

**Critical Reaction: Annotated Bibliography of Soyayya Genre
Criticisms from Newspapers, 1991-1999¹**

Professor Abdalla Uba Adamu
Department of Education
Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria

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Introduction and Analytical Framework

The current meaning generally attached to the term literature — a body of writing by a people or by peoples using the same language — is a relatively modern one. The term itself, derived from the Latin word *littera* ("letter of the alphabet"; *litterae*, "letters"), is ancient enough; but in ancient times literature tended to be considered separately in terms of kinds of writing, or genres as they came to be called in the 18th century when the term literature took on its modern meaning.

Literature as a whole and in its parts means various things to various writers, critics, and historians. At one extreme, it may be held that anything written is literature. Though this position is seldom held, that at the other extreme—literature is only the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and *Hamlet*—is slightly more popularly held. Between these extremes, attitudes vary widely. For some critics, a hierarchy exists: tragedy is superior to comedy; the short story is inferior to the novel. For other critics, qualitative criteria apply: poetry is verse that succeeds; the limerick and nonsense verse are failed poetry. Critics also differ on the purpose or ends of literature. Many ancient critics — and some modern ones — hold that the true ends of literature are to instruct and delight. Others — a majority of the modern ones, probably — hold that pleasure is the sole end.

Literature is a form of human expression. But not everything expressed in words — even when organized and written down — is counted as literature. Those writings that are primarily informative — technical, scholarly, journalistic — would be excluded from the rank of literature by most, though not all, critics. Certain forms of writing, however, are universally regarded as belonging to literature as an art. Individual attempts within these forms are said to succeed if they possess *artistic merit* and to fail if they do not. The problem, however, is that the nature of artistic merit is less easy to define than to recognize. The writer need not even pursue it to attain it. On the contrary, a scientific exposition might be of great literary value and a pedestrian poem of none at all.

Thus, even at the beginning of Western literary criticism, a controversy already exists. Is the artist or writer a technician, like a cook or an engineer, who designs and constructs a sort of machine that will elicit an aesthetic response from his audience? Or is he a virtuoso who above all else expresses himself

¹ This paper represents the most comprehensive bibliographic listing of criticism about contemporary Hausa prose fiction in Northern Nigeria from local sources.

and, because he gives voice to the deepest realities of his own personality, generates a response from his readers because they admit some profound identification with him? This antithesis endures throughout western European history--Scholasticism versus Humanism, Classicism versus Romanticism, Cubism versus Expressionism — and survives to this day in the common judgment of our contemporary artists and writers. It is surprising how few critics have declared that the antithesis is unreal, that a work of literary or plastic art is at once constructive and expressive, and that it must in fact be both.

It is this search for the meaning of literature that informs the debates about the values and directions of contemporary Hausa creative writings in the last decade of first millennium.

Generations of Hausa Writers

The first generation (1933-1945) are what I can call *classical Hausa literature*. There is no meter for making this judgement, except for linguistic style.² I argue that the linguistic styles used in this category of books was the quintessentially "correct" and therefore classical Hausa. The strong links between literary acquisition and the Islamic erudition connotes an Islamic and cultural respectability to this mode of expression. Further, the books were written mainly by scholars with deep Islamic roots (who actually took some convincing to even agree to write in the *boko* scripts in the first place, considering such activity as dilution of their Islamic scholarship). As Dr. Rupert East, the arch-Svengali of the Hausa classical literature, exasperatedly noted³,

"...the first difficulty was to persuade these Mallams that the thing was worth doing. The influence of Islam produces an extremely serious-minded type of person. The art of writing moreover, being intimately connected in his mind with his religion, is not to be treated lightly. Since the religious revival at the beginning of the last (19th) century, nearly all the original work produced by Northern Nigerian authors has been either purely religious or written with a strong religious motive. Most of it was written in Arabic, which, like Latin in Medieval Europe, was considered a more worthy medium of any work of importance than the mother tongue." (East, 1936 p. 350).

Further, the sentence structure in the early classical Hausa books no longer reflects common modes of speech. The language used in the books was the "accepted gentleman's" mode of speech, free of vulgarities and virtually academic. It has to be, considering that the books were State-sponsored, and that also they were essentially aimed at grade schools. The sponsorship by the State, in the form of colonial administration, itself under British Conservative Party influence, ensured books written in prose that the British would approve. Thus books such as *Ruwan Bagaja*, *Magana Jari Ce*, *Shehu Umar*, *Gandoki*

² Umaru Ahmed and Bello Daura argue that the classical Hausa — the meter I use in this categorization — is "Hausa language and literary styles which have been greatly influenced by Arabic and Islamic tradition — as opposed to Modern Hausa, which connotes Hausa language and literary styles which have been influenced by Western Civilization and culture through the agency of the English Language." (p. 7). See their *An Introduction to Classical Hausa and the Major Dialects*, Zaria, Northern Nigerian Publishing Company, 1970.

³ Rupert East., "A First Essay in Imaginative African Literature", *Africa*, Vol 9, No. 3, 1936, pp. 350-357.

reflect these styles. Consequently, the strong links between these early Hausa classics and educational endeavors confer on them an elite status not afforded to other forms of Hausa fiction.

The second generation (1950-1979) of writers are what I consider *neoclassical Hausa*, who seemed to be awed by, and rooted to, the literary aesthetics of the classical Hausa generation. There was a studied attempt at humor and correct mode of speech, and behavior. The censoring hand of the State machinery is also very present in these books, especially as the task of publishing them was undertaken by the State-sponsored agencies. Further, the creation of more high schools in the era, meant more books needed to be used as set books for Hausa studies, and as such a large volume of these books were produced and the major examination body recommended them as textbooks. Consequently, books such as *Gogan Naka*, *Kitsen Rogo*, *Iliya Dan Maikarfi*, *Sihirtaccen Gari*, and *Tauraruwa Mai Wutsiya* all became comparable with the classics, but with an admixture of fantasy, realism and even a dash of inter-stellar travel (*Tauraruwa Mai Wutsiya*) Their focus also altered to reflect problems of urbanization and the greater complexities of an emergent semi-technological society.

The third generation (1980-1985) can be considered *modern Hausa classics*, where the accepted linguistic modes were used in the narratives. However, it seemed that Hausa fiction was emerging from the era of fantasy into a firmer reality. The biggest blow to the generation, however was the removal of State chaperonage from the literary scene. About seven of the nineteen books in this category were the products of competitions to encourage writers (held in 1978 and 1980). NNPC was no longer the dominant publisher either, publishing only the seven competition winners out of the nineteen books. Thus *Karshen Alewa Kasa*, *Tura Ta Kai Bango*, *Tsumangiyar Kan Hanya*, *Gaskiya Dokin Karfe* were attempts to retain a degree of relevancy in an increasingly changing world. But the stilted presentation of "correct" behavior could not capture the attention (or the money) of a new age generation of readers still in their adolescence. The writers did not continue much writing beyond these first attempts.

Each of these three first generations operated under more less isolated and protected medium. The books were published by large multi-national publishers, and they were keen to emphasize marketability and acceptability. Matters of style, language, format and presentation therefore were rigorously enforced if not by the authors, then by the copy editors of the companies.

The Millennium Generation and Ballistic Urbanism

The fourth generation (from 1984) heralded the arrival of a new age generation. The modern classical Hausa writers of the early 1980s seemed to have retired their pens, since most of them were one-hit wonders; producing a text that was well received and used as a textbook for West African School Certificate Hausa examinations. Just like the Hausa neoclassical and classical writers before them, they enjoyed the patronage of the State or multinational corporate publishing houses, eager to cash on the burgeoning high school population, freshly spewed from the pools of the mass educational policy of Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme of 1976.

When stringent economic reforms ('austerity') hit, the publishing companies felt it, and they had no option but re-prioritize and withdraw their patronage of

vernacular works. It took two competitions (1978 and 1980) to tease out more writers who fall neatly into the third generation, but still using the modern Hausa mode. Some, however, hark back at the classical Hausa formats (e.g. *Amadi Na Malam Amah* which can draw a parallel with *Ruwan Bagaja*).

The newcomers gate-crashed the Hausa literary scene with ballistic urbanism, divesting readers from the village simplicity of the earlier Hausa classics. They were cultural cyborgs: an uneasy confluence between the two rivers of Hausa traditionalism and modern hybrid urban technological society. Strangely enough, they did not build on the thematic styles of their “modernist uncles”. Thus this new generation of writers avoided giving too much attention to marxist politics (as, for instance in the earlier *Tura Ta Kai Bango*), gun-toting dare-devils, drug cartels (e.g. as in *Karshen Alewa Kasa*), prostitution or alcohol consumption. Writing in uncompromising and unapologetic Modern Hausa (often interlaced with English words to reflect the new urban lexicon of *Ingausa*), they focused their attention on the most *emotional* concern of urban Hausa youth: love and marriage; thus falling neatly into the romanticist mold, or *soyayya*.

In this respect, they unwittingly borrow antecedents from the European *sentimental* novel. This is because, as was the case of the 18th century European genre, the new Hausa prose fiction *soyayya* writer exploits the reader's capacity for tenderness, compassion, or sympathy to a disproportionate degree by presenting a beclouded or unrealistic view of the subject. In Europe, the genre arose partly in reaction to the austerity and rationalism of the Neoclassical period. The sentimental novel exalted feeling above reason and raised the analysis of emotion to a fine art. This was perfectly reflected in the saccharine dialogs, often interlaced with bursts of long songs characteristic of the new Hausa romantic fiction.

The economic boom of the country had gone into nosedive by the time these literary “mercenaries” and stalwarts arrived. Thus they were not guaranteed schools to proceed after high schools; and no automatic scholarships wait for them. For many who were able to eke out living, in petty artisan occupations (e.g. cap-making, sewing clothes) or lowly clerical chores in government offices, their next attention was settling down and getting into a humdrum of a family life. For many it was a shock to learn that they cannot marry their loved ones due to their abject poverty, and that the girl of their dreams (literally) had been given away, often against her wish, to a rich pot-bellied *Alhaji* with tons of cash to sway everyone's minds. For many, these experiences were enough to convert them to neophyte literati, and the focus of their angst is clearly outpouring of imaginary romanticism. Thus the *soyayya* genre made its appearance. Consequently one of the most successful books of the emergent genre was the autobiographical *In Da so Da Kauna* by Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, written in anger in 1990 and published in 1991.

Other writers, especially the women, see life through the prism of a soap opera and therefore chronicle the day-to-day experiences of *kishi* (resentment amongst co-wives) and the issue of female empowerment through making it clear that girls have a choice in deciding the direction of their lives. No matter the medium of expression, the end message is clear: personal empowerment, and the right to choice. It is this message that drew the flak on the themes and subject matter of their writing.

Critical Mass

Ibrahim Sheme has to take the credit of being the journalist/writer (*Kifin Rijjiya, The Malam's Potion*) who provided the first forum during which opinions can be shared on the emergent genre. As the literary editor of the Kaduna-based *Nasiha* (1991-1993) newspaper with Islamic leanings, he created a forum where opinions on both sides of the divide were expressed. If there was one instance in which the debates on the *soyayya* genre were said to have started it must have been in *Nasiha* of September 6, 1991 in which Ibrahim Sheme published an interview with Hauwa Ibrahim Sheriff of NTA Katsina, herself an author (*Ba A Nan Take Ba*). In the interview she claims that she wants to be different from the *soyayya* writing then in vogue because, in her opinion, readers were simply sick and tired of reading *soyayya* books.

This interview was thin edge of the wedge, and opened the floodgates of criticisms against the genre from readers of the paper. For a whole year the debate raged. Thus for the few years that *Nasiha* existed, there was a huge range of opinions on the *soyayya* genre from its readers; so much that Ibrahim Sheme has to close the debates and issue a final opinion on the issue as a referee. He sustained the debate, however, when he moved to *Mujallar Rana*, also based in Kaduna.

His eventual transfer to the *New Nigerian* newspapers and the appearance of a literary supplement — *The Write Stuff* — on Saturdays from December 2, 1995 provided an opportunity in which a wider academic focus is given to the genre (although the column was on general literary activities in the country, with emphasis on the North). The supplement was moved to Fridays from February 21, 1997 issue of *New Nigerian*. It moved once again to Saturday in a totally different paper, *New Nigerian Weekly* from Saturday 21, 1998. Since then, the supplement has run what it calls *The Great Soyayya Debate* on a regular basis, giving platforms for all shades of opinions. When Ibrahim Sheme resigned from the *New Nigerian Weekly* in September 1999 and moved to *Weekly Trust*, the *The Write Stuff* literary supplement was retained under different editorship. However, many literati in Hausa prose fiction felt that it was the end of the opportunities for any form of exposure in any newspaper of Hausa literature. This was more so because the *Weekly Trust* has cast itself in the "anti" new Hausa literature "camp", and thus many not give Ibrahim Sheme the creative freedom and leverage to allow the spirited debates that sustained the genre in *Nasiha, Rana, New Nigerian, and New Nigerian Weekly*. It was this anticipated lack of a voice that further acted as a motivation this book. It is hoped that it will serve as a coda to not only the first millennium and its impact on Hausa literature, but also open up new critical perspectives of the impact and significance of literature on youth in Muslim Northern Nigeria.

A turning point in the criticisms was the appearance of Ibrahim Malumfashi into the arena. A university lecturer and a writer (*Wankan Wuta*), Ibrahim Malumfashi's entry into the fray (*Akalar Rubutun Adabin Hausa Na Bukatar Sauyi*, *Nasiha*, 15/11/91) conferred on the debates academic legitimacy. The central core of his criticism was extolling what I call the *Imamian Paradigm of Hausa Literature* which urges those with creative skills to follow the footsteps of the classic Hausa prose fiction writers of the 1930s. Quite simply, he wants a "proper" literature to be written for Hausa youth, rather than "trash" novels. It was only in July 1992 that Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino (*Zamani, Zo Mu Tafi*,

Nasiha 24/7/92) by then the most successful *soyayya* author, replied to the critics in the paper.

The central argument of Ibrahim Malumfashi was that *soyayya* novels are not *literature*, but “unserious” (*gwanjo*) pamphlets, and within the literary circles, little more than chapbooks; as such, they do not deserve the intellectual attention they are given. This was more so since they pose a danger of stifling “real” literature (*orijina*). Their market-driven force earned them the label of *Kano Market Literature*, to reflect how transient they are expected to be, just like anything in a market.

Perhaps the contempt with which the educated literary establishment has for the *soyayya* genre (as epitomed by Ibrahim Malumfashi and Danjuma Katsina) came about because of the language styles used by the writers. Without exception, they all write in the common language used in ordinary conversations. Since such love-laden words are, within Hausa cultural behavioral norm, not normatively used in conventional speeches, they tended to appear puerile, or at worst, vulgar. The dialogs are therefore not the speeches of a “gentleman”. Like Latin, the proper language of Hausa classical literature was an upright polished academic language. And as in the case of the evolution of Vulgar Latin that heralded the appearance of Romance Languages, in the 9th century, first in northern France and then in Spain and Italy, the new Hausa novelists were seen as mutilating the proper language of literary expression by using common (vulgar) “barbarian” of an increasingly urbanized Hausa lexicon.

Also many of the antagonists were against the perceived moral perversion seemingly encouraged by the dialogs in the *soyayya* books. In one extreme case, a critic labeled the writings *kafirci* (as in Danjuma Katsina’s *Zuwa ga Marubuta Soyayya*, Gwagwarmaya, 11, 1993) because they encourage behaviors that are anti-Islamic teachings (e.g. mixing of sexes, promiscuity). Other critics were against the genre because the writers empower girls to think for themselves (Imam T/Wizirchi in 1999). Since the predominant theme of the early writers in the genre (1990-1995) was on forced marriages, many critics were scandalized that the issue of forced marriage was given such prominence. Imam T/Wizirchi, for instance, was of the opinion that girls have no right to a marriage partner of their choice, and must, according to Islamic injunctions as understood by him, accept the husband of their parent’s choice in the matter. *Soyayya* writers commit the greatest disservice to the Islamic polity in Northern Nigeria, according to such critics, by giving adolescent girls the belief that they can reject their parental choices in marriage.

In another instance, a critic blamed *soyayya* writers, in particular Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino’s *In Da So* for being catalytic in the death of teenage girl about to be married to someone she does not love. (Hamisu Abdullahi Gumel’s *Of Hausa Novels and Moral Decadence*, New Nigerian Weekly 16/5/98). The Sunday New Nigerian of November 24, 1991 carried out a front-page story of a 16-year old girl who drowned herself by jumping into a well to face a fate apparently worse than death in the hands of a suitor she does not love, and whom her parents were insistent on marrying her. The father of the girl, full of remorse, “...appealed to other parents not to force their children to marry the person they do not love...”

Yet this case, coming at the height of the anti-soyayya genre debate, sparked off further criticism, especially as in the just published *In Da So*, Part I, the heroine jumped into a well to commit suicide. But it was not clear whether the unfortunate girl who died was motivated by reading *In Da So*; more so as the fictitious heroine in the book *did not die*.

Still yet another line of attack on the genre was that the writers use settings, scenes and plots that are not characteristic of the Hausa society. Flashy expensive cars, massive white-washed mansions, ultra-modern living rooms with cable television, satellite dishes (*tauraron dan Adam*), elegant chaises longues, and traveling itinerary that includes London, Amsterdam, and Saudi Arabia are all pointed out as lifestyles of the rich and the famous of Euro-American cultural circuits (Ibrahim Malumfashi in 1991, Muhammad Kabir Assada in 1994). This led to further accusations that many authors of the genre merely adapt Indian movie screenplays to Hausa settings (merely changing the names). The Indian movie connection actually led to a full-fledged field research on parallel modernities in contemporary Hausa society, as reported by Larkin (1995, 1997).

Some other critics became personal in their attacks, accusing the writers of being high school drop-outs unable to further their education (Ibrahim Malumfashi in 1991). Such writers, according to this criticism, have only passed Hausa Language in their school certificate examinations, and that was what gave them the courage to believe that they can write novels of any meaning (Shu'aibu H. Gambo in 1997). Their lack of higher educational qualifications were therefore seen as a serious limitation to their ability to write truly great fiction in Hausa language.

The most extreme form of criticism, however, was in response to calls for censorship of the books to protect adolescent morality by the Kano State Government — where most of the books were written, published, and distributed. The Kano State Government established an 11-man Book and Film Censorship Committee in December 1996 to monitor the type of literature and video films that are flooding the market.

It was the case the often the criticism were made after reading a few books, and suddenly a vitriolic attack is heaped on them. As the tide showed no intention of receding, some of the critics changed tack. They grudgingly started looking at the books dispassionately, and started reading them in larger quantities to sample as diverse opinions as possible. In a dramatic turn-around, Danjuma Katsina who had in 1993 labeled the writings as *kafirci*, had by the end of the decade started categorizing the books into "the good, the bad and the ugly" (Danjuma Katsina in 1997): thus giving his own opinion of the quality of the reading matter contained in the books. By 1998 Danjuma Katsina had written a "best of" article in which he awarded encomiums on the what he considers the best books of the genre. With dispassionate exposure, attack therefore turned into praise and constructive criticism.

It could be possible that the venom shown on the books might have muted the approaches of many of the writers, and led to materials that were less open to such attacks so that by the late 1990s, they are becoming more establishmentarian. It could also be possible that the events described by the

writers in their books are so true that denying them will not make them go away. Some critics would therefore prefer to roll with the tide and urge corrective measures on part of the society as a result of the social ills described in the books.

For many critics, the *soyayya* genre was just a passing fad, which was hopefully to be stifled by the economic morass the country had entered (Ibrahim Malumfashi in 1999). Indeed in a wide-ranging survey which includes prose in Hausa culture, Graham Furniss devoted only 3 pages to the genre. Clearly dismissive of their literary value, he points out that

“...the novels appear to owe more to English-language publishing of the Mills and Boon, and James Hadley Chase variety than to any Hausa precedent. As far as I am able gauge, their audience, buying books as never before, is also predominantly young, the product of the policy of Universal Primary Education initiated during the 1980s. In 1993 a typical novel of 100 pages by a member *Raina Kama* was retailing at 15 or 20 naira, compared with 5 Naira for a coke or 30 for a bowl of rice and stew...”⁴

Yet the seeming fact that youth, *buying books as never before*, were prepared to use their money to buy books, while the money was enough to buy a meal, indicates the forcefulness of the phenomenon.

Thus the genre kept moving from strength to strength, despite the economic crunch. The fledging authors always seem to source money to print their books — a feat their modernist uncles were unable to do — and the audience always seem to find money to buy them. Many authors graduated from printers to publishers, through registration with the National Library Board and acquisition of sets of ISBN allocations. The appearance of the ISBN on a book in Nigeria confer on it published legitimacy, and in this regard Gidan Dabino (Ado Ahmad’s outfit) was among the first to publish their books professionally.

By far the most faithful defender of the *soyayya* genre from 1991-1995 was Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, who found himself catapulted to fame with the publication of his second novel (the first was not then published) *In Da So Da Kauna*, Part I (translated later as *The Soul of My Heart*) in 1990. If one book can be named as opening the floodgates for the *soyayya* genre, then it was this book. Previously there had been books on the genre which actually started appearing in 1984, especially with Talatu Ahmad’s *Rabin Raina*. But that was still the era of severe financial difficulties for many companies and individuals, so the Hausa book literature industry was merely a trickle.

Despite the economic hardships, the new decade of 1990 provided individuals with an opportunity to invest their earnings on self-publishing their tentative forays into creative writing. The availability of computing facilities, particularly WordPerfect software and later Microsoft Windows made it easier for many of the manuscripts to suddenly appear as books. The massive success of *In Da so Da Kauna* proved to many standing on the sidelines that it can be done, and it can be profitable. The acceptance of the novel among its target audience, the

⁴ Graham Furniss., *Poetry, Prose and Popular Culture in Hausa*, p. 55. London: International African Institute/Edinburgh University Press, 1996.

Hausa youth, also indicates that there was a ready audience for it, and their response to Ado Ahmad (which made him re-print the book many times; the final print-run was over 50,000) is a clear confirmation that the genre, “warts and all” (after Ibrahim Sheme), has arrived.

While words are being flayed all over the pages of mainly vernacular newspapers mainly condemning the genre, only Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, and to a lesser extent Yusuf Muhammad Adamu (*Idan So Cuta Ne*) stood out as a staunch defender of the genre. Other authors kept a muted silence (although as one wag puts it, “they were laughing all the way to the bank!”) and kept churning out the books.

Throwing Stones in the Vicinity of Glasshouses

Without exception the criticism center around male-female interactions which were forcefully brought out into the open. This is scandalous to a society conditioned to masking its emotions. Thus scenes of gamboling, frolicking and swimming in bikinis and trunks (e.g. in Bala Anas Babinlata’s *Kulu*) were all labeled *kafirci* and influences of Euro-American cultural perversion — this from the same critics able to condone military dictators stashign away billions of the country’s currencies in foreign banks.

Of course if the gamboling and romancing hugs were done within the medium of marriage, even if outside the house, apparently it is acceptable to critics, although it should still not be described as it was considered a private affair.

And yet such sexuality was openly described in at least one highly acclaimed Hausa modernist novel, *Karshen Alewa Kasa* (pp. 8-9), which Ibrahim Malumfashi described as the “most meaningful” book he has ever read (*Nasiha*, 15/11/91) and yet this moral lapse (albeit between a married couple in their farm) was hardly mentioned by any of the critics of the *soyayya* genre. This is because such critics had never actually read beyond a few Hausa neoclassical or Hausa modernist novels. Indeed, for many, the attention given to earlier writers was in response to the revulsion evoked by the *soyayya* genre writers.

Further, the cover artwork of the *soyayya* genre books was one that drew the ire of Danjuma Katsina who labeled such artwork as *kafirci*. Yet a Hausa neoclassical book, *Sihirtaccen Gari* (itself a translation from a collection called *Ikra* by Sayid Kutub) has on its cover two entwined lovers (although all “properly” clothed). It was never pointed out that open display of such tender emotions is uncharacteristic of Hausa emotional pattern of behavior.

Perhaps the most controversial Hausa classic is *Dare Dubu Da Daya*, published in five volumes. This was a translation of Arabic *Alf Laylah Wa Laylah*, a collection of Oriental stories of uncertain date and authorship whose tales of Aladdin, Ali Baba, and Sindbad the Sailor have almost become part of Western folklore, and translated into English by Sir Richard Burton as *The Thousand Nights and a Night*, 16 vol. (10 vol., 1885; 6 supplementary vol., 1886-88). The raw sexuality of some of the stories, especially in vol. 5, was glossed over by critics of the *soyayya* genre. Containing gory salacious details of sexual promiscuity, it nevertheless became accepted as an adult text in a prudish Hausa society of the 1930s when it was translated by Mamman Kano and Frank Edgar. In the 1980s it was even being read over the radio! And yet to date,

there is no single *soyayya* book that described the vivid details of sexuality as in some of stories of *Dare Dubu Da Daya*.

Karshen Alewa Kasa, *Tsumagiyyar Kan Hanya*, *Zabi Naka*, *Turmin Danya* deal with themes of urbanism, corruption, politics, bureaucracy and technological society. *Turmin Danya*, even when moralizing, deals with sexual corruption of the worst order — a marriage man (to three wives) procuring young girls for extra-marital activities.

Karshen Alewa Kasa must have been good for other qualities, but certainly not its morality — the very accusations against *soyayya* writers. As Graham Furniss noted, "...marking a major departure from previous writing, the story (*Karshen Alewa Kasa*) is brim full of features of modern Nigeria: fast cars, booze, gambling, sex, violence...girl-friends who speak their minds in no uncertain terms...and a wide variety of stock characters from Northern Nigerian society..."⁵ Furniss further observes that, "...this novel owes more to James Hadley Chase, Fredrick Forsyth and the cinema of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* than to earlier Hausa writing..." (ibid).

An interesting correlation was found between *Ilya Dan Maikarfi* and an Old Russian and Russian traditional form of heroic narrative poetry *byliny*, transmitted orally. The oldest *byliny* belong to a cycle dealing with the golden age of Kievan Rus in the 10th-12th century. They centre on the deeds at the 10th-century court of Saint Vladimir I of Kiev. Prince Vladimir I and his court. One of the favorite heroes is the independent Cossack *Ilya Muromets of Murom*, who defended Kievan Rus from the Mongols⁶. Unlike the aristocratic heroes of most epics, Ilya was of peasant origin. He was an ordinary child who could not walk and who lived the life of a stay-at-home, sitting on top of the stove until he was more than 30 years old, when he discovered the use of his legs through the miraculous advice of some pilgrims. He was then given a splendid magic horse that became his inseparable companion (in the Hausa version, the horse is called *Kwalele*), and he left his parents' home for Vladimir's court. There he became the head of Vladimir's retainers and performed astonishing feats of strength. He killed the monster Nightingale the Robber and drove the Tatars out of the kingdom. His legend was the basis of the *Symphony No. 3* (1909-11; *Ilya Muromets*) by Reinhold Glière.

It was this tale that was adapted, although without much acknowledgement, by Ahmadu Ingawa as *Ilya Dan Maikarfi* (1968). And though in a foreign setting (or, as the Hausa story goes, "...in the Eastern lands") and, according to Pilaszewicz, un-Islamic ending (being turned into a stone), nevertheless it became readily identified with hero worship and neoclassical Hausa literature. Indeed it is clear that Ingawa uses Abubakar Imam's formula in translating and adapting tales with Eastern tinge to Hausa settings in *Ilya Dan Maikarfi*.

I will now present what is so far the most comprehensive annotated bibliography of criticisms on Contemporary Hausa Prose Fiction.

⁵ Furniss, *Poetry, Prose* ..., p. 40.

⁶ A more direct link was made by Yu. K. Scegllov, "...who identified Waldima (in *Ilya Dan Maikarfi*) with Prince Vladimir, and the mysterious town of Kib with Kiev." See Stanislaw Pilaszewicz, "Literature in the Hausa Language" in B. W. Andrzejewski, S. Pitaszewicz, and W. Tyloch (eds.), *Literatures in African Language: Theoretical Issues and Sample Surveys*. Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 224.

The Annotated Bibliographical Listings

Sherif, Hawwa Ibrahim., "Interview with Ibrahim Sheme", *Nasiha*, 6 September 1991. Seminal interview with an author (*Ba A Nan Take Ba*) and journalist which started the whole new Hausa literature debate. In the interview, the fiery tempered writer attacked the then new crop of Hausa novelists as being one-track minded with a singular focus on *soyayya*. She urges for a new direction in Hausa prose fiction.

Malumfashi, Ibrahim., "Akalar Rubutun Adabin Hausa Na Bu[atar Sauyi", *Nasiha*, Friday 15 November 1991, p. 7. This was one of the most structural and earliest attacks on the new Hausa writings. Coming from a writer (Hausa *Wankan Wuta*; English, *From the Eyes of My Neighbor*), an academician, this particular essay conferred on the polemics of new Hausa writings some form of legitimate authority. It also became the central point on the exposition of the virtues of what I call the *Imamian Paradigm of Hausa Literature* which sees the writings of Abubakar Imam era as being the quintessential and only relevant Hausa literature. This article is the central core of Ibrahim Malumfashi's main attack on the *soyayya* genre and the new Hausa prose fiction (from 1984). This article became the main focus of praise and attack by both writers and readers of the genre. Malumfashi accuses the writers of being culturally irrelevant. However, condescendingly extols a neoclassic Hausa text, *{arshen Alewa {asa* as being the most meaningfully and well-crafted book he has read, and urges those with creative skills to follow the footsteps of the classic writers to purify their literary expressions. Suggests that there are themes for Hausa writers to work on, such as poverty, education, economic depravity, rather than romantic escapism which seemed to be the only focus of the new prose fiction writers.

Bichi, Maigari Ahmed., "The Author's Imagination" *The Triumph*, Tuesday March 12 and 17, 1992, p. 7 each issue. Also published as "Kano Market Literature: The Man Behind It", *New Nigerian Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, June 20, 1997. *Eulogizes Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino as a writer and provides an insight into the Mal. Ado's motive for writing by suggesting that Mal. Ado was motivated by personal experiences of deception in love affairs, as reflected in Mal. Ado's first book, *Inda So Da {auna* (1992). Bichi claims that after the book was published, the author received about 979 letters from various readers all over the country, of which 326 were from male readers, the rest of 653 were all from female readers — many of whom actually visited his house.

Gidan Dabino, Ado Ahmad., "Zamani, Zo Mu Tafi!" *Nasiha*, Friday 24, 31, July 1992, p. 4. *Rejoinder to Ibrahim Malumfashi (*Akalar Rubutun Adabin Hausa Na Bu[atar Sauyi*, *Nasiha* 15/11/92). Times change, and we must change with them! Ado Ahmad argues that Ibrahim Malumfashi should not have been disdainful of the current crop of writers on the basis of their lack of deeper Western education or literary training; that creativity resides in everyone, regardless of training or qualification. Berates Ibrahim Malumfashi who eulogized specifically a neoclassical Hausa novel, *{arshen Alewa {asa* which Malumfashi in his original article claims to be the most meaningful book he has read. Ado Ahmad asks why *Magana Jari Ce* a classical Hausa novel (by Late Alhaji Abubakar

Imam, the “father” of Hausa prose fiction) is still being printed, whereas the neoclassical {*arshen Alewa* {*asa* is deleted; was it because the classical text was more significant than the neoclassical one?

Malumfashi, Ibrahim., “Tsakanin ‘Gwanjo’ Da ‘Orijina’, *Nasiha*, Friday 7, 14, August 1992. *A rejoinder to Ado Ahmad’s rejoinder (*Zamani, Zo Mu Tafi, Nasiha* 24, 31/7/92). Laments being misunderstood as a critic and researcher by most Hausa writers. Attempts to educate readers, in particular Ado Ahmad, on his understanding of the differences between literature (*orijina*, as reflected in *Kitsen Rogo, Karshen Alewa Kasa, Jiki Magayi*) and novels (*gwanjo*, as reflected in all *soyayya* genre), which was his main argument in the first article. Argues that virtually all the current crop of Hausa writings, especially *soyayya* are not literature. Rhetorically asks why neoclassical Hausa texts like *Kitsen Rogo, {arshen Alewa {asa* are used as set books in Secondary school curriculum, and not a single *soyayya* book, and answers that schools do not exist to corrupt the minds of youth (which he argues the *soyayya* books do).

Adamu, Yusuf Muhammad., “Ina da Ja, Ibrahim Malumfashi!” *Nasiha*, Friday 21 August 1992, p. 4. *A writer defending his book (*Idan So Cuta Ne*) which was attacked by Ibrahim Malumfashi (*Nasiha* 15 November 1991) accusing the writer of using European settings with Hausa names. Argues that his contexts simply reflected the contemporary Hausa upwardly mobile and Nouveau rich characters.

Gambo, Shehu., “Jigon Soyayya: Holoko Hadarin Kaka”, *Nasiha*, Friday 21 August 1992, p. 4. *An antagonist and follower of Ibrahim Malumfashi (q.v.). Defends Malumfashi’s attack on *soyayya* genre and accuses Ado Ahmad of being commercially, rather than intellectually, motivated.

Giginyu, Nasiru Mudi., “{ aramin Sani { u} umi Ne: Martani Ga Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino” *Nasiha*, Friday 21, Friday 28 August 1992, p. 4. *A vitriolic attack on Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, particularly the rejoinder he wrote to the paper on 24 July 1992. The writer accuses Mal. Ado of encouraging copy-cat behavior amongst Hausa adolescent girls. In particular, he argued that a girl called Fati Abdullahi in a village in Kaduna State had killed herself by throwing herself into a well, as reported in the *New Nigerian*, November 24, 1991. Her grisly end echoes the ending of Ado Ahmad’s first book *Inda So Da Kauna*, Part I, where the heroine threw herself into a well when it was clear she would not be allowed to marry the boy she loves. Mal. Nasiru accuses writers like Ado Ahmad of encouraging such bizarre acts. It was not clear from both the news story or the critique that the unfortunate girl was actually motivated into killing herself as a direct result of reading Ado Ahmad’s book. Incidentally, the heroine, in Mal. Ado’s book, survived the fall in the well.

Sheme, Ibrahim., “Raba Matasan Marubutan Hausa Fada”, *Nasiha*, Friday 21 August 1992, p. 4. *Ibrahim Sheme attempts to “referee” in the arena of pro, and against, *soyayya* genre among youth. As the editor of the *Nasiha* literary ‘supplement’ he stands on the high pillar of shifting through the morass of articles on both sides of the divide. This article

gave a resume of the debates, and urges that the writers should contextualize their settings.

Haruna, Aishatu., "The Celebrated Hausa Writer Who Never Went To School...Ado Ahmed Gidan Dabino" *The Pyramid*, September 6-13, 1992. Also reprinted in *New Nigerian Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, Friday June 20, 1997. *Eulogizes Ado Ahmed Gidan Dabino and provides a family profile on the writer who, "receives not less than 15 love letters a week..." The reproduction of this and Bichi's article published five years earlier, indicated the rekindling interest in the *soyayya* genre debate, especially now that it is in English language papers, giving the debate a larger audience.

Gidan Dabino, Ado Ahmad., *Tasirin Labaran Soyayya Ga Al'umma, Musamman Hausawa*, an unpublished paper presented at a Writer's Forum Seminar on Sunday December 27, 1992, Kano. *Provides a long analytical framework on the concept of *soyayya* before arguing the merits of the genre from six perspectives. A very dispassionate and well written paper which neither promote nor damn the genre.

{ ungiyar Matasa Marubuta, *First Kungiyar Matasa Marubuta* Literary Symposium, held January 9, 1993, Rumfa College, Kano. This is a *video* tape, containing coverage of the symposium held under the auspices of Kungiyar Matasa Marubuta of Kano, on the new Hausa writings. Papers were presented by Shehu Al[alanci, Bashari Farouk Roukbah (*Hantsi Leka Gidan Kowa*), and Ibrahim Malumfashi. Sheikh Aminuddeen Abubakar, a noted cleric in Kano, provided a neutral ground and a fairly linear perspective of writing and writers in Hausaland. Other noted literati included Dr. Sa'id Muhammad Gusau, the editor of *Nasiha* newspaper (that started the critical debates in the first place), Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino (who engaged Ibrahim Malumfashi in a war of words on what constitutes plagiarism and criticism in literature) and Khamisu Bature Makwarari, author of highly controversial *Matsayin Lover*. (This tape is available from Yusuf Adamu's archives).

Gusau, Bashir Sanda., "Abinda Ke Sa Muke Rubuta Labaran Soyayya", *Mujallar Rana*, 8-21 February 1993, p. 19. *Interview by Ibrahim SHEME with Bashir Sanda Gusau, a *soyayya* writer (*Soyayya Dan[on Zumunci, Duniyar Soyayya*, etc). The author reveals that his first book, *Aibin Biro*, published in 1988 was a political satire that led to his arrest by State Security Service agents (in then Sokoto State). He decided after that unpleasant experience to concentrate on what a theme that is safe, mundane and in vogue, *soyayya*. He also explains that although the central theme of his latter books, e.g. *Soyayya Dan[on Zumunci* which was used in critical theory class in one of the northern Universities, is love, nevertheless it ends with a philosophical message. Defends the Middle-Eastern settings of some of his books.

Mujallar Rana, "Aibin Biro Ko Amfaninsa?" *Mujallar Rana*, February 8-12, 1993, pp. 14-17. *The first survey of writers, critics and booksellers (who prefer to stock *soyayya* books "because they sell fast!") by the editorial team of the newsmagazine conducted by Ibrahim SHEME, although

mainly synthesized from earlier correspondences in the *Nasiha* literary supplement (*Sharhi Kan Littatafai*). Interlaced with literary commentary from university lecturers Islamic scholars on the genre. A very good definitive guide on the views of people on the genre.

Musawa, Zabba'u Garba., (Ms) "A Yi Rubutun Da Zai Inganta Rayuwa", *Mujallar Rana*, 8-21 February 1993, p. 20. *Interview by Ibrahim Sheme with Ms Zabba'u Garba Musawa, a playwright (*Da Na Sani*). Urges for more writers among Hausa youth and explains the educative role of literature. Accepts *soyayya* genre, but would wish the writers to concentrate on more educative literature.

Danjuma Katsina, Muhammad Mu'azu., "Zuwa Ga Marubutan Soyayya", *Gwagwarmaya*, No. 11, 1993, pp. 19-20. *Editor of the newsmagazine (*Gwagwarmaya*). A journalist, writer (*Mai Yadda Ya So*) and one of the two notable arch-critics of the *soyayya* genre (the other is Ibrahim Malumfashi (q.v.)). Whereas Ibrahim Malumfashi based on criticism on the belief that the new Hausa writers will never replace Hausa literature as represented by the Imamian Paradigm, Danjuma Katsina based his revulsion of the genre on moral arguments that the genre is un-Islamic and corrupts the mind of the youth. He considers such writings as *kafirci* (apostasy). Not surprisingly, he was also the Deputy-Editor of *Al-Mizan*, a Hausa Muslim newspaper. This is an "open letter" to *soyayya* writers. Claims that the central theme of the genre, from his reading of many books, was against either forced or arranged marriages — a common custom among the Muslim Hausa. However argues that many of the settings are not culturally Hausa, and the cover art of the books was un-Islamic, showing as they do in some cases, boys and girls mixed together, or girls without *hijab* on their heads. Further argues that if the *soyayya* genre writers are reforming the society, then there are more, Islamic, ways of doing it than through writings which he believes have corrupting influence on youth.

Hadiza Mohammed (Ms), "'Kafircewar' Marubutan Soyayya" I and II, *Rana*, 31 May 1993, p. 25; 14 June, 1993, p. 17. *An apocryphal rejoinder to Danjuma Katsina who argued that *soyayya* writers had gone against Islamic teachings (*kafirai*) in promoting undesirable, salacious behaviors among youth (their target audience). She argues that an inappropriate methodology was used to generalize the genre.

Gidan Dabino, Ado Ahmad., "Ba Laifunmu Ba Ne", *Gwagwarmaya*, No. 13, 1993, pp. 24-25. *This is an interview between Danjuma Katsina (antagonist) and Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino (protagonist) of the *soyayya* genre. Mal. Ado argues that before the large-scale appearance of the *soyayya* writings in Kano, there were social vices of sexual nature, and thus it was unfair to attribute their occurrence to the style of *soyayya* writers.

Danjuma Katsina, Muhammad Mu'azu., "Kafircewar Marubutan Soyayya: Raddin Editan *Gwagwarmaya* Muhammad Danjuma", *Gwagwarmaya* 14, (1993) 1414. *A rejoinder to Hadiza Mohammed, an apocryphal defender of the genre (and most likely pen-name of a well-known *male* journalist). Defends himself against the charges that he called the new Hausa

writers unbelievers (*kafiraî*) in his article of *Gwagwarmaya*, No. 11, 1993, pp. 19-20. First claims that the writer, Hadiza Mohammed, could not be traced at the address given, and therefore was a fake name. Claims that he quoted out of context by "Hadiza Mohammed" in "her" rejoinder to his original article on Hausa writings. Warns that this was a ploy to deliberately alienate him from his Muslim brothers who are writers. Claims that his original article was terribly twisted to distort his opinions on the new Hausa writers.

Gidan Dabino, Ado Ahmad., *Gudummawar Adabin Hausa Ga Addinin Musulunci*, an unpublished paper presented Workshop organized by Muslim Students Union of Senior Secondary School, Dawakin Tofa, Monday May 3, 1993, Kano. *Argues that a significant portion of Hausa poetry, popular songs and writings contain Islamic messages, thus intertwining Islam and culture in all aspects. Not strictly on *soyayya*, but at least shows the writers sensitivity to the religious aspects of some Hausa cultural expressions. However, does bring in the *soyayya* theme to show how some of the writes moralize on religious issues. In particular, he chose *Idan So Cuta Ne* (Yusuf Adamu) where the girl attempted to unsuccessfully entice her lover to impregnate her so that they can marry since their parents do not wish them to marry.

Ahmad, Muhammad Lawal., "Marubutan Soyayya ko Ma~arna Al'umma? *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* , Thursday 29 July 1993, Letters Page, p. 3. *Writes that *Soyayya* writers are motivated by Jews and Christians (aka Euro-American socio-cultural antecedents) to destroy Islam among Hausa adolescents. Condemns the genre and says the writers should instead use their skills in writing on Islam. Uses a Hadith from *Arba'un Hadith* to support his arguments against [*agaggun abubuwa* (created stories; although the Hadith was referring to possibly rumors etc, rather than creative writing) to prove that such writings are un-Islamic.

Malumfashi, Ibrahim., "Adabin Kasuwar Kano", *Nasiha* 3 & 29 July 1994. The first (?) vernacular article in which Ibrahim Malumfashi created the term *Adabin Kasuwar Kano* (Kano Market Literature), a contemptuous comparison between the booming vernacular prose fiction industry, based around Kano State (with *Center of Commerce* as its State apothegm) and the defunct Onitsha Market Literature which flourished around Onitsha market in Anambra State in the 1960s. Malumfashi argues that the new Hausa writings were merely passing fad and market driven, and would likely fade away, just as the Onitsha Market Literature did. Picks up Danjuma Katsina's moral high stand against the *soyayya* genre and argues the novels are responsible for corrupting the minds of youth, especially school girls.

Assada, Muhammad Kabir., "Ramin Karya Kurarre Ne", *Nasiha*, 16-22 September 1994, p. 4. *Claims that some *soyayya* writers copy their themes mainly from Indian films. In particular, an Indian film called *Romance* was, according to him, plagiarized as *Alkawarin Allah* by Aminu Adamu. Argues that the only skill the new generation of Hausa writers have was in plagiarization of Indian movies or only in writing in love stories, and not much else. Urges that such writers should re-direct their skills in writing in other genres.

Gidan Dabino, Ado Ahmad., "Wanda Ya Raina Tsayuwar Wata Ya Hau Ya Gyra" Martani Akan Adabin Kasuwar Kano, *Nasiha*, Friday 16 September – 6 October 1994, (3 issues), p. 4 each issue. *This replies Ibrahim Malumfashi (*Adabin Kasuwar Kano*, *Nasiha* 3 & 29/7/94) on the attributes and values of *soyayya* genre. Mal. Ado claims that this particular article was heavily edited, and provided the me with the original copy which he sent — and it does seem that the most contentious points were cut off; possibly due to space limitations. In the original text, Mal. Ado asks Malumfashi to answer 29 questions (which were excluded from the published article in *Nasiha*, of which Ibrahim Malumfashi was the Deputy Editor!) which deal with social vices and argues that these vices existed in Hausa society long before *soyayya* writers appeared on the scene. He argues that the writers were merely reflecting the realities of the society. Mal. Ado also replies that a few of the *soyayya* books have started appearing as recommended texts in some schools (e.g. College of Science and Technology, Sokoto and *Inda So Da Kauna* Part I, *Auren Zamani* and *Dan[on Zumunci*; College of Education, Kano and the English translation of *Inda So Da {auna* Part I translated as *The Soul of My Heart*, 1992).

Giginyu, Nasiru Mudi., "Ina Ruwan Biri da Gada", Martani Akan Adabin Kasuwar Kano, *Nasiha*, Friday 21-27 October 1994; 28 October – 3 November, 1994; 3-17 November 1994. *Accuses *soyayya* writers of empowering girls to rebel against their parents and their religion (Islam) by showing they have choice in their marriage affairs. Claims that *soyayya* writers are financially motivated and morally bankrupt.

Abdullahi, Muhammad., "Shin Marubuta Soyayya sun Kuwa San Soyayyar? Martani Akan Adabin Kasuwar Kano, *Nasiha*, 28 October – 3 November, 1994; 3-10 November 1994. *Presents a view on what love is and that the love portrayed in the *soyayya* genre is mainly salacious.

Qaseem, Muhammad., "Wankan Wuta ko Wankar Littafi?" *Nasiha*, Friday 11-17 November, 1994. *Accuses Ibrahim Malumfashi of plagiarizing Jeffery Archer's *Kane and Abel* in a Hausa form, and serialized in *Nasiha* as *Wankan Wuta*. Also claims the book (Archer's) was adapted into an Indian movie called *Kudgaaz*, and asks whether Malumfashi copied Archer or the Indian movie. Further claims that since *Wankan Wuta* features love as a central theme, then Malumfashi is also a *soyayya* writer — a genre he (Malumfashi) detests!

Aliyu, Suwaibat A., (Ms) "Sharhi Ba Zargi Ba Ne", *Nasiha*, Friday 2-8 December 1994, p. 8. *Centrist. Claims that *soyayya* writers are inspired more by Middle-Eastern folk lore and traditions rather than Euro-American cultural influences. Argues that *soyayya* as a concept was a recurring theme in books published before 1990 when the *soyayya* genre properly took off. Accepts that some of the writers probably copy Indian film themes in their books, but also often portray the realities of the current Hausa society. Urges critics to be objective in their observations on the *soyayya* writers and suggests more focus on Hausa poetry, rather than *soyayya* writings.

Ayagi, Sani Abdullahi Yusuf., "Yabon Gwani ya zama dole." Martani Akan Adabin Kasuwar Kano, *Nasiha*, Friday 12-19 May, 1995, p. 4; repeated Friday 16-22 December 1995, p. 4. *Rejoinder to Ibrahim Malumfashi (*Adabin Kasuwar Kano*, *Nasiha* 3 & 29/7/94) and Nasiru Mudi Giginyu (*Ina Ruwan Biri da Gada*, *Nasiha* 21-27/10/94). Defends *soyayya* writers. In particular salutes Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino who he argues that despite lack of extensive western education and degrees, yet has become a literary icon in modern Hausa prose fiction. Urges for constructive criticism and suggests that no matter how bad the *soyayya* books are portrayed to be, they must contain some learnable lessons. Argues that he does not believe the writers are responsible for corrupting the society. Concludes by claiming that most of the criticisms were maliciously motivated.

Yahuza, Muhammad Bashir., "Marubutan Zamani Da Adabin Zamani" *Nasiha*, 2-16 June, 1995 (2 issues). *Centrist. Argues that contemporary Hausa novels, especially *soyayya* were written without careful editorial work. This was because many of the authors were bedsit and garage publishers, who cannot afford to go the bigger publishing houses. As such, these books were marked by serious errors. Urges for a more "correct" Hausa literature.

Gidan Dabino, Ado Ahmad., *Tsokaci a Kan Labaran Soyayya*, an unpublished paper presented at Workshop on Hausa Language, Culture and Literature, Center for the Study of Nigerian Languages, Bayero University, Kano, 7-11 August 1995, Kano. *Presents a resume of some of the antagonisms against the genre, and argues that it is was misunderstood. Claims that 15% of the writers were autobiographical in their writings; 65% were reflecting what was going on in the society; while the rest of the 20% write purely for pleasure.

Maizare, Abdullahi Yahaya., "Sara Da Sassa]a", *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, Monday 13 May 1996, p. 4. *A defender of the genre of new Hausa writings. In earlier articles Hausa writers were accused of being barely literate (having only a secondary school education, and not more, e.g. Ibrahim Malumfashi's article in *Nasiha*, 15/11/91) and being responsible for the moral corruption of contemporary Hausa youth through thinly disguised salacious writings. Argues that accepted Hausa literature classics such as *Dare Dubu Da Daya* (trans. 1933) and *{ arshen Alewa { asa* (1982) were far more salacious than any Hausa prose fiction, and that another accepted Hausa classic, *Jiki Magayi* (1933) had dubious moral attributes since it focuses on revenge. Insists that *soyayya* writers are merely reflecting the realities of the current Hausa society.

Whitsitt, Novian., *The Literature of Balaraba Ramat Yakubu and the Emerging Genre of Littatafi na Soyayya: A Prognostic of Change for Women in Hausa Society*. An Unpublished thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (African Languages and Literature) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1996. *Claims to be one of the first "academic" study of the genre. His analysis was from a feminist perspective, focusing attention on two of Ramat's books (*Budurwar Zuciya*, and *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?*). He also scrutinized

littatafai na soyayya looking at the social and political implications alluding to the position of women in Hausa society.

Gambo, Shu'aibu H., "A Harmful 'Love', *New Nigerian Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, February 21, 1997 p. 11. *A snippet. In a scathing attack on the *soyayya* genre and its authors, he argues that "there is a great need for the society, particularly parents, religious, social and educational authorities to intervene to check the commotion these useless writings are creating in our society.." Argues further that the writers "consist of some obnoxious teenagers and adult persons of varying ages who passed out of their secondary education with F9 here and there, or may have got a C6 credit in Hausa only on their GCE slips. Another segment of this group are some persons who are rescued from darkness by the emergency adult literacy evening classes⁷ and on completion they arrogate themselves academic maturity...This group depends intoxicatingly on their ability to write Hausa with little difficulties, neglecting the essential norms and technicalities involved in proper Hausa prose..." He also accuses some "...mushroom university dons who promote these irresponsible writings by blessing them with forewords.."

Larkin, Brian., "Modern Lovers: Indian Films, Hausa Dramas and Love Novels Among Hausa Youth", *New Nigerian Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, February 21, 26, 1997. This paper was initially presented at the African Studies Association Annual Meeting at Orlando, Florida, U.S., November 3-6 1995; Also published as "Indian Films and Nigerian Lovers: Media and the Creation of Parallel Modernities." *Africa*, Vol 67, No 3, 1997, pp. 406-439. *This article (from *Africa*) discusses the significance of Indian films in revealing a relatively ignored aspect of the transnational flow of culture. After discussing reasons for the popularity of Indian films in a Hausa context, it accounts for this imaginative investment of viewers by looking at narrative as a mode of social enquiry. Hausa youth explore the limits of accepted Hausa attitudes to love and sexuality through the narratives of Indian film and Hausa love stories (*soyayya*). This exploration has occasioned intense public debate, as *soyayya* authors are accused of corrupting Hausa youth by borrowing foreign modes of love and sexual relations. The article argues that this controversy indexes wider concerns about the shape and direction of contemporary Nigerian culture. Analyzing *soyayya* books and Indian films gives insight into the local reworking and indigenizing of transnational media flows that take place within and between Third World countries, disrupting the dichotomies between West and non-West, colonizer and colonized, modernity and tradition. in order to see how media create parallel modernities.

Musa, Ibraheem., "Censoring the Romantics", *New Nigerian Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 21 February 1997. *Deals with censorship issues on *soyayya* writers. Although he does not support censorship of authors, nevertheless he took trouble to "...make it abundantly clear that I am not in support of the activities of these weeds luxuriating on the fringes

⁷ A barely concealed attack on Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino and Ms Balaraba Ramat Yakubu who both became writers after graduating from Adult Literacy classes.

of literature. If truth be told, they are a cancer on the body of the nation's literati..." Suggests an alternative method of censoring books through voluntary co-operative censorship involving the authors and State-agents to determine what is acceptable to society.

Adamu, Yusuf Muhammad., "Hausa Writer and Writing Today", *New Nigerian Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, Friday 20, 27 June 1997. *A long exegesis on contemporary *boko* Hausa writing, with particular slant to the *soyayya* genre from a *soyayya* writer (*Idan So Cuta Ne*, 1989). Divides Hausa writers into four generations. First was from 1930s, represented by Abubakar Imam and co, who published works like *Ruwan Bagaja*, *Idon Matambayi*, *Gan]oki*, *Shehu Umar*; the second generation was represented by Ahmadu Ingawa and co with *Iliya Dan Mai]arfi*, *Da'u Fataken Dare*, *Nagari Na Kowa*, *Tauraruwar Hamada*; the third generation by { *arshen Alewa* { *asa*, *Tsaka Mai Wuya*, *Mallakin Zuciyata*. The fourth generation arose out of a long gap after the third generation when publishing firms found it difficult to sustain their publication and this led to the individual efforts and attempts at publishing, which gave fertile soil to the *soyayya* writers.

Malumfashi, Ibrahim., "The Hausa Writer and the Reading Culture", *New Nigerian Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 20, 27 June; 4 July, 1997. *An extremely detailed and long exposition on the history of Hausa writings from earliest part of the first millennium. It is in this paper that the sobriquet KML or *Kano Market Literature* first appeared in English (having made a debut in *Nasiha*, 3 & 29 July 1994 as *Adabin Kasuwar Kano*). Initially designed as a contemptuous categorization of all recent (i.e. post 1984 when the genre was virtually created with Talatu W. A. Shellat's *Rabin Raina*) and "unserious" Hausa novels (as opposed to *original* works of literature represented by the Imamian Paradigm), with particular emphasis on the *soyayya* genre, the term, shortened to KML was gleefully embraced, to Ibrahim Malumfashi's chagrin, by his critics! Further states that the books were "...selling because (they) have basically the same themes liked by the youngsters; love, marriage, women's role, domestic power relations, education, morality and inter-generational struggle. Within-a spate of 10 years, a new reading culture had been introduced and gaining wide currency daily. It has attracted such wide spate of criticism not only from the literary critics, but Hausa newspapers, magazines, journals, mosques, parents and just recently the Kano State Government that enacted an edict to check the proliferation of these books. All these does not seem to affect the production of these books, as most would want..."

Sheme, Ibrahim., "Much Ado About *Soyayya* Writers", (Editorial Comment), *New Nigerian Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, Friday July 25, 1997. *Just as he acted as a referee in *Nasiha* when the debate got hot (21/8/92), he also steps in to provide an eloquent editorial comment after allowing all shades of opinions to be expressed. Points out that despite casting aspersions on the writers the phenomena "...has since grown into a big industry, throwing up publishing firms, filmmaking outfits, book-selling ventures, writers' associations, and even a news journal. At the same time, the publications of this market have increased in number, volume and sophistication, becoming at the time the largest

book publishing business in the country, beating by far the decidedly strong book publishing industry in the English language..." Notes that the *soyayya* writers "...are unstoppable. This is more so since they have not only dominated the book-selling market but have pierced and conquered the hearts of majority of Hausa readers..." Despite campaigns to destroy the genre, they have prospered. Asks (and answers!) "...so what do we do with the promoters of the KML? Crucify them? Gag them? The answer is simple: befriend them. Hug them. Give them prizes. Love them. Censoring a creative mind wouldn't cleave it of its spirit or exorcise from it the devil some of us thought it contains. Better let the market reach its zenith, as it already obviously has, arch, and go down. Even so, we may not want a literary movement to just disappear because it would vanish with a part of our culture..."

Danjuma Katsina, Muhammad Mu'azu., "Hausa Writers: The Good, The Bad and the Ugly." *New Nigerian Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, Friday 5 September 1997 p. 12. *Marks a significant move for the critic who had earlier labeled the writings of the new age Hausa novelists as *kafirci*⁸ (*Gwagwarmaya*, No. 11, 1993) and has now started looking at them more dispassionately in terms of the quality of the materials written. The *good* authors, in his classification, "...are those who write with a positive purpose in mind and, while writing they obey all the Hausa grammatical rules...Definitely, in this category the "Kano Group" of Hausa authors are in the lead.." They include Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino (*In Da So Da Kauna*) and Bala Anas Babinlata (*Zinaru, Kwarya Ta Gari*). The *bad* authors "...consists of those authors who are refractory to constructive criticism even as their write-ups are grammatically poor." Examples include Aminu Abdu Na'inna (*Raina Fansa*) Muhammad Usman (*Ban Kwana Ga Masoyi*). Further, "...many women are also found in this category such as Hajiya Balaraba Ramat Yakubu (*Badariyya, Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare Ba*) who wrote many books, yet they are of poor quality that one would be led to think that her books were written so many decades back, before the era of excellence in Hausa literature..." The *ugly* authors are those who "...have been unable to develop a good style and have a tendency to write without consideration for their audiences' feelings.." Examples cited include Adamu Aliyu (*Dan-gwajin Takalmi*), and "...Bilkisu Ahmad Nabature Funtua (triple worst!)(*Ki Yarda Da Ni, Allura Cikin Ruwa*)..."

Danjuma Katsina, Muhammad Mu'azu., "Lessons from the Abubakar Imam Interview", *New Nigerian Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 19 December 1997. *Eulogizes an interview published in the recent issue of *New Nigerian Literary Supplement* (21/11/97, 28/11/97, 5/12/97, itself reproduced and translated from the original Hausa language script to English by Ibrahim Seme from *Harsunan Nijeriya* Vol XVII, 1995 pp. 86-110). Paradoxically argues that modern Hausa writers "...refuse to take an idea from others. They should understand that there is nothing wrong in doing and expressing that.."; whereas the Late Abubakar Imam openly acknowledges his literary antecedents. Yet the problem of Hausa

⁸ Kafirci is non-belief in God's messages. The critic used the expression to refer to participation in any activity that is expressly prohibited by Islam.

writers, especially the *soyayya* genre were the accusations that they copy from other cultures! Concludes by accusing that "...only few Hausa writers today would care to write and educate; most would only do so for material gain and popularity..." Concludes by hoping that "...writers who are popular, such as Ado Ahmad, will lean from Imam and write books on such topics as "The importance of women's education" or any topic which will enlighten and encourage the society to go either for school or business for their self sustenance.."

Danjuma Katsina, Muhammad Mu'azu., "Hausa Literature: Why Novian Whitsitt Couldn't Get It Right", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 28 February 1998 p. 15. *A critic of Novian Whitsitt's dissertation on feminist literature in Hausaland. Points out that Whitsitt's analysis ignores the role of Islam in Hausaland, and as such also ignores Islamic viewpoints on feminism — a perspective that the critic argues must be taken into consideration when analyzing works written by a Muslim Hausa woman. The English translations of many of the Hausa dialogs were also faulted which "clearly shows that Novian Whitsitt has produced a thesis on books he could neither understand their content nor comprehend their mode of presentation." Cautions foreign researchers about accuracy in conducting field research on issues of culture and language, and "...they should remember that that Hausa people of today are in 1998, not 1898."

Malumfashi, Ibrahim., "Kano Market Literature: A 'Love' Story", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 14, 21, March 1998. First presented as a seminar paper at the 1st Annual Seminar organized by the Creative Writer's Club, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, on February 20, 1998. *Gives a detailed analysis of book publishing in Northern Nigeria before focusing attention on the "the new creative writings, though regarded as significant in many academic and intellectual fora, are now becoming a tool in changing certain societal norms, most especially among the youth, when no other "serious" work is there to compete with them in the open market..." Argues that most of the new Hausa prose fiction author's do not have educational backgrounds beyond secondary schools, and "most of them are not exposed to the rudiments of classical or variety of local and external literature." Also claims they derive their influence from cinema, television and videos. Admits, however, that "the Kano Market Literature is blossoming despite the criticism and edicts. This is because the Hausa society needs literary pieces, it needs creativity, it needs to move ahead with time, as such it needs to document its ups-and downs, since the "serious" literature is nowhere to be found.

Gumel, Hamisu Abdullahi., "Of Hausa Novels and Moral Decadence", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 16 May, 1998 p. 14. Also published in *Sunday Triumph*, 22/2/98. *An acidulous attack on the *soyayya* genre. Argues that "...today Hausa novels have become the agents of cultural destruction and therefore a menace to the society. The contemporary Hausa novelists, knowingly or unknowingly, are posing a threat to the existence of their society's moral and cultural norms. The danger here is that these books, which now flood our markets, full of obscenity in total disregard of the culture of the community or the

language in which they are written are undermining its very existence..." Claims that recent spades of suicides and murders by girls in unacceptable matrimonial circumstances were influenced by such writings. Harks back at the "...good old days when the early Hausa literary writers were using literature as a vehicle for advancing the Hausa community and of portraying the dignity of its people and culture...." Accuses *soyayya* genre writers of "...writing for fame and money, and for the sake of being widely known. Most of them lack the creative mind. Besides, their writings are linguistically dwarfed..." Besides being subversive, he also claims that Hausa writers "...are a poor replica of Western literature and are bent on destabilising the culture of the Hausa people..."

Adamu, Yusuf Muhammad., "Long Live The Hausa Novel!", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, June 6-12, 1998, p. 15. *A rejoinder to Hamisu Abdullahi Gumel (*Of Hausa Novels and Moral Decadence*, *New Nigerian Weekly*, 16/5/98) A spirited defense of the genre from a writer (*Idan So Cuta Ne, Ummulhairi*). Argues that "...literature is a reflection of social happenings. Writers do not exist in a vacuum, but rather write out of their accumulative experiences derived from the existing social framework and reality, operating in the society in which they live." Further argues that "...when a writer writes about social inequality, brutalisation, forced or arranged marriages, moral decadence, cultural imperialism, etc, it is because such things abound in his society...If, therefore, readers and social critics do not like what Hausa novelists write they should also dislike and re-assess the social-psychology and social framework existing in contemporary Hausa society..."

Yusuf, Aisha Umar., "The Great *Soyayya* Debate", *Weekly Trust*, June 19/26, 1998. *Accuses the *soyayya* books of being "...virtual replicas of contemporary European literature..." Having "read only ten of these contemporary Hausa novels..." and admitting that she is "...by no means an authority on the subject..." castigates the writers for portraying settings and contexts not characteristic of Hausa society. "...some of the scenes one encounters in *soyayya* are not what obtain in real-life Hausa courtship and romance..." Cites three examples from the books she read to strength her arguments about the alien cultures portrayed in the books, which included an aeronautic engineer playing a flute on the streets of Jos for his girlfriend (Zuwaira Isa's *Cin Amanar {auna}*). Advocates for a censorship board which can "...correct cases of misinformation such as the ones quotes above, as well as ensure that some moral and linguistic standard is adhered to. It should consist of Hausa linguists from our universities, learned Muslim clergy and other responsible leaders of thought...The time to do something about them is now, if not we may have genuine case to regret later."

Abbas, Halima., "New Trends in Hausa Fiction", *New Nigerian Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 11, 18, July; 1 August, 1998. *This was a post-graduate seminar presentation of the Department of Nigerian and African Languages, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria held on June 3, 1998 towards an M.A. degree. *Focuses attention on the literary aspect of the novel as a framework and attempted to use the framework in analyzing

soyayya books. Argues that the genre was a protest against the Hausa classicist novel writing styles (as iconized by the Late Alhaji Abubakar Imam). Urges for the continuation of the books and wants the authors to be encouraged to write more "properly".

Adamu, Yusuf Muhammad., "Hausa Novels: Beyond the Great Debate", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 18 July 1998, p. 14. *A rejoinder to Aisha Umar Yusuf (*The Great Soyayya Debate*, Weekly Trust, 19 & 26/6/98). Defends the trenchant view that the Hausa "...novel as an entity cannot be stopped. There is nothing wrong if bad books are discouraged. What I will not like to see is negating the contemporary Hausa novel. If all Hausa novelists are discouraged by general and subjective criticism it is as good as saying farewell to the Hausa novel forever..." Argues further that "...the Hausa people are better at listening and talking than at writing. Hausa society has no interest in its creative literature and has neglected it..." and wonders why a whole legion of Hausa neoclassical writers have stopped writing. "...so if those that are supposed to be writing sense failed to, those who can write nonsense have very reason to do so until good writers emerge..."

Funtua, Bilkisu S. Ahmed., "I Write To Enlighten Northern Women", *New Nigerian Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 1 & 15, August 1998. *The first and most in-depth interview given by a female *soyayya* writer. So far all the flak had been absorbed by Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino. Most of the female writers had decided to keep quiet about the raging thunder. It is therefore a tribute to Ibrahim Seme, the editor of the Supplement who was able to arrange to interview the most prolific female *soyayya* writer. She explains that her books were more like real-life soap-operas, and that she attempts to be as moral as possible. Her central theme is female empowerment, but within the establishment, thus eschewing feminist tendencies.

Danjuma Katsina, Muhammad Mu'azu., "Death to the 'soyayya' Novel!", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 5 September 1998, pp. 14-15. *A rejoinder to Yusuf Adamu's *Hausa Novels: Beyond the Great Debate* (*New Nigeria Weekly*, 18/7/98). Claims that parents would prefer to buy prayer genre books for their children than *soyayya* genre books, because "...in a Hausa traditional set-up no parent can buy a love story book for his child. Not that love does not exist in a traditional Hausa society, but parents would rather teach their wards to pray than how to love..." Ironically acknowledges a vital achievement of the *soyayya* genre by stating that "...we discovered that many people learned how to read as a result of the influences of *soyayya* novels, but later turned their attention to prayer books..." Concludes by stating that "...looking at the background of these books nothing beneficial will come out of them but foolishness, lack of direction and immorality..."

Danjuma Katsina, Muhammad Mu'azu., "The 'Best Hausa Books' of 1997/98", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 17 October 1998, p. 15. *The single apostrophe around best of Hausa books, possibly added by the editor reflect a wry sense of irony. Danjuma Katsina has been the most destructive critic of the *soyayya* genre

(labeling their writings *kafirci*, *immoral*, etc), and yet in this article comes up with a best seller list. Although the list also contains non-fiction works, yet the first three positions were taken up by *soyayya* books! His judgmental meter includes the book being educative, written in standard Hausa, critical of immoral acts, teaches morality and is appealing to readers. Based on all these the best is *Zinaru* by Bala Anas Babinlata (the ugly writer of Danjuma's earlier categorization, see Danjuma Katsina, *Hausa Writers: The Good, The Bad and the Ugly*, New Nigerian, 5/10/97). Another "ugly" writer in his earlier classification was Bilkisu S. Ahmed Funtua ("triple worst!") at the third place with *Ki Yarda Da Ni*. Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, the "good" writer and best now emerges second place with *Duniya Sai Sannu* which enamored the critic so much that he suggests it "...could even be recommended or our schools..."

Mansur, Ahmed., "Re: The 'best' Hausa Books 1998", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 19 December 1998 p. 15. *Supports Danjuma Katsina's *The 'Best Hausa Books' of 1997/98*", *New Nigerian Weekly*, 17/10/98), and writes to "amplify other salient issues which I strongly believe have derailed the beauty and philosophy in the art of writing nowadays..." Argues that "...under normal conditions, the increasing enthusiasm writing is good for Hausa literature, though many of the novels available remain virtually inauspicious, even when evidence points to the contrary..." Extols neoclassically written Hausa books (such as *Mallakin Zuciyata* and *Kitsen Rogo* "so far the best of their kind I read in recent times") and laments that "...today's novels have been robbed of taste and decency because of failure of logic, poor methodological outline and lack of clear thinking...The writing culture is overtaken by all comers and it seems to be driven by economic forces alone at the expense of enriching the Hausa customs and traditions...By manipulating the unsavoury trends in our marriage system, most novels are irrevocably damaging the attitudinal and ideological perception of readers towards the marriage institution, thereby throwing the youths, particularly girls, into the devil's arms. Nudity, sex, drugs and violence — themes Western writers gleefully promote — are surreptitiously entering the art of writing, a phenomenon that does good to nobody..."

Abdullahi, Iiyasu Ibrahim., *Tsokaci A Kan Kagaggun Labaran Soyayya: Yanayinsu Da Sigoginsu*. Unpublished M.A. (Hausa) thesis, Nigerian Languages, Bayero University, Kano 1999. *One of the first in-depth studies of the genre. Lists a total of one hundred books and their authors, and selected six for a structural analysis. He was more concerned with form and structure, rather than any moralizing of the genre.

Abubakar, Muhammad Mujtaba., *Litattafan Soyayya a Ma'aunin Hankali Da Na Shari'a*. Privately published. School of Business and Publish Administration, The Polytechnic, Kebbi, 1999. *A religious attack on the *soyayya* genre in which the author, using copious quotations from the Qur'an and the Hadith, argues that the only love approved by Islam is legal (married) love; any exposition on love outside marriage is un-Islamic, and on this basis, the entire lot of *soyayya* genre stand damned because they encourage immoral behavior amongst Muslim youth. He

also attacks the recent crop of Hausa home videos, which perhaps not surprisingly, were hotwired to the *soyayya* writings.

Adamu, Abdalla Uba., "Hausa Literature in the 1990s", (in two parts), *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 24 April 1999, p. 14 (Part I); Saturday May 1, 1999, p. 14 (Part II). *Just as the debate on the relevance and direction of the new Hausa writings seemed to be getting cold, Dr. Abdalla Uba Adamu, a science educationist, entered into the fray and rekindled it. Writing as "...a protagonist of Hausa writing and writers in general..", argues for the relevance of the *soyayya* genre within the context of four uses of a novel in European literary settings. The main focus of the author is on encouraging reading habits among Hausa adolescent and youth. Further contends that "...it is ludicrous to presume that such mere erotic imageries (as reflected in many *soyayya* books) are capable of corrupting the whole society, and gives a naive view of society. It also says nothing about *responsible parenting* which many parents shirk away from and point accusing fingers at *soyayya* writers. Critics always also ignore the *endings* of such novels which reveals their inherent morality..." Believes that "...banning some of the books such as had been done by the Kano ANA or setting up a Government committee as done in Kano to scrutinize the manuscripts are both counter-productive measures which will stifle further creativity. Creativity cannot be muzzled by self-appointed guardians of public morality. If the book is distasteful enough, the market will reject it — sending a powerful enough message to the author to revise strategies and focus..."

Malumfashi, Ibrahim., "Beyond the Market Criticism", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 15 May 1999 p. 14, 15. Published also in *Weekly Trust*, 28 May 1999. *A rejoinder to Abdalla Uba Adamu, whom Malumfashi considers "merceneristic". As argued: "...by making inferring that *soyayya* books are describing today, Abdalla is merely being atavistic. Does he mean to tell us that between 1990 and 1998 the Hausa society is rabidly engrossed in love and romance? Does that mean the era of SAP and Abachanomics were an era of gigantic love escapades and romantic topsy-turvy? I am not sure if that hypothesis can stand the test of time. This is because the period between 1991-1998 was the worst period in the life of most households: pervasive poverty, hunger, misery, school drop-outs), riots, political miscarriages, corruption, prostitution, and thuggery were (are?) the picture that confronted (confronts?) us. How come then love and romance took the centre-stage in our chapbooks and not any of these economic problems?.." Alternatively refers to *soyayya* genre as chapbooks or Kano Market Literature. Argues for a purity in Hausa literature, warning that "...as I have been saying for years, our preoccupation with the Kano chapbooks, the drums we beat in their commendation and ululation, our over-reliance on these young writers as our literary saviours will, if care is not taken, bring down Hausa literature...I said it over and over again, that market pamphleteering is just a vogue where it thrived. It was never taken to be a "contemporary literature" but an adventure within a given literary landscape..."

Malumfashi, Abdulaziz S., "Babinlata: A Writer With A Difference", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 22 May 1999 p. 15. *Eulogizes Bala Anas Babinlata, a first generation *soyayya* writer (*Kulu, Da Ko Jika?, Zinaru, Bakar Ashana, Rana Zafi*). Claims that Babinlata's books "...have a unique feature and they differ greatly from those of his colleagues in terms of style and ideas...Among the characteristics of his books are the accurate description of events, places, things and people, correlation of paragraphs and events, descriptive opening, superb dialogue, as well as suspense, to mention but a few...If you feel sleepy, don't even start reading Babinlata's book, else you will remain awake until you finish reading it!..." Concludes by stating that "...with time and if Babinlata continues to exhibit his literary talent, he would be the Abubakar Imam of our time..."

Sheme, Ibrahim., "Of Market Forces and the Hausa Novel", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 5 June 1999. *A rejoinder to Ibrahim Malumfashi's *Beyond Market Criticism* (New Nigerian Weekly, 15/4/99). Argues that increased literacy level as more schools weaned students, the widespread introduction of American home videos due to accessibility to new technology as well as the burgeoning sophistication/Westernisation of the Hausa society have necessitated a change in Hausa society. "...Thus anyone who assumed our society was not a part of the global village should see his doctor immediately. The society cannot be an island unto itself but is unstopably susceptible to external influence. The KML (Kano Market Literature) may appear foreign, but it's not wholly so; it was made up of both local and foreign ingredients..." Concludes that "...However, like all grains, there can be found among them bad ones, but that shouldn't push us into burning the farm where they are produced or the barn in which they are kept. Willy ninny, they (Hausa *soyayya* writers) have documented a part of our culture even if it includes the bad part. For this, we should hug their authors or write the right alternatives ourselves..."

Adamu, Abdalla Uba., "Idols of the Market Place: Literary History, Literary Criticism and the Contemporary Hausa Novel", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, June 12, 1999, pp. 14-15. *A rejoinder to Ibrahim Malumfashi's *Beyond Market Criticism* (New Nigerian Weekly, 15/4/99). Deals with the mechanism of literary criticism by focusing on the *moral worth* of literature and the nature of its *relationship with reality*. Argues that the novelist, in whatever social circumstances, is an interpreter of the society. The Hausa society has had to rely for years on classical works to provide an interpretation of a society no longer in tune with current social realities. Also claims that some contemporary *soyayya* novels like Bala Anas Babinlata's *Zinaru* are "...far more relevant in analyzing today's problems than *Shehu Umar*. If the novelist is seen as moral interpreter of the society, then he must operate within his natural medium, unhampered by cloying and suffocating classicist paradigmatic shackles..."

Imam T/Wizirchi, Abdullahi Garba., *Tsokaci Da Kalailaicewa a kan Litattafan Soyayya na Hausa*, Seminar Presentation in Bayero University, Kano, Wednesday June 16, 1999, Department of Nigerian Languages. *The speaker was inspired into writing the paper as a result of being a field

assistant to an American postgraduate student, Novian Whitsitt (q.v.) Mr. Whitsitt wrote out eleven questionnaire items, to which Mallam Garba provided written responses. It is this, as it were, completed questionnaire, that Mallam Garba presented to the crowd in BUK. Thus the paper was written in a form of question-answer style. It provides the authors' view on the predominantly evil effects of *soyayya* genre, which according to him, range from encouraging stealing among youth (so that they can buy the books they are now hooked on to) and mass failure in examinations by girls, to poor housekeeping by housewives (who were constantly engrossed in reading these types of books).

Adamu, Abdalla Uba., "Hausa Literature and Information Technology in the decade of the 1990s", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, 3 July, 1999, pp. 14-15. *Focuses attention on a pioneering work which led to the development of Hausa hooked characters (Truetype fonts as { }] [| ~) for the PC using Fontographer 3.5, and how the fonts were distributed as "public domain" shareware to literary centers and authors in Kano. Claims that the availability of the fonts in 1995 boosted the production of Hausa books making them easier to read due to accentuation.

Ibrahim, Malumfashi, "Dancing Naked in the Market Place:", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, July 10, 1999 p. 14-15. *A reply to the various criticisms (Abdalla Uba Adamu, NNW, 12/6/99; A. S. Malumfashi, NNW 22/5/99; and Ibrahim SHEME, NNW 5/6/99), of his *Beyond the Market Criticism* discourse (NNW 15/5/99; as well as Weekly Trust 28/5/99). Argues that "...most writers are dancing naked in the marketplace..." since they keep on grafting ideas from other sources to make up their stories — thus stripping themselves bare to reveal their real lack of originality. Spent considerable time trying to prove that both William Shakespeare and Alhaji Abubakar Imam relied heavily on other people's works. While he accepts this is an established tradition in the literary world, he berates Hausa *soyayya* writers of being incapable of effective grafting. Points out, for instance, that Ibrahim SHEME's *Kifin Rijiya* is "...another pervasive transmutation of Imam's *Ruwan Bagaja* which in the long run did not serve the encomium of realism and fantasy. SHEME's caricature dabbled more into the fantasizing..." Argues that Hausa writers lack the sophistication of European "...writers' mindset and their wide range of readings..." to successfully graft ideas into effective story-lines. According to him, "...our writers parrotically graft an idea and reproduce it without letting it germinate..." Concludes that although the recent Hausa novels may "...serve as a token in opening new vistas, especially reading culture among less-literate market women, young school leavers and married women..." it will never save "...Hausa prose fiction from extinction! What the market literature is now doing is lullabying us to deep slumber colonising our thoughts in romantic delirium, instead of liberating us from the clutches of capitalism and its local comprador collaborators..."

Adamu, Abdalla Uba., "The Lexicon of Love: A Review of Tsokaci Da { alailaicewa a kan Litattafan Soyayya na Hausa", Seminar Presentation in Bayero University, Kano, Wednesday June 16, 1999, Department of

Nigerian Languages, *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff* August 21 and August 28, 1999. *A review of the seminar presentation by Imam T/Wizirchi (q.v.), which itself was a questionnaire survey answer for Novian Whitsitt (q.v.). Argues that the seminar paper lacked empirical bases for many of claims made, such as that *soyayya* novels were responsible for mass failure of examinations among school girls; their presence also encourages petty theft by boys who wanted to read them and having no money therefore steal some to buy them (!); and that all cases of marital problems were caused by housewives who read the novels.

Tilde, Aliyu, "Prudence and the Contemporary Hausa Novel", *Weekly Trust*, August 16, 1999 p. 18. *As an advocate of the Imamian Paradigm of Hausa Literature, argues that the *soyayya* books will never stand the test of time in terms of quality. "To expect that these books will stand the test of time and be accepted within academic circles as genuine literary contributions is least deserved by any person who might have passed through a degree programme." Castigates the *soyayya* books as being "...poorly conceived, poorly written and poorly published. They are nowhere to be compared with the standard literature of the "Imam" and "Suleiman Katsina" eras. Acknowledges, however, that the *soyayya* books "...might have simply filled a vacuum created by the recent incapacity of our Hausa specialist holding a degree or a Ph.D. in the subject." Accepts that mainstream publishing houses may not wish to publish the recent spate of Hausa novels, but points out that the "...this should not discourage good writers particularly during the age of desktop publishing...other channels like the Internet will soon open its arms at a much cheaper cost than even desktop publishing..."

Aliyu, Mohammed Dantala., "Why some academicians 'hate' the *soyayya* novel", *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, September 25, 1999 p. 14. *Another critic of the genre who noted the recurrence of the debates on the genre in 1999 particularly in *New Nigerian Weekly*. Argues that "...too shameful it would be should the *soyayya* books find their way into the classroom. The *soyayya* heroes and their protagonists academicians like Dr. Abdalla Uba Adamu should be prudent in the role they are currently playing in this debate. Recall the adage *da Jan gari akan ci gari* (the enemy within). Adamu may turn out to be the *Jan gari* (the enemy) who, in blind fantasy, threw away intellectualism and betrayed his colleagues..." Urges for a return to "ideal" (i.e. Imamian) Hausa literature. Ends with a prayer that "...it is our hope that these novels will be kept out of schools, as was done in Europe to Mills and Boon, Caribbean Caresses, etc. Antagonists of the *soyayya* pamphlets are not constituting themselves as authorities and should not be mistaken as such..."

Pindiga, Habeeb Idris., "Soyayya novels are the real Hausa literature" *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, October 23, 1999 p. 14. *A fiery rejoinder to Aliyu Mohammed Dantala's fears that *soyayya* books could find their way into classrooms. Asks, rhetorically, "...which is the ideal literature of Hausa? The plagiarized compositions of the Alhaji Imams or the translated versions of Garba Funtuwas? Or it is the crime stories of the Bature Gagares or the vengeance packets of

the John Tafida Wusasas? Tracing the history of Hausa novel writing, one ends up finding as great as were plagiarized, translated, or stolen from various Arabian and European literary works. So if there is anything ideal in *Ruwan Bagaja...Jiki Magayi...*etc what makes *Inda Alkawari*, *Tauraron Zuciyata*, *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?* and *Zinaru* unacceptable?...In my opinion, it would be worthier to teach/study the moral lessons packed in Balaraba Ramat Yakubu's *soyayya* book, *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?* Than the barbarian antiquated compositions like *Shehu Umar* and collections like *Ruwan Bagaja* and *Iliya Dan Maikarfi*. Who cares for "labarun aljannu?" or "labarun barayin zamanin jahiliyya" in this modern world?.

Adamu, Abdalla Uba., "Emotions in Motion: Sleaze, Salacity, Moral Codes and Hausa Literature" " *New Nigerian Weekly Literary Supplement — The Write Stuff*, November , 1999 p. 14.*Another rejoinder to Dantala's September 25 1999 article. This argues that "...it is often forgotten that it is the society that creates literature; not the other way round. There is no single scene, behavior, or act described in, say, Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino's *Kaicho!* or Yusuf Adamu's *Idan So Cuta Ne* that is not a common mode of behavior in any society. Talking about them does not necessarily provide a template for readers to emulate; it merely draws attention to them and their unpleasant consequences...." Concludes by stating that "...if we want sanitize Hausa literature, then we must sanitize the Hausa society, for literature is a reflection of society and is a creation of society. We must acquire the habit of *responsible parenting*. We must find ways of controlling the freaks, sex weirdoes and monsters — the real enemies within — that are prevalent in our society hiding under the façade of moral purity. So long as these perverts exist, they will continue providing endless source of inspiration for writers..."