

**A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PECULIAR CONCEPT
OF COMMUNAL-CARING-AND- INTERPERSONAL
RELATIONSHIPS IN LAGOS IN YORÙBÁ WRITTEN POETRY**

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Abstract

One of the privileges that Lagos, either as a metropolitan city or State, has that others in Nigeria do not have is socio-economic opportunity as the commercial hub of the Nigerian economy with its proximity to the Sea and the Ocean. However, the Yoruba communal values system, which encompasses greetings and an attitude of caring that are integral to interpersonal relationships and deeply entrenched in Yoruba cultural heritage, is fractured by many peculiar challenges. The focus of this is a critical examination of city life in Lagos, specifically the interpersonal relationships of Lagosians.¹ The paper addresses the perennial problem, such as the essence of having cordial interpersonal relationships, for individual and societal development. The poem of Olúgbóyèga Àlàbá, titled: “Ìlú Ọdájú,” (a town of the hard-hearted people), serves as our data. The twenty-two-line poem with four stanzas is subjected to a critical literary analysis, using the Culturalist theory. Findings show that the intra/iter-personal relationship that could still be found in the hinterland, “ilú-òkè”, is elusive to many residents in Lagos. But more importantly, virtually everyone is living or relating with others with mutual suspicion; perhaps with unpalatable personal experience or misinformation about Lagos as a violent place. Hence, the city is referred to as a town of wisdom, “ilú ọgbón,” where everybody is expected to be too conscious of his or her environment and the trending phenomenon to fend, protect, and “fight” for survival of the fittest or his or her “rights.”

Keywords: Lagos, Communal relationships, Interpersonal relationships, “Broken,” “Ìlú Ọdájú,” “Ìlú-Òkè”

1.0 Introduction

More than anything in life, human survival depends on inter-personal relations, which translate, directly or indirectly, into mutual understanding and giving, though sacrificial empathy and intentional assistance. No man is an island; consequent upon which, man, by nature, is a *social animal*. They are bound to interrelate with one another. Man, as a complex being, could be studied from different perspectives, Ogbinnaka (2002:24) posits, “There exist many interrelated and intertwined approaches to studying man. The intellectual conceptions of man can be brought under various headings. These include eschatological, genetic, sociological, philosophical-anthropological, and the scientific conceptions of man. This classification is not exhaustive.”

The social reality of the economic situation in Nigeria cum the Yorùbá ethics of caring, is posing more problematic situations to many citizens, especially in the cities, where the means of surviving is becoming extremely difficult. Thus, this perennial problem warrants embarking on studying these topical issues to give a helping hand to fellow human beings who are in dire need. Ironically, man is selfish by nature, and avarice is a natural inclination that virtually every man falls into way too often. Man is obligated to give, as no man has it all, according to a Yorùbá proverb, “*Lánihuntán kì í níwo ẹ̀şin.*” Because of the prospects and challenges for human survival and the seemingly available abundance of socio-economic and political opportunities, Lagos suddenly became the greener pasture for Nigerians and many African nations. The consequences of this *moral freedom* to reside in any part of Nigeria, as spelt out in the Constitution, are the current reality that Lagos is witnessing in terms of population explosion. In a way, the liberal culture of the Yorùbá people is very much in place, and it breeds diversity, ethnicity, among other anomalies that seem not to be under control through adequate security measures in place to curb any potentiality of breaking law and order. As a substantial number of *Lagosians* are struggling for survival, with the natural environment, they

are also struggling with a mutual trust issue. Consequently, many “broken walls” are demanding attention to be fixed in Lagos, as a cosmopolitan city. We opine that if the political promises will take effect, with consciousness to duty to protecting the lives and properties of an average Lagosian, then, the relationship mechanism that has been broken in Lagos needs to be rebuilt, restored and, repaired by all stakeholders; as the State and Local Government alone cannot do it all.

2.0 Objectives:

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- (i) Define Lagos, in the light of the modernity context, as it affects culture of caring and interpersonal relationships, as logically portrayed by Àlàbá (1993) in his poem.
- (ii) Identify the factors mentioned by the poet as responsible for the “broken walls” of Yorùbá tradition of caring and cordial interpersonal relationships in Lagos, as a metropolitan city.
- (iii) Evaluate the mentality of an average Lagosian on Yorùbá cultural values in caring for one another on interpersonal relationships.
- (iv) Recommend plausible solutions to the perennial problems raised by the poet of study.

4.0 Methodology

This paper adopts a quantitative approach by analyzing selected written poetry of Olúgbóyèga Àlàbá (1993) titled, “*Ilú Òdájú*,” that is related to interpersonal relationship issues in Lagos. Only one (1) of his several poetic collections was chosen as our data for literary analysis. Despite being a metropolitan city, Lagos life is divided into two important phases, ancient Yorùbá and comparatively with the modernity, for a better understanding of the Yorùbá concept of interpersonal relationship and ethics of caring. Relevant existing works of literature from the library and articles from reputable journals were consulted for our

literature review to identify the gaps to be filled and areas of contribution to knowledge. A few Yorùbá proverbs and parlance sayings were employed to underscore our findings. The secondary data was elicited from Online sources, as information cited from the Internet. “It is recognized that national literatures exist. For comparative literature to flourish, national literatures written in restrictive languages should be translated into other world languages to narrow the gap between cultures,” Abíoyè (1999:8). Therefore, the Àlàbá’s poem that serves as our data will be translated into English for wider readers.

3.0 Definition of Terms

- (i) **Ìlú Ọ̀dájú:** - The concept of “*Ìlú Ọ̀dájú*,” in the Yorùbá cultural milieu portrays a town, where people are so mean without having compassion, or human feelings for one another. This kind of lifestyle is very contrary to the Yorùbá cultural practices, norms, and values that place cordial interpersonal relationships with being humane as a priority. This type of life is attributed to the original settings of the Yorùbá people in ancient times. These cultural practices are gradually going into extinction and are becoming increasingly rare to be found in the communal system of the Yorùbá people in modern-day.
- (ii) **Ìlú Ọ̀gbón:-** The concept of wisdom, “*ọ̀gbón*,” is supposed to be used positively, and someone purportedly believed to be wise is expected to use his or her wisdom for self-improvement, self-empowerment, and the benefit of humanity without jeopardizing the well-being of others. Ọ̀rúnmilà, the Yorùbá divinity of wisdom, lived an exemplary life in this regard. Of all the Yorùbá towns, in the Western part of Nigeria, it is only Lagos that is attributed to as “*ìlú ọ̀gbón*.” However, there is another side of wisdom, known as “*ọ̀gbón àrẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀kẹ̀*.” (mischievous wisdom). This is the type of wisdom the poet

implies as being operational that turned some people to “òdájú.” Hence, he tagged Lagos as “ílú òdájú.”

- (iii) **Ìlú-Òkè:-** *Ìlú-Òkè* is a common disparaging phraseology that a typical Lagosian often uses to identify, describe, or call people who visit Lagos, for whatever purpose. The common saying, “*Ara ’ilú-òkè*” (Someone from the hinterland), is an example of a statement that underscores this attitude. To a typical Lagosian, “**ará-ílú-òkè**” is not as wise as the *Lagosians*. There is no moral justification, logic, or substantive evidence to validate this erroneous impression that only the *Lagosians* are the wisest. How and why is the monopoly of wisdom linked to Lagos, or her ecosystem, when a Yorùbá folktale proves otherwise with the futile endeavours of the tortoise to gather all earthly wisdom, but it displays an act of foolishness in the long run.

4.0 Literature Review

Though the Yorùbá written poetry has been examined on a thematic basis, nevertheless, there are still other areas that need to be interrogated. The existing scholarly works reviewed underscore and justify the topical issues of communal-caring-relationship, a Yorùbá cultural heritage, that is now a perfect example of cultural extinction in the metropolitan city of Lagos. Ọlábímtán (1974) and Fólórunṣọ (1998) worked on the genealogy and developmental stages of the Yorùbá written poetry. Ọlágbèmi (1980) examined the disc poetry of Ọlátúnbòsún Ọládàpò. Oyèbísí (1981) also examined the artistic poetry of Ifáyemí Ẹlèbuibon. Ọlátúnjí (1984) is a comprehensive work on the features of the Yorùbá oral poetry.

Adébàjò (1982), Akínyemí (1987), and Fákéyẹ (2003), at different focal points, explored the socio-political relevance of written, disc, and radio poetry in the Yorùbá society. Adébòwálé (1991), further interrogates the art of Ọlátúnbòsún Ọládàpò’s poetry. Oyèwálé (2003), who examined

Kúnlé ológundúdú's poetry, did justice to the political themes in his poems. The gap we set out to fill in this study is to revisit Kúnlé Ológundúdú as a Yorùbá activist, especially as it affects the socio-political and economic situation in both Yorùbá society and Nigeria as a nation. Gbádégesin (2011) examines the Yorùbá cultural traditions and how they conceive morality in ancient times, and their significance for having an abundant life for humanity. Ọlásopé & Adéyemí (2011) also interrogate how global and local economies have intensified the diverse roles that conflicts have played in human society as depicted in Moria Buffini's *Welcome to Thebes*, a drama text.

It would stand to reason that those living in the rural Yorùbá communities, otherwise known as hinterland "ílú-òkè," practice the Yorùbá cultural values on greetings and benevolent gestures than those living in the cities, especially the metropolitan city of Lagos. Àjùwọ̀n-Adéníran (2014) explores the significance of poetry and its relevance in conflict management in human society. She employed Ọláńrewájú Adépòjù disc poetry, and how it was used by the poet to settle a rift between Senator Rasheed Ládọ̀jà (Former Governor of Ọ̀yọ̀ State) and Lámídì Adédìbù, as well as Gbénga Adébóyè's poetic rendition that was employed to settle a land dispute between Mọ̀dákékéké and Ifẹ̀. Bouno and Gimba (2016), in their historical mapping of settlement and intergroup relations among the Huasa and the central Delta region during the pre-colonial era in Nigeria, observe that the people of both regions lived and traded with one another peacefully, which has now been disrupted as a result of many sociopolitical conflicts and diverse events in the last few years. Oyèwálé (2024) discusses a poet as a proactive agent of change about anomalies in society with pragmatic revolutionary ideas, which underscores the restive nature of a seasoned poet.

5.0 Theoretical Framework

Cultural theory in literature, also known as literary theory or critical

theory, analyzes how literature reflects and shapes cultural contexts, power structures, and social identities. It moves beyond simply reading texts for intrinsic meaning to consider their relation to broader societal forces and historical developments. Stuart Hall is credited as the most influential figure in the cultural studies field, which took off in the 1960s. Cultural construction refers to the theory that elements of social and cultural characteristics are mere constructs invented by society. Cultural theory aims to reveal the mechanisms and interrelationships between literature, culture, and society, often exploring how texts both reflect and influence cultural practices. Cultural theory is a method of studying cultural conflict that focuses on understanding conflicts of values in terms of competition between different organizational forms.

As a discipline, cultural studies emerged in the 1960s with the help of several scholars. Stuart Hall, Richard Hoggart, E.P. Thompson, and Raymond Williams are all considered the field's main founders. The founders were all known to challenge the dominant humanities theories in post-war Britain; they argued that culture was a much more nuanced and intricate concept and that multiple elements within society needed to be analyzed to understand its development fully. The term "cultural studies" was coined by Hoggart after he created the Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies in the U.K. in 1964. The Birmingham Center was dedicated to cultural studies research and critique of modern culture, to understand how culture develops and how to make improvements, possibly. Stuart Hall, in particular, is credited as the most influential figure from the cultural studies field; he ran the Birmingham Center from 1968-1979 and headed various groundbreaking research studies and connections.

The researchers and theorists of the Birmingham group developed social critiques of their period, which developed into an international movement. They were among the first to study the effects of media on

society and its various groupings, as well as political and economic factors and their influences on cultural forms. Gender, race, ideology, class, and more were also examined about how cultural messages were received. The early proponents of cultural studies also largely critiqued rising capitalism and how it affected everyday people and their rights. They examined how certain groups in society get and maintain power over others, and how the dominated groups resist. Cultural studies have impacted the development of many other fields and how people understand societal relations, attitudes, power, and growth. As a discipline, cultural studies emerged in the 1960s with the help of several scholars. **Stuart Hall**, Richard Hoggart, E.P. Thompson, and Raymond Williams are all considered the field's main founders.

6.0 Caring and Being Cared for as a Two-Edged Sword of Reciprocative Phenomenon

The climax of human existence and interpersonal relationships is the act of benevolence that alleviates people's suffering, especially in an egalitarian society. Though conflicts, as an integral part of human life, must arise, it must be resolved for the peace, progress and development of everyone in society. Unah (2002: xii) aptly captures it:

Society is about man's interaction with other men. In the cause of such interaction, conflicts requiring the regulation of motives have become a committant element of society, characterizing the latter as "regularized interaction." In seeking to regularize interaction and regulate motives, human reason fabricates ideas, concepts and principles as tools for assigning meaning, order and value to the world.

The poet's affirmation and mediation on how interpersonal relationships could be built and sustained must be so crucial for maintaining mutual trust, a sense of belonging, and a peaceful coexistence in society. However, it is adequate to add that there is no perfect community or society that is devoid of one chaotic situation or the other. Nodding (1995:182) critically

examines the effects of caring on the cared-for and the special contributions that the cared-for make to the caring relation.” It is on the premise of the above, on an act of caring and being cared for, that Nodding’s (1195:175-189) expatriates that:

As human beings we want to be care and be cared for. The one cared-for sees the concern, delight, or interest in the eyes of the one-caring and feels her warmth in both verbal and body language. Caring involves stepping out of one’s own personal frame of reference into other’s. When we care, we consider the other’s point of view, his objective needs, and what he expects of us.”

The poet repeatedly emphasizes the necessity of caring and the need to be cared for, as reciprocating gestures, which instincts have placed on human beings, as the cogent reason for living. What is so commendable about the Yorùbá culture, especially in ancient times, and to date, is their goodwill character in caring for one another, a stranger, inclusive. We can conclude that the poet’s worldview and philosophical stance, which aim at promoting peace, unity, and progress, are in tandem with the Yorùbá cultural heritage on the ethics of caring. He highlights different logical variables that make his position for individuals’ understanding necessary on the urgent need to care for one another and vice versa. However, the hurly-burly, anxiety, survival of the fittest syndrome, high cost of living, religious bigotry, ethnic divide, political affiliation, among other variables, human feelings, and moral concern that could enable people to be passionately warmed to meet the needy have been lost.

7.0 Data Analysis and Findings

The poet encapsulates the Yorùbá culture in human interpersonal relationships. The fabrics that connect every human being is the ability to relate symbiotically, with a consciousness of appreciating, emulating, and reciprocating good gestures or any act of kindness. Hence, the poet laments the paradigm shift in Lagos over the years. In his poem, titled “*Ìlú Òdájú*,” he explains:

Èkó, ilú òdájú.

Èkó, ilú ìmọ̀tara.

Yorùbá bọ̀ wóni ní, 'Ojú ní rójú sàánú'

Èkó ní 'Alátìṣe ní m̀tìṣe'

Àlàbá (1993:48)

Lagos, the town of hard-hearted people

Lagos, a town with selfish people

Yorùbá remarks that it is ideal to show empathy to people

Lagos retorted that individuals should find solutions to peculiar problems

The poet historically reflects on the Yorùbá cultural norms and values, as well as the spirit of brotherhood and communalism. He emphasizes the caring aspect of Yorùbá culture that underscores every human being as a part of the network of relationships that connects a communal setting. One of the social identities of a typical Yorùbá man is liberality. We can imagine how life would be if every human being were to be living in isolation without mingling with one another in a cordial, interactive manner. What this essentially depicts is that every member of a community is as important as others and can contribute meaningfully to the well-being of an individual and the larger society, in one way or another. From the principle of cultural theory, this connection is, observably, the mechanism through which the larger community grows and develops. The higher the tendency for some norms and values to be jettisoned or truncated by the so-called civilization, the greater the degree of conflicts that would arise.

This is one of the many factors that prevent Lagos from continuity in practicing or experiencing Yorùbá cultural values and the benefits of caring for one another, as being entrenched in the Yorùbá culture. The fundamental features of Yorùbá cultural values, in space and in time, have been reduced to merely socializing with perceived friends and caring less

about more imaginary enemies. The poet opines that, fractured and broken though modern relationships might be, every human being is woven together in the web of humanity to help one another. However, the modern situation, especially in its act of deviance to other people's problems or challenges, is regressing in showcasing the Yorùbá values system. We are all linked by the bond of our common origin, as '*homo sapiens*,' despite the perennial issues of interpersonal relationships in Lagos.

*Yorùbá ní, 'Ká fòtún wèsì
Ká fòsì wètún;
Lòwó fì í mọ́ dáadáa
Èkó kò, ó ní 'Olómú kó má adómú iyá gbé.'*
Àlábá (1993:48)

Yorùbá posits that washing the right hand with the left
hand
Using the left hand to wash the right hand
Make your hands so clean;
Lagos re-joined that individualistic life is the model of
Living

In retrospect, the poet further laments the breakdown in Yoruba mutual relationships that could enable people to work together to accomplish greater things for societal development, both personally and communally. The saying, 'there is a strength in unity,' is no longer a tenable principle applicable to most *Lagosians*, who prefer individualistic lives to communal ones. The cause of complaint is a common slogan of "mind your own business," which is making most people feel neglected amid a populace that Lagos is known for. These pragmatic experiences of cultural conflicts are a visible reality that most people are careless about the problem of neighbours within their neighbourhood. Similarly, the *realism* of the capitalist nature of Lagos demonstrates the most fundamental principle of "survival of the fittest." The principle, in one word, is insensitivity to the basic needs of the needy, by the majority of people who themselves are

struggling to make ends meet.

Consequently, the yardstick to define the concept of need becomes a relative term, which depends on many variables. A Lagos common parlance, “*Jàfójo kò sí mó, jà fún ara rẹ́ ló kù,*” meaning there is no one fighting for the fearful or voiceless, who are in dire need of means of livelihood, but the in-thing is fighting for oneself, underscores the *situationism* in contemporary Lagos. The question, now, remains: where do we place the poet’s concern? The poet’s perspective, according to the Yorùbá vales system, is underscored by a slogan for unity, “*Àgbájo ọwọ́ la a fí í sọyà.*” There are multiple benefits of the culture of togetherness that are embedded in the short poem understudy. The contemporary phenomenon in the modern Lagos reveals the incredible damage that the so-called has done to the Yorùbá cultural norms and values system.

However, aside from cultural festivals and possibly catastrophes, the metropolitan life of Lagos, combined with the influence of social media, has created 'artificial boundaries' that push people apart. This shift in perspective means that some individuals live in loneliness despite being in a crowded city like Lagos, because others seem to care less about them or identify less with them. This change in attitude is clear in the poet’s excerpt, “*kólómú dómú iyá è gbé,*” which emphasizes individualism over communalism or collectivism. The poet, in a way, highlights the unique aspects of the Yoruba communal system and recognizes the sad reality that modernity—along with the rise of mega-cities—has broken a system of valuable customs that traditionally supported individuals in every community for generations.

*Yorùbá ní ‘Èni Ọlórún b̀n k̀n b̀n nìyàn’
Èkó ní ‘Èni bá fẹ́ ní, kó lọ múra.’
Yorùbá b̀n ẁn sì tún ní,
‘Omi làwa ènìyàn,
Bá a bá ş̀n síwá, à sì tún ş̀n séyìn;*

Àlàbá (1993:48)

Yorùbá remarks, whosoever God blesses should give
others
Èkó retorted, whosoever wishes should strive
Yorùbá further remarks that,
People are like a river
If we flow forward, we would also flow backward

The poet is critically intended to break the wealthy resistance against the strange attitude of stinginess by some people in Lagos. Open-handed with kind gestures and systematic giving to those in need, play pivotal roles in the Yorùbá ethos of caring and interpersonal relationships in every Yorùbá community. The poet affirms that in Yorùbá culture, being a part of a community connotes having a sense of belonging, which requires giving back to society, such that the challenges of an individual are ameliorated, and catered for by family members, well-wishers, or are often handled through collective effort. However, he observes that this principle is not practicable for many in Lagos.

The *liberalism* of the Yorùbá cultural milieu in giving helping hands, moral, financial, or material support is known as “*àṣà-ìranra-èni-lọwọ*.” The Yorùbá culture that advocates acts of charity, which has been largely trivialized as inconsequential in Lagos, is what the poet reaffirms in the excerpt. The historical examples that come to mind are well portrayed in the Yorùbá prose narratives, as moral lessons for the children. The observation of the poet underscores how people have been treating the needy, which is contrary to the foundational values of the Yorùbá people. Self-sacrifice, benevolent giving that naturally brings inner fulfillment, joy, cordiality, enables more effective change in a community, where an injury to one is an injury to others.

The poet narrates a possibility of people meeting to part and parting to meet

again, coincidentally or by Providence, as a major factor that warrants being caring for one another. The poet laments the issue of ambiguities and contradictions in Lagos on the inherited Yorùbá legacy of a common oneness in terms of caring and interpersonal relationships laments:

Bó pé tíí, tẹni kú tẹni sọ̀nù á pàdẹ̀;

Bó pé tíí, ojú a máa túnra rí gidi

Èkó ní, 'Okò là á bá kùkùtẹ̀,

Okò náà la ó sì fí sí lọ.

Bí ẹ̀ bá rí wa aní tiyín sáá

Ohun ẹ̀ bá rí, ẹ̀ s.e fún wa!'

Èkó le bi' ilú ọ̀dájú,

Bó bá dánílóró tán, e fagbára kọ̀ ni.

Àlàbá (1993:48)

After a long time, a deceased will meet a missing person;

After a long time, the potential of seeing again is incontestable

Lagos remarks that we always meet a tree stump

We would leave it on the farm after the day's work, scintillating

That depends on whether you see us at all

Whatever you wish, do it for us!

Lagos is tough like a town of the heartless,

If it petrifies one, it tangentially teaches one strength

The climax of the poet's standpoint, which encloses the core of his apt perspective on Lagos as a city of hard-hearted people, showcases that the majority do not care about the likely consequences or aftermath effects of their actions that may be inimical to others in the society. The poet illustrates that human life is a complex phenomenon filled with unexpected moments of spontaneous encounters with people of diverse cultures. It

provides some imaginary personalities and circumstances of right or wrong choices made, and also provides a basis for making better interpersonal relationships or dispositions with people because of the circumstantial of meeting later in life.

The poet posterity, or the “*Law of Kamal*” or retributive judgement, has a magical way of bringing people who have crossed paths together, unpredictably. Hence, the Yorùbá use to logically affirm that, “*ojó ló n pé, ipàdè kì í jinnà*” (the days might be prolonged, but the time to unexpectedly meet is not far-fetched). The poet figuratively illustrates how someone who got passed on and the person who went missing could coincidentally meet again. This tendency of coincidental meeting (*ipàdè-lésè-òggbèjì*) is aptly captured in a Yorùbá axion, “*ojú á túnrarí, òwe Àkàlámàgbò,*” we shall see again, is the Àkàlámàgbó’s adage. Thus, the poet advocates for being helpful simply because nobody knows the future. The truism of a saying on ethical value, a Yorùbá adage, “*bógún bá jẹ lọ, ogbòn níí jẹ é bọ,* (What goes around comes around), is aptly undeniable.

Dwelling on the Yorùbá cultural heritage, the poet creates awareness for a better orientation for the *Lagosians* to understand how easier it is to create a problematic and toxic environment by following personal inclinations of hard-heartedness rather than realistic judgment, that is germane and beneficial in human interpersonal relationships. Consequently, any logical reflection on the reality of life concerning retributive judgment could hardly ignore the need to take caution when relating to people, either relatives or even strangers. The poet’s observation on how injustices and unethical attitudes of being mean to people that permeate interpersonal relationships in modern-day Lagos is food for thought.

Conclusion

We have critically examined the Yorùbá ethics of care in the poetry of Àlàbá, which establishes that it is an individual’s responsibility to

consciously or unconsciously care about the welfare of one another in society, in accordance with the Yorùbá culture. The study established, through the poetic analysis of Àlàbá (1993), that every human being, as a social animal that cannot live in isolation, is somewhat obligated to help other people in society. As the Yorùbá affirms, “*Oore loore wó tọ*” (what goes around comes around), “*Ara èniyàn loore wà*,” (it is difficult to determine your caring-helper), are logical facts that human beings through cordial and Cting interpersonal relationships, must be treasured as invaluable, and as a potential helper, at any point in time. Building and maintaining interpersonal relationships is very germane for human existence, survival, development, and achievement. Àlàbá, in his poem, “*Ìlú Òdájú*,” challenges the *Lagosians* to go beyond myopic thinking about *individualism* (personal needs), as individuals, but to endeavour to care or cater for others, within what is humanly possible. The poem, with its apt and relevant socio-cultural theme and impactful messages, showcases the comprehensiveness of the significance of interpersonal relationships as a human lifeline. Findings show that there is an apparent contradiction between the seamless and natural manner in which the Yorùbá people relate within a communal setting by caring for one another and the current peculiar perspectives of an uncaring attitude of many people in modern-day Lagos. Some fundamental factors, such as “*rat race*” on survival of the fittest, challenging economic factor, socio-political and cultural diversity, ethnic-divide, which brew mutual distrust issue, and the common acceptance norm of “*mind-your-own-business*,” were identified as the main cause of non-challant attitude towards the caring and welfarism for one another in Lagos. It was affirmed that the poet’s message, as being creatively portrayed in his poem, charged and sensitized the *Lagosian* to be more proactive in being intentional with conscious efforts to be more caring about the well-being of the needy, which invariably connotes every *Lagosian* simply because, “*nobody has it all*.” That be as it may, it is logical, from a critical reflection, to assert that Lagos, as metropolitan city, due to its high cost of living on basic necessity of life, is not meant for those

who might not have the financial wherewithal of being a *Lagosian*. The reality on ground, in Lagos now, is that every *Lagosian* is in grips of financial crisis; except possibly, with a few ones. However, the poet is of the opinion that in our search for money, we must be downright realistic and avoid the tendency to do so without empathy for the downtrodden in Lagos and the society at large. Therefore, the people that could be feeling “oppressed,” “marginalized,” the less privileged, the outcast, among others could find an alternative to acquiring saleable skills that could meet the needs of the teeming population within his or her geographical location in Lagos. The fact remains that Lagos, as a hub of Nigerian commercial activities, is a land of opportunity, unique and marketable for every human skill, services that could meet the needs of a teeming population of *Lagosians*. Better still, there is also an alternative of relocating to a more affordable neighbouring State, outside Lagos, where the standard of living is relatively cheaper, affordable, and accessible; with more developmental opportunities. This is further underscored by a Yorùbá proverb, “*kò si’ ibi tí kò gbògo, òle. nikan lààyè ò gbà,*” meaning that every place of sojourn, home or abroad, is potentially a land of opportunity; it is only a lazy person that would always give untenable excuses.

1. Lagosians: is a generally accepted terminology for the people who live in Lagos.

2. [https://study.com/learn/lesson/cultural-studies-overview-theory.html#:~:text=Stuart%20Hall%20is%20credited%20as,mere%20constructs%20invented%20by%20society,\(Accessed](https://study.com/learn/lesson/cultural-studies-overview-theory.html#:~:text=Stuart%20Hall%20is%20credited%20as,mere%20constructs%20invented%20by%20society,(Accessed) (Accessed on 28/5/2025)

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