

The Politics of Exposure: Contested Cosmopolitanisms, Revelation of secrets, and
Intermedial Reflexivity in Hausa Popular Expression

By

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Dedication

For my grandmother, Nannie, Louise Brown McCoy, my role model and the maker of my American home. May I have your grace, wisdom, hospitality, humour, love, and sense of adventure when I am 92.

For my family, my parents, whose decision in 1988 to move to Nigeria “for four years” transformed our lives forever. I cannot thank you enough for taking that step into the unknown: Dad, my wise mentor, for your tireless pursuit of truth, your faith in humanity, and your big open mind; Mom, for your patient love and quiet faithfulness that have held our family together. For Nathaniel, whose memory will always be a part of who we are. For Daniel and Laura, whose single-minded pursuit of your dreams has inspired me in my own quest. For Tassneem, who has so courageously made her way in this world. For Katrina, the newest addition to our family whose irreverent humour and generosity has helped keep me sane for the past few years. And for Ruth, my chosen sister for the past twenty-three years, who has encouraged me through laughter and tears, passion and quiet.

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Preface

My excitement about the thriving Hausa language literary and popular art scene in Northern Nigeria began in an unlikely way. In 2003, I started the MA programme at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, planning to research and write on contemporary Nigerian literature in English. However, because the department required that I become proficient in an African language, I chose to study Hausa, as I already spoke a little. My family has lived in Nigeria since 1988 and in the north-central city of Jos since 1991, where I began learning Hausa, at my father's insistence, during a school break. When re-visiting Hausa at Madison, I thought that the language learning opportunities would give me more of a chance to come back to Nigeria to continue my interactions with writers in English that I had begun during a 2001 Fulbright IIE fellowship. So in June to August 2005, I returned to Nigeria and went to Sokoto on the Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship to continue learning the language.

On a visit to Jos before I travelled to Sokoto, I asked a Hausa friend of my parents in Jos if there was a Hausa equivalent of Nollywood movies that I could watch to improve my Hausa. He said, "Sosai mana! Of course. There are novels too!" I had no idea. Christian friends expressed worry about me going so far north. They warned me that with the coming of shari'a law to Sokoto in 2001, women were banned from riding commercial motorcycles and that I must be sure to cover myself completely. But the first thing I saw when driving into the city was a girl in a spaghetti strap tank top on the back of a motorcycle. That moment was the first indication that many of my ideas about the "north" were wrong.

My three months in Sokoto completely changed the direction of my research. My teacher, Professor Malami Buba, had me read Hausa novels out loud to him and pointed me to a video

club where I could rent Hausa movies. My Helen Keller moment came when I was reading Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino's 1991 two-part novel *In da So da Kauna*, which tells the dramatic story of star-crossed lovers, one from a rich family, one from a poor one, who are betrayed by parents and friends but who end up happily together. There was a point in the novel when the words began to flow and I couldn't put the novel down because I wanted to know what was going to happen. I started reading Hausa like I had read science fiction and fantasy and historical romances in high school—hungrily and quickly. It was the same for the films, which I would walk down muddy back streets every few days to rent from the video club. I was enchanted by the stories that these films told, of youth, their loves, fears, and dreams. I loved the joyful moments of Indian-style singing and dancing that would burst through the diegetic skin of the films—structurally similar to the long songs and poems that interspersed some of the novels. Watching the films and reading the stories exploded my stereotypes from Jos about a static north languishing under shari'a law. At the end of my time in Sokoto, I went to Kano with Professor Buba to meet a few of the writers and filmmakers that he knew. I have always been fascinated by literary movements—the Carpe Diem poets, the romantic poets in England, the Beat movement in 1960s America—these moments of intense creativity when artists and poets and novelists are all speaking and influencing each other. And when I went to Kano, I thought, “here it is. Here is one of those moments.” And I just wanted to come back and be a part of it.

One of the other things that made me bend my research in this direction is that it seemed that many of the English-language writers I had known and interacted with for years through the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), seemed to have little idea that there was a Hausa literary scene, although many of them spoke Hausa. There was much moaning about the lack of reading culture in Nigeria and particularly the lack of education in the north, but here was a

literary community in this “un-educated north” that published hundreds of books a year, and there were thousands of people, particularly women, reading them. Because this movement was in Hausa, it seemed to be largely ignored by the larger Nigerian and African literary community. Although it was generating much debate and dialogue among Hausa speaking scholars and critics, including Ibrahim Sheme, in his column, “The Write Stuff” in the *New Nigerian*, and later his column, “Bookshelf,” in *Weekly Trust*, and had been studied by a few Nigerian and international scholars¹—the discussion and knowledge of what was going on with Northern Nigerian literature and culture seemed to be off the radar among mainstream discussions of Nigerian literature and art. My research interest in Hausa film and literature started out, therefore, with a passion to help bring the literature and films to the attention of a larger field of scholarship on literature and to challenge stereotypes about the north. Perhaps naively, I believed that everyone else would be as excited as I was about them.

In June 2006, I returned to Nigeria, this time to Kano, for three months of pre-dissertation research on a West Africa Research Association pre-doctoral fellowship. I spent a lot of time in the office of author and publisher Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, whose 1991 novel, *In da So da Kauna*, had so enchanted me and who had by that time become Chairman of the Kano branch of Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA). While visiting the office of (the now late) Director Balarabe Sango, a writer and filmmaker I had met at a Hausa Association of Nigerian Authors meeting, I recognized director and actor Abbas Sadiq from the film *Albashi/Salary* (2005). I had watched the film the year before and had both taught and written a paper on it (“Reimagining”). After our first conversation, he took me under his wing, writing me into one of

¹ See particularly the academic work of Abdalla Uba Adamu, Yusuf Adamu, Novian Whitsitt, Joanna Sullivan, Brian Larkin, and Graham Furniss. Within “mainstream” discussions of Nigerian literature as represented by ANA, there were also exceptions. The Kano branch of ANA had English and Hausa branches, and Emman Shehu, who was the chairman of the Abuja ANA chapter in 2005, helped start the Bashir Karaye Prize for Hausa literature (personal communication, 5 December 2013).

his scripts, even getting permission from a cinema owner for me to observe the screening of his films *Albashi I* and *II* in Marhaba Cinema, where women were normally not allowed. I was star struck. The atmosphere in Kano was free and exuberant. All of Kano was a stage for filmmakers, who would shoot dancing and singing sequences on the side of the road and take turns in empty houses used as sets. One day I was in a private garden in which three different films were being shot at once. Director Sango took me to live “gala shows” in outdoor performance spaces not far from Marhaba Cinema, where actors mimed and danced to film music. In the same shows, comedy actors would perform farcical sketches that would leave the crowd roaring with laughter.

In May 2008, I returned to Kano for dissertation research with the support of the Ebrahim Hussein Fellowship for Research in African Literature and the Harvey Fellowship, which was extended by the Fulbright Hays from 2009 to 2010. Living in Kano for an extended period of time, my research became as personal as it was formal. The novelist Sa’adatu Baba Ahmad became one of my best friends. Kind filmmakers and musicians, who I began to realize were grouped by studio-affiliation, adopted me into their world. I spent much of my time in Golden Goose studio, an editing and recording studio, where I got to know hip-hop artist and sound designer Ziriums and his brother, aspiring musician Osama bin Music, novelist and scriptwriter Nazir Adam Salih, director Falalu Dorayi, editor Sulaiman Abubakar, director and scriptwriter Baba Ali Yakasai, actor Umar Gombe, singers Suhaima “Golden Goose,” Abdurahman “Alfazazi”, and DJ Yaks, and others. My circles of acquaintance rippled out from there.

There had been a dramatic change in Kano, however, from 2006 to 2008. In 2007, there had been a scandal when a sex video of a Hausa actress known as Hiyana, after her first big film *Hiyana (Betrayal)*, and her boyfriend, Usman Bobo, was leaked and spread from Bluetooth to Bluetooth on mobile phones, an event I will discuss throughout this dissertation. A new head of

the censorship board was appointed. He extended a three month ban on filmmaking initially established by the filmmakers association to six months and instituted stringent new rules that in effect meant that most filmmakers began to leave the state when they were shooting films. (I will discuss this further in Chapters 4 and 5.) “Gala” shows of the sort I had observed in 2006 were now banned. In fact the open-air theatre I had visited was destroyed in April 2007, even before the Hiyana scandal, after it was rumoured that a “polygamous lesbian wedding” had occurred there (See BBC “Polygamous” and “Nigeria ‘lesbian’”). Singing and dancing in the films was banned. Writers were also affected by these censorship laws, which required not only that all film scripts be vetted by the board but also that any book published in Kano had to be inspected. While I had previously heard some resentment of the Kano State Censorship Board in 2006, now most artists expressed a louder opposition. In September 2007, the musician and filmmaker Adam Zango had been arrested and imprisoned (Ibrahim and Malumfashi 14). In October 2008, after my arrival in Kano, the most famous Hausa comedian Rabilu Musa D’anlasan, better known as D’an Ibro, was imprisoned along with his director Lawal Kaura (Maikatanga and Giginyu 10-14), and in December 2008 an award-winning filmmaker Hamisu Lamido Iyan-Tama was also imprisoned. Worried about how popular writers could be censored and famous filmmakers and musicians could be arrested with very little attention from the larger Nigerian media— I began to write articles, some of them under a pseudonym, for the news agency Inter-Press service and a feature for the Nigerian newspaper *Next* on issues of censorship (See Gizo “We Will”, “Writers”; McCain “Award-Winning,” “Hard Times”). In January 2009, I also started a blog, with the intention of publicizing the events.

What I began to realize, over the course of my research, was that my notion that everyone would be excited about the flourishing field of Hausa literature and film once they knew about it

was rather idealistic. At a Lagos film festival in December 2008 I tried to talk to English-language filmmakers about the censorship crisis in Kano, but no one seemed very interested. In the national space of Nigeria, there did not seem to be much regard for cultural production in Nigerian languages, reflecting, perhaps, what Ngugi wa Thiong'o has called the "narcissism of the African middle class" which "sees itself as constituting the nation" and the "languages they use" as the "truly national and continental" ones (*Penpoints* 93). In December 2010, Commonwealth prize winner Tricia Adaobi Nwaubani even wrote in a *New York Times* op-ed "In Africa, the Laureate's Curse," that she was glad Ngugi wa Thiong'o hadn't won the Nobel Prize for literature that year because she "shudder[ed] to imagine" that other African writers, desirous of winning a prize too, would follow his example in writing in their own languages.

My interest was pulled in two directions, first, there were the on the ground realities of the conflict between conservative critics and bureaucrats over Hausa literature, film, and music in the north. Cultural producers were being slandered on radio and newspapers, censored, and arrested. Pierre Bourdieu has theorized that literary and artistic fields are driven by conflict (*The Field* 32), and much of what interested me in Hausa cultural productions was the way that writers, filmmakers, and musicians responded to those who attacked them. Such responses were made in metafictional productions that argued for the respectability of their professions, many of which were made in years previous to the Hiyana sex scandal, or, as the arrests continued, much more harsh defences and counteraccusations against their critics.

Second, there was a more subtle kind of censorship, in which outside of the north, very little was known of this art movement or of its suppression. This is, in part, because Nigerian-language productions are not valued, and, in part, because in larger national discourse, often driven by the Lagos axis of cultural production, the north is regularly stereotyped as backwards

and devoid of activity. As Jos erupted into multiple ethnic and religious crises from 2001 to 2010, with continuing attacks on outlying villages, and as from 2009 to 2014, the entire north began to be assaulted by the terrorist group Boko Haram, which has especially devastated the northeast, the symbolic divisions between “north” and “south” became starker. Opinions printed in popular publications and on the internet often seemed to homogenize every Muslim in the north as a “Hausa-Fulani” and every Hausa-Fulani as ignorant, murderous, and involved in a conspiracy to take over Nigeria.²

Hausa-language artists often found themselves in a double bind. Those who had grown up in Jos, like Abbas Sadiq and Zainab Idris, were being told in Kano that they were foreigners corrupting a “pure” Hausa Muslim tradition. Simultaneously their families in Jos were being told by Berom politicians that they were foreigners trying to steal the land from the indigenes and foment shari’a law in a Christian land. While little was known about Hausa cultural producers outside the north, on some of the online articles about Hausa films, commenters made derogatory statements. After an article I published in the *Weekly Trust* pointing out the NFVCB statistics on indigenous language films, a commenter on the Nigerianfilms.com website, which reproduced the article, said: “d Yoruba nd Hausa film makers are d cause of all these confusion. They’re bin

² A nairaland user manchy7531, for example, quotes Lord Lugard in his proposal that the Fulani be chased out of Nigeria: “the Fulani has a character that is antithetical to the hopes and yearnings of other ethnic nationalities in Nigeria and around West African sub-continent. [...] The only language the Fulani understands is war and conquest. [...] and they have brainwashed the Hausa people to believe that their (Hausa) destinies are tied together with that of the Fulani because of Islam. The Fulani use the Hausa numbers as a buffer to perpetuate Fulani evils in Hausa name.” David Akintimoye uses more sophisticated but similarly homogenizing language on *Nigeriaworld*: “many young Hausa/Fulani Muslims in the northern part of Nigeria [...] feel that they have an obligation to render services to their benefactors even if they include committing heinous and horrendous crimes of mayhem, genocide and arson. The few powerful Hausa/Fulani politicians pay them a lot of money and give them ammunitions to kill Christians living in that region in order to become politically relevant. [...] It is difficult to track down the murderers because many law enforcement personnel in the northern region of Nigeria are Muslims and also from the Hausa/Fulani tribe and many of the Christians being killed in that region are not from the Hausa/Fulani tribe but from the Southern region of Nigeria.” Umar Bello challenges this sort of homogenization in an article for the *Daily Post*, pointing out that the terminology of “Hausa-Fulani” has its roots in the colonial era and has continued to be used as “permanent modifiers” attached to negative activities: “In essence, you don’t only focus on their crime but on their ethnic identity and livelihood as if those are also faulty.”

unnecessarily petty n jealous of d Ibo filmmakers nd stars. Nollywood shld b one umbrella in Nig, there shld be notin lyk kanywood or yorubawood” (Crystal). In other words, similar to Nwaubani’s critique of Ngugi’s writing in Gikuyu, this commenter blamed Nigerian-language filmmaking communities for being “divisive,” even though both Yoruba and Hausa film communities had pre-existed the English-language “Nollywood.” On another article about the first Hausa film to be made in India, the first three comments were derogatory. One reader Aish said “TO HELL WIT HAUSA BEASTS. Threat to naija. Who cares about their boring film?” Another wrote, “Abokis almajiris boko haram wan shoot their mad film for wer? LOL! Im sure is all about Murderers story line” (Pete). There were hierarchies of power here, in which Hausa-language artists were being attacked by politicians, clerics and an elite at “home” in Kano and Jos, and from an internet-using elite elsewhere in Nigeria and abroad.³ Furthermore, on an international level, even after the “Arab Spring” of 2011, Muslims were often similarly presented as equally conservative or violent. There was little acknowledgement of internal diversity and debate.

I began, therefore, wanting not just to contribute to academic knowledge about Hausa cultural production but also wanting to use knowledge about Hausa cultural production to combat three discourses: 1) northern Nigerian propaganda about filmmakers, writers, and other cultural producers on radio, in newspapers, and even in pamphlets being distributed in mosques; 2) a larger national discourse that homogenized the north and video-filmmaking; and 3) a Western rhetoric that homogenized Muslims.

My research and activities during my dissertation research took on two strands. First, the more formal academic research and participation, travelling to Usman Dan Fodiyo University,

³ A few months after the initial derogatory comments made by the likes of Aish and Pete on the article about the first Hausa film, however, there were many Hausa film fans who responded with equal heat to these comments, demonstrating an increasing access to the internet across Nigeria.

Sokoto; University of Maiduguri; University of Jos; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; Niamey and Bayero University, Kano (BUK) in search of research materials on Hausa films. From 2008 to 2012, I also presented papers at six conferences in Mainz, Germany; Ibadan; Ilorin; Kano; and Lagos, and attended other academic conferences, film festivals, workshops, award ceremonies, and writers' conventions in Lagos; Abuja; Makurdi; Yenagoa; Kano; Zaria; Kaduna; Gusau; Jos; Damagaram, Niger, and Ougadougou, Burkina Faso. In 2008, the Department of Mass Communications at Bayero University, which hosted me while I was in Kano, requested me to teach a "Gender and Media" class. They also requested me to help them start a "Hausa Home Video Resource Centre," compiling resources that could aid other researchers of Hausa film. I put much of my effort into a blog for the centre, where I compiled a bibliography of academic works on Hausa films, a page of links to articles in the popular press, summaries of Hausa films written by my students, and other resources. I also assisted two documentary crews from the U.K. and the U.S. who came to make documentaries on aspects of popular culture in Kano.

The second strand of my research was ethnographic in nature. I carried out interviews and engaged in participant observation with filmmaking and writing communities, research I partially modelled on Karin Barber's immersion with Yoruba travelling theatre groups (Barber, *The Generation*). Because of the censorship crisis, which made most filmmakers take their productions outside the state, I spent most of my time in editing and recording studios, hanging out with studio hands, musicians, editors, and directors watching their films or music videos being edited, listening in on and participating in conversations on censorship, politics, aesthetics, personal gossip, and everything else. I was also invited to observe on film and music video sets and occasionally even asked to appear in films, most of which, because of problems with censorship, were shot outside of Kano state. I spent time on "Kannywood" film sets in Jigawa,

Zaria, Kaduna, Jos, Kano, Sokoto, and one Nollywood set in Benin City. I also attended English-language and Hausa-language Association of Nigerian authors meetings and conventions in Kano, Gusau, and Abuja. When writer Elnathan John asked me to give a presentation on Hausa literature and film at a series of Abuja literary events, I also became re-involved with the largely English-language Nigerian literary scene and frequently engaged in literary debates on social media. After writing publicly for a Nigerian audience on my blog and occasionally for other newspapers, in 2010, the editor of *Weekly Trust*, an Abuja-based paper with widespread distribution in the north, asked me to contribute a weekly column, one of the jobs I have lived on following the end of my research grants.

As my interest is in writing about hierarchies of power and the expression of subaltern cultural producers, I am aware of my own complicated and even problematic position within these structures. First, my impulse to “help” the “voice of the subaltern” be heard is problematic. Just because I, and other members of the English-language Nigerian writing community, had not heard of Hausa literature and film, that did not mean that there were not millions who had. This includes those in northern Nigerian academies who had been writing on this cultural production from the 1990s and those who had followed Ibrahim Sheme’s columns in the *New Nigerian* and *Weekly Trust*. Second, my origins and training are in the “centre,” although I wrote much of my dissertation from the “margins.” Yet, my life in the “margins” is one of choice and comes together with the privileges a white expatriate is often given in Nigeria. As Ilian Kapoor points out, referencing Spivak, “it is dangerous” for “Western researchers/ academics” “to assume one can encounter the Third World [...] on a level playing field. Our interaction with, and representations of, the subaltern are inevitably loaded” (631). While I made genuine lifelong friendships in Kano and was treated with utmost kindness by almost all the filmmakers and

writers I met, my initial entry into Kannywood was likely facilitated by my foreigner status—the symbolic cultural and economic capital I represented. I simultaneously offered a certain amount of exoticism that producers could market whenever they put me in a film, a certain amount of access to foreign publicity, as well as access to foreign “things.” On trips back to Nigeria from the U.S., I ferried latex makeup and mint-flavoured fake blood, books and laptops across the Atlantic for various members of the film, literary, and university communities. A Nigerian researcher, who was not already a filmmaker, likely would not have been adopted so quickly as a “pet” by filmmakers. It would have been even more unlikely that a random researcher from Nigeria with an imperfect grasp of English would have been adopted into the powerful Hollywood or the New York publishing industry. My very success was enabled by the power of the global research structures in which I was positioned and the relative marginality of the group I was researching.

Yet, while mindful of my privilege, I also believe that I entered the film industry in much the same way that others interested in filmmaking enter it. As I hung around studios and sets, I saw other young people wanting to get into the film industry doing much the same thing—becoming friends with the community, being given small jobs to do to test out ability. Popular actor Mustapha Musty told me that he became involved in the profession by hanging around film sets and in editing studios (personal interview), a tale of origins I have heard from other actors too. I was asked to check English-language subtitles for several films, acted as the set photographer on a few sets, and was given small roles in others. At the same time, the ability to spend so much time “hanging out” with filmmakers was as a result of my generous foreign funding that enabled me to spend time immersed in the world I was researching without having to worry about teaching five classes a semester (as my office mate doing her M.A. at Bayero

University did) or scramble for roles as other actresses did. The visibility of my research, while partially because I was so active online, also had much to do with my contact with a network of other “international” researchers.

My position as both an insider and outsider in the industry had its advantages and disadvantages. Its advantages are too many to list, but they include a certain clarity of insight that comes from being within and a working relationship with almost everyone in the Kano film community. One of the disadvantages is that I’m not sure that this sort of deep immersion is the best way to efficiently write a PhD dissertation. Spending several years in Kano with filmmakers, I obtained good material, but the amount of it became overwhelming and sometimes my over-familiarity with the interviewee and the internal politics of the industry meant that my focus became myopic. Sometimes I would put off scheduling interviews because I thought I had plenty of time and, as a result, never got them done. It is also sometimes hard to step back and evaluate material objectively when I am so close to it. At the same time, my appearance of familiarity with the industry may mean that I risk misrepresenting what I think I understand. I am not Hausa, I am not Muslim, I am not a trained filmmaker, and, while I was welcomed as a sort of “pet,” I did not always understand the context or politics of every discussion I was involved in. My Hausa is still imperfect and suffers when I spend time away from Kano. Obviously, having spent only about three and a half years immersed in the industry, I do not understand it as those who have been within or following it from its inception.

I continue to be troubled by questions of power and representation. I asked myself when I was blogging and writing for *Inter-Press* about the censorship issues if I was continuing in a tradition of negative Western media attention on Africa and on Islam. Was the censorship crisis as crucial as I thought it was? Was I imposing my own liberal Western ideas about freedom of

speech on a more conservative society, which had a right to be troubled by cultural imperialism? Was I making the conflict between the filmmakers and their critics more binary than it actually was? Was I writing propaganda? Was I doing the same thing Spivak critiques, attempting from my privileged position, to speak for the subaltern?

This leads to another question. Why does it matter if the “centre” hears these voices? Does not the desire to have the centre hear them somehow reinforce its centeredness? Does the very focus on “being heard” make the metropolis the privileged site that must hear the voice of the Other? Is this not precisely the sort of thinking Teju Cole critiqued in the propaganda video made by the activist organization Invisible Children, who oversimplified and dehistoricized the threat of the rebel Joseph Kony to Uganda, wanting to make him famous as if his global fame and American involvement would automatically solve the problem? (“The White Savior”). Why not flip that and just say it doesn’t matter what the metropolis thinks? ⁴ Kapoor, again citing Spivak, problematizes the privileging of Western academic theory, where “‘the field’ becomes the repository of data, the academy the ‘centre’ for value-added theory. [...] The Third World is ‘worlded’ on the basis of this theory/practice binary, which perpetuates the pattern of placing the Western academy and intellectual at the centre” (633).

Another tension comes from my privileging of Hausa cultural production over production in other languages that are truly more subaltern. Brian Larkin also acknowledges this tension in the preface to his dissertation, describing how he was confronted by some youth corpsers

from the middle belt, an ethnically mixed area under Hausa control which has long resented political domination from the north. They accused me and all

⁴ The use of the words “centre” or “metropolis” to refer to New York, London, Paris etc, makes me uncomfortable because the former “third-world” also has its metropolises, including Kano and Lagos, where for centuries people from different parts of the world have been mixing. Following Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s argument in *Moving the Centre*, I believe we must make the “margins” in Africa a centre too.

foreign researchers of only being interested in Hausa culture and Hausa history, explicitly arguing that this was a new version of the old class alliance whereby British colonialists ‘supported’ Hausa/Fulani Muslim rulers. My decision to study Hausa culture, made in part because of a sense of its marginal relation to British and American culture, was seen by these youth as a directly political decision, a continuance of older forms of domination. The act of scholarship, of deciding to study one people instead of another, was seen as a means to confer status, prestige and power. (*Uncertain Consequences* xv-xvi)

This is an accusation I recognize from my own interaction with friends and commenters on social media and other articles I have written. To some extent, it is a fair one. There a history of minority domination by a “Hausa/Fulani” ruling class from the early 19th century jihad of Usman d'an Fodiyo through colonial collusion to more recent postcolonial politics. Hausa is also a language of power, which does dominate and even threaten the existence of smaller minority languages in the north. Writers or filmmakers writing or making films in Nupe or Tangale or Ngas or Bajju have much less access to an audience than Hausa does. With the ongoing ethnic and religious violence in the middlebelt Nigeria, some people from minority language groups conflate the Hausa language with the political power of the Hausa elite and are making a conscious political decision to speak English or their own indigenous languages rather than Hausa. Former military governor of Gongola state Yohanna Madaki has articulately expressed the background behind this position, arguing that the British colonial government educated middlebelt children in Hausa as a way of imposing an education tax and that cultures of minority groups are being subverted through their loss of language (Madaki and Iyare). While the novels and films I study sometimes express critiques of the Hausa-Fulani ruling class, they just as often,

as Matthias Krings has pointed out, reinforce a sense of religious and cultural superiority over the “pagans” in films like *Judah!*, *Ruhi*, and *Shaheed* (“Conversion”). And a desire to “produce an ‘authentic’ and ‘heroic’ subaltern” out of the Hausa writers and filmmakers could just as well do the opposite and silence what they are actually saying (Kapoor 638).

My response to such critiques is to twofold: First, I acknowledge the tension, and admit that I am myself caught up in Western university structures that offered Hausa as a course and not Tiv or Berom. In the final few years of my dissertation research, I began to do more research on minority language filmmaking traditions, published some of my findings on my blog, in my column and in an article for *The Global South* (McCain, “Nollywood and”), and hope to do more of this sort of research in the future. Second, I point out that part of my research is attempting to examine these discourses of power and homogenization and understand how they are produced. Not all “Hausas” or Hausa-speakers who are producing material in the Hausa-language are similarly dominant. There are, indeed, many Muslim (and Christian) minorities in the north, and Hausa writers and filmmakers often capture these complex internal tensions in their work. Indeed, much of the criticism of these communities by a Hausa elite is that they do not follow the dominant narrative—they aren’t “Hausa” enough.

In my dissertation, I wrestle with these tensions, and I hope to do justice to the complexity of the hierarchies of power where cultural producers, as Bourdieu has pointed out, are both dominated and dominating (*The Field*). I aim to examine these texts where they are both radical and conservative, listening, as Barber points out, for how the “community understands itself” through reflexive texts (*The Anthropology* 5), as well as paying attention to the discourse surrounding them. Writing as both an (untrained) ethnographer and as a textual critic, I draw advice from researchers who have been in similar positions. Bourdieu, who started out his career

as an ethnographer in Algeria, has pointed out the necessity of a “reflexive sociology” that acknowledges the “lay and scholarly discourses that swirl” about the object of research (Bourdieu and Wacquant 176-177) as well as the position of the researcher within the scholarly game and the impact the conventions of the “academic institution” have on the research (Wacquant 34-35). While Spivak has long critiqued those who claim to speak for the subaltern and, like Bourdieu, emphasizes a self-reflexivity about a researcher’s own privilege, she herself has repeatedly returned to India to become involved in an activist subaltern education that will build “infrastructure for agency.” She points out that her goal is to “learn to learn from below, from the subaltern, rather than only study him (her)” (*An Aesthetic* 439). Spivak writes in language that makes it difficult for a non-academic audience to access her work, which complicates her desire to “learn from the subaltern” without falling into the trap of speaking for them in the academy that she initially critiqued in “Can the subaltern speak.” Yet I find her constant self-interrogation a useful model. While she points out that her activist goal is different from that of a “historian or anthropologist” whose goal is to “classify, record, and describe,” this goal of “learning from below” is similar to the goals of those who study popular culture as a way accessing the voice of the subaltern. Similarly her self-awareness about the structures of privilege granted by the institution is similar to those of anthropologists like Brian Larkin, who points out how his own “background and person is not just a question of identity but one of politics that enters into the defined field of political relations that obtains in Nigeria” and that the “production of knowledge is not disinterested but enters into complicated fields of ethnic and political conflict” (*Uncertain consequences* xv).

Such awareness of one’s own privilege and “contamination,” as Kapoor puts it, should not necessarily paralyze a researcher from pursuing topics that deal with the subaltern. Indeed,

Carmela Garritano points out that such an endeavor is “worth while” as long as one acknowledges “that any such recovery must recognize the limits of what can be known and that what is known is always already marked by the location of the subject who produced it” (*The making* 21). Spivak’s project, Kapoor argues, is a space-clearing gesture “to acknowledge our complicities and unlearn our prejudices” in order to make way “for the subaltern speech act” (643). This is ultimately the goal of my dissertation. While I worry about the politics of representation, I also am aware that my friends who are novelists and filmmakers and musicians produce their work precisely because they want to be heard. If I can help spread these voices further, then I will have done what I set out to do.

Introduction

Setting the Stage: the Politics of Exposure

In August 2007, a scandal swept across the Kano-based majority-Muslim Hausa film industry in northern Nigeria. A privately-made phone video of a popular Hausa actress, Maryam “Hiyana,” having sex with a lover, Usman Bobo, had been leaked to the public. Within days, there were hundreds of black market entrepreneurs offering what was being called “the first Hausa blue film” for download onto mobile phones, while outraged religious and political leaders called for an indefinite suspension of the Kano film industry and the mass expulsion of other performers suspected of “improper” behavior (Ibrahim, “What” 53; Ibrahim, “Sex” 2; Dantiye 6). The scandal exploded onto an already tense relationship between often edgy filmmakers and writers and proponents of a strict adherence to Islamic shari’a law re-established in twelve Northern Nigerian states between 1999 and 2003 (Olaniyi 72). Earlier in the year, several actresses had gone into hiding after local shari’a vigilantes had interpreted a party in their honor as a “polygamous lesbian wedding” (BBC, “Polygamous”; BBC, “Nigeria”; Karofi, “Woman” 5) and in June before the “Hiyana” scandal broke, *A Daidaita Sahu*, a Kano state agency for the “reorientation” of society, organized a book and film burning at a girls’ school, which they repeated in September following the scandal (Musa 45; Sheme, “Film Burning”). The small scale exposure of Hiyana’s secret sins via phone video was interpreted by conservative social critics as the larger scale “exposure” of the sins of the film industry, which needed to be “sanitized.” It resulted in a censorship crisis in Kano state that lasted for over four years.

The Politics of Exposure

In my dissertation, I study the Kano state censorship crisis and the musical and filmic responses to it by artists. I use these as openings into a much larger and multi-sided critical study of Hausa popular culture. I examine the tensions between writers, filmmakers, and musicians, who often purport to educate their audiences and challenge a culture of institutional secrecy, and conservative critics, who argue that these artists are exposing vulnerable audiences to corrupting influences. I encapsulate these aims in what I call “the politics of exposure.”¹ By politics, here, I refer to the controversies and negotiations surrounding creative expression and public culture in Hausa society, both directly linked to the Kano state government’s conservative interpretations of shari’a law during the censorship crisis, as well as a much older social discourse about gender, art, and morality, dating back to the early 19th century jihad of the reformer Usman dan Fodiyo. The conversation is by no means binary and includes a whole range of opinion and public presentations by artists, scholars, and religious leaders.

Within this field of struggle or “politics,” I use differing but interrelated senses of the term “exposure.” Exposure is a conceptually fluid and politically useful term, which fits particularly well with the variety of discourses surrounding the literary cultures and entertainment industries of Nigeria. Merriam-Webster defines “exposure” first as “a: the condition of being presented to view or made known;” “b: the condition of being unprotected...;” “c: the condition of being subject to some effect or influence,” and second as

¹ In a June 2013 Google search, I found two other usages of this expression, 1) a 2 August 2010 article by Mary-Beth Snow “Wikileaks and the Toothless Politics of Exposure,” which discusses how Wikileaks exposure of secret American military, intelligence, and diplomatic documents was not met with a corresponding political outrage from the American public, and 2) a Pinterest board run by Jenna Lloyd named “Invisibility & the Politics of Exposure,” a repository of links to other websites that contains no text. While these two sites are, perhaps, broadly related to my own interests, the use of the terminology “politics of exposure” has not, to my knowledge, been developed in an academic context, and any overlap here is purely coincidental. I began discussing the concept with Nollywood scholar Lindsey Green-Simms in June 2010, following our discussion of my paper “Video Exposé” presented at the “Nollywood and Beyond” conference in Mainz in May 2009. I have been developing it ever since.

“the act or instance of exposing: as a: the disclosure of something secret.” I am interested in the varying ways in which this term is mobilized and acted upon in the field of discourse surrounding the literary and publication industry, the entertainment industry, and the flourishing field of literary and cultural criticism in Northern Nigeria.

In discussions of Nigerian literature and film, the concept of exposure has been used in several ways relevant to my project: first, the condition of being subject to colonial education, which Chinua Achebe in *There Was a Country* calls a “primary exposure” to cosmopolitan literary flows (15); second, the attempt to combat colonial propaganda about Africa and cultural imperialism by “writing back”—bringing global *exposure* to African stories, presenting the story of Okonkwo in a whole novel, as Achebe does in *Things Fall Apart*, for example, rather than merely a condescending paragraph in a colonial memoir. The African Writer’s Series, first edited by Achebe, not only presented a different picture of Africa to the world but also became a part of the educational curriculum of most Anglophone African nations, *exposing* African students to a certain idea of African literature as “re-education and regeneration.” The novelist, Achebe argued, is not only an artist but also a teacher (Achebe, *Morning* 45).

Third, exposure as a way of what Wendy Griswold calls “bearing witness to Nigeria’s confusions [...] in order to bring about the transition to a better future” became a thematic preoccupation in the post-colonial period (11). Truth-telling “novels of disillusionment” exposing the failure of the postcolonial state were characteristic of Nigerian literary fiction from the late 1960s on. Literary icons became active in politics, performing the “gadfly” role that Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o argues is one of the major functions of art (*Penpoints* 128), such as Wole Soyinka’s infamous hold-up of a radio station (Gibbs 240) and frequent interventions in Nigerian politics or Chinua Achebe’s short book *The Trouble with Nigeria*.

Popular novels of the sort that became known as Onitsha Market literature and popular films of the sort that became known as Nollywood exhibit another kind of concern about the moral corruptions to which the vulnerable are exposed to in the city. These popular cultural forms also tend to “expose” the bombast, hypocrisies, and secret sins of the elite, and like Achebe, many of these authors and filmmakers present themselves as teachers—this time of how to succeed in a rapidly changing colonial and postcolonial environment.

Exposure in Hausa popular expression

The mostly popular northern Nigerian texts I will discuss in my dissertation have more similarity to this latter corpus of works than they do to the works legitimated by global publishing structures or film festivals as “African Literature” or “African Film.” Hausa literature, film, and music are largely marginal forms even in discussions of Nigerian popular music and film. Exposure, as I will discuss it in relation to Hausa literature, film and music, first, can refer to the very lack of knowledge about Hausa popular culture in other parts of the world or even within Nigeria. Hausa-language artists are not very “exposed” on the national or the world stage.

Second, exposure, similar to Achebe’s use in *There Was a Country*, can be used to refer to the enlightenment of a population by giving them access to education and cosmopolitan ideas that enable them to understand their society as it relates to a larger global community. This can be seen in the campaigns of the early 19th century jihadist Usman dan Fodiyo and his family, who stress a cosmopolitan Islamic education against “outdated” tradition (Mack and Boyd, *One Woman’s* 45); the British colonial attempts to create a reading public by sponsoring the first Hausa writing contests or to enlighten audiences about “progress” by showing educational films (East, “A First” and Larkin, *Signal*); and in later attempts to enlighten the public by institutions

that sometimes collude with and sometimes oppose each other. Writers and filmmakers often claim to both mirror society and to enlighten it. Filmmaker Mikail Isah bin Hassan, for example, spoke to me about his responsibility to educate people through film in terms of earlier government initiatives to educate the populace through mobile cinema (personal interview). The Kano State Censorship Board and Kano State “Re-orientation” Directorate, *A Daidaita Sahu*, established as an initiative of the shari’a government, initially sponsored popular Hausa authors to write didactic novels and awarded filmmakers for films that promoted Hausa cultural values. These public campaigns were meant to promote a more pious public, based on a deeper understanding of Islam as well as appreciation for its global reach and influences. Yet, only a few years after the founding of *A Daidaita Sahu*, the organization began to burn books and films, which they saw as embodying the corrupting influences of Western cultural imperialism. The interpretations of which kinds of exposure to which kinds of cosmopolitan forces are acceptable—whether conservative Salafist sermons on tape, Western NGO-sponsored messages, Indian films, southern Nigerian music videos and so on—is a highly contested field. It is these multiple forms of transnational media that flow into northern Nigeria and the controversies surrounding them that inform the first term “contested cosmopolitanisms” in my subtitle.

Third, in relation to the second term in my subtitle “Revelation of secrets,” exposure can also refer to the exposure of the political corruption of elites, the moral corruption of the film industry, and the sexual corruption of women by men, or in some cases by each other. Exposure here is a form of revelation, shining a harsh light into hidden spaces and the dirty underside of a showy exterior.² This concept of “exposure” was mobilized by the Kano State Censorship Board and by other conservative critics to refer to the exposure of the secret sins of corrupt members of the film industry, fears about the over-exposure of young women in the industry, and the

² I thank Brian Larkin for some of the wording of this section (Email, 14 June 2013).

negative influences to which the films were exposing vulnerable audiences.³ During the censorship crisis, the director general of the Kano State Censorship Board, Abubakar Rabo Abdulkarim, for example, made radio accusations purportedly exposing the perversions of the film industry claiming that he wanted to protect society from corrupting influences. On the other hand, entertainers and novelists also mobilize the concept of “exposure” to reveal the hidden sins of those they portray as hypocrites, from corrupt politicians to hypocritical clerics to misbehaving husbands and wives. Women novelists and film producers use the concept to reveal private domestic spaces and to discuss the abuses hidden in these domestic spaces. In the hands of authors or filmmakers, exposure of abuses in the home and the corruption of the elite becomes a form of “bearing witness” as Wendy Griswold, Teshome Gabriel, and Brian Larkin put it—a truth-telling that is necessary before a sin can be corrected.

Fourth, by contrast, exposure can refer to the anxieties of both political and religious authorities and ordinary people surrounding how these films and stories about Nigeria “expose” Nigeria and Hausa culture in the sense of shaming it—exhibiting poor quality videos with stories that wash dirty linen in public and that deviate from uplifting representations of what is argued to be “true” culture. Such films, critics claim, make Nigeria seem backwards and the culture of the north seem un-Islamic and derivative of foreign influences. Such fears can be seen both in the “rebranding” campaign of former Nigerian Minister of Information Dora Akunyili and in the “reorientation” campaigns of shari’a government officials.⁴ When I spoke to the director general

³ Abubakar Rabo Abdulkarim, the director general of the Kano State Censorship Board, told me in an interview that he objected to the way women were portrayed on screen: “Sometimes, my dear, if you give me an extreme close up of a woman on a screen, with her lips wetted, [...] are you harassing me with her? Why must I allow that? [...] It is somebody’s daughter; it is somebody’s wife next time. To our culture we don’t allow that. Because you are exposing her, you are abusing her” (McCain, “Interview with Alhaji”).

⁴ Kano state governor Ibrahim Shekarau argued in a visit to Dora Akunyili that the Kano-State “programme of Societal Reorientation,” formed to encourage shari’a compliance, was an example of successful rebranding that the nation could do well to model (Muhammad, “Rebranding”).

of the Kano State Censorship Board, Abubakar Rabo Abdulkarim, in 2009, he indicated that one of his motivations in censorship was to control how Hausa culture was presented to the world.

Finally, the cosmopolitan “exposure” and fame of the stars is seen as both a point of pride to those who benefit from material and symbolic associations with celebrity and a source of embarrassment when celebrities engage in behaviour that is not befitting of “cultural ambassadors.” The stardom of the entertainment industry has been used by politicians who hire musicians and actors to join them in their political campaigns, but it has also proved threatening in the political realm when stars like Hamisu Lamido Iyan-Tama and Sani Danja mounted political campaigns against the ANPP government in Kano, which had come to power on a shari’a platform.

Exposure, therefore, is a concept that is invoked by all actors in the controversy. Writers, filmmakers, and musicians often claim they are exposing the corruption of elites or those in authority and wield their exposure as celebrities as a tool to gain power and wealth. Censors use it to say that they are exposing the immorality of the artists. Cultural elites use it to express concerns that Nigeria is being embarrassed on the global stage by substandard productions. Although these anxieties are expressed throughout Nigeria in response to the sprawling Nigerian film industry, often called Nollywood, they are the most acute in northern Nigerian Hausa Muslim culture, where privacy is seen as not only a cultural but a religious value. Exposing “secrets” of the private sphere, in this case, becomes political by challenging hegemonic structures of corruption that thrive on secrecy. Yet it also draws accusations of cultural imperialism from local intellectual and religious elite, who argue that the adoption of certain Western aesthetic forms and the revelation of private domestic spaces and hidden women’s bodies are forbidden not only in Hausa culture but also in Islam. After the “Hiyana scandal” for

example, English-language novelist Aliyu Kamal encapsulated his critique of Hausa novels and films into a fictionalized version of the scandal in his 2010 novel *Hausa Girl*, implying that it was the exposure of a young woman to Hausa novels, films, Western music, and the worldly glamour of celebrity, and her scorn for Islamic education that caused the shameful exposure of her undressed body to the world and the downfall of all her dreams and aspirations.

Kamal's novel about the influence of Hausa novels, films, and music on a young girl's life also illustrates the third term in my subtitle, "intermedial reflexivity," which refers to the ways in which the different genres of Hausa popular expression and the discourses surrounding them flow into, interact with, and draw attention to each other. My analysis will deal with the intertwined genres of novels, films, and music, which grew out of and informed each other, as well as the critical debate contained in newspaper and magazine publications and published and unpublished interviews in English and Hausa that I collected during my field research from 2006 to 2013. While the first part of my dissertation will trace the historical development of these genres and examine the ways in which they present exposure as revelation and education, the second part of my dissertation will explore how films and songs address the critical discourse surrounding them and re-create the historical events of the censorship crisis through self-reflexive metafiction. First, I offer brief accounts of the emergence and evolution of the genres.

The Colonial origins of Hausa prose fiction

In explaining why my research is important, it will be useful here to lay out a brief history of the field of Hausa literature and performance in which I am situating myself and the scholarly work that has already been done in the field. The Hausa language has been written as early as the 1400s in *ajami*, Arabic script. Poetry written in Hausa particularly flourished during

the 19th century reign of the Fodiyo family (Hiskett 80); however, the British colonial government under Frederick Lugard changed the orthography of Hausa to Roman script for administrative purposes. From 1908, students in colonial schools were taught this script rather than ajami, yet as Rupert East, the colonial Superintendent of the Literature Bureau, put it, until 1933, there was “no literature, and very little ‘reading matter’” for students who learned this new script. Under East’s oversight, the Director of Education sponsored a writing contest meant to “produce the foundations of a vernacular literature” (“A First” 351). Largely ignoring the “vernacular” literary tradition of the jihadists, the British colonial goal was to develop the “latent literary ability” of the Hausa and build from scratch a literature that would re-create what East called the “serious-minded” (352) Islamic society into a more British-style reading public. The first colonial literary contest gave birth to the five short novels that have been used in the educational curriculum in northern Nigeria ever since. Abubakar Imam’s humorous picaresque novel, *Ruwan Bagaja*, which told the tale of a young trickster who wandered as far as India to save his stepfather’s honour, gained him recognition from East and subsequent scholars as the star novelist of this first generation of Hausa prose writers. East was heavily involved in the process of writing Imam’s second novel, *Magana Jari Ce*. Imam writes about how East requested Imam’s transfer from the Katsina school where he was teaching to the Zaria-based Literature Bureau, where every morning East would go over what Imam had written the previous day “and suggest changes or other stories to read” (Imam, *Memoirs* 26). Imam describes how East “taught me many dos and don’ts” of writing, such as “never to allow a miscreant to triumph over a good character in any fictional story” and how he “assembled for me many story-books in Arabic and English” to read as he wrote (qtd. in Adamu, *Transglobal* 18-19). Such guidance

indicates both a moralistic aesthetics and a desire to educate through exposure to and imitation of “world literature.”

East expressed opinions on the need for British supervision in cultivating an educated Hausa public, in his 1943 essay on the Hausa-language newspaper *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*. He argued that the newspaper attempted to expose “the ordinary Hausa who has only had the education given by a vernacular elementary school or adult class” to “world events and tendencies” “in a manner” that “suited” his “intelligence and standpoint” (“Recent Activities” 176).⁵ East posited that “the present policy of *Gaskiya* is that it should represent a fusion of what is best in European and African thought” and that “it will not be possible, for the present at least, to hand over the paper entirely to an African staff without changing the conception of its educational mission” (178). While Mohammed Inuwa Mora points out that *Gaskiya ta Fi Kwabo* was founded in 1939 by the colonial government to “help spread information about the impending World War II” (9), East articulated a more idealistic mission of spreading culture and education. The publication of Hausa prose fiction and news was intended by colonial authorities as a form of education and moral “uplift,” a conduit for exposing readers to European values in an “African” form.⁶ This mission became even more pointed when the Literature Bureau was transformed into the Northern Regional Literature Agency (NORLA) in 1953 to publish mostly educational materials for the campaign against illiteracy called “Yaki da Jahilci,” (War Against Ignorance) (Hayatu 57).

⁵ He was particularly pleased with reader responses to a column that dealt with “health, educational, social and suchlike problems” and “hoped that these articles have in some degree compensated for our failure recently to produce educational matter in book form, and will have a more permanent value than either the local news articles or the political leaders” (177).

⁶ As East himself put it, he was interested in the commercial aspect of the Corporation only as a way to maintain the “production of vernacular literature,” for “the enlightenment of the general Northern Nigerian public, and the training of an African staff to take over eventually the work started” (qtd. in Furniss, “On Engendering” 114).

Of course, Hausa authors and journalists were hardly thoughtless colonial pawns. They produced a literature that has been of immense importance to the continuing tradition of Hausa creative expression.⁷ Contemporary Hausa novelists Nazir Adam Salih, Bala Anas Babinlata, Hafsat AbdulWaheed and even English-language novelists Helon Habila and Abubakar Adam Ibrahim have spoken about how their early interest in literature was partially inspired by reading Abubakar Imam and other early Hausa novels (Salih, personal interview; Babinlata, personal interview; Yusuf M. Adamu, “Interview”; McCain, “The Heroism”; Abubakar Adam Ibrahim, personal communication). Neither were the colonial ideals of prose, presented by the British government, as an educative, civilizing tool necessarily alien to Hausa readers. Such goals were similar to the use of poetry by early jihadist leaders and administration to educate and spread cosmopolitan ideas about Islamic civilization. What it did mean was that written expression in Hausa remained subject to mediation by elite authorizing institutions, whether by religious scholars or government-sponsored publishing companies. Popular Hausa expression most accessible to the masses tended to be expressed orally, through oral stories, radio, popular musicians, and drama groups of the sort developed by teacher and populist politician, Aminu Kano, whose plays were never published (Adamu, “Media Technologies”).

Following independence, the Nigerian government continued institutions first begun by the British. In 1960 NORLA, which had been largely funded by the colonial government, disbanded and transferred its publications to the Gaskiya Corporation to operate on more of a commercial basis. The Gaskiya Corporation later merged with the British publisher MacMillan

⁷ Imam writes with resentment about how he “worked day and night” writing *Magana Jari Ce*, without being given any kind of “bonus or royalty,” and how despite his preference for the teaching profession he was pressured into additional writing work for the colonial administration. (*Memoirs* 138-139). Graham Furniss traces the tensions that grew up in later years between Rupert East, then chairman of the Gaskiya Corporation, and Abubakar Imam, then editor of *Gaskiya ta fi Kwabo*. Imam, siding with the other Nigerian workers of the paper, resigned as editor in 1948 when East seemed more concerned with ideals about the corporation’s mission of enlightenment than practical considerations like a competitive salary (Furniss, “On Engendering”).

to become the Northern Nigerian Publishing Company (NNPC); however, the target audience was still largely the government school curriculum (Hayatu 59).⁸ Abdalla Uba Adamu lists 54 Hausa novels that were published from the 1930s to the mid-1980s mostly by NORLA, Gaskiya, and NNPC (“Reflections” 3-6), noting that the “theme and genre” begun in the works of Abubakar Imam and the other “‘famous five’ 1933 Hausa novels,” with stories of battles and jinns set in a mythical Hausa past, became models for what followed (Adamu, *Transglobal* 25).

Contemporary Hausa Literature, Film, and Music

Ironically it was not until formal publishers began to suffer under IMF-imposed structural adjustment programmes in the mid-1980s, and authors began to move beyond the topics and styles preferred by these formal mediators of culture, that the greatest quantity of Hausa prose fiction began to be produced and read (See Furniss, “Innovation” 428). Yusuf Adamu points out that by the mid-1980s computer technology had become more widely available and there were growing numbers of young people literate in Hausa writing in Roman script because of the Universal Primary Education introduced in the 1970s (“Between” 203). Faced with the lack of publishing opportunities, young authors began forming collectives and printing their own novels. Talatu Wada Ahmed, the second known woman to publish a Hausa novel,⁹ is believed to be one of the first writers to branch off on her own, publishing the first part of her three part “romance” novel, *Rabin Raina*, in 1984 (Adamu, “Reflections” 12). In the late 1980s and 1990s, many others followed suit. Graham Furniss and Abdalla Uba Adamu, and Yusuf Adamu describe how

⁸ The Nigerian government continued the literacy campaign “Yaki da Jahilci.” Graham Furniss describes the many poetry competitions from the 1940s to the 1970s organized by Gaskiya Corporation, the Kano State Ministry of Education, and the Kano State Ministry of Information, which elicited poetry on the war effort during World War II, state creation, praise for federal soldiers during the Biafra war, and so on (*Ideology* 40). There were also writing contests for prose fiction following the 1933 model sponsored by the Nigerian Department of Culture and NNPC.

⁹ The first known woman to publish a novel in Hausa was Hafsat AbdulWaheed, whose novel *So Aljannar Duniya* won a 1979 NNPC writing contest and was published by NNPC in 1980 (Adamu, “Reflections” 9).

students from adult education programmes and young people in drama groups began writing novels about their lives. These novels dealt with issues of young love and marriage so often that they were dubbed “*littattafan soyayya*”—literally translated “love books,” but, in fact, they include a wide variety of themes and genres, including supernatural adventures, crime thrillers, muckraking family dramas, and so on.

Stemming from drama clubs first established by populist politician Aminu Kano in the 1930s, which from the late 1940s were performing for radio in Kano and by the 1960s for television in Kaduna (Adamu, “Media Technologies” 58-64), amateur Hausa films were also being made on VHS by Kano-based drama groups in the early 1980s. The first successful non-television commercial production, *Turmin Danya*, was made by the Tumbin Giwa Drama Group in 1990.¹⁰ The films and novels were often organically related, with novelists coming out of drama groups, and drama groups performing adaptations of novels. Early popular novels like Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino’s bestselling *In da So da Kauna*, Balaraba Ramat Yakubu’s *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne*, and Bilkisu Funtua’s *Ki Yarda da Ni* were made into films in the early 1990s. Many writers became part of the film industry: Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino and Balaraba Ramat Yakubu became producers, popular novelist Bala Anas Babinlata, who was an actor before he was a novelist (personal interview), became a director, and other popular authors, such as Nazir Adam Salih and Ibrahim Birniwa, also began to write scripts.

The Hausa film industry was dubbed “Kanywood” in 1999 by novelist and *Tauraruwa* magazine publisher, Sanusi Shehu Daneji (Adamu, “Transgressing” 288), who told me that he created a column “Kanywood” to discuss gossip about the industry, naming the Hausa industry after its center in Kano and modeling the name on Hollywood. Despite initial complaints from

¹⁰ These popular dramas developed by drama troupes were often distinct from the written dramas, published by NNPC, which were more often performed at schools and universities.

Kaduna-based filmmakers at the Kano-centric nature of the term, the name stuck (personal interview). Later “Kannywood” became a more common spelling in the popular media, and this is the spelling I use in this dissertation.

Music is also integrally related to both fields. Novelists often included poetry meant to be sung in their novels and which were sung in early film adaptations. Later films began to include Bollywood-style singing and dancing sequences, which gave rise to a flourishing music industry. “Playback singers” became celebrities in their own right, releasing video cd albums of music videos with similar aesthetics to those songs in the longer narrative films. Aspiring musicians like Adam Zango, Sani Danja and others became successful actors and directors, who went on to release music video albums alongside their feature films. This intermedial connection between Hausa literature, film, and music is much more tightly woven than is Nigerian English language literature, film, and music, which are typically far more independent of each other.

Contemporary Critical Discourse, Popular and Scholarly

One of the most common critiques of the new novels, and later the films and music, was that they were derivative of foreign forms and that they were exposing vulnerable audiences to corrupting influences. The General manager of NNPC, Ja’afaru D. Mohammed, for example, said in a 2000 interview with the *New Nigerian Weekly* that the “bulk of these works are unhealthy for both academic and social well-being of the young ones....The contents are mostly alien to the Hausa cultures they pretend to explore.” He noted that NNPC would not publish such novels, “they know we won’t accept, so they don’t even bring to us” (qtd. in Adamu, “Reflections” 12). As Abdalla Uba Adamu has often noted, these critiques were ironic considering that the earliest Hausa prose fiction, published by NNPC and taught in schools since

the 1930s, had also been heavily influenced by world literature. The difference, it seems, is that the young self-publishing novelists of the 1980s and 1990s, products of the massive “Yaki da Jahilci” literacy campaigns of earlier years, were operating outside of authorized forms of exposure, with themes and styles that were not seen as educational by authorizing institutions, even if authors themselves saw themselves as teachers.

The criticism came from multiple directions, including from intellectuals and academics, from conservative lay-readers and from religious groups. One of the earliest scholars to engage the novels was Ibrahim Malumfashi, then a lecturer of Hausa literature at Usmanu Dan Fodiyo University in Sokoto, who first wrote about the novels in *Nasiha* in 1991. He considered the new self-published literature, which in 1994 he dubbed “Kano Market Literature” in comparison to Onitsha market literature, to be “trash” written by secondary school “drop-outs,” lacking the quality of “original” literature of Abubakar Imam or of the more recent contest-winning author Bature Gagare. One of his greatest critiques of the novels was that they were escapist romances which did not portray themes relevant to society (Adamu, “Critical” 9, 15-17, 21). Malumfashi’s academic literary critique and others of the sort offered by Ja’afaru D. Mohammed or Shehu Gambo, who accused authors of commercial rather than intellectual motivation (Adamu, “Critical” 17), were in line with the overall trajectory of viewing Hausa literature as a way to valorize and “uplift” Hausa culture.

A related form of criticism was offered by young male lay readers, whom Larkin describes as anxious about the unrealistic expectations the novels created about romance, leading girls to expect expensive gifts and romantic behaviour from their suitors (“Indian” 430). Another form of criticism was based in concerns that the novels were exposing and encouraging young people in un-Islamic alien behaviours, such as the intermingling of unmarried youth and

disobedience to parental authority. Danjuma Katsina called such novels “kafirci (apostasy)” (Adamu, “Critical” 19). Hamisu Abdullahi Gumel called the novels a “menace to society” and blamed real-life suicides of young girls on influences from the novels where similar events had occurred (Adamu, “Critical” 30).

These critiques from many different directions had certain common elements. Graham Furniss summarizes the debates about the novels into two basic “yardsticks,” which he argues also applied to debates around the earliest novels published in the 1930s and 40s as well as the poetry circle he worked with in the early 1970s: “the first and most important yardstick is whether the work can be judged to be consistent with, or supportive of, the moral and behavioural norms that are held to be prescribed by Islam.” The second yardstick he identifies is whether the novels and films “portray accurately, are supportive of, or undermine ‘Hausa customs’” (“Innovation” 432). This idea of “Hausa customs,” he points out, is a concept constructed by “politicians and intellectuals over the last half century,” “of a premodern Hausa way of life, unencumbered by western artifacts and western-derived ills and separate from the cultural mores of other linguistic groups” (432).¹¹

The most extreme reaction to the novels were calls for government control (Adamu, “Critical” 9; Larkin, “Indian ” 430; Whitsitt, *The Literature* 37). Novian Whitsitt writes that during his research in 1994, “A community group in Kano, known as the Voluntary Social Enlightenment Society, had written to the Ministry [of Education], demanding a ‘call for action

¹¹ As Achille Mbembe has noted, such nativism is often a response to the paternalistic discourses of colonialism” (“African Modes”). Attempts to judge works by what is both “properly” Islamic, judged by a “universal” standard, and “traditional,” based on static notions of customs from the past, leads to strange contradictions. Certain nativists simultaneously denigrate the accommodative Hausa bori cult practiced mostly by Muslims, which like Achebe’s description of Igbo mbari art (*Morning* 33) recognizes and incorporates Arab Muslim, European Christian, Igbo, Yoruba, and Maguzawa “pagan” spirits into its possession practice, as un-Islamic (Danfulani 426-427, 439) , yet valorize as “Hausa culture” recent importations from the Middle East like the hijab (Mahdi 2).

against publishers of Hausa novels that enhance moral decadence’” (*The Literature* 37).¹²

Adamu describes how the Kano State Government did establish a “Book and Film Censorship Committee in December 1996” (“Critical” 9), but such interventions did not make any serious impact until the coming of shari’a law to Kano state in 2000 when filmmaking was briefly banned. In the early 2000s, the Kano State government tried a carrot and stick approach to Hausa popular culture, establishing both a “Directorate for Societal Reorientation” known as A Daidaita Sahu, which sponsored didactic novels and films to “promote Hausa culture and religion,” and the Kano State Censorship Board, which at its most aggressive required writers to register individually with the board, banned films, and arrested actors, directors, musicians, owners of video parlours, and so on. I will discuss this historical moment in detail in my final chapter on censorship.

From the beginning, such criticism elicited passionate responses from writers like Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino whose groundbreaking 1992 article, “Zamani, zo mu tafi!” (“Let’s go with modern times”), responded in particular to the criticism of Malumfashi, arguing that the critic was making sweeping generalizations and that writers were not copying foreign culture but instead writing out of personal experience and trying to improve society for the better. Furthermore, he argued that if the themes in contemporary novels resembled those from other cultures, it merely demonstrated the common humanity in all cultures (Gidan Dabino, “Zamani” 4; Larkin “Indian” 431).¹³ Although scholars often point out that the form of these narratives,

¹² During my own research in August 2008, I saw similar rhetoric. A flier in Hausa distributed in mosques by an “Org. for Islamic Values Protection,” claimed that “litattafan soyayya” 1. Prevented children from studying, as they preferred to read the novels to studying, 2) corrupted the thinking of youth and was of no use to the community, 3) taught lying and cheating, 4) taught disrespect for God’s laws, 5) taught them to disobey their parents, such as ideas that only girls themselves have the right to choose a husband and not their parents. The flier also claimed that writers were taking money from interest groups outside the country to ruin the proper Islamic upbringing of the community, and warned parents to keep their children from reading this damaging literature. (See Appendix 1 to read in Hausa).

¹³ From this earliest intervention, Gidan Dabino, who was not formally schooled until he was an adult and does not write in English, has been one of the more prolific theorists of Hausa contemporary literature, first presenting an

with their romances and love triangles, were influenced by the Indian films that had filled cinemas from the 1960s and television screens from the 1970s (Adamu, *Transglobal* 37-38), authors such as Gidan Dabino and Balaraba Ramat Yakubu argue that their novels deal with the realities of day to day life and even their own experiences. Gidan Dabino received thousands of letters from his fans, many of whom asked for advice and viewed him as a mentor (Larkin, “Indian Films” 431-432), an experience common to many writers. But this “teaching” often takes the form of exposing and challenging the corruption of an older generation and abuses of the elite, valorizing romance between young people, and arguing that women and youth should be given greater choices in how they wish to live their lives. In the preface to her novel about incest and sexual abuse in the house of a wealthy man, *Wane Kare ne ba Bara ba?*, Balaraba Ramat Yakubu writes that she wants to “show people that not everyone who looks good on the outside is good in secret” and vice versa (V, my translation). Controversial author Al-Khamees Bature Makwarari wrote in the preface to his “lesbian” novel *Matsayin Lover* that he intends the book as a “warning and a caution” to society (1). Novelist and academic geographer Yusuf Adamu challenged criticisms that Hausa novelists were exposing readers to corrupting influences arguing that “when a writer writes about social inequality, brutalization, forced or arranged marriages, moral decadence, cultural imperialism, etc, it is because those things abound in his society” (qtd. in Adamu, “Critical” 30-31). Elsewhere he portrayed authors as being “among the downtrodden [...] Yet they can use their pens to fight for their rights and the rights of the oppressed” (qtd in Larkin, “Indian” 431).

“analytical framework on the concept of soyayya” at a Writer’s Forum seminar in 1992 (Adamu, “Critical” 18) and going on to present and publish many more such pieces at conferences, newspapers, and in collected volumes. Most recently his translated chapter “Hausa Love Stories: Origins, Development and their Impact on the Hausa in Nigeria,” which traces the development of love stories, love songs, and their modes of publication and distribution from the pre-colonial era to present, was included alongside Abdalla Uba Adamu’s two chapters in the book from *Oral Literature to Video: the Case of Hausa* published in 2011 by Rudigger Koppe Verlag.

Novian Whitsitt, the first non-Nigerian to leap into the debate and the first scholar to write a thesis-length treatment of the topic with his 1996 A.C. Jordon Prize winning MA thesis and later his 2000 PhD dissertation, both at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, follows in this trajectory of presenting the writers as speaking for subaltern groups. In his examination of the novels of Balaraba Ramat Yakubu, he argues that her works attack patriarchal institutions and make the case for women's education. Other academics like Brian Larkin, Graham Furniss, and Abdalla Uba Adamu have written some of the most influential academic studies on the novels, which I will discuss in more length in my review of their work on film.

The Intersection of Hausa popular expression with Nollywood Studies

The vigorous debate surrounding Hausa novels and later the films and music resembles the debate surrounding the larger Nigerian film industry that was emerging at the same time. I place my study at the intersection of these two fields and find the debates that have emerged out of the study of Nigerian film a useful lens through which to examine the field of Hausa literature, film, and music.¹⁴ Similar to opinions expressed about soyayya novels, the criticism of Nigerian films, first labeled "Nollywood" by the *New York Times* in 2002 (Jedlowski, "Videos" 17), has often been that they are of "little artistic worth" (Armes 156), "drowning in a sea of mediocrity and amateurism" (Olayiwola 59), giving Nigeria a bad name because of the "slew of fetish practices" (Akunyili, "Truth" 4), behind the rise of crime and violent behaviour (Popoola 139), and stuck using "alien conventions" (Ukadike 131). However, the English-language films, which the term Nollywood primarily refers to, have also received far more positive attention from scholars than have Hausa novels or films. Scholars of what is now being called the rising field of

¹⁴ For a history of the Nigerian film industry most often addressed as Nollywood, see books like Jonathan Haynes' *Nigerian Video Films* or Pierre Barrot's *Nollywood: the Video Phenomenon in Nigeria*.

“Nollywood Studies” have examined the ways in which Nigerian films demonstrate the voices of the masses and “theories from below,” reaching popular audiences unobstructed by what Onookome Okome calls “self-appointed cultural mediators” who attempt to “legislate the production of culture and knowledge about the postcolonial condition” (“Nollywood” 26). Okome describes the active participatory way audiences engage with the films to point to how the films “produce culture from the bottom of the street” (“Introducing” 2), implying that Nollywood films with their “liberation” from outside funding and outside expertise are actually closer to the ideals of activist “third cinema” than Francophone African films (“Is Nollywood”).

Moradewun Adejunmobi uses the term “regional popular” to argue that it is precisely the autonomous “commercial orientation” of the films, based on the “informal” West African market rather than the “formal” structures of global capitalism, that allows them to appeal to the topical concerns of their audiences that non-commercial African festival films do not (9-14). John McCall calls Nollywood “the Pan-Africanism we have” arguing that its “sprawling marketplace of representations” and appeal to audiences all over Africa has created a common frame of reference and cultural force more accessible than previous intellectual discourses of Pan-Africanism (96).

My concept of the politics of exposure is relevant here both in the breadth of the reach of the Nollywood films—how many people are exposed to them—and in the subject matters they address—what stories they expose. The form of the low budget video film with its ability to reach large popular audiences is potentially a powerful site for filmmakers to situate social and political critiques. The low budget technology allows “a shorter production time,” which, as Chukwuma Okoye observes, “makes it possible to address significant issues and events while they are still topical” (24)—the same topicality that had made popular literatures like those of

Onitsha, Kano, or Nairobi to sell more widely than most of what was celebrated as the African “literature” of the time. The films often also reflect what theorists of other forms of popular culture like Barber, Ndebele, and Newell have noted as expressions of the morality of popular classes. Exposure is an important part of the aesthetics of popular culture. Nigerian poet Odia Ofeimun remarks that the films “recall the sass of junk journalism, and in a sense, what was called guerrilla journalism under the military”, “actually giving back to us a mirror image of the way we are, the ways in which we behave and misbehave [...] in a no-holds-barred fashion which leaves no room for anybody to hide” (53). Jonathan Haynes in his survey of films that portray the political corruption of the elite, observes that after the end of the military rule, some of them challenge official history by “re-tell[ing] recent or contemporary political events under the thinnest of disguises” (“Political” 527), re-enacting the stories only heard by most of the audience as rumour.

In his study of popular perceptions of corruption in south-eastern Nigeria, anthropologist Daniel Jordan Smith describes how accusations of the occult, following the Owerri riots in 1996, which were sparked off by a television broadcast about an alleged ritual murder of a young boy, helped explain to a popular public how a young elite, many of them known as 419 men, got rich so quickly (*A Culture* 139, 152). He argues that even when such stories “are exaggerated, and even when they are seemingly completely apocryphal, these stories tell truths. They place in the arena of popular discourse ‘public secrets’ (Taussig 1997) that cannot be exposed directly without fear of reprisals from those who control the means of punishment” (152-153). Like Smith, Francis Harding argues that many times the video films, in visualizing the rich material of urban legend, provide an “explanation” for “economic disparities” through the “revelation” of the shocking sins the elite have committed in order to gain their power (17). Larkin calls this an

“aesthetics of outrage,” reading the portrayal of social transgressions as “public witnessing” and “moral commentary on the society itself” (*Signal* 186), language very similar to third cinema theorist Teshome Gabriel’s description of third cinema as a “collective witness” or Robert Stam’s theory of an “aesthetic of garbage” in which garbage “is a truth teller” (Gabriel, “Third Cinema Updated” par. 26; Stam 41).¹⁵ If as Smith, Harding and Larkin argue, such informally circulating stories help a public “make sense of issues like corruption, economic inequality, and political exclusion” (Smith, *A Culture* 153), putting such stories into fictional films, as also happens when they are put into newspapers, books, or even music, moves them beyond a coping mechanism to a kind of political challenge to the powerful who perpetuate inequalities. From public secrets informally discussed in rumour, they become public secrets “exposed,” recorded and mass circulated.

I apply this political theme of looking at Nigerian films as a “mirror” or a “witness” or “exposé,” and the tensions revealed in elite anxieties about what these films are mirroring, witnessing, and exposing to local audiences and the world to my analysis of Hausa literature and film. Here I do not mean that I believe these works are direct “reflections” of society. Instead, following the scholars discussed above, I am interested in the interpretive mediatory role they play and the discourse that surrounds them, the intentions stated by the filmmakers and writers and the reactions by critics. The reaction of the filmmakers to critics in their interviews and films often become popular theories that both challenge and reinforce the status quo. This politics of exposure is not always what Western academics would term a “progressive” politics of secular, liberal, emancipatory goals and promises of democratic citizenship. As Lindsey Green-Simms remarks, “while we should indeed look at the way that Nigerian video films reflect the struggles,

¹⁵ Kenneth Harrow has recently riffed on this concept in *Trash: African Cinema from Below*, in which he uses the trope of trash to question dominant readings of African cinema and examine the “trashy” films of Nollywood.

anxieties and instability of ordinary Nigerians, we must not forget to recognize the ways that they also deflect various concerns about everyday life” (62). She notes that films allow “audiences to take pleasure in a series of glamorized moral transgressions that are then condemned and disallowed” (69). Her examination of how Nollywood interprets and condemns lesbian relationships in film can be compared with the way Hausa author, Al-Khamees Bature Makwarari, similarly sensationalizes lesbian relationships in his novel *Matsayin Lover*, which I analyze in my first chapter. These often contradictory impulses to expose and conceal, teach and sensationalize are similar to what Tejumola Olaniyan describes in the music and public self-presentation of Nigerian musical icon, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, who was committed to flogging the “unresponsive postcolonial state and its retainers and foreign backers” while simultaneously engaging in sensationalist behaviour that shocked conservative audiences (*Arrest* 245). Yet the difference between most Hausa artists and Kuti, despite both sensationalizing and moralizing, are the ways in which Hausa filmmakers, writers, and musicians generally demonstrate great anxiety to prove their respectability to a conservative public. These works simultaneously entertain, “contest official power,” and “reproduce hegemonic discourse” through the moralistic pedagogic impulse of popular culture to “regulate and police cultural citizenship” (Green-Simms 76).

Like most of the scholars I’ve cited here, my research focus on the video films and other forms of popular expression stems from a fascination with the “bottom-up” theories of the subaltern classes. However, I hope to move beyond generalizing statements about films as representatives of the masses and cogs in the wheels of an informal West African economy, to pay more attention to the agency of individual artists, as Haynes has called for (“What”). While Nollywood has proved an important avenue for scholars to theorize popular opinion, the burgeoning field of “Nollywood Studies” sometimes homogenizes and romanticizes the films.

There is a tendency to fall into what Bourdieu points out is a fallacy of “reflection”—that is romanticizing the filmmakers or other popular culture producers as acting directly as an uncomplicated “medium” for the voices of the masses without taking into consideration the mediatory role the artist plays (*The Field* 180-181). Until Alessandro Jedlowski’s 2011 PhD dissertation, “Videos in Motion: Processes of transnationalization in the southern Nigerian video industry: Networks, Discourses, Aesthetics,” there had been little scholarly study of the rapidly changing modes of production, increasingly higher budget films or the new cinema distribution system, whereby Nollywood films often premier in London and play in multiplexes in the U.K. and cosmopolitan Nigerian cities like Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt. Garritano (“Contesting Authenticities”) and Jedlowski (“Videos”) have described internal conflict within the Ghanaian and Nigerian film industries, between upwardly mobile “quality” filmmakers and those they consider to be upstarts; however, there has been little attention paid to the celebrity culture that has grown up around Nollywood, or relationships between multiple language film industries, though some scholars are beginning to move in that direction.¹⁶ These developments increasingly problematize simplistic notions of Nollywood films as “voice of the masses.”

Ironically, a scholarship that purportedly focuses on the popular expression of the subaltern masses also sometimes falls prey to the sorts of hierarchies that Barber and Furniss point out happen in studies of postcolonial literature (Barber, “African-Language”; Barber and Furniss, “African-Language Writing”), focusing on English-language films, as if they are representative of most video films.¹⁷ In fact, with the exception of the year 2004, when according

¹⁶ Noah Tsika’s book on Nollywood celebrity *Glamorous Migrations: Nollywood Stardom in West Africa and the Diaspora*, forthcoming from Indiana University Press, will be the first book length study of celebrity in Nollywood. Edward Ossai’s 2012 PhD dissertation “Ethnic Identities in Nigerian Home Videos and the National Question” and chapter “Nollywood: Dis/unifying issues and symbols” looks at several Nigerian-language film industries.

¹⁷ Portions of this and the next section are taken from my article “Nollywood and Its Others: Questioning English Language Hegemony in Nollywood Studies” published in *The Global South*, 7.1 (2003), 30-54. Used by permission.

to National Film and Video Censor's Board data English films were at around 66% of the films turned into the board, NFVCB data for every other year shows Nigerian language films as being in the majority. Hausa films are usually at about 30% and Yoruba films between 40-60%. (See my article "Nollywood and Its Others" for more details.) Nevertheless, as Akin Adesokan points out, English-language films are often seen as the "default" Nigerian film ("Anticipating" 99). At the ten Africa-themed video film or film and media conferences I have attended since 2006, at only one of them, which was focused regionally on Northern Nigeria, were there more than one or two papers on Hausa films.¹⁸ Papers on Nigerian languages are generally in the minority at these forums. The problem seems to be, as Haynes notes of the distance between African cinema scholars and Nollywood scholars ("A literature review"), that there is little communication between "Nollywood Studies" and those in mostly Northern Nigerian universities doing research on Hausa popular culture.¹⁹ This lack of communication, in turn, impoverishes larger

¹⁸ The conferences were as follows: 1) "International Conference on Communication, Media, and Popular Culture in Northern Nigeria," in Kano, July 2006; 2) "African Film: An International Conference" in Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, USA, November 2007; 3) "International Conference on Nigerian Home Videos" in Ibadan, July 2008; 4) "Nollywood and Beyond: Transnational Dimensions of an African Video Industry" in Mainz, Germany, May 2009; 5) "Nollywood: A National Cinema?: An International Workshop" in Ilorin, July 2010; 6) "African Film, Video and the Social impact of the new technologies" in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso during FESPACO February 2011; 7) "Reading and Producing Nollywood" at the University of Lagos, March 2011; 8) "Nollywood in Africa, Africa in Nollywood" at Pan-African University, Lagos, July 2011; 9) "Nollywood and Theatre for Development: Exploring the Bridges of Interaction" in Zaria, November 2011; and 10) "International Conference on Nollywood, Woman, and Cultural Identity" in Makurdi, May 2012. Of course, this is only a sampling of the total numbers of Nollywood-themed conferences. I was not able to attend two northern-focused conferences "First International Conference on Hausa films" in 2003 and the conference "Women in Literature and Films in Northern Nigeria" held at Kwara State University, Malete, in November 2011, which despite being focused on northern regional production had only four papers on films listed in its program of events. Jonathan Haynes lists four other conferences from 2001 to 2009 ("A literature" 107-108). The ten I attended, however, seem a fair sample size. For example, at the conference held at Pan-African University, although quite a few of the presenters noted the existence of film production in multiple languages, only five papers out of thirty-three papers or roundtables listed in the program dealt in any detail with non-English language Nigerian films or audiences: one nation-wide audience study, two papers dealing with Yoruba films, one on Ibibio films, and my own paper on the Hausa film industry. Similarly at the University of Lagos conference, out of 28 papers, three discussed Yoruba film content, and, again, only my own discussed the Hausa industry. Other conferences I have attended have been similar.

¹⁹ Even the National Film and Video Censors Board, despite having numbers that show the importance of indigenous-language films to the film industry, often marginalizes them in their programs and materials, while celebrating and promoting the glamour of an international English-language Nollywood. In 2011, when the NFVCB announced their cooperation with the non-profit Homevida for a "short film script competition," the assumption seemed to be that scripts would be submitted in English—an assumption confirmed by Homevida when I asked

understandings of the complexity of the film industry within Nigeria. I believe that an attention to Nigerian-language (and African-language) films, will provide more nuance and recognition to those producers and directors who produce films closest to the concerns of the grassroots. My own contribution to a more complete picture is an examination of those films in Hausa.

Scholarship on Hausa films as they are related to the Politics of Exposure

While Hausa films are frequently neglected in comparative studies, there has been a lively discourse surrounding the entertainment industry, just as there was for the *soyayya* novels, in northern Nigerian newspapers and internet forums, as well as a fair amount of scholarship done in northern universities (see my “Working Bibliography of Works on Hausa Film”). In 2003, Abdalla Uba Adamu, Umar Faruk Jibril and Yusuf Adamu organized a conference *Hausa Home Videos: Technology, Economy and Society*, out of which came a sixty-five paper proceedings written by scholars and film stakeholders alike that is the most comprehensive resource on Hausa films to date. Scholars like Abdalla Uba Adamu, Matthias Krings, and Brian Larkin have published widely on Hausa films and often present at international Nollywood conferences. There have been at least three PhD dissertations completed on the Hausa film industry, including the work of Umma Ado Abbas (2008), Umma Aminu Inuwa (2009) and Isa Yusuf Chamo (2012), at least six or seven MA theses and dozens of BA theses. Unfortunately, other than the work of Adamu, Krings, Larkin, and myself, little of this work makes it to international Nollywood-themed conferences or into international publications and tends to

them online about the language of the entries. Similarly, in the March 2012 issue of the NFVCB magazine *The Classifier*, reporter Waziri Joel Amos inexplicably asks popular Nollywood actress and director Stephanie Okereke “her take” on why “over 90% of our movies are in English Language” (11). Despite the majority focus on English-language films in Nollywood studies, however, not all scholarship has reinforced these stereotypes. The historical importance of the Yoruba travelling theatre and cinema in the development of video films, their geographical proximity to English-language productions, and the more frequent co-collaborations means that Yoruba films are often invoked and analyzed alongside English-language films, although the scholarship on them is still less than that on English films.

remain in local departmental libraries and publications, accessible only to scholars who travel from university to university in search of materials.²⁰ Such scholarship, while valuable, is often narrowly focused on comparisons to Hausa literature and culture, with little attention to the wider field of studies on video films.

In my own research on Hausa popular expression, I have found the work of Abdalla Uba Adamu, Graham Furniss, Matthias Krings and Brian Larkin the most helpful in developing my ideas about the “politics of exposure,” with its associations of contested cosmopolitanisms, revelation of secrets, and reflexive intermediality. I build my idea of contested cosmopolitanisms, regarding the controversies over which form of transnational flows are acceptable to which actors in Hausa society, on Adamu’s and Larkin’s important studies of the intersection between transnational media flows and Hausa popular culture. Brian Larkin’s groundbreaking 1997 essay “Indian Films and Nigerian Lovers,” on how Hausa people have engaged with Indian films, lays the foundation for discussing the agency of audiences and artists, not as simply passive subjects of cultural imperialism, but as actively imagining their lives through the mediating lens of a culture they see as being similar to their own. Abdalla Uba Adamu’s prolific work on how “transglobal media flows” have been adopted in Hausa popular culture, from novel to film to music, and his exhaustive description of the controversies surrounding these provide detail and context to Larkin’s observations about “parallel modernities.” While I disagree with some of the essentializing ways in which Adamu discusses Hausa culture,²¹ I am heavily reliant on his comprehensive histories and transcription and

²⁰ To help correct some of this imbalance, I have tried to promote research being done on Hausa films in Nigeria on the blog for the Hausa Home Video Resource Centre at Bayero University. See <http://hausahomevideoresourcecentre.wordpress.com>

²¹ I disagree, for example, with Adamu’s claims that there is any sort of essential difference between the styles and themes of ethnic Hausa and ethnically non-Hausa performers and filmmakers making films in Hausa (See his interview with Adam Alqali, “Most successful Hausa filmmakers are not Hausa”; *Transglobal* 59, 85-86, etc).

translations of recent songs in dozens of different publications, as well as his intermedial work that encompasses multiple genres. While Larkin and Adamu have done invaluable anthropological work in describing the history and background of these works, I hope to build on their sweeping anthropological histories and invaluable attention to the *longue duree* with more close readings of the actual texts.

In these close readings, I follow the work done by Graham Furniss, Novian Whitsitt, and Matthias Krings. Although Furniss's major contribution has been in looking at the history of 20th century Hausa literature from proverbs to prose to poetry, his theories about the didactic nature of Hausa poetry in *Ideology in Practice* can be extended to other genres. He has also made important contributions to the study of Hausa soyayya literature, spearheading the collection of novels at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London that is probably the largest collection of these novels in the world and co-writing valuable histories of these works with Nigerian scholars like Malami Buba and Abdalla Uba Adamu (See *Bibliography of Hausa popular fiction* and "Go by Appearances at your Peril"). Where I find his work the most useful to my own is in his research on the literary circles established by Hausa soyayya authors in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and in his preliminary intermedial work that traces the evolution of a story from an oral folktale "Bora da Mowa" to Umar Balarabe Ahmed's play *Bora da Mowa*, to Balaraba Ramat Yakubu's novel *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne* to the film based on the novel ("Video"). While I will not trace stories in as precise a trajectory as he does, this intermedial work, alongside Adamu's examination of literature, film, and music in his many publications, has been helpful in tracing how the different genres flow into and impact each other.

I am also indebted to Matthias Krings' examination of how Hausa filmmakers invoked transnational symbols of Islam in their films as a response to the coming of shari'a law and the

initial ban on films in 2000 (“Conversion”). His analysis of Islamic conversion films, which self-consciously demonstrate the artists’ compliance with shari’a law, and his observations about how filmmakers present themselves as teachers and preachers provide the precursor to my examination of the metafictional representations of the censorship crisis of 2007. I also hope to extend Novian Whitsitt’s observations on “Islamic feminism” in Yakubu’s novels beyond her call for education in *Wa Zai Auri Jahila* to look more closely at “exposure” in her muckraking novel of sexual abuse in the home in *Wane Kare ne ba Bare ba*, which to my knowledge no other scholar has addressed.

In examining exposure as the revelation of secrets and private domestic spaces, I engage with Adamu’s detailed histories of the controversies that surround the exposing of private space in early films like *Alhaki Kwikwiyo* and *Saliha*? His observations serve the launching point for my examination of the exposure of secret corruption in the home and the controversies surrounding the exposure of domestic space in Hausa literature and film. In my exploration of the exposure of secrets, I also find particularly useful Brian Larkin’s aforementioned concept of the “aesthetics of outrage,” which he defines as “a narrative based on continual shocks that transgress religious and social norms and are designed to provoke and affront the audience” (*Signal* 189). Nollywood films, he argues, often use “spectacular transgression” to “witness” and “enact a moral commentary” on the excesses of a corrupt elite. My concept of the “politics of exposure,” builds on and extends Larkin’s “aesthetics of outrage.” While Larkin applies the “aesthetics of outrage” to English-language films, discussing tropes of Indian-film influenced love stories in relation to Hausa films, I am interested in the way Hausa artists, whether novelists, filmmakers, or musicians, also make use of outrageous situations and representations of corruption to evoke reactions from their audiences. While, as I will show, many of these

works demonstrate and expose shocking sins committed in supposedly protected private spaces, the artists are also often on the receiving end of this outrage. This is illustrated in the Hiyana crisis, when the secrets sins of a Hausa film actress were exposed and applied to the film industry as a whole. The “aesthetics of outrage” are made use of not only by artists but also by their critics, such as head censor Rabo Abdulkarim who went on television and radio to “expose” the artists in equally outrageous rumours about immorality and corruption of the entertainment industry.

My Contribution

Maintaining secrets and the protection of hidden spaces is an integral part of Hausa Islamic society. A popular Hausa expression is “*Allah ya rufa mana asiri*,” “May God keep our secrets.” There are hadith forbidding a man from exposing what his wife has told him in secret and forbidding the public revelation of private sexual sins unless seen by four male witnesses. The protection of domestic space and the modesty of the human body is also an important part of proper Islamic behaviour. Yet the dark side of these protected spaces, as I will explore in my discussion of Balaraba Ramat Yakubu’s muckraking novels and films on similar topics, is that they are often hidden sites of domestic abuse and other forms of corruption. The exposure of these private spaces is a source of tensions, with critics, anxious about protecting and maintaining hegemonic interpretations of culture and religion, expressing concern about the way the films portray protected spaces and expose the female body. The writers, filmmakers and musicians I focus on look more at the justice of exposure as revealing corruption and hypocrisy. As “*masu fadakarwa*” (preachers), as they are often listed in closing credits of films, artists argue that they are bringing light to dark places. They often invoke judgment day when even the hands

and feet and skin of the body will shout out sins done in secret. This ideology is potentially embedded in the Hausa proverb: “*Komai nisan dare, gari zai waye.*” (“As deep the dark of night, the dawn will break.”)

The word exposure as used to mean exposure to knowledge about the world or education also has both positive and negative connotations. While conservative culture critics argue films and novels are exposing populations they characterize as weak-minded (the discourse centres on women, children, and youth) to corrupting outside influences, artists often argue that the films educate and enlighten—are tools for exposing an audience to larger ideas. Into this discourse come complex discussions about cultural imperialism with critics and the Kano State Censorship Board often trying to protect Hausa culture from overwhelming global forces, while filmmakers often take the view that outside influences are modernizing forces that contribute positively to Hausa culture. In the following chapters, I intend to read the contextual controversies of history alongside the texts that cause these controversies. As such I combine observations gained through field research, interviews, and participant observation with close analysis of texts I have collected in over five years of research in northern Nigeria.

My work contributes detail and nuance to existing studies of Hausa literature and film and breadth and context to studies of African film and literature that are usually focused on European-language work. In examining Hausa written and performed narratives, which are often neglected in larger discussions of Nigerian literature and film, I do so aware that the narratives I study are subaltern in what Pascale Casanova calls the “world republic of letters.” I analyze marginal texts that rarely receive global exposure. Only a few of the texts I analyze here have been addressed by other scholars or even by newspaper reviewers, and of those, even fewer have received any sort of close reading.

African literature in English currently seems to be experiencing a renaissance on the global literary scene, with reviewers around the world canonizing authors like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Taiye Selasi, and Teju Cole, and prizes like the Caine Prize for African Writing drawing attention to writers like Helon Habila, Binyavanga Wainaina, NoViolet Bulawayo, and others.²² Yet African-language literatures are increasingly marginalized. In what should otherwise be cause for celebration with the June 2013 establishment of the large pan-African Etisalat Prize for Literature, African language literature even in translation seems to have been deliberately excluded, as rules for the prize require submissions to have been “first published in English” (Etisalat).²³ Without wanting to lessen the importance of these striking cosmopolitan English-language texts, my research is ideologically driven by a desire to “move the centre” as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o advocates, through re-valorizing literature written in African languages and drawing attention to the primary importance of a text’s most immediate audience. While not every text I examine would be of interest to international audiences or warrants translation, there is value in closely looking at texts that preoccupy the millions of people that make up Hausa society. My work engages with Gayatri Spivak’s questions about who hears the subaltern. I hope to complicate notions about who the subaltern is, the constraints and possibilities under which they speak and how their dialogue with those who hear them demonstrate the rich, complicated politics of a Muslim society grappling with membership in the nation and the world. Although my primary attention is on the contestations and theories of Hausa artists and audiences, my work is important to studies of “world literature” too, as it is only with increased attention to the

²² Nigeria, in particular, is drawing much of this attention. In May 2013 alone, Nigerian author E.E. Sule won the Africa-region Commonwealth Prize for his novel *Sterile Sky*. Two days later when the Caine Prize shortlist was released, four out of the five nominees were Nigerian. The eventual winner, Tope Folarin, was, as expected, a Nigerian (although he had lived his whole life in the U.S.). This followed the Caine Prize win in 2012 by Nigerian Rotimi Babatunde.

²³ When I tweeted at the Twitter handle for the prize asking them about this exclusion, they confirmed that only works originally published in English would be eligible.

field that the best works will have a chance at being translated and “exposed” to a wider audience.

Chapter Breakdown

I divide my dissertation into two sections. The first section will begin with texts from the 1970s through the 2000s to examine how selected Hausa written and screen narratives grapple with exposure to non-Islamic cultures and how they often justify their exposure of secret sins and private corruption as part of a general enterprise of moral education. The second section will look in detail at how the intermedial Hausa entertainment industry responds to criticism and talks about itself through metafiction. Starting with a comparison to English-language Nollywood metafiction, I will look in detail at the Kano censorship crisis and how artists responded to the events through novels, films, and music. The chapter breakdown is as follows:

Part 1: “Komai nisan dare”: A theory of exposure in Hausa film and literature

In “**Chapter 1: Contested cosmopolitanisms: History, literature, and exposure in three Northern Nigerian fictions,**” I briefly examine the exposure of Hausa literature in relation to English language literature in Nigeria and how the north is often presented as unexposed and uneducated in Nigerian national discourse. This opening allows me to look comparatively at similar processes happening within the north, within the historical tensions between what is seen as the *dar al-Islam*, the cosmopolitan realm of Islam—the global ummah, and the *dar al-kufr*, that indisciplined world existing outside of Islam. Ironically, tensions over what are seen as foreign incursions into Hausa culture are often layered onto anxieties about the corrupting influences of non-Islamic tradition. I analyze the tensions between Islamic

responsibility and the un-Islamic world of popular music, associated with the bori cult and prostitution, in Umaru Balarabe Ahmed's 1972 Hausa-language play *Bora da Mowa* (*Two Wives: One Loved—One despised*), and in Labo Yari's 1978 English-language novel, *Climate of Corruption*, where cinema culture takes on the same associations. I will further trace these tensions in the 1998 "lesbian" novel *Matsayin Lover* (*Lesbian Lover*) by Al-Khamees Bature Makwarari, which was banned by the Kano branch of the Association of Nigerian authors. All of these fictions demonstrate social conflict between the *dar al-Islam* and the *dar al-kufr* that layer on the gendered tensions between the bori cult and the government of the early Fulani caliphate. They also all expose private corruptions ostensibly to educate audiences about correct forms of behaviour, although the reaction to the release of *Matsayin Lover* demonstrates how controversial the "exposé" of public secrets can be.

In "**Chapter 2: A Private Experience? Balaraba Ramat Yakubu's Hausa novels of exposure,**" I look at the "politics of exposure" first in the "child marriage" controversy in 2013 when Senator Ahmad Yerima challenged the removal of a clause from the constitution which defined a woman as "of age" as soon as she was married, examining patriarchal discourse that took place in the popular media about the place of the woman in the home. I contrast the male rhetoric about the safe and protected space of the home with three of the novels of Hajiya Balaraba Ramat Yakubu. Yakubu's novels *Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare ba?* (*Is the Man a Dog or just an Outcast?*) (1995), *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne* (*Sin is a Puppy*) (1988/2012), and *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?* (*Who Will Marry an Illiterate Woman?*) (1990) "expose" supposedly protected female spaces as

sites of egregious abuse.²⁴ Yet these novels also offer a way forward through the exposure of education and independent careers for women who have been maltreated in their homes.

In **“Chapter 3: “Spectacular Transgressions:”²⁵ The subversive politics of spectacle in Hausa films and music videos,”** I examine how three genres of Hausa screen media, the Sentimental melodrama, the Chamama comedy, and the music video, use “spectacular techniques” to perform a didactic function in keeping with a reformist Islam, similar to the progressive politics of early Hausa dramatist and beloved populist politician Aminu Kano. These “spectacular techniques” illuminate and extend the concept of the “spectacular” discussed in almost oppositional ways by third cinema theorist and neorealist filmmakers Solanas and Getino and South African literary critic Njabulo Ndebele. The entertaining spectacles in the films, including techniques such as melodrama, breaking the fourth wall, and sermonizing or entertaining “showstoppers” (as Matthias Krings calls interruptions in the narrative) are often discussed as being made merely for fast money and as pure entertainment. I argue that these techniques also often allow for self-reflexive moments that emphasize teaching moments. I combine analysis of the “Sentimental films” *Gurnani (Growling)* and *Jarida (Newspaper)*, the Chamama comedy film *Ibro Ya Auri Baturiya (Ibro Married a European Woman)*, and the music videos from the film *Zazzabi (Fever)* and Adam Zango’s *Bahaushiya (Hausa Girl)* album, with observations gained from interviews and participant observation. Finally, while acknowledging the political potency of many of these works, I point out that the objectification of women and their bodies that often occurs in these spectacles often undermines the purportedly Islamic message in the films.

²⁴ I use Graham Furniss, Malami Buba, and William Burgess’s translations of these titles in *Bibliography of Hausa Popular Fiction 1987-2002*, except in the case of Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne, which Furniss, Buba, and Burgess translate as “A Crime is Like a Puppy.” Aliyu Kamal translates the title as *Sin is a Puppy* in the Blaft translation that I use.

²⁵ This phrase was first used by Brian Larkin in *Signal and Noise* in his description of his concept of the “aesthetics of outrage” (186).

Part 2: Metafiction and Self Reflexivity: How Hausa popular art talks about itself

In “**Chapter 4: Video Exposé: ‘Junk journalism’ and celebrity in Nollywood ad Kannywood,**” I compare and contrast English-language and Hausa-language metafiction, looking at the tensions between the portrayal of the film industry as junk journalism, which exposes the sins of an elite, and as a celebrity culture, which presents itself as parallel to the other global celebrity cultures as well as anxieties about maintaining an image that may not tally with real life. I examine the Nollywood metafiction, *The Super Star*, *The Price of Fame* and *Nollywood Hustlers*, and the Kannywood metafiction, *Inda Ranka... (In Life...)*, *Hafsah*, and *Kyalli* (Glitter). Finally, I look at how Kannywood metafiction “answer back” to these sorts of critiques, as well as show some of the interior conflict of the film industry. I discuss the films made before the Hiyana crisis here, moving on to the more heated metafiction made after the censorship crisis in Chapter 5.

In “**Chapter 5: “The politics of censorship in Kano: sex scandals and prison sentences in a shari’a state,”** I first examine the history of official censorship policies in Kano state from pre-shari’a days in the 1990s to the formal establishment of the Kano State Censorship Board in 2001, after the new shari’a government banned filmmaking in Kano. Second, I explore the specific tensions that arose after the Hiyana crisis when the chief censor ran a media campaign purportedly exposing the secret sins of the filmmakers, using some of the same techniques filmmakers had once used in their films to expose the secret sins of those they fingered as hypocrites. Finally, I examine three different genres of Hausa screen media that responded to the censorship crisis, each featuring an artist imprisoned during the crisis: Rabilu Musa D’anlasan in the comedy *Kotun Ibro (Ibro’s Court)*, Hamisu Lamido Iyan-Tama in the melodrama *Kurkuku (Prison)*, and Adam Zango in the music video “Oyoyo.” I argue that in

metafictional and autobiographical responses to the censorship crisis, these artists build on previous metafictional self-representations to characterize themselves not only as exposed and enlightened members of society against what they represent as the backwards and provincial conservative forces of the Censorship Board and its mobile court, but also as good Muslims opposed to hypocrites. The filmmakers show themselves as seeking to expose the wrongdoing of the Censorship Board and the mobile court attached to it, as well as the state government that empowers both. Ultimately, the filmmakers use their suffering at the hands of the Censorship Board as a synecdoche for the suffering of society at large under the Kano state government, using their own experiences as a meditation on justice, appealing to the national government and God for higher justice.

In my conclusion, I look at how the meditations on exposing corruption and speaking out against injustice in Hausa film, music, and literary industries foreshadow the Boko Haram crisis that began to sweep northern Nigeria in 2011 to the present.

Chapter 1: Contested cosmopolitanisms: History, literature, and exposure in three Northern Nigerian fictions

In Nigerian author Labo Yari's 1978 English-language novel *Climate of Corruption*, a young man Sule travels from the northern city of Kaduna to the southern city of Lagos in hopes of beginning his life anew in what was then Nigeria's capital city. When he arrives, however, he comes face to face, for the first time, with stereotypes of the north as backwards, unexposed, and fanatical. "These northern people can be crazy. He can chop one's head off with a knife easily" (149, 151) a neighbor says to other neighbors on Sule's first morning in Lagos. When Sule faints on a Lagos street, pedestrians ridicule him, "This is not the bush, it's the city. They all come down here with their bush mentality and refuse to adjust" (188). The wife of his father's friend, Mama Benji, lists off a litany of stereotypes about the north. Having lived in Zaria twenty years earlier, she is convinced that they "haven't changed much. They still don't go to school. [...] They are usually skeptical with anything that belongs to a white man. And they don't care about the future, so they'll never be ambitious to be doctors or engineers" (155-156).

Mama Benji's assumptions about the superiority of Lagos society, which is more like that of the "white man," and other proclamations by Lagosians about the civilization of their city as against other parts of the country, usefully illustrate popular perceptions of the hierarchies that structure postcolonial Nigerian society even today.¹ In observations about Chinua Achebe's novel *No Longer At Ease*, Tejumola Olaniyan points out that "the city, by virtue merely of its hosting of Westernization and Western power—'greatness' and wealth—is the new elite location, while the countryside is the lowly one, less Westernized and deeply impoverished"

¹ Mark Amaza's 2011 blog post "Re-Introducing Northern Nigeria: Not as you know it," challenges "southern" stereotypes about the north that have seemingly not changed since Labo Yari's 1978 novel.

(“The Paddle” 49-50). Olaniyan’s observation is relevant, not only to the tension between urban and rural Nigeria, but also to the tensions that often occur between regions. Labo Yari poses two Nigerian cities against each other: Kaduna, which was capital of the Northern region until 1967, and Lagos, the political capital of the federation until 1991 and still its economic capital. However, the north, in the Lagos imaginary, comes to symbolically represent the nation’s most impoverished and “uneducated” rural areas against which a more “exposed” and sophisticated Lagos elite can define itself.²

This chapter begins by taking as its focus the way these regional hierarchies manifest themselves in Nigerian literature and the critical discussion around that literature. Labo Yari’s second novel, the metafictional *Man of the Moment*, describes the quest of a talented young man Amadu Badak, who is tempted away from his thriving career as a leather craftsman in a rural village in the north by dreams of making it as a poet in Lagos. He has nearly worn out his welcome in friends’ homes, when a *deus ex machina* appears in the person of the wealthy, cultured, and widely travelled woman Anyanwu. She offers him an empty apartment in Ikeja and attempts to develop his poetry by exposing him to Western writers and philosophers. After Anyanwu mysteriously disappears, Amadu is about to abandon his dreams of making it as a poet. Then, he receives a letter from Anyanwu telling him she is coming back from the United States and another letter telling him that his volume of poetry that Anyanwu submitted has been accepted for publication. While Amadu and Anyanwu’s rapport reflects a classic patron-client relationship, Yari ironically implies that literary success is necessarily accomplished through an acquaintance with a cosmopolitan elite and Western publishing and educational structures.³

² This stereotype can be seen in recent Nollywood films, where the guard is often shown as a backwards Hausa.

³ Helon Habila’s novel *Waiting for an Angel* similarly describes the travails of the northern writer Lomba, who is trying to make it in Lagos. Lomba is part of a cohort of other artists who dream of making it big, which seems to mean going abroad. While Habila’s character Lomba ends up in prison, Habila himself realized this dream in real

Both of Labo Yari's novels point to regional disparities in access to cultural capital in finding recognition among the Nigerian elite. *Man of the Moment* specifically points to the importance of exposure, both in education and publication, to what Pascale Casanova calls "the world republic of letters," which she centres in Europe, in building a literary reputation. Yari's 1992 novel seems to be, in part, a reflection on his own experiences as a writer. He was one of the first northern writers to publish an English-language novel and was involved in the founding of the Association of Nigerian Authors (Sheme, "At home"). However, his career has been marked by near anonymity. Ibrahim Sheme argues that this is partially because he lives outside of the centres of English-language literary activity.⁴ In a conference paper "Religion and Identity in Northern Nigeria: the Example of Labo Yari's *Climate of Corruption*," Suleiman Jaji points out that "critical appraisal of" Yari's works is "rare." Indeed Jaji's paper was one of two scholarly papers on Yari's first novel *Climate of Corruption* that I could locate. In January 2013, when I published a review of *Climate of Corruption* in my *Weekly Trust* column, Yari sent me an email thanking me for examining a novel which has been largely ignored by the media establishment. The lack of discussion of Yari's fiction in wider discussions of Nigerian literature illustrates a much larger imbalance in attention paid to literature produced in the northern regions. As late as December 2012, when I attended the 7th conference on Northern Nigerian literature held at Bayero University in Kano, presenters lamented that, despite the reoccurring

life. He wrote *Prison Stories*, the collection of short stories that became his fractured novel *Waiting for an Angel*, in Lagos. When he won the Caine Prize for African Writing, his novel and two subsequent novels were published by the multinational publisher Penguin. His literary success resulted in him earning a creative writing degree in the U.K. and taking up a position at George Mason University in the United States.

⁴ Ibrahim Sheme is an important Northern intellectual, who hosted many of the debates about soyayya literature in the literary magazine *Nasiba* and later in the literary pages of the *New Nigerian* and *Weekly Trust*. In addition to his literary journalism, he is also a bilingual author in English and Hausa, with titles that include the 1999 English language collection *The Malam's Potion and other Stories* and the Hausa novel 'Yar Tsana, which won the Bashir Karaye Prize for Hausa literature in 2007. He is also a publisher, owning the publishing company Infomart and the Hausa film magazine *Mujullar Fim*. He has diversified into producing films as well. He is currently the editor of *Blueprint* newspaper and often reposts or writes original posts on his blog "Bahausha Mai Ban Hausi"/ "the Vexing Hausa Man," named for Ak'ilu Aliyu's poem "Hausa Mai Ban Hausi" (Ak'ilu 39).

academic conference on the theme, Northern Nigerian literature continued to remain largely invisible in larger scholarly studies and popular perceptions of Nigerian literature.

One of the questions that the conference members asked and attempted to answer is whether there is really less literature being written in the northern region than there is in other parts of the country or whether it is a matter of a lack of visibility? And what are the reasons for the lack of visibility of the literature that is there? In this chapter, I keep these questions in mind as I explore the tension between what Abel Joseph calls “two opposing hegemonies: the Arab-Muslim and the Euro-Christian” (240).⁵ I describe how the different systems of education and

⁵ The simple answer to this question of whether there is a scarcity of Nigerian literature from the north is “no.” In addition to 54 Hausa novels formally published by government publishers like NORLA, Gaskiya Corporation, and NNPC from the 1930s to the 1980s (Adamu, “Loud Bubbles” 5-6), the School of Oriental and African Studies Hausa popular literature database lists 731 Hausa novels published from the 1980s to 2003 in their collection. This does not include volumes of 20th century poetry, plays or religious treatises, or pre-colonial poetry, history, and legal writing in Hausa, Fulfulde, and Kanuri ajami script and Arabic. In the final chapter of his 1988 book on the history of writing in Hausa, *Hausa a Rubuce: Tarihin Rubuce Rubuce Cikin Hausa*, Ibrahim Y. Yahaya lists over 2000 titles of books of religion both Muslim and Christian, history, mathematics, science, business and professional work, recorded oral literature, language learning, education, novels, plays, poetry, newspapers, magazines, dictionaries, theses and journals written and published in Hausa since the colonial period. (It must be noted, however, that most of the theses he listed are in English.) (207-316). Roman Loimeier points out that 100,000 copies of the first edition of Islamic leader Abubakar Gumi’s Arabic tafsir, interpretation of the Qur’an, was funded by a Saudi businessman and distributed free of charge. Two more editions were also printed, indicating a huge audience for written religious works (Loimeier 184).

That said, until recently, there does seem to be less literature in English originating from the north than from other regions of the country. Of the 83 books of Nigerian origin from the Heinemann African Writers Series, which ran from 1962-2003, I could identify only one of the authors as coming from the northern region: Malum Amadu, who wrote *Amadu’s Bundle: Fulani Tales of Love and Djinnns* (AWS, “Cover Gallery”), published in translation. I determined this number by counting the number of Nigerian names on the list provided on the African Writers Series, Chadwyck Library collection. The AWS published a total of 365 books from 1962 to 2003 (Fraser and Bejjit par. 8). This is obviously an imperfect method as names do not necessarily indicate location, but it gives a rough indication of the number of Nigerians published by the AWS and the lack of representation from the north. With the exception of the novels of Cyprian Ekwensi, who was born in the north-central city of Minna and was publishing popular novels as early as the 1940s (Zell and Silver 142-143), there were no other English novels published by a writer from the north that I found record of until Mohammed Sule’s *The Undesirable Element* was published by Macmillan Pacesetters series in 1977. In Griswold’s comprehensive survey of Nigerian novels in English published from the 1950s to the mid-1990s, *Bearing Witness: Readers, Writers, and the Novel in Nigeria*, she identifies over five hundred novels by 261 authors (275-291). However, of the 140 authors whose birthplace she knew, she found that “only 10 percent come from the north, 42 percent from the east, and another 39 percent from the west (the southwest and the old “middle west”), with the remainder [9 percent] from the middlebelt” (43). Griswold’s research is problematic. She seems to overly rely on records from official publisher catalogues and “Africana” collections in American university libraries (22) and on research she did in the southern cities of Lagos, Ibadan, Onitsha, and Enugu, collecting novels from only one city in the north central region, Minna (22). She also only did reader surveys with readers resident in Lagos and those living abroad (88-119). The biggest problem with her research was probably her attention to only English-language novels (33). She claims that “vernacular languages

the overall use of Hausa rather than English complicates the ways in which literature written in the north is presented by its authors and received by audiences. Stereotypes about the north by southerners are not one-sided. In northern writing by Muslims, the south is often portrayed as part of a larger “alien” influence that threatens Muslim identity. The central aim of this chapter is to illustrate the anxieties of many northern critics about these contested cosmopolitanisms—non-Islamic influences that threaten the Muslim *ummah*. Through an examination of three northern Nigerian texts in English and Hausa, I explore two intertwined themes: first, these authors’ ambivalence about Western and non-Muslim influences and institutions and, second, their use of “exposure” as a teaching tool to show what needs to be changed in society. Before commencing with this analysis, I will first address questions of education and the different forms of “cosmopolitanism” that contribute to the regional literary traditions of Nigeria.

Education and Exposure to Agents of Cultural Capital

In Achebe’s 2012 memoir *There was a Country*, he titles an early section “A Primary Exposure” (15). In it he describes the beginning of his “formal education at St. Philips Central School, in 1936 or thereabout.” Achebe attributes his acquisition of the cultural capital and literary skills he needed to tell his story to a larger world to his exposure to Western education at a series of increasingly elite institutions in a Nigeria on the cusp of independence. His first short stories were published in the *University Herald* at University College, Ibadan (33). When he attended training at the British Broadcasting Corporation school in London, he met the writer

make up only a tiny portion of the available reading materials” and that “Part of the answer to the question of, How do Nigerians read? Must be, therefore, ‘By and large, they read in English’ (104-105). However, by the time she published her book in 2000, there were more novels in Hausa than those she listed in English in Nigeria (Furniss, Buba, and Burgess). (The Hausa novels may not have met her page length requirement but ignoring such a large body of work is problematic in a sociology of reading culture.) Nevertheless, her overall survey is useful in pointing out the disparity of geographical access to publication in English, which by the 2010s had not changed all that much.

Gilbert Phelps, who helped him submit *Things Fall Apart* to British publishers. These formative opportunities and connections with writers such as Phelps established the foundation for Achebe's accomplished career and highlight, more broadly, the sources of cultural capital that enabled his successful career trajectory as a writer whose works circulate globally (37-38).

As editor of the Heinemann African Writers Series and a founding member of other influential literary institutions,⁶ Achebe in turn helped connect other Nigerian writers to the larger world of global publishing, a role for which he is often called the “Father of African literature.”⁷ Schools and universities became the meeting places where literary movements flourished and out of which cultural gatekeepers emerged. Achebe notes that many of “the pioneers of modern African literature” came out of the same Government College—Umuahia, he attended: “Vincent Chukwuemeka Ike, Christopher Okigbo, Elechi Amadi, I.N. C. Aniebo, Chike Momah, Gabriel Okara, and later Ken Saro-Wiwa” (25). The University of Ibadan, where Ulli Beier founded the literary magazine *Black Orpheus* and began the “mbari clubs” (Benson 1), was one of the most important universities in the development of the first generation of Nigerian literature. Nsukka became another important university environment for literary development,⁸ and it is environments like these that established the literary networks that came to define

⁶ Achebe describes how in the mid-1960s, he and other writers “established the Society of Nigerian Authors [...] as an attempt to put our writers in a firm and dynamic frame” to help society (*There Was* 57). He was also instrumental in the founding of the Association of Nigerian Authors in Nsukka in 1981 (Ohaeto 243).

⁷ He regularly rejected this title, saying humorously in his essay “African Literature as Restoration of Celebration,” that he dissociated himself “From that well-meant but blasphemous characterization” not out of modesty but as “an instinctive genuflection to an artistic taboo among my people—a prohibition—on the pain of being finished off rather quickly by the gods—from laying proprietary hands on even the smallest item in that communal enterprise in creativity which my people, the Igbo of Nigeria, undertook from time to time, and to which they gave the name mbari” (*The Education* 108).

⁸ In their introduction to a special issue of *English in Africa* on “third-generation” Nigerian writing, Adesanmi and Dunton note that Ibadan and Nsukka have “acquired a reputation in Nigeria’s literary history for being sites of generational beginnings. [...] most of the third generation poets studied at the prestigious universities in these two cities, or in Lagos, Nigeria’s economic capital” (8). This literature that emerged out of schools and universities and was published by Heinemann and other multinational publishers had an outward orientation. Ulli Beier admits that, like the initial publication of Amos Tutuola’s *The Palm Wine Drinkard* and Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, writing in *Black Orpheus* was initially meant to serve as reading about Africa for Westerners (Benson 27).

Nigerian literature. Northerners, both because of their physical distance from and their smaller numbers in institutions of higher education,⁹ were largely excluded from these literary circles.¹⁰

While Nigerian literature in English tends to be written by those who have excelled at Western education, the literature of the north in Hausa and English is impacted by two strands of formal education, both of which are historically distanced from the institutions of the south.

Although the north is often represented in the popular imagination as “unexposed” and uneducated, as can be seen in Sule’s experiences in *Climate of Corruption*, northern cities like Kano or Katsina are, in fact, cosmopolitan centres that have long been engaged with the wider

⁹ Even as late as 2010, the 2010 DHS Educational Data Survey by the Nigerian National Population Commission points out the numbers of school aged children in secondary school in the “South West (65%) is about three times higher than” school aged children “in the North East (22 percent) (NPC 57). “In Bauchi and Sokoto States (in northern zones) 92 percent and 91 percent of children ages 5-16 are unable to read, respectively; in contrast in Lagos and Ekiti States (in southern zones), 92 percent and 85 percent respectively are able to read” (161). With these kinds of educational disparities, it is understandable that as AbdulGaniyu Abolore Issa and Akinfenwa Oluwaseun Stephen point out, “nearly all the multinational publishers in Nigeria are based in Southern Nigeria” and they rarely promote northern writers, who are left with no option but to “approach relatively unknown foreign publishers or to self-publish” (222-223). To publish fiction, as opposed to religious work which often received funding from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries, writers must rely upon a network of connections and an infrastructure for publishing that was well developed in Southern Nigeria but largely absent from the north. An exception to this would be Northern Nigeria Publishing Corporation (NNPC), formed partially from MacMillan Nigeria, which has published most well-known Hausa books up to the 1980s, when self-publication became common.

¹⁰ There were exceptions. Poets Mamman Vatsa and Emman Shehu and novelist Zaynab Alkali were included in academic discussions of Nigerian literature, and in 2001, Abubakar Gimba was the president of the Association of Nigerian Authors. The imbalance in recognition has begun to change especially with the recognition of Bauchi-born Helon Habila, who was the first Nigerian to win the Caine Prize for African Writing in 2001. His collection of self-published short stories *Prison Stories* was published as the novel *Waiting for an Angel*, which subsequently won the Africa-region Commonwealth Prize in 2003. Although Habila had been based in Lagos when he received this recognition, by 2013, there was a rising recognition of Nigerian writers living in the north on the Nigerian literary scene. The internet, beginning with listserves like JosANA and Krazitivity and continuing into social media interaction on Facebook and Twitter, and online journals like Chuma Nwokolo’s *African Writing Online* and Richard Ali’s *Sentinel Nigeria* gave a more public voice to a community of African and Nigerian writers who were far less limited by location. The capital city of Abuja in north-central Nigeria became one of Nigeria’s major literary centres with institutions like the Abuja Literary Forum, Abuja Literary Society and others. In 2013, the Africa region Commonwealth prize was won by E.E. Sule, who was based in Niger-state and had grown up in Kano, and when the Caine Prize for African Writing shortlist came out, four out of the five nominees on the shortlist were Nigerian, two of whom were based in Abuja, Abubakar Adam Ibrahim, who grew up in Jos, and Elnathan John, who grew up in Kaduna. Ibrahim’s nominated story had been published in a short story collection that was the first book published by Parresia Press co-founded by Abuja-based Richard Ali, who was born in Kano and grew up in Jos, and Lagos based Azafi Omoluabi-Ogosi. Nigeria-based publishers have also recently begun to sell their books online through konga.com and jumia.com, making books available theoretically to anyone in the country. That said, the Lagos axis is still privileged by these online vendors, which are based in the city, and book costs make them largely available only to a wealthy elite. Nevertheless, the decentralization of publishing houses indicates that a much more diverse set of voices will be heard in the 21st century

world through trade and pilgrimage routes East and towards the Arab Muslim world. Literacy in Arabic, as well as Hausa writing in ajami script,¹¹ is thought to have developed in Kano in the 1400s during the reign of Muhamman Rufa (Hiskett 79-80).¹² In 1650, Shaykh Muhammd b. al-Sabbagh describes a madrasa in Katsina that taught “Law, Koran exegesis and prophetic tradition, grammar, syntax.... philology [...] and logic... The study of grammatical particles and of the Names of God...Knowledge of Koran recitation,...The science of rhyme and metre” (qtd. in Hiskett 56). Clearly this education was connected to flows of knowledge from the larger Muslim world.

By the late 18th and early 19th century, the scholarly Fodiyo family were producing large amounts of scholarly narrative and verse. Nana Asma’u, the daughter of the reformer Shehu Usman d’an Fodiyo, had a close working relationship with her brother and husband, often collaborating with both of them on scholarly biography, history, and literary translations between Arabic, Hausa, and Fulfulde. She also wrote a great deal of poetry, which she used as a teaching tool, in those three languages, and she preached in the Tuareg language of Tamachek (Boyd; Boyd and Mack, “Educating”; Coles and Mack, “Women” 21).¹³ By identifying as part of the global Muslim community, the *ummah*, in their scholarly and religious works, which were in dialogue with other Arabic texts, these writers presented a cosmopolitan view of the world to their students and readers. Usman dan Fodiyo, himself, possessed an advanced understanding of geopolitics in the Islamic world. For example, he was aware of French incursions into Egypt (Hiskett 223), and when the British explorer Hugh Clapperton visited Sokoto in 1824, dan

¹¹ Ajami is commonly used to describe non-Arabic languages being written in Arabic script. (See Phillips, “Hausa in the 20th Century: An Overview.”).

¹² The Kanem-Borno empire, in what is now northeastern Nigeria, has earlier records of literacy. Hunwick notes that the “first known writer in Arabic was a grammarian and poet of Kanem, Abu Ishaq Ibrahim al-Kanemi, who died c1212” (210).

¹³ Balaraba Sule and Priscilla Starratt (“Islamic”) and Jean Boyd and Beverly Mack (“Educating”) point out that the Islamic educational system for women founded by this community survives to this day.

Fodiyo's son Sultan Muhammadu Bello complained about Muslims being killed by the British in India (Umar, "Islamic" 148).¹⁴

The coming of colonialism in the early 1900s altered the power of these educational structures and changed the direction of Hausa written expression. John Phillips points out that although "at the beginning of colonial rule there were about 250,000 pupils in about 25,000 Qur'anic schools and no telling how many literate graduates," the colonial administrator Brigadier Lugard's decision to change the orthography of Hausa from Arabic-script *ajami* to Roman script for administrative purposes ended up making colonial education a rival to rather than a complement to Qur'anic education (66).¹⁵ Phillips argues that Hans Vischer, the colonial officer in charge of Northern Nigerian education from 1908 deliberately set out to use Hausa in Roman script in education to isolate students from anti-colonial materials in both English and Arabic (74-76). Lugard was particularly insistent that northern pupils be kept away from southern Nigerian teachers (78), an example of his widespread use of "divide and rule policies" that have had repercussions on the relationship between the Nigerian north and south to date.¹⁶ Alhaji Mahmood Yakubu points out that the British refused to allow missionaries to establish any schools in the north and initially discouraged Western education as a way to demonstrate to emirs that they were not challenging Islam. Further, they did not want to create "a class of 'denationalized natives'" who would provide a political challenge to British rule (42). Yakubu notes that it was not until "nearly two decades after the inception of British rule, that Katsina

¹⁴ Alhaji Mahmood Yakubu points out that Kano in particular was "an established centre of international commerce" by the time Clapperton visited in 1824. He notes that Clapperton "was amazed to find European goods, among them French writing pads and English green cotton umbrellas, on sale at the Kano market; Spanish dollars were also legal tender" (130).

¹⁵ Ibrahim Y. Yahaya puts the number of students in the 25,000 schools as 218,618 (90).

¹⁶ This desire to keep northerners and southerners separate in the early days of colonialism can be contrasted to the "detribalized" nature of the boarding schools of the sort Achebe attended in the 1940s, as Molly Mahood, a lecturer at University College Ibadan, noted made students think "of themselves as Nigerians" (qtd. in Ochiagha 9).

College was established, and remained for the next three decades the only government post-elementary school in Northern Nigeria, serving a population of over 20 million people” (43).

While the British eventually sought to combine the Islamic and Western system of education, in the early colonial period often the truly skilled ulama (Islamic scholars) refused to teach in the schools, and many parents would not send their children to school fearing Western influence on a proper Islamic upbringing (Hiskett 294). One of the first Hausa novelists Muhammadu Bello recounts how his father “was very suspicious of European schools. He thought that the idea behind them was to convert boys to Christianity.” After he heard that emirs were sending their sons to school and that Arabic and Islamic studies were on the curriculum, Bello’s father reluctantly agreed to let him go. He told him, “as for you, Muhammadu Bello, wherever these Europeans take you, whatever those Europeans do to you, know that Islam is your religion and learning is your tradition” (qtd in Furniss, “Hausa Creative” 87-88). Paul Newman points out that the suspicion about Western education is evidenced in the name “*karatun boko*” given to Western education, which literally means “fraudulent” or “deceptive” education. “As compared with traditional Koranic learning, which was highly valued, western education was viewed as lacking in substance and a fraudulent deception being imposed upon the Hausa population by a conquering European force” (8). From the time of the Fodiyo jihad, jihadists had posed the “corrupted” local practice against the Islamic knowledge found in the *ummah*, the global Muslim community. That which was outside the Muslim community was falsehood. The use of *boko* with its connotations of “sham, fraud, inauthenticity” (Newman 11) for Western education is very similar to the use of the word *boka* for what Bargery’s Hausa dictionary defines as a “soothsayer; wizard; quack doctor,” and its connection to pre-Islamic

religion (Bargery 117). The threat of Western influence was layered onto older fears about the influence of “pagan” syncretism that lay outside of the *ummah*.

By the 1940s, these suspicions were beginning to change. Colonial officer R.M. East, the superintendent of the Zaria-based Translation Bureau noted in a 1936 article that there was a “growing demand [...] for instruction in a European language” as people began to realize the importance of Western education for “social advancement” (“A First” 353). In *An Aristocracy in Political Crisis*, Alhaji Mahmood Yakubu writes a detailed history of the tensions between the old aristocracy and the new Western educated elite, many of whom had passed through Katsina College, the only government institution of post-primary education in the north until 1949 (43, 65). Populist politician Aminu Kano was one of the voices in favour of increasing access of Western-style education to everyone, including women, and he critiqued the conservative aristocratic structures of the emirate, which he argued were stifling the masses (Maryam Aminu Kano 135). There were also tensions between the more moderate educated class represented by intellectuals and politicians like Ahmadu Bello and Abubakar Imam and the traditional aristocracy. By the 1950s, however, the conservative aristocracy, alarmed by the rise of Aminu Kano and Sa’adu Zunger’s populist political party NEPU, had aligned themselves with the more moderate NPC, represented by Ahmadu Bello, Abubakar Imam, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and others. NEPU aligned themselves with the radical nationalism of Azikiwe and often found supporters in the Sabon Gari, the cosmopolitan new town that grew up outside of the old city walls where people from all over Nigeria lived. Yakubu points out that NEPU’s “cardinal strategy for mobilizing support was to expose the abuses prevalent” in the Native authority system, in which the aristocracy colluded with colonial rule (103). NPC’s mantra, on the other hand, was the “north for Northerners” and they defined themselves as the party of “tradition” as

against the encroachment of the South. Thus NPC drew on earlier anxieties about European, Christian influences into a new concept of “tradition” (99-104), opposing the more radical openness of NEPU.¹⁷

In spite of these political shifts in the mid-twentieth century, the early colonial policies restricting education to only a small elite continued to have a great impact on the development of Nigerian literature. While Achebe and his classmates were being trained in English literature and writing at a school where “the vernacular” was banned (Ochiagha 7), so that Achebe could claim when defending his use of English in writing, “for me, there is no other choice. I have been given this language and I intend to use it” (“English” 348), the differences in colonial education policy and the lack of Western schools in the north meant that not all Nigerians could equally claim or even desired such ownership of English.¹⁸ Indeed, as I have described above, the colonial policy to educate northern Nigerians in Hausa written in Roman script rather than focusing on English meant that creative writers in the north were separated from the literary discourse taking place in

¹⁷ By the 1970s, Iran and Saudi Arabia were becoming alternate sources of education and modernity, and the Salafist-influenced Izala, officially formed in 1978, were in favour of education. Umar notes that, “By integrating Islamic and western education, Izala schools have neutralized the longstanding resistance to Western education” (“Education” 135). Umar observes that ironically more western educated Muslims are drawn to Islamic fundamentalism than are those who received either traditional or modern Islamic education (143), positing that “[b]y embracing Islamic fundamentalism, western-educated Muslims equip themselves with the necessary Islamic capital to compete culturally, socially, politically, and economically against Muslim elite trained in modern and traditional Islamic schools” (144). By the 1970s, therefore, there was a rich mix of competing cosmopolitan modernities in Nigerian public life and education, those from the West and from the East.

¹⁸ The earliest prose fiction in Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa seemed to have been inspired by literary contests. In 1933 Pita Nwana’s novel *Omenuko* won an “All Africa literary contest” (Pritchett, “Translators Preface”). Similarly, as described in this chapter, the first Hausa novels were written for a literary competition organized by Rupert East’s Translation Bureau in 1933. D.O. Fagunwa’s Yoruba novel *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmale*, translated by Wole Soyinka as *Forest of a Thousand Daemons* “was written for a writing competition organized in 1936 by Gladys Plummer, superintendent of the education ministry in Nigeria” and published in 1938 by the Church Missionary Society (Olakunle 109), although it was not the first Yoruba novel. Rita Nnodim notes that the first Yoruba novel was Isaac B. Thomas’s *Itan Igbesi aiye Emi Segilola* published serially in the Yoruba-language newspaper *Akede Eko* from July 1929 to March 1930 and was published in one volume as a novel in 1930 (156). It was later translated by Karin Barber. Writing competitions seemed to remain a motivation for Yoruba and Hausa writing. Karen Barber and Graham Furniss point out that the Yoruba writer Oladejo Okediji initially planned to write in English until he saw that the Western Region Literature Committee had started a competition for Yoruba language novels in 1954 (Barber and Furniss 9). Abdalla Uba Adamu notes that until the mid-1980s, Hausa writing was supported by government publishing and the rise of what he calls the “third generation” of “modern classical” Hausa writers was promoted by a 1980 competition by the Department of Culture and a 1981 NNPC competition (“Loud Bubbles” 2-6).

southern educational institutions. And yet, I argue that the poor education of the north in English had by the end of the twentieth century, ironically contributed ultimately to one of the most vibrant indigenous-language literature traditions on the continent.

The colonial intervention in literature resulted in two different literary traditions in northern Nigeria. One had roots in Islam, the jihad, and religious texts and was seen as highly authoritative. The second emerging tradition, impacted by the colonial officer East's intervention and overlapping with popular tale-telling and singing, was more secular and entertainment-oriented. It was presented by colonial authorities and later by nationalists as evidence of cultural progress, and yet it was often read with anxieties produced by the first tradition. Furniss points out that while "daily experiences" of the early novelists were "bound up with aspects of a 'colonial encounter,'" the earliest Hausa imaginative prose narratives were more concerned "with their own notions of Hausa society" ("Hausa Creative" 100). While colonialism certainly affected educational policies and the politics of the north, the literature produced in Hausa responded to the alien incursion of colonialism as part of a larger and longer discourse about the relationship of the Muslim *ummah* with everyday life and other activities that were seen as foreign to it.

The scorn Lagos city dwellers have for rural dwellers that Olaniyan describes, has its parallel in Hausa tradition as well, where, as Rudolf Gaudio notes "the city represents *dar al-Islam*, the abode of Islam, an oasis of restraint surrounded by *dar al-kufr*, the abode of unbelief where wild, immoral practices prevail" (*Allah Made* 18). These distinctions are made not only between city dwellers and rural-dwellers but also between the larger global Muslim community and that which lies outside it. Said Babura Ahmad points out that the value of Islamic knowledge associated with "male society in the cities and urban areas, rather than in rural communities" has

also had the effect of devaluing lighter entertaining fare like folktales, which are associated with “women and children, particularly in the rural areas” (29-30), a point also stressed by Ousseina Alidou (*Engaging* 130). The jihadist reform movement of Usman dan Fodiyo in the early 1800s:

directed repeated attacks upon un-Islamic practices current in the Hausa states, including the practice of bori, the spirit possession cult, and certain kinds of musical performances. Although tale telling was not expressly termed un-Islamic by the Islamic reformers, it was regarded as fululu (idle talk, gossip), which is undesirable, in which people were therefore enjoined not to participate. Instead people were asked to engage in madahu (panegyric and other literary activities that directly propagated Islam. (Ahmad, *Narrator* 28).

East, albeit with a certain amount of colonial condescension, observed that this “serious-minded” attitude towards writing was one of his major obstacles in persuading “these Malamai that the thing was worth doing” (“A First” 352). Story-telling, he claimed, “is looked upon as a pastime for the amusement of women and children, somewhat below the dignity of a man who has attained the status of a malam [a religious scholar]” (352). Several of the novels submitted to East drew on folklore. Abubakar Imam, author of *Ruwan Bagaja* and later *Magana Jari Ce*, in particular, wrote amusing tales drawing on the trickster type.

While the colonial imposition of Roman script had the effect of breaking the continuity between the historical and religious writings in Arabic and ajami script, it also had the effect of opening writing to more secular forms of entertainment. However, the scorn against such “non-serious” works has meant that tale-tellers and other entertainers often make self-conscious defenses of their work, framing the entertainment in moral structures that ostensibly teach some lesson. Furniss notes that “A legacy of traditional verse has been the social acceptability of

didacticism.” And such “[e]xhortation, prohibition, congratulation and condemnation” survived from the “content of religious verse” into the modern poetry, which often addresses more secular themes” in the 20th century (*Ideology* 7). Joanna Sullivan notes that the “connections” in modern Hausa fiction “to its poetic influences are clear and manifold,” as the “use of fantasy, the earmark of folklore, faded into the distant past” and “Hausa fiction suddenly took a turn towards the serious” (“Modern” 121).

Ahmad describes how “a form of cultural revivalism started to emerge” in the early 1970s, in which government arts councils and universities began to promote the study of Nigerian languages and culture.¹⁹ In this context, folktales in particular began to be seen as a way to provide “moral training.” Alidou argues that the transcription of Hausa folklore by men trained in Islamic literacy was a kind of “male invasion of a female narrative space,” which “transformed both the language and style of the original tales by inscribing them within an Islamic Hausa linguistic and symbolic space” (*Engaging* 133). According to the performer Abdullahi Sani “who is also a student of Arabic, Hausa, and Islamic studies,” “Many people take it that performing tale [*sic*] or hearing it is sinful because it is a lie. Actually this is not the case. Although what happens in tale is not real, the aim is to teach a moral lesson which is in conformity with Islam” (*Narrator* 33-34). Such justification of entertainment through pointing to the social and teaching value of stories, as a form of enlightenment, is one that is often expressed from tale-tellers and novelists, to filmmakers and singers, and is one of my major interests in this dissertation.

¹⁹ Playwright Umaru Balarabe Ahmed described to me in an email how he translated the play *Bora* that he had originally written in English “into Hausa because, like fellow Hausa University Arts graduates of the 1960s, we were highly interested in promoting Hausa Studies at University level, hence our shift of focus away from whatever first degree we pursued, e.g. English, Arabic e.t.c”

In addition to often using “morality tales,” a genre common to West African popular literature from the Yoruba traveling theatre to Onitsha market literature to the contemporary Hausa novels that populate northern marketplaces, the ideological and spatial division of the *dar al-Islam* and the *dar al-kufr* in place from the jihadist literature of the early 19th century also often informs the way “modern” Hausa writers organize their fiction. Tensions arise in the texts and among readers when these spatial divisions and moral trajectories are violated.

In the following section I analyze how three northern Nigerian authors negotiate between a self-conscious moralism and the tensions that arise when showing “immoral” behaviours and “un-Islamic” spaces. The three prose works I examine here illustrate different traditions within twentieth century Hausa literature: first, the academic cultural revivalism evident in the Hausa-language play *Bora da Mowa* by Umaru Balarabe Ahmed, published by NNPC in 1972; second, the English-language northern text, the novel *Climate of Corruption* by Labo Yari, published by Enugu-based Fourth Dimension in 1978; and third, the Hausa-language novel *Matsayin Lover*, part of the soyayya novel tradition, self-published by Al-Khamees D. Bature Makwarari in 1998. While varying in style, genre and subject matter, these self-consciously moralistic fictions trace tensions about inside and outside, what is secret and what is exposed, what is private and what is public in contemporary life in Muslim northern Nigeria. Each of these texts present some form of anxiety about the corruption of the “*dar al-Islam*” by exposure to outside forces from the “*dar al-kufr*,” and each text exposes secret sins that have seeped into spaces thought to be safe by the Muslim community, whether the home in Ahmed’s play *Bora da Mowa* and Yari’s *Climate of Corruption*, or the girl’s boarding school in Makwarari’s novel *Matsayin Lover*. Yet, the act of “exposing” these “corrupted spaces” as an ostensive act of education can become controversial, as I will demonstrate by looking at the banning of the final novel *Matsayin Lover*.

Bora da Mowa

Playwright Umaru Balarabe Ahmed was a product of the few prestigious government schools in the north in the second half of the twentieth century, attending Barewa College in Zaria. He worked as a secondary school teacher, and obtained his B.A. from the University College in Ibadan in 1965 and an M.Ed. from Ahmadu Bello University Zaria in 1974. Although he began to teach at the tertiary level in 1977, his early career in the 1960s and early 1970s was in secondary education (Nigerian National Merit Award 1-2), and it was in the secondary school environment that he wrote his first collection of Hausa plays *Bora da Mowa*, published by NNPC in 1972. His work is a good example of the sort of cultural reclamation that a Western-educated northern elite had begun to engage in during the 1970s, as they sought to negotiate a Hausa identity in relation to both local and national discourses about religion, culture, and politics. All four of the plays in the collection deal with marriage conflict, and three of them deal specifically with tension between wives in polygynous households, hence the name “Bora da Mowa,” [Favoured and Unfavoured Wife]. This title also references, more generally, an old Hausa motif, found in numerous folktales, which feature the good wife, the wicked wife (who is often shown as visiting a sorcerer or witch) and a didactic ending.

The play I examine here is the first of the collection from which it takes its title. *Bora da Mowa* was written in English in 1959, as *Bora*. Ahmed later translated and expanded it in Hausa. It was initially performed by school children in Government Secondary School, Funtua (*Bora* 3).²⁰ The frame story centres on conflicts between husbands and wives, as well as generational conflict between elderly and young suitors.²¹ As Furniss notes, the characters in Ahmed’s plays

²⁰ Unless otherwise noted, my quotations from the play in this dissertation come from the unpublished translation done by Ann Fleisher and Neil Skinner. I footnote the original Hausa.

²¹ This theme of conflict between rich older suitors and young suitors is an old one, explored as early as the 1935 novel *Jiki Magayi* by John Tafida Umaru Zaria and Rupert East. (Skinner speculates that *Jiki Magayi* was the basis

are, like those in folktales, stereotypes, and “the strong moral overtone is apparent from their interactions and from the moral positions they articulate to each other in the plays” (“Video” 109). The play develops the old folkloric domestic conflict, in a new modern context, where I am reading the relationship between the two wives as symbolic of the threat of non-Islamic influences on the Muslim community.

Bora da Mowa tells the story of a girl Umma, who goes against her parents’ wishes, turning down the offer of marriage from an older wealthier man, Daudu, to marry her sweetheart Ilu. Their marriage prospers and her parents reconcile themselves with her choice when they see Ilu accumulating wealth. Then, Ilu decides to marry a new wife, Ziza. He brags to his brother that this woman is the “most beautiful hooker in town” (Act 1, Scene 6)!²² From the time Ziza enters the house, Umma suffers. Ilu abandons her and moves her out of her old room into a leaky room formerly used for domestic animals. The only way she is able to survive is through the help of Ilu’s kind brother Audu. Ziza teaches her son to mock Umma and her son, pointing out that they are unwanted by Ilu. Eventually, Umma is no longer able to take the abuse, and she moves back to her parents house. Meanwhile, Ziza’s behaviour becomes more and more out of control. She demands money from Ilu to build houses near hotels, where she spends weeks at a time away from him and their son. She drains him of all of his wealth, and, soon, it is gone. She is known as a *bori* (spirit possession) practitioner and the queen of prostitutes, showing up in a scene in a drinking spot, where two drunks gossip about her lesbian affair with another prostitute. Eventually, Ziza goes to a witch to get poison to kill Ilu so she can inherit his

of Cyprian Ekwensi’s novel *An African Night’s Entertainment*, although Ekwensi claims that the story was told to him orally [Skinner, “From Hausa” 152].) This is also a frequent theme in the more contemporary self-published novels, such as Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino’s *In da So da Kauna*.

²² “wacce ta ke ba wadda ta fi ta duk cikin kilakawan garin nan” (Ahmed 13).

property. But, in good folkloric fashion,²³ her spoiled son eats the food meant for his father and he dies. The police, coming to Ilu's house to apprehend his corrupt politician friend Habu, find and arrest the prostitute and politician together. Ilu is left alone.

I suggest that the conflict between the two wives can be read as a metaphor for the larger social conflicts between the Muslim community and that which is often condemned as alien to it. Although Umma has rebelled against her parents to marry the boy she loves, she is vindicated in two ways: 1) her parents are more interested in the money of her suitor than his character, and 2) it turns out that her judgment about her older suitor is correct, as he has threatened Ilu with a spell of impotence if he goes ahead and marries the girl.²⁴ While nothing ever seems to come of Daudu's threat, the spiritual forces that evil Daudu invokes return to Ilu through Ziza, a prostitute and practitioner of bori, the spirit possession ritual against which the jihadists struggled.²⁵ While Ziza does not literally make Ilu impotent—she bears him a son—she emasculates him by stripping him of much of his social power and wealth, as she demands more and more of his resources for herself. He becomes what Hausas joke about as a “*mijin Hajiya*,”

²³ Ahmad describes how in the folktale “The Story of Janna and Jannalo,” a woman goes to a boka to get help in killing her stepson, whom she tries to kill with several different methods including poison. She ends up accidentally killing her own son instead (*Narrator* 40). This sort of poetic justice is found in folktales from other cultures as well. A similar incident happens in Lola Shoneyin's novel *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*, when the daughter of the first wife eats a poisoned dish prepared by her jealous mother for the fourth wife and dies in her stead.

²⁴ Ironically, her younger suitor Habu also turns out to have bad character, as can be seen in his treatment of her after he marries a second wife.

²⁵ Bori practice is what Dan-Inna Chaibou calls a form of “sacred drama” (qtd. in Beik 12) thought to have originally been part of the pre-Islamic religion, which offered women powerful roles (Dunbar 76). It was “tolerated” by “Muslim Hausa kings” until the jihad when “Usman d'an Fodio and his successors sought to end these practices in strict conformity with Shari'a” (Gaudio, *Allah Made* 36). Indeed, Mukhtar Umar Bunza points out that one of the motivations of the jihad was to cleanse Islam of corruption from Bori (4). While the independent women and ‘yan daudu (transvestites or “feminine men” as Gaudio calls them) associated with the bori cult are seen as outcasts from the Muslim *ummah* and often practice their professions outside of the city in the sabon gari (new town, associated with foreigners), they do not see themselves as outcasts in the same way as their critics do. Joanna Sullivan points out that some bori spirits are associated with Muslim jinn, such as “Malam Alhaji of the Prophet [...] guest from Mecca” (Sullivan, “Exploring Bori” 276). Rudolf Gaudio notes that while “orthodox Muslims” view the Bori adepts “willingness to let spirits possess” them as sin, “virtually all Bori practitioners today are Muslims and view their ritual ‘play’ [wasa] as compatible with God's will, for it was He who created the spirits and rules over them. Since the adoption of Shari'a, Bori has been banned from the public sphere” (32).

husband of a Hajiya,²⁶ where all the power in the home belongs to the wife. The two wives illustrate here the binary Nawal El Saadawi notes is characteristic of Arab literature, “the female characterized by seductiveness and sexual passion” as well as conflict and sorcery, posed against the “the mother pure, virtuous, virgin devoid of sex or passion” (524). In the domestic relationship into which Ziza is introduced, the first wife and good mother Umma symbolizes the *ummah*, the global Muslim community in which people act within the bounds of propriety defined by Islam. Beverly Mack argues that, “Muslim Hausa culture is focused inward, with the family at its core and the wife and mother as overseer of this context” (*Muslim Women* 7). The inner health of domestic sphere, signified by the virtue of the women in the home, is thought to have consequences on the health of the public society of men. Ilu had prospered while married to the virtuous Umma. The second wife Ziza, on the other hand, represents both the pre-Islamic bori tradition, which jihad intellectuals had tried to eradicate, and the corrupting Western influences which came later in what is called “bariki culture.”²⁷ Ilu’s good brother Audu initially approved the second marriage because he believed it would redeem Ziza from a wayward lifestyle. Instead, when Ilu foolishly brings the evil Ziza into his home, his relationship with his wife Umma and the larger Muslim *ummah* begin to fall apart.

²⁶ Hajiya, literally means a woman who has gone to Mecca to do the hajj, but is used as a term of respect (children often call their mothers “Hajiya”). Here it is used specifically as a term that indicates a powerful woman.

²⁷ Brian Larkin notes that *Bariki* “refers to the leisure culture that grew up around male migrants, usually Christian, imported to the North from the South of Nigeria early in the twentieth century to work for the expanding colonial economy.” Eventually, “these ‘barracks’ became amorphous parts of a larger urban landscape and bariki came to refer to a set of institutions and practices taking place in these areas as well as to the areas themselves. These practices include *bikis*, large parties organized by important *karuwai* featuring ‘*yan daudu* (men who sleep with men), *bori* spirit possession, and the beer parlors which dot the landscape. Hausa people stereotype barikis as being full of ‘*yan iska*, dissolute youth, who waste their time drinking and frolicking with women” (*Signal* 155). Older patterns of behaviour are layered onto new practices in a new urban “Westernized” setting, as bariki is indicative of the “alien” influences from the South, as well as places where “traditional” outcasts, like *karuwai*, *yan daudu*, and bori practitioners, can carry on with their practices denounced as un-Islamic.

What interests me most in the play is Act 2, scene 6, which takes the audience out of the domestic sphere and into Ziza's sinful world of drink, dance, sex, and spirit possession.²⁸ This scene is set in "the bar of a hotel," a space outside the Muslim home. It is most likely in the Sabon Gari, the "New Town" established after colonialism outside the old Hausa cities, where foreigners settled and where "drinking, mix-sex socializing, and spirit-possession [Bori] came to be tolerated" (Gaudio, *Allah Made* 18). For the first time the audience sees Ziza's world, the place she seems the most at home. When we see her in Ilu's house, she appears to always have one foot out the door. She does not fit the Hausa ideal of what a good wife should be, that is, a woman content to remain at home, as the "overseer" of her husband's domestic concerns. In the bar, however, she is in her element. All rules are overturned here. As opposed to a largely patriarchal Islamic society, the drinking space is ruled by women.²⁹ The proprietress of the beer parlour is named Madam Danlof (translated Dunlop by Fleisher and Skinner), the name signaling her connection to the West, and Ziza is seen as queen of the immoral people who gather in the bar, a position that resonates with pre-jihad Hausa history with its powerful queens and other female leaders connected to the bori cult (Mack, "Royal" 110-112; Boyd 43).

If in Ilu's home, Ziza is recognized as a wife and mother, here her secret life is openly exposed. And it turns out that it is a "secret" in name only, what Stephen Murray calls "the will not to know" in Islamic societies that enables private transgression as long as they remains publicly secret ("The Will"). The two gossips reveal that not only is she having an affair with a woman, but the "the whole town knows that all the boys and girls belong to Ziza" (Act 2, Scene

²⁸ I thank Linda Hunter for first drawing my attention to this scene in the class Hausa Verbal Arts in Translation, when I served as her TA.

²⁹ There is a connection here to pre-jihad roles for women. For example, the *Inna* of Gobir, the powerful sister of the king who dressed as a man while performing official tax collection duties and had a number of women officials under her, was also leader of the bori cult and its coterie of women practitioners (Boyd 46-47; Mack and Boyd 36).

6).³⁰ A friend teases the young man Lami about the affair he is having with Ziza,³¹ “Who in this town doesn’t know what’s been going on between you two? Even though you’ve been doing it in secret. [...] It’s public knowledge that she arranged your marriage.” Later the same gossip reveals that Lami is also having an affair with a man, Alhaji Kwasta.³² The patriarchal power structures where a man, as head of a household, can marry up to four women is overturned here as a promiscuous woman is seen as the “owner” of both boys and girls.³³ In this space, there are no clear-cut boundaries between the sexes, and sexual affairs take place not only across but within the boundaries of sexual difference—a source of great anxiety to those concerned with maintaining the moral order they believe is prescribed by Islam.

This particular scene encloses this scandalous space with its spectacle of music, dance, and bori possession within a moralistic frame. Following the jihad, Nana Asma’u wrote poetry warning good Muslims away from the sort of spectacle that is presented in this scene. In this excerpt of her 1857 poem “Prayer for Rain,” translated by Jean Boyd and Beverly Mack, she calls for repentance for the sinful activity causing a drought. Although she deems drums acceptable during war, work and travel, when they are serving a useful purpose, she expresses concern over drumming for entertainment, dancing and association with bori.

12. *Ku tuba da kwarce dud da bori da caca duk,*

(Repent of using magic, attending bori and gambling.)

³⁰ “ai, duk garin nan kowa ya san Ziza yara duk nata ne, maza da mata” (Ahmed, *Bora* 32).

³¹ Although Lami is normally a woman’s name, it is used here for a young man, probably because the gossips later reveal that he is having an affair with a man: “Besides, hasn’t he got his ‘friends’, too, like Alhaji Kwasta!”/“Af, shi ba shi da abokansa, kaman su Alhaji Kwasta!” (Ahmed 32). Gaudio discusses a *dan daudu* (feminine man), he knew named Lami and similarly points out the feminine nature of the name (74).

³² “Wane ne bai san tsakaninku ba a garin nan, ko da yak e komai a b’oye ku ke yi. [...] Sanin kowa ne ita ce tai maka aure!”

³³ This anxiety about women reversing patriarchal structures can be seen in the 2007 scandal in Kano, when a woman was accused of having a polygamous lesbian wedding with Hausa film actresses. The woman at the centre of the controversy denied the charges, and only one of the women had any connection to the film industry. But the controversy illustrates public anxieties about the role “independent women” play in disrupting propriety. (See BBC. “Polygamous lesbians flee Sharia” and “Nigeria ‘lesbian wedding’ denied.”)

Wuta ar rabon mai yin su gobe da tab'uwa.

(Hell fire will be the reward of those who do not.)

13. *Mu koma ga hanya dai ta Sunna mu tsira duk,*

(Let us return to the Path of the Sunnah and be redeemed.)

Mu samu mu so juna mu zam kuwa 'yan uwa

(Respecting each other, banding together as colleagues.)

14. *Ku tuba da almunkar kid'i duk na badili,*

(Do not go where there is immoral drumming and chatter)

Maza duk da mata duk su garwaya nan kuwa

(For men and women mix together on these occasions.)

15. *Kid'i don jihadi babu laifi gare shi shi,*

(The beating of drums in jihad is permissible)

Kaza da na aiki don a samu a bar nawa.

(And so is drumming when communal work is being done)

[...]

18. *A bar dai kid'in amre da wasa ta takkarai,*

(But do not allow drumming at weddings to accompany wild dancing)

Ta sabo ga sha'awar duniya fa da mantuwa

(It is sinful: worldliness and forgetfulness.)

19. *Zama hak'ik'an mai tunawa da lahira,*

(Let us live in the remembrance of the Hereafter)

Shi tuba fa don mutuwa hali nata abkuwa.

(And repent because death will come. [Boyd and Mack, *The Collected* 146, 288].)³⁴

Drumming, music, and dance that occur in mixed-sex environments take on sinful connotations, which must be repented of in order to receive Allah's blessing. Because of their associations with other non-Islamic activities, such music and dance should be kept away from the safe proper space of the Muslim home. Relationships with these entertainers mark individuals as less pious Muslims. The sort of rhetoric used by Nana Asma'u here was still being used in 1950s Kano.³⁵ Gaudio reprints several letters to the Kano daily newspaper *The Daily Comet*, which express anxieties about the activities of musicians, prostitutes, and *yan daudu*. Muhammadu Korau writes in 1957 that independent women are often arrested "on the grounds that they supposedly cause the lack of rain and other problems." Another reader wrote in 1959 asking the Emir to

"help us ban Banjo Dancing [*Rawar Banjo*], and Admonish prostitutes to get married, and other things, like Dara playing, and gambling, and the stupid behavior [*shashacin*] of 'yan Daudu. [...] The reason I'm submitting this complaint of ours is because no respectable Muslim [*musulmin kirki*] would want these kinds of immorality [*iskanci*] to take place in Muslim lands [*kasashen Musulmi*]" (qtd. in Gaudio 46-47).

It was in this environment that Ahmed wrote his plays. He exhibits forbidden entertainment but situates these spectacles within a moralistic frame that allows the audience to participate in their condemnation. In his play *Malam Soko*, Ahmed again uses fiddlers and bori

³⁴ I have combined the English translation found on page 146 and the Hausa Roman transcription on page 288 of *The Collected Works of Nana Asma'u*, edited by Jean Boyd and Beverly B. Mack.

³⁵ Despite this sort of rhetoric, Brian Larkin points out in *Signal and Noise* how cinemas were attractive places of ambiguous morality. While the young men who frequented them were seen as 'yan daba, or thugs, the same young men were "at the forefront of the popular class agitating violently for the introduction of shari'a law" (149).

practitioners as the sign of a threat to the peace and harmony of the home.³⁶ The wicked second wife of Malam Soko fills the house with “drumming and dancing from fiddlers to bori, the whole town is talking” (Ahmed, *Bora* 51).³⁷ In *Bora da Mowa*, near the end of Act 2, Scene 6, the connection between the bar space and the bori cult is not just rumoured but is demonstrated. In a spoken aside that is left out of the translation, Madame Danlof tells us that the other people in the bar want Ziza to enter into her bori trance (34). The stage directions describe the action: “The drumming begins to warm up, and a praise-singer starts to sing Ziza’s praises.” A praise song for Ziza follows, which calls attention to her beauty and her wealth, or at least the beauty and wealth of the spirit who will ride her:

Daughter of Ali

Smooth and shining, young daughter of Ali

Bubakar is in her care

Bubakar and Fendo too are in her care

Lady of limitless wealth

Your cattle reach a thousand

Your beauty is beyond reckoning

No one imposes a husband on you.³⁸

³⁶ While he uses “traditional music” as it often occurs in un-Islamic “bariki” space, Ahmed himself seems interested in “promoting Hausa Studies” and preserving such music, although he seems ambivalent about its prestige. In an email response to some of my questions he responded that the “negative side” of Hausa films is “the liberal use of music and dance, a – la –Indian type and the marginalization or even displacement of Hausa traditional musicians by the Hausa film industry. Thus even in real life situations, some artistes in the film industry have replaced Hausa traditional artistes as praise-singers and hangers-on to the well to do.”

³⁷ My translation. “Gidanka yanzu ya zama na bidi’a daga goge sai bori, duk gari ana tad’i.”

³⁸ Fleischer and Skinner’s translation greatly condenses the song which is made up of the wak’a and amshi, verse and a refrain that repeats the verse. I will quote only the wak’a here. Note the opening and closing verses which sounds like the Islamic call to prayer in Arabic: “*la illaha illallahu*” “There is no God but God”:

1) *La—la la—la.....*

La—la, la—la ila, la—la lalaho

2) *Ziza.....Ziza.....*

Ziza—Ziza, Ziza ya ki ‘yar Ali!

The praise song points to values that clash with common interpretations of Islamic ideals of modesty and humility, particularly for women. There is no mention made in this entire scene of Ziza's marriage or her obligations to her husband. In the song, not only is her independence, wealth, and beauty praised, but she is also portrayed as the guardian of men. Her value comes from that which is outside the home rather than in it. Although this song is similar to contemporary praise songs for the powerful *Inna* of Gobir, a female political leader and leader of the bori cult (Boyd and Mack, *Educating* 97),³⁹ these elements were a source of anxiety for the 19th century jihadists, who described such independence as contrary to Muslim ideals of the good woman. J.M. Kaura notes that according to Jihad leaders, although "a husband should not forbid his wife from going out when the need arises," "unlicensed freedom of movement of women where there was no necessity was a forbidden innovation since it helped in the spread of corruption of woman hood" [*sic*]. Women were to avoid "talking to or looking at men" (81).⁴⁰

3) Waro—waro, 'yar Ali!

4) Ga renon Bubakari!

5) Bubakari da Fendo duk!

6) 'Yar mai dubun dukiya!

7) 'Yar mai dubun saniya!

8) Kuma ga dubun kyau da ke!

9) Auren dole ba ki so!

10) La—la la—la.....

La—la, la—la ila, la—la lalaho

11) La—la lalaho!

12) La—la lalaho! (34-35)

³⁹ Jean Boyd describes Ta'Allah, the *Inna* of Gobir, whom she knew during the 1970s and 1980s. Ta'Allah described a historical *Inna* who had captured a sword from "A Caliphate foe" and who described herself as the chief of bori adherants "excluding Muslims." Ta'Allah had "male court officials and an impressive praise-song which includes her genealogy and descriptive metaphors which lauded her as *masaka matsera* (the refuge and place of safety), *hankaka mai zaman shiri* (ever vigilant like the black and white crow), *mai damara fama* (always girded and ready for action)" (Boyd and Mack, *Educating* 97). Such a praise song sounds very similar to the one in praise of the bori leader Ziza in *Bora da Mowa*.

⁴⁰ As can be seen in the works of Nana Asma'u, such as her [translated] poem "Sufi Women," and in Aisha Balarabe Bawa's analysis of the writings of her father Shaykh Uthman Ibn Fodio, women's freedom outside the home comes in relation to their religious duties. Nana Asma'u praises Sufi women who preached to women in the mosque (Boyd and Mack, "The Collected" 47), and Dan Fodiyo decried men who burdened women with domestic duties to the detriment of their Islamic education (Bawa 7). However, Shaykh Uthman also discouraged women from "conducting business in the markets" while men stayed at home (8) and going to activities where they would mingle with men without being properly veiled (7). Even as far back as the early 1800s, Shaykh Uthman Danfodiyo condemned women "competing with men" at the market as imitating Europeans (qtd. in Kaura 88), "And among the

The singer, who mentions that men are dependent on her, is ostensibly praising Ziza's independence outside of this Islamic context. This becomes glaringly clear when she enters the bori trance. When the song finishes, the stage instructions describe the bori ceremony, which involves "vigorous" drumming, a fiddler playing the "theme tune of Ziza's bori spirit," mixed-sex dancing, and Ziza, "dressed in the bori costume appropriate to her spirit" going into a trance "as the spirit takes possession of her" (See the Hausa in Ahmed *Bora* 34-35).

Although religious leaders and texts warn Muslims to stay away from such activities, which could also apply to writing, reading, or viewing these plays, I argue that the entertainment provided by the spectacle of music, dance and bori possession may also be excused here as moral instruction and commentary, a form of teaching through "entertainment." Scholar Ibrahim Y. Yahaya, for example, defends the craft of story-telling, as "a major motivation to learning" (qtd in Ahmad, *Narrator* 35). Ziza's sinful ways can be more completely understood—and thus opened for interrogation—because they are demonstrated in this scene. Her connection, not only to what is presented as sexual immorality, but to the spirit world in the bori trance prepares the way for the scene that follows: when Ziza visits a witch to purchase a potion with which she plans to kill her husband. Illicit sexuality, "pagan" beliefs, and unconscionable acts, such as attempted murder, align in this course of events.

Ahmed displays some amount of anxiety about this performance in the text. For instance, in the stage directions at the beginning of Act 2, Scene 6, there is a cautionary warning to omit the scene if children are acting it,⁴¹ which implies that it was not a part of the play the first time it was performed at government secondary school in Funtua. Ahmed told me in an emailed

innovations is staying of men at home and going out of women to market competing with men; and it's a forbidden innovation and also imitation of Europeans" (from *Bayanul Bida'i*, p. 25, qtd. in Kaura 88).

⁴¹ "Kashedi-in yara ne za su yi wannan wasan kwaikwayon, ana iya cire wannan kashin daga wasan, wato kada a yi shi sam" (Ahmed, *Bora* 30).

response to some questions that “[t]o my knowledge, in Hausa society parents have never objected to children performing plays” and that “there has never been controversies about the performance of my plays,” but his stage directions seem to exhibit a concern to protect children from being exposed to what could be harmful influences, the mimicry of these sinners, with their drinking and dancing, bori possession, and talk of sex. In other words, Act 2, Scene 6 provides an entertaining spectacle that while ostensibly used to further Ziza and Habu’s characterization, could also have the result of attracting children to that very space they are being warned against. All the secrets about those who pretend to be good members of the *ummah* are exposed here, which raises ethical questions in Islam surrounding who has the authority to disclose these social facts, particularly to youth.

In addition to the public revelation of Ziza’s identity as a prostitute, a lesbian, and a bori practitioner, this scene also becomes the site that exposes to audiences in a public setting the hypocrisies that surround the actions of a corrupt politician in a non-Islamic government. Here, this decidedly, modern-day sinner’s corruption is associated with the older culture of drumming, dancing, bori, and prostitution. Ilu’s cynical friend Habu, a politician, secretly drinks alcohol in his home. The stage directions describe how he is “*drinking—hard—when he hears someone at the door*” (Act 2, Scene 5).⁴² When he hears that it is Ilu, recognizing him as a fellow sinner, he bids him to come in. The two joke about his secret drinking:

Ilu: But you never drink in public—only here in your house.

Habu: *Has a drink and then puts the glass down.* Am I an idiot to let people know how I drink? Nope. When I leave home, I’m a good Muslim, a saint, always with prayer beads in my hand. Then, when I get to the office I lay them down on my

⁴² “Habu na zaune na kora burkutu sai ya ji ana sallama”(Ahmed, *Bora* 25).

desk in front of me. Ah, but when I get back home, I forget my sainthood and go back to my natural devilry.⁴³

Habu is the sort of hypocrite that Hausa people often joke about carrying alcohol rather than water in a kettle used to make ablutions before ritual prayer. The outward signifiers of goodness in fact contain corruption inside. Outside in the public world, Habu pretends to be particularly righteous, always fingering his prayer beads, but in the privacy of his home he drinks without guilt. Having lost the elections, despite his plot to bribe the voters, he makes his appearance at the hotel, which is publicly recognized as a space outside of pious Muslim control. And once he “comes out,” in this space, the stage directions reveal that “Habu’s voice can be heard above everything else” (Act 2, Scene 6).⁴⁴ Like Ziza, the gossips reveal that he has no secrets here. Neither does his position as a (now failed) politician command him any respect. When Habu insults the other drinkers, one of the gossips retorts:

Friend #1: [...] Sir. *Sarcastically.* With great respect—just remember you’re plain old Habu now and not a Member of the House. [...] So we don’t like where there are crooks and drinkers, do we? Well, I piss on the two-timers who drink secretly at home and then go to the mosque every Friday. Now you’ve lost the election, you’re the same as everyone else. And today, praise God, your secret is out and everyone will know you’re a drinker.⁴⁵

⁴³ **Ilu:** Amma ban tab’a ganinka kana sha a waje ba, sai dai a gida ko yausha.

Habu: Ya kurb’a, ya aje kofi. Shawaraki ne ni zan bari mutane su san ina sha? Ai in na fita tamkar waliyyi nake, ko yausha tasbahata na hannu ko ko tana rataye a wuya, in ko a ofis ne sai in aje ta daidai gabana. Amma da na shigo gida, haba sai in manta da wani waliyantaka, in koma shed’an d’ina! (Ahmed, *Bora* 26).

⁴⁴ “muryar Habu ta fita kowa tashi” (30).

⁴⁵ “sauran matan garin nana da suka san shi ai ba sa yarda da shi. [...] **Abokin Farko:** [...] Ran kai dad’e. A habaice! Kai, ka tuna yanzu tintirinka Habu ka ke, ba memba ba. [...] Mhm? Ba ka son zuwa inda ‘yan iska su ke, mashaya. Mts, munafukai masu sha a b’oye a gida, ma su sallar Juma’a. Da yake ka fad’i a zab’e, ka zama daidai da kowa ai yau gashi Allah ya tona asirinka, kowa ya san kana sha” (Ahmed, *Bora* 33).

By coming to the hotel rather than continuing to secretly drink at home, Habu can no longer pretend to be a good Muslim. The drinking spot is the space where all secrets are publicly exposed. The phrase used by the gossip in Hausa, “Allah ya tona asirinka,” literally translates as “God has exposed your secret.” It is a phrase often used in curses against corrupt politicians and other hypocrites. By the end of the play, God has indeed exposed Habu’s secret, not only amongst the drinkers in the bar, but also in the public arena in front of voters, when police come to arrest him for his “involvement in corruption and bribery” (Act 3, Scene 3).⁴⁶

Ironically, when Madam Danlof calls the police to come break up a fight that has broken out between Habu and the gossips, she points out that while sinners may come to the bar to drink and go wild, it is not intended that the news of this space be made known to the rest of the community. She says to patrons, “Ku rufa man asiri,” meaning “Keep our secrets for us.” While anyone seen in such a space would be gossiped about by “all the town,” she is concerned about her hotel becoming so visible that would draw unwanted attention to her and her clients.⁴⁷

If there is any ambiguity about the enjoyable spectacle of Act 2, Scene 6, the moralistic end shows the consequences of drinking, illicit sex, political corruption, and consorting with the dark arts. At the end of the play, the corrupt politician and the immoral prostitute with her recourse to sorcery are conflated. Both come under judgment through the disciplinary actions of the state. Here, Ahmed’s demonstration of corruption in society does not extend to a critique of the police. Instead, the police play a punitive function in bringing about order out of chaos. The ending envisions society as it should be. The play here exposes evil but also brings the audience to catharsis. It is only by exposing this evil, Ahmed implies, that we can do something about it. The audience’s illicit pleasure from vicariously participating in the dancing and bori practice is

⁴⁶ “Ana tuhumarka ne game da k’age-k’agen cin hanci” (Ahmed, *Bora* 41).

⁴⁷ A similar moment happens in Alhaji Mohammad Sada’s play *Uwar Gulma*, when the beer joint owner, Mama warns drinkers from drawing police to her bar with their quarrelling (10).

perhaps excused by the more righteous pleasure they take from seeing those punished who should be punished. The intensity of the audience's catharsis is heightened by the fact that "real life" politicians in northern Nigeria continue to take bribes, and bori and prostitution never quite disappear despite occasional campaigns against them.

Bora da Mowa thus positions itself both as entertainment and as instruction, displaying those elements of society that are often publicly reviled and privately enjoyed in order to make a moral point about their evils. This is a position often also taken by practitioners of Hausa film industry which began to become popular in 1990 and which I will discuss in later chapters. Yet, despite the moral ending, Ilu is left in an ambiguous position. Umma has departed and Ilu, having invited Ziza into his home, is saved from her evil plot only when his offspring with the evil woman dies. He is left in a liminal space, saved from the designs of the hypocritical un-Islamic second wife but also still separated from his first wife Umma and the Muslim *ummah*. The only hope he has in rejoining the community is in his exemplary brother Audu, who is with him when his son dies and Ziza and Habu are arrested in Ilu's house. Ilu has the choice to let Audu guide him back to the right path or to be left alone.

The play enacts exposure both in its theme and its form. Thematically, the sins of Ziza and Habu in the *dar al-kufr* are exposed in the moralistic script of the play. Further, in order to effectively display these sins to his audiences, Ahmed must also create a performance space in which these exposures can occur. These spaces feature the music and dance usually found only in forbidden bariki spaces. However, these scenes also serve an additional function: they "expose" educated audiences in modern school and performance settings to these forbidden, yet decidedly entertaining spectacles.

Climate of Corruption

Labo Yari's English-language novel *Climate of Corruption* takes us into similar liminal spaces outside the world of the Muslim *ummah*, into the world of cinema, drinking, gambling, and prostitution in the northern city of Kaduna, the capitol of Nigeria's northern region until 1967. Yet, the boundaries are less clear here and both the punishment for the sinful characters and the state of authority is more ambiguous in this novel. Although the first part of the novel, set in Kaduna, follows the same moralistic frame demonstrated in *Bora da Mowa*, the characterization within that frame undermines moral binaries of good and evil. The second part of the novel set in Lagos deconstructs the moral frame all together and, I argue, leaves the reader disoriented about where the boundaries of the *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-kufr* separate.

In *Climate of Corruption*, Yari further details the "bariki" culture of drinking, gambling, and prostitution glimpsed in *Bora da Mowa* and introduces a new element: cinema culture. As Brian Larkin has pointed out in *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria*, the cinema with its schedule of Indian films is popularly viewed as a space that tempts young men into patterns of behaviour that layer onto older forms of moral corruption associated with bariki culture. Within this imported cinema space, prostitutes banter in the aisles and young men trash the place because the Indian film was not violent enough for their tastes (Yari, *Climate* 34-40). The venue occupies the same ambiguous "alien" space as the bar where drinkers go with prostitutes and quarrel over a song sung by a "traditional" Hausa singer (74-87). Both spaces lie outside of the moral education that the protagonist Sule's parents give him.

Yari's work is situated in the uneasy position of being between two of the literary traditions I documented above: English language Nigerian literature and Hausa literature with its older Islamic influences. Because of this, the narrative of his novel is more ambiguous and less

didactic than much of the Hausa literature that preceded it, a style he told interviewer Sumaila Umaisha that he modeled on European novels (Umaisha, “Labo Yari”). Yet Yari does not have the same easy elegance in English that many more well-known Nigerian writers do. Unlike Achebe, who often forces his readers to understand Igbo words through context, Yari translates almost every Hausa word into sometimes obscure English words that often confuse more than they clarify. This translation practice has the effect of distancing Hausa speakers, while not necessarily making it easier for English-speakers to read.⁴⁸ I suspect that this may be one reason why his work has not been more widely recognized for the way it expresses many of the tensions of life in Northern Nigeri or for its dialogue with other Nigerian writers. Specifically, *Climate of Corruption* asks questions similar to those in other “novels of disillusion” of the late 1960s and early 1970s, such as Chinua Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease* or Wole Soyinka’s *The Interpreters*.

I structure *Climate of Corruption* into three sections, the Kaduna section, the train-travel interlude, and the Lagos section. The Kaduna section, made up of chapters 1-10, opens and closes with the protagonist Sule, a twenty-two-year-old man, meeting his friend Kallah at the Kaduna train station. Sule, is there to bid goodbye to his parents, who symbolize the guiding spirit of “tarbiyya,” the Islamic moral education all “Hausa-Fulani” parents are expected to give their children. After Sule helps his parents load their luggage on the train, his father expresses concern about the rakish look of his friend Kallah, who tells Sule he has come to meet a “whore” traveling from Kano. His father warns Sule: “Never drink alcohol; don’t visit gambling places.

⁴⁸ For example, he uses the word *milksop* for the transvestite *dan daudu* character, Delu, which could have easily been glossed and then left in Hausa, since there is no easy cultural parallel. Similarly, he translates *miya* as *ragout*, which could have been more simply described as “stew” or “soup” or just left as a contextual gloss. The harsh word “whore” for what I presume is the Hausa word *karuwa* could have been translated more gently as courtesan or as Rudolf Gaudio suggests, “independent woman” (Gaudio 5). Where I use the word “whore” in this analysis, I am following Yari’s usage.

And never let me hear that you are running to tarts' houses I know this is the fashion of your friends, well if you discard my teachings, Allah would never be inclined to thee" (8).

Little does he know that Sule has been waiting for the moment of their departure to consummate his relationship with a "whore," Maimuna, whom he had met through the introduction of a feminine man, a *dan daudu* (or "milksoy" as Yari calls him), at the cinema. Once his parents have left, he goes immediately to the brothel where Maimuna lives to, in his words, "tramp" on the teachings of his father (31). Although he had been "brought up in a strict Islamic discipline" by a father who was a scribe and a mother who was the daughter of a Fulani chief (10), he is eager to taste another lifestyle, and he quickly becomes involved in all three vices his father had warned him against. He drinks and smokes; he not only sleeps with a prostitute, he allows her to provide for him; he becomes so addicted to gambling that he sells everything he owns and convinces people to loan him money with the promise that he will help them get "contracts" in the government office where he works. Personal corruption, Yari implies, leads to public corruption. He gradually loses everything he possessed before his parents left, including his clothes and his bicycle. Finally, he even loses Maimuna, the "whore" herself. Using the money he had gotten from his office for a bicycle loan, he takes Maimuna for a holiday in Zaria. On the way back, the vehicle they are traveling in has an accident, and Maimuna is killed.

Like Ilu in *Bora da Mowa*, Sule discovers that once you let sin into your life, it is not satisfied until it has separated you from everyone you love and drained everything valuable from your life. In the hospital, Sule wakes up from a nightmare about Maimuna's loss determined that he must return to the "clear path" (116) that he had been on before his parents left Kaduna. Remembering the advice of his father "to detest bribery and corruption, and never to lie," and to avoid alcohol, which is "the deadliest of sins," as well as gambling, and whores who are "the rots

of the society” (114), he reforms his life and decides to join his parents in Lagos. At the train station, he again meets his friend Kallah. This time Sule is departing. Kallah remains a static character. He is at the train station to meet the same “whore” from Kano whom he was meeting at the beginning of the novel. Sule, on the other hand, has, in his own words, sunk into the abyss and come out of it on the other side. He tells Kallah he hopes to receive “moral support” from his parents in continuing to reform his life: “They were the ones who put me on the right path, so I’m sure they can still help me in retracing my steps” (117). If the novel were to end here, it would follow in the tradition of the didactic morality tale: a man sins and is punished for his sins; he then becomes determined to sin no more and is accepted back into the Muslim *ummah*.

However, the story does not end here. After an interlude train trip in chapter 11, we enter the third section on Lagos, from chapter 12 to the final chapter 20. The Lagos section is almost the exact inverse of the Kaduna section. The Kaduna section begins with Sule plotting to escape his parents’ discipline so that he can try out an immoral life and ends with him seeking to reform his immoral life. The Lagos section starts with Sule determined to seek the positive influence of his parents to help him live a virtuous Muslim life. Instead, he discovers his parents in Lagos are even more corrupt than he was in Kaduna. He sinks into apathy and ultimately, as the ending of the novel implies, an immoral lifestyle far worse than any he had experienced thus far.

The Lagos section of the novel illustrates Sule’s exposure to a cosmopolitan environment in a culture not his own. While on the train ride south, he discusses technological advances in transportation with other travelers, which seems to prepare him for the progress he will make once he arrives in Lagos. However, Sule’s first experience of Lagos is a “strong odour of human excrement” and gridlocked traffic (133). Like the first meeting with Kallah and his “whore” at the beginning of the Kaduna section, these first experiences of Lagos are symbolic for what is to

come. Similar to the metaphor of shit in Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, the excrement Sule smells on his arrival in Lagos symbolizes the corruption he finds there, and the gridlocked traffic signals the obstacles he will meet in trying to follow the right path. Kaduna is portrayed as corrupt, but Lagos is depicted as the epitome of depravity. Sule is discriminated against, for the first time, for where he is from rather than for his behaviour. Mobs gather to stone people for no reason. While Lagosians label him as having a "bush mentality," everything that Lagosians portray as "modern" and "civilized" seems degenerate to him.

Almost everyone he meets seems to be involved in tangled sexual affairs.⁴⁹ His hope that his parents will point him in the right direction crashes around him when he goes to his father's office and overhears his father, Alhaji Ibrahim, making plans to meet his young secretary, Biodun, at a guest house later. When Sule opens the door, "[h]is knees suddenly buckled beneath him as he saw Biodun sitting on the lap of his father. She was kissing him while his hand was stroking her breast" (185). Each following encounter with his father is worse than the previous one. At an owambe party thrown by Sule's father's friend Tunde Adefela, with whom Sule is staying while he waits for his parents to get a house of their own, his father shows up with an older woman, Comfort Chukwu, who turns out to be the secretary Biodun's mother. Not only is Alhaji Ibrahim committing adultery but he is committing the abomination of sleeping with both mother and her daughter. Later, Sule "gazed in repulsion as he saw his father pour beer into Comfort Chukwu's glass before filling the glass in front of him which he emptied in a draught"

⁴⁹ While Yari's focus, for the most part, is on a sexual corruption in Lagos that contradicts the Islamic morality Sule has been taught by his parents, this personal corruption can be read as metonymic for a larger societal corruption. Of Ikoyi, the one beautiful place in Lagos Sule encounters, his cynical friend Fagbura tells him, "Let me tell you one thing, there are people living here who take their children daily to Ikoyi to kindergartens and schools. Not because there are no schools or kindergartens in this part of Lagos, no, simply because Ikoyi is synonymous with colonialism. So they want their children to colonise others when they grow up" (214-215). Here, as in Yari's novel *Man of the Moment*, a Lagos elite is portrayed as taking advantage of the hard-working lower classes. As opposed to the progress Sule had expected as he travelled south by train, the gridlocked traffic Sule encounters when he arrives in Lagos represents the standstill the country has come to. Sule comes to believe that the "civilization" the Lagosians brag of is just part of their corruption.

(202)⁵⁰. Iyaho, a girlfriend of Sule's friend Fagbura, is unaware that the man is his father. She asks him about what Islam allows. "Do Alhaji's [sic] go to church?" she asks him, implying that his father goes to church. "And didn't you see him dancing with a woman who everybody knows is a whore." Sule eventually "realized that Fagbura and Iyaho were talking about his father. He felt suddenly exposed, humiliated, defenseless" (206).

Even as Sule gives up his father as a lost cause, he is in for an even worse shock. After moving in with his parents, he discovers his mother drinking beer and having an affair with his father's friend Tunde Adefela. The fall of his mother, who has to this point represented the woman whose purity guards the sanctity of the Muslim home, causes Sule to give up hope of ever returning to the "straight path." The novel ends with Sule opening a bottle of beer "with his teeth angrily," hoping his father's mistress Comfort Chukwu, who had earlier tried to seduce him, will return: "He would not waste time; he would pull off her dress as soon as she entered the room and would make love to her in a way neither of them would ever forget" (229).

Sule is described as living in a "climate of corruption" in both Kaduna and Lagos, which Jaji argues stand for "Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria respectively" (6). Yet, Sule's youthful transgressions in Kaduna appear relatively benign compared to the tangled sexual affairs of his parents in Lagos. His forays into the *dar al-kufr* in Kaduna portray a world similar to that seen in Ahmed's *Bora da Mowa*, yet there is not as stark a division here between the *dar al-Islam* and the *dar-al kufr* as that portrayed in Ahmed's play. Hajiya Binta, the brothel owner in *Climate of Corruption*, is rumoured to be a lesbian, just as Ziza is in *Bora da Mowa*, yet, unlike Ziza, she is not portrayed as an uncomplicated evil character. Indeed, readers are encouraged to sympathize with her as Yari describes her background. As a young girl of fifteen,

⁵⁰ The mother Comfort Chukwu with her Igbo name and the daughter Biodun, with her Yoruba name, could be read contentiously as Yari's symbol for the corrupt "south," which seduce the formerly righteous Hausa-Fulani north, represented by Alhaji Ibrahim and his Fulani wife, into adultery.

she followed a sergeant to Kaduna during World War II. He promised to marry her but instead abandoned her, and she was forced into prostitution. When she later bought a house, every man she fell in love with “duped her of her money and later ran away.” She then “concentrated her efforts on helping young girls who found themselves in a helpless situation in Kaduna town. [...] She had even gone further and rented out rooms to milksops who acted as link-men between the unattached women and men” (13-14). Unlike Ziza, who is portrayed as a greedy and arrogant woman with no care for Islamic propriety, Hajiya Binta is described as trying to help other young girls in similar positions. Rather than celebrating her notoriety as Ziza does and becoming involved in the bori spirit possession cult, instead, “amidst the rumour that she was a lesbian,” Binta “went for a pilgrimage to Mecca. Upon her return she changed. She stopped drinking alcohol and began to pray five times a day. She asked the milksops to quit her house.” Yet, when “the learned people in Islamic affairs” advise her to ask the “unattached women” to leave her house and instead allow “poor and invalid ones to come and live free of charge,” she disregards their advice, reasoning “that she was not the only landlady in town who was accommodating unattached women” (14).

Unlike Ziza, Hajiya Binta reforms herself, yet she remains an unmarried independent woman who hosts prostitutes in her home. She seems more comfortable living in the liminal space between a strict adherence to Islam taught by the “learned people in Islamic affairs” and an independent lifestyle. While she reprimands Sule for wearing Western-style clothing that made him look like “one of the unbelievers” rather than “a son of a Moslem,” she good-naturedly lets him know that his girlfriend Maimuna is in the house (16). Similarly, the “milkso” or cross-dressing *dan daudu* character, Delu, who introduces Sule to Maimuna after he attends a film show, responds to Sule’s disgust at him acting like a woman and going by a woman’s name by

snapping “Forget my personal peculiarity. We are all human beings” (16). Yari, here, creates a voice for those characters despised in public discourse as “the rots of society” (114).

Even ordinary people, whom Sule does not initially suspect being connected to the corrupt *bariki* lifestyle, are drinkers, complicating the stark divisions in the ideology of the *dar al-Islam* and that which is alien to it. When Sule’s landlady invites him to her niece’s baby naming ceremony, he thinks that perhaps he might find beer at the party “if the husband was not a puritan” (55). Sure enough, Sule finds that they are “mostly retired soldiers and policemen who had seen a lot of urban life” and who “expressed the same wish as Sule’s, that there would be enough food and beer at the ceremony [...] The husband was not a strict Muslim, for he was known to be frequenting beer parlours in town” (55). Yari exhibits less of a stark contrast between good Muslims and hypocrites than Ahmed does in *Bora da Mowa*, but instead a continuum of practice.

And indeed, I think this portrayal more accurately captures the complexity of mainstream Hausa societal attitudes towards the relationship between entertainment and sin than the other texts do. Likewise, Umaru Balarabe Ahmed does not always portray entertainment as evil in his plays. While he uses *bori* practice as a sign of second wives’ wickedness, he also uses dancers to mark transitions between scenes and appear at wedding parties. In his play *Bulek’e*, there is good-natured banter about a troupe of dancers, and a wife, whose friend is about to become her co-wife, decides to invite singers and dancers into the house, despite her husband’s disapproval of them (*Bora* 93). When I asked Ahmed in an email what he thought about the Hausa film industry, his main concern seemed to be that they were displacing “Hausa traditional musicians.” Gaudio points out that in other narratives of ordinary life such as that told by Baba of Karo to anthropologist Mary Smith in 1949-50, she presented *bori*, prostitution, and *yan daudu* as an

ordinary part of neighborhood life during her youth (Gaudio 41). Children would watch their ceremonies, and the Emir of Zarewa appointed one of the prostitutes as “Magajiya [‘Chief of the prostitutes’]” to oversee any complaints men may have about one of the women (Smith, *Baba* 64). In his own field work, Gaudio noted the ambivalence with which the *yan daudu* spoke about their identity, acknowledging that their “unconventional gender and sexual practices make them imperfect Muslims” yet many also remain devoted to their faith, aware, through going on hajj that “such imperfection exists throughout the Muslim world” (141). Similarly Brian Larkin describes how men, who no longer indulge in cinema, wistfully describe their youthful cinema-going days.

Cinema-going is stereotyped as un-Islamic yet remains a vibrant popular pastime during a period when Islam intensified in the North [...] Cinema stands both inside and outside the moral boundaries of Hausa society, a marginal space that transgresses orthodox norms yet strangely becomes a site where those norms can be intensified. It reminds us that Muslim societies like Northern Nigeria are variegated and made up of different interests. (Larkin, *Signal* 149)

Here Larkin demonstrates how the people engaged in behaviours seen by some critics as un-Islamic can paradoxically be the most concerned with promoting Islam. Presentations of these activities in plays or films often echo public discourse condemning such activities, yet binaristic discourses often conceal what “is” with what “should” be.

With the rise of mass media, it becomes even harder to separate these spaces, as records and cassette tapes of drumming and singing were made and played on the radio and tape recorders and later on television. In Ahmed’s play *Bulek’e* children are shown as being engrossed with the television (Bora 73). In a recent tribute to the late Hausa amada musician,

Barmani Choge, novelist Abubakar Adam Ibrahim describes how, “Often parents would shield their children from listening to her music when she was aired on TV, especially when she crooned out those salacious lines that women hailed with ululations and cheers and sometimes with bowed heads due to the brazenness of her words and their delivery. But this often increased the young ones’ desire to hear this woman the more” (Ibrahim, “Barmani”). Television also allowed for the incursion of foreign influences into the home. Abdalla Uba Adamu notes that from October 1977 to June 2003, 1,176 Hindi films were broadcast by the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Kano (“Transnational Media Flows and Contra-Flows” 21). Larkin describes how once these Indian films, which had once been entertainment only for the young men who could go outside the city to cinemas, came into domestic spaces through television, they began to change women’s ideas about love and romance (Larkin, “Indian” 424). Mass media not only allowed “bariki” culture to filter into the home, but it also gave rise to new hybrid forms of the sacred and the secular. In “Bandiri Music, Globalization and Urban Experience in Nigeria,” Larkin examines how Sufi bandiri singers adapt Indian film music into praise for the prophet, layering the “sacred” onto the profane—a practice that the Salafi-inspired Izala sect condemned but which the singers defended as an evangelistic tool. This use of media comes into a field where, as Umar observes, the ulama discuss contemporary issues as they affect Islam on radio and distribute sermons on videotape (“Education” 131-132).

Yari’s novel and other later Hausa novelists, such as Ibrahim Sheme in his novel about the life of a prostitute, *’Yar Tsana*, sympathetically portray characters who live on the margins of social acceptance. Although these behaviours are seen as corrupt, Yari does not dehumanize the characters who engage in them. Maimuna, Sule’s “whore,” becomes the most sympathetic character in this “corrupt” space. Like Hajiya Binta, she has a difficult past and was “forced” into

the lifestyle of a prostitute. Having lost her childhood husband whom she “married when we were both sixteen” to a road accident, she “almost ran mad.” When an acquaintance of her parents took her to the Kano to seek psychiatric care, she started to go with the servants of the family “to the cinema and drinking places” (21). The cinema for Maimuna, as it was for Sule, is the place she is initiated into the corrupt “bariki” lifestyle. It is here that she meets a rich man who makes her his mistress, and she is introduced into the life of prostitution. When, while living in Zaria, she “only made love to the men I fancied very much, those I rejected were annoyed, and soon they began to rumour that I was a lesbian” (22). For religious leaders, writers, and ordinary Nigerians, accusations of lesbianism seem to be the easiest way to discipline a woman who exhibits too much independence. Maimuna comes to Kaduna, and, when she meets Sule through the “milksoy” Delu, she feels “a slight quiver similar to the one I used to feel whenever saw my husband. It was then that I felt I was in love again” (22).

Maimuna’s love is seen as a purifying emotion that begins to redeem her from the degradations of prostitution. Although Maimuna makes her living from sleeping with men, she truly loves Sule and, although it is she who first teaches him to drink, smoke, and have sex, she also tries to protect him from the excesses of the bariki lifestyle. While he gambles and drinks away all of his own money, she feeds and entertains him with the money she makes from prostitution. She also tries to make their relationship more respectable by suggesting “to him that they go and live together in his rooming house.” When Sule, selfishly not wanting to have to provide for her, declines, she continues to pay for his lifestyle. All the same she disapproves of his gambling habit, and tries to protect him from his own bad judgment.

Chapter 7 presents a setting reminiscent of Act 2, Scene 6 in *Bora da Mowa*. After winning over twenty pounds in a card game, Sule takes Maimuna and one of his gambling

friends to the bar of a hotel to show off his new wealth. There, he pays “a soloist with a local violin” to sing a praise song for Maimuna—similar to the praise song sung for Ziza in *Bora da Mowa* (78). Here, however, there is no bori trance, just the sense of pride Maimuna feels at the thought that “soon the song would move from town to town. People would sing it at work or play, and some day it might be recorded on gramophone records.” Gramophone technology complicates the boundaries between the *dar al-kufr* and the *dar al-Islam*, by taking the song from the drinking space and spreading it far and wide. Maimuna’s imagination of her song being immortalized on a record that would travel beyond the space of the bar and into the everyday lives of people foreshadows the moment when Sule will hear the song, or a song like it, again on a record in Lagos after Maimuna’s death. Although there is no bori trance in the bar, Maimuna still becomes associated with the spirits that ride bori adepts. In the record Sule hears in Lagos, the soloist “was singing the oldest melody, one sung to great jinn, famous emirs and the forgotten heroes of the internecine wars of the sahelian region. Then he heard the name... yes Maimuna’s name. [...] So Maimuna was still following him, he thought. [...] Now he was perfectly sure she was a jinn, and perhaps a bad jinn” (179).

Sule’s conviction that Maimuna is a jinn begins when he hears of her death, and he remembers their last conversation. She made him swear, “By Allah and His Prophet” to never go to Lagos (109). “Could such a creature be a whore? No, no, she certainly had not been a human being. She was a jinn sent to earth. Maybe Allah himself sent her to him” (113). Recalling her “efforts to stop him from gambling and to minimize his drinking habit” (114), he becomes convinced that “when she found me going astray, she caused that accident and disappeared. She loved me so much that that was why she did not kill me. She was a good jinn” (115).

On his arrival in Lagos, however, he is haunted by the idea that Maimuna is taking revenge on him for breaking his promise to her by going to Lagos. Yet, despite his fear brought about by his disillusion with Lagos, that she is actually a bad jinn, his time with Maimuna stands out as, ironically, the purest and most meaningful time of his life. The *dar al-kufr* and the *dar al-Islam* in Kaduna are combined in Sule's mind. Although he initially looks to his parents as ideal Muslims to guide him back to a righteous lifestyle, it is instead Maimuna, the "whore," whom he imagines that Allah sent to him to put him back on the right path. Just as he ignores his father's advice to stay away from a dissolute lifestyle in the Kaduna section of the novel, he also ignores Maimuna's advice to stay away from Lagos. And had he heeded her advice, he may have avoided the larger disillusion brought about by discovering his parents' adulteries.

The binary of virgin/mother or whore Nawal El-Saadawi decries in "The Heroine in Arab Literature" is complicated here. The whore becomes the pure motherly figure and the mother becomes the whore, but in between Maimuna carves out a space for both of them. While discussing an Indian film she had seen in the cinema with Sule, she responds to his attempts to demonize women by moving beyond such binaries. Opposing Sule's theory that a wife who tries to seduce her husband's friend represents the devil, she argues, "Don't forget she was pushed to do it by a man. So the real devil was the man who married her and refused to take care of her, but left her to the mercy of a young handsome man" (41).⁵¹ Maimuna's discussion of the film obliquely references her own position as a woman who exists outside of respectable culture.

Perhaps part of the problem, Maimuna suggests, is that there is something wrong with a society

⁵¹ The Indian film is about a wife, whose husband is often away on business, who tries to seduce her husband's friend, a poet. Sule comes up with a theory "that the film producer was depicting Adam and Eve. The lovely wife was Satan who tried to influence Adam and Eve into eating the forbidden fruit. However, the poet, unlike Adam, was not influenced by the wife" (41). Maimuna responds with a spirited defense of women, arguing that the husband put his wife in a vulnerable position. Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim, producer of the Hausa film *Sakacina*, which represents a young wife similarly left by her husband while he travels on business, excused the behaviour of the heroine who became involved with another man in the same way. She told me that the film was to show men that they shouldn't just leave their wives alone but should make sure they give them companionship.

that addresses only a woman's material needs but does not acknowledge her emotional and sexual needs as well (41-42). Maimuna's theory applies later to Sule's mother, who is effectively abandoned by her husband. This neglect leads her to begin an affair with his friend Tunde Adefela. As the "milksoy" Delu told Sule, "We are all human beings" (16). There are no wholly evil characters in Kaduna—just human beings with needs.

Yet there is a difference in the way Yari portrays northern and southern characters. Maimuna, a prostitute who had taken care of Sule with her own money, is contrasted with a Lagos girl—his father's secretary Biodun—who has an outwardly respectable profession but cares only about money. She tells Sule she will not marry her schoolmate who comes to see her at work: "He doesn't have even a Volkswagen. I've made up my mind not to marry a man with a Peugeot 404. I am going to marry a man with a MercedesBenz [*sic*]" (167). Likewise, Sule's parents occupy outwardly respectable roles but are also involved adulterous relationships.

His parents' fall is, in some ways, blamed on the new environment in Lagos to which they have been exposed. In Lagos, Sule apparently comes into contact with non-Muslims and their assumptions about his religion for the first time. Islam in Lagos, as presented in the novel, is just another form of exhibitionism rather than conviction that controls behaviour. When Sule first meets his father's teenage secretary, Biodun, she tells him, "'I wish I were a Muslim, to go to Mecca and be Alhaja. I heard that gold is very cheap over there. Fancy me buying a lot of gold chains and putting them on my body to make a show. I'd be walking like this,' she rose and walked like a model in a fashion parade" (169). Biodun reduces Sule's religion to an outward symbol of wealth—a way for her to exhibit her body rather than to modestly cover it. Even a sacred city like Mecca is to Biodun a source of illicit activity. When Sule protests that "People

go to Mecca for a religious purpose,” she tells him, “No, most of the people I have met went to buy gold. I heard they smuggled many things too. They say things are cheaper in Mecca” (169).

This portrayal of a corrupted form of Islam in Lagos is also seen in the scene of the *owambe* party. As Alhaji Ibrahim dances with Comfort Chukwu, “the bandleader began to sing in English and what Sule heard shook him. ‘Modern Alhaji who cares little about mosque,’ the band sang. He waited to hear whether his father was going to protest. But instead, he saw him pasting more currency notes on the bandleader’s forehead” (202). After Sule catches him with Biodun, Alhaji Ibrahim no longer tries to hide his actions from him and even reverses the instructions he gave him in Kaduna by encouraging him to, “Drink something or go and grab a girl and dance” (203). Sule remembers that before coming to Lagos, “his father had never before taken time to talk to him as he was doing today. Most of the time it was only to warn or instruct him. But today he was talking to him as a man who was trying to soothe an offended friend” (208). Alhaji Ibrahim continuously excuses his actions to his son by invoking cultural differences, “There’s a world of difference between here and the North. I know how you feel, but you’ll soon realize that what I have done is nothing” (186). Proclaiming that he is still a Muslim, he tells Sule, “You’re still confusing the values in the North with those here” (209). Alhaji Ibrahim repeats the Lagos rhetoric that portrays the north as rural and backwards and Lagos as the epitome of modernity.

Sule initially reacts to these stereotypes with dismay, followed by determination. This is particularly clear through his characterization of the outspoken Mama Benji as Satan in the same way he had characterized the seductive wife in the Indian film.

It was now that he began to wonder why his father had decided to bring him here among people, whom Sule thought were regarding his own people as backwards

simply because they did not behave like them. [...] He would certainly not discard those customs and traditions that Mama Benji regarded as backwards. She would not be his yardstick, nor anyone else in Lagos. Maybe it was Satan who was personifying himself into Mama Benji with the sole purpose of detracting him from following the right path. (156)

Jaji points out that, although the north is also portrayed as corrupt, against the Lagos setting, the “North typifies the Islamic ethos of good moral behaviour and religious purity in social and individual life.” Once he comes south, Jaji argues, Sule becomes a symbolic “standard bearer of the ‘northern perspective’ and ‘the northern ethics’” (10). The position between father and son is reversed, with Sule coming to occupy the role of his father:

“Remember you told me that the Islamic system of value can be applied anywhere in the world. And I’m fully convinced of that. So I can’t see myself rejecting those values and taking others. How will I feel? You want me to split myself into two? No, there’s no going back, and you too, you should change. I’m sure you can live here with those values. In fact you’d be a better man. Whores are Satan’s best friends. That’s what you were always telling me, and now you are leaving your wife at home and moving about with another woman” (209).

Alhaji Ibrahim’s lowest point comes when he comes to his son’s room, drunk, begging him for advice. He insists that he will change the entire family to his new lifestyle, “Tomorrow you and your mother are all going out with me. She’s going to wear a mini-skirt. [...] Then, in the night, all three of us will go and eat dinner in a night club and dance soul music” (225). Here, Alhaji Ibrahim completely reverses the *tarbiyya* that he had given his son in Kaduna. All of Lagos, even the Muslim home, becomes an expanded version of the *dar al-kufr* drinking spaces

in Kaduna. Although Sule believes that anywhere he lives the “Islamic system of value” should apply, he does not come across a “good” Muslim character anywhere in Lagos.

Nevertheless, although Sule is offended by stereotypes of the north he hears from Mama Benji and other characters, his perception of Lagos are also coloured by stereotypes. His friend Fagbura tells him that “In this town [...] everyone you see is an exhibitionist. People display a lot and are extravagant when conditions allow it. A messenger says he is a clerk outside of his place of work. [...] Also, when you take a bus, in Lagos, you pretend your car is in the garage. And when people notice that you always take a bus, you tell them you’re a socialist” (176-177). Sule sees Lagos through this lens Fagbura has provided and becomes increasingly offended by the exhibitionism of the city, yet he rarely remembers that he himself lived the life of an exhibitionist in Kaduna, when he pretended to his creditors that he had a higher position than he did and when he showed off in the bars and gambling places. In his idealization of northern values, he also forgets disparities between an Islamic ideal and practice in Kaduna, as demonstrated in the lives of young boys “entrusted to Koranic teachers by their parents who hoped that the teachers would teach them how to read the holy Koran so that they would grow up embracing the discipline of the religion. But when they found themselves in big towns and had to beg to feed themselves, they would become whores’ errand-boys.” Others would “end up serving in drinking places” (30).

There is an ambivalence, therefore, in the novel about whether exposure to Lagos corrupts good people, or whether Lagos, like the other spaces outside the *dar al-Islam*, is a site where secret sins are exposed in public. Did Sule’s parents go bad because of their exposure to the corruption in Lagos, or was this corruption lurking in them all along, waiting for a place it could be openly exposed without shame? Just as the politician Habu in *Bora da Mowa* exposes

his secretive drinking at home when he comes out into the drinking space of the bar, it could be that Lagos simply affords Sule's parents the opportunity to come out into the open with their hidden corruption. Sule's judgment of all of Lagos becomes similar to what Gaudio notes is "Northern Nigerian nationalists' xenophobic descriptions of non-Muslim southerners" (*Allah Made* 55). Barbara Cooper points out that:

The south, where Nigerians have had longer access to Western schooling and in some cases extended exposure to Christianity, is described by northern nationalists as the debased realm of Western cultural imperialism and the source of corrupt Western practices and values. Hence the advantages of the south become, in this Islamist formulation, signs of moral and spiritual decay. (34).

In this statement, she could well be describing the characterization that Yari applies in *Climate of Corruption*. Yari's novel paints disillusion about Nigeria as a whole, portraying both north and south as corrupt. When interviewer Sumaila Umaisha asks Yari about how *Climate of Corruption* "seems to criticize some undesirable behaviours among some Muslims," Yari tells him, "What I did was to expose the behaviours, not to condemn them. It is the writer's duty to expose such behaviours so that the coming generation will know how the society was. And from this they may try to effect changes that would make the society a better one." Yet, despite exposing the bad behaviour of his Muslim characters, there is a subtle bias against the south in his characterization. While none of Yari's Kaduna characters are good Muslims, with outward appearances and actions aligning with a pious core, Yari gives them depth and a back-story that gives insight into their decisions. By contrast, almost all of the Lagos characters in *Climate of Corruption* are depicted as shallow, ignorant, sexually promiscuous, or all three at once. With the exception of Sule's friend Fagbura, none of his southern characters are portrayed very

sympathetically. Yari falls into the same trap his southern characters fall into when they stereotype the north.

The moment that seems to me to be the most indicative of Yari's own Islamic ethical ideal is the train interlude between Sule's corrupt lifestyle in Kaduna and his parents' corrupt lifestyle in Lagos. Here Sule meets other Muslims, who appear to live according to the ideal Islamic precepts we have not seen anywhere else in the novel. The one woman in the train compartment modestly withdraws into a corner to eat and goes elsewhere to pray so that she will not be seen by the men. The men discuss current events and progress, including a discussion about whether Allah could have actually allowed the Americans to land a man on the moon, modeling a civilized and respectful dialogue, despite disagreement. It is in this transitional traveling space in the train from Kaduna to Lagos, that Yari could be offering a suggestion on how Muslims can navigate the modern world. Yet this is a space wholly occupied by Muslims, and, while Yari has sympathetic non-Muslim characters in his novel *Man of the Moment* and some of his short stories, it is difficult to see from this novel how he envisions a society where Muslims can maintain their goodness while living amongst non-Muslims. Muslims' exposure to non-Islamic spaces, rather, seem to result in their sterility, disillusionment, and sin.

Matsayin Lover

While *Bora da Mowa* and *Climate of Corruption* were both published by established publishing companies in the 1970s, the next work I will discuss, the Hausa novel *Matsayin Lover* was self-published by Al-Khamees D. Bature Makwarari in 1998. Makwarari was writing during the last days of the Abacha regime, two years before so-called shari'a law was implemented in Kano. *Matsayin Lover* is one of the most notorious of the soyayya novels, the wave of Hausa

novels described in my introduction that young authors began self-publishing in the mid-1980s when structural adjustment programmes crippled commercial publishers all over the country. These authors frequently had to defend themselves against criticism that the novels, which were often about the love lives of youth and domestic conflict, were corrupting their readers; however, even those who were vocal in their defense of the new literature condemned Al-Khamees's⁵² novel. The Kano branch of the Association of Nigerian Authors even banned the book (Adamu, *Transglobal* 47). The problem was its subject matter: lesbianism.⁵³ Although, as we have seen, other northern Nigerian works published formally by publishing companies also mentioned the existence of lesbianism,⁵⁴ Al-Khamees goes beyond these oblique references to a much more spectacular presentation by describing, in some detail, the sexual acts themselves. Moreover, he locates these affairs not within the Sabon Gari "bariki" space, but instead within what are supposed to be protected, and even sacred, feminine places. Lesbian relationships are first presented in a girl's secondary school and then unfold in a private residence, which appears outwardly respectable but turns out to be a kind of lesbian harem, owned by a woman who lures innocent young girls into her web. As Al-Khamees told Graham Furniss and Abdalla Uba Adamu, his friends told him he was "opening up things in society about which things should not be said" (106), illustrating what Stephen Murray has called "the will not to know" about homosexuality that commonly occurs in Islamic societies.

⁵² While his full name is Al-Khamees D. Bature Makwarari, he identifies himself on the cover as the novel as simply Al-Khamees, so I will refer to him by that name in the following discussion.

⁵³ Although Indian "pulp" publisher Braft was interested in publishing a translated version of the novel, they were not able to find a translator willing to translate it [personal communication Professor Abdalla Uba Adamu and email with Braft Publications]; therefore all the quoted text here is my own translation.

⁵⁴ Lesbian characters include Ziza in *Bora da Mowa* and others in the works of Labo Yari. In addition to his references to rumours of lesbianism surrounding the characters Hajiya Binta and Maimuna in *Climate of Corruption*, Labo Yari also wrote a story "Cavalier of the Plain" in his collection *A House in the Dark and Other Stories*. Set in a pre-colonial rural village, a man is eaten by jealousy over his lover's lesbian affair.

The bulk of the novel centres on the intrigues of secondary school students and their cliques in a boarding school. Hildat and her friend Malissa entertain Hildat's boyfriend, who arrives for their school visiting day in a plush "Super Cat" sports car. Another girl Raulisa plots with her friends, both at school and when they go home on vacation, to steal Hildat's boyfriend. Fadita and Rufaida, two school girls who have become lovers, are described mooning romantically over each other. In another unrelated episode (that may have been more directly linked to the rest of the novel had Al-Khamees been able to finish part 2 of the text) we see a lesbian, Hajiya Zannub, befriending a young girl, Nahiyar, in a supermarket and then attempting to seduce her by inviting her to her house, where she keeps dozens of other young girls as lovers. A host of somewhat confusing minor characters make moral commentary, much like a Greek chorus, on the main characters and the events taking place at the school. Analysis of this text is further complicated by the fact that there are two versions of the first part of the novel. I will analyze sections of both versions, noting which one I am speaking of in the text.

Matsayin Lover opens with a thief sneaking into a girls' hostel while the students are asleep, fleeing only when a girl wakes and raises an alarm. Though single sex schools are supposed to provide a safe place for young girls to be educated, this introduction to school life references widespread social anxieties about the vulnerability of young women. There are often stories told about young girls being raped by armed robbers or other intruders into secondary school hostels (Adamu "Nigeria: Kano"),⁵⁵ and in 1995, there was a famous case of apparent

⁵⁵ In an October 2012 article, Lawan Danjuma Adamu recounts how a student and the younger sister of the principal were raped during an armed robbery attack on a girl's secondary school in Kano. Although this incident is years after *Matsayin Lover* was published, it is not the only one of its kind. Indeed an incident of this sort took place at one of the hostels of my own secondary school in Jos in the early 1990s. Adamu writes that "Stories of intrusions by suspected criminals or people intending to commit crimes are not new in the history of female boarding houses in Kano [...] The most common story, which is often dismissed by many as a myth is that of gardi (adult male), sneaking into female hostels at night with the sole aim of committing rape." Most recently, attacks of the terrorist group Boko Haram on boarding schools highlights these anxieties in alarmingly contradictory ways. The terrorists have been recorded as telling the girls to leave school and go home, and, in the most chilling attack yet around 300

mass spirit possession in a Kano secondary girls school (O'Brien 223).⁵⁶ In some novels, boarding schools serve as sites that raise questions about the integrity of the young women's upbringing and the risks they face when they live outside of their fathers' homes.

In *Matsayin Lover*, what is seen as the most alarming threat to the girls' virtue is not that of the *gardi*, who sneaks into the hostel, but a twist in the character of the girls themselves. An innocent schoolgirl friendship becomes a lesbian relationship. The description of the lesbian relationship between Rufaida and Fadita is similar to descriptions of teenage heterosexual relationships in other Hausa romance novels. In Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino's bestselling *In Da So da K'auna*, for example, the lovers write each other love letters and poems. Muhammad visits Sumayya in her boarding school, and Sumayya even comes to visit him in his room at home, where they embrace and kiss. In *Matsayin Lover*, Rufaida comes to visit Fadita in her hostel. She lies on Fadita's bed as they gaze at each other. The two girls read a book, "Map of Love," that Rufaida wrote for Fadita and exchange vows of love. Dialogue similar to that of the heterosexual lovers in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* furthers the comparison of these two girls' forbidden love to the star-crossed romance between a girl and boy:

Da Rufaida ta ga dare ya fara sai ta ce "Zan tafi".

"Har za ki tafi dare fa bai yi ba" in ji Fadita yayin da ta rik'e mata hannu.

Daga karshe suka sauko daga kan gado suka fita daga d'akin zuwa baranda. Nan ma suka tsaya yin wata hirar har wata 'yar shagwab'a Rufaida ta ke wai ita ta zo gurin 'lover'(16).

When Rufaida saw that night had fallen, she said, "I've got to go."

girls were abducted from a Chibok boarding school, some of whom were "married" by the militants (Mark "Now"). Boko Haram frame their attacks as moral correction on girls, who seek an identity outside the home.

⁵⁶ Aliyu Kamal's novel *Hausa Girl* fictionalizes an incident that was widely reported in the popular media, about an entire hostel of girls being possessed by spirits after insulting an old woman who tried to stop them from dancing.

“You’re going when it isn’t even late yet?” said Fadita, holding on to her hand.

Finally they got up from the bed and went out from the room to the verandah.

Here they stood whispering together. The depraved Rufaida said she had come to see her “lover.”

The description echoes more familiar and sympathetic Hausa stories of heterosexual lovers, and the romance is quite similar to that between two school girls in Ayodele Morocco-Clarke’s story “What Matters is the Way We Are;”⁵⁷ however, Al-Khamees marks it with asides that demonstrate his disapproval. For example, in the above passage, he writes: “they continued the sort of play that is not good in religion” (16).⁵⁸ Al-Khamees’s authorial judgment is echoed in the following scene where two minor characters act as a chorus to sit in judgment on the lesbians. Karbiyya, a girl who overhears their conversation, confides in her friend Hadisa the “*abin mamaki*” (surprising thing) that she saw. Hadisa tells her that this behaviour is called “*matsayin lover*” (substitute [lesbian] lover) and is widespread, not only in their school, but in other schools as well. There had been other students expelled over it. The implication in the terminology is that the girls are merely substituting girls for the boys they would be interested in were they out of school. Karbiyya worries that if she didn’t have good friends to advise her, she too may have been tempted. But religion helped to guard her against it:

“*To ni ba zan yi irin k’awancin abin da na ga an yi jiya ba. Wanda ko d’a
namiji ba zan iya yiwa ba, sai dai mijin aurena domin raya sunnar ma’aiki*”

⁵⁷ Ayodele Morocco-Clarke’s story, told in the voice of the northern Muslim character Hauwa, about her romance with another school girl is quite similar, but it contrasts with *Matsayin Lover* in the sympathetic tone the first person narration gives the lovers. While Al-Khamees inserts direct authorial commentary and also displays the judgment of other more righteous classmates, Hauwa’s tale speaks back to these sorts of critics, demonstrating the suffering the forced separation from her lover and the judgment of their peers, teachers, and families have caused in her life.

⁵⁸ “suka ci gaba da wasu irin wasanni marasa kyau a addinace....” (16).

(S.A.W.) kuma sune suke jawo wa sauran ‘yan makaranta ake yi mana kud’in goro ake zargin mu ba ki d’aya akan abin da ba mu san da shi ba” (17).

“Me, I couldn’t get involved in that sort of friendship that I saw yesterday. I couldn’t even do that with a boy, unless he was my lawfully married husband so as to uphold the sunnah of the Messenger (P.B.U.H). Their behaviour is making the rest of us students suffer unwarranted gossip over something we don’t know anything about.”

However, when Karbiyya threatens to tell the Principal about Fadita and Rufaida, Hadisa cautions her, “It’s none of your business [...] If God exposes their secret, you’ll hear that they’ve been expelled” (17).⁵⁹ Knowledge of religion helps the girls stay away from this sort of lifestyle, but they leave it to God to judge and punish as God, not the principal, sees fit.

This description of Fadita and Rufaida’s indiscretion and Karbiyya and Hadisa’s condemnation of it is the extent of the school-girl lesbianism that we see in the first edition of *Matsayin Lover* Part 1 that was banned; the second edition describes their enthusiastic embrace in front of everyone when they return to school from vacation (Second edition, 37). Most of the story revolves around Raulisa’s conniving to steal Hildat’s boyfriend. However, the consequence of Karbiyya and Hadisa’s illicit affair can be seen in the actions taken by predatory lesbian character Hajiya Zannub in the final few scenes of the novel (27-37).

Zannub, whose name sounds similar to the Hausa word for sin, *zunnubi*, is described as having started to “go bad” in secondary school. She was expelled from school after school for her sexual behaviour with other girls. In her final year of university, she met with a stupendously wealthy older man, who insists that she marry him. After much pressure, she feels she has no choice but to wed because he is so wealthy. Soon after they marry, her husband divorces her

⁵⁹ “‘Ke dai ba ruwan ki’ In ji Hadisa ‘Idan Allah ya tashi tona musu asiri sai dai ki ji an kore su.’”

when he finds her in bed with another woman. Once she is “independent,” she refuses to marry again. Zannub uses the wealth she acquired from her husband and money that she stole to build a big house where she continues to seduce women into her “depraved” lifestyle.

Hajiya Zannub, who looks like a “Beauty Queen” and drives around town with her music blasting from the car’s speakers, has a glamorous foreign aura. She is described as living her life as if she were in “Holywood” [sic]. Observing her get out of her car at the shopping centre, some young men describe feeling like they were in Paris from the scent of her perfume. Like the chorus of disapproving girls at the secondary school, who provide commentary on their lesbian classmates, the young men say, “These sorts of Hajiya don’t have any idea of what is happening in the country” (27).⁶⁰ While the surface meaning of this judgment could be that the wealthy do not understand the ways poor people suffer, there is a simultaneous critique here of her Western appearance, which has alienated her from the Hausa community.

Nahiyar’s visit to Hajiya Zannub was only polite after the woman makes overtures of friendship, both paying for her groceries and giving her a lift in her car. In fact, driving a girl home and paying for her groceries are usually signs of male courtship. Perhaps these peculiar signs should have served as a warning to Nahiyar. It is in Hajiya Zannub’s “love nest” that readers are exposed to the most shocking sexual behaviour in the novel. Nahiyar’s first sense that all is not well occurs when she is met at the door by a girl wearing a mini-skirt and t-shirt which has written on it in English, “I’m a lesbian I play the field, and I have no apologies [sic].” When Nahiyar proceeds into the room, she finds it filled with girls watching a pornographic film, “The Sign of The Night” (31). Later they are described as watching “The Last American Virgin.” “It is in watching these sorts of film that they learn more of the immorality of how to chase after

⁶⁰ “Ai irin wad’annan Hajiyoyin ba su san halin da ake ciki ba a k’asar nan” (27).

women like themselves, their own sisters” (34).⁶¹ In the meantime, Hajiya Zannub is in her “Secret room” (in English in the original) with another girl and their sexual caresses are described in the same graphic anatomical detail that one might read in an English-language “Mills and Boon” romance novel. When Hajiya Zannub summons Nahiyar into her room, she boasts that she takes care of all the girls here, feeding them, clothing them, and giving them work to do. All of them had finished their degrees in the university. All this she offers to Nahiyar if she agrees to become one of her lovers. Zannub tells her that after she experiences the love of a woman she will “never again desire a man” (33). When Nahiyar flees Hajiya Zannub’s advances, the other girls attack her, ripping her blouse open so that her breasts are exposed (35). After they finished humiliating her, they allow her to leave (36).⁶²

There are several points to be made here. First, the juxtaposition of the seductive predator Hajiya Zannub and the naïve Nahiyar continues the binaries between “whore” and “virgin,” also seen in *Bora da Mowa*. In her analysis of Nollywood films that feature lesbian characters, Lindsey Green-Simms calls this the binary between the “the innocent girl” and “the ‘bloody’ lesbian” (“Hustlers” 65). Hajiya Zannub, like Ziza, is presented as an evil seductress who threatens the cohesiveness of the Muslim *ummah*. There is a twist here, however. Mixed-gender spaces have been among the most cited concerns from the jihadists to more contemporary critiques of university education. In these sites, a young man might be seduced by an immodest woman, as Sule was at the cinema, or girls and women could, in turn, be seduced by equally immodest men. J.M. Kaura, for example, argues that “most of the schools we have, both

⁶¹ “a kallon irin wadannan finafina suke k’ara koyon lalatar da suke sanya a gaba ta neman mata ‘yan’uwansu.”

⁶² This sort of violent asocial behaviour by lesbians is also represented in later English-language Nollywood films about lesbianism. In the film *The Lesbians* and its sequel *The Clash of Lesbians*, a group of lesbians gang up on and humiliate a young man who was making overtures towards the gang leader. Later the lesbians kidnap and threaten one of their members who tries to leave the gang for a heterosexual relationship. Lindsey Green-Simms, who looks at representations of lesbianism in other “campus cult” Nollywood films, argues that Nollywood films about lesbianism attempt to morally police society by placing the blame for “moral degeneracy” on “female sexual transgressions” (“Hustlers” 64).

religious and secular, have male teachers. With qualified muslim women teachers, majority of parents, guardians and husbands would be more than willing to send their women to these schools [sic]" (89). He mentions reports in a newspaper that "a teacher was accused of having an illicit relationship with his student. If women teachers were made to teach in these schools, such a problem would not have occurred" (102). The assumption here is that an all-female environment will keep the virtue of young girls and wives intact. However, in *Matsayin Lover* Al-Khamees points out that separating girls from boys is not enough.

Readers experience a sense of disorientation here similar to that felt by Sule in *Climate of Corruption* when he discovers that his parents do not follow the morals they have taught him. The separate space of the school, meant to keep girls safe from the temptations offered by the opposite sex, has given rise to a "new" form of illicit sexuality. What parents might assume are normal innocent feminine friendships are, in fact, the author argues, sexual relationships taking place in girls boarding schools. Although Nahiyar responds to Hajiya Zannub's overtures of friendship in a perfectly normal way by visiting her, the novel suggests that friendships between women have been polluted. Not only does Hajiya Zannub betray Nahiyar's trust, but she also corrupts the ideal of trusting family relationships by using family terms to organize her harem: all of the girls call her "Mummy," and she calls them "daughter" (31).

The change in "normal" relationships between women comes, Al-Khamees implies, from their exposure to corrupting foreign spaces, whether in the boarding houses for secular Western education or from the influence of Western films such as *The Last American Virgin*. Green-Simms describes how in "campus cult" Nollywood films with lesbian characters, the "outlawed bodies of the prostitute-lesbian" have become associated with "foreignness, capitalist greed and bourgeois excess" ("Hustlers" 68). In *Matsayin Lover*, the women often use English to describe

their sexuality, similar to Joanna Sullivan's observations that the characters in Bature Gagare's novel *K'arshen Alewa K'asa* who speak English "have criminal personalities, those who resist English remain innocent and unblemished" ("Modern" 168). Rufaida and Fadita code-switch in English during their endearments. Rufaida gives Fadita a book "Map of Love," the title of which is in English. The T-shirt the girl wears that proclaims her pride in her promiscuous lesbianism is in English. The room where Hajiya Zannub seduces women is called the "Secret room" in English. The terminology "Mummy" and "daughter," the women use for their relationship is also in English, as are the names of the pornographic films the girls watch. Even the second word in the title of the novel is the English word "Lover." The lesbians in Hajiya Zannub's commune are seduced by their desire for the material wealth "Mummy" can provide them, as well as visions of a different, "foreign" life trajectory, offered by the American films they watch. While the cinema has long been associated with non-Islamic spaces, as we see in Labo Yari's *Climate of Corruption*, the video player has brought the corrupting foreign films that used to be relegated outside of the city into the home. As Abubakar Rabo, the head of the Kano Censor's Board, put it over a decade after *Matsayin Lover* was published, "The advent of video technology brought with it urgencies and tough challenges. In the past, you could physically prevent young boys and girls from going to watch a film at the cinema hall if you feared they would be exposed to immorality. With video technology the devil has been piped into the home and corruption is only a click away" (Rabo, "On Kano Censors"). The video player, which allows women to watch films without going to the immoral space of the cinema, also makes it easier to hide films' corrupting influences and immorality in the seemingly respectable space of a private house.⁶³

⁶³ All the same, a house where only women live is not considered to be respectable. Nahiyar does not know who lives in the house, however, until she goes inside.

Social anxieties about women being exposed to corrupting Western influences are layered onto older patriarchal anxieties about gender-segregated spaces where women find power outside of that granted to them from their position in the home. Al-Khamees, whose female readers must have had some form of Western education in order to read the roman Hausa script, likely would not condemn education. Nevertheless, he does express his concerns about the autonomy women learn in schools. When Raulisa returns from school for vacation, for example, she navigates the town by herself to visit her friends, much to the disapproval of her father. In the second edition of *Matsayin Lover* (out of which the Hajiya Zannub episode had been cut), Raulisa even tracks down Hildat's boyfriend Nadeer in his office to flirt with him. Back in school, she tells her friends that the best way to catch men is give them their body. Gone is the demure ideal of the shy Hausa girl (Larkin, "Indian" 417, 423), and in its place is an assertive woman, willing to chase another girl's boyfriend and use her body to seduce him. But beyond this untoward behaviour, the lesbian relationship is portrayed as the most threatening thing that could happen to society and the women themselves in the school. Rufaida tells Fadita in English, "Fadita don't you know some people are jealous [sic] just because we are together?. Try not to be separated my love" (16). The schoolgirl couple Rufaida and Fadita and later Hajiya Zannub and her "harem" offer an alternative world, in which men are not necessary for material success or even sexual fulfillment. Similar to Green-Simm's description of how "the male viewer, accustomed to identifying with the male gaze" is "forced to yield his position to a woman" when watching a "bloody lesbian" seduce an "innocent girl" in the Nollywood film *Beautiful Faces* ("Hustlers" 65), male readers of *Matsayin Lover* are forced to yield their position to Hajiya Zannub who courts and caresses a whole household of young women. When Zannub tells

Nahiyar that all of the girls under her care have finished university and she is providing careers for them, she implies that women can thrive, both sexually and financially, without men.⁶⁴

Hajiya Zannub's patron-client arrangement, in which younger girls depend on her and call her "Mummy" layers onto older forms of relationships between the female followers and the leader of the bori cult sometimes called "Inna" or "Iya" (Boyd 43) both titles meaning "Mother" in Hausa. Boyd notes that the Inna of Gobir was also called the "uwar gari," "mother of the city." She dressed in men's clothes, rode astride a horse, "collected taxes, and had a number of women officials whose titles reveal the categories of artisans from whom they collected taxes" (46). Mack points out that, with the "growing influence of Islam in Hausaland," these powerful political positions for women declined under the jihadist political system (Mack, "Royal" 113); however, there were also continuities. Nana Asma'u cleverly appropriated the outer symbols of the bori system, transforming them into symbols of Islamic education.⁶⁵ Yet, Nana Asma'u's education emphasized women's roles that discouraged the kind of independence found in the bori cult. Boyd writes that the students in her education system were "the young girls and the older women," while women of marriageable age were expected to "stay at home and look after their families" (51). The lesbian world Hajiya Zannub offers Nahiyar, as a woman of marriageable age, builds on the old structures of female power offered by the bori cult, but with a

⁶⁴ Women who claim to be too independent, it is implied, are actually lesbians. Accusations of lesbianism, as we can see in the rumours about Hajiya Binta and Maimuna in *Climate of Corruption*, are a form of disciplining women who exhibit too much independence. These sorts of assumptions are found in other narratives such as the Nollywood film *The Lesbians*, where lesbians are characterized by being independent, having many close single female friends, turning down propositions from men, delaying marriage, and acting as prostitutes to gain power over men. The assumptions are that no woman is a lesbian because she prefers women but rather because she has been disappointed by men, and when the right man comes into her life she will go back to being a contented heterosexual. Furthermore, lesbians are a threat to men who admire them and a threat to fellow lesbians who choose committed relationships with men. The only redemption for a lesbian is a relationship leading to marriage with a man.

⁶⁵ Giving the leaders of the groups of female students large *malfa* hats, "one of the marks of office used by the Inna of Gobir, the chief of women devotees of bori, Asma'u deliberately took up the symbol" and "it turned into an emblem of Islam" (Mack and Boyd, *One Woman's* 89).

complete independence from men that resonates with stereotypes about Western feminism circulating throughout northern Nigeria.

Although *Matsayin Lover* makes few references to the spiritual world that *Bora da Mowa* and *Climate of Corruption* invoke, the final scene of the first edition of the novel, shows Hajiya Zannub in a confrontation with an old symbol of pre-Islamic power. Zannub parks her car in a garden and begins to caress her lover, but when the girl suddenly flees, Zannub finds herself face to face with a deadly snake. The snake is often featured in Hausa legends as a symbol of a pagan force that must be appeased through sacrifice. Boyd points out how the leader of women, the Inna, in Tsibiri, “proceeded annually to sacrifice at a tree inhabited by a serpent called Sidi” (43).⁶⁶ In the Hausa founding myth, a Prince of Baghdad, Bayajidda, kills a snake called Sarki, which has been hoarding the water of Daura. He marries the Queen of Daura, Daurama Shawata, the 17th queen in a line of Hausa queens, and bears sons who become the mythic founders of the 7 Hausa city-states (Michael, “Daura’s Tales”). The conquering of the snake, which the queen no longer seems to be able to handle, therefore symbolizes a transition from matriarchal to patriarchal rule. In this new social order, the prince conquers chaos and establishes the rule of reason and order under Islamic precepts.

To the sinner who is not under the protection of a Muslim and male guardian, the snake is a fearful creature. Hajiya Zannub, who has assumed the role of a woman’s leader marked more by Western influence than her adherence to the old traditions, could be seen as facing the judgment of an old, vengeful force, and forseeing the torments of Hell, where snakebites are

⁶⁶ Danfulani notes that even today, “a serpent or species of snake” is the “totem of nearly every Maguzawa [non-Muslim Hausa] community in the Kano region” (410).

among the punishments for adulterers (Islam 272).⁶⁷ The last sentence of the novel before the teaser “Wait for MATSAYIN LOVER part 2,” reads, “She knew that there is no friendship between man and snake, so she started to count herself among the corpses, who would be wrapped in white cloth and carried to her grave” (37).⁶⁸ In Hajiya Zannub’s imagination, the evil, overly-sexualized woman is punished for her sins, even more drastically than is Ziza at the end of *Bora da Mowa*. The virtuous virgin Nahiyar who flees Hajiya Zannub’s advances, on the other hand, seeks the protection of her male suitor, a journalist who promises her he will address the situation. There is the sense that the patriarchal order will be re-established.

The male journalist who appears near the end of the first part of the novel is presented as the hope for setting things right. The implication is that he will investigate Nahiyar’s accusations and expose to the public the threat posed by Hajiya Zannub’s house of women. I read the journalist figure as a stand-in for Al-Khamees himself. In his introduction to the text, he presents the novel as an urgent intervention needed by the community to expose secret corruptions that are a threat to naïve young girls like Nahiyar. *Matsayin Lover* opens with a defensive author’s note, which I will reproduce in full here because of its significance in establishing the author’s ostensible purpose:

Hakika yana da kyau, kuma ya dace na yi bayani saboda yawan soke-soken da aka dinga samu a kan littafi “Matsayin Lover” tun kafin ya fito. Wasu suna yi wa littafin mumummunar fahimta har ma suna ganin kwata-kwata bai dace ake an rubuta shi ba. A gaskiya ban rubuta wannan littafi da niyyar cin mutuncin kowa ba, musamman ma mata da ake ganin kamar domin su aka yi littafin.

⁶⁷ Khawaja Muhammad Islam describes how in Hell, the “genitals of the adulterers will be stretched to the length of miles and then snakes and scorpions will be let loose upon them who will bite their genitals” (272). Islam also describes snakes as punishment for those who miss their prayers, dodge zakat tax, and other sinners (245, 253).

⁶⁸ Hak’ik’a ta yi imani ba a shiri tsakanin mutum da maciji, saboda haka nan take ta fara lissafa kanta cikin marigaya an d’auko ta lullub’e cikin farin likkafani za a kai ta mak’abarta” (37).

It is appropriate for me to give an explanation since there has been a lot of controversy surrounding this book *Matsayin Lover*, even before it came out. Some have misunderstood the book to the extent that they think that it is not appropriate for it to be written at all. The truth is, I didn't write the book to ruin anyone's reputation, especially the women for whom it is assumed I wrote the book.

Makusudin rubuta littaaƙin shi ne domin faɗakar da mata tare da wayar musu da kai game da irin baɗaƙalar da take faruwa a tsakanin matasa mata har ma da manyan matan, domin su guji illar wannan mummunar dabi'a. Sai da na gaba na baya suke koyar darasi, kuma ina ganin me kashedi ba maso-fada ba ne. Saboda surutun wasu tsirarun mutane bai kamata ana ganin abin faɗakar da al'umma da yi musu hannunka me sanda a yi shiru ba. Kuma babu wani marubuci da zai dauki alkalami ya yi rubutu domin kawai ya ci mutuncin al'umma sai dai kawai idan an jahilci manufarsa, musamman ma a irin rubuce-rubucenmu.

The reason for writing the book was to warn women and let them know about the evil things that are happening between young women (lesbians), including those influential women of society, so that they will flee from this wicked practice. From the beginning to the end, they will learn lessons. I think of it as a warning, not an attack. Just because a few people are talking idle nonsense, we shouldn't see something happening in society about which people need to be warned and guided and just stay silent. There is no writer who will pick up his pen and write merely to embarrass the community. To think that is to be ignorant of his purpose, especially with our kind of writing.

Daga karshe ina kira ga makaranta da su karanta wannan littafi a nutse domin su yi masa kyakkyawar fahimta. Ko shakka babu iyayen yara mata da mata ‘yan makaranta da wad’anda ma ba ‘yan makarantar ba, kai ma samarai za su bukaci wannan littafi domin ya zame musu abin fadakarwa da lura.

Finally, I am calling on the readers to read this book carefully and let it sink in so they understand it very well. No doubt parents of girls, school girls, and even those who are not at school, even young men, need to read this book because it will be a warning and caution to them.

Al-Khamees frames the events described in the novel as essential reading, a kind of self-help book for parents and young people to maintain the respectability of the *ummah*. Just as Karbiyya said she was grateful for the guidance of the other girls in the school who warned her against lesbianism, this is, Al-Khamees claims, what he is openly offering everyone. He is not exposing the secrets of any particular person—that is for God to reveal, as Hadisa tells Karbiyya. However, he is exposing the “dangerous” practices of lesbianism through fiction, so that no one else is taken in by women’s deception. He tells Furniss and Adamu, “I had written a book that was capable of going out and making an impression among the people, and people would learn what was going on with their daughters in their secondary schools, things that were happening that they know nothing about” (106). Just as the immoral practices of Act 2, Scene 6 in *Bora da Mowa* are presented so that people understand Ziza’s wickedness, so also does Al-Khamees present his sensational scenes as necessary to expose the wickedness of lesbianism.

Despite this self-presentation as a muckraking exposé needed to reform the community, the reaction of the writing community, even those who also framed their discourse in this manner, was that it was “simply too much.” Al-Khamees describes how:

My friends came round—Bala Anas, Ado, Dan Azimi—and they said there was too much bad language in it and people were complaining that if it came out it would cause damage to people, it was too Western. The style of writing was too Western and that it did not read as if I was issuing a warning. [...] They told me not to write it, but it was printed and it started to be sold in the market, then it was stopped in the market before fifty were sold. It was my friends who stopped it, among them Bala, Sanusi Shehu, Yusuf Adamu and Balaraba. [...] [T]hey said to me that no it can't be said, it is too open. I was opening up things in society about which things should not be said. The way I was describing a woman touching another woman with lust, they said it was too much and they convinced me not to do it. Ibrahim Sheme told me it would be literary suicide. (Furniss and Adamu 105-106).

Unlike Umar Balarabe Ahmed, who warned that impressionable children should not be exposed to Act 2, Scene 6, or Al-Khamees's colleague Balaraba Ramat Yakubu who printed a warning in the preface of her explicit novel about incest, *Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare Ba?* that “no one under fifteen should read it” (v), Al-Khamees recommends his book to schoolgirls. He does not seem to feel that there might be things inappropriate to express to certain audiences. The other writers he mentions (a roll-call of the most influential writers and filmmakers of the 1990s) felt that he could hurt his own reputation (and theirs) if he did not withdraw the book. Ironically, he was accused of exposing his readers to the same bad influences he was attempting to critique.

While he portrayed young girls as being corrupted through their exposure to harmful Western influences, audiences understood his book as one of those same “Western” influences that could spoil the piety of his readers. This tension between artists, who claim to be teaching and reforming society through exposing the secret evils in which hypocrites are engaged, and those critics who claim these works of art are capable of tempting others into sin is an enduring one in Hausa society. The anxiety Al-Khamees’s novel caused the writing community was well-founded. Other writers, like Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino, were also accused of being Western-influenced and of corrupting his young readers (Larkin, “Indian” 430-432)—and their reaction to Al-Khamees’s explicit novel was that of self-preservation. The coming of “shari’a law” to Kano two years later, was a culmination of the sorts of calls by critics for the government to “take radical action ‘against’ *soyayya* books” (Larkin, “Indian” 430). In the following decade, both writers and filmmakers were rendered by political leaders into scapegoats for immorality in society. I will discuss this controversy in the following chapters.

As I have read Labo Yari’s novels and short stories, with their somewhat sympathetic descriptions of the “bariki lifestyle” and even a story about lesbians, “Cavalier of the Plain,” in his collection *A House in the Dark and other Stories*, I have often wondered why they have not faced more of the kinds of critiques to which Hausa popular fiction is subject. Yari describes his duty as a writer to expose corruption, although he is less concerned with “teaching” than his Hausa colleagues (Umaisha, “Labo Yari”). Unlike Ahmed’s play *Bora da Mowa*, which presents the moral binaries of a folktale, or Al-Khamees’s *Matsayin Lover*, which presents the behaviour with authorial asides that make his disapproval clear, *Climate of Corruption* ostensibly presents behaviours and allows audiences to make up their own minds.

I think there are two reasons Yari's work has not been more controversial. First, although he describes the bariki lifestyle, his books do not go into such explicit detail as Al-Khamees's novel, though they are comparable to the description in the novels of Balaraba Ramat Yakubu and Ibrahim Sheme. Second, and probably more importantly, they are written in English, influenced in style by European literary writers, published by the Enugu-based Fourth Dimension Publishers, and largely unavailable anywhere except for a few university libraries and bookstores. When I reviewed *Climate of Corruption* in my *Weekly Trust* column, a reader emailed to tell me he had gone to "over twenty bookshops" in Jos trying to find the novel, to no avail. Labo Yari's novels written in English, a language available only to the educated elite, do not have the same potential to impact the "masses" that novels in Hausa do and therefore are of much less interest to critics concerned about the impact of literature or film on the *ummah*. Yari himself notes that he does not "think writers can change the Nigerian society" because "readers are not many" (Umaisha, "Labo Yari").

A comparison could be made between Ngugi wa Thiong'o's English language novels and his novels in Gikuyu. In *Moving the Centre*, Ngugi notes that after his novel *Grain of Wheat* came out, "I came to realize only too painfully that the novel in which I had so carefully painted the struggle of the Kenya peasantry against colonial oppression would never be read by them" (27). It was not until he wrote the play *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want)* with Ngugi wa Miiri in his mother tongue Gikuyu that the Kenyan government began to take note of his subversive writing and threw him in prison, where he determined "never to write my fiction and drama in English again" (Pozo, "An Interview"). Similarly, Larkin describes how while Hausa films were often critiqued and even banned for the ways in which they borrowed from Indian films, Indian films were never censored or banned: "The tension arose when styles of love

and sexual interaction from Indian films were dramatized in a Hausa context. What could be tolerated while safely confined to the practices of another culture however ‘like’ Hausa culture was simply too controversial when the necessary gap for cultural borrowing was collapsed” (“Bandiri” par 25). When those same actions are written about or performed in the Hausa language by “Hausa” people, they become threatening to the community. In this case, English becomes a kind of veil for talking about “shameful” things. When they are spoken about in Hausa, audiences seen as “vulnerable” are “exposed.” This dynamic played out the most dramatically in Hausa society during the censorship crisis from 2007 to 2011, during which time the Kano State Censorship board required every author writing in Hausa to open a file with the board and many filmmakers and musicians performing in Hausa were arrested and imprisoned.

Conclusion

I have looked at these three texts as windows into the public discourse about the dangers of exposure to influences outside of the *dar al-Islam*, both those “traditional” and “alien” to Hausa society. I have discussed exposure in several different ways. First, I look at the noun “exposure” as contact with education and the cosmopolitan influences of an outside world. While exposure to Western style education and publishing institutions gave largely southern Nigerian writers access to a global reading public, the orientation of northern Nigeria toward the Arab world and the different forms of colonial education limited the influence of northern Nigerian writers to the region. Labo Yari, one of the educated northern elite, describes the offence his character Sule took when Mamma Benji doubted the existence of universities, yet Al-Khamees’s novel highlights social anxieties about girls schools and university education for women.

Second, I use “expose” as a more active verb, the “exposing” of secret sins that occurs in the play and both novels. Such exposure was used to challenge the status quo by attacking powerful sinners, as can be seen in Ahmad’s exhibition of the corrupt politician, as well as to maintain the existing moral order, as can be seen in Al-Khamees’s attack on lesbians.

Whereas, there doesn’t seem to have been any public controversy about the first two works, perhaps because they were published by formal publishers in the 1970s and were less explicit in their descriptions of lesbianism, by the late 1990s when *Matsayin Lover* was self-published, there was much greater controversy about the undisciplined use of fiction to describe “indecent” elements of society, perhaps because by the 1990s there was a much wider field of readers and critics. Only two years later, when democracy returned to Nigeria, what was termed shari’a law was introduced in Kano. The implementation of shari’a in northern Nigeria from 1999 to the present brought to the surface conflict between the Islamic ideal and the everyday practice of northern Nigerian society, which includes large minorities of Christians and Muslims of varying levels of commitment and conviction. The interaction between culture producers and authorities in public discourse in the 1990s and the 2000s after shari’a implementation is what I will focus on in the rest of this dissertation.

Chapter 2: A Private Experience? Balaraba Ramat Yakubu's Hausa novels of exposure

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's short story "A Private Experience" from her collection *The Thing Around Your Neck* tells the story of Chika, a wealthy young Igbo woman visiting Kano who gets caught up in a violent ethnic riot and finds herself hiding in an abandoned store with a poor Hausa woman. The story is told from the perspective of Chika, who finds herself wondering if "this woman's mind is large enough to grasp" the complex reasons for the riots or whether she even understands what going to university is (47-48). We see Chika's thoughts, but the thoughts of the Hausa woman are opaque. She helps Chika, but she does not speak, except a few sentences in broken English. In fact, we never learn her name. Her experience is filtered through the eyes of a grieving yet privileged Chika.

Adichie's story about the encounter between a Western-educated member of the Nigerian elite and a subaltern woman of the north invokes Gayatri Spivak's question "can the subaltern speak" and the self consciousness of the educated woman who attempts to speak for her. Adichie seems aware of this tension. Chika realizes, guiltily, that she cannot fully understand this woman. Her resentment against the amorphous enemy of "the Hausa" who have killed Igbo people in riots and war unravels as she hides from the violence with the Hausa woman and recognizes their common humanity. They are both victims of violence: Chika worries about her sister caught up in the riots, just as the woman worries about her daughter. The story is a meditation of sisterhood across ethnic and language boundaries. Yet, there are imbalances here: except for a few awkward bits of conversation in a language she does not speak well, the woman remains silent. We see only her actions, her cleaning of Chika's wound, her question about her own chapped breast, her prayer—an action which is misrepresented by Adichie, who like her protagonist does not seem to

have spent enough time with Hausa Muslims to know that a Hausa woman covers herself when she prays and would not have taken off her veil to use as a mat. While Adichie was obviously attempting to explore the way that an encounter with an “Other” complicates Chika’s assumptions, her portrayal of the nameless Hausa woman, in fact, reinforces the stereotype of the northern woman as seen in public discourse in Nigeria—the ultimate subaltern, married young, uneducated, unable to speak. Often discourse about the Muslim woman of the north is carried out, as can be seen in the July 2013 uproar about child marriage that I will discuss in further detail below, between non-Muslim feminist activists located in the cosmopolitan centres of Lagos and Abuja and powerful Muslim men, like Senator Ahmed Sani Yerima, who claim that early marriage and women’s place in the home is determined by Islam and cannot therefore be questioned. With a few exceptions, northern Muslim women’s voices on these issues are rarely heard by the larger Nigerian or global community.

Yet, that northern women’s voices in English are rarely heard by a Western educated elite, does not mean they are not speaking, writing, or reading.¹ Hausa women’s novels are widely read in northern Nigeria. In fact, a male author once joked to me that men were starting to take female pseudonyms in order to be read by the voracious audience of women reading other women’s novels in Hausa.² Yusuf Adamu has pointed out that the upsurge of women’s literature in the 1980s and 1990s encouraged more women (and men) to gain literacy so they could read

¹Halimat Abolusawu-Sekula has written an MA thesis and Ramlat Jibir-Daura, Murjanatu Rilwan Muhamad, and Moshood Zakariyah have written conference papers on Northern women’s novels in English, including the novelists Aishatu Gidado Idris, Fatima Ba’aram Alkali, Fatima Usara Hassan-Tom, Halima Sekula, Hauwwa Mohammed Allurawa, Mairo Mohammed Mudi, and Talatu Wada Ahmed. But few of these mostly locally published northern female novelists publishing in English are very popular. Zaynab Alkali who writes in English and is published by MacMillan is the one female northern Nigerian writer well-known in discussions of African literature. In fact, in the comments during a presentation at the 7th Conference on Northern Nigerian literature at Bayero University, one commenter said that the only northern Nigerian novelists he could think of in the corpus of Nigerian literature were Zaynab Alkali and Helon Habila. Novelists publishing in Hausa, on the other hand, have large fan followings of young women and men who write to them and call them and seek their advice.

² I interviewed a young woman who supports her reading habit by renting out her collection of hundreds of novels. She told me that she mostly bought novels by women and that most of the people who rented from her were women, who preferred women’s novels. Market traders similarly told me novels by women sold better.

the novels for themselves (“Between” 204). Women’s writing in Hausa and the filmmaking process which often includes women as producers and actors expose the suffering and joys of northern women in their stories, along with more quotidian concerns of household life, but their expression in Hausa means that they address their stories not to a global audience, as Adichie does, but instead to a local audience of Hausa-speakers. While women’s novels and films entertain, the authors often explicitly frame them as instruction meant to help change society.

Building on my analysis in Chapter 1 of the tensions between the *dar al-Islam* and the *dar al-kufr* in Hausa literature, in this chapter I will discuss Hausa male discourse about the ideal Islamic home, which is supposed to be a protected and virtuous space, following the controversy about child marriage in July 2013. I will contrast this rhetoric with that in three novels by Balaraba Ramat Yakubu, *Wa Zai Auri Jahila? (Who Will Marry an Illiterate Woman?)*, *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne...Ubangidansa yakan bi (Sin is a Puppy... that follows you home)*,³ and *Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare ba? (Is the Man a Dog or Just an Outcast?)*, in which she seeks to expose patriarchal corruption and abuse in the home that leads to the suffering of women and advocates for education to enable women to become financially independent and to participate in public life.⁴

This chapter deals with my theme of exposure in three ways: First, I examine male anxieties about women’s exposure to the world outside the “protected space” of the home and how this discourse is influenced both by local tradition and the cosmopolitan flows of transnational Islamist discourse, which poses itself against corrupting Western influences. Second, I examine how Balaraba Ramat Yakubu challenges patriarchal metanarratives about the sanctity of the home through her novels, by offering the perspective of women and children in

³ Aliyu Kamal’s literary translation of the title of the novel skillfully captures the essence of the original proverb; however, a more literal translation would read “Crime is a puppy... it follows its master.”

⁴ Except for the novel *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne...* translated into English by Aliyu Kamal as *Sin as a Puppy...*, none of the other works have been translated into English. Unless otherwise noted, the translations in this chapter are mine. I footnote the original Hausa wherever I translate myself, but I will not footnote the translation of *Sin is a Puppy...*

the home, a perspective that has long been stifled in public discourse. These texts reveal (*expose*) secret abuses that are hidden in the private space of the home and often invoke the exposure of sins that will happen on the final Day of Judgment. Third, I examine how Yakubu and other artists defend themselves against accusations of corruption by arguing that their novels and films offer enlightening advice on ways Hausa society can progress, both encouraging sinners to repent and offering a way forward for women. A cosmopolitan education (*exposure*) for women is offered as a solution to empower not only women but society as a whole.

In the patriarchal narrative I will explore below,⁵ the female body itself is inscribed with secrets. Once a girl reaches puberty and develops signs of womanhood such as menstruation and breasts—which are much harder to hide—then her body is seen as a threat to public order directed by men, and she herself is seen as vulnerable to sexual temptation. According to “religious ideologues” in contemporary northern Nigeria, as in contemporary Saudi Arabia or Iran, women’s bodies are “obscenifi[ed]” as a “source of public disorder” (Hoodfar and Ghoreishian 248). The woman’s body, “apart from her hands, feet, and face” is considered *aurah*, shameful or private (Helie and Hoodfar ix). In some contexts, the woman’s voice is also seen as *aurah* (Adamu, *Transglobal* 104). Abdalla Uba Adamu points out that in “Muslim Hausa societies,” both the biological bodies of women, their “*intimisphäre*” and their living space in an “inner apartment (*hujrat*)” make up two layers of privacy that are meant to “govern” their

⁵ It is important to note, as Anissa Helie does in her chapter “Policing gender, sexuality and ‘Muslimness’” (1), that this sort of patriarchal narrative is found in many other traditions, including in societies which engage in Christian, Jewish, and Hindu religious practice, as well as in some pre-colonial “traditional” African societies. Miriam Hansen points out that in the history of Europe, which Jurgen Habermas has explored in his theorization of the “public sphere,” the public sphere was considered to be a place for the civic action of a responsible man. “By contrast, the ‘public woman’ was ‘a prostitute, a commoner, a common woman’” (10). My focus in this dissertation, however, is specifically the patriarchal narratives found in Hausa Muslim society, which are often informed by narratives found in other Muslim societies. Helie argues that, while many other societies police sexuality, “sexuality remains one of the cornerstones through which ‘Muslimness’ is enforced” (2), and the concept of what “Muslimness” entails tends to be used in political ways to homogenize understandings of Islam in widely variable Muslim societies in order to create an “Ideal ‘Islamic society’” (3).

“participation [...] in public affairs” (104). In these narratives, the safest place for a girl who has “become a woman” is in her husband’s house where her sexuality can be contained in a moral virtuous space defined by marriage. As the father of author Balaraba Ramat Yakubu put it, her “secrets” must be contained in her husband’s house. The home, thus, takes on aspects of the body, a private place to be protected by the man, its virtue defined by a woman’s actions. Beverly Mack argues that, “Muslim Hausa culture is focused inward, with the family at its core and the wife and mother as overseer of this context” (*Muslim Women* 7). In this ideal, the private space is a protected space where the woman can nurture the virtuous Muslim family with her body, through giving birth and feeding children, and with her upright example by teaching the children. Mack also points out that a woman is expected to continue her Qur’anic education in the home, and her knowledge of Islam is part of what helps her to create the good Muslim home that is the bedrock of society. It is this ideal narrative valorizing the place of the woman in the home that informs arguments against women’s performance of certain jobs in the “male” public domain, and many women repeat such narratives in their novels about love and the home.

The problem, the novelists and filmmakers I examine point out, is that this complementarian ideal is often violated. The home, with its feminine secrets, is not always a protected and nurturing space. According to these counter narratives, when the home is polygamous, there are often quarrels and competition between wives and sometimes even collusion between wives to deceive their husband about what is happening in the house. On the part of men, as we also saw in *Bora da Mowa*, husbands do not always perform their duties to support or protect the home in accordance with the ideal. They do not necessarily provide for their families, neglecting their wives and treating them unfairly, and they are often emotionally and physically abusive. The privacy of the home, in these instances, does not protect the woman

and her body but instead places her in danger and covers over violations. While these abuses are often “public secrets” that are spoken about in the private spaces of the home amongst women, they are rarely acknowledged in public discourse controlled by male voices.

The arrival of the woman’s novel in the 1980s challenged the status quo by bringing the private space of the home, the woman’s perspective about the patriarchal ideal, and the abuses that often happened in these supposedly protected spaces into public discourse. The ubiquitous Hausa films made by young people, which were developing simultaneously with the popular literary movement, became even more controversial. Not only did they display protected domestic places, but they also unveiled and displayed the female body, often posing rebellious challenges to the rhetoric of their elders. Both forms often exposed not only the private spaces and emotions of woman and youth in the house, but also the abuses that supposedly righteous men performed in these private spaces. In response to narratives that inscribe the woman’s body with secrets that threaten public order, authors often characterize secret sins as also inscribing themselves on the bodies of men, in the forms of physical or mental illnesses, which cannot be hidden. Invoking the Day of Judgment as described in the Qur’an, when the hands and feet and skin of the body will bear witness to the sins committed during life, authors challenge patriarchal authorities by exposing, through story, the sins of publicly virtuous characters.

A major controversy surrounding the literary and film movement developed in conflicting interpretations of what sort of exposure “Islam” allows. As I will demonstrate, critics often accuse novelists and filmmakers of being “Westernized” and importing “alien” concepts into a pure Hausa culture and perfect Muslim ummah. Whereas critics cite passages from the Qur’an that stipulate that secret sins must not be discussed without the requisite number of upright male witnesses so as to keep sins from being propagated, novelists like Balaraba Ramat

Yakubu and other filmmakers argue that their works are educational and meant for the reform of society. Because they present fictional situations, they are not violating injunctions against exposing the sins of a specific person. Instead, their narratives are like sermons that point out the sins happening in society and call for reform and repentance. While not all novelists or filmmakers agree on specific responses to their critics—some being more supportive of maintaining the status quo than others—most of them pose themselves as teachers who will improve society. Some of them argue that society would be better off if women are less dependent on their husbands and are given opportunities to better themselves through education. These artists argue that a more equitable society, where men and women both have access to exposure to public life, will ultimately be a healthier and happier society.

This is an argument I trace throughout my dissertation, but in this chapter I focus specifically on the works of Balaraba Ramat Yakubu, while in the next chapter I examine several films by young filmmakers, which expose vice in the home and offer alternate trajectories to correct these problems. Before my examination of her novels, however, I will look at the dominant patriarchal discourse represented in the activism of Senator Ahmad Yerima for the “right” of Muslims to engage in young marriage, a controversy that built on his earlier activism for the “right” of Muslims to live under “shari’a” law in northern Nigeria.

Muslim Marriage According to Senator Yerima: Patriarchal anxieties about women’s exposure to the world

In July 2013, there was a brief spate of public outrage in Nigeria over the issue of child marriage. Senator Ahmed Sani Yerima, the former governor of Zamfara State who had politicized and lobbied for the re-introduction of Islamic shari’a law in his state in 1999 and who

in 2010 notoriously married a 14-year-old Egyptian girl in the Abuja main mosque,⁶ challenged the Senate's removal of subsection b of clause 4 in section 29 of the Nigerian constitution. The clause in question states that only a person of 18 years of age is considered old enough to renounce Nigerian citizenship, unless that person is a married woman, in which case she is considered "of age." Following his challenge, sixty other senators, mostly from northern Nigeria, supported him, and the subsection excepting married women remained in the constitution (Mudashir, Hassan and Sa'idu 6-7), effectively defining the adulthood of a girl (at least in matters of citizenship) by marriage, no matter how young a girl actually is. Yerima's rhetoric for keeping the clause and subsequent responses made by actors, journalists, authors and other commentators provide a window into the ways patriarchal discourses circulate in and beyond Hausa society. The subsequent debate also illustrates the varying ways in which ideas about "exposure" are deployed in shaping often conflicting assumptions about what is required to protect young girls.

⁶ It was widely reported by the media that the girl was thirteen and that he had paid her family a \$100,000 bride price. As the Child Rights Act, which specifies that a woman must be eighteen years of age before she can marry, was in effect in Abuja at the time and since he married at the Abuja main mosque, activists accused Yerima of committing a crime. In a 28 July 2013 interview with *Sunday Trust*, Yerima claimed that according the Constitution, the Child Rights Act affects only "those who conduct their marriages under the Common Law," and that since there was "freedom of religion" in Nigeria, he was within his right to marry under Islamic law (Abbah and Tayo 8). Yerima, who was fifty-two at the time of the interview, claimed that his Egyptian bride was fourteen when he married her three years previously. By the time of the interview, he said she was seventeen and had a child (9). In a 25 August 2013 interview with Kadaria Ahmed on Channels TV "A Child Not A Bride," he denied that his wife was the daughter of his Egyptian driver, as was widely claimed in media reports. Because the media has not, thus far, had access to the girl or her family, his side of the story is the only one that has been heard. Although Yerima cultivates the image of a devout Muslim with the appearance of an Islamic scholar, legal scholar Aminu Gamawa on Al Jazeera's "The Stream" pointed out that he does not have a background in Islamic scholarship but instead worked in banking before becoming a politician. Journalist Karl Maier also claims that Yerima previously admitted that much of his wealth came from payoffs from the soldiers working for the ECOMOG peacekeeping force, while he was working at the Central Bank of Nigeria, which he never paid back despite his claims of piety (186). Thus despite all of Yerima's anti-imperialist rhetoric, much of his wealth appears to come from skimming off global capitalistic structures. In a moment of poetic justice, his sins seem to have caught up with him. In February 2014, the News Agency of Nigeria reports that Yerima was arraigned "on an eight-count charge of armed robbery, conspiracy and attempt to commit murder, among others" when thugs he allegedly hired to kill a member of the House of representatives in August 2013 were caught (NAN, "Sen. Yarima").

Yerima represents patriarchal power on three levels. Not only is he part of the Hausa aristocracy as son of the emir of Bakura—Yerima literally means “prince” in Hausa—but he possesses political power, first in his position as governor of Zamfara state from 1999 to 2007, and second in his position as a senator of the federal republic of Nigeria, which he assumed in 2007 following the end of his term as governor (Kendhammer 125). Not only do these positions consolidate his power in Nigeria, but he has also drawn on transnational Islamist rhetoric to prove his “Muslim” credentials in the global *dar al-Islam*. Although Yerima is not an Islamic scholar, Kendhammer notes that Zamfara billboards in 2007 congratulating Yerima on his Senate win featured images of him “with a long beard, turban, and kafiya—dressed as an Arab.” His appearance invoked “well-worn Islamic symbols,” that links the “religious nature of his political ‘mission’” with other global Islamist political movements (163).

In an interview with *Sunday Trust*, Yerima argued that the subsection exempting married women from the age had been codified into the law in the 1979 Constitution and continued into the 1999 Constitution:

The Second schedule Part 1, Item 61 of the Constitution clearly ousted the powers of the National Assembly to make any law regarding marriages under Islamic Law and Customary Law [...] So the issue is the definition of what full age is. [...] Under Islamic Law, any girl that has reached the age of puberty is a full-age woman. What is puberty in Islam? Puberty is when a girl starts menstruating or she has extended breasts; she is of full age. Any girl that has started menstruation can be married out. This is a sign of maturity. Therefore, if your daughter starts her menstruation at the age of nine, 13, 14, at whatever age, she is of full age and

she can marry at that age, once she is mature as far as Islamic Law is concerned.”

(Abbah and Tayo 8)

He told interviewers that if his daughter “has a husband at 10 years old, I will give her out in marriage if she is mature enough,” arguing that it was safer to marry off a young girl than to risk that she might engage in premarital sex (9). At issue here, is the relationship between age and the potential risks to which a girl is exposed based on the choices she makes at that age. Expressing a conservative patriarchal perspective on young marriage similar to those expressed by Islamists in Yemen, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere (Edwards, Jamjoom), Yerima argues the risk of denying girls the “right” to marry at a young age (and denying men the “right” to make decisions about giving out their daughters and marrying young wives). Young marriage, he argues, enables girls to avoid the temptations of premarital sex and gives them the opportunity to be legal adults once they are wives. (He does not indicate what young boys are to do when faced with the same sexual temptations. Neither does he argue that boys should be given equal opportunity to become legal adults at the same age.) Girls here are defined by their bodies: their breasts and menstruation. Once puberty becomes obvious (or exposed to the public), then girls must be “protected” from sin by being hidden in the “safety” of the marital home. To lend credence to his argument, Yerima invokes “Islam” and “Islamic law” as a monolith providing clear-cut definitions, without acknowledging the internal debates among Muslims about law and meaning.⁷ On the other hand, his more “liberal” opponents challenge this idea of a monolithic “Islam” and express anxieties about the physical and political risks to which emotionally and mentally immature girls are exposed should they make uninformed decisions (or such decisions

⁷ Feminists Ziba Mir-Hosseini and Vanja Hamzic speak out against this sort of homogenizing rhetoric. Writing in *Control and Sexuality: The Revival of Zina Laws in Muslim Contexts*, they reject “statements beginning ‘Islam says...’ or ‘Islam allows...’ or ‘Islam forbids...’ Islam does not speak, rather it is people who claim to speak in the name (with the authority) of Islam, selecting sacred texts (usually out of context) that appear to justify their claims, and repressing other texts that oppose them” (24).

are made for them) about marriage or renouncing citizenship. Conflicting concepts of the dangers to which girls are exposed and the safety or danger of the marital home drive the debate. But both sides of the debate seem to talk about girls as objects to be protected from exposure to harm rather than as agents with the ability to speak for themselves.

Women's rights activists reacted to the Senate vote with outrage, many of them unequivocally denouncing child marriage, often with little acknowledgment of the poverty and the historical cultural norms behind such marriages. The #Childnotbride hashtag trended on the fickle middle class Nigerian Twitter space for a few days in July 2013, and Nigerian human rights organizations such as the Lagos-based BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, Lagos-based Nigeria Feminist Forum, Kwara-based Wellbeing Foundation, Lagos-based Women Empowerment and Legal Aid Initiative and Abuja-based Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) expressed concern about the Senate action (BAOBAB Press Release; Abidde; Hirsch; Eyoboka, Ogundipe, Umoru and Erunke). In a viral video uploaded to YouTube, popular Nollywood actress Stella Damasus angrily condemned the Senate, arguing that "pedophiles" were using religion to "enslave" children: "I am a firm believer that every Nigerian has the liberty to practice whatever religion they like freely. But these shameless senators should not make Nigeria a shari'a state. Nigeria is not an Islamic country. Do not impose the evil desires of your heart on an entire nation using religion as a cover." Perhaps because of her celebrity, Damasus seemed to be the loudest Nigerian woman's voice on the issue, and she was the only woman and the only non-Muslim included on a 3 September 2013 Al Jazeera "The Stream" panel discussion, which included Yerima and two other Muslim men.⁸

Damasus's argument is that men in the Senate who voted against the deletion of the clause are

⁸ By failing to include a Muslim woman on the panel, Al Jazeera made the position of those arguing against Yerima, who was using "Islamic law" to bolster his claims, much more difficult and reinforced the marginalization of Muslim women in public life.

appropriating Islam to rationalize exposing girls to pedophilia and sexual slavery, yet her insistence that Nigeria is not an “Islamic” country reproduces Yerima’s homogenizing rhetoric about Islam. Feminist blogger Lesley Agams points out that most of the outrage is coming from “southern non Muslim” feminists and expresses her resentment that the “issues arising largely from the treatment of the Muslim girl child and woman are dominating the national gender discourse” (“#ChildNotBride Campaigns”). In her perspective, the backwards north is holding back other discussions about “access to capital to grow female led businesses, conditions at the work place, and child care for working mother.”

However, there were also protests from some northern Muslims, including those in BAOBAB and WRAPA, who worried that Islam was being exposed to ridicule by hypocritical extremists who silence more nuanced interpretations of sacred texts. Poet Gimba Kakanda wrote in his column in *Blueprint* and then circulated online, “Give religion to an idiot, and you have created a monster. [...] a fanatic is an intellectual fraud who highlights aspects of religion that celebrates the man, while he finds bliss in disregarding portions that emphasise the rights of the woman.” In one of the few articles by a northern Muslim woman on the issue,⁹ high profile lawyer Maryam Uwais carefully balanced between the uncompromising outrage of her non-Muslim feminist counterparts and the more nuanced language of Islamic jurisprudence, pointing out that the monolithic Islam claimed by Yerima (and some of his critics) does not exist:

Contrary to the position conveyed by the Senator from Zamfara, there is certainly no unanimity of positions on such contemporary matters of social interaction, within Islamic jurists or the various Schools of Thought. Surely where there is ‘silence in the texts’ (i.e. primary sources) or lack of unanimity as regards a

⁹ *Leadership* columnist Hannatu Musawa also wrote in response to the issue in her 19 July article “Stolen Lives,” and journalist Kadaria Ahmed conducted an aggressive interview with Yerima for Channels TV on 25 August 2013.

particular practice, that opening allows for a society to determine for itself what is in its best interest (maslaha), in its own context. [...]As a Muslim woman (without pretensions of scholarship) forever striving for knowledge, research into these matters has revealed that in matters of social interaction (mu'amalat), there is a lot of latitude in what is permitted, unless it is expressly prohibited by a clear text. The rules are certainly not so definitive. What is also evident is that the 'best interests of the child' is a paramount consideration within Islam, along with the principle of public good (maslaha or istislah).

Uwais's comment is in line with contemporary Islamic feminist thought such as that of Leila Ahmed, who argues that the egalitarian "ethical vision" of the Qur'an undermines the patriarchal practices outlined for the particular Arabic culture in which the prophet lived, an ethical understanding that is invoked by many contemporary lay Muslims in Egypt (63). However, as Ahmed points out, although a new generation of "modern" women and men found new roles for women, a rise in Islamist movements gave a place for conservative men to justify increased controls on women that reflect older theocratic societies (231). Despite the "ethical message that the layperson justifiably hears or reads in the Qur'an," the "Islam of the politically powerful" continues to be that form which is "intolerant of all understandings of the religion except its own, which is authoritarian, implacably androcentric, and hostile to women" (225).

As explored in the previous chapter, Muslims who advocate for behaviour that does not align with conservative authoritarian understandings are often accused of being corrupted by Westernization. During earlier nationalist movements feminism and imperialism were seen as intertwined (Mir-Hosseini, "Muslim" 639). Early 20th century Lebanese activist Nazira Zain-al-Din, who argued that women's experiences made them better interpreters of passages of the

Qur'an that dealt with women, was accused as being "an agent of western imperialism" and "spoiled by Western missionary education" (Badran, "Between" 18-19). Such attitudes have continued in later Islamist governments, political parties, and rebel groups such as Homa Hoodfar and Ana Ghoreishian describe policing women's morality in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Malaysia, and Algeria. Ahmed points out that, "Laws imposing restrictions on women and giving men increased control over 'their' women are typically among the first 'Islamic' measures' introduced by such groups upon coming to power" (*Women* 232). Controlling women's bodies through legislation on marriage, dress and mobility becomes a public way for political actors to identify with the larger Muslim *ummah*, where such movements are also taking place, and to assert difference against an imperial and "immoral West."

Similarly, in Nigeria, the institutionalization of what Mir-Hosseini and Hamzic claim is "erroneously" called "shari'a law" (xvi)¹⁰ continued transnational flows of Islamic conservatism that layered onto older patriarchal customs. While some high profile "modern" Muslim men such as Kakanda support equal opportunities in public life for women and protest the abuses of "fanatics," the language of Islamism gives conservative men the language with which to reinforce their control over women. They accuse those who argue for women's "rights" of being overly influenced by Western culture, of even undermining Islam, and they argue that women are exposed to harm when they are not under the protection of men. Ironically, as Kendhammer points out, the language of "rights" that Yerima and other Islamists in Nigeria use when proclaiming their right to practice their religion, used in first in their "right" to implement "shari'a" law in Nigeria and later in expressing their "right" to marry young girls, appropriates "the language of international human rights" (154). The protests of international human rights

¹⁰ Helie and Hoodfar similarly note the "erroneous" political use of the term "Shari'a," claiming that "Contrary to popular belief, there is no single, homogenous set of Muslim laws or practices which can be labeled shari'a; it is important to recognize the great diversity among Muslim communities and schools of law" (xiii).

activists that the rights of women and religious minorities are being violated by strict interpretations of Islamic law were skillfully countered by anti-imperialist arguments such as those made by Yerima in his 1999 speech at a rally to launch the implementation of shari'a in Zamfara State. Kendhammer points out that Yerima presented shari'a

implementation as part of a continuing struggle for Nigerian Muslims to obtain 'the freedom to exercise their full rights since the period [the North was] invaded and colonized by the British,' [...] Sharia implementation was presented as a constitutionally protected right ('freedom to worship'), one that had been denied by the very (secular) legal tradition on which the language of constitutionalism is based (127).

Yerima skillfully frames the implementation of "shari'a" law, as a corrective to the imperialist restrictions of colonialism. The same imperial powers, he argues in his later apologetics for young marriage, are attempting to impose "rights" that are odds with his freedom to practice his religion. Yerima and his followers' usage of "rights" language thus builds on and contests cosmopolitan "liberal" understandings of human rights.¹¹ The use of the girl's body in discourses of "protection," by both feminists and international human rights organizations and by men in power asserting anti-imperial rhetoric, is reminiscent of Spivak's observation that colonial rhetoric about "white men, seeking to save brown women from brown men" hardened and reinforced the patriarchal practice of widow self-immolation, by conflating the concept of *sati*, the "good wife" with self-sacrifice ("Can" 61). Extreme interpretations of women's roles become reinforced in reaction to perceived imperialism.

¹¹ "Exposure" to the West is contested with "exposure" to what is portrayed as global Islam. The written "Islamic penal code" in Nigeria followed the example of other nations that had formerly been colonized by Western powers, such as Libya, Pakistan, Iran, and Sudan (Kendhammer 139).

In the comments section of Maryam Uwais's article, men made comments like: "What authority has she to comment on something that she does not know.[...] apparently she is brainwashed by her exposure to western culture" (Umar Kabiru Yabo); or "We cant continue to ape the west. Religiously, early marriage cannot be disputed [...] we need a position or platform for the muadithun and the fuqaha to meet. Not these NGO ladies who are more of US stooges and booth leakers" (Mikail Ibn Jummaa Atolagbe); or "madam uwais is not a scholar of islam"¹² and so should not make presumptions of wat islam can or cannot allow....., furthermore a women who has little respect for her dressing and appearance by not puttin on the obligatory veil¹³ [...] stands in our presence posing herself as a helpless lover of islam!!!!!!?....., i find that most hypocritical" (isa bn dawood). On the social media network Facebook, I observed many similar instances of Muslim men lecturing the few Muslim women who dared protest, telling them that they were incorrectly interpreting the Qur'an and were overly influenced by the West, even questioning their identity as Muslims.¹⁴ Men attempt to dismiss and silence Muslim women's opinions and other dissenting voices with accusations that they are not correctly covering themselves and have been corrupted by their exposure to Western influences.¹⁵ In response to the controversy, Yerima and other male figures claiming authority wrote asserting

¹² Legal scholar Aminu Gamawa pointed out that Senator Yerima is not an Islamic scholar either ("The Stream").

¹³ The photo that accompanied the text of Maryam Uwais's article on *Omojuwa* pictured her with a headtie that covered her hair but without an accompanying veil to cover her neck and shoulders.

¹⁴ This is not to say that all Muslim women were necessarily against young marriage. One friend told me that, while she did not like young marriage between young girls and old men, it would be difficult to change young marriage in villages, where the age differences tend to be less drastic and where there is little available education for girls. Anthropologist Kathryn Rhine points out that many young girls expect and desire to get married, and even resent their parents who make them delay marriage in order to finish their education (personal communication).

¹⁵ As a female columnist in the northern Nigerian newspaper *Weekly Trust*, I myself have been the recipient of attacks that respond to my opinions with sexualized *ad hominem* attacks on my character. After foolishly referring to Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* as one of my favourite books (McCain, "20 authors"), one reader called me a "slimy whore" and a "stinking zionist beach [sic]." In response to another article in which I countered fellow columnist Aisha Umar-Yusuf's assertions that women in the Hausa film industry are prostitutes (Umar-Yusuf, "Losing"; McCain, "Chasing"), a reader wrote that since "you are a part of them [...] keep the statistics" on how many indecent moves "you have succumbed to." As I am a foreigner, such attacks probably have less impact on my family or my career, but they do give me a small idea of what northern Nigerian women face from their communities when they write on controversial matters.

that postponing marriage beyond the onset of puberty was an un-Islamic Western innovation and put young girls at risk of committing sin. Medical doctor Peregrino Brimah argued that it was actually healthier for girls to marry and give birth as teenagers than to delay marriage (“My Thoughts”). Yerima argued that in Western societies, there was a scourge of teenage pregnancies and that in the United States “they allow girls to have sex at 12, 13 years but they don’t want early girl marriage” (Abbah and Tayo 9). The “Western” example, therefore, becomes a foil by which to silence with accusations of cultural imperialism any protest coming from within.

Men’s voices like those cited above express the ideal of married life in terms of women’s place in the home under the guardianship of her father and husband. M. M. Muhd, in an online response to Gimba Kakanda’s protest against child marriage, writes

The problem with all these gender equality trash is, even the feminists do not know and are not likely to know that man and women were/are/will never be equal. NEVER! They failed woefully to see that women’s status is SUPERIOR than that of the man. In Islam, a child’s paradise is under his mother, a wife who is considered to be a Queen. The Almighty has made it mandatory that the husband caters for all her needs (Education inclusive), I mean ALL. [...] God, in His infinite mercy made nature to partition male and female in such a way that there would be division of labour: Man with masculinity, woman with beauty and fragility. Man’s ample ‘power’ to cater for her needs. Common sense! Alas, Man (in this case woman) threw away that dignity, in her bid to be equal to man she decided to lower her dignity.

According to Muhd, exposure to presumably Western feminist discourses hurts women and degrades their “superior” status. By not respecting Islamic requirements that men take care of

women, “feminists” lessen women’s access to this protection. Muhd’s interpretation is consistent with presentations in other northern Nigeria texts written by men preceding the controversy, such as popular *Weekly Trust* columnist Bala Muhammad¹⁶, who wrote on 19 May 2012, arguing that women are “trustworthy” in the “home” but become mismanagers in the “House” of Assembly: “It is time to refocus some attention to something we can trust them do: raising children. In all cultures, stocks and cash are not the first management priority of the fairer gender; it is managing the family. Instead of raising vouchers, they should be raising children. Instead of taking stock, they should be taking care” (64). In a 2009 Jos publication *Women’s Shield in Islam (Almost Everything you Need to know about the Position of a Woman in Islam)* that I bought in Kano in an Islamic bookstore and which is also sold outside mosques, Abdul-Aziz Idris Zakariyya expounded at length about a women’s “place” in Islam. While making convincing historical arguments that Islam raised the status of women¹⁷ and quoting from the Qur’an about the equality of men and women in Islam, Zakariyya goes on to argue that a woman is “weaker psychologically than men” (103) and “an easy victim [...] due to her physical and emotional make-up. She is always in need of a man to help her secure all her needs” (104). He critiques the “intellectual imperialism” of “Western” ideas that women should have “free rein to assert herself,” and “mix with men freely” (98), arguing that the “female has lost her natural position of protection in western society and is thus obliged to fight for equality with the male” (120). His presentation is in line with Yerima’s claims on Channels TV and Al Jazeera that women are not

¹⁶ Bala Muhammad maintained his influential position as back page columnist at *Weekly Trust* throughout his tenure as the head of the Kano state A Daidaita Sahu, the Societal Reorientation Directorate, a “shari’a compliant” propaganda wing for the government of Ibrahim Shekarau, from 2004 to 2011.

¹⁷ Leila Ahmed, on the other hand, notes that women on the Arabian peninsula had greater “autonomy and participation” in public life before the coming of Islam (42-63); however, while the practice of the Prophet Muhammad was to limit pre-existing freedoms, she argues that “Islam’s ethical vision, which is stubbornly egalitarian, including with respect to the sexes, is thus in tension with, and might even be said to subvert the hierarchical structure of marriage pragmatically instituted in the first Islamic society” (63).

on an equal footing with men in terms of mental maturity.¹⁸ In all of these presentations from Yerima to Muhd to Zakariyya, men present a benevolent but patronizing ideal, similar to British Victorian ideals of the home in the 19th century: Men protect women and work outside the home to provide for their families, while women raise the children inside the home. The home, in these terms, becomes a protected space for the “beauty and fragility” of a woman (Muhd)—a safe haven away from exposure to negative Western influences and immorality.

Women write back at stories of domestic bliss

Northern Nigerian women pose a whole range of responses to this idyllic patriarchal model. NGOs such as FOMWAN (Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria), BAOBAB for Women’s Human Rights, and WRAPA (Women’s Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative) frequently negotiate between the language of human rights and the language of religious obligation. Female columnists like Bilkisu Yusuf of FOMWAN and Hannatu Musawa regularly contribute women’s perspectives in English-language northern Nigerian newspapers, and there are women’s pages in Hausa papers like *Aminiya* and *Leadership Hausa*, which often serialize Hausa novels. Female columnists do not always classify themselves as “feminist,” however.¹⁹ Neither do they necessarily offer contrary opinions to dominant discourses.²⁰ *Weekly Trust* columnist Aisha Umar-Yusuf, for example, regularly takes a

¹⁸ On Al Jazeera’s “The Stream,” for example, Yerima said that, “going by scientific revelation any woman who is even more than twenty-five, thirty years of age cannot be compared to behavior of male [sic].”

¹⁹ In her classic essay, “Stiwanism: Feminism in an African Context,” Nigerian feminist Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie points out that “the public position” of FOMWAN “is that the woman has been liberated for thousands of years under the Shari’a law,” and, while they advocate for women’s rights, they distance themselves from “feminism,” which they believe is “influenced by Western white feminists, ‘abstracting the individuals from all concrete and collective bonds; pitting the individuals against institutions, relativising and trivializing the family’” (542).

²⁰ Saba Mahmood’s *Politics of Piety: the Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* respectfully explores the agency of women involved in Islamic revival movements, arguing that it is important to recognize “dimensions of human action whose ethical and political status does not map onto the logic of repression and resistance” (14). While I agree that it is important to pay attention to the agency of women who express conservative viewpoints and while

conservative viewpoint on women's affairs that seem in line with those offered by Zakariyya. In May 2012, about the same time as Bala Muhammad's article on how women should stay out of the House of Assembly, she wrote a two-week column putting forth "proofs against woman's overall leadership" ("Other" 49). She challenged Moroccan feminist Fatima Mernissi's critique of the authenticity of a hadith that said, "Any nation that makes a woman its ruler shall never prosper," arguing that Mernissi "is not qualified to be counted among even ordinary conscious Muslims let alone Islamic scholars" ("Re: Who" 50). The anonymously-written fictional series "Al-Bint's Diary" in *Weekly Trust* features the life of a matron who regularly gives pithy advice to other women about marital woes and raising children, sometimes challenging men, but more often placing the onus for solving the problems of the home on women themselves.

Novels by women have a similar range, from reinforcing to challenging patriarchal norms, sometimes doing both in the same text. Halimat Abolusawu-Sekula critiques five English-language novels by northern women writers for glorifying "insipid stereotypes of women prepared for them by the existing male literary hegemony," such as women as meek, "submissive and uncomplaining" (46-47). Such stereotypes populate Hausa fiction by women as well. Habiba Abdullahi Makarfi and Novian Whitsitt both in their analyses of novels by the popular author Bilkisu Salisu Ahmed Funtua point out that while her novels appeal to the everyday issues that face women, they uphold "the dominant ideology" (Makarfi 41). Funtua demonstrates the unhappiness of first wives when their husbands bring in immoral second wives, but places the onus for unhappy marriages on women for being ungracious to their co-wives or not trying hard enough to make their husbands happy. Such narratives, Whitsitt points out,

Mahmood's theory could be applied to a fascinating study on conservative women's voices in columns like Aisha Umar-Yusuf's "Another Dimension" and "Al-Bint's Diary," such a study does not fall under the purview of my focus on exposure in this dissertation. Mahmood wants to look beyond discourses of resistance and subversion, but it is these very discourses that most fascinate me in Hausa novels and films.

reinforce patriarchal ideals about the woman being subservient to her husband, yet still cautiously challenge the status quo by pushing for women's education. According to Whitsitt, Funtuwa²¹ “offers suggestions on how to cope with” the “living reality” of Hausa women's experiences—promoting passionate love between husband and wife as one way to solve problems of discord, even within polygamous households.

In her estimation, women are responsible for their own emotional misery when they give into feelings of self-absorption and jealousy. With the proper attributes of religious faith, maturity, and tender affection toward their husbands, women can find happiness in the midst of a polygamous reality. However, such a conservative stance does not preclude Bilkisu Funtuwa's overt support for female education, a belief that confronts traditional attitudes. (“Islamic-Hausa Feminism Meets” 143-144)

Funtuwa's novels fit more into the narrative provided by Zakariyya, who advocates for women's education and even careers outside the home but prioritizes their place in the home, maintaining that there are essential differences in the psychological makeup of men and women.

The novels of Balaraba Ramat Yakubu, which Whitsitt contrasts with Funtuwa's novels and which I will focus on below, are harsher and angrier, presenting the less-than-ideal realities of many homes from the perspective of wife and daughter. Yakubu was writing and publishing her novels at least ten years before the implementation of shari'a law in northern Nigeria, but they continue to be relevant to contemporary discussions about child marriage and women's roles in the home. While proudly proclaiming her identity as a Muslim writer, she argues, as Whitsitt has observed, that a patriarchal Hausa culture has corrupted and departed from Islamic

²¹ The differences in spelling of Bilkisu Ahmed Funtua's name come from variant spellings on the covers of novels. The last name actually refers to the city where she lives—a common naming practice among the Hausa.

ideals. She points out that there is a difference between customs and religion. In a 2008 interview with Akintayo Abodunrin, she argues: “We are Muslims and we have rules in Islam for marriage and so on. But sometimes, our culture dominates the religious dictates and culture and religion are different. So, I fight because I want to stress that culture and religion are different. Probably that is why I’m called a controversial writer.” She claims that in her novels, she educates women about “what is demanded by religion and what is a matter of customs that can be changed” (qtd. in Furniss and Adamu 108). Even where her female characters are meek and patient, she highlights the ironies of a male-dominated society that treat a woman well only when she is submissive. In following sections, I examine how her novels challenge the “noble” ideals of marriage, with contextual details of dysfunctional homes as seen by women in them. Ultimately, the narratives I explore offer alternative models that, as Whitsitt points out in his explication of *ijtihad* (Qur’anic reinterpretation based on the context in which one lives), situate themselves as being more valid interpretations of sacred texts than the patriarchal “cultural” models proposed by the men in the first section of this chapter.

In Yakubu’s 1990 two-part novel *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?* set between the village of Gamaji and the city of Kano, with brief detours to London and Lagos, the thirteen-year-old protagonist Abu (who changes her name to Zainab in the second part of the novel) is treated as an object to assuage the pride of several men. Although she loves school and reading books, her father takes her out of school when her Qur’anic teacher comes by to advise him to remove her because, “in Islamic law, it’s not appropriate girl to allow a full grown girl to roam about.”²² Abu’s body has betrayed her. “Her breasts filled her chest” (1)²³, and it is not possible to hide the fact that she

²² “Lokacin da Abu ta cika izifi na talatin, sai malaminsu ya ga cewa, a matsayinsa na malaminta, ya kamata ya yi wa ubanta magana don a yi hanzarin kawar da ita, don kuwa a shari’ar Musulunci, bai yi daidai ba, a bar cikakkiyar burdurwa a waje” (2).

²³ “Ga dai nono ya cika k’irji” (1).

has physically matured. Her father is embarrassed because, “he knew that if one man will say something to his face, no doubt ten are talking behind his back” (*Wa 1 2*).²⁴ Yet taking her out of school, as her Islamic teacher suggests, is not in line with presentations of the Islamic ideal. While Zakariyya notes that women are exhorted to seek religious education and that women had attended the teaching sessions of the Prophet (91-92), Abu’s education is halted after she learns only thirty of the sixty *izafi* of the Qur’an in order for her father to be spared embarrassment in face of the social pressures of other men in the village.²⁵ As Whitsitt observes about the incident, “Behind closed doors becomes the only respectable place for a female of marriageable age” (“Islamic Hausa Feminism and” 131). The secrets of her maturing body must be hidden in her father’s or her husband’s house.

Although the solution to this “problem” is marriage to her cousin Amadu, whom she has grown up knowing she would marry and with whom she is very much in love, Amadu rebuffs her for a more sophisticated city woman once he goes to Kano for university, telling her he will not marry an “uneducated woman.” Abu’s father, Malam Garba, humiliated by Amadu’s rejection of his daughter on the eve of the formal marriage ceremony and not wanting to be embarrassed in front of the community by his “full-grown” daughter’s unmarried state, determines to give her to the first suitor who comes along. Sarkin Noma, a local aristocrat,²⁶ has already expressed an interest, so upon Amadu’s rejection, in an attempt to save face in front of

²⁴ “*Amma da ya ga mutane daga waje sun fara maganar, sai hankalinsa ya tashi, don ya san in mutum d’aya ya fad’i magana a gabansa, to ba shakka, goma sun fad’a a bayansa, ko bayan idonsa*” (2).

²⁵ The text literally says, “When Abu finished 30 *izafi*, their teacher saw that it was his responsibility as her teacher to talk to her father about quickly removing her [from school], because in Islamic law, it’s not appropriate to leave a full grown girl to roam about” (2). According to Bargery, an “*izafi*,” is “one of the 60 equal portions of the Koran” (483). Therefore, Abu was being withdrawn from Qur’anic school when she had completed only half of her Qur’anic memorization. It may be usual for women to be withdrawn at this stage and the ideal is that a woman would continue her education in her husband’s house—Yerima claimed in the Al Jazeera “The Stream” panel that he was attracted to the Egyptian girl he married at 14 because of her “religion” and that she had memorized 40 *izaf* of the Qur’an. Nevertheless, the ideal is not always followed. The novel makes clear that Abu is denied the educational opportunity that boys have.

²⁶ The name Sarkin Noma literally means the king of farming or the “Chief farmer” (Danfulani 420). Yakubu told me that it was an aristocratic title given to wealthy men who owned many farms (personal communication.)

the community, Malam Garba gives Abu to Sarkin Noma as his wife only a few weeks after her intended marriage to Amadu. The fifty-two year old Sarkin Noma's initial interest in Abu, before he even meets her, is to add her as a fourth and final wife to subdue his three other quarrelling wives. Such use of marriage as a ploy to tame other wives is pointed out in Yakubu's other novels, such as in *Sin is a Puppy...* when Alhaji Abubakar, tired of the quarrelling between his wives, has the "idea of taking a third wife, who might bring the first two wives to their senses" (*Sin* 49). The identity of the bride initially matters less to these characters than her role as a disciplinary measure on the home, and that is the purpose with which Sarkin Noma initially courts Abu. But when, during his courtship visits, a heart-broken Abu makes it abundantly clear that his presence disgusts her, Sarkin Noma, whose own eldest daughter is four years older than Abu, becomes determined to marry her in order to assert his control over the stubborn girl, telling her, "Abu, no matter how much rejection you show me, I will still marry you" (*Wa* 1 98).²⁷ In the first part of the novel, Abu's fate is dependent on men's pride and determination to show their control over their families. Each man departs from the Islamic ideal, Amadu in being seduced by the Western-style culture in Kano, breaking his promise to marry Abu, and chasing a less than virtuous non-Muslim woman; Malam Garba in forcing his daughter to marry a man she doesn't like, against hadith that specify that a girl must not be married against her will ("Can a woman be forced"; Dawud, Book V, Chapter 690, 2088); and Sarkin Noma in showing favoritism to his wives and behaving violently towards Abu when she arrives in his home.

Abu's mother and her aunt both openly oppose the marriage, the more sophisticated city aunt, Hajiya Kumatu, repeating that "it is no longer done these days" (*Wa* 1 119, 135);²⁸

²⁷ "Abu duk k'iyayyar da za ki nuna mini, sai na aure ki" (98).

²⁸ Hajiya Kumatu's claim, "Ai, an daina yin wannan yanzu" (135), that forced marriage is in opposition to "civilized" modern life is one that is often made. In a 2001 *Weekly Trust* article about a 13-year-old girl who had run away from her husband's house, a man who had taken her into his family, "expressed surprise that some Nigerians

however, men's assertions about the ideal of marriage override their own. Malam Garba presumes he knows best for his daughter. Ignoring Abu's wails and his wife and sister's protests, he twice beats Abu for her stubbornness, before the wedding party and when she runs home after a night in her husband's home. To both men and women who protest his forcing his daughter to marry, he tells them that every girl is afraid to go to her husband's house but that she would be happy enough once she was there (118, 136). Acting from this same paradigm, Sarkin Noma arrogantly presumes that his bride will become overwhelmed with love for him once he subdues her sexually. After beating and raping her during a horrifying night-long struggle on the second night after she is brought to his house (after she runs away on the second day), he tells her, "I swear, Abu, there's never been another woman that I love so madly, even before I met you. Stop crying, and rest yourself. I promise you, Abu, anything you want, I'll do for you, no matter what it is. Now what is happier than this? See how I've found you a virgin. No one has known you except for me. Ai, this is a thing you can boast of" (141).²⁹ Both Malam Garba and Sarkin Noma presume women don't know their own minds and that once they are convinced by their fathers and husbands of the right thing to do, that they will settle down happily into the home. The assumption is that the happiness and pride of the woman should come in the pleasure she brings to the men in her life and the virginity she brings to her marriage. Her primary value as a bride, here, comes from her intact hymen and not from any active achievement of her own.

are still practicing forced marriage despite the in-roads of civilization. He observed with concern that unless such acts are stopped forthwith, our youths especially girls would continue to drift into lawlessness and immorality" (El-Hafiz 26). This rhetoric counters the sort being used in the first part of the chapter. While Yerima and his cohorts argue that young marriage (to an old man or whomever else her parents find appropriate) will protect girls from exposure to "lawlessness and immorality," Yakubu through her fiction and the good Samaritan in this article argue that forced marriage of the young will force girls into the precise vices that marriage is supposed to protect against.

²⁹"Wallahi Abu babu wata matar da nake jarabar so, tun kafin ma in sadu da ita irinki. Ki daina kuka, ki saki ranki. Na yi miki alk'awari Abu, duk abin da kike so, zan yi miki ko mene ne. Yanzu me ya fi wannan dad'i? Ga shi na same ki cikakkiyar budurwa. Babu wanda ya san ki 'ya mace in ba ni ba. Ai wannan abin ki yi alfahari da shi ne" (141).

There are many hadith that seem to forbid marrying a girl without her consent, such as Abu Huraira's report of the Prophet's words, "A woman without a husband (or divorced or a widow) must not be married until she is consulted, and a virgin must not be married until her permission is sought" (Kitab-Al-Nikah, Book 8, Number 3303). Similarly, the Prophet's wife A'isha asked him if it was necessary to consult a virgin, "whose marriage is solemnized by her guardian," and he said, "'Yes, she must be consulted.' Aisha reported: I told him that she feels shy, whereupon Allah's Messenger (May peace be upon him) said: Her silence implies her consent" (Kitab-Al-Nikah, Book 8, Number 3305). Another hadith reads: "An orphan virgin girl should be consulted about herself; if she says nothing, that indicates her permission, but if she refuses, the authority of the guardian cannot be exercised against her will" (Dawud, Book V, Chapter 690, Number 2088); however, much of the controversy about soyayya novels was in the challenge these novels often gave to forced marriage, which was interpreted by the society as acceptable within Islam. Mir-Hosseini and Hamzic point out that in Nigeria, the custom of *ijbar*, acceptable within the Maliki Law most often followed in Nigerian shari'a courts, "gives a father the 'right' to control the marriage of a never-married daughter" (120). In his discussion of Yakubu's novel *Ina Son Sa Haka*, Abdalla Uba Adamu explains that her:

exploration of forced marriage does not follow the Islamic religious orthodoxy that sees such marriages as permissible on the assumption that since the girl (and as interpreted by some Muslim Hausa who enforce such practices almost always the girl, never the boy) is too young to understand her mind, the parents have the right to force her to marry the person they want, not the person she wants. A strong assumption behind such forced marriages is that the girl does not have to be happy; even if she doesn't love the enforced husband, it is believed that she

will get used to him with time. Clearly in such situations, love and happiness of the girl (and perhaps of the husband) are secondary to the enforcement of parental authority and saving face, especially if the father of the bride had promised her to either his friend, or the son of his friend. Her refusal, therefore, is not an option. (“Parallel Worlds” 2).

This is the public story of marriage told by many men in northern Nigeria, even up to today, as is so blatantly illustrated by Yerima and his cohorts: The man knows best for the woman, and the best and safest place for a young girl is her husband’s house. By contrast, Yakubu exposes Abu’s side of the story and the horror that a thirteen-year-old girl faces in her fifty-two-year-old husband’s house. When the news comes to Abu’s home only two days after she has been taken to Sarkin Noma’s house that she has been found a virgin, Abu’s aunt, Hajiya Kumatu, voices her displeasure that the old man has so quickly initiated her into sexual intercourse: “So quickly, like a tricky mosquito? He wouldn’t leave her alone for a few days? [...] He has no shame, immediately letting loose on the girl as if she is an old divorcee” (*Wa* 157).³⁰ The novel collects the dissatisfaction and outrage expressed among women in the home and brings them into the public arena, where they can compete with the patriarchal narrative about a father’s or husband’s authority as being more important than a girl’s happiness.³¹

Yakubu moves beyond the indirect fictional representation of this unhappiness to sermonize directly to her readers. In the preface to the second part of the novel, she directly challenges parents who force their daughters to marry men they don’t like. Her preface to part two of the novel ironically undermines the preface of part one, which was written by Garba

³⁰ “Hajiya Kumatu ta ce, ‘Da wurwuri kenan gayyar sauro. Shi ko bari ba zai yi, ta yi ‘yan kwanaki ba? [...] Shi ko kunya ma ba ya ji, jiya-jiya da bud’ar kan yarinya, sai ka ce wata bazawara?’”(157).

³¹ Rahma Abdul Majid’s massive novel *Mace Mutum*, published in 2006, also takes on this issue of child marriage, in which a 14-year-old girl is given away to an old itinerant teacher and dies in childbirth.

Shehu Gaya (Sultan), from the Department of Children's Welfare in the Kano State Ministry of Health. His preface was perhaps solicited in an attempt to make the book more publicly acceptable to a wider, more educated readership, but either he misses much of what Yakubu was trying to do in the novel or he tries to neutralize her radical suggestions by giving them a conservative spin. He points out that one of the issues in the novel is that of disobedience to parents, and he exhorts readers to follow "the directions of one's parents no matter what they say unless it is to go against the path of God" (ix).³² He points out that Amadu did not obey his parents in the matter of marriage to Abu and that's why he found himself regretting what he had done. He conveniently ignores how Abu's father forced her into marriage with another man old enough to be her father, and it was her flight from her father's direction that saved her life. The second issue he points out is the problem of lack of education that causes Amadu to reject Abu. But again, he does not mention that Abu's lack of education is actually her father's fault, as he did not allow her to continue with her schooling.

Yakubu's introduction to part two of the novel can be read as a response to Gaya's interpretation in the introduction of part one. She starts out abruptly with the statement, "The reason I wrote this book is to make people aware of the dangers of forced marriage and what can happen when you marry a girl to a husband she does not like." She elaborates on this beginning in the second paragraph, including a plea to parents "For the sake of God and his Prophet, they should try to give their daughters the sort of husbands that they like, as long as they don't go against the ideology of Islam" (ix).³³

³² "Mawallafiyar ta sarrafa labarinta ne ta yadda zai dad'a jawo hankalin matasa akan bin umarnin iyayensu a kowane hali suka sami kansu, har dai idan bai sabawa tafarkin Allah ba" (ix).

³³ "Shi dai wannan littafi na rubuta shi ne saboda wayar da kan Jama'a game da yiwa 'ya'yanmu mata auren dole, da irin illar da ke tattare da bai wa yarinya mijin da ba ta so." "don Allah don Annabinsa, su yi k'ok'ari su bai wa 'ya'yansu mata irin mazan da suke so, in dai ba a sab'a wa ak'idar musulunci ba" (ix).

While Gaya focuses on the lesson to children on how they shouldn't disobey their parents, "unless it is to go against the path of God," Yakubu reverses the direction of authority by making it a lesson for parents. She appeals directly to parents not to frustrate and ruin the lives of their children, taking nearly the same phrase, "as long as it doesn't go against the ideology of Islam." She skillfully demonstrates, therefore, how to use similar words and recourse to religion to argue an almost opposite perspective from that of the reigning patriarchy.

To further claim authority for her public challenges to accepted norms in society, she has often spoken about how some of her novels are based on actual experiences (Abodunrin). Her challenge to parental figures is therefore not an abstract feminism learned from outside but an intensely personal response to what she has gone through.³⁴ Her description of Abu's experience is partially based on her own life. She, herself, was withdrawn from school in primary 4 and married at age twelve to a forty-eight year old man. In a short narrative autobiography on the online platform *Gumel*, she describes how her brother Murtala Mohammad, who eventually became the military head of state but was assassinated shortly thereafter, tried to intervene, but their father told him, "If Balaraba was a boy, she could mingle with men and I wouldn't worry, but since she is a girl, her secrets will be kept, as God has ordained, in her husband's house."³⁵ The marriage lasted for a little over a year. She describes how, although she was supposed to be in strict purdah, she would wander out to play dolls with other children in the street. Her husband divorced her when she was thirteen because she was too young and didn't have the "sense for married life." Married again at fourteen, she was divorced at fifteen, this time with a son: "I

³⁴ She told me in an interview that she didn't know much about feminism or womanism, the theoretical frames that have been used by Whitsitt and Adamu to analyze her novels, but she is just seeing the situation that people are in and reacting to that (Interview, 23 March 2009). "Ni na k'asa gane womanism da feminism. Ban gane shi ba. Kin gane? Ina gani halin da mutum yake ciki shi yak e jawo mutum ya dauka kowani fani ya rike, kin gane?"

³⁵ "Da Balaraba namiji ce sai tayi ta cudanya da maza bazan damu ba, amma tunda macece rufin asirin ta har ga Allah shine gidan mijin ta." (Yakubu, "Hajiya Balaraba Ramat Yakubu").

returned home with my son to stay with my parents. If he was naughty, he would be loudly scolded, and me too, his mother, since I was a young girl, I would be scolded too. I can say that this was the time I started becoming a woman since I can remember that it was that time that I started being able to do every kind of work in the house.”³⁶ Eventually, with her mother’s encouragement, she attended adult education classes. Once she learned to read and write in roman script, she began to use her writing ability to subversively undermine the patriarchal structures that had caused her so much suffering.

Her novels publicly air the problems she faced as a child and stories she has heard from other women. These women’s secrets are no longer hidden in their husband’s houses but exposed for the entire society to see. Hajiya Balaraba told me that she preferred to focus on “exposing the problems in the house.” She was disappointed with the film adaptation of her novel *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne*, because instead of spending much time showing the problems the wife Rabi faced in her home, the filmmakers instead focused on the sensational antics of the second wife, the old prostitute Delu (Interview, 5 August 2006). Focusing on this conduct exposed sins in the home but not ones that would make the viewer as sympathetic to the plight of most women. I will discuss how films use sensationalism ostensibly to teach but also to entertain in my next chapter.

Women’s Secrets, Exposing Corruption in the Home

So far, I have discussed how Yakubu exposes the traumas women face in the home that are acceptable in patriarchal discourse. Although Abu’s father and husband assume that the girl will grow used to her marital home, Yakubu challenges these male assumptions with emotional appeals exposing the feelings and experiences of a young girl in a forced marriage. She invites

³⁶ “Na dawo gida na zauna ni da dana a gaban iyayen na, in ya yi abin kuruciya a yi masa fada da tsawa, nima uwarsa tunda nima yarinyar ce haka za’a yimini fadan. Zan iya cewa a wannan lokacin ne na fara zama mutum don zan iya tunawa a lokacin na fara iya kowanne irin aiki na gida” (Yakubu, “Hajiya Balaraba Ramat Yakubu”).

the reader, whether male or female, to inhabit the body of Abu and experience the way she is being treated. She warns against accepted practices by presenting the voice of the subaltern married young. But her novels also challenge narratives about the safety of the home by exposing sin and unacceptable abuses that take place in the home.

Yakubu's *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?*, like Lola Shoneyin's 2010 English-language novel *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*, slyly points out that while men may claim to be lords and masters in their homes, they don't actually know everything that is going on in the home. The home is not always a place that protects a woman's virtue. Sarkin Noma's third wife Tasalla has been unhappy in his home since their wedding night when Sarkin Noma discovers that she was not a virgin when she came to the marriage. Sarkin Noma treats her badly and only sleeps with her when his other two wives travel. When, after a quarrel with one of the other wives, she tells him she wants a divorce, he reminds her of how they have guarded the secret of how she came to the home without her virginity. She angrily retorts by exposing the secrets of his home to him: "I hear you, I didn't come to your house as a virgin, but, you know, I'm not the first one. Your first daughter even had an abortion before she was married. If you don't know, today I have told you" (106).³⁷ The episode, as does Shoneyin's novel, illustrates that though men may speak for how the home guards the honour of the woman, a man in a polygynous home really does not know what is happening in the home. The home may indeed be a place where corruption and vice are hidden. The novel like Tasalla's story exposes these secrets on a broader scale.

While readers of Yakubu's novels often tell me that *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?*, with its happy ending, is their favourite of Yakubu's novels, Yakubu's other novels, most of them more muckraking and satirical, similarly describe the miseries of polygamous homes headed by

³⁷ "Na ji, na zo gidanka ba budurwa ba, amma ai kan san ba a kaina aka fara ba. 'Yarka ta fari ai sai da aka zubar mata da ciki, sannan aka aurar da ita. Idan ba ka sani ba, yau na gaya maka" (106)

womanizing patriarchs who use the privacy of the home to hide their own bad behaviour. While Sarkin Noma is not aware of the secrets his wives keep from him about his daughter's waywardness, in the next two novels I will discuss, *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne* and *Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare Ba?*, husbands expect their wives to keep secret their neglect, vice, and abuse.

In her novel *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne*, translated as *Sin is a Puppy...* by Aliyu Kamal—the first, and so far only, Hausa novel written by a woman to ever be translated³⁸—Yakubu describes the misery of Rabi, a woman married to a stingy womanizing husband Alhaji Abdu, who spends all his money on prostitutes and gives her only a paltry sum each week with which to feed, clothe, and school her nine children.³⁹ (She also takes care of his daughter from another marriage.) She supplements this pittance with cooking and selling food, which children come into the house to deliver to customers. When Rabi quarrels with Alhaji Abdu's second wife, Delu, an old prostitute, and he divorces Rabi, she experiences, for the first time since her marriage, happiness and freedom, as she begins to provide for herself without having to worry about his oversight. The novel describes the sweet feelings of revenge Rabi feels when she hears that Alhaji Abdu's second wife was caught in bed with another man and that Alhaji has lost almost everything he owned in a market fire. However, by the end of the novel, her brothers, who had supported her when Alhaji Abdu treated her badly, end up reversing their loyalties, supporting her husband when he begs her to come back to him. The wealthy but controlling son-in-law she had encouraged her daughter to marry, who had only recently divorced two other wives because they were not submissive enough, leads her brothers in forcing her back into the

³⁸ Ibrahim Malumfashi is currently translating Rahma Abdul Majid's novel *Mace Mutum* and published the first chapter of his translation in the translation journal *Words without Borders* in October 2013.

³⁹ Rabi is in a similar position to the long-suffering first wife, Asma'u, of a similarly womanizing man in Yakubu's first novel *Budurwar Zuciya*. While Asma'u takes care of his household and raises the children, Alhaji Usman regularly marries and divorces young girls once he is tired of them, while still finding time to visit prostitutes. Alhaji Usman's sins revisit him when he finds his son sleeping with his bride. The son had been in love with her before she was forced by her parents to marry his generous father.

marriage. Rabi “felt like a young girl in a forced marriage,” but under the pressure of these men, she eventually “gave in,” and goes back to a man she hates and who has nothing to offer to the marriage except his symbolic presence as a husband (125-126). Unlike the eventual happy ending of *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?* that I will discuss later, this novel leaves readers with a profound sense of dis-ease. The marriage is maintained, but it is not a happy one. The narrative moves beyond demonstrating the unhappiness of girls in socially acceptable forced marriages to demonstrate the unacceptable neglect and womanizing of a selfish and sinful husband.

Yakubu includes descriptions of physical abuse in many of her novels. Abu in *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?* is beaten by her father when she tries to refuse marriage to an old man and is raped when she resists the sexual advances of her much older husband. Alhaji Abdu, in *Sin is a Puppy...*, neglects Rabi, refusing to give her enough money to feed and clothe her children, and slapping her when she quarrels with his second wife. In another of her novels *Ina Son Sa Haka*, the heroine Fatima, like Abu, is beaten by both her husband and her father and raped by her husband. Even the wealthy, handsome Alhaji Abubakar, who marries Rabi’s daughter Saudatu in *Sin is a Puppy...*, beats and kicks his second wife Halima for slapping his new wife and showing him disrespect (96). But the novel that shows the most egregious abuse is Yakubu’s novel *Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare Ba?*. The proverbial title, *Is the Man a Dog or just an Outcast?*, ironically questions the acceptability that egregious sinners, who put on a pious front, have in society.

Yakubu acerbically juxtaposes the public perception of the stupendously wealthy Alhaji Gagarau and the private reality of his life. Outwardly, he is a pious and generous Muslim, giving alms, and sharing his wealth among the community and his relatives. “Alhaji Gagarau was a man of good deeds, he gave alms and was religious. The people in the neighbourhood missed him badly because of the good will he had planted among them. Every Sallah he would slaughter a

cow and distribute the meat among his neighbours” (6).⁴⁰ He also distributed clothing and money in the community. However, despite this generous exterior, privately he is a manipulative sexual predator. Before his first marriage, he molests his sisters and nieces. After his marriage, he begins to sexually abuse his neighbour’s daughters, his wives’ sisters and his own daughters. Finally, when his sons marry, he sleeps with all of their wives. As the novel describes (and the title implies), he is not a human but an animal—a dog and an “old goat.” His third wife Hajiya Asabe bitterly abuses him, “Bastard, Kaffir, if you were slaughtered, your flesh would be halal to eat,” implying that he has become a complete animal: “I won’t live with a he-goat. You don’t respect your daughters or your sisters, let alone your daughters-in-law, you dirty old goat” (30).⁴¹ As opposed to public rhetoric about the home being a safe place for daughters and wives to protect their virtue, the home with this sort of father and husband is dangerous.

Public Secrets and Exposé on the Judgment Day

Throughout the novel, Alhaji Gagarau is obsessed with keeping his depravity secret. He is certain that with his wealth, he can keep his secrets from being exposed. And for a while he is successful. When his son Habu marries his neighbour’s daughter Hauwa, with whom Alhaji Gagarau has been sleeping for years, he gives Habu a new car and convinces him not to expose her lack of virginity, so as to keep the good relationship with their neighbor. Habu has no idea that it is his own father who has deflowered his wife (she tells him a teacher raped her), or that his father rapes his wife again after the marriage, finally convincing her to continue the affair.

⁴⁰ “Alhaji Gagarau mutum ne mai alheri, ga sadaka ga kuma addini, domin kuwa mutanen unguwar da ya taso sun yi ta fama da begensa saboda alherin da yake shuka musu, don kowacce Sallah sai ya yanka sa guda domin yin sadaka a unguwar.”

⁴¹ “Shege, kafiri wanda in aka yanka namanka yanzu halak ne a ci [...] ba zan zauna da bunsuru ba, ba ka da ‘ya ba ka da k’anwa balle suruka baza d’an akuya” (30).

Although his sons seem oblivious to their father's incestuous promiscuity let alone that he is sleeping with most of their wives, most of the women of the house know what is going on. His third wife, Hajiya Asabe, sends her eldest daughter to live elsewhere to keep her away from her father, and tells Alhaji Gagarau to his face that she knows that his daughter-in-law Hauwa's son is his, "There's not one of your daughters here whose room you haven't entered, as if you were a gamadidi bug, you don't even leave your daughters be, let alone your daughters-in-law. Wallahi, watch out for the afterlife. May God keep us safe" (27).⁴² When Hajiya Asabe reveals to the second wife Hajiya Gambo, who knew that he was sleeping with the first wife's daughters but not her own, that he has been sleeping with her son Habu's wife, the wives gang up on Alhaji Gagarau and beat him up, telling him that they will not release him until he confesses which of their children he has been molesting. He begs them for forgiveness, promises them he will never do it again, and convinces them to keep his secret because their children will be disgraced if the word leaks out of the home. Unfortunately, his promises mean nothing, and their private beating does not stop his molestation. With his secret "safe," he continues in his wicked ways.

Yet despite Alhaji Gagarau's conviction that he has been able to keep his depravity a secret, there are rumours in the community that he is molesting his daughters. His wife Hajiya Asabe tells him, "...there's no one who sleeps and wakes in this house who doesn't know what's going on between you and your daughters, or do you think that there is not a soul who knows what you are doing? (29)"⁴³ His son-in-law Alhaji Uba who has married his eldest daughter Yalwa had even heard such rumours before he married her but had dismissed them as malicious

⁴² "...duk matan ya'yan nan naka babu wacce ba ka shiga d'akinta ba sai ka ce gamad'id'i, ba ka bar 'ya'yanka mata ba balle kuma surukai ai wallahi, lahirarka da kallo, Allah ya yi mana tsari" (27).

⁴³ "...duk mutumin da ya kwana ya tashi a gidan nan babu wanda bai san tsakaninka da 'ya'yanka mata ba ko kana zaton cewa duk abin da kake yi ba wanda ya sani ne? (29)"

gossip. When he spots her behaving suspiciously, lying about injuries on her body, however, he begins to recall what he had heard.

In *Sin is a Puppy...*, Alhaji Abdu similarly blames “Rabi for discussing their private matters with the neighbours. No one would know of the conditions in which he kept his family if she had not told them” (8), he believes. However, Yakubu makes it clear that Alhaji Abdu’s blame of his wife for exposing his neglect is ironic, since the neighbours “could hear everything that was said in the house—a fact that the neighbours were clearly not very happy about” (2). Whenever Rabi “tried to complain to Alhaji Abdu about the family’s plight it led to an awful shouting match that all the neighbours could hear” (4). Her family is also aware of how badly he treats her, since they have taken up much of the burden of supporting her, but they “knew she had too many children to walk out on her husband” (5). Clearly, although Alhaji Abdu’s abuse happens in the home, people outside of the home are aware of it.

Similarly, although Alhaji Abdu’s second wife the old prostitute Delu warns her lover the electrician Jatau to be careful when he comes into the house so that their secret is not exposed,

Delu’s warning came too late. A roadside trader [...] had noticed that the electrician always seemed to visit while the head of the household was out. It had happened enough times that he had a pretty good idea what was going on between the youth and housewife. The trader never thought of telling Alhaji Abdu about it; instead he just prayed that the man would come home early one day and find out for himself. (91)

Yakubu demonstrates that there are many “public secrets,” about which people gossip but which are rarely officially exposed. Although sinners may think they can hide their hypocrisy and some

are successful, she regularly invokes Allah who is a “Witness” (*Alhaki ix*)⁴⁴ and the “day of judgment” (*Sin 5*), when the sins of hypocrites and unbelievers will be exposed. Her novels question the value of “secrecy” that permeates Hausa society and imply that if sins were more publicly discussed that it would be more difficult for abusers to victimize so many children and women in the home and get away with their sins.

Her novels themselves fictionally follow the template of Judgment Day described in the Qur’an, exposing sins that have inscribed themselves on the body of the sinners. But since she is exposing things that are currently happening in life, there is the implication that people still have time to repent before the final day of judgment. The public exposé of sins in these novels becomes a cathartic moment of release when the community is finally able to talk openly about what has secretly been observed. In *Sin is a Puppy...*, Alhaji Abdu grows suspicious when he comes home from the hospital and Delu refuses to open her door. Calling four of his neighbours, the legal number of witnesses for testifying to adultery according to Surah 24:4 of the *Qur’an*, he catches Delu with the electrician in her room, and the sins that the trader had known about are publicly exposed to the community. The exposure of these sins not only shames Delu, who had been similarly caught with a lover in a previous marriage, but also compounds the punishment Alhaji Abdu receives for his earlier sins against Rabi and her children. His shop is burned down in a market fire, his car filled with all of his clothing that he had taken to the launderer is stolen, and finally he is publicly cuckolded by his second wife for whom he had rejected his entire family. He is so traumatized by losing all his possessions and so ashamed when he discovers Delu’s betrayal that he never again regains his physical, psychological, or economic potency. When Rabi hears of his public disgrace she celebrates it as “divine retribution for the entire

⁴⁴ Kamal’s translation correctly translates Yakubu’s word “Shahidi” as witness, but he takes it out of her quotation marks and reduces the capital letter to a small letter (*Sin viii*). In the original, Yakubu places great emphasis on the word witness, by putting it in quotation marks and capitalizing it, thus “Witness” (*Alhaki ix*).

world to see” (112). The end of the novel, which sees Rabi reluctantly back together with Alhaji Abdu but now the “head of the household,” ends bitterly: “Alhaji Abdu’s new life was something like the life of a dog in paradise: no trouble, but not much joy. Still, the Almighty had at last made it possible for him to know and seek the truth, and to turn away from falsehood” (127).

Kamal’s translation makes for a pleasing literary ending for the English-language reader, but he puts into third person description what is a first person plural prayer and appeal to audience at the end of Yakubu’s novel in Hausa. The sentences following the observation about Alhaji Abdu’s life being like a dog in paradise, reads in my own, less literary and more literal, translation as follows: “We should beg Almighty Allah, the Ruler of All, to give us the power to understand the truth and give us the power to follow it. May he show us what falsehood is, and give us the discipline to avoid it. Amin” (172).⁴⁵ The novel thus ends with a moral judgment that emphasizes the point made in the introduction to her novel about God’s judgment occurring in this life as well as in the hereafter. The novels themselves, like the moments of exposure within them, become symbolic exposés that open up these issues from the space of the story to public discussion in the world of the reader. Yakubu positions her novel as having a didactic purpose that answers her own prayer. It shows the false path that sinners have taken and calls on her readers to avoid it. Her purpose is made more obvious by the direct appeal to the audience in both the introduction, self-reflexive authorial intrusions throughout the novel, and in the final few sentences of the novel.

In the introduction to *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne*, Yakubu makes an argument that contrasts her interpretation of a just and loving God with how religion is being abused by “worthless men.”

⁴⁵ “Sai dai mu rok’i Allah Mad’aukakin Sarki ya ba mu ikon gane gaskiya, gaskiya ce, ya ba mu ikon bin ta. Ya nuna mana k’arya k’arya ce, ya ba mu ikon kauce mata. Amin.”

Opening with a prayer of thanks to God who gave her the strength to publish her book,⁴⁶ she goes on to point out that there are men in every corner of Nigeria who regard “a married woman with children as a sort of slave to be bought or sold at the marketplace” and treat them “as poorly as they like, since they believe her to be completely worthless.” This behaviour, she argues, contrasts with “the hadith of Prophet Muhammad: ‘Allah will bless the efforts of those charged with the divine responsibility of caring for others.’” Such men, she argues “clearly never spare a thought for the hereafter, or else they would not perpetrate their evil deeds,” pointing out that some men are so “irreverent” that they ignore all admonishment “by saying that the hereafter won’t come any time soon” (*Sin...* vii). As opposed to the use “of the hadith that says that a woman’s salvation is tied up with that of her husband,” she argues that “it is not only in the hereafter that Allah deals with men like this. Allah deals with each person as his or her own deeds warrant” (viii). Indeed, she points out that “Allah showed ‘Alhaji Abdu’ in this story, that He is the ‘Witness’ of every creature who oppresses his brother” (*Alhaki* ix, my translation).⁴⁷ Here, she directly challenges the sort of patriarchal narrative I explored in the first part of this chapter, claiming her ability as a Muslim woman to interpret the hadith and the Qur’an. As Whitsitt has pointed out, this challenge to accepted interpretations draws on “the religious spirit of *ijtihad*” to “insist that the call for social change and female empowerment occurs within the sanctions of Islamic doctrine” (“Islamic-Hausa Feminism and” 121). Her story, she points out, is meant to “serve as a lesson to the Muslim community. May the Lord God make the sinners change their ways, as He does not forgive a man’s crime against another” (viii).

⁴⁶ Ironically, the male translator Aliyu Kamal leaves out this opening invocation to Allah, as he does the prayer at the end, in his translation *Sin is a Puppy...*

⁴⁷ “Allah ya nuna wa ‘Alhaji Abdu’ na cikin wannan labari cewar, shi ne ‘Shahidi’ a kan kowanne bawa da ya zalunci d’an’uwan sa” (ix).

Her novels all deal with issues she has observed in society and have an activist purpose—to expose wrongdoing, to enlighten and to change people. She embeds exposure of sins into her novels, enabling the characters in the diegetic space of the novel to discuss and learn from those sins. Her hope is that the discussion inside the novel will also extend outside the novel to teach her readers about sins they should avoid and from which they should repent, as well. Her novels become larger exposés, which enable the community outside the novel to learn from what is happening in society. Her fiction, she argues, is a tool that sinners can learn from and change their lives before the coming of Judgment Day when it will be too late to repent.

On the Day of Judgment, even the hands and feet will testify

In *Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare Ba*, Yakubu presents perhaps the most dramatic examples of the exposure of sins, as well as perhaps one of the most dramatic opportunities for repentance and reformation, that occur in her novels. Alhaji Gagarau's secret molestation of most of the women in his life is ultimately publicly exposed in two ways: by his rotting hand and by his daughter-in-law Talatu, a reformed prostitute who refuses to be seduced. Both of these incidents open up to the community discussions of sins that happen in the secrecy of the home. In her introduction to *Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare Ba?*, Yakubu writes "I wrote this story to show people the character of some of our men who hide themselves in a respectable position but are, in fact, fooling people. I'm not doing this to slander any particular person. No, I am doing it to show people that not everyone who is good person on the outside is a good person in secret. And not every person who is worthless on the outside is worthless in secret" (V).⁴⁸

⁴⁸ "na rubuta labarin ne don na nuna wa jama'a halayen wasu mutanen namu dake buya a cikin rigar mutunci suna yaudarar jama'a. Ban yi nufin cin zarafin wata ko wani ba. A'a na yi shine don na nunawa jama'a cewar ba duk mutumin kirki a fili, yake iya zama mutumin kirki a boye ba. Sannan ba duka mutumin banza a fili yake zama mutumin banza a boye ba" (V).

After establishing Alhaji Gagarau's scandalous hypocritical history in the first chapter, Yakubu describes his rape of his oldest daughter Yalwa in the second chapter of the novel. He had been molesting her from childhood, even taking her for an abortion when she was in secondary school, and the sexual relationship lasted into her adulthood even years after her marriage. But when, filled with shame and frustration, Yalwa attempts to finally break off the sexual relationship, her father brutally beats and rapes her. In the process he wounds his hand when a splinter enters it. The wound becomes infected and the ever-worsening infection in his hand follows him through the rest of the novel as he molests other members of his family. The hand becomes symbolic for his sin, which he initially hides but eventually begins to rot and stink and can no longer be hidden. The stench follows Alhaji Gagarau, so that even people who do not know his sins avoid him. While Alhaji Gagarau is outwardly pious, the hand, which becomes increasingly gangrenous but which he refuses to amputate (just as he refuses to stop sinning), gives away his depravity and ultimately kills him. Before he dies, however, it is the blackened and rotting hand that enables his son-in-law, the husband of Yalwa, Alhaji Uba, to confirm his suspicions awakened by rumours he had heard about Alhaji Gagarau and his daughter. Like the day of judgment when sinners' own hands and feet will bear witness to their sins (Surah 24:24; Surah 26:65),⁴⁹ Alhaji Gagarau's hand exposes his secret. Putting together what he had

discovered were Yalwa's lies about her bruised appearance and the time that Alhaji Gagarau said

⁴⁹ According to the Aisha Bewley translation of *The noble Qur'an*, Surat al-Haqqa, 69:18, "On that Day you will be exposed—no concealed act you did will stay concealed." The Qur'an speaks about how on the judgment day, the skin and limbs of the body will testify to the sins of the sinner. Surah 36:65: "Today We seal up their mouths and their hands speak to us, and their feet bear witness to what they have earned." Surah 24:24 speaks of the punishment sinners will receive "on the Day when their tongues and hands and feet will testify against them about what they were doing." Surah 41:19-23 describes this exposure even more vividly: "On the Day We crowd the enemies of Allah into the Fire and they are driven in close-packed ranks, when they reach it, their hearing, sight and skin will testify against them concerning what they did. They will ask their skins, 'Why did you testify against us?' and they will reply, 'Allah gave us speech as He has given speech to everything. He created you in the first place, and you will be returned to Him. You did not think to shield yourselves from your hearing, sight and skin testifying against you and you thought Allah would never know how much of what you did. It is that thought you had about your Lord that has destroyed you so now you find yourselves among the lost.'"

he had injured his hand, Alhaji Uba confronts Alhaji Gagarau with the evidence and accuses him of molesting his daughter. When Alhaji Uba goes to his wife's office to talk to her about his discovery and catches Yalwa in the act of adultery with the Commissioner, he furiously tells the office full of people waiting to see her that her father, Alhaji Gagarau, has been sleeping with her as well. "Come look and see them, no shame no fear of Allah. [...] Her father is sleeping with her too, but, at least, he has a guesthouse where they meet. This marriage—ai, it's better to marry a prostitute from under Tamburawa bridge. At least you know what you've married" (72).⁵⁰ This is the first public exposure of Alhaji Gagarau's sins in the novel. Ironically Alhaji Uba's words about marrying a prostitute being better than a hypocrite are literally fulfilled in the next chapter.

Alhaji Gagarau's secret is exposed to the public by his righteous son-in-law. Shortly after it is exposed to the rest of his family, notably to his oblivious sons, by his daughter-in-law Talatu. Exposure in both cases is when the men in the family, whether his son-in-law or his sons, begin to figure out what the women in the house have known all along. Talatu is a reformed prostitute, but she turns out to be the most virtuous woman in the novel. After the second time Alhaji Gagarau attempts to rape her, Talatu runs out of the house and exposes his sins to his entire family. She tells them not only what Alhaji has tried to do to her but that he has been sleeping with all of his other daughters-in-law all along. The publicly disrespected woman becomes the agent of exposure, who explodes the hypocrisies of the home.

Yakubu here inverts the figure of the prostitute that she had depicted in a rather typecast way in *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne*. While in *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne*, the longsuffering wife Rabi's virtue was contrasted with the immorality of the old prostitute Delu who became her co-wife, here the

⁵⁰ "Ku lek'o ku gansu ba kunya ba tsoron Allah [...] Ubanta mahaifi ma nemanta yake yi, shi yana da gidan da suke had'uwa. Wannan da aurenta ai gwara auren karuwar da take gadar Tamburawa ka san abin da ka aura" (72).

presumably upright wives corrupted by Alhaji Gagarau are shown as being worse than prostitutes, and the old prostitute is the upright woman.

As Yakubu notes in her introduction, things are not always what they seem. “I wrote [this book] to show people that not everyone who has a virtuous exterior is able to be a virtuous person in secret, and not all of those who appear worthless on the outside are worthless on the inside” (V).⁵¹ As in Oscar Wilde’s novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the charming exterior may conceal a perverted interior, while the ugly exterior may contain a pure heart. The respectable wife may be a prostitute, and the prostitute may be a respectable wife. The pious and generous alhaji may be an old goat. The cover illustration of the novel, which can be viewed in Appendix 2, reinforces this message, in its portrayal of a woman half covered with a hijab on one side and the other half exposed in Western clothing with uncovered hair and bare arms. While the rest of Alhaji Gagarau’s daughters-in-law allow him to sleep with them in exchange for generous gifts, Talatu flatly refuses such an abomination. Yakubu comments that while the women in their husbands home are seen as being respectable, it is actually the prostitute, who has nothing to hide, who is the most respectable woman. She has already been seen and known as a prostitute; she has nothing to lose from exposing his secret. Despite or perhaps because of her sinful history, she is the only woman with the courage to resist Alhaji Gagarau’s advances and the only one with the courage to bring out his sins in front of the entire family. In the closing paragraphs of the novel, Yakubu sermonizes: “the meaning of [the novel] is that some married women are more sinful than prostitutes but they hide their sins in their husband’s house. So you will always think of the prostitute as the one at fault. She is the most disrespected of women, but she is more

⁵¹ “na yi shine don na nunawa jama’a cewar ba duk mutumin kirki a fili, yake iya zama mutumin kirki a boye ba. Sannan ba duka mutumin banza a fili yake zama mutumin banza a boye ba” (V).

truthful than other women” (109).⁵² The publicly respectable and the privately sinful are inverted here.⁵³ Yakubu makes the dramatic point that there are people who are publicly respected who are often far worse than those who are publicly reviled. The character of Talatu illustrates the revolutionary power of repentance and the power the truth has in the life of a reformed sinner.

More troubling, for readers like me who, like Rabi in *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne*, want to rejoice in the “divine retribution” Alhaji Gagarau receives once his sins are exposed, Yakubu demonstrates the power of God’s forgiveness in the chance she gives Alhaji Gagarau to repent before he dies. When it becomes clear that his rotting hand is going to kill him, Alhaji Gagarau repents of his sins and writes a letter to his children asking for their forgiveness. He takes responsibility for Yalwa’s adulteries, saying that he was the one who taught her from childhood. He does, however, ask his children not to tell other people what he has done. His third wife Hajiya Asabe, who has previously led the other wives in revolting against him, weeps, pities him, and forgives him (her forgiveness is perhaps aided by the massive sum of money he gives her to give to her daughter, who has found a husband to marry). The exposure has given him a chance to repent before he dies, but his repentance does not make anything better in the world he leaves behind. His sons have divorced their wives, and his widows are left to care for the illegitimate children he left behind. Ultimately, the disgrace of the sexual sin is felt more by his daughter Yalwa than it is by the greatest perpetrator, Alhaji Gagarau.⁵⁴ Although, his children

⁵² “Ma’anarsa shi ne wasu matan aure sun fi karuwai barna to amma don suna lullube a gidajen mazansu na aure dan haka kullum za ka ga karuwa ce mai d’aukar lafi. Ita ce kuma wulak’antacciya a cikin mata. Amma a k’ashin gaskiya sun fi wasu matan” (109).

⁵³ Yakubu performs a similar inversion in her novel, *Ina Son Sa Haka*, when a man marries a prostitute who turns out to be a much better wife than his three other quarrelsome wives who neglect and insult him when he is ill.

⁵⁴ One of the more troubling aspects of the book is that women end up paying a higher penalty than the rapist and pedophile at the centre of the novel. While Alhaji Gagarau makes peace with his wife and repents before he dies, the daughters-in-law are divorced by their husbands. Yalwa is both publicly disgraced and sacked from her job. Although it could be that Yakubu merely presents society the way it is, she does devote much of her sermonizing to the hypocritical married women who slept with their father-in-law, and the cover of the novel focuses on imagining a hypocritical woman rather than a hypocritical man. Novian Whitsitt has noted that in her first novel *Budurwa*

keep the secret after his death, “when they remembered they were not happy because there was nothing they could do but bear the memory” (109).⁵⁵ Although forgiveness is up to God, Yakubu implies, a man’s sins will continue to affect the living.

While this book is a work of imagination, Yakubu told me in her interview, “It’s a true story.” She pointed out that she had compiled several different stories she had heard about abuse in the home into the monstrous character of Alhaji Gagarau (Interview, 5 August 2006). Indeed the newspapers are filled with stories about young girls (and on occasion young boys) being molested by their elders.⁵⁶ However, like the novel *Matsayin Lover* examined in Chapter 1, Yakubu was discouraged from selling or reprinting the novel. The book was too scandalous and exposed in detail things that were seen as better being kept quiet. Her critics, she told me, said that she was lying—that such a thing could not happen in Hausa society and that she was only corrupting children. The novel quickly went out of print, and, when the plates for printing were destroyed in a flood and the computer on which the electronic files was spoiled, it made it even harder for her to think about bringing out a new edition. (Interview, 5 August 2006).

Responding to Critics

In his discussion of films that similarly expose secrets of the home, which I will discuss in the next chapter, Abdalla Uba Adamu points out that these authors’ exposure of things which are supposed to be secret is a source of major controversy surrounding popular novels and films. The Qur’an and hadith are often interpreted as pointing to the importance of protecting privacy

Zuciya, Yakubu “perpetuates the stigma of immorality surrounding young single woman. She ultimately caters to the patriarchal prejudice against them” (“Islamic-Hausa Feminism and”125). Here, although Yakubu turns this stigma on its head, pointing out that some married women are worse than their single counterparts, she extends patriarchal anxieties about women’s sins and unveiled bodies. The cover image of a woman half covered in a hijab and half exposed is more recognizably a symbol for hypocrisy than an image of a man could be.

⁵⁵ “In sun tuna ba sukan ji dad’i ba don dai babu yadda za a yi ne sai hak’uri” (109).

⁵⁶ See Yushua’u A Ibrahim “My niece’s rapist is known” and “7-year-old kills sex attacker”; Jaafar Jaafar “Man, 45, Impregnates own teenage daughter”; Haruna Gimba Yaya “Father in court for having oral sex with own children.”

and hiding sins that could cause other people to stumble. Shaykh Muslim Hamza Karamali on the Qibla.com website advises those who commit sins to not to expose their sins to others but to instead to conceal them and seek forgiveness, citing the Hadith that says, “Whoever commits any of these awful sins (qadhurat), let him conceal himself with the concealment of Allah, for verily, whoever exposes his action to us (man abda lana safhatahu), we will impose the hadd punishment upon him.” Adamu quotes verses from the Qur’an to demonstrate the importance of privacy in Islam, such as Surat Al Hujrat, 49:12: “O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: And spy not on each other behind their backs.” Or Surat Nur, 24:19, which says “Those who love (to see) scandal published (broadcast) among the Believers, will have a grievous Penalty in this life and in the Hereafter: Allah knows, and ye know not” (qtd. in *Transglobal* 82).

There is a tension, therefore, between Yakubu’s impulse to expose sin and deep cultural and religious injunctions about privacy. Talatu, Tasalla, and other characters who expose the sins going on in the home in the novels could be read as violating scripture by humiliating, in front of other Muslims, sinners who might still repent. Similarly, Yakubu, likewise, could be criticized for presenting these sins in her novels by “broadcasting” sins that should not be discussed.

Yakubu defends herself against such critiques in several ways. First of all, she often stresses that, although her stories may be based on things that are happening in society, she is not speaking about any specific person’s sin. In her preface to *Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare Ba*, Yakubu stresses several times that it is a fictional story and does not refer to a specific person.

“Whenever I write a book, I seek to understand the state that the society is in, then I keep asking people if it were them that something happened to, what steps would they take” (V).⁵⁷ She also

⁵⁷ “duk lokacin da zan rubuta littafi na kan fahimci halin da mutanen wannan lokacin ke ciki, sannan na dinga tambayar jama’a cewar in sune abu kaza ya same su to wane irin mataki za su dauka.”

cautions that no one under fifteen should read the novel, and urges readers not to insult writers but to bring any mistakes they make to their attention.⁵⁸ She frames her novels as sermons for mature readers, who are old enough to know something about the problems of society. She warns people about sin, without shaming specific people.

Two other forms of defense can be found in what she told me during an interview with her in 2006. I asked Yakubu about Abdalla Uba Adamu's claim, "In Islam, the first criterion of private life was that a person may choose to keep certain matters concealed from and inaccessible to others" (*Transglobal* 82). "If people say to you that you are exposing secrets, how would you answer them?" I asked her.

"If they say I am exposing secrets in my book," she replied,

"I'll tell them they should change their behaviour then. That's it. Because every person that is doing wrong he doesn't want people to know. He prefers that only God knows, but he is cheating people. So if I see someone doing that, I'll come out and talk about it. [...] I'm doing nothing wrong. From my perspective, I'm helping the person and I'm helping other people by letting them know that if you do this and that, this is what will happen to you, which is there in the Qur'an. [...] The Qur'an says that if you cheat someone, you can be sure Allah won't forgive you. You'll see it in this life or if you die. So what is the fault in that? If you don't want to have a problem, don't do it. That's it." (Interview, 23 March 2009).

This sort of rhetoric privileges the right of those suffering injustice over the rights of those committing sins to retain their secrecy. She positions strategic exposure as justice for those

⁵⁸ As I noted in the previous chapter, her colleague Alkhamees Bature Makwarari similarly points out in the preface to *Matsayin Lover*, discussed in the previous chapter that "I didn't write the book to ruin anyone's reputation, [...] I think of it as a warning, not an attack. [...] we shouldn't see something happening in society about which people need to be warned and guided and just stay silent" (1).

being abused, a concept that is important in the teachings of the Prophet. As hip-hop artist Nazir Ahmad Hausawa once told me, there is a hadith that says, “If you see something haram, you’re supposed to fight it. If you can’t fight it, then you talk about it; if you can’t talk about it, then you feel it in your mind.” He said that the only way to prove injustice was occurring was to “give your evidence” (qtd. in McCain, “Video” 48).⁵⁹ Novels that feature sins are a way of presenting evidence with the intent of helping those who are oppressed and abused.

Finally, Yakubu points out that such exposure “helps” sinners by reminding them of the consequences of their behaviour. Talking publicly about sins that plague society gives sinners the opportunity to reform their lives before death and judgment day. As texts such as *Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare Ba* or the films I will discuss in the next chapter demonstrate, exposure serves a purpose, not for mere sensationalism or character assassination, but in order to warn sinners to repent. The exposure of sins gives even the most egregious sinners, such as Alhaji Gagarau who has molested and abused dozens of girls, the opportunity to repent and make their lives right with God. Yakubu, like writers and filmmakers I will describe in Section 2 of my dissertation, self-consciously presents her work as the sort of cathartic exposé that occurs in her novels, revelation of public secrets that enable a community to openly speak about the sins that plague their societies. Ironically, as I will demonstrate in the following chapters, this rhetoric also was used by men in positions of authority to make accusations against the supposed immorality of the film industry. Writers and filmmakers found themselves in the position of defending their own right to privacy. This tension about what should remain private and what should be exposed runs throughout the texts I explore in this dissertation, and, in the next chapter, I look at how these

⁵⁹ Hausawa seems to be referring to the hadith narrated by Abu Said Al-Khudri: “I heard the messenger of Allah say: “Whosoever of you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart; and that is the weakest of faith” (An-Nawawi, Chapter 1, Hadith 34).

tensions manifest in film. In the final section of this chapter, I discuss the solution Yakubu and a few other writers and filmmakers put forward to help solve the abuse of power in the home.

Education and Self-determination: the Way Out for the Exposed Woman

Yakubu and the makers of the films I will describe in the next chapter see their narratives that expose abuses as a way of reforming society: showing the problems so that they can be dealt with. The narratives themselves, exposing the problems of society, are seen as part of the solution, as they educate their readers on repentance and self-improvement.

One of the solutions Yakubu and some of the other writers and filmmakers propose is the empowerment of women who have been left in the house, through employment, education, and exposure to knowledge. In *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne*, Rabi finds the most happiness when she is independent. With her cooking business, she is able to put her children through school and buy the dishes that custom requires her daughter to take into her marital home.⁶⁰ Of course, a job does not necessarily free a woman from abuse, as can be seen in the case of Yalwa in *Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare Ba*. Despite being a director of a government office, she is still subject to the sexual exploitation of her father. When she tries to hide from him in her own home, he follows her there and her husband queries her about why she isn't being more polite to her own father. Rabi, too, as described earlier, is forced to go back to her worthless husband.

However, these moments of independence are shown as one way out. Yakubu portrays Yalwa with some sympathy. Although she is not just a simple victim of Alhaji Gagarau's molestation as she chooses to cheat on her kind husband with the Commissioner, her choices are

⁶⁰ In Hausa culture, while a prospective groom is usually expected to bring "zance" gifts to the bride, which include suitcases full of clothing, toiletries, and other items, the bride's family is usually expected to furnish her room and provide her with decorative dishes for display in her new home. In *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne*, the wealthy Alhaji Abubakar generously furnishes Saudatu's room, but Rabi insists on following custom by providing her daughter with dishes.

seen as the psychological result of the abuse at the hands of her father. While she is disgraced, divorced, and sacked from her job, she does find some amount of happiness at the end of the novel with her own house and a business of clothing boutiques. In an interview, Yakubu told me,

In Hausa society, we have all kinds of problems, especially with marriage. If a woman's husband divorces her, whether in Christianity or Islam, he should take care of the children, feed them and clothe them. But in Hausa culture, some of the men are ignoring that. [...] Right now, men are stronger than women. If a man does this to you, and you go to the government, they won't give you money. Most of the time the children won't go to school, and they won't call the husband and punish him. The best thing, as far as I am concerned, women should find work. What I want women to know is that even before the problem, you should get ready. By the time the problem arrives, you know you have something saved. Do some kind of profession whether cooking food, even selling pure water, or frying kosai. At least you have found an income. By the time your husband says you should leave, you know you have a way to survive. Sometimes, about 40% of the women in their husband's houses are cooking food to sell, and they feed their husband and children in the house. They are used to it. [...] If you don't have any support, you can start working. You can sell food, [...] rice or guraso or spaghetti or kosai. [...] So that, for example, people in the neighbourhood know that me, I sell yam and soup here every day. People will bring flasks to the door of the house, and say they've come to buy. You can make a profit. I don't want a woman to sit down and fold her hands waiting for her husband to take care of her. Men are not honest, you know? So, you will see that in all of my books, I try to

tell women, if you are not educated, you should at least do something to bring in an income. If you are educated, go and find work. My heart hurts when I see a woman who has been disrespected or she has entered wahala. I prefer for a woman to look for work—if she is married, fine—if she’s not married, fine, she can take care of herself. She can pay her children’s school fees. I’ve seen a woman pay for school fees from nursery school up to university. She had a husband at home who didn’t pay even one kobo. What do you call such a man? The owner of the house, or husband, or just houseboy? I don’t know what to call that kind of man. So, me, I prefer for a woman to get up and look for work of her own, whether cooking food, or selling things, or government work, let her do it. But she shouldn’t sit down and say the husband should take care of her.

(Interview, 5 August 2006.)

While acknowledging the ideal that the man should take care of his family, Yakubu points out that she is concerned with reality. She argues that women should be able to support themselves whether they are married or not, and, as she points out, her books attempt to encourage women to be more independent.⁶¹ The first type of woman, that of the uneducated woman who finds work for herself, is illustrated in *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne* by Rabi’s ability to take care of herself even when Alhaji Abdu does not provide for her and her children. Her ability to cook and sell food makes the transition out of the marriage much easier, and she is able to enjoy

⁶¹ Yakubu’s fictional descriptions of the difficulties women face in the home, as well as the strategies they use to support themselves, are similar to those of her compatriot, author Flora Nwapa. Nwapa describes how in her novels *Efuru* and *Idu*, “Apart from exposing the pain, misery and humiliation which childless or barren women suffer in the traditional society, the two novels (I hope!) give insight into the resourcefulness and industriousness of women [...] I tried to debunk the notion that the woman is dependent on her husband. The woman not only holds her own, she is astonishingly independent of her husband” (528). Yakubu, like Nwapa’s response to male depictions of women in African literature, combats the sort of patriarchal rhetoric seen in the first part of the chapter, with a description of the ways women do and can take care of themselves apart from male custodianship.

an independent life apart from her husband because she could make her own living. Even when she is forced back into the marriage, her experience of independence has changed her relationship with Alhaji Abdu. “He had trampled on the rights of those whose welfare Allah had entrusted to him, and he had fallen into ruin. Rabi now took over the role. She was the one who handed out the day’s provisions, who distributed the detergent and soap” (*Sin* 126). This sort of woman also appears in a happier family arrangement in *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?*, in the person of Abu’s aunt Hajiya Kumatu who brings extra income into her household, supplementing her husband’s salary with her cooking. Since she has a very good relationship with her husband, Yakubu implies that such independence is not harmful and may even be a boon to the marriage.

The second type of woman, that of the educated woman who has more options to support herself, is also illustrated by Abu/Zainab in *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?* In this novel, she provides the most hopeful vision for what women can achieve once freed from expectations of the home. Abu runs away from her elderly husband’s house and thereby away from the patriarchal authority of both husband and father. She seeks refuge with her sympathetic aunt in Kano, and it is in this nurturing female space that she goes back to school and thrives. Though her aunt is married, her husband Malam Sango provides an alternate male father figure to the men in the village. He has stayed with one wife for twenty-three years despite her childlessness. Unlike Abu’s birth father Malam Garba, her second father Malam Sango encourages her education and then her work as a teacher and a nurse.

The city of Kano exposes Abu to new ways of life and new opportunities for supporting herself. The transition from the illiterate village girl to the enlightened city woman is illustrated in the change of name from the diminutive Abu to the more grown-up Zainab. Although proponents of child marriage argue that women who do not marry young will become immoral,

Zainab goes to school, where she excels, and begins work as a teacher and then a nurse while maintaining her virtue, handing over her salary each month to her aunt and accepting only an allowance from Hajiya Kumatu, as she would if she were still at home with her parents. Her education becomes a blessing to the entire family. She is able to bring her family in the village gifts from the salary she earned (which her aunt set aside for her); she persuades her father to allow her sisters to go to secondary school instead of marrying them off early; and she also takes care of putting them in school. With her medical knowledge, she encourages her childless aunt to go to the hospital for a check-up, where they discover that she just needs a simple operation to solve her fertility problem. Hajiya Kumatu and Malam Sango are rewarded for their adoption of the run-away Zainab when Hajiya Kumatu becomes pregnant after twenty-three years of marriage. Had Zainab not become educated, the novel implies, the rest of the family would not have been exposed to the positive effects of her education.

The role of education in empowering women is one that is stressed in other novels and films. While Whitsitt points out that popular author Bilkisu Funtuwa's placing the burden on women to ensure that their marriages are happy is a conservative one, he does point out that her characters are often highly educated ("Islamic-Hausa Feminism Meets" 149). Adamu describes how a woman's "aggressive pursuit for a career" in Funtuwa's novel *Allura Cikin Ruwa* is a "quite revolutionary fictional concept" ("Parallel" 25). He describes how Funtuwa told Ibrahim SHEME in an interview that one of her biggest motivations in writing is because of

the way the girls in the North (of Nigeria) are having their rights denied. You find a brilliant girl with the urge to further her education but as soon as she gets married the husband prevents her from going further. I know that marriage cannot be a hindrance to a woman wanting to further her education. In this regard,

Southerners are more progressive than us. As such, I realized that through the medium of writing using the little talent God gave me, I could put into the heads of girls ideas—through entertainment and enlightenment—to appreciate the importance of education. (qtd. in Adamu, “Parallel” 25)

Thus, as Whitsitt points out, while Funtuwa has a more optimistic vision of the traditional polygamous household, both authors see education as the solution to many of the hardships women face in the home. And their books become one way of educating girls about the importance of seeking knowledge. In the next chapter, I discuss how films open these educational sermons to even wider audiences, those who cannot read.⁶²

Challenging Dominant Men: Finding an equilibrium

Just as these narratives anticipate critiques about the exposure of secret vices, they also anticipate men's critiques about a woman's place in the home and counter them. In Yakubu's novels she portrays women's independence as threatening to male authority. But the extent to which this independence affects men depends on their attitude and respect for women. Yakubu and some filmmakers parallel the punishments of men who behave in a socially acceptable

⁶² Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino and Falalu Dorayi's film *Sandar Kiwo*, for example, illustrates how a woman suffers at the hands of her husband's family when her husband dies. They expel her from her husband's home and mistreat his daughter—who, it is revealed at the end, is the daughter of another wife—until the widow saves her and puts her through school with her cooking skills. There is a generational transition here between the ways women cope with abuse and neglect. The mother survives by cooking, while her brilliant stepdaughter is proclaimed the best student at the end and, it is implied, will continue on into a more prestigious career. In Zainab Idris and Abbas Sadiq's film *Albashi*, there are two generations of powerful women: the mother of two boys who has raised them through her job as a professional in an office (the mother's husband is never seen or mentioned) and her daughter-in-law, Binta, a brilliant young woman who excels at university and becomes a doctor. Although Binta marries her worthless boyfriend Umar who is unemployed and without a degree, since he was expelled from university for cheating, she is able to support him through her work as a doctor. When he divorces her, she continues her career with little hardship, while he descends into madness, his secret sins inscribing themselves on his body similar to the characters I describe in the previous section. These films illustrate how a discourse began in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the novels about the importance of exposing women to education continue in an even more popular form that is available even to audiences that cannot read.

patriarchal fashion with men in narratives who engage in more egregious sins. The similar punishments portray acceptable and unacceptable abuse as equally reprehensible and point to the redemption possible when they accept women's new social positions outside the home.

First, as Zainab flourishes in Kano, her ex-husband Sarkin Noma, the epitome of the patriarchal male, dwindles. Her success emasculates him. His inability to possess her physically eats away at him until he dies. Similar to Alhaji Gagarau's rotting hand in *Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare Ba*, it is his own inability to move past his desire to possess a woman he cannot have that kills him. Sarkin Noma's decline is framed in terms of his manhood. He no longer goes to his other wives, telling them, "I am no longer well enough to fulfill your needs. I'm looking for medicine, but any of you who can no longer be patient until God heals me, you are free to go" (70). His ailment does not stay a secret: "almost everyone knew that Sarkin Noma was no longer a man" (71).⁶³ Sarkin Noma's identity centres on possessing a woman, unable to accept that she might have a mind and life of her own, and he reaps the consequences of his obsessive desire to control Zainab. The physical dwindling away of these powerful abusive men is a motif that appears in many of Yakubu's novels: in *Wa Zai Auri Jahila*, Sarkin Noma fades away, finally dying from unrequited desire for Abu; in *Sin is a Puppy...*, Alhaji Abdu loses his possessions, is hospitalized several times, and ends up becoming subservient both to Rabi and his son-in-law for whom he keeps shop; In *Wane Kare Ba Bare Ba*, Alhaji Gagarau dies slowly of his rotting hand, injured when he raped his daughter; In *Ina Son Sa Haka*, Shehu descends into a madness that eventually kills him when he cannot have his first wife Fatima whom he had forcibly married but who has escaped the marriage and married someone else. Yakubu has revenge on the patriarchal male by humiliating him in her fiction, but she also uses these physical ailments as a symbol for

⁶³ "Ni dai yanzu, ba ni da lafiyar da zan iya biya muku buk'atunku. Ina nan ina neman magani. Amma wacce duk ta ga ba za ta iya hak'uri, har Allah ya sauwak'e mini ba, to ga hanya nan" (70). "kusan kowa ya san cewa Sarkin Noma ba namjiji ba ne" (71).

the psychological sickness that makes men think they must treat a woman “as a sort of slave to be bought or sold at the marketplace” (*Sin* 37).⁶⁴

In *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?*, Malam Garba, Zainab’s birth father, however, provides a more redemptive male figure. Finally listening to his wife—unlike Sarkin Noma, he has only one—he begins to regret his pride and what it has made him do to his young daughter. Instead of running after other women when he quarrels with his wife as Sarkin Noma does, he humbly repents and seeks her forgiveness when he senses her anger. When his sister Hajiya Kumatu brings Abu back to the village two weeks after she had run from her husband’s house, he does not force her to go back. The doctor’s note from the hospital, knowledge from the city, saying that Abu should not have sexual relations for at least two years while her body matures, gives him a face-saving excuse to yield to his sister’s pressure to procure the divorce for his daughter. The experience makes him wiser as he allows Zainab to put her younger sister Inna in secondary school.

Finally Amadu, the foolish young man who refused to marry Abu because he had met a more exciting woman in the city and because he said he didn’t want to marry an illiterate woman, has seven years at school in England to repent of his mistake. When he returns and meets Zainab as a beautiful, mature, and educated woman, he immediately apologizes to her and pursues her tirelessly. Zainab makes him suffer for months as she refuses to have anything to do with him, but, eventually, when he is able to prove to her that even in England he regretted his mistake, she forgives him. They enter into a much happier and more equitable marriage than they would have had he married her at thirteen. While she reminds him that, though he has never been

⁶⁴ A similar moment can be found in the film *Albashi*, produced by Zainab Idris and directed by Abbas Sadiq. A worthless unemployed man Umar accuses his virtuous medical doctor wife Binta of being unfaithful, insisting that the only way she can save the marriage is by quitting her job. A whole host of male characters have no problem interacting with Binta and other educated women on an equal basis, including Umar’s brother Ibrahim who accepts Binta as his boss at the hospital. On the other hand, Umar’s extreme jealousy, which leads to eventually to a drug-induced madness and subservient position within his marriage has to do with his inability to cope with his wife as an equal, who, like Rabi in *Alhaki Kukuyo Ne*, becomes the head of the household in place of her unstable husband. Such patriarchal attitudes end up hurting both women and the men who try to control them.

married, she is a divorcee and no longer a virgin, he acknowledges that this is his own fault. The end of the novel thus demonstrates a new kind of exposed man who values love of a specific woman much more than the object of her virginity. Whitsitt argues that this “fundamental change” in the way Zainabu and Amadu relate to each other “highlights a profound shift in the Hausa social structure,” which suggests that men no longer need to be thought of as the guardians of women (“Islamic-Hausa Feminism and” 133). Indeed Zainab is more financially stable than Amadu is. She works as a nurse at the hospital, while he is still looking for a job. Their love affair provides a new model of love between equals rather than a need by men to control and lord over their wives. The ending of *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?* is one of the happiest endings of any of Yakubu’s novels. The last two paragraphs of the novel read:

When Amadu and Zainab were preparing for bed, Amadu said to Zainab, “If every woman was inquisitive like you and went after education until she was able to meet all her needs, I don’t think it would be possible to find any more ignorant women.”

Zainab just gazed at him and smiled. In that moment, she couldn’t speak.

There was nothing else that she wanted but to lie with her head on Amadu’s chest and to sleep the sleep of the happy. (*Wa* 2 164)⁶⁵

The ending here ties the happiness of the newly married couple to the moral lesson that the young man has learned and the independence and confidence that Zainab has been able to achieve through education. While many of Yakubu’s male characters are depraved and cruel to their wives, she provides a hopeful vision of a more egalitarian society, where men and women

⁶⁵ “To, a lokacin da Amadu da Zainab ke shirin kwanciya, sai Amadu ya ce da Zainab, “In da a ce kowace mace haka za ta dage, ta nemi ilimi, har ta biya buk’ararta, da ban yi zaton za a sami sauran jihilai mata ba.

Zainab ta kale shi kawai, ta yi murmushi, don kuwa a wannan lokacin, magana ma ba za ta iya yi ba. Babu abin da take so, irin ta kwantar da kanta a k’irjin Amadu, ta yi barcin farin ciki” (*Wa* 2 164).

meet on more equal footing. True love, she implies, will become more possible when the woman is not dependent on the man, the man does not see the woman as subservient to him, and both are exposed to education. Yakubu's ideal vision of a woman finding fulfillment in a relationship of which she is an equal partner reflects a similar vision to that put forth by Molara Ogundipe Leslie, who notes that African feminism is "not about adversarial gender politics" or "opposition to men," but instead devoted to "Social Transformation Including Women in Africa" (549-550). African women, Ogundipe-Leslie argues, and Yakubu implies in her fiction, value marriage and children and relationships with men. They just want to work together with men, not be oppressed by them. The resultant more equal society will benefit both women and men. The hopeful note with which Yakubu ends *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?* invokes the hope for freedom from "patriarchal biases," which Turkish feminist Ayfie Duzkan has noted is a new refrain in Turkey, "There is another life [...] Another life is possible" (qtd. in Mir-Hosseini and Hamzic 13).

Conclusion

Ultimately, women's education is what has allowed Yakubu to pen these empowering narratives. The novels that expose public secrets and envision a way forward through education for both men and women become correctives, ways women (and youth) can publicly voice their dissatisfaction with the status quo.

When Spivak asks "Can the subaltern speak?" she questions the attempts by Western educated "native informants" to speak for the subaltern. Her original concern seems to be about the "complicity" of an intellectual elite in "muting" the subaltern ("Can" 64) and how the "international feminism" of "women of dominant social groups" reproduce imperial concerns about saving brown women from brown men than in a concern about exploring how subaltern

women speak to other subaltern women (“Can” 64, 43). An example of Spivak’s concern, for example, can be seen in the blanket denunciations by international feminist groups of child marriage rather than in examining the factors behind it, and how Al Jazeera chose the privileged feminist Nollywood actress to represent the issue to the world, rather than a Muslim woman with firsthand experience of the issue, who could speak with more nuance and knowledge.

However, while Spivak’s space-clearing gesture is necessary to point out that the “postcolonial or the member of an ethnic minority” is not necessarily the same thing as the “subaltern” (65), such self-reflexive anxiety taken to an extreme can serve to ignore what the subaltern is saying. In Adichie’s story “A Private Experience” that I cited at the beginning of this chapter, for example, Chika spends a lot of time imagining how different the Hausa woman’s life is from her own, but she asks the woman very little—not even her name. Adichie’s representation of the woman in her story is sympathetic, but it is not accurate. Apparently, neither she nor her Western editor actually know enough about Muslim or Hausa women to correctly portray how they pray. The title “A Private Experience” draws on the language of privacy in Islam but leaves us only with a sense of Chika’s experience and not that of the Muslim woman who helps hide her. Such a focus is only one side of a much larger story.

My concern in this dissertation is to move beyond a focus on how elite institutions are not hearing the subaltern, and instead examine how previously subaltern actors claim agency through opening what Spivak calls “a line of communication” which gives them access to “the long road to hegemony” (“Can” 65). While Western education has been used historically to create a “class of persons” who have interpreted the “subaltern” to the globe, education is also claimed by contemporary Hausa writers and filmmakers as a tool that enables them to speak to and improve the lives of other women amongst whom they live.

Yakubu's novel *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?*, in particular, situates that "road to hegemony" in exposure to education. Zainab's journey reflects and re-imagines Yakubu's own journey. It was her adult education, after her first two marriages, that gave her the ability to write, and she uses that ability as a way to communicate with other women who are in the same position she was in. Although she belonged to a privileged family (at least one which was temporarily the family of a head of state), she herself experienced the forced marriage and rape by an older man that she describes in her novel. She was a subaltern who has been able to rise and speak for herself to other women in her society, challenging the patriarchy and offering a way forward.

Yakubu told me that she knows very little about theories of feminism cited by scholars who examine her work, but she does know what happened to her and what is happening in the lives of the women around her (personal interview, 23 March 2009). It is from these experiences that she formulates a response, a kind of theory from below, in which she exposes the abuse of women in the home and offers both men and women a way forward through repentance and education. In her later work Spivak has spoken about her attempts to set aside her privileged status and work as "nothing but a citizen of India" collectively with subaltern Indian citizens to build an "infrastructure for agency" (*An Aesthetic* 438-439). Although she remains anxious about the disparity of class, she poses her teacher training as an attempt to "learn from below, *from* the subaltern, rather than only study him (her)" (439). Yakubu's work seems to be a good example of this paradigm. Using her literacy training to write about her own experience, she formulates suggestions for women that are much more in tune with the needs of women around her than the well-meaning but uninformed suggestions of feminists like Stella Damasus, who live outside of the immediate environment they are trying to change. And because there are many other women writing in Hausa, Yakubu's suggestions are complemented and challenged by many other voices,

which together form a corpus of work that witnesses the challenges of their society and offer theories to a mass reading public on how to move forward. Because these authors are writing and performing in Hausa, they are rarely heard by global mediators of cultural capital, but they are heard by their own society, and perhaps that is enough. Although Yakubu was delighted when her novel *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne* was translated into English and became available to a larger global readership, her primary audience continues to be her own society.

Yet, Spivak's anxieties about who is hearing the subaltern remain relevant when thinking about the national laws and policies, such as those championed by Senator Yerima, that are made *for* the subaltern without their input. Until there are more translations, of the sort commissioned by Indian-publisher Braft, the Hausa woman will likely still be viewed by the rest of the world as Adichie portrayed her, the ignorant woman in a dusty corner, who cannot speak.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ My point here is similar to that made by Joanna Sullivan, who argues that Ibrahim Katsina's Hausa novels are national in the same way that Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* or Wole Soyinka's *Season of Anomy* are, yet critics don't know this because these novels are not translated ("Modern" 90).

Chapter 3: “Spectacular Transgressions:”¹ The subversive politics of spectacle in Hausa films and music videos

The radical populist politician Aminu Kano was not just one of the most beloved politicians in northern Nigerian history, he also wrote some of the first plays in northern Nigeria during his time at Kaduna College in the late 1930s.² He used these performances, which included dancing, to satirize the hypocrisy of a ruling elite and colonial authorities, ridiculing both a corrupted tradition and “modern Western ways” (Feinstein 56). He began a drama tradition that eventually transitioned into the drama groups that performed for television in the 1970s and 1980s and became the Hausa film industry by 1990 (Sango 60; Al-Kanawy 370-371; Ali 30-32). Contemporary Hausa films are often critiqued by conservative members of society for presumed moral violations that their entertaining productions include and provoke, namely, exposing shocking secrets with melodramatic stories and women’s bodies in song and dance sequences. In this chapter, I will argue, however, that the political and moral messages many Hausa filmmakers preach in their films and their often expressed desire to transform society have strong connections to the aesthetics of reformist Islam—an aesthetic not dissimilar to that promoted by Aminu Kano. Hausa filmmakers employ spectacle—that is stylized cinematic moments in which filmmakers attempt to provoke a response of shock, laughter, sentiment, or

¹ This phrase was first used by Brian Larkin in *Signal and Noise* in his description of his concept of the “aesthetics of outrage” (186).

² Unfortunately, none of these plays have been published and the content is only available through the description of scholars. Kano’s biographer Alan Feinstein writes that one of his plays was called “‘Kar Ka Bata Hajin Naka’ (Alhaji, Don’t Spoil Your ‘Haj’ [...]), later changed to ‘Alhaji Ka Iya Kwanga,’ roughly translated as ‘The Alhaji Knows How to Dance the Conga.’” Feinstein points out that Kano’s plays “ridiculed the old traditional way of life, of turbans and long flowing robes whose pockets bulged with good luck charms. Through gross exaggeration he indicated that a simpler daily costume would be very much in order. Nor should the rigid old mallams be relied on as authorities” (56). In another play he “broadly satirized the pomposity of the British district officer (D.O.) by presenting him onstage with pillows tucked into his belt and covering them with flowing robes. [...] As a sop to the British in the audience, he had this same D.O. join in the dance in the closing scene” (57).

outrage from viewers—not just as entertainment but also to moralize by drawing audience attention to corruption and injustices of society. These uses of spectacle by filmmakers, to ostensibly teach and reveal, conflict with critiques of spectacle by those who claim that the spectacle itself, through its exposure of private spaces and women’s bodies, is corrupting society. This chapter will explore these tensions and pay particular attention to the presentation and claims of the filmmakers themselves about what spectacle in their films achieves.

The term “spectacle” as a description of film and literature has been used in multiple ways to describe the effects on audiences, content, form and motivation of performance and narrative. Merriam-Webster defines it as “a) something exhibited to view as unusual, notable, or entertaining; especially: an eye-catching or dramatic public display” or “something that attracts attention because it is very unusual and shocking,” and “b) an object of curiosity or contempt.” In other words, the word spectacle can be used in a positive way to describe a pleasant eye-catching show or in a negative way to describe a disgraceful exhibition. I will discuss the way spectacle manifests itself in Hausa films, in the genres of melodrama, comedy, and music videos. The two definitions of spectacle with their contrasting positive connotations, in the emphasis on entertainment and attraction in the first definition, and negative connotations, in the emphasis on being an object of contempt in the second definition, usefully capture much of the debate about spectacle that has extended into criticism of Kannywood and Nollywood films. In this chapter, I am particularly interested in the tensions and contradictions between the way the concept is defined and used by a variety of critics and practitioners, and the theoretical possibilities opened up when examining these tensions.

First, in critical responses to Nollywood and Kannywood films, there is often an intellectual concern about content, motivation, and effect on audiences that reflects an anti-

capitalist, anti-consumerist, anti-Western ethos similar to that expressed in the 1970s by third cinema filmmakers in Latin America and Africa.³ Film critics such as Michael Chanon and Frank Ukadike have classified the entertaining “Nollywood” film industry into a first cinema tradition of commercial entertainment (Chanon 6; Ukadike 127), and many of the critiques of Nollywood coming from scholars within Nigeria echo third cinema critical concerns that filmmakers are “just out to make money” and are just “ripping off” Hollywood or Bollywood films.⁴ Disquiet about the aims and content of the films, as “spectacular entertainment,” is similar to the concern “third cinema” theorists had about what Glauber Rocha called “digestive cinema”—“happy funny fast films without messages, films with purely industrial aims” (par 11). This view of film acknowledges the attraction of spectacle as expressed in the first Merriam-Webster definition while judging it with the contempt of the second. There are also concerns about the negative effects of such films on what are characterized as vulnerable and impressionable audiences, similar to Solanas and Getino’s worries about the effects of Hollywood spectacles on “passive consuming audiences.”

³In their groundbreaking 1969 essay “Towards a Third Cinema,” Marxist filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino posed what they called a revolutionary “third” cinema against the “show and amusement” of a consumerist “first cinema” represented by Hollywood, and the experimental but individualistic “second cinema” as represented by European art house cinema (1). “The cinema as spectacle” as represented by bourgeois filmmaking, they argue creates a “passive and consuming” audience (4). Other revolutionary Latin American filmmakers and critics who found themselves in the third cinema tradition also tended to critique entertaining cinema. Julio Espinosa wrote that his ideal “[i]mperfect cinema rejects exhibitionism, [...] the narcissistic and the commercial” (par 39). Moving to Africa, the “Resolutions of the Third World Film-Makers’ Meeting,” in Algiers, Algeria in 1973, expressed great concern about the effects of cultural imperialism, and argued that the cinema of the capitalist world “invades the screens of the capitalist world and consequently that of the Third World, where it contributes to hiding inequalities, referring them to that ideology which governs the world imperialist system dominated by the United States of America” (20).

⁴Nollywood scholars like Jonathan Haynes, Onookome Okome, and Moradewun Adejunmobi have provided a more nuanced perspective on this first cinema/third cinema divide. Haynes points out the political critique in many Nollywood films (“Political Critique”), and Okome has questioned if the self-sufficient industry from below does not fulfil some of the goals of third cinema (Okome, “Editorial” 6; Okome, “Is Nollywood”; McCain, “FESPACO” 252). Adejunmobi, as described in the introduction, has argued that the West African market orientation of the films is opposed to the formal structures of global capitalism, and they have a greater appeal to popular grassroots audiences than the supposedly more political African cinema films do (9-14).

Second, a related concern, often stated in religious terms, is that the films are not just pacifying viewers but actively corrupting their character, a corruption that is often equated to exposure to foreign cultures, as I described in Chapter 1. This corruption is related to the content and form of the films. This critique, in particular, is often heard from critics of Hausa films, who criticize them for, as Zulkifl A. G. Dakata puts it, serving up spectacles, such as beauty contests, dancing and singing, or “the appearance of ten different girls in wedding gowns attempting to woo” a suitor, that are “alien to our culture” and result in “negative consequences” for viewers (251-252). A British-Council-workshop-trained Hausa filmmaker Mustapha Adamu Indabawa, whom I interviewed in 2006, disliked showy Kannywood films. He told me that he was concerned about the foreign influences for which Hausa films were acting as a conduit, “The way I saw my sister dancing, singing, I just hung my head. I had to ban watching Hausa films in our home. Yes. I now ban it. Nobody will bring Hausa film now into my house. Nobody. Because they are imitating what they see in film.”⁵ Indabawa’s concern about the effect of watching Hausa films on his sister is telling. The content that is seen as the most threatening is that which exposes the bodies of women, and the audiences that are seen as the most vulnerable to imitating these “harmful influences” are particularly women and youth.

Abubakar Rabo Abdulkarim, the director general of the Kano State Censorship Board from 2007 to 2011, told me that “if women are commercialized, we see that as unbecoming, dehumanizing.” “Sometimes, my dear, if you give me an extreme close up of a woman on a

⁵ Indabawa positioned himself more along the lines of “second cinema” being interested more in “quality” and felt that it was important for filmmakers to have formal training. In addition to his concern about the influence of spectacle on viewers, he told me that he didn’t like Hausa films because “they make it because they want to make money. And by the time you are making a film to make money, you’ll be trying as much as possible to minimize cost, and when you are minimizing your cost you are also minimizing quality. [...] That’s why I don’t think I will engage myself in commercial films. I can’t do it. Because if you say you will make commercial films, you cannot beat them. [...] I believe I cannot beat them and I will not join them. So, let me concentrate on making art films.” He told me he would focus his attention on making NGO films that did not require commercial success with an audience (personal interview).

screen, with her lips wetted, you understand, costumed... Are you harassing me with her? Why must I allow that?" (McCain, "Interview with Alhaji").⁶ Rabo equates spectacles that display women's bodies with moral corruption, again bridging these two conflicting themes in the definition of spectacle and linking them to what he presumes the effect of the content will be on the audience. This spectacle of dancing women or "erotic" close ups of women, critics like Rabo and Indabawa argue, is alien in content and form and exposes audiences to corrupting influences.⁷ Moreover the intent of the filmmakers, they argue, is merely to use women to make money. These critics thus link their critiques of spectacle both to the sorts of anti-imperialist rhetoric of the third cinema filmmakers and to religious arguments about protecting both the sanctity of the female body and the vulnerable female from exposure to harmful influences that I discussed in the previous chapter.

Filmmakers are quite aware of these critiques. In their films and interviews with the popular press, they demonstrate an awareness of audience and are often self-reflexive about the content and form of their media, a self-reflexivity I will discuss in more detail in the next two chapters. However, they often argue that their spectacular presentations are reflecting "reality" both in reflecting the way people live their lives and in exposing public secrets. The filmmaker Abbas Sadiq, for example, told me that he grew up in the cosmopolitan city of Jos wearing jeans and listening to hip-hop. When such "alien" conventions are used in his films, he is merely reflecting his own reality. "It's not that everyone who does a Hausa film is a Hausa." In fact, he

⁶ Rabo went on to express his opinion that Hausa films were exploiting women: "it is somebody's daughter; it is somebody's wife next time. To our culture we don't allow that. Because you are exposing her, you are abusing her..." (McCain, "Interview with Alhaji").

⁷ Although Rabo was notorious for his harsh treatment of filmmakers, there are a sizeable number of filmmakers who are also troubled by the singing and dancing sequences in films, for aesthetic and cultural reasons. I discuss this later in footnote 60.

said that even if you went to the houses of their critics “you will see their children putting on Western wears, but they say we shouldn’t put them” (personal interview).

Other filmmakers and artists have told me that in order to make their point about corruption, they have to show the behaviour they are criticizing.⁸ As I noted in the previous chapter, hip-hop artist Nazir Ahmad Hausawa framed such exposure through a hadith about challenging evil behaviour. Exposing hypocrisy and injustice, he told me, is a form of self-defence: “You have to give your evidence” (McCain, “Video” 48) Producer Aminu Bala Mailalle, whose controversial *cinema verité* film *Bakar Ashana* set in an actual brothel was subsequently banned by the Kano State Censorship Board in 2004, told me, “the films that we make are warnings and reminders to make people think. You have to show good behaviour and bad behaviour.” He had made the film, he said, in order to warn girls, who often flocked to Kano trying to be put in films and ended up going into prostitution, about how much they would suffer if they fell into such a lifestyle. He further told me he wanted to make a film that would show how politicians are “spoiling children, with drugs and thuggery, and ruining people so that they have no work to do. [...] They are just stealing money and going to outside countries. [...] What

⁸ The film medium became even more scandalous than the novels because it took the interaction between men and women out of the private imagination of the reader and placed such interaction and women’s bodies on screen for everyone to see. Abdalla Uba Adamu describes the controversy over the film *Malam Karkata*, made in the late 1990s, about a phony Islamic scholar who insists that women sleep with him before he will help them with magical cures. His name Karkata “twisted” apparently refers to a sexual position. The film caused such outrage after its first public screening that marketers refused to distribute the film (“Private Sphere” 15; *Transglobal* 80-81). Adamu points out that these films were critiqued for exposing private spaces and women’s bodies that are not supposed to be seen, as well as for disrespecting Islam and disgracing Muslims. Adamu notes that “the technique adopted by Hausa video filmmakers in communicating these moral messages to their audience would seem to clash with these injunctions that respect privacy in all forms” (*Transglobal* 83). Yet, it was this “insider’s” exposé of hypocrisy, this shocking spectacle that warns viewers that people are not always what they seem, that the filmmakers often argue as justification for the sorts of stories they tell. One crew member, who worked on *Malam Karkata*, told me that the film was merely trying to expose how fraudulent “malams” take advantage of women coming to them for help (personal communication). The executive producer claimed that the film was based on a true story, and the actor who had played the role of Malam Karkata, Alhaji Kasim Yero claimed, “Here we want to warn Muslim teachers that beside this terrible sin of unlawful sex which will be severely punished by Allah, they are also endangering their health with their lust” (qtd. in Adamu, “Private Sphere” 16). As Larkin points out in southern Nigerian films, the filmmakers depict “people who appear to be one thing and are revealed to be something else” (*Signal* 190), and, indeed, these depictions are intended to “provoke and affront the audience” (184) and enact reform.

they are doing I hear it and I see it. I want to show people so that they see it too. We are making films so that people will understand and go back and reform. If we don't do it, they won't repent" (personal interview). In contrast to the criticism of spectacle that overlaps with third cinema critiques of "digestive" cinema that merely pacifies audiences, filmmakers present their works as a form of spectacle that reflects underlying social conditions and teaches audiences moral lessons.⁹

This concept of spectacle seems to be more in line with South African literary critic Njabulo Ndebele's definition of the term. He points to spectacle in South African literature, as the "highly dramatic, highly demonstrative form of literary representation." Ndebele uses the term to refer, not to pacifying entertainment, but to the highly politicized didactic representation, which he argues is spectacle that reflects an underlying reality. Although he critiques spectacular representations in literature for having "run its course," he points out that such literature comes from a context where the absurd is the real:

Everything in South Africa has been mind-bogglingly spectacular: the monstrous war machine developed over the years; the random massive pass raids; mass shootings and killings; mass economic exploitation, [...] the luxurious life-style of whites: servants, all encompassing privilege, swimming pools, and high commodity consumption; the sprawling monotony of architecture in African locations, which are the very picture of oppression. (41)

His description, with some modifications, could apply to a contemporary Nigeria, with its extravagant political elite, entrenched ethnic discrimination, oppressed masses and widespread violence by government and non-state actors.

⁹ In this concern to reflect the "truth," they are similar to the rappers in Niger whom Adeline Masquelier writes "defend their activities by invoking their commitment to truth" (252). As one rapper told her, "We are here to sing about reality. We cannot lie, everything we say is real. We describe reality" (252).

Again, there are competing definitions of the spectacular here. While Solanas and Getino present it as pacifying entertainment made only for commercial purposes and argue for a more political cinema, Ndebele critiques spectacle in South African fiction for the opposite problem, a sterile black and white didacticism which takes away from the nuance of everyday life. He, too, hopes for a positive impact on an audience, but argues for a more complex literature in form and content that celebrates the everyday struggles of ordinary people.

I find the tension between these two almost oppositional presentations productive.¹⁰ I am interested in the position between these two ideas of spectacle—where the entertainment meets the politics. The spectacle in Hausa films, and to some extent also in many English-language Nollywood films, I argue, falls into this middle territory—commercial entertainment that nevertheless also draws attention to the spectacular corruption and inequalities in Nigerian society.¹¹ Brian Larkin has identified the melodramatic aesthetics of spectacle as an “aesthetics of outrage,” in which “spectacular transgression” becomes a “mode of address designed to outrage and provoke the viewer” (*Signal*186). As opposed to Solanas and Getino’s idea of spectacle and entertainment as a pacifying force, Larkin argues that this “outrage provides a public witnessing to the sorts of activities people are involved in and, through the bodily reaction to them, enacts a moral commentary on society itself” (186). He gives the example of the moment in Kenneth Nnebue’s film *Glamour Girls* when a member of the Lagosian elite engages in sexual activity with a prostitute, only to discover that she is his sister, a moment that

¹⁰ While Solanas and Getino see spectacle as part of consumerist apolitical cinema and Ndebele presents it as a dramatic “exterior” political literature, these two definitions of spectacle are not entirely oppositional. Solanas and Getino and Ndebele all believe that there needs to be a move from merely witnessing abuse to a rational response on how to overcome it (Ndebele 49-53; Solanas and Getino 7).

¹¹ Adejunmobi points out that the commercial is not always capitalist. The West African market system appeals to a broad base without necessarily being controlled by those with large-scale interests and, she claims, “enable a wider range of voices focused on the subjectivity of communities living on the margins of the global economy to emerge from within those communities and for such voices to take centre stage locally and regionally” (14).

dramatizes the shocking depravity of a Lagos elite and provides a moment of self-awareness for that self-same elite.

While Larkin applies this “aesthetics of outrage” only to southern Nigerian films and argues that Hausa films are characterized more by a preoccupation with “romantic love” (195), I believe that his observations about the didactic power of “spectacular transgressions” are equally applicable to the Hausa films I discuss in this chapter. Further, I argue that in Hausa films there is also often a frontal presentational aesthetic, what Matthias Krings, building on Martin Rubin’s concept, has identified as the “showstopper,” that is both entertaining and didactic. He identifies these showstoppers both in singing and dancing sequences and in the long sermonizing monologues that intersperse Hausa films (“Conversion” 59-60). Hausa filmmakers self-consciously present the spectacular content of their films in spectacular forms that provoke discussion and debate among their audiences.

In the rest of this chapter, I will extend Larkin’s ideas on the “aesthetics of outrage” in Nollywood and Krings’ ideas on the “showstopper” in Kannywood by examining how filmmakers claim to use entertainment spectacle to teach audiences through engaging in socio-political critique. I will trace this through three different genres of Hausa screen media:¹² the “Sentimental” melodrama, the “Chamama” comedies, and finally the music videos that intersperse both types of films and have become an independent genre of their own. Within these genres, which are also made up of many sub-genres, I discuss “spectacular techniques” used within and across the genres, such as melodramatic storylines, direct address, showstoppers, the guerrilla technique of incorporating audiences into the film and so on. While these texts often

¹² I borrow this term from Lindiwe Dovey, who argues that “the term African screen media [...] recognizes not only the plurality of styles and genres within African film production but also the increasingly diverse formats (video, television, new media) in which films are made” (2). It is particularly useful to my study here, which looks not only at full-length films but also music videos.

duplicate and extend the sorts of exposure of private corruption that I explored in Balaraba Ramat Yakubu's novels, I will conclude by examining contradictions within filmmakers' use of spectacle. These spectacles may expose corruption, immorality, and injustice but also sometimes reproduce and render invisible other corrupt and unequal power relations, including those between the genders.

Setting the Stage: The Actors and Genres of the Hausa film industry

Hausa filmmakers and others associated with the film industry are popularly identified with two extremes of Hausa society, both of them in the margins of patriarchal public discourse. First, these artists' choice to enter the film industry, popular critics argue, places them on the moral margins of society, an entertainment world that takes on the same ambiguous morality of the Sabon Gari world of bori, praise singers, and prostitutes, which I discussed in Chapter 1.¹³ Second, on the other hand, the mostly young men who make up the film industry¹⁴ have often entered it with a passion for narrative formed from years of watching Indian films and hearing oral stories at home with their mothers. They thus become associated with the feminine world

¹³ As Aminu Bala Mailalle told me, "You left your country and your family to come do research on our film industry [...] But our own people don't take us as anything important. They just take us as rascals and layabouts and people who have no work to do. [...] They don't see us as having any worth" (personal interview). There are variations on how film is characterized in various parts of the north, however. As Muhammad Rabi'u Rikadawa, a Kaduna-based actor and producer who had been acting since the 1980s in drama groups, radio, television and film told me, Kaduna, the former headquarters of the northern region where people from many different ethnicities and religions mixed, was more liberal than Kano. He claimed that most people in Kaduna were more helpful to filmmakers and saw film as a profession, unlike Kano, where people assumed filmmakers were scoundrels and layabouts (personal interview). I observed that in Jos, the atmosphere surrounding film productions also seemed more relaxed than those in Kano. Though, of course, conservative critics in all of these cities would have a similar take on film, cities like Kaduna and Jos have fewer formal restrictions than Kano. Because until the 2007 censorship crisis, the main film market was in Kano, however, my research focuses on the industry there.

¹⁴ There are many women who act as producers, singers and actors; however, the bulk of the directors and other crew on set and in the editing studio are men. Women who become involved in film are even more stigmatized than the men in the industry, often facing accusations that they are prostitutes. Women who enter the industry as producers, without having previous experience as actresses, are also sometimes taken advantage of by the men in the industry, who charge them more money than usual for their services—a problem frequent enough that there is a name for it in the industry "kantawaye." Safiyyah Adam has interviewed female producers about this problem for her MA thesis: "A Study of Challenges Faced by Female Executive Producers of home video in Kanywood."

that Beverly Mack argues makes up the innermost core of Hausa society (*Muslim Women* 7).

Although there are many members of the film industry who come from the middle class and have a university education, the fact that they are devoting their lives to creating narratives, seen as part of the women's world, rather than employing themselves in more "useful" activities,¹⁵ means that their critics often characterize them as unserious layabouts. Perhaps because these men who make films are in an ambiguous position of power, simultaneously associated with the ruling patriarchy and the women who are ruled by the patriarchy, their narratives often waver back and forth between male and female perspectives, sometimes reinforcing and sometimes challenging patriarchal norms, even, at times, in the same texts. By framing their stories as sermons, however, they transition from the feminine and disreputable world of entertainment to the masculine and respectable world of religious instruction.

The early novels and the films that grew and spread parallel to the novels were created by young people, often from the lower classes, who engaged in generational conflict, challenging their elders about conventions surrounding marriage and careers and exposing abuse in the home. By the 2000s, as Adamu points out, two major divisions in the film industry seem to have developed: film communities surrounding what was called "Sentimental" films and the "Chamama" comedy films ("Private Passions" 287-288).¹⁶

¹⁵ Ousseina Alidou points out that in Hausa society the entertaining *tatsuniya*, or oral tale, had been dominated by women, while religious and historical writings had been dominated by men (141-142). She argues that the relegation of women's forms also occurs in the marginalization of the "love novellas" written by women (148). The films that continue the oral tradition and overlap in many ways with the popular literature that grew up alongside them, are mostly directed and edited by men, however, which places these men engaging in "unserious" entertainment in a position of ambiguous respectability.

¹⁶In "The Emergence and Characteristics of Kannywood," Abdalla Uba Adamu further breaks down the division into four groups, which he calls the "art" filmmakers, largely made up of the first generation of filmmakers, the "sentimental," the rebellious "young Turks" who find inspiration in Indian films, the *chamama* comedy films, and the "non-ethnic Hausa" films into which he bunches films by Igbo and Yoruba producers and other ones performed by "non-ethnic" Hausa actors (285-294). While I agree with him that the internal divisions within the Hausa film industry are more complex than the Sentimental/*chamama* division, I disagree with his separating "non-ethnic" Hausa from the major sentimental filmmakers. I think such "non-ethnic" filmmakers are far more integrated into the mainstream Hausa film industry than he implies. And while there are divisions between filmmakers like Iyantama

The mostly melodramatic Sentimental films, which Adamu notes “specialize in romantic storylines with ‘modern’ stage settings of big houses and flashy cars,” are similar thematically and structurally to Indian films (“Private Passion” 287-288) and usually have a larger budget and longer production times than Chamama films. From what I have observed, the “Sentimental” films, made up of romances, adventures, and social family dramas, seem to be more closely related to the sorts of narratives found in the novels and the sorts of films that originally overlapped with and were adapted from the novels in the early 1990s. Although “Sentimental” films, tend to be more flamboyant and choreographed than their predecessors from the 1990s, these older filmmakers, as Adamu has noted, generally play elders in “Sentimental” films (“Emergence” 289). Many popular novelists, such as Nazir Adam Salih, Ibrahim Birniwa, and Majeej El Hajeej, some of whom were writing in the 1990s, continue to write scripts for Sentimental films.

While both Sentimental and Chamama filmmakers grew out of drama groups of the sort Aminu Kano started in the 1940s and which by the 1980s were making films for television, the story-driven Sentimental films seem to be more closely linked to the novels. Chamama films, on the other hand, seem to be the most closely related to the drama that still continues to be performed live, a correlation I will discuss further in my longer section on Chamama. Anecdotally, women are thought to be more drawn to the Sentimental films, whereas men in “serious” masculine professions often claim to like Chamama films more. As opposed to the story-driven Sentimental films, Chamama films tend to be character-driven. And while Sentimental films tend to have more carefully developed scripts and take about a week, sometimes longer, to shoot, Chamama films, from what I have observed, are often made quickly

and Alkanawy’s family films and the racier Sentimental films, I think the division could also just be a generational one, since, as he points out many of the performers who acted in “art films” appear as elders in “Sentimental” films (289). I personally think Sentimental films are often more aesthetically adventurous than the so-called “art films.”

in a day or two and sometimes have only a scene-list rather than a script. If there is a script, it is often used only as a rough guide and does not seem to be overly studied by the actors. Chamama films are usually comedies, performed by a stock list of comedians who feature both on television and in movies and perform the same character over and over in a variety of contexts. Adamu points out that most of these films specialize “in producing slapstick comedies based on rustic or other simple settings and revolving around a central charlatan character, Dan Ibro (played with gusto by Rabilu Musa Danlasan)” (“Private Passion” 288), but in recent years D’an Ibro’s typecast sidekicks such as the village idiot D’an Auta (Abubakar Suleiman) or the crotchety old man Baba Ari (Aminu Ali) have become stars in their own right around whom entire films revolve.¹⁷ The audience tends to watch these films less for the story and more for the comedy produced by typed character actors.¹⁸ The episodic comedy routines in Chamama films

¹⁷ When I asked popular comedian Aminu Ali, who plays a typecast crotchety old man Baba Ari in most of his films, for a definition of Sentimental and Chamama films, he told me that the main difference was that Chamama was comedy and that it didn’t take a whole lot of money to make people laugh. Sentimental, on the other hand, dealt more with modern city life and themes of love and family, including a lot of singing and dancing. While Chamama also sometimes deals with modern city life, they tend to focus more often on “traditional” village life of the ordinary poor people. He also said that if people said Chamama films did not have scripts it was a lie. The major Chamama directors, like Comrade Umar Jalo, always provides scripts for his actors (personal interview). When I observed on the sets of several Chamama films, I usually did not see actors following scripts and I was never given a script in the Chamama films I was asked to act in. Instead, a scene list that the director would control, sometimes scribbling in new scenes, seemed to be more common. Because Chamama films tend to be cheaper to make, there are far more producers who are just entering the industry and who may not perform to a certain “standard.” This was a problem that comedian and director Mikail Isa Bin Hassan noted, saying that too many unprofessionals had come into the industry. Bin Hassan, who plays the character Gidigo in comedy films yet who has goals to make “quality” films and went to FESPACO in 2011, defined Chamama as a “film that won’t cost too much money to make and one that is low quality and nothing is done professionally.” Unlike Aminu Ali he distinguished between comedy films that were well directed and Chamama. In his comedy film *Rikita-Rikita*, he used all the Chamama actors, but he claimed it was not Chamama because he spent a lot of time preparing it. (personal interview)

¹⁸ The actors in Chamama and Sentimental films are generally separate. In fact, if non-star actors appear too many times in Chamama films, they are seen as hurting their chances at breaking into the more prestigious Sentimental industry. One friend, who is one of the most respected scriptwriters and producers in the industry, expressed his concern to me that by agreeing to appear in several Chamama films, I was ghettoizing myself. He determined to cast me in one of his higher budget Sentimental films in order to show people what I was “capable” of. There are exceptions to the divisions in these film communities, however, where the stars are concerned. Saratu Gid’ad’o, for example, acts equally in Chamama and Sentimental—usually as the brazen typed character Daso in Chamama films and a variety of roles in Sentimental films. There are some producers who spice up their Sentimental dramas with a Chamama actor like Ibro or Baba Ari for comic relief to melodramatic plots, not unlike Shakespeare’s use of fool characters to add comic relief to his tragedies, and star Sentimental actors will occasionally appear in high budget comedies alongside Chamama actors.

lend themselves to being ripped from the larger narrative and watched individually on cell phones, just as are the song and dance sequences which intersperse both kinds of films.

From the early 2000s, both genres also almost always (though this has been changing in the last few years) include at least one or two song and dance sequences: Sentimental films feature Indian-style dream sequences, whereby actors mime singing to pre-recorded music, and dance sometimes with a group of back-up dancers; Chamama films, on the other hand, tend to parody the style and performances of the Sentimental films, transforming the amorous expressions and choreographed dances of the higher budget films into comedy.¹⁹ These song and dance sequences, from concept to sound, are an obvious borrowing from Indian films, but over the years have developed their own aesthetic norms and have given rise to an entire music industry in Kano.

To the major genre divisions of Chamama and Sentimental in the film industry, therefore, I would add the music industry, which grew out of the Sentimental film industry, but which has become increasingly independent. Although still closely related to the film industry, former “playback singers,” who once merely produced music for the films now release music video albums of their own. These music videos usually feature the singer alongside backup dancers and singers, and sometimes also feature performers from the Sentimental and Chamama film industries. The same song, therefore, is sometimes used both in a narrative film, with the actors of the film miming the lyrics to further the storyline, and also in a music video album featuring a different visual story that includes the actual singer. The music that imitates the film sound, with its aural similarity to Indian film music—a call and response between a male voice and a high pitched woman’s voice—is called *nanaye*. There is also a growing hip-hop movement,

¹⁹ Earlier films like *In da So da Kauna*, adapted from Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino’s bestselling novel in 1994, also made use of song, but it was performed within the diegesis of the film without accompanying dancing or spectacle used in later Sentimental films, which used more Indian-film style song and dance sequences.

often made up of actors in the film industry, which tends to be a hybrid of nanaye and hip-hop influenced by Southern Nigerian and American hip-hop.²⁰

The major distinction between the film form and the stand-alone music video form is that the music video enclosed within the frame of the narrative film contributes to the interpretation of the larger film, whether demonstrating the love between characters, revealing unspoken secrets, filling in narrative, or subverting the ostensible message of the film.²¹ Stand alone music videos, on the other hand, are either released as singles or in albums of 5-10 short videos and often narrate condensed stories of their own through catchy rhythms and lyrics. It is like the genre difference between a novel and a collection of short stories. Both forms, however, are often ripped at computer download centres and placed onto phones as stand-alone music videos, which circulate through Bluetooth and other wireless technologies. Widespread mobile phone use means that the short form appeals to an audience “on-the-go,” who can consume the music video even if they do not have time or the electricity to sit in one place to watch an entire film. The short form of the music video is also used to sell films, as the song and dance sequences are mixed in with excerpts from the action to become trailers for the films.

These three intermedial genres of Sentimental, Chamama, and music videos overlap, and all three engage in techniques of self-reflexive spectacle, which purports to teach as well as entertain. Like Aminu Kano’s plays, Hausa films link personal and domestic politics to national

²⁰ Abdalla Uba Adamu breaks down “secular” Hausa contemporary music into three genres: First, the “nanaye” singers who “follow the pattern of Hindi-film music, with romantic themes delivered through male and female vocal performances” that usually have “high-pitched soprano” female voices, “coupled with rhyming chorus.” Second, he identifies what he calls “Technopop,” which he claims contains “lesser amount of female accompaniment and mainly focused on social issues.” He notes that Technopop singers often sing for politicians. The third he identifies is rap, which he claims is “based on American hardcore rap structure, and contains only male voices singing about mainly social issues” (“Poetic Barbs” 11).

²¹ Popular singer Abubakar Sani told me another major difference is that while film songs usually feature a man and woman singing to each other that album songs focus more on the primary male singer, who may have a female back-up chorus (personal interview). This focus on a solo rather than a duet is not always a focus on the man, however, as there are also popular female singers like Fati Nijar, Maryam A. Baba and others.

and global politics. And while early third cinema theorists disparaged a cinema of “show or amusement,” as “one more consumer good [...] destined to satisfy only the ideological and economic interests of the [...] lords of the world film market” (Solanas and Getino 1), Hausa creative artists see the entertaining form not only as pleasurable but also as the best way to get their message across.

Each entertaining genre I discuss here, Sentimental, Chamama, and music video, allows filmmakers to couch instruction in a pleasurable form that ensures audiences will pay attention, thus melding politics with entertainment.²² Spectacle and melodrama exaggerates and sensationalizes the message, yet also paradoxically reveals parallels to real life. Audiences are not lulled into the story but are rather constantly dynamically engaged with the film in a way that recalls Brecht’s alienation effect.²³ The films, like the novels of Balaraba Ramat Yakubu and Al-Khamees Bature Makwarari, purport to expose secret corruption, but the fictional form allows them to say things that could not normally be said. The films reveal public secrets, including the

²² As novelist and screenwriter Nazir Adam Salih told me, he makes his works seventy per cent entertainment and thirty per cent message because if the book is boring, the person won’t stay to finish the novel let alone get any message out of it (personal interview). The claim by filmmakers and actors that they are “teaching” or “preaching” is very common and one I have heard over and over in my interviews and in other popular media interviews with Kannywood figures. Saratu Gidado, who in her films often plays loud-mouthed brazen women, for example, told me that she first became interested in film when she was working as a primary school teacher: “those of us who act are like teachers. In film you teach both adults and children. Those who watch learn a lesson from us. So I said let me use the talent that God has given me” (McCain, “Saratu” 08). Rashida Adamu Mai Sa’a also told me, “I want people to know that the reason I entered the film industry was to instruct people.” She thinks films are a powerful medium through which to pass messages. “You can study and preach, but people won’t understand what you are saying. But if you make a film, even a short film of only two minutes, you can send a message on anything you want to say. People will understand and make use of it” (McCain, “I entered” 11). While obviously this framing of film as moral instruction is a way to make an often denounced profession respectable, the didactic purpose is often reflected in the techniques used within the films as I illustrate in this chapter.

²³ Brecht defines the alienation effect, which he elsewhere calls the “A-Effect” as “turning the object of which one is to be made aware, to which one’s attention is to be drawn, from something ordinary, familiar, immediately accessible, into something peculiar, striking and unexpected” (143). The attitude of the actor using the A-effect Brecht advocates for is “a socially critical one.[...] In this way his performance becomes a discussion (about social conditions) with the audience he is addressing” (139).

problems of the home, but because they are fiction, they act like illustrations in sermons, showing the effects of bad behaviour without specifically slandering a specific person.²⁴

In the rest of this chapter, I will first examine the didactic elements in several sensational Sentimental melodrama films which echo some of the themes of exposure explored in Yakubu's novels, whereby the exposure of secrets in the home becomes spectacle; second, I will examine the moments of political critique in Chamama comedy films, which are generally watched more for their entertaining slapstick episodes than for their larger plots; I will examine how direct address often found in both Sentimental and Chamama film forms overlaps with what Matthias Krings has called showstoppers, which will bring me to my third section, tracing how this direct address combined with singing and dancing in films and stand-alone music videos becomes both a source of passing lessons to the audience and a source of great anxiety to its critics, often because they display women's bodies. One element running through all three genres is breaking the fourth wall through direct address.

Spectacular exposure of hypocrisy in "Sentimental" melodramas

The trailer for the film *Mai Daraja* flashes English subtitles of the voiceover in English²⁵ that reads "in a home of a semi-large family, Intrigues!!! Crisis!!! Hypocrisies!!! Tensions!!! Stresses and lots of controvercies [*sic*] on the increase all as a result of inheritance Which divide them into fanctions [*sic*]." This sort of melodramatic story was typical of the sort of film being made when I first began to study Hausa films in 2005, the contents of the film ironically belying

²⁴ In her interview with me for the *Weekly Trust* fashion insert *Tambari*, for example, Saratu Gidado made a distinction between showing "what is happening" in society, which she purports she does in films, and the fiction of the specific films she acts in. She said, "I want people to know that everything I do in film is acting. It is fiction, it's not real. We are showing a lesson. We show what is happening, but it is acting, not real life. [...] Some people misinterpret me and think that when I act negative roles, it is my habit. People should understand that outside of film, I am not like that. I am a very simple person and a good woman." (McCain, "Saratu" 08).

²⁵ Trailers for Hausa films often feature English voiceovers, perhaps in an attempt to attract a wider audience.

its title *Mai Daraja* meaning “The respectable person.” Here the wealthy, elite home that is supposedly a protected, respectable place is represented as exploding with scandal and hypocrisy.²⁶

Brian Larkin follows Peter Brooks by pointing out that melodrama, which is the genre that the Sentimental Hausa films mostly falls into, works through excessiveness. It works by “taking the basic material of reality and charging it with a larger significance, exaggerating it so that the essential moral polarities that underlie everyday life are made clear” (*Signal* 182). Although Brooks was writing about 17th and 18th century French and American melodrama, his observations are relevant to the contemporary use of the form in Nigeria. “Melodrama,” he argues, “comes into being in a world where the traditional imperatives of truth and ethics have been violently thrown into question, yet where the promulgation of truth and ethics, their instauration as a way of life, is of immediate, daily, political concern” (11). Hausa society is in such upheaval as it attempts to negotiate between multiple cosmopolitan influences to identify truth and moral behaviour in an increasingly unstable world—a world, where, as Larkin notes, people are not always what they seem (*Signal* 202). Such instability is reflected in narratives where the titles and metaphoric names that imply goodness are ironically undermined by the immoral actions of the characters, such as in Munir Katsina’s novel *Zab’i Naka* where a mother named Shiryayya (good order) turns to prostitution or in the film *Mai Daraja*, where the respectable home is chaotic and full of intrigues. These upheavals that Larkin observes in the

²⁶ Such representations follow similar ironies such as those Linda Hunter and Chaibou Elhadji Oumarou point out in Munir Katsina’s novel *Zab’i Naka*, where the characters names become ironic: “The mother (good order) [her name is Shiryayya (good order)] turns to prostitution, the complete antithesis of her name; Na-muduka [He is all of ours] evolves as a caring and generous man, but obtains the money for his philanthropy illegally. The characters themselves are metaphors for an Islamic aesthetic, but also for the character of modern Nigeria, replete with corruption, poverty, and immorality” (60).

Hausa films of the early 2000, I witnessed intensify during the censorship crisis of 2008-2011 and the films I examine in this chapter lead up to that moment.

Melodrama is set in a world of good and evil and its “spectacular enactments [...] seek constantly to express these forces and imperatives, to bring them to striking revelation, to impose their evidence” (Brooks 13). The authors of the melodramatic Hausa novels and films that I examine, like the gothic novels of 17th century England, are fascinated by “what lies hidden in the dungeon and the sepulchre” and, through narratives about hidden corruption, attempt to bring “to violent light and enactment the forces hidden and entrapped there” (19). By exposing secret corruptions in an often excessive manner, filmmakers present themselves as preachers, bringing the bad out into the light to show it for what it is and thus re-establish the good. Since many of the films are made by young people, they often act as tools of critique by a younger generation against an elder generation they present as polluted.

In the previous chapter, I looked at how Balaraba Ramat Yakubu “writes back” at patriarchal narratives in her novels. She uses the technique of melodramatic storylines and direct address to sermonize about and expose secret corruptions and hypocrisies in the home. In this section, I will look at two films made by the edgy production company 2-Effects Empire, which rival *Wane Bare ba Bare Ne* for their scandalous storylines. Both films flamboyantly expose secret sins, including incest, and are posed as sermons from the youth to their elders.

The 2-Effects Empire film *Gurnani*, which the trailer for *Mai Daraja* that I described at the beginning of this section precedes, is an exaggerated warning about men who try to keep their families in strict seclusion. In the film, a man refuses to allow his wife or children out of the home, except to go to school, and impresses on all of his employees the importance of making sure the children don’t leave the house. He tells a well-meaning neighbor, the community liman

(the prayer leader), who questions his lack of neighbourliness that his children “will stay here in this house. I’m not going to let them go about with your children picking up all kinds of [bad] manners.” His wife also warns him about keeping his children at home like a prison “God is the one who makes the laws, not you,” but he insists that the best way to raise them is to make sure they don’t go out.

This supposedly “protected” space, however, becomes a site of dysfunction that goes from bad to worse. It is impossible to isolate his family from the outside world. One of his sons bribes the housekeeper to buy him pornography. The man scares away his daughter Asma’u’s suitor with a gun and beats her for entertaining the young man. His youngest son, twisted by watching violent films on satellite television finds his father’s gun and threatens to shoot his mother. When the man discovers that another daughter Nafi has started a love affair with his personal assistant, he murders the young man, and Nafi hangs herself. He covers up the murder and suicide by burying them both in his walled compound. In the meantime, another daughter, Aisha, who has no access to interaction with any other men outside the home, falls in love with her brother Jamil and begs him to love her—what Isa Yusuf Chamo notes is “an extreme consequence of the father’s extreme paranoia” (74). Deranged with unrequited love for her brother, she poisons her remaining sister, Asma’u, out of jealousy. The housekeeper, who has witnessed it all, attempts to blackmail the father by threatening to expose his secret if he does not either marry her or give her money. When he refuses to agree to her conditions, she brings the police. In the end, all secrets of the home are revealed. The surviving daughter Aisha is revealed to be pregnant. When she identifies the father of the pregnancy by pointing in his direction, it is ambiguous whether she is pointing at her father or her brother.

Gurnani is unarguably a sensational melodrama, filled with exaggerated spectacle. It is also an agenda piece from the perspective of the young whereby filmmakers point to the dangers of the isolated home and strict notions of purdah. While, for reasons of censorship,²⁷ it cannot show sexual corruption of the sort Larkin describes in *Glamour Girls*, where a man discovers he has been engaging in sexual foreplay with his own sister—acts the audience sees—(186), the outrageous implication of incest in the revelation of Aisha’s pregnancy performs the same function. Danja and Yakubu make use of the black and white aesthetics of melodrama and the sensationalism of murder and incest to attack what they see as patriarchal protectiveness of the home. The entertainment is combined with an “educational” aesthetic. Not only does the man who attempts to isolate his family end up ruining his family, but his control of his home becomes more about covering over his own hypocritical behaviour, as a murderer and (possibly) an incestuous rapist than actually protecting his wards. The man of the house is wrong. The woman of the house, who tells him God makes laws and not him, is right. Young filmmakers therefore indirectly critique their conservative elders by slyly implying that they are either excessively paranoid or their attempts to control their children and close their houses are because they have something to hide. A “female” perspective, as represented by the mother, and a young perspective, as represented by the mostly adolescent children, corrects a patriarchal male one.²⁸

²⁷ Before the Kano State Censorship Board was formally instituted in 2001, films such as *Saliha*, *Alhaki Kwikwiyo Ne*, and others did show men and women touching each other, but with formal censorship, physical contact between the sexes was discouraged, even to the point where, in 2006, Abbas Sadiq stopped me from shaking hands with a man on the set of a film in which I was making a guest appearance. The head of the censors board Abubakar Rabo Abdulkarim told me there were instances in which men and women were allowed to make physical contact (McCain, “Interview with Alhaji”), and, indeed, on the set of 419 2, directed by Shariff Ahlan in 2006, I did shake hands with a man for the camera. But Sadiq’s concern about physical contact reflects an anxiety that is often seen in films, where a husband or wife will fall sick and their spouse sits some distance from them, wringing their hands.

²⁸ Other films have similar moments. In Aminu Bala Mailalle and Ahmad Alkanawy’s film *Jagora/Guidance*, for example, a wealthy and respected man is killed by the woman who works in his house. In the subsequent murder trial, the local liman testifies that the murdered man was a virtuous and respectable Muslim who gave alms, supported the mosque, and prayed publicly; however, the skillful female defense lawyer brings witnesses who reveal that the man in fact made a former maid pregnant, kept a mistress on the side and was attempting to rape the maid when she stabbed and accidentally killed him. Just as the generous Alhaji Gagarau in Yakubu’s novel *Wane Kare Ne*

The film implies that these two marginalized groups know better than the father, and indeed have more in common with a good Hausa society represented by the community liman. Where they have become corrupted, it is implied that it is because of the corrupted “tarbiyya,” home training, they received. The corruption flows from the father to the rest of his family.

Excessively scandalous moments displaying taboo subjects such as rape and incest run through many of the films, and it is questionable that such a piling up of spectacular detail is really performing much of a didactic function. But the filmmakers frame these scandalous storylines as necessary to teach about how to avoid sin. In, for example, the 2004 2-Effects Empire film *Jarida*, which like *Gurnani* was directed by Sani Danja and produced by Yakubu Mohammad, a woman Hajiya Larai, seduces her drunken son-in-law, D’an Soja, sleeping with him as one of the conditions from a boka (spiritualist) in creating a spell that will give her a large contract. Although Larkin has argued that Hausa films present “an idealized version of Hausa society,” which do not deal with the supernatural as often as southern Nigerian films (*Signal* 212), *Jarida* is just one of many films that show the harmfulness of going to a boka to try to influence one’s fate. The boka has told Hajiya Larai that once she chooses to purchase his services, she must do what he says or roam mad in the bush. When he tells her she must sleep with her son-in-law, she, like those who betray their loved ones in southern films such as Kenneth Nnebue’s *Living in Bondage* where Andy kills his wife Merit to gain wealth, finds herself betraying her daughter’s trust. She pries out of her daughter, Zahra, the confession about her husband’s secret drinking and uses that knowledge to seduce ‘Dan Soja when he is drunk. Although, like *Gurnani*, the film does not actually show any sexual activity, the implied adultery

Ba Bare Ba was publicly exposed as a hypocrite, the lawyer demonstrates in court that those attesting to his character did not really know him. Those who spent the most time with him knew he was a womanizer. The Day of Judgment in the Hereafter is reflected in this earthly court, where the guilty is exposed and the innocent vindicated. Indeed the exposure of the dead man’s sins by women was necessary in order to prove the maid’s innocence.

between mother-in-law and son-in-law is so scandalous that the filmmakers use several extra-textual moments outside the diegesis of the film to warn audiences that the actors are not truly engaging in sinful behaviour. In an opening screen before part 1 of the film begins, there is a notice that reads, “What the actors in this production do is not their character. They are performing this harmful behaviour in order to exhort and warn people.” At the end of part 1 of the film, after the closing title “Alhamdu lillah. We’ll meet again in part 2,” the actors Amina Garba and Sani Danja come out and face the camera in order to speak to the audience as their true selves as opposed to their filmic alter egos. Amina Garba, who plays the mother-in-law Hajiya Larai, expresses her embarrassment at what she had to portray in the role, but claims that it is a warning about trying to manipulate God’s will by going to bokas for spells.²⁹ Sani Danja, who plays the son-in-law D’an Soja, shakes his finger at the camera reminding the viewers that this is acting and not real life, and that he was quite embarrassed by the role as well.

In part two, to reinforce this lesson, the widowed Hajiya Larai’s pregnancy, which she had discovered in part 1, grows until she is no longer able to hide it. To her great shame, her body betrays her. It cannot contain her secret. The first signal that the Hajiya Larai has become pregnant is when, directly after the party she has planned to celebrate the contract she has received as a result of her sin, she vomits, visual shorthand in both Kannywood and Nollywood movies for discovering pregnancy. In the very next scene, her daughter Zahra also vomits. These embodied signals for pregnancy are moments of dramatic irony, cuing the audience in on the spectacular scandal of a mother and daughter both being pregnant by the same man before

²⁹ According to my female friends in Kano and Sokoto, the practice of going to “malams,” Islamic teachers who perform prayers for a fee, or “bokas,” spiritualists who perform magic for a fee, is quite prevalent among women. One friend once offered to take me to a “malam,” to have him say “prayers” for me to influence a certain situation. In *Jarida*, the pious malam refuses to do anything that will ensure that Hajiya Larai receives the contract, as it is sinful to try to force God to do anything, but he offers to pray for her. The boka, on the other hand, promises that she will receive the contract if she performs certain actions forbidden in Islam.

anyone else in the diegetic world of the film knows about it. Coming immediately after the party, the vomiting also serves as a visual indication that though you might enjoy your sins at the beginning, there will always be a punishment that follows. In the scene following Zahra's vomiting, Hajiya Larai tells D'an Soja that she is also pregnant. He looks around to make sure no one else has heard before encouraging her to go for an abortion. However, as this is a supernaturally induced pregnancy, it cannot be gotten rid of, no matter how many modern or traditional doctors she goes to, and as her stomach grows larger and more visible, she suffers the result of her body's betrayal in the shame that follows.

As in other public secrets, her daughter's in-laws gossip about her pregnancy, but the secret does not come out officially until after Zahra dies of a broken heart, shortly after giving birth. At the beginning of the film when Zahra first discovered her husband was a drunkard, she prayed, "Allah ya rufa mana asiri" (May God keep our secrets), but, as she is dying, she leaves behind a letter for her friend, exposing the secret that her husband had impregnated her mother.³⁰ Her friend reads the revelation out loud to the mourners who fill the home after her death.

The letter, like the novels discussed in the previous chapter, represents the voice of a woman who knows the depraved things that are going on in her house and brings them to the attention of a wider public by writing them down. The letter left behind by Zahra in *Jarida* becomes a technique by which both she and the filmmakers expose the secrets of her home and change life forever for those who remain behind.³¹ In this male-produced text, Zahra has to die

³⁰ Part 2 of the film revolves around exposing secrets. Hajiya Larai, furious with her friend Saratu for encouraging her to get in trouble and then abandoning her, exposes to another friend the secret that Saratu had an affair with her husband. In revenge, despite being warned by the boka that she would turn into a dog if she did so, Saratu goes to Zahra and exposes the secret that her husband had gotten her mother pregnant. During the moment when Saratu exposes the secret, she looks at the camera as if determined to expose the secret to the world.

³¹ In Gayatri Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" she describes one of her aunts Bhubaneswari who committed suicide and left a letter behind. The letter was only discovered ten years after her suicide, and the lack of attention to Bhubaneswari's story was one of the things that cause Spivak to "lament" that "the subaltern cannot

before the secret can come out to the rest of the family; however, her voice is heard by the community. Neither her husband nor her mother get away with their sins. Once D'an Soja and Hajiya Larai are shamed in front of the rest of the mourners, D'an Soja's own mother curses him, and he goes mad. Just as Hajiya Larai's sins of greed and incest are exposed through the pregnancy that takes over her body, D'an Soja's sins of drunkenness and incest reveal themselves in his madness, which eventually leads to his death when he accidentally drinks poison. The poison that he drinks finalizes the punishment that he had begun by drinking the "poison" of alcohol, leading him on the road to ruin. It is an embodied punishment, which is similar to those men suffer in Yakubu's novels. A similarly appropriate punishment is prepared for the mother-in-law's friend Saratu, played by comedienne Saratu Gidado, who arranged the visit with the boka and encouraged her to go ahead and sleep with her son-in-law. Her trafficking in magic results in a "back to sender" punishment.³² She is turned into a dog. This is a spectacular embodied punishment that literally enacts her character as an amoral trickster. She has betrayed her friend, taking her to the boka and then abandoning her once she has received the kickback from the boka. Her "pagan" actions have resulted in her transformation into an animal despised by Muslims. As Balaraba Ramat Yakubu editorializes with the proverb in the title of her novel, "sin is a puppy that follows you home."

Although Hajiya Larai is publicly shamed for her sexual sin, as is Yalwa in *Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare Ba*, she like Yalwa is given a second chance.³³ Perhaps this is because, unlike D'an

speak" ("Can" 63). The letter in *Jarida*, by contrast, enables the voice of the "subaltern" to be heard by her relatives and ultimately ends in her mother's reformation.

³² Signs around Nigeria advertise the services of spiritualists who can send curses "back to sender." The boka in *Jarida* warns Saratu that if she exposes Hajiya Larai's secret to her daughter, she will be turned into a dog.

³³ Just as Yalwa in *Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare Ba* was seen as having been introduced into her sinful adulterous lifestyle by her father (thus having received bad "tarbiyya), the mother-in-law is seen as being led astray by her hurt over the disdain of other women for her poverty and by her greedy selfish friend Saratu. Since both of these women's sins came as a result of other people sinning against them rather than out of their own inherent badness, they are both given second chances.

Soja who merely grows angry when reminded of his sin, Hajiya Larai has, at the prompting of her daughter, prayed to God to forgive her. Following her daughter's death, she repents, seeks out Qur'anic education with an Islamic scholar and becomes a Qur'anic teacher and preacher, teaching other women and raising both her illegitimate child and her orphaned grandchild in the right way. The ending of the second part of the film, reflects the ending of the first part, where Amina Garba, the actress who plays Hajiya Larai, reminds the audience that they are watching a sermon. The final moments of the film show Hajiya Larai preaching a sermon to other women, warning them against making her mistake of caring about worldly things. It is a redemptive moment that shows the value of exposing secret sins. Exposure gives those sinners, who have some humanity left in them, the opportunity to repent before they die and help other people stay on the straight path. The film takes the exposure of Zahra's letter to another level, reaching not just the family but thousands of audience members with its warning about trying to manipulate God's will. The spectacle in this melodrama of sin and repentance not only physically revolts those who imagine a mother-in-law sleeping with her son-in-law (a physical shudder that Sani Danja performs at the end of part 2 when he and Amina Garba assure the audience that they are only acting), but it also draws people in to receive the sermon at the end.

Jarida makes use of formal devices to reinforce the sermonizing. Matthias Krings describes "showstopper" elements in singing and dancing sequences that interrupt the "didactic" message of the film and which are criticized by "local critics" for distracting "the audience from paying attention to any moral lesson that the narrative frame may contain" ("Conversion" 59); however, he points out that another form of showstopper is modeled after preaching, "lengthy didactical monologues," which teach about religion and morality. *Jarida* has its share of entertaining songs and dances, but also makes use of the more serious sermonizing

showstoppers: when Zahra weeps and prays to God, seeking his strength after finding out about the incestuous affair between her mother and her husband, when her letter is read to the mourners after she dies, and when her reformed mother preaches to her students at the end. The sermon moves beyond the diegetic world of the film in the section at the end of part 1 when the actors Hajiya Amina and Sani Danja cast off their fictive identities and speak to the audience in their capacity as *masu fadakarwa* or *masu wa'azi*—admonition deliverers or preachers, as actors have often been listed in the closing credits of films following the implementation of shari'a law in Kano (Krings, "Conversion" 49). These moments reinforce the ostensible message of the film, though the film's titillating moments provide non-didactic entertainment, which I will discuss in my conclusion to this chapter.³⁴

The filmmakers Sani Danja and Yakubu Mohammad, through their production company 2-Effects Empire tend to make films dealing with some of the most shocking themes I've seen, including the first film I discussed *Gurnani*. They seem to be quite aware of the possibilities of direct address. In the 2010 film *Sai Na Dawo/Until I return*, Sani Danja, who plays the king of the fantasy 'Kalankasa kingdom', and Fati Yola, who plays his sister, speak directly to the camera about the importance of good leadership, asking "Why is Africa always left behind? The leaders take wealth out of the country, we have no light, water, education," points more relevant to Nigeria than the mythic kingdom they inhabit. Yakubu Mohammed, the director of the film, told me that he did so because

I wanted the message to go straight to the authorities concerned. Film is a replica of reality. When I want to drive home a very good message, I need to talk directly to you, [...] the authorities concerned and the people who have been affected. Let

³⁴ These contrasting moments of teaching and diversion provide what Hunter and Oumarou have argued is the tension and balance that is a crucial part of Hausa verbal aesthetics, attempting to bring about change through interrupting the didactic "meter" with an emotional "rhythm" (71-84).

them know, this is what is happening. [...] The reason why Sani [...] look[ed] straight into the camera [was] so that people will know that he is talking to them directly. (personal interview)

These performances seem to be designed, as Brecht noted of the “alienation affect,” to promote “discussion (about social conditions) with the audience” being addressed (Brecht 139) and reinforce the overall didactic message of the film. The black and white didacticism found in the melodramatic form is distilled and spoken to the audience. In the case of the film *Sai Na Dawo*, this sermon has more to do with the world of the audience than the world of the film itself, linking preaching about morality and the home to wider national and global politics. These moments are meant to elicit discussion from the audience, applying what the king from the mythic Ghanaian kingdom has said to the Nigeria in which they live. This idea of speaking directly to the audience with a moral message, and the concern with a politics that encompasses the local and the global is also one that is found in Chamama comedy films.

Techniques of political spectacle in Chamama comedy films

From my observations, cheaply made Chamama comedy films are more like entertaining stage drama than their Sentimental counterparts, reminding me of the improvisatory nature and rhythm that Karin Barber describes in her research on Yoruba travelling theatre (“Popular Reactions” 434). Indeed, the comedian Mato Yakubu (Nakunduba), who was involved in stage drama before drama groups began to film their performances, claims that “it was the tradition for stage dramas to always be in comedy form” (Giginyu, “Kannywood” 12). This proximity to live drama provides comedy troupes with a set of techniques gained from close interactions with

audiences, such as improvisation, direct address, exaggerated gestures and voices, and reliance on a set of stock characters.

The comedians play characters and character types, such as the trickster D'an Ibro, the grumpy old man Baba Ari, the village idiots D'an Auta and D'an Dolo, the stingy money-grubber Daushe, the brazen independent woman Daso, the village chief Sarki, the obsequious court sycophant Gatari, and so on, who explore what the character would do in each new situation that a film presents, much as trickster characters appear in each new folk tale.³⁵

Examples of such films are *Ibro Dan Siyasa (Ibro Politician)*, *Ibro Driver*, *Ibro Producer*, *Ibro Police*, *Ibro Makaho (Ibro Blind Man)*, *Dan Cana (The Chinese)*, *Siyasar Daushe (Daushe's Politics)*, *Ibro D'an Daudu*,³⁶ etc. There is less focus on the overall message than Sentimental films; however, messages are often inserted into moments of slapstick humour.

Comedian Aminu Ali, who is most known for his comedic roles as the crotchety old man Baba Ari, told me that he first started acting with drama groups before he entered film and that they use their "creativity" to build on and improvise the story. "Sometimes we have scripts but sometimes, because we have become experts, when we see the audience, we know the kind of play we will do for them" (personal interview, my translation). This style of live drama acting has been carried over into the Chamama film, comedians riffing on the script or storyline the director gives them to improvise dialogue.³⁷

³⁵ The comedians are obviously influenced by the oral tradition, but they are also influenced by transnational media that is also built on the oral traditions of other places, such as cartoons. The Loony Tunes cartoon "Tom and Jerry" is a favourite with many filmmakers, and I often observed these comedy clips pass around on BlueTooth. Mikail Isah Bin Hassan told me "Tom and Jerry" was one of his influences (personal interview).

³⁶ Rudolf Pell Gaudio has examined the spectacle in presenting stereotypes about the y'an daudu (transvestite) community film for laughs in *Ibro D'an Daudu* at length in his book *Allah Made Us*.

³⁷ The generally lower budget productions in which, like guerrilla theatre, sometimes the setting is improvised; the commitment to the Hausa speaking masses that make up their audience; and the claims of most of the practitioners I have spoken to that one of their main goals in filmmaking is to teach or enlighten their audience give Hausa language films strong resonances with the early goals of third cinema.

The creative possibilities that almost entirely improvised productions give to actors, directors, and editors is theoretically rich. Much of the brilliance of performances by Hausa comedians is exactly this freedom to improvise.³⁸ The episodic narrative structure and tendency of these films to be shot in long or medium shots with long takes, therefore, are entwined with spontaneous performances and become part of the aesthetics of Chamama. They also sometimes seem to be almost documentary in nature. One film I saw on the satellite television channel Africa Magic Hausa³⁹ showed comedian Aminu Ali, playing his stock role as the crotchety old man Baba Ari, stumbling through a train full of people. When I asked him about this scene, he told me that, as I suspected, the passengers knew nothing about the film until the train started moving, when they informed the passengers they would be filming (personal interview). This guerilla technique, like live theatre, pulls the audience into the performance, performing a similar function to what Solanas and Getino noted was an exciting new facet of guerilla cinema, engaging “the participation of people who, until then, were considered spectators” (9). The Chamama film made so often in improvised village or urban poor settings reflects the actual environment of real people. By pulling the audiences who gather around to watch the performances, in the case of village settings, or captive audiences, in the case of the train, into

³⁸ Cheaply made Sentimental films also sometimes have this improvisational aesthetic, which I observed in 2006 during my pre-dissertation research when I first began to go on film sets. On the five film sets I visited in Kano in 2006, I never saw a script. The director simply told the performers what to do. By 2010 when I started visiting Sentimental sets during my dissertation research, most of the sets I visited in Kaduna (as few films were being shot in Kano because of the censorship crisis) had scripts, though older actors often still improvised. While it could be that Sentimental films were being forced to become more “standardized” because of the Kano censorship crisis as Mohammad Rabi’u Rikadawa suggested (personal interview), it could also be that in 2010 I was visiting higher budget sets of more respected filmmakers. When I visited set of lesser known filmmakers in Sokoto in 2011 and another one in Jos in 2012, neither had scripts. The “Sentimental” set I visited in Sokoto also took on the guerilla documentary-style nature of the Chamama film *Daran dan Daram*, as they inserted me in the film as a visiting exchange student who they took to the market. We walked through the market with a camera, while real traders and craftsmen explained their work to me.

³⁹ I started watching the film on Africa Magic after the opening title so was not able to record the title. Aminu Ali told me that the name of the film was *Daran dan Daram*, but I could not independently verify this.

the film, they both reflect their audiences and make their audiences part of the spectacle.⁴⁰ By doing this they validate their claims to be reflecting the concerns of ordinary people and use the reactions of their live audiences to customize their film performances in much the same way they would in a stage performance.

This improvisatory acting means that the films are built more around episodic moments of comedy and the temporal inspiration of the comedians than a cohesive scripted storyline of the sort seen in Sentimental films.⁴¹ Although these cheaply made comedy films often have very loose plots and are watched mostly for laughs, the comedians, improvising as they do in live performances, often insert teaching moments and incisive political critiques into these comedic episodes. The comedians take seriously their role as entertainers but see the entertainment as going hand in hand with improving society. Aminu Ali told me that film is “medicine” and “preaching.” Laughter helps people forget their stress,⁴² but embedded within the entertainment are lessons about life. He told me repeatedly throughout our interview that drama and film was admonishment and sermonizing and that if audiences see the consequences of sins as performed in the play or film, they will avoid those sins in their own lives. When I asked him what he thought the importance of film was, he told me it is a path for preaching and admonishment about religion, about language, about culture and so on (personal interview).

⁴⁰ The fact that Chamama films are performed outside more often than the mostly interior Sentimental films gives them more opportunities to utilize live audiences. In *Ibro Ya Auri Baturiya*, which I will discuss in the next few pages, you see can heads popping over the walls of the village compound where the action is going on, fans trying to watch the live comedy. In one moment, Daushe, who has been accused of hiding the baturiya in his house, takes a villager into his house to show him that the baturiya is not there and then calls the villagers around to hear his speech that he is not hiding the baturiya. These villagers, of course, are made mostly of children and youth, as they are the ones who had been gathered around trying to catch a glimpse of the action. The live audience is pulled into the film as extras.

⁴¹ This episodic structure works both like the picaresque narrative structure in Abubakar Imam’s novel *Ruwan Bagaja* and like the “series of displays [...] strung together with little connection” described by Tom Gunning in his analysis of the early 20th century “cinema of attraction” (65).

⁴² Comedy is “like medicine,” he told me. He used to visit a man with high blood pressure to make him laugh and make him feel better.

The comedians Mikail Isah Bin Hassan and Isyaka Abubakar Jalingo, both of whom also make Sentimental films, have told me similar things. Bin Hassan said “film is a school that teaches people and corrects people.” He said that he sees filmmakers as teachers, and also as business people. They teach and they educate, so that films become “educative entertainment” (personal interview). Similarly, comedian Jalingo, who won best Nigerian Language film for his Sentimental film *Ciki Daya* at the Zuma Film Festival in 2010, told me he mixes “entertainment,” “instruction,” and “action” in his films. “All of our elders,” he told me

prefer comedy, because they can relax. Those with high blood pressure will feel better, as they are watching and laughing. If it is a film about family problems, in all of the houses that are watching it, you will find two of the three homes that watch it have that sort of problem. If it is a film about betrayal, people will recognize it, either he is betraying someone or someone has betrayed him. There is a message. (personal interview)

While the focus on comedy as a form of relaxing entertainment may seem to fall into the “pacification” Solanas and Getino critiqued, the combination of the idea of comedy as “medicine” and as “message” actually reveals a highly reflexive way of thinking about performance as a way to affect their audiences. Ali and the other comedians I talked to are very conscious of the effect that laughter has on the body. Brian Larkin points out, following Linda Williams’ concept of the bodily “spasm,” that the “spectacular transgression” in *Glamour Girls* is meant to “work on the body, generating physical revulsion” (*Signal* 186). Comedies are also meant to work on the body, through laughter, and this physical response, comedians argue, has a healing effect, reducing stress and high blood pressure. By characterizing themselves as doctors, who can heal the body, and as teachers, who teach the truth, these filmmakers parallel

themselves to the malams, Qur'anic teachers, who write verses from the Qur'an on wooden slates, and then wash these verses into water for people to drink. The teaching enters not only the mind of the recipient but the body, as medicine. The goal of laughter and the goal of teaching, thus, layer onto older forms of embodied and performed medicine.⁴³

While some of these lessons are inserted into acts that demonstrate the consequences of bad behaviour, they are also sometimes directly addressed to the audience, comic versions of the showstopper sermons I described in Sentimental films. When I asked Aminu Ali about times I had seen him speaking directly into the camera in his films, he told me that usually he would be talking about *tarbiyya* (the ethical “home training” children receive to make them into good Muslim members of society.) “If we are in a scene and I am the only one left, and we are doing the scene on *tarbiyya*. If I finish what I’m saying and the children have gone, I can turn—” (In the interview, he illustrated how he would look into the camera and go into an improvised monologue about those who misbehave.) “I will keep looking into the camera. It means I’m looking at the audience, not just the camera. If I look at the camera, those who see my eyes looking at them will not say that it is the camera I am looking at but that I am talking to the people. I am speaking directly to the audience.”⁴⁴

⁴³ This idea of performance as medicine also layers onto the less respectable embodied practices of the bori cult, in which a spirit mounts a person, who then performs a stock spirit character, which has much overlap with the highly stylized stereotypical performances in Chamama films. In “From Possession Rituals to Video Dramas: Some Observations of Dramatis Personae in Hausa Performing Arts,” Matthias Krings has noted the similarity in the stock characters performed in bori rituals and stock characters in Hausa “video dramas,” comparing Graham Furniss’s discussion of pre-film comedy genre of “*yan kamanci*, whereby occupational groups are mocked by using stock characters” to the “films of Rabilu Musa Danlasan alias Ibro” (165).

⁴⁴ This form of direct address is sometimes used in Nollywood comedies as well. It was used with particular effectiveness in Kingsley Ogoro’s hit film *Osuofia in London*. The London-based Nigerian barrister, who is trying to trick the obnoxious *Osuofia* out of his late brother’s inheritance, grows so frustrated with *Osuofia* that he rushes into the bathroom. Staring straight into the mirror/camera, he rants about how his attempts to speak his “perfect British accent” are undermined whenever he is with Nigerians. At one point, he directly addresses the Nigerian audience of the film: “You are laughing at me. You think I have a problem? You think I have a coconut problem?” This direct address reveals the psychological insecurities and hypocrisies of an alienated elite, addressed both to Nigerians abroad who would understand the concept of a “coconut problem” and to the larger mass audience of Nigerians at

While such direct address in Chamama films is usually funny and less serious than the sermons in Sentimental films, Ali points to it as a teaching moment. The comedy points out inconsistencies and ironies of human behaviour, and, although such teaching moments usually have to do with the immediate everyday concerns of society, the comedians also include moments of sophisticated political critique linking the neocolonial mentality of Nigeria's leaders to global imperialism.⁴⁵ In the film *Ibro Ya Auri Baturiya* (*Ibro has Married a European Woman*), in which I played the *baturiya* (European or white woman),⁴⁶ for example, the entire storyline of the three part film (as is typical in Ibro comedy films) is circuitous and is best watched for its individual comedy routines; however, there are some deeply political critiques embedded within these scenes that knowingly parody the imperial relationship between the West and their former colonies. Like Kingsley Ogoro's film *Osuofia in London*, which parodies patronizing films like the South African hit *The Gods must Be Crazy* and mocks the Western characters who attempt to steal from the African *Osuofia*, the comedians in *Ibro Ya Auri Baturiya* use the situation of the *baturiya* stuck in a village to draw attention to the privilege of the Westerner and a wealthy elite associated with the West over ordinary Nigerians, both inside

home, who are in the position to judge a privileged elite who steal from compatriots to fund their wealthy lifestyles in Europe.

⁴⁵ Abdalla Uba Adamu notes that other comedy films where discussions of global politics occur are *Ibro Usama* and *Ibro Saddam*: "Even though they were cast in the comedy mold, they were accurate hilarious takes on both American president, George Bush, Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussain, and the Afghan war in 2002" ("The Emergence" 290). Adamu relates that the idea that a revered figure like Osama bin Laden may be mocked caused a controversy before the film was released eliciting condemnations during "Friday sermons in Kano, Kaduna, Maiduguri, and Sokoto" (291). While the Censorship Board passed the films they "requested the producers to remove the song and dance sequences as they belie the gravity of the subject matter" (291).

⁴⁶ This is a particularly useful film to analyze here, as my observations of improvisatory acting as it happened during the shooting of the film give me better insights into how the meaning was created more by the comedians themselves than by a script. While I saw the producer and director studying a script on the set of *Ibro Ya Auri Baturiya* 2, I was never given a script, and I did not see any of the actors with one either. When I was acting—rather badly—in the film based on the two lines of instruction the director and sometimes the other comedians would give me, I had no idea of what the final story would be and was as surprised and delighted on set by the comic monologues improvised by the comedians as I was when I watched the final film and realized the extent of the critique of neo-imperialism in it. My character of the *baturiya* became a typed symbol of the West to join the typecast cast of other Chamama characters, and this symbol was often made use of more off screen, as the topic of conversation by other characters, than on screen.

Nigeria and abroad. The films, while seen as unsophisticated by their critics, include incisive critiques made by improvising comedians not only of local politics but global politics and global media representations. They use the figure of the baturiya as a symbol of these critiques.⁴⁷

The baturiya in the film, who insists she wants to leave the village and go to the embassy, is somewhat like Amos Tutuola's half-bodied baby, a swallowing monster who exhausts the resources of her hosts but does not leave even after she has stolen all of Baba Ari's money, which could have gotten her successfully away from the village. The trickster Ibro has brought her to the village after tricking her into marrying him by telling her they would live in a big house in Abuja. When he grows tired of her, in part because she will not eat cheap local food, only expensive imported "macaroni," he tries to exchange her with his friend Daushe in payment for a debt. Instead the baturiya runs away in search of the American embassy and is adopted by the village idiot D'an Auta, who takes her home to his stingy old father Baba Ari. Baba Ari complains that she is costing them too much money, since she will only drink expensive bottled water, and is filling up the pit toilet he has to pay to be emptied. When Dan Auta suggests Baba Ari marry her, he tells him, "Only wealthy people deserve to marry a baturiya. They have money, houses, and money. They can marry her. Me, I only have one brother who is rich. I can't marry her."⁴⁸ The wealthy are conflated with the Western, separated from the ordinary people suffering poverty.

At the end of part one, after using up all of Baba Ari's resources, the baturiya compounds her imposition by stealing his life savings that he had hidden under his mat. This is a comic moment where the baturiya, too, becomes a trickster figure but can also be read as a metaphor

⁴⁷ While denigrated by critics as unsophisticated and uneducated, both Chamama and Sentimental filmmakers are often quite aware of the ideological power of film. Sentimental filmmaker Salisu T. Balarabe, for example, told me that American films are propaganda, using film to show the world the strength of their military. He said that Hausa filmmakers also needed to show the world what they were good at through film. (personal interview).

⁴⁸ The quotes in my analysis of this film come from the subtitles.

for colonialism, for the intruder who takes advantage of hospitality to steal everything the people own. In part two and three, she similarly consumes all of Daushe's resources, so that Daushe who was hunting Ibro to repay a loan in part one, by part three is begging Gatari, the hypocritical sycophant of the village chief, for a loan so that he can meet the baturiya's demands.

There are several moments of knowing critique of imperialism and cultural imperialism that occur here. First, when the trickster character Ibro divorces his first wife at the beginning of the film in order to keep the baturiya, he is giving up his own culture in exchange for a foreign habit that sucks him dry. Second, Ibro tells his friend Daushe, who wants Ibro to exchange the baturiya for a loan, that he did not get the white woman from Europe but instead from a container in Lagos. The absurd nature of the claim and his friend's reaction (he didn't want the baturiya anymore because she might have come from Togo or Ghana rather than Europe) highlights the way that which is from Europe is often prized more than that which comes from Africa. Third, once Daushe does marry the baturiya, his subsequent inability to give her up, enumerating all the "different" physical features that endear her to him, even though she is sucking him dry, similarly points to the destructiveness of this alienating attitude, which values the foreign at all cost.

Fourth, the film and its two sequels move from demonstrating the effect of colonialism and cultural imperialism on the psyche of the colonized to a critique of America's neocolonial presence in the world. *Ibro Ya Auri Baturiya 1,2, and 3* become a spoof on the Hollywood "rescue" film where populations of the Other get mowed down and bombed in an attempt to save the one white character. In *Ibro Ya Auri Baturiya 2*, the political position of the sarki is at risk because there is a baturiya being concealed in his village without his knowledge. D'an Auta, the village idiot, and Baba Ari, his father, who had taken the baturiya in when Ibro abandoned her,

become liable. D'an Auta tells his father, "America is now looking at you as a thief, and they will bomb you. They are watching you through satellite." The baturiya threatens D'an Auta over the phone that there are Americans coming to bomb him, a threat she repeats in Daushe's house when he refuses to take her to the embassy. The baturiya acts here as physical marker, through which wider global events can be discussed. Once she has made an appearance in the film, she no longer has to appear in every scene. The phone through which D'an Auta receives her threats itself stands in for the baturiya, who in turn stands for America and the West as a whole.⁴⁹

Such moments highlight anxieties about America's overbearing presence in the world, revealing popular conceptions of it as an aggressive imperial state. The cracks about satellites and bombs are particularly timely, as by 2009 when the film was made, drones that navigated by satellite imagery were bombing Muslim communities America felt were a threat. The baturiya represents a danger to the village both in the desire for Western pleasures usually enjoyed only by the elite, which can cause people to go into debt, and as a representative of an imperial power that when displeased can wreak great havoc on the less powerful. In this way, though a comedy rather than a drama, it reminds me of Djibril Diop Mambety's film *Hyenas*, which metaphorically traces the effect on a mythic African community of the World Bank represented by a jilted woman who has come back to her village seeking revenge. Indeed, one of the most sophisticated cracks in *Ibro Ya Auri Baturiya* comes when Baba Ari points to the problems of the World Bank, which loans with one hand and then takes away with the other.

⁴⁹ Indeed America and Europe is blended here, as sometimes they talk about the baturiya as an American and sometimes as a European. The old colonialism of Europe is thus conflated with the new imperialism of America. If European literature such as that of Joseph Conrad and American films from *African Queen* to *Black Hawk Down*, to *Tears of the Sun* often portray Africa as a homogenous Other that serves only as a backdrop for strong white characters, Europe and America here are condensed into a homogenous Other, which bombs and steals at will. The closing scene of the film, showing a line of Chinese people at the airport, similarly conflates China with Europe and America indicating a new imperial presence.

While order is reinstated at the end of the film when the police finally find the baturiya and put her back on the plane, the baturiya herself has disappeared (I had already gone back to America in real life). In a guerilla scene shot at an airport, which from the angle of the shot looks like it was taken surreptitiously, a line of Chinese people waiting in a queue to board an aircraft stand in for the baturiya in the same way that the phone had. The baturiya matters less to the film than the symbolism of the Imperial Other she evokes, the Chinese becoming the next in a line of colonizers. The fact that the Nigerian police have colluded with America's desires to return her to her country, as is revealed in a scene where two men talk about her return and in a title at the end of the film,⁵⁰ matters less than the havoc the baturiya wreaks and the villagers wreak on her within the body of the film.

This film exposes less the secrets of the home than it does the ironies and contradictions of how people interact with the cosmopolitan Western influences. Since Chamama films are usually set in villages, while Sentimental films are usually set in the city, the tensions between the cosmopolitan city slicker and the backwards or wily villager are a consistent characteristic of the Chamama film. Here, the baturiya merely makes such tensions more obvious. Whether the audiences actually interact with such "messages" in a political way or just to laugh and reduce their high blood pressure is another matter. The most common feedback I get from people on the street who recognize me from the film is "they really made you suffer." This may be a form of identifying with me when they meet me in person, but it can also be a political response. In the same way the baturiya made her hosts suffer, they too made her suffer. Much of the humour of the film comes from the subversive enjoyment of seeing a baturiya mocked for her prodigious toilet filling abilities and suffering at the hands of tricksters, reversing the sort of glorification of

⁵⁰ The title reads "Baturiya ta kubuta daga kauyan da ta tsinci kanta a ciki, ta koma izuwa kasarta, ta U.S." ("The European woman slipped away from the grasp of the village in which she had caused such a ruckus and bounded back to her country, the U.S." [my translation]).

white characters typical of Hollywood films set in Africa. This humour that layers onto satirical portrayals of the interaction of European characters with villagers from the recent *Osuofia in London 2* to Aminu Kano's play where the colonial officer is "announced by the town crier, who ordered that all the dogs of the village be prevented from barking, the children from crying and shouting, and the donkeys from braying so that the visiting D.O. could have peace and quiet" (Feinstein 57). By 2009, the baturiya could make threats but is herself, like the white woman in *Osuofia in London 2*, forced to fetch water, pound tuwo, and ride donkeys, divested of most of the power with which to act on her angst.⁵¹

While the film itself, like many Chamama films, is long and somewhat tedious, the pleasure the audience has in watching it are in these episodes of sometimes political comedy, which are sometimes ripped in two or three minute segments and passed through Bluetooth through phones. I saw girls watching Ibro sketches on their phones in taxis, and when I would sit in studios, friends would pass their phone to me to watch various slapstick comedy segments or music videos. The short rippable comedy sequences present similar spectacle to the short singing and dancing sequences that intersperse Hausa films. I will spend the rest of my discussion in this chapter on the song and dance element of most Hausa films.

"Spectacular transgressions:" exposure in music videos

Music videos intersperse both Sentimental and Chamama films, and have increasingly become elements that can stand on their own. The songs inserted into the larger film form are an aesthetic technique that, in addition to acting as a commentary on the film plot, also often perform implicit and explicit socio-political messages. The songs move from playing an interpretive role within the space of the film to, as music played on radio, on phones, and on

⁵¹ The film was consciously modeled on *Osuofia in London*, and audiences often make that connection to me.

separate video cd albums, playing a role as a commentary on the larger society about which the films are made. These stylistic forms therefore work in different spaces to convey multiple messages and perform multiple functions. In this section, I will look first at how a song and dance sequence included in the fiction film *Zazzabi* works to reveal secrets and anxieties at the heart of the plot and then look at several stand-alone music videos included within Adam Zango's controversial *Bahaushiya* album.

Mimed song and dance sequences in Hausa films, similar to what Wimal Dissanayake observes of those in Indian popular cinema, are “a vital part of the meaning of popular films, introducing important creative ambiguities and tensions and calling attention to the creation of new scopic regimes” (219). While criticized as being used in the films for mere entertainment and having little to do with larger story, the highly stylized songs often add the nuance that is sometimes left out of the didactic plots, summarizing the plot, portraying emotion, telescoping time, metaphorically representing sex or violence that cannot be shown in the body of the film, providing commentary on the action, revealing secrets at the heart of the narrative, and so on.⁵² In this way they act as the “sublime conjunction” Harold Scheub argues that a story achieves when “narrative plotting and the rhythmic organization” meet to create “profound meaning” (275-276). Krings follows “Martin Rubin in theorizing these interruptions in the narrative as ‘showstoppers’”: While the narrative frame in the Hausa film is “the place for didacticism,” the song and dances, fighting sequences or other showstopper elements are “constructed in an

⁵² The musical scores of English-language Nollywood films often also engage in commentary and interpretation, although they are generally played in the background rather than interrupting the narrative as the visual song and dance sequences in Hausa films do. For example, *In the Price of Fame*, a film I will examine in the next chapter, the refrain addresses the protagonist Steph, encouraging the audience's empathy, ‘Oh nobody believes you. They think you are fabricating stories. So nobody wants you around. Oh yes, you're a superstar, but no one cares who you the hell you are. You try to be something and they bring you down. But girl keep your head up. It's gonna turn around....’” The song here foreshadows the success the actress will achieve at the end of the film, despite the troubles she faces throughout the narrative, just as the song sequence in *Zazzabi* that I discuss in the next few pages foreshadows the discovery of HIV at the end of the film.

awareness of the spectator's gaze and conferring the pleasures of looking and listening, they invite the audience to participate, and thus address spectators differently from the narrative frame" ("Conversion" 59). I argue that this very awareness of the spectator's gaze, along with playing with metaphor and drawing on meaning from a web of associations from other cultural texts, often means these showstopper elements perform a didactic function of their own.

In the Sentimental film *Zazzabi*, the title song and dance is significant to the film first in its placement in the storyline, second in the content of its lyrics that poetically summarizes the plotline, and third, in the metaphor, lexical ambiguity, and film editing that reveal secrets at the heart of the action. First, to understand why the song is so powerful, there is need to understand the narrative plot of the film that I will deal with in this analysis. The film story, with a few side plots left out, can be briefly summarized as follows: a girl's suitor (the suitor played by the actor Sani Danja and the girl by the actress Mansura Isah)⁵³ is feeling feverish, and she encourages him to go to her father, who is a doctor, for a check up. The doctor tells him he is HIV-positive, which he realizes via a flashback that he must have gotten the one time he picked up a prostitute. Sani stops pursuing Mansura when he finds out he has the disease, but he does not tell her what has happened. Meanwhile, another suitor Salim (played by the actor Ibrahim Maishunku) has begun to chase her, and since Sani is no longer picking her calls, Mansura agrees to reciprocate Salim's love. Five months later, Mansura takes Salim to her house to introduce him to her family, and he sees a photo of her father. Shortly after, her father is mysteriously murdered, and her sister who witnessed the murder is also knocked unconscious and suffers brain damage. After an investigation, it turns out that Salim had recognized the photo of her father as his doctor and did not want him to expose his HIV-positive status, so he murdered him. The heart-broken

⁵³ Since the names of the first lover and the girl are not used in the film and are not identified in the closing credits, where the actors are listed without characters' names, I will call the first lover Sani and the girl Mansura, after the actors who play them and who actually married in real life a few years after this film was produced.

Mansura who has lost her father, sister, and lover in one fell swoop goes back to Sani. Sani tells her that he cannot be with her because he has HIV. The film ends with Mansura looking at him in shock and Sani walking away with a grieved expression on his face.

Zazzabi does not follow the public awareness campaign clichés of NGO-sponsored films about HIV.⁵⁴ It rather reveals in a less guided way anxieties about how HIV has interrupted “normal life,” imagining the terror of the HIV-positive person that their status may be exposed. “Zazzabi” means fever and is here metonymic for HIV and the physical manifestation of the illness in AIDS, which is the central secret at the heart of the film. Like the film *Gurnani* or *Jarida*, the story of the film is driven by the tension between concealing the disease, which itself becomes metonymic for secret sins and the even more egregious sins these acts of concealment have led to, and disclosures that will on the one hand protect Mansura physically but on the other hand prevent the consummation of love.

The title song and dance sequence is set like many other Hausa film music videos in an outdoor space—here a park with a low wall where the lovers sit and the backup singers dance. The cinematography of the piece is uninspiring and less spectacular than some film music videos, but the visual editing contributes to the meaning of the piece. The sequence springs out of Sani’s thoughts as he is sitting alone in his room thinking about his HIV diagnosis by Mansura’s father. The song sequence is followed immediately by Salim seeking Mansura’s sister’s help in his quest to make Mansura love him. The song therefore indicates a turning point

⁵⁴ Other HIV-themed films like *Janne Kunne* sponsored by USAID, featured a more traditional narrative of a couple who gain HIV through extramarital intercourse, are tested and counseled in the body of the film so that the counseling reaches the audience as well as the diegetic characters. After repenting of their sins, they are married, join a support group, and take medicine. When the wife dies, the husband, played by Sani Danja, marries a former HIV-negative girlfriend, after counseling about how condoms can protect her. Though she cannot have any children of her own, since they are using condoms, she raises his child from his first marriage even after her husband dies.

in the film, as Mansura's affections transition from Sani to Salim, and parallels in poetic form the plot of the narrative.

Although I do not have the space here to analyze the entire song at length, I will analyze the overall structure as it parallels the plot, and how it reveals the secret that drives the tension at the heart of the film. The song contains two refrains: a lover's call and response sung by one of the male characters, either Sani or Salim, and echoed by the female character Mansura: "Zazzabi ya sauka jikina, Zazzabi ciwo mai zafi, Ciwon so, ciwon kauna, Zazzabi shi ne a jikina," meaning, "A Fever has invaded my body, Fever so hot, Fever of love, fever of passion, A Fever is what is in my body," and a female ensemble chorus, which sings "Zazzabi ya kama masoya, zazzabi ciwo mai zafi. Ciwon so. Ciwon kauna. Zazzabi ciwo mai kuna," which means "A fever has captured the lovers, A fever so hot, Fever of love, fever of passion, fever that burns." The ensemble refrain is woven between six four-line stanzas. Within each stanza, the ensemble responds to each line of verse with the short refrain, "Zazzabi, ciwo mai zafi" ("Fever so hot"). And at the end of each stanza, the ensemble repeats their longer refrain. The overall aural pattern is set up as follows:⁵⁵

- 1) Sani sings the lover's refrain. (with Salim appearing in one shot, singing one line).

The Ensemble chorus sings their refrain. Mansura sings the lover's refrain.

- 2) Sani sings verses one and two. The ensemble chorus sings the short refrain in response to each line of each stanza, and each verse ends with the ensemble chorus singing the long refrain.

⁵⁵ While I do not have the space to analyze the shot sequence as it complements the aural rhythm of the song, there is much intercutting between Sani and Mansura whenever either one of them or the female chorus is singing. When Salim sings, there is intercutting between shots of him and of Mansura. I will note the shots that are significant in revealing the secret that Salim is also HIV-positive. To watch the music video and read a translation of the entire song, see McCain "Translating (and Transcribing) the Hausa film song *Zazzabi* [Fever]" on *A Tunanina*.

- 3) Mansura sings verses three and four. The ensemble chorus sings the short refrain in response to each line of each stanza, and each verse ends with the ensemble chorus singing the long refrain.
- 4) An instrumental interlude, with rapid cutting of shots between the members of the love triangle.
- 5) Salim sings the lover's refrain. Mansura sings the lover's refrain. The Ensemble chorus sings their refrain.
- 6) Salim sings verse five. The ensemble chorus sings the short refrain in response to each line of each stanza, and sings the long refrain after Salim finishes the verse.
- 7) Sani sings verse six. The ensemble chorus sings the short refrain in response to each line of each stanza, and sings the long refrain after Sani finishes the verse.
- 8) Mansura sings the lover's refrain. Sani sings the lover's refrain. The Ensemble closes the song with their refrain.

From this structural break-down, we see several things. First while each rhyming line of verse proceeds in a linear fashion through the story, it is interspersed with the regular meter of the ensemble refrain, reminding us of the central trope of the zazzabi or fever of love, forming the tension and balance that critics like Scheub and Hunter and Oumarou have argued is an aesthetic technique in story and song. Second, the structure of the content of each stanza follows the linear narrative of the plot of the film. The first four verses set up a call and response between Sani and Mansura, focusing on the relationship between them that began the film. However, the instrumental interlude, in which there is rapid intercutting between all three lovers, interrupts this pattern. The lover's refrain performed by Salim and Mansura replaces Sani with Salim. The song ends with a verse sung by Salim (Verse Five), and then by Sani (Verse Six), focusing the

audience's attention on the two rivals and their relationship with Mansura, before returning to the call and response of the lover's refrain between Sani and Mansura. Again, this interruption of the pattern creates meaning by "upsetting the balance" that has been established in the call and response between Sani and Mansura, a technique Hunter and Oumarou argue is an important stylistic technique in Hausa visual and verbal art (84). The structure here reveals the overall plot of the film, which begins with the love between Sani and Mansura, transitions to the love between Salim and Mansura, and returns to fever-doomed love between Sani and Mansura, where at the end of the film, just as in the final verse of the song, he directly confesses his HIV-positive status.

In poetically echoing the prosaic structure of the film, the song, placed in the first part of the film between Sani's discovery of his HIV-positive status and Salim's determined pursuit of Mansura, also exposes through metaphoric language the secret at the heart of the film that is not exposed in the narrative until the end of the film in part two. One of the most striking things about this song is the lexical ambiguity. The film deals with characters who have HIV, so the use of the word "fever and disease" is quite literally describing the illness they are struggling with. Further, the line "ciwon so, ciwon kauna" ("sickness of love, sickness of passion or desire") indirectly explains the way in which the disease arrived in the body—through the sexual act—"making love." However, the song also taps into the metaphoric use other writers and artists have made of the concept of being "sick with love." In Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino's bestselling novel *In da So da Kauna*, for example, which also intersperses the prose of the text with songs exchanged between the lovers, the young lover Muhammad writes in his song that he is fleeing Kano to Kaduna because he has been separated from his sweetheart Sumayya, "Ciwon sonta ne ya sa ba zan zauna ba" ("The sickness of loving her is the reason I won't stay"; part 1, 85).

Sumayya sings on a cassette to Muhammad, that “In na tuna ka sai na farka daga barci na,/ Ciwon so ya sanya wannan ba komai ba” (“If I remember you I wake from my sleep/ The sickness of love makes it nothing”; part 1, 71). When she dreams that Muhammad has been killed in an accident she sings, “Ciwon so shi zan kashe ni” (“The sickness of love will kill me”[or The sickness of love will make me kill myself]; part 1, 87). Larkin has pointed out that in the film *Wasila*, epileptic fits the lover Jamilu suffers when he hears his wife is ill make love a “tactile physical thing. They present love as something slightly out of control, unpredictable, and dangerous” (*Signal* 207). The idea of love as a sickness, therefore, has a long genealogy in Hausa expression.

The song “Zazzabi” thus layers a literal meaning of the “disease of love” on top of the metaphoric usage audiences have grown used to, creating a striking and disturbing image of the dangers love brings not only the heart but the body. As we can see from the opening refrain, the song begins as a confession from Sani that he does not have the courage to make to Mansura until the end of the film, telling her about the fever of love in his body. In Verse Six at the end of the song just as in the narrative action at the end of the film, he comes out and says, “Kanjamau⁵⁶ cutar a jikina. Lafiya bata dawowa” (“AIDS is the disease in my body. Health will not return”), moving from the metaphoric language about the “sickness of love” to a direct disclosure that he is actually suffering from AIDS.

The song does more than just reveal the dramatic irony of Sani’s secret about his HIV status that the audience knows but Mansura does not yet know; it also subtly reveals the secret of Salim’s HIV status as well, which neither Mansura nor the audience will discover in the narrative until the end of the film. In the opening chorus, there is visual cross-cutting between the two lovers Sani and Mansura, until suddenly on the phrase “Zazzabi shi ne a jikina” (“A Fever is

⁵⁶ Kanjamau, which literally mean “to become thin,” is the euphemism that became the Hausa word for AIDS.

what is in my body”), there is a cut to a close-up of Salim, singing that he too has the fever in his body. The metaphoric usage initially conceals the literal meaning under words that audiences are used to hearing figuratively. While Salim never comes out and says the word “kanjamau” (“AIDS”) as Sani does in his verses, his repetition of the refrain that “zazzabi ya sauka jikina” (“a fever has come to my body”) and the structural placement of his verse right before Sani’s verse confessing his HIV-positive status encourages the comparison between them. We thus see that the song not only adds an emotional rhythm to the linear plot of the film, but it also reveals the secret both characters have tried to conceal.

Using metaphoric language about the “fever of love,” the song reveals that both of Mansura’s suitors have HIV, before Mansura herself knows that Sani has it and before the audience knows that Salim also has it. The song therefore encapsulates the dramatic irony of the film that plays on both the conventional use of “fever of love” to describe unrequited love to transform it into another kind of “fever of love”: HIV-AIDS. The poetic exposure in the song in part one foreshadows the narrative exposure in part two. At the end of the film when Mansura goes back to Sani and he reveals to her that he too has HIV, the music video sequence between Sani, Mansura, and Salim plays again, while the credits run. The song works both to complement the film as a metaphoric revelation of the secret around which the plot revolves and stands by itself as a kind of message about the dangers of love and HIV.

The song did not merely stay enclosed within the frames of the narrative film but became so popular that it earned the song writer Sadiq Usman Sale the industry name Sadiq Zazzabi.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Actors or singers made popular by a specific film or song are usually called by the name of the film. Sadiq Usman Sale, for example, composed the song “Zazzabi” and played a small role in the film and is now known as Sadiq Zazzabi. Other actors with similar stage names are Rukayya Umar who is called Dawayya, and perhaps most dramatically Maryam Usman, who was called Maryam Hiyana, after her role in the film *Hiyana/Betrayal* (or *Deceit*). The “Hiyana” crisis I will discuss further in the next chapter, therefore, was appropriately named “Betrayal,” for the actress who was named for a film in which betrayal occurs. The “real life” betrayal, when

Played on the radio and on individual devices, the song spoke not only to the secrets of the film but to the secrets of a larger society, bringing discourse of love and passion that is supposed to be concealed within the home, and with it a discourse about HIV, into a public space of discussion and debate. The poetry goes far beyond a simple NGO message about HIV, but like the Chamama films, which enclose political messages in comedy, it brings formerly hidden issues into public discussion and debate. It becomes a theme song not only to the film but to life. While as Abdalla Uba Adamu has noted (“The Influence” 158), not all film songs work so well with the film—indeed the second song in *Zazzabi* is as insipid as the first one is profound—“Zazzabi” is a good example of what the best film songs can achieve both within the narrative of the film and in the larger arena of society outside of the film.⁵⁸

The particular effectiveness of the songs as message-bearers, similar to the moments of comedic spectacle in Chamama films, may have something to do with its connection to oral theatre performance, what Dissanayake calls the “frontality” of the performance where, as in Parsi theatre, “actors and actresses [...] make no attempt to conceal the fact that they are performing” (218). Similarly, William Paul observes that the genre of the musical, “often works on an interplay between those moments of representational drama in which the characters seem to exist in a world of their own cut off from us by the fourth wall and those moments when characters make more direct address to us, breaking down any sense of a fourth wall” (238). One

according to industry gossip, another actress passed around the sex video ensuring that it leaked to the public and ruined Maryam Hiyana’s career, was even more dramatic than the fictional betrayal (Adamu, “Poetic” 9; Ammani).⁵⁸ While I do not have the room to address it in detail here, the songs in the film *Albashi*, have a similar depth and importance to the meaning of the film. The opening song in *Albashi* acts as what I’ve elsewhere called a “symbolic thesis statement for the rest of the film” (McCain, “Reimagining” 171). When female protagonist Binta sings “Let’s compete, and see who is the master. I am the best, therefore watch me,” introducing a dance between men and women, this statement foreshadows Binta’s becoming a “master” in her marriage. The first song and dance sets up the tension between men and women as women enter the professional world and challenge traditional gender roles, but also the balance that can be achieved, when they sing “we have something in common, so let’s dance together,” (171). The other two songs and dances in the film emerge from Binta’s husband Umar’s anxieties about her independent role, conflating her ability to earn a salary with sexual promiscuity. The songs in *Albashi* thus play an organizational and an emotional function in the film. For further analysis, see my discussion in “Reimagining Gender Spaces in Abbas Sadiq’s and Zainab Idris’s Video-Film *Albashi*.”

of the most striking elements of Hausa film song sequences is that in most of them, as in Indian film songs or MTV-style music videos, the singers and dancers make eye contact with the audience through the medium of the camera.

While the occasional moments of breaking the fourth wall that I noted as occurring in *Sentimental* and *Chamama* films are also meant to communicate with the audience, the direct address in song and dance sequences are included in almost every film, lasting from three to five minutes at a time. These sequences become a consistent stylistic device by which the gaze of the dancers, performing self-consciously for the audience and inviting them to join in to sing along, break down the barrier between the fiction of the films and the “real life” of the audience. As I noted of the popularity of the film song “Zazzabi,” they extend the story of the film into everyday reality. The soundtracks of Hausa films increasingly become soundtracks to life, as they are repeated on the radio and sold on cassette and cd.⁵⁹

Anxiety about this direct identification with the audiences and the attractive spectacle these song and dance sequences provide is often expressed in critiques of the films. The protests of “local critics” against the songs and dances, Krings speculates, comes out of an assumption “that the attraction of spectacle distracts spectators from paying attention to any moral lesson that the narrative frame may contain” (“Conversion” 59). Elements subversive to the moral status quo such as portraying a lead female character who is “submissive, traditional, innocent, and coy” in the narrative suddenly “celebrat[ing] her body” in a dance sequence, as Dissanayake points out of Indian films (220), are certainly of concern to Hausa critics. But perhaps even more alarming

⁵⁹ Boundaries between films and real life have also been broken down in wedding trends. Fashionable young couples often commission a song, many times performed by Hausa film playback singers, to be distributed as a wedding gift. Those who can’t afford their own song will often use the one composed for the wedding between superstars Sani Danja and Mansura Isa for a dance where friends spray them with money. There have even been some cases where wealthy couples commission a music video where they imitate Hausa film actors by miming love songs (Hausawa, personal communication). Young people thus re-create fantasy spaces, where they pretend to be both the characters they watch in films and the celebrities who play them.

to them is the element of participation, in what are seen as insidious alien elements, that the showstopper elements invite. Like the former head of the censor's board Abdulkarim, Ibrahim Ado-Kurawa claims that "Hausa home video are serving as agents for the spread of Indian culture," since "[a]ll dances copied from the Indians are a form of worship for a particular god depending on the signs made in the dance. By copying the worship of Indian gods the Muslims are committing shirk" (117). Mohammad Mahmud believes that songs and dances in Kannywood films are more dangerous to a Hausa audience than those in Indian films, arguing that audiences are aware that activities performed in foreign films belong to a "way of life which differs from ours. But when the so-called Kannywood came and started producing the Hausa version of the foreign and (southern) Nigerian films, the whole society found itself drowning fast" (par 9)!⁶⁰ The implication is that these elements of spectacle are most dangerous when they are performed by recognizably Hausa performers because a Hausa audience is more likely to imitate them. As the story the filmmaker Mustapha Indabawa told me, about banning Hausa films in his house because he found his sisters dancing, illustrates, the singing and dancing in Hausa films becomes a personal threat.

Some filmmakers challenge these readings of the songs and dances as foreign to or corrupting Hausa culture. Director, producer and singer Yakubu Mohammad told me that films done without singing and dancing were flops. Part of the reason they were so popular with

⁶⁰ Some creative writers and filmmakers agree that singing and dancing are "alien" to Hausa culture. The filmmaker Mustapha Indabawa I cited at the beginning of this chapter found singing and dancing one of the most threatening aspects of Kannywood films. Other filmmakers, who otherwise ally themselves with Kannywood, also dislike singing and dancing. Balaraba Ramat Yakubu told me she did not like singing and dancing in Hausa films: "Have you ever seen a girlfriend and boyfriend singing and dancing on the side of the road?" she asked me. "It's not our culture" (personal interview, 5 August 2006). Mikail Isah Bin Hassan repeated this, telling me that it was because of Indian films that they started importing singing and dancing into the films. The early films, he admitted, sometimes had songs but they were more like sermons, but the dancing he thinks is not realistic (personal interview). Even comedian Rabilu Musa Danlissan, who was later imprisoned for one of his parodic songs and dances, told me that singing and dancing "have no use. We didn't start out with these films. The problem is that if you don't put in the songs the audience will say it isn't good, or the story is bad, since Indian films have already spoiled the audiences. Because of that they got used to singing and dancing. It's because they say our films are no good if we don't put dancing that we put it. But in our cultural films there is no singing" (personal interview).

audiences, he argued, was because “dandali” singing and dancing had long been a part of Hausa culture. Film singing is “modernizing” the tradition (personal interview). Filmmaker Abbas Sadiq similarly linked this singing and dancing to village dandali customs where boys would court girls at night by singing and dancing. While, like Yakubu Mohammad, he agreed that they were used to sell the films, he said that this use of music was not alien but also “traditional,” as his grandmother had used songs to sell her wares in the market (personal interview). Pioneering actor and director Ibrahim Mandawari admits that there is some potential for negative social influence in the songs and dances, listing the problems he sees, but also argues that the songs and dances in Hausa films actually replace the influence of “pagan” Indian songs and dances people used to copy. He believes that the songs help promote the message of the film and also promote the health of society by teaching married people how to express love to each other (378).

Nevertheless, the anxieties about the song and dance became so strong, that in 2007 following the Hiyana sex scandal, the newly appointed head of the Kano Censorship Board Abdulkarim, used the opportunity to ban singing and dancing from the films all together (Ibrahim and Malumfashi 15). This restriction ironically coincided with an increase in the release of separate music video albums by many of the playback singers who compose and sing for films and some actors-turned-musicians. The audio of these albums is often released informally on radio and virally through Bluetooth cellular phone technology. Once the song has become popular, the money is then often made on the music video cd, which tends to sell better than music cds because it is less easily pirated. Many of the actors in the Hausa film industry are increasingly expanding their oeuvre to music and music videos that are not tied to any film, but which often maintain the aesthetics of film songs.⁶¹

⁶¹ This also happened in Nollywood when marketers banned certain actors and actresses, who then tried their hand at singing: Genevieve Nnaji, Omotola Jalade Ekeinde, Nkem Owoh, Jim Iyke and others (See Anon, “How”;

I will conclude this section by looking at how the tensions described above play out in the music videos of actor, director and musician Adam A. Zango. Zango, whose early screen name was “Usher” after the American musician, was one of the first Hausa actors to release a music video album, *Bahaushiya (Hausa Girl)*, separate from his appearance in feature films.⁶² In two of the six music videos from this album, Zango continues in the muckraking tradition established by the longer Sentimental and Chamama genres, using the short pithy form of the music video to tell stories that moralize about bad behaviour and expose secret corruptions. Each song is introduced by different Hausa actors explaining to the audience what impressed them about the song—thus the album becomes an extended meditation on the significance of storytelling, film, and music in Hausa society.

In Zango’s music video “*Tarbiyya*” (Moral Education), for example, the actress Fati Bararoji directly addresses the audience in her introduction of the song, saying it was her favourite because of the moral lessons it taught the youth, “If you have faith and you understand Islam, [these lessons] will make you shake a little bit.” Like the claims to “preaching” that filmmakers make in the feature length films, the actress, here, elaborates on the message of the song, fitting in her own sermon before Zango’s song begins about the problems of youth with no proper upbringing and the wickedness of men who abuse girls. She situates both herself and Zango, as film industry celebrities, into the moral space as preachers or teachers, saying at the

Nollywooderizer). The Hausa film industry became roughly divided into nanaye singers (film music released separately from the films) and hip-hop. Hip-hop was sometimes performed by actors, such as Adam A. Zango, Sani Danja and Yakubu Mohammad, Shaban Ty, and those closely related to Kannywood such as Ziriums, Billy-O, and Kano Raiders, but a few hip-hop artists like the K-Boyz deliberately separated themselves out from Kannywood and went so far as to record insulting songs that supported the accusations of the censors board, calling those involved in film “homosexuals” and rogues in their song “Bingo.” There are another group of musicians who perform in Hausa, who have very little to do with Kannywood and have more connections with Lagos musicians than with Kannywood musicians, such as XDogginit, Soultan Abdul, Eedris Abdulkareem, the musicians involved with the Goethe Institute “Kano to Lagos” workshop, like Nomiis Gee, and others.

⁶² Zango had, like filmmakers Abbas Sadiq, Sani Danja and others, been involved in music before he became an actor. Nazir Ahmad Hausawa told me that he, Adam Zango, and Abbas Sadiq had been the original members of the hip-hop group Northern Soldiers, first named Cakewalk, which began in 2005, and Zango used some of the songs sung by Northern Soldiers on his first album (personal communication).

end of her speech, “Finally, you can see that we are being educated about how to live our lives. This, in itself, makes me very happy” (my translation). While Bararaji directly moralizes about the wickedness of men who abuse girls, Zango puts forth his message through stories and questions: In “Tarbiyya,” Zango ironically contrasts the word “*tarbiyya*” (“training,” “proper upbringing,” or “moral education”—the foundation, as Adamu notes, for becoming a “*mutumin kirki*” [“good person”] in Hausa society) against stories of worthless old men (“*tsohon banza*”) who abuse and impregnate young girls hawking on the street, and other men who take advantage of girls by bribing them with presents and drugs (Adamu, “Tarbiyar” 11). Similar to the 2-Effects Empire films I discussed in my section on Sentimental films, in which the corruption of the young is seen as ensuing from the corruption of their elders, Zango implies that the youth have not received proper “*tarbiyya*” at home. Instead, he will educate them through song.⁶³

Like other global music videos, which self-consciously present the act of recording or performance, Zango opens the music video referring to the medium through which he is presenting his sermon. The song begins in the setting of a modest real-life studio with Zango roughly replacing one producer with another, putting on headphones and positioning himself in front of the microphone. His first words, like the word “action” which opens the film *The Price of Fame*, which I will discuss in my next chapter, are directed to the producer about the volume-level of the headphones. It is ambiguous whether his statement is part of the performance or part of the actual recording. When the volume is fixed, he shouts out, codeswitching, “Ok, this is Prince Zango, from K-town. Toh zan ba ku bayani,” (“Ok, I’m going to tell you a story”). The rest of the refrain is a series of pedagogic rhetorical questions, directed towards two girls Lara

⁶³ This teaching impulse seems to be a common theme across Hausa popular culture from northern Nigeria to Niger. Adeline Masquelier notes that rappers in Dogondoutchi, Niger, “construct themselves as educators who help young people survive very real threats to their well-being and their economic future,” seeing themselves “as social agents actively involved in the reconfiguration of knowledge and informed perspectives on reality” (250).

and Binta, asking them about who has ruined their lives, and then answering his question with sometimes abusive language:

Lara waye ya yi miki cikin nan?

(Lara who gave you this pregnancy here?)

Nigga nan, da ya saye miki waya nan?

(This nigga that brought you this phone here?)

Binta, waye ya sa kike sha kwaya

(Binta, who made you start taking drugs?)

Duk kawayye ‘yan bariki wawaye.

(All of your girlfriends are foolish whores.)

Ai, wai me sunan dinkin nan

(Ai, what is the name of this style you wear)

Dinkin mai kariya ya yi

(That immodest style)

Wai zuro hannunka masoyi...

(Called “come insert your hand, darling.”)⁶⁴

After identifying the source of their problems through these questions, he launches into a chorus that repeats over and over: “Gaya musu, Gaya musu, na ce gaya musu, fada musu” (“Tell them, tell them, I say tell them, speak to them”)—a reference to speaking hard truths.

⁶⁴ There is much anxiety in society about the immodest styles that tailors make for women. Ironically, although Zango is denouncing such styles here, the film industry was often blamed for making them popular. Nazifi Dawud Khalid wrote, in an opinion piece for *Daily Trust*: “One day, I heard some of my sisters chatting about some names of fashion styles which perplexed me. These names included ‘maigida dubi kiwonka’, ‘zuro hannunka masoyi’ and so on. When I asked them how they came to know about these fashion styles, they simply cited Hausa movies” (17). By denouncing revealing fashions here, Zango deflects such criticism by posing himself as a teacher in line with righteous moral sensibilities.

Within this metafictional frame that demonstrates to an audience how musicians record their songs, he makes a pointed connection between the act of rapping and singing and older oral genres, beginning the second verse with a direct address to his audience and the traditional Hausa storytelling formula “Toh, ga ta nan, ga ta nan ku.” (“Ok, here it is, here it is, you all.”) Rapping and occasionally pointing to the camera from the setting of a sound recording studio, he tells the audience, “Yau labari zan ba ku” (“Today, I have a story for you”), before launching into his story of the old man who impregnates a young hawker. The story is acted out by a Chamama actor, who dramatically performs a ridiculous old man playing cards who sees a young hawker, beckons her over, and then throws her out of the house when he’s done with “his work.” She is subsequently thrown out of her home, after she finds that she is pregnant. The Chamama actor comically thrusts his pelvis simulating sex—combining the didactic message and melodramatic tragedy of the Sentimental film with the comic and sometimes vulgar actions of the Chamama film: “Who is at fault?” Zango asks. “The mother or the worthless old scoundrel?” making a not-so-subtle argument that the corruption of the youth is due to the abuses of their elders.

The third verse also begins with a reference to storytelling, warning youth that if they don’t stop taking drugs and neglecting their prayers, they will end up like the abortion doctor who is suffering in Hell. At the end of the video he does not end the story with the traditional nonsense ending of “kurunkus” but instead with the call to action of the chorus, “Gaya Musu, Gaya Musu” (“Tell them, tell them”). Zango hangs up his headphones, turns from the mic and walks purposefully toward the camera. The story has not ended. Zango, like the actors in Femi Osofisan’s play *Esu and the Vagabond Minstrels*, has gone from storytelling “theatre,” to a direct appeal to the audience through song, to finally a physical progression towards the audience: “The

actors join the audience. The theatre empties. Life resumes” (Osofisan 72). Zango’s advance towards the camera implies that he intends to extend his revolution to the audience.

While “Tarbiyya” deals with a specifically Hausa setting, Zango’s video “Nigeria” makes a larger pan-Nigerian critique. Dancing on a rubbish heap with other youth, he addresses the camera, telling the audience to listen to his song about the travails of the youth in Nigeria. While singing about the life the poor suffer, he acts out ways youth try to scrape out a living as commercial motorcyclists, bus conductors, or by selling petrol on the street. Throughout the song he contrasts the heartlessness of those with money with the suffering of the poor, and implies in the refrain of the song that Nigeria suffers because Nigerians are too forgiving of their oppressors: “Nijeriya, babu kwanciyar hankali, Nijeriya, don kuwa na yafewa mun yi” (“Nigeria, there is no rest, Nigeria, because of all the forgiveness we grant”).

In this song, too, he walks toward the camera at the end. The appeal he makes to the citizens of Nigeria through the address of the camera layers onto other music videos made by musicians singing in English, such as Eedris Abdulkareem’s “Mr. Lecturer” and “Jaga Jaga.” These videos encapsulate a harsh critique of Nigerian leaders into a short, pointed form that is likely to be watched many more times than their feature-length cousins. As Zango pointed out in an interview with me and the documentary filmmakers Alex Johnson and Saman Piracha, not everyone can watch a two hour film, but the short form of a song, often watched repeatedly on cell phones, will allow them to understand immediately when he is talking about bribery and corruption or reforming the country (personal interview).

These two music videos on Zango’s album *Bahaushiya*, like the Sentimental and Chamama films I’ve described in earlier sections, are socially conscious attacks on the political status quo, performing a function similar to hip-hop in other African countries that critiques

politicians and elders for the travails of the youth, as explored by Adeline Masquelier in Niger and Susan Shepler in Sierra Leone (Masquelier 252-253; Shepler 637). However, the combination of messages ostensibly in line with Islamic moralism and a more political nationalistic message sit uneasily beside the four other videos on the album that are arguably demeaning to the women he features, similar to the sort of antimonies of sexual exhibitionism and oppositional politics discussed by Tejumola Olaniyan in the music of the legendary Nigerian musician Fela Anikulapo-Kuti (*Arrest* 249-258). Although Zango associates himself with righting Hausa culture in the track “Tarbiyya,” his dance tracks point to a more ambivalent relationship, as actress Kubra Dakoh says when she introduces the controversial “Qidaya” (“Count it out”), one of the videos where a dancing girl wears a midriff-baring shirt: “If you see how they shoot this, you would swear it is not a Hausa song, unless you listen to the words, which are in Hausa, because he’s shooting the video differently from how they normally do Hausa videos.” Indeed, Zango’s harangue in “Tarbiyya” against the revealing fashions girls wear is directly contradicted in the songs “Qidaya,” “Playgirl,” and “Lelewa,” all of which feature girls in tight, revealing clothing, dancing to provocative lyrics.

Bahaushiya includes dance tracks, songs lamenting the materialism of girlfriends and message-oriented musical sermons, but the “sexy” songs on the album landed Zango into trouble. He was one of the first high profile members of the film industry to be arrested by the censorship board following the Hiyana scandal that I described in my introduction. Audiences were also upset at the naming of the album *Hausa Girl*, which supposedly characterized all Hausa women as the materialistic and immoral girls Zango addresses in the album.⁶⁵ A month

⁶⁵ A critic of Hausa novels and films, novelist Aliyu Kamal, a professor in the English Department at Bayero University, wrote a novel that fictionalizes the events surrounding the Hiyana sex video and the release of Adam Zango’s *Bahaushiya* album. Naming the novel *Hausa Girl*, an Anglicized version of Zango’s album name, Kamal traces the downfall of a “dullard” girl who spoiled her education by reading Hausa novels and gave up her chances

after the Hiyana-induced ban on Hausa films, Zango was sentenced to three months in prison. The charges were for releasing the album without having it censored (although Zango had released the cd in Lagos, not in Kano), and for marketing it in Kano despite the ban on filmmaking. But the accusations that resonated more with public morality were those by Executive Secretary of the Kano State Censors Board Abubakar Rabo Abdulkarim that Zango had “contravened the teachings of Islam and Hausa culture” because of “the type of dressing and dancing portrayed in one of the videos” (Ibrahim and Malumfashi 14-15). Zango’s socially conscious videos were overlooked for the ones with the dancing girls.

Another such song in the Chamama comedy *Ibro A Loko* got comedians Rabilu Musa and his colleague Lawal Kaura thrown in prison for two months in 2008.⁶⁶ The song like Zango’s music videos includes women dancing provocatively with the camera focusing on their winding buttocks, and the comedian Ibro dancing, legs spread wide, thrusting his pelvis in simulation of intercourse, similar to the way the Chamama actor had in Adam Zango’s “Tarbiyya.” If such spectacle is meant to teach, critics feared it was meant to teach children “iskanci” or immorality. These music videos, which resulted in the arrest of the performers, were among the most dramatic examples of the inconsistencies which open up an aporia between the claims made by Hausa filmmakers in all genres about “moral” messages they are trying to teach society, and where they open themselves up to attack by their critics with sexually-suggestive spectacles.

While all three genres of Hausa films I have discussed here layer onto the sort of socially conscious dramas performed by the troupes under Aminu Kano, Aminu Kano’s plays were

of respectability by joining the Hausa film industry. She is swept off her feet by a filmmaker who promises to make her a star. He drugs her and makes her dance provocatively, which he later sells as part of a music video album. He also rapes her and video records the rape on his phone. In this fictionalized version of the crisis, Kamal thus demonizes the film industry and takes the agency away from actresses who participate in the industry of their own accord. In future research, I hope to further explore these parallels, alongside Hausa novels about the film industry.

⁶⁶ The film *Ibro A Loko* had received a censorship certificate, but censor’s board head Rabo told me that the music video compilation which excerpted the scandalous song “Mamar,” original to *Ibro A Loko* had not been. The song was apparently quite popular and was used to mock the governor who wore striped material (Adamu, “Poetic” 21).

performed entirely by men (Al-Kanawy 369). The inclusion and focus on women's bodies in Hausa films introduced the element that became the most controversial part of these films that their critics used to accuse them of violating Islam rather than reforming a Muslim society. The exploitation of women's stories and women's bodies are also the element of spectacle that most appears to be the sort of spectacle critiqued by third cinema filmmakers.

Conclusion

In the 2-Effects film *Sai Na Dawo*, the king played by Sani Danja directly addresses to the audience of the film a powerful message about the need for African leaders to be more responsible, indicating he is the sort of progressive leader that Africa needs. Yet within the film story, he has a terrible home life, using his powerful position to force a woman who is in love with another man to marry him and mistreating another wife. When I asked Yakubu Mohammad, the director of the film, about this apparent contradiction between the king's progressive political message and his reprehensible private behaviour, he told me, "This is human nature because there are some issues we don't have control over. [...] You will see world leaders who have a very good track record but you will see in one way or the other they have problems in love. It's just human nature, you might have nine but you don't have ten, no matter how good you are, there are loopholes." The representation of this king and Yakubu's explanation becomes a useful example of the problem of many of these films which purport to teach but have "loopholes" in the way they represent women and love, portraying as role models men who may have serious problems in the way they treat women.

There is no question that many Hausa films and music videos, including some of the most controversial have powerful social and political messages, yet there are notable silences and gaps

in the films that often undermine the messages they purport to pass. One of these examples is the use of women as objects in lessons and in sexualized spectacles, where films both challenge and reinforce a patriarchal status quo. Binta S. Mohammed notes that Hausa films reveal “the construction of men’s vision of women; the submissive woman is created, offering a kind of femininity that is not a threat to the ‘masculine’ man. In Hausa films, this ideal woman, usually given the role of mother, wife or maiden, is portrayed as beautiful, pure and peaceful” (175). In other films, Aminu Fagge Mohammed notes, women are “depicted as irrational, unstable, competitive and destructive” often being “responsible for marital instability,” visiting bokas, “conspire[ing] among themselves” (180).

We see examples of both of these kinds of women in most of the screen media I’ve discussed above, which challenge elders or make political critiques, yet still portray women as objects. The beautiful, pure, and peaceful woman is seen in the longsuffering Zahra in *Jarida*, whose response to the discovery of the adultery between her mother and her husband, after a brief moment of madness when she contemplates setting them all on fire, is tears and prayer. She has to die before her letter exposing the scandalous secret is revealed. She is similar in character to the woman forced to marry the king in *Sai Na Dawo*, who suffers false accusations by her co-wife, but is eventually proven to be innocent. The contrasting “irrational, unstable” and “destructive” women are even more common. In *Gurnani*, the daughter who falls in love with her brother and poisons her sister is incomprehensibly “irrational” and “unstable.” In *Jarida*, the materialistic desires of the mother and the treacherous actions of her friend Saratu are the main negative forces which thrust the whole family into outrageous scandal. In *Sai Na Dawo*, the first wife lives an immoral life, which results in her later barrenness, and falsely accuses her innocent co-wife of adultery. Even in *Zazzabi*, the briefly appearing prostitute becomes the symbol for

HIV, which destroys the relationship between Sani and the innocent Mansura. Similarly Adam Zango's *Bahaushiya* album alternately berates girls as interested in men only for their money ("Saliha" and "Playgirl") and enjoins girls to dance, making their dancing a pleasurable spectacle for a male audience ("Lelewa" and "Quidaya"). Even the two socially conscious videos on the album are directed as teaching women: "Tarbiyya" frames itself as instruction to "Lara" and "Binta," who have been ruined by their weakness, succumbing to male attention. Lara's friends are called "foolish whores." Even the music video "Nigeria" points out that the poor young men have no chance with girls because they have no cars or money.

In Chamama films women generally play a peripheral role to the major male comedy actors,⁶⁷ and they too often portray women in these stereotypical ways, though even good women in Chamama films tend to be a little more quarrelsome than their Sentimental counterparts. In *Ibro Ya Auri Baturiya*, two good Hausa wives in two different marriages are displaced for the destructive baturiya, who treacherously steals Baba Ari's life savings and threatens all of her hosts with bombs. The wives fight her but are ultimately displaced.

Finally, women's bodies themselves are objectified as sexual objects and become sites where their good and bad character is revealed through pregnancy and disease. (This form of embodied objectification is sometimes extended to men as well). First, women's bodies are most obviously displayed in song and dance sequences, often wearing tight Western dress. Second, their bodies often reveal either their innocence or guilt. Pregnancy becomes both a marker of innocent motherhood, as we see in Zahra's character in *Jarida*, and is used as an embodied form of punishment for sins that cannot be hidden. We see pregnancy used as a technique to expose sins in Hajiya Larai's supernaturally un-abortable pregnancy in *Jarida*, in Aisha's incestuous

⁶⁷ The major exception to the marginalization of women in chamama films is Saratu Gidado who plays the comedic figure, the brazen Daso. She often appears in Sentimental films like *Jarida* playing brazen female characters and in Chamama comedy films using the type name Daso.

pregnancy in *Gurnani*, and in Lara's "bastard pregnancy" in Zango's music video "Tarbiyya."⁶⁸

The converse of this sort of pregnancy as judgment for sins is seen in the barrenness of the king's wife in *Sai Na Dawo*, who cannot get pregnant because of all of the birth control she used during her earlier immoral days. Disease also serves as a punishment for immorality when the prostitute in *Zazzabi* is seen as the agent for passing on HIV, and when the girl who changes "ten boyfriends in a week" in Adam Zango's video "Playgirl" is shown at the end as unkempt, with a begging bowl, and scratching at the sores on her flesh. In all of these productions, the filmmakers may challenge the patriarchy, but they also reinforce it in their representations of weak or destructive women and in imagining women as the audience they must instruct.

Such representations are not new and they are not specific to Hausa culture. Many similar complaints have been made about women in Nigerian films in other languages (See Garritano, "Women"; Ukata; Ewrierhoma; Olujinmi and so on). Feminist critics like Binta Mohammad and Mabel Ewrierhoma have called on more female producers to enter the film industry and challenge such representations. And, to some extent, these stereotypes are challenged in films produced by women. *Albashi* produced by Zainab Idris reverses many of the stereotypes discussed above, placing the powerful female role model in the person of a mother, who is always seen in her professional role in her office, and in the figure of the good, pure, and innocent wife, Binta, who also happens to have a powerful professional role as a doctor and director of a hospital. She uses her professional role to support her unemployed husband. While the film reveals the anxieties of Binta's husband Umar in the male voiceover and in a few dancing and singing spectacles framed as visualizations of Umar's fears about her role in the public sphere, it is a film that powerfully re-imagines the status quo. Rukayya Umar Dawayya's film *Sarauniyar Kyau* similarly maintains the sexualisation of the woman's body in a beauty

⁶⁸ The Hausa term for an illegitimate pregnancy, which is used in "Tarbiyya," is "cikin shege," "bastard pregnancy."

contest, yet portrays the revenge of a woman on the men who have thwarted her attempts to advance in education etc, her whole life by attempting to sleep with her. She finally uses the sexualization men have forced upon her to exact her revenge, by secretly filming “respectable” men propositioning her.

Even within films produced by men, men’s bodies are sometimes used as objects as well. In Adam Zango’s music videos, there are several moments where shirtless young men dance alongside girls and alone. And while men cannot get pregnant, they can be judged through their bodies as we saw illustrated in films like *Jarida* and *Zazzabi*, which echo the embodied punishments of men in the novels of Balaraba Ramat Yakubu. Men’s secret sins of drinking and sex, show up on their bodies with D’an Soja’s madness and self-inflicted death by poison and in both Sani and Salim’s HIV infections. In Zainab Idris and Abbas Sadiq’s *Albashi*, the cheating, drug-taking Umar also goes mad and must take a subservient role to his doctor wife who gives him his medicine.

Such ambiguous representations reveal what Karin Barber has called the “textual loopholes, fissures, and silences” in what appear to be otherwise conservative texts that “often reveal doubts and anxieties; and possibilities of an alternative view” (“Popular Arts” 8). Jane Bryce argues that it “is possible that Nollywood’s ‘loose’ and ‘diabolic’ women are signs of discontent with a social status quo vested in a certain kind of male power—a discontent felt by disempowered men as much as women” (78). Men in power, like the head of the Censors’ board, Rabo Abdulkarim, told me they were “protecting” women by enforcing restrictions on the way they appeared in the films. Rabo was also trying to protect the status quo in Hausa society. Filmmakers, on the other hand, fall more into the category of disempowered youth challenging the status quo that Bryce mentions. She argues that it is “time to shed the moral prescriptiveness

and normativity that has characterized criticism” and instead “let us take our cue from an audience that understand femininity as an ambivalent sign for an era of transition, signifying both social depravity and the desire for social transformation through radical change” (85). If women are “feared and mistrusted” in these films, she argues, it may be that it is because “women know their [men’s] secrets and can manipulate them” (80). Hausa filmmakers may often direct their advice at Hausa women, but they also frequently expose the sins of the men. Even young men’s somewhat misogynistic harangues against materialistic girls, such as in Adam Zango’s music videos, are a way of pointing out that the public figure of the couple that Furniss argues is “marker of modernity” (“Video” 96) has been disrupted through corruption, and that youth have become powerless in the face of the skewed priorities of their elders, as Susan Shepler points out in Sierra Leonean hip-hop (637-638). These filmmakers point out, using spectacular techniques in Sentimental melodramas, Chamama comedies, and transgressive music videos that their own poverty is caused by a selfish elite.

In this chapter I have discussed the self-reflexive ways in which filmmakers present their films as teaching morality and politically challenging corruption. In the next section of this dissertation, I will discuss how they directly confront their critics through metafiction about the film industry. The tensions discussed in general terms in this chapter are even more blatant in the metafiction I will discuss in the next two chapters.

Chapter 4: Video Exposé: “Junk journalism” and celebrity in Nollywood and Kannywood¹

“From boardroom struggles to political power play, military adventurism and godfatherism in politics, ritual murder, drug abuse and the rehabilitation of drug abusers, witchcraft and churchcraft, high living and low life, prostitution and AIDS, the home-videos ... are turning out the Nigerian story in a no-holds-barred fashion which leaves no room for anybody to hide. In this they recall the sass of junk journalism, and, in a sense, what was called guerrilla journalism under the military.” –Odia Ofeimun (53)

“The Press – love them, hate them, they’re our friends this minute, the next minute, you’re like ‘Jesus, what did I do so wrong?’” –Omotola Jolade Ekeinde (Abdul, “I Want” 51)

In a paper presented at the Nollywood and Theatre for Development conference held at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria, in November 2011, Law Ikay Ezech, of the National Institute for Cultural Orientation, summed up many of the anxieties surrounding Nigeria’s burgeoning film industry. He complained that actors and actresses “who are supposed to be cultural ambassadors to the country and role models to younger Nigerians” are reported in the popular press as engaging in embarrassing, immoral behaviour, and that the films, which should be “promoting, propagating and developing Nigerian culture” have instead “gradually moved from churning out movies that celebrate the occult, cultism, killing, blood letting and rituals to X rated ones that border on nudism, sex and their attendant vices” thereby “encourage[ing] the spread of these vices in the society” (173, 172, 176). While Ezech’s language was challenged by other participants at the conference, his views are expressive of ways in which the Nigerian film industry is often talked about by the public, government bureaucrats and academics, demonstrating that the Nigerian film industry as a whole, not just the Hausa film industry, is

¹ A version of this chapter was published in 2012 as “Video expose: Metafiction and message in Nigerian films” in the *Journal of African Cinemas*, Volume 4, Number 1. Used by permission of Intellect.

often viewed as a corrupting influence. While many Nigerians express pride in the spread of home-grown films across borders and in the recognition the industry has received from bodies such as UNESCO, which in 2009 stated that Nigeria was the second largest producer of films in the world, this international recognition also makes more pressing anxieties about the “quality” of the films and how “Nigerian culture” is being represented to the outside world. In 2010, at a film and TV programmes expo, BOB TV, then Minister of Information and Communication, Dora Akunyili, called on the film industry to help rebrand Nigeria with the “truth” of the “positive aspects of our culture, for instance, how corruption or any form of stealing is taboo in our traditional set-up” (6). Inherent in the “rebranding” exercise is not only a desire to challenge stereotypes and improve Nigeria’s image outside the country, but also a desire to “sanitize” corrupting influences in the films and have them teach positive moral and developmental lessons.

Onookome Okome posits that this tension between filmmakers and critics, whom he calls “self-appointed cultural mediators,” over how to represent Nigeria is “located in the reality associated with the production of knowledge in contemporary Africa and the denial of that reality by” intellectuals who desire to “legislate the production of an ‘authentic’ culture and society in contemporary Africa” (“Nollywood” 34–35, 28). He points that the “truth” of Nollywood is found in the “sort of social diary of the collective life that ordinary people live in Nigeria” and, as such, has a “latent political character” (35). As opposed to the academic formations of a small intellectual elite, he argues that Nigerian films become a kind of theory of the masses about everyday life in Nigeria.²

² Olakunle George has made similar claims that “African literature” is itself “a mode of theory,” arguing that “creative literary texts by African authors” are “theoretical explorations of pressing realities—in other words, as sources for and elaborations of theory” (105). The works of Balaraba Ramat Yakubu, as Novian Whitsitt argues for example, can be seen as expressing home-grown feminist theory about contemporary Hausa society.

Although I am not convinced that Nigerian films are always representative of “those things that matter to the man and woman in the street” (36) or that their critics are necessarily an intellectual elite, I do agree, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter on spectacle in Hausa screen media, that the historically close connection of the films to their audiences and the often low-budget technology of the films have offered filmmakers a potentially powerful site to situate social and political critique. As I outlined in my introduction, this connection has been elaborated by other scholars who study Nigerian films, such as Jonathan Haynes, Francis Harding, Brian Larkin and others.

In this chapter, I extend and complicate arguments that Nigerian films reflect the popular “theories of the masses,” by focusing on how English-language and Hausa-language Nigerian filmmakers use metafiction that specifically address the medium of the camera and the film industry, to talk about themselves and their relationship with their audiences. Here I build on my discussion of self-reflexive techniques in Hausa novels and films in the previous chapter, by looking at narratives that revolve around filmmaking itself. Although metafiction has often been described as a postmodern tool, the result of an existential “narcissism” (Hutcheon 6; Mwangi 5), metafiction also acts as a tool which, as Linda Hutcheon points out, contains the seeds of its own theory within it (6). Evan Mwangi points out that, while much African literary theory argues that postcolonial African literature “writes back” at the colonizer, most African literature tends to be much more interested in internal dialogue—with writers writing back at each other and at “local forms of oppression that are seen to parallel classical colonialism” (1), engaging in internal dialogue. He looks at metafiction as “literary moments that are aware of their own textuality” (8), in particular, as evidence of the theoretical impulse within African literature (13).³

³ Part of the appeal of Nollywood to many of the scholars who study it is this topical appeal of films made by Africans for Africans. This is not to say there have been no Nollywood films that self-consciously address an

Self-reflexive African art cinema, such as Mahamat-Saleh Haroun's 1999 film *Bye Bye Africa* and Jean-Pierre Bekolo's 1996 film *Aristotle's Plot*, have made important interventions in discussions about the relationship African cineastes have with popular African audiences. Nigerian filmmakers using the more accessible form of the video film do much the same thing in their metafictional films made for popular audiences, self-consciously reflecting on the tools by which they tell stories and theorizing their roles as both professionals and cultural mediators. But whereas Haroun's and Bekolo's art films ask questions directed mostly at intellectuals and film critics, Nigerian metafictional films tend to provide answers to improve their reputation with popular audiences.⁴

Here, I build on my discussion of the practice of breaking the fourth wall, in the previous chapter, by first looking at how filmmakers use self-reflexive techniques, such as drawing attention to the camera. These techniques overlap with what Teshome Gabriel has called "conventions of oral narrative" that present "film as message" ("Towards" 47), to point to the possibilities of low-budget recording technology to expose corruption and engage in political critique. Second, I examine how filmmakers respond to the discourses surrounding the film industry in metafictional films that deal with the lives of stars and the process of making films. In these

audience larger than the Nigerian community. The 2003 classic *Osuofia in London* brilliantly parodies exoticizing moves of films like the South African film *The Gods Must Be Crazy*. More recently Lancelot Imasuen has made a film about the British invasion of Benin, which he told me that he made to draw global attention to the issue of reparation (McCain, "Nollywood Greats"). There have also been an upsurge of "Nollywood" films, like *Osuofia in London*, made abroad either by filmmakers based in Nigeria or those based in the countries where the films are being made (See Hoffman; Haynes, "The Nollywood"; Jedlowski, "On the Periphery"; Samyn, etc). But while there has been some amount of attention paid to Nollywood in film festivals in Europe and elsewhere, much of this has presented the films more as a curiosity than anything else (Jedlowski, "Videos" 116). Although the recent upsurge in cinema releases and films made by Nigerians living abroad films aim for a global audience, Haynes points out that most of the films made abroad seem to assume a Nigerian audience and pay little attention to the society in which they are living, outside of the Nigerian community ("The Nollywood" 81-82). The target audience for most films made in Nigeria seems to still be Nigerians.

⁴ This impulse to prove respectability with popular audiences is similar to impulses in the popular metafictional novels, by Kenyan novelist David Karanja and Wairimu Kibugi, Evan Mwangi describes as endorsing "a writer's pursuit of a bourgeois lifestyle and eventual assimilation by the mainstream fraternity of writers and political leaders" (7).

two types of metafictional films, Nigerian filmmakers negotiate tensions between the “junk” journalistic impulse discussed in previous chapters, which as Ofeimun notes “leaves no room for anybody to hide,” and the cultivation of celebrity and image in an increasingly glamorous Nollywood (53). I divide my analysis into two major sections. In the first section I discuss metafictional films from the southern English-language industry, usually called Nollywood, and in the second section, I discuss the northern Hausa-language industry, usually called Kannywood, which is the subject of focus in this dissertation.⁵ I argue that while there are similarities in how filmmakers in both industries respond to criticism, metafiction reveals differences in economic and cultural context that have resulted in an increasingly upwardly mobile Nollywood elite, while Kannywood has remained closer to the grass roots. Ultimately, these metafictional films express on a smaller scale filmmakers’ theories about what the film industry as a whole does for the nation.

Nollywood self-reflexivity

In their analysis of the possibilities digital technology has given Iranian cinema, Adam Ganz and Lina Khatib draw parallels between the surveillance video and the ubiquity of digital camera technology: “Simply put, there are more cameras filming more people in more places than ever before. The images will consist of both impersonal, ‘objective’ surveillance images and private images shot on hand-held cameras and mobile phones” (25). This new technology has made it easier for ordinary people with no film training to become guerrilla “filmmakers” or “journalists,” and, in the age of social media, the amateur video image has played a role in exposing real life abuses in Nigeria. These include the abuse of politicians when Farouk Lawan,

⁵ While scholars, government officials, and the international media often use the term Nollywood to describe the entire Nigerian film industry, participants of the Nigerian language industries often use the term to refer to the English-language industry alone (Adamu, “The Hausa”; Bakare and Quadri ; Ossai, “Nollywood”).

chair of the House of Assembly committee to investigate the fuel subsidy scam, was secretly videoed taking a \$3 million bribe (BBC “Nigerian Farouk”) and Benin Governor Adams Oshiomole was videoed verbally abusing a widow vending on the side of the road (NaijaTV), as well as the crimes of ordinary people, when four University of Port Harcourt students were lynched in Omoukiri-Aluu (Yafugborhi), and an Abia State University student was gang raped on video (Punch Metro). These incidents, because they were captured on camera, enter the imagination of the Nigerian public more than equally, or even more egregious, crimes of which there are no images. These incidents illustrate the power of the digital camera used both by ordinary consumers and by professional filmmakers to reveal abuses.⁶ Ganz and Khatib comment that it “is unsurprising, then, that the sense of privileged access and disclosing secrets is a common theme in digital cinema” (26). Even before phone cameras became common, Nigerian filmmakers were fascinated by the possibilities cheap video technology gave for challenging the powerful, both with the prop of the camera or the recorder within the diegetic space of a film and with their own cameras in front of which secret sins were performed in the fiction film.

In the 2006 film *The Journalist*, a bumbling semi-amateur photo-journalist, played by comedian John Okafor, accidentally videos a gang murder, a video that eventually leads to the arrest of the gang. From the opening sequence of the film, attention is drawn to the camera, a prop that takes on a larger significance as a tool to expose secret sins. *The Journalist* opens with a cartoony de-saturated shot of the “journalist,” Bernard, swinging his camera around. The shaky handheld movement of the camera filming Bernard and the brief cut to the perspective of Bernard’s video draw attention to the medium, what I am calling the non-diegetic camera, the

⁶ One friend in Kano told me about how he used his phone to record a lecturer asking him for a bribe and another friend recorded her conversation with the Director General of the Kano State Censors Board revealing how over-familiar he was with her. Digital devices give ordinary people an ability to document witnessed abuses.

camera that represents the viewpoint of the audience. Within the world of the film, the journalist's video camera shows the crimes of the armed robbers involved in the murder. The non-diegetic camera, representing the gaze of the audience, reveals the more systematic corruption of the police. A respected chief, who is secretly the leader of the robber gang, bribes the police superintendent. Eventually when the murder is made public by the journalist's video, the same police superintendent keeps his hands clean by ordering the arrest of the chief. The non-diegetic audience is made aware that justice has been done but is not complete.

In the Hausa film industry, too, Hausa filmmakers, from nearly the beginning, have mocked self-righteous hypocrites and demonstrated a fascination with possibilities offered by cheap recording technology to explode private corruption and challenge authority. In the early film adapted from Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino's bestselling novel *In da So da Kauna* (*Where there is Love there is Respect*), a recently married girl exposes her corrupt grandmother's attempt to break up her marriage by secretly recording her on a hidden cassette recorder. In *Salam Salam* (*On good terms*), a rich alhaji who receives much adulation for helping a poor friend after an armed robbery attack is revealed, again by secret cassette recording, to have commissioned the armed robbers. In *Daham* (*Gold*), a man sets up hidden cameras in his house through which he discovers the plot of three of his wives to murder the first wife's sons. And in *Sarauniyar Kyau* (*Beauty Queen*), a woman hires a cameraman to secretly film an Islamic scholar responding eagerly to her seduction so as to expose his hypocrisy. The revelation of secret sins on hidden recorders in these films suggests that the films are doing the same for "real life" sins. This revelation becomes part of what the filmmakers see as the "message" of their films that I discussed in the previous chapter, layering onto what Abdalla Uba Adamu has argued is a synthesis of didactic Islamic morality with popular oral conventions of the folk tale, the Hausa

tatsuniya (Adamu, “Islam” 64).⁷ Like oral tales, films often simultaneously reinforce and subvert the status quo.

In metafictional about Nollywood, the relationship of the film industry with both the exposure of “truth” and a critique of a wealthy elite becomes more complicated. Critics who support the video film genre often celebrate how it has, in the words of Foluke Ogunleye, “given voice to the voiceless, hope and visibility to the marginalized [... having] all the potentials of dynamite” (*African Video* ix–x). Yet Nollywood’s humble technology and street appeal coexist sometimes uneasily with its increasingly more glamorous star system.⁸ If the low-budget video films give “voice to the voiceless,” the world of glamour and wealth that has grown up around Nollywood is about maintaining an image that may not tally with “real life,” at least for most people in the country. In films like *Beyonce and Rihanna*, musicians live in palatial mansions, drive expensive cars, and live self-absorbed lives consumed by their quest for success. Outside their representation in films, stars become fictionalized in glamorous entertainment television shows, pulp magazines, fan sites and tabloids exposing scandals. Their lifestyles are represented as being not that different from the elite whose secret sins are exposed in the films they act in. There is an ironic parallel, therefore, between the “junk journalist” aesthetic of the video films, which often sensationalize and expose secret corruption, and other “junk journalist” media forms, which do the same with the lives of stars. A 15 February 2009 interview in *Leadership Newspaper* with Nollywood star Omotola Jolade Ekeinde reveals the fraught relationship

⁷ The self-consciousness about the camera can also be found in the metafictional technique of breaking the fourth wall through direct address to an audience, which I discussed in the previous chapter. By drawing attention to the way the camera mediates between characters in the film and the audience, filmmakers make a subtle case for the importance of the film medium in exposing corruption.

⁸ Noah Tsika examines Nollywood celebrity in detail in his forthcoming book *Glamorous Migrations: Nollywood Stardom in West Africa and the Diaspora*.

between Nollywood stars and the press: “Love them, hate them, they’re our friends this minute, the next minute, you’re like ‘Jesus, what did I do so wrong?’” (Abdul, “I Want” 51).

The three films I will discuss in this section, *The Super Star*, *The Price of Fame*, and *Nollywood Hustlers* demonstrate this tension between truth-telling and celebrity and include responses both to external and internal critiques of the southern-based English-language industry.

All three reflect anxieties about how the film industry is portrayed in the media, as well as a documentary impulse to educate the audience about the professional side of the industry. In the first two films, super star actresses face scandal at the hands of an unscrupulous press. In *The Superstar*, nude photos have been published of the actress Agata, while in *The Price of Fame*, the secret teenage pregnancy of the actress Steph becomes tabloid fodder. However while the scandal plays a redemptive role in Steph’s life, which enables her to deal with long suppressed memories of a rape and her parents rejection, Agata tries to cover up the scandal, first claiming that there had never been any photographs, then that they had been doctored, then that she had been drugged, and finally that a former boyfriend had convinced her to pose for “a foreign photographer.”

Aside from the tenuous narrative thread of Agata’s woes as she tries to navigate her way through the scandal, *The Super Star* is a bit of a muddle, the sort of film that would be denounced by the filmmakers in *Nollywood Hustlers*, which I discuss last in this section; however, it presents a rich portrait of the many personalities whose livelihoods and reputations are imaginatively caught up in Nollywood: blackmailing newspaper editors, the heads of film industry guilds who express their righteous indignation at both Agata and the irresponsible media, a director and producer who hunt Agata to ask her to refund the money paid for an unmade film, a pastor and his wife who tell her that they are disappointed after hoping she would

bring positive publicity to the church, a Nollywood fan who sprays her with a packet of packaged water after seeing the photos, and finally Agata's wealthy chief father who goes into a lengthy rant on how women have spoiled Nollywood in an interview with a journalist who later tries to blackmail him.⁹ Ultimately, although she has been advised to tell the truth, Agata's final confession to her father ends up in her death as he shoots her in the same way he had shot the editor who tried to blackmail him. In *The Super Star* almost everyone comes out looking bad except for the guild heads who seem to be trying to keep the profession respectable and directors and producers who are just trying to do their job. The makers of the film indicate that the problem with the industry is not with the structure or professionals but with spoiled individuals who behave badly and a media obsessed with salacious details about the stars.

While *The Super Star* engages with the anxieties and discourse surrounding Nollywood, the *Price of Fame* extends this engagement with the collision between junk journalism and truth-telling in films to a story that works as an extended argument in defense of Nollywood. In the film, the actress Steph's secret teenage pregnancy, which ended in giving the child up for adoption, is exposed. The scandal forces Steph to confront her past, which enables her to find her long-lost daughter, reconcile with her estranged parents, and eventually come out and confess on national television that she was raped, in an attempt to help other rape victims. Steph's trials and triumphs symbolize the challenges and achievements of the entire industry.

The Price of Fame presents the discourse surrounding the film industry by placing arguments often heard by critics and fans into the mouths of characters, then presenting solutions to perceived problems. In the second scene of the film, Steph's secret child, whose identity has

⁹ I suspect Pete Edochie (who plays Agata's father, the chief, in *The Superstar*) was improvising his sexist and rather unstructured rant in the film, as in a 2007 interview with NigerianMovies.Net, he says much the same thing: "The people responsible for producing these roles are the ones that make monsters out of these people particularly the actresses. You find out that the moment you allow a woman the access to come in contact with so much money she becomes uncontrollable" ("I have").

not yet been revealed, begs her adoptive mother to let her watch a new Steph James film.

Although the mother looks wistfully at the video CD, she tells her daughter that she can watch movies on the weekend but on a school night must finish her homework and go to bed – a subtle response to critics who argue that watching films makes children neglect their studies.

Responsible parents, the film implies, will control their children's viewing habits. However, while both mother and daughter are enthusiastic about the films, "junk journalism" complicates the mother's response. When she hears from a colleague, to whom she has just been gushing about the actress, that according to the papers, Steph had gotten pregnant as a teenager and then "abandoned her baby just to be a superstar," she responds with horror, exclaiming, "you really have to be careful these days [...] about who our kids are looking up to and what they are watching." Established as a caring and responsible mother in the earlier scene, the film shows that her interaction with the scandal-mongering media has biased her against the films. The fear that the bad behaviour of the stars will influence fans not to watch their films is a very real one in filmmaking circles. At the December 2008 Lagos International Film Festival, there was a lively Q&A after a panel on "Challenges of Making Christian Films in Nigeria" in which a producer stated that he looked for "born again" performers of good character. Some actors argued vehemently that the personal lives of the stars should have no impact on the selection of artists, that it was the performance that mattered. This was countered by others who said that actors were looked to as role models, and the sales of films would be impacted if a star was seen as being immoral.

The Price of Fame suggests the audience should not believe everything they hear about the stars. While the facts of the story as reported by the media are true, the interpretation is not. Steph, as we learn through strategically placed flashbacks, was raped as a young girl, her parents

refused to believe her story, and she was advised by a home for unwed mothers to give the child up for adoption. Despite having to drop out of secondary school, however, she has been able to make something of her life. Not only does this trajectory illustrate for audiences the problems of taking media reports about Nollywood at face value, it also provides counter-evidence against arguments often used to condemn films, contending that the film industry is a respectable, if often misunderstood, profession and a legitimate source of wealth. Steph's father has from her adolescence tried to repress her creative instincts, telling her she must quit the church choir: "You are going to be a doctor. You don't need singing. [...] This is Nigeria. As far as I am concerned, singing does not put food on the table." At the end of the film when Steph reconciles with her parents, her father sheepishly examines her posh Lagos house. The creative arts, the film implies, offer possibilities for success beyond the wildest dreams of straitlaced parents, stuck in a civil service mentality.

Finally, although the film illustrates the tension between the muckraking press and the image-obsessed entertainment industry, it implies that despite their differences, both forms of media are ultimately concerned with truth-telling, which, while often painful, is necessary for a healthy society. As in *The Journalist*, the camera is shown as a powerful instrument for showing "the truth". Rather than the hidden camera of the guerrilla journalist, this time it is the professional camera of the filmmaker making a movie that inadvertently reveals the "true story." The opening shot of *The Price of Fame* begins with the spoken word "action," indicating that it is the beginning of both the shoot in the diegetic world of the film and the movie the audience is watching. Steph, protagonist of both the diegetic film and the one that contains it, sits at a table with another actress. As the camera slowly zooms out, we see the camera and crew enter the picture and hear Steph tell the other actress that she has been raped. Although Steph's personal

secret has not yet been exposed, this opening sequence foreshadows her revelation in front of the camera, in part two of the film, when she appears on television to tell the world about a rape that actually happened to her.

In the third scene, Steph is lying on her bed reading when a man bursts into her room and begins to assault her. It is initially ambiguous whether this is actually happening to Steph “in real life” or to the character she is playing until there is a cut to the crew, a cut back to the scene that is being acted, and then a cut to a black and white flashback of Steph actually being raped. In the rape scene that is being filmed, Steph throws off the actor playing the rapist. The director is displeased, as this is not in the script, but it appears that playing a rape victim is forcing Steph to come to terms with the memory of her own experience, giving her the opportunity to “rewrite the script.” The media exposure of her secret plays the same role. In the end, Steph tells her side of the story on a television celebrity show, saying that the media’s exposure of her teenage pregnancy was painful, but ultimately healing as it forced her to work through her unresolved emotions over the rape, encouraged her to establish a relationship with the daughter she gave up for adoption, and provided a forum for her to reach out to other rape victims.

Steph’s confession on the television talk show and her confession about her rape in the fiction film end up revealing the same story. There is ambiguity between the film Steph has appeared in and the story of her actual life, implying that the diegetic world of the film and the world of the audience will have similar connections. This point is emphasized when an actress who is trying to steal Steph’s role in the film begs the director to give her the part. When he seems to accede, she laughs and says, “That’s what I love about Nollywood. The show must go on”. Seconds later she looks directly into the camera, grins, and says, shrugging, “I got it!” – a playful reflexive acknowledgement of Nollywood fans watching the film.

Ultimately, *The Price of Fame*, which seems to be inspired by the life of Nollywood superstar Genevieve Nnaji,¹⁰ self-consciously stages Steph's story as synecdoche for the story of Nollywood. From humble beginnings singing with the church choir, she overcomes all obstacles to achieve success. The problem with Nollywood is not in the structure or substance of the industry, which is portrayed as professional, but in the irresponsible actions of individuals, in this case the actress who tries to steal Steph's role and leaks the story about her teenage pregnancy to the media. In the end, Steph's confession leads to victory. She reunites with her parents, who finally believe her story after they see it on TV, agrees to marry her childhood sweetheart, takes custody of her daughter when the idealized adoptive mother dies of cancer, and wins the most prestigious award in Nollywood. The end of the film fully reconciles the film industry with the media when we see magazine after magazine of Steph as a "winner" gracing the covers. While this victorious ending is not necessarily realistic, it reflects the conventions of other Nollywood films that Larkin describes as "exaggerated imaginings that nonetheless deal with underlying truths" (*Signal* 190). Steph's rise to success represents both the history of Nollywood and the dream filmmakers have for its success.

By the second half of the decade, dreams for the success of Nollywood as an African counterpart to Hollywood and Bollywood were becoming more firmly established. In 2005, Peace Anyiam-Osigwe founded the glamorous Africa Academy Movie Awards to recognize films being made throughout Africa. The arrival of second-generation filmmakers, like Jeta Amata and Kunle Afolayan, and graduates from international film schools, like Afolayan, Chineze Anyaene and Stephanie Okereke, was also influential in helping establish a Nigerian filmmaking elite. These filmmakers began to shoot with expensive cameras, sometimes on

¹⁰ According to online gossip, Nnaji, now one of Nollywood's most successful stars, came from a strict Catholic family and got pregnant at 17 (Gist Express). *The Price of Fame* seems to rewrite her story into one that an audience will sympathize with. I thank my student Rita Asuwe for pointing out this convergence.

celluloid film, often with international casts. As they registered a presence on the international film festival circuit, the “New Nollywood” began to win a certain amount of respectability among an elite who had once mocked the video phenomenon (TED; Olatunji; Leu, “Nollywood”). Indeed, the “New Nollywood” filmmakers were quick to distance themselves, as Andrew Rice notes of interaction with Afolayan, “from Nollywood and its streetwise art of “guerrilla filmmaking.” “Their mind-set,” Afolayan said, “is totally different than mine” (“A Scorsese”).

This increasing sophistication is reflected in the satirical *Nollywood Hustlers*, premiered in 2009, which, like *The Price of Fame*, makes arguments about the respectability of the film industry, educating the audience about the profession, but this time, rather than focusing on tension with “junk journalists,” does so through a parody of “junk” filmmakers. The film contrasts the “true” glamorous celebrities of Nollywood with the amateurs. It is the pretenders that give the Nigerian film industry a bad name, the film implies, not the professionals. Unlike *The Price of Fame*, which shows a sympathetic portrait of Steph’s humble background before she becomes a superstar, demonstrating that stars deeply care about what their fans think, *Nollywood Hustlers*, which reviewers point out is inspired by the Hollywood comedy *Bowfinger*, mocks infatuated fans and inexperienced filmmakers trying to break into what is portrayed as an established and glamorous Nollywood (Agbedeh).

The film, co-produced by Nollywood star Uche Jombo and successful writer/producer Emem Isong, whose English-language films are often about wealthy Lagos elite, treats misconceptions people have about Nollywood by portraying two layabouts, Elvis and Lucky, who think they can get rich quick by getting into movie business. Tricking a rich businessman, Prince, into investing in their film after promising him that Nollywood stars Monalisa Chinda

and Ramsey Nouah (the actual names of the real-life stars) will appear in the film, they enjoy the attention of would-be starlets and crashing Nollywood parties until they discover what is left of the money is not enough to hire even one Nollywood star to be in their movie. Deciding to film the stars without their permission, they chase Monalisa and Ramsey around Lagos, improvising encounters that they secretly record on a hidden camera. Eventually they are discovered by the stars, their tape is confiscated, and they are punished by Prince, who goes on to produce a film with the “real” professionals.

Like *The Price of Fame*, *Nollywood Hustlers* indirectly addresses several critiques of the industry as unprofessional: the rumoured immorality of the Nollywood “casting couch” and the alleged amateurish efforts of filmmakers who churn out films without knowing anything about “real” filmmaking. The hustlers fit the complaints of critics in both areas. As soon as Elvis and Lucky collect the money from Prince to make the film, a bevy of young girls who want to become actresses show up on their doorstep, willing to, as Lucky instructs them, “girlfriend their way to the top.” Here the Nollywood fiction illustrates points often made by actresses in newspaper interviews about how sexual harassment is more a problem for amateurs than it is for professionals.¹¹ Similarly, the hustlers know nothing about actual filmmaking, assuming that it is just a matter of renting a video camera, shooting a script and becoming rich. When Lucky comes back from doing “research” to find out the equipment they need for the film, Elvis tells him “Wetin you wan’ use light do? We’ll shoot the film during the day. We don’t need lights.”

On the other hand, the true stars and filmmakers belong to professional associations, have personal assistants, accept fees worth millions of naira, and have foundations to help children. They are more professional, more humane, and far more glamorous than these layabouts. The

¹¹ Actress Laide Bakare, when asked about sexual harassment in the industry, responded that there were women so desperate to get into the industry that they would even “throw themselves” at responsible men. True actresses, would not “create the atmosphere to be harassed,” she stated (Alabi 19).

contrast can be seen visually in the cut back and forth in the telephone conversation between Elvis, who is seated on a veranda with an old rusting air conditioner in the background, and Monalisa's personal assistant, who is seated on a leather couch in front of elegant drapes. While she responds to his questions professionally, his shock at Monalisa's appearance fee and his attempt to haggle her down demonstrates his street hustler outsider status. Near the end of the film, actual Nollywood director Lancelot Imasuen repeats the same critiques he makes of unprofessionals in real-life, laughing at how Prince has been taken in by these tricksters.¹²

“I don't know why you guys always think filmmaking is for all [sic] Tom, Dick, and Harry. Now can you just walk into a theatre to start operating somebody without getting the required training as a surgeon? But when it comes to filmmaking, everybody is 'oh it is very easy'.”

Instead, he advises Prince that if he is interested in producing films, he should look for people “who have made names in the business” and who belong to professional associations. The characterization of Prince, as the Igbo businessman who knows nothing about filmmaking but wants to make a quick profit, is a jab at the marketers, Rice describes as saying “they can't afford the extravagances of talent” (“A Scorsese”). However, the moneyed Prince is treated more gently than the impoverished hustlers. Once he turns from the imposters to the real filmmakers, he is able to produce a “quality” film with the stars he wants.

Nollywood Hustlers also appeals to sophisticated second-generation Nollywood fans through self-consciously parodying Nollywood formulas and then cleverly associating unoriginality with the hustlers. The film opens to a background score of hackneyed Nollywood organ music as the star Monalisa and Elvis run towards each other in slow motion for an

¹² Victor Akande quotes Imasuen: “A lot of us in our little understanding raised alarm on the way professionalism was gradually being eroded, with every Tom, Dick, and Harry coming into the business” (13).

embrace. In a point of view shot from Elvis's perspective, Monalisa looks into the camera and puckers her lips, leaning in for a kiss. When there is a cut to Elvis asleep on the bed, the previous scene is revealed as a dream sequence. The clichés, although recognizably Nollywood, are put into the mind of an unprofessional. When we see the true professionals on set, they are surrounded by film equipment and Lancelot Imasuen peering into the production monitor giving direction. As opposed to his initial fantasy, Elvis can never again get so close to Monalisa. The distance is both physical and one of class, as is subtly illustrated when Elvis and the camera operator hide across the road behind a dumpster full of garbage to shoot Monalisa getting into her luxury car. In the shaky long shot of her car seen in the screen of the diegetic video camera, there is a foreground of rubbish as public transportation tricycles and motorcycles interrupt the distant vision of glamour. The hidden camera here becomes a literal demonstration of Stam's theory of garbage as "truth teller" (Stam 41), capturing, in a kind of paparazzi documentary, the banality of everyday life for the stars: Monalisa Chinda in her gym clothes and Ramsey Nouah on a date. But, like the junk journalism of *The Price of Fame*, they misrepresent the stars in an attempt to capitalize on their fame. Lucky harasses Monalisa as she drives, provoking her to come out of her car and scream at him, and the hustlers bring in an aspiring actress, the pepper soup joint waitress Scholar, to interrupt Ramsey's date with accusations of abandoning her after a night of passion. When Monalisa and Ramsey finally catch on to the scheme at a staged UNICEF youth meeting where Ramsey is to present his children's foundation, the stars have their bodyguards grab the tape away from the hustlers. Previewing the tape, Ramsey's biggest concern seems to be his image, saying, "This is a huge embarrassment to my personality."

The film Elvis and Lucky are trying to make and the actual film *Nollywood Hustlers* become duelling representations of Nollywood "truth": the "guerrilla" film on the daily life of

the stars as captured by the hustlers within the diegesis of the film and the frame film produced by a Nollywood elite who cleverly pull actual Nollywood figures into the fiction. Not only do Nollywood stars Monalisa Chinda and Ramsey Nouah good-naturedly caricature themselves but *Nollywood Hustlers* co-producer Emem Isong is invoked several times inside the film. One of these moments comes after Prince discovers Elvis and Lucky's tricks and decides to make a film with the real professionals. Director Imasuen, playing himself, tells Prince that he has commissioned Isong to write the screenplay for the new film and advertises her other films: "One great writer. Sure. She wrote *Games Women Play, Reloaded, Games Men Play, Behind Closed Doors*, all of those very big movies." In addition to this plug for Isong, an advertisement for the industry itself occurs in a spectacular red carpet party interlude where a dozen Nollywood stars, producers, directors and musicians, including Isong, play themselves. Filmed with a handheld camera like a television entertainment show, the television personality Denrele makes faces at the camera and interviews Nollywood stars about their lives as celebrities and the charities they support. Such blurring of boundaries between real life and fiction allows the filmmakers to present this as the "true" authorized story of the film industry.

The film industry here is presented as glamorous as Hollywood and Bollywood, a truly "first cinema," and the ally of the wealthy, if somewhat unexposed, investor Prince, who is able to put his money to good use once he is educated about the importance of quality. Though *Nollywood Hustlers* features more pidgin English dialogue and daily life in Lagos than most of Isong's films, the humble beginnings and the "voice of the people" sometimes romanticized by Nollywood scholars are mocked here. Indeed the pidgin and the heavily Igbo-accented English spoken by the hustlers become class markers that contrast them with the professionals, who speak English with cultivated accents. Unlike *The Price of Fame* where Steph's humble

background is portrayed sympathetically, in *Nollywood Hustlers*, those seen as trying to break into the industry are bumbling con artists, who are punished in the end. The filmmakers show more interest in potential investors than the lowly fans who love their films.

However, although the film distances Nollywood from its humble beginnings and portrays it as a long-established celebrity culture, the character Scholar, the social climbing waitress turned prospective actress played by executive producer Uche Jombo, transcends this divide. The one truly successful hustler in the film, she plays on Prince's pity as a fellow victim of Elvis and Lucky's tricks to "girlfriend her way to the top." When Prince finances the Imasuen film, he asks that his "upcoming actress," formerly one of the "fakes" recruited by Elvis and Lucky, be put in the film alongside Monalisa and Ramsey. Although Scholar never quite masters the polished cadences of a star, continuing to speak with a heavy Igbo accent even when she leaves pidgin behind, she does change her name to Princess, to parallel her sugar daddy Prince, and refuses to speak to her former colleagues at Mama Ngozi's pepper soup joint, who had once mocked her ambitions. Scholar is the subversive character, what Karin Barber calls a kind of "textual loophole," who undermines the facade of a wholly sophisticated Nollywood as presented in the film (Barber, "Popular Arts" 8). Just as she refuses to acknowledge her humble beginnings and less than savoury colleagues, so also do the elite in the film refuse to acknowledge their humble beginnings and the hustlers who actually made it big in Nollywood. *Nollywood Hustlers* points to the changing allegiance of Nollywood's elite from the popular audience of the street to more sophisticated and exposed fans and investors. However, though it is harder to put forward such a self-presentation as a "bottom up" portrayal of "contemporary Nigerian social and cultural history" as Okome argues ("Nollywood" 39), it does illustrate his point about how Nollywood portrays the desire for social mobility in Nigeria (37). Not only is

Scholar a synecdoche for the part of Nollywood that rose from street to celebrity, the form of the metafiction film itself metonymically represents the larger desire of the Nigerian masses to rise, as one film title put it, “from grass to grace.”

Kannywood exposé

Although the Lagos-based English-language industry presented in *The Price of Fame* and *Nollywood Hustlers* continues to be the most visible face of Nigerian film in the national and international media, the northern city of Kano, as I described in my introduction, is the home of a slightly older film industry. *Turmin Danya (The Draw)*, the first successful commercial Hausa-language video film was made by the Kano-based Tumbin Giwa drama group in 1990, two years before the famous Igbo-language *Living in Bondage*, which is often referred to as the beginning of the Nigerian video-film industry. The first big Hausa hit that spread all over Northern Nigeria was *Gimbiya Fatima* made the same year as *Living in Bondage*. Similarly, the Hausa film magazine *Tauraruwa (Star)* coined the name “Kanywood” for the Hausa film industry, after its centre in Kano, in 1999 three years before the name “Nollywood” was bestowed on the Nigerian film industry by the *New York Times* in 2002 (Adamu, “The Hausa” 34). (The popular media later changed the spelling to Kannywood.) According to 2010 NFVCB statistics, Hausa films made up nearly 30 per cent of the films made in Nigeria, while English-language films made up only around 12 per cent (Bala 12), though English films had gone back up and Hausa films had reduced by 2012 (Malgwi).¹³ However, perhaps because there has not been a similar level of

¹³ Although I focus on Hausa films here, Yoruba films, currently the largest part of the Nigerian film industry at around 55 per cent in 2010 (Bala 12), were likely being made on video before any other language in Nigeria, as Yoruba filmmakers pioneered the transition from celluloid to video. Yoruba actor Yinka Quadri claims that Kenneth Nnebue, made over two dozen video films in Yoruba before the success of *Living in Bondage*. Similarly, Yoruba filmmakers, like Hausa filmmakers, generally use the word “Nollywood” to refer to the English-language industry, though there are more Yoruba crossover stars into English-language films than there are Hausa (Bakare and Quadri).

investment in the northern industry by wealthy executive producers and perhaps because of language limitations, Kannywood has not yet achieved the level of international fame or celebrity respectability portrayed in *Nollywood Hustlers*.

Before I discuss self-reflexivity in Kannywood films, there is need to set up the context that distinguishes it from Nollywood. Although many of the critiques of Kannywood are similar to those made of Nollywood, with complaints about unprofessionalism, low-quality, and immorality in the films and the film industry, the culture and history of the conservative Muslim society of Northern Nigeria has meant the repercussions of such anxieties are greater. As Paul Ugor observes, the NFVCB banned around 25 films between 1994 and 2005 and gave harsh ratings to others, but the NFVCB remained “largely handicapped in determining the content” of the films or controlling the process by which they were made (11–12). Certainly, there was never a time when it tried to completely shut down filmmaking in Nigeria. By contrast, in December 2000, following the implementation of Islamic *shari’a* law in Kano State, made possible by northern political interpretations of the 1999 Constitution, the state government banned the “shooting, production, distribution and showing” of films in Kano state, saying that film “constitutes an incalculable damage and nuisance on the sacred teachings of the Sharia legal system” (Media Rights Agenda n.d.).¹⁴ After filmmaking associations in Kano came together to present their cause to the state government, listing the thousands of people employed by the industry, the state government and filmmakers came to a compromise. The Kano State Censorship Board (KSCB), established in February 2001, enabled filmmakers to return to work, while also providing a political concession to conservatives who had urged the ban. Filmmakers

¹⁴ Following the return to democratic rule in 1999, there was a populist campaign across the North for the re-establishment of Islamic *shari’a* law. *Shari’a* had been in place before colonialism and was seen by the masses as a way of getting rid of corruption in the justice system. In June 2000, Kano state publicly implemented the law (Ostien). I will describe this historical moment in greater detail in the next chapter.

who wanted to make or sell films in Kano were now required to pass their films through both the national and state level boards. The new Kano state censorship law reproduced NFVCB stipulations about cultural sensitivity and professional standards, but it also created new rules to prevent un-Islamic behaviour (McCain, “The Second Coming”; KSCB, “Cinematography”).

In 2003, Ibrahim Shekarau became Kano state governor, after campaigning on promises that he would implement *shari’a* law better than the previous governor Rabi’u Kwankwaso. In addition to creating the *Hisbah* Board (*shari’a* vigilantes), who often shut down singing and dancing at weddings and arrested commercial motorcyclists for carrying women, Shekarau also established A Daidaita Sahu, a Societal Reorientation Directorate, to help restore “our cherished values”: “uprightness, good manners, patriotism, and respect for law and order” through social initiatives (Olaniyi 88; Ostien 5, 7; Shekarau, cited in Ostien 7). While in the first few years of Shekarau’s tenure, filmmakers suffered little further interference, in 2007, an event occurred that turned the attention of the government back to film.

As I described in my introduction, in August 2007, during Shekarau’s second term, a private cell phone video of Kannywood actress Maryam “Hiyana” having sex with a lover, a Lagos-based bureau de change worker, Usman Bobo, was leaked to the public. Like the scandal in *The Price of Fame*, which was leaked by an actress jealous of Steph, it was rumoured that another actress had leaked the clip so as to ruin Hiyana’s reputation (Adamu, “Private Passion” 293). Within days, there were hundreds of black marketers charging thousands of naira to download what was being called the “first Hausa blue film,” while outraged religious and political leaders called for an indefinite suspension of the Kano film industry and the mass expulsion of other performers suspected of “improper” behaviour. While Nollywood scandals of the type portrayed in *The Super Star* and *The Price of Fame* are often rumoured in tabloids, this

Kannywood sex scandal, combining in “real life” anxieties about celebrity and the ability of cheap technologies to expose secret corruption, resulted in the second temporary ban on filmmaking in Kano and ushered in one of the most dire periods in Nigerian film history, which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 5 (See also McCain, “Nollywood, Kannywood”). The metafictional films I discuss in the Kannywood section of this chapter were all made before the 2007 censorship crisis but all of them reflect the social anxieties about the film industry that built up to the extreme reaction to the Hiyana sex video.

Although Hausa filmmakers often claim to be “preaching” or passing on a message as I described in the previous chapter and demonstrate a fascination with the power of recording devices to reveal secret corruptions, as I described in the previous section in “junk journalism,” they are often challenged by critics who feel filmmakers are corrupting society. Concerns about cultural imperialism combine Islamic anxieties about encroachment of western “Christian” norms, as Krings, Larkin, and Adamu have noted, with third cinema style critiques of “first cinema,” illustrating the complex interplay of conservative traditionalist and radical nationalist discourse to suppress individual expression similar to that expressed by Nivedita Menon in “Between the Burqa and the beauty parlor?” In 2009, the head of the Kano State Censors Board Abubakar Rabo Abdulkarim told me that it was alarm over how films were jeopardizing “societal values” that made “this board to ban all alien dancing, all alien cultures that were smuggled into our projects” (McCain, “Interview with Alhaji”).

Rabo’s moralistic remarks sound quite similar to those made in the “Resolutions of the Third World Filmmakers Meeting in Algiers, 1973.” Expressing suspicion of cultural imperialism, they stated that it is “necessary to be vigilant and eliminate nefarious action which the information media can have and to purify the forms of popular expression (folklore, music,

theatre, etc) and to modernize them” (Gabriel, *Third Cinema in* 106). Similarly, just as Julio Espinosa theorized that “[i]mperfect cinema rejects exhibitionism, [...] the narcissistic and the commercial” (par. 39), much of what is seen as “alien” to a discreet and modest Islamic Hausa culture is the spectacle of celebrity projected by the popular media (and by filmmakers themselves in their films) that invokes the glamour surrounding other film industries of Nollywood, Bollywood and Hollywood. This celebrity spectacle was at its peak when the censorship crisis hit Kano in 2007.¹⁵

In the entertainment section of Northern Nigerian newspapers and film magazines, stories about all four industries appear side by side. Kannywood has its own well-developed star system, with Hausa stars frequently appearing on billboards and on stickers decorating buses and taxis and participating in award shows modelled on other film award shows around the world, both Hollywood’s Academy Awards and Nollywood’s Africa Movie Academy Awards. In a promo for a pilot television programme, *SuperStars Video Magazine*, actor, director and producer Shariff Ahlan speaks to the camera, contrasting information that comes from newspapers and film magazines with his new show, in which the information comes from the mouths of the stars: “Hausa superstars have become celebrities, but we don’t know how they live their lives, what kind of clothes they wear, what kind of cars they drive, or how they live with their families. Come, let’s see” (my translation). In his promo, Hausa actors build celebrity on their own terms. Sani Danja and Ali Nuhu show off national and international awards. Abba El-Mustapha shows

¹⁵ Adamu points out that one of the most important aspects of the person who has received “*tarbiyar Hausawa*,” a good moral education and upbringing is “*kunya da kara* (modesty, self-deprecation, humble, acknowledges others’ opinion over his own)” – a characteristic that can often seem at odds with celebrity culture (Adamu, “*Tarbiyar*” 9). Responses to the actions of the stars in *Fim* magazine demonstrate this tension: In a letter published in January 2009 *Fim*, reader Muh’d Usman Dandattijo advises stars to behave themselves at the glamorous parties *Fim* covers. He assures actress Rasheeda Adamu that “anyone who is religious and values Hausa culture who sees the photo [of her posing with director Sadiq Mafia at a Kannywood wedding] will be upset.” He advises her to properly cover her body and warns her she will lose her fans if she continues to display herself (7). Another letter in the February 2009 issue advises Kannywood star Ali Nuhu to stop acting in Nollywood films because “you are a Muslim” (Muhammad, “Ali” 8, my translations).

off his collection of shoes and colognes. But lest this be considered materialistic, the next shot shows him dressed in a respectable Hausa kaftan distributing alms to young men in wheelchairs.

The director Ashiru Nagoma takes this glamour spectacle to another level in huge productions that feature most of the stars. In the 2005 film *Tutar So (Patriotism)*, he gathers Kannywood stars into song and dance sequences, which he inserts into the larger narrative of the film. These songs do not necessarily have anything to do with the film's storyline, but instead become stand-alone music videos featuring stars calling out their actual names to the camera. While many song and dance sequences in Hausa films are edited together with clips from the action to become advertorial trailers, Nagoma uses the sequence, as Inwang used the red carpet sequence in *Nollywood Hustlers*, to sell, not just the film, but the film industry.¹⁶

Despite this focus on glamour, most Hausa films are not able to project the kind of wealth seen in films like *The Price of Fame* or *Nollywood Hustlers*. Although, "huge mansions and luxury cars" seem to have become "*the marker*" of what Nollywood is known for in other African countries (Krings, "Nollywood goes" 76, original emphasis), Hausa filmmakers rarely have the resources to display such wealth, even when the story calls for it.¹⁷ Ahmad Sarari, a producer and recent Vice President of the northern filmmakers' body Motion Pictures Practitioner's Association of Nigeria (MOPPAN), told me in 2009 that part of the reason many Hausa films are "technically not very good [is...] not unconnected with the financial situation we've found ourselves in, the economic position of northern Nigeria. [...]The average budget for

¹⁶ This fad of bringing together all the stars in one film didn't last much past 2006, and I often heard filmmakers speak contemptuously about such films, saying they were merely star vehicles and had no story.

¹⁷ On the set of the film *Mutallab*, actors and members of the crew complained to me that the story of a family who sent their son abroad to study called for a posher setting than the modest uninhabited house in Kaduna with unkempt grounds where we were shooting. The director tried to make up for the lapse in verisimilitude in the interior shots, by shooting over the walls of a large house in Abuja for exterior fill-in shots.

a film in Lagos right now is about five million, the average budget for our film is 500,000. You will see they have ten times as [much] money” (McCain, “Interview with Dr. Ahmad Sarari”).

While in the southern industry, wealthy businessmen like Prince are willing to invest in films, the wealthy elite of the North have a more conflicted relationship with the film industry, in part because of the moral implications of involvement in filmmaking. Kannywood metafiction is less able to showcase the kinds of affluent lifestyles portrayed in southern metafiction, but they do demonstrate a similar concern with defending themselves to their fans as making a respectable livelihood. Films like *Taurari (The Stars)*, *Tauraruwa (Star)*, and *Yar Fim (The Film Actress)*, combat perceptions that film practitioners are wild, lazy and undisciplined by presenting the professional context and educating audiences on the inner workings of filmmaking. The offices in these films are generally chic and modern; the producers and directors who appear in the diegesis of the film are sometimes shown wearing business suits and greeting visitors with a busy professional demeanour. *Yar Fim* shows a virtuous young woman whose profession as an actress means she asks her suitor to wait for her while she finishes a script conference but still has time to walk his sister home from school. Similar to the sermonizing “showstopper” elements in films I described in Chapter 3, in a scene immediately after her lover has told her he will not be able to marry her because his mother objects to him marrying an actress, there is a long sequence showing the actress praying set to the extra-diegetic soundtrack of a verse from the Qur’an being chanted. When she eventually marries the man, she prevails in her marriage as a good wife, despite all the insults the first wife rains upon her for being an actress.

In educating their audience about the professional world of film while simultaneously showing the piety of filmmakers, the implicit argument, as in *The Price of Fame*, is that it is a

respectable modern career like medicine or law. The director of both *Tauraruwa* and *Yar Fim*, Salisu T. Balarabe, sounded like Imasuen in *Nollywood Hustlers* when he told me that people thought filmmaking was an easy way to make fast money. “People don’t know the importance of a thing until they understand how you do it,” he said. He told me that *Yar Fim* was produced by actress and producer Zainab Booth who contacted him after she saw his metafiction film *Tauraruwa* and told them they should make another film like it to show people that filmmaking is a respectable profession. To reinforce this message, she made *Yar Fim* a family affair playing in the film alongside all of her children and casting her eldest daughter as the virtuous actress (personal interview).

In addition to proclaiming the respectability of film as a profession, which echoes on a more modest scale what Nollywood metafiction do, filmmakers often imply that it is a profession that promotes culture and religion. Matthias Krings comments on how following shari’a implementation, several filmmakers, attempting to “justify the moral legitimacy of their video films, [...] recast their work as religious admonition (*fa’dakarwa*) or religious preaching (*wa’azi*), and liken themselves in press interviews to religious teachers (*malamai*),” noting that, in the credits of films, actors are sometimes referred to as “‘admonition deliverer’ (*masu fa’dakarwa/masu wa’azi*)” (“Conversion” 49). The film *Sansani* (*War-camp*) moves this self-conscious discourse from extradiegetic elements such as credit titles or closing lines reading “Alhamdu lillah” into the diegesis of the film itself. In *Sansani 2*, when a young man becomes an actor, his wild and violent half siblings, children of his mother’s two wicked co-wives from a previous marriage, persecute him, while his righteous stepfather praises him for his career choice, saying it is a profession “like preaching.” In *Gurnani* (*Growling*), which I discussed in the previous chapter, the father who throws the neighbourhood *liman* (prayer leader) out of his

house for suggesting that he allow his family to watch Hausa films rather than satellite TV, turns out to be (possibly) sexually abusing one daughter and to have murdered the suitor of another. In *Yar Fim* the senior wife who abuses her co-wife for having once been an actress, tries to put a spell on her, illustrating that the woman who society sees as respectable is far less respectable than the woman who was an actress, a point similar to that made by Balaraba Ramat Yakubu in her novel *Wane Kare Ne Ba Bare Ba*. In this way, filmmakers align the practice of filmmaking with culture and reputability, while associating critics with hypocrites and scoundrels.

Of these narratives, I will discuss in more detail the films *Inda Ranka (In life...)* and *Hafsa*, which reference the conflict and potential reconciliation of the Hausa entertainment industry with tradition, and the film *Kyalli (Glitter)*, which makes a much more in-your-face argument that the sins of the filmmakers are rooted in the hypocrisies of their critics. These films provide a range of responses, reflecting self-consciousness about entertainment media as forms of instruction and enlightenment.

Inda Ranka, which takes its title from the proverb “inda ranka kasha kallo,” meaning, “In life you will see many things,”¹⁸ presents the film industry as an orderly and professional world that is turned upside down by the actions of one immoral actress. On a narrative level, the film follows closely the genre of the “melodramatic love story” described by Krings, in which “love’s potentially antisocial force, its selfish dark side, is sometimes coupled with the equally undesirable forces of witchcraft and ‘pagan’ magic” (“Conversion” 54). Safiya, a girl from a destitute family, begs a producer, through his wife, to help her enter the industry as an actress, but once she enters, she betrays them both by using a “pagan” *boka* to bewitch the producer into falling in love with her. Although the producer is portrayed as a moral and responsible husband

¹⁸ *Inda Ranka* is also the name of a popular radio show on the Kano-based Radio Freedom that discusses entertainment industry issues.

before he met Safiya, her charm works, and he becomes the first of her many lovers. His successful career is derailed when Safiya becomes more and more unpredictable, rumours about their relationship abound, and he is alienated from his wife, his parents, and his colleagues. In the meantime, Safiya enriches herself from her career and her many wealthy lovers. Although she now has the means to support her widowed mother and virtuous sister, she treats them with disrespect and even seduces her sister's suitor away. In the end, she quits acting when she quarrels with the producer and one of her other lovers, a powerful government "commissioner," has him arrested. Although she had turned down marriage offers because she wanted to continue her career, when she finally does leave her career, she is left alone. After one of her affluent lovers, who has given her a house and vacations to Europe, discovers a respectable alhaji proposing marriage to her, he warns the man away, "She has many lovers. Honestly, she is not marriage material." Both the producer and the alhaji are reconciled with Hausa culture when they turn from the glamorous femme fatale to modest, good women who stay at home, the producer back to his wife and the alhaji to Safiya's virtuous sister. Safiya is left alone without prospects.

Although the film, which had been shot before the Hiyana scandal but released afterwards in 2008, does not anticipate the devastating impact the actions of an actress could have on the industry itself, it does self-consciously reflect on the film industry's relationship with the KSCB in one scene, when an actress grabs the front of an actor's shirt in a fight and the director, played by real-life director Ishaq Sidi Ishaq, shouts "Cut, cut, censors." The film also has remarkable parallels to the Hiyana scandal, and in an ironic twist features the actress Maryam Hiyana as the virtuous sister of the immoral actress. (The marketers of the film took advantage of this coincidence by placing a blow-up of Hiyana's face on the VCD cover of the

film, as if she were the central act rather than a supporting actress).¹⁹ When I asked producer Nura Husain, who acted the producer in the film, about the similarity between the real-life scandal and the events portrayed in *Inda Ranka*, he replied that although it is not a true life story, “we made it based on what we know. We have the knowledge, we are in the system. We thought we should make [a film about] this important problem.” And it turns out that “exactly what we showed in the film happened in the industry. Exactly” (personal interview). He told me about how one of the scenes in the film reflected a “real life” episode he had witnessed when an actress refused to come to the set of the film because she had quarrelled with the producer who was her boyfriend (personal interview). In the film, however, the producer’s bad behaviour is seen as a result of being bewitched by Safiya, and thus, although larger political and social problems are hinted at in the actions of Safiya’s lover the “commissioner,” the problems of the industry are blamed on the extreme behaviour of a single wicked woman. When the producer leaves his relationship with Safiya to reconcile with his wife and parents, the implied resolution of the problem is that with a return to traditional values, the film industry will be saved. The resolution follows a genre convention that reinforces conservative gender roles.

While *Inda Ranka* attempts to defend the film industry by scapegoating a single immoral actress, the film *Hafsah*, named after the main character, seems to do the opposite, showing how a single talented and unfairly maligned singer saves the band she joins by drawing on “tradition” to revive stale genre categories.²⁰ *Hafsah* portrays a group of musicians as mostly decent people who make music for the love of it. The director encourages the audience to identify and sympathize with the musicians. The leader of the band, Faisal, talking about how he has lost

¹⁹ Because of the censorship ban on releasing any films including *Hiyana* in them for five years, the producers were only able to sell the film outside of Kano state. I bought it in Jos.

²⁰ While *Hafsah* portrays the music industry rather than film, it is relevant to my analysis since, as I pointed out in Chapter 3, music is an integral part of the Hausa film industry and creates music celebrities as famous as film stars.

many of his family relationships because of his career choice, insists, as do many real-life Hausa musicians I have spoken to, that “music is my life.” Yet the band is in a slump, with the same boring songs and dances, and their producer is about to yank their funding and their performance space. It is not until Faisal meets Hafsah, the mysterious beggar woman with the beautiful voice, that the fortunes of the band turn around. Hafsah refuses to perform the same old standards and instead infuses her performance with new life by returning the band to Hausa folk songs and village dances. The eventual “message” of the film seems to combine a lesson about HIV awareness (Hafsah turns out to be HIV positive but is able to have a successful career as a singer all the same) with a point about how film and music does not necessarily have to “spoil” culture. Neither do “culture” and “tradition” have to remain static in the village. Instead “culture” and “tradition” can continue in new urban forms. The tradition that Hafsah brings revives the flagging performances of a band stuck in a rut. The film also implies, in a seeming response to Hausa audiences who often look down upon singers as mere praise singers, that the band offers a more viable avenue for singing than begging. The film explores the healing nature of the truth when Hafsah’s jealous rival, like the jealous actress in *The Price of Fame* who revealed that Steph had a baby out of wedlock, reveals to the band that Hafsah is HIV positive. Although it initially seems that Hafsah’s career will never recover, the revelation eventually enables her to reconcile with her family, who had abandoned her, and teach society that HIV does not mean an end to life. The film closes with a concert, in which Hafsah hugs her formal rival, with whom she has apparently reconciled, and sings to a crowd and by implication the larger audience of the film about how HIV will not destroy her.²¹

²¹ *Hafsah* reverses the idea of an embodied punishment for sin (as seen in other HIV-themed films or the pregnancies in films I discussed in Chapter 3), instead showing that Hafsah, who was infected by her husband and thus not guilty of any sin, can have a successful life even if HIV-positive. Despite its positive social theme, *Hafsah*,

Sani Mu'azu, producer and director of *Hafsah* and at that time president of MOPPAN, engages critiques that the Hausa film and music industry is spoiling tradition by indiscriminately accepting outside film and music forms. In a paper presented after the Hiyana scandal, he argues that Hausa films work “as a counter-force against the influence of films from other parts of Nigeria and foreign films with adverse values contained in imported cultures threatening the survival of our peoples’ good values” (“Censorship” 4). *Hafsah* extends his argument, showing how modern entertainment forms can be redeemed by recourse to tradition. The film illustrates a popular theory about the importance of “selectively choosing from foreign forms and values what can add value and vitality to the traditional culture” that Abubakar Aliyu Liman argues extends back to the thought of Aminu Kano (“Radicalism” 182).

While *Inda Ranka* attempts to maintain the status quo and *Hafsah* seeks to point a way forward through cooperation, Saeed Selbar’s film *Kyalli* virulently critiques both the industry and a culture that, he implies, protects hypocrites from exposure. *Kyalli* accepts criticisms of immoral elements in the film industry but points a finger back at the critics, with a snide “We may be bad, but it’s your fault,” suggesting both sides need change. Of the three films, *Kyalli* also plays the most with stylistic features that self-consciously point outside the world of the film. *Kyalli*, which Selbar told me means “glitter” or “glamour” and is named for the entertainment television show in the diegetic world of the film, combines commentary on the glamour of the industry with the muckraking criticism of other films that show the corruption of the youth as the fault of a corrupted political elite. Selbar, who wrote, directed and edited the film in early 2007, though it was not released until 2010, anticipates the political crisis that followed the Hiyana scandal. *Kyalli* presents many actual critiques of the industry: a fake

like Iyan-Tama’s film *Tsintsiya*, which won Best Social Issue film at Zuma Film Festival in 2008, was banned by the Kano State Censors Board for not being censored in Kano. I discuss these bannings more in Chapter 5.

director tricks young women into sleeping with him by promising them film roles; an actress takes gifts from a corrupt politician. Selbar told me, “I want to point out not all that glitters is gold. There are a lot of fake producers. Kids run away from home and go stay in Kano for two or three years without entering the industry. Some end up getting pregnant” (personal interview).

Selbar juxtaposes these common critiques of the film industry with the “exposé” aesthetic of the films, displaying the hypocritical lives of the most virulent critics of the industry. In the first scene, a politician, Alhaji Dandano, is angered when his fawning audience abruptly leaves to follow the movie star DJ.²² This scene is followed by one in which Alhaji Dandano berates his wife for watching Hausa films, which she claims show Hausa culture. Later on, Alhaji Dandano goes on a celebrity TV show to proclaim that if elected governor he will return all filmmakers back to where they came from, pushing wheelbarrows and labouring on the streets. Furthermore, he will forcibly marry off young girls so they will not go into acting and will encourage men to marry up to four wives to ensure the women are married. Alhaji Dandano’s speeches satirize much of the extreme rhetoric about the film industry during *shari’a* implementation.²³

The politician’s relationship with the public is multiple. We see him in his role on the stump talking to people on the street, his contentious family life and then his public denunciation on television of what he claims is the corruption of the film industry. The television camera captures his official stance while the “hidden” camera (both diegetic and non-diegetic) captures his unofficial corruption. It turns out that, from a secret affair, he had fathered a pair of twins out of wedlock: the boy had been given to foster parents and had, unknown to him, turned out to be

²² In a case of life mirroring fiction, Sani Danja, the actor who played DJ in *Kyalli*, later described to me a real life instance of fans rushing away from a politician to surround him when he visited a political rally in the years following the making of *Kyalli* (personal communication).

²³ Government involvement in marriages came about during the second tenure of Governor Rabi’u Musa Kwankwaso. The *hisbah*, the shari’a police institutionalized by Governor Ibrahim Shekarau, sponsored a series of mass weddings, where the government paid money to men marrying widows or divorced women, thus saving these women from the socially provocative situation of being unattached (Yaya “1000”).

his rival, the movie star DJ, while the girl became the television reporter on whose programme, *Kyalli*, the politician had denounced the film industry. The glamorous young people the politician condemns are his own secret children. If they do wrong, Selbar implies, it is rooted in the corruption of their father. The hypocrisy of the politician is exposed on many levels, through the self-conscious use of the diegetic and non-diegetic camera. The politician moves from haranguing his second wife for admiring the cover of a Kannywood video cd, to plotting an affair with the film actress featured on the cover, whom he subsequently sends a cell phone and the keys to a new car, promising to take her on vacations to Europe to blow government money. At one point Alhaji Dandano self-consciously acknowledges the audience, looking directly into the (non-diegetic) camera and shaking his finger while he ostensibly addresses a monologue towards DJ, saying he is going to destroy him. The evil plans of the politician to murder his rival are confirmed by his direct confession, much like the evil plans of the barrister in *Osuofia in London* to trick Osuofia out of his inheritance are revealed through his direct address monologue.

If the politician's corruption is captured by the non-diegetic camera, the use of cameras in the diegesis of the film are responsible for his final downfall. A hidden camera planted by the politician's illegitimate daughter, the entertainment reporter, in DJ's house, captures Alhaji Dandano's murder of his secret-son, the actor. The downfall of the politician is brought about by the camera, a device that works within the narrative of the film, but also provides political commentary on the power of the film industry to explode the hypocrisies of a corrupt political elite. Footage showing Alhaji Dandano murdering DJ is played on the daughter's television show so that his secret sin is revealed to the entire city.

Selbar also plays with the porous boundaries of the film when he makes a cameo appearance, similar to Isong's appearance in *Nollywood Hustlers*, granting the entertainment

reporter an interview about his “new film *Kyalli*,” followed by a song and dance sequence where he sings, dances and raps alongside Sani Danja and Mansura Isa, the stars who play stars in the film. While Selbar is critical here of the excesses of the film industry, he also wants to promote it. As he said to me: “Film actors have the quality of being glamorous. They attract people and add joy and happiness to people’s lives. [*Kyalli*] is about the glamour of the film industry and how it affects people negatively or positively, but mostly positively” (personal interview). The title of “*Kyalli*” or “glitter” therefore encompasses both a positive celebration of glamour and an ironic reference to how the camera can reveal that “not all that glitters is gold.”

Nollywood and Kannywood metafiction as artists’ statements

If, as other scholars have argued, Nigerian films both reflect the rumours of the street and project the image of how Nigerians would like to live their lives, then metafictional elements of the films reveal the self-consciousness of the filmmakers as mediators of these dreams. Films that draw attention to the tools of the filmmaker and to filmmaking as a process become artists’ statements, expressing on a smaller scale filmmakers’ theories about what the industry as a whole does for the nation. The metafictional films I have discussed here reflect the variety of discourses surrounding the Nollywood and Kannywood industries; however, they also share similarities in the ways they respond to their audiences.

First, films that are not directly about the process of making films but draw attention to the role of the camera tend to deal with themes of exposing secret corruption or being a direct portal between fiction and real life. While these films sometimes reinforce a conservative status quo, as can be seen in *Daham* where hidden cameras reveal the independent-minded wives of a wealthy man as secretly planning the murder of the favoured wife’s sons, more often they

challenge authority, whether that of corrupt police, politicians, religious leaders, a wealthy elite, or even just conservative elders who are suppressing the expression of the youth. The self-consciousness about performance and recording technology subtly point to the power of films to reveal “truth” about hypocrites.

Second, although filmmakers vary in their responses to government intervention, metafiction about the entertainment industry tend to do for the industry what Akunyili, in her rebranding campaign, wanted to see them do for the nation: they project a mostly positive image to correct misperceptions about a maligned community. Metafiction, from both Nollywood and Kannywood, respond to common critiques of the industry as misunderstandings brought about by the actions of irresponsible individuals. They attempt to correct these misperceptions by showing a professional and glamorous industry, with celebrities who are role models for their audiences. In the *Price of Fame*, Steph, after overcoming the scandal of having her teenage pregnancy revealed, uses her celebrity to help reduce the stigma of being a rape victim. Similarly in *Hafsah*, after the secret of Hafsah’s HIV status is revealed, she performs at a huge concert to help reduce the stigma of HIV. In *Nollywood Hustlers*, the movie star Ramsey promotes his foundation to help poor children on the streets. In *Sansani 2*, the young man who becomes an actor is praised by his stepfather as having chosen a profession like preaching.

However, while these films demonstrate many similarities in the way Nollywood and Kannywood respond to their audiences, they also illustrate the gaps between them. It is in the more extreme relationships between the film industry and their critics, the disparities in funding, and the more self-aware political positioning of many of the Kannywood filmmakers that some of the most dramatic differences between the Hausa-language Kannywood and English-language Nollywood are found. While the historical movement of *The Price of Fame* to Nollywood

Hustlers shows an increasingly upwardly mobile and wealthy industry, the historical progression of the Kannywood metafiction I have discussed reveal more contested identities and more harshly drawn moral boundaries. While, in *The Price of Fame*, Steph's trials are caused by a jealous colleague and a muckraking media, and, in *Nollywood Hustlers*, stars are harassed by ignorant street hustlers, the antagonists of the film industry in Kannywood metafiction tend to be more evil and the consequences more severe. In *Sansani 2*, the actor is physically beaten by his wicked stepbrothers who claim he has shamed the family by his involvement in film. In *Inda Ranka*, Safiya uses evil powers to spiritually manipulate the previously kind and professional producer, eventually having her powerful government lover throw him in jail. In *Kyalli*, the evil politician Alhaji Dandano threatens to ban the industry and actually kills the movie star DJ. In these metafiction, actors, singers and, indeed, the industry itself are presented as being in more actual danger than they are in Nollywood metafiction, making the task of defending themselves the more urgent. In this way these films reflected the harsh rhetoric around the film industry in the 2000s, following the implementation of shari'a law, and anticipated the trials filmmakers would suffer under the Censorship Board following the Hiyana crisis, which gave rise to more aggressive and confrontational metafiction that I will discuss in the next chapter.

The embattled stance of Kannywood metafiction makes clear their desire for respectability and upward mobility to which they look to Nollywood as a model. Many Kannywood filmmakers I interviewed express a desire to have their films seen in cinemas and enter the global marketplace. Banker and producer Mohammad Dahiru, whose goal is to make films that will be shown in cinemas all over the world, told me he founded the Savannah International Movie awards for Kannywood in 2010 to reward filmmakers who win with training in Malaysia (personal interview). Quite a few Kannywood filmmakers attend brief training

workshops offered at forums like the Nollywood organized expo BOB TV or the annual workshops at the National Film Institute, and some have gone for even longer training programmes. Dr. Sarari, currently the zonal director for the northwest NFVCB office, and his brother Iyan-Tama were able to obtain sponsorship from the South African telecommunications company MTN for the 2013 Kannywood Awards (Giginyu, “Day”). So far, however, educated Kannywood filmmakers have neither reached the level of recognition nor attracted the same level of investment as their Nollywood counterparts.

It is here that a certain paradox can be found. The shrinking numbers but higher budget context of Nollywood is beginning to appeal more to a wealthy elite, who can afford to pay for expensive multiplex cinema tickets, than to the video audiences in the street. By contrast, Dahiru told me in a 2010 interview that he had done a study that showed that the average Hausa video sold better on the market than the average Nollywood film. Indeed, nearly three times more Hausa films were being made and consumed in 2010 than were English films (Bala 12). The context of the Hausa film industry means that Kannywood metafiction still project a concern for respectability to local audiences and often engage in more overtly political discourse directed at the grass roots. It is here and perhaps in other language films, that the “voice of the voiceless” and the “social diary” of ordinary people that Nollywood scholars often look to can be most obviously found.

Chapter 5: The politics of censorship in Kano: sex scandals and prison sentences in a shari'a state¹

When I arrived in Kano in June 2008, the film industry had completely changed from what I had observed during my pre-dissertation research in 2006. The August 2007 Hiyana sex scandal, described in the Introduction and Chapters 3 and 4, had resulted in a change in the administration of the Kano State Censorship Board (KSCB). Abubakar Rabo Abdulkarim, the new Executive Secretary whose title quickly changed to “Director General” to echo the nomenclature of the National Film and Video Censors Board, had cracked down on the industry with a series of harsh penalties for filmmakers he claimed broke the rules. Film production was banned in Kano for three months, later extended to six months, but even when the ban was lifted, most of the filmmakers had moved productions outside the state, most of them to Kaduna, though postproduction continued in Kano. The crackdown, which included many arrests, elicited responses from artists that came in the form of songs and snide backhanded commentary in films with storylines that were not directly about censorship. After the government changed hands in 2011 and the leadership of the KSCB was dismantled, filmmakers began to make extended commentaries on the censorship regime in feature length films.

I begin this chapter with a history of censorship in Kano from 2001 to 2011. I then explore the specific tensions that arose after the Hiyana crisis when the chief censor ran a media campaign purportedly exposing the secret sins of the filmmakers, using some of the same techniques filmmakers had once used in their films to expose the secret sins of those they

¹ Portions of the first section of this chapter borrow from my chapter “Nollywood, Kannywood, and a Decade of Hausa Film Censorship in Nigeria” published in a different version in the 2013 Palgrave MacMillan book *Silencing Cinema: Film Censorship around the World*, edited by Daniel Biltereyst and Roel Vande Winkel. Reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.

fingered as hypocrites. Finally, I examine three different genres of Hausa screen media that responded to the censorship crisis, a “Chamama” comedy, a “Sentimental” melodrama, and a music video, each featuring an artist imprisoned during the crisis. I argue that in metafictional and autobiographical responses to the censorship crisis, these artists build on previous metafictional self-representations to characterize themselves not only as exposed and enlightened members of society against what they represent as the backwards and provincial conservative forces of the Censorship Board and its mobile court, but also as good Muslims opposed to hypocrites. The filmmakers show themselves as seeking to expose the wrongdoing of the Censorship Board and the mobile court attached to it, as well as the state government that empowers both. Ultimately, the filmmakers use their suffering at the hands of the Censorship Board as a synecdoche for the suffering of society at large under the Kano state government, using their own experiences as a meditation on justice, appealing to the national government and God for higher justice.

Censorship in Kano

The Kano State Censorship Board was created in 2001 following the implementation of shari’a law in Kano. As I have described in previous chapters, the film industry from nearly its beginning had been controversial. Abdalla Uba Adamu recounts the furore that occurred over several early Hausa films. Upon the 1999 release of *Saliha?* a film about a young girl, Saliha, who constantly wore the hijab as a sign of her virtue only to be revealed as having been sexually active before marriage, “a fatwa (Muslim clerical ruling) of death sentence was issued on the director and the producer of the film by a religious group in Kaduna, who demanded that the film should withdrawn [*sic*] from the market and the film’s makers apologize to the Muslim

community for what was seen as disrespect for Islam” (*Transglobal* 81-82). After the first screening of another film, *Malam Karkata* “dealing with a rogue marabou who insisted on sexual gratification for dispensing spiritual consultation to emotionally distressed women,” marketers “vowed not to stock, sell or distribute the film.” Adamu points out the conflict between filmmakers who seek to reform society through exposing hypocrisy and a public which saw respect for privacy as an essential part of an Islamic and Hausa identity (81).

Although these films were popular among young people, especially women in purdah, and although filmmakers often argued that the films would not sell without the singing and dancing, the films drew the ire of religious leaders and the elite. The films were seen as introducing ‘alien values’ and spoiling the upbringing of Muslim children. Zulkifl Dakata, for example, states that while Hausa-language films replaced the Indian film in the market, they unfortunately went on to continue serving us with the same elements that have always threatened to degrade our culture. It is hereby sad to note that instead of using our culture to promote and sustain our indigenous development, we take to copying, and imitating Indians; the no holds barred approach that they present in gender relations among the youths appear very artificial. (250-254).

The major concern in this common form of critique was the idea that Hausa films were introducing foreign concepts and influences, which were corrupting a “pure” Hausa Muslim culture.

The stakeholders in the Kano film industry, which by 1999 was known as Kanywood, took measures to address concerns about morality. In interviews filmmakers often stressed their own Islamic identity. Adamu describes actor Alhaji Kasimu Yero defending his role in the scandalous *Malam Karkata* by saying that the film passed a “message” about the differences

between hypocrites who abuse their positions and true Islamic teachers (*Transglobal* 81-82).

Sabo Nayaya describes how distributors “established their own censoring committee” and refused to sell any videos not previewed by the committee. “[T]he objective was to do away with obscenities and other unwanted portions” they believed would “bring chaos or cause disaffection between the people” (233-234). Alhaji Musa of Malam K’ato video shop recounts how video sellers heard negative feedback about the films from their customers. When he visited the National Film and Video Censors Board office in Abuja before a zonal office was established in Kano, he realized that only one of the film reviewers understood Hausa. Though a main objective of the NFVCB was to make sure the films did not disrespect other ethnicities or religions, Alhaji Musa was concerned that they didn’t understand Hausa culture or religion. Coming back to Kano, he called a meeting of the marketers’ association and other film stakeholders after which they opened an office that would review films before they were released on the market (Malumfashi, “Ni ne” 21). The committee was made up of three marketers and three filmmakers. Alhaji Musa Nasali, Chairman of the Cassette Sellers Association at Kofar Wambai market and one of the marketers on the review committee, described, in a conversation with Kannywood researcher Ibrahim Daniel and me, about how filmmakers would voluntarily bring their films to be reviewed by the committee, paying five hundred naira for the service of marketers who were presumed to be in tune with the mood of video audiences (personal interview). The marketer’s review board thus played a vital function in connecting filmmakers with their viewers; however, it was not as successful in negotiating government interventions.

As I briefly described in Chapter 4, the marketers review board was formed during a time of widespread campaigning for the reimplementation of what was called shari’a law, the Islamic judicial system in effect from the revolution of reformer Usman Dan Fodiyo until the British

conquest. When civilian government was reinstituted in Nigeria in 1999 after years of military rule, the newly elected governor of Zamfara state, Sani Yerima, the same politician whose marriage to a young girl I discussed in Chapter 2, interpreted the 1999 constitution as allowing northern states to implement shari'a law. The masses began to demand that this law be instituted all over the north. Although there was some amount of opposition from northern Muslims and widespread protests by Christian minorities that led to a series of violent conflicts, political rhetoric presented shari'a as a way to bring justice to the poor and right the damage done against the Islamic state by British colonialism, which had, as Mamman Lawan Yusufari argued, "bequeathed a 'one-legged' Sharia by its phasing out of Islamic criminal justice system" limiting shari'a law only to personal and business matters ("Sharia Implementation"). Moral ills in society were often seen as a result of the failings of a "judicial system which is largely Western in its orientation and origin" (White Paper on the Report of the Committee on the Implementation of Sharia Law in Kebbi State" qtd. in Ostien, Volume III 4). Kano Governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso bowed to political pressure, and, on 21 June 2000, shari'a law was publicly declared in Kano. Among the evils to be "sanitized" were prostitution, gambling, alcohol consumption, film and video viewing, and other social mixing of men and women in schools, public transportation, and weddings (Ostien, Volume III 4-6).

Although Adamu notes that in June 2000 the publicity committee of the Kano State Government had a round table to discuss film regulation with filmmakers ("Poetic Barbs" 4), those driving the agitation for shari'a did not seem aware of these measures taken by the film industry itself to guard their image. Adamu writes that, on 13 December, following the official implementation of shari'a in November, the Kano State government held a press conference and issued a press release that spoke to the "incalculable damage constituted by local films in our

society, and in particular, its affront on the scared [sic] teachings of the Sharia Legal System.” The government banned the “shooting, production, distribution and showing of such films” (“Poetic Barbs” 5). Adamu points out that the “overwhelming interpretation” of the ban on “local” films referred only to “*Hausa video films*” and that “almost immediately after the announcement, police teams went around Kano metropolis confiscating heaps of *Hausa* video cassettes” (5; emphasis in original). Such anxiety about Hausa films in particular reflects the concern for how audiences will absorb the activities they see Hausa actors performing in Hausa settings, which I discussed in Chapter 3.

When I interviewed Abdulkarim Mohammad, the first president of the Motion Picture Practitioner’s Association of Nigeria (MOPPAN), an association founded in the late 1990s to advocate for Northern filmmakers with the federal government, he recalled that MOPPAN had previously not been very successful in recruiting members. With the ban, MOPPAN was able to help “assemble industry operators in associations like the Kano State Filmmakers association, Kano state artist’s guilds, the musicians that are there and the cinema theatre owners, cassette sellers associations.[...] We packaged a presentation for the government.” In it, they presented the number of filmmakers involved in each association and the “average capital [...] per person operating in the sector. So, while we embraced their pronouncement wholeheartedly because it is through shari’a, we are calling on them to provide us with an alternative means of livelihood so that we can be able to fit into the new scheme of things.” The response of the government demonstrated stereotypes Nigerian elite have about the film industry. Mohammad told me that “the commissioner for information said the Kano executive council was amazed at the quality of English that was used in the submission and that they didn’t realize the scale of the industry as of that time.” Faced with the impressive submission from MOPPAN, the government told the

filmmakers to come up with a solution (personal interview). The government response indicates two contradictory impulses in relation to the filmmakers. First, it presumed the “unworldliness” of the film industry in the larger context of the Nigerian state, assuming that they were unexposed, uneducated and unable to speak English and thus easy to dismiss. Second, by contrast, it was concerned about the “damage and nuisance” the industry, as the conduit of both local and cosmopolitan Western influences, would cause to the Muslim ummah, by competing with and posing an “affront” to the universalist “Sharia Legal System.” (Adamu, “Poetic Barbs” 5). Such contradictory impulses were to define the way the Kano state government interacted with the film industry for the next decade.

Birth of the Kano State Censorship Board

The solution the filmmakers came up with was the government-run KSCB. In 1999 the participants of the second National Film and Video Forum organized by the National Film and Video Censors Board had recommended that the NFVCB should “be the only film and video regulatory body in the country” because “the establishment of many censorship boards in the country would end up stifling the fledgling industry” (James 69).² However, when Mohammad and the other filmmakers perused the law, they realized that “if any state government feels that there are some provisions of the NFVCB that are not taking adequate care of the locale of the state, they are at liberty to create their own state censorship boards” (Abdulkarim Mohammad, personal interview). MOPPAN worked with the state government to create the Kano State

² The National Film and Video Censors board was created by Decree No. 85 in 1993, replacing previous censorship bodies that had covered only film rather than video, and began to function as an agency on 15 June 1994. (See my chapter “Nollywood, Kannywood, and a Decade of Hausa Film Censorship in Nigeria” in the book *Silencing Cinema* for more details on previous censorship policies in Nigeria.) The national censorship act, was a broad-ranging law that licensed and regulated exhibition space and censored foreign and local film and video works before they were released, censorship including both concerns about national unity, regulation of violence and obscenity, as well as the technical quality of the films.

Censorship Board, which would enable the film industry to return to their work, while also providing a political concession to the religious leaders who had urged the ban on the industry. Henceforth filmmakers wanting to access Kano markets would be required to pass their films through both the NFVCB and the KSCB before release.

Much of the “State Censorship Film Board Law 2001” and the “Cinematography (Licensing) (Censorship) Regulations 2001” enacted on 1 February 2001 reproduce almost word for word Part VII, 36 of the NFVCB 1993 law censorship criteria, stipulating that films should have “educational or entertainment value, apart from promoting the State culture, unity and interest” and should not “undermine National Security,” “induce or reinforce the corruption of private or public morality,” “encourage or glorify the use of violence,” “expose the people of African heritage to ridicule or contempt,” “encourage illegal or criminal acts,” “encourage racial, religious or ethnic discrimination or conflict” or “be blasphemous or obscene.” New regulations specific to Kano prohibit men and women from entering the same auditorium unless the cinema provided a “hijab,” which in effect meant that women were no longer admitted into cinemas (Part X: Conditions for Admission into Cinema Houses, 7 and 8). The censorship laws, therefore, attempted to combine nationalistic rhetoric with laws that would bring Hausa society in line with ideals about the separation of sexes, influenced by other cosmopolitan Islamic policies.

Part II: 8 of the 2001 law extends the authority of the law beyond films or videos, giving the board power to, among other things, “screen, censure any film, obscene books and literature before releasing to the general public for exhibition,” to which “Part XVI-Censorship of Books and Other Literary Works:14” of the cinematography regulations adds stage shows and performances. Part II:8 of the law also gives the board power to “register the State film Industry operators and other related persons” and “to impose guideline [*sic*], regulations or conditions

applicable on persons or bodies in the business of producing, sale, distributing of any film, pornography books or publications in the State.”³

According to my interview with Abdulkarim Mohammad, the film industry was given four out of sixteen seats on the censorship board which was also to include, according to Part II: 4 of the law, representatives from the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Justice, the Emirate Council, the Managing Director of the State Television Authority, and “other members to be appointed by Governor and at least two of which shall be Islamic scholars of high repute.” For the most part, the bureaucratic oversight of the law proved to be the political compromise that gave the film industry the ability to continue their work, although filmmakers began to self consciously present themselves as “shari’a compliant.” Actors were often listed as “*masu fadakarwa*” (sermonizers) in the closing credits of films, and Matthias Krings writes about a proliferation of “Islamic conversion films” shortly after the beginning of shari’a dramatizing the superiority of Muslims among pagan peoples. When these didn’t sell well, the directors went back to making the romantic singing and dancing films that audiences seemed to prefer (“Conversion” 45-68).

Although according to Sabo Nayaya, “singing and dancing between male and female” was prohibited (235), this prohibition was rarely enforced, not even in 2003 when a new governor, Ibrahim Shekarau, supported by conservative religious scholars, was voted in on

³ [Nigerian] National Film and Video Censors Board Act, 1993; CAP 23. Cinematograph (Censorship) A Law to Make Provision for the Censorship in Kano State of Films for Exhibition and for Purposes Connected Therewith. Title NN17 of 1964 KSLN 22 of 1983; [Kano] State Censorship Film Board Law 2001; Cinematography (Licensing) (Censorship) Regulations 2001 [<http://kanocensorsboard.com/Index.htm>]; For the Kano State Censorship Board Law 2001, I used a photocopy I obtained from the Kano State History and Culture Bureau; however, there is some discrepancy between the 2001 Cinematography Regulations I obtained at the History and Culture Bureau and the pdf I downloaded from the Kano State Censorship Board website. The regulations uploaded to the website seem to be a renumbered and extended version of the original regulations. Most of the regulations are the same with a few insubstantial changes in wording. Where there are substantial additions, they seem to be additions of forms and attempts to harmonize the regulations more with the NFVCB. ‘Form T’ of the pdf includes the signature of Governor Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso and is dated 23 May 2001. I saved the documents to my computer before the KSCB website was taken down after the end of Shekarau’s tenure in 2011.

claims that he would institute true shari'a law. Indeed, some filmmakers helped him in his campaign (Ciroma and Abdulaziz 32). As a part of his programme he instituted the *Hisbah* board (shari'a police) and *A Daidaita Sahu*, a "Directorate of Social Reorientation." In a *Weekly Trust* interview, Bala Muhammad, director of *A Daidaita Sahu*, pointed out that the directorate was intended as a "systematic and conscious effort through which desirable qualities such as discipline, honesty, piety, hard work, sacrifice and selflessness, among others, can be re-instilled in the society." As a part of the programme, the government created social initiatives like providing motorized tricycles for women to ride in, as a substitute for commercial motorcycles, and sponsored a workshop with members of the Association of Nigerian Authors to write a series of twenty novellas addressing "social ills" and encouraging positive Islamic behaviour (Okenyodo 22).⁴

In 2006 when I began pre-dissertation research in Kano, the second executive director of the Board, Abdulkadir A. Kurawa gave me a copy of a form in Hausa "Ka'idojin Duba Fina—Fina" ["Criteria for Reviewing Films"] which was distributed to filmmakers. Roughly translated, it reads:

Film Producers should prevent

- 1) Close dancing between a woman and a man.
- 2) A girl appearing in tight trousers or a short shirt in a film
- 3) Leaving hair uncovered [for a woman], unless the story indicates

⁴ Linking the "failure rate" in a girl's boarding school with their reading habits, Muhammad tells the story how teachers searched "for novels in closets and wardrobes. Incredibly, about 4,000 (four thousand) romantic and titillating novellas were retrieved in a school with about 2,000 students!" *A Daidaita Sahu's* programme "ONE STUDENT, ONE BOOK" was created with the intent of asking "students to submit their uncommendable reading materials for our didactic novellas" (Okenyodo 22). The government, thus, initially attempted to harness and control the creativity of some of the same writers of "uncommendable" romantic fiction to create more disciplined texts that addressed issues the state found important. This relationship was to become more complicated in 2008 when the director general of the Kano State Censors Board, Abubakar Rabo Abdulkarim attempted to require each writer to open an individual file with the censor's board, and the writers went "on strike." (See Gizo, "We Will Write" and "Writers, Filmmakers").

- 4) Putting on tight clothes that reveals the figure of a woman
- 5) Insulting or lack of respect for elders
- 6) Insulting or demeaning another religion or culture
- 7) Using children for scenes that are not appropriate for them
- 8) Using rituals or magic in films in inappropriate ways
- 9) Showing nudity, sex or vulgar actions
- 10) Ridiculing a specific person or a people or going against Islamic law⁵

Kurawa qualified several of the rules to me, saying the implementation depended upon the context of the story. He suggested, for example, that a story in which a woman was a lawyer or a “mad woman” would not require her hair to be covered. The regulations, therefore, were tempered by the temperament of the board. When I sat with the board to preview several films, they did not object to anything in the three films we watched, even in a bedroom scene where a man was suffocating a woman with a pillow. However, while the board tolerated the frequently donned Western dress and romantic and controversial storylines often including violence or insinuations of shockingly taboo sexual conduct,⁶ they did sometimes exercise their powers to ban a film, including Aminu Bala’s *cinema verite* film *Bakar Ashana* (Burned out match,

⁵ The text of the Hausa reads as follows:

Ka’idojin Duba Fina-Finai

Masu shirya fina-finai su kiyaye da:-

- 1) Rawar mace da namiji gaba da gaba.
- 2) Fitowar ‘ya mace da wando da karamar riga a fim.
- 3) Tsefe kai ko barin gashi a bude
- 4) Sanya tufafin da ke bayyanar da surar mace
- 5) Lafazi na batsa ko rashin girmama na gaba.
- 6) Cin fuska ga wani addini ko kabila.
- 7) Amfani da yara ta hanyar da bai dace ba.
- 8) Kaucewa tsafe-tsafa da amfani da makamia ta hanyar da basu dace ba.
- 9) Nuna jima’i, batsa ko wata hlayyar rashin mutunci
- 10) Kaskantar da wani mutum ko al’umma ko sabawa shari’ar Musulunci.

Wajibi ne masu shirya fina-finai su kiyaye da wadannan ka’idoji da kuma wadanda Hukuma kan iya fito dasu daga lokaci zuwa lokaci.-Management.

⁶ As I have described in chapter 3, storylines featuring adultery and incest are common features of Hausa films.

2004/5), that I discussed in Chapter 3. It was shot in an actual brothel and included a long provocative dancing scene set to traditional music, Because Bala censored the film with the NFVCB but bypassed the KSCB, the board ordered him arrested and fined, as well as the ban and seizure of the film from Kano shops (Adamu, “The Influence” 166).

Sex Scandals in a shari’a State and the tenure of Abubakar Rabo Abdulkarim

In August 2007, the Hiyana sex scandal, which I’ve described in the introduction and chapters 3 and 4, shattered any remaining cordiality between the censorship board and the film industry. Although the phone video had been made privately and had no relation to other filmmakers, the video clip was called the first Hausa “blue film.” Hiyana’s actions seemed a confirmation of public fears about filmmaking. The scandal exploded onto an already tense atmosphere. Earlier in the year, hisbah, shari’a police, had interpreted a party in honour of four women, supposedly actresses, as a “polygamous lesbian wedding,”⁷ destroying open air theatres and in June before the “Hiyana” scandal broke, The Societal Reorientation Directorate had organized several book and film burnings (BBC, “Polygamous lesbians”; BBC, “Nigeria ‘lesbian wedding’”; Karofi, “Demolition” 47; Musa, “...burns”; SHEME, “Film Burning”). The Hiyana video had been rumoured as early as June 2007 when *Gidauniya*, a film magazine based in Kaduna, reported rumours that a porn film had been produced. Aminu Aliyu Sharif (Momo), Vice Chairman of the Kano State Association of Guild of Film Artists called on Hausa film artists to boycott the magazine for “tarnishing the image of filmmakers” (Ibrahim, “Pornography” 33).

⁷ The now late writer and director Balarabe Muhammad Sango, who told me he had been involved in planning the event, told me it was a party to help raise money for the women so that they could marry. He told me that only one of the women was an actress (personal communication).

Once the video went from rumour to an easily accessible commodity, the anger about the film industry spread (along with the video) all over the north. Now instead of filmmakers accusing their critics of tarnishing their reputation, critics like the newly appointed executive secretary of the KSCB, Abubakar Rabo Abdulkarim, used the same language Sharif had used in statements like, “We will not allow filmmakers in the state to tarnish the good image of our religion and culture” (Ibrahim, “Exodus”). The Hiyana scandal was seen as exposing the misdeeds of an entire industry. Critics in local papers expressed fears of encroaching outside influences corrupting Hausa Muslim society. The Hiyana crisis made more dramatic the sorts of criticisms that were already being made. Magaji Musa Gama, for example, wrote in *Weekly Trust* that, “Hausa movies is [sic] the worst thing that ever happened in the history of culture adulteration. Everything concerning the present Hausa movie is either fake, adulterated or outright plagiarism. About ninety percent of these Hausa actors and actresses are school drop-outs, semi-illiterates or total illiterates” (43).⁸ Nazifi Dawud Khalid wrote in *Daily Trust* that Hausa films portray “ways of life that are completely alien [...] they import nihilistic Western values that only destroy the moral standards of the society. These values include Western fashion and lifestyles—which are mainly the products of increasing globalisation” (17). In the Hausa language newspaper *Aminiya*, Yusuf Dingyad’i conflated the alien values of Europe and Lagos in his critique of Hassan Giggs for making “European-style films in Lagos” (16). Islamic

⁸ Such representations are captured in Bayero University professor and translator Aliyu Kamal’s English-language novel, *Hausa Girl*. The novel fictionalizes recognizable historical events: his “dullard” heroine is obstructed in her education by her love for Hausa novels. Imitating dances seen in Hausa films, she becomes vulnerable to a mass spirit possession at her secondary school. She is seduced into the film industry by a filmmaker, who like Adam Zango makes a music video named “Bahaushiya” of the girl dancing provocatively. But in Aliyu’s novel, the filmmaker is a rapist who drugs her into dancing in the music video. He then rapes her while she is drugged and videos it to blackmail her. Kamal, therefore, conflates the musician Adam Zango’s arrest over his album *Bahaushiya* with the Hiyana scandal and paints most commercial filmmakers as evil and corrupt, although there is a “good” filmmaker who seeks education over profit in the novel. Kamal’s novel provides a novelized version of much of the oppositional discourse about the film industry—reflecting many of the rumours propagated by the Kano State Censors Board chief Abubakar Rabo Abdulkarim during the censorship crisis—as well as an intellectual concern with “quality” in film.

organizations like *Jama'a Tajdidl Islamiy* (JTI) in Kano State called for Muslims to boycott the Hausa film industry (Adamu, "Sex Video" 2), and clerics like Sheikh Salisu Aleru even called on parents to refuse their daughters possession of mobile phones for fear that they would imitate Hiyana (Zakari 14). As described, this outrage ranged from calling filmmakers illiterate school drop outs without Western education to calling them importers of alien Western values to anxieties about technologies that opened the larger world of communication to women at home.

This popular anger translated into political action. According to Mustapha Isah Kwaru, Kano State Governor Ibrahim Shekarau "said some of the artistes and producers of the Hausa movies are not indigenes of the state, maintaining that the government has a mandate to ensure sanity in the industry" (2). Elsewhere "the speaker of Kano State House of Assembly, Alhaji Abdulazeez Garba Gafasa said the house would have taken a more drastic action over the matter had the actress been a Kano State indigene" (Yahaya and Ibrahim 9). The "corruption" of the film industry was thus framed as an intrusion of "foreign" values on an essentially pure Hausa Muslim culture. The political action that would follow was infused with this sort of rhetoric.

The intellectual and political denunciations that othered the film industry as a foreign encroachment sometimes translated into violence on the grassroots level. Vice President of MOPPAN at the time, Ahmad Sarari told me that clerics "used the opportunity to call for our heads. [...] We were exposed to very serious danger, and they started harassing and storming houses of some actresses, started attacking some actors in their cars" (McCain, "Interview with Dr. Ahmad Sarari"). People merely suspected of being a part of the industry were also attacked. A mob in Bauchi nearly lynched a girl who looked like Hiyana (Hardawa and Abubakar 9).

In order to protect their stakeholders and to have time to prepare a scheme on "professional ethics" for the industry, MOPPAN called for the suspension of film production for

three months and quickly expelled Hiyana and seventeen other members suspected of “different unethical conducts (Not related with Sex) capable of bringing the film profession to disrepute” (Sarari, “Brief Report”). A Daidaita Sahu, the Kano State Directorate for Societal Reorientation, called for a ban on filmmaking for a year (Dantiye 6). The Kano State Censorship Board led by Kurawa, further called for a five-year ban on films that included Hiyana and accused the 17 other suspended members of being “involved in immoral acts like homosexuality, fornication, and drunkenness, contrary to Islamic law” (Shuaibu, “Panic.”). The Hiyana video was thus read by government representatives as exposing not only her own private act but as exposing the secret sins of the entire industry. Ironically, the same impulse to expose secret sins filmmakers presented in their narratives about a publicly righteous but privately corrupt society was being used against the filmmakers themselves, despite their vigorous denials.

In September 2007, the governor appointed Abubakar Rabo Abdulkarim, formerly deputy commandant of the Hisbah, as executive secretary of the KSCB. His title was soon inflated to “director general” to parallel the nomenclature of the NFVCB. Rabo, as he was called by the film industry, interpreted the censorship laws rigidly and much more harshly than his predecessor Kurawa. *Leadership* columnist Al-Amin Ciroma, a filmmaker himself, indicates that the problem between Rabo and the filmmakers had started during Rabo’s time with the shari’a-enforcing hisbah force (Ciroma and Abdulaziz 32). Sani Mu’azu, president of MOPPAN at that time, complained in a January 2009 interview with me that “Rabo has never been faithful to that law. Since he came, he has been manipulating the law to create his own new rules and regulations. He called them ‘new guidelines’” (McCain, “Interview with Sani Mu’azu”).⁹

⁹ Mu’azu gave the example of the new guidelines as “For instance, here we are with a law that says the highest amount of money you can charge somebody as a fine is N10,000, and we’ve heard of people paying N300,000, N500,000. So, nobody is being faithful to the law. People are just using the law to do what they want to do” (McCain, “Interview with Sani Mu’azu”).

The first of these “new guidelines” came in a 21 September 2007 press release, in which he laid down stringent new rules: production companies were required to employ people with diplomas and certificates in the field and have a “minimum of N 2.5 million [around \$16,000 [USD] as working capital.” Scripts had to be submitted to the board for approval, and singing and dancing in films were banned. He also pushed MOPPAN’s original suspension of film activities to six months, until February 2008, required that literary works be submitted for censorship, and that authors, publishers, and booksellers must individually register with the KSCB (Abdulkarim, “Press Briefing”; See Appendix 3 for the full press release).

By the end of his regime in 2011, he had forms and guidelines uploaded to the KSCB website that required every individual involved in the Kano film industry whether actor, editor, scriptwriter, or singer to register and have a file opened at the board. As part of the registration process, film operators had to sign a pledge “to be of good moral conduct and promise to abide by the provisions of the Censorship Board Law 2001” as well as “whatever guideline or guidelines that might be imposed by the KSCB from time to time” agreeing to subject themselves “to any punitive sanction measures that might be implored [*sic*] by the Board in the event of my going contrary to any of the guidelines that might be imposed [...], (“Undertaking by Film Operators”, See Appendix 4). Such forms meant that filmmakers signed over many of their rights to the censorship board. No film production could continue in the state unless every person involved with the production was registered with the board (Film Censorship Guidelines, See Appendix 5). Rabo also required scripts to be approved before they were shot in the state, and every film that was to be sold in the state, whether shot there or not, had to pass for the board for censorship (McCain, “Interview with Alhaji”).

Among the additions and tightening of the censorship guidelines were added stipulations that “Dancing and singing (Elia *[sic]*/pollutive) are prohibited in films”; “Female actresses are henceforth banned from appearing in any film wearing trousers, skirts and mini/night gowns that are erotic/sexually harassing” and also are “banned from having combed out hair.” In interest of gender neutrality, “Male artistes must not play any role in a film wearing tight cloth, very short attires or passionate barbing, which does not suit our customs and cultures.” “Films posters and trailers must not be exhibited or shown to the public unless and until approval from this Board is secured”; and “Opposite sexes while filming are strictly disallowed from spending night mingling freely at films locations” (Film Censorship Guidelines).

The new regulations regarding production company finances or educational requirements for practitioners indicate concerns similar to those of the National Film and Video Censors Board about the minimum financial thresholds and the “professionalization” of the industry to fit with “global” standards of filmmaking, although with only one active film school in the country at the time, such stipulations were almost impossible to meet.¹⁰ They also indicate a desire to more strictly control the artists themselves, especially women in the industry. Although there had been provision in the law signed in 2001 by Governor Kwankwaso for the board “to impose guidelines, regulations or conditions” (KSCB Law II: 8e) and even for registration of members

¹⁰ Directors and producers were required to “possess a Diploma or Certificate in the field of production from a recognize *[sic]* Institution” (Director Registration Form). Artistes were required to “possess a minimum qualification of a secondary school leaving certificate” (Artiste Registration Form), and scriptwriters and other film operatives were required to “possess ‘O’ Level Certificate or its equivalent.” (Script Writer and Others Registration Form). Production companies were required to have specific kinds of equipment and a permanent office, complete with a “permanent office secretary” and all “members of the productions crew shall have a minimum qualification of a Diploma or Certificate in a related field from a recognized institution” (Application for Registration Production/Post-Production Companies). Operational times in cinemas he limited from 8:00-10:30pm and reiterated “the order of non admitting of females and under aged” (Additional Guidelines to Cinema Proprietors). Rabo also attempted to make all writers in the state register with the board, although with the intervention of the national Association of Nigerian Authors executive, he settled for writers being registered with writer’s associations which would then forward the list of writers to him. He also required that any book published in the state be passed through the board. (Abdulkarim, “Press Briefing”; Sheme, “Kano Censorship-ANA”) Soccer viewing centres were also required to register with the board and video gaming centres were banned. (KSCB Progress Report).

(8b), this had never been enforced, as it was considered to be the responsibility of the filmmakers' associations. Additionally, although MOPPAN had an unwritten practice of disallowing women to act after they were married (personal communication with MOPPAN secretary Ahmad Alkanaway), this is the first time that specific characteristics were required of film stakeholders by the state. On the individual registration forms, single women involved in the industry were required to "state reasons/circumstances." "In case of female artistes [actresses], she must not be a married person" (Artiste Registration Form, Director Registration Form, Producer Registration Form, etc. See Appendices 6-9). In addition "Female Musicians and Lyricists must be under the care of a husband, parent or guardian (not independent as the case may be)" (Script Writer and Others Registration Form, Appendix 9), while "Female artistes must be under the care of her parents/guardians" (Artiste Registration Form, Appendix 6). These requirements were reinforced by an "undertaking" where a "Father/Guardian" was required to introduce a prospective film practitioner: "my Daughter/Sister/Member of my family is taking this appointment with my consent and will be of very good character [...] In the event of breaking any of these rules, I will be liable for any action to be taken by the Board" (Undertaking, Appendix 10).¹¹

From 2007 to 2011, over a thousand people associated with the film and entertainment industries were arrested and fined or served prison sentences, including singers, editors, marketers, video viewing centre owners, and video gaming centre employees. Rabo seemed to judge success by the number of arrests. In an undated progress report published on the KSCB

¹¹ According to these forms, actresses are expected to be unmarried, while lyricists, singers, or producers may be married but, in that case, must have their husbands' permission to work. Although Kano State was the first to legislate that women must be under the guardianship of a man, the respectability of women in the entertainment industry in many other parts of Nigeria has also long been considered dependent on her marital status and whether she had a respectable guardian. We can see this from the Yoruba travelling theatre troupes where the actresses were granted respectability by their marriage to the leader of the troupe (Barber, *The Generation* 283) to the ambiguous "respectability" Fela Anikulapo Kuti granted to his backup dancers when he married twenty-seven of them in one "traditional" ceremony in 1978 (Moore 156).

website, item 21 referred to the “menace of the TV game,” which had been banned. “More than 1000 culprits were arrested and prosecuted by mobile court after disregards to calls and warnings, while about 1,500 TV sets and other equipment were confiscated by the court” (KSCB Progress Report). Most of those arrested were taken to the “mobile” court attached to the censorship board headed by Justice Mukhtar Ahmed (sometimes called Muhtari Ahmad) and were sentenced within a few hours, often without having a lawyer present. My presentation of these arrests here will inform my discussion about the films made in response to the arrests the final part of this chapter.

The first high profile arrest was in September 2007 when actor, director, and musician Adam A. Zango, whom I discussed in Chapter 3, was arrested. Zango was ostensibly imprisoned and fined for releasing his music video album *Bahaushiya* in Kano without being censored, but, when speaking to the media about his arrest, Rabo “explained that the type of dressing and dancing portrayed in one of the videos contravened the teachings of Islam and Hausa culture as well, adding that the dressing in the video portrayed nudity to a certain degree” (Ibrahim and Malumfashi 15). Other arrests followed. The comedian Rabilu Musa ‘Danlasan, aka ‘dan Ibro and his colleague Lawal Alhassan Kaura were arrested in October 2008 and imprisoned for two months. They were accused of having a production company they did not register with the board and for releasing uncensored films *Ibro A Loko* and *Ibro Kauran Mata*, both of which had been released long before Rabo’s tenure. Rabo later claimed that the charges did not refer to the film *Ibro A Loko*, which had been censored before his tenure, but to an uncensored album of singing and dancing sequences excerpted from various films that had the same title (McCain, “Interview with Alhaji”). The comedians denied the charges (indeed often such compilations were the work of pirates and a marketer Malam Hassan interviewed by *Sunday Trust* seems to indicate the CD

he was selling was pirated [Karofi and Sa'idu 32]); however, Rabilu Musa D'anlasan and Lawal K'aura did not have a lawyer to plead for them in their initial hearing. When they asked the judge for mercy, he gave them two months in prison without option of bail, although they were released after about a month. The popular press speculated that Ibro was arrested because one of the songs from *Ibro A Loko* had been used by fans to mock the governor. (Maikatanga and Giginyu 10-14; Karofi and Sa'idu 32).¹²

The longest drawn out case was that of director Hamisu Lamido Iyan-Tama, a former gubernatorial candidate who had run against Ibrahim Shekarau as the New Democrats candidate in 2006 (Adamu, "Poetic Barbs" 16). Iyan-Tama was one of the oldest and most respected directors in the industry and had won awards from previous administrations of the KSCB for the positive portrayal of Hausa culture and Islam in his films. He was arrested on his return to Kano from the Zuma Film Festival held in Abuja, where his film *Tsintsiya*, an inter-ethnic, inter-religious love story made to promote national unity, won "Best Social Issue Film" (Malam, "Court" 4). Although he had made radio announcements that his film was not for sale in Kano, he was arrested because a few copies had been found in an office of a video shop raided by the censorship board. Despite having a receipt for registration and despite the fact that no filmmaker had yet received a certificate of registration that year, he was also accused of not registering his company with the board (McCain, "Interview with Dr. Ahmad Sarari"). After a long drawn out court case, the mobile court judge Muhtari Ahmad abruptly cut short the case when a witness did

¹² It seems that Rabilu Musa was being punished for actions his fictional alter-ego committed. He was so identified with the Ibro character, that in *FIM Magazine's* coverage of Rabilu Musa D'anlasan's arrest, after identifying him by name in the first paragraph, he was identified as "Ibro" in the rest of the five page article. Adamu, after pointing out that D'anlasan was thought to have been arrested for the song "Mamar" in *Ibro A Loko*, which mocks the striped material worn by the governor, notes the irony of Ibro being "partly jailed for an offense he did not commit," as the "Mamar" song had been voiced by the musician Maidawayya, one of the musicians known for mimicking Ibro's distinctive voice ("Poetic Barbs" 19). Later songs like "Ibro Sankarau" and "Ibro sauka a Babur" responding to D'anlasan/Ibro's imprisonment were also voiced by other musicians. The character Ibro seems to have taken on a life of his own, speaking metonymically for the entire industry. The person Rabilu Musa D'anlasan was assumed to be responsible for Ibro's actions, even though he had partially lost control of the character's voice.

not show up, proclaiming that “the charges against the filmmaker required that he proved the prosecuting team wrong beyond a reasonable doubt or face the wrath of the law,” and that “justice delayed is justice denied” (Abdulaziz, “Filmmaker”). Ahmad sentenced Iyan-Tama to three months in prison and a fine of N300,000, as well as another one year of imprisonment with the option of a N10,000 fine. According to Abdulaziz, the judge presented a document to Iyan-Tama and asked him whether he had the same permit for other years. “When the accused tried to explain, the magistrate shut him up saying ‘answer me, yes or no?’” (“Filmmaker”). Iyan-Tama served nearly all of his three month sentence before the appeal was heard. He was eventually cleared of all charges in a settlement case (personal interview).

The harsh penalties filmmakers and marketers suffered for ostensible violations of the censorship, as well as requirements like having to pass a script through the censorship board before shooting or individual registering with the board, led many of them to flee the state, moving their film productions a few hours’ drive south to the more liberal cities of Kaduna, Jos, and Abuja, which were not subject to the censorship laws in Kano state. The new centre of Hausa film production shifted to Kaduna. Although many filmmakers continued to take their works to the KSCB so as to access the powerful Kano market, others identified themselves as “Nigerian filmmakers,” using their certificate from the NFVCB to bypass the KSCB. After the arrests began, such films were generally labelled “not for sale in Kano” and if found in Kano were known as “cocaine.” When I tried to buy Adam Zango’s *Bahaushiya* album in the Kofar Wambai market in Kano I was told repeatedly that the marketers did not sell “cocaine,” though several directors slipped me unmarked copies of their DVDs, requesting for me to keep them under wraps. I eventually found a pirated copy of Zango’s album in Jos.

Ironically the actions of the KSCB, taken to protect what Rabo called the “clean and respected clan of the Hausa-Fulani” ended up opening the Hausa film industry to the wider nation. Indeed, Kannywood star Ali Nuhu believed:

The ban may have been a blessing in disguise. Most of my colleagues had never thought of leaving their comfort zone up until now. And after this, they’ve come to realise that moving opens your eyes to a whole new world of ideas. Unlike the previous setting that was largely local, which restricts the kinds of activities you can engage in as an artist, there is a lot more improvement now. (Aminu, Alao and Tijjani 18-19).

Filmmakers and musicians claimed they did not have to be defined by Kano, that they were Nigerians and could sell their art in the 35 other states of the nation. As controversial filmmaker Sani Danja told *Weekly Trust*, “So for these very unnecessary rules they have set for the actors in Kano, most of us have decided to take our talent elsewhere. That is by moving outside the state to places like Kaduna, Abuja, Jos and Lagos. Of recent, some Kannywood producers went to Dubai. So you can see that we are expanding even outside the shores of Nigeria” (Alhassan and Aliyu 19). Against accusations that filmmakers were importing “alien” values, Danja and Nuhu define the cosmopolitan nature of filmmaking as precisely one of its strengths. Danja’s reference to the wealthy city of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates reminds readers that the filmmakers absorb modern international influences that are also Muslim.¹³

¹³ Ironically, Rabo took credit for the “international recognition” of the Hausa film industry, saying that “I am happy to report that following our firm steps in bringing sanity to the industry, some of these film actors have now gone international. They are now engaged in international film making. They achieved that feat after they have agreed to adhere to our procedures which qualify them for our certification” (Karofi and Sa’idu 32). The censor thus fluctuated between stating his anxiety about the “alien” influences in the film industry and taking credit for the international recognition of filmmakers, supposedly received as a result of his “sanitation” exercises.

Using reasoning that claimed Nigerian, rather than Kano, identity, MOPPAN and various filmmaking associations engaged in a series of lawsuits against the censorship board. MOPPAN was placed in the ironic position of challenging the state assembly for passing a law MOPPAN had helped create, claiming that there were aspects of the law being implemented that contradicted the NFVCB. Representatives of MOPPAN argued that once the national board approved their film, they should be able to show it anywhere in the country (McCain, “Interview with Dr. Ahmad Sarari”). This was backed up in writing from the NFVCB. The “Frequently Asked Questions” page of their website [and brochures I picked up at the trade fair BOB-TV] confirm, “The Censors Board has a national coverage. Once a film or video work has been passed by any of its zonal committees, it can be exhibited in any part of the Federation” (NFVCB, “FAQ”).¹⁴ The filmmakers, therefore, situated themselves as sophisticated and informed Nigerians with national rights that transcended regulations of a “local” power.

The Contradictory Impulses of Censorship and the Response of Artists

In an interview with me, Rabo expressed his fears of “adulteration” of Hausa-Fulani culture by outside influences. If their culture “is being poisoned, or [...] misrepresented in [...] creative arts, obviously there will come a time where Hausa-Fulani will have no place to be traced (McCain, “Interview with Alhaji”). This nativist desire to protect culture from alien influences is parallel to what Achille Mbembe calls an “Afro-radical” ideal. Both nativism and Afro-radicalism, Mbembe argues, operate from the same episteme of “autochthony, each spatio-racial formation” having “its own culture, its own historicity, its own way of being,” believing

¹⁴ In a 2008 interview with *FIM Magazine*, the director general of the NFVCB Emeka Mba acknowledged the ambiguity of the law, which put Kano-based filmmakers in a difficult position with regard to the national and state laws, and he expressed his desire that the Kano State censors board would work with the national body in the same way that the separate Lagos-state censorship board did (Maikatanga, “‘Duk’” 43-44).

that the wound of the colonial encounter, “cannot heal until the ex-colonized rediscover their own being and their own past” (“On the Power” 635). While a rebellion against what Tejumola Olaniyan has called “the seeming inevitability” of foreign “dominance in the lives of the natives” is understandable (*Arrest* 242), nativist thought at its extreme adapts the simplified and controlling vision of the world presented by colonials, essentializing as the only “genuine culture” that which is most useful to those in power. Although the KSCB law included many passages from the NFVCB regulating disrespectful representations of the religions and ethnicities of the nation, in practice, the KSCB under Rabo attempted to “liberate” Kano from the nation with a narrow definition of culture that did, in fact, discriminate against and repress diversity of culture or opinion.

Yet, as Mbembe points out, Africans have long dealt with multiplicities of cultures and assimilation of new thought. The history of Islam in Africa is one in which “the state is only one example of the possible form of social organization legitimized by the Prophet. In other traditions, it is the political authority itself that is shrouded in suspicion. Does it not risk corrupting the religious?” (“On the Power” 637). This suspicion of political authority as a cover for misbehaviour is one that became more and more prevalent in Hausa films after the formation of the censorship board.

The conflict between the KSCB and the filmmakers articulates what Olaniyan has called the difference between a “sacred” essentialist and a negotiable “secular” process-oriented proposition of identity. (“Uplift” 103-104). Both censors and filmmakers frequently express devotion to promoting Islam and “passing a message” through film. Both sides also often express support for the ideals of shari’a law, but each side approach these ideals from a different direction. On the one hand, the censorship board focuses on protecting, guarding, and controlling

the masses and their culture. Rabo characterized himself as coming to the rescue of “overwhelmed parents,” who want to “safeguard their wards [...] from corrosive visual influences,” by “insisting” that the board had a “duty to vet and verify the names submitted as association members to avoid people of questionable characters, drug addicts, paedophiles, alcoholics, cultists, and robbers hiding under the Guilds to pass on their corrupt morals to younger people” (Rabo, “On Kano”). The filmmakers and their allies, on the other hand, seek to expose hypocrisy and demonstrate the consequences of excess, identifying the very sorts of questionable characters Rabo accuses them of being, instead among the hypocritical leaders of society. Many filmmakers also actively reacted to the sorts of closed discourses Rabo presented by posing themselves as enlightened and exposed members of society against a regressive unsophisticated force. As the crisis deepened, their work became increasingly self-reflexive in its identification with the suffering of ordinary people.

Ironically, in his zeal to “expose” the sins of the film industry, Rabo ended up performing the same exposé role that the films often did, and the filmmakers ended up suffering under the accusations they made against the rest of society. In addition to arresting members of the film industry, Rabo played ads on the state-run Radio Kano warning parents not to allow their children to read Hausa novels because they were spoiling their education and upbringing, and gave radio interviews on Radio Kano accusing filmmakers of using drugs, fornication, and homosexuality (McCain, “Arrest of Singer”).¹⁵ He also travelled around the north making similar

¹⁵Both the politicians in their accusations and filmmakers in their accusations against politicians used homosexuality as a supreme insult. While Rabo and other critics called filmmakers homosexuals, singers and other members of the film industry threw this term back in their faces. Aliyu Liman notes that both invective songs “Ibro Sauka a Babur” and the invective “Sakare,” composed by Shi’a musician Abubakar Mailafiya Kaduna against Sokoto governor Aliyu Magatakarda Wammakko, called politicians homosexuals (“Inversion” 75,79). These insults often occurred in feuds between musicians as well. A rap group called the K-Boyz, who supported the Kano State Government, released a profane single “Bingo” insulting Adam A Zango by calling him a dog and a homosexual.” (This song is discussed in the November 2008 issue of FIM Magazine [Mamman 49-50], although the article does not mention the specific accusations of homosexuality in the lyrics of the song, which I obtained through Bluetooth transfer on my

accusations on other radio stations, in bold attempts to provoke audiences into harassing filmmakers. In Kaduna, he went on air at the independent radio and television station DITV, accusing filmmakers in Kaduna of making pornography (Ciroma, “Showdown”). According to a defamation of character complaint filed by the Kaduna Filmmakers Association, who translated into English part of the Hausa transcript of Rabo’s accusations, he also added that, “The immoralities perpetuated by Hausa film practitioner are to [sic] grave that even pagans of Kaduna State would not do them: It is now left for Kaduna people to stand up against them and make sure they send them out of Kaduna State” (Filmmakers Associations, Kaduna State “Complain”).¹⁶ The censorship board also took out full-page ads in the Hausa-language paper *Aminiya* reproducing privately-taken photos of Hausa actresses in skimpy clothing that had circulated on the internet (KSCB/Hukumar, “Idan kunne”; Appendix 11).¹⁷ While both the radio statements and the newspaper ads were inciting, the newspaper ads directly undermined the stated intentions of the board to protect the “conservative Muslim Hausa society” from negative

phone.) This toxic environment proved to be one that became even more dangerous for people practicing same sex relationships following a national law outlawing same sex relationships and public associations with people claiming to be gay (Mark, “Nobody”).

¹⁶ The Hausa original of the transcript reads “Irin Badalar da yan fina-finan hausa su ke yi a garin nan ko Arnan Kaduna ba sa yi, don haka ta rage ma Jama’ar garin Kaduna da su tashi tsaye su yake su domin su kore su daga Kaduna kamar yadda muka kore su daga kano.” For some reason, the complaint left out the last part of the statement in Hausa which reads in my translation that the Kaduna people should expel filmmakers from Kaduna State “in the same way that we expelled them from Kano” (Filmmakers Associations, Kaduna State, “Complain”).

¹⁷ The ad features a photo of Rabo in the top left-hand corner, as if looking at the photo of actress Safiya Musa on the top left of the page. Musa is shown posing with her skirt hiked up around her thighs, clutching a stuffed animal and sucking her thumb, acting as if she were a child, purportedly on a film set. In the bottom right hand of the ad is a picture of the actress Kubura Dako in a loose spaghetti strap tank top, immediately beside a photo of Ibro holding a jerrycan of petrol. While Rabo’s photo is captioned calling him “Malam,” a term of respect, and listing his official title as “Director General of the KSCB,” the captions of the other photos describe the actors in judgmental terms. Safiya Musa is described as being in a “foolish and immoral pose” and Kabura Dhacko’s appearance as “wicked” (my translations, See Appendix 11 for original Hausa). Such photos circulated on internet social media sites and via Bluetooth on mobile phones. Some photos of actresses in skimpy dress were obviously photoshopped. In my conversations with members of the film industry during the time, they pointed out the hypocrisy of Rabo condemning the actresses for their dress while displaying private photos publicly on the pages of the newspaper. In regards to the photo of Safiya Musa showing her thighs, some filmmakers I knew complained that there were traitors among the film crew who would take paparazzi-style photos with phone cameras while actors and actresses were unaware that they were being photographed. Whether this was the case in the photo of Musa is up for debate. (KSCB/Hukumar, “Idan”, Appendix 11).

influences (Rabo, “On Kano”). Ironically in attempting to “expose” the sins of filmmakers, publishing the photos in the newspaper exposed far more Hausa speakers to the photos than would have otherwise seen them, seemingly violating the very rules the ad was trying to reinforce about banning actresses from wearing revealing clothing in films.

Rabo’s public use of religious rhetoric made it difficult for the “secular” NFVCB to intervene without appearing to meddle in religious freedom as presented by shari’a activists like Yerima. In a savvy move in June 2009, then director general of the NFVCB, Emeka Mba appointed Ahmad Sarari, then vice president of MOPPAN and brother of Iyan-Tama, as the NFVCB zonal coordinator of the north-western region of Nigeria, giving a Muslim member of the Kano film community authority from the national censorship body. Filmmakers claimed both national and Muslim identities. After Rabo made accusations about the supposed illicit sexual behaviour of the filmmakers (McCain, “Arrest of Singer”), the Kano State Filmmakers Association took him to a shari’a court for slander, demonstrating that ideally Islamic law cuts both ways (Gwangwazo, “Police”). Although the court cases were bogged down by bureaucracy—in some cases Rabo simply refusing to come to court¹⁸—the artists’ most powerful weapon against the government was their creative work. Musicians working with the film industry responded to censorship with fiery songs. Their invectives were subsequently banned by the KSCB but passed as the homemade Hiyana sex video had, through Bluetooth on mobile

¹⁸ Mansur Sani Malam reported in *Leadership* that Rabo “refused” to report to the police station as agreed in the case filed at the shari’a court. MOPPAN secretary Ahmad Alkanawy said “A police officer handling the case advised us to go and reconcile among ourselves” (“Defamation”). While Rabo reserved the right to use security forces to arrest filmmakers, he refused to subject himself to the same authority. A similar moment happened between May and July 2010 when Kaduna filmmakers filed a complaint against him for defamation of character in an interview with Kaduna television and radio station DITV. He refused to answer summons to the court in Kaduna and accused those of suing him with sending him death threats by text message. Kano police crossed state lines and intimidated the families and colleagues of those he had accused, arresting Kaduna-based FIM magazine editor, Aliyu Abdullahi Gora, taking him to Kano, and holding him in the Kano Goron Dutse prison for almost a week without trial. Later a judge in Kaduna fined the Kano state police N100,000 for unlawful detention of Gora (McCain, “Kaduna State,”; McCain, “FIM Magazine”).

phones (McCain, “Mobile Court Bans”). One musician Sadi Sidi Sharifai, imitating the comedic voice of the comedian Ibro, composed a satirical song, “Sankarau ya kama ni” (Meningitis seized me), playing on the rhyming words of *sankarau* (meningitis) and *Shekarau* (the governor) to metaphorically retell the story of Rabilu Musa’s arrest and imprisonment (Adamu, “Poetic Barbs” 19). A similar song “Ibro Sauka a Babur” (Ibro get off the motorcycle) builds on “Sankarau ya kama ni” discussing Rabilu/Ibro’s persecution both metaphorically and directly, complaining that although there were still brothels and bars, they were arresting Ibro. Ibro’s voice rebelliously insists that he is still in the city, and he won’t quit acting. He appeals to the day of judgment: “Ai, daurin Allah ya wuce naka./ Ka duba ni, /Kai Sai mun je lahira, Allahu ya kama ka!” (“Ai, God’s justice is more powerful than yours./ Look at me / Kai, wait until we enter the afterlife, and God catches you!”; my translation).¹⁹ Such appeals to God’s justice were common. Adam Zango responded to his prison time with a song “Oyoyo,” recounting his imprisonment and calling on God to deal with those who had imprisoned him. Musicians like Nazir Ahmad Hausawa with “Girgiza Kai” (Shake Your Head) and Aminuddeen Ladan Abubakar (ALA) with “Hasbunallahu” (Allah is Sufficient) followed this pattern, singing prayers to God to punish those who kept them from their livelihoods. Although the Kano State government responded by banning eleven such songs (Abdulaziz, “Court”), the banning simply

¹⁹ Some excerpts from the song, which Aliyu Liman discusses in greater length in his article “Inversion of Hegemony in Contemporary Hausa Lyrical Expression,” are as follows: “Ibro ga ni a babur, sankarau ya sa ni a damuwa. Zan gudu in bar gari. Raba ni da dan Bunsuru.” (“I’m Ibro, see me on this babur [motorcycle]. Sankarau [meningitis] is really worrying me. I’ll run and leave this city. Get me away from this he-goat.”) The chorus appealed for him to get off the “babur.” Several words here are being used for their aural similarity to identifying markers of governor Shekarau (called Sankarau [meningitis] here, a Babur from northeastern Nigeria (Liman, “Inversion” 74). Later in the song the voice of Ibro tells of what happened to “Rabilu.” “Ni da Kaura aka kama dan iya suka kulle/ Na ga gidan karuwai, gidan giya na tsalle, gari basu kulle ba sai Rabilu da dan mai Talle.” (“Me and Kaura were arrested, and imprisoned/ I’ve seen brothels and bars. They didn’t imprison any of them, only Rabilu and MaiTalle.”) The song also mentioned Rabo by name. Artists were quite clever in using puns to get their point across. Singer Maryam A. Baba composed a song “Rabo Rabo,” where the word “rabo,” “Providence” could make a generic point about “good providence” versus “corrupted providence,” but which also was understood to refer to Rabo Abdulkarim, the chief censor (Adamu, “Poetic Barbs” 14-15).

gave them more publicity in a technological environment where the Internet and Bluetooth made physical censorship very difficult.²⁰

While Rabo accused filmmakers of sexual misbehaviour, the filmmakers fired back with films made after the beginning of the crisis that exposed the sexual sins of an outwardly pious elite. In Aminu Bala's film *Jagora* (Guidance), when a businessman is killed by his servant, an imam claims the man was pious, but a female lawyer reveals that he kept a mistress and was trying to rape the servant when she stabbed him. In an even more direct jab, the film *Jidda* and its sequel *Dr. Rabo*, written and produced by Nasir Gwangwazo, presents a lecherous doctor named Rabo who extorts sex from a woman, Jidda, in return for treating her dying husband. Another sly moment occurred at the premiere I attended of Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino's film *Sandar Kiwo*, which was partially funded by DFID and the British Council. The event was prominently attended by Bala Muhammad, the director of *A Daidaita Sahu*. The editor of the film Sulaiman Abubakar inserted Nazir Hausawa's banned song "Girgiza Kai" as diegetic music to which characters in the film were listening. A wave of appreciative laughter rippled through the auditorium full of Kannywood professionals when the song came on. Although the song was changed in the final version of the film released on VCD, it was a subversive moment at a film screening attended by government representatives and sponsored by formal institutions from which Kannywood filmmakers are often exhorted by critics to seek funding.

²⁰ The blog "Nanaye," which has only two posts from October 2009 seems to have been created by the pseudonymous Larabi with the purpose of distributing some of these banned songs, including "Girgiza Kai," "Ibro Sankarau," "Ibro Ka Sauke Kayanka" and other popular songs that were not banned such as Maryam A. Baba's song "Rabo, Rabo." Aminu ALA was arrested and accused of releasing his invective song *Hasbunnallahu* without having it censored, although Adamu points out that the song was never officially released and that the sentence did not make sense ("Poetic Barbs" 24). (Following his arrest, however, the album, named *Tsangayar Kura* translated by Adamu as the "Hyena's Den" (24) and featuring a painting of a man crying, clutching prayer beads, and raising his hands in prayer, was sold in Jos and other locations. The CD contained four songs harshly responding to the censorship crisis. While it did not credit the musicians, it was slyly labelled "Rabo Entertainment.")

In telling these stories, filmmakers capture the rhetoric of the youth, who often complain about the hypocrisy of leaders who use shari'a to punish the poor while they themselves commit worse sins. Although the Hiyana scandal became representative of all that the critics feared about the industry, there was a strong backlash among youth against the demonization of Hiyana and the film industry. The actress became an unlikely folk hero. Stickers of her likeness were plastered on buses, taxis and motorbikes all over the north. Adamu points to blogs that sprang up online defending Hiyana as a victim and pointing back at a hypocritical society and "errant... Islamic scholastic establishment" ("Private Passion" 298). One pseudonymous female wrote, in a letter to *Daily Trust*, "The uproar and self-righteous indignation expressed over the issue is almost laughable... because we are a nation that selects known adulterers as leaders" (Yarshila).

In an ironic twist of fate that could have come straight out of a Hausa film, in August 2010, during the holy fasting period of Ramadan, newspapers and radio reported that Rabo was caught by the police parked with a young girl in "a bushy area" late at night. According to a report in *Leadership*, Rabo raced off leading police in a Hollywood-style car chase, sirens blaring. After hitting a motorcyclist and speeding off, he was finally caught by a mob of commercial motorcyclists and was saved from lynching by the police (Abdulaziz, "Rabo"). Rumour had it that the police found the girl's underwear in the car, although the Divisional Police Officer released Rabo to leave with the girl the same night, after he told them that she was his niece (MOPPAN, "Press Release"). Two days later, the man he had hit still in the hospital, Rabo left Kano for Saudi Arabia on *umrah*, the lesser hajj. Abdulaziz writes that when he was approached by the media, he "appealed to the journalists to let the matter die as exposing it amounts to ridiculing Islam," arguing that the scandal was a political set up to embarrass him ("Rabo"). Like Yerima, the politician who lobbied for the re-establishment of shari'a law in

northern Nigeria and who argued that a law limiting the age at which girls could be married violated the rights of Muslims, Rabo attempted to deflect his critics with outward signs of righteousness and appeals to Islam, conflating his own actions and opinions with an authoritative “Islam.”

However, ten years after the shari’a project had begun, this sort of rhetoric was becoming less successful with audiences. Although Rabo continued to carry out occasional raids on musicians and filmmakers, he had lost the respect of much of society, having been branded by the media with the same sorts of accusations he had been trying to pin on the film industry. In the comments section of Abdulaziz A. Abdulaziz’s *Leadership* article “Kano Chief Censor in Alleged Child Abuse Scandal,” for example, commenters mocked Rabo’s defence that he was set up by political foes and questioned his attempts to deflect criticism on his actions as an attack on Islam. A commenter named Ahmed commented, “Idiot. Are you Islam? Islam has nothing to do with your affair. Nonsense.” Ali Kano said “God Almighty save us from our leaders whom we bestowed our trust upon but turned to batrayed [sic] us, they always come in the name of religion and do something else behind.”²¹ Friends of mine in Kano who had no connection to the film industry told me they had heard about it on the radio and were disgusted by his hypocrisy. In the gubernatorial elections a few months later, the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) of the

²¹ In other responses to the article, Habibiy reacted to Rabo’s defenders, pointing out the hypocrisy of Rabo’s claims to expose filmmakers when had his own sins to hide, “Why you people protecting rabo against his heinous crime. He made similar allegations against the filmmakers many a times published photos meant for personal collections in daily papers assassinate their characters openly through the state radio and others, yet he did right?” Aji Isuwa Suleiman said, “Ridiculing Rabo not Islam. that is how people try to hide behind religion and commit all sorts of nonsense!! Why was he running away from the police n even nearly killing somebody if he was carrying his cousin. And the pant fa, for who? [...] when people are caught they say religion, or political undertone etc.” The most sardonic commenter “9” said “It’s better 2 ‘ridicule’ Islam & expose shameless fornicators. Blaming PDP for a set up. Mayb PDP drugged you wiuth viagra & made you have the urge, then PDP sent your ‘cousin’ to lurk around. Then PDP made you go to the bush & PDP planted d underwear & made your ‘cousin’ not wear any. PDP also informed the police on where you’d be.. & PDP made you start the car to run despite you were just out in d bush at night with your little cousin.. PDP also tampered with your brakes that made you hit a bike rider a made you keep running. Wow PDP must have dealt you a harsh PDP treatment.” These comments from the general populace reveal an increasing exhaustion, at least from the youth, with authoritative appeals to religion carried out by misbehaving leaders.

Shekarau government, who had given license to Rabo and the most extreme critics of the film industry, was voted out and Kwankwaso, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) governor under whom the KSCB was first founded, was voted back in, resuming office in June 2011.²²

MOPPAN and a league of popular actors had campaigned for Kwankwaso, believing that he would bring back the original interpretation of the KSCB as a protective agency run by and for artists. They were not disappointed. On 25 November 2011, Kwankwaso appointed Ahmed Dahiru Beli, the original head of the KSCB, as executive director once again. Members of the film industry, including comedian Rabilu Musa D'anlasan (Ibro), who had been imprisoned by the previous board, were given seats on the board.

The board had come full circle in the ten years between 2001 and 2011. The events had the mixed-up poetic justice of a Hausa film: the governor who first banned film in Kano came back promising the salvation of the film industry; the censor appointed after a sex scandal to "sanitize" the film industry was disgraced by his own sex scandal; an actor imprisoned by the censors board was appointed to the board in the next political tenure. A public discourse that idealized politicians' promises to use Islamic law to protect culture moved toward indignation over how those same politicians abused shari'a to hide their own corruption.

Guilty or Not Guilty? Court, Prison, and the Consequences of Injustice in *Kotun Ibro*, *Kurkuku*, and "Oyoyo"

In the year following the political transition, several films were released in response to the indignities filmmakers had suffered under the board. Like the films I discussed in the

²² In the fluid political affiliations Nigerian politicians are known for, Kwankwaso left PDP in November 2013 for the All Progressives Congress (APC) (Daniel, "No"), and his formal rival Ibrahim Shekarau joined PDP, a party he had run against for years, in January 2014 (Shuaibu, "Shekarau"). He was later appointed Education Minister by President Goodluck Jonathan.

previous chapter, at least two of these texts contain metafictional elements that directly reflect on the film industry. However, as they are responses to actual arrests and imprisonments, the tone is more urgent, angry, and pointed in its critique than the previous metafiction. In this section, I will focus on texts that include the three most famous artists imprisoned under the board: a comedy, *Kotun Ibro*, featuring Rabilu Musa Danlasan; a “sentimental” melodrama, *Kurkuku* (Prison), featuring Hamisu Lamido Iyan-Tama, who also produced and co-directed the film; and the music video of Adam A. Zango’s invective song “Oyoyo.”

All three films work to expose the injustice filmmakers suffered under the KSCB, the mobile court attached to it, and the state government empowering both. Exhibiting their evidence of abuse to a court of public opinion, the texts present these local institutions as oppressive and unenlightened. By contrast, the filmmakers portray themselves as citizens in two frameworks that are larger than their residence in Kano. First, they are citizens of a larger nation, Nigeria. Second, they are citizens of the cosmopolitan Muslim ummah, a global spiritual community under God’s rule. Citizenship in these two realms gives them recourse to a justice that is greater and more powerful than the local implementation of laws specific to Kano State. In opposing their treatment in Kano State, they initially appeal to Nigerian law. Then, following a similar pattern to that which I identified in Chapter 2, they appeal to God’s justice and the final day of judgement, when those who suffered injustice will be vindicated by God’s judgment on their oppressors, either in this lifetime or the next. These texts suggest that if Nigerian courts cannot bring them justice in this lifetime, God’s court will bring them justice in the hereafter, when the hypocrisy of the oppressor will be exposed.

In staking these metaphysical claims about citizenship and justice, the filmmakers also align themselves with ordinary people who suffer in an unjust environment and warn the

government of the consequences of injustice. Although some responses, such as the satirical song recorded in Ibro's voice, "Ibro Sauka a Babur," pointed to Governor Shekarau's own "foreignness" to Kano²³ to invert accusations that filmmakers were introducing alien values, the texts I analyze position the filmmakers both as cosmopolitan citizens of Nigeria and their experiences with courts and prisons as synecdoche for the suffering of ordinary people under an unjust government. My analysis will examine how the chamama comedy *Kotun Ibro* mocks the unjust mobile court system through parody; how the "sentimental" docu-drama *Kurkuku* claims to expose the unjust practices of the censorship board, the mobile court, and the government by presenting a "true account" of what happened; and how the music video "Oyoyo" warns about the consequences of injustice.

Court

The comedy *Kotun Ibro* (*Ibro's Court*) directed by the prolific chamama director Comrade Umar Jalo, features Rabilu Musa, who was imprisoned by the KSCB in October 2008, as the ubiquitous trickster character Ibro turned judge. Although not as obviously autobiographical as the texts by Iyan-Tama and Adam Zango, which both directly reference the artists' imprisonment, *Kotun Ibro* does slyly respond to the censorship crisis and Rabilu Musa's arrest and rapid sentencing in a mobile court. By characterizing the mobile court as a roving judge who dispenses sentences without the checks and balances of an ordinary court, the film

²³ Abubakar Aliyu Liman points out that Shekarau was originally a Babur from Borno State—not a Hausa from Kano state—a point that is obliquely made in the 2009 song "Ibro Sauka a Babur," which puns on "Babur" as the word for both Shekarau's ethnicity and for a motorcycle (Liman, "Inversion" 75). Although Shekarau and those empowered by his government sometimes made accusations against filmmakers who were not "indigenes" of Kano, he was subject to those same accusations. See, for example, Freedom Radio broadcaster Salisu Yakasai's February 2014 rant against Shekarau for joining the PDP, a political party he had opposed for years: "Kanawa are not hypocrites and will show him very soon that they want nothing to do with him. They have done for him more than he has done for them. In case we have forgotten, he is not even a bona-fide Kano indigene. He is originally from the Babur tribe in Southern Borno, but that did not stop Kanawa, in their true hospitable nature, from making him feel at home. And this is the thank you we get" (Yakasai, "Ibrahim").

critiques an actual system of justice where mobile court workers and shari'a enforcers, the hisbah, would arrive unannounced and harass filmmakers going about their business. It also mocks the sort of "justice" handed out in the mobile court attached to the Censorship Board, where Judge Mukhtar Ahmed regularly sentenced people whose work was related to the film industry rapidly with little explanation.²⁴ By layering this recognizable story onto one featuring ordinary people going about their business, it also aligns the injustice the filmmakers suffered in real life with the injustice ordinary people suffer in the film, thereby encouraging audiences to see the injustice done to Ibro through populist eyes.

The story, loosely strung together—as most chamama films are—is framed as a dream by comedian dan Ibro. In the first scene of the film, Ibro goes to sleep and dreams that he has been made the judge of a mobile court, *kotun tafi da gidanka* (the court "Go with your house"). Ibro's incarnation as a mobile court judge begins with his swearing in. Wearing the outer accoutrements of the Nigerian justice system, the robe and wig that he will keep on throughout the film, he takes an oath that he will carry out his work with truth and justice. The rest of the

²⁴ The concept of the mobile court, attached to the Censorship Board but located in the liminal space outside Kano City at the airport, where offenders arrested by mobile court workers were taken, was difficult for me and most people I spoke to, to understand. In an attempt to understand the legality of this institution, I asked the director general of the KSCB, Abubakar Rabo Abdulkarim, about cases where people were sentenced without a lawyer present. He told me, "What we are operating is a mobile court. And our law was very categorical. Mobile court is of strict liability. You do this. You don't do this. We have been campaigning, we have been enlightening our state holders to always have in their possession, certificates of registration, licensed or their business premises, so that if the law, if the court of law, if the mobile courts charge, you can immediately present that 'this is my certificate,' you are free. For nonproduction of your certificate to the mobile court, you understand, you are bound to be charged. If you will plead guilty, you understand, the prosecutor has every right to tell the court that, yes, I am, rest assured that this person is guilty because he confessed guilty. Subsequently, after that the judgment must be fast. So this is how in certain cases, some people, we will ease things for them because they know they are wanting. They know they are faulty, they are defaulters, they immediately confess. So, in that case, what do you do, especially if you haven't expressed any interest in producing a legal counsel. So, in a nutshell, my dear, nobody was ever prosecuted by this mobile court without being given a fair hearing. Judgement is judgment" (McCain, "Interview with Alhaji"). Rabo's convoluted use of legal jargon was characteristic of the way the mobile court was explained in public discourse; the idea that filmmakers must always have their certificates is reminiscent of South African pass laws. The use of the Constitution to mystify ordinary citizens in *Kotun Ibro* parodies this sort of explanation and draws attention to the danger of giving so much power to an institution that provides no clear explanation of itself to the people arrested under its authority.

film, however, becomes a mockery of this oath and, subsequently, of the entire idea of a mobile court where swift judgment occurs.

Most of the action in this episodic film comes from Ibro and his assistant, who venture out of their cement block court to the streets, barging into the affairs of people who are minding their own business. In these cases, Ibro comes across people on the street and has his assistant place his chair in front of the hapless defendants. The assistant then officiously opens a large book and reads out various offences that supposedly violate specific numbered sections of the Constitution. The book acts as a symbol of the government, an intimidating instrument that cannot be questioned and seems to have little relevance to the daily lives of the people being arrested by its authority. The use of the Constitution here emphasizes its illegibility to ordinary people on the streets; it is a prop that gives authority to Ibro and disempowers those he sentences. The document that is supposed to detail and explain the rights of the Nigerian citizen in this case becomes an object by which these rights are instead obscured. Much of the problem here is in the very apparatus of the mobile court, where Judge Ibro takes on the powerful outward symbols of authority—the robe, the wig,²⁵ and the large intimidating Constitution—but has none of the checks and balances that actually ensure justice. There are no lawyers and no appeals, only a judge appearing unannounced and sentencing poor people with divorces they did not request, outrageous fines they cannot afford, and prison sentences.

While Judge Ibro harshly treats most of the people he comes across, he reverses his pronouncements wherever a sentence causes him discomfort. When a Fulani man casts a hex whereby Ibro is magically glued to his chair, he reverses the divorce he had pronounced between the Fulani man and his wife. When his own daughter is brought in by complainants, he simply

²⁵ The mobile court being mocked here actually does not make use of wigs and robes, which are used only in the higher courts. The comedy is more concerned with evoking an audience's imagination of a court to elicit a response than in "documentary" faithfulness to any sort of objective reality.

tells her to go home. Moreover, he and his cronies use their government-given power for personal advantage. His assistant takes bribes, and when they accost a girl walking alone on the street who tells them she is going home, they arrest her, guffawing as they playfully argue over who will bail her out. It is not clear whether her offence is walking alone or being unmarried. But in Ibro's court, the clarity of the offense does not matter, as there is nothing to hold the court accountable for justice. Ibro ends up following her home, proclaiming that he has paid her bail. This echoes complaints made by actresses who claim they were arrested only to be propositioned by the men who charged them.²⁶

The increasingly outrageous harassment to which Judge Ibro subjects ordinary people points to a broken justice system, whereby those in power misuse the language of justice to scapegoat those who are already suffering because of government incompetence. This is potently illustrated when Ibro and his assistant arrest two men playing cards on the street. One of the men tries to explain that he is a primary school teacher and the other is a local government employee, and neither has been paid his salary. Ibro refuses to listen to their explanation and insists in English, "Guilty or not guilty? Guilty or not guilty?" In this moment, the comedian recalls the exact words often said by real life judge Mukhtar Ahmad to filmmakers brought into his mobile court; Judge Ahmad would not listen to explanations but insisted on hearing a plea of "guilty or not guilty." Judge Ibro continues to speak garbled English, as incomprehensible to the men and

²⁶ Nasir Gwangwazo, a Kannywood scriptwriter/producer and a reporter with *Leadership*, writes that the hisbah raided the home of actress Zainab Umar and arrested her and her sisters calling them "'prostitutes,' 'lay-about's' and 'useless.'" The women were accused of "living a single life on their own" and were detained, according to some witnesses, with men for "more than 20 hours in the Hisbah headquarters." Ironically, a witness told Gwangwazo that after the women were released, "one of the men kept phoning Zainab, telling her that he was interested in dating her." Zainab told reporters she could not give them a formal interview, "saying, 'They said we should not talk because that would tantamount to fighting the cause of Islam'" ("The War"). The woman's complaint is thus silenced by the patriarchal authority of the hisbah, yet subversively creeps out in the report prepared by the Kannywood scriptwriter/reporter. The junk journalism of the newspaper reporter and the junk journalism of the filmmaker I discussed in Chapter 4 are exemplified here. During my research, I heard other women in entertainment industries say that while authority figures publicly denounced them, they privately propositioned them.

the audience as the Constitution his assistant has been reading, and drags the two men off—the viewers assume—to prison. His use of English, like the use of the Constitution, reinforces the distance of the court from the ordinary people it purportedly serves. Yet the broken nature of his English also emphasizes his incompetence in the legal profession in the larger Nigerian state.

In this moment that parodies actual events, the comedians make clear the injustice that is being done. The same government that has refused to pay its employees is empowering a judge who makes a travesty of justice by persecuting those same employees. As one character puts it, “you catch someone with no witnesses, no police, you hold his shirt, you tell him, ‘do you know who I am?’” This complaint, though put into the mouth of a character who is an ordinary citizen, echoes the complaints I heard from many filmmakers during the censorship crisis. Ibro’s comedic performance as a judge who literally roams the streets looking for people to arrest merely exaggerates the experience of many people who were arrested without warning by the hisbah during the tenure of Governor Ibrahim Shekarau. Although filmmakers are not mentioned in *Kotun Ibro*, Rabilu Musa Danlasan’s own experience at the hands of the Censorship Board and mobile court provide a rich subtext to the film, giving his character Ibro ammunition with which to mock his captors.²⁷

The film becomes a repository for recording the many voices of protest, in a popular form that will be widely watched. The film about the mobile court becomes a form of evidence in the larger court of public opinion. In Chapter 3, I noted the existence of sermonizing monologues in

²⁷ When I spoke with the now late comedian and director of the film *Ibro A Loko*, who was arrested alongside Rabilu Musa, Lawal Kaura, not long after the two were released from prison in November 2008, he told me the circumstances of their arrest. He said they were bundled into a private car by un-uniformed men. Taken to the mobile court at the airport where most filmmakers were sentenced, they were both asked if they had appeared in the film *Ibro A Loko*. Both men agreed. Yet when they denied that they were producers or marketers of the film, they were still sentenced to two months in prison on the first count and given additional fines for the other counts. They were sentenced without a lawyer present, although a lawyer subsequently spent almost a month trying to get them bail (personal interview; Maikatanga and Giginyu 10-14).

many Hausa films. *Kotun Ibro* is filled with monologues by various characters who bemoan the injustice of this mobile court. These characters act as witnesses to the oppression of injustice suffered by ordinary people in Kano. The problem of Ibro's mobile court, a government failure, is finally solved by an appeal to a larger government authority. In the film, a "big man," a politician is appealed to. He recognizes the parody of justice that Ibro has committed, and finally the Head of Police orders Ibro's arrest; the mobile court is finally held accountable to the larger Nigerian state. As the policeman who once served their court now hauls Ibro off, Ibro's assistant mocks him with the English words "Guilty or not guilty?"

Framed as a dream and put forth as a harmless comedy where Ibro himself portrays the corrupt judge, as he portrays so many other professions, the film *Kotun Ibro* absolves itself of any accusations of slander, but allows the comedian to re-enact and mock the judge who sentenced him, while reinforcing the responsibility of the state to call to order judges who are out of line. This is a nod to the new Kwankwaso government, who dismantled Shekarau's Kano State Censorship Board and would later appoint Rabilu Musa to the Censorship Board that once imprisoned him. It is also a performance of what the filmmakers think the government should do to those who carry out injustice in its name.

At the end of the film, Ibro wakes from his dream and bursts into a monologue: "These judges who cheat people. They claim they are practicing Islamic law. God sees them. What kind of evil is this?" These are the final words of the film as the sound fades out and a title "Alhamdu lillah [To God be the glory]" scrolls across the screen. As the credits roll, the actors in the film are listed as "masu fadakarwa" [preachers or warners], situating the filmmakers as preachers of correct Muslim behaviour unlike the hypocritical Censorship Board and court judges who often

claimed to be carrying out shari'a law.²⁸ The film's closing words also echo Ibro's "Ibro Sauka a Babur" song, where Ibro says "Ai, God's justice is more powerful than yours. / Look at me / Kai, wait until we enter the afterlife, and God catches you." It also echoes statements Rabilu Musa made to the media from the hospital where he was seconded after three days in the prison: "if the authority that took me there [to prison] did it for the sake of God, then it's ok; but if otherwise, then the evil done to me shall certainly be redressed, if not here, then in the hereafter" (Ibrahim and Aliyu 32).

The film elicits audience sympathy by linking the travails of the filmmakers to their audiences of ordinary people. It also points to the existence of a higher justice system than the mobile court, in the form of the Nigerian government and the final Day of Judgement, where God will deal justice to anyone who escapes it in this life.

Prison

Hamisu Lamido Iyan-Tama's melodramatic re-enactment of his arrest and travails in prison, the four part docu-drama *Kurkuku/Prison*, is stylistically quite different from *Kotun Ibro*, following more of the genre conventions of the Sentimental films I discussed in Chapter 3, with their embedded song sequences and melodramatic heroes and villains. While *Kotun Ibro* aims to mock using exaggerated symbols of the justice system like the wig and robe, *Kurkuku* aims to

²⁸ Although Rabo often went on to the radio claiming that the filmmakers were violating religion and although filmmakers I spoke to said they were arrested by the hisbah shari'a enforcers, Rabo claimed in an interview with me that "when we had this law in 2001, there was nothing like shari'a implementation in Kano. It was purely a constitutional and a literary law" (McCain, "Interview with Alhaji"). His statement to me in English revealed an awareness of me as a Western researcher who would have less sympathy for shari'a law but would presumably respect Nigerian constitutional law. His presentations to a Hausa radio and television audience in Hausa, on the other hand, regularly linked the Censorship Board and its mobile court to Islam, and of course his claim that there was no shari'a when the Censorship Board was founded was incorrect. As I described at the beginning of this chapter, the Kano State Censorship Board was founded in response to the ban made when shari'a law was implemented in 2000. While the board apparently fell under constitutional law, its arrests were often framed as a result of violations of religious sensibilities. The authority of the court was therefore quite ambiguous to the public.

expose and document injustice, showing the magistrate mobile court as it was in actual court rooms with judges and lawyers appearing in plain clothes. However, it makes similar points about citizenship and justice, showing filmmakers finding relief from the harassment of a censorship board and court that are portrayed as local and petty by appealing to the higher justice to which they have a right as Nigerian citizens, and the justice of God that their identity as Muslims entails. Like *Kotun Ibro*, this film addresses the high-handed injustice and hypocrisy of the mobile court, but it also goes further to show the next step after the mobile court, the sentence of prison. The idea of prison suffuses *Kurkuku/Prison*: in the film's name; in the songs that centre around prison as a metaphor; and in imagery that covers Iyan-Tama sitting behind bars in the stylistic, animated opening sequences and action sequences, as well as song sequences with Iyan-Tama sitting bound in chains. This imagery is reproduced in the posters for the film, which feature Iyan-Tama in chains behind bars with the familiar and inflammatory caption "Guilty or not guilty?"²⁹ The prison here becomes not only a re-enactment of Iyan-Tama's own experiences in a literal prison but also a metaphor for the unjust state.

In this section, I will show how the film presents the following: witnesses from the film industry defending themselves and demonstrating that injustice has been done them, accusations made in the film about the corruption and crimes of the Censorship Board, and claims to Nigerian citizenship and warnings to the Censorship Board about consequences of injustice and the judgement that comes from higher authorities in Nigeria and ultimately from God himself.

²⁹ Although Iyan-Tama presents the film as a kind of documentary, his dramatization of his imprisonment showing himself clad in dirty prison uniforms and bound in chains fits more with the conventions of melodrama than documentary. When I went with filmmakers to visit him in prison in January 2009, he was dressed in a bright carefully ironed kaftan that seemed as though it had been brought freshly washed from home. From what I observed, he was treated with respect by the prison guards. His neat clothing in the dusty bare bones Gwauron Dutse prison so struck me that I actually noted it in the article I wrote about his imprisonment for InterPress service: "Dressed immaculately in a crisp dogon riga, the only physical sign that he was in prison was his rubber slippers" (McCain, "Award-Winning"). Like the use of the robe and wig in *Kotun Ibro*, the filmmaker is more concerned with the effect of the costume on the audience than in carefully recording non-essential facts.

While the body of the film provides evidence of the injustice done to the filmmakers, the songs interspersed throughout the action allow filmmakers to more directly communicate the messages they want to impart.

The film is framed with a researcher asking Iyan-Tama about what led to his imprisonment for a book meant to “enlight the public.”³⁰ The narrative subsequently presents Iyan-Tama shedding light on the shadowy practices of the “Kano state films censorship board and the state government.” He tells the interviewer it was “a test on my faith,” and there is a cut to actual documentary footage of Iyan-Tama’s New Democrats gubernatorial campaign against Ibrahim Shekarau, with hoards of young men following him and cheering. Following cultural dances that are performed at his rally, the documentary footage shrinks down to a television screen watched by a row of dour men gathered around a conference table. They turn out to be members of the governor’s administration. Neither the governor nor any of the officials are listed by name, perhaps to avoid legal problems, but they perform an antagonistic function in the film, as they did in real life. The film cuts back and forth between shots of the television screen, which features crowds of people over whom scrolls the message “Praise be to God By giving us the opportunity and courage for having a peaceful and successful ND national convention,” and the row of “government” men, members of the sitting cabinet, shaking their heads and plotting to frustrate Iyan-Tama’s political efforts. The director of the KSCB tells the others that he knows what to do, and the next scene shows Iyan-Tama in his office after being summoned. From the very first scenes of the film, Iyan-Tama is characterized by a populist appeal to the Nigerian masses and by invocations to God, while his enemies are shown as envious schemers plotting his ruin. Iyan-Tama’s subsequent court case and imprisonment are portrayed as the political machinations of jealous provincial and corrupt government appointees.

³⁰ All quotes from *Kurkuku* come from the English-language subtitles of the film, unless otherwise noted.

The narrative arc of the four-part film is balanced: parts 1 and 2 show the triumph of the KSCB as they send the Hausa film industry into a deeper and deeper crisis; whereas in parts 3 and 4, roles begin to reverse as filmmakers seek justice and their antagonists find their power fading. Part 1 mostly focuses on Iyan-Tama's arrest and initial trial. Part 2 picks up in pace, showing arrests of video gaming centre employees, singers, and video marketers, and a meeting where well known Kannywood figures like Saratu Gidado (comedian Daso), Rukayya Dawayya, Mikail Isah bin Hassan (comedian Gidigo), and others vent their frustration over how their names are being tarnished by KSCB propaganda. In parts 3 and 4, Iyan-Tama's lot improves as the director general of the KSCB begins to face the judgement of his superiors and the economic woes of the general public caused by the crackdown on the film industry. Iyan-Tama gets out of prison, travels to Hollywood, and sues the director general. The director general finds himself reprimanded by the Nigerian Minister of Information, representatives of the National Film and Video Censors Board, other members of the Kano State government, and Iyan-Tama himself, who, before the arrest reproaches the head of the KSCB for his unprofessionalism and, in the settlement afterwards, for his injustice. The narrative arc of the film contrasts the provincial and corrupt ways of the board with the cosmopolitan, sophisticated and good Muslim filmmakers.

Even more than *Kotun Ibro*, Iyan-Tama's film, which directly portrays what happened during the censorship crisis from Iyan-Tama's perspective, presents itself as evidence in a court of public opinion, exposing the corruption of the system that convicted him. The film presents evidence that was not accepted in the actual court, and, as exhibits to the people, includes archival photographs, newspaper articles, and court records, as well as Iyan-Tama's certificates and receipts proving the legitimacy of his business, which was questioned in court. Although there are a few changed names and a few fictional scenes—some of which imagine the

corruption of the KSCB workers—Iyan-Tama claimed to me that “75-85%” of the material presents events the way they happened (personal communication, 16 October 2012), indicating he intends the film to be read as a testament to what happened during the censorship crisis. The filmed court cases are re-enactments of court transcripts. Iyan-Tama, *FIM* Magazine editor Aliyu Gora, and other Kannywood stars play themselves. In response to filmmakers’ voices being suppressed and overshadowed by the KSCB’s media campaign against them during the nearly four-year censorship crisis, *Kurkuku* presents the filmmakers’ case against the state government.

The film critiques the process of justice in the mobile court, exposing through re-enactments and witness statements various irregularities that took place. As previously described, many of the mobile court proceedings were shrouded in mystery and subject to confusing rules. Those arrested were tried and charged rapidly, sometimes at odd hours of the night. The film exposes these abuses, showing the arrest of Iyan-Tama without a warrant, and his shoddy treatment by the mobile court judge, including the way one of his court cases was moved to a different court without informing him or his lawyer. When he showed up at the wrong court, he was charged with contempt of court for missing the time. While *Kurkuku* focuses on Iyan-Tama’s experiences, it also invokes the arrests of other filmmakers, musicians, and entertainers: Adam A. Zango, Rabilu Musa Danlasan (Ibro), Sadiq Zazzabi, Aminu Ala, and others. The film allows other people in the film and entertainment community to speak about their arrests, presenting this evidence to a much wider audience—encouraging the world beyond the court system to decide whether Iyan-Tama and his colleagues are “guilty or not guilty” and whether the actions of the court were biased.

As a form of docu-drama presented to a court of popular opinion, the film reflexively organizes multiple monologues by “witnesses” associated with the film and entertainment

industries, through the reappearing motif of the researcher or journalist. The figure of the journalist or researcher organizes the film, from the opening frame where Iyan-Tama is speaking to a researcher about what happened to a woman who makes appearances throughout the film doing internet research on Iyan-Tama's imprisonment—my research blog makes a cameo here—to journalists at the court interviewing filmmakers and others associated with the film industry about their arrests.³¹ In some of the witness monologues the journalist disappears and the witnesses address the camera itself, implying that the film is a kind of journalistic exposé of censorship and court abuses. The direct address format of these scenes gives the impression that the witness is presenting a complaint to the audience of the film.

In one scene, a disembodied voice asks a woman sobbing outside the Kano Mobile Court, Nomansland (an actual location with a poetically appropriate name) why she is at the court. As the woman, a singer, answers, we see the microphone but never the actual journalist. The microphone in the frame invokes the witness stand, as she narrates the injustice that was done to her, but implies that justice is done through the journalism outside the court rather than inside it. She relates that she was shooting her “musical album of praises of the Prophet” when some men claiming to be from the Censorship Board arrested her. Although she was arrested at 4pm, her case did not hold until 9pm. “They put on candles and torch lights and told me that I should accept all the charges they are going to level against me saying that if I argue, they will do to me what they did to our leader Iyantama.” From the beginning, therefore, the court case becomes more about extortion and intimidation than actually seeking truth or providing justice. The woman, who is dressed in a black veil and a long black abaya³² relates the reason they gave for her arrest. “They said they caught us wearing tight dresses and that we were misbehaving, but

³¹ One of the journalists featured is the actual *FIM* magazine editor Aliyu Gora, playing himself.

³² The abaya is a full body overdress usually imported from Dubai and Saudi Arabia.

honestly I was wearing a gown and hijab.” After bringing the money for the fine, for which she had to sell some of her possessions, “immediately I brought the money, they shared it amongst themselves.” She tells the reporter that she has no recourse to justice, “I leave it for God and I know he will avenge me.” The young woman, who protests that she does not need permission from a man-made court to sing praises of the Prophet, presents herself as a virtuous Muslim woman harassed by corrupt court officials who keep her at the court late at night and extort her for money. Rather than the systematic justice a court implies, the arrests here seem as arbitrary as those made in the comedy *Kotun Ibro*. In this scenario, it is the men who harass her that behave inappropriately rather than the woman they have arrested. Her attire, with its invocation of modest style imported from the Arabian peninsula, the home of the Prophet, reinforces her piety.

The film also makes use of the familiar faces of celebrities speaking, as themselves, to the camera about how they have been affected by the crisis. The film strategically uses recognizable faces to appeal to the sympathy of their fans. As opposed to some of the metafictional films I discussed in Chapter 4, these films downplay the glamour of celebrity and instead focus on the stars’ connections to ordinary people. Acting as themselves, these celebrities seemingly grant the audience access to information about their private and professional lives and invite the audience to identify with them, as people just struggling to make a living like anyone else. During a meeting of Kannywood stakeholders, various Kannywood directors, producers, and actors play themselves, looking into the camera as they speak, as if the film audience has been drawn into the meeting. Actresses Rukayya Dawayya and Saratu Gidado both give ardent speeches about how respectable women in the film industry are maligned. Rukayya Dawayya speaks in the first person plural, as if for the entire industry, about how “film is like our flesh and blood. It is with film that we feed ourselves and take care of our parents and send our younger

ones to school. [...]We can never sleep well, we can never have any peace [...] What kind of wickedness is this? They go onto the radio and ruin our reputation calling us prostitutes!” [I have added to the subtitle translation]. Actress Saratu Gidado contests accusations that women in film are not respectable, listing women who married after being actresses. In these cases, women present to the audience their own stories about participating in the film industry, contrasting the claims of the Censorship Board with their own experiences and linking their lives to the families they support through their careers.

By highlighting their connections to the families they support, these famous actors present the suffering of the film industry under the Kano State government as a synecdoche for the suffering of the rest of the society under the same government. Part 3 of the film demonstrates the complaints of many ordinary people, beyond the famous faces, who have been affected by the censorship crisis. In one scene a mother tells her hungry children that she cannot feed them because her brother in the film business, who has supported them since her husband died, has been prevented from doing his work. “May God avenge us,” she tells the children, as she shakes the empty grain bag. Other scenes show old men selling films and young men in video gaming centres being rounded up and arrested. An old man comes to a government office to complain that his grandchildren’s computers have been seized. He relates how he had sold their inheritance to procure the computers for them and that they are the means of livelihood by which they support their family. He curses the director of the Censorship Board “Our children are now jobless [...] You have cheated us. May Allah punish you for blocking their only source of income! May Allah punish you for making us starve.” These scenes and the melodramatic “starvation” language of pitiable widows, orphans, and elderly demonstrate the filmmakers’ argument that the censorship crackdown affected not just celebrities but a whole range of people

in the city. Indeed, in one meeting called by the Igbo business community to discuss what to do because the crisis is affecting their own work, one man claims that “movie making in this state has provided jobs for over 200,000 talented youths. When he [the director of the Censorship Board] came in, he disrupted everything, and these youths they fled to other states.” By showing these disenfranchised characters cursing the Censorship Board, Iyan-Tama’s film also implies that the filmmakers’ sentiments are shared by the wider public.

The film also goes beyond presenting how the injustice of the court caused suffering, making accusations that the film industry is persecuted for political and material gain and exposing the neglect and corruption of the government. Mikail Isah bin Hassan clearly frames the debate from the filmmakers’ perspective when he says to the camera in the meeting of Kannywood stakeholders:

The government is using this to divert attention from itself, to confuse the masses, so that they won’t remember to ask what the government has done for them as a people. [...] The public should know that this fight is originally theirs, because you have nothing to show as dividends of our government, and our films reflect on that and we do not intend to stop.

The filmmakers position themselves as exposing the neglect and corruption of the government. The campaign against the filmmakers, they argue, is only meant to draw the attention of the masses away from government crime.

In the film, the director of the KSCB³³ admits in a soliloquy that he knows the imprisonment of Iyan-Tama is political but that the arrest of other filmmakers was necessary “so

³³ Much of the corruption is shown as being instigated by the director of the Censorship Board, who is not named in the film. The judge’s name is also changed, presumably to avoid legal complications and accusations of slander. More moderate government voices are portrayed, such as the elderly chairman of the Censorship Board who warns the director against injustice and another sympathetic official who scolds the director for overstepping his bounds.

as to divert attention and make them think it was non-political after all.” He chuckles to himself as he reflects on how “I have made money. I have made a name. I am now famous. I am now influential and no one can toy with me.” Iyan-Tama, as producer and co-director of the film, erases the Hiyana scandal as instigating the KSCB crackdown and portrays his own political persecution and the nefarious character of the Censorship Board members as the root of the crisis. The head censor is characterized as a kind of vampire, feeding on the lifeblood of the industry. As he kills the industry in Kano, he himself grows in wealth and—he believes—reputation. As if this self-confession is not enough, the film shows corruption in multiple scenes where the censor implicates himself. After a montage of short scenes showing plain clothes Censorship Board workers arresting old men marketing videos in the market and seizing CDs from their shops, the chief censor tells his workers to take half of the films supposedly seized as “ponography” [*sic*] to their marketer in Gombe State to sell. He tells him that “we will publicly burn the rest.” The Censorship Board is thus accused of extortion and theft in the film and juxtaposed with the KSCB’s film and book burning ceremonies meant to demonstrate a cleansing of society from the filth of the filmmakers. The true filth, the film implies, is in the heart of such hypocrites.

The sins of the filmmakers’ antagonists do not end with theft and corruption, however. The film hints at even more sinister attacks on innocent people, in its re-creation of the actual attack on Iyan-Tama’s family that occurred while he was in prison. Immediately after Iyan-Tama is shown behind bars refusing a government official’s demand that he plead guilty for crimes he insists he did not commit in exchange for his release, shadowy figures are shown scaling walls in the dark. To a dramatic soundtrack of clanging cymbals, a thug sneaks into the bedroom where Iyan-Tama’s wife is sleeping with her children around her. He tells the terrified woman, “We

were sent to molest you.” When Iyan-Tama’s wife begs him and recites the Qur’anic verse meant for times of trouble, “Inna Lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji’un” (“To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return”), he and the other thugs leave. Part 2 of the film ends with a guard telling Iyan-Tama his family has been attacked and the helpless filmmaker behind bars begging the guard to help convey his family to another apartment. The attack is linked to the intimidation tactics of the state, indirectly by placing the attack in the scene following Iyan-Tama’s refusal of the offer to release him should he plead guilty, and directly by the thugs’ claim that they were sent to molest his wife. The man who is meant to be the protector of the sacred private space of the home is helpless behind bars, and the family’s survival is presented as God’s protection. Another attack scene is shown, this when a menacing figure confronts a woman in the dark who claims she is the only one left in the house after the family moved. This time the repetition of the verse “Inna Lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji’un,” in a woman’s voice off-camera, ends in a shriek. Although not explained, the scene references the actual rape, by “night marauders,” of a housekeeper staying in the “boys’ quarters” of one of Iyan-Tama’s homes while he was in prison, only a few weeks after the attack on his family (Abdulaziz, “Iyan-Tama” 4). Here the antagonists threaten and perform violence on the body of a woman under the filmmaker’s protection, while simultaneously claiming that the film industry is a threat to women. While rhetoric used by the Board was that of protecting women from the corrupting influences of films, and while the mobile court arrested women it accused of behaving in an unseemly manner, the film implies that the Board and the government were behind these violent attacks on women in what an unnamed source in a *Leadership* article called a “psychological war against Hamisu Iyan-Tama and his family” (Abdulaziz, “Iyan-Tama” 4). Referencing these shadowy attacks, the film makes an accusation that those who want the filmmakers to fail will stop at nothing to intimidate and

silence them. The Censorship Board is portrayed as hiring rapists, while the innocent filmmakers and their families are shown as seeking God's protection. And yet, this film demonstrates that it is impossible to silence filmmakers who present themselves as the voice of the people.

The court case and imprisonment of Iyan-Tama become synecdoche for the larger injustice and imprisonment of the Kano people in a system that devalues the contributions of all members. The appeal to two higher courts becomes obvious in this film about a court case. The first higher system to which the oppressed appeal is the federal court, challenging "local" restrictions and harassment with their identity as Nigerian citizens. In the meeting of Kannywood stakeholders, filmmaker Mikail Isah bin Hassan tells his fellow filmmakers:

"We have taken another case to the federal high court because we want the court to tell us the greater between federal laws and state laws. My question for you is, are we Nigerians? If yes, why are our rights infringed on, even when we abide by all the rules and regulations? Is this state not part of Nigeria? If it is, then we deserve to be accorded our full rights as law abiding citizens of this country."

The appeal to a Nigerian identity runs throughout the film. *Kurkuku* follows and comments upon the film for which Iyan-Tama was arrested, *Tsintsiya (Broom)*, with its message that Nigerians of various ethnic and religious backgrounds should come together to fight for human rights. In *Kurkuku*, an Igbo trader in a community meeting repeats in English much the same sentiment Bin Hassan expressed in Hausa, but pushes it further observing the xenophobic nature of the rhetoric of the censorship board, which framed its activism in terms of "protecting culture and religion": "He wants us to go. He wants us to leave his own state. But we have our rights as Nigerians. We also have our National certificates to do business anywhere in this country. How come one state is saying no?" The "local" antagonists are contrasted against

cosmopolitan Nigerians. The film portrays the censorship board, despite its claims of being aligned with national censorship, instead as backwards and the enemy of progress of a multicultural, multi-ethnic nation.³⁴

Establishing this contrast between the superior enlightened filmmaker and the unexposed and corrupt censor the film demonstrates the judgment the censor and his unjust court face. After the magistrate judge is shown as sentencing Iyan-Tama to prison without hearing all of the witnesses from the defence, the lawyer, played by actor Rabi'u Rikadawa (who was himself placed on an arrest list by Rabo during the censorship crisis) walks out on the court and tells the journalist interviewing him that they will appeal to a higher court. "We will seek for justice wherever we can get it, and thank God, God is always on the side of truth. Period!" (*Kurkuku* 2). With this dialogue, Iyan-Tama deftly links the higher Nigerian court with the justice of God.

The censor is first reprimanded and humiliated by his superiors in the federal government. The Nigerian Minister of Information and representatives of the National Film and Video Censors Board put him in his place, telling him in English that Iyan-Tama's film promoted national unity and that he had no authority to charge people on business regulation, as that was the territory of the Corporate Affairs Commission. The committee of Igbo business leaders discuss forming another committee to inform the other thirty-five states in the nation that the governor, who was running for president, has destroyed the economy of his own state. The censor's actions not only affect the board but also his political sponsors, a danger that at least one member of the Kano state government recognizes and for which he reprimands the censor. On

³⁴ *Kurkuku* builds on Iyan-Tama's earlier film *Tsintsiya*, which features an inter-ethnic Igbo-Hausa, Christian-Muslim romance and celebrates all the cultures in Nigeria in a ceremony at the end. Similarly *Kurkuku* ends with a party for the filmmakers, where dancers of multiple ethnicities perform for Kannywood stars. The woman we have seen doing internet research on Iyan-Tama's imprisonment throughout the film, is revealed to be a human rights activist, Princess Emmanuel (a Christian and implied southern name). She speaks about how to teach Nigerians about their rights, before handing over the microphone to filmmakers and musicians arrested during the crisis. There is a theme of Nigerian unity running throughout both of these films that Iyan-Tama uses as a counterpoint against what he portrays as the myopic and intolerant censorship board.

the judicial level, the higher federal appeals court overturns the sentence of the lower mobile court judge, and the censor is forced to apologize to Iyan-Tama in a settlement case in Kaduna.

The second and higher judgment comes in the form of God's judgement, as hinted at in the curses filmmakers and other people affected by the censorship crisis rain down upon the censors board. The heart of this sort of connection is made in the multiple song performances, which reprise throughout parts 2 through 4 of the film. In addition to the songs original to the film, the controversial song "Hasbunallahu"³⁵ is used directly after a scene set in a Kano federal appeals court to a montage of shots of Iyan-Tama in prison and newspaper clippings about his imprisonment. "Hasbunallahu," which has been examined in more detail by Abdalla Uba Adamu, was composed and sung by five popular Hausa singers, and it calls down curses on those who keep the singers from their livelihoods, exhorting God to "afflict" with "pestilence" and "chaos" those who "have taken refuge in culture and our religion" to persecute them. It was banned after being informally released on Bluetooth, and two of the singers involved, Aminu ALA and Bashir Dandago, were arrested ("Poetic Barbs" 21-23).³⁶ The portion of the song played following the court appeal in Part 3 of the film reads in part (in the subtitles), "As for those that despise us, Lord, please despise them too, make all those who love them begin to despise them, scatter their plans and budget and make them blind and lonely."³⁷ Please everyone say Ameen to that prayer! [...] Whenever they call on you oh Lord for a favour, scatter their

³⁵ Liman notes that the song derives from "the Quranic verse revealed to Muslims for constant recitation as protective prayers against enemies in the course of the battle of Uhud" ("Inversion" 78).

³⁶ Adamu points out that another singer Kabiru Maulana, who was not involved in the song, was also arrested after "the Censors thought they heard his voice on the Hasbunallahu track" ("Poetic Barbs" 23).

³⁷ Much of the song asks Allah to curse their enemies with a long litany of physical ailments "Inflict their brains with confusion, then their bodies with pile and high fever [...] leave them alive but snatch good health from them, inflict them with unending sickness, make us prosper while they rot away on hospital beds. [...] Inflict them with gonorrhea, cholera and tension. In addition, bring upon them hypertension and typhoid, then in conclusion, inflict them with leprosy, blindness and A.I.D.S." This song, of which I have only quoted a portion of the exhaustive list of ailments they wish upon their enemies, follows in the tradition of storytellers inflicting antagonists with physical disease as punishment for their sins as I noted in the novels of Balaraba Ramat Yakubu and the films I discussed in Chapter 3. By including sexually transmitted diseases in the list, the singers slyly imply that their enemies are hypocritically engaging in the sorts of immoral behaviour they accuse the film community of engaging in.

plans and give unto them what they wish for us.” In the film, it is after this song is performed that the fortunes of the censorship board begin to reverse and the head censor begins to suffer humiliation at the hands of his superiors. In the space of the film, at least, he begins to see the consequences of unjustly persecuting the innocent. The appeals to God are seen as working through the official operations of the Nigerian state. By reaching outside the film and pulling in the song “Hasbunnallahu” that was banned by the censorship board, the filmmakers give the song a narrative function as a prayer that is answered over the course of the film and also rebelliously indicate the end of the censor’s power that enabled the release of the film in the first place. This is reinforced when the two singers who were arrested over the song, Aminu ALA and Bashir Dandago, are shown performing the song at a Kannywood party at the end of the film showing the triumph of the filmmakers over the Censors Board.

The other film songs composed specifically for *Kurkuku* similarly perform the function I noted in Chapter 3, distilling the overall message of the film into potent verses that directly attack those who antagonized Iyan-Tama and the other filmmakers. The film songs summarize the trajectory I’ve identified in the overall film: first, presenting the innocence and goodness of the filmmakers and the injustice of the censors board and its court; second, accusing the board and the government of corruption; and, finally, warning about God’s justice that is to come and warning about the consequences of injustice in the society. I have included the transcripts of the translations of the songs from the subtitles in the Appendix 12. Here I will identify verses that illustrate this trajectory.

The first song appears in Part 2 after the lawyer played by Rabi’u Rikadawa tells a journalist interviewing him that they will appeal to the higher court and that God’s justice will prevail. The chorus of this first song, the visuals of which cut between Iyan-Tama sitting in a

barred room with chains on his hands and his family at home reads, “The prison yard is nobody’s home, but a place you can find yourself at anytime, irrespective of your person or personality, whether you are guilty or not.” The song speaks to the instability of life in Nigeria, where innocent people suffer alongside criminals and justice is not done. This discussion of temporal injustice is contrasted with the eternal justice of the universe in which God will eventually reward the righteous and judge the hypocrite. The second verse which Iyan-Tama mimes, chains around his neck, and a barred window appearing over his left shoulder, reads “Even a prophet of the Almighty was once thrown into prison, despite the fact that all investigations proved him not guilty. I want you to understand that the falling of dry leaves is a warning to the green ones because indeed the prison yard is nobody’s home but a place you can find yourself at anytime, whether you are guilty or not.” Iyan-Tama here places himself in a history of injustice that has been done from the beginning of the world, even comparing himself to a prophet of God. By doing so, he undermines the accusations against him and compares his enemies to the pagans who imprisoned the prophet Yusuf on false accusations.

The song reprises in Part 3, after the scene where the housekeeper is attacked by thugs in the night. In this part of the song, the imprisoned Iyan-Tama continues his invectives against those who commit injustice, and is joined in his complaints against the board by his wife who calls on God to judge their enemies “because I was disregarded and humiliated. As if throwing my husband in jail wasn’t enough, there was an attempt on my life in my own house.” This accusation points out how the sacred space of the home, supposedly protected by those who attacked the filmmakers, was breached. The rest of the song continues with complaints by Iyan-Tama’s children, by members of the New Democrats political party, and Iyan-Tama’s parents and relatives.

In this song, Iyan-Tama gives “advice” to all sorts of criminals that becomes accusations against the justice system that imprisons people whether they are guilty or not: his advice encompasses those in the prison yard and expands outward to “policemen involved in taking suspects,” whom he warns to “fear Allah in all their dealings and shouldn’t press false charges. Remember the biggest court is that of Allah where all of us shall appear before him for proper judgment.” He warns judges “to be fair and transparent in their judgement and fear Allah in whatever they do,” because “Iyantama was wrongly accused and he doesn’t intend to forgive, because he was imprisoned for no offence. May Allah judge them on the day of reckoning where the guilty and non-guilty will be known.” Iyan-Tama’s most direct attack is in Verse 22 of the second song on an antagonist he calls “Danbora Dangajala,” an insulting name that seems to substitute for the head censors’ name: “I intend to include you in my song because you repeatedly referred to all filmmakers as pagans. After all, we pray to Allah, we fast and give zakkat to the poor, and go to hajj. We believe in Allah and his messenger. We attend hajj and also offer Eid sacrifices.” Here Iyan-Tama responds to Rabo’s accusations made on Kaduna DITV that filmmakers are more immoral than pagans. Iyan-Tama asserts that the filmmakers perform the five pillars of Islam: testifying to belief in Allah and his messenger, praying, fasting, giving charity, and going on hajj to Mecca. The twenty-fourth verse contrasts this righteous behaviour of the filmmakers with the sinful behaviour of the censor, obliquely referring to the sex scandal that beset Rabo toward the end of his tenure at the KSCB. “God has exposed you and will surely expose your allies. You (Danbiri and Danbora) will surely come to a bitter end, because you are cheats and hide under the shade of religion.” Verse 25 continues, “Allah does not do injustice and also emphasized in the Qur’an, and Allah is the master of all judges. But you don’t do anything aside dictatorship. May Allah punish you. And as for us filmmakers, we are

just doing our legitimate business and enlightenment.” As opposed to hypocrites hiding under religion, a category of people denounced strongly in the Qur’an, Iyan-Tama emphasizes that God’s justice is on the side of filmmakers, contrasting the “enlightenment” performed by the filmmakers with the deeds hidden in the shadows by their antagonists. The filmmakers by shedding light on the corruption of the board perform a precursor to Judgement Day, when sins that have not been exposed in this life time will be brought out into the open.

However, although the songs invoke the larger justice of God, they warn of the dangerous consequences of sustained injustice, when people are imprisoned “whether they are guilty or not,” has on the larger society. The refrain of the last song in *Kurkuku 4* reads: “Honesty is now a scarce commodity in our community and being truthful no longer looks like the way out and culprits walk freely without the fear of being arrested. But a struggling man, battering to make ends meet is made the scapegoat. And justice is not done to him and his rights were infringed.” Here, he points to the ironies of Nigeria as a prison where the truly guilty oppress the “struggling man.”

In the song in part 3, Iyantama warns: “The youth live their lives in total lack of freedom, I, Iyan-Tama, call on leaders to provide them with jobs for the betterment of their lives. Some go to jail having a good character but come out as bad eggs [...] some were jailed for just wandering at night and come out as full fledged armed robbers. And joblessness is also responsible for rampant theft in the society.” The injustice done to the youth both in the actual prison walls where young people are held for minor offences and in the larger metaphoric prison of Nigeria where youth have no work to do creates dangerous conditions that, he implies, boomerang on leaders who perpetuate these injustices and contribute to the overall instability of society.

This is the point also made in the final text I will discuss in this chapter, the music video “Oyoyo” featuring Adam A. Zango, who was imprisoned for releasing his music video album *Bahaushiya* without censoring it with the KSCB.

Oyoyo³⁸: Welcome to the Consequences of Injustice

Adam Zango’s music video, like Iyan-Tama’s film, directly responds to his imprisonment in October 2007. When he was released from prison, he fled Kano to his home town of Kaduna, where he was to weather the rest of the censorship crisis, continuing to release provocative songs and music videos that respond defiantly to his imprisonment and which proudly proclaim his identity as a citizen of Kaduna rather than Kano. His song “Oyoyo” or “Kan Mai Uwa da Wabi” responds directly to how he had been jailed in Kano. It was subsequently banned along with ten other songs, by the same mobile court that had arrested him. The music video, released after the end of Shekarau’s political tenure, builds on representations of injustice in Nigeria in the *Bahaushiya* album, for which Zango was arrested, to warn against the consequences of injustice.

The song “Oyoyo” (analyzed as a song by Abdalla Uba Adamu and Abdulaziz A. Abdulaziz as “Kan Mai Uwa da Wabi” [“On No Particular Target”]³⁹ before the video was released) is a harsh invective that, like the songs in *Kurkuku*, accuses the Kano state government of hypocrisy. Like the two other texts I’ve examined here, the short song contrasts the innocence of the filmmakers with the hypocrisy of their antagonists, compares the suffering of the filmmakers to the suffering of other people under the injustice of the state and invokes the ultimate justice of Allah. Ultimately, the confrontational video of the song set in a prison cell

³⁸ “Oyoyo” is a word used all over Nigeria as a greeting and is roughly equivalent to an informal “welcome.”

³⁹ Adamu transcribes and translates part of the first two verses, but leaves out the opening invocation, a large portion of the first verse, and the third verse all together. The partial transcription by Abdulaziz A. Abdulaziz fills in some of these gaps but not completely (Adamu, “Poetic Barbs” 13-14; Abdulaziz, “Review”). Here, I examine parts of the portions left out by these two critics.

pushes the complaints of the previous texts I've discussed towards a more aggressive embodied challenge to unjust leaders, working as a warning about the consequences of injustice in Nigeria.

The confrontation opens with a challenge that this song is “Kan Mai Uwa da Wabi” “on no particular target” (as Adamu translates it), but warning that “Idan halinka ne, sai ka ji ka daina. Idan kana aikata laifi irin wannan, ka tuba wa Allah” (“If this describes you, take my advice and stop. If you are doing these sorts of sins, repent to Allah”; my translation). Like other filmmakers who do not mention names but make accusations that are clearly recognizable to those who followed the crisis, Zango cleverly addresses the song to the person who recognizes himself in his accusation. This opener prepares the way for him to proclaim the innocence of the filmmakers and the hypocrisy of their critics.

Like the song in Iyan-Tama's *Kurkuku*, which points out that people often end up in prison “whether they are guilty or not,” in his third verse, Zango points out that while some of the prison inmates are thieves, fraudsters, and drug dealers, others are innocent, “Wani bawan Allah ne. Bashi da laifi, an kama shi. [...] Wani ko ba shi da laifi, an ajiye shi, ba'a duba shi.” (“Another is a servant of God, with no fault, and yet he was arrested [...] Another did nothing wrong, yet they locked him away and didn't investigate.”) Similar to his song “Nigeria,” he compares this unjust travail in prison to that suffered by other youth in the unjust space of Nigeria. In verse 1, he comments that commercial motorcyclists also curse his gaoler because he arrested them, and in verse 2 he argues that “a hundred thousand Muslims” have been kept from their livelihoods by which “some feed their parents, some pay their own school fees, some earn to get married, some feed themselves” (Adamu, “Poetic Barbs” 13). Just as Iyan-Tama uses the trope of prison as a synecdoche for a larger discussion of injustice in Nigeria, Zango's song

implies that depriving so many innocent people of their livelihoods blurs the boundaries between prison and freedom within the state of Kano.

Furthermore, just as Iyan-Tama compared his own imprisonment to the unjust imprisonment of a prophet of God, Zango invokes both prophets and more recent Nigerian “heroes,” who were assassinated or died in prison. He positions himself among these heroes and prophets unjustly persecuted by unbelievers and implies that their stories will long serve as testimonies to the injustice of their oppressors. Like his song “Tarbiyya” that I examined in Chapter 3, which frames Zango’s critique as an oral tale, Zango opens his song with a verse that self-reflexively positions himself as a storyteller, singing “ni za na wak’e [...] jaki mai harbin nan, ya fake da cin addinan nan” (“I will sing a song [...] about Jackass, who hides behind the façade of Islam”; Adamu, “Poetic Barbs” 13). He then confronts his captor with the injustice of this arrest.

To, Barau ka kama ni, kuma ka je ka kulle ni.

(Well, Barau,⁴⁰ you have arrested me, and locked me up.)

Karshe ma ka d’aure ni, ni na ji dad’in d’aurin nan.

(In the end, you jailed me, and I am happy for it.)

Shi ba d’aurin Allah ba, ba d’aurin Manzon Allah ba. Ba kuma daurin musulunci ba

(This is not Allah or his Prophet’s jail sentence, nor is it ordained by Islam.)

(Adamu, “Poetic Barbs” 13).

⁴⁰ Adamu notes that Barau was an infamous criminal who operated in the 1960s and 1970s. “Subsequently, the barb Barau is used to refer to a person who can be considered a real bastard—which Adam Zango used to refer to the governor of Kano, Ibrahim Shekarau in the song” (“Poetic Barbs” 13). In invoking a real-life outlaw to name those oppressing the film industry, Zango ironically inverts questions about whom the real criminals are and who really deserves punishment.

Like Iyan-Tama, Zango asserts that his imprisonment is a result of injustice that has nothing to do with Islam, comparing his captors to the ignorant pagans, criminals themselves, who go against Allah's injustice. In the next portion of the verse, he challenges "Barau" and his judge to imprison him again or even to execute him. Sardonicly claiming to be "happy" for his imprisonment, Zango places himself in a tradition of martyrdom stretching from the time of the prophets to contemporary Nigeria. In the third verse, he lists a long list of northern Nigerian "heroes" who were unjustly killed: Amadu Sardauna, Murtala Muhammad, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, Sani Abacha, and the Islamic scholar Malam Jaafar.⁴¹ Not only does he portray these characters as innocent, he implies that prison builds heroes. While prison is meant to control and shame, Zango argues that in a time of injustice when criminals are in charge, prison is instead a badge of honour, by which the imprisoned gain more respect from society. And indeed, in his review of the song Abdulaziz A Abdulaziz argues that Zango could be claiming he is "happy" about his imprisonment because of the publicity that it gave him.

Ever since his arrest, it is rumored that the hitherto artist of modest profile has his fame risen to unpredictable level. Unconfirmed accounts have it that Zango's *Bahaushiya* has sold in thousands and even smuggled to Kano where it was

⁴¹ This list is ironic in several respects. While both the Sardauna, Nigeria's first prime minister Ahmadu Bello and military of state Murtala Muhammad were both assassinated in botched coup attempts, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua was actually imprisoned and died under the regime of the next "hero" on the list "Sani Abacha." Yar'Adua died in captivity in suspicious circumstances—his official biography claims that Yar'Adua believed he had been injected with HIV by Abacha's personal doctor (Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation 283)—while Abacha mysteriously died a few months later while in power, in what some also believe was a secret assassination. Although Abacha is often described as one of Nigeria's worst dictators by Nigerian intellectuals like Wole Soyinka, in Kano state and other parts of the north, many people see him as a hero who brought development to their region. The contradictory moment where Zango lists both Yar'Adua and his captor as "truth-telling" heroes is an aporia that undermines Zango's defensive rhetoric in the song. "Oyoyo" conflates all forms of injustice together without parsing various strands. The final man on the list the Islamic scholar Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmud Adam, was assassinated in 2007 and some speculated that the Kano state government was behind the assassination ("Revealed"), although there is also much evidence that points to the assassination being the early work of the terrorist organization that became popularly known as Boko Haram. Although Sheikh Ja'afar was an early influence on the founder of Boko Haram, Mohammad Yusuf, in the years before his assassination, the scholar preached against Yusuf's extremist teachings as well as against the corruption in the Kano State government. ("The Popular" 122; Walker 4; "Revealed")

initially banned. It was said that Adam A. Zango (aka Usher) made no little fortune while serving that jail term and a source said he has used that opportunity to help many fellow inmates. That is why Zango, upon his release, was severally reported to have described the incidence [*sic*] as befitting opportunity that accorded him so many things, among which are popularity and fortune.

(“Review”)

Zango twists the shaming rhetoric of the court and the humiliation of physical restraint in prison to embrace the celebrity that the unjust imprisonment gives him, associating himself with these other Nigerian “heroes” who also suffered imprisonment or assassination. A prison meant to restrain and conceal criminals within the walls of a prison, instead gives more exposure to public figures kept within prison walls and in turn gives their stories more power than if they had been left to suffer in the wider prison of the Nigerian state.

The song, which valourizes both Shehu Musa Yar’Adua and his captor Sani Abacha, is rougher and more self-contradictory than Iyan-Tama’s carefully framed accusations. It is also angrier and edgier. Adam Zango’s voice is more strident in this song than it is in most of his other songs, and here it sometimes sounds more like he is shouting than singing. The challenge of the prisoner to his gaoler, which claims power precisely in the place of disempowerment, is made even more obvious in Zango’s video.

The music video “Oyoyo” released after the end of the Shekarau government in Kano, though it was shot and edited beforehand, brings out the raw anger of the song in menacing images of brawny young men in prison who surround Zango, backing him up as he sings. While the music video captures Zango’s anger about his imprisonment, the ominous images also

gesture towards the alarming consequences of injustice that plague Nigeria and introduces a new embodied rebellion, contrasting images of prison with the aggressive bodies of young men in it.

The black and white video opens with a grinding beat to a montage of shots of young shirtless men pumping weights. The setting is a dark room with a small barred window that invokes the claustrophobic feeling of prison. The first long shot of a man doing push-ups in and out of the frame of the shot while a smaller man crouches on his back⁴² in front of a barred window fades to a medium shot of a muscled young man with a scarf tied over his face, bandit-style, staring into the camera as he lifts weights, again in front of the barred window. Shots of young men lying and then sitting on a bench lifting weights fade to a shoulders up shot, in the left-hand side of the frame, of the now late actor and comedian Lawal Kaura, who himself spent two months in prison alongside Rabilu Musa. He is shirtless, grimacing as he lifts barbells. Another man behind Lawal lifts a weight, and a muscled shirtless young man lifting a weight on the extreme right hand side of the frame stares at Lawal, before walking over and looking down on him in a sinister way. The next shot focuses closely on Lawal's grimacing face as his cheeks puff in and out and then zooms out to show his muscled arm lifting a barbell, while four hefty shirtless young men stand behind him, puffing out their chests. In this imagery there is a stark contrast between the prison bars, meant to control Nigeria's youth, and the body building exercises these young men engage in, by which they assert control over their own bodies. Unlike the song in *Kurkuku* where Iyan-Tama is shown sitting docilely behind bars his head in his hands

⁴² To the Western critic, the homo-erotic imagery featuring shirtless muscled young men eyeing each other, in particular the shot of one man crouching on the back of another, is striking. Like the self-contradictory portrayal of Abacha as a hero, when Abacha imprisoned one of the other heroes on the list, such imagery seems to contradict protests against their critics' accusations about homosexuality in the industry, although it could be read as a subversive and threatening response to songs like the K-Boyz "Bingo," which called Zango a dog and a "homosexual." Whether such imagery is intentional is debatable.

as he complains about injustice, here the much more aggressive imagery showing men flexing their muscles in front of the bars indicates defiance against the control of the prison.

Following this opener set to grinding deep bass music, the pop sequence begins and a title “Fresh Prince” runs across the screen as Adam Zango begins to sing, “Hey yo! This song is on no particular target.” Zango, clad in a tank top and a leather jacket with a bandana around his neck walks towards the camera, emerging from the dark shadowy background of other men. Throughout the video, he sings into the camera, gesturing violently. Medium shots of him dancing with the other men behind him, sometimes with blow-torches flaming out from the sides of the frame, are interspersed with close-up shots of him stripped down to his tank top furiously thrusting his finger into the camera and other shots of half-naked muscle-men grimacing and gesturing menacingly at the camera.⁴³ The imagery of the video reinforces the aggressive lyrics, by which Zango rebels against the control of the prison and the state. Zango’s furious gesturing at the screen with bodyguard-like figures behind him also visually demonstrates the urgency of his message whereby he asserts his rebellion against both physical and mental bars.

He argues that the leaders attempt to metaphorically imprison people with restrictions on work and movement. Addressing himself to those who make rules and prisons, he juxtaposes the freedom of Islam with the earth under unjust rulers. He points specifically to the xenophobic discourses about “indigeneship” in the state, which was both applied to the filmmakers who were accused of introducing “foreign” values to a “pure” Hausa tradition in Kano and to other youth who were denied employment because of their “outsider” status.

Ka ce mana mu ‘ya’yan baki ne

(You say to us that we are only the children of guests [foreigners])

⁴³ The spectacle of half-clad muscle-men gesturing violently at the camera is reminiscent of the posturing of World Wrestling Federation performers that are sometimes shown on Nigerian television, as well as American rap videos set in prisons.

‘Yan achaba duk sun tsine ma

(All of the commercial motorcyclists also curse you)

Domin, ka kama su, mun gane ka mugun bawa ne

(Because you arrested them. We understand you are wicked)

Duniya gidan baki. Kowa ya zo ya zo fatauci ne

(The earth is one of visitors. Everyone comes but temporarily)

Ya zo bautar Allah ne. Jan daga Kalmar Annabi ne.

(He comes to serve God... that is what the Prophet said.)

Rago kai dan masu gari. Je ka duniyar ta goya ka.

(Weakling, you are of the world. Go and let the world support you. [my translation])

Here, very like Iyan-Tama’s film which paints the censors board as xenophobic and regressive, Zango points out that, although leaders “hide behind the façade of Islam,” their claims to indigeneship and foreignness are “wicked” and worldly perspectives. Instead of engaging in true shari’a, which treats all Muslims the same, he argues that his critics are cultural chauvinists playing ethnic politics. While they call the filmmakers and other youth in marginal positions riffraff and aliens corrupting a pure Hausa culture, Zango contrasts this with the perspective that in the eyes of God all Muslims are equal no matter where they are from. It is in this sense that Zango proudly claims the title of alien, as one who understands that life on earth is temporary, and celebrates his status as a prisoner, since all human beings are, in a sense, prisoners. It is only one’s own body that one has control over, he implies—a body that will testify to the goodness or badness of what its owner did while on earth on the final judgement day. By contrast, he argues

that his critics are, as Abdulaziz A. Abdulaziz puts it, “blindly embracing the merriment of worldly life” (“Review”).

Zango thus associates himself and other filmmakers with the hard-working youth of Nigeria, who understand their positions as sojourners in the world, and juxtaposes these oppressed and truth-telling youth with the hypocrisy of their antagonists, who claim the authority of “Islam” to create mental and physical prisons for other people but who do not even understand the Scripture or the words of the prophet. Such hypocrisy, he argues, will be judged both in this life and the next. Following on these protestations of his own innocence and accusations of hypocrisy against his antagonists, like Aminu ALA and Bashir Dandago in “Hasbunallahu” or Iyan-Tama in *Kurkuku*, he calls on God to do justice by punishing the oppressors in the same way that they sought to oppress others:

Ya Allah ga kukanmu, ya Allah ba mu yafe ba

(Oh, Allah, [hear our cry], we will not forgive this injustice)

Ya Allah ba mu k'yale ba, kuma ya Allahu ka saka min.

(Allah we will not allow this. Allah punish my tormentors.)

Gwamnati ta kama ni, to Allahu ka kama ta.

(The government has arrested me. Allah please arrest them.)

Gwamnati ta kulle ni, to Allahu ka kulle ta.

(The government has locked me up, Allah please lock them up.)

Gwamnati ta d'auri ni, to ya Allahu ka daure ta a k'iyama, sannan ka saka min.

(The government has jailed me. Allah please jail them in the Hereafter and reward my patience.)

(Adamu, “Poetic Barbs” 13. The portion in brackets is my own translation.)

Zango, like the other filmmakers I have discussed in this section, contrasts the injustice of human courts with God's justice in the Hereafter and presents his own imprisonment not only as an insult that places him along with many other honourable and great men, but also as a synecdoche for the larger state in which ordinary people suffer. From opening verse, in which he self-consciously reflects on his position as a singer of injustice, he presents himself as the voice of the people, expressing their misery and their curses.

In his imagery of shirtless young men, Zango also builds on previous videos from his *Bahaushiya* album such as "Nigeria," where he shows shirtless young men dancing on trash heaps and describing how they can find no work. "Oyoyo" revisits all the same themes, showing the consequences of the unemployment and injustice described in "Nigeria." The scrawny chests of the young men dancing on trash-heaps in "Nigeria," become the built-up chests of the prison thugs lifting weights in "Oyoyo." Using his own experience as a metaphor, Zango gathers an army of young men to witness to the injustice of the government and what they might suffer as a result. The celebration of the body in his video can be read as a rebellion against the control of the prison, but it also implies a more threatening stance. Adeline Masquelier has noted that Nigerien rappers are aware that the population growth and declining resources in Niger, "has attracted mounting concern about potential radicalism—owing to the correlation between young men and violence—they refer to themselves as a ticking time bomb to which the government should attend by providing jobs and educational opportunities" (236). It is in this sense, as well, I think, that Zango's video must be read.

Although Zango's song never states as explicitly as Iyan-Tama's reprise in *Kurkuku* that innocent young men go to prison and come out armed robbers, his music video implies as much. The consequences of putting men in prison unjustly and the consequences of taking jobs away

from young men in the larger “prison” of Nigeria are the same, a turn to crime that has far worse consequences on society than the “alienating” dancing and singing in films or Zango’s *Bahaushiya* album. His music video “Nigeria,” with its complaints about the suffering unemployed youth, thus leads naturally to the consequences of such unemployment and unjust imprisonment in his music video “Oyoyo.”

Although the terrorist group popularly known as Boko Haram had only just started to terrorize Nigeria when “Oyoyo” was released, the images of fierce young men in prison foreshadow the menace that was to plague the Nigerian government, in part because of the failure of the justice of the state. Indeed, Boko Haram began its violent campaign after the Nigerian military extrajudicially executed hundreds of Boko Haram members including its leader Mohammad Yusuf. Part of Boko Haram’s early terrorism involved prison breaks where they released their own members, as well as many other criminals held in the prisons who joined their uprising. Boko Haram had just begun to morph into a violent terrorist group when Zango’s video was released. The video “Oyoyo” was prescient of the menacing army of criminals that would plague Nigeria in the years to come, and the videos the leader of the group Abubakar Shekau would release on YouTube, gesturing at the camera, while bodyguards stand behind him. Such menace, Zango, implies, is the result of injustice. The visible injustice done to the film industry becomes the public face of the more frequent injustice done to more invisible members of society.

Conclusion

The censorship crisis brought to a head the tensions between a youth-oriented entertainment industry with its impulses of truth-telling and social critique and a government

who wanted to control and discipline these narratives. All three films I discuss here—*Kotun Ibro*, *Kurkuku*, and “Oyoyo”—become meditations on injustice that pose themselves as synecdoche for the wider problems of injustice in northern Nigerian society. The filmmakers present themselves as bringing light to injustice that is often invisible when done to less prominent individuals, exposing the perpetrators who mis-use their power. Finally these texts gesture towards the consequences of injustice in society, warning their viewers that if they do not question and respond to the injustices of the filmmakers they will be the next ones to suffer.

Unfortunately, such arguments about the consequences of injustice were prescient in a more tragic way than anyone could imagine, as in the years following the release of these screen texts, the north was decimated by the terrorist group Boko Haram, which combined to an extreme degree the retrogressive tendencies that had called for the imprisonment of filmmakers with the restlessness of the youth. The Boko Haram crisis was in some ways the direct consequence of the injustice the filmmakers warn against, as they were product of the dangerous mix of unemployment, lack of justice for extrajudicial murder, and injustices done in prisons. In the face of such terror, both the government and Kannywood became helpless in their responses, which I will discuss in my conclusion.

Conclusion

On 6 April 2014, the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics released a stunning new report presenting Nigeria's GDP as the largest in Africa, even ahead of some European countries, like Belgium, that had once colonized parts of Africa (Kale, "Measuring"; "Step Change"). This report was perhaps the most dramatic of a series of "rebranding exercises" that the Nigerian government has engaged in since returning to democratic rule, from President Olusegun Obasanjo's "Heart of Africa" CNN advertisements in 2004 to then Minister of Information Dora Akunyili's rebranding programme "Good People Great Nation" in 2009 (Akinola 18). In much of the discussion of Nigeria's new GDP, publications from *The Atlantic* to *The Economist* to *The Guardian* mentioned Nigeria's film industry "Nollywood" as part of the new economic boom, citing figures of ambiguous origin that Nollywood is Nigeria's "second-largest employer after agriculture" (Friedman).¹ As I mentioned in Chapter 4, the Nigerian government has been keen to use Nollywood's global success in the process of "re-branding" the nation and from 2010 has ostensibly invested millions of dollars in the industry.² Government pride and investment in Nollywood has coincided with and contributed to a rise in polished productions made by filmmakers who travel to film festivals around the world, go for training workshops abroad and have begun to focus on cinema release for films, often set abroad, that increasingly reflect the lives of a jet-setting Lagos and Abuja elite. As I have noted elsewhere, government investment

¹ The source for this figure is not clear. Friedman cited a May 2013 UN article written by Rebecca Moudio, but Moudio did not cite her claim. A March 2014 article by Joe Itah on the Nigerian Export Promotion Council stated that "The movie industry in Nigeria is currently the largest employer after agriculture;" however, they do not cite the source of the figures either. It may be that as with many Nollywood numbers, everyone is citing someone else's estimate.

² Following President Goodluck Jonathan's promise that the federal government would invest \$200 million into the industry in November 2010, which was accessible through loans from the Nigerian Export-Import Bank (NEXIM), in 2013 Jonathan promised additional fund of N3 billion (Leu, "Applying"; Osae-Brown; Ryan, "Federal").

has focused mostly on the English-language sector of the film industry even though the majority of the films released in Nigeria are made in Nigerian languages (McCain, “Nollywood and”).³

At the same time, global literary gatekeepers continue to pay little attention to African-language literature. Instead, there is a similar focus on the writing of largely expatriated writers and stories of the well travelled elite, whom Taiye Selasi has dubbed Afropolitans (“Bye, Bye Barbar”).⁴ The same critics who admire Afropolitanism tend to denounce what novelist Helon Habila, in his review of Zimbabwean author NoViolet Bulawayo’s debut novel *We Need New Names*, calls “poverty porn.” In 2012, Caine Prize judge Bernardine Evaristo, a novelist and poet based in Britain, declared in a blog post on the Caine Prize website that it was time to “move on” past “the familiar images that dominate the media: War-torn Africa, Starving Africa, Corrupt Africa – in short: The Tragic Continent.” On a panel at the Africa Writes Festival in London in July 2013, Evaristo described her “battle” to make sure one particular story, “which ticked all the boxes ... a boy living in a terrible situation, prey to gangs, brutalized etc” did not make the 2012 shortlist. “I was absolutely determined that we were not going to have any traumatized children winning this prize.” When I asked her if she were not censoring writers living in Africa, she hurriedly assured me that she could not tell people what stories to write but that it was time to “start talking about different kinds of stories coming out of Africa, and I think this is happening especially with Taiye Selasi’s new book and Chimamanda’s new book....” The new novels she cited as more exciting new African stories, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Americanah* and Taiye Selasi’s *Ghana Must Go*, are about relatively privileged Africans living in Western countries—

³ Hamisu Lamido Iyan-Tama told me that Kannywood had not been included in the “Nollywood Act” funding until National Assembly representative Aminu Goro advocated on their behalf. Iyan-Tama and the other organizers of the 2013 MTN Kannywood Awards honoured him for his advocacy in November 2013 (McCain, “Kannywood Awards”).

⁴ When the author now known as Taiye Selasi wrote her ground-breaking essay “Bye, Bye Barbar,” coining the term “Afropolitan,” she was writing with her actual name Taiye Tuakli-Wosornu.

stories more like her own than the stories of traumatized children she is so determined to remove from the international literary scene (McCain, “Defining”).

I may have sympathized more with Evaristo’s cause at the beginning of my research. After all, my own scholarly interest in Hausa literature and film began precisely because, as I describe in my preface, I was enchanted by the love stories and tales of everyday life, the dancing and singing, consumed by popular audiences but largely ignored by mainstream scholarship. My interest was in some ways like Evaristo’s. I wanted to challenge stereotypes about a poverty stricken and violent northern Nigeria and examine exciting new genres of Hausa literature and film. However, as I wrote my dissertation while living in Jos, Nigeria, I felt the tension between Evaristo’s impatient charge to “move on” past representations of suffering and the context of living in Northern Nigeria during the Boko Haram terrorist uprising, where people left their homes daily knowing that they could be blown up or shot at by unknown gunmen.⁵ The same morning that London-based Evaristo spoke about her determination that a story about a “traumatized child” would not win the Caine Prize, Boko Haram entered a boarding school in Yobe State and slaughtered around forty-two school children. This was only one atrocity in a long litany of attacks on hundreds of government facilities, churches, mosques, schools, banks, private homes, and other targets. The insurgency has grown increasingly worse in 2014 with Amnesty International noting in March 2014 that over 1,500 people had been killed in the first three months of 2014 alone as a result of violence both by the terrorists and the Nigerian Security Forces. In the week following the announcement of Nigeria as the largest economy in Africa,

⁵ On 26 February 2012, I was shaken out of my bed at 7:15am by a bomb at the Church of Christ in Nigerian (COCIN) headquarters church in Jos less than a block and a half from where I was living as I wrote the dissertation. And on 29 April, there was an attack on Bayero University only a few blocks from where I had lived only a few months earlier. The same morning of the COCIN bomb in Jos, the Hausa traders and the Hausa family around the corner that I bought masa and miya from had their businesses and homes burned and looted by a mob in “revenge” attacks. In the year that followed, refugees from the northeastern Yobe state began to flood into Jos.

nearly 180 people were killed in northeastern Nigeria and almost another hundred were killed in a bombing of a public transportation hub on the outskirts of the capital of Abuja (Campbell). The same day as the bomb, around 300 girls were abducted from a school in Chibok, Borno State (Mark, “Now”). The directive of writers and intellectuals living in the Nigerian Diaspora or a wealthy elite living in Lagos or Abuja for African writers “move past” stories of poverty and violence seems a more subtle version of government re-branding campaigns by civil servants worried about how filmmakers expose Nigeria’s dirty laundry to an international audience than a serious engagement with the literature on the ground.

I place my dissertation in the rich contradictory space between these two narratives of Nigeria: the exciting “Africa rising” narrative of “Nollywood” and its exposure in global cinema circuits and the more sobering stories that expose the poverty, corruption, and violence that still plague the nation told by often marginalized Hausa film and literary industries (and increasingly by the relentless propaganda of Boko Haram). The “politics of exposure” is precisely this layered and multi-faceted public discourse about which voices and stories are heard in the space of the nation and the world. While I admire the accomplishments of Diaspora-based writers and filmmakers and believe that they often make important critiques of the Western societies in which they live, my work is ideologically motivated by Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s calls to “move the centre” to focus on writing and performance by people on the continent in languages that appeal to more immediate audiences, the masses living in Africa. In this context, the “politics of exposure” also refers to concerns, in most of the texts I discuss, about exposing injustice and corruption. Novelists, musicians, and filmmakers implicate authority figures and are in turn implicated in accusations about the corruption of society.⁶

⁶ Most recently, for example, Sani Danja, whose films I examined in Chapter 3, has become notorious for singing in a PDP celebration in Kano, in which Goodluck Jonathan welcomed his former rival Ibrahim Shekarau to the party,

I have noted several themes that run through most of the texts I have studied in this dissertation. First, unlike Adichie, who in a visit to the Wisconsin Book Festival in 2007 shrugged aside questions about audience, writers and artists who produce work in Hausa tend to be much more reflexively concerned with how they communicate with their audiences, usually the communities in which they are living. Stylistically, they often include authorial intrusions, as I noted in the novels of Balaraba Ramat Yakubu, or direct address to the audience, as I noted in my analyses of films and music videos that draw attention to their messages to their audiences. Second, because of a close relationship with their audiences and because of their production in the language of their community, the writers and artists I have featured here seem to have little anxiety about “explaining” culture to an outside audience as scholars like Kanchana Ugbabe, Tanure Ojaide, Akin Adesokan, and Graham Huggan have noted of much English-language African literature.⁷ Instead, they focus on issues that are relevant to the everyday lives of their

on 15 April 2014, a day after the bombing in Abuja and the mass abduction in Chibok. M.U. Ndagi notes the irony of “Mr. Shekarau dancing shoulder-to-shoulder with Sani Danja, a Kannywood actor he once banished from Kano for reasons of immoral consequences that were occasioned by singing and dancing” (“When”). While Ndagi notes the irony of Shekarau claiming to be a “Malam,” an Islamic teacher, in this context, I note, on the other hand, the irony of Sani Danja’s claims of being a political activist, when singing for a politician he once vociferously opposed. Singer Dauda Kahutu Rarara skewered all parties involved in a critical song “Zuwan Mai Malafa Kano,” [“The Big Hat Comes to Kano”], using the old metaphoric name for Shekarau, “Sankarau/meningitis.” Rarara was later arrested by the secret service SSS (El Rufai; Garba).

⁷ Kanchana Ugbabe notes that new Nigerian writing “speaks to a wider audience, but the voice tends to occasionally ‘explain’, ‘define, and clarify’” (17). She asks “how much of Africa do we ‘translate’ or ‘italicize’ in the process of writing” with this Western audience in mind?” (14). Tanure Ojaide has argued that there has never before been such a large number of Africans abroad writing about the continent. He notes the somewhat problematic nature of this dislocation (46), pointing out that many of these émigré writers seem to be writing specifically for Western audiences. Chris Abani and Uzodinma Iweala, for example, tend to use language that is “unique and different from the language of Africans in Africa” in their novels. He argues that, “At the moment, there are Africans writing to be read by only or mainly Westerners and, as the examples of Abani and Iweala show, there appears to be a lack of realistic reflection on the place, people, worldview and sensibility of Africans. In this regard, setting a novel in Africa becomes a convenient tool rather than a true reflection or relevant milieu toward an artistic function.” (45). Akin Adesokan similarly points out that in what is often classified as “New African writing,” the “Western metropolis is the primary site where these different genres circulate, compete and generate complex cultural capital” (“New African” 3,6). He problematizes this tendency of “a handful of mostly young and expatriated writers” to gain access to the global stage, positing that this popularity “stands in tension against the enormity of the cultural and political predicaments that face the continent” (16). These scholars concerns reflect larger concerns of postcolonial critics, such as Brennan, Huggan, and Orsini, about “self-exoticizing” globetrotting cosmopolitan celebrities dominating multinational publishing, which in turn affects how literature from their countries of origin is studied.

readers and viewers, often critiquing hypocrisy and corruption in society as it affects the lives of the youth. Rather than being concerned with what outside audiences will think about “Africa,” the anxieties of the artists seem directed more toward proving their piety to conservative critics, challenging those who question their commitment to upholding Muslim values, and critiquing abuses within the societies in which they live. As Evan Mwangi has noted of self-reflexive Swahili and Gikuyu texts in Kenya and Tanzania, authors are “writing back” not to Europe but to local critics and those that “facilitate the exploitation of their societies” (256). Those texts I explore do not “move past” suffering as Evaristo calls for but instead expose it, often through the tools of melodrama and spectacle, and pose it for public debate and discussion that give agency both to the artists and their audiences. While Hausa films and novels also often feature the lives of the wealthy and reproduce patriarchal rhetoric, the status quo is constantly undermined by what Karin Barber notes are “textual loopholes, fissures, and silences” in what appear to be otherwise conservative texts that “often reveal doubts and anxieties; and possibilities of an alternative view” (“Popular Arts” 8). These aporias constantly direct audience attention back to outrage over inequality and injustice. This outrage over injustice can point fingers back at the film industry as well, as demonstrated by the recent outrage over Kannywood filmmaker Sani Danja’s performance for Goodluck Jonathan and his former rival Ibrahim Shekarau at a political rally only a day after a bomb in Nyanya Abuja and the mass abduction of schoolgirls in Chibok. Dauda Kahuta Rarara’s song that, following in path of metafictional films and songs I discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, attacks PDP politicians and those in the film industry who support them demonstrates the diversity of an industry that is not afraid to engage in self-criticism.

Regional writing, especially in indigenous languages, gets far less international exposure. Orsini notes similar hierarchies of publication of Indian literature (328).

My focus on the “politics of exposure,” therefore, engages with Spivak’s question about the subaltern speaking from a different direction. I believe there should be less concern about how those in the Western institutions hear the subaltern, than how subalterns speak to and are heard in their own societies. As Mwangi notes, the “‘subaltern’ that Spivak sees in the postcolonial is not an overwhelmed individual with an erased subjectivity. The postcolonial subject seizes the power of speech and performance to criticize local enactments of hegemony without sparing the colonial past from critique” (259). In thinking about the subaltern in this way, I have demonstrated how artists theorize their role from the ground up—theories that incorporate both “conservative” and “progressive” voices. I first examined written texts that reach audiences who are not always literate in English. In my first chapter, I looked at three texts written by men, which express anxieties about how exposure to the “alien” *dar al-kufr* threatens the smooth functioning of the patriarchy in the *dar al-Islam*, while simultaneously exposing the corruption that occurs as a result of this exposure. In my second chapter, I looked at how in three novels Balaraba Ramat Yakubu follows this impulse to “expose” the secret corruption within the supposedly protected space of the home, arguing that such exposure is part of the process of justice necessary before society can be reformed. Yet she also presents exposure to Western influences and education from a different direction than the texts I discuss in the first chapter, focusing not on those influences seen as corrupting by other authors but instead on those aspects of education that create agency for women. She argues, particularly in *Wa Zai Auri Jahila?*, that women have the intelligence and character to use education to enlighten and contribute towards a new more egalitarian society. I continued to explore this theme of justice and enlightenment in my next three chapters on screen media that are available to audiences who are not literate at all. Artists pose their texts as educational as well as provocative exposés to incite dialogue about

issues of justice. They respond to criticism with metafictionalizations that further theorize their status as preachers and teachers calling for social reform.

This focus on an immediate and Hausa-speaking audience does not mean that these artists remain provincial or separate from cosmopolitan influences or engagement. Hausa novels and films often feature characters who have travelled abroad, and the books, films, and music themselves travel beyond the borders of Nigeria. Novelists Nazir Adam Salih and Sa'adatu Baba Ahmed have told me about fans who call them from Saudi Arabia and Dubai, and as I noted in Chapter 5, Hausa filmmakers are increasingly making films abroad as well. Fans of Hausa literature, film, and music span west and central Africa, as well as the Hausa diaspora that tends to more often be found more in Asia than in Europe or the Americas. The focus on Hausa-speaking audiences, however, means that artists engage with the world from a centre rooted in northern Nigeria. Brian Larkin and Abdalla Uba Adamu have described the way Hausa popular culture engages with transnational media flows. The Hausa film and music industries are heavily influenced by Indian films but they are not merely imitative. For example, after I watched the film *Slumdog Millionaire*, set in India, with a studio full of directors, producers, editors, and actors, I listened to producer Aminu Bala speak passionately about how he had dreamed about making films about the slums of Kano and the homeless Qur'anic students, the almajirai, long before he saw this film. *Slumdog Millionaire*, he said, inspired him to revisit this idea. Although Hausa filmmakers are often accused of merely copying and imitating Indian films, Bala's story about his creative process shows a cosmopolitan engagement between the Oscar-winning film and the situation on the ground, between a story of slums in India and a story of slums in Nigeria already formed in his mind.

In the face of the injustice and suffering in Nigerian society, artists, therefore, often pose their texts as testimony given in order to obtain justice. This self-consciousness about author's roles as witnessing and challenging a corrupted status quo has been a part of the literary and film movement from nearly the beginning, in novels and films like the works of Balaraba Ramat Yakubu which expose abuses in the home or Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino's *In da So da Kauna* which presents the complaint of the youth about their elders they argue are corrupted by a lust for material possessions or films like *Malam Karkata*, where a phony Islamic teacher is shown as taking advantage of women. These texts frame themselves as presenting their evidence of injustice to a court of public opinion. This impulse to expose becomes the most self-conscious in the texts I discussed in the last chapter, where films feature literal witnesses in a literal courts.

The makers of these final films frame their metafiction as synecdoche for the metaphoric prison of life in an unjust society, appealing to an ideal Nigerian justice system available to them as citizens in the nation and to God's justice available to them as Muslims in the global *umma*. They imply that these are the same appeals their audiences are and should be making. The concern with injustice in these texts reflects society's desire for justice. This desire can be traced from the agitation for shari'a law in northern Nigeria, when the appeal to God was made by politicians who promised God's justice to the masses, to a widespread disillusionment with political shari'a. Politicians—filmmakers argue—use the language of God's justice to cover over their own human corruption. The history of the film industry's interaction with the censorship board from 2001 to 2011 demonstrates the move from the valorization of the political "othering" rhetoric that can be seen in the "conversion" narratives explored by Matthias Krings to the disillusion many felt ten years later when injustice seemed even more prevalent than it had been

before the arrival of so-called shari'a law. This disillusion with "hypocritical" religious and nativist rhetoric resulted in narratives which took pride in a diverse yet unified Nigerian identity.

The scandal of the censor who publicly denounced filmmakers for immorality but was caught in his own sex scandal foreshadowed the shame that would follow Senator Yerima, the governor who had first introduced shari'a law in Nigeria but who was arraigned in 2013 for armed robbery and conspiracy to murder one of his political opponents (NAN). In both situations leaders' claims to righteousness, while oppressing people through the implementation of shari'a, are destroyed when their own sins are exposed. Both politicians' melodramatic scandals call to mind the poetic justice of a Hausa film or novel, showing the power of these narratives to interrogate the contradictions of real life in Nigeria. These texts powerfully dialogue with actually occurring events and self-reflexively meditate on their roles as intermediaries. Artists tell stories people want to hear but also the stories they think people need to hear.

My analysis here points to new directions for research to explore another contradictory space between two narratives about northern Nigeria. The path taken by Hausa novelists, filmmakers, and musicians represents one trajectory taken by disenfranchised young people to address the chronic injustice and hardship of life in northern Nigeria. In the face of injustice in everyday Nigerian life, artists preach, teach, and expose the misdeeds of the powerful. Drawing together cosmopolitan influences from Mumbai, Dubai and Lagos they often appeal to cosmopolitan ideals of western education and ideals about what citizenry in the Nigerian state entails to theorize a Hausa Muslim identity in the "modern" world. However, these professional writers, musicians, and filmmakers are not the only ones using mass media to put forth their proposals for northern Nigerian society. Another segment of "performers," the terrorist group Boko Haram, combines the most retrogressive impulses of the censorship board with the

criminal results of injustice the filmmakers I discussed in Chapter 5 warn of. The actors of Boko Haram appeal to another form of cosmopolitan transnationalism, drawing on forms of protest media created by international extremist groups Al Qaeda, Al Shabaab, and others. Like Kannywood and Nollywood filmmakers, these groups make savvy use of new media, Twitter and YouTube. The same techniques and technologies used to build up a glamorous Nollywood touted in national rebranding projects are also used by Boko Haram to create competing spectacles that deconstruct narratives about the unity of the nation.

As I noted in Chapter 4, new accessible technology has made it easier for ordinary people with no film training to become guerrilla “filmmakers” and for ordinary people to become more informed about the excesses and abuses captured on video. From nearly the beginning of its transition from an extremist sect to a terrorist organization in 2009-2010, Boko Haram has drawn on video imagery. First, the group has framed its terrorism in response to media images: the surreptitious video of the extrajudicial execution of Boko Haram founder Muhammad Yusuf and other sect members in 2009 that was aired on Al Jazeera, and the phone video of “Christians” in Jos cannibalizing Muslims after an attack during Eid El Fitr in 2011 that spread like the Hiyana sex video via Bluetooth technology (Adeyeye; Al Jazeera, “Video Shows”; Usman, “Cannibalization”). Second, the group responds to these “proofs” of injustice with media spectacles of their own. The “shock and awe” tactics of the attacks, whether suicide bombs or commando style raids,⁸ draw on spectacles as diverse as the Hollywood action film, the terror extravaganza mastered in the Al Qaeda attack on the World Trade Centre (itself subversively modeled on Hollywood action films), and the global news aesthetics of “embedded” war journalists during American president George Bush Jr’s “shock and awe” campaign in

⁸ Friends who witnessed the attacks on Bayero University campus and other parts of Kano told me the attackers were young men doing stunts on motorcycles as if they were in an action movie.

Afghanistan and Iraq. The leader of the group, Abubakar Shekau, specializes in rambling soliloquies to the camera. His YouTube performances sometimes remind me both of the performances of Hausa actors acting like “madmen” and a long perverse version of the “teaching” monologues that intersperse Hausa films. After a March 2014 attack on Giwa Barracks in Borno State, Boko Haram released a propaganda video that showed the group using tanks and heavy artillery. Online commenters immediately drew the connection between the aesthetics of the Boko Haram video and an action film. A commenter Igbi Efe on the Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium (TRAC) YouTube video “Actual Attack on Barracks carried out by Boko Haram” commented, “This looks more like an acted movie than reality [...] this was a film, not reality and there is no evidence on it to show otherwise.” One of my Facebook friends mentioned that the video looked like a “Chuck Norris movie.” The makers of the video presented themselves, as Hausa filmmakers do in their metafiction, as sympathetic heroes, showing people—ostensibly prisoners held in Giwa Barracks—including women in hijabs, running towards the camera as if to seek refuge with Boko Haram. Their display of intimidating artillery draws on tropes of the action film, where the soldier is a liberator of passive, grateful populations. The video focuses on spectacular explosions and shooting but does not show blood or any chilling images of the children and other noncombatants they are accused of killing.⁹

What strikes me most when watching this Boko Haram production is the soundtrack and the editing of the piece. While much of the footage is set to a calm chanting in Arabic, there is a transition to a song sung in Hausa, with aural similarity to those in Hausa films (though without female voices), with carefully rhymed lyrics that state their grievances and call people to join in the killing, such as this excerpt:

⁹ One might make an ironic comparison here to the American video-game style footage of drone attacks on targets in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which glorifies the technology and spectacle of the attack and conceals the killing of children and other noncombatants.

Zamu kashe ku. Bamu barenku.

(We will kill you. We won't leave you alone.)

Zamu yi yaki a tafarki nasara ba.

(We will make war on the path to victory)

[...]

Zamu yi yaki da arna ma hukunta

(We will make war on those pagans with their courts)

Wa'anda ke yin dokoki na mugunta.

(Who are making evil laws)

Babu hukunci

(There is no authority)

Sai Musulunci

(Except Islam.)

Ya ku ga mutane, kun ki zo ku bi Allah

(Oh, People, you refuse to come and follow God)

Ku biyo shari'a, sannan sai ku yi Sallah.

(Follow shari'a and begin to pray [sometimes a metonym for becoming Muslim])

Idan kuma kun ki, za ku ga yaki.

(If you refuse, you will see war)

Kun ga muna nan, muna ta jiranku.

(You see we are here, we are waiting for you.)

The tune to which these lyrics is set is so catchy that, to my horror, I found myself absent-mindedly humming it. The track, thus, moves beyond “footage” to a consciously edited

“film” that draws both on the Hollywood action movie and the Hausa melodrama. The music in the Boko Haram video, like the music in Hausa films, enables the “filmmakers” to speak directly to audiences about their aims and the “moral” of the video spectacle. Like the films I discussed in my final chapter, Boko Haram invokes God in calls for “justice,” but unlike filmmakers who appeal to the ideal justice of the Nigerian state, Boko Haram identify themselves as the arbiters of justice against a Nigerian state that is their prime enemy. We can read these two media-producing groups as fighting for two different visions of what justice in Nigeria should look like. The very fact that there are lyricists, singers, studio producers, and film editors among Boko Haram points to the uncomfortable convergence between the Hausa film industry and this rogue group, which not only stages but performs violence as spectacle. While Kannywood filmmakers express their discontent by exposing corruption, calling for reform, and creating ideal scenarios where justice is done, Boko Haram calls for and performs a bloody revolution. Ironically, Boko Haram has seized “exposure” on the world stage that the Hausa film industry has never received, insisting that the world must hear them even if they have to destroy it in order to speak.

I aim in this dissertation and in my future research to complicate the stark binaries presented by both Boko Haram and commenters who see Boko Haram as synonymous with the north, by exposing multiple conflicting voices that have long been interacting with audiences in the north. This research is important not only in presenting a more nuanced understanding of current events in Nigeria but also in emphasizing the way the “politics of exposure” plays out across the world between the so-called subaltern and those who would speak for them.

Appendices

These appendices include the following documents:

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I thank Balaraba Ramat Yakubu for allowing me to reproduce the cover of her novel *Wane kare ne ba bare ba* in Appendix 2, and Hamisu Lamido Iyan-Tama for allowing me to reproduce the translations of the songs from his film *Kurkuku* in Appendix 12. I downloaded items 3-10 from the Kano State Censorship website on 23 June 2011. Shortly after, the site was taken down, and this dissertation is one of the few places they are archived.

Appendix 1

A flier distributed by the Org. for Islamic Values Protection in a Kano mosque in 2008 warning the community against popular Hausa novels.

ANA WATA SAI GA WATA

Da sunan Allah Mai Rahma Mai jin Kai. Tsira da aminci su Kara tabbata ga shugaban al'umma Annabi Muhammadu sallallahu alaihi wa sallama. Bayan haka; Muna Kara jan hankalin al'ummar musulmi kamar yadda muka saba a Koƙarinmu na kare daraja da tsarin tarbiyyar adiininmu na musulunci.

A yau muna dauke ne da sakon jan hanlalin iyaye akan wata masifa da take dada yaduwa a cikin al'umarmu wato yawaitar rubuce-rubuce soyayya da na batsa da na labarurrukan gululi, tatsuniyoyi da al'mara marasa kai da manufa.

A gaskiya kowa yasan irin barnar da waƙannan rubuce-rubuce suke haifarwa a cikin al'umarmu. Yana daga irin barnar da litattafan soyayya ko na batsa suke haifarwa:

1. Hana yara karatu.

Bincike ya nuna irin yadda yara 'yan sakandire da makarantun firamare musamman na 'yan mata suke mayar da hankalinsu wajen karanta irin waƙannan litattafan sama da abinda ake koyar dasu amakarantunsu. Malamansu sune sheda akan haka.

2. Gurbata tunanin matasa.

Waƙannan rubuce-rubuce sune kan gaba wajen bata tunanin yara maza da mata, ta yadda ake kirkiro labarin da bashi da asali bare tushe ko manufa, kuma bashi da wani amfani da zai yiwa al'umma, ta hanyar saka musu burace-buracen da ba lalle ne su sami hakan ba, kawai an barsu da tunanin ko ta yaya sai sun kai matsayi kaza da suka karanta alittafi kaza.

3. Koyawa yara karya da yaudara.

Ta hanyar waƙannan litattafan ne yara suke koyar yadda za suyi su yaudari junansu koma su yaudari iyayensu, da kuma hanyoyi daban-daban na karya da yara suke koya a cikin waƙannan litattafai.

4. Koyar da rashin kunya da sabon Allah.

Ta hanyar waƙannan litattafan yara suna koyar rashin kunya, ta yadda a cikin wasu litattafan zaka ga ana ambatar wasu kalmomin da bai kamata ake yaro karami ya sansu ba, kai a wani karon ma har kai ana ambaton yadda wasu abubuwa na hulda tsakanin namiji da mace suke gudana, wannan ma yana daƙa kusantar da yara zuwa ga zinace-zinace da sauran ayyukan al'fasha, wani lokacin ma harda koya musu a aikace.

5. Koyar da kangara ga iyaye.

Da irin waƙannan litattafan ake amfani ana koyawa yara yadda za su yiwa iyayensu tawaye, da kangara da sunan 'yancin fadin al'barkacin baki, ko kuma 'yancin zaɓaɓwa kai abin da mutum yaga dama. Misali ana nunawa 'ya'ya mata cewa, sune kadai suke da damar zaɓaɓwa kansu miji ba iyayensu ba, idan uba ya zaɓaɓwa 'yarsa mijin da ba ta so, to zata iya bujirewa ta nuna bata yarda ba, ta hanyar halaka kanta ko mijin, wanda hakan ya zama ruwan dare.

Wani abun takaici ma shi ne, daga cikin irin waƙannan litattafai, akwai waƙanda ake rubuta su da sunan musulunci, waƙansu ma sai kai ance anyi sune domin a koyar da wani ilmi a addinace, kamar ake, ana koyar da ilmin jima'i a musulunci, ko zaman aure.

Koda yake, wadansu masu yin irin wannan aikin suna fakewa cewa ai duk abinda suka rubuta sun ciro shi ne daga litattafan larabei, to anan sai muce da su, ai ba duk abin da aka rubuta da larabei ne yake zama na addinin musulumei ba. Kuma su tuna Annabin tsira da amincin Allah su tabbata a gareshi ya fadfa mana cewa" ya ishi mutum ya zama makaryaci idan zai fadfi duk abinda ya ji." To ina ga mutumin da zai fadfi ko ya rubuta duk abinda yaga wani ya rubuta? A gaskiya duk mutumin da yake da manufa mai kyau da kuma kishin addininsa, to ba zai bayar da hadfin kai wajen lalata tarbiyyar musulmi ba koda kuwa mai zai samu.

Akwai kyakykyawan zaton cewa, kungiyoyi na gida da na kasashen waje wadanda su a kullum burinsu shi ne, su lalata tarbiyyar al'umma, suna yin amfani da wadannan mutanan masu hazaƙar rubuce-rubuce, domin su samu damar shigar da manufarsu mara kyau a saukake. Irin haka nema yasa suke bayar da kyautuka na musamman da basu lambar girmamawa. Kai harma hukumomi da jami'o'i wadanda suke da izinin bayar da digiri na girmamawa, suna bayar da digirinsu ga irin wadannan mutanan. Kamar yadda a kwanan nan aka bawa wani Mai kula da wata jarida lambar yabo a wata jami'a, duk da cewa yana daga cikin mutanan da suke bayar da kariya ga irin wannan aika-aika, kuma ma shi mai yada ta ne, a matsayinsa na ɗan fim Mai mujallar fim kuma mawallafin littafin 'yar-tsana. Anan muna kira ga shugaban jaridarsa a matsayinsa na dan-arewa mai kare mutumein arewa, da ya takawa wannan edita birki tun kafin mutanan Kano su fara yi masu da jaridarsu tofin alaƙsine da addu'o'in da baza su gama lafiya ba.

Daga karshe muna yin nasiha ga wadannan bangarori kamar haka:-

1. Masu yin wadanan rubuce-rubuce, a matsayinku na musulmi muna kira garesu da suji tsoran Allah (SWT) su daina yin irin wadannan rubuce-rubuce sabo da cutarwa ne ga al'umma. Maimakon haka suyi koyi da magabatansu na kwarai a wannan harkar.

2. Abu na biyu shi ne bangaren iyayen yara; a gaskiya wajibi ne akan kowane uba ya kula da irin halin da ɗansa yake ciki, ya lura sosai da irin litattafan da 'ya'yansa suke karantawa, kai yama saka doka mai tsanani akan karanta duk wani littafi mara amfani garesu tare da cusa ma yaransa tsoran Allah.

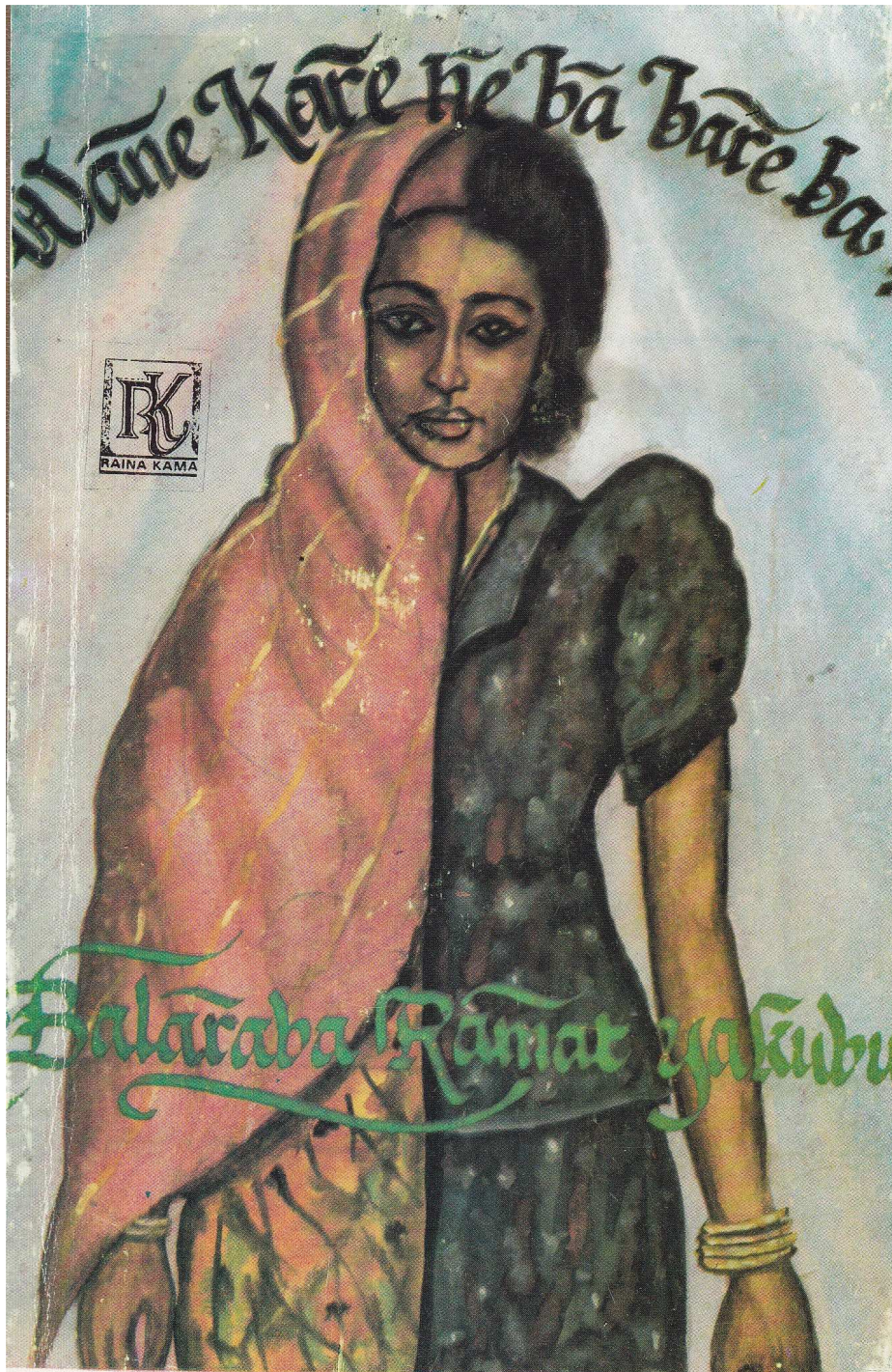
3. Abu na uku shi ne kungiyoyi da hukumomin gwamnati da masu zaman kansu, tare da jami'o'inmu musamman ma Jami'ar Bayero mai daraja, ya kamata su dinga la'akari da mutanan da za su baiwa lambar yabo ko girmamawa, kada su riƙa karfafar mutanan da suke yaƙar addini da tarbiyya kuma 'yan kwangilar yahudu da nasara.

4. Abu na huɗu shi ne hukumomin da abin ya shafa, ya kamata su kara kula da wallafa ta hanyar sa ido sosai akan irin wadannan litattafai, su kuma ɗauki mataki mai karfi na dakile irin wadannan abubuwa, idan suka yi haka babu ko shakka al'umma za su mara musu baya da kuma adu'o'i domin yin hakan tamkar jihadi ne fi sabilillahi.

Saƙo daga (I.V.P) Org. for Islamic Values Protection

Appendix 2

Cover image from Balaraba Ramat Yakubu's novel *Wane kare ne ba bare ba?* [*Is the Man a Dog or Just an Outcast?*] (used by permission of copyright holder, Balaraba Ramat Yakubu)



Appendix 3

Media Centre

Home > About Us > Press Release > Top News

PRESS BRIEFING BY DIRECTOR GENERAL KANO STATE CENSORSHIP BOARD MAL. ABUBAKAR RABO ABDUKAREEM ON THE EXPIRATION OF SIX MONTHS BAN ON FILM LOCATION ACTIVITIES. HELD ON MONDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 2008 AT THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE BOARD

Distinguish Guests, Gentlemen of the press

1. Further to the unfortunate happenings in the film industry, His Excellency Executive Governor of Kano State Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau has approved the appointment of Taskforce committee to sanitize, standardize and professionalize the film industry in the state.

2. This unfortunate incidence led to public outcry which resulted in the lost of public confidence in the film industry, followed by suspension of all location activities for three months by motion Picture Practitioners Association of Nigeria (**MOPPAN**) and subsequent endorsement by the Board.

3. To compliment **Stakeholders' position**, the Board extended the three month suspension order to six months for the purpose of fulfilling certain Herculean challenges facing the industry, Board inclusive.

The suspension order was clearly on location activities unlike what was speculated that **it** was meant to jeopardize the Film Industry. Marketers, production and post production companies, musical studios and other activities were not affected by the order. Moreso, the Board has responded to various appeals made by organizations that have a stake in its activities to revisit the issue of censoring films already completed before the unfortunate incidence.

4. Accordingly, this is not the first time filming activities were suspended in Kano State. In the year 2000 the then administration suspended filming activities without any exception, even cinema houses were affected. Another example is that of Lagos State where filming activities were suspended for two years in order to ensure ethical professionalism in the Business.

It is professionally a tradition and globally accepted; sensitivities are never compromise in filming projects. Currently China is a clear testimony where a prominent production company was duly Punished and suspended from further filming.

5. Gentlemen of the press, I want make it categorically clear that religion, culture and public dignity cannot be compromise by any good government in the name of Economic interest persuades by certain segment of the society, taking into cognizance the social responsibility being entrusted by our people to this administration which operate within the tenants of Shari'a legal system.

6. Special guests, gentlemen of the press, within this suspension period the Board through its open door policy has tried to bring stakeholders on board through various activities such as meetings, sensitization seminar, consultations with other relevant government agencies and revalidation/registration exercise.

7. The Ideal registration period of the Board is first two weeks of the month of January of every year. Therefore, we want to notify the public that, some of our stakeholders has responded positively e.g. Cinema proprietors, Soccer Viewing Centre proprietors, CD Sellers, and some Production Companies. But in order to be lenient to our teaming stakeholders the Board has magnanimously from last week extended the registration period to the end of first quarter of 2008. This extension is peculiar to the year 2008. Mean while Provisional License is under process for those Production companies that are about and determine to fulfil requirements.

8. General requirements and guidelines for registration were reflected if the Boards application Forms and didn't in anyway undermine ethics, professionalism, Religion and culture of our people. Hitherto, in respect to this, I would like to make it abundantly clear that every individual operator **MUST** register and be issued with license to operate, be it an Artiste, scriptwriter, designer, Director, Producer and other related persons in the home video as provided by section 8 sub section 'B' of the Kano State Censorship Board Law 2001 (Guidelines attached)

Meanwhile, trade guilds must register with the Board after being recognized by the **MOPICON** code of Ethics.

9. Registration of production companies as enshrined in the Kano State Censorship Board law is mandatory before operation or any transaction with them.

10. Script must be submitted by a certified and registered production company for the Board's approval which will facilitate the document to be recognized by other authorities like copy Rights Commission, etc.

Equally, approved script will not be filmed until location/outing schedules are endorsed by the Board. At this juncture I want to draw the attention of Hoteliers, agencies and individuals to note that, henceforth, no location activity will take place in their premises without clearance from the Board.

Gentlemen of the *press*, we are using this medium to warn that, it is a breach of law for any production company to embark on shooting/location activities without his script and schedule of outing being approved by the Board.

11. Important issues worth nothing primarily to our teaming stakeholders are thus:

- a). Submission of scripts will be through guild of script writers, **MOPPAN** or individuals as the case may be.
- b). Submission of accomplished films will be through **MOPPAN**, Film Makers Associations or Individuals as the case may be.
- c). To facilitate the activities of the preview committee, the Board has decided to expand the membership of the committee by involving Kano State Film Makers Association as members to serve in the committee.
- d). All our stakeholders are equal in the eyes of the law provided they remain law abiding.
- e). Stakeholders dealing with international organizations and corporate bodies should note that, Board has moral and legal status in that transactions as provided in Section 85 of Kano State Cinematography licensing Censorship regulations 2001.

At this juncture, I am happy to announce to our teaming stakeholders and the general public that the ban on location activities is hereby lifted with effect from Tuesday 12th February 2008 on the following conditions:-

- a). All film operators and related persons must register with the Board and be issued with license as enshrined in the Kano State Censorship Board law 2001 Section 6 sub section 'B' to ensure maximum control.
- b). All Film corporate bodies and companies/ professional guilds and Associations must register with the Board as provided by Kano State Censorship Board law 2001.
- c). All production scripts and outing schedules must be approved by the Board before any location activities.
- d). All production must not Jeopardize the sensitivities of the general public thus Religion, culture, law, State and ethics of the profession. Hitherto, public are rest assured of protecting their dignity in Hausa Films.
- e). Any film that features non registered artiste/artistes by the Board will not be cleared.
- f). The proliferations of Hausa musical albums has attracted the Board's attention, hence must be censored. Therefore lyricists and musicians are equally to register like the rest of our stakeholders.

These conditions go along with the law establishing the Board and the regulations conducting the affairs of the Board.

Thanks you and God bless

BISSALAM



Appendix 4

KANO STATE CENSORSHIP BOARD (HUKUMAR TACE FINA-FINAI DA DAB'I)

Motto: Ido Mudu (Morality is Measurable)

3rd Floor Broadcasting House, (CTV/67) Maiduguri Road, Hoto Kano P.O. Box 2286 Tel: 064-912021

UNDERTAKING BY FILM OPERATORS TO BE OF GOOD MORAL CONDUCT AND TO ABIDE STRICTLY TO THE CENSORSHIP BOARD'S LAW AND GUIDELINES.

I _____ of _____

pledge to be of good moral conduct and promise to abide by the provisions of the Censorship Board Law 2001. That I equally undertake to be loyal and have respect to lawful orders that might be issued by constituted authority. I also pledge to conduct myself in an orderly and exemplary manner within and outside the film industry. That I further undertake to interact and live in peace and harmony with my colleagues in the film industry. That I promise not undertake role that will be detrimental to my Religion, Culture, State, People or the profession.

I also pledge to abide by whatever guideline or guidelines that might be imposed by the Kano State Censorship Board from time to time.

That I also agree to subject myself to any punitive sanction/measures that might be implored by the Board in the event of my going contrary to any of the guidelines that might be imposed by the Board.

That I also stand the chance of loosing my licenses whenever go contrary to any.

- a. Of the provisions of the Kano State Censorship Board.
- b. Guideline or Guidelines that might be imposed from time to time by the Board.

Signature of Declarant



Appendix 5

KANO STATE CENSORSHIP BOARD

(HUKUMAR TACE FINA-FINAI DA DAB'I)

Motto: Ido Mudu (*Morality is Measurable*)

FILM CENSORSHIP GUIDELINES

For any film to conform with the tenets of the Islamic Shari'ah and the good norms of our cultural heritage, it must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Films to be produced, marketed or shown in Kano State must secure a final approval from this Board.
2. Dancing and singing (Eliau/pollutive) are prohibited in films
3. Female actresses are henceforth banned from appearing in any film wearing trousers, skirts and mini/night gowns that are erotic/sexually harassing.
4. All female artistes are strictly disallowed from appearing in a film wearing a see-through cloth or a tight dressing that exposes their figures immorally.
5. Male artistes must not play any role in a film wearing tight cloth, very short attires or passionate barbing, which does not suit our customs and cultures.
6. Females, appearing in any film are banned from having combed out hair. Similarly, they are disallowed from appearing bareheaded unnecessarily.
7. Flittering, offensive words, indecent utterances/vulgar in all their ramification are banned in all films.
8. Offensive utterance in disregard to any religion, tribe or ethnic group is also strictly prohibited.

9. Underage must not participate in an unsuitable scene or roles that are abusive.
10. Sorcery or any type of magic display henceforth disallowed in films. Similarly, use of weapons wrongly or unnecessary is also disallowed.
11. Films posters and trailers must not be exhibited or shown to the public unless and until approval from this Board is secured.
12. It is mandatory for any film meant for public consumption to be clearly meaningful and must have names suitable and acceptable to our society.
13. Film operators, artistes, other related persons must not engage themselves into the film business without securing license (through appropriate trade guilds) from this Board.
14. Opposite sexes while filming are strictly disallowed from spending night mingling freely at films locations.
15. No film shall be produced unless and until its script is duly scrutinized by a consultant and passed by this Board.

NB:

In addition to all the above, the Kano State Censorship Board reserves the right to introduce more guidelines when necessary or modify any of the existing ones.



Appendix 6

KANO STATE CENSORSHIP BOARD

(HUKUMAR TACE FINA-FINALI DA DAB'I)

Motto: Ido Mudu (Morality is Measurable)

ARTISTE REGISTRATION FORM

The Cinematography (Licensing) (Censorship) Regulations 2001

The Director General,
Kano State Censorship Board
Kano.

2
Passports

Sir,

1. Name of applicant:-----
2. Age:-----
3. LGA----- State of Origin:-----
4. Tribe:----- Nationality:-----
5. Religion:-----
6. Registered domicile:-----
7. Marital Status:-----
(if single, state reasons/circumstances; female applicants)
8. Employment Status:-----
9. Professional Status:-----
 - a. Category "A"
 - b. Category "B"
 - c. Category "C"
10. Educational Qualification(s): -----
11. Working Experience:-----
12. Two Referees one of which Must be a certified production Company

Declaration: I ----- declare that all the information/particulars in this application are true and subject to the operation of the Kano State Censorship Board Law

a. Name:-----
Address: -----
Relationship: -----
Sign: ----- Date: -----

b. Name: -----
Address: -----
Relationship: -----
Sign: ----- Date: -----

13. Comment on suitability or otherwise of the applicant (Guild of Artistes) -----
-----if not suitable why-----

14. Father/Guardian undertaking: Ref to (undertaking):-----

Sign: ----- Date: -----

(Applicant)

GUIDELINES FOR REGISTRATION OF ARTISTES

1. An artiste must be of sound mental and moral behavior.
2. Must not be below 18 yrs old.
3. Must be a registered member of Kano State Guild of Artistes.
4. Must possess a minimum qualification of secondary school leaving certificate
5. Must be fluent in Hausa language.
6. In case of female artistes, she must not be a married person.
7. Artiste must be a Nigerian as stipulated in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
8. Female artistes must be under the care of her parents/guardians (not independent as the case may be).
9. These guidelines are subject to review depending on prevailing circumstances.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

- A. Decision:-----
- B. Date of Decision:-----
- C. ID Card Number:-----
- D. Date of Issuance:-----

Date: -----Signature: -----





Appendix 7

KANO STATE CENSORSHIP BOARD

(HUKUMAR TACE FINA-FINALI DA DAB'I)

Motto: *Ido Mudu* (Morality is Measurable)

3rd Floor Broadcasting House, (CTV/67) Maiduguri Road, Hoto Kano P.O. Box 2286 Tel: 064-912021

DIRECTOR REGISTRATION FORM

The Cinematography (Licensing) (Censorship) Regulations 2001

The Director General,
Kano State Censorship Board
Kano.

Sir,

2
Passport

1. Name of applicant: _____
2. Age: _____
3. LGA: _____ State of Origin: _____
4. Tribe: _____ Nationality: _____
5. Religion: _____
6. Registered domicile: _____
7. Marital Status: _____
(if single, state reasons/circumstances; female applicants)
8. Employment Status: _____
9. Professional Status: _____
 - A. Director "A"
 - B. Asst. Director "B"
10. Educational Qualification(s): _____
(Credentials must be attach)
11. Working Experience in Production: _____
12. Name five prominent Films you Directed:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
13. Two Referees one of which must be a certified production Company
 - a. Name: _____
Address: _____
Relationship: _____
Sign: _____
 - b. Name: _____
Address: _____
Relationship: _____
Sign: _____
14. Declaration: I _____ declare that all the information/particulars in this application are true and subject to the operation of the Kano State Censorship Board Law
15. Comment on suitability or otherwise of the applicant (Guild of Directors): _____
if not suitable why? _____

Sign: _____

(Applicant)

Date: _____

GUIDELINES FOR REGISTRATION OF DIRECTORS

1. A Director must possess a Diploma or Certificate in the field of production from a recognize Institution.
2. A Director must ensure a friendly atmosphere and should avoid roles that will tarnish the image of his artistes.
3. A Director must observe and respect religion, culture and public interest
4. A Director must be a registered member of the guild of Directors.
5. A Director must be guided by the approved script throughout his production.
6. A Director must avoid any role that will corrupt public morals e.g. Dressing, hair style etc.
7. These Guidelines are subject to review depending on prevailing circumstances.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

- A. Decision:-----
- B. Date of Decision:-----
- C. ID Card Number:-----
- D. Date of Issuance:-----

Date: -----

Signature: -----



KANO STATE CENSORSHIP BOARD

(HUKUNAR TACE FINA-FINAL DA DAB'D)

Motto: Ido Mudu (Morality is Mandatory)



Appendix 8

KANO STATE CENSORSHIP BOARD

(HUKUMAR TACE FINA-FINALI DA DAB'I)

Motto: Ido Mudu (Morality is Measurable)

3rd Floor Broadcasting House, (CTV/67) Maiduguri Road, Hoto Kano P.O. Box 2286 Tel: 064-912021

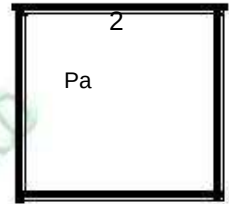
PRODUCER REGISTRATION FORM

The Cinematography (Licensing) (Censorship) Regulations 2001

The Director General,
Kano State Censorship Board

ssports
Kano.

Sir,



1. Name of applicant:-----
2. Age:-----
3. LGA-----State of Origin:-----
4. Tribe:-----Nationality:-----
5. Religion:-----
6. Registered domicile:-----
7. Marital Status:-----
(if single, state reasons/circumstances; female applicants)
8. Employment Status:-----
9. Professional Status:-----
 - a. Producer "A"
 - b. Asst. Producer "B"
 - c. Associate Producer "C"
10. Educational Qualification(s): -----
(Credentials must be attach)
11. Working Experience in production:-----
12. Name three prominent Films you produced:
 - a. -----
 - b. -----
 - c. -----
13. Two Referees one of which must be a certified production Company
 - a. Name:-----
Address: -----
Relationship: -----
Sign: -----Date: -----
 - b. Name: -----
Address: -----
Relationship: -----
Sign: -----Date: -----
14. Declaration: I -----declare that all the information/particulars in this application are true and subject to the operation of the Kano State Censorship Board Law
15. Comment on suitability or otherwise of the applicant (Guild of Producers) if not suitable why?-----

Sign: -----Date: -----

(Applicant)

GUIDELINES FOR REGISTRATION OF PRODUCERS

1. A Producer must possess a Diploma or Certificate in the field of production from a recognized Institution.
2. A Producer must ensure that his script is endorsed by a recognized consultant and approved by the Board.
3. A Producer must ensure that Professional Equipments are used (Broadcasting Standard) in his project.
4. A Producer must observe and respect religion, culture and public interest.
5. Request for location activities must be applied to the Board 48 hrs before the (outing).
6. Alien/adulterated singing and Dancing has been cancelled in Hausa Film.
7. A Producer must be a registered member of the guild of Producers.
8. A Producer must discourage free mingling of opposite sexes for the whole night during production.
9. These Guidelines are subject to review depending on prevailing circumstances.

 FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

- A. Decision:-----
- B. Date of Decision:-----
- C. ID Card Number:-----
- D. Date of Issuance:-----

Date: -----Signature: -----





Appendix 9

KANO STATE CENSORSHIP BOARD

(HUKUMAR TACE FINA-FINAL DA DAB'I)

Motto: Ido Mudu (Morality is Measurable)

3rd Floor Broadcasting House, (CTV/67) Maiduguri Road, Hoto Kano P.O. Box 2286 Tel: 064-912021

SCRIPT WRITER AND OTHERS REGISTRATION FORM

The Cinematography (Licensing) (Censorship) Regulations 2001

The Director General,
Kano State Censorship Board
Kano.

Sir,

2
Passports

1. Name of applicant: _____
2. Age: _____
3. LGA _____ State of Origin: _____
4. Tribe: _____ Nationality: _____
5. Religion: _____
6. Registered domicile: _____
7. Marital Status: _____
(if single, state reasons/circumstances; female applicants)
8. Employment Status: _____
9. Professional Status: _____
 - A. Script Writer
 - B. Cinematographer
 - C. Editor
 - D. Production Designer
 - E. Film Exhibitor
 - F. Musician and Lyrics
10. Educational Qualification(s): _____
(Credentials must be attach)
11. Working Experience: _____
12. Name three prominent Films you produced or participated.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
13. Two Referees one of which Must be a certified production Company
 - A. Name: _____
Address: _____
Relationship: _____
Sign: _____ Date: _____
 - B. Name: _____
Address: _____
Relationship: _____
Sign: _____ Date: _____
14. Declaration: I _____ declared that all the information/particulars in this application are true
and subject to the operation of the Kano State Censorship Board Law
15. Comment on the suitability or otherwise of the applicant by appropriate guild _____
if not suitable why? _____

Sign: _____ Date: _____

(Applicants)

GUIDELINES FOR REGISTRATION OF SCRIPTWRITER AND OTHERS

1. A film operative must possess "O" Level Certificate or its equivalent (Additional qualification is an added advantage)
2. A film operative must avoid any act capable of polluting public morality.
3. A film operative must observe and respect religion, culture and public interest.
4. A film operative must be a registered member of an appropriate guild.
5. A film operative must be a Nigerian as stipulated in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
6. Female Musicians and Lyricists must be under the care of a husband, parent or guardian (not independent as the case may be)
7. These Guidelines are subject to review depending on prevailing circumstances.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

- A. Decision: -----
- B. Date of Decision: -----
- C. ID Card Number: -----
- D. Date of Issuance: -----

Date: ----- Signature: -----





Appendix 10

KANO STATE CENSORSHIP BOARD

(HUKUMAR TACE FINA-FINAI DA DAB'I)

Motto: Ido Mudu (*Morality is Measurable*)

UNDERTAKING

I _____ of

No: _____ in

_____ L.G.A. of _____

State, is the Father/Guardian of _____

who is an applicant with Kano State Censorship Board as an Artiste do solemnly and consciously undertake that _____

_____ is my Daughter/Sister/Member of my family, is taking this appointment with my consent and will be of very good character and will abide by the laid down rules and regulations. In the event of breaking any of these rules, I will be liable for any action to be taken by the Board.

Sign: _____

Date: _____

GSM No: _____



Appendix 11

36

HUKUMAR TACE FINA-FINAI TA JIHAR KANO

Juma'a 30 ga Yuli, 2010

AMINIYA

Idan kunne ya ji jiki ya tsira

Hukumar Tace Fina-Finai ta Jihar Kano: Kafuwarta da irin aikace-aikacenta bisa hurumin doka



Maiem Ibrahim, Raho Abdulkarim, Derakta-Janar na Hukumar Tace Fina-Finai Da Dabi' ta Jihar Kano

Masa iya magana na cewa "An dafa ana ruwa kasa tana shayewa" jama'a da dama da masu gudanar da sanar fina-finai Hukuma ko sana o' in da suka jibincin hakan sun jima suna jimami tare da al'ajabin yadda ake zamanin doka da marja tsakanin masu gudanar da wadannan sana o' in da hukumar wadda take lura tare da tsabace wannan sana'a a fadin Jihar Kano.

Ganin yadda mutane suke yi wa hukumar mummunan zato, ya sa muska ga akwai buƙatar fitowa don fadakar da su matuƙa da ayyukan da Gwamnatin Jihar Kano ta dora wa wannan hukuma, don tabbatar da ganin ta biya buƙatar doka da ta samar da ita.

Bari mu bi matuƙa da ayyukan doka doki, domin jama'a su fahimta yadda wannan hukuma ta sa gaba da yadda ta zama zakaran gwajin dafi a fadin kasar nan wajen samar da masalahar kan irin gurɓatar tarbiyya da al'adun jama'ar Jihar Kano, musamman matasa da yara da sauran al'umma da fina-finai suke haifarwa. Sakamakon yadda suka saba wa wasannin kwall-kwayo na dauti wajen yin hannunuka mai sanda kan wasu kura kura da al'umma ko hukumomi ke yi.

Hukumar Tace Fina-Finai da Dabi' ta Jihar Kano an kafa ta ce a farkashin Doka ta 4 ta shekarar 2001 a zamanin mulkin Gwamnatin Injiniya (Dokta) Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso.

Doka, wadda ta samu sa hannun Gwamnatin Kano Injiniya Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso a ranar 31 ga wata Janairu shekara ta 2001 bayan samun amincewa da kafuwarta daga Majalisar Dokokin Jihar Kano. A farkashin wannan doka an yarda a rika kiran wannan hukuma da sunan "Hukumar Tace Fina-Finai da Dabi' ta Jihar Kano."

Wannan hukuma ta tace fina-finai da dabi' ta Jihar Kano ta fara aikin ne a ranar 1 ga watan Fabrairun shekara ta 2001 tare da Hukumar Darakoci da Doka ta ba Gwamnatin Jihar damar kafawa don samun damar zarfafi da ayyukan hukumar bisa hurumin da doka ta samar mata.

Kadan daga cikin irin aikace-aikace da aka dora wa hukumar sun hada da tsabace irin badaidari da ke gurɓata tarbiyyar kamfanan yara da matasa da suke gusa da kyawawan al'adun jama'ar Kano wajen maye su da dabi' u ko al'adun Yahudawa tare da na wasu kabilu ta fuskar nuna nuna fina-finai da ba su dace da zamantakewar al'ummar jihar ha. Yana daga cikin ayyukan wannan hukuma ta lura da gidajen kalla na majigi (silima) ko saye da sayar da fina-finai tare da tace su kansu fina-finai da za a kalla, don tabbatar da ingancin abubuwan da suka kansu. Sannan cikin ayyukan wannan hukumar akwai lura da yadda za a tsara tare da gabatar da fina-finai da irin sutura ko lafuzan da ke cikin fina-finai ko wafoki.

Kazalika hukumar ita ke da hakin lura da maza baje kolin tallace-tallace kan tituna ko motoci tafi-da-gidanka na majigi (silima). Sai dubawa tare da tace litattafan da ake bugawa a jihar tare da ba da izini (lasisi) ga wadannan ayyuka.

Kafawa da ayyukan Hukumar Darakoci

Sashi na 3 Karamin Sashi na kashi na biyu na (1 da na 2 da na 4) na doka da ta kafa hukumar ya yi bayansi farar kan yadda za a kafa Hukumar Darakoci na wannan hukuma. Haka nan Sashi na 5 da na 6 da na 7 da na 8 da kuma na 9 na wannan doka ya fito da tsawon lokacin da wakilan Hukumar Darakoci za su zama a hukumar da yadda za a cire kowane marfo da daga cikin hukumar idan buƙatar haka ta taso. Haka nan, sassan sun nuna irin farfadin iko da wakilan Hukumar Darakoci suke da shi wajen gudanar da ayyukan hukumar.

Samar da lasisi ga gidajen majigi (silima) Kashi na 3 na doka da ta kafa wannan hukuma Sashi na 10 da na 11, ya ba Hukumar Tace Fina-Finai da Dabi' ta Jihar Kano damar bayarwa ko soke izini (lasisi) yin gidajen nuna majigi ko kuma yin hakan a cikin motar tafi-da-gidanka ko ababen da suka jibinci mana hotuna a batar jama'a. Sashi na 13 na doka ya fito da tsawon lokacin da lasisi zai kasance.

Sashi na 15 na wannan doka ya ba hukumar damar dubawa tare da ziyartar wuraren da ake aikata irin wadannan ayyuka da suka shafa ta tare da kowane duk wasu na urori ko kaset na wafoki ko fina-finai wadanda suka shafa dokoki da ka'idojin da hukumar ta kafa bisa hurumin da doka ta ba ta. Kazalika hukumar na da damar hukunta duk wanda ya karya dokoki ko ka'idojin da aka shimfi da don



Safiya Musa ta yi wawan zama da shigar badala a wani fim. Ana yadda hoton a intanet da wavoyin hannu.

samar da tsabtar sana'ar fina-finai da gidajen kalla ko kuma dabi' ta fadin Jihar Kano.

Tace fina-finai

Kashi na 4, Sashi na 16 Karamin Sashina (1 da na 2) na doka da ta kafa wannan hukuma ya yi bayansi kan hurumin da Hukumar Tace Fina-Finai da Dabi' ta Jihar Kano take da shi wajen tace fina-finai ko baje kolinsu a batar jama'a, tare da dubawa ko samar da izinin shigo da wasu fina-finai daga wasu sassan kasar nan ko duniya.

Bari mu duba wasu ka'idojin da hukumar ta kafa don wadannan sana'ar o' in a fadin Jihar Kano kafin mu je ga irin aikace-aikace tare da nasararin da hukumar ta samu cikin kamfanen lokaci.

Ka'idojin tace fina-finai

Hukumar Tace Fina-Finai ta Jihar Kano ta shimfi da wadannan ka'idoji wajen tace fina-finai moddin jama'ar da ke zaune a fadin jihar za su kalli wadannan fina-finai. Duk wani mai da'awar gudanar da harkar fina-finai, zai sayar ne ko zai kyautar da fina-finai, to ya zama wajibi ya kasance ya yi fim din daidai da al'adun al'ummar jihar tare da tabbatar da cewa ba su saba ka'idojin da hukumar ta shimfi da ko zarce hurumi da dokokin Shari'ar Musulunci da jihar ke aitarwa.

Ka'idojin su ne-

-Dokkan wasu raye-raye da waƙe-waƙe da suka saba da al'adu ko addinin Musulunci an haramta su cikin kowane fim.

-An haramta wa kowane mace da za ta shiga cikin wasannin kwall-kwayo ko fina-finai ta yi shigar tsiraci, ko sayar wando ko kuma tafaɗɗi da suka yi kama da na maza ko sayar rigunan baci cikin wasan fim.

-Babban lafi ne kuma haramun ne ga duk wata mace da za ta fito a cikin fim ta sayar sutura da za a rika ganin tsiracinta, ko sutura mai matse jiki da za ta fito da siffarta jikinta a fili.

-Shi ma namiji da ke fitowa zayyana.

-An haramta wa kowane mace da za ta shiga cikin wasannin kwall-kwayo ko fina-finai ta yi shigar tsiraci, ko sayar wando ko kuma tafaɗɗi da suka yi kama da na maza ko sayar rigunan baci cikin wasan fim.

-Babban lafi ne kuma haramun ne ga duk wata mace da za ta fito a cikin fim ta sayar sutura da za a rika ganin tsiracinta, ko sutura mai matse jiki da za ta fito da siffarta jikinta a fili.

-Shi ma namiji da ke fitowa zayyana.

irin fina-finai, ya zama tilas ya goje wa sayar sutura da ta saba wa al'adun jama'ar Jihar Kano, ya zama tilas ya sami lasisi yin hakan daga wannan hukuma kafin fara aitarwa.

-Dokkan wasu raye-raye da waƙe-waƙe da suka saba da al'adu ko addinin Musulunci an haramta su cikin kowane fim.

-An haramta wa kowane mace da za ta shiga cikin wasannin kwall-kwayo ko fina-finai ta yi shigar tsiraci, ko sayar wando ko kuma tafaɗɗi da suka yi kama da na maza ko sayar rigunan baci cikin wasan fim.

-Babban lafi ne kuma haramun ne ga duk wata mace da za ta fito a cikin fim ta sayar sutura da za a rika ganin tsiracinta, ko sutura mai matse jiki da za ta fito da siffarta jikinta a fili.

-Shi ma namiji da ke fitowa zayyana.

-An haramta wa kowane mace da za ta shiga cikin wasannin kwall-kwayo ko fina-finai ta yi shigar tsiraci, ko sayar wando ko kuma tafaɗɗi da suka yi kama da na maza ko sayar rigunan baci cikin wasan fim.

-Babban lafi ne kuma haramun ne ga duk wata mace da za ta fito a cikin fim ta sayar sutura da za a rika ganin tsiracinta, ko sutura mai matse jiki da za ta fito da siffarta jikinta a fili.

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Wata 'yar wasan, Kubura Dako cikin mummunan shiga



Rabbu Dan Ibro rike da jakar fetur a kamfen'in siyasa a wani fim

Wannan shafin doka ce da Hukumar Tace Fina-Finai da dabi' ta Jihar Kano

Appendix 12:

Kurkuku Songs

I have transcribed these songs from Hamisu Lamido Iyan-Tama's film *Kurkuku* from the subtitles done by Ummul 'Khairi Usman. I have left them as it is, with a few minor edits for spelling and clarity. Used by permission of copyright holder Hamisu Lamido Iyan-Tama.

Song 1 (in *Kurkuku* 2)

Chorus: The prison yard is nobody's home, but a place you can find yourself at anytime, irrespective of your person or personality, whether you are guilty or not. X2

Verse 1

The prison yard belongs to brave men, it doesn't belong to anyone in particular, whenever it calls on you, you must obey it. It is a place where you can find weak and strong men alike, irrespective of that person's personality or whether he is guilty or not.

(Chorus)

Verse 2

Even a prophet of the Almighty was once thrown into prison, despite the fact that all investigations proved him not guilty. I want you to understand that the falling of dry leaves is a warning to the green ones because indeed the prison yard is nobody's home but a place you can find yourself at anytime, whether you are guilty or not.

(Chorus)

Verse 3: It was simply by God's grace that some were arrested, made to appear before a law court and prosecuted. Some were prosecuted for debts, while some are made to pay for the crime of others whether they are guilty or not.

(Chorus)

Verse 4: Some are armed robbers, while some are charged for murder, while some just found themselves without a good reason. Some are thieves while some were charged with aiding and keeping stolen goods.

(Chorus)

Verse 5: Some were imprisoned for pushing hard drugs, while some because they took the law into their hands. Some do jungle justice instead of seeking for the law's intervention, while some were jailed for engaging in violence.

(Chorus)

Song 2 (Reprise) (in *Kurkuku* 3)

Verse 6: The prison yard is a home of faith increment, a home of sacrifice, may Allah protect us from such an environment, whether you are guilty or not.

(Chorus)

Verse 7: The prison yard is a home of capital and minor offences alike. I strongly advise that all criminals should repent and turn to Allah for forgiveness. Turn a new leaf and be honest citizens.

(Chorus)

Verse 8: And I also advise the policemen involved in taking suspects to court to fear Allah in all their dealings and shouldn't press false charges. Remember the biggest court is that of Allah where all of us shall appear before him for proper judgment.

(Chorus)

Verse 9: You take people to court and whatever you tell the judge is final, he uses it in passing his judgment whether the accused is guilty or not.

(Chorus)

Verse 10: Iyantama only gave a brotherly advice to judges, to be fair and transparent in their judgment and fear Allah in whatever they do to avoid sentiments and avoid putting innocent citizens into trouble, and make honesty their watchword.

(Chorus)

Verse 11: Iyantama was wrongly accused and he doesn't intend to forgive, because he was imprisoned for no offence. May Allah judge them on the day of reckoning where the guilty and non-guilty will be known.

(Chorus)

Verse 12: They used his kind of business as an excuse because he was running for the gubernatorial seat. Oh Allah! Be the judge between him and all those that did injustice to him.

(Chorus X2)

Verse 13: Oh Allah, I, Zalihatu, Iyantama's wife ask you to judge them accordingly, because I was disregarded and humiliated. As if throwing my husband in jail wasn't enough, there was an attempt on my life in my own house. Oh Allah! Please be the judge.

(Chorus)

Verse 14: My husband was taken far away from me, a distance that was like never before. After

throwing him to jail for no offence, I was attacked by assassins on one lonely midnight. They startled me and my kids. May Allah judge them for us.

(Chorus)

Verse 15: We Iyantama's children also say that our father was maltreated. He was taken away from our mother, and our lives were thrown into anarchy. We always had sleepless nights with tears streaming down from our eyes. We will never forgive them. And we pray that Allah judges them accordingly.

(Chorus)

Verse 16: I, Iyantama, am calling on our leaders to please be rendering help to prison houses. Take care of them and feed them well, regardless of the fact whether you know the inmates personally or not, because you can also find yourself there at any time whether you are guilty or not.

(Chorus)

Verse 17: Anyone who is good to others will never perish though you might go through trials and tribulations. There was a saying of Prophet Muhammad (S.W.A) that: Whoever does a good thing will be rewarded accordingly and whoever does a bad thing will be rewarded accordingly and the Prophet never tells lies.

(Chorus X2)

Verse 18: We all the members of N.D. (Sauyi) political party will not forgive this act, and also the 44 Kano L.G.A's not exempting any. We all pray that Allah judges them accordingly for jailing our party leader for no crime at all.

(Chorus)

Verse 19: The youths live their lives in total lack of freedom, I, Iyan-Tama, call on leaders to provide them with jobs for the betterment of their lives. Some go to jail having a good character but come out as bad eggs.

(Chorus)

Verse 20: Some were jailed for just wandering at night and come out as full fledged armed robbers. And joblessness is also responsible for rampant theft in the society.

(Chorus)

Verse 21: Danbora Dangajala, I intend to include you in my song because you repeatedly referred to all filmmakers as pagans. After all, we pray to Allah, we fast and give zakkat to the poor, and go to hajj, we believe in Allah and his messenger. We attend hajj and also offer eid sacrifices.

(Chorus)

Verse 22: And you (Dan bora) the role you played in the whole issue wasn't a good one, and Allah has rewarded you for your wickedness. You have seen the fruits of your act in this world, not forgetting that God is also waiting for you.

(Chorus)

Verse 23: God has exposed you and will surely expose your allies. You (Danbiri and Danbora) will surely come to a bitter end, because you are cheats and hide under the shade of religion.

(Chorus)

Verse 24: Allah does not do injustice and also emphasized in the Qur'an, and Allah is the master of all judges. But you don't do anything aside dictatorship. May Allah punish you. And as for us filmmakers we are just doing our legitimate business and enlightenment.

(Chorus)

Verse 25: Iyantama's parents and relatives are also saying they will never forgive such an act. And even well wishers and friends are not exempted, neighbors and our supporters too, not leaving out business associates.

(Chorus)

Verse 26: My special appreciation goes to all my fans home and away, for how they stood by me tirelessly during my trial. And all others that stood by me, may Allah bless you abundantly.

(Chorus)

Hasbunnallahu English transcription (from *Kurkuku* 3)

(This plays over montage of Iyan-Tama in prison and coming out to get into prison vehicle)

(Chorus) Allah is sufficient for us, with his guidance and grace.

Those who do now wish us well, God please deprive them of luck.
As for hypocrites, Lord, please keep them busy with a non-profitable business.
Whenever they attempt to progress, Lord, please don't let them.

(Chorus) Allah is sufficient for us, with his guidance and grace.

Inflict their brains with confusion, then their bodies with piles and high fever.
Distribute plenty of diseases among their family members.
Oh Lord, shake and sear them even in their bedrooms.

(Chorus) Allah is sufficient for us, with his guidance and grace.

As for those who love us, Lord, please love them in return.
Let the whole world love them and do not let their enemies succeed, and do not let poverty come their way.

(Chorus) Allah is sufficient for us, with his guidance and grace.

As for those who despise us, Lord, please despise them too,
Make all those who love them begin to despise them.
Scatter their plans and budget and make them blind and lonely.
Please everyone say Ameen to that prayer.
Leave them alive but snatch good health from them.
Inflict them with unending sicknesses,
Make us prosper while they rot away on hospital beds.

(Chorus) Allah is sufficient for us, with his guidance and grace.

We have a lot of enemies, we know some, while you alone know some.
Whenever they call on you, Lord, for a favour,
Scatter their plans and give unto them what they wish for.

(Chorus) Allah is sufficient for us, with his guidance and grace.

Inflict them with gonorrhea, cholera, and tension.
In addition, bring upon them hypertension and typhoid.
Then in conclusion, inflict them with leprosy, blindness and AIDS.
Please, everyone say Ameen to this prayer.

(Chorus) Allah is sufficient for us, with his guidance and grace.

Bring upon them asthma, kwashiorkor, pneumonia
Skin disease, not forgetting to add whitlow, elephantitis
Malaria and fever
Please everyone say Ameen to this prayer.

(Chorus) Allah is sufficient for us, with his guidance and grace.

Bring anthrax upon their bodies and glaucoma on their sight,
Also add to them trachoma and please make them deaf and dumb!
Please everyone say Ameen to this prayer.

(Chorus) Allah is sufficient for us, with his guidance and grace.

Oh, Lord, you alone know our problems and what is in our hearts
Reduce our enemies to nothing and deprive them of the power to harm us.

Please everyone say Ameen to this prayer.

(Chorus) Allah is sufficient for us, with his guidance and grace.

Oh Lord! You alone know our problems and what is in our hearts
Reduce our enemies to nothing and deprive them of the power to harm us!

(Chorus) Allah is sufficient for us, with his guidance and grace.

Please Lord, accept our prayer and protect us for the sake of our beloved prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Oh Lord of creation, please protect us from our enemies, and those who despise our line of business,

Create a protective barrier between us, this I ask you, Oh Lord.

The wicked people have sworn to destroy us,

Please protect us and our family from their wicked ways,

They have succeeded in reducing us to nothing and tarnishing our image

They treat us as trash in our own town and pretend to be serving our traditions and religion.

Lord, please protect us for the sake of our beloved prophet, Muhammad (PBUH)

(Chorus) Allah is sufficient for us, with his guidance and grace.

Last song (from *Kurkuku* 4)

(Chorus 1) Honesty is now a scarce commodity in our community, and being truthful no longer looks like the way out and culprits walk freely without the fear of being arrested.

Verse 1: Thieves are left secured in the safety of their offices and even robbers go unpunished. Pickpockets and area boys are allowed to go scot free. But a struggling man, battering to make ends meet is made the scapegoat. And justice is not done to him and his rights were infringed.

(Chorus 1)

Verse 2: Before going into politics, you were a pauper. The people were entrusted in your care and you let them down. And the law makes us seem to follow suit. Because to them leadership means owning a fleet of flashy cars and a fat account, not community development.

(Chorus 1)

Verse 3: Iyan-tama has been a patriotic and law abiding citizen and even in your filmmaking you never misbehave. If justice is a word to go by, then you deserve a fair share of it. But they did injustice to you and feigned ignorance.

(Chorus 1)

Verse 4: “Tsintsiya” preaches love for one another because he believes in unity lies our strength and that we as Nigerians should show love to foreigners so that our lives may be strengthened. Peacemaking, condemning violence and law enforcement should be our civic duty. He sees Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba as one without the feeling superiority over the other

(Chorus 1)

Verse 5: Someone that preached all this was the one they arrested due to sheer wickedness. He is someone that has the interest of this nation and its people at heart and is always looking for a way forward. Iyan-tama has a very good foresight on how to develop the country. Allah is your strength and he won’t allow your enemies overcome you.

(Chorus 1)

Verse 6: Right from the start, his films are always well planned out. Enlightenment has always been his tradition. He has never produced a wayward film, but if anyone hears otherwise, then they shouldn’t hesitate to exhibit it in a law court.

(Chorus 1)

Verse 7: Iyan-tama is a brave and fearless man that is the first among equals (X2)

Iyan-tama is a brave and fearless man, an outstanding star, continue to lead us, our leader. God is your strength.

(Chorus 1)

Verse 8: He has been producing intelligent movies even before the birth of your board. Everyone can attest to that, both his friends and enemies alike. They are just being selfish and unjust. Just hear in mind that you don’t have what it takes to bring him down.

(Chorus 1)

(Chorus 2): Iyan-tama has never acted in any film that didn’t abide by the law. If you couldn’t emulate him, then you shouldn’t intimidate him.

Verse 9: You prosecuted him because of his film “Tsintsiya” but that couldn’t stop him from making a name, so you can as well feel bad, but don’t forget that man proposes, God disposes.

(Chorus 2)

Verse 10: Iyan-Tama was summoned by the federal government and he heeded the call and was accorded due respect for his bravery. It was a large meeting with a lot of dignitaries in attendance. And they all testified that “Tsintsiya” is not biased.

(Chorus 2)

Verse 11: Even foreign countries are satisfied that he is an intellectual and as such gave him a job that will go a long way in promoting unity, the message was passed across and “Tsintsiya” is approved. He intelligently promoted unity without being biased about it.

(Chorus 1)

(Chorus 2)

Verse 12: Emulating Iyan-tama is not a crime, and there is much sense in his movies, if you take a time out to watch.

(Chorus 1)

Verse 13: Remembering the past is a remedy for forgetfulness. Iyan-tama is a parent to all. He can be compared to wealth in abundance. He is admirable. Anyone who doesn't admire Lamido envies him.

(Chorus 1)

Verse 14: A good background is an essential asset. Let us know if you have one. Really believe in that, saying that what never was, can never be. Why are you hiding? Considering the conniving hypocrite that you are.

(Chorus 1) X2

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