CLASSICAL HAUSA POETRY IN GASKIYA TA FI KWABO, 1939-1960

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ABSTRACT

Poetry is one of the genres generally used as a means of communication and essentially for propaganda and enlightenment purposes, it is generally accepted that, poetry is a great treasure that stored a great deal of people's culture, psychology and their worldview. However, the paper discusses the general thematic view of the Hausa classical poetry as a means of mobilization which is basically for propaganda and enlightenment in Northern Nigeria. Examples were cited of some poems composed for such purposes that were published in Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo newspaper from 1939-1960. The paper went further to recover the thematic thrust in the content of these poems which include among others education, political, economic, religious and social issue.

INTRODUCTION

From time immemorial, writing has become the most effective means of communication. Not only that it helped in exhibiting traditional culture and other spheres of human endeavour, the history of every human society rarely survived without being fictitious if not richly documented and preserved. Poetry is one of Hausa literary genres which utilize the human accent as a prime vehicle of message and delivery from one person to another. Its dominance was plain as the nose on your face particularly in motivating and gingering the people in any altercation. The aim of this paper is to present and describe some Hausa classical poetry from *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*.

"WAfA" (Oral Poetry), was also used in mobilizing the people in Hausaland typically among the most effective and popular methods of spreading messages. [1] The use of oral poetry, especially the oral version of the written text became the most effective way of spreading the message of the Jihad by Shehu and his followers.

Sani (1989) describes Dr. East as unforgetful in Hausa written literature in Northern Nigeria without mentioning his contributions, and also praise his concern by initiating written poetry in *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* editions. The establishment of *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* was an additional opportunity for the Northern people to write their poetry in their own language in the paper. [2]

According to Furniss, (1999), Poetry in Hausa land was a medium for the communication of Islamic ideas to the local populace, and took its place alongside Arabic

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1 Umar Faruk Jibril, Community Mobilization in Traditional Societies: A contextual Appraisal of the Role of Oramedia in the 1804 Uthman Ian Fodio Jihad Movement.(2005) p.9

2 Sani,A.A. 'Neo-colonialism and literature in Nigeria: The case of the Northern Nigerian Publication Company Limited, Zaria, 1966-1980's , 6-9 March, 1989.

poetry, and so on . The significance of the Hausa version was that it formed a key weapon in the battle for the hearts and minds of the ordinary people. The battle went on in conjunction with the military campaigns of the reformist jihad of the early nineteenth century.[2]

Amin, (2005), explains that Hausa poetry has continued to flourish as a vehicle for conveying religious, political, and, to some extent, secular ideas, yet until recently, it has not been explicitly used for religio-political mobilization as had been done in the Century of the reform movement of Usman Dan-Fodio, or as had been tried by Sultan Attahiru Ahmadu II in 1903 to resist the British occupation of the Caliphate. A quick glance at the politically oriented poems during the colonial and post-colonial era down to recent times will show that they are more aimed at propagating party ideals or government programmes. [3]

Jaggar. (2001), Hausa is used extensively in commercial, governmental and educational spheres, and in the mass media. There are several Hausa language newspapers, including *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* ('Truth is worth more than a penny') , published twice a week in kaduna, northern Nigeria, and book publishing is active .[4]

A GENERAL THEMATIC VIEW OF THE CLASSICAL POETRY

Hausa classical poetry as mentioned above was a vehicle for mobilizing and **basically** for propaganda or the like. From the foregoing it is apparent that the Hausa poets, although focussing their lenses on patriotism unlike others poets whose preoccupation is romantic. Even though it is one of the vehicle which the people of northern Nigeria people showcase their opinion and provide positive reception to the colonial masters in order to weigh their good relationship, there by giving them sovereignty, and how to uplift their community in terms of Education Health and other social activities . For instance, *Waƒar Jihar Arewa (The Northern province)* of Abubakar Ladan[5] *(19th December, 1958) Education;* for instance *Waƒar Kwaleji* (College) of Malam Muhammad Bawa Azare.[6] Second Edition (February, 1939.) also independence; for instance,*Waƒar Murnar kar~ar Mulkin kan Arewa* (Appreciation of Northern independence) of Malam Aliyu A. J. (13 March, 1959.) and for Health that is *Waƒar Renon Jarirai* of Malam Jauro Ishiyaku. Also for (Gaskiya annual ceremony) *Waƒar Bikin cika shekarar Gaskiya* of Malam Nata'ala Masinjan Al}alin Sakkwato. (11 April, 1945.)[7] *Waƒar Makarantar Shari'a ta Kano* (Kano school of law) of Sarkin zazzau Ja'afaru, 130 edition, (31, January, 1945.)[8] *Waƒar da soja suka yi wa sarkin katsina*. (Northern Army Poet for emir of Katsina)[9] another one for socio-political dogma, *Waƒar Jihar Arewa*. (The Northern poetry)[10] of Abubakar Ladan Zaria. *Waƒar zuwa Ga Mai Girma Sarkin Gwandu.* (

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[1] Furniss, G. *Poetry, Prose and Popular Culture in Hausa.* University Press, Ibadan. (1996), p197

[3]Muhammad Lawal Aminu REFORMISM AS A THEME IN HAUSA RELIGIO-POLITICAL POETRY November 18, 2005

[4] Jaggar. Hausa London Oriental and African Language Library (2001), p. 1
[5] Gaskiya ta fi kwabo 19 December, 1958.
[3]Gaskiya ta fi kwabo Second edition February, 1939. p 4
[7] Gaskiya ta fi kwabo 11 April, 1945, p2
[8] 130 Edition {anwar Gaskiya, 31 January, 1945, p10
[9] {anwar Gaskiya, 131 Edition, January, 1945.
[10] Gaskiya ta fi kwabo, 19 December, 1958. P14

To the Emir of *Gwandu*) of Yusufu kantu. With reference to health, there is *Wa}a a Kan Tsabta* . (Health care) of Malama Mairamu[11]

OBSERVASION OF THEIR THEMATIC POINTS OF VIEW

Although these poets based on their thematic preoccupation, which cut across all aspects of Hausa culture, do not discriminate a Hausa man base on his religion. An artistic Hausa man always goes alone with his traditional and cultural heritage. Likewise women were not left behind in advising other women to live in peace with their counterparts, for examples a poem written by Malama Delu, Uwargidan Malam Yusufu Sufi Funtuwa, Bampai, Kano, reads thus:[12]

Kuma yin biyayya Gun miji alfanu ce,
Kuma girmamashi
Da yi abin daya ce maki,
Su ne ake so gun ki mai yin aure.
Kuma ba musu ko,
{an}ani ki bari duka,
Haka nan hushi,
Da abin daya saki duk,
Ke dai ki yi shi saboda girmama aure.
Sannan ki yo ha}uri,
A kowane lokaci,
In kin ri}e haka,
Kin bi hanyar gaskiya,
Kuma ba ki tozarta a domin aure.
Mata ma'aura masu,
'ya ya ga batu,
Allah Ta'ala jallah,
Shi ya fa]a haka,
'ya 'yammu baiwa ce a domin aure.
Kuma zan jawabi,
[an gajere gun ku duk,

Na garga]e ku,
Maza da mata duk muzo,
Domin mu girmama yin shi haddin aure.

As plainly seen, the poet is pointing out that the culture of Hausa Traditional people cannot be transcended conventionally or racially.

Education is one of the heritage in Hausa community, which lead their people in achieving their aims and objectives in day to day activities, even before the advent of colonial masters: Example from Malam Muhammadu Bawa Azare[13]

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[11] Gaskiya ta fi kwabo, 23 May, 1958.
[12] Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo 24, April, 1964.
[13] Gaskiya Ta Fi kwabo 2 Edition February, 1939. pp-4

Idan an yi ba}on Bature garin nan,
Ya kan zo ya zaga ya duba da murna,
Yana al'ajab da sanin 'yan College.
Idan ingilishi ka ke so ka ji,
Irin na Bature na can Ingilishi,
Ka zo nan ka zauna wurin 'yan College.
Wurare na girma na aikin }asashe,
Idan dai ana so a sa Ingilishi,
A kan bar Akawu, a]au]an College.
A Higher College ba a son wasanni,
Kowane yaro yana }o}ari
Ya zauna cikinta, ya zam]an College.

Malam Muhammad Azare expresses the idea and the excitement in education especially in the North by showcasing the status and the importance of those who possessed knowledge in the Hausa society.

More again, Health is essential in every community including Hausa. This was examined by Malama Mairamu thus:[14]

'Yan uwa mata sai ku motsa ku ji,
Zan garga]e ku a kan tsabta.
Ku lura da duk abin da na ce
Ku gyara inda nay yi ~ata.
Wanka , wanki da share gida,
Su ne manya a wurin tsabta.
Ko cikin manya da babba kuma,
Haka ma a cikin sha'anin tsabta.

Wanka dai kowa ya san shi,
Shi ne babba a wurin tsabta.

Kulliyomin sai ki yiwo shi uku,
Safe, rana da yamma duk tsabta.
Sa'an nan wanki na kayan gida,
Da tufa su ma su san tsabta.
Kar ki bar kwanoni duk dau]a,
Ko da sauran abinci ba tsabta.

Basically, the poem comprises of hygienic condition of Hausa society, particularly the role of women in their connubial home.

Likewise babies were included in showing concern for their mother's thus:[15]

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[14] Gaskiya Ta Fi kwabo, 23 may, 1958.

Zan }are zamena gareku ku ji shi,
farko wurin kwana na jariri an so.
A yi masa mahalli wurin kwanansa,
da uwa da }a an so su kwana wuri dabam-dabam.
Domin wurin barci kar a matse shi,
Shinfi}a-sai a yi masa tsabta ko wane.
A gadonsa lallai ne a sa mai laushi,
Da abin rufa duk a shanya su kwana biyu.
Wanki da guga yakamata a yi musu,
Haka za mai abin sha ko wane.

This is an attractive and thrilling poem where the duty of mother was mentioned. Certainly, this is what the world is calling for – child care. Even United Nations had made a clarion call to save the life of the babies or the younger generation, for posterity.

A glimpse at the classical poems during the colonial era of *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* down to recent times will show that they are more aimed at propagating political ethics. For instance, a poem by malam Garba Maitebur Tashar Kuka Kano:[16]

Rana ta za~e nan fa sun ga ba}in ciki,
Kuka suke da idonsu ranar gaskiya.
{uri'ar salama ta yi wo ambaliya,
Sashin sawaba sai kiyashi gaskiya.
Jama'ar salama duk ana ta farin ciki,
Ikon Allah shi ya bayyana gaskiya.
Daga soma sauraron rizal Nijeriya,
Sashin salama an yi gaza gaskiya.
Sashin sawaba tagumi daba}in ciki,
Sun }ora hannu sun yi kuka gaskiya.
Su ba kujeru ba ku}in ajiya nasu,
Arna suna }ararsu kotu a gaskiya.
Ku shigo salama don ku dai na ba}in ciki,
Ku shigo sira}al-musta}ima ta gaskiya.
Mai }in sawaba sai ka dinga fari ciki,
In dai kana }aunar salamar gaskiya.
Tamfar a ce dalma a ce zinariya,
Haka ma sawaba kan salamar gaskiya.

Obviously, from the light of the discussion so far, generally speaking, the category of poetry under study is thematically Hausa philosophical ideologies. However, some portions are more explicitly so because of the issues they raised.

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[15] Gaskiya Ta Fi kwabo, 6th October, 1961. pp-9
[16] Gaskiya Ta Fi kwabo , 22 January, 1965. pp-11

The aims and objectives of this classical poetry is clearly stated in some of the poems that are presented. They show the philosophical point of view of the people and political propaganda of the time.

For instance a poem by Abubakar Ladan Zaria[17]

Babu amfani ga ilmi,
In akwi rashawa da zulmi,
In ana kwaJayi mu}ami,
Dole ai aiki da ilmi,
Kar mu sha kùnya jihar Arewa.
Tun da jalla ya taimake mu,
Za mu kai har lokacimmu,
Na mu son 'yancin }asarmu,
Sai mu tashi ilahirinmu,
Mu yi aiki don jihar Arewa.
Kar ka }allafa zuciyarka,
Kan abin da ya gagare ka,
Kar ka hangi na]anuwanka,
Don mutum ne shi kamar kamarka,
Kai dai yi adon jihar Arewa.

From the above poem, one can understand that patriotism is one of the principles which make an individual to be an excellent member of the community, for instance:

Na mu son 'yancin}asarmu
Sai mu tashi ilahirunmu,
Mu yi aiki don jihar Arewa.

The poem awakes and charge people to be patriotic and thus urge them to struggle for the emancipation and freedom of northern Nigeria. In the same vein, the Hausas believe that to accomplish *'Yancin kai* i.e. **struggle for freedom** there are certain important preconditions that must be observed. Hence, it is acceptable among the Hausa that for one to achieve certain goal he should be patriotic in all human endeavours.

CONCLUSION

This paper, through the study of classical poetry published in *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo,* the only Government owned newspaper which was established in January 1939 tried to describe socio-political views of people of Northern Nigeria. The paper tries to provide sub-themes within the context of the important role played by classical poet in mobilizing the people of Nigeria, especially through education, which is so essential in an individual's life and society in general. Northern Nigeria has multi-religious and multi-cultural background; it is therefore not possible to distinguish a Hausa man based on religion or Western education in any circumstance. The traditional lives of the people of Northern Nigerian have different enlightenment and their location may not be necessarily connected. Finally, it is hoped that

[17] Gaskiya Ta Fi kwabo 19 December, 1958: pp-14

this classical poetry elucidates, how this most over crowded municipalities in the Northern. Nigeria refers to social issues in their poetry as published in *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo.*

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