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Loud Bubbles from a Silent Brook: Trends and Tendencies in Contemporary Hausa Prose Writing

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ABSTRACT

This paper traces the transformation of Hausa popular fiction, a genre created predominantly by young Muslim Hausa of Northern Nigeria. It specifically explores the interface between creative fiction and conservative society and shows how creativity and media technologies combine to reflect a transformational stage of an aspect of popular culture in a conservative African society. Contemporary Hausa prose fiction evolved as the product of British colonial policies which acted as the midwife at the birth of *vernacular* Hausa creative writing in 1933. State patronage was however removed and a massive independent publishing industry emerged among young Hausa novelists. Reacting against the staid conservatism of mainstream Hausa society, and embracing new media technologies they opted for a creative route different from their literary forefathers. Their open treatment of romantic themes drew the ire of the Muslim Hausa conservative establishment, and graphically illustrated a society in turbulent transition.

This paper will examine aspects of the growth in the production of Hausa creative writing, mostly in Kano since the late 1980s, a phenomenon that has attracted much comment in Nigeria and abroad. This writing has variously been referred to as "Hausa popular fiction," "modern Hausa literature," "*soyayya* (love) books," and even "Kano market literature." Creative writing in Hausa originated in colonial times and a number of generations of writers have come and gone. (For a history of this writing see particularly Skinner; Pilaszewicz; Yahaya; and Furniss, "Poetry").

By 1984 the inheritors of the Hausa writing tradition, who had been published in the early 1970s, seemed to have set aside their pens. A number of them were one-hit wonders, producing a text that was well received and used as a textbook for West African School Certificate Hausa examinations (e.g., *Kitsen Rogo*),

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but no more. Just like the Hausa "classical" writers (of the 1930s and 1940s) before them, they enjoyed the patronage of the State or multinational corporate publishing houses, eager to cash in on the burgeoning high school population, products of the implementation of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme of 1976.

The post-1984 newcomers gate-crashed the Hausa literary scene with an ebullient urbanity and a sometimes raw sexuality, moving their readers away from the village simplicity of the earlier Hausa classics. They operated in the space between Hausa traditionalism and a fast-growing, hybrid, urban, media-rich, technological society. As Ibrahim Sheme pointed out, by the 1980s, "a lot of the traditional ways of life in Hausaland had drastically changed. The incursion of western lifestyles into our society was so great that when it captured young hearts, it was inextricably mirrored in our literature" (1). With experience of a range of modern media, and particularly having undergone a visual media bombardment from Hollywood and Bollywood cinema, the new Hausa novelists that emerged from the mid 1980s refused to build on the thematic styles of their "modernist uncles." Thus, this new generation of writers avoided paying too much attention to Marxist politics (as, for instance, in the earlier *Tura Ta Kai Bango*) or gun-toting dare-devils and drug cartels (as in *Karshen Alewa Kasa*) or the ills of prostitution and alcohol consumption. Writing in uncompromising and unapologetically colloquial modern Hausa (often interlaced with English words to reflect the new urban lexicon of "Engausa"), they focused their attention on the most *emotional* concern of urban Hausa youth: love and marriage, thus falling neatly into the romanticist mold, or *soyayya* (romance), and consequently borrowing inspiration and motifs from Hindi cinema, as has been discussed by Brian Larkin.

A series of developments combined to push northern Nigerian Muslim Hausa youth into suddenly embracing indigenous literature, especially prose fiction in the decade of the 1980s. The main catalytic factor was the role of bold and innovative television melodramas from the various state television stations in major Nigerian cities operating under the Nigerian Television Authority, and the independent state-owned television stations, such as CTV 67 in Kano. By far the most popular of the 1980s television programs in Kano State, *Bakan Gizo* (chronicling the saga of Hanne and Kallamu) dealt with forced marriage. *Hadarin Kasa* and *Farin Wata* (dealing with the tribulations of a Hausa boy wanting to marry a Yoruba girl against the wishes of both parents) became the seedbed for romantic imagery amongst young viewers. In most large streets, at least in Kano, little corner shops with small black and white television sets became sizable viewing centers in the mid 1980s during the broadcasting of *Farin Wata* by the state-owned CTV 67 television studio. (For a more detailed study of Hausa television soap operas see Bourgault, "Television" and ch. 5 of "Mass Media.") The massive popularity of dramas on public television in the period evoked such intense interest among young people that drama clubs and societies were formed with the stated purpose of improvising dramatic sketches along similar lines. One of the early antecedents of these clubs was the ambitiously entitled Organization for Moral Concern, established in 1982 to cater for youth in urban Kano in three different ways.

The first was an adult literacy division that attempted to provide supplementary education to young people who had dropped out of elementary and secondary schools. The second focused on self-help activities, especially the clearing of gutters and drains in the urban areas, road maintenance, and removal of

accumulated trash from communal skips. The third division concentrated on the use of drama for enlightenment.[1] The first division died off, due to the prominence of the Kano State Agency for Mass Education. The second broke away from the collective and was transformed into the Abdullahi Bayero Self-Help Group that eventually was supported by the Kano State Social Welfare Department. The third transformed into an independent Jigon Hausa Drama Club in 1984. Its membership was boosted by the large-scale absorption of many members of the Gyaranya Drama Club (GDC), which had been in existence since 1982. The GDC was based in the Gyaranya ward of the old city, and in the neighborhood of the defunct Palace Cinema that had shown many Hindi films, in which the most popular elements were complex, choreographed, song-and-dance routines (e.g., *Raaste Ka Patthar, Waqt, Rani Rupmati, Dost, Nagin, Hercules, Jaal, Sangeeta, Charas, Kranti, Dharmatama, Loafer, Amar Deep, Dharam Karam,* and many others). These inspired the GDC to start producing long songs in their drama sketches, using the Indian song motifs, themes, and structures, but with Hausa language lyrics. This did not go down well with many members, so when a core of such people contemplated breaking away to form the Jigon Hausa Drama Club within the Organization for Moral Concern, a number of the members of the GDC crossed over to the new Club.

The drama sketches were written by young aspiring members with imagination and a determination to transfer their ideas from written form to dramatic performance. Lack of capital as well as a lack of state sponsorship curtailed their dreams of dramatic epics being staged in the urban centers of northern Nigeria. Thus, while restricted to neighborhood plazas (*dandali*) and club houses, the dramatists continued to develop their scripts, which they subsequently turned into full-length novellas. But even there they faced obstacles. There was a complete lack of interest from the major book publishers. They had no alternative to private publishing in getting their thoughts into print. They had to sponsor the production of their own books through the printing presses, many of which had been established to take advantage of the business of printing posters, manifestos, and other materials for the high-profile party campaigns taking place at the time. A lack of government patronage also contributed to the rise of private publishing in northern Nigeria, especially of Hausa prose fiction from 1984. The state-owned publisher, Northern Nigerian Publishing Company (NNPC), which had been the main publishing organization in northern Nigeria, had virtually collapsed. Further, there was considerable reluctance on the part of mainstream Nigerian publishers to accept works, particularly fiction, in the Hausa language, or even establish offices in the north of Nigeria.

Longman Nigeria Ltd., however, did buck the trend by continuing in the Hausa literature publishing market, essentially in order to capture high school students studying the language. For instance, under the firm's "Abokin Hira" series, examples of various genres were published, including prose fiction, poetry, and drama. Titles included *Ciza Ka Busa* by Isma'ila Junaidu; *Kowa Ya Sha Kida* by M. S. Ibrahim; *Tafiyar Goga Birnin Lillifa* by Inuwa Dikko; *Tauna Ka Hadiye* by M. W. Hamza; *Tsaka Mai Wuya* by Kamaruddin Imam; *Jiya Da Yau* by Abdullahi Umar Kafin Hausa; *Kama Da Wane* by Inuwa Dikko; and *Taura Biyu* by M. W. Hamza.

The NNPC did publish the winners of its 1979 competition, including *So Aljannar Duniya* (Love Is Heaven on Earth), which became an instant commercial hit. It was as if the novel was taken from the script of *Farin Wata*—the CTV 67

drama that explored an interethnic love affair, to the strenuous objection of both sets of parents. *So Aljannar Duniya* explored a similar theme—this time a love affair between a purebred Fulani girl (closely matching the experience of the author, Hafsat AbdulWaheed) and an "alien" (Hafsat AbdulWaheed married a man from the Middle East). The novel was also a catalytic factor in the development of Hausa prose fiction, in that it did away with Fulani *pulaaku*[2] and introduced a brash, assertive, loud and anti-establishment heroine, Bodado, who, armed with a degree in pharmacy, came back to her village to set up a drug store and introduce her fiancé—all unlady-like behavior in the Fulani mindset. Thus she discarded *munyal* ("self-control"), *semteende* ("modesty"), and *hakkillo* ("wisdom")—central components of *pulaaku*—and declared, openly, her love for an "alien" in her aunt's presence! The opening dialogue from the novel sets the pace in which Bodado, speaking, informs her aunt:

> Aure! Inna[3] ni fa na gaya muku ba zan auri kowa ba sai wanda nake so. Kun san zamani ya sake.
>
> Marriage! Aunty, I have told you that I will only marry the man I love. You know times have changed. (1)

Such direct confrontation in a Fulani village was uncommon, and reflected the author's personal rebellion against tradition. Her aunt—delegated to mediate in these matters on behalf of the protagonist's mother—was shocked. As she lamented:

> Mhm! Wannan zamani, Allah Ya saukaka. Yarinya ki zauna kina zancen aurenki, sai kace hirar nono da mai. Don haka fa ba ma son sa diyarmu makarantar boko. In kun yi karatu sai ku ce kun fi kowa. Me kuka dauke mu ne?
>
> Mhm! These times of ours. May Allah save us. Listen to you talking about your marriage, as if you are talking about milk and butter. That is why we don't want to send our daughters to school. After you finish you feel you are superior to everyone. What do you take us for? (2)

Thus the battleground and the rules of engagement have been established—female empowerment through education; and Hafsatu AbdulWaheed chose the most conservative arena for such a battle, a Fulani settlement, considered generally more trenchant about *pulaaku* than urban Fulani society.

The success of *So Aljannar Duniya* appears to have sent a message to potential literati to pick up their pens and set to work—thus spawning a genre that the organizers of the competition that produced the novel did not envisage or desire. Further, the combined effects of the harsh economic realities of the 1980s (the decade of coups and countercoups in Nigeria) ensured reduced parental responsibility in the marital affairs of their children. In this way, fantasy derived in part from Bollywood Hindi films, anti-authority feelings, and bursting testosterone in a conservative society that sees strict gender separation, all combined to present Hausa youth with *soyayya* (romance) as the central template for creative fiction. It was in part a safety valve for repressed sexuality. In particular, Hindi cinema played a strong role in providing inspiration for the first of this generation of Hausa novelists, and indeed later Hausa video dramatists.

The great boom in Hindi cinema in Northern Nigeria was during the 1970s when state television stations were established and became an outlet for Hindi films. Such films were also readily available on videotape targeted at home viewers. NTA Kano alone had shown 1,176 Hindi films on its television network between 2 October 1977, when the first Hindi film was shown (*Ann Bann*), and 6 June 2003.[4] From the first appearance of Hindi films on Hausa television stations, children and young school-age boys and girls became avid watchers of the films and gradually absorbed templates of behavior from screen heroes they wanted to emulate. By the early 1990s they had become novelists, moving into the home video arena towards the end of the decade.

With apparently no one to assess and publish their manuscripts, these young Hausa prose writers in northern Nigeria had no alternative than to privately publish their books themselves. A selection of the early pioneer self-published authors is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

A Selection of Pioneer Millennium-Generation Hausa Prose Fiction Writers[5]

No.	*Title*	*Author*	*Year*
	So Aljannar Duniya	Hafsat AbdulWaheed	1981
	Wasiyar Baba Kere	Ibrahim Saleh Gumel	1983
	Inda Rai Da Rabo	Idris S. Imam	1984
	Rabin Raina I	*Talatu Wada Ahmad	1984
	Soyayya Gamon Jini	Ibrahim H Abdullahi Bichi	1986
	Budurwar Zuciya	*Balaraba Ramat Yakubu	1986
	Rabin Raina II	*Talatu Wada Ahmad	1987
	Wa Zai Auri Jahila?	*Balaraba Ramat Yakubu	1987
	Kogin Soyayya	A. M. Zahraddeen Yakasai	1988
	Alhaki Kwikwiyo	*Balaraba Ramat Yakubu	1988
	Rabin Raina III	*Talatu Wada Ahmad	1988
	Mata Masu Duniya	*Kulu M.B Tambuwal	1988
	Kaikayi	Abubakar Bala Gyadi-Gyadi	1989
	Kashe Makashinka	Alhaji Y. Abubakar Mohammed	1989
	Rabon Kwado	*Sadiya T. Umar Daneji	1989
	Garin Masoyi	A. M. Zahraddeen Yakasai	1989
	Idan So Cuta Ne	Yusuf M. Adamu	1989
	In Da So Da Kauna	Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino	1990

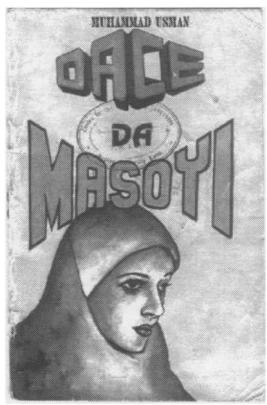
*Women authors

Of the 18 titles in Table 1, two (*Budurwar Zuciya* and *Wa Zai Auri Jahila*) were printed by the Gaskiya Corporation, Zaria, a printer that was associated traditionally with the NNPC, after printing costs were met by the author. They were thus not *published* by the NNPC. The apparent reluctance of the NNPC to be associated intellectually with this nascent literature indicates its disdain for the emergent genre. In an interview in 2000, Alhaji Ja'afaru D. Mohammed, General Manager of the Northern Nigerian Publishing Company (NNPC), Zaria said that, "the bulk of these works are unhealthy for both academic and social well-being of the young ones [. . .]. The contents are mostly alien to the Hausa cultures which they pretend to explore." He went on to scornfully declare that NNPC does not publish

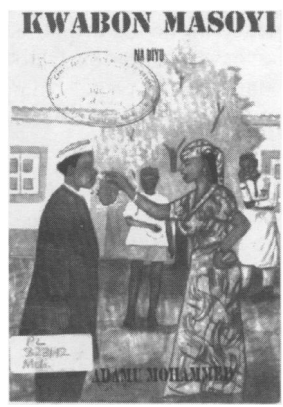
such books because "they know we won't accept, so they don't even bring to us" (Umaisha 14).

The overwhelming focus on *soyayya* as a theme among the early writers put off major publishers from investing in the genre and further created a gulf between authors and publishers. From the titles alone, one can see that many of the novels contain the word *so* "love" and its derivatives (e.g., *soyayya* "mutual love", *masoyi* "lover") recurring in many of them, as shown in the covers in Plate 1.

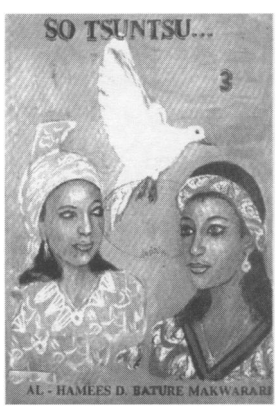
In Da So Da Kauna
"Where there's love, there's fondness"



Dace da Masoyi
"Lucky in love"



Kwabon Masoyi
"Pennylover"



So Tsuntsu
"Flying love"

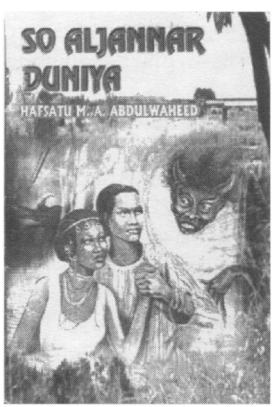
Ruwan Soyayyar Zuciya
"Weeping heart"

Kibiyar Soyayya . . .
"Arrow of love"

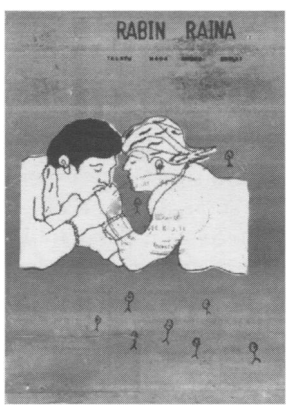
Plate 1: Love in the contemporary Hausa novel. With permission from the Raina Kama Writers Association, Kano, Nigeria.

There are no specific records to show which urban cluster in the north started the private publishing phenomena, but it would seem to have been kick-started by the appearance of Ms. Talatu Wada Ahmed's *Rabin Raina*—a series of three similarly titled, but unrelated novels, privately printed in Zaria from 1985 to 1988. The three *Rabin Raina* novels were seminal for many reasons. Not only were they the first by a Muslim Hausa woman (and a graduate with a degree in Biology) since Hafsat AbdulWaheed's prize-winning *So Aljannar Duniya*, but they also set the tone for the battle cry of Muslim Hausa *womanism*—which, as Alice Walker explains, is a woman displaying "outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behaviour. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered 'good' for one"—by promoting, quite forcefully, the idea of Muslim Hausa women's contemporary western education.[6]

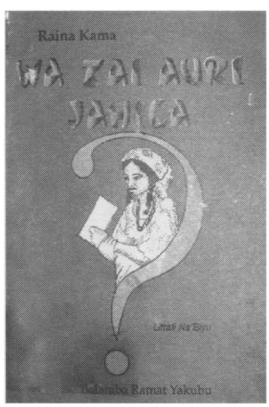
Hitherto the cultural perception of an educated girl in the Muslim Hausa society was generally unfavorable: educated girls were seen as immoral, wayward, and impertinent. To avoid girls committing embarrassing and immoral acts, more often than not parents were eager to see their daughters married as soon as possible, regardless of their level of education—if at all they did attend school. Thus, pulling girls out of school to marry them off was a common occurrence. Each of the female protagonists in the three novels in Plate 2 display "outrageous" (to a traditional mindset) behavior.



So Aljannar Duniya
(Hafsat AbdulWaheed)
"The spirit of love"



Rabin Raina
(Talatu Wada)
"Better half"



Wa Zai Auri Jahila?
(Balaraba Ramat Yakubu)
"Who will marry an ignoramus?"

Plate 2: Hausa womanist trail-blazers. With permission from the Raina Kama Writers Association, Kano, Nigeria.

In *Rabin Raina I* (1985), the father of the heroine refuses to allow her to even have a boyfriend while still in lower levels of education, insisting that all matters and affairs of the heart should wait until she finishes her schooling. Further, not only are the parents of the heroine pro-education, so also is her suitor, who, while pursuing his own medical degree in Britain, insists on his fiancée finishing at least (the then) five years of secondary school so that they can finish their education together. Even the cover of the novel is anti-authority by showing a couple in a tender moment, the man clearly wearing Western dress (looking like a Hindi film star) and kissing the hand of the girl.

In *Rabin Raina II* (1987) the protagonist has to drop out of school for a variety of reasons, but her fiancé insists on her going back to complete her education. Indeed he often goes to her house to give her extra lessons to catch up. After her schooling, she is employed as a personnel officer in an organization with an amorous boss who fancies her, to the chagrin and distress of her fiancé who, incidentally, also works in the same organization. The heroine eventually extricates herself, blackmailing her boss by recording a conversation in which he is setting up a shady deal.

In *Rabin Raina III* (1988), the art of blackmail to escape from the apparently inescapable is perfected by the protagonist when she finds herself to be married, against her wish, to another person, her parent's choice. She escapes by simply arranging a relationship between the suitor she detests and a commercial sex-worker. The suitor is caught red-handed by the protagonist's father, and this is the basis for dissolving the "gentleman's agreement" whereby the suitor would marry the protagonist. Thus free, she is finally given the opportunity to marry someone of her own choice and whom she loves.

The themes—expressing a choice of whom to marry, engaging in wily blackmail to obtain what is desired, and an aggressive pursuit of contemporary education—are all counterblasts to a Muslim Hausa sociocultural pattern that insists on a girl being married off as soon as she becomes "biologically" mature, and being subject to her parents' choice of husband. In the *Rabin Raina* series of novels, although the girls are educated, they are nevertheless religious, obedient, respectful, and cheerfully carry out the household chores, both in their parents' as well as husbands' houses. Thus the idea that Western education "spoils" girls and makes them anti-authority and rebellious as well as immoral is explored and debunked, by an educated Muslim Hausa woman. It was the closest to a manifesto for prototype feminism that was to emerge at the beginning of this explosion of popular Hausa literature.

The *Rabin Raina* series, difficult to obtain as they were, nevertheless caught the attention of some of the more urban Kano novelists. In particular, Balaraba Ramat Yakubu, a young adult learner at the school run by the Kano State Agency for Mass Education, picked up the womanist baton in 1986 with her first novel *Budurwar Zuciya* (Young at Heart), which expanded the theme set in *So Aljannar Duniya* and *Rabin Raina* for Muslim Hausa women's empowerment by making explicit the potential tragedies and intrinsic injustice of *auren dole* ("arranged marriage"). As Novian Whitsitt points out in his MA thesis, the text confirms the existence of *auren dole*, painting it as a marital tradition in which parents offer their daughter as sacrificial lamb, for financial gain.[7] The denial by the parents of the girl's decision-making abilities poses the greatest injustice.

Remarkable among the early writers were women, with Balaraba Ramat Yakubu of Kano leading the group. Her prose, written in anger at the perceived injustice done to women in Hausa society, expanded on the womanist female empowerment anthem in contemporary Hausa literature. As Whitsitt argued, in Ramat's fiction,

> [t]he necessity of marriage and motherhood receives less attention than the search for self-improvement, independence, and education [. . .]. Qualities of intelligence, leadership, and independence, as opposed to those of ignorance, subservience, and marital dependence, become the coveted ideals [. . .]. [Her works] suggest an ideal of revision, a restructuring of traditional perceptions of gender. Such a restructuring would facilitate women assuming a larger degree of responsibility in their familial, educational, and career choices." (76–78)

Ramat Yakubu's anthem against *auren dole* and pro-gender empowerment through education is elaborately explored through Zainab, the protagonist of *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?* A twelve-year-old girl, she is married against her wish to a man older than her father. She runs away from him, escapes to an aunt in the city and continues her education, qualifying as a nurse.

While Talatu Wada Ahmad and Balaraba Ramat Yakubu presented the vanguard of the new Muslim Hausa woman's voice in prose fiction, another, this time male, writer of the period was on the verge of planting a time-bomb in his portrayal of *auren dole*. When Ahmed Mahmood Zaharadden Yakasai's *Kogin Soyayya* appeared in 1988, it also became a revolutionary pacesetter in expressing Muslim Hausa rebellion against the tradition of arranged/forced marriage, this time through the eyes of a male protagonist.

In *Kogin Soyayya*, the protagonists are denied permission by the boy's parents to marry each other. This is a surprising twist since in such situations it is usually the girl who gets the short end of the stick—being forced to give up the boy she loves for one chosen by her parents. *Kogin Soyayya* bucked the trend by arguing that boys are also victims of the *auren dole* phenomenon. Denied marriage, the protagonists decide to elope (on a motor bike!), after first contemplating and rejecting suicide. They hide in a village at a considerable distance from Kano, and only reveal themselves when negotiators persuade their parents to allow them to marry. Throughout their period of elopement, they remain chaste, obedient, and subservient to traditional authority. Thus the author conveys the message of moral uprightness even in a tempting situation. Indeed, to confer dignified morality on the scene, the two lovers are given refuge in the house of the village chief when they tell him they are related to each other. Later when they have to reveal that they are actually lovers on the run, the village chief takes it in his stride and offers to become a negotiator to resolve the situation. Thus, in *Kogin Soyayya*, traditional authority submits to the need to give young people the choice of marriage partners.

A further literary polemic appeared when Yusuf Adamu, of Kungiyar Matasa Marubuta (see below), a writers' club, published *Idan So Cuta Ne* (If Love is an Illness)[8] in 1989, in which he took up the theme of forced marriage, but in which, although the protagonists fall in love, the opposition from their parents is enough to prevent them getting married. They neither elope (as in *Kogin Soyayya*) nor rebel against their parents (*Rabin Raina III*). Thus, they marry other partners; however,

their *children* marry each other! Patience and trust in providence, as well as total obedience to parental tradition, are thus encouraged in the novel.

To complement *Kogin Soyayya,* Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino (like Balaraba Ramat Yakubu an adult learner at the Agency for Mass Education) published *In Da So Da Kauna,* the most phenomenally successful novel of the genre, in 1990. The novel caught the teenage population full blast with its recounting of a familiar tale, but in an unfamiliar plot environment. In the novel, a girl from an extremely rich family falls in love with a poor boy. She meets resistance from parents who want her to marry a boy of similar social status. She rebels and decides to kill herself rather than suffer a fate worse than death—forced marriage to someone she detests. Her method of dispatching herself (throwing herself down a well) was an ancient and entrenched folkloric solution to dilemmas faced by Hausa girls in situations of forced marriage. The success of the novel was enhanced by the sheer wall of criticism it faced. In the first instance, it was seen as an irreligious tract aimed at making girls rebellious. Secondly, it was accused of encouraging copycat suicides among girls.[9]

Hausa society was undergoing seismic sociological changes and was increasingly being forced to abandon some of its most cherished norms, such as arranged marriages, and acknowledge the loss of parental power and authority over their children—a general sense of losing control. Contemporary development, a new urban culture, and other factors had combined to foster resistance to the traditional institutions. The new Hausa writers merely sought to share their perspectives with a larger audience.

When it became clear that it was easier to write and publish a book than to assemble a drama group and put on a play, many of the new writers then turned their attention to forming writing collectives, especially in Kano. One of the earliest was Kungiyar Matasa Marubuta, referred to earlier, formed in 1986 by Yusuf Adamu, a medical geographer and advocate of children's Hausa literature, with the grand objective of transforming the society through writing (thus his polemical reply to Zahraddeen's *Kogin Soyayya* in his *Idan So Cuta Ne*). The predominant philosophy of the club was the triumph of good over evil in all cases, and enthronement of family values. Their activities were carried out by focusing on prose, poetry, plays, children's literature, and the translation of religious documents (which later encouraged other authors to focus attention on the creation of the prayer genre). The club was active for only four years from 1986, folding in 1990, essentially because the group seemed to spend more time on literary criticism than on actual book printing or publishing. Lack of capital also led to the decline of the club. Yusuf Adamu's *Idan So Cuta Ne* remained the only book published by the club.[10] Later in the 1990s, the club also published Binta Bello Dambatta's *Duniya Mai Yayi* in 1995.

Ahmed Mahmood Zaharadden also founded Kukan Kurciya, another writing and drama club, in 1986, and this survived until 1999, producing a series of novels under its banner (e.g.. *Ragayar Lawashi*). The Writer's Forum was another writers' club established by young university graduates led by Ibrahim Aminu Dan Iya and Sunusi Shehu Daneji in 1989, also with a fiercely intellectual focus. They had more capital and wherewithal than Kungiyar Matasa Marubuta and were able to publish four books: *Ban Kwana Da Masoyi, Rabo Da Masoyi, Zaman Lafiya,* and *Rabon Kwado*—the last written by a female writer.

The Writer's Forum, and Kungiyar Matasa Marubuta remained the two clubs with an exclusive focus on writing rather than drama production and writing. The dominant youth groups in Kano, however, were more interested in developing scripts for drama sketches. In this regard, a drama club aiming to produce video films of their dramas, which involved Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino—one of the more visible of the new Hausa prose fiction writers, was the Kano State English Request Writers and Drama Club, formed in 1985. But funding for full-scale production of movies and all the necessary equipment needed for film production in the depressed economy of the late 1980s was not forthcoming. Writing therefore became a more easily accomplished task than movie production.

From 1985 to about 1990 there was not much public comment upon the new Hausa fiction. The novels that appeared in this period were characterized by their ideological positions on modernity versus conservatism; parental authority versus a child's right to choose. In 1990, Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino—writer and, later, actor—became the unlikely hero who provided the catalyst for the full emergence of the new Hausa writers in the early 1990s. Neither the first nor the best, he nevertheless had the foresight to send a series of short stories he wrote from around 1985 to 1989 to a German Hausa radio program, *Taba Ka Lashe*, for which he was paid a token honorarium. Each reading lasted about fifteen minutes, but it was enough to make him a household name among Hausa listeners of the program. During this time he was taking an adult literacy course conducted by the Agency for Mass Education, Kano. His main occupation was the sewing and marketing of embroidered caps. Eventually his "fans" started suggesting to him, during informal sessions, that he should put out a collection of his stories as a book or alternatively, expand on the theme of some of them and make them into a book.

It was in this period that Ado Ahmad decided to expand one of his short stories into a first novel, *Hattara Dai Masoya* (1988), while still a student in the Adult Education classes. He was then aged 23—almost the same age as Abubakar Imam when the latter wrote *Ruwan Bagaja* in 1933. Being also a member of the Kano State English Request Writes and Drama Club, he started giving thought to the establishment of a mechanism through which books could be published. Clearly the other authors whose books were already in the market had found a means of getting printed. Ado Ahmad then decided to form an investment company, Raina Kama Ventures, which would be used as a sort of *adashi* (rotating credit system) and which would hopefully generate enough capital to get books published. The company had five members, two of whom were typists and worked for the government (one of them actually typed all of Ado's early manuscripts).[11] Incidentally, These civil servants were also fiction writers and enjoyed the patronage of a well-established writer, Bashari Farouk Roukbah,[12] who offered to help them with orthography.

Eventually, however, it became difficult to get Raina Kama Ventures to sponsor the printing of books, so Ado, who had by then developed another manuscript, *In Da So Da Kauna*, decided in 1990 to ask his mother for sponsorship to print the book. With a loan of 5,000 Naira (equivalent to 60 US dollars at that time) from his mother, he used the money to print *In Da So Da Kauna*. He deferred publishing his first book, *Hattara Dai Masoya*, because he judged it would not be accepted by women readers due to its gender bias, which did not cast women in a good light. He considered *In Da So Da Kauna* more balanced, and thus more likely to capture youth

emotions. He judged correctly. The book was not published under the auspices of Raina Kama Ventures, but as a single effort by a single individual. By the time the book was read out on *Shafa Ruwa Shuni*, a Radio Nigeria Kaduna literary program, it had captured the minds and moods of Hausa youth to such an extent that the first 1,000 print-run of the book sold out immediately, thereby making a profit of 3,000 Naira for the author at the moderate price of 8.00 Naira a copy. Demand for reprints eventually pushed the print-run to over 25,000 by 1994--making it the biggest selling piece of Hausa fiction in the period 1990–1995.

A chance meeting in 1990 of three of the most prominent new Hausa writers, Balaraba Ramat Yakubu, Ado Ahmad, and Dan Azumi Chediyar 'Yangurasa at the premises of the Kano State History and Culture Bureau changed the picture. The encounter revealed a common concern with how book publishing could be sponsored in Kano. A follow-up meeting was arranged by Balaraba Ramat Yakubu in her house and the three proposed the idea of a printing company/writers' group. The first name suggested for the new outfit was Ramin Shuka.[13] Ado Ahmad, however, recommended Raina Kama Writers Association, which was accepted.[14] The first traditional ruler they wrote to, the Emir of Kano, agreed to be their patron, thus conferring on them a degree of royal patronage.

Like bubbles from the depth of a silent brook, these and other literary groups and societies continue to spring up in Kano in a variety of forms. One of them, Soyayya Communications, established in 1990, had the unique approach of putting out a literary magazine with the main story drawn up in cartoons. The magazine *Ruwan Zuma* lasted for only six months before folding due to insufficient funding. Its main focus was on the theme of love, thus lending support to the *soyayya* trend in novel writing.

The Kano State History and Culture Bureau (HCB), established in 1980, played a small, but catalytic role in midwifing the emergence of the new crop of Hausa prose writers in the early 1990s. The HCB itself was established amid community suspicion that it was mostly promoting music and dance—two activities frowned upon in a deeply conservative society. The painstaking manuscript acquisition and documentation activities were lost on most people. Further, through the establishment of a publications unit in the Bureau, it was also mandated to promote literary activities in the State. It thus found itself embroiled with Hausa writers when a poet, Hussaini Maikarfe, submitted to a printing company a collection of his poems, *Matsayi*, in 1989. He had run out of money and was unable to retrieve the printed copies from the printers. In desperation, he approached the Bureau for financial assistance.[15] After going through a copy of the poems he gave them, the management of the Bureau was so impressed that they not only paid for the rest of the books to be printed, but also promised to launch the book for him.[16] This seems to have drawn the attention of other budding authors in Kano to the Bureau, and many took their manuscripts to the Bureau in the hope of also being sponsored. This was clearly more than the Bureau could handle, and it had to be made clear to authors that the Bureau could only provide a forum for the *launching* of any book, but could not sponsor its production. However, the Bureau also offered to edit manuscripts for authors. In this way, one of the earliest emerging novelists submitted *Dantasha*, which the Bureau edited, and it was later published in 1990. The editing undertaken by the Bureau concerned the extent to which the ideas in the books conformed to the cultural and moral standards of Hausa society

and the orthography of the Hausa language. Submission for editing was purely voluntary on the part of the authors.

The editing service provided by the Bureau did not go down well with a number of the authors who were not happy with the way their ideas were tampered with. The Bureau was at pains to point out that as a government agency, they had to ensure that whatever they endorsed conformed to public ideals of morality, decency, and behavior. A deadlock was reached in which it was clear that there would be no effective synergy between the Bureau and the writers who approached it for advice. Many of the writers stopped approaching the Bureau, preferring to become independent and relying on the public either to accept or reject their works.

A new development in the relation between writers and the state came through a rather innocuous invitation by the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) to the Bureau to attend its annual conference in Niger State in 1991. This marked a turning point in organized literary activities in Kano because the Bureau, armed with a copy of the ANA Constitution, then contacted the numerous writers' clubs in Kano with a view to forming an umbrella organization for the whole of Kano State.[17] This was accepted by most of the writers and an election was held to choose the executives who would run the affairs of the Association.

Following a series of internal disputes the Association was in danger of dying when in 1995 Yusuf Adamu, a budding writer with *Idan So Cuta Ne* as his first book, came onto the scene and initiated the formation of a caretaker committee, which later organized an election during which Yusuf Adamu became the Secretary of the Association. It was decided to hold a book fair to be called *Dandalin Marubuta* during which not only would the various books be sold, but also the public would have a chance to interact with the authors and ask them about their writings. This fair, the first of its kind in Kano, was held in 1995.

HCB gave ANA an office in the Gidan Dan Hausa complex, but being located away from the city made it difficult for many of the writers to regularly attend the monthly meetings, so the office was closed down after two years. The secretariat was relocated to the Kano State Library Board in the city where Magaji Ahmad Bichi, a former ANA Chairman, worked. Kano ANA was made up of two distinct branches. The English section catered for English-language or dual-format novelists (e.g., Auwalu Hamza with *Love Path* and *Gidan Haya*). The second section was the Hausa division that catered to the Hausa-language novelists and was certainly more lively since it tended to often focus attention on morality issues and literature, leading to heated debates.[18] Kano ANA is the only branch in Nigeria to cater to two language formats. Perhaps this has been because Kano, and Hausa writers generally, have produced the largest amount of indigenous prose fiction of any group in the country.

On 25May 2002, however, a group of about 90 writers belonging to ANA formed a break-away faction in Kano called Hausa Writers Association of Nigeria (HAWAN) under the leadership of Ibrahim Ahmed Daurawa (author of a best selling novel, *Soyayya a Birnin Sarayebo*—the first Hausa novel to focus attention on the Bosnian ethnic conflict). HAWAN felt that the creative fiction industry was being exploited by booksellers and that ANA seemed to be too cozy with them. Further, restriction of ANA activities to creative works prevented effective dialogue with other non-fiction Hausa writers, such as *ajami* writers who use Arabic script to

write in the Hausa language, and prayer-genre writers who write small pamphlets about various aspects of Islam in the Hausa language.

In other states in the north, few writers clubs exist, and certainly none on the same scale as Kano's Raina Kama or Kukan Kurciya. For instance, the Sudan Writers Association (SWAK) was established on 19 December 2001 in Kontagora, Niger State, but at the time of its formation, none of the members had a single book out in the market.[19] In Kaduna there was Mikiya Writers' Association (which published *Ruwan Dare* and *Da Kyar Na Sha* in 1996). Similarly, Zaria had Himma Writers Association under the leadership of Abdullahi Yahaya Maizare, while Kebbi has Kebbi Writers Association under Idris Imam. Thus Kano, with its huge and well-established commercial networks, coupled with its enhanced urban culture, became the main center for the production of the new literature. It is indeed for this reason that the new Hausa novels were rather dismissively referred to by critics as *Adabin Kasuwar Kano* (Kano Market Literature)[20]—alluding to their market-driven nature, rather than literary flair or intellectual panache.[21]

For years, Kano held sway in the number and organization of new prose fiction writers. Two new magazines appeared, *Marubuciya* ("The Writer") in January 2001, and *Wakiliya* ("The Representative") in August 2002. Although sporadic in their appearance, they nonetheless remain the main outlet for news, reviews and interviews in Nigeria on the contemporary Hausa novel. A sample of their covers is shown in Plate 3.

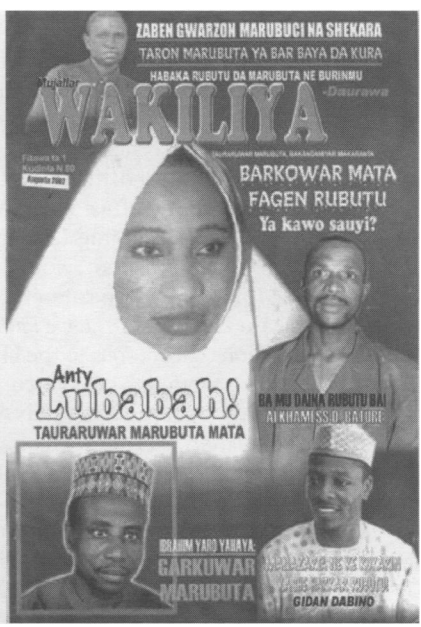


Plate 3: Read All About It—Promoting the Contemporary Hausa Novel in specialist magazines. With permission from the Raina Kama Writers Association, Kano, Nigeria.

Two aspects of media technology accelerated the development of the contemporary Hausa novel. The first was the wide-spread availability of cheap personal computers, and most important, the bundling of Windows 3.1 with its true type fonts in 1992. Second was the availability of cheap VHS cameras. Prior to the arrival of cheap personal computers, Hausa novels were typeset on manual typewriters, and when electronic typewriters became available through business centers (print shops that became common in the mid 1990s), most of the authors quickly embraced the new technology that was crude, but effective. When the personal computer started making inroads, first via Amstrad PCW word processors in 1989, the crude Courier-font printouts were seen as revolutionary. When "proper" computers became affordable in about 1991 in Kano, the arrival of WordPerfect for DOS heralded another revolution that, when coupled with Courier typeface and set at 10 point size, produced an effect, when justified, like a page from a book. However, the new novelists were overjoyed when Windows 3.1 became available in April 1992 and WordPad became the default "word processor" for most of the operators with its Arial font. More novels were produced from 1993 using this system.

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 Graham Furniss 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 characteristic 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. ("Hausa popular literature" 12)

Yusuf Adamu was able to link a number of the new wave of Hausa novels with their transition to the visual medium, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Hausa novels adapted into home videos

No.	*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

No.	*Author*	*Novel to Video*
	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	(Bakandamiyar) 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[22]
	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

(After Adamu "Between the word" 211–12)

When the new wave of Hausa writers started producing, in sizable quantities, prose fiction interlaced with love stories and emotional themes, literary and textual critics started comparing their storylines with Hindi films, accusing them of ripping off such films (see Abbas). Thus the Hindi film *Romance* was claimed by Assada to be ripped-off as *Alkawarin Allah* by Aminu Adamu. By 1999 there were at least 453 of the novels in my database. The list may well have exceeded 700 by 2000 and Furniss reports some 1,300 volumes in his collection by 2004 (pers. comm.).

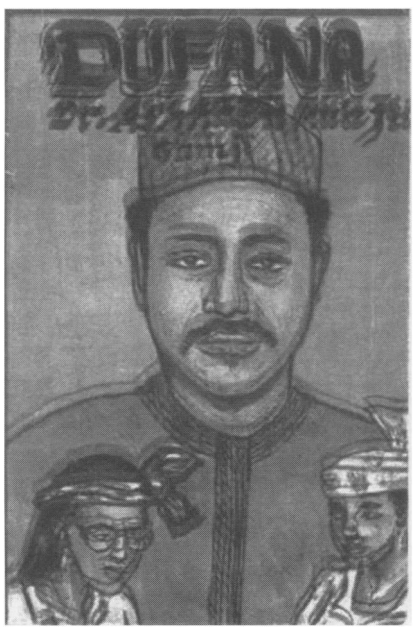
When in 1996 the Kano State government gave up any thoughts of censoring books, at least at an active level, critical reaction and condemnation increased in the newspapers. Earlier in 1992, the first attack on the emerging genre was published by Hawwa Ibrahim Sherif, a writer (*Ba A Nan Take Ba*), in an interview with Ibrahim Sheme, published in *Nasiha,* 6 September 1991. In the interview, the fiery-tempered writer attacks the then new crop of Hausa novelists as being one-track-minded with a singular focus on *soyayya.* She urges a new direction, new themes, in Hausa prose fiction.

This critical stance was taken up by one of the most consistent critics of the genre, Ibrahim Malumfashi in an article ("Akalar"), published in the cultural magazine, *Nasiha.* The article contained one of the earliest and most structured attacks on this new Hausa writing. Coming from a writer (Hausa, *Wankan Wuta;* English, *From the Eyes of My Neighbor*), and an academic, this particular essay conferred on the polemics surrounding the new Hausa writing some form of legitimate

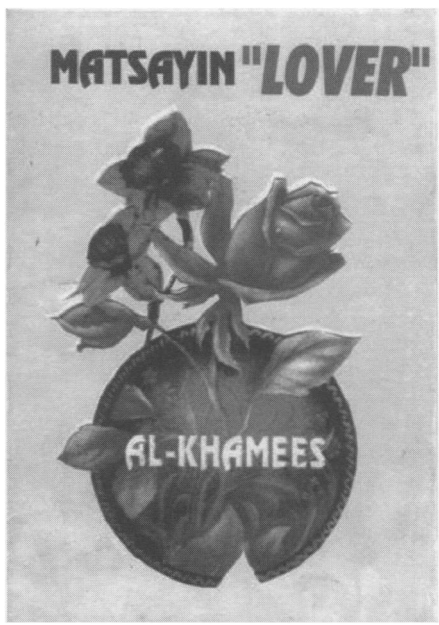
authority. Malumfashi accuses the writers of being culturally irrelevant and suggests that there were more worthy themes for Hausa writers to work on, such as poverty, education, and economic deprivation, rather than romantic escapism, which seemed to be the only focus of the new prose fiction writers.

The public perception of the new literature was not helped by the appearance of about ten novels between 1998 and 2003 that seemed to fuel conservative apprehension of the new genre. These were *Wane Kare Ne* (Balaraba Ramat Yakubu), *Kyan Dan Miciji* (Bilkisu Ahmed Funtuwa), *Matsayin Lover* (Al-Khamees Bature), *Dufana* (Ashabu Mu'azu Gamji), *Zata Iya* (Zuwaira Isa), *Malika* (Lubabah Ya'u), *Gajen Hakuri* (Maryam Kabir Abdullahi), *Auren Zahra* (Rabi Ado Bayero) *Komai Dadinki Da Miji* (Larabi) and *Sirrin Loba* (Kamalu Namowa Bichi). All these novels have descriptions of explicit sexuality or at least suggestive scenes. Two of them, *Matsayin Lover* (Al-Khamees Bature) and *Sirrin Loba* (Kamalu Namowa Bichi), were the first Hausa novels to describe lesbian love, and, in *Matsayin Lover,* rather explicitly, at least for a conservative society. Plate 4 shows the covers of two of the more steamy Hausa novels.

Dufana deals with a bizarre theme of attempting to find out which category of Hausa girls are most sexually deviant—educated or uneducated. The protagonists set themselves the task of finding out by having as many sexual relations as possible within a certain period, and with randomly chosen girls from each category.



Dufana
"The flood"
Soft porn



Matsayin Lover
"The lover's stand"
Lesbian love

Plate 4: Sexuality in Hausa Fiction. With permission from the Raina Kama Writers Association, Kano, Nigeria.

Matsayin Lover describes how lesbian relationships form among Hausa girls in boarding schools, and how a network of influential women sustain the practice by enticing young girls into the ring.

The Hausa branch of ANA stepped in when these novels were released in 2000 and banned them. They became instant rarities, exchanging for about ten times their cover price—and especially sought after by young women.[23] *Sirrin Loba* was also banned in 2003 by booksellers who felt it had crossed the lines of decency.[24] Earlier novels such as *Wane Kare Ne, Kyan Dan Miciji,* and *Matsayin Lover* had the offending parts removed by the authors and second "clean" editions were printed. The controversies merely indicate the saber-rattling that goes on when writers explore themes rather done than spoken about. Interestingly, about six of the writers of the soft porn/"naughty" novels are women. Yet these are the only errant—if there is anything such thing in creative writing—works in Hausa prose fiction. The range of themes goes well beyond *soyayya.* Let me illustrate with an analysis of 453 novels from my database collection.

In a period spanning four years (1997 to 1999) a series of research assistants read as many as 453 novels with a guideline that enabled them to determine the central theme of each novel. Reading was made much easier by the average size of the novels which was about 40 to 50 pages. Two years was taken because many of the novels were in multiple volumes and the readers had to wait for Part II of the novel before making a final decision. While not exactly scientific, this nevertheless gave a rough-and-ready guide to the predominant themes of the novels. The result is shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Contemporary Hausa Prose Fiction Themes

Theme	*Number*
Romance	160
Various	79
Drama	77
Unclassified	56
Sword and Heroics	17
Sermonizing	15
Entertaining	8
Deception	7
Tussle/Disagreements	6
Co-wife jealousy	5
Resignation to Fate	4
Obedience to parents	4
Patience	4
Soft porn*	4
Political	3
Marriage	4
Total	*453*

*at the time of the study; there about 10 now.

The overwhelming tilt of the books towards *soyayya* as the central theme makes many critics and observers label such books *soyayya*. Yet from the database it is clear that *soyayya* constitutes only 35% of the books. The rest of the 65% deal with other aspects of life. Since there are two categories of "unclassified" and "various," it is of course likely that more titles would fit into one or more of the other clearly defined categories. So this classification should be taken as fairly loose. A further limitation of this categorization is that the determination of the central theme is purely personal; another researcher may place more emphasis on another theme than the one given here. For instance, Bala Anas Babinlata's *Da Ko Jika?* is, on the surface, a *soyayya* story. Yet a closer analysis reveals it as a deeply moralizing novel that warns of the consequences of monetary greed.

Perhaps the biggest accusation against the books, and one that manifests itself in many of the odd 160 *soyayya*-themed novels, is that of empowering girls to voice out a personal choice in marriage. This is seen as *rashin kunya* (impertinence) or lack of *kawaici* (reticence) and therefore outside the scope of *Tarbiyar Bahaushe (pulaaku)*. In the archetypal Hausa society, girls forced to marry a man they do not love are expected to show *hakuri* (endurance) until they eventually get used to the man (or the woman, as the case may be, since there are cases of boys being forced to marry girls they do not love).

Other themes covered by the writers included (with one example each): deception (Salisu Yusuf Salihi's *Maza Masu Wuyar Sha'ani*, 1995); sword and bravery (Babangida Abdu's *Gugan Karfe*, 1995); life in marriage (Jamila Ibrahim Nabature's *Ba A Raba Hanta Da Jini*, 1999), perseverance (Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino's *Kaicho!* 1996); fate (Mansur Ibrahim Birnin Kuka's *Haka Allah Ya So*, 1996); crime and punishment (Aminu Umar's *Ban Ji Ba Ban Gani Ba*, 1999); greed (Nazir Adam Salihi, *Me Ya Fi Kuki?*, 1998); tribalism (Balaraba Ramat Yakubu's *Badriyya*, 1997); friendship (Bala Anas Babinlata's *Rashin Sani*, 1994); comedy (Kabiru Ibrahim Yakasai's *Suda*, 1994); obedience to parents (Bara'atu Muhammad's *Kowa Ya Ki Ji Ba Zai Ki Gani Ba*, 1995); betrayal of trust (Ahmad Musa Anka's *Zakaran Da Allah Ya Nufa Da Cara*, 1996); moralizing (Balarabe Abdullahi's *Idan Kasan Wata*, 1997); detective (Yusif Gwangwazo's *Yallabai*, 1998); steadfastness (Hafsat Umar Dange's *Hakuri Amintaccen Ciniki*, 1997); allegory (Abubakar Balarabe's *Tsuntsu Duka Tsuntsu Ne*, 1999); obedience (Kabiru Ibrahim's *Yabanya*, 1999); and many others.

NOTES

1. Interview with Bala Anas Babinlata, author (*Zinaru, Da ko Jika*) who was a high school student when the organization was formed and who took an active part in the drama/writing division. Kano, 21 Aug. 1999.

2. The Fulani code of behavior, subscribed to also by many Hausa. *Pulaaku* involves important Fulani/Pullo virtues such as *munyal*, which is patience, self control, mental discipline, prudence; *semteende*, which is modesty and respect for others, even for enemies; and also *hakkillo*, wisdom, forethought, prudence in managing personal affairs and giving hospitality. The Pullo is trained to be stoic, never to show feelings, to be wary of outsiders, and to have a deep emotional attachment to cattle. He maintains his respect by keeping his distance from others. A Pullo is a better person if self-sufficient and relying on few personal possessions and comforts.

3. Maternal aunt, a mother only *in loco parentis*.

4. Figures obtained from the daily program listings of NTA Kano library, June 2003.

5. A database of popular Hausa prose fiction is maintained online at http://hausa.soas.ac.uk by Graham Furniss and Malami Buba of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

6. For an exploration of Alice Walker's conception of womanism as it applies to Hausa prose fiction, see an extended review in Abdalla Uba Adamu "Parallel Worlds."

7. Not all forced marriages in Hausaland are contracted for financial gain. Other motives include strengthening the kinship ties between families or improving genetic stocks of families with chosen ancestral stocks.

8. " . . . Then Patience is the Cure." This truncated Hausa proverb is a fatalist anthem propagating the view that patience is the cure to all injustice.

9. Following the widespread success of *In Da So Da Kauna*, The *Sunday New Nigerian* of 24 November 1991 carried a front-page story of a sixteen-year-old girl who drowned herself by jumping into a well rather than face a fate apparently worse than death at the hands of a suitor she did not love, and whom her parents were insistent should marry her. The father of the girl, full of remorse, "appealed to other parents not to force their children to marry the person they do not love" (2).

10. And even then, it was made possible because Yusuf Adamu's father gave him 2,000 Naira to print 1,000 copies of the book.

11. Their names were Muhammad Lawan Isa, Nasiru Mudi Giginyu (both typists and civil servants), Lawan Muhammad, Yusuf Lawan Gwazaye, Shehu Iliyasu Chiranci, Auwalun Gabas, and Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino. With the exception of the two civil servants, all were small scale businessmen; for instance, Auwalun Gabas was a tailor, while Ado Ahmad sold caps.

12. Author of modernist Hausa novels. His most outstanding book is *Hantsi Leka Gidan Kowa*.

13. *Ramin Shuka Ba Zurfi Sai Albarka* (A Shallow Planting Hole That Produces Abundance) is a Hausa proverb indicating the hope of the new venture, even though very young.

14. According to Ado Ahmad (10 Aug. 1999), since none of the three had advanced training in Western education, it was likely that their books would be received with disdain in certain circles. *Raina Kama Ka Ga Gayya* (Appearances Can Be Deceptive), adapted from the Hausa proverb, is a battle-cry from the new novelists, challenging all to ignore them at their peril (of missing a great literary adventure!)

15. Interview with Auwalu Hamza, one-time Head of Department, Research and Documentation, History and Culture Bureau, Kano, 3 Apr. 2000.

16. "Launching" a book is a peculiarly Nigerian publishing ceremony during which an author presents his book to carefully selected and well-heeled members of the public who then sometimes pay extremely high sums for copies of the book. At the end of the activities, it is hoped that the launching would have fetched the author enough money to recover his initial investment.

17. Eventually two main branches of ANA emerged in Kano: an English version that was hosted by the British Council and a Hausa version hosted by the Kano State Library Board.

18. Unfortunately, the very informal nature of the Hausa-language ANA in Kano made it difficult to keep minutes of meetings that would have been quite revealing for the insight they would have provided into the emergence of standards in the new Hausa writing.

19. Interview with SWAK officials in *Marubuciya* June 2002: 11.

20. This term was coined by Ibrahim Malumfashi in *Nasiha* 3 and 29 July 1994.

21. This was also an implicit comparison with the defunct "Onitsha Market Literature" that flourished around Onitsha Market in the early 1960s.

22. This was different from *Rabiat* by Aishatu Gidado Idris who abandoned the project of converting her novel into a home video.

23. Interview with Magaji Shitu, printer of many of the new novels, Kano, 24 Sept. 2000.

24. See the magazine report "An hana sayar da littafin *Sirrin Loba*," *Wakiliya* 3 Apr. 2003: 15.

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