CULTURE AND SOCIETY IN THE POETRY OF NANA ASMA'U

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CERTIFICATION

This thesis, titled **"Culture And Society in the Poetry of Nana Asma'u"** by MADINATU SHEHU, meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Literature of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been produced by me. It has not been submitted on any previous application for a higher degree. All authorities are sustained in the footnotes and sources of information are duly acknowledged by a list of references.

MADINATU SHEHU

D E D I C A T I O N

Dedicated to my Mother

and Father

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ABSTRACT

Studies on the literary activities of Nana Asma'u are shallowly exposed. This is despite her immense significance to the Uthman bin Fodio 18th century Jihad reform period to the full understanding of literary activities in indigenous languages in the Northern States of Nigeria. This study, therefore, is an exploration of the style and content of the poetry of Nana Asma'u bint Fodio. In other words, the study examines culture and society in the poetry of Nana Asma'u. The study has appendices of a selection of Nana Asma'u's poems and is divided into five chapters.

The first, chapter provides an introduction to Nana Asma'u, her family, her life history, her matrimonial home and the origins of her literary activities. Chapter two is a literature review on the poetry and significance of Nana Asma'u. Chapter three is a literary appreciation of the form of her elegies while chapter four studies Nana Asma'u's injunctionary poems. Chapter five contains the general conclusions reached after studying the poetry, the culture and society of Nana Asma'u bint Fodio.

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was brought up in a learning environment. She was educated in the well known Islamic system of education which had been passed to Housaland from Timbuktu. "This system of education had persisted for many centuries whenever orthodox muslims were to be found."[2]

At the age of three to four years she started to learn the Fatiha (the opening surah of the Holy Quran) by heart from her teacher. At the age of five she was given her allo (writing slate) with which she was taught words of the Arabic letters beginning with Bismillah. She had to recognize the individual letters "b", "s", "m" and read them aloud to her teacher while pointing to them with her finger. On satisfying the teacher that she could recognise the letters, the writing was washed off, and other sentences written out. The classes would have been held in the open air in the women's part of the house. Asma'u and other children, boys and girls attended in the morning before 10:oo a.m and in the afternoon between 3:00 p.m and 5:00 p.m, the La'asar prayer marking the end of the afternoon classes. "By the time she was ten years she had probably read the Holy Qura'an in its entirety, there being sixty hijibi (section)".[3] This was a necessary precondition for introducing Nana Asma'u to higher forms of knowledge. Thus, it is "when competence is reached in reading Arabic, poetry is studied much of which is

also committed to memory. The memorization of classical Arabic texts and poetry which can be done concurrently, and the study of grammar preceeded any attempt made by a student to compose any work of his or her own".[4]

Nana Asma'u's education followed these lines. Proportionally her education included more than academic and religious studies. From the beginning, the Shehu, Nana's father stressed the crucial importance of individuals patterning their life-styles on the sunna of the Prophet and the examples set by his companions. In Ihya al-sunna written in 1793, the Shehu had written clearly that

> "Whatever they did, we will do, and whatever they avoided, we will avoid".[5] (sick)

In the hadith there are many examples of the Prophet exhorting people to work with their hands. An example is found in Muhammad Bello's book Kitabal Nasihat (translated and versified by Asma'u) which mentions the example of the Prophet's daughter Fatima grinding her own grains by hand".[6] Inevitably, the Shehu in order to set an example twined grass into ropes, "his son Muhammad Sambo carries produce to market in a sack slung across his shoulder".[7] Nana Asma'u was taught to perform household chores by the Shehu's wives and these included food preparation, spinning, soap making and hair-dressing. All this

education and home training contributed a lot to the intellectual and spiritual development of Nana Asma'u.

Similarly within the Qadiriyya orthodoxy under which Asma'u grew up, sufism (mysticism) was widely practised especially by her parents. Sufism amongst its value system rate wealth, power, houses, clothes very low, while highly regarding piety, humility, compassion, patience and learning in Islamic science".[8] It was these values that Asma'u was taught by many members of her family. First among them was her step-mother, Hauwa'u, a well learned wife of the Shaikh. Nana Asma'u was also taught these values by her father Shehu B. Fodio. Shehu Usman B. Fodio was also educated in the well-known Islamic system of education which had been passed to Hausaland from Timbuktu. The Shehu had read the Qura'an with his father, Muhammad Salih and learnt the Allshriniyyat and similar works from his father. Shehu Usman also learnt syntax and the science of grammar. He studied Mukhtasar under his maternal and paternal uncles. Shehu was a great scholar, a teacher and a preacher. He taught Nana Asma'u the above mentioned values very well.

Nana Asma'u, correspondently, was one of the children that benefited from the knowledge of the Shehu, her father. Nana was always present whenever her father was teaching any group of students irrespective of their

age or sex. This gave her an opportunity to learn intensively. This in turn influenced her very well and contributed to her being a well learned woman, a teacher, a preacher and a poet in her own right.

It is worth emphasising that Nana Asma'u was also educated by her elder brother, Muhammad Bello. Muhammad Bello was the third son of his father. Muhammad Bello was born and grew up during the formative period of the reform movement. He too, like Asma'u, spent most of his time in an atmosphere of total commitment to the revolution. This meant life as dictated by the prevailing circumstances. Muhammad Bello like his father was well educated in the Islamic religion. Despite his tremendous knowledge of Islamic religion, Muhammad Bello was a warrior too. After he had grown up and read some books of ilm, basic religious rites and rules, which he studied with his uncle Abdullah, he remained with his father, and together with Asma'u, observed and listened to their father's teaching and preaching.

Muhammad Bello helped in educating Nana Asma'u while at the same time he helped his father in domestic activities. When Muhammad Bello went to Barayar Zaki to visit his maternal grandmother, Hussaina, Wodi a house boy of the Shaikh was sent by the Shaikh to bring Muhammad Bello back home. From childhood Muhammad Bello was filled with the fervour of the Jihad and was

fully aware of his father's intention to establish an Islamic Government in Hausaland. Asma'u was a keen observer of her family, especially of her brother. His activities gave her great courage in her own undertakings. His military ambition and teaching particularly influenced her. Nana Asma'u became vast in knowledge. "It was (therefore) natural for these scholars to influence Nana Asma'u for the fact that she was always eager to learn, to listen and to observe".[9]

Generally, Nana Asma'u was "taught Islamic science such as (Figh) Jurisprudence, (tauhid) theology, grammar, literature, Arabic language, logic and mathematics".[10] She also learnt the Holy Qura'an by heart when she was a child on which she composed a poem, titled Surorin Alkur'ani (the Quranic Verses.) Khalid Muhammed, complimenting Nana Asma'u says, "her writings are remarkably well educated in the Arabic language and Islamic science".[11] Nana Asma'u's two major works in Arabic: Tambih al Ghafilin (admonisting the negligent) and Tabshir al ikhwan (good tidings to good muslims) as Dr Ogunbiyi notes "demonstrate the depth of her education and her reading in Islamic science".[12] Many other scholars, especially in Nigeria, described her as one of the "non Arabs" who can successfully write in Arabic. She made significant contributions to literature in West Africa especially

in Nigeria in the early 19th century when very few men not to talk of women were at all literate. Throughout her life Asma'u remained loyal to the ideals she learned in her father's home at Degel and devoted her entire life to the cause in which she believed.

Nana Asma'u did not travel any where in search of knowledge. She did all her studies with her parents at home and later in her matrimonial home. Above all Nana Asma'u's home environment enabled her to socialise with people of equal and higher education and her role as a teacher dictated upon her to interact with people of equal or lesser education. This was because since her tender age she was never restricted in meeting people in search for education. She developed more interest in seeing women in particular become as educated as the men. As a result she concentrated her efforts on women education. Combining successfully her duty as a house-wife and a mother, she also supervised the work of the women in the household. She encouraged them to learn because:-

> "Women are encouraged to acquire learning all men and women alike. Both should acquire education from the cradle to the grave. Infact Islam has also made adequate provisions for preparing the women as equal partners of men".[13]

In addition to the above encouragement, Prophet Muhammad had also pronounced that:

> "The Holy Qura'an in various places proclaimed the equality of men and women on almost every plane, moral spiritual and intellectual".[14]

Furthermore, Shehu Usman, Nana's father, considered women education highly important.

In 1793, the Shehu wrote his major work Ihya al sunna wa'ikh mad al -bida in which he said,

> "know that my purpose concerning this book is the revival of the Sunna of Prophet Muhammad and the removal of satanic innovations. Women education is of primary importance".[15]

The sunna is also explained as thus:-

> "The Sunna being the custom therefore of the Prophet, encompassed among other things his relation with his wives, his wives relationship with each other, the Prophet's relationship with his daughters and his son in-law, and his views on all matters to do with women kind. There is no aspect of a woman's life which is left uncovered".[16]

The Shehu's attitude in the 19th century towards women education and status are set in a number of books. In Irshad ahlal-Tafrit wa'i Ifrat for example, he poses the question why "if a woman is permitted to go to Mecca she should not be allowed to learn the article of faith without which no religious duty could be properly performed?[17] The Shehu used two authorities to support his position that it is obligatory on a husband to teach his wives, children and slave".[18] There is a well

known message in Nur al-al bab, where the Shehu argues that it was wrong for learned Mallams to leave their women and children in ignorance and busy themselves with their pupils. The Shehu felt that women education was highly significant because women are the caretakers of the home and of the family. Once they are well educated, there is a high possibility that they would produce a good family. Infact, those women who utilise their education properly, train their children in a reasonable way, contribute to the general good of the society.

The Shehu, Nana's father, also taught that it was the full responsibility of a father to teach his children or send them to where they would be taught. He was one of the leading examples in support of women education. His wives and children were among the most educated people in his time. Among his children was Muhammad Bello noted for his "abundant knowledge and administrative ability".[19] Among the Shehu's daughters were Khadija (noted for her sufism), Maryam who was well educated in Arabic language and Islamic sciences and especially the famous Nana Asma'u. Nana was a most distinguished scholar amongst the daughters of the Shehu. "She was well educated, well versed in religious poems, literature and politics".[20] She was generally fluent in classical Arabic. Her writing,

her piety and rightousness, her success as a housewife, a mother and a preacher remained shining examples for women in Hausa Islamic society and even beyond.

Two further important influences shaped Nana Asma'u's outlook to life. First was the sunna the (tradition) of the prophet Muhammad which was central to the ideology of the community. It was the sunna of the prophet, not local customs that guided the Shaikh her father when he made decisions on day to day affairs. Thus, Nana Asma'u's family background had the most immediate influence on her. There was also the importance of the (inna) Queen of Gobir performing the functions of the minister for women affairs in traditional Gobir society. According to Jean Boyd, the Inna described herself as sarkin mata duka (king of all women). The word (sarki) is a masculine word meaning king or chief, the feminine form being (sarauniya). The word inna literarily means mother, and her praise name as uwargari (mother of everybody) uwa being an alternative form of Inna. "On ceremonial occasions Inna dones regalia which include a turban, gown, trouser, sword and damara, she rides a horse in the Hawan Sallah (the Id parades). Her disguise is impenetrable. She is intended to look and act as a warrior".[21]

"Formerly the Inna acted as regent on any occasion when Sarkin Gobir was absent".[22] "Inna Yarbukuma for

example become the virtual ruler of Gobir in the 1880s during the reign of Sarkin Gobir Ibrahim".[23] Everything which affects women is her concern. "She daily interviewed women who come with complain and problems. She went to court to plead mitigation for female offenders who previously sought her aid".[24] She settled family quarrels of all kinds and shouldered the burdens of the oppressed. She was involved in women's health problems, fertility, marital compatibility, child birth and so on. She accepted mentally ill patients whom she handed over to the yar bori (members of the spirit cult) for treatment".[25] The Inna also supervises the activities of the courtsans of Gobir.

When one analyses the role Nana Asma'u placed as a mature woman, one can identify certain elements like the concern for women, which are common also to the Inna's role. Evidence point to Asma'u turning to the Sunna where the Inna had turned to local custom. It could be assumed that Asma'u clearly converted the role of the Inna to an Islamic role. "This conversion was planned with Muhammad Bello's assistance and that she set out to promote: the sunna using traditional non-sunna channels in order to find an easy way into the hearts of the untutored and possibly only semi-Islamic masses".[26]

> "listening to people sorting out their problems was an activity she had undertaken as a child when she acted as alkali. It seems clear that as part of her daily routine she heard petitioners, received visitors, supervised her classes as a teacher, studied and wrote and scrupulously attended to her religious duties".[27]

She took interest in women affairs. Her works were known to her contemporaries and she played an active part in the intellectual life of the community. From her writings, her interest in the underprevileged in the society could be inferred. Nana Asma'u's interest and active participation in women education was total. As a teacher she taught both men and women. She taught them Islamic theology, law and Zuhd (Ascetism) as well as how to read and write Arabic language. She spoke four languages fluently: Fulfulde, Hausa, Arabic and Berber (tamashek). Mastery of these languages enabled Nana Asma'u to communicate easily with the majority of her students who spoke these different languages. She has also written extensively in Fulfulde, her mother tongue, as well as in Arabic and Hausa.

Despite her considerable interest in teaching and preaching she was also dedicated to politics. "She gave much support to a leader who defended the territorial integrity of the caliphate".[28] Inevitably she helped to raise the spirit of the army with poems directed against the enemies they were fighting. She contributed to the war effort through the "use of pen

and paper and her intelligence that helped to lead the army to many victories against the unbelievers and the synocretists".[29] One of the battles she witnessed was The battle of Gawakule. This was the campaign launched against Sarkin Gobir Ali and his allies Sarkin Maradi and Sarkin AZbin. This campaign is important not only because of its size and success but because Asma'u wrote two poems on the campaign. The battle of Gawakule, the first in 1836 and the second twenty years later. It is just possible that she herself accompanied her husband on the campaign, for in both poems she said quite clear "I saw it with my own eyes," when discussing what happened on the eve of the battle. She was forty four at the time and quite used to travelling. The expedition was not improvised. It was carefully planned and took three months to organise.

In 1807 Nana Asma'u married Usman, known throughout his life as Gidado dan Laima, the name having been perpetuated in view of the section of Sokoto in which he lived, Gidadawa. At the time of her marriage she was about fifteen years old. Usman Gidado Dan Laima, was born about 1776. His father was a torodo called Abubakar Sambo who lived at Kamboza in Gwandu district. After beginning his education at home in a customary way he joined the Shehu at Degel as a student. He seems to have struck immediate rapport with Muhammad

Bello then. "Together they went to get books from the Ulama (Scholars) at Kadaye and Alkalawa in Gobir, probably in the late 1790".[30] and their friendship continued until 1837 when Bello died.

Gidado, according to Clapperton, advised Bello on choice of officials and regularly toured the emirate under his supervision, Zaria, 'Adamawa, Kano, Gombe, Hadeja and Katsina".[31] Gidado's role was clearly that of a trusted friend and loyal companion. He rode constantly from Shehu to Bello taking messages and letters. In a book Al-Kashf wai bayan, Gidado indicates that "the relationship of the three men were so close that they seemed to be in telepathic communication with each other".[32] Clapperton, who liked Gidado, said of him "he is an excellent man and has unbounded influence with the Sultan (Muhammad Bello) to whose sister he was married".[33]

As mentioned earlier Nana Asma'u was not only a teacher, a preacher but was also a mother. She bore six male children to Vizier Gidado b. Laima, three of whom died when they were young. Among the surviving three "two became Viziers, while the third one became the Dangaladima (the senior official and messenger of the vizier".[34] The children were Abdul-Qadir the second Vizier Gidado b. Laima from 1842-1859. After his death he was succeeded by his son Ibrahim who

become Vizier from 1859-1874. After Ibrahim then come his Uncle Abdullah (son of Asma'u) who become Vizier from 1874-1886.

Furthermore there was literary collaboration between Muhammad Bello and Nana Asma'u. A book Kitabal-Nasihat was written by Muhammad Bello. Nana Asma'u however translated the book into Fulfulde and versified it. This work was dated 1836. Two years later another version appeared, this time in Hausa. It is titled Tawassuli Ga Mata Masu Albarka. Evidence point to the fact that Muhammad Bello and Asma'u collaborated over the book's compilation, translation and versification and that work started as early as 1833, pressumably "after Wurno become the rabit.[35]

Nana Asma'u died in 1865, at the age of seventy two. (Allah ya jikanta Amin) May her soul rest in perfect peace. Amin.

In chapter two we shall look at the literature review in respect of Nana Asma'u's literary output.

Notes for Chapter 1

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17. Ahmad Muhammad Kani, 1978, pp. 100-101.

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19. Satura Mukoshy, 1983, p. 27.

20. Ibid, pp. 27-28.

21. Jean Boyd, 1983, p. 6.

22. Ibid, p. 6.

23. Waziri Junaidu Arfuraihani (chapters on Muhammad Sambo) p. 5.

24. Waziri Junaidu Arfuraihani (chapters on Muhammad Buhari p. 7.

25. Jean Boyd, 1983, p. 8.

26. Ibid, p. 9.

27. Ibid, p. 84.

28. Satura Mukoshy, 1983, p. 15.

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30. Gidado Dan Laima, al-Kashf wa'i bayan Fodio p. 10.

31. H. Clapperton, Journal of the Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa, London, 1827, p. 80.

32. Jean Boyd, 1983, p. 30.

33. D.M. Last, The sokoto Caliphate, London, Longman Green & Co, 1967, p. 2.

34. Jean Boyd, op. cit., p. 77.

35. Al-Kashf wa'i bayan, Fodio p. 22-23.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: CRITICS ON NANA ASMA'U

This chapter is a review of critical opinions on the poetry of Nana Asma'u. It may be worthwhile to make some general remarks about the very nature of poetry as a necessary introduction to the criticism of Nana Asma'u's poetry.

A poem is produced by a poet, it take its subject matter from the universe of men, things and events. It is addressed to or made available to an audience of hearers and readers. "Poetry is what gets lost in translation".[1] One cannot translate the word of a poem in such a way as to translate its meaning, and yet reproduce its original rhythm and colour, identical associative and aural values, all those nounces of sound and of symbolism that are a poem's very essence.

Moreover the syntactical order in which words are organised vary from language to language, and the over-all effects of the words in the original may not be preserved when they are rearranged in the order imposed upon them by translation. Also there are words in each language that have no equivalent in another. "The French have no word for "home". There is no verb in English that is the exact counter-part of the German causchen, no does the German qucken" adequately render

the implications of the English verb "to peer".[2] "A poem will result when the genius of a language - its words, their sound and their sense offers the genius of a poet an opportunity to perform a miracle".[3] "A poem gives the world back to the maker of the poem, in all its original strangeness, the shock of its first surprise".[4] It is capable of doing the same for the rest of us. "A poem is a way of knowing and feeling that requires, for its understanding a modicum of imagination and some familiarity with the conventions of the art".[5] Moreover a poem may take a generation to yield its full secret. One might even say that a poem's meaning varies from age to age.

M. Maritain in his book The Situation of Poetry touches a profound truth when he describes a poem as a form of knowledge that is "not ordered to knowing but to being expressed in a work". Its aim, method and end result is the creation of a new thing. That new thing represents knowledge that could have been realised in no other way.

"In a universe in which everything has meaning and in which all meanings are related and symbolised one another, the poet lives perpetually on the age of discovery".[6] It is the poet's function to understand, to interprete to learn what it is he is being told, by giving form to the formless and a body to the

bodiless. The true relation of reason to inspiration in poetry and of substance to form, was first convincingly set forth by Dr Johnson's successors. Poetry to them was simply "the expression of the imagination only another name for clearest insight, amptitude of mind and reason in her most exalted mood".[7] They held the poet to be one who sees into the world of human experiences with clear and comprehensive vision. "The passion which stirs to life his creative instinct does not distort the truth but reveal it. Whilst his function is to communicate neither knowledge no moral instruction but power".[8]

Closely allied to the above the artist has always functioned in African society as records of mores, and experience of his society as the voice of vision in his own time. It is time for him to respond to this essence himself. In a paper "Why African literature?" David Rubadiri has spelt out the themes that would excite African literature for a long time as politics, race and self consciousness with a search for identity. Augustinho further said poetry coming from Neto and Sipho Sepamla, exhibit the quality of having matured out of the concept of asserting the colour identity. They represent to a large extent their feelings about the condition of their people, or human being through orientation of the protest culture which have gone to the extent of revolution in Neto.

Cheney Coker, in A Poet in Exile states that the very existence of an African writer is itself a political statement and assert that poets should live the content of what they write, otherwise it would be used against them by the very people who constitute their readership. Recognition may be the only reward they should expect because the poet is obviously going to jail, especially if he is an African poet".[9]

In the People's Mood, Mbulelo Mzamane recommends literature to politicians as a kind of political barometer to gauge popular feeling".[10] He then rightly observed that the revolutionary poet is one that concretises the aspiration of his people for a better life thinks that the movement see to the possibilities of realising that goal. Garbai also affirms that a working definition of culture could be based on the idea that political domination in itself is an act of culture. "If imperialist domination has the vital need to practise cultural oppression, national liberation is necessarily an act of culture".[11] Poetry has been a part of a cultural act or practice since the days of cultural nationalism. "Art is culture based and culture specific".[12] "It is important to mention that culture has to do with self definition".[13]

Arguing further, Garbai says that the understanding of culture is based on the relationship between words

and their meaning and how the poet might manipulate them. To understand any society in terms of their songs, music or poetry or any genre one has to comprehend and appreciate the culture. "The relationship *according to Garbai between culture and poetry* within the tangible aspect of a society is determined by the concentration of all the existing factors that formed the environment. Hence culture incorporates the tradition through dynamic representation for new values".[14]

However, Donatus Nwoga, in African Literature Today No.10, said African Poetry is that which includes the transcendental elements which provide the poet an opportunity to retain his audience by being relevant to his tradition. The angle of vision of the artist is affected by natural social and spiritual freedom within which he is operating".[15] He also describes poets as those who hold up a mirror to the society and in this way raise significant questions over the operations of the artist.

In addition poetry is a vehicle for political, social and cultural emancipation. Poetry has long been used by people. African poetry today owes much to oral poetry and "it is a form of catharsis to use Freud's term, for the communication of ones feeling over a given situation".[16] Writing poetry may not quite be

an achievement, but a poet's attitude to the political problem in the society would détermine his relevance and actual achievement. It is in this way that poetry in Africa can be understood as an art which is channelled to propagate ideas to influence the community. This does not mean that poetry is outright propaganda. Social realism both as a technique in poetry and a practical reality occupies an important place in African literature. In this general vein Ruth Finnegan further views "Praise poetry as the most developed and elaborate poetic genre in Africa".[17] The elegies glorify virtues, express the people's beliefs, joys, sorrows and notion about right and wrong. A lot of Nana's writings are actually elegies.

So many people have written a lot about Nana Asma'u and her literary activities. Satura Mukoshy in her thesis titled Contribution of Nana Asma'u Bint of Shaikh Usman B. Fudi to West African Literature 18th to 19th Century, sees Nana Asma'u as having great qualities as well as being a good writer. She argues that Asma'u composed verses in Hausa to instruct her female students in Islamic religious knowledge in a simple entertaining way. In her wa'az (admonition) poems Asma'u instruct her students on how to perform ablutions, the purpose and situations for which Taimama (sand ablution) is allowed. Some of Asma'u's poems

according to Mukoshy, encourage her students to seek religious knowledge even if they have to go out of their matrimonial homes. However, Nana Asma'u insist that a woman going out to seek for knowledge must be decently dressed and should go out of commitment to Allah. Asma'u also has a poem which instructs her students to adhere to the five fundamental pillars of Islam namely Shahada (the belief in Allah and his messenger the Prophet Muhammed), Sallah (Prayer), Azumi (Fasting), Zakka (Alms) and Hajji (Pilgrimage to Mecca).

Nana Asma'u become known and heard in places far and near. According to Mukoshy, Asma'u has written Tambih al Ghafilin wa Tadhkir al Aqilin ila Turuq al Salicin (admonishing the negligent on and reminding the intelligent of the ways of the pious) to give guidance to the women folk about good and evil. Satura Mukoshy said that the bulk of Nana Asma'u's works were written in Fulfulde. "This was because fulfulde and Arabic were the most common media".[18] Nana Asma'u looked after her father's manuscripts after his death. This according to Satura Mukoshy marked the beginning of her own writing. Nana Asma'u helped to raise the spirit of the faithful with the poems directed against the enemy they were fighting. According to Mukoshy most of Nana's works are mainly on religion and elegies in form of prose and poetry. Similarly, "Nana Asma'u in contemplative moods wrote on religious themes; in old age,

she wrote dramatic poems of thanks at the over-throw of the son of her father's ally who turned despot".[19] She also wrote on the courageous Mustapha, her brother in-law who fought and won Silame. She also wrote elegies on the brave deeds of people, her friends and relative.

In the contribution of Nana Asma'u Fodio to the Jihadist Movement of Shehu Dan Fodio from 1820-1862, Jean Boyd makes extensive remarks on Nana Asma'u. She states that Nana's education included more than academic and religious studies. Nana Asma'u was also good at making things herself. She was taught how to cook very well and was also good in the preparation of Fura, a main food. Cleaning and spinning of thread were also part of her chores.

According to Jean Boyd Nana Asma'u had good potentials. She wrote to sustain the idealism of the Shehu's revivalist movement. This according to Jean Boyd was the inspirational force which compelled her to write. Nana Asma'u first three works are items of consideration in her respect. One of them is Tambih al ghafilin wa-tadhkir al-aqilin (admonishing the negligent on and reminding the ways of the pious) dated 1820. It is a short tract of eight pages long of Arabic prose with four parts. The first describes character traits which lead to perdition and the third

describes those traits that lead to paradise, the fourth briefly summarised the Sunna. It shows Asma'u's ability is fluent, and that technically she was capable of assisting Muhammed Bello.

Furthermore, according to Jean Boyd, Nana's second poem, Fa inna ma al usur yusuran (verily after every difficulty there is relief roused much more interest. Whether or not on general terms Muhammed Bello inspired her to start writing was not known, but he definitely played on inspirational part in the writing of her second work. "To understand it we have to turn back on Jelani who had attempted an unsuccessful Jihad in Air, and taken refuge in Sokoto".[20] Ibra then joined Sarkin Gobir and together they marched to Sokoto. "Gidado was at the Sansani outside the city wall when he heard Ibra's drum".[21] He rode into Sokoto and told Bello who was in the Majalisa (Council Chamber). When Bello had finished his business there, they went together to the Sansani. "That night Ibra's camp fire could be seen from Sokoto"[22] and Asma'u went to see Aisha, her friend. She found Bello has left a written message of comfort for her. "Fa inna ma al usur yusuran - which is an aya from the Holy Qur'an meaning "So verily with every difficulty there is relief".[23] According to Jean Boyd Nana Asma'u took this text and composed an acrostic poem in fulfulde, the first work

of the first line beginning with "fa" the second with "I" and so on. Infact reading down the right hand side of the poem one read the text. "This shows that by the time she was thirty Asma'u was a clever and inventive poet at her best and most spontaneous when writing in Fulfulde".[24]

In a book titled A Revolution in History, the Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio by Ibrahim Sulaiman, Nana Asma'u is seen as a noble lady who grew up to become a scholar in her own right, a teacher who educated not only a generation of women but through these women also educated many children. "She was indeed a torch that lit up the path of the revolution and a pillar that held Islam aloft even in the most trying period".[25] Quoting Ibrahim Sulaiman, Jean Boyd said that she managed to step out of her role as a teacher of women to enter the role of politics boldly campaigning to keep the idealism of the Shehu alive. Nana's merit he said lay principally in combining the education of the women with looking after the welfare of the poor and the deprived. Her husband was responsible for public welfare in the early days of the caliphate, but Asma'u came to symbolise both the aspiration of women for education and respect and the yearning of the poor for justice, health and comfort. Asma'u shows the extent to which a determined and well-bred women can influence

society. "She showed the height a woman can reach in knowledge and moral consciousness and how she can use these to keep a revolutionary society on its feet".[26] Successful caliphs Ibrahim Sulaiman says, looked to her for guidance. Indeed her influence on the general course of the caliphate, enhance by her stature as a saint and daughter of the Shaikh, might yet prove more decisive than we read in books. "He further noted her poems on religion, history, politics, military activities of the caliphate can be heard from the lips of women all over Nigeria and she lived still in the minds of many".[27]

In relation to the above, Zaruma, a cultural magazine of Sokoto State says Asma'u was given an orthodox Islamic education and she knew the Qur'an by heart. Asma'u's first known composition is dated 1820. It is in Arabic titled Tanbih-al-Ghafilin (admonishing the negligent). According to Alhaji Umar she wrote fifty four works. Some work remain undiscovered as it is unlikely that everything has been found. She wrote in Arabic, Fulfulde and in Hausa. She wrote poetry and prose. Alhaji Umar said she wrote tammis (a technique of adding three lines of poetry to an original two line verse) and turned prose work into poetry. "She was a very skillful and versatile writer".[28]

In Tanbil al-Ghafilin according to Umar, Asma'u wrote that "Among evidence of love for the messenger

are..... affection for the Muslim community demonstrated by working for its interests and depending it against injuries and loses". At the time she was twenty-two years old, she had been pioneer settler in Sokoto and has seen the rapid growth from practically nothing to a thriving community larger (according to Lander) than Kano. She was known as Uwar Gari (mother of the community) a title which indicate the scope of her activities. In the elegies she wrote according to Alhaji Umar, she praised various women for their contributions to society preparing food-stuff in bulk for the army (Fatima wife of the army commander Aliyu Jeda) patiently and sympathetically attending to women in child birth. Zaharatu in her turn was praised for her care of the aged, concern for all poor people and for all orphaned children. Zaharatu and her women colleagues made it their business to know about the society in which they are living and to lend a hand in sorting out their problems. Asma'u is also known for the way in which she looked after the children of Muhammad Bello.

Despite the fact that she has to play her part in running her husband's household and that her work was tiring, she nevertheless according to Umar, had a burning compulsion to write. "She did not simply write high minded religious verse, infact she hadly wrote

anything which was not of immediate relevance to the times in which she lived".[29] Consider for example the opening lines of a poem about Sarkin Gobir Mayaki and Sarkin Kebbi Nadama

> "May Allah the beneficent destroy Mayaki and Nadama, May they be exterminated".

She has a most lively and informed interest in all aspect of her society. She may not have ridden into battle, but as a contemporary of hers noted,

> "You have evidence your ability to hurl weapons at the enemy".

According to Alhaji Umar however, Asma'u is perhaps best known for her interest in women education, and for the classes she held. There is no doubt that women come to Asma'u to learn. She wrote a poem about one of their leaders Hauwa, who conducted groups of women to Asma'u at all seasons for the year. Asma'u taught them about Islam so that they would know what are its essentials like ritual ablution, prayers, alms, the fast and the pilgrimage. "I" Asma'u further said taught them what every women should know and instructed them to shun lying, meaness, jealousy, adultery, stealing and conceit.

Moreover the Editor of Daily Times Nigeria 4th May, 1973 presented Nana Asma'u as a prolific writer who

distinguished herself in many interlectual pursuits. The editor further said Nana Asma'u was born in 1788 at Degel in Gobir Sokoto province. Nana's intelligence was apparent at an early age. She began to write poetry in Fulfulde when she was still a child. Later she wrote poems in Hausa and in Arabic. Her writing in Arabic, the paper further explained are the best known of all her works. Among them are Tanbih al-Ghafilin (reminder to the careless) a long prose work dealing with the virtues of life stepped in Islamic values and Tambshir-Ikhwan (good news to the brethren) a long poem.

The title of her collected Hausa poems is "Mousofat" and they have been translated into Arabic by Mustapha Dan Issiaka. Nana's poetry in the tradition of the period is largely of a panegyric nature, and praises the Prophet and the faith of Islam.

Nana was married to Gidado Laima and the paper further explained. Gidado was one of the lieutenants of her brother Muhammed Bello. She become the teacher of all the girls and women in her family, and also trained her younger brother Isa, in Qur'anic studies and in Arabic. This paper claimed that of all her scholarly works, her translation were the most important. She renders many of her father's works in Hausa from their original fulfulde, thus assuring a wider audience

for the writings of one of the most influential men of his time.

In Inquiry, August 1985 Jean Boyd throws more light on Nana Asma'u. Nana's first job according to Jean Boyd in the social arena was to help settle the captives in the community. "Her wisdom, efficiency and integrity were noted, and as a result she was given the responsibility in connection with the distribution of alms, a responsibility which required the exercise of investigative skills and legal acumen".[30] She took keen interest in midwifery; wrote an elegy in praise of midwives who attended to their work promptly and cheerfully. Asma'u encouraged those who looked after the welfare of widows and orphans and acknowledged in writing the zeal of women who prepared food-stuff for the army. Asma'u the cleverest woman of her generation, according to Jean Boyd, did not distant herself from the people nor did she retreat into the ways of intellectualism. Instead she ploughed her gifts and learning into the community.

Nana Asma'u did not write into a timid fashion, nor is her work open to misinterpretation".[31] Jean Boyd claimed that a poem Nana wrote when she was over sixty years of age gave one an idea of the directness of her approach. Most of her poems talk of basic fundamental ideas and situation. Verse one begins as follows:

Allah the bountiful destroy Mayaki
and Nadama annihilate them
Destroy Maradi destroy Tsibiri,
destroy Anka raise them to ground.
Destroy Argugun, destroy Zaga Zagawa
Gulma, Saurwa and Tumba".

Infact the following verse in Nana's poem Meditation Upon Death gives us directness in her poem.

6a. Let us hurry up and repent
my brothers, so that we be prepared,

b. Let us make good our deeds because
we shall remain in the here after
for ever.

Preparation for the hereafter is
carried out here in this world,
so you should stop being slack,
we do not remain here, we are
here only for a short while".

The above poem carried direct basic ideas in life. A kind of universal statement. Infact according to Jean Boyd these are not words of shy uncommitted person. Her poem directed against military opponent are interesting because they follow the tradition established by Muhammad Bello and Abdullah Fodio, and shows how it was perfectly possible for a woman to use the same literary genre as men in otherwords her work transcended gender".[32] She wrote as a responsible and informed citizen and was listened to because what she said was meaningful and apt. Nana Asma'u wrote a poem in which she painted a graphic description of Bello fighting his last battle against Gobir, surrounded by

loyal and fearless war men.

Nana Asma'u intended her listeners to remark on the contrast between Bello's men and men of their time. Jean Boyd further explained that in some of Nana's writing she attacked caliphate leaders who had become corrupted by power and settled into decadent ways. At the age of seventy-two she directed one of her poems against her kinsman Dan Yalli, who in a long reign had assumed that joviality was an adequate substitute for vigilance and probity. The powm opens as follows:

> "We give thanks to Allah who has given us the means of overthrowing Dan Yalli who has caused us so much trouble.
>
> He behaved unlawful and did wanton harm there by causing hardship to muslim.... We have witnessed the robberies which have taken place In the markets on the highways, and at the gate way of the city".

It is as the critic of her own people that Asma'u is seen at her most courageous. She took the line that Kinship and position takes second place to industry and correctness a line which the Shehu had, as we know, written in changed times. According to Jean Boyd, Nana Asma'u had always taught the town women in her room and had written poetry for them to sing, in which she instructed them about religious duties, the history of the Prophet and the life of the Shehu. Over the

years Nana Asma'u come to realise that the faith of rural women was in danger probably because their role has been relegated to a purely domestic one. Asma'u set down to remedy the situation, young married women were not permitted to make journey to learn from Nana Asma'u. It was the elder women who come bringing girls not married whose young sharp minds memorised the words of Asma'u's songs very quickly, ready for transmission to the women at home. The elder women also learn the songs and presumably drawing on their experience, put questions to Asma'u whose answers deepened their knowledge and prepare them to deal with situation at the village level.

Moreover Jean Boyd summed up Nana Asma'u as thus, Nana Asma'u is actually a scholar, sufi, revolutionary, social critic and above all a mother of six children. David Rubadiri had further spelt out politics, race and the self consciousness with a search for identity as themes of African literature. Richard Priebe and Thomas Hale also stressed that art can be politicised to create awareness. Mbulelo Mzamane sees literature as a kind of barometer to guage popular feelings. Nwogo further describes poets as those who hold a mirrow to the society and in this way give a reflection of the society. Ruth Finnegan also said elegies glorify virtures, expressed the people's believes, joys, sorrows

and notion about right and wrong.

Furthermore several scholars have attempted to write on Nana Asma'u's contribution to the Jihad. These scholars have been either historians or antropologists in outlook. Satura Mukoshy views Nana as a good writer with good qualities. That Nana took care of her father's writing after his death. Jean Boyd also made an intensive remark on Nana Asma'u. She said Nana's education included more than academic and religious education. She was also good in making things herself. Ibrahim Sulaiman further sees Nana as a noble lady who grew up to become a scholar in her own right. A teacher who educated a generation of women and children. He sees her as a torch that lit the path of the revolution and a pillar that held Islam aloft even in the most trying period. Alhaji Umar also said Nana was given an orthodox Islamic education and she knew the Qur'an by heart. He said she wrote fifty-two works in Hausa, Arabic and Fulfulde. Usman Shehu presented Nana as a prolific writer who distinguish herself in many interlectual pursuits. To him her writing in Arabic is the best known of all her works.

Nana Asma'u is a profound poet who understand her society and advanced it by composing poems about it. My desire is actually to go beyond what these writers have done. Nana's work as a literary activity hitherto

not explored by students of literature deserves more attention. In otherwords, this research intends to do a literary appreciation of Nana's poetry. She made great contribution to literary activities through her poetry as well as being a good and capable teacher.

She seems much concerned with the way the Jihiliya period exploited the women folk. She also realised that the women in Islamic society were victimised simply because they lacked knowledge of their rights. Thus she dedicated herself to the task of educating them and their children for the production of a better society. She taught them directly and through her poetry, religious as well as approved social life. She wrote poems which showed her desire for a better and harmonous society. Her elegies were written in respect of good people and the elegies formed the bulk of her writing. She did this so that her audience will appreciate their leaders, good people with good qualities and characters for emulation. Her poems are simple. Her poetry as a literary activity is worth exploring to bring her into focus of literary sphere just like Ama-Ata, Zainab Alkali and other women writers.

People I have reviewed so far use some theoretical analyses in analysing their works. Some of them use the formalist approach. Others use the sociological approach. My desire is to use the two approaches

together in trying to analyse Nana Asma'u's work. Nana's poetry look at the society and the culture of that society. She seem able to retain her audience in the sense that she discusses matters affecting the people in the society. The poet in question explained her feeling over the situation at the reform period. African poetry can be understood as channels to propagate ideas to influence the community. Nana's poetry was able to influence the Jihadist greatly as we shall see later when we come to analyse some of her poems.

In addition the sensibility and intelligence of this writer placed her at the focal point of the collective awareness, constitute her into ideal witness. It is also true that what distinguished her is not only this heightened capacity for perception and response but also a special capacity for expression and for the organization of experiences in significant forms.

"The writer's expression must not only capture the flow of experience but also propose a broader vision of life that transcends the immediate to which his work refers to".[33] Inevitably the work has a meaning for the people of that time and the people of today, the issues are of the social and moral life of the people. The force of her insight into the complexities of human spirit gives depth to her works

through which they come to express a general human condition. A literary work need not to be disassociated from its reference to a particular context of life and experience of existential awareness to have a general human relevance and application. This theoritical approach placed an undue emphasis on the message of the literature rather than on the manner of expression. "The recognition of achievements is not simply a question of mastery of form but of the degree of level of seriousness which a writer's work evinces, the art of expression being a handmaid to his vision rather than an end to itself".[34]

Her writing were originally written in three languages. Some of them were written in Hausa, others in Arabic, yet some in Fulfulde. The researcher went to Sokoto History Bureau and collected some of Nana Asma'u's poem already translated mostly by Mrs Jean Boyd. Readers should be aware with the fact that none of her poem was written in English. They are only translated. Chapter three will be an analysis of her elegies.

Notes for Chapter 2

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22. On the authority of Waziri Junaidu. Ibra camped at Sokoto University Campus.

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Chapter 3

THE FORM OF NANA ASMA'U'S ELEGIES

This chapter looks at the form of Nana Asma'u's elegies and how the poems reflect the society and the culture in which she lived.

Poetry is used for a purpose, and it is observed as a matter of fact, as an integral part of life. "People write poetry they hope will communicate emotion, move readers in some direction, or sharpen their awareness".[1] The role of poetry very well suits conscientization which would serve to bring the awareness necessary for social or cultural changes. The general cultural trend of poetry is considered and treated as theme and motif. Poetry further illuminates the African condition and the achievement of poetry as a vehicle of cultural emancipation.

Poetry is sometimes written because the poet feels compelled to set down his thought and emotions. Without this compulsion there can be no composition. The poet also writes because he hopes his poetry will have an effect on readers. Nana Asma'u wrote to sustain the idealism of the Shehu's revivalist movement. This was the inspirational force which compelled her to write.

Thus, most of Asma'u's poetry, especially the ones we intend to study in this chapter, are elegies. "Elegy is a kind of song or poem expressing sorrow or lamentation especially for one who is dead".[2] The tenor of the poetry is one of daring, courage, bravery and heroism. The heroes are not superior beings except in so far as their earthly deeds make them so. They do not have supernatural powers nor do they pit their strength against supernatural beings. In short they are ordinary human beings engaged in ordinary human activities. "But the poet in the vividness of his imagination, uses metaphor, imagery and symbolism which transports these ordinary activities to a level of the extra ordinary".[3] Moreover "heroism is thus used here in a much more restricted sense which refers solely to deeds of heroism in the history of man's struggle for survival and in the pursuit of honour".[4]

In addition, the poet digs into the history of the leader. The events discussed are part of the process of remembering history. These poems "bring out the verbal genius of the poets, their inventiveness and their fantastic imaginative power".[5] Death plays an important role in Nana Asma'u's poetry and thus the bulk of her poems are lamentations. She makes death personal in her poems and brings to the foremost man's ultimate loneliness and his need for support. "After

all, funeral dirges are not for the ears of the dead. They are for the living".[6] Therefore Nana Asma'u made the dirges vehicles of lamentation, philosophy, ideas on morality and comments on the general human condition. "The occasion of a death lends itself more to the creation of this type of poetry than any other human situation".[7]

Jean Boyd posits that elegiac poetry in the Islamic setting is used in praising the deceased ones, that is, if an individual is a good teacher, husband, relative, friend or associate, he gets praised only after death. Nana thus composes many elegiac poems for her friends and relatives. Jean Boyd further says that elegies form the majority of Nana's poems. In fact, no elegy praises a woman for beauty, no one is praised for his skill or feats of strength alone. Individuals are praised only on merit. Nana Asma'u, according to Jean Boyd, praises the way in which people attempt to reach high standards of behaviour most acceptable to Islam. In a ruler this would be the exercise of patience, courage in action, probity in public affairs, dedication in duty and endurance.

As mentioned earlier, Nana's poems reflect the society and the culture in which she comes from. "Society is a group of humanbeings bound together for self-maintainance and self-perpetuation and sharing

their own institution and culture. The concept denotes continuity and large scale complex social relations with both sexes and all age groups involved. Usually there is a territorial or political boundary".[8] Culture on the other hand is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habit acquired by man as a member of society".[9] Looking at Nana's poetry one realises that her poetry to a large extent actually reflects and is largely influenced by the Islamic reform movement of the period.

The poems we intend to study in this chapter are Sonnere Abdullah, Sonnere Buhari, Sonnere Bello and Sonnere Moinna. "Sonnere partly means Qasida".[10] The form of the Qasida has been described by Lyle thus:

> The ode has a strictly prescribed sequence of ideas and subject. Unless it has a lamentation of the dead or deals with equally serious topic, it must begin with the mention of a woman. The main objects, thus reached at least, may be a Panegyric on his tribe, or some other person, the description of some scene of travel or war a pleading or a warning for the foolish".[11]

Sonnere therefore appears more panegyrical than elegiac. Her Sonnere poems are models of technical competence. Her thoughts are deeply religious, devotional and prayerful.

In writing her poetry, the Hausa society shaped her

work. The Islamic belief in Allah and the life-after-death also shapes the tone of her poetry. The emotions are not allowed to overflow. They are checked because of the belief that Allah is supreme. It is part of the attribute of the society to mourn after death. Mourning helps to emotionally stabilise the mourner.

Again there is an aspect of the praise form in elegy. The praise then becomes a kind of celebration. It is the noble deeds of the dead one that makes the sense of the loses graphic. One of the stylistic devices used is pious references and prayers at the beginning and at the end of each poem. This is a fact which in no way prevents her work from being fresh, colourful and varied. She begins each of her poem with doxology in which she gives thanks to Allah in the usual tradition of Islam. For example:

Sonnere Abdullah reads:

> We give thanks to the all powerful
> Who is the
> One only who does not die,
> Who is omnipotent.
>
> His Omnipotence extends over everyone,
> He is unique in his authority, Who
> do his will, are recompensed in paradise.
>
> (Appendix 1)

In Sonnere Buhari this is the beginning:

> I acquiesce to the will of Allah who exercise
> powers over mortals. I ask for forgiveness.
>
> (Appendix 2)

In Sonnere Bello the introduction read thus:

> I rely on Allah the almighty, the pure the Omnipotent to assist me to accept what he has enacted.
>
> To help me because I am bereft.
> Only Allah can ease my bereavement,
> for he is all powerful.
> Allah is the almighty king.
>
> (Appendix 3)

In Sonnere Moinna she introduces the poem this way:

> I give thanks to the lord of creation
> I advice the muslim community.....
>
> (Appendix IV)

Another device Nana Asma'u employs in her poetry is the use of contrast. Here, celebration exists side by side with a feeling of loss. While she mourns the loss of an individual she also celebrates by highlighting his great and admirable qualities. For example, in Sonnere Abdullah she says in the following stanza:

> I weep as I write for my father's younger brother who assisted religion and revived the sunna.

Abdullah was unique among the Shehu's brothers, and famous for his scholarship, and for his tireless teaching.

In Sonnere Buhari, she has the following lines:

> I have lost a brother who loved me
> and wish me well. I bow to Allah's decree.
>
> Nothing detrimental was ever said
> about his deeds or saying. He has

an excellent character. It was the
Shehu's which he inherited.

In all the lines above, there is great feeling of loss concerning the individuals she writes about. There is also the feeling in Nana Asma'u of the fact that these people really spent their lives usefully. Each of the people have been of great importance to the community when alive. Their qualities, helpfull services which is also a kind of celebration, is highlighted by Nana Asma'u.

Another technique employed by Nana Asma'u is the use of intertextuality. This is seen profoundly in Sonnere Abdullah. There are many references to either the Qura'an or the Hadith in the poem. For instance:

Because in the hadith we find the
Prophet said so.
The Qur'an contain the same thing.
Only those who pay no attention
(will not regard the advice)

For it is written in the hadith,
that the prophet said that when
a scholar dies, Islam is breached.

The contents of her poems come from knowledge of religious studies which thus influence her writing greatly. All her poems are divided into stanzas to demarcate the movement of thoughts. There are a lot of metaphors in her poems. In Sonnere Abdullah, the following lines have metaphorical expressions:

The Shehu was the sun of his time,
his younger brother was the moon.
They had great light.

He was like the twin courses of a
river which pour with water
constantly providing water for all.

Another technique employed by Nana Asma'u is the use of prayers at the end of each of her poem. She is also very thankful to the almighty Allah at the end of each poem. In Sonnere Abdullah the following lines are worth considering:

May Allah poor his blessing on the Prophet,
and his relatives and companions.

And his followers who have followed religion
And never strayed from the part of the Sunna.

In Sonnere Buhari her concluding stanza reads:-

I gave thanks to Allah I have
concluded my poem
May Allah receive it with the
grace of the prophet.

May blessing fall on the relatives and
Conpanion and followers of the prophet
Who have supported the Sunna.

Sonnere Bello has the following as part of its conclusion.

My poem is completed. May Allah receive
it for what it is, I give thanks and invoke
blessing on the prophet, his companions
and those who have been given honour and
karama.

Sonnere Abdullah, was written in respect of Malam Abdullah who is the younger brother to the Shehu Usman

Nana's father. Malam Abdullah was a scholar, a teacher, a writer and a sufi.

> "His writings were among his greatest contributions to the revivalist movement and indeed it was because of the literary output of people like Abdullahi that the revivalist community in Hausaland was able to sustain a system of Government that survived the rest of the revivalist movement of West Africa and to some extent even survived the British occupation of northern Nigeria early in the 20th century".[12]

This poem was one of the poems originally written in Fulfulde. It was written in 1830 and was translated by Jean Boyd.

This is an elegy written on the death of Malam Abdullah describing his qualities, his immense learning, his unfailing generosity towards ordinary people, his being the foremost brother of the Shehu.

To further explain this poem, Nana Asma'u expressed Allah's uniqueness in His authority and His reward of paradise to His faithful servants. People should gather provisions for the journey ahead which is death. Such provisions include the fear of Allah which means whatever one intends to do he should try to do it according to what Allah ordered mankind to do. The poem further teaches people to stop such things as gossiping, stealing, drinking, smoking, backbiting and other bad practices.

Nana Asma'u in the above poem prays to Allah to

provide for the muslim community what they cannot provide for themselves. Nana Asma'u prayed to Allah to reward Malam Abdullah greatly and also the Shehu. She prayed to Allah to forgive their sins and take them to the best place in paradise (Firdausi) which is also the place of the Prophet.

Sonnere Buhari is yet another elegiac poem written after the death of Buhari. We have not been able to find much of his history. But from the poem we gather that he was Nana's brother whom as she said in her poem, loved her sincerely. In this poem Nana sees Buhari as a projected object used as a ladder in Islam. She expressed him as brave, generous and an excellent scholar as well as being a man of patience. He has a good relationship with his people and he was also alight to the muslim community. In all his activities, according to the poem, nobody has ever seen him in the wrong either in speech or in action. He has an excellent character like that of the Shehu. His people profited very much with his teaching and his worldly affairs. He was very religious. Never tired of performing his prayers. He was always remembering Allah and supplicating for his mercy. Nana prayed to Allah to forgive him, have mercy on him, light his tomb, and reward him for all his good deeds. She further prayed to Allah to provide Buhari with a shade

in that hot day. She prayed that may his good deeds out weigh the bad ones. May Allah provide him with the fresh and pleasing water in heaven called Kausar and finally may Allah place Buhari in the paradise of Firdausi.

Sonnere Bello is another poem worthy of consideration written after the death of Muhammad Bello. Muhammad Bello was an elder brother of Nana Asma'u. He was Nana's teacher and a husband to her best friend - Aishatu. Bello was born and brought up during the formative period of the Jihad. He was a man of knowledge, an administrator and a warrior. Bello served many roles during the Jihad. He was an ordinary soldier, scout, spy, raiding party leader, flag bearer and commander-in-chief. He was also the speaker during the Jihad, propagating and defending the Jihad movement. He was among his father's script composers of diplomatic correspondences. He has an abundant interest in politics and was a lover of his people.

Nana expressed great agony over Bello's death for the death was a double loss. First she lost Bello as an elder brother and secondly as a teacher who provided her with a lot of encouragement. In tears, she composed this poem about Bello to soften her heart which is full of love for him. She expressed her agony for she lost great and lasting love, mutual understanding and

confident. His generous and forgiving nature, his literary instruction she can never enjoy the like again. She further expressed in the following lines that the agony on the death of Bello makes her to toss and turn to God for solution to this disheartening problems:

> I toss and turn and return again to
> Allah the Holy on whom I rely
> I weep as I say my prayer beads and
> when I try to sleep I turn restless
> ingrief as I remember Bello, I pray
> God will reunite us.

Nana Asma'u in her grief said in the following lines that Bello's death has reduced her to a small motherless hen.

> I am a small chicken whose mother
> is dead, who cries,
> or like someone left in the wilderness
> alone who knows, whose ears are closed
> (to those calling to him)
> God alone will wipe away my grief.
>
> I am an infant who has been left
> pitiful and enfeebed
> without mother or father to care
> for me, that is how I look on this
> occurence.
> Verily only the grace of Allah can help me.

Nana also expressed some of Bello's good qualities. He was upright, courageous, patient and dedicated. He spread learning and expressed matters thoroughly. Bello appealed to the wretched people to become useful. The following lines show his dignity among scholars and non-scholars alike.

In his days he was unique in his
status among scholars alike.
He assuaged people's griefs and
fears, He was a place of refuse,
a heaven listen to what I say.

He has a fine temper and has a pleasant personality. He gets angry only when the law is broken. Nana prayed to Allah to perfume his grave, honour him for the sake of the prophet, provide him with that soothing fine water from heaven and allow him encounter the prophet on the last day.

The last elegiac poem for consideration in this chapter is Sonnere Moinna (Appendix IV). This was written on the death of Moinna; who is a younger sister to Nana Asma'u. She describes the qualities of Moinna, her kindness, her generosity, her learning, her piety and her contribution to the harmony of the community. It was originally written in Fulfulde. Nana expresses that the community should pray for Moinna because she was a kind of ladder in the muslim community. Her loss was actually a great disturbance. She helped the community with her activities of kindness. She fed people, relatives and strnagers alike. She appreciated everybody without difference and she urged them to learn.

The following lines from Sonnere Moinna shows Nana Asma'u appreciating the contribution of women during the Jihad.

> She organised the production of Provision, when an expedition was mounted. She had a lot of responsibilities.
>
> She sorted problems out and urged people to live peacefully. She put an end to quarrelling.

Though muslim women cannot go to war, they have an important role to play. Their role includes preparing food, nursing the injured and taking care of the children. Moinna has great knowledge and understanding of what she reads. She has a sense of admiration and dedication. Nana prayed to Allah to light Moinna's tomb, to also put her in paradise.

In conclusion, however, each of the individuals discussed about in this chapter contributed greatly to the development and success of the society. They are people with worthy qualities. Their qualities come out clearly after the society lost them. Thus the urge to write and broadcast their contribution for whole generations to see.

Notes for Chapter 3

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11. M. Hiskett (Ed) Tazyin al-waraQat, University Press, Ibadan, 1963, p. 9.

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Chapter 4

THE INJUNCTIONARY POEMS OF NANA ASMA'U

This chapter essentially looks at poems that are not elegies, but those that deal with other aspects of life. They are basically injunctionary in nature. "An injunction can prevent the wrong from being done at all or can prohibit its continuance".[1] The first injunctionary poem The remedy against the fearful things of the here after is trying to conceptualise life after death. Life as it is conceptualised by the poem, is a continuum. Death itself, in the final analysis, is just a transistory mode. The conclusion of a span of life on earth is not an absolute end to everything, but death is a sign post for the possibility for life at another level. Heaven or hell has been duly recognised by the Holy Qur'an.

The first poem provides the possibility of remedial action while on earth. There is the underlying assumption in the poem that humanbeing in himself is not perfect, that is why these remedial actions are necessary for the individual if he wished to enjoy the hereafter.

The poem is built up on a system, and this system incorporates definite human action and the indefinite mysterious capacity of the superior being (Allah.)

On the whole there is a total logic that informs

the injunctions which the individual is expected to perform if he is to enjoy the hereafter. One of the most important aspect of the injunctions is that it makes the individual responsible to one another, especially those who do not have. Actually the poem does not make any distinction between those who have and those who do not have. What is encouraged in the general act of giving, because in giving the little we have, we get more, in abundance. From the logic of the poem, the individual who gives something out of his mundane earthly articles will reap greater benefit from the permanent wealth of Heavenly bliss.

In the opening stanza - the poem

> Hold fast to the remedy of the
> commander of the believers.....

Commander of the believers refer to Shehu Usman Dan Fodio. It is the title Muslims usually use to address their religious leaders. The title has been in use as far back as the time of the caliphs. It is the translation of the Arabic term Amir-al-muminin.

The phrase "strangled by death" in verse ten is part of a widely held belief among the muslims that death strangles wicked people, and they die a painful death, while the good people die peacefully. The poem commends muslims to give voluntary alms as distinct from the compulsory alms al-Zakka. Thus against every possibility

of danger in the grave there is a remedy. The remedies are actualised while the person is alive. So the poet here is urging muslims to give alms of anything within their possession or make firm their intention to give that which they can. In Islam, however, to make a firm intention to do something good is as meritorious as performing it. There are traditions which speak specifically on this. For example, the first hadith in the collections of Al-Nawawi's forty hadith says,

> The remedy against the darkness of the grave is to give the ladle of Fura as alms.....

Fura here is a staple food in Sokoto, the poet's locality and is the most suitable type of food to give as alms. This, however, does not mean that every locality must give Fura. Any staple food in any locality could be used to give alms, in that area.

Verse five:

> The remedy against the worms in the grave is to give a lump of meat as alms, you understand community.

The poet here says after an individual dies, the next thing that happens to his body is decay. Worms and other insects devour it. "Mention of this is repeatedly made in Hiskett's Hausa Islamic Verse".[2]

Verse eight:

> The standing of the ressurection
> listen, you should give threshed

grain as alms
By God I hear witness, that
standing,
There is nothing like it for suffering.

This verse discusses the day of resurrection or the last day which is the day in which all creations dead or alive will be called to assemble before God to account for what they did during their life. Thus, the poet called on Muslims, to give alms of grain for it may give them ease as there is a lot of suffering for the standing of that day. The receiving of individual record book was discussed in verse nine. Receiving the book in the right hand here refers to the Muslim belief that in this world, every adult humanbeing is guarded by two Angels, Raqib and Atik. Raqib writes down all that one does that is good and Atik writes down all the bad deeds.

Thus, the records of one's actions are kept throughout one's life time. On the day of resurrection these records are weighed. If the individual's bad records outweigh the good ones, his left hand will be thrust into his breast and pulled out behind and his record book will be given to him in that hand. Then that individual goes to hell. On the other hand an individual's good record out weigh his bad ones, his book will be given in the right hand and he will go to paradise. In this respect the poet says in verse nine:

> The receiving of the book in the
> right hand we are going to talk about.
> The thing to do in order to ensure
> that you receive in the right
> hand, is to give.....

In concluding this poem therefore, the awesome picture of life in the grave is mediated to a large extent, for good or for bad by the humanbeing himself, so that it could be said that invariably what happens to the human being while in the grave is his destiny as he himself has ordained it.

The general style of the poem moves along figurative sense, what is remedial action in the here and now and the threat or expected boon in the hereafter.

Another poem worth considering in this chapter is Warning to those who do not fast. The poem highlights the general rules during the Ramadan period. The writer is knowledgeable about the fasting. The poem shows various circumstances under which fasting is compulsory or not. It shows people that are exempted from fasting and those that will have to compensate when they are not able to fast. As usual with Nana's poems it starts thus:

> With the help of Gpd I am going
> to compose a poem help me,
> our men and women, you should
> all give ears.

In verse two she indicates whence the Ramadan fast commences.

When the moon of the month of fasting
rise let us not drink.

The month of fasting, Ramadan, is the ninth month of the lunar calender. During the thirty days of this month all muslims are supposed to fast. This is one of the pillars of Islam. In preparation for the fasting, a precise declaration is required:

At the beginning of Ramadan
the intention is made firm....

In Islam it is required that a muslim should enter into a firm intention before performing any religious act. Without the prior intention the fasting is invalid. After the declaration of intention, fasting should be done for thirty days.

Verse five:

If there is doubt to the sight of the moon,
do not drink,
During the day we should restrict
our mouths
We should not drink water.

In the above verse, the poet is referring to the month before Ramadan. For instance, on the thirtieth day of that month, muslims should not eat food, even though the advent of Ramadan has still not been officially notified at the beginning of the day. But if by noon no news has been heard that Ramadan has begun, then they may eat. Verse six further explains the above verse.

If the crescent of the new moon of Ramadan is sighted on the night before the thirtieth of that month, that is on the twenty ninth of Sha'aban, and the muslim do not hear about this till late the following day, even if they had eaten nothing during the morning and afternoon of that day, they must pay back because there has not been formal intention to begin the fasting and without such intention, the fasting is invalid. For the intention can only be made once the moon is sighted.

Verse seven uses an obligatory tone to emphasise to the muslim community the compulsion of fasting as thus:

> If two liable muslim see the moon
> There should be no drinking of water
> Muslim truly it is an obligation that
> we should not drink water.

Verse nine to thirteen explains the category of people that are exempted. The verse also explains those that should not fast but will pay back. Verse thirteen however, warned those mentioned above who are allowed to abstain from fasting. They are only allowed to do so if this is really necessary. For instance, if a pregnant woman or a nursing mother is able to fast but abstain from doing so, her punishment will be heavy. Verse fourteen to sixteen explains the kind of punishment face by one who breaks or refuses to fast on a day without genuine reason.

It is true that knowledge is deep. It is also wide. Infact, some people say that knowledge is like an ocean. An individual can only acknowledge what he is able to see. But one can hardly see all, deep and wide. Nana Asma'u acknowledges the above statement in verse seventeen and twenty one as thus:

> If a pregnant woman breaks the fast
> Let her go and enquire,
> Perhaps she could give a measure
> of food when she repays.

"Enquire" above means to find out more from learned Malams. "Perhaps" above also shows lack of assurance.

Verse twenty one:

> A very young person and an invalid,
> I am not very learned,
> Ask the learned whether they
> are to pay back.

In the above two verses the poet admitted fallibility. She shows her inperfection and also humility. It is true to life situation for no single person is perfect except the Supreme being.

Verse twenty nine:

> If you have intention to fast and
> the menstrual flow stops,
> At the time of the early
> morning meal, it is not
> permitted to break the
> fast by drinking water.

In the above verse the condition concerning the

religious obligation of menstruating women are complex. The verse means that if a menstrual flow stops just at the time of the morning meal she must fast for that day. It is worth noting that women in their menstrual period are prevented from performing prayers, from fasting, if on pilgrimage, must not circumambulate the Ka'aba or walk between the mount of Safa and Marwa. Likewise they are prevented from entering the mosque, from handling the Holy Qur'an. As soon as the menstrual period stops, they must take the ritual bath, whereupon all these religious duties become incumbent upon them.

Verse thrity three:

> Take note the early morning meal
> take it in the morning,
> If dawn has broken, do not
> break your fast.

Closely related to verse twenty nine, this verse explains that during Ramadan, muslims take their morning meals before the break of dawn. They must however be careful not to delay this meal until after dawn has broken. If they do so this constitutes a breaking of the fast and renders them liable to certain penalties such as feeding sixty needy people, setting a slave free or fasting for two months consecutively. Verse thirty four on the other hand discusses time for breaking the fast. A muslim is supposed to pay careful attention to the passage of time while fasting and he should be aware of

the exact time at which the sun sets. Similarly it is meritorious for the fasting muslim to break the fast immediately the sun sets.

Verse thirty five:

> If you have not said Asham prayer
> come and ask, abstaining from the
> early morning meal does not enable
> you to break the fast.

From the above verse there are prayers during Ramadan known as Tarawih prayers that are said in congregation during the fasting period after the compulsory late evening prayers. Some people mistakenly imagine that these prayers are essential to the validity of the fast. Thus, when they miss them, they discontinue their fasting the following day. Also, some people if they wake up late thus are unable to have their morning meals before dawn, regard this as making their fast invalid and therefore discontinue. The poet pointed out that this is incorrect. Both Tarawih prayer and Sahur the early morning food are not compulsory in respect of fasting. However there is a great reward in Asham and Sahur to whoever performs them during fasting.

In concluding this poem however, though some part..... are missing, we have seen part of the culture of the society Nana Asma'u is discussing. What we have seen so far give us a vivid explanation about fasting, as it should be done, who should fast in the society,

who should not, and who should restore the missing fast and who should not.

The third poem to be considered in this chapter is Grave Sins that turn a Muslim into a Kafir. In this poem there are some injunctions a muslim is supposed to follow. It is mainly dealing with ethics which characterise a good muslim. The words "Grave Sins" in the title of the poem means serious sins requiring careful consideration. Nana Asma'u started with doxology as is usual with her style of writing.

> Let us give thanks to the lord of
> the heavens, the lord of office in truth,
> Let us invoke the blessing and
> peace of God upon our prophet.....

The poem is also reiterative in nature. It is supposed to keep the faithful on their toes and remind them of their religious duties. In verse three she wrote:

> Accept my poem, I am going to preach
> in order that you may hear,
> Oh community stop being forgetful
> Cast away worldly things.

Furthermore, the injunction to "cast away worldly" things is typically sufi, sufis fear that if too much time is spent after material gain, muslims will neglect religious duties. It is also said in the Holy Qur'an:

> "O ye who believe! What aileth you
> that when it is said onto you,
> Go forth in the way of Allah,
> ye are bowed down to the ground
> with heaviness.

> Take ye pleasure in the life of the world
> rather than in the hereafter.
> The comfort of the life of the world
> is but little then in the hereafter".[6]

One of her techniques in this poem is the play on words in verse four. The Hausa word for deception is rudi and to roast is also rudi. Verse five discusses repentance.

> The repentance that makes one follow
> what God commands.....

The verse explained that there is no need for muslims to repend today only to relent on the repentance tomorrow. It is even believed that if a person repents and repeats the same sin he will receive double punishment.

Verse eleven:

> Also the property of the orphans,
> those who misappropriate it, tyranously,
> let them understand it is as if they
> are eating hell fire itself.

Infact among the most hateful things is Islam is the maltreatment of the orphans in any way. God almighty has said in the Holy Qur'an,

> "Give to orphans their wealth,
> exchange not the good for the bad,
> nor obsorb their wealth into yourwealth.
> Lo; that will be a great sin".[7]

Islamic law provides adequate principles concerning administrating orphan's properties. Verse fourteen warns against pointing to gesturing with lips. This is a way of backbiting, people use without saying anything.

This is very sinful in Islam. In Abdulrahaman's book on Islamic teaching, Al-ahalari he says:

> "Telling lies is prohibited to an adult muslim. It is also prohibited upon him to backbite, to whisper against others and indicate people by the lips, mischieviously".[8]

Verse sixteen of the Grave sins that turn a muslim into a kafir has this also to say on begging: "Also greed, deception and too much begging". This verse speaks about begging. Begging as such is not condemned, but only excessive begging. This probably refers not to the institutionalised begging by the poor but the habit of certain quite well-to-do individuals pestering the rich and pressing for favours. This verse echoes a verse in Shehu's Tabban Hakika:

> "This is an admonition so that you wake up, so that you prepare for the hereafter where you are going to Stop going to beg every now and then. Who ever begs excessively in the hereafter his face would be scratched, There is no doubt".[9]

On the whole Nana uses many devices in writing her poem. The poems are divided into stanzas. Each stanza has an A and a B part. Each of her poems starts by giving thanks to Allah. There is also the use of metaphor as one of her stylistic devices. The phrase "strangled by death" in verse two of The remedy against the fearful things of the hereafter is metaphorically

expressed.

Nana Asma'u resorts to symbolising in writing her poem. "The Bridge" in verse ten of the above poem symbolises a journey between life on earth and another life hereafter.

There are three poems worth considering before concluding this chapter. These poems are Wakar Gewaye (Song of Wondering), Qasida fil-munaja (title of Qur'an Suras) and Qasida fi Madh al-rusul (Ode in Praise of the messenger).

The Song of Wandering originally written in Hausa was titled Warkar Gewaye. In this poem Nana gives "an account of her father's life from the beginning of his missionary journey in Gobir, Zamfara and Kebbi, his hijra out of Gobir, his wandering, that is his movement from one headquarter to another in the course of the Jihad or Holy war, the campaigns and battles of the Jihad, his life during the post Jihad period and finally his death".[10] This poem follows the same general pattern as the early Hausa Sira poems of Abdullah, her uncle. The general ambience is similar in that the Hausa poetess hints constantly at devine intervention to aid the Shehu. The poet refers to Shehu's enemies as the envious ones in the following verse:

> "The envious ones had no power at all
> to intercept Shehu when he halted there,
> because of fear of him".

Asma'u's poem is one among several works in Arabic, some in Hausa that contributed to the process of cannonization. This established a parallel between the Shehu's life, character and career and that of the prophet Muhammad and in consequence a miracle tradition grew up around the Shehu's memory.

Asma'u's most interesting work, from a literary point of view is a Hausa poem being the Arabic title Quasida fil Madh al-rasul, Ode in praise of the messenger. The poem starts with the doxology that is normally seen in Islamic literary works. In the opening verses, Nana urges muslims to praise Muhammad so that they may obtain light and radiance of heart. They may be cleansed through the praise of the best mankind, Ahmad.

Some of the verses especially verse 8-19 bear the recital of the physical and moral excellences of Prophet Muhammad. The writer says there has never been created among mortal men the like of him nor will one like him ever be created. In qualities of character which give delight, the poem further says there is none like him. Muhammad is as generous as the rain during rainy season. According to the poem also, God gave him many evidentiary miracles. Muhammad gave Uqasha a stick and it becomes a dagger in battle.

In the latter part of the poem, Nana Asma'u shows Muhammad as the saviour of his community and thus she says:

"O my lord, we pray you that we may
escape from this world
For the sake of his rank the
best of mankind, Ahmed".

Towards the end, the poem prays for reunion with the Shaikh in the last day for the sake of the prophet. The poem ends invoking blessing upon all his family and all his followers.

In conclusion, therefore the first poem which is The remedy against the feaful things of the hereafter discusses life after death as an aspect of Hausa life. Life itself from the poem is a continuum. The conclusion of a span of life on earth is not an absolute end to everything. but death is a signpost for the possibility of life at another level. The poem shows every muslim's desire to be in heaven not in hell after death. Thus God provided remedial action while on earth. On the whole there is a total logic that informs the injunctions which the individual is expected to perform if he is to enjoy the hereafter.

The second poem Warning to those who do not fast shows general rules on the Ramadan period. The poem shows various circumstances that the fasting are compulsory or not. It also shows those that are completely omitted. The poem highlighted how an individual who is fasting should move about his daily activities in a guided manner. The poem emphasises the

worth of intention in muslim's activities in general and in fasting in particular. It further enumerates conditions in respect of menstruating women.

The third poem talks of the injunction a muslim is supposed to follow. It is mainly dealing with ethics and these ethics are geared towards making an individual a good and respectable muslim. The injunction also casts away worldly things. The poem discusses the proper way to take care of orphans and their wealth.

On the whole, the content and styles of these poems are made easy for the general public. There is no difficulty in comprehending them. All of them are geared towards making a good and harmonious Islamic Umma. The poems, finally, provide us with a clear picture about the poet's society and some aspect of the cultures of that society.

Notes for Chapter 4

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4. Dangambo, 1980 Vol.II p. 100.

5. AlNawawi, Forty Hadith p. 1-2.

6. Qur'an IX: 38.

7. Qur'an. IV: 2.

8. Abdulrahman, Mukhtasar-Al Ahlari p. 6.

9. Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, Tabban Hakika, p. 41.

10. Hiskett, Mervyn, A History of Islamic verse, University of London SOAS 1975, p. 133.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Nana Asma'u was not only a scholar who contributed a lot to the literature produced during the Jihad movement led by her father Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, but was the first woman scholar in her time and in her area who become eminent and distinguished through her work.

Nana Asma'u correspondently was one of the children that benefited fully from the knowledge of the Shehu her father. Nana was always present when her father was teaching any group of students irrespective of their age or sex. This gave her a golden opportunity to learn intensively. This in turn influenced her very much and contributed to her being a well learned woman, a teacher, a preacher and a poet. Nana was also educated by her elder brother Muhammad Bello. Her own observation of Bello's activities as a brother and also as a teacher gave her great courage in her own undertaking.

A lot of her poetry are elegies. Death played an important role in Nana's poetry thus the bulk of her poems are lamentations. She made death personal in her poems. After all funeral dirges are not for the ears of the dead, they are for the living. Therefore, Nana made the dirges vehicles of a lamentation, philosophy,

ideas on morality and comments on the general human condition. Nana praised the way in which people attempted to reach high standard of behaviour most accepted in Islam.

Some of her elegies can be discribed as Sonnere poems. They are deeply religious, devotional and prayerful. The Islamic belief in Allah and the life-after-death also shaped the tone of her poetry.

Each of the individuals Nana elogised contributed greatly to the development and the success of the society. They were people with worthy qualities. In her injunctionary poems on the other hand, Asma'u conceptualises life-after-death. The conclusion of a span of life on earth is not an absolute end to everything but death is a sign post for the possibility for life at another level.

Nana Asma'u used many styles in writing her poetry. In her Sonneres, she shows ordinary human beings engaged in ordinary human activities. But the poet in the vividness of her imaginative uses metaphor, imagery and symbolism she transports these ordinary activities to a level of extraordinary. Thus the poems bring out the verbal genius of the poet, her inventiveness and fantastic imaginative power. This is evidence in the use of contrast and intertexuality.

Thus, female creative writing in the Northern states

of Nigeria did not start with the writings of Zainab Alkali or Hauwa Ali; Nana Asma'u bin Fodio blazed that trial over two hundred years ago.

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" " " Warning to Those Who Do Not Fast.

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I discussed with Malam Dr Mahmud Ahmed Modibo who is a lecturer in History Department, ABU Zaria and also a fulfude speaker who told me that Sonnere simply means Qasida.

On the authority of Waziri Junaidu. Ibra camped at Sokoto University Campus.

PPENDIX I Sonnere Abdullahi Trl. Jean Body 1829

1. We give thanks to the All-Powerful who is the One-Only who does not die, who is Omnipotent.

2. His omnipotence extends over everyone, He is unique in his authority: those who do His will are recompensed in Paradise.

3. We therefore acquiesce to the King who makes judgements: may we receive our reward. All muslims let us give thanks and repent.

4. God knows we have been given warnings to repent, be obedient, do the right thing, feel sorry (for our wrongdoings).

5. Because in the Hadith we find the Prophet said so The Qur'an contains the same thing. Only those who pay no attention (will not regard the advice).

6. God knows we have been told, therefore let us with good intentions gather the provisions needed for the journey (death) ahead.

7. The provisions comprise fear of Allah, the doing of good deeds, the rejection of evil and piet

8. The Shehu was the sun of his time, his younger brother was the moon. They had great light.

9. And Bello is their legatee, it is apparent. May God prolong his life and awaken us.

10. If it were not for Allah's admonitions concerning life, we would be terrified by this taste of death which we have savoured.

11. I weep as I write for my father's younger brother who assisted religion and revived the Sunna.

12. If it were not for the decree of Allah, I would continue to cry ceaselessly.

13. But I acquiesce to God's law, and profess my obedience to Him, may He pardon and forgive me.

14. Abdullahi was unique among the Shehu's brothers and famous for his scholarship, and for his tireless teaching.

15. He was like the twin courses of a river which pou with water constantly, providing water for a

16. The first course was the Shari'a, the second was true uncontaminated knowledge.

17. Just as the Niger river provides water for all Hausa-land its waves spreading out in all directions,

18. So he graced every endeavour through his learning and his exemplary attendance at the mosque.

19. Every facet of scholarship, the mosques, the schools, everything he touched, he illuminated.

20. People are now bewildered, the students have dispersed in their anxiety.

21. And the common man weeps. He knows he has lost his benefactor who never failed him.

22. On Allah we rely on you and wait upon your word this day. May You effect for muslims that which they cannot do on their own.

23. I know that the gap left by him cannot be filled, except by God's wisdom, because there was no one like Abdullahi.

24. For it is written in the Hadith, that the Prophet 1/1 said that when a scholar dies, Islam is breached.

25. Only one as great as Abdullahi is capable of filling the gap which is left.

26. May Allah give him a handsome reward, and also the Shehu. May we be united with them in Paradise

27. May Allah forgive them and accept them and take them to Firdausi which is the place of the Prophet in Heaven.

28. May they be certain of the protection afforded them in the world in the after-life, and until the Day of the Resurrection.

29. My poem is finished. May the Almighty accept it. The year of its Hijira is 1245.

30. May Allah pour his blessings on the Prophet, and his relatives and companions.

31. And his followers who have supported religion and never strayed from the Path of the Sunna

APPENDIX II

Sonnere Buhari Trl.- Jean Body 1893

1. I acquiesce to the will of Allah who exercises power over mortals. I ask for forgiveness.

2. I have lost my brother who loved me and wished me well. I bow to Allah's decree.

3. Because He will help me to overcome the effects of what has happened.

4. I remember Buhari who was a two pronged tree (used as a ladder) of Islam. I rely on Allah.

5. He was brave, an excellent scholar, generous, and patient; he had a sense of kinsmanship and was a light to mankind.

6. Nothing detrimental was ever said about his deeds or his sayings. He had an excellent character, it was the Shehu's which he inherited.

7. (Obscure text)

8. He benefitted his people in their religious and worldly affairs in a proper manner.

9. He was ill for two years and seven months (before his death), he bore his sufferings nobly.

10. He benefitted his kinsmen and muslims of his paternal and maternal families.

11. He was very pious, never tired of saying his prayer-beads.

12. Oh Allah forgive him and have mercy on him out of the mercy which is without end.

13. Lighten his tomb and reward him for all his good works.

14. Give him shade on the Day of the Resurrection and may his good deeds outweigh his bad deeds.

15. And put him with the Chosen One who excelled all mortals. Give him to drink the water of Kausara.

16. And take him to the Paradise of Firdausi and place him with the Prophet.

17. May he see the Almighty. Oh Allah receive my prayer for the sake of the Prophet, for the Almighty is generous.

18. Unite him with all muslims for the sake of the Prophet.

19. Oh death is bitter The grief I feel for the death of Buhari overflows and still accumulates.

20. Sanko, Bello, Hassan, Habsatu, Fadima Na'Inna - their deaths have sorely grieved me.

21. What can requite the grief of the heart? Nothing, except the realization that these deaths are a lesson for us.

22. We thank Allah for those who are still alive we pray they may live, for Allah is bountiful.

23. May Allah give a long life to Atiku, for the sake of the Prophet.

24. May He fortify muslims and cause Islam to overcome and crush unbelief. May the Sunna be revived and be victorious.

25. May Allah speedily destroy Maradi, Anka, Zamfara Taibiri and Zauma. Allah I make my prayer to you.

26. For the sake of the Prophet who excels all mortals, the leader of the Saints.

27. And Badawi and Rufa'i and Dasuki. Also Shehu Degel. May Allah be with them.

28. I give thanks to Allah. I have concluded my poem. May Allah receive it with the grace of the Prophet.

29. May blessings fall on the relatives and companions and followers of the Prophet who have supported the Sunna.

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APPENDIX III

Sonnere Bello Trl. Jean Body 1831

1. I rely on God the Almighty, the Pure the
Omnipotent to assist me to accept what He
has enacted.

To help me because I am bereft. Only Allah can
ease my bereavement, for He is all-powerful.

Allah is the Almighty King.

2. I rely on the most Excellent of mortals and
invoke peace upon him
And all his relatives and companions and all
others who became
muslims and learned from him.

3. In tears I call upon him and compose this poem
for the Caliph.

To soothe my heart which is full of love,
in the face of the death which has occurred,

And in remembrance of the Shehu.

4. I am bereft of the great and lasting love and
absolute mutual confidence I had with my
brother.

His magnaminity, his literary instruction
- I shall never enjoy the like again.

I cannot describe everything: but will explain
just a few points.

5. I toss and turn and return again to
Allah the Holy on whom I rely

I weep as I say my prayer beads and when I
try to sleep I turn restlessly in grief
as I remember Bello.

I pray God will re-Unite us.

6. Unite us in the realms of Paradise, oh God
most Holy, Gracious, You can effect this.

My sins cause me to be cleft with fear but I
still hope for Your mercy.

For Your munificence is unending.

7. I am like a small chicken whose mother is
dead, who cries;

Or like someone left in the wilderness alone,
who how s, whose ears are closed
(to those calling to him?)

God alone can wipe away my grief.

8. I am like an infant who has been left pitiful
and enfeebled.

Without mother or father to care for me,
That is how I look on this occurrence.

Verily only the grace of God can help me

9. He helped me in every respect as far as my
religion and my world affairs were
concerned, it is well known

He was my teacher. He helped people with
their affairs - Fulanis, Hausas, Fuzus,
his family.

He had concern for their welfare. He did
things according to Religion.

10. He was upright, exceedingly generous, patient:
he spread learning and explained matters.

He was sensible. He brought back prodigals
using his wits to overcome problems.

May Allah help us for You are Merciful.

11. In his day he was unique in his status among
scholars and non scholars alike.

He assuaged peoples griefs and fears, he was
a place of refuge, a haven,

Listen to what I say.

12. He had a fine character, he was merciful to
the poor, he honoured and befriended people.

He was gracious to strangers and generous to
them, looked after their interests, fed
them.

It was his nature to be very generous.

13. He was never ill-tempered, he was pleasant to
everyone; only if the law was broken did
he become angry.

In which case he was implacable and could not
be appeased. When he regained equanimity
he was calm.

These were his characteristics from his boyhood.

14. Oh Allah bestow on him Your blessings,
Your mercy, and perfume him

In his grave with Your favours: light up
his tomb; give him honour

For the sake of the Prophet of Honour I make
my plea

15. On the Day of Resurrection may he be saved by the grace of the Prophet

And drink from Kausara, and be taken to Paradise the abode of the Prophet.

For the sake of him who excelled, I make my plea.

16. May he see the face of the Prophet the Chosen One, and may he be with those who see God.

May he be united with his father and mother and all those who have trodden the Excellent Path

For the sake of the Prophet our leader.

17. I pray that Allah will give us aid now that Bello is gone and give-victory to his successor.

May he have a long life and strengthen religion, as Bello did

For the sake of Prophet I make this plea.

18. My poem is completed. May Allah receive it for what it is. I give thanks

And invoke blessings on the Prophet, his companions and those who have been given honour and Karama.

I ask for the illumination of the Prophet.

19. The date is 1253 from the Hijira of the Prophet to Madina.

Count and see. You know the place to which he made his Hijira

And say "Allah is our Helper".

APPENDIX &&& IV

Sennere Moluna Trl. Jean Body 1838

1. I give thanks to the Lord of Creation. I advise the muslim community ---

2. To stop grieving for the dead in the fashion of the ignorant,

3. The Shehu told us not to err and prohibited extravagent wailing,

4. Cry and shed tears of grief for the loved one and to relieve your pain.

5. We must acquiesce to the will of Allah and pray for recompense for the loss of Hu'Inna,

6. For she was like the two pronged tree (used as a ladder) to the muslim community Her loss is a great sadness.

7. She succoured the community with her many acts of charity, feeding people

8. Relatives and strangers alike, she showed no discrimination. She gave, and she urged people to study.

9. She organized the production of provisions when an exp&dition was mounted. She had a lot of responsibilities

10. She sorted problems out and urged people to live peaceably. She put an end to quarrelling.

11. She had studied a great deal and had deep understanding of what she had read. She was pious: a most admirable person.

12. She fasted a lot: she urged muslims to do good deeds and desist from wrongdoing. She went into religious retreats

13. Keeping silence. May the Lord have mercy on her and give her the grace to give the correct answers.

14. May her tomb be full of light and may she be carried to the Paradise of Firdausi.

15. Where she will be united on the Day of the Resurrection with the Shehu and Maimuna and Inna (Garka).

16. And all muslims, in the place of refuge, in the name of the Most Excellent of mortals who was lifted into Heaven.

17. For the sake of the Excellent One may we see the One-Only Almighty, may He put us on the Path.

18. And may we see Abdulkadir Jelani and Shehu and all the muslims.

19. Say "Amen", say "Allah receive our prayer, the Bountiful is Allah.

20. I thank Allah and invoke peace on the Prophet who Excels all mortals.

21. May the blessings of Allah be upon him and his relatives and followers.

22. And all those who had the light, who revived Religion and followed the Sunna.

I end here in the year of the Hijira 1254

APPENDIX V

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

THE REMEDY AGAINST THE FEARFUL THINGS

OF THE HEREAFTER

1. (a) Hold fast to the remedy of the commander of the Believers, you know,

(b) He has made it clear to us that it is something useful, you understand.

2. (a) He has explained the remedy against being strangled by death,

(b) It is to give a beast as alms, so it is said, or that one should make firm his intention to do so.

3. (a) (the remedy against the fear of meeting) Nakīr and Munkar is to give alms in money,

(b) Make ready, for the meeting with these two is something terrible.

4. (a) The remedy against the darkness of the grave is to give the ladle of fura as alms, include also,

(b) The constriction of the grave, make cakes, do not delay.

5. (a) The remedy against the worms of the grave is to give a lump of meat as alms, you understand, O community,

(b) Cease being slack, here is the remedy, here it is, do not change it.

6. (a) Thus also the scorpions of the grave, seek the remedy against them,

(b) Buy sandals, and give them as alms, there is nothing difficult about that.

7. (a) There are biting ants and snakes, seek the remedy against them,

(b) Give as alms your bedding. At a guess I think you understand.

8. (a) The standing of the Day of Resurrection, listen you should give threshed grain as alms,

(b) By God I bear witness, that that standing there is nothing like it for suffering.

9. (a) The receiving of the book in the right hand, we are going to talk about it,

(b) (The thing to do in order to ensure that you receive it in the right hand), is to give alms of a gown. This will be enough for you if you have understood, you should be able to do it.

10. (a) As for the Bridge, the remedy against failing to cross it is only a turban, the lake of al-Kawthār, what is needed to ensure that you drink from it is,

(b) Only a ladle and a small calabash, give it to the traveller.

11. (a) The beholding of Muhammad, say, may God cause us to experience it,

11. (b) A small gourd is what is given to ensure this, let the diligent one hear.

12. (a) May God make us to behold the salvation of the lord of mankind,

(b) You Muslims, all of you, say, 'amen' my intention is fulfilled.

13. (a) I invoke God's blessing upon his family and similarly upon his companions,

(b) And upon the Followers of the Companions.

APPENDIX VI

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

WARNING TO THOSE WHO DON'T FAST

1. (a) With the name of God, I am going to compose a poem, help me.
   (b) Our men and women, you should all give ear.

2. (a) When the moon of the month of fasting rises, let us not drink water,
   (b) As for food, let us not eat it during the day, unless we forget.

3. (a) At the beginning of the month of Ramadān, the intention is made firm,
   (b) For thirty days except in the case of necessity or forgetfulness.

4. (a) If there is no necessity (for breaking the fast) and no forgetfulness
   (b) You know there is no justification which may cause us to drink water.

5. (a) If there is doubt as to the sighting of the moon, do not drink,
   (b) During the day. We should restrain our mouths we should not drink water.

6. (a) If we are told that it was sighted yesterday night,
   (b) You know there is no doubt, that we must compensate for it.

7. (a) If two reliable Muslims see (the moon) there
should be no drinking of water

(b) Muslims, truly, it is obligatory that we should
not drink water.

8. (a) If only one man sees it, whoever he may be,

(b) What he says is of weak authority because he has
no one to support his words.

9. (a) Twelve people are allowed to eat during the
course of the month,

(b) Four do not have to pay back, eight have to
pay back.

10. (a) A very young person, an old person, one who is
suffering from severe thirst and a very weak person,

(b) These are the four whom we said do not have to
pay back.

11. (a) Traveller, sick person, a lunatic, a pregnant
woman,

(b) And a person who faints, they are the five who
have to pay back.

12. (a) And the woman who breast feeds, and one in her
period or with the blood of childbirth,

(b) If they do not fast, they are the eight who
have to pay back.

13. (a) They should not abstain from fasting recklessly,

(b) If they do abstain recklessly, their punishment
will be heavy.

14. (a) If you feed sixty people you have paid back plus a day's fast

(b) If you fulfil this, you have paid back what you owe.

15. (a) If you fail to do this, then you must free a slave (let people testify to this)

(b) And also perform the day's fast which you failed to do.

16. (a) If you are unable to do that, then you must fast for two months consecutively,

(b) And fast a day more, the one you failed to do.

17. (a) If a pregnant woman breaks the fast, let her go and enquire,

(b) Perhaps she should give a measure of food when she repays.

18. (a) And the woman who breast-feeds who broke her fast, we say she should ask,

(b) She should give a measure of food (in addition) after paying back.

19. (a) The traveller, the sick person, the mad person, let him ask,

(b) Together with the woman with the blood of childbirth, the ruling concerning them is that they should pay back.

20. (a) An old person and a person who has to drink water all the time,

(b) The ruling concerning them is to give a measure of corn every evening as repayment.

21. (a) A very young person and an invalid, I am not very learned,

(b) Ask the learned whether they are to pay back.

22. (a) There are two with them, for I have heard there are six,

(b) The woman in her period, the person who has fainted, they are to pay back.

23. (a) If it is not an obligatory fast, then it becomes voluntary,

(b) And what I have heard from the Shehu is that in this case, it is not necessary to pay back.

24. (a) Muslims, it is to you that I refer, I have no concern with infidels,

(b) Those who break the fast should remember they have to pay back.

25. (a) There are eleven months of the year for paying back,

(b) If they pass, then a measure of food should be given in addition to paying back.

26. (a) If you are slack and the month of Sha'abān comes and goes,

(b) This is the reason why you should give a measure of food in addition to paying back.

27. (a) The cutting of the skin (for medicinal purposes) is allowed,

27. (b) If you want (kaho) you should contact a barber who does not fast.

28. (a) The cutting of tribal marks, the putting of eye cosmetic, and putting medicine through the anus,
(b) And the putting on of scent, may only be done after breaking the fast.

29. (a) If you have intention to fast and the menstrual flow stops
(b) At the time of the early morning meal, it is not permitted to break the fast by drinking water.

30. (a) Let us not taste anything with our mouths during the day,
(b) Nor indulge in love play with women until we have broken our fast.

31. (a) Let us avoid anything that causes an emission of semen,
(b) Coupling and its like, all of you, you have heard.

32. (a) If you come to your wife and she has finished her period,
(b) And you are a traveller, you can break the fast.

33. (a) Take note, the early morning meal, do not take it in the morning,
(b) If dawn has broken, do not break your fast.

34. (a) When it is evening, take note of the fact,
(b) When the sun sets, break your fast immediately.

35. (a) If you have not said Asham prayer, come and ask,

(b) Abstaining from the early morning meal does not enable you to break your fast.

36. (a) The ear and the tooth are not to be treated with medicine,

(b) In broad daylight until after we have broken our fast.

37. (a) If in case of necessity, drink, then enquire

(b) You should make ready to repay after we have drunk water.

38. (a) Let us refrain from useless talk, let us restrain our mouths,

(b) Let us not frequent the palace, let us stay away from the market.

39. (a) Let us not follow those who sit and play draughts

(b) When we are fasting, let us restrain our legs and hands.

40. (a) If not to the mosque, then to the Hallam (learned scholar)

(b) Or to your farm, do not be careless concerning these three things brother.

41. (a) Let us go back to the King who has no consort,

(b) It is with him that there is wealth, cast away ambition my brother.

42. (a) Who is he? What can a mere human being do?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

GRAVE SINS THAT TURN A MUSLIM INTO A KAFIR

1. (a) Let us give thanks to the Lord of the heavens, the Lord of office in truth,

   (b) O Muslim community of God, you hear.

2. (a) Let us invoke the blessings and peace of God upon our prophet,

   (b) His family, his Companions and the Followers.

3. (a) Accept my poem, I am going to preach in order that you may hear,

   (b) O community, stop being forgetful, cast away worldly things.

4. (a) Truly, there is deception in the world, it is like one who roasts,

   (b) You who delay repentance, take it up, let us make up our minds (to repent).

5. (a) The repentance that makes one to follow what God commands,

   (b) And stops one from doing what He prohibits is the true repentance.

6. (a) I am going to explain the grave sins, fully,

   (b) So that you may hear and stop committing them brethren, O Muslims who follow (God's command).

7. (a) Because they turn the one who commits them into an infidel,

7. (b) If he does not repent until death comes upon him.

8. (a) Backbiting, pride, malice and envy,

(b) Thus also stealing as well as deception and ostentation

9. (a) Adultery, sodomy, embezzlement and bribery,

(b) Suspiciousness and swindling, hate them, they are of the world.

10. (a) Cursing a Muslim and intrigue, leave them alone,

(b) Fraud, usury, those who sell at an exhorbitant price, pay heed.

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11. (a) Also the property of orphans, those who misappropriate it tyrannously,

(b) Let them understand, it is as if they are eating Hell Fire itself.

12. (a) Telling lies, hypocrisy, anyone who commits them,

(b) He will burn because it is the way of Satan that he follows.

13. (a) Pride, tyranny and gazing at persons other than the lawful [illegible],

(b) Disagreement with parents, he who angers them,

14. (a) Also mischief-making and indicating people with the lips

(b) And giving presents unwillingly, there is no reward for that.

15. (a) Cursing Muslims and vilifying them, likewise

(b) Giving presents unwillingly, there is no reward for that.

(a) Also greed, deception and too much begging,

(b) He who makes use of what is forbidden, he will not be saved, so that you should understand.

(a) Taking people's property by force, foul talk and adultery, all

(b) And constantly pretending to pray so that people will give you alms, repent of practising ostentation.

(a) Pointing at a Muslim and indicating him with the lips,

(b) And signalling in a secret fashion, stop them, they are evil.

19. (a) Abusing a Muslim and intimidating him

(b) Because of greed, it is straying from the right path, it is contrary to good guidance.

20. (a) And becoming angry over insignificant things, and frivolity,

(b) Using the time of prayer for worldly activities.

21. (a) Jealousy, hatred, also disregard for relationship,

(b) Hatred among the Muslims, there is no good in it.

22. (a) Also failing to obey the rulings of authority,

(b) And the call of a qāḍi, he who refuses (to answer has committed a sin).

23. (a) Also embezzlement you hear, these are the paths of Hell Fire,

(b) And robbery, homicide, those who commit them will burn (in Hell Fire).

24. (a) Also young women in the town,

(b) If there is no necessity for them to be there, let them repent in truth.

25. (a) Only in cases of necessity, to eat and drink and go to market,

(b) Or for the purpose of what is obligatory on the individual or for the purpose of enquiring about religion.

26. (a) Men, let them stop wearing gowns that touch the ground,

(b) And those made of silk and those adorned with gold.

27. (a) Also men fleeing from the line of battle, if they

(b) Out-number the infidels, you should stay.

28. (a) Also false testimony and prying (into Muslims private affairs)

(b) And defamation of character of the God-fearing, you hear

29. (a) Making trouble with neighbours, backbiting and much quarrelling,

(b) Being ill-natured towards relatives and being hot-tempered.

30. (a) And magic and false allegations and a woman who bewitches her husband,

(b) For all of these, there is no salvation, you should all repent quickly.

31. (a) Also pride and boasting and also extravagance,

(b) And consuming wealth in seeking to follow the world.

32. (a) Also living with a tyrant or an adulterer

32. (b) Except in the case of necessity, having no other alternative.

33. (a) Likewise he who loves infidels

(b) Although he knows (that they are infidels) he will burn (in Hell) you hear.

34. (a) Likewise asking a magician about the hidden future,

(b) Only God knows what is hidden, He alone.

35. (a) For he who discards these (sins) will obtain forgiveness

(b) From the Fire of Hell, O community, repent in truth.

36. (a) Likewise the drinking of alcohol, he who sells it, you hear, (will burn in Hell),

(b) The Bori cult is mixed with idolatory so it is.

37. (a) I have explained all the mortal sins for you to know

(b) The grave sins, so that you can repent in truth.

38. (a) Let us make good our deeds, brethren, let us prepare

(b) What Allah orders, let us all make up our minds (to obey).