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FABU HAUSA MAGICAL REALISM NNEBUE
GHANA CÔTE D'IVOIRE CARRIBEAN NIGERIA

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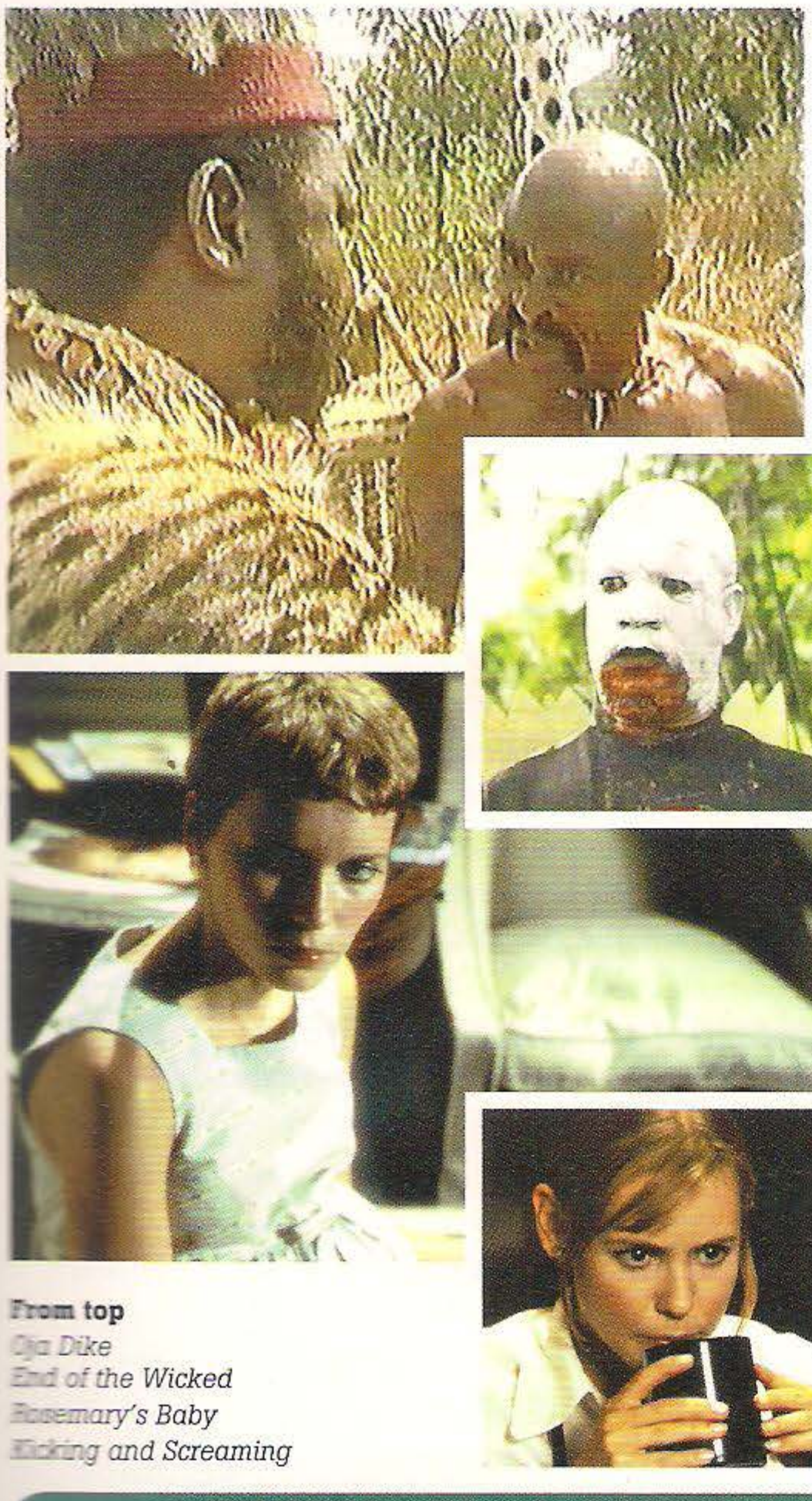
Contents
Issue 28



From top
Oja Dike
End of the Wicked
Rosemary's Baby
Kicking and Screaming

REVIEWS
Festival Reports / News / Views
FEATURES
Interviews
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Currying favour: eastern media influences and the Hausa video film

By Abdalla Uba Adamu

Keywords: Kano; Kanywood; Bollywood; Islam; colonialism; Middle Eastern literature; Translation Bureau; Literature Bureau; 'Istanci'; 'Imamanci'; adaptive translation; 'Bollywoodanci'; globalization; cultural proximity.

THE HAUSA VIDEO FILM was literally born in 1990 with the first Hausa language film, *Turmin Danya* in Kano, northern Nigeria. In 1998 media journalists in Kano labelled the industry Kanywood – in the fashion of Hollywood and Bollywood. Between 1991 and 2000 there was an avalanche of new producers, directors, actors, marketers – and increasingly, singers and choreographers. There was a reduction in the productions after 2001 when the sharia law was re-implemented in most northern Nigerian states, including Kano; although production picked up between 2002 to 2005. When the National Film and Video Censorship Board, Abuja, started recording (and censoring) video films in Nigeria from 1995, a total of 1,610 Hausa video films were officially recorded by the Board between 1998 and 2005.

The main cinematic influence on Hausa video film-makers were Hindi films imported by resident Lebanese merchants and shown in Lebanese-controlled theatres throughout northern Nigeria (Larkin 2002), and eventually shown by the state-controlled television stations as 'Weekend Television'. The religious divide and the Islamicate environment in northern Nigeria created a preference for eastern-flavoured visual entertainment due to perceived similarities between Muslim eastern cultures and Hausa Muslim cultures – at least in the public space of Islam.

The Hausa video film eventually evolved into a pastiche of Arabic literary sources and Hindi films and acquired three distinct characteristics similar to those of Hindi films. The first is the love triangle – scenarios where two women are vying for the love or attention of one man; or vice versa. The second is forced marriage – where a girl (and occasionally a boy) is forced to marry a partner other than their choice. The third is melodramatic song and dance routines – complete with male and female voices in a dialogic performance, with background singers; and all performers in pretty and often elaborate costumes – in classic Hindi-film style (for which, see Ganti 2004).

In this article I argue that the dominant characteristics of the Hausa video film – its use of its Hindi film motif – has historical colonial antecedents that saw the British colonial administration openly encouraging and advocating for translation the literature of especially the Middle East into Hausa, rather than encouraging indigenous literary development in the Hausa language. It is from this antecedent of adapting and in some cases downright appropriating the literature from the Middle East and Asia that Hausa video film-makers acquired the strategy of using the Hindi film as a template for their own film-making.

Hausa language and literary development

Of the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Muslim Hausa have, arguably, the most extensive and well-established literary tradition. This was made possible by contact with Islam as far back as the 1320s in the

Hausaland, which exposed the area to the literary polemics and activities of the Muslim world at large. Thus while most Nigerian communities glorified their literary antecedents through extensive collections of oral traditions and folk tales, the Muslim Hausa, in addition to an extensive collection of similar oral traditions, had the instruments to *write* down their literature through the medium of the Arabic language earlier than all the other groups. And while classical Arabic remained the preserve of the clerics and courtiers in Muslim Hausa communities for centuries, subsequently even the Hausa language became Arabicized in the form of a *ajami* that opened up literary expressions for millions of literate, but not scholastic, members of the community.

Islam and colonial rule had led to a total transformation of the traditional Hausa society. Before the arrival of the British in 1900 the traditional Hausa society had virtually transformed itself into an Islamic polity with centuries of Islamic scholarship, which was further entrenched by the reformist *jihad* of Shehu Usman dan Fodiyo in 1804. The Islamic polity thus established a cultural framework that provides inspiration for subsequent literary tradition in Hausaland and which has sustained itself for well over five hundred years. Therefore the scholastic tradition in Hausaland was essentially religious, having been generated and sustained by the clerics.

Translation Bureau, Rupert East and *Istanci*

When the British colonized what later became northern Nigeria in 1903, they inherited a vast population of literate citizenry, with thousands of Qur'anic schools and equally thousands of Muslim intellectual scholars. Since it is clear that it would be against the grain of British colonial rule to encourage Islamic scholarship – a fact openly admitted by Hans Vischer in 1910 when setting up the first western-type schools in northern Nigeria – a way had to be devised to slow down the progress of Islamic education (Crampton 1975). That way was simply the forceful intrusion of roman alphabets into a newly created education system in 1909.

However, it took until 1929 to set up a 'Translation Bureau' initially in Kano, but later moved to Zaria in 1931. The first director of the bureau was Mr Whiting, and his tenure saw the Hausanized versions of local histories in Arabic texts, notably *Tarikh Arbab Hadha al-balad al-Musamma Kano*, Anon, the oft-quoted *Kano Chronicles* as translated by H.R. Palmer and published in the *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute* (Volume 38 (1908) pp. 59–98) and republished in his *Sudanese Memoirs* (3 volumes: London, 1928), Volume 3, pp. 92–132. The Hausa translation was *Hausawa Da Makwabtansu*.

'Of the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Muslim Hausa have, arguably, the most extensive and well-established literary tradition. This was made possible by contact with Islam as far back as the 1320s...'

The main focus of the Translation Bureau was just that – translation of non-Hausa language works using the sparkling brand new Hausanized Roman script. It was only when Dr Rupert East took over in 1932 that it acquired its *Istanci* persona and became devoted to wholesale translation of works from far and near into Hausa in order to generate reading material, more essentially to enable colonial officers to polish their practice of the Hausa language than to empower the 'natives' with enriched literary heritage. It was this obsession with *translation* of carefully selected works, rather than 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 Rupert East, its main protagonist.

And yet *Istanci* was a *selective* process, not aimed at education, its ostentatious cover, but at an educationally condescending service. If the purpose was to translate reading materials, then the vast archival library of Usman Danfodio alone would keep the Translation Bureau busy for quite a while. Yet there was a studious effort to *ignore* the majority of indigenous Arabic and Islamic literary sources. This is hardly surprising considering that the local Arabic and Islamic literary sources that could be translated into Hausa contained a significant dosage of religious components; it would certainly look odd for the British to continue the process of translating Arabic religious or semi-religious treatises into Hausa, especially as the script for forceful Romanization of the Hausa language was written by the missionary, Dr R. Miller (Adamu 2003).

Thus the clutch of translations done – *Hausawa da Makwabtansu*, *Labaran da Da Na Yanzu* and others – were fairly safe local histories, not scripts for a revolutionary Muslim revolt against infidel rule. To break the dryness of the historical texts, a more spicy and exotic

fictional material was also translated. This was *Dare Dubu da Daya*. 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 volumes (10 volumes, 1885; 6 supplementary volumes, 1886–88). 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.

However, more general literature of a creative nature was required as reading material for the growing number of 'literate' people in the area. As Dr Rupert East exasperatedly noted,

... 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 [nineteenth] 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: 350)

To encourage indigenous writing in Romanized Hausa script a short story competition was organized in 1933, in Katsina, among the students and staff of the Training College. The best five – what I call the 'famous five' – among the numerous submissions were published. These were *Ruwan Bagaja* (Abubakar Imam), *Shaihu Umar* (Abubakar Tafawa Balewa), *Gandoki* (Muhammad Bello Kagara), *Idon Matambayi* (Muhammadu Gwarzo). Later, Dr East collaborated with John Tafida Umaru to produce *Jiki Magayi*.

The most outstanding of the five Hausa novels, to Rupert East, 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. East detected this in the first draft of the novel, and drew the attention of Abubakar Imam to it. As East, the superintendent of education in charge of the Translation Bureau and editor of the manuscripts, noted in a letter to Mr Allen, then in charge of the Katsina Middle School where Abubakar Imam was then a student,

Many thanks for your note and for sending back Malam Abubakar's manuscript. I sympathise with the author, and quite understand if he feels a certain amount of resentment at having his book cut about so much. At the same time I don't see how we can publish it as it stands, as he has taken many of his stories almost word for word out of other books, and if we published these under his name, it would set a bad precedent. I made a special point of the work being original when I came around ... Apart from this the book is well written, quite one of the best that have been sent in, and it would be a great pity if the trouble he has taken were wasted for the lack of the small extra labour required. Actually all that is needed is for him to write five or six short stories out his own head to replace those which have to be cut out, and adjust the connecting passages so that the narrative runs on continuously. (in Mora 1989: 23)

Abubakar Imam, in an interview with Nicholas Pwedden stated that he was 'inspired to write *Ruwan Bagaja* after reading *Muqamat Al Hariri*. *The Maqamat*, translated in 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). Plate 1 shows the cover artwork of the two tales.

Literature Bureau, Abubakar Imam and *Imamanci*

In giving his account of the birth of *Imamanci*, Abubakar Imam further told Pwedden:

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).** (Pwedden 1997: 13–14, emphasis added)

Thus *Ruwan Bagaja* actually marked the transition from *Istanci* – direct translations of other works into Hausa – to its adaptive variety, *Imamanci* – the 'transmutation' of the literature of the Other, into the Hausa mindset. As Imam further revealed, he was taught the art of literary transmutation by Rupert East who

... 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 1997: 13–14, emphasis added)

Rupert East was thus the *originator* of Hausa literary Imamian transmutative strategy, while Abubakar Imam its script reader. It is from this transmutated strategy of Abubakar that we received the term *Ofishin Talifi*, for the Translation Bureau (instead of its original translation of *Ofishin Juye-juye*), and later, *Majalisar 'Dinkin Duniya* for the United Nations.

Imamanci as a literary technique and an 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 mould of *Ruwan Bagaja* and using its adaptive literary technique for the newly renamed Literature Bureau. According to Imam,

From then on he (East) assembled for me many storybooks 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 if 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* **(Knowledge is an Asset).** (Pwedden 1997: 14)

It is this book, *Magana Jari Ce* that 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 Brothers Grimm Fairy Tales*, *Tales from Shakespeare*, and *Raudhul Jinan* (Abraham 1998). Indeed, further analysis of *Magana Jari Ce* revealed the following as its sources material:

11 stories from Thousand and One Nights
2 stories from the Indian collection *Panchatantra*
2 stories from a Persian version of the Indian collection *Sukasaptati*
1 story that is of Persian origin
14 fables from the Brothers Grimm
2 fables from Hans Andersen
7 short stories from *Decameron* by Boccaccio

'Films from India were the most pervasive media influence on youth growing up in the 1960s through to the end of the millennium.'

1 based on a Biblical story (from the Old Testament)
1 based on a Greek myth about the king of Macedonia
1 based on a fable by W. Hauff
14 stories were either original or derived from unknown sources. (Furniss 1996: 273)

The Imamian paradigm of adaptive translation soon enough found favour with subsequent Hausa prose fiction writers of the 1950s, who due to their exposure to Arabic sources were able to cull a story here and there – thus media availability became an important factor – and recast it as a Hausa tale. Imam himself does not seem to have been happy to continue the trend of adaptive prose fiction because his subsequent works were more educational.

The various changes that the Literature Bureau under went subsequently, and the need to increase the number of reading materials for the burgeoning primary and secondary-school student population encouraged other authors to begin their writing. The works that emerged in the early 1950s included *Ilya Dan Mai Karfi* (Ahmadu Ingawa, 1951), *Gogan Naka* (Garba Funtuwa, 1952) and *Sihirtaccen Gari* (Ahmadu Katsina, 1952).

For instance, *Ilya Dan Mai Karfi* sustained the Imamian paradigm by adapting a Russian *byliny* (narrative poetry) transmitted orally. The oldest Russian *byliny* belong to a cycle dealing with the golden age of Kievan Rus in the tenth–twelfth century. They centre on the deeds at the tenth-century court of Saint Vladimir I of Kiev, Prince Vladimir I and his court. One of the favourite heroes is the independent Cossack Ilya Muromets of Murom, who defended Kievan Rus from the Mongols (Pilaszewicz 1985). 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 *Ilya Muromets* (1909–11) by Reinhold Glière.

And while it was not clear which literary work 'inspired' *Gogan Naka*, it is clear that the tale also borrowed heavily from eastern sources, since the hero – Abdul Bakara, or Bokhara, of India – after gallivanting all over Asia, ended up as a king of Egypt.

Sihirtaccen Gari, however, was different from the other two in the sense that it was not even an Imamian adaptation; it was a direct *translation* of an Arabic language collection of short stories, *Ikra* by Sayid Kutub, as revealed by the author in a brief introduction to the book.

Other prose fiction outputs in both the 1950s and 1960s continued the Imamian adaptive strategy, often adapting a foreign tale to a Hausa mindset, or directly translating from foreign sources. It was almost an article of faith that any Hausa prose fiction produced in the period *must* be an adaptation of a foreign tale. Thus *Robin Hood*, *Twelfth Night*, *Animal Farm*, *Saiful Mulk*, *Tanimuddari* and *Baron Münchhausen*, *Hajj Baba of Isfahan* were all directly translated from their original sources to Hausa with varying degrees of Imamism.

More significantly, 1930s Hausa novels provided templates for subsequent Hausa authors to recast the same stories in different formats. Almost all the five were thematically copied – media appropriation – by subsequent authors by merely changing the names and settings, but retaining the central core of similarities with the earlier published novels.

Thus *Nagari Na Kowa* (Jabiru Abdullahi, 1968) harked back at *Shaihu Umar*, while *Tauraruwar Hamada* (Sa'idu Ahmed, 1965) could be called *Ruwan Bagaja Part II* if it were a film, as would *Da'u Fataken Dare* (Tanko Zango, 1952) with its cloning of *Idon Matambayi* (the disowned tale written by Muhammadu Gwarzo, 1934), a tale of brigandage, and *Dare 'Daya* (Umaru Dembo, 1973) with *Jiki Magayi*.

Passage to India – the roots of *Bollywoodanci*

Increasing exposure to media in various forms, from novels and tales written in Arabic to, subsequently, radio and television programmes with a heavy dosage of foreign programmes due to paucity of locally produced programmes in the late 1950s and early 1960s provided more sources of *Imamanci* for Hausa authors. The 1960s saw more media influx into the Hausa society and media in all forms – from the written word to visual formats – was used for political, social and educational purposes.

One of the earliest novels to incorporate these multimedia elements – combining prose fiction with visual media – and departing from the closeted simplicity of the earlier novels, was *Tauraruwa Mai Wutsiya* by Umar Dembo (1969). Written at the time of media coverage of American Apollo lunar landings as constant news items, and the Star Trek television series as constant entertainment fodder on RTV Kaduna, the novel tells the story of a boy befriended by a rocket-travelling alien who took him up in his rocket on a space journey to extraterrestrial worlds. In one of the few early analyses of the novel, it was argued that it combined elements from many foreign sources. Of the sources of influence on the novel, the most visual was the Indian cinema influence, in which A.G.D. Abdullahi analysed that a scene in the novel was created in which a boy and a girl sung love songs to each other Indian-cinema-style. This is the first noticeable influence of Indian cinema on Hausa writers who had, hitherto, tended to rely on Arabic and other European literary sources for inspiration. Indeed, *Tauraruwa Mai Wutsiya* is a collage of various influences on the writer, most of which derived directly from the newsreels and television programming (Abdullahi 1978).

By 1980, the Northern Nigerian Publishing Company, NNPC, had virtually stopped publishing prose fiction works, restricting itself to recycling the old classics as well as more educational materials. The process of publishing became a cash-and-carry affair with authors being charged for the printing of their works (e.g. Balaraba Ramat Yakubu's *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?*). A new crop of authors then emerged, full of ballistic anger about job insecurity, lack of further education to proceed to and general malaise and insecurity. With media parenting in the form of an increasing deluge of television and radio programmes imported from Asia, mainly Indian cinema, coupled with the popularity of cinema houses showing the same films, it was only a matter of time before the template provided by *Tauraruwa Mai Wutsiya* started providing a basis for writing stories with Indian cinema themes of love and romance. Thus emerged the genre of popular Hausa literature contemptuously labelled *Labaran Soyayya* and Kano Market Literature, which by 2000 had produced more than 700 titles – thanks to the increasing availability of cheap printing presses (Malumfashi 1994; Furniss 2003).

When in the early to mid-1990s the VHS camera became affordable, a whole new visual literature was created by the first crop of contemporary Hausa novelists. As Furniss (2003: 12) noted,

One of the most remarkable cultural transitions in recent years has been this move from books into video film. Many of the stories in the books now known as Kano Market Literature or Hausa Popular Literature are built around dialogue and action, a characteris-

tic that was also present in earlier prose writing of the 1940s and 1950s. Such a writing style made it relatively easy to work from a story to a TV drama, and a number of the Hausa TV drama series ('*Magana Jari Ce*', for example) derived their story lines from texts. With the experience of staging comedies and social commentaries that had been accumulating in the TV stations and in the drama department of ABU, for example, it was not difficult conceptually to move into video film.

Yusuf Adamu (2002) was able to link a number of the new wave of Hausa novels with their transition to the visual medium, as shown in Table 1. **(right)**

When the new wave of Hausa writers started producing, in massive quantities, prose fiction interlaced with love stories and emotional themes, not many researchers associated the phenomena with the more visual literature of Indian or more accurately, Hindu cinema.

Films from India were the most pervasive media influence on youth growing up in the 1960s through to the end of the millennium. The media deluge from the various state television stations throughout the north created a media generation steeped in the lore and life styles, as well as mindsets of people from other cultures. It created the mental framework for *Bollywoodanci* – the direct translation of Hindu films into, first Hausa novels, and later when the VHS video medium became affordable, into video films.

Leap of imagination: *Bollywoodanci* and the new wave of Hausa video films

Those brave (or foolhardy) enough to venture into Hausa video film production from 1990 to 1999 rapidly established themselves as pioneering superstars – and earned significant fame and modest fortune from the sales of their videos, which by now are considered classics in Hausa video film. Even at this 'primitive' stage of the industry, acculturative media influences on the video films tended to be tame. There was the remnant of the disco and rap fever that swept Nigeria in the early 1970s and 1980s – providing a sociological soundtrack to the authors of the new novels and producers of the new video dramas. This appears in some videos of this era (e.g. *Daskin Da Ridi*, a folktale modernized, and *Badakala*, the first to feature traditionally adapted disco dancing). The main themes of the videos were either comedy (*Tantiri*, *Gagare*, both patterned on Hollywood's *Problem Child* (1990) and the antics of Macaulay Culkin in *Home Alone* (1990)), political dramas (*Tsuntsu Mai Wayo*), historical epics (*Gimbiya Fatima*), boy-meets-girl situation dramas with parents opposing (*In Da So Da Kauna*), or family conflicts, especially among co-wives (*Ki Yarda Da Ni*, *Alhaki Kwikwiyo*). Thus there were clearly defined genres and producers strove to maintain these genres.

Their success, however, attracted a new wave of producers, artists and directors with production values different from those adopted by the early experimenters. Young and sassy, they were the products of acculturative media confluence – a mishmash of cultural influences ranging from

Table 1 Hausa novels adapted into video films

Author	Novel to video
Abba Bature	*Auren Jari*
Abdul Aziz M/Gini	*Idaniyar Ruwa*
Abubakar Ishaq	*Da Kyar Na Sha*
Adamu Mohammed	*Kwabon Masoyi*
Ado Ahmad G/Dabino	*In Da So Da Kauna*
Aminu Aliyu Argungu	*Haukar Mutum*
Auwalu Yusufu Hamza	*Gidan Haya*
Bala Anas Babinlata	*Tsuntsu Mai Wayo*
Balaraba Ramat	*Alhaki Kwikwiyo*
Balaraba Ramat Yakubu	*Ina Sonsa Haka*
Bashir Sanda Gusau	*Auren Zamani*
Bashir Sanda Gusau	*Babu Maraya*
Bilkisu Funtua	*Ki Yarda Da Ni*
Bilkisu Funtua	*Sa'adatu Sa'ar Mata*
Dan Azumi Baba	*Na San A Rina*
Dan Azumi Baba	*Idan Bera da Sata*
Dan Azumi Baba	*(Baadamiyar) Rikicin Duniya*
Dan Azumi Baba	*Kyan Alkawari*
Halima B.H. Aliyu	*Muguwar Kishiya*
Ibrahim M. K/Nassarawa	*Soyayya Cikon Rayuwa*
Ibrahim Mu'azzam Indabawa	*Boyayyiyar Gaskiya (Ja'iba)*
Kabiru Ibrahim Yakasai	*Suda*
Kabiru Ibrahim Yakasai	*Turmi Sha Daka*
Kabiru Kasim	*Tudun Mahassada*
Kamil Tahir	*Rabia*
M.B. Zakari	*Komai Nisan Dare*
Maje El-Hajeej	*Sirrinsu*
Maje El-Hajeej	*Al'ajab (Ruhi)*
Muhammad Usman	*Zama Lafiya*
Nazir Adamu Salihu	*Naira da Kwabo*
Nura Azara	*Karshen Kiyayya*
Zilkifilu Mohammed	*Su Ma 'Ya'ya Ne*
Zuwaira Isa	*Kaddara Ta Riga Fata*
Zuwaira Isa	*Kara Da Kiyashi*

American disco, rap and 'niggaz with attitude' culture to the new-age Indian Bollywood ethos. Their video production values were not informed by household dramas (since most were not married, they were incapable of accurately recreating marital family situations), rustic settings or moralizing sermons to appease the traditionalist establishment. Their main creative mechanism is to rip-off Indian masala films and remake them into Hausa copies, complete with storylines, songs and choreography. In this new age of Hausa video film, the genres of the founding fathers disappeared – and a spicy masala mixture of videos started appearing which combined several genres in one video, copying as many Indian films as they could – thus I coined the term *Bollywoodanci* (Hindinization) to reflect the main mechanism of this cluster of film-makers.

Overriding this entire hodgepodge is the desire to be commercially successful in an economy that denied these Young Turks proper jobs, supported by an educational system incapable of enabling them to proceed with further education beyond high school; and thus left listless and jobless, with an NFA (no future ambition) mindset. Towards the end of the 1990s, the 1970s toddlers and teenage cultural rebels had grown up enough to acquire capitalistic values. They were products of an acculturation process officially sanctioned by radio and television houses that saw a continuous diet of Indian (plus a sprinkle of American and Chinese) cinema and African American movie and musical influences. And an economy that gave them a licence to survive by any legal means necessary.

Faced with the looming issues of settling down to a married life in an unstable economy, the new wave of Hausa video film producers strove hard to give the Hausa video film its distinct commercially formulaic characteristic, which is, inevitably, a love story, often a love triangle: either two girls after the same boy, or two boys after the same girl, with parents or guardians opposing. Plate 1 shows how the Hausa video film posters visually capture the conflict.

These patterns, are of course, adopted from Hindi cinema, which is why Hausa video film-makers latch on to them due to what they perceive as cultural similarities.

Reflecting innate Freudian conflicts of repressed sexuality in a traditional society, they use the film medium to bring out their innate desires and communicate to elders their preoccupation with marital concerns. They rapidly constituted themselves into a large pool of unmarried marriage guidance counsellors through the exploration of pre-marital relationships in a traditional society. Rarely were the films of the *Bollywoodanci* cluster a reflection of life and its mysteries such as schooling, jobs, inner struggles or moral dilemmas. The theme and message were exclusively on romance. They thus became visual *soyayya* novels (see Larkin (1997) for comparisons between the

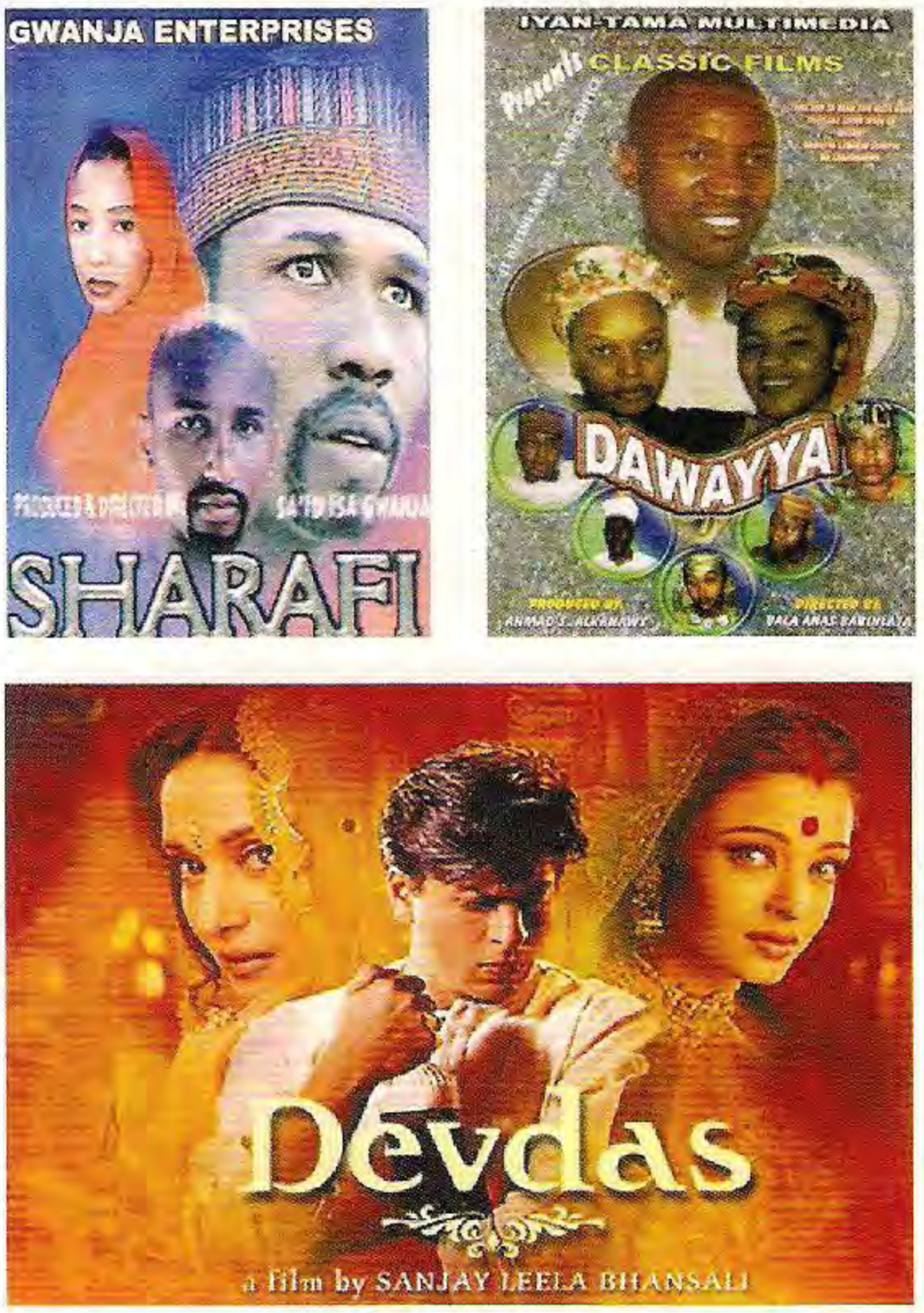

Plate 1 Talking heads
sexuality conflicts in Hausa video film (top left, *Sharafi*, and right, *Dawayya*; bottom – Hindi template, *Devdas*).

new video film format and Hausa *soyayya* novels).

A necessary vehicle for the expression of the love conflict (and often violence as a means of conflict resolution or enforcement of turf territoriality, with the turf often being a girl as an object of desire) in Hausa video film is the song and dance. It has become so embedded in the media that it is often considered commercial suicide to produce a video *without* at least a song and dance.

In the process of such Freudian rivalry and the intense struggle to gain an upper hand, all protagonists sing and dance, often in dreamscape surrealistic flashbacks or forwarded wishful thinking. Thus mothers sing to their daughters, husbands sing to their wives, children sing to their parents and, of course, lovers sing to each other (a perfect illustration of this is in *Tubali* where, during a wedding ceremony, everyone started singing, *including* the parents). In the end one gives up for the other, and everyone lives happily ever after. Thus the central focus is the song and dance, not the storylines – indeed, the songs often become mini-scripts themselves and almost operatic. Thus by and large, the most commercially success-

ful Hausa video films, such as *Sangaya*, *Kansakali*, *Ki Yarda Da Ni*, *Ibro Awilo*, *Wasila*, were successful because of their song and dance routines, not the power of their script.

From my fieldwork discussions with producers in Kano, no one actually sat down to copy any specific Indian film in the early stages of the video film industry in Kano (1990–98). It is therefore instructive that the first full-blown Indianization of virtually an entire film from Indian to Hausa was from Jos, in central Nigeria, which was more cosmopolitan and with a long history of matinee cinema. The Indianization started with the appearance of Mr U.S.A. Galadima's *Soyayya Kunar Zuci*. It was an appropriated Hindi film, *Mujhe Insaaf Chahiye*. It was premiered to a select private audience in a video store in Kano in 1995, and the overwhelming audience response was that it was too Indian and too adult to be accepted in a Hausa culture as a video film; more so since it was also the first Hausa video film with body contacts between genders. This was probably what informed its non-release on video film since it was restricted to cinema showings only. Yet, surprisingly, despite its being appropriated from an established Hindi film, the video won Best Director (U.S.A. Galadima) and Best Actor (Ibrahim Mandawari) trophies at the first Arewa Film Awards in 2000. What made the situation even more ironic was that the video was sponsored by the Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC) in Jos, a *government* agency with a mission of ensuring cultural empowerment through Nigerian films and videos.

Thus the producers, directors and artists who emerged overnight often had no proper script or any idea how to acquire one. They, or their financiers, simply turn to predominantly Bollywood films for storylines and ideas. Table 2 shows the details of 20 appropriated Hindi films out of a database of 127 (Adamu 2008).

Hausa video film-makers generally adopt three techniques in media adaptation of foreign films for their local audiences. The first, and most predominant, is a direct appropriation, or what the Hausa video film industry itself refers to as *wankiya* (washing off someone's ideas and substituting with your own). In this process a Hindi film is recreated almost scene by scene. Examples include *So...* (*Mohabbatein*) and *Khusufi* (*Taal*). In the second method, *dauraya* (clean-up), remembered scenes from previously watched Hindi films were appropriated and over-layered with a Hausanized storyline, as in *Abin Sirri Ne* (*Judwa*), *Dijengala* (*Khoon Bhari Maag*). Finally, in *girgiza* (rinsing) Hindi film posters alone often were used for storylines and inspiration, e.g. *Huznee* (*Trishul*). Plate 2 shows how the poster artwork is adapted from Hindi to Hausa, from the hit Hindi film, *Taal*.

Table 2 Appropriated Hindi films in Hausa

Hausa video film	Appropriated Hindi film	Appropriated element
Al'ajabi	Ram Balram (1980)	Song
Alaqa	Suhaag (1940), Mann (1999)	Songs
Aljannar Mace	Gunda Raj (1995)	Songs
Bakace	Tere Naam (2003)	Storyline
Burin Zuciya	Raazia Sultaan (1961)	Storyline
Ciwon Ido	Devdas (2002)	Storyline
Dafa'i	Ghayal (1990)	Storyline
Danshi	Bazigar (1993)	Storyline
Dijengala	Khoon Bhari Maang (1988)	Storyline
Hisabi	Gunda Raj (1995), Angarkshak (1995)	Songs
Ibro Dan Indiya	Mohabbat (1997), Rakshak (1996)	Songs
Inuwar Rayuwa	Main Pyar Kiya (1989)	Storyline
Jazaman	Lahu Ke Do Rang (1997)	Songs
Khusufi	Taal (1999)	Storyline/song/poster
Sharadi	Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (1995)	Song
Shaukin So	Pyar Ishq Aur Mohabbat (2001)	Scenes/song
So Bayan Ki	Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (1998)	Songs
Tanadi	Judaai (1997)	Storyline
Zabari	Mein Khiladi Tu Anari (1996), Mohra (1998)	Choreography
Zo Mu Zauna	Khabie Khushi Khabi Gam (2001)	Storyline

It is not all East, though. Quite a few of the Hausa video film producers would rather see their craft reflected in the sophistication of Hollywood, especially when the technology became available that would enable them to experiment. An example of this is Hafizu Bello's *Qarni* which cloned Arnold Schwarzenegger's *The 6th Day* in both the poster artwork, as well as a fundamental premise of the Hollywood film to probe into another person's soul. The posters of the two films – the global and the appropriated – are shown in Plate 3.

Despite the massive popularity of the Hausa video films, especially those that rely on Hindi film templates for their packaging, the critical Islamic society frowns on the films (see Adamu 2006a, 2006b). For instance, Adamu (2006b: 54) quotes a correspondent in the letters page of a Hausa popular culture magazine in northern Nigeria asking:

Quite frankly, you have spoiled your films with copying Indians especially with regards to their songs and dances ... In Sokoto viewers have started ignoring Kano (Hausa) films because they have become Indiyawan Kano (Kano Indians). (Halima Umar, Sokoto State, Letters page, *Tauraruwa*, vol. 4 no. 6 (September 2000), p. 7)

How can a person, claiming to be Hausa, producing a film for Hausa people, copy Indian and European cultural norms and claim they are his culture? Film production (among Muslims) is good because it an easy medium for delivering social message, but the way they are doing it now is a mistake. (Yusuf Muhammad Shitu, Kaduna Polytechnic, Zaria, in *Annur*, August 2001, p. 24)

The extreme expression of these sentiments culminated in a 'film burning' event in Bauchi, northern Nigeria – the first of its kind in the history of popular culture in Nigeria – organized by the ultra-orthodox Bauchi Muslim parliament in May 2005, which mobilized its members (which included just about anyone sharing their views, not necessarily a formal member) to symbolically burn hundreds of Hausa video tapes as a protest against a planned awards ceremony to Hausa video film stars. As one of the leaders of the parliament justified,

We are gathered here to repent to Allah and to demonstrate our disgust with *mujrimai*, *fajirai*, *'yan iska* **(perverts, sinners and hooligans) who broadcast sins, and who are trying to do the same in our part of Nigeria. We're gathered to burn these (Hausa) video tapes, set them on fire because they are paths to hell-fire!** (Speech in *Fim*, June 2005 p. 13)

All these reflect the dynamics of cultural production in a society that is part of an international hub of an increas-

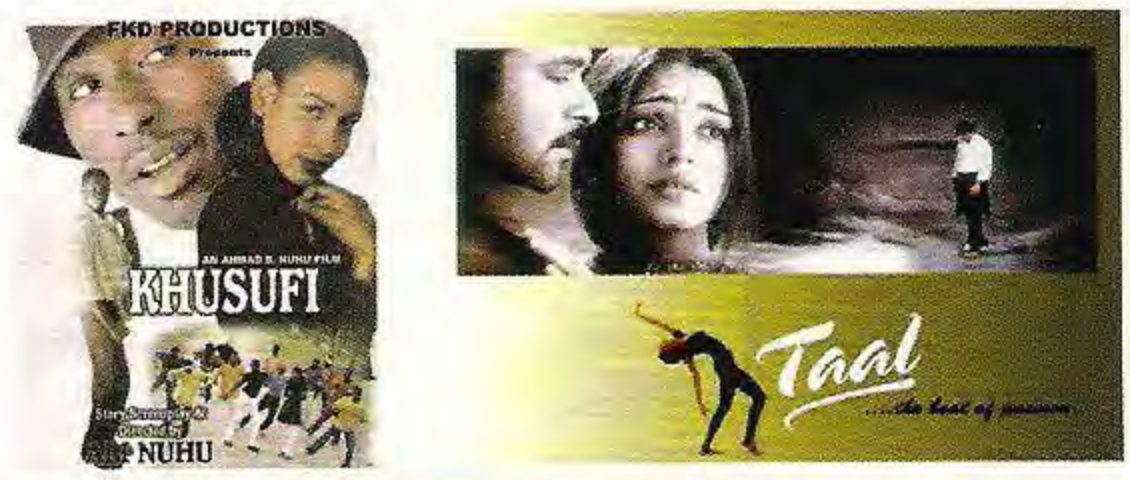

Plate 2 *Khusufi* (Hausa) appropriating *Taal* (Hindi).

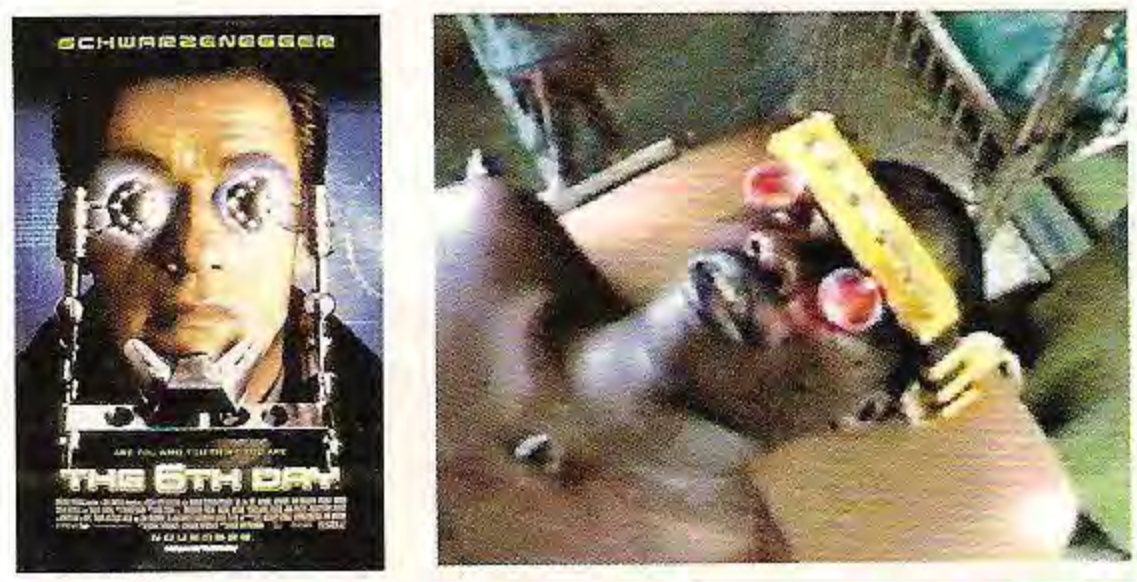

Plate 3 Cloning Arnie – *The 6th Day* as *Qarni* in Hausa.

ing clash of values between East and West, and would surely suggest a new node of inquiry into the various transfigurations of the media imperialism argument.

Conclusion

Over the last decades media in all forms, transnational flows of representative identities and the globalization of the American entertainment ethos have combined to create a climate of mistrust for either globalization as a concept, or Americanization of the entertainment ethos as a process of entertainment in not only Muslim countries and communities but also in traditional societies. Thus what is of further significance is the way media is used to construct identities and share these constructs with communities sharing these identities. Obviously then, the usage of identity-construct kits from different communities may communicate different conceptions of the communities and consequently lead to misrepresentation of identities. And yet, the desire for globalized acceptance – even if the 'globalized' is localized to acceptance beyond the immediate community – leads to experimentation with various forms of acceptance of representational identities beyond the immediate localized communities. This is the scenario that creates issues of the role of entertainment in such communities.

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 in-

frastructure and entertainment content. This naturally led to the development of theories of imitation – with the view that availability of new communication technologies would enable developing countries to imitate the West in a process of modernization.

Additionally, Curran (2000) argues that two contrasting attitudes towards globalization can be found. The first is expressed by cultural theorists who welcome globalization as a means for the reinforcement of international dialogue. It enables minorities to gain attention beyond national borders. An opposing point of view stresses the threat that globalization poses to democracies and international politics, aiming at limiting the influence of worldwide capitalism. Both these views at least concur a certain degree of weakness in recipient systems as a result of the transnational flow of influences. What needs to be determined is the extent to which the recipient systems – I do not accept Curran's term of 'nation state'; such entities are too complex to be treated as single – are transformed.

Indeed media and cultural studies' theories of globalization tended to focus attention on the role of mass media in the society (e.g. Beck and Winter 2003; Appadurai 1996), how they are communicated and preserved in a transnational context. Another focus is on how people appropriate media, and which identities they create with the new transformed media (see particularly Sreberny-Mohammadi 1996; Schiller 1976; and Boyd-Barrett 1977).

Consequently, as Patterson (1994) argues, industrialization and modernization both entail the spread of common sets of behaviours and attitudes within the context of economic change. However, the globalization of culture also takes place independent of whatever economic changes are occurring in a particular region or society. Traditionally, the transmission of culture across societies was facilitated by two main media: migration and literacy. People learned about other cultures either through travelling themselves or from travellers, or by reading about other cultures and adopting or adapting what they learned. These traditional media could, under certain circumstances, be effective means for the transmission of cultures across the globe.

It is clear therefore that Hausa writers and video drama producers are adept at adapting other media sources to their entertainment mindset, starting from 1934 with Abubakar Imam's *Ruwan Bagaja* before making a transition to the video medium via *Tauraruwa Mai Wutsiya* through the first Bollywood-copied video film, *Soyayya Kunar Zuci* (Jos, 1995)

Thus with the onslaught of media parenting all over developing countries, it was inevitable that film-makers have tried to imitate metropolitan models of telling stories to their communities, often using the same templates to enhance what they consider the universal appeal of their craft.

Yet, regional studies of media influences indicates that a cultural resonance is often created from a media-rich country to another country sharing *similar* norms and values. For instance, according to Jane O. Vinculado (2006: 234),

> **The phenomenal Taiwanese soap opera hit *Meteor Garden* in 2003 has transformed the face of Philippine programming. It paved the way for the influx of Asian dramas from Taiwan, Korea and very soon, Japan. Dubbed in Filipino (the local language), these chinovelas (a play of words from the words Chino meaning Chinese and telenovela, derived from the soap opera format of Latin American countries) is common fare on Philippine television, with about one or two of them occupying the primetime schedules of the top networks and some appearing in non-primetime slots like daytime and weekend timeslots.**

This 'Asian media invasion' was welcomed by Vinculado's respondents, for as she reported (Vinculado 2006: 238),

> **In terms of cultural affinity, respondents feel that they can relate to the physical characteristics of the characters, being Asian and exposed to the physicality of the actors in their everyday lives. Since some Filipinos look like the characters, they are not alien to them compared to the Caucasian-looking characters in the Latin telenovelas. Respondents also feel a cultural connection to the settings used in the programs and not in the way we expect. Since they can strongly relate to the storylines in the Asian soaps, they can relate to the settings employed. Though they have not been to any of these places, they are familiar with the settings. The university and coffee shop may look different, but they are constantly exposed to similar settings.**

However, 'cultural affinity' soon translates into 'cultural proximity' in explaining the inter-regional spread of Korean media products especially to China and Taiwan. Dong Hwan Kwon (2006) quotes studies that analysed the contents of widely accepted Korean television dramas among East Asian countries for commonalities of acceptance. The analysis revealed that 'Korean dramas that have been widely accepted in Asia contain the Confucian values that are close to Chinese culture' (Kwon 2006: 262). This was premised on common culture and value systems between Korean and Chinese.

Similar trends were noted with regards to the popularity of Japanese drama series in Taiwan. As Koichi Iwabuchi (2002: 147) reported,

I asked Taiwanese audiences comparative questions about Japanese dramas, Taiwanese dramas, and American dramas. Most of my interviewees in Taipei noted that emotionally they engaged more with Japanese dramas more than they did with Western or Taiwanese dramas. Of course in so far as Japanese dramas are broadcast in Japanese with Chinese subtitles, the Taiwanese cannot help but regard them as foreign; but for all that, they do not regard such dramas in quite the same way they do the American programs. This is because Taiwanese audiences tend to remark that, racially and culturally, they have more in common with the Japanese than they do with the Americans. 'Yeah, Japan is a foreign country and this (foreignness) makes Japanese programs look gorgeous and appealing. But the distance we feel to Japan is comfortable, Americans are complete strangers.' ... 'The West is so far away from us, so I cannot relate to American dramas...'

Further, his respondents explained that the ways of expressing love in Japanese dramas, which are delicate and elegant, are much more culturally acceptable than those of American dramas, and human relations between family and lovers also look more culturally proximate to Taiwan. This proximity allows Taiwanese audiences to relate to Japanese dramas more easily.

Thus countries sharing common cultural proximity find it easer to provide 'oppositional resistance' to media programming from non-proximity sources. This is further facilitated, as Joseph D. Straubhaar (1991) suggests, by the inclusion of linguistic commonalities even within linguistic clusters and groups. Interestingly enough, colonized countries often feel they share the same linguistic – and therefore cultural – spaces with the metropolitan countries, thus partaking in the latter's transnational programmes. This is illustrated, for instance, by African francophone countries where, as Mytton, Teer-Tomaselli and Tudesq (2005: 101) noted,

The rapid and successful development of the more popular and successful francophone transnational television stations in Africa has resulted from France's own political and cultural approach, which among other things seeks to extend and strengthen co-operation between countries that have the French language in common. In effect francophone African countries have joined with France, Canada, Switzerland and Belgium in an international 'community' held together by the French language. Interestingly, bilingual Canada appears to be the most active of these countries outside France. The policy of co-operation with state-owned African television services, which France has maintained since

'... southern Nigerian programmes – both TV dramas and video films, which are characterized by a central engine of Christian ethos and ethnic peculiarities of the producers, are less palatable to northern Nigerian Muslim audiences.'

independence was gained by its former colonies, has been implemented thanks to good relations with these African states. France has extended its policy of co-operation to include those states that were former Belgian colonies.

For anglophone African countries, transnational television comes in the form of South Africa's cable services of MNet, MultiChoice and its subsidiary, DSTV. But with a subscription of US$60, these services are essentially limited to elites – or those with enough interest to break out of traditional home-based media fare. In effect, it is paying for the privilege of accessing American programmes – the starting point. Further, the African content (especially series dramas) of the stations in these services had no appeal to a northern Nigerian Muslim audience.

This may possibly help to explain why southern Nigerian programmes – both TV dramas and video films, which are characterized by a central engine of a Christian ethos and ethnic peculiarities of the producers, are less palatable to northern Nigerian Muslim audiences. The years of inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts between northern and southern Nigeria (see Agi (1998) for a comprehensive treatment of this) are clear testimonies to cultural hostilities that makes within-country media acceptability difficult (unless as done in Nigeria, enforced by a federal legislation – for although National Television Authority networks carry a dosage of programmes from all the regions, in the north they are predominantly ignored increasingly in favour of ArabSat scheduling that broadcast a lot of American programmes). And yet Hindi films from across the world would seem to be more acceptable in that despite religious and linguistic

non-proximity, yet they carry enough cultural motifs that approximate the cultural spaces of Muslim northern Nigerians in the form of love triangles and forced marriage issues – in essence, sharing similar cultural mindsets. As similarly indicated in an editorial in *The Hindu*:

> **Bollywood's distributors explain that the growing acceptability as also resistance against Indian cinema emanate from the same fact: the cultural revival of Afro-Asian societies after they overthrew European imperialism. The Indian Masala film is closer to the emotional grammar of the Asians and Africans than the Hollywood box office bonanzas. Hollywood's story of American divorcees does not touch the emotional chord of Afro-Asian families. Their emotional ambience is closer to something like Hum Aapke Hain Kaun. The interaction between the characters in a Hindi film family drama is recognisable, therefore it holds their attention. Besides, song and dance play a pivotal role in the social life of Afro-Asian societies.** (M. Shamim, 'Bollywood films make waves around the world', *The Hindu*, Sunday, 25 February 2001)

Thus 'cultural resonance' explains why young Hausa film-makers, spoon-fed on Hindi film fare from birth openly embrace the Hindi film motif, even if aware that the cultural and religious realities of their society is totally different from that of India. It subsequently opened the floodgates for the defining characteristics of the Hausa video film, which is its acculturative inspiration by Indian masala popular cinema; the Hausa film *masala* is actually *kwado* – a mixture of genres and styles in one medium. Indian popular cinema was a constant feature of Hausa entertainment since the 1930s when the first cinemas were opened in Kano and other urban clusters such as Kaduna and Jos. However, the biggest boom for Indian cinema in northern Nigeria was in the 1970s when state television houses were opened and became the outlet for readily available Indian films on video tapes targeted at home viewers. For instance, during my fieldwork, the archival records of NTA Kano alone indicate that a total of 1,176 Indian films were broadcast on its television network from 2 October 1977 when the first Indian film was shown (*Ann Bann*) to 6 June 2003. At the time of starting the Indian film appearance on Hausa television houses, children aged 4–6, and their youngish mothers (who were in their 20s) became avid watchers of these films. By 2000 the children had grown up, became film-makers and used their Indian cinema impressionistic conditioning as their defining template for artistic visual media in cultural interpretation – often with the financial and moral support of their *mothers*.

Although the media outlets – both in the government-owned television stations and popular markets – had *some* dosage of traditional entertainment content, nevertheless the barrage of Indian music and film overshadowed the indigenous content. On television, for instance, indigenous theatre was restricted to 30-minute drama sketches, while a full-blown Indian, American or Chinese film is shown for over two hours.

There was a considerable absence of indigenous traditional entertainment media aimed at youth to counter these foreign media influences, and little effort on the part of governments to promote traditional theatre and musical forms which were relegated to quaint bucolic festivals, or government functions. It is for these reasons that the Hausa video film acquired its non-exportable characteristics, unlike southern Nigerian video films whose plots, storylines and general characteristics have a pan-African outlook that appeals to other communities and societies outside Nigeria. ●

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