

## INVESTIGATING THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN THROUGH YORÙBÁ MUSIC: A CASE OF ODÒLAYÉ ÀRÈMÚ AND LÁGBÁJÁ

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### Abstract

The place of women in various societies has remained a controversial social discourse. On the global scene, women have continued to renounce the hegemonic position of male figure over their female counterpart, arguing that they remain objects of significance and not to be undermined, for their slated orthodox duties. Anchored on Walker's womanism theory, this paper examines how the philosophical ideologies about women in Yoruba society have changed, over time, as represented in the works of *Odolaye Aremu* and *Lagbaja*, two popular Yoruba artistes who belong to different eras. The study employs the purposive sampling technique to select *Odolaye Aremu's Oro awon Obinrin* and *Lagbaja's Who-man* for in-depth content analysis.

*Odòlayé Àrèmu* on one hand, employs a harsh and confrontational view in expressing his philosophy about women, focusing on the weakness and shortcomings of the female gender, without having any concerns about their feelings while addressing social ills associated to women. *Lagbaja* on the other hand, employs a different approach in his work concerning women. Contrary to the position of *Odolaye Aremu*, he projects the beauty of the female gender, by appreciating the relevance of women in areas such as multitasking, nurturing, managing and being the mother of all. The dissenting positions of the two artistes is representative of their various eras and the changing perspectives about the female gender in Yoruba society, which reveals that the perspectives of the Yoruba concerning women is changing and suggests more respect and power to the female gender.

**Key words:** Women, female gender, Yoruba , Odolaye Aremu, Lagbaja.

### Introduction

The role of women in African society remains a controversial social discourse. On global platforms, women have continued to reject the hegemonic ideology of the male gender towards women, which tramples on women's rights that are woven around their orthodox responsibilities, religion, physique, and intelligence. However, women still bear the major social burden of the family and community at large. Oyesomi and Salawu (2018) Considering the roles women and female characters play in Nigerian music videos, featuring women to gain a wider audience appeal, thereby portraying women as beings with no self-worth, dignity and respect. Olusola (2023) focused on issues that lead to the subjugation of women in music videos within West African society, including the Yorùbá people in Nigeria. Olusola (2023) further indicated that several factors lead to these forms of subjugation, such as religious beliefs and cultural factors. Olayemi (2020) noted that music, especially among the Yorùbá, has the power to be utilized to either subvert, promote or subjugate women. Viljoen (2014) described the importance of female representation in music. The study also focused on how women have been subjugated through white versus black or tribal representation. Researchers have focused on the role of hip-hop music in the sexualization of women, and Wizkid's music videos that objectify women are a prime example of this phenomenon (Abodunde, 2017; Acharya, 2015; Eze, 2020).

In the past, African society viewed women as second-class citizens who depended solely on men for protection, affiliation, provision, and identity. This was a time when women were only recognized as someone's wife or daughter, regardless of their accomplishments. However, it is a reality that some women have distinguished themselves through serious toil and have attained such remarkable recognition that they have been awarded chieftaincy titles. Despite this, the general perception that women are inferior to men has continued to be relevant in Yorùbá culture.

Music is a powerful tool that plays a functional role among the Yorùbá people. It can be performed with or without instrumental accompaniment. Most artistes write songs to inform their audience of their views on topical social discourse, thereby contributing to the development of their society.

This study engages the works of two Yorùbá artistes, Odòlayé Àrèmu and Bísádé Ológundé, who is popularly known as Lágbájá. Odòlayé Àrèmu was a composer and song leader, known for his *dàdàkúàdà* music style, a popularly localized musical genre of the Yorùbá people of south-western Nigeria. His music praises wealthy aristocrats, kings, and renowned social groups. Most of his compositions deal with trending life issues, particularly those affecting the Yorùbá people. Odòlayé Àrèmu expressed his philosophy about current events in

a harsh manner, without pity or concern for those who might be hurt by his music. He expressed himself without minding the audience's reaction.

Bísádé Ológundé, popularly known as Lágbájá (Somebody), is an Afro musician whose popular genre has continued to gain wide patronage since the late nineties. He is known for his masked stage appearance and non-confrontational attitude when addressing issues, particularly those related to women.

Since the twentieth century, Yorùbá society has experienced a paradigm shift regarding women, with women becoming increasingly vocal in society and being able to compete with men in many areas. These areas include the economy, politics, and leadership in political and religious places, as well as in many other aspects of life traditionally reserved for men.

This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the old and new conceptions of women in Yorùbá society through the lens of selected tracks from Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú and Lágbájá. This study examines women representation in the selected songs, style of presentation and factors responsible for these views.

Numerous scholarly works from various fields of study such as Olujimi (2004), Adagbada (2014), have examined the importance of women in Yorùbá films and their position in theatre. Balogun (2010) argues that women have been subjected to different forms of oppressions, suffering for recognition from their male folks, and this is also evident in proverbs directly related to women, which such proverbs violate the respect and dignity of women. Ajewole (2013) also discusses the cultural and religious beliefs about women as music makers, stressing the immense potential possessed by women which are undermined, against the idea of Africans, that they should only be in the kitchen. Works of Samuel and Adejube (2017) are for examining how music artistes use different musical elements to document the narrative of women as object of honor and significance in human society. These works explore the dynamic space that women occupy as they take on important roles in the economy, academics, politics, and religion, beyond their conventional roles. Several scholars have examined various issues related to women, including women's empowerment in politics and finance, as well as women's voices in artistic works such as music and film.

Samuel (2018) also examined the gender space transgressors by women in entertainment industry, specifically focusing on two Yorùbá dundun female drummers, explaining how the musical landscape intermittently becomes a space for negotiating power with Yorùbá patriarchs.

Chikelu (2023) submitted that women in the music industry still face discrimination, sexual assault and under-recognition which are threat to achieving huge success in their chosen career, if not checked. In the work of Uko Akpan, Patience (2023) examined how folk music reinforces Nigerian women to use their talents as a source of income and livelihood.

### **Research background**

Despite the large body of literature, little or no attention has been given to the changing perspectives on women in Yorùbá society throughout different periods. This is surprising, given that popular musicians are generally seen as the voice of their cultural environment. This research takes a step towards filling this knowledge gap by conducting a comparative study of the philosophical ideologies of the Yorùbá in selected songs of two popular Yorùbá artistes, Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú and Lágbájá. This study compares the views of the two post-independence Yorùbá artistes on women within the context of their songs.

The artistes were selected based on their contributions to social discourse within Yorùbá society. This study employed purposive sampling to select one song track from each of the two artistes, which are *Ọ̀rọ̀ àwọn Obìnrin* by Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú and *Who-man?* by Lágbájá. Data was generated from both primary and secondary sources. The study collected primary data from the selected songs, and secondary data from existing literature surrounding the discourse on women in Yorùbá society, as well as literature relating to the works of the selected artistes. The data was analyzed using the content analysis technique.

This study is based on Walkers's theory of womanism, which she first postulated in 1979. The theory explains how women, especially black women, at all levels of life and in different parts of the world, have been mistreated and subjected to corporal and mental violence by their male counterparts. In this study, womanism theory helps to understand how women in Yorùbá society have taken deliberate steps to reconstruct how they are viewed overtime. Several male artistes, including Lágbájá, have advocated for the successful reconstruction of the place of women in Yorùbá society. This is demonstrated in the changing perspectives about women. The

periodic gap between the release of Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú's *Òrọ̀ àwọn Obinrin* and Lágbájá's *Who-man?* shows an improvement in the positive imaging of the female gender, particularly in Yorùbá society.

### Literature review

#### *The role of Yorùbá music in society*

Ogundeji (1991) classified songs into three categories: festival songs, children's songs, and ceremonial songs. Adeleke, (2019) classified songs into four categories: solo, group, call, and response performances. Adagbada (2014) and other scholars noted that while accompanied songs are an important part of the musical realities of the Yorùbá, they do not fully capture the Yorùbá musical tradition, which also includes unaccompanied songs.

Studies have also explored issues pertaining to women in Yorùbá society. Samuel and Adejube (2017) have done notable work in the field of musicology. They examined how music artistes use different musical elements to document the narratives of women as objects of honor and significance in the society. Samuel (2018) also examined how women transgress gender norms through music. The study focused on two female Yorùbá dundun drummers and explained how the musical landscape intermittently becomes a space for negotiating power with Yorùbá patriarchs. This is especially evident among the Ayan family of the Yorùbá, where musical training used to be given only to male children in the form of playing, constructing, and repairing the talking drum. Except in rare cases, the training of the female child is neglected.

Ibitoye (2021) agrees with Samuel and Adejube (2017) about the paradigm shift in African music studies that concerns female involvement in the *Baluu* and *Kengbe* music performances of the Ìlòrín people. The two studies demonstrate how women have started creating space for themselves within the musical realm. Women were not originally designed to participate as music makers, but rather as music consumers and supporter. The conclusions drawn from these studies strongly support the idea that women should challenge and disagree with conventions in order to change the narratives to reflect current realities.

Adagbada (2014), Falola (2011), Samuel (2018), and Olujinmi (2004) highlight the dynamic nature of the roles of women. They stress the increasing opportunities for women and the need for recognition and respect for their gender. Samuel and Adejube (2017) analyzed how women have challenged the roles ascribed to them with songs such as *Obinrin ni mí* by Sola Allyson. Through these songs, women celebrate womanhood and attempt to rewrite the narratives surrounding male dominance in relation to their gender.

In Yorùbá society, songs are highly regarded as important artistic elements. Songs are uncompromising in nature and include detailed historical accounts of past events, educative and informative content, societal acceptable behavior, as well as condemnation of attributes considered as social vices. In the traditional Yorùbá community, music in the form of song is an integral part of people's everyday lives.

Several genres of traditional Yorùbá songs have made their way into popular music, including *àpàlà*, *sákàrà*, *wéré*, *àwùrẹ̀be*, and *dàdàkúàdà*, among others Olukoju (1985) These genres are usually classified based on the principal musical instruments by which they are identified. Contemporary genres among the Yorùbá include hip-hop, *Afrojùjú*, Afropop, high life, jazz, Fuji, R&B, and rap. All of these musical genres can be traced back to the Yorùbá culture, and they continue to exhibit aspects of that culture, such as language and instrumentation.

Olukoju (1985) classified Yorùbá music into seven categories: festival, folklore, political, cradle, satirical, incidental, and twin mother's music. Yorùbá people have music for every aspect of their lives. However, the categorization of Yorùbá music is not all-encompassing because it does not include all aspects of the Yorùbá life in which music is present. Such aspects include mourning, entertainment, and singing praises for the kind and important personalities.

#### *The role of women in Yorùbá society*

Adagbada (2014) maintained that in traditional Yorùbá patriarchal society, women are considered as fiddle beings, dependent on their male counterparts for survival, protection, and identification. This section offers a brief summary of the place of women in traditional Yorùbá society. It is worth noting that women have distinguished themselves throughout the long history of the Yorùbá, subverting the hegemonic narrative of men about women in society. For instance, Samuel and Adejube (2017) noted the importance of archiving the relevance of women in Yorùbá society, as advocated in Sola Allyson's song titled *Obinrin ni mí*. However, the act of rewriting the historical narratives of the male over their female counterparts has existed for a long time. This is also true in the contemporary age. Women with notable personalities and influence are pushing back against the long-held chronicle about the place of women in society. They are featuring prominently in various sectors such as the economy, politics, academics, industry, and entertainment. While space is being created for

women to become more relevant in society, the various advocacies for women's recognition still face some setbacks.

Despite this, there are still occupations that are gender-specific. Falola (2011) maintained that women have taken on managerial roles in formal and semi-formal organizations in the contemporary age. They have not only found their place in the corporate world but also actively participate in politics, head religious positions, and many more.

### ***The art of dādàkúàdà***

*Dādàkúàdà* is one of the locally popularized traditional musical genres of the Yorùbá people. It is most commonly found among the Yorùbá-speaking communities in Kwara State and some neighboring south-western states of Nigeria. Na'Allah (2011) noted that *dādàkúàdà* is one of the most popular musical genres in Ìlṣorin. Its origin can be traced to *toorin egúngún* (songs for the masked) technically referred to as *iwì*. Nevertheless, *dādàkúàdà* music was not performed during the ritual process of the masked. Instead, they would begin to sing *dādàkúàdà* songs after they had removed their *egúngún* costumes. *Dādàkúàdà* has historically been a form of entertainment, typically performed after the completion of the ritual processes of the *egúngún*.

Na'Allah (2011) also acknowledged Òkùkù as the first artist to perform *dādàkúàdà*. Òkùkù was reported to have single-handedly started the *dādàkúàdà* song, accompanying it with drum music from the gangan drum. Òkùkù, who was an *egúngún* performer himself, was said to be very popular in Ìlṣorin and its surroundings. In addition to Òkùkù, Abu Numo also performed *dādàkúàdà*. Other notable musicians who performed *dādàkúàdà* from the seventeenth to nineteenth century include Láòmì, Adéféláyé, Bàbá Awé, Àkànbí, Jaigbade, Àwòdì, and Ajíbóyè Ose, Olanrewájú Olojéè, Sàkà Àrèmú Kólóbó, Kàrímù Ìsàlè Àbàtà, and Àjàpè Alárápé. They have brought new innovations to the genre.

Training is essential for effective professionalism as a *dādàkúàdà* practitioner. During training, practitioners learn the art of using words that are insulting to individuals who are perceived to be deserving of such. These individuals may be perceived as enemies by their patrons.

### **Life and works of Odòlayé Àrèmú**

#### ***The life of Odòlayé Àrèmú and his philosophy about women***

Mohammedu Odòlayé Àrèmú was an Ìlṣorin born *dādàkúàdà* artiste whose music gained wide appeal in his home town. He performed his *dādàkúàdà* music throughout many Yorùbá cities and recorded numerous albums during his lifetime until his death in 1997. Odòlayé Àrèmú was born in 1941 in a village called Ajiniyo, which is a border town with Ìlṣorin. At the age of 16, he lost his father to the cold hands of death. As his father was the breadwinner of the family, he was unable to continue his education. At the age of 22, he decided to pursue music as a career after being inspired by a performance he watched at a ceremony near his village. There, a *dādàkúàdà* musician was invited to stage a musical performance. Odòlayé Àrèmú became enthusiastic while watching the performance and decided to learn the art of *dādàkúàdà*. After making this decision, his apprenticeship lasted for 8 years and he later became independent in the year 1972. He had an artistic feat of creating myths about the issues and personalities he sung about.

Odòlayé Àrèmú has often been criticized for being a rebel against his Yorùbá ethnic group. The allegation was connected to Odòlayé's praise-singing of people of suspicious character, including the late Ìbàdàn politician Alhaji Làmídì Adédibú. Odòlayé Àrèmú responded by stating that he is more interested in the unity of Nigeria. He added that if he praises anyone who has exhibited good character, he would not hesitate to criticize the same figure if he has a questionable character.

Odòlayé Àrèmú can be described as a socially committed *dādàkúàdà* artiste whose songs were informed by the happenings within his cultural settings. His artistic vision was to create a crisis-free society. Themes in his songs include death, marriage, culture, and respect for one another.

Odòlayé Àrèmú was married to many women throughout his lifetime, but he did not allow all of them under his roof at the same time. While some of the women he married left, others would still join him as new wives. It is worth noting that Odòlayé Àrèmú never kept more than three women at once in his residence, despite having many wives. The controversial life of the *dādàkúàdà* singer, performer, and composer came to an end on 25 February 1997. While Odòlayé Àrèmú lived in many places in Nigeria during his lifetime.

Figure 1. Odòlayé Àrèmú. Retrieved from google chrome <https://www.deezer.com>.

***The philosophical ideologies of Odòlayé Àrè mú***

The philosophical ideology of Odòlayé Àrè mú situates women at the mercy of men. The above assertion is not a new ideology, but rather the school of thought that Odòlayé Àrè mú and most men of his era subscribed to. They viewed women as property that could be tossed away and not as equals who could answer for themselves, except at the discretion of their husbands. This idea has always centered around women.

The statements about Odòlayé Àrè mú above are accurate, particularly in his music that deals with social issues related to women. Even though he tried to address societal problems, he often ended up hurting the feelings of women in general due to the way he addressed such issues. This can be traced back to the fact that Odòlayé Àrè mú's family practiced polygamy.

*Women who admire their own beauty excessively*

Odòlayé Àrè mú believes that if a woman is intoxicated with the adornment of her beauty, it would lead to her downfall at a later end. Although this may be true for women today, it is an issue that has persisted for many years and is still evident as a social issue, even with the changing times. The excessive adornment and appreciation of beauty in women can lead to infidelity, which is a forbidden idea within the Yorùbá community and can lead to the untimely death of young men (Àrè mú, 1997):

*Àgbà yèwò ní ò bàwò òyinbó jé*

It is the attention of the masses that destroys the skin of the white man

*Èmi mo da tó ba yí o*

Beauty intoxication

*Yóó sòbàdí omọ ẹlòmù dawọ*

will definitely make or mar some maidens

In the extract above, Odòlayé Àrè mú hints at the possible outcomes of women being intoxicated by their beauty, rather than focusing on possessing good behaviors that will make them great mothers and wives. He implies that these women only succeed in drawing unnecessary attention to themselves, which attracts men with bad intentions.

*Women as a threat to men*

Odòlayé Àrè mú (1997) maintained that women threaten men with leaving their matrimonial homes due to their beauty, especially those whose husbands are not financially stable and cannot meet all of their financial needs:

*N ó lọ o*

I will leave

*N ó lọ o*

I will leave

*N ó lọ o, lobinrin fi n dẹrù bọkọ*

I will leave, is the language women use to threaten their husband

*Ọkọ tó bá níşé lápá bí hán bá bí í dá a*

A well to-do husband, a true son of the land

*A ní tó bá lé lọ o mọ lọ*

will ignore such threat, reminding her

*Obinrin àgbà n bẹ ní jù tí n fetí kípá sọ kòkò ẹwà*

of many female farmers in remote areas,

Who brings down their cooking pot

From the locally made fire wood stove

Using the edge of their dainties

In the above extract from Odòlayé Àrè mú's work, women are threatening men with leaving, especially men with low incomes. In a bid to keep their wife and family together, some men travel the extra mile to make sure the immediate needs of the family are well catered for. Wealthy men with deep pockets ignore such threats, reminding her of less fortunate women in villages who are doing better and are even looking for such rare opportunities that the woman of the house has. This implies that once she leaves, another woman moves in. However, this may not be the case for low-income men, which exposes their economic strength to society.

*Women as pretenders and deceivers*

Odòlayé Àrè mú observed that pretense by women is a serious social ill, which is exhibited when they cover up their wrong acts. He maintained that the behaviors of some women are suspicious. It is possible that when women are acting responsibly, they are covering up something untrustworthy. Although this attitude is part of human nature, women still exhibit it when covering up their previous suspicious acts. Odòlayé Àrè mú (1997) an excerpt from the selected song titled *Oro awon Obririn*:

*Ẹyin a fojú wómọ mọ fọkàn wómọ o o*

Women seeking for fruit of the womb deceitfully

*Àmọ ọlọhun n kòwé yín lówó. Walahi! Walahi!*

God is noting your ideas

*Ìwọn lèyàn mọ ọ n dẹmí dé obinrin mọ*

Boundaries should be set in trusting women  
*Ò dǽjǽ lẹ̀ fẹ́rú bojú*  
 One who triggers a fight and go into hiding  
*Ò tàkàkà hanrun ẹ̀mọ̀*  
 One who sleeps roughly and snore mysteriously  
*Àlùsì ewúrẹ̀ tí ń hunrun lẹ̀kẹ̀kẹ̀ méjẹ̀ẹ̀jì.*  
 A naughty goat that grows hair on both cheeks

*Women as agents of infatuation*

In the lyrics below, Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú (1997) expresses his displeasure with the level of infatuation that can endanger one's life. Men go to great lengths for the sake of strong feelings at first sight while trying to get the attention of a woman.

*Èmi ọ̀ mọ̀ mọ̀ ríhun tóbìnrin ọ̀ le fì ní ẹ̀*  
 Have not seen what a man cannot do  
*Tí ń bá wuni (obìnrin dùn púpọ̀)*  
 When he desires a woman  
*Tó bà rán ni laccra á dà bí ọ̀gùnpa lójú ẹnì*  
 If she sends one to Accra it will look like ogunpa to one

This position suggests that women can use their beauty to confuse men and captivate their minds for as long as they want, because their beauty has caught the man's attention. Some of the themes above address the social trending issues that Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú was discussing. Perhaps his choice of words and style of music influenced his manner of presentation, along with his family experience.

**Life and works of Lágbájá**

*The life of Lágbájá*

Bísádé Ológundé, popularly known as Lágbájá, was born in Lagos in 1960. He is a Nigerian Afrobeat musician, songwriter, and instrumentalist. The use of a mask to cover his identity is directly related to his stage name, Lágbájá, which means anonymous or someone without a specific identity. He believes in social reform through music and began his musical journey in the early nineties. He presents himself as a common man in the carnival tradition of the Yorùbá people, and his name is reflected in the choice of his stage attire – a slated textile and a clothing mask.

Being a self-taught saxophonist, he formed his first music band in 1991 in Lagos. His willingness to address social issues within the available context and space motivated him. His first album, released in 2000, titled *We Before Me*, addresses the social discourse of being a voice for the voiceless. The album demands honesty from politicians and urges brotherhood and unity. He does not make confrontational music; instead, he addresses issues philosophically without mentioning specific names. Some of his music includes *Ikira* (1999), *We and Me Part 2* (2000), *Africano the Mother of Groove* (2005), and *200 Million Mumu (The Bitter Truth, 2012)*, among others. He has won several awards both domestically and internationally, particularly in 2006 when he produced a music video for his song *Never Far Away*.



Figure 2. Lágbájá Retrieved from google April (2024) [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

***The philosophical ideologies of Lágbájá***

Lágbájá is known for adding his voice to trending issues. He has a way of portraying an idea without hurting the mind of his listeners, yet communicating his ideology without necessarily pointing fingers. In his song *Who-man*, the word *who-man* portrays the overall thematic ideology about this selected music, meaning who is man without woman.

Lágbájá's music emphasizes the importance of men giving women the respect they deserve. The music suggests that men cannot exist alone and yet women are often not given the respect they deserve. The instrumentation of the music was tailored to this premise, giving voice to the voiceless and making a symbolic representation of women, using agogo (a metal idiophone instrument) as described by Samuel and Adejube (2017). The metallic idiophone instruments used by Lágbájá play a polyphonic, interlocking rhythmic role in elucidating Lágbájá's philosophical ideas about eradicating the ideology of denouncing and rejecting women's untiring efforts to build a society free of obstacles. However, these duties are not well recognized. This is what Lágbájá critiques while advocating for fairness and tranquility. The responsive nature of the music brings about the focal point of the chorus, calling on the male figure to give appropriate credit to the women around them.

The music presents women as the renowned figures responsible for lineage continuity, and suggests that men are nothing without them.

The song *Who-man* by Lágbájá as noted by Samuel and Adejube (2017)

Man oppresses woman so How would life be?  
 A world without woman? (Resp.) Empty as a ghost town,  
 Eerie as a graveyard Who is man? Who?  
 Who man without woman?  
 He's (Resp.) Nothing, nothing at all

Figure 3. *Who-man* by Lágbájá. Scored on Sibelius.

### **Themes in *Who-man***

#### *Theme of respect and appreciation*

Lágbájá calls upon male folks to respect and appreciate the women in their lives. He advocates that woman be treated with respect and justice, which is an issue of human rights. The opening phrase of his music state. Samuel and Adejube (2017)

Mankind shall never find justice  
 Until first we ensure justice between the sexes  
 Man to woman Who? Who man without woman?  
 He's nothing, nothing at all  
 We cannot do without her, yet she's disrespected.

Equality is an essential foundation for justice, as it ensures that all parties are recognized and given their deserved position within society. The lack of equality in many societies, particularly the traditional Yorùbá society, has kept women in positions where they are unable to contribute to key issues within their societies. This does not mean that women are totally relegated in Yorùbá societies, as they play key roles. However, the traditional culture of viewing women as unimportant in certain serious matters is unjust.

#### *Women as indispensable beings*

Lágbájá recognized the multifaceted roles that women fulfill, including being mothers, caregivers, pillars of strength, nurturers, and supporters. He further advocates that woman be treated with respect and justice, which is an issue of human rights Samuel and Adejube (2017)

She bares with dignity, The stress of pregnancy  
 How dare we complain, It's a daughter not a son  
 Would you have existed, were your mother never born,  
 If you call yourself the stronger sex, let me see  
 Your hand in the air, maybe you should bear the baby,  
 What a site would be, to see man in labour  
 Whoooo? Who make life sweet? Woman!  
 Who make man happy? Woman!  
 Yet can make man cry o? Woman!  
 Who born your grandpa? Woman!  
 Who born your father? Woman!

Lágbájá's perspective, as portrayed in this excerpt, is that women are the origin of life and the continuation of human existence. He emphasizes the important roles that women play in childbearing and nurturing, which are essential for the survival of life of both the male and female genders. This goes beyond childbearing and nurturing. Women, especially in Yorùbá societies, are also in charge of cooking and feeding the family, amongst which there are males, including the father.

#### *Women as companions*

Another perspective, as portrayed in the song by Lágbájá, is that a woman can help a man live a complete and more meaningful life. He believes that a man cannot live a fulfilling life without a woman in his life Samuel and Adejube (2017).

Who are you? Who are you? Ah! Without woman?

*O ò já mọ̀ ǹnkankan*  
 Nothing! You are nothing man, Nothing at all.  
*Femi minus Kemi? Zero! Owei minus Premo? Odo Rabata!*  
 Rabata!  
*Adamu minus Hauwa? Zero! Emeka minus Ngozi?*  
 Zero! Chinedu minus Ada? Zero! Gari without sugar?  
*Odo rabata! Boli ti o lepa? Odo rabata!*

### **Relevance of Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú and Lágbájá's views in present times**

choice of words about women may indicate that there was a specific encounter that triggered such an outpouring or it could be a reflection of societal issues that are still prevalent today. For example, women defiling their marriage vows, which is against the norm. When listening to certain media outlets, like Agidigbo FM, and particularly to a social and family program called *Kokoro Alate*, hosted by the CEO of Agidigbo Media House, Oriyomi Hamzat. It is clear that Odòlayé has strong views on the faithfulness of women in marriages. This is especially true as paternity fraud continues to be an issue.

On the contrary, Lágbájá argued that we must not fail to acknowledge the undoubtful role of women in society. Their role includes providing financial aid in such a harsh economy, thereby providing succor and relief to the family, combined with their cultural responsibility of nurturing the family. He further stressed that women should be given more space to handle and fulfill their mandate, as no man can be complete without women, and that credence should be accorded to them, regardless of their shortcomings.

### **Evaluation of their style, in the choice of language usage**

As a musical artiste, Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú demonstrated his mastery of the Yorùbá language through various stylistic effects. He used his music as a tool for social control, informing his audience of social discourse. Despite his harsh presentational style, he was able to convey his message effectively.

Lágbájá has a subtle way of addressing issues by using the speech surrogacy technique of the drum orchestra in buttressing his philosophical thoughts. His approach of code mixing and code switching makes him more relevant, coupled with his presentational style that has earned him wider appeal, especially among women. Lágbájá's music style is non-confrontational, which is evident in some of his music, and has given him wider coverage. Lágbájá is also known for allotting solos or lines to be sung by women in many of his albums. This acknowledges the importance of women and when given the chance to help, provides a beautiful contrast. This is observed in his music through divergences of vocal texture, adding more colors to the music.

### **Conclusion**

This study has discovered that the two artistes exhibit striking differences with regard to their philosophical ideology of women in their selected songs. This could be due to Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú's (1977) self-proclaimed status as the eagle's eyes of Kwara State:

*Ajá Kwara tí kì í gbó lásán, tí kò bá rí eranko a sì rí èyàn àtàtà.*

The kwara's dog that doesn't bark in vain, if it's not against animals, it would be for the influential.

Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú is like a watchdog of society who appears unapologetic about his use of words. This is not surprising because *dàdàkúàdà* practitioners are known for their heavy use of Yorùbá poetic words for praising their patrons and addressing social ills. Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú's choice of harsh words about women may indicate that there was a specific encounter that triggered such an outpouring. In contrast, Lágbájá's ideology is that women are essential and soothing to men. He sees them as integral to life. Lágbájá has a calm and serene approach, which stands in stark contrast to Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú's critical language.

Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú is considered a socially committed artist. He addressed societal issues in his songs, with the aim of creating a harmonious society. His songs reflect the lifestyle of individuals in society. However, his confrontational style sometimes makes women see him as an enemy of womanhood. In contrast, Lágbájá has always been an advocate for equity and fairness, which he demonstrates by giving women lines to perform in many of his albums. Lágbájá has written, composed, and performed many songs in support of women, including *Skentele* and *Jenke*, among others.

The two artistes displayed their respective ideologies in their songs, taking their level of exposure, audience reception in term of gender, and changing times into account.



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- Captions
- Figure 1. Odòlayé Àrè mú. Retrieved from google dec (2023) <https://www.deezer.com>.
- Figure 2. Lágbájá Retrieved from google dec (2024) [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)
- Figure 3. *Who-man* by Lágbájá Notated on Sibelius notation software and export as graphics. April (2024)