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HIS ACADEMIC EMINENCE
PROF. RALPH AFOLABI AKINFELEYE

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Didactic Transformations: Community Theater, Hindi Cinema and Emergence of Hausa Video Films in Northern Nigeria

By
Abdalla Uba Adamu

Introduction

Hausa community theater performances do not follow any specific script. These are performed mostly by children and young people and generally takes place from the first ten days of the Muslim holy month of Ramadhan, depending on the willingness of the performers to continue. It is aimed at teaching Muslim Hausa children some fundamental social skills. The sketches are performed every night in playgrounds throughout northern Nigeria and provide a guide to acceptable behaviour.

From the 1960s, Hindi films were shown in northern Nigerian cinemas and immediately connected with the audience, particularly due to a convergence between the didactic narratives of the Hindi cinema and the local theater. A number of drama clubs sprung up keen to use available technologies to convert the community theater scripts into video films using the Hindi film structure as a creative inspiration, complete with song and dance.

This work traces the development of Hausa entertainment by looking at Hausa popular culture and its oral roots and then tracing its transition to folkloric opera and indigenous drama. It presents this transition via the diagram in Figure 6.1, which shows how media technologies played a significant role in the *reversal* of visual to oral literate in contemporary Hausa popular culture.

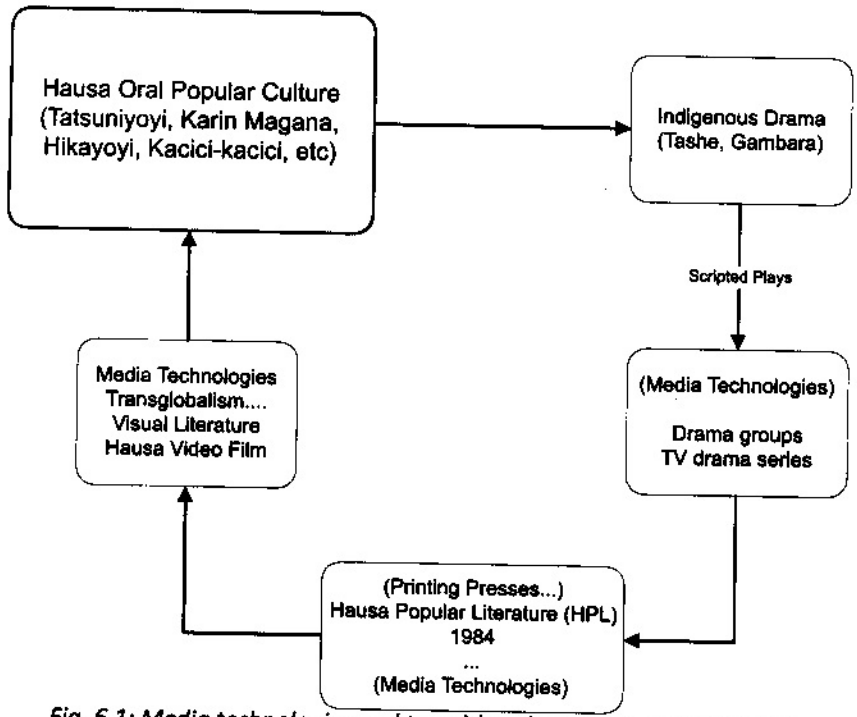

Fig. 6.1: Media technologies and transitions in Hausa popular culture

Figure 6.1 above traces the development of the Hausa creative industries in Hausa indigenous literature and the various inputs into the development of each genre by digital technology.

Oral narratives and *mental animated* graphics

The traditional *tatsuniya* folktale forms the core of Hausa popular culture[1]. It provides an emic ethnographic rendering of the life of the Bahaushe (or Hausa man) in a traditional society. Aimed mainly at children, the *tatsuniya* is a body of oral narratives used to draw attention to the critical aspects of cultural life, showing how to live a good life. It is necessarily a 'female space', for as Alidou (2002b) argues:

> *In Hausa tradition, the oldest woman of the household or neighbourhood – the grandmother – is the 'master' storyteller. Her advanced age is a symbol of a deep experiential understanding of life as it unfolds in its many facets across time;*

> *and she is culturally regarded as an important source of knowledge production, preservation, and transmission. This matriarch becomes the mediator/transmitter of knowledge and information across generations... She uses her skills of storytelling to artistically convey information to younger generations about the culture and worldview, norms and values, morals and expectations. Her relationship with her younger audience of girls and boys...puts her in a position to educate, through her tatsuniya, about taboo topics such as sexuality, shame and honour, that culturally prevent parents and children from addressing with one another (p. 139).*

The *tatsuniya* becomes a script showing how to live a good life and avoid corruptions. Strongly didactic and linear (without distracting sub-plots), it directs attention to what is good and what is bad and shows the consequences of violating approved conduct. The moral code embodied in the *tatsuniya* is simple and straightforward: the good are rewarded and the evil punished. Its straightforward narratives ensure the avoidance of scenes, which present moral dilemmas. The reason for the direct narrative as well as the avoidance of conflict resolution scenes is attributed to Islam. Alidou (2002a), building up on the works of Skinner (1969) and Starratt (1996), points out:.

> *The impact of Islam on oral literary production in Hausa culture has been multifold. First, the inception of Islam in Hausa culture infused the themes, style, and language of Hausa oral literature with an Islamic ethos and aesthetics. Its mode of characterisation also took a turn towards a more Islamic conception of personal conduct that defines a person as 'good' or 'evil.' Furthermore, many modern Hausa epics and folktales contain metaphorical allusions to spaces relevant to Islamic history and experiences (p. 244).*

The imaginative structure of the *tatsuniya* does not stop at narrative styles: it often builds complex plot elements using metaphoric characterisations. Animals, for example, feature prominently, with Gizo, the spider, taking the role of the principal character, albeit one who alternates between being good and bad.

Other elements explored within the tapestry of the *tatsuniya* include the ethnic stereotyping of 'Maguzawa' – the portion of the Hausa people who refuse to accept Islam and retained their traditional African religious beliefs – and the non-ethnic Hausa. The latter include the 'absorbed' Hausa, such as the Kanuri, the Tuareg and the Nupe, who linguistically identify themselves as Hausa, despite their primary ethnic identities. There is also the widespread fun at the expense of 'men of Gotham' – country folks.

While the stories incorporate humour, sharp observation and ethnocentricity, the core messages are moralistic. Many focus on issues such as ingratitude, acts of God and poverty. Within this framework are interspersed comedies revolving around tall stories or white lies.

The coming of Islam to Hausaland ensured that all narratives conform to the Islamic code of behaviour. The reinforcement of separate spaces for males and females in Islam reflect the gender-space specificity of the Hausa *tatsuniya*. The gender space is described and clearly delineated-and this further underscores the moral codes of the *tatsuniya* narrator. Within this framework, the *tatsuniya* scripts do not explore the female private world but reinforce gender stratification of a male dominated society. This gender space limitation of the Hausa folktale came under serious challenge in the transition to the video medium. In an attempt to project what they consider 'modernity', the Hausa video filmmakers often cast female characters in tight-fitting revealing clothes that are disapproved of by the censorship agency established specifically for all literary productions in Kano.

A study of the thematic classifications of the *tatsuniya* by Ahmad (2002) reveals plot elements that resonate with commercial Hindi film plots and provide creative convergence points for Hausa video filmmakers to use the *tatsuniya* plot elements, if not the direct stories, couched in the frame of commercial Hindi film, referred to as *masala*. These themes, according to Ahmad (2002), include the unfair treatment of members of the family, which sees various family conflicts focusing on favouritism (as for example in the *Kogin Bagaja* folktale), unfair or wicked treatment of children (*Labarin Janna da Jannalo)* and disobedience to parents (*The girl who refuses to marry any suitor with a scar*). This is supplemented by the second theme of the tales, which include the reprehensible behaviour of the ruling class or those in positions of authority. Sub-themes include the forced marriage (*Labarin Tasalla da Zangina*), arrogance by members of the ruling elite (*The daughter of a*

snake and a prince) and oppression (*A leper and a wicked Waziri and a Malam*). Other themes include deception, personal virtues and virtuous behaviour. For further embellishment, some of the tales in the *tatsuniya* repertoire contain elements of performance arts where the storylines merge into a series of songs – often with a refrain – to further add drama to the story.

The *tatsuniya* is a collection of scripts read night after night to millions of children all across Hausaland – no matter how geographically defined – as night entertainment – at least, first, before the media intrusion of television and later, digital satellite television.

The *tatsuniya* as opera – street *tashe* drama

Inspired by the *tatsuniya*, drama clubs and societies had a long history in Kano going back to traditional court entertainments during festivals. Indeed, records from the histories of Kano dating back to the founding of the city in 950 CE or so revealed a structured focus on drama, music and entertainment. From this, drama and theater were long a component of Hausa traditional entertainment styles. The Hausa theater has, of course, undergone significant transformations: it started as a guild-related activity before crossing over to religious performances in the Hausa *bori* cult systems. Kofoworola (1987) points out that:

> *Assessed on the basis of their magico-religious functions, the ritual forms of enactments in Hausa performing arts such as dance, mime, imitative movements, mimicry and acting could be regarded as a legacy of the past traditions (p. 11).*

The arrival of Islam in 1320 reduced the 'paganistic' dimension of this ritual. The *bori*, however, has retained its popular culture appeal up till now. In fact, associated with a ruling class right from its inception, drama has developed into various forms in Emirs' courts throughout northern Nigeria. Thus, *Wasan Gauta*, which metamorphosed into *Wasan Garma*; *Wasan 'Yan Kama* and *Wawan Sarki* were all sophisticated conventions initially aimed at the entertainment in the palace but were eventually performed for ordinary citizens. This led to the development of similar groups in the form of, for instance, *'Yan Gambara* and *'Yan Galura* performing artists who combined

comedy, theater and music in public performances.

Theater was not restricted to courts or to adults. Hausa children and young people had also developed a whole range of theater forms in order to entertain themselves, especially from the 10th day of the Ramadhan when Muslim Hausa communities launch into a *tashe* festival, which sees various performances involving, for example, imitation and music. Umar (1981, p. 4) explains that *tashe*, derived from *tashi* (wake up), refers to the fact that children could not wake up in the middle of the night and engage in household chores, which makes night-time suitable for daytime activities while food is being prepared for *sahur* (the pre-dawn breakfast). They amuse themselves with playing games and engaging in theatrical activities, many of which involve imitating the household activities of adults.

Although performed in various categories – ranging from comedy to serious drama – the plays presented during *tashe* serve to focus the creative energies of youth and provide them with an opportunity to show their understanding of adult spaces and contribute to the social life of their individual societies. Many of the *tashe* plays deal with social responsibility or illumination. I will illustrate with a few of them.

Baran Baji is performed by a group of six or more children aged up to 14 years. The principal character often dresses in female clothing and carries the equipment used by women in preparing food. 'Props' might include a grinding stone (*dutsen nika*), a circular mat for covering pots and vessels (*faifai*) and a sieve (*rariya*). During the performance, the principal character actually prepares food for 'her' household and fellow performers encourage 'her' by singing. The purpose of the drama is to instil a sense of responsibility while educating children (especially girls) about household chores. Initially performed by girls, the theater became an exercise in gender cross-dressing when the girls started withdrawing from public performances. At the beginning of the 21st Century, by which the time Shari'a Law was being enforced in the Muslim parts of northern Nigeria, even the boys had stopped this particular theater due to Islamic injunctions against gender cross-dressing. For instance, from a Hadith in Sunan Abu-Dawud, Book 32, Number 4087, Abu Hurayrah narrates that 'the Apostle of Allah cursed the man who dressed like a woman and the woman who dressed like a man'.

Another, *Ka Yi Rawa*, is also performed by a group of six to eight children with one of them dressing up like a quintessential Hausa Muslim *Mallam* or

teacher, complete with a white beard (made from cotton), a *carbi* (prayer-beads), a mat, an *allo* (wooden writing slate) and an ink-pot. The song and chorus of this play admonishes the teacher for enjoying worldly pleasures, such as dancing. The performer acting the Mallam defends himself and points to the symbols of scholarship that have deterred him from engaging in such folly. When they refuse to believe him, he decides to perform a jig to prove he can dance! The main point of the play is to draw the attention of the Muslim teacher class to the fact that the eyes of the community are on them and that they should be models of good behaviour.

Macukule, performed by young men (as opposed to children), is a parody with a focus on ethnic deconstruction of various ethnic groups in Nigeria. Performers mimic cultural patterns in a song and chorus fashion, with the lead singer reeling out the various behaviours of a specifically targeted group. A lead singer reels out the distinctive behaviour associated with particular groups while performers mimic that behaviour. The ethnic groups are not individually identified and the term *Gwari* is used. And although Gwari does refer to a specific ethnic group in Kaduna, in this particular play the term is used to refer to the non-ethnic Hausa (*bagware*). In this way, the *Macukule* performances serve to illuminate their audience about specific group traits and the distinctive behaviour of other ethnic groups.

Jatau Mai Magani, performed by young men, focuses attention on the medicinal properties of various shrubs, trees, leaves and plants in the community, and in a powerful song and chorus fashion serves to illuminate the audience on indigenous medicine. The song ends in a declaration of the absolute powers of the Creator to heal – not the *Shaman* (*boka*) or herbalist.

Neither is the *tashe* theater restricted to males only; girls equally participate in communicating to the community their understanding of their eventual social roles and responsibilities in a series of theatrical performances that include *Samodara*, *Ragadada*, *Mai Ciki*, *A Sha Ruwa*. For instance, in *Ga Mairama Ga Daudu*, two girls dress as 'husband' and 'wife' with a song and chorus trailing them. The group then enacts not only how a wife should dress to please her husband, but also how she can relate and communicate with him to hold his attention. The entire script is sung by one of the girls in the chorus, with the 'newlyweds' acting out accordingly. However, *Mairama da Daudu* has slowly faded from the set pieces of girls in the *tashe* theater due to the reinforcement of the Shari'a in most northern Nigerian states after 1999.

For instance, in another Hadith from Sunan Abu Dawood, Book 32, Number 4066 reports, Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin narrates that 'Ibn Abu Mulaykah told that when someone remarked to Aisha that a woman was wearing sandals, she replied: 'The Apostle of Allah cursed mannish women".

It, therefore, became increasingly impossible for the girls to dress in male clothing to assume the matrimonial space of the 'husband' in the *Mairama* mime[5]. Thus, in the elements of these street performances, we often see reflections of gender stratification – perhaps not unexpected in a strictly Islamic society. The assumption of cross-gender roles in *Ga Mairama Ga Daudu*, for instance, is necessitated by the social and religious convention of gender segregation, which makes it impractical to combine adolescent boys and girls in a simulated marriage situation. Consequently, right from the start, Hausa theater has a focus on gender segregation and in a didactic style emphasises female social responsibilities. However, with the increasing Islamisation of northern Nigeria, the girls' portions of the *tashe* theaters gradually began to disappear. By 2005, very few female *tashe* troupes were found in urban Kano; their places were replaced by boys who dress in female clothing.

And while *tashe* is an organised activity with a specific spatial configuration – performed in households or streets where the artistes are given money for their performance – children also engage in a series of games and plays that reflect the theater outside of the *tashe* festival settings. A vivid example of this is *Langa*. This is a strenuous, physically demanding game engaged by male adolescents only. It is performed as a competitive sport with two teams of six or more players, each team with a camp. It is played with the players standing on the right leg and the left bent at the knee and held in place by the right arm. The idea is that the two teams represent two warring 'nations' and the player-warriors, who are 'killed' by the simple act of being pushed down on the ground – an easy thing to do considering that the players hop on one leg.

However, the strategy is to avoid being 'killed' by running as fast as possible to one's 'encampment.' The players whose 'warriors' are brought down most often are considered losers, who must, therefore, pledge allegiance to the winners. The game/drama serves to emphasise territoriality and group cohesion. This is one of the few performances that combine elements of both theater and game.

Antecedent Hausa drama performances in Northern Nigeria

Hausa drama took a more structured form with the publication of *Six Hausa Plays* in 1930. Targeted at primary school pupils, it seeks to formalise community theater and further emphasise the transition from the orality of Hausa literature, which saw the transformation of tales to the written form. As Pilaszewicz (1985), points out:

> *Hausa plays, as folk tales did, concern themselves with family situations, with problems connected with marriage and polygamy to the fore. They discuss the upbringing of young people and protest against moral decline, and deal with some more general problems of social inequalities (p. 228).*

The introduction of *Six Hausa Plays* into the educational curriculum in 1930 provided a template around which other issues could be explored in addition to family dramas. The first to seize this opportunity of using drama as a platform for social education was Mohammed Aminu Yusuf, better known as 'Aminu Kano' (1920-1983), a social critic, philosopher, radical activist and social reformer. He was, as the name suggests, based in Kano, although with a wide circle of influence all over northern Nigeria. His ideas eventually crystallised in the manifesto of the People's Redemption Party (PRP) from what Aminu Kano interpreted as class oppression by traditional ruling hierarchies in the emirates of northern Nigeria. He was the first to formally write drama between 1938-1939 while teaching in the Kano Middle School. He also taught at Kaduna College where he founded the Dramatic Society. Through drama and theater, Aminu learnt how to express issues in a humorous and sometimes satirical way. As a teacher in Kaduna College, he wrote many plays in which:

> *he criticised the exploitation of the masses and challenged the system of emirates in northern Nigeria. In the play, Kai wane ne a kasuwar Kano da ba za a cuce ka ba? (Whoever you might be, you will be cheated at Kano market) he depicted the exploitation of country people by heartless merchants, while in Karya Fure take ba ta 'ya'ya (A lie blooms but yields no fruit) he raised the problem of excessive taxes levied upon the Hausa rural population. In the*

> *years 1939-1941, Aminu Kano wrote around 20 short plays for use in schools where he ridiculed some of the outdated local customs, as well as the activities of the Native Authority in the system of indirect colonial administration (Paden 1973, p. 277; Pilaszewicz 1985, p. 228).*

Other plays included *Alhaji Kar ka bata Hajin Ka*, which admonishes people not to be taken in by the superficial life of modern western ways. Through his plays, Aminu ridiculed the old-fashioned ways of life and even satirised the British and their colonial attitudes. With a combination of all these and learned in the Qur'an and fluent in Hausa and English languages, a good sense of humour and above all his ability to sustain the attention of his audience, Aminu Kano began a smooth transition to his future political life. Perhaps not surprisingly, none of these plays were published when he submitted them to the Hausa-language newspaper, *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*. The traditional establishment was well entrenched to accept literary criticism, especially from one of them.

One of his pupils who was to assume his mantle as a playwright – although without the acerbic social criticism – was Maitama Sule, a pupil under Aminu Kano at the Middle School, Kano. Sule later became a social philosopher, an orator, and a politician. He also became an international diplomat, becoming Nigeria's Ambassador to the United Nations. In the recognition of his intellectual abilities, he was turbaned the Dan Masanin Kano. Maitama Sule's interest in drama was intensified in 1937 when he watched a stage drama of the Bayajidda legend performed by the pupils of Wudil Elementary School. He was influenced by Aminu Kano's use of drama as a means of educating people on social issues from 1943 to 1946 while he was a student at the Kaduna College. After graduation from the College, Maitama Sule was posted to his alma mater, the Kano Middle School in 1948. According to his biographer:

> *...his preoccupation with drama took a wider dimension of thematic spread and audience. In school, he established the dramatic society and was the master in charge of it. His dramatic activities went beyond the school. He established a city-wide troupe (Abubakar, 2001, p. 41).*

The first play staged under Maitama Sule's leadership of the Society of Middle School was *Sarkin Barayi Nomau* in 1948, with Maitama Sule playing the principal character. The play was a focus on brigandage. The special guest of honour in the audience was the then Emir of Kano, Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero who was extremely impressed and amused by the performance. He subsequently became interested in the drama troupe and its activities and instructed the Treasury to set aside some funds for the troupe to buy costumes and other materials needed to stage their plays. The troupe metamorphosed into Kano Drama Troupe and later, perhaps because of the official grants received from the Treasury, became part of the Kano Native Authority Film Unit, all in 1948.

The Kano Film Unit became the sole representative of Kano in any subsequent cultural festivals across the country, but most especially at Kaduna where such festivals were regular. When the Institute of Administration was opened in April 1954, it was the Kano Film Unit that entertained the audience with a stage drama focusing on how to run a local government council (and by showing how not to run it). Perhaps due to the conventional nature of their scripts, the Kano Film Unit was supported by both the traditional establishment, as well as the colonial administration.

The success of the Maitama Sule Drama Group stimulated the creation of other production companies in Kano. These included Ruwan Dare Drama Group (1969); Janzaki Motion Pictures (1973) containing perhaps the largest contingent of known Hausa video film stars; Yakasai Welfare Association (1976), Tumbin Giwa (1979), Gyaranya Drama Club (1981) and Jigon Hausa Drama Club (1984) (Sango, 2004).

These clubs were not professional in the sense of being engaged in a specified activity as one's main paid occupation rather than as an amateur. They were run by enthusiasts with full-time regular jobs who took to stage acting as a hobby. With time, they were able to become good enough to establish themselves as professional television drama and stage theater practitioners. At about the same time these drama groups were flourishing both in stage (*wasan dabe*) and radio dramas, cinema, especially the screening of Hindi films, made a spectacular entrance.

These historical developments contributed to the acceptance of theater in the Hausa public culture, particularly with a focus on maintaining traditional value systems. The intrusion of electronic entertainment forms, particularly

from India, changed the way the Hausa perform their theater.

The emergence of Kannywood – the Hausa video film industry

The ready accessibility to cinemas and later films screened on television created massive popularity for especially Hindi films in northern Nigeria. This motivated the desire of some of the drama clubs in Kano to consider transforming into film production companies, especially in the late 1970s. The cameras available at the time were VHS video cameras-such as Panasonic NV-M50-which record on VHS video cassettes only. It is this technical antecedent origin of the Hausa film that caused it to be referred to as 'video film', as opposed to film shot on celluloid film stock characteristic of developed film industries, such as Hollywood. With the easily available more digital technologies, the Hausa video films are now recorded on cameras with internal hard drive storage or on cameras with memory card storage facilities.

The first commercial Hausa video film produced in Hausa was *Turmin Danya* (dir. Salisu Galadanci) in 1990 by the Tumbin Giwa Drama group. This saw the transition of the drama groups from stage performers to video film actors.

Turmin Danya as a pioneer video film sustained the Hausa theatrical tradition through its didactic storyline of preaching tolerance, patience and submission to parental will as virtues. While based on original story about denied love, it subtly pays homage to the Hindi film story-line structure in its manifestation of one of the main characteristics of Hausa video films: forced marriage or denied love, in which one partner is forced on another unwilling partner by parents.

Subsequent development of the Hausa video film saw a move away from stage drama/theater productions by drama guilds into individual 'studios' (often based around a single office), thus creating a viable industry centered around the commercial city of Kano – earning the industry the tag of 'Kannywood' in 1999, some three years before an article in the *New York Times* in September 2002 created the tag 'Nollywood' for what came to be labelled the Nigerian film industry (whether based on celluloid or video medium). From 1990 to about 1995, Hausa video films adopted the stage structure of theatrical productions, instead of the more expansive cinematography associated with standard filmmaking.

The Hindi film influence on the Hausa video film production appeared first in

1995 when Mr. USA Galadima directed *Soyayya Kunar Zuci* on behalf of the Nigerian Film Corporation. This film was the first in Hausa media history to clone a Hindi film, *Mujhe Insaaf Chahiye* (dir. Tatineni Rama Rao, 1983). The production technique used in the Hausa film introduces the practice of intertextuality in Hausa video filmmaking. While originally a literary device, intertextuality, as the shaping of a text's meaning by another text, particularly the way that similar or related texts influence, reflect or differ from each other, became adopted by mainly developing nations film industries. The Indian film industry, for instance, is particularly noted for this, as many studies have shown how a lot of its contemporary films are appropriated from Hollywood films and remade as Hindi films for Indian audiences (Bakshil & Kiran, 2014; Ciolfi, 2012; Hassler-Forest & Nicklas, 2015; Novak, 2010; Sunder, 2011; Thomas, 1985).

This intertextual strategy of Hindi filmmakers found its way into Hausa filmmaking in two ways. First, Hindi films became a source of 'inspiration' to Hausa filmmakers, so that Hindi films are often remade as Hausa films. Second, the main Hindi film storyline structure of love triangles, forced marriages and spectacular choreographed song and dance routines became a part of Hausa films (Adamu, 2010, 2009).

In 1999, Sarauniya Films in Kano released the trailer of a new video film, *Sangaya* directed by Mohammed Sabo. It contained catchy tunes and most importantly, a tightly controlled choreography, which heightened anticipation for the film released in early 2000. The film subsequently became the most successful Hausa video film of the decade-and merged the Hindi storylines with another Hindi film motif: spectacular choreographed song and dance routines that became the biggest selling points of the video film. It also set the pace and sent a creative signal: for a Hausa video film to sell massively, it required three fundamental motifs – a love story based on a love triangle (two males/ females competing for one female/male), forced/denied marriage and song and dance.

The commercial drive to succeed in a fiercely competitive market led to a market situation in which the focus was on creating video films for Hausa-speaking audience that was already addicted to clone Hindi films. Each producer was attempting to upstage the other in the appropriation game, trying to prove that his video film could produce a better Hindi adaptation than others.

From fieldwork with directors, producers, and actors in Kano in 2005 – the halcyon period of the industry – the main reasons advanced by Hausa video filmmakers about their strong focus on the love triangle storylines and song and dance routines in their videos were three. First was the claim that marriage and marital relationships are central to the life of the average Hausa person (particularly girls and women). And since films are reflections of life, they argue they are merely mirroring the society's obsession with marital affairs in all the shades of a spectrum: from teenage love to co-wives conflict, to strategies followed by Hausa women to control their husbands through shamanistic (*bokanci*) concoctions and rituals. They also argue further that their audience prefer love stories, especially young girls and housewives who constitute as much as 80 percent of Hausa video film viewers.

Second, the Hausa video viewer has a Hindi film antecedent. The most popular films shown in major urban centers in northern Nigeria were Hindi cinema up to the late 1980s. These remained the main source of inspiration for growing young urbanised male Hausa who, in the absence of locally-flavoured cinema, saw these Hindi films closely approximating their own social space. The effect was even more electrifying on house-bound young housewives who have no opportunity to go to the cinema and therefore rely solely on the television programming. The elaborate song and dance routines captivate the urbanised Hausa so deeply that many of them can recite the Hindi songs word for word and from the beginning to the end. The outcome of these 'Hindunese' cinema language is obsession with the Hindi cinema motif in all the aspects of contemporary Hausa popular culture.

Third, the flowing saris of the actresses and the macho posturing of the actors, coupled with an obsession with love triangles made these Hindi films immediately acceptable and, rapidly enough, Northern Nigeria became the biggest market for Hindi films in Nigeria. Thus, among Hausa video film producers, the appeal of Hindi cinema was due to perceived *similarities* between Hindi and Hausa cultural patterns, rather than divergences. Larkin (1997) narrates thus:

> *Talking to many friends about their love of Indian films, I was struck by the common refrain that Indian culture was 'just like' Hausa culture. I found it surprising that a staunch Muslim Hausa should identify so strongly with Hindu Indian culture, but over*

> *time different cultural similarities became clearer. Most obvious are the many visual affinities between Indian and Hausa culture. Men in Indian films, for instance, often dress in long kaftans similar to the Hausa dogon riga, over which they wear long waistcoats, much like the Hausa palmaran. Women are also dressed in long saris and scarves which veil their heads in accord[ance] with Hausa ideas of feminine decorum (pp. 412-413).*

Although the Kano State Government established a Censorship Board in 2001 to regulate the Hausa video film industry, the focus was on getting revenue for the government from filmmakers through censorship fees and warnings about morality of the song and dance in the films. The creative focus of the Hausa video film remains firmly rooted in approximating Hindi film production culture.

As Blakely (2001) points out, academic responses to various facets of global entertainment have changed drastically over the last forty years, reflecting for the most part, huge changes in technology, media infrastructure, and entertainment content. This naturally led to the development of theories of imitation (e.g. Marlberg, 1995; Rozik, 2002; Walker, 2000; White, 2013) with the view that the availability of new communication technologies would enable developing countries to imitate the West in a process of modernisation. Similarly, Curran and Park (2000) argue that two contrasting attitudes towards globalisation can be found. The first is expressed by cultural theorists who welcome globalisation as a means for the reinforcement of international dialogue. This enable minorities to gain attention beyond national borders. An opposing point of view stresses the threat that globalisation poses to democracies and international politics, aiming to limit the influence of worldwide capitalism. Both these views, at least, concur to a certain degree of weakness in recipient systems, as a result of the transnational flow of influences (see for example, Thussu, 2007).

Conclusion

The Hausa have over the centuries developed strongly didactic, but culturally enduring entertainment forms through drama, street theater and mimesis. Wholly original, these entertainment forms came to symbolise not only their

language, but their 'nation'. Coupled with this are the mind-set characteristics that have been mapped out by Kirk-Greene and Millard (1973), which reflect the quintessential Hausa 'good man' (*Mutumin Kirki*) captured in the *tashe* theater, rather than the Hausa video films – indicating a demarcation between the traditional and the modern in Hausa theater. The casualty in this modernisation is the traditional theater. It was never truly popular in the first place, as a professional vocation in northern Nigeria and was restricted to performances during religious festivals, maintained by children during the Ramadhan. It was regarded as 'child play', or *wasan yara*. So, the theatrical performance continue to battle with the video camera for its survival among the Muslim Hausa of northern Nigeria.

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