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A critique of sexism in selected Zimbabwean songs: a decolonial perspective

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2023
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/36072

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ABSTRACT

This study is a critique of sexism in Zimbabwean dancehall (Zimdancehall) songs. It aims to unpack how male artists represent women in their song lyrics in the local Shona language. To validate the decoloniality of the study, the researcher also looks at female artists' contribution to sexism in song lyrics. The study particularly examines how women become victims of oppression and insult through song lyrics. The research takes a decolonial posture that seeks to research while empowering and fighting alongside women. Social justice and activism accompany the theory and the method of this study and that is in rhythm and rhymes with decoloniality as a theory and critical diversity literacy, in which this study is located. The use of a qualitative research approach enables the study to answer why and how male artists portray women as sexist objects. The analysis of the music lyrics displays unequal power relations which exist between men and women. Issues of commodification, violence, objectification, exploitation of women are raised. The excerpts from the songs display how, indeed, sexism has become rampant in Zimbabwean songs. A considerable portion of these songs contain obscene amounts of sexist talk which disrespects womanhood. Sexist lyrics continue to gain affirmation from listeners. This exposure makes them perpetrators of sexism as music has a huge impact on people.

Key words: Zimdancehall, Sexism, Objectification, Commodification, Vulgarity, Hegemonic Masculinity, Misogyny, Crudeness, Genre.