and justice‖ for Africans. The second stanza of the song addresses the racism and international politics which he has been a victim of all his life. He touches on class struggles and how it makes people feel inferior because they are regarded as first-class and second-class citizens‖. He posits that it is in our eyes that prejudices begin before they are internalized by maintaining that if we could accept that our eyes are same and chose to see things that way; we will place less emphasis on the colour of the skin. He ended it by going back to equality which is the bedrock of accepting the whole human race as one regardless of colour, creed and region.

*Until the color of a man's skin (War)*

*Is of no more significance (War)*

*Than the color of his eyes (War)*

*Me say war (War)*

*That until the basic human rights (War)*

*Are equally guarantee to all (War)*

*Without regard to race (War)*

*And this a war (War)*

Gurtman (2002) argues that –The sentiment of abandonment and the lack of a father figure forced Bob Marley to look to other means, like the ideals of Rastafarianism, for direction, comfort, and a sense of belonging. The strong allegiance to black culture that resulted from the absence of his white father also partially credence to Marley’s unwaveringly sense of Pan-Africanism‖; the above can be said to be true with his resolve in the song:

*And until that day (War)*

*The African Continent (War)*

*Will not know peace (War)*

*We Africans will fight (War)*

*We find it necessary (War)*

*And we know we shall win (War)*

*As we are confident (War)*

*In the victory (War)  
Of good over evil (War)*

The song bears the weight of political outcry with fingers on displacement and repression as it opines that if the issues are not sincerely addressed –The dream of lasting peace (War)/ World citizenship (War)/ Rule of international (War)/ Morality (War)/ Will remain in but a fleeting illusion (War)/ To be pursued (War)/ But never attained (War)¶. It further narrows the argument with emphasis on Africa and without getting confrontational about who the agitators are, maybe because of the origins of the speech, it lampoons colonialism and neo-colonialism with the mention of –And until the ignoble (War)/ And unhappy regime (War)/ That hold our brothers in Angola (War)/ In Mozambique (War)/ South Africa (War)/ About human bondage (War)/ Have been toppled (War)/ Utterly destroyed (War)/ Well everywhere is war/ Me say war¶. This points to the unrest and agitation for independence in the African countries as well as the constant clash of blacks against white oppressors in apartheid South Africa. The song bears a universal message, delivered in a subtle tone and its oxymoronic because it comes with the idea of a preacher suing for peace though warns about war.

It has been argued in this paper that Fela was moving towards the decolonizing of the African mind and he started out with himself by rebelling against his father who he was convinced shouldn't model him to suit a white man's life. Billed to study medicine in Trinity College but opted to study music, which was his foremost rebellion against the family institution. In his case, he considered the white man's ways inferior to his own indigenous ways and being a cultural ambassador, he had to reject any form of imported ideas not only artistically, religiously, culturally but economically because he believes they are racist and wouldn't want us (Africans) to be better than them. He took the fight beyond his homes having rejected the slave name –Ransomell to fight against the Nigerian government which he thinks was



subjecting itself to the whims and caprices of the West. He saw the father figure in the Nigerian government and it re-ignited his unresolved conflicts of the colonial lifestyle in his home which is now being perpetrated on a national scale. Fela felt the denigration of the African in the speech of Botha which represented white dominance over blacks on African soil. He couldn't help but point out the hypocrisy of so-called Western powers by stating:

*These disguising leaders ee-oh, nawah for dem  
Dem hold meeting everywhere, dem reach America  
These disguising leaders ee-oh, nawah for dem  
Dem hold meeting everywhere, dem reach America  
Dem call the place United Nations  
Hear oh another animal talk  
Wetin united inside United Nations?  
Who & who unite for United Nations?  
No be there Thatcher & Argentina dey  
No be there Reagan & Libya dey  
Israel versus Lebanon  
Iran-i-oh versus Iraq-i  
East West Block versus West Block East  
No be there dem dey oh United Nations  
Dis "united" United Nations  
One veto vote is equal to 92...or more, or more  
What kind sense be dat, na animal sense  
What kind sense be dat, na animal sense*

The choice of the words –animal talk is scathing remark on the ideas of human rights which the global powers were advocating for all and sundry. But Fela wouldn't entertain such hypocrisy among a group of pretentious usurpers who he described as –disguising leaders'. He describes them thus because of the undercurrents of power play and makes a mockery of –United Nations' because the nations are at war yet claim to be united. For instance, the mention of Reagan and Libya refers to the April 15,

1986 bombings of Libya by the USA known as Operation El Dorado Canyon, a series of air attacks on selected targets in Libya in retaliation for her perceived terrorist activities (Britannica). His mention of Thatcher and Argentina refers to Falkland wars which happened during the reign of former female UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher when –On 2 April 1982, Argentinian forces invaded the British overseas territory of the Falkland Islands. British forces landed on the islands on 21 May. After a series of engagements against a well dug-in but ill-trained conscripted Argentinian Army, they began the battle for Stanley, the Islands’ capital on 11 June. The Argentinian forces surrendered on 14 June (Imperial War Museums). His inclusion of Israel and Lebanon points to The Israeli–Lebanese conflict, also known as the South Lebanon conflict, which led to a series of military clashes in the 1970s involving Israel, Lebanon and Syria, the PLO, and some militias within Lebanon. Iran versus Iraq refers to the latter’s invasion of the former on 22 September 1980 –triggering a bitter eight-year war which destabilized the region and devastated both countries.¶ (BBC). The narratives continue with historical perspectives on how the United Nations is a divided house of preferential treatments just as how the Western Bloc were more inclined to refer to themselves as the Free World or the First World, whereas the Eastern Bloc was often called the "Communist World" or "Second World". He emphasized on the disharmony in the organization which they claim to be united and refers to their voting system which he believes gives preference to some countries above others. He questions the rationale of their choices and called it animal sense because it is unbecoming of a human being to think like that.

He wonders how people, who are so selfish and disrespectful of their fellow human beings and are racist, wicked with the intent to continue taking advantage of others could consider themselves human beings when they are acting like animals in the jungle. It behooves his reasoning that they consider themselves human beings and have the audacity to hold meetings to plot a path for a

better world as he states: -Dem go hold meeting oh, / Dem go start yab human beings/ Animal talk don start again/ Dash dem human rights. He finds their position condescending that they could claim to be human beings when in fact they are animals:

*How animal go know say dem no born me as slave?*

*How animal go know say slave trade don pass?*

*And, they wan dash us human rights*

*Animal must talk to human beings*

*Give dem human rights*

*I beg-I oh, make you hear me well-u well*

*I beg-I oh, make you hear me very well*

*Human rights na my property*

*So therefore, you can't dash me my property*

*Human rights na my property*

*Dey wan dash us human rights*

He continues the political outcry with how he was punished for speaking up against brutality in his home country Nigeria which sets him to launch an international attack on the plight of black South Africans under the apartheid regime of Botha who in his speech made the infamous statement that -this uprising will bring about the beast in us referring to the white oppressors clamping mercilessly on the black South Africans.

*Some people say why I dey talk like dis*

*No be talk like dis dem take to carry me go prison ee-oh"*

*No be me dey talk, na Prime Minister Botha dey talk ee-oh*

*No be me dey talk, na Prime Minister Botha dey talk ee-oh*

*Him say, this uprising will bring out the beast in us*

*This uprising will bring out the beast in us*

*Him say, this uprising will bring out the beast in us*

*This uprising will bring out the beast in us*

*Him say, this uprising will bring out the beast in us*

*This uprising will bring out the beast in us*

This is a rejection of world racism has perpetrated by global powers systemically through their relevance in the comity of nations. The point here is the silence of the first-world countries on a statement that could be likened to genocide which they have deliberately kept quiet over. This prompts his position questioning their moral justification to claim to advise people on human rights when they are behaving like animals. He concludes that they are an association of vile people with the same interests pretending to be noble leaders. Botha, Raegan and Thatcher by their involvements in the wars and treatment of other people have acted along racial and terrorist lines which he portrays thus:

*Kejikeke; my argument*

*Botha na friend to Thatcher & Reagan*

*Botha na friend to some other leaders too*

*And together dem wan dash us human rights*

*Animal wan dash us human rights*

*Animal can't dash me human rights*

*Animal can't dash us human rights*

*Beasts of no nation- EgbeKe Gbe na bad society*

*Beasts of no nation, EgbeKe Gbe*

*Beasts of no nation, eturugbeke*

*Beasts of no nation, EgbeKe Gbe*

*Beasts of no nation, eturugbeke*

The voice of the social crusader agitating for a better world for Africans is present in the two songs boiling with activism and demanding justice and fairness from imperialists who have over the years taken Africans for granted. The songs address racism, neo-colonialism, bad governance and other societal ills with accusing fingers pointed at the history of avarice and dominance perpetuated by the white man. The position of the musician stalking as Africans and relating the African experience canvasses a united front of conscious lyricism and afrocentric activism that demands the liberation of Africans.

## **Conclusion**

Following the preceding discussions on the development of the musicians and the thematic preoccupation of their songs, this paper has been able to establish how their backgrounds shaped their artistic worldviews using music as a vehicle of protest, activism, awareness and social consciousness. The rebellion against the father-figure is evident in both lives of the musicians which can be posited as physically absent in the case of Bob Marley and culturally absent in the case of Fela. While Bob Marley looks towards father-figures in search of an absent father to mould his life, Fela looked towards his culture and traditional African beliefs which were not embraced by his father because he was a Christian. It might be said that the quest to unravel themselves led to radical thoughts which made them reject the suppressed emotions of their childhood. The fact that the colonial environment they both found themselves lacked the absolute expression of their cultural experience, hence the adoption of pidgin English in Fela's lyrics and the traditional patois of Jamaica by Bob Marley is a pointer to their displacement.

Probing further, it could be argued that since a father is a person of authority in the home, symbolically for these musicians, any person or organization that occupies a position of authority and threatens the freedom of others instantly conjures the image of repressed emotions in their childhood which they had to fight off. Their bohemian lifestyle which many have come to adore can be perceived to be influenced by their environment which bore the weight of oppression and alienation that prompted a resistance which turned out as a political outcry against all forms of oppression.

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