



Research Paper

## A Cultural Analysis of The Poem 'Èran Ọ̀sìn' In Jibola Abiodun's *Àlọ́ Ñ Lọ́*

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### Abstract

*This study investigates cultural themes in the poem 'Èran Ọ̀sìn', one of the poems in the text in the collection under the title Àlọ́ Ñ Lọ́. The poet brings to focus in the poem some cultural aspects of the Yorùbá traditional life in relation to domestic animals and b. the poem highlights traditional values, and some socio-economic values of domestic animals and birds. The study is a content analysis, whereby the author read the poem and extracted lines for analysis and discussion the study adopts cultural theory for the analysis of the poem. The study adopts Cultural theory for the analysis of data/excerpts. The theory assumes that a people's culture determines their ways of life and their perception of the world. The study reveals that the poem captures the cultural orientation, beliefs and attitudes of the Yorùbá people to domestic animals and birds. The study reflects on the imaginative power of creative writers (poets) to rely on the culture of a people to build a text to entertain and educate.*

**Keywords:** poem, domestic animals, cultural themes, traditional values, creative writers

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Creative writers build their imaginative thoughts around the society and their environment. They look deeply into the culture, customs, social institutions and social activities of humankind in the areas of economy, politics, religion and social interactions and use their imaginative power to create fictions that educate and entertain their readers. They also use their creative works to document and preserve landmark events, aspirations and achievements of human kind in their respective societies. (Hudson 1963, Ogunsina 1987, Obafemi 1997, Bruce 2014, Abiodun 2022) To this extent, therefore, literary works mirror human activities, attitudes, postures, aspirations and achievements in their social environments. Hudson (1963) is quoted in Abiodun (2022:550) as saying that,

Literature...is a vital record of what man have seen in life, what they have experienced of life, what they have thought and felt about those aspects of it which have most immediate and enduring interest for all of us, It is fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language.

Kehinde (2005:70) corroborated the claim that the society is the pool that a creative writer relies on for inspiration that helps build his imagination. The scholar writes that "no a matter how imaginative a writer may be, the society he knows or resides is invariably the background of his writing."

As the study reveals, the Yorùbá background of the author of the poem under study is widely reflected in the poem. The Yorùbá traditional and cultural practices are well expressed in the poem. The main focus of the poem is the culture of keeping domestic animals and birds, however, the poet highlights some cultural issues that point to the interaction of humankind with domestic animals and birds. It stresses the cultural, social and economic values of the animals. The study presents the values of the animals as enumerated in the poem. In specific terms, the study discusses the cultural, social and economic issues raised in the poem. These include the culture of naming, religious festivals, adjudication, economic advantage of domestic animals and some other

socio-cultural issues. As this study reveals, the poem, 'Eran Ọ̀sìn' is rich in its exposition of socio-cultural and socio-economic values of domestic animals and birds.

## II. THE POEM 'ERAN Ọ̀SÌN'

'Eran Ọ̀sìn' is a short poem of twenty-eight lines. It has five stanzas, and each stanza, except the fifth stanza has six lines. The fifth stanza has four lines only. The poem is presented below.

Àbíké lájá  
Ó kómí jẹ nínú ilé  
Àṣàké ládiyẹ òkòkó  
Ó ṣaáyán jẹ lọ̀dẹ̀  
Àríké lólógìnńí músùúrù 5  
Ó peku jẹ ní kọ̀rọ̀ iyàrá

Iléyá wọ̀lé dé  
Sùnmọ̀nù mágbò funfun báláú  
Kérésí wọ̀dẹ̀ dé  
Sàámú táwọ̀ séwúré abàmù rẹ̀dẹ̀rẹ̀dẹ̀ 10  
Eégún dé sí kàà lágbàlá  
Béégúndé nawọ̀ móbúkọ̀ tó ṣẹ̀pọ̀n lanba

Ọ̀jó fẹ̀ rebi  
Ẹ̀ṣin gbé e ó sáré  
Àiná dirù sílẹ̀ 15  
Kẹ̀tẹ̀kẹ̀tẹ̀ gbẹ̀rù pọ̀n sẹ̀yìn  
Ìlọ̀rí n wá wàrà  
Màlúù fun ní wàrà mu

Táyé fẹ̀ nàwó  
Ó mágùntàn rọ̀jà ó dowó 20  
Kẹ̀hìndé fẹ̀ sẹ̀yàwó  
Ó méwúré lọ̀ rẹ̀e fàna ẹ̀  
Ìdòwú ṣẹ̀ sófin ilú  
Ó mèlẹ̀dẹ̀ lọ̀, ọ̀rọ̀ bùse

Ẹ̀ má lagi méwúré mi 25  
Ẹ̀ má sàgùntàn mi lókò  
Èyàn tó mò 'wúlò ẹ̀ranko  
Kó tọ̀jú nhkan ọ̀sìn

Àbíké owns a dog  
It licks excrement in the house  
Àṣàké owns a hen  
It eats up cockroaches at the corner of the room.  
Àríké owns a cat 5  
It eats up rats at the corner of the room  
Ileya sets in  
Sùnmọ̀nù took a very white ram  
Christmas sets in  
Sàámú (Samuel) picks a big and fattened she goat 10  
Masquerades arrive into the grove  
Béégúndé picked a big he-goat

Ọ̀jó planned to travel  
A horse carried him and raced away 15  
Àiná had goods to transport  
A camel carried the goods on its back  
Ìlọ̀rí wanted milk  
A cow gave him milk

Táyé needed money.	20
He went to the market to sell his sheep	
Kẹ̀híndé planned to marry a wife	
He took a goat to his in-laws	
Ìdòwú violated the rules of the community	
He paid a fine of a pig, and was set free	25
Do not hit my goat with stick	
Do not throw stones at my sheep	
People who know the value of animals	
Should take care of domestic animals	

The poem draws attention to domestic animals that include *ajá* 'dog', *ewúré* 'goat', *òbúkọ* 'he-goat', *àgùntàn* 'sheep', *ẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ̀* 'pig', *ológìnní m̀sùùrù* 'cat'. It also mentions a domestic bird *adiyẹ òkòkò* 'hen'. These domestic animals, and bird are common domestic animals and bird in the Yorùbá traditional setting. They are still kept as domestic animals today in Yorùbá land. One notes that the poet carefully links the animals to female characters in the poem. The author does this to show that keeping domestic animals or ownership of domestic animals is much more common among women than men. Thus ownership of these animals is linked to Àbíkẹ́, Ànìkẹ́ and Àríkẹ́ as shown in stanza one of the poem. One notes that when it comes to the social use of the animals, particularly for festivities, men have dominance over women in terms of ownership. However, they may be required to pay a token using them for festivities. The poet lists *ẹ̀şin* 'horse', *kẹ̀tẹ̀kẹ̀tẹ̀* 'donkey' and *màlùù* 'cow' as domestic animals. These are not strictly speaking traditional domestic animals in the Yorùbá culture. However, the author lists them to show his understanding of cultural contact between the Yorùbá people and other ethnic groups, particularly the Hausa/Fulani people that interact socially, culturally and economically with the Yorùbá people. These animals are also found in Yorùbá land today. Kings and rich individuals keep horse as domestic animal. A Yorùbá proverb and an excerpt from Odunjo (1961) poem confirm this point, thus;

Ta ló mọ̀ Ọ̀kòlò l'Ọ̀yọ̀?	'How many people know Ọ̀kòlò in Ọ̀yọ̀?'
Koriko lásán ló n pa fún ẹ̀şin ọ̀ba.	'He is a mere keeper of the king's horse.'
... Ìyá rẹ̀ lẹ̀ lówó lówó	...Your mother might be rich
Bàbá rẹ̀ lẹ̀ l'ẹ̀şin léékàn...	Your father may have a stable full of horses...

These confirm that kings and few wealthy individual in Yorùbá land keep horses. Donkeys are also found in Yorùbá land today, although they are very few. Cows are very common today in Yorùbá land, people hire Fulani cattle herders to keep tend to them. The point being made here is that the poet is not wrong to mention *ẹ̀şin* 'horse' *kẹ̀tẹ̀kẹ̀tẹ̀* 'donkey', and *màlùù* 'cow' as *Eran Ọ̀sìn* 'domestic animals'.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Different researchers investigate how Yorùbá poetry utilizes animal symbolism to transmit cultural values. Many scholars including Ajibade 2005, Akinlade (2018), Adewuyi (2019), Olaleye (2020), Oyelami (2020), Ogunmodede (2021), Bankole (2021), Adeoye, Taiwo, and Eben (2022), Ajayi (2022), Salawu (2023) and others have researched this topic.

Ajibade (2005) research in to the worldview of the Yorùbá people about animals. His work elucidate the Yorùbá perception of animals, including domestic animals, with regards to their classification, their role and position in religious, political, social and economic domains of human. In his work "Cultural Pedagogy in Yorùbá Children's Animal Songs" Akinlade (2018) introduces an alternate approach to understand how animals in Yorùbá children's oral songs serve as cultural tools for developing moral behaviors and social values. He emphasizes that these musical creations serve as educational tools that come from traditional tribal knowledge systems and they activate collective awareness when performed for groups. However, his analysis is centered exclusively on oral traditions intended for children, overlooking how similar moral instruction is embedded within adult-focused literary texts. While the performative nature of children's songs allows for immediate community engagement, modern poetry extends this cultural pedagogy to broader audiences through artistic reflection and creative reinterpretation. This study extends Akinlade's findings by showing how *Eran Ọ̀sìn*, a modern Yorùbá poem, adopts a similar cultural logic in its portrayal of domestic animals to communicate values that are essential to Yorùbá ethics and social order. Unlike the children's songs, which rely on direct messaging, *Eran Ọ̀sìn* weaves these values into layered metaphors and symbolic imagery, that appeals to both intellectual engagement and emotional resonance.

Adewuyi (2019) in his study, "Indigenous Poetics and the Semiotics of Animal Symbols in Yorùbá Oral Literature," presents a compelling exploration of the symbolic function of domestic animals in Yorùbá oral

traditions. Through a careful examination of oral genres like *ewi* (didactic poetry) and *ijálá* (hunters' chant), Adewuyi demonstrates how these animals serve as agents of communication. His work reveals how these representations are not arbitrary but are found in Yorùbá cultural narratives that tie morality to the natural world. However, Adewuyi's analysis is confined to oral genres and does not address how these cultural symbols are adapted into contemporary written forms, especially poetry. He overlooks how modern creative writers engage with these same symbolic resources to reframe traditional ideas for contemporary audiences. This is where the current study on *Eran Ọ̀sìn* offers a critical contribution. It shifts the focus from the oral to the written, examining how a modern Yorùbá poem recontextualizes these traditional animal symbols within a literary framework. *Eran Ọ̀sìn* exemplifies how written poetry can act as a bridge between ancestral knowledge and modern sensibilities.

Olaleye (2020) in his essay "*Animal Imagery and Yorùbá Cultural Identity*" investigates the integral role of animal symbolism in shaping and expressing the Yorùbá worldview, particularly through traditional oral forms such as folktales and ritual chants. He contends that animals function as symbolic extensions of human experience, which allows storytellers and performers to convey layered meanings that touch on ethical behavior, spiritual consciousness, and communal values. Within his study he analyzes the goat as a fundamental cultural symbol that embodies sacrifice together with resilience. In Yorùbá religious ritual, along with its use as a sacred object, the goat represents both religious practice and attributes of perseverance and humility that Yorùbá communities strongly value. He describes the reinforcement of these associations by showing how animals repeatedly appear in oral literature to display human virtues and failings as well as their destined outcomes.

However, his discussion remains largely rooted in oral literature and does not extend to how these culturally charged symbols are transposed into contemporary written forms, particularly poetry. This is the gap the present study seeks to address. In analyzing *Eran Ọ̀sìn*, this research reveals how the poem reimagines domestic animals not just as a recurring motif from oral tradition but as a sophisticated literary device that captures the philosophical and emotional differences of Yorùbá life. In *Eran Ọ̀sìn*, the goat embodies the tension between individual fate and communal expectations, between obedience and exploitation. It becomes a site of cultural memory, where past practices, beliefs, and rituals are encoded into poetic language for modern interpretation. Oyelami (2020) in his work, "*Symbolic Animality in Yorùbá Cosmology and Literature*" undertakes an in-depth examination of the spiritual and cosmological roles animals play within Yorùbá traditional belief systems and literary expression. He contends that animals are not just biological or narrative elements but serve as metaphysical bridges between the human, ancestral, and divine realms. Drawing from mythological texts, oral chants, and indigenous cosmological accounts, Oyelami argues that certain animals such as goats, rams, and birds, possess spiritual affinities with *òrìṣà* (deities), and ancestral spirits. The goat, for instance, is seen as a ritual mediator, offered in sacrifice to appease the gods or to redirect misfortune. Chickens and birds are likewise associated with divination and spiritual messages, especially in contexts like *Ifá* and other ritualistic practices. In literature, Oyelami notes, these sacred connotations are often preserved to maintain the spiritual depth of Yorùbá cosmology. While Oyelami's work offers critical knowledge into the sacred symbolism of animals in traditional narratives and their spiritual weight in Yorùbá thought, it does not fully explore how these sacred meanings are carried over, transformed, or reframed in contemporary poetic expressions. His focus remains anchored in traditional cosmology, with limited attention to how written poems reinterpret these symbols for modern moral, emotional, and literary effect. The current study addresses this gap by examining how *Eran Ọ̀sìn* bridges both sacred and mundane dimensions of Yorùbá symbolic animality. The poem invokes the spiritual resonance of the goat, traditionally a sacrificial animal associated with atonement and submission to explore broader philosophical themes such as fate, duty, and communal expectation. Thus, the poem functions as both a cultural archive and a literary meditation on Yorùbá beliefs.

Ogunmodede (2021) in her study "*The Performative Power of Birds in Yorùbá Praise Poetry*" offers an incisive exploration into the symbolic and performative dimensions of avian figures in Yorùbá oral poetic traditions. Her work focuses particularly on birds such as the parrot (*eyékolé*) and pigeon (*eyé ewà*), interpreting them as spiritually significant messengers and metaphysical intermediaries within the Yorùbá cosmological imagination. Bankole (2021) examines "*Cultural Memory and Animal Imagery in Yorùbá Contemporary Verse*" examines the deliberate use of animal symbolism by Yorùbá poets as a strategy for preserving and transmitting cultural memory in an era of rapid modernization and socio-cultural transformation. His analysis focuses on how animals, especially those with ritual, domestic, or totemic associations in Yorùbá society are deployed in contemporary poetry to serve as mnemonic devices that recall communal values, traditional practices, and collective identities. Also, Adeoye et.al (2022), in their work titled "*A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Animal Totems in Some Selected Yorùbá Proverbs*", looks into the complex ways in which animal imagery within Yorùbá proverbs encapsulates moral instruction, cultural values, and societal expectations. The authors argue that animals such as the tortoise, goat, and chicken are deliberately selected as symbolic representations to mirror human behaviors and to enforce societal norms. The study delivers a detailed examination of Yorùbá society proverbs combined with their functional roles yet its main focus remains on oral tradition and its social settings. It does

not extensively explore how similar moral and cultural instructions are embedded within contemporary literary texts aimed at adult audiences.

Ajayi (2022) examines how contemporary Yorùbá poetry uses animal symbolism to explore traditional symbolism alongside modern social changes in his research "Tradition and Modernity in the Animal Symbolism of Contemporary Yorùbá Poetry." The study examines how animals especially household pets become literary tools in Yorùbá contemporary poetry to represent resistance against oppression and both the identity struggles faced by communities along with their traditional-versus-modernism cultural dilemma. Salawu (2023) in his work "*Domestic Animals as Metaphors of Exploitation in Urban Yorùbá Poetry*" explores how contemporary Yorùbá poets use animal imagery to critique pressing socio-political issues such as exploitation, inequality, and alienation in urban settings. He explains how these animals function as symbolic representations of people who live under economic oppression as they become subject to unending work activities while receiving no recognition or payment. His investigation centers on political economic analysis, though he neglects the traditional cultural meanings of the animals after their depiction.

The present study seeks to extend Salawu's knowledge by not only examining the critical function of animals in conveying socio-political messages but also by delving into the cultural and traditional connotations that these animals carry. Specifically, in *Eran Ọ̀sìn*, a domestic animal are not just a figure of exploitation or social critique but is imbued with rich cultural meaning. By expanding the scope of analysis to include not only social commentary but also the cultural dimensions of animal imagery, this study highlights how *Eran Ọ̀sìn* operates as both a critique of modern alienation and a reaffirmation of Yoruba cultural identity. The domestic animals in the poem embodies not just the pain of exploitation but also the resilience and spiritual continuity of Yoruba traditions, and makes it a powerful symbol of cultural survival amidst socio-political upheaval.

#### IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts cultural theory as presented in Douglas (1978) for the exposition and analysis of the poem under study. The theory assumes that every society is guided by its culture; it goes further to say that the world-view of a people is dictated by and anchored on the culture of the people. The world-view of a people is construed by the culture of the people. As scholars have explained, culture is the totality of the ways of life of a people. It encapsulates the beliefs, institutions, language, art the general norms and patterns of life of a people in any given society. Işola (2010: 1) quotes UNESCO (2002) as having defined culture as

The set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group, encompassing in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, tradition and beliefs.

It is possible to infer from the foregoing that all activities of man and style of living revolve round culture.

Douglas (1978), believes that cultural theory is very relevant to the analysis of literary texts because literature is a true reflection of a people's culture. A creative writer writes within the context of his/her cultural experience. (Alonge 2003, Ogunsina 1992). For every work of art, it is always possible to see the mark of culture, imagination develops mostly within the ambits of cultural beliefs and cultural practices.

This theory is considered relevant for this study because the present study because the poem under study describes aspects of Yorùbá culture as they relate to the keeping of domestic animals and birds. The poet weaves cultural beliefs and cultural practices around domestic animals and birds, showing the ways Yorùbá people understands these animals and birds within their socio-cultural world-view.

#### V. ANALYSIS of the POEM

This section presents the themes relating to socio-cultural, socio-economic and other social activities of man as contained in the poem. The section is divided into sub-sections such that each sub-section discusses a theme. This allows for easy understanding of the poem.

##### 5.1. Naming

Naming is an important culture found across all the cultures of the world. It is means of identification. Names are very important among the Yorùbá people, and Yorùbá scholars in the field of onomastic have written extensively on the values and functions of names in the Yorùbá culture (Adeoye 1972, Fasiku 2006, Fakuade, Friday-Otun & Adeosun 2020). Names are given to express traditional and religious beliefs, historical events in the family, social values, hopes, aspirations and philosophy of the people. Abiodun, Olaiya & Oladeji (2022: 49) affirm that,

Yorùbá names have profound values in relation to the culture, philosophy, religion, social organisations and general world-view of the people; this explains why Yorùbá names are not mere tags of identification.

In the Yorùbá culture, human names fall into four categories personal names (orúkọ àbísọ), panegyrics (oríkì), predestine names (orúkọ àmútọrunwá) and appellations (inagije/àpèlẹ́). In the poem under study, the poet makes use of three of the different categories of names, namely personal names, panegyric and predestine names. The names are shown below:

Personal Names	Panegyric	Predestine
Bèégúndé	Àbíké	Ọ́jó, Táyé
Sùnmọ̀nù	Àṣàké	Àiná, Kẹ̀hìndé
Sàámú	Àríké	Ìlọ́rí, Ìdòwú

The first name under personal names, **Beegunde** is the shortened form of **Abeegunde**, a name associated with *Egúngún* cult. Shortening the name is a reflection of the tradition of name clipping in the Yorùbá culture (Lewis 2019). *Egúngún* cult a religious cult that celebrates the dead forefathers of adherents of the cult. Yearly, or in some cases every three years the adherents mark *egúngún* festival celebrate with fun and fanfare. They engage in elaborate celebration that involves eating, drinking and dancing. The other personal names mentioned **Sùnmọ̀nù** and **Sàámú** represent a reflection of Islam and Christianity in the Yorùbá society. *Sùnmọ̀nù* is the domesticated form of **Ishmael**, an Arabic name that is popular among adherents of Islam. *Sàámú* on the other hand, is the domesticated form of the name **Samuel**, which is common in Christendom. The poet possibly brings the name to show that apart from traditional religion of *egúngún* cult, other religions are found among the Yorùbá people. The names under panegyric and predestine category are popular in the Yorùbá culture. They do not require further discussions.

## 5.2. Religious Festivals

The poet draws attention to the three religious beliefs that are popular in the Yorùbá geographical space. They are traditional religion, Christianity and Islam. He does this by identifying religious festivals practiced by adherents of each of the religions. In the second stanza of the poem, the poet calls attention to the festivals.

<b>Iléyá</b> wọlé dé (line 7)	Ileya sets in.
<b>Kérésì</b> wọ̀dẹ̀ dé (line 9)	Christmas sets in.
<b>Eégún</b> dé sí káà lágbàlá (line 11)	Masquerades arrive into their groves.

**Iléyá** is the Muslim festival celebrated to mark a covenant between Allah and Prophet Ibrahim as contained in the Holy Quran. The festival symbolizes the veneration of Prophet Ibrahim's ultimate sacrifice of his son following the command of Allah. Prophet Ibrahim was in the process of doing as commanded when Allah gave him a ram in place of the child prepared to be sacrificed. The festival also marks the climax of Muslim's pilgrimage to Makkah/Mecca. A very important aspect of the festival in the Islamic culture is the sacrifice of a big ram, this explains line 8 of the poem that says:

*Sùnmọ̀nù mágbò funfun báláú (line 10) Sùnmọ̀nù took a very white ram.*

The poet recognizes this as the hallmark of **Iléyá** festival among Muslims.

The second religious festival mentioned is **Kérésì**, a festival held among Christians to mark the birth of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the corner stone of Christianity; as such, Christians mark Christmas with a fun and funfair; they dress in their best attires, and every household prepares enough to eat and drink, and to entertain guests. Thus, the line:

*Sàámú táwọ́ séwúré abàmù rẹ̀dẹ̀rẹ̀dẹ̀. Sàámú picks a big and fattened she goat.*

Saamu picks the goat to celebrate the festival as dictated by the Yorùbá culture that requires festivals to be celebrated with fun and funfair.

The third religious festival mentioned in the poem is *ọ̀dún eégún* 'eégún/egúngún festival', a Yorùbá traditional festival usually observed in memory of the dead. Yorùbá people believe that that dead are in constant watch of the affairs and activities of the living. The dead are believed to have the power to bless or condemn the living to severe punishment. It is, therefore, part of the Yorùbá ways of life to appease the dead by celebrating them at least once in a year or once in every three years to attract their blessings. It is in the light of this that the poet writes that,

*Bèégúndé nawọ́ móbukọ́ tó sẹ̀pọ̀n lanba Bèégúndé picked a big he-goat.*

The essence of snatching a big and matured he-goat is to slaughter it for the feast that goes with the *egúngún* festival.

From the foregoing in this section, it is established that the poet demonstrates a very good knowledge of the religious festivals in the Yorùbá society. The poet rightly identifies two festivals associated with the two foreign religions in the Yorùbá society, and one of the many festivals observed in the traditional religion.

## 5.3. Values within the Household

The first stanza of the poem describes domestic values of some domestic animals within the household. The first line of the poem tells about dogs being used in the house to clean up excrements of toddlers in the

household. In the Yorùbá traditional setting, toilets and stooling bowls were not common, toddlers and little children stool or defecate anywhere in the open. However dogs are immediately called to eat up excrement. This explains the first two lines of the poem that read thus.

Àbíké lájá	(line 1)	Àbíké owns a dog
Ó kómí jẹ nínú ilé	(line 2)	It licks excrement in the house

The poet demonstrates awareness of this traditional practice among the Yorùbá people. Almost every home had a dog in the traditional setting for a number of reasons and one of the reasons, as the poet submits is to lick excrement. Other reasons not mentioned by the poet is using dogs to hunt, and using dogs for security. However, the poems speaks only one, which is licking excrement. The fact that dogs eat up excrement is found in the Yorùbá proverb that says,

Àgùntàn tó bá bájá rìn á jẹgbẹ.	A sheep that keeps the company of a dog will eat excrement.
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The proverbs attest to the fact that dogs are used to licking excrement; the proverb says that when a sheep keeps the company of a dog, it will acquire the skill of licking excrement.

The third and fourth lines of the poem speak of one of the values of a hen, a domestic bird in the household. Hens are known to consume cockroaches, this explains the popular saying in Yorùbá,

Aáyán ò le jǹjọ afẹ níwájú adiyẹ.	A cockroach cannot dance leisurely in the presence of a hen.
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When a cockroach is caught in the house, it is thrown to a chicken/hen for consumption. In the same vein, when cockroaches are discovered in the corner of the house, or in a container in the house, chickens are invited to consume them. This explains lines 2 and 3 in the poem.

Àṣàkẹ ládiyẹ òkòkó	Àṣàkẹ owns a hen.
Ó saáyán jẹ lọdẹ.	It eats up cockroaches at the corner of the room.

The fifth and the sixth lines equally speak of the usefulness of a cat in the house. Cats are known to hunt down rats in the house, their (cats) best food as far as the Yorùbá traditional setting reveals are rats. For this reason, every household keeps at least a cat to ward off the menace of rats. Lines five and line six read thus,

Àríkẹ lólóginní músùúrù	(line 5)	Àríkẹ owns a cat
Ó peku jẹ ní kẹrẹ iyàrá.	(line 6)	It eats up rats at the corner of the room.

From the foregoing in this section, the poet speaks of the importance of dogs, cats and chickens/hens in helping to preserve hygienic environment in the household. Dogs lick excrements thereby reducing the hazard of having flies carrying bacteria from excrement to food items and different surfaces in the house. In the same vein, chickens/hens and cats consume roaches and rats respectively thereby checking them from carrying bacteria from their body into food items and cooking utensils, and also from destroying clothing materials and other valuables in the household.

#### 5.4. Socio-economic Values

The poem reveals that domestic animals have socio-economic values. The third stanza of the poem talks about transportation of human beings and of goods, the stanza also talks of the nutritional value of providing milk. Line one to line four of the stanza talks about the usefulness of horses in transporting humans, and line 5 and line six reveals that animals have nutritional value. The first two lines read thus;

Ọ̀jó fẹ rebi	(line 13)	Ọ̀jó planned to travel
Ẹ́sín gbé e ó sáré	(line 14)	A horse carried him and raced away.

The two lines confirm the value of horses in the area of transportation. As revealed in the poem, Ọ̀jó planned to travel and a horse became the valuable source of transportation for Ọ̀jó. Similarly, Àinà planned to move good items from one destination to the other, and a camel became the valuable source of transporting the goods. Lines 14 and 15 of the poem read thus,

Àinà dirù silẹ	(line 15)	Àinà had goods to transport
Kétékétẹ gberù pọ́n sẹ́yìn	(line 16)	A camel carried the goods on its back.

The last two lines of the poem speak of the nutritional value of a cow. The poet writes that,

Ìlọ́rí ń wá wàrà.	(line 17)	Ìlọ́rí wanted milk.
Màlúù fun ní wàrà mu	(line 18)	A cow gave him milk.

Humans need milk because of its nutritional value. Cows are known to be a good source of consumable milk that is good for human health, thus, Ìlọ́rí turns to a cow to get milk.

Reading the poem further, the poet writes on the economic value and other social values of domestic animals. According to the poet, they are used to create wealth, and also used to pay for social obligations. Line one of the 4th stanza of the poem says that a particular character in the poem Táyé needed (to spend) money, he took his sheep to the market and sold it (for money). This implies that it is possible to create wealth by keeping animals and birds. Whenever a person who keeps domestic animals needs money, the option of taking one or some of the animals to the market for sale is always open.

Táyé fẹ́ nàwó	(line 19)	Táyé needed money.
Ó mágùntàn rojà, ó dowó	(line 20)	He went to the market to sell his sheep.

Further on the socio-economic value, the poem speaks of an important item in the payment of dowry among the Yorùbá people. Payment is a dowry is an important social obligation that must be fulfilled before a groom a marriage is considered legitimate at the traditional level. In the poem, it is stated that,

Kéhìndé fẹ́ sẹ̀yàwó	(line 22)	Kéhìndé planned to marry a wife.
Ó méwùrẹ́ lọ réé fàna ẹ̀	(line 21)	He took a goat to his in-laws.

A goat is one of the items commonly demanded for as part of the dowry by the family of a bride. In this regard, Kéhìndé performed the statutory social obligation by taking a goat to his in-laws as part of the dowry so that his in-laws can give consent to his wish to marry their daughter.

Another aspect of social issue covered by the poem is payment of fine as in the traditional way. An offender was usually taken to palace of a community king to answer to his/her offence. A community king and his chiefs usually preside over cases of offence to the law of the land. Upon pronouncing judgment of guilt, a culprit was usually fined. One very common item in the list of fines was always an animal; a goat, a pig, a sheep, or a ram. The poem speaks about this in lines 23 and 24 shown below.

Ìdòwú sẹ́ sófín ilú	(line 23)	Ìdòwú violated the rules of the community.
Ó mèlẹ̀dẹ́ lo, ọ̀rọ̀ bùsẹ́	(line 24)	He paid a fine of a pig, and was set free.

The lines affirm that Ìdòwú is arraigned in the community court, and to clear himself, he presented a pig as fine, and he is set free.

## VI. GENERAL OVERVIEW and CONCLUSION

A careful look at section 5 and the sub-sections under it reveals that the poem 'Èran Ọ̀sìn' is a reflection of some aspects of the social and cultural life of the Yorùbá people in relation to their keeping domestic animals and birds. The poem shows that domestic animals and birds are valued for a number of socio-cultural reasons. The last four lines of the poem reinforce this observation as the poet makes passionate appeal to people to take care of domestic animals and animals in general. The poet cautions people to avoid harming them, and to refrain from causing them distress. The last four lines reads thus,

È má làgi méwùrẹ́ mi	Do not hit my goat with stick.
È má sàgùntàn mi lókò	Do not throw stones at my sheep.
Èyàn tó mò'wúlò ẹ̀ranko	People who know the value of animals.
Kó tọ́ju nnkan ọ̀sìn	Must take care of domestic animals.

These four lines are very important to the entire message of the poem because the lines represent a clarion call to all and sundry to give particular attention to the life and survival of domestic animals and animals in general. This poem shows that domestic animals occupy an important space in the lives and existence of the Yorùbá people. Hence, the cultural significance and traditional use of domestic animals in Yorùbá society is a way of preserving them through cultural beliefs and practices.

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