

Hausa Prose: A medium for global unity

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Abstract

The issue of unity and integration among world communities is globally recognized in literature and orature. The spirit of unity that is vital for peaceful coexistence was contained and portrayed in literary revolution through organized competitions before and in the present day. Globalization refers to bringing the world communities together into smaller closer villages. Thus, this write up centers on global unity that has been reflected by some prominent Hausa prose authors who espoused the idea of “one nation one destiny” within the scope of stars combination, scenes or environments involved in their styles in the course of projecting their themes to their readers. This practice remained since the early sets of Hausa prose writing up to the historic Onitsha Market Literature in the 1970s to the present contemporary Kano Market Literature (Kasuwar Adabin Kano). The paper analyses how Hausa literary works bridged the gap of tribalism and nepotism in the so-called regional names leading to tribal forums such as ACF, *Afenefere* and *Ohaneze Indigbo*. The literature therefore considers peaceful coexistence and interaction between all tribes, at national level e.g. Hausa, Yoruba or Igbo etc. or at global level as Black or white Arab or Asian man in a given story. This paper considers this style very important especially in this time when the entire world is surrounded by different forms of violence.

Keywords: integration, globalization, hausa prose, global unity

1. Introduction

Hausa Prose literature and orature has for long remain as medium or global unity and integration. Nigeria like its counterparts in other regions of the world was faced with tribal or religious difference, that eventually deteriorated to an endemic problem for example the *Boko Haram* insurgency started as state problem but culminated to serious continental menace that dominated discussions in the United Nations and in other global forum. Other countries in world witnessed their crisis that occurred due to similar or different reasons, example Southern Sudan, Rwanda, Central Africa Republic, which led to the lost of millions of lives and properties worth millions of dollars. Since after the civil war in Nigeria, which started 6th July 1967 and ended on 12th January 1970 (Bichi, 1964:13) precipitated the emergence of associations such as *Afenefere*, *Ohaneze* and *Arewa Consultative Forum* forums that were founded on tribal differences and agenda. Hausa Prose could be a medium that can clear such differences before the transforming into a different things.

Various styles are used by authors of Hausa Prose including aspect of unity. A call to unity remains prevalent since the first literary prose competition initiated and organized by the Literature Bureau in 1933 and all subsequent ones organized by Northern Nigeria Publishing Company, Zaria in 1978, and Federal Ministry of Culture in 1980 (Abbas, 2009:78).

These courageous authors used different stars and styles in portraying different themes and philosophy of life, including the spirit of unity among world communities. The noble effort continued to be passed on generation to generation until this era of Kano Literature Market.

This paper chooses to demonstrate global unity through examples from the “*Magana Jari Ce*” stories. The paper also

uses other Hausa prose books to project the relevance of global unification.

2. ‘Magana Jari Ce’ as Medium for Unity of Human Race

Magana Jari Ce is a popular volume in world prose written by a prominent author Abubakar Imam. He was said to have written the three volume “*Magana Jari Ce* (1-3) in six months ^[1]. An indication of his clear dedication and commitment to the development of Hausa prose in the world.

The first volume of *Magana Jari Ce* I comprises 26 stories in 134 pages. The second volume of *Magana Jari Ce* II contains 32 stories in 234 pages; while the third volume of *Magana Jari Ce* III 21 has stories in 228 pages.

3. ‘Magana Jari Ce’ as Medium for Unifying Nigerians

The volume 1 to 3 of *Magana Jari Ce* contains stories that portray unity and togetherness among Nigerians. In volume 1, story 4 of four pages titled “*Sauna Kira Mana Shashasha, In Ka ga Sakarai Ku Taho Tare*” i.e. “Call a fool for me if you meet stupid come along with him”. This is a story of a young Hausa businessman who embarks on trading journey to Yoruba land. Unfortunately, the young Hausa businessman cannot speak any other language than Hausa while the native people of the town he meets cannot speak any language other than Yoruba. The boy who is named Wawa continues to communicate, in difficulties, with his hosts and having wrong impressions about many things he enquires about (Imam, 1980:629).

There are clear agitation for two important things in this story, one is need for unity between Hausa and Yoruba people as trading partners; secondly there is need for both Hausa to understand Yoruba language and for Yoruba to

¹ Malumfashi, I. (2009) p.46

understand Hausa language for the proper enhancement of unity and trading partnership.

The twelfth story in the first volume is another related story about a wealthy Yoruba man with his Hausa slave whom he bought from one Arab king. The story titled “Yadda Muka yi da Ubangijina Ojo” i.e. what happened between myself and my Master Ojo”. In this story Ojo is the richest Yoruba man in the area. He bought a slave boy from one Arab king. Ojo has three wives but he decides to bring a fourth one. When he marries her, she visits “Boka” who gives her charms to influence Ojo to divorce the first three wives. The slave boy sympathizes with his master and got solution for him against the wicked woman. (Imam, 1980:57). The story indicates unity in life and togetherness in interactions between Hausa and Yoruba people.

The sixth story of the second volume titled “Mara Gaskiya ko Cikin Ruwa ya yi Jivi i.e. “The guilt is always conscious of their guilty”. The story is about six Fulani young men on their way to their traditional ceremony “Sharo”. One of them has a large sum of money (fifteen shillings) which he intends to get married. When they get to the town, they lodged at Sarkin Fawa’s house. Unfortunately, one of the Fulani men is a thief, and he takes away the fifteen shillings of his brother. The case is taken to a judge, and the judge distributes sticks to them and said “Before tomorrow the stick given to the thief will be longer by an inch than the rest”. Therefore, in the middle of the night, the thief wakes up and cut his own stick and inch less. In the morning, when they returned to the court the judge easily detects the thief and the money stolen is returned to the owner, (Imam, 1980:157-159).

The two important issues on unity about the story is taking the readers mind to the Fulani world and the way they speak Hausa language in their accent and also their annual cultural event “Sharo”. Secondly, although is a known fact that Hausa and Fulani in this era are regarded as one as almost one of media called them “Hausa/Fulani” the interaction between the judge and the young Fulani man signifies love and unity between them.

Another story, the twenty six. A story of volume two titled “Labarin Waxansu Samari Su Uku” i.e. “Story about Three Young men”. These young men meet a caravan of pilgrims on their way to Makka. They asked permission from the leader of the caravan and he agrees and they joined the caravan. Unfortunately, they have a stopover and when the journey is set to continue, the three young men are already in deep sleep. When they wake up, they cannot trace their caravan. They therefore continue their journey. A long the way,, they sighted a tall image from far away in the desert but they do not understand until the image becomes close to them. It is a man in a Tuareg attire on a camel back, they greet him but he refused to respond, later he brings out his sword and beheaded two among the three young men. While he is searching money from their pocket, the other young man picks up the sword and beheaded him. (Imam, 1980:162-265).

The caravan signifies a unity in this story, because the caravan usually comprises different people from different routes all set to achieve one cause, that is, to perform the Hajj. Another aspect is the setting which could be the Sahara desert, and the killer or the robber’s identity as shown in the illustration appears to be a Tuareg man.

The story identifies issue of national security. Again it emphasizes the need for citizens to identify danger zones on

the routes they have taken chosen before embarking on any inter boarder travelling.

In a similar vein, the eleventh story of Magana Jari Ce volume 3 titled “Karen Bana Shi Ke Maganin Zomon Bana” i.e “Wise Approach is the Best Solution to Wise Problems”. A story about Igbo man called Nwanko and his Hausa friend Bala. They are friends operating a closely related business. One day, Bala borrowed money from Nwanko which he promises to pay after a period of time. Should Bala fail to settle the debt, however, is free to use a knife and cut a flesh from Bala’s body worth the debt. When the period lapsed without response from Bala, Nwanko asked Bala to allow him to cut the flesh as promised. It was not easy but finally the case is taken to the judge. On their way before they reach the court, Bala became involved in another three cases, but the judge ordered Bala to allow Nwanko to cut the flesh but on condition that blood should not appear because it was not in the agreement. When Nwanko realizes that forfeiting the money is easier. He therefore said to the judge “I have forgiven Bala, after all he is my friend” (Imam, 1980:420-429). A throwback to Shakespeare’s Shylock.

The business interaction with Hausa people in communities signifies unity and harmony especially between Nwanko and Bala. This represents unity and harmony between Hausa people and Igbo people. Another aspect portrayed in the story was mindfulness of forgiveness among the Nigerian citizens. This was translated in the recent policy of Bayelsa State government that emphasizes the call by the governor on all Nigerians from all over the states to go Bayelsa and all the legal rights of a bonafide indigene and operate business in the state. This will as well allow his people to operate freely in all parts of Nigeria as good citizens of Nigeria.

4. Hausa Prose as Medium for Integration of Ideas and Thoughts

Hausa Prose portrays another platform on which philosophical ideas and thoughts that were developed and translated to stories and oratures were however transformed and adopted into Hausa language. This indicates that Hausa related ideas and thoughts are flexible and accommodative to carry stories from other sister languages, as long as the story has been properly transformed or translated and well organized and composed. Example Magana Jari Ce was developed from parts of Arabic books such as *Alfu Laylah*, *Bahrul Adab*, *Khalilah wa Dimnah*, *Rauzul-Jinan* and *Kitab Nurul Zaman*. It however owes its origin to English sources, like The Brothers Grimm Fairy Tales, Tales from Shakespeare, Hans Anderson Fairy Tales and Aesop Fables, (Malumfashi, 2009: 66-67).

The interesting aspect of the process is that despite the processes of reading, conception, regurgitation, translation and transformation, one can hardly understand that some of these stories were not Hausa original stories. This is not unconnected with the power of knowledge, wisdom and professionalism displayed by the likes of Abubakar Imam.

Another aspect that added to the acceptability or assimilation in the adaptation were the illustrations of pictures that were done to reflect the typical Hausa land world. This is the translation of unity in ideas and thoughts that involved Arabs, Europeans, and Hausa people. This adaptation low themes, protagonists were co-opted in the processes.

5. Hausa Prose and the Integration of Global Towns and Cities

The style of Hausa Prose authors is commonly flexible. An author can easily take readers from Hausaland to Yoruba like Wawa who travelled to Yorubaland (Imam, 1980:26) or from Igbo land to Hausaland (Imam, 1980:420), from town to jungle example where Umaru was kidnapped by kidnappers at Kagara from where he took Umar to unknown jungle (Tafawa Valewa, 1955:18-19). In addition, within the same book, a reader is taken to Cairo, and Alexandria in Egypt (Iskadariya) and Tripoli (Turabulus) ^[2] in Libya within the same page. Imam (1966) also uses the same style where the reader along with the protagonist of the story, Alhaji Imam is carried to Birnin Qudus ^[3], within the same page, from where he proceeds to Baitul Muqaddas. Imam even takes his reader to the world of spirits and denizens when he is involved in a ship wrick. The tide takes him to an Island ^[4].

In (Katsina, 1982:18), the author carries the reader from Hausa land along to China, America and India through a cinema house. In (Ingawa, 1970:3) after being bed-ridden for long, two people visit him and offered him milk which eventually cures him of his illness. They however asked him to go to Qib city ^[5] to the assist less privileged people in the area Kiev.

6. Conclusion

Hausa Prose can be noted as a medium through which many global problems could be rectified. Problems such as bilateral misunderstanding, national, tribal, religious conflicts, insurgency, can be resolved through dissemination of awareness through Hausa Prose. Therefore, it is for the readers to understand that authors perform a noble role of discharging different forms of social responsibilities to their communities. These social responsibilities include using their arts of authoring to create sense of global unity, provide enabling environment for peaceful coexistence to prevail among Nigerians and other world communities. It is their responsibilities on their side to ensure a crime-free and a corruption free society.

7. Reference

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² Tafawa Valewa, A. (1955) p. 43.

³ Imam A. (1966), p. 34.

⁴ Ibid p. 36.

⁵ Qib city which is popularly known as Kiev presently in Ukraine.