Endless Inspiration

One Thousand and One Nights
in Comparative Perspective

Orhan Elmaz

Endless Inspiration

Gorgias Handbooks

Gorgias Handbooks provides students and scholars with reference books, textbooks and introductions to different topics or fields of study. In this series, Gorgias welcomes books that are able to communicate information, ideas and concepts effectively and concisely, with useful reference bibliographies for further study.

Endless Inspiration

One Thousand and One Nights
in Comparative Perspective

Edited by

Orhan Elmaz

2020 ܓ

TABLE OF CONTENTS

v

"We Are Not in Baghdad Anymore": Textual Travels and Hausa Intertextual Adaptation of Selected Tales of *One Thousand and One Nights* in Northern Nigeria

Abdalla Uba Adamu (Bayero University Kano)

This chapter textually analyses how a few tales from the *Nights* were re-translated, in effect intertextualy transmutated as African tales in Hausa language of northern Nigeria in 1930s by Abubakar Imam in what is considered by the local intelligentsia as the quintessential Hausa storyline. The adaptation was done so skillfully that it was only in the 1970s that local readers started making connections between the stories they read in translation in Hausa language and the original. The chapter analyses two of the nine adapted stories from the *Nights* in order to determine the intertextual devices used to 'mask' the originals and pass them as Hausa. These stories are 'The Bull and the Ass', translated as *Labarin wani jaki da sa* (MJC vol. I, 54–57), and 'Masrûr the Eunuch and Ibn al-Qâribî' as *Ba wahalle sai mai kwaɗayi* (MJC vol. I, 96–98). They were chosen because of their short length and didactic messages, which parallel Hausa folktales. The chapter hopes to draw attention to the various devices used by African authors in using transnational literary sources as templates to build their own literary imaginations.

  The British colonized northern Nigeria from 1903 to 1960, and in 1929, the colonial administration set up a Translation

Bureau. Initially it was in Kano, but in 1931 it was moved to Zaria and in 1935 renamed the Literature Bureau. The first director of the Bureau was Mr. Whiting, who was later replaced by Dr Rupert East. He eventually provided the fundamental framework for the development of literature in the region.

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. To get things started, the Bureau organized a literary competition in 1933, collecting manuscripts from prospective authors. The five books that emerged from the manuscripts as winners in the competition were *Ruwan Bagaja* ('The Water of Cure', Malam Abubakar Imam Kagara), *Gandoki* ('Mr Inquisitive', Malam Bello Kagara), *Shaihu Umar* ('Shaykh Umar', Malam Abubakar Bauchi), *Idon Matambayi* ('The Eye of the Enquirer', Malam Muhammadu Gwarzo), and *Jiki Magayi* ('Body Language', Rupert East and John Tafida). These books were published in 1934.

The most outstanding of these five Hausa novels, in Rupert East's view, was Abubakar Imam's *Ruwan Bagaja*. 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 Pweddon (1995: 87), stated that he was 'inspired' to write *Ruwan Bagaja* after reading al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt*:

> 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 Zurƙe)." (emphasis mine).

However, other sources used to write *Ruwan Bagaja* included the core plot element from *The Brothers Grimm Fairy Tales* (especially *The Water of Life* from where the book derived its title) and *Sinbad the Sailor* from the *Nights* (Mora 1989). Thus, *Ruwan Bagaja* marked the first emergence of intertextual adaptation of transnational tales into African languages in Nigeria. 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 char-
acter 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 (Pweddon 1995: 87).

The intertextual device used by Imam in his re-reading of for-
eign tales into Hausa language is critical in understanding what
might be called 'contextual intertextuality', a process in which
core narrative elements are retained and re-contextualised for
different audiences. Imam therefore refused to be a slave to the
narrative, and he credited this to his teacher, Rupert East.

[…] On translation, he (Rupert East) 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 sup-
posed 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).

The tutelage was taken a notch higher when East

[…] assembled for me many story-books in Arabic and Eng-
lish, especially Iranian texts. Fortunately I knew Arabic be-
cause I had learned it right from home. That's why I could
understand the Arabic books unless if the language is 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 1995: 88).

Magana Jari Ce is composed of about 87 stories—mainly narrated
by a parrot, Aku (although joined in a competitive mode by an-
other parrot, Haziƙ) to various audiences and settings. In another
interview, Abubakar Imam stated that he had taken the figure of
the parrot and its technique of storytelling from a Persian book

(Wali 1976). Published in 1937 in three volumes, *Magana Jari Ce* established itself as the quintessential example of Hausa literature because of its clever weaving of local mindsets and transnational fictional landscapes. Included in the volumes were nine stories from *One Thousand and One Nights*; 14 fables are from the Brothers Grimm; five stories are from a Persian version of the Indian collection *Śukasaptati*; two stories are from the Indian collection *Pañcatantra*; two fables are from Hans Christian Andersen; seven short stories are from the *Decameron* by Giovanni Boccaccio; one each is based on a Greek myth about the king of Macedonia; a story of Persian origin; a Biblical story, and a fable by W. Hauff. Only about 34 stories were either original or derived from unknown sources (Jeż 1986). All these were woven into a Hausa narrative, obscuring the originating stories and adapting the plot lines to Hausa society.

The chapter operates within the larger framework of transcultural intertextuality. The intertextual relationship between a cultural product, the story, and its transmigrational adaptation is analysed 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…as it is used and understood in specific contexts and instances of communicative interaction'.

INTERTEXTUAL ADAPTATIONS AND AFRICAN LITERATURE

Bakhtin's contention that a text 'lives only by coming into contact with another text (with context)' (1986: 162) has formed the fundamental core of intertextuality. Bakhtin refers to this contact as 'dialogic' and sees texts as utterances, rather than a mechanical contact of 'oppositions' possible only within a single text, devoid of both another text and context. Eventually the dialogic text becomes a monological dialectic (an idea which Bakhtin borrows from Hegel).

It was Julia Kristeva who transformed Bakhtin's 'contact with text' idea into 'intertextuality', which she saw as a dynamic site in which relational processes and practices are the focus of analysis instead of static structures and products. She notes that the literary word is 'an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings' (1986a: 35). Further, intertextuality is, according to Kristeva, a 'redistribution of several different sign-systems' as well as the 'transposition of one (or several) sign-system (s) into another' (1986b: 111).

This 'redistribution' has appeared in so many texts around the world. However, beyond merely an acknowledgement of the significance of one text for another in the construction of a hybrid third text, there is the issue of conceptual translation of core ideas, principles, or Bakhtian 'context' in the third text. Thus, intertextuality actually goes beyond two juxtaposing texts: for them to form an effective contextual pair, they must convey a meaning not present in either of them. The emergence of this new context is demonstrated in the way *Arabian Nights* or *One Thousand and One Nights* became domesticated in non-Arabic cultures.

Texts are therefore conjoined with others to reflect what I call '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 adaptions of books as remakes. As Horton and McDougal (1998: 3) noted, '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'.

Intertextual adaptation of stories as a literary device suspiciously alludes to either outright plagiarism or lack of originality. Indeed, it can be argued that intertextuality, appropriation and adaptation have always featured in African literature, in the

sense that the oral literature of many African communities oper-
ates as an open source depository of folk wisdom and history
that gets adapted to various circumstances and communities,
and in many ways. As Irele (2001: 37) notes,

> […] the mobility of the text implies that the entire process
> of the generation and maintenance of oral texts—
> composition, performance, and transmission—obeys the
> principle of intertextuality, which impels every instance of
> oral literature toward a condition of collective appropriation.

In this way, stories are retold and reimagined as they move from
one context and community to another. Further, although the
novel is a distinctly European device, in Africa it becomes an
intertextual and adaptive depository. African novelists such as
Chinua Achebe, Amos Tutola, Taban Lo Liyong, Ben Okri, and
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Naguib Mahfouz have all at one time or an-
other interwoven myths and contemporary realities in their fic-
tional narratives.

However, even African novels that use the Western canon
in their narrative often allude to *other* African novels, although
without acknowledging them as such. As Ogede (2011: ix)
pointed out,

> All texts have forebears, but it is especially enlightening to
> be told that some African writers read other African writers
> because the fact that they have often found a strong impetus
> to work through their own ideas with each other is seldom
> recognized.

In exploring how African writers alter one another's styles while
drawing from older texts to fashion new ones, Ogede (2011)
demonstrates such intertextual reading as a sign of honourable
acknowledgement, rather than what others might see as outright
plagiarism, a practice which Ogede (2011: ix) actually refers to
as 'theft of creative thunder'.

Such inter-African intertextuality, which Kurtz (2011: 24)
also sees as 'intergenerational intertextuality' since writers ap-
propriate from their oral traditions, European literary models
and also an 'increasing body of recent African writing' therefore
forms the basis for understanding how African literature evolves

beyond its at least three formations of oral; written in African languages; and written in European languages.

Intertextuality, adaptation or appropriation is certainly transcultural, 'a poetic practice of interweaving elements from different national and cultural traditions in ways that require comparative, border-crossing reading strategies' (Mai 2010: 1). This sees an influence that does not restrict itself to a particular race, nation or culture. This is shown, for instance, in how Arundhati Roy's *God of Small Things* intertextually pays homage to Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mocking Bird'* (Lemster 2010).

In a similar way, Sasic (1998: 167) was able to demonstrate how the Somalian writer, Nuruddin Farah, in his *Sardines*, 'meshes the complex grids of transcultural and intertextual awareness to construct a Somali novel'. A subsequent analysis of the novel linked Ancient Greek tragedy and the Somali Theatre, throwing the character of Shahrazad and the tortoise tale segment of Chinua Achebes's Things Fall Apart into the mix.

TRAJECTORIES OF HAUSA TRANSLATIONS OF *ONE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS*

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 1300s, 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 folktales, the Muslim Hausa, in addition to these, had the instruments earlier than all the groups to write down their literature through the medium of the Arabic language. Moreover, while classical Arabic remained the preserve of the Muslim clerics and courtiers in Muslim Hausa communities for centuries, the Hausa language became Arabicized in the form of Ajami, which opened up exposure to literary expression for millions of literate members of the community (see Dobronravine 2004). British colonial rule from 1903 to 1960 established Western schools and enabled the Muslim Hausa to absorb the Western literary tradition.

Thus, Islam and colonial rule 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 behind it, which was further entrenched by the reformist jihad of Shehu Usman ɗan Fodiyo in 1804. The Islamic polity thus established a cultural framework which provided inspiration for the 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. It was this scholastic tradition that led to the main entry of One Thousand and One Nights into Hausa literature through four interfaces. The first was Arabic to Hausa in Latin script; the second was modern Hausa, but online at Facebook; the third was a reloaded version of the Arabic to Hausa version, but in modern Hausa prose and orthography. The fourth, the main subject of this chapter, was an (the?) Arabic to Hausa intertextual adaptation.

The first Hausa translation of One Thousand and One Nights came about during the colonial period when Frank Edgar, a colonial official, and a local resident, Malam Mamman Kano, translated the Arabic Alf Layla wa-Layla as Dare Dubu da Ɗaya [Hausa: literally, Night Thousand and One] in five volumes. Little is known about Mr. Edgar, except that he was a colonial civil servant with a keen interest in collecting Hausa folktales, proverbs, and folk sayings. It was during this fieldwork in 1911 in northern Nigeria that he came across tales that were clearly not Hausa, traced them to One Thousand and One Nights and started collecting them. What he collected from the local Islamic clerics was their Hausa oral translations of the original Arabic, which they were fluent in. He was able to collect these Arabian tales, and with the aid of Gibb's English translation of the French version of the Nights, he translated them into Hausa. The French version was translated from Arabic by Dr. J. C. Mardrus, while E. Powys Mathers rendered it into English. Using this as a guide, Edgar then placed his collection in a sequential order, ending on the 169th night. The precise original date of publication of the Hausa version varies from 1924 to 1927.

However, a reprint was published by Northern Nigerian Publishing Company in 1970.

Squarely targeted at adults due to its more erotic content, it was part of the British colonial policy of encouraging reading habits. There was no attempt to edit or censor the Hausa collection from the more adult stories, especially in Volume 5 of the Hausa version. However, there were local objections to the translation and its being made available in the public domain. The main objection came from Alhaji Abubakar Imam, considered the 'father of Hausa fiction', who was among the first five Hausa novelists to emerge as a result of a colonial literary competition in 1933. The rest of the Hausa society, prudish as it was (for instance, resisting the establishment of cinemas in the 1950s), accepted *Dare Dubu da Ɗaya* as legitimate, if underground, literature. In the 1970s, it was even read over the radio for a short period. However, an Islamic revival in 1979, triggered by the Iranian Islamic revolution, led to the creation of a more Islamicate northern Nigerian society and the reading of *Dare Dubu da Ɗaya* over the radio was banned by the stations themselves in a process of self-censorship.

To make *Dare Dubu da Ɗaya* more 'African' some of the stories were illustrated with drawings of distinctly African figures and contexts. This helped to make the collection of the stories more 'Hausa', and for many years, Hausa readers were not aware of the foreign origins of the stories, since the characters have Islamic and Middle-Eastern names similar to those of Hausa Muslims.

This is shown, for example, in the tale of 'Fisherman and Jinni' (*One Thousand and One Nights*, Vol 1). The Hausa 'jinni', fierce-looking with lots of big teeth, approximates the Hausa 'dodo' monster that eats people (especially children if they are naughty; for the illustration, see p. 23 of the 1970 Hausa edition). Further, the genie has clearly Negroid features, in contrast to Barbara Kolberg's more stylized drawing of the genie from other illustrators (available at http://www.barbarakolberg.com/na010.htm)

The second and third trajectories were more recent, and connected. The second started in a Facebook group, *Mace Mu-*

tum ('Female, human') into a group called *Kowa* ('Everyone'). The idea behind 'mace' (woman) 'mutum' (human) is to convey the impression that females are also human. The group was based on *Mace Mutum* ('Female, human'), a novel by a Hausa author, Rahma Abdulmajeed, who declared herself a feminist; and this is reflected in the book, since this focuses on the lives of four abused women who set out to avenge their treatment at the hands of their male oppressors. It was so far the biggest volume of the Hausa language novel, at over 500 pages. Controversies concerning the book (mainly its feminist theme in a patriarchal society) led to discussions about other controversial Hausa works of fiction, and *Dare Dubu da Daya* was frequently mentioned. This led to the setting up of a separate Facebook group to solicit support for the reloading of the *Dare Dubu da Daya* based on the original folio scripts written by Edgar, and which were available at the National Archives in Kaduna, Nigeria.

In 2013, a pair of Facebook bloggers (Bukar Mada and Ɗanladi Haruna) and an academic (Professor Ibrahim Malumfashi)—who all met each other on Facebook and had been made aware by Mace Mutum (Kowa) of the discussion on reviving the book—decided to revisit the issue of reloading *Dare Dubu da Daya*. They noted that the 1924 translated Hausa version was based on handwritten translations by Frank Edgar. Further, although the entire 1001 nights were actually translated by Edgar and his Hausa colleague, Malam Mamman Kano, only stories up to the 169th night were published. The Facebook bloggers set up a funding strategy on Facebook to continue publishing the stories, this time in a more standardized Hausa orthography and a more grammatical mode of narrative presentation, which would make the new translations easier to read for modern audiences, in contrast to Edgar's original dense Hausa spread over many unbroken pages of narrative. They were able to re-transcribe Edgar's handwritten folios into modern form from November 2013 to May 2015. The book was finally published in October 2015 as *Labaran Dare Dubu da Daya – Mujalladi na Daya* [The Stories of One Thousand and One Nights, Volume 1].

The 2015 edition was planned to be published over the following years in 12 volumes, since it was self-funded. The funding strategy they came up with nevertheless did not yield the results that they expected and they decided to publish subsequent volumes when funds would become available. The first volume contained re-transcriptions up to the 35th night. It was illustrated occasionally by drawings from Burton's edition of the translated *One Thousand and One Nights*, which are available on the Web. Aimed at the more modern Hausa youth, particularly the Facebook generation, the appropriated illustrations probably connect the stories with modernity more effectively than Edgar's African illustrations.

The fourth trajectory forms the main basis for this chapter. As noted earlier, nine of the stories of *One Thousand and One Nights* were intertextually re-adapted for Hausa audiences in *Magana Jari Ce*. In re-contextualizing the nine stories, Imam adopted two main strategies. The first was the narrative frame structure; the second was the re-translation and adaptation of individual stories within the frames. The frame took his readers away from *Shahrazad*'s Baghdad to Hausaland in Nigeria of the 1930s.

Interestingly, *Magana Jari Ce* provides a unique instance of what can be referred to as 'intratextuality'—when a text refers to itself, rather than referring its existence to sources outside itself. In 2000, the late Mustafa Hijazi Sayyid (2000) of the Institute of African Studies and Research at Cairo University translated *Magana Jari Ce* into Arabic under the title *al-Kalām raʾsmāl* ('Speech is Capital') thus re-admitting into Arabic the nine Arabic tales of *One Thousand and One Nights* from their sojourn in Hausa. The re-translation was made from Hausa to Arabic without the translators being aware of the Arabic intertextual origins of some of the Hausa tales, and they were passed off as African tales. This further establishes the uniqueness of *Magana Jari Ce* as a translational juncture that further establishes the universalism of the human narrative fiction.

WE'RE NOT IN BAGDAD ANYMORE: IMAM'S INTERTEXTUAL READING OF ONE THOUSAND ONE NIGHTS

As explained earlier, *Magana Jari Ce*, published in 1937, contained 87 intertextually reworked stories that were appropriated from transnational literatures of Europe and Middle East, with nine of the stories being from *One Thousand and One Nights*. These are listed, together with the English versions of the stories in Table 1.

The identification of the Hausa adaptations of the *One Thousand and One Nights* stories in *Magana Jari Ce* was initially made by Jeż and Piłaszewicz (2003), itself based on an earlier work by Jeż (1986), however in Table 1, I have corrected numerous errors in the precise sources of both the Hausa and the original versions. It was also clear that Jeż (1986) based her identification of the non-African sources from the Polish translation (Kubiak, 1976) of the English versions of *One Thousand and One Nights*. This is because although Jeż and Piłaszewicz suggested 11 stories were appropriated by Imam in the Hausa version, I could only confirm nine from both *Magana Jari Ce* and the English translations by Mathers and Burton.

In its mandate to facilitate the Hausa reader's understanding of foreign literature, the colonial Translation Bureau tried to ensure that the translations removed elements, for instance, references to idols, that might be offensive to the Muslim religious sensibilities of the Hausa. As Piłaszewicz (2010: 222) points out,

> In its construction, *Magana Jari Ce* resembles the *One Thousand and One Nights*, but its stories are transmitted through a parrot and not told by a princess as in the Arabic work. The author skilfully blends the traditional narrative power of the Hausa stories with the charm of the borrowed plots, and the realities of African life have been introduced in a masterly way. The stories vary in their nature and the strength of their appeal, but all clearly point to some moral.

Table 1: Intertextual Adaptions in *Magana Jari Ce* (after Jeż and Piłaszewicz 2003)

Magana Jari Ce Story Source	*Burton's English Translation of the* Nights
Labarin wani Baƙauye da waɗansu 'yan birni (I, 32–36)	Tale of the Sharpers With the Shroff and the Ass (875–930), Suppl. vol. I
Labarin wani jaki da sa (1, 49–52)	Tale of the Bull and the Ass (Told by the Vizier) (0), vol. I
Ba wahalle sai mai kwaɗayi (I, 96–98)	Masrur the Eunuch and Ibn al-Karibi (400–401), vol. V
Saurin fushi shi ka kawo da na sani (I, 99–102)	Story of King Sindibad and His Falcon (5), vol. I
Labarin Sarkin Farisa da wani Bahindi (II, 121–127)	The Ebony Horse (358–371), vol. V
Labarin Amjadu da Asadu (II, 150–167)	Tale of Kamar al-Zaman (170–237) vol. III
Hassada ga mai rabo taki (III, 205–218)	Tale of the Trader and the Jinni (2–3), vol. I
Labarin Kamaruzzan ɗan sarki Sharuzzaman (II, 138–149)	Tale of Kamar al-Zaman (170–237) vol. III
Alheri danƙo ne, ba ya faɗuwa ƙasa banza (III, 64–73)	The Story of Abou Hassan, or The Sleeper Awakened, Suppl. vol. I

Consequently, Imam's translations were linguistic, compositional and contextual, and Imam adhered to the teachings of Rupert East in maintaining expertise in his native language.

The main strategy Imam borrowed in the construction of *Magana Jari Ce* was the frame structure of *One Thousand and One Nights*. In prose fiction, the frame is 'the focal point of a narrative space which designates and circumscribes it from the outside as its inside' (Felman 2009: 316). The literary device of the frame provides a convenient location for the organization of smaller stories. In such stories, usually an introductory or main narrative is presented, at least in part, to set the stage for a more emphasized second narrative or the collection of shorter stories, one leading to other, although not necessarily connected thematically.

In his intertextual construction of *Magana Jari Ce*, Imam weaved his frame from three different sources, *Śukasaptati* from India (Haksar 2000), *Ṭūṭīnāma* from Persia—or more specifical-

ly, written by a Persian expatriate then resident in Uttar Pradesh, both titles alluding to an 'enchanted parrot'—and the Arabic *Alf Layla wa-Layla,* which was easy for him since he spoke fluent Arabic. Interestingly, *Dare Dubu da Daya* was in print when Imam embarked on writing *Magana Jari Ce* in 1930s, but he shunned Edgar's Hausa version and relied on the original Arabic versions of the nine stories he adapted in *Magana Jari Ce.* This is evidenced by the fact that with the exception of the 'Tale of the Bull and the Ass', which was relayed on the first night, the rest were tales that went beyond the 169th night end of the Hausa translation. In any case, Imam in an interview with Pwedden (1995) stated that Rupert East assembled for him many story-books in Arabic and English, especially Iranian texts to work from. I emphasize this to show that although there was a local source for Imam to work with, he used the external sources for his adaptations.

He started with the frame structure, using a parrot, which substitutes Shahrazad's frame, essentially because the latter frame was occupied by a female in unsavoury circumstances. As he related to one of his biographers (Wali 1976), the idea of the parrot came from a Persian book. Kablukov (2004: 78) identified the book as *Ṭūṭīnāma* written by Ẓiyāʾ al-Dīn Nakhshabī in the 14th century. *Ṭūṭīnāma* itself was based on an earlier Sanskrit text, *Śukasaptati*, which dated from the 12th century. The 52 stories in *Ṭūṭīnāma* are narrated by a parrot to his owner, a woman called Khojasta, to prevent her from going out of the house for amorous affairs in the absence of her husband. The parrot is kept company by another bird, a myna. Khojasta kills the myna because the latter admonishes her about engaging in any extra-marital affairs. To save himself, and at the same time achieve the objective of preventing Khojasta from going out, the male parrot starts narrating interesting stories to Khojasta for 52 nights (Qādirī and Chandra 1976).

The second frame was the original source of the stories in *Ṭūṭīnāma* from *Śukasaptati* (Haksar 2000) over 800 years before *Ṭūṭīnāma* was appropriated by Nakshabi. The 70 stories in *Śukasaptati* are narrated by Lord Shuka, who takes the form of a parrot. Imam avoided direct appropriation of *Śukasaptati* due to

its reference to un-Islamic deity. The collection reminds a married woman, Prabhavati, 'to honor monogamy by distracting her from trysts with her lover' (Snodgrass 2010: 82).

The third frame Imam used was from the prologue of *One Thousand and One Nights*. While *Shahrazad* as a storyteller forms the frame of the tales, she clearly replaces the parrots of *Ṭūṭīnāma* and *Śukasaptati*. While there does not seem to be any link between the parrot and Shahrazad's frames—the individual stories in both Ṭūṭīnāma and Śukasaptati, although told in a frame device, differ from those of One Thousand and One Nights—Imam linked the two by substituting a woman with a parrot, especially as both the parrot and Shahrazad are traumatized and endangered. Further, both frames take to storytelling to prevent the occurrence of a personal tragedy.

Imam's substitution echoes the prudish Hausa Islamic society of the 1930s—the era of Imam's book. The parrot was handily convenient for Imam because of its position in Hausa society as a garrulous bird, and whatever its actual gender, was considered to be female. This merely reinforces the stereotype of a woman being garrulous—a perfect vehicle for a metaphorical Shahrazad. The bird's name in Hausa is generally 'aku', although it is commonly called 'aku kuturu' due to its white scaly legs, reminiscent of the lesions on a leper's skin (kuturu).

The frame in *Śukasaptati* is actually the same as in *Ṭūṭīnāma*. In Magana Jari Ce, the parrot frame also follows similar structure, leaning towards *Śukasaptati*. The parrot in the Hausa story is bought by a ruler to prevent his son from going out of the palace to join his father in a battle. The prince has already killed a female mate of the parrot that advised against his going out. The surviving parrot keeps the prince enthralled every night until the king returns victoriously from the battle. In each of the three frames, there is an obstacle to the occurrence of a catastrophe. Imam, however avoided the sexual overtones of the Middle Eastern frames and stuck to moralistic tales expected of an African Muslim society. Both Khojasta and Prabhavati were obsessed with illicit affairs, while Shahrazad was fighting for her life. Imam's 'aku' is a guardian entrusted to prevent a child losing his life.

INTERTEXTUAL COMPARISONS

1 – The Story of a Donkey and a Bull

The first of the two stories to be analysed is The Story of a Donkey and a Bull, which is also the first story in the Nights. It was the only tale in the collection related by the vizier, Shahrazad's father, as an allegory about his fears for her life considering how this particular tale ends. In the Hausa version, *Labarin wani jaki da sa* 'The Story of a Certain Donkey and a Bull', it is related by a parrot to tantalize a young prince into listening and prevent him from leaving the palace where assassins await him.

One Thousand and One Nights version

A merchant is given the ability to understand what animals are saying after praying to God, but must not reveal this gift or he will die. One day, he hears a bull moan about the hard work he is doing every day, while the donkey does not have to do anything. The donkey advises him to pretend he is ill. And when the bull does so, he is taken care of by his owner. The merchant advises the owner to let the donkey work instead of the bull and thus, the donkey regrets his advice.

The merchant again overhears a conversation between the bull and the donkey. This time the donkey advises against the bull resting, lest he be slaughtered. He does so and the merchant finds this very funny and laughs loudly. The wife of the merchant asks why he is laughing but he says he cannot disclose the reason on penalty of death. She still wants him to tell her, so he intends to tell her. However, before then, he overhears a cockerel telling his dog that if he were the merchant, he would keep his wife in check by beating her with twigs. The merchant does as he has heard, battering the wife until she repents and does not want to know the reason why the merchant laughed anymore.

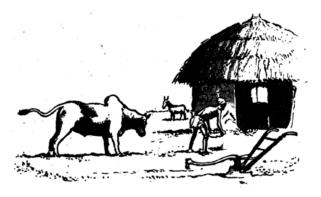#### *The Magana Jari Ce version*

A farmer prays for the ability to be able to comprehend animal talk and he is granted his wish. He suddenly hears a cockerel singing and a nearby hen commends his voice, upon which he

replies that it is because he is getting old; he could sing louder in his youth. This amuses the farmer and he laughs.

Later, while resting near his barn, the farmer overhears his bull complaining to his donkey about the easy life the latter enjoys since he does nothing. The donkey admonishes the bull as being too docile and suggests the bull become aggressive next time the labourers want to drag him to the farm. The bull does precisely that, becomes aggressive and refuses to eat. The farmer realises that the bull has taken the donkey's advice. So, he asks his labourers to saddle up the donkey to do the farm work. The donkey returns exhausted and finds the bull relaxing. The donkey, realizing that the bull will continue the easy life, warns him that he has heard the farmer is planning to take the bull to the butcher because he cannot do farm work anymore. The bull becomes frightened and immediately active so that he may not be seen as lazy and get slaughtered. The farmer, hearing all this dialogue, laughs and instructs his labourers to always be merciful to the animals because they have feelings too.

The Hausa title of this tale is straight translation of the original, not a metaphor as other titles appropriated by Imam. In Hausa societies, especially in the colonial period, a farmer is more commonly associated with domestic animals than a merchant. There were possibly two reasons for this. First, Imam's departure from the original was intended to remain faithful to the nature of the society by substituting a farmer for a merchant. Second, Imam introduced a spiritual dimension in his adaptation. Whereas in the original the merchant is already endowed with the ability to understand animal speech, the intertextual adaptation uses a spiritual register to enable the merchant acquire this gift. Thus, the farmer prays hard to God, including engaging other prayer consultants, in order to grant him the gift of understanding animal speech. Imam does not delve into why the farmer was obsessed with understanding animal speech—although the reason is alluded to at the end of the tale.

Imam stripped the story to its basic skeletal message, removing the excess details about the farmer and his family. Cut off also was the wife-battering end of the original story, the possible death of the merchant if he were to reveal his gift at the

ability to understand the conversation between the bull and the donkey, which makes him laugh, and which piques his wife's curiosity. Instead of revealing the reason, he takes the advice of a stray cockerel and simply batters her until she repents and promises not to pester him any more about the reasons for his laughter. Such violence against women often portrays profile registers about the treatment of women in Middle-Eastern societies. To enrich the story, a resident Belgian artist, Jacqueline de Naeyer, who eventually married Rupert East (Furniss 2011: 30), provided an illustration for the story as seen in this picture, which reflects a typical African farm setting.

The Story of a Donkey and a Bull as illustrated by Jacqueline de Naeyer from A. Imam, *Magana Jari Ce* (1937), p. 50.

Imam introduced the cockerel as a prologue to the story and created an amusing drama between the cockerel and a hen; whereas in the original the cockerel is aggressive and indeed eggs the merchant on to undertake his misogynic wife-battering.

Abubakar Imam's adaptation of the story ends more peacefully—with an animal rights template that makes the master aware of how man badly treats animals. The change in the end of the story towards a more pacifist appreciation of animals and turning away from the brutality meted out to the wife reflects a vintage 1930s Hausa society.

#2 – Masrur the Eunuch and Ibn al-Káribí

The second tale is from Burton's translation, *Masrur the Eunuch and Ibn al-Káribí* (Burton 1885–1888, V, 400th–401st nights). The Hausa version is *Ba wahalle sai mai kwaɗayi* (I, 96–98).

One Thousand and One Nights Version

Masrūr, an official of Hārūn al-Rashīd once laughs in the presence of the Caliph, which annoys the Caliph. Masrūr assures the Caliph that his laughter is evoked by the memory of what he observed the previous day at the bank of the river, of a certain Ibn al-Qāribī, amusing people. The Caliph asks Masrūr to bring Ibn al-Qāribī to the palace so that he could also be amused. Masrūr goes to Ibn al-Qāribī and informs him of the palace summons and the latter agrees to come. However, Masrūr cuts a deal with him that Ibn al-Qāribī will only retain a quarter of whatever is given to him; the rest would be for Masrūr. They haggle between splitting into two, agreeing at two thirds for Masrūr and one third for Ibn al-Qāribī.

They go to the Caliph who threatens Ibn al-Qāribī with three blows with a bag he is holding if he is not amused. This did not faze Ibn al-Qāribī who is apparently used to harsher treatment. His comedy routine however fails to amuse the Caliph who remains stone-faced. Since he is not amused by the routines, the Caliph decides to mete out the punishment promised, and give Ibn al-Qāribī a blow with the bag, which is full of stones—an additional fact Ibn al-Qāribī does not anticipate. Before the Caliph could strike the next blow, Ibn al-Qāribī tells him of the deal he cut with Masrūr about the latter receiving two thirds of whatever was due him. The rest of the blows should therefore be dealt to Masrūr. This amuses the Caliph who collapses in laughter. He then deals a blow to Masrūr, who cries that one third is sufficient for him and the rest should be given to Ibn al-Qāribī. This further amuses the Caliph so much that he bursts out laughing and rewards the two with stupendous riches.

The Magana Jari Ce version

There was once a king who enjoyed merriment. One day he wakes up depressed and orders his messenger to summon his

vizier to attend to him. When the vizier comes, he informs him of his depression and suggests a stroll by the river. The messenger laughs at this. The king gets annoyed and wants to know if he or the vizier is the source of his jest. The messenger explains that he was at the riverbank the previous day and saw someone making people laugh. The king asks the messenger to summon the jester.

When the messenger gets to the jester, he informs him that the king wants to see him. However, the messenger cuts a deal with the jester for two thirds of whatever the jester gets, or he will go back and tell the king he has not been able to find him. The jester agrees, and they set off for the palace of the king. When they arrive, the messenger leaves, and the king asks the jester to make him laugh, or get whipped. However, try as he may, he cannot make the king laugh. The king asks if that is all he can do, and the jester answers in the affirmative. The king then tells him to get ready to be whipped since he has not laughed. The king whips him once. The jester howls in pain and asks the king to stop, informing him that he has taken his share. The king is puzzled at this. The jester explains the deal they have with his messenger. The king asks for the messenger to come and he informs him of what he has given to the jester and the remaining is his own. He eagerly comes forward thinking he is going to get riches. The king then whips him once. The messenger howls in pain and yells that he has given up the remainder since the first lash was enough for him. The king is so amused by this that he laughs and rewards the pair handsomely.

The title of Imam's adaptation of this tale is the first point of departure from the original, for it was not based on the simple translation of the original's title. In this story, the title is a Hausa proverb, which reflects the theme of the story, for it means 'the greedy suffer', which is precisely what happened to Masrūr/ the messenger character. Imam also avoided the necessity of translating 'Eunuch' in Hausa which, although known to Hausa ruling circles, is not a common expression in Hausa and its sexual connotations would seem to be better avoided altogether in a fictional narrative aimed at formal school settings.

Thus, Imam added a prologue to the tale by creating a context, which necessitated a miserable state of the king, which requires cheering up. In the original, such context was absent, as Masrūr simply started laughing at the memory of the jester. This could not happen in the presence of a ruler in Hausa societies as it would be considered the height of disrespect. Further, the mere act of being summoned by a ruler in Hausa is considered a high honour. Therefore, when the messenger in Imam's adaptation informed the jester of the summons from the palace, the latter did not argue, nor did he haggle about the deal the messenger cut with him, whereas in the original Masrūr had to haggle with Ibn al-Qāribī over their share. This gave both Masrur and Ibn al-Qāribī a level of independence not associated with courtiers or subjects in a traditional Hausa setting. Consequently, Imam's characters in this tale tended to show more acquiescence to traditional authority, thus truly reflecting power structure in such traditional society. The lesson in both the two tales is about the dangerous consequences of avarice.

CONCLUSION

In proclaiming the 'death of the author', Barthes (Heath 2010) disconnected writing from the author, disagreeing with any focus on the authors' identity to deduct any meaning from their work. Killing the author, Barthes, argued, liberated the text. This would appear to be the case in Abubakar Imam's *Magana Jari Ce*. This stands out in the corpus of Hausa literature as the most intertextual adaptation of transnational stories into the Hausa language of northern Nigeria. These transnational stories shaped its very existence through a series of literary devices. Yet the masterful way the adaptations were done has tended to obscure the roots of the stories and the general impression was that these were Hausa stories, based on Hausa lifestyle. The circumstances narrated would have existed even in the absence of the transitional texts they were based on. Thus, do Imam and Shahrazad share the same motive in their stories? I argue that intertextuality merely provided us with a searchlight to uncover the authorless text in Imam's Hausaland.

Devices used include a framework structure borrowed from three sources, but sticking principally to *One Thousand and One Nights*. Also used were a series of interconnecting literary devices that revolve around the motifs he used. These recurring elements helped Imam to construct a specific mood that differed from the original story. These include redaction, simplification, selective acceptance to geographical or religious differences with Hausa societies, and semantic expansion of some plot elements,

The narrative style adopted in *Magana Jari Ce* was closely patterned on *One 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 *One Thousand and One Nights*, the narrator created the stories to delay the execution of a stubborn princess. In addition, *Magana Jari Ce* also included a series of subtexts outside the palace, which revolved around a series of attempts to lure the prince out and assassinate him to prevent his eventual accession to the throne. The parrot maintained its mandate successfully and when the king returns and learns of the evil machinations of his vizier, he has the vizier executed and the parrot appointed vizier. In *Śukasaptati*, the parrot loses his voice and ascends to heavens in a blaze of flowers. In *Magana Jari Ce*, the parrot becomes the vizier, a promotion of sorts. This further enriches the stories and creates a narrative contextual continuity more vividly than in the original text. *One Thousand and One Nights* also ended happily for Shahrazad, as by the end of the 1000 stories, when she has exhausted her repertoire, the king has fallen in love with her and spared her life and made her the queen.

Perhaps one of the series of issues that could be asked is if there was any 'redistribution' in these intertextual travels of narratives from Middle East to Africa. The reason is because of the way Imam's adapted stories mesh well with local realities and circumstances. Indeed, the ease with which these stories were adapted into Hausa culture and narrative style attests to the commonality of human societies, for none of the adaptations yielded any outcome that can be described as being totally alien

to the society, despite the original source story being an external source.

REFERENCES

Bakhtin, Mikhail M., Michael Holquist, and Vern W. McGee. 2014. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. by Vern McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press).

Barthes, Roland 2010. *Image, Music, Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, HarperCollins Publishers).

Burton, Richard F. 1885–1888. *A Plain and Literal Translation of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, Now Entituled the Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*. 16 vols (Printed by the Burton Club for private subscribers only) <http://burtoniana. org/books/1885_Arabian%20Nights/index.htm> [accessed 24 October 2017].

Dobronravine, Nikolai. 2004. 'Hausa Ajami Literature and Script: Colonial Innovations and Post-Colonial Myths in Northern Nigeria', *Sudanic Africa*, 15: 85–110.

Edgar, Frank. 1924. *Dare Dubu Da Daya. Littafi Na Biyu* (Lagos: C.M.S. Bookshop; reprinted 1970 by the Northern Nigerian Publishing Company).

Felman, Shoshana. 2009. 'Turning the Screw of Interpretation', in *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory, 1900–2000*, ed. by Dorothy J. Hale (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons), pp. 316–328.

Furniss, Graham. 2011. 'On Engendering Liberal Values in the Nigerian Colonial State: The Idea behind Gaskiya Corporation', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 39: 95–119.

Imam, Abubakar. *Magana Jari Ce*. Vol. 1. 1937. Zaria: Kamfanin Gaskiya.

—— 2000. *Al-kalām ra'smāl*, trans. by Muṣṭafā Ḥijāzī Sayyid (Cairo: al-Markaz al-Qawmī li-l-tarjama).

Irele, Abiola F. 2001. *The African Imagination: Literature in Africa and the Black Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Jeż, Beata, and Stanisław Piłaszewicz. 2003. 'Foreign influences and their adaptation to the Hausa culture in Magana Jari Ce by Abubakar Imam', *Studies of the Department of African Languages and Cultures,* 33: 5–28.

Jeż, Beata. 1986. 'Funkcjonowanie wątków obcych w dziele Magana Jari Ce A.A. Imama' [Functioning of Foreign Motifs in 'Magana Jari Ce' by Alhaji Abubakar Imam] (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Warsaw, Warsaw).

Kablukov, Evgeni. 2004. '*India and Central Asia: Cultural Relations in Middle Ages*', in *India and Central Asia: Classical to Contemporary Periods*, ed. by Braja Bihārī Kumāra (New Delhi: Concept Pub. Co), pp. 78–82.

Kehinde, Ayo. 2003. 'Intertextuality and the Contemporary African Novel', *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 12: 372–386.

Kolberg, Barbara. 'The Art of Barbara Kolberg' <http://www.barbarakolberg.com/na010.htm> [accessed 12 November 2016].

Kristeva, Julia. 1966. [1986a]. '*Word, Dialogue and Novel*', trans. by Alice Jardiney, Thomas Gora and Lion S. Roudiez, in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. by Julia Kristeva and Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 35–61.

Kristeva, Julia. 1974 [1986b]. '*Revolution in Poetic Language*', trans. by Margaret Waller, in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. by Julia Kristeva and Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 89–136.

Księga tysiąca i jednej nocy [Book of One Thousand and One Nights]. 1976, ed. by W. Kubiak (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy).

Kurtz, Roger J. 2011. 'The intertextual imagination in Purple Hibiscus', *Ariel*, 42: 23–42.

Lemaster, Tracy. 2010. 'Influence and Intertextuality in Arundhati Roy and Harper Lee', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 56: 788–814, 838.

Mai, Xiwen. 2010. 'Transcultural Intertextuality: Reading Asian North American Poetry' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Michigan).

Malumfashi, Ibrahim, Ɗanladi Z. Haruna and Bukar Mada. 2015. *Labaran Dare Dubu da Ɗaya – Mujalladi na Ɗaya* (Kaduna, Nigeria: Garkuwa Media Services Ltd).

Mora, Abdurrahman. 1989. *Abubakar Imam Memoirs*. Zaria: The Northern Nigerian Publishing Company Limited.

Ogede, Ode S. 2011. *Intertextuality in Contemporary African literature: Looking Inward* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books).

Piłaszewicz, Stanisław. 2010. '*Literature in the Hausa Language*', in *Literatures in African languages: Theoretical Issues and Sample Surveys*, ed. by B. W. Andrzejewski, Stanisław Piłaszewicz and Witold Tyloch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 190–254.

Pweddon, Nicholas, 1995. 'The Abubakar Imam Interview', *Harsunan Nijeriya*, XVII: 86–110.

Qādirī, Muḥammad and Pramod Chandra. 1976. *Ṭūṭīnāma: Tales of a Parrot – das Papageienbuch* (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt).

Sasic, Borislava. 1998. 'Nuruddin Farah's Sardines: The Construction of a Somali Novel on the Intersection of Transcultural Intertextuality', in *Across the Lines: Intertextuality and Transcultural Communication in the New Literatures in English*, ed. by Wolfgang Klooss (Amsterdam: Rodopi), pp. 167–176.

Shuka Saptati: Seventy Tales of the Parrot, trans. by Aditya Narayan Dhairyasheel Haksar. (New Delhi: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000).

Snodgrass, Mary Ellen. 2010. *Encyclopedia of the Literature of Empire* (New York: Facts on File Inc.).