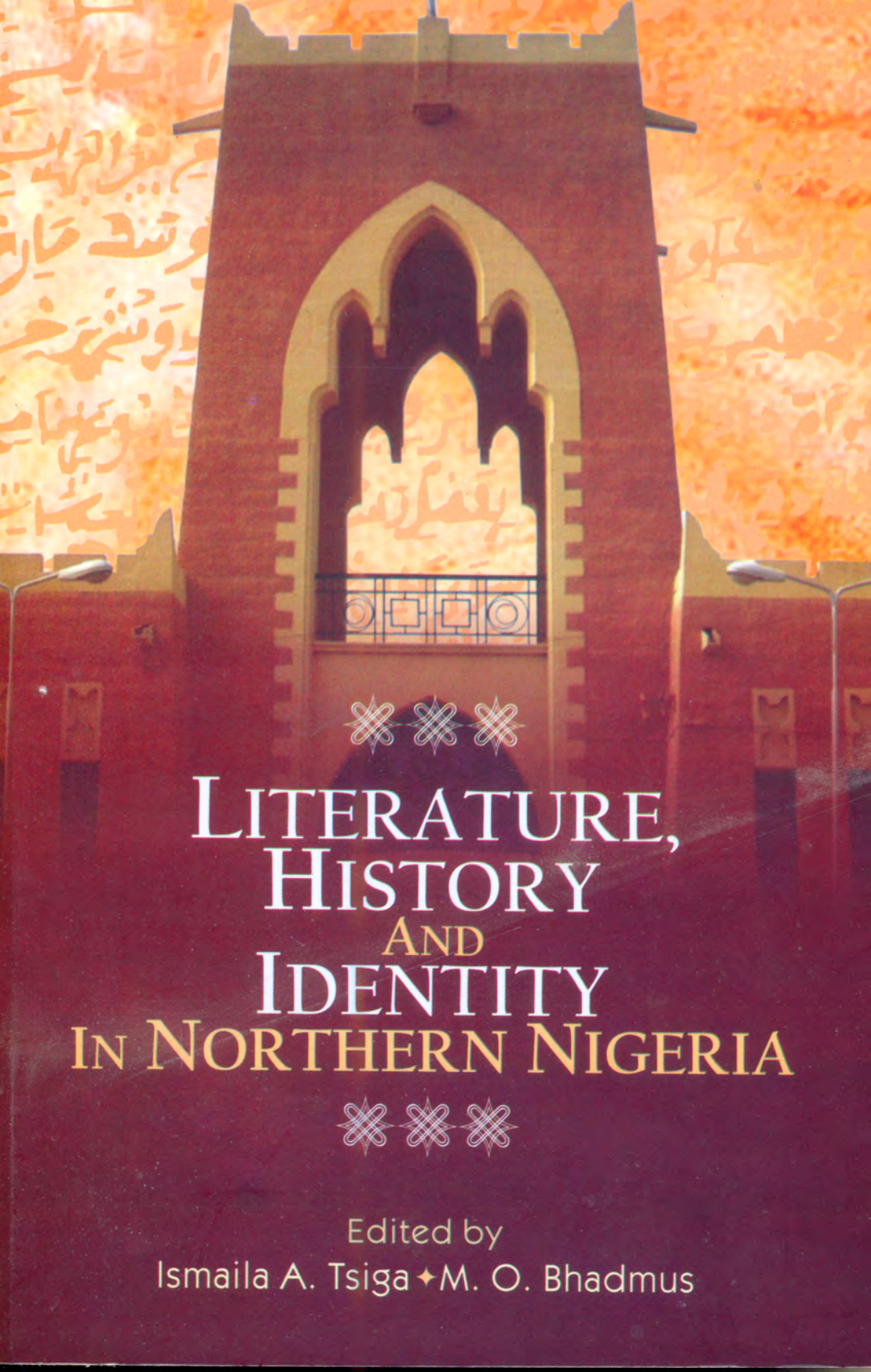




LITERATURE,
HISTORY
AND
IDENTITY
IN NORTHERN NIGERIA



Edited by
Ismaila A. Tsiga ♦ M. O. Bhadmus

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Chapter Six

Trans-Fictional Migration and Inter- Textual Re-Interpretation: The Grimm Brothers' Tales in Muslim Hausa Literature

Abdalla Uba Adamu

Introduction

Intertextuality, one of the central ideas in contemporary literary theory, is not a transparent term and so, despite its confident utilisation by many theorists and critics, cannot be evoked in an uncomplicated manner. Such a term is in danger of meaning nothing more than whatever each particular critic wishes it to mean (Allen 2000). Julia Kristeva's attempt to combine Saussurean and Bakhtinian theories of language and literature produced the first articulation of intertextual theory in the late 1960s. Her main introduction to intertextuality argues that, 'any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of *intertextuality* replaces that of inter-subjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least double' (Kristeva and Moi, 1986:37).

Texts are, therefore, conjoined with others to reflect what could be called 'textual migration'. For, as Martinez (1996: 268)) argues, 'the concept of intertextuality requires...that we understand texts not as self-contained systems but as differential and historical, as traces and tracings of otherness, since they are shaped by the repetition and transformation of other textual structures.'

This intertextual template extends to more than shifts in narrative location and its context. A very common reflection of this narrative

shift is in filmic adaptations of books as remakes. As Horton and McDougal (1998: 3) note, 'in terms of intertextuality...remakes-films that to one degree or another announce to us that they embrace one or more previous movies — are clearly something of a special case, or at least a more intense one.'

This chapter approaches textual migration from the intertextual perspective. It analyses the intertextual relationship between a cultural product, the story, and its trans-migrational adaptation, as an intervention on an existing discourse formation, which includes both the original product or text and the discourses using it, originating it, deriving from it or surrounding it. This intervention amounts to both an interpretation and an appropriation of the original text. In this regard, Landa (2005: 181) notes that, like other intertextual modes (translations, critical readings), adaptations produce a 'retroactive transformation of the original rather as it is used and understood in specific contexts and instances of communicative interaction.'

To investigate this textual migration, the chapter shall analyse two stories from the Grimm Brothers' collection of fourteen stories that were adapted in northern Nigeria by Abubakar Imam in the Hausa compendium of stories, *Magana Jari Ce*, 'ability to tell stories is a valuable possession', (Bargery 1943), published by the British colonial administration in Nigeria in 1940. As Bargery further notes,

'although the bulk of the stories are of foreign origin, few of the listeners will realise this, far from whatever source they may have been culled, they have been thoroughly assimilated by the able Hausa author, Malam Abubakar Imam Kagara, and then retold by him in his own words. They are in fact stories by a Hausa for Hausas—individuals and places are given Hausa names, and in other ways, the stories are very successfully given a true African setting.' (Bargery 1943: 100)

The original Grimm Brothers' stories were written by Jacob Ludwig Grimm (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Carl Grimm (1786-1859) in the early 1800s; and depict life as generations of central

Europeans knew it — capricious and often cruel. The two brothers, patriots determined to preserve Germanic folktales, were only accidental entertainers.

Inspired as children by a library of old books with tales that caught their imaginations, the brothers devoted a lifetime to collecting their own stories and folktales told to them mostly by women, young and old, which they eventually compiled into a book of fairy tales. They named their collection, *Children's and Household Tales* and published the first of its seven editions in Germany in 1812. Based mainly on oral narratives, the two hundred and ten stories in the Grimm's' collection represent an anthology of fairy tales, animal fables, rustic farces, and religious allegories with an everlasting literary value.

Grimm's Fairy Tales, as the English version is usually called, pervades world culture. So far, the collection has been translated into more than one hundred and sixty languages, from Inupiat in the Arctic to Swahili in Africa. The stories and their characters provide one of the most enduring cases of intermedial transformation — shifting from the pages into virtually every media: theatre, opera, comic books, film, paintings, rock music, advertising, fashion, etc. In the United States, the Grimm's collection furnished much of the raw material that helped launch Disney as a media giant.

In his analysis of the emergence of the Grimm Brothers' tales as international intercultural icons, Dollerup (1999:289) argues that they collected the tales to preserve the German cultural heritage in the wake of threats from Napoleonic Wars, 'and not because they intended to have the tales translated. For socio-cultural, geographical, and historical reasons, the Grimm and Andersen tales fused into an international genre as a result of translation.'

However, this analysis does not focus on the textuality of the main European stories, but the elements of the stories and how these elemental structures are intertextually altered to fit into an African Muslim society of the 1930s.

British Colonial Translations Bureau in Nigeria

In 1929, the British colonial administration in Nigeria set up a translation bureau initially in Kano, but later moved it to Zaria in 1931; it became the Literature Bureau in 1935 (Hayatu (1991). The first director of the bureau was a Mr. Whiting, although he was replaced later by Dr. Rupert East. The objectives of the bureau were to:

- translate books and materials from Arabic and English;
- write books in Hausa;
- produce textbooks for schools; and
- encourage indigenous authors.

Mr. Whiting's tenure saw the Hausa Roman script versions of some Arabic texts detailing local histories, notably *Tarikh Arbab Hadha al-balad al-Musamma Kano*, translated in English as *The Kano Chronicles* by H. R. Palmer and published in the *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 38 (1908) pp. 59-98 and re-published in his *Sudanese Memoirs* (3 volumes: London, 1928), 3: 92-132. An extended Hausa translation of this manuscript was supervised by Rupert East as *Hausawa Da Makwabtansu* (Translation Bureau Zaria 1933).

The establishment of the Translation Bureau ensured, through a literary competition in 1933, that a whole new set of reading materials, and consequently literary style, was created for the Muslim Hausa in northern Nigeria. This yielded the first clutch of now Hausa *boko* (modern writing in Roman alphabet) literature written in classical Hausa (*Ruwan Bagaja*, *Shehu Umar*, *Gankoki*, *Idon Matambayi*, *Jiki Magayi*) published in 1935. Since the scholastic tradition of the Hausa has always been the preserve of the Malam (teacher, scholar) class, even in popular literature the fountainheads carved out of that class reflected their antecedent scholastic traditions. Thus, the novels were written mainly by the scholars, with some, like Abubakar Imam who wrote *Ruwan Bagaja*, being quite young at the time (he was twenty-two when he wrote the novel). They had deep Islamic roots and actually required some convincing to even agree to write in the

boko (Romanised) scripts in the first place, considering such activity as a dilution of their Islamic scholarship.

The main focus of the Translation Bureau was just that — translation of literary works using the sparkling brand new Romanised Hausa script. It was only when Dr. Rupert East took over in 1932 that it acquired the *persona* of what Dobronravine and Philips (2004) refer to as *Istanci* and became devoted to the wholesale translation of works into Hausa from far and near (although the further, the better because nearer literary communities, both geographically and culturally, such as The Sudan and Egypt were somehow ignored). The aim was to generate reading materials; more essentially, to enable colonial officers to polish their practice of Hausa language for communication than to empower the “natives” with enriched literary heritage. It was this obsession with translation of carefully selected works, rather than fully encouraging local indigenous initiatives into literary explorations, that earned this era of Hausa literary development the epithet of *Istanci* — principally due to the forceful nature of the Rupert East, its main protagonist.

For Rupert East, the most outstanding of the five Hausa novels published in 1935, was Abubakar Imam’s *Ruwan Bagaja* (The Healing Waters). However, it was clear from the plot elements and general thematic structure of the novel that it was not a Hausa tale, unlike others that had clearly identifiable Hausa settings. Abubakar Imam, in an interview with Nicholas Pwedden (1995: 12, 14) stated that he was “inspired” to write *Ruwan Bagaja* after reading *Muqamat Al Hariri*: “in that story (*Ruwan Bagaja*) there were two characters — Abu Zaidu and Harisu — with one trying to defeat the other through cunning. I also used two men, on the basis of that technique, but I used the Hausa way of life to show how one character (Abubakar) defeats the other (Malam Zurke).”

It was this “inspiration” that was to become the root of the glocalisation of the foreign media by the Hausa performing artistes, which was heavily promoted by the British. In effect, Abubakar Imam and the British had planted a Trojan Horse within the entertainment mindset of the Hausa.

The *Muqamat*, translated into English by various authors as *The Assemblies of Al-Hariri: Fifty Encounters with the Shaykh Abu Zayd of Seruj* *Maqamat* was written by Abu Muhammad al-Qasim Hariri (1054–1121) and was widely available among Muslim scholars and intellectuals of northern Nigeria in its original Arabic, as set reading material for the advanced course of Arabic grammar after the completion of the Qur’anic phase of a Hausa Muslim’s education.

Other sources used in writing *Ruwan Bagaja* included the core plot elements from *The Grimm Brothers’ Fairy Tales* (especially *The Water of Life* from where the book derived its title), *Sinbad the Sailor*, and stories from *A Thousand and One Nights*. Thus, *Ruwan Bagaja* actually marked the transition from *Istanci* — direct translations of other works into Hausa — to its adaptive variety, *Imamanci* — the “transmutation” of transnational literature into Hausa mindset. Imam revealed he was taught this art of literary transmutation by Rupert East, who also,

...taught me many dos and don’ts. For example, he taught me never to allow a miscreant to triumph over a good character in any fictional story, such as a cheat or a fraud, even if he appears to be winning in the beginning and he is being highly respected and praised. That it is better to make him the loser at the end... On translation, he said if someone utters something nice, either in English or in Arabic, or any other language, when translating it into Hausa, you shouldn’t be enslaved to the wordings of the statement, trying to act like you’re translating the Koran or the Bible. What you’re supposed to do, as long as you fully understand what the man said, *is to try and show genius in your own language just as he did in his*, i.e. yours should be as nice in Hausa as his was nice in English. That way Dr. East kept teaching me various techniques of writing until I understood them all (Pwedden 1995: 87, emphasis added).

Rupert East was, thus, the originator of Imamian transmutative strategy — *genius in your own language* — while Abubakar Imam was its script reader. It is from this transmuted strategy

of Abubakar that we received the term *Ofishin Talifi*, for the Translation Bureau (instead of its original translation of *Ofishin Juye-Juye*, literally, 'the office for making copies'), and later, *Majalisar Dinkin Duniya* (literally, 'the council for sewing the world together'), for the United Nations.

Imamanci, as a literary technique and emergent media technology device, worked brilliantly because of the skills of the adapter, Abubakar Imam. However, Imam was to acknowledge the Svengali in Rupert East, when the latter recruited him, albeit temporarily, to work on producing more reading materials along the mold of *Ruwan Bagaja* and using its adaptive literary technique for the newly re-named Literature Bureau. According to Imam,

From then on, he (East) assembled for me many story books in Arabic and English, especially Iranian texts. Fortunately I knew Arabic because I had learned it right from home. That's why I could understand the Arabic books unless... the language was too advanced. I read all of these books until I understood the techniques of established writers. When Dr. East realised that I had finished, he told me what to do and I set out to write. The first book I wrote was *Magana Jari Ce* (Speech is an Asset). Pweden (1995: 88).

This book, *Magana Jari Ce*, became the unalloyed classic of Hausa literature; despite the heavy dosage of foreign elements it contained from books as diverse as *Alfu Layla wa Laylatun*, *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, *Bahrul Adab*, *Hans Andersen Fairy Tales*, *Aesop Fables*, *The Grimm Brothers' Fairy Tales*, *Tales from Shakespeare*, and *Raudhul Jinan* (Abdallah 1998).

Magana Jari Ce is composed of about eighty stories — mainly narrated by a parrot, *Aku* (although joined in a competitive mode by another parrot, *Hazik*), to various audiences and settings. In an interview (Wali 1976), Abubakar Imam stated that he had taken the figure of the parrot and its technique of story-telling from a Persian book, most likely *Tuti-Name* (Book of Parrot), written by Zia ul-Din Nakhshabi (Kablukov 2004). Indeed,

further analysis of *Magana Jari Ce* reveals the following as its source material:

Eleven stories from *A Thousand and One Nights*

Two stories from the Indian collection *Panchatantra*

Two stories from a Persian version of the Indian collection *Sukasaptati*

One story that is of Persian origin

Fourteen fables from the Grimm Brothers'

Two fables from Hans Andersen

Seven short stories from *Decameron* by Boccaccio

One based on a Biblical story (from Old Testament)

One based on a Greek myth about the king of Macedona

One based on a fable by W. Hauff

Fourteen stories were either original or derived from unknown sources (Jez and Stanislaw, 2003: 23-28).

The narrative style adopted in *Magana Jari Ce* is closely patterned on *A Thousand and One Nights*, in that the narrator relates a series of stories to delay the departure to war of a very strong-willed prince; whereas in the original *A Thousand and One Nights*, the narrator created the stories to delay the execution of a stubborn princess.

The pattern adopted by the British in creating globalised literature for indigenous African audiences seemed to have been generic to all parts of Africa. For instance, in East Africa, the British colonial administration followed a close strategy of educational development as that of northern Nigeria. Thus, when Tanganyika became part of the British empire in 1919, the school system was modernised and the Swahili language was then standardised in 1925-30. In the following years, there was the need for Swahili reading matter and also as a medium to propagate the modern way of life in a world widely ruled by Britain.

An important medium in this respect was the monthly journal *Mambo Leo* (Today's Affairs), founded by the Education Department in Dar es Salaam in 1923. Besides essays and news of

all kinds, the journal also contained entertaining texts, among them translations of foreign literature. These were usually issued in a serialised form. Issues from the initial period of 1923-32 include adaptations of literary tales, such as “*The Voyages of Sindbad the Sailor*” (1923-24), “*Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp*” (1925-26), “*Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*” (1926), Longfellow’s *Tale of Hia-watha* (1927) or Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1928). All of these stories were published without any introduction, source reference or further comment. Further translations included Stevenson’s *Kisiwa Chenye Hazima* (*Treasure Island*; 1929), Haggard’s *Mashimo ya Mfalme Sulemani* (*King Solomon’s Mines*; 1929), Kipling’s *Hadithi za Mawgli, Mtoto Aliyelelewa na Mbwa Mwit* (*The Story of Mowgli, the Child Who Was Raised by a Wild Dog, The Jungle Books*; 1929), Swift’s *Safari za Gulliver* (*Gulliver’s Travels*; 1932) among others (Geider 2004: 252).

The intertextual path, therefore, seemed to have been directly created by the British colonial administration in their African colonies as a practical alternative acceptable to them in tackling the problems caused by the dearth of indigenous literature. This was more so as both Tanganyika and northern Nigeria had a strong base of the oral tradition, which could easily be transmuted into the written text, in order to serve the same purpose as the imported story books.

Grimm Brothers’ Tales in Africa

The story sources analysed in this chapter are four – two original translations into English from the German stories in the Grimm Brothers’ collection; and two corresponding intertextual renderings in Hausa language by Abubakar Imam. To facilitate the analysis, each story is given a code which more easily identifies it; for example CG for *Clever Gretel*, and KDK for *Labarin Kalala da Kalalatu*. The listing of the sources is as follows:

- Original: 'Der gute Handel' [The Good Bargain], *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* [Children's and Household Tales, 1857] No. 07 [TGB]
- Translation: 'Kwadayi Mabudin Wahala' [Greed is the gateway to misery] (*Magana Jari Ce*, Vol 3, pp. 96-106 [KMW])
- Original: 'Das kluge Gretel' [Clever Gretel], *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* [Children's and Household Tales, 1857] No. 77 [CG]
- Translation: 'Labarin Kalala da Kalatu' [The Story of Kalala and Kalalatu], *Magana Jari Ce*, Vol 1, pp. 14-18. [KAK]

Case Study #1: 'Clever Gretel': The Original German Version Translated into English

KHM 77 [English] - Clever Gretel (Vol 1, Nr. 77)

The story is about an extremely vain cook, Gretel, who not only seemed to like dressing in red, and twirling around the kitchen, but also had a penchant for wine and the food she cooked for her master. One day, he asked her to prepare a meal of two fowls for himself and a guest who will be joining them later. She scalded the chickens, plucked them, put them on the spit, and towards evening set them before the fire, that they might roast. With the chickens roasting over the fire, Gretel kept taking a swig of her favourite wine, all the time muttering about the lateness of the master and his guest.

When the chickens were all done, the aroma became too much to bear for Gretel, and helped along by a continuous supply of wine, she began to eat the chickens bit by bit until nothing was left. Just at about that time, the master returned with the guest and instructed Gretel to bring the meal to the table, while he sharpened a knife.

Gretel, knowing there was nothing for them to eat, ran to the guest and informed him that he should disappear because her master was sharpening a knife to cut off the guest's ears. The

guest ran away on hearing this. Gretel then went to the master and scolded him for bringing in a greedy guest who had taken off with the two chickens. The master ran out after the guest, with the knife still in his hand, asking the guest to stop so that he could take only one. The guest, thinking the master meant only one ear, kept running away.

Labarin Kalala da Kalalatu: Clever Gretel in Hausa

KHM 77 [Hausa] – ‘*Labarin Kalala da Kalalatu*’ [*The Story of Kalala and Kalalatu*], *Magana Jari Ce*, Vol 1, pp. 14-18.

Once upon a time there was a man, Kalala, who lived with his wife, Kalalatu. Kalala was a very generous man, who always invited guests to have dinner with him. He used to have the dinner with his neighbour, but had to stop it because the neighbour kept complaining about Kalalatu’s cooking. When it got too much, he stopped and, instead, went out in the highway and invited complete strangers. Kalatu, his wife, did not like having guests to dinner because she always got a tiny portion; whereas she would get more when there were just the two of them. She got her own back at the husband by simply splitting any meal into two and eating one-half. If Kalala complained, she replied that she was able to salvage only the little he could now see, as the rest had been burnt. He never complained about this because he was a patient man.

One day, he went to the market and bought two hefty chickens, which he instructed her to cook. She obliged, but while she was cooking, the aroma kindled her craving. She started lamenting that, despite her craving for these chickens, she would probably only end up with a tiny thigh. She continued cooking the chickens, but eventually the craving overcame her and she started eating bits and pieces, until eventually she ate away half of a chicken. Kalala had earlier told her to take the thigh as her share.

She now ran to the door to see if Kalala had returned with the expected guest and when she did not see them, she sat down, looking at the whole chicken and a half, lamenting to herself that they would get cold before Kalala and the guest arrived. Since

she had no reasonable explanation for how half of the chicken disappeared, she decided to eat the other half too, leaving only one chicken. When Kalala and guest still did not show up, she ate the other chicken as well.

Soon after, Kalala and the guest arrived and he called out to her to prepare the dinner for the two of them. Kalala in the meantime fetched a knife and started sharpening it. While Kalalatu was thinking about what to do, she heard the noise of a guest greeting at the doorway. When she answered the door, the guest informed her he had been invited to a dinner with Kalala, praying for the couple, "*Allah Ya saka mu ku da alhairi*" [May Allah reward you abundantly with His grace]. Kalalatu glared at him, berating at his foolishness to expect a dinner invitation from a total stranger. She explained to the guest that Kalala was actually mentally deranged; he usually would invite a guest to his house on the pretext of eating dinner, only to cut off his ears. Indeed, right now he could be heard sharpening a knife to cut off the guest's ears, so advised the guest to run away, which he did.

She then went to Kalala and berated him on his manner of randomly extending invitation to unknown people to dinner, because the latest guest he invited had stolen the two chickens and run off with them. Kalala then ran out of the house with a knife in hand, calling after the guest to give him at least one – meaning one of the chickens. The guest thought Kalala meant his ear, so kept running. Kalala was unable to keep up with him and eventually gave up and returned home. Kalalatu asked if he had retrieved the chickens and he replied in the negative. He vowed never to invite unknown guests to his dinner table again. [Personal translation.]

Intertextual Interpretation of CG and KDK

While *Clever Gretel* (CG) and *Kalala da Kalalatu* (KDK) share the same plot elements, the transfictional migration of CG created a different setting and characterisations in KDK. In CG, a landed master apparently in a big farm house, typical of

European estates has a cook, while in the KDK the two had to be married. This is because it would not be feasible to explain to Muslim Hausa children of the 1930s how a man and a woman could cohabit in the same house, without being married, and without being related in any way. Imam, therefore, brings in marriage as the moral and religious element to explain the cohabitation of the Master and the Cook.

The psychological state of Gretel is revealed in CG – fondness for wine, and probably getting drunk; indeed, her errant behaviour is explained on the basis of her intoxication and consumption of copious amount of wine. However, Imam could not bring the Muslim Kalalatu to drink; he, therefore, makes her into a whining housewife – forever complaining about her husband's generosity in inviting total strangers to dinner, while virtually denying her a full taste of what she cooks, despite her toils and labour. Thus, in both two cases, the women are reflected as weak and susceptible to their inner desires; although more so with Gretel, who, in addition to whining, has vanity and wine added to her mental portfolio.

A common frame to both CG and KDK is the feature of inviting guests to dinner. While this might be a European tradition, it is firmly entrenched in Islam, as indicated in *Surat Al-Insan*, which says of Muslim believers:

They [are those who] fulfill [their] vows and fear a Day
whose evil will be widespread. And they give food in spite
of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive.
Surat Al-'Insan (The Man) 76:7-8.

Imam, therefore, domesticated the story within the framework of the Islamic injunction concerning generosity to strangers. Consequently, by using Islamic motifs within the context of the original story of non-family feeding, Imam domesticated the Grimm Brothers' tale to Muslim Hausa community.

While in CG, the story did not exactly end — a final scene is missing to indicate the consequences of the Master's invitation — Imam finished his own rendering by closing the tale neatly in

the form of a pledge by Kalala not to invite guests to his dinner table again. While this might have provided the creative Imam the justification he needed to close the story — and provide a punch line with the premise of a stolen dinner — it also injected a lot of humour into the rendition (e.g. by suggesting that the guest is mentally deranged).

Illustrations and Visual Iconography of KDK

In order to strengthen the storylines in *Magana Jari Ce*, the editor (Rupert East) utilised copious illustrations that bring out the main plots of the stories — adapting some from the original illustration in the Grimm Brothers' tales. The illustrations were made by the Belgian artist, Jacqueline De Naeyer, who was employed by Rupert East after World War II to work at the Gaskiya Corporation. East eventually ended up marrying De Naeyer and moved back to the UK with her (Furniss 2011). Her illustrations of the various Gaskiya Corporation publications were quite illuminating for their reflection of the Hausa society in the 1930s. The sketch of the domesticated Clever Gretel story in *Kalala da Kalatu* in particular is a good example, as shown in Fig. 1:



Fig. 1. Kalala da Kalalatu [Clever Gretel]

The figure very well communicates the last scene of both the CG and KDK stories, when the Master/Kalala runs out of the house with a knife in hand, asking the guest to stop and give him 'one'; the flowing gowns ('babbar riga') of the men; furthermore, the picture of the feet of the guest running shoeless visibly demonstrates his desperation and the haste in which he leaves the house — a typical depiction in Hausa comic scripts of someone running away from danger. Kalalatu is shown in the background with an impressionistic glee on her face, while the dog (not mentioned anywhere in both the CG and KDK narratives) adds colour to the situation by shown to be yelping at the guest as well.

What seems to be communicated most effectively, however, is the look of terror on the guest's face. Altogether, the illustration provides enough evidence of the character of the *dramatis personae* in the story, as well as its farmland setting – for it is clearly not depicting a highly densely populated cluster of villages. This interplay between the visual elements in Fig. 1 communicates the comical nature of the story, helped along by the inscrutable face of knife-wielding Kalala and the terror-stricken guest.

Case Study 2: 'The Good Bargain': The Original German Version Translated into English

KHM 7 [English] - The Good Bargain (Vol 1, Nr. 7)

A peasant sold his cow for seven silver coins (talers). On the way home, he heard frogs in a pond calling 'aik', 'aik', 'aik'. Thinking they were referring to his money, he berated them for saying it was eight ('aik'), insisting that the correct amount was seven. When they continued, he threw the seven coins into the pond for them to verify. When they continued with their 'aik' song, he left, frustrated at their stupidity and inability to count properly.

Next, he slaughtered another cow hoping to sell the meat. On the way to the market he met a pack of dogs, led by a greyhound, which kept yelping at the meat. He then decided to give the meat to the dog with the intention that should the dog eat it, he, the peasant, would then collect the payment from the dog's master. He then went to the master after three days to collect the money. The master became annoyed at this request and kicked the peasant out, who now went to the king to complain first about his money being seized by frogs in the pond, then the butcher refusing to give him his money for the meat, which his greyhound had eaten.

The king and his daughter were amused at this narrative, which made the king so happy that he decided to give his daughter to the peasant in marriage. The peasant declined, stating that he already had a wife, and had no wish to see wives

in every corner of his house. The king became annoyed, but remained calm as he ordered the peasant to return in three days for a special reward of five hundred. On the way out, he met a palace sentry who had witnessed everything. The sentry and a Jew thought the King meant to give the peasant five hundred gold pieces, so they tricked him immediately into promising to give them two hundred and three hundred, respectively, in exchange for smaller coins that had less value.

On the appointed day, the peasant returned to the palace. When he was ordered to remove his shirt, the peasant realised that the king meant to give him five hundred strokes of the cane, whereupon he shouted that under the agreement they had two hundred should really go to the sentry, while three hundred should be given to the Jew. The King then ordered the blows to be delivered to the sentry and the Jew. The King was so amused by this turn of events that he opened his treasury to the peasant to take any amount he wanted. The peasant filled his pockets with a lot of coins. However, he was heard complaining later at an inn that he was cheated by the king – since he did not know how much he had in his pocket, whereas he was certain if he had been given the five hundred the king mentioned at first that would have been more substantive.

The Jew, who followed him to the inn, overheard this and reported to the King, who in turn and in rage, asked the Jew to bring back the peasant. The Jew was happy, certain now that the peasant would also be punished. When the Jew returned to inform the peasant about the summons, he felt he needed a new coat befitting his new moneyed status, in order to appear more presentable before the king. However, he could not get any around; the Jew, therefore, offered to lend him his own coat so as to hasten the return to the palace. The peasant was satisfied with this, put on the Jew's coat, and the two went off to the palace.

When the king confronted the peasant with what the Jew had reported about him, he denied it and explained that the Jew was

an incurable liar – so much that he could even claim ownership of the coat he, the peasant, was wearing. The Jew jumped up and explained that the coat truly belonged to him, which merely increased the ire of the king, who subjected him to another bout of punishment for slandering the peasant. Eventually, the peasant went home wearing the good coat and with some good money in his pockets, saying to himself, “This time, I made it.”

‘Kwadayi Mabudin Wahala’ [Greed Leads to Hardship]: The Good Bargain in Hausa

KHM 07 [Hausa] Kwadayi Mabudin Wahala (Magana Jari Ce, Vol 3, pp. 96–106)

There was once a man called Dandamau who was so foolish that people considered him a simpleton. He was so doltish that he was exempted from paying the community tax. One day, however, he had a quarrel with the ward head, who vowed to put him on the list of those who must pay the tax, arguing that if Dandamau was really such a dolt, how could he have maintained his family?

Thus, Dandamau was forced to find job as an apprentice for a woodcarver where, after working for some time, he was able to earn nine coins, which was enough to pay his tax. On the way home, he passed by a pond and heard frogs singing, ‘kwas’, ‘kwas’, ‘kwas,’ [Takwas in Hausa]. He stopped and started arguing with them, insisting that he had nine, not eight coins. When they continued, he threw the nine coins in the pond and asked them to count themselves. When they did not return the coins, he left, muttering about this incident of highway robbery in the pond.

Shortly after he arrived home, the ward head sent for the tax payment and Dandamau requested to be given more time. His wife also informed him that their pantry was empty. He then took one of his lambs with the intention of selling it in the market; but later changed his mind and decided to slaughter it instead and sell the meat to the head of butchers. On his way, he was accosted by a pack of dogs, led by a spotted dog, which was owned by the

head of butchers. Dandamau now decided to give the meat to the dog with the understanding that it would help him to collect the money from its owner.

Later, he met the head butcher and asked for his money after recounting that the butcher's dog had taken the meat on his behalf. The head butcher pointed the dog to Dandamau and asked him to request the money directly from it — which Dandamau did, to the annoyance of the butcher. When the dog ignored Dandamau, he lamented that after their last encounter the dog must have become mute and, therefore, insisted that the butcher should pay for the meat which the dog ate. The butcher became so annoyed that he threw Dandamau out of the shop.

Dandamau then reported the case to the chief of the village, whom he met sitting in the audience chamber together with his daughter. He narrated all that happened between himself and the dog and the butcher's response. This made the princess laugh so much; she had earlier been downcast because of her mother's death. As a reward for making the princess laugh, the chief gave the hand of the princess in marriage to Dandamau. He declined, saying he already had a wife. The chief became angry and asked him to return the following day to receive 100 on his body. Dandamau left with expecting that he would be given a cash reward of one hundred coins. On his way out of the palace, he was accosted by the chief's butler, who tricked him into promising to exchange his anticipated reward of one hundred coins with other coins of lesser denomination, but of the same quantity.

However, when Dandamau returned to the palace the next day, there were no coins; instead, the chief instructed that he should be given one hundred strokes of the cane on his body for being very foolish. Weighing his new fortune before the punishment was effected, Dandamau shouted out to the chief that it should go to the butler instead, because they had agreed earlier that he should hand over "the one hundred" he was to collect from the palace. When the chief enquired about this arrangement, the

butler answered in the affirmative, but explained that it was in respect of coins, not lashes. Nonetheless, the butler was made to take off his clothes and receive the one hundred lashes, as per their bargain. The chief, amazed at Dandamau's luck, then gave him the chance to go to the treasury and take as much fortune in gold coins as he could. Dandamau did just that, filling his garments with as many coins as he could carry.

However, as he walked away he began to wonder if the gold pieces he had in his pocket were equivalent to the one hundred coins he would have received the first time, complaining to himself loudly about the amount and insisting that he should have been given the one hundred coins instead of the few that he had now collected in the folds of his garment. The butler, still smarting from the lashes, overheard this, and ran to inform the chief about Dandamau's ingratitude. The chief initially wanted to dismiss this, but then decided to investigate. Unknown to them, Dandamau's brother had overheard the butler's report to the chief, and quickly scripted to his brother what to say when summoned by the chief.

When the butler summoned Dandamau to the chief's presence, Dandamau suggested that he needed to change his gown as the one he had on him was dirty due to the large number of coins he carried in its folds. The butler, eager to see that Dandamau got punished, quickly offered him the use of his own and together they returned to the chief's audience chamber. The chief started berating Dandamau about what he was alleged to have said, but Dandamau insisted that the butler was such a compulsive liar that he might even claim ownership of the gown that he was wearing. The butler quickly asserted his ownership of the gown, which the chief ignored and ordered him to pay the cost of the one hundred strokes of the cane he was earlier given, or face another round of similar punishment. The butler paid swiftly and a portion of the money was given to Dandamau, whose brother now took charge and managed it all, making them quite wealthy in a short time.

Intertextual Interpretation of TGB and KMW

While in TGB the peasant has no name, in KMW he is referred to as Dandamau, a conjured nickname that is coined (perhaps purposely for this story, as the name is not common in Hausaland) to mean 'the muddler' or one who muddles things up, either due to forgetfulness, or due to sheer doltishness. The central theme — greed does not pay — of *The Good Bargain* (TGB) is maintained in *Kwadayi Mabudin Wahala* (KMW), but with significant inter-cultural changes.

The original German word for eight, 'acht', became an onomatopoeic referent by the frogs in both Hausa, English and German. Whereas the German 'acht' and English 'eight'/'aik' share tonal antecedents, however, the Hausa word for 'eight' is 'takwas'—which has different tonal properties from the European versions. Imam's use of 'kwas', a root-derivative of 'takwas' or eight, pays homage to the original frog song lyric of 'aik'/'acht'. In this, however, Imam expects the reader to link 'kwas' with 'takwas' or eight. Further, instead of seven coins in the original, Imam changed it to nine coins — a higher value amount considering the amount of labour done to earn it.

One significant departure, though, which Imam could not transmutate effectively is the issue of rejecting the princes as a bride. In both TGB and KMW, the protagonist rejects the princess given to him as a wife. It is doubtful this could happen in Hausaland of the 1930s, when marrying such a wife would have opened the gateway for Dandamau to become a member of the gentry. Furthermore, no one dares refuse the offer of a wife by the king; especially if the bride is the king's own daughter. Nonetheless, Imam's retention of this scene in his translation perhaps has a deliberate creative strategy to further emphasise Dandamau's foolhardiness.

A plot twist inserted in KMW, which is totally absent from the original TBG, is the brother who suggests a change of shirt for Dandamau before the latter is taken to the chief's presence. In the original TGB, it is the Jew who lends the shirt. However,

since the Jew has been excised out of KMW, the dastardly acts of the Jew are transferred to the greedy wily palace butler. The Jew's greed then becomes easily seen in palace butlers, most of who are of slave origin and use every means necessary to survive – including subterfuge. The presence of a brother for Dandamau presents the latter with a credible narrative presence in the story in the absence of the stereotyped greed of the Jew in TGB.

Thus, TGB ends up as an anti-Semitic narrative with the Jew portrayed as greedy and receiving the short end of the stick. Imam avoids this racial profiling by inwardly turning to the intrigues of a chief's palace and finding a villain in the butler. This is necessary in order to remove the Jew from the narrative. The possible reason for this was that Imam was given the task of translating the stories by British colonial officers. It could be possible that not wishing to cause offence, he decided to censor his writing to remove the anti-Semitism in the story. Even closer to the Germans, the Danish translators of the Grimm Brother's Tales dropped two stories that were considered anti-Semitic, including *The Good Bargain* (Dollerup 1999: 246).

Illustrations and Visual Iconography of KMW

KMW was also illustrated to further draw attention of the reader to the comic turns and events in the narrative. Even the original story has an illustration that depicts the protagonist as a wild-eyed moron.



Fig. 2: Peasant and Dandamau at the pond

The line drawings in Fig 2 employ different motifs to relate the scene at the pond. While the peasant on the left is drawn in a highly impressionistic manner typical of European art illustration, the Hausa version on the right again reflects a typical Hausa landscape, with sparse vegetation (despite being close to a body of water). The Dandamau illustration, however, conveys the scene more effectively, as it is a dynamic drawing which communicates action. This artistic dynamism is further reflected in Fig. 3 below:



Fig. 3: The Chief, his daughter and Dandamau

The illustration in Fig. 3 captures the scene where Dandamau relates his story to the chief, with his daughter laughing at the narrative. Despite their merriment, however, Dandamau is quite sober-faced, to indicate that to him, the incidence about the butcher's dog not paying him for the meat it ate is not funny. The artist also maintains consistency in Dandamau's dress, for we can see that he is wearing the same long gown as at the pond scene.

Thus, in the three illustrations that accompany the two stories, subtexts were created that have added value to the

main narrative. This is because the interplay among the visual elements of the illustrations helps to emphasise the specific and non-specific aspects of the narratives and lend a cinematic perspective to the stories.

Conclusion

Both *The Good Bargain* and *The Clever Gretel* are comedic narratives. Abubakar Imam's rendering of the two stories took the comedic narrative a notch higher by inserting interpretative dialogue structures absent from the originals. In "*Kalala da Kalalatu*", the first comedic point was the made-up names of the characters — such names do not exist in Hausa naming conventions, but created in sound-alike manner to give a domestic synergy between a husband and his wife.

In her attempt to frighten off the guest, Kalalatu informs him that only a deranged person would invite someone totally strange to his home for dinner, a statement that contradicts Kalala's sincere public-spiritedness (and perhaps his sense of Islamicity). Kalalatu is not against such invitations, but against the small portions she gets after her toils, whenever a guest comes to dinner. For both European and African audiences, therefore, Kalalatu/Gretel's actions might have signaled a blow for women's rights in the domestic sphere.

Kalala da Kalatu Islamises *Clever Gretel* by marrying Gretel to a husband, rather than co-habiting a large farmhouse with a male master — a situation that is culturally not acceptable to Muslim African audiences, even if acceptable to the non-African audiences.

Further identities were brought in to make the adapted Hausa narrative of *The Good Bargain* more acceptable and interesting. In giving the peasant a specific name in Imam's rendering of the story as *Kwadayi Mabudin Wahala*, Imam, therefore, re-orientes the narrative to make it more distinctly African. This is because almost all African folktales are rooted in specific naming conventions of characters. KMW gave the peasant two names

— his actual name, Dandamau, and his community referent, Dolo. Dandamau is a play on ‘damawa’, to muddle things, thus Dandamau can mean ‘muddled one’, while Dolo means simpleton — all combined to paint the picture of an apparently unintelligent person. It would have been difficult for Imam to use peasant — *dan kauye*, country bumpkin — in his translation, as that would not have been considered politically correct. By giving the original German peasant an African name, Imam, therefore, created a metafictional character in which a secondary character is created within the narrative of a primary character.

Getting rid of the Jew character — either for aversion to anti-Semitism in Imam, or out of fear of what the European colonial overlords would think of an African portrayal of a Jew — created a narrative discontinuity for Imam. He solved this by creating another metafictional character in the form of a brother for Dandamau who leads the remaining part of the narrative, since Dandamau is too much of a simpleton to wriggle out of the situation. This poetic license, therefore, gave Imam the opportunity to reinforce the concept of one being one’s ‘brother’s keeper’ in a virtually literal sense and further brings out the African sense of community responsibility towards each other. The peasant in TGB has no brother, at least in the English translations of the tale.

While the stories of *Magana Jari Ce* analysed in this paper are treated as inter-cultural texts — since there is no cultural contiguity between the source texts and target texts — they nevertheless, provide an inter-cultural mirror of the society. They also demonstrate the Imamian strategy of creating a wholly new fictional substrate on which to affix his characters using more comedic frames, which, subsequently, became characteristic of all Abubakar Imam’s fictional works. Thus, Imam’s re-orientation of the original source texts has succeeded in creating a literary corpus that has become, to all intents and purposes, totally African.

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LITERATURE,
HISTORY
AND
IDENTITY
IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Literature, History and Identity in Northern Nigeria is a unique collection of articles on literature selected from papers presented at the 7th Conference on Literature in Northern Nigeria at Bayero University, Kano, that was jointly organised with the Kwara State University, Malete, from 3rd – 6th December 2012. The book explores the indivisible links between literature, history and identity with specific reference to Northern Nigeria. Identity is a product of history and literature; at the same time, it also produces literature and history. This causal relationship makes this book of essays on literature in Northern Nigeria contemporary and apt in explaining the region's present challenges and prospect as a people. We are always a product of our cultural practices, arts, aesthetics and history, as they together assist us, not only in negotiating existence and self-realisation, but in determining fundamentally what we are as a people in the greater scheme of being and knowing; what the philosophers of antiquity call 'ontology' and 'epistemology'.

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