CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Position of the Malam in Habarcen Hausa

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Introduction

The word 'Habarce' is derived from Arabic 'Khabar' meaning story. The story can be 'Tatsuniya' or Legend. The Hausa language borrowed the word and modified it as 'Habarce' which referred to an oral or written story. Therefore, this paper dwells on concept of 'Habarce or Habarcen Tatsuniya' (Tahir 2012).

In the Hausa tradition, the oldest woman of the household or neighborhood, the grandmother is the "master" storyteller. Her advanced age is a symbol of a deep experiential understanding of life as its unfolds in its many facets across time and she is culturally regarded as an important source of knowledge production, preservation, and transmission.

The vital role that the Malam plays in the process of socialization in society has been recognized by the 'Habarcen Tatsuniya' constituting a major, early source for the liberation of the imagination. Built largely on fantasy, the 'Habarcen Tatsuniya' has therapeutic, emotional, and cathartic usefulness as well as didactic functions.

This 'Habarcen Tatsuniya' provides a passageway through which society confirms its strengths and growth strategies, while inducting new generations into its life-flow. The influence of the tale is felt even more strongly in oral cultures than in those that are script-centered.

While the narrator may become a performer in the process of the narration, the audience plays the multiple functions of listener and active participant-commentator, actor, or musician. The folktale is popular literary art in the true sense of the expression; it is a literary art form directly created, controlled, and enjoyed by the people across space and time. When in the telling, for example, a member of the audience contributes to the narration

with a statement such as 'Ta zo mu ji ta' or when the narrator directs a phrase such as sentence such as "My children, you must listen carefully to what this animal said . . ." to the audience, the comments serve to obscure the passage of time by suggesting that the once upon a time is now, and that in the world of the tale the past and the present can converge. The tale, together with its importance, is thus drawn from a distant past and made to approximate the realities of the present time. These and other similar comments are sometimes made in order to create the space for a song or a contribution, or to allow for a reversal of roles between narrator and audience. The intervention may also be made so as to slow down the flow of the narration or to underscore the effective-ness and relevance of the story for the rest of the audience.

The Malam and His Position In Habarcen Hausa

The Malam offers help and gives advice without being asked. The position of malam in 'Habarce' is considerable due to the position offered to him as a character. In every content of the 'Habarce', the Malam touches on special elements of life, that is why people with problems come to seek his help and advice, because he is learned and religious, and Allah accept his prayers. Koki's mother asks him to give her the charm so that her daughter may beget a son. The Malam gives her the necessary medicine, and later the daughter that is Koki has a child.

A man came to him again with his problem, and Malam should tell him the way to obtain Allah's mercy. The Malam advises him to give up lying and by doing so the man succeeds. Another position of Malam is a woman came to him and asks him to give her something that can help her control her husband. Instead of giving her any medicine, Malam advises her and teaches her the best ways to win the full attention of her husband.

The Malam as a Main Character

In some Habarcen Tatsuniyar Hausa in which the Malam appears as a main character is designed to prove the truth of his word, but his main character is derived from his learning, and the religion which gives him supernatural powers. Also the Malam is

experienced and utilizes his knowledge in helping people to avoid punishment basically on condition that they give sadaka.

Therefore, children especially girls, acquired the tales as they still perform important roles as judge, advisor and generally as agent of social and political indoctrination. (Abubakar, 1982).

The Malam in Habarcen Tatsuniyar Hausa appears to be an educator who teaches students and puts them on the right path. His school usually located in a mosque, serves the dual purpose of a place of worship and a school. His school can also be located in other places, which can be seen in Habarcen tatsuniyar Hausa and with that, he played a great role as an educator in the Hausa tale.

The Beautiful Girl

In another Habarcen Tatsuniyar Hausa Malam advises the father of a girl who has no equel in beauty, that when the time comes for marrying off his daughter he should not give her to a young man whose parents are still alive, but rather to an orphan. The father follows the advice, which proves to be very useful. Later she was taken by evil, and it is an orphan who followed her and saved her life. (Ahmad, A. 1981).

The Malam as a main character teaches morality accordingly to Habarcen Tatsuniyar Hausa, as he shows good deeds to the students so that they can put in practice. He also shows them the bad effect of otherwise so that they can avoid.

The Malam and Fir'auna Town

The Malam give an example in Fir'auna town when he advised them to stop doing bad deeds. The people of Fir'auna town became exemplary and as result the attitude of the ruling class also changed from bad to good and so on.

The Malam also develops his community economically, for he teaches his students, how to farm and sell farm produce. Farming is a great source of income to the typical rural Hausa man.

The Malam helps in ensuring better socialization among the people. He does this by ensuring good human relationship among his students. Since they are sitting together, learning together and even eating together, their relationship is sound. This can be also be located in Habarcen Tatsuniyar Hausa.

The Malam performs miracles. He crosses the river by placing pieces of paper on the surface of water and stepping on

them. Also the malam can make someone blind by spitting in his eyes, and so on.

Conclusion

Tales are narrated traditionally. They contain traditional aspects and beliefs until the advent of Islam into Hausa land. This influence brought so many changes in Habarcen Tatsuniyar Hausa. Hausa use aspects of Islam in their tales. The Malam in Hausa society performs important roles as judge, advisor, and generally as agent of social and political indoctrination. (Abubakar, 1982). This paper has emphasized the importance of 'Habarcen Hausa' in maintaining the literary tradition and heritage of the people. The knowledge contained in 'Habarcen Hausa' will continue to be relevant for many generations to come. Furthermore, the concept of Habarcen Hausa and, the position of the Malam on as morality, ethics, politics, economics, social lifestyle of the people, their administration and many other matters was also discussed.

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