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## Analytical study of *Water no get enemy* by Fela Anikulapo Kuti

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### Abstract

*Fela Anikulapo Kuti, popularly known as Fela, is a colossal figure and a pioneer in Nigerian popular music, with an indelible mark on the global music soundscape. Many scholars and music enthusiasts have studied Fela's music, covering his pioneering efforts in creating Afrobeat, artistry as a performer, socio-political activism and lifestyle. Only a handful of studies have covered musical analysis of structural elements in his works. The study employs a qualitative methodology, involving the use of bibliographic materials, as well as the collection and transcription of the selected track into staff notation, which facilitates the documentation of its structural format. Findings reveal the exclusivity of the song text to Pidgin English except for a code mix with Yoruba language, use of melodic minor scale, lengthy instrumental solos, constant featuring of the saxophone as a solo instrument in the foreground, as well as the limited chords used in the musical progressions. Also, the backup singers are an integral part of his performances as they feature in complementing his stage craft and melodic structures in call and response format.*

*Keywords: Fela, Afrobeat, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Afrobeats, Melodic minor scale, Pidgin English, socio-political activism, Pan-Africanism.*

### Background of the Study

Fela Anikulapo Kuti, often referred to as Fela Kuti or simply Fela, stands as a towering figure in the realm of Nigerian popular music, while also leaving an indelible mark on the global music landscape. As a multifaceted artist, social activist, and musical innovator, Fela's life and music are imbued with an unmatched depth of cultural and socio-political significance. Emerging at the crossroads of traditional Nigerian rhythms, highlife, jazz, and funk. Fela's musical compositions breathed new life into the spectrum of Nigerian popular music (Grass, 1986). With his band, Africa 70, and later Egypt 80, Fela carved out a distinct musical genre known as Afrobeat. Moore (2009),

established that the genre is characterized by its infectious grooves, socially conscious lyrics, and expansive musical arrangements. His music not only captivated audiences across the African continent but also transcended international boundaries, earning him a devoted global following. Fela's pioneering efforts transformed the sonic landscape of Nigerian popular music, influencing countless artists and genres, while ensuring his enduring status as a musical luminary.

The author revealed that Fela Kuti's prowess as an African musician radiates throughout his expansive discography, reflecting a profound understanding of indigenous rhythms, melodies, and storytelling traditions. His compositions are a testament to his mastery of Nigerian musical idioms, incorporating Yoruba, Igbo, pidgin English and other African and Africanised musical and extra-musical elements in a cohesive and transcendent sonic tapestry. Through his music, Fela voiced the lifestyle, culture, aspirations, beliefs, struggles, and triumphs of the African people, while also exalting the beauty and complexity of African musical heritage. Beyond his musical prowess, Fela Kuti stood as an unyielding activist, fearlessly challenging the tyrannical power structures that pervaded the Nigerian society (Stewart, 2013). His songs served as potent vehicles for social commentaries, addressing issues such as government corruption, human rights abuses, and socio-political inequalities. The author asserted that Fela fearlessly used his music to amplify the voices of the disenfranchised, often at great personal risk. His role as a fierce advocate for social justice and political accountability positioned him as a symbol of resistance and a beacon of hope for countless individuals across the African continent and beyond.

A musical analysis of Fela Kuti's works is paramount to unravelling the multifaceted layers of his musical genius and cultural impact. By delving into the structural, harmonic, rhythmic, and lyrical elements of his compositions, one can discern the intricacies of Afrobeat as a musical genre, unravel the nuanced intersections between traditional African music and global influences, and understand the thematic depth and symbolism embedded within Fela's lyrics. Furthermore, a musical analysis provides insight into the innovative instrumentation, improvisational techniques, and compositional strategies that distinguish or symbolize Fela's music, while also offering a profound appreciation of his unique vision and artistry.

An in-depth exploration of his music is crucial to recognizing the enduring legacy and relevance of his artistic and activist legacy. Although Fela's music has been broadly studied and commented on by diverse scholars and music enthusiasts across the globe. Commentaries and documentaries have covered the aspects of his pioneering efforts in the creation of Afrobeat,

his innovative artistry as a performer/band-leader, unapologetic socio-political activism and seemingly wild lifestyle. But not so much has been done to conduct an in-depth musical analysis that lays bare the various musical elements in his works with the aid of musical transcriptions in the form of staff notation.

Also, as Loko and Loko (2017) pointed out and in corroboration with Omibiyi (1981), Adegbite (2001) among other scholars, in their advocacy for musicological studies to encapsulate the analytical study of Nigerian popular music, and that the pedagogic efforts on African music should focus more on the structure rather than mere description of the performance and text. This study is a scholarly attempt at the transcription and analysis of the musical elements such as rhythm, scale, form, melodic structure and harmony among other musical elements that are inherent in Fela's musical works, which at present is scarce.

The study aims to provide a comprehensive study of musical and extra-musical features in Fela's works. It is purposed to serve as a cogent bibliographic material for students and researchers on Afrobeat, Fela's pioneering efforts and his immense contributions to the growth and development of Nigerian popular music. Primarily, the study is based on *Water no get Enemy* by Fela Anikulapo Kuti.

Significantly, the study will serve as a valuable addition to the body of studies on popular music, specifically on Afrobeat, being a strand of Nigerian popular music. Also, it will contribute to African musicology as it documents a transcription of Fela's musical works by presenting an analytical study of Fela's compositional style and techniques. Musical analysis and textual translation of *Water no get Enemy* was done with little or no reference to his performance style and practice. The analysis and findings has little or nothing to do with audience interaction, costume and stage presence/management.

Although, Fela is not available to provide information on the factors and events that informed his composition of *Water no get Enemy*, as well as the choice of language, instrumentation and singing style. Following the large collection of songs in his career opus, it is not entirely sufficient to authoritatively define or draw finite conclusions on Fela's compositional style.

## Methodology

The study adopted the qualitative methodology. It also utilised bibliographic and discographic methods in collecting data on the subject matter. Relevant published and unpublished bibliographic materials from physical and online sources were consulted in order to be abreast of existing information and knowledge about definitions, observations, thoughts,

concepts and conceptualisations on Afrobeat, Fela's life, career, musical works and his influence on Nigerian popular music. These bibliographic materials also provided a basis to identify the gap in the study. The selected track was listened to over a period of four months and transcribed it into staff notation using the Musecore notational software. This aided in documenting its structural format.

Employing musical staff notation and a tabulated structural format, *Water no get Enemy* is presented and analysed after thorough listening. The analysis of both musical and extra-musical features in the selected works cut across aspects of form, melody, harmony, rhythm, scale structure, pitch range and text. The analysis of *Water no get Enemy*, and the presentation of its findings constituted the post-field aspect of the study and finally culminating into the conclusion, where a definition is given to Fela's compositional style as inferred from the findings presented. *Water no get Enemy* was downloaded from an online source (tubidy.com), played repeatedly until various aspects of its musical and textual components were clear enough for documentation, transcription and analysis.

The analysis involved interpretation, identification of patterns and themes in textual data. These provided an understanding of the themes and patterns which helped the study in answering most of the research questions. The information gathered were then examined to deduce elements and stylistic features that are fundamental to the research topic, and that satisfy the aim and objectives of the study.

## **Fela Anikulapo Kuti, His Life and Career**

Moore (2009) described Fela Anikulapo-Kuti as a fearless maverick, arming himself with a saxophone. For him, music was a righteous and potent weapon. The author pointed out that Fela was born Olufela Olusegun Oludotun Ransome-Kuti in 15 October 1938 and died August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1997. He was a Nigerian musician, bandleader, composer, political activist, and Pan-Africanist. He is acclaimed the King and creator of Afrobeat, a Nigerian popular music genre which he pioneered by fusing West African music with American funk and jazz (Oikilome, 2009).

Fela was also famously known as *Abàmi Èdà* (literarily meaning the strange being), following his charismatic personality, activism especially against the Nigerian Military government and his stance as a musical and socio-political voice of international repute. Grass (1986) asserted that at the peak of his prominence, he was referred to as one of Africa's most challenging and charismatic music performers.

Fela was born into the elite and aristocratic Ransome-Kuti family in

Abeokuta which is the modern-day capital of Ogun State, South-western Nigeria. Olukayode-Segun & Ojarokutu, (2019) explained that Fela's parents, Reverend Israel Oludotun Ransome-Kuti and Chief (Mrs) Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti were actively involved in the anti-colonial movement in Nigeria, most notably the Abeokuta Women's Riots which was led by his mother in 1946. Barrett (2011) reported that Fela attended Abeokuta Grammar School and was sent to London in 1958 to study medicine but instead, he decided to study music at the Trinity College of Music, with the trumpet being his preferred instrument.

While there, he formed the band *Koola Lobitos* and played a fusion of jazz and highlife. In 1960, Fela married his first wife, Remilekun (Remi) Taylor, with whom he had three children (Femi, Yeni, and Sola). Moore (2009), reported that in 1963, Kuti moved back to the newly independent Federation of Nigeria, re-formed *Koola Lobitos*, trained as a radio producer for the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation and had a stint with Victor Olaiya and his All-Stars Band. He called his style Afrobeat, a combination of Fuji music, funk, jazz, highlife, salsa, calypso, and traditional Yoruba music (Oikilome, 2009), and seven years later, he renamed the band *Nigeria 70*.

## Career Highlights

Olaniyan (2004), revealed that the band performed a quick recording session in Los Angeles before returning to Nigeria, and that would later be released as *The '69 Los Angeles Sessions*. Following the return of Fela Kuti and his band to Nigeria, the group was renamed *Africa '70* as lyrical themes changed from love to social issues (Olatunji, 2007). He formed the *Kalakuta Republic* which was then a commune, recording studio, hangout and home for many people connected to the band in various ways. He later declared *Kalakuta Republic* independent from the Nigerian state. Fela Kuti set up a nightclub, initially naming it as the *Afro-Spot* and later the *Afrika Shrine*, where he performed regularly. Moore (2009) noted that Fela also changed his name to *Anikulapo* (literarily meaning He who carries death in his pouch) as a means of an expression of indestructibility and resilience.

Moore (2009) explained that Fela's music was popular among the Nigerian public and Africans in general. He usually sang in Pidgin English, a reason believed to be so that individuals all over Africa could enjoy his music, where the local languages they speak are diverse and numerous. Following Fela Kuti's frequent criticisms of the Nigerian Military government, the ruling government executed several raids on his *Kalakuta Republic*. The author pointed out that in 1977, Fela and *Africa 70* released the album *Zombie*, which heavily criticized Nigerian soldiers, and used the zombie metaphor

to describe the Nigerian military culture. The album was a massive success and infuriated the government, who raided the *Kalakuta* Republic with 1,000 soldiers. During the raid, Fela Kuti was severely beaten, and his aged mother was fatally injured after being thrown from a window. It is worthy of mention that Fela's mother was recorded to be the first woman to drive a car in Nigeria. The commune was burnt down, and Fela's studio, instruments, and master tapes were all destroyed. McKinnon (2005) explicated that in response to the attack, Fela delivered his mother's coffin to the Dodan Army Barracks in Lagos, which was the residence of General Olusegun Obasanjo at the time. The author explained that he also wrote two songs, *Coffin for Head of State* and *Unknown Soldier*. These served as a response to the Nigerian Military government following its official release that claimed unknown soldiers had destroyed the Fela's commune.

In 1977, Fela Kuti and his band had two concerts with unfortunate outcomes. According to Moore (2009), the first was in Accra, in which a riot broke out during the song *Zombie*, which caused him a ban from entering and performing in Ghana. The author explained that Ghanaian students, in their struggle against their own military government were singing it to mock the military as the words describe soldiers as zombies. The second concert was the Berlin Jazz Festival, where most of his musicians deserted him after the concert owing to rumours that he planned to use all of the proceeds to fund his presidential campaign. Moore (2009) explained that in 1978, Fela performed at the Berliner Jazztage in Berlin with his band Africa 70, disappointed by their fees, Tony Allen, the band leader and almost all the musicians resigned. Since then, according to the author, Lekan Animashaun, the Baritone sax player became the band leader and Fela created a new group which he named *Egypt 80*.

Moore (2009) revealed that in 1980, Fela signed an exclusive management contract with French producer Martin Meissonnier who secured a record deal with Arista records in London through A&R Tarquin Gotch. The first album was released in February 1981 under the title of *Black President* with the track *ITT* (acronym for International Thief Thief) and *Colonial Mentality* and an edited version of *Sorrow Tears and Blood* on the B-Side of the album. Following this release, Fela performed his first European tour (4 concerts in a week) with a group of 70 people in his crew. The tour starting in Paris on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1981 with a huge crowd estimated at 10,000 people, then Brussels, Wien and Strasbourg. This was followed by another album *Original Sufferhead*, which was recorded in Paris in July 1981.

According to Moore (2009) Fela continued to release albums with the *Egypt 80* band and toured in the United States and Europe. In 1986, he

performed in Giants Stadium in New Jersey as part of Amnesty International's Conspiracy of Hope concert along with Bono, Carlos Santana, and the Neville Brothers. In 1989, Fela and the *Egypt 80* released the anti-apartheid album, *Beasts of No Nation* that displayed U.S. President Ronald Reagan, UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and South African State President Pieter Willem Botha on its cover. The author revealed that the title of the composition evolved out of a statement by Botha: *This uprising, against the apartheid system will bring out the beast in us*. Fela's album output slowed in the 1990s, and eventually, he ceased releasing albums altogether.

## Fela's Music and Performance Style

Fela's musical style is called Afrobeat, a style he originated and described to be a complex fusion of jazz, funk, highlife, and traditional Nigerian, African chants and rhythms (Olaniyan, 2004). According to the author, Afrobeat borrows elements from the native *tinker pan* and contains elements of intoxicating soul and has similarities to James Brown's music. Olaniyan (2004), reported that Tony Allen, Fela's drummer of twenty years, was instrumental in the creation of Afrobeat. The author quoted Fela saying that there would be no Afrobeat without Tony Allen. Tony Allen's drumming style notably makes sparing use of the 2 & 4 (upbeats in a simple quadruple time signature) strokes behind-the-beat playing style, opting for an outline of the time in shuffling hard-bop fashion, while maintaining a strong downbeat. The author pointed out that there are clear audible musical similarities between Fela's compositions and the work of electric-era Miles Davis, Sly Stone and Afro-funk pioneer Orlando Julius.

Olorunyomi (2005), revealed that Fela's band was notable for featuring two baritone saxophones when most music groups only used one. This is a common technique in African and African-influenced musical styles and can be seen in funk and hip hop. His bands always performs with two or more guitarists and sometimes performed with two bassists at the same time both playing interlocking melo-rhythmic patterns. The West African electric guitar style in Afrobeat bands is a key part of the sound, and is used to give basic structure, playing a repeating chordal/melodic riff.

Olorunyomi (2005), explained that some elements often present in Fela's music are the call-and-response between the lead vocalist and the chorus, usually in figurative but simple lyrics. His songs were generally very long, about 10–15 minutes in length, while some others reached 20 or 30 minutes. Some unreleased tracks would last up to 45 minutes when performed live. Their length was one of many reasons that his music never reached a

substantial degree of popularity outside Africa. His LP records frequently had one 30-minute track per side. There is usually an instrumental introduction or jam section of the song which ordinarily lasts for about 10–15 minutes long before Fela starts singing the main part of the song. On some recordings, his songs are divided into two parts with the first part being the instrumental, and the second with added vocals.

Fela's songs are mostly sung in Nigerian Pidgin English, although he also performed a few songs in the Yoruba language. His main instruments were the saxophone and the keyboards, but he also played the trumpet, electric guitar, and the occasional drum solo.

The subject or theme of Fela's songs tended to be very complex. They regularly challenged common received notions in the manner of political commentary through music. Many of his songs are also expressed in the form of parody and satire. The main theme he conveyed through his music was the search for justice through exploration of political and social themes that affected the common people (Olorunyomi, 2005).

According to Moore (2009), Fela was known for his showmanship, with his concerts being usually outlandish and wild. He referred to his stage act as the *Underground Spiritual Game*. Many expected him to perform shows like those in the Western world, but during the 1980s, he was not interested in putting on a show because he believed that art and by extension his own music, should have political meaning. His European performances were a representation of what was relevant at the time and his other inspirations. Moore (2009) revealed that he attempted to make a movie but lost all the materials to the fire that was set to his house by the military government in power. Fela's concerts also regularly involved female singers and dancers, later dubbed as *Queens*. Ayobade, (2019) explained that these *Queens* were women who helped to influence the popularization of his music. They were dressed colourfully and wore makeup all over their bodies that philosophically expressed their visual creativity. The author observed that the singers of the group played a vocal backup role for Fela, usually echoing his words or humming along, while the dancers would put on a performance of an erotic manner. This began to spark controversy due to the nature of their involvement with Fela's political tone, along with the reality that a lot of the women were young.

## Death and Legacy

Moore (2009), reported that on the 3rd of August, 1997, Fela's brother, Dr. Olikoye Ransome-Kuti, who was already a prominent AIDS activist and former Minister of Health, announced that Fela had died on the previous



day from complications related to AIDS. On the contrary, and following his spiritual beliefs in addition to his agitation for Pan-Africanism, Fela had been an AIDS denialist before his death (Moore, 2009). The author concluded that Fela is remembered as an influential icon who voiced his opinions on matters that affected the nation through his music. Since 1998, the Felabration festival, an idea pioneered by his daughter Yeni Kuti, is held each year at the New Afrika Shrine, Ikeja, Lagos, to celebrate the life and posthumous birthday of the music legend. Since Fela's death in 1997, there has been a revival of his influence in music and popular culture, culminating in another re-release of his catalog controlled by UMG, Broadway, off-Broadway shows, and new bands, such as Antibalas, who continue to carry the Afrobeat banner to a new generation of listeners.

According to Olorunyomi (2005), the collaborative jazz/afrobeat album *Rejoice* by Tony Allen and Hugh Masekela, released in 2020, includes the track *Never (Lagos Never Gonna Be the Same)*, a tribute to Fela. Fela's song *Zombie* has appeared in the video game *Grand Theft Auto: IV*, and he was posthumously nominated to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2021. Fela's Afrobeat has had a profound and lasting impact on Nigerian popular music, especially in the fusion of traditional Yoruba music and Afrobeat elements, which can be heard in the work of contemporary Nigerian Afro-Hip-Hop artistes. These artistes have continued the tradition of infusing Afrobeat rhythms and socially conscious lyrics into their music, contributing to its enduring legacy.

### **Musical Analysis of *Water No Get Enemy***

This is a lengthy song track that took up the entire second side of Fela's 1975 album titled *Expensive Shit*, released after a failed attempt by the then Nigerian Federal government to charge him for possession of weed (Moore 2009).

Track Title:	Water no get enemy
Date Released:	January 1, 1975
Album:	Expensive Shit
Genre:	Afrobeat
Producer:	Recorded by Fela and the Africa '70
Key:	D minor (or A minor)
Time Signature:	Common time
Tempo:	Moderate/Mid-tempo
Length:	11 minutes

Musical Form

The overall shape of this work presents two sections which are characterised by the dominance of the musical instruments and vocals respectively. The former being the lengthy instrumental opening with the Piano and Saxophone taking turns to play improvisations in-between the signature tutti-styled and horns dominated melody, memorable as the main intro of the work, while the latter is the sung section. Implicitly, the Verse-Chorus form that is prevalent in popular music is seen in the sung section of the track, which involves the lead singer doing a solo or verse before switching to a second sub-section that featured the backup singers in a sort of call and response (Solo-responsorial) format.

The track starts with an instrumental introduction, and also ends with an instrumental outro in which the same musical ideas in the introduction were featured, but this time shortened. Below is a tabular analytical format of *Water no get enemy*. The table shows the section or timeline, Musical Theme(s), Musical style and Elements and Structural function of section.

Section (Timeline)	Text/Musical Themes	Musical Style/ Elements	Structural Function of Section	Overall Message
Opening Section  0:00 - 5:36	Instrumental Opening featuring an Electronic Piano, Bass, Brass section, percussions, and scarcely, the lead vocal.	The harmonic progression revolves around Chords I and IV in an Ostinato style. The main melody that counts as the main introduction is played in tutti by all the melodic instruments while Piano and Saxophone played improvisations in- between.	Sets the pace and harmonic framework for the track.	The only vocalism heard is scatted, and makes no literal sense.

Verse  5:37- 6:38	The lead vocalist singing a solo melody	Vocal solo against instrumental background. The melody is woven into the harmonic framework set at the intro. It gradually builds up from a lower range to a higher one in sequential movements.	States the main message in the track, and builds up to the chorused refrain.	Affirming the significance of water by mentioning its usage in daily human life from birth to death.
Chorused Refrain  6:38 - 7:54	Solo-responsorial.	The lead vocal makes a call while the backup singers respond in unison.  The instrumentation is steady all through.	Develops the theme and builds up to a repetition of the refrain.	There is no force capable of being an adversary to water. Water is the source of African power.
Outro  1:30 - 2:13	Same as the opening section, but shorter.	Same as the opening section, with a retarded final phrase and a sustained chord sounded by all instruments in crescendo.	Brings the recording to a close	Same as the opening.

**Table 1:** Structural format of *Water no get enemy*

**Instrumentation:** The musical instruments encountered in this work were recorded live and 5 of them are indefinitely pitched Percussions. There is a horns section that involve Trumpets, Trombones, Saxophones (Alto, tenor and Baritone), Electronic piano, Trap set and Bass guitar, all of which contribute significantly to the overall soundscape of the musical work. The instruments are highlighted in **Table 2** alongside their category, functions and roles within the ensemble.

Instrument	Category	Musical Function	Roles in the ensemble
Saxophones	Woodwind	Melodic	Soloist/ Melodic Accompaniment/ Horns Section
Electronic Piano	Keyboard	Harmonic, and melodic	Background chordal accompaniment, soloist
Trumpets	Brass	Melodic	Melodic Accompaniment/ Horns Section
Bass Guitar	Lower Strings	Melo-rhythmic	Pulse, Ostinato, Background Rhythm
Snare Drum	Percussion	Rhythmic	Rhythm fillings
Bass Kick			Pulse/downbeats
Hi-Hats			Time-liner
Toms			Rhythm filler
Woodblocks			Time liner

**Table 2:** Category, role and function of instruments in *Water no get enemy*

**Melodic Structure and Phrases:** The melodies are phrased within one bar, usually building up from either the tonic (I) or the dominant (m) in both the refrain and the verses. The melodies are resolved to the supertonic (r) or the tonic which follows the harmonic framework delineated by the piano chordal progression and supported by the melodic instruments. There are lots of repeated phrases in this track. The prevalent intervals in the melodies are major and minor seconds (M2 and m2), unison, minor thirds (m3) and perfect fourths (P4) in the descending order of frequency. The prevalence of unisons and seconds, and less of wide leaps produces a conjunct melodic motion that makes the song simple, tuneful and catchy.



**Figure 1:** Melody in the Verse of *Water no get enemy*

**Harmonic Progression and Texture:** The chord progression in *Water no get enemy* is *i* to *iv* (A<sup>#</sup>m to D<sup>#</sup>m) in the key of A<sup>#</sup> minor. The chords are

pronounced by the Electric Piano, with the root note being accentuated by the Electric Bass. There is no harmony in the voices as the parts are heard to be singing in unison with frequent magadizing.

The image shows a musical score for the introduction of the song 'Water no get enemy'. It features six staves: Lead Voice, Backup Voice I, Backup Voice II, Electric Piano, Alto Saxophone, and Brass Section. The Lead Voice and Backup Voices are in unison, singing a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes. The Electric Piano provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords. The Alto Saxophone and Brass Section play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

**Figure 2:** Array of voices and instruments in *Water no get enemy* showing the chord progression and rhythmic movements at the introduction

**Rhythm:** There is a predominant use of short notes while long notes were scarcely used. The longest note is the semibreve (whole note) which is usually found at the cadential points. The rest of the note values heard include dotted quaver, quaver (eight) and semiquaver (sixteenth) notes in descending order of value.

**Key, Scale and Pitch Range:** Based on both the singers' and instrumental melody, the song is composed with the natural minor scale of A<sup>#</sup> but 6 of the 8 degrees (A<sup>#</sup> B<sup>#</sup> C<sup>#</sup> D<sup>#</sup> E<sup>#</sup> G<sup>#</sup> or *l t d r m s l*) of the scale are heard in the melody.

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The staff contains a sequence of notes: A<sup>#</sup>, B<sup>#</sup>, C<sup>#</sup>, D<sup>#</sup>, E<sup>#</sup>, and G<sup>#</sup>. Below the staff, the notes are labeled with their degree numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

**Figure 3:** The Degree of tones used in *Water no get enemy*.

The lead voice melody is composed within a compound major sixth, which spans 21 semitones (from E<sup>#</sup>3 to A<sup>#</sup>4).

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The staff contains a sequence of notes: E<sup>#</sup>3, F<sup>#</sup>3, G<sup>#</sup>3, A<sup>#</sup>3, B<sup>#</sup>3, C<sup>#</sup>4, D<sup>#</sup>4, E<sup>#</sup>4, F<sup>#</sup>4, G<sup>#</sup>4, A<sup>#</sup>4. A line connects the E<sup>#</sup>3 note to the A<sup>#</sup>4 note, indicating an octave range.

**Figure 4:**Range of an octave (E<sup>#</sup>3 to A<sup>#</sup>4) in *Water no get enemy* melody

**Text:** The song text is written in a code mix of Yoruba and pidgin language. It is uncertain to absolutely determine which has prominence because both the Yoruba language and Pidgin English were used in the verse which seemed to be a means of emphasising and conveying the message in the verse whereas Pidgin English was used in the chorus. The manner of expression is unambiguous and direct except when water is described as *black man power*. The central message in the lyrics is to emphasize the importance of water in the life of humans, especially Africans. Onomatopoeic expressions in the form of scatting were used to accompany the instrumental introduction.

*Water No Get Enemy* literally depicts that nobody is in any form of enmity with water as it is used by everyone for a myriad of purposes. Undoubtedly, the theme is less contentious, but for its timely and thought-provoking lyrics which is based on a Yoruba (southwest Nigeria) proverb concerning the power of nature. Live in harmony with nature, Fela advises, and you will be live longer and wiser. In *Water No Get Enemy*, Fela also suggests that, if the Nigerian political opposition work with nature, their ultimate victory is assured (Moore, 2009). The story behind *Expensive Shit* album reveals evidence of Fela's determination to resist the abuse of power by the Nigerian government.

The lyrics of the song and its English language translation is presented in **Table 3**.

Song Text	English translation
T'ò ba fẹ̀ l'ò wẹ̀ omi l'ò ma'lo	If you want to bath, you will use water
If you want go wash, a water you go use	If you want to do laundry, you will use water
T'ò ba fẹ̀ sẹ̀bẹ̀ omi l'ò ma'lo	When you want to cook, you will use water
If you want cook soup, a water you go use	If you're making a soup, you will need water
T'ò ri ba n'gbona o omi l'ero re	When your head is hot, you will need water
If your head dey hot, a water go cool on	If your head is hot, it needs water to cool
T'omo ba n'dagba omi l'ò ma'lo	When your child is growing, you'll use water
If your child dey grow, a water he go use	When your child is growing, you'll use water
If water kill your child, a water you go use	If your child drowns, you'll still use water
T'omi ba p'omo e o omi na lo ma'lo	If your child drowns, you'll still use water
Ko s'ohun to'le se ko ma lo'mi o	There's nothing you can do without water
Omi o l'ota o	Water has no enemy
Water, you no get enemy!	Water has no enemy
	Fighting it will only lead to death
If you fight am, unless you wan die (water, you no get enemy)	
I dey talk of Black man power (water, you no get enemy)	I speak concerning the power of Africans

**Table 3:** Translation of *Water no get enemy* lyrics to English language.

## Conclusion

The study discussed Afrobeat as a Nigerian popular music and highlighted the various stages of its evolution especially in relationship to the notable trends that typifies the life and career of Fela Anikulapo Kuti as the inventor and most prolific exponent of Afrobeat. It cuts across historical, evolutionary development and the influence of the former on the latter in order to provide a background for studying Fela's musical works as the foremost Afrobeat exponent

The study proceeded to conduct musical analysis and an English translation of the text of *Water no get enemy* by Fela. The track was dissected to break down the aspects of form, melodic structure/phraseology, harmonic progression, texture, range, scale, rhythm and text.

Findings from the analysis conducted reveal that Fela's Afrobeat is characterised by lengthy instrumental solos, constant featuring of the saxophone as a solo instrument in the foreground, a mixture of Yoruba and Pidgin-English text, indispensability of the horns sections and the use of the

minor mode especially in the melodic form. The findings further reveal that he usually relies on the backup singers to complete his musical statements, hence the ample use of call and response.

Interestingly, despite his education and years of living in England, there is no trace of Queens English in Fela's music. This accentuates his Pan-Africanism belief, disapproval of the European way of life and his adherence to his African root. Through the choice of matrix language and the message conveyed by his lyrical content, Fela has been able to make a bold statement regarding his disapproval of how the world is being polarised into the masses versus the aristocrats, and how he chose to stay on the side of the masses. Beyond renouncing his English last name (Ransome) which he sees as a slave tag, Fela has used the instrumentality of his music to clamp down on any traces of pro-colonial activities of the government and African societies at large.

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